



THE NETHERLANDS

**THE WONDERFUL
WORLD OF LIZE**

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Lize in her house. She lives in Odijk, a small village near Utrecht.

The wonderful world of Lize

'It would be immoral to bring it [a child with Down's] into the world': these were the shocking words uttered by Richard Dawkins, the eminent British biologist. And today, with prenatal screening, certain countries have declared that they will soon be Down free. But those affected by this syndrome can enjoy just as happy a life as everyone else.

Lize, the protagonist of this reportage, is a living example. After attending public secondary schools, she completed specialization courses in green schools and restoration. She has participated in the Special Olympics in Rome and ice-skating competitions in the United States, where she won various gold medals. She was also one of the protagonists (together with 4 other young people with Down's) of the soap opera "Downistie", which was broadcast on primetime Dutch TV and which initiated widespread public discussion between those in favour and those against.

She recently married Ruben, who also has Down's syndrome, and they live together in an apartment in The Hague. Their wedding was the culmination of just how beautiful and happy the life of a young woman can be, even with Down's. Today Lize proves just how important the continuous care, study, and stimulus of young people with Down syndrome is for them to feel that they are an integral part of society and not just a weight to be endured. A point of view that was once all too readily believed and, sadly, in many cases still is.

This story does not intend to offer an anti-abortion perspective. Rather, it simply wants to say that the decision of whether or not to have a child cannot depend only on the fact of whether that baby will have Down's syndrome. March 21 is World Down Syndrome Day, a day to raise public awareness across the globe and to celebrate the lives and achievements of those with Down's. It has been officially recognised by the United Nations since 2012.



Lize at work in the "Jumbo" supermarket of Odijk, a small village near Utrecht.



Lize and Ruben on a bus in Den Haag where Ruben lives.



Lize going to the Utrecht school she attends one day a week, she's specializing in catering and supermarket management.



Lize and Ruber in Lize's house in Odijk, a small village near Utrecht.



Lize and Ruben shopping at Odijk supermarket.



Lize and her father Jan in the gym they weekly attend.



Lize and Ruben in Lize's house in Odijk, a small village near Utrecht.



Lize and her mother Maria at the Amsterdam skating ring.



Lize, Ruben and the cat Beauté in the house of Lize's parents in Utrecht



Lize and Ruben, together with their guests, pose for the wedding photo.



Lize and Ruben at Gran Hotel Amrâth Kurhaus where they will spend their wedding night.



Lize preparing for her wedding.



Lize having her makeup done on her wedding day.



Lize comes down the stairs to meet Ruben on the day of their wedding.



Lize and Ruben at his parents home the day of their wedding.



Lize and Ruben kiss at the end of the wedding ceremony.



Ruben and a group of friends during the party.



Lize and Ruben on the beach of Den Haag on their wedding day.



Lize poses with a group of friends with Down's on the day of her wedding.



Lize and Ruben with their wedding cake.



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