

# Gender and career development — Malta

Observatory: EurWORK | Topic:

Published on: 17 May 2007

Author: Manwel Debono, Centre for Labour Studies

Disclaimer: This information is made available as a service to the public but has not been edited by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. The content is the responsibility of the authors.

## 1. Changing concepts of careers

*Research suggests that current career patterns are still strongly influenced by traditional concepts of careers. Traditional concepts are often described as hierarchical models, with continuous service and regular promotion progress up through a series of levels within an organisation, or between organisations. However, new forms of employment are likely to lead to a greater diversification of career paths for both men and women.*

*a) Is the traditional career model appropriate to your country? How have women's careers complied with this traditional model?*

The traditional career model still holds in Malta, as those employees who continue to give regular service to their employers progress more easily within the hierarchal structures of their organisations through promotions and seniority benefits. Furthermore, employment patterns are stable and new forms of employment such as teleworking are still not popular. However, in Malta there are many small family owned enterprises where the traditional career model does not apply, as these ventures have no career ladder or any regulatory framework for promotions.

Most women in Malta still face a number of barriers in their career progression, such as career breaks due to lack of child care facilities, which in turn affects their promotion paths. Many women manage to work only reduced hours or are in part time work, which again puts them in a disadvantage to reach senior positions.

*b) Please provide research evidence on whether the traditional concept of a career in your country is changing or whether it remains largely entrenched. Are traditional careers changing as new forms of employment are introduced? If there have been recent changes, what types of change are occurring?*

As has already been stated before, there have been no substantial changes in traditional career models, since new forms of employment are still not very popular. Official statistics show (Table 1) that the overwhelming majority of Maltese workers are in full time employment. A small percentage of Maltese employees work on reduced hours and they tend to be predominantly female.

Type of employment	Sex				Total	
	Males		Females			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Full time job	98,752	95.2	35,089	78.8	133,841	90.3
F/T with Reduced hours	193	0.2	1,514	3.4	1,707	1.2
Part time job	4,753	4.6	7,928	17.8	12,681	8.5
Total	103,698	100	44,531	100	148,229	100

*NSO Publications: LFS 2005*

## **2. Data on segregation and mobility**

*a) Please provide details of employment for men and women by industrial sector and full and part time work for 2005 and also for men and women by socio-economic classification 2005.*

Female employment is the highest in the Education sector (Table 2). Indeed, this is one of the two sectors (the other is Health and Social work) where females outnumber males. Due to its working hours, the Education sector provides women with a form of employment which enables them to continue with their career and raise a family. On the other hand, the manufacturing industry, which is the largest private employer, is male dominated.

Economic Activity	Sex				Total	
	Males		Females			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	2,804	2.7	111	0.3	2,915	2.0
Fishing	533	0.5	-	-	533	0.4
Mining and quarrying	491	0.5	-	-	491	0.3
Manufacturing	21,730	21.0	5,565	12.5	27,295	18.4
Electricity, gas and water supply	2,985	2.9	309	0.7	3,294	2.2
Construction	12,456	12.0	283	0.7	12,739	8.6
Wholesale and retail trade, repairs of household and vehicles	14,368	13.9	6,765	15.2	21,133	14.2

Hotels and Restaurants	7,906	7.6	5,111	11.5	13,017	8.8
Transport, storage and communication	9,986	9.6	1,996	4.5	11,982	8.1
Financial intermediation	3,122	3.0	2,953	6.6	6,075	4.1
Real estate, renting and business activities	5,901	5.7	2,375	5.3	8,276	5.6
Public admin and defense	8,771	8.4	2,634	5.9	11,405	7.7
Education	3,854	3.7	7,225	16.2	11,079	7.5
Health and social work	4,954	4.8	5,625	12.6	10,579	7.1
Other community, social and personal service activities	3,651	3.5	3,579	8.0	7,230	4.9
Private households with employed persons	-	-	-	-	-	-
Extra-territorial organisations and bodies	186	0.2	-	-	186	0.1
Total	103,698	100	44,531	100	148,229	100

*NSO Publications: LFS 2005*

In line with the traditional career model, the majority of males (a high 95%) are in full time employment (Table 3), whereas part time employment tends to be predominantly female (17.8% vs. 4.6% of men).

	Sex				Total	
	Males		Females			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Full time	98,752	95.2	35,089	78.8	133,841	90.3
Part time	4,753	4.6	7,928	17.8	1,707	8.5
Total	103,698	100	44,531	100	12,681	100

*NSO Publications: LFS 2005*

A larger percentage of females work in professional, clerical and service-related occupations when compared to males (Table 4). On the other hand, a larger percentage of males work in skilled and unskilled occupations.

Economic Activity	Males		Females		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Armed Forces	1,173	1.1	-	-	1173	0.8
Legislators, senior officials and managers	10199	9.9	3,068	6.9	13267	9.0

Professionals	9448	9.1	6739	15.1	16187	10.9
Technicians and associate professionals	14723	14.2	7252	16.3	21975	14.8
Clerks	6934	6.7	10031	22.5	16965	11.4
Service workers and shop and sales workers	13088	12.6	9976	22.4	23064	15.6
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	2914	2.8	-	-	2914	2.0
Craft and related trades workers	19817	19.1	263	0.6	20080	13.5
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	11234	10.8	3363	7.6	14597	9.8
Elementary occupations	14168	13.7	3839	8.6	18007	12.2
Total	103,698	100	44,531	100	148,229	100

NSO Publications: LFS 2005

***b) Please provide details of any survey evidence which shows the percentage of women in management and senior management positions (including the number of women who are Board Directors) by industrial sector.***

Survey evidence showing the percentage of women in management and senior management positions by industrial sector is not available. Table 5 presents the figures of women in the highest occupational groups, that is, legislators, senior managers and managers and professionals.

<b>Occupational Group</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Legislators, senior officials and managers	3,011	6.6
Professionals	7,329	16.0

NSO Publications: LFS 2005

### **3. Data on training and qualifications**

***a) In the Gender Perspectives Annual Review 2000, data was collected on the education levels of men and women across the member states. For member states that were covered in the 2000 annual review, we would like to update these figures. For new member states we would like to collect equivalent figures. Please refer to the 2000 annual review for more details ([www.euro.eufound.europa.eu/2001/03/update/tn0103201u.html](http://www.euro.eufound.europa.eu/2001/03/update/tn0103201u.html)).***

	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>All</b>
% of labour force with a University level education	10.5	8.6	9.4
% of labour force having completed secondary education only	43.2	44.5	43.8

***b) Please provide information on the amount and duration of training provided by employers for men and women employees in 2005, by part time and full time work.***

Data is not available.

#### **4. The social partners and gender and careers**

***a) What are the views and opinions of the social partners in your country with regard to:***

***i) gender segregation***

Occupational gender segregation has been the focal point of various debates about gender inequality among social partners in Malta. In fact segregation has frequently been used as a tool to measure inequality. Nevertheless, social partners feel that the concentration of the sexes in different occupations does not necessarily mean that either sex is disadvantaged.

Social partners are striving to reduce gender segregation by trying to encourage their female members to be more actively involved at the places of work. For instance, both the General Workers' Union (GWU) and the Union of United Workers (UHM, Union Haddiema Maghqudin), the two largest general trade unions, give support to their females members to become committee members and assume decision making positions.

***ii) training and qualifications to promote equal career opportunities amongst men and women;***

Although men and women have equal opportunities for training and qualifications, it is evident that there is still much that can be done to promote equal career opportunities. According to the Malta Employers Association (MEA), this must be done from the early stages of a student's life. MEA places considerable emphasis on career guidance as a means of making students aware of the wide variety of career opportunities. Parental guidance is also viewed as playing a vital role in the formation of a student's career orientation.

***iii) tackling gender discrimination in careers; and***

Social partners feel that although gender equality is protected by law, discrimination in various forms is still evident in women's careers. Recruitment strategies and models of selection tend to militate against women. While social partners publicly condemn all forms of discrimination, some unions stated that a woman may not be given a job simply because she is married or has kids. The MEA believes that there needs to be a change in culture in order to make employers fully aware of the benefits of an equal employment policy. Social partners are happy that gender mainstreaming is featuring in the government policy.

***iv) encouraging the adoption of policies on gender and careers at company level?***

Social partners feel that they can help to promote practices of work-life balance and also challenge the false idea that working long hours is what makes a good employee. However, more needs to be done to promote new types of employment which might make it easier for women to progress in their careers and reach high positions. Trade Unions said that in the public sector, they have by and large, succeeded through collective bargaining to obtain family friendly working conditions, much more favourably than the provisions and term in the law.

***b) What policies have the social partners developed to promote career opportunities for women within their own organisations (internal)?***

In top positions of the union hierarchy women tend to be conspicuous by their absence. Indeed, within the UHM there are no women occupying high positions. At the GWU there are only five female council members out of 54. In the GWU there is one woman who forms part of the Administrative council of the union. Female legal advisors are being employed by the social partners. Indeed GWU, UHM and MEA employ female lawyers. Union officials contend that although they do promote career opportunities for women within their own organisations, most of the time women tend to shy away from such positions often claiming that they have other commitments.

***c) What policies have the social partners, either individually or jointly developed to promote career opportunities for women in other organisations (external), with regard to:***

***i) gender segregation;***

- ***sexual harassments policy***

- ***employment handbook for employers in collaboration by ETC entitled ‘Making work better for organisations and for employees’***

***ii) training and qualifications to promote equal career opportunities amongst men and women;***

***iii) tackling gender discrimination in careers; and***

***iv) encouraging the adoption of policies on gender and careers at company level (for example, EQUAL)?***

Social partners do encourage the adoption of policies on gender and careers, not only at company level but also on a more national level. For instance, MEA is a development partner in the EU project EQUAL dealing specifically with promoting equality and eliminating discrimination. Furthermore, unions cover the above issues in the collective agreements that they negotiate and sign.

***d) are there any other examples of social partner activities directed at improving career opportunities for women, generally or specifically (for example, EQUAL)?***

In order to improve career opportunities for women, social partners take part in various projects which enable them to launch campaigns and give their input in conferences and seminars. Furthermore, they also participate at European level motions. For instance, MEA is a participant in the EU funded project 'For diversity against discrimination' 2003 – 2010 which deals with 5 types of discrimination including gender. As 2007 is the year of Equal Opportunities for All, social MEA intends to place gender discrimination high on their agenda.

## **5. National Centre view**

***Please provide a commentary on key developments in gender and careers in your country. In particular please give your assessment of the impact of legislation on promoting gender equality in careers and outline the biggest barriers to promoting gender equality in careers.***

A main development in gender issues is the increasing number of females in every sector of the educational system. Females university students have been outnumbering males for the past years. It is only in the trade section of vocational schools where girls are in a minority.

The setting up of the National Centre for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) indicates government's commitment to achieve gender equality. Government has also enacted a specific law, namely the Gender Equality Act (2003) to address gender issues. The family friendly measures introduced in Employment and Industrial Relation Act (EIRA, 2002) are also aimed at promoting gender equality.

Despite all the efforts, there has not been any substantial increase in the female participation rate in the labour market, which is by far the lowest in EU. Empirical studies consistently point out that parental leave is rarely, if ever, taken by males. The number of childcare facilities is very low and concentrated in particular areas, where the residents tend to be white collar workers and/or of middle class background. Finally, the male bread winner model is supported implicitly and explicitly by the traditional Catholic doctrine dominating the Maltese culture.