



THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA  
RESEARCH, INNOVATION  
& DEVELOPMENT TRUST

**RIDT Newsletter**  
April 2025

## Human presence in Malta earlier than previously thought

*Mediterranean Hunter Gatherers Navigated Long-Distance Sea Journeys Well Before the First Farmers*

In a paper published in the acclaimed international research journal *Nature* on Wednesday 9 April 2025, new evidence shows that hunter-gatherers were crossing at least 100 kilometers (km) of open water to reach the Mediterranean island of Malta 8,500 years ago, a thousand years before the arrival of the first farmers. This report documents the oldest true long-distance seafaring in the Mediterranean, before the invention of boats with sails – an astonishing feat for hunter-gatherers likely using simple dugout canoes.



[Read more about it here](#)

## The President of Malta visits UM research projects

On Tuesday 18 March 2025, H.E. The President of Malta, Dr Myriam Spiteri Debono visited the University of Malta. She was welcomed by the UM Rector, Prof. Alfred Vella. The president was given an overview of the ongoing research at University by the Pro-Rector for Research Prof Simon Fabri. She was also given exclusive details of recent discoveries by University of Malta Archeological Scientists Prof. Nicholas Vella and Prof. Eleanor Scerri.

The President also visited the Centre for Molecular Medicine and Biobanking where she was greeted and accompanied by Prof. Richard Muscat. She also had the opportunity to visit the European Molecular Biology Laboratory which is currently at the University of Malta.



[Click here to find out more](#)

## The RIDT Giving Back Campaign

RIDT has launched a campaign to encourage University of Malta Alumni to support research at their Alma Mater. The campaign follows the drive of three Alumni who took the initiative to support research at the University of Malta by giving a regular, monthly, donation.

The **RIDT Giving Back Campaign** is targeting professionals who owe their education and formation to the University of Malta. It is being featured on all main social media platforms, with a focus on LinkedIn.

For further information click here

Or write to [info@ridt.org.mt](mailto:info@ridt.org.mt)

## The RIDT Giving Back Campaign



*Gratitude is an emotion that I connect to a lot. After 25 years of benefitting from my professional formation at the University of Malta I felt the need to personally give back more. That is why I chose RIDT for my monthly disbursement. It is a small gesture on my part but this seed could become very significant if many contribute. Through the funding of research our beloved Alma Mater can be more prestigious and sustainable.*

**Christopher Busuttill Delbridge**



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**Learn more:**  
[info@ridt.org.mt](mailto:info@ridt.org.mt)

# More generous support

Over the past months, RIDT saw the continuous support of regular donors and new supporters.

**Beating Hearts Malta**, funded two research projects in innovative cardiovascular medicine.



[Click here to find out more](#)

**The Lifecycle Malta Foundation** kept its annual appointment with another generous donation towards research in kidney disease.



[Read about it here](#)

**The Alfred Mizzi Foundation** a constant supporter of RIDT and research at the University of Malta, chose to support the third phase of an ongoing research study in Loneliness.

[Find out more here](#)





During the Christmas season, **Lidl Malta** joined forces with RIDT to turn a simple holiday tradition into meaningful support for medical research in Malta. Through their campaign, which ran from December 2nd, 2024, €1 was donated for every Deluxe Panettone Classic (1000g) purchased.

Thanks to the incredible support of the Lidl Malta customers, 1,662 panettoni were sold and the management rounded up the donation to €2,000. This contribution will help fund vital medical research, fostering innovation and improving healthcare outcomes in our community.



The management and staff of **The National Archives of Malta** made a generous donation in support of medical research. The presentation to RIDT CEO Wilfred Kenely was made by Debbie Scerri (on behalf of all the staff) in the presence of the National Archivist Dr Charles Farrugia.



RIDT benefits from the **Welbee's Loyalty Points Scheme**. Clients shopping from the different Welbee outlets are given the opportunity to support their favourite cause by donating their loyalty points to their chosen organisation. This year, once again, Welbee made a generous donation, this time towards research in ALS.



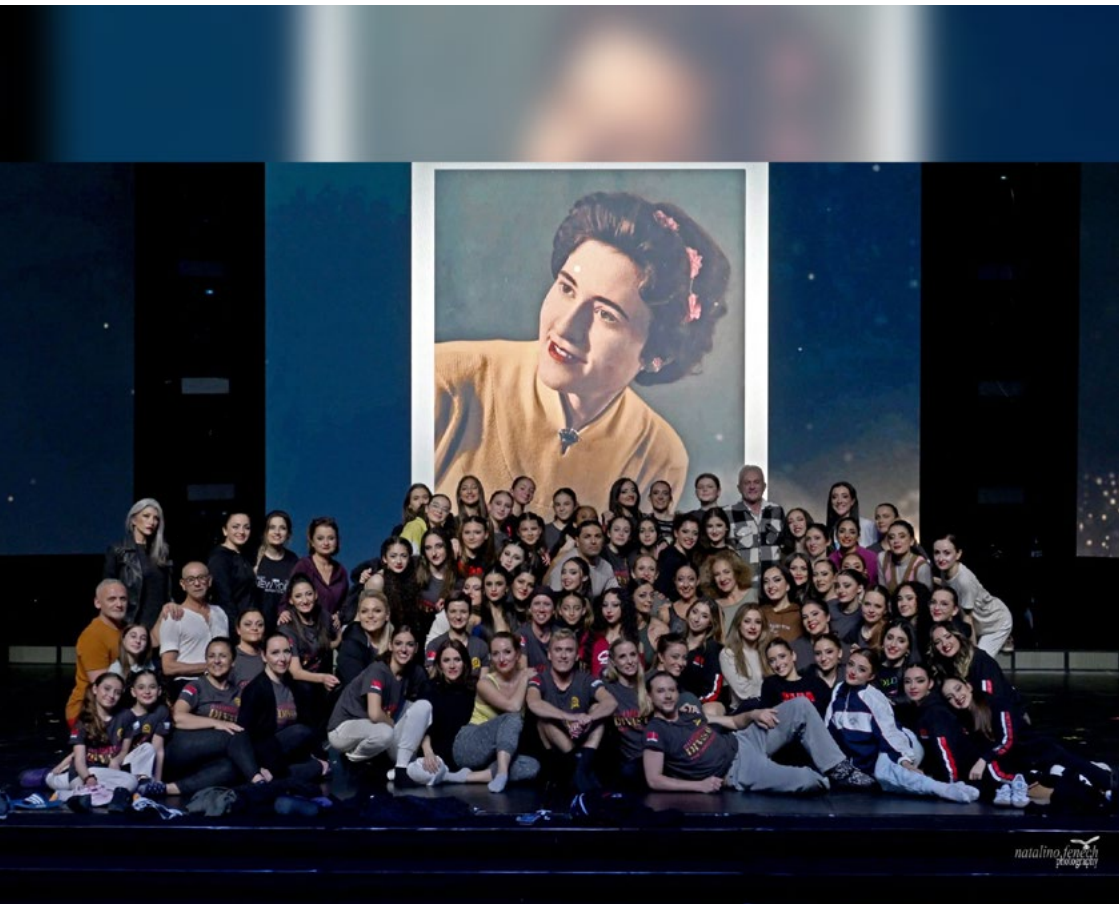
**SUPPORTING  
LOCAL NGO'S**



## More news...

Following the sad passing away of Mrs Mary Busuttil (nee Thake), mother of popular dancer and choreographer, **Felix Busuttil**, a beautiful donation was made by members of the **YADA Dance Company** towards medical research.

RIDT would like to thank all those who contributed towards this donation which continues to strengthen the role of in memory giving towards the hard work of the researchers at the University of Malta.





## The UM Payroll Giving Scheme

The Research, Innovation and Development Trust is continuing with its efforts to raise awareness on the fundamental role of research in our society by reaching out to different entities, organisations, businesses and individuals. This outreach is proving to be successful, as can be seen by the announcements made in this newsletter.

The staff of the University of Malta, academic and non academic, can contribute regularly towards this noble cause through the University of Malta Payroll Giving Scheme. If you are already a member, please encourage others to join the scheme. Our strength is in numbers and a small regular donation, equivalent to two coffees a month, can make a significant difference.

[Click here to find out how you too can be part of this scheme](#)