



# Monitor of Inclusive and Sustainable Well-being

& the Sustainable Development Goals

2025

**Inclusive and sustainable well-being** refers to the quality of life here and now, as well as the extent to which this is achieved at the expense of the well-being of future generations or of people elsewhere in the world.

Well-being has three dimensions: 'here and now', 'later' and 'elsewhere'.

Well-being '**here and now**' concerns people that currently live in the Netherlands. It relates to people's quality of life and the quality of the environment in which they live.

Everyone who lives in the Netherlands is, in principle, equally free to lead a life that is valuable, regardless of their gender, age, religion, origin or other characteristics. In practice, not everybody has the same opportunities and not everyone makes the same choices. Well-being therefore differs across population groups and regions, and this is why we measure the distribution of well-being 'here and now'.

Well-being '**later**' concerns future generations in the Netherlands, who, in order to enjoy a similar level of well-being as we do today, will need access to the resources that the current generation is using.

It will be difficult for future generations to maintain a similar level of well-being if mutual trust breaks down and the social, societal and political participation of large groups decreases, if technology becomes obsolete or infrastructure is neglected, if the environment becomes polluted and nature no longer provides a suitable habitat for humans and animals, or if education is not accessible to everyone and people are not taught the skills that they need. Well-being 'later' thus relates to how sustainable our well-being is.

Well-being '**elsewhere**' concerns people in other countries who are affected by the positive and negative consequences – whether now or in the future – of the choices that we make in the Netherlands today.

This brochure provides a summary of the state of well-being in the Netherlands.

# Inclusive and sustainable well-being 'here and now'

**Well-being 'here and now' concerns the quality of life and the living environment of the people who currently live in the Netherlands.**

## **A society with high levels of satisfaction and trust**

Most Dutch people are satisfied with their lives in general and with specific aspects of their lives such as work, leisure time and housing. In 2024, 85.3 percent of Dutch people rated their lives with a score of 7 or over. Trust in other people is high compared with the EU27, and is increasing. Trust in institutions is also high and actually rose slightly in 2024.

Even so, less than half of the Dutch population (48.2 percent) feel that they can, to a large extent, decide freely how to live their lives. This is higher than in most other EU27 countries, but it does mean that more than half of the Dutch population feel they have little or limited control over their own lives.

## **Financial insecurity despite growing material well-being**

The financial resources of households are increasing. Poverty is falling and is low compared with other EU countries. However, the share of households with problem debts is rising, as is the share of households that are unable to heat their homes properly. While the share of the population with serious concerns about their financial future did fall in 2024, it remains higher than it was in 2021.

## **Abundant work opportunities, but work pays less**

Labour market shortages mean that there are plenty of opportunities to work. An ever increasing share of the population (aged 15-74) is in work, unemployment and unused labour potential are falling, and fewer people are worried about the possibility of losing their job. Labour participation is the highest in the EU and long-term unemployment is the lowest in the EU. The economic differences between men and women are decreasing.

The strong demand for workers is not reflected in the financial remuneration for work. Real hourly wages are among the highest in the EU, but have not increased since 2009. Indeed, real hourly wages were actually lower in 2023 than in 2009. The share of total earned income accounted for by remuneration from labour of employees and the self-employed is falling and the share taken up by company profits is increasing. The percentage of workers in flexible employment is the highest in the EU. Although satisfaction with work and leisure time is high, an increasing share of the working population is experiencing mental fatigue as a result of work.

**Housing is becoming more expensive and ever more young adults still live at home** The housing shortage is worsening. For 2024, this shortage is estimated at 400,000 homes. Renting or buying a home is becoming ever more expensive and Dutch people have relatively high housing costs. However, the percentage of household income spent on housing is falling. The impact of the housing shortage is also visible in the growth in the percentage of young adults still living at home. The percentage of dwellings without major defects fell sharply from 2023 to 2024.

## **Fewer harmful substances in the air but more environmental problems reported**

In some respects, the quality of our living environment is improving. The area of managed natural land areas is increasing. Nitrogen deposition on natural land areas, emissions of substances that cause acidification and urban exposure to particulate matter are all falling. On the other hand, never before have so many people been affected by environmental problems, and a relatively large and growing group of people experience noise pollution. The quality of water in nature is also insufficient.

## Trends in well-being 'here and now' at a glance

The circle below provides a visual representation of the trend and most recent change in all the indicators that, combined, form the 'here and now' dimension, grouped into eight themes. Below that, you can see how the Netherlands is doing in comparison with other EU countries on the same indicators.

### Key

Medium-term trend (8 years)  
Change (most recent year)



Increase in well-being

No change

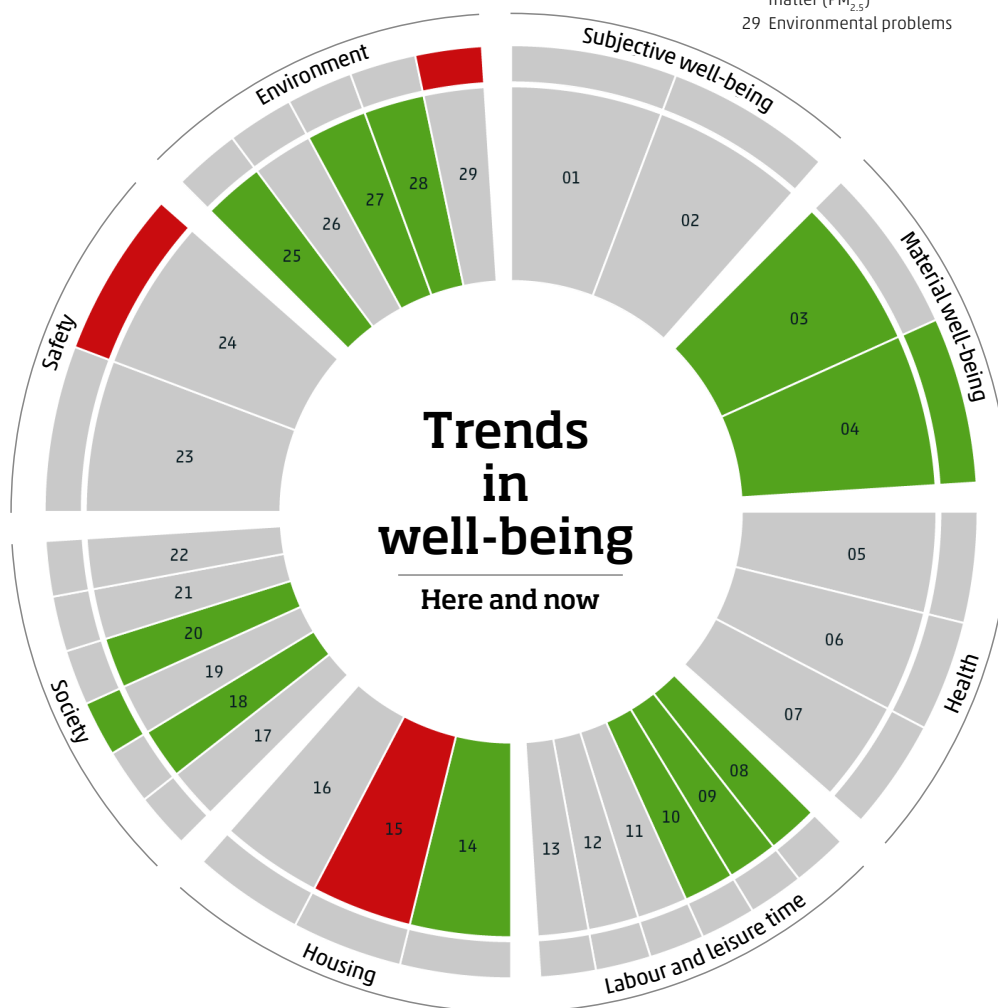
Decrease in well-being

Insufficient data (quality)

- 01 Satisfaction with life
- 02 Feeling in control of own life
- 03 Median disposable income
- 04 Individual consumption
- 05 Healthy life expectancy of men
- 06 Healthy life expectancy of women
- 07 Overweight adult population
- 08 Long-term unemployment
- 09 Net labour participation
- 10 Level of education achieved: HBO, WO
- 11 Satisfaction with leisure time

- 12 Time lost due to traffic congestion and delays
- 13 Satisfaction with work (employees)
- 14 Housing costs (rented and own homes)
- 15 Young adults (25-29 years) living with parents
- 16 Satisfaction with housing
- 17 Contact with family, friends or neighbours
- 18 Voice and accountability
- 19 Trust in institutions

- 20 Trust in other people
- 21 Changes in values and norms
- 22 Voluntary work
- 23 Often feeling unsafe in the neighbourhood
- 24 Victims of crime
- 25 Managed natural assets (terrestrial) within NNN
- 26 Quality of inland bathing waters
- 27 Nitrogen deposition and terrestrial nature areas
- 28 Urban exposure to particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)
- 29 Environmental problems

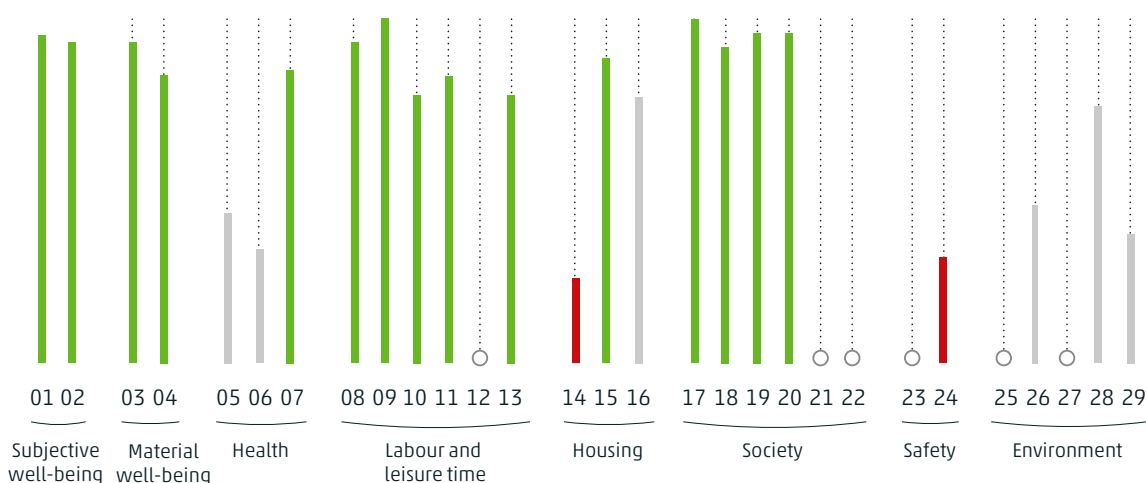


### EU ranking

The bars show the Netherlands' ranking in the European Union for each indicator.

### Key

- High ranking
- Middle ranking
- Low ranking
- No data



## **Inclusive and sustainable well-being 'later'**

**Well-being 'later' relates to the resources that will be available to future generations in order to achieve the same level of well-being that we enjoy today. Well-being appears to be becoming more sustainable, but the level is not high. Economic, human, natural and social capital are constant or increasing with the exception of two indicators. Compared with the other countries of the EU, however, the scores for the Netherlands are average or even on the low side. This indicates that, despite favourable developments, well-being 'later' is under pressure.**

### **Earning capacity of the economy less robust, productivity falling**

The quantity of economic capital appears to be healthy, and the trend is stable. However, it may be observed that the quantities of physical capital and knowledge capital per hour worked have gradually fallen over the past ten years. Moreover, investments are not increasing. As a proportion of GDP, investments in tangible fixed assets (such as machinery and buildings) and R&D are constant, whereas investments in ICT and civil engineering are falling. Only private R&D expenditure is increasing. The level of investments is average (R&D and ICT) or low (tangible fixed assets) in European terms. Investments in new capital goods, knowledge and technological innovations are required in order to maintain the earning capacity of the Dutch economy. One reason for this is that the ageing of the population is putting pressure on the financial sustainability of pensions and public services for the next generation. The economy is still growing, but mainly because Dutch people are working more hours in total. The growth in labour productivity has been declining for some time, and in 2023 and 2024 labour productivity actually fell.

### **Economy steadily becoming more sustainable**

Energy consumption is declining and the share of renewable energy is increasing. Companies are using less and less energy and materials in their production processes. Domestic material consumption and the greenhouse gas intensity of the Dutch economy are among the lowest in the EU, and greenhouse gas intensity is declining. A decoupling of greenhouse gas emissions and economic growth is taking place, in absolute terms.

### **Pressure on nature remains high despite minor improvements**

Spatial pressures are increasing due to the growing population. The space for nature has grown slightly, but the pressure on the natural system remains high due to excess phosphorus and nitrogen. More than 70 percent of natural land areas are affected by excess nitrogen. In addition, only 5.1 percent of the area of protected surface water meets the biological quality requirements.

Pressure on nature has an impact on biodiversity. Populations of meadow, field and farmyard birds are declining. The same is true of mammals, breeding birds, reptiles and butterflies characteristic of forest, heathland, dunes and extensively managed grasslands. Some species are doing better. The proportion of non-threatened species has increased slightly, to 61 percent in 2024. Populations of saltwater animal species have been growing since 2010. Animal species which are dependent on rivers, lakes and canals are also rising in number. The average trend in biodiversity can conceal major differences per species.

### **Pressure on the welfare state and quality of institutions**

Institutions which are necessary for the well-being of the current generation and for future generations appear to be running into trouble. Threats to well-being 'later' are gradually increasing due to long-term developments such as an ageing population, urbanisation and migration. There is a shortage of staff in all sectors. Rental and sale prices of houses are rising and people's mobility is being impeded by a shortage of homes. The viability of pensions and

## Trends in well-being 'later' at a glance

The circle below provides a visual representation of the trend and most recent change in all the indicators that, combined, form the 'later' dimension, grouped into four themes. Below that, you can see how the Netherlands is doing in comparison with other EU countries on the same indicators.

### Key

Medium-term trend (8 years)  
Change (most recent year)



Increase in well-being

No change

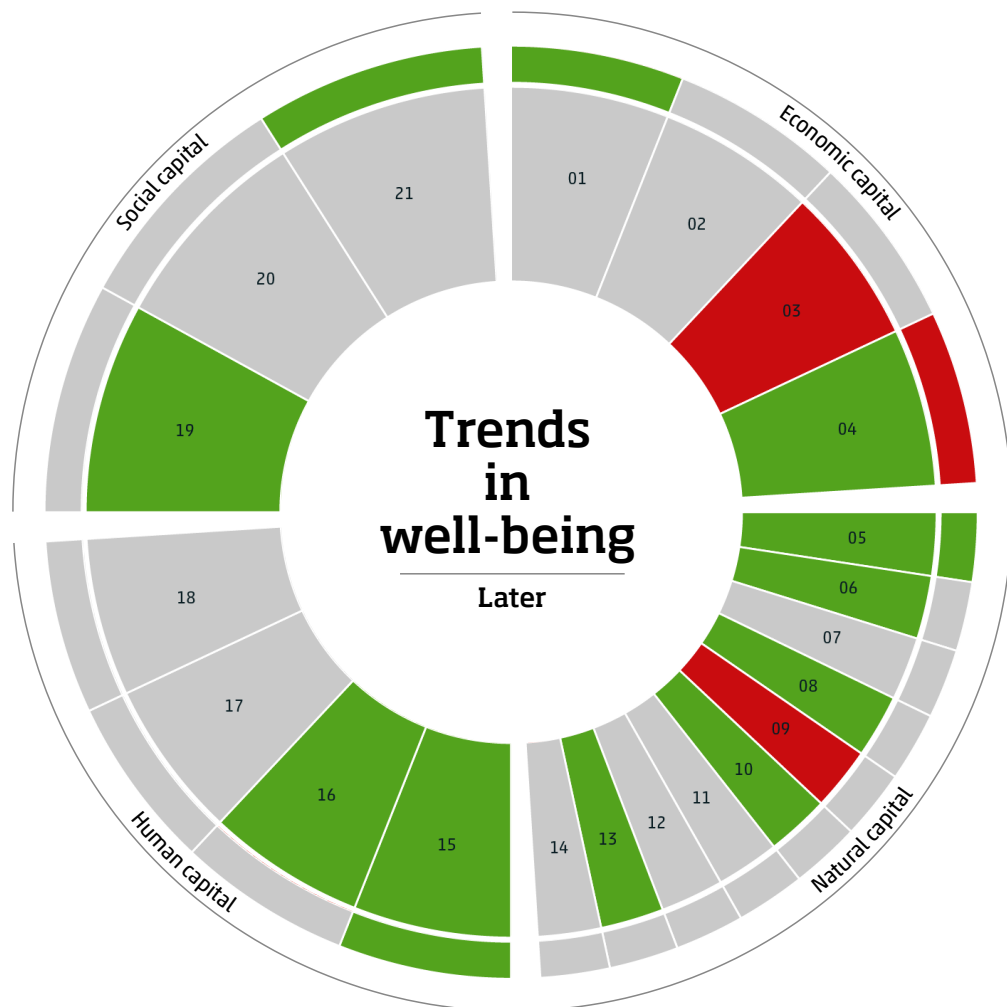
Decrease in well-being

Insufficient data (quality)

- 01 Physical capital stock
- 02 Knowledge capital stock
- 03 Average household debt
- 04 Median wealth of households
- 05 Renewable electricity capacity
- 06 Managed natural assets (terrestrial) within NNN
- 07 Phosphorus surplus
- 08 Nitrogen surplus
- 09 Fauna on land

- 10 Fauna in freshwater and marshes
- 11 Surface water with sufficient chemical quality
- 12 Ground water abstraction
- 13 Urban exposure to particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)
- 14 Cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- 15 Hours worked
- 16 Level of education achieved: HBO, WO
- 17 Healthy life expectancy of women

- 18 Healthy life expectancy of men
- 19 Trust in other people
- 20 Feelings of discrimination
- 21 Trust in institutions

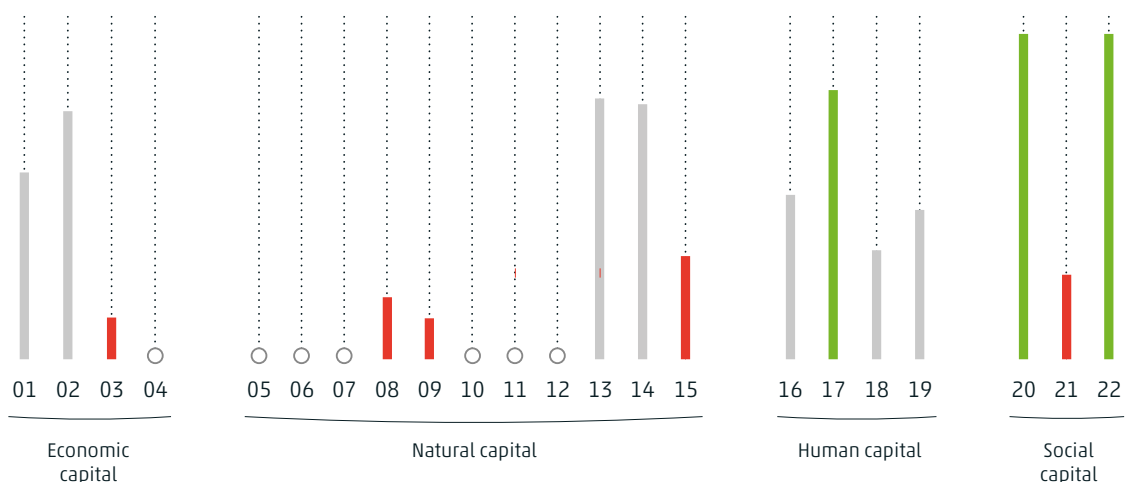


### EU ranking

The bars show the Netherlands' ranking in the European Union for each indicator.

### Key

- High ranking
- Middle ranking
- Low ranking
- No data



the welfare state are under pressure due to the ageing of the population. Trust in institutions is relatively high, but indicators for the quality of administration, such as the effectiveness of government administration and the rule of law, are gradually falling. However, the quality of Dutch public institutions remains high compared with other EU countries. Public debt is falling.

## **Inclusive and sustainable well-being 'elsewhere'**

**The choices that Dutch people make for their own well-being have consequences for the well-being of people elsewhere in the world. Most of the relevant indicators show no upward or downward trend.**

Imports of fossil fuels are falling, and the quantity of land required worldwide to make products for Dutch consumers is also decreasing. The material footprint is relatively low, whereas the land footprint and greenhouse gas footprint are average for the EU. The figures on the value of Dutch imports show that the benefits from this trade (jobs and income) primarily accrue to other affluent countries, with more than 90 percent of the value of goods coming from upper-middle-income and high-income countries.

The picture painted for well-being 'elsewhere' is probably overly positive. Many aspects are not easy to measure. For example, it is difficult to determine the quality of the jobs created elsewhere by Dutch imports. Moreover, the figures on the environment and raw materials are compared with countries which, like the Netherlands, are among those with the biggest footprints worldwide.

## **Young adults fall behind in terms of well-being**

Well-being 'here and now' is not distributed equally across the population: it is the least favourable for the youngest groups, those aged under 35, and is far more favourable for age groups from 45 and upwards. There are also differences between men and women which favour men, on average. But these differences are smaller than those between the different age groups, groups of different origin and groups of different levels of educational attainment. The most striking finding is that, compared to 2019, the position of the very youngest age group in particular has deteriorated, as has that of those with higher vocational or university education and people born outside Europe. By contrast, the positions of people whose level of educational attainment is primary or a prevocational secondary (VMBO) education and people born in the Netherlands with parents also born in the Netherlands were quite likely to have improved.

The differences between population groups seen for the separate indicators do not necessarily relate to the same people. At the individual level, favourable or unfavourable outcomes can accumulate across different themes. As a result, for some people we observe high well-being or low well-being across many themes. The accumulation of favourable outcomes is highly concentrated among those with higher vocational or university education, and among people born in the Netherlands whose parents were also born in the Netherlands. The accumulation of unfavourable outcomes is common among people whose maximum level of educational attainment is primary or prevocational secondary (VMBO) education, people born outside Europe and those aged 65 to 74. Compared to 2019, the group of people for whom unfavourable outcomes accumulate has shrunk slightly. As a result, the middle group – for whom neither favourable nor unfavourable outcomes accumulate – has increased. The group at the top of the distribution is unchanged.

## Trends in well-being 'elsewhere' at a glance

The circle below provides a visual representation of the trend and most recent change in all the indicators that, combined, form the 'elsewhere' dimension, grouped into two themes. Below that, you can see how the Netherlands is doing in comparison with other EU countries on the same indicators.

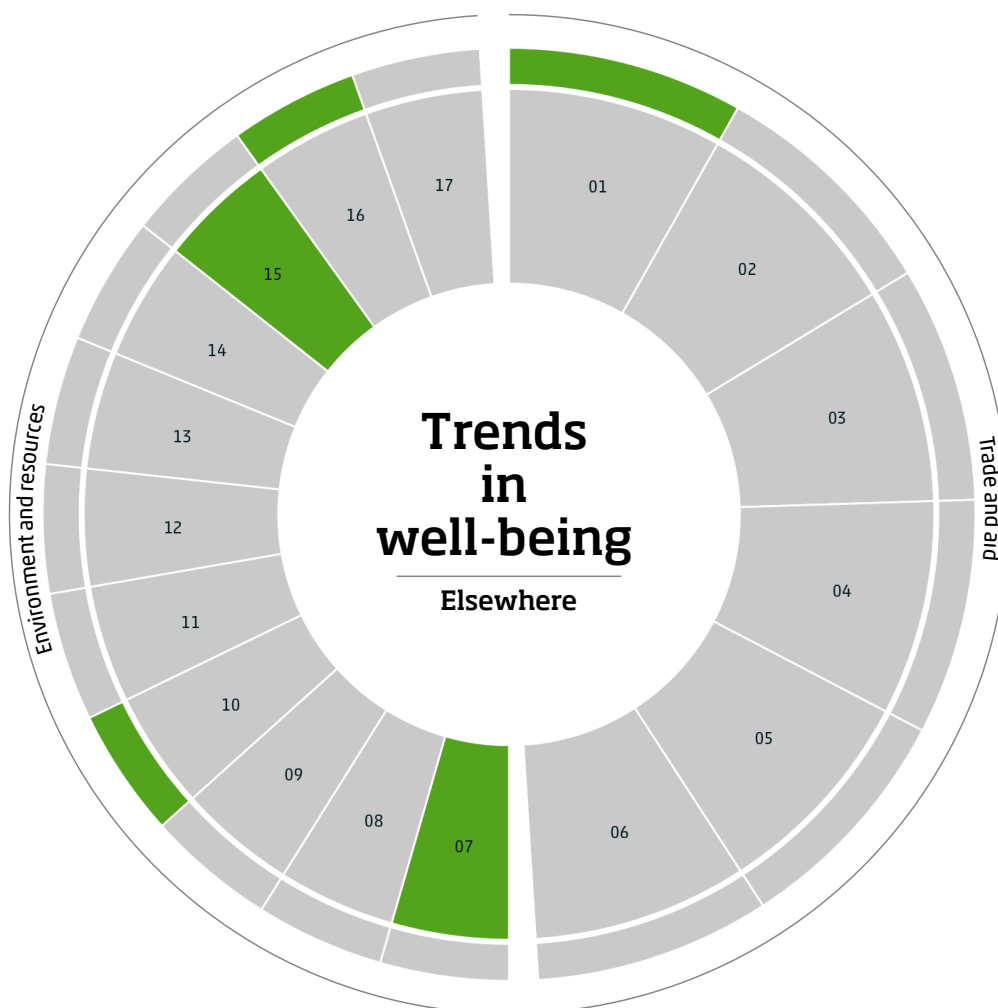
### Key

Medium-term trend (8 years)  
Change (most recent year)



Increase in well-being  
No change  
Decrease in well-being  
Insufficient data (quality)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 01 Imports of goods from low-income countries          | 09 Imports of metals                          |
| 02 Imports of goods from lower-middle-income countries | 10 Imports of metals from LDCs                |
| 03 Imports of goods from upper-middle-income countries | 11 Imports of non-metallic minerals           |
| 04 Imports of goods from high-income countries         | 12 Imports of non-metallic minerals from LDCs |
| 05 Official development assistance                     | 13 Biomass imports                            |
| 06 Remittances   | 14 Biomass imports from LDCs                  |
| 07 Fossil fuel imports                                 | 15 Land footprint                             |
| 08 Fossil fuel imports from LDCs                       | 16 Material footprint                         |
|  | 17 Greenhouse gas footprint                   |

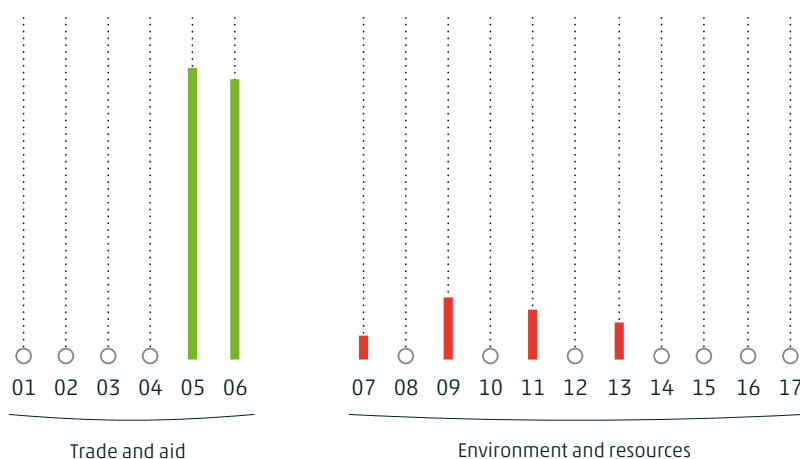


### EU ranking

The bars show the Netherlands' ranking in the European Union for each indicator.

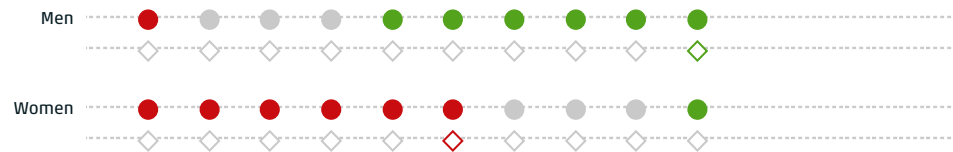
### Key

High ranking  
Middle ranking  
Low ranking  
No data

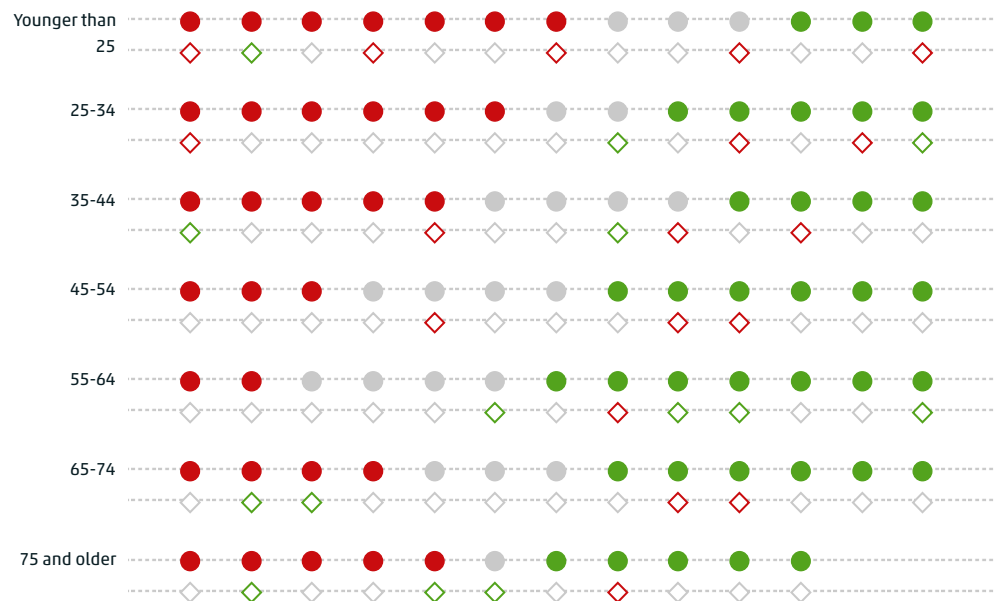


## Distribution of well-being in most recent year and relative development since 2019

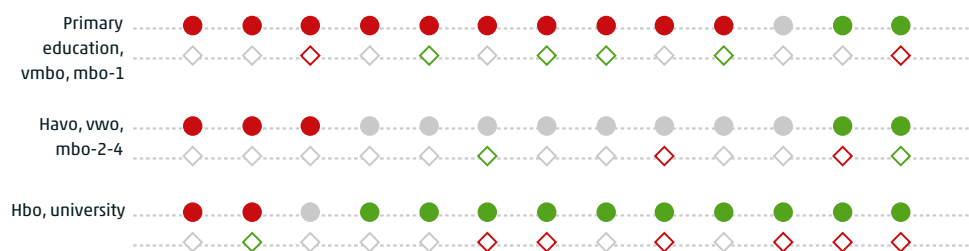
### Sex



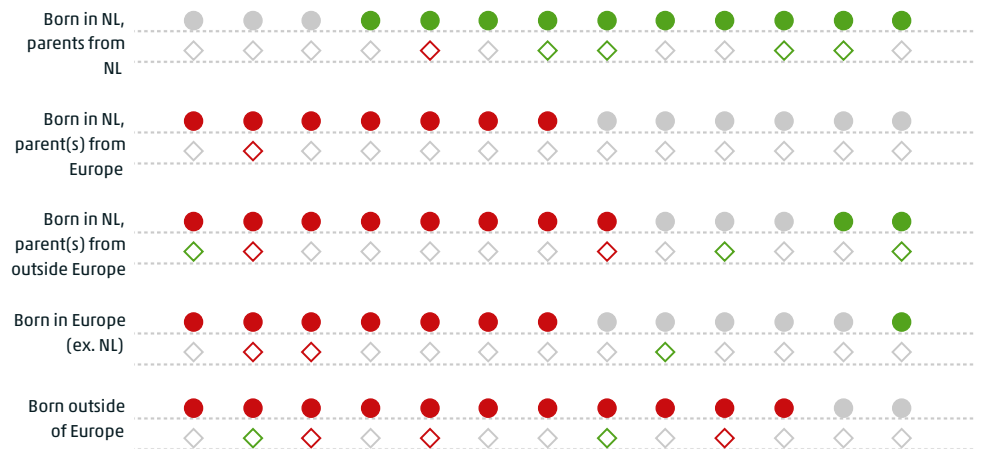
### Age



### Level of education



### Origin/country of birth



● Most recent year  
◇ Relative trend compared to 2019

The dots show for each indicator where population groups have significantly higher (green) or lower (red) well-being than the average for the whole population (grey). The diamonds indicate whether the value for a population group has changed, compared to 2019 (2022 for job satisfaction), more favourably (green) or more unfavourably (red) than the average for the whole population.

### Monitor of Inclusive and Sustainable Well-being & the Sustainable Development Goals 2025

The indicators in the 2025-edition were updated until 25 March, 2025. All underlying information is available on the Statistics Netherlands (CBS) website, including a technical explanation (in Dutch) and tables containing the data used. In the Monitor, the emphasis is on the medium-term trends, based on data points from the period of 2017 – 2024.



Facts that matter



Edition 2025