

Dear participants

[slide 1- intro slide Atria]

I would like to take you back 60 years in time to the year 1956. This is an important year in the lives of women in the Netherlands. But before I talk to you about these events I would like to introduce you to my grandmother.

[slide 2 – photo oma]

In 1956 my grandmother was a women in her late forties.

[wijzen naar foto op slide: this is my grandmother, Antonia Crielaard-Beenen] So she was more or less the same age as I am today.

At this moment in time she was married to my grandfather for more than 20 years. They had lived through the second world war and ten years after this war things got better. Together my grandparents ran a vegetable and potato shop where my grandmother was the one dealing with the customers. My grandfather formally owned the shop. It was hard work but they were making ends meet.

She was born and raised in the Southern part of the Netherlands and lived her whole life in the city of Breda. After 8 years of schooling my grandmother had left school at the age of 14 to start working. Nothing special in the 1920s. Many girls left school at that age to start working. So did she.

After her marriage to my grandfather she gave birth to 6 children. In 1956 the eldest being 20 and the youngest 8

years old. They had 4 girls and 2 boys. My mother was one of these children, number 4 in this row and born in the middle of the second world war.

My grandmother's elderly mother was living in with them. And my mother recounts the mischievous character of her grandmother well. So while my mother had fun with her grandmother, my grandmother had to deal with her mother defying her authority on a daily basis. Besides this the eldest child in the family was chronically ill as of early childhood and needed a lot of care and attention.

So in today's terms we would say my grandmother was doing not only triple shifts but quadruple shifts;

- working long hours in their shop
- taking care of her family, of which one child needed special attention.
- She also had not only to take care of her elderly mother but had to keep her in check as well.

All in all it is fair to say my grandmother worked hard and had little or no time, nor money, to spend on her herself.

[slide 3 – wet handelingsonbekwaamheid]

And then the year 1956 came. It was a momentous time for women in the Netherlands. In June of 1956 a law passed that granted women autonomy: **the act abolishing the legal incapacity of married women**. My mother recalls the joy her mother experienced when this law passed and came into effect on the 1st of January 1957. For the first time in ages women in the Netherlands were no longer depended on their

fathers, brothers or husbands when it came to making decisions and acting financially and legally here upon.

Fast forward 60 years to the present. And here I am standing in front of you. Speaking at this conference in the hart of Amsterdam, at the university to be more precise. The city I live and work but was not born and raised in. I migrated from the north to Amsterdam shortly after I received my university degree.

Like my grandmother I am also a married women in my late forties. I also work full-time but not in the shop owned by my husband. I have my own career and so does he. And when I come home at 6 o'clock my husband has dinner ready. Compared to my grandmother my family duties are totally different: I only have two children and my parents and mother-in law are still healthy and living on their own. And more importantly my husband and I share the household responsibilities equally.

So in 60 years or two generations, since that law passed, a lot changed for women and girls in the Netherlands. But I regret to say, I am the exception to the Dutch rule.

Let me take you through some facts and figures to sketch the state of play in the Netherlands in this day and age.

[slide 4 – labour participation]

The Netherlands is known for it's high percentage of women gaining a higher education and consequently for entering the labour market. As you can see the percentage of women

working over the last sixty years rose from less than 40 percent to over 60 percent in 2015. While the percentage of men on the other hand has slowly decreased from little over 90 percent to 70.

I have to make two remarks concerning this slide:

1. Please note that the net labour participation means working 12 hours or more in the Netherlands. We do this because we value economic independence of women and men. Employment of 12 hours is the bare minimum for economic independence. Therefore we do not work with the more usual figure of working at least 1 hour per week as is more or less common in many other countries.
2. The second remark I would like to make is: this statistic is the measure for the population aged 15 to 65. However a lot of young people have one or more part time jobs while they are in school or university. And a lot of men and women in their early sixties used so called early pension plans to stop working and start their pension early. [slide 5 – employment rate] If we correct these figures to the European parameters and compare them to the European average the percentages of labour participation of both women and men are slightly better in the Netherlands. As you can see in this slide.

The downside of these high percentages of labour market participation is: the high percentage of part time employment of women. Or to put it differently the low percentage of full time working women.

[slide 6 – part time workers in % of total employment]

As you can see 77 percent of all working women and 28 percent of men work part time in the Netherlands. The average number of hours women work is 26.4 in the Netherlands. Research shows us: Mothers who have a working partner work the least hours while young women with a partner and no children yet work the most hours. And interestingly enough men with a partner have the longest work weeks.

[slide 7– working hours disaggregated by education]

If we zoom deeper into the women working and look at their educational attainment, we see the general rule applied in the Netherlands too: the higher the education of women, the more hours they work. On average the number of hours worked per week by women with a higher education is at least 28.

I have not specified these figures for ethnicity but it is fair to say migrant women, for women of Turkish and Marroccan decent the numbers drop even more. Labour participation of these groups of women peak around 40 percent.

So these figures lead to the conclusion that only 53 percent of all women over the age of 20 in the Netherlands can be called economic independent. As said before me by minister Bussemaker. [slide 8 – economic independence] And this means they earn at least 900 euros per month on a paid job. Again it is fair to conclude that education is important to

achieve economic independence. 75 percent of women with a higher of university degree is economically independent in the Netherlands.

[Slide 9– emotional burden]

After showing you all these facts and figures about the labour market participation of men and women in the Netherlands, the main question is why do women work less hours in a paid job? Atria, recently conducted a study (commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and in cooperation with the Netherlands institute for social research) looking into the so-called third shift and it's effects on the labour participation of women and men.

The theory behind this notion of a third shift says women work triple shifts: unpaid in their household, at their paid job and once both jobs are done, they are still 'on the call' for third type of work: emotion work. So women experience less leisure time and more emotional burden even when they are just sitting on the couch.

The 3 main findings of the study were:

- Leisure time of women is more dispersed and it is spent mostly in the presence of their children;
- Women are focused on the needs and well being of others in their spare time while men use their spare time for fun activities, either for themselves or to undertake with the family;
- Interestingly enough: Fathers with busy schedules would like to have more leisure time.

[Slide 10 – average time spent on paid and unpaid work]

Leisure time is defined as the time left after paid and unpaid work are 'done'. Parents with children are working 50 hours per week, paid and unpaid, as you can see in this graph. However, the division between these two categories are reversed. Women work more hours unpaid while men work more or less the same hours paid. So Atria came to the conclusion that part time work is a strategy for women to cope.

To quote the Dutch monthly Opzij:

Women and men have the same amount of leisure time, but women have half the money, half the career and twice the worries.

[Slide 11 – pay gap]

Over the last 15 or so minutes I took you back to 60 years in time to the year 1956. Told you about the life of an average hard working woman in the Netherlands in 1956. I fast forwarded you to 2016 and gave you an overview of the current Dutch situation. And now I would like to use the last remaining minutes to look towards the future.

At this slide you see the pay gap disaggregated by age group in the Netherlands. And even though the figures for age groups over 40 are terrible, there is some good news too: The younger generation of women do better.

They graduated faster, with better grades and in a higher education than their male counterparts. And as you can see, for the first time in history they earn more than their male

counterparts too. This is a sign of hope. But, and there is always a big BUT. But they do not have children yet. So the question remains what will these young women and their partners decide when they start thinking about children? Will the women fall into the traditional motherhood pit and pay the motherhood penalty or will they, and by they I mean both these young women and their partners, decide differently. Make different life choices and therefore avoid the motherhood penalty?

[slide 13 – recommendations]

To facilitate these choices and to make sure this younger generation will not be afflicted by the motherhood penalty, Atria recommends the following:

1. Paid parental leave – for fathers and mothers. A parental leave that enables fathers to use it once the mothers start working after their maternity leave;
2. High quality day care with highly qualified and schooled day care workers;
3. A change in the Dutch school system – a system that is tailored for full time working parents;
4. A critical mass of women on boards (30 percent) is needed, with or without quota, for the reinforcement and reproduction of gender diversity in the boardroom.

[Slide 14 – Strong Woman]

I would like to end my presentation the way I started it. By turning to my grandmother once more. She passed away in 2002 at the age of 94 and only a month after she became a

great-grandmother. So I cannot ask her to reflect on her life anymore nor to comment on mine or compare our lives. All I can do is speculate.

I think she must have been chronically tired half her life and had felt the responsibilities weighing on her shoulders. I know she felt blessed by her fortunes and just lived through her ordeals. Her faith as well as her practicality kept her going. And probably most importantly she wished a different life for her children as well as her grandchildren. She made sure they got an education and a profession, all of them, the boys as well as the girls. I know for sure she was proud of me being her first grandchild, and a girl, to receive a university degree and having a life of my own.

This is in essence the same for every generation. We wish the next generation not to repeat our mistakes and to benefit of the gains achieved by previous generations. Together we can and should make this happen for the next ambitious young women who are entering the labour market right now and are eager to start their career.

I call upon all of you to make it happen for the next ambitious generation.

[Slide- 14]

Thank you.