



Editorial

The Future of Scholarly Publishing is Open Access

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Dear readers and authors of Xjenza Online, as Editor-in-Chief, I am also pleased to announce the release of the second regular issue of 2022 of Xjenza Online.

In 2022, Malta Chamber of Scientists celebrated its 30th anniversary, so you should not be surprised to learn that the journal is 28 years old! The way we communicate, connect and share has changed drastically since 1996 when the journal was first launched in a printed format, and even more since 2013 when the journal was relaunched as an online free open access journal. This has deeply impacted scientific research and academic publishing as well. Open access is currently the way for academics to publish and achieve a worldwide audience. The future of scholarly publishing lies in open access due to the easy access and distribution of academic publications which are important to everyone: authors, readers, and funders. It has almost become an incentive to researchers to publish open access in recent years, as it is a huge opportunity to broaden the impact of their work. However, some scientific communities remain adamant to publish in open access journals because of the expensive publication fees and concerns about the quality of the peer-review process. In this context, the service Xjenza Online has provided to the local and international scientific community is truly exceptional as the publications are not only open access, but free of charge and the Editorial Board is dedicated to rigorous and fair peer-review. Malta Chamber of Scientists has, therefore, to be commended for their commitment to provide the infrastructure and manpower to keep the journal running through donations and sponsorships which most of the time are rather modest or one-offs.

In this context, we are excited to share with you our latest open access publications included in the current issue.

The issue opens with an article by Vella and Camilleri which presents a detailed decomposition method to explain changes in poverty when the poverty line is not

fixed and depends on the income distribution. Empirical illustrations based on EU-SILC data for Malta between 2005 and 2018 revealed that the poverty line and income growth were the most important contributors to poverty changes, especially during periods of rapid income growth.

Next, the article by Fabri et al. examines the macroeconomic and socioeconomic determinants of early school leaving (ESL). The outcomes highlight the complexity of ESL involving nonlinearity, equifinality, and asymmetric relations. Inequality and parental education emerge as key determinant of ESL.

The paper by Cutajar et al. presents a step-by-step guide on how to set up a valuable and informative mixed method evaluation strategy of large-scale science festivals and events.

Visanich presents then an interesting study on public opinion and protest efficacy in the context of the proposed yacht marina in Marsaskala. The research identifies the underlying factors causing individuals' concerns on the proposed development. Results point to the social, environmental and economic impacts that this development would have, particularly on the community infrastructure of the locality of Marsaskala.

The issue concludes with an article by Borg Muscat et al. on the factors influencing the abundance and distribution of feral pigeons in urban environments in Malta, an important contribution towards a tailor-made and economical scientific management plan for controlling feral pigeons in urban settings.

I also conclude by wishing you a very Happy New Year 2023 filled with good health and many scientific discoveries! The main goals of the coverage will remain the same in 2023 and in the future (at least for the next five more years of my editorship), namely to serve the local professional scientific community, to publish high-quality original findings in a peer-reviewed environment, and to help early-career researchers to advance their scientific discourse in the community.

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