

# Plan of action Changing Places in the Netherlands 2023-2025



## Summary

October 2023 - Karin Stikma



## **Did you know that there is a group of children and people with disabilities who cannot go out, have fun in attractions or the soccer stadium because there is no proper toilet facility available?**

### **No toilet facility?**

A specific group, children and adults with severe physical or (very) severe multiple disabilities, needs a special facility with a laying care area as a toilet facility. Internationally this facility is known as a Changing Places toilet. In the Netherlands we do not yet have any official Changing Place(s) toilets.

Stichting het Gehandicapte Kind has taken the initiative with Joint Projects to address this problem and to motivate the Netherlands to change this. We find it important that everyone can have fun everywhere and can go out together. That also means that everyone should be able to go to the toilet!



**“A good care facility for Bram allows us as a family to enjoy a whole day out as well.”**

### **Size of target group**

About 100,000 people need this facility.

### **Our dream: 2,501 Changing Places in the Netherlands**

Our big dream is to establish 2,501 Changing Places in the Netherlands by 2044 at the latest. Why that number? We have 2,501 residential places in the Netherlands, which means that such a vital place can be available close by in every residential place.

And that is possible. In England they already realize 125 new Changing Places toilets per year. They now have a total of 1,942 throughout the country.

For the shorter term, we have the following goal:

### **Realizing 30 Changing Places up until 2025.**



**“Having to change your big child in a corner on the floor in a public space is really degrading.”**

## Impact

By placing a Changing Place, we make an impact in several ways. First, of course, there is **personal impact** for the experiencer himself. Simply being able to go to the bathroom when you need to like everyone else should be the most normal thing in the world. In addition, there is **social impact**. That's about being connected to the world around you and belonging, being allowed to "participate without restriction. By offering a Changing Places toilet facility, the entrepreneur is also making an **economic impact**. By investing in this new product-market combination, he/she is showing his/her social face. Finally, there is a **societal impact**. By investing in a Changing Places toilet, you show as a municipality and entrepreneur that inclusion is something that comes naturally.



"Usually, we cannot change,  
so we go home."

## What is then a Changing Place?

A Changing Places toilet is a toilet facility that meets a number of requirements. Specifically, it is a facility for people who use a wheelchair and cannot independently make the transfer to a toilet or adult stretcher. To go to the toilet, they need a toilet facility that includes a high-low adult stretcher, an elevator, a wheelchair-accessible toilet, a high-low sink and a sealable trash can.



"I want to be able to change my daughter  
in a humane way."

## What did we do?

From January to June 2023, the following activities were undertaken to identify how to realize our dream:

- Interviews with decision makers
- Online survey of need for lying care places
- Desk research at home and abroad
- Recruitment & selection of (kinship) experience experts (the so-called Changing Places Rebellion Team)
- Co-creation session with various stakeholders
- Outline campaign/communication plan
- Explore realization of first Changing Places toilet



We saw much enthusiasm and commitment to start tackling this invisible, urgent problem. All in all, we received great input from various stakeholders for the creation of a concrete plan of action.

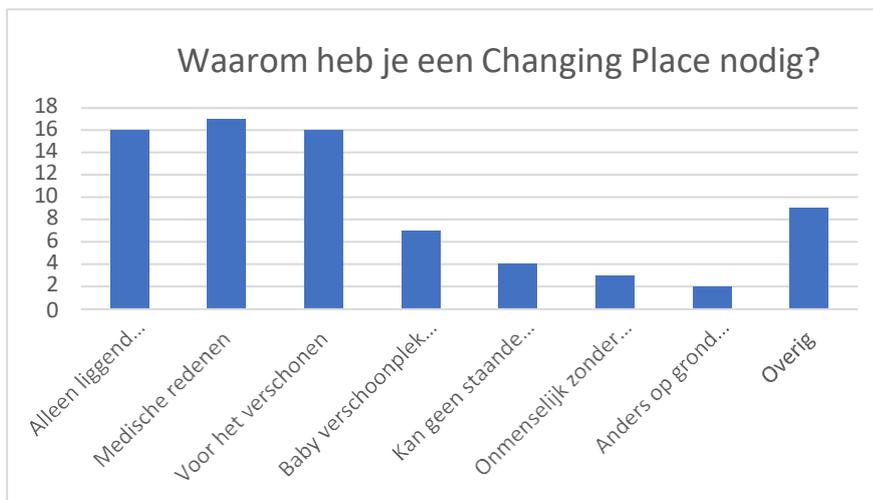
## Need assessment

As described above, we conducted research on the need for a Changing Places restroom last period (Jan - June 2023).

The following highlights the most striking results from the online survey (n = 64). For example, it appears that Changing Places toilets are especially needed in the following leisure venues:

1. Amusement Parks,
2. Shopping Centers,
3. Zoos,
4. Museums and Restaurants.

To the question "*Why do you need a Changing Place?*", as shown in Figure 1, the following answers were given: lying down changing only (16x), for changing (16x) or medical reasons (17x).



**Figuur 1:** De noodzaak van een Changing Place toilet

It was then asked "**How** do you now arrange sanitation for yourself or the person you are out with? This question therefore related to the process. To this, the following answers were most common: planning carefully; in unorthodox places; taking precautions; and finding places where you can. Not changing was also mentioned.



**"I often have problems on a day trip because I can't find a suitable restroom. Sometimes I just stay near home then."**



**Figuur 2:** Het proces van verzorging als je op stap bent

The sanitation of the person themselves or of the person someone is out with most often occurs in the following places: on the floor (often of a toilet); in the car/bus; in an enclosed space; at home or in an open space (for example, a bed in the IKEA was mentioned).



**Figuur 3:** De plekken waar nu verzorging plaatsvindt



**“Because of personal integrity,  
I want to change my child at a Changing Place.”**

## Locations on their way to full Changing Places restrooms

Furthermore, in order to get a picture of current lying care places, the Hoge Nood app inventoried which locations in the Netherlands have an adult stretcher. In addition, the overview of "Changing Places" toilets on the website of Nederland Toegankelijk was studied. A total of 77 locations were involved. Categorized by type of leisure location and distribution, it looks as follows:



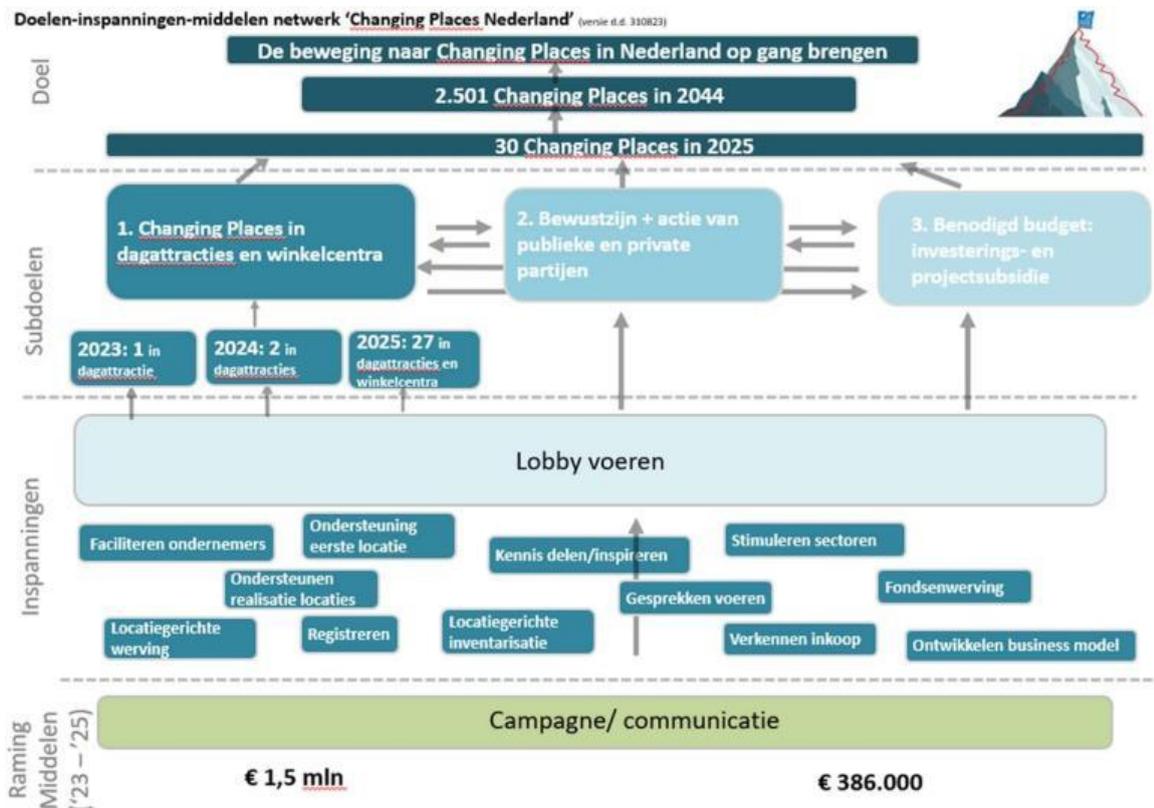
## What will we do in the period 2023-2025?

The coordination of the program lies with Stichting het Gehandicapte Kind, which is engaging Joint Projects for this purpose. We will actively collaborate with a program team, with the Changing Places Rebels Team and involved stakeholders.



**"In order to participate fully, lying care facilities are needed."**

## For the next 2.5 years, we want to execute the following program:



- Changing Places in day attractions and shopping malls.  
 We will realize a first pilot location in 2023 and two showcases in 2024. Once those are ready, we can then take the next step to 10 new locations in both day attractions and shopping malls. With the realization of these new Changing Places toilets, we want to start the movement. So with these 13 locations, it doesn't stop. On the contrary. On the contrary, we want to accelerate the creation of more reclining restroom locations. Parallel to the above, we are also working hard to ensure that 17 existing restrooms are upgraded to full Changing Places toilets. So that by 2025 we will have 30 full-fledged horizontal hygiene areas in the Netherlands.
- Awareness and action by public and private parties  
 We aim to create awareness among both public and private parties that a Changing Places toilet is a necessary facility. And that action is needed, in several ways: policy is needed but so are laws and regulations. Such as inclusion of Changing Places toilets principles in EU directives, in the Building Code and/or in the NEN standard.
- Obtaining contributions and subsidies.  
 In order to start at all, financial resources are first needed for the realization of 30 Changing Places toilets and for directing the program. That is where the focus will be first.

## Lobby supports with communication tools

Through lobbying, we are going to systematically press for an entry point through informal channels to start reaching our short-term goal of 30 (by 2025) and long-term goal of 2,501 Changing Places toilets (by 2044).

With the following key message, we are going to pose the problem:

**100,000 people now have to stay home or change on this dirty floor.  
Without Changing Places toilets, this will continue.**



In doing so, we use the following communication tools and activities (= communication package): website, leaflets, gimmick, mailing, social media posts and presentations.

## Needed budget

One Changing Places toilet costs an average of €50,000. So for 30 locations we need € 1,500,000. For program activities and organization, € 386,000 is needed, Total budget needed for the period 2023 to 2025 is: € 1,886,000.

This is a lot of money but for this target group these facilities are crucial. With the support of donors, funds and companies we hope to reach the target amount as soon as possible.

## Participate?

Would your organization also like to participate or would you like to get involved as an expert by experience in making this beautiful dream a reality? We would love that! Please contact Karin Stiksma at [karin@jointprojects.nl](mailto:karin@jointprojects.nl) or 06 19057019. Then we can explore together what we can do for each other.

Changing Places in the Netherlands is a project set up and driven by Stichting het Gehandicapte Kind from the mission that no handicapped child is excluded (no child without friends).

