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Toekomst

# A Working Future



**For fair opportunities and options  
in work and education**



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# Why A Working Future?

The Netherlands faces a challenge. The labour market is changing because of technological developments, flexibilisation, decentralisation and budget cuts. This requires the utmost utilisation of talents and potential of our working, care-giving and studying population. In order to achieve this goal, every individual needs the opportunity to explore their options and realise their aspirations by working towards a future according to their own ambitions. A necessary condition is the creation of sufficient options for combining work, care-giving and education. It is crucial that individuals will not be limited in their ambitions and options by the so-called gender stereotypes: traditional standards of what men and women are 'supposed to do'. Gender stereotypes are also often associated with LGBTI, ethnic, class and age-related stereotypes.

*A Working Future* is committed to breaking gender stereotypes in education and the labour market, and improving the options for combining work, care-giving and education. *A Working Future* is a collaborative project of Atria, Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History; Emancipator; Dutch Council of Women (NVR); and VHTO, National Expert Organisation on Girls/Women and Science/Technology. The project is supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

For a period of five years (2018-2022), *A Working Future* is focusing on a combination of action-oriented research and development of intervention strategies by identifying stereotypes and positive counter-stereotypes, deploying role models, sharing good examples and putting these issues on the agenda of government, social partners, educational institutions and employers.

It is ultimately dedicated to breaking gender stereotypes in education and the labour market, and improving the options for combining work, care-giving and education.



## Context and Goals of A Working Future

*A Working Future* wants to contribute to:

**A labour market without barriers  
created by gender stereotypes for both  
employees and employers.**



# A Changing Labour Market

Current developments in the field of digitisation, robotisation and flexibilisation offer both obstacles and opportunities. Before 2020 seven millions jobs will disappear worldwide, especially in technical and administrative professions with routine level tasks, in the middle section of the labour market. This will affect women disproportionately. It is expected, however, that two million jobs will be added in the STEM sector: *Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics*. To be able to use these work opportunities, more girls and women with interest in and talent for science/technology and ICT need to enter these sectors.

The proportion of workers with tenure has decreased dramatically in The Netherlands in past decade. In 2003, 73 % of the working population still had a permanent contract. By the end of 2017 that percentage had shrunk to a mere 60 % due to the increase of freelancers and employees with temporary or on-call contracts. Flexibilisation offers opportunities to combine work, care and learning and has the potential for more job satisfaction and less sick leave.

In this changing labour market, services like cooking, cleaning, buying groceries and child care are increasingly outsourced. The ageing population contributes to the need for professional caregivers. Low-level technical jobs, mostly held by men, are disappearing because of robotisation. Men with an interest in and talent for care-giving should be able to retrain as caregivers to take advantage of the job opportunities in the growing care sector. As care-giving is still primarily considered a profession for women, the current situation offers an opportunity to break this gender stereotype.



## Gender Stereotyping

*A Working Future* wants to contribute to:

Education which does not limit young people's educational and/or vocational choices by gender stereotypes.



## ***A Working Future* questions stereotyping and the corporate culture that comes with it, with the objective to achieve equality.**

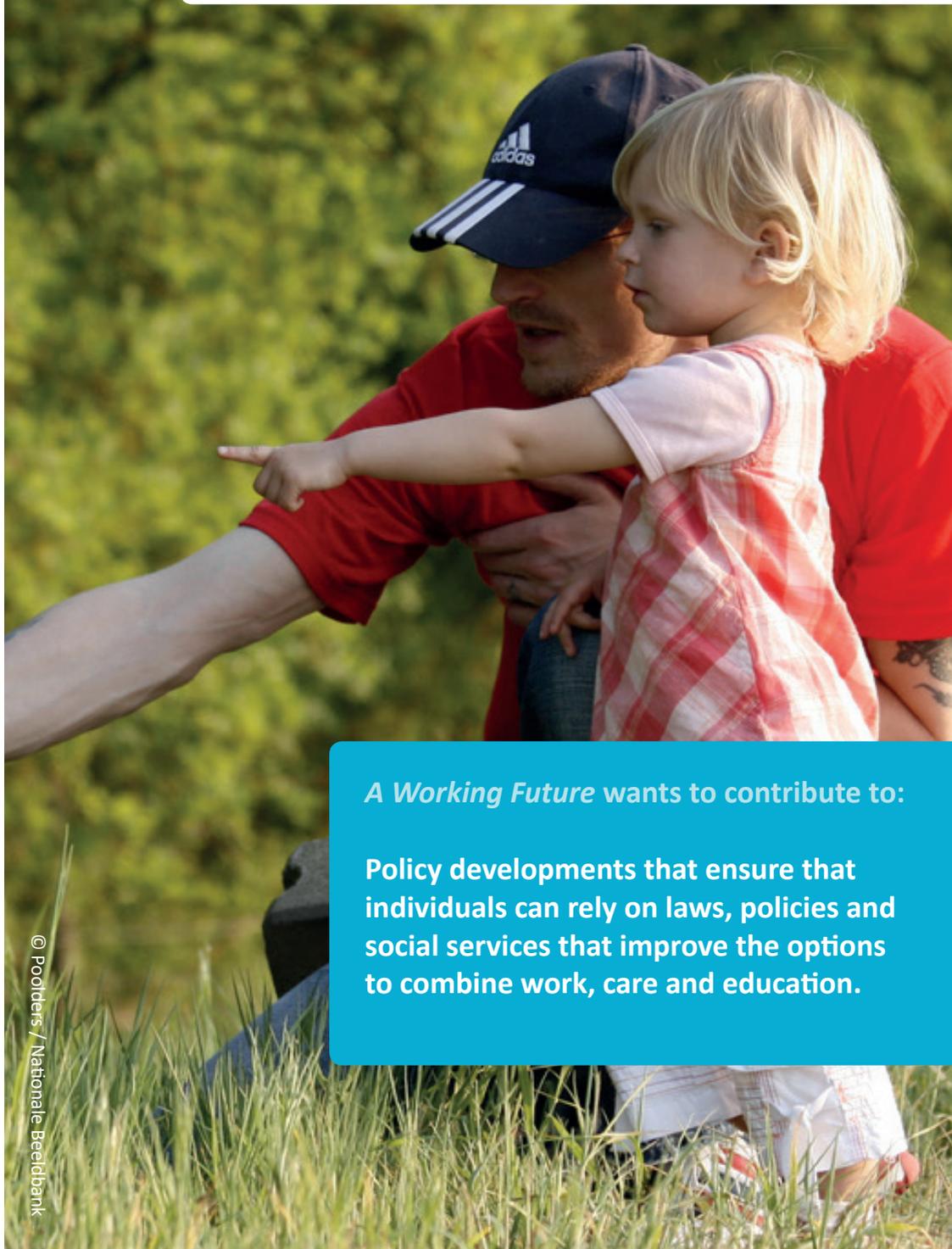
Social norms about masculine and feminine responsibilities in relation to work are quite conservative in The Netherlands, and based on stereotypical notions: men have jobs and women are care-givers. Men and masculinity are valued over women and femininity – and heterosexuality over homo- or bisexuality.

Gender stereotypes create obstacles in the job market for employees and employers, and for students. Dutch girls choose education and professions in science, technology or ICT less often than boys, even though they have the talent and opportunities on the current labour market are favourable. Boys rarely choose care-giving professions, even though there is a huge demand for those in the job market. At the same time boys and men do not consider commitment to equal participation in care tasks at home a matter of course.

Gender stereotypical notions and expectations of both men and women lead to exclusion and discrimination in the workplace. Having and raising children is considered something that predominantly concerns women; it still poses a risk for them in terms of continued employment. This makes it harder for women to get jobs, or permanent contracts, in sectors where working full-time is standard. Employers also often prefer employees who fit into the corporate culture. If this culture is strongly male oriented, this preference is detrimental to women.



## Facilities and policies for tomorrow's work



*A Working Future* wants to contribute to:

**Policy developments that ensure that individuals can rely on laws, policies and social services that improve the options to combine work, care and education.**





***A Working Future* is committed to creating a balance between work and care-giving by means of future-oriented facilities by policy measures that support parental leave, day-care centres and equal access to education.**

Fathers who express the wish for a longer leave of absence or a reduction of working hours are often met with resistance by their employers. Women are still expected to combine their jobs with caring for their children, parents and other loved ones. Three quarters of the female workforce still work part-time, as opposed to only a quarter of the male workforce. This disbalance is part of the reason that only 59 % of Dutch women are economically independent, as opposed to 79 % of men. This makes Dutch women financially vulnerable, especially after a divorce. Working part-time is not a wish but a necessity for many women who struggle with combining work and care-giving. Especially young women often involuntarily work part-time and also are less satisfied with their jobs than men.

Without regulation and supporting policy measures by government and employers these pressures will only increase, and will hinder women's access to the labour market. Facilities like maternal and parental leave, day-care centres for children and part-time jobs play an important role in making choices that concern work, care-giving and education. To achieve an equal sharing of jobs and caring by men and women, a revaluation of care-giving is necessary.



*A Working Future is a collaboration of:*



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## Atria

Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History. Atria is committed to equal treatment and equal opportunities for girls and women.

[www.institute-genderequality.org](http://www.institute-genderequality.org)

## Emancipator

The Dutch organisation for men and emancipation with regard to themes like violence, work and care, sexuality and sexual diversity.

[www.emancipator.nl](http://www.emancipator.nl)

## Dutch Council of Women (NVR)

National umbrella of women's organisations in The Netherlands. The umbrella of over fifty women's organisations. Each with their own background, all with the purpose of improving the position of women.

[www.nederlandsevroudenraad.nl](http://www.nederlandsevroudenraad.nl)

## VHTO, National Expert Organisation on Girls/Women and Science/Technology

VHTO is committed to increase the participation of girls and women in science, technology and ICT.

[www.vhto.nl](http://www.vhto.nl)



### Supported by:

#### Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW)

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) is working towards a smart, able and creative Netherlands.

[www.government.nl/ministries/  
ministry-of-education-culture-and-science](http://www.government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-education-culture-and-science)

# Fair opportunities and options in work and education

Gender stereotyping is a reason that a considerable potential of human capital remains unused. In a socially just world people's paths in life are open and diverse and not limited by stereotypical standards. In that world, people develop themselves according to their wishes and talents, and find their balance between work, education and care-giving.

Would you like to learn more about the programme,  
or share good ideas, examples and experiences?  
Contact [werkendetoekomst@atria.nl](mailto:werkendetoekomst@atria.nl)



Institute on  
Gender Equality and  
Women's History



Emancipator  
voor mannen en emancipatie



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Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en  
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