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

Annual Report

Academic Year 2021/2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Forewords.....	5
1. Staff and Boards at The Islands and Small States Institute	7
2. Teaching at the Islands and Small States Institute	9
2.1. Undergraduate courses	9
2.1.1. Diploma in Gozo Studies.....	9
2.2. Postgraduate courses	9
2.2.1. Master of Arts in Islands and Small State Studies	10
2.2.2. Master of Arts (Research on Islands and Small States).....	10
2.2.3. PhD Programme	12
2.3. Testimonials from ISSI Students.....	13
2.3.1. Testimonials from Master of Arts students.....	14
2.3.2. Testimonials from PhD students.....	16
2.4. List of all lecturers teaching with ISSI	19
2.4.1. Testimonials from ISSI academics	20
3. Research at the Islands and Small States Institute.....	22
3.1. WHO Collaborating Centre on Health Systems and Policies in Small States	22
3.2. Climate Change Platform.....	22
3.3. Island Tourism Platform	22
3.4. EU Marie Curie applications	23
3.4.1. Dr Pedro Pombo, Portugal - 'ECO-Heritages'.....	23
3.4.2. Dr Shalini Sharma, India - Digital Circular Economy Standard (DiCES).....	24
3.5. MA by Research students who graduated in 2021	25
3.5.1. Duncan Cassar – 'A retrospective study of teenage pregnancy and its repercussions in small island states: A focus on Malta'	25
3.5.2. Kendra King Snagg – 'Disaster risk reduction to multi-hazards in small island developing states: The case of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines'	25
3.5.3. Matthew Charlery-Smith – 'Musical traditions and Commonwealth societies: Envisioning a commercially empowering multiculturalism for small states'	25
3.5.4. Ben Biedermann - 'Virtual Asset Deployment in Small Island States: The Case of Malta'	26

3.6. MFEA and UM Scholarships in Islands and Small States Studies – Students’ testimonials	27
3.6.1. Ruth Gutierrez-Corley	27
3.6.2. Marie Michele Audrey Tolbize Ravina	28
3.6.3. Ratu Tevita Rarokolutu.....	29
3.7. PhD research students and themes	29
3.7.1. Georges Marc Nicette - ‘Understanding lived experiences of former heroin users and discourses surrounding heroin use in a Small Island Developing State (SIDS): The case of Seychelles’	29
3.7.2. Theresia Penda Choppy - ‘Creativity and creolization in Seychellois creole folktales’.....	30
3.7.3. Thuan Luca Nguyen Dinh - ‘From Overtourism to Undertourism: Small Island States and the COVID-19 Pandemic’	30
3.8. Research projects.....	30
3.8.1 SUNRISE - ‘Situated Understanding of Resilience in Island Societies and Environments’	30
3.8.2 Global Island Report	31
3.8.3 Beyond Pandemics	32
3.8.4 ERASMUS+	32
3.8.5. Horizon 2020: EcoScope - Ecocentric Management for Sustainable Fisheries and Healthy Marine Ecosystems (H2020 BG-10-2020).....	33
3.8.6. Vulnerability and Resilience Framework.....	34
4. Publications.....	35
4.1. Prof. Lino Briguglio	35
4.2. Prof. Frank Bezzina	35
4.3. Dr Stefano Moncada.....	36
4.4 Prof. Ing. Charles Yousif.....	36
4.5. Small States and Territories Journal (SST).....	37
4.6. Occasional Papers.....	37
4.6.1. Debt and domination: Malta’s usurious economy – Mary Grace Vella and Yana Mintoff.....	37
4.6.2. Rent-seeking elites versus the disempowered: a case study on the impact of divergent interests on foreign policy in São Tomé and Príncipe - José Francisco Pavia	38
4.6.3. Small states and the vulnerability resilience framework: withstanding exposure to adverse external shocks - Lino Briguglio and Stefano Moncada	38

5. Outreach and Communication.....	40
5.1. ISSI Postgraduate Conference	40
5.2. Webinars	41
5.3. Articles (newspapers, Newspoint).....	43
5.4. Social media activities	47
6. Collaborations.....	48
6.1 Collaboration with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.....	48
6.1.1. Scholarships for ISSI students coming from small island developing states	48
6.1.2. Virtual Summer School (VSS) on Child Protection in Armed Conflict.....	48
6.1.3. Support to the MFEA’s UN Mission in New York concerning small island developing states	49
6.2 Collaboration with the University of Seychelles.....	49
6.3 University Consortium of Small Islands States.....	50
Annexes.....	51
Annex 1: List of ISSI students and their dissertation titles	51

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) continued to reaffirm its positions as a centre of excellence in islands and small states studies, strengthening its teaching, research and outreach activities during the academic year 2021/2022. The success experienced by the ISSI in the past academic year was also instrumental for the whole University of Malta, contributing to consolidate the objectives of the UM Strategic Plan, especially in relation to themes I. Learning and Teaching; II. Research and Knowledge Transfer; V. National Impact; VI. International Outlook; and VII. Sustainability.

I congratulate the determination of the ISSI to collaborate with many other centres, institutes, departments, at the UM, to foster a culture of cooperation among academic entities, and between disciplines, that speaks to the heart of its truly interdisciplinary approach to teaching and doing research. This resulted in many good practices, such as the supervision of doctoral students, the teaching in the MA programme, and research activities that yielded tangible results for all those involved, such as important publications in reputable international peer reviewed journals and book series, among others.

I not only wish the very best to the ISSI for the next academic year, but I am sure that the good seeds planted in this period will bear even more nutritious and valuable fruits in the years to come. Congratulations.

Dr Stefano Moncada - Director

This past academic year was a further period of expansion for the Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI), where we increased the number of students in the Master by research, the Doctoral Programme, successfully obtained new grants from the University of Malta and the European Union, and consolidated further alliances with strategic partners in Malta and abroad, to continue expanding our teaching and research breadth.

The Master by research experienced a significant increase, reaching a total of eight students, the highest since the programme was established in 2018. The Doctoral Programme has also reached excellent results with seven new students enrolled only in the past academic year, bringing the overall number of ISSI's doctoral students to ten, a mighty figure for a relatively small institute, continuously battling with availability of sufficient human resources and stretching the contribution of existing resident academic staff. The rich diversity of backgrounds and countries of origin of the new cohorts 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.

The ISSI also managed to secure the University of Malta Excellence Award, through a project entitled ‘Beyond Pandemics: Improving climate resilience and health systems in small island states’, and landed its first prestigious Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action (EU) project, where senior researcher Dr Pedro Pombo will conduct his research at the ISSI on the theme of “Heritage Ecologies: culture, resilience and development in Island States (ECO-HERITAGES)”. Furthermore, the ISSI continued to work on on-going research projects, and submitted, as a co-partner, additional project proposals for research grants in the area of economic vulnerability, sustainable development and climate change, taking the lead in the context of islands and small states studies.

The ISSI further expanded its national, regional and International cooperation, signing official agreements to continue supporting the work of islands jurisdictions and small states. This is the case for a collaboration agreement with the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade, supporting its work at the UN level for the election of Malta at the UN Security Council, by specifically hosting a summer school at the UM in the area of the protection of children in armed conflicts. Additionally, ISSI members have been advising the Ministry and its official foreign representations on issues related to the vulnerability and resilience of small states. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the UM and the University of Iceland, with the ISSI playing a pivotal role in drafting the text and designing the teaching, research and outreach activities to be possibly undertaken by the two entities. Furthermore, in June 2022, the ISSI hosted its first postgraduate conference in islands and small states studies in Valletta, which gave the opportunity to young, as well as more senior researchers, to present their research and discuss, in a constructive environment, the most recent scholarly development in islands and small states studies.

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

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

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Mr Luca Thuan Nguyen Dinh (Research Support Officer II), luca.nguyen@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. Lino Briguglio (Scholar of Repute)

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)

Perit Raphael Axiak (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

Dr Ing. Charles Yousif

Mr Luca Nguyen (Student representative)

Doctoral Academic Committee of the ISSI

Dr Stefano Moncada (Director)

Prof. Lino Briguglio

Dr Ing. Charles Yousif

Dr Valentina Cassar

During the academic year 2021/22, the following meetings were held:

Board:

- 4 Nov 2021
- 9 June 2021

Board of Studies:

- 4 November 2021
- 10 June 2022

PhD Committees:

- 9 June 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. Undergraduate courses

With one undergraduate course offered at diploma level, the ISSI provides a general training on 'Gozo Studies'.

2.1.1. Diploma in Gozo Studies

This level 5 course runs over two years (four semesters) and carries a total of 60 ECTS. This diploma is split into three modules: economics and environmental studies, history and culture. The students are provided with a variety of teaching methods that are utilised during the course programme, including lectures, field-visits, seminars and home assignments. The course aims at linking past and present realities in Gozo with various academic disciplines, offering a strong interdisciplinary perspective. This course has the additional objective of improving students' communication skills, stimulating teamwork, and enabling all participants to develop useful career skills, such as sourcing and inferring quantitative/qualitative data, critical evaluation of social and economic realities, and interpretation of historical information. During the academic year 2020-2021, the diploma course was not offered due to an insufficient number of students applying.

However, a process of restructuring and revamping of this diploma has started, updating contents and expertise, including an active collaboration with Gozo's regional authorities that will likely increase the number of students, with the aim of re-opening the diploma in the academic year 2022-2023.

2.2. Postgraduate courses

The ISSI offers a taught MA, a MA by research, and a PhD programme. The taught MA in Islands and Small States Studies has been offered since the inception of the ISSI, over 30 years ago, and has trained a sizeable number of students both in Malta and abroad. During the past three years, this taught MA course started to be 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. We envisage this option to be fully operational from academic year 2022/2023.

The MA by research was introduced for the first time in the academic year 2018-2019, and has been running since then, increasing the 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 over 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.

2.2.1. 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.

2.2.2. 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, depending on public health measures and the availability of suitable rooms) 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

2.2.3. 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

During the academic year 2021/22, six international (2 female and 4 male) and five Maltese MA students (3 female and 2 male) as well as nine international PhD students (5 female and 4 male) were enrolled with the ISSI.

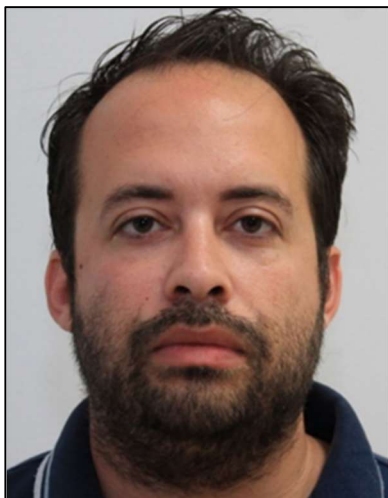
2.3. Testimonials from ISSI Students

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.

2.3.1. Testimonials from Master of Arts students

Stephen Bonnici



Picture 1. Stephen Bonnici, MA by research student (2021-2022)

The programme was designed so as to enhance the knowledge on islands and small states matters including and not limited to social, environmental, and economical issues. The lectures were professionally delivered by knowledgeable tutors and although as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the delivery was performed via video conferencing a two-way communication was adequately achieved between the students and the tutor.

My experience of the Master of Arts in Islands and Small States Studies was overall very positive. This experience served as a tool to improve my academic skills such as knowledge attainment on islands using various research analyses techniques. Socially, the course made it possible to meet students coming from different countries around the world both online and personally during the first postgraduate conference in islands and small states studies.

My research focuses on *“International sourcing in small island states and their impacts on employment: The case of the Maltese islands.”* At each stage of the Global Value Chains, an enterprise may opt to source domestically or internationally, and source core or supporting business functions to affiliated or non-affiliated organisations. How a multinational enterprise opts to enter an investing country affects labour expertise demands. The extent of skilled and unskilled labour demands as a result of international sourcing are diverse, impacting wage rates and henceforth Gross Domestic Product. Despite this, there is a paucity of data; particularly more pronounced for small island states, including Malta.

The aim of this research is to use available statistical information together with recently published results from the Global Value Chains and International Sourcing Survey covering the period between 2018 and 2020, to analyse the effect on domestic employment and economy due to international sourcing. I was supervised by Prof. Lino Briguglio.

Tamara Schembri



Picture 2. Tamara Schembri, MA by research student (2021-2022)

I joined the Islands and Small States Institute since it was the only course that provided me with the perfect interdisciplinary approach to issues pertaining to islands and small states. The flexibility that is offered with online learning allowed me to manage both my studies, my career and of course my personal life! During the past year I have expanded my knowledge in several issues that belong to islands and small states such as geography, economics, and social aspects. The support that is offered by all the lecturers and administrative staff is excellent and they have made my academic journey not only interesting but also fun! I recommend this course to anyone, especially to individuals working for the public sector, environmental NGOs, international organisations and teachers.

My research project was inspired by my line of work. I worked on "*Small States performance in EU research funding programmes: A Maltese perspective*". The performance of four of the smallest European Member States: Malta, Estonia, Cyprus and Luxembourg (with a special focus on Malta) was analysed. The mixed methods research consisted of a content analysis exercise where the number of funding opportunities available for islands and small states were recorded and how these opportunities are impacting their participation. The use of descriptive statistics and statistical analysis supported the content analysis exercise. Several recommendations were presented at the end of the research project to improve Malta's participation in EU research funding programmes. I was supervised by Dr Stefano Moncada.

2.3.2. Testimonials from PhD students

Angelique Louise Marie Pouponneau



Picture 3. Angelique Louise Marie Pouponneau, Doctoral Student (enrolled in 2021-2022)

I come from the island nation of Seychelles. The plight of small island developing states (SIDS) is always close to my heart, so when I was looking for a PhD programme, I was looking for an institution that values the perspectives of islands. The Islands and Small States Institute, University of Malta, offers that. Having returned to formal education after eight years in legal practice, conservation finance and environmental diplomacy, I am glad to have the opportunity to undertake my research under the guidance of prominent small States academics who provide a constructive and open space for me to delve into this important issue.

My research seeks to contribute to a significant knowledge gap and address a practical problem. The lack of finance is one of the main reasons for the slow development of the sustainable ocean economy in SIDS. This research seeks to tackle this challenge by critically examining the laws and institutional arrangements in Belize, Fiji and Seychelles and propose legislative and institutional reform that will support SIDS to first, unlock funding and investment from different funders and second, balance the environment, and social, economic and good governance objectives of the sustainable ocean economy. I am being supervised by Prof. Simone Borg, Prof. Caroline Morris and Dr Stefano Moncada.

Jordan Kymani Williams



Picture 4. Jordan Kymani Williams, Doctoral Student (enrolled in 2021-2022)

I started on this academic journey in October 2021. So far, it has been the most exciting and fulfilling challenge I have embraced in academia. The Island and Small State Institute (ISSI), University of Malta (UM), has done an excellent job of cultivating a sense of community while recognising the multicultural experiences that shape our classrooms. Furthermore, the courses have provided the opportunity to understand new concepts and refine old skills. The course on research methodology has been particularly rewarding in my professional life; this course has increased my appreciation for quantitative research. There is a significant focus by the ISSI on applied research, the school of thought that academics should seek knowledge to positively impact the social world. Members of this unique community have demonstrated their personal commitment to improving the realities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Through these conversations and vicarious learning, my ethos has been strengthened to advocate for socio-economically vulnerable people in SIDS. Finally, this programme has proven to be vital to my holistic development owing to the consistent and powerful mentorship by members of the faculty. ISSI and, by extension, UM mentors are passionate about training students. This is reflected in their dedication to nurturing the whole student.

My project adds to a catalogue of urban violence, urban poverty, and garrisonisation scholars who assert that state parasitism and tribal politics have framed lives of social exclusion and suffering for inner-city communities in Kingston, Jamaica. This project, titled "*Explorations of social suffering and violence in a bipartisan political context: The case of Jamaica,*" employs an interpretative phenomenological approach to explore the intersection of politics, poverty, and lived realities in urban Jamaica. Under the supervision of Drs Albert Bell, Stefano Moncada, and Michael Briguglio, this project embraces empirical attention to the urbanisation of poverty in postcolonial developing states, particularly small states. This project's pivot to understanding and investigating poverty rather than simply using macroeconomics and grand narratives is crucial. In this body of work, I assert that acknowledging and understanding the lived realities of social actors are essential for advancing knowledge and guiding policy.

This project is guided and informed by the experiences of 24 Jamaicans who have experienced continuous poverty and social marginalisation. These social actors reside in two communities aligned to the two dominant political parties in Jamaica: the Jamaica Labour Party and the People's National Party. Through narratives and interviews, I will explore the extent to which political socialisation and

tribalism are important elements in these societies' worldviews and members' daily lives. Historical state parasitism is investigated in the study as a means of framing structural violence. The research will also investigate spatial violence through persistent political institutions that endanger national progress. Through this project, I will advance a more robust understanding of social suffering from the vantage point of social actors immersed in these realities. Importantly, this project is concerned with allowing socially excluded communities to author and guide the narratives and insights that exist about them.

Allanson Cruickshank



Picture 5. Allanson Cruickshank, Doctoral Student (enrolled in 2021-2022)

Although, as a family-oriented person, I was pleased with the opportunity to pursue my PhD at ISSI via the distance option, I was a little apprehensive about how exactly it would work. The courses occurred simultaneously and were time-intensive in the first semester. In the second semester, the classwork tasks and assignments came in quick succession, which made time management a bit challenging. However, Dr Moncada, the head of ISSI, along with his team, has been quite supportive and facilitated the students well. One of my major concerns prior to enrolling was what will be the level of PhD supervision that will be given. Thus far, I have been satisfied with the content and timely nature of the supervisory feedback. I am also grateful to have met, although only virtually thus far, several extraordinary persons from various parts of the world. I am sure that lifelong friendships are being forged as we embark on this journey together.

The title of my research is *“Volcanic Risk Reduction in the Face of Multiple Hazards in Caribbean SIDS: A Focus on Saint Vincent and the Grenadines”*. In April 2021, the La Soufrière volcano in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines erupted. This eruption took place just prior to the beginning of the rainy season in the Caribbean. When the rains came, they exacerbated an already dire situation by sparking several devastating lahars. With the intensification of tropical weather systems that is associated with climate change, this pairing of hazards is likely to occur more frequently. Small volcanic islands are especially at risk because of the increased likelihood of infrastructure to be located in highly exposed areas due to land use pressures.

This research, which is supervised by Dr Stefano Moncada and Prof. Adelle Thomas, aims to:

- determine which Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) frameworks are currently utilised in the Caribbean in order to develop a new framework for volcanic risk reduction which addresses the secondary impacts of volcanic eruptions, including the impacts of hydro-meteorological hazards (hurricanes, floods, drought associated with CC) during and after volcanic eruptions in Caribbean SIDS;
- investigate ways in which the efficiency of hazard knowledge sharing between researchers and practitioners in Caribbean SIDS can be improved;
- develop a framework for integrating volcanic risk reduction, and DRR in general, into the curriculum in Caribbean SIDS.

2.4. List of all lecturers teaching with ISSI

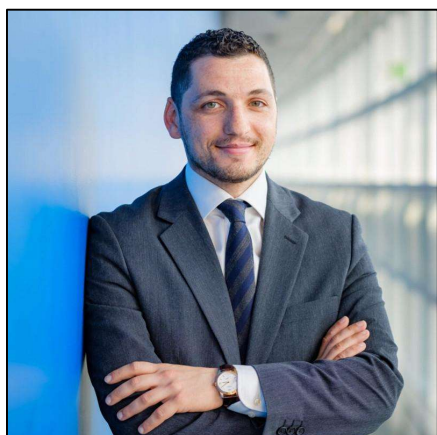
The ISSI collaborates with academic staff from several Faculties/School/Institute/Centres based at the University of Malta, and in other key centres overseas, in order to provide the most appropriate expertise in the teaching and in the research areas of our prospective students. The ISSI has one full-time 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
- Prof. Roderick Pace
- Prof. Saviour Formosa
- Dr George Vital Zammit
- Dr Karl Agius
- Dr Michael Briguglio
- Perit Raphael Axiak
- Ms Glorianne Camilleri
- Dr Margaret Camilleri Fenech
- Dr Francesco Sindico

2.4.1. Testimonials from ISSI academics

Dr Karl Agius



Picture 6. Dr Karl Agius, lecturer for the academic year 2021-2022

Lecturing at the Islands and Small States Institute has not only given me the chance to share the research I conducted on central Mediterranean Islands but also served as an opportunity to discuss with students the overlapping realities, challenges and opportunities faced by (small) islands and island states. The fact that most students who enrol for the post-graduate programme reside on islands from various geographical areas and come from different academic backgrounds makes this experience even more enriching to those delivering lectures and students.

In particular I enjoyed discussing with students their research and how to overcome the common challenges arising from island dynamics. The online environment, study material and flexibility offered by the Institute are commendable as it gives the opportunity to students from different time-zones and from different working environments to join the programme. The conferences organised by the institute are an added value for students and academics giving them the opportunity to exchange views with island scholars and to link academic knowledge with the reality on the ground.

Dr Francesco Sindico



Picture 7. Dr Francesco Sindico, lecturer for the academic year 2021-2022

I was delighted to teach international climate change law on the Islands and Small States post graduate programme. Islands are at the forefront of the global fight against climate change and whilst many may be small geographically, their diplomatic skills and efforts within the climate change arena have been impressive. This year at COP27 a decades long plight of SIDS has led to the international community recognising the need for an ad-hoc loss and damage fund.

I discussed with the Islands and Small States post graduate programme how funds like this one develop and how they fit in the wider picture of international law. Doing this with students from islands with some of them actively involved in international climate change law on behalf of their national delegations or civil society organisations is simply unique. I look forward to collaborating more in the future and I hope to be able to teach the students in person in forthcoming editions of the Islands and Small States post graduate programme.

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

After having been re-designated as a World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre on Health Systems and Policies in Small States in 2021, the Islands and Small States Institute continued to cooperate with the WHO Europe office. The ISSI supported the WHO in developing policy recommendations for post-pandemic resilience building in small state health systems and the connection with sustainable tourism, producing a policy brief, which was adopted at the 2022 Montenegro Ministerial Meeting of the Small Countries Initiative, and a more detailed background paper on this specific theme.

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. The CCP has started internal consultations to amend its statute and allow more entities to join the platform, while discussing the optimal functioning of its board.

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, Prof. Andrew Jones, Dr Marie Louise Mangion, and Ms Michaela Maria Chircop (Student representative) as members

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), in print].

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 website

The statute of the ITP is available here: <https://www.um.edu.mt/platforms/islandtourism>

3.4. EU Marie Curie applications

The ISSI has published a call for expression of interest for the 2022 *EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship*, in the area of ‘Vulnerability and Post-Pandemic Resilience in Islands and Small State Economies’. Among many applications received, the two most promising were selected, and the researchers were supported to submit important research projects that could advance knowledge in key areas of post-pandemic recovery and resilience. Below is a short summary of the two applications.

3.4.1. Dr Pedro Pombo, Portugal - ‘ECO-Heritages’

Dr Pombo’s proposal investigates the role of cultural heritages in promoting local economic development and sustaining social and environmental resiliencies, in the context of Small Island States (SIS), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and Sub-National Island Jurisdictions (SNIJs) located in Europe, the African continent and in the Indian Ocean.

With the objective of establishing dialogues between the fields of anthropology, heritage, environment, development and island studies, this research enables operative disciplinary bridges to address socioeconomic and environmental vulnerabilities in insular and archipelagic contexts in face of climate change. Being extremely vulnerable to climate change due to their small territorial area and particular exposure to sea-level rise, small islands and archipelagos became crucial case studies for its consequences in a global scenario. While climate change affects cultural and natural contexts, heritage management and indigenous cultures may provide answers to this situation through traditionally established cultural systems that integrate ecological preservation, the sustainability of the natural resources and social development.

The results of this research are aimed to inform operational programmes in the context of SIS, SIDS, and SNIJs promoting the integration of heritagisation processes and indigenous knowledge systems in actions for sustainable futures. Furthermore, this research addresses the pressing challenge, at a European and global level, of developing expertise to promote effective responses to mitigate the

social, economic and ecological consequences of climate change. The research team supporting Dr Pombo is formed by Dr Moncada, Prof. Briguglio and Prof. Baldacchino.

3.4.2. Dr Shalini Sharma, India - Digital Circular Economy Standard (DiCES)

The environment in many islands is vulnerable to a variety of pressures which generate negative externalities and have serious repercussions for economic and social well-being. Yet economic and social wellbeing also depends on GDP growth and business success - often the very sources of these externalities. The impending climate crises, limited resources, market fluctuations, pandemics and supply chain issues, call for a new and different way to visualise economic success. The 'Digital-Circular Economy' is one such alternative model.

Malta, a small island state and member of the European Union (EU), has committed itself to the EU Green Deal, The CE Action Plan as well as other EU goals, presenting an ideal case study to assess the transition to a circular economy. Here, the imminent need for a circular economic strategy and the participation of business as key stakeholders also presents a policy-driven justification for research. Malta, being a highly industrialised island, is chosen to research for designing digital-circular economy standard.

This project, entitled Digital Circular Economy Standard (DiCES) aims to design and develop an innovative digital circular economy standard for use by various sectors. Digital circular economy standard will be an automated platform for use by businesses, government offices and organisations to ensure cradle-to-cradle traceability of assets (any sector) and use of its data for generating data-backed circular economy bonds. Circular Economy Bonds (CEB) will be traceable green assets devised in alignment with EU taxonomy for circular economy, and available for trade on (any) Green Exchange (where it gets listed). The tools, data formats, algorithms, protocols, information processing and analytics, i.e. the integral part of digital-circular economy standard, process for listing on Green Exchange, is prime to enable the implementation of DiCES circular economy standard, creation of circular economy bonds, its acceptability and adoption on universal scale.

Starting with the identification of enablers and barriers to circularity, DiCES will proceed to develop systems to enable circular production. It will deliver the digital-circular economy standard and data-backed incentive system, to create market competition and ease the transition to circular economy. It therefore sets out to resolve issues pertaining to the identification of the level of implementation of the circular economy, drivers for market competition and incentives for implementation of the circular economy. The project will ultimately enhance profitable investment, enable stable GDP and job creation, align research with EU taxonomy for circular economy, while supporting governance to enable transition from linear to circular economy. This digital-circular economy standard will contribute to the achievement of the EU Green Deal (Raw Materials value chain), the CE Action Plan, EU's Cohesion Policy & SDGs, and follow up on the 2017 Valletta Declaration, and the 2020 Memorandum of Understanding signed by 14 EU countries with large island populations to decarbonise EU Islands, and specifically to promote projects and exchange best practices that cannot be addressed only at the island level.

3.5. MA by Research students who graduated in 2021

The research below is the result of the 30,000 words dissertation that ISSI students delivered at the end of the academic year 2020-2021. Some of the research summarised below is being presented at international conferences and in the process of being submitted to international journals.

3.5.1. Duncan Cassar – ‘A retrospective study of teenage pregnancy and its repercussions in small island states: A focus on Malta’

This dissertation aims at gaining an understanding about the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy as seen through the eyes of former teenage mothers. It seeks to gain knowledge from their experiences about the leading causes and their coping strategies within an island context. A thorough definition and sociological factors associated with this phenomenon will be provided in the literature review. Furthermore, although this research focuses on Malta, this study puts forward a general analysis of teenage pregnancy throughout several states hailing from all the continents. Ultimately, it seeks to understand whether an island mentality contributes to social constructions of teenage mothers. Prof. Joanne Cassar and Dr Valerie Visanish were the supervisors.

3.5.2. Kendra King Snagg – ‘Disaster risk reduction to multi-hazards in small island developing states: The case of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines’

This research addresses disaster risk reduction policies and multi-hazard frameworks in the context of the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS), with a focus on the small state of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). Many SIDS are vulnerable to hazardous events because of their characteristics of being remote, small, and susceptibility to external shocks. SVG is one such small island state that is faced with multiple hazardous events. There is therefore a need for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) measures to be in place for such islands to be able to withstand the impacts of these hazards. This research aims to investigate frameworks on DRR in multi-hazardous situations in SIDS and the extent of implementation of DRR measures in SVG, through a Systematic Literature Review and a content analysis of national budgets spanning from 2012 to 2021. The results show that there is a progressive increase in the mentions and allocations of budgetary sums to DRR. There are, however, key DRR terms and concepts that are conspicuously absent from the budgets, such as risk assessment, risk awareness and education, linked to multi-hazards, which suggests that a lack of adequate measures, and corresponding funding, is to be registered. This study may be useful to guide policy in the area of DRR measures in SVG and support further research in the area of multi-hazards in SIDS. Dr Moncada and Prof. Saviour Formosa were the supervisors.

3.5.3. Matthew Charlery-Smith – ‘Musical traditions and Commonwealth societies: Envisioning a commercially empowering multiculturalism for small states’

The main objective of this dissertation is to examine the commerciality of music traditions and how the existence of multiculturalism unifies people to expand and appreciate them. This research also provides insight into locally performed but lesser globally known native and popular music artists, musicians, and traditions within Commonwealth member states/societal groups. The aim is to examine through participant interaction how different native styles are perceived and the degree of

commercial potential they have, with the intention of suggesting innovative ways of platforming them that can achieve an empowering level of critical acclaim and global recognition. The research explores the successful implementation of any suggested policies that would socioeconomically strengthen Commonwealth small states and, as a result, the Commonwealth as a whole. By using examples from social media trends, historical communications archives (TV, radio, literature, news, etc.), Western social and music history, the US recording industry and successful Commonwealth projects, the research intends to demonstrate how the bloc can be a progressive, protective and powerful tool to support the development of indigenous communities, small states and the often-unexplored cultures within them. Prof. Baldacchino was the main supervisor.

3.5.4. Ben Biedermann - 'Virtual Asset Deployment in Small Island States: The Case of Malta'

Since the inception of virtual assets, regulatory approaches by small island states have been marginalised and discredited for enabling the blockchain industry. Without being formally connected to the discourse on small states as financial centres, the literature on virtual asset regulation has reinforced the narrative of small islands as risky, lacking transparency, and vulnerable to financial crime. This research challenges some of the findings from literature in the field of financial services in the context of small island states, and building on the case of Malta discusses findings that possibly suggest a new narrative.

This research adopts a mixed-method approach, analysing the Virtual Financial Assets Act (VFAA) adopted in Malta and the European Commission's proposal of the Directive on Markets in Crypto-Assets (MiCA). By initially focusing on a specific case study island, a standardised research approach prevalent in small island state studies was taken. We then introduced methods of computer linguistics to assess legislations, and map themes and prevalent patterns. Informed by the theory of small-scale flexible specialisation, the results led to a keyword query, which guided the qualitative document analysis of the VFAA and MiCA. Our results confirm that Malta's self-proclamation as blockchain island was not an announcement leading to laissez-faire regulation, but it prompted a regulation of virtual assets that is viable and competitive within the EU financial market. Furthermore, in parts of the directive proposed by the European Commission, we find that the legislation adopted in Malta can be regarded as a blueprint for virtual asset regulation, as set out by MiCA. For small island state studies, the findings imply the need to further review the mainstream narrative in literature on financial assets that depicts islands mostly negatively. This paper also points to the need of having further research on how other small island states regulate this new class of financial assets, in order to shed further light on both the hegemonic narrative on islands, and whether virtual assets promote investments and provide long-lasting development opportunities for islands. Dr Moncada was the main supervisor.

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

3.6.1. Ruth Gutierrez-Corley



Picture 8. Ruth Gutierrez-Corley (Belize)

The doctoral research programme at the Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI) is very comprehensive providing one year of introduction courses to understanding the economic, environmental, social and political issues that govern development of islands and small states along with the research tools and methodology necessary to undergo my research in the next two years. During the first year period, it has allowed me to gather the theoretical foundation to launch my doctoral thesis while networking with experts in the field of climate adaptation through conference and workshop opportunities. It has been a fruitful experience so far as I prepare to engage with stakeholders in my research.

My doctoral research focuses on investigating the vulnerability of seaweed farms in the Caribbean Sea with a focus on perceived short- and long-term adaptation strategies employed by seaweed farmers specifically in Belize. My doctoral research is entitled “The Sustainability of Seaweed Aquaculture for Blue Growth and Climate Change Adaptation in Small Island Developing States (SIDS): The Case of Belize”. Under the guidance of Dr Stefano Moncada (principal supervisor) and Prof. Alan Deidun (co-supervisor), the first phase of the research involved conducting a systematic literature review on climate change adaptation theoretical and conceptual frameworks in the context of sustainable livelihoods (SL), while leveraging the seaweed aquaculture developments as blue livelihoods in SIDS.

3.6.2. Marie Michele Audrey Tolbize Ravina



Picture 9. Marie Michele Audrey Tolbize Ravina

I am from Rodrigues Island, Mauritius, and currently completing an MA (Research on Islands and Small States) with the University of Malta through the Islands and Small States Institute, which I started in October 2021. My experience with this Programme has, in a first instance, been very revealing and very enriching; revealing in the sense that it allowed me to discover how similar islands are, and enriching as we are given the tools to deal the specific characteristics and issues of our home islands. Furthermore, engaging with classmates during the online classes allows for a rich exchange of ideas and learning of best practices, with the support of very knowledgeable lecturers. Hence I may conclude that overall, it was a positive experience for me as it gave me new perspectives on fellow islanders and small states in general.

The Covid 19 pandemic brought into the limelight the crucial question of food systems resilience and its connection to people's nutrition and food security. Improving local food production, and the resiliency of the Small Island Developing States' food systems, could potentially offset the impact of pandemics or other natural catastrophes on food systems and food security in these states. My research is entitled "Agroecology and Food Sovereignty in Small Island Developing States: The case of Rodrigues Island". The diverse nature and uniqueness of SIDS do not allow for a one-size-fits-all approach to solve climate-related issues or other catastrophes' issues; but identifying research gaps for each state and determining how the evidence falls short allows to maximally inform policymakers, researchers, and funders on the types of questions that need to be addressed and the type of studies that are needed to address these questions. Also, the actual global food system is not able to put food on everyone's table; hence the necessity to look into other alternatives.

3.6.3. Ratu Tevita Rarokolutu



Picture 10. Ratu Tevita Rarokolutu

Ni sa bula vinaka! and warm tropical greetings from the islands of Fiji!

COVID-19 may have brought setbacks to many, but to me it was a blessing in disguise! The pandemic further revolutionised education, introducing online learning, enabling students from across the globe to study online at prestigious institutions. I have been blessed to be awarded the scholarship to complete my Master's study online at the Islands and Small States Institute of the University of Malta. From day one when I send in my expression of interest till date, the support system has been exceptional. From my immediate supervisor to the support staff team who have been effectively monitoring, assisting and guiding my learning journey at Malta, every step of the way! Their unwavering support and commitment to ensuring my studies at the ISSI are well completed is testament of the advanced educational system one gets from a world renowned university such as the University of Malta.

Vinakavakalevu and Thank you so very much, Islands and Small States Institute at the University of Malta, for the memorable learning experience!

3.7. PhD research students and themes

3.7.1. Georges Marc Nicette - *'Understanding lived experiences of former heroin users and discourses surrounding heroin use in a Small Island Developing State (SIDS): The case of Seychelles'*

This sociological study aims to explore the lived experiences of former heroin users and related discourses associated with heroin use in Seychelles. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Seychelles is one of the most affected SIDS by the heroin pandemic, suffering from the highest rate of heroin use per capita globally (APDAR 2021; UNODC, 2019), representing 5.6 per cent of the population, almost 11 per cent of the working force. Despite a large amount of literature on heroin use and its effect on society, there is a lack of research in understanding heroin use in SIDS context, a

gap limiting policy debates and interventions. This research intends to address these shortcomings, inviting a rethinking of drug policy by bringing the stories and surrounding construction of heroin discourses within policy debates and practices. Mr Nicette's supervisory team is formed by Dr Michael Briguglio (main), Dr Stefano Moncada (co-supervisor), and Prof. Marilyn Clark (advisor). Mr Nicette has successfully passed the evaluation to move from MPhil to PhD.

3.7.2. Theresia Penda Choppy - 'Creativity and creolization in Seychellois creole folktales'

The research is based on small island states from the perspective of plantation islands and creolization, with a particular focus on the student's home archipelago, the Seychelles. The selection of folktales as the corpus for this study was undertaken given the proper contextualisation of such material into the theoretical framework and hypothesis. In short, creole folktales illustrate their people's diasporic origins, the creolization process, and the creation of a new social identity in each creole community. Being islands has also influenced the particularities of each island creole community. Ms Choppy's supervisory team is formed by Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino (main), Prof. Dominique Lanni (co-supervisor), and Prof. Ray Fabri (advisor). Ms Choppy has successfully undertaken her upgrade from MPhil to PhD and is in her final year of studies.

3.7.3. Thuan Luca Nguyen Dinh - 'From Overtourism to Undertourism: Small Island States and the COVID-19 Pandemic'

This doctoral research explores the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector in small island states and the response and resilience enacted to withstand the crisis. COVID-19 consequences have been severe in touristic small island states. This vulnerability would confirm the traditional view that small islands are fragile. However, past global crises have shown that small island states are resilient. This research intends to contribute to the debate whether this resilience is policy-driven and planned by the government (top-down) or it is due to the innate resourcefulness of the collective action of individuals, firms and the society (bottom-up) and how it applies to the COVID-19 situation. Mr Nguyen's supervisory team is formed by Prof. Lino Briguglio (main) and Dr Stefano Moncada (co-supervisor). Mr Nguyen has successfully undertaken his upgrade from MPhil to PhD and is in his final year of studies.

3.8. Research projects

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

The ISSI is 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 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 Global Island Report

Dr Moncada, in collaboration with Dr James Randall, Professor Emeritus, Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) in Canada, contributed a chapter to the *Annual Report on Global Islands 2021*, published by Island Studies Press in partnership with the Foreign Affairs Office of Hainan Province. The Report explores the progress by island governments in addressing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as issues related to carbon neutrality, trade, and tourism, and how jurisdictions could be building resilience in order to be better prepared for future extreme events.

Entitled 'Progress and Success by Sovereignty? The Attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Small Island States, Small Island Developing States, and Subnational Island Jurisdictions', the chapter of Dr Moncada and Dr Randall acknowledges that achieving the SDGs represents a crucial milestone and understanding perceptions and support from citizens towards the Goals is critical for governments to implement suitable policies and that, progress notwithstanding, there are still areas where it has stalled, and where governments face difficulties in interpreting public opinion needed to promote effective interventions. The research explores, for a selected group of small island states (SIS), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and subnational island jurisdictions (SNIJs), the relationship between the importance given to SDGs by island citizens and the actions taken by governments to meet the Goals. It aims to close a knowledge gap and contribute to a growing debate in island studies, in understanding the characteristics - and, potentially, factors - that shape public perceptions of success in achieving SDGs. The chapter adopts a quantitative approach by using correlation analysis, utilising an original survey conducted in ten SIS, SIDS, and SNIJs. The research finds that issues connected to sovereignty, population dynamics and wealth can potentially help to interpret current gaps in policy implementation and to support the success by governments to meet their SDG targets.

The chapter can be downloaded here: <https://islandstudies.com/files/2022/07/Ch-3-Moncada-Randall-pgs-85-106-June.pdf>

3.8.3 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, and started in March 2022. 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.

3.8.4 ERASMUS+

Since 2019, the ISSI has been awarded several grants under the Erasmus+ Key Action 107 “International Credit Mobility” (staff mobility for teaching), to foster collaboration between the Institute, as well as the University of Malta, and the University of Mauritius, Queensland University (Australia), the University of West Indies at Cave Hill (Barbados), and the University of Prince Edward Island (Canada). One mobility, with the University of Mauritius, took place in June 2022, where Dr Moncada and Mr Luca Nguyen taught and conducted research seminars on several themes, among which the project ‘Beyond Pandemics: Improving climate resilience and health systems in small island states’.



Picture 11. Dr Moncada and Mr Nguyen delivering a seminar at the University of Mauritius

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



Picture 12. 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>

3.8.6. 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.

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

Books

- Briguglio, L. (2022) My 50-year research journey on the economies of Malta and other small states. *Xjenza* on line Journal of the Malta Chamber of Scientists.

Book chapters

- Briguglio, L. (2022) “Social governance in Southern European EU member states”, in Brown, M. and Briguglio, M. (eds) Social Welfare Issues in Southern Europe. Routledge, UK. <https://www.routledge.com/Social-Welfare-Issues-in-Southern-Europe/Brown-Briguglio/p/book/9780367206420>
- Briguglio, L. and Avellino, M. “Assessing Overtourism: The Case of Malta.” in Managing Events, Festivals And The Visitor Economy: Concepts, Collaborations And Cases. Editor: M. Duigan. Publisher: CABI, UK. <https://www.cabi.org/bookshop/book/9781789242850/>
- Briguglio, L. (2021) “L-ekonomija u l-politika ta’ stati żgħar.” in Vassallo, M.T. (ed.) Kollox Politika? Governanza, Religjon, Ekonomija, Amministrazzjoni Pubblika. BDL Publication. <https://bdlbooks.com/product/kollox-politika/>

Journal Articles

- Briguglio, L., & Moncada, S. (2022). “Small states and the vulnerability resilience framework : withstanding exposure to adverse external shocks.” Occasional Papers on Islands and Small States, 3.

4.2. Prof. Frank Bezzina

Journal Articles

- Bezzina, F., Brown, M. & Marmarà V.A. (2022) “Gender balance in national parliament: voters’ perceptions towards the gender corrective mechanism in Malta”, Democratization, Vol. 29 No. 4, pp. 655-672. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2021.1995859>
- Cassar, V., Bezzina, F. & Fabri, S. (2022) “A fuzzy-set approach to re-exploring work-related stress-outcome relationships: Implications for research methods, theory and practice”, Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods (EJBRM), Vol. 20 No 2, pp. 63-74. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34190/ejbrm.20.2.2207>
- Lahmiri, S., Bekiros, S. & Bezzina, F. (2022) “Complexity analysis and forecasting of variations in cryptocurrency trading volume with support vector regression tuned by Bayesian

optimization under different kernels: An empirical comparison from a large data set”, *Expert Systems with Applications*, Vol. 209, December 15, 118349 (13 pages). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2022.118349>

- Tracz-Krupa, K., Bezzina, F., Cassar, V., Przytuła, S., Bruska, A., & Szymańska-Czaplak, & E. (2021) “Expectations towards international study visits: Preliminary research findings”, *Journal of Intercultural Management*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 1-19.

Edited volumes

- Cassar, J., Bezzina, F. & Borg, C. (eds.). (2022). *IPS Journal*, Issue 4: July. Floriana, Malta: Institute for Public Services.
- Cassar, J., Bezzina, F. & Borg, C. (eds.). (2022). *IPS Journal*, Issue 3: January. Floriana, Malta: Institute for Public Services.

4.3. Dr Stefano Moncada

Book Chapters

- 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

- 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
- 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 Prof. Ing. Charles Yousif

- Vella, R.C., Yousif, C., Rey Martinez, F.J. & Rey Hernandez, J.M., “Prioritising Passive Measures over Air Conditioning to Achieve Thermal Comfort in Mediterranean Baroque Churches”, *Sustainability* 2022, 14(14), 8261; <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/14/8261/pdf> <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14148261>

- Buga, N. & Yousif, C., “Evaluating drivers and barriers to adopting a local energy policy under The Covenant of Mayors Initiative in the Small Island State of Malta”, *Energy Policy* 159 (2021), 112586; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2021.112586>
- Vella, R.C., Rey Martinez, F.J., Yousif, C. & Camilleri, L., “Thermal Comfort in Places of Worship within a Mediterranean Climate”, *Sustainability* 2021, 13(13), 7233; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13137233>
- Gatt, D., Caruana, C. & Yousif, C., “Building Energy Renovation and Smart Integration of Renewables in a Social Housing Block Toward Nearly-Zero Energy Status”, *Frontiers in Energy Research*, Vol. 8 (2020) 560892; <https://doi.org/10.3389/fenrg.2020.560892>

4.5. 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. 4, No. 2 was published in November 2021 and it included two Special Sections: one on “Resilience and climate change in small states and territories” and another on “Sustainable island futures: A collaborative research project”. Each section is made up of a guest editorial and a number of articles (four and three, respectively). Another two articles were published together with the usual section presenting book reviews of twelve publications.

Vol. 5, No. 1, was published in May 2022 and it included a Special Section on “After Brexit: The UK’s Overseas Territories and Britain’s Crown Dependencies” made up of a guest editorial and six articles. Seven other articles and the section with book reviews completed the issue.

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

4.6. Occasional Papers

The following papers were published in the *Occasional Series* in *Islands and Small States Studies*, which has been active since 1994.

4.6.1. *Debt and domination: Malta’s usurious economy – Mary Grace Vella and Yana Mintoff*

In 2021, Malta was grey listed by the European Union’s Financial Action Task Force for its administrative deficiencies and lack of adequate and transparent regulatory frameworks. Indeed, parallel to the formal economy, lies an equally strong informal economy, characterised by hot money, cheap and precarious labour, and enterprise in illicit activities. In the Maltese Islands today, usury or the charging of interest on loans in excess of 8%, is considered an economic crime, yet despite its

criminalisation in 2002, it remains a widespread though hidden phenomenon. Often concealed through bribery and extorted through violence, usury lies at the heart of corrupt societies. Yet, it is largely overlooked as an important issue in terms of socio-economic impact and development. This paper examines the practice of usury within the Maltese Islands from a financial and macro-economic perspective. Based on qualitative interviews with stakeholders engaged in the field and a case review analysis of civil and criminal cases related to usury from 2011 to 2021, the paper presents an analysis of the financial and macro-economic causative factors and impact of usury on stability and economic development. This analysis leads to a number of implications for reform which would provide for adequate living income for all, measures to curb both legalised forms of usury and criminal usury, improved banking services, and enhanced administrative and regulatory and mechanisms.

4.6.2. Rent-seeking elites versus the disempowered: a case study on the impact of divergent interests on foreign policy in São Tomé and Príncipe - José Francisco Pavia

This paper addresses the divergence between São Toméan civil society (or most parts of it) and the political elite (generally rent-seekers) on the shift in São Tomé and Príncipe's foreign policy from Taiwan (the (Republic of China) to China (People's Republic of China). The São Tomé and Príncipe-Taiwan cooperation, which covered social projects on education, health (e.g., the Malaria Control Project), agricultural production and water supply, etc., was seen positively by a sizeable portion of São Tomé and Príncipe's civil society. In contrast, the country's collaboration with Beijing, which is focused on large enclave projects, such as oil infrastructures, ports and airports, is part of the Belt and Road Initiative, and driven by geopolitical considerations. We argue that this shift in foreign policy was mostly intended to create more opportunities for embezzlement and corruption to benefit the political elites and rent-seekers, while undermining any cooperation that benefitted the neediest populations. Field work with interviews and data research was conducted to confirm the hypothesis. The findings – thus far – corroborate the main assumption.

4.6.3. Small states and the vulnerability resilience framework: withstanding exposure to adverse external shocks - Lino Briguglio and Stefano Moncada

The vulnerability and resilience (V&R) framework tests the hypothesis that highly economically vulnerable countries, in terms of their exposure to adverse external shocks, can still be successful economically if they are governed well, and conversely, countries that are relatively sheltered from such shocks can perform badly, if their governance is weak. The model is based on two indices, the first measuring economic vulnerability and relates to exposure of countries to adverse external shocks and the second relating to resilience, which in this study is associated with policy induced measures, thus with governance. In this framework, governance is given a wide definition, covering economic, political, social and environmental dimensions. The mentioned hypothesis was tested empirically with up to date data and a re-estimation of the original model. This paper presents additional methodological

explanations on how the model of the V&R framework was developed, and discusses new results. Our study finds that small states are disproportionately burdened, relative to other states, especially when trying to build resilience to adverse external shocks. The paper concludes by discussing the issue of concessional finance for small states so as to enable them to strengthen their institutional frameworks, aiming to inform the policy donor community.

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. ISSI Postgraduate Conference

The ISSI organised its first Postgraduate Conference on Islands and Small States Studies on Monday 20 June, at the University of Malta's Valletta Campus. The conference attracted a large number of young scholars, and received about 100 abstracts and requests for attending the conference, from all corners of the world. The conference was opened by a message from Hon. Minister Ian Borg, who stressed the successful cooperation with the ISSI and the UM in offering scholarships, and by supporting knowledge and research that can sustain the work of the Ministry, and Malta in general, within the EU and international organisations.

Pro-Rector Prof. Frank Bezzina highlighted the role of the ISSI in supporting the internationalisation of the University of Malta (UM), registering a good majority of its students coming from outside Malta, especially from other island states. Prof. Nicholas Vella, Director of the University's Doctoral School, stressed the importance of such conferences, also in the light of the growing community of postgraduate researchers at the UM, and where the ISSI is providing an important contribution.

A round table entitled 'Islands and Small States Power: Punching above their weight?' was also held, with Prof. Lino Briguglio, Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino, and Prof. Simone Borg, who have all stressed the progress made by research stemming from small islands states, and their growing role within the international arena. The conference was supported by the Institute of Tourism, Travel and Culture, the Doctoral School of the University of Malta and the Conference and Events Unit. In order to reduce the carbon footprint of the conference, only plant-based food was offered, and other mitigating actions adopted to minimise climate change impacts.



Picture 13. ISSI staff and some of the participants at the Postgraduate Conference at the UM Valletta Campus

5.2. Webinars

The ISSI held a webinar entitled "Small Island Developing States: Vulnerability and Resilience under Climate Change" on 7th December 2021. The event saw the global launch of the book "Small island developing states: Vulnerability and resilience under climate change", published by Springer.

The event was chaired by H.E. Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino, Ambassador of Malta for Islands and Small States and former Chairperson of the Islands and Small States Institute of the University of Malta.

Prof. Frank Bezzina, newly-appointed Chairperson of the Islands and Small States Institute and Dean of the Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy of the University of Malta, opened the event.

The editors of the publication addressed the event.

- Dr Stefano Moncada, Director of the Islands and Small States Institute of the University of Malta;
- Prof. Lino Briguglio, Professor at the Islands and Small States Institute of the University of Malta;
- Prof. Hilary Bambrick, Adjunct Professor at the School of Public Health and Social Work at Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia;
- Prof. Ilan Kelman, Professor of disasters and health at the University College London, England, and a Professor II at the University of Agder, Kristiansand, Norway;
- Prof. Catherine Iorns, Professor of law at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand;
- Prof. Leonard Nurse, visiting Professor of integrated coastal management and climate change adaptation, University of the West Indies (UWI), Barbados

James Ellsmoor, Founder and CEO of Island Innovation also addressed the event.

The poster features the logo of L-Università ta' Malta Islands & Small States Institute on the left. The main title is "Seminar/Webinar on 'SIDS: Vulnerability and Resilience under Climate Change'". Below the title, it states "Global launch of the book: *Small Island Developing States. Vulnerability and Resilience under Climate Change*, published by Springer". The chairperson is listed as H.E. Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino, Ambassador of Malta for Islands & Small States. A list of speakers includes Prof. Frank Bezzina, Dr Stefano Moncada, Prof. Lino Briguglio, Prof. Hilary Bambrick, Prof. Ilan Kelman, Prof. Catherine Iorns, Prof. Leonard Nurse, and Mr James Ellsmoor. The venue is UM Msida Campus, IT Services, Room: VC 101. The Zoom registration link is <https://tinyurl.com/Webinar-Registration-7DEC21>. The event date and time are 7th DEC 2021 | EST: 9.00am | CET: 3.00pm | ACT: 10.00pm. On the right side, there is a book cover for "Small Island Developing States: Vulnerability and Resilience Under Climate Change" by Stefano Moncada, Lino Briguglio, Hilary Bambrick, Ilan Kelman, Catherine Iorns, and Leonard Nurse, published by Springer.

Picture 14. Poster for Webinar on the occasion of the launch of "SIDS: Vulnerability and Resilience under Climate Change"

On 16th March 2022, the ISSI invited University staff and students, as well as members of the general public, to a webinar delivered by Dr Christian Depraetere, from the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) based in Montpellier, France, entitled “Small island states and territories and the general framework of the world archipelago”.



Picture 15. Poster of Webinar organized by the ISSI in collaboration with Dr Christian Depraetere

On 27 June 2022, the Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI) of the University of Malta and the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) organised a world-wide webinar on the engagement of the IMF with small developing states.

The speakers included top officials of the IEO and a number of experts on small-state issues. Dr Stefano Moncada, Director of the ISSI, chaired the event.

The IEO report generally indicated that the IMF's surveillance, advocacy and analytical work relating to small developing states was of major benefit for these states, but more needed to be done to address the specificities of these states and to improve the coordination of work on small states within the IMF itself.

L-Università ta' Malta
Islands & Small States Institute

Webinar: Strengthening IMF Engagement with Small Developing States

📅 27th June 2022 | 3pm to 4.30pm (CEST) | 9am to 10.30am (Washington, DC)

✓ Further information and registration: http://lnkiy.in/IMF-ISSI_Webinar_2022 (Zoom)

This webinar will present the IMF's Independent Evaluation Office's (IEO) evaluation of the Fund's engagement with its 34 Small Developing State (SDS) members. The report covers over a decade of IMF surveillance, lending and capacity support to SDS. It touches on many policy issues in small states, including challenges related to low growth and vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change. The evaluation recognises progress made over the last ten years in strengthening IMF work on SDS, but concludes that there is much the IMF can do to further raise the value of its engagement with these countries.

IEO The Independent Evaluation Office

STRENGTHENING IMF ENGAGEMENT WITH SMALL DEVELOPING STATES

The 34 countries defined by the IMF as SDS are among its most vulnerable members, posing particular challenges for the institution's engagement. Building on the progress made over the last decade, the IEO puts forward four recommendations.

- Recalibrating IMF Engagement**
To reinforce coherence and continuity, the Fund should refresh staff guidance on SDS work and reinforce mechanisms for internal coordination, Board involvement, and collaboration with partners.
- Enhancing Surveillance and CD**
To improve the focus and traction of these activities, in the context of SDS, the Fund should adapt its tools, deepen integration across Fund activities, better recognize constraints, and increase support for implementation.
- Addressing SDS' Financing Needs**
The IMF should use its lending framework in ways that better address SDS needs, including greater attention to growth and resilience in programs, careful implementation of the new RST, and higher access limits under the large natural disaster window.
- Strengthening HR Commitments**
The IMF should adopt further HR commitments to reduce turnover, avoid gaps in coverage, minimize disruptions from handovers, and strengthen Fund presence on the ground.

For information visit us at:
<https://ieo.imf.org/en>

Picture 16. Poster of Webinar organised by the ISSI and the IMF's Independent Evaluation Office.

5.3. Articles (newspapers, Newspoint)

During the academic year 2020/2021, the ISSI was featured in a number of news items and outlets, ranging from the University's own Newspoint information portal to national and international publications and Government press releases.

Whilst a comprehensive list of article links is found below, here are some highlights:

Dr Moncada's interview with MaltaToday on climate change adaptation and mitigation

In his interview with MaltaToday, ISSI's Director Dr Stefano Moncada offers a critical reflection on policies and practices, in Malta and internationally, concerning climate change mitigation and adaptation. He calls for the urgent need to shift to more sustainable policy and economic practices. "Ours is an economic system which measures the economy only on the basis of income; and this is absurd, because we don't live only on income... either as countries, or individuals. We have other things to measure by: health, education, social well-being, and so on. But unless these things really are measured, and given a value... will not be able to 'change the system'."

On a positive note, Dr Moncada emphasises that it is not too late to enhance the Maltese and global response to global warming. "We have been successful in the past, and we can succeed again. But obviously, the longer we delay this process, the higher the cost will be, and the shorter the timeframe for us to do it in. Because climate change is not going to wait for us to decide. It is already knocking on our doors."

MaltaToday (8th November 2021)

Ref.:https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/interview/113150/climate_change_will_not_wait_for_us_to_take_action_stefano_moncada#.Y4XuGHbP3rd

The World Health Organization reports on ISSI's reassignment as Collaborating Centre

In this news item, the World Health Organization (WHO) announces the reassignment of the ISSI as the WHO Collaborating Centre on Health Systems and Policies in Small States, following its original designation in 2017.

“Known as a centre of excellence on issues pertaining to islands and small states, ISSI has a notable track record of high-calibre policy research on resilience, economy, and environment and health issues affecting small states. The institute is currently supporting a WHO project aimed at gaining a better understanding of the interplay between health and tourism, with a focus on sustainable tourism in small states.”

WHO website (3rd May 2022)

Ref.:<https://www.who.int/hungary/home/29-04-2022-who-re-assigns-islands-and-small-states-institute-in-malta-as-collaborating-centre>

Professor Briguglio as keynote speaker in the July 2022 UN High-level Political Forum on sustainable development

This news item, published on the University's own portal Newspoint, reports that “Professor Lino Briguglio, former Director and current member of staff of the Islands & Small States Institute (ISSI), was invited as keynote speaker in a United Nations (UN) High-level Political Forum on sustainable development that focused on the progress made by UN members on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), organised in New York in July 2022.” During the event, Professor Briguglio “[...] stressed the importance of increasing resilience by strengthening the institutions in SIDS, arguing that these states are highly exposed to adverse external shocks, but with the right set of institutions, such states will be better able to withstand their inherent vulnerabilities and to be better equipped to attain the SDGs.”

Newspoint (7th July 2022)

Ref.:<https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2022/07/islands-and-small-states-institute-academic-addresses-un-meeting-on-sdgs>

Table 4. List of articles featuring the ISSI

Date	Media	Title	Weblink
07-Oct-21	Newspoint	UM academic moderates UNDP World Maritime Day event	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2021/10/undp-world-maritime-day
20-Oct-21	Newspoint	Prof. Lino Briguglio to speak at the Swiss Academic Association conference	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2021/10/lino-briguglio-to-deliver-speech-at-the-swiss-academic-associationon-research-and-teaching-of-economics-and-finance-symposium
22-Oct-21	Newspoint	Small Island Developing States - Vulnerability and Resilience Under Climate Change' book is now published	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2021/10/islands-and-small-states-institute-issi-pr
04-Nov-21	Newspoint	Islands & Small States Institute PhD candidate attends COPS26 in Glasgow	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2021/11/islands-and-small-states-institute-phd-candidate-attends-cops26-in-glasgow
08-Nov-21	MaltaToday	Climate change will not wait for us to take action Stefano Moncada	https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/interview/113150/climate_change_will_not_wait_for_us_to_take_action_stefano_moncada#.Y1ho6HbMLGI
25-Nov-21	Newspoint	SIDS: Vulnerability and Resilience under Climate Change	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2021/12/sids-vulnerability-and-resilience-under-climate-change
01-Dec-21	Newspoint	Kollox Politika? A new publication by Department of Public Policy, FEMA	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2021/12/kollox-politika-a-new-publication-by-department-of-public-policy-fema
16-Dec-21	Newspoint	Malta's contribution to climate change policy	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2021/12/maltas-contribution-to-climate-change-policy
17-Dec-21	Newspoint	Vulnerability and Resilience under Climate Change	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2021/12/vulnerability-and-resilience-under-climate-change
17-Dec-21	Newspoint	Research excellence awards presented to UM researchers	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2021/12/Research-excellence-awards-presented-to-UM-researchers
12-Jan-22	Newspoint	Vulnerability and Resilience under Climate Change	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2022/01/webinar-by-the-issi-of-the-university-of-malta

16-Feb-22	Newspoint	Meetings at the University of Mauritius	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2022/02/meetings-at-the-university-of-mauritius
10-Mar-22	Newspoint	WHO Regional Director, Dr Kluge discusses health policies in small states	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2022/03/who-regional-director-dr-kluge-discusses-health-policies-in-small-states
10-Mar-22	Newspoint	Joint seminar at the University of Seychelles	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2022/03/joint-seminar-at-the-university-of-seychelles
14-Mar-22	Newspoint	Webinar: "Small island states and territories and the general framework of the world archipelago"	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2022/03/webinar-islands-And-small-states-institute-issi
15-Mar-22	Newspoint	UM academic on panel of experts for SIDS multidimensional vulnerability index	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2022/03/islands-and-small-states-institute-pr
08-Apr-22	Newspoint	1st Postgraduate Conference in Islands and Small States Studies	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2022/06/1st-postgraduate-conference-in-islands-and-small-states-studies
03-May-22	WHO	WHO re-assigns Islands and Small States Institute in Malta as collaborating centre	https://www.who.int/hungary/home/29-04-2022-who-re-assigns-islands-and-small-states-institute-in-malta-as-collaborating-centre
04-May-22	Euraxess	1st Postgraduate Conference in Islands and Small States Studies	https://www.euraxess.org.mt/malta/news/1st-postgraduate-conference-islands-and-small-states-studies
06-May-22	UNRIC	WHO re-assigns Islands and Small States Institute in Malta as collaborating centre	https://unric.org/it/who-re-assigns-islands-and-small-states-institute-in-malta-as-collaborating-centre/
06-Jun-22	UNESCO	The role of the University Consortium of Small Islands States in sustainable development	https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/en/2022/06/06/the-role-of-the-university-consortium-of-small-islands-states-in-sustainable-development/
16-Jun-22	Newspoint	The evaluation of the IMF's engagement with small developing states	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2022/06/the-evaluation-of-the-imf-engagement-with-small-developing-states
24-Jun-22	Newspoint	Islands and Small States Institute organises postgraduates conference	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2022/06/islands-and-small-states-institute-organises-postgraduates-conference

01-Jul-22	Newspoint	Islands & Small States Institute and IMF's Independent Evaluation Office joint webinar	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2022/06/joint-webinar-by-the-islands-and-small-states-institute-and-the-imfs-independent-evaluation-office
07-Jul-22	Newspoint	Islands & Small States Institute academic addresses UN Meeting on SDGs	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2022/07/islands-and-small-states-institute-academic-addresses-un-meeting-on-sdgs
14-Jul-22	Newspoint	UM Academics discuss UM project 'Beyond Pandemics' at the University of Mauritius	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2022/07/pr-um-academics-discuss-umproject-beyond-pandemics-at-the-university-of-mauritius
18-Jul-22	Newspoint	Signing of Agreement on a UN Virtual Summer School	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2022/07/signing-of-agreement-on-a-un-vss

5.4. Social media activities

The Institute sustained its efforts in making its academic activities and outputs known to a wider audience through its social media channels. The articles published in the *Small States and Territories Journal* continued to be disseminated on Thursdays. Tuesdays were allocated to chapters from the *Routledge Handbook on Small States*, while Wednesdays showcased the Springer *SIDS Vulnerability and Resilience under Climate Change*.

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

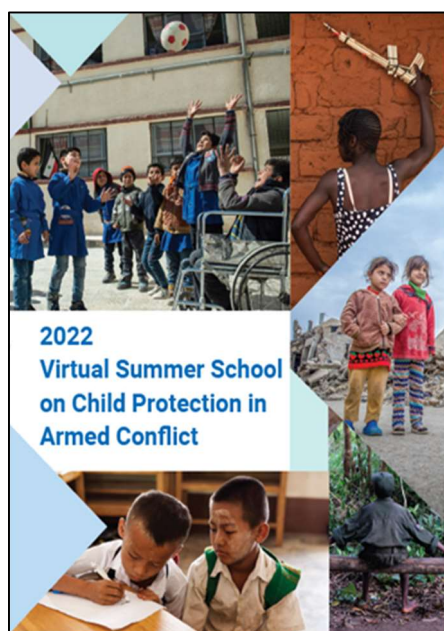
The ISSI actively promotes collaboration with public and private entities to increase visibility and reach of its teaching and research activities, as well as the mainstream of islands and small states studies.

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 2021/22, three ISSI postgraduate students benefited from these scholarships, namely Ruth Gutierrez-Belize, Marie Michele Audrey Tolbize Ravina and Ratu Tevita Rarokolutu.

6.1.2. Virtual Summer School (VSS) on Child Protection in Armed Conflict



Picture 17. Poster promoting the 2022 Virtual Summer School on Child Protection in Armed Conflicts

In late spring and summer of 2022, the ISSI collaborated with [Prof. Carmel Cefai](#), Director of the UM's [Centre for Resilience and Socio-Emotional Health](#), in the preparation and delivery of a pilot Virtual Summer School (VSS) on Child Protection in Armed Conflict. The Summer School was implemented between 29 August and 9 September 2022 in collaboration with the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (the OSRSG- CAAC) and the Government of Malta. This innovative training course was specifically designed to strengthen the

knowledge, competencies and skills of actors contributing in various capacities to the protection of children in armed conflict through a holistic and collaborative approach.

During the event's first week, participants acquainted themselves with relevant definitions, concepts, and frameworks related to conflict-affected children. They explored the place of the CAAC mandate in the protection architecture, gained a clear understanding of the six grave violations against children in conflict-affected settings while placing the topic in the broader context of related contemporary issues. During the second week, participants obtained essential skills and competencies through sessions on monitoring, analysing and reporting, on ending, preventing and responding to grave violations against conflict-affected children, as well as on fostering accountability and combating impunity.

For further information, visit:

<https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2022/07/signing-of-agreement-on-a-un-vss>

<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/virtual-summer-school-on-child-protection-in-armed-conflict/>

https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/220602_Course-Outline_Updated-Version.pdf

6.1.3. Support to the MFEA's UN Mission in New York concerning small island developing states

Professor Briguglio, selected as an expert in a UN high level panel for the creation of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index, has been attending several meetings in New York, and collaborated with Malta's mission to the UN to support their work in the interest of small states. Professor Briguglio has also attended a briefing, sponsored by the MFEA, to report to the EU ambassador on the proceedings of the high level panel, being the only European expert present in the panel.

6.2 Collaboration with the University of Seychelles

In mid-2020, the University of Malta, spearheaded by the ISSI, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Seychelles (UniSey). The partners agreed to transfer knowledge and expertise between academic staff; offer exchanges to students for enhanced learning and research experience; explore joint research and study programme development; and to share relevant information.

In the course of the academic year 2021/22, the ISSI continued its cooperation with UniSey by hosting students from the Seychelles, who are following the ISSI Doctoral Programme. Further activities are

planned, including a possible exchange of undergraduate and postgraduate students to be enrolled in the next academic year.

6.3 University Consortium of Small Islands States

In 2005, the University of Malta was one of five universities that have signed an agreement on the setting up of a University Consortium of Small Island States (UCSIS). The other founding members of the Consortium were the University of the West Indies, the University of the South Pacific, the University of Mauritius and the University of the US Virgin Islands. The initiative is supported by international institutions, including the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat and UNESCO.

On 6th June 2022, the latter organised a debate on ‘the role of the University Consortium of Small Islands States in sustainable development’, in which ISSI’s Director Dr Moncada was one of a number of reputable island scholars and policy experts to participate.

Key points emanating from the debate, as published on the [event website](#) were the following:

- There is a lack of physical resources. Schools can join to increase support for knowledge and research on the ground and exchange best practices; potential to provide even better platforms.
- The strengthening of the consortium itself needs a strategic resource mobilisation.
- Founding values of the university: let some smaller universities lead the way in.
- Needs a united front in finding solutions and a mandate for human resource development, fostering research, and indigenous resources, and providing coordinating and alignment mechanisms.
- Governments can capture the human capital to help develop small island economies. Being highly dependent on one single sector is problematic.
- Funding joint research within the consortium will help to meet the SDGs through transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary to start.
- UNESCO and all the funding partners are very committed to making this happen (consortium) with proposals from experts (e.g. on membership).

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>
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>
Vilame	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 2021/2022)		
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)		
Theseia Pendra	Choppy	<i>Creativity and Creolization in Seychellois Creole Folktales</i>
Geroges Marc	Nicette	<i>Understanding Lived Experiences of Former Heroin Users in SIDS</i>
Luca	Thuan Din Nguyen	<i>Overtourism to Undertourism: Small Island States and the Covid-19 Pandemic</i>