

Foreword



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It is with great pleasure that I write this Foreword to the 2021–2022 Biennial Report of the Centre for Labour Studies (CLS). The CLS was established in 1981, making it the oldest Centre at the University of Malta, and in 2021 celebrated its 40th anniversary. Fittingly, the current biennial report looks back not only at the period under review, but also celebrates the first 40 years of this small but impactful Centre.

The CLS has developed from offering its first course in 1983, a Diploma in Labour Studies, to offering four tertiary courses: the Diploma in Gender, Work and Society (held in collaboration with the Faculty of Social Wellbeing), the Bachelor in Work and Human Resources (Hons) (in collaboration with the Faculty for Economics, Management and Accountancy), the Bachelor in Occupational Health and Safety (Hons), and the Masters in Lifelong Career Guidance and Development (together with the Faculty of Education). The courses offered by the CLS have been a considerable success. The CLS has contributed to society by producing qualified practitioners in fields of national importance, including industrial relations, gender equality, human

resources, occupational health and safety, and career guidance, amongst others. Over the years, several alumni have held top positions in public and private organisations, whilst also contributing to society via NGOs.

The CLS also has a commendable track record in research. Over the years, the CLS has produced many noteworthy research papers. Since 2003, the CLS has held a contract with the Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions (Eurofound), an EU Agency, to produce related research reports. In 2022, the CLS won the tender to continue contributing to this Agency's Network of European Correspondents for the next four years. During the period under review, the CLS also produced research of national importance, commissioning studies regarding poverty and inequalities in Malta. Over the years, CLS academics have been active in producing research, sometimes for peer-reviewed scientific journals, and other times in collaboration with social partners. Historical research can be viewed on the CLS website (www.um.edu.mt/cls), past biennial reports and via the academic profiles of CLS staff on the UM website. This biennial report presents the research conducted during the review period.

The CLS has been active in outreach and in contributing to wider society. Over the last 40 years, the CLS has been involved in several notable initiatives, such as facilitating the setting up of the Forum Nazzjonali tat-Trade Unions (FNTU) in conjunction with the President of Malta. The CLS has also held several events in an effort to contribute to policy discussion and enhance awareness of CLS research. During 2021-2022 alone, and despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the CLS carried out its first online public Research Conference, whilst also holding physical events on inequalities in Malta and hosting a discussion between health and safety students and the Minister responsible for the Occupational Health and Safety Authority. During this period, the CLS also hosted a special event held at the Aula Magna, Valetta Campus, that celebrated the 40th anniversary of the CLS. A series of videos where some notable alumni reflected upon the impact of the CLS were also produced to celebrate this anniversary. More information on some of the

events held during the period under review can be found in this Biennial Report. Past CLS biennial reports document the efforts made by those working at the Centre over the years.

Of course, this short forward cannot do justice to the work carried out over the last two years, let alone the last forty. With that in mind, this special edition of the Biennial Report contains the reflections of each of the past Directors of the CLS. First, the speech provided by the CLS' founding father, Professor Edward Zammit on the occasion of the CLS' 40th anniversary event is reproduced. This is followed by an article by Professor Godfrey Baldacchino who reflects upon adult education in Malta and the influence of the CLS. In a related article, Mr Saviour Rizzo describes political education in Malta and the CLS' pioneering involvement. This is followed by two articles by Professor Manwel Debono. These discuss the Centre's contribution to the career guidance and human resource professions, respectively. A contribution by Dr Anna Borg then reflects upon the development and impact of the Diploma in Gender Work and Society. Finally, I discuss the CLS' impact on occupational health and safety education in Malta. This latter piece was written in collaboration with Dr Francis La Ferla who coordinated the course in health and safety prior to 2011.

Of course, the CLS cannot rest on its laurels, but must also plan for the future. Amongst our plans for the coming two years, we aim to:

- Develop a strategic plan that will be approved by the CLS board and will provide valuable future direction to the Centre.
- In terms of education, re-open each of the CLS' four courses. The CLS also intends to explore opening a new postgraduate course which will provide added opportunities for our current students to continue their education, whilst also aiming to offer some short courses for those who are yet to study with the CLS.
- In terms of research, the CLS intends to focus on publishing peer-reviewed research which is relevant to the Maltese labour market. The CLS will also continue producing deliverables for Eurofound. In order to

enhance the ability of the CLS to conduct research, funds obtained from current and past research activities will be re-invested to hire a full-time research support officer.

- In terms of outreach, the CLS has a number of activities in the pipeline. These include events for students, such as topic-specific seminars and industry visits, as well as public local events such as a second research conference. An international event, a conference on the history of work, is also planned. CLS academics will also continue to distribute their research findings via the media, and local and international conferences.

In closing, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the CLS Board, Professor Godfrey Baldacchino who chaired the CLS until the latter months of 2021, Professor Tanya Sammut Bonnici who has since chaired the CLS, my colleagues Dr Anna Borg and Professor Manwel Debono, and our invaluable administrative members of staff, including Ms Josephine Agius, Ms Stephanie Muscat, and Ms Alessia Zahra, who helped in putting this biennial report together.