



Utrecht University

Utrecht  
University Fund

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

# Achieving great things together

The COVID-19 pandemic turned 2020 into a highly unpredictable year in which nothing could be taken for granted. However, the Utrecht University Fund continued to provide invaluable support for education and research at Utrecht University. The many donations to our crowd-funding campaign helped to ease financial problems among students as a result of the pandemic. // **page 8** Computing tool helps rid the Galapagos Islands of plastic – and that's just the start. // **page 10**



FOREWORD

# Staying the course and looking ahead

As I mentioned last year, we are currently in the midst of an ‘intelligent lockdown’. At the time, I couldn’t have imagined the situation would still be much the same one year later. Still, we have achieved great things in 2020 in line with our two guiding principles of ‘staying the course and looking ahead’.

As you would expect, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the Utrecht University Fund’s activities. While there was no opportunity to meet physically, the rapid development of digital channels allowed the university, the fund and our alumni to stay in touch. This new situation also opens up opportunities to share more of our activities and stories with you. We will continue to do so enthusiastically under the leadership of our new director Margot van Sluis-Barten. This certainly applies to the current year, which will see both Utrecht University and the Utrecht University Fund celebrate their respective anniversaries!

The Utrecht University Fund enjoyed a good financial year. In addition to the solid results of our Funding the Future campaign, a total of almost €145,000 was allocated to projects such as Inclusion, research on plastic-free oceans and the university scholarship programme. Our fund also launched a successful crowdfunding campaign to raise emergency funding for students struggling with financial problems due to the pandemic. We are very grateful to Professor Joop van der Maas, who left us a highly generous legacy of over one million euros. This annual report provides an overview of these and other activities in the year under review.

2020 marked the departure of our director Fenna Hanraets-van Charldorp, who now serves as business director at Utrecht University’s Botanical Gardens. We also parted ways with our valued board member Barbara Oomen, who stepped down from the Board. We greatly value both their contributions to the Utrecht University Fund. We were also delighted to welcome two new Board members: José van Dijck and Paul Stamsnijder have been making valuable contributions since last spring.

Let’s stay the course together over the coming period, as we look forward to better times ahead!

Yours sincerely,

**Lodewijk Hijmans van den Bergh**  
*Chair, Utrecht University Fund*

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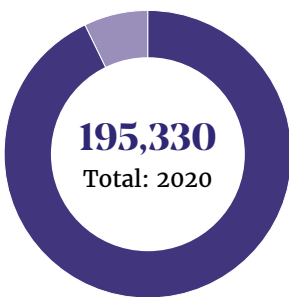
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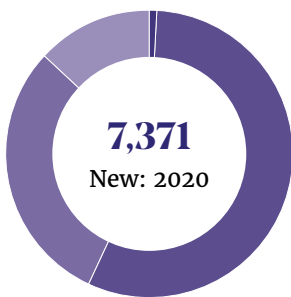
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# What can the numbers tell us about 2020?

ALUMNI

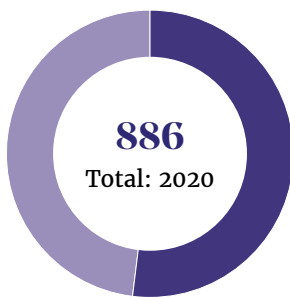


- Registered alumni: 195,330
- Of which international alumni: 13,164



New alumni in 2020

- PhDs: 1%
- Bachelor's: 56%
- Master's: 30%
- Postgraduates and exchange alumni: 13%



Attendance at alumni events

- Total no. of attendees: 886
- Those attending an alumni event for the 1st time: 422
- Cancelled events: 11

ALUMNI WORLDWIDE

Utrecht University alumni can be found in cities all across the globe. We have alumni networks in ten major global cities.

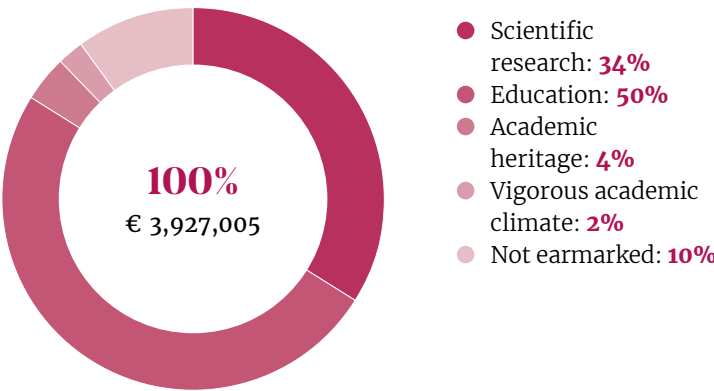


UTRECHT UNIVERSITY FUND

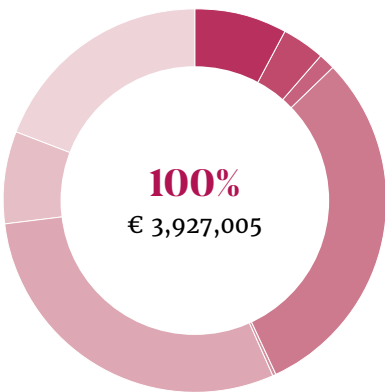
What is the total amount raised?



For what purpose are these funds intended?



Where have these donations come from?



- Friends: 8%
- Funding the Future campaign: 3.6%
- Crowdfunding: 1.3%
- Estates: 30.2%
- Other donations & charitable gifts: 0.3%
- Named funds: 29.9%
- Corporate gifts: 7.8%
- Equity funds: 18.9%

Named funds

- Number of named funds: 30
- Capital appreciation of named funds in 2020: € 1,819,164

Steun.uu.nl

- Number of crowdfunding campaigns online at steun.uu.nl: 10
- Total revenue: € 50,598

Equity funds

- Financial support obtained from other equity funds: € 740,270

Funding the Future

Total amount raised by the campaign  
Funding the Future 2020: € 144,918.00

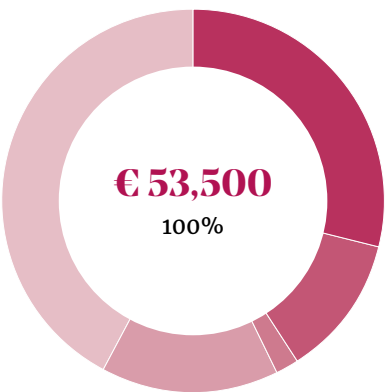
Earmarked for:

- Scholarship programme: € 67,509
- Refugee students: € 23,662
- Plastic-free oceans: € 27,188
- Asian elephants: € 20,000
- COVID-19 emergency fund (fundraising commenced in April 2020): € 5,879
- UCU Scholarships: € 680

Friends

Friends: 14321  
Student Friends: 6314  
Donated by these Friends: € 314,116  
Amount of this sum to be spent on subsidies for students: € 53,500

\*The number of student grant applications in 2020 was lower than in previous years (a difference of about €80,000) due to the cancellation of many extra-curricular activities and study trips due to the COVID pandemic. The remaining amount was earmarked for the university scholarship programme.



- Culture: 29%
- Conferences, symposia and lectures: 12%
- Sports: 2%
- Study programme and study trips: 15%
- Career: 42%



# Connecting with our alumni

Alumni are an integral part of Utrecht University's academic community. Utrecht University is proud of its graduates and invests in efforts to reach out to, connect with and engage over 195,000 registered alumni. We strive to connect them to each other and the university: the bond between alumni and their university is a relationship for life.

As in previous years, we organised events for alumni at home and abroad. Most of these events were held online in view of the pandemic. We published two editions of our alumni magazine *Illuster* (focusing on the themes of education and relationships) and kept alumni informed of the latest developments at our alma mater through various digital channels. The effort to provide expertise and support for alumni policy development at the faculties and UCU initiated in 2019 was continued in 2020.

Naturally, the COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on the year's events. Reports of concerns about a deadly virus reached us through the Utrecht alumni community in Beijing even before the first national lockdown in March. Alumni in the Chinese capital weren't allowed to leave their homes, and shared their worries and concerns with us. We made sure to let them know they were in our thoughts. It wasn't long before the Netherlands was also largely under lockdown, and we were forced to cancel our annual alumni reunion, the University Day, at the last minute. Other 'physical' alumni events were soon to follow. The event calendar eventually resumed in online form in May 2020, with successful lectures by Anton Pijpers, Hester den Ruijter and others. Our online quizzes proved to be an international success. These online events also gave us the opportunity to connect with alumni who were previously inaccessible because they live in places without a substantial alumni presence.

In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were also faced with another setback. In the summer of 2020, it became clear that Blackbaud, the external supplier of Utrecht University's CRM system, had been affected by a data security incident. The incident affected the system we use to register interactions with our alumni, donors and relationships. Informing all those affected and resolving the incident put a major burden on our internal organisation.

On the other hand, the year was also marked by a sense of solidarity. The support for our crowdfunding campaign for students affected by the pandemic was heartwarming, with donations flooding in from alumni, staff, students, parents and others. In the words of one of our donors: 'As a recent graduate, I really understand how important it is to support students in need during these terrible times.' These types of responses underline the lifelong bond between alumni and the university – a relationship we are working to strengthen through our alumni programme.

## THE UTRECHT UNIVERSITY FUND BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Lodewijk J. Hijmans van den Bergh, LLM**  
*Chair*



**Tanja L. Nagel, LLM**  
*Treasurer*



**Mr. Paul Stamsnijder**  
*Board member*  
(as of 20 January 2020)



**Prof. dr. Barbara Oomen**  
*Board Member*  
(until 20 January 2020)



**Mr. Harald S. Miedema, MBA**  
*Vice President*



**Prof. dr. José van Dijck**  
*Board member*  
(as of 20 January 2020)



**Prof. dr. Anton Pijpers**  
*Member and President of the Executive Board, Utrecht University*

## UTRECHT UNIVERSITY FUND

# For a better future

We are the oldest university fund in the country, and were originally founded by alumni in 1886. Our objective has remained the same ever since: helping Utrecht University to grow and flourish as an academic community. 2020 was an extraordinary year; alumni felt even more engaged with Utrecht University as a result of the COVID pandemic, and expressed their commitment to our community. In 2020, the Utrecht University Fund raised almost 3,9 million euros. This wonderful amount went to various Utrecht University projects aimed at building a better future. Contributions to research and education (the latter in the form of student grants), support for students affected by the pandemic, grants for students seeking to develop their talents outside of the curriculum, grants for student society activities, contributions to the preservation and accessibility of academic heritage and efforts to make science accessible to a broad audience.

We are enormously grateful for the help of all our volunteers and the financial support provided by over 15,000 Friends and donors. Your contributions are what enables the Utrecht University Fund to make a difference, more and more each year. The stories in this annual report underline what we are all working so hard for.

The Utrecht University Fund is a registered foundation. Members of its Board of Directors serve on a voluntary basis and always include both a Utrecht University professor and a representative of the Executive Board of Utrecht University.



**Fenna Hanraets-van Charldorp**  
*Director of the Utrecht University Fund and head of Relationship Management*  
(until August 2020)



**Margot van Sluis-Barten**  
*Director of the Utrecht University Fund and head of Relationship Management*  
(as of August 2020)



# ‘Got my degree certificate despite the pandemic’



In March 2020, large parts of the world suddenly found themselves under lockdown. Students’ freedom of movement was also restricted. Side jobs evaporated, but landlords didn’t suddenly stop charging rent. Many students found themselves in acute financial difficulties, prompting the Utrecht University Fund to launch a crowdfunding campaign among Friends, alumni, staff and other stakeholders.

‘The world basically went crazy for a bit’, recalls student counsellor Frank Peters. We soon started receiving reports that the situation was becoming dire through our student support chain (spanning from tutors and study advisors to student counsellors and psychologists).

There was a genuine sense of panic in some cases, especially among international students that wanted to go home and found themselves facing all sorts of expenses and problems. We have our own emergency fund, but it isn’t nearly big enough to support everyone. Allowances are also subject to certain rules and conditions, including some in the area of study progress, so we were very glad to hear about the new COVID-19 emergency fund.

We know a lot about laws, regulations and provisions and financial resources for students through our work as student counsellors, so our colleagues from the Utrecht University Fund asked if they could consult with us. We were also able to refer students to other facilities and coordinate with student psychologists and other parties. For example, many students

from other European countries didn’t know they could borrow money from DUO and use it for other purposes.

## MY DEGREE PROGRAMME CHANGED MY LIFE

‘Because it’s horrible if you can’t study due to money problems’, writes one donor. Another donor added: ‘My studies at Utrecht University changed my life, so I want to help current students as much as I can.’ The emergency fund has already received over EUR 35,000 in donations, and has provided financial support to dozens of students. The fundraising effort is still ongoing.

Frank: ‘I have been very touched by the generosity of our donors, who include many alumni and staff members as well as students and their parents. Many donations are from Friends of the Fund, and some are from alumni who once benefited from the University Fund themselves. I’m grateful for the fact that their support is helping us to respond quickly and hopefully make sure people don’t have to discontinue their studies. We’ve been getting some heart-warming responses from students, such as: “I’m so grateful for the donation, it’s a huge relief and it means I can focus on my studies again.”’

## SECOND-HAND DESK

‘At the same time, it’s kind of frustrating that we can’t solve all the issues. We can help students with a modest contribution to alleviate their worst problems. For example, money to fix a broken computer, a contribution towards a ticket home or a month’s rent. The fund has also allowed us to contribute to the purchase of new laptops for emergency situations. We even helped someone with a second-hand desk.

But we’ve also had to turn people away if the amounts they needed were too large and/or the problems were too structural. Unfortunately, we can’t just give students twenty thousand euros towards their tuition fees or compensate someone’s lost income for a few months. However, we are trying to offer breathing space to as many students as possible in order to give them time to think about their next steps.’

## MORE BREATHING SPACE

‘Although the COVID-19 pandemic is still with us, that initial sense of panic seems to have subsided. The Minister has since introduced some provisions that offer certain students a bit of breathing space. However, the financial problems haven’t been resolved, let alone the issues in terms of wellbeing. Everyone at the university is making a huge effort to keep things running smoothly. And while it may never be enough to solve all the problems we’re facing, it’s definitely nice to help people get their degrees.’

Many of the hundreds of donations to the emergency fund were made by Friends of the Utrecht University Fund. The members of this group of loyal donors, consisting of Utrecht University alumni, students and staff, donate at least EUR 30 each year. Their contributions help us to build a thriving academic community. Donations to the emergency fund were made in addition to the regular annual contribution, which Utrecht University Fund uses to finance student grants, scholarships and special projects.

[uu.nl/friend](https://uu.nl/friend)



# ‘The Galapagos are only the beginning.’

COMPUTING TOOL DEVELOPED BY UU RESEARCHERS IS  
HELPING TO CLEAN UP PLASTIC WASTE EFFICIENTLY



To turn the Galapagos Islands into the first ecosystem to be returned to a 100% plastic-free state: this is the goal of a new large-scale project in which Utrecht-based scientists **Erik van Sebille** and **Stefanie Ypma** are cooperating with international ecologists. The mapping of ocean currents will play a crucial role in this process. The researchers' computing tool, which predicts where and when plastic will wash up, is now being used to clean up the Galapagos Islands. And that's just the start.

Van Sebille explains: 'We couldn't have chosen a better place to make plastic-free. So why do the Galapagos offer such an ideal test location? It's obviously an iconic area. The Galapagos also have a small population and almost all tourism is sustainable. Most importantly, though, the ocean currents around the Galapagos bring up relatively clean water from the deep sea, which basically wash the plastic away. That means we only have to give the ocean a helping hand. By efficiently cleaning up the plastic that the sea deposits on land, we can prevent the plastic from going on a long journey across the oceans.'

## PREDICTIVE COMPUTING TOOL

So how is the computing tool helping them in this process? Van Sebille: This predictive tool will tell park rangers when they need to go to which island, to clean up the plastic before it washes back out to sea.' The process of cleaning up large pieces of plastic on land, such as bottles, plastic bags and fishing gear, is easier than cleaning up microplastics in the sea, and also has a far greater impact. Every time a piece of plastic hits a rock or rubs against sand, it breaks into smaller

pieces. If you don't clean up that macroplastic quickly, you'll end up with thousands of pieces of microplastic. 'By combating the waste while it is still on land, you reduce the amount of time plastic spends in the ocean – and therefore its opportunity to do damage.'

## DRIFTERS

Voor de ontwikkeling van de 'plasticvoorspeller' bouwen de onderzoekers software die allerlei The researchers are currently developing software that combines various types of wind and water data in aid of the new 'plastic predictor'. Ocean currents will play a crucial role in this regard. Small floating buoys will be deployed in order to map out these currents accurately. Their exact trajectory can then be tracked with GPS signals. 'Drifters are already commonly used in ocean research. But because the major ocean currents tend to carry them away from the Galapagos, there is still much we don't know about the local current systems. We must therefore release the buoys at very specific locations', researcher Ypma explains. 'We'll also need a new type of drifter, as the current ones

typically drift at a depth of about fifteen metres. That's ideal if you want to do research on oceanic temperatures and nutrients. 'Plastic, however, floats on the surface and is more strongly impacted by waves and wind. We're currently developing this new type of drifter.'

## POTENTIAL FOR THE WHOLE PLANET

And it won't end with the Galapagos. The research being conducted by Van Sebille and his team provides a starting point for global efforts to tackle the problem of plastic pollution in our seas. The researchers aim to apply the method in other areas, such as Svalbard, Indonesia and the Wadden Sea. The software for the plastic predictor is also open source, and can be freely used by others. Van Sebille: 'We're not just examining the problem from a scientific point of view, we're also working to solve it.'

## THANKS TO GENEROUS DONATIONS

Donor contributions to the Utrecht University Fund and donations as part of the Funding the Future campaign have contributed greatly to the development of the predictive computing tool. The fund is also enlisting the help of alumni and donors to enable the next research stage. Donors can now directly fund part or all of one of the new drifter models.

*Van Sebille also won the Agnites Vrolik Award in 2020, a prize in recognition of research with a major social impact. See page 28 for details.*

'Funding the Future' is the name of the annual fundraising campaign organised by the Utrecht University Fund. Thanks to the generous donations of alumni, Friends, staff and students, the Fund was able to divide the impressive sum of almost €145,000 between four wonderful projects this year. In addition to the Plastic-free oceans project, the Utrecht University Fund supported the university scholarship programme, provided aid to refugee students through Inclusion and supported research aimed at developing a vaccine and treatment for the EEHV virus, which is deadly for elephants. In the spring of 2020, the newly established emergency fund (also see page 8) was the fifth project to be added as a fund-raising goal for the Funding the Future campaign. Finally, University College Utrecht alumni had the opportunity to pledge their contribution to the UCU Scholarship Fund.

In 2021, the Utrecht University Fund is once again asking for support for a new group of four deserving Funding the Future projects.

[uu.nl/pay-it-forward](https://uu.nl/pay-it-forward)





# Professor earmarks his legacy for students in need

In 1953, Professor **Joop van der Maas** lived through the North Sea Flood, a traumatic experience that prompted him to donate his legacy to students facing financial or emotional difficulties for reasons beyond their control. He named the Utrecht University Fund as his sole heir. This remarkable legacy of over one million euros will enable the Utrecht University Fund to help a great many students for years to come.

Joop van der Maas was born in Oosterland, in the province of Zeeland, on 21 September 1936, as the only child of Leendert Marinus van der Maas and Pieterella Cornelia Wagemaker. He grew up on his parent's farm, surrounded by vast expanses of pastureland and country estates. Even in primary school, Joop proved to be a clever pupil and a quick learner. Shortly after the war, he became one of only a few children in his village to attend the Higher Civic School in Zierikzee.

## NORTH SEA FLOOD

His carefree childhood in rural Zeeland was brutally interrupted by the devastating North Sea flood of 1953. Because his family home was destroyed

by the flood, Joop was evacuated to Hilversum. There, he graduated from secondary school at the Nieuwe Lyceum with a science-focused subject package, after which he enrolled in the Chemistry programme at what was then known as 'Utrecht State University'.

## AN EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT

In those days, attending university was still a rare achievement – particularly for someone born into a farming community. But Joop was an exceptional student who found his path in science. After graduating with a major in Chemistry in 1959, he set up a doctoral research project aimed at infrared (or vibrational) spectroscopy. He defended his doctoral thesis – *Potassiumbromide disk sampling for infrared spectrometry* – on 11 October 1965. Van der Maas was appointed a member of senior academic staff and, from 1969, a lecturer in the Analytical Chemistry department at the university in Utrecht. The crowning achievement of his academic career came in 1980, when he was appointed Professor of Spectrochemical Analysis at the Faculty of Chemistry.

## A PASSIONATE LECTURER

Joop van der Maas was a passionate lecturer who was eager to share his knowledge and knew how to generate enthusiasm in his students. Teaching was never a rote activity for him. His lectures, in which he would gesticulate wildly in an attempt to mimic the movements of molecules, made an indelible impression on countless students. As a PhD supervisor, he was demanding and critical, but also able to motivate and encourage his candidates while allowing them a large amount of freedom.

## LOVE FOR THE FIELD

Van der Maas published over two hundred articles and books over the years, both alone and with co-authors, earning him a reputation as an international authority in his field of study. Love for the field and the conviction that there was a great deal left to discover kept him involved in those academic circles even after receiving emeritus status in 2001. Until the start of the coronavirus pandemic, he continued to visit De Uithof nearly every day. On 2 June, he suffered cardiac arrest while riding his bicycle and subsequently died.

Joop van der Maas was a warm individual who took a genuine interest in his students. Fear of drowning in the 1953 flood, evacuation and living with a host family had shaped him to a strong degree. As a result, he felt a particular affinity for disadvantaged students. His motto was: unforeseen events are always a possibility in life, and everyone deserves a second chance. This credo was certainly a factor in his dedication to helping those students who carried some extra burden, as well as his decision to name the Utrecht University Fund as the sole beneficiary of his estate.



A growing number of alumni, current and former staff members and other stakeholders are considering donating all or part of their legacy to the university. Such a bequest will stretch beyond your lifetime, benefiting subsequent generations and helping to build a better world. You can help new generations of students and researchers at Utrecht University to grow and develop, and continue making a valuable contribution to society. Any gift, whether large or small, is very much appreciated. The Utrecht University Fund facilitates such donations.

[uu.nl/bequests](https://uu.nl/bequests)



CROWD-  
FUNDING

# Singing at a 1.5-metre distance

FIND AN ALTERNATIVE REHEARSAL SPACE AT [STEUN.UU.NL](https://steun.uu.nl)



Weekly concert rehearsals in theatres across the Netherlands. Participation in world championships. UU's Dekoor student choir was always a go-to option for any television or radio programmes in need of a choir. That all changed with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, 2020 wasn't an entirely wasted year for the close harmony choir. **Jos Mulkens** is a Master's student at Nanomaterials and a board member at Dekoor. He explains how the choir members tried to make the best of things thanks to creative solutions and crowdfunding.

Like many organisations, Dekoor had to transition to online rehearsals when the first lockdown was announced in March 2020. However, the choir couldn't simply resume rehearsals once the measures were relaxed. Its usual rehearsal location, the Parnassos cultural centre, is too small to ensure a 1.5-metre distance between the choir members. The Utrechtse Muziekschool (DUMS) building on the Domplein offered a welcome alternative. 'It was really the perfect location at the time', Jos explains. 'You can fit in fifty people and still keep a distance of one and a half metres. That's all Dekoor needed.'

#### **CROWDFUNDING**

However, regular rehearsals in DUMS would be costlier. While the society was able to cover part of the costs, the remainder had to be funded from new sources. Crowdfunding offered a solution. The choir was able to raise money through the Utrecht University Fund's crowdfunding platform. This platform is intended for research and student initiatives that are not currently being actively promoted by the fund but do meet its objectives. A large portion of the required amount had already been raised by December.

#### **THANK YOU VIDEO**

The choir recorded a thank-you video as a gesture to all the donors. That proved to be a daunting task: Jos estimates that it took about eighty hours to create the video. 'The conductor played the piece on the piano, and two choir members recorded the vocals. All the other members then recorded their own parts at home based on that example.' The choir also used this method for other special COVID-proof projects. For example, Dekoor commissioned the design of an app that allowed visitors to take a musical audio tour of the Botanical Gardens. The choir also provided musical entertainment during the university's online Anniversary Day in 2021.

#### **MENTAL HEALTH**

In addition to being a choir, Dekoor is also a student association that forms the focal point of many members' studies. As Jos explains, this presents an even bigger problem than the cancelled concerts. 'It's obviously really sad if you suddenly can't make music any more, but it's been much harder to see our members' mental states deteriorate.' The choir members have been trying to keep in touch online as much

as possible. We start our online rehearsals by discussing how everyone is feeling and what might be bothering them. Conductor Christoph MacCarthy also makes sure to allow enough time for these important social interactions. We also encourage our members to keep on seeing each other if they want to, while observing the COVID measures.'

New members are having a harder time finding their place in the group under the circumstances. 'They haven't discovered just how much fun Dekoor can be yet. Their only real experience of the choir has been rehearsals at a one and a half metre distance, when that was still possible. That's why we've been devoting extra attention to them.'

#### **NEW PLANS**

Luckily, the choir is now looking ahead again and has already started making ambitious plans for the post-COVID era. 'We're mainly focused on 2022 at the moment. We won in the pop and jazz categories at the last World Choir Games. We hope to hold on to those titles in South Korea in 2022.'

Our crowdfunding platform [steun.uu.nl](https://steun.uu.nl) exists for the benefit of our entire academic community. Scientists and student organisations can use this platform to set up crowdfunding campaigns of their own. This is a way for benefactors to assist in carrying out scientific research and to support student initiatives in Utrecht and our education in general. By leaving a message, they can tell others about their donation and involvement in our cause. Dekoor wasn't the only applicant to raise funds through the platform in 2020. Crowdfunding was also used to raise money for the University Fund's own COVID emergency fund (also see page 18). Fundraising efforts were also organised in support of the circular forest garden at Utrecht Science Park and the 'making research accessible to all' campaign.

[steun.uu.nl](https://steun.uu.nl)





# Loyal supporters of science and academia



*Martine Mondt is official secretary of the Hofvijverkring Fellowship and has been a member since the beginning.*

Seven years ago, four alumni in The Hague decided to set up a donor fellowship in order to support research and academia at Utrecht University. **Martine Mondt** (Dutch Law, 1970) joined the group along with five other Utrecht University alumni. The group has since become a household name in The Hague and Utrecht: the Hofvijverkring Fellowship.

Martine Mondt proudly recounts the story of one of the young researchers to receive a grant from the Hofvijverkring in recent years: Dr Riccardo Levato. Riccardo used the 2019 grant to visit Professor Michiya Matsusaki, a leading researcher at Osaka University working to develop biomaterials for tissue regeneration. One year later, in September of 2020, Levato was awarded a European grant of no less than 1.5 million euros for the development of an ultra-high-speed 3D bioprinter. The grant from Hofvijver proved instrumental in his success. Martine: 'It was definitely one of the high points of the past year for the Hofvijver Fellowship.'

## PRODUCTIVE ENCOUNTERS

In the early years, the fellowship mainly focused on regenerative medicine. This form of medicine is focused on repairing damaged tissues or organs by applying the body's self-healing capacity or knowledge from developmental biology.

'We recognised the importance of stem cell research, and the idea of regenerative medicine obviously appealed to us as older people', Martine adds with a wink. The board of the Fellowship of Utrecht University professors also learned that while this field of research attracts a lot of funding, a few weeks' visit to our university by international scientists is still difficult to finance through regular funding streams.

It didn't take the members long to choose a focus: The Hofvijverkring Fellowship currently facilitates these visits through the Visiting Scientists project. Members' contributions (everyone contributes EUR 500 a year for a period of five years; a lower rate has now been introduced for younger alumni) have enabled scientists from all over the world to travel to Utrecht in recent years. Martine: 'Surprisingly, many of these visits have led to new publications, successful applications for international grants and researcher and student exchanges. In many cases, the partnerships we helped to facilitate prove to be lasting.'

## COMMON PURPOSE

The members of Hofvijverkring Fellowship are deeply engaged with the researchers they support, as their great pride in Levato's success demonstrates. 'That sense of engagement with Utrecht University and our relationships with each other create a strong sense of connection and common purpose', Martine explains. Both visiting scientists and young researchers supported by the Hofvijverkring Fellowships are invited to speak about their work. Although last year's talks were held online via Zoom, the events were still very well-attended. 'In addition to being very grateful for the financial support, young researchers really appreciate the fact that they're getting a vote of confidence from a group of alumni they've never even met.'

The Hofvijverkring Fellowship has encouraged and financially supported exchanges between researchers since its inception, and created opportunities to meet their beneficiaries and fellow members. The members consist of alumni who settled in The Hague and its surrounding area after their student days. While some members already knew each other – from dinners organised for and by alumni in The Hague, for example – many also forged lots of new relationships at the Hofvijverkring. The members are connected by their shared history in Utrecht and passion for science and academia. As Martine explains, that's what makes donating together so much fun.

The members are also looking forward to real-life meet-ups in The Hague, both among themselves and with 'their' researchers. In Spain, there is already one eager potential visitor who couldn't make the trip in 2020 due to the COVID-19 measures: visiting scientist Prof. Núria Montserrat Pulido of the Institute for Bioengineering of Catalonia. Her visit will undoubtedly mark the start of new partnerships.

Named funds are designed to let the founder determine what their donations will be spent on. The Utrecht University Fund managed a total of 30 named funds in 2020. Named funds are built on major donations from their founders, who may also choose to donate periodically over a longer period of time. Some do so alone, while others – like the members of the Hofvijverkring Fellowship – make joint donations. Some named funds also actively raise funds from other donors, while others do not. Despite all these differences, all named funds have one thing in common: they make a difference by providing support where it is needed most. Check our website for an overview of the various named funds.

[uu.nl/namedfunds](https://uu.nl/namedfunds)



# Connecting to the entire world with your laptop

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GAINING INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE DURING A PANDEMIC



The past year took some very unexpected turns for a lot of students due to the COVID-19 pandemic. That certainly goes for **Jesse Wijlhuizen** who had to cancel his long-anticipated study abroad. Still, when he heard he had been awarded a grant to do an online course at the London School of Economics and Political Sciences (LSE), he couldn't help but jump for joy. Wijlhuizen was able to connect with people from all over the world from behind his laptop.



*Jesse Wijlhuizen found a way to study abroad despite the pandemic: online.*

'I'd been accepted to a summer school in China, but the pandemic ruined all my plans. They ended up cancelling the programme. Since I had set aside my summer for the summer school, I wanted to see if I could spend it working on my personal development some other way. I came across an online LSE programme with participants from all over the world. It focused on the economic effects of globalisation and its impact on politics. Unfortunately, it cost almost as much as a whole year's tuition, which was way too expensive for me. I decided to submit an application to the Utrecht University Fund student committee.'

#### INTERVIEWING AUTHORS

Jesse was a bit daunted by the idea of applying for a scholarship for an online programme: 'You don't really know what the format will be in advance. It would be a shame if you only got to watch videos and didn't get an opportunity to ask questions directly to the experts and lecturers.' Luckily, the opposite turned out to be true. 'The programme was really dynamic. I read articles and reports from sources like the UN and followed online lectures as part of the theoretical component. We also interviewed the authors of

the articles and studies in order to explore the subject in greater depth. That was great, because you got to speak to the writer of the words you just read.'

#### MANDATORY FORUM DEBATES

The programme also emphasised knowledge exchange. 'There was a forum where you had to respond to posts and start your own thread. We would debate the course materials and discuss political issues like Trump's actions and China's influence on global politics. The forum allowed me to connect with people from all over the world, from students doing work placements at other organisations and professionals. In addition to those sorts of substantive discussions, we were also supposed to take weekly knowledge quizzes and write an essay on the chosen topic. You received a weekly grade for those components and your contributions to the forum. We were always graded by professionals from the field. For example, a former Brazilian ambassador graded all my essays. I then had the opportunity to ask her questions about her job and discuss my essay online.'

#### THE CHANGING JOB MARKET

Jesse was particularly drawn to one of the programme's subjects: how is globalisation affecting people's labour market opportunities and education? 'As a member of the Social and Economic Council's youth platform and a board member at CNV Jongeren, this new information is really useful to me. After all, it's our job to advise governments on this very issue so it's obviously good to know all the ins and outs.'

Jesse is more engaged than the average student. He served on the University Council last year and is a member of the VIDUIS Student Union Supervisory Board. He was already driven to make the world a better place at the young age of nine. 'There was a construction site near my house where rabbits lived. When I heard the municipality wanted to build houses there, I immediately went down to complain. After all, the rabbits already lived there. The official reassured me that the rabbits would be able to find a new place to live without any help, but also promised to keep an eye on the situation. I went back home feeling good about what I'd done. That sense of engagement never really left me since.'

## STUDENT COMMITTEE

Under normal circumstances, the Utrecht University Fund supports student life at our university by making around EUR 80,000 available for grants each year. This funding comes from donations made by Friends of our Fund. All applications are processed by the Utrecht University Fund student committee. Both student organisations and individual students can submit grant applications for extracurricular activities that promote personal and academic development. In 2020, the number of activities was scaled back due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, grants were provided for various online programmes such as the one attended by Jesse, as well as several online lectures, concerts and theatre performances.

Members of the 2020-2021 Board of the Utrecht University Fund Student Committee:



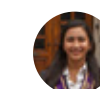
**Leon Cronie**  
BA in Language and Cultural Studies



**Jonas van Diepen**  
BA in Liberal Arts and Sciences



**Myrthe Keulemans**  
BA in Governance



**Giuliana Fernandes da Silva**  
BA from Utrecht Law College



**Pelle Bronkhorst**  
BA in Governance

By donating 10 euros per year, students can become a Friend of the Utrecht University Fund. In doing so, they will be contributing to grants that benefit student life at the university. Following a recruitment campaign in the autumn of 2020, the Fund acquired some 1950 new Student Friends.

[uu.nl/stuf](https://uu.nl/stuf)



# New linear particle accelerator for Faculty of Veterinary Medicine



Cancer is the leading cause of death among both humans and animals. As many as one in four dogs and cats will get cancer at some point, and 130,000 dogs and cats die from the disease every year – an average of about 35 a day. The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine is the only facility in the Netherlands where animals with cancer can be irradiated with a linear accelerator. The faculty was able to install a new particle accelerator in October 2020 thanks to support from various parties.

Elekta, a private company, donated the new linear particle accelerator to the faculty while four civil society partners – Het Waardige Dier, Stichting Abri voor Dieren, Stichting D.O.G. and Stichting DierenLot – provided the necessary funds to install the unit and keep it running for the next few years. The UMC Utrecht Radiotherapy Department supervised and coordinated the installation process.

## ONE MEDICINE: KNOWLEDGE THAT BENEFITS ANIMALS AND PEOPLE

Radiation therapy is the only available treatment for some types of cancer, for example in cases where tumours are difficult or impossible to remove by surgery, such as tumours in the brain or nose. Maurice Zandvliet is a

specialist in internal medicine and oncology at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. He is responsible for all radiotherapy treatments in dogs and cats at the academic veterinary hospital. 'Radiotherapy is particularly stressful for the patient, as it requires many daily treatments; in humans, the process can take up to 35 sessions. Animals don't require as much radiation; fifteen treatments are usually enough, but they have to be done under anaesthesia.' There are many similarities between cancer cases in humans and animals. Veterinary oncologists and human oncologists can gain more knowledge by regularly exchanging their experiences, which will ultimately lead to better treatment methods for humans and animals. Physician-scientists at UMC Utrecht are developing leading global technologies that will allow for treatment regimens with higher doses and far lower treatment frequencies. This development would also constitute a major step forward for veterinary medicine. Sharing knowledge in this area will improve treatments for both animals and humans, helping to optimise irradiation procedures among other benefits.

Robbert Tersteeg, head of Radiotherapy at UMC Utrecht, explains the significance of the ongoing collaboration with Veterinary Medicine. 'Conducting research from multiple perspectives opens up a broader view of your field and

generates a lot of knowledge and creativity. We are located next to the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine – the only facility in the Netherlands that combines veterinary medical care with research on domestic animals – which offers a unique opportunity to support and reinforce each other's work and collaborate on projects. It would be wonderful if we eventually develop treatments that improve the lives of both people and animals.'

## IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT SUPPORT

In contrast with the procedure in regular hospitals, pet owners must largely cover the costs of treatment themselves. As an independent academic institution, the faculty has no profit motive and cannot afford the cost of highly complex equipment such as the particle accelerator. However, such equipment is crucial in ensuring the continued progress of veterinary care. The support from Elekta, UMC Utrecht and the four funds will allow us to offer animals the best possible innovative care, while contributing to groundbreaking research that benefits both animals and humans.

Inga Wolfram is head of fundraising at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. 'We're incredibly grateful for the particle accelerator and the support we've received from UMC Utrecht and the four funds. We never could have done this without our partners. Together, we're making a real difference to improve the health of animals and people with cancer, which is what it's all about at the end of the day.'

The fundraisers at Utrecht University and the Utrecht University Fund also maintain relationships with other wealth funds and contribute to fundraising efforts outside of the regular academic funding streams. For example, the new accelerator at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine was installed thanks to the contribution of companies, funds and other partners. The special relationship between the Utrecht University Fund and the K.F. Hein Fund is another case in point. This fund supports projects in the Utrecht region: the Utrecht University Fund nominates exceptional Utrecht University projects that tie in with the K.F. Hein Fund's objectives. For example, the fund supported no less than eleven UU projects in 2020, including Beatrice de Graaf's 'Terrorism in the classroom' project and a historic research project by Prof. Renger de Bruin centred on knights in Utrecht.

[uu.nl/en/organisation/donate/apply-for-subsidies/fundraising-advice](https://uu.nl/en/organisation/donate/apply-for-subsidies/fundraising-advice)



# Agnites Vrolik Award goes to research project on plastic-free oceans



On 31 August, oceanographer Erik van Sebille won the third Agnites Vrolik Prize for his research into ocean currents. The Utrecht University Fund will be able to award this prize for the next 10 years thanks to a bequest from alumnus Ms Cobi de Bree. The award underlines both the impact of and appreciation for research at Utrecht University.

Van Sebille designs software that models ocean currents and maps out the journey made by plastic waste in our oceans. According to the jury: ‘Eric is an outstanding scientist, whose academic output and intense commitment to society are truly admirable.’

All the nominated researchers had been in suspense for a long time, as the planned award ceremony during the Anniversary Day celebration in March had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. The big moment finally came during the official Opening of the Academic Year, when Erik van Sebille was presented with the EUR 25,000 cash prize and Agnites Vrolik award.

See pages 10–13 for more information on Erik van Sebille’s research.



Ruud Keulen and Margot van Sluis-Barten sign named fund agreement for new Caren van Egten Fund.

## Utrecht 1636

Utrecht 1636 is the network for loyal and committed donors, and was established in 2019. Utrecht 1636 helps to further UU students’ academic and personal development. Members can also choose to designate their donations to one of our named funds. Members donate a minimum annual amount of 500 euros for a period of at least 5 years and has been steadily gaining new members. The names of members who wish to remain anonymous have been omitted from the list below.

[uu.nl/utrecht1636](https://uu.nl/utrecht1636)

### UTRECHT 1636 MEMBERS

- Ms I.J. Aalfs
- Ms A. Basha
- Prof. R. Braidotti
- Mr A.H. den Breems, LLM
- Ms H.M. de Bruijn-Franken
- Ms M. Bunge
- Ms F.F. van Charldorp-Hanraets
- Dr J.J. Dankers
- Ms S. Debhan MA
- Dr F. Driedonks
- Mr. R.K. Dunn PhD
- Mr L. Gaarenstroom
- Mr H. Gajentaan, LLM MA
- Dr P.M.B. van Genuchten, MBA
- Dr D.G. Groothuis
- Mr A. Heikens
- Mr L.J. Hijmans van den Bergh, LLM
- Mr R.A.M.A. Keulen
- Ms C. Kikkert-Hindaal
- Mr F. Knol
- Ms G. Knol-van Veenendaal
- Dr P. Koeze
- Mr P. Kraaijenhagen
- Dr R.R. Kuijten, MBA
- Dr E.M. de Lange
- Mr J.J.J. van Lanschot, LLM
- Mr H. van Manen, LLM
- Ms A. Miedema
- Dr H.S. Miedema MBA
- Prof. J.C. Mondt
- Ms M.A.A. Mondt
- Dr A.D.A. Monna
- Ms M.J.M. Mourits
- Ms T.L. Nagel, LLM
- Mr A. Oostra, LLM
- Mr K.S. Phoa
- Ms I. Phoa-Provatoroff
- Ms Y.C.M.T. van Rooy, LLM
- Dr C.E. Seidel
- Mr D.W. Sickinghe, LLM
- Prof. A.M. Smelik
- Dr A. Smit
- Ms Smit-Antons
- Mr P.H. Stamsnijder
- Mr Jason Tan
- Mr K.K. Troost, LLM
- Ms A.E. Troost-Staal
- Mr M.B. Unck, LLM
- Dr J.G.F. Veldhuis
- Dr M.M.H. Veldhuis-Thier
- Mr E.J. Verloop, LLM
- Mr H.A.M. Vrans
- Dr W. Wessels
- Ms M.J.H. Willinge
- Prof. G.J. van der Zwaan

## Two new named funds

In some cases, donors who contribute larger amounts decide for themselves which purpose they would like their gift to serve. To do this, they set up what is called a named fund. The founder gives the fund a name and determines its objective. The number of named funds managed by the Utrecht University Fund increases every year, with the current total at 30. Two new named funds were established in 2020.

The **Caren van Egten Fund** was established by Ruud Keulen, partner of Caren van Egten (1958–2010). Van Egten served as a financial expert on the Utrecht University Supervisory Board until her passing. The two are both Utrecht University alumni and committed former Veritas members. The fund aims to promote the academic development of – especially female – students at Utrecht University.

The **Henk Visscher Fund** aims to promote national and international scientific research and education in the fields of palaeobotany, palynology and organic petrology. The fund is focused on supporting young academics at Utrecht University.

[uu.nl/namedfunds](https://uu.nl/namedfunds)

## No face-to-face meetings

Despite being such an important part of the Utrecht University Fund’s activities, face-to-face meetings sadly had to be cancelled this year. In March, we were forced to cancel our traditional alumni reunion day, the annual University Day, at the last minute. The same applied to the Anniversary Day event, which was cancelled for the first time since the Second World War. The official Opening of the Academic Year was held online. The traditional Utrecht University Fund Annual General Meeting Meeting organised for friends and donors at the end of each calendar year also had to be cancelled. Instead, our new director Margot van Sluis-Barten introduced herself online and expressed her hope that we will meet again soon.





## 2020 International Women's Day

The International Women's Day celebration was one of the last events to take place in 'physical' form just before the first lockdown hit the Netherlands. Over 450 visitors – students, staff and alumni – met to discuss various current issues. For example, Hester den Ruijter (winner of the 2019 Agnites Vrolijk Prize) and Melissa Vink (Social Sciences) discussed the gender gap from their own research perspectives, and Rosi Braidotti held a lecture on women's emancipation and pop culture in a packed Auditorium. The special day's events also included the presentation of the Rosanna Fund's 2020 grants for women. Grants were awarded to Ayça Alaylı, Nancy Younes, Safaa Naffaa, Tambinh Bui and Saba Hamzah.

[uu.nl/rosanna-fund](https://uu.nl/rosanna-fund)



## New website

We have updated the web pages for alumni and pages on Utrecht University Fund activities. Visit us online at [uu.nl/alumni](https://uu.nl/alumni) and [uu.nl/doneren](https://uu.nl/doneren) for the latest news about the university, the events calendar, details on the many ways of donating to Utrecht University and lots of stories about the impact of donations to the Utrecht University Fund and the alumni our university is so proud of.



[uu.nl/alumni](https://uu.nl/alumni)  
[uu.nl/donate](https://uu.nl/donate)

## New director



Last year saw the appointment of the new director of the Utrecht University Fund, Margot van Sluis-Barten. Van Sluis-Barten succeeds Ms Fenna Hanraets-van Charldorp, who is now Commercial Director of the Botanical Gardens. As Director of the Erasmus Trust fund, Margot led the successful 'Challenge Accepted' fundraising campaign on behalf of Erasmus University Rotterdam. Margot: 'I want to contribute to a stronger academic community by strengthening alumni engagement, expanding partnerships and establishing an endowment fund. Because the only way to truly support research is to be able to offer a multi-year commitment. And so we're going to ask everyone who has a special place in their heart for the university or for the city of Utrecht to contribute to this endowment fund.'

## 2019 Vliegenthart Thesis Award

Özge Algül (27) was presented with the Vliegenthart Thesis Award for her research thesis on the aspirations and prospects of Bosnian war refugees during an online presentation on 14 April. The jury unanimously selected Özge's thesis from a total of 25 submissions, stating that it contained 'a wealth of insights uncommon in most scientific studies'. Özge won 2,000 euros, which she is free to spend at her discretion. Max Vetzo (25) received an honourable mention and 500 euros for his thesis on algorithms and fundamental rights.





# CREATING TOMORROW TOGETHER

## Support equal opportunities for prospective students

Unfortunately, an academic education isn't equally accessible for everyone. A large group of students can't rely on financial support from the government or their parents. This is why scholarships are so important. Scholarships help more young people to realise their academic dreams.

*Please contribute by scanning the Tikkie code and donating. You can also donate by transferring money to NL 43 INGB 0000 0144 75 with the reference 'Creating tomorrow together'.*



CREATINGTOMORROWTOGETHER.NL



Utrecht University



UMC Utrecht

This campaign is part of the Utrecht University and UMC Utrecht anniversary celebrations. We are celebrating 385 years of science and academia in Utrecht under the motto "Creating tomorrow together".

#### Colophon

**Where to find us:** Utrecht Science Park · Administration Building / Room 0.30 · Heidelberglaan 8, 3584 CS Utrecht, the Netherlands.  
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*Algemeen Nut  
Beogende Instelling*

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