The Endeavour scholarship enabled me to obtain a Masters Degree in Cultural Sustainability and Tourism; and conduct my research on Agritourism as part of the course. The Master of Arts in Cultural Sustainability and Tourism is aimed at providing participants with a multi-perspective approach to Mediterranean culture and its relation to the tourism sector. The course equips students with the key skills that enable them to contribute towards the continuous improvement of heritage and cultural touristic activities in the Mediterranean region.

The programme provides students with an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the various facets of culture, namely: rural and built heritage, cities of culture, artistic manifestations, traditions, legislations, Mediterranean culture, religious heritage, and culture tourism.

The course is designed to enhance student research and innovation management techniques, through designated assignments, research dissertation and study units such as ‘Research Methods in Cultural Tourism’.

Throughout the course, students are also expected to familiarise themselves with key texts, policy documents, white papers and other seminal documents prepared at national, regional or world level by organisations working in tourism and culture (such as UNWTO, UNESCO, EU and DG Enterprise). These documents will serve as the basis on which students will build the subject knowledge required to meet the aims and objectives outlined in this degree programme.

In addition to the above-mentioned practical offers hands on experience and brings students face-to-face with current issues and realities of today’s cultural tourism sectors.

The programme is opens with acquainting participants with themes related to culture and heritage. Following this, Study-units such as Cultural Tourism and the European Dimension; Traditions and the Tourism Product; and Cultural and geographic landscapes in Tourism, aim at highlighting the correlation between culture and tourism and the interdependent factors between these segments. The programme also incorporates study credits such as Exhibiting Cultures: The Arts and the Media; The Marketing and Management of Culture; These aims at providing the adequate knowledge to participants on the sustainable management and operation of cultural and heritage tourism.

**Research on Agritourism**

The Master of Arts in Cultural Sustainability and Tourism culminates in the compilation of a dissertation study on a subject related to the themes of the course. The Endeavour scholarship has allowed me to fulfil my objective of furthering my studies on the subjects of agritourism, through my study titled: “Agritourism in a Community-Based tourism Context. Case Study: Żejtun”.
Agritourism and community-based tourism are still novel concepts in Malta. Tourism in Malta is still largely focused on sun and sea promotion, with certain regions of the island receiving little to no tourism at all. The introduction of sustainable forms of tourism could not only bolster the economy of rural and traditional Maltese village communities, but also help preserve culture.

My dissertation analyses the possibility and dynamics of implementing agritourism and community-based tourism in a traditional Maltese village; where an authentic cultural experience is offered for sustainable and controlled tourist consumption; as opposed to mass tourism in coastal regions. The study investigates the possible benefits, effects and implications of adopting these forms of niche tourism.

Żejtun was identified as a potential case study – due to its characteristics and little touristic activity. Throughout the research I conducted literary research on the village and gathered the opinions of experts from the fields of agriculture, tourism as well as local stakeholders to determine whether the adoption of agritourism and community-based tourism in Żejtun is feasible, and if so, what the implications are.

The study revealed that the community of Żejtun approves of this idea, and the various stakeholders have all been taking measures in respect to the development of tourism within their village. The experts interviewed also seem to agree on the necessary changes that need to be made in order to successfully develop tourism. The study also provides several recommendations based on the knowledge gathered throughout.

The research work disclosed in this publication is partially funded by the Endeavour Scholarship Scheme (Malta). Scholarships are part-financed by the European Union - European Social Fund (ESF) - Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 “Investing in human capital to create more opportunities and promote the well-being of society”. 