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Quantitative Research 3 - A study of employment of disadvantaged groups in Malta

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Introduction

This report will define the most disadvantage groups in Maltese society, focusing on their employment issues.

Maltese society has been evolving through the last decades, thanks to an economic boom, the population has increased. Currently it is the desired destination of lots of professionals highly specialised in economic sectors such as IT (e.g. gaming). Additionally, due to the migration fluxes in the Mediterranean area, Malta has been hosting asylum seekers and refugees. Part of them for long time needing structure help and support to integrate in the society and make a livelihood.
The following chapters will address firstly the definition of disadvantage groups identifying them in the Maltese society structure, while secondly the employment current and recent rates, finally the support in place for the unemployed population.

Disadvantage groups

Definition of which are the main disadvantage groups and their geographical position in Malta.

Definition of disadvantage groups

Disadvantage groups are defined as :" Groups of persons that experience a higher risk of poverty, social exclusion, discrimination and violence than the general population, including, but not limited to, ethnic minorities, migrants, people with disabilities, isolated elderly people and children" by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (1).

While no individuals or groups in the society is totally safe from falling into poverty, some are more at risks than others, due to various factors, here the most relevant are listed:

- socio-demographic characteristics;
- economic status and structural inequalities;
- physical and/or mental health difficulties;
- lifestyle patterns;
- social shocks[1].

Malta At Risk Of Poverty or social Exclusion rate (AROPE) (2) stood 23.1%, (21.9% for males and 24.3% for females) while the European average measured 24,8%. In 2013 AROPE increased spiking at 24 % in Malta, similarly to other European countries, the social groups most affected are elderly, children, unemployed or living in jobless households. As previously mentioned, the groups targeted considering AROPE index, at its highest risk, are listed and defined in table 1:

Table 1 Detailed definition of disadvantage groups

Disadvantage Group	Definition

[1] Social shock is mainly related to migration phenomenon, it can be experienced by people changing completely their environment and it results in disorientation, difficulties in integration perceiving the new society environment as foreign and not familiar (3).

children and young people	The age range overall is 0-30, children 0-13 and young people 13-30. (2)
elderly people	Age range is 65+ (3)
unemployed	• someone aged 15 to 74 (in Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, Iceland, Norway: 16 to 74 years); • without work during the reference week; • available to start work within the next two weeks (or has already found a job to start within the next three months); • actively having sought employment at some time during the last four weeks. The unemployment rate is the number of people unemployed as a percentage of the labour force. (4)
working poor	Individuals are at risk of in-work poverty when they work for over half of the year and when their equivalised yearly disposable income is below 60% of the national household median income level (5)

Nevertheless, in Malta, other social groups are recognised to be vulnerable, here listed and detailed in table 2:

Table 2 Vulnerable groups definition

Vulnerable Group	Definition
persons with physical and/or mental health challenges	Person suffering from any kind of mental or physical illness/disease.
persons experiencing violence and other forms of abuse	Person suffering from any action that intentionally harms or injures another person. (6)
asylum seekers and immigrants	Asylum seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed. (7) Immigrant is any person who moves, usually across an international border, to join family members already abroad, to search for a livelihood, to escape a natural disaster, or for a range of other purposes. (8)
persons with addictive behaviour	Addictive behaviours are actions beyond conscious control that are constantly repeated by a person who is dependent on a chemical substance or activity (9)
persons who lack life skills	Person that lack the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demand and changes of everyday life. Commonly cited life skills include communication and listening skills; negotiation and refusal skills; decision-making and problem-solving skills; and coping and self-management skills, such as increased self-esteem and the ability to manage feelings and stress. (10)

persons experiencing discrimination	Person that suffers from intentional or unintentional behaviour for which there is no reasonable justification. Such behaviour adversely affects specific individuals or groups on the basis of characteristics defined by the 1992 B.C. Human Rights Act. These characteristics include age, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, and unrelated criminal convictions. (11)

Population density Malta

Maltese population is concentrated in the southern and northern harbor, as shown in figure 1.

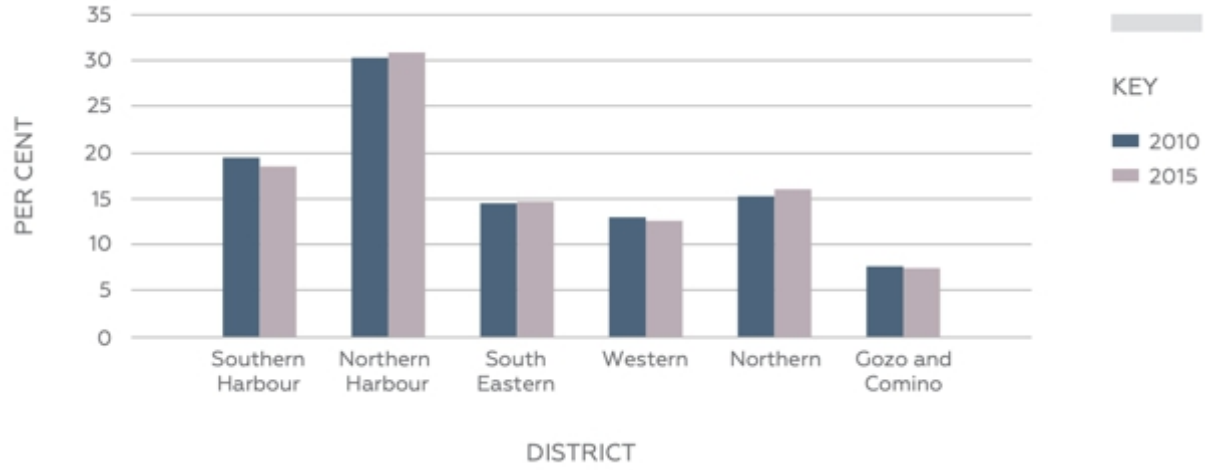


Figure 1 Malta, population density

The high population density districts are characterized by a highest chance of poverty rate due to the presence on the area of a higher number of people.

Poverty distribution in Malta

The Statistics on Income and Living Conditions survey showed that in 2017, 75 516 persons living in private households in MALTA were at-risk-of-poverty, with 93.6 per cent residing in Malta region and 6.4 per cent residing in the Gozo and Comino region. This translates into at-risk-of poverty rates of 16.7 and 16.4 per cent for the regions of Malta and Gozo and Comino, respectively. The highest increases in the number of persons at-risk-of-poverty in 2017 were registered in the Northern district and Southern Harbour district at 20.7 and 14.2 per cent, respectively. Meanwhile, the number of persons at-risk-of-poverty in Gozo and Comino, South Eastern and Northern Harbour districts decreased by 10.8, 9.7 and 1.9 per cent, respectively. (12)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
MALTA	**61 689**	**65 186**	**66 621**	**71 712**	**73 137**	**75 516**
Malta	**57 062**	**60 279**	**60 583**	**65 749**	**67 728**	**70 688**
Southern Harbour	13 730	14 326	14 630	14 852	15 888	18 139
Northern Harbour	18 248	17 927	17 651	22 428	22 934	22 506
South Eastern	7 706	7 847	9 336	9 757	11 382	10 282
Western	7 851	8 581	8 360	6 213	7 592	7 776
Northern	9 527	11 599	10 606	12 500	9 932	11 986
Gozo and Comino	**4 627**	**4 907**	**6 038**	**5 962**	**5 410**	**4 828**
Gozo and Comino	4 627	4 907	6 038	5 962	5 410	4 828
			% of total population			
MALTA	**15.1**	**15.8**	**15.8**	**16.6**	**16.5**	**16.7**
Malta	**15.1**	**15.8**	**15.5**	**16.4**	**16.4**	**16.7**
Southern Harbour	17.8	18.7	19.6	19.3	20.7	23.7
Northern Harbour	15.3	15.0	14.2	17.0	16.9	16.1
South Eastern	12.4	12.2	14.1	14.7	16.2	14.0
Western	13.9	15.3	14.7	11.0	13.3	13.4
Northern	15.1	17.5	15.5	17.6	13.6	16.1
Gozo and Comino	**15.0**	**15.8**	**20.0**	**20.0**	**18.3**	**16.4**
Gozo and Comino	15.0	15.8	20.0	20.0	18.3	16.4

Figure 2 Persons at-risk-of-poverty by region/district and year

The at-risk-of-poverty threshold is also referred to as the at-risk-of-poverty line or, simply, the poverty line. This is equivalent to 60 per cent of the median national equivalised income of persons living in private households. The at-risk-of-poverty rate refers to the share of persons with an equivalised disposable income below the at-risk-of poverty threshold.

Education level

Poverty is determined and associated with some factors, one the more relevant is education, here from figure 3 it is clear how the region defined previously as the poorest in Malta are the same in which the level of education is the lowest.

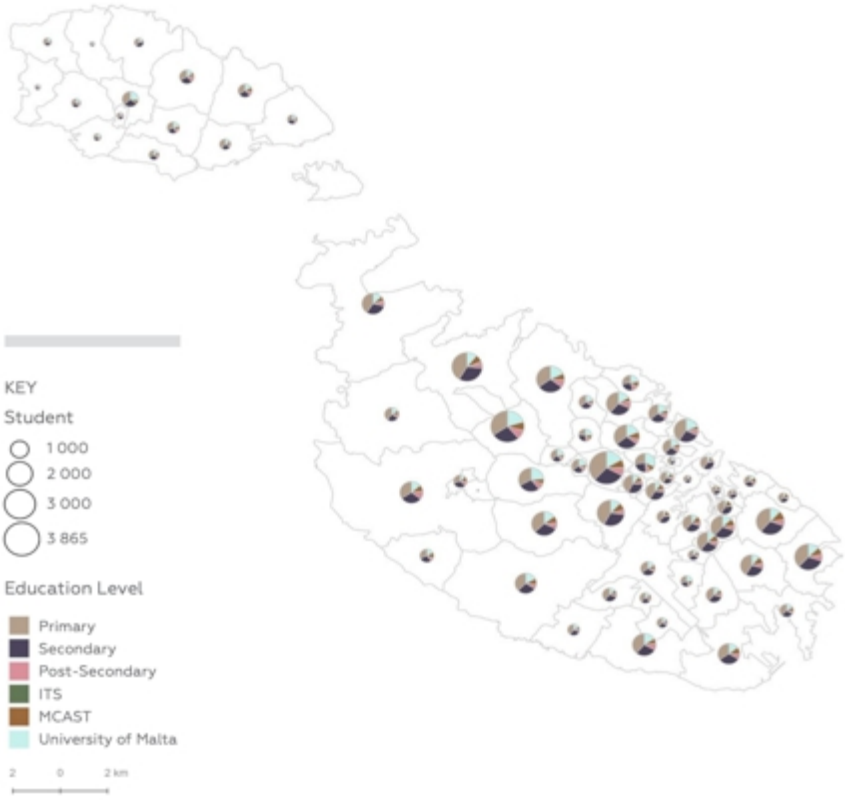


Figure 3 Education level by district

Employment

Here the report will focus on the current labor market situation in Malta for the disadvantage groups up mentioned in the report.

Malta employment rate

Here is an overview of the employment rate of the Maltese population during the last decade:
employment Rate in Malta decreased to 72.30 percent in the fourth quarter of 2018 from 72.80 percent in the third quarter of 2018.
Employment Rate in Malta averaged 58.45 percent from 2000 until 2018, reaching an all time high of 72.80 percent in the third quarter of 2018 and a record low of 53 percent in the first quarter of 2002. (12)
Below, in figure 4, all the data are summarized clearly:

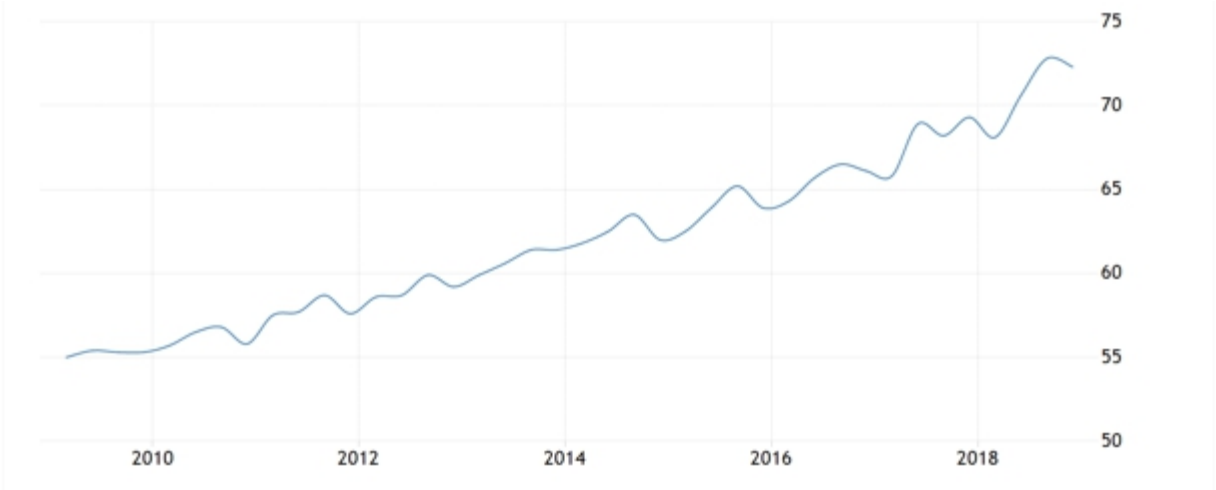


Figure 4 Employment trend in Malta 2010-2018 (14)

It is evident how there is a slight up and down but the employment trends is positive and has being constantly growing since 2010 to 2018.

Unemployment

The unemployed population is defined as the population that is without a job, looking for it and able to work.
The unemployment rate has been diminishing since 2018, getting to 3.5 % of the population in January 2019, by genders the jobless rate was lower for women (3.4 percent vs 4.0 percent in Q4 2017) than for men (3.6 percent vs 4.0 percent). Considering youth the rates increases, from April 2018 it has being going up down from 8 to 10.7 %. It was at 10.7 % in July and September 2018, while at the minimum, 8% in April 2018. At the latest survey, in march 2019 it was at 9.5 %. (13)

Working poor

Maltese population changed through the last decade, at the moment there is a highest percentage of migrants moving towards the island aiming at different job positions.
A large part of working poor is represented by third country nationals migrating to Malta as refugees. Furthermore, it is clear in figure 5 how since 2002, when the majority of them was employed in the construction sector, currently, the highest percentage is working in managerial, professional and scientific positions, while the lowest in manufacturing. (14)

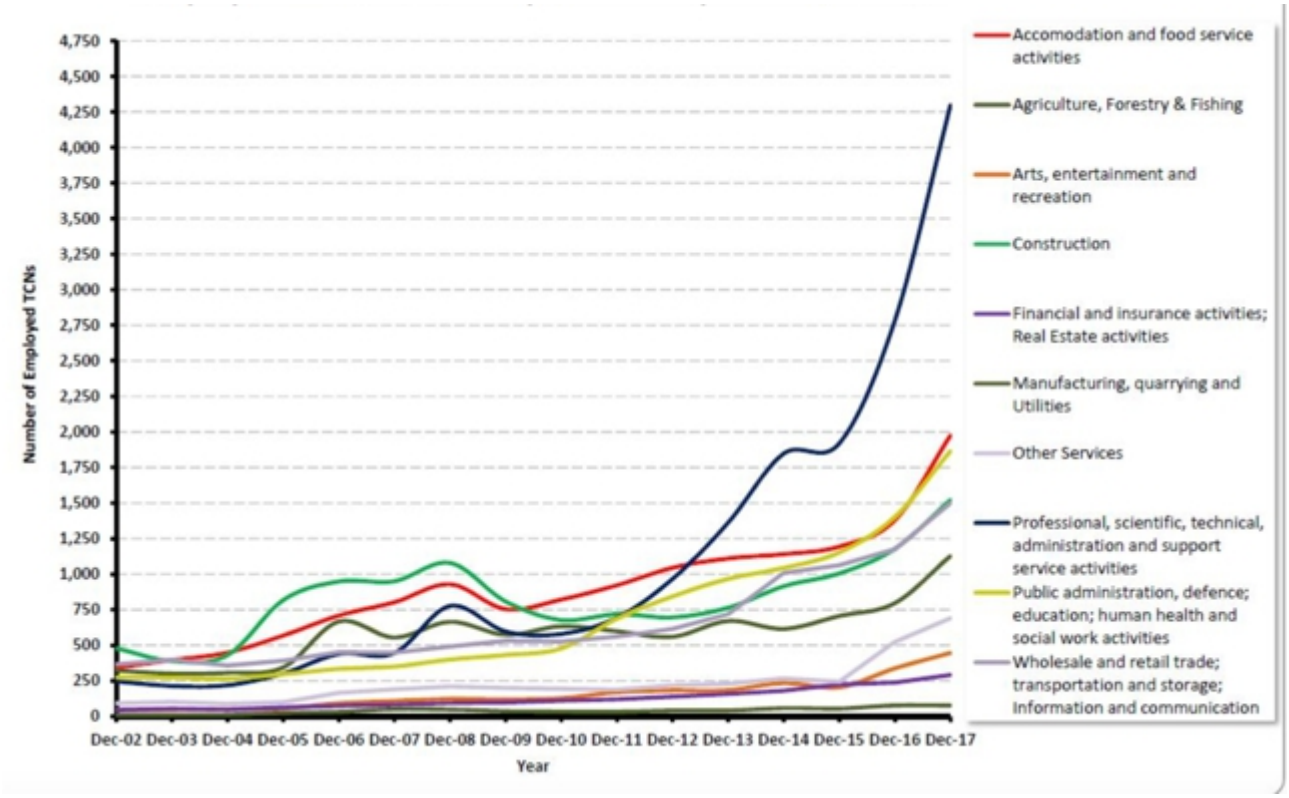


Figure 5 Emplyment of third country nationals by economic sector (14)

From figure 6 it is evident that a shift took place in the economic sector of interest and availability for third country nationals, while in figure 4, it is evident how the most common job designation for them is still elementary, followed close by service and sales workers.

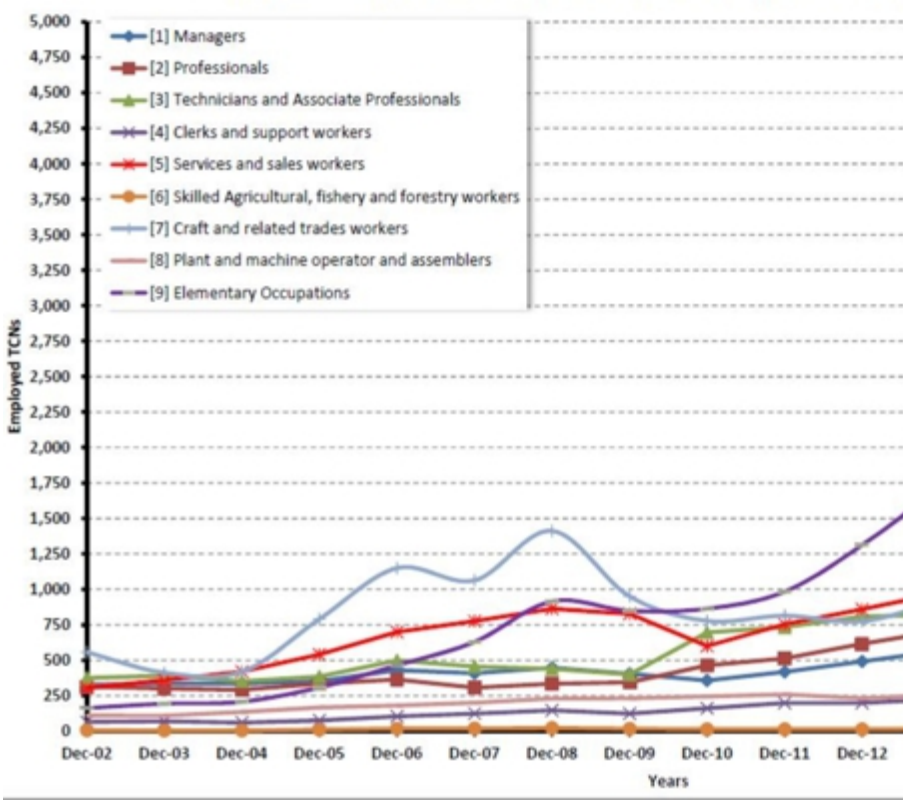


Figure 6 Major occupation group of employed third country nationals (14)

It is also relevant to see that the percentage of employed asylum seeker or beneficiary of protection has being increasing since 2002, in figure 7 there is an overview considering age cohort in the category:

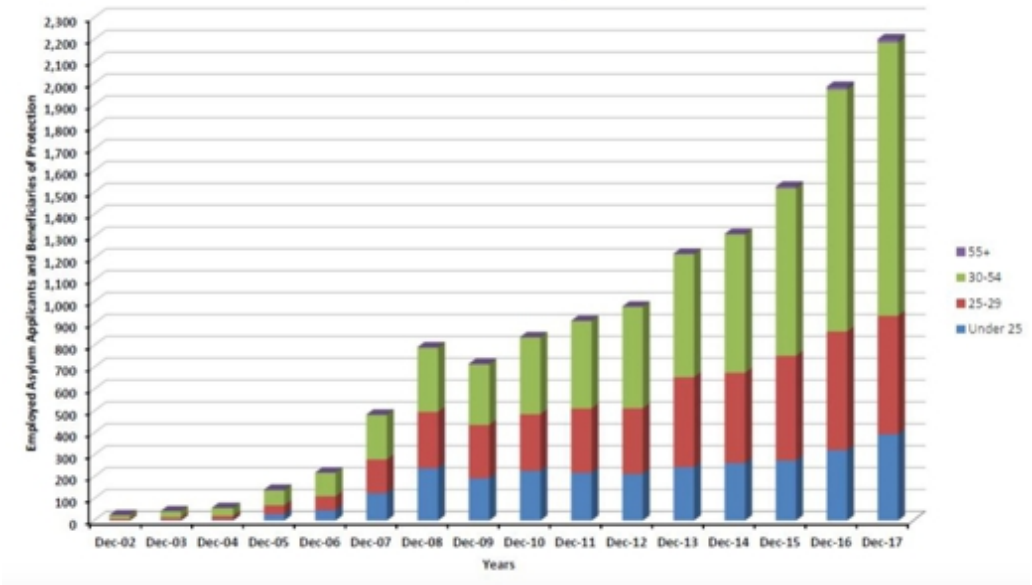


Figure 7 employed asylum applicants and beneficiaries of protection by age cohorts 2002-17 (14)

Considering a total of four categories between the third country nationals:

- asylum seekers
- temporary humanitarian protection
- subsidiary protection

- refugee

It is evident in figure 8, below, that the highest percentage employed are asylum seekers, followed by subsidiary protection, temporary humanitarian protection and refugees. In the graphic timeline it is evident how the asylum seekers population grew considerably while the refugees increasing was quite the opposite, a steady and small rise from 2002 to 2017 surveys. (14)

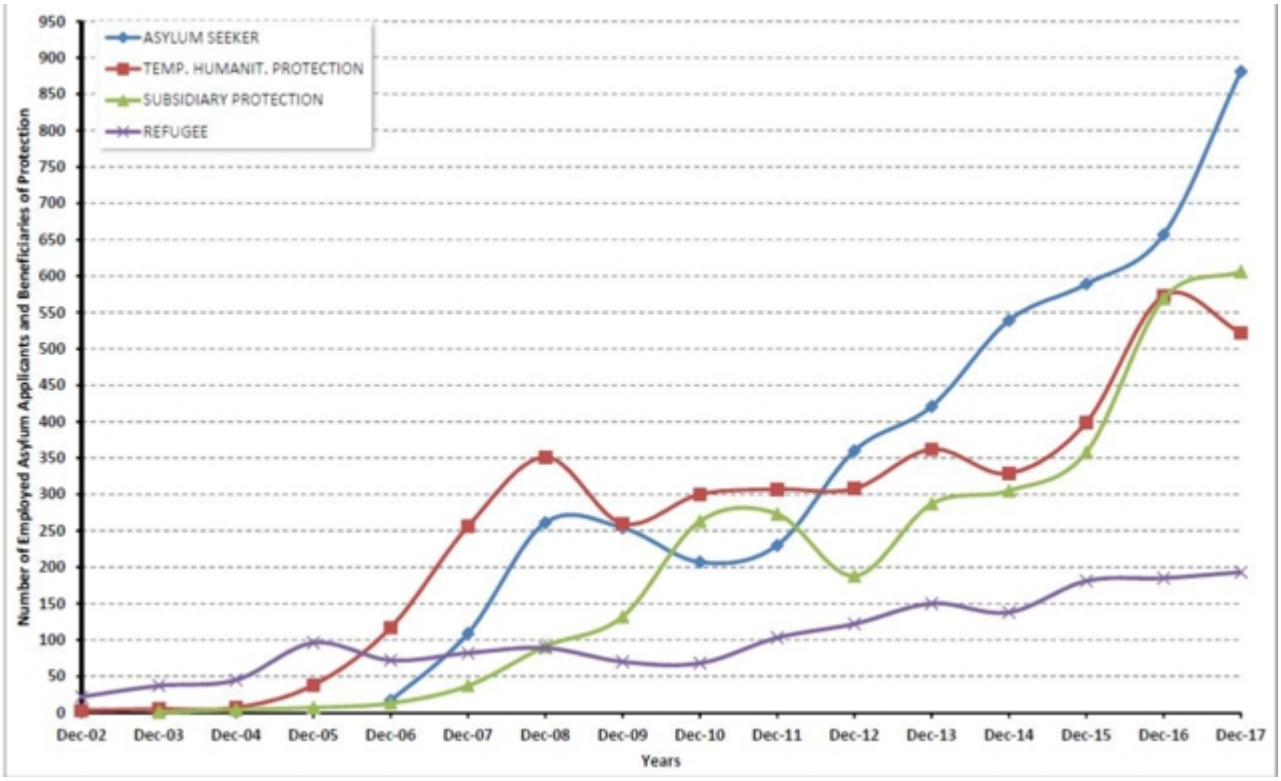


Figure 8 Employed asylum applicants and beneficiaries of protection trend 2002-17 (14)

Unemployment tools

There is a scheme to help and support unemployed people. It consists in receiving a weekly support, quantified in:

- Weekly Rate for head of household €105.93
- Weekly Rate for member of household €8.15

Such support twill be provided for a maximum period of 156 days after which the entitled person will stop benefitting from it. (15)

Moreover, the government provides jobplus, a platform through which people are able to register themselves and look for a job position. It stands for enhance accessibility to the labour market through modernised and targeted services, whilst facilitating labour mobility and promoting investment in human capital.

It has many function in terms of support for contacts, workers and companies, e.g. to have access to the unemployment support the procedure and the documents have to be filled up online through a jobplus profile. (16)

Government Schemes for unemployment

Here are summarized all of the schemes that the Maltese government put into place to address the unemployed difficulties, focusing especially on the most vulnerable groups in the society, below in table 3:

Scheme	Aims
Access to Employment	• Enhancing opportunities to access the labour market and providing work experience to those furthest away from gainful employment; • Bridging the gap between labour market supply and demand; • Increasing social cohesion.
Average Wage Earners	• Assisting employed and self-employed persons attending one of Jobsplus courses and whose weekly wage does not exceed €300 (basic) per week.
Bridging the Gap	• Supporting the client in the transition period from unemployment to employment. It allows the employer to evaluate the performance of the client in the workplace, prior to proper engagement. The scheme targets disables and people in disadvantage situations
Childcare Subsidy	• offering an incentive for individuals with parental responsibilities to attend training courses organised by Jobsplus in order to improve their prospects of employment and integration into the labour market
Job Bridge Centre	• This offers various training opportunities to vulnerable & disadvantaged job seekers to acquire pre employment skills in order to adapt to labour market changes & requirements, enhancing their prospects for paid employment. Click here to find out more.
Mature Workers Scheme	• Employers, including self-employed individuals, who as from 2014 employ persons aged between 45 and 65, and who have been registering for work on Parts 1 and 2 of the unemployment register for the preceding six months, will have their income tax deducted pro-rata, as per the following information.
Tax Incentive Scheme	• With the Tax Incentive Scheme employers can benefit from €600 deduction from taxable income for each hands-on-training placement with a duration of 26 weeks or more. Placements must be offered to participants within the Youth Guarantee Scheme, Traineeships, Work Exposure and Work Placement Schemes.

Traineeship Scheme	• The Traineeship Scheme is intended to provide jobseekers with initial vocational training (pre-employment training) that will help individuals obtain the knowledge, skills and competence required to find and retain employment. Traineeships are based on a combination of on-the-job and off-the-job training. The programmes offered are labour market driven, whereby the job preferences of the jobseekers are matched with the requests made by employers participating in the scheme.
Work Exposure	• The Work Exposure Scheme is intended to facilitate transition into employment by providing jobseekers with initial hands on training that will help individuals obtain the knowledge, skills and competences required to find and retain employment. This scheme is designed to mirror contemporary labour market demand, whereby the job preferences of the jobseekers are matched with employers' requests.
Work Placement	The Work Placement Scheme is aimed at providing training to participants following a course offered by Jobsplus, which includes a practical component. Namely: • Vocational Education and Training Award in Child Care (0-3years) • Vocational Education and Training Award for Care Workers for Persons with Disability • Vocational Education and Training Award for Care Workers for the Elderly
Work Programme Initiative	• Assisting long-term unemployed individuals to re-enter into the labour market. The Work Programme Initiative's (WPI) main objective is that of re-integration the long-term unemployed into the labour market. This initiative consists of three phases: profiling, training and job placements. If any participant is not placed in employment for at least 6 out of 24 months from the date of the signing of the WPI contract, s/he is referred back to Jobsplus.
Youth Guarantee	The Youth Guarantee scheme (ESF.01.002 - Youth Guarantee 2.0) is an EU-funded project, developed for young people aged 15 to 25, and which consists of four education and employment related initiatives: the NEET Activation Scheme II, SEC Preventive Classes, MCAST Preventive Classes, and the ICT Summer Courses.

The schemes have a double function, they firstly aim at employing people, secondly some of them aim at providing education and formation to people working in low job position to earn ability to change their job designation. (17)

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