



Founded 1964

Q-Mara

Newsletter of the National Council of Women - Malta



Members of



International Council of Women

Founded 1888

Motto: "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you."



European Centre of the International Council of Women

Founded 1961

In Special Consultative Status with the Economic & Social Council of the UN

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Front Cover Photos

Launch of the Bice Mizzi Vassallo Music Competition 2023

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II-Mara

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN - MALTA

Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa
Pope Pius XII Flats, Mountbatten Street
Blata l-Bajda HMR 1579, MALTA

Tel: 21 248 881/21 Tel/Fax: 21 246 982 E-mail: ncwmalta@camline.net.mt
<http://www.ncwmalta.com>

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

As we close a year and prepare ourselves for the festive season, I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge this year as being the one where we overcame a world pandemic - a first of this magnitude within our lifetime. We came out of lockdown, not to a world as it was before but a new one, where we still tread cautiously, and we have a new standard for personal space and hygiene; being slightly more aware of our surroundings, and having a greater appreciation for social interactions and events.

The NCW was hard at work this year, with loads of successful events. A hybrid of online and in-person events, classes, and seminars, as we enter a new social standard of effectively balancing life. As editor of this newsletter and a part of the Executive Committee of our beloved organisation, I'd like to thank everyone involved in helping achieve our mission to work towards helping women of all ages acquire the relevant skills to give them better opportunities for both personal and professional growth.

As an NGO active since 1964, we depend on you to be able to continue our work, and our initiatives wouldn't be possible without your donations, contacts, and volunteering.

No matter how big or small your contribution is, the NCW depends on our network for its involvement and help to get our message across to the right channels and voice our support for all local matters in order to ensure gender equality which falls within our highly regarded values. So I'd like to thank the whole Executive Committee and staff for working tirelessly towards the Council's missions; thanks to our network of local and international partners and stakeholders who support our initiatives in anyway within their means; and finally thanks to all of our members who attend our events and classes, follow our activities, as well as pass on our messages to the people they know and help grow our outreach.

To all of you - THANK YOU! We augur you an enjoyable read of our last newsletter for the year and take this opportunity to wish you and your family a joyous 2022 Christmas and a blissful start to the New Year 2023!

Together We Learn
Together We Grow
Seasons Greetings



Lara Gail Dougall
Editorial Board

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President's Message

Dear Ladies and friends,

We are nearing the end of the year, and the festival season is upon us. This means it is time for another issue of our newsletter. I hope that this season will bring us closer to our loved ones and to each other. At this moment, while many of us are planning our Christmas and New Year celebrations, my thoughts dwell on those people who are currently undergoing the hardships of war, poverty, and certainly those who desperately need our help, especially at this time of the year.

Tragically, we are going to close this year as we started it: with another femicide. This time she was a Maltese mother of two children. This happened just a few days before the 16 Days of Activism to eliminate violence against women. This violence could establish itself in several forms such as: sexual harassment, physical abuse, psychological abuse and financial control just to mention a few. This violence against women can happen anywhere!

These issues are one of the main concerns in our programme. In fact, National Council of Women (NCW) always aims to raise more awareness and put pressure on all levels of authorities and other institutions to ensure that laws are heeded and action takes place, so that the necessary arrangements to protect the lives of women and girls will be taken more seriously. Therefore, NCW remains at the forefront on these matters.

It is also through education that women and girls will be better able to improve their situation and society in general. NCW offers this service by working with institutions in this sector, and in encouraging people from all ages to participate in these programmes. We also go the extra mile to offer other courses in conjunction with different organisations from the Public and Private sector, to encourage more women to participate in the labour market and be part of the decision-making process. I believe that through education and programmes especially tailor made for women and girls, NCW are offering a second chance to improve the abilities of women and to help them stand on their own two feet.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all the Executive members, affiliated organisations, members and finally the staff at our premises, for the management and running of our organisation; namely for participating and dedicating their time throughout the year.

On behalf of the Executive Council members and myself, I wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year filled with love, joy, and happiness.

Doreen Borg Zammit
President



NCW Press Release on Domestic Violence

22nd November 2022

When are we going to give this matter our utmost? How is it that despite a femicide law, reports at Police Stations, protests, talks, still violence persists! We are all failing these women. The life of another woman, Bernice Cassar, a young woman a mother of two small children who are now orphaned, killed brutally while in her car. And this despite an order for her protection given by the court! Not only has her right as a human being been abused through constant violence both physical and psychological, but her life taken away by the father of her children.

It happens also during the month of November, the month when we mourn our loved ones, the month when we highlight and we mourn also the women, who like Bernice faced death in a violent manner by

a member of her family. It is not only a femicide, it is violence against the children who have been robbed of their mother at such a tender age.

The National Council of Women condemns any action of violence, be it physical, psychological or verbal. The government must take serious action in order to rectify the situation where women need not wait, months or even years to have their cases heard and to find that when the case is called the woman would have already faced her creator. Let us not keep talking and issuing press releases, action today will save a life tomorrow.

Dr Josette Barbara-Cardona
Hon. General Secretary
National Council of Women (NCW)

Parlament id-Drittijiet tal-Anzjani u l-Abbuż 2022

(Organizzat flimkien mill-Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Anzjani)

I-Ġimgħa, 30 ta' Settembru 2022

Mr Speaker,

Onorevoli, nies distinti, u dawk kollha li jahdmu u għandhom għal qalbhom l-anzjani.

Ejjew insiehu aktar vuċijiet fi strutturi ta' tmexxija biex l-anzjani jkunu msahha u salvagwardjati fis-soċjeta' tagħna. Nemmen li għad hemm settur tal-anzjani li mhumiex milhuqa mill-ebda istituzzjoni civili, reliġjuza jew volontarja.

Illum, bi dmir, aħna nħarsu lejn l-anzjani KOLLHA.

F'din il-kamra tar-rappreżentanti, jien waħda mill l-iżgħar vuċi. Studajt u lhaqt għax fuq kolloxx kelli s-sapport ta' dawk ikbar minni; speċjalment in-nanniet tiegħi u nisa anzjani fi hdan il Kunsill tan-Nisa.

Nemmen hafna fil-kumplimentarjetà bejn l-anzjani u l-generazzjoni li tiela'. Dan punt li spiss isemmih anke l-Papa Franġisku. Għal skop ta' statistika, dejjem nifirdu in-nies fis-soċjeta' skont l-'age groups'. Fil-hajja ta' kuljum, dan m'għandux ikun. Jekk irridu soċjeta' b'sahhitha, irridu noholqu strutturi 'safe' għall-kbar u ż-żgħar.

Fiz-żewġ rwoli kbar li nokkupa f'hajti – il-professjoni ta' nutar u dik ta' membru attiv fi hdan il-Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa – niltaqa' spiss mar-realta' tat-terz età fil-komplexità kollha tagħha.

Il-Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa ilu mpenjat sa mill-bidu nett biex jiżgura li l-anzjani, speċjalment in-nisa, jkunu murija rispett u dinjita. Il-Kunsill iħabbrek biex johloq spazju fejn il-mara tkun

salvagwardjata u b'sahhitha biżżejjed biex tgħix hajja b'dinjità.

Fl-MCESD, il-Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa jħabrek biex fis-soċjeta' u speċjalment fid-dinja tax-xogħol tkun rispettata l-'gender equality'. Ma ninsewx li l-'gender equality' tolqot in-nies anzjani, li jahdmu kif ukoll dawk li jieħdu penzjoni. Għaliex hawn hafna nisa jieħdu penzjoni inqas mill-irgħiel?

Għal diversi snin, anke illum, noffru korsijiet differenti biex l-anzjani 'ikunu fuq saqajhom' dejjem preparati għal soċjeta' li tinbidel, mhux biss fil-valuri, iżda ukoll fl-iżvilupp ta' infrastrutturi teknoloġiċi bħal computer u smartphones.

Il-Covid halliet effetti iebsin fuq is-soċjeta' tagħna, iżda bla dubju serviet ta' xprun biex tinbeda rivoluzzjoni teknoloġika f'pajjiżna. Il-mistoqsija tqum waħidha: l-iżvilupp qed johloq diskriminazzjoni mal-anzjani? X'inhi t-triq il quddiem?

Jeżisti FAQAR li ma jidhirx. Qed nirreferi għal hafna anzjani li qegħdin f' sitwazzjoni mingħajr għajjnuna, dawk waħidhom jew f'sitwazzjoni prekarja. Ma nemminx li dejjem isir uzu tajjeb mill-prokura per eżempju. Sal bieraħ stess kelli anzjani ssaqsini għaliex bilfors ikollu nagħmel prokura? Għax il-bank viċin id-dar għalaq u ma nafx nuzza l-ATM? Nippreferi noqod bla flus. U din il- persuna tagħzel li tibqa mingħajr flus għaliex m'għandiex lil min tafda.

Il-Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa ihegġeg lill-awtoritajiet konċernati jieħdu azzjoni mmedjata sabiex jiżguraw li l-anzjani ma jibqgħux lura f'dinja li qed issir aggressiva teknoloġikament u wara dan il-programm ejja nahdmu bis serjetà biex dan il faqar li ma jidhirx ikun fil-quċċata tal-aġenda tagħna.

Nagħlaq billi ngħid li l-vjaġġ naslu sa tmiemu mill-ewwel passi u ħsibijiet tal-lum huma l-ewwel passi. U nistedinkom ma nieqfux mad-diskorsi tagħna illum, ejja nkomplu billi nintaqaw, nikkollaboraw u nimplemmentaw! Billi nagħtu vuċi shiha lil anzjani.

Grazzi.

Dr Rebecca Berry Wellman
NCW Treasurer



The National Council of Women congratulates ...

Dolores Cristina for being made Companion of the National Order of Merit and for being the first woman to receive such an honour. Dolores Cristina held the post of President of the National Council of Women during 1991 til 1995; and Anna Bonanno and Simone Borg for receiving the Medalja għall – Qadi tar – Repubblika. NCW is so proud that so many of its members have been recognised for their very valid contribution to the country.



MCAST Fresher Days 2022

NCW Executive Committee Member Sarah Scerri attended the MCAST Fresher Days in Paola and Mosta which were held in October. The NCW stand was amongst the other NGO's exhibits in a newly organized hall. Students from MCAST visited and noted all exhibitors carefully.



All the students Sarah met and chatted with were interested in the work we do at NCW and as a result have eagerly



contacted our offices to complete their internships with us.

Il Mara magazine was given out to many students who found this information very interesting. Meanwhile, Sarah also had the opportunity to meet His Excellency George Vella, President of Malta who, after exchanging a few words, recalled NCW's visit to the palace in Valletta. Sarah also met with Prof James Calleja, Headmaster of MCAST and the Hon. Clifton Grima, Minister for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation who thanked Sarah for participating on behalf of National Council of Women.

Courses at NCW in collaboration with The Directorate for Lifelong Learning

Lessons got underway at the beginning of October in conjunction with Lifelong Learning and are going very well. All students attending have benefitted greatly from the content so far, and are also enjoying the social aspect of the classroom atmosphere. There has been a good attendance for the longer courses on offer, like Maths and Italian SEC Level for those students interested in bettering their employment opportunities and also a great interest in Spanish MQF level 1 for those wanting to start up the language from scratch.

Short programs like Digital Skills (Learn How to Use your Tablet and Smartphone) and Italian Conversation – Level 2 were extremely popular and became fully booked in a matter of hours. These short courses are wrapping up this week and NCW in conjunction with the Directorate for Lifelong Learning intends to offer up these courses again early in 2023.

Aside from collaborating with Lifelong Learning, NCW also organised a Maltese for Beginner's course for Foreigners for which there was a huge demand and this course became fully booked within a short space of time. Students at this course were compiling sentences in Maltese within a matter of weeks thanks to the talent, dedication and generous time of our brilliant Maltese teacher.

Here at NCW we pride ourselves in offering the space for educational purposes for people from all walks of life.



Bice Mizzi Vassallo Concert

Introductory Speech

Good evening,

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Council Members,
Distinguished audience, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this evening's performance. Tonight is particularly special since it serves as a prelude to the forthcoming Bice Mizzi Vassallo competition.

As many of you already know, Bice Mizzi Vassallo, besides being the wife of a former Maltese prime minister, was the daughter of composer Paolino Vassallo and one of the foremost pianists of the early 20th century. Later on in her life, she turned to teaching which she did enthusiastically. She is known to have tutored some of the country's best pianists. Two years following her death in 1985, the Council of Women instituted the Bice Mizzi Vassallo Music Competition in her honour.

This competition has been an ongoing event offering opportunities to both pianists and string players living in Malta and Gozo since 1987 and has gained a prestigious reputation among local musicians. It was an event that took place every two years until in 2011, after which it was postponed for several years due to unforeseen circumstances.

It was the wish of many within the Council to persevere with this initiative and together with my peers, we recently formed a new organizing committee. Despite our personal commitments, we welcomed the initiative to revive the competition; seeing how talented young musicians have benefitted from such an experience. We saw the importance of creating opportunities that are presently lacking in concept and calibre with the sole disinterested scope of offering talented young musicians a platform to enhance their musical careers.

This need has been even more highlighted in the past few pandemic years when we all came to appreciate the importance the cultural sector has on our mental and emotional well-being.

Furthermore, as a committee we also felt the admiration for the former late members to whom in fact we are dedicating this evening, namely, Jane Spiteri & Mary Farrugia, who were past Council members, Cynthia Turner who besides being among the top Maltese pianists was also involved in leading the adjudicating panel for the competition for several years and more recently Anna Scicluna (nee Bisazza), who like Bice Mizzi Vassallo was a dedicated teacher who taught many of today's leading musicians.

We earnestly believe that such an initiative has born its fruits and its objectives throughout the years. This is in fact the very scope of this evening. Tonight's performance will showcase accomplished musicians who have ventured towards successful careers both locally and internationally, but most importantly, were past BMV winners. We are grateful to them for accepting our invitation to perform for us this evening despite their busy schedules and commitments and for a particularly compelling programme.

It is with great pleasure that we have worked for the past few months on this endeavour to revive the Bice Mizzi Vassallo music competition with the 14th edition to be held in September 2023. Our interest in this project was further fueled by the tremendous support we gathered to make both tonight possible as well as the revival of the competition. The board of directors at Alfred Mizzi Foundation has shown its interest in encouraging this initiative for young musicians and is supporting the committee in organizing next year's competition and related events.

We have also found support from Malta Society of Arts for this evening's venue, support and dedicated stage direction as well as the National Student Travel Foundation who will be sponsoring flights for the winners of the competition.

Together with Tatjana, who was involved with setting up tonight's programme, and Rosette who has been instrumental in coordinating the awards, we are happy to launch next year's competition with the regulations for this 14th edition already available. We are also delighted to have the opportunity here tonight to introduce you to the esteemed professors who will be collaborating with us to award the winner of each section short courses abroad and who are committed to offer an unforgettable experience to our winners.

It is our honour to have collaborated through the Honorary Consulate for Malta in the Regione Emilia to offer the winner of the string section, a brief course in Italy under the tutorship of Professor Besutti, while the winner from the pianoforte section will be attending a short course collaborated by Professor Maria Gabrys with the Chopin Society in Warsaw.



Dr Corinne Bowman Briffa
BMV Music Committee Chairperson

Bice Mizzi Vassallo Concert Review

Wednesday, 23rd November 2022

Six of Malta's top piano and violin players met on Wednesday evening to perform a concert on the occasion of the revival of the Bice Mizzi Vassallo Music Competition. The BMV Music Competition was set up by the National Council of Women in 1986 in memory of one of Malta's leading pianists and teachers who also played the violin. Its aim was to encourage young musicians at a time when they had little opportunity to take up music professionally. Through the Competition many of the prize winners got the opportunity of going to prestigious music institutions in major European towns and cities and for the first time in their lives they met talented peers in the international music world. Among these were pianists Caroline Calleja, Joanne Camilleri, Christine Zerafa and violinists Tatjana Chircop, Carmines Lauri and Sarah Spiteri all of whom have distinguished themselves both locally internationally.

The evening opened with a performance of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata by Christine Zerafa and closed with a performance of pieces by Sarasate, Wieniawski, Poldini and Bazzini by Carmine Lauri -Lauri was accompanied by his sister Stephanie, also an excellent pianist who unfortunately has been away from the concert scene for quite some time. In between pianists Joanne Camilleri and Caroline Muscat nee Calleja performed Mozart's Piano Sonata in D major for four hands and two Hungarian Dances by Brahms. Sarah Spiteri and Tatjana Chircop got together for a performance of LeClair's Sonata no.1 for 2 violins and with Joanne Camilleri for a performance of Corelli's Trio Sonata no.1. These were all virtuoso pieces which were not however performed

for the sake of showing off the performers' virtuosity, which they doubtlessly did, but were performed with great sensitivity and musicianship.

After a hiatus of twelve years the ABMV Music Competition has been revived and the 14th edition is being held in October 2023. The competition will consist of two sections, a section for pianists and another for string players – violin, viola, cello and double bass. Candidates will present a ten-minute programme consisting of works of their own choice among the pieces laid down in the regulations.

The winner in the piano section will have the opportunity to be coached by Professor Maria Gabrys-Heyke at the Chopin Society in Warsaw, while the winner of the string section will have the opportunity of being coached by Professor Mirco Besutti, founder of the Associazione Scuole di Musica Emilia Romagna. Prizes also include accommodation and travel expenses.

The rules and regulations are available from the office of the National Council of Women, National Council of Women of Malta, Pope Pius XII Flats, Mountbatten Street, Blata l-Bajda HMR 1579, MALTA. Tel: (+356) 21248881, (+356) 21246982; Fax: (+356) 21246982; E-mail: ncwmalta@camline.net.mt



Ms Cecilia Xuereb

The Launching of the 14th Edition of the Bice Mizzi Vassallo Competition

The competition will be held in October 2023 and will consist of 2 sections: a section for pianists and another for string players not older than 25 years. Eligible string players comprise violin, viola, cello and double bass. Candidates will present a ten – minute programme consisting of works of their own choice among the pieces laid down in the regulations.

Application forms and regulations may be collected from NCW Centre, Mountbatten Street, Blata l-Bajda on Mondays to Fridays from 0830am to 1230pm or downloaded from NCW website <http://www.ncwmalta.com>

- Applications must be submitted to the NCW Centre by noon, Friday 30th June 2023

- Applications received before June 2023 will benefit from a discount of €15.

- Forms should also include: i) Copy of the I.D. Card ii) Music scores of both set and chosen piece/s for preliminary and final sessions Registration Fee of €100 (Cheques payable: the National Council of Women) Office hours for receipt of applications: Monday to Friday 9am to noon.

In case of any difficulty, applicants may telephone organizers on 21246982 or email ncwmalta@camline.net.mt





Budget 2022

The budget was presented by The Minister of Finance, The Hon. Clyde Caruana on the 24th of October. Many were apprehensive due to the rising cost of Fuel and energy and the crises brought about first by the pandemic and then by the War in Ukraine. The rising cost of living especially for staple food such as flour and oil, has brought hardships to many.

Presenting the budget, the Minister reassured that there would be no increase in fuel and energy costs, neither will there be increases in taxes. The budget has been described as a social one. One cannot list all the benefits, but the increase in benefits for carers who look after relatives at home will see the benefit increase substantially. Many of these carers are women who many times have to abandon their work in order to look after and care for family members. This is detrimental to their National Insurance Contributions especially if they had not as yet reached pensionable age.

Another welcomed benefit is the assistance for first and second time property buyers, ensuring people can become owners of their residences. With rental costs rising year after year and the difficulties faced by young couples to put up the 10% deposit for the purchase of a new home, the government's

guaranteeing the deposit made life for them. In this year's budget, there is also a €10,000 grant over a period of 3 years plus the assistance when the house is bought in an Urban Conservation Area (UCA).

Several other social benefits like the provision of a personal assistant for a person with a disability and the increase of social security for a disabled person. The Work Life Balance Directive has been discussed for the last few years. However there seems to be only a reference to an increase in paternity leave from one or two days to ten days. Whether this will be taken up by the fathers will remain to be seen. Healthcare was also one of the budget's priorities, with special mention to mental health and free medicines for some ailments.

As the economy continues to grow, so does the need for more workers and the government has allocated funds for the companies to further invest in their businesses and train the workers. All in all, the budget is one with a wide social aspect, aimed at easing the situation created due to the uncertainties persisting in the world today.

Mary Gaerty
Ex Officio

Malta Employers Association

SMEs National Forum 2022 "Ensuring the Skills for Future Competitiveness"

The Malta Employers Association has put forward thirteen concrete solutions to address the current skills shortages affecting Maltese industry. MEA President Joanne Bondin explained how "we are currently experiencing a lack of human resources across the board. It is a constant challenge for employers to find employees with the right skills and qualifications to the extent that it is raising concerns about business continuity and competitiveness. To overcome this serious predicament, we need to focus on becoming more efficient and innovative in our business models and operations whilst addressing the social and economic needs of our country".

MEA Director-General Joseph Farrugia opened the Forum, arguing that "while lack of skills is a global challenge, there are specific issues for Malta, including a low birth rate and a high percentage of young people opting or willing to leave for good. We need to design incentives to retain labour, while at the same time having a clear economic direction for the country. We are here to channel our recommendations towards a sustained growth based on skills, innovation and economic transformation".

In a recent survey conducted by the MEA, 53% of respondents claimed that the current situation was exerting a significant impact on their business including serious disruption on their operations and stretched out resources. A further 12% responded that the impact on their business was "severe" to the extent that business continuity was severely at risk. Workers' new priorities in favour of flexible work arrangements, particularly post-pandemic further exacerbate the challenge ahead for employers.

The MEA's 13 recommendations emerged from extensive research, focus groups and consultation with a wide array of economic stakeholders, including industry leaders, entrepreneurs and officials from government authorities and agencies. Today's SME National Forum 2022 entitled Ensuring the Skills for Future Competitiveness, served to debate the recommendations with a view to strengthening the MEA's call for action.

These include a call for capitalising on digital skills, investing in training and mentorship, a better connection between academia and industry, the prioritisation of risk assessment and the strengthening of good governance among others.

MEA is affiliated to the International Organisation of Employers (I.O.E.), SGI Europe and BUSINESSMED. Many stakeholders addressing the Forum highlighted the 13 recommendations put forward by the MEA and called on the authorities to implement the recommendations as soon as practically possible to ensure the smooth functioning of the labour market now and in the years to come.

In view of this positive feedback, in closing the event, Ms Joanne Bondin called on all stakeholders towards a concerted national effort and use the MEA as a facilitator to take forward these recommendations. The MEA will be producing a report featuring today's event and the entire consultation process to be presented to the authorities in its efforts to ensure that its recommendations are translated into action.

Grace Attard
NCW Vice-President

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN REPORT ON COP27

Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt, November 2022

Filling an empty bucket? Compensating for Loss and Damage

At the Conference of Parties 27, COP27, held in November, 2022 in Egypt, it was hoped that there would be compensation for loss and damage provided to developing, and often low-emitting countries, by the developed countries that have benefitted financially and economically from the power generated by burning coal, oil and gas over many years.

As we know burning fossil fuels has led to increases in carbon dioxide and methane gasses that have a greenhouse effect. This causes temperatures to rise. With warmer land and oceans more water is evaporated and is a major cause of increases in severe storms, flash flooding or massive flooding as in Pakistan and Australia recently. Plus other effects.

There is a rising frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.

In an IPCC Working Group Report, it was assessed that:

1. Losses and damages are already being experienced: Existing global warming of 1.1°C has already caused dangerous and widespread losses and damages, led to disruptions in nature as well as affected the lives of billions of people, despite people's efforts to adapt.

2. Future losses and damages will rise with increased global warming: With increasing global warming, losses and damages increase and become increasingly difficult to avoid, while strongly concentrated among the poorest vulnerable populations.

3. Losses and damages are unavoidable and are unequally distributed: Adaptation cannot prevent all losses and damages. Losses and damages are disproportionately experienced by developing countries and by vulnerable groups, such as people of low socio-economic class, migrant groups, the elderly, women and children.

4. Losses and damages are not comprehensively addressed by current financial, governance and institutional arrangements: Particularly in vulnerable developing countries, existing international, national and sub-national approaches to address loss and damage are insufficient. (Ref. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/adelle-thomas-loss-and-damage>)

"The insights document, compiled by the *Climate Research Programme* and supported by UN Climate Change (UNFCCC), also highlights that **many of these consequences cannot be avoided with mere adaptation measures** and that acting swiftly to reduce emissions is a much better option." (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/11/1130422>)

"Vulnerability hotspots cluster in 'regions at risk': Vulnerability hotspots – areas with the highest susceptibility to being adversely affected by climate-driven hazards – are home to 1.6 billion people, a number projected to double by 2050. The report identifies vulnerability hotspots in Central America, the Sahel, Central and East Africa, the Middle East, and across the breadth of Asia. [People in Small Island States are experiencing serious effects on their habitats already. WR]

"New threats on the horizon from climate-health interactions: Climate change is adversely impacting the health of humans, animals and entire ecosystems. Heat-related mortality, wildfires affecting our physical and mental health, and growing risks of outbreaks of infectious diseases are all linked to climate change.

There will be more displacement of people, and more migration.

"Private sustainable finance practices are failing to catalyse deep transitions: "Sustainable finance" practices in the private sector are not yet catalysing the profound economic transformations needed to meet climate targets. This reflects the fact that these are mostly designed to fit into the financial sector's existing business models, rather than to substantially shift the allocation of capital towards meaningful mitigation."

"Loss and Damage – the urgent planetary imperative: Losses and damages are already widespread and will increase significantly on current trajectories, making it imperative to advance a coordinated global policy response. Deep and swift mitigation and effective adaptation are necessary to avert and minimise future economic and non-economic losses and damages.

"Inclusive decision-making for climate-resilient development: Decentring and coordinating decision-making across scales and contexts, while prioritising empowerment of a broad range of stakeholders, are key ways for climate action to be more effective, sustainable and just, as well as necessarily more reflective of local needs, worldviews and experiences." (Ref. <https://10insightsclimate.science>)

At COP27, it took persistence and extra time to pass the agenda item on Loss and Damage eventually announcing that: COP27

1. "Acknowledges the urgent and immediate need for new, additional, predictable and adequate financial resources to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in responding to economic and non-economic loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events, especially in the context of ongoing and ex post (including rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction) action;

2. *Decides* to establish new funding arrangements for assisting developing countries in responding to loss and damage, including a focus on addressing loss and damage by providing and assisting in mobilizing new and additional resources, and that these new arrangements complement the existing arrangements for financial support from other sources, funds, processes and initiatives, including outside the Convention and the Paris Agreement; "(COP agenda item 8(f) / CMA agenda item 8(f) **Matters relating to funding arrangements responding to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including a focus on addressing loss and damage. Version 19/11/2022.**)

In the document there were decisions about having workshops in 2023 on how to fund for loss and damage. (p3 op cit).

So, at COP27, there was no progress on lessening greenhouse gas emissions, with no follow through on phasing down of coal nor to phase out all fossil fuels, which are the actions needed to mitigate climate change.

"Public mobilisation and activism, market forces, aid and development programs, and legislation at local, state and national levels are all important sites of climate politics – and potentially, significant change." (Ref. M.McDonald, <https://theconversation.com/cop27-one-big-breakthrough-but-ultimately-an-inadequate-response-to-the-climate-crisis.20/11/22>)

ICW has been calling for activism, and we should be ready to influence decision makers, and be the decision makers so as to reduce the damaging effects of climate change on our communities around the World.

ICW members should be asking for funding to help the most vulnerable.

That is why my heading is "Filling an Empty Bucket?"

Wendy Rainbird
ICW Habitat Adviser

Commonwealth, Gender Equality and Climate Action

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 56 independent and equal countries and home to 2.5 billion people. The Commonwealth member governments have agreed to shared goals like development, democracy and peace. The Commonwealth is often described as a 'family' of nations. At the heart of this family are three intergovernmental organisations: The Commonwealth Secretariat which supports member countries to achieve the Commonwealth's aims, The Commonwealth Foundation which supports people's participation in democracy and development and The Commonwealth of Learning which promotes open learning and distance education. The international headquarters of the Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Foundation are located in Marlborough House on Pall Mall in London and The Right Hon Patricia Scotland KC is the current Commonwealth Secretary-General. Commonwealth member countries are also supported by a network of more than 80 intergovernmental, civil, cultural and professional organisations

The Commonwealth Secretariat has launched a new best practice guide that will assist policymakers and practitioners across the Commonwealth to integrate gender equality into national climate action. Commonwealth Secretary-General, Right Hon Patricia Scotland, KC, unveiled the publication during a side event co-organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat & SLYCAN Trust on 11 November 2022, in the margins of the UN Climate Change Conference COP27 in Sharma El-Sheikh. Titled "*Gender Integration in Nationally Determined Contributions: A Commonwealth Best Practice Guide*", the handbook includes a range of detailed evidence-based approaches to incorporating gender equality within a country's national climate plans, or 'Nationally Determined Contributions' (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.

The aim is to ensure the engagement of all sections of society – including women, who make up half the global population – as positive agents of change, and to include them in all aspects of climate action, from decision-making to implementation across the 56 Commonwealth nations.

Secretary-General Scotland said: "The Commonwealth has firmly committed to gender equality and youth empowerment through the



Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2021-2030. This year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting reaffirmed the commitment to driving inclusive, gender sensitive and gender responsive climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives. I encourage you to utilise this resource, as we strive toward improving integration of gender in NDCs as the bedrock for successful climate action".

The best practice guide covers five key sections: Policy alignment and clarity of intent; financing gender expertise and gender budgeting; skills for a gender-just transition; evidencing a gender-just transition; and institutional collaboration.

Each section covers practical steps to facilitate the integration of gender into countries' NDCs, including guiding questions and tips for resolving common hurdles, along with a wide range of examples of best practices from across the Commonwealth to support learning and knowledge-sharing.

Doris Bingley
Commonwealth Women's Network
National Council of Women Malta

CASTME and STEM Education



The Commonwealth Association of Science, Technology and Mathematics Educators (CASTME) was established in 1974 as an NGO recognized by the Commonwealth Secretariat. It links science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) educators across the Commonwealth. CASTME supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG4 (Education) and SDG5 (Gender).



Additionally, in collaboration with Philip Harris/Findel it recommends awards. NCW Malta was awarded the Findel award in 2018. Lady Sue Dale Tunnicliffe and Kathleen Nugent came to Malta for the presentation.

CASTME has members throughout the Commonwealth, and regional groups in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Europe. It has advisers based in Australia, Canada, India, Malta, Mauritius, and Nigeria.

CASTME's Chair Lady Sue Dale Tunnicliffe's latest book is "Play and STEM Education in the Early Years"

This edited book provides an overview of unstructured and structured play scenarios crucial to developing young children's awareness, interest, and ability to learn Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in informal and formal education environments. Forty-seven STEM experts come together from 16 countries, (among them Malta),

to describe educational policies and experiences related to young learners 3–4 years of age, as well as students attending formal-nursery school, early primary school, and the early year classes post 5 years of age.

The book is intended for parents seeking to provide STEM activities for their children at home and in playgroups, citizen scientists seeking guidance to provide children with quality educational activities, day care practitioners providing educational structures for young children from birth to formal education, primary school teachers and preservice teachers seeking to teach preschool, kindergarten or children typically aged 5–8 years old in grades 1–3, as well as researchers and policy makers working in science didactics with small children.

The chapter by the Maltese experts is "Addressing Variability in Learning in the Early Years through STEM and Executive Function"

The National Council of Women Malta, The Commonwealth Women's Network and The Commonwealth Association of Science, Technology and Mathematics Educators are happy to enhance student learning, exchange ideas and best practices as well as provide a look forward to a new way of conceiving STEM Education in the early years.

The National Council of Women Malta is very pleased that Lady Sue Dale Tunnicliffe, CASTME's Chair and Kathleen Nugent CASTME's Vice-Chair will be visiting Malta in March 2023.

Doris Bingley
Commonwealth Women's Network
National Council of Women Malta

First Aid Course at NCW Learning Centre

On 20th and 27th August 2022, NCW hosted a First Aid for 12 participants, fully sponsored by the Malta Council for Voluntary Sectors.

Participants attended a course where they were trained in essential first aid skills that could prove vital when faced with a medical emergency. Through theoretical sessions, discussions, demonstrations, and scenarios, the participants covered a myriad of topics related to illness and traumatic incidents. This course was aimed at anyone who wanted to be prepared and trained in what to do when dealing with a casualty in an out-of-hospital setting.

Not surprisingly all slots filled up immediately and the course was well attended by a number of enthusiastic participants who thoroughly enjoyed both sessions. A certificate valid for 3 years (First Aid) will be handed out to all participants.



Appreciation

Miriam k/a Minnie Cassar

Many at the National Council of Women knew Minnie Cassar since their college days. For decades she was dedicated to Malta Admirabilis Training College Association as an active member and President of the organisation. She organised many events and represented MATC at the National Council of Women central committee.

In her quiet and gentle presence never missing a smile she touched the lives of many, worked with enthusiasm and determination for the good of all. We at NCW shall miss her dearly especially during our Annual General Meeting which falls in January to which she never gave a miss.

Minnie Cassar was a role model to many as an exemplary teacher and in her older years to her contemporaries to remain active and never miss an opportunity to continue lifelong learning.

Her Spirit will continue to live in the many organisations in which she contributed with honesty and integrity

Our deepest sympathy and condolences go to her family and to her many friends.



Marie Demicoli
Asst. Hon. General Secretary

“Together with implementation”
COP27 Sharm El Sheikh (6-18 November 2022)

Resolution

adopted on November 14, 2022

We, NGOs involved in the Environmental and Health Crisis Committee of the Conference of INGOs,

Concerned by the alarming calls from COP27 leaders, experts and worldwide NGOs highlighting the conclusions of the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report, that provide the ultimate evidence that the human share of climate change is a serious threat to sustainable future, to human health and most species survival,

Anxious with the multiple, cumulative and ultimately out-of-control climate impacts such as floods, storms, forest fires, water scarcity, biodiversity loss and soil depletion, hitting all of us, but disproportionately the most vulnerable lands and people around the world,

Worried by the persistent lack of implementation of their commitments by States Parties to the UNFCCC, to the effect that CO2 emission need to be cut to 45% by 2030, in eight years, in order to limit global warming increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius,

Aware that climate change is also a major threat to sustainable and long term development, and will drain, as a consequence, one billion migrants out of their homeland during this century,

Faithful to the values and principles of the Council of Europe, and in line with the previous recommendations of the Conference of INGOs addressed to States Parties, calling for respect for human rights and the protection of the environment, we

Solemnly call for solidarity in order to provide support to fragile and most severely hit countries, disadvantaged regions and peoples by helping them, through guidance and finance when required, to take significant steps on this track,

Recall the need for and the effectiveness of individual and wide-scale behavioural transformation, with everyone consuming responsibly and in solidarity,

Commit ourselves to contributing to accelerating the transition

- **by primarily encouraging** the public authorities of each country in which our NGOs are established to develop **implementation plans**, from national to local level, to follow the Paris agreement
- **by helping** to make energy and consumption sobriety an effective value
- **by supporting** circular economy and the use of recycling as means of solidarity and leadership to achieve zero-emission energy,
- **by advocating** for nature-based ecosystem solutions in all sectors and at all scales, notably the plantation of trees which can represent 30% of the reduction effort of greenhouse gas emissions
- **by helping disseminate** relevant information, best practices and new technologies through our networks to drive implementation in partnership with other stakeholders globally and locally.
- **by promoting** real, inclusive, multifaceted implementation, with adapted governance and easy-to-implement legislation building on civil society expertise, cooperation and effective participation

The time for joint action is now!

Dean Award given to NCW Hon. General Secretary Dr Josette Barbara Cardona

Our Hon. General Secretary, Dr Josette Barbara-Cardona has recently achieved a PhD in Sociology from the University of Leicester, England. Dr Barbara-Cardona is an Organisational Psychologist by profession, and has been practicing in this profession for several years. Her PhD Thesis was supervised by Prof John Goodwin and Prof Henrietta O'Connor, and the title is: *The Building Blocks of Human Capital: Socioculturalism and Career Development of Maltese Youths*. Dr Josette Barbara-Cardona has a genuine interest in the good of society, especially mental well-being, personal/career development, workplace dynamics, and public policy. In fact, she has contributed in projects undertaken by NCW especially in training. She also works on projects that concern upskilling and well-being employees, both within the private and public sector. Dr Barbara-Cardona is currently a visiting lecturer at the University of Malta within the Department of Public Policy and Department of Psychology. She is also a visiting lecturer at the Institute for Tourism studies where she lectures Human Behaviour in the Tourism and Hospitality industry. On Tuesday 29th of November, Dr Barbara-Cardona has been awarded an achievement award by the Dean Dr Emanuel Said during the prestigious Dean's Awards of the Faculty of Economics, Marketing and Accountancy (FEMA), recognizing her academic success and contribution to the faculty.

Dr Barbara-Cardona, in her role as Hon. General Secretary at NCW, is considered as a significant pillar within the council. Even though she has a very busy schedule with her career and family commitments, she manages to give attention to the core aspects of what NCW represents. Josette encourages women who feel that they want to give something back to society, especially with issues that concern women to come forward and join us as members as NCW provides a platform of dialogue and activism.



Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls

The situation of women and girls in rural areas is very diverse, so it was not surprising that the first attempt to reach consensus at CSW56 in 2012 failed. It was a significant accomplishment to achieve relatively strong Agreed Conclusions (AC) at CSW62 in 2018. If the measures agreed to at CSW62 to reduce inequalities for women and girls in rural areas were realized, significant progress would be made on Agenda 2030, for women and girls and for the whole world.

Four years after CSW62, there has been very slow progress in a few regions and sectors. In general, women have only been able to maintain what has already been achieved and prevent regression. Central factors for the equality of women in rural areas are the dismantling of stereotypes and gender-specific norms, the equal inclusion and participation of women in decision-making positions, and lack of adequate infrastructure in rural areas.

Some of the most important factors in achieving equality and gender justice for women and girls in rural areas are the dismantling of structural barriers and internalized stereotypes, the lack of role models and gender-specific socialization.

Women, girls and their organizations must be able to participate fully and equally in shaping society, the economy and politics, even in rural areas. It is therefore necessary to ensure that they are fully and equally involved in decision-making processes and positions of power, and have equal access to land, credit and other resources.

Women and girls play key roles in agriculture, accounting for 43% of the agricultural labor force globally. However, they face obstacles including gender-based

violence, and limited access to land, information, capital, credit and other inputs. Agriculture is a generally high-risk sector for trafficking, exploitation, forced labor, and violence against women. Gender-based violence causes fear, illness and other physical and psychological effects which can make women and girls unable to work at their full capacities, resulting in food insecurity and limited resources, which may also cause families to resort to child or early marriage. The situation may get worse in times of conflict, displacement, and food crisis which are often impacts of climate change.

Another factor affecting women and girls in rural areas is the lack of infrastructure. Women and girls need gender-

responsive, quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure including safe drinking water and sanitation, energy, transport, technology, education, health, maternal,

childcare and others.

Women and girls in rural areas are disproportionately affected by natural disasters, as they are often responsible for collecting firewood and water. To combat the impacts of climate change, technological solutions and behavioral or economic changes are not enough. Increased social sustainability and gender equity are also needed.

The undersigned non-governmental organizations in consultative status to the Economic and Social Council, members of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women Vienna, call on all stakeholders and parties to CSW62 to remove obstacles and do more to empower women and girls in rural areas, and to finally and immediately accelerate implementation of the Agreed Conclusions of CSW62.

UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

COMMISSION on the STATUS OF WOMEN



NCW End of Summer Dinner





Save the Date

National Council of Women Annual General Meeting



Saturday, 28th January 2023

Victoria Hotel, Gorg Borg Olivier Street, Sliema

Registration and Coffee starts at 8.30am

Buffet Lunch will follow after the AGM

Please confirm your attendance by Tuesday 24th January 2023

AGM with Coffee break €5 / AGM, Coffee and Lunch €25

Those wishing to become members can do so during registration.

Only paid up members are entitled to vote.



Seasons Greetings

NCW President

Doreen Borg Zammit

and the

Executive Committee

wish all

NCW Members

and their loved ones

a Holy and Peaceful Christmas

and a

Prosperous New Year 2023

