

30th October 2025

HSBC Malta Foundation supports 7th Edition of the Thematic STEM Debate

The HSBC Malta Foundation supported this year's Thematic STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Debate, now in its seventh edition, organised by the Directorate for STEM and VET (Vocational, Education and Training) Programmes within the Ministry for Education, Youth, and Research. The event, held during Playcon 2025 at the MFCC in Ta' Qali, brought together primary and middle school students from across Malta to explore the theme Digital Gaming: Do digital games help children learn important skills or mostly distract from learning?

The initiative formed part of the Directorate's ongoing commitment to nurturing scientific curiosity, communication skills, and critical thinking among students. A total of nine participants in Year 6 and Year 7, engaged in a structured round table debate that encouraged them to form evidence-based opinions, collaborate in teams, and articulate their ideas clearly and respectfully in front of a public audience.

A preparatory session on public speaking was held in collaboration with Esplora and workshops organised by the Primary Science Team were held as part of the Thematic STEM Debate initiative, prior to the final event. The Faculty of ICT, Department of Artificial Intelligence and the Institute of Digital Games at the University of Malta supported the Thematic STEM Debate edition from the start helping students develop confidence in public speaking while deepening their understanding of digital gaming's educational and social implications.

Glenn Bugeja, Head of Corporate Sustainability at HSBC Malta, said: "This was such an important initiative because it brought science and communication together in a creative way. It was encouraging to see young students developing the ability to think critically and express themselves with confidence. The HSBC Malta Foundation was proud to support programmes like this that combined learning, collaboration, and fun."

Isabel Zerafa, Education Officer within the Directorate for STEM and VET Programmes, explained: "The Thematic STEM Debate has become a highlight in our calendar because it helps students see science not as a set of facts to memorise, but as a tool to explore real-world issues and shape opinions. The debate provides a platform for students to engage with their mentors, parents and educators, to explore current STEM themes and to identify strengths and weaknesses in arguments on the topic. It is a formative educational process that nurtures critical thinking and communication skills among others, through diverse and meaningful opportunities for students. With the support of partners like HSBC Malta Foundation, we continue to provide platforms that make STEM learning engaging, inclusive, and relevant to everyday life."

The event concluded with an awards ceremony recognising the top three debaters for their performance, creativity, and reasoning. By linking scientific literacy with public speaking, the Thematic STEM Debate continued to promote essential 21st-century skills that prepare students to think independently and engage meaningfully in a technology-driven world.



Photocaption: The Top Three Debaters of the 7th Edition of the Thematic STEM Debate.



Photocaption: A group of young students during one of the debates aimed at developing their ability to think critically and express themselves with confidence



Photocaption: During an awards ceremony recognising top debaters for their performance, creativity, and reasoning

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