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## Partner Check

(working title)

Wage Indicator Foundation, [www.wageindicator.org](http://www.wageindicator.org)

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Plantage Muidergracht 12, 1018TV Amsterdam, Netherlands

### Functional description:

Imagine the visitor at a particular WageIndicator website, clicking Check Your Partner and getting a portrait gallery of 8 men and 1 woman.

Now the visitor is invited to choose her age from a drop down menu between 15 and 30. Given her age the portraits may become more juvenile or older, up to a maximum of 10 years difference.

Next the visitor picks 1 picture, the picture turns and two of the texts/scenarios from the 9 groups below appear in tandem. Underneath these 2 scenarios a link to a deeper page/another website is posted. It provides more background information and a discussion platform.

### Aim of the tool:

- give insight into the economic effects of your partner choice now and 30 years from now
- in a playful way show the consequences of quitting your job and dedicate yourself to the upbringing of your children

### Display of the tool:

- as a flash application in the various WageIndicator websites; for an example of a flash tool see [workindicators.org](http://workindicators.org)

**Multicultural means pictures differing per region, i.e.:**

- Brazil
  - India
  - Southern Africa
  - Eastern Europe
  - Caucasus
  - Western Europe (suitable for Argentina too)
- Can be extended with more countries/regions/racial or cultural

environments.

**Multilingual:**

- the tool will offer the option to upload effortlessly new languages through xml in flash, a function that can also be performed by programmers other than the designers/builders of the application (Russian, Chinese, Hindi, Spanish etc.)

**Technical:**

- we don't go for the latest flash version, as the tool must be consulted also in poorer countries where presumably there is less sophistication in cyberspace yet
- xml for uploading and updating of texts

**Picture choice free from copyright.**

I

**Paul is 3 years younger and as educated as you are.**

Scenario 1

Since you are somewhat older you started your career a bit earlier. He's happy with your career and salary. Paul sets out on his own career. Once the kids come the two of you decide to hire a girl for the day-care and carry on with your careers. When you've reached 50 you find how surprisingly few female friends got on with their careers. You most probably won't die poor. You are a role model for your daughters.

Scenario 2

You are really good at your job and make a career fast. He is less fortunate and jealous of your professional success. Once the kids come he and your mother-in-law keep on nagging. Finally you stay home and look after the kids. When the kids have come of age you return to work. It's not easy, but your earlier working experience gets you a modest job. By now you are fed up and divorce

him. Your daughter has learned the lesson. She will only marry the man who respects her wish to keep on working as a mother.

## II

### **Armando is 3 years younger and less educated than you are.**

#### Scenario 1

You embark on a career, while he combines his less demanding job with looking after the house and the kids. An ideal constellation, especially since the house needs years of repair. Before you know you're approaching 50, happy with your life, kids and husband. He keeps you fit and free from work stress. He's happy to be provider of the proper work-life balance.

#### Scenario 2

You embark on a career and have children. But unfortunately his less demanding job and life style lead him astray. He starts having affairs and ruins your short-lived dream marriage. Yet your life is not ruined, as you are financially independent. Once over 50 you will live on comfortably and even can help finance the study of the kids. Do you miss a man in the house?

## III

### **John is your age and your professional colleague.**

#### Scenario 1

You are friends and decide to share everything: kids, home, career. He supports your career wish. He is understanding also when you have to put in more effort. And he knows that women usually get paid less. No reason to put you down. He's all for balance and harmony. You grow old together. If something untoward should happen, at least there are no financial problems. Each of you could and would easily support the other.

#### Scenario 2

You're happy in your job, beginning of a career, home, marriage and with your kids. Then your son gets a strange disease and must be looked after permanently. But there's no granny around to help out. Therefore you stop working, as your family needs John's higher income. After a long sickbed your son dies. A grievous consequence is that you and John grow apart emotionally and divorce. Now all you are left with is a meagre, unskilled job.

#### IV

##### **Michel is 3 years older and you are equally well educated.**

###### Scenario 1

You marry, have kids. You decide that Michel will make a career and you look after the babies. You will have your second working life later. You advise all your friends to do likewise: all the time in the world for the kids, no stress, Michel earns good money. He loves to see you and the kids making a home. The kids' job done – you're over 40 now – you learn a new trade with job perspectives. Michel gladly pays for your training course. Things work out fine. You get a suitable job and together you earn enough to pay for the childrens' studies.

###### Scenario 2

You both have nice jobs, a fine house and the kids are even better. You decide that Michel provides the family income while you look after the babies till they come of age. Then Michel is fired, but finds a new job some far away place. You move house. Then again: loss of job and removal. By now the family is unsettled and the money gone. You want to start working again. But the kids are still young and Michel insists on the deal. You stick it out together in the long run, but looking back at 50 you ask: what went wrong? Is this just life?

#### V

##### **Carlo is 5 years older and better educated, he's a foreigner.**

###### Scenario 1

You decide to move with Carlo to his native country. While learning the new language and adjusting to the different culture you have 2 babies. They make your happiness complete. You have no problem abstaining from a paid job. Many happy days make pleasant years. Before you know you're 50. You may have been dependent – and still are – on your husband's income, but you don't mind. You laid the foundation, Carlo opens the kids' perspectives.

###### Scenario 2

Carlo decides to stay. While he learns the language and adjusts to the new culture, he looks after the babies. After he's integrated into society he will find a suitable job. But then his academic qualifications are not acknowledged. And he has no other skills like general practitioner or plumber. So he gets unskilled work only and earns little. As a woman, you earn less than your male colleagues. The family makes ends meet, but no more. When you're 50 Carlo

pains for his place of birth. You let him go. To love you said goodbye a long time ago.

VI

**Daniel is 10 years older and better educated.**

Scenario 1

You are happily married. The money he makes! A good excuse to stay at home and look after the children. A wonderful period of your life begins. Once the kids have come of age you shift your caring attention to the family at large. Again, bliss! Alas, Daniel dies at 60. But in your early fifties you have no trouble finding a new man once you've overcome the loss of your husband. Maybe also because you made sure about the inheritance?

Scenario 2

You get married. When the kids come you start to realize that his having children with his ex, complicates matters. He loves those kids too and wants to give them just as much attention – and support. You thought that with him money would never be a problem? It now is. Divided Daniel cannot give all his kids all the care and support they need. So you have to look after your own, really. But still you depend on him for most of the money. Lesson for your daughter: double check. Marry a charming, protective older man, just because you fell in love?

VII

**You choose to live without 'him'.**

Scenario 1

You choose to live without 'him'. You're happy in your qualified job and social circle of standing. Your brothers protect and accompany you whenever the occasion demands you to be 'chaperoned' or show up with a male partner. This is how you socialize and network uninhibited. You do well all your working life and will certainly not die alone and destitute.

Scenario 2

You never found 'him'. Never found the time really to look for him. All your energy went into your career. Yet, at 50, you start to ask yourself if this was the right path. Your social circle is made up of women. You have learned that it's men who pull the strings in the labour market. You bumped your head against the glass ceiling once too often. You wouldn't know what to advise your sister's daughter. Alone in a dead end street? The life of a housewife?

## VIII

### **You choose a woman.**

#### Scenario 1

Living together in the big city makes you both happy. In your social environment there are more women like you two – and men for that matter. But you also count heterosexual couples amongst your friends. You live the full life, both have jobs and seriously consider taking kids. Would they restrict you in your ambitions and freedom? You conclude that kids would enrich your lives and not harm your financial prospects in the long run. You go for it and never regret!

#### Scenario 2

Living together in the big city makes you both happy. Then your partner leaves for the village to look after her ailing mother. She has to endure harassment from her siblings over you all the time. In this period she is fired due to prolonged absence. Never mind, you gladly support her financially. Mentally however, you slowly drift apart, like big city and village. After her mother finally dies she returns to live with you again. But it's too late. You don't match anymore. You pity and keep supporting her, though you both approach 50 by now. The first quarrel with your new partner is about the money that goes to your ex. You are at a loss for a good reason.

## IX

### **You settle for single status with children.**

#### Scenario 1

While trying to finish your studies you become pregnant. The father is a fellow student. You decide to keep the baby. The father goes his own way. Your mom looks after the baby while you finish your studies, following dad's advice. Then the first job. A new boy friend. You like men and find it hard to settle for one. Oops, another baby. As a single mother you have to work hard to make enough money. But you get by. Parents, friends and even the visiting fathers admire your stamina and assist with whatever they can. The kids help out in the house. At 50 you can proudly say that you have always been independent, financially too.

#### Scenario 2

You really want a baby and marry early, not thinking twice. Your immature husband tires of his little family soon and quits, making you a single working mother. Hard times, little fun. Your solution is to remarry, this time for good. You find him soon enough and relax. Your first baby gets a little brother and

sister. Your man earns little, so you start on a job too, part time. You cannot afford day-care for the kids. As a result you're locked up in a life of near poverty. There's no way out for you. But there is for your husband: he leaves you and the kids to cater for yourself. As soon as they can the kids have to contribute to the household income. No study for them, no more future for you.