



Youth 4 Entrepreneurship Gozo

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When last January the Gozo Business Chamber was celebrating its 20th Anniversary, in my address at the celebratory evening, I told the gathering that one of the tasks the Chamber was setting its goals to for the year was to emphasize its work among the young. We had just experienced the first edition of Youth for Entrepreneurship and we made it a point that the second edition would be even more successful than the first. A couple of weeks afterwards Covid-19 arrived and wrought mayhem to our plans. But I am very happy this evening to be amongst you, to hear you, to have you sharing with us, your views, your dreams about the future, which are the dreams, we, the not-so-young have for our island, Gozo.

In this context, the European Green Deal, the Union's new growth strategy to transform Europe into a fair and prosperous society with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy with zero net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050, and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use, fits like a glove to what we want for our island.

This is why this year as a Chamber we have decided to focus our efforts in the Youth 4 Entrepreneurship contest to promote the aspect of sustainability.

We truly believe as a Chamber in this concept. Islands are the ideal test beds for the deployment of innovative technologies, and they can set the pace for other regions and countries to follow suit.

The importance of nurturing entrepreneurship has come to the fore, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has not just caused a global health emergency, but it has also caused a global economic slowdown among other consequences. Every business that has been forced to close leads to multiple stories of unemployment, but also of uncertainty. During this situation, we need to collaborate together, we need to be creative, and find innovative solutions that can chart the way forward.

Despite these difficult circumstances I sincerely believe there is hope. Today's event is a testimony to this effect. Before I conclude I feel I must convey my heartfelt thanks to Daniel Borg, our CEO without whose unstinting efforts this event would not have been held. Thanks also to the Ministry for the Economy, Investment and Small Businesses and Agenzija Zghazagh for their unreserved support. Thanks also to the Minister for Gozo Hon. Perit Clint Camilleri for his presence with us today.

This evening we have seen six youths present six bright ideas, all related to sustainability, and to Gozo. We have seen ideas ranging from how to create compost, to the better use of sea transport, generating energy through tiles, the development of a green business park, rekindling the art of Maltese wool weaving, and the collection, dissemination and provision of quality food, that would otherwise be thrown away. What can I say? I am truly impressed!

Norman Vincent Peale once said "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars." This is what I wish for these young persons today. Do not stop to dream. You are our future. We can show that we can develop economically, but at the same time be sustainable. Don't desist from being dreamers and independent thinkers. As a Chamber we wish you all the best. Despite the fact that the winner will not be announced today, you are all winners as you have had the courage to think and put your idea forward. Well done to all!