SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF MALTA CAMPUS
MARSASCALA SITE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Considerations of the social impacts of major projects would not be complete if the perceptions of the residents and stakeholders are overlooked. This Social Impact Assessment focuses on the possibility that the American University of Malta opens a campus in Marsascala. Residents and stakeholders in Marsascala were generally in favour to the possibility that a foreign university - the American University of Malta - establishes a campus in Zonqor. Positive attitudes were based on the perception that (i) this project is a prestigious project and therefore improves the image of the South and Marsascala in particular: (ii) the rental market for accommodation will rise and benefits the owners of the apartments: (iii) the catering and entertainment business can bank on an all year round cliental, as the families of the students shall visit all year round: (iv) new businesses will be set up to cater for the needs of the students but also to serve a community with higher spending power: (v) the diversity of cultures shall create a new paradigm which may lead to new types of businesses, events and activities: (vi) research conducted by the University can be tested in Marsascala and the benefits reaped by the residents of the town. Innovative projects may include new technology, alternative energy etc.: (vii) the University may satisfy its Corporate Social Responsibility through funding of local social and sports projects such upgrading the public pool at Zonqor, supporting financially and through expertise the local swimming and waterpolo teams; (viii) Corporate Social Responsibility may also include bursaries granted by the University to young people hailing from Marsascala and ad hoc educational courses for the locals; (ix) increased job opportunities for people in the locality and in the region; and (x) the American University of Malta an be the catalyst that will bring the renaissance that is much needed in the South.

Fieldwork uncovered key concerns on behalf of residents about possible negative implications if the American University of Malta opens a campus in Marsascala. Issues that stood out included (i) probable increase in traffic; (ii) possible decrease in parking facilities; (iii) chance that the increase in the number of students would lead to the establishment of number of bars and clubs that would transform Marsascala into a, in informants' own words, "Paceville of the South"; (iv) plausible rise in housing renting prices that would effect negatively prospective tenants in low-income brackets and the young; (v) a risk that the present drainage system will not keep up with the projected increase of students in the locality, (vi) a concern that any new roads constructed for the project shall require the expropriation of agricultural land which many expressed a wish to keep to a bare minimum; and (vii) the possibility of loss of income to some individuals who work the land, (viii) and unease that the current road infrastructure is inadequate to support the heavy vehicles that shall need to access the site during construction which shall cause inconvenience to the residents. The Social Impact Assessment also enquired respondents about the possible mitigation strategies that they wish the government to implement so as to safeguard their interests and optimise outcomes for their local community, as well as compensate for the inconveniences they will experience as the result of the establishment of a campus operated by the American University of Malta. Mitigation possibilities included making suitable arrangements for traffic and parking spaces management, transparency, durable drainage system, active citizenship / political participation, and good governance as regards applications for the opening of new leisure establishments.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project description

Government is considering various sites for the location of the proposed American University. One of the sites that is presently being considered, amongst others, is Marsascala. The proposed American University of Malta will include five colleges and all the amenities expected in a modern-day university. These five collages will include buildings not exceeding three floors and will also take into consideration the topography of the existing sites and the surrounding environments. As to facilities, it will include what is generally expected of any contemporary day university, including lecture halls, labs, workshops, research and development areas, library, dormitory and ample sport facilities. Not only will the American University of Malta give importance to the surrounding environment in its plans but it will be sensitive to surrounding properties so that their market value will possibly grow. The American University of Malta will be focusing on Engineering, Communications, Information Technology and Medical Science. Degrees awarded by the American University of Malta will be accepted by any country that recognises the Bologna accredited degrees. This means that the degrees issued by the American University of Malta will be recognised in each and every member state of the European Union. Courses will be offered at Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate levels. The American University of Malta has, in fact, already submitted courses for five Bachelor, one Masters and four Doctorates to the National Commission for Further & Higher Education for its accreditation process. Furthermore, it is in this University's plans to offer courses in more than 60 different subjects with additional courses being introduced later, in line with market demands.

The government perceived this project as reflecting its economic vision to strengthen the economy and internationalise the higher education sector. Having some 17 per cent of all students based in Malta, as well as another unaccounted number of Maltese students following studies overseas, shows that there is potential in this market both for Maltese as well as to attract more foreign students to the Maltese Islands (Bartolo, cited in GRTU, 2015. Three main concerns raised from an education point of view - namely, that due to this project education quality standards are going to be lowered to accommodate the investors; there is not going to be an element of research as is required of an university; and that the recent changes in the legislation where made to allow government to grant education licenses directly without the necessary requirements and processes - government insisted that there is in fact going to be a strong element of research at the American University of Malta and that the amendments presented though a recent legal notice does give further regulatory powers to the National Commission for Further and Higher Education to ensure standards. The fact that studies show that the average income of families in the South Region of Malta is 11 per cent lower when compared to other regions has also been emphasised by the government. It is expected that this project builds on the government's present economic vision and will have a substantial income for Malta, particularly the South of the Island, with an estimated €115 million investment across three years bringing to Malta due to some incoming 4,000 foreign students (Cardona, cited in GRTU, 2015). These students are expected to pay around €12.5 million in tuition fees and spend €1.8 million on property rental. Studies based on the United Kingdom show that foreign student influx generates further tourism income brought by family visits whilst the students are expected to spend around €15,000 each per year. The same studies show that every €1.00 spent on tertiary education repays the economy with €2.50.

This report comprises of a Social Impact Assessment on the possibility that the American University of Malta establishes a campus in Marsascala. This campus shall host a number of academic faculties and university residences.

1.2 Social Impact Assessment

A *Social Impact Assessment* (SIA) was undertaken as part of the sustainability evaluation for the setting up of a foreign university, the American University of Malta, in Marsascala. This SIA report focuses exclusively on the possible social impacts that the establishment of the American University of Malta will have on Marsascala site.

As Misra (2004) points out, SIAs are premised on the idea that development interventions have social consequences, and therefore, it is necessary that governments understand the effects of their decisions before policies are implemented and have emotional impacts upon communities. While SIAs are normally undertaken within relevant national environmental policy frameworks, SIAs are not restricted to this, and SIA as a process and methodology has the potential to contribute greatly to the planning process. The function of SIAs is to render projects responsive to social development concerns, giving actors a voice in decisions affecting the future of their communities, whilst minimising and compensating for adverse social impacts. Hence, SIAs can be understood in terms of efforts to assess or estimate, in advance, the social consequences that are likely to follow specific government interventions. It is a process that provides a framework for prioritising, gathering, analysing, and incorporating social information and participation into the design and delivery of novel policy decisions. SIAs ensure that policy interventions are informed and take into account the key relevant social issues, and incorporate a participation strategy for involving a wide range of stakeholders. At this point the definition of 'social impact/s' is central to the elicited assessment data. This report defines 'social impact/s' as:

> The consequences to human populations of any public or private actions that alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organise to meet their needs and generally cope as members of society. The term also includes cultural impacts involving changes to the norms, values and beliefs that guide and rationalise their cognition of themselves and their society. (Burdge, 2004 : 3)

In more practical terms, SIAs include the processes of analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions, and any social change processes invoked by those interventions (International Association for Impact Assessment, 2003). According to the Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment (1994), SIAs are carried out through processes of assessing or estimating, in advance, the social consequences that are likely to follow from specific policy actions or project development, particularly in the context of appropriate national, state, or provincial environmental policy. Indeed, good practice in SIA is based upon the premise that social, economic and biophysical impacts are inextricably interconnected, and that change in any of these domains will lead to changes in other domains. SIA must, therefore, develop an understanding of the impact pathways that are created when change in one domain impacts other domains (International Association for Impact Assessment, 2003).

This SIA sought to understand the observations and discernments of stakeholders and residents in the Marscala community vis-à-vis the following query: what will change and what social impacts will occur as a result of the establishment of a campus on behalf of the American University of Malta in Marsascala? The subsequent section provides a brief overview of the methodological design guiding the carrying out of the herein SIA.

1.3 Methodology

Following Burdge's (2004) informative advice on the theory of and methodology for Social Impact Assessments, the present research report included three major steps: (i) community scoping and profiling, (ii) the setting up of the American University of Malta in Marsascala, and (iii), proposals for mitigation, remediation and enhancement, as well as monitoring.

The *first* phase included scoping and profiling of the Marsascala community, especially the identification of the existing environment, and identification of social variables of interest. The goal was to outline the definition of the existing physical and socio-economic context, personal/social values of the stakeholders in this community, and the detection of social effects typically associated with the establishment of a tertiary educational institution. The objectives for phase one are presented in Box 1.1.

Box 1.1 **Phase 1 Objectives: Scoping and profiling of the Marsascala community**
▪ What are the community's basic demographics? ▪ Who are the stakeholders in the community? ▪ Who are the key community/voluntary organisations in the community? ▪ What is this community's key cultural identity? ▪ Which key social values characterise this community? ▪ What are this community's key aspirations? ▪ What do local residents see as the primary needs for this community? ▪ What are the education, employment, risk-of-poverty and health levels of residents in Marsascala?

This stage utilised both secondary and primary sources of data. Secondary sources consist of data that have already been produced in other research, with this report making use of the National 2011 Census (National Statistics Office, 2014) and other local studies on Marsascala (Abela, 1999). Primary sources, on the other hand, consist of data collected by researchers themselves during the course of their research. In this SIA, primary sources of data were examined through exploratory research which, as Strebbins (2001 : 3) points out, consists in "broad-ranging, purposive, systematic, prearranged undertaking designed to maximise the discovery of generalizations leading to description and understanding of an area of social or psychological life. Exploration research was conducted through the 'fieldwork' strategy, which typically involves the researcher observing and recording behaviour and events in their natural setting. The researcher physically goes to the people, setting, or site in order to meet the goal and objectives of the study by immersing him/herself in the contextual background. Although conversational probes elicited a rich variety of data, the key method of data collection utilised throughout the fieldwork consisted of 'non-directive' interviews. Non-directive interviews were conducted with residential and business community groups, and stakeholders. In non-directive interviews, the interviewer refrains from offering opinions, avoids expressions of

approval and disapproval, and often, will spend some time trying to establish rapport with the interviewee prior to the interview. This is usually done by simply talking informally before the interview proper starts. Once the interviewee feels that they are not going to be criticised or judged, that they can talk freely, it generally follows that they will talk with honesty and openness. In locating informants for interviews this SIA opted for convenience sampling where researchers simply use as participants those individuals who are easy to get: people are selected on the basis of their availability and willingness to respond. The analysis of data followed the 'coding' strategy which is carried out through three subsequent stages (Strauss and Corbin, 1997): (i) open coding which is concerned with identifying, naming, categorising and describing diverse phenomena found in the data, (ii) axial coding which is the process of relating codes to each other, via a combination of inductive and deductive thinking, and (iii), selective coding which is the process of choosing one category to be the core category, and relating all other categories to that category.

The *second* stage consisted of further fieldwork to elicit data on perceived social impacts, on behalf of residents and stakeholders in Marsascala, as the result of the establishment of a foreign university. Similar to the precedent phase, the key methods of data collection and analysis included conversational probes, non-directive interviews, and coding procedures respectively. The objectives for phase two are presented in Box 1.2.

Box 1.2:
Phase 2 Objectives: Social Impact Assessment - Marsascala site

Wide-ranging impacts

- What are the community's views on the establishment of a campus on behalf of the American University of Malta in Marsascala?
- What are the key issues driving the community's perceptions on this possible development?
- What is the community mostly concerned about?
- What are the key risks associated with the establishment of a campus on behalf of the American University of Malta in Marsascala?
- What the key drawbacks, as perceived by the community, on the possibility of the establishment of a campus on behalf of the American University of Malta in Marsascala?
- Do residents anticipate any change in the following social attributes as the result of the establishment of a foreign university in Marsascala?

Mitigation issues

- Is there anything the government could do to lessen people's concerns?
- If this project was to proceed, what conditions would the community wish to see implemented to make it acceptable?
- What monitoring can be done so that the establishment of a foreign university in Marsascala does not impact upon the daily lives of residents?
- What would give the community confidence that this project is being managed well, both in the near and long-term future?

The 26 SIA variables in Box 1.3 represent the type of effects arising from planned change in communities (Burdge, 1998). Each variable has the potential to inform the decision-maker of the consequences of the proposed action which can be measured in advance of the project.

Box 1.3:
Social Impact Assessment Themes - Marsascala site

Population impacts

1. Population change
2. Influx or outflow of temporary workers
3. Presence of seasonal (leisure) residents
4. Relocation of individuals and families
5. Dissimilarity in age, gender, racial, or ethnic composition.

Community/Institutional arrangements

6. Formation of attitudes toward the project
7. Interest group activity
8. Alteration in size and structure of local government
9. Presence of planning and zoning activity
10. Industrial diversification
11. Enhanced economic inequities
12. Change in employment equity of minority groups
13. Change in occupational opportunities

Conflicts between local residents and newcomers

14. Presence of an outside agency
15. Introduction of new social classes
16. Change in the commercial/industrial focus of the community
17. Presence of weekend residents (recreational)

Individual and family level impacts

18. Disruption in daily living
19. Dissimilarity in religious practices
20. Alteration in family structure
21. Disruption in social networks
22. Perceptions of public health and safety
23. Change in leisure opportunities

Community infrastructure needs

24. Change in community infrastructure
25. Land acquisition and disposal
26. Effects on known historical, historical, sacred and archaeological resources

During this phase of data collection, interviews were conducted with stakeholders in Marsascala - hence, with people who will be affected by socio-economic development in the area. Fieldwork uncovered two key ‘non-elite’ stakeholders - namely,

Residents. The people who live in Marsascala, and who may be further sub-grouped in the following sectors: children, youths, adults, older persons, disabled, men and women.

Business operators. The Marsascala region includes various business companies that range from restaurants, groceries, village bars/pubs, stationeries, beauty salons, pet shops, hairdresser saloons, butchers to haberdasheries.

Community activists. Marsascala also includes a number of community activists that range from social workers to community workers to historians who have, for many years, invested a lot of time and energy towards the improvement of Marsascala.

A strategic part of the second stage of fieldwork consisted in interviewing 'key informants' having knowledge of the Marsascala community. Elite interviews can be helpful in the following ways: (i) identifying community concerns; (ii) aiding the discovery of population and organisations that should be involved in SIAs; (iii) building support for project implementation; (v) evaluation of mitigation effects; and (iv), establishing priorities among programme alternatives. The employment of semi-structured interview guide sought to measure change in human populations, communities, and social relationships resulting from the construction of the establishment of a foreign university in Marsascala. Elite interviews were conducted with:

- Mayor, Marsascala Local Council
- Deputy Mayor, Marsascala Local Council

The *third* and final phase of social impact assessment involved recommendations for mitigation, remediation and enhancement, as well as monitoring. This phase focused on developing alleviating and management options for the social impacts elicited in phase two. Preliminary ideas about monitoring the perceived social impacts were also deliberated.

2 SIA PHASE 1: THE MARSASCALA COMMUNITY

Marsascala (‘Wied il- Ghajn’ in Maltese) is a sea-side village in the South Eastern Region of Malta that has grown around the small harbour at the head of Marsascala Bay, a long narrow inlet also known as *Marsascala Creek*. The bay is sheltered to the north by *Ras iż-Żonqor*, the south-east corner of Malta, and to the south by the headland of *Ras il-Gżira*.

2.1 The historical context

‘Wied il- Ghajn’, or ‘’Marsascala’’ , is a maritime village, not far from Zabbar and Zejtun. It is an area by the coast enjoying two inlets that are very popular with people going fishing and for entertainment. However in times gone by when communciation was still primative, the area must have look far out in the country and away from the safety of the bastions that protected the cities at the time. It was also an area exposed to anything that came by sea. The idea of the landing of il-furbani is still part of the local folklore. Until the Second World War (1940-1945), Wied il-Ghajn was still a small village consisting mostly of summer residences, but today it has grown to such an extent that it is considered one of the better places to live in. It is also one of the fastest growing towns in terms of population and economic activity (Abela 1999).

’Wied il- Ghajn’ gets its name from the two valleys on which it is built. The first valley, along the Zabbar Road, lies between the San Anard Hill and the Bidni Hill, while the second one lays between the latter and the San Antnin Hill. From here a road leads to Zejtun. The village’s name refers also to a spring of fresh water which in past times served as a washing place and still flows beneath Marina Street into the sea. As cited from the book of Joe Abela (1999), it is commonly agreed that the origin of the name - ‘Marsascala’- ‘Marsa’ is an Arabic word meaning bay, while ‘Skala’ has given rise to different interpretations. This word could have been derived from Sqalli (Sicilian) for Marsascala was frequented by Sicilian fishermen since Malta is just 60 miles (97 km) south from Sicily. Maybe it was derived from the Sicilian 'Piccola Cala' meaning little inlet or it was just a reference to some rock-cut steps on the water's edge since *scala* also means a straight flight of steps (Abela, 1999). Old documents mention the big fish pond and a tower built by Mattiolo d’ Elia that go back to the times of the Order of St John in Malta (ibid.).

With the arrival of the Knights , the people of these islands could start looking at the future with courage and hope. However it was not before ninety years had elapse before the Knights started thinking seriously about Marsascala’s defence (Abela, 1999). In July 1614, a fleet of 60 Turkish vessels, under the command of Ali Basha, appreared on the horizon. The enemy fleet carried around 6,000 soldiers. At first the enemy galleys approached Marsaxlokk Bay, but they were quickly repelled by the guns of Fort St Lucian, which had been constructed by Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt just four years earlier. Failing at Marsaxlokk they chose to land at Wied il-Ghajn and St Thomas’s Bay which were completely exposed, as Fort St Thomas had not yet been built (Abela, 1999). However, after this attack, the Knights soon realised that a landing of the enemy at Marsascala, the nearest port to the Grand Harbour, constituted a dangerous threat to their security, for this bay offered direct access from the sea to the centre of Malta. Hence in no time at all, Alof de Wignacourt began building Fort St Thomas in the exact location where the enemy had landed in 1614, on a plot of land bought previously by the same Grand Master. The new fort offered protection to both St Thomas’s Bay, as well as, to Wied il-Ghajn Bay. The new Tower is much bigger than the those usually found round the coast of the island, for it was intended to defend the bay but also to store arms. It became one

of the major fortifications in the xlokk of the country. It is believed that the plan of the tower was drawn by Vittorio Cassar, son of Glormu, the famous designer of the most celebrated buildings in Valletta. The tower was named after the small chapel of St Thomas which had existed in olden times at the bay with the same name (Abela, 1999). Over time, the area assumed greater significance in terms of the defences of the island and infact the Kights added other structures to enhance the fortifications namely; De Redin Tower, Briconet Redoubt and the Redoubts in St Thomas Bay together with Torri Mamo, though the latter was the contribution of a wealthy Maltese family. Torri Mamo was built in 1657 by the Mamo Family at Tar-Rumi, on the road leading to Zejtun. It is not as big and as strong as St Thomas' Tower, but it's of average size though very nicely designed. It is built on a plan known as St Andrew's Cross, surrounded by a small dry ditch and a drawbridge, which does not exist any more, to secure the residents in case of an attack. In the vicinity the same family also built St Gaetan Chapel. It was popular and loved by local fishermen as attested by certain graffiti on the facade of the chapel. Until the 1950's the feast of St Gaetan was celebrated in this chapel on the 7th July. De Redin tower was built by Grand Master De Redin in 1659 as part of his plan to improve the security round the whole of the island. It is located in the area known as taz- Zonqor, at the point seperating the limits of Marsascala from those of Zabbar / Xaghjra, near is-'Sala. A number of redoubts were also built, some by French military engineers though one of them was build during the English period in anticipation of a Italian invasion during World War II. The redoubt built by the Knights, is one of the best preserved redoubts in the Maltese Islands and currently houses the local Police Station. It was built in 1715 by Commendatore Gio. Battista Briconet and was initially garrisoned by local Militia from the Zejtun Regiment. Adjacent to St Thomas Bay, the Knights built at least two other redoubts- Maħsel redoubt and the Riħana redoubt. Since the 16th century not less than ten chapels have been built at Marsascala, most of them by private families. Though a couple of them no longer exist, all the others can still today be used and admired. Amongst these chapels one can find, St Thomas Chapel, The Tower's Chapel, Our Lady of 'Tad- Dawl. St Gaetan Chapel, St Nicholas Chapel, St Anthony Chapel and tac-Cintura Chapel which orginally formed part of a Palazzo as a summer residence for a noble family.

2.2 The cultural context

Marsascala is a very different village today than it was some years ago. While, in the past, it was considered as a holiday village for the Nobility; today Marsascala has a culture consistent with a typical town bustling with activity of young families and a youthful population. A culture which brings together many people all coming from different walks of life, backgrounds, education and occupations. While most of the local families orignally hailed mainly from Cottonera and Zejtun, the residents who moved to Marsascala in the last years come from all over Malta. This diverse scenario is a melting pot for the new and emerging culture of Marsascala. Inspite of the fact that the parish of Wied il-Ghajn was established as recent as 1949 it has already gain most of the characteristics, typical of other towns such as the growing local festa with the trappings of the respective activities of a band club, band marches and interest in fire works. Moreover, Marsascala's connection with the Cottonera is not only restricted to the migration of people from this region but the town owes the birth of the parish to the church leaders of the Basilica of Senglea who took it upon themselves to set up a church in the locality. In fact they chose St Anne as the patron saint, being the mother of il-Bambina that is venerated in Isla. Apart from the religious ceremony, the local band club 'Ghaqda Muzikali Sant' Anna' holds various programmes to commemorate not only the local feast but other events during the year. However Marsascala is not just another town but is fast becoming a centre of entertainment for both the young and not so young. The number of entertainment

outlets have mushroomed all over the town and it has become the major entertainment centre in the south of the island. The businesses sensed this opportunity and are developing and investing in activities and services that attract more people and patrons to the events and their services. During summer the population increases exponentially with people moving to their summer homes in Marsascala. This adds to the level of activities in the town while offers an enjoyable experience to many who come from other parts of the island. This is increasing its connectivity to other towns and therefore its social capital. The town has attracted a number of academics and like minded people, most of whom are committed in a number of activities and clubs namely those connected to social work, sports and philantropy.

2.3 Population and socio-economic structures

2.3.1 Population

The 2011 Census demonstrated that Marsascala experienced a total 131.8 per cent growth rate since 1995 and a total 18.3percent growth rate since 2005 (National Statistics Office, 2011). Malta's population registered a 10 and 2.7 per cent growth rate in the periods 1995 - 2011 and 2005 - 2011 respectively. The 2011 National Census reports that Marsascala's population increased substantially during the past century, from 888 in 1957 to 11,056 in 2011 (table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Marsascala total population by census years

1931	1948	1957	1967	1985	1995	2005	2011
--	--	888	876	1,936	4,770	9,346	11.056

Source: National Statistics Office, (2012)

The 2011, Marsascala's gender distribution for males and females was 5,506 and 5,550 respectively. Table 2.2 reports Marsascala's gender distribution for the years 1995 - 2011. Whilst the population density of Marsascala was 887 persons per square kilometre in 1995, in 2005 this figure decreased to 2.057 persons per square kilometre in 2011.

Table 2.2: Marsascala total population by sex: Census years 1995 and 2011

1995			2011			Change 1995-2011 (%)		
Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
2,395	2,375	4,770	5,506	5,550	11,056	129.9	133.7	131.8

Source: National Statistics Office, (2012)

In 2011, Marsascala's population was relatively skewed in favour of children and middle adulthood as the largest number of residents was found in the 10-19 and age bracket (526 persons), followed by the 40-49 (517 residents) and 50-59 (461 residents) age brackets (table 2.3). The 2011 census found the 0-14 age cohort is the majority of this community (tables 2.3 and 2.4).

Table 2.3: Marsascala's total population by age group (2011)

0-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
2,207	1,363	1,836	1,987	1,438	1,162	1,063	11,056

Source: National Statistics Office, (2012)

Table 2.4: Marsascala total population by age and sex (2011)

Age	Males	Females	Total	Age	Males	Females	Total
0-9	748	728	1,476	60-69	529	489	1,018
10-19	721	704	1,425	70-79	206	228	434
20-29	708	784	1,492	80-89	69	100	169
30-39	1,071	1,105	2,176	90-99	8	19	27
40-49	806	759	1,565	99+	-	-	-
50-59	637	640	1,277	Total	5,503	5,556	11,059

Source: National Statistics Office, (2014)

Table 2.5 notes that Marsascala has a relatively young population. Whilst the average age of the population living in the Maltese Islands is 40.5 years, Marsascala registers a 35.5 average age. In 2011, Marsascala's ageing index and percentage of persons aged 65-plus were 35.5 and 9.6 respectively.

Table 2.5: Average age [AA] and Ageing Index [AI] by locality and 65+ age group (2011)

Region	AA	65+ (%)	AI	Locality	AA	65+ (%)	AI
Maltese Islands	40.5	16.3	110.3	Malta	40.4	16.1	109.1
Gozo/Comino	41.6	18.3	125.9				
Southern Eastern	38.2	12.9	79.1	Marsascala	35.5	9.6	48.2

Source: National Statistics Office, (2014).

In 2011, Marsacala included 7,211 dwellings, out of which 4,210 were occupied (58.4 per cent), 1,858 used for seasonal or secondary use (25.8 per cent), and 1,143 completely vacant (15.9 per cent). Occupied dwellings constituted terraced houses (646), semi-detached houses (132), fully-detached houses (87), maisonette / ground-floors (1,371), flats/penthouses (1,880), semi-/fully-detached farmhouse (37) and other (57). Occupied dwellings were owned freehold (2,563), owned with ground rent (845), rented unfurnished (196), rented furnished (427), held by emphyteusis (36), and used-free-of charge (143).

2.3.2 Education

The 2011 National Census reported that Marsascala include above-average rates for literacy when compared to the national and regional averages. Whilst the average literacy rates for Malta and the South Eastern region were 93.6 and 92.8 per cent, Marsascala scored 96.4 per cent (table 2.6)

Table 2.6: Literacy and illiteracy among population aged 10 and over (South Eastern / Marsascala)

District / Locality	Literate		Illiterate		Total	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Malta	353,878	93.6	24,074	6.4	377,952	100.0
South Eastern	53,335	92.8	4,119	7.2	57,454	100.0
Marsascala	9,240	96.4	343	3.6	9,583	100.0

Source: National Statistics Office, (2014).

The 2011 Census also testified that a significant number of residents in this region are fluent in the Maltese and English languages, and to a lesser extent, even in Italian (table 2.7). The French language is also spoken well by a minority of residents, with more inhabitants speaking Arabic than German.

Table 2.7: Population aged 10 and over by district and languages spoken (South Eastern)

Language	Well	Average	A little	Not at all
Maltese	54,201	412	685	2,156
English	33,883	11,017	6,720	5,834
Italian	13,496	9,523	9,951	24,484
French	1,590	2,619	7,041	46,204
German	501	650	2,198	54,105
Arabic	637	423	1,838	54,556

Source: National Statistics Office, (2014).

Table 2.8: Population aged 15 and over by highest level of education by sex (South Eastern)

District and sex	No schooling	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Post-Secondary	Tertiary
Malta	5,948	71,254	145,639	64,076	18,792	49,995
Males	2,000	29,446	74,914	32,342	11,874	25,356
Females	3,948	41,788	70,725	31,734	6,918	24,639
South Eastern	959	10,884	22,901	9,804	3,056	6,200
Males	342	4,673	12,155	4,956	2,028	3,023
Females	617	6,211	10,746	4,848	1,028	3,177

Source: National Statistics Office, (2014).

Conclusively, one also finds that the majority of residents in the South Eastern region hold a Lower Secondary level of education, but that more residents in this district have a tertiary than post-secondary education level (table 2.8).

2.3.3 Employment

The human capital is embodied in the skills and knowledge acquired by an individual who through changes in the relations among persons facilitate action. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible. In this regard it is important to look closer at the social class of the residents which among other structural characteristics, influence social capital and possibility of upward social mobility. People residing in the South Eastern Region, in which Marsascala is found, are more likely to find employment in the following occupations: service and sales

workers, technicians and associate professionals, professionals, craft and related trades workers, and clerical support workers (in respective order) (table 2.9).

Table 2.9: Employed persons aged 15-plus by district and main occupation.

Occupation	Southern Harbour	Northern Harbour	South Eastern	Western	Northern	Gozo & Comino	Total
Armed Forces occupations	387	404	308	164	211	139	1,613
Managers	1,791	6,706	1,919	2,952	3,820	812	18,000
Professionals	3,338	8,511	3,638	4,755	4,732	1,975	26,949
Technicians and associate professionals	3,610	6,715	3,796	3,469	3,844	1,239	22,673
Clerical workers	3,461	5,975	3,021	2,723	3,152	1,163	19,495
Service and sales workers	6,101	9,792	5,029	4,505	5,669	2,764	33,860
Skills agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	176	202	400	519	538	404	2,239
Craft and related trades workers	3,850	4,829	3,441	2,633	2,952	1,427	19,132
Plant and machine operators	2,872	2,574	2,557	1,435	1,338	606	11,382
Elementary occupations	3,975	4,402	2,700	2,030	2,065	1,340	16,512

Source: National Statistics Office, (2014).

The 2011 Census also shows that employees residing in the South Eastern Region were over-represented in the manufacturing sector and wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (table 2.10)

Table 2.10: Employed persons aged 15-plus by district and economic activity (2011)

Economic Activity	Southern Harbour	Northern Harbour	South Eastern	Western	Northern	Gozo & Comino	Total
Total	**29,561**	**50,110**	**26,809**	**25,185**	**28,321**	**11,869**	**171,855**
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	141	197	374	463	508	352	2,035
Mining and quarrying	106	154	137	102	149	56	704
Manufacturing	5,142	5,452	4,709	3,035	2,617	1,111	22,066
Electricity, gas, stream and air conditioning supply	306	303	413	312	215	70	1,619
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	415	373	441	258	208	198	1,893
Construction	1,744	2,676	1,917	1,563	2,060	1,030	10,990

Table 2.10: Employed persons aged 15-plus by district and economic activity (2011) (contd.)

Wholesale / retail trade	4,630	9,255	3,502	3,992	4,660	1,551	27,590
Transportation / storage	1,976	2,903	1,845	1,368	1,461	535	10,088
Accommodation and food service activities	2,071	4,483	1,640	1,691	3,497	984	14,366
Communication	955	1,958	799	911	1,039	212	5,874
Financial activities	1,031	2,583	1,142	1,291	1,395	306	7,748
Real estate activities	84	411	89	120	220	96	1,020
Professional, scientific and technical activities	959	2,818	818	1.328	1,398	269	7,590
Administrative and support service activities	1,452	2,267	1,058	905	1,169	382	7,233
Public administration	2,873	3,588	2,438	1,891	1,904	1,439	14,133
Education	2,148	4,316	2,232	2,517	2,465	1,629	15,307
Human health and social work activities	2,307	3,399	2,231	2,323	1,890	1,184	13,334
Arts, entertainment and recreation	558	1,565	452	486	670	192	3,923
Other service activities	588	1,188	528	550	716	261	3,831
Activities of household as employers	23	64	13	22	18	8	148
Extraterritorial organization and bodies	52	157	31	57	62	4	363

Source: National Statistics Office, (2014).

The majority of unemployed persons in the South Eastern Region held last main occupations in Service and sales workers, Elementary occupations, and Craft and related trades workers (in respective order) (table 2.11).

Table 2.11. Unemployed persons aged 15-plus by district and last main occupation (2011).

Occupation	Southern Harbour	Northern Harbour	South Eastern	Western	Northern	Gozo & Comino	Total
Total	**2,063**	**2,404**	**1,551**	**848**	**1,076**	**602**	**8,544**
Armed Forces	6	6	5	6	8	2	33
Managers	42	155	31	38	55	13	334
Professionals	53	152	52	44	68	39	408
Technicians & professionals	127	201	82	59	96	45	610
Clerical workers	119	227	115	91	99	40	691
Service and sales	405	622	245	196	309	139	1916
Skilled agriculture	11	17	16	11	8	19	82
Craft and related trades workers	410	351	309	152	168	114	1504
Plant and machine operators	314	203	241	99	85	72	1014
Elementary occupations	576	470	455	152	180	119	1952

Source: National Statistics Office, (2014).

2.3.4 Risk-of-Poverty

According to the *Income and Living Conditions Survey 2010* in 2010 the national rate of persons at-risk-of-poverty in the Maltese Isalnds stood at 15.0 per cent, 14.5 per cent males and 15.5 per cent females, which numbered 19,580 and 31,940 respectively (table 2.12). As far as the South Eastern Region is concerned the rate of persons at-risk-of-poverty stood at 13.9 per cent, 13.2 per cent males and 15.6 per cent females, which numbered 4,090 and 4,650 respectively (National Statistics Office, 2011).

Table 2.12: Persons at-risk-of-poverty by district

District	Number			% of population		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Southern Harbour	6,430	6,820	13,250	16.2	17.2	16.7
Nortrhern Harbour	9,120	8,650	17,770	15.6	14.6	15.1
South Eastern	4,090	4,650	8,740	13.2	14.6	13.9
Western	3,760	4,380	8,140	13.0	15.5	14.2
Northern	4,180	4,840	9,020	13.8	15.8	14.8
Gozo / Comino	2,010	2,600	4,610	12.9	16.4	14.7
Total	29,580 [sic]	31,940	61,520 [sic]	14.5	15.5	15.0

2.3.5 Health

Statistics derived from the 2011 Census demonstrates that the South Eastern Region registered 18.5 per cent of its population with long-term illness and or health condition, which is lower than the national average of 19.9 per cent (table 2.13).

Table 2.13: Total population by long-term illness / health condition and district

District	With illness/ health condition		Without illness / health condition		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Southern Harbour	18,670	23.5	60,768	76.5	79,438	100
Northern Harbour	25,156	20.8	95,293	79.2	120,449	100
South Eastern	11,920	18.5	52,356	81.5	64,276	100
Western	11,333	24.2	46,796	75.8	58,129	100
Northern	10,850	17.0	52,915	83.0	63,765	100
Gozo and Comino	5,173	16.5	26,202	83.5	31,375	100
Malta	83,102	19.9	334,330	80.1	417,432	100

Source: National Statistics Office, (2014).

The Census also reported that a wide number of residents in the South Eastern region suffer from disability. Most experience physical disability followed by blindness or partial sight loss, mental health, deafness or partial hearing loss, specific learning difficulty, intellectual disability, and development disorder respectively (table 2.14).

Table 2.14. Type of disability / difficulty among total population by district

Type of Disability / difficulty	Southern Harbour	Northern Harbour	South Eastern	Western	Northern	Gozo & Comino	Total
Mental health condition	1,563	1,959	951	1,027	898	647	7,045
Deafness or partial hearing loss	1,109	1,817	776	737	760	474	5,673
Blindness or partial sight loss	1,519	2,301	1,039	853	950	447	7,109
Intellectual disability	334	378	248	297	181	107	1,545
Specific learning difficulty	628	1,003	484	639	534	213	3,501
Development disorder	212	271	131	224	144	58	1,040
Physical disability	1,897	2,914	1,203	1,487	1,428	723	9,652
Other disability	19	45	14	19	26	12	135

Source: National Statistics Office, (2014).

3 SIA PHASE 2: ASSESSING THE SOCIAL IMPACT

3.1 Population impacts

Variable 1: Population change

SIA studies the movement of people into or out of a specified geopolitical area, over a period of time, as a result of the project. This is because the magnitude and rate of population change has important implications for community infrastructure requirements and may be a major determinant of other financial and social impacts in the region. As far as the size of population change, the density of population in Marsascala, and the rate of influx or outflow of residents, this SIA study finds that there will be relatively limited population change, and therefore limited social impact, as the result of the establishment of a campus operated by the American University of Malta. The inflow of some 4,000 foreign students - across two campuses - plus a minimal number of foreign tutors can be easily absorbed in university residences and rental premises in Marsascala and adjoining localities. This is especially the case when you consider that students will be attending the campus during the winter, spring and autumn seasons, which are shoulder periods for the tourist and local summer resident periods. This SIA also expects the impact on the medical infrastructure at the Cospicua and Paola Health Polyclinic will also be negligible since foreign students tend to have private health insurances.

Variable 2: Influx or outflow of temporary workers

SIA projects research the temporary movement into or out of workers in a specific geographical area, over a specific period of time, as a result of the planned project. This is because some of the social impacts of a project can be traced to the number and composition of the construction and associated workers who are introduced in the area. Some of the impacts of the workers are temporary (such as housing and health needs), whilst others will be more permanent (such as unused infrastructure capacity). Considering that Malta is a micro-state, and hence, workers will not opt for residence in the Marsascala area, there will be no impact as regards temporary movement into or out of workers in this locality.

Variable 3: Presence of seasonal (leisure) residents

SIA projects research whether there will be either a permanent/seasonal increase/decrease in the population of the impact area resulting from the project development as this may lead to the rapid development of motels, gas stations, and seasonal housing. Such development may be a source of negative impacts of local zoning are inadequate, as well as having a negative effect on the community's infrastructure such as employment patterns, business practices, and disruption of basic services. Since the intended project of establishing a campus operated by the American University of Malta will also include a University dormitory for students, no impact is expected from the project development due to a rapid development of motels and seasonal housing. Considering that Malta is a micro-state, it follows that family relatives visiting students can easily opt for accommodation in other areas of Malta.

Variable 4: Relocation of individuals and families

The number of people who are relocated, voluntary or involuntarily, as a result of intended major projects is also a significant concern of SIAs. The establishment of a campus operated by the American University of Malta is not anticipated to result in any relocation of families residing in Marsascala, and hence, no social impacts are expected on this front in the locality. Considering that the government stated that the campus will be developed on land that the University of Malta had identified as being 'abandoned agricultural land' (Maltatoday, 2015), this SIA does not anticipate the relocation of full-time farmers' to other sites.

Variable 5: Dissimilarity in age, gender, racial and ethnic composition

Another key aspect of SIAs is the determination of the instruction into the impact area of a sizeable group of persons dissimilar to the resident population in one or more characteristics of age, gender, race or ethnicity. The establishment of a campus operated by the American University of Malta certainly means that a larger number of younger persons will be residing in Marsascala. In this respect, this SIA recommends that the built campus includes sports and leisure arenas which will occupy the student's free time. However, the micro-state status of Malta means that students can easily reach other localities where sports and leisure industries already operate (e.g. Marsa/Msida and St. Julians respectively). This SIA also recommends that since it is anticipated that most students will profess the Islamic religion the campus also includes a Mosque for prayers.

3.2 Community/Institutional arrangements

Variable 6: Formation of attitudes toward the project

This SIA studied the community's views, in terms of their positive or negative feelings, towards the project under focus. Stakeholders in Marsascala were generally in favour to the possibility that a foreign university - the American University of Malta - builds a campus in Marsascala. Both business operators and residents were largely receptive to large-scale international investments that would introduce much needed financial capital in the area - as this would not only increase the available range of job opportunities for residents in the Marsascala and adjoining localities, but would also have a spill-over positive economic effect on business ventures, renting prospects, and leisure and education opportunities. Moreover, some residents voiced their approval towards the fact that the setting up of the foreign university will regenerate a site that is presently abandoned, and instead, result in the construction of a natural park. In their own words,

> Jiena naħseb li l-art bejn Wied il-Għajn u x-Xgħajra hija żdingata u għalkemm ma hemmx bini, ftit huma li jmorru jimxu jew jagħmlu l-picnics għax hemm ħafna ħmieġ u naħseb anki ġrieden …Veru li green area imma, għid il-verità, kemm imorru nies hemm il-Ħadd wara nofsinhar? Jekk jinbena park aħjar, ikollna fejn imorru l-Ħadd.
>
> Fis-sajf ikun hawn ħafna xogħol għar-restaurants, għalkemm, huwa veru wkoll, li fost il-ġimgħa jkun hawn ħafna mwejjed battala. Li rridu aħna huwa li jkollna x-xogħol matul ix-xitwa wkoll. Jekk ikun hawn l-istudenti fix-xitwa jgħin ħafna; meta taħdem fil-weekends biss, tispiċċa tarmi ħafna ikel.

> Jien nara ħafna flats vojta fix-xitwa. Veru li biex issib flat vojt fis-sajf *ci vuole*, imma tajjeb li ssib lil min tikri s-sena kollha. Jien għandi flat għall-kiri u kemm jista' jkun nixtieq inħallieh long let milli nikrih xahar xahar u ġieli anki ġimgħa ġimgħa…L-istudenti jgħinu żgur għax ikun hawn iżjed lil min tikri.
>
> Jien naqbel ħafna li jkun hawn università ġewwa Wied il-Għajn għax minn mindu għalqet il-Jerma kollox ħa daqqa 'l isfel. Mhux għax il-Jerma kienet kollox imma żgur li kienet tgħin ħafna lilna tal-ħwienet. Kont tara ħafna turisti tal-Jerma jimxu filgħaxija …Il-Jerma kienet iġġib iżjed xogħol fil-Milied u l-Għid, issa kważi baħħ dawn il-ġranet.
>
> Aħna minsijin hawnhekk, jekk mhux għal xi power station jew riċiklaġġ. Meta tgħid li ġej mis-South qisek tistħi. Kellna pixxina tal-waterpolo imma marret l-Imsida. L-anqas pitch tal-waterpolo magħluq ma hawn…Huwa żġur li jekk ikun hawn Università barranija jiġi iżjed investiment ta' kwalità.
>
> Wara iż-Żonqor ħmieġ biss hemm. Mur ara x'hemm! Fridges mormija u mbarazz biss, kollu ġrieden. Mhux vera li n-nies igawduh iż-Żonqor fix-xitwa. Anzi, hadd ma jmur 'l hemm. Jekk tiġi din l-Università naħseb li jirranġawh u jkun aħjar għall-familji, tkun tista' tmur passiġġata fin-nadif.
>
> L-Università se żżid ix-xoghol fil-viċin, nimmaġina li dawn jkollhom bżonn ta' nies ta' snajja kif wkoll cleaners u ħafna xogħlijiet oħrajn. Mhux biss għan-nies ta' Wied il-Għajn imma wkoll għan-nies tal-Kottonera li kif jaf kullħadd hemm ħafna qgħad…L-Università se tgħin ukoll lil min jixtieq jistudja, forsi ommijiet li għandhom tfal żgħar u ma jistgħux jaħlu ħafna ħin biex imorru jistudjaw l-Imsida.
>
> Ħadd ma jaf il-futur iżda żgur li l-istudenti tal-Università se jkollhom bżonn ta' iżjed faċilitajiet għal-isports. Mhux hekk hemm l-Imsida; hemm pixxina nazzjonali u anki gym. It-tfal tiegħi jkollhom imorru 'l fuq biex jieħdu sehem f'xi sports. L-anqas grownd tal-futbol ma għandna hawnhekk. Jien nemmen li dawn l-affarijiet huma kollha possibli jekk ikollna Università ġewwa Wied il-Għajn.

The fact that this large-scale international investment did not entail the building and operation of factories related to the manufacturing industry was another positive issue raised during interviews. To cite one informant,

> Ma nafx kif tista' ma taqbilx li jkun hawn Università f'Wied il-Għajn. Università mhix fabbrika jew impjant tar-riċiklaġġ…se ġġib magħha ħafna investiment.

Moreover, many residents voiced their pride that their locality would serve as the site for a foreign university, a project development that will bestow both a positive identity towards Marsascala as well as improve the locality's level of prestige, both locally and internationally. To cite some typical comments,

> Jien naħseb li għandna nkunu kburin li xi ħadd għandu l-interess li jibni università ġewwa l-lokalità tagħna. Żgur li din hija ħaġa ta' preġju u ta' min jaraha b'mod favorevoli. Mela xi jridu n-nies?...Università għandha tagħmel lil Wied il-Għajn aħjar. Li tgħid li Marsascala għandha Università tkun qed tgħolli l-livell tal-post, tpoġġi lil Wied il-Għajn bħala lokalità ewlenija f'Malta…Jien l-ewwel wieħed li niftaħar li Wied il-Għajn se jkollu Università u żgur li hemm ħafna bħali.

Nota bene. It was the *a priori* intention of the authors of this SIA to conduct a non-random quantitative investigation with Marsascala residents (convenience sample) that elicits either a

‘Yes’, ‘No comment’, or ‘No’ response to a statement reading ‘Are in you in favour of the possibility of the establishment of a campus operated by the University of Malta in Marsascala?’ However, due to the extensive politicisation of this issue - especially the affirmation that the American University of Malta project in Marsascala tended to be more of a real estate project than an educational one, - rendered the prospect of receiving politically unbiased replies an impossible feat. This was our experience during our fieldwork in Marsascala where most targeted potential respondents either expressed a wish not to take part in this exercise as they felt that their answers would mean an unwitting support to either the Opposition or the Government, or contributed replies in an impetuous manner.

Variable 7: Interest group activity

SIAs study the formation, or renewed activity, of formal and informal interest organisations stating positions for or against the project or policy change. This is because interest groups and organisations are identifiable forces active in the community that represent subcategories of the population which stand to gain or lose by the proposed project or change in policy. This SIA conducted interviews with three long-standing community activists in Marsascala. Results of the interviews are presented below:

Community Activist 1. Interviewee affirmed that she supported the project because it will generate more business activity for the locality throughout the year rather than solely during the summer season. In her opinion, the project should hopefully offer new and improved job opportunities for the people in the south, provided that young job seekers are encouraged and trained to take up these opportunities. The owners of rental accommodation will also benefit as Marsascala has a considerable number of properties that are vacant and currently generating little or no revenue for their owners. In her opinion, good investment in the property market should not be restricted to the north of the island exclusively but spread out across the country. She also underlined that the diversity of people that the University shall attract is another advantage, since this can create a new stream of new culturally diverse events that can enrich the social capital of the town. However, the interviewee also mentioned some concerns - namely, the current inadequate management of the traffic in the town which needs to improve, as the current congestion is already creating enough pollution for the residents to content with. She argued that for this project to succeed, the infrastructure needs to be upgraded and new road connections created especially through Zabbar and Kalkara. She also felt that efficient transport should be made available to discourage the students from obtaining their own private cars. In addition, Marsascala would need parking spaces at the periphery of the town to avoid further congestion and pollution in the town centre. Interviewee also remarked that the volume of waste that is generated shall increase, and therefore, arrangements have to be made to cater for this requirement. Interviewee also claimed that the University should make a direct contribution to the local community as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility and fund community projects that target the locality. In addition, she feels that the young people of Marsascala should be positively discriminated when awarding bursaries to the Maltese by the University. This would add to the support of the local community to the University and its mission. The required construction works were also perceived as another concern for the residents, and therefore, new traffic connections should precede the development and used effectively to minimise the discomfort of the residents who have already gone through a major private development project on the same side as Zonqor. In this regard, she advocated proper consultations with the community through the local council, and felt that there should be structured dialogue with the residents to ensure that their needs are heard and listened to, and action is taken where necessary. Moreover, she suggested compensation to the residents if there

are any inconveniences suffered during the construction phase. This policy was adopted in the past when people were compensated for the inconveniences caused by the building and operation of the recycling plant. Finally, interviewee advocated that the necessary provisions should be made in the contract so that the licensing of the project ensures an educational purpose for the long run.

Community Activist 2. Interviewee has lived all his life in the south of the Island though not always in Marsascala. He pointed to the fact that successive Governments considered the South as the power house of the island, and therefore, the power stations, the docks and most of the industrial estates and re-cycling plants have all been constructed in the South. On the other hand, the more prestigious public project such as the Mater Dei Hospital and the University of Malta are located in the centre or north of the island. The special concessions to hoteliers were also given in areas that were already enjoying a more than average standard of living than the rest of the country. The residents of these locations witnessed the value of their properties rise together with the family fortunes and businesses. He therefore deducts that there is a degree of resentment in the collective consciousness of the people in the South, perceiving themselves to be treated as second class citizens and considered only for the utilitarian function that the region offered the rest of the country. Moreover, the only hotel in the South - namely the Jerma Palace - which was a symbol of prestige, was allowed to close down and the abundant building has been an eye sore for the Marsascala community ever since. Marsascala grew without proper urban planning and today it suffers the consequences of bad traffic management, weak infrastructure and lack of parking facilities, to mention but a few. The town suffered from the ill effects of the rubbish dump at Sant Antnin and the fish farms just off the bay of Marsascala. Interviewee also stated that Zonqor in particular was fast becoming a dumping area for domestic bulk refuse. Against this background, interviewee cannot but feel good about the prospect of having the America University of Malta located at Zonqor. He believed that this prestigious project will help to restore some of the lost pride of the people in the South and redress somewhat the balance of affluence between the North and the South. Interviewee stated that this project shall change the image of the South of the Island, and increase the economic standing of the town but also that of the surrounding villages and cities. He envisioned that more business will be attracted to the area, and not only catering establishments, but also businesses that cater for those who have a higher spending power and in the process create more jobs in the region. The increased affluence will improve social behaviours and the community will develop in terms of its social capital. Interviewee felt confident that most of the spending of the students will be done in the town as businesses will move to the area to cater for their needs. At the same time, he had concerns which he thinks can be mitigated through proper planning. He explained that the infrastructure needs to be upgraded namely, road, drainage system, public transport and waste collection. He was adamant that the best way to manage the project is through open and honest consultation and saying things as they truly are, and stated that although the people are supportive of the project, open and frank consultations will increase the creditability of the project managers, whilst increased levels of trust will speed things up. The road connections between Marsascala, Cottonera, Smart City and Zejtun all need to improve so that transport is provided between these areas. Interviewee argued that there is a need for regional transport which will serve the people well while cutting down on their need to use the private transport. Therefore, Government needs to set up a consultation and information centre in order for the residents and those interested in the project to approach the officers and air their concerns, while public meetings would serve well to pass information and update the community with developments. Interviewee hoped that Government will be able to manage both the project effectively, as well as, the new paradigm that the town will shift to, so that Marsascala will maximise the benefits and minimise any

negative impact. He was concerned about the unregulated mushrooming of businesses that may turn Marsascala into the new Paceville in the South and Government should take measures early on in the project to ensure the protection of the town's environment and its community. He suggested using the licensing system for business outlets to regulate and ensure a healthy balance between business interests and the general well-being of the residents. Finally, interviewee asserted that the property of the University should be exclusively used for educational purpose and this be inserted in the contract. Here, he cited the example of the Jerma Hotel that, in spite of the fact that it closed down, the proprietors were unable to use it for other purposes as the original contract prohibited them from such action.

Community Activist 3. Interviewee asserted that the University project in Marsascala will have a number of benefits for the locality namely the opportunity for employment and increased commence for local businesses. He recalled the times when Jerma Hotel was in operation which offered many job opportunities for the locals and attracted people to visit the area, and thus, having a ripple effect on other businesses. In his opinion, those who offer rental accommodation are also welcoming this development as with a higher demand for accommodation will result in better business opportunities. However, interviewee also believed that this is also a source of concerns. He thinks that some people on low income may find the new rental costs unaffordable, and advocates that Government may mitigate this issue by embarking on a project of social housing in the area. He was also concerned about the parking problem which, as things stand at the moment, is already a problem especially in summer when the population exceeds 20,000. This could be mitigated by a multi-storage parking in the outskirts of the town where non-residents can park their cars outside the Marsascala and have a shuttle service to the centre of town. He pointed out that one also needs to consider the real possibility that there shall soon be some 'Jerma' like development on the site of the old Jerma Hotel. This shall add to the number of people in the area and with the advent of the University, the families of the students might be among the most frequent patrons of the new resort. This is good for business although certainly adding to the traffic congestion. Interviewee preferred to take a holistic view of the situation and argued that, given the fact that Marsascala is experiencing the pressures of population growth, Government together with the local council should embark on a master plan for the sustained development of the area. He suggested that apart from the parking and social housing issues, the local infrastructure needs upgrading to address the emerging needs of the community, amongst which are the needs for a health centre, police patrols, petrol station and more green areas in and around the town. Interviewee advocated that this is to be done in a sustainable way, and therefore, the University project should be integrated in a comprehensive plan that is sensitive to the long term sustainability of the locality including the environment and services that enhance the quality of life of residents.

Front Harsien Outside Development Zones. This SIA could not reach the *Front Harsien Outside Development Zones* for its comments since it was earlier communicated to authors that the *Front* is only willing to discuss the option to have a campus operated by American University of Malta only after it is guaranteed that any development at Zonqor and any other Outside Development Zones site is dropped. For the *Front*, this

> …also includes the construction of roads on ODZ areas due to traffic impact and air quality impact. The Front favour of using already developed sites in Cottonera. But the Front opposes utilizing ODZ land in this densely populated part of the island. Furthermore, it is important that possible sites are available for public consultation given that there may be commonalities and differences in terms of social and environmental impacts of different sites. Comprehensive impact assessment studies should be carried

> out (EIA, TIA, SIA etc..). Front Harsien ODZ insists that when the possible sites are available for public consultation, this should involve a comprehensive consultation process with local councils, residents, NGOs, experts and other stakeholders.
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> (email sent to authors, 31 July 2015)

In the same communication, the *Front* underlined that the above should not involve a rushed procedure, but should involve meetings for feedback as well as adequately timed processes for written feedback. Since the authors of the SIA could not guarantee that any development at Zonqor and any other Outside Development Zones site is dropped, no communication took.

Variable 8: Alteration in the size and structure of Local Government

A change in number and type of positions necessary to operate local government activities in the impact area is a key interest of SIA studies. This is because, following the development of large and extensive projects, local governments tend to begin to operate more formally and bureaucratically as the volume and complexity of its responsibilities increase. The Marsascala Local Council is in favour of the setting up of a campus operated by the American University of Malta in Marsascala, with a five against four vote outcome. During the voting session,

> PL Councillor Daniel Spiteri mentioned that Marsaskala has been looking for sports facilities for quite a while and that this University will provide residents with such facilities. He stressed that the development will give existing sports clubs the needed facilities as well, adding that the project would also help them through resources, research and branding. He mentioned that Melita football ground as well as Luxol were built on ODZ land. He also added that youths of the area will be exposed to university level students, who would thus give a good example. PL Councillor Lawrence Ciantar agreed and said that youths cannot keep playing in a corner and thus need proper facilities. He stressed that the area has seen a number of projects, such as the recycling plant as well as the drainage plant dumped on it regardless of protests, yet governments of the past ignored them. He stressed that the project would help the south regenerate and mentioned that Prime Minister Muscat stated that the location of the project is not final. He voted in favour….Charlot Mifsud, the PL Councillor, stressed that Marsascala is associated with the recycling plant, explaining that this project would help the locality be identified with education. He stressed that people began to leave the locality after the recycling project took place. This project will make it possible for youths to have an area for recreational activities, he explained. He voted in favour. PN Councillor Sandro gatt disagrees with the project, emphasising that the land is Outside the Development Zone. He stressed that businesses are not the only sector of society that should be considered. He voted against the project. PN Councillor Charlot Cassar also voted against, explaining that the area is of ecological importance as well as scientific and agricultural importance. "The people there are afraid and have no idea what will happen, and it is important to keep the livelihood of the farmers in mind". He stressed that those saying the project will be good for the community are working off assumptions. "All we know is that it will be built on ODZ land and will be stolen from us by a foreigner". He stressed that the nature park will be half the size of what it is supposed to be should the project go through. As for sports, he said that the project will end the chance for the locality to have sports facilities and local teams will be reliant on the university. PL Deputy Mayor Desiree Attard voted against the project, stressing that she has met with many people and most do not want it built on ODZ land. She asked councillors "have you spoken to people?" She mentioned that the council should fight for the family park and see sports facilities built there. She stressed that in the past the council has fought against damaging development, and mentioned the various plants in the area as example, asking why they wouldn't fight now. "The Nature Park has been in the local plan since

> 2006". She spoke of the farmers, mentioning that the people benefit from their fruit and vegetables. She voted against the project. Mayor Mario Calleja mentioned that he hadn't spoken to many people on the issue however those he did, he explained the project to them and put their mind at ease. He stressed that at no time will views be obstructed due to the project. He reiterated that the Prime Minister said that farmers on the Nature Park land will not have their livelihoods taken away. "Thank God for the 115 million euro project," he said, adding that the Council will need to receive funds to sort out the public transport in the area as well as drainage works etc. He added that people will have a chance to object to the project if they like.
>
> Malta Independent, 2015

The councillors voting against the project voiced their concern that the campus was being constructed on a site in the Outside Development Zone. The following two sections report on the elite interviews done with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Marsascala who voted in favour and against the project respectively

Mario Calleja, Mayor, Marsascala Local Council. Mayor asserted that he was always supportive of initiatives that change Marsascala into a modern town that offers its residence a better quality of life. In his opinion, this vision is shared by most of the residents whatever their political allegiances. The onset of a major project such as the American University of Malta would be a catalyst for an overhaul of the local infrastructure. Nevertheless, the drainage system would need to be upgrading as it was originally designed to cater for not more than 2,000 persons, and local transport arrangements would need to be made as the town will spread even wider since people would need local transport service to go from one side of the town to the other. Moreover, he asserted that the promenade on the Zonqor side of the bay is best to be extended and joined to Smart City - which will turn Marsascala's promenade into the longest and nicest one on the island. This development shall also cater for the needs of people with disabilities who shall have access to a long stretch of promenade leading to various spots of interest. The Mayor was also optimistic about the verbal commitment that the investor made in favour of the local community, particularly in upgrading the local public pool and the construction of a full size football pitch which the town still lacks. Bearing this in mind, Mayor felt confident that the promises will find their way in the final contract. In the process, the derelict stretch of land between Zonqor and Smart City should be landscaped and any 'eye sore' removed. He cited additional benefits that the project shall derive - namely, the increase in business for the local catering establishments and the rental accommodation. Furthermore, this development will add pressure on MEPA to take the necessary decisions with regards to the project on the ex-Jerma Hotel site. The Mayor affirmed that Marsascala lost a lot of status when the Jerma Hotel closed down, and lamented that as a result Marsascala has been branded by its rubbish dump at Sant Antnin. The University in Marsascala has the potential to change the brand of the village to a University Town which is a significantly better image argued the Mayor. Nevertheless, whilst he acknowledged that the project shall trespass over an ODZ classified land, he nevertheless argued that this can be effectively mitigated with careful and sensitive planning, as well as, taking into considerations the conditions that he personally is advocating for this development - namely,

(i) that there shall be no development along the coast in order to remain accessible to the public at all times;

(ii) that the development shall not obstruct the open views of the residents of Zonqor;

(iii) that no one loses his or her livelihood in case that such individuals are living of the land;

(iv) and that the University shall not house catering establishments that compete with the local outlets, as well as, no entertainment spots are allowed on campus that can disturb the peace of the residents.

The Mayor's vision for Marsascala is one of an upmarket town and not a repeat of the development that occurred in areas like Paceville. He asserted that if these conditions are adhered to, coupled with pleasant landscaping, he underlined that the green light should be given, one which will be well within the legal parameters governing permits for developments over ODZ land. He felt that these conditions should be also written down in the contract to ensure that everyone would have his and her mind at rest that all community concerns shall be respected and addressed. In fact, he emphasised the importance that the Local Council is involved at the planning and implementations stages of the project and information supplied in time for the Council to keep the residents updated. He suggested that the project managers should open an information office on site that shall deal with all the queries presented by the residents. Finally the Mayor advocated guarantees in the final contract that would ensure that the project shall remain true to its original educational enterprise and that any changes will only be done after consultation with the Local Council.

Desiree Attard, Deputy Mayor, Marsascala Local Council. The Deputy Mayor was concerned with the lack of information provided so far which leaves a lot for the imagination such as whether the University shall house the teaching facilities only or whether it shall provide the sleeping quarters as well. In her opinion, having day students, or students residing on campus, makes a difference in terms of the pressures and stresses on the local infrastructure. She listed a number of issues which concern her and on which she based her objections to the construction of the American University of Malta at Zonqor. She explained how Marsascala was allowed to sprawl across a wide area without proper urban planning and that this shortcoming is one of the underlying reasons for the problems facing the locality today. At this point, Deputy Mayor pointed out that despite the serious traffic management problems in Marsascala no concrete action was taken by the relevant authorities. The magnitude of the new project led her to assume that new roads shall be constructed, and possibly, on a scale larger than previously suggested by the Council, and that this would possibly require the expropriation of agricultural land. The Deputy Mayor perceived Zonqor as practically the only green area remaining in the locality that is accessible and which can be enjoyed by the public. She would not like to see this taken away from the residents, and instead, reserved solely for the enjoyment of the patrons of the University. She explained how Marsascala grew exponentially and that the number of residents in winter stand at 18,000, and that the prospect of an additional 4,000 students shall add considerable stress on all the infrastructure - such as the management of traffic. She pointed out that more apartments will have to be built to accommodate the new influx of people and speculated that in spite of the increased supply, the cost of rental accommodation will nevertheless, rise. Going back to the traffic problem, Deputy Mayor asserted that in the absence of an efficient public transport system, the University might need to provide its own transport arrangements to and from Marsascala. Alternatively, the students will have to acquire their own private transport, and hence, increase traffic in the locality. However, her major issue of concern was the possibility that the tranquil life of residents in Marsascala will be replaced by noisy entertainment outlets, and possibly, unruly social behaviour by the visitors. She believed that this is a real possibility and that only early and decisive interventions from Government can protect the community. In the eventuality that the project takes off, the Deputy Mayor urges Government to regulate the areas where the catering and entertainment outlets are allowed to set up business, as well as set appropriate opening hours that respect the rights of the residents

for peace and tranquillity. She thinks that the licensing system should give Government enough leeway to ensure that the rights of the residents are respected. Deputy Mayor asserted that she is in favour of improving the infrastructure of the locality but only in a planned and holistic manner that takes all the variables into consideration, including new projects, so as to be able to improve the well-being of the residents and the users of services in the locality. She affirmed that she would prefer if the American University of Malta would not be built in Marsascala, but if it was absolutely necessary to have it in the town, then she suggested the alternative site of the disused quarry at Taz-Ziju in Marsascala. However, she also suggested the land adjacent to the Smart City complex as a plausible alternative. She argued that the disused quarry is large enough to accommodate the project and would certainly contribute positively to embellish the area and add value to the town. On the other hand, if the project had to go ahead at Zonqor, then she hoped that the designs would be very sensitive to the environment and in line with the expectations of the residents of Marsascala. Other mitigating factors could include new incentives for low income people and the young, so as to be able to compete in the market for rental accommodation. She floated the idea that Government may buy up land in the locality, which is already earmarked for development, and use it for social housing projects. Tax concessions for home seekers may also be another possible measure that assists people find accommodation in Marsascala. If and when such a project takes off, Deputy Mayor advocated better road infrastructure so as to offer better access to the site, and therefore, minimise the pollution and other inconveniences. However she reminds of other aspects of the infrastructure that needs upgrading - namely, the drainage system, garbage collection, and parking facilities. She supported the idea of a national wide transport system by sea that connects Marsascala with other localities such as Marsaxlokk, the Grand Harbour and Marsamxetto Harbour. The Deputy Mayor suggested that the University should offer underground parking for the students and possibly for the public as well. In addition, she stated that the University would be expected to engage in supporting local projects such as the water sports activities by funding the upgrading of the public pool at Zonqor. In addition, she underlined that the University may also offer courses to the local residents that address the needs of the community, while offering bursaries to young people from the town. Research may also prove beneficial for the Marsascala community, and hopefully the University should commit to apply innovative projects in the locality which emanate from the research work conducted by its personnel. The Deputy Mayor also raised the fact that if the students would be mainly Muslims, Government should take note and ensure that resources are allocated to educate and mediate this issue at an early stage of the project. She also affirmed her expectation that consultation with the public should be a central feature of this project. While she would have preferred that consultation was initiated before official pronouncements were made, she welcomes genuine consultation at all the stages of the project. Deputy Mayor claimed that the residents have the right to information and that their concerns are listened to and addressed. In conclusion, she supported the idea that the contract and licensing of the project should be one that ensures a strict adherence to the *raison d'etre* of an international University.

Variable 9: Presence of planning and zoning activity

SIAs study the extent that national government can cope with increases in the development, planning, zoning and/or land use regulation. In this respect, this SIA strongly recommends that procedures and regulations for planning and zoning requirements are fully adhered to during the building of the American University of Malta's campus in Marsascala.

Variable 10: Industrial development

The number and variety of private sector industries - ranging from manufacturers to retailers to services - within the project impact area has potential for major social impact. This is because project development could lead to industrial diversification in the local economy, both directly through its presence as an employer and consumer of equipment, supplies and services produced by its employees. This SIA found both residents and business operators to be overwhelmingly positive towards the possible establishment of campus managed by the American University of Malta in Marsascala as this was perceived to have the potential to bring much needed financial capital to the locality both to themselves personally but also to present and prospective employees.

Variable 11: Enhanced economic activities

SIAs research the degree to which employment opportunities of the proposed area or development match the job skills of the unemployed in the impact area. This is because project justification often hinges on the expectation that the development event will contribute to the employment needs of the area. This SIA found that both residents and business operators held that the establishment of campus managed by the American University of Malta to have a strong potential towards bringing about a new job opportunities that would result in lowering unemployment rates in Marsascala and adjoining localities. Moreover, both residents and business operators stressed how the employment opportunities that would arise following the building of the American University of Malta's campus will need to directly match the job skills of the unemployed persons and other willing to change to occupation with better conditions. To report the findings of an extensive interview with a leading business operator in Marsascala,

Business entrepreneur. Interviewee believed that locating the American University of Malta in Marsascala is very good news for local businesses. He argued that business in winter slows down but that the new project will provide business throughout year. He affirmed that Marsascala had lost its role as a tourist town and that nowadays tourist buses rarely visit Marsascala. Hence, local businesses tend to cater for local patrons, and according to interviewee, this needs to change. He underlined that Marsascala should emulate the experience of Vittoriosa and open up for tourists and make the town accessible to foreigners. When the Jerma Palace Hotel was operating, local business benefitted as some of the hotel patrons used the local pubs and restaurants however when it closed down, the small businesses suffered. The American University of Malta might be the catalyst project that might reverse this situation and place Marsascala back on the tourism map. Interviewee was irritated at those who are opposing the project and claimed that when the town was suffering from environmental problems such as the rubbish damp at Sant Antnin and the fish farms off the bay of the town, few non-governmental organisations seemed to bother and take notice. Now that a prestigious project was earmarked for the area, non-governmental organisations are raising all sorts of concerns. In this regard, he was disappointed to learn that Government is considering allocating only a part of the University at Zonqor. Interviewee argued that Government should stick to the original idea and locate all the operation at Zonqor. Interviewee acknowledged that reconciling the various interests will always be difficult but Government has ways of seeing to this and thinks that solutions can be found. He anticipated that the market for rental accommodation shall improve and in this regard suggested that Government should limit the number of beds that the University can offer on campus so that its patrons shall use more of the rental accommodation offered in Marsascala and in the neighbouring areas. Interviewee

perceived the University as a resource to upgrade the sports facilities in the area and possibly make Marsascala the main centre for water sports for the Maltese and tourists alike. Given the fact that the University shall offer science courses related to sport, he thought that this development can be taken further and students be encouraged to applying their learning by using the relevant facilities in Marsascala. In addition, he perceived an immense potential in the long and nice promenade of Marsascala, and suggested that a padded track can easily be fitted which will attract athletes for training. These are suggestions commensurate with the concept of a University town. He acknowledged the parking problems in the locality and agrees that it needs to be addressed adequately. He suggested a park and ride facility where an arrangement can be made and the local business shall fund the service during specific hours such as in the weekends. This could also be an attraction in its own right. Interviewee also raised the issue of culture and wonders how the diversity of cultures that the new project will bring shall be managed and used positively. Finally, interviewee advocated that if and when this project kicks off, Government needs to make sure that the construction works shall not inconvenient the residents or the patrons of the businesses. He argued that when the new Fgura - Marsascala by-pass was constructed, arrangements had been made to manage the traffic properly and for the works to finish on schedule. In this regard, he expected that the relevant authorities need to have all plans in hand and any preparatory access routes to and from the site are in place before the construction works start.

Variable 12: Change in employment equity for minority groups

The degree of which employment opportunities of the proposed project match the job skills of minorities - such as low-income, younger persons, ethnic groups, and women - is a key interest in SIAs. This is important because jobs resulting from project development need to be distributed equitably. Since Malta is a micro-state, job opportunities can be accessed equally by diverse sectors of the population. This SIA recommends that government ensures that the job recruitment of potential employees to work at the campus in Marsascala managed by the American University of Malta is in line and follows established industrial relations practices and procedures.

Variable 13: Changing occupational opportunities

SIAs study the degree to which the proposed project or development alters the occupational profile of the impacted area, since such changes may lead to changes in family-income and lifestyle alterations. This SIA did not encounter any information and feedback to suggest that the building of the American University of Malta's campus will alter the occupational profile of the impacted area, or that this development may lead to changes in family-income and lifestyle alterations. However, there might be a few who work the land which may be expropriated.

3.3 Possible conflicts

Variable 14: Presence of an outside agency

SIAs focus on the possibility of a permanent residence in the project area of a government agency or private company that has not previously been in the community and whose management and control is external to the area, since this may be a source of dissatisfaction among local stakeholders, especially if this agency is not responsive to local needs and priorities. The presence of new employer may also be a source of frustration as it may alter

existing social and power structures within community. Herein, this SIA recommends strongly that the government ensures that any local and foreign companies connected in some way to the possible establishment of the Marsascala campus managed by the American University of Malta respect the needs and priorities of the locality's residents and stakeholders.

Variable 15: Introduction of new social classes

SIA projects research the possibility of appearance of a group of people that either expand an existing social class or establish a new social class. This is because the appearance in the community of a group of people who, because of their education, income and/or occupation, have a different lifestyle than those of the existing residents may change the political and power relationships within the community. Since Malta is a micro-state, one does not expect workers employed at the American University of Malta's campus to set up residence in Marsascala, and hence, these communities will not experience any impact as far as introduction of new classes are concerned. On the contrary, it is possible that this development will enable residents in Marsascala to find it easier to enrol in a tertiary education programme due to the influence of the close proximity of a University campus to their homes.

Variable 16: Change in the commercial/industrial focus of the community

A possible change in the traditional commercial/industrial or private sector focus of the community is another key focus of SIA projects. If the area is known as a retirement, farming, or other type of community, the concern is whether the introduction of the project will change this traditional character. This SIA found a number of residents to be apprehensive that as a result of the setting up of a campus operated by the American University of Malta, may lead to the opening up of a range of new bars and clubs in Marsascala to cater for the leisure interests of younger adults. In this respect, this SIA recommends that MEPA ensures that applications for leisure establishments follow existing local development plans.

Variable 17: Presence of weekend residents

This SIA variable focuses on the possibility of an influx of temporary weekend residents or who have no permanent home in the community as the latter may exploit or use the new project, but then, contribute very little (if any) in return to the community. The establishment of foreign university's campus in Marsascala will not result in the residence of weekend residents in the locality or adjoining neighbourhoods. The possibility of additional residents during the summer months has also been explored. If one takes note of the trends at the University of Malta's Msida campus, this SIA expects foreign students to visit their countries of origin during summer, and hence, very limited impact, if any, is anticipated on the resident population during summer months.

3.4 Individual and family level impacts

Variable 18: Disruption in daily living

SIA projects research the possible changes in the routine living and work activities of residents in the impact area caused by alteration to the visual environment, noise and odour levels, transportation routes or the amount of vehicular traffic resulting from the project or development. A change in the community image may also influence whether outsiders will visit, live, or establish businesses in the area. Fieldwork uncovered key concerns on behalf of

residents who raised some concerns about possible negative implications if the American University of Malta established a campus in Marsascala. These included a

- probable increase in traffic;
- possible decrease in parking facilities;
- chance that the increase in the number of students would lead to the establishment of number of bars and clubs that would transform Marsascala into a, in informants' own words, "Paceville of the South";
- plausible rise in housing renting prices that would effect negatively prospective tenants in low-income brackets and the young;
- risk that the present drainage system will not keep up with the projected increase of students in the locality;
- the possibility of loss of income to some individuals who work the land, - a concern that any new roads constructed for the project shall require the expropriation of agricultural land which many expressed a wish to keep to a bare minimum; and
- unease that the current road infrastructure is inadequate to support heavy vehicles that shall need to access the site during construction which may cause inconvenience to residents.

However, stakeholders also affirmed that with adequate, sustainable and empowering government planning and policies, all the above jeopardies can be successfully mitigated.

Variable 19: Dissimilarity in religious practices

The introduction into the impact area of a new group with religious values, beliefs and practices different from those of the resident population is also a major concern of SIA projects as this may result in social conflict. This SIA anticipates that the establishment of a foreign university campus in Marsascala will not result in any extensive level of dissimilarities in religious practices in the localities in question. Students who may profess the Islamic religion may attend religious services at the Muslim Mosque at Corradino which is 20 minutes away by car from Marsascala. However, it is noteworthy that two Marsascala residents did voice concern if most of the students at the University are Muslim as this may, in their opinion, result in some tension between the dominant western culture in Marsascala and students' Muslim culture.

Variable 20: Alteration in family structure

SIA projects focus on the increase or decrease in one or more of the family status categories (e.g., married, never married, female head of household, with/without children) since, typically, the construction phase of a project will bring large numbers of young and single males into the community. This SIA anticipates that the establishment of a foreign university campus in Marsascala will not result in any alteration in family structure in the localities in question.

Variable 21: Disruption in social networks

SIA projects study the possibility of the termination or disruption of normal community social interaction (e.g., friendship and kin relations) by project development such as through the construction of physical barriers to existing vehicular or pedestrian routes. SIA uncovered no data to suggest that Marsascala will experience any termination or disruption of normal community social interaction following the establishment of a foreign university campus.

Variable 22: Perceptions of public health and safety

SIA projects research the perceptions, attitudes or beliefs on the part of residents in the impact area that their physical health and safety, to include their mental well-being, will be jeopardized by the proposed project or activity. Indeed, projects such as the American University of Malta may lead to perceived risk and stress among local residents. While the public's assessment of risks is subjective in nature, their fears should not be dismissed as irrational or unimportant. If there is a widespread belief that the project will endanger their (and future generations') health, community satisfaction will be diminished, and acceptance of the project and workers will be hindered. This SIA found that certain residents did perceive the possibility of some adverse effects on their physical health and safety, as well as mental wellbeing, as the result of the establishment of foreign university campus in their locality. Such undesirable impact was perceived to possibly result from pollution during construction works from building materials and increased traffic, as well as from noise pollution if more bars and clubs are allowed to open in Marsacala and are frequented by sizeable crowds of students and visitors.

Variable 23: Change in leisure opportunities

An increase or decrease in leisure/recreational opportunities due to changes in the management of resources within the impacted area is a vital concern in SIA studies. This is because the number and type of leisure opportunities available in a community has an important influence on residents' satisfaction within their community. Recreational developments may add to, or change the nature of, available leisure opportunities. Not only residents will be affected, but outsiders' perceptions of the community may change and thereby influence the number of people and business that relocate in the future. In this respect, this SIA found that some Marsascala residents were against the opening of more bars and clubs that would have a negative impact on the relative tranquillity of the locality.

3.5 Community infrastructure needs

Variable 24: Change in the community infrastructure

SIA projects research the increase decrease in the demands for, and supply of basic infrastructure services and facilities within the impacted area. This is because project developments can alter the demands placed on both private and public sector facilities and services ranging from housing to social work services to public cleaning. This variable is included in SIA reports because the cost and quality of public services have an important influence on residents' wellbeing and satisfaction with their community. In this respect, this SIA found that some Marsascala residents voiced concern as regards a possible negative impact on the already stretched parking facilities, traffic congestion, and drainage system as the result of additional number of residents in their locality.

Variable 25: Land acquisition and disposal

SIAs focus on the number of acres of land that will shift from present use classification or ownership as a result of the project or policy change. Land acquisition or disposal resulting from the project represents more than a financial loss or gain to the community since, if the project is a controversial one, land acquisition may be resented by stakeholders. Although stakeholders and interviewees acknowledged that building in outside development zones is to be avoided as much as possible, at the same time they also voiced their concern how much the

locality needs an international investment project which would result in a range of social and economic benefits. Many argued that if there were some negative environmental repercussions, they believed firmly that positive implications outweigh adverse ones:

> Jien skantajt li kien hemm protesta kontra l-Università. Jien nifhem li wieħed irid iqis ħafna qabel ma jibni fuq ghelieqi ODZ, pero li ma tagħmel xejn u tħalli kollox kif inhu huwa ħażin ukoll. Il-verità hi li Wied il-Għajn għandu bżonn investiment kif kellhom ħafna lokalitajiet oħra.
>
> Il-Gvern mhux qed jgħid li se jeqred liż-Żonqor kollu imma li se jieħu parti minnu. Fid-dinja kollox *give and take*. Titlef biċċa u tirbaħ biċċa. Jien naħseb li b'din l-Università il-pajjiż kollu se jgawdi, u għalhekk hemm bżonn li naraw 'il boghod u nqisu il-benefiċċji li se jħalli dan l-investiment barrani.
>
> Li nibnu fl-ghelieqi ghal xejn ma naqbilx iżda dan investiment li se jħalli ħafna frott. Wieħed irid ikun onest miegħu nnifsu u jgħarbel kollox qabel ma jipprotesta. L-intenzjoni hija tajba…Hekk jew b'hekk, dan huwa proġett ta' natura edukattiva li se jgħolli l-ghajxien ta' ħafna familji li l-membri tagħha huma kemm ħaddiema kif ukoll professjonisti.

<u>Variable 26: Effects on known cultural, historical, and archaeological resources</u>

The proposed destruction, diminution or alteration of one or more of known cultural, sacred, historical or archaeological resources within the impact area is of crucial interest to SIA. The destruction of such areas could mean not only the loss of valuable historical data but may also lead to an increase in public opposition to the project and may delay citizen approval. This SIA anticipates that the establishment of a foreign university campus will not have any negative social impact on cultural, historical, religious and archeologically resources.

3.6 Mitigation issues

Residents and stakeholders were asked for their ideas on what actions should the government take to safeguard their interests and optimise outcomes if the American University of Malta opens a campus in Marsascala. Four key issues emerged - namely,

Traffic. Stakeholders expect the government to make suitable transport arrangements so that traffic flow is not disrupted during the building of the campus and its operation afterwards.

Parking spaces. Stakeholders expect the government to make suitable parking arrangements so that the project does not result in a decline of parking spaces.

Drainage system. Stakeholders called on the government to improve the drainage system so as to ensure that it can cope with the expected surge of students living in Marsascala.

Leisure industry. Stakeholders called on the Government, and MEPA in particular, to ensure that applications for new leisure establishments follow local development plans.

Active citizenship. Government was called on to establish an open communication line with stakeholders so that each decision is discussed at length prior to any taken conclusion. In addition the local community is kept engaged throughout all the phases of the project.

Multicultural education campaign. This SIA recommends that Government commissions an education campaign on the issue of multiculturalism as the result of different religious practices that may result as the consequence focuses on intolerance.

Coastal accessibility. Government was called on to ensure that development along the coast to remain accessible to the public at all times.

Residences' vistas. Government was called on to ensure that the development shall not obstruct the open views of the residents of Zonqor.

Services Offered. Government was called on to ensure that a limit is set for the provision of accommodation and catering services on campus so as to ensure that the University does not engage in unfair competition.

Corporate Social Responsibility. Government was called on to ensure that the University upholds its CSR commitments and in particular actively support the upgrading of the public pool and the building of a full size football pitch. In addition the University shall offer bursaries to young people from Marsascala.

4 CONCLUSION

The goal of this SIA was to assess the social impacts if the American University of Malta establishes a campus in Marsascala. We found our quest to meet the aim and objectives of this SIA to be more difficult than initially envisioned. The reason was that this project has been deeply politicised in recent months with the Government on one side supporting the project and the Opposition Party and a coalition of non-governmental organisations strongly opposing this undertaking. Undoubtedly, the fact that some 3,000 persons gathered in Valletta on 20 June to take part in protest organised by the Front Harsien ODZ and that the Nationalist Party also organised an activity at Zonqor to protest against plans to develop an American University of Malta on this site functioned to render residents in Marsascala somewhat uneasy to take part in research interviews and to claim their stand even if they were promised complete and unreserved anonymity.

Nevertheless, this SIA found stakeholders in Marsascala were generally in favour to the possibility that a foreign university - the American University of Malta - establishes a campus in Zonqor, although references to a range of concerns if the project is given the green light were also made. *On one hand*, stakeholders perceived the possibility of this development as a prestigious undertaking, one which has the potential to change the way that South of Malta, and Marsascala in particular, is perceived by the Maltese population. Positive views were also premised on the assessment that this project may inject much-needed financial capital in business operations in Marsascala, improve the rental market, and even raise the worth of edifices in Marsascala and adjoining localities. This was an especially strong sentiment for businesses in the catering and entertainment industries which lament that customers are in short supply in months other than the summer season, and who wish for customers with higher spending power. Many informants underlined that the setting up of a campus operated by the American University of Malta will result in a diversity of cultures which in turn shall create a new paradigm leading to new types of businesses, events and activities. Other possible impacts mentioned by stakeholders included the possibility that the new University can sponsor and encourage research on issues of interest to Marsascala whose focus may range from sports development to new technology to alternative energy - to mention some. Indeed, many advocated the government to insist that the new University invests both energy and money in meeting its Corporate Social Responsibility such as bursaries to students in Marsascala and adjoining localities. In short for many informants, the American University of Malta may be the catalyst that will bring the renaissance that is much needed in the South. *On the other hand*, fieldwork uncovered key concerns on behalf of residents about possible negative implications if the American University of Malta opens a campus in Marsascala. Issues that stood out included (i) probable increase in traffic; (ii) possible decrease in parking facilities; (iii) chance that the increase in the number of students would lead to the establishment of number of bars and clubs that would transform Marsascala into a, in informants' own words, "Paceville of the South"; (iv) plausible rise in housing renting prices that would effect negatively prospective tenants in low-income brackets; (v) a risk that the present drainage system will not keep up with the projected increase of students in the locality, (vi) a concern that any new roads constructed for the project shall require the expropriation of agricultural land which many expressed a wish to keep to a bare minimum; and (vii) and unease that the current road infrastructure is inadequate to support the heavy vehicles that shall need to access the site during construction which shall cause inconvenience to the residents.

Table 4.1 summarises the general social impacts (if any) that the establishment of campus operated by the American University of Malta will have on the community under focus.

Table 4.1: Social impacts on the prospect that American University of Malta opens a campus in Marsascala.

Social Impact	Positive	Negative	None	Uncertain
Population impacts				
Population change			■	
Influx or outflux of temporary workers			■	
Presence of seasonal (leisure) residences			■	
Relocation of individuals and families			■	
Dissimilarity in age/gender/ethnic composition			■	
Community/institutional arrangements				
Formation of attitudes toward the project	■			
Interest group activity	■			
Size of and structure of local government			■	
Presence of planning and zoning activity			■[1]	
Industrial development			■	
Enhanced economic activities	■			
Change in employment for minority groups			■	
Changing occupational opportunities	■			
Possible conflicts				
Presence of an outside agency			■	
Introduction of new classes			■	
Communities' commercial/industrial focus				■[2]
Presence of weekend residences			■	
Individual and family level impacts				
Disruption in daily living		■[3]		
Dissimilarity in religious practices			■[4]	
Alteration in family structure			■	
Disruption in social network			■	
Perceptions of public and health safety			■	
Change in leisure opportunities				■[5]
Community infrastructure				
Change in the community infrastructure		■[6]		
Land acquisition and disposal				■[7]
Effects on known cultural/historical resources			■	

[1] SIA strongly recommends that procedures and regulations for planning and zoning requirements are fully adhered to dueing the building of the American University of Malta's campus in Marsascala.

[2] SIA recommends that MEPA ensures that applications for leisure establishments follow existing local development plans.

[3] Increased traffic and decreased parking spaces.

[4] SIA recommends that Government commissions an education campaign on the issue of multiculturalism.

[5] Some Marsascala residents were against the opening of more bars and clubs that would have a negative impact on the relative tranquillity of the locality.

[6] Strain on the drainage system.

[7] Although stakeholders and interviewees acknowledged that building in outside development zones is to be avoided as much as possible, at the same time they also voiced their concern how much the locality needs an international investment project which would result in a range of social and economic benefits.

This SIA concludes that people are generally in favour of this development but at the same time wish to be given certain assurances that Marsascala will not be worse off especially in terms of its family-friendly character. They are also in support of tangible investment policies that are delivered on time and which improve their quality of life in a concrete manner. One key issue is the need to keep a balance between the interests of residents and business operators, with the latter asking for assurances that the development plans of the latter will not go unchecked. The general feeling is that the authorities might appear impotent when faced with the business community's financial might and if left unchecked can roll over the interests of the community and reduced their well being instead of improving it. It is noteworthy that, however, stakeholders and residents were positive about the possibility that the government is able to implement possible mitigation strategies which safeguard the interests of everyone, optimise outcomes for their local community, as well as compensate for the inconveniences they will experience as the result of the establishment of a campus operated by the American University of Malta. Mitigation possibilities included making suitable arrangements for traffic and parking spaces management, transparency, durable drainage system, active citizenship / political participation, and good governance as regards applications for the opening of new leisure establishments.

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