

ISLANDS AND SMALL STATES INSTITUTE - ISSI at the University of Malta

Annual Report

Academic Year 2024/25

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Forewords

Professor Frank Bezzina - Pro-Rector, and Chair of the Islands and Small States Institute Board

The Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI) of the University of Malta (UM) during the academic year 2024/2025 continued to contribute to consolidate the aims of the University of Malta's Strategic Plan. The Institute's sustained engagement with high-level policy, exemplified by the significant contribution of its academics to international bodies like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), alongside its role as the WHO Collaborating Centre on Health, further strengthened its leadership and excellence in island and small state studies. Success in obtaining innovative research grants, such as the COMPLY project focusing on leveraging digital tools for regulatory compliance, confirmed its forward-looking research agenda.

The continued cooperation that the ISSI maintained with other centres, institutes, and departments at the UM contributed to enrich interdisciplinary collaborations, an essential and purposely planned objective for tackling the complex, multi-faceted challenges faced by islands. ISSI's Doctoral and Masters programmes both experienced sustained interest, supported by the proactive recruitment through crucial scholarship opportunities for students from Small Island Developing States. This ensures a continuous increase in the quality and global reach of its student body.

The solid foundations and key achievements laid in this period will allow the ISSI to build an even stronger future, with the objective of strengthening the overall development of students, academic staff, and the University at large.

Professor Stefano Moncada - Director

The academic year 2024/2025 represented a further period of significant growth and consolidation for the Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI) across our teaching, research, international recognition, and crucial outreach activities. Our commitment to the interdisciplinary nature of islands and small states studies was reaffirmed, not only through the continued consolidation of cooperation with various centres, institutes, departments, and schools at the UM but also through the expansion of our academic offerings, including the successful running of the Master of Arts in Islands and Small States Studies and the introduction of the specialised Award in Islands, Small States and Archipelago Studies.

The steady increase in the number of students in the Master by Research and Doctoral programmes continued, demonstrating the appeal and necessity of our specialised focus. Our capacity to attract high-calibre students from the four corners of the world was strengthened by the active recruitment efforts for the 2025/2026 intake, supported by dedicated scholarships for nationals of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). This rich diversity confirms the Institute as one of the most internationally focused entities at the University of Malta.

In terms of research and external recognition, the Institute achieved outstanding milestones. Academic staff affiliated with the ISSI sustained their contribution to the scholarly body of knowledge by publishing in reputable international peer-reviewed journals, including in our own hosted journal,

Small States & Territories. Furthermore, the appointment of ISSI academics, notably my own nomination as a Leading Author on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), provided direct evidence of the Institute's high-level policy engagement. Our role as the WHO Collaborating Centre on Health Systems and Policies in Small States also continued to anchor our policy-relevant research.

Our portfolio of cutting-edge research projects expanded significantly. The EU-funded Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) project “Heritage Ecologies (ECO-HERITAGES)” continued its impactful fieldwork and research. Crucially, the MSCA Doctoral Network project “MEDiverSEAty” became fully operational, successfully hosting and launching the two PhD positions at the ISSI, thereby strengthening our doctoral training capacity within a major international consortium. We also successfully launched the innovative COMPLY project, which explores the synergy between AI, digital governance, and regulatory resilience in island contexts.

The ISSI also consolidated further alliances with strategic partners, both locally and internationally, to expand our teaching and research breadth. We continued our strategic collaboration with the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade, supporting its critical work at the European and International level regarding the vulnerability and resilience agenda for small states.

The success of these initiatives and the continued high performance of our ongoing work are fundamentally dependent on the efforts and dedication of all who work with the ISSI. Allow me to thank our Chair, Prof. Frank Bezzina, the ISSI Administrator Ms Godianne Montebello, our research officers Dr Pedro Pombo, Dr Luca Nguyen, William Grech, Dominik Kalweit, Vincenzo de Cancellis and Justin Whittle, and all board members and colleagues who cooperate with us. Although based in other centres, institutes and departments, their contribution has been essential to continue positioning the ISSI as a world-renowned centre of excellence in islands and small states studies. To the next year!

1. Staff and Boards at The Islands and Small States Institute

Director of the Institute

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Chair of the Islands and Small States Institute Board

Prof. Frank Bezzina, frank.bezzina@um.edu.mt

Islands and Small States Institute Board Members

Prof. Stefano Moncada (Director)

Prof. Roderick Pace (Senate Appointee)

Prof. Saviour Formosa (Academic Staff Representative)

Dr Ing. Charles Yousif (Scholar of Repute)

Prof. Dominic Fenech (Council Appointee)

Dr Valentina Cassar (Scholar of Repute)

Prof. Lino Briguglio (Scholar of Repute)

Dr Pedro Pombo (Academic Staff Representative)

Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino (Scholar of Repute)

Mr Jwala Rambarran (Student Representative)

Ms Stephania Marie Perrine (Student Representative)

Board of Studies of the M.A. (RISS)

Prof. Stefano Moncada (Director)

Prof. Lino Briguglio

Prof. Ing. Charles Yousif

Doctoral Academic Committee of the ISSI

Prof. Stefano Moncada (Director)

Prof. Lino Briguglio

Prof. Ing. Charles Yousif

Dr Valentina Cassar

During the academic year 2022/23, the following meetings were held:

Board:

- 14 January 2025
- 29 May 2025
- 10 July 2025

Board of Studies:

- 4 October 2025

PhD Committees:

- 20 March 2025

The Board of Examiners also meets in separate zoom meetings and approves items/requests online, when needed.

2. Teaching at the Islands and Small States Institute

The ISSI offers postgraduate courses in the area of islands and small states studies. The strong interdisciplinary nature of our courses makes it attractive for many prospective students, who are joining from a variety of disciplines, with the added objective of supporting the teaching and research in islands and small states studies to become more mainstreamed into traditional and emerging disciplines.

2.1. Postgraduate courses

The ISSI offers a taught MA, a MA by research, and a PhD programme in islands and small states studies. The taught MA in Islands and Small States Studies has been offered since the inception of the ISSI, over 35 years ago, and has trained a sizeable number of students both in Malta and abroad. During the past three years, this taught MA course was restructured, with the aim of updating some of its study units, and to also allow single study units to be offered to the general public, as stand-alone units, in line with the intention to widen the training and educational opportunities offered by the University of Malta.

The MA by research was introduced for the first time in the academic year 2018-2019, and has been running since then, exhibiting a steady number of students year by year, and showing an excellent capacity to attract students from Malta, Gozo, but especially internationally. In fact, the percentage of foreign students has been keeping constant with 60 to 70 per cent enrolling from outside Malta.

The PhD programme in Islands and Small States Studies, unique in the world, was also recently restructured and aligned with some of the teaching offered through the MA by research. This is allowing all PhD students to follow those same study units being taught in the MA by research, with the aim of receiving a proper background in islands and small states studies, and to solidify their basis in research design and methodology.

2.1.1. Master of Arts in Islands and Small State Studies

This postgraduate course carries 90 ECTS, in line with the EU Bologna Process, and runs on a part-time basis over the course of two years (5 semesters).

The Master of Arts in Islands and Small States Studies is offered at both the University of Malta Main Campus and the Gozo Campus. The aim of the programme is to impart knowledge on islands and small states issues and to provide the opportunity for students to conduct research on the same issues by submitting assignments and writing a dissertation. This MA course was recently revamped, and new study units created to reflect both the evolution in the research area of islands and small states studies, but also to allow single study units to be followed by the general public, and with the option of providing training to both public and private entities interested in this specific programme.

2.1.2. Master of Arts (Research on Islands and Small States)

This specific blended postgraduate programme was designed with research as the first outcome of a training path that aims at enhancing the knowledge of the students on islands and small states

matters. The course is intended to be interdisciplinary and relates to economic, social, environmental, and political issues associated with islands and small states. The different study units offered by the programme are designed so as to strengthen the capacities of the students to understand and identify the advantages and constraints associated with small country size and insularity. The programme enhances the students' capacities for thinking, reasoning, conceptualising and assessing key theoretical, and applied, aspects relating to islands and small states, thus, additionally, contributing to their intellectual development.

Table 1. Programme of studies of the MA by Research

Study Unit Code	Title	ECTS
ISS5200	Introduction to the Study of Islands and Small States 1: Economic and Environmental Issues	5
ISS5210	Introduction to the Study of Islands and Small States 2: Social and Political Issues	5
ISS5220	Research Methodology	10
ISS5230	Dissertation	70

Students of this programme are required to attend lectures (face-to-face and/or online) at the University for a three-week intense period at the beginning of October, to then be expected to continue with their studies via online platforms provided by the University and properly supervised by lecturers and academic coordinators in this blended journey.

Since the academic year 2018-2019, this MA by Research has been the main programme offered by the ISSI, given its capacity to attract students from abroad, and the strong research component that is also appealing for those students who would like to continue in their doctoral studies.

Table 2. Historical overview of students enrolled in the MA by Research

Academic Year	Students
2018-2019	3
2019-2020	5
2020-2021	5
2021-2022	8
2022-2023	6
2023-2024	6
2024-2025	5

2.1.3. PhD Programme

The ISSI is proud to offer the only, to date, Doctoral Programme in the world that specialises in islands and small states studies. This programme requires all students who have not graduated from the MA by research offered by our Institute, to follow three preparatory study units (the same offered within the MA by research programme), in order to receive proper training on environmental, economic, social and political aspects of islands and small states. Additionally, students are required to follow a research methodology unit, to sharpen research design and explore research methods through theoretical and practical training offered by ISSI academic personnel.

The ISSI also recognises the excellent work being undertaken by the University of Malta Doctoral School, whereby continuous training opportunities are being offered to all doctoral candidates, and with administrative support to our offices, ensures that the growing student community is well served and prepared for their research.

Table 3. Historical overview of students enrolled in the ISSI Doctoral Programme

Academic Year	Students
2018-2019	0
2019-2020	2
2020-2021	3
2021-2022	7
2022-2023	5
2023-2024	3
2024-2025	2

During the academic year 2024/25, five international MA students as well as two international PhD students were enrolled with the ISSI.

2.2. Testimonials from ISSI Students

Students are at the core of ISSI's mission, and our efforts are always undertaken to ensure that excellent quality, in both the contents of the training and the relations that occur, is provided in a timely and responsible manner.

The testimonials below show the impact that the ISSI has had on the students' path to improve their educational attainments. They are also a testimony of the many positive impacts and inputs that the ISSI was able to receive from all its students.

2.2.1. Testimonials from Master of Arts students

Quan Chen



Picture 1. Quan Chen, MA by Research Student (2024-2025)

The decision to study at the Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI) has proven to be an insightful and culturally rich experience. There are three "uniques" I want to share with my fellows in the Small and Island State Institute. First, Maltese culture is unique not only in the EU but in fact in the world. The wisdom, hospitality, and open-mindedness of our institute directly reflect the daily life of the wonderful people of this country. This environment has been crucial to my learning. Secondly, our discipline is unique because of the interdisciplinary approach on many island and small states. This approach can broaden the existing visions of different expertise, spanning from legal studies to biology to linguistics to many subjects one may name it. The last unique quality is that one can easily know a fellow from a real small country; our platform is unique. The international perspectives shared by my classmates have made the Institute a truly engaging and global hub for island studies.

My research is focused on "Citizenship by Investment Schemes from China in the Small Island States of Malta and Antigua and Barbuda." Citizenship by Investment (CBI) schemes might be deemed as "an Island State Thing." This is not only because it has been for decades only happening in small island states, but also because the three core "number questions" (namely "how many applicants", "how much to be raised," and "how many days should a new citizen stay/residency requirement") can be very sensitive to many aspects of a small island nation. However, addressing these also reflects the resilience of a small island nation. In fact, there is a "4th" number to be noted, which is related to China. As China is the top source country to the CBI programs, this phenomenon might even be called "sub-CBI for China." The fund CBI generated from the Chinese applicants might be more than the trade deficit or financial aids originated from China. My work aims to answer the core question: Can small island states "leverage" a superpower by their CBI programs? Researching the CBI cases in Malta (EU) and Antigua (Caricom) might offer more pictures on this critical geopolitical and economic phenomenon.

Cheshta Hoolash



Picture 2. Cheshta Hoolash, MA by Research Student (2024-2025)

My decision to join this institute has been very fruitful. This Master's has strengthened my research skills while also equipping me to design and implement projects through my NGO in Mauritius with a multidisciplinary approach. My research work is based on the 'Development of Sustainable and Inclusive Heritage Tourism in Small Island Developing States: The Case of the Historical Village of Vieux Grand Port in Mauritius'. Thank you to Dr Moncada and the team for this unique experience with a pleasant working environment and for providing the required support to the students.

Nandini Tanya Lallmon



Picture 3. Nandini Tanya Lallmon, MA by Research Student (2024-2025)

Studying at the Islands and Small States Institute as a fully distance learner has been one of the most transformative experiences of my academic journey. Receiving a full merit-based scholarship gave me the confidence to pursue a topic deeply meaningful to me, while the immense support of my supervisor guided me through the challenges of writing my thesis. Even though I studied from afar, ISSI made me feel part of a vibrant intellectual community that is committed to advancing the voices of Small Island Developing States. As part of my studies, I was honoured to be selected in the first cohort of the SEA-EU Alliance study grant and received a fully funded semester abroad at the University of Split, Croatia, where I was able to engage in interdisciplinary research and broaden my academic horizons. I also had the privilege of presenting my research at the 18th Islands of the World Conference hosted by International Small Islands Studies Association at the University of Zadar, and at the 19th Development Dialogue hosted by the International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam, under the auspices of the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes. These opportunities not only strengthened my research but also gave me the chance to represent ISSI and the University of Malta on international platforms. For me, ISSI has been not only an academic institution, but also a source of mentorship, encouragement, and inspiration. It has been a place that bridged the distance of online study and helped me grow into a confident researcher ready to contribute to more inclusive island societies.

My research is titled “Dissonances between Policy Framework and Customary Practice in Gender Equality of Small Island Developing States: The Case of LGBTQI+ Rights in Mauritius”. It explores the gap between progressive policy commitments to gender equality and the lived realities of LGBTQI+ persons in Mauritius, as a lens into the wider challenges faced by Small Island Developing States(SIDS). By examining the intersection between formal legal frameworks and entrenched socio-cultural practices, the study highlights the dissonances that often hinder meaningful inclusion across island societies. The findings aim to inform more contextually grounded policy approaches in SIDS, ensuring that global commitments translate into tangible protections for marginalized communities living in vulnerable island contexts.

2.2.2. Testimonials from PhD students

Vincenzo de Cancellis



Picture 4 , Vincenzo de Cancellis, Marie Curie European Doctoral Student (enrolled in 2024-2025)

As I completed my Master studies in Global Change Ecology and Sustainable Development Goals, I was determined to pursue a doctoral opportunity that could expand my research horizons and approach environmental and marine conservation in a more holistic, multidisciplinary way.

The Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI) at the University of Malta quickly stood out as a great opportunity to delve further into this perspective, offering resources, training, and opportunities to grow academically and personally. Concurrently, my PhD journey has been enriched by continuous dialogue and collaborations, given the high connectivity and relations that ISSI fosters as one of the world's leading institutions focusing on research in islands.

My research title is “Marine and terrestrial protected areas to foster climate change adaptation in islands: a sustainable livelihoods approach”. This PhD project is also part of the MEDiverSEAty European Doctoral Network, funded under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant, whose main goal is to explore the human dimensions of Mediterranean marine biodiversity. Specifically, my research aims to identify key climate change hazards and to assess how protected areas in Malta can enhance climate change adaptation and provide sustainable livelihood resources among stakeholders and the wider population, including investigating the related challenges and obstacles. Outcomes are expected to contribute to climate change and development theories, particularly regarding livelihoods, well-being, and the planning and management of protected areas in small island states.

As my first year as a doctoral student comes to a close, I am very grateful for the supportive and encouraging work environment at ISSI, as well as the inspiring team I am fortunate to be part of. I cannot be more excited to continue my journey and see how I can keep expanding my horizons and skills.

My research is titled “Marine and terrestrial protected areas to foster climate change adaptation in islands: a sustainable livelihoods approach”. This PhD project is part of the MEDiverSEAty European Doctoral Network, funded under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant, exploring the human dimensions of Mediterranean marine biodiversity. In particular, this research intends to investigate the role of marine and terrestrial protected areas in supporting climate change adaptation (CCA) and well-being in Malta, focusing on 'Il-Majjistral' National Park. This research aims to identify key climate change hazards and examine how protected areas contribute to Malta's and the EU's CCA commitments. Using a sustainable livelihoods approach, the study will assess how protected areas in Malta can enhance livelihood resources and well-being among stakeholders and the wider population, including challenges and obstacles. The project will employ mixed-methods, combining qualitative participatory focus groups, quantitative surveys, and spatial analysis. This approach will geo-locate hazards, identify livelihood resources, and evaluate measures promoting CCA through ecosystem restoration.

Outcomes are expected to contribute to climate change and development theories, particularly regarding livelihoods, well-being, and the planning and management of protected areas in small island states. Concurrently, findings aim to inform policy on climate change adaptation, environmental management, and communication strategies.

Allanson Winston Timothy Cruickshank



Picture 5. Allanson Cruickshank, Doctoral Student (enrolled in 2024-2025)

Undertaking a PhD is a potentially life-altering process and, my time at ISSI has been a very significant period of my life. Balancing a full-time PhD with family life, volunteerism, work and several other endeavours has been challenging. However, my PhD supervisor, Dr. Stefano Moncada, has been very pragmatic in his approach to supervision. Things changed rapidly in terms of my field work and what I was required to do, but we were able to make the necessary adjustments in a timely manner and continue working towards completion. This was invaluable for me. Overall, I think that the programme of study at ISSI is particularly important for the residents of SIDS and their work is globally recognised in this field. I have also had the support of my PhD classmates, as we often bounced ideas off each other, vented to each other when frustrated and encouraged each other along this journey. Additionally, I am grateful to ISSI for their tuition scholarship, which has made completing this programme a reality. I also express gratitude to the AIS Forum for their grant sponsorship, which aided me in completing my field work. Finally, I was able to successfully defend my PhD at my PhD Viva Voce in May 2025. I am elated to know that all four of my PhD classmates were successful in achieving the same excellent outcome. In conclusion, I would encourage persons from islands and small states around the globe, especially in SIDS, to choose ISSI as their first option to conduct research on islands and small states. The invitation is also for those who are not from islands and small states. Let us expand the body of knowledge on these unique locations of global significance.

My research focuses on “Volcanic Risk Reduction in the Face of Multiple Hazards in Caribbean SIDS: Examining St. Vincent and Dominica”. With the intensification of tropical weather systems, associated with climate change, the compound interaction of non-hydrometeorological hazards and hydrometeorological hazards is likely to occur more frequently, as seen in the lahars during the April 2021 explosive eruption of La Soufriere volcano in SVG. Small volcanic islands are especially at risk because of the increased likelihood of human settlements being located in highly exposed areas due to land use pressures. A sequential, exploratory, mixed method approach was used to collect qualitative (elite interviews and an analysis of DRR and CCA policies in the Caribbean region, Dominica and SVG) and quantitative data via a household questionnaire survey (N=402). The data was analysed using thematic content analysis (NVivo) and various statistical analyses (stata). Among the findings were that comprehensive disaster management (CDM) could address DRR and CCA, but would require an improvement in inter-agency collaboration. Social capital, land use planning and economic

instruments could build resilience to all hazards. Regarding social capital, generally, persons no longer assist in their communities without payment, except during, and immediately after, disasters. This adds a Caribbean island communities' perspective to the current understanding of social capital in Pacific island communities in the literature. Finally, scientific knowledge can be effectively translated into evidence-based DRR and CCA policy and practice by: improving public education; removing partisan political biases in executing DRR and CCA activities; mainstreaming DRR and CCA into the national development process; and, using knowledge brokerage to facilitate improved communication among stakeholders. There was little divergence between both countries in terms of the results, except for a stronger acknowledgement and consideration of non-climate related hazards in SVG than in Dominica. The thesis advances theoretical knowledge regarding the nexus between volcanic risk reduction and CCA in volcanic SIDS, especially the strategies which can address multiple hazards in this context. This combination has scarcely been examined in the literature previously. The thesis also extends the current body of knowledge on utilising mixed methodologies in dealing with disaster and volcanic risk reduction in concert with CCA. The findings have numerous implications for DRR and CCA policy in volcanic SIDS, especially considering addressing both simultaneously and their compound, cascading and complex effects.

Doris Atayi



Picture 6. Doris Atayi, Doctoral Student (enrolled in 2024-2025)

As a PhD student specialising in small island studies focusing on counselling in Seychelles, I have found this program to be both transformative and highly relevant to the needs of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). My academic journey has equipped me to critically analyse the intersections of mental health, cultural identity, and the unique socio-economic conditions small island populations face.

I now have a strong academic background and functional abilities to tackle important topics like human development, resilience, and the social difficulties brought on by vulnerability in small island environments, thanks to my PhD pursuits. This is especially important considering that formal counselling services are still a work in progress in my area. Considering that formal counselling

services are a work in progress in my area, this is especially important. The program has also given me the opportunity to share my unique perspectives, particularly in standardising counselling models to conform to indigenous customs, religious beliefs, and community-based methods. I am also able to balance my personal life and my studies because of the availability of distance learning classes and the support I receive from my supervisors.

Small Island Studies' interdisciplinary approach has broadened my viewpoint by relating counselling practice to important issues like education, sustainability, smallness and isolation - all of which significantly influence our communities. I have effectively closed the gap between theory and practice by conducting research and interacting with local and international experts. This has allowed me to ensure that my work considers the practical difficulties that professionals encounter in small island settings. My doctoral studies at the University of Malta have cultivated my professional and personal development.

By developing spaces of empowerment and hope for counselling professionals, I will be able to make a substantial contribution to improving counselling and mental health services across small islands, especially the islands of Seychelles.

My research, titled 'School counselling in Small Island Developing States: The case of Seychelles', opens an opportunity to investigate the social implications of counselling in Seychelles. The research on counsellors' experiences takes on a sociocultural perspective, which considers that the school counsellors' journeys are part of a plurality of networks and social frameworks in a given social and historical context. This perspective also examines the transactions between the counsellors and their environment, which are played out in particular through daily and specific interactions. It highlights the centrality of social justice in the practice of counselling, as well as the importance of expanding professional horizons and the roles of counsellors to initiate systemic change in the context in which they work. The research aims to shed light on the origins and mutations of counselling practice and to provide a contemporary portrait of the profession of school counselling in Seychelles.

Colin Sylvester Mattis



Picture 7. Colin Sylvester Mattis, Doctoral Student (enrolled in 2024-2025)

Studying at the Institute of Islands and Small States (ISSI), part of the University of Malta, is a transformative and intellectually enriching experience that broadens both my academic and professional horizons. Through my PhD programme in Islands and Small States Studies, I engage deeply with global environmental challenges while grounding my learning in the unique and urgent realities faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

My research focuses on “Climate Change Adaptation Frameworks and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Small Island Developing States.” It explores how MSMEs, critical drivers of local economies, respond to climate risks, and whether current national and international adaptation frameworks adequately reflect their needs and constraints. I am developing a novel policy framework that identifies effective legislative, institutional, and financial mechanisms to support MSMEs in overcoming adaptation barriers. My study spans several Caribbean SIDS and integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods to assess adaptation implementation levels, knowledge gaps, and the impact of sectoral and geographic variables. The goal is to generate practical, scalable insights for policymakers, development agencies, and MSMEs themselves.

Outside the classroom, I benefit from access to knowledgeable faculty, a diverse international student body, and an inclusive atmosphere that sharpens my global perspective. The university’s commitment to sustainability and innovation reflects my own values and aspirations.

I continuously apply the skills, knowledge, and global networks gained here to my work in environmental policy, sustainable development, and climate action. The ISSI empowers me to contribute meaningfully to a more resilient and sustainable future, and I highly recommend it to anyone seeking to make a lasting impact.

Ruth Gutierrez-Corley



Picture 8. Ruth Gutierrez-Corley, Doctoral Student (enrolled in 2024-2025)

Studying and training at the Islands and Small States Institute has provided me with a unique opportunity to connect my passion for sustainable oceans and livelihoods with interdisciplinary research on the blue economy. ISSI has been an inspiring platform where I can contribute to advancing knowledge that bridges science, policy, and the lived realities of small island communities. It has been a fruitful experience interacting and exchanging ideas and knowledge with ISSI researchers and

scientists from SIDS all over the world. I am eager to continue contributing to groundbreaking research and initiatives that address pressing climatic and environmental challenges.

My doctoral research, titled “The Sustainability of Seaweed Aquaculture for Blue Growth and Climate Change Adaptation in Small Island Developing States (SIDS): The Case of Belize”, explores the potential of seaweed farming as a sustainable livelihood strategy and adaptation measure in the context of climate change and blue economy. Using Belize as a case study, the research identifies current local adaptation practices among seaweed farmers and identifies significant capitals of the sustainable livelihoods framework contributing to a sustainable seaweed aquaculture to blue growth, food security, and resilience in SIDS.

Ben Biedermann



Picture 9. Ben Biedermann, Doctoral Student (enrolled in 2024-2025)

The Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI) at the University of Malta continues to provide me with an intellectually rich and supportive environment. Since joining the PhD programme, I have been encouraged to pursue an interdisciplinary path that combines political science, digital governance, and island studies.

What makes the ISSI unique is the combination of academic rigour and openness. I have always felt trusted to shape my research while benefitting from close guidance and mentorship. Over the past year, my involvement at the Institute has been complemented by collaboration with colleagues internally, active participation in ISISA and other island studies networks. This has allowed me to deepen connections with colleagues at the University of Prince Edward Island in Canada, Rijksuniversiteit Groeningen and the Faroe Islands, Lund University, and the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz in Germany.

I also presented my work at international conferences, most recently in Jersey and at the 2025 European Society for Oceanists Conference in Lucerne, Switzerland. These exchanges have not only led to a journal publication (forthcoming), but also highlighted the value of the ISSI as a hub where small state research does not remain insular but contributes to the most pressing global debates of our time.

My PhD research, titled *“Disseminating Technocratic Narratives: Public policies on digital infrastructure in small jurisdictions,”* examines how small states and territories navigate the governance of digital infrastructure. These technologies, which are becoming increasingly popular for accessing public services, pose particular challenges under conditions of smallness, where questions of public versus private ownership, procurement choices, and socio-political impacts become especially pronounced. The study develops a Digital Infrastructure Maturity Framework (DIMF), combining document analysis, ethnography, and quantitative data to assess digital identity systems in jurisdictions including Aruba, Dominica, Palau, and the Marshall Islands. By investigating how these systems are procured, deployed, and operated, the research seeks to understand their effects on statehood, regulation, and development. Preliminary findings point to distinct patterns of reliance on private-sector-led solutions and decentralised technologies, reflecting both innovation and vulnerability in small-scale settings. The expected outcome is a policy toolkit for decision-makers and a theoretical contribution to debates on digital public infrastructure, sovereignty, and scale.

Georges Marc Nicette



Picture 10. Georges Marc Nicette, Doctoral Student (enrolled in 2024-2025)

Enrolling in the doctoral programme at the Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI) has been an intellectually transformative experience and, without reservation, I consider ISSI to be the premier choice for aspiring scholars from small island societies. The Institute's multidisciplinary approach to the study of "smallness" is unparalleled, offering a rich and nuanced perspective that is essential for understanding the complex realities of island life.

My academic journey at ISSI has broadened my research horizons and provided me with a critical foundation for analysing the unique challenges and opportunities inherent to small island societies. The rigorous curriculum and vibrant research environment significantly enhanced my critical thinking skills, continually challenging my assumptions and approaches to scholarly inquiry.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my experience was the exceptional calibre of mentorship provided by my supervisors and academic advisors. Their profound expertise within their respective fields was instrumental in guiding my research and adapting my focus as my understanding of the subject matter deepened. This dynamic engagement not only refined my academic work but also instilled in me a greater confidence in navigating complex research questions.

Furthermore, ISSI fosters a richly diverse academic community, bringing together students from various island jurisdictions and cultural backgrounds. This exposure to multiple perspectives has greatly enriched my appreciation for the distinctive characteristics and shared realities of island societies, further enhancing the depth and relevance of my research.

I wholeheartedly encourage students from other island societies to consider enrolling in ISSI programs. The Institute offers an unparalleled academic journey, equipping scholars with the tools, knowledge, and international network necessary to make meaningful contributions to the field of island studies and to their home communities.

My study, titled “Investigating Discourses on heroin Use and Users in a Small Island Developing State (SIDS): The case of Seychelles”, explores how problematic heroin use and users are constructed within Seychelles’ unique socio-cultural environment. Using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA), I examine power relations and discourses shaping heroin practices, drawing on media texts, interviews with six former users, and insights from seven experts.

Findings reveal that Seychelles’ intimate, close-knit society profoundly shapes perceptions and practices of heroin use. Five dominant discourses—medical, resource scarcity, political, stigmatising, and the ‘wake up and be normal’ narrative—frame users as deviant, ill, or morally failed, justifying surveillance, abstinence-based treatment, and exclusion. These narratives, rooted in the island’s religious, cultural, and political context, reinforce stigma, limit privacy, and blur distinctions between use and problematic use. The study highlights the need for context-specific, inclusive strategies that address stigma and recognise the political dimensions of drug use, contributing new sociological insights to island drug scholarship.

2.3. List of all lecturers teaching with ISSI

The ISSI collaborates with academic staff from several Faculties/School/Institute/Centres based at the University of Malta, and in other key centres overseas, in order to provide the most appropriate expertise in the teaching and in the research areas of our prospective students. The ISSI has two full-time academics placed at the Institute, Prof. Stefano Moncada and Dr Pombo, whilst Prof. Briguglio is a Senior Fellow. An important contribution towards all the lectures, supervisions and participation to the ISSI boards comes from academic personnel placed in other Faculties/School/Institute/Centres, and without which the ISSI would not be in a position to provide the necessary inputs towards its teaching and research programmes.

The Director and the Chair have repeatedly expressed their gratitude to all those who are contributing. The ISSI has put forward, backed and endorsed by the ISSI Board, a request for additional resident academic staff to be placed at the ISSI, showing that the current load being endured by Prof. Moncada and Prof. Briguglio, also considering the projected growing teaching and supervision efforts, perfectly justifies such a request.

The current list of lecturers servicing the ISSI is the following:

- Prof. Stefano Moncada
- Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino
- Prof. Lino Briguglio
- Prof. Patrick J. Schembri
- Mr. Joseph Gauci
- Prof. Saviour Formosa
- Dr George Vital Zammit
- Dr Karl Agius
- Dr Michael Briguglio
- Prof. Jack Corbett
- Dr Glorianne Camilleri
- Dr Margaret Camilleri Fenech
- Dr Francesco Sindico
- Dr Pedro Pombo
- Dr Sarah Cuschieri

2.3.1. Testimonials from ISSI academics

Prof. Lino Briguglio



Picture 11. Prof. Lino Briguglio, former Director of the ISSI and senior fellow, academic year 2024-2025

As the founder and former director of the Islands and Small Institute, I am pleased that under the direction of Professor Stefano Moncada, who succeeded me, the Institute has flourished, attracting many international students. As a result of an arrangement with the Government of Malta put in place by the present director, some ISSI students are funded through a Government grant, indicating high confidence by the authorities in what the institute is offering. The Institute also participates in a number of projects relating to global issues, including climate change, health and environmental sustainability. I am confident that under the direction of Professor Stefano Moncada, assisted by Dr Pedro Sobral Pombo, the Institute will continue to make the University of Malta well-known internationally for its significant achievement.

2.4. Visiting scholars

The ISSI also collaborates with a number of international scholars, for teaching and learning experiences, to provide public lectures on issues pertaining to island and small states, and for joint research initiatives. The Institute is truly grateful to its international collaborators for sharing their expertise and perspectives with its staff, students and ISSI's wider community.

2.4.1 Dr Milla Vaha



Picture 12. Dr Milla Vaha, visiting lecturer during the academic year 2024-2025

In early 2025, the ISSI had the pleasure to host Dr Milla Vaha, Senior Lecturer of Politics and International Affairs at the University of the South Pacific. In winter 2024-2025, she is a visiting research fellow at Academy of International Affairs NRW in Bonn, Germany. In her research, she is broadly interested in the questions of ethics and world politics and her current work explores the relationship between the existential threat of climate change and nuclear testing histories in the Pacific region. She is the author of *The Moral Standing of the State in International Politics: A Kantian Account* (2021) as well as various journal articles and book chapters.

Dr Vaha was the speaker of ISSI's seminar and webinar titled "Resisting Nuclear Colonialism through Memorialisation: Nuclear Justice Education and Awareness in the Pacific", held in the afternoon of 3 February.

2.4.2 Prof. Dimitris Ballas



Picture 13. Prof. Dimitris Ballas, visiting lecturer during the academic year 2024-2025

During the 2024-2025 academic year, the ISSI had the pleasure of hosting Prof. Dimitris Ballas, Full Professor, Chair of Economic Geography in the Faculty of Spatial Sciences at the University of Groningen, Director of the Erasmus Mundus international master programme Islands and Sustainability, and academic lead of the Islands and Sustainability Lab of the Rudolf Agricola School for Sustainable Development. He has a first degree in Economics (1996, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece), a Master of Arts (with distinction) in Geographical Information Systems (1997, University of Leeds, UK) and a PhD in Geography (2001, University of Leeds, UK). He has also previously worked as Associate Professor at the University of the Aegean, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography at the University of Sheffield and has also held Visiting Research Scholar positions at the University of Cambridge, Harvard University, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (Austria) and a Visiting Professor position at Ritsumeikan University (Japan). Professor Ballas has published widely in the fields of social and economic geography, social and spatial inequalities, regional science and Geoinformatics in the Social Sciences, including highly cited articles and books on the geography of happiness and well-being, as well as on spatial microsimulation and related quantitative methods. He also has extensive experience in using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and spatial microsimulation for the evaluation of the socio-economic and spatial impact of national social policies, as well as area-based policies. His work includes the books *The Human Atlas of Europe: A Continent United in Diversity*, co-authored with Danny Dorling and Benjamin Hennig (Policy Press) and *GIS and the Social Sciences: Theory and Applications* co-authored with Graham Clarke, Rachel S. Franklin and Andy Newing (Routledge).

Prof. Ballas was the speaker of ISSI's seminar and webinar titled "Islands, Islanders and the Geography of Happiness and Well-being", held on 5 May 2025 at the University's IT Services building.

2.4.3 Prof. Lina Montuori



Picture 14. Prof. Lina Montuori, visiting lecturer during the academic year 2024-2025

In May 2025, the ISSI was visited by Prof. Lina Montuori, who presented on "the significance of biomass in a circular economy and in the sustainable development of Small Islands: recent advancements in biofuel technologies" at a seminar and webinar held on 6 May.

Prof. Montuori obtained her PhD *cum laude* in Industrial Engineering and MBA from the Polytechnic University of Valencia (Spain). Previously, she received her BSc and MSc *cum laude* in Mechanical Engineering for Energy and Environment from the University of Naples "Federico II" (Italy) and moreover she holds an Executive Master in Digital Marketing and Analytics from the Catholic University of Avila (Spain). She worked as Guest Researcher at the Power Center for Utility Explorations of the State University at Buffalo, New York (USA) and she has more than 15 years of a demonstrated successful track record of R&D projects at international top brand companies (Enel, Solaer Group, Toshiba Mitsubishi-Electric Industrial Corporation). At present, she is lecturer at the Department of Applied Thermodynamics at the Polytechnic University of Valencia (Spain), author and editor with multiple and relevant publications in high-impact journals. Finally, she is senior researcher at the Institute for Energy Engineering (IIE) where she leads a team of 5 PhD researchers in the research fields of renewable energies, AI-based energy efficiency, ports and terminal decarbonisation, natural gas and smart metering.

3. Research at the Islands and Small States Institute

The ISSI proudly hosts two research platforms (Climate, Tourism), as well as the WHO Collaborating Centre on Health Systems and Policies in Small States, which represent a crucial part of our research activities and places the ISSI as a centre of excellence for those broad research areas, contributing both to academia and policy.

3.1. WHO Collaborating Centre on Health Systems and Policies in Small States

Following the redesignation in 2021, the ISSI continued to work as the World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre on Health Systems and Policies in Small States. Thanks to its notable track record of top-level policy research on resilience, economy, environment and health in small states, the Institute had first been designated as a WHO Collaborating Centre in 2017, during the 4th High-level Meeting of Small Countries held on 26th and 27th June 2017.

In collaboration with the WHO, the Institute is working on three main topics: (i) the development of policy recommendations on building health-system resilience in small states; (ii) the interrelationship between tourism, health systems and sustainability, with a focus on islands and small countries, through a planetary health and equity approach; and (iii) the development of a toolkit on health information, digital health and evidence generation in small states.

3.2. Climate Change Platform

Established in 2016, the main objectives of the Climate Change Platform (CCP) are to facilitate collaboration between University of Malta entities and individual academics interested in climate change issues, and to promote research and teaching initiatives relating to climate change. The CCP is guided and overseen by a Steering Committee chaired by Prof. Maria Attard and Prof. Charles Galdies as the CCP focal point. The other members of the Committee are Prof. Lino Briguglio, Dr Andreas Kotelis, Prof. Stefano Moncada, Prof. Paul J. Pace, Prof. Ing. Paul Refalo, Dr Louise Spiteri, Prof. Alex Torpiano and Prof. Ing. Charles Yousif. The CCP continued to lead several consultation processes among University of Malta academics, collecting and collating feedback to key climate change and energy proposed legislation, and to this end submitted comments to government authorities when carrying out consultation initiatives.

3.3. Island Tourism Platform

The Island Tourism Platform (ITP) was set up in 2017, as a collaborative project between the Islands and Small States Institute and the Institute for Tourism, Travel and Culture (ITTC). Its main objectives are to facilitate collaboration between University of Malta entities and individual academics interested in island tourism issues and to promote research and teaching initiatives relating to island tourism at the University of Malta and elsewhere.

The ITP is administered and guided by a Steering Committee composed of Dr Marie Avellino (Director of the ITTC) as chair, Prof. Lino Briguglio (member of the ISSI) as vice-chair of the ITP and co-ordinator, and Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino, Prof. George Cassar, Dr Marie Louise Mangion, and Ms Elly Iussa (student representative) as members. The work of the Steering Committee is facilitated by Dominik Kalweit, Research Support Officer at the ISSI.

One outcome of the collaboration between the ISSI and the ITTC, through the ITP, was the publication of three studies relating to overtourism and environmental governance, all authored by Prof. Briguglio and Dr Avellino. The first is a 2019 article titled *Has overtourism reached the Maltese Islands?* (2019, Occasional Papers on Islands and Small States ISSN 1024-6282, Issue: 2019/01), and the other two are chapters in books namely “Overtourism, Environmental Degradation and Governance in Small Islands with Special Reference to Malta” (Chapter 17 in *Shaping the Future of Small Islands*, Palgrave Macmillan (2020)), and “Assessing Malta’s Overtourism” (Chapter 10 in *Managing Events, Festivals and the Visitor Economy: Concepts, Collaborations and Cases*, Cabi (2021)).

Another outcome of the setting up of the ITP is the introduction by the ITTC of a study unit titled “Island Tourism”, at the undergraduate and Master’s levels. In these study units, the special characteristics of small islands are highlighted, leading to relatively high economic benefits and also to environmental degradation, given the limited carrying capacity and the fragile ecosystem of many small islands. The successful collaboration between the ISSI and the ITTC has therefore led to beneficial initiatives, more of which are being planned. More information is available on the ITP’s website.

3.4. MFET and UM Scholarships in Islands and Small States Studies – Students’ testimonials

3.4.1. Rickie Morain



Picture 15. Rickie Morain (Grenada), MA by research student (2024-2025)

I am very pleased to be enrolled in the MA in Islands and Small States at UM. This comprehensive programme provided us the opportunity to gain a thorough understanding of the various social, environmental, economic and political vulnerabilities that small islands states uniquely experience. It

further equipped us with the necessary methodological research tools and techniques needed to effectively conduct literature review and further research in our various interest areas.

The sum of the parts exceeded the whole in my cohort by benefitting from the rich interactions, debates and experiences shared among colleagues from SIDS all over the world. I have the greatest appreciation for all the lecturers, guest speakers and administrative staff who facilitated this amazing program.

The tiny Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) islands share an ocean space that is hundreds of times larger than their combined land masses, the latter which have been traditionally overexploited in the production of agriculture crops for the export market, and more recently, are crammed with mainly unplanned and under-regulated tourism, fisheries and recreational facilities along the coast.

The Sustainable Development discourse of Small Islands States (SIDS) now present a golden opportunity to address this concern. My research therefore focuses on investigating the avenues and mechanisms through which renewable energy solutions can be integrated in the management of the blue economy and to examine the budgetary support allocated by the various islands of the sub region in this regard.

3.5. UM Scholarships in Islands and Small States Studies – Students’ testimonials

3.5.1. Ifeanyi Godwin Clement



Picture 16. Ifeanyi Godwin Clement, MA by research student (2024-2025)

Awesome and Rich! Those words encapsulate my experience in this programme. I have always enjoyed research and teaching, so I knew I wanted to follow a programme that will prepare me adequately for this purpose.

Since this was a Master by research, lots of emphasis was placed on developing my research skills through quality teaching and excellent supervision provided at the institute. Most paramount was the excellent supervision and guide provided by Prof. Stefano Moncada. I am an improved researcher, when compared to when I started the programme, with great analytical and communication skills, thanks to the mentoring provided by my supervisor.

My research focuses on “Climate change adaptation and the role of civil society organisations in the Mediterranean region: The case of Malta”. For climate adaptation programmes to succeed in most states, there is the need to build a concerted effort in the formulation and implementation of adaptation policies and strategies. This is why the role of civil society organisations in climate governance is crucial.

By conducting expert interviews and adopting a qualitative content analysis, this research examines key government documents on climate change, to evaluate to what extent civil society organisations are involved in design and implementation climate change adaptation in Malta. Results reveal a lack of effective NGO involvement in climate policy co-designing thereby losing valuable public inputs in the policies.

3.6. PhD research students and themes

3.6.1. Ben Biedermann - Disseminating Technocratic Narratives: Public policies on digital infrastructure in small jurisdictions

This research, titled “Disseminating Technocratic Narratives: Public policies on digital infrastructure in small jurisdictions”, analyses digital identity projects in small jurisdictions and evaluates their relevance for defining digital infrastructure under conditions of smallness. Roads, parliamentary buildings, and hospitals are examples for public infrastructure that also highlight that infrastructure cannot be infinitely downsized, a problem of relevance to small jurisdictions. Electronic passports, software, and data centres are digital infrastructure, but what differentiates digital infrastructures from physical ones? Digital identity offers an interesting perspective on answering this question by connecting contemporary issues of small societies, such as statehood, the role of technology, and market regulation.

3.6.2. Marie Stéphanie Perrine - Climate Change Adaptation among coastal communities in Small Islands Developing States: The case of adaptive capacity in Rodrigues

In SIDS, older generations lived with basic materials and resources, but could organise, cope, adapt and survive natural disasters and the worst of climatic events to secure their livelihoods. While Traditional and Local Knowledge (TLK) strengthened their resilience, SIDS’ contemporary portrayal as epitome of vulnerability, is quite contrasting. The research titled “Climate Change Adaptation among coastal communities in Small Islands Developing States: The case of adaptive capacity in Rodrigues” aims at filling the theoretical gap on and provide empirical evidence of how climate change adaptation, TLK and adaptive livelihood capacity interact in the context of the Indian Ocean’s SIDS.

3.6.3. Colin Mattis - Climate Change Adaptation Frameworks and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Small Island Developing States

Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) has been identified as an essential policy response to the negative impacts of climate change. While most of the adaptation research has focused on responses and strategies that are implemented by the public sector and large multinational companies, there is a gap in knowledge on how Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (MSMEs) are adapting, and whether suitable theoretical frameworks exist to accommodate the specific needs of MSMEs in the context of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The methodology for this study involved a mixed method approach, including a systematic literature review (Prisma), qualitative (elite interviews) and quantitative analysis (surveys) to assess the extent to which MSMEs are involved in CCA within SIDS, and the extent to which the policies of Caribbean Community (CARICOM) SIDS contain instruments that seek to involve MSMEs in adaptation activities.

This research will contribute to closing the adaptation gap by providing policy makers and decision makers with clear guidance, knowledge and tools that they need to enhance national adaptation planning. The research will also facilitate the development of climate change adaptation concepts and theories, especially relating to policy frameworks that seek to spur MSME involvement in climate action. Methodologically, the research proposes a framework, inclusive of systematic literature review, content analysis, qualitative analysis tools (such as NVIVO-14) and policy assessment methods, which can be used to investigate stakeholder involvement in climate action as part of research projects. Most importantly, the research aims at informing climate change adaptation policy and practice, especially relating to the involvement of MSMEs within SIDS.

3.6.4. Jean Alcindor – A Socio-economic Analysis of the Agricultural Sector in the Small Island States of the Indian Ocean: Implications for Education and Training Development in Seychelles

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, and lately between Israel and Hamas, the global economy has been hit severely especially in the tourism and agriculture sectors. The small island states of the Indian Ocean such as Seychelles and Mauritius which are being studied in this exploratory research, are no exception, given their high dependency on tourism and importation of food, fuel, labour, raw materials and other commodities. These challenges have contributed to a sharp decline in Foreign Direct Investment, GDP growth and export volumes of these islands, as well as disrupted regional and global supply chain. The heavy blow to these islands' tourism sector has brought about a myriad of socio-economic and political challenges which call for a rethinking of their current macroeconomic and fiscal policies and strategies. Although these islands are economically vulnerable, agricultural policy reform and restructuring is seen as a major strategic option of the on-going economic diversification process. Yet, both of these islands are exposed to exogenous shocks which have a strong impact on cost of food production. To revive the agricultural sector of these islands is a challenging task; but many, largely untapped, opportunities exist. This can be optimised if the agricultural sector is modernised through the use of science and technology. However, to cope and sustain such an innovation, there is a need to simultaneously revamp the education and training sector through human capital investment. It is on this premise that the main research hypothesis of this PhD is that, with a vibrant and robust TVET system in place, Seychelles would be in a stronger position to supply a competent workforce to ensure the vitality and

resilience of its agricultural sector, which will then better support a sustainable economic recovery and further growth. Hence, in this study a constructivist paradigm, through a mixed research methodology using PESTLE Analysis of the food systems of small island states is being employed (a) to find out what are the current socio-economic factors influencing the development of agriculture and their impacts on education and training in Mauritius, and; (b) what are their implications for further development of education and agricultural training in Seychelles?

3.6.5. Allanson Cruicksbank – Volcanic Risk Reduction in the Face of Multiple Hazards in Caribbean SIDS: Examining St. Vincent and Dominica

With the intensification of tropical weather systems, associated with climate change, the compound interaction of non-hydrometeorological hazards and hydrometeorological hazards is likely to occur more frequently, as seen in the lahars during the April 2021 explosive eruption of La Soufriere volcano in SVG. Small volcanic islands are especially at risk because of the increased likelihood of human settlements being located in highly exposed areas due to land use pressures.

A sequential, exploratory, mixed method approach was used to collect qualitative (elite interviews and an analysis of DRR and CCA policies in the Caribbean region, Dominica and SVG) and quantitative data via a household questionnaire survey (N=402). The data was analysed using thematic content analysis (NVivo) and various statistical analyses (stata).

Among the findings were that comprehensive disaster management (CDM) could address DRR and CCA, but would require an improvement in inter-agency collaboration. Social capital, land use planning and economic instruments could build resilience to all hazards. Regarding social capital, generally, persons no longer assist in their communities without payment, except during, and immediately after, disasters. This adds a Caribbean island communities' perspective to the current understanding of social capital in Pacific island communities in the literature. Finally, scientific knowledge can be effectively translated into evidence-based DRR and CCA policy and practice by: improving public education; removing partisan political biases in executing DRR and CCA activities; mainstreaming DRR and CCA into the national development process; and, using knowledge brokerage to facilitate improved communication among stakeholders. There was little divergence between both countries in terms of the results, except for a stronger acknowledgement and consideration of non-climate related hazards in SVG than in Dominica.

The thesis advances theoretical knowledge regarding the nexus between volcanic risk reduction and CCA in volcanic SIDS, especially the strategies which can address multiple hazards in this context. This combination has scarcely been examined in the literature previously. The thesis also extends the current body of knowledge on utilising mixed methodologies in dealing with disaster and volcanic risk reduction in concert with CCA. The findings have numerous implications for DRR and CCA policy in volcanic SIDS, especially considering addressing both simultaneously and their compound, cascading and complex effects.

3.6.6. Doris Atayi - School counselling in Small Island Developing States: The case of Seychelles

This study opens an opportunity to research the social implications of counselling in Seychelles. The research on counsellors' experiences takes on a sociocultural perspective, which considers that the school counsellors' journeys are part of a plurality of networks and social frameworks in a given social and historical context. This perspective also examines the transactions between the counsellors and their environment, which are played out in particular through daily and specific interactions. It highlights the centrality of social justice in the practice of counselling, as well as the importance of expanding professional horizons and the roles of counsellors to initiate systemic change in the context in which they work. The research aims to shed light on the origins and mutations of counselling practice and to provide a contemporary portrait of the profession of school counselling in Seychelles.

3.6.7. Georges Marc Nicette-Investigating Discourses on heroin Use and Users in a Small Island Developing State (SIDS): The case of Seychelles

Seychelles, a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) with Africa's highest GDP per capita, faces a severe heroin crisis, with the world's highest per capita use. Despite this, little is known about the complex realities of heroin use in Seychelles, as no qualitative sociological studies have been conducted. Existing research mainly reflects Western contexts, leaving a gap in understanding and hindering informed policy debates in island settings.

This study explores how problematic heroin use and users are constructed within Seychelles' unique socio-cultural environment. Using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA), I examine power relations and discourses shaping heroin practices, drawing on media texts, interviews with six former users, and insights from seven experts.

Findings reveal that Seychelles' intimate, close-knit society profoundly shapes perceptions and practices of heroin use. Five dominant discourses—medical, resource scarcity, political, stigmatising, and the 'wake up and be normal' narrative—frame users as deviant, ill, or morally failed, justifying surveillance, abstinence-based treatment, and exclusion. These narratives, rooted in the island's religious, cultural, and political context, reinforce stigma, limit privacy, and blur distinctions between use and problematic use. The study highlights the need for context-specific, inclusive strategies that address stigma and recognise the political dimensions of drug use, contributing new sociological insights to island drug scholarship.

3.6.8. Ruth Gutierrez-Corley - The Sustainability of Seaweed Aquaculture for Blue Growth and Climate Change Adaptation in Small Island Developing States (SIDS): The Case of Belize

This research explores the potential of seaweed farming as a sustainable livelihood strategy and adaptation measure in the context of climate change and blue economy. Using Belize as a case study, the research identifies current local adaptation practices among seaweed farmers and identifies significant capitals of the sustainable livelihoods framework contributing to a sustainable seaweed aquaculture to blue growth, food security, and resilience in Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

3.6.9. Vincenzo de Cancellis - Marine and terrestrial protected areas to foster climate change adaptation in islands: a sustainable livelihoods approach

This PhD project is part of the MEDiverSEAty European Doctoral Network, funded under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant, exploring the human dimensions of Mediterranean marine biodiversity.

In particular, this research intends to investigate the role of marine and terrestrial protected areas in supporting climate change adaptation (CCA) and well-being in Malta, focusing on 'Il-Majjistral' National Park. This research aims to identify key climate change hazards and examine how protected areas contribute to Malta's and the EU's CCA commitments. Using a sustainable livelihoods approach, the study will assess how protected areas in Malta can enhance livelihood resources and well-being among stakeholders and the wider population, including challenges and obstacles.

The project will employ mixed-methods, combining qualitative participatory focus groups, quantitative surveys, and spatial analysis. This approach will geo-locate hazards, identify livelihood resources, and evaluate measures promoting CCA through ecosystem restoration.

Outcomes are expected to contribute to climate change and development theories, particularly regarding livelihoods, well-being, and the planning and management of protected areas in small island states. Concurrently, findings aim to inform policy on climate change adaptation, environmental management, and communication strategies.

3.7. Research projects

3.7.1 SUNRISE - 'Situated Understanding of Resilience in Island Societies and Environments'

The ISSI was a partner in the project 'SUNRISE: Situated Understanding of Resilience in Island Societies and Environments', led by Birkbeck, University of London and financed by the UK NERC Global Partnerships Seedcorn Fund (GPSF). Other partners included the University of the Sunshine Coast, the University of the West Indies, and the University of Mauritius. The project has now been completed.

Through the establishment of an international, interdisciplinary collaboration on island climate resilience, SUNRISE addressed the following core issues:

- 1.) Approaches used in global and regional climate impact assessments are often poorly suited to relatively small islands and, especially, atoll countries, given the fundamental mismatches in the spatial scales of knowledge creation and decision-making and action.
- 2.) While the impact of climate change on island places is widely studied, far less attention has been given to the impacts of climate change on the fundamental characteristics of 'islandness', or to the consequences of these impacts as transnational and internal interdependence shifts in response to climate and non-climate forcing.

By applying their complementary skills and expertise, the research team worked on developing innovative approaches to overcome these empirical and conceptual gaps in how islandness is accounted for in data and methodological approaches typically used in climate impact assessments. SUNRISE piloted novel approaches to explore climate impacts and resilience in contexts not usually compared, including North Atlantic and Pacific islands, seeking to situate varied, place-based examples of climate impacts and resilient practice within the wider context of small islands.

The collaboration produced a number of tangible academic outputs, including a special issue in the *Small States and Territories Journal* (November 2021), a research paper in the climate change journal *WIREs*, and the highly cited paper ‘Understanding Islandness’.

Following the formal conclusion of the project, the SUNRISE partnership continues to generate academic impact through the preparation of further publications. In particular, research papers are currently being written based on fieldwork conducted in Trinidad and Tobago and in the Scottish islands, ensuring that the project’s conceptual and empirical contributions continue to inform island studies and climate resilience research beyond the project’s lifecycle.

3.7.2 Beyond Pandemics

The project “Beyond Pandemics: Improving climate resilience and health systems in small island states” received the Research Excellence Award in December 2021, financed by the University of Malta’s Internal Research Grants Programme. It commenced in March 2022 and was finalised during the Academic Year 2023/24, with final reports currently being submitted.

The project aimed to identify existing climate and public health risks, as well as resilience-building measures, in Small Island States (SIS), which are often disproportionately impacted by external shocks. A crisis such as COVID-19 severely affected the socio-economic fabric of many SIS, in many instances already challenged by limited financial capacity and infrastructure, long supply chains and looming climate change scenarios.

The research employed a mixed-methods approach, including participatory focus groups, elite interviews and household surveys, to assess health systems in the two small island states of Malta and Mauritius, investigating factors capable of increasing both climate and health resilience. The project also explored the adoption of a Planetary Health Approach, using a systematic perspective to link the environment and health systems in order to proactively address and overcome external shocks.

The project positioned itself within a growing area of research on the resilience of climate and health systems in a post-pandemic world. In light of uncertainties over the effectiveness of climate and public health measures undertaken by authorities to enhance resilience, the project demonstrated strong relevance and innovation. Its objective of mapping effective responses to climate and health crises in SIS offers valuable insights for national governments, with the potential to guide policy development at local level.

Internationally, the project also sought to support the work of the World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre (WHO-CC) in Health Systems and Policies in Small States, hosted by the ISSI of the University of Malta, as well as that of the Small States Health Platform and Climate Change Platform of the University of Malta, thereby reinforcing ISSI’s role at the interface of research, policy and practice.

3.7.3. Horizon Europe: MEDiverSEAty - In quest of the human dimensions of MEDiterranean Marine Biodiversity (HORIZON-MSCA-2022-DN-01)

MEDiverSEAty is a European Doctoral Network financed under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions of the Horizon Europe programme, investigating the human dimensions of Mediterranean marine

biodiversity. The project recognises that despite ongoing efforts to conserve biodiversity in the Mediterranean Sea, considerable gaps remain in the effective implementation of conservation measures. In particular, there is a lack of public understanding of the sea and an absence or oversimplification of ‘diversity’—in terms of cultures, roles, societies, attitudes and identities—as a key driver influencing Europeans’ relationship with marine biodiversity. To address these gaps, MEDiverSEAty brings together partners from six European countries (Italy, Malta, France, Spain, Montenegro and Greece) to implement an international, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral Doctoral Network Training and Research Programme that integrates both the human and biological dimensions of marine biodiversity conservation and advance Mediterranean Ocean Literacy.

The project’s doctoral training framework focuses on two core pillars essential to contemporary marine science, policy and education: Ocean Literacy and Marine Biodiversity Conservation. Through joint research in academic and non-academic settings, the programme will train 10 PhD candidates to form a community of early career researchers equipped to tackle the social, cultural, economic and ecological challenges of Mediterranean marine biodiversity governance.

During the reporting period September 2024 to August 2025, MEDiverSEAty progressed in both its research and training activities. A series of thematic training events were successfully organised to strengthen participants’ interdisciplinary knowledge and research skills:

- 1.) **Managing Your Doctoral Journey Successfully**, held in Malta (January 2025) — focusing on strategies and competencies for progressing through the PhD phase.
- 2.) **Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis: Techniques, Tools and Application**, delivered online (February 2025), providing methodological skills for synthesising complex bodies of literature.
- 3.) **Innovative Science-to-Policy Approaches: The Case of UNOC25**, held online (March 2025), exploring pathways for translating research into actionable governance frameworks.
- 4.) **The Gender Dimension of the Ocean**, conducted online (May 2025), integrating gender perspectives into marine science and policy analysis.
- 5.) **Data Collection and Analysis in Socio-Ecological Systems**, held in Lesvos (June 2025), focusing on empirical tools and approaches for socio-ecological research.

These training modules supported the doctoral network in bridging disciplinary boundaries and reinforcing capacities in theory, methodology and science-policy engagement.

In addition to training activities, MEDiverSEAty featured at public engagement and outreach platforms. The project participated in the EU Corner at the Science in the City Festival 2024, where it highlighted its work on integrating human and biological dimensions in Mediterranean marine biodiversity conservation alongside other Horizon Europe MSCA-funded projects.

MEDiverSEAty’s ongoing interdisciplinary research and training activities are expected to continue shaping scientific discourse and policy practice on Mediterranean marine biodiversity through the remainder of its implementation phase, which runs until 31 December 2027.

3.7.4. Vulnerability and Resilience Framework

For a number of years, under the leadership of the Institute's former Director, Prof. Lino Briguglio, the ISSI has been developing the Vulnerability and Resilience Framework, which seeks to explain why, in spite of their high economic vulnerability, many Small Island States (SISs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDSs) succeed economically. This research has shown that many small island states place major importance on policies that enable them to withstand structural vulnerabilities by building economic and social resilience. The Framework has been influential in academic and policy circles and continues to inform global discussions on vulnerability and resilience in small states and SIDS.

The Framework has been referenced by a number of international organisations in their work on small states and vulnerability, including within the Commonwealth's literature on small states and resilience building, which has emphasised the unique structural challenges faced by SIDS and the need for policy approaches that support resilience across economic, social and environmental dimensions.

During the reporting period, ISSI continued to advance the visibility and impact of the Vulnerability and Resilience Framework through strategic high-level engagement. Prof. Stefano Moncada, Director of the ISSI, was invited as a keynote speaker to the SIDS High-Level Meeting organised by the Government of Cabo Verde in collaboration with governments of Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea SIDS regions, where he presented insights into structural vulnerabilities and the role of resilience-enhancing governance for small island states.

As part of ongoing research activity, Prof. Briguglio and Prof. Moncada continue to work on updating the underlying indices and analytical dimensions of the Vulnerability and Resilience Framework with the most recent data, and to refine its applicability across different groups of small states and SIDS. This includes contributions to multidimensional vulnerability measurement efforts and engagement with academic and policy audiences at international fora.

3.7.5. ECO-HERITAGES: Cultural heritage to advance island states' sustainability

The EU-funded ECO-HERITAGES project investigates the role that cultural heritage plays in advancing local economic development and social and environmental resilience in Small Island States (SISs), Small Island Developing States (SIDSs) and Sub-National Island Jurisdictions (SNIJs). Small islands are characterised by small size, remoteness and exposure to climate change, including sea-level rise, which significantly impacts their economies and societies. Crossing anthropology, heritage, environment, development and island studies, the project integrates institutional heritagisation processes and indigenous knowledge systems in actions for sustainable futures.

During the reporting period September 2024 to August 2025, ECO-HERITAGES reached the final stages of its empirical research activities. The second half of August to the beginning of October was dedicated to fieldwork in the Indian Ocean, specifically in Mauritius, Mayotte and Comoros. These periods of ethnographic research closed the fieldwork phase of the project and were followed by several months dedicated to the preparation of the final comprehensive report and several specialised reports to be uploaded to the project management page.

Besides the final reports to be submitted to the European Commission, the project's research resulted in several academic publications. Two articles were published in May 2025: Pombo, Pedro and Stefano

Moncada (2025), “A systematic literature review on climate change and cultural heritage: The case of islands”, in *Small States and Territories* 8(1): 133–154; and Moncada, Stefano and Pedro Pombo (2025), “Editorial: locating cultural heritage and climate change in islands and small states”, in *Small States and Territories* 8(1): 127–132. In addition, two chapters for edited books are currently under review.

The project also originated diverse conference presentations and the organisation of conference sessions. By invitation, the team co-organised the side-event “The role of cultural heritage for sustainable development in SIDS and Island Territories” at the Global Sustainable Islands Summit in Saint Kitts and Nevis on 30 May 2025 (Pedro Pombo and Stefano Moncada). Pedro Pombo also delivered a lecture and workshop at the Johannes Gutenberg University (JGU) Mainz research group “Indian Ocean Confluences”, including the lecture “Heritage Ecologies: research on cultural heritage and climate change in Small Island Territories” and the workshops “Islands of Memory: landscape, heritage and environmental change in small insular territories in the African Indian Ocean”, held on 9 and 10 January 2025.

Further dissemination activities included participation in the webinar “Unlocking Key Potential. Research-driven innovations in education”, organised by Science in the City, the University of Malta and the University of the Highlands and Islands on 30 May, as well as an invited speaker role at the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF) proposal writing masterclass, PF2MT, organised by Xjenza Malta on 18 June 2025.

The project also featured in peer-reviewed academic meetings, notably with the presentation by Pedro Pombo and Stefano Moncada entitled “Insular heritage ecologies. Climate change action, cultural heritages and local knowledge systems” at the International Conference Islands and Island Studies 2025, organised by JICAS, Shima and SICRI in Jersey Island on 6 June 2025.

The ECO-HERITAGES project officially ended on 12 February 2025. Nevertheless, further publications and activities are planned for the dissemination and communication of the research, including the preparation of two book proposals, ensuring the continued visibility and impact of the project’s results beyond its formal conclusion.

4. Publications

The publications listed below are an extract of the most significant publications of some of the academic staff based at, or who collaborate with, the ISSI.

4.1. Prof. Lino Briguglio

Edited Book

- Briguglio, L., Avellino, M., & Butcher, J. (Eds.). (in press). *Overtourism in Cities and Small Islands* (20 chapters). Routledge UK.

Book Chapter

- Briguglio, L., Avellino, M., & Butcher, J. (in press). Introduction: Overtourism in Cities and Small Islands. In F. Bezzina, M. Avellino, & J. Butcher (Eds.), *Overtourism in Cities and Small Islands* (20 chapters). Routledge UK.
- Briguglio, L. (in press). Malta's Economy. In *Western Europe* (2025 ed.). Europa Publications/Routledge.
- Briguglio, L. (in press). Overtourism in Western Europe: Issues and prospects. In *Western Europe* (2025 ed.). Europa Publications/Routledge.

4.2. Dr Pedro Pombo

Journal Article

- Pombo, P. (2025). *Macao, from the ocean to the archives: maritime routes, emigration and heritage in the Mascarenes*. *Review of Culture*, (77), 67–96.
- Pombo, P., & Moncada, S. (2025). A systematic literature review on climate change and cultural heritage: The case of islands. *Small States and Territories*, 8(1), 133–154.

Journal Editorial

- Pombo, P., & Moncada, S. (2025). Editorial: locating cultural heritage and climate change in islands and small states. *Small States and Territories*, 8(1), 127–132.

4.3. Prof. Stefano Moncada

Journal Articles

- Moncada, S., & Sobral Pombo, P. M. (2025). Editorial: Locating cultural heritage and climate change in islands and small states. *Small States & Territories*, 8(1), 127–132.

- Pombo, P. M. S., & Moncada, S. (2025). Culturally appropriate? A review of the literature concerning the interaction between climate change and heritage in islands. *Small States & Territories*, 8(1), 133–154.
- Gutierrez-Corley, R., Moncada, S., & Deidun, A. (2025). Sustainable blue economy practices in seaweed farming, Belize: Cultural heritage and climate resilience in a Small Island Developing State. *Small States & Territories*, 8(1), 189–204.

Book Chapter

- Moncada, S., Djoundourian, S., Kholeif, S., Camilleri Fenech, M., Drius, M., Spagnuolo, F. (2024) 'Sustainable Development Pathways'. In: MedECC Special Assessment Report, Climate and Environmental Coastal Risks in the Mediterranean [Djoundourian, S., Lionello, P., Llasat, M.C.(eds.)] Union for the Mediterranean, Plan Bleu, UNEP/MAP, Marseille, France, pp. 156-189.

4.4. Small States and Territories Journal (SST)

Vol. 7, No. 2 was published in November 2024 and it included a Special Section on “Public Administration and crisis governance in small states” bringing together four articles on crisis governance in small states. The guest editorial was penned by Külli Sarapuu and Marlene Jugl, and it presents the articles and discusses common themes emerging across the very diverse study settings. The four articles deal with the diplomatic dilemmas of small states from the Global South in the area of autonomous weapons systems, policy governance challenges faced by Palau during the COVID-19 pandemic, priorities and procedures shaping subnational climate adaptation finance allocation in the Seychelles, and robust crisis governance during COVID-19 in the Faroe Islands make up the special section.

The regular section included three articles, one on young people’s perceptions of housing access in Madeira, another on cross-party dialogue in Cabo Verde and the third about the adaptive capacity and sargassum management in Caribbean small subnational island jurisdictions. The issue also presented reviews of seven books.

Vol. 8, No. 1 was published in May 2025 with a Special Section from a symposium marking the ten-year anniversary of Veenendaal and Corbett’s (2015) seminal piece, ‘Why small states offer important answers to large questions’. Featuring 24 interdisciplinary contributions, the symposium explores how small states contribute meaningfully to major debates in political science, international relations, public administration, law, health, education, and beyond, challenging theoretical orthodoxies, enriching comparative insights, and offering scalable models of innovation and resilience. The contributions are organised around four themes: Revisiting the canon: power, agency, and theory-building; Rethinking statehood, sovereignty, and the international legal order; Resilience, innovative governance, and institutional learning; and Representation, rights, and social transformation. They illustrate how smallness is both constraint and catalyst.

Another three articles in the regular section deal with marine conservation trust funds and the experience of the Seychelles, the dynamics of exclusion within the Eurovision Song Contest and the mechanisms that preclude 'sub-state units' from participating, and a systemic analysis of media coverage of a particular influenza outbreak in 1957 in Malta. The book review section presented analyses on eight books.

4.5. Occasional Papers

The Occasional Series in Islands and Small States Studies has been active since 1994. During the period under review, the following two papers were published:

"Recent trends in the United States and Caribbean trade relations" authored by Winston Dookeran, Andres Valenciano and Daniel E. Perrotti.

This paper examines recent trends in United States-Caribbean trade relations (2021–2024), highlighting persistent structural asymmetries and limited diversification. Goods exchanges remain concentrated in energy, transportation, and food, while services are dominated by tourism, leaving the region vulnerable to external shocks. Using concentration measures, the study confirms high dependence on a narrow range of products and partners. While identifying emerging opportunities in digital services, renewable energy, and the blue economy, it underscores the need for comprehensive strategies to foster resilience. A companion paper by the same authors complements this analysis by outlining policy proposals to address these vulnerabilities.

"United States-Caribbean trade relations : geopolitical challenges, economic dynamics and policy pathways" authored by Winston Dookeran, Andres Valenciano and Daniel E. Perrotti.

The U.S.-Caribbean relationship sits at a crossroads. As power shifts to a multipolar world, Caribbean states are moving from dependency to strategic multi-alignment to protect autonomy and widen partnerships. Despite decades of trade preferences, economies remain narrow and vulnerable to shocks; COVID-19 has accelerated the pivot. We offer a six-pillar framework - export diversification, regional integration, and institutional strengthening among them - to recalibrate ties while honouring sovereignty. The analysis shows how small states can reshape partnerships for stability and shared prosperity, and how renewed U.S.-Caribbean cooperation can build regional resilience in an interdependent era.

5. Outreach and Communication

In this section the ISSI's main outreach and communication activities are listed, and links to the specific events provided. The ISSI aims to publicise both its events and those organised by colleagues in Malta and outside, in order to increase the visibility of islands and small states studies.

5.1. Webinars

During the Academic Year 2024/25, the ISSI held five seminars and webinars, hosting speakers from the University of Malta as well as international partner institutions as main speakers.

As coordinator of the University's Small States Health Platform (SSHP) and host of the World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre (WHO-CC) in Health Systems and Policies in Small States, on 28 November 2024, the ISSI held a webinar titled **"Epidemiological insights from Malta: COVID-19 trends, vaccination impact, and lessons for future global preparedness"**. This webinar examined the epidemiological impact of COVID-19 on Malta, a small island nation with distinct healthcare challenges. It covered Malta's pandemic trends, the direct and indirect burden on the population and healthcare system, along with the outcomes of its rapid vaccination campaign. Comparisons were made with other European islands and microstates, highlighting key differences in response strategies. The event further addressed how the pandemic exposed health inequalities, particularly in non-communicable disease care, due to service disruptions. Key lessons from Malta were discussed and recommendations for future pandemic preparedness, focusing on resilient healthcare systems and public health surveillance, shared.



L-Università ta' Malta
Islands & Small States Institute

Webinar: "Epidemiological insights from Malta: COVID-19 trends, vaccination impact, and lessons for future global preparedness"

28th November 2024 | 2pm to 3pm CET

Zoom registration: <https://bit.ly/epidemiological-insights-MT>



Speaker
Dr Sarah Cuschieri, MD, PhD

This webinar will examine the epidemiological impact of COVID-19 on Malta, covering its pandemic trends, the direct and indirect burden on the population and healthcare system, along with the outcomes of its rapid vaccination campaign. Comparisons will be made with other European islands and microstates, highlighting key differences in response strategies.

Picture 17. Poster for the webinar "Epidemiological insights from Malta: COVID-19 trends, vaccination impact, and lessons for future global preparedness"

The event's speaker **Dr Sarah Cuschieri** is an epidemiologist specialising in the epidemiology of non-communicable diseases. She graduated as a medical doctor in 2011 and embarked on an academic and research career at the University of Malta in 2013. In 2023, she became an Adjunct Research Professor with the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Western University, Canada, and Vice-President of the Chronic Diseases Section of the European Public Health Association (EUPHA). She holds a PhD in Epidemiology from the University of Malta and a postgraduate Diploma and Masters in Diabetes Mellitus type 2 from Cardiff University, where she received a silver award of excellence. In recognition of her leadership and academic contributions, she received the TOYP Academic Leadership Award in 2021 and became a fellow of AdvanceHE in 2024. Dr Cuschieri has consistently ranked among the top 2% of most-cited scientists globally (2020-2023). She is currently the principal investigator of the Horizon Europe Project RAPIDE and is involved in numerous research collaborations focusing on non-communicable diseases, small European states, and Long COVID.

On 3 February 2025, the ISSI invited to a seminar and webinar titled **"Resisting Nuclear Colonialism through Memorialisation: Nuclear Justice Education and Awareness in the Pacific"**. As part of the event, the short film **"In Exile"** (2023) by Director Nathan Finch was also screened.



L-Università ta' Malta
Islands & Small States Institute

Seminar/Webinar: "Resisting Nuclear Colonialism through Memorialisation: Nuclear Justice Education and Awareness in the Pacific"

Incl. screening of the short film "In Exile" (2023) by Director Nathan Finch



Speaker

Dr Milla Vaha

Senior Lecturer of Politics and International Affairs at the
University of the South Pacific

Picture 18. Zoom poster for the webinar/seminar "Resisting Nuclear Colonialism through Memorialisation: Nuclear Justice Education and Awareness in the Pacific"

The event explored the requirements for nuclear justice in the post-colonial context, focusing on memorialisation. As an important element of nuclear justice, memorialisation provides societies with ways to educate their people on this widely ignored part of world history. By looking at education and awareness initiatives developed in the Marshall Islands as an example, the webinar/seminar illustrated the importance of memorialisation in contesting nuclear colonialism and hegemonic history.

The event's speaker **Dr Milla Vaha** is a Senior Lecturer of Politics and International Affairs at the University of the South Pacific.

On 29 April 2025, Justin Whittle, ISSI's doctoral fellow of the project MEDiverSEAty, funded under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions of the European Commission's Horizon Europe, facilitated a webinar titled "**Citizen Science in Malta for Marine Restoration**".



L-Università ta' Malta
Islands & Small States Institute

MEDiverSEAty

ONE MILLION ACTS OF SCIENCE
— CITIZEN SCIENCE MONTH —

Webinar: "Malta's Marine Citizen Science"

📅 29th April 2025 | 4pm to 5pm CEST
📍 Zoom registration: [ADD ZOOM/BITLY LINK HERE](#)

um.edu.mt/issi @um.islands @UMislands @ummalta

Come join and celebrate 'World Citizen Science Month' in April with us by joining a special webinar to discuss the contribution of Citizen Science in Malta for the protection and conservation of marine ecosystem. Don't miss this fantastic opportunity to learn more about the incredible marine work occurring here in Mediterranean Sea in Malta.

Host: Justin Whittle, MPhil and MEDiverSEAty (MSCA-DN) Doctoral Candidate for Marine Citizen Science at the Islands and Small States Institute, University of Malta.

Funded by the European Union

Picture 19. Poster for the webinar "Citizen Science in Malta for Marine Restoration"

Celebrating 'World Citizen Science Month' in April, the event discussed the contribution of Citizen Science in Malta towards the protection and restoration of marine ecosystems. It featured presentations from leading citizen science campaigns in Malta, including SharkLab, EcoMarine Malta, Discover the Blu, Ċirkewwa Marine Park and the Oceanography Malta Research Group (OMRG). The session concluded with an engaging roundtable discussion.

The fourth seminar and webinar of the academic year 2024-2025 was held on 5 May, focusing on "**Islands, Islanders and the Geography of Happiness and Well-being**" and co-organised by the ISSI together with the Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy (FEMA). Its speaker was Prof. Dimitris Ballas, Full Professor, Chair of Economic Geography in the Faculty of Spatial Sciences at the University of Groningen, Director of the Erasmus Mundus international master programme Islands and Sustainability, and academic lead of the Islands and Sustainability Lab of the Rudolf Agricola School for Sustainable Development.



L-Università ta' Malta
Islands & Small States Institute



L-Università ta' Malta
Faculty of Economics,
Management & Accountancy

Department
of Economics

Seminar: *"Islands, Islanders and the Geography of Happiness and Well-being"*

📅 5th May 2025 | 2.30pm to 4pm CEST

📍 Venue: UM Msida Campus, IT Services, Room: VC 101
& online: bit.ly/Geography-of-Happiness (Zoom registration)



Speaker

Prof. Dimitris Ballas, PhD
University of Groningen

This presentation explores how island characteristics like insularity and remoteness influence happiness and well-being, revisiting spatial economics literature and recent research. It draws on the Erasmus Mundus "Islands and Sustainability" programme and analyses European data to assess whether island living positively impacts happiness despite economic disadvantages, with relevant policy implications.

Picture 20. Poster for the seminar/webinar "Islands, Islanders and the Geography of Happiness and Well-being"

Prof. Ballas' presentation highlighted ongoing work and statistical analysis of suitable secondary data in Europe, including most of the variables that are thought to be associated with subjective well-being measures. It went on to examine whether and the extent to which insularity and living on an island may have a statistically significant impact on happiness when compared to mainland areas. To that end, the presentation also considered a number of attributes of islands that are typically considered as negative from a regional economic performance perspective – mostly relating to remoteness and poor accessibility to the mainland – but which might be considered as positive in terms of happiness and well-being, as is also evident by the popularity of many remote islands as tourist destinations. Furthermore, the seminar discussed the policy implications of the analysis.

On 6 May 2025, the ISSI, in collaboration with the Institute for Sustainable Energy of the University of Malta, held its final seminar/webinar for the academic year, titled **"The significance of biomass in a circular economy and in the sustainable development of Small Islands: recent advancements in biofuel technologies"**. The event assessed the significance of biomass in a circular economy through the review of the main technologies for biogas production from biomass and its function as a green energy feedstock in the Mediterranean Area. It further presented the latest experimental results achieved at the IIE Lab of the Polytechnic University of Valencia (Spain), before carrying out a comparative analysis between biomass gasification in bubbling bed gasifier and downdraft fixed bed. New perspectives of an energy transition based on the third generation of biofuels were also provided by analysing their benefits and existing barriers. The event ended by discussing the sustainable actions carried out by EU countries to promote decarbonised energy system and biomass-based energy communities with a special focus on small islands applications.



L-Università ta' Malta
Islands & Small States Institute



L-Università ta' Malta
Institute for Sustainable Energy

Seminar: "The significance of biomass in a circular economy and in the sustainable development of Small Islands: recent advancements in biofuel technologies"

6th May 2025 | 2.30pm to 4pm CEST

Venue: UM Msida Campus, IT Services, Room: VC 101
& online: <https://bit.ly/biofuel-technologies> (Zoom registration)



Speaker
Prof. Lina Montuori, PhD
Universitat Politècnica de Valencia

This seminar explores the role of biomass in the circular economy, focusing on biogas technologies and green energy in the Mediterranean. It presents findings from the IIE Lab of the Polytechnic University of Valencia (Spain), compares gasification methods, examines third-generation biofuels, and reviews EU actions for decarbonisation, with emphasis on small island applications and energy communities.

Picture 21. Poster for the seminar/webinar "The significance of biomass in a circular economy and in the sustainable development of Small Islands: recent advancements in biofuel technologies"

The seminar's speaker was Prof. Lina Montuori, she is senior researcher at the Institute for Energy Engineering (IIE) where she leads a team of 5 PhD researchers in the research fields of renewable energies, AI-based energy efficiency, ports and terminal decarbonisation, natural gas and smart metering.

5.2. Articles (newspapers, Newspoint)

During the academic year 2024/2025, the ISSI and its members were featured in a number of news items and outlets, ranging from the University's own Newspoint information portal to national and international publications. Whilst a comprehensive list of article links is found below, here are some highlights:

"Climate change will hit Malta hard. Here is what we can do"

Malta should focus on nature-based solutions rather than costly engineering fixes to tackle rising temperatures, according to Prof. Stefano Moncada, Director of the Islands and Small States Institute at the University of Malta. Responding to a study predicting Malta will suffer the highest increase in heat-related deaths in the EU under a 3°C global temperature rise, Prof. Moncada calls for urgent, practical action grounded in nature. He highlights that planting more trees and replacing concrete with soil can reduce urban temperatures by as much as 1-2°C, a difference he says is often underestimated. However, these solutions remain largely overlooked, as shown by excessive tree pruning across the country, which he sees as a sign of limited awareness around the cooling benefits of green infrastructure.

Prof. Moncada further proposes improving building standards to manage sun exposure more effectively — measures he notes have been studied but not implemented in Malta. He also stresses the need for behavioural changes, such as restricting outdoor work during periods of extreme heat, echoing practices in countries like Australia. These changes, he says, will require cooperation from public and private sectors, along with social partners. As a small island state, Malta is particularly vulnerable to climate change, Prof. Moncada warns, due to its high exposure and limited economic means to adapt. He insists that environmental changes are already underway, and action cannot be delayed.

Ref.: <https://timesofmalta.com/article/climate-change-hit-malta-hard-here.1097500>

"Malta ranked 15th as country that shows high risk of climate change harm: study"

Malta ranks 15th out of 190 countries most at risk from climate change, according to the Climate Vulnerability and Resilience Index (COVRI), unveiled at COP29. Developed by the Government of Malta in collaboration with the University of Malta's Islands and Small States Institute and the Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States, COVRI provides a comprehensive framework to assess and compare climate risks and resilience, with a particular focus on Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Despite ongoing efforts, countries like Malta face disproportionately high costs in building climate resilience. Malta ranks 23rd in resilience performance, yet achieving this has proven financially burdensome—a challenge often overlooked by donors and international institutions.

Environment Minister Miriam Dalli and Malta's Ambassador for Climate Action, Simone Borg, underscored the urgency of climate adaptation for small states dependent on vulnerable coastal economies.

Prof. Moncada stressed that COVRI marks a significant advancement by addressing shortcomings in traditional indicators like Gross National Income per capita, which fail to reflect the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS. He highlighted that COVRI introduces standardised, replicable metrics to help policymakers monitor progress, identify areas of risk, and strengthen national resilience strategies.

Ref.: <https://timesofmalta.com/article/malta-ranked-15th-country-shows-high-risk-climate-change-harm-study.1100977>

"Foreign Ministry to increase scholarships for students from developing countries, war-torn regions"

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism, Ian Borg, has reaffirmed Malta's commitment to education as a tool for sustainable development and peace, announcing an expansion of postgraduate scholarships for students from developing countries and conflict-affected regions. During a visit to the University of Malta and the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC), he met with international scholarship recipients supported through Malta's Official Development Assistance (ODA). This year marks a record number of scholarships awarded, with €265,000 invested in 16 postgraduate students studying subjects such as diplomacy, sustainable

development, conflict resolution, and humanitarian action. The scholarship programme will grow further in the 2025/26 academic year.

Particular emphasis was placed on the University of Malta's Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI), which also benefits from the Ministry's support. The Ministry is funding specialised Master's and PhD scholarships at ISSI for students from Small Island Developing States (SIDS), as part of Malta's wider commitment to supporting SIDS through international cooperation and research.

The University's Rector, Professor Alfred J. Vella, welcomed the continued investment and stressed the importance of such initiatives in building a diverse and globally connected alumni community. The scholarships, he noted, not only provide educational opportunities but also promote the exchange of knowledge and skills, especially in areas facing development challenges.

MEDAC Director Professor Stephen Calleya described the visit as an inspiring opportunity for students to engage directly with high-level diplomacy and international policymaking.

Ref.: <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2025-04-05/local-news/Foreign-Ministry-to-increase-scholarships-for-students-from-developing-countries-war-torn-regions-6736269127>

Table 4. List of articles featuring the ISSI

Date	Media	Title	Weblink
03 September 2024	Times of Malta	We need sustainable tourism	https://timesofmalta.com/article/we-need-sustainable-tourism.1097569
04 September 2024	Times of Malta	We need sustainable tourism	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/we-need-sustainable-tourism.1097569
07 September 2024	Times of Malta	Climate change will hit Malta hard. Here is what we can do	https://timesofmalta.com/article/climate-change-hit-malta-hard-here.1097500
07 October 2024	Times of Malta	Malta's Climate Action Authority launched	https://timesofmalta.com/article/malta-climate-action-authority-launched.1099125
10 October 2024	Times of Malta	Isn't it time to start focusing on life beyond our wallets?	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/budgets-breakfast.1099202
16 October 2024	Newspoint	Lino Briguglio - No Man Is An Island Book Launch	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2024/10/lino-briguglio-book-launch
09 November 2024	Times of Malta	Supporting small island developing states	https://timesofmalta.com/article/supporting-small-island-developing-states.1100715
09 November 2024	Times of Malta	Budget 2025: We asked five experts about the bigger picture	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/budget-2025-we-asked-five-experts-bigger-picture.1100513

13 November 2024	Times of Malta	Malta ranked 15th as country that shows high risk of climate change harm: study	https://timesofmalta.com/article/malta-ranked-15th-country-shows-high-risk-climate-change-harm-study.1100977
13 November 2024	MaltaToday	Malta presents Climate Vulnerability and Resilience Index at COP29	https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/132270/malta_presents_climate_vulnerability_and_resilience_index_at_cop29
17 November 2024	Newspoint	Webinar: Epidemiological insights from Malta	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2024/11/webinar-epidemiological-insights-from-malta-issi
18 November 2024	Times of Malta	My little dream for Malta	https://timesofmalta.com/article/my-little-dream-malta.1101182
03 December 2024	Newspoint	Island Legacies Conference	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2025/06/island-legacies-conference
05 January 2025	Times of Malta	What six leading figures are predicting for 2025	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/what-six-leading-figures-predicting-2025.1103289
21 January 2025	Newspoint	Minister of Curaçao Visits UM Rector	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2025/01/minister-of-curacao-visits-um-rector
24 January 2025	Newspoint	ISSI Researchers Share MSCA Experience on SmartTalks Podcast	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2025/01/issi-researchers-share-msca-experience-smarttalks-podcast
28 January 2025	Newspoint	Prof. Briguglio's Book Presentation to Rector	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2025/01/prof.briguglios-book-presentation-to-rector
28 January 2025	Newspoint	Resisting Nuclear Colonialism through Memorialisation: Nuclear Justice Education and Awareness in the Pacific	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2025/02/resisting-nuclear-colonialism-through-memorialisation
02 February 2025	The Malta Independent	A man larger than his island	https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2025-02-02/newspaper-lifestyleculture/A-man-larger-than-his-island-6736267503?utm_source=chatgpt.com
03 February 2025	Times of Malta	'Vision 2050' – where do we go from here?	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/vision-2050-go-here.1104499
23 February 2025	Times of Malta	Small islander, but no Lilliputian	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/small-islander-no-lilliputian.1105479
03 March 2025	Times of Malta	Gender equality and the economy	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/gender-equality-economy.1105846

07 March 2025	Newspoint	Unlocking key potential: Research-driven innovations in education	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2025/05/unlocking-key-potential-webinar
08 March 2025	Times of Malta	Women changing science: today and in the future	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/women-changing-science-today-future.1106227
15 March 2025	Times of Malta	Call for social pact to boost family-friendly measures	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/call-social-pact-boost-familyfriendly-measures.1106302
20 March 2025	Times of Malta	One in three people live in noisy neighbourhoods - study	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/one-three-people-live-noisy-neighbourhoods-study.1106862
29 March 2025	Times of Malta	Well-being in Malta: Sweet averages mask our sour inequalities	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/wellbeing-malta-sweet-averages-mask-sour-inequalities.1107207
05 April 2025	The Malta Independent	Foreign Ministry to increase scholarships for students from developing countries, war-torn regions	https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2025-04-05/local-news/Foreign-Ministry-to-increase-scholarships-for-students-from-developing-countries-war-torn-regions-6736269127
08 April 2025	Times of Malta	Maldives foreign minister discusses relations in Malta visit	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/maldives-foreign-minister-discusses-relations-malta-visit.1107830
08 April 2025	Times of Malta	US tariff uncertainty looms larger than direct impact on Malta	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/us-tariff-uncertainty-looms-larger-direct-impact.1107807
22 April 2025	Newspoint	Webinar: Citizen Science in Malta for Marine Restoration	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2025/04/webinar-citizen-science-malta-marine-restoration
23 April 2025	Times of Malta	Editorial: People are not just economic contributors	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/editorial-people-economic-contributors.1108526
25 April 2025	Newspoint	Islands, Islanders and the Geography of Happiness and Well-being	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2025/05/islands-islanders-and-geography-happiness-and-well-being
25 April 2025	Newspoint	The significance of biomass in a circular economy and in the sustainable development of Small Islands	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2025/05/seminar-and-webinar-by-prof-lina-montuori-6-may-2025
15 May 2025	Newspoint	One Ocean, One Planet: Celebrating Biodiversity through the Human Dimension	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2025/05/one-ocean-one-planet-celebrating-human-dimension

22 May 2025	St. Vincent Times	St Kitts to Host Global Sustainable Islands Summit	https://www.stvincenttimes.com/st-kitts-to-host-global-sustainable-islands-summit/
27 May 2025	Newspoint	ISSI Contributes to SIDS High-Level Meeting in Cabo Verde	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2025/05/issi-contributes-sids-high-level-meeting-cabo-verde
02 June 2025	ODI Global	Call for Nominations: Certificate in Advanced Knowledge for SIDS Global Leadership	https://odi.org/en/about/our-work/resilient-islands/call-for-nominations-certificate-in-advanced-knowledge-for-sids-global-leadership/
07 June 2025	Times of Malta	Malta's future, the financial sector and well-being	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/malta-future-financial-sector-wellbeing.1110974
13 July 2025	Times of Malta	Beyond the beach: Malta's masterclass in tourism governance	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/beyond-beach-malta-masterclass-tourism-governance.1112933
17 July 2025	Newspoint	Australian High Commissioner visits the Islands and Small States Institute	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2025/07/australian-high-commisioner-visits-issi
28 November 2025	Times of Malta	Construction and well-being	https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/construction-wellbeing.1101627

5.3. Social media activities

The Institute continued to publicise and disseminate information about its academic activities and outputs through its social media channels. It is now also present on the professional networking platform LinkedIn and is in the process of establishing profiles on other social media channels such as Bluesky and Instagram. The articles published in the Small States and Territories Journal continued to be disseminated on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

ISSI also promoted its postgraduate programmes at relevant points during the year in order to attract more researchers hailing from SIDS and those who have an acute interest in island and small state studies. Moreover, it also used its social media channels to publicise webinars and conferences it organised, as well as other events that featured contributions by its staff.

6. Collaborations

The ISSI actively promotes collaboration with public and private entities to increase visibility and reach of its teaching and research activities, as well as the mainstream of islands and small states studies.

6.1 Collaboration with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

6.1.1. Scholarships for ISSI students coming from small island developing states

In 2020, the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Islands and Small States Institute in 2020, affirming the institutions' shared commitment to promote the interests of small states at the local and international level, and to strengthening Malta's central role in this regard. As part of the MoU, the Ministry committed to fund scholarships for students hailing from small states and seeking to further their studies at Institute. During the academic year 2023/24, two ISSI postgraduate students benefited from these scholarships, namely Ms. Juzel Lloyd, from Jamaica, and Ms. Stacey Alvarez de la Campa, from St Vincent and the Grenadines.

6.1.2. Support to the MFET's UN Mission in New York concerning small island developing states (SIDS)

The Islands and Small States Institute has proudly supported the work of Prof. Lino Briguglio who was nominated by the United Nations General Assembly as one of the 11 experts that developed a 'Multidimensional Vulnerability Index', following a prompt by AOSIS and many SIDS to create additional metrics to allocate concessional funding. The ISSI provided Prof. Briguglio with the necessary support to continue the excellent work that Malta, through the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade and Malta's Mission at the UN in New York, has been conducting in the past years.

6.2 Collaboration with the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States

Dr Moncada was entrusted by the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) to develop a Multidimensional Vulnerability and Resilience Index to discuss if, and to what extent, parameters associated to vulnerability and resilience are considered within donor institutions, especially in the realm of concessional funding. The OMVRI was developed to first identify key indicators according to economic, social, environmental and political pillars, and then abide by desirable attributes of a composite index, called "STAR", which stands for Simplicity, Transparency, Affordability and Reproducibility.

6.3 Collaboration with the University of Cagliari

The University of Malta, following the initiative taken by the Islands and Small States Institute signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Cagliari Play, in an ad-hoc ceremony

held at the University of Malta in connection to research collaborations on the theme of insularity. The ceremony was attended by the Director of ISSI, who delivered the MoU originally signed by the Rector, Prof. Alfred Vella, and Prof. Aldo Berlinguer, Professor of Law at the University of Cagliari. The two institutions are planning further collaboration in the area of postgraduate supervisions, examination processes, especially Masters and PhD, and consortiums to apply for research grants in the area of sustainability science applied to islands.

Annexes

Annex 1: List of ISSI students and their dissertation titles

MA Students		
Rickie	Claude Morain	<i>The Management of the Blue Economy in the Eastern Caribbean Small Island States: A focus on Grenada</i>
Ifeanyi Godwin	Clement	<i>Climate Change Adaptation and the Role of Civil Society Organisations in the Mediterranean</i>
Osmar Gil Rocha Brigham	Ferro	<i>The performance of the Cruise Tourism industry in St Vincent Island and recommendations for service improvement post Covid-19</i>
Alana	Fiafia Richmond-Rex	<i>Banning single use plastic in small island developing states: Assessing the impact on Niue</i>
Nandini Tanya	Lallmon	<i>Dissonances between policy framework and customary practice in gender equality of Small Island Developing States: The case of LGBTQI+ rights in Mauritius</i>
Marie Michele Audrey	Tolbize Ravina	<i>Agroecology and Food Sovereignty in Small Island Developing States: The case of Rodrigues Island</i>
Stacey Natasha	Alvarez De La Campa	<i>Integrating Indigenous and community-based climate change adaptation in Eastern Caribbean small island developing states: The case of St. Vincent and the Grenadines</i>
Berdina Cornelia	Berendse	<i>Recycling plastic practices in the Dutch Kingdom: Contrasting PET usage in the Netherlands and Curacao</i>
Quan	Chen	<i>Citizenship by Investment Schemes from China in the Small Island States of Malta and Antigua: A regulatory perspective</i>
Zena	Kontou	<i>Challenges facing agriculture in Cyprus in the last two decades</i>
Juzel	Lloyd	<i>Overcoming barriers to clean energy sources in Caribbean small island developing states: Jamaica as a case study</i>
Aiyush	Prasad	<i>Climate Vulnerabilities in Small Island Developing States: A Case Study of Wainibuku Hart Community, Fiji</i>
Chestha	Hoolash	<i>Development of Sustainable and Inclusive Heritage Tourism in Small Island Developing States: The case of Historical Village of Vieux Grand Port in Mauritius</i>
Daniel	Cole	<i>Customary and tenure, environmental protection and community decision-making in Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands</i>
Emily	Gibb	<i>Public Transport in Island States: Key Factors for Success from Malta</i>
Maisa	Desena	<i>Youth and Ocean Literacy for Climate Change action in SIDS: the case of Cabo Verde</i>

PhD Students (1st year 2024/2025)		
Vincenzo	de Cancellis	<i>Marine and terrestrial protected areas to foster climate change adaptation in islands: a sustainable livelihoods approach</i>
Justin Neil	Whittle	<i>Economics and Citizen Science: Insight for ecosystem restoration in Island Marine and Terrestrial Protected Areas</i>
PhD Students (2nd year 2024/2025)		
Jwala	Rambarran	<i>Innovative Financing for Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) -Tackling the Twin Crises of Debt and Climate Change</i>
PhD Students (3rd year 2024/2025)		
Colin	Mattis	<i>Climate Change Adaptation Frameworks and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Small Island Developing States"</i>
Marie Stephania	Perrine	<i>Climate Change Adaptation among coastal communities in Small Islands Developing States: The case of adaptive capacity in Rodrigues'</i>
Ben	Biedermann	<i>Disseminating Technocratic Narratives: Public policies on digital infrastructure in small jurisdictions</i>
Jean	Alcindor	<i>A Socio Economic Analysis of the Agricultural Sector in the Small Island States of the Indian Ocean: Implication for Education and Training Development in Seychelles</i>
PhD Students (4th year 2024/2025)		
Doris Anna	Atayi	<i>School Counselling in SIDS: The Case of Seychelles</i>
Allanson Winston Timothy	Cruickshank	<i>Volcanic Risk Reduction in the Face of Multiple Hazards in Caribbean SIDS: A focus on Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</i>
Claire	Gauci	<i>Building Resilience to Extreme Events in Small Island States Nudging Nutrition</i>
Ruth Julianna	Gutierrez-Corley	<i>The Sustainability of Seaweed Aquaculture for Blue Growth and Climate Change Adaptation in SIDS: The Case of Belize</i>
Angelique Louise Marie	Pouponneau	<i>Legal Instruments to Foster the Blue Economy in Small Island States</i>
Malshini Louendra	Senaratne	<i>Blue Carbon Markets in SIDS: Community Participation and the Case of Seychelles</i>
Jordan Kymani	Williams	<i>Explorations of social suffering and violence in a bipartisan political context: The case of Jamaica</i>
PhD Students (advanced)		
Georges Marc	Nicette	<i>Understanding Lived Experiences of Former Heroin Users in SIDS</i>