



Femma's action
research about
the new full-time

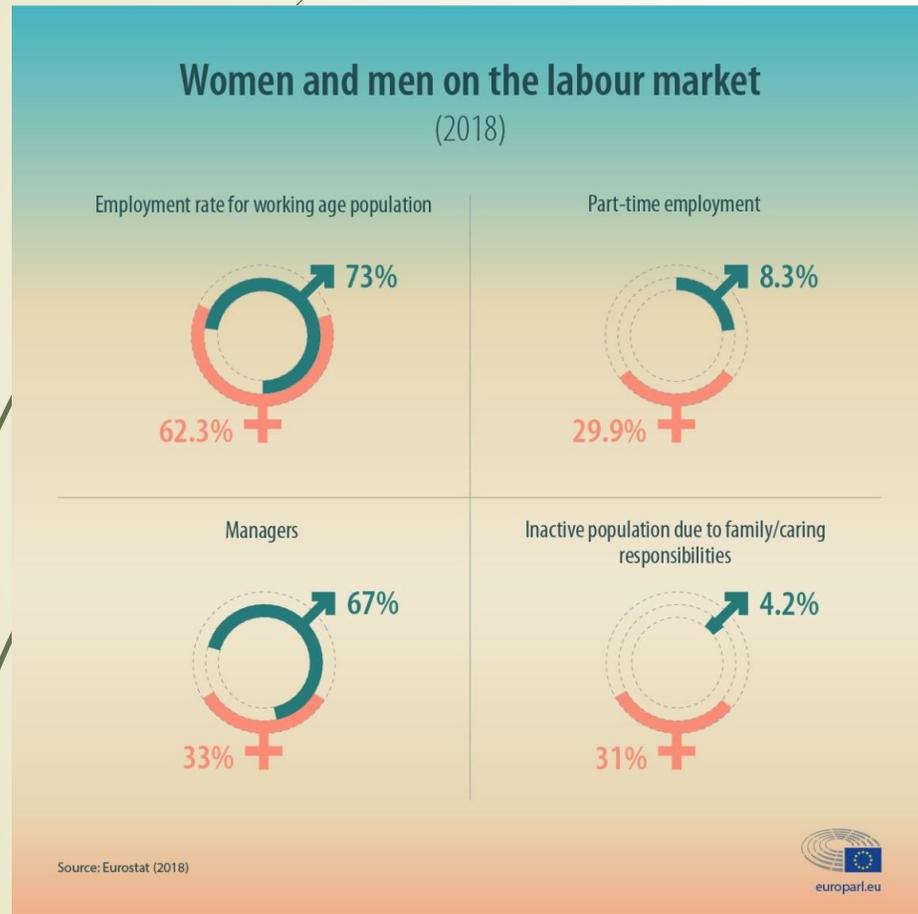




Approach

- ▶ Action research: why and how
 - ▶ The results of the action research
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Why a 30-hour workweek?



- More equality between men and women
- More socio-economic equality
- Revaluing unpaid work

Why an action research?



"I have flexible working hours and lots of holidays. Yet we still have to hurry to get the children to school and do household chores. This is because my wife has a busy job. She is often home late, so I do many of the tasks. We do not have any free time. No time for hobbies, our own development is on the back burner."

"I constantly feel like nothing must go wrong. Because if that happens, everything goes to hell. Due to the concurrence of circumstances there is no more margin. Moreover, I do the combination of two times 50%, and that is more than 100%. There is no margin, we will not stretch any further."

(focusgroup discussion 2017)

David Graeber

- ▶ *“Taking direct action by occupying a building or street, for example, makes us realise that there are alternatives to the existing situation. It makes us think about how we want to organise ourselves and society. It leads to reflection. When people experiment, they suddenly realise that much more is possible than they initially thought. It opens up perspectives..”*





How?



LEGAL-TECHNICAL



INVESTMENT



RESEARCH



Legal-Technical

Starting points: wage retention, same organisational goals, individual workload must not increase

Therefore:

- ▶ Implementation of a new work organisation
- ▶ Replaced 70% of the minus hours at organisation level
- ▶ Time management workshops for all the staff members
- ▶ Efficiency gains by working less hours

Also:

Collective agreement with design in four of five days

Placing in a broader legal framework



Investment



- ▶ Investment: staff cost increased by 2,7 % (2019 vs 2018)
 - ▶ Job creation (= good for government)
 - ▶ Outsourcing tasks
 - ▶ Reassessment
 - ▶ Decreasing overtime
 - ▶ Decreasing off-days
 - ▶ No use of care leave (= good for government)
 - ▶ Parttimers '28 hours' choose for the new fulltime of 30 hours



Research

Impact of 30-hour workweek on :

- The combination of work, care and leisure
 - General time-use
 - Organisation and experience of paid work
 - Organisation and experience of household tasks and (child)care
 - Personal leisure
 - Social relationships
 - Mental and physical well-being
 - The perception of family time by staff member's children
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Research partners

Research group TOR,VUB



- Respondents:
 - ❖ Staff members
 - ❖ Partners
- Method:
 - ❖ Diaries
 - ❖ Questionnaires
 - ❖ Focus groups and in-depth interviews

Kind & Samenleving



kind & samenleving

- Respondents:
 - ❖ Children of staff members
- Method:
 - ❖ Interviews



Research results



WISHES AND
SATISFACTION

MORE PEACE AND
BALANCE

MORE TIME FOR
HOUSEKEEPING,
LESS HOUSEHOLD
STRESS.

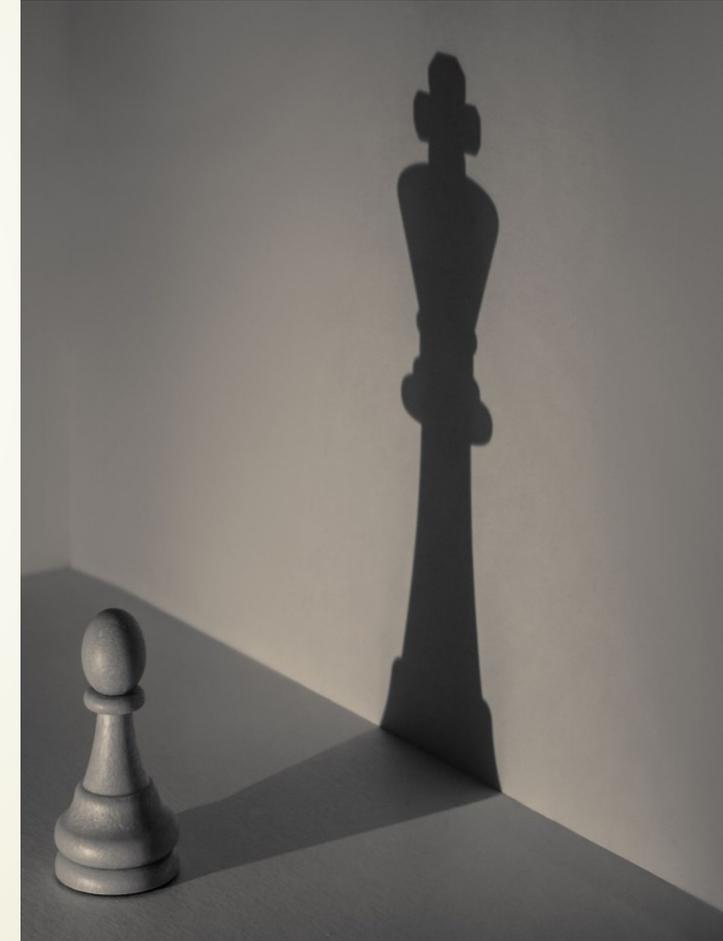
MORE TIME FOR
LEISURE, SOCIAL
CONTACTS AND
PERSONAL CARE

PARENTS AND
CHILDREN HAVE
MORE QUALITY
TIME

POSITIVE
EVALUATION OF
FEASIBILITY AND
QUALITY OF WORK

Wishes, reality and satisfaction

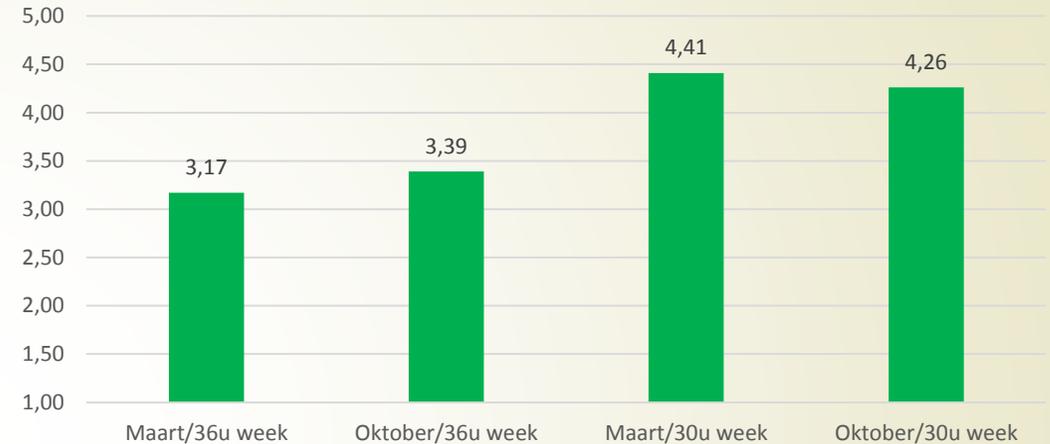
- ▶ Top 5 activities where respondents want to spend more time on:
 - Personal relaxation (83%),
 - Sports and exercise (69,95%),
 - Time with partner (62,7%),
 - Learning something new (62,55%)
 - Hobbies (62,2%).
- ▶ Full-time employees spend on average per week more time on:
 - Household work (37% of freed-up hours)
 - Personal care (20% of freed-up hours)
 - Leisure(28% of freed-up hours)
 - Child care (6% of freed-up hours)
 - Social participation and unpaid help (5% of freed-up hours)
- ▶ Satisfaction with the way they spent their extra time: 7,65/10



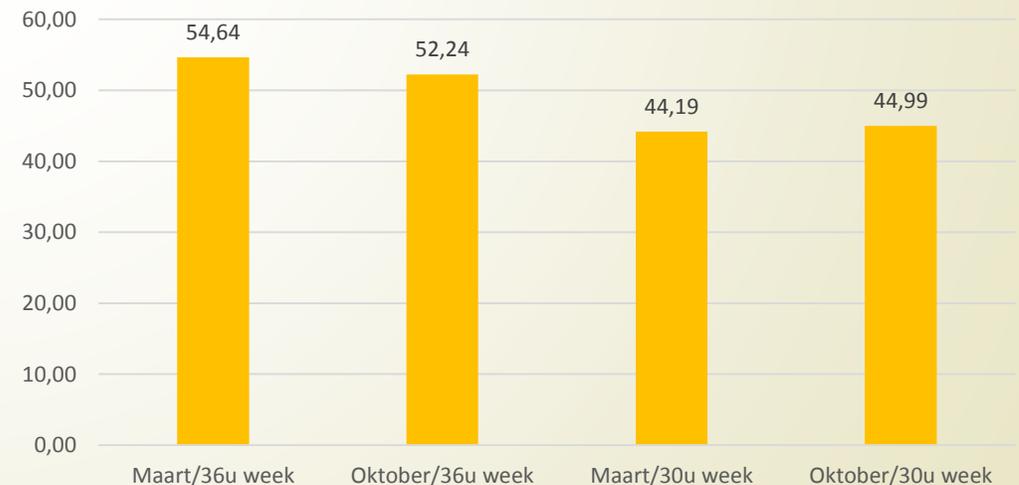
More peace and balance

- Improved satisfaction with the work life balance
- Decrease in work-to-life conflict
- Decrease in workload
- Decrease in general time pressure: no new activities

Satisfaction with the work life balance, full-time employees (scale 1-5)



General time pressure full-time employees (1- 100)



More time for housekeeping and less household stress

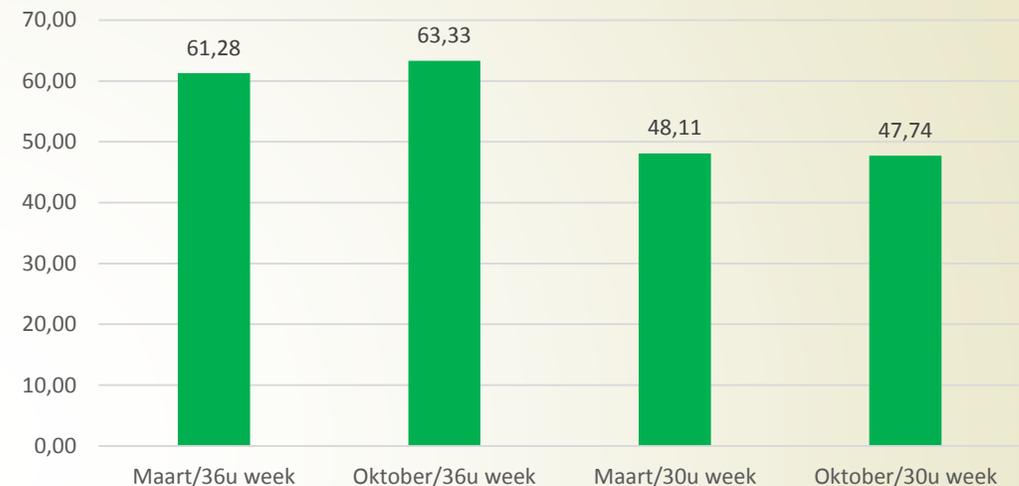
- ▶ More time for housekeeping than initially wished for
- ▶ Some people report tensions in the relationship
- ▶ Less household stress
- ▶ Less multitasking



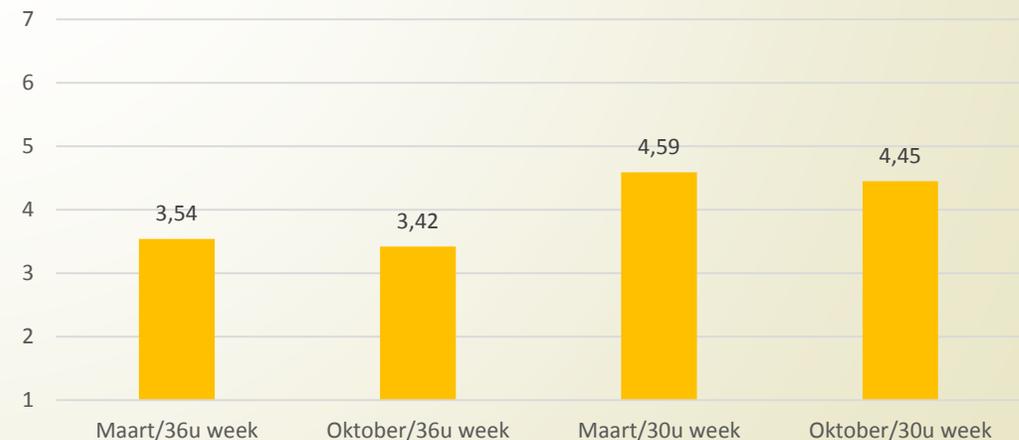
More time for leisure, social contacts & personal care

- More time for hobbies, no new leisure activities
- Improved quality of leisure time
- Improved satisfaction with the amount of leisure time

Leisure time pressure full-time staff members (1-100)

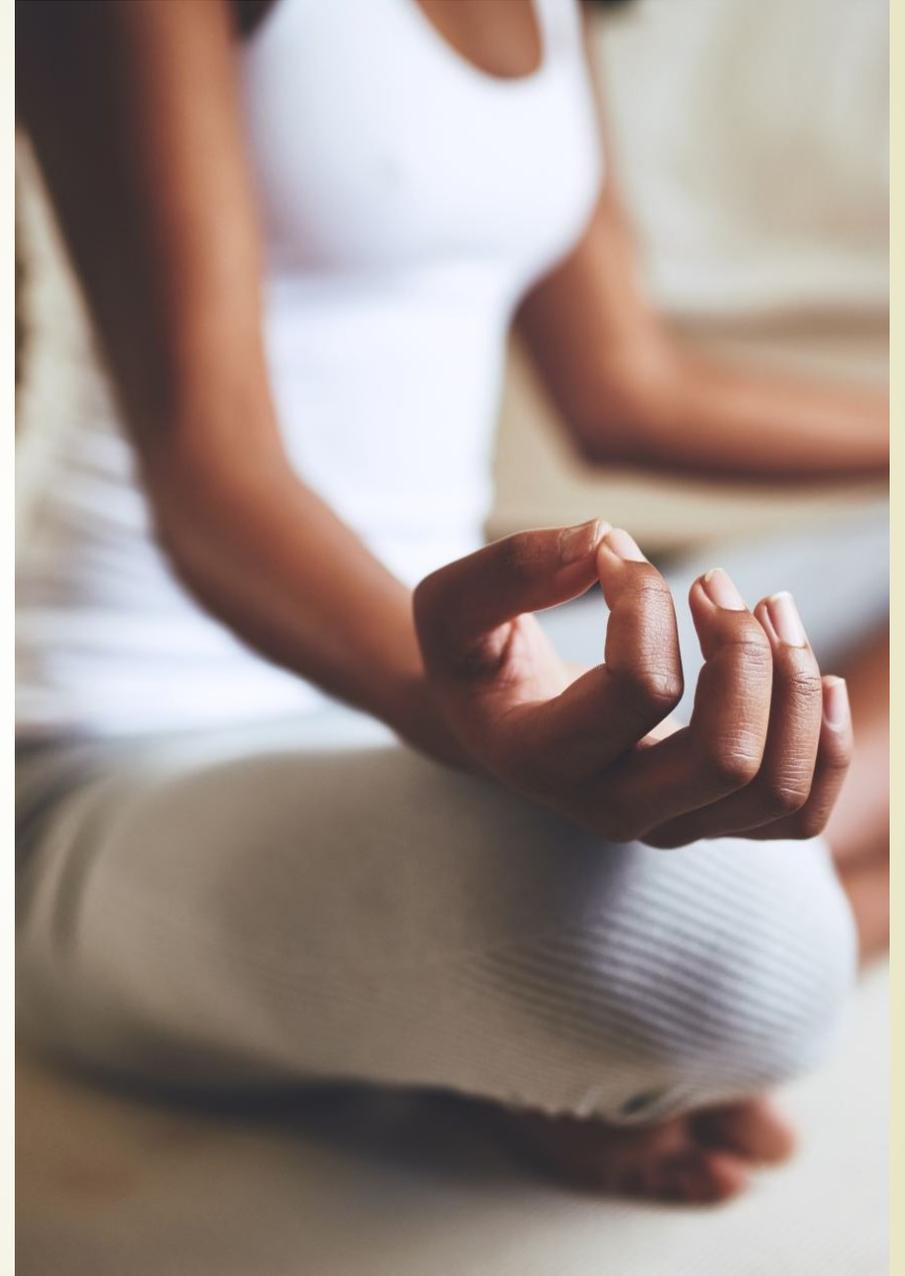


Satisfaction with amount of leisure time, full-time staff members (1-7)



More time for leisure, social contacts and personal care

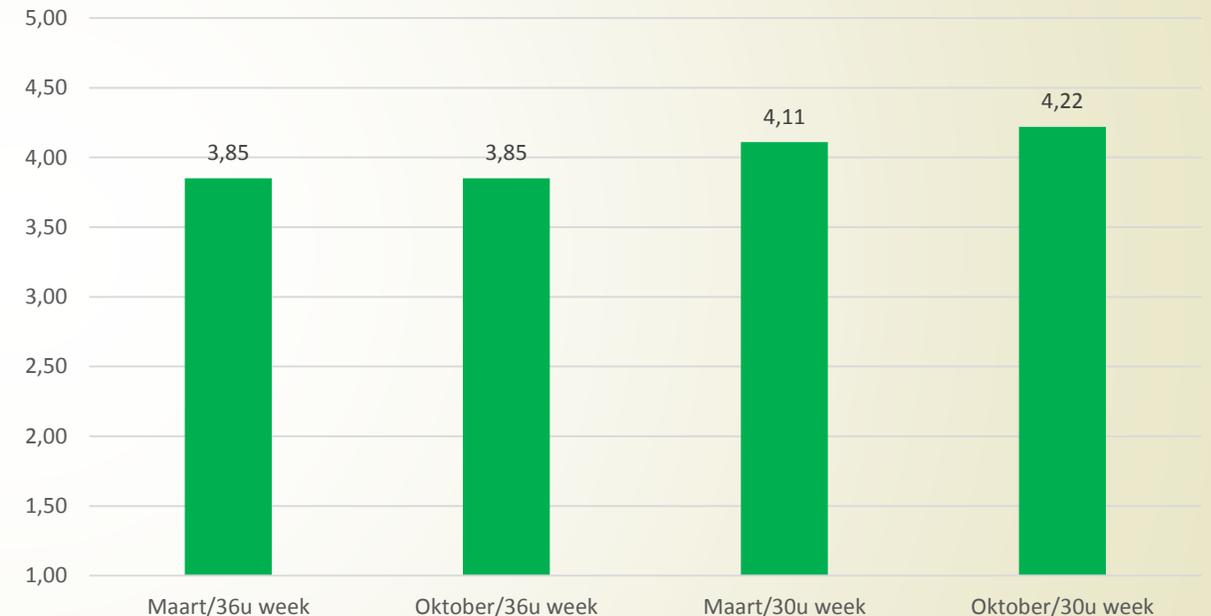
- ▶ Increase in social contacts
(families with young
children)
- ▶ Focus on children and
family, less on friends
- ▶ Increase in personal care
(mostly in families with
young children)



Parents experience more quality time:

- ▶ Slight increase in time spent with children. Slight transition from being together towards doing things together
- ▶ Improved relationship with children
- ▶ Satisfaction with organisation of childcare increases
- ▶ Polarisation regarding to division of childcare activities

Quality of time and relationship with the children, full-time staff members (1-5)





Children experience more quality time:

- ▶ Children like availability and presence of parents
- ▶ They feel stress and the loss of it
- ▶ Biggest impact on children who feel bottlenecks in family time



Children experience more quality time:

- More relaxed transition moments of the day
- More quality time: opportunity to do things together
- More autonomy: children have more control over family time



Positive evaluation of feasibility and quality of work

- ▶ Work tempo doesn't increase
- ▶ More focus and efficiency
- ▶ Absenteeism: decline "off-days"
- ▶ More employees see themselves working until retirement age
- ▶ Quality of work on individual and organizational level has been positively evaluated

Potential

- ▶ The new full-time deserves further research into its expansive social effects
- ▶ What would it be like if both partners work in the new full-time? Would that mean fewer women would need to work part-time? Would we divide the tasks more evenly at home? Would shops need to be open for less time, which would shorten the long working hours of many self-employed? Would our community life benefit from it? Would it lead to a more sustainable lifestyle? Does the new full-time also distribute labour in a more equitable way? Does it create more jobs?





More info?

- ▶ Full report in English: www.gerichtopevenwicht.be
 - ▶ Facebookgroup Kortere werkweek (B), shorter working week movement (UK), Seks timmars arbetsdag (SE)
 - ▶ Femmacontacts: lise.devooght@femma.be & jeroen.lievens@femma.be
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