



**L-Università
ta' Malta**

**Islands & Small States
Institute**

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

Annual Report

Academic Year 2022/23

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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 2022/2023 successfully contributed to consolidate the objectives of the Strategic Plan set by the UM, especially focusing on the themes of I. Learning and Teaching; II. Research and Knowledge Transfer; V. National Impact; VI. International Outlook; and VII. Sustainability. The international nature of the institute and its position as a centre of excellence in islands and small states studies was reaffirmed by the success in obtaining prestigious EU and International research grants.

The ISSI continued to cooperate with many other centres, institutes, departments, at the UM, contributing to enrich interdisciplinary collaborations, both in teaching and research. ISSI's Doctoral and Masters programmes both experienced an increase in the number, and the quality, of students, also increasing the number of joint supervisions and collaborations.

I am certain that the good foundations laid in these years will allow the ISSI to build even stronger future trajectories, contributing to the overall development of students, academic staff and the University at large.

Dr Stefano Moncada - Director

The academic year 2022/23 represented a further period of expansion for the Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI), for our teaching, research, international recognition and outreach. The number of students in the Master by research and the Doctoral Programme, continued to steadily increase, by also consolidating the cooperation with other and centres, institutes, departments, schools at the UM, thus truly embracing the interdisciplinary nature of islands and small states studies. The total number of doctoral students enrolled with the ISSI increased to 12. The rich diversity of backgrounds and countries of origin of the new cohorts continue to make the Institute among the most international looking entities at the University of Malta, reaffirming the interdisciplinary nature of the ISSI and its capacity to attract good quality students from the four corners of the world.

In terms of research, the academic staff affiliated to the ISSI continued to contribute to islands and small states studies scholarly body of knowledge by publishing in reputable international peer reviewed journals and publishing houses. In addition to this, the ISSI continued to manage and develop the University of Malta Excellence Award 'Beyond Pandemics: Improving climate resilience and health systems in small island states', by presenting at prestigious international conferences and drafting the first publication. In February 2023 the prestigious Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action (EU) project, led by researcher Dr Pedro Pombo started to be operational on the theme of "Heritage Ecologies: culture, resilience and development in Island States (ECO-HERITAGES)". Additionally, the ISSI landed a further

research grant from the Archipelagic and Islands Forum (AIS), supporting one of its PhD students in the research journey.

The ISSI also consolidated further alliances with strategic partners in Malta and abroad, especially the University of Aruba and KU Leuven, to continue expanding our teaching and research breadth.

The ISSI continued the strategic collaboration with the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade, supporting its work at European and International level, especially on issues related to related to the vulnerability and resilience of small states..

The success of these new initiatives, and the consolidation of on-going work, was made possible by the efforts and dedication of all the people who work with the ISSI. Allow me to thank our Chair, Prof. Frank Bezzina, the ISSI Administrator Ms Godianne Montebello, our research officers Luca Nguyen, Dominik Kalweit and William Grech, 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

Dr Stefano Moncada, stefano.moncada@um.edu.mt

Academic Staff

Prof. Lino Briguglio, lino.briguglio@um.edu.mt

Research and Support Staff

Ms Godianne Montebello (Administrator II), godianne.scicluna@um.edu.mt

Mr Dominik Kalweit (Research Support Officer I), dominik.kalweit@um.edu.mt

Mr William Grech (Research Support Officer I), william.grech@um.edu.mt

Mr Luca Thuan Nguyen Dinh (Research Support Officer II), luca.nguyen@um.edu.mt

Dr Pedro Pombo (Marie Curie European Research Officer), pedro.sobral-pombo@um.edu.mt

Chair of the Islands and Small States Institute Board

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

Islands and Small States Institute Board Members

Dr Stefano Moncada (Director)

Prof. Roderick Pace (Senate Appointee)

Prof. Saviour Formosa (Scholar of Repute)

Dr Ing. Charles Yousif (Scholar of Repute)

Dr Marie Avellino (Council Appointee)

Dr Valentina Cassar (Scholar of Repute)

Prof. Lino Briguglio (Academic Staff Representative)

Mr Luca Nguyen (Student Representative)

Ms Claire Gauci (Student Representative)

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

Dr Stefano Moncada (Director)

Prof. Lino Briguglio

Prof. Ing. Charles Yousif

Mr Luca Nguyen (Student representative)

Doctoral Academic Committee of the ISSI

Dr 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:

- 5 January 2023
- 25 July 2023

Board of Studies:

- 25 January 2023
- 20 July 2023

PhD Committees:

- 19 December 2022

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 undergraduate and 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 33 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

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

During the academic year 2022/23, three international MA students as well as 12 international and one Maltese 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

Aeden Chetcuti



Picture 1. Aeden Chetcuti, MA by research student (2022-2023)

Joining the Institute of Islands and Small States (ISSI) as a Master's student was a rewarding experience. One of the most important aspects of the ISSI was its multidisciplinary approach, which greatly broadened my research horizons. This allowed me to engage in insightful discussions with peers from various countries, thereby fostering a rich global perspective.

Another stand-out feature of the ISSI was the unwavering support and dedication of its faculty to student success. Their commitment to providing a nurturing environment created an atmosphere conducive to learning and personal growth. The Institute's expertise, coupled with its published works, greatly enhanced our understanding of island studies.

The ISSI offers a holistic learning journey, striking a balance between providing guidance, imparting knowledge, and encouraging critical discourse. Based on my own experiences, I wholeheartedly recommend ISSI to anyone seeking a rewarding academic experience. The institute provides a unique and enriching opportunity to deepen your understanding of island studies and engage with a vibrant international community.

My research titled "Granting fortunes - how networks of an intrapreneurial / entrepreneurial class act on development strategies in Malta" is a qualitative study that highlights the influence of social networks on economic development while examining entrepreneurship in Malta. It explores entrepreneurship, the impact of social capital, and the benefits and drawbacks of networks in small island states. The study is based on theories of social capital and network analysis. Elite interviews with corporate actors indicated that although social networks boost economic development, Malta's entrepreneurs frequently lack creativity and create cliques and clusters that stifle competition. The research draws attention to how diverse 'social worlds' are intertwined, which raises questions about corruption, collusion, and favouritism in this small island's corporate environment.

2.2.2. Testimonials from PhD students

Marie Stéphanie Perrine



Picture 2. Marie Stéphanie Perrine, Doctoral Student (enrolled in 2022-2023)

In my quest to find a programme with specific focus on small island states, I came across the University of Malta's Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI). The programme provides me with not only greater understanding on my research topic but also enhances my critical thinking and provides excellent opportunities for personal development.

I love the multidisciplinary lens of courses offered and I am extremely pleased to learn from academics that work on a thematic close to my heart. The availability of distance learning classes and the incredible support from my supervisors also allows me to balance my personal life and studies.

My research title is "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 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.

Ben Biedermann



Picture 3. Ben Biedermann, Doctoral Student (enrolled in 2022-2023)

The Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI) at the University of Malta offers a comprehensive, yet in-depth perspective on society through the lens of smallness. The freedom and trust the institute places in its students, when choosing their research, even at the Master's level, is truly unparalleled.

After I decided to continue my studies and apply for a PhD programme, the ISSI stood out by offering unconditional academic support and interest in the interdisciplinary research project of my choosing. I regard the diversity and quality found at the ISSI highly.

My 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 exemplary for public infrastructure. These examples 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.

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 one full-

time academic placed at the Institute, Dr Stefano Moncada, and Prof. Briguglio also contributing with a part-time TR4 position. 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 Dr 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:

- Dr 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

2.3.1. Testimonials from ISSI academics

Dr Pedro Pombo



Picture 4. Dr Pedro Pombo, Marie Curie European Research Officer, academic year 2022-2023

Joining the ISSI to work with Dr Stefano Moncada as a Marie Curie European Research Officer has been a rewarding life-changing experience. Being warmly welcomed into an international and multidisciplinary team while developing research on cultural heritage and climate change is inspiring and profoundly gratifying, and my integration in the ISSI research team represents academic collegiality in its finest.

Collaborating in the institute's postgraduate programme gives me the rewarding experience of sharing knowledge with students based in different regions of the world, engaging in exciting conversations in an authentic learning environment that enhances research skills and is intellectually stimulating.

I am greatly pleased with the institute's global networks and engagement with international institutions, and its active participation in worldwide conferences and meetings, proving the applicability of an academic research engaged with societal concerns and sustainable environments.

Dr Glorianne Camilleri



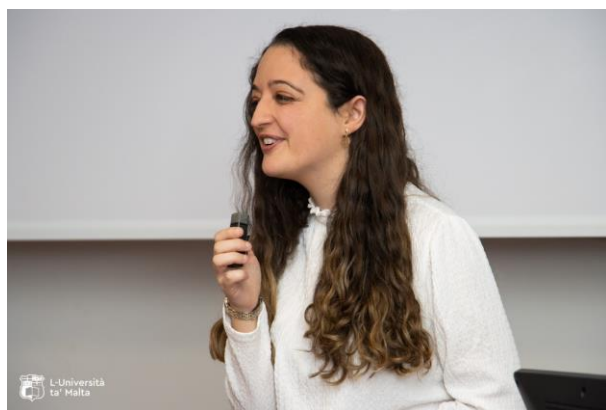
Picture 5. Dr Glorianne Camilleri, lecturer for the academic year 2022-2023

Contributing to the Islands and Small States postgraduate programme for the past five years has been a pleasure and honour. It has been particularly interesting to share experiences from across the world, due to the multinational student participation, facilitated since 2020 by online delivery. I have been awed by the personal commitment and resilience of some students that followed and actively engaged with questions and in discussions during classes, despite the odd hours when considering the different time zones. Students sharing their own specific realities brought added value and enriched the learning experience of the whole group. It is therefore with great satisfaction for me to review and assess their work, whereby they get to demonstrate critical thinking skills and their newly acquired proficiency in using the NVIVO software, a practical digital tool when undertaking qualitative research.

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 Hillary Briffa



Picture 6. Dr Hillary Briffa, visiting lecturer during the academic year 2022-2023

Dr Briffa visited the ISSI in late February 2023. As part of her visit, on 22nd February, she held a public seminar and webinar on "The Strategies of Small States: safeguarding autonomy and influencing great powers". Dr Briffa is a lecturer in National Security Studies and the Assistant Director of the Centre for Defence Studies in the Department of War Studies at King's College London, where she read for her PhD, asking whether small states can have a grand strategy.

She is also a founding member of the Centre for Grand Strategy at King's, where she serves as the research lead for the Climate Change and International Order portfolio. Previously, she has taught courses across the spectrum of global politics, international relations, defence, foreign policy, security and strategy at the Royal College of Defence Studies, the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, University College London, Birkbeck University of London, and Queen Mary University of London. Beyond academia, she served as Malta's official Youth Ambassador to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for three years, and worked at the Malta High Commission to the UK throughout Malta's tenure as Commonwealth Chair-in-Office.

After running peace-building projects in Eastern and Central Europe, in 2015 she was appointed an Associate Fellow of the Royal Commonwealth Society, and in 2016 became a recipient of the U.S. State Department's inaugural Emerging Young Leaders award.

2.4.2 Prof. Stefano Malatesta



Picture 7. Prof. Stefano Malatesta, visiting lecturer during the academic year 2022-2023

Professor Stefano Malatesta visited the ISSI in mid-February 2022, where he held a seminar and webinar titled “A Coral State. Socio-political implication of reefs in the Maldives”. Prof. Malatesta is Associate Professor at the Department of Human Sciences for Education “Riccardo Massa” of the Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca, Italy. Inter alia, he holds expertise in the human geography of small islands and in coastal and maritime tourism). Stefano Malatesta is a geographer and Associate Professor at the University of Milano-Bicocca.

He is member of the Board of MarHE Center (Maldives) and former member (2018-2022) of the Executive Committee of the International Small Islands Studies Association (ISISA). He teaches *Human Geography of Small Island Systems*, and *Geography of Tourism*. Between 2018 and 2021, Prof. Malatesta served as chair of the Working Group on Small Island and Archipelagos (AGel). He coordinates one of the research groups of Island4Future (<https://is4future.uniroma3.it/progetto>).

In 2017, he was awarded from the Italian Geographical Society as best under-40 geographers. Prof. Malatesta’s main research topics are human geography of small islands, geopolitics of Indian Ocean, Ocean Literacy, children geographies, citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

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

In 2021, the ISSI was re-assigned as the World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre on Health Systems and Policies in Small States, a role which it continues to hold. 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. Simone Borg (outgoing), with Prof. Maria Attard as vice-chair, and Dr Stefano Moncada as the CCP focal point. The other members of the Committee are Prof. Lino Briguglio, Dr Charles Galdies, Prof. Paul J. Pace and Dr 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 Mr 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. MA by Research students who graduated in 2021

The research below is the result of the 30,000 word dissertation that the ISSI student delivered at the end of the academic year 2022-2023. Some of the research summarised below is being presented at international conferences and in the process of being submitted to international journals.

3.4.1. Aeden Chetcuti – ‘Granting fortunes - how networks of an intrapreneurial / entrepreneurial class act on development strategies in Malta’

The dissertation titled *“Granting fortunes - how networks of an intrapreneurial / entrepreneurial class act on development strategies in Malta”* is a qualitative study that highlights the influence of social networks on economic development while examining entrepreneurship in Malta. It explores entrepreneurship, the impact of social capital, and the benefits and drawbacks of networks in small island states. The study is based on theories of social capital and network analysis. Elite interviews with corporate actors indicated that although social networks boost economic development, Malta’s entrepreneurs frequently lack creativity and create cliques and clusters that stifle competition. The research draws attention to how diverse ‘social worlds’ are intertwined, which raises questions about corruption, collusion, and favouritism in this small island’s corporate environment.

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

3.5.1. Rickie Morain



Picture 8. Rickie Morain (Grenada)

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.

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

3.6.1. Ifeanyi Godwin Clement



Picture 9. Ifeanyi Godwin Clement, MA by research student (2022-2023)

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 Dr 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.

3.7. PhD research students and themes

3.7.1. 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.

3.7.2. 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.

3.7.3. 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.

3.7.4. Jean Alcindor – 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

3.8. Research projects

3.8.1 SUNRISE - ‘Situating Understanding of Resilience in Island Societies and Environments’

The ISSI is a partner in the project ‘SUNRISE: Situating 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 are the University of the Sunshine Coast, the University of the West Indies, and the University of Mauritius.

Through the establishment of an international, interdisciplinary collaboration on island climate resilience, SUNRISE aims to address the following 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/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 the consequences of these impacts as transnational and internal interdependence shifts in response to climate and non-climate forcing.

By applying their complimentary skills and expertise, the research team works on developing new approaches that overcome these empirical and conceptual gaps around how islandness is accounted for in data and methodological approaches typically used in climate impact assessments. SUNRISE will then pilot new approaches to explore climate impacts and resilience in contexts which are not usually compared, including North Atlantic and Pacific islands. In doing so, SUNRISE will seek to situate varied, individual examples of place-based climate impacts and resilient practice within the wider context of small islands. This collaboration has already managed to produce some tangible results, by publishing a special issue in the Small States and Territories Journal (out November 2021), and by submitting a research paper in the prestigious climate change journal Wires, currently under a revise and resubmit.

3.8.2 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, started in March 2022 and continued in the Academic

Year 2022/23. This project aims to identify existing climate and public health risks, as well as resilience-building measures, in Small Island States (SIS), often disproportionately impacted by external shocks. A crisis like Covid-19 highly impacted the socioeconomic fabric of many SIS, in many instances already challenged by limited financial capacity and infrastructure, long supply chains and looming climate change scenarios. The project employs a mixed-methods approach inclusive of 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 explores the adoption of a Planetary Health Approach, which uses a systematic perspective to link the environment and health systems to proactively overcome external shocks. The project positions itself in a growing area of research: that of resilience of climate and health systems in a post-pandemic world. The current uncertainties over the effectiveness of climate and public health measures undertaken by authorities to enhance resilience, gives to this project a high relevance and a strong innovation component. The objective to create a map of effective responses to climate and health crises in SIS is valuable to national governments, with the potential of guiding policy locally. Internationally, this project also seeks to meet an overarching objective 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, and that of the Small States Health Platform and Climate Change Platform of the UM.

3.8.3. Horizon 2020: EcoScope - Ecocentric Management for Sustainable Fisheries and Healthy Marine Ecosystems (H2020 BG-10-2020)



Picture 10. H2020 EcoScope project logo

The ISSI is a partner in the EcoScope Project, led by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, comprising a total of 24 partners and financed through the Horizon 2020 Blue Growth Call 'Fisheries in the full ecosystem context'. EcoScope aims to promote an effective and efficient, ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management. The project will develop an interoperable platform, a robust decision-making toolbox, a series of online courses and a mobile application. These tools will be available through a single public portal, to promote an efficient, ecosystem-based approach to the management of fisheries and achieve maximum and continuous participation of stakeholders.

The four-year (2021-2025) project addresses ecosystem degradation and anthropogenic impact that cause fisheries to be unsustainably exploited in several European Seas. EcoScope promotes efficient, holistic, sustainable, ecocentric fisheries management that will aid towards restoring fisheries sustainability and ensuring balance between food security and healthy seas. Further information can be found on the project website: <https://ecoscopium.eu>

3.8.4. Vulnerability and Resilience Framework

For a number of years, under leadership of the Institute's former Director, Prof. Lino Briguglio, the ISSI has been working on the Vulnerability and Resilience Framework, which tries to answer the question as to why, in spite of their economic vulnerability, many small island states succeed economically. Their studies found that many small states assign major importance to policies that enable them to withstand their economic vulnerability by building economic resilience. The Framework is being referred to by many international organisations, particularly the Commonwealth Secretariat, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, in their studies and policy reports relating to small states, to argue that these states need to be supported to enable them to strengthen their economic governance for resilience-building purposes.

In their latest contribution to the Institute's broad research work within the Vulnerability and Resilience Framework, Dr Stefano Moncada, the current Director of the Institute, and Prof. Briguglio have published a book with Springer entitled 'Small Island Developing States - Vulnerability and Resilience Under Climate Change'. The book was co-edited with Prof. Hillary Bambrick, Prof. Ilan Kelman, Prof. Catherine Iorns and Prof. Leonard Nurse, world-renowned scholars in different fields of climate change. Including seventeen chapters, the publication explores how vulnerable and resilient communities from SIDS are affected by climate change; proposes and, where possible, evaluates adaptation activities; identifies factors capable of enhancing or inhibiting SIDS people's long-term ability to deal with climate change; and critiques the discourses, vocabularies, and constructions around SIDS dealing with climate change. The contributions, written by well-established scholars, as well as emerging authors and practitioners, in the field, include conceptual papers, coherent methodological approaches and case studies from the communities based in the Caribbean Sea and the Indian, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. In the introduction, Dr Moncada and Prof. Briguglio contextualise the book within current literature, emphasising the importance of stronger links between climate change science and policy in SIDS, both to increase effectiveness of policy and also boost scholarly enquiry in the context of whose communities are often excluded by mainstream research.

As part of this ongoing research project, Prof. Briguglio and Dr Moncada are planning research papers that aim to update the vulnerability and resilience indices with the most recent data.

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

Small Island States (SISs), Small Island Developing States (SIDSs) and Sub-National Island Jurisdictions (SNIJs) are all characterised by small size, remoteness and exposure to climate change, such as sea-level rise, impacting their economies and societies. The EU-funded ECO-HERITAGES project will investigate the role that cultural heritage plays in advancing local economic development and social and environmental resilience in Malta (SIS), Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles (SIDSs) and the French island territories of Reunion and Mayotte (SNIJs). The project will combine anthropology, heritage, environment, development and island studies to integrate institutional heritagisation processes and indigenous knowledge systems in actions for sustainable futures.

This research project, funded by the European Commission under its Horizon Europe programme, investigates the role of cultural heritages in promoting local economic development and social and environmental resiliences, in the context of Small Island States (SIS), Small Island and Developing States (SIDS) and Sub- National Island Jurisdictions (SNIJs) located in Europe, the African continent and in the Indian Ocean. Small islands are extremely vulnerable to climate change due to their small size and exposure to sea level rise, affecting their social and economic development. Crossing anthropology, heritage, environment, development and island studies, this research aims at integrating institutional heritagisation processes and indigenous knowledge systems in actions for sustainable futures.

This project will be hosted by the Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI) of the University of Malta, one of the few European entities in island studies and insular development, and supervised by Dr Stefano Moncada, specialist in development economics, climate change and sustainable development, and by Professors Lino Briguglio and Godfrey Baldacchino, world leading scholars in small states and islands studies. Addressing the challenges, at European and global level, of informing effective responses to mitigate social, economic and ecological consequences of climate change, this project will focus on the SIS of Malta, the SIDS of Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles and the SNIJs of the French island territories of Reunion and Mayotte.

Through an innovative interdisciplinary methodology, this research contributes with ethnography and cultural studies to sustainable development theories and brings socio-economic resilience analyses to heritage studies. This research will contribute, overall, to the role of Malta and of SIS in the UN actions for Sustainable Development, the EU Development and Cooperation actions and the Missions of the Horizon Europe 2021-2027 Framework.

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. Frank Bezzina

Journal Articles

- Lahmiri, S., Bekiros, S., & Bezzina, F. (2022). Evidence of the fractal market hypothesis in European industry sectors with the use of bootstrapped wavelet leaders singularity spectrum analysis. *Chaos, Solitons & Fractals*, 165, 112813
- Cassar, J., Bezzina, F. & Borg, C. (Eds.) (2023). *IPS Journal : Issue 5 : March 2023*. Institute for the Public Service
- Bezzina, F., Zielińska, A., & Cassar, V. (2023). Re-visiting the six-item Stanford presenteeism scale (SPS-6) and its psychometric properties. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1251357
- Fabri, S., Pace, L. A., Cassar, V., & Bezzina, F. (2023). Understanding the determinants of innovation across European member states: a fuzzy-set approach. *International Journal of Innovation Science*, 10.1108/IJIS-11-2022-0230
- Cassar, V., Tracz-Krupa, K., Przytula, S., Rank, S., Fabri, S., & Bezzina, F. (2023). Placing data analytics into the HRM leaders' tool kit: Practitioners' views of data analytics. *Psychology of Leaders and Leadership*, 26(3-4), 149–172

4.2. Dr Pedro Pombo

Book chapters

- Pombo, Pedro, 2022. "From the forest to the valley: Temple Architecture, Landscape and History in Goa". In Ray, Himanshu Prabha, Salila Kulshreshtha and Uthara Suvrathan (eds) *Routledge Handbook on Hindu Temples: Materiality, Social History and Practice*. Routledge.
- Pombo, Pedro, 2023. "Notes on Aesthetics, Ethnography and Being in the World". In Oloko, Patrick, Michaela Ott, Peter Simatei and Clarissa Vierke (eds) *Decolonial Aesthetics II*, Springer.

4.3. Dr Stefano Moncada

Book Chapters

- Gutierrez-Corley, R., Cruickshank, A., & Moncada, S. (2023) Network governance and the role of environmental non-governmental organizations in Belize. In *Handbook of Civil Society and Social Movements in Small States* (pp. 46-61). Routledge. DOI: [10.4324/9781003341536-5](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003341536-5)
- Moncada, S. and Randal, J. E. (2022). Progress and success by sovereignty? The attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in small island states, Small Island Developing States, and subnational island jurisdictions. In Randall (Eds) *Islands Economic Cooperation Forum Annual Report on Global Islands*. Charlottetown: Islands Studies Press. ISBN 978-1-988692-52-4

Journal Articles

- Njoku, Chukwudi, Joel Efiang, and Stefano Moncada. 2023. “Socio-Ecological Drivers of the Pastoralist–Farmer Conflict in Nigeria’s Mid-Benue Trough: Introducing the Ethnicity Dimension”. *The Journal of Population and Sustainability*, November. <https://doi.org/10.3197/JPS.63799953906872>.
- Foley, A., Moncada, S., Mycoo, M., Nunn, P., Tandrayen-Ragoobur, V., Corbett, J., Kelman, I., Brinklow, L., Walshe, R., Robinson, S.A., Kloeck, C., Pugh, J., Chandler, D.. (2023). Understanding “Islandness”. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 1-18.
- Wolf, F., Moncada, M., Surroop, D., Shah, K.U., Raghoo, P., Scherle, N., Reiser, D., Telesford, J.N., Roberts, S., Havea, P.H., Naidu, R., Nguyen, L. (2022). Small island developing states, tourism and climate change, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, DOI: [10.1080/09669582.2022.2112203](https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2022.2112203)
- Foley, A. M., Moncada, S., Mycoo, M., Nunn, P., Tandrayen-Ragoobur, V., & Evans, C. (2022). Small Island Developing States in a post-pandemic world: Challenges and opportunities for climate action. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, e769. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.769>
- Leal Filho, W., Wolf, F., Moncada, S., Lange Salvia, A., Babatunde Balogun, A.L., Skanavis, C., Kounani, A., and Nunn, P.D. (2022). Transformative adaptation: towards sustainable responses to climate change challenges. *Mitig Adapt Strateg Glob Change* 27:20 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11027-022-09997-2>

4.4. Small States and Territories Journal (SST)

Small States and Territories (SST) is a scholarly, open-access journal dedicated exclusively to the study of the nature and workings of islands, small sovereign states (however defined) and non-sovereign territories. Launched in 2018, SST has its institutional home at the Islands and Small States Institute. Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino is the editor in chief. The journal is nested within the University of Malta website at: www.um.edu.mt/sst

Vol. 5, No. 2 was published in November 2022 with a guest editorial commemorating the 30th anniversary of the international conference convened by the Institute of Islands Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island, Canada entitled *An Island Living*, in September 1992. The event is seen as a catalyst to a wide range of scholarly and policy initiatives – including this journal – about

small island states and territories. Four articles dealing with sovereignty, social networks, food security and the geopolitical scenario of the Indian Ocean, and the regular section presenting reviews of six books completed the issue.

Vol. 6, No. 1 was published in May 2023 with five articles dealing with various issues, among which hybrid warfare, micronational sovereignty claims, the blue economy, politics and corruption in small island states and small states navigating between major military powers. The regular book review section presented analyses on six books.

All queries and manuscripts to be considered for publication are to be addressed to: sst@um.edu.mt

4.5. Occasional Papers

The Occasional Series in Islands and Small States Studies has been active since 1994. During this reporting period, the following paper was published: “Proposed strategic directions for the promotion of sustainable tourism in Malta” authored by Marie Avellino; Lino Briguglio; George Cassar; Charles Galdies; Dominik Kalweit; and Marie Louise Mangion.

The objective of the document was to propose a set of strategic directions for Malta in the quest for sustainable tourism which is defined by the UN Environment Programme and UN World Tourism Organization as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and the host communities.” This implies that a strategy for sustainable tourism should address economic, environmental and social concerns for the current and future generations. One cannot therefore ignore issues that will impact future contexts and consequently future societies. This calls for a coordinated approach across policy fields.

Given Malta’s sensitivities, the attainment of sustainable tourism is paramount. This necessitates making choices about the type of tourism activity that best suits the country not only in the short term but also in the long term. This implies coordinated decision-making in different policy fields that looks at the whole value chain: commencing from starting up, the investment and the operational cycle, the resulting impacts, as well as the markets and tourist profiles that Malta seeks to attract. In this document reference is made to the need to attract quality tourists. This term refers to discerning tourists who care for and respect the host community, its culture and its physical environment, and recognise the value of and accept to pay the right price for what is experienced in the host destination.

4.6. Handbook of Civil Society and Social Movements in Small States (Edited by Lino Briguglio, Michael Briguglio, Sheila Bunwaree, Claire Slatter) published by Routledge

Published in March 2023, this volume is unique because of its focus on small states. There are many studies on civil society and social movements, but none that specifically deal with this category of countries. As is well known, small states have particular characteristics, including a limited ability to reap the benefits of economies of scale, a high degree of exposure to forces outside their control, and the proximity of politicians to the voters, often leading to clientelistic relationships and patronage

networks. The small island developing states have the additional problem of high environmental vulnerability, with some also dealing with disproportionate ecological footprints. These factors have a bearing on the organisation and performance of civil society organisations and social movements, as explained in several chapters of this book.

The volume is organised in three parts and 24 chapters, dealing with aspects of civil society and social movements in small states in the political, social and environmental spheres, respectively. Various definitions of civil society are proposed in the chapters, but most authors associate the term with organised groups, operating in the interest of citizens, independently of government and commercial business, including various forms of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Civil society also encompasses social movements, which are considered to be loosely organised collective campaigns in pursuit of social goals. These two terms are sometimes used interchangeably; however, some authors argue that social movements tend to engage in 'contentious politics' including protests, while NGOs engage through more organised and institutional routes.

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 tries to publicise both its events and those organised by colleagues in Malta and outside, with the aim of increasing the visibility of islands and small states studies.

5.1. Webinars

During the Academic Year 2022/23, the ISSI held a record number of eight seminars and webinars on a vast array of topics and with a diverse group of speakers.

On 17th November 2022, Dr Mark Egan, former Greffier of the States of Jersey presented on "**COVID-19: why governance makes a difference**". The event was organised in collaboration with the WHO Collaborating Centre on Health Systems and Policies in Small States, hosted at the ISSI. It was also addressed by Dr Bettina Menne, Coordinator of the European Office for Investment for Health and Development from the WHO Regional Office for Europe.



Picture 11. Poster for the webinar on "COVID-19: why governance makes a difference"

In this webinar, Dr Mark Egan presented the different governance arrangements used by the three Crown Dependencies Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man to legislate and set policy on COVID-19 in 2020/21. It was followed by a discussion on how those arrangements might have affected the legislation and policy, public acceptance of the legislation and policy, as well as policy outcomes.

In the seminar and webinar titled "**A Coral State. Socio-political implication of reefs in the Maldives**", held on 15th February 2023, Professor Malatesta from the Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca provided an overview on Maldivian Human Geographies. He then discussed the social function of corals and the value their preservation as both heritage and ecosystems might have in environmental policies at national and local levels.



L-Università ta' Malta
Islands & Small States Institute

Seminar/Webinar: A Coral State. Socio-political implication of reefs in the Maldives

📅 15th February 2023 | 3pm to 5pm

📍 Venue: UM Msida Campus, Campus Hub, Room: CHBO-318
Zoom link: <https://universityofmalta.zoom.us/j/99212082473>



Speaker
Professor Stefano Malatesta

Associate Professor,
Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca

This seminar gives an overview on Maldivian Human Geographies, presents the social function of corals and the value their preservation as both heritage and ecosystems might have in environmental policies at national and local levels.

Picture 12. Poster for the webinar on socio-political implications of reefs in the Maldives

On 22nd February, ISSI in collaboration with the Department of International Relations of the Faculty of Arts, the Institute for European Studies and the European Documentation Centre held a seminar/webinar on "**The Strategies of Small States: safeguarding autonomy and influencing great powers**".



L-Università ta' Malta
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L-Università ta' Malta
Institute for European Studies



L-Università ta' Malta
Faculty of Arts

Department of
International Relations



European
Documentation Centre
University of Malta

Seminar/Webinar: The Strategies of Small States: safeguarding autonomy and influencing great powers

📅 22nd February 2023 | 4pm to 5.30pm (CET)

📍 Venue: UM Msida Campus, IT Services, Room: VC 101
Zoom Registration link: shorturl.at/luJ8

Convenors:

Dr Stefano Moncada, Islands and Small States Institute, UM
Prof. James Sater, Dept. of International Relations, Fac. of Arts, UM
Prof. Mark Harwood, Institute for European Studies, UM

Chair:

Dr Stefano Moncada



Speaker

Dr Hillary Briffa

Assistant Director, Centre for Defence Studies,
Dept. of War Studies, King's College London

Dr Briffa will examine the strategies pursued by small states to safeguard their autonomy, as well as innovative means of projecting influence ranging from the harnessing of multilateralism to bind great power behaviour, to serving as 'smart states' in the international system.

Picture 13. Poster for the seminar/webinar on "The Strategies of Small States: safeguarding autonomy and influencing great powers"

The talk was delivered by Dr Hillary Briffa, Lecturer in National Security Studies and the Assistant Director of the Centre for Defence Studies in the Department of War Studies at King's College London. Dr Briffa examined the strategies pursued by small states to safeguard their autonomy, as well as innovative means of projecting influence.

The webinar titled "**Development and Stabilization in Small Open Economies: Theories and Evidence from Caribbean Experience**" was held on 9th March 2023.



L-Università ta' Malta
Islands & Small States Institute

Webinar - Development and Stabilization in Small Open Economies: Theories and Evidence from Caribbean Experience

📅 9th March 2023 | 4pm to 5.30pm (CET) | 11am to 12.30pm (AST)

✓ Further information and registration: shorturl.at/BHILU (Zoom)

Dr Worrell, renowned economist based in the Caribbean region, will be presenting pertinent aspects of his recent book "Development and Stabilization in Small Open Economies", published by Routledge in January 2023, which analyses and explains the nature of the economies of small countries and territories.

Speakers:

Dr DeLisle Worrell, Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados (retired)
Prof. Lino Briguglio, Professor of Economics, University of Malta
Moderated by Dr Stefano Moncada, Director, ISSI



Picture 14. Poster for the webinar on Dr Worrell's book published by Routledge in January 2023.

The webinar was delivered by Dr DeLisle Worrell with reference to his latest book, which analyses and explains the nature of the economies of small countries and territories. Dr Worrell is a member of the Bermuda Financial Policy Council, the Bretton Woods Committee (Washington DC), and the College of Central Bankers, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. Between 2009 and 2017, he was Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados. The event was also addressed by Prof. Lino Briguglio, world-renowned economist, expert in Island and Small States Studies and former Director of the ISSI.

Later in March 2023, ISSI launched the book "Civil Society and Social Movements in Small States" by means of a series of regional webinars. The event covering Europe, the Indian Ocean and Africa was held on 16th March; the one focusing on the Caribbean region on 23rd March; and the final webinar targeting the Southern Pacific region was held on 30th March 2023.



L-Università ta' Malta
Islands & Small States Institute

Webinar and book launch: *Civil Society and Social Movements in Small States*

📅 16th March 2023 | 3.30pm to 5pm (CET)

The discussion will focus on chapters of the book relating to small states in Europe, Africa and the Indian Ocean.

The discussion on chapters relating to the Caribbean small states will follow on 23rd March and on the Pacific small states on 30th March.

✓ Further information and registration: https://linktr.ee/um_issi

Speakers:

Prof. Sheila Bunwaree (Mauritius), Chapter author
Dr José Maria Gomes Lopes (Cabo Verde), Chapter author
Dr Aleksandar Andrija Pejović (Montenegro), Chapter author
Dr Mario Thomas Vassallo (Malta), Chapter author

Moderator: Dr Stefano Moncada, Director, ISSI



Picture 15. Poster for the first of three webinars launching the Handbook of Civil Society and Social Movements in Small States, published by Routledge

The first event was moderated by ISSI's Director Dr Stefano Moncada and saw the participation of chapter authors Prof. Sheila Bunwaree (Mauritius), Dr José Maria Gomes Lopes (Cabo Verde), Dr Aleksandar Andrija Pejović (Montenegro) and Dr Mario Thomas Vassallo (Malta).

Moderated by co-editor Dr Michael Briguglio, Senior Lecturer at the University of Malta's Department of Sociology, the second event was addressed by **Dr Acolla Lewis-Cameron** (Trinidad and Tobago), Mr Allanson Cruickshank (St Vincent and the Grenadines), Mr Aniel Andrew (Trinidad and Tobago), Dr Annita Montoute (Caribbean) and Prof. Jessica Byron-Reid (Caribbean). The third regional webinar, focusing on the South Pacific region, was moderated by lead editor Prof. Lino Briguglio, Senior Lecturer and former Director of the ISSI. Speakers were Mr Vijay Naidu and Prof. Claire Slatter (Oceania), Prof Yoko Kanemasu (Samoa), Dr Romitesh Kant (Pacific) and Mr Viliame Kasanawaqa (Fiji).

The "Handbook of Civil Society and Social Movements in Small States" depicts the way civil society encompasses social movements, which are considered to be loosely organised collective campaigns in pursuit of social goals. It deals with particular characteristics of small states, including limited ability to reap the benefits of economies of scale, high degree of exposure to forces outside their control, and the proximity of politicians to the voters, often leading to clientelistic relationships and patronage networks.

The seminar and webinar on "**The Bridge Effect: A Case Study of Prince Edward Island, Canada, with some implications for Gozo**", held on 24th May, concluded the events of the Academic Year 2022/23.

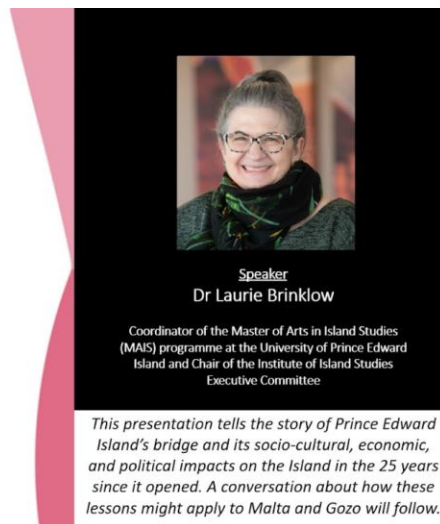


Seminar/Webinar:
The Bridge Effect: A Case Study of Prince Edward Island, Canada, with some implications for Gozo

📅 24th May 2023 | 4.30pm to 6pm CEST

📍 Venue: UM Msida Campus, IT Services, Room: VC102

🔗 Zoom link: <https://shorturl.at/bouB3>



Picture 16. Poster for the webinar delivered by Dr Brinklow

The talk was delivered by Dr Laurie Brinklow, Coordinator of the Master of Arts in Island Studies (MAIS) programme at the University of Prince Edward Island, Chair of the Institute of Island Studies Executive Committee and President of the International Small Island Studies Association (ISISA). Dr Brinklow's presentation told the story of Prince Edward Island's bridge and its socio-cultural, economic, and political impacts on the Island in the 25 years since it opened. The presentation was followed by a conversation about how these lessons might apply to Malta and Gozo.

5.2. Articles (newspapers, Newpoint)

During the academic year 2022/2023, the ISSI and its members were featured in a number of news items and outlets, ranging from the University's own Newpoint information portal to national and international publications. Whilst a comprehensive list of article links is found below, here are some highlights:

UM academic presents project results "Beyond Pandemics" at ANU

The article published on the University's own media website focuses on Dr Moncada's presentation of the award-winning project "Beyond Pandemics" at the Australian National University, focusing on improving climate resilience and health systems in small island states. The project received the Research Excellence Award in December 2021 and is financed by the University of Malta's Internal Research Grants Programme, began in March 2022. It assesses health systems in Malta and Mauritius, using a mixed-methods approach. Preliminary findings reveal a lack of joint consideration of climate and health crises, especially in small islands, and a deficiency in policies creating synergies. The audience included academic staff, students, and public authorities.

Newpoint (7th December 2022)

Ref.: <https://www.um.edu.mt/newpoint/news/2022/12/um-academic-presents-project-results-beyond-pandemics-at-anu>

Prof. Briguglio on *Going beyond tourists and towers: what could drive Malta's economy?*

The article discusses the need for Malta to diversify its economic drivers beyond industries like construction, tourism, and gaming, which have significant impacts on the country's resources and citizens' well-being. Prof. Briguglio emphasises that Malta cannot solely depend on industries like construction due to their evident impacts on scarce resources, particularly land, and the wellbeing of the population. He continues suggesting that Malta's manufacturing industry can grow through vertical specialisation, contributing specialist skills or knowledge to imported goods, resulting in higher-value, higher-paid skills.

Times of Malta (18th April 2023)

Ref.: <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/going-beyond-tourists-towers-drive-malta-s-economy.1025927>

Small Island Developing States Scholarships awarded by the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade of Malta and the Islands and Small States Institute of the University of Malta

This online article published by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) presents the collaboration between the Maltese Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade and the ISSI in awarding scholarships at Master and PhD level to applicants from ODA-eligible SIDS. The partnership, which commenced in 2021, comprises one PhD scholarship and six Masters scholarships over three years and is expected to be extended in 2023.

UN DESA (N.D.)

Ref.: <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/sids-scholarships-Malta>

Table 4. List of articles featuring the ISSI

Date	Media	Title	Weblink
11 August 2022	Times of Malta	The three Ds and economic progress – Lino Briguglio	https://timesofmalta.com/article/view/three-ds-economic-progress-lino-briguglio.973511
21 October 2022	Newspoint	COVID-19: why governance makes a difference	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2022/11/issi-webinar-covid-19-why-governance-makes-a-difference
07 December 2022	Newspoint	UM academic presents project results “Beyond Pandemics” at ANU	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2022/12/um-academic-presents-project-results-beyond-pandemics-at-anu
20 December 2022	Times of Malta	Is there excess supply in Malta’s property market? – Lino Briguglio	https://timesofmalta.com/article/view/excess-supply-malta-s-property-market-lino-briguglio.1002493
23 December 2022	UN FCCC	8th National Communication, 2022	https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/NC8_Malta_2022_V5_final.pdf
25 December 2022	Times of Malta	University Gozo Campus is 30 years old	https://timesofmalta.com/article/view/university-gozo-campus-30-years-old.1002871
17 January 2023	Newspoint	New upcoming book - Handbook of Civil Society and Social Movements in Small States	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2023/01/new-upcoming-book-handbook-civil-society-social-movements-smallstates
13 February 2023	Newspoint	Seminar/Webinar: "The Strategies of Small States: safeguarding autonomy and influencing great powers"	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2023/02/seminar-webinar-the-strategies-of-small-states
22 February 2023	Newspoint	Islands Research Community: Successful Meeting among Students and Alumni of the Islands and Small States Institute	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2023/02/islands-research-community-successful-meeting-among-students-and-alumni-of-the-issi
23 February 2023	Newspoint	Webinar: "Development and Stabilization in Small Open Economies: Theories and Evidence from Caribbean Experience"	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2023/03/webinar-development-and-stabilization-in-small-open-economies
03 March 2023	Newspoint	Regional webinar and book launch series on "Civil Society and Social Movements in Small States"	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2023/03/regional-webinar-and-book-launch-series/_nocache

11 April 2023	Times Malta	of	Fact-check: How important is construction for Malta's economy?	https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/factcheck-important-construction-maltas-economy.1024541
18 April 2023	Times Malta	of	Going beyond tourists and towers: what could drive Malta's economy?	https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/going-beyond-tourists-towers-drive-malta-s-economy.1025927
21 April 2023	Times Malta	of	Supporting Malta's manufacturing sector – Lawrence Zammit	https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/supporting-malta-s-manufacturing-sector-lawrence-zammit.1026556
24 April 2023	Newspoint		Island and Small States Institute Doctoral Student presents Book Chapter at International Conference	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2023/04/issi-doctoral-student-book-chapter-intl-conf
10 May 2023	Newspoint		Seminar/Webinar: The Bridge Effect: A Case Study of Prince Edward Island, Canada, with some implications for Gozo	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2023/05/the-bridge-effect-case-study
10 May 2023	Newspoint		The Islands and Small States Institute to host Fulbright U.S. Scholar Prof. Rebecca Hamilton	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2023/05/issi-host-fulbright-us-scholar-rebecca-hamilton
16 May 2023	Newspoint		Islands and Small States Institute Director delivers keynote speech at University of Aruba	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2023/05/islands-institute-keynote-speech-university
22 May 2023	The Malta Independent		More than 250 academics at University of Malta join pro-environment protest	https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2023-05-22/local-news/More-than-250-academics-at-University-of-Malta-join-pro-environment-protest-6736252059
12 July 2023	Newspoint		United Nations award for the Islands and Small States Institute, and the Maltese Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2023/07/un-award-islands-small-states-institute-maltese-ministry-foreign-european-affairs-trade
08 August 2023	Times Malta	of	Are we really wealthier?	https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/are-really-wealthier.1048153
ND	UN DESA		Small Island Developing States Scholarships awarded by the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade of Malta and the Islands and Small States Institute of the University of Malta	https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/sids-scholarships-Malta

5.3. Social media activities

The Institute continued to publicise and disseminate information about its academic activities and outputs through its social media channels. The articles published in the *Small States and Territories Journal* continued to be disseminated on Thursdays. As from March 2023, Wednesdays showcased each of the chapters of the *Routledge Handbook of Civil Society and Social Movements in Small States*. On Tuesdays, the ISSI gave space to the research that each of its students, at Masters and PhD levels, were undertaking.

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 2022/23, two ISSI postgraduate students benefited from these scholarships, namely Alana Fiafia Richmond-Rex, from Nieu, and Rickie Claude Morain, from Grenada.

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 Aruba

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 Aruba and KU Leuven, in an ad-hoc ceremony held in Aruba in connection to a Symposium attended by the Director of ISSI, who delivered the MoU originally signed by the Rector, Prof. Alfred Vella. The three 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 small islands.

Annexes

Annex 1: List of ISSI students and their dissertation titles

MA Students		
Stephen	Bonnici	<i>Outsourcing business functions in small island states: Impacts on employment in the Maltese Islands</i>
Elaine	Camilleri	<i>Analysing the Accessibility of Green Open Spaces in the Maltese Island</i>
Aeden Anthony Gerald	Chetcuti	<i>Lilliputian entrepreneurs or Gulliver's envy? A social network analysis of entrepreneurship in small island states: A case study of Malta</i>
Rickie	Claude Morain	<i>The Management of the Blue Economy in the Eastern Caribbean Small Island Sates: 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>
Viliame	Kasanawaqa	<i>Toward Resilient and Sustainable Economic Development in Pacific Small Island Developing States. The case of Fiji</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>
Ratu Tevita	Rarokolutu	<i>Multi-Hazard Risk Assessment in Pacific Small Island Developing States: The case of Labasa, Vanua Levu, Fiji Islands</i>
Tamara	Schembri	<i>Small states performance in EU research funding programmes : A Maltese perspective</i>
Marie Michele Audrey	Tolbize Ravina	<i>Agroecology and Food Sovereignty in Small Island Developing States: The case of Rodrigues Island</i>
Pawel	Tverskoi	<i>The application of shelter theory and healthy security in small states</i>
PhD Students (1st year 2022/2023)		
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 (2nd year 2022/2023)		
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 Forster 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 contexts: The case of Jamaica</i>
PhD Students (advanced)		
Theresia Penda	Choppy	<i>Creativity and Creolization in Seychellois Creole Folktales</i>
Georges Marc	Nicette	<i>Understanding Lived Experiences of Former Heroin Users in SIDS</i>
Luca	Thuan Nguyen	Din <i>Overtourism to Undertourism: Small Island States and the Covid-19 Pandemic</i>