

ITS Celebrates its First MQF Level 6 Graduates

In 2019, the Institute of Tourism Studies proudly had its first graduates completing studies at tertiary level. In this edition, one will be focusing on the work of two former students who completed their work with a high level of enthusiasm. The dissertations were presented in May 2019 as part fulfillment of their B.A. in Culinary Arts, and the following are an abstract of their work.

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Brincat presents his dissertation wherein he explores and investigates the causes leading to chef shortages. The author wanted to comprehend the extent of the chefs' shortage, the occupational conditions which regulate the profession, the occupational standards being adhered to, the impact the shortages have on the restaurant and hotel firms and the effect the shortage might have on the Maltese culinary level.

The study carried out was based on a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews. Primary data was sought from a total of 14 executive chefs/head chefs working in 5-star hotels in the Maltese Islands, in restaurants listed in the "The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta" with a "Most Popular for Best Food" award, and restaurants from different locations which feature in "The WRMC Restaurant Guide" and have a Silver Spoon Award.

Exploring the causes leading to chef shortages in the Maltese Islands

Joseph Brincat



Photo by Sebastian Coman / Unsplash

From the data gathered by the participants, it transpires that the shortage is evident. The situation leading to shortages that the establishments are experiencing is related to skill, low pay, working long hours and conditions, and also lack of Maltese chefs. Lack of skill in culinary students appears to be present in a moderate amount. Nevertheless, each establishment has its own type of shortage and its own problems. The extent of the shortages in the firms examined is somewhat controlled, however they do not exclude the fact that there are no similar shortages in the workforce. A difference on shortage mentality can be seen between the Executive Chefs who are the main people in charge of the kitchens of the establishments visited and the brigade they manage, who are the workhorses of any kitchen in every establishment. The executive chefs interviewed seemed to be experienced and knew all about the difficulties that the industry has to offer. However, individuals in

lower ranks and just starting in this industry do not seem to be aware of the sacrifices and difficulties that the industry offers. Pay and conditions need to be taken seriously because the majority of the candidates not accepting a job offer and opting for another do it just for the pay. Long hours is another issue and is listed as the main reason why they eventually opt to leave an establishment. If the wages and conditions are not going to be improved, and the local institution, Institute of Tourism Studies and the industry start working hand in hand to understand each other, then the shortage will be much higher in a few years' time and the amount of foreigners, replacing the Maltese workforce will increase.

The researcher believes that this shortage will lead either to an automatic rise in wages by a substantial amount or else the quality of certain restaurants will drop reflecting the inferior quality of skill applied in the various kitchens.

Culinary Arts
Student,
Thomas
Camilleri
delivered a

Save the Bees

Thomas Camilleri Mallia

study on the problems that are affecting the local apiculture industry, the Maltese Honeybee (*Apis Mellifera Ruttneri*), the art of beekeeping and suggestions to what could be done to stop the extinction of the bees.

A small insect hops from one blossom to another, scattering nectar and pollen across the fields while producing a golden liquid full of health benefits. This insect is the honeybee. Honeybees have been helping mankind in various ways most importantly, by producing honey and pollinating crops. In the past years honeybees' populations have declined, including those in the Maltese islands. This research is based on the problems that the local apiculture industry is facing and the search for a solution to prevent the extinction of the honeybee.

In this study 59 local beekeepers participated in the survey, sharing their difficulties, explaining what the honeybees are

experiencing and suggesting solutions to prevent a further eradication of the honeybee population. Two distinctive interviews were conducted, one with the Malta Beekeepers Association in order to have an understanding of their work and the promotion of the local apiculture industry, whilst supporting the local beekeepers. The other interview was carried out with a representative from the Smart Bees project, who aims to safeguard the Maltese honeybee so that it does not lose its unique characteristics.

With the data collected the author revealed various problems deriving from diseases, pests, vandalism, financial difficulties, climate change, land development and the European Union funding system which do not favour the Maltese Beekeepers due to the small scale of the units in Malta. The beekeepers propose various solutions which if applied in the near future can improve the apiculture industry and safeguard the Maltese honeybee population.

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