



Press release

11 december 2012
15:00 hrs

Emancipation monitor 2012

- Labour participation of women (20-64 years) in the Netherlands remains unchanged from 2009 to 2011 at 64 percent; their economic independence is also unchanged, at 52 percent.
- Use of formal child care (day care centres, childminders) for children under 4 years of age fell from 49 percent in 2009 to 44 percent in 2011. More children were cared for by relatives and friends on the other hand.
- More girls are choosing science-oriented education disciplines. The share of girls in nature and technology profiles in secondary education rose from 10 to 24 percent (havo) and from 19 to 38 percent (vwo).
- More women (31 percent) than men (19 percent) feel unsafe. Women are more afraid than men of being a crime victim, as they consider the consequences of sexual and other abuse to be more serious, and they feel they are less able to defend themselves.

These are just some conclusions of the *Emancipation monitor 2012*, published jointly by Statistics Netherlands and the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) on 11 December (available in Dutch only).

The monitor aims to give a picture of the present situation with respect to the emancipation process in the Netherlands. It describes recent developments in the areas of education, paid labour, combining work and care, income, senior management positions and abuse against women.

Labour participation by women remains unchanged

Labour participation by women in the Netherlands (percentage of women aged 20-64 years with a paid job of at least 12 hours a week) rose from 63 percent in 2008 to 64 percent in 2009. In 2010 and 2011 it remained at the same level. For men, the participation rate fell from 82 percent in 2008 to 80 percent in 2011.

In relative terms, still more women than men were unemployed in 2011 (5.3 versus 4.9 percent). But the difference has not been this small in the last ten years. This is because female unemployment has risen more slowly during the crisis than male unemployment.

Unemployment among young women (15-26 years) is lower than among their male peers (7.1 versus 8.2 percent). The difference in labour participation between women and men is smallest in this age group (79 versus 83 percent).

Women with lower education levels are more likely to be unemployed (8.1 percent) and at 33 percent their participation rate is relatively low. They work relatively less often because they think - in their own words - they have less to offer potential employers. They are also more likely to adopt the traditional male-female role pattern.

Women's economic independence also remains unchanged

Over half (52 percent) of women in the Netherlands aged 20-64 years are independent in economic terms: they have an income from paid labour at the level of

income support or higher. The percentage of economically independent women has remained at the same level since 2008, while for men it has decreased from 76 to 74 percent.

The difference between men and women can partly be accounted for by the high percentage of women working part-time: three-quarters of women with a job of at least one hour a week work part-time. In 2011 women worked for an average 26.4 hours a week, just as long as in 2006. For men the average was 38.2 hours.

Working from home more popular

The share of employees who work from home on at least one day a week has risen since 2005: for women from 23 to 28 percent and for men from 28 to 32 percent. In addition, one quarter of employees – just as many women as men – can shift their working hours to suit them. Most women and men think interesting work and a good atmosphere at work are more important than being able to work flexibly. Mothers in particular think flexible working conditions are important.

Shift from formal to informal childcare

Use of formal child care (day care centres, childminders) for children under 4 years of age fell from 49 percent in 2009 to 44 percent in 2011. Care by family and friends, rose on the other hand, also for children aged 4-12 years.

More and more women continue to work the same number of hours after the birth of their first child. This percentage rose from 50 in 2009 to 54 in 2011, while the share of women who worked shorter hours fell from 40 to 35 percent. One in ten women stop work altogether after the birth of a first child.

Household tasks remain unevenly divided

Most women and men think that partners should divide household tasks evenly between them. However, most couples do not do so in their own situation, and neither do they plan to do so. Both men and women say they think that women are better at housework and childcare.

More girls choosing science and technology disciplines in education

Girls and boys choose different disciplines in education, but at all levels the difference is diminishing. More girls are choosing technology and science disciplines, especially in senior general secondary education (havo) and pre-university education (vwo).

Following the change in regulations regarding profile options, the share of girls taking the nature and technology profile rose from 10 percent in 2005/'06 to 24 percent in 2011/'12 (havo) and from 19 to 38 percent (vwo).

Wage gap still substantial

In 2009 women earned on average 80 percent of the gross hourly wage for men. Part of the wage difference between men and women can be accounted for by differences in among other things work experience, occupation level, education and management tasks. If this is corrected for, a wage difference of 8 percent remains. Compared with 2008, wage differences have hardly changed.

Slightly more women in higher positions

The share of women in top positions (on management and supervisory boards, senior executives etc.) in the 100 largest companies in the Netherlands rose from 9 percent in 2009 to 10 percent in 2011. In the non-profit sector the share of women senior executives rose from 28 to 30 percent. In central government the share of women among the highest ranking civil servants remained the same in 2011, at 26 percent. The share of female university professors rose from 12 percent in 2009 to 15 percent in 2011.

Among senior managers themselves, there seems to be an increased acceptance of women in high positions. Most of them also think that it should be possible to work part-time in these positions, and that senior management positions can be combined with care responsibilities.

More women victims of abuse in own home

More men than women are victims of abuse (1.3 versus 0.7 percent) and threatening behaviour (4.6 versus 2.5 percent). Women are more likely to fall victim to sexual abuse (2.3 versus 0.4 percent). Unlike men, most women know the perpetrator of abuse and threatening behaviour. Three out of ten abused women are abused by a partner, former partner or relative.

More women (31 percent) than men (19 percent) do not feel safe. For both men and women, feeling unsafe is mainly caused by the risk of violence. Women are more afraid of nearly all sorts of crime than men, especially burglary and sexual abuse by someone they do not know. They are more afraid than men because they consider the consequences of sexual and other abuse as more serious, and because they feel less able to defend themselves.