



# What If We Gave *Mental Load* A Sweep Up?

SPONTEX GREAT COMMITMENT





Our Engagement :  
For A Lighter *Mental Load* At Home  
STUDY — 2023

## Our approach

KEY RESULT  
**#1**  
MENTAL  
LOAD

KEY RESULT  
**#2**  
TASK  
SHARING

KEY RESULT  
**#3**  
STEREOTYPES

KEY RESULT  
**#4**  
THE  
CHANGE

What's  
next?



# Spontex is rubbing against an important subject

**You've all had to deal with it. It comes into your home uninvited, and it even takes up more space than the youngest family member. Worked it out yet?**

**We're talking about Mental Load.**

**And in particular, the mental load at home.\***

\*The term "Mental Load" was first coined in the 1980s by sociologist Monique Haicault. It then steadily gained popularity until it was officially added to the dictionary (Petit Larousse illustré 2020).



At Spontex, we're passionate about making everyday life easier. **Our motto, "Champion of Less Effort", declares this ambition loud and clear.** So, it's perfectly natural that we should continue on our journey by tackling such a complex social problem.

Quality of life at home is something that everyone should care about. **Our aim is simple: we want to implement specific actions that will help change people's domestic behaviours,** whether they're couples, housemates or families...

...to alleviate the mental load at home and share the burden in a fairer way.

*The mental load,  
we make it our mission,  
hedgehog's word!*



## A 2-step approach

How can we begin to address a problem as complex as this?

We have opted for a simple yet effective approach: analysing the current situation and then taking action.



### 1 ANALYSE

*Determine beliefs and behaviours*



### 2 ACT

*Work with experts to develop an action plan that can help alleviate the mental load*



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# Understanding before acting is essential!



*At Spontex, we know that to do a good job, you need good tools!*

But in this case, we're not talking about sponges or microfibres. We're talking about another essential tool: knowledge, in particular, knowledge about human behaviour relating to domestic tasks. By conducting a survey, we have attempted to measure the behaviour and beliefs linked to everyday household tasks and the associated mental load in six European countries.



## This study has allowed us to:

- ✓ Validate the current situation that we mentioned in the introduction
- ✓ Offer new insights on the subject
- ✓ Reveal new potential solutions and evaluate their potential
- ✓ Establish a starting point before implementing the action plan



Methodology: This online questionnaire was completed by 5,012 people in Spontex's six European markets – Spontex-Toluna-Inkidata Survey (France, Spain, Italy, Germany, the UK and the Czech Republic).

## Discover our 4 key results from the UK study

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## KEY RESULTS #1

# Mental Load - It Affects Everyone!

As its name suggests, mental load can be a real headache. It's not the number of tasks that wears you down; it's having to think about them, everywhere and all the time.





## WHAT IS THE MENTAL LOAD?

First and foremost, we wanted to determine what mental load is.

So, we asked our respondents the following question:



## What constitutes mental load in your everyday life?

(Select up to 4 responses)



## OUR ANALYSIS

**1** **Mental load is generally perceived more as a form of psychological pressure rather than a measure of workload.**

To this question, 40% chose "Having to think about several things at once" and only 26% chose "Doing essential household tasks".



**2** **The fear of not having enough time for yourself is also a serious negative consequence.**

This answer was chosen by 31% of respondents.





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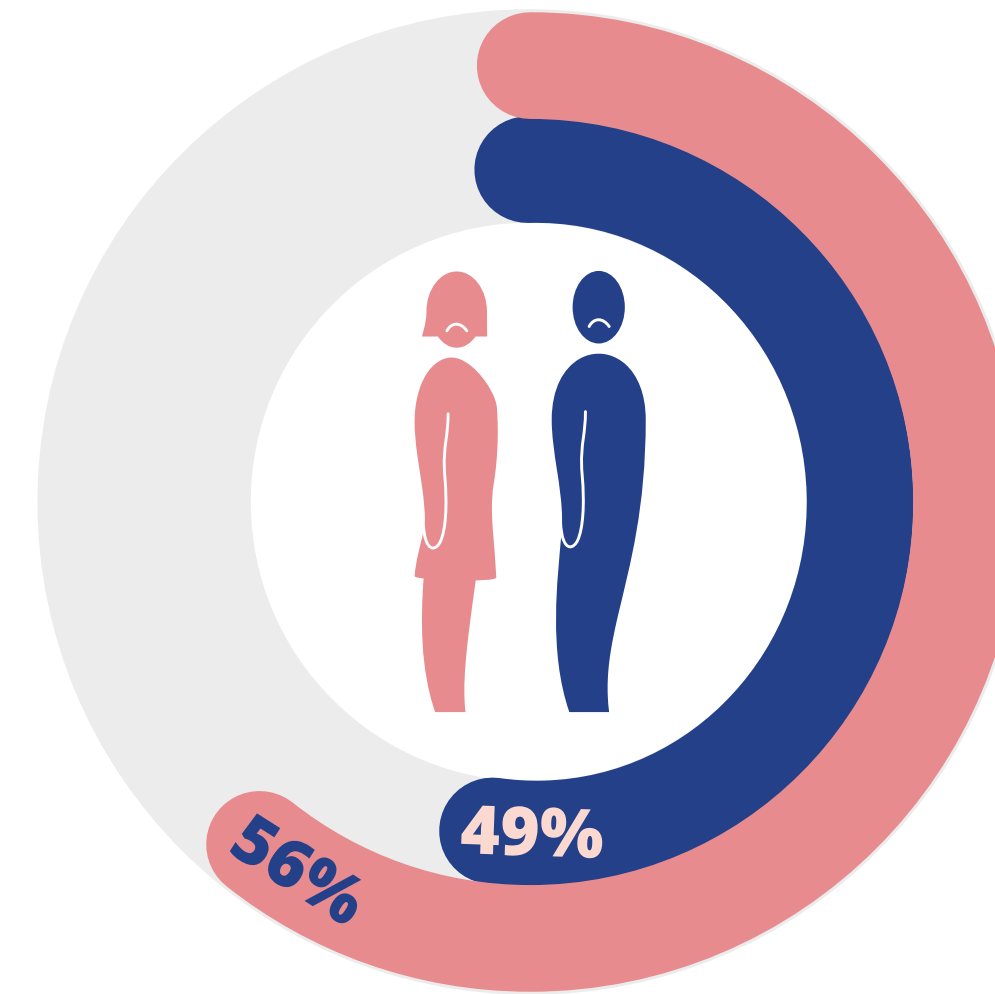
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AND WHAT ABOUT THE  
MENTAL LOAD AT HOME?

**The burden is just  
as significant for  
men as for women.**



**49% of men and  
56% of women  
considered mental  
load as a burden.**





## KEY RESULTS #2

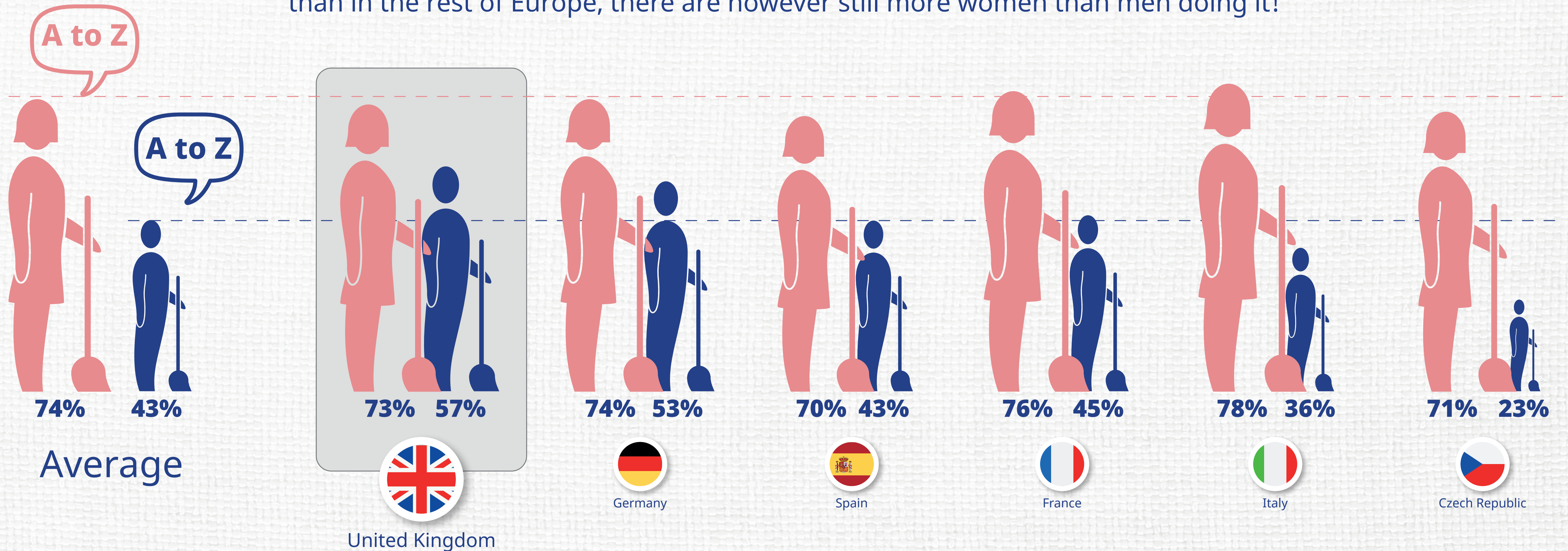
# At Home, Unequal Sharing of Tasks is Proving Difficult to Change

Contrary to certain common beliefs, the move towards equal sharing of domestic duties has barely gained momentum. Women still take care of the majority of domestic tasks and bear most of the mental load.



## Performing a task from start to finish\*... the REAL issue?

High disparities between percentages of women and men who claimed that they take care of **all their household duties from start to finish.** Even if the difference in the UK is lower than in the rest of Europe, there are however still more women than men doing it!

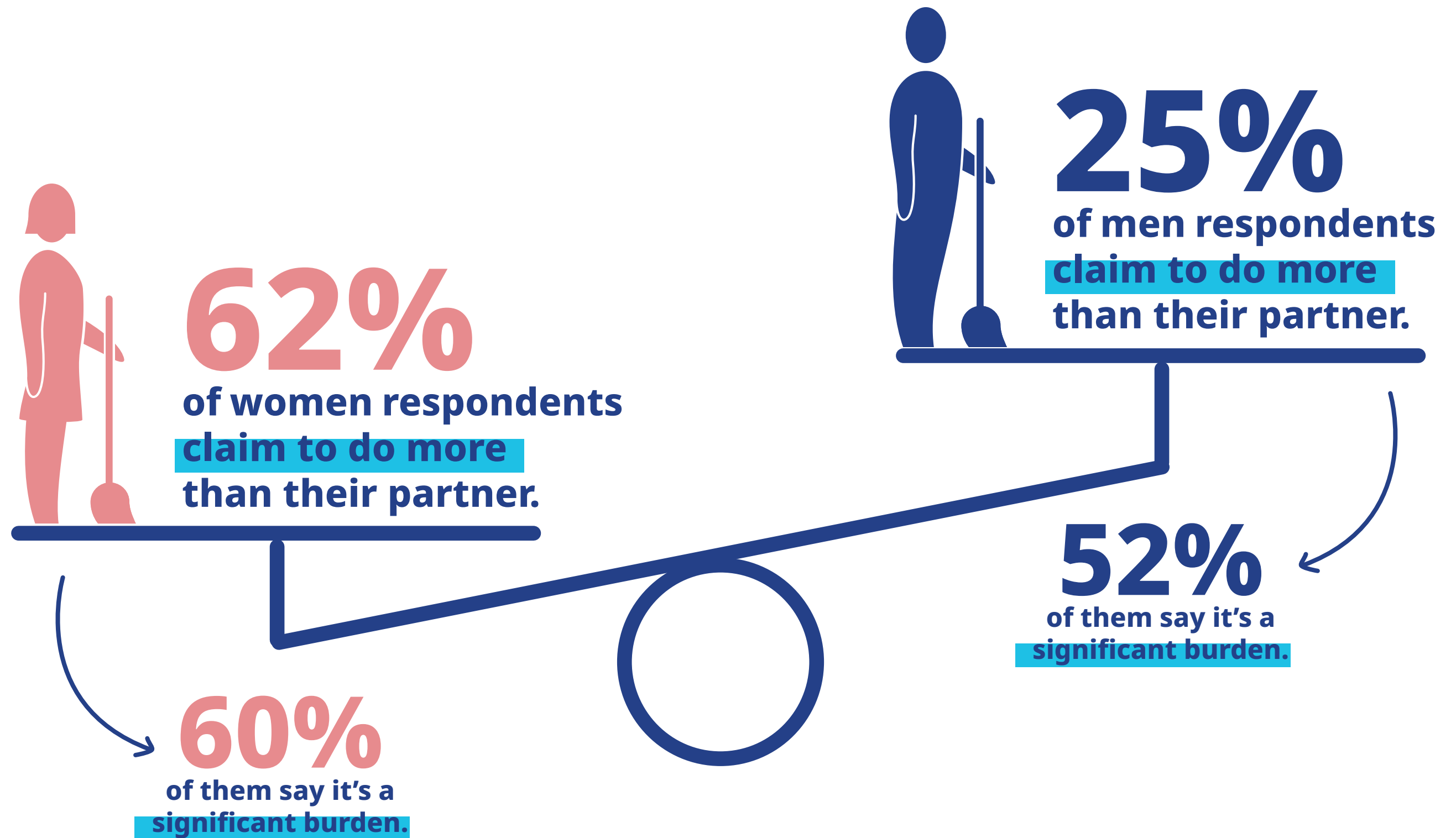


\*E.g., Planning meals AND cooking; sorting laundry AND loading the washing machine AND hanging it out AND putting it away; writing the shopping list AND doing the shopping.





Overall,  
domestic tasks  
are unequally  
shared...  
and women  
bear most of  
the mental load.



**In turn, this has a significant impact at the personal level for both men and women.**

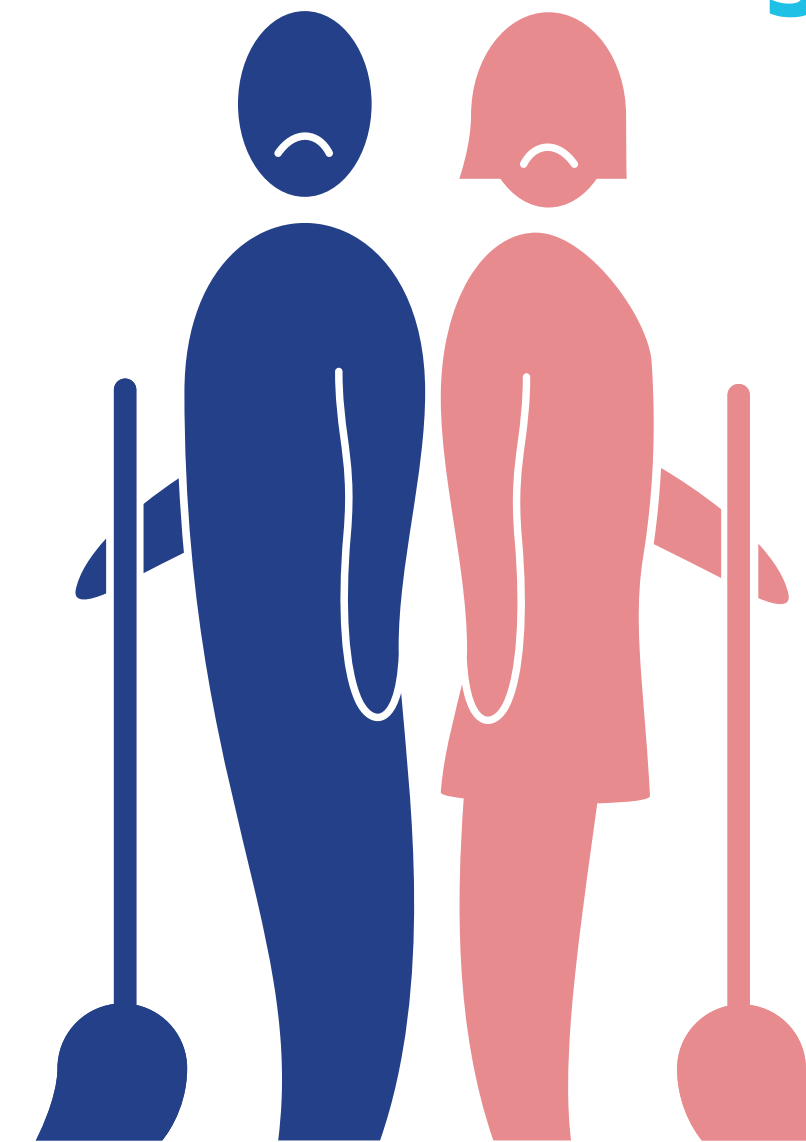


In response to the question "What bothers you the most about the fact that you do more than your partner?"...

... the most common responses were about frustration and lack of time for themselves.

I'm tired and feel overloaded  
57%

I think it's unfair  
29%



I don't have enough time for myself  
32%

My relatives don't recognise what I do for them  
32%

**The less financial  
independence  
someone has**

*(no matter the gender),  
the more likely they  
are to take on an  
unequal share of  
domestic duties.*



To the question “Do you feel that you do more than your partner?”



**73%**

of respondents  
earning much less  
than their partner  
*(both men and women)*  
answered yes *(a little  
more or a lot more).*



**29%**

of respondents  
earning much more  
than their partner  
*(both men and women)*  
answered yes *(a little  
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## KEY RESULTS #3

# Deeply Rooted Stereotypes and Underappreciated Work

The origins of these inequalities in the home can be found in persistent attitudes and ways of delegating tasks.



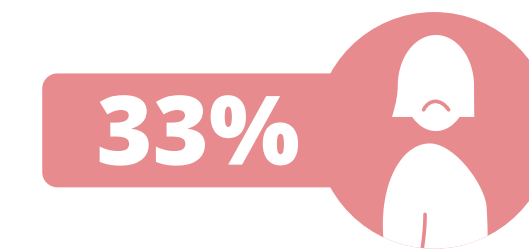


**Responses to the question “Do you delegate or not”**  
*(no matter the gender) especially reflected current stereotypes.*

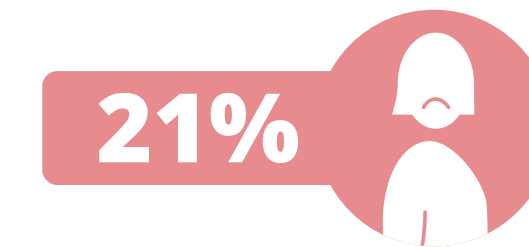
**38%**

**of respondents don't delegate...**

**... because...**



My partner/other doesn't do it in time  
*(vs 15% for men)*



My partner/other always finds excuses or avoids being asked  
*(vs 12% for men)*



It's my job to take care of the things I'm in charge of  
*(vs 33% for women)*

**The reasons for not delegating between women and men are slightly different: women endure while men choose to do so.**



Overall, all domestic tasks suffer from a general **lack of appreciation** and it can be observed on **two levels** (*no matter the gender*):

1

**A lack of recognition or gratitude at home**

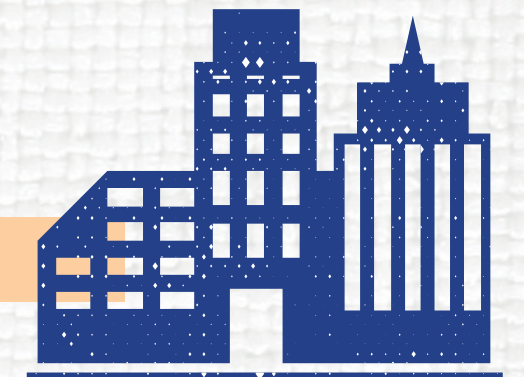


**70%**

of respondents feel they are not thanked enough for what they do!

2

**A lack of socio-economic appreciation within society**



**39%**

of respondents feel domestic work is not valued by society!





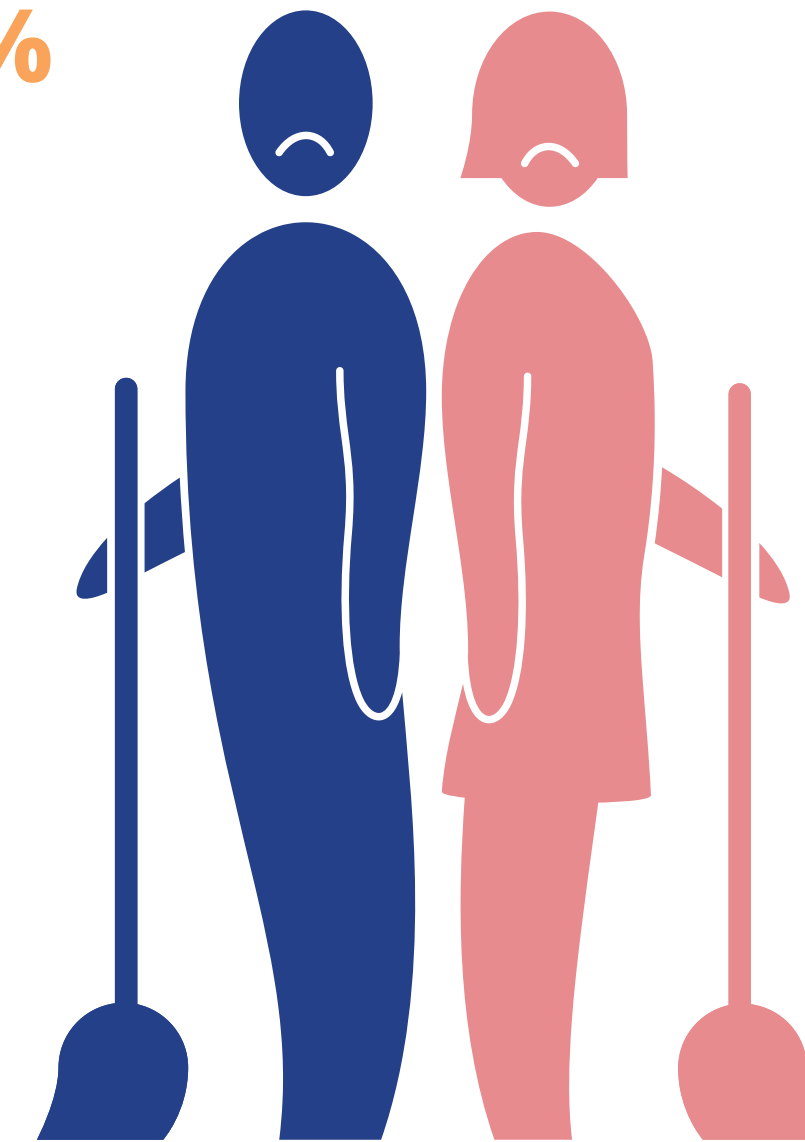


Here is a small selection of the excuses that clearly demonstrate the lack of importance attached to these tasks:

I don't have time  
50%

I'll do it later  
59%

I have more important things to do  
33%





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## KEY RESULTS #4

# There Is a Will to Change Things!





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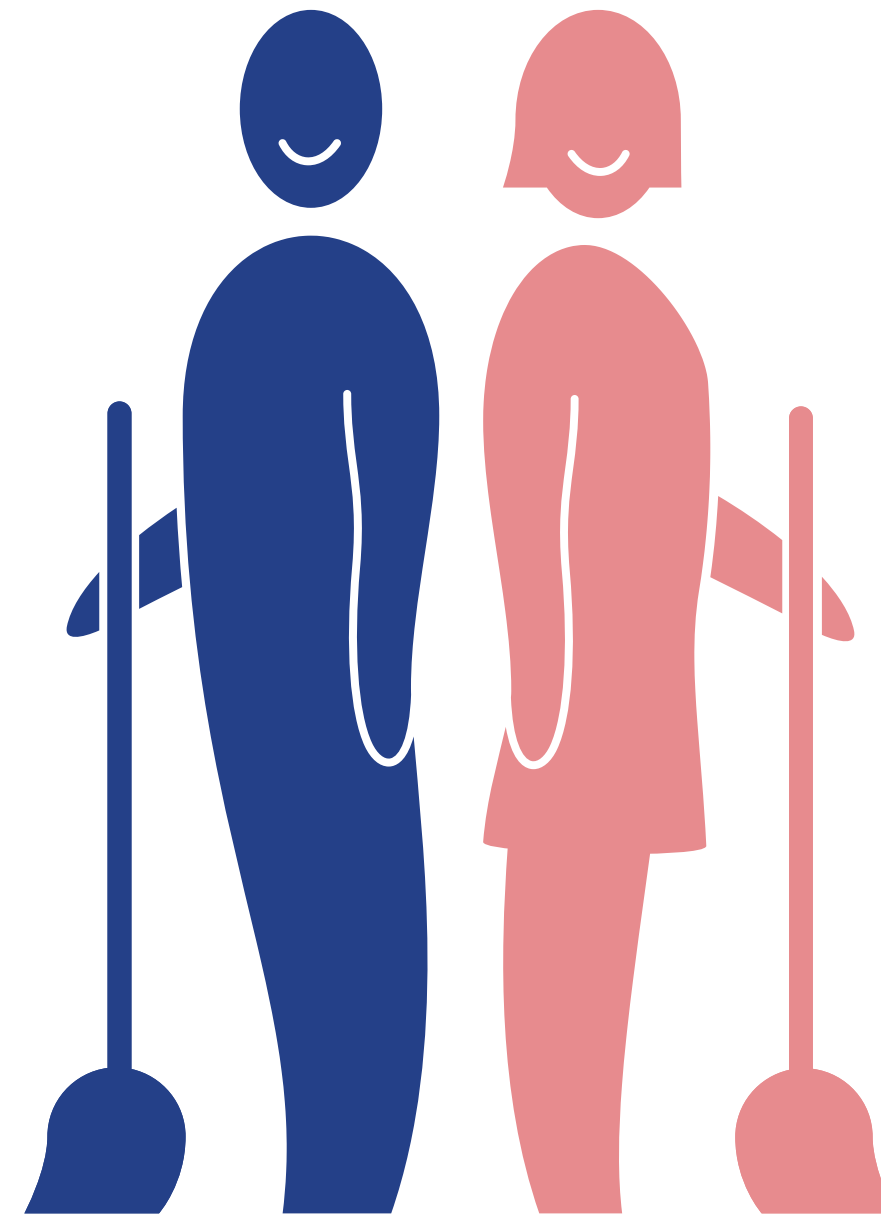
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Household  
duties should  
be shared out  
in a fairer way.



**82%**  
of respondents  
(both men and  
women) said it.

*Yes!!! There's still hope!*



For both the social and private spheres, what is needed for things to change is clear: **more recognition and a change in attitudes.**

THIS MEANS THAT THINGS CAN CHANGE IF:

1

**At home**

We learn how to set limits and make more time for ourselves

**31%**



We say thank you

**27%**



2

**In society**

We recognise the economic value of domestic work

**34%**



We change attitudes through education

**39%**





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WHAT'S NEXT?

And if We Dust  
It All Off?



## After the analysis, it's time to act!

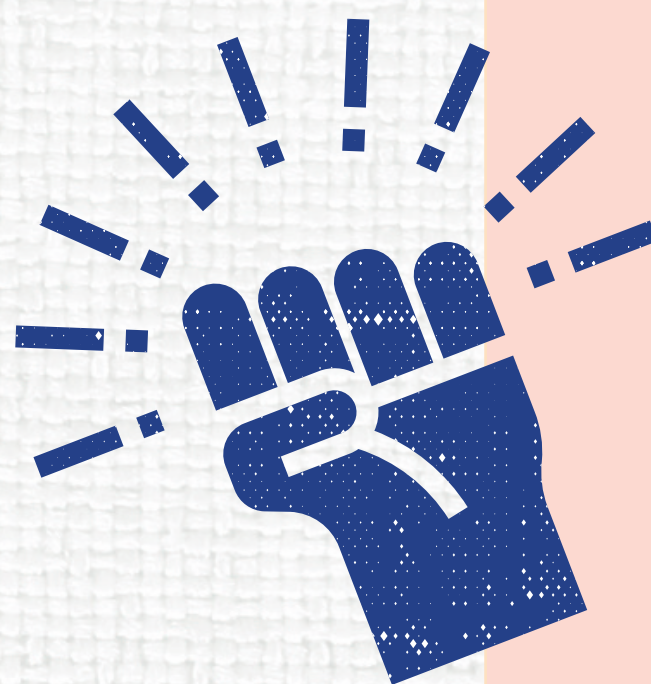
When it comes to a complex social problem like this one, **we need to roll up our sleeves and really take the bull by the horns.**

Even today, whilst awareness of inequality has grown considerably, the old attitudes and stereotypes still persist and are stopping progress. But **here at Spontex, as a "Champion of Less Effort", we're not just sitting around twiddling our thumbs.**



For more than **90 years now, we've been offering innovative, efficient products** to help men and women to save time in their daily lives.

**Today, we're pushing this agenda even further to clean up inequality and move towards a fairer division of household duties.**





**Our survey clearly demonstrates the need for change, and we're more motivated than ever to take on the challenge!**

**We bring together a top multi-disciplinary team of experts:**



**Thibaut de Saint Pol**, sociologist specialising in lifestyles and social inequality. He was also formerly the director of the National Institute for Youth and Public Education.



**Fabienne Silvestre**, consultant in the study of consumer markets and trends.



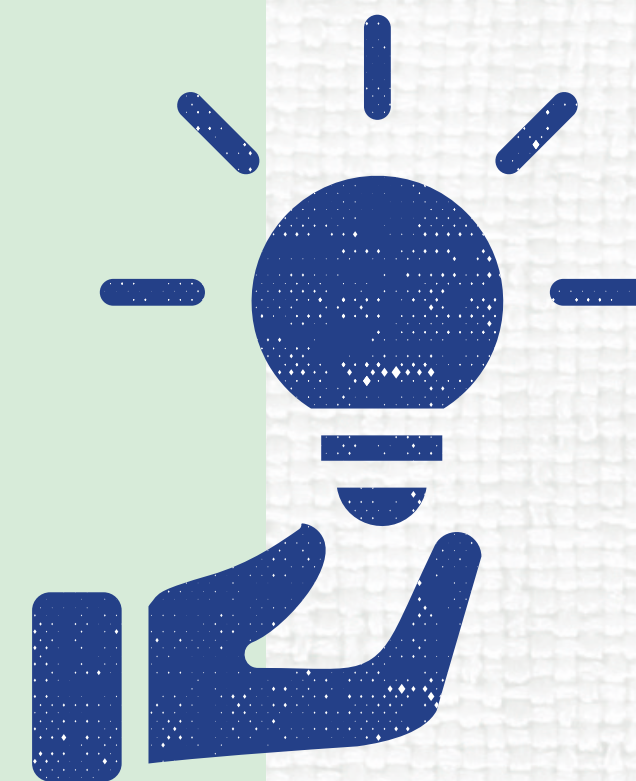
**Sandrine Raffin**, specialist in behavioural change and social marketing.



**The Spontex teams** that work every day to create products that make domestic life easier.



**The LinkUp teams** which supports companies in their commitment process.



*Our goal:*

**To identify the actions and solutions that will help alleviate the mental load borne by both men and women in everyday life.**

An action plan will be deployed in partnership with organizations and associations that will help us implement our actions in our European markets: France, Spain, Italy, Germany, the UK and the Czech Republic.





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with our latest actions?

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