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 Employment and Training Corporation
 Malta

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Foreword by the ETC Chairperson

It gives me great satisfaction to present the third Gender Equality Plan for 2007-2008. For the past years, ETC has taken a leading role in the promotion of gender equality in the labour market. This plan ensures that in the coming years, ETC will continue to be at the forefront, with various initiatives and ideas that will be implemented over a two year period. The proposed actions are aimed at job seekers, women who are at the risk of redundancy or who are facing difficulties in reconciling work and family, immigrant women, lone parents and students from area secondary schools.

The plan is the result of a long consultation process with various stake holders of Maltese society. Among these, ETC managers and employment advisors, who are constantly in touch with women seeking employment. Furthermore, we also wanted to hear the perspective of union officials like the MUT, GWU, UHM and MUMN. The consultation process also

included bankers, Employers' Associations, NGO's who work in this area as well as the Gender Equality Machinery through NCPE. Finally we also consulted Appogg, policy makers, academics and the EU representation in Malta. This process was beneficial because it enabled us to discuss the challenges ahead of us from a very wide perspective and to propose holistic solutions based on the reality of the Maltese context.

The Gender Equality Plan gives an in-depth analysis of what has happened in the labour market during the last six years using a gender lens. Based on these facts and statistics, it proposes a series of activities aimed at the different target groups. These include a mix of training proposals, new ESF funded projects, a tracer study, support and information services and an award scheme for employers who offer innovative working solutions for their employees in ways

that permit them to balance their family and work. The Plan also includes a compilation of interesting local and foreign publications related to gender and work and disseminates good practices from other countries.

I am hopeful that with the dedication of all those involved in the process of making the workplace more inclusive for women, ETC will be able to make a useful contribution to our economy and to Maltese women who are eager to contribute economically in order to achieve the well being of their family and their country.

Michael Balzan

Chairperson ETC

A Message from NCPE

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality

Gender equality can easily be defined as the equal participation of women and men in the development of their societies, and, therefore the equal access to the benefits of this same development.

However, one cannot discuss development and not include employment and further identify the link to economic independence in the equation. The Employment and Training Corporation is the very organ upon which the national strategy for employment falls. Furthermore, ETC has a dedicated unit for gender issues and as such ensures that the various angles necessary for proper implementation are included.

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality [NCPE] set up in January 2004 has the national responsibility to ensure that equality is achieved. Cap 456 of the Laws of Malta specifies a number of areas where equality needs to be ensured: the area of employment is one such area and

therefore the collaborative work that is going on between ETC, NCPE and other organizations takes on a national dimension. Both organizations realize that the way forward is through collaboration with all stakeholders and that one's achievement is not one's own but becomes a national achievement which will help societal improvement.

With this approach, the collaboration between the gender unit of ETC, NCPE and other partners has, in fact produced results that could not be achieved if everyone was working separately. It is indeed with pleasure that we note that many a document produced by different entities in this field is the result of a collaborative effort. Besides having been partners on various EU co-funded projects in the past, both entities support each other in their everyday effort to bring about the necessary changes. Nevertheless, there is no blurring of the responsibilities and each organization knows and follows its full remit.

The wise words of Kofi Annan explain further gender equality: they also explain why we are all genuinely motivated to bring about change.

“Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.”

Gender Equality is about improving society.

Sina Bugeja

Executive Director, NCPE



Introduction

As Malta's Public Employment Service Organisation, ETC must contribute towards the social and economic development of the community.

Work and productivity are fundamental to the economic development of our country and having a job is one of the best ways of ensuring social inclusion. Whilst the male employment rate is above EU average, Malta continues to have the lowest female employment rate when compared to the other EU 27 countries. The high inactivity rate of women amounting to 67.3% has a direct effect on the overall low employment rate of 55.5% of those aged between 15 and 64 (NSO: 1/2007). Setting up of the Gender Equality Unit in 2001, ETC has been taking a proactive approach to address this challenging situation.

Culture is often put forward as being the cause of the low employment rate of women. Shared beliefs and values are an integral component of culture but that does not mean that they are static and that they do not change over time. While it may be the case that a considerable number of women do not wish to enter into gainful employment, the study with inactive women conducted by the Research and Development Unit of ETC in 2004 clearly shows that nearly half of all inactive women (44.8%) would consider working if they found the right conditions to do so. On top of this list is the need to be able to cope and combine the caring responsibilities of their family with their job.

With this clear indicator in mind, the aim of this third Gender Equality Action Plan is to work with different stakeholders in order to ensure that those women who really would like to re-enter or to remain in the labour market will be able to do so. How can ETC help these women and how are we going to ensure that these women are able to work? An important prerequisite for success is that men become more actively involved in the family and share the non-remunerated work. It is therefore important to involve men in this change process.

We have set ourselves a number of challenges for the coming two years. Through awareness raising, training, research, dissemination of good practices and support we want to promote the right conditions in order to permit both men and women to participate actively towards the social and economic development of our country.



The Consultation Process

We wanted to make sure that this third Gender Equality Action Plan included as many ideas from different stakeholders as possible and we took a collaborative and consultative approach when writing this plan.

The consultation process took the form of focus group meetings with various stakeholders – policy makers, unions, employers, ETC staff members, academics, NGOs and gender equality machinery.

We felt that it was imperative to include the various stakeholders in the consultation process to better understand the slow increase in the female employment rate recorded over the years in Malta. The importance of collaboration with various entities was underlined during

our numerous preparatory meetings for this Action Plan. In fact, through the consultation process we have come up with a number of proposed projects and actions which we feel can tackle the needs of our target groups, be they inactive women, young mothers, lone parents, immigrant women or older women returnees. Specific programmes and schemes have been identified that target each of these groups of women in order to allow them to be fully ready, willing and able to work.

During the focus groups a number of suggestions were put forward by those present. Some of these are directed to policy makers, as it was felt that a number of policy changes are needed to be in place before women can truly participate in the labour market on an equal footing with men. Other recommendations are directed at the improvement of ETC services and how ETC can help increase the female participation rate through the services it offers.

These suggestions will make it possible for more women to enter, remain and move ahead in the labour market. The results of the focus groups were recorded and suggestions for change were outlined by those invited.

We thank all those involved in the consultation process for their contribution to this Gender Equality Plan.

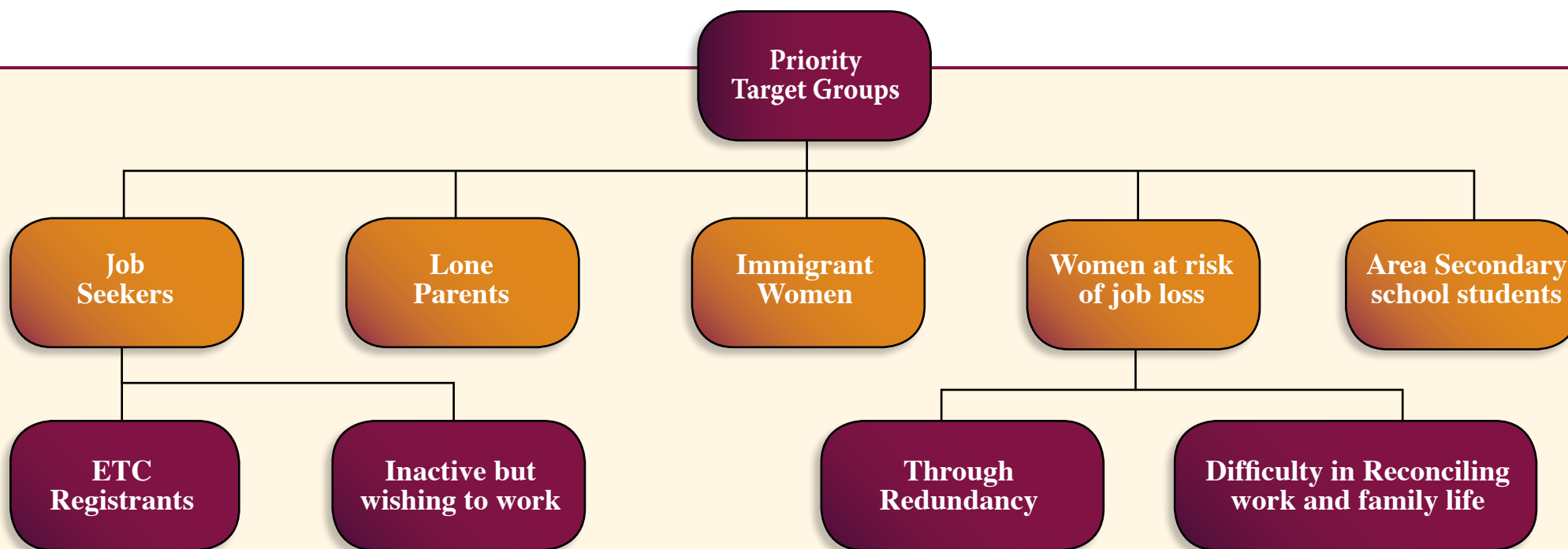
Policy Recommendations

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The following policy recommendations were suggested during the consultation meetings. These fall outside the direct remit of ETC and many require legal and policy changes to materialise. However many of the suggestions indicated are indispensable in creating the right conditions for those who want to combine work with other personal commitments and responsibilities.

- Implement and disseminate a national after-school hours activity scheme which can include sports, drama, dance and supervised homework within the school building using different teachers to the ones working in the morning.
 - Increase the opportunities for reduced working hours especially for those working in the private sector.
 - Increase the use of urgent family leave to cover periods when children are sick in both the public and the private sector
 - Review the benefit system, particularly for lone parents and other vulnerable groups to 'make work pay'.
 - Encourage the extension of childcare centres' opening hours.
 - Set up an Equality Ombudsperson to deal solely with equality issues within the public sector.
 - Carry out gender audits and gender budgeting on government spending.
 - Encourage employers to offer work-life balance measures to their employees.
 - Offer long-term financial and other support to female entrepreneurs.
 - Extend the opening hours of Government departments through the use of innovative working conditions.
- All the above measures need to be implemented through changes in policy and legislation, keeping in mind the needs of dual earner families. These changes need to be approached holistically to ensure that these and other families are well-supported in order to reconcile family with work responsibilities.

Following this consultation process the ETC Gender Equality Action Plan for 2007-2008 will focus on the priority groups listed below



We will be seeking to offer services which meet the needs of the target groups by involving in the process various stakeholders, particularly employers, unions, heads of schools and policy makers. More specifically, our work over the next couple of years will involve:

- Organising campaigns aimed at various sectors of society to challenge the prevailing culture and mentality regarding gender roles.
- Helping employers create a healthier and happier work-environment through implementing work-life reconciliation measures.
- Sharing of good practices of employers who make use of alternative work arrangements in their companies, as well as publicising success stories of women who undertook ETC training courses.
- Carrying out research in order to improve the services ETC offers to both women and men.
- Developing schemes aimed at supporting dual earner families and single parents.

Review of the Second Gender Equality Action Plan

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The last two years have been full of interesting activities aimed at increasing the female employment rate and promoting greater awareness of work-life reconciliation in Malta for both women and men. The Gender Equality Unit took a number of initiatives as follows:



Employment and Training Corporation

Training, Seminars and events organisation

Training for Staff

During 2005 and 2006 we continued to train our staff in the area of gender equality. Between October 2005 and May 2006 all the staff employed in the Employment, Finance and Business Development Divisions and Head Office staff were given updates in gender-related legislation that is relevant to the labour market. They were also made aware of the

role of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality in its fight against discrimination and sexual harassment and the procedures involved in making a claim. More intensive training was given to the Employment Advisors who attended a full day training session.

Training for Students

A two-day training session with Fifth Form female students attending a Secondary school in Pembroke was organised as a pilot project. The aim of the training was to



Gender Equality Action Plan 2007-2008

encourage the female students to challenge traditional gender stereotypes associated with family roles and employment. This was achieved through active discussions between trainers and the students on issues related to assertiveness, empowerment and gender equality.

Training for Employment Advisors

In June 2006 training was given to all employment advisors on the issue of single parenthood. The aim of this training was to help our staff to understand the needs of this client group and to be in a better position to offer a quality service to them. A leaflet encouraging more lone parents to work was sent by mail to all lone parents who are receiving social benefits.

Lone parents Pilot Project (LPPP)

As part of the LPPP, empowerment skills training was organised for women who are either homeless and/or have gone through domestic violence and who seek refuge at Dar Merhba Bik and Dar Qalb ta' Gesu. The course included self-empowerment training sessions and job-readiness skills. Women with literacy problems were encouraged to follow an additional literacy course also being offered by ETC.



Modern Men in Enlarged Europe



Seminar on Men and Parental Leave

A seminar on Men and Parental Leave was organised in December 2005. This seminar concluded the Modern Men in Enlarged Europe project which was funded by the European Union. The seminar was well attended and received substantial coverage by the press. The project's website can be reached at www.dadcomehome.org/en

Seminar on Telework

In March 2006 a seminar on Telework was organised in collaboration with the Ministry for Investment and IT and Industry. In this seminar the findings of ETC funded research on the subject were presented and discussed with the audience present. A copy of the leaflet and study can be obtained from the following links:

Leaflet <http://etc.gov.mt/docs/telework%20leaflet.pdf>

Study <http://etc.gov.mt/docs/An%20Enabling%20Framework%20for%20Telework.pdf>

Seminar for Employers

In June 2006 a seminar was organised for employers during which a Manual on 'How to Make Work Better for Employers and Employees' was launched. The seminar included presentations from various employers who already implement some of the measures suggested in the manual. The manual can be downloaded from the following link:

<http://etc.gov.mt/docs/manual%20content.pdf>

Women @ work project

A total of sixteen women, both registering and not, have participated in the project. The aim of the project is to increase the employability of women from the Cottonera region. Following focus groups held in April 2006, general training in matters connected to work-related issues was held for all participants. A number of women then undertook further training in different areas including ECDL, customer care, security, nutrition and hairdressing, all funded by ETC. Three of the women are currently employed. A number of participants enrolled in an ETC scheme, such as Work Start Scheme and Job Experience Scheme. At the time of writing a number of women had completed the scheme, others were currently undertaking the scheme, while some were about to start participating in the schemes. In total, ten participants were directed to ETC schemes.

Awareness-raising activities in the Media

During these last two years we continued to raise awareness on the issue of gender equality and work with the general public. We were invited in thirty television programs, we gave four interviews to the printed media and we participated in three radio programmes. Furthermore, events organised by the Gender Equality Unit were regularly featured on newspapers through the Corporation's Communications department. Exposure in the media reaches a wide audience and raises the profile of ETC and its commitment to promoting gender equality in issues relating to work.

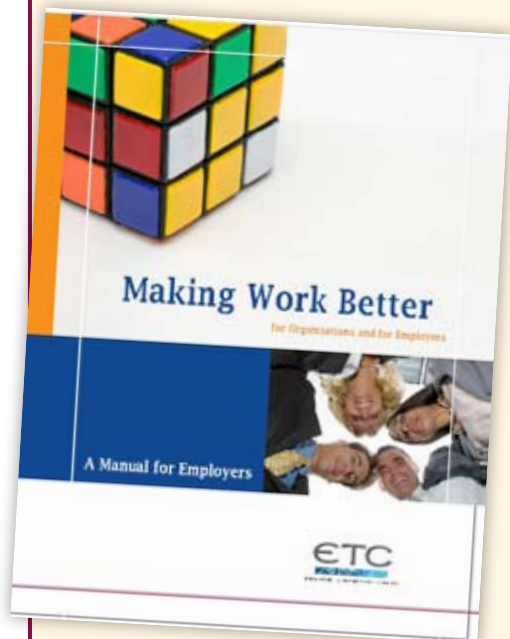
Awareness-raising on changes to the Income-Tax Act

In January 2006 a short radio campaign was coordinated by the Gender Equality Unit in order to raise awareness on the changes to the Income Tax Act which introduced a tax break for women returnees and better deals for the

second earner in the household. Since the introduction of the revision to the Income Tax Act (found in annex 2), 420 married women returned to work (The Times, More Married women join the workforce (Thursday September 28th, 2006)).

Awareness-raising on men's rights to Parental Leave

As part of the EU-funded project Modern Men in Enlarged Europe, a number of awareness raising activities were carried out. These included the publication of leaflets on parental leave which were distributed to health clinics, hospitals, local councils and prenatal classes. A bus campaign promoting the rights of fathers to parental leave was also held. On Father's Day 2005, the Unit held a press conference outlining the project and the research results at the post-natal ward in St. Luke's hospital where new fathers were given a gift pack containing material produced for the project. A copy of the study can be downloaded from: http://etc.gov.mt/docs/Joint_Report.pdf



EU Projects

The Gender Equality Unit took has been proactive in applying for new EU funded projects related to childcare.

ESF 24: Increasing Female Participation through childcare services at the workplace (European Social Fund Project)

During the last year we implemented an ESF funded project on childcare services at the work place. While the project was underway, we realised that the demand for benefit grants from employers to open up a childcare centre at their place of work was going to be lower than planned. For this reason the project was re-structured and as a result more money was allocated for training. This has permitted us to launch an additional five childcare courses. One course was delivered in Gozo, two were held for existing providers who want to upgrade their skills, and another two were planned for prospective carers. Ten courses in total have been funded through this project. All courses are currently underway and will finish by May 2007.

ESF 50: Information Campaign on the Benefits of Quality Childcare in Malta (European Social Fund Project)

This ESF project was submitted in February 2006 and was approved shortly afterwards with a budget of Lm100,429. The aim of this project is to raise awareness on the benefits of quality childcare for the children, their parents,

employers and Maltese society in general. Since its approval, a tender was issued by the Department of Contracts and the project implementation started towards the end of 2006. The project kicked off with a research element on which the advertising campaign will be based. The campaign includes television and radio spots, billboards, leaflets and a national conference on issues related to quality childcare.



Research

Work Segregation Study

A qualitative study called “Breaking the Mould” was concluded during the past year. This study focuses on women and men who work in areas normally associated with the other gender. The aim of the study was to understand the respondents’ initial motivation for entering the field, the educational path taken and the work experience in a non-traditional field. The findings of this research were disseminated to Guidance Teachers during a seminar held in December 2005.

Other ETC Schemes and events related to gender equality

Childcare Subsidy Scheme offered by ETC for the use of childcare

The Employment and Training Corporation has taken the initiative to offer trainees a subsidy on childcare services during their training period. This subsidy is of 56c per hour. Since its inception in April 2006, a number of trainees have benefited from this scheme.

ESF 31: Employment and Training Schemes – Traineeships for women returnees (European Social Fund Project)

This project forms part of the ESF 31 project submitted in February 2006 which incorporates various training schemes aimed at different target groups. This particular scheme is targeted at women returnees and includes both off-the-job and on-the-job training in the areas of Care for the Elderly, Plant Operations in the Pharmaceutical Sector, and Retailing. Off-the-job training consists of empowerment and computing courses. Participants are entitled to the minimum wage during the on-the-job training.

Back-to-Work Programme

A specific training scheme was organised between 2005 and 2006 for women wishing to return to the labour market and who have been inactive for the last 5 years. The training undertaken was in the areas of office skills, retailing skills, factory operations and care for the elderly.





ESF 31: Employment and Training Schemes – Promoting the Employability of Lone mothers on Benefits component (European Social Fund Project)

This ESF project was initially submitted in February 2006 and was approved shortly afterwards. The Lone Mothers on Benefits project forms part of an overall project consisting of various training elements. The aim of the lone mothers project is to offer both off-the-job and on-the-job training for ten lone mothers in order to help them move from a state of dependency on social benefits

to social and financial independence. The project offers general training related to literacy, IT skills and empowerment as well as specific training in an area of the participants' choice.

Empowerment training for single mothers

In collaboration with Dar Guzeppa Debono, Gozo, the Training Division of ETC organised an empowerment course for single mothers. Eleven participants successfully completed this pilot programme, which ended with an activity-full weekend centred around practical activities in Gozo.





Recent Policy Changes

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Government Policy Changes

During 2005 and 2006 the Government took a number of initiatives which should help improve the situation of women in the labour market. These include the finalisation of the Child Care Regulations in July 2006 and the changes made in January 2005 to the Income Tax Act which now gives tax benefits to women returnees

and more favourable income tax rates to persons working part time (LN 105/2005 and LN 110/2005). The Budget of 2007 also included a number of initiatives to help women return to employment.

Budget measures that may contribute to increasing female employment rates can be found hereunder:

Part-time workers

Those working 8 hours or more a week are now allowed to pay an NI of 10% of their earnings. According to the Budget speech, the next step is to carry out discussions with employers on their role when employing workers between 8 hours and 19 hours a week.

Work-life reconciliation

Government has extended family-friendly measures available to the Civil Service to the entire Public Sector.

Childcare

Parents who send their children to licensed childcare facilities will be able to deduct up to Lm400 from taxable income to make good for part of the expenses incurred. Employers, who subsidise childcare expenses, can deduct these costs from taxable income and this help will no longer be considered as fringe benefits. Finally, Government will continue to offer technical advice and financial aid to help existent childcare centres upgrade their services.

Income tax

Income tax bands have been revised and adjusted for both single and joint (married) declarations. The revised bands are as follows:

Widows' and Widowers' pension

The fixed rate of pension is still received for the five years of marriage when widows or widowers marry again.

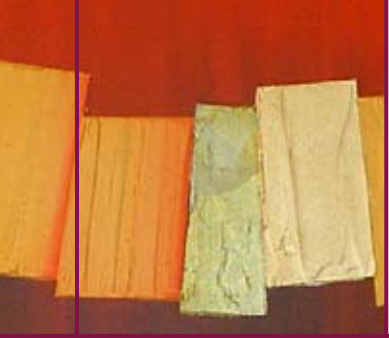
Family companies

Men or women working in the family business can now be registered as employed within the same business for fiscal purposes.

Tables of revised income tax bands

SINGLE RATE		MARRIED RATE	
Income bands <i>Lm</i>	Rate %	Income bands <i>Lm</i>	Rate %
0-3,250	0	0 -4,500	0
3,251-5,500	15	4,501-8,000	15
5,501-6,750	25	8,001-10,000	25
6,751+	35	10,000+	35





A Closer Look at the Labour Market from a Gendered Perspective

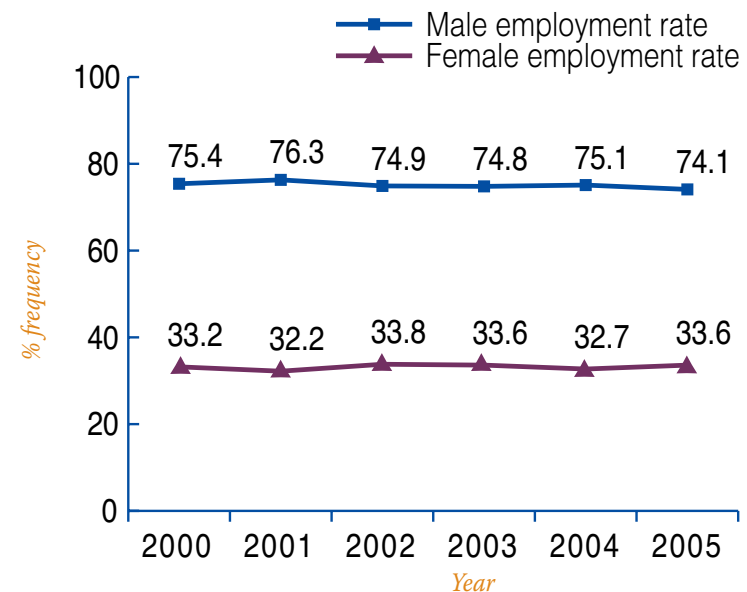
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In this section we give an overview of the situation of women and men in the Maltese Labour market during the last six years (2000-2006). This includes a review of both full time and part time work, the number of hours worked and a look at women in top management positions.

A look at the labour market figures for the last years shows that between 2000 and 2005 the female employment rate remained low and stable ranging from 33.2% in 2000 to 33.6% in 2005. This means that over a five year period (2000-2005)

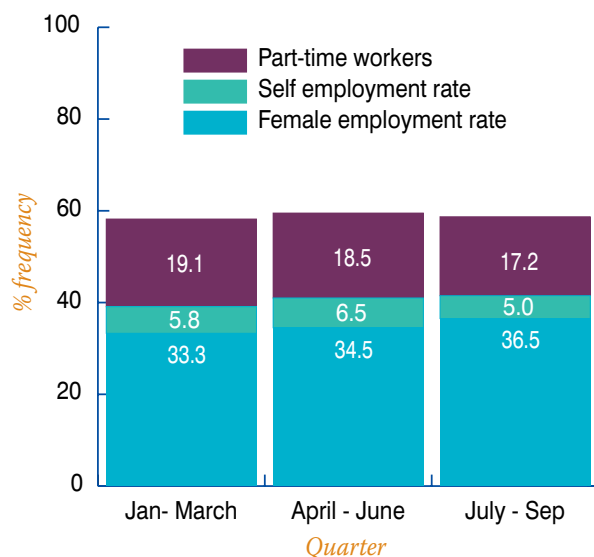
the female employment rate increased by 0.4%. These figures remained relatively stable despite the relocation of certain manufacturing concerns and it is hoped that the prospect of higher value-added activities in the coming years will see an increase in the female employment rate.

Female and Male Employment Rate Trajectory



Source: Labour Force Survey, National Statistics Office

Female Labour Force Statistics 2006



Source: Labour Force Survey, National Statistics Office

Female Employment Rates 2006

A closer look at the employment figures for the past year (2006) reveals that the number of women working increased from 47,043 (between July to September of 2005) to 49,883 in the period covering July to September 2006 (NSO1/2007). Between July and September 2006, the majority of Maltese women were working full-time while the remaining 17.2% were working part-time. A low rate of 5% were self-employed. During this period the female employment rate reached an all-time high of 36.5% from 33.3% in the first quarter. However one

must be aware that part of the change may be due to methodological changes carried out by NSO. In this regard NSO changed the weighting procedures in order to correct for sample bias arising out of differential non response and non representative probabilities of selection. These methodological changes have been carried out from the 2005 data series onwards; hence comparisons to previous years are not on a like with like basis.

Between the 1st and 3rd quarter of 2006 the female inactivity rate remained high, ranging from 69.5 to 67.3% while the

unemployment status ranged from 2.9 to 2.6% during the same period (Labour Force Survey, 2006, News releases – NSO). 53.8% of the inactive women in 2005, cited family responsibilities as the prime reason for their inactivity (NSO 2006, Labour Force Survey 2005).

Age distribution of total employed women

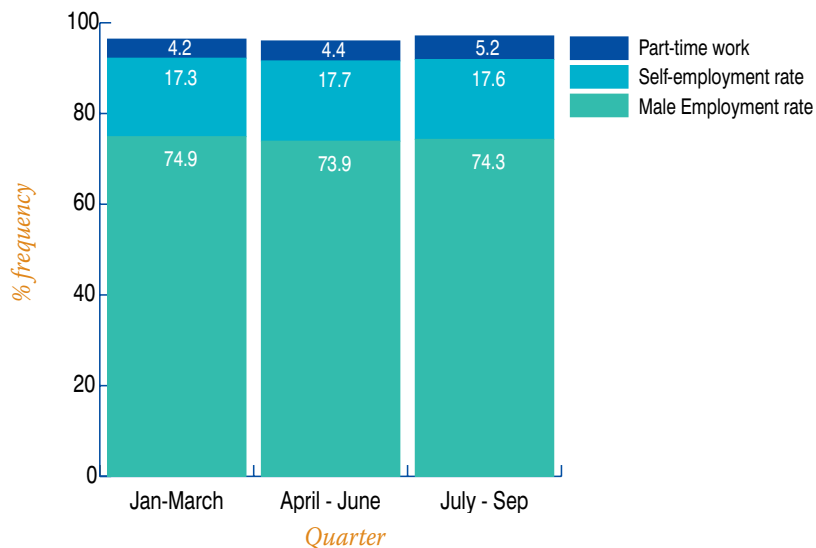
Age Group	Women	
	No.	%
July – September 2006		
15 – 24	13,159	26.4
25 – 34	15,931	31.9
35 – 44	9,415	18.9
45 – 54	8,922	17.9
55 – 64	2,456	4.9
65+	-	-
TOTAL	49,883	100.0

Source: Labour Force Survey: July-September 2006, NSO

Age distribution of total employed women

It is interesting to note that from the table above, in 2006 (3rd Quarter) the majority of women in employment were in the 25-34 age bracket. This is encouraging to note since if this group of women maintain their employment, not withstanding that they fall within the childbearing age, the employment rate of women can be expected to rise in the future.

Male Labour Force Statistics 2006



Source: Labour Force Survey, National Statistics Office

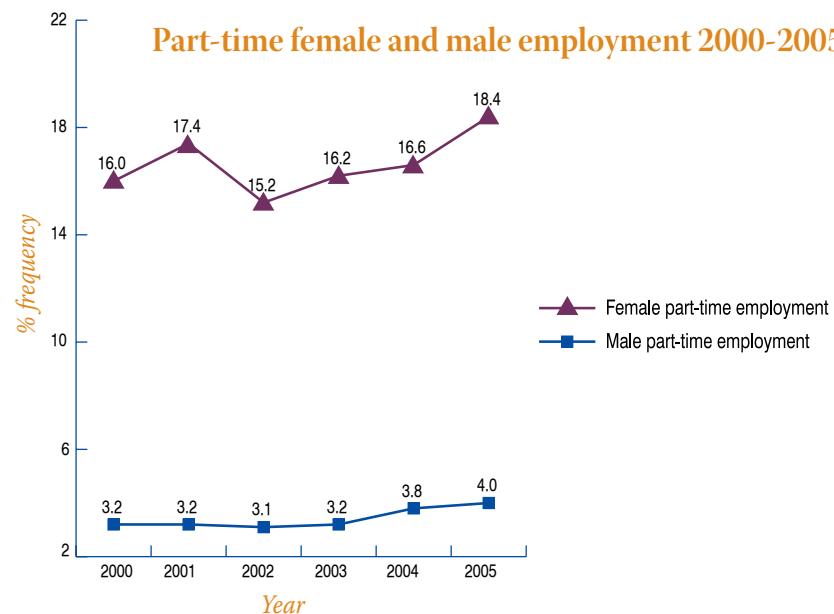
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Male Employment Rates 2006

The above table shows that the male employment rate decreased slightly from 74.9% in the 1st Quarter 2006 to 74.3% by the 3rd Quarter of the same year. The vast majority of Maltese men were working full time while only 5.2% worked part-time during the 3rd Quarter of 2006.

During the same period 17.6% were self employed. Between the 1st and 3rd Quarters 2006 the inactivity status of men was relatively low ranging from 29.3% to 30.8% whilst the unemployment status ranged from 5% to 4.2% during the same period (Labour Force Survey, 2006, News releases – NSO). The majority of men (50.5%) during 2005, quoted retirement as the main reason for their inactive status (Labour Force Survey 2005, NSO).

Part-time female and male employment 2000-2005



Source: Annualised LFS statistics, NSO. Data for 2006 not yet published

Female and Male part-time employment trajectory 2000-2005

Between 2000 and 2005 the female part-time employment rate of those who have a part time job as their main occupation, increased from 16% in 2000 to 18.4% in 2005 resulting in an increase of 2.4%. The percentage of men who have a part-time job as their primary job is much lower. However during these last years this percentage also increased slightly from 3.2% in 2000 to 4% in 2005.

Combining work and family

Different perspectives from employers, workers and their associations

Marvic Zammit
Manufacturing sector

“With childcare, I know that my child is learning and making new friends”



Marvic Zammit is a machine operator and works on a three shift basis. Her husband works as a handyman also on a shift basis. Marvic and her husband have a 3 year old son. During some shifts they take him to a play school or alternatively his grandmother looks after him. Marvic finds it hard to reconcile work and family responsibilities but finds the support of her husband who shares house work. Apart from her husband and family, Marvic makes use of a childcare centre. She feels that through this experience, her son “is learning and making new friends, and these experiences help him grow and develop”.

Noel Vella
Department for Industrial Employment Relations

“In any family, but especially in a larger one, [family commitments] are never-ending”



Noel works as the Director of Industrial and Employment Relations. He is married to Cora and they have 5 children aged between 15 and 7. Cora works full-time as Chief Notary to Government and Archivist Notarial Archives. Noel is able to reconcile his work and family responsibilities with a lot of hard work and help from relatives. Because Noel and his wife both work on a full-time basis, family commitments are tackled once they return home from work. In their positions at work they accept that they have to meet certain work demands, including being required to work after normal hours, and also during the weekends. However, Noel and Cora believe that restructuring normal working hours to work from 7.15am to 3.30pm, for example “could enable us both to arrive home earlier on most days to be with the children, help with their homework, do the cooking and do the 101 other things needed by any family.”

Miriam Gatt
Health Sector

“Employers seem to forget that they will only enjoy their old age retirement if and only if we bring up these children”



Miriam works as a full-time Public Health Physician. Miriam’s husband works as a project coordinator within the Education Division. Miriam and her husband have 3 children, aged 14, 10 and 5. Their eldest child has Down’s syndrome and, although she is fully mainstreamed in a secondary school, nonetheless, her parents know that after completing secondary school, her options are limited and Miriam fears she will have to reduce her working hours to care for her. Miriam claims that reconciling work and family life “is only possible because of strong family support from both husband and parents”, although Miriam acknowledges that her work offers her some form of flexibility. Her husband’s support is especially important during school holidays. When the children were very young, family friendly measures such as maternity leave, unpaid leave and reduced hours were essential. However, Miriam feels that as yet there is no help or concessions to support a family with a child with special needs.

Maria Pia Chircop

Foundation for Human Resources Development



“...less stressed employees result in better performance at work”

Employers can facilitate greater work-life balance for their teleworking employees by increasing technological equipment like video cameras and more advanced telephony systems in order to facilitate their participation in meetings and other work-related commitments. Furthermore, different working patterns can be developed for those who require to be home at certain hours of the day because of family responsibilities. This can be arranged in a way wherein an employee covers core hours of business, while another might cover other hours in order to ensure continuity of work, as a form of job sharing. Reducing employee stress can result in higher productivity at work. However, one should not ignore that within the local setting, stumbling blocks can arise, when providing work-life balance measures for employees. “The possibility of offering more work-life reconciliation strategies always depends on the nature of the business, the size of the company and the present economic situation”.

Dr Charmaine Grech

General Workers Union



“...there is still the mentality that to work, the worker has to be present on the company’s premises”

Employers can facilitate greater work-life balance for their employees by creating a flexible working environment, introducing telework and abiding by the working time directive, among other things. When looking at local companies offering work-life reconciliation measures one can mention various companies, such as McNeill, VF and De La Rue, who offer longer parental leave periods and others, like Enemalta and Trelleborg, who offer reduced hours to their employees. Stumbling blocks related to the implementation of family friendly measures at the place of work are various. For workers in a production or sales setting, availing themselves of certain measures is not possible, although there are some measures which can be used such as flexible work, job-sharing and part-time work. The costs which employers associate with introducing family-friendly measures create a major stumbling block for the positive implementation of such facilities in the workplace.

Dr Roberta Lepré

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality



“Employers are still not aware of the business case for work-life balance”

Employers can facilitate greater work-life balance for their employees by respecting their employees’ rights as laid down in the law and by managing work by output rather than by hours worked. Within the Maltese scene, particularly within the public sector, a number of initiatives are in place which facilitate a healthier work-life balance, including the option for employees to work on a reduced time schedule of 20 or 30 hours a week. MITTS Limited (Malta Information Technology and Training Service Ltd) offer the option of telework to their employees. The business case for work-life balance means that the employees’ “needs are taken into consideration. This translates into measurable increased outputs and the organisation saves money because sick leave is drastically reduced, and the cost of recruiting and training new members of staff is curtailed. Moreover, organisations would be retaining their skilled workforce”.

Francesca Debono
Manufacturing sector



“Finding a balance and time management are key to the success of work and family responsibilities”

Francesca works full time as a PA to the General Manager in a factory. Her husband is General Manager for a software company and runs his own business on a part-time basis. They have two children, aged 12 and 2. Their youngest son attends a childcare centre which is situated near Francesca’s workplace. He attends the childcare centre every day for 35 hours a week and “really enjoys playing with the other children there.” Finding a balance between work and family responsibilities is a matter of time management for Francesca. Support from her husband is paramount and she also finds support from her parents with babysitting. She claims to have a very understanding boss, which is essential “should a family crisis occur”.

John Vella
Public Service sector



John feels that as a new parent, his job, like that of many others, offers little flexibility.

John is employed at managerial level in a public service organisation. His wife, a university lecturer, has to spend a lot of time and effort in preparing lessons, notes and guidance for her students. The couple have a 2 year old child, and recently, John opted to make use of the public sector’s option of parental leave for one year. Since returning to work after parental leave, John feels that as a new parent, his job, like that of many others, offers little flexibility. “There is a lack of facilities that cater for both parent and child at the workplace. Some employers are still miles away from starting to understand the need of family-friendly conditions of work”. In reconciling work and family responsibilities, John states: “My partner’s support is first and foremost. Then the immediate relatives if, when and where they are available. Present childcare services are not enough to cater for dual earner families, while childcare facilities at the workplace are still a remote fantasy of the distant future.”

Lorna Pillow
Banking sector



“A mother should not be led to choose between her family responsibilities and her career”

Lorna Pillow is a manager in a foreign owned bank. Her husband is self-employed and they have a 15 month old son. Lorna finds great support in her husband who is very present for the family when he is at home. Furthermore, her mother’s help in caring for their child while Lorna is at work is of great importance to her. Lorna is aware that finding a balance can at times involve hard work but she believes that this balance is possible if there is determination. She stresses that parenthood should not lead to losing out on one’s job and career. Lorna works on a reduced-hour time schedule and she appreciates the trust which her employers show towards her, as this means that she can find a healthy balance between her work and family.

Vickie Sciberras

Kummissjoni
Nazżjonali Persuni
b'Dizabilità

“The key to achieving a realistic work-family balance is having a job where you are treated as a whole person with specific needs and with a valid contribution to make to the workplace.”



Vickie Sciberras, works as a full-time occupational therapist at the National Commission Persons with Disability and is also a part-time lecturer at the Institute of Health Care. Her husband is a general practitioner. “Being a wheelchair user, working full-time and keeping a home is a challenge.” However, she feels that work gives her a sense of dignity, purpose and a level of satisfaction. Vickie tries to reconcile her work and family life by setting realistic daily goals and managing her time well. Flexible working arrangements with her employer mean that Vickie has the possibility of adapting her working hours and of utilising vacation leave on an hourly basis. Furthermore, accessibility to the work and home environment help her greatly in achieving a better work-life balance. Vickie acknowledges that “the fact that my husband and I share the tasks to be done at home helps a lot, since we both work full-time”. This is important in order for her and her husband to have a healthy work life balance.

Dr Charlotte Camilleri

Malta Employers' Association

“Employers encounter difficulties in finding replacements since as yet no temping agencies exist”



Employers can facilitate greater work-life balance for their employees by offering flexible and reduced hour time schedules. However one has to bear in mind that resources and conditions vary from one company to another and so employers cannot be placed all on the same plane. In the local setting, depending on the resources available to the company, employers may provide practical measures in favour of family life, for example by extending parental leave entitlement from the statutory 3 months to 6 months. According to the Malta Employers' Association, employers may encounter difficulties in finding replacements for employees on parental leave, since few temping agencies exist, as well as the cost that such measures may entail.

Dr. Romina Bartolo

Union Haddiema
Magħqudin

“Employers are not interested in long-term investment but look at the short-term costs”



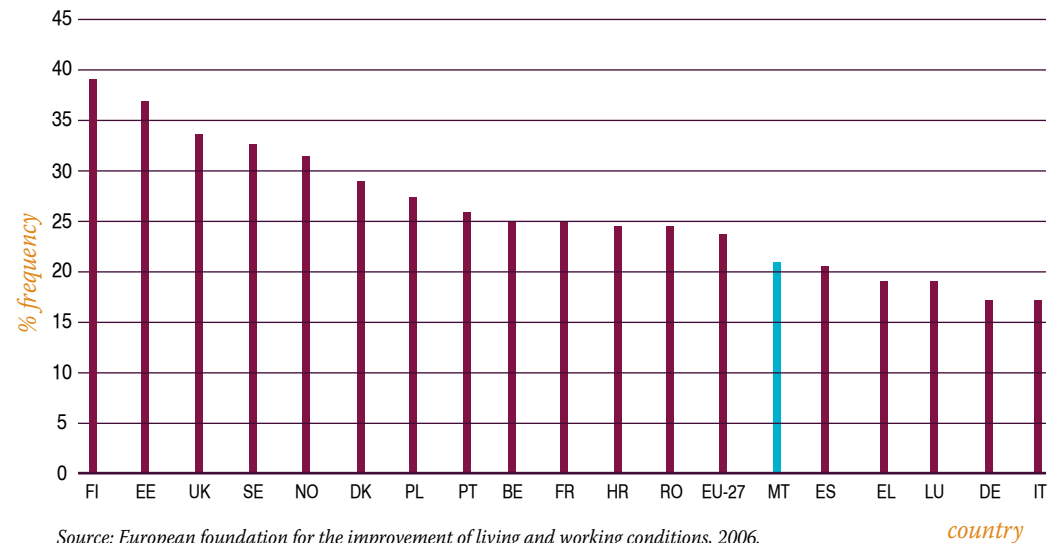
Employers can facilitate greater work-life balance for their employees by offering flexible working hours and providing childcare facilities amongst others. Within the Maltese setting, large companies such as HSBC and Bank of Valletta offer family-friendly measures to their employees, such as extended parental leave options amongst other benefits. When employers are planning the introduction of family-friendly measures for their workers, the prime stumbling block may be the employers' present mentality which sees family-friendly measures as a cost rather than a benefit. According to Dr. Bartolo, employers are usually more interested in the short-term costs rather than looking at the long-term investment that these policies can have on their organisation.

Normal hours worked by Maltese men and women per week by job type



Source: Statistics In Focus: Labour force Survey 2005, Eurostat, 13/2006

Percentage of Females in Top Management



Source: European foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, 2006. The 4th European Working Conditions survey

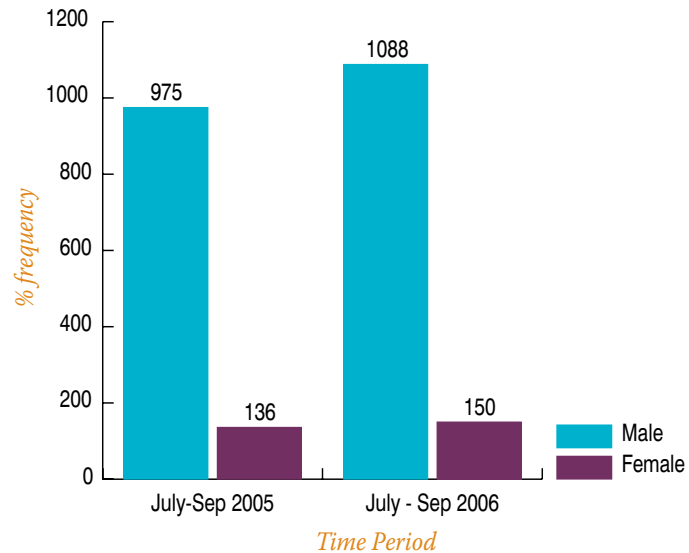
Number of hours worked by women and men

Maltese women who have a full time job on average work 38.8 hours a week and those who work part time work 20.1 hours a week. Conversely, men who have a full time job on average work 41.5 hours weekly and 18.6 hours respectively (see figure above).

Women in top management

Just over 20% of persons in top management in Malta are female. Although across Europe female managers are still in a minority, certain countries like Finland and Estonia have exceeded 35%. Women normally lead in organisations where the majority of workers are women and on the other hand men lead in organisations where the majority of workers are men.

Accidents at work by Gender



Source: Labour Force Survey. Accidents at work: July - September 2006 (237/2006). NSO



Accidents at work: July - September 2006 (237/2006)

Statistics confirm that manufacturing (35.4%) and construction (15.1%) are the two sectors in which most accidents occur. However when looking at the statistics from a gendered lens one finds that most accidents for women were in the Health and Social Work Sector (34%) and then in manufacturing (27.3%). For men the majority of accidents occurred in the manufacturing sector (36.5%) and then in the construction industry (17.1%).

Pay Gap

The gender pay gap is the difference between men's and women's average gross hourly earnings as a percentage of men's average gross hourly earning for paid employees aged between 16 to 64 years and working 15 hours per week and more.

According to NSO the Gender Pay gap for Malta in 2005 stood at 3.3%. This decreased from 5.5% in 2002 (LFS: Key Indicators in the Labour Market, 147/2006).

However, a report carried out by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality in Malta in 2006 claims that the pay gap in Malta is at around 23.2% (NCPE: Gender Mainstreaming: the Way Forward). The NCPE gender pay gap was calculated through a quantitative analysis of the gross pay inclusive of commissions, performance bonuses and overtime (ibid. page 49).

It is important to note that between the two figures, a number of methodological differences exist in the type of earnings captured and the number of hours worked cited by those surveyed.

A Focus on Education and Training

While gendered choices still seem to be present among the student population at both post-secondary and tertiary level, a number of positive trends appear to be emerging among male and female students.

For example, within the Faculty of Science, during the current academic year (2006/2007), the number of female students following a Bachelor of Science (Hons.) degree (f=171) has surpassed the number of male students (m=148). A similar positive indicator can be found among students following courses within the faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering, where the number of female students is rapidly increasing (f=111; m=114). Furthermore, while overall university female graduates continue to outnumber male graduates (2006 statistics – f=57%; m=43%), in the faculties of Law, Medicine, Health Care, Education, Arts, Communications and in FEMA, the number of female graduates continues to surpass that of males.

At MCAST, the student population in 2006, also showed similar signs of encouragement. The female students increased by 3.5% within the IT institute and by 1.9% in Electrical Engineering, among others.

Proposed actions & timetable of events



The following activities are being proposed in order to address the challenges faced by the target groups identified through the consultation process.

January – June 2007

Training to remaining ETC staff members on legal updates regarding gender equality

Organisation and launch of new project in the Cottonera region – Women@Work, to encourage more women to participate in training and employment-related schemes

Launch ESF No. 50 – National Campaign promoting the Benefits of Quality childcare: carry out research, launch and organise campaign and conference

Training for area secondary students on gender equality and gender roles

Campaign that targets employers on the importance of greater work-life reconciliation for employees in collaboration with UOM
BA Communications students

Organise training for HR managers on ways of implementing work-life balance measures in the workplace in collaboration with FHRD and UOM
BA Communications students

Launch an information service for job-seekers on employers who offer work-life balance measures at the workplace – e.g. telework, reduced hours, part-time work

Proposal to deliver “Women for Employment” courses at local council level

July – December 2007

ETC will be conducting train-the-trainers programmes on gender equality and discrimination. Such training is essential since trainers will be conducting similar sessions with all registered unemployed persons

Training on gender stereotypes organised with NCPE to media representatives

Conclusion of ESF47 - Promoting an entrepreneurial culture amongst women. This includes training the mentors and female participants in entrepreneurship skills

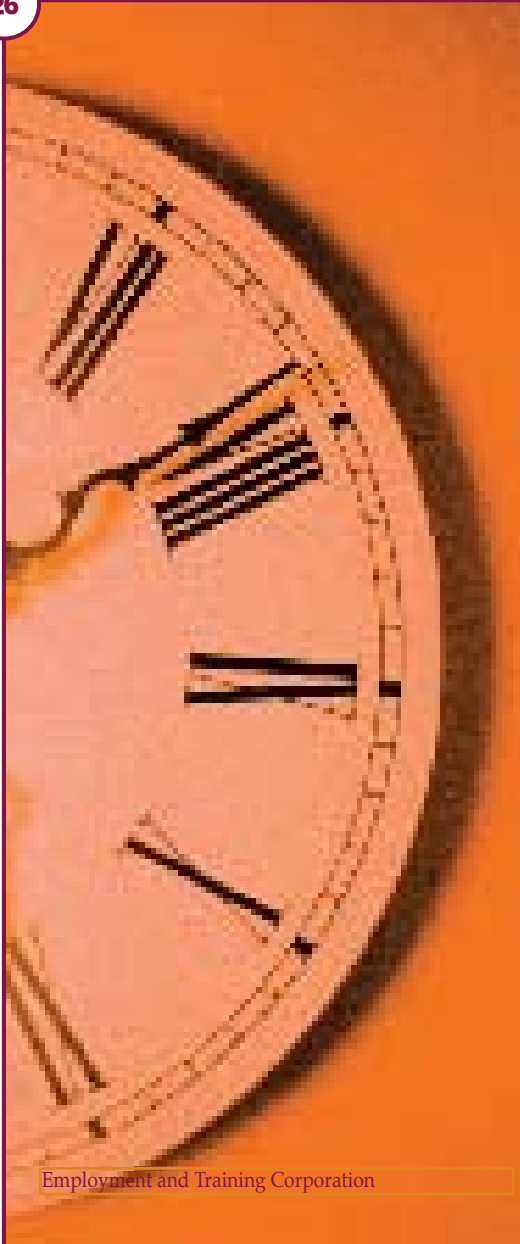
Training for area secondary students on gender equality and gender roles

Proposal to launch a campaign on gender equality in the workplace aimed at employers, workers and registering unemployed women

Organise a think-tank on the issue of non-remunerated work carried out in the home in order to propose solutions how this can be divided more equally between women and men. The think-tank will include women and men living in a partnership, academics, policy makers, people from the judiciary, Church representatives and other interested parties

Carry out a qualitative/tracer study on ETC female trainees over the last 2 years in both female and male oriented courses, with the aim to propose recommendations for an improvement to ETC training courses

Conclude and evaluate lone parents pilot project



January – June 2008

Training for area secondary students on gender equality and gender roles

Project proposal to create of an advisory and support service for employers seeking to implement various family friendly measures

Organisation of international conference in collaboration with the European Commission representation in Malta, dealing with the subject of women and work in Southern European countries*

Training for immigrant women in collaboration with Dar Qawsalla on language and empowerment

July – December 2008

Launch an award for employers offering work-life reconciliation policies at the workplace

Training for area secondary students on gender equality and gender roles

Organise think-tank with Union officials on ways in which measures promoting the reconciliation of work and family life can be promoted in the private sector through collective bargaining

Project proposal to develop homehelp services through training and schemes for low-skilled women to work in these areas

Creation of specific training courses for women

** Implementation is subject to funding*

Annex 1: Key events

2005

Seminar and event organisation

January 13th, 14th

Training to Union officials

January 21st

Women and Men in IT seminar

April 12th

Press launch for ESF 24 and Gender Equality Action Plan 2005-2006

June 19th

Father's day activity at St. Luke's Hospital to promote parental leave for fathers as part of the Modern Men project

July 18th

Filming of father on parental leave as part of the Modern Men project

October 26th

Legal update training to Employment and Training Divisions Executive staff of ETC

November 2nd

Gender awareness training organised for Employment and Training Divisions Executive staff of ETC

November 9th

Legal update training to Employment Division staff of ETC

December 15th

Parental leave seminar in order to disseminate research findings and discuss parental leave issues in Malta

Appearances in the media

January 10th

Filming Qalb in-Nies TV program

February 4th

Television appearance – Education 22

February 25th

Interview for FM Magazine

March 18th

Television appearance – Education 22

April 26th

Filming - Ghax-xoghol tv program

May 16th

Filming Education 22

May 20th

Television appearance – Education 22 (22am)

June 16th

Television appearance – TVM

June 23rd

Television appearance – NET television

August 23rd

Filming Parental leave – Education 22

September 14th

Interview with The Times

October 31st

Television appearance – Education 22

November 1st

Filming – Education 22

November 1st

Filming – Qalb in-Nies TV program

November 1st

Interview – Claire Agius Ordway

December 8th

Television appearance – NET TV

Seminar participation

January 27th

NSO open Day – Work-Life balance

February 18th

NCPE conference participation

February 28th

Gender News Good News EU project
Steering Committee meeting in Rome, Italy

March 21st, 22nd

Modern Men in Enlarged Europe EU project,
steering committee meeting 2, Malta

March 23rd

Participation and presentation at GWU
seminar for women returnees

April 12th, 13th

Participation in training on gender equality
organised by SDO

April 27th

NCPE seminar on sexual harassment at the
workplace

May 13th

Ir-Rabta bejn il-familja u l-iskola seminar

May 23rd

Gender News Good News EU project,
Steering committee meeting, Rome, Italy

May 23rd

“EQUAL” workshop participation

May 26th, 27th

Peer review on the role of men in gender
equality through parental leave in Norway

June 24th, 25th

Participation in 1st Workshop for the
Gender News Good News EU project in
Rome, Italy on Gender stereotypes in the
Media

August 29th, 30th

Modern men in Enlarged Europe project,
Steering committee meeting 3, Denmark

September 15th

Participation in conference by EDRC
– Working for an Inclusive Society

September 28th

Gender News Good News EU project,
Steering committee meeting, Rome, Italy

October 11th

Participation in Corporate Social
Responsibility seminar

October 11th

Delivery of talk to NCW on why women
should work

October 14th, 15th, 16th

Participation in EZK conference on
Work-Life balance, Germany

October 17th

Participation and presentation of ETC
training possibilities at GWU seminar

October 28th

Training on multi-ground discrimination by
NCPE

November 17th, 18th

Final conference Modern Men in
Enlarged Europe EU project, Lithuania

November 28th, 29th

2nd workshop for Gender News Good
News EU project in Madrid, Spain on
Stereotypes in the media

December 6th, 7th

Seminar for PSD and Guidance Teachers
where Occupational Segregation study
was presented

December 22nd

Seminar on Science graduates at
University, Malta



2006

Seminar and event organisation

February 23rd

Gender legal update training for ETC staff (Employment Division)

March 16th

Organisation in collaboration with MIITI of Telework seminar

May 17th

Gender legal update training for ETC staff (Finance, Business Development Division, Head office)

June 13th

Single parent service training to ETC staff (Employment Advisors)

June 22nd

Seminar and launch of Manual for Employers

October 16th

ESF 31: Seminar organisation on training project for lone mothers

November 2nd

EQUAL seminar for employers in collaboration with NCPE, NCW, MEA and FOI

November 23rd, 24th

Training seminar for 5th formers in an area secondary on challenging gender stereotypes and work

Appearances in the media

January 5th – 13th

Airing of Income Tax campaign on Radio

January 9th

Participation Education 22 channel

January 12th

Participation in 22am program – Education 22

February 7th

Filming Education 22 on parental leave

February 7th

Filming – Tarbija fil-guf TV program on parental leave

February 23rd

Filming – Ghax-xoghol ETC TV program

March 3rd

Participation in Xarabank TV program on Pension reform

March 4th

Television filming EQUAL project – TVM

March 9th

Radio program EQUAL project – PBS

March 10th

Participation in RTK radio program

April 5th

TV program – Education 22 – 22am

April 27th

Interview on childcare

May 5th

TV program – Sellili Net TV

May 30th

TV program – Education 22 – 22am

June 13th

Participation in Bondi+ program on women and work
Childcare program on Education 22 – 22pm

October 10th

TV program – Education 22 – 22pm

November 15th

Interview for U30 program (PBS) on youth and gender equality

November 15th

TV program – Education 22 – 22am

December 8th

Participation on Xarabank program on women and work

Seminar participation

January 6th

Presentation (the role of men in achieving gender equality) and participation in NCPE seminar

January 31st

Participation in Conference on NAP against Poverty and Social Inclusion

February 24th

Presentation at MUMN conference on work-life reconciliation

February 15th

Participation NCPE ESF conference

February 22nd

Delivery of talk to over 40s unemployed on finding solutions to job searching

March 1st

Presentation at GWU seminar on part-time incentives and employment

March 7th

Participation in NCW discussion on women and work

March 23rd, 24th

Final concluding conference – Gender News Good News EU project in Rome, Italy

April 3rd, 4th

Participation in EQUAL conference in Tallinn, Estonia

April 25th – 28th

Presentations to inactive women participating in EQUAL project with NCPE on work-life balance

April 25th

Presentation on Gender Equality Unit's work to Cedefop visiting group

April 27th

Presentation to parents at Sir Luigi Preziosi Secondary school on the need for girls to further their studies and continue working

April 28th

Presentation on Gender Equality Unit's work to foreign delegation brought over by GWU

May 4th

Presentation on women and work for conclusion of Women for Employment course organised by SIFE UMT

May 19th

Seminar participation on Women in Business

June 2nd

Participation NCPE ESF conference

June 14th

Participation in ETC Single mother forum: Inclusion through employment

June 20th

NCPE conference: Gender Equality, responsibility for both sexes

June 23rd

Presentation on Gender Equality Unit's work to EQUAL partners on gender and age

July 14th

NCPE ESF Conference

July 28th

Press conference attendance MFSS on Childcare standards

August 3rd

Presentation on Work-life Balance for women returnees organised by Staff Development Organisation

September 1st

NCPE ESF conference: Gender Mainstreaming, the way forward

September 15th

NCPE ESF conference: Gender Mainstreaming, the way forward

September 19th

EDRC conference “Family values in the European Union and Malta”

October 12th, 13th

Participation in European Foundation for the Improvement of living and working conditions meeting in Dublin

October 20th

Participation in conference in Prague by European Women's Lobby titled “Who Cares? Care Issues in Europe from a Gender Perspective”

October 26th, 31st

Training on women in leadership positions delivered to FHRD members

October 28th

Presentation to Malta Olympics Committee on women in leadership positions in sport

November 6th

Delivery of lecture on gender equality to Post graduate diploma in Career Guidance students at University of Malta

November 14th

Presentation on the role of men in gender equality in Lithuania through EU funded project “Modern men in Enlarged Europe II: Family-friendly Policies”

November 16th

Participation in NCPE seminar FETE project

November 20th

Participation in NCPE conference ESF: Gender Mainstreaming, the way forward

November 30th

Presentation to over 40s in Gozo on Government incentives

Cottonera Women@Work Project

December 1st

Participation in 1st Quality seminar organised for ETC senior executive staff members

December 5th – 7th

Attended training organised by NCPE on Equality issues for good governance in Malta and Cyprus Public Service

December 7th

Participation in the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions' road show in Malta

December 15th

Presentation on Government incentives for women's employment for SIFE UMT seminar

December 18th

Presentation and sharing of experiences on training initiatives by the Gender Unit to foreign delegation by GWU

April 25th and 26th

Focus groups for inactive and unemployed registrants respectively for discussion on their training and employment needs

June 13th

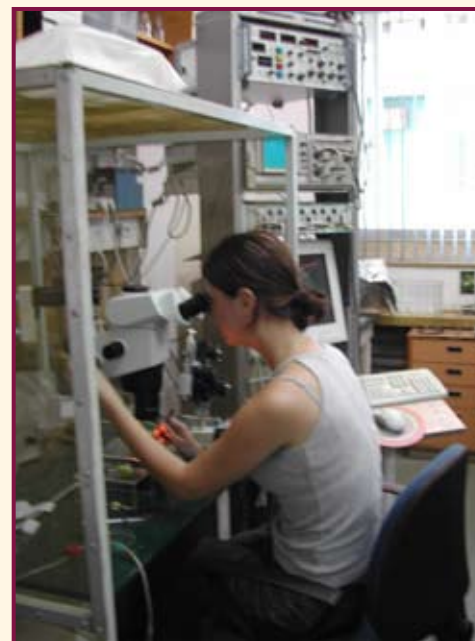
Meeting with Cottonera women for new project involving funding of training and scheme participation

June 16th

One-to-one interviews with Cottonera women interested in participating in the project to assess their needs and aspirations

June 20th, 22nd, July 4th, 11th

Presentation to Cottonera women participants on work-related issues such as the importance of work and how ETC schemes can help women wishing to return to employment, the Social Security system and the benefits of formal employment, the Employment law, discrimination and harassment, and health and safety at work



Student requests and meetings

During 2005 and 2006, the Gender unit was involved in overseeing and dealing with a number of student requests for information on various topics related to gender equality related to theses and presentations. These included studies related to marital status and employment, fertility issues, pension reform, fathers and parental leave, gender in rural communities, telework, disability and gender, women's work in family businesses and gender in the media.

Annex 2: Legal Updates 2005-06

Tax Provisions affecting Women Returners

Tax Credit (Women Returning to Employment) Rules, 2005

Women returning to employment will benefit from a tax credit of Lm700 set off against the tax in respect of gains of profits from the said employment.

Women may benefit from this tax credit if they have been absent from the labour market for at least 5 years and have been in employment for at least 24 consecutive months prior to leaving the labour market.

This tax credit may be availed of over 2 consecutive years commencing from the year of assessment during which the return to employment takes place.

Part-time Work (Amendment) Rules, 2005

As from year of assessment 2005 any persons:

- Receiving a pension and in part-time employment as secondary form of income
- or
- Holding a full-time job as primary occupation but having also a part-time job as secondary occupation,

are able to transfer their right to 15% tax on the part-time income to the spouse returning to employment, usually the woman.

Pension Reform

Social Security (Amendment)
(No.2) Act XIX, 2006

National Insurance Credits

Parents born on or after 1st January 1962, who have legal custody of a child, and who opt to leave the labour market to care for the child or are not active in the labour market for child-rearing responsibilities, are entitled to:

- Up to a maximum of 2 years of child-rearing NI credits per child until that child reaches the age of 6, which credits can be shared between the mother and the father

- Up to a maximum of 4 years of NI credits per severely disabled child until the age of 10, which can be shared between the mother and father.

This child-rearing credit is available for married, single and adoptive parents, who may be employed, unemployed, inactive or self-employed. Credits are awarded only if the parent returns to employment for a minimum period equivalent to the period of credits awarded (i.e. 2 or 4 years) prior to the retirement age.



Annex 3: Consultation Meetings

Date: 21st August 2006
Guests: **ETC Managers**
Mr. Edwin Camilleri, *Manager, Labour market Research, BDU*
Dr. Alexiei Dingli, *Senior Manager, BDU*
Mr. Robert Suban, *Manager, EU*

Date: 30th August 2006
Guests: **ETC Managers**
Mr. Raphael Scerri, *Acting Senior Manager, Employment*
Mr. Felix Borg, *Operations Manager*
Mr. Charles Cassar, *Manager, Administration*

Date: 31st August 2006
Guests: **ETC Employment Advisors**
Date: 5th September 2006
Guests: **Union Officials**
Dr. Romina Bartolo, *UHM*
Dr. Charmaine Grech, *GWU*
Mr. Kevin Bonello, *MUT*
Ms. Maria Cutajar, *MUMN*

Date: 12th September 2006
Guests: **Employers**
Mr. Joe Farrugia, *MEA*
Mr. George Pulis, *HSBC*
Ms. Mariella Borg Costanzi, *Farsons Group*

Date: 13th September 2006
Guests: **NGO's and Gender Equality machinery**
Ms. Marie Demicoli, *NCW*
Ms. Doris Bingley, *NCW*
Mr. Silvan Agius, *NCPE*
Ms. Amanda Ellul, *Dar Qawsalla*

Date: 20th September 2006
Guests: **Policy Makers**
Dr. Therese Micallef, *Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity*
Mr. Alfred Portelli, *Department for Social Security*

Date: 28th September 2006
Guests: **Mixed focus group: Policy makers, academics, employers**
Dr. Joanna Drake, *European Commission representation in Malta*
Ms. Maryanne Gauci, *Appogg services*
Dr. Marceline Naudi, *University of Malta*
Dr. Josann Cutajar, *University of Malta*
Dr. Brenda Murphy, *University of Malta*
Dr. Saviour Rizzo, *University of Malta*
Ms. Mary Louise Agius, *HSBC*



Annex 4: The World of Family Friendly Policies

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Family-friendly policies are defined as those measures that increase resources of households with dependent children or elderly persons. Such measures reduce barriers to having children and enable dual earner families to combine work and family commitments; whilst enabling equal employment opportunities between men and women. Below are a few examples of how these family-friendly measures are being implemented in various countries:

Parental leave: Italy

Legislation encourages fathers to take a proportion of the parental leave (at least 3 months of the 10 months allocated). Should they not take these three months, the family will lose the possibility of obtaining an additional month of parental leave (total parental leave 11 months). Fathers cannot transfer their right to parental leave to the mother.

Childcare: Denmark

Around 70% of childcare costs are paid for by the Danish state. The remaining maximum of 30% is paid by parents. However, it is free for parents on low income. Over 90% of Danish municipalities are in a position to guarantee a place in the childcare centre for children born there.

Telework: Portugal

Employment legislation in Portugal introduced the legal framework regulating telework in 2003. The Employment Code ensures that the teleworker receives the same treatment as other company employees.



Urgent family leave /childcare leave: Sweden

Temporary parental benefit is available to parents who are caring for a sick child up to 12 years of age, and in certain cases, up to 16 years of age. 120 cash benefit days per year are available and are paid at 80% of the parent's regular income. It is widely used by both parents, though on average 7 days per child are taken each year. It is an effective option for dual-income families as it enables both the mother and father to combine family commitments with work outside the home.

Flexitime: Australia

The Australian Public Service collective agreement includes the introduction of 'flexbank', a system whereby employees are required to work an average of 37 hours and 30 minutes per week, but have flexibility in the number of hours worked on any particular day. Employees can work between 7am and 7pm, Monday to Friday. The flexbank is designed to facilitate a balance between operational requirements, efficient client service and the personal needs of the employees.

Work-life balance: UK

Since 2003, in the UK parents of children under six or disabled children under 18 years of age, have the right to apply to work flexibly and their employers will have a duty to consider these requests seriously. It does not provide an automatic right to work in an alternative work arrangement, as there will always be circumstances when the employer is unable to accommodate the employee's desired work pattern. The legal right is however designed to meet the needs of both parents and employers, especially small employers. It aims to facilitate discussion and encourage both the employee and the employer to consider alternative working patterns and to find a solution that suits them both.



Annex 5: Publications of Interest (2006)

The following are highlights from EU publications on gender equality and work

The European Union believes that gender equality is a fundamental principle on which societies can improve. Over the last few years, EU directives and publications focussing solely on gender equality have been issued and published. Equality bodies have been set up in all Member States, and the Institute for Gender Equality has been established in Vilnius, Lithuania. This will be operational as from 2007. The aim of the institute is to raise awareness among EU citizens on issues related to gender equality and to fight discrimination based on sex.

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European Commission (2006) Report on Equality between Women and Men, 2006

The 2006 report on Gender Equality outlines a number of challenges facing the European Union member states in achieving greater gender equality. These include:

- Reducing the wage gap, which averages 15% across Europe;
- Reforming the tax and benefit system to make formal employment more attractive, particularly for women;
- Increasing and focusing on work-life reconciliation policies, such as parental leave and alternative work arrangements;
- Increasing quality childcare to help more parents participate in the labour market;
- Involving men in the gender equality process.

European Commission (2006) A Roadmap for Equality between women and men, 2006-2010

The Roadmap for Equality identifies a number of priority areas which need special attention when targeting gender inequality, such as:

- Achieving the 2010 Lisbon targets for employment (female employment rate - 60%)
- Addressing the gender wage gap
- Increasing female entrepreneurship through various incentives
- Creating incentives for women to work, by making work pay
- Promoting a better work-life reconciliation for both men and women
- Developing more care facilities not only for children, but also for the elderly and disabled, which may lead to the creation of more jobs where women want to work
- Increasing women in decision making positions, politics and in science-related jobs to reduce occupational segregation, both vertical and horizontal.
- Eliminating gender stereotypes from all areas of life – e.g. education, employment, media

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Fourth European working Conditions Survey, 2006

The report on European working conditions shows that in the EU 27, more men (55.5%) than women (44.5%) are in employment. Many sectors are still largely dominated by one sex. For example, women constitute 75% of workers in the education and health sectors, while 76% of those working in transport and communications are men. Only 23% of the European workforce is employed in occupations where there is an even mix of men and women.

In general, Eastern and Southern European countries tend to have longer working days and weeks when compared to Central and Northern European states. Overall, the majority of the European workforce works a regular five-day, 40-hour week. Around 50% of workers in Northern European countries can adapt their working time to a certain extent to suit their needs. This possibility exists for only 25% of workers in Southern and Eastern Europe.

Most part-timers in Europe are women with 33% of them opting to work part-time, as opposed to 4% of men. Long working hours are predominantly a

male phenomenon in Europe with 20% of men, as opposed to 8% of women working more than 48 hours a week. As a result, men, particularly fathers, report more dissatisfaction with their work-life reconciliation than women.

Unpaid work is prioritised differently for both genders in Europe. While men tend to devote time outside work to further their education, women use free time mainly for domestic duties. At work, women suffer more bullying and harassment than men. In fact, there are three times as many women as men who suffer unwanted sexual attention.

When one looks at the wages of men and women, the latter tend to work more in the lower income groups. In the EU 25 around 50% of women are positioned in the lower third of the income scale, as opposed to 20% of their male counterparts. The high prevalence of female part-timers may partly account for this. However, among full-time workers, differences are still evident and women are particularly under-represented in the higher income scale in all European countries.

European Foundation for the Improvement of living and Working Conditions

Working time options over the life course: New Work patterns and company strategies, 2006

Companies may opt to introduce work-life balance measures at work for a variety of reasons namely:

Responding to socio-economic, cultural and demographic changes

These changes include an increase in the female workforce, a change in the family structure and diversified family forms, as well as the belief in life-long learning and active ageing which can create greater awareness among workers on the need to find a healthy balance between their work and private life.

Offering working time arrangements as a business case

Organisations may also choose to introduce work-life balance measures on their own initiative. This may be done to increase productivity, reduce absenteeism and staff turnover, to portray a positive public image or to save on recruitment and training costs.

Responding to internal and external pressures

Employees, unions, government incentives and legislation can all work toward encouraging employers to introduce family-friendly policies in the workplace. This can be done through financial support, offering expertise and campaigning to make employers aware that such measures can make business sense, for example by increasing the business opening hours through flexible working solutions.

Organisations may either supplement existing legislation favouring better work-life reconciliation, or initiate measures to help employees reconcile work and family responsibilities.



Sharing good practices

Here are real-life examples of companies that are trying to implement new working time patterns in a way that allows for the reconciliation between their own interests as a commercial organisation and enhancing employees' possibilities for improving their work-life balance.

Different working time according to age

Volkswagen (Germany) has introduced the idea of demographic working time, wherein younger employees work a 40-hour week, which decreases with age, down to 32 hours a week.

Extending opening hours

The UK government is itself setting a good example as an employer. The civil service opening hours have been extended to 8pm one weekday and Saturday morning through the implementation of flexible work time schedules allowing a better balance between work and family commitments for Government employees.



Collective bargaining

In its action program submitted at its 10th Congress, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) highlighted the issue of working time reduction (35 hours) and innovations in working time arrangements, as a topic for collective bargaining in order to undertake better work-life reconciliation and improve the quality of jobs.

Family-friendly measures

Boiron, a French company producing homeopathic products, goes by its motto 'to manage through trust'. They have developed a social policy which highlights:

- The possibility to adapt the working hours to match the constraints that employees have outside work, in everyday life.

- Since the 1970s, each employee working full time for at least 6 months may ask to work part-time, choosing the duration and number of working days, and which days to work. This scheme may be used for up to 1 year, at the end of which there is a new negotiation between the employer and employee.

- Since 1976, it has been possible to progressively reduce working hours from the age of 55 by using a time credit system, according to the number of years worked in the company.
- It is possible to save holidays on a multi-annual basis.

- Training opportunities offered during the free time of the employee with a coach financed by the company for up to 2 half days.

As a result of this policy, staff turnover amounts to 7%, and absenteeism is just 5%.

Local publications and reports

The local scenario has seen an increase in the number of publications, statements and reports dealing with gender equality in the Maltese setting. Below are a few of the most recent contributions made by various entities.

Nationalist Party (2006)

Increasing women's participation in Society

The General Council of the Nationalist Party acknowledges the efforts and incentives carried out by Government to ensure the advancement of women in Maltese society. The Council stresses the need to continue working on enabling women to become economically active by participating in formal employment. Areas which needed special attention, according to the Council, include the situation of family businesses, the national insurance system for part-timers as well as the taxation system.

In line with these identified issues and areas of concern, the Council encourages Government to implement the following changes so as to enable women to enter and remain in the labour market, many of which were addressed during the Budget 2007 speech.

- Change the present part-time National Insurance contribution system, to one which is proportional to the part-timer's income,
- Allow spouses of self-employed persons to regularly work within the company
- Extend for the following year, the income tax incentives for women returning to employment after a 5 year break.

Furthermore, the General Council encourages Government to:

- Continue to ensure that women are able to fulfil their social role in society by providing further adequate conditions and opportunities for them to do so.
- Encourage the increase in quality childcare facilities, particularly through European funds, to help mothers reconcile work and family responsibilities and participate fully in the Maltese economy
- Further life-long learning possibilities to encourage both men and women to develop themselves in various sectors of society.
- Focus on further education to increase female participation in the labour market.

Malta Labour Party (2006) Towards full equality between women and men

The aim of the document is to increase the female participation rate and increase equality between men and women in Malta. From this report, a number of proposals are suggested, among which the following related to employment are:

- Redefine the meaning of “discrimination” as found in the Equality for Men and Women Act to cover areas currently not protected by the law.
- Award greater autonomy and power to the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality to implement the law and effectively investigate cases of discrimination.
- Give recognition to the qualities like team building, conflict resolution, budgeting and communication skills, which one develops whilst bringing up the family.
- Encourage women to join cooperatives in order to establish their own business by offering support, research, information, banking facilities and by eliminating bureaucracy.
- Introduce a quota system to increase the number of women in parliament, international agencies, Executive positions in the Public Sector and on boards and committees among others.
- Ensure that self-employed women have the same rights to maternity benefits as those offered to employed women.
- Provide financial remuneration for all 14 weeks of maternity leave.
- Increase parental leave in the private sector by 3 months, for a total of 6 months unpaid parental leave.
- Employ casual workers in the public sector in order to replace other workers who are on a reduced time schedule.
- Provide pro-rata benefits for part-timers working 8 hours or more per week.
- Make work pay by offering better tax conditions for women returnees.
- Lower NI contributions for women returning to employment or those wishing to open their own business.
- Introduce childcare facilities for parents who work in the public sector.
- Create an after school and holiday care system wherein extracurricular activities like sports, art, dance, etc are provided for children in kindergarten and primary schools.
- Create incentives for childcare facilities to be opened in different localities.
- Encourage organisations to effectively deal with cases of sexual harassment at the place of work.
- Ensure that women with low skills are given adequate training possibilities; where necessary, provide separate training for women and men and offer training in the area of technology for women.

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality

ESF Gender Mainstreaming: The Way Forward

As part of an ESF funded project, four research components dealing with various elements of gender and work were carried out. These looked at family-friendly policies at the workplace, telework, the career paths of graduates and the gender pay gap.

The studies outlined a number of recommendations for policy makers, employers and other stakeholders. For the scope of this publication, the recommendations emanating from the studies dealing with family-friendly policies and the gender pay gap review will be summarised.

Family Friendly Measures at the Workplace

The report looked at five local firms and whether any family-friendly policies were present and consequently the effect the presence or absence of such policies have on the employees of the companies.

The recommendations pertaining to the study include the provision of campaigns aimed particularly at men to encourage them to take up family-friendly measures. Further research and audits on equal opportunities and family-friendly measures in local companies are needed. Family-friendly policies should be developed and staff trained on their use and benefit. Following the implementation of family-friendly policies, new forms of management should be developed which are more suited to work of high trust and high value. Government should grant awards and tenders to those companies that offer equal opportunity policies and which have family friendly policies in place.

Gender Pay Review

The study suggests that caring responsibilities and the subsequent reduction in working hours or career breaks for women may result in the disparity of wages between men and women. In fact, the study shows that the gender pay gap between women and men amounts to around 23%, when one considers the gross pay, inclusive of commissions, performance bonuses and overtime. Recommendations from the research include:

- Address the underlying causes of the pay gap, by enabling more women to participate in the labour market on a full-time basis by developing better support systems in the form of quality, affordable childcare services, flexitime, telework and the adequate provision of urgent leave because of sick children;
- Make it more financially viable for both partners to work and enabling women to work full-time rather than part-time;
- Encourage more men to take up parental leave and provide incentives to the private sector for doing this;
- Ensure that equality and anti-discrimination laws are respected and implemented;
- Ensure that more workers are covered by collective agreements and address the pay gap in collective bargaining;
- Encourage a system of standardised pay structures in the private sector;
- Establish a system of job appraisals in order to reduce the wage gap for full and part-time workers;
- Target traditional gender roles through campaigns aimed at children, youth, young parents, employers, educators and the general public.



Annex 6: Standards for Childcare facilities

In 2006, the national standards for childcare centres were published by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity. These standards have been developed in order to ensure that children under the age of 3 are assured the best service which will stimulate and enhance their emotional, social and educational development.

Standard 1 – Suitably trained and qualified staff are to be recruited. These need to have the necessary aptitude and skills to provide good quality care and service providers are to ensure that appropriate carer to child ratios are in place.

Standard 2 – The physical environment, premises and equipment used are suitable and safe for children. Adequate space for indoor and outdoor play, cleanliness and safety of premises and equipment are essential.

Standard 3 – The facility is managed by a qualified person whose skills and experience reflect the needs and objectives

of the facility. A written manual of policies and procedures is present and is accessible to all users.

Standard 4 – The health and safety of children is promoted at all times. Strict attention is paid to the safety and hygiene of all equipment and good standards of hygiene are practised and encouraged. Proactive steps are taken to prevent and control the spread of infections.

Standard 5 – Qualified caregivers interact with children and cater for their physical, social, intellectual and emotional needs. Activities are organised to meet the full range of the child's developmental needs.

Standard 6 - Regular consultation with parents on the progress and development of the child is desirable. Carers welcome parents and work in close collaboration with them to promote the welfare and development of the child.

Standard 7 – The facility has a clear code of behaviour management that is understood and applied by all staff, parents and children. Through positive guidance, children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to show care and consideration for others.

Standard 8 – The facility's manual of procedures contains a Child Protection Policy and Procedure, which is followed

should instances of abuse arise. All instances of suspected abuse are to be reported to the relevant authorities.

Standard 9 – A healthy and nutritious diet is provided to all children. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy snacks and carers take careful note of any dietary requirements of children. Fresh, drinking water is accessible at all times.

Standard 10 – Respect for the diversity of the children's backgrounds, beliefs and individualism is encouraged. Activities are designed to display a wide range of positive images reflecting non-stereotypical roles, and safeguarding the world's diversity of race, ethnic origin and religious belief.

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