

Valletta: capital of prisoners, but not of University

- Harbour areas have highest number of prison inmates per capita
- Same localities are the least represented in tertiary education
- Four of Malta's top 10 university towns are in Gozo

By James Debono

Young people hailing from towns surrounding the Grand Harbour are the least likely to frequent University or MCAST, statistics released in parliament last week show. Not surprisingly, other statistics revealed in parliament in the same week also reveal that 20% of the prison population hails from the same geographical region.

With 0.4% of its population in prison, Valletta emerges as the locality with the greatest number of prisoners in both absolute and relative terms. Only 8.2% of young people aged between 15 and 24 attend university or MCAST.

This suggests that apart from the urban regeneration proposed by the government for this area in its plans for the Grand Harbour, this area is also in desperate need of a social regeneration.

Only 2.5% of Maltese university students hail from towns surrounding the grand harbour. The percentage rises to 4.2% in MCAST. While students from Gozitan and affluent northern localities prevail at the more academically oriented university, students from southern Maltese localities prevail at the more vocationally oriented MCAST, a MaltaToday analysis of figures presented in parliament reveals.

Education Minister Dolores Cristina released the number of students from each locality attending university and MCAST in reply to a query by Labour MP Carmelo Abela last week. These figures were used by MaltaToday to determine

Percentage of 15-24 year olds attending MCAST

Top 10 localities		Bottom Five localities	
San Lawrenz	11.5	Floriana	2.5
B'Bugia	10.3	Saint Paul's Bay	3
Safi	10.2	Swieqi	3.2
Pembroke	9.8	Valletta	3.3
Kercem	9.7	Marsa	3.9
Ghaxaq	9.6	Hamrun	4
Mqabba	9.3	Xghajra	4.1
Fgura	9.2	Bormla	4.1
Rabat	9	Isla	4.2
Mosta	8.9	Sliema	4.3

Number of university/junior college students as a percentage of 15-24 year olds

Top 10 localities		Bottom 10 localities	
Attard	30.1	Bormla	4
Balzan	29.8	Birgu	4.2
Ghasri	28.9	Marsa	4.7
Rabat Gozo	27.1	Valletta	4.9
Qala	23.2	Isla	6.5
Lija	23.2	Qrendi	6.7
Sannat	21.4	Pieta	7.8
Iklin	21.4	Hamrun	8.4
Sliema	20.8	Kalkara	9
Munxar	20.4	Paola	9.1

Since university population also includes a number of over 24-year-olds the figures are only indicative

Localities with highest percentage of people in prison

%	
Valletta	0.4
Isla	0.3
Bormla	0.2
Kalkara	0.2
Ghaxaq	0.2

the percentage of 15-24 year olds attending both MCAST and University.

Bormla emerges the locality with the lowest percentage of students in this age group attending university. But it does not fare much better in MCAST, which attracts only 4% of 15-24 year old Bormlizi.

On the other hand a number of more affluent northern localities like Swieqi and Sliema, which fare better at university, are among the least represented localities at MCAST. The analysis reveals that B'Bugia is the Maltese locality with the highest percentage of students aged between 15-24 who continue their studies in MCAST: just 1% below the small Gozitan locality of San Lawrenz.

B'Bugia is closely followed by southern Safi. Other southern localities in the top 10 most represented localities in MCAST include Ghaxaq, Mqabba and Fgura.

On the other hand students hailing from the more affluent middle class belt of Attard, Balzan and Lija prevail at University.

University students represent 30% of the 15-24 year old population in both Attard and Balzan and 23% of the same age group in Lija.

Significantly, four of the top 10 localities with the highest percentage of university students hail from Gozo. The top Gozitan localities are Ghasri and Rabat.
