

# Public Health Leadership and Governance in Small States

## ***Implementing Health 2020***

WHO Andorra meeting July 2015

N Azzopardi-Muscat, R Pace, L Briguglio

Islands and Small States Institute

University of Malta

# Overview

- The Islands and Small States Institute
- Leadership and governance in small states
- Resilience, Adaptability, Innovation
- Public health leadership
- Building policy capacity in small states

# Islands and Small States Institute



UNIVERSITY OF MALTA  
*L-Università ta' Malta*

Natasha Azzopardi Muscat | Sign Out



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## Islands & Small States Institute

[UoM HOMEPAGE](#)

- ▶ MA ISSS Course
- ▶ Research
- ▶ Publications
- ▶ Sustainable Development
- ▶ Diploma in Gozo Studies
- ▶ Diploma in Lace Studies
- ▶ Student Affairs (MA ISSS)
- ▶ SSNED
- ▶ Past Events
- ▶ Staff



### Choose a COURSE

Undergraduate  GO

### Welcome to the website of the Islands & Small States Institute.

The Islands & Small States Institute promotes research and training on economic, social, cultural, ecological and geographical aspects of islands and small states. It also offers postgraduate courses on islands and small states studies.

Based at the University of Malta, the institute evolved from the Islands and Small States Programme which had been set up in 1989 at the Foundation for International Studies, Valletta. In 1993, the Programme was restructured as an Institute with the principal aim of enabling the organisation to offer academic courses. [\[PDF\]](#)

### Notices

#### **Annual Report**

The Islands and Small States Institute Annual Report



News on Campus

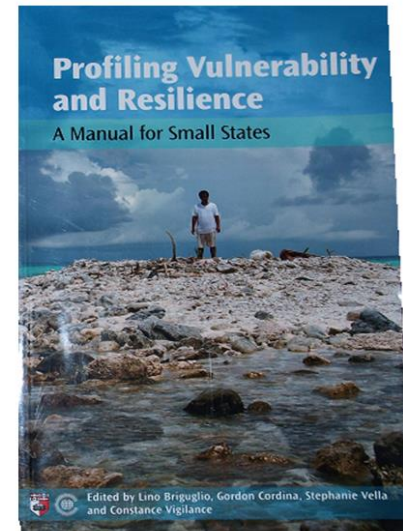
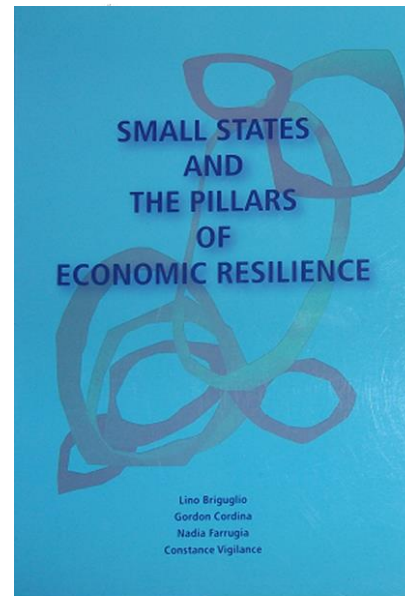
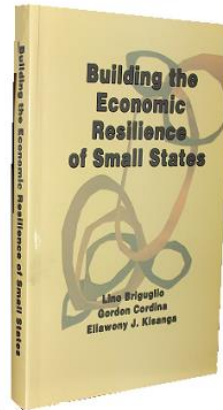
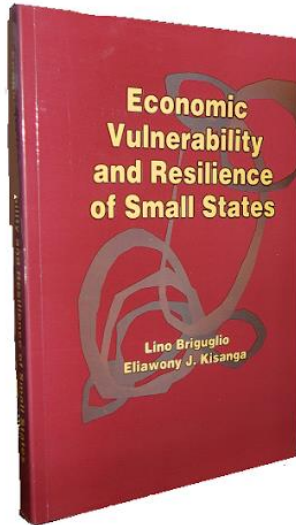
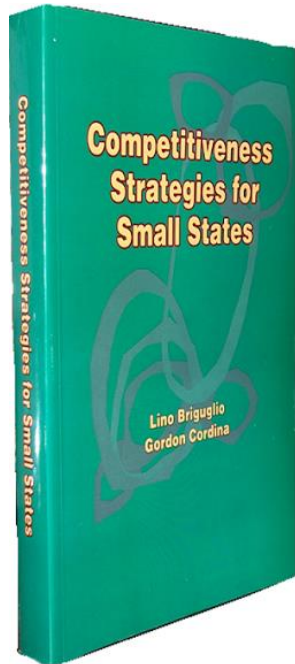


Campus Map

# Research Profile

- Economics
- Environment and Climate Change
- Vulnerability /Resilience Index
- Commonwealth
- World Bank

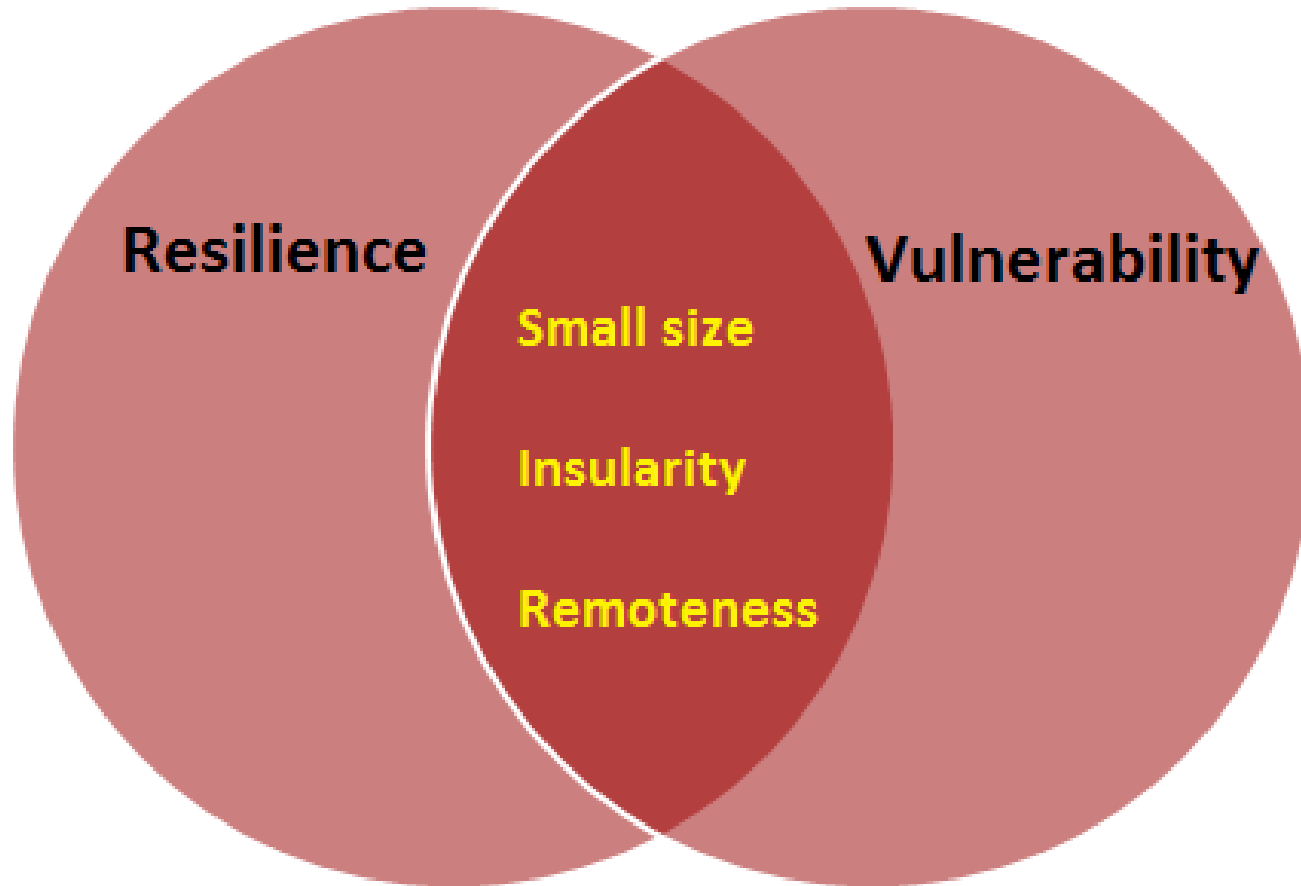
# ISSI Publications



# Vulnerability/ Resilience

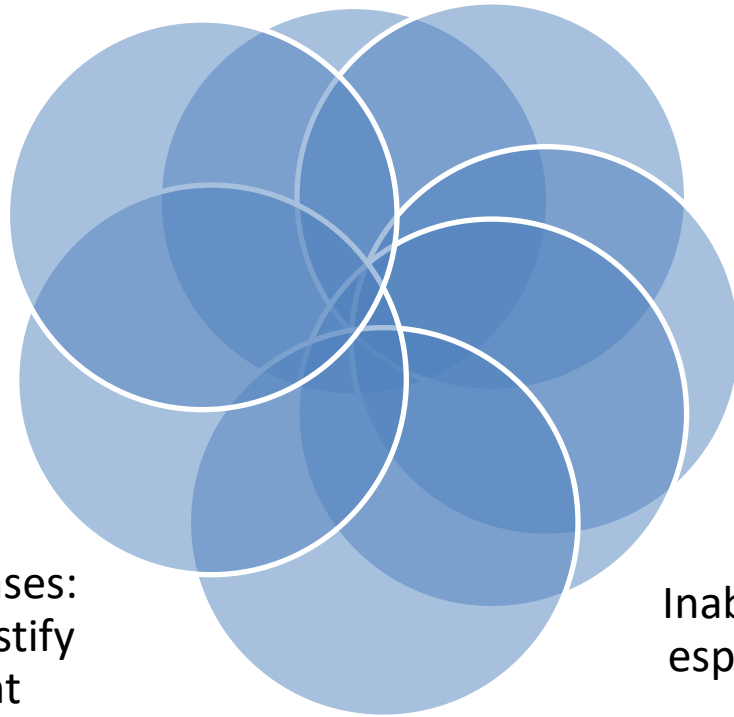
- Small states must overcome (inherent) vulnerabilities
  - Size, location, power asymmetry, economic shocks
  - Capacity constraints
- Resilience building (man-made)
  - Strong governance, responsiveness, social capital, corporatism, strategic organisation

# Health Systems



# Small Population

Limited contributor pool  
in sharing pop. resources  
(gene types, organs)



Quality issues  
associated with low  
throughput

Deskilling

Difficulties with rare diseases:  
not enough patients to justify  
availability of treatment

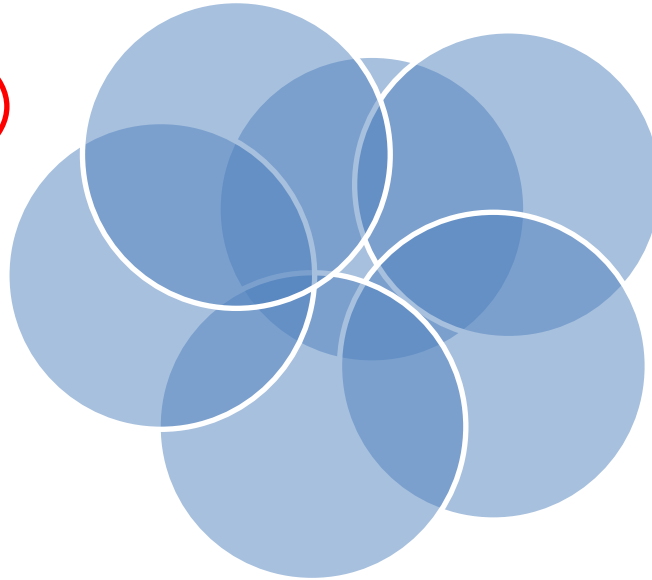
Inability to offer all services  
esp. highly specialised care



# Small Economy

Administrative  
burden of regulation

High or inefficient  
unit costs of  
production



Lack of competition  
between providers

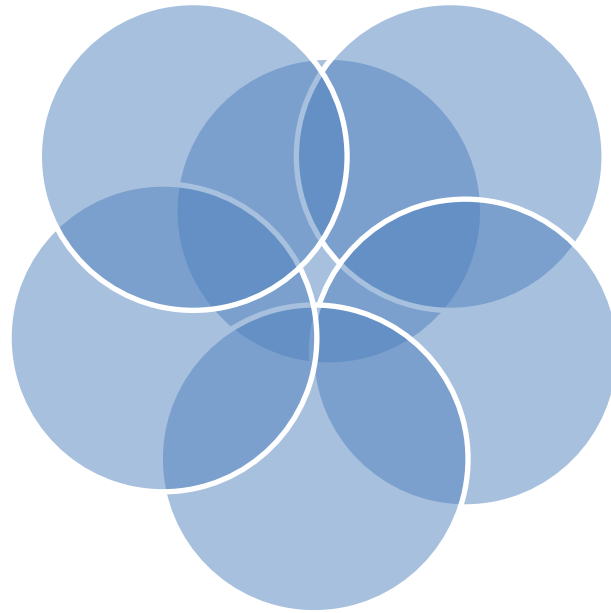
Lack of interest by  
industry to place  
medical goods on  
the market

High prices for  
medicines and medical  
supplies due to small  
volumes of consumption

# 'Insularity'

Difficulty  
segregating roles in  
the health system

Lack of peer review  
available at national  
level



Access to  
innovation may be  
delayed

Lack of mobility -  
stagnation

Quality issues may  
remain unnoticed

# Policy capacity

- Concept of action competence
  - Internal capacity
  - External capacity

Empirical evidence (Briguglio et. al.)

# Resilience building

# Small states in the International Arena

- Passive adopters
- Industrious agenda setters
- Role of small states as
  - Norm entrepreneurs
  - Mediators
  - Honest brokers

# Norm entrepreneurs

- Unlikely to have significant vested interests in large multinational corporations
- Viewed as neutral promoters of public health values
- Models for inter-sectoral cooperation

# Public health leadership competences

- Systems thinking
- Political leadership
- Organisational learning and development
- Collaborative interdisciplinary leadership
- Leadership and communication
- Leading change
- Emotional intelligence
- Ethics and professionalism



# Perspectives on public health leadership in small states

- Preliminary results from qualitative study conducted in Malta in 2014
- In depth interviews with 33 stakeholders
  - Public health leaders, clinicians, politicians, academics, civil society

# Strengths & Opportunities

- Social ecology (everyone knows everyone)
- ‘Helicopter’ view
- Direct access to politicians
- Short distance between research, policy and practice

# Whole of government / whole of society approach

- Corporatism (Katzenstein)
  - Joint up government and society
- We should expect that this approach would be easier to implement in small countries

# Weaknesses threats

- Lack of strong and independent public health institutions
- Administrative and regulatory burden
- Lack of implementation capacity
- Conflicts of interest
- Conditioned by alliances with larger states
- Lack of voice and capacity in civil society – checks and balances missing

# Resulting effect

- Need to prioritise effort and resources
  - Limited possibility to push forward several initiatives at the same time
  - Focus on mandatory initiatives

# Effective strategies

- Building external review and support
  - To ensure quality
- High level of participation in European networks and organisations
- Honest and candid approach to implementation early on in negotiations