

WUR from within: straight, sharp, transparent

No 09

Resource

JANUARY 2023 VOLUME 17

The journalism platform for all at Wageningen University & Research

Compensation for
pregnant
PhD student

Socio-cultural
view of fishing
industry

Hundreds of
students apply for
energy grant

Hedgerows in
dairy farming

Solar farm sheep
graze more

With gloves on it's doable
Energy crisis | p.12

WUR should
introduce
paid parking
p.18



Contents

NO 9 VOLUME 17



20

The secrets
of the bog



24

Zoo elephant
is saving the
species



26

Refugee family
finds home in
Wageningen

5 Liana study wins
Resource Cover Prize

6 Students want to
interview candidate
tenants

8 You win some, you
lose some: panic-
stricken students

10 The proposition: rich
friends are good for
your bank account

28 The side job: Sabine
teaches yoga

Read the latest news and
background stories at
resource-online.nl



FOREWORD

Flashy video

Something is wrong with WUR's reputation. At least, that is one of the conclusions of a major study by research firm Motivaction, which was tasked with measuring awareness of WUR among internal and external groups. The good news is that WUR has a 'very good reputation' with a score of 7.6 (higher than for other organizations and companies researched by Motivaction). But – we read on the intranet – there is still work to be done. Because the general public doesn't know what WUR is about. During the New Year's reception, a Flashy video was proudly shown for sharing with the general public. It was a series of glossy, vaguely scientific images in the corporate marketing style. Replace the logo with that of another technical university and they could use the video too. There is indeed work to be done. Fortunately there are the 'Brandkey sessions', in which staff talk about how they see WUR. Perhaps that will help. Today, we start the new year with the first issue of *Resource*. With students in the cold, WUR employee Marjolijn Dannenburg who took an Afghan family into her home, and a debate about paid parking on campus. Enough WUR staff and students in this first number to show what WUR stands for.

Willem André
Editor-in-chief





HUGS & COOKIES

Last Monday was Blue Monday, officially the most depressing day of the year. For students Menno Lemmers (Food Technology) and Hidde van der Kemp (Biology), that was a reason to organize hugs and a listening ear in Forum for anyone who needed it. Or at the very least a home-made vegan chocolate chip cookie — they had baked about 2000. 'How incredibly nice of you guys! Such friendliness means a lot to everyone at WUR who struggles from time to time with life,' was one of the messages on Facebook page Student Plaza. Worth repeating? Lemmers: 'Possibly. Baking 2000 cookies is not actually that difficult.' ME

Photo Guy Ackermans

Compensation for pregnant PhD students

PhD candidates who work in a chemical lab have to stop immediately if they become pregnant as working with solvents is dangerous for the foetus. But they can't always be sure their contract will be extended as pregnancy costs the chair group money. Now WUR is tackling that problem with a new scheme.

Depending on the situation, the compensation will be several tens of thousands of euros and is intended for the extension of the PhD student's contract. Professor of Organic Chemistry Han Zuilhof, who has been raising the issue since 2017, is pleased with the

scheme, which according to him is the first of its kind in the Netherlands. 'My PhD candidates say pregnancy is scientific suicide, because it is far from certain whether the contract will be extended in full or indeed at all.'

Equal opportunities

That is because a pregnancy costs the chair group money, for example because the higher wage costs during the extension are not covered by the Employee Insurance Agency. Ever since 2017, when one of his PhD candidates got pregnant, Zuilhof has been regularly raising the issue, until he was finally able to turn to the new Diversity &

Inclusivity manager Eva Siebelink.

The new scheme will only affect a small number of women per year. The prohib-

ited tasks are work in some chemical labs and with certain animals. Even so, Siebe-

'This lets women do a PhD in their preferred field'

link is pleased with the scheme. 'What matters is that everyone at WUR has equal opportunities. This lets women do a PhD in their preferred field. And it makes it more appealing for chair groups to recruit young women.' RK

Hundreds of students apply for energy allowance

Between 500 and 600 Wageningen students have applied for the energy allowance. The 1300 euro allowance is for people who need financial help coping with rising energy bills. The deadline for applications was 31 December 2022.

The counter stood at 150 applications at the end of November. A spokesperson for the municipality said the number of applications rose fast after Idealis announced in December that it would increase service charges by an average of 71 euros as of 1 January 2023. Student applications for special assistance have also increased. At first the government recommended excluding students from the energy allowance, but the court in Arnhem ruled last summer that this was unjustified. Students in other cities have also taken the matter to court, with the support of the national student's union LSVb.

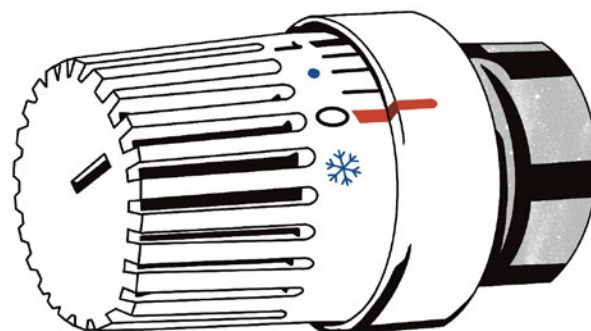
The Wageningen Federation of Student Associations (WKvV) also called on Wageningen municipality to pay students the energy allowance. The municipality said it was willing in principle but lacked the money and staff to arrange this for all students. 'The national government has delegated responsibility for the energy allowance to municipalities, but without giving them a budget,' said WKvV chair Jort Hautvast (20) in December.

Conditions

Wageningen municipality has told *Resource* that applications submitted by students will be dealt with just like all the other applications. Even so, it is not clear how many students will eventually receive the allowance as many do not meet the conditions, such as an energy contract in

your own name or the minimum age of 21. Hautvast: 'Many student houses don't meet these or other conditions, so most students will miss out. At the same time, the huge increases in energy prices are still being passed on to us.' LZ

See too 'With gloves on it's doable' (page 12) on what the energy crisis means for students and what measures could be forthcoming.



14.3

Price ceiling for building-wide heating

Tenants in blocks of student flats will also get lower energy bills thanks to government support. To ease the pain of soaring energy bills, the government came up with the price ceiling: a maximum energy price for consumption below a certain threshold per connection. But in some buildings all the tenants share a single connection, and jointly they consume too much energy for the price ceiling to have any effect. This is often the case in student blocks of flats. Now a scheme for them will start in February with retrospective effect.

Landlords will be able to apply for a grant on behalf of their tenants. However it is not clear how much the grant will be per resident. That will depend in part on energy prices and average consumption. LZ

See also page 12.

Teaching unions told universities their starting demands for a new collective labour agreement last week. They want more permanent contracts and a pay rise of 14.3 per cent because inflation has wiped out the 4 per cent adjustment in the previous agreement. So the unions are now demanding 14.3 per cent, the inflation rate reported by Statistics Netherlands last October. Salaries should also grow in line with inflation every year. HOP

Liana study wins Cover Prize 2022

Paul Hoekstra's dissertation *Disentangling Lianas* won the Cover Prize with a deciding vote by the jury.

Adding up the jury's and readers' points produced a tie. A lot of online readers loved the cover of Bahadır Can Güz's dissertation *Healthy bones for broiler chickens*, with nearly one third (1055) of all votes going to his stylized chicken with brittle leg bones. But it is Mark Hoekstra who has bagged the Cover Prize. He was as surprised as anyone. 'I had seen that one of the other covers got a lot of votes. So I thought I could forget it. It's nice

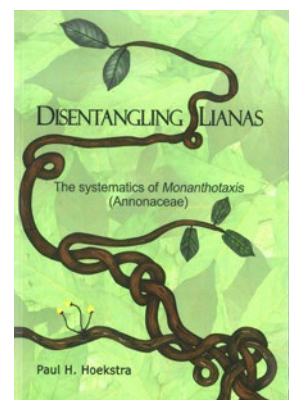
though,' he responds. In his research, he described 79 lianas of the *Monanthotaxis* genus from the soursop family. The 'disentangling' he did is depicted quite literally on the cover. It was his own idea, says Hoekstra. 'My wife did a few sketches and then Photoshop was used to create the cover.'

Onomatopoeia

'The drawing captures the content of the study in a kind of visual onomatopoeia,' says jury member Han Zuilhof (professor of Organic Chemistry) about the winning cover. 'The drawing is both precise and simple.' 'The cover does justice to

the content,' thinks curator of Special Collections (Forum Library) Anneke Groen. 'With soft colours and delicate lines. There is depth to it as well. Very nice!'

2913 people took part in the public vote for the 13th Cover Prize. Trailing some way behind Bahadır Can Güz, *Catfish Feed* by Folsade Esther Elesho (680 votes) came in second and *Mother's Milk* by Patrick Schimmel (401 votes) third. 'Mother's Milk really stands out as far as I am concerned,' says jury member Alfred Heikamp, a graphic designer at Resource. 'The full-page bright yellow title



shows that text does not have to be subordinate to image. The title is powerful, bold and suggests some urgency.' RK

See the covers on resource-online.nl

Students want more houses where they interview candidate tenants

There should be more accommodation with the right to interview candidate tenants, say Wageningen students in a survey. It was organized by a working group that wants better insights into the accommodation wishes of students.

The working group includes representatives of the Wageningen Federation of Student Associations, Student Council party VeSte, municipal council party Connect Wageningen and the housing committees of KSV Franciscus, WSV Ceres, SSR-W, WSR Argo and Nji-Sri. A total of 815 students completed the survey — probably all Dutch given that the questionnaire was in Dutch. The working group says it is almost

impossible to set up new student houses and there is also a lack of clarity about the five per cent rule (in Wageningen, a maximum of five per cent of the houses in a street can be student houses).


Dissatisfied

23 per cent of the respondents are dissatisfied with their current accommodation; 70 per cent of them would rather live in a house with the right to interview candidates. 81 per cent of the respondents think the interview right has a positive effect on the accommodation situation. 70 per cent also think Wageningen doesn't have enough accommodation for students. The working group wants to discuss the survey findings with the


municipality and Idealis.

Idealis director Bart van As wonders whether the survey gives a complete picture: 'Was it mainly filled in by student society members or also by international students? We have nearly 6000 rooms and apartments, including 3162 rooms with shared facilities. 52 per cent of the rooms with shared facilities are allocated using the interview system and 48 per cent based on time since registration. In our own monitor, we also see the interview system scores highest for customer satisfaction: people like being able to choose their flatmates. On the other hand, the interview system is a kind of beauty contest. Idealis wants to be there for everyone.' LZ

(Advert)






Space debris



Wednesday, 25th January
Café Loburg
 19h45 Live music by Troubagroove
 20h15 Science

Speakers
 Dr. Dimitra Stefoudi
 (Leiden University)
 Ir. Peter Batenburg
 (TU Delft)

www.sciencecafewageningen.nl



Landscape struggles

Landscapes are the result of a struggle — of humans versus nature, or humans versus one another. This will be shown in four talks (in the public library) and an exhibition (in De Casteelse Poort museum). Former WUR Rural Sociology lecturer Jan Schakel kicks off on 31 January with a talk on the fight to keep the trial plots near the old Microbiology building as a vegetable garden. Next in the series is a talk by former WUR employee Beatrice Kesler on how the floodplains were saved from the threat of housebuilding. The then WUR Planning chair group played a key role in this particular struggle. Attention will also be paid to the fight for nature in the Binnenveld (28 March) and the conservation of the Wageningse Eng. The talks are free of charge (see bblthk.nl).

In the museum, the exhibition *Imagining the Landscape* considers aspects including the 'university landscape' of the many experimental farms and trial fields around the town. The diversity of landscapes surrounding the town was one of the reasons why Wageningen was chosen originally as the centre for Dutch higher agricultural education. The exhibition is on display until 2 April. RK

Solar farm sheep graze more

Master's student Emma Kampherbeek's research on the combination of sheep and solar panels, which took her to California, resulted in a publication this month in *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*.

The official name for such dual land use where the production of solar energy is combined with forms of agriculture is agri-voltaics. Emma Kampherbeek studied whether solar panels and sheep make a good combination. The Animal Sciences Master's student, who has now graduated, went to Gold Tree Solar Farm in California, where she studied

The microclimate around the panels boosts the protein content

what she calls 'solar sheep': sheep that graze in solar fields. Using data loggers on their collars, she studied whether and how the sheep use solar fields for

grazing. She also looked at the effect that the presence of solar panels had on the quality of the feed in this Mediterranean climate.

Heat stress

She found that the sheep grazed more in fields with solar panels than in similar fields without such panels. Kampherbeek explains the increased grazing as partly due to the fact that the solar panels protect the sheep from the heat and extreme weather conditions, which increases time spent grazing. Secondly, the solar panels affect the vegetation: the microclimate around the panels (more shadow, more condensation) leads to a higher protein content and improved digestibility. Of course the climate in the Netherlands is not the same as in California, says Kampherbeek. But parallels can be drawn, especially given climate change. She points out that cases of heat stress and deaths among Dutch livestock have risen substantially in the past ten years. ME



Twan Stoffers with cuvette containing, from the left: common roach, bream, ide, another ide and western tubenose goby. ♦ Photo Twan Stoffers

Good breeding grounds are not enough

Floodplains in the Netherlands have been drastically relandscaped in recent decades in an effort to mitigate the risk of flooding. Theoretically, these interventions created excellent nurseries for fish. And yet the fish populations of the rivers have not increased. Doctoral candidate Twan Stoffers set out to find out what's going on.

He concludes that the breeding grounds are adequate as long as there is sufficient diversity in the environment created by these restoration projects. The young of typical river fish

that require running water, such as nase, common dace and ide, thrive in secondary channels

'Each species has its own optimal habitat, which changes as the fish mature'

of the rivers. These species are four times as likely to be found there as in side arms that only connect with the river at one end.

By contrast, the biggest populations of fish are found precisely in the side arms where there is very little current. Stoffers: 'It is mainly bream, common

roach and perch that thrive there.

These are common species that do not require flowing water. Eighty per cent of the young river fish belong to these species.' These common species also occur in the secondary channels, which therefore boast the greatest biodiversity.

Water levels

The results are based on an extensive measuring programme run by Stoffers. The data were added to an investigation commissioned by Rijkswaterstaat on the ecological quality of 46 recovered floodplains. The overall picture shows that there is no such thing as the ideal breeding ground. Stoffers: 'Each species has its own optimal habitat, which changes as the fish mature. The diversity of habitats is essential.' Still, the breeding grounds do not noticeably boost the fish population in the rivers. According to Stoffers, this is due to the connection with the river. 'After the first year in the breeding ground, many of the fish migrate to the river, and that's where things go wrong. Decreasing water levels frequently cause the breeding ground to become disconnected from the river early in the season.' RK

[You win some & you lose some]

A failed experiment, an error in your model, a rejected article: in academia such things tend to be labelled failures. As for talking about failure? Not done! But that's just what WUR co-workers do in this regular feature, 'You win some, you lose some'. Because failure can be useful. In this instalment, we hear from Sander Gussekloo, associate professor of Experimental Zoology.

Text and illustration Stijn Schreven

'When I started lecturing in Utrecht, I was asked to give the lecture series called "An Overview of the Animal Kingdom" for biomedical students. My predecessor's lectures were available, but I was young and enthusiastic, so I wanted to do it all again in my own way. I started with the sponges and then progressed slowly to the development of vertebrates, giving lots of nice details about various animal groups along the way.

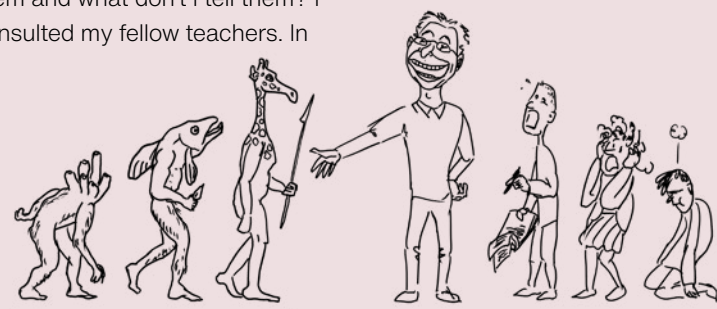
After the first lecture, the students came up to me panic-stricken. Did they need to know all this? I was surprised at first: as a biologist, I thought: surely everyone finds this interesting? Then I got the feeling: oh dear, what have I done? I told them that only the big picture was important, but because I had already told them so much, they still wondered what could come up in the exam.

For me, it was a lesson that I should really cater for the target group and their degree programme. My predecessor emphasized that as well. What do the students want to know, what is their background? What do I tell them and what don't I tell them? I consulted my fellow teachers. In

the second lecture, I summarized the main points of the previous one and I tried to reassure students that all those details might be interesting but weren't necessary to pass the exam. The panic was over. I adapted the other lectures as well.

'After the first lecture, students came up to me panic-stricken. Did they need to know all this?'

I realized that it is more satisfying to cover a bit less ground if that helps the students understand the material better, than to be able to indulge my personal interests. Nowadays I am very familiar with the type of group and the curriculum at WUR. I know what the students do and do not know. On the "Invertebrates" course, there is always a student who asks a question I don't know the answer to. Then I start searching and I always come across interesting things. Then I can still go into detail for those who want that.'



Model to improve fruit transport

Thijs Defraeye, a professor in the Food Quality and Design group, wants to develop a 'self-care food system' to increase the uniformity of decisions made during transport and storage.

Various people decide whether a batch is OK or not during the chilled transport of fruit and vegetables. They do this based on their own experience or using data from a random sample. That leads to a lot of variation in the decisions taken in the supply chain. Thijs Defraeye wants to develop models that let everyone take those decisions using the same approach, with less reliance on individual expertise. At the end of last year, he

was made professor by special appointment of Data and Simulations for Self-care Post-harvest Fresh-food Supply Chains in the Food Quality and Design group.

Defraeye is developing

The model can predict the overall picture based on limited data

a self-care food system so that everyone in the supply chain can take decisions using the same information. The idea is that the system will be able to predict the overall picture (for example, the quality of the whole cargo) based on limited data (for example, one temperature sensor). To do this, the model uses simulations of the physics to derive additional characteristics of the cargo. 'That lets you take more intelligent decisions,' says the professor.

Strawberries

Defraeye and his colleagues already developed models last year to predict the quality of citrus fruits and strawberries during transport and recommend actions for players in the supply chain based on those predictions. The strawberry model showed that shelf life is determined by the design of the trays, in addition to temperature and humidity. The researchers were then able to identify critical factors for the loss of quality in each type of packaging. ss

Socio-cultural view of the Dutch fishing industry

Within two days they had 60 completed questionnaires. The response to the study by Marloes Kraan (Wageningen Economic Research) of Dutch fishing communities speaks volumes about the situation. 'A lot of fishermen feel abandoned.'

Kraan's research is part of a larger impact study of fisheries following two motions passed by the Lower House of Parliament in late 2021. Basically, the intention is to chart the impact of the many policy changes in recent years on the fishing industry, the supply chain and fishing communities. 'The latter focus is quite new,' stresses Kraan. It explains why she is surveying crew members and fishermen's wives as well as skippers. 'We are trying to understand how the fishing businesses are embedded in the communities. So it is also about the crew, the wives and the families,' she explains.

When the study started in early 2022, the Dutch fishing industry was already going through a tough time due to Brexit, the EU's ban on pulse trawling and the considerable expansion of wind power at sea. Then the war in Ukraine started, which soon had an effect on fuel prices. Kraan: 'It was a kind of stress test for the fishing industry. As our study progressed, we saw the sector collapsing. A lot of trawler skippers decided there was no longer a future in the business.'

Screwed

A survey was conducted during the previous fisheries crisis in 2008 as well. The current survey largely builds on that, to make sure the data is comparable. One new component is the subjective social wellbeing. Kraan: 'Fisheries is more than just fish and biology. In



Volendam is an example of a community where the fishing industry has a big impact.

Europe too, there is now more interest in the social aspect. We worked hard for that as social scientists.'

Kraan's mission is to make explicit what the Dutch fishing industry is exactly and to clarify its importance — in both economic and socio-cultural terms — and identify pointers for improving fisheries policy. The study, which involved interviews as well as questionnaires, uncovered some strong emotions. 'Many

'Fishing is typically a job you choose based on a mix of passion and tradition'

people are furious,' notes Kraan. 'It is understandably difficult to accept that after years of fisheries policies based on the precautionary principle and sound impact assessments, pulse trawling still gets banned — even though it has been studied so thoroughly and approved. Or that large wind farms are being built at sea even though the effects are unclear.

Many fishermen feel screwed. Just like the farmers.'

Painful process

There is sorrow too. 'For many skippers, considering stopping is a painful process that people have long kept silent about. Fishing is typically a job you choose based on a mix of passion and tradition. It is not any old job, it is part of your identity. When fishermen stop, they lose something they have always had. What does that do to the fishermen, their families, their environment and their outlook on the future? Are there factors that soften the blow, and if so what? The questionnaires are all about these aspects.'

Around 200 questionnaires have been filled in so far. Kraan hopes far more fishermen will take part to enable good comparisons between fisheries and communities. The questionnaires will be available until the end of January. ME

Hedgerows: a study of their added value for dairy farms

Hedgerows and vegetation windbreaks have ecological value and improve the landscape, but can they also be functional and financially viable elements on dairy farms? That is the key question behind agro-innovation centre De Marke's Hedgerow 2.0 project.

Researchers at Wageningen Plant Research and the Louis Bolk Institute are designing and analysing various types of hedgerow for the project, varying things like the vegetation mix, height and position. Such hedgerows are a traditional feature of the patchwork farmland and dry sandy soils of the Achterhoek region in the eastern Netherlands. 'The idea is to showcase them at De Marke to demonstrate the potential of hedgerows to

farmers,' says project leader Rob Geerts of Wageningen Plant Research's Agrosystems Research group. The researchers also intend to plant functional hedgerows at two dairy farms in the Achterhoek.

Business model

Demonstrating the value of hedgerows may therefore be the most important aspect of the project, thinks Geerts. 'Gelderland – in fact the whole of the Netherlands – is faced with a huge challenge: to save biodiversity and plant more woodlands,' he says. 'To win the support of land users, and in Gelderland that basically means farmers, you need to offer them a good business model.' This is important, because planting hedgerows

reduces a dairy farmer's crop production area and manure quota, as the land used for them is subtracted from these calculations.

So the challenge is to use hedgerows in ways that positively contribute to dairy farm operations. Geerts: 'Like forage trees, for example: vegetation that is rich in minerals, trace elements and other healthy nutrients that the cows can graze on at their leisure – rather like a natural medicine cabinet.' Other functions the project is exploring include carbon sequestration and the absorption of nitrogen and particulate matter. The project is funded by the provincial Nature-Inclusive Agriculture for Gelderland Action Plan and will run at least until mid-2024. ME

THE PROPOSITION

For PhD candidates, their thesis propositions are an opportunity to publicly express their professional and personal convictions about science and society. In this feature they explain their most thought-provoking proposition. This time, a proposition from Zhihong Lyu, who graduated with a PhD in the Physics and Physical Chemistry of Foods on 14 December.



'Making friends with rich people fattens your bank account'

'This proposition is actually based on a *Nature* paper which studied 21 billion Facebook friendships. The study aimed to answer the question why people escape poverty faster in some communities than in others. It showed that in neighbourhoods with higher economic connectedness, so friendships across class or income boundaries, people earned more money later in life.

It is not only about the money. Yes, if you have financial problems or want to start a company, friendships with people of a higher economic status can help you. But it is also about social capital: if you have a high income, it usually means you are successful in your field. Rich friends are often also rich in knowledge and experience.

They can introduce you to other people in their network, which can increase the chance of success in life.

This paper in *Nature* resonated with me. We are living in a society in which we can't succeed through our own efforts alone. You need a team around you. I would like to start my own company in future, and I have accumulated my social capital to prepare the ground. If my "rich friends" are successful in their field, they can help with their experience and connections. And one day, I may also become a "rich friend" for others.' CJ

Dijkgraaf

Just before Christmas, Minister of Education, Culture and Science Robbert Dijkgraaf issued an 'urgent appeal' to all university governing bodies to stop actively recruiting international students. I hold Dijkgraaf in high regard and I think his decisions as a minister so far have shown that he is a real scientist who usually comes up with sensible policies.

But this call came in for a lot of criticism and I too was rather amazed by its tone and content. But when I dug a bit deeper, it soon became clear to me that this wasn't what our minister really wanted. Not only was his hand forced by a motion in the Lower House of Parliament, but he had advised against that very motion at an earlier stage. The minister further wrote:

'On Friday 9 December, I informed the Lower House that I wanted to comply with the motion, but that the institutions had also asked me to keep some room for customization in the interests of sectors with labour shortages and depopulating regions. I proposed to the House — even though this meant leaving more scope than the motion offers in its current form — to leave scope for recruitment for regional sectors with a shortage.'



Guido Camps

In translation, this Hague-speak clause 'even though this meant leaving more scope than the motion offers in its current form' reads: 'Dear House, your motion is short-sighted, so I am trying to make the best of it by adding something of my own.' The minister's addition offers governing bodies a wild card with which they can ignore the 'urgent' recommendation.

It is much too convenient for the Lower House to blame all the problems with

'The criticism of Dijkgraaf should have been addressed to parliament'

academic workload, financial incentives and housing issues in the big cities on international students. The criticism of Dijkgraaf

should have been directed at the House. Dijkgraaf is trying to make the best of it by explicitly broadening the discussion to ask the question: what direction does higher education in the Netherlands want to take? Fortunately, the Physics professor turns out to be a skilful politician, and higher education is going to benefit from that.

Guido Camps (39) is a vet and a researcher at Human Nutrition and OnePlanet. He also enjoys baking, beekeeping and unusual animals.

Students hit extra hard by energy crisis

‘With gloves on it’s doable’

Energy prices have soared since the war in Ukraine began. Like everyone else, students are hard hit. It is affecting them, their housemates and the student societies.



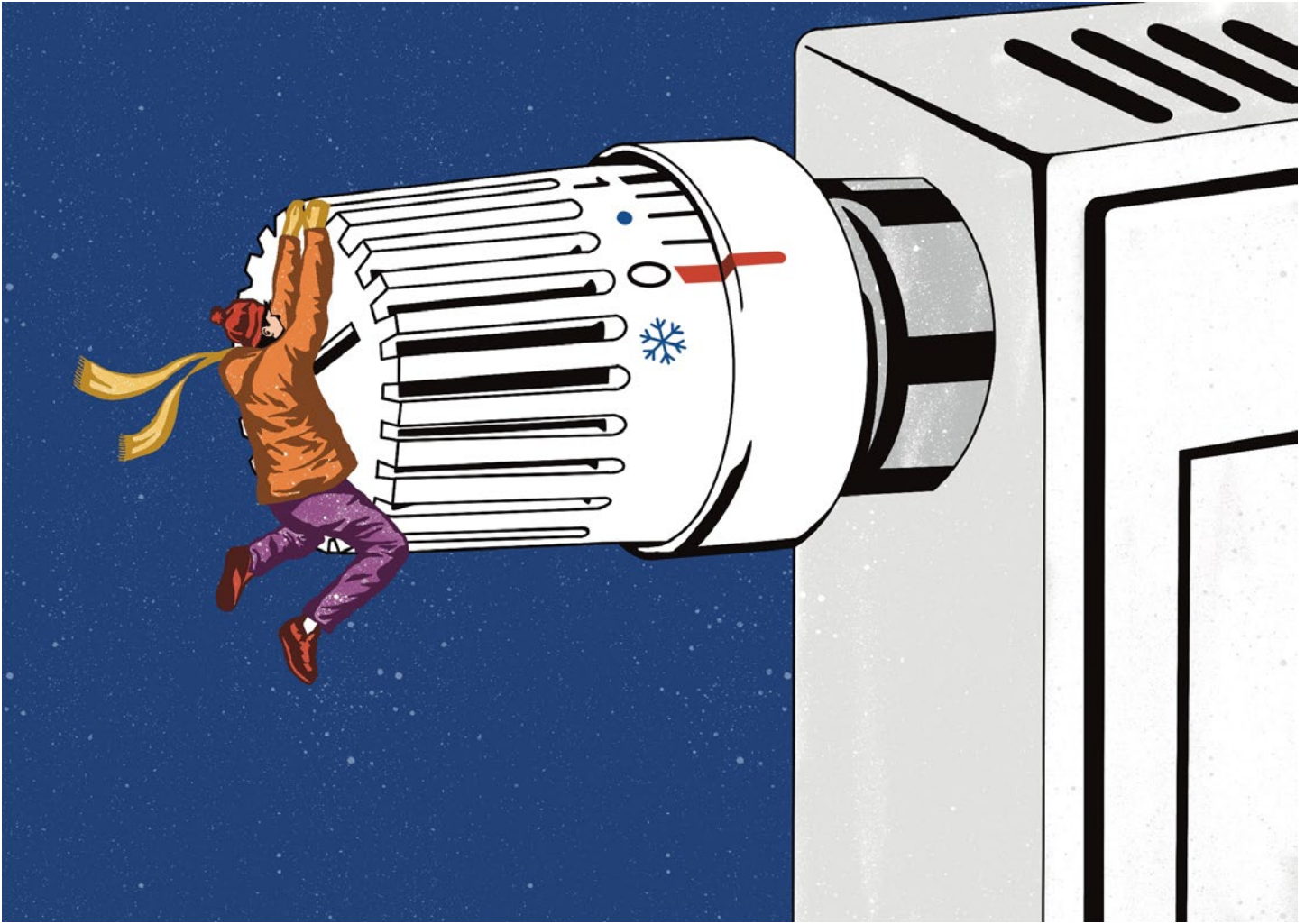
Text Luuk Zegers

In early December, student housing provider Idealis announced that their tenants will face much higher service charges from 1 January 2023: an average increase of 71 euros per month, a 127 per cent rise. The exact amount varies with the type of room, the building, energy use and other factors. One of our student editors who lives in Dijkgraaf, for instance, will now spend 389 euros a

month on living expenses, up from 302 euros. Idealis spoke of ‘quite a strain’ on students’ financial situation. Idealis, which is Wageningen’s largest student housing provider, is trying to keep tenants informed of developments. For instance, a new email address has been created for questions about energy bills. And along with other student housing providers, student unions, universities and other organizations, Idealis is lobbying the government for support measures for students. Because despite their low incomes, students don’t usually qualify for such support. Martijn Balke, Idealis operations manager: ‘In many policymaking contexts students get forgotten – consciously or unconsciously. It is wrong that students are not eligible for support: they are residents of the municipality too and they have to pay more for energy like everyone else.’ The lobby seems to be bearing fruit: there are signs of action in The Hague and further clarity is expected by the end of February on, for example, what the price ceiling for

energy costs will look like in student flats with building-wide heating systems (see inset on page 14). However, the fact that students will soon be eligible for some support measures does not mean their worries are over, says Balke. ‘People often forget that the rates below the price cap have still gone up enormously compared to last year. All it means is that their difficulties will be eased slightly, but we don’t know yet how much exactly.’ Meanwhile, residents’ questions are trickling in. Can’t individual energy meters be installed in complexes with building-wide heating systems?

‘When tenants write that I should be lynched, that’s unacceptable’



Students don't yet qualify for support measures to help cope with rising energy costs. ♦ Illustrations Valerie Geelen

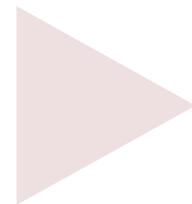
No, says Balke, because installing a meter in every room or corridor costs hundreds of euros per room, and those costs ultimately have to be covered by the rent. 'That doesn't outweigh the potential savings this could bring.' Some residents also wonder why they should be more frugal with energy while their neighbours put the heating up high and everyone pays the same for their energy at the end of the month anyway. 'Saving energy makes sense, but the residents of a complex should do it together.'

Tense relations

Housing costs are rising even faster with other landlords, and that can cause strained relations between

tenants and landlords. For instance, residents of the Beringhem student complex in Bennekom were shocked when their service costs more than doubled in several stages last year. Bachelor's student of Forest and Nature Management Bob Schobbers (20): 'In 2021, I paid about 525 euros a month, of which 142 euros was service costs. From January 2022, it became 581 euros per month, with 198 euros in service costs. In October and November 2022, it suddenly rose sharply, to 740 euros per

'Saving energy makes sense, but residents of a complex should do it together'



month, 348 euros on which was service costs. In December, I paid nearly 800 euros, of which 405 euros was service costs.' The service fell again in January, leaving him with about 680 euros in housing costs this month.

For Beringhem residents, it is not always clear why their service costs fluctuate so much, Schobbers says. And it wasn't always easy to communicate with the landlord. 'For example, I got a letter shoved under my door urging me to pay an invoice of almost 800 euros that had supposedly been outstanding for a long time, and saying that if I didn't, they would come by to collect it. When I emailed to ask where that invoice came from because I had transferred my rent as usual, it turned out to be a mistake.' Meanwhile, several of the residents had questions

about their service charges. There was supposed to be a meeting in October to answer their questions, Schobbers says. 'But in a private residents' WhatsApp group, threats towards the landlord JW Vastgoed Management were made jokingly. Those messages reached them

and they did not show up at the meeting.' Beringhem residents took the case to the rent tribunal for investigation.

'It is wrong that students are not eligible for support'

Understanding

Johan Wagteveld of JW Vastgoed Management in Ede confirms that there was a tense relationship between his office and some of the tenants. 'When people write that I should be lynched or call me cancer-Johan, that's unacceptable to me. The way a small minority of the tenants behave towards our staff is absurd. It is a pity that other residents suffer for it, but it made us decide only to answer questions in writing.' He finds the excuse that it was meant as a joke incomprehensible. 'We want to have a good relationship with tenants, but the starting point for that is mutual respect.'

Reality

'In view of the massive rise in energy costs from 1 January 2022, the difference between the advance payment and the actual bill became so big that we decided on an interim payment in October 2022,' Wagteveld says. 'That extra sum was added to the advance payment for the last months of 2022 so that tenants won't be faced with a massive bill at the end of their tenancy. We do this at all our complexes and it is in line with the

Support measures

The government is trying to help people cope with the energy crisis in several ways, but for a long time most students were left out in the cold, all too literally.

- A price cap was introduced this month, which means that below a certain energy consumption level (the ceiling), people don't pay more than a set 'ceiling rate'. Many student residences, such as the star flats in Wageningen, have central heating at the building level, with one big shared connection. So the flats don't have their own energy meter and together they always end up paying more than the energy ceiling rate. For a long time it seemed that this group, which includes many students, would miss out, but mid-December the Minister for Energy Rob Jetten announced a separate scheme which is expected to start by the end of February.
- Secondly, many students did not qualify for the two compensation payments of 190 euros that households received for their energy bills in November and December. Why not? Because students renting a house together don't usually have their own contract with their energy provider. Jetten wants to address this too. How he will do so should become clear by the end of February.
- Then there is the one-off energy allowance of 1300 euros for low-income households. In line with the advice of the Ministry of Social Affairs, most students are not eligible for this. Unjustifiably, according to local and national student representatives, such as the Wageningen Chamber of Associations. Many students' incomes are low enough to qualify for the allowance, but they do not always meet other criteria. Student union LSVb is calling on students to apply for the energy allowance anyway and lodge objections if they are rejected, and then to go to court if their objection also goes unheard.

rent tribunal's policy manual. We have collated all our tenants' queries and sent them with explanations in a general email to all tenants.'

'Of course we share our tenants' concerns about high advance payments,' Wagteveld says, 'but unfortunately this is the reality. If the government comes up with a solution to compensate tenants in complexes like Beringhem, with building-wide heating, we will pay that out to tenants as well.'

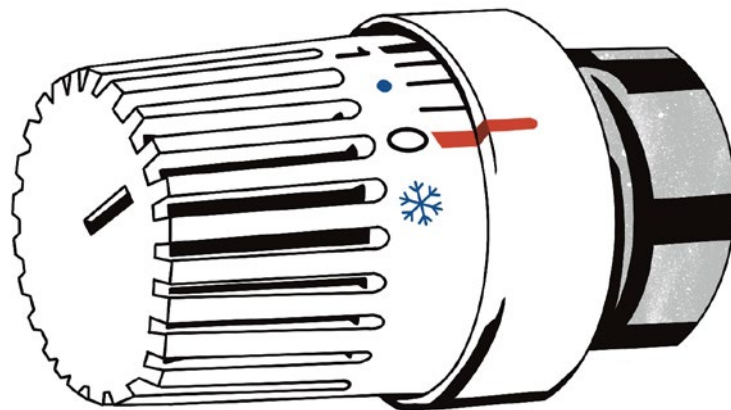
Schobbers says he does understand why JW Vastgoed is passing on the increased energy costs to the tenants. 'But it is a lot of money.' He hopes the government will start helping students with their bills. 'I have a nice room, but if it suddenly costs me nearly 700 or 800 euros a month instead of 600 euros, I really need to look for something else. My neighbour is in the same boat. We'll wait and see.' ■

Are you a student and in acute need of money? You may be eligible to apply to the Louise O. Fresco Fund. This was set up by former WUR president Louise Fresco when she left to help WUR students who find themselves in financial difficulty through unforeseen circumstances. You have to be able to prove that you do not have the money, cannot borrow and cannot take on extra work alongside your studies.

Cold in the pub

Student societies are adjusting to higher energy bills too. 'They have to,' says Ceres president Cas Struker. When the temperature dropped after the summer, all the radiators were turned off and the knobs removed so no one could turn them back on. 'We still heat with gas, so it's not doable to keep the whole clubhouse warm. But at one point, when the board was meeting wearing three jumpers and gloves and we were still cold, we decided to heat the rooms where we work during the day a little bit at least. Not that it is warm here now, but you can work without gloves on now.' In the bar, the heating is still off. 'So it is cold there at the start of the evening, but once there are a lot of people, it automatically warms up. On special occasions or dinners, the fireplace is lit and electric heaters are used.' Members are understanding about the cold clubhouse, says Struker. 'If we save on this, we can keep doing other things.'

Ceres' sustainability committee (DuurCo) has set up a project with the municipality to make student houses more sustainable. 'The municipality wants to combat energy poverty in Wageningen,' says DuurCo chairman Jasper Breeuwsma. 'In that project, a sustainability team – the Tochtbusters (draughtbusters) – goes around houses to improve the insulation in simple ways, completely free of charge. Things like window foil, radiator foil and draught excluders. We proposed doing the same in student houses.' The municipality responded enthusiastically, so DuurCo sent a questionnaire around to student houses in Wageningen and 55 of them signed up. 'Student houses often still have single glazing. Window film helps to keep more than 50 per cent more heat inside, so that's a big saving.' An order for insulation material has already been placed. 'Two Tochtbusters will be coming to our clubhouse soon to explain how to install it.'



'Once there are lots of people in the bar, it soon warms up'





DEEP SEA SPY

PhD researcher Fee Smulders is studying the habits and habitat of the manatee in Burgers' Zoo in Arnhem. The Arnhem study is an interim stage really. Smulders and the zookeepers fitted one of the three manatees in Burgers' Zoo with a special underwater camera attached with suction pads. The aim is to see whether the camera stays in place, and where it can best be attached to the animal. In the summer, Smulders will travel to Mexico, where she wants to attach the camera, worth about 10,000 euros, to wild manatees. ^{WA}

Photo Theo Kruse

Should WUR introduce parking charges?

It is as busy as ever again on the roads and on campus. The car parks are full and there are traffic jams at the roundabout at the end of the working day. In December, a student action group ran a campaign for a different use of the car parks. If Covid and activism don't help, are parking charges the solution?

Text *Resource* editors • Illustration Ilja Bouwknegt



Martijn Derks

lecturer at Breeding and Genetics

'Encouraging people to come to work by bike or public transport is good, but it's not an option for me. I live in Wellerlooi in northern Limburg, about an hour's drive away. It would take me over two hours by public transport.

I assume that public transport just isn't an option for the people who come by car.

So I don't think there will suddenly be far fewer people coming by car if parking charges are introduced.

Anyway, the current infrastructure already discourages coming by car. If you want to go home at five o'clock, you get stuck in a traffic jam on campus. I usually go home around four or after six, as then it's manageable.' LZ



Jacco Bontekoe

student and member of action group New Mobility Wageningen

'We want a biodiverse and future-proof campus with space for living, meeting, research and study. Then we need to use space well. Currently, we have more than ten football fields of car park on campus. That space is not free.

Why do we subsidize car use with free space for cars?

Parking charges can encourage people to cycle or carpool more often. However, it is important that parking charges are combined with other measures, such as better public transport connections and central off-campus parking spaces. A good pair of rain-proof trousers can also work wonders. And the space that is freed up should be put to good use, e.g. for nature or housing.

If we want a campus with fewer cars, parking charges and parking regulation in general are a good first step.' LZ



Thomas Olijhoek

Facilities & Services and Green Office manager

'As Green Office Wageningen, we are in favour of encouraging sustainable transport and of discouraging unsustainable ways of coming to campus. Parking charges fit in with that, so we are in favour of them. But we are aware of the implications this has for both the campus and the neighbourhoods around it. People are likely to park in the surrounding residential areas. This would not make the campus more sustainable, as the sum total of cars would remain the same. That can't be the idea. If the municipality also started charging for parking in the surrounding residential areas, or restricted parking to local residents there, you would prevent

this. The municipality would then have to enforce that. So **parking charges on campus should only be introduced in consultation with the municipality.**^{SS}



Yavanna Aartsma
researcher at Entomology

'I am not pro-car, but **parking charges would feel like a fine for coming to work.** I don't think it's fair if I get a cut in salary, effectively, compared to someone with the same contract who happens to live in Wageningen. That said, the congestion on campus is frustrating. Sometimes I spend up to 15 minutes in the traffic jam to the roundabout before I get off campus. I live 55 kilometres from campus, and coming by public transport would take me three hours a day.

I see more future in positive incentives like a relocation bonus if you move closer to the campus, though it is not realistic to expect everyone to be able to move within cycling distance. Besides, moving is not an obvious option if you're on a temporary contract and during this housing crisis. And if we moved, my

partner would then live further from his work and have to commute further. That won't solve anything.'^{SS}



Lex Roders
real estate project manager at Facilities & Services

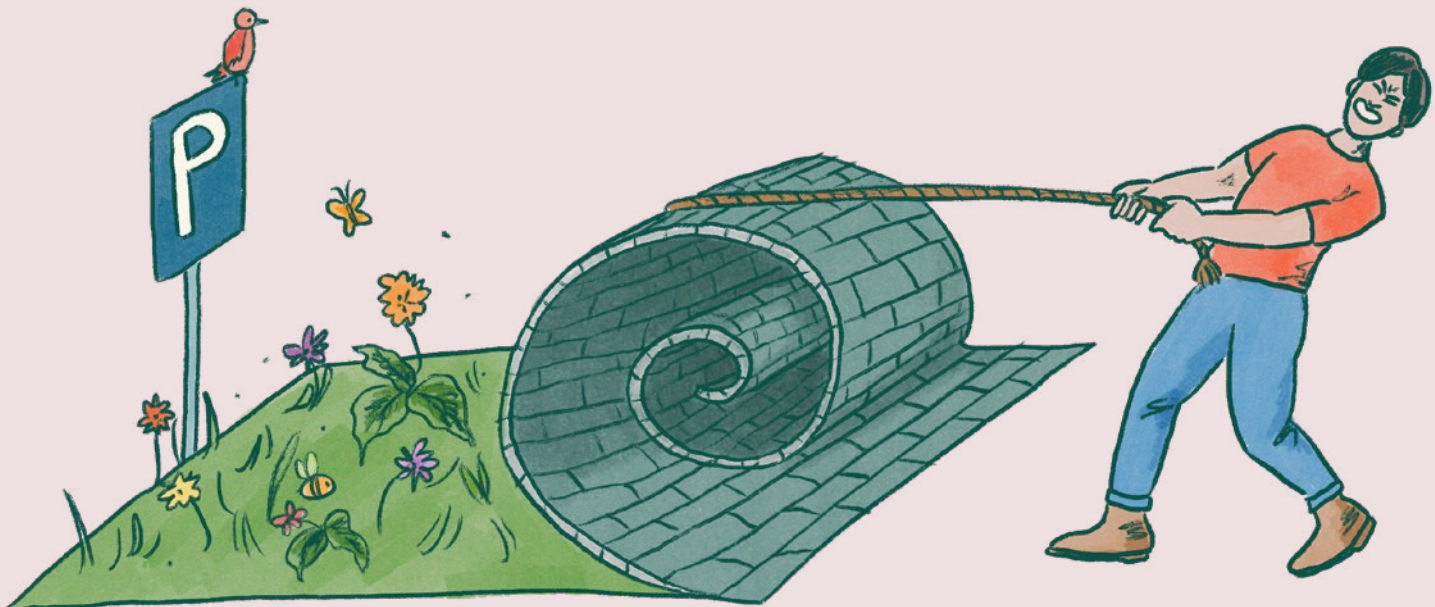
'WUR has an active sustainable mobility policy that encourages the use of public transport and bicycles and discourages the use of cars. **The majority of WUR's employees do come to the campus by bike or by public transport.** WUR employees live all over the Netherlands and for some of them, the car is a more efficient means of transport. And WUR wants to serve them too. Parking charges aren't compatible with that goal. Because the focus is still on public transport and cycling and because driving to work is discouraged, the approach is not to expand the parking facilities any further despite WUR's

substantial growth. Instead, WUR chooses to focus and work on alternative transport options and encourages those.'^{RK}



Sjoerd Brandsma
lecturer in Landscape Architecture & Spatial Planning

'I have nothing against car drivers but if we want to park cars in front of the door, that means no gardens, shadow or greenery welcoming us as we approach the buildings. What kind of campus do we want in Wageningen? We need to talk about that. But we can already start experimenting tomorrow. The top deck of the garage rarely gets used – only really when it's raining a lot. **We could divert a hundred drivers to the top deck and upgrade the parking spaces** freed up by this to temporary green spaces. If it doesn't work, we reverse it.'^{ME}



‘You’ve got a prehistoric human right in front of you’

The secrets of the bog

Landscape archaeologist Roy van Beek has charted the bog bodies of northern Europe. A painstaking task that has generated new insights as well as some puzzling findings.

Text Roelof Kleis

Bog bodies capture the imagination. An aura of mystery surrounds the well-preserved mummies. Who were these people and why did they meet their end in the bog? Were they ritually sacrificed, killed in some other way, or did they just get lost and drown?

Landscape archaeologist Roy van Beek has been fascinated by the subject for years. ‘For an archaeologist, it’s brilliant,’ he says in explanation of his fascination. ‘You couldn’t get any closer to someone who lived that far in the past. With the best-preserved mummies, like the Danish Tollund man, you can practically still see the stubble on the chin. You feel like you’ve got a prehistoric human right in front of you.’

It’s the same with the Yde girl in the Dutch province of Drenthe. This is the bog body Van Beek published research findings on in 2019. The 16-year-old girl, who was ritually strangled around the beginning of our era, was given a reconstructed face. Van Beek used archaeology, soil and pollen research to fill in the details about her surroundings. Popular conceptions of bog bodies stem from finds like these. Rightly so? No, says Van Beek categorically. ‘For a long time, we’ve had tunnel vision, seeing only a small group of finds, which are admittedly



Hallonflickan, the ‘Raspberry Girl’, was found in Sweden and was some 15 to 20 years old when she died. She got her name from the large number of raspberry seeds found in her stomach • Photo Wikimedia Commons

'My work often ends in speculation'

very appealing and spectacular but which only tell a fraction of the whole story. The books about them fill many bookcases, creating a particular idea about bog bodies that has little foundation. That is cause for concern, really.'

Bones

Van Beek studied the distribution of bog bodies in northern Europe, charting their locations from Ireland to the Baltic states for the first time. He did not restrict himself to well-preserved mummies, but also included skeletons and skeletal remains in the survey. 'If you take a broader view of it, the story looks different,' he says now. 'At first, I too assumed that there was no comparison between those mummies and fragmented bone remains. Until the penny dropped one day. The Yde girl is essentially no different from another find of a remnant of bones. You have to put the different finds side by side. Besides, mummies don't tell you everything. In some ways, they are well preserved. They have nails, skin, hair and sometimes you can even see what the last thing they ate was. But they don't usually contain bone material. A mummy is a bag of skin. Skeletons provide you with different information, sometimes including the cause of death.'

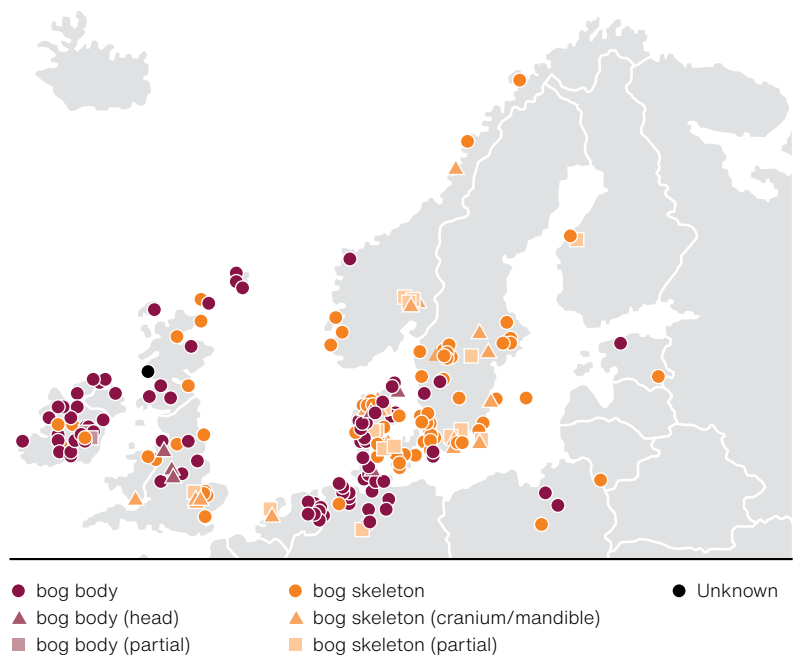
Not a burial site

Created together with an international team of experts, the database of bog bodies includes more than 1000 individuals across 266 sites, and spans seven millennia. Funnily enough, those finds are not evenly distributed over time. In fact, statistical analysis reveals a puzzling pattern of seven peaks with long periods between them from which significantly fewer or even hardly any corpses have been found. Why is that? 'That is the key question,' says Van Beek. 'The first finds are from the Neolithic period (from 11,000 BCE - ed.). In those agricultural societies, human populations began to cluster for the first time. Moreover, this is when peat formed on a larger scale. You don't get bog bodies without peat. But why are there peaks and troughs in their occurrence? I don't know. Maybe it has something to do with cultural preferences and sacrificial rites. That is definitely the case with the big spike in finds from the Iron Age and Roman period, for example. But I don't think there is just one clear reason for those spikes. There will be a complex interplay of factors. You can't lump all those corpses together.'

The idea that the peat served as a burial site has been ruled out, according to Van Beek. 'We know quite a lot about what a normal burial was in this period. You have the dolmens, the burial mounds, the urn fields. Bog bodies are a deviation from these methods. The question is why these people were not entitled to a normal burial. Were they criminals, disabled, or outcasts in some other way, who were rejected by their society? Besides individual sites, you have places where people were repeatedly left behind. Cult locations of sorts, where sacrifices were made. In places like that, you also come across quite a few child corpses.'

Less than 20 per cent of peat corpses were demonstrably killed by violence. But here Van Beek takes a cautious approach. 'You can by no means always establish whether violence was involved. Many of the finds were made from 1880 to the first half of the 20th century. Not everything is well preserved and recorded. You have to work with whatever is there. This study is the first to include Central and Eastern Europe. There are vast peat bogs there – peat is still being cut in the Baltic states. And yet there haven't been as many bodies found there as I had hoped. That might be because finds were not recorded. That is an archaeologist's tragedy. My work often ends in speculation.'

One thing Van Beek is sure of is the importance of protecting peat bogs. 'Not only because of their biodiversity, but also because they can tell us things about who we are. They are important archives. Peat stores evidence of 7000 years of human interaction with this kind of landscape.' ■



Distribution of human remains in bogs • Source: Van Beek et al

6 tips for coping with financial stress

LOOK AFTER THE PENNIES...

It's no disaster to feel the pinch occasionally, perhaps after splashing out over the holidays, but serious money troubles can have far-reaching consequences, and can even cause a substantial decline in your IQ*. *Resource* participated in a WUR workshop on financial resilience and learned how to tame the primitive brain.

Among students, it is quite normal to casually admit to having a lot of month left at the end of the money. But the same thing happens to WUR graduates with an excellent salary and you never hear them talk about it: taboo! Shame won't get rid of money worries, however. On the contrary. To help employees stay or become financially healthy – money worries often leave their mark on someone's life and even work – WUR regularly offers an online workshop on financial resilience via vital@work. *Resource* attended one such session and noted the following eye-openers.

1. It's not about money

Financial stress is not about money, but about behaviour — things you do or do not do with your money, emphasize the trainers, Eef van Opdorp and Petra Verstappen, both budget coaches. The biggest pitfall is that a lot of behaviour happens on autopilot. And as money stress increases, the rather hedonistic primitive brain ('yolo' – you only live

Blogs on students and cents

(in Dutch)

Journalist Maaïke Wind didn't dare look at how high her student debt was for years. Until she did look, got the shock of her life, and was so horrified that she paid off more than 30,000 euros in two years. Her blog *Fuckdiestudieschuld* (Fuck that student debt) is highly recommended for anyone who wants to get smarter with their money. The blog *Skere student* by *Resource* columnist and influencer Emma Mouthaan is also full of useful money tips.

once) increasingly takes over from the more sensible neocortex. Result: the greater your money worries, the more irrational your (intuitive) financial decisions. The remedy? Avoid impulsive decisions about money, because your yolo brain is bound to dominate those and you will stay broke. So: shop with a list, sleep at



Text Marieke Enter

least one night on any major purchase, constantly remind yourself that a new purchase is not the same as instant happiness, and so on. In other words: train your brain.

2. Avoid the minefield

Retailers know exactly which buttons to push to tempt you into making that purchase. Are you feeling a bit wobbly or are you just sick of all that constant manipulation? Stay away from shops, including online ones. Limit yourself to your essential shopping – and compare prices, say some workshop participants, who save up to 40 euros a week by doing so.

3. The influence of your past

To handle money wisely, you need to build a healthy relationship with money. But if money carries an emotional charge from

* By 13 IQ points even, comparable to the diminishing capacity to think caused by alcoholism or after a late-night wake-up call.
Source: Mani, A., Mullainathan, S., Shafir, E., & Zhao, J. (2013): Poverty impedes cognitive function. *Science*, 341 (6149), 976-980.

PEOPLE WHO EARN MORE GET MORE CASUAL WITH MONEY



Photo Shutterstock

your youth, that can go on reverberating for a long time. For instance, were there money worries at home, or did your parents argue a lot about money? Chances are that your subconscious equates money with hassle and urges you to stay away from it. The trick is to see money for what it is: just money. It doesn't bring happiness, but neither is it filth that you should stay away from.

4. Having enough money makes you careless

As people start earning more, they often get more casual with money. There is no need to keep track of your spending. But if anything unexpected happens – your energy bill triples, you're laid off work or your partner kicks you out – you still end up in trouble. And, less dramatically but still a shame: you unwittingly spend a lot of money on things that aren't worth it.

A daily caramel macchiato for 4.95 euros may not seem like it breaks the bank but it adds up to nearly 1300 euros a year. Do you really want to spend that much on it?

5. The 10-cent rule

Financial resilience requires a buffer, everyone knows that. But how big should such a buffer be? According to budget coaches, a good rule of thumb – one that is also worth teaching your children if you have any – is to set aside 10 cents of every euro that comes in.

6. Just do it...

Hate administration? Tell me about it. But the budget coaches' advice is: just think of it as a well-paid job. Knowing what comes in and what goes out is the only way to keep track of your money. Reluctantly, *Resource* bites the bullet on a rainy day in the Christmas

Help with serious money worries

If you have (looming) financial problems, the sooner you tackle them the better. Don't keep trying to muddle through on your own; overcome your diffidence and get help. Useful addresses in Wageningen include Humanitas Thuisadministratie and Schuldhulpmaatje Wageningen, where buddies will help you organize your administration, get an overview of your finances and start dealing with any debts. If your money worries are so big that they affect your work or studies, you can also go to WUR for support. Staff can consult the occupational social workers and students can go to the student deans to work out their options together.

holidays. I cull my subscriptions, cancel unnecessary paid apps, call insurers and internet providers about cheaper options... and yes: in one afternoon I saved over 400 euros! That's the way to get the hang of it. ■

ZOO ELEPHANT IS SAVING THE SPECIES

With his genetic research on Asian elephants in European zoos, PhD student Jeroen Kappelhof hopes to lay a solid foundation for the protection of these animals. 'Zoos are shifting from recreation to conservation.' Text Rob Buiter

De schaarse Aziatische olifanten op het eiland Borneo vormen waarschijnlijk een ondersoort. Dat is een van de eerste opmerkelijke uitkomsten uit het promotieonderzoek van dierwetenschapper Jeroen Kappelhof (Animal Breeding and Genomics).

The rare Asian elephants on the island of Borneo probably form a subspecies. That is one of the first striking findings from the PhD research done by animal scientist Jeroen Kappelhof (Animal Breeding and Genomics).

With a grant from the Dutch Research Council, Kappelhof has been working since October 2021 at both WUR and Rotterdam Zoo, better known as Blijdorp Zoo. He is doing genetic research on the various Asian elephants kept in European zoos. 'Zoos are very keen to contribute to animal conservation and also to the reintroduction of endangered species into the wild. But before you start doing that, you still need to know what kind of animal you are dealing with,' Kappelhof says, summing up his research question.

Kappelhof started collecting blood samples from Asian elephants in zoos affiliated with the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) last year. 'An estimated 35,000 to 50,000 Asian elephants are still living in the wild. There are also about 15,000 of them

in captivity worldwide, some in zoos and most in work camps in Asia. But of all these animals, a complete genetic profile of only nine individuals had been made and published to date.'

The researcher's priority was animals born in the wild but now living in zoos in Europe. 'There was blood from a few elephants in an EAZA biobank, but I had to get blood from most of the elephants myself,' he says. He now has fully analysed DNA data from the first batch, which comes from several different countries.

Of the Asian elephant, *Elephas maximus*, several subspecies are known, such as *E. m. maximus* on Sri Lanka; *E. m. sumatranus* on Sumatra and *E. m. indicus* on the mainland. But the initial results from Kappelhof's research suggest that there are more subspecies, probably including one on Borneo.

Gone for good

It was suggested back at the turn of the century that Borneo's elephants deserved their own branch in the family tree, but that was purely on the basis of mitochondrial DNA, which is only inherited through the maternal line. Kappelhof: 'So now our research on DNA from the nucleus points in the same direction: there is almost certainly a separate subspecies living here that could therefore be called *E.m. borneensis*.' His genetic research is more than just hair-splitting for elephant experts, Kappelhof stresses. 'First of all, the recognition of a separate subspecies has legal consequences. Knowing that a certain population is genetically completely separate from other populations

'I HAD TO GET BLOOD FROM MOST OF THE ELEPHANTS MYSELF'



Researcher Jeroen Kappelhof with his elephants in Rotterdam Zoo • Photo David Rozing

has implications for its conservation status. So if the Asian elephants of Borneo were to disappear, you would lose that entire branch of the lineage. Forever.’ This research could have implications for the regular work of zoos too. ‘We look not only at the differences between groups, such as these subspecies, but also at the similarities between individuals. The genetic load provides information about the damage caused by inbreeding. If two individuals are too similar, for example, you know you really shouldn’t breed with them to avoid fertility problems. So this research could eventually mean you only allow certain animals to mate within the right subspecies so as to avoid creating even more inbreeding.’

Breeding programmes

For the time being, such practical applications are theory, Kappelhof emphasizes. ‘The populations of Sumatran and Borneo elephants in European zoos are relatively small, so we probably don’t have the luxury of creating an ideal mix there, but with the populations from India and Sri Lanka, we will hopefully be able to do so in future.’

The researcher expects such breeding programmes to be core work in the zoos of the future. ‘Currently, certainly in the eyes of the general public, zoos are primarily there for recreation purposes. But Blijdorp and other serious zoos also do research into conservation and the

reintroduction into the wild of endangered species. For instance, we participate in international breeding programmes for the red panda, black rhinoceros and many other endangered species that have already been released into the wild. I think zoos are undergoing a transition from theme parks to conservation organizations.’

Kappelhof is aware there it will take a while before Asian zoo elephants will be released into the wild. ‘But things are different for the elephants in Asia’s many work camps. After some careful training, they will be able to return to life in the wild more quickly. And there too, genetic research to determine the right subspecies and the relationship between individuals could help you to release the right animals in the right places.’ Currently, it still costs several hundred dollars per animal to have the complete genome of zoo animals unravelled, but the technology is getting cheaper. ‘So I really think this kind of genetic research is the future for many more species,’ Kappelhof said.

Kappelhof expects to publish his first paper, on the separate status of Asian elephants in Borneo, in the course of this year. ■

An Afghan refugee family in the attic

A roof over their heads

WUR guest worker Parisa Aqdas Karimi and her family are living in the attic of a Wageningen home. And now it's time for them to move on. Photo Guy Ackermans

This story is a cry for help. An urgent cry for help. Marjolijn Dannenburg, WURth-while coordinator, is looking for housing. Not for herself; she lives with her family (husband and 17-year-old daughter) in a semi-detached house in Wageningen. But for her Afghan guests. Since early September, WUR guest worker Parisa Aqdas Karimi, her husband and their three children aged 9, 6 and 2 have been living in Dannenburg's attic. And now it's time for them to move on.

It all started last year after another cry for help when Karimi sent out an email appealing for support. As a university lecturer at Kabul University and an advocate of women's rights, she was in danger. She had been teaching at the university since 2009. 'And I also did work on human rights for NGOs. I taught women how to stand up for their rights. And for the American aid organization USAID, I taught women how they could become the leaders of the future.' That was until the Taliban came to power in 2021. For her own safety, she rarely

visited the university after that. When the Taliban found out who had been working on these programmes, Kabul was no longer safe for Karimi and she sent her cry for help out into the world. Including to WUR, where she had once taken an online course. The email came to the attention of Dannenburg. 'I asked her to send me her qualifications. I wanted to know who she was, what kind of person I was dealing with,' she says. 'What struck me most was all the work she had done on empowering women and girls. I was particularly struck by one sentence in her email: "I worked with many NGOs, where I taught most of the girls to fight for their rights and never accept any kind of violence against themselves, as well as raise their voice in society in order to reduce gender sensitivity in Afghanistan." I thought: goodness, what a strong woman. And now it's her turn and she needs someone to help her.'

In the attic

Dannenburg found the Teaching and Learning Sciences chair group willing



Text Roelof Kleis

to look for a project for Karimi. 'That worked out and I managed to arrange funding, which enabled her to get a visa for herself and her family.' And so Parisa and her family travelled by bus from Kabul to Pakistan on 19 August. They really wanted to leave earlier but it was hard to obtain valid passports. Karimi: 'Ours had expired and we couldn't apply for new ones because we would probably have been arrested. We eventually managed to arrange passports through the black market.'

The two women met for the first time at Schiphol Airport nearly three weeks later, on 8 September. Dannenburg: 'For eight months, we had only had online contact. It was a tense time not knowing

'IN AFGHANISTAN MY DAUGHTER WOULD SOON NOT BE ALLOWED TO GO TO SCHOOL ANYMORE'



'I HOPE THAT THIS STORY WILL PROMPT SOMEONE TO COME FORWARD WHO CAN HELP'

whether they would make it. And then suddenly, there they stood, the five of them. That was really ... wow! Like reaching the top of Mount Everest. And it's quite funny that she is even shorter than I am! Two small women have managed to pull this off.' The Dannenburg family generously put up the guests in their own home. 'I couldn't find anything else. So many people are already putting up Ukrainians. And available housing was one of the conditions for permission to let them come to the Netherlands. Her husband's position was an important factor too. He had worked in the HRM department at the Ministry of Defence and had been wanted by the Taliban for some time. He was more or less in hiding' The Afghan family has been living in Dannenburg's attic for four months now. 'At first it was difficult,' says Karimi. 'There are so many cultural and religious differences between us. But we are happy here now. The eldest two children go to the international school *De Wereld* and my husband works at Brocacef, a medical company that packages medicines, in Ede.' And he has made a success of it, adds Dannenburg. 'One Monday in October, he and I toured several employment agencies in Ede by bike. By Friday, he had a job. And within a month he was taken on permanently and given a pay rise.'

It soon became clear that there could be no question of returning to Afghanistan. 'My colleagues in Kabul warned me that the Taliban knew I had worked for NGOs. *If you go back, you don't know what will happen to you.*' The past two years

have been full of stress and depression, which also contributes to the decision. 'When I came to the Netherlands, I was desperate. I have had a lot of support here at WUR. Things are going well, and I get to write a PhD proposal. I am happy especially for my daughter, who is nine now. In Afghanistan, she would soon not be allowed to go to school anymore. Here she can learn what she wants.'

Hope

As a guest worker, Karimi is eligible for a 'job-seeking year' for workers with a higher education. She could write her PhD proposal in that year and look for funding. 'But then they need housing,' says Dannenburg. 'Two families sharing a house designed for one family is not a tenable situation.' What is more, it is urgent: the family's temporary residence permit expires on 19 January. After that, neither Parisa nor her husband are allowed to work and they must report to the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) in Ter Apel. It would be good if they were sent to the Asylum-seekers' Reception Centre in Wageningen, but that is uncertain.

Dannenburg: 'We are really hoping for that. Then they can carry on with their lives here. The children are doing well at school. As a family, they have every prospect of making a success of living here in the Netherlands. But COA can't promise anything.'

'I've often wondered: why am I doing this?' says Dannenburg. 'Parisa is just one woman. There are hundreds, maybe thousands, who are in the same situation. Okay, but is that a reason not to do anything? The Talmud says: those who save one person save humanity. During World War II, people hid Jews in their homes. An awful lot of Jews were killed nevertheless. But that didn't make it any less worthwhile to save the few you could. I hope that this story will prompt someone to come forward who can help.' Dannenburg hopes that WUR too will want to do something for all those other Parisas. 'I would like WUR to extend the solidarity it shows Ukrainians to Afghan scientists as well'. The women especially. 'Tears are shed in my house about students of Parisa's who are not allowed to take their exams, after a Taliban ruling in December, and who therefore cannot graduate and have only one future option left: to marry. But who? Most of the more progressive men have already left the country. Should they marry illiterate men, Taliban fighters? Education for all is one of the global sustainability goals. Surely WUR should be able to do something towards that? Through online education, for example, or systems like Scholars at Risk.'

It is no coincidence that the use of online learning resources is the topic Karimi has been working on in recent months. She would like to do a PhD on it. 'Maybe online education can bypass Taliban restrictions. I want to give Afghan women hope again. I hope the world won't forget Afghan women.' ■



THE SIDE JOB

You've got to make ends meet somehow. We can all borrow from Uncle Duo, but there are also students who earn money in unusual ways. In this series, we put some interesting side jobs in the spotlight. This time we meet Sabine Boerboom (25), a Master's student of Organic Agriculture, who teaches yoga at *Het Yogaschooltje* and other venues. Text Steven Snijders

'I had such severe RSI at one point that I couldn't even do the dishes anymore! I was in the middle of a stressful period at the time and had gone beyond my limits. I had to rehabilitate in hospital. Yoga, focusing on balance and relaxation, put me back in touch with myself. By doing exercises that

'Yoga can be spiritual, but it doesn't have to be'

train flexibility, for instance, you also extend your own limits, but in a mindful way. Yoga taught me to let go of stress responses in daily life, such as hunching my shoulders. As a teacher, I can now help other people to listen to their bodies. During a class, I walk around the room and support the participants. With a simple question, for example, like: 'Do you realize that you are frowning?' People often do that unconsciously and it feels more comfortable when you relax your forehead. 'I teach classes in various styles, such as yin yoga, flow yoga and classic hatha yoga. Classic hatha targets all the body's systems. It increases your flexibility and strength and teaches you how to

get into "rest and digest" mode. In flow yoga, you move on every inhalation and exhalation. Yin classes focus on the tendons, joints and connective tissue. Connective tissue surrounds muscles and organs to protect and connect them. Stretching these "slow tissues" improves circulation and flexibility. And you stay in a pose for longer in a yin class. These are meditative exercises in letting go of thoughts that are of no use to you and returning to the present sensations. I think yoga is less new-agey than people think. It can be spiritual, but it doesn't have to be. You get in touch with yourself, which actually means having both feet on the ground. In the end, yoga is just a form of exercise.'



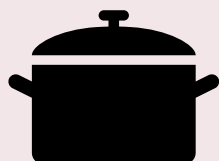
Photo Annemijn Meijerink

Sabine teaches yoga

Who: Sabine Boerboom (25)
What: yoga teacher
Why? Yoga puts you in touch with yourself
Hourly wage: €5 to €45 per hour, including preparation

Do you have an unusual side job or know someone else who does? Send an email to steven.snijders@wur.nl

You encounter all the flavours of the world in the WUR community. Stevan Paunovic, is a Plant Sciences MSc student from Zurich, share a recipe for 'ugly pizza'.



Flavours of WUR

Grozna pica (ugly pizza)

'This dish comes from a small Croatian town on an island in the Adriatic Sea. The cuisine of this island was heavily influenced by both Croatian and Italian cuisine. My grandmother taught me how to make this dish, but as we can't get all the ingredients here in the Netherlands, I have adapted it a bit.

'The main ingredient, the local fish "zubatac", is hard to find here in the Netherlands so I usually replace it with vegetarian fish fingers (which taste very similar after frying and are better for the environment). The other main ingredient is bread. In the original recipe you use bread that is like a small pizza mozzarella but with slightly different herbs. I would recommend just using whatever bread

you prefer; you can't go wrong here. The last two ingredients are rocket and mayonnaise.'

- 1 Arrange the fish fingers like the rays of the sun on half of the pizza.
- 2 Heat the oven to 200 °C and bake the bread for 10 minutes.
- 3 Take the pizza out of the oven and cut it in half so you've got one half with fish fingers and one half without.
- 4 Spread mayonnaise and sprinkle rocket over the half with the fish fingers.
- 5 Cover it with the other half of the pizza.
- 6 Tasty with a glass of chilled white wine. Enjoy it!



Ingredients (for 2 persons) :

- (vegetarian) fish fingers
- pizza base or other round bread
- mayonnaise
- rocket



Stevan Paunovic as a child in Croatia, looking for the right fish for the *grozna pica* (ugly pizza).

IN MEMORIAM

SIP VAN WIEREN

With his extensive knowledge of large mammal management and the ecological knowledge behind it, Sip was a popular lecturer in the Wildlife Ecology & Conservation Chair Group for over 20 years. Before joining our group, he worked for the National Institute for Nature Conservation (the forerunner of WENR). Sip's natural-history and scientific

knowledge of deer, boar, roe deer, wolves and geese was legendary. He was responsible for the introduction of Scottish Highlanders on the Veluwe and since then elsewhere in Dutch, German, Belgian and French nature reserves. Sip was an important source of information for nature reserve managers, on ticks among other topics, and played a major role in making reserves in the Netherlands more natural. He gained much inspiration for his work during his travels in the Himalayas, Russia,

Kenya and elsewhere, where he supervised PhD students. A nature lover and keen hiker, Sip was much loved by his colleagues, PhD candidates and students, and was renowned for his keen insights.

It was with great sadness that we had to say goodbye to Sip in recent months. We wish Marjolein much strength to bear her loss.

On behalf of colleagues and former colleagues, Herbert Prins and Frank van Langevelde

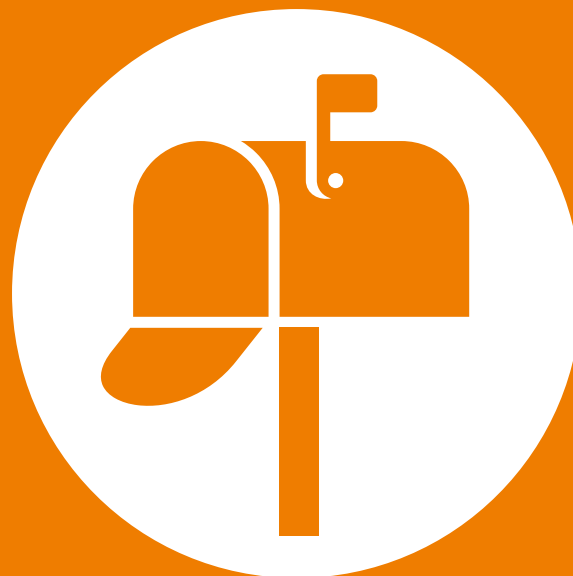
RESOURCE IN THE LETTERBOX EVERY TWO WEEKS?

Go to resource-online.nl and subscribe!

SUBSCRIBE

Resource

WUR from within: straight, sharp, transparent



(Advert)

University Fund
Wageningen

anne
vanden
banfund

'All small
donations
add up to
one big gift:
knowledge'

Support talented
students and make
a world of difference!

Donate now at
www.annevandenbanfonds.nl

Scholarships for students
from developing countries



Colophon

Resource is the independent medium for students and staff at Wageningen University & Research. *Resource* reports and interprets the news and gives the context. New articles are posted daily on resource-online.nl. The magazine is published every fortnight on Thursday.

Contact Questions and comments for the editors:
resource@wur.nl | www.resource-online.nl

Editorial staff Willem Andrée (editor-in-chief), Helene Seevinck (managing editor), Roelof Kleis (editor), Luuk Zegers (editor), Marieke Enter (editor), Stijn Schreven (editor), Coretta Jongeling (online coordinator), Thea Kuijpers (secretariat).

Translations Clare McGregor, Meira van der Spa, Clare Wilkinson

Design Alfred Heikamp, Larissa Mulder

Overall design Marinka Reuten

Cover Photography Eric Scholten

Printing Tuijtel, Hardinxveld-Giessendam

Subscription A subscription to the magazine for one academic year costs 59 euros (135 euros if abroad). Cancellations before 1 August.

ISSN 1389-7756

Publisher Corporate Communications & Marketing,
Wageningen University & Research





Photo Marte Hofsteenge



BUILDINGS TO CLOSE MORE OFTEN TO SAVE ENERGY

After the successful closure of various buildings on campus during the Christmas period to save energy, WUR is considering closing buildings more often. 'The more often we close them, the less energy we use.'

In a pilot project, next month teaching buildings Orion, Forum and Leeuwenborch will be open only four hours a day. 'Between 11:00 and 15:00 to be precise,' says campus manager Glenda Close. 'That's when students like to congregate on campus, we learned from a questionnaire we sent round. Lots of students would prefer a lie-in with a gentle start to the day so they can then wander into a lecture around 11:00 with a cup of coffee. By 15:00 they're tired and want to relax or play sports. If we key into our students' wishes, we will no longer have to turn the heating up from dawn to dusk.'

During the pilot, teachers will be asked to get through their lectures twice as fast. 'There is less time per lecture, so they will need to up the pace,' explains Close. 'I know that might sound challenging, but YouTube has some good tutorials on talking fast. If students record

the lecture, they can replay it and listen to it at home at half speed. I don't see the problem.'

Other campus buildings will also have reduced opening hours during the pilot. Close: 'Atlas is busy on Tuesdays but there's hardly anyone there the rest of the week.

So you are better off closing it completely on the other days; then you don't need to waste any energy.'

With these energy saving measures, WUR hopes to set the right example in the energy crisis. 'We all need to do our bit,' says Close. 'This is the contribution we can make as a university.'