

Smart Arabic

Date: Wednesday 2nd May, 1997.

Venue: Ministry of Gozo



Gozo College
Pilot Project

Twenty-six fourth form students, currently attending the Gozo College, were celebrating the completion of an introductory Arabic language and culture course. During his address Chev. F. Gatt, Gozo College Coordinator, emphasized the fact that the college's priority is to provide a holistic educational and training experience for every individual attending or working in the Gozo College. He thanked the teachers that organized the courses especially those that delivered their courses after school hours. Chev. F. Gatt said that one of his priorities was to introduce a new category of languages which he calls exotic, like Chinese, Indian and also Arabic. He said that this year the language introduced was Arabic because this will surely provide Gozitan students with an advantage when applying for posts in companies with Arabic interests. After his address the teachers and parents that attended a computer course were given a certificate of attendance by the Gozo Minister.

Then Mr. Charles Daniel Saliba, the Arabic course teacher, delivered a speech on the benefits of studying Arabic. He mentioned the investments being made in Malta by Arabic Companies such as those like Smart city, Maltacom, FimBank, International Hotel Investments and investments by Maltese people in Arab countries. During his speech, Mr. Saliba quoted Mr. Joe C. Cordina's article "*Arabic - time to get smart about it*" that appeared in The Sunday Times on 29th April and concluded that its time for Arabic again! Mr. Saliba also showed his students a vacant post for a high profile executive job that appeared in The Sunday Times of 1st April where one of the prerequisites was "**Basic knowledge of Arabic**".

Mr. Saliba said that after attending a two year university course organized by The Department of Arabic and Near Eastern Studies within the Faculty of Arts and sponsored by the SDO, he had obtained a Diploma in Arabic. He was later contacted by Chev. F. Gatt to organize and coordinate an Arabic language and culture course. Mr. Saliba thanked both Chev. F. Gatt, the mastermind after this project, and the twenty six students that attended this Arabic course. After delivering his address, Mr. Saliba presented the Gozo Minister and the Gozo College Coordinator with a pack of notes that he prepared for the students. Afterwards the majority of the students read various scripts written in Arabic. Finally every student was given a certificate of attendance together with Mr. Saliba's last publication "*Ktejjeb b'taqsira b'differenza u b'eżerċizzji varji fuq L-Isqaq*", by the Gozo Minister Hon. G. Debono.

After the presentation of certificates, Gozo Minister, Hon. Giovanna Debono, addressed the graduates. She stressed the importance of lifelong learning and the responsibility that every individual has to continue to educate him/herself even after graduating. She congratulated Chev. F. Gatt for his continuous efforts and initiatives to provide Gozitans with the appropriate educational opportunities. She concluded that the Arabic course was an ideal course, especially now, that we are going to have the Smart city project. She encouraged, Chev. F. Gatt and Mr. Saliba to provide Gozo College students with similar courses so that Gozitan youths would be well equipped to work with Arab companies or companies with Arab interests.