

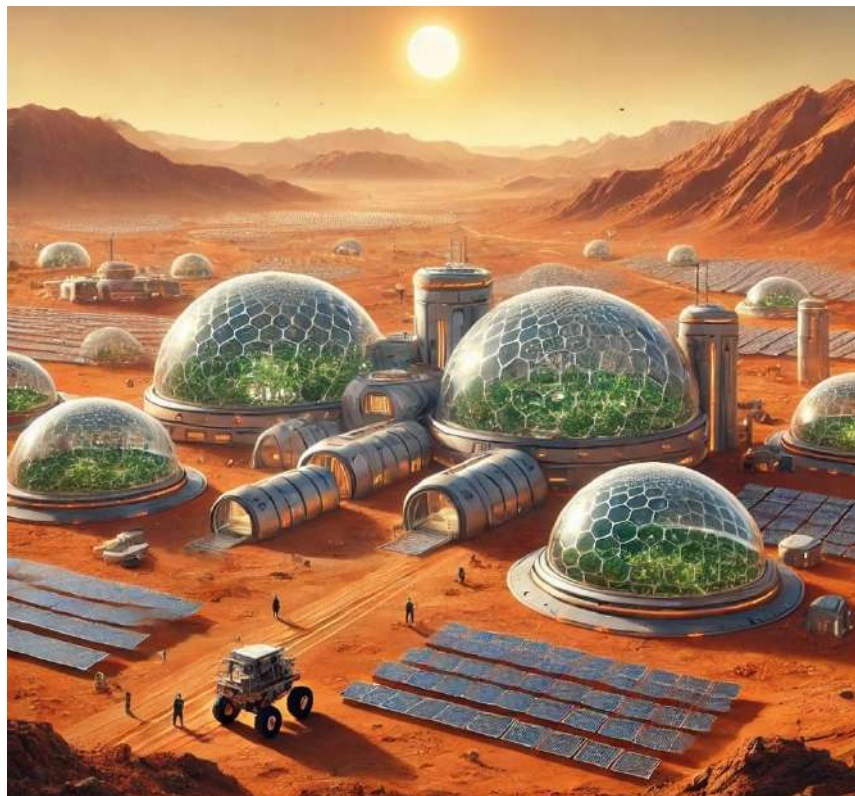


**JULIAN'S
Pathfinder**
Foundation

Julian's Tech Start-up Challenge 2025

Occupy Mars

September 9th – 12th



**L-Università
ta' Malta**



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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

WHY?

Julian was particularly keen on science & technology and the impact it could have on society in the near future. He also kept a file of inventions from when he was seven years old which served as an inspiration for this series of events. Julian's essays on 'Do we have a moral duty to exceed ourselves' and 'Does the best education happen outside the classroom', have also inspired the Foundation to support gifted children through outside the classroom education, like this Camp, to help them fulfill their potential and inspire them to make a positive contribution to society. The Foundation aims to inspire young people to follow their dreams and think big about future technologies that will help make the world a better place. This year's Camp aims to encourage young people to think about the future whilst respecting the past. This programme and other series of events will thus also help to tick off two items on Julian's Bucket List: 'Change the World' and 'Start a Business' ...in this Camp we're looking at 'Starting a New World on Mars!'

WHAT?

The Camp consists of a 4-day residential event run in collaboration with the University of Malta. This year's theme focuses on space exploration, with a specific focus on the development of a human settlement on Mars which brings together various concepts in science and engineering, as well as practical considerations in making Mars habitable including related socio-economic and sustainability issues. The participants will be divided into 6 groups each focusing on one of the following specific areas: food, energy, buildings, technology, health and economy. The idea is for them to work together not just within their own team but in collaboration with the other teams with a view to developing a holistic settlement plan. We're seeing this as a thought experiment whereby the participants are encouraged to develop ideas that may work in an extreme resource constrained environment, and in so doing possibly come up with ideas that could also have an application here on Earth. The programme also aims at instilling an entrepreneurial mindset, giving the applicants a structured approach for developing project proposals and presenting them to relevant stakeholders. In a fun, safe and respectful environment, participants will follow a series of workshops led by experts in groups, Q&A sessions, and mentoring. They will also acquire transferable life-skills. These sessions will be interspersed with fun and inspiring activities. Participants will be divided into groups with a view to developing their own project proposal and pitching it to an evaluation panel at the end of the programme. They will receive a certificate of participation and feature in an audio-visual production.

WHERE AND WHEN?

The Camp takes place at the Mount Saint Joseph Retreat House on the 9th - 12th of September 2025.

FOR WHOM?

The activity targets 24 high-ability 13 to 15 year-old students from various secondary schools in Malta and Gozo. Interested applicants participated in a 30 minute online cognitive reasoning test and those shortlisted were requested to submit proposals to address current building and infrastructural needs in Malta. The submissions received were evaluated on the basis of their novelty, application of technical knowledge/ implementability and clarity of proposal.

JULIAN'S TECH STARTUP CHALLENGE 2025 – OCCUPY MARS

Pocket Programme

DAY 1

9th September 2025

0800 - 0830	Arrival / orientation
0830 - 0900	Welcome talks
0900 - 1030	Icebreaker and circle time
1045 - 1130	Allocation of groups and themes
1130 - 1300	Why is space exploration important? And why Mars?
1300 – 1500	Lunch and check-in into rooms
1500 - 1700	The new world on Mars – an expert panel briefing
1700 – 1900	Guided group work – interviewing the experts
1900 - 2000	Dinner
2000 - 2200	Star gazing

DAY 2

10th September 2025

0800 - 0845	Breakfast
0845 - 1015	All you need to know about Mars
1030 - 1130	Life in space
1130 – 1300	Guided group work
1300 - 1430	Lunch
1430 - 1500	Circle time
1500 - 1700	Guided group work
1700 - 1800	What we can create on the Red Planet
1800 - 1900	Building rockets
1900 - 2000	Dinner
2000 - 2200	Ice breaker games

DAY 3
11th September 2025

0800 - 0845	Breakfast
0845 - 1015	Imagining a new world on Mars
1030 - 1300	Preliminary presentations / Guided group work
1300 - 1445	Lunch
1445 - 1530	Preliminary presentations / Guided group work
1530 - 1630	Planning space missions and potential settlements
1630 - 1730	Engineering life to reach new worlds
1745 - 1900	Guided group work
1900 - 2000	Dinner
2000 - 2200	Space karaoke

DAY 4
12th September 2025

0800 - 0845	Breakfast
0845 - 1045	Group work
1100 - 1300	Presentation skills
1300 - 1430	Lunch
1430 - 1530	Prepare for final presentation
1530 - 1800	Final presentation in front of panel and audience
1800 - 2000	Concluding remarks, presentation of certificates and reception

DETAILED PROGRAMME

Day 1

DAY 1	Location	Activity
08:00-08:30	MSJ - Level 0 Entrance hall	MEET AND GREET Orientation and allocation to rooms The Team
08:30-09:00	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	WELCOME TALKS! The Julian's Pathfinder Foundation Adrian Spiteri & Nadia Spiteri Programme Directors Prof Joseph Borg & Dr Josef Borg
09:00-10:30	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	ICEBREAKER AND CIRCLE TIME Malcolm Ross
10:45-11:30	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	ALLOCATION OF GROUPS Complete overview of workshop Prof Joseph Borg & Dr Josef Borg
11:30-13:00	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	WHY IS SPACE EXPLORATION IMPORTANT? AND WHY MARS? Ensuring the long-term survival of humanity as a multi-planetary species Prof Alessio Magro
13:00-15:00	MSJ – Level 0 Food Hall	LUNCH Lunch, break, settling-in and unpacking
15:00-17:00	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	THE NEW WORLD ON MARS An expert panel covering the key topics: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT : Dr Gordon Cordina BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Prof Alex Torpiano ENERGY: Prof Luciano Mule Stagno ROBOTICS: Ing Stefania Cristina DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE: Malcolm Ross FOOD & AGRICULTURE : Sonya Sammut HEALTH & MEDICAL : Prof Joseph Borg / Dr Kate Rubins
17:00-19:00	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall Semi-Circle	GUIDED GROUP WORK - INTERVIEWING THE EXPERTS One to one meetings with the groups and the experts
19:00-20:00	MSJ - Level 0 Food hall	DINNER
20:00-22:00	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	STAR GAZING Astronomical Society of Malta - Dr Josef Borg

Day 2

DAY 2	Location	Activity
08:00-08:45	MSJ - Level 0 Food hall	BREAKFAST
08:45-10:15	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MARS Dr Josef Borg
10:30-11:30	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	LIFE IN SPACE Prof Joseph Borg
11:30-13:00	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	GUIDED GROUP WORK
13:00-14:30	MSJ - Level 1 Food Hall	LUNCH
14:30-15:00	MSJ - Level 1 Main Hall	CIRCLE TIME
15:00-17:00	MSJ - Level 0 Main hall	GUIDED GROUP WORK
17:00-18:00	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	WHAT WE CAN CREATE ON THE RED PLANET Dr Robert Zubrin
18:00-19:00	MSJ - Level 1 Main Hall	BUILDING ROCKETS Nicholas Samut, University of Malta Rocketry Team
19:00-20:00	MSJ - Level 0 Food hall	DINNER
20:00-22:00	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	ICE BREAKER GAMES Gerald De Giovanni, St Michael School Scout Group

Day 3

DAY 3	Location	Activity
08:00-08:45	MSJ - Level 0 Food hall	BREAKFAST
08:45-10:15	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	IMAGINING A NEW WORLD ON MARS – A DEBATE <i>Patrick Tabone</i>
10:30-13:00	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	GUIDED GROUP WORK & PRELIMINARY PRESENTATIONS
13:00-14:45	MSJ - Level 0 Food hall	LUNCH
14:45-15:30	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	GUIDED GROUP WORK & PRELIMINARY PRESENTATIONS
15:30-16:30	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	PLANNING SPACE MISSIONS & POTENTIAL SETTLEMENTS <i>Dr Jim Green</i>
16:30-17:30	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	ENGINEERING LIFE TO REACH NEW WORLDS <i>Prof Christopher Mason</i>
17:45-19:00	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	GUIDED GROUP WORK
19:00-20:00	MSJ – Level 0 Food hall	DINNER
20:00-22:00	MSJ – Level 1 Main hall terrace	SPACE KARAOKE <i>Ronnie Busuttil (Flying Alligators) and Ing Mark Azzopardi (The Sleeper)</i>

Day 4

DAY 4	Location	Activity
08:00-08:45	MSJ - Level 0 Food hall	BREAKFAST
08:45-10:45	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	GROUP WORK Prepare for presentation
11:00-13:00	MSJ - Level 1	PRESENTATION SKILLS Coaching and practice Pia Zammit
13:00-14:30	MSJ - Level 1 Food hall	LUNCH
14:30-15:30	MSJ - Level 0 Food hall	PREPARE FOR FINAL PRESENTATION
15:30-18:00	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	FINAL PRESENTATION Welcoming Speech Final event; smart casual. Open to guests and parents. Presentations: 10-15 min presentation 5-10 min feedback and discussion Moderated by Ing Mark Azzopardi Judging Panel: Kelvin Camenzuli (GO), Mr Gordon Caruana Dingli (MDH/UM), Ing Marco Cremona (Sustech), Ing Stefania Cristina (UM/COE), Kenneth Farrugia (BOV), Simon Grech (BOV), Chris Meilak (EY), Prof Alex Torpiano (UM)
18:00-20:00	MSJ - Level 1 Main hall	Concluding remarks, presentation of certificates and reception on the terrace

OUR PARTNERS



Serving students, scholarship and society, sustainably.

Lying at the cross-roads of the Mediterranean, UM has been, over its 400-year history, the hub for international academic exchange on the island. UM is the leading higher education institution in Malta and its structures are in line with the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education area. At UM we carry out academic research and provide a vibrant higher education setting in the arts, sciences and the humanities as required for Malta's economic, social and cultural development. Our courses are designed to produce highly-qualified professionals in multiple disciplines. Our alumni community is growing exponentially: well over 3,500 students graduate in various disciplines annually. We are committed to high standards of research and teaching and every member of staff at UM plays an important role and contributes to an outstanding student experience. Today UM is composed of fourteen faculties, a number of interdisciplinary institutes and centres, three schools and a junior college. Besides the main campus, situated at Msida, there are three other campuses: Valletta, Marsaxlokk, Gozo.

PATRONS

	As Malta’s systemically important Bank and as one of the largest lenders to Maltese businesses, we have a huge role to play in reducing the effects of climate change and protecting the planet for future generations. The time has come for us to take things further and go the extra mile by committing to tackle the “green fight” and set an example for fellow organisations. We, as Bank of Valletta are connected to all parts of the economy; from individuals and small businesses right through to large corporations. There is an urgent need to transition to a low-carbon future, expand the green economy and promote green finance; along this journey, we commit to influence and lead. We are committed to play a leading and effective role in the country’s sustainable development, whilst tangibly proving ourselves to be responsible and caring citizens of the community in which we operate.
	At EY, our purpose is Building a better working world. In a world that’s changing faster than ever, our purpose acts as our ‘North Star’ guiding our more than 300,000 people — providing the context and meaning for the work we do every day. We help digital pioneers fight data piracy; guide governments through cash-flow crises; unlock new medical treatments with data analytics; and pursue high quality audits to build trust in financial markets and business. In other words, working with entrepreneurs, companies, and entire countries to solve their most pressing challenges.
	As Malta’s longest standing and leading communications services provider, GO offers an integrated quad-play bundle of mobile, fixed line, internet and TV services. We also support Maltese businesses by providing a range of tailored professional solutions, such as Cloud Services, business IP services and much more, enabling them to thrive and grow. Our purpose at GO is to drive a digital Malta where no one is left behind. We also aim to do our share in building a greener and more environmental-friendly Malta. We acknowledge our potential to bring about positive change and are committed in playing our part on the journey to net zero.

Thanks

Special thank you to each member of the Board of the Julian's Pathfinder Foundation for always being there to offer support and advice in ensuring that the Foundation delivers these programmes to the best of its ability.

Thanks are due to all advisors, donors, volunteers, friends and family. This camp would not have happened if it were not for your help and support.

A big thank you to the University of Malta for supporting on many levels, and to all the presenters and panelists for joining us in this journey and for inspiring our young participants.

The Julian's Pathfinder Foundation would like to thank our hosts, the Mount Saint Joseph Retreat House, for making us feel at home and attending to all our requests.

Thanks are also due to:

- Elia Borg Bonaci Ltd and Xemxija Pitstop for contributing to catering;
- STL for loaning us laptops for the students to work on their projects during the Camp;
- St Michael's Scout Group for their ice-breaking / team building session;
- Malta Astronomical Society for running the star-gazing session;
- Kuluri for their ongoing design work and media support
- SK Graphics for providing the roll-up banner;
- Dr. Mariosa Vella Cardona for legal advice and support on the event;
- Mr Mark Azzopardi from Working Town for logistical support and for organising the karaoke together with Ronnie Busuttil (Flying Alligators);
- Ms Melanie Casha Sammut, Ms Xanthe Schembri and Ms Penelope Ann Fitzgerald from the STEM & VET Curriculum Hub / Directorate for STEM & VET Programmes for their guidance and for helping us reach out to the secondary educational institutions;
- James Moffett and his team from the University of Malta for the audio-visual production;
- Prof Colin Calleja and Dr Rosienne Camilleri from UM's Faculty of Education and Dr David Camilleri from the University of Melbourne for their guidance on gifted educational programmes;
- The heads and staff of the various secondary schools for promoting the programme;
- CorporateGiftsMalta and Corinthia Group, in particular the management at Radisson Blu Resort - Golden Sands, for their support;
- The Safeguarding Commission for their training and invaluable advice; and
- Ganado Advocates, Notary Pierre Attard and Komply for helping with the setup of Foundation.

Last but not least, we would like to thank Prof Joseph Borg and Dr Josef Borg for exceeding our expectations in coordinating this programme together with Mr Malcolm Ross, and for bringing together such a distinguished group of experts. You have been such an inspiration to these children!

BIONOTES

Julian's Pathfinder Foundation - Founders and Administrators

Adrian Spiteri

Adrian is Julian's father. Adrian switched paths numerous times before seeing the light! He originally graduated in chemistry & biology then switched to corporate finance with a big 4 accountancy firm and later qualified as an accountant. Some 10 years later he started his own business in renewable energy, whilst continuing to do some advisory work through his own firm, where Julian also used to help out.

Nadia Spiteri

Nadia is Julian's mother. Nadia is a pharmacist by profession with a masters degree in pharmaceutical technology. Nadia has been working in the pharmaceutical industry for most of her career, and is currently a Qualified Person and consultant within this industry.

Reuben Spiteri

Reuben is Julian's uncle. Reuben travelled and worked around the world for about 6 years before finding his path back in Malta where he entered University as a mature student to read for a master's degree in philosophy. In parallel he co-founded Earth Garden Festival and Kuluri marketing & design firm.

Ing Mark Azzopardi

Mark is a mechanical engineer with a background in environmental technologies. He is an energy auditor and has also occupied various management positions in both the private and public sectors. Mark is the co-founder of Working Town, a company organising corporate events and training aimed at creating opportunities for businesses to discuss issues of social importance.

Pierre Cassar

Pierre has extensive experience in broadcasting media. He is currently the Director for Marketing, Communications and Alumni Office at the University of Malta. He also served as CEO of the Broadcasting Authority and Chair of the Mediterranean Network of Regulatory Authorities. He is active in sport administration having served as Director of Media with the Malta Olympic Committee in 2000 - 2004.

Celine Suban

Celine graduated from the University of Malta with a Bachelor's degree in Artificial Intelligence (Hons), and is now working as a Senior Technology Consultant at EY. She has taught various subjects enthusiastically, varying from reading to mathematics to programming, to both children and adults. Celine loves learning and spends her free time doing Massive Open Online Courses and reading. Her work at the Foundation allows her to combine all of her passions and share her passions with other like-minded individuals, while contributing to make the world a better place.

Patrick Tabone

Patrick is a graduate in International Relations from the University of Cambridge and was a member of Malta's Core Negotiating Group during EU accession negotiations. He served as Chief of Staff at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and later as Chef de Cabinet of former EU Commissioner Joe Borg in Brussels. He was appointed as Principal of Chiswick House School and St Martin's College in 2008, and is now leading the family business, Sigma Coatings (Malta) Ltd. Patrick is also one of the founders of the Ladybird Foundation.

Prof Pierre Schembri-Wismayer

Pierre is a professor at the University of Malta Anatomy department and previously worked in St Luke's hospital. After graduating from medicine in Malta, he did voluntary medical work in Africa and then studied cancer research at Glasgow University. Pierre produced an EU-funded television series, (X-lab), to help kids enjoy science and regularly talks at schools, on radio and on TV. His research focuses on new cancer treatments, stem cells and biomechanics. With Maltese engineers, he developed the MaltaHip which was awarded a European patent. He collaborates with local industry and helped preserve cells from the last pure Maltese ox.

Julian's Pathfinder Foundation - Advisors and Volunteers

JPF's advisors and volunteers involved in this camp are being listed

Erika Micallef

Erika is an educator with over 20 years of experience, most of which was spent teaching in a church school setting. She holds a degree in Primary and Physical Education from the University of Malta, during which she also studied at Rowan University in New Jersey as an exchange student. That experience deepened her interest in cross-curricular and thematic approaches to education, which continue to shape her practice today. Over time, she became increasingly aware of the lack of provision for gifted, twice-exceptional, and neurodivergent learners in Malta. This inspired her to pursue a Master's degree in Gifted Education with the goal of bridging this gap and creating inclusive opportunities where these learners can thrive. Her passion lies in supporting high-potential and neurodivergent children, with a strong focus on developing executive functioning skills and socio-emotional growth. She also encourages children to explore their deep interests in fields often considered beyond their age level, nurturing their curiosity while respecting their individuality. Just as importantly, she works alongside families, helping them navigate the current educational system and advocating for their child's needs so they feel empowered and supported throughout their journey. Today, through her work with initiatives such as Julian's InventaLand Programme, she is committed to raising awareness, driving change, and building learning environments that recognise and nurture exceptional talent.

Dr Mariosa Vella Cardona

Mariosa is a warranted lawyer holding a post-graduate degree in European and Comparative law and has been practising for the past 25 years. In the course of her career, Mariosa occupied various roles including that of Deputy Chairperson of the Board of Governors of the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority, member of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality and Deputy Secretary General of the Malta Bankers' Association. She is also a visiting examiner at the University of Malta and a regular contributor to the local media. Mariosa is also a close friend of Julian's family and has known Julian since his childhood.

Other volunteers (many of whom are alumni from previous camps) ensuring the wellbeing of participants and smooth running of the programme include:

- Simona Borg
- Haydn Cassar
- Kieran Cassar
- Shanel Cassar
- Kristine Farrugia Wismayer
- Taran Gambin
- Denzel Sciberras
- Charles Spiteri
- Georgi Timcenko

Programme Directors

Prof Joseph Borg

Joseph initially undertook the studies of applied biomedical science in the former Institute of Health Care, now Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Malta and subsequently followed specialised training in Molecular Genetics and Haematology. His research career began in 2004 when he formally joined the Laboratory of Molecular Genetics, Department of Physiology and Biochemistry (University of Malta) as an MSc student and participated in the final stages of the GEOPARKINSON project, an FP5 EU-funded project (QLK4-CT-1999-01133). In 2006, Joseph enrolled as a research assistant on an FP6 EU-funded project – Infrastructure for Thalassaemia Research Network (ITHANET RI-2004-026539) that started his career in experimental haematology and haemoglobin genetics. Subsequent work unveiled the molecular genetics of the HPFH KLF1-related condition (OMIM 613566) and established KLF1 as a novel quantitative trait locus for HbF (HBFQTL6). He has now published over a 100 publications that include both conference and peer-reviewed articles. His highest accolades include two high impact first-author publications in Nature Genetics, EMBO J, Haematologica, Human Mutation and Pharmacogenomics. Joseph's current research interests as an academic with the Department of Applied Biomedical Science continue to focus on the molecular genetics of developmental globin gene switching and control. Together with his Borg Group he conducts extensive research on KLF1 erythroid-specific transcription factor, utilising both genomic (DNA-based) and transcriptomic (RNA-based) approaches in in-vitro (cell cultures) and in-vivo (clinical patients) models. He is now also a member of the Analysis Working Group at the Nasa Gene Lab, USA run by Afshin Behesti and the ESA Space Omics Topical Team, studying amongst others the effects of spaceflight on erythropoiesis for both astronauts living on board the ISS and other missions and a range of mouse model organisms sent to space and back. This work is also done in collaboration with Christopher Mason at the Institute for Computational Biomedicine, Weill Cornell Medicine, USA.

Dr Josef Borg

Before joining the Faculty of Health Sciences as a Research Support Officer, Josef Borg successfully completed a PhD within the Institute of Space Sciences centering on radio astronomy, and in particular, the calibration of radio interferometers. He worked on the BEST-2 array at the Medicina Radio Observatory, as well as on the upcoming Square Kilometre Array telescope in Australia and South Africa. These projects involved the development of pipelines for handling of data coming from these telescopes, and eventual calibration of these telescopes using such observations. During the course of his doctoral studies, he has also supervised a number of projects, including a B.Sc. project focused on the observation of exoplanets. Previously, he also read for his undergraduate degree at the University of Malta, within the Faculty of Science, for a B.Sc. in Biology and Chemistry (Hons.). His undergraduate dissertation centered around the simulation of the evolution of the atmosphere of Saturn's moon, Titan, as the Sun becomes a red giant. Josef Borg is now working as a Research Support Officer on the TargetID – Novel Drug Targets for Infectious Diseases project, within the Department of Applied Biomedical Science at the faculty of Health Sciences.

Guest Speakers

In alphabetical order

Dr Gordon Cordina

Gordon is a leading economist in the Maltese islands. He has professional experience spanning 25 years, covering banking, policy-making, academia and private sector consultancy. Gordon was appointed Chairman of the Bank of Valletta p.l.c. in October 2020, of MAPFRE MSV Life in September 2021 and director of MAPFRE Middlesea in September 2022. At Bank of Valletta, he serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors, the ESG Committee, and the Nominations and Remuneration Committee and is a member of the Risk Committee and the Compliance and Anti Financial Crime Committee. Gordon is a graduate of the University of Cambridge and the University of Malta. His main area of academic interest is the growth and macroeconomic dynamics facing economies that are prone to heightened risks. Gordon has several years of Board and Risk Committee experience in major financial institutions in Malta, served as Manager of the Research Department of the Central Bank of Malta, Director General of the National Statistics Office of Malta, Head of the Economics Department of the University of Malta and Economic Advisor to the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development. Through the private consultancy firm he co-founded in 2006, he is involved in a number of local and international research projects and consultancy assignments with institutions including the EU Commission, NGOs and private sector entities. Gordon is also a visiting senior lecturer at the University of Malta.

Dr Ing Stefania Cristina

Stefania is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Systems & Control Engineering within the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Malta. Her research focuses on computer vision, image processing, and artificial intelligence, with expertise in vision-based tracking of human body movements for applications in human-computer interaction, assistive technologies, and fitness analysis. More recently, her work has extended to the development of innovative medical applications, including the use of thermal imaging for the early detection of skin cancer. Beyond her research and teaching, Dr Cristina plays an active role in the international engineering community through the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), where she has served as Executive Committee Member and Chair of the Vision & Imaging Technical Network. Locally, she has held the roles of Honorary Secretary and Chair of the Malta Group of Professional Engineering Institutions (MGPEI), and she currently serves as Education and Training Secretary on the Executive Council of the Chamber of Engineers (CoE).

Dr Jim Green

Jim has worked at NASA for 42 years before retiring in December 2022. He received his Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Iowa in 1979 and worked at Marshall Space Flight Center, Goddard Space Flight Center, and NASA Headquarters. During Jim's distinguished career at NASA, he has been NASA's Chief Scientist and was the longest serving director of NASA's Planetary Science Division with the overall programmatic responsibility for the New Horizons spacecraft flyby of Pluto, the Juno spacecraft to Jupiter, and the landing of the Curiosity rover on Mars, just to name a few. Jim has received the Exceptional Achievement Medal for the New Horizons flyby of the Pluto system and NASA's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Medal. He has written over 125 scientific articles in refereed journals and over 125 technical and popular articles. In 2015, Jim coordinated NASA's involvement with the film The Martian. In 2017 Asteroid 25913 was renamed Jamesgreen in his honor. He now teaches students around the world about space and planetary science in the Metaverse.

Prof Christopher E. Mason

Christopher is a professor of Genomics, Physiology, and Biophysics at Weill Cornell Medicine. He is also one of the founding Directors of the WorldQuant Initiative for Quantitative Prediction together with Olivier Elemento. Christopher has co-founded four biotechnology startup companies including Onegevity Health, Biotia, BridgeOmics, and Nurture Genomics. He holds four patents related to his research. Mason completed his dual BS in genetics and biochemistry from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 2001.[6] He did his PhD in genetics from Yale University in 2006.[7] He completed a post-doctoral fellowship in clinical genetics at Yale Medical School, while also serving as a visiting fellow of genomics, ethics, and law at the Information Society Project at Yale Law School.[8] Mason began work at Weill Cornell Medical College in 2009. Mason was a principal investigator for the NASA Twins Study.[12][13] He also led the first demonstration of sequencing in zero gravity and designed the genomics and bioinformatics methods and experimental protocols that were used on the International Space Station (ISS) for the mission to sequence DNA in space for the first time. The results looks promising for Mars mission.[14] This work also led to Mason's selection as the chair of the steering committee for the NASA GeneLab Data and Sample Archive (2018-2022) and has highlighted Weill Cornell Medicine on two NASA mission patches.[15] Mason also was selected by the National Academy of Sciences for the Decadal Survey for NASA.

Prof Alessio Magro

Alessio is a resident professor with the Institute of Space Sciences and Astronomy (ISSA) at the University of Malta. After reading for his undergraduate degree in Information and Communications Technology, he spent a year working in the software industry, after which he started his PhD with the Department of Physics at the University of Malta, working closely with the radio astronomy group at the University of Oxford, and spent an additional year as a postdoc with the same department. His main research area is high performance software instrumentation for radio telescopes, primarily working on the Square Kilometer Array.

Prof Luciano Mule Stagno

Luciano holds a Ph.D in Materials Physics from the Missouri University of Science and Technology. He joined the Institute for Sustainable Energy in 2009 after having been the CEO of Heritage Malta for 3 years. Prior to that he spent 12 years working in the United States with MEMC Electronic Materials, one of the world's largest suppliers of solar and semiconductor materials. His last post there was that of Director of Worldwide Labs with responsibility for labs in Asia, Europe and the US. His major expertise is in the characterization and synthesis of semiconductor and solar materials and he was a pioneer in the development of several characterization techniques. He has published extensively and holds 10 patents on semiconductor/solar materials. His current research interests are in photovoltaics, and other renewable energy technologies that could be applicable to Malta. He is also Chairman of the Scientific Committee of COST (Cooperation in Science and Technology), Vice-president of Din L-Art Helwa (The National Trust of Malta) and President of the University of Malta Academic Staff Association (UMASA).

Malcolm Ross

Malcolm is an independent consultant with 46 years' experience in critiquing and enhancing strategies to monetise new products, services and enterprises. Based in Malta, he advises, challenges and coaches C-Level executives and investors across Europe and South-East Asia. Until July 1999 he was Vice-President in Arthur D. Little's world-wide Electronics, IT and Telecoms Practice. In parallel to his continuing activity in telecoms consulting, Malcolm is now leveraging his experience to improve the success rate of new products, services and enterprises. He applies to new enterprises over a much broader range of sectors in systemising creation of intrinsically viable and valuable new businesses for both corporates and new ventures. Processes includes deep-diving into the psychology of target consumers, brainstorming products/services that delight these consumers, quick-PoC, critique of business plans, market entry strategies, boosting competitive position, acquisition/auctions and transactions/M&A. Born in London, he is fluent in English, German and French, and has learnt and forgotten Italian several times. He has published both business and humorous articles, is seriously addicted to adventurous travel experiences and confesses to a passionate addiction to the world's finest chocolate. He is a PADI Master Dive Instructor, and almost-professional underwater photographer, with over 6,000 dives. Malcolm is a physics graduate, a certified Neuro-Linguistic-Programming (NLP) trainer, as well as a Freeman of the Goldsmith's Company and a Freeman of the City of London.

Dr Kate Rubins

Kate was born in Farmington, Connecticut, and raised in Napa, California. She did chores around the house to help her fund a trip to Space Camp in seventh grade. The camp inspired her to take more math and science classes in school. In July 2016, Rubin became the third female Space Camp alumna to fly in space. Her father, Jim, still resides in Napa and her mother, Ann Hallisey, lives in Davis, California. Kate graduated from Vintage High School in Napa, California, in 1996. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in molecular biology from the University of California, San Diego, and a Ph.D. degree in cancer biology from Stanford University Medical School Biochemistry Department and Microbiology and Immunology Department. She was a member of the Kappa Lambda chapter of the Chi Omega sorority while attending UC San Diego. For as long as she can remember, Kate had always wanted to be an astronaut. Her initial understanding was that she would have to become a fighter pilot first and progress from there, but after getting involved with public health HIV prevention in high school she developed an interest in viruses and microbiology and decided to pursue that first instead. Some of her hobbies include flying airplanes and jumping out of them, scuba diving, and entering triathlons, in which she was a member of the Stanford triathlon team.

Sonya Sammut

Sonya is a policy scientist and a lecturer at the University of Malta. She is the Director for Food Systems at the Malta Food Safety and Security Authority and is currently also serving as Malta's Ambassador for Organic and Sustainable Food. Sonya holds a Master in Knowledge-based Entrepreneurship, a Master of Science degree in Agricultural Sciences, and a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry and Biology.

Nicholas Samut

Nicholas attended St Martin's College Sixth Form from 2022 to 2024. He followed the programme that allowed him to

study three Advanced Level subjects and three Intermediate Level subjects, including Systems of Knowledge, where he completed one of his Advanced Level subjects within his first year at sixth form. Nicholas graduated with high grades and is now a student reading for a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering at The University of Malta. Nicholas is also an executive member and stability lead of the University Rocketry Team.

Prof Alex Torpiano

Alex is a highly experienced academic and leader in built environments. He has dedicated 16 years to his role as Dean of the Faculty for the Built Environment at the University of Malta. Throughout his career, he has held various leadership positions, including Head of the Department of Architecture and Urban Design from 2016 to 2020, Head of the Department of Building and Civil Engineering from 1988 to 1999 and 2007 to 2011, and Head of the Department of Civil and Structural Engineering from 2011 to 2016. In addition to his leadership roles within the university, Alex has made significant contributions to research and professional organisations. He established and served as the Institute for Masonry and Construction Research Director from 1994 to 2009. He has also been actively involved in the governance of the University of Malta, serving as a Member of the Senate and on the Council from 2009 to 2021. Beyond academia, Alex has played a prominent role in professional associations. He served as the President of the Chamber of Architects and Civil Engineers (Kamra tal-Periti) from 1994 to 1996 and again from 2017 to 2019. From 2019 to 2024, he held the position of Executive President of Din l-Art Helwa, an organisation dedicated to preserving Malta's cultural and natural heritage.

Pia Zammit

Pia is a wearer of many hats – and in all of them she is a story-teller. She is an actress, an activist, a public speaker, a communications coach, and a voice-over artist. She firmly believes that the ability to communicate effectively is a super-power – it opens doors and allows us to get our message heard.

Dr Robert Zubrin

Robert is an American aerospace engineer, author,[3] and advocate for human exploration of Mars. He is also an advocate for U.S. space superiority, writing that "in the 21st century, victory on land, sea or in the air will go to the power that controls space" and that "if we desire peace on Earth, we need to prepare for war in space. He and his colleague at Martin Marietta, David Baker, were the driving force behind Mars Direct, a proposal in a 1990 research paper intended to produce significant reductions in the cost and complexity of such a mission. The key idea was to use the Martian atmosphere to produce oxygen, water, and rocket propellant for the surface stay and return journey. A modified version of the plan was subsequently adopted by NASA as their "design reference mission". He questions the delay and cost-to-benefit ratio of first establishing a base or outpost on an asteroid or another Apollo program-like return to the Moon, as neither would be able to provide all of its own oxygen, water, or energy; these resources are producible on Mars, and he expects people would be there thereafter. After the success of his book *The Case for Mars* (1996), as well as leadership experience at the National Space Society, Robert established the Mars Society in 1998. This is an international organization advocating a human mission to Mars as a goal, by private funding if possible.

The Panel

In alphabetical order

Kelvin Camenzuli

Kelvin is the Chief Digital Officer at GO plc, Malta, responsible for GO's transformation into a fully digital organization. Also a member of the Board of Cablenet, a leading telecommunications services provider in Cyprus and part of the GO Group, where he foresees the technology plans of the company as it continues with its growth strategy in Cyprus. Kelvin has extensive management experience at Chief Officer level where he has accumulated expertise in technology projects and operations across both the financial (banking) sector and telecommunications industries. An engineer by profession, with an MBA from the University of Malta.

Mr Gordon Caruana Dingli

Gordon is a Consultant Surgeon and a Senior Lecturer at the University of Malta. He is President of the Association of Surgeons of Malta and was formerly Chairman of the Department of Surgery, Head of the Breast Unit, President of the Medical Association of Malta, President of the Commonwealth Medical Association and Founder Member of the Doctors for Road Safety NGO. He has followed space travel since the Apollo 11 landing and chaired the International Year of Astronomy Malta Committee in 2009. He has published a book "We went to the Moon".

Dr Ing Stefania Cristina

Stefania is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Systems & Control Engineering within the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Malta. Her research focuses on computer vision, image processing, and artificial intelligence, with expertise in vision-based tracking of human body movements for applications in human-computer interaction, assistive technologies, and fitness analysis. More recently, her work has extended to the development of innovative medical applications, including the use of thermal imaging for the early detection of skin cancer. Beyond her research and teaching, Dr Cristina plays an active role in the international engineering community through the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), where she has served as Executive Committee Member and Chair of the Vision & Imaging Technical Network. Locally, she has held the roles of Honorary Secretary and Chair of the Malta Group of Professional Engineering Institutions (MGPEI), and she currently serves as Education and Training Secretary on the Executive Council of the Chamber of Engineers (CoE).

Ing Marco Cremona

Marco obtained his M.Sc. in Water Studies and Hydrology at the University of Malta in 1997 after having worked as a water treatment engineer since 1992. Building on his background in mechanical engineering, he gradually diversified his interests to include environmental issues and is today considered as one of Malta's leading hydrologists and water treatment engineers. His green professional credentials go back to 1997 when he was involved in the preparation of the very first Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) carried out in Malta; in later years he was commissioned by the Government of Malta to draft national master plans relating to waste and storm water. He invented and built the world's first sewage-to-potable water plant for hotels (HOTER) and designed and lives in what is probably Europe's only completely water self-sufficient home. His work has won him international acclaim and various awards. His HOTER project also earned him a place as one of three finalists in the CNBC/Allianz Good Entrepreneur Competition (for the best green business idea in Europe), which was broadcast to a worldwide audience in December 2009. He was nominated and shortlisted for the Stockholm Water Prize 2012. He was nominated and shortlisted for the Stockholm Water Prize 2012, the Nobel Prize equivalent for professionals and activists working in the water sector. Marco Cremona is a founding member of the Malta Water Association. Marco was also the first Maltese citizen to lead an expedition to Mount Everest and reach the summit.

Kenneth Farrugia

Kenneth is the Chief Executive Officer of Bank of Valletta plc. He sits on the Board of Directors of the Bank as an Executive Director, chairs the Executive Committee and is a member of several management committees. Kenneth also sits on the Board of Directors of BOV Fund Services Limited, BOV Asset Management Limited and MAPFRE MSV Life plc and is the current Chair of the Malta Bankers Association. Kenneth began his career at Bank of Valletta in 1985. Over this period, he has occupied various executive positions across the bank's asset management, retail banking and credit business areas. He also occupied various financial services related industry positions to include member of the board of the European Fund and Asset Management Association, Chair of the Malta Asset Servicing Association, as well as the Chair of FinanceMalta, Malta's national promotional body for the financial services industry. He was also the Chair of Malita Investments plc, which is listed on the Malta Stock Exchange and as well as member of the management committee of the Depositor and Investment Compensation Schemes. Kenneth is a Harvard Business School Alumnus, having completed his study program at Harvard Business School in Boston, USA.

Simon Grech

Simon carries forty years of experience within the local financial services industry, primarily in commercial and retail banking. He has recently been appointed Acting Chief Commercial Officer for Bank of Valletta Plc. His academic qualifications include a Masters in Business Administration from The University of Bangor (Wales) as well as a BSc. in Financial Services from the University of Manchester. Simon was also president of the Maltese institute of Financial Services between 2012 and 2015 and holds a Fellowship from the London Institute for Banking and Finance, for which institute he is also an accredited trainer. Simon has lectured on various financial services related courses locally and abroad since 1998.

Chris Meilak

Chris Meilak, Partner at EY Malta, is an economist and Certified Public Accountant, leading EY's Valuations, Economic Advisory and Sustainability services in Malta. Chris holds an MA in Economics and an ACCA degree, is GRI certified and is also a Visiting Lecturer at the Department of Economics, University of Malta.

Prof Alex Torpiano

Alex is a highly experienced academic and leader in built environments. He has dedicated 16 years to his role as Dean of the Faculty for the Built Environment at the University of Malta. Throughout his career, he has held various leadership positions, including Head of the Department of Architecture and Urban Design from 2016 to 2020, Head of the Department of Building and Civil Engineering from 1988 to 1999 and 2007 to 2011, and Head of the Department of Civil and Structural Engineering from 2011 to 2016. In addition to his leadership roles within the university, Alex has made significant contributions to research and professional organisations. He established and served as the Institute for Masonry and Construction Research Director from 1994 to 2009. He has also been actively involved in the governance of the University of Malta, serving as a Member of the Senate and on the Council from 2009 to 2021. Beyond academia, Alex has played a prominent role in professional associations. He served as the President of the Chamber of Architects and Civil Engineers (Kamra tal-Periti) from 1994 to 1996 and again from 2017 to 2019. From 2019 to 2024, he held the position of Executive President of Din l-Art Helwa, an organisation dedicated to preserving Malta's cultural and natural heritage.

Participants

In alphabetical order

Clayton Aquilina, De La Salle College
Jake Bonnici, De La Salle College
Kristina Maria Borg, Sacred Heart College
Luigi Borg, Saint Paul's Missionary College
Jack Borg Pullicino, St. Michael Foundation
Luke Camilleri, Saint Michael School Santa Venera
Jaimee Cauchi, St. Dorothy's Senior School
Krista Cauchi Delia, San Anton School
Nicole Farrugia Wismayer, Sacred Heart College
Louisa Fsadni, St. Dorothy's Senior School
Matthew Galea, Stella Maris College
Benjamin Gauci, St. Michael Foundation
Gabriel Gauci, De La Salle College
Daniel Grech, Stella Maris College
Kate Harmsworth, St. Dorothy's Senior School
Luke Mercieca, St. Nicholas College Dingli Secondary
Martin Muscat, De La Salle College
Martin Nigita, San Andrea School
Elena Portelli, St. Monica School
Riona Seguna, St. Dorothy's Senior School
Hanna Shaiby, St Clare College Secondary School - Pembroke
Anna Spiridonova, St Clare College Secondary School - Pembroke
Therese Amelie Vassallo, St. Dorothy's Senior School
Ailsa Yang, St. Martin's College

OUR INSPIRATION



The Julian's Pathfinder Foundation was created in memory of Julian Spiteri who passed away tragically in a traffic accident in April 2021. Julian was a second-year law student at the University of Malta who was constantly questioning whether he was on the right path and if reading law was the best course for him to reach his full potential. His long list explaining 'why I want to study / practice law', which he pinned to the cork board above his desk, is evidence of the great lengths he went to justify his choices and he frequently referred back to this list when he was doubting whether he was on the right path. Hopefully this list can serve as a guidepost for anyone considering the legal profession or any other career path.

The list, as well as other writings found by his parents posthumously, led his family to establish the Julian's Pathfinder Foundation with the purpose of inspiring and supporting gifted children and youth to achieve their full potential. Julian's essays on 'Do we have a moral duty to exceed ourselves' and 'Does the best education happen outside the classroom', have led Julian's parents to focus the charitable cause of the Foundation on our moral duty to support the most gifted amongst us through outside the classroom education to help them fulfil their potential and inspire them to make a positive contribution to society.

Julian was also particularly keen on science & technology and the impact it could have on society in the near future. He also kept a file of inventions from when he was seven years old which served as an inspiration for this series of events. The Foundation aims to inspire young people to follow their dreams and think big about future technologies that will help make the world a better place.

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Julian Spiteri

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Do We Have a Moral Duty to Exceed Ourselves?



Julian Spiteri Nov 12, 2018 · 4 min read

Analysing Nietzsche's controversial thoughts



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as Friedrich Nietzsche. Unlike other post-Kantian philosophers who were demanding a new “*critique of reason*”, Nietzsche instead called for a new kind of human existence. It may be due to the fact that he himself was a solitary thinker, but it is clear that his philosophy is one that puts aside relations with others and the building of a society and focuses on the individual, and his journey towards becoming “*Der Übermensch*”.

One aspect of Nietzsche’s philosophy that made it incredibly popular was the fact that it attacked many ideologies that were taken for granted at the time. To mention a few, Nietzsche heavily criticised the idea of human nature, the idea of God, and the idea of morality and ethics, in particular those portrayed by Western philosophers. These radical thoughts were what set him apart from other philosophers, both during his lifetime and even more so at this day and age. Most know him for his claim that “*God is dead*”, however, few are actually aware of Nietzsche intentions when he said this. Here, the death of god likely represents a death of inherited values, which should now be reevaluated. That being said, there is no single correct answer to what he meant by “*the death of God*”, but it is clear that he at least meant to announce the end of traditional forms of authority: historical, political, religious moral and textual.

What is true of the death of God is true of eternal recurrence. There has been a great river of literature attempting to interpret this enigmatic doctrine. Once again, it is impossible to know exactly how this idea was to be interpreted, however it was certainly meant to assert Nietzsche’s allegiance to reality as it is, and encourage us to do the same. Nietzsche claims that due to the relationship between matter and time, matter has an infinite number of configurations, and therefore we may live our lives a number of times. He does not propose this as a literal truth, but instead as a thought experiment to improve our lives. He emphasises that the ideal human being is one who has “*not only come to terms and learned to get along with whatever was and is, but who wants to have what was and is repeated into all eternity*”.

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Despite the difficulty in interpreting Nietzsche's oftentimes confusing logic, it is clear that he is in favour of the idea that we have a moral duty to develop ourselves into something higher. Human kind has certainly progressed significantly over time, and this success can be credited to our constant desire of improvement. Therefore, if such an outlook has been so beneficial, can it be applied to an individual? Nietzsche believes so, and proposes the *Übermensch*, an individual superior to all others. Whether there has ever been such a being, and if it is even possible to reach such a state, should not be given much thought. Instead, it should be seen in a way that can be likened with Plato's theory of the forms. The *Übermensch* may not be attainable, but we must aim to imitate it.

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However, a life of constant self-evaluation may not be for everyone. Assuming Nietzsche himself applied his ideologies to his own life, it was clear that the way he

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have died of syphilis caught from prostitutes, a study of medical records has found that, far from suffering a sexually-transmitted disease which drove him mad, Nietzsche almost certainly died of brain cancer. Either way, it is clear that Nietzsche's life was not a pleasant one, however he stressed that his philosophy is based on strength and courage, and we must therefore embrace our suffering. One's life does not necessarily have to be filled with happiness in order to be a fulfilled one. However, if the suffering reaches an extent to which it is a detriment to our mental health, it seems sensible to attempt to avoid it.

Nietzsche is often considered to be one of the most misinterpreted philosophers, however it was Nietzsche himself who said that *"There are no facts, only interpretations."* If one thing is to be taken from his philosophy, it is that we must no longer blindly follow values, and should instead look within ourselves and discover our own purpose. This purpose may differ from Nietzsche's, but the very act of not blindly following Nietzsche's values is exactly what he would have hoped for.

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Julian Spiteri

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Does the Best Education Happen Outside the Classroom?



Julian Spiteri Nov 11, 2018 · 3 min read

We must learn the best way to learn



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School might be where your formal education ends, but it shouldn't be the place where learning does. As Socrates put it, *"I know one thing; that I know nothing"*. Although the word 'education' typically brings to mind sitting behind a desk, the very definition of the word is 'an enlightening experience', which I would argue more often than not happen outside the classroom.

The most important thing to keep in mind when discussing education, and more importantly learning, is the individual, or in this case the student. Very often, schools adopt a one-size-fits-all approach to instruction and classroom culture. For students, this means the loss of creative, flexible differentiation — instruction tailored to each child's social, emotional, and academic needs. Such a system often ignores the fact that different people are more receptive when thought in different way. Some students listen best while sitting perfectly still, others are actually their most focused while bouncing on a cushion or standing. Insisting that all children sit in the exact same manner only sets the stage for unnecessary reminders that exhaust both the teacher and her students.

However, when properly executed, traditional classroom education is an extremely powerful tool. Not many possess the cognitive ability and will power to be capable of self-educating, and in practice, there is a clear correlation between formal education and intelligence, especially when it comes to literacy and numeracy. Although there are many other important factors when examining the intelligence of an individual, I believe it is difficult for one to seek further knowledge without having at least a basic understanding of literacy and numeracy. They are foundational to successful living, learning and participating in today's society.

That being said, literacy and numeracy alone are not adequate. These must be reinforced with other, less fundamental skills, which either cannot be learnt in a classroom, or otherwise in my opinion should be learnt through personal experience. One of these skills is conversation. Failure to engage in conversation with others in order to gain experience could result in one's personal communication skills are being hindered. The broader outcome could be social isolation, arrested social development, and not learning from the common lot of other's experiences and mistakes who are their age and older, which could stifle a person in various ways and potentially become a barrier to rewarding careers and the full enjoyment of relationships. Knowing how to connect with others, being empathetic, when to speak and when to listen, is of great value in the workplace and in interpersonal relationships. To learn the art of conversation is to actually do it, with peers and other varied and diverse people.

Practical thinking skills are also not often acquired through classroom education. Education is generally pragmatic, wherein the educators test students on specific data, and as such students will learn the specific data just for the test, often by rote memorisation. Too often, then, students are not taught how to think through to solutions; even in math, formulas are memorised and the numbers plugged-in to the formula without an understanding of the formula's formation and what it is solving for, and what are real scenarios it's applicable to. The best way to improve choice making is in fact to make choices, and be exposed to the positive and negative consequences of these choices.

Traditional education and informal learning work hand in hand. By helping young people apply their knowledge across a range of challenges, learning outside the classroom builds bridges between theory and reality, schools and communities, young people and their futures. Balance in life is essential, and this holds true for knowledge acquisition, skill learning, and most importantly the building of values.

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14/12/2018

Bucket List

- Write a book
- Live outside Malta
- Visit every country
- Have a child
- Become a millionaire
- Own a boat
- Skydive
- Visit all of Malta
- Swim from Malta to Gozo
- Learn another language
- Run a marathon
- Be a mentor to someone
- Start a business
- See the Northern Lights
- Buzz cut my hair
- Get a PhD
- Learn a martial art
- Fast for a week
- Play poker in a casino

- Meet an idol
- Learn front and backflips
- Change the world
- Watch the sun set twice
- Reach 6 feet
- Milk a cow
- Have a wikipedia page

14/12/2018

Rules for Life

- Do exercise
- Eat good food
- Never stop learning
- Variety is the spice of life
- Moderation is key
- Stay with like minded people ^{*} (but not exclusively)
- Less is often more
- Read books
- Set challenging but realistic goals
- Know when to break rules
- If you can't clean your room, don't try to change the world
- It's okay to seek pleasure
- Stop trying to make sense of things which will never make sense

* like-minded people should have diverse interests and opinions, but similar attitudes and mindsets