

Extra Curricular Activities at the University Gozo Centre - 2004

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Between 1 and 3 March the University Gozo Centre hosted an International Workshop organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the University of Malta. The workshop, which focused on economic vulnerability and resilience building of small states, was inaugurated by H.E. Jagdish Koonjul, the Chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) which represents forty states in the United Nations. The participants of the workshop consisted of twenty-six experts from all Commonwealth regions. These included academics, practitioners, policy makers, and representatives of international and regional organisations.



The inaugural session of the International Workshop

On 18 April 2004, the Lace Making Programme at the University Gozo Centre organized the annual event "Gozo Lace Day" for the eighth consecutive year. The event, held at the University Gozo Centre premises, consisted of a number of exhibitions and demonstrations of Maltese lace and a number of talks on matters related to lace making.

The event was introduced by Professor Maurice Cauchi, member on the Board of the University Gozo Centre. Ms Consiglia

Azzopardi, coordinator of the Lace Making Programme, delivered a talk about the aspirations of those who seek to attend lace courses at this centre. She also explained how these courses held on a scientific level would raise the level of Maltese lace making to the same footing as the big European lace making countries, such as Belgium, Holland, France, Italy and Spain. In his talk the Hon. Anton Tabone, praised the initiative taken by the University of Malta to approve such a matter as Maltese lace to be studied as an academic subject. Mons. Lawrence Sciberras delivered an interesting talk about lace in church vestments.

The event also included exhibitions of Lace Programme projects and textile crafts. Other exhibitions were mounted by the International Organisation of Needle and Bobbin Lace (OIDFA) and by the Malta Lace Guild. There were also demonstrations of pillow covering, card weaving, cord making by ATC and information about short courses in different aspects of Maltese Lace. A number of stands were mounted by the Koperattiva Ghawdxija tal-Bizzilla u Artigjanat with lace making materials.



Hon. Anton Tabone awards a certificate to a participant who successfully completed a course in Lace Making.

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Just before the event, Ken Wroe, a British resident in St. Paul's Bay walked in with a biscuit tin containing some forty Maltese bobbins and an accompanying letter. They were sent by Mabel Duxbury from Leeds Yorkshire, UK, now in her eighties and is unable to travel over because of her illness. Daughter of Commissioner for SW Leeds, Mabel had trained as a Domestic Science teacher with emphasis towards needlework and craft. At the end of World War II one of her relatives ended up in Malta, and he kindly purchased for her "a 'set' of lace bobbins and a pillow made from the bottom of a trousers' leg, stuffed with straw and stitched at the top and bottom," as she described in her letter. Mabel never got to use the bobbins and she is delighted to find a safe harbour back home where they belong after safe moving custody in England, hoping some Maltese fingers will again find pleasure in using them.

The Lace Making Programme extends warm thanksgiving feelings to Mabel Duxbury, and to Ken Wroe who was instrumental in carrying the bobbins back home.



Ken Wroe (left) donating the bobbin to Consiglia Azzopardi (center) and Profs Maurice Cauchi (right)

An Expert's Workshop on Competitiveness Strategies of Small States was held at the University Gozo Centre between 14 and 17 July 2004. It was inaugurated by Minister Censu Galea whose portfolio includes competitiveness. He said that Malta like other small states is very heavily dependent on imports and exports and therefore its competitiveness is of paramount importance.

The workshop was attended by senior officials and experts from different Commonwealth countries. At the end of the workshop the

participants approved a final statement with recommendations as to how small states can maximise their competitiveness potential. The workshop was convened by Professor Lino Briguglio who is also one of the editors of the book which have been launched during the workshop entitled 'Competitiveness Strategies for Small States'.



A session of the International Workshop "Competitiveness in Small States"

On 20th August 2004 the Centre held its annual summer activity entitled 'An Evening with Walter Micallef u l-Hbieb'. The activity was organised by the University Gozo Centre with the participation of Mr Walter Micallef (Guitar & Vocals), Paul Camilleri (Harmonica), Renzo Spiteri (Percussion), Eric Wadge (Bass), Jes Psaila (Acoustic Guitar), Albert Grazia (Accordion) and coordinated by Mr Steve Borg. The concert was received with great enthusiasm by the big audience present. Among the guests were the Hon. Giovanna Debono and Professor Lino Briguglio, Director of the Centre.



Walter Micallef flanked with other members of his group, performing live one of his songs during "An Evening with Walter Micallef u l-Hbieb" held at the University Gozo Centre on 20th August 2004.

On 22 November 2004, nine students were awarded with a Diploma in Commerce after having successfully completed the course offered at the University Gozo Centre between October 2002 and July 2004. The graduation ceremony was held at the University of Malta.

In October 2004 the University of Malta through a Sixth Framework Project called "Twister" offered for the first time a Diploma in IT course simultaneously in Malta and in Gozo. The course is run by the Board of Studies for IT and students can attend classes simultaneously at the Department of Communications and Computer Engineering at the Tal-Qroqq campus and at the University Gozo Centre in Xewkija. The system is based on the virtual classroom concept where one lecturer in one location will conduct lectures for two classes using IP technology. The equipment used is basically that of video conferencing adapted for interactive simultaneous classes where the students can ask questions and interact with the lecturer and with each other, in both locations at the same time. The bandwidth is being obtained via a new satellite connection provided from EUTELSAT, one of the consortium partners.

The launching of the system took place on Wednesday 27 October at the two sites being used for the course namely the Tal-Qroqq Campus (Engineering Building) and the University Gozo Centre. Present for the occasion were Prof. Roger Ellul Micallef, University Rector, the Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, Prof Lino Briguglio, director of the University Gozo Centre, Dr Hector Fenech, manager at EUTELSAT, and Prof. Paul Micallef, Dean of Engineering.

Prof. Roger Ellul Micallef said that this is a unique opportunity for the University of Malta and he was sure that this system will open new prospects in the future. He thanked Prof. Paul Micallef and Prof Lino Briguglio for their work in making this idea a reality.

The Minister for Gozo, Hon. Giovanna Debono, who was also present for the occasion, stated that she is very happy that Gozo has become more connected to the University. She thanked the University for the invaluable support it was giving to Gozitan society.



Inauguration of the IT Distance Learning Project. From Left: Dr Hector Fenech, manager at EUTELSAT, Professor Lino Briguglio, Director University Gozo Centre, Hon Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo and Professor Paul Micallef, coordinator of the project.

On 11 December, the 'Award of Certificates' event was held at the University Gozo Centre. The Hon. Giovanna Debono, distributed certificates to 150 candidates who were eligible after they had followed courses at the University Gozo Centre during 2004.

Minister Debono, commenting on the activities of the Gozo Centre, said that the partnership between the Ministry for Gozo and the University Gozo Centre is bearing fruit. She said that the large number of participants attending courses at the University Gozo Centre is a clear evidence that the Centre is making a very important contribution to Gozitan society. In his speech, Professor Lino Briguglio, who presided over the event, said that he was very pleased that so many students are seeing the need for further training and attending the courses offered by the Centre. This already shows that the Centre is filling a very important void. He thanked the Minister for Gozo and the University authorities for their continuous support of the Centre.



Students who attended short courses in Gozo during the "Award of Certificate" event.