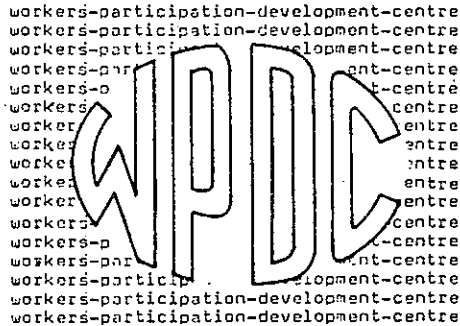


THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
WORKERS' PARTICIPATION
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE



FIRST ANNUAL REPORT
(March - December 1981)

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INTRODUCTION

The Workers' Participation Development Centre (WPDC) was established at The University of Malta by a Council decision on the 19th March 1981. This initiative was taken in response to a need felt by the Government, trade unionists, researchers and others in order to support, promote and coordinate the process of workers' participation within important sectors of the Maltese economy.²

Workers' participation occupies an important place in the *Malta Development Plan 1981-85* and the specific role of the WPDC is also indicated in that document.³ It is envisaged that workers' participation may provide an alternative strategy for national development through the social and economic advancement of Workers within undertakings and within society as a whole. Following its introduction by the Government in 1971, in response to the economic and industrial problems besetting Malta Drydocks, the principle of workers' participation is now accepted by everyone in Malta.⁴ And as the participatory process gathers international momentum, the WPDC keeps abreast of such developments particularly in other developing countries.

¹This first report of the WPDC covers the period of time from its establishment to December 1981. However, it also includes occasional references to activities which preceded and followed that period. An abridged version of this report appears in the Annual Report of The University of Malta, 1981 which has recently been submitted to Parliament.

²In his address to a Workshop held at the University on the Further Development of Workers' Participation in Malta in June 1980, the Minister of Education publicly voiced his support for setting up such a Centre at the University. The participants on that occasion included the GWU, Drydocks, the M.D.C., the CMTU and the Ministry of Development.

³Development Plan for Malta 1981-85. Valletta: OPM 1981 p.177.

⁴Workers' Participation as an issue in the 1981 General Elections. WPDC 1982.

The immediate objectives of the WPDC are the following:

- (1) *Education*: to organise educational programmes and to promote the re-structuring of educational structures, contents and technology at all levels in order to prepare students and workers for the responsibilities of participation.
- (2) *Consultancy*: to provide consultancy services wherever participation is being implemented and to make suggestions concerning policy making.
- (3) *Research*: to conduct research on the Maltese participatory experiences and to co-operate with other researchers and institutions elsewhere. For this purpose the WPDC will also act as a clearing house for information on the participatory process in Malta and abroad.

STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION OF THE WPDC

The WPDC forms an integral part of the University and helps to integrate that institution into the world of work. Its office is currently located within the Faculty of Management Studies while it reports directly to the Rector and the University Council.

The activities organised by the WPDC are conducted by some members of the academic staff who are specialised in industrial sociology, labour economics and public administration. These are also assisted by others.

This nucleus is directed by an organizing committee (The WPDC Committee) drawn from key persons in participatory enterprises, government departments, the Malta Development Corporation, the Confederation of Trade Unions and other strategic areas. The role of the Committee is that of linking the WPDC directly with the actual field of workers' participation, through collective planning and supporting of its activities. During 1981 the Committee held regular meetings according to the WPDC Statutes.

The WPDC Committee is composed as follows:

- Dr E.L. Zammit (Chairman, The University of Malta)
- Mr G. Agius (General Workers Union)
- Mr A. Busuttil (General Workers Union)
- Mr J. Buttigieg (Malta Drydocks Corporation)
- Dr E.E. Camilleri (Finance Officer, The University of Malta)
- Mr D. Darmanin (A/Head, Faculty of Management Studies, The University of Malta)
- Dr G. Kester (Institute of Social Studies, The Hague)
- Mr J. Magro (Malta Development Corporation)
- Dr E.J. Scicluna (Head, Division of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Studies, The University of Malta)

Mr F. Selvatico (Malta Drydocks Corporation)
Mr S. Spiteri (Confederation of Trade Unions)

The WPDC is financed by the University and by the other institutions represented on its Committee. These funds are supplemented by voluntary contributions made by outside sponsors, notably, at present, the Bank of Valletta Ltd. and Mid-Med Bank Ltd.⁵

ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS

In accordance with its statute, the WPDC Committee undertook the following educational, research and other initiatives:

- (1) A five week seminar entitled 'The Public Sector into the 1980's' for management of public and parastatal enterprises. This Seminar was organised jointly by the WPDC and the Parastatal Industries Sector of the MDC.
- (2) A series of three-month courses entitled 'The Maltese Worker at Work and in Society' aimed at introducing workers to the fundamental concepts in economics, sociology, law and political science. One of the aims of these courses is to lay the foundations for more advanced and specialised courses later on. These courses are organized under the auspices of the University Extension Studies Programme. Two of these courses were held during 1981 with a total of 70 workers attending.⁶

Following each of these courses, the participants were presented with a questionnaire which sought their views on the conduct of the course and their suggestions for improvement. A report was then drawn based on these views. The enthusiastic response of the workers for these activities demonstrate their usefulness. A normal registration fee of £M2 per person is normally required to help partly offset the expenses and also to symbolise the participants' commitment. In most cases these fees have been met by the GWU, the Drydocks and the CMTU for their respective members who register for these courses.⁷

- (3) Contact and collaboration were established with various international organizations having similar aims and objectives. In

⁵ A detailed breakdown of income and expenditure incurred by the WPDC during 1981 is attached to this Report as Annex I.

⁶ Another series of courses in Applied Social Science has been started in 1982 on location at Malta Drydocks. While having the same aims as the previous ones, these courses are tailored to meet the specific needs of that self-managed enterprise.

⁷ As these courses were subsidised by the Extension Studies Board, the registration fees were deposited in that fund.

this context members of the WPDC Committee were invited to participate and present papers at:

- i. Working Conference on Transition to Workers' Self-Management in Industry as a Strategy for change in Developing Countries, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands, May 14-15, 1981.
 - ii. International Conference on Workers' Self-Management and Participation organized by the Indian Institute of Management and ICPE in New Delhi, India, November 2-4, 1981.
 - iii. As the Maltese experience in workers' participation particularly at the Drydocks, merits the attention of other developing countries the WPDC is actively collaborating in the international research project entitled 'Workers' Self-Management and Participation in Decision Making as a Factor of Social Change and Economic Progress in Developing Countries' which is organized by ICPE (International Centre for Public Enterprises) Ljubljana, Yugoslavia.
- (4) The following publications were made by members of the WPDC and others:
- i. Transition to Workers Self-Management - The Malta Experience ISS, The Hague 1981. An updated edition of this book is currently in preparation.
 - ii. Self-Management as a Strategy for Change. Lettre du Cicra, (6) Paris Juin 1981 (pp. 26-29).
 - iii. Industrial Democracy and Development - The Experience of Malta ISS, The Hague, 1981 (pp. 25-30).
 - iv. Management into the 1980's. A joint WPDC/MDC publication, 1981).
 - v. An abridged version in Maltese of Dr Kester's book: Transition to Workers' Self-Management (1980) is currently in preparation. This version is intended for use in the workers' courses.

WPDC ASSOCIATION

Associated members of the WPDC are kept informed regularly about WPDC activities through the *WPDC Newsletter* and other publications. These include workers' educational courses, study groups, research and consultancy services.

Membership is open to 'all those interested in promoting workers' participation'. These tend to be those who participated in the WPDC courses. A nominal membership fee of £M1 per annum is required. This project began functioning during 1982.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS: WPDC STAFF AND RESOURCES

It can be noted with satisfaction that during these first nine months under review the WPDC has been successfully launched and has made an encouraging start to some of its basic activities. These mainly consisted of workers' educational courses and some research activities. However, even more needs to be done in these directions - particularly if a sound scientific basis is to be laid for actual assistance to those involved in the participatory process. It should be recognized that the modest progress achieved so far needs to be consolidated as soon as possible. New and more imaginative initiatives need to be undertaken if the WPDC is to have a real impact in line with its objectives. At the same time it should be borne in mind that 'one should learn to walk before one starts running'. Therefore, in order to maintain a constant rate of progress a regular input from abroad remains essential for the foreseeable future. In this context the collaboration established with ISS (The Hague) and ICPE (Ljubljana) are particularly relevant and need to be further developed. Meanwhile, it cannot be emphasized enough that all the activities, functions and work to be done call for a major allocation of resources both in terms of manpower and in terms of material support. It has been observed by Dr G. Kester, on his recent 'consultation visit' that the present manpower base of the WPDC is too narrow: 'Most persons associated with the Centre in one way or another can only devote a minor part of time to it'. He strongly expressed the opinion that there was need of more staff to enable the Centre to fulfill better its aims and activities.

What seems also extremely important is to mobilize at the University or in the educational system in general, persons who have an interest in the subject. Very encouraging results were already obtained by inviting staff members from various faculties to play a role in the presently run courses at the Centre. One could similarly invite staff members in various faculties to re-think the content of the teaching they offer and their text-books thus taking into account the new type of society Malta is presently willing to build. Not only should one think of the University, but also perhaps the Education Department, enterprises, or persons engaged in the newspapers, television and radio.

The full-time research assistant who worked with the WPDC during 1981 has had to give up this work in order to undergo post-graduate studies abroad. And it was not possible to recruit a replacement due to the current 'ban on employment' on University staff vacancies. This situation may soon be remedied through the

secondment of a civil servant who is currently a student worker. Yet this may only be a temporary solution. Meantime, another student worker sponsored by the Drydocks has been seconded to the WPDC for two days a week - till July 1982 when this person returns to his study phase. And a graduate teacher has been seconded by the Education Department to assist in the coordination of WPDC courses for a maximum of three afternoons per week. Naturally such assistance is welcomed and appreciated. However, it is now necessary to look for longer term solutions to the manpower problem if the WPDC is to develop further.

ANNEX I

FINANCIAL EXPENDITURE INCURRED DURING 1981

(Listed here are the expenses originating from University sources)

<i>Salaries</i>	£M2092.38,0
(Research Assistants)	
(Secretarial Assistance)	
<i>Education</i>	508.78,0
(Two courses in the series 'The Maltese Worker at Work and in Society' concluded in January 1982)	
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	269.44,2
(Includes journals, printing, telephone calls, newspapers and stationery)	
	<hr/> £M2870.60,2 <hr/>

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM NON-UNIVERSITY SPONSORS DURING 1981

G.W.U.	£M1000
Malta Drydocks	£M1000
Bank of Valletta	£M 500
Mid-Med Bank	£M 500
M.D.C.	£M 450
C.M.T.U.	£M 200
TOTAL	<hr/> £M3650 <hr/>

NOTES

1. The above contributions are earmarked for the years 1981-82.
2. As University sources of funding were made available (notably, through *ad hoc* applications to the Extension Studies Board for the workers' educational courses), only £M39.24 for additional Secretarial assistance were utilized from the above contributions during 1981. The remaining balance was subsequently transferred to the 'Reserve Fund' for use by the WPDC in successive years.
3. There was also an additional income of £M136 from the registration fees for the two workers' educational courses listed above. This amount was transferred to the Finance Department of the University and used to partly offset the subsidy required from the Extension Studies Board for running these courses.