

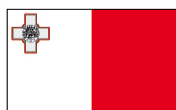
Pre-Campaign Focus Group Report

FIRST-TIME EMPLOYED

Maria Brown, Ph.D.

www.gemma.gov.mt

KNOW. PLAN. ACT.



Operational Programme II- European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020
"Investing in human capital to create more opportunities and promote the well-being of society"

Project part-financed by the European Social Fund
Co-financing rate: 80% European Union; 20% National Funds



Pre-Campaign Focus Group Report Persons in first employment (FE)

Maria Brown, Ph.D.

Introduction

This report presents findings of the qualitative analysis carried out on the data retrieved from the focus group held in June 2019 with a sample of persons in first employment in Malta.

The analysis was carried out on the basis of the indicators identified as relevant through the literature review exercise carried out for the purposes of this research study, namely:

1. Household and lifestyle, with special attention to income and consumption;
2. Financial literacy and capability, with attention to financial education;
3. Retirement capability, with attention to an analysis pension schemes; and
4. End-user engagement with awareness campaigns, with special attention to media and social media dissemination channels.

Moreover, the review of literature also enabled identifying mechanisms that transversally affect all these four main indicators, namely:

- a. Trends (identified within the cohort/s);
- b. Assets and resources (that one or more social cohort/s already possess/es or practice/s);
- c. Limitations (that limit the financial literacy and/or retirement capability of one or more social cohort/s);
- d. Communication vehicles (that are relevant to one or more social cohort/s when engaging with financial literacy and retirement capability).

These indicators and mechanisms will also be used to organize the structure of this report.

Household and lifestyle

Trends

Data retrieved during the focus group with persons in first time employment illuminate a common short-term saving trend among participants. To explain better, a number of participants expressed that they were going through a phase when they were making a number of substantial expenses that included buying a car, getting married and buying property. In order to cover these expenses, participants found themselves giving up wants to save for needs long enough to accumulate the required sum of money:

... qisni iktar meta bdejt nikber u niltaqa' ma' esperjenzi fil-ħajja per eżempju trid ġġemma biex tixtri karożza, jew issa li trid tixtri post, jew biex iġġemma qabel tixtri post. Allura qisu ma' l-eta' żżid l-maturita' u iktar responsabbiltà.

Anke jien naħseb l-ewwel li bdejt ngemma kien meta kont ħa nixtri l-karożza, ta' 18. Imbagħad tfaddal, imbagħad dak il-perjodu li inti tkun 'achievjajt' l-iskop tiegħek tieqaf. Imbagħad fażi oħra – id-dar.

Jiġifieri meta jien u t-tfajla hekk qed nagħżlu biex nixtru, m'hemmx x'taġħmel, part-time, tfaddal u ma toħroġx. Żmien il-ghaks.

Il-post u t-tiegħ huwx. Ftit oħra sa niżżewġu. U avolja hu avveniment sabiħ ħafna, jirrekjedi l-flus ukoll.

In this context, lack of interest in gambling that trends among participants resonates. There was a general agreement that they would gamble only occasionally when jackpots are high and with very cautious limits:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Parteċipant 1:</i> | <i>Le ma nithajjarx.</i> |
| <i>Parteċipant 2:</i> | <i>Le anqas jien ta.</i> |
| <i>Parteċipant 3:</i> | <i>Xi kultant ija, imma meta s-somma tkun għolja naqa!</i> |
| <i>Parteċipant 4:</i> | <i>... insomma darba fil ukoll. Qatt ma rbaħt imma!</i> |
| <i>Parteċipant 5:</i> | <i>Dejjem nagħmel limit ta' kemm kieku nonfoq.</i> |
| <i>Parteċipant 6:</i> | <i>Darba kull sitt xhur nixtri wieħed.</i> |

Assets and resources

The focus group yielded little data that could be coded as assets and resources facilitating this cohort's household and lifestyle. These data include evidence that participants in a relationship committed to joint efforts to resource the financial aspect of their household and lifestyle and to prioritize needs over wants and save money. There is also evidence that at the time of the study participants resourced (i.e. supplemented) their main income with part-time employment:

Jigifieri meta jien u t-tfajla hekk qed nagħzlu biex nixtru, m'hemmx x'taġhmel, part-time, tfaddal u ma toħroġx. Żmien il-ġhaks.

Further data show that participants' lifestyle is one where certain medium-term and long-term purchases and investments are possible, such as buying a car, organizing a wedding reception and getting a home loan to purchase property:

Anke jien naħseb l-ewwel li bdejt ngemma kien meta kont ha nixtri l-karozza, ta' 18. Imbagħad tfaddal, imbagħad dak il-perjodu li inti tkun 'achievjaġt' l-iskop tiegħek tieqaf. Imbagħad fażi oħra – id-dar.

...eżempju trid ġgemma biex tixtri karozza, jew issa li trid tixtri post, jew biex iġgemma qabel tixtri post.

Limitations

Limited opportunities to save money and to cover for expenses featured among limitations characterizing lifestyle of this cohort:

- Parteċipant 1: Mhux żmien bħalissa għalina li nfaddlu eżempju.*
Parteċipant 2: Naq'a diffiċli!
Parteċipant 3: Nifimkom perfettament, imma forsi ma rridx ikun hemm daqshekk pressure anqas.
Parteċipant 4: Il-biċċa hi li meta nikbru qisu jiġi kollox f'daqqa! Allura naq'a overwhelming.

Data analysis illuminated the association between such limitations and the life stage that many (relatively young) persons in FE were experiencing at the time of the study, when they had to cover substantial expenses, such as

buying a car or getting married, identified in the earlier subsection on trends.

Communication

Figure 1
Word cloud - FE household and lifestyle
Twenty (20) most frequent words



Figure 1 graphically presents the twenty (20) most frequent words found in the FE focus group data that was coded as related to household and lifestyle. The same analysis results are presented in table format in Table 1.

Table 1
List - FE household and lifestyle
Twenty (20) most frequent words

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage	Similar Words
karozza	7	3	2.19%	karozza
nixtri	6	3	2.19%	nixtri
post	4	3	2.19%	post
tfaddal	7	3	2.19%	tfaddal
tiegħek	7	3	2.19%	tiegħek
tixtri	6	3	2.19%	tixtri
achievjajt	11	2	1.46%	achievjajt
dar	3	2	1.46%	dar
faži	4	2	1.46%	faži
ġġemma	6	2	1.46%	ġġemma
iskop	5	2	1.46%	iskop
nġemma	6	2	1.46%	nġemma
perjodu	7	2	1.46%	perjodu
żmien	5	2	1.46%	żmien
avveniment	10	1	0.73%	avveniment
diffiċli	8	1	0.73%	diffiċli
esperjenzi	10	1	0.73%	esperjenzi
eta'	4	1	0.73%	eta'
flus	4	1	0.73%	flus
ftit	4	1	0.73%	ftit

These results inform on the vocabulary terms preferred by the sample representing the FE cohort to refer to items, concepts and practices related to the financial aspects of household and lifestyle.

Moreover, they shed light on the quantitative relevance that each word had when the focus group discussion focused on household and lifestyle matters. In other words, on the frequency of the specific words tabulated above during the fieldwork with the sample of the FE cohort.

Financial literacy and capability

Trends

Trends indicating a certain level of financial literacy among persons in FE included requesting different quotes to enable price comparison and informed expenditure for a service or a product:

Quotes ingib.

Many participants associated maturity of financial literacy with having to save for and cover expenses associated with young adulthood, such as buying a car or a property:

...esperjenzi fil-hajja per eżempju trid ġġemma biex tixtri karożza, jew issa li trid tixtri post, jew biex iġġemma qabel tixtri post.

Simultaneously the above data testify to a certain degree of financial capability among participating first time-employed persons. Setting medium-term goals to save enough to cover for specific expenditures trended among financial literacy and capability of representatives of FE persons:

Anke jien naħseb l-ewwel li bdejt ngemma kien meta kont ħa nixtri l-karożza, ta' 18. Imbagħad tfaddal, imbagħad dak il-perjodu li inti tkun 'achievjajt' l-iskop tiegħek tieqaf. Imbagħad fażi oħra – id-dar.

Assets and resources

During the focus group, being in first-time employment was explicitly flagged as an asset to financial capability:

B'mod pożittiv, li kieku ma kontx first time employee u bil-kapriċċi li għandna, ma kienx jirnexxieli nfaddal biex inkun nista' nixtri post...

Prioritizing needs over wants and budgeting emerged as deeply ingrained assets to this cohort's financial literacy and capability:

Naħseb l-ewwel ħaġa li nagħmel hu li ndur u nara x'irrid innaqqas, x'changes nista' nagħmel.

Dejjem nagħmel limit ta' kemm kieku nonfoq.

Dik ħajti.

Dik dejjem!

U jekk ma nagħmiliex inħossni qed nisraq lili nnifsi.

Notwithstanding, it also emerged that in times of crisis, some participants resort to financial support from their parents:

Riċerkatriċi: Fuq min / xhiex idduru meta jkollhom bżonn il-flus?

Parteċipant 1: Naħseb il-ġenituri hux?!

Parteċipant 2: Anke jien...

There is significant evidence that participants' financial literacy was resourced by online and digital tools that include Excel, Internet banking and Revolut:

Kont inżomm spreadsheet, day-to-day consumption ta' kemm infaqt dakinhar etc.

Naħseb iktar Revolut infatti qed ittina iktar għajnuna fuq consumption.

...għandi card, imma meta nonfoq bil-card xi haġa tigi registered fuq il-mobile.

F'Revolut, nista nitfa' cap fiha imbagħad jgħidli fiex infaqt bħal ikel, vjaġġi, ħwienet. Tista tissetja kollox.

Jien għandi 3 cards, credit account, savings account u Visa wkoll. Dawk narahom bis-saħħa tal-Internet Banking. Dik biha nara kemm għandi savings, kollox.

Finally, participants also spoke of occasions when they were victims of financial scams at a younger age, inferring they were more financially literate at this point in their lives and conscious of scam techniques and of protective bank services in this regard:

Darba serquni, anqas kont naf. Ridt nixtri mobile meta kont iżgħar u riedu Western Union Transfer u għamiltu u kont tlift ma' €400.

Jew iċemplu d-dar jew inkella emails imma drajthom.

Illum hawn HSBC li jibgħatulek messagg allahares qatt jieħdulek flus mhux suppost.

Limitations

Data evidence illuminates participants of this cohort feel overwhelmed when confronted by a number of expenses identified in earlier subsections of this report:

Il-biċċa hi li meta nikbru qisu jiġi kollox f'daqqa! Allura naq'a overwhelming.

Consequently, notwithstanding earlier findings on trends, assets and resources characterizing financial literacy and capability of this cohort, it may also be inferred that financial literacy on how to plan and handle expenses and financial commitments that typically feature in young adulthood and first employment is limited.

Moreover, participants flagged an association between early wage income and limited financial literacy and capability that become manifest with irresponsible or hedonic spending:

Pero' dak iż-żmien ta' 16 għalkemm bdejt naqla' l-paga ma kellix f'moħħi li ngemma dak iż-żmien allura l-paga kont nonfoqha imbarazz prattikament.

Jiġifieri dak iż-żmien meta bdejt naqla' l-paga, bdejt nieħu gost li kelli ċertu indipendenza iktar milli, jekk ridt immur noħroġ, stajt ħriġt bil-flus tiegħi, iktar milli l-ħsieb biex ingemma.

There is also evidence that persons in FE may also share financial responsibilities with family members who may occasionally be less cost conscious:

Jien nagħmilha imma l-mara ma tagħmilhiex. Jekk jogħġobha xi ħaġa sa tixtrieha, imma skond x'inh i wkoll....

Finally, the majority of participants manifested distrust in trade unions and reluctance to join a trade union due to association with partisan politics

and/or peer group pressure, or because they saw little value in membership. Only exceptionally data flag positive outcomes of trade union membership:

Jien m'inix fi 'Trade Union ghax hafna minn shabi m'humieq fihom.

Il-kollegi tieghi m'humieq fihom anqas.

Jien ma rridx inkun f'wahda.

Jien ma nemminx xi hafna bihom.

Qatt ma kelli bzonn.

Jien ma narah li kelli bzonnha, ma tantx hadna azzjoni meta kien hemm bzonn jew trid taççetta s-sitwazzjoni.

Pero' Malta jassoççjaw trade unions ma' politika, b'hekk ma jidhlux daqshekk nies biex ma jassoççjawx dak li jkun ma' eba partit.

Naħseb li kieku naħdem mal-privat, kont inhossni hafna iktar komdu kieku qiegħed ġo wahda.

Anke jiena vera!

Jiena kont u ma bqajtx.

Jien ġej minn settur tal-gvern imbagħad ġejt ma' (isem tal-post tax-xogħol). Fil-bidu kont dħalt mhux ghax kien hemm bzonn imma ghax jiġi fuqek xi hadd u jsaqsik. It's against a membership fee imma insomma malajr neħhejt lili nnifsi minnha ghax ma hassejtx il-bzonn. Kont qed inhallas għal xejn.

Jien xtaqt insemmi punt wieħed. Jien oħti taħdem mal-Gvern, ix-xogħol tagħhom l-impjegati kollha qiegħdin f'union u jghinuhom hafna!

Communication

Figure 2 graphically presents the twenty (20) most frequent words found in the FE focus group data that was coded as related to financial literacy and financial capability. The same analysis results are presented in table format in Table 2.

Figure 2
Word cloud - FE financial literacy and capability
Twenty (20) most frequent words



These results inform on the vocabulary terms preferred by the sample representing the FE cohort to refer to items, concepts and practices related to the financial literacy and capability.

Moreover, they shed light on the quantitative relevance that each word had when the focus group discussion focused on financial literacy and capability. In other words, on the frequency of the specific words tabulated above during the fieldwork with the sample of the FE cohort.

It is however to be noted that a considerable number of participants in this focus group were non-Maltese speakers. Notwithstanding this also reflects the economic migrant demographic in the country at the time of the study.

Table 2
List - FE financial literacy and capability
Twenty (20) most frequent words

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage	Similar Words
f'trade	7	10	1.13%	f'collective, f'daqqa, f'moħħok, f'post, f'revolut, f'trade, f'wahda, f'xogħlok
flus	4	10	1.13%	flus

xogħol	6	7	0.79%	xogħol
ridt	4	6	0.68%	ridt
union	5	6	0.68%	union, unions
card	4	5	0.56%	card, cards
bżonn	5	5	0.56%	bżonn
jkollok	7	5	0.56%	jkollok
nixtri	6	5	0.56%	nixtri
post	4	5	0.56%	post
tiegħek	7	5	0.56%	tiegħek
żmien	5	5	0.56%	żmien
gvern	5	4	0.45%	gvern
testment	8	4	0.45%	testment
tfal	4	4	0.45%	tfal
tixtri	6	4	0.45%	tixtri
toqgħod	7	4	0.45%	toqgħod
visa	4	4	0.45%	visa
ammont	6	3	0.34%	ammont
collective	10	3	0.34%	collective

Retirement capability

Trends

Awareness of and general planning for pension years trended among persons in first-employment, with some concerns on not being able to maintain the standard of living and cover required expenses:

Jien naħseb ta, mhux fid-detall.

Mhux nifqa' rasi fuqha.

Ija ta.

Jien ukoll naħseb fuqha.

Le imma milli tisma' li għandek paga u tieħu 2/3rds, ovvjament id-domanda ta' kif ħa nkampa naħseb tiġi frekwenti.

Jien eż inħoss li suppost għandi nkun naf iktar fuq il-pensjoni jew għala inħallas NI.

Jien insaqsihom ħafna lill-ġenituri tiegħi fuqha.

Assets and resources

As transpires from the data cited in the last subsection, parents emerged as a resource to acquire information about pension years. Online sources were also mentioned, reflecting that many persons in first-time employment at the time of the study were also digital natives:

Riċerkatriċi: Kieku kellhom tiċċekkjaw, fejn tmorru?

Numru ta' parteċipanti: Online kieku

Other data point to significant interest in getting to know more about retirement capability. In other words, representatives of this cohort craved retirement literacy:

Jien eżempju inħoss li suppost għandi nkun naf iktar fuq il-pensjoni jew għala inħallas NI. NI hi l-bolla. Imma eżempju l-NI parti minnha hi għall-pensjoni tiegħi? Jew hi għall-pensjoni ta' issa?

Limitations

A foreseen unsustainability of state pension system existent at the time of the study was identified among the limitations to retirement capability.

Jekk tkun għadha teżisti.

A minority of data illuminates that pension years were considered a remote event and such data infer little value to planning for it as from the stage of first time employment:

Jien kulma ngħid li t-triq twila ħafna. Qieghda ta' 65 jew 63?

Other data infers the limitation of taking for granted a pension income due to Malta's political climate. This is accompanied by lack of analysis on the extent of which such income would provide the desired or required standard of living:

Today you are entitled to pension. Politikament hi diffiċli li jkun hemm setting stone li ha jkollu affarijiet tajbin. Any political party wouldn't remove pensions.

Another limitation is the lack of knowledge on how national insurance contributions are related to retirement capability and future pension income. As mentioned earlier, since such data indicated concerns and questioning then they do not just infer limitations, but also interest and an opportunity to invest in the retirement literacy of this cohort:

Jien eżempju inħoss li suppost għandi nkun naf iktar fuq il-pensjoni jew għala inħallas NI. NI hi l-bolla. Imma eżempju l-NI parti minnha hi għall-pensjoni tiegħi? Jew hi għall-pensjoni ta' issa?

Jien naħdem proġetti li huma funded mill-EU. Imma jekk jiena ilni naħdem 14-il sena taħt ir-regoli illi parti milli inħallas hu parti mill-pensjoni tiegħi, imbagħad one fine day xi ħadd jergu jinbidlu r-regoli.

Communication

Figure 3
Word cloud - FE retirement capability
Twenty (20) most frequent words



Figure 3 graphically presents the twenty (20) most frequent words found in the FE focus group data that was coded as related to retirement capability. The same analysis results are presented in table format in Table 3.

These results inform on the vocabulary terms preferred by the sample representing the FE cohort to refer to items, concepts and practices related to retirement capability.

Table 3
List - PFB retirement capability
Twenty (20) most frequent words

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage	Similar Words
flus	4	24	1.37%	flus
xogħol	6	14	0.80%	xogħol
tiegħek	7	13	0.74%	tiegħek
f'trade	7	11	0.63%	f'collective, f'daqqa, f'moħħok, f'post, f'revolut, f'trade, f'waħda, f'xi, f'xogħlok
tfal	4	10	0.57%	tfal
union	5	9	0.51%	union, unions
għodda	6	8	0.46%	għodda
pensjoni	8	8	0.46%	pensjoni
żmien	5	8	0.46%	żmien
finanzjarja	11	7	0.40%	finanzjarja
jkollok	7	7	0.40%	jkollok
nixtri	6	7	0.40%	nixtri
taħdem	6	7	0.40%	taħdem
taħseb	6	7	0.40%	taħseb
b'sigħat	8	7	0.40%	b'diżabilità, b'paga, b'sigħat, b'xi, b'certu
card	4	7	0.40%	card, cards
agħti	5	6	0.34%	agħti
bżonn	5	6	0.34%	bżonn
familja	7	6	0.34%	familja
inqas	5	6	0.34%	inqas

Moreover, they shed light on the quantitative relevance that each word had when the focus group discussion focused on retirement capability. In other words, on the frequency of the specific words tabulated above during the fieldwork with the sample of the FE cohort.

End-user engagement with awareness campaigns

Trends

Despite lack of reference to campaigns in the dataset of this cohort, it may be inferred that technology-driven, online, work-based peer-to-peer initiatives prevailed among relatively successful outreach media flagged by this cohort:

*Riċerkatrici: Kieku kellkhom tiċċekkjaw, fejn tmorru?
Numru ta' parteċipanti: Online kieku*

Fil-bidu kont dhalt (fi trejd unjin) mhux ghax kien hemm bzonn imma ghax jigi fuqek xi hadd u jsaqsik.

Jien m'inix fi Trade Union ghax hafna minn shabi m'humiex fihom.

Il-kollegi tieghi m'humiex fihom anqas.

Assets and resources

As explained in earlier parts of this report, the digital literacy inferred from the data provided by this cohort and persons' in first employment novelty to full employment suggest that online and work-based platforms would successfully disseminate awareness campaigns content.

Particularly as regards online platforms, a financial literacy and retirement capability targeting this cohort is likely to be successful if disseminated through online platforms that FE already use to manage their finances, such as online banking and Revolut:

Il-Visa tissettjali għall-ispejjeż tieghi. Naf li għandi ammont fuq credit card.

Kont inżomm spreadsheet, day-to-day consumption ta' kemm infaqt dakinhar eċċ.

Nahseb iktar Revolut infatti qed ittina iktar għajmuna fuq consumption.

...għandi card, imma meta nonfoq bil-card xi haġa tigi registered fuq il-mobile.

F'Revolut, nista nitfa' cap fiha imbagħad jgħidli fiex infaqt bħal ikel, vjaġġi, hwienet. Tista' tissettja kollox.

Jien għandi 3 cards, credit account, savings account u Visa wkoll. Dawk narahom bis-saħħa tal-Internet Banking. Dik biha nara kemm għandi savings, kollox.

Limitations

The focus group yielded limited data that could be coded as a limitation to this cohort's engagement with awareness campaigns. What can be inferred from the negative outlook to trade unions discussed earlier is that campaigning for trade union membership as one vehicle towards enhanced financial and retirement literacy and capability may be very challenging.

Figure 4 graphically presents the twenty (20) most frequent words found in the PFB focus group data that was coded as related to end-user engagement with awareness campaigns. The same analysis results are presented in table format in Table 4.

19

Table 4
List - FE end-user engagement with awareness campaigns
Twenty (20) most frequent words

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage	Similar Words
union	5	10	2.12%	union, unions
f'trade	7	9	1.91%	f'collective, f'revolut, f'trade, f'waħda
bžonn	5	8	1.70%	bžonn
ridt	4	8	1.70%	ridt
collective	10	6	1.27%	collective
gvern	5	6	1.27%	gvern
card	4	5	1.06%	card, cards
agreement	9	4	0.85%	agreement
bargaining	10	4	0.85%	bargaining
dħalt	5	4	0.85%	dħalt
esperjenza	10	4	0.85%	esperjenza
involuta	8	4	0.85%	involuta
kollegi	7	4	0.85%	kollegi
trade	5	4	0.85%	trade
unit	4	4	0.85%	unit
xogħol	6	4	0.85%	xogħol
credit	6	3	0.64%	credit
visa	4	3	0.64%	visa
account	7	2	0.42%	account
ammont	6	2	0.42%	ammont

Moreover, they shed light on the quantitative relevance that each word had when the focus group discussion focused on end-user engagement with awareness campaigns. In other words, on the frequency of the specific words tabulated above during the fieldwork with the sample of the FE cohort.

Main conclusions and recommendations

The ability to save for medium-term and long-term projects and investments trended among representatives of persons in first employment; together with the ability to prioritize needs over wants as well as budgeting skills significantly supported by fluency with ICT tools. Association with the place of employment also trended, revealing that the first time employment position contributed to a relevant part of the participants' identities.

Analysis of focus group data also illuminated the relevance of family members in the financial decision-making of this cohort, from parents to spouses. However, there is no evidence that FE seek professional support to make decisions and manage financial matters and representatives of this cohort manifested significant reluctance to do so through trade union membership.

Analysis of the research data identified significant interest and constructive curiosity to enhance one's retirement literacy and capability, albeit scant retirement planning practices.

Consequently, it may be concluded that shortcomings in financial and retirement literacy and capability of members of the FE cohort include retirement planning practices that may be taken on as from first employment and seeking professional guidance in this regard, that may include trade union membership.

The research also shed light on how members of the FE cohort are more likely to find campaign content that is contextualized within work-based and peer environs as interesting, appealing and influential. Given the digital fluency of many representatives of this cohort online campaign platforms are likely to have a successful outreach.