

# WBG Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy calls for a Care-led Recovery

**Make Mothers Matter**  
**16 July 2020**

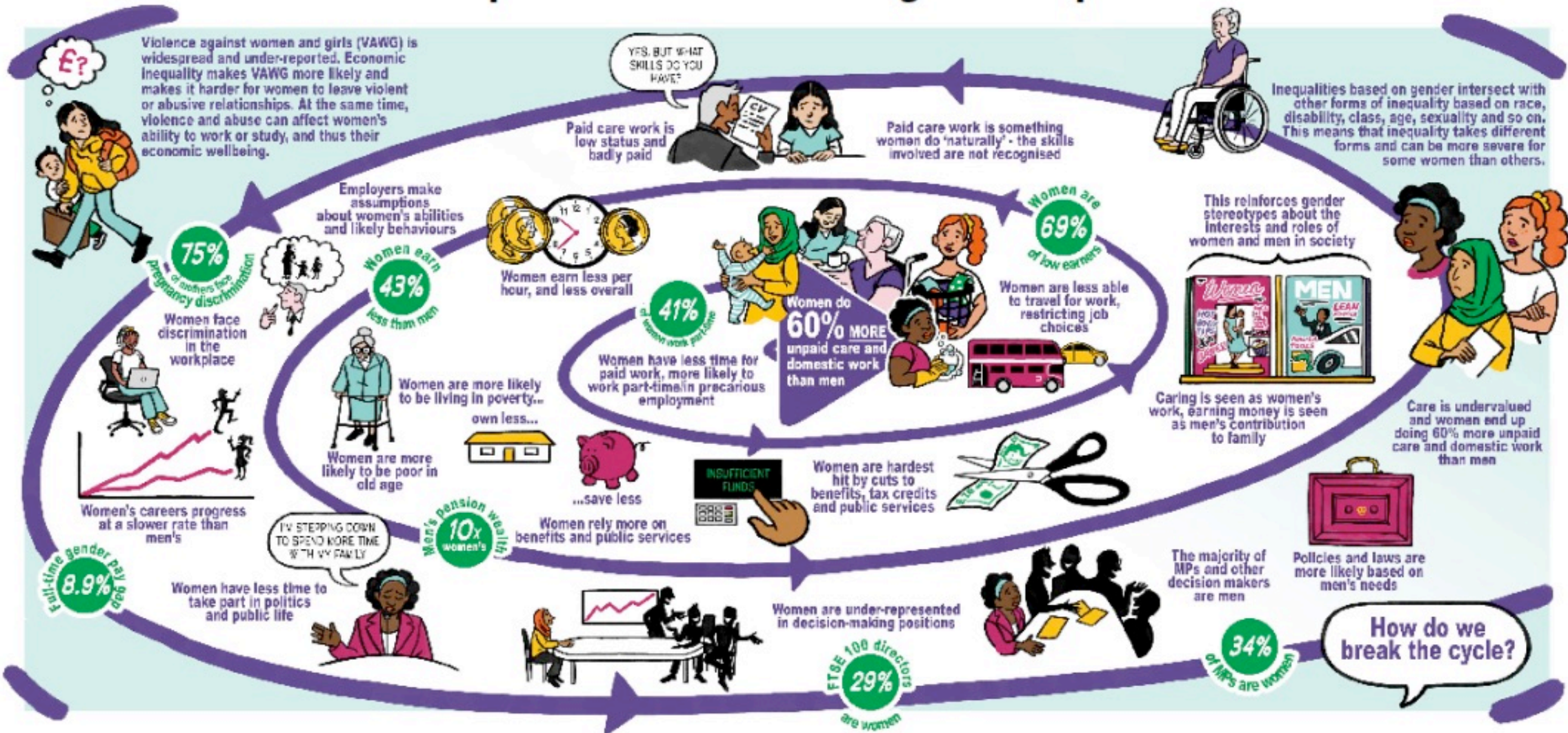
Susan Himmelweit  
Open University and Women's Budget Group

# WBG Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy

- Women's Budget Group, a feminist economic think-tank:
  - known for its critical gender impact analysis of existing and proposed UK policy
- Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy
  - *proactively* developing *alternative economic policies* to promote a gender equal economy
  - Commissioners from other organisations, trade unions, academia, business, and journalism
    - Chair: Professor Diane Elson
  - Has commissioned papers and asked for evidence on a number of themes from experts in different sectors, including experts by experience
- Examines interconnection between different gender inequalities
- Focuses on the interconnections and feedback mechanisms that reinforce inequalities
  - and the links that policy can help break
- Sees the unequal division of unpaid care at their heart

# Spirals of inequality

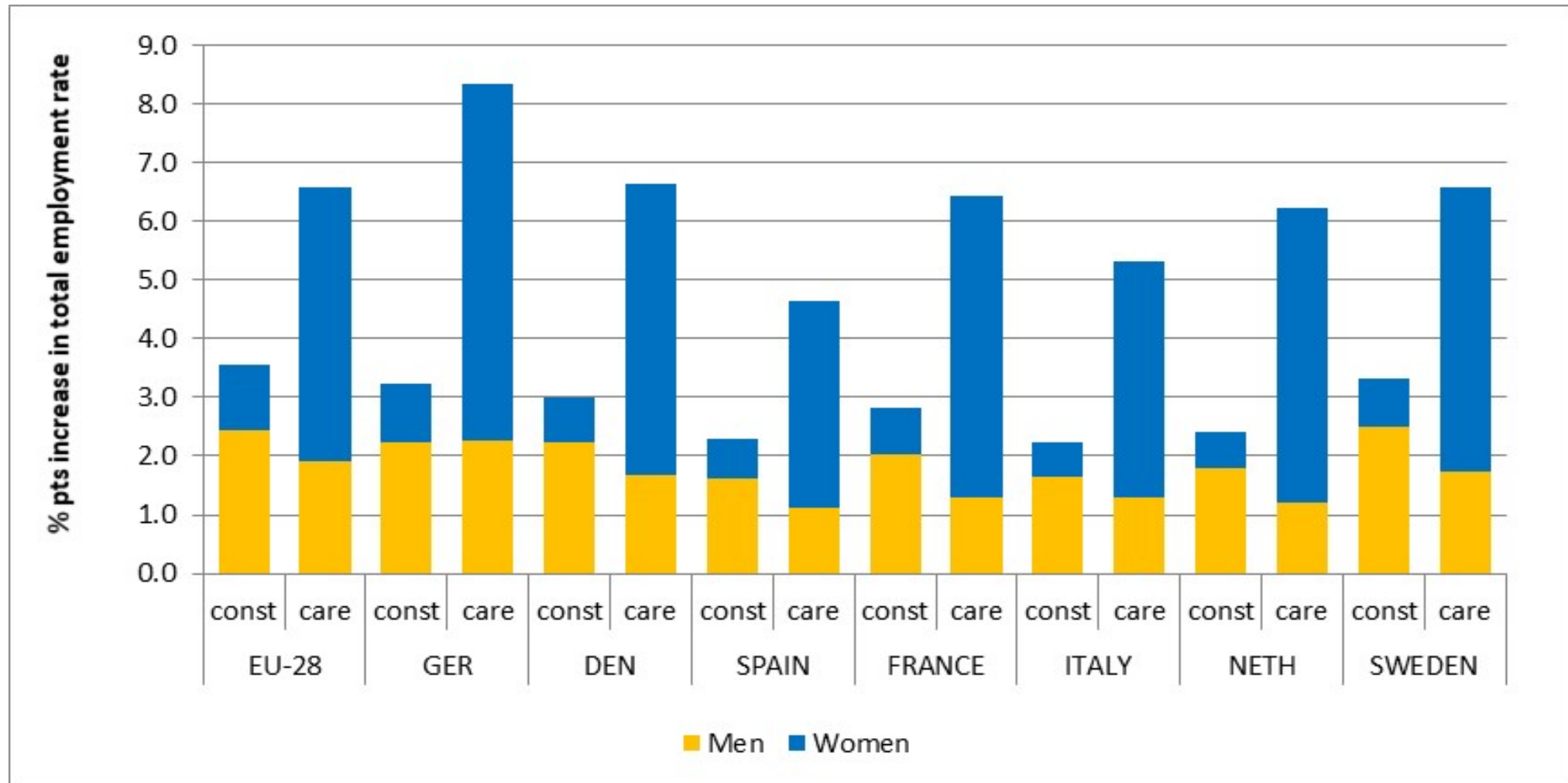
## How unpaid care is at the heart of gender inequalities



# We need a care-led recovery!

- Commission set up before the pandemic
  - But answer to what was needed to build back better more gender economy fell out easily from our analysis
- A care-led recovery by investing in care to generate jobs and reduce gender inequality
- Like a green new deal – not a competitor but a complement to it
  - But investing in human beings and their care, our care infrastructure, rather than physical structure

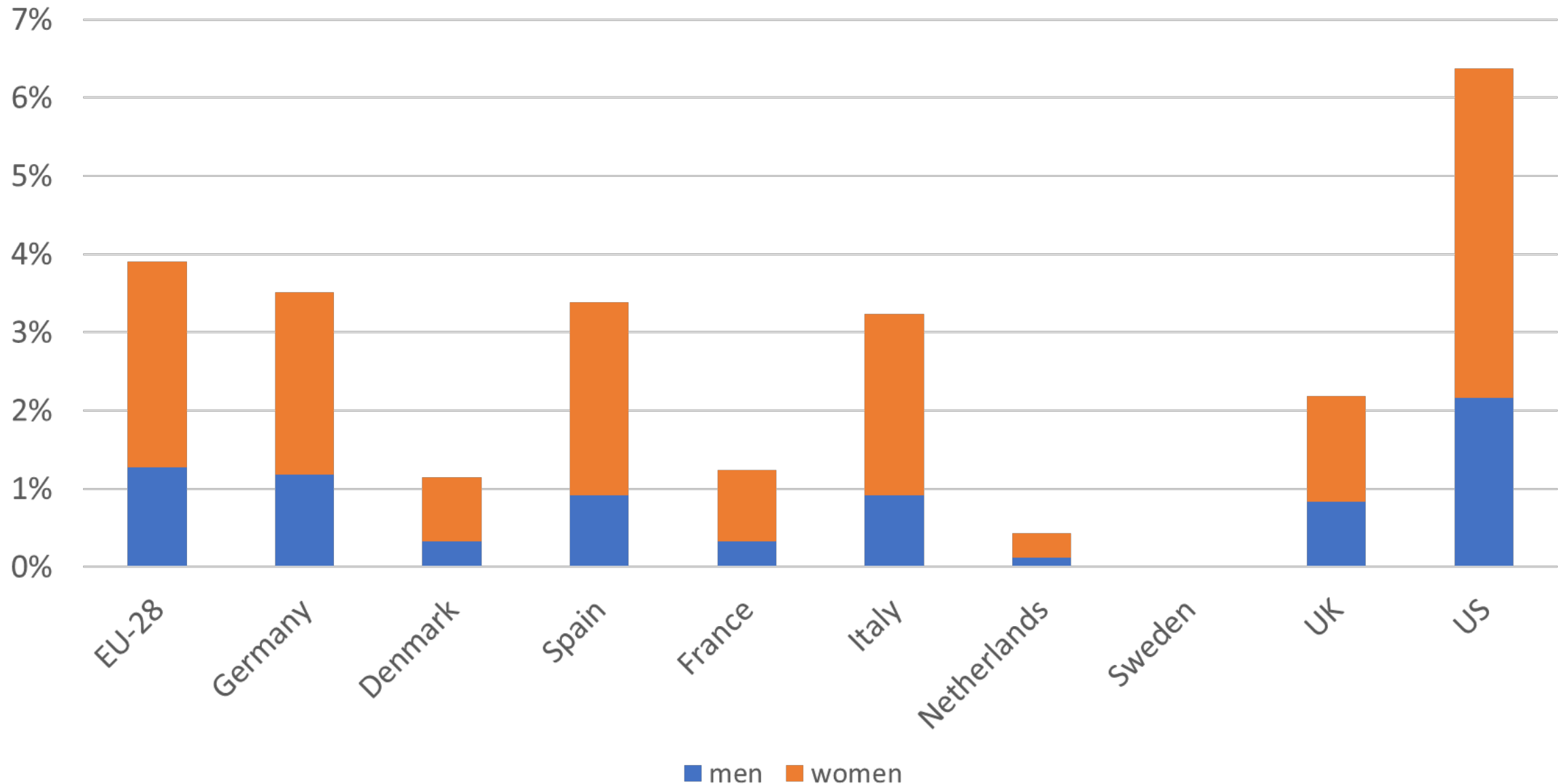
# Effect on employment rate of investing 2% of GDP on construction or care: various EU countries



# But isn't that just producing poor quality jobs for women?

- Investing in care requires:
  - a larger proportion of the population involved in providing care
  - recognising that successful care depends on the skill of carers
  - transforming the job of care - training, career structure, better pay
    - recruitment and retention problems in many countries make this necessary if care workforce is to expand
- In Sweden:
  - 10% of the workforce is employed in care
  - Care workers not as badly paid as in the other countries
  - 4.8% of GDP is spent on care
- NB Even in Sweden most care carried out unpaid within families
- Investment in care is necessary to improve the lives of all women – including unpaid carers

# Rise in overall employment rate (% points) from matching Sweden: in % of GDP spent on care and wages in care as % of average wage



# A care-led recovery would:

- Transform care services for those who need them
- Generate significant employment (more than investment in construction)
- Reduce the gender employment gap (unlike investment in construction) but still create a lot of jobs for men
- Be an investment in the future:
  - Better cared for people
  - Preventing greater needs in the future
- Be sustainable – rather than producing more things, we will all need to be caring for each other more and learning how to do so better!