

# Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

## Netherlands Review Report

May 2019

## **Introduction and Glossary of abbreviations**

In the Netherlands, married women were considered legally incapacitated until 1956, and until 1957 the law required that female civil servants be dismissed when they married. Since those days we have come a long way along the path to equality. Considering how much the Netherlands has achieved in recent decades, and how both legislation and cultural norms have evolved, there is reason to be optimistic.

This review report tries to give as much as possible answers to the questions of UN Women. Dutch Gender equality policy focusses on three main topics:

- Employment;
- Social safety and
- Gender stereotyping, and equal treatment.

Abbreviations:

OCW: Ministry of Education Culture and Science

VWS: Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

SZW: Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment

EZK: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy

JenV: Ministry of Justice and Security

BZ: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

BZK: Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

IenW: Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management

**I. Section One:**

Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks

- Priorities and achievements
- Challenges and setbacks

**II. Section Two:**

Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern

- Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work
- Poverty eradication, social protection and social services
- Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes
- Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions
- Peaceful and inclusive societies
- Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation.

**III. Section Three:**

National institutions and processes

**IV. Section Four:**

Data and statistics

**I. Section One**

**Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks**

## **1. What have been the most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past 5 years?**

During the period 2014-2017, the Dutch government pursued a number of policy spearheads: women's participation in employment in the light of the economic crisis, social safety for women, differences between boys and girls in education, international polarisation, intersex persons (greater awareness), and women's health. Following the 2017 general election and the formation of a new government, there have been some shifts in focus. Policy and action are now based on three main themes: employment, safety and gender diversity, and equal treatment (non-discrimination). Where possible, links are made between women's emancipation and LGBTI emancipation.

### **Achievements**

#### Employment

The Dutch government wishes to achieve full gender equality in both employment opportunity and income.

- A number of successful methods and projects have been funded in recent years. They include *Eigen Kracht* ('Own Strength'), aimed at women who, for whatever reason, find greater difficulty in securing employment, *Kracht on Tour* ('Strength on Tour'), an awareness programme which seeks the engagement of local businesses and organisations, *Educatie voor Vrouwen met Ambitie* ('Education for Women with Ambition'), concerned with the acquisition of basic skills such as reading and writing, *How 2 Spend It* (financial awareness and budgeting skills for women), and *Single SuperMom* (which sets out to mobilise single mothers by various means, including the creation of a network). All activities have reached a large number of women with a non-Western background. This is important given that this group still shows a low level of economic independence. The *Single SuperMom* programme specifically targets single mothers, being another group with relatively low economic and financial independence.
- During the period 2018-2022, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) is to finance the *Samen werkt het!* ('Together it Works!') alliance in which Women Inc., Bureau Clara Wichmann, Movisie, the Dutch Council of Women (NVR) and WO=MEN will encourage both men and women to combine paid employment with unpaid (family) care commitments.
- In 2017, the Dutch government reserved five million euros to support the appointment of female professors as part of the *Westerdijk Talent Impulse* programme. The intention was that universities should appoint no fewer than one hundred additional female professors 'at a stroke'. This ambition was achieved and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) was able to confirm one hundred nominations.
- The economic position of women has improved somewhat since the economic crisis. The most recent *Emancipation Monitor* reveals an increase in the total number of hours worked by women. The number of women in employment increased from 69.8% in 2014 to 72.9% in 2017. Economic independence rose from 58% to 60% (in the period 2015-2017).
- Paternity leave has been extended, whereby the mother's partner becomes entitled to more days off. Until December 2018, partners in employment could take two days' paid leave, their wages being paid by the employer. On 1 January 2019, this entitlement was increased to five days. From 1 July 2020, partners will be able to claim five weeks' additional leave, to

be taken within six months of the baby's birth, and will be entitled to an allowance equivalent to 70% of their regular salary (subject to a statutory maximum). There has therefore been a significant extension of the paternity leave entitlement for partners. The new arrangements are intended to ensure that a longer period of leave becomes seen as the norm.

### Social safety

The government is keen to promote the acceptance and social safety of all citizens. The focus is on eliminating violence and intimidation against women. Women and LGBTI persons are more likely than others to be confronted with (sexual) violence or discriminatory behaviour, not only in public areas but also at home, at school, in the healthcare setting or when taking part in recreational activities.

- Violence against women is still too often regarded as a 'women's problem', while the vast majority of perpetrators are male. In 2016, the 'White Ribbon' campaign placed the emphasis firmly on men's own responsibility. The campaign has been supported by the Ministry of OCW since 2016 and is one of a number of measures which have successfully raised awareness of men's involvement in violence against women, and their role in preventing it.
- Attention for women's safety has been increased at the local level. No fewer than eleven municipalities accepted the minister's invitation to take part in the 'Safe Cities' programme, the focus of which is safety in public areas. Municipalities enjoy some discretion in how they pursue the overall aims. They are able to design and implement measures which are appropriate to the local situation. The program has enabled municipalities to develop new initiatives to enhance women's safety and contributed to getting the problem (higher) on the local agenda.

### Gender diversity

The government actively supports individuals' freedom to determine their own gender identity and expression, free of prescriptive norms and any form of discrimination. The term 'gender neutrality' is sometimes used but this can imply that a person should not consider themselves a man or a woman, or present themselves as such. The government prefers the term 'gender diversity', whereby the aim is not uniformity but quite the reverse: the opportunity for greater choice and opportunities.

The government wishes to challenge gender stereotyping, thus increasing freedom for everyone: men and women, boys and girls, and those who prefer not to be 'labelled' or have choices foisted upon them.

- Greater attention is now being devoted to the role and position of men and boys. Both women and men have much to gain from greater freedom of choice and less stereotyping of their respective 'roles'. Women and girls remain at a disadvantage in many areas. It is important that men and boys are made more aware of the fact that women must be given greater opportunity to attain an equal position, and that men can act as their allies in doing so.
- The Gender and Health Alliance is a pioneering initiative supported by the Ministry of OCW which seeks to raise awareness of the importance of gender-sensitive healthcare. Its efforts

have inspired the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) to implement the Gender and Health (*Gender en Gezondheid*) knowledge programme and to support the inclusion of gender issues in the curriculum for medical specialists in training.

### Challenges and setbacks

There are some areas in which, despite considerable effort, not all desired results have yet been achieved.

- Between 2015 and 2017, the average working hours of women in employment increased by one hour, to 28 hours per week. This is a step in the right direction but is not yet enough.
- The [Emancipation Monitor](#) 2018 shows a fall in the proportion of women working in health care, administration and the services sector. Their representation in the technical professions and ICT has increased slightly, but there remains a significant discrepancy between the number of male and female students who opt to follow technology-related subjects at school and beyond. During the 2017/18 school year, girls represented only 10% of students in technology streams at VMBO (pre-vocational secondary school) level, and just 40% at VWO (pre-university) level.
- The government is committed to increasing women's representation in decision making positions as well in company boards. The percentage of female professors in higher education increased from 19.3% in 2016 to 20.9% in 2017. The percentage of women holding a seat on the board (or supervisory board) of the largest 5000 companies also increased. The target of having 30% female representation in company boards is enshrined in law; it is now a legal requirement. Nevertheless, while female representation is rising, it is doing so too slowly. Women hold only 14.5% of all executive board positions and 18.2% of those on supervisory boards.
- Economic independence among women is rising but the rate of increase remains too slow. Among women with a migrant background, employment participation and financial independence are markedly lower than in the indigenous female population. Employment participation is especially low among non-Western first-generation migrants with limited education.
- It is difficult to break down entrenched stereotypes and the process can take much time and patience. Although attitudes regarding women's role in Dutch society have indeed changed in recent decades, there remain areas in which bias persists. For example, the effects of gender stereotyping can still be seen in terms of employment opportunity, social safety, non-discrimination and gender diversity.
- In the international context, the Netherlands is notable for a particularly high rate of part-time employment. Although this applies to both men and women, (young) women in particular are more likely to work part-time than their counterparts in other countries. There is also a marked difference between the working hours of women (29 per week) and men (37 per week), compared to the European averages of 35 and 39 respectively. The government has therefore decided to conduct an interdepartmental policy study, which will examine part-time work. It will consider the causes and effects of the high rate of part-time employment, as well as the obstacles that may be encountered by those wishing to work either more or fewer hours. Policy 'packages' will then be developed to support the various views which currently exist on this subject. The final report is expected to be submitted to parliament in the latter half of 2019.

**2. Which of the following have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country over the past five years through laws, policies and/or programmes? (Please check relevant categories.)**

- Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice
- Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls
- Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security
- Eliminating violence against women and girls
- Access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights
- Political participation and representation
- Right to work and rights at work (e.g. gender pay gap, occupational segregation, career progression)
- Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises
- Unpaid care and domestic work / work-family conciliation (e.g. paid maternity or parental leave, care services)
- Gender-responsive social protection (e.g. universal health coverage, cash transfers, pensions)
- Basic services and infrastructure (water, sanitation, energy, transport etc.)
- Strengthening women's participation in ensuring environmental sustainability
- Gender-responsive budgeting
- Digital and financial inclusion for women
- Gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and resilience building
- Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes
- Other

A number of our priorities have already been covered in the answer to Question 1 (see pages 6 and 7). In addition, we wish to state that employment participation and the position of women on the labour market have long been important themes within the emancipation movement and in the government's own emancipation policy. The Emancipation Monitor 2018 indicates that modest progress has been made. However, there is still a long way to go.

A number of successful methods, programmes and projects addressing economic independence have been co-funded by the Dutch government in recent years. They include *Eigen Kracht* ('Own Strength'), aimed at women who, for whatever reason, find greater difficulty in securing employment), *Kracht on Tour* ('Strength on Tour'), an awareness programme which seeks cooperation with local businesses and organisations, *Educatie voor Vrouwen met Ambitie* ('Education for Women with Ambition'), concerned with the acquisition of basic skills such as reading and writing), *How 2 Spend It* (financial awareness and budgeting skills for women), and *Single SuperMom* (which seeks to mobilise single mothers by various means, including the creation of a network). All activities have reached a large number of women with a non-Western background. This is important given that this group still shows a low level of economic independence. The *Single SuperMom* programme specifically targets single mothers, being another group with relatively low economic and financial independence.

The funding period for some of these projects expired at the end of 2016. In 2017 and beyond, the central municipality in each employment market region could apply for co-financing for projects designed to increase the economic independence of women. This has allowed the municipalities to adapt their approach in keeping with the local situation. No fewer than 25 of the 35 central municipalities availed themselves of this possibility in 2017, and 24 did so in 2018.



**3. Over the past five years, have you taken specific measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination? (Please check relevant categories.)**

- Women living in remote and rural areas
- Indigenous women
- Racial, ethnic or religious minority women
- Women living with disabilities
- Women living with HIV/AIDS
- Women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities
- Younger women
- Older women
- Migrant women
- Refugee and internally displaced women
- Women in humanitarian settings
- Other

- In 2018, the Ministry of OCW committed to funding a number of Strategic Alliances for a period of five years. These alliances comprise various societal organisations which work to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression in various (intersecting) areas. The *Verandering van binnen uit* ('Change from Within') alliance includes several migrant and refugee organisations working closely with Movisie, the national knowledge centre on social issues. The *Gedeelde trots, gedeeld geluk* ('Shared pride, shared happiness') alliance is made up of COC Nederland, Transgender Netwerk Nederland and NNID/Intersekse Nederland. *Gezondheidszorg op maat* ('Made to measure healthcare') comprises Women Inc, the COC and Rutgers, and is concerned with gender-sensitive healthcare services, while the *Act 4 Respect* alliance brings together Rutgers and Atria to tackle the problem of gender-related violence.
- The Ministry of OCW also supports the LEF project being run by the rights organisation *Femmes For Freedom*. The organisation promotes the right to self-determination, marital equality and the eradication of harmful 'traditional' practices thus helping women from the migrant and refugee communities to achieve their ambitions.
- The emancipation process did not begin at the same time for all groups of women, and neither is it progressing at the same pace. This is evident in terms of employment opportunity: there are some women for whom it is especially difficult to find or keep paid employment. An approach which addresses various needs and reaches the target groups calls for a thorough knowledge of the causes of disadvantage, and about what will and will not work with regard to each specific group. A generic policy will have different effects within different groups, some of which may be counter-productive. Moreover, implementation of such a policy may be unintentionally affected by stereotypical perceptions.

In its local approach, the government therefore follows four action lines:

1. Monitoring social disadvantage among women and setting the agenda for remedial action.
2. Supporting local partners by means of research and knowledge dissemination.
3. Targeted projects addressing specific groups of women.
4. Gender-aware policy research.

- During the period 2015-2017, the Ministry of SZW implemented its 'Self-determination Action Plan' which was primarily concerned with prevention. Activities built upon those undertaken between 2012 and 2014 further to the Prevention of Forced Marriage programme. The more recent action plan was deliberately broad in nature, since forced marriage, captive marriage, abandonment, honour-related violence and non-acceptance of homosexuality are all symptoms of an underlying problem: the denial of others' right to structure their lives as they wish. The denial of self-determination is a serious violation of basic human rights and freedoms. The Action Plan therefore sought to raise people's awareness that they are fully entitled to make their own choices, whether at school, at work, in leisure pursuits, in choosing a partner, divorce, religion and so forth. Everyone is encouraged to make such choices for themselves.

***4. Has the increasing number of humanitarian crises—caused by conflict, extreme weather or other events—affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country?***

No.

**5. Which of the following does your country consider to be the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country for the coming five years through laws, policies and programmes? (Please check relevant categories.)**

- Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice
- Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls
- Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security
- Eliminating violence against women and girls
- Access to affordable quality health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights
- Political participation and representation
- Right to work and rights at work (e.g. gender pay gap, occupational segregation, career progression)
- Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises
- Unpaid care and domestic work / work-family conciliation (e.g. paid maternity or parental leave, care services)
- Gender-responsive social protection (e.g. universal health coverage, cash transfers, pensions)
- Basic services and infrastructure (water, sanitation, hygiene, energy, transport, communication, etc.)
- Strengthening women's participation in ensuring environmental sustainability
- Gender-responsive budgeting
- Digital and financial inclusion for women
- Gender-responsive disaster risk prevention, reduction and resilience building
- Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes
- Other

Work and income

The Dutch government wishes to achieve complete gender equality in the field of work and income. We devote particular attention to:

- The financial independence of women
- Increasing female representation in decision-making positions and company boards/board rooms
- Closing the 'pay gap' between men and women.

Central government works closely with local authorities (municipalities) to promote economic independence for women. It is the municipalities who are responsible for assisting people into paid employment, whether or not they are in receipt of welfare benefits.

The EVA project ('Education for Women with Ambition') is being coordinated by *Stichting Lezen en Schrijven* (Reading and Writing Foundation). It helps women to improve their basic skills. In the Netherlands, women are more likely than men to experience difficulty with basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and using a computer. As a result, they have fewer opportunities on the labour market.

The government is currently investigating additional measures which can be taken to counter pay discrimination.

Close cooperation is essential if greater gender equality on the labour market is to be achieved. The government cannot succeed alone. It is necessary to foster greater awareness of the problems among the business community and the general public. Strategic partnerships have therefore been formed with two alliances of societal organisations:

- *Samen werkt het* ('Together it works') encourages men and women, but most especially financially vulnerable women, to take advantage of the opportunities available to combine paid work with unpaid care responsibilities.
- *Werk.en.de Toekomst* ('Work and the future') is working to break down stereotypical perceptions in education, on the labour market and within the government itself.
- The Dutch government provides financial support to Women Inc., a rights organisation whose activities include bringing pay discrimination to the attention of employers and women. Women Inc. has developed practical interventions designed to close the pay gap. In the coming months it will investigate ways in which improvements can be implemented in all sectors, including ICT and the media. Input has been derived from the studies examining pay inequality conducted by the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, as well as consultations with employee representation bodies such as unions. There has also been ongoing contact between SZW and the nationwide network of discrimination reporting centres.

There will also be close cooperation with the employer's federation VNO-NCW and with *Stichting Topvrouwen* to further increase female representation in the boardroom.

#### Social safety

The government is keen to promote the acceptance and social safety of all citizens. The focus is on eliminating violence and intimidation, not least that directed towards women.

- The Ministry of OCW supports the LEF project being run by the women's rights organisation *Femmes For Freedom*. This organisation promotes the right to self-determination, marital equality and the eradication of harmful 'traditional' practices thus helping women from the migrant and refugee communities to achieve their ambitions.
- In April 2018, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS), the Ministry of Justice and Security (J&V) and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) launched a joint programme to combat domestic violence and child abuse.

All measures involve cooperation between various emancipation organisations, working together in three strategic partnerships to promote social safety and acceptance:

- *Gedeelde trots, gedeeld geluk*: ('Shared pride, shared happiness') is an alliance of LGBTI organisations and is concerned with various aspects of safety, education, employment, media, health, politics, law and lifestyle choices.
- *Verandering van binnenuit* ('Change from within') is concerned with the social safety of women and LGBTI persons, as well as acceptance of gender equality and sexual diversity within migrant and refugee communities.
- *Act4respect* is concerned with the prevention of gender-related violence among children and young adults. The focus is on both (potential) victims and perpetrators.

## Gender diversity

The government actively supports individuals' freedom to determine their own gender identity, free of prescriptive norms and discrimination. Particular attention is devoted to the representation of women in the media and to gender diversity among children and young people

- Women Inc. is working to expand the alliance of media organisations which currently includes NPO, RTL and VICE. The aim is to ensure a balanced depiction of women on television and in all other media productions. The Dutch government endorses greater diversity in the media, including advertising.
- The Minister of OCW has commissioned research examining the depiction of women in the media and how it is changing.
- The Minister of OCW has also requested an internal study examining the way in which government organisations present themselves in their various communications. The results will provide the basis for a discussion about how the public sector can set a good example with communications that are as neutral and inclusive as possible.
- Further to the government's emancipation policy, the Minister of OCW has endorsed various initiatives intended to encourage more male students to prepare for a career in primary education, and more female students to opt for a career in STEM.
- The *Werk.en.de Toekomst* alliance is developing a 'counter-stereotype' database of role models: women who work in male-dominated professions and *vice versa*.
- There are significant differences in the health status of men and women. In general, women are in poorer health than men. Gender-awareness in the health sector means that gender-specific care is often needed; in such cases, equality demands unequal medical treatment. The government wishes to achieve a fully inclusive healthcare system. The *Gezondheidszorg op maat* alliance promotes gender-sensitive and LGBTI-sensitive healthcare.

**II. Section Two**  
**Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work**

**6. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to advance gender equality in relation to women's role in paid work and employment?**

- Strengthened / enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation
- Introduced / strengthened gender-responsive active labour market policies (e.g. education and training, skills, subsidies)
- Taken measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace
- Strengthened land rights and tenure security
- Improved financial inclusion and access to credit, including for self-employed women
- Improved access to modern technologies (incl. climate-smart technologies), infrastructure and services (incl. agricultural extension)
- Supported the transition from informal to formal work, including legal and policy measures that benefit women in informal employment
- Devised mechanisms for women's equal participation in economic decision-making bodies (e.g. in ministries of trade and finance, central banks, national economic commissions)
- Other

In 2014 and again in 2018, we produced action plans with a view to countering discrimination on the labour market and in the workplace. Both included measures to prevent discrimination on the basis of gender and pay discrimination. A separate action plan was produced in 2017, specifically aimed at protecting the rights and status of pregnant women. In addition to increasing knowledge and awareness, this plan provides for stricter supervision by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (Inspectorate SZW), and includes measures to encourage anyone with a grievance to make an official complaint.

The measures included in the Labour Market Discrimination Action Plan 2018 are primarily concerned with discrimination in recruitment and selection processes, and with promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Gender is one of the potential grounds for discrimination covered by the plan. There are also specific measures intended to prevent pay discrimination and close any pay gap that may exist:

- Since 2010, Statistics Netherlands (CBS) has conducted a biannual survey at the request of the Ministry of SZW to identify any discrepancy between salaries paid to men and those paid to women performing the same job. In addition, the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, the Ministry of SZW and the Ministry of OCW conducted joint research examining pay equality in universities of applied sciences (2016). Drawing attention to differences helps to raise awareness among organisations, employees and the general public. It promotes a debate at both organisational and societal level. The Minister of SZW wishes to mobilise employers, employee representative bodies and female employees themselves to eliminate the pay gap. This process demands the creation of transparency.
- With funding provided by the Ministry of OCW, Women Inc. has launched a number of initiatives to help employers and female employees work towards a system of equal pay for equal work. With the help of experts and stakeholders, Women Inc. is currently examining what is needed in order to achieve the necessary improvements.
- The national Labour Foundation (*Stichting van de Arbeid*) is to update the 'Equal Pay Checklist' which will then be made available to various stakeholders such as employers and employer federations, employee representative bodies and employees. The foundation will actively inform these stakeholders about the underlying causes of pay discrimination and will offer guidelines for resolving it.



- The government pursues a number of paths to encourage women's participation in employment. We also strive to bring about a more equal division of work and care responsibilities between men and women, as illustrated by the extension of paternity leave and the 'Work and Care' campaign which calls for partners to discuss ways in which to achieve a good balance of work and family responsibilities with each other and with their employers.

Since 2015, the Inspectorate SZW has worked to ensure that employers apply a policy intended to minimise or prevent psychosocial stress in the workplace, including that caused by discrimination. On each inspection visit, a dedicated team determines how matters such as discrimination against pregnant women are dealt with, and whether the company concerned has taken – or should take – appropriate measures. Based on certain indicators, including the demographic make-up of the workforce, any complaints received, the company's willingness to implement change and the applicable legal framework, the most appropriate supervision regime can then be determined.

**7. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to recognise, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote work-family conciliation?**

- Included unpaid care and domestic work in national statistics and accounting (e.g. time-use surveys, valuation exercises, satellite accounts)
- Expanded childcare services or made existing services more affordable
- Expanded support for frail elderly persons and others needing intense forms of care
- Introduced or strengthened maternity/paternity/parental leave or other types of family leave
- Invested in time- and labour-saving infrastructure, such as public transport, electricity, water and sanitation, to reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women
- Promoted decent work for paid care workers, including migrant workers
- Conducted campaigns or awareness raising activities to encourage the participation of men and boys in unpaid care and domestic work
- Introduced legal changes regarding the division of marital assets or pension entitlements after divorce that acknowledge women's unpaid contribution to the family during marriage
- Other

Paternity leave for partners (male or female)

Paternity leave for partners is to be extended in two steps. The first step has already been taken with the introduction, on 1 January 2019, of one week's paid leave following the birth of a child. This entitlement extends equally to female partners. The second step will be taken on July 1st 2020 with the introduction of an additional 5 weeks' leave, during which the partner will receive 70% of his or her regular salary. Until 31 December 2018, paid paternity leave for partners was limited to two days. See also p.7.

The Work-Care Calculator

Many people in the Netherlands opt almost automatically for a certain division between paid work and unpaid care responsibilities. In most families with young children, the male partner works full time, while the female partner works part time. In 2016, the Ministry of OCW awarded funding to Women Inc. (an NGO concerned with women's emancipation) and NIBUD (an independent foundation providing financial information and advice for households) to support the development of an online tool – the Work-Care Calculator – which reveals the financial consequences if partners opt for a different division of work and family care. The process involves eight steps, the first six of which require users to enter information about their current personal and financial circumstances. The calculator then shows how different choices will affect their salary, tax liability, childcare costs, benefit entitlements, etc. The site's launch, on 2 July 2017, was accompanied by a communications campaign and attracted much media attention. Between July 2017 and December 2018, it attracted 132,408 unique visitors, of whom 73% entered all required information and discovered the implications of their proposed new work-care arrangements.

'Beperkt Zicht'

The 'Beperkt Zicht' ('Restricted View') campaign is part of the 'Samen Werkt Het!' alliance programme. The campaign targets both media-makers and the general public by means of meetings and social media postings (with the hashtag #BeperktZicht) to challenge current stereotypical perceptions relating to the division of work and family care.

**8. Has your country introduced austerity/fiscal consolidation measures, such as cuts in public expenditure or public sector downsizing, over the past five years?**

Yes, in 2014 there was a onetime reduction of €2 mln. From 2015 and onwards there was a reduction of €2.5 mln (measuring from the budget of 2013).

**9. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?**

- Promoted poor women's access to decent work through active labour market policies (e.g. job training, skills, employment subsidies, etc.) and targeted measures
- Broadened access to land, housing, finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services
- Supported women's entrepreneurship and business development activities
- Introduced or strengthened social protection programmes for women and girls (e.g. cash transfers for women with children, public works/employment guarantee schemes for women of working-age, pensions for older women)
- Introduced/strengthened low-cost legal services for women living in poverty
- Other

The focus is on the following work-related sub-themes:

- economic independence
- women in senior positions
- equal pay
- the combination of work and (family) care.

For women, economic independence reduces the risk of falling into poverty in the event of, say, divorce, separation or the partner's death. The same applies to families with a (male) breadwinner who faces unemployment due to the economic crisis.

The four sub-themes are closely interrelated. To promote the economic independence of women, it is essential to arrive at a good combination of work and family care responsibilities, to eradicate differences in pay based solely on gender, and to ensure equal career opportunities for all. Men, many of whom are fathers, also have a part to play in that they can help to clear the path for more women in senior (boardroom) positions.

When considering 'economic independence', we identify three main groups of women who are not economically independent (defined as having an income lower than 70% of the statutory minimum wage). Most policy measures address these three groups:

- non-working women who experience difficulty in securing paid employment
- women working part-time but not earning enough to be deemed economically independent
- young working women.

Various projects at local and regional level are currently being (co-) funded by the Ministry of OCW:

- In November 2014, the pilot project *De Nieuwe Toekomst* ('The New Future') was launched in eight cities by *Federatie Opvang* (an organisation which runs women's refuges and other services for vulnerable women) and the *Nederlandse Vrouwen Raad* (Dutch Council of Women; NVR). Eight groups of women who had been victims of domestic violence were given training and personal counselling in order to 'restore their strength' and regain control of their lives. The ultimate aim of the project was economic independence, since this is regarded as the best protection against (a return to) domestic violence.
- Education for Women with Ambition (EVA) is a project coordinated by the Reading and Writing Foundation. It received funding from the Ministry of OCW throughout the period 2014-2018. The project helps women to develop their basic skills to the level required to re-enter education or find employment, whether paid or voluntary. Courses are organised at the local level and an online platform has been created to allow women to practise their literacy, numeracy and computer skills.
- *How2Spend It* is a financial platform created by *Finance for Women* to help young women improve their financial awareness and financial management skills. The project was supported by the Ministry of OCW during the period 2014-2018.

- *Kracht on Tour* ('Strength on Tour; KoT), was funded by the Ministry of OCW between 2014 and 2017. During this period, the ministry organised meetings in fourteen regions for non-economically independent women with a view to demonstrating the importance of economic and financial independence, and encouraging them to take the first steps on the path to economic independence.
- SingleSupermom (funded from 2016 to end 2018) is an organisation which is devoted to improving the position and well-being of single mothers. It applies a threefold approach:
  - Well-being through improvement of the financial, emotional and economic position, as well as self-awareness and confidence.
  - Providing information and encouraging single mothers to engage in paid or voluntary work, self-employment or (further) study.
  - Bringing single mothers together within local and national networks, both physical and online, with a view to creating a social 'safety net'.

While the pilot projects were confined to selected towns and cities, since 2017 all municipalities have been able to apply for resources to fund meetings intended to increase awareness of the importance of economic independence, and to make agreements with employers willing to offer job opportunities to the members of the target group. The financial contribution paid to municipalities is part of the Economic Independence Programme (PEZ) and related budget.

The objective of the Economic Independence Programme is to increase economic independence among women by raising awareness of how a personal income from employment will improve their situation, and to help them make the first steps in finding paid employment. Part of the PEZ is the 'Decentralisation Payment for Economic Independence' provision which provides a budget for municipalities to organise large meetings (with a minimum of 150 attendees) or to allow at least 50 women to take part in a longer-term process in pursuit of these aims.

Alongside the projects described above, the department for gender equality and LGBTI equality has used mainstreaming to highlight themes such as employment participation, poverty/debt restructuring and social integration, thus increasing attention for the economic independence of women within all departments of the Ministry of SZW.

The Netherlands has implemented various measures to promote the economic independence of women. They can be classified into three categories:

- 1) measures intended to increase knowledge and awareness within the target groups
- 2) education and training for women
- 3) agreements with municipalities and employers.

Several types of instrument have been applied within each category: projects in which alliances of organisations received subsidies and, later, the decentralised payment for municipalities wishing to strengthen the economic independence of women. The measures are complementary and are intended not only to strengthen the position of women but also to increase the availability of employment for women. The instruments are applied at local and regional level, based on the belief that it is here that the greatest gains can be made, and in keeping with the decentralisation of responsibility for (re-)integration and labour market policy that has already been undertaken.

The mechanisms which are assumed to underpin each of the measures are as follows:

- 1) Increasing knowledge and awareness about financial independence.

The Netherlands wishes to increase women's knowledge and awareness about the benefits of financial independence, based on the belief that this will motivate women to take up employment and/or work more hours than in the past, perhaps moving from part-time employment to full-time

work. Women who are more aware of the implications for their personal situation are more likely to become – and remain – financially independent. The number of women who can be deemed economically independent will then increase. The assumed mechanism is that women who are aware of the importance of economic independence, and know how to achieve it, will be more inclined to take the necessary action.

## 2) Education and training for women

By offering (or contracting) education and training for women, the Netherlands is attempting to improve skills, the lack of which stands in the way of economic independence. The assumed mechanism is that women will become better qualified for the labour market and stand more chance of success at job interviews, whereupon employment participation will rise.

## 3) Agreements with municipalities and employers

Agreements with and between municipalities and employers, whether at local or regional level, increases awareness of the position of women and will hopefully result in more, and better, jobs being made available to women. If this is achieved, a greater number of women will take up (or remain in) paid employment, thus achieving greater economic independence.

**10. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls?**

- Introduced or strengthened social protection for unemployed women (e.g. unemployment benefits, public works programmes, social assistance)
- Introduced or strengthened conditional cash transfers
- Introduced or strengthened unconditional cash transfers
- Introduced or strengthened non-contributory social pensions
- Reformed contributory social protection schemes to strengthen women's access and benefit levels
- Improved access to the above for specific populations (e.g. women in informal employment, including domestic workers; migrant and refugee women; women in humanitarian settings)
- Other

- The 'Multiple Birth Maternity Leave' provisions came into force on 1 April 2016. A woman who is expecting more than one child is now entitled to paid maternity leave beginning 10 weeks before the due date of delivery, as opposed to the standard 6 weeks.
- The *Wet invoering extra geboorteverlof* (Additional paternity Leave (Implementation) Act) came into force on 1 January 2019. From this date, the partner of a woman who has given birth may take one week's paid paternity leave on full pay at any time during the four-week period following the birth. (The entitlement for part-time employees is calculated pro rata). From 1 July 2020, partners become entitled to an additional five weeks' paternity leave to be taken within six months of the birth, and will receive payment equivalent to 70% of his or her regular salary.
- The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment submitted its Action Plan on Pregnancy Discrimination to parliament on 22 March 2017. The Dutch government, working alongside relevant societal organisations, is to introduce additional measures to combat discrimination against pregnant women and young mothers.
- Further to the Action Plan on Pregnancy Discrimination, in 2018 the Ministry of OCW provided funding for an awareness project entitled *Baby en Baan* ('Baby and Job'). It focuses on working women and jobseekers of child-bearing age, stressing the importance of being able to find work, or remain in work, even when pregnant or caring for very young children. Since January 2018, the project has already reached some 1.3 million women and has therefore been extended into 2019.

**11. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?**

- Promoted women's access to health services through expansion of universal health coverage or public health services
- Expanded specific health services for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health services, mental, maternal health and HIV services
- Undertaken gender-specific public awareness/health promotion campaigns
- Provided gender-responsiveness training for health service providers
- Strengthened comprehensive sexuality education in schools or through community programmes
- Provided refugee women and girls as well as women and girls in humanitarian settings with access to sexual and reproductive health services
- Other

Gender and Health Alliance

The Gender & Health Alliance (*Alliantie Gender & Gezondheid*) was formed in 2012 by WOMEN Inc. and the Ministry of OCW. Comprising policy-makers, medical experts and researchers, it works to identify the differences between men and women in terms of health and disease, whereupon it becomes possible to introduce gender-sensitive healthcare services.

The Alliance has been responsible for various projects and programmes, many of which have been co-funded by the Ministry of OCW since 2014. A number of important breakthroughs have been made. There is now a National Knowledge Programme on Gender and Health, based on a research agenda developed by the Alliance in association with ZonMw. The investments made in this programme by the Ministry of VWS acknowledge the importance of gender-sensitive healthcare. Moreover, the Alliance's work in raising awareness of gender-sensitive healthcare has seen a significant expansion, and changes to both medical training and treatment practice have been implemented. Such progress illustrates the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation. Mobilising the various stakeholders simultaneously has greatly accelerated the process of implementing gender-sensitive healthcare in the field.

One of the milestones of this process was a series of visits to university medical centres and mental health institutes. During the 2014-2015 project period, the Alliance organised meetings at about half of all university medical centres in the Netherlands. The 'tour' did much to increase support for gender-sensitive healthcare among professionals, policy-makers and the general public alike.

During the 2014-2015 project period, the Alliance had three workgroups: Awareness, Research and Education. In 2016, the Research workgroup was absorbed by ZonMw's National Knowledge Programme on Gender and Health, following the announcement in March that year of a 12 million euro investment by the Ministry of VWS. This amount is specifically earmarked for research focusing on women's health and covers the period 2016-2020.

Another milestone has been the public information campaign [\*Behandel me als een dame\*](#) ('Treat me like a lady'), which attracted much attention in 2017. It calls for a healthcare system which takes the differences between men and women into account in research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment. The campaign earned the Alliance its first major award: the Bronze Effie, a prestigious advertising industry prize.



In 2017, the work to date of the Gender and Health Alliance was subject to evaluation. The resulting effects analysis (in Dutch) notes various important advances in gender-sensitive healthcare, such as:

- the inclusion of gender differences in the curriculum of medical and psychiatric training programmes
- the adoption of gender-sensitive treatment protocols by mental health services
- the launch of projects examining gender implications in specific health conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, migraine, anxiety disorders and arthritis
- greater prominence of gender-sensitive healthcare within the Emancipation Monitor
- the launch of the Gender and Health Research Agenda.

### Personalised healthcare

In 2018, the Ministry of OCW entered into a strategic partnership with the *Gezondheidszorg op maat* ('Personalised Healthcare') alliance, consisting of COC Nederland, Rutgers and WOMEN Inc. Over the five-year period 2018-2022, the alliance will receive funding of approximately four million euros to support various activities intended to promote gender-sensitive and LGBTI-sensitive healthcare. Healthcare providers must not only be alert to gender and sexual diversity, but must be aware of the underlying links between all aspects of diversity. An individual is not defined by gender alone. There are several other factors which can influence health, including age, socio-economic status, ethnicity, physical ability and sexuality. The Personalised Healthcare alliance has opted to focus on the interaction between three aspects relevant to gender-sensitive and LGBTI-sensitive healthcare: gender diversity, sexual diversity and age.

The alliance has got off to a flying start. Its activities to date have been primarily concerned with:

- Preliminary research to identify important moments in an individual's life which are defined or influenced by gender or sexuality. There are both biomedical and social aspects at play. Age is often the prime determining factor in events such as a woman's first menstrual period and the birth of her first child, the emergence of sexual orientation in teenagers, and loneliness among seniors.
- These 'moments' form the basis of research to identify relevant themes within primary care and mental healthcare services, thus identifying the relevant professionals and further diversifying activities. In order to achieve its objectives, the alliance will pursue a threefold change process involving:
  1. Knowledge development
  2. Knowledge transfer
  3. Knowledge embedding.

The development, transfer and embedding of gender-sensitive and LGBTI-sensitive healthcare will serve to equip both patients and care providers. The results is positive and inclusive care for all. The process will be followed on an iterative basis throughout the subsidy period (and beyond), and in close contact with the healthcare sector and all stakeholders.

### Knowledge development

To ensure that the government, healthcare sector and the general public are fully aware of the importance of gender-sensitive and LGBTI-sensitive healthcare, it is necessary to develop, collate and disseminate relevant knowledge. As yet, there is no comprehensive body of knowledge about the

interaction between gender (diversity), sexual diversity and age. Similarly, the extent to which 'personalised healthcare' is already practised in the field is not clear. The knowledge development phase is therefore concerned with collecting and collating existing knowledge, identifying the gaps in that knowledge, and research to fill those gaps. This will involve desk research, secondary analysis, supplementary research, a stakeholder analysis, and evaluation of the results during a series of expert meetings. The results will provide a clearer picture of the themes and disciplines to which the Alliance is to devote most attention during the first two years of the research period proper, and will also determine the form and purpose of subsequent interventions and activities.

#### Knowledge transfer

All existing knowledge and new findings will be actively disseminated to fill the gaps in the knowledge of healthcare professionals and the public. The process will target various relevant stakeholders, such as the professional associations, patient representative organisations, the media and the general public (or selected groups). The selection of target groups will be made on the basis of the stakeholder analysis. Knowledge will be transferred by means of general or targeted information campaigns and direct communication.

#### Knowledge embedding

The overall objective is a situation in which differences are automatically taken into account in the consultation room. In addition to raising awareness among professionals and the public, it is therefore necessary to embed the knowledge gained within guidelines, protocols, quality standards, professional training programmes and relevant networks or online platforms. Guidelines, protocols and training programmes must all be fully gender-sensitive, LGBTI-sensitive and inclusive. All relevant knowledge must be readily available to professionals and patients, to be found among the sources that they would usually consult. The government and the professional associations are the key parties in creating the (pre-)conditions for knowledge embedding. They can now call upon the support of the Alliance in doing so, and in implementing a system of fully personalised healthcare.

## 12. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls?

- Taken measures to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development programmes
- Strengthened educational curricula to increase gender-responsiveness and eliminate bias, at all levels of education
- Provided gender equality and human rights training for teachers and other education professionals
- Promoted safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments for women and girls
- Increased access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) and digital fluency and literacy
- Ensured access to safe water and sanitation services and facilitated menstrual hygiene management especially in schools and other education/training settings
- Strengthened measures to prevent adolescent pregnancies and to enable adolescent girls to continue their education in the case of pregnancy and/or motherhood
- Other

### Promoting non-gender stereotypical education choices (TVET and STEM for girls)

The [Emancipation Monitor 2018](#) reveals a decrease in female representation in the healthcare, services and administration sectors, together with a slight increase in the technical professions and ICT. Nevertheless, significant differences between the percentage of male and female students who opt to take certain subjects at school and beyond. Girls remain under-represented on STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) programmes at all levels. In 2017/18, girls made up less than 10% of STEM students at VMBO (pre-vocational secondary school) level, and just over 40% at VWO (pre-university secondary school) level.

- The Dutch governments supports the *Werk.en.de Toekomst* ('Work and the future') alliance, in which Atria, VHTO (National Expertise Centre on Girls/Women and Science/Technology), Emancipator and the Dutch Council of Women (NVR) are working to counter stereotyping in education, in government and on the labour market. Its Action Plan 2018-2021 is chiefly concerned with lowering the 'segregation index' in education, i.e. the difference between the number of male and female students on each study programme.
- In 2010, VHTO launched the annual 'Girlsday' with financial support from the Ministry of OCW. The purpose is to bring girls and technology companies together.<sup>1</sup>
- The government, private sector and education sector have entered into a covenant – the 'Technology Pact' – the aim of which is to recruit and retain talent (male and female) in the technology sector. Activities are organised at the regional level.
- The government has also provided funding for VHTO's *Beeldenbrekers* ('Image Breakers') project, which addresses gender stereotyping in primary and elementary education and develops early-age interventions.
- In 2016, VHTO joined forces with the MBO Council to run the 'More girls in Technology' project in schools for secondary vocational education<sup>2</sup>. The project involves a network of 'ambassadors', a toolbox, an inspiration kit and conferences. The government's initial subsidy covered the period to the end of 2018; this has now been extended to the end of 2019. A total of 32 MBO schools are taking part. VHTO has also advised four education regions with regard to their plans to implement the 'Strong Technology Education' programme at VMBO (pre-vocational secondary education) level, with specific attention given to gender inclusivity.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.vhto.nl/projecten/girlsday/girlsday-in-english/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.vhto.nl/over-vhto/english-page/about-vhto/>

### Creating safe schools

Sex education in schools devotes attention to sexual resilience, while the biannual Social Safety in Schools monitor also includes information about the prevalence of inappropriate sexual behaviour. It appears that incidents are becoming less common.

The school curriculum at both primary (elementary) and secondary level is currently under review. Key learning objectives with regard to sexuality and sexual diversity are to be refined and clarified so that all schools are aware what is expected of them. In the latter half of 2019, the development teams (which include practising educators) will announce the basic components of the new learning objectives. It is likely that both sexual resilience and sexual integrity will be given more explicit attention.

There are already various statutory provisions intended to ensure the safety of students and teaching staff in the vocational education sector. Schools are required to implement a social safety policy designed to prevent sexual intimidation, racism and violence. They must also conduct an annual Risk Inventory and Evaluation (RI&E). When formulating their social safety policy and devising measures, schools are able to call on the support and guidance of the MBO Council's Integrated Safety Network and the School & Safety Foundation.

### Awareness and teacher training

All teacher training programmes in the Netherlands have translated the statutory requirements into knowledge bases for both primary school and secondary school teaching qualifications. The updated knowledge bases (which were implemented at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year) expressly include the topics of sexual diversity and gender diversity. *Stichting School en Veiligheid* (School and Safety Foundation; SSV) has developed a database of course materials which will equip prospective teachers with the required knowledge and skills in all aspects of social safety. In early 2019, the foundation published a handbook on 'Professionalism and Sexual Integrity' for the use of teacher training programmes and practising teachers.

### Creating a safe environment

- A study conducted by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) reveals that the Dutch public are taking an increasingly positive view of sexual diversity and gender diversity. Acceptance of gender diversity is closely aligned with the safety of women and girls.
- The Dutch government has supported Emancipator's 'White Ribbon Campaign' for the past three years. This campaign emphasises the role that men can and should play in eliminating violence against women. It is important that men realise that women should be allowed the opportunity to achieve an equal position, and that men can be their allies in doing so. Specific activities surrounding the campaign included the recruitment and training of ambassadors and role models, a 'blogathon' and various discussion meetings about men, masculinity and violence against women.
- The Dutch government has invited fifty municipalities to take part in the 'Safe Cities' programme. To date, eleven have accepted that invitation and will undertake various projects to increase social safety for women.
- In December 2018, the *Act4Respect* alliance (comprising Rutgers and Atria) launched a platform which allows professionals to access a vast body of information about gender-related violence and its prevention, for which a number of best practice examples are presented. It is hoped that the platform will become the 'go to' resource for professionals in all relevant disciplines.

### Prevention of teen pregnancy

- In the Netherlands, collective prevention of unplanned (teen) pregnancy and the provision of information about contraception relies largely on school sex education lessons.
- In November 2018, the government produced a seven-point plan to reduce unplanned (teen) pregnancy. A number of points attract specific investment, such as resources to support collective prevention information in schools, the availability of counselling for young expectant mothers who must make certain choices, and the national roll-out of the *Nu Niet Zwanger* ('Not Pregnant Now') programme, in which information and advice about contraceptive methods plays an important part.
- Studying while pregnant. The Dutch government considers it very important to provide adequate support to young expectant mothers who are still in education. It must be possible to continue one's studies while pregnant. To ensure that this is the case, the Netherlands wishes to introduce statutory maternity leave for students in the MBO (senior secondary vocational education) stream. A student fund has been set up to provide financial compensation for those who must continue in education longer due to personal circumstances, including pregnancy. At both senior secondary level and in further education, there are various individualised solutions to provide support for expectant and nursing mothers, and to raise awareness of their situation.

## Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

### **13. In the last five years, which forms of violence against women and girls, and in which specific contexts or settings, have you prioritised for action?**

- Intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape
- Sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings and in employment
- Violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (e.g. cyber violence, online stalking)
- Femicide/Feminicide
- Violence against women in politics
- Child, early and forced marriages
- Female genital mutilation
- Other harmful practices
- Trafficking in women and girls
- Other

#### Programme: Violence does not belong at home (2018)

Additional resources have been made available to help municipalities tackle domestic violence and child abuse at the local level, and to support the *Veilig Thuis* ('Safe at Home') programme. More stringent requirements with regard to vigilance and report response have been introduced.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the government has allocated funding to a major awareness programme, *Geweld hoort nergens thuis* ('Violence does not belong at home').

The programme is structured along three action lines which strengthen the existing response to domestic violence and child abuse:

1. Identifying (potential) problems at an earlier stage, with a view to curtailing the duration of violent behaviour and preventing any escalation. Better awareness of the problems enables us to devise more effective ways of helping the victim and all others affected.
2. Stopping violence and long-term solutions. A violent situation is brought to an end as quickly as possible. Social workers and other professionals follow a coordinated approach designed to restore a safe situation. Perpetrators are dealt with in an appropriate manner. Support or assistance is provided to the entire family system in order to facilitate recovery and build resilience. All family members and their social network are involved (the system approach), with input from police and other authorities as appropriate.
3. Specific target groups call for extra attention. The programme therefore includes certain targeted actions.

The overall programme includes a public awareness campaign drawing attention to various types of domestic violence (e.g. child abuse, elderly abuse and partner violence), and measures to enhance expertise within the professional field.

#### Measures against sexual harassment in the workplace

The Dutch Working Conditions Act obliges the employer to implement a policy to prevent and combat psychosocial stress, which can be caused by factors such as (sexual) harassment and violence

---

<sup>3</sup> Veilig Thuis is a helpline and reporting centre for domestic violence and child abuse. It can be contacted by victims, perpetrators or concerned members of the public. Staff answer questions and give advice. They also determine whether professional help is required and, if so, in what form.

on the work floor. The working conditions (Health & Safety) policy is generic in nature, providing a framework for action. It falls to individual employers to implement a policy which is appropriate to their organisation and adequately addresses all potential risks. If specific groups of employees face particular risks, the employer must adjust its policy accordingly.

A source of information that provides a picture of specific risks based on gender, age or sector is the Netherlands Working Conditions Survey. It is conducted annually by the Dutch Organisation for Applied Scientific Research, commissioned by the Ministry of SWZ.<sup>[1]</sup> The survey asks employees to state whether they have encountered inappropriate behaviour during the past year, including unwelcome sexual advances from colleagues, supervisors or third parties. Every other year, the Inspectorate SWZ publishes *Occupational Health and Safety at Work*, a report about compliance with health and safety obligations based on its inspection findings. In 2016, attention was devoted to undesirable social behaviour.<sup>[2]</sup> One finding is that Dutch employees are more likely to face external sexual advances (e.g. from clients, patients or students) than those from managers and/or colleagues. There are differences between sectors, but it is striking that external sexual harassment mainly occurs in healthcare and hospitality while internal sexual harassment mainly occurs in the services and public administration sectors. Female employees and young employees of both genders (15-24 years) are more likely to face sexual harassment (usually external but also internal).

Between 2014 and 2017, the Ministry of SWZ devoted particular attention to psychosocial stress (see Question 6.1), including inappropriate social behaviour, within its *Sustainable Employability* programme. The topic was addressed by means of (communication) campaigns about harassment at work (2015), aggression and violence by third parties (2015/2016) and inappropriate behaviour at work (2016). In addition to agenda-setting activities, employers, employees and other stakeholders have been given tools to help prevent psychosocial stress and promote a safe working culture. One example is the sexual harassment guide, developed in collaboration with the Dutch Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (see: <http://www.duurzameinzetbaarheid.nl/124618/WegwijzerSeksueleIntimidatie.pdf>). This guide provides the employer / HR employee, colleagues and the victim with a framework for action to tackle sexual harassment at work.

A study was carried out to examine possibilities for strengthening the role and position of the trusted adviser, or workplace counsellors (*vertrouwenspersoon*). The trusted adviser within an organisation can make a significant contribution in tackling undesirable behaviour and can assist victims of all forms of inappropriate behaviour (including sexual harassment). The study findings were presented to parliament on 14 June 2018, together with a written statement outlining the action planned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment to strengthen the position of trusted advisers in the coming period.<sup>[3]</sup>

The Inspectorate SWZ oversees compliance with the Working Conditions Act. Using the self-inspection tool 'Workload and Undesirable Behaviour', employers can examine their own organisation "through the eyes of an inspector" and determine whether additional measures are needed to adequately protect employees against psychosocial stress, excessive work pressure, etc. The Inspectorate can report non-compliance with the Working Conditions Act and will investigate any report made by the Works Council or trade union.

The Ministry of SWZ is closely involved in the action programme *Violence doesn't belong at home*, alongside the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Ministry of Justice and Security and the

---

<sup>[1]</sup> See: <http://www.monitorarbeid.tno.nl/nea>

<sup>[2]</sup> See pages 113-127 of [Health and Safety in operation 2016](#)

Association of Netherlands Municipalities (see Chapter II.2.). From the perspective of good employment practices, this programme examines the role that employers can play in identifying domestic violence at the earliest possible stage and engaging in discussion.

The Inspectorate SWZ has established its programme with regard to labour exploitation for the period 2017-2019. This programme offers a wide range of measures for improving cooperation and detection. To protect vulnerable groups more effectively, the SWZ Inspectorate will invest in preventive measures, in increasing the willingness to report, and in a coherent (inter)national approach.

The Ministries of J&V, VWS, SWZ and Foreign Affairs are working on a comprehensive programme to combat human trafficking. Additional funding (partly long-term) for the support of victims is provided under the current Coalition Agreement. Proposals will be further refined at a later date.

#### Promoting social safety for women: a local approach

The *Veilige steden* ('Safe cities') programme strengthens the local approach in promoting social safety for women. The project, which runs from 2018 until 2021, relies on cooperation with municipalities in tackling problems such as street intimidation and sexual harassment or violence in entertainment venues such as bars and nightclubs. Wherever possible, the national approach will be linked to local efforts to promote safety for the LGBTI community and to increase sexual resilience among all young people, male and female.

#### Cyber violence

See Question 16.

#### Child, early and forced marriage

See Question 29.

#### Female genital mutilation

The Netherlands applies a strict zero-tolerance policy with regard to female genital mutilation (FGM). As a form of physical assault, it is a criminal offence even when carried out in another country if either the victim or alleged perpetrator holds Dutch nationality or is domiciled in the Netherlands. In recent years, the government has developed an integrated chain approach to tackle FGM:

- The *Veilig Thuis* programme has designated staff who provide advice and register reports. They can be consulted by professionals who suspect that FGM has been, or is likely to be, performed. *Veilig Thuis* staff are authorised to investigate reports and to take action where there is a risk to a person's safety. If a criminal offence is suspected, the police will be informed immediately.
- An FGM Protocol is in place to support professionals who encounter cases of (possible) FGM, allowing them to provide an adequate response.
- The Federation of Somali Associations in the Netherlands (FSAN) maintains a network of community advisors who liaise with members of the target groups (migrants from high-risk countries), explain the health risks of FGM and ensure that everyone is aware that FGM is a criminal offence in the Netherlands.
- The government has issued a 'Statement against Female Genital Mutilation' which has been translated into all relevant languages. It too draws attention to the health risks of FGM and stresses that perpetrators will be prosecuted.



- Women who have already been the victim of FGM can attend their local municipal health service (GGD) which will provide referrals to appropriate care. This scheme is subsidised by the Ministry of VWS.
- Midwives and obstetricians may encounter women who have undergone FGM. They have received appropriate training and have access to advice from experts who work according to a medical protocol.
- A factsheet on FGM was distributed to municipalities in December 2016. It includes guidelines for policy at the local level.

#### Other harmful practices

Various harmful practices are addressed jointly as part of efforts to reduce domestic violence. The problems of FGM, forced marriage, abandonment and honour-related violence are grouped under the heading of 'Harmful Traditional Practices'. (See also Question 14.)

#### Trafficking in women and girls

See Question 29.

#### Other

Our report of September 2018 on progress and compliance with the Istanbul Convention lists all activities undertaken in connection with the prevention of violence against women. The report offers a comprehensive description of all relevant policy measures, legislation and other government initiatives.

14. What actions has your country prioritised in the last five years to address violence against women and girls?

- Introduced or strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation
- Introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls
- Introduced or strengthened measures to increase women's access to justice (e.g. establishment of specialist courts, training for the judiciary and police, protection orders, redress and reparations, including for femicide cases)
- Introduced or strengthened services for survivors of violence (e.g. shelters, help lines, dedicated health services, legal, justice service, counselling, housing)
- Introduced or strengthened strategies to prevent violence against women and girls (e.g. in the education sector, in the media, community mobilisation, work with men and boys)
- Monitoring and evaluation of impact, including evidence generation and data collection, including regarding particular groups of women and girls
- Introduced or strengthened measures for improving the understanding of causes and consequences of violence against women among those responsible for implementing measures on ending violence against women and girls.
- Other

#### Training

Police training devotes attention to domestic violence in both the initial post-recruitment phase and continuing 'on the job' instruction. There are regular seminars on related matters. The Department of Public Prosecutions (OM) organises various courses for its staff, addressing matters such as domestic violence and sexual offences. These courses can also be attended by members of the judiciary and independent legal practitioners.

There is also training for professionals who may encounter human trafficking, and this is an important part of the national efforts to combat the practice. Courses and information sessions are held for (military) police, local authority staff such as social workers, the judiciary and prosecutors, staff of the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) and the inspectors of the Inspectorate SZW.

#### Restraining orders and injunctions

Under the *Wet Tijdelijk Huisverbod* ('Temporary Restraining Order Act'), the mayors of all municipalities are authorised to impose a temporary restraining order on any person suspected of committing domestic violence<sup>4</sup>, or who is considered likely to do so. The order prohibits the person from entering certain premises (usually the home address) and/or having any form of contact with the alleged or intended victim.

Article 2 of the Act stipulates that, where necessary, a restraining order may be notified verbally. In urgent situations it is therefore not necessary to serve a written restraining order. The initial order applies for ten days, which can be extended to a maximum of 28 days by the mayor concerned. The main purpose of this type of order is to restore the safety of the victim(s). Where the threat persists, a further restraining order can be imposed. It will prohibit contact with all persons living at the address who are considered to be in danger. If the order is broken, the police will take action. Non-compliance is a criminal offence which carries a penalty of up to two years' imprisonment or a fine not exceeding €20,500. Support is always offered to the victim, and in most cases to the

---

<sup>4</sup> The wording of the relevant statute refers to 'serious and immediate danger'.

perpetrator as well. This is proactive: social services do not wait to be asked. A person seeking a restraining order does not have to pay any costs.

At present, there is no centralised record of the number of restraining orders issued. Registration is the responsibility of individual municipalities. Enquiries confirm that several restraining orders have indeed been issued. A small number of larger municipalities also have one or more women's refuges. Various other types of injunction or restraining order can be imposed on suspects or persons convicted of violent offences at various stages of the judicial procedure. In some cases, they are accompanied by probation or electronic tagging. If the person concerned breaks the terms of the order, the police are able to take him into custody immediately. In most cases, violation will also trigger any suspended sentence or result in the revocation of release on licence. Victims are also able to apply for a restraining order through the civil courts, whereupon compliance can be enforced by the court-appointed bailiffs.

In 2016, courts issued 21 restraining orders in cases relating to domestic violence. In 2017, this figure rose to 29. Such orders are generally subject to conditions, especially when accompanying a suspended sentence or releasing the suspect to await trial at a later date.

### Shelters and refuges

Physical accommodation for the victims of domestic violence is organised on a local or regional basis. The 35 central municipalities receive government funding to support the provision of shelters and refuges for the victims of domestic violence, and other activities to reduce or eliminate domestic violence. In 2016 and 2017, the amount concerned was approximately €118 million per annum. In 2018, the amount was increased to cover the additional responsibilities further to the *Veilig Thuis* programme and the stricter reporting requirements (€11.9 million in 2018, rising to € 38.6 million in 2021 and beyond).

The following paragraphs describe the new activities undertaken to provide assistance for the victims of domestic violence, over and above the established services as listed above.

### Sexual Violence Centres

All victims, including those who do not wish to involve the police, can contact a Sexual Violence Centre (*Centrum Seksueel Geweld*; CSG) at any time of the day or night. There is a single national telephone number and a nationwide network of 16 CSGs. Doctors, nurses, sexual health advisors, psychologists, social workers and specially trained police officers are on hand to offer assistance. The CSGs are primarily intended for the victims of a rape or sexual assault which has taken place within the past seven days. However, victims who do not wish to involve the police, or who were assaulted more than seven days ago, can also call upon the CSGs' services. The CSGs do not have their own premises but operate from a local hospital or the offices of the municipal health department (GGD).

The CSG provides:

- forensic examination to determine the extent of injury and secure possible evidence
- acute medical care intended to prevent unwanted pregnancy or infection with STIs, and to treat any injuries
- acute psychological care to promote recovery and prevent development of adverse effects such as Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSS)
- if necessary, refers a victim for psychological trauma aid for immediate continued help (to circumvent a healthcare waiting list).

When the victim arrives at the CSG – with or without the police – she (or he) will be met by a trained professional such as a (forensic) nurse, who will provide support and assistance. Criminal investigation is not a primary aim of the CSG and victims are under no obligation to make a police report. If the victim nevertheless wishes to do so, a forensic physician will examine any physical injuries and retrieve potential evidence. Even if the victim is not sure yet whether or not to report the crime, forensic evidence can be obtained, just in case. The victim has to agree to a forensic examination. Samples will be received and carefully recorded by a trained police officer to ensure admissibility in court. Acute medical care will be given as required. The forensic and medical processes are carefully coordinated to ensure that neither interferes with the other, while also minimising discomfort and stress for the victim. A doctor can for instance obtain samples for forensic evidence as well as for testing for a STD. That way the victim has to endure only one physical examination instead of two.

If the victim wishes to make a police report, an appointment will be made at the police station as soon as possible. A CSG case manager will maintain contact to monitor the victim's physical and mental well-being. If the problems caused by the incident are not fully resolved after four weeks, the victim will be offered an appointment with the ambulatory mental health services. Where there is a risk of harm through 'honour revenge', help can be provided anonymously. The victim's GP is automatically informed of a visit to the CSG unless the victim specifically requests otherwise.

The CSGs operate according to quality criteria which have been established at national level. Each CSG works closely alongside local partners, such as police, hospital, municipal health service, mental health service, the Veilig Huis team and the national victim support agency, *Slachtofferhulp Nederland*. Their cooperation is subject to formal agreements and an efficient exchange of information.

In 2016, there were 1945 reports of sexual violence (both acute and non-acute). In 2017, this figure rose to 2624. In 2016, assistance was provided to 833 victims of acute sexual violence, of whom 766 were female. In 2017, assistance was provided to 1103 victims of acute sexual violence, of whom 1015 were female. Further information about the CSGs can be found at [www.centrumseksueelgeweld.nl](http://www.centrumseksueelgeweld.nl).

#### Dutch Centre of Forced Marriage and Abandonment (LKHA)

The Dutch Centre of Forced Marriage and Abandonment (LKHA) is funded through the decentralisation payment for women's refuges awarded to the 35 central municipalities. The LKHA is the national knowledge and expertise centre on forced marriage and abandonment. It coordinates complex case responses, advises professionals in the field, and is the partner to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where victims are in other countries. The LKHA verifies reports, and supports victims in their repatriation to the Netherlands. The centre also provides information and professional training.

The LKHA can be contacted 24/7. Outside regular office hours, calls are handled by an incident room. If immediate assistance is required (and possible), the call will be transferred to the officer on duty (as for calls to the National Expertise Centre on Honour-Related Violence). For administrative purposes, the LKHA forms part of the *Veilig Thuis Haaglanden* organisation.

#### Veilig Thuis: national helpline

Both professionals and members of the public can contact *Veilig Thuis* ('Safe at Home') using a free telephone number. The service offers advice and records reports of (suspected) domestic violence or child abuse. To meet their statutory responsibilities, all *Veilig Thuis* organisations are required to provide a 24-hour service. Anyone seeking advice or support remains in control of his or her situation at all times. This means that *Veilig Thuis* will not stage any intervention without express permission. All callers, whether seeking advice or making a report, are able to remain anonymous if they wish. In accordance with its operational protocol, *Veilig Thuis* will provide information about its own tasks and procedures to any person making a report, whereby confidentiality and anonymity are stressed. In 2014 and 2015, central government provided funding to develop a five-day basic training course for *Veilig Thuis* staff, together with online resources and a manual to support the 'train the trainers' approach. *Veilig Thuis* organisations also offer their staff ongoing training to broaden their knowledge and keep it up to date.

### Monitoring

The Netherlands has a number of general 'monitors' (ongoing statistical surveys) which devote attention to the safety of women and/or violence against women. Of these, the most important is the biannual Emancipation Monitor, conducted further to the government's emancipation policy. It focuses on the emancipation of women and includes a chapter examining violence against women. The Sexual Health in the Netherlands Monitor 2017, conducted by Rutgers, is a representative population survey among some 17,000 respondents. Of these, 22% of female respondents and 6% of male respondents report having been forced to perform a sex act against their will. When inappropriate physical contact and kissing are included, the figures are significantly higher: 53% of women and 19% of men. The full report is published online at [www.rutgers.nl](http://www.rutgers.nl) (in Dutch). Rutgers and SOA Aids Nederland are responsible for the *Seks onder je 25e* ('Sex under 25') survey in association with municipal health departments. The survey has now been conducted on three occasions: in 2005, 2012 and 2017. The most recent survey had a respondent sample of 20,000 young people aged 12 to 24. The results offer a representative impression of the sexual health of this group. One finding is that 2% of male respondents and 11% of female respondents report having been forced to perform some form of sex act against their will. This represents a slight decrease compared to the 2012 figures of 4% and 17%. The full report is published online at [www.rutgers.nl](http://www.rutgers.nl) (in Dutch).

### Prevalence studies

- It is important to know how often domestic violence occurs. What is the nature of the problem and what is its extent? What trends have emerged in recent years? To answer these questions, a large-scale prevalence study is currently in progress, comparable to the 2010 studies examining domestic violence and child abuse. The most recent study began in 2015 and was completed in January 2019. <https://www.wodc.nl/onderzoeksdatabase/2668i-synthese-prevalentieonderzoek-hg-en-kimi.aspx>
- A study into the incidence and prevalence of FGM was launched in 2017 and will be completed in June 2019. It follows the first such survey, completed in 2013.

### Veilig Thuis: policy information

Further to the Social Support Act (WMO) 2015, all *Veilig Thuis* organisations are required to publish transparent policy information. The implementation regulations accompanying the Act include a specific protocol which stipulates the types of information to be provided. Required information includes: the total number of reports received, investigations conducted and persons offered advice; a breakdown of reports and requests for advice by source (professional,

public, etc.), and aggregated data with regard to the nature of violent incidents. This information is collected by Statistics Netherlands/CBS twice annually and is published online. The figures are not disaggregated by gender, whereupon it is not possible to determine how many reports or requests for advice are made by women.

### Gender scan

In 2013, the government commissioned a 'gender scan' (quick study). The final report confirmed that there was (and remains) some way to go in developing a gender-sensitive social environment. The results of the scan were discussed with municipalities, *Veilig Thuis* organisations, police forces and the Department of Public Prosecutions in 2015. All parties indicated a need for concrete guidelines which would allow them to develop a more gender-sensitive approach. A toolkit for professionals was therefore developed. It includes a factsheet about gender-sensitive working practices, a methodology for the discussion of specific cases, and a handbook for the use of local authorities. The toolkit was launched at a meeting held in 2016 and then distributed to all stakeholder organisations. The action programme *Geweld hoort nergens thuis* ('Violence does not belong at home'), launched by the government and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) in April 2018 applies the principle that partner violence must be viewed in the relational context as well as the context of general perceptions and expectations regarding the respective roles of men and women. Throughout the remainder of the programme, we shall develop and strengthen the gender-sensitive approach, drawing upon the toolkit described above.

### **National Action Plan 1325**

Gender-related violence and the prevention of sexual violence are also addressed by the National Action Plan 1325, which is primarily concerned with the Netherlands' involvement in international peace-keeping operations in the conflict countries.

## 15. What strategies has your country used in the last five years to prevent violence against women and girls?

- Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviours
- Work in primary and secondary education, including comprehensive sexuality education
- Grassroots and community-level mobilisation
- Shifting the representation of women and girls in the media
- Working with men and boys
- Perpetrator programmes
- Other

### Public campaign about domestic violence

In 2012, the government announced the campaign *Een veilig thuis, daar maak je je toch sterk voor* ('A safe home: something to stand up for') which ran until the end of 2017. It brought all forms of domestic violence to the attention of the widest possible public, stressing that such violence is unacceptable and encouraging people to take action. An overarching concept which embraced both domestic violence and child abuse was developed for the campaign: the 'circle of violence'. Domestic violence never stops of its own accord. Only if someone actually does something will the circle be broken. The campaign therefore sought to mobilise victims, perpetrators and witnesses alike. Everyone can take action!

The campaign included public service announcements on television and radio highlighting the existence of child abuse, partner violence and elderly abuse, a website ([www.vooreenveiligthuis.nl](http://www.vooreenveiligthuis.nl)) and a toolkit with resources such as articles for publication in free newspapers, facts and figures, folders and posters, which was distributed to municipalities, professionals and *Veilig Thuis* organisations. The website is still online and serves as a 'first port of call' for anyone who suspects domestic violence or child abuse is taking place. Menus and links provide referrals to other sources of information and advice, including the nationwide network of *Veilig Thuis* organisations.

A new public campaign was launched in February 2019 as part of the 'Violence does not belong at home' programme. It too devotes attention to various forms of domestic violence, including partner violence, child abuse and elderly abuse. It seeks to make the public more aware of the problems and the action they can – and are expected – to take.<sup>5</sup>

The 'Orange the World' campaign is described in our answer to Question 26, under 'raising awareness'.

### Sexual violence

In 2016, *Slachtofferhulp Nederland* (Victim Support Netherlands) conducted a social media campaign reaching out to the family and friends of victims of sexual violence. Through Facebook and Twitter, they were encouraged to provide open support and thus help victims to break their silence. The campaign has its own website (still online) at [www.verbreekdestilte.nl](http://www.verbreekdestilte.nl).

In October 2017, *Fonds Slachtofferhulp* (the Victim Support Fund) launched a national campaign in association with the network of Sexual Violence Centres (CSGs). Under the title *Als het jou overkomt* ('If it happened to you'), the campaign partners greatly raised public awareness of sexual violence and its impact. The campaign also served to publicise the national telephone number of the CSGs (0800-0188). A significant increase in the number of calls was noted.

### Self-determination

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ikvermoedhuiselijkgeweld.nl/>

The campaign *Praten over jouw keuzes* ('Talk about your choices') was launched by the Ministry of SZW in 2016. It targets (mainly) young people who are not always able to make the choices they would like to make. In many cases, that is because their family or community has different ideas. A website (no longer online) provided advice on how to start a constructive discussion and links to relevant sources of help and information. Users were also invited to submit their own experiences.

The online campaign *Trouwen tegen je wil* ('Marrying against your will') was launched in 2017. It encourages young people with any information about forced marriage or abandonment in other countries to talk to someone they trust, or to seek help and advice from an organisation such as *Veilig Thuis* (0800-2000). There is a website at [www.trouwentegenjewil.nl](http://www.trouwentegenjewil.nl). The campaign's main target group comprises young people aged between 16 and 25, whether the actual victims of forced marriage and abandonment or their friends. Advice and practical assistance are provided to potential victims, while their friends learn what they can do to help.

### Education

The school curriculum at both primary (elementary) and secondary level is based on a number of 'key objectives'. In sex education, key objectives are concerned not only with sexual reproduction and development, but also the acceptance of sexual diversity and sexual resilience. A report published by the Education Inspectorate in June 2016 reveals that 95% of schools now apply the key objectives when designing classroom activities. The Dutch government does not stipulate or prescribe how schools should address the objectives; it does not involve itself in the content of lessons but it does require schools to devote attention to the subject matter. How they do so is a matter for each school to decide and there can be differences in approach.

Useful course materials have been made available by *Stichting School en Veiligheid* (School and Safety Foundation) and Rutgers. Among the most widely-used are *Lentekriebels* ('Spring Flutterers') in primary education and *Lang leve de Liefde* ('Long Live Love') in secondary education. Both were developed by Rutgers. For students in practical and vocational education (the VMBO and MBO streams), Rutgers has also produced a complementary online programme and toolkit under the title *L.O.V.E.*, which deals with the risks of sexting and grooming. Rutgers is currently working on an adapted version of *Lang leve de Liefde* for use in special education schools. Another widely-used and effective resource is the online game *Can You Fix It?*, also developed by Rutgers, which is entirely devoted to the topic of sexting.

### Countering stereotyping

As part of its efforts to reduce or eliminate violence against women, the Dutch government stresses the importance of breaking down stereotypical perceptions of gender roles. Challenging stereotypes is a component of various projects (and the associated funding) conducted under the general emancipation policy. One example is the Ministry of OCW's financial support of the *Werk.en.de Toekomst* ('Work and the Future') alliance, which works to counter gender stereotyping in education, business and the public sector.

Another example is the Gender Diversity alliance, which brings together various civil society organisations concerned with both women's emancipation and LGBTI emancipation. This alliance, which is also funded by the Ministry of OCW, is working to break down current (harmful) gender norms and create greater opportunity for gender diversity. It therefore contributes not only to women's and LGBTI emancipation, but also the emancipation of men.



### Teacher training

All training programmes for both primary school and secondary school teachers devote attention to the presentation of sex education in the classroom, which is also expected to cover aspects such as sexual development and sexual resilience. In 2018, the generic knowledge base for these programmes was updated to include sexual and gender diversity. Implementation will take place during the 2018-2019 academic year.

### Working with men and boys

The White Ribbon Campaign was run in 2016, 2017 and 2018 with financial support from the Ministry of OCW. This campaign calls on men to pledge that they will never commit any act of violence against women, will never condone violence, and will always speak out if they are aware of any act of violence. A series of meetings was held to encourage (young) men to become actively involved in efforts to stamp out violence against women. The campaign was coordinated by Emancipator, the Dutch organisation for men and gender justice, affiliated with the global MenEngage alliance. *LEFgozers* (formerly known as 'Beat the Macho') is a series of workshops for young males between the ages of 14 and 18. They are encouraged to discuss the 'macho norms' and think about new, more positive forms of expressing masculinity. *LEFgozers* thus helps to prevent (sexually) inappropriate behaviour, increase the acceptance of the LHGBTI community, and support the healthy (sexual) development of those taking part. *LEFgozers* was developed by Rutgers and is funded by the Ministry of OCW.

WE CAN Young (now known as *Ik ben van mij*: 'I am my own person') is a peer-to-peer campaign intended to increase the sexual resilience of young people in order to prevent sexually inappropriate behaviour. It has been running in fifteen municipalities since 2012 and the current funding period expires in mid-2019. The method reaches both male and female adolescents. Particular attention is devoted to stereotypical perceptions of gender roles.

### Probation services

The probation service offers an intervention to help the perpetrators of domestic violence avoid re-offending. BORG (the Dutch word for 'safeguard' but also an acronym for 'stopping partner violence') is available nationwide, both on an individual basis and in small self-help groups. It draws on the 'what works' principle. Most of those taking part in the intervention do so on the recommendation of the court: it is often a condition of their sentence. Partners (or ex-partners) are also involved. Part of BORG is helping the perpetrators of domestic violence to understand why they act in this way, how to recognise the warning signs, how to avoid situations which may prompt them commit an act of violence, and how to control themselves in future. The programme also devotes attention to general social skills. It examines the meaning and consequences of domestic violence, as well as perceptions of women within society as a whole and in the social setting in which the perpetrator was raised, since this can have a marked effect on his attitudes and actions.

Another intervention offered by the probation service is the Dutch version of the Canadian *Caring Dads* programme. Perpetrators may volunteer to take part or may be ordered to do so as a condition of sentence. The programme addresses the man's role and responsibilities as father and parent. The focus is on restoring 'good parenthood' by challenging ingrained and inappropriate perceptions of parenting, the partner and children. *Caring Dads* combines elements of fatherhood (family role, knowledge and skills) with the acknowledgement of past abuse and the acceptance of responsibility for the safety and well-being of everyone in the household. The prime consideration is the needs of the children themselves. The programme comprises seventeen two-hour group sessions held once a week, together with various 'homework' assignments.

This programme devotes close attention to contact with the mother, emphasising that a respectful, non-violent and supportive co-parenting relationship is part and parcel of being a caring father. One full session and several homework assignments are devoted to this aspect. Fathers are encouraged to reflect on how the parental relationship influences the attitudes of their children: what message do those children take away?

The *Expertisebureau Online Kindermisbruik* (national expertise centre on online child abuse) runs the 'Stop it Now' programme with funding from the Ministry of J&V and the Ministry of VWS. This is a preventive approach targeting persons with paedophile tendencies and the (potential) perpetrators of child sexual abuse.

#### Promoting the economic independence of victims of domestic violence

*De Nieuwe Toekomst* ('The New Future') is a project run by the Dutch Council of Women (NVR) and *Federatie Opvang* (FO) with funding from the Ministry of OCW. It aims to promote participation and economic independence among the residents of women's refuges and has received two project subsidies since its launch in 2015. An evaluation held in 2016 concluded that the project achieves good results. Approximately half of those taking part have risen one or more steps on the 'participation ladder', an instrument which assesses social, employment and educational integration. The project will continue until at least early 2019 and forms part of the *Geweld hoort nergens thuis* programme described above. Having proven itself effective, the methodology has recently been added to the Movisie database of recognised social interventions.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/rapporten/2016/10/04/effect-methodiek-de-nieuwe-toekomst/effect-methodiek-de-nieuwe-toekomst.pdf>

**16. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?**

- Introduced or strengthened legislation and regulatory provisions
- Implemented awareness raising initiatives targeting the general public and young women and men in educational settings
- Worked with technology providers to set and adhere to good business practices
- Other

Media literacy and awareness of cyber-violence

- Mediawijzer.net is a national network organisation established by the government in 2008 to promote 'media-literacy' among children and young people. The network comprises over 1,200 relevant organisations, companies, independent professionals and institutions in fields such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT), arts and culture, libraries, education, child development, media coaches and media-makers. The network also devotes attention to safe media use, e.g. in connection with the risks of sexting.
- In July 2017, *Atria* (the Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History) published a factsheet about online sexual intimidation. It can be downloaded at <https://s3-eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/atria-nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/04143841/factsheet-cybergeweld-onlineversiedef.pdf> (in Dutch).
- Cyber-violence is one of the three key topics addressed by the *Act4Respect* alliance, a partnership between Atria and Rutgers. It brings together young people and the professional field to make partnerships based on full equality the accepted norm, with absolutely no room for intimidation or violence, whether physical, sexual, in the real world or online. The central tenet of *Act4Respect* is that a person's gender, identity, personality or preferences must never form the basis for discrimination or violence. The alliance is being funded by the Ministry of OCW for a period of five years. See: <https://act4respect.nl/thema/cybergeweld/>
- The Netherlands has developed a new action plan to tackle online child pornography and images of child sexual abuse. It involves close cooperation with private sector organisations such as internet providers, who work according to a Code of Conduct and have undertaken to use 'Notice and Take-Down' orders to block or remove offensive material from their servers as quickly as possible.

**17. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media?**

- Enacted, strengthened and enforced legal reforms to combat discrimination and/or gender bias in the media
- Introduced binding regulation for the media, including for advertising
- Supported the media industry to develop voluntary codes of conduct
- Provided training to media professionals to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media
- Promoted the participation and leadership of women in the media
- Established or strengthened consumer protection services to receive and review complaints about media content or gender-based discrimination/bias in the media
- Other

In 2013, the Dutch government and the Council of Europe co-hosted a conference on *Women and the Image of Women*. One of the follow-up activities was a 2016 study, funded by the Ministry of OCW, examining how evidence-based information can be used to set the agenda for the years ahead in a way that will involve all the various stakeholders. The main focus was the extent to which media-makers are aware of stereotyping, and are willing to apply resources to bring about change. The study gave rise to an initiative that has been funded by the Ministry of OCW since September 2017: the Coalition on Media Influence in Stereotyping and Perception. Several organisations in both public and commercial broadcasting, as well as the advertising industry, have joined the coalition and have undertaken to challenge stereotyping through a more balanced representation of modern society. They are doing so not only within their own organisations but are working to set the agenda for the entire media sector.

In the past year, the coalition has expanded from three to nine partners. It has organised several meetings and recently launched an online database.

**18. Has your country taken any action in the last five years specifically tailored to address violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination?**

YES

- The *Verandering van binnenuit* ('Change from within') alliance works to increase the safety, equality and acceptance of women and LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) persons. It devotes particular attention to the various migrant and refugee communities within the Netherlands' multicultural society. As the name suggests, it does not apply a 'top-down' approach but works 'from within' communities, relying heavily on the participation and support of those with a migrant or refugee background. Discussions centre around themes such as honour-related violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage, depending on the exact nature of the problems which exist within specific groups.
- The Ministry of OCW has awarded a subsidy covering the period 2017-2020 to the LEF project run by *Femmes for Freedom*. This organisation works to expose and prevent 'traditional practices' such as forced marriage, child marriage, abandonment and captive marriage. It supports women and girls from the migrant and refugee communities, helping them to achieve self-determination and fulfil their potential.
- During the period 2015-2017, the Ministry of SZW implemented its 'Self-determination Action Plan' which was primarily concerned with prevention. Activities built upon those undertaken between 2012 and 2014 further to the Prevention of Forced Marriage programme. The more recent action plan was deliberately broad in nature, since forced marriage, captive marriage, abandonment, honour-related violence and non-acceptance of homosexuality are all symptoms of an underlying problem: the denial of others' right to structure their lives as they wish. The denial of self-determination is a serious violation of basic human rights and freedoms. The Action Plan therefore sought to raise people's awareness that they are fully entitled to make their own choices, whether at school, at work, in leisure pursuits, in choosing a partner, divorce, religion and so forth. Everyone is encouraged to make such choices for themselves.  
The Action Plan was subject to ongoing evaluation, with a zero-reference measurement in 2015, an interim measurement in 2017 and a final effects measurement in 2018. The results were encouraging but also revealed some points for attention and lessons for the future. It is, for example, positive that specific training for school teachers has helped to raise awareness of the problems, and in particular how honour-related issues can be identified at an early stage. A brochure about forced marriage and abandonment seems to have raised awareness of this problem too, and has helped professionals become more alert to possible warning signs. The *Eer en Vrijheid* ('Honour and Freedom') platform supports ongoing professionalisation through knowledge-sharing.

## Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

### 19. What actions and measures has your country taken in the last five years to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?

- Reformed constitution, laws and regulations that promote women's participation in politics, especially at decision-making level, including electoral system reform, adoption of temporary special measures, such as quotas, reserved seats, benchmarks and targets
- Implemented capacity building, skills development and other measures
- Encouraged the participation of minority and young women, including through sensitisation and mentorship programmes
- Provided opportunities for mentorship, training in leadership, decision-making, public speaking, self-assertion, political campaigning
- Taken measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish violence against women in politics
- Collected and analysed data on women's political participation, including in appointed and elected positions
- Other

#### Legislative reforms

There have been no formal changes to the statutory provisions in the past five years. The entitlement to 'substitution leave' was established in 2006, whereby anyone holding political office may appoint a deputy to cover absence due to illness or pregnancy. These arrangements are currently under review since an anomaly has been noted. The period of paid leave is 16 weeks, upon termination of which membership of a representative body resumes. For this reason, it is not possible to take the full entitlement within the final sixteen weeks of a representative body's fixed term of office. Prompted by questions raised in parliament on 6 December 2017 (about the case of a local councillor who was unable to take maternity leave), the Minister of the Interior has undertaken to draft an amendment that will enable temporary leave to be taken during that final sixteen-week period. The proposal is currently in the consultation phase.

#### Implemented capacity building, skills development and other measures

- Orientation programme for mayors. For a number of years, an orientation programme has been organised for people who have little or no public administration experience but who nevertheless wish to be considered for the role of mayor. This is partly intended to increase diversity. The first five such programmes had a female representation of approximately 60%. Of the candidates who actually went on to be appointed to a mayoral position, 67% were women. The 2019 orientation programme will again devote special attention to women's representation but also that of candidates with a migrant background.
- The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) funds professionalisation activities for public administrators (councillors at local and regional level, mayors and aldermen), organised by the relevant federations. Some activities are specifically designed for new entrants. Although not specifically intended to increase diversity, such activities can lower the threshold for those wishing to become politically active.
- The Ministry of BZK awards annual subsidies to a number of municipalities to support orientation courses (coordinated by *ProDemos*) which encourage people other than 'the usual suspects' to become more politically active. Ways in which to increase diversity are currently under examination. See also the *ProDemos* factsheet *Politiek Actief* (in Dutch).<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> [https://prodemos.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ProDemos-Politiek-Actief\\_factsheet-voor-mail.pdf](https://prodemos.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ProDemos-Politiek-Actief_factsheet-voor-mail.pdf)

### Stimulating interest in politics

The Ministry of BZK stimulates young people's interest in politics by various means, such as facilitating school visits to parliament or council chambers, and pre-election debates for young people.

### Networking and knowledge-sharing

Networking and knowledge-sharing are primarily matters for individual political parties and their affiliated research institutes. However, the political parties have recently joined forces to establish a network of political educators, with financial support from the Ministry of BZK. The current government has also taken measures to ensure that those in political office are properly equipped for the job. Professionalisation activities are coordinated by the relevant federations and now include an online learning environment.

The Ministry of BZK also supports some local initiatives with regard to stimulating diversity (for example Politiek Netwerk Drenthe) and assists in sharing knowledge and best practices.

### Violence against politicians

The Minister of BZK regards all forms of aggression or violence against public servants to be wholly unacceptable. In partnership with *Netwerk Weerbaar Bestuur* ('Resilient Governance Network'), the ministry supports information and training as part of a preventive approach, together with support and aftercare should an incident nevertheless occur.

According to the most recent Aggression and Violence Monitor, a total of 29 incidents of violence or aggression against holders of political office were reported in 2017. The vast majority of cases involve verbal aggression. The monitor does not disaggregate by gender but does note the level of government and office concerned:

- 43% mayors
- 40% aldermen (members of the municipal executive)
- 28% councillors.

### Collected and analysed data

The annual report *De Staat van het Bestuur* ('Status of Governance') has been produced since 2006. It monitors women's representation on local and regional (provincial) councils and female membership of executive offices such as mayor or alderman. All past editions can be found online, the most recent at <https://kennisopenbaarbestuur.nl/rapporten-publicaties/staat-van-het-bestuur-2016/>

In the near future an exit-study will be conducted analysing motives for quitting politics which might provide new insights in why women leave political function prematurely or decide not to stand for election again.

### Other

In late 2017, the Ministry of BZK organised a round table conference to discuss ways in which diversity in political office can be increased.

**20. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?**

- Strengthened the provision of formal and technical vocational education and training (TVET) in media and ICTs, including in areas of management and leadership
- Taken measures to enhance access, affordability and use of ICTs for women and girls (e.g. free wifi hubs, community technology centres)
- Introduced regulations to advance equal pay, retention and career advancement of women within the media and ICT field
- Collaborated with employers in the media and ICT field to improve internal policies and hiring practices on a voluntary basis
- Provided support to women's media networks and organisations
- Other

Recruitment and retention of women in ICT (education and employment)

- The VHTO project *DigiVita* brings female ICT professionals into schools to act as guest teachers during computer science lessons. Girls are invited to 'speed date' with the professionals and many have the opportunity to shadow them at work. The VHTO also organises regular 'DigiVita Code Events', at which girls practise coding and programming under the guidance of female ICT professionals and university students, producing their own websites, apps or games.
- The project [Lets Close the Digital Gender Gap](#) has developed a toolbox and runs a social media campaign with the hashtags *#nietgenoeg* [not enough] *#vrouweninIT* [womeninIT].
- The Work and the Future Alliance (Atria, VHTO,<sup>8, 9</sup> Emancipator and NVR) is working to challenge gender stereotyping in education, employment and the public sector.

Media

See Question 17.

Equal pay

The Dutch government subsidises the efforts of Women Inc. to raise awareness of the pay gap among employers and (potential) employees. Women Inc. also devises practical proposals to close the pay gap and in the coming year will examine ways in which improvements can be implemented in all sectors, including ICT and the media.

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.vhto.nl/over-vhto/english-page/about-vhto/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://s3-eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/atRIA-nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/30131109/factsheet-techniek-def.pdf>



**21. Do you track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?**

YES

**If YES, what is the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women?**

The Netherlands does not use gender-responsive budgeting.

Within the national budget, the amount of €15.7 million is allocated to support the overall emancipation policy (women and LGBTI). The ODA budget for the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women (further to Article 3.2 of the International Trade and Development Cooperation Programme) is €52.4 mln.

**22. As a donor country, does your country track the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?**

YES

As a donor, the Netherlands uses the OECD-DAC gender marker to monitor and compile its annual report on its Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending further to the OECD-DAC policy indicators, which include gender. The report is available online in the OECD-DAC database. The Netherlands does not use gender-responsive budgeting. However, as noted in the answer to Question 21, there is a specific ODA budget dedicated to the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women, further to Article 3.2 of the national International Trade and Development Cooperation (BHOS) programme. The amount concerned is currently €52.4 mln.

**23. Does your country have a valid national strategy or action plan for gender equality?**

Yes

**If YES, please list the name of the plan and the period it covers, its priorities, funding and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG 5. If YES, has the national action plan been costed and have sufficient resources been allocated to its achievement in the current budget?**

At the commencement of each new government period, the Minister of Emancipation produces a 'vision document' on emancipation policy which is submitted to parliament. Policy for the period 2013-2016 was presented as a summary of main points. The *Emancipatienota 2018-2021* sets out the current government's emancipation policy in detail, whereby the links between the various topics and the relevant SDGs are made explicit.

During the period 2014-2017, policy and action focused on a number of spearheads, *viz.* participation of women in the wake of the economic crisis, the social safety of women and LGBTI persons, gender differences in education, international polarisation, intersex persons, and women and health. The new government period has seen a shift in focus whereupon policy and action now centre around three major themes: employment, safety and gender stereotyping, and equal treatment (non-discrimination). Wherever possible, coordination is sought between women's emancipation and LGBTI emancipation.

In addition, the form of government's cooperation with civil society organisations has changed. We now seek greater cohesion and long-term benefits by means of alliances between organisations which are concerned with broadly the same theme. In 2017, a number of such alliances were formed to support emancipation policy. They became operational in 2018.

The government's efforts to remove obstacles to successful emancipation take various forms: policy, public awareness campaigns and practical facilitation, largely depending on the nature of the problems being addressed. However, all have the overall aim of ensuring that emancipation is embedded in regular policy. 'Mainstreaming' is therefore one of the key components of the methodology we have adopted to achieve the objectives of the emancipation policy.

A good example of gender mainstreaming is the extension of paternity leave for partners (see Question 1).

**24. Does your country have an action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women?**

YES/NO

**If YES, please provide some highlights of the action plans and timeline for implementation.**

Yes. The implementation of the CEDAW Convention is at the heart of the work of the Gender Equality department. Having received the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee on 24 November 2016, we organised a conference to discuss the contents. It took place on 9 February 2017 and was attended by representatives of various organisations involved in gender equality, including policy makers, the judiciary, the media, police, women's organisations and the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children. The outcomes of this conference provided input for the government's new Gender Equality Action Plan 2018-2021, which reinforces the government's intention to apply the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee in full. The steps that we have taken with regard to four specific recommendations are described in the report submitted to Committee in November 2018.

Similar procedures are followed with regard to other human rights conventions that address gender. Following the Universal Periodic Review, for example, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations organised a conference and drafted a new national action plan on human rights.

## **25. Is there a national human rights institution in your country?**

YES

### **If YES, does it have a specific mandate to focus on gender equality or discrimination based on sex/gender?**

The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (*College voor de Rechten van de Mens*) protects, advances and monitors human rights in the Netherlands. It does so through independent research and by providing advice and information. The Institute is empowered to investigate and rule on individual cases of alleged discrimination. It produces an annual report outlining the status of human rights in our country.

### **Activities of the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights**

#### Pregnancy discrimination

Pregnancy discrimination remains a common obstacle to women's participation in employment. The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights regularly deals with complaints alleging pregnancy discrimination. It also provides public information on the topic, conducts research, and advises government and parliament.

A 2016 study by the Institute concludes that 43% of women in employment (or seeking employment) have encountered possible discrimination due to pregnancy or early motherhood. See:

<https://mensenrechten.nl/nl/publicatie/36883>.

Among expectant mothers whose contract was not renewed, 44% state that this was 'probably' due to their pregnancy. In November 2017, the Institute requested the public to report suspected cases of pregnancy discrimination. It received no fewer than 855 responses. Some cases involved the outright termination of a temporary contract, while in others the employment relationship was continued under materially different terms and conditions.

The Institute regularly reports its findings to the government and to parliament. It may, for example, submit a written statement when any debate on discrimination or emancipation is tabled, calling for additional measures to be put in place to prevent pregnancy discrimination and for the existing measures to be more rigorously enforced.

In 2017, the Institute received a total of 4259 complaints or enquiries, of which 1470 related to pregnancy discrimination. It also received 52 'requests for a ruling' in cases of alleged pregnancy discrimination (numerically the fourth largest ground for complaint), most of which concerned either termination of an existing contract or the complainant being unfairly 'passed over' during the recruitment process. Of the 432 requests for a ruling actually investigated and adjudicated by the Institute in 2017, 51 involved alleged pregnancy discrimination.

<https://mensenrechten.nl/nl/nieuws/recordaantal-vragen-en-meldingen-over-discriminatie-bij-college-voor-de-rechten-van-de-mens>

#### Pay discrimination

Many women in the Netherlands are still being paid less than their male colleagues for the same work. The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (and its forerunner, the Equal Treatment Commission; *Commissie Gelijke Behandeling*) has conducted large-scale salary surveys in three sectors: general hospitals (2011), colleges of higher education (2016) and the insurance industry (2017). See: <https://mensenrechten.nl/nl/nieuws/drie-onderzoeken-tonen-werkgeversrisicos-voor-ongelijke-beloning-van-mannen-en-vrouwen>

These surveys revealed the mechanisms which underlie wage discrimination in various sectors, suggesting that the 'pay gap' is in part caused by the use of salary determinants that are not directly related to the position held or the responsibilities it entails. In practice, women are more likely to be disadvantaged than their male colleagues if remuneration is based on experience, the employee's previous salary and direct negotiation rather than standard pay scales. The use of inappropriate determinants greatly increases the risk of pay discrimination.

The Institute provides information about pay discrimination to employers. One example is its campaign *Grip op Gelijk Loon* ('A grasp on equal pay'), which also includes an online test. Using the website [www.mensenrechten.nl/gelijkelonen](http://www.mensenrechten.nl/gelijkelonen), employers and HR consultants can discover whether they have fallen into any of the pitfalls of pay discrimination. A checklist for the development of a (more) gender-neutral remuneration policy is also provided.

### Violence against women

The Institute publishes regular reports on violence against women, in which it responds to the information contained in the government's own reports. It also holds frequent consultation meetings with NGOs. In late 2018, the Institute submitted a report to GREVIO (the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence), an independent forum which monitors compliance with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence 2011, better known as the Istanbul Convention. This convention stipulates various measures which governments are obliged to implement. The Institute's report confirms that the Netherlands has indeed taken much affirmative action, particularly with regard to domestic violence, but there remains considerable room for improvement. See:

<https://mensenrechten.nl/nl/nieuws/college-voor-de-rechten-van-de-mens-rapporteert-over-geweld-tegen-vrouwen-nederland>

The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights has commissioned research examining compliance with the Istanbul Convention, with particular reference to measures intended to protect women and girls with a disability. See: <https://mensenrechten.nl/nl/nieuws/gerichte-aanpak-nodig-van-geweld-tegen-meisjes-en-vrouwen-met-een-beperking>. This study involved a policy analysis of relevant legislation, desk research focusing on relevant practical interventions, an expert meeting, and a series of interviews with policy-makers and professionals, with whom the findings were also discussed. Further to this study, the Institute has advised the government to devote greater attention to the specific risks which make women and girls with a disability more likely to become the victim of violence. An effective approach that will serve to protect their human rights calls for a better understanding of these risks.

## Peaceful and inclusive societies

### **26. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?**

- Adopted and/or implemented a National Action Plan on women, peace and security
- Integrated women, peace and security commitments into key national and inter-ministerial policy, planning and monitoring frameworks
- Used communication strategies, including social media, to increase awareness of the women, peace and security agenda
- Increased budgetary allocations for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda
- Taken steps to reduce excessive military expenditures and/or control the availability of armaments
- Re-allocated funds from military spending to social and economic development, including for gender equality and the empowerment of women
- Supported inclusive and gender-sensitive conflict analysis, early warning and prevention mechanisms
- Other

### National Action Plan 1325

The third National Action Plan 1325 was published in 2016, to cover the period 2016-2019. The National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security is produced and implemented by the government (specifically BZ, Defence, OCW, V&J and the national police), in association with over fifty NGOs and civil society organisations (knowledge institutes, development organisations, diaspora organisations and women's rights advocacy groups). We believe this form of cooperation to be unique in the world. Part of its added value is the global network of partner organisations we are able to access. Partnerships provide an excellent source of information, ideas and new initiatives. Coordinating the activities of government and civil society results in mutual strengthening and a more sustainable result. The third National Action Plan (2016-2019) places an emphasis on cooperation with local women's organisations. Concrete projects in a number of selected countries are linked to the Netherlands' diplomatic activities and the lobbying efforts of civil organisations which have endorsed the plan.

### Raising awareness

UN Resolution 1325 was passed in 2000, at which time the Netherlands was a member of the Security Council. In its contributions to various forums, including the annual open debate on Women, Peace and Security and the meetings of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the Netherlands has always been a fervent champion of the role that women themselves can play in creating and maintaining peace, and efforts to combat (sexual) violence against women. Our interventions in these forums, and the social media posts which have accompanied those interventions, serve to highlight the very active contribution that the Netherlands has made. During our membership of the Security Council in 2018, considerable attention was devoted to Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The Netherlands regards the WPS agenda as the key to sustainable world peace. On International Women's Day (8 March 2018), member states were requested to send female delegates to the meeting chaired by the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Ms Sigrid Kaag. For the first time in the history of the UN Security Council, there were more women than men seated around the famous horseshoe-shaped table. Such newsworthy actions help to raise awareness for the topic.

Another example of the Netherlands' active awareness-raising is our contribution to 'Orange the World', an annual UN campaign to stop violence against women. In November and December 2018, thirteen important public buildings in the Netherlands, including the Binnenhof parliament building in The Hague, were floodlit in orange every evening for sixteen days. The stories of women and girls working to stop violence were shared through several Twitter accounts, including @NLWomensRights, with the hashtag #WeListenNL. The Dutch contribution to 'Orange the World' extended far beyond the Netherlands itself. For example, our embassy in Mozambique was also floodlit in orange throughout the campaign period.

Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, several e-learning modules have been developed to help policy staff make effective gender analyses, and each of the various directorates now has a 'gender focal point'. Last but not least, the recent ambassadors' conference included the presentation of the Gender Award, a token of esteem for the ambassador who has made a particularly active contribution to gender equality.

#### Increased budgetary allocations for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda

The third National Action Plan 1325 increases the Netherlands' financial commitment to 16 million euros over a four-year period. This amount will be allocated to programmes in eight focus countries: Afghanistan, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Syria, Yemen, South Sudan and Iraq. A consortium including at least one Dutch organisation and one local partner is active in each country. The Netherlands has also launched the Peace and Security For All (PS4A) pilot programme, through which smaller subsidies will be invested in small, grassroots women's rights organisations. (The total budget is €450,000 to be divided between three consortiums.) The programme began in 2018 following the confirmation of selection criteria designed to ensure that small, grassroots organisations are indeed able to access funding for WPS-related activities.

Outside these set subsidy frameworks, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also makes incidental financial contributions to the WPS agenda. One example is its co-funding of the Spanish-Dutch training course, 'A comprehensive approach to gender in operations', which is organised every four years. The ministry also co-finances the training of female peacekeepers from the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs).



**27. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?**

- Promoted and supported women's meaningful participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements
- Promoted equal participation of women in humanitarian and crisis response activities at all levels, particularly at the decision-making level
- Integrated a gender perspective in the prevention and resolution of armed or other conflict
- Integrated a gender perspective in humanitarian action and crisis response
- Protected civil society spaces and women's human rights defenders
- Other

Participation

Participation is one of the three pillars of the National Action Plan 1325. Women and men should have equal leverage in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building. This principle is of course reflected in the NAP 1325 programmes financed by the Netherlands, most notably those in Yemen, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia, South Sudan, Libya and Syria.

A good example of the Netherlands' active engagement is its NAP programme in Yemen. Particular attention is devoted to women's participation at the local and regional levels, which can then be linked to the international level by means of advocacy efforts. The NAP partners apply various strategies, which include the provision of training for women, local (women's) NGOs and decision-makers, as well as fostering contact between these three groups. Harmful gender stereotypes are discussed during the training sessions, since they often prevent women from taking part in decision-making processes and activities concerned with peace and security. Other NAP 1325 programmes include comparable training processes to address other themes such as gender-related violence and human security.

In addition to the NAP programmes, the Netherlands' diplomatic missions in various countries actively promote women's participation in peace processes. In Afghanistan, for example, the Dutch embassy takes every possible opportunity to stress the importance of a fully inclusive peace process, while in Yemen the Netherlands has facilitated discussions between the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Freedom (Tawafaq) and the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths.

As part of our involvement in the UN Security Council, on 24 October 2018 the Netherlands organised a side event to promote women's participation in peace and security activities in Yemen and the Central African Republic (CAR). The event brought representatives of civil organisations in those countries together with the international (donor) community, and identified opportunities to increase international support for the meaningful participation of women in the humanitarian response, peace-building activities and security matters.

Gender perspective

Within the international humanitarian system, the need for a gender needs assessment is established by international agreements and standard operational procedures. The Dutch MFA discusses the application of the 'gender and age marker' and other aspects of its gender policy with its humanitarian partners. It also expects specific attention to be devoted to gender when its partners undertake capacity-building. When multiyear funding is allocated, the recipient organisation's gender policy is assessed.

### Protected civil society spaces and women human rights defenders

The Netherlands has helped projects in various countries to support women human rights defenders, and applies a feminist approach to protection, networking and attention for psycho-social wellbeing. The goal is to enable women human rights defenders to play an active role in promoting human rights.

In addition, the Netherlands works to protect and/or strengthen civil society space. Strategic Partnerships have been formed further to the *Samenspraak en Tegenspraak* ('Dialogue and Dissent') policy framework, with a view to strengthening the position of local civil society organizations and advocacy groups. The Dutch government actively supports various organizations and movements which champion the rights of women, minorities, the environment and other aspects of sustainable development. Alliances of such organisations work alongside local groups to promote interaction with public sector authorities, the business community, religious leaders and other stakeholders. That interaction is sometimes based on dialogue, as in offering advice, and sometimes on dissent, as in protests or demonstrations calling attention to human rights violations.

**28. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?**

- Implemented legal and policy reform to redress and prevent violations of the rights of women and girls
- Strengthened institutional capacities, including of the justice system and transitional justice mechanisms as applicable, during conflict and crisis response
- Strengthened capacity of security sector institutions on human rights and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse
- Increased access of conflict-affected, refugee or displaced women to violence prevention and protection services
- Taken measures to combat illicit arms trafficking
- Taken measures to combat the production, use of and trafficking in illicit drugs
- Taken measures to combat trafficking in women and children
- Other

### Asylum

Gender-related violence can be grounds for a successful asylum (subsidiary protection) application. The training programme completed by all staff who deal with asylum applications includes a 'Gender and SOGI' module (Gender, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity). It is intended to ensure that staff are fully equipped, in terms of both knowledge and skills, to assess a request for protection on the basis of these aspects and in a fully gender-sensitive manner.

Procedures demand that an interview to determine the status of a female asylum-seeker is conducted by a female officer if the applicant so wishes. A request for a female interviewing officer may be submitted by the applicant herself. The interview report is treated in the utmost confidence and its contents are not divulged to the applicant's spouse or partner. The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) takes every measure to ensure that traumatised female asylum-seekers are offered appropriate counselling and care.

### Human trafficking

Although other sources sometimes use the term 'trafficking in women and girls', the Netherlands applies the gender-neutral term 'human trafficking', since victims are not necessarily female and trafficking is not always a matter of sexual exploitation.

The Dutch approach to combating human trafficking is based on several core principles. That approach is concerned with all forms of human trafficking as identified by the Organised Crime Threat Assessment (*National Dreigingsbeeld*) 2017, viz. sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, criminal exploitation and forced labour (enslavement), regardless of the victim's age or nationality. The Netherlands is working to implement an integrated (chain) approach which comprises prevention, vigilance, detection, victim support and international cooperation. It is essential that all actors, such as the police, Department of Public Prosecutions, municipalities, care and welfare organisations and the Inspectorate SZW, work together as closely as possible. In recent years there have been a number of national programmes designed to improve our response to human trafficking. Three such programmes are described below.

## Together against human trafficking

*Samen tegen mensenhandel* ('Together against human trafficking') is an integrated multi-year programme which includes a broad range of measures to strengthen efforts in this field. Its development began in 2018 under the auspices of four key ministries (J&V, VWS, SZW and BZ), working closely alongside a large number of external partners. The programme has five main action lines:

1. Refining the basic strategy with regard to human trafficking. This involves improving our ability to identify cases, apprehend perpetrators, and broaden the range of support and aftercare services available to the victims of human trafficking.
2. Refinement of efforts to combat labour exploitation. Ways in which to strengthen our response to labour exploitation are to be examined and implemented.
3. Prevention. One of the key aims of the programme is to prevent people falling victim to human trafficking in the first place. This involves interventions not only in the Netherlands but also in the country of origin and in the transit countries. This action line will also focus on potential perpetrators, whereby human trafficking can be thwarted by various means including agreements with the private sector.
4. Strengthening efforts at the local level. An integrated approach must be adaptable according to the precise situation. There must be effective cooperation between all chain partners, particularly at the local level. Municipal authorities have an important role. They are responsible for coordination and for the administrative organisation of adequate victim support services. Their part in directing the local response to human trafficking is also of vital importance.
5. Sharing knowledge and information. An adequate response to human trafficking demands a thorough understanding of the nature and extent of the problem. This action line devotes attention to the need for effective communication and knowledge-sharing between the various professionals involved, both within the Netherlands and elsewhere.

## National Victim Referrals System

In 2013, an interdepartmental programme was launched with the aim of developing a cohesive national referrals system for the victims of human trafficking. It was realised that better coordination between the various partner organisations (e.g. in justice, healthcare and migration) would greatly improve both access to support and assistance, as well as the quality of the services themselves. The overall aim is to ensure that the help provided to victims is entirely in keeping with their needs.

Various projects have since been undertaken within this programme:

- *Wegwijzer Mensenhandel* ([www.wegwijzermensenhandel.nl](http://www.wegwijzermensenhandel.nl)), developed in 2015, is a website which lists and links to all available sources of assistance for the victims of human trafficking. Although primarily intended for professionals, it also includes sections with advice for victims and concerned members of the public. The website devotes special attention to support for underage victims.
- A pilot project is ongoing in which a multidisciplinary approach is applied to determine whether a person has indeed been the victim of human trafficking. An advisory report is then produced which clearly states the probability that this is the case. This report can be used to support an application for a residence permit or to request support services. The pilot will be subject to evaluation in mid-2019, the results of which will determine whether the methodology is to be adopted on a more permanent basis.
- A 24/7 hotline was trialled during 2016 and 2017.
- The *Wegwijzer Mensenhandel* website (see above) includes a checklist of possible indicators of human trafficking. This checklist has now been updated. It can be used by all professionals who have contact with potential victims.

- From late 2014 until 1 July 2016, a pilot of ‘on-site interview rooms’ was held at three reception centres for the victims of human trafficking. These rooms were designed to provide a more welcoming atmosphere than a regular police station, thus making it easier for victims to make an official report.

### Loverboys

The term ‘loverboy’ has now entered the Dutch language. It refers to a young man who seduces one or more girls with (apparent) affection and gifts, before forcing them into prostitution. The Azough Commission was formed by the national federation of youth welfare organisations to investigate ways in which the loverboy problem can be tackled more effectively, and ways in which to improve the support available to young (female) victims of human trafficking. In 2016, the Commission proposed a number of practical measures which will assist youth welfare workers to identify and assist victims, and which will improve cooperation between the welfare field and the judicial authorities. The Commission also produced recommendations with regard to the registration of victims with *CoMensha*, the national expertise and coordination centre on human trafficking. The overall intention is to increase knowledge about the nature and extent of human trafficking involving underage victims.

- In 2017, the products of the Azough Commission were adapted to devote special attention to underage persons with an intellectual disability, a group with a greater chance of falling victim to human trafficking practices. It is hoped that this will facilitate the identification of sexual exploitation among girls and young women with a minor intellectual disability.
- In 2016, an analysis of lover boys’ profiles and the methods they used was conducted. The results were used to develop a ‘barrier model’ which describes various obstacles that the relevant organisations can put in place to make the exploitation of vulnerable girls and boys very much more difficult.
- Various prevention projects have been developed and implemented, either to protect potential victims directly, or to increase the sexual resilience of young people (male and female). All schools (elementary and secondary) are required to devote attention to sexuality and sexual diversity. In 2017, a full listing of all current preventive interventions was distributed to schools, local authorities and youth welfare departments.
- In 2016 and 2017, a study focusing on male victims of sexual exploitation was conducted under the auspices of the Ministry of VWS.
- The Netherlands Youth Institute (*Nederlands Jeugdinstituut*) has produced a checklist to help municipalities develop an effective policy to tackle the ‘loverboy’ problem.
- In 2016, the Netherlands Youth Institute helped local youth welfare departments to develop and describe the range of support and treatment options for the victims of ‘loverboys’. This project was funded by ZonMw as part of the *Effectief werken in de jeugdsector* (‘Effective working in the youth sector’) research programme. It resulted in a handbook which describes five treatment programmes which have since been submitted for approval. Once formally recognised, they can be rolled out in the field.

### Access to justice

Extending access to justice, with particular attention to women’s rights, is a priority within the BHOS policy document *Investeren in Perspectief* (‘Investing in Perspective’). The Netherlands is committed to ensuring that, starting in 2019, an additional 200,000 people per year, half of whom are women, will have access to justice. This represents a twofold increase on previous years.

The international Task Force on Justice has been formed to place this topic higher on the international agenda, develop innovative strategies that will increase access to justice in practice, and disseminate relevant knowledge as widely as possible. It is co-chaired by Sigrid Kaag, Dutch

minister for international trade and development cooperation, who sits alongside the justice ministers of Sierra Leone and Argentina, and the independent group of global leaders known as The Elders. The Task Force on Justice has appointed the High-level Working group on Justice for Women, which is to return recommendations with regard to increasing access to justice for women and girls in areas such as the prevention of, or adequate response to, violence, institutional and legislative discrimination, female representation within judicial systems, and specific programmes for both women and men.

The Netherlands also supports various *transitional justice* initiatives intended to help communities affected by conflict to recover from the large-scale abuses of the (recent) past. The focus is firmly on the victims and their needs, with a special emphasis on women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes.

**29. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child?**

- Taken measures to combat negative social norms and practices and increased awareness of the needs and potential of girl children
- Strengthened girls' access to quality education, skills development and training
- Tackled disadvantages in health outcomes due to malnutrition, early childbearing (e.g. anaemia) and exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases
- Implemented policies and programmes to reduce and eradicate child, early and forced marriage
- Implemented policies and programmes to eliminate violence against girls, including physical and sexual violence and harmful practices
- Implemented policies and programmes to eradicate child labour and excessive levels of unpaid care and domestic work undertaken by girl children
- Promoted girls' awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life
- Other

Education

In the Netherlands, all children must attend school from the age of 5. This applies equally to girls and boys.

There are ongoing initiatives intended to counter stereotyping and challenge gender norms in education. They include efforts to encourage more girls to study science and technology. See also Question 12.

Child marriage

The Netherlands' efforts to eradicate underage marriage form part of its overall approach to forced marriage and abandonment, as well as initiatives intended to promote self-determination. See also Question 18.

In 2016 and 2017, a number of measures were taken to strengthen the chain approach to forced marriage and abandonment:

- Legislative amendments, including the implementation of *Wet Tegengaan Huwelijksdwang* (Forced Marriage (Prevention) Act) per 5 December 2015.
- Efforts to improve identification of (potential) forced marriage by professionals such as teachers and the staff of civic registries.
- An annual campaign *Trouwen tegen je wil* ('Marrying against your will'), which provides information about what to do if facing forced marriage or abandonment.
- The establishment, on 1 January 2015, of the Dutch Centre of Forced Marriage and Abandonment (LKHA), a knowledge and expertise centre for professionals which also has a specialist department to coordinate the response to complex cases.
- Embassies in high-risk countries have developed their own procedures to ensure a prompt and effective response to complex cases.

The Netherlands also works internationally to combat child marriage wherever it may occur.

- Three alliances of NGOs (Yes I Do, More than Brides, and Her Choice) have been awarded a total of €75.6 over the period 2016 to 2020 to support activities to prevent child marriage.
- The worldwide network organisation Girls not Brides (GnB) has been awarded the amount of €4.5 mln over the period 2016 to 2020.

- The Netherlands also supports the UNFPA/UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, in partnership with Canada, the United Kingdom, Belgium and the European Union. This involves a contribution of €5 mln per annum throughout the period 2014 to 2019.

Through its permanent representatives to forums such as the United Nations Human Rights Council and the African Union, the Netherlands endorses and advocates efforts to eradicate the practice of child marriage.

### Violence against children

The Netherlands has a general strategy to prevent all forms of domestic violence, including that against children. It has given rise to activities such as the *Geweld hoort nergens thuis* ('Violence does not belong in the home') programme. There is also specific policy with regard to FGM, forced marriage and other harmful practices, as well as forms of violence to which young women and girls are particularly susceptible. See also Question 13.

Since 1 July 2013, professionals are required to report suspicions of domestic violence using specific code numbers which relate to the nature, severity and urgency of the situation. The provisions of the *Wet Meldcode* (Reporting Code Act) apply to the healthcare, education, childcare, social services, youth welfare and judicial sectors. Reporting codes exist for domestic violence, child abuse (violence and/or sexual abuse), FGM, 'honour-related violence', parental abuse (violence by a child directed at a parent), elderly abuse (including financial exploitation) and forced marriage.

In 2017, the government raised the minimum requirements for use of the reporting codes. Since 1 January 2019, all organisations covered by the Reporting Code Act must have a formal assessment framework, the fourth and final stage of which determines whether a code is to be applied. It assists professionals in deciding whether there are grounds for suspecting serious domestic violence or child abuse.



## Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation

### 30. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies?

- Supported women's participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management and governance
  - Strengthened evidence and/or raised awareness about gender-specific environmental and health hazards (e.g. consumer products, technologies, industrial pollution)
  - Increased women's access to and control over land, water, energy, and other natural resources
- Promoted the education of women and girls in science, engineering, technology and other disciplines relating to the natural environment
  - Enhanced women's access to sustainable time- and labour-saving infrastructure (e.g. access to clean water and energy) and climate-smart agricultural technology
  - Taken measures to protect and preserve the knowledge and practices of women in indigenous and local communities related to traditional medicines, biodiversity and conservation techniques
  - Taken steps to ensure that women benefit equally from decent jobs in the green economy
  - Monitored and evaluated the impact of environmental policies and sustainable infrastructure projects on women and girls
- Other

The Netherlands applies an active policy designed to promote women's participation in employment and female representation in leadership positions. This is a generic policy which also covers organisations in the environmental sector. The overall aim is to achieve a more equal gender balance in the workplace and in (senior) management.

It should be noted that the Netherlands evaluates all proposed legislation using the Integral Assessment Framework (IAK). Environmental legislation is no exception. In 2018, the IAK was expanded to include 'effects on gender equality' and 'effects on developing countries'. It may therefore be assumed that all new laws and regulations will be fully 'SDG-proof'.

In recent years, the Netherlands has run an active promotional campaign to encourage girls to study science and technology. Figures published by Statistics Netherlands/CBS do show a rising trend.<sup>10</sup> Whether this will be reflected by an increase in female representation on study programmes relating to nature and the environment remains to be seen. Although more girls (and indeed boys) have opted to study technology at secondary school level, there has not been a comparable increase in higher or further education, as the Statistics Netherlands/CBS data for 2007 to 2017 shows. See also Question 12 (Women and girls in STEM).

The EU, and hence the Netherlands as a member state, recognises the importance of pursuing economic growth in a way that will not cause any adverse environmental impact. Ambitious targets have been set for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, increasing energy efficiency, promoting the use of renewable energy, limiting the use of primary resources, reducing waste production and developing the circular economy. In recent years, this has led to an increase in 'green' employment opportunity, i.e. jobs concerned with the conservation, protection or rehabilitation of the environment. Such jobs can only be termed 'sustainable' if they also offer safe, healthy and decent working conditions. They must benefit both the environment and the people who perform the work. Employment opportunity in the Dutch environmental sector increased by almost 14% between 2001 and 2015. While overall employment opportunity began to show a decline in 2008 as the result of the economic crisis, that in the green sector continued to rise steadily for several years thereafter. Investments in environmental measures also showed a significant increase: from €2.2 billion in 2000 to €4.9 billion in 2015. These figures are taken from the online report *Groene Groei* ('Green Growth')

which examines the economic opportunities created by the use of renewable and sustainable resources.<sup>11</sup> The green economy shows greatest growth in areas such as solar energy, wind energy, biomass technology and waste recycling. Most of the jobs created by such growth are in sectors such as installation technology, waste processing and construction (e.g. of offshore windfarms), all of which have traditionally been dominated by men. Although exact figures are not available, an increase in the total number of employment places does not automatically suggest an increase in female representation within the 'green' sectors.

---

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2017/47/werkgelegenheid-in-de-milieusector-toegenomen>

**31. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation?**

- Supported women's participation and leadership, including those affected by disasters, in disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation policies, programmes and projects
- Strengthened the evidence base and raised awareness about the disproportionate vulnerability of women and girls to the impact of environmental degradation and disasters
- Promoted access of women in situations of disaster to services such as relief payments, disaster insurance and compensation
- Introduced or strengthened and implemented gender-responsive laws and policies related to disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation (e.g. disaster laws addressing vulnerability of women in disaster)

The Netherlands has a long tradition of protecting the country and its inhabitants against climate change. The geographic location of our country, much of which lies below sea level, means that measures to protect ourselves against (climate-related) disasters are quite literally a matter of life or death. They are also of essential economic importance. A comprehensive governance system is in place, with tasks and responsibilities allocated at national, regional and local level. Similarly, taxes and levies are raised at all these government levels. Municipalities, for example, impose the 'drainage and sewerage' charge paid by individual households and business users, while regional water authorities collect the 'water system tax'. These charges are, supplemented by centralised tax revenue, and fund provisions such as water defences, the purification and supply of drinking and irrigation water, and the drainage of waterlogged areas. Taxes and subsidies are also used to fund certain climate mitigation measures in the form of subsidies for energy-efficient construction and transport. All taxation is entirely gender-neutral, as are the services it finances. The government strives to protect all residents of the Netherlands on the basis of inclusivity. An individual's contribution to the costs is based on income rather than gender. Those on low incomes are, under conditions, entitled to rebates on general as well as regional charges.

The Netherlands pursues a policy intended to promote women's participation in employment and in business leadership positions. This is a generic policy which extends to positions related to disaster risk reduction and to climate-related programmes and projects. The objective is to achieve a better gender balance in leadership positions. In the field of climate adaptation, mitigation and disaster management, this calls for ongoing attention. Although women are now somewhat better represented in the Dutch water management sector, the ideal balance has yet to be achieved.<sup>12</sup> Relevant data on this remains fragmented and incomplete, whereupon it is difficult to make any informed statement at this time. Data is however available with regard to the gender balance within the water authorities, which are among the most important water management bodies in the Netherlands and are also involved in climate adaptation measures. This data confirms that, while the ideal balance has not yet been attained, female representation has indeed increased in recent years. According to the Human Resources Monitor<sup>13</sup>, women made up approximately 32% of the water authorities' total workforce in 2016. This figure is below the national average of 48% but represents an increase of 28% compared to the 2014 figure.

Gender is an important aspect of our environmental, climate and water programmes that we undertake in other countries. Gender and inclusivity are taken into account in all phases of the project cycle. Every project proposal is assessed to identify the obstacles that could preclude women or other disadvantaged groups from taking part or receiving the resultant services. The findings are then included in the activities plan with a view to ensuring appropriate participation by these groups,

---

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.nederlandsevrouwenraad.nl/docs/Gender\\_en\\_water\\_startdocument\\_final.doc](https://www.nederlandsevrouwenraad.nl/docs/Gender_en_water_startdocument_final.doc)

<sup>13</sup> [https://hrm.aenowaterschappen.nl/content/userfiles/files/HR-monitor/DEF%20HR-monitor2016\\_v2.pdf](https://hrm.aenowaterschappen.nl/content/userfiles/files/HR-monitor/DEF%20HR-monitor2016_v2.pdf)

which is closely monitored. Where participation is found to fall below the desired level, an analysis is conducted and the lessons learnt carried over into the next project cycle.

### **III: Section Three**

National institutions and processes

**32. What is your country's current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women? Please name it and describe its location within government.**

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science (also responsible for gender equality and LGBTI equality) has an important role to play in establishing the overall framework for women's emancipation policy and embedding it within the various ministries and societal organisations. The most recent policy paper on women's emancipation is the *Emancipatienota 2018-2021*, in which the government sets out the main points of its policy for the period to 2022. Where necessary or appropriate, the minister makes agreements with the responsible ministries in order to achieve specific women's emancipation objectives. The Gender Minister has overall responsibility for monitoring and assessing progress in all aspects of women's emancipation in the Netherlands. Interdepartmental coordination guarantees that the entire political leadership and all senior civil servants are involved in producing the international and national reports on gender issues.

**33. Is the head of the national machinery a member of the institutional process for SDG implementation (e.g. inter-ministerial coordinating office, commission or committees)?**

Yes.

***If YES, please provide further information***

Each ministry is responsible for implementing the SDGs in its own policy domain. The Minister of Emancipation is the coordinating authority with regard to the promotion of gender equality, women's empowerment and the implementation of SDG 5. The minister provides much of the content of the report on SDG progress submitted to parliament each year. (See also Question 35).

WO=MEN and WOMEN Inc. have been designated the national coordinators of SDG5. These are two Dutch NGOs .

To support SDG implementation, the Integral Assessment Framework (IAK) for new policy and legislation has been adapted. Specific guidelines have been added to help officials evaluate both the positive and negative effects of new policy or legislation in terms of gender equality. This serves to 'mainstream' the promotion of gender equality and women's employment more effectively within all government interventions.

**34. Are there formal mechanisms in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

YES

If YES,

**a) Which of the following stakeholders participate formally in national coordination mechanisms established to contribute to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

**Beijing Declaration and PfA**

- Civil society organisations
- Women's rights organisations
- Academia and think tanks
- Faith-based organisations
- Parliaments/parliamentary committees
- Private sector
- United Nations system
- Other actors, please specify...

**2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

- Civil society organisations
- Women's rights organisations
- Academia and think tanks
- Faith-based organisations
- Parliaments/parliamentary committees
- Private sector
- United Nations system
- Other actors, please specify....

**b) Do you have mechanisms in place to ensure that women and girls from marginalised groups can participate and that their concerns are reflected in these processes?**

Policy devotes specific attention to various groups of women, such as those with a migration background, documented asylum seekers and women with a disability.

Interdepartmental cooperation is sought to ensure that the interests of all groups are included in the relevant policy. In addition, various (alliances of) civil society organisations are awarded funding to conduct projects which will benefit these groups. There are currently alliances working in the areas of:

- Gender-sensitive healthcare
- Encouraging both women and men, but in particularly financially vulnerable women, to take advantage of possibilities for combining paid employment with unpaid care commitments.
- The prevention of gender-related violence among young people and young adults.
- Breaking down gender stereotypes in education and on the labour market.
- Social acceptance and safety of LGBTI people
- Promoting social safety and the acceptance of gender and LGBTI equality within migrant and refugee communities.



***c) Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.***

Through a partner NGO (WO=men), this report was circulated among various relevant organisations with a request for comments and ancillary information. Their input has been used to refine the answers to the questions.

**35. Is gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls included as a key priority in the national plan/strategy for SDG implementation?**

- Yes
- No
- There is no national plan/strategy for SDG implementation

The Netherlands has integrated SDG implementation into the regular policy cycle through monitoring, consultation and reporting on SDG progress. An annual report outlining national SDG progress is submitted to parliament. The [second report](#) (in Dutch) on SDG implementation was presented to parliament in May 2018 as part of the regular budget and reporting cycle. It follows the [first report](#) (also in Dutch) of May 2017.

Both reports build on objective and independent [measurements](#) by Statistics Netherlands/CBS, in English), which is highlighting gender equality as an ongoing challenge. Although it is now decreasing, a disparity in the hourly wage paid to men and women still exists. Moreover, women remain underrepresented in (senior) management positions in both the public and private sectors.

As outlined in the 2018 [Letter to Parliament](#) (in Dutch) on SDG implementation, improving gender equality and emancipation of women and girls remains a high priority for the Netherlands, particularly with regard to social safety, improved economic independence and leadership representation.

## **IV: Section 4**

### Data and statistics

**36. What are the top three areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?**

- Promulgated laws, regulations, or statistical programme/strategy setting out the development of gender statistics
- Established an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics (e.g., technical working group, inter-agency committee)
- Used more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programmes and projects
- Re-processed existing data (e.g., censuses and surveys) to produce more disaggregated and/or new gender statistics
- Conducted new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialised topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)
- Improved administrative-based or alternative data sources to address gender data gaps
- Produced knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g., user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers)
- Developed a centralised web-based database and/or dashboard on gender statistics
- Engaged in capacity building to strengthen the use of gender statistics (e.g., trainings, statistical appreciation seminars)
- Other

The Emancipation Monitor is compiled jointly by Statistics Netherlands/CBS and the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) and has been published every other year since 2000. Beginning in 2018 (the tenth edition), the printed version has been replaced by an online report. The latest Emancipation Monitor has seventeen chapters, each of which examines questions such as 'Are women working longer hours?', 'Who cares for sick relatives?' and 'How safe do women feel?'<sup>14</sup>

To coincide with the launch of the digital Emancipation Monitor, a new database – *StatLine M/V* – went online. It has been developed by Statistics Netherlands/CBS at the request of the Minister of OCW and includes detailed statistical information about gender-related socio-economic differences in the Netherlands. Historical data reveals the trends and developments over time.<sup>15</sup>

The new form of the monitor and the addition of the database renders information more accessible. The data is readily searchable by anyone who wishes to stay informed about the progress of emancipation in the Netherlands, or seeks specific information about gender differences in a given area.

---

<sup>14</sup> [www.emancipatiemonitor.nl](http://www.emancipatiemonitor.nl)

<sup>15</sup> <https://mvstat.cbs.nl/#/MVstat/nl/>

**37. Out of the following which are your country's top three priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years?**

- Design of laws, regulations, or statistical programme/strategy promoting the development of gender statistics
- Establishment of an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics (e.g., technical working group, inter-agency committee)
- Use more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programmes and projects
- Re-processing of existing data (e.g., censuses and surveys) to produce more disaggregated and/or new gender statistics
- Conduct of new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialised topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)
- Greater utilisation and/or improvement of administrative-based or alternative data sources to address gender data gaps
- Production of knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g., user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers)
- Development of a centralised web-based database and/or dashboard on gender statistics
- Institutionalisation of users-producers' dialogues mechanisms
- Statistical capacity building of users to increase statistical appreciation on and use of gender statistics (e.g., trainings, statistical appreciation seminars)
- Other

There are currently several products relating to national gender statistics. The most important are:

- The biannual Emancipation Monitor, which is now available online with a summary in English (see Question 36)
- The *StatLine M/V* database (see Question 36)
- The biannual *Loonverschillen mannen en vrouwen* ('Wage gap between genders') monitor. See: <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/maatwerk/2018/47/monitor-loonverschillen-mannen-en-vrouwen-2016> (Dutch only)
- The regular *Bedrijvenmonitor Topvrouwen* ('Companies Monitor Women at the Top') See: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2017/12/01/bedrijvenmonitor-topvrouwen-2017-een-beetje-beter-maar-nog-lang-niet-voldoende>. (English summary begins p. 9.)

These reports will continue to be published and/or updated in future.

At the request of Eurostat, Statistics Netherlands/CBS and several other EU statistics offices have developed a questionnaire intended to establish the incidence of violence against women. A draft version was trialled in 2018 and the results are currently being evaluated. In 2020/2021, surveys are to be held at the national level. This cooperation between EU member states means that there will be directly comparable data on this important aspect of the emancipation policy.

**38. Have you defined a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs?**

Yes

No

***If YES, how many indicators does it include and how many of those are gender-specific?***

**If YES, how many of the gender-specific indicators are additional country indicators (i.e., not part of the global SDG monitoring and indicator framework)?**

**Please provide the indicators in an annex**

See: [https://www.cbs.nl/-/media/\\_pdf/2018/22/the-sustainable-development-goals.pdf](https://www.cbs.nl/-/media/_pdf/2018/22/the-sustainable-development-goals.pdf)

**39. Has data collection and compilation on SDG 5 indicators and on gender-specific indicators under other SDGs begun?**

Yes

No

These indicators form part of the annual survey conducted by independent research institutes (Statistics Netherlands/CBS and SCP). For specific indicators, please refer to the CBS report.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/publication/2018/10/the-sdgs-the-situation-for-the-netherlands>

**40. Which of the following disaggregations is routinely provided by major surveys in your country?**

- Geographic location
- Income
- Sex
- Age
- Education
- Marital status
- Race/ethnicity
- Migratory status
- Disability
- Other characteristics relevant in national contexts

Comment 1: Not all surveys disaggregate by disability but the standard datasets quantify the number of respondents in receipt of incapacity benefit.

Comment 2: Re. 'Other characteristics': the standard datasets also include 'domestic situation' (e.g. partnered/unpartnered, any children, age of youngest child).