

REPORT ON A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON

**MODERN MAN IN ENLARGED EUROPE**

*MALTA NATIONAL REPORT*

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## 1 INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

The umbrella objective of the project as set out in the original brief is “to identify, develop and sustain innovative gender equality strategies regarding men and parental leave.” The project aims to promote gender equality via an investigation of the conceptual understanding of paternity and how this relates to new images of male identity and masculinity.

The objectives of the research exercise described in this report are to investigate perceptions of, and attitudes towards, parental leave amongst two main categories directly involved in the application of parental leave: fathers who have availed themselves of the leave option, and employers who have approved parental leave applications for male employees under their responsibility.

### 1.1 Categories of interest

There are two main categories which may be said to have a direct experience of parental leave:

1. **Fathers** who have availed themselves of parental leave over the eight-year period preceding the date of commencement of the study, and
2. **Employers** who have approved paternity leave to male members of staff over the eight-year period preceding the date of commencement of the study.

In Malta, the parental leave option was only legally extended to the private sector in October 2004. To a very great extent direct experience with parental leave can, as of this date, only be found within the public sector.

Contact details of male public sector employees who had availed themselves of parental leave within the eight-year period preceding the date of the study and names of employers of same were forwarded to us by the Public Service’s Management and Personnel Office.

### 1.2 Research objectives

The generic research objectives of this project are to gain an understanding of:

1. how fathers deal with parental leave
2. how masculine identity relates to the concept of parental leave
3. employers’ views on parental leave legislation and of its impact on the workplace.

The research objectives specific to the two categories of interest are listed below.

**For the fathers category** the research objectives are to investigate:

1. how the decision to take parental leave was made: how the informants obtained information, whether they sought advice or endorsement from others, the reactions of colleagues, employers, family members and friends on communicating the decision;
2. whether and how the experience has changed the informants' self image: whether/how it has affected their career prospects and what it has revealed about the types of father that they are;
3. the informants' evaluation and experience of parental leave: what they found most challenging, most rewarding, whether they would choose to repeat the experience, whether they would do anything differently and how they suggest the conditions of the parental leave option be improved;
4. how informants feel the experience of parental leave compares to the experience of being in paid employment;
5. whether and how the informants' decision to avail themselves of parental leave affected their relationship with their partner and whether and how domestic work was shared during this time;
6. whether and how the parental leave period affected the informants' relationship with the child: whether it improved communication and led to their being made aware of new things related to child rearing;
7. how informants define being a good father: whether they view themselves as having a traditional view of fatherhood; and
8. how informants view 'masculinity' and how it relates to the upbringing of children.

**For the employers category** the research objectives are to investigate:

1. informants' awareness of public service parental leave policy;
2. informants' views on parental leave terms as they stand today;
3. informants' perceptions of, and attitudes towards, the parental leave option;
4. how informants feel parental leave impacts their organisation;
5. informants' personal experience with parental leave applications from male members of staff; and
6. whether informants would consider availing themselves of parental leave.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

The original qualitative method design for this project envisaged interviews and focus groups to be carried out with a total of 15 fathers and 10 employers. The methodology included both focus groups and in-depth interviews. However, the original list of contacts forwarded by client contained only 11 fathers and 6 employers.

After three fathers refused to participate in the focus group session it was decided that the method be modified to rely exclusively on in-depth interviews in order to allow for the interviews to be carried out at a date and time more convenient to the informant and therefore reduce the refusal rate.

All the interviews were carried out between January 14<sup>th</sup> and February 14<sup>th</sup> 2005. Interviews with fathers were conducted along the lines specified in the guides shown in Appendices E and the interviews with employers were conducted using the discussion guides shown in Appendices G and H.

Interviews with fathers lasted around 45 minutes while interviews with employers lasted approximately 30 minutes. Since none of the fathers interviewed was on parental leave during the time of the study, the daily log option was not utilised.

### **2.1 Participant selection and recruitment**

Eligible informants were contacted using contact details forwarded by client. Prior to being invited to participate, each interviewee was screened for eligibility using the recruitment questionnaires shown in Appendices A, B, C and D.

### **2.2 Participant profiles**

A breakdown of father and employer interviewee profiles are given in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1:** Informant profiles for the Fathers category

Informant					Partner			
	Age	Level of Education	Gross Annual Income	Parental leave period	Number of children	Age	Level of Education	Income
1	41	Tertiary	8,000 -9,999	28 wks	3	40	Postgraduate	6,000 – 7,999
2	42	Tertiary	8,000 -9,999	30 wks	1	46	Postgraduate	6,000 – 7,999
3	46	Tertiary	10,000 – 13,999	2yrs 5mts	2	32	Tertiary	3,001 – 5,999
4	44	Tertiary	8,000 -9,999	1yr 24 wks	2	47	Post-Secondary	3,001 – 5,999
5	38	Vocational	3,001 – 5,999	20 wks	2	31	Vocational	< 3,000
6	35	Tertiary	6,000 – 7,999	1 yr	3	33	Tertiary	6,000 – 7,999
7	35	Tertiary	3,001 – 5,999	3yrs	2	33	Tertiary	6,000 – 7,999
8	33	Tertiary	6,000 – 7,999	1yr	2	33	Post-Secondary	3,001 – 5,999
9	46	Tertiary	3,001 – 5,999	2 yrs	2	34	Tertiary	6,000 – 7,999
10	34	Tertiary	6,000 – 7,999	1 yr	2	34	Tertiary	10,000 – 13,999

**Table 2:** Informant profiles for the Employers' Category

Informant					Organisation			
Participant	Age	Sex	Position	Held for	Sector	Number of Employees	Typical level of Education	% of Men
1	45	M	Superintendent	8 yrs	Health	750	Secondary	51 – 75
2	58	F	Director General	1 yr	Education	Ca. 7,000	Post-Secondary	< 25
3	58	M	Director General	5 yrs	Aviation	48	Vocational/Tertiary	51 – 75
4	50	F	Manager	25 yrs	Health	114	Tertiary	25 - 49

### 3 LAWS RELEVANT TO THE LABOUR MARKET AND TO GENDER EQUALITY

Table 3 below provides the 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.

**Table 3:** Summary of Gender-Related Legislation in Malta

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**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

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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

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**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.

**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.

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*Part-time employees (minimum 20 hours a week and having part-time*

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*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

**EMPLOYMENT AND  
INDUSTRIAL  
RELATIONS ACT**

*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.

*Urgent Family Leave  
Regulations, 2003*

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

**EMPLOYMENT AND  
INDUSTRIAL  
RELATIONS ACT**

*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.

*Parental leave  
entitlement  
regulations, 2003*

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.

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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.

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**EMPLOYMENT AND  
INDUSTRIAL  
RELATIONS ACT**

*“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.*

*Equal Treatment in  
Employment  
Regulations, 2004*

*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.

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**EMPLOYMENT AND  
INDUSTRIAL  
RELATIONS ACT**

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

*Protection of Maternity  
Regulations, 2003*

*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.

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## **4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **FINDINGS FROM THE FATHERS CATEGORY**

#### **Taking the Decision**

- The main motivation for taking parental leave was to spend time with the child
- Other motivations given were; to provide child with a caregiver and for a career break.
- In most cases informants took the decision with their spouses
- The main sources of information were: the media, in-house circulars and colleagues.

#### **Reactions from family, friends and colleagues**

- Informants were met with generally positive, albeit not overly enthusiastic reactions
- There was some element of surprise but in most cases the decision was easily accepted
- There were some cases of negative reactions - especially from the parents who were concerned about the informant's work position
- Reactions from colleagues varied from incredulous surprise to indifference

#### **Experience and Evaluation of Parental Leave**

- Around half the respondents felt very relaxed and found parental not at all stressful when compared to their jobs
- It was viewed as a special period where they had time to enjoy their children and home.
- The best things about parental leave were that it: gives you time to appreciate the family and other things in life (besides work); gives you a direct experience of the children and is a learning experience in child-rearing; allows you time off work and to enjoy a less hectic pace of life; allows the spouse to re-enter the job market/devote more time to her work.
- The worst things about parental leave were that it: involves a considerable financial setback which requires one to alter ones lifestyle; exposes one to some negative/judgemental attitudes from acquaintances and colleagues; involves spending a lot of time alone and losing contact with adults; can have a negative effect on career prospects; such as setting you back in terms of promotions; Is a lot of work!

#### **Suggestions for improvement**

- The most frequently mentioned was that the family be given some financial support
- Other suggestions were to: give parental leave takers guidelines on how to replace the work routine and spend time in the home more efficiently; increase the maximum age of the child when parental leave can be availed of; allow a "reduced hours" clause for when children are older; allow the parental leave period to count as time in service safeguarding

the employee's seniority and promotion prospects; modify legislation so that the leave option can be broken down into a number of periods and used with more than one child

### **Comparison to paid employment**

- Most of the informants interviewed said that they found the two to be very different.
- The two main advantages were: having more time to spend with the children and an opportunity to learn about the home
- Parental leave was said to be more relaxing because one's schedule was more flexible
- A few felt detached from the social structure and adult company.

### **Relationship with partner**

- All the informants said that their decision benefited the relationship with their partner
- Being on parental leave freed up time to spend together and improved communication.

### **Relationship with child**

- All the informants said that their relationship improved because of the time spent together.
- The parental leave period had strengthened the bond with the child.
- Communication with the child was seen to have improved as they had time to get to know and understand each other.
- Many informants compared their relationship to the one their partner had. In some cases, the mother was still seen to have the better relationship with the child.

### **Being a good father**

- Being a good father included: being responsible for the child – both financially and emotionally; actively instilling values, a sense of discipline and desirable qualities in the child; investing time in his child.
- Some fathers insisted on discipline and actively guiding the child's choices while others described how discipline encompassed both mutual respect and friendship.
- Half the respondents said they were good fathers whilst the other half said they tried to be

### **Self-Image**

- The informants' perceptions of themselves had improved following their experience.
- Some said they felt more complete, were proud of themselves and more confident that they could manage any situation following this experience
- Most of the informants said that parental leave had helped them become better fathers

### **Perceptions of Others**

- Parental leave was said to have both positive and negative effects on others' perceptions
- Friends and acquaintances had generally appreciated, in some cases admired, what they had done. Three informants felt judged negatively because they were doing a "woman's job"

### **Perceptions of Masculinity and Parenting**

- All informants but one said that childcare was equally the responsibility of both parents
- Some said that times had changed and that the local mentality had to be challenged
- Childcare was still deemed to be primarily the woman's job if: a) the father is the sole breadwinner, b) the father is more involved in his job/career than the mother; c) the child is physiologically dependant on the mother; such as during the initial "breast-feeding period".

### **The "Traditional Man"**

- The Traditional Man would not consider going on parental leave and would not be very involved in running the family and caring for the children
- Most informants did not consider themselves traditional men: the kind who would work all day and return to the home in the evening expecting to be waited on by the wife.

## **MAIN FINDINGS FROM EMPLOYERS**

### **Awareness of Public Service parental leave policy**

- All informants referred to Public Service regulations
- Only one informant was able to describe the service regulations on parental leave

### **How Parental leave impacts the organisation**

- All informants said that having an employee on parental leave was very disruptive This was particularly so when the employee was in a senior position or headed a working team
- In a couple of cases the informants tried to persuade the employee to go on reduced hours

### **How parental leave impacts the employee and employers' attitudes**

- Informants were positive about how the experience of parental leave affected the employee.
- Both mothers and fathers who availed themselves of this option were seen to mature as a result of this experience.
- A negative side to parental leave was that the parental leave period generally occurred during a time when the employee would be reaching a peak in career development.

- The leave period is often used to make a career change and the department often loses some of its best-trained and most experience employees through this leave option.
- Parental leave can be abused of and that this was very de-motivating for other employees
- Parental leave was said to be fundamentally a praiseworthy option by all informants and very motivating for the employees who do avail themselves of it

#### **Extent of personal experience with parental leave applications**

- Informants had very limited experience with male employees on parental leave.
- When asked to describe their reaction they all said that they had been surprised initially.
- None of the informants had ever availed themselves of parental leave.
- Only one informant said that he would not consider the option if he were to have a child at this time. The reason given was that his spouse does not work and could care for the child.

#### **Attitudes towards Parental leave Gender Equality**

- All informants agreed with the concept of equal rights and responsibilities for both sexes

#### **Ideal Duration of Parental Leave Period**

- Most informants said that the duration of the parental leave period should be between three and four years.

## 5 ANALYSIS OF DISCUSSIONS

This section describes the main findings from the two categories of interest: fathers and employers.

### 5.1 Fathers' Perceptions and Attitudes towards Parental Leave

All of the 10 fathers who were interviewed during the course of this project were married and employed within the public service at the time when they availed themselves of the parental leave option. The spouses of the informants were in full-time employment during the time when the informant was on parental leave and their income ranges are given in Table 1 above.

#### *5.1.1 How the decision was taken*

In the first part of the interview, informants were asked to describe how they had taken the decision to avail themselves of parental leave, motivations, how they had obtained information about the terms and conditions involved and the reactions of colleagues, friends and family members on communicating their decision.

The motivations given by informants always included being able to spend time with the child. They wanted to be "*more involved*" and to have more time to enjoy the children "*before time ran out*." One respondent said that it had been his "*dream*" to take time off to devote to his children and that before doing so he found himself feeling jealous of his wife and of the "*special relationship*" she had with the children. In one case the informant said that he expected it to be a "*rewarding experience*" and had embarked on it in this spirit.

Interestingly, however, this reason was generally accompanied by a second motivation which generally fell under one of the following:

#### **1. to provide the child with a caregiver**

In many cases the spouse was the higher income earner and/or could not afford to be away from her job at the time. In quite a few cases, the decision was at least partly determined by the need to provide a caregiver for the child. In one case the couple had no relatives who were able to care for the child while the couple were at work. In the other cases, however, the informants explained that they did not want their child to be raised by the grandparents or a babysitter and had decided to take time off work so that they would take personal responsibility for their child's upbringing – at least for the duration of the parental leave period.

## 2. to benefit from a career break.

In quite a few cases the informant described how he had not been finding his job fulfilling enough at the time and therefore saw the parental leave option as a good opportunity to remove himself from the work environment as he considered future career options.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that many fathers had a 'secondary motivation' which differed from their expressed wish to spend time with the child may testify to the 'extraordinary' nature of their decision as it is not, as the informants themselves often mentioned, the accepted norm in Malta for fathers to take time off work to spend time with their children. It was made quite clear during the course of the interviews that while the problem of having a caregiver for the child and/or needing a career break was 'secondary' to the desire to spend time with the child, it was by no means, a negligible consideration and often had significant weight in the father's final decision.

In most cases informants took the decision with their spouses. In a couple of cases informants claimed that the decision was theirs alone. In one case in particular, the informant's spouse doubted how genuine he was about wanting to spend time with the children. Whilst this may be considered an extreme example within the group of fathers participating in the study, it illustrates the culturally-determined 'surprise' and, in cases such as this one, 'disbelief' in the face of a highly uncommon decision. In the researcher's experience, this may often extend to resistance (stated or covert) to the idea. However, this facet of gender-determined parenting roles was not covered by this study and it is reasonable to assume that the informants were, by virtue of their actions, more positively inclined than most towards this infrequent, if not necessarily unpopular, choice.

Not all informants faced this type of reaction from their spouses, however, the opposite end of the "reaction continuum" was another informant, who said that his wife had always encouraged him to take parental leave. He also said that she had for some time been "*pushing him*" to take time off to stay with the children and so was very happy when he finally agreed to do so.

The main sources of information about parental leave were: the media, in-house circulars and colleagues. In a few cases informants had been guided by the department's HR department while one informant in particular had got to know about the option through his union newsletter.

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<sup>1</sup> As one employer aptly put it, "One is always a bit surprised to see a male name (*on the parental leave application form*) but then one finds out that there is another reason for the father's decision and that it will benefit both spouses in the long-term." (See Section 5.2.3)

### 5.1.2 Reactions from family, friends and colleagues

When asked to describe the reactions from friends and family on communicating their decision to go on parental leave, informants said that they were met with generally positive, albeit not overly enthusiastic reactions. The third-party opinions which appeared to carry any weight with informants were those of spouses and parents. As described by the informants themselves, there was some element of surprise in the feedback they received, but in most cases the decision was easily accepted and did not attract a strong reaction.

In a few cases, informants did describe some negative reactions, especially from the parents who expressed concern about the informant jeopardising his work position. A couple of others were worried that the informant would not cope and/or expected that he would not do any of the domestic chores leaving the bulk of the work to the wife.

Reactions from colleagues varied from incredulous surprise to indifference. However a few colleagues did react quite strongly (sometimes offensively) to what they saw as an unorthodox choice. *“Rawni ftit stramb. (“They thought I was a bit bizarre.”)* Some colleagues passed comments about him doing a “woman’s job”: *“It’s shameful - he’s the housewife!”*, *“Why (are you taking parental leave)? Are you pregnant?!”* *“So will we see you again or will you be staying at home now?”*

A couple of informants did mention that the strongest criticism came from their older male colleagues. Women colleagues, were said to be generally in favour of their decision and were much more understanding. In a couple of cases some younger male colleagues showed an interest in the option and said that they might consider taking parental leave themselves in the future if they could afford it.

The financial problem was also brought up by colleagues. A few asked the informants how they could afford to lose a full-time salary and expressed some regret that they would never be able to avail themselves of this option as they had no financial backup to do so.

When asked to describe how their superiors had reacted to their communicating their decision to go on parental leave, a couple of informants said that their bosses had initially reacted quite negatively and had insisted that they be given a replacement for the duration of the parental leave period while some colleagues were clearly aggravated by the fact that they would have to do his share of the work. However, after informants insisted with their HR manager that the necessary arrangements be made and, in a couple of cases, made it clear that they would accept being transferred to a new department on re-entry should that be necessary, the application was approved.

As discussed above, this span of reactions from surprise to disdain is not surprising to an observer of local Maltese culture. The novelty of the decision – most third parties mentioned here would not have had direct experience of male relatives or acquaintances taking leave – may be partly what instigates this reaction. However, one must keep in mind that Maltese society, whilst strongly matriarchal in the private sphere, is relatively unacquainted with the role of the father extending into that of a main caregiver – indeed with extending much beyond the role of main breadwinner.

### 5.1.3 Experience and Evaluation of Parental leave

In the second part of the discussion, the informants were asked to describe their experience of parental leave: the best and worst thing about being on parental leave, whether they would repeat the experience and what, given the opportunity, they would do differently.

Interestingly, informants' perceptions of the daily chores they were dealing with varied quite significantly. Around half the respondents said that they felt very relaxed and that they found housework and caring for the children not at all stressful when compared to their jobs; *"housework is not stressful", "I felt quite laid back."* Another four informants, however, said that they always found themselves very busy: *"hectic", "much more busy than work", "gurnata mimlija daqs bajda!" ("a jam-packed day!")*

When asked to evaluate the experience, many informants had positive comments. Their parental leave appeared to be generally viewed as a special period where they had time to enjoy their children and their home: *"I have many nice memories."* *"At the end of it I wished I could have extended the leave period."*, *"I really made the most of my time with the children. I used to take them everywhere."*

#### 5.1.3.1 The Challenge of Creating a New Routine

A few fathers, however, found the experience a bit more challenging: *"I couldn't get used to not having a routine."* *"I found it very difficult to spend so much time at home."* *"I felt a bit tied down as I could do nothing unless the children were asleep."* The major challenges mentioned by almost all informants were a) getting used to a different routine, b) doing without adult company and c) some aspects of child caring which they needed guidance on, such as, weaning.

Informants were also surprised at other aspects of parental leave which they not envisaged finding difficulty with: namely, the amount of energy and commitment that domestic work requires, sticking to a routine and re-entering full-time employment after a period of absence.

In spite of the challenges the informants' evaluation of parental leave was described in very positive terms: *"It makes life more fulfilling."*, *"It makes you see work, and life, from a different perspective."* *"It allowed me to be more involved with the child's upbringing – we have a special bond now."* *"It shows you the beauty of parenting."*

Also significant was the fact that, for around half the fathers in the study the leave period served as a needed career break. In some cases their job was no longer satisfying and they welcomed the leave period as a time to revisit priorities and make a fresh start career-wise.

#### 5.1.3.2 A Financial Burden

The parental leave option was also praised for being a means by which to give the *spouse* a chance to re-enter the job market or consolidate her position at work. In quite a few cases, the spouse was the higher income earner and the parental leave option allowed the couple to choose to give up the lower salary for the duration of the leave

As per National Statistics Office data<sup>2</sup>, the percentage of gainfully employed females aged 17 – 64 in the population is 32. This low figure indicates that the number of dual income earners in Malta may be very low – especially when compared to other European countries. The fact that so many households rely on a single income may go a long way towards explaining the low incidence of male parental leave takers.

Although almost all the informants (except for two) said that they would be prepared to repeat the experience if they had another child, many said that they wouldn't because of the financial setback it entailed. Indeed for almost all the informants this was the worst thing about the parental leave option and giving financial support even if limited – was mentioned as something that should be considered by involved parties.

#### 5.1.3.3 Parental Leave on balance

The best things about parental leave as mentioned by informants were:

1. It gives you time to appreciate the family and other things in life (besides work)
2. It gives you a direct experience of the children and is a learning experience in child-rearing.
3. It allows you time off work and to enjoy a less hectic pace of life.
4. It allows the spouse to re-enter the job market/devote more time to her work.

The worst things about parental leave mentioned were:

1. It involves a considerable financial setback which requires one to alter ones lifestyle.
2. It exposes one to some negative/judgemental attitudes from acquaintances and colleagues.
3. It involves spending a lot of time alone and losing contact with adults.
4. It can have a negative effect on career prospects; such as setting you back in terms of promotions.
5. It's a lot of work!

Informants were asked what they would do differently if they were to repeat the experience. There were few contributions at this point but some respondents did say that they would plan the leave period better so as to make the most of it, "*because time flies!*" A couple of others said that they would try to be less isolated during this time and be more open to social activities. A couple of informants would also appreciate keeping in touch with their workplace through reduced working hours rather than losing contact completely. A few respondents also mentioned that they would, with hindsight, know how to take better care of their children and would make sure that they made the most of their time together.

#### *5.1.4 Suggestions for improvement*

The most frequently mentioned suggestion for improvement was that the family be given some financial support for the duration of the parental leave period. This was very greatly stressed by the majority of informants who said that they would have extended the leave period if they could afford to and that worrying about how to make ends meet can at time be very stressful.

Other suggestions for improvement made were to:

1. give parental leave takers guidelines on how to replace the work routine and spend time in the home more efficiently;
2. increase the maximum age of the child when parental leave can be availed of;
3. allow a "reduced hours" clause for when children are older;
4. allow the parental leave period to count as time in service safeguarding the employee's seniority and promotion prospects;
5. modify legislation so that the leave option can be broken down into a number of leave periods and/or used with more than one child.

When asked for the optimum duration of the leave period, four informants said they would expect it to be between two and three years, three informants said that four years would be more adequate while three said that there should not be any limit on the duration of the parental leave period and that parents should be allowed to go on parental leave for as long as the couple can afford it.

#### *5.1.5 Comparison to paid employment*

When asked to compare being on parental leave to being in paid employment, most of the informants interviewed said that they found the two experiences to be very different.

The two main advantages of being on parental leave were, of course, that one had more time to spend with the children and that one had an opportunity to learn about and “*garner enthusiasm*” for the home which one was generally more detached from while on a full-time working schedule.

##### 5.1.5.1 Less Stressful/More Flexible

Parental leave was said to be generally more relaxing because one’s schedule was more flexible and during parental leave “*you’re your own boss.*” Although both activities required time, energy and, to some informants’ surprise, commitment, the tasks that they had to attend to during parental leave were seen to be generally less taxing and time seemed to “*pass quicker*” than when at work.

##### 5.1.5.2 Isolation/Lack of Contact with Colleagues

A number of informants also commented on the fact that they felt detached from the social structure. Being away from the work environment, many of them found that they had very little contact with the outside world and with adult company. This, they felt was a great disadvantage of being on parental leave. The other major point mentioned was that the financial situation of the household was dramatically different without their monthly income

In order to gather a better understanding of the informants' experience of parental leave they were asked to mention what they missed whilst away from work. The responses given, in decreasing order of frequency were:

1. interaction with others: daily conversations with colleagues, the maintenance of friendships within the working environment and the daily contact with people – clients, students etc – which one had on a regular workday
2. the interest factor and satisfaction that working in one's chosen field allowed
3. having an established work routine: This was viewed positively by some informants who had initially found the unstructured nature of domestic work a bit difficult to get used to.

#### *5.1.6 Relationship with partner*

Practically all the informants in the study said that their opting to go on parental leave for a shorter or longer period of time benefited the relationship with their partner. Their being on parental leave freed up some time to spend together. It also improved communication because they were both calmer and less stressed and because the situation at home became "healthier" - less hassled and time-constrained.

Most of the informants said that it helped them understand their partner's role within the family – "*Now I know what it is like!*" It allowed them to learn how to contribute more to the housework and care of the children. The partners were said to be "*very happy*" that the fathers had opted to go on parental leave and in most cases appreciated their decision. In fact, some fathers commented that during the period that they were on parental leave, their partner appeared to be happier and in a better mood. This they attributed to the fact that she was less stressed during the time when their spouse was handling a good part of the child caring responsibilities. In one case, an informant said that he knew his wife was "*proud of him*" for taking such a decision.

During the time that this study was carried out, all informants except for one had returned to full-time employment. (Only one father was on reduced hours during the time the study was carried out.) Now that all the informants except one are back to full-time employment, care for the child is being split equally between the spouses in five cases. Three informants take over caring for the child during the time when both he and his spouse are at home.

The decision to have a child was, for the great majority of informants, taken jointly. The pregnancy was unplanned in three cases.

### 5.1.7 Relationship with child

The discussion on how parental leave impacted their relationship with their child elicited much enthusiasm amongst the fathers interviewed. Practically all the informants said that their relationship with their child improved because of the extra time spent together. It was seen to have affected the way their child saw them and this effect was deemed to be still noticeable at the time of the study when the great majority (all except one) of the fathers had returned to their full-time working schedule.

Some of the fathers were obviously happy to describe how they had now become their child's "point of reference." The parental leave period had strengthened the bond with the child and enabled them to "put down roots" on which to build the relationship with the child in the future.

#### 5.1.7.1 Positive Comparison to Mother/Child Relationship

Interestingly many informants compared their relationship with their child to the one their partner had. In some cases, the mother was still seen to have the better relationship with the child. A "better relationship" was generally said to belong to the parent the child referred to when in trouble and/or more willingly obeyed and accepted as an authority figure. In quite a few cases, however, the father said (with some evident pride) that their relationship with the child was as good as or even better than that enjoyed by the mother: "I feel as important as the mother now! Not one little bit less!" The relationship was said to be much better ("hafna, hafna" – "much, much better") and that they were now a lot closer than they had been before.

This contributed to some very positive feelings about parental leave amongst fathers and elicited some superlative comments from the informants at this point: "(It was) an experience I will never forget." "We became very close. I am still her (the daughter's) point of reference today." "She still remembers what I did for her (informant had been on parental leave in 2001, and occasionally someone will remind her about it. We still have a very good relationship."

Communication with the child was generally seen to have improved as they had time to get to know and understand each other. In a couple of cases the informant said that the child "grew more like me" while one father said that they understand each other so well now that "sometimes words are unnecessary" and "a look or a gesture is enough."

When asked whether parental leave allowed them to learn anything new about their child and about what caring for them entailed, quite a few said that it did not. The reasons given for this were that, a) they had had other children, b) worked with and/or had extensive prior experience with children, c) it was largely the way they expected and d) because the child was too young

at the time and therefore did not allow for the type of communication which would have allowed them to get to know them better.

Those who answered in the affirmative said that they were surprised to find that it was so demanding. As one respondent said, "*Things did not happen automatically!*" and required a lot of time and energy to get done. A couple of informants commented on how surprised they were to see how quick the child was in learning new things and by how time consuming it was to make sure that the child was safe and sound.

#### 5.1.8 Being a good father

Informants offered some differing definitions of a good father but most revolved round three key factors:

1. **being responsible for the child** – both financially and emotionally. This includes being "*someone (the child) can rely on*", "*being a supportive shoulder*" and "*a friend when s/he grows older.*" "*A good father always puts his child first – both financially and psychologically.*"
2. **actively instilling values, a sense of discipline and desirable qualities in the child.** A good father was defined by some as being a "*good role model*". He puts great store by setting a good example and takes responsibility for the child's education – both moral and academic.
3. **investing time in his child** by "being present" in his/her life. This includes striving to achieve a healthy work-life balance and finding time to care for the child. A good father also finds time to play, listen and pay attention to the child. "*A good father always finds time for his child.*"

Being a good father was described as being "*very involving.*" Whilst most of the informants mentioned all three characteristics listed above in some way, the most striking difference was in how they thought fit to rear their child. Some fathers insisted on discipline and actively guiding the child's choices when young while others described how they took pains to "*discuss*" issues with their child and how discipline encompassed both mutual respect and friendship.

When asked whether they considered themselves to be good fathers, about half the respondents said they thought they were whilst the other half said they tried to be ("*struggled*" was the term used by one informant.)

#### 5.1.8.1 An Improved Self-Image

Most of the informants discussed how the parental leave period had helped them become better fathers. It gave them enough time to understand their child and be involved in their upbringing. Some said that parental leave taught them what being a good father was all about. They are now more involved in the physical care of the child and are also more careful in their behaviour around the child when at home.

The feeling of being a better father made informants feel “*more complete*” This was described as a fantastic feeling (“*Tal-genn!*”) and as giving a great boost of fulfilment and satisfaction. For a couple of informants, the feeling of being a good father was also that of knowing that when you die, you will be alive in your children. It is dedicating a lot of time to your children “*knowing that there will be a lot to look forward to.*”

Informants were asked to give an example of when they acted like a good father. The examples given were the following:

1. Spending three weeks attending to son in hospital.
2. Preparing a meal for the family while on a family outing.
3. Staying up with the child when she couldn't sleep.
4. Punishing child for not getting good exam grades.
5. Informant took parental leave from work (Two cases)
6. Reading to daughter regularly when she was young.
7. Consoling children after someone broke into their home.
8. Being available for the children every day – at any time they need him.
9. Coming to realise that the children were fulfilling duties and managing well in life.

#### *5.1.9 Perceptions of masculinity and parenting*

Informants were asked to comment on the statement that childcare was primarily a woman's job. Not surprisingly most of the informants disagreed with this statement.

All informants but one said that childcare was equally the responsibility of the mother and the father. Some informants said that times had changed and that the local mentality with regards to this issue had to be challenged. The idea was said to be “*old-fashioned*” and “*sexist*”. It was said to be an idea which was appropriate a while ago but now that women want to be involved in productive, paid employment, it is no longer an accurate picture of the reality in the home.

A few exceptions were pointed out during the course of the discussion, Childcare was still deemed to be primarily the woman's job if:

- a) the father is the sole breadwinner,
- b) the father is more involved in his job/career than the mother
- c) the child is physiologically dependant on the mother; such as during the initial "breast-feeding period".

The one informant who agreed with the statement said that it was true because women were naturally "*more caring*" than men and were therefore more suited to caring for young children.

When informants were then asked for their views on why it is generally the mother who takes time off work for the children, most informants said it was because the father was generally the higher earner in the household. Other motivations given were that it is traditionally and culturally considered more "*acceptable*" but also because following childbirth, the mother would need some time off work to get her strength back and with the woman at home with the child. At this time the man would feel "*useless*" around the house and would usually prefer to spend his time at work.

As mentioned earlier, couple of informants also said that the first few months of the baby's life were particularly important and that at this time the mother is possibly more important to its well being than the father. However, in the opinion of all informants, following this initial period, both the mother and the father should have an equal opportunity to spend time with the child.

#### 5.1.9.1 The "Traditional Man"

Informants were asked whether they would define themselves 'traditional men'. Most informants disagreed with the term.

'Traditional Men' would not consider going on parental leave "*or even changing nappies!*" They wouldn't be very involved in running the family and caring for the children. One informant described himself as "*rather unorthodox*" while another said that he always saw his role as being more than that of the main breadwinner. There appeared to be rather strong views on the topic and some of the informants expressed themselves rather emphatically on this issue.

A few insisted that they were not at all traditional ("*Lanqas xejn!*") and while they liked 'traditional activities' with the family (such as family dinners and outings) they did not consider themselves the kind of man who would work all day and return to the home in the evening expecting to be waited on by the wife.

One informant in particular said that he used to be a traditional man but that his perception of himself and the way he related to his family changed during his parental leave period. (*"Kont u m'ghadnix!" "I was that way – not anymore."*) Taking time with the child made him realise how much the father's input meant to the child and made him realise that the father's role was distinct from that of a breadwinner and very important to the family.

#### 5.1.9.2 Self-Perceptions and Perceptions of Others

The informants' perceptions of themselves had improved following their experience. Some said they felt "more complete" That they had found a better balance between the male and female roles within the family and that they were proud of themselves and more confident that they could manage any situation following this experience. One respondent said that he is very happy that he got to raise his children himself (rather than having the grandparents or a baby sitter take care of them) and it gave him a sense of his own importance within the family. Overall, the fathers interviewed felt they had grown and learnt a lot about parenting through their decision to take time off work to be with the children.

Parental leave was said to have both positive and negative effects on others' perceptions of the informants. For around half of the informants, friends and acquaintances had generally appreciated, in some cases admired, what he had done for his child. In their experience, the local mentality about parenting is changing and other people he had come across had acknowledged that it was natural for the father to want to "do his share". The informants said that they had received positive comments and a couple still do from time to time.

Three informants, however, had rather negative experiences with feedback from other people. They felt a lot of people judged them negatively because they believed they were doing a woman's job and one informant said he was still taunted when he took a day off work by some colleagues who would say, *"Off work today? Again?"* Another informant who teaches at a girls' secondary school said that his students had made fun of his decision at the time and had not understood his need to be with his children during the early years.

## 5.2 Main Findings from Employers

The following section reports findings from interviews carried out with employers who had approved parental leave applications for male employees in the near or distant past. Only four employers accepted to be interviewed and, as explained above, all the informants headed departments within the Public Service. A profile of informants in this category is given in Table 2 in Section 2.2 of this report.

All the informants had very limited experience with male employees availing themselves of unpaid parental leave (four at most) and the discussion often extended to include attitudes towards both male and female employees who availed themselves of this option.

### *5.2.1 Awareness of public service parental leave policy*

As mentioned above all the informants came from the Public Sector and they all referred to Public Service regulations when asked about parental leave policy. Only one informant was able to describe the service regulations on parental leave mentioning the 13 weeks paid and 1 week optional unpaid maternity leave as well as the 3 years career break which may be availed of up to the time when the child is five years old. This informant also mentioned the reduced hours option.

The other informants said that their department complied with Public Service regulations and that when the case arose they would refer to their HR department for information on terms and conditions.

### *5.2.2 How parental leave impacts the organisation*

Informants were asked to explain how they felt about the parental leave option. All four interviewees said that they felt that having an employee on parental leave was very disruptive to day-to-day operations: "*Dejjem se jharbat hux?*" (*"It's bound to be disruptive isn't it?"*) This was particularly so when the employee was in a senior position or was heading a working team of some sort: "*very inconvenient*", "*a nightmare*". Although a replacement could be asked for, and colleagues would generally cover the employee's workload, most of the informants felt that the parental leave option interfered greatly with the smooth running of their department. One informant said that she had a running joke with women who applied for parental leave – "*I tell them that they should have submitted an application before getting pregnant!*"

In a couple of cases the informants encouraged the employee to go on a reduced hours schedule rather than absent themselves from work completely. However, for the other two respondents, having employees on reduced hours was even more tiresome as they would generally have to “*negotiate hours*” with the employee, adjusting other employee’s schedules to fit in with the schedule of the person on reduced hours. In some cases the employee was also seen to be too involved with the child to be fully committed at work. Furthermore, as one employer put it, “*Their thoughts would still be full of the child and it’s difficult to get them to think about work and only work.*”

The main problems with reduced hours were:

1. that you have to negotiate working duties around family commitments;
2. the frequent giving of handovers;
3. the fact that employees generally miss out on the first (planning) part of the day; and
4. negative reactions and resistance from the other members of staff.

One informant who headed a department in the health sector said: “*We must make it very clear that even on reduced hours you have responsibilities. The department needs continuity and regularity.*”

For one informant, parental leave is good for women as it was a means to keep them in employment and on the department’s staff list. However, for other respondents, it was seen to be a necessity – one informant termed it “social progress.” As one informant pointed out, all long-leave options created disruption and inconvenienced the running of the department.

### *5.2.3 How parental leave impacts the employee*

Apart from the inconvenience it caused to the organisation, informants had generally positive comments about how the experience of parental leave affected the employee. Both mothers and fathers who availed themselves of this option were seen to mature as a result of this experience.

A negative side to parental leave was mentioned by a couple of informants with regards to senior or professional staff. As one informant pointed out, the parental leave period generally occurred during a time when the employee would be reaching a peak in career development. The leave period is often used to make a career change so that the department often loses some of its best-trained and most experienced employees through this leave option.

Another point that was mentioned was that “*parental leave can be abused of*” and that this was very de-motivating for the other employees. One informant especially, stressed the potential for abuse – especially with male employees, who, he felt, would use the long leave option for other purpose: “*There is always another reason with males.*”

However, parental leave was said to be fundamentally a praiseworthy option by all informants and very motivating for the employees who do avail themselves of it. As one informant put it, “*We’re not over the moon (when an employee goes on unpaid leave) as we can barely cope as it is but in this case he was a senior and trusted employee and I was sure he did not have ulterior motives.*” As mentioned by practically all informants, the major problem apart from having to find a replacement for the duration of the leave period was the possibility of losing the employee who would have looked for and found alternative employment during the parental leave period.

#### *5.2.4 Extent of personal experience with parental leave applications*

As mentioned earlier the informants had very limited experience with male employees availing themselves of parental leave. When asked to describe their reaction they all said that they had been surprised initially.

One informant who had such applications from four professional-grade employees was afraid that it would interrupt operations and had tried to persuade the employees to opt for working on a reduced-hours scheme. Another informant said that he had made it a point to discuss the decision with the employee and “*make sure that he know what he was doing (because of the financial drawback it involved.)*”

#### *5.2.5 Would employers avail themselves of parental leave?*

None of the informants had ever availed themselves of parental leave. Only one informant said that he would not consider the option if he were to have a child at this time. The reason given for this was that his spouse does not work and therefore he does not see a need for him to be at home with the child too. The same informant also admitted to being “*rather traditional on these issues.*”

#### 5.2.5.1 Attitudes towards Parental Leave, Gender Equality

All informants said that they agreed with the concept of equal rights and responsibilities for both sexes. However, while two informants said that it was right that parental leave be extended to fathers saying that things “*have changed*” and that this egalitarian view of childcare was gaining ground, another two qualified their statements.

For one informant, females are “*better at bringing up children.*” *Women should have longer parental leave periods. It was always that way.*” For another, “*it is good that fathers take time off work to be with the child, but the child will always gravitate towards the mother. Men don’t know how to care for children, women do.*”

One female informant said that “*It is always a risk to have a woman in your staff but you shouldn’t be biased by this. This option and others will help more women gain senior positions because there are more concessions being made enabling them to cope with both work and family life.*” She also pointed out that she has lost more staff through emigration leave than through employees opting to go on parental leave.

#### *5.2.6 Ideal Duration of Parental Leave Period*

Most informants said that the duration of the parental leave period should be between three and four years. For one informant the duration should vary on the basis of each individual case – the more senior the employee, the less the duration of the leave period.

## APPENDICES

**Appendix A - Recruitment Questionnaire: FATHERS (English)**

Introduction / Setting an appointment

**Good morning/afternoon. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ . I work for the Research Unit at BPC, an independent Marketing Communications Agency. May I speak to \_\_\_\_\_ <respondent's name>?**

*If respondent is not available, ask:*

**Can you tell me when it is best time to phone to talk to \_\_\_\_\_ <respondent's name>?**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

*Make note of day / time when best to call and call again.*

*When respondent is contacted, say:* **We are carrying out a research project about being a parent in 2005. This study is being carried out on behalf of ETC and is aimed at parents who work with the Public Service. Would you mind if I ask you a few questions?**

Q1. What department / unit are you assigned to at present?

*Write in:* \_\_\_\_\_

Q2. What is your designation?

*Write in exact designation:* \_\_\_\_\_

Q3. Do you have children under the age of 9 years?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO Q4</b>
No	2	<b>Thank &amp; Close</b>

Q4. How old are your children?

Child 1: *Write in age* \_\_\_\_\_

Child 2: *Write in age* \_\_\_\_\_

Child 3: Write in age \_\_\_\_\_

Q5. As you may be aware a new legislation on parental leave was introduced recently. Which of the following sentences applies to you?

<b>READ OUT</b>		<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
<b>Yes, Have availed myself of parental leave in the past</b>	1	<b>GO TO Q6</b>
<b>Yes, currently on parental leave</b>	2	<b>GO TO Q6</b>
<b>Never availed myself of parental leave</b>	3	<b>Thank &amp; Close</b>

Q6. Who is the head of department who authorized your parental leave? (**Ensure that name supplied pertains to Head of Department**)

Write in: (Name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Designation) \_\_\_\_\_

(Department) \_\_\_\_\_

Q7. From the time you applied for parental leave, have you been transferred to another department?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO Q8</b>
No	2	<b>Go To Q9</b>

Q8. If Yes: Which unit / department were you assigned to when you applied for parental leave?

Write in: \_\_\_\_\_

## DEMOGRAPHICS

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Q9. May I ask you your age / age category? Write in exact age \_\_\_\_\_

<b>AGE</b>	
18-24	1
25-34	2
35-44	3
45 and over	4

**As part of this project, we are interviewing parents who opted to take parental leave to take care of their child/children and we would like you to participate in this study. This consists of an in-depth interview which should take around 60 minutes and each participant will be paid Lm10. Would it be possible to set an appointment for an interview at a date and time convenient to you over the next few days?**

**Appointment :**

**Day:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Date :**\_\_\_\_\_

**Time :**\_\_\_\_\_

Kindly inform respondent that interview will be in-depth and for this reason the interview will be recorded (audio only). Explain that this is necessary to help you compile the report on the outcome of the interview.

*If asked, explain that the project is being carried out on behalf of ETC and assure respondent that any information the respondent gives during the interview will be reported in summary format.*

***Thank you for accepting to participate in this study.***

**Respondent's Name**

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**Address**

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---

**Telephone Number/s**

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**Interviewer's Name**

---

**Interviewer's ID No**

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**Interviewer's Signature**

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**Date of interview**

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## Appendix B - Recruitment Questionnaire: FATHERS (Maltese)

### Introduction / Setting an appointment

**Il-gurnata t-tajba. Jien \_\_\_\_\_ u qed incempillek mill-BPC. Ahna kumpanija indipendenti li taghmel ir-ricerka. Jekk joghgbok nista' nkellem lill- \_\_\_\_\_ <respondent's name>?**

*If respondent is not available, ask:*

**Tista' tghidli fi x'hin l-ahjar li ncempel biex inkellem lill- \_\_\_\_\_ <respondent's name>?**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

*Make note of day / time when best to call and call again.*

*When respondent is contacted, say:* **Bhalissa qeghdin naghmlu studju mall-genituri dwar xi tfisser li tkun genitur fis-sena 2005. Dan l-istudju li qed isir ghal ETC, huwa mmirrat ghal genituri li jahdmu mas-servizz pubbliku. Nista' nistaqsik xi ftit mistoqsijiet?**

Q1. F'liema dipartiment tahdem bhalissa?

Write in: \_\_\_\_\_

Q2. X'inhu l-grad tieghek?

Write in exact designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Q3. Ghandek tfal that id-disa' snin?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO Q4</b>
No	2	<b>Thank &amp; Close</b>

Q4. Kemm ghandhom zmien it-tfal?

Child 1: Write in age \_\_\_\_\_

Child 2: Write in age \_\_\_\_\_

Child 3: Write in age \_\_\_\_\_

Q5. Ricentement giet introdotta il-ligi dwar il-Parental leave. Liema minn dawn is-sentenzi li ser naqralek tapplika ghalik?

<b>READ OUT</b>		<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Kont hadt Parental leave xi zmien ilu	1	<b>GO TO Q6</b>
Bhalissa qieghed fuq il-Parental leave	2	<b>GO TO Q6</b>
Qatt ma hadt Parental leave	3	<b>Thank &amp; Close</b>

Q6. Min hu l-kap tad-dipartiment li awtorizzalek il-Parental leave? (**Ensure that name supplied pertains to Head of Department**)

Write in: (Name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Designation) \_\_\_\_\_

(Department) \_\_\_\_\_

Q7. Minn meta applikajt ghal-Parental leave, inti gejт trasferit ghal xi dipartiment iehor?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO Q8</b>
No	2	<b>Go To Q9</b>

Q8. **If Yes:** F'liema dipartiment/unit kont meta applikajt ghal-Parental leave?

Write in: \_\_\_\_\_

## DEMOGRAPHICS

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Q9. Tista' tghidli kemm ghandek zmien / Taht liema kategorija t-eta' taqa' \_\_\_\_\_

<b>AGE</b>	
18-24	1
25-34	2
35-44	3
45 and over	4

**Bhala parti minn dan il-progett, qeghdin nintervistaw genituri li ghazlu li jiehd u I-Parental leave. Ahna nixtiequk tippartecipa f'dan l-istudju. Din l-interview hija pjuttost dettaljata u tiehu madwar siegha u kull participant jinghata Lm10 tal-partecipazzjoni tieghu. Huwa possibli li naghmlu appuntament f'hin u gurnata konvenjenti ghalik biex inkun nista' naghmillek din l-interview?**

**Appointment :**

**Day:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Date :**\_\_\_\_\_

**Time :**\_\_\_\_\_

Kindly inform respondent that interview will be in-depth and for this reason the interview will be recorded (audio only). Explain that this is necessary to help you compile the report on the outcome of the interview.

*If asked, explain that the project is being carried out for on behalf of ETC and assure respondent that any information the respondent gives during the interview will be reported in summary format..*

***Thank you for accepting to participate in this study.***

**Respondent's Name**

---

**Address**

---

---

**Telephone Number/s**

---

**Interviewer's Name**

---

**Interviewer's ID No**

---

**Interviewer's Signature**

---

**Date of interview**

---

**Appendix C - Recruitment Questionnaire: EMPLOYERS (English)**

Introduction / Setting an appointment

**Good morning/afternoon. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ . I work for the Research Unit at BPC, an independent Marketing Communications Agency. May I speak to \_\_\_\_\_ <respondent's name>?**

*If respondent is not available, ask:*

**Can you tell me when it is best time to phone to talk to \_\_\_\_\_ <respondent's name>?**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

*Make note of day / time when best to call and call again.*

*When respondent is contacted, say:* **We are carrying out a research project amongst heads of departments in the public service on parenting and parental leave. This study is being carried out on behalf of ETC and we would appreciate your participation. Would it be possible to set an appointment for an interview at a date and time convenient to you in the next few days? The interview should take around 45 minutes.**

**Appointment :**

**Day:\_\_\_\_\_ Date :\_\_\_\_\_ Time :\_\_\_\_\_**

Kindly inform respondent that interview will be in-depth and for this reason the interview will be recorded (audio only). Explain that this is necessary to help you compile the report on the outcome of the interview.

*If asked, explain that the project is being carried out for one of our clients and assure respondent that any information the respondent gives during the interview will be reported in summary format and that his/her name will not be revealed to client at any point.*

***Thank you for accepting to participate in this study.***

**Name of Company**

---

**Respondent's Name**

---

**Address**

---

---

**Telephone Number/s**

---

**Interviewer's Name**

---

**Interviewer's ID No**

---

**Interviewer's Signature**

---

**Date of interview**

---

## Appendix D - Recruitment Questionnaire: EMPLOYERS (Maltese)

### Introduction / Setting an appointment

**Il-gurnata t-tajba. Jien \_\_\_\_\_ u qed incempillek mill-BPC. Ahna kumpanija indipendenti li taghmel ir-ricerka. Jekk joghgbok nista' nkellem lill- \_\_\_\_\_ <respondent's name>?**

*If respondent is not available, ask:*

**Tista' tghidli fi x'hin l-ahjar li ncempel biex inkellem lill- \_\_\_\_\_ <respondent's name>?**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

*Make note of day / time when best to call and call again.*

*When respondent is contacted, say:* **Bhalissa qeghdin naghmlu studju ma' kapijiet tad-dipartimenti fis-servizz pubbliku dwar il-parental leave. Dan l-istudju qed isir ghall-ETC, u napprezzaw jekk inti tippartecipa f'dan l-istudju. Din tikkonsisti f'interview iddettaljata li tiehu madwar 45 minuta. Huwa possibli li naghmlu appuntament f'hin u gurnata konvenjenti ghalik biex inkun nista' naghmillek din l-interview?**

**Appointment :**

**Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_ Time : \_\_\_\_\_**

Kindly inform respondent that interview will be in-depth and for this reason the interview will be recorded (audio only). Explain that this is necessary to help you compile the report on the outcome of the interview.

*If asked, explain that the project is being carried out for one of our clients and assure respondent that any information the respondent gives during the interview will be reported in summary format and that his/her name will not be revealed to client at any point.*

***Thank you for accepting to participate in this study***

**Name of Company**

---

**Respondent's Name**

---

**Address**

---

---

**Telephone Number/s**

---

**Interviewer's Name**

---

**Interviewer's ID No**

---

**Interviewer's Signature**

---

**Date of interview**

---

## Appendix E - Interview Guide- FATHERS (English)

(Estimated total running time: 2hrs)

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- **Thank you for accepting to participate in this study.**
  
- **Introduction and aim of Interview**
  - *To find out participants' views about being a parent in 2005 and their views on parental leave.*
  
- *Assurances of confidentiality, awareness of recording facility, etc*
  - *Reassure participants that any facts and views they make known during the interview will not be linked to their names, and reports of the discussion will not mention names of participants.*

### PART 1

(Estimated total running time: 60 mins)

---

#### **B1. Ice breaker**

- Ask fathers **currently** on parental leave: **Can you describe how you spent the day yesterday?** Probe for routine activities, proportion of time spent with child, carrying out domestic chores etc
  
- Ask fathers **not currently** on parental leave: **Thinking of the time when you were on parental leave, can you describe how you would spend a typical day?** Probe for routine activities, proportion of time spent with child, carrying out domestic chores etc

#### **B2. Decision to go on Parental Leave**

- **Can you tell me how you decided to go on parental leave?**
  - Probe to determine:*
    - *How they got to know about the parental leave option*
    - *Who first endorsed the idea (participant or partner? Or others?)*
    - *Reactions from partner, family and colleagues and whether and how this influenced the decision process*
    - *Whether they took specific action to address negative reactions*

### **B3. Self-Image**

- **Can you tell me about how you see/saw yourself with regards to being on parental leave?**

*Probe for:*

- *how important the activity of being with child is to respondent*
- *is this putting him on a slow track with regards to career; if yes, how does he feel about this?*
- *does he see himself being busy or laid-back?*

### **B4. Evaluation of leave**

- **Now that you have gone through, or are going through, the experience, can you tell us your views on parental leave?**

*Allow for spontaneous responses then ask:*

- **What was the biggest challenge?**
- **What has it taught you?**
- **What is the best thing about parental leave?**
- **What is the worst thing about parental leave?**
- **Would you do it again?**
- **Would there be anything you would do differently?**
- **If you could put forward suggestions for improving parental leave terms, what would they be?**

### **B5. Comparison to paid employment**

- **Now I would like you to think about your experience of paternity leave and that of being in paid employment. How do they compare?**

*Allow for spontaneous responses then ask:*

- **Would you say the experiences are similar or different?**
  - o **In what way/s are the experiences similar?**
  - o **In what way/s are the experiences different?**
- **What do/did you miss about work while being on parental leave?**
- **What did/will you miss about paternal leave when you went/go back to work?**

#### **B6. Workplace – colleagues and employer/manager**

- **What were your colleagues' reactions to your opting for parental leave?**
- **Did you have any problems at work related to your opting for parental leave?**  
*If yes, how did you handle them?*
- **Had anyone else in your workplace opted to take parental leave up to that time?**
- **What factors in your work situation would have stopped you from taking parental leave?**

#### **B7. Friends and Family**

- **What reaction/s did you expect from your friends and family to your opting to take parental leave?** *Probe: Where there any surprising reactions?*
- **Do you personally know other fathers on parental leave?** *Probe: Is it common in your circle? What about their experiences?*

#### **B8. Relationship with Partner**

- **Thinking about your relationship with your partner, would you say your being on parental leave has influenced your relationship in any way? How?**
- **How would you describe your partner's reaction to your being on parental leave?** *Probe: Was she in favour/against? Was it difficult for her to hand over responsibility for childcare and domestic work?*
- **When both you and your partner are at home, who takes care of the child?**
- **How are household chores shared between you: cooking, cleaning, shopping?**
- **If both of you are at home and the child starts crying, who picks him/her up?**
- **How did you come about the decision to have a child?** *Probe: which spouse was most in favour of having a child. Was parental leave taken into consideration when planning the child?*

#### **B9. Relationship with child**

- **Thinking about your relationship with your child. Would you say your being on parental leave has impacted your relationship in any way? How?**
- *Unless spontaneously mentioned ask:* **How would you say communication has changed?** *Probe: Do you understand your child better than before?*

- Have there been any surprising things which you discovered about caring for your child?

**B10. Being a good father**

- How would you describe a good father?
- Do you consider yourself a good father?
- Would you say your opting for parental leave has affected your quality as a father?
- Can you describe the feeling of being a father?
- Can you give me an example of one instance when you think you were being a good father?

**B11. Masculinity**

- What do you think of the idea that childcare is primarily a woman's job?
- Do you consider yourself a traditional man?
- How do you think your opting for parental leave has influenced other people's opinions of you?
- How has your opting for parental leave influenced your image of yourself?
- Why would you say fathers choose to avail themselves of a shorter period of leave i.c.w. the birth of a child than mothers?

*Unless spontaneously mentioned ask:*

- What is the ideal duration of parental leave – for mother, for father?
- Should the mother and father be granted parental leave together for a period? If so, for how long?

**If currently on leave, give respondent Day Log document and explain that he will need to fill it in and have it ready for you to pick up on \_\_\_\_\_ <date> at \_\_\_\_\_ <time>.**

**PART 2**

Q1. May I ask you your age / age category? **Write in exact age** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>AGE</b>	
18-24	1
25-34	2
35-44	3
45 and over	4

Q2. Which of the following best describes your level of education?

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
No formal education	1
Primary	2
Secondary	3
Vocational training	4
Post-Secondary education	5
Tertiary education	6
Other <i>Write in</i> _____	

Q3. Primarily, do you see yourself as:

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Family oriented	1
Career oriented	2
Both	3

Q4. What is your marital status?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Married	1
Living with partner	2
Divorced	3
Separated	4
Widowed	5
Single	6
Other <i>Write in</i> _____	

**PARTNER'S BACKGROUND**

---

Q5. May I ask you how old your partner is? *Write in exact age* \_\_\_\_\_

<b>AGE</b>	
18-24	1
25-34	2
35-44	3
45 and over	4

Q6. What is your partner's occupation? *Write in and code below* \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Professional/Managerial	1
White Collar	2
Shop Owner	3
Skilled worker	4
Unskilled worker	5
Armed Forces/Police	6
Retired	7
Unemployed	8
Student	9
Housewife	10
Other: <i>Write in</i> _____	

Q7. Which of the following best describes your partner's level of education?

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
No formal education	1
Primary	2
Secondary	3
Vocational training	4
Post-Secondary education	5
Tertiary education	6
Other <i>Write in</i> _____	

Q8. Primarily, do you see your partner as:

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Family oriented	1
Career oriented	2
Both	3

## **YOUR CHILD**

---

***If respondent has more than one child, ask him to answer the following questions about the child for whom he availed himself of parental leave***

Q9. Are you and your partner the biological parents of the child for whom you availed yourself of parental leave?

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Yes, both of us	1
Yes I am, but my partner is not	2
Yes my partner is, but I am not	3
No, none of us	4

Q10. How old is the child for whom you availed yourself of parental leave?

	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>MONTHS</b>
<b>Write in exact age:</b>		

Q11. What is the gender of the child for whom you availed yourself of parental leave?

Male	1
Female	2

Q12a. Do you have other children?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO Q12B</b>
No	2	<b>GO TO Q13a</b>

Q12b. How many other children do **you** have?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
One	1
Two	2
Three	3
Other: Write in _____	

Q13a. Does your partner have other children?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO Q13B</b>
No	2	<b>GO TO Q14</b>

Q13b. How many other children does **she** have?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
One	1
Two	2
Three	3
Other: <i>Write in</i> _____	

Q14. If you or your partner have more than one child, are they

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Only common children	1
Both common children and children you are only parent of	2
Both common children and children your partner only is parent of	3
Children you are only parent of	4
Children your partner only is parent of	5

## YOUR PARENTAL LEAVE

---

Q15. In total, how long is / was your parental leave period?

	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>DAYS</b>
<b>Write in:</b>			

Q16. Apart from parental leave, have you been absent from work in some other way to take care of the child for whom you availed yourself of parental leave?

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>	<b>Indicate duration:</b>
No	1	
Yes, time off in lieu of overtime	2	_____ years _____ weeks _____ days
Yes, vacation	3	_____ years _____ weeks _____ days
Yes, other <i>write in</i> _____	4	_____ years _____ weeks _____ days

Q17. **Ask only to respondents who have other children:** Did you take parental leave when your other children were born?

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>	<b>Indicate duration:</b>
No, I did not	1	
Yes, I took parental leave	2	_____ years _____ weeks _____ days
Yes, vacation or other	3	_____ years _____ weeks _____ days

Q18a. Did your partner take parental leave to care for the child for whom you availed yourself of parental leave?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>	<b>Indicate duration:</b>
Yes	1	_____ weeks _____ days
No	2	<b>GO TO Q20</b>

Q18b. In total, how long is / was **her** leave period?

	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>DAYS</b>
<b>Write in:</b>			

Q19. How old was the child for whom you availed yourself of parental leave when your partner returned to work / education?

	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>MONTHS</b>
<b>Write in:</b>		

Q20. For how long will **you** be/were you on leave in total – including parental and other leave?

	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>DAYS</b>
<b>Write in:</b>			

Q21. For how many days or weeks can you get parental leave on full pay?

	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>DAYS</b>
<b>Write in:</b>		
<i>Don't know</i>		1

Q22. For how many days or weeks can your partner get parental leave on full pay?

	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>DAYS</b>
<b>Write in:</b>		
<i>Don't know</i>		1

Q23. Have you taken, or will you be taking, leave for a period **without full pay** to look after the child for whom parental leave was taken?

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>	<b>Indicate number of weeks:</b>
No	1	
Yes, on daily benefit	2	_____ weeks
Yes, with nothing paid	3	_____ weeks

Q24. Has your partner taken, or will your partner be taking, **parental** leave for a period **without full pay** to look after the child for whom parental leave was taken?

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>	<b>Indicate number of weeks:</b>
No	1	
Yes, on daily benefit	2	_____ weeks
Yes, with nothing paid	3	_____ weeks

#### **YOUR ECONOMY DURING PARENTAL LEAVE**

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Q25. In which of the following categories does your gross annual income fit? This means any income including your salary, investments or income from any other source

<b>SHOW CARD A</b>	
<b>Less than Lm3,000</b>	1
<b>Between Lm3,001 –Lm5,999</b>	2
<b>Between Lm6,000 – Lm7,999</b>	3
<b>Between Lm8,000 – Lm9,999</b>	4
<b>Between Lm10,000 – Lm13,999</b>	5
<b>Between Lm14,000 and Lm19,999</b>	6
<b>Lm20,000 and over</b>	7
<i>Don't know/No answer</i>	8

Q26. In which of the following categories does your partner's gross annual income fit? This means any income including your salary, investments or income from any other source

<b>SHOW CARD A</b>	
<b>Less than Lm3,000</b>	1
<b>Between Lm3,001 – Lm5,999</b>	2
<b>Between Lm6,000 – Lm7,999</b>	3
<b>Between Lm8,000 – Lm9,999</b>	4

<b>Between Lm10,000 – Lm13,999</b>	5
<b>Between Lm14,000 and Lm19,999</b>	6
<b>Lm20,000 and over</b>	7
<i>Don't know/No answer</i>	8

**THANK & CLOSE**

**Respondent's Name**

---

**Address**

---

---

**Telephone Number/s**

---

**Interviewer's Name**

---

**Interviewer's ID No**

---

**Interviewer's Signature**

---

**Date of interview**

---

## Appendix F - Interview Guide- FATHERS (Maltese)

- **Grazzi talli accettajt li tippartecipa f'dan l-istudju.**
  
- **Introduction and aim of Interview**
  - *To find out participants' views about being a parent in 2005 and their views on parental leave.*
  
- *Assurances of confidentiality, awareness of recording facility, etc*
  - *Reassure participants that any facts and views they make known during the interview will not be linked to their names, and reports of the discussion will not mention names of participants.*

### PART 1

(Estimated total running time: 60 mins)

---

#### **B1. Ice breaker**

- Ask fathers **currently** on parental leave: **Tista tiddekrivili kif qattajt il-gurnata l-bierah?** Probe for routine activities, proportion of time spent with child, carrying out domestic chores etc
  
- Ask fathers **not currently** on parental leave: **Ahseb ftit fuq meta kont fuq parental leave. Tista' tiddekrivili kif kont tqatta' gurnata tipika?** Probe for routine activities, proportion of time spent with child, carrying out domestic chores etc

#### **B2. Decision to go on Parental Leave**

- **Kif iddecidejt li tohrog fuq parental leave?**
  - Probe to determine:*
    - *How they got to know about the parental leave option*
    - *Who first endorsed the idea (participant or partner? Or others?)*
    - *Reactions from partner, family and colleagues and whether and how this influenced the decision process*
    - *Whether they took specific action to address negative reactions*

#### **B3. Self-Image**

- **Tista' tiddeskrivili kif sejjer / kif mort bil-parental leave?**

*Probe for:*

- *how important the activity of being with child is to respondent*
- *is this putting him on a slow track with regards to career; if yes, how does he feel about this?*
- *does he see himself being busy or laid-back?*

#### **B4. Evaluation of leave**

- **Issa li int ghaddejt jew ghaddej minn din l-esperjenza, tista' taghtini l-opinjoni tieghek fuq il-parental leave?**

*Allow for spontaneous responses then ask:*

- **X'kien l-akbar challenge ghalik?**
- **X'tghallimt minn din l-esperjenza?**
- **X'inhi l-isbah haga dwar il-parental leave?**
- **U x'inhi l-aghar haga dwar il-parental leave?**
- **Tkun lest li terga' tghaddi minn esperjenza bhal din?**
- **Hemm xi haga li kieku kont taghmel b'mod differenti?**
- **Kieku kellek taghmel xi suggerimenti biex ittejjeb il-kundizzjonijiet marbuta mal-parental leave, x'tip ta' suggerimenti taghmel?**

#### **B5. Comparison to paid employment**

- **Issa nixtieqek tahseb fuq l-esperjenza tieghek meta kont/qieghed fuq il-parental leave, ghal dik tax-xoghol normali bi hlas. Kif tipparagunhom?**

*Allow for spontaneous responses then ask:*

- **Tahseb li dawn iz-zewg esperjenzi huma simili jew differenti minn xulxin?**
  - o **F'hiex tahseb li huma simili?**
  - o **F'hiex tahseb li huma differenti?**
- **X'timmissja/ x'kont timmissja dwar ix-xoghol meta kont/ waqt il-parental leave?**
- **X'kont timmissja/x'timmissja dwar il-parental leave meta kont /meta tkun ix-xoghol?**

#### **B6. Workplace – colleagues and employer/manager**

- **X'kienet ir-rejazzjoni ta' shabek meta ddecidejt li tohrog bil-parental leave?**

- **Kellek xi problemi fuq ix-xoghol fir-rigward tad-decizjoni tieghek li tohrog bil-parental leave? *If yes, Kif solvejthom?***
- **Kien hemm xi hadd iehor li ghazel li johrog bil-parental leave qablek?**
- **X'inhuma l-fatturi fuq il-post tax-xoghol li setghu zammewk milli tiehu l-parental leave?**

#### **B7. Friends and Family**

- **X'rejazzjoni kellek minghand familjari u hbieb ghad-decizjoni tieghek li tiehu l-parental leave? *Probe: kien hemm xi rejazzjonijiet li ma kontx qed tistenna?***
- **Int taf xi missirijiet ohra li hargu bil-parental leave? *Probe: Din hija komuni f'dawk ta' madwarek? Probe : X'jghidu dwar din l-esperjenza li ghaddew minnha?***

#### **B8. Relationship with Partner**

- **Meta tahseb dwar ir-relazzjoni tieghek mal-partner, tahseb li l-fatt li int hrigt bil-parental leave effetwa r-relazzjoni taghkhom b'xi mod? Kif ?**
- **Kif tiddeskrivi r-rejazzjoni tal-partner tieghek ghal-fatt li int hrigt bil-parental leave? *Probe: Kienet favur jew kontra l-idea? Sabitha difficli biex tghaddilek ir-responsabbilta tat-trobbija tat-tifel/la u x-xoghol tad-dar?***
- **Meta int u l-partner tkunu t-tnejn id-dar, min minnkhom jiehu hsieb it-tifel/la?**
- **Kif jinqasam ix-xoghol tad-dar: tisjir, tindif, xiri ghad-dar?**
- **Jekk tkunu t-tnejn id-dar u t-tifel/la jibda/tibda tibki, min minnkhom jiehu hsiebu/ha?**
- **Kif wasaltu ghad-decizjoni li jkollkhom tarbija? *Probe: Minnkhom it-tnejn, min xtaq l-aktar li jkollkhom tarbija? Il-parental leave gie kkunsidrat meta kontu qed tippjanaw it-tarbija?***

#### **B9. Relationship with child**

- **Meta tahseb dwar ir-relazzjoni tieghek ma ibnek/bintek, thoss li l-fatt li hrigt/qieghed bil-parental leave effetwa din ir-relazzjoni? Kif?**
- ***Unless spontaneously mentioned ask:* Kif tghid li nbidlet il-komunikazzjoni bejniethom? *Probe: Thoss li issa tifhem lill-ibnek/bintek ahjar minn qabel?***
- **Skoprejt xi affarijiet li ma kontx taf bihom fir-rigward tat-trobbija tat-tifel/la?**

### **B10. Being a good father**

- Kif tiddeskrivi missier tajjeb?
- Inti tikkunsidra lilek innifsek bhala missier tajjeb?
- Tahseb li l-fatt li ghazilt li tiehu l-parental leave effettwa il-kwalitajiet tieghek bhala missier?
- Tista' tiddeskrivili xi tfisser li tkun missier?
- Tista' ttini ezempju ta' kaz wiehed fejn thoss li kont missier tajjeb?

### **B11. Masculinity**

- X'tahseb fuq l-idea li t-trobbija tat-tfal hija primarjament ir-responsabbilta tal-mara?
- Inti tikkunsidra lilek innifsek bhala ragel tradizzjonali?
- Kif tahseb li d-decizjoni tieghek li tiehu l-parental leave effettwat l-opinjoni tan-nies, dwarek?
- Kif tahseb li l-ghazla tieghek li tiehu l-parental leave influwenzat il-mod ta' kif thares lejg innifsek?
- Ghaliex tahseb li missirijiet jaghzlu li jiehdu perjodu iqsar ta' leave mill-ommijiet meta titwieled tarbija?

*Unless spontaneously mentioned ask:*

- Idejalment, x'tahseb li ghandu jkun it-tul tal-parental leave kemm ghall-omm, kif ukoll ghall-missier?
- L-omm u l-missier ghandhom jinghataw parental leave flimkien ghal xi perjodu? *If so:* Kemm ghandu jkun twil dan il-perjodu?

**If currently on leave** give respondent Day Log document and explain that he will need to fill it in and have it ready for you to pick up on \_\_\_\_\_ <date> at \_\_\_\_\_ <time>.

### **PART 2**

Q1. Tista' tgħidli kemm ghandek zmien / Taht liema kategorija t'eta' taqa'?

**Write in exact age** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>AGE</b>	
18-24	1
25-34	2
35-44	3
45 and over	4

Q2. Sa fejn ghamilt skola?

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Qatt ma mort skola	1
Primarja	2
Sekondarja	3
Vocational	4
6 <sup>th</sup> Form	5
Universita	6
Other <i>Write in</i> _____	

Q3. Inti tikkonsidra lilek innifsek bhala persuna orjentata l-aktar:

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Lejn il-familja	1
Lejn il-karriera	2
Lejn it-tnejn	3

Q4. X'inhu l-istat civili tieghek?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Married	1
Living with partner	2
Divorced	3
Separated	4
Widowed	5
Single	6
Other <i>Write in</i> _____	

## **PARTNER'S BACKGROUND**

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Q5. Tista' tghidli kemm ghandha zmien il-partner tieghek? **Write in exact age** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>AGE</b>	
18-24	1
25-34	2
35-44	3
45 and over	4

Q6. X'inhu x-xoghol tal-partner tieghek? **Write in and code below** \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Professional/Managerial	1
White Collar	2
Shop Owner	3
Skilled worker	4
Unskilled worker	5
Armed Forces/Police	6
Retired	7
Unemployed	8
Student	9
Housewife	10
Other: <i>Write in</i> _____	

Q7. Sa fejn ghamlet skola il-partner tieghek?

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Qatt ma marret skola	1
Primarja	2
Sekondarja	3
Vocational	4
6 <sup>th</sup> Form	5
Universita	6
Other: <i>Write in</i> _____	

Q8. Inti thoss li l-partner tieghek hija orjentata l-aktar:

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Lejn il-familja	1
Lejn il-karriera	2
Lejn it-tnejn	3

## YOUR CHILD

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***If respondent has more than one child, ask him to answer the following questions about the child for whom he availed himself of parental leave***

Q9. Inti u l-partner tieghek inthom il-genituri naturali tat-tifel/tifla li hragt bil-parental leave biex tiehu hsieb tieghu/taghha?

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Iva, it-tnejn li ahna	1
Jien iva, imma l-partner le	2
Il-partner iva, imma jien le	3
Le, hadd minnha	4

Q10. Kemm ghandu/ha zmien it-tifel/tifla li hragt bil-parental leave biex tiehu hsiebu/ha?

	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>MONTHS</b>
<b>Write in exact age:</b>		

Q11. X'inhum tifel jew tifla?

Male	1
Female	2

Q12a. Int ghandek tfal ohra?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO Q12B</b>
No	2	<b>GO TO Q13a</b>

Q12b. Kemm ghandek tfal ohra **inti**?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
--	----------------------

One	1
Two	2
Three	3
Other: <i>Write in</i> _____	

Q13a. Il-partner tieghek ghandha tfal ohra?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO Q13B</b>
No	2	<b>GO TO Q14</b>

Q13b. **Hija** kemm ghandha tfal ohra?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
One	1
Two	2
Three	3
Other: <i>Write in</i> _____	

Q14. Jekk int jew il-partner tieghek ghandkhom aktar minn tifel/la wiehed/wahda, dawn huma:

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Kollha taghkhom it-tnejn	1
Uhud minnhom taghkhom t-tnejn u ohrajn li huma uliedek biss	2
Uhud minnhom taghkhom t-tnejn u ohrajn li huma ulied il-partner biss	3
Kollha uliedek biss	4
Kollha ulied il-partner biss	5

## YOUR PARENTAL LEAVE

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Q15. B'kollox kemm kien/hu twil il-parental leave li hadt?

	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>DAYS</b>
<b>Write in:</b>			

Q16. Apparti mill-parental leave, kien hemm xi okkazjonijiet ohra fejn ma dhaltx ix-xoghol biex tiehu hsieb it-tifel/la li hadt il-parental leave ghalih/a?

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>	<b>Indicate duration:</b>
Le	1	
Iva, hadt it-time off	2	_____years _____weeks _____days
Iva, hadt il-leave	3	_____years _____weeks _____days
Iva, xi haga ohra: <i>write in</i> _____	4	_____years _____weeks _____days

Q17. *Ask only to respondents who have other children:* Hadt parental leave meta twieldu t-tfal l-ohra tieghek?

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>	<b>Indicate duration:</b>
Le, ma hadtx	1	
Iva, hadt parental leave	2	_____years _____weeks _____days
Iva, hadt xi leave iehor	3	_____years _____weeks _____days

Q18a. Il-partner tieghek hadet parental leave biex tiehu hsieb l-istess tifel/la li hadt il-parental leave ghalih/a?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>	<b>Indicate duration:</b>
Yes	1	_____weeks _____days
No	2	GO TO Q20

Q18b. B'kollox kemm hu/kien twil il-perjodu tal-leave li hadet?

	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>DAYS</b>
<b>Write in:</b>			

Q19. Kemm kellu/ha zmien it-tifel/la li hadt il-parental leave ghalih/ha meta l-partner tieghek irritornat ghax-xoghol/studju?

	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>MONTHS</b>
<b>Write in:</b>		

Q20. Kemm se ddum / domt barra fuq leave meta tqis kemm il-parental leave u xi tip ta' leave iehor li hadt?

	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>DAYS</b>
<b>Write in:</b>			

Q21. Kemm il-gurnata/gimgha tista' tiehu parental leave minghajr ma titnaqqaslek il-paga?

	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>DAYS</b>
<b>Write in:</b>		
<i>Don't know</i>		1

Q22. Kemm il-gurnata/gimgha tista' tiehu parental leave il-partner tieghek minghajr ma titnaqqsilha il-paga?

	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>DAYS</b>
<b>Write in:</b>		
<i>Don't know</i>		1

Q23. Inti hadt jew behsiebek tiehu leave ghal xi perjodu **b'salarju mnaqqas**, biex tiehu hsieb it-tifel/la li hadt il-parental leave ghalih/ha?

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>	<b>Indicate number of weeks:</b>
Le	1	
Iva, fuq allowance	2	_____ weeks
Iva, minghajr l-ebda hlas	3	_____ weeks

Q24. Il-partner tieghek hadet jew behsieba tiehu parental leave ghal xi perjodu **b'salarju mnaqqas**, biex tiehu hsieb it-tifel/la li ttiehed il-parental leave ghalih/ha?

<b>READ OUT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>	<b>Indicate number of weeks:</b>
Le	1	
Iva, fuq allowance	2	_____ weeks
Iva, minghajr l-ebda hlas	3	_____ weeks

## **YOUR ECONOMY DURING PARENTAL LEAVE**

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Q25. Liema minn dawn il-kategoriji li ser insemmelek tiddekrivi l-ahjar, l-ammont ta' dhul gross tieghek fis-sena? Bi dhul gross qed nghid kull dhul sew mis-salarju, minn investimenti u kull sors iehor

<b>SHOW CARD A</b>	
Anqas minn Lm3,000	1
Bejn Lm3,001 – Lm5,999	2
Bejn Lm6,000 – Lm7,999	3
Bejn Lm8,000 – Lm9,999	4
Bejn Lm10,000 – Lm13,999	5
Bejn Lm14,000 and Lm19,999	6
Lm20,000 jew aktar	7
<i>Don't know/No answer</i>	8

Q26. Liema minn dawn il-kategoriji li ser insemmelek tiddekrivi l-ahjar, l-ammont ta' dhul gross tal-partner tieghek fis-sena? Bi dhul gross qed nghid kull dhul sew mis-salarju, minn investimenti u kull sors iehor.

<b>SHOW CARD A</b>	
Anqas minn Lm3,000	1
Bejn Lm3,001 – Lm5,999	2
Bejn Lm6,000 – Lm7,999	3
Bejn Lm8,000 – Lm9,999	4
Bejn Lm10,000 – Lm13,999	5
Bejn Lm14,000 and Lm19,999	6
Lm20,000 jew aktar	7
<i>Don't know/No answer</i>	8

**THANK & CLOSE**

**Respondent's Name**

---

**Address**

---

---

**Telephone Number/s**

---

**Interviewer's Name**

---

**Interviewer's ID No**

---

**Interviewer's Signature**

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**Date of interview**

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## Appendix G - Interview Guide- EMPLOYERS (English)

### Introduction / Setting an appointment

**Good morning/afternoon. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ . I work for the Research Unit at BPC, an independent Marketing Communications Agency. May I speak to \_\_\_\_\_ <respondent's name>?**

*If respondent is not available, ask:*

**Can you tell me when it is best time to phone to talk to \_\_\_\_\_ <respondent's name>?**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

*Make note of day / time when best to call and call again.*

*When respondent is contacted, say: **We are carrying out a research project on parenting and parental skills amongst heads of departments in the public service. This study is being carried out on behalf of ETC and we would appreciate your participation. Would it be possible to set an appointment for an interview at a date and time convenient to you in the next few days? The interview should take around 45 minutes.***

Kindly inform respondent that interview will be in-depth and for this reason the interview will be recorded (audio only). Explain that this is necessary to help you compile the report on the outcome of the interview.

*If asked, explain that the project is being carried out for one of our clients and assure respondent that any information the respondent gives during the interview will be reported in summary format and that his/her name will not be revealed to client at any point.*

***Thank you for accepting to participate in this study.***

**PART 1**

**Q1. Note respondent's gender**

Male	1
Female	2

**Q2. May I ask you your age / age category? Write in exact age** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>AGE</b>	
18-24	1
25-34	2
35-44	3
45-54	4
55-64	5
65+	6

**Q3. May I check the exact name of this department/organisation?**

*Write in exact name:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Q4. What is your grade within this department/organisation?**

*Write in exact designation* \_\_\_\_\_

**Q5. How many people does your department/organisation employ?**

	<b>NUMBER</b>
<b>Write in:</b>	

Q6. How long have you held this position within this department/organisation?

	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>MONTHS</b>
<b>Write in:</b>		

Q7. What is the ratio of men to women in your department/organization?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Less than 25% men	1
Between 25% and 49% men	2
Equal distribution –50% of each gender	3
Between 51 and 75% men	4
76% and over men	5

Q8. What level of education is typical for your staff?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Primary / Basic	1
Secondary	2
Vocational Training	3
Post-Secondary	4
Tertiary	5
Other <b>Write in</b> _____	

Q9. What is the average age of your employees?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Between 18 – 24 years	1
Between 25 – 34 years	2
35 – 44 years	3
45 – 54 years	4
55 years and over	5

Q10. What percentage of your male employees have children?

READ OUT	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
None (0%)	1
Few (1% – 25%)	2
Some (26% - 75%)	3
Most (76% - 99%)	4
All (100%)	5

Q11. Have any of your male employees availed themselves of parental leave?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>	
Yes	1	<b>GO TO Q13</b>
No	2	<b>GO TO Q12</b>

Q12. Why do you think that none of your male employees have taken parental leave?

<b>DO NOT PROMPT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
None of my male employees have children	1
None of my male employees were interested in taking parental leave	2
It is not possible at this work place	3
I have asked them not to	4
Their partners wouldn't let them	5
Why would they do that?	6
Other Write in _____	

## PART 2

### PARENTAL LEAVE AND THE DEPARTMENT

B1. **Does your department/organization have a policy on parental leave?** *We are interested in the participant's knowledge of overall Public Service policy and also in whether his/her department has any specific guidelines on parental leave.*

B2. **What are your views on parental leave?** *Allow for spontaneous responses then probe to find out how the participant feels about overall Public Service policy and how s/he feels it impacts on the running of his/her department.*

B3. Unless spontaneously mentioned in QB2 above, ask: **What impact do you feel parental leave has on your department/organization?** *Probe for both positive and negative effects: eg effect on operations, morale and motivation of fathers and colleagues etc.*

### PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH STAFF ON PARENTAL LEAVE

B4. **In your experience, how many times have you been forwarded a request for parental leave by a male member of staff?**

B5. **When was the last time a male employee in your organization applied for parental leave?**

- **What was your reaction?** *Allow for spontaneous responses then probe for how participant felt the employee's absence would impact the organization and how s/he went about addressing the situation. What reactions did he meet with from the employee's colleagues and whether and what kind of help was s/he given from superiors, if any.*

## **PERSONAL VIEWS**

**B6. Have you ever availed yourself of parental leave? If yes, ask participant:**

- **How did you go about making the decision to take parental leave?** *What factors contributed to his/her decision, whether spouse/partner or others influenced the process, whether colleagues and work considerations were an important factor in the decision etc*
- **.What is your experience with regards to parental leave?** *Allow for spontaneous response then probe for how he/she feels the experience influenced his/her relationship with the child, his/her partner, his/her career prospects*

**B7. Would you consider/reconsider availing yourself of parental leave in future?**

**B8. What would you say is the ideal duration of parental leave that should be allowed?**

*How much for the father, how much for the mother and how much to share?*

**B9. What are your views on men's and women's equal rights?**

**Name of**

**Department/Organisation**

---

**Respondent's Name**

---

**Address**

---

---

**Telephone Number/s**

---

**Interviewer's Name**

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**Interviewer's ID No**

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**Interviewer's Signature**

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**Date of interview**

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## Appendix H - Interview Guide- EMPLOYERS (Maltese)

### Introduction / Setting an appointment

**Il-gurnata t-tajba. Jien \_\_\_\_\_ u qed incempillek mill-BPC. Ahna kumpanija indipendenti li taghmel ir-ricerka. Jekk joghgbok nista' nkellem lill- \_\_\_\_\_ <respondent's name>?**

*If respondent is not available, ask:*

**Tista' tghidli fi x'hin l-ahjar li ncempel biex inkellem lill- \_\_\_\_\_ <respondent's name>?**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

*Make note of day / time when best to call and call again.*

*When respondent is contacted, say:* **Bhalissa qeghdin naghmlu studju dwar parental leave fost kapijiet tad-dipartimenti tas-servizz pubbliku. Dan l-istudju qed isir ghal-ETC u l-interview tiehu madwar 45 minuta. Tista' taghmilli appuntament biex nkun nista' nigi naghmillek interview f'xi gurnata u hin li huma konvenjenti ghalik? Il-partecipazzjoni tieghek tkun apprezzata .**

Kindly inform respondent that interview will be in-depth and for this reason the interview will be recorded (audio only). Explain that this is necessary to help you compile the report on the outcome of the interview.

*If asked, explain that the project is being carried out for one of our clients and assure respondent that any information the respondent gives during the interview will be reported in summary format and that his/her name will not be revealed to client at any point.*

**Grazzi talli ghazilt li tippartecipa f'dan l-istudju.**

**PART 1**

Q1. *Note respondent's gender*

Male	1
Female	2

Q2. Tista' tghidli kemm ghandek zmien / Taht liema kategorija t'eta' taqa'? *Write in exact age*

—

<b>AGE</b>	
18-24	1
25-34	2
35-44	3
45-54	4
55-64	5
65+	6

Q3. Tista' taghtini l-isem ezatt ta' dan id-dipartiment / din l-organizzazzjoni?

*Write in exact name:* \_\_\_\_\_

Q4. X'inhu l-grad tieghek ?

*Write in exact designation:* \_\_\_\_\_

Q5. Kemm hemm impjegati fid-dipartiment / organizzazzjoni tieghek?

	<b>NUMBER</b>
<i>Write in:</i>	

Q6. Kemm ilek tokkupa din il-pozizzjoni f'dan id-dipartiment /organizzazzjoni?

	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>MONTHS</b>
--	--------------	---------------

<b>Write in:</b>		
------------------	--	--

Q7. Fost l-impjegati li hemm fid-dipartiment / organizzazzjoni tieghek, x'persentagg minnhom huma rgjel?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Less than 25% men	1
Between 25% and 49% men	2
Equal distribution – c. 50% of each gender	3
Between 51 and 75% men	4
76% and over men	5

Q8. B'mod generali x'livell t'edukazzjoni ghandhom l-impjegati tieghek?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
Primary / Basic	1
Secondary	2
Vocational Training	3
Post-Secondary education	4
Tertiary	5
Other <i>Write in:</i> _____	

Q9. Bejn wiehed u iehor, x'inhil-eta medja ta' l-impjegati tieghek?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
18 -24 years	1
25 – 34 years	2
35 – 44 years	3
45 – 54 years	4
55 years and over	5

Q10. X'persentagg ta' l-impjegati rgjel tieghek, ghandhom it-tfal?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
None (0%)	1
Few (1% – 25%)	2
Some (26% - 75%)	3
Most (76% - 99%)	4
All (100%)	5

Q11. Hemm xi hadd mill-impjegati rgjel tieghek li ghazel li jiehu l-parental leave?

	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>	
Yes	1	<b>GO TO Q13</b>
No	2	<b>GO TO Q12</b>

Q12. X'tahseb li hija r-raguni li hadd mill-impjegati rgjel tieghek ma' hareg bil-parental leave?

<b>DO NOT PROMPT</b>	<b>MARK ONE ONLY</b>
None of my male employees have children	1
None of my male employees were interested in taking parental leave	2
It is not possible at this work place	3
I have asked them not to	4
Their partner's wouldn't let them	5
Why would they do that?	6
Other Write in _____	

## PART 2

### PARENTAL LEAVE AND THE DEPARTMENT

B1. **Fid-dipartiment / organizzazzjoni tieghek, hemm policy dwar il-parental leave?** *We are interested in the participant's knowledge of overall Public Service policy and also in whether his/her department has any specific guidelines on parental leave.*

B2. **X'inhi l-opinjoni tieghek dwar il-parental leave?** *Allow for spontaneous responses then probe to find out how the participant feels about overall Public Service policy and how s/he feels it impacts on the running of his/her department.*

B3. *Unless spontaneously mentioned in QB2 above, ask:* **X'effett tahseb li jhalli l-parental leave fuq id-dipartiment / organizzazzjoni tieghek?** *Probe for both positive and negative effects: eg effect on operations, morale and motivation of fathers and colleagues etc.*

### PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH STAFF ON PARENTAL LEAVE

B4. **Mill-esperjenza tieghek, xi kemm il-talba kellek minghand impjegati rgjel ghall-parental leave?**

B5. **Meta kienet l-ahhar darba li mpjegat ragel f'dan id-dipartiment / organizzazzjoni applika ghall-parental leave?**

- **X'kienet ir-rejazzjoni tieghek?** *Allow for spontaneous responses then probe for how participant felt the employee's absence would impact the organization and how s/he went about addressing the situation. What reactions did he meet with from the employee's colleagues and whether and what kind of help was s/he given from superiors, if any.*

### PERSONAL VIEWS

B6. **Inti personalment qatt hadt parental leave?** *If yes, ask participant:*

- **Kif wasalt ghad-decizjoni li tiehu l-parental leave?** *What factors contributed to his/her decision, whether spouse/partner or others influenced the process, whether colleagues and work considerations were an important factor in the decision etc*
- **Tista tghidlli dwar l-esperjenzi tieghek waqt li kont bil-parental leave?** *Allow for spontaneous response then probe for how he/she feels the experience influenced his/her relationship with the child, his/her partner, his/her career prospects*

**B7. Tikkunsidra / terga' tikkunsidra li tiehu parental leave fil-futur?**

**B8. X'tahseb li ghandu jkun il-perjodu idejali ta' parental leave li jinghata?** *How much for the father, how much for the mother and how much to share?*

**B9.X'inhil-opinjoni tieghek dwar drijjiet ugwali ghall-irgiel u ghan-nisa?**

**Name of**

**Department/Organisation**

---

**Respondent's Name**

---

**Address**

---

---

**Telephone Number/s**

---

**Interviewer's Name**

---

**Interviewer's ID No**

---

**Interviewer's Signature**

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**Date of interview**

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