

Submitted on February 1st 2018 by Mr. Louis Aquilina, UNEVOC Coordinator of the UNEVOC Centre at MCAST.

Last Friday 26th January, the UNEVOC Centre in Malta, based at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) together with the MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre organised a conference with the theme: *Entrepreneurship and Employability – A VET Symbiosis*

The conference was very well attended, with over 150 attendees coming from education institutions, Government ministries and organisations, NGO's and Industry. The media covered the event as well.

The Conference focused on understanding the link between entrepreneurship and employability, the importance of entrepreneurship in Vocational and Educational Training (VET), industry skill sets when employing people, teaching entrepreneurship, shaping the curriculum to meet industry needs in order to inform, train and form students, the role of mentors in entrepreneurship education and ways on how to assess entrepreneurship.



The Conference was opened by Mr Stephen Cachia, MCAST Principal and CEO. Dr Silvio De Bono, President of the Board of Governors addressed the audience and mentioned the importance of entrepreneurship as part of the curriculum and its link to employability. Mr Eric Flask, Director, Innovation and Entrepreneurship spoke about MCAST's vision on Entrepreneurship education and the way forward. Ing Louis Aquilina, Director Partnerships Office gave a presentation on UNEVOC and Entrepreneurship ([Presentation available here](#)).

During the second half of the conference a panel discussion on Entrepreneurship and Employability moderated by Prof Godfrey Baldacchino was held. Members on the panel included Dr Leonie Baldacchino, University of Malta; Mr Matthew Bezzina, industry; Dr Mario Cardona, MCAST; Ms Danika Formosa, MCAST student; Mr Ivan Refalo, industry and Mr Roberto Tweraser, MCAST alumni. After the discussion Ing Vincent Maione, MCAST Vice- Principal and Dr Nadia Marie Vassallo, Director Curriculum gave a presentation on assessing entrepreneurship and the way forward.

Entrepreneurship is one of the three pillars of education at MCAST together with a Multidisciplinary Curriculum and Work-based Learning. It was first introduced through a module at degree level and gradually further modules were introduced across all levels. The programme was based on similar programmes abroad, however students were not being engaged properly as at first entrepreneurship was looked at as a glorified business studies subject. This gave rise to a complete reconstruction of the Entrepreneurship programme and entrepreneurship education concept.



Taking a two-fold approach, MCAST developed a programme to equip its young adults with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to succeed in an entrepreneurial economy. Primarily it focuses on the learners' cognitive development by ensuring that a strong curriculum, which targets all the levels of education at MCAST. Supported by an environment which is conducive to flourishing an entrepreneurial mindset, the entrepreneurship curriculum aims to provide the students with the tools and the confidence required to take the path towards business creation or utilise such skills in their place of work.

Secondly, the programme engages in entrepreneurship related activities which serves to enrich the learners' entrepreneurial experience. Apart from providing incubation spaces for business development, mentors are assigned to students and alumni who approach MEC with a business idea, to guide them towards reaching their full potential by establishing a rhythm of interesting and thought-provoking discussions. The new programme is based on a three-tier approach whereby the student is first informed about entrepreneurship, followed by training and formation into becoming entrepreneurial until finally the student experiences entrepreneurship to learn to become an entrepreneur.

