



## **Gender Equality Action Plan**

**2005 - 2007**

Employment & Training Corporation

# ETC GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

**2005 - 2007**

## Contents

<b>Report on the Gender Equality Action Plan 2003-2004</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Women, Work and the European Union</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Women and the Maltese Labour Market</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Programmes and Initiatives 2005-2007</b>	<b>21</b>

Appendix 1: Events 2003  
Events 2004

Appendix 2: Laws relating to gender equality in the labour market

## Report on the Gender Equality Plan 2003-2004

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It has been a busy time since the launch of the ETC Gender Equality plan in January 2003. The country has seen important milestones since then; for instance, Malta joined the European Union in May 2004 and the first National Action Plans for Employment and for Poverty and Social Exclusion respectively were launched in late 2004.. In these last two years two pieces of important legislation with direct relevance to gender and work have also come into force, namely the Employment and Industrial Relations Act and the Equality for Men and Women Act.

Work in the Gender Equality Unit at ETC has spanned many areas and included **training, studies, seminars, campaigns, involvement in EU projects and much more.** We worked with Guidance Teachers, Union Officials, policy makers and people within the Media and with various experts in the gender equality field. We have also collaborated closely with the then Department, Women in Society and later with the newly appointed National Commission for the Promotion of Equality between Men and Women. We also helped numerous university students who asked for our assistance with their dissertations related to gender and work and gave our input in matters relating to policy especially with regards to the childcare regulations.

We have managed to do most of the initiatives described in our first Gender Equality plan. Some of the initiatives stalled due to reasons beyond our control; others were slightly modified to meet a changing situation. Still another number of initiatives were not foreseen in the last Plan but came about in response to emerging opportunities. The next section provides a brief summary of the main activities which were undertaken by the Gender Equality Unit during these last two years:

### **Training**

#### Training for ETC Staff

In November 2003 Dr Alison Parken delivered a two day training seminar in Gender Mainstreaming for Senior Managers, Managers and Senior Executives working at ETC. The seminar was prepared in conjunction with Professor Teresa Rees. It included training in a step-by-step approach to Gender Proofing and Gender Impact Assessments and was designed to enable ETC staff to create and deliver effective programmes which promote equality.

During the training it was emphasised that the design of employment and training programmes must not reproduce inequalities by producing a 'one size fits all' service. Doing so does not account for the gendered differences of individual's daily lives which may inhibit women from making a full contribution to economic growth and their own personal fulfilment.

#### Training for Advertising Agents

An information meeting was organised on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2003 for key persons involved in the advertising media about the changes in the Employment and Industrial Relations Act regarding advertising and gender equality. Dr Brenda Murphy a university lecturer in Media Studies, addressed the participants and made suggestions regarding the use of language to ensure law compliance when accepting adverts for jobs in their newspapers.

#### Training for Guidance Teachers

Guidance Teachers in Public and Private Schools were given training with the scope of updating them on the legal developments in the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (2002) and The Equality for Men and Women and Women Act (2003) During the training sessions which were held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December, Dr. Roselyn Galea briefed the Guidance Teachers about these laws and their relevance to the labour market. The

workshops touched upon issues relating to the interviewing process, job advertisements and sexual harassment.

### Training for Personal and Social Development Teachers + Guidance Teachers

On the occasion of the launch of a Manual for Gender Sensitive Vocational Guidance in April 2004, four training sessions were organised between March and April 2004 to all Guidance and Personal and Social Development Teachers in Public, Private and Church Schools. The training, which was delivered by Ms Mary Cooney from the University of Malta with the assistance of Ms Charmaine Mifsud Cardona included four workshops on career opportunities to both sexes, how to avoid gender stereotyping and work segregation and the importance of getting boys and men to share in the domestic responsibilities at home.

### Training for Union Officials

A two-day training seminar for officials from Trade Unions in Malta which included General Workers Union (GWU), Union Haddiema Maghqudin (UHM), Malta Union of Teachers (MUT), Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses (MUMN) and Union of Cabin Crew, together with a representative from the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> January 2005. Training was delivered by Professor Godfrey Baldacchino.

The aim of the seminar was to provide background information, practical guidelines and checklists in order to add to the efforts of trade unions to promote gender equality at the place of work, through gender sensitive collective bargaining.

Six workshops permitted participants to reflect on gender issues and what concrete input they could make when drawing up collective agreements for employees. The topics discussed included the benefits for women participating in trade unions; the benefits for the various unions in attracting more women; the inclusion of gender-friendly clauses in the respective collective agreements including childcare structures, parental leave entitlements and other work-life balance policies.

### Training for Women Returners

Empowerment training is offered free of charge to unemployed women who would like to return to the labour market. The previous training course was reviewed and updated and is run on a continuous basis throughout the year.

The course includes units on communication, working in a team, assertiveness skills, time management, conflict and stress management, job search and CV writing skills and interview skills amongst others. The course includes the sharing of experiences with role models who have made the transition from home to work.

## **Studies and Seminars**

Two studies were commissioned by the Gender Equality Unit and are still underway at present. These studies focus on Occupational Segregation and on Telework and should be completed in 2005. We have also commissioned the writing of a Manual for Gender Friendly Organisations which will be published and disseminated amongst Employers.

### *Women's work aspirations*

In 2004 the Research and Development Division launched a series of short surveys among women with the aim of assessing their work aspirations and their wish to find or retain employment. Separate surveys were held among employed, unemployed and inactive women (i.e. women who are not in full-time study, in employment or seeking work). Survey

participants were asked a series of questions dealing with their intention to retain or take up employment and the conditions that would help or encourage them to do so.

Results have already been obtained for the first survey done among inactive women and presented during a Research Forum organised in June 2004. Findings reveal that almost half of the respondents interviewed would like – under certain family-friendly conditions - to take up work. Most were younger women, had secondary level of education or higher, used to work as machine operators and assemblers, clerks or as service and sales workers and were employed in sectors such as manufacturing, wholesale and retail, as well as hotels and restaurants. A publication containing the results of all three surveys will be produced in 2005.

### **Lone mothers on social security benefits**

In 2004 the Research and Development division also launched a qualitative study among lone mothers on benefits. The scope of the research project is to get to know more about this client group's work aspirations and the factors that influence them. Respondents have been asked about their work experiences, whether they wish to work, type of working conditions they wish to work in, what is hindering them from searching for a job, their level of education, and the type of assistance they require. Findings of the study will be presented during a research forum organised in 2005 and published later on the same year.

### **Women and Men in the IT labour market**

The R&D division carried out a qualitative study among 11 companies that employ both males and females in IT occupations. The scope of this small enquiry was to understand the recruitment and promotion procedures of employers in the IT sector, as well as the measures they take to retain IT staff within the company. Employers indicated that most applicants for IT jobs are male, although the females that they have interviewed proved to be very talented. Most companies claim to offer family-friendly measures to their employees such as flexible or reduced hours, the possibility to shift to part-time work, teleworking, career breaks and special leave. Female employees avail themselves of family-friendly measures more than males.

The Division intends to supplement the findings of the study with another small-scale qualitative enquiry among female IT employees themselves. Participants will be asked questions relating to their job experience, their choice of a career in IT, and their working conditions. The information gathered from both studies will be published in 2005.

### **Seminar by WPDC on Women's Formal Participation in the Maltese Labour Market**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2003 a seminar was held at St James Cavallier in conjunction with the Workers' Participation Development Centre and the Department of Women in Society. The study which was conducted by the WPDC tested seven distinct hypotheses which may impact on women's decisions to stay away from the labour market. ETC contributed to the dissemination of this study by organising the seminar, at which the Senior Executive on Gender Issues and other speakers gave their reactions to the findings of the study which were presented by Professor Godfrey Baldacchino.

### **Women and Men in the IT labour market**

The ETC, in conjunction with the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality and the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, organised a seminar on Women and Men in the IT Labour Market in January 2005. The aim of the seminar was to generate ideas as to how the IT labour market could be made equally accessible for both women and men. Members of various organisations with interest in either IT or gender equality were invited. The guest speaker for this seminar was Dr Jane Millar, a researcher/consultant from the UK whose area of expertise is the IT, electronics and communications sector.

At the seminar, ETC's R&D division presented the results of a small study of 11 companies that employ both males and females in IT occupations. The scope of this enquiry was to

understand the recruitment and promotion procedures of employers in the IT sector, as well as the measures they take to retain IT staff within the company. Employers indicated that most applicants for IT jobs are male, although the females that they have interviewed came across as very talented. Most companies claim to offer family-friendly measures to their employees such as flexible or reduced hours, the possibility to shift to part-time work, teleworking, career breaks and special leave. Female employees avail themselves of family-friendly measures more than males.

## **Campaigns**

### A campaign aimed at encouraging girls to continue schooling

Girls who have low qualifications and skills find it more difficult to remain in employment and to re-enter the labour market at a later stage if they stop working to have children. Thus the more qualified and skilled they are the more likely it is that they remain or eventually return to the labour market.

In 2003 a campaign was launched in time to coincide with the end of the scholastic in order to encourage more girls to continue studying after they finish their secondary education. For this campaign the singer Nadine Axisa who is a B.Sc graduate in Maths and Physics was used on the poster which was distributed in secondary schools and used on street billboards. A parallel campaign was also done on some radio stations.

### A campaign aimed at encouraging more girls to study Science, Engineering and Information Technology

In 2003 a campaign was launched to encourage more girls to study science, engineering and Information Technology. The campaign coincided with the time of the year when applications for courses at MCAST and at University are open for students.

The Maltese Judoka Michelle Grech who was then pursuing a Ph.D in a science related field, was used for this campaign. The message behind the campaign was that work in these areas can be fun and creative and is usually well paid. The main slogan was "Science, Engineering and Information Technology – Girls can do it too - It's fun and it pays!".

### Work-Family Balance Campaign

In 2004 ETC launched a campaign on work-family balance with the aim of raising awareness and encouraging a debate about enabling mothers and fathers to meet their responsibilities as workers and parents.

For this campaign TV, street billboards, radio and printed media were used. Two Public Service Announcements were produced and aired on the public and political television stations in Malta in conjunction with adverts on radio and local newspapers.

The aim of this campaign was to encourage and enable women and men to pursue productive and fulfilling work which would bring an income to the family while ensuring that both can share equitably in the joys and burdens of parenthood. Through this campaign ETC wanted to give a positive message to families by encouraging the collaborative sharing of paid and unpaid work.

## **Local Projects**

### Lone Parents Pilot Project

An Action Research Project targeted at lone parents is underway. The aim of the project is to provide a holistic package of care by means of multiple interventions centred around the

needs of lone parents and their children with the scope of encouraging them to return to training or education so that they can become financially independent. Ms Christine Borg is the project leader and is working on this project in collaboration with various entities.

The project is now nearly a year old. It was initiated in May 2004, when six participants from the Ghozza Unit of the Education Department and another six participants from the Parish of St. Paul's Bay and Merhba Bik Home. Participants were either pregnant or had at least one child, were not in a stable relationship and were not in gainful occupation. The ages of the participants ranged from below 16, to thirty.

A tool was created which served to gather all relevant information in a concise manner. The Profile tool looked at the particulars of each participant in the areas of *Housing; Education; Income; Development; Childcare; Health; and, Occupation*. A personalized action plan was set up, led by the wants and needs of the participants and with a view to enabling participants to continue their academic education and training in any subject of their choice.

#### Cottonera Pilot Project for Women

The Cottonera Women's Pilot Project is a joint project between ETC and the Cottonera Community Services, Appogg. The aim of the project is to help women to enter the labour market and helping them overcome specific obstacles through training and mentoring support.

The project started in 2003 wherein focus groups with social partners and women registering for work were held. In these focus groups the needs and suggestions of participants were noted and eventually this led to the creation of a training programme which was tailor-made for their specific needs. The course included units on self-esteem, assertiveness, communications, time management, decisions making and ethical values, gender issues, harassment, job search, CV writing and interview and presentation skills amongst others. The women were each assigned a mentor to help them identify possible employers. All the nineteen participants who started the course completed it, and were awarded certificates for attending.

At present a review is underway to establish how many of these women are in employment and to assess future needs.

#### INT – Ibda Negozju Tieghek

In 2003, a number of women participated in INT, a one-stop Entrepreneurship Programme run by ETC's Training Division, aimed at promoting an enterprise culture among persons interested in taking up self-employment. In this programme, ETC offered training and guidance, as well as a financial grant to those with a successful business plan, mentoring and marketing support

#### The Small Business Management Courses

The Training Division also organised courses dealing in management issues for those interested in starting their own business or those already having their own business who need further training in management. There were various modules in the course itself which tackle different issues including how to manage finance, book-keeping skills and VAT accounting; and marketing skills amongst others.

There has been a positive participation by women in such courses. Since 2001, the female uptake of this course has been promising with 220 women making use of this managerial course.

### **EU Projects**

#### Leonardo Project

ETC secured funds through the Leonardo da Vinci Programme for a project which involved six persons from the Childcare Technical Committee. Through this project the six beneficiaries gained insightful experience by visiting and observing the municipal infant-toddler centres and the pres-schools in the Reggio Emilia area in Italy. Reggio Emilia is a world known centre of excellence for childcare.

This project gave participants the opportunity to experience several of Reggio's Children's Centres and to observe the settings in which education and care are delivered. The exchange took place between the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2003.

#### European Social Fund Project – Increasing Female Participation through childcare services at the workplace

Funds amounting to Euro 907,419 have been secured from the European Social Fund for a project which aims to increase the supply of quality, accessible and affordable childcare service facilities at the place of work. It is envisaged that this project will create around 600 new childcare places at the work place. Doing so will mean that more women will be able to remain or return to the labour market.

This project proposes a range of activities to promote childcare. The first part provides for the training of child carers. The training programme consists of both a theoretical component, in line with NVQ Level 3 standards, as well as a practical component where trainees are required to work under supervision in a childcare facility.

The second part of the project entails a package of incentives for employers to start and run childcare services. The incentive package includes half the salaries of trained child carers and the provision of free-of-charge childcare expertise to companies wishing to provide such services. The project also includes a start-up grant to adapt the premises to a desirable standard and/or to render it safe and stimulating for toddlers and children and another grant in order to buy the equipment and furnish the place adequately.

#### Modern Men in an Enlarged Europe

The project ***Modern Men in Enlarged Europe: Developing Innovative Gender Equality Strategies*** aims to foster sustainable change in gender identities by encouraging men to take up new and modern gender roles.

The project promoter is the Lithuanian Office of the Ombudsman and includes three other countries, namely Denmark, Iceland and Malta which is participating through ETC.

The project revolves around the use of paternity leave as a means to confront stereotypes about men and to develop new images of men as care-givers. Areas of activity include the development of strategies and tools to overcome gender stereotypes; encouraging new gender images through the media; training decision-makers to become more gender-sensitive; and developing gender mainstreaming policies with particular focus on men and care-giving roles

#### Gender News Good News

The project *Gender News Good News* aims to increase gender awareness among those who contribute to the various media namely television, radio, press and web media. Through this project script writers, producers and journalists in collaboration with experts in the equality field will produce a manual with guidelines for the various mass media that will help overcome gender stereotypes in public opinion.

The projects aims at raising awareness in media workers/experts about the existence of stereotyped and prejudiced attitudes in the workplace, that hinder or discourage male workers from taking more caring and less gender stereotyped roles within the family. It aims at

spreading information and cultural models that facilitate the conciliation between family and work, at prompting a fairer distribution of non-remunerated work done at home and at changing stereotyped roles both at work and at home.

The promoter is the Ministry of Labour and Social Politics in Italy in collaboration with the RAI Italy and Spanish and French Television amongst others. Malta is represented through the Gender Unit at ETC and the NCPE. Through this project seven Maltese persons who are involved in the different media will be able to get training in order to produce guidelines for more gender sensitive portrayal of women and men in the media.

## **Childcare**

### ETC Childcare centre – all year round care

As from August 2004, the childcare services offered to parents who work at ETC were extended to include all year care for babies over three months of age. Previously the childcare services were offered only during the holiday periods. New nursery equipment was procured and the setting was changed and adapted to accommodate children of different ages.

### Participation in the childcare technical committee

ETC has been a regular contributor to the Technical Committee for Child Day Care. The Committee was set up with the aim of producing childcare regulations, and these regulations were launched for consultation in July 2004.

## Women, Work and the European Union

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In May 2004, Malta became a member state of the European Union. Gender equality has long been a highly-valued principle of the Union, and is reinforced by the new Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. It is becoming increasingly important to integrate the gender perspective across all policy spheres. This is very much the case in terms of labour market policy, where women's full potential has yet to be mobilised.

In its recent report on Gender Equality 2005 (COM2005 44 final), the Commission highlights a number of policy challenges that face member states today. These include the following:

- Member states should ensure equal opportunities in the labour market for women and men with care responsibilities, by providing the right combination of instruments which would allow them to work full time if they wish and also to return to full time jobs after a period of part-time
- Member states should pursue their efforts to modernise social protection systems. Pension systems and other social benefits should be adapted to a context where women are employed to the same extent as men and aspire to the same career opportunities as men and where men can share equally domestic tasks and care responsibilities.
- Member states should remove financial and non financial disincentives to women's participation in the labour market, as well as the ones that cause long career breaks with negative consequences on the level and entitlement to pensions. These include notably the individualisation of taxation and benefit systems and the promotion of affordable childcare facilities.
- Member States should ensure that measures and activities financed by the Structural Funds and the European Social Fund in particular, aim at combating gender stereotypes in education and in the labour market and contribute to reducing the gender pay gap. Meanwhile European Social Fund and European Regional Development Funds should be used to increase the provision of care facilities.
- Member states need to boost the provision of affordable, accessible childcare facilities of good quality, in particular for children aged 0-3 in line with the Barcelona targets.
- In the context of the ageing population, urgent actions and commitments are needed at member states level to guarantee a suitable level of care provision for dependants other than children, in order to avoid the withdrawal of workers, in particular women, from the labour market.
- Special attention should be paid to actions directed towards men in order to promote a change of workplace culture in support of gender equality.
- Member States should promote adequate parental leave schemes, shared by both parents. It is particularly important to facilitate men's possibilities to take up leave by developing financial and other incentives.
- Member States and the Social Partners should initiate awareness raising activities to encourage men to share responsibilities for care of children and other dependents.
- Member states need to address the large gap in employment rates between older women and older men by adequate measures with a view to reaching the target of 50% employment rate for older workers by 2010.

- Member States and Social Partners should address the persistence of the high level of the gender pay gap and of gender segregation in the labour market.

In 2004 Malta published its first National Action Plan on Employment (NAP), as part of the European Employment Strategy. Each member state is to submit a NAP every year, outlining its policy priorities and measures. The NAPs are based on ten employment guidelines, the sixth of which deals with gender equality in employment. It calls for an integrated approach to encourage female labour market participation and to achieve a substantial reduction in gender gaps in employment/unemployment rates between women and men including a reduction in the pay gap by 2010.

The guideline calls for measures which will help reconcile work and private life particularly through the provision of services for children and other dependents and encourages the sharing of care and house work between women and men. This guideline calls on Member States to remove disincentives to female labour market participation and to provide childcare by 2010 for at least 90% of children between three years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children under three years of age.

Below is a table showing the Targets as set by the Employment Strategy and the set Maltese targets for increasing the female employment rate, increasing the provision of childcare and encouraging the return of older women to the labour market:

**Table 1: EU targets NAP 2004**

<b>Targets as set for Malta</b>	<b>Situation as at December 2003 in Malta</b>	<b>Proposed targets for Malta at 2010</b>	<b>EU Target 2010</b>
Increasing female employment rate by 7%	33.7%	40.7%	60%
Increase childcare provision to 1,800 places (300 per annum) for children under 3	Not available	15%	33%
Increase older worker employment rate by 2.4%	32.6%	35%	50%

### **NAP Measures**

The National Action Plan includes concrete proposals which encourage women to remain and return to the labour market through tax incentives and by removing disincentives to work. For example at present a full time worker is entitled to be taxed at a flat rate of 15% on earnings up to Lm3000 which have been earned through a second job. In the case of a couple opting to be taxed at the married rate, this 15% rate entitlement can be transferred to a spouse working on a part time basis while the other spouse remains taxable at the preferential married rate.

Another incentive is addressed to women who have been inactive for at least five years from the labour market. The National Action Plan proposes that they will be given a one-off tax holiday in the first year of their full-time or part-time employment in the private sector.

### **European Social Fund Projects**

In order to reach the above targets set for Malta a number of European Social Funds projects which focus on gender equality have been identified and will be undertaken by various entities during the period of 2004-2006 as follows :

An ETC project which aims to train a pool of child carers and to provide a packet of incentives to employers with the aim of helping them to open a childcare centre for their employees at the place of work

A project of the Ministry of Health, Elderly and Community Care which will promote more women in top management positions at public hospitals through gender-sensitive training and the introduction of job sharing and flexible hours for public health workers.

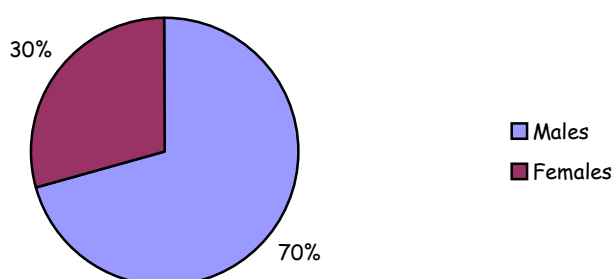
A project of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality which will revolve around a number of studies. These include an analysis of the benefits of family-friendly measures for employers and employees, a review of the gender pay gap, an analysis of the career path and working conditions available to graduates and a quantitative survey relating to a Telework pilot project in the public sector.

Finally, a project promoting technical skills among women returnees in IT and customer services and Entrepreneurship will be undertaken by The Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology.

## Women in the Maltese Labour Market

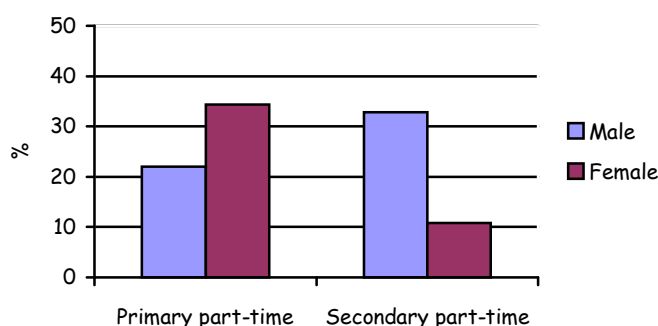
According to the Labour Force Survey issued for the period July to September 2004, the full-time gainfully occupied population in Malta amounted to 137,708 person. Of these 40,659 were women and 97,049 were men. Thus there were 56,390 more men in the labour market than women.

Chart 1: Total employed as at September 2004



37,156 (27%) jobs out of the total of 137,708 were part time jobs. There were 12,766 women for whom part time work was their primary occupation and 4,016 women who had a part time job as their secondary occupation thus totalling 16,782. On the other hand 8,188 men had a part time job as their primary occupation and 12,186 men who had a part time job as their secondary occupation thus totalling 20,374. (NSO 18/2005). Thus overall there are more men working part time (as primary and secondary occupations) than there are women. Of all working mothers, 63% work full time whilst 37% work on a part time basis. On the other hand 99% of working fathers work full time and only 1% work part time.

Chart 2: % part-time employment July-Sept 2004



In 2004 there were 15,947 persons who were self-employed and of these only 2,167 were women. In the private sector, men outnumber women in all sectors and the least differences appear in the Banking, Insurance and Real Estate Sector while in the Public Sector the only two categories of work where women outnumber men are in the Educational and Health and Social work field. There were 46,338 employees in the Public Sector of which 13,950 were women and 32,388 were men.

Whilst there are positive measures in the NAP to encourage more women to return to the labour market, and three months unpaid parental leave have been granted to women and men working in the private sector in 2003, there are still many challenges ahead if we want to

increase the participation rate of women. Society still places a disproportionate amount of responsibility on women for the caring of the children, elderly relatives and the caring of the home and the gender contract is still very traditional. Childcare services are still far-and-in-between for the under three year-olds and there are no funded after-school-care schemes, whilst the holiday scheme offered by government still does not satisfy the needs of typical dual earner families who work in the private sector. Finally the benefits of a career break and reduced working hours are mostly available to workers in the public sector and flexible working solutions are still rare in the private sector.

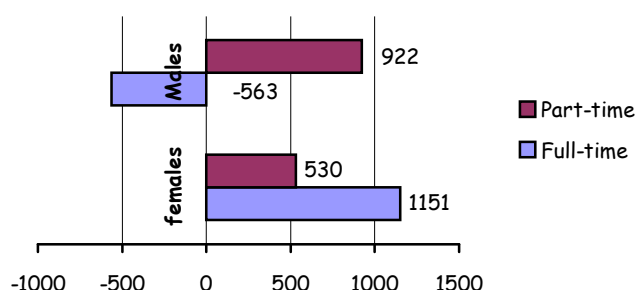
In spite of various circumstances that could impact negatively on the participation rate of women, there are visible signs that their position is likely to continue to increase in the labour market. The following are some of these indicators:

#### Increase in women's full time and part-time employment

According to ETC data based on September 2004 figures, there was an increase of 530 jobs over September 2003 whilst Female part-time only employment rates increased by 1,151 jobs. The rate of increase of women's full time jobs in a year amounted to 1.3% but this rose by 10% when it comes to women's part-time work. According to ETC data for the same period there was a drop of 563 jobs in men's full time employment rate and an increase of 922 jobs in men's part time only work

Part-time work is on the increase across Europe; however one needs to ensure that those working on a part time basis enjoy the same pro-rata rights and benefits as those working on a full time basis. In Malta pro-rata benefits are only available to those who work at least 20 hours a week and persons who have a part-time job as their primary job, still have to pay a National Insurance Contribution equivalent to the minimum wage, even if they are not earning it.

**Chart 3: Increase/Decrease in type of employment  
Sep 2003-2004**

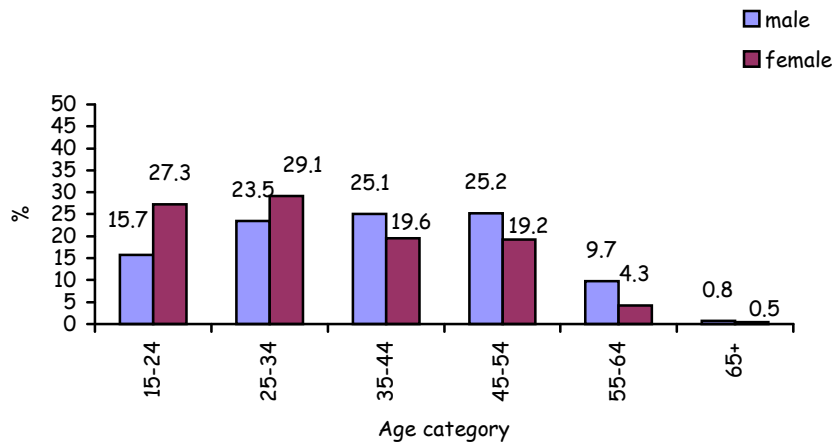


#### More women are likely to remain in the labour market

A look at the age distribution of the total employed persons (LFS 1/2005) reveals that of all working women, the largest percentage of women (29.1%) by age cohort are aged between 25-34. This is the prime age when women are likely to have their first or their second child and if they have remained in the labour market during this period, they are likely to remain employed as their children grow older.

If more women are likely to remain in the labour market, more childcare places need to be created for the under three's and after-school care and holiday schemes need to be developed and expanded. Experience across Member States shows that countries which have comprehensive policies to reconcile work and family life for both men and women, show higher fertility rates as well as higher female participation rate in the labour market.

Chart 4: Age Distribution of total employed persons (%)  
July-September 2004



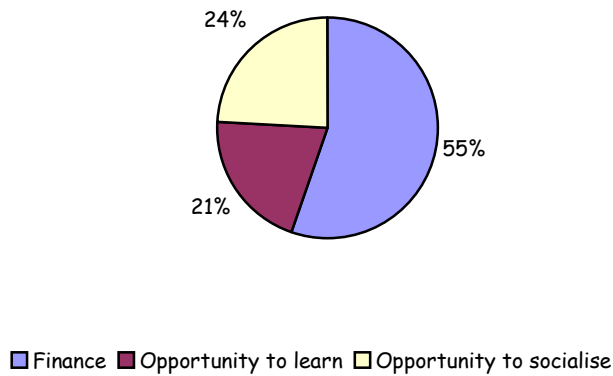
#### Inactive Women..... but willing to work

The LFS (July-Sept 2004) reports that 69.5 of all Maltese women aged between 15 and 64 are not active in the labour market, that is they are neither employed nor looking for work. However, research on the “*Work Aspirations of Inactive Women*” carried out by the Research and Development Unit at ETC during 2004 revealed that 44.8% of inactive women, amounting to more than 50,000 women, would actually like to work under certain conditions. These include good working conditions especially family friendly hours, adequate job opportunities, further education and training opportunities and favourable fiscal measures concerning national insurance and tax rates.

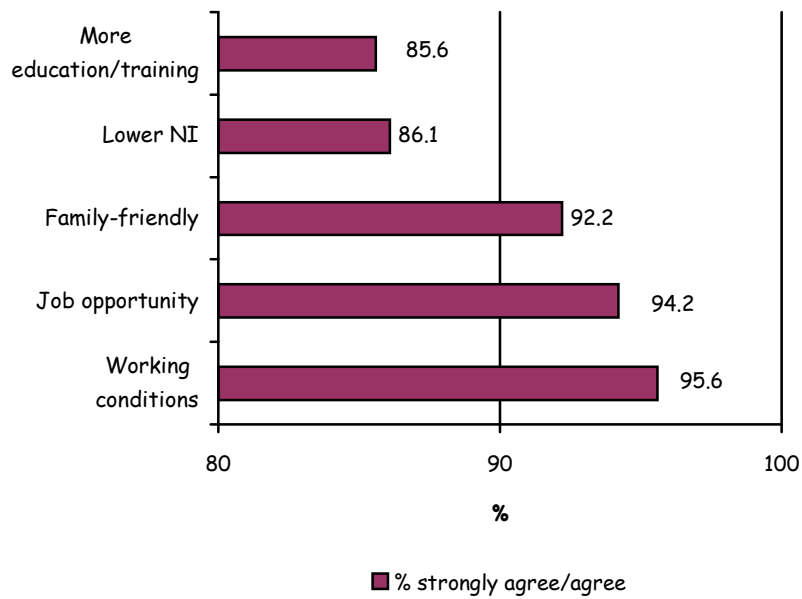
Those who said they would not like to work were significantly older, with more-and adult-children, and partners with a higher mean income. They also tended to be less likely to have ever worked and to have a lower level of educational attainment.

This research highlights the importance of increasing the participation rate of girls who undergo further education and training, since the more highly a woman is educated, the more is the likelihood that she will remain or return to the labour market after giving birth. It also poses the challenge to ensure more flexible and innovative working solutions for all and that fiscal incentives are in place to make it worthwhile for workers, especially those working part-time, to do so in the formal economy. More and better jobs need to be created both for women and men and more incentives need to be put in place in order to attract older women back to the labour market.

**Chart 5: Reasons cited as "very important" for wishing to work**



**Chart 6: Preferred conditions of work**

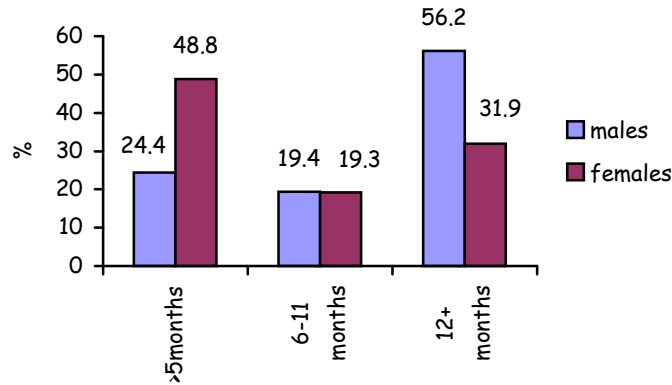


The prime reason cited by inactive women who wish to work is related to financial matters. This implies a probable shift in the future to dual earner families or at least one-and-a-half earner families becoming the norm and not the exception.

Shorter unemployment phases

Women tend to spend less time in unemployment than men. Almost half of those females registering for work find employment in less than 5 months. They are therefore less likely to become long-term unemployed.

**Chart 7: Duration of job search July-Sep 2004**

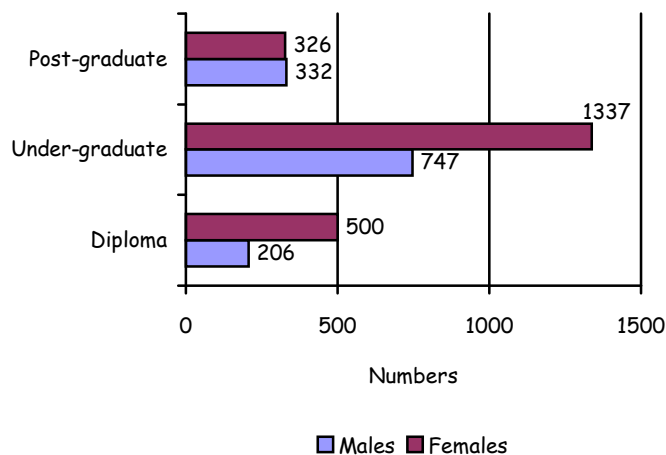


Since women tend to find a job faster, more attention may need to be given to men to ensure that activation measures are in place to prevent them from becoming more long-term unemployed.

More women who are pursuing tertiary education

Statistics for students who graduated in November 2004 show that 64% of all undergraduates (1,337) were women and 36% (747) were men. In postgraduate courses, there were 326 females (49.5%) and 332 (50.5%) males. Female undergraduate students were largely under represented in Engineering (80.9% males) and Architecture (63.3% males) while males were under represented in the humanities mostly in the education (72.7% Females) and the health care sector (71.8% Females).

**Chart 8: University graduates 2004 by gender**

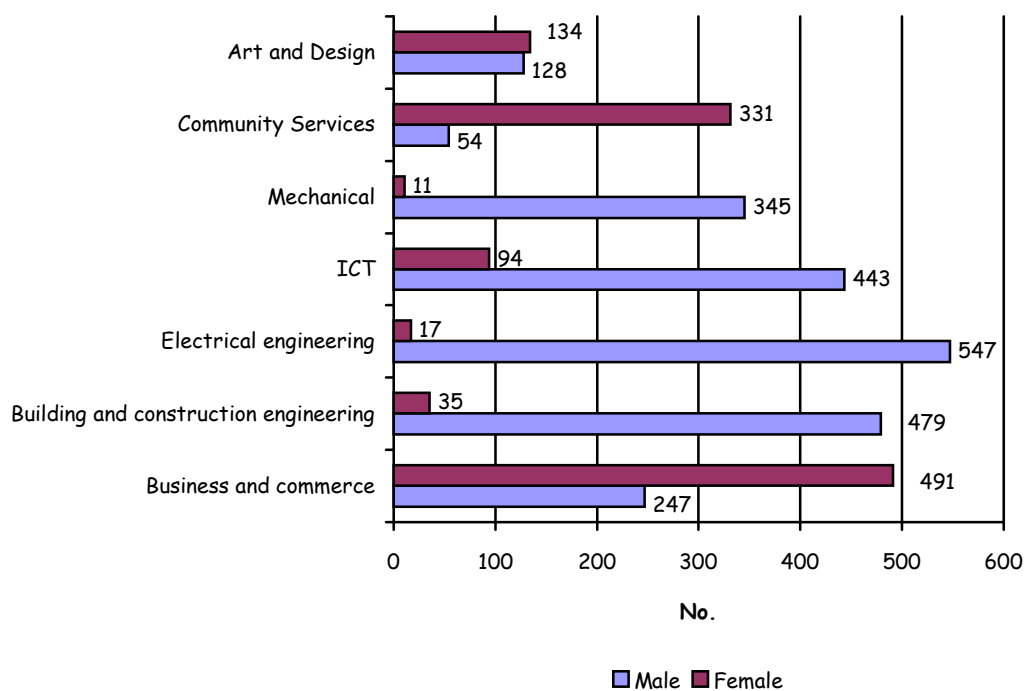


In the present academic year 2004-2005 there are encouraging signs of improvements in the number of female students reading for Science degrees at the University of Malta wherein 49.5% of students (1645) are female and 50.5% (1681) are men. Similar signs of improvement can be noted in the number of female students following the Information and Communication Technology courses wherein female students make up 42.1% of all students and in the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, where 60.6% (303) are female students and 39.4% (197) are males.

However, in March 2005, at the Malta College of Arts Science and Technology, there were still twice as many boys (66.2%) as girls (33.8%) taking vocational courses. Male students predominate in courses related to electronics, telecommunications, computer hardware,

masonry, engineering, ventilation and air conditioning and other more stereotypical male areas. Female students, on the other hand, predominate in courses related to arts and design, banking and financial services and administrative and community care amongst others.

**Chart 9: Breakdown of MCAST students by institute and gender March 2005**



In the ETC Extended Skill Training Scheme and the Technical Apprenticeship Scheme there are nine boys to every one girl who are studying and getting on-the-job training in a vocational area. The pattern followed by apprentices at ETC in the choice of training is similar to the choices made by MCAST students, that is boys tend to follow traditional courses like auto electrical technicians, applied mechanical engineering, and motor vehicle technicians and girls tend to follow courses in the caring and beauty field.

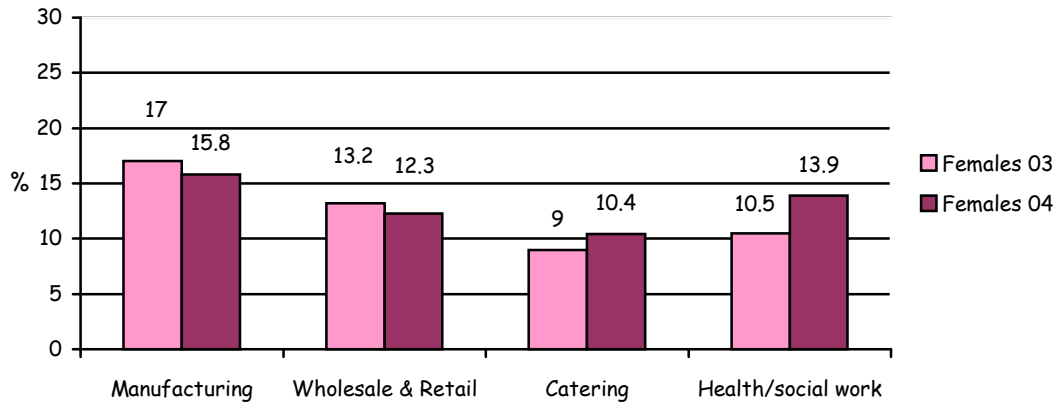
This poses a challenge to ensure that more female and male students enter into non-traditional areas of study and work to extend their career options. This should decrease job segregation and should impact positively on the wage-gap. It is also important to address the gender gap in educational achievements since women are outnumbering men especially at the tertiary level but men are still outnumbering women in vocational education and training. It is essential that more female and male students continue to further their education and training beyond the mandatory school age and since women are attaining higher educational qualifications, more attention needs to be paid to men's educational achievements.

#### Shift from the Manufacturing to the Services Sector

According to the Labour Force Survey (July-September 2004) there was a decrease in manufacturing jobs which affected women's employment in that sector whilst an increase was registered in the wholesale and retail trade sector. There were also slight increases in the employment rate of women within the Health and Social Work Sector as well as in the catering industry.

The shift from manufacturing to the services sector brings with it new challenges in order ensure that women and men are given re-training in order to enable them to find work in alternative sectors of the economy.

Chart 10: Females employed (%) by economic activity in 2003 and 2004

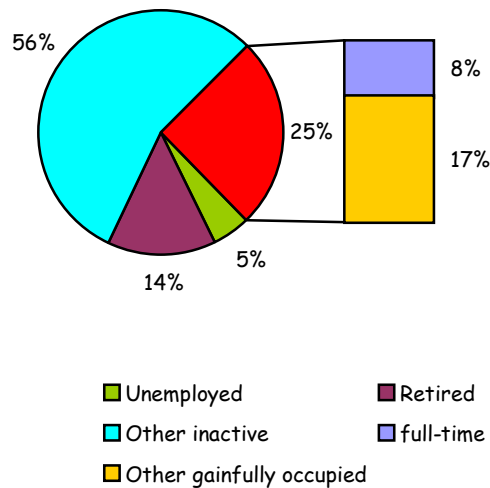


Increase in single mothers household

The majority of single parent (75.5%) households in 2003 were headed by single mothers. Of these, 25.2% work but only 8% have a full time job. The National Action Plan on Poverty and Social Inclusion identified single mother's households as being at a greater risk of poverty than other households.

This poses new challenges to ensure that more single parents can work and that it is worthwhile for them to do so, otherwise they may prefer to rely on social benefits. The gap between the minimum wage and the social benefits for single parents may not be sufficient to encourage them to give up their benefits in favour of a job which does not come without risks. The need for affordable, accessible, quality childcare becomes more urgent if we want more single women to work instead of relying on social benefits.

Chart 11: Single mother household by economic activity

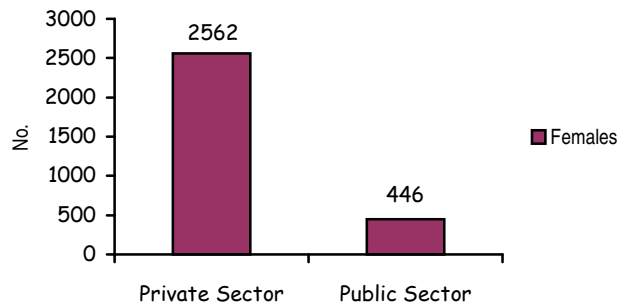


Fewer Female Dropouts from the Labour Supply where there are more flexible working solutions:

A study carried out by the Labour market Research unit at ETC during 2003 aimed to determine the numbers and reasons for female dropout rates from the labour market. It is interesting to note that in the Public sector where greater emphasis is placed on work-life integration measures, the level of female dropouts was much lower at 15% than that in the Public sector which amounted to 85% of all dropouts

This poses a great challenge to ensure that employers become aware that through work life measures they can retain working time arrangements. They associate work life balance measures, like flexible working hours, with extra burdens and costs, disruptions and complexities to management to coordinate them. Thus any policy change must come accompanied by a strong business case for it to succeed with employers.

Chart 12: Female dropout by sector



### 2005

#### Launch European Social Fund Project Scheme to encourage Employers to open childcare centres at the workplace

This project which is co financed by the European Union provides a packet of incentives to employers to open a childcare centre for their employees at the work place. The launch will include details of how employers can apply to get funds and will give more information about the training of the staff to ensure quality.

#### Introduce a register for Part-Time workers

At present persons registering for work did not have the option to register for part-time work. With the creation of a new Part-Time register, persons who can only work part time or reduced hours will be able to be matched by requests from employers also seeking part time workers.

#### New Training and Employment Schemes for Women

A number of new training and employment schemes will be launched with the aim of encouraging more women with different education and skills to take up training and employment.

#### Presentation of project for EU funding

A project will be written and presented to the European Union for funding through the Programme relating to the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005) through the Open Call for Proposals. The priority for this year's call focuses on the role of men in the promotion of gender equality, in particular the role of men and fathers in the reconciliation of work and private life.

#### Launch of Manual for Employers

A manual will be launched and training will be provided in collaboration with the Malta Employers Association in order to increase awareness in employers about important issues relating to gender and work

#### Training to ETC Staff – Employment Section

Staff within the Employment Section at ETC will be updated on the existing and recent legislation that are of relevance to gender and the labour market. Subsequently a process of Gender Mainstreaming spanning several months will be initiated in collaboration with the Senior Manager and staff.

#### Telework Study and Seminar

Following a study on the feasibility of telework, we will disseminate findings through a joint seminar with the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Information Technology.

#### Men on Parental Leave Project

Following a qualitative research which has been carried out with men on parental leave and their employers, we will organise activities to disseminate findings especially through the use of a video production which will focus on a day in the life of a man who is on parental leave to care for his child.

### Work Segregation Study

Following the results of a study on work segregation a seminar will be organised in collaboration with the Euro- Mediterranean Institute for Education and Research and the Euro-Guidance Unit.

### Longitudinal Tracer Study

A ten-year long longitudinal tracer study is being proposed with 11 and 16 year old students in order to assess their work and life preferences and how gender impacts on their choices over a number of years.

## **2006**

### Seminar for 5<sup>th</sup> Formers from area secondary schools

An area secondary school for girls will be selected for this pilot project wherein the 5<sup>th</sup> formers attending that school will be invited to a weekend of activities wherein they will be able to explore and widen their career choices.

### Gender News Good News Project

As a follow-up of the Gender News Good News Project, guidelines for more gender sensitive portrayal of women and men in the media will be issued and disseminated as widely as possible. This project will be done in collaboration with the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality.

### Supported Employment Scheme for Single Parents

It is envisaged that a scheme will be introduced for a limited number of single mothers in order to train them and give them a job experience through a pilot scheme.

### Presentation of project for EU Funding

A new project will be submitted for funding on gender related issues.

### Follow-up work with Guidance Teachers

A follow up of the work already carried out with the Guidance Teachers and the Personal and Social Development Teachers will be done wherein further training and support will be given.

### Training of ETC staff

Staff within the Training Section at ETC will be updated on the existing and recent legislation that are of relevance to gender and the labour market. Subsequently a process of Gender Mainstreaming spanning several months will be initiated in collaboration with the Senior Manager and staff.

### Conference on Women and Work in Southern Europe

An international conference with foreign and local speakers will be held on Women and Work in Southern Europe. The idea is to take a closer look at the common factors which affect the low participation of women in southern Europe and propose suggestions to what can be done about it.

## Entrepreneurship Scheme and Training for Women

This project will consist of a training and entrepreneurship scheme for women and men who are interested in providing home help in various areas.

## Qualitative Study on Early School Leavers

A qualitative study on early-school leavers will be done.

<b>2005 Jan to June</b>	<b>2006 Jan to June</b>
Launch ESF scheme for Employers to open childcare centres at the place of work	5 <sup>th</sup> formers seminar on career exploration – weekends for area secondary students
Introduce a register for Part Time Workers	Gender News Good News – Publication of guidelines and training to persons in the media in collaboration with NCPE
Design and launch of ETC new training and employment scheme for women	Supported employment scheme to single parents
Presentation of project for EU funding	Presentation of project for EU funding
Launch manual for Employers and training to HR Managers in collaboration with MEA using manual	Follow-up work with guidance and PSE teachers
Training to ETC staff - Employment Section including legal updates and gender mainstreaming process + launch of written guidelines to staff	Training to ETC staff – Training Section including legal updates and gender mainstreaming process
<b>2005 September to December</b>	<b>2006 September to December</b>
Telework study + Seminar/project in collaboration with MITI	International Conference on Women and Work in Southern Europe
Video Release and Seminar following study of fathers on parental leave	Highlight foregone income and declared work benefits.
Gender Segregation results and seminar in collaboration with the Euro-Guidance Unit and the Euro Mediterranean Institute for Education and Research	Entrepreneurship Scheme and training for home help support scheme
Launch of a ten-year longitudinal study with a cohort of 11 year olds with respect to their work and life choices and the impact of gender upon them.	A qualitative study of the reasons for early school-leaving and the differences between young men and women in this respect.

## Appendix 1: 2003 Events

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- 6<sup>th</sup> January Information session and discussion with employees at the ETC Employment Section.
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- 9<sup>th</sup> January Childcare Technical Committee Meeting
- 13<sup>th</sup> January Participation in RTK radio programme
- 15<sup>th</sup> January Work-Life Balance Forum at Hotel Phoenicia organised by Workers' Participation Development Centre
- 16<sup>th</sup> January Information session and discussion with ETC Employment Advisors
- 22<sup>nd</sup> January Launch of the Gender Equality Plan
- 23<sup>rd</sup> January Gender Mainstreaming in Action Training
- 24<sup>th</sup> January Gender Mainstreaming in Action Training
- 7<sup>th</sup> February Participation in PBS radio programme on the Gender Equality Plan
- 15<sup>th</sup> February Participation on Radju Malta programme
- 27<sup>th</sup> February Meeting with Gender Media Group
- 5<sup>th</sup> March Childcare Meeting
- 17<sup>th</sup> March Cottonera Women's Project - Introductory meeting
- 21<sup>st</sup> March Meeting at Guidance Unit
- 7<sup>th</sup> April Meeting at Ministry of Social Policy on the Joint Inclusion Memorandum
- 8<sup>th</sup> April Attended seminar organised by the Broadcasting Authority on Gender and Media issues
- 9<sup>th</sup> April Meeting at Kummissjoni Persuni b'Dizabilita'
- 24<sup>th</sup> April Meeting at Ministry of Social Policy regarding Joint Inclusion Memorandum
- 28<sup>th</sup> April Employment Review – European Commission - Malta
- 5-7<sup>th</sup> May Conference on Women and IT - Athens
- 14<sup>th</sup> May Childcare Technical Committee - Meeting with service providers
- 20- 21<sup>st</sup> May Gender Budgeting and Gender Mainstreaming training meeting –The Hague.
- 28<sup>th</sup> May Participation in Action Learning Group - ETC
- 29<sup>th</sup> May Training on Equal Programme
- 3<sup>rd</sup> June Meeting at Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni B'dizabilita
- 6<sup>th</sup> June Meeting at Guidance Unit
- 18<sup>th</sup> June Childcare Technical Committee Meeting

- 24<sup>th</sup> June Participation in PBS TV programme to encourage more young girls to continue studying after they finish secondary schools and to choose non-traditional subjects.
- 25<sup>th</sup> June Speaker in seminar on Factors Affecting Women's Formal Participation in the Maltese Labour Market organised – Workers' Participation Development Centre
- 9<sup>th</sup> July Participation in Television programme – Net TV
- 10<sup>th</sup> July Talk at Corradino Correctional Facility
- 14<sup>th</sup> July Presentation to ETC staff
- 22<sup>nd</sup> July Childcare Technical Committee Meeting
- 6<sup>th</sup> August Participation on RTK radio programme on Family and Work
- 16<sup>th</sup> September Childcare Technical Committee meeting
- 19<sup>th</sup> September Meeting on New European Employment Guidelines
- 7<sup>th</sup> October Work-life Balance Conference organised by Richmond Foundation
- 11-14<sup>th</sup> October Meeting in Hungary organised by the Swedish Labour Market Board
- 19-25<sup>th</sup> October Visit to Reggio-Emilia childcare centres – Leonardo Project
- 14<sup>th</sup> November Cottonera Women's Project - Focus Group
- 18<sup>th</sup> November Talk to members of "Tibqax Wahdek" Voluntary Group
- 26-28<sup>th</sup> November Gender Mainstreaming in Action Training by Alison Parken to ETC staff
- 2<sup>nd</sup> December Attended presentation at St. James Cavalier on *Disability and Work*
- 3<sup>rd</sup> December Legal updates to Guidance Teachers – Part 1
- 3<sup>rd</sup> December Presentation on the situation of women and men in the labour market
- 10<sup>th</sup> December Legal updates to Guidance Teachers – Part 2
- 17<sup>th</sup> December Childcare Technical Committee Meeting.

## Appendix 1: 2004 Events

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- 20<sup>th</sup> January Participation in Seminar *Il-Familja u x-Xoghol* organised by the *Kummissjoni Nazzjonali tal-Familja*
- 28<sup>th</sup> January Participation in radio programme – PBS
- 10<sup>th</sup> March Participation on NET television programme regarding childcare
- 18<sup>th</sup> March Presentation on National Action Plan to Gender and Social Partners
- 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> April Participation in EU conference on “Women and Men in an enlarged Europe” - Malta
- 16<sup>th</sup> April Participation in radio programme – PBS
- 21<sup>st</sup> April Childcare Technical Committee meeting
- 23<sup>rd</sup> April Meeting at Zejtun Local Council on childcare
- 29<sup>th</sup> April Meeting at Education Department on Single Mothers’ project
- 6<sup>th</sup> May Social activity at Ghozza Unit
- 7<sup>th</sup> May Childcare Technical Committee Meeting
- 19<sup>th</sup> May Participation in Focus Group on National Action Plan for Social Inclusion
- 21<sup>st</sup> May Participation in seminar *Promoting Entrepreneurship amongst women* organised by the *Organisation of Women in Business*
- 11<sup>th</sup> June Participation in Seminar on *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion*
- 14<sup>th</sup> June Speaker in Seminar on the Work Aspirations of Inactive Women in Malta
- 27<sup>th</sup> July Attended the launch of the Provisional Childcare Regulations
- 1<sup>st</sup> September Participation in European Social Fund training
- 20<sup>th</sup> September Presentation in European Employment Committee meeting on childcare - Brussels
- 1<sup>st</sup> October Participation in General Workers Union seminar on Vocational Guidance
- 7<sup>th</sup> October Participation in Seminar on single parents in Germany
- 10<sup>th</sup> October First transnational committee meeting of *Men on Parental Leave Project* - Lithuania
- 24<sup>th</sup> October Peer review meeting in Denmark
- 2<sup>nd</sup> November Participation in Conference *Living to Work – Working to live* in Ireland
- 10<sup>th</sup> November Participating in meeting on *Gender News, Good News* in Italy
- 3<sup>rd</sup> December Participating on Net TV *Arena*
- 3<sup>rd</sup> December Attended training seminar on VAT issues on EU Structural and Cohesion Funds.

- 15<sup>th</sup> December Speaker in *Career Guidance* Seminar organised by Euro Guidance.

## Appendix 2: Laws relevant to the Labour Market and Gender Equality

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This appendix provides important aspects of the Equality for Men and Women Act (2004), the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (2003) and a number of regulations which followed. These have an impact on gender equality in the labour market.

This summary of the legislation is in no way meant to impart legal advice.

### **1 EQUALITY FOR MEN AND WOMEN ACT**

#### **To promote equality for men and women, 2003**

*Definition of discrimination:*

“discrimination” means discrimination based on sex or because of family responsibilities and includes the treatment of a person in a less favourable manner than other person has been or would be treated on the grounds of sex or because of family responsibilities and “discriminate” shall be construed accordingly.

Employers discriminate if Employee is given less favourable status than others on the basis of sex and family responsibilities in view of:

- Managing the work
- Giving promotions
- Distributing tasks
- Offering training opportunities
- Working conditions
- Alter conditions after employee invoked right under the law.
- Publishing or displaying an advertisement which promotes discrimination.
- Neglecting the obligation to suppress sexual harassment.

(It shall be unlawful for any person to harass another by imposing an act of physical intimacy; requesting sexual favours; subjecting persons to acts having sexual connotation, unwelcome and offensive.)

*Other clauses:*

- Spouses of self-employed workers who participate in activities of the company are entitled to fair compensation proportionate to the value of their contribution.
- A financial or insurance company to discriminate on basis of gender, particularly in issuing grants for business start-up.
- Educational or training establishments to discriminate in access to courses; offering educational support; assessing skills.
- The law establishes the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality

## **2 EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT**

### **Protection against discrimination related to employment, 2002**

*It shall be unlawful to:*

- Discriminate in job vacancies and selecting procedures of employees where the discriminated party is better qualified, unless the Employer can prove that the action was based on acceptable grounds related to the nature of the work or on grounds related to previous work performance and experience.
- Victimise employees for reporting complaints or disclosing information regarding discriminatory behaviour.
- Harass through unwelcome acts regarded as offensive, humiliating and intimidating.
- Sexually harass employers or employees by subjecting them to sexual intimacy; requesting sexual favours.
- Employees in the same class of employment are entitled to the same rate of remuneration for work of equal value.

*Offence:*

- A fine not exceeding Lm1,000 or a maximum of 6 months imprisonment or both.

## **3 EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT**

### **Part-Time Employees Regulations, 2002**

*It shall be unlawful for an employer to:*

- Treat a part-time employee less favourably than a comparable whole-time employee.
- Dismiss employee for his/her refusal to transfer from part-time to full-time work and vice versa.
- Dismiss employee due to proceedings against employer or making use of these regulations.

*Part-time employees (minimum 20 hours a week and having part-time as principal employment) are entitled to:*

- Pro rata entitlement of public holidays, vacation, sick, birth, bereavement, marriage, injury leave and bonuses.

*Other clauses:*

- It is the duty of the employer to inform employees on whole-time opportunities

## **4 EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT**

### **Urgent Family Leave Regulations, 2003**

*Main clauses:*

- Employees are entitled to time off from work in cases of sickness, accidents, births and deaths of immediate family members.
- No advance notification is needed for urgent leave.
- Employer is bound to grant a minimum total of 15 paid hours per year to each employee (this is to be deducted from vacation leave entitlement).
- Employer shall establish the maximum number of hours of time off in each case (should not be less than 1 hour per case except where there is the explicit agreement of employee).
- Employer can demand evidence to confirm request of urgent family leave.
- Part-time employees are entitled to pro rata urgent leave.

*Offence:*

- A fine of no less than Lm200 and no more than Lm1,000

## **5 EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT**

### **Protection of Maternity Regulations, 2003**

*Employee = “pregnant employee”, “employee who has recently given birth” and “breastfeeding employee”.*

*Main clauses:*

- Employment and wages shall be ensured throughout the duration of leave.
- Temporary alternative work or adjustment of working environment will be offered.
- Special maternity leave – leave for absence from work granted by the employer to an employee who is pregnant, breastfeeding or has recently given birth, when despite the employer taking steps there exists or would still exist, a risk that could jeopardise the health or safety of the employee; such leave is to be granted for as long as the risk exists and on terms referred to in the regulation.
- Employee is entitled to an uninterrupted maternity leave of 14 weeks, availed of in:
  - Four weeks before giving birth
  - Six weeks after giving birth
  - Remaining weeks in part or full, immediately or before or after the above periods as the employee may request.
- Full wages are paid for 13 weeks, 14<sup>th</sup> week is unpaid.
- Time-off from work will be granted to attend ante-natal exams at no loss.
- Employees on maternity leave are entitled to all rights and benefits as other employees.
- During leave, employee will forfeit bonuses/allowance related to production/performance.

The Employment and Industrial Relations Act also stipulates that:

*It shall be unlawful for an employer to:*

- Dismiss an employee during the whole period of maternity leave or the period of five weeks following the end of such leave in which she is incapable of work, owing to a pathological condition arising out of confinement.

*Offence:*

- A fine of no less than Lm200.

## **6 EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT**

### **Parental leave entitlement regulations, 2003**

*Main clauses:*

- Unpaid parental leave is granted at birth, adoption or legal custody of a child to care for that child for a period of 3 months until the age of 8.
- Employer and employee decide to grant the parental leave on a full-time or part-time basis (piecemeal or time credit system).
- Same job or alternative, equivalent employment is ensured on his/her return.
- At the end of parental leave employee remains entitled to all rights and benefits as others at the same work-place.
- Employer cannot dismiss an employee on the basis of parental leave usage.
- The Employee has the right to demand a statement of parental leave taken.
- Employer may postpone the granting of parental leave for justifiable reasons related to the operation of the place of work.

*Offence:*

- A fine of no less than Lm50 and no more than Lm500.

## **7 EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT**

### **Equal Treatment in Employment Regulations, 2004**

*“Direct discrimination” occurs where one person is treated less favourably than another on the basis of stipulated conditions. “Indirect discrimination” occurs where an apparently neutral practice would put persons at a disadvantage when compared with others.*

*It shall be unlawful:*

- To discriminate on the basis of religious belief, age, disability, sexual orientation and racial or ethnic origin.
- To harass a person through acts which violate the person’s dignity and create an intimidating or offensive environment.
- For an employment agency to discriminate in providing services; in terms and conditions and in provision of services.

*Other clauses:*

- Positive action shall not be deemed unlawful.

*Offence:*

- A fine not exceeding Lm1,000; a maximum of 6 months imprisonment or both.

