

Bridging Circle

Between Switzerland and The Netherlands

An initiative of Béa Bieber, Anita Pijpelink and Cécile Masson
Hosted by Cécile Masson

“The intuitive mind is a sacred gift, and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We’ve created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.”
Albert Einstein

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1. Introduction

The deep held conviction that feminine presence is required to bring more balance in the long- and short-term decision-making practices on all levels of society was the spark of this initiative in the context of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The women present sense that their *life domain* is not represented adequately in the existing *system domain* that the writer Wouter Hart describes in his book *Lost in control* as the following. 'The system domain is a reproduction of the *life domain*, just as a map is a reproduction of the earth beneath our feet. It's a set of agreements about how we should operate in the *life domain*, which come in various forms, such as policies, procedures, instructions, targets, responsibilities, formats, and patterns. These elements in the *system domain* tell us something about the here and now in the *life domain*, without really 'knowing' the here and now. We've created the *system domain* because it makes our work in the *life domain* easier, just as a map can help us to find a route and communicate it to other people. The *system domain* is not just valuable, it's even indispensable.'¹ He continues to say that the *system domain* is not a copy of the *life domain* and that both need to work in harmony to serve a purpose. We invite you to read appendix **one** before continuing reading after the introduction for a deeper understanding.

The participating women feel that their innate and engaged personal purpose is ignored, and the mere existence of human beings of female gender is often belittled, or inadequately represented in today's *system domain*.

The approach we chose helped to name not only facts and figures but also to speak about the emotional effects of this pandemic and address the individual and the collective needs. Bringing women from different backgrounds and ages together helped to discern the greater pattern and will empower more women to stand up for their visions and values. It is based on deep dialogue with self and others and based on varied sources.

In this report you will find examples (big and small) from both countries to illustrate the patterns that emerged as we exchanged. Patterns that do illustrate that the challenges that humanity faces are not only of a specific community or country but are part of a Western Democratic culture that we believe needs to change from within to create a society where everybody can be appreciated, respected, and feel free to bring her or his talents in the most positive and constructive way. And that without fear.

Writing this report, it appeared at some point tiresome to read again the same facts that all know so well. That is why looking at the patterns appeared so precious. Therefore we also would like to acknowledge that many aspects of our cultures are well organized. These sessions focused on where improvement is needed to further develop the quality of life for all citizens.

A beneficial balance, between the old that has served us well and innovative approaches is needed for the democratic rights to be nurtured; to create a healthy, human worthy and life-enhancing culture for future generations of both sexes. To create that balance, the purpose of this report is to empower more women to step up, be present in boards and leading decision-making platforms and to deepen the dialogue with men who also wish to honor the fundamental human rights as defined by law. It has not the ambition to be a scientific report but to be an inspiration to hold a different conversation in the domain of gender equity, and that in service of life.

2. Approach

¹ Wouter Hart, *Lost in control* ISBN 9082999609 Original title 'Verdraaide Organisaties' ISBN 9789013105735

2.1 Participants

Participants from two countries and varied backgrounds were present to broaden the conversation.

For the **Netherlands** as a part of the European Union

Emmy Galama : Permanent Representative of International Council of Women (ICW) to UNHABITAT (Nairobi, Geneva) www.icw-cif.com and The Huairou Commission (New York) <https://huairou.org>. Chair of Zeeuws Vrouwen Platform (www.zeeuwsvrouwenplatform.nl)

- Anita Pijpelink, Regional Minister of the Province of Zeeland for the Partij van de Arbeid (Social Democratic Party)
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/anita-pijpelink-b3544415/>
- Femke Hoekstra Wittebol, Teacher University of Applied Sciences, member of the Social Democratic Party <https://www.linkedin.com/in/femkewittebol/?originalSubdomain=nl>
- Julia van Oord, Student of International Relations and Organizations at University of Leiden and Young Female Talent <https://www.linkedin.com/in/juliavanoord/>
- Cécile Masson, Independent professional and author www.cecilemasson.com & www.lettersoflovetolife.com

For **Switzerland** as an independent nation with many different sub-regions that have their own independence.

- Béa Bieber, Grossrätin Kanton Aargau and Vorstandsmitglied des Oberrheinrates, President of the GrünLibérale Party GLP, Fricktal, Presidentin des Gesundheitsforum www.beabieber.ch
- Simone Mayer- Jacober Member of party of the The GrünLibérale Party GLP, Kanton Aargau www.schreibatelier-jacobere.ch
- Christine Ziegler, Moderatorin & Biologin www.inter-act.ch
- Christiane Guyer, Stadträtin of the city of Zofingen member of political party Grüne www.christiane-guyer.ch
- Moufida Duc, Macherin & Projectmanager

2.2 Process

In four on-line sessions lasting two hours and a half, the participants exchanged in a structured way on how

- the pandemic has affected women and children,
- to frame the urgent requirements to have the democratic impact,
- to accelerate the desired results,
- women can bring the change they want to see in their own work field.

A quadrant that addresses the emotional, the factual, the strategic and the visionary qualities of leadership was used to highlight the excesses and lacks, each of these qualities bring forth. Using this approach helped to enlarge the field of exchange and allowed to map the 'system domain', 'life domain' and the purpose of each participant for engaging herself either voluntarily or professionally. By doing so a rich harvesting of insight appeared that took into consideration the greater field of possibilities. ²

A space of trust where open minds, open hearts and open wills were fully present as we exchanged was created and nourished throughout. ³

2.3 Languages

² Inspired by Coming Into Your Own Feminine Leadership <https://ciyowomensretreat.com/index.html>

³ Theory U, by C.Otto Scharmer

The languages spoken were:
Dutch, English and (Swiss) German.

2.4 Age range

Twenty-two to seventy-four

3. The observations during the pandemic

“The pandemic showed very clearly that change on the local level only happens when one has the prove that it is a global issue.” The pandemic has put a magnifying glass on the fact that we are as human beings globally connected, consciously or not and that we are part of the living eco-system that is reacting.

The pandemic has forced many to slow down and live in the moment. That helped the valuing of the “small things of life” that appear to be very precious indeed. Health, a loving relationship, a caring community in the vicinity. *“Rather than chasing the big events or the big emotions on social media, the Covid lock-down helped to slow down, open hearts again and to be more serene.”*

This pandemic showed that there are several big gaps in the democratic procedures in both countries.

- The assumption of superiority with regards to gender, race, environment, and thinking above intuitive sensing,
- The lack of action on the prevention of violence against the natural environment, women, and children,
- The lack of long-term investments for the conscious nurturing and caring of the *‘life domain’ and system domain* regarding education, health, the arts, and the environment,
- The lack of awareness that society is a breathing, living, and sensing human system that needs to be cared for by life-protecting rather than system-protective management,
- The lack of conscious emotional bonding to life and all living.

The effects are systemic gender inequity, systemic racism, prevailing of unconscious biases that result in suffering of a part of society and loss of faith and trust in the traditional leadership that until recently appeared to have served well.

This management culture that has prevailed so far was based on individual ego centered attitudes whereas the challenges we are facing need to be addressed collectively to serve the eco-system of which women and men are part of. Women need to be included and include themselves in this conversation to make a difference between long-term and short-term interests as they have a different sense of urgency regarding certain subjects that to this point have been neglected.

Home officing has helped to raise awareness on the urgency of the matter and to raise awareness of how much energy and time goes into the to cure and care of a household, a good education, a well-organized health care system and viable outdoor spaces also in urban settings.

The present and future challenges need a different type of leadership that has an enhanced capacity of self-reflection, and balances in a life-protecting and purpose-driven manner, the short- and long-term consequences of the decisions that shape the quality of the *life-* and *system domain*.

4. Facts

Facts and figures were compared for both countries and compared to some European and international statistics to reveal the parallels between the countries.

4.1 Health & Safety

The pandemic exposed the lack of care and health facilities on local level in the communities. The assumption that 'one size does fit all' has created unnecessary suffering for a great part of the population. Professionals and patients were not well prepared in dealing with such a pandemic even though many scientists had already warned for decades that this was going to happen.

Examples

- Regular and preventive health checks could not be done with the consequence that women develop uterus or breast cancer that could have been detected directly had the regular health checks happened. The treatment is now either complicated or too late creating more personal and collective suffering that has long term consequences for the families.
- Medical Consultations for girls and young women couldn't be held face to face anymore and are held by phone. If a girl/woman had the chance to have a consultation at all, the consultation had less positive impact then when held face to face. The professionals face an extra challenge in how to sense the client's needs and how to best serve them.
- The lack of research done with female candidates in test groups for medication and vaccine development is undermining public health. Barley any studies were made with female candidates to the AstraZeneca vaccine. Other domains are heart disease, obesities, and depression just to name a few.
- Professionals in the health sector were highly stretched in their capacity to give professional care. Individually and collectively, they made and keep making a titanic effort to serve the patients. However, they themselves need to be taken care of as well to stay healthy and do the job they were trained to do.
- Loneliness is a big challenge for young people especially youngsters who are not in a steady relationship. Their social life was outside, on the terrasses and in places of social interactions such as libraries. Singles particularly felt the isolation that has profound impact on their emotional and psychological wellbeing and that influences their cognitive learning capacities.
- Young people miss a structured approach to the pandemic, and some feel cheated by policy makers for lack of long-term vision. The pandemic showed clearly that the psychological help desks of municipalities and other are over booked and there is a great lack of funding generally in the well-being sector to respond professionally and humanly to the actual challenges.
- Depression is increasing and is specifically noticeable with adolescents and young adults. The isolation of the lock-down, the lack of personal contact and weight of responsibility they feel is put onto their generation to care for the environment is for many too big to bare. Not to speak of their very personal life forecast that they cannot direct anymore.
- The challenge on younger generations to cope with the pressure of the lock-down is massive and the intergenerational understanding is not always present. For an 80-year-old to be in lock-down is challenging but they have lived 80 years in considerable freedom of movement. Young people are in need to reinvent a new way of cohabitation where intergenerational decision making is the norm.

- The lockdown has increased the pressure on families, and many were ill equipped, due to lack of understanding of the situation (language, access to information, level of education), to be mentally, physically, and emotionally resilient to pressure. This escalated often into domestic violence.
- Shelter houses for victims of domestic violence are totally overbooked resulting in unnecessary deepening of traumatic experiences for the victims. In 2020 in CH there is an increase of 30% violence against women. The Frauenhäuser in CH-Aargau are full. Compared to before the pandemic many more children were victims of domestic violence, which in the long term will have an influence on their personal development. As this is a collective trauma it could influence the quality of the social interactions and culture in the long run if not addressed adequately.
- Domestic violence had specific peaks during the festive period and after meals. There could be a double correlation. On the one side the attempt to relax after high pressure at work allowing the anger and frustration to be sensed resulting in an explosion (violence), and /or the use of alcohol during meals. Another aspect could be that the perpetrators of violence do not have the capacity to handle their emotions and let it out on partners and children.
- Lack of exercise outside in public spaces such as parks and gyms, makes an accumulation of energy that cannot be channeled in a healthy way. The loosening of the lockdown has had the positive effect of lowering the cases of domestic violence.
- It is known that the rate of forced child marriage has increased despite being illegal in Europe.
- The access to help and education is undermined by the lock-down as some girls and women were forced to stay at home and were not allowed by male family members to access their devices freely.
- Police and help centers (*CH Opferhilfe/Schalchtofferhulp & Blijf van me lijf*) have a lack of capacity and cannot offer the needed help.
- The professionals (police and others) do not always appreciate the courage it takes for a victim to step to the police to ask for help and act on any call for help. There is a lack of awareness/ and or capacity that domestic violence expresses itself in various ways. An assumption that victims are asking for violence prevails.
- The influence of the weather is not to be underestimated on how people feel and how that influences the rate of violence present either in the public or private space. It shows again how interconnected humanity is with the direct environment.
- The lack of *life-domain* insight regarding the needs of a community is visible also in the vaccination procedures. "Teachers in NL are expected to stand in front of a class whether they are vaccinated or not. Boards of schools did not take the time to welcome teachers coming back to school after nine months of home teaching. "The fact that there is no time to even have a collective, reflective moment to exchange amongst teachers is heartbreaking and sad. I did not feel seen."

4.2 Economy

For various reasons women contribute in different ways to society than men. The traditional family life after World War II, has for a long time not allowed women to work at all when married or pregnant. In the Netherlands this changed in the 1970th. The Swiss law allowed women to vote only in the 1970th. In 50 years, the attitude towards parity is changing very slowly. At this rate society faces another 125 years of inequity. Women are still being confronted with biases when choosing for a career and family. They are less-worthy mothers than non-working mothers something that is never said of men. The tension to care

for their children, the future of humankind, and wanting to contribute to society through work that is paid, is not always easy to bare when put under pressure by the local culture or the culture of origin.

If they work, women often work part-time to bring some extra income to the household and care of the family. In The Netherlands parents are by law together responsible for the income of the family. Even when men would like to work parttime, employers too rarely facilitate this personal choice of the couple. Especially the vulnerability of women who have a smaller job, is worrying.

The pandemic showed specifically for Switzerland a lack of female experts in the public field. In the Netherlands this was less the case. Generally, the lack of role models such as successful female entrepreneurs and politicians and the respectful covering of their contribution in the media, is lacking. During these exchanges one of the participants faced serious and repeated shaming and blaming by a man that was published in the media.

Women's contributions to the well-functioning of society are highly (financially) undervalued by the prevailing *life- and system domain* and by women themselves. This is expressed in the salary gap between women and men that is highest in the low paid jobs.

Examples

- Many women working in low-paid jobs, part-time or with short contracts are blue-collar workers that have had already fewer financial means. This pandemic has again massively hindered or slowed down their development to financial independence. Very often women are in these jobs because they also take care of the children whereas the fathers more easily find work. This gives men financial independence and an extra advantage especially in cases of divorce.
- To find work during the pandemic is difficult and can bring people without a job in even further economic problems.
- Certain sectors such as the gastronomy where many women work will not come back as strongly as before.
- The scanning machines in supermarkets will put many women out of jobs soon and hinder adolescents to earn a little extra.
- In big companies the cleaning services are less needed because of home officing. Many have lost their jobs because of this restructuring. In CH 95% of the employees in the cleaning industry do have a migratory background and are predominantly women. In NL women with low education or from a migratory background are often given a chance to start participating in society with a cleaning job and have found themselves out of a job.
- Cleaners in private homes of migratory background were faced with the bias to be less clean than Europeans.
- The short-term profit and performance driven attitude of many economic models based on the exploitation of human and natural resources is up for revision. They do not help to find sustainable solutions, are in contradiction with the law and perpetuate mental and emotional aggression to men and women also in the workplace.
- The systemic acceleration of the speed of work and needed performance levels starts to reach saturation point in many domains. The suppression of feelings due to stress enhances the use of drugs to cope and generates a vicious circle of violence in homes, on the roads and in public political debate.
- For the younger generation this pandemic will have long lasting consequences in how to structure their lives because many of the needed changes in how to structure economy, social

welfare, education, maintenance of the road system not to speak of the environmental challenges is projected onto their future. The planning of the future like it was done for the after-war generation is no longer possible as the changes and challenges appear on all fronts at an accelerating speed.

4.3 Education

In education many unconscious biases are present that inform the future society. Addressing these, is crucial to bring more gender equity in all realms of life. Educating teacher and students to be aware of their biases is a minimum requirement. Educating young people to respect and listen to each other needs to go hand in hand with informing them of the basic human rights that shape Europe since the World War II and that still need to find their way into the mindset of many.

Examples

Unconscious bias

- School advice in The Netherlands in 2020 from primary school to high school was less high for girls than for boys because the last school exam had been canceled. In these last school tests girls often scored higher than boys giving them an extra chance to reach the higher education, HAVO rather than VMBO, University rather than HAVO. Especially children from less financially secure backgrounds received lower recommendations. 7% more girls and 4% more boys. This means that girls of less privileged background need to work harder to reach their ambitions and bring their talents to the workforce if on-line teaching is going to prevail.
- Unconscious bias is present daily when students get back their grades: Boys get encouraged by male teachers and are being told how talented they are. "Girls with the same grade are told that they must have been working very hard to have the same result. Insinuating that as a woman I do not have the 'natural' talent like boys do." Women teachers might be extra proud when girls have good grades, which is also an unconscious bias from their part. A positive impact of Corona is that there is little time to exchange on grades. The unconscious bias is not so public anymore, less hurting talented young women's feelings and making them either feel insignificant or angry.
- Students' associations in NL have mainly male presidents. The prevailing culture present is flawed by dominant behavior, a sense of superiority and aggressive language. The sense of superiority of male university students is worrying as it mirrors the existing sense of superiority with regards to gender, nationalities, and races. The language use too is aggressive, non-inclusive to women, other nationalities and sometimes even violent with death as consequence. "*University is the only thing that matters. HBO is just a course.*"
- The assumption that good thinkers are superior human beings, flourishes and reflects the dominant culture that systemically suppresses the sensing and emotional aspects of the *life domain*.
- The underlying bias present in the *system domain* is that physical and caring professions are worth less than intellectual professions also with regards to financial rewards. This exposes the lack of sense of reality with regards to the *life domain* not only of women and children but many professionals active in the sectors of health, education, the arts, and the environment.

- Diversity of team members with regards to gender and cultural background is important. Having a teacher with migratory background can help to raise awareness on unconscious biases of the professional team and in the classroom.
- Male students of all backgrounds seem to feel authorized to question the professionalism of a female teacher. When they do not feel happy with a grade, they go directly to the board of directors to complain. This is time consuming and disrespectful to the seniority and experience of female professionals.
- Female students do not feel safe to speak up or show their faces on-line during class as the sexually tinted comments of male students are perceived to be a threat.
- The access to help and education is undermined by the lock-down as some girls and women were forced to stay at home and were not allowed by male family members to access their devices freely.

Role models

- Girls and young women are not properly educated in how to challenge systemic issues to position themselves as leaders. Because of the lack of exposure to strong female role models that often work from purpose, they rarely can find the tools and practices and networks to enhance their own performance. They are forced to fit into a masculine way of leadership and a masculine organization of the *system domain* that often goes against their own nature. This undermines their self-confidence also because their innate leadership qualities remain invisible. It does take true inspiration and passion to go beyond cultivated biases and discrimination present in the *life-* and *system domains*.

Long term care for workforce

- Teachers face the same struggles as students. Contact for teacher is just as important to the teacher as it is for the students/ambassadors to meet with students or with teachers. Talking into a dark hole is as challenging for teachers as it is for students. The purpose of the organisation (school), the teachers and the students are extra challenged in the *life domain* by the unconscious biases present.

4.5 Communication & Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In the media, at work and home women are exposed to unconscious micro messaging that does not reinforce their talents. Empathic qualities of men and women are considered soft and are often neglected in conversations. In AI the continuous programming of unconscious biases has taken worrying proportions, and little is done to prevent this type of discrimination to sex, ethnicity, or age. The dominant position of global platforms such as Facebook, Google and Microsoft undermine access to a more diverse approach to certain subjects and is creating a monoculture where the inclusion of diversity in both the *life-* and *system domains* is undermined.

Examples

- The way how voices of women are heard in Zoom/ mTeams meetings compared to a natural face to face situation is equity undermining. Studies show that women's voices are not recorded in a neutral manner giving them less impact as they speak. This has consequences for the short and long term of gender equality as their impact is weakened.

- On online questionnaires with questions regarding gender, age and ethnicity should be revised as they invite algorithms to interfere with the information given. The difference in the information given to men and women is worrying.
- Scientific reports regarding female empowerment are not easily found. The information given is often not up to date or incorrect. Students doing research have one main source in NL (CBS) which does not allow for unbiased research. Only when really wanting to know more they will be directed to institutes such as The Dutch Council of Women, Women Inc. and Atria that form an Alliance in The Netherlands representing many women's organizations that total to 1 million individual members.
- In PPP presentations regarding technical jobs often only masculine figures are on the pictograms without any sign of diversity. The subtle framing that only men can have technical jobs needs to be addressed.
- IT female role models are needed.

In the media

- Caricatures of female often address the looks of women rather than what they bring as professionals
- Word choice of journalists covering political campaigns are biased:
She would like to become an alderwoman... > Here the insinuation is being made "is she capable?" versus Is he going to be the next alderman? > Here the underlying message is: is he going to win?
- The power of the word should get more attention as well in the context of the local understanding. Example: In Swiss German there is a clear difference between the use of the word *Dame* or *Frau*. *Frau* is indicating a female human being; *dame* is in Swiss German interpreted as a slut. In High German however when addressing an audience, the speaker may say Damen und Herren.
- **In meetings** men take more space and lack of inclusive skills and self-reflection. Men speak louder, hardly pose and do hardly ever question their own opinions. When female politicians take the initiative to bring some nuance and questioning into the exchanges they are being depicted as being aggressive.
- The way decisions are made are not inclusive but exclude the female voice to be heard especially if the majority are men. The *purpose* of women is belittled, and their *life domain* ignored. For female politicians to be heard, listened to, and respected they must make an astonishing effort to be taken seriously. The men in power do not seem to be educated to listen and do not hear another opinion but their own. They lack the finesse of questioning their assumptions of reality (their *life-domain*) and the skill to listen respectfully with an open mind to another person's experience of the *life-domain*.
- The emotion that is triggered by this kind of disrespectful behavior is humiliating, as it generates unnecessary sadness and anger. This kind of behavior is unworthy of democratic leadership as it is not respectful of the human rights that include freedom of speech and freedom of fear.
- Street names are rarely carrying the names of influential women. This too can change if more women step up.

4.6 Leadership

In general, the prevailing leadership in business and politics is masculine, aggressive, high speed, profit based, ego centered and exclusive.

The pandemic showed that true leadership should not only protect the interests of the happy few (a system in itself) but of all citizens. For that a new type of leadership needs to be shaped that includes women and men that have a different leadership style and know how to nurture an inclusive work and living culture.

The pandemic has shown that the present leadership is based on control and fear. Fear of lack of resources, fear of losing a position as a leader, the fear of lack of perspective that triggers reactions by fear. This style misses the long-term vision and understanding of impact certain choices will have on future generations with regards to the human rights and the environment. One could argue that this is management of the existing *system domain* rather than leadership driven by purpose and understanding of the *life domain* of women, children, and a great part of society.

The pandemic equally showed that to keep a society running the relational qualities are just as important and need to be nurtured and maintained to have a sense of solidarity. That on all levels of society and in politics.

The opposite of fear is trust. This trust has been severally undermined the last couple of years cultivating cultures of fear in some parts of the population that express themselves through aggression and violence. The pandemic showcased a lack of long-term preventive insights that created problems that future generations will need to solve.

Examples

- Systematic reduction of investments in education, access to health care and cure, the arts, and natural out-door spaces in urban environment for all citizens are key examples.
- The environment around the home such as high-quality external places in urban setting enhances the quality of the experience in the *life-domain*.
- Young generations are losing trust in the policy making and take the law in their own hands.
- Violence that is systemically left unpunished becomes part of the established system. The systemic acceptance of violence against women (30% in normal times) is heightened in times of crisis, is a noticeable example and can be considered as a “global pandemic in its own right” as the president of the Dutch Council of Women Nenita la Rose said in an interview held with C. Masson during the first lock-down.
- *De Kindertoelagen Affaire* in The Netherlands that brought the last national government of the Netherlands to fall is a clear example of unconscious bias and systemic discrimination by race and by income within the *system domain*.
- Only a handful of leaders appeared to have the guts to take responsibility for their mistakes. Angela Merkel publicly apologized for making some mistakes and so did Ex Minister Lodewijk Asscher who stepped down after the *Kindertoelagen Affaire*, which made the government fall as other ministers were also considered to be responsible.
- Women who do make it into political boards are shocked to realize that in the 21st Century their presence as a professional is still questioned and that sexist jokes prevail.
- Practices such as the presence of two women in traditional Swiss customs when a political leader is speaking is considered out of fashion. A male cyclist opening a big bottle of champagne after

winning a tour, flanked by two beautiful women can be considered sexist. Both examples give the message that beautiful women are best held as decoration.

- The lack of humanness and connectedness with the people they serve needs to be addressed in the present *system-domain*. A culture that also allows empathy to be part of leadership qualities is needed. Many men and women feel that need.
- Aggressivity and the need to control are dominantly present in board exchanges and do not help to find long term solutions. From a psychological point of view this could be considered a shadow of the healthy male energy.
- Men and women are trapped in stereotypical behavior that is outdated.

5. Advise

5.1 Health and Safety generally

Long term investment and vision on how to create a caring society is vital. Strategic investments into care and health facilities such as local hospitals, is essential to create a more caring and human worthy society. A society that secures through facilities the fundamental human rights but also through highly needed execution of the law to protect victims of violence.

Strategic Investment allocations on national regional and municipal level need to take into consideration the *life-domain* of the local population and the individual patients. The purpose of the organization (hospital, care-home, refuge) and the *life-domain* of the caregivers and the patients need to be leading to form the *system domain*, not the other way round.

Domestic violence

- Educate police and help organizations that the mere reaching out to ask for help is an act of courage and needs to be taken seriously. The emotional and mental aspects of domestic violence need to be taken into consideration and acting on a call for help should include several layers of concrete help as of the first call to the police:
 - Medical help to physical injury
 - Psychological help to mental injury
 - Therapeutic help to emotional injury
- Allocations of funds that respect the basic human rights of women and children in
 - short term to increase the capacity of caretakers and police
 - in the long term to educate and create a more inclusive environment to empower victims.
 - Shelter houses for victims must always be available locally with enough (human) capacity to fulfill all levels of care needed.
- Statistics need to take into consideration the calls for help also in the long run and not only the call for actions as is done now after physical injury. This to inform the general sense of how big the suffering due to domestic violence is present in society.
- Educate all citizens as of a young age in how to deal with their emotions and ventilate anger in a constructive rather than destructive way.

- Schools, parents, and professional experts need to work together to integrate more mindfulness practices, nonviolent communication, and general self-reflection into the school curriculum on all levels of education including the professional education up to universities.
- The creation of interesting and inviting places outside the home could be a solution to counteract domestic violence in urban settings. Any urban development plan should consider the aspect of health and safety and create pleasant green spaces for people to get together, play sports, garden or for outside relaxing. This enhances generally the quality of life and contact with the living.
- Local communities could be actively involved to contribute to upgrading their direct neighborhoods to create green spaces together through civil participation. This has the extra advantage that the aspect of caring for these places might be enhanced especially if younger generations are also involved.

5.2 Economy

Improvement could be made when dealing with migratory women by having the basic politeness to ask them the qualification they have from their home country. Assuming that a non-European or Western national is less qualified or intelligent is outdated and needs to be addressed on all level including refugees and victims of domestic violence. Helping migratory women to participate in society by giving them a cleaning contract when they are highly educated is systemic racism, discriminatory highly biased and perpetuates mental and emotional suffering for future generations too. **Ref. De Nieuwe Toekomst** <https://www.nederlandsevrouwenraad.nl/html/index.php>

Revision of present model-based exploitation is essential.

Intergenerational relationships need to be nurtured or encouraged to keep in touch with each other's needs also with regards to economy. Employers need to consider the will of young parents to be present with their children, the individual talents and needs. The shaping of inclusive workplace culture (gender, generations, ethnicity just to name a few) is not only a responsibility of the HR departments but of all departments.

5.3 Education

Male students need to be educated as of a young age to respect the professionalism of a woman and not have the assumption that they are less qualified or worth less than their male counterparts.

Both girls and boys need to be educated to realize that sexually tinted discriminatory comments on looks online are discriminatory and are undermining the sense of safety of the victims. The bullying and the shaming are inadmissible at school and in the media and when excessive need to be addressed by law and include parents in the conversation.

Students need to know their rights and their obligations in writing especially as on-line education is going to increase and when not respected should be addressed accordingly.

Children generally need to develop a new set of skills to be personally more resilient to stress.

All citizens need to develop more self-awareness about the signals of their body and how to trust, interpret and verbalize these signals to raise awareness on possible issues rather than suppressing them.

5.4 Communication

The worldwide digitalization of meetings and education will have an influence in how women and young girls can position themselves in meetings. If these sensitivities of the technical possibilities are not being

addressed with big on-line platforms such as Zoom and others it could have dire consequences for women in the short and long term. This needs to be addressed in the short term before more unconscious biases are programmed into digital standardizations.

The word choices in public campaigns need to be considered by candidates themselves, by journalists and by political parties to enhance gender equity. The signals and the energy of inequality that are continuously perpetuated are big and need to be addressed also in publicity. Humor can be used to counteract these kinds of practices to raise awareness on how ridiculous these recurrences are in the 21st Century but only to a certain point. When female politicians that for years have served their communities with all their heart are publicly humiliated and shamed with untruth and blasphemy it cannot be tolerated by a democratic society.

Chairs of meetings in politics and in business need to be trained to ensure that inclusive meeting styles are cultivated, and no woman is going to be shamed because she has a different opinion than the male norm.

5.5 Leadership

All leaders should be trained and re-trained in self-reflection and inclusive leadership practices that make them aware of the *life-domain* of a great part of the population.

Leadership practices should allow space to slow down and seriously look at the consequences of their decisions before reacting out of fear, digitalizing fear rather than trust into the *system-domain*.

Leaders should be trained to listen and respect other points of view and cultivate an open mind and be allowed to show their emotions.

Business, medical, and political leadership must take into consideration the needs of the young generations. Global development, migration and family re-compositions has left many either without a healthy family structure, cultural community, or adequate schooling. Their experience or the *life-domain* is incomparable to the experience of leaders that have formed the present *systems-domain*. Generational and gender diversity is a must to bring the much-needed change.

The lack of empathy by high placed politicians in the Kinder *Toeslagen Affaire* towards the families that were wrongly accused of fraud that lasted years created excessive suffering. Allowing the same senior civil servants to stay in positions without being made responsible is a lack of leadership and disrespect for the general population they are meant to serve. It shows that the management of a *system-domain* that is disrespectful of the *life domain* in the end will fall and is not life enhancing, nor politically or economically responsible in the long-run as it undermines the essence of mutual trust.

Leaders should allow enough time to employees and themselves to take time for the family and friends to meet. The pandemic has shown how precious the social networks are in times of crises and these should be given active attention and care.

6. Conclusion

The women present in this circle are stunned to note yet again that even though, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10th December 1948 and adopted on the 4th of November 1950 in Rome by the European Council, and the Istanbul Convention so little change to protect and empower women is visible in the *system domain* created by people in power. The lack of sense of reality regarding the *life-domain* of 51% of the population is astounding. The *system-domain* needs to undergo a radical culture change and address

systemic undermining of women rights and implement them by law in daily life on all levels of society and in all sectors.

We observe that the women present in politics and in business that dare to speak up are intrinsically purpose driven. They serve a higher purpose than themselves in service of future generations. What we observe in the existing system of both states is that the purpose of many of their actions is undertaken to serve the existing *life-domain* but is withheld by the conservative forces in the *system-domain* that lacks a sense of realism.

Nearly 80 years after the Universal Human Rights Declaration women still need to justify their presence in the professional space and certainly in boards. This slow pace is inadmissible.

Fighting for women's rights is fighting for human rights and women and men are invited to truly take a moment of self-reflection, individually and collectively to see if the changes they are now bringing into the *systems-domain* serve humanity and the European democratic society. We owe it to future generations, to our mothers and fathers and to ourselves to put life first and that in all its diversity.

The effect, especially for women, of the uncertainty and long-lasting insecurity of how to shape a personal and collective future in the context of Corona has direct effect on the health of people and more anti-depressives than ever are being proscribed. People who are allowed to go out have lost the rhythm and confidence to do so, especially people without a functioning social network. They should be helped to dare stepping into the light again.

We hope with this collective report, the collection of examples that you would like to join us by spreading it, translating it, adding to it, and making use of it wherever suitable to make our common point that the future generations deserve our presence and impact. This cultivating of feminine presence is crucial, is highly indispensable and needs to be invested into.

Female leadership has been shown during this pandemic on all levels of society. Our wish is that this well-grounded, empathic, and social-minded leadership that is directly linked to the life domain will prevail and grow stronger.

Appendix

1. <https://www.lostincontrol.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/17503-preview-Lost-in-Control-v4.pdf>