



Utrecht
University

Utrecht
University Fund

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Moving towards a bright future

Our anniversary year in 2021 saw the Utrecht University Fund support a wide range of projects by Utrecht University researchers and students, and marked the start of various new initiatives. // **page 8** Charisma Hehakaya set up a fund to support first-generation students. // **page 14** Jesper Weehuizen is researching more effective methods of treating Q fever.



INTRODUCTION

Sunshine and dark clouds

Just as the grey veil of a nearly two-year COVID pandemic is starting to lift, we find ourselves under the dark clouds of the Ukraine war. While our thoughts are clearly with the victims, many alumni are also contributing in their own way to help relieve the human suffering. The Utrecht University Fund has relaunched the Emergency Fund, previously mobilised during the pandemic, to provide a financial lifeline to affected students.

The 2021 reporting year was still dominated by COVID. Another strange year of restrictions and personal anxieties, but also a period in which the sun came out again and we could finally look ahead. And a year in which the University and University Fund both celebrated an anniversary. While the format of these celebrations was obviously unusual, both alma mater and fund proved to be alive and well and brimming with plans for the future. A good case in point would be the ‘Alumni about tomorrow’ multimedia exhibition. The stories in this annual report also reflect the renewed sense of energy and dynamism bubbling up throughout our organisation. Some examples: Charisma Hehakaya set up a fund in support of first-generation students, the Olaf Schuiling Fund founded by Henk Vrins supports research and education in the field of geochemistry, and Tanja Nijboer will be able to conduct research into brain damage thanks to the generous proceeds of our ‘Funding the Future’ campaign.

In the meantime, the Utrecht University Fund team has been working hard to plan for the future, forge even closer ties between our alumni and university and build a better future together. The ‘Sharing Days’ in May 2022 mark the first step in that process, with more events set to follow.

Our treasurer Tanja Nagel stepped down in 2021 following the end of her second term. We are grateful for her hard work on behalf of our fund and have welcomed Ernestine Schimmelpenninck as her successor.

We look to the future with a sense of confidence. Now more than ever, let our university’s motto be our guiding light: Sol Iustitiae Illustra Nos!

Kind regards,

Lodewijk Hijmans van den Bergh
Chair, Utrecht University Fund

CONTENTS

2021 ANNUAL FIGURES	4
UTRECHT UNIVERSITY ALUMNI	6
UTRECHT UNIVERSITY FUND	7



First Generation Fund contributes to accessible education

Crowdfunding 8



“My mother always encouraged me to keep learning”

Friends 10



More effective treatments for Q fever

Bequests 14



VR glasses help children with brain injury to exercise at home

Funding the Future 16



“Break out of your student bubble”

Student Committee 20



Encouraging curiosity

Named fund 22



Biotech company Genmab supports refurbishment of Utrecht University Museum

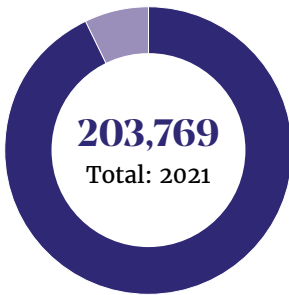
Companies & Equity funds 26

ACTIVITIES IN 2021	28
--------------------	----

What do the numbers tell us about 2021?

ALUMNI

How many alumni are there?



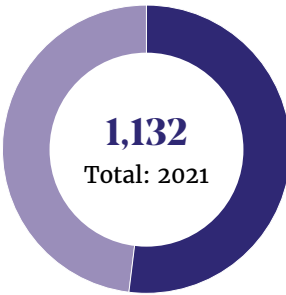
- Registered alumni: 203,769
- Of which international alumni: 13,753

How many new alumni did we have this year?



- PhDs: 4%
- Bachelor's: 60%
- Master's degree (MSc; MA; MBA): 33%
- Postgraduates and exchange alumni: 3%

How many alumni visited an alumni event?



- Total no. of attendees: 1,132
- Those attending an alumni event for the 1st time: 546

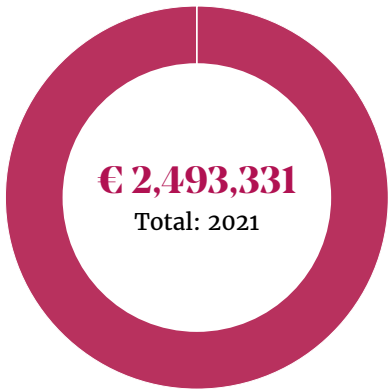
ALUMNI WORLDWIDE

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

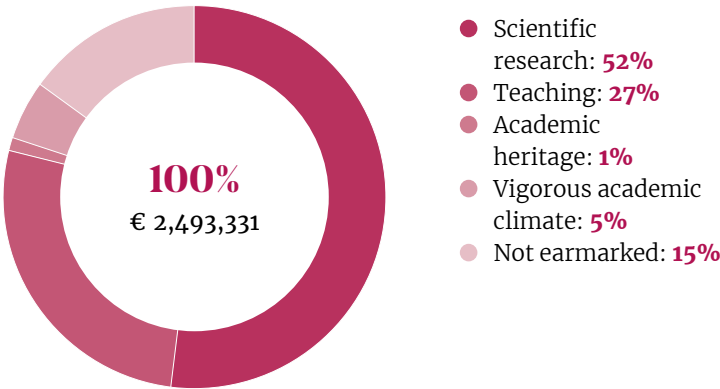


UTRECHT UNIVERSITY FUND

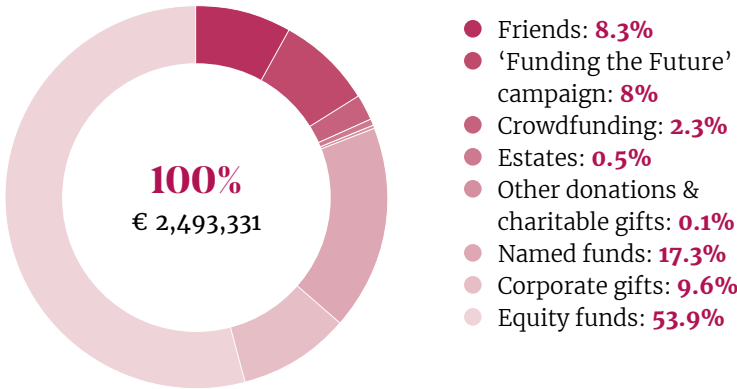
What is the total amount raised?



For what purpose are these funds intended?



Where have these donations come from?



Named funds

- Number of named funds: 31
- Capital appreciation of named funds in 2021: € 531,511

Steun.uu.nl

- Number of crowdfunding campaigns online at steun.uu.nl: 20
- Total revenue: € 59,958

Equity funds

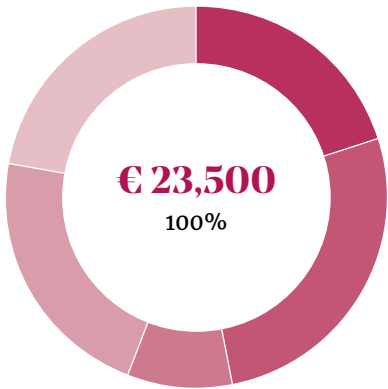
- Grants obtained from other equity funds: € 1,344,005

Friends

Friends: 14,055
Student Friends: 6,112
Donated by Student Friends: € 285,924

Of the total amount donated by Friends, the amount allocated to student grants totalled: € 23,500

*as was the case in 2020, the number of student grant applications in 2021 was lower than in previous years (around € 80,000) due to the fact that many extracurricular activities and study trips were cancelled due to the pandemic. The remaining amount was allocated to the Utrecht University scholarship programme.



Funding the Future

Total amount raised by the campaign 'Funding the Future 2021': € 198,843

Earmarked for:

- Scholarship programme: € 108,019
- Research on brain damage: € 23,386
- Plastic-free oceans phase 2: € 30,568
- Dutch for all children: € 20,000
- Animal-free teaching: € 15,000
- UCU Scholarships and UCU projects: € 1,870

A tight-knit community

Alumni represent an important part of the Utrecht University community. Utrecht University is proud of its graduates and actively seeks to reach, connect and engage its more than 203,000 registered alumni. According to our 2021 alumni survey, 73 percent of them feel connected to Utrecht University. In the case of alumni in the 67 and under age group, engagement is largely driven by a desire to keep acquiring relevant knowledge. Alumni aged 68 and above indicated that their engagement was mainly motivated by the desire to give something back and to stay involved.

We keep over 135,000 Utrecht University alumni informed through our alumni magazine Illuster. In 2021 saw the launch of an alumni e-mail newsletter that goes out to over 85,000 alumni. Our alumni connect with each other and the university in various alumni circles around the world. In cases where the pandemic prevented face-to-face encounters in 2021, alumni events were held online. This also allowed alumni from more remote countries to join in for the first time.

Many other events were also organised online in connection with the COVID pandemic. As regards alumni activities, our contribution to the university's anniversary year took the form of 'Alumni about tomorrow', an online and physical exhibition in which dozens of Utrecht University alumni describe their outlook for the future. Historian and author Rutger Bregman was named Alumnus of the Year and his online College Tour was well attended. The launch of a new online book club pilot project marked the launch of the new online alumni portal in 2021. The findings will be used to further develop and roll out this Alumni Community over the course of 2022.

2021 also marked the start of tendering for our new CRM system. Utrecht University uses the system to log all communications with our alumni, donors and business contacts. The tendering process will be completed before the end of 2022.

Where to find us

Utrecht Science Park
Administration Building (Room 0.30)
Heidelberglaan 8, 3584 CS Utrecht, The Netherlands

PO BOX 81125
3508 TC Utrecht
The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 (0)30 253 80 25
E-mail: alumni@uu.nl | ufonds@uu.nl
Website: uu.nl/alumni | uu.nl/doneren

Facebook: facebook.com/alumniuniversiteitutrecht
Instagram: instagram.com/alumniuu
Twitter: twitter.com/AlumniUU
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/school/universiteit-utrecht
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/utrechts-universiteitsfonds

THE UTRECHT UNIVERSITY FUND BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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



Tanja L. Nagel, LLM
Treasurer
(until 22 June 2021)



**Prof. José F.T.M.
van Dijck**
Board Member



Mr Paul Stamsnijder
Board Member



Harald S. Miedema MBA
Vice Chair



**Ernestine H.F.A.
Schimmelpenninck, LLM**
Treasurer
(starting 5 October 2021)



Prof. Anton Pijpers
Board Member and chair
Utrecht University
Executive Board

UTRECHT UNIVERSITY FUND

Opportunities for independent research

The Utrecht University Fund is the Netherlands' oldest university fund and was founded by alumni in 1886. Its objective has remained the same since its inception: helping Utrecht University to grow and flourish. Our fund achieves this goal by attracting independent funding for Utrecht University programmes and projects that cannot be financed through government funding, indirect funding or contract funding. In 2021, the fund raised a total of €2,493,331 through private donations from alumni and staff and contributions from foundations and equity funds. Alumni and others with a vested interest in the university raised over €198,000 for a total of five projects as part of the annual 'Funding the Future' campaign. These projects consisted of the university scholarship programme, plastic-free oceans, Dutch for all children, research into brain damage and animal-free education;

In 2021, a total of 2,090,718 euros was spent on research, education in the form of scholarships, the preservation of academic heritage and extra-curricular student projects. The fund provided more emergency support to students in 2021 as a result of the pandemic, as it did in 2020.

We are extremely grateful for the help of all our volunteers and the financial support of nearly 15,000 Friends and other 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 illustrate the urgent need for our joint efforts.

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.



Margot van Sluis-Barten, MSc
Director of the Utrecht University Fund
and head of Relationship Management

The First- Generation Fund helps to make education more accessible



If you are the first member of your family to go to university, you'll have to find out how everything works all by yourself. **Charisma Hehakaya** (30) experienced this first hand when she started on her Bachelor's in 2012. She is now in the process of obtaining her doctorate and wants to give other first-generation students an easier start. This inspired her to set up the First-Generation Fund last year.

"My parents never said 'Don't go to university' or anything. It's just that no one really had the knowledge or the experience; I didn't have any role models around me. We were also struggling with social and financial problems at home. When I first started my Bachelor's in Science, Business & Innovation at VU Amsterdam, I really struggled to do everything at once. I had to learn how to study, but I also needed to work on the side in order to pay my tuition fees, buy a laptop, books and support myself. It took me some time to find that balance." Charisma has since racked up three Master's degrees and expects to obtain her doctorate degree at UMC Utrecht this September. She is researching the implementation and evaluation of the MR-Linac, a technology that should eventually enable more targeted tumour treatment with fewer side effects.

Our crowdfunding platform 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. Donors contribute to scientific research while supporting Utrecht University's student initiatives and education. By leaving a message, they can tell others about their donation and involvement in our cause.

steun.uu.nl

GIVING BACK

"It's obviously great to do a lot of degree programmes, but it's not just about the curriculum. I learned a lot more over the course of my studies, and I realise that's been a great opportunity. Now that I've almost finished my PhD, I decided it was time to give something back." I assessed the existing facilities for first-generation students at Utrecht University. As it turned out, it's all pretty fragmented; some faculties don't offer any form of support and the university's financial schemes aren't specifically aimed at this group of students. First-generation students also aren't really inclined to ask for help, even though they do deserve extra attention. That inspired the idea of the First-Generation Fund. I mainly want to encourage these students to make the most of their talents."

CROWDFUNDING

Charisma discussed her plan with staff members at almost all of the university's support programmes. As it turned out, they all acknowledged the need for a new fund. She eventually pitched her idea to Margot van Sluis-Barten, director of the Utrecht University Fund. As a result, she can now use the University Fund's crowdfunding platform to raise 100,000 euros over a two-year period. The bar is certainly high. Charisma's initiative has been featured in internal and external media – including the AD and Volkskrant newspapers – since October 2021, and she is actively promoting the First-Generation Fund on social media. She has already raised over 31,000 euros so far. "It's a great result. All the money we raise will go towards material support for students. From laptops to academic English courses and study trips abroad."

AWARENESS

So how is she managing it all alongside her PhD research? "I enjoy doing this because it's so important to me. I don't mind spending my evenings off on the project. I'm a good planner, and that makes all the difference. I've also been lucky enough to get help from Caroline van de Beek of the University Fund."

Charisma also writes to foundations in order to sustain interest in the initiative. "I've also assembled a group of ambassadors: First-generation students, staff and others who help promote the fund at their own faculties. I think it's really important that staff and students become aware of the challenges facing first-generation students. I'd also like to set up a mentoring programme that integrates all the existing initiatives. We need to make the support system for first-generation students less fragmented and more accessible. That will also help make education more accessible in general."

“My mother
always
encouraged
me to keep
learning”

BRAZILIAN NATIONAL CAROLINA KONRDÖRFER RANGEL IS SET TO OBTAIN HER MASTER'S DEGREE IN MOLECULAR AND CELLULAR LIFE SCIENCES THANKS TO A UTRECHT EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIP.



Carolina Konrdörfer Rangel (27) grew up in Novo Hamburgo in the southernmost state of Brazil. She was awarded a Utrecht Excellence Scholarship in 2021, which allowed her to obtain a Master's degree in Molecular and Cellular Life Sciences from Utrecht University.

Carolina was among the top ten percent of students at her Pharmacy Bachelor's programme in Brazil. "My parents didn't get much of an education. My cousins and I are the first members of our family to go to university. My mum works at a supermarket checkout. She always encouraged me to get a higher education. 'If you work hard, you'll be better off than we are', she'd tell me. We didn't have much money at home. There's a lot more wealth inequality over in Brazil anyway. There's no way I could have studied here without the Utrecht Excellence Scholarship. The tuition fees alone are over twenty thousand euros. I'm really grateful to have received this scholarship."

DRIVEN

Carolina is both hard-working and enterprising. She previously completed a ten-month internship at UMC Groningen in 2017, as part of her Bachelor's in Pharmacy in Brazil. That opportunity also came about as the result of a scholarship. "Back in Brazil, I was working in a lab that's partnered with UMC Groningen. That's how it all happened." Her professor in Groningen encouraged her to apply for a two-year Master's programme here in the Netherlands. The rest is history, as they say. "I might never have received this scholarship without his letter

of recommendation. The interview went really well, though, and I felt very relaxed. Getting all the documents I needed to come here made me more stressed, though," she jokes. Carolina also chose this Master's because of its broad, multidisciplinary approach. "That gives me the opportunity to explore a whole range of subjects before I choose a specialisation. I also love the fact that the programme includes a work placement abroad."

STUDYING AND LIVING

"I really like it here. It's a really safe country, and Utrecht is beautiful. I love the parks, the cafés, the atmosphere in the city centre and the Amelisweerd estate. I also love cycling, even though I recently had an accident. If you asked me if there's anything I don't like about the Netherlands, I'd probably mention the fact that people are so blunt. I think the Dutch don't always have that much empathy." She found studying at Utrecht University challenging, especially at the beginning. "They really expect you to work independently here. That was new for me. I had to rely on independent study, especially during the lockdown in the first few months. I also had my first ever bioinformatics lessons – programming, in other words.



That was pretty challenging. Still, I managed to get good grades in the end, so it all worked out." In addition to juggling all these challenges, Carolina also found time for a side job as a waitress. The extra money is a welcome addition to her scholarship, and the job offers a completely different perspective on life in the Netherlands.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

Carolina has since finished the report on her first work placement, during which saw she researched epilepsy. Her next stop: the University of California in San Diego for her overseas work placement. She will be studying a protein associated with the neurodegenerative processes in ALS, and learning new research methods. "I think my mum was right. Studying hard has already improved my life."

FRIENDS

Donations from Friends – consisting of alumni, students and staff of Utrecht University – provide the basis for the Utrecht University Fund's activities. Friends contribute to a thriving academic community and equal opportunities for prospective Utrecht University students through their annual gift of € 30 or more. Their donations make it possible to provide student grants, scholarships and special projects, among other things. For example, Friends' donations enabled Carolina Konrdörfer Rangel to study in Utrecht.

uu.nl/friend

A godsend with a huge impact



One is a young doctor-researcher. The other died in 2018 at the age of 85, after a frugal life. So what connects **Jesper Weehuizen** and **Johanna Alida van Leerzem**? They both studied Medicine at Utrecht University. The generous bequest by Mrs Van Leerzem helped Jesper carry out his doctoral research on the improved detection and treatment of Q fever.

The university was pleasantly surprised to receive the largest bequest in its history at the start of 2019. Johanna Alida van Leerzem (1933–2018) bequeathed EUR 1.2 million for patient-related scientific and fundamental research in the field of internal medicine. Her legacy is administered by the Van Leerzem Family Fund, one of the Utrecht University Fund’s named funds. The name certainly reflects the generosity of Alida’s parents. In addition to paying her tuition fees (325 guilders), they also covered the cost of items such as a cutting box and a 750-guilder microscope. Their dedication will now live on through the Family Van Leerzem Fund, which enables promising researchers to conduct innovative, clinical scientific research.

SPECIAL “HEIR”

Jesper Weehuizen (28) is a physician researcher specialising in infectious diseases at UMC Utrecht and one of Alida’s special “heirs”. “My research basically covers every aspect of chronic Q fever. One to five percent of

people infected with Q fever develop a serious, chronic illness. The bacteria then tend to accumulate on the heart valve or aorta, causing patients to develop heart problems such as dilated or even ruptured aortas. Those symptoms are debilitating and can even be fatal. The bacteria are very difficult to detect in the human body with current techniques. I used the money I received from Ms Van Leerzem’s estate to study a new detection technique that could potentially identify bacteria more effectively in order to treat patients more quickly and hopefully prevent serious complications. Unfortunately, the new diagnostic technique doesn’t appear to be more effective than previous ones. However, we did gain new insights that might allow us to apply it in the treatment of patients with chronic Q fever. We’re currently considering a follow-up study.” Uniquely, this funding was provided by an alumnus of the university.

WHO WAS ANNIE VAN LEERZEM?

Alida – or Annie, as she was also known – grew up as an only child in Rotterdam in the 1930s and 1940s. It was certainly not an abundant era, which may have contributed to her frugal lifestyle. Her father worked as a mechanical engineer on the deep-sea fleet and later became chief engineer with the Holland America Line. After finishing secondary school in 1951 in Rotterdam, Annie moved to Bilthoven with her parents so that she could study medicine in Utrecht. She faithfully attended all the practicals and lectures. Her notebooks contain hundreds of sketches of cells, joints and organs.

In 1959, she graduated from what was then the Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht as a general medical practitioner. Although Annie continued to be registered as a general practitioner throughout her life, she never actually went on to practise medicine for reasons unknown. After the death of both her parents

in the late 1990s, she continued to live alone in the house in Bilthoven and led a reclusive life.

PASSING THE BATON

Annie’s legacy represents a passing of the baton to future colleagues. “I get to present the results of the study at Europe’s largest infectious disease conference,” Jesper explains with justifiable pride. “I hope to finish my doctoral research by the end of the summer. After that, I plan to start on my internal medicine programme.” Clearly, Van Leerzem’s incredible legacy is only becoming more important as time goes on.

A growing number of alumni, current and former staff members and other stakeholders are considering donating all or part of their estate to a university cause. After all, you can still make a great difference to future generations when you are no longer with us. A bequest to science will 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

Training from the comfort of home with VR goggles

VIRTUAL REALITY GOGGLES ALLOW YOUNG PATIENTS
WITH BRAIN DAMAGE TO TRAIN AT HOME.

Patients with brain damage may struggle with cognitive functions such as paying attention and concentration. In order to gain a picture of the cognitive functions in such a patient, doctors currently conduct a neurological study involving pen-and-paper tests. Neuropsychologist **Tanja Nijboer** wants to supplement this method using new technological possibilities: Having received over 23,000 euros in funding from the 'Funding the Future' campaign, she can now use virtual reality goggles to research children with brain damage and launch a study on home-based training.

Tanja Nijboer, who won the prestigious Betto Deelman Award in 2019 for her exceptional merits as a neuropsychologist, says she is in no way in favour of eliminating the current pen-and-paper methodology. "However, these tests are carried out in a laboratory environment. Those are obviously ideal, stable conditions. The method makes it possible to identify the maximum capacity of these patients' brains."

IN THE WILD

However – and this is the bit that interests the Utrecht University neuropsychologist – such results typically do not offer much insight into how the patient will fare in everyday life. "Our day-to-day lives offer a setting that is far from optimal. At home or at work, we are constantly being distracted or doing multiple things at once. If your goal is to confirm the existence and/or extent of 'cognitive functions in the wild', the current method is not going to be terribly useful. That's why, in cooperation with various businesses, we have developed a number of virtual reality environments." An example of this is

'Koji's Quest', a VR game developed by NeuroReality. Nijboer: "As a player in the game, you have to try to get back home after an accident in outer space. A dog named Koji helps you by offering additional explanation and tips. The more successful you are at playing the game, the more difficult the tasks become. The tasks in the game require you to use different cognitive functions." The researchers assess the children's gameplay behaviour to determine the quality of their cognitive functions.

OPEN-HEART SURGERY

Nijboer and her colleagues currently have a VR configuration set up in the Wilhelmina Children's Hospital (WKZ) in Utrecht. "We're studying children who underwent open heart surgery at a very young age. Many of these children have symptoms relating to cognitive functions, which is no surprise, as a good blood supply is essential for the brain to work properly. When the heart is not doing so, this has consequences for the brain as well, and for things like cognitive functions and behaviour."

TRAINING AT HOME

Having raised over 23,000 for her research through the 'Funding the Future' campaign, Nijboer is now ready to expand the initial project. "Among other things, the funding will allow us to buy twelve new virtual reality goggles which we can lend out to the young heart patients. The kids can then use them to start training at home. It's important that they can do the exercises in their own familiar environment rather than some clinical location. Who knows, they might even start playing the virtual game every day. We hope it will ultimately help us develop innovative training methods for the cognitive functions. We're trying to improve the quality of their daily activities and their ability to participate."

PASSIONATE

The neuropsychologist was somewhat surprised just how much money the University Fund managed to raise for Nijboer's research through the campaign. "Our target amount was 20,000 euros. People had a year to donate to the campaign. I didn't really know what to expect, to be honest. But it turns out a lot of alumni are passionate about our university and appreciate the importance of our research, so they donate money. I hadn't expected we would actually exceed our target, although I obviously hoped we would. It's really amazing: the money will allow us to help the kids recover from their brain injuries at home and expand the research to other groups. For example, we're set to launch a new study on pre-term infants and children with birth complications like oxygen deprivation."

'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 €198,000 between four wonderful projects this year. In addition to Tanja Nijboer's brain research, the Utrecht University Fund also contributed to the university scholarship programme, drifters for the plastic-free oceans project and the Dutch for all Children research project. Alumni of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine also had the opportunity to contribute to research on animal-free education. University College Utrecht ran its own campaign, raising money for the UCU Scholarship Fund among its own alumni.

uu.nl/pay-it-forward



“Break out of your student bubble”



Utrecht Union invites prominent guests in an effort to connect Utrecht University students with inspiring individuals. **Hidde Hekman** spent the past academic year serving on the Utrecht Union board along with five other students. A grant enabled them to make a professional recording of their interview with writer Lale Gül, so that they could share it with the wider world and student community during the pandemic.

“Utrecht Union tries to help students break out of their bubble by inviting people who have made a real difference in society. The guest speakers are intended as a source of inspiration, but students also get the opportunity to ask critical questions. Interacting with inspiring people from a very different background enriches your student life and gives you a broader perspective on things. Your student days are a formative time, so that’s very important,” explains Hidde Hekman of Utrecht Union.

CONNECTING ONLINE

The COVID measures prevented us from organising any physical events and made that kind of connection very challenging. However, Utrecht Union still managed to reach Utrecht University students by publishing the recorded interviews online. “We usually charge an admission fee to fund the events. We couldn’t host an audience this time, so we decided to record the interviews on video. We shared the videos on Instagram, but we weren’t generating any revenue from audience members. But filming does cost money, especially since we had it done professionally. We felt that was important, because you won’t reach anyone if you share a badly produced video. We applied for a grant from the Utrecht University Fund to fund our interview with Lale Gül. I really enjoyed discussing the grant with STUF

(the Utrecht University Fund Student Committee). As a student, it was nice to be able to talk to another student; it feels a lot less formal than discussions with other funds.”

CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW

Author Lale Gül published her controversial autobiographical debut novel ‘I’m going to live’ in 2021. Gül is still a student herself, and Utrecht Union was eager to invite her as a speaker. “We always prepare very thoroughly. We obviously read Lale Gül’s book and watched some of her earlier interviews. Even if you already know a lot about someone, you’re still doing the interview for the viewers, so you want to be able to ask about anything they might be interested in.” Hidde is studying Medicine, which came in handy while doing interviews for Utrecht Union: “We learn conversational skills from the very first year. You need to ask open questions and follow up on the answers. We approach student associations, study associations and other parties who might be interested in order to reach the widest possible audience. The interview with Lale Gül already has over 7,000 views on Instagram and almost 5,000 views on YouTube.”

DOING YOUR OWN THING

“A lot of people told me they thought it was really cool that Lale came to see us. She’s obviously talking about a very specific experience, growing up in a strict Islamic family and breaking away from it, but other people can also identify with her situation. People who never felt they could be themselves at home, for example. Her story also helped a lot of students realise that you really need to be free to do your own thing. That also ties in with Utrecht Union’s message: break out of your bubble.”

Hidde enthusiastically discusses Utrecht Union’s future plans: “We’ve expanded a lot over the past three years and had some really interesting speakers, but we want more. I’ll remain closely involved. After all, you’ve helped build something beautiful, and you want it to grow and keep thriving.” Utrecht Union events are open to all students and anyone interested in attending. Keep an eye on their Instagram account for updates on upcoming speakers.

Members of the 2021-2022 Board of the Utrecht University Fund Student Committee:



Bas van 't Hek
Bachelor's
in Law



Eva Aalten
Bachelor's in
Biomedical Sciences



Eduardo Hanst
Bachelor's in Human
Geography and Planning



Inge Rothuis
Bachelor's in Molecular
Life Sciences



Timo Ilbrink
Bachelor's in Language
and Cultural Studies

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 2021, the number of activities was scaled back due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, funding was made available for various online lectures, concerts, performances and activities aimed at helping students to connect with their peers. 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. The number of Student Friends totalled 6,112 in 2021.

uu.nl/stuf

NAMED
FUND

“Science is
born out of
curiosity”

CHEMISTRY ALUMNUS HENK VRINS NAMED HIS FUND AFTER HIS SOURCE OF INSPIRATION, RESULTING IN THE CREATION OF THE OLAF SCHUILING FUND.

The Olaf Schuiling Fonds is named after Prof. **R.D. Schuiling**, professor of geochemistry and experimental petrology from 1972 to 1997. The fund was established by one of Schuiling's former students, **Henk Vrans** (Chemistry, 1968), in an effort to support fundamental research in the field of geochemistry. While Vrans pursued a career outside academia, he never lost his love for science.



“Science starts from a desire to discover how things work, without striving for any specific goal. Wanting to know exactly how something works isn’t the same as being able to put something together yourself. Let’s leave that up to engineers,” Vrans adds. However, he also acknowledges the growing demand for practical and relevant research on societal issues. He primarily considers Utrecht University to be a scientific institution that must carefully safeguard its autonomy.

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT

Vrans says he found Utrecht University to be a pleasant and inspiring environment during his own student years. “Hospitable, open, versatile and scientifically oriented. You never had the feeling that you were being educated in the traditional sense. You had the opportunity to enrich yourself spiritually by attending lectures in almost every imaginable subject.” He graduated in Theoretical Chemistry, but chose to minor in Geochemistry under Olaf Schuiling. After barely six months as a PhD candidate, Vrans went abroad to take a tem-

porary job in the semi-finished products industry, which was enthusiastically recruiting at the time. He ended up staying. However, he did stay in touch with his alma mater through former fellow students and Olaf Schuiling himself.

MENTOR

After retiring, he began supporting scientific research, most notably the geosciences. This support took the form of a named fund for fundamental geochemistry research. His desire to contribute was partly driven by the sense that he still had an “outstanding debt” to the university because of his premature departure, but also reflected the enthusiasm with which Olaf Schuiling worked on his well-known “Olivine Project” during retirement. Appropriately, Vrans named the fund after his mentor. However, this didn’t preclude Schuiling from applying to the fund himself. His application was rejected because the project was considered too far into the realm of applied science.

FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH

As Vrans explains, the Geochemistry department has evolved immensely since his departure from Utrecht, both in terms of its scale and quality. “They’re doing far more substantial research these days, partly thanks to the huge amount of new lab equipment. And the quality of the projects we assess at the Fund’s evaluation committee is quite extraordinary.” He can certainly appreciate the latter, since there is still so much to discover in the field of geochemistry. “The scientific world has always tended to focus on ‘all living things’ and humans in particular. While living nature constitutes a tiny part of the earth, let alone the universe, it tends to be the focus of most research.” Above all, Henk Vrans appreciates the fact that Utrecht University remains committed to fundamental research despite increasing political and societal pressure to produce solutions to the problems of our time.

Named funds are designed to let the founder determine what their donations will be spent on. The Utrecht University Fund managed a total of 31 named funds in 2021. 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 individually, like Henk Vrans at the Olaf Schuiling Fund. Others, such as the members of the Hofvijverkring fellowship, donate communally. 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 offering support where it is needed most. Check our website for an overview of the various named funds.

uu.nl/namedfunds

Inspiring new generations of academics



The fundraisers at Utrecht University and the Utrecht University Fund also maintain relationships with other equity funds and companies and help to raise funds outside of the regular academic funding streams. For example, the UMU's renovation is being supported by companies, funds and cooperation partners. Other examples include the close relationship between the Utrecht University Fund and K.F. Hein Fund. This fund supports projects in the Utrecht area, while the Utrecht University Fund nominates special Utrecht University projects that reflect the objectives of the K.F. Hein Fund. In 2021, the fund provided financial support for a total of 12 Utrecht University projects, including 'Terrorism at school' and 'The mental health of senior secondary vocational education students in Utrecht during the pandemic'.

uu.nl/en/organisation/donate/apply-for-subsidies/fundraising-advice

The Utrecht University Museum (UMU) is currently undergoing a renovation. The aim is to transform it into the Netherlands' leading research museum. A place where visitors are encouraged to become researchers and marvel at the world around them. **Jan van de Winkel** – the President & CEO of biotech company Genmab – felt inspired by the museum's ambitions and decided to offer UMU financial support.

"I used to regularly visit the Evoluon technology museum in Eindhoven when I was in secondary school. I could spend hours just walking around, losing myself in the exhibits. I also remember a chemistry teacher who did wonderful experiments in class. That was really fascinating to me as a kid. I still feel grateful for that teacher and museum because they inspired and enthused me. I want new generations to enjoy the same experience. If you can ignite that kind of spark in kids' minds, you're really making the world a better place."

That passion for science is one of the reasons why Van de Winkel – who is also professor of immunotherapy – still gives lectures at various universities, including Utrecht University, despite his full schedule.



"I love teaching young people about the power of science. I try to show them how they can actually make the world a better place by asking smart questions and conducting sound experiments. This new knowledge will enable Genmab to develop more effective medicines. For example, we're working to ensure that cancer becomes a chronic condition that you don't die from in the future."

A COMPREHENSIVE AND CONNECTIVE UNIVERSITY

Van de Winkel: "Still, our company doesn't just aim to play an important role in patients' lives, we also want to contribute meaningfully on a broader scale. Our support for the university museum is one example of our efforts to help the community we live and work in to thrive. Our contribution to the museum also reflects our sense of commitment to Utrecht University. It's a really inspiring comprehensive and connective institution. That broad scope is a real strength, because most scientific breakthroughs take place at the intersection of different disciplines. That's why I try to create opportunities for people to connect, both within and outside Genmab. That kind of interaction has so much potential."

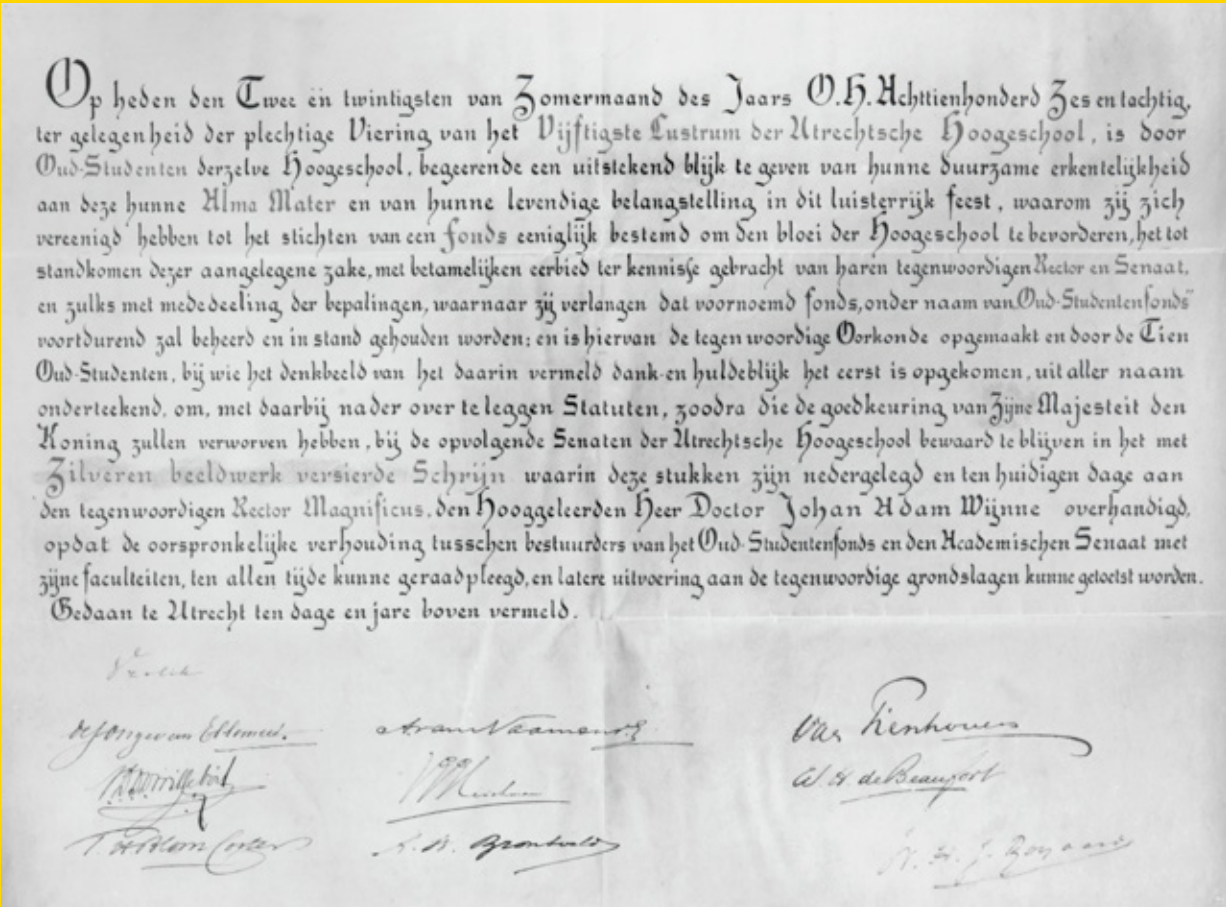
Van de Winkel believes you're never too young to start building connections. "That's one of the reasons we're so excited about the museum. I'd actually love to reach even younger children by – for example – having them recreate the human immune system with LEGO. We are a Danish company, after all. It's a great way of explaining what proteins are and how they can be used in medicine. Inspiring new generations is always amazing, no matter how you go about it. After all, even Nobel laureates got inspired by something they once saw or heard."

AN INTERFACE BETWEEN SCIENCE AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

UMU Director Femke den Boer is extremely grateful for Genmab's financial contribution. "As a university museum, we're basically an interface in the dialogue between science and the general public. Genmab's support is incredibly valuable in that process. One exhibition sponsored by the biotech company offers museum visitors an immersive experience of past and present research methods. They also learn just how important qualities such as innovativeness and creativity are for researchers. That doesn't just apply at universities, but is equally true in the business world which constantly requires research in order to develop new insights and solutions. Genmab's contribution is helping us achieve our aim of becoming the Netherlands' leading research museum."

Artist's impression by Platvorm, ontwerpers van tentoonstellingen

The Utrecht University Fund celebrates 135 years



2021 marked an anniversary year for both Utrecht University and our Utrecht University Fund, which celebrated its 135th year. On the occasion of Utrecht University’s 250th anniversary in 1886, a number of former students decided to raise money for an ‘Academy Fund’, with the idea that the University could use this fund to pay for expenses not covered by state funding. This marked the birth of our country’s very first university fund. We looked back on our 135-year history this year with a special feature in Illuster. We are proud of the generous contributions from our alumni, staff and other stakeholders, who donated money for scholarships to mark this special anniversary year at our request. These scholarships will give more young people the chance to pursue their scientific dreams

uu.nl/en/organisation/illuster/illuster/university-fund

Utrecht University Fund Founding Act



Utrecht 1636

Utrecht 1636 has provided a network for loyal and committed donors since 2019. Utrecht 1636 helps to further Utrecht University 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. The number of members is steadily increasing. The names of members who wish to remain anonymous have been omitted from the list below.

uu.nl/utrecht1636

UTRECHT 1636 MEMBERS

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

Alumni about tomorrow

In September 2021, the Dom Square outside the University Hall was decorated with large panels featuring portraits of Utrecht University alumni. How do they see the future? How are they using their own unique talents to make our world a better place? Who inspires them to do this, and who are they doing it with? After all, we can achieve more when we work together. In 2021, Utrecht University and UMC Utrecht celebrated 385 years of science and academia as part of the ‘Creating Tomorrow Together’ together initiative. Our ‘Alumni about tomorrow’ anniversary exhibition (organised at various indoor locations throughout Utrecht, on Dom Square and online) generated a lot of attention in this historic academic year. The exhibition highlighted the vital role of alumni in our academic community.

uu.nl/en/organisation/alumni/alumni-about-tomorrow

International Women’s Day 2021

Rosanna Fund for Women scholarships are traditionally presented during the university’s International Women’s Day celebrations. This event was conducted entirely online in 2021. In 2021, the Rosanna Fund scholarship was awarded to Maha Al-Buhar, Talitha Verhaar-Spanjersberg and Krista Ettlinger. The Rosanna Fund for Women, founded by Rosi Braidotti and Anneke Smelik (see photo), is one of the Utrecht University Fund’s 31 named funds and supports talented female students and staff members at Utrecht University.

uu.nl/rosanna-fund





Rutger Bregman named Alumnus of the Year

Historian and author Rutger Bregman was named Alumnus of the Year during a special college tour on the eve of the 385th Dies Natalis. Rutger Bregman (34) studied History at Utrecht University from 2006 to 2012. He was already writing articles for the magazine published by his student association S.S.R.-N.U., the DUB university magazine and national newspapers during his student days. He worked at ‘de Volkskrant’ and ‘De Correspondent’ and wrote a number of books, including ‘Gratis geld voor iedereen’ (Utopia for realists, and how we can get there), ‘De meeste mensen deugen’ (Humankind: A hopeful history), and ‘Het water komt’ (The water is coming). He joins our pantheon of previous Alumni of the Year: Marjan Minnesma, Feike Sijbesma, Cathelijne Broers and Jan Beuving.

Bregman’s books are having a lot of impact, according to the jury. He has shown courage and is raising awareness of urgent issues such as climate change. Bregman uses his academic knowledge to do so, while using language accessible to a wider audience. According to the jury report, his work makes an important moral appeal on the reader, contributing to our shared sense of meaning. This message is crucial in our current era: accept responsibility, don’t shy away from critical self-reflection and show courage. This is a realm where the humanities can truly show their value to best effect. Utrecht University’s Alumnus of the Year Rutger Bregman exemplifies all these qualities.

Current students had the opportunity to put questions to their illustrious forbear during a special well-attended College Tour broadcast from TivoliVredenburg. The event was entitled ‘How to make a difference’. Bregman also chatted with a number of his former Utrecht lecturers, including Beatrice de Graaf. The evening’s events also included the presentation of his Alumnus of the Year award: A work of art by Utrecht-based artist Nissim Men depicting one of the winner’s most meaningful locations in Utrecht. Rutger Bregman selected Oudegracht 32, home to the N.I.S.A.T.A. society, part of the S.S.R.-N.U. student society, which also happens to be below where he himself lived as a student. The Utrecht University Fund is responsible for the prize.

uu.nl/en/news/rutger-bregman-is-utrecht-universitys-alumnus-of-the-year

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING CANCELLED AGAIN

After a relatively mild summer in terms of the pandemic, we were looking forward to organising a small-scale general annual meeting again in the autumn. We were unfortunately forced to cancel the scheduled event due to rising infection rates and new COVID measures, anniversary year notwithstanding. However, we did invite all donors and Friends for the 2022 Annual Meeting – now advanced to the spring in early April – in 2021. Thankfully, this wonderful event did ultimately go through on 4 April 2022.



2020 Vliegenthart Thesis Award

Liselotte Podda (MA Musicology, 2020) received the Vliegenthart Thesis Award for her Master’s thesis on diversity in opera during a teleconference ceremony on 29 April 2021: ‘Negotiating a Sea of White: Whiteness and Diversity in Dutch Opera Practices’. Her thesis, which the jury described as “the perfect balance of theory and practice”, was selected from a total of 25 submissions. The Vliegenthart Thesis Prize is awarded annually by the Utrecht University Fund. The prize consists of a sum of €2,000, which the winner is free to spend freely.

Podda’s thesis examines the relationship between De Nationale Opera’s (DNO) diversity and inclusion measures and the whiteness of the organisation between 2017 and 2021. To this end, she assessed DNO’s key focal points: programming, audiences, personnel, partners and positioning (the “5 Ps”). According to the jury: “This thesis is an exemplary combination of cultural theory, social criticism and practical research.” Since award ceremonies could not be conducted in the normal fashion due to the pandemic, jury chair Prof. Hans Vliegenthart called the winner personally to inform her that she had won. A representative of the Utrecht University Fund then dropped by her house to present her with flowers and the cheque.



Alumni survey: 73 per cent want to stay involved

So how do alumni feel about their relationship with Utrecht University? What are their aspirations in terms of professional development? How would they like to stay connected? We asked our alumni to answer all these questions in the 2021 Alumni Survey.

Utrecht University alumni take a positive view of the university, which they associate with quality and academia. As many as 73 percent would like to stay involved. The most frequently mentioned reasons to stay involved were the desire to acquire relevant professional knowledge and the attractive range of activities offered by the university.

Furthermore, more than 70 percent of alumni are planning to pursue further education in the next two years (Education for Professionals) while almost a third are planning to participate in an alumni activity in the coming year. They are also eager to give back to their university, e.g. by getting involved in the Utrecht University Fund. 44 percent donate or would be willing to donate to the fund. The age distribution is diverse. The majority of respondents donate with the aim of supporting Utrecht University research projects.

uu.nl/en/news/73-of-utrecht-alumni-want-to-stay-involved

The Hague: online events and Hofvijverkring fellowship

Our Utrecht University alumni in The Hague didn’t let the pandemic stop them from getting together in 2021. While physical gatherings had to be cancelled, the online meetings were very well attended. For example, Dr Stefan Kulk held a lecture on the importance of protecting freedom of speech entitled ‘Deplatformed on Twitter and Facebook on 24 March’. A musical dinner attended by Annelies Andries and Michiel Kamp – both of whom were awarded a scholarship in 2021 – was held at Brasserie Berlage on 13 October. The event was attended by no less than thirty donors and members of the Hofvijverkring fellowship.

uu.nl/en/organisation/donate/hofvijverkring



Help out, scan
this QR code
and donate!



Help Utrecht University students in need

The war in Ukraine represents a tragedy for our Ukrainian students. The war is also having a major impact on our Russian and Belarusian students. This horrific conflict has left affected students facing many unforeseen challenges. Utrecht University stands in solidarity with these students and provides assistance wherever possible. However, we urgently need your help to financially support this group during this war.

These students are part of our academic community and should not have to suffer because of decisions made in the Kremlin. Help out and donate to the Emergency Fund, which was created especially for Utrecht University students in financial difficulties, and show the world that academia can transcend politics and unite in these difficult times.

steun.uu.nl

The Emergency Fund is part of the Utrecht University Fund and was established to help students in urgent need.

Algemeen Nut
Beogende Instelling
ANBI

Colophon
Editing & production: Utrecht University · Utrecht University Fund.
Photography: David Meulenbeld, Bas van Hattum, Simona Evstatieva.
Publication date: May 2022.