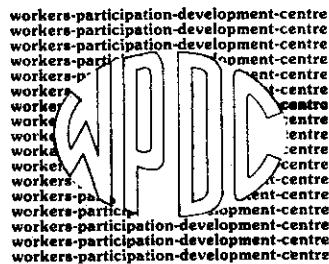


THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

WORKERS' PARTICIPATION  
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE



Fifth Annual Report  
1985

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Malta University Press  
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## CONTENTS

1. **Introduction**
- 1.1 The WPDC Committee
2. **Worker Education**
- 2.1 Diploma Course in Labour Studies
- 2.2 Study Visit on Yugoslav Self-Management
- 2.3 Short Courses
- 2.4 Seminars
- 2.5 Radio Programmes
3. **Research, Consultancy & International Exchanges**
- 3.1 Participation in International Research Project
- 3.2 Study Visit by Austrian Trade Unionists
- 3.3 Proposals as Amendments to Commercial Partnerships Act
- 3.4 Award of a Fellowship
- 3.5 Exchanges with the Institute of Social Studies (The Hague)
- 3.6 ICPE Management Consultants' Visit (OPTIMA)
- 3.7 International Contacts
4. **Publications and Other Activities**
- 4.1 Reports and Publications
- 4.2 Other Activities
5. **Conclusion**

**Annexe - Financial Statement**

## 1. Introduction

The Workers' Participation Development Centre (WPDC) of the University of Malta was set up in 1981 as a bridging agency between the University and the world of work. It operates within the area of industrial relations, trade unionism and labour studies and promotes the goal of workers' participation within the Maltese economy and society at large.

The theory of workers' participation provides both a goal and a strategy for development which gives concrete expression to the process of democratisation of workers' rights and duties. It represents one of the best examples of how a theory can coincide fully with the reality it sets out to depict. Thus it also constitutes a working method of national development made possible through the economic emancipation of working men and women. For a small, developing nation like Malta seeking to reach a level of self reliance, such a process may make an effective contribution towards national self-identity.

The principle of workers' participation is now accepted by the major social and political forces in Malta. Nevertheless its implementation requires proper investment and constant monitoring.

In pursuance of these aims the Workers' Participation Development Centre has deeply involved itself in the field of worker education and has undertaken consultancy services, research and publication.

The issues of trade unionism, labour and development as well as the practice and capacity of workers to participate in undertakings featured prominently in the educational programmes organised by the Centre. This type of education is looked upon as an investment for the future leaders of the Maltese workers at all levels. Apart from its instrumental value this type of education contributes positively to the realization of the ideal of lifelong education in the specialized branch of adult education.

In its consultancy, research and publication services the Centre exchanges views and keeps contact with various institutions and personalities concerned with workers' participation. This has helped the Centre to adopt a more professional approach in identifying problems as well as developing diagnostic skills and keeping abreast of international developments in this field.

## 1.1 The WPDC Committee

During 1985, the WPDC carried out its activities under the direction of its organising committee. The committee was composed as follows:

Dr E.L. Zammit	Chairman
Mr G. Agius	General Workers Union <sup>1</sup>
Mr A. Busuttil	General Workers' Union <sup>2</sup>
Mr S. Attard	Malta Drydocks
Mr J. Camilleri	Malta Drydocks
Prof. D. Darmanin	Faculty of Management Studies
Dr G. Kester	Institute of Social Studies, The Hague
Mr J. Magro	Malta Development Corporation
Prof. E.J. Scicluna	Faculty of Management Studies
Mr S. Spiteri	Confederation of Trade Unions
Mr G. Baldacchino	Secretary <sup>3</sup>

The Committee held its meetings regularly in accordance with the statutes. The minutes of each meeting were kept and approved at the beginning of each successive meeting. During these meetings various proposals for activities were made, discussed and decided upon as well as matters relating to the organisation of the WPDC. All activities were carried out with the cooperation of the organisations represented on the Committee.

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1. Due to the retirement of Mr George Agius from the G.W.U., Mr Alfred Vella was nominated to represent the G.W.U. on the WPDC Committee.
2. Mr S. Attard was nominated by the Drydocks Council to replace Mr J. Buttigieg on the WPDC Committee.
3. Mr S. Rizzo was nominated Secretary to the WPDC Committee following the award of a fellowship for higher studies by the Dutch Government to Mr G. Baldacchino.

## 2. **Worker Education**

### 2.1 Diploma Course in Labour Studies

The three year Diploma Course in Applied Social Studies specialising in Labour Studies, organised in collaboration with the Faculty of Management Studies, entered its fourth and fifth semesters. The units covered in this course during 1985 were Economics and Sociology of Workers' Participation, Leadership, Public Speaking and Communication, and Participatory Management, Accounting and Finance.

As part of the study programme, participants went on a week's study visit to Yugoslavia following a UNESCO travel grant in order to experience the system of self-management in that country (see item 2.2 below), sponsored by UNESCO, Malta Drydocks and the University.

### 2.2 Study Visit on Yugoslav Self-Management

Following the award of a travel bursary by UNESCO for the training of worker leaders and trade union activists, the 22 Maltese participants in the diploma course in Labour Studies went on a week study visit (April 8 to 15, 1985) to Yugoslavia in order to experience the self-management system as practised in that country.

The study programme for the visit was organised by the Yugoslav Centre for the Theory and Practice of Self Management Edvard Kardelj (YCTPS) and the International Center for Public Enterprises in Developing Countries (ICPE) both located at Ljubljana and with whom the WPDC has had long standing contacts. These acted as hosts to the Maltese group. As part of their study programme the students visited a number of participatory enterprises including a publishing house, an engineering instruments factory and a shipyard at Rijeka. Lectures were delivered by leading Yugoslav professors.

An evaluation exercise was made by the participants on their arrival in Malta and the report was sent to UNESCO for perusal. In this evaluation exercise instructive comments were made about the strong unifying factor of self-management, the decentralisation of power and decision making, the intricate network of vertical and horizontal structures and the social objectives of self management. The participants' impressions about the social and economic implications of sustaining non viable sectors of economy, the organisation of the industrial enterprises, the trade unions and the workers' education system were also elaborated upon.

This study visit proved to be a profound educational

experience as it helped the group to identify key problems in the development and implementation of a system of self-management. The international economic situation, the cultural heterogeneity of the country, the problems caused by the present recession were not only discussed but also seen and observed in practice.

### 2.3 Short Courses

The Centre has adopted a policy of organising short intensive courses intended specifically for all categories of workers. Such courses are designed to familiarise workers with the fundamental concepts of social science. The aims of these courses are to promote the workers' understandings of the workings of society and to enhance their personal and cultural experiences.

#### (i) The Maltese Worker at Work and in Society

The fifth course in this series was held from February to June, 1985. There were 32 participants who attended this course which consisted of 26 lectures and discussions of 2 hours each divided into five sections: Sociology, Economics, Psychology, Law and Political Science. The number of participants included 33% manual workers which was an improvement over other courses in this series.

From the responses to questionnaires distributed to the course participants anonymously there was a consensus about the validity of the course. In their favourable comments the participants stated this course enhanced their educational backgrounds and enriched their experiences. Several expressed their willingness to pursue more advanced courses in future.

#### (ii) Course on Cooperatives

In collaboration with the Cooperatives Board of the Ministry of Agriculture the WPDC organised a one full-time course on cooperatives for students attending the Danny Cremona School of Agriculture. The course aimed at imparting to the students information concerning the setting up of an agricultural cooperative. It was envisaged as the first venture in cooperative education and other courses are planned to be held subsequently. The promotion of workers' cooperatives falls in line with the objectives of the Centre since cooperatives are conceived to be enterprises run on self-management principles. The topics covered during this course included:

- Historical Background of Cooperatives

- Group Dynamics
- The Economic and Marketing Aspects of Agricultural Cooperatives
- Committee Procedures
- Setting Up a Cooperative.

At the end of the course the participants were awarded a certificate of attendance by the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

#### 2.4 Seminars

The seminars organised during 1985 were the following:

(i) A one-day seminar on "Industrial Psychology was held at the Concorde Hotel Bugibba on February 2, 1985. The seminar was organised as a conclusion to the study unit on this subject offered to the diploma course students during the third semester.

(ii) A one day seminar entitled The Role of Young Workers at the Drydocks was held at the University of Malta on 24 April 1985. This seminar which was attended by a group of 90 ex-apprentices, was organised in conjunction with the Education Department of the G.W.U. and Young Drydocks Workers' Section. During this seminar the youths had the opportunity of discussing the system of self management practised at the Drydocks and of the workers' reactions to this system. At the end of the seminar the Rector of the University of Malta presented the Journeyman's certificate to the apprentices.

(iii) A half-day seminar as a conclusion to the course The Maltese Worker at Work and in Society (see 2.3) was held at the Mellieha Bay Hotel on 15 June 1985. During the seminar the participants did an evaluative exercise of the course and took part in a discussion on Workers' Participation as a strategy for National development. The participants were presented with certificates of attendance by the University Rectors' Delegate.

(iv) A series of weekly educational seminars was organised at the Drydocks in order to assist the further development of workers' participation at this large, self-managed enterprise. These seminars were earmarked for Union shop stewards and delegates, Workers Committee members and lower management. These were organised with the collaboration of Drydocks Workers attending the diploma course.

Each seminar consisted of a brief introduction by a WPDC staff member followed by a tape and slide feature on

workers' attitudes, opinions and beliefs about the system of workers' participation. A discussion followed chaired by the Drydocks' workers themselves. The worker-students acted as facilitators and rapporteurs of the proceedings of these seminars. The reports and suggestions are regularly brought to the attention of the Drydocks' Council.

## 2.5 Radio Programmes

During the year under review, the WPDC continued presentation of another series of short programmes on the local Radio/Cable Radio Network of Xandir Malta. This series of weekly programmes was entitled From the World of Work and complemented the previous series broadcast in 1984: The Transition to Workers' Participation

This series of programmes aimed at equipping the listeners with a better understanding of the world of work with reference to the historical events that contributed towards workers' emancipation.

The programmes were broadcast between April and June 1985. The themes covered during these programmes were the following:

- (i) The Effects of the Industrial Revolution
- (ii) Work in Developing Countries
- (iii) Employment and the Maltese Economy
- (iv) Trade Unionism
- (v) Industrial Law
- (vi) Unemployment - its social aspects
- (vii) Emigration
- (viii) Satisfaction at Work
- (ix) Work in the Computer Age
- (x) Development of Participatory Values
- (xi) Participation at the Place of Work - Malta Drydocks
- (xii) Cooperatives: Local and Foreign
- (xiii) Education and Work

Also during 1985, staff members of the WPDC participated in a number of educational programmes on the local television network in which they expounded on the principles of work, trade unionism, participation and cooperativism.

### 3. Research, Consultancy & International Exchanges

#### 3.1 Participation in International Research Project

The WPDC continued to play an active part in the international research project Workers' Self-Management and Participation in Decision Making as a Factor for Social Change and Economic Progress in Developing Countries which is coordinated by the International Center for Public Enterprises (ICPE) Ljubljana, Yugoslavia. This project has now reached its third phase. A WPDC representative took part in a two-week international conference held in Yugoslavia in November 1985 and presented a case study dealing with the recent developments in the field of workers' participation in Malta.

The WPDC has been commissioned by ICPE to prepare a partial monograph on workers' education for participation as input to the comparative monograph which will analyse the overall results of the project (Phase I and II) in light of the theoretical and practical experiences.

#### 3.2 Study Visit by Austrian Trade Unionists

The WPDC hosted a group of 40 Austrian trade unionists who were on a study visit, to a seminar at the University of Malta. On this occasion the Austrian trade unionists were briefed on the objectives and activities of the WPDC in the field of workers' education, consultancy, publications and research on workers' participation and self-management.

The Austrian group came from "Solidaritat Reisendienst" a social academy for trade union education in Vienna. The group was led by Professor Erwin Weissel, director of the Academy and professor at the University of Vienna.

#### 3.3 Proposals as Amendments to Commercial Partnerships

##### Act

A delegation of the WPDC Committee submitted a number of proposals to the authorities concerned for consideration as amendments to the Commercial Partnership Act. The Members of this delegation were:

Dr E.L. Zammit, Professor J. Micallef,  
Dr G. Kester and Prof. D. Darmanin

#### 3.4 Award of a Fellowship

The WPDC research assistant was awarded a Dutch Government fellowship in order to undertake a 15 month study

course leading to a M.A. degree in Labour and Development studies.

### 3.5 Exchanges with the Institute of Social Studies (The Hague)

In summer of 1985 Dr Gerard Kester of the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague visited Malta to present his research report concerning the current state of participatory system at Malta Drydocks. This report was based on fieldwork carried out during 1984. Meetings were held with Shop Stewards, Works Committee members, the Drydocks Council, Trade Union Executives and top and middle management.

This research was undertaken as a joint activity with the Institute of Social Studies (The Hague).

The findings of this report will be used as a basis for the conclusion of a study group set up by the GWU Drydocks Section in order to review the current state of workers' participation at the Drydocks. This study group presided by the WPDC Chairman, has been set up in 1984 and includes representatives of MDD Council, GWU sections and WPDC.

The WPDC Chairman was a visiting lecturer at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Holland for a one-month period during which he contributed to the M.A 'Labour and Development' programme of the Institute.

### 3.6 ICPE Management Consultants Visit (OPTIMA)\*

A team of management consultants from the International Center for Public Enterprises (ICPE) in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia visited Malta in December 1985 at the invitation of the Malta Development Corporation, the Central Board of Cooperatives and the Workers' Participation Development Centre of the University in order to carry out an Optima programme.

This consultancy exercise was conducted at the Malta Drydocks and two cooperatives with the aim of developing a performance improvement approach by increasing the self reliance of managers in solving encountered problems and at assisting the professional staff in developing diagnostic skills. The team's work was first directed at identifying particular problem areas or constraints that may inhibit growth. These variables are very often perceived as being beyond the controls of the enterprise itself.

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\*Optimal Performance through Internal Management Action

The exercise included wide varying interviews with key members involved in the decision making of the enterprise as well as senior staff members and trade union representatives. Moreover in order to complement the inside information, the team also exchanged views with several Government Ministries and outside institutions.

As a conclusion to this programme two conferences were held, one at the premises of the Central Cooperative Board and the other one at the University of Malta. During these conferences detailed reports of these macro-economic exercises were presented to the participants for discussion and appraisal. The report of this study will be published by ICPE.

### 3.7 International Contacts

Active links were also maintained by the WPDC with various organizations abroad. Such links are mutually beneficial and help to improve the quality of the WPDC's resources and at the same time keep it abreast of international developments in the field of industrial democracy.

- Amalgamated Metals Foundry and Shipwrights Union  
(AMFSU) N.S.W. Australia
- Association of Workplace Democracy (AWD) - Washington DC, USA
- Centre International de Coordination de Recherches sur Autogestion (ICRA) - Paris, France
- Centre for Research into Industrial Democracy - Participation (CRIDP) University of Glasgow, Scotland
- Centre for the Study of Industrial Democracy and Self-Management, University of Haifa, Israel
- Consejo Latino Americano y del Caribe para la Autogestion (CLA) - Lima, Peru
- European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) Brussels, Belgium
- Greater London Enterprise Board (GLEB) London, U.K.
- Industrial Cooperative Association (ICA)
  - Massachusetts, USA
- International Association of Quality Circles (IAQC)
  - Oklahoma, USA
- International Industrial Relations Association (IIRA)
  - Geneve, Switzerland
- Institute for Democratic Economic Alternative (IDEA)
  - New Jersey, USA
- Institute of Workers' Control, Nottingham, UK
- Labour Studies Centre - Institute of Labour and Industrial Relations, University of Michigan, USA
- Trade Union Institute Research & Education Group (TUIREG) Oxford, UK
- The Plunkett Foundation for Cooperative Studies  
Oxford, UK

The National Center for Employee Ownership (NCEO), Virginia, USA  
UNESCO Literacy, Adult Education & Rural Development  
Division, Paris, France  
Yugoslav Center for the Theory & Practice of Self-  
Management Edvard Kardelj, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia.

Dr Philip Beaumont from the Centre for Research into Industrial Democracy and Participation (CRIDP) University of Glasgow paid a visit to the WPDC Office during November.

#### 4. Publications and Other Activities

##### 4.1 Reports and Publications

The following publications and reports were made by WPDC staff members during 1985:

- (a) WPDC Fourth Annual Report - A descriptive sketch of the WPDC activities during 1984
- (b) The WPDC Newsletter - Another issue was published during 1985 recording the various events in the field of industrial relations as well as the work of the Centre.
- (c) Il-Koperattivi - A 35 page booklet which gives some information and guidelines on the setting up of a cooperative and also including some relevant sections from the Act of Cooperative Societies (1978). This book, the fourth in the series of Workers' Education, was published by the WPDC in collaboration with the Central Board of Cooperatives, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The Centre and the Board of Cooperatives intend to use this publication in order to promote the principle of cooperativism among the general public and especially among Maltese youths.
- (d) Workers' Participation - An Alternative Strategy for Socio-Economic Development - A paper presented at the International Conference on Economic Development of Small Countries organised by the Faculty of Management Studies between May 22-24, 1985
- (e) Workers' Representatives versus Workers' Representatives and Policy Recommendations... A Postscript. Two draft research papers concerning workers' participation at Malta Drydocks - published jointly with the Institute of Social Studies (The

Hague). These studies based on research carried at Malta Drydocks, are to be used as guidelines for Study Group for the submission of its recommendations (see 3.5)

- (f) Report about the UNESCO sponsored study visit on Yugoslav Self-Management by a group of Maltese worker leaders and union activists. This report was sent to UNESCO in accordance with the conditions set for the award of a travel grant (see 2.2) mimeo.
- (g) Report about the Course entitled "The Maltese Worker at Work and in Society" held between February and May 1985. This report is based on a questionnaire given to the participants at the end of the course (see 2.1) mimeo.
- (h) Report on the educational seminars held at the Malta Drydocks for Union shop stewards and delegates, Works Committee members and lower management. This report comprises the conclusions reached during the seminar discussion, the suggestions made and a general overview of the seminars [2.4 (iv)] mimeo.
- (i) Malta Drydocks - An Optima Case Study (1)  
The Cooperative Movement in Malta (Optima Case Studies 2,3 and 4). Four reports of the case studies of the Malta Drydocks and two cooperatives submitted by the Consultancy Team of ICPE as part of the Optima programme. These reports are to be published by the ICPE (3.6)

#### 4.2 Other Activities

- (a) A Tape and Slide Documentary Feature was produced by the Centre. This feature presents a brief historical background of the development of workplace democratisation at the Drydocks followed by a review of the results of the survey conducted by the Centre in 1982. During the courses organised by the WPDC this has proved to be a useful visual aid.
- (b) During 1985 the Centre continued with its work of systematic and regular monitoring of events in local industrial relations. This includes coding and filing of press cuttings and data gathered from other sources. This data is regularly published in the WPDC Newsletter, and is used by students and other researchers.

## 5. Conclusion

As in previous years, during 1985 the WPDC has continued to strive towards its objectives as formulated in its statutes. The above listed activities indicate that further progress in this direction has been achieved.

The first group of workers enrolled for the diploma course in labour studies have successfully completed the second year of their studies. This course is specifically aimed for the training of trade unionists and worker leaders in participatory enterprises. The centre also made it possible for this group of worker-students to go on a study visit to Yugoslavia following the financial help of the Malta Drydocks, the University and a travel grant by UNESCO. It is encouraging to note that these worker leaders are taking initiatives to pass on what they have learned to their fellow workers at their place of work. The links established between the Centre and the Central Board of Cooperatives were concretized this year by the joint organisation of an educational course for students of the school of Agriculture.

Another encouraging note in the year under review is the publication of the fourth book in the series of workers education. Such ventures in the field of workers' education together with another series of radio educational programmes may be considered as a positive investment in the field of workers' participation - an ideal which is upheld by society at large.

Furthermore, the work of research, consultancy and monitoring of industrial relations may also provide the necessary backing for a scientifically planned development strategy. Particularly the research work carried out in conjunction with the ISS (The Hague) and ICPE (Ljubljana, Yugoslavia) referred to in this report, were aimed at identifying problems for future social action from both a local and international perspective.

Naturally, the Centre would not have been in a position to accomplish all this work without the support of various bodies. The help forthcoming from the Ministry of Education through the secondment of a teacher with the Centre as a replacement for the research assistant who had to go abroad to further his studies went a long way towards alleviating the manpower problem - a problem which has beset the Centre throughout its five years of existence. The Centre has also during this year spared no effort to improve its limited material facilities so as to be able to embark on wider ventures in future in pursuit of its objectives.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

## Income &amp; Expenditure Account - 1985

## INCOME

University Funds	Lm 6,008
Miscellaneous	Lm 1,132 (a)
Other Income	Lm 2,609 (b)
	_____
	Lm 9,749
	_____

## EXPENDITURE

Workers' Educational Programmes	Lm 3,594 (c)
Personal Emoluments	Lm 3,807 (d)
Publications	Lm 863 (e)
Equipment and Stationery	Lm 556 (f)
Miscellaneous	Lm 103 (g)
	_____
	Lm 8,922 (h)
	_____

Surplus of Income over expenditure	Lm 826 (i)
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- (a) Represents Registration and Membership Fees (Lm 426.40); sale of books (Lm 535.65) and transferred interest (Lm 169.54)
- (b) Represents contributions by the Malta Drydocks (Lm 400) and by UNESCO (Lm 2,209.00) as study travel grant for diploma students.
- (c) Includes: lecturing fees, seminar and course expenses. Special expenditure of Lm 2,459 for study visit to Yugoslavia by diploma students sponsored by UNESCO grant; Contribution towards Optima exercises (Lm 200); Cost of visit by ISSS lecturer/consultant (Lm 222); Excludes running cost of Diploma in Labour Studies which is met out of special University vote.
- (d) Includes salaries of research and secretarial assistance, national insurance contributions and allowances.
- (e) Includes cost of printing of books in the Workers' Education Series, journal subscriptions and other purchases of literature.
- (f) Includes purchase of office equipment, audio visual teaching materials (Lm 306) and stationery (Lm 250)
- (g) Includes postage, telephones, advertisements, telexes and photocopying
- (h) All amounts rounded to nearest figure
- (i) Amount transferred to Reserve Fund. Vide WPDC First Annual Report (1981) p.7 (2)