

# Master Vitality and Ageing

*A mission of intergenerational exchange*



*YEARBOOK 2019-2020*



Leiden University  
Medical Center



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands



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Master Vitality and Ageing  
Leiden University  
Leiden University Medical Center

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LUMC 2020



# Welcome to the Vitality and Ageing Yearbook of 2019-2020!

After a wonderful year together with all the lectures, orientation visits, study trips, and social activities, we worked hard to catch the essence of it all. It was quite a challenge to capture everything in less than 100 pages, but here it is: our “photo album” filled with V&A memories.

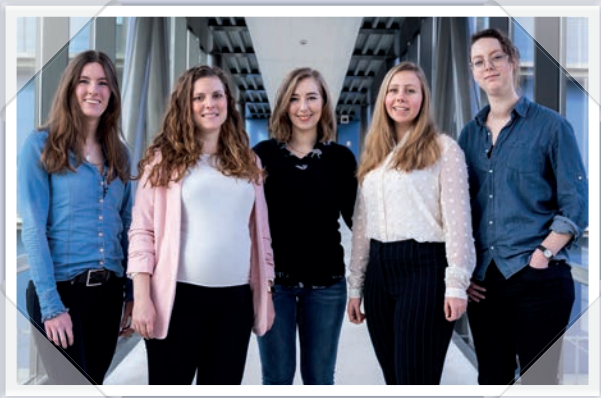
This year would not have been the same without all the students, the V&A staff and the teachers, often experts in their field. But most of all, we are grateful for all the older adults who were involved in the master’s programme. They helped us practice our interview skills, gave feedback and provided us with their personal perspective on important subjects. This intergenerational exchange is a special aspect of this master and it was important for us to incorporate this in the yearbook. Therefore, to give you a chance to get to know some of these older adults better, we share their inspiring stories in “Meet the V&A Seniors”. At the same time, we want to destigmatize older adults (and students), which is illustrated by the pictures accompanying the interviews. After all, the most important thing we have learned this year is that there is no typical “older person” and that there is a lot we can learn from them.

We want to give a special thanks to Amber, who helped us every step of the way by sharing her enthusiasm and yearbook-making expertise. Lastly, we want to thank you all for your participation and hope you will enjoy this yearbook as much as we do!

Love,

### The Yearbook Committee 2019-2020

<b>Amber Schoenmakers</b>	Advisor from the V&A staff
<b>Cornelia Wieringa</b>	Editor-in-chief and content creator
<b>Isabelle Moens</b>	Interview editor and content creator
<b>Nicky Smits</b>	Design editor and content creator
<b>Jeanita Berkhout</b>	Freelance content creator





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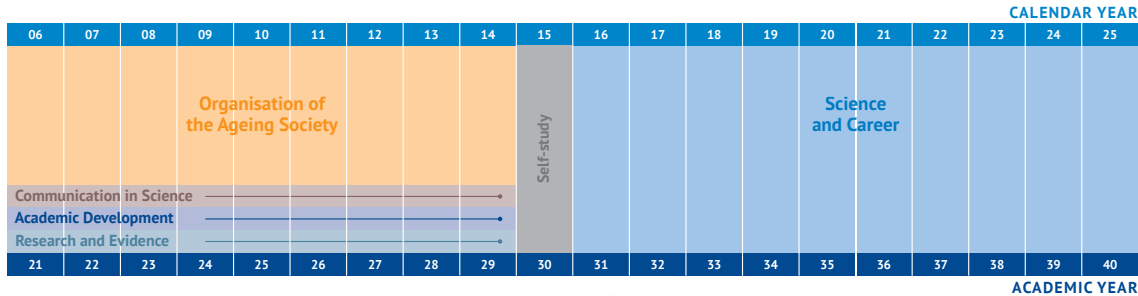
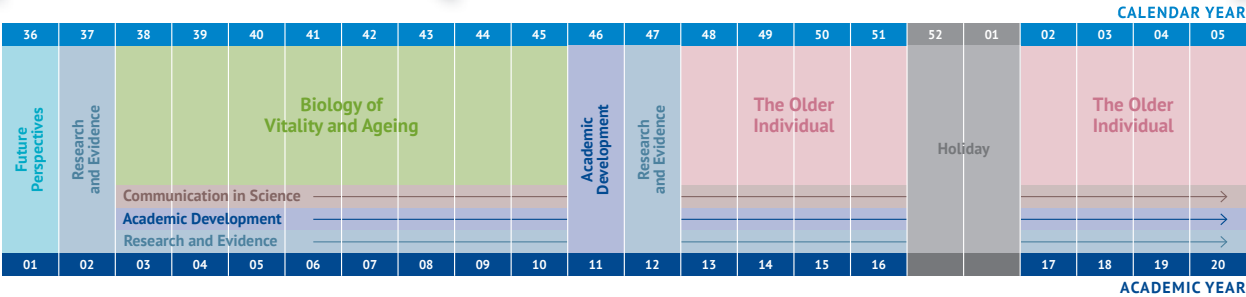
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# OVERVIEW OF THE V&A CURRICULUM 2019-2020

*"I liked the BVA course best, because I love biology."*  
Thomas

*"I liked making the innovation video because I love to come up with new ideas and solutions for problems, and I was able to put my creativity into it."*  
Mara

*"I found it interesting to learn more about the problems that the elderly care faces, how the healthcare professionals are dealing with it and how they want to improve it."*  
Petra



*"There are a lot of chances to 'design' this master in such a way that it caters to your interests and needs. Use them!"*  
Marlinde

*"I really liked OAS, since the information was up to date and the lecturers very adept."*  
Marlinde

*"Asking a lecturer for an internship was the best thing I did this study year!"*  
Charlotte





## INTRODUCTION

### *Welcome from the Master Staff*

Dear students,

This yearbook will remember you and the staff of your master's study Vitality and Ageing in the memorable academic year 2019-2020. For some of you the LUMC was already well known, others came from other Dutch universities and some of you even from abroad. From the start of the master onwards, you were very eager to learn. Besides gathering extensive knowledge in the biological, individual and societal perspectives on ageing, you have learned, practised and mastered many academic and professional skills. We hope that this unique combination of knowledge and skills will give you an optimal start in your professional careers.

In this academic year, we have experienced two special challenges. The first one was the official assessment of our Master's programme by an independent NVAO committee on March 11, 2020. During the year you contributed in a very constructive way by giving feedback, having discussions with the staff and introducing points for improvement. Your input and feedback helped us make this assessment of our programme a success and will help us to improve the programme in the coming years.

The day after this visitation, our second challenge appeared. The Corona-virus outbreak led to unorthodox measures by the Dutch Government, resulting in the "intelligent lockdown". The most important measure for all of us was the closing of the University and LUMC on March 12, 2020. Suddenly, we were all forced to change our schedules, be flexible, and to work and study online. We were impressed by your professionalism, flexibility, help and energy to make it possible to finish your programme. For the staff, most remarkable were the changes in your internship plans. Almost all of you had to change your plans. You showed great resilience and managed together with the staff to start alternative internships in April!

We want to thank the students for their contributions, and the yearbook committee for making this yearbook. We wish you all the best for your future career in our greying society!

On behalf of the staff of the Master's programme Vitality and Ageing,

**Prof. dr. Jacobijn Gussekloo**  
**Dr. Arko Gorter**

Master Director  
Master Coordinator



## Meet Toon Verlaan

By Isabelle Moens and Nicky Smits

Twenty years ago, Toon Verlaan (78) entered the educational building next to the LUMC for the first time to teach medicine students. Now his valuable contribution to the V&A master still brings him to this building regularly. Therefore, it seems fitting to meet him there for this interview.

A little less than 20 kilometres outside of Leiden, Toon was born and raised in Ter Aar. After completing his seminary alpha, he moved to Tilburg to study philosophy and theology. Thereafter, the pastorate sent him to Indonesia where he not only worked, but also learned the Indonesian language and met his wife. Back in the Netherlands he got into welfare work for older persons in Brummen more by accident than by design. He describes the work as “meaning something for all the elderly people running loose in the municipality”. He discovered that

*“At times everybody feels like they are 12 years old again.”*

working with people was his cup of tea, and he especially liked working closely with all the volunteers. Although he always said he would never go back to the west of the Netherlands, he later accepted a job in Leiden that suited him perfectly: directing the Radius Foundation.

*“When someone does not function as desired, try to find out why so you can help them.”*

He did this job for 25 years, resulting in an increase of the foundation’s size from 15 employees and 200 volunteers when he started to 75 employees and 800 volunteers when he retired. This is a testament to his extraordinary skills as a leader. He told us that the recipe for success is to have a group of motivated employees and to not fire anyone too quickly: “when someone does not function as desired, try to find out why so you can help them”. Retirement did not dull his enthusiasm about his job’s purpose, so he kept his job as a member of the editorial board of the societally oriented online magazine “Geron”. He also actively participates as a member of the elderly board and partakes in the V&A master’s programme as well.

When we asked if he feels old, he laughed and said: “I realize that I am old, how I feel does not matter. Of course, at times everybody feels like they are 12 years old again, but that is part of how you experience the world, and not how the world actually is.” ■



*Isabelle and Toon both like reading. However, Isabelle prefers reading actual books, while Toon reads all his books on his e-reader.*



## Future Perspectives

By Isabelle Moens

The master started in the first week of September with the Future Perspectives week, in which the main objective was to get to know each other (our fellow-students, the staff and the older individuals) and to learn about the content of the master. On the second day of the week, we all participated in a serious game which ended with a performance created by the students, which was rated by the older individuals and the master staff. During the game, there was also time scheduled to have a cup of tea with the older adults, which

immediately made everyone even more enthusiastic about the master's programme. Furthermore, during this week we also got the possibility to experience how it is to physically age by trying on ageing suits. Right away we noticed communication barriers and physical limitations that are common in older persons, which sparked multiple ideas regarding what we could do to help. The future perspectives week was topped off with an entertaining boat tour through the canals of Leiden along with a high tea.



*Serious game performance "Let's stay active" created by the students.*



*Students wearing ageing suits consisting of weights, blurred glasses and headphones to simulate how it feels to age physically.*

## Research and Evidence

Dear Master Vitality and Ageing Alumni,

Research and Evidence is designed to help you prepare for the internship period. This year, the programme was a great mix of performing statistical analyses (theory and "Do-It-Yourself"), designing your own quantitative study on frailty, interviewing older persons on their views on vitality (and your own topic of interest!), doing e-learning and writing your research application for the internship.

It was great working with you all year, inside the lecture room (lots of lively exchanges) and outside the lecture room (lots of e-mails). With your energy and enthusiasm about vitality and ageing, you've also made my first year as course coordinator a wonderful experience. The absolute highlight for me was the poster pitch session in November, in which you presented posters that would fit perfectly at an international conference. You showed wonderful creativity, successful teamwork, great abilities to perform well under big time pressure, and excellent qualitative research skills.

I wish you the best for your future careers in the field of ageing and vitality, integrating research in your future work, as a researcher or as a user of research results.

**Wendy den Elzen**

Course Coordinator Research and Evidence





# Academic Development

This year we reformed the educational line with more focus on professional development and academic thinking. The education regarding professional development was generally the same as last year, but a new week was designed for academic thinking. After only three expert lectures in law, ethics and philosophy, you were challenged to write an advice about the use of robots in the care sector. I was curious what to expect. And yes, I was pleasantly surprised by the level of your work in such a short time. I was proud to see you all presenting your ideas for an external party at the Ministry. Even more importantly, they already invited us to come back, so that is a compliment for your work!

Besides this, you also worked on your professional development and personal choices. It is a pity that many of you had to change plans due to the Corona outbreak. Nevertheless, I hope you found internships suiting your ambitions. I enjoyed to work with you and wish you all the best in the future!

**Yvonne Drewes**  
Course Coordinator Academic Development

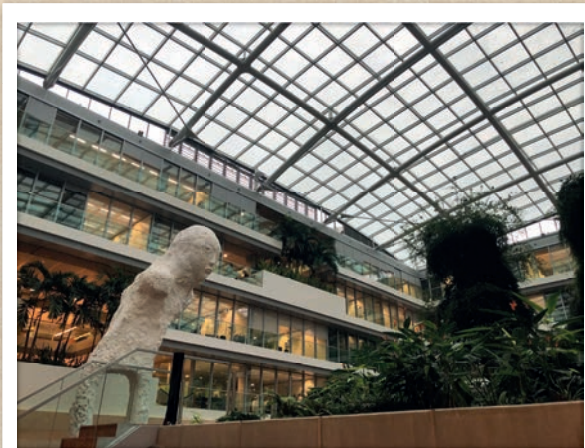


# AD Week - Academic Thinking

By Isabelle Moens and Cornelia Wieringa

In the academic development week, the focus was on academic thinking. The week started with expert lectures on law, ethics, and philosophy to enable us to discuss topics from ethical, legal and philosophical perspectives. The main topic we focused on was the possible role of (care) robotics and sensors in the care of older individuals. Throughout the week we worked in groups on this topic. After researching and discussing from the three different perspectives we eventually wrote a comprehensive essay on robotics and sensors in health care. At the end of the week, we were welcomed by 2 members of the CEG (“Centrum voor Ethiek en Gezondheid”) at the Ministry of Finance

where we presented what our recommendation to the Minister of Health would be. To make a clear definition of a “robot” turned out to be a crucial first step when discussing the implications and considerations, as well as for making a final recommendation. Furthermore, ideas about privacy and responsibility (law), the slippery slope (philosophy) and principlism (ethics) were discussed intensively. This resulted in a fun and educational day at the CEG! The collaboration with a real organization about an actual assignment allocated by the Ministry made it even more interesting for us as soon-to-be young professionals.



*The presentations for the CEG took place in the beautiful Ministry of Finance building in The Hague.*



*Thomas, one of our international students, presents the philosophical aspect of implementing robotic care to fellow students, the master staff and the two CEG employees.*



## Meet Herma-Joze Blaauwgeers

By Isabelle Moens and Jeanita Berkhout

From the moment we walked into the house of Herma-Joze Blaauwgeers, we could see that she is a very creative person. She made a lot of the paintings on the wall herself and she had a sewing studio in her living room. Herma-Joze (75 years-old, but not feeling a day over 50) lived in many different countries throughout her life: the Netherlands, Germany, the United States of America and Belgium. Love brought her to these countries, and love ultimately brought her back to the Netherlands, specifically the love for her daughter.

Herma-Joze's age does not stop her from being active. Besides participating as a member of the elderly board, she reads a lot, participates politically, and makes

*“Give me the opportunity to do something. I have the knowledge and experience, so use it!”*

“memory blankets”. These blankets (all sewed by herself!) are made from pieces of people's history (e.g. a shirt of one's child) and made into a beautiful memento. The signature of Herma-Joze is a small puppet sewed into the blanket. Additionally, she is a writer. Her first book

tells the story of her father, whom she never had the chance to meet because he was executed in World War II. As a tribute, Herma-Joze was named after her father, which makes her very proud.

Still, despite all these various activities, Herma-Joze experiences feelings of uselessness at times. “From one day to the next, I was worthless” explains Herma-Joze about the first day of her retirement. “Give me the opportunity to do something. I have the knowledge and experience, so use it!” Moreover, she wants older adults to be more involved by society. She mentioned an example where older adults and society intermingle successfully. “Younger adults are only allowed to live there if they take over some of the household duties of the older adults on the other side of the street. I think this is fantastic!”

The combination of all her knowledge and a passion to create a better future results in many ideas on improving the situation for older adults in the Netherlands. She shares all of these ideas enthusiastically with the master V&A students, and even thought about following the master herself. However, by passionately participating in an advisory role she can coach and cooperate a new generation to realize these changes. This ties in perfectly with her comment at the end of the interview that students can always contact her to work together and change the world together. ■



*Herma-Joze shows Jeanita how to make a memory blanket, a skill most younger people do not possess. Jeanita would have to use tape to get the pieces together.*



## Biology of Vitality and Ageing

Congratulations! You have now officially finished your 1-year Master programme in Vitality and Ageing at the Leiden University.

It has been a while since we last had you in class during the course “Biology of Vitality and Ageing”, which already started in one of the first weeks of the programme. We hope you enjoyed the course and that you learned a lot about the biological basics of ageing, which you could further use during your research internships.

It is difficult to name a few highlights of the course, but we definitely enjoyed the study trip to Max Plank institute in Cologne, and were honored to have two international lecturers during the course (professor Claudio Franceschi and professor Andrzej Bartke).

In careers (whether biological or not), feedback is of utmost importance. Also in our case, we cannot give a good course without feedback. We therefore really want to thank you for all the feedback we have received to further improve the course for the coming years.

We wish you the very best of luck in your future careers. And remember, biology is everywhere. 😊

Best wishes,

**Raymond Noordam and Diana van Heemst**  
Course coordinators Biology of Vitality and Ageing



*Patrick Rensen shows the model of a brown fat cell to the students after giving a lecture on brown adipose tissue.*



*Claudio Franceschi gives an expert lecture on inflammaging to the master V&A students.*



*V&A students enjoying Cologne on Sunday afternoon.*



*Researchers of the Max Planck Institute explain about the different animal models, like the drosophila (fruit fly), used for biomedical research on ageing.*



## Biology of Vitality and Ageing Course

By Isabelle Moens and Cornelia Wieringa

At the beginning of the year we, as new V&A students, started the first of the three big courses of the master: Biology of Vitality and Ageing. The fact that we all had different backgrounds meant that everyone had different expectations of this course: the biomedical students expected this course to be a piece of cake, while others feared this course the most. From the first lecture we were taken to the world of DNA and cells. As preparation for the lectures, often given by experts in the field, we read scientific articles that were discussed in the workgroups, which were very helpful. We had interesting lectures about subjects such as: the hallmarks of ageing, caloric restriction, brown fat, humoral systems and antioxidants. Most noteworthy was the lecture by prof. dr. Claudio Franceschi from the University of Bologna, Italy. He was the first to publish about “inflammaging” and many more scientific publications have followed since then; truly an expert in his field!

Besides gaining knowledge through lectures and working groups, we were encouraged to perform our own literature research and write a scientific essay on a topic of our choosing. This freedom ensured that we could all write about something we were passionate and curious about, which led to some very impressive essays! Our final grade not only depended on the essay, but also on an exam, which tested our theoretical knowledge about and insight into the subjects that were discussed during the course. Afterwards, there were drinks with opportunities to network and relax with our fellow students and teachers.

The most memorable part of the course was without a doubt the study trip to Cologne. This was our first study trip of the year and we were all very excited to travel together to Cologne. On Sunday we went on a city tour, drank local beers and enjoyed the nightlife, which made the next (early) morning a bit of a challenge. However, it was all worth it because we got to visit the Max Planck Institute for Biology of Ageing! Our visit to this impressive research institute also included a tour where we got to see the animal models we heard about during the course, it was incredibly interesting!



*One of our first group pictures, taken at the Max Planck Institute in Cologne, Germany! The morning consisted of listening to interesting lectures given by experts and presentations by all the students on the animal models used by PhD students for ageing research at the Max Planck Institute. In the afternoon the same PhD students gave us a tour through the research labs. Witnessing ageing-related experiments being conducted on the different animal models (c. elegans worms, killifish and drosophila fruit flies) was new for most of us and left a lasting impression.*



## Meet Johan Hogendoorn

By Isabelle Moens and Cornelia Wieringa

On a beautiful spot just outside of Leiden Johan Hogendoorn (72) and his wife welcomed us in their home, where they have lived for 40 years. The first thing that stood out was the love and humor between them. His passion for organizing meetings, giving advice on policy relevant for older adults, and helping others formed the basis of his entire career and is still the core of his current activities.

When he was twenty Johan moved with his parents from The Hague to Apeldoorn. He enjoyed his life in Apeldoorn, where his function as main board member of the national D66 brought him into contact with a job at Social Services. This job turned his hobby into a career.

*“You can help people in and out of a hospital bed, but is it not better to keep them out of that bed in the first place?”*

Although the nature in Apeldoorn impressed him, he missed living in the west of the Netherlands. Thus when he met his wife, who was living in Leiden at that time, deciding where to live was easy. In addition, his love for

*“I still have so many plans and ideas I want to carry out.”*

nature and birds followed him from Apeldoorn back to Leiden and led to his voluntary work for the bird working group (“Vogelwerkgroep”) of Polderpark Cronesteyn.

Next to this voluntary work, Johan remained working in the social service until his retirement. Retirement turned his work back into a hobby as he participated in several elderly unions, the elderly board and the master V&A. The one thing he wants to share with the students is the importance of advising and policy making. Especially when it comes to the welfare of older adults, because “You can help people in and out of a hospital bed, but is it not better to keep them out of that bed in the first place?”. For this reason, he also underlined the importance of focusing on preventive measures and thinking in solutions.

Whether Johan feels old? Absolutely not! “I still have so many plans and ideas I want to carry out. I want to continue with this for a long time!” And if we can believe his wife, he probably will be participating in meetings for the rest of his life! ■



*Cornelia watches the birds the old-fashioned way with binoculars, but Johan uses an app to find them on his mobile phone which provides him with all the relevant information in a single click.*



## The Older Individual

The Older Individual (OI) started in December 2019 with a very diverse block. Biomedical themes, well-being, social context, moral and ethical circumstances, (il)literacy... Many topics with their different but very complementary contents. You, the students, were eager and curious and your participation in the working groups and lectures was really wonderful. And last but not least there was the participation of the elderly, our target group! Your questions together with their experience created a good leverage. Just before Christmas you had your exam and after a cozy “borrel” you all enjoyed a well-deserved holiday.

And then 2020 started with something completely different. Within a period of only four weeks you all had to co-create a relevant innovation with the elderly. Starting from scratch and coached by several professionals. At the end of the month you presented your 3 minute videos and even shorter pitches. The results were again diverse but also stunning and even prizewinning!

Thank you all for your enthusiasm and motivation,

**Sandra van Dijk and Wim Lely**

Course Coordinators The Older Individual



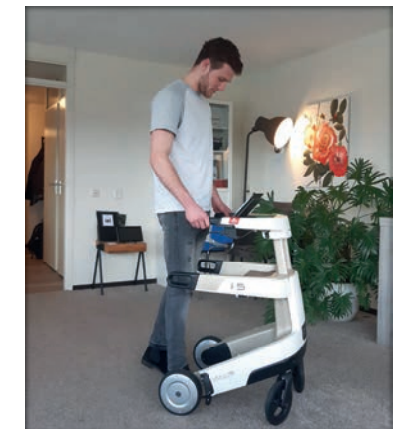
*During the lectures of OI a lot of interesting innovations for older individuals were presented, for one lecture the innovation was actually present. This therapeutic baby seal robot called “Paro” was a big hit!*



*After the OI exam we celebrated with a Christmas-themed lunch, which was well earned and a good start of our Christmas break.*



*During the Master we work in groups a lot! This way we learn from each other and achieve the best results.*



*This electronic walker present in the model iZi-housing apartment we visited, invites you to exercise and helps you walk if needed. The assisted dancing option was a student favorite.*



## The Older Individual Course

By Jeanita Berkhout

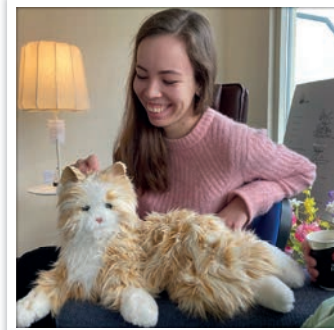
Looking through the eyes of older adults: what is their perspective on health and successful ageing? We learned that health is much more than just the absence of disease; that health is about physical, mental and social well-being. And that besides the status of these three components, the most important component to age successfully is adaptation.

The course was split into two parts. In the first part, we got numerous of inspiring lectures about a broad range of topics: from geriatric giants, to polypharmacy, cultural aspects, the meaning of the third phase of life, interventions, shared decision making and a lecture on sexuality and intimacy. These weeks really broadened our way of thinking about elderly care. A fun element to mention is the mini-symposium: small groups were formed and each group had to give a lecture about a certain age-related condition. Some groups got really creative by even incorporating the game “bingo” into their lecture!

The last part of the course was completely different. We were introduced into the world of innovations and taken on the journey of design thinking, which consists of six important steps: empathizing, defining (understanding), ideating, prototyping (exploring), testing and implementing (materializing). In this second part of the course, we got a lot of freedom to use our own creativity. We could choose our own challenge and work out our innovative ideas for that challenge. In between we received feedback from each other and from the V&A elderly board. At the end of the course everyone presented their ideas in the form of a video pitch, with some of the students being very motivated to continue working on their innovation. Student Ephrem Tesfay even got a grant from Leven Lang Leven to further develop his “Tale Talk” innovation and he tells us all about it on page 27.



*In “The White Fog” the students experienced the thoughts of someone with dementia. The hairdresser-shades disconnected the students even more from the outside world.*



*Mara petting the robot cat which is one of the innovations presented at the iZi-housing model apartment. The aim of this cat is to combat loneliness in community-dwelling older individuals.*



*Students visiting the Argos: Marnix revalidation centre located in Vlaardingen.*

## Oudtopia By Jeanita Berkhout

How will it be, to be old? At Oudtopia, the world of the older adults, we got to experience this by becoming our own-old-selves. We time-traveled to our 80<sup>th</sup> or even up to our 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. For four hours, we experienced the difficulties some older adults encounter via The Forest Walk, Moving to Your Last Home, the game Mens Schaak Je Niet, The White Fog and an escape room. It was a fun day with a lot of laughter and confronting moments which were impressive and sad at the same time. For us as students Oudtopia was a temporary journey, however, for some older adults this is not the case. Oudtopia provided us with an near-insider’s perspectives we would otherwise never have at our age, and we are grateful for that!

## iZi-housing By Isabelle Moens

The municipality of The Hague has started the initiative for iZi-housing in 2016, and it is currently driven by the residents of the complex in The Hague. An exceptional collaboration between iZi-housing and their elderly ambassadors ensures that suitable gadgets are selected and tested that aim to help older people live at home as long as possible. iZi-housing demonstrates 90 different technical and non-technical gadgets which can help community-dwelling people to continue living independently. We learned about these different gadgets and about the importance of well-thought-out introduction of these applications to the older individuals and their families. The next ambition for iZi-housing is to expand to other regions, and thereby create more awareness regarding the existence of these gadgets!

## Nursing Home Visit By Cornelia Wieringa

In January we all visited a nursing home. I visited “Het Zonnehuis” in Vlaardingen (not pictured) which offers nursing home care, home care, psychogeriatric day treatment, and (poli-)clinical rehabilitation. During this visit we learned about all the different aspects of this care organization including an extensive tour through the building. For someone like me, with no personal experience with a nursing home, this was very enlightening. We learned from ergotherapists, the in-house policy advisor, nurses, geriatric specialist and the manager. All these different perspective were very valuable, also as part of our career orientation. Especially the policy advisor gave us an interesting behind-the-scenes peek into her work and what it entails, which was very interesting and easily my favourite part of the visit!





*After a train ride to Utrecht, we were excited to go to Vilans and learn more about all they do.*

## Vilans

By Isabelle Moens and Cornelia Wieringa

At Vilans we were welcomed by Johan Vesseur (senior advisor) and Monique Spierenburg (expert), who showed us an overview of the the broad range of subjects Vilans is involved in. The 3 major focus points of Vilans were highlighted: research, consultancy and knowledge. The research is mostly funded by ZonMW and the latter two are both funded by VWS.

We learned that Vilans collects, validates and distributes knowledge about (mostly) long-term care. And that this organization is especially important for the implementation of projects, because of the co-creation with the specific target groups. In the second part we learned about the importance of thinking about the future. “You cannot predict the future, but you can think about it!”. To illustrate this, an extreme example of how the healthcare can look in 2030 was showed. This evoked a lot of discussion right away, which turned out to be the goal of design fiction, which is a part of design thinking. In conclusion it was a very informative day and some students were so inspired by the work of Vilans that they applied for their master internship at Vilans!

## ZonMw

By Isabelle Moens

During the second part of the course “the Older Individual” we were given the opportunity to invent solutions for problems older individuals face. With these innovative ideas in mind, we went to The Hague to visit ZonMw. ZonMw is a famous organisation in the research community, as they finance healthcare innovations and (bio)medical research. We were honored and excited at the same time to learn from these experts how to develop an innovation from scratch. Firstly, after a short introduction about ZonMw itself, the two employees were really interested in our ideas. After discussing some, the two representatives from ZonMw provided us with the “hexagon exploration tool”, which is used to discuss and analyse innovations. In small groups we discussed our innovative ideas with the help of this tool, which enabled us to improve our individual innovations. After an interesting but intensive workshop at ZonMw we all headed home with enough new themes to discuss in our innovation paper. This workshop of ZonMw really lifted our innovations to a higher level, for which we are very grateful.

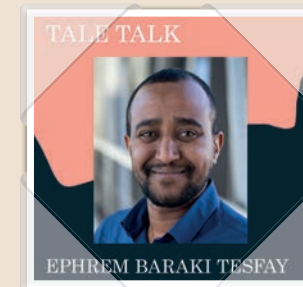


*Working on our innovations during the implementation workshop at ZonMw.*

## A winning innovation: Tale Talk

By Ephrem Tesfay

**Leven Lang Leven, a project of innovation for healthy ageing in the Netherlands, challenged everyone in- and outside of the healthcare sector to submit an innovative idea on ageing in an enjoyable and meaningful way. My innovation “Tale Talk” is one of the twelve winning ideas selected by the project. I will receive professional coaching and budget to further develop my innovation.**



The idea of developing Tale Talk started with a story I heard from a Syrian man I once met during one of my Dutch language classes. I remember our Dutch language level was very low but we were able to understand each other during that little Dutch and English mixed conversation we had. He managed to tell me what happened to his family and his home in Syria. I could see sorrow in his eyes when he told me how he lost his sons and daughters along with his entire house because of the ongoing war. What struck me most was that he was happy for telling his story to someone in a new language and for being understood.

That moment had been on my mind for a while and an opportunity opened up during the V&A course The Older Individual. We were asked to create an innovation to help older people age successfully. Inspired by the story of the 50 year old Syrian man, I wrote a paper on the level of purpose in life (PiL) in older migrants aged 50 and above, including an innovative way to help older migrants engage in their new home country. A few weeks after I submitted my paper about this innovation, I received an email from my course coordinators about the opportunity to submit ideas for the Leven Lang Leven project. My girlfriend helped me translate the one-page application I wrote and we submitted it to the website of Leven Lang Leven. After a few weeks, to my surprise, I received an email which stated that I had been selected. With unreserved support from the master's team, a paper I wrote evolved into an innovation I want to develop further.

Tale Talk aims to be a platform where elderly migrants will express themselves through their stories and heritages that connects them to the most meaningful part of their lives. Follow my Facebook page to learn more: <http://fb.com/Tale-Talk-105096497837461/>







## Meet Christina Harrevelt

By Isabelle Moens and Cornelia Wieringa

**From the moment we met Christina Harrevelt (75), at the closing drinks of The Older Individual course, we wanted to get to know this radiant member of the elderly board better. Luckily, she enthusiastically agreed to an interview for the yearbook. During the interview we soon noticed that the 600 words we have for this profile were not nearly enough to do the life story of Christina justice (she should write a book!), but we tried because everyone should get to know her!**

Christina's journey began in 1945 in Paramaribo where she grew up in a close-knit community. Among the many related and unrelated members that formed her family, her grandmother still holds a special place in her heart. However, even at a young age, Christina had dreams that went beyond Paramaribo. She paved her own road to success, starting with her application for the AMS (= general high school in Suriname) even though no one expected her to continue with a higher education. The people in her immediate environment emphasized that becoming a teacher was good enough for her, but Christina did not agree, she wanted to become a physician in a large hospital. Unfortunately, she was assigned to the division with alpha courses instead of the beta direction. Nevertheless, she stayed motivated and started to work at the public health agency. Her intrinsic motivation made her excel and opened up opportunities beyond Paramaribo. She was about to receive a scholarship to study Health Education in the USA, which in the end, went to a man. Once again she remained determined and followed her own path. A path that included a two-week journey on a ship that brought her to the Netherlands to study in Leiden. Without a gymnasium certificate, she could not study English as she'd hoped, so instead, she started out as a

working student. After three years she was granted a scholarship to study anthropology in Leiden, where she met her husband and soon thereafter gave birth to a daughter. To graduate from anthropology, Christina had to do research abroad, but luckily she was one of the students who could conduct the required research in the Netherlands: a research project on the Surinamese living in "De Bijlmer". This allowed her to stay close to her daughter, as well as her mother, who'd moved to the Netherlands when Christina got married. After some extra delay, because she got pregnant with her second daughter, Christina graduated from anthropology (on a health-related topic!) at the age of 34. It was a long road but she made it, which could not make her more proud, and rightly so!

Throughout her life music and especially singing (in a choir) have brought Christina joy. So, together with her partner at the time, she founded "Cabaret Revo", short for Cabaret Revolution, as a way to celebrate the abolition of slavery on the 1st of July with fellow students, which was common in Suriname. They continued to perform cabaret and songs about the injustice in Suriname throughout the Netherlands, to raise awareness and funds for the democratic youth association in Suriname. Although other students went back to Suriname after graduation, Christina and her friends from Cabaret Revo stayed to continue fundraising. Christina never stopped singing and currently sings in a choir.

After graduation Christina started working full-time and ended up working in the migrant-welfare sector, where she became the director of an important organisation in the field and later played a key role in the merging of different migrant organisations. She is currently the chairwoman of a foundation for older Surinamese women, treasurer for "Network of Organisations for Older Migrants", member of the local Elderly Board and member of the V&A Elderly Board. She enjoys participating in the master more and more each year, so lucky for us she has no plans to stop any time soon! ■

*Christina is very glad to have a laptop which she uses often, however Cornelia prefers a notebook over an online device, for example for taking notes during the interview.*





## Organisation of the Ageing Society

Despite all the effects of the coronavirus crisis the OAS module in 2020 was a creative and energetic one. It all started normally in February with good student participation in the lectures. Luckily the Brussels visit was just in time for the full scale of the coronavirus crisis became apparent and the various “lock downs” started. From that moment on both staff and students had to demonstrate their flexible and creative side to keep things moving. Zoom lectures and meetings became more or less normal and an essay as exam was thought up, created and approved by the exam committee in record time. The leadership game which normally takes up the entire last week of the module was also replaced in record time by online lectures and an online game. The students underwent all these last minute changes with good will and humour. For Suzan, Tony, and the junior teachers it was a pleasure to read the creative policy papers and essays and he online session, in which the students who were not able to go to Brussels participated, was also a dynamic and interesting learning experience. All in all we can look back on a dramatic but positive OAS module 2020 which taught us all a great deal, the corona part of which we hope never to repeat.

### Tony Poot and Suzan van der Pas

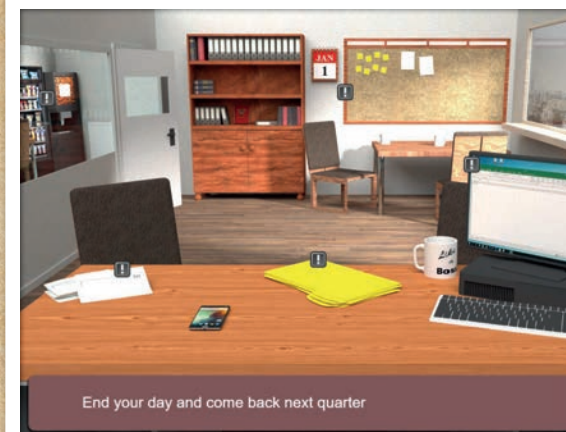
Course Coordinators Organisation of the Ageing Society



*During OAS the Year Representatives (JVT) organised a music quiz in “Hepatho”, the LUMC student pub. We had lots of fun playing games, beer pong and dancing. A great night!*



*This year the master V&A was evaluated by an independent board for the first time: “de visitatie”. The student panel is pictured, who discussed the tops and tips of the Master with the board.*



*The at home leadership week included the Hospital Game. A simulator game where our job as director was to keep the financial director, the staff and the patients satisfied. This proved to be quite a challenge.*



*A dinner party for the international students was organized by other students. Everyone brought a dish from their birth country and a lot of experiences were shared!*



## Organisation of the Ageing Society Course

By Nicky Smits

Our last course, Organisation of an Ageing Society, was one characterized by novelty and surprises. We took a trip to Brussels, took part in orientation visits to the field, received guest lectures by experts from many different fields, and had the chance to immerse ourselves in a subject that was utterly foreign to many of us.

We started the course with a history on the city planning of early Dutch villages, and moved through socioeconomic diversity, the WHO age friendly cities programme, a long discussion on the concept of tenders, the WMO contribution and the unique position of the Dutch GP to integrated and value-based care. We watched a documentary on the Martini-Klinik, a specialized prostate cancer centre, and got coached in negotiation and stress management. We attended lectures in the LUMC and on campus The Hague, and listened to the VWS, SCP, RVS and Jet Bussemaker. All in all, we accumulated knowledge from maybe not all, but many corners of the healthcare system.

OAS gave us the possibility to meet leaders in the field, which produced the interviews that can be enjoyed in this yearbook. We also visited the municipality of Leiden, where we received valuable insights on the current projects and had the opportunity to use our knowledge in a brainstorm session about the future of municipal elderly care. We travelled to Brussels, where we visited the EU building, the streets (Did you know young Belgians have a “stone in the stomach”, a wish to each build their own house?) and the European Parliament.

OAS was also a course struck by inconveniences and changes. An orientation visit was unexpectedly cancelled due to railway maintenance, the trains to Brussels were delayed, and most distinctively, the exam and leadership week were cancelled due to the quarantine measures related to the outbreak of Coronavirus. Despite these challenges, the OAS team have organised online alternatives with minimal delay, and we are thankful to them.



*Learning more about the inner workings of the municipality and the challenges it faces.*

## Municipality of Leiden

By Isabelle Moens

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of March the municipality of Leiden opened its doors to the V&A students for the first time. The objective of this orientation visit was to learn about the biggest challenges that the Municipality faces, but also to gain insight in the work of a civil servant (which is not boring at all!). As a warming up, we started with a game in which we had to match cities to their demographics which was a far more challenging task than most of us expected at first! Thereafter we learned more about the demographics of Leiden, and about one of the four clusters in the municipality: “participation and social development”. With all this new information freshly in our minds, we were challenged to think up innovative ideas on how to prevent inhabitants from problems with housing, welfare and the relation with cure and care. Afterwards there was time for questions of which we made good use!

## Hackathon VWS

By Isabelle Moens

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of March we had the opportunity to visit the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS). This orientation visit consisted of two parts. First we were provided with some background knowledge about this Ministry’s functions, and thereafter we were challenged in a Hackathon to tackle problems the VWS faces. For this Hackathon 4 different groups were composed to discuss the challenges and afterwards every group presented their plans. There was a lot at stake because one group could win an individual VWS visit, but this time a whole day as shadow of an employee. It was fun to see that all groups tackled the problems in different ways and how competitive the groups became after hearing about the prize. The winning group presented a well-thought out and detailed plan in order to tackle nurse shortage. Their key message was to not focus on recruiting new nurses, but on preventing current nurses from flowing out. In conclusion, the final score of the day: happy students who were challenged and content representatives who were impressed by the ideas of the V&A students!



*A few of the V&A students in the impressive VWS building.*





*Our study trip to Brussels included a visit to the European Parliament. The visit started with a lecture where we learned more about the European Union and the European parliament: why it is important to have the European Union, how many members represent the European citizens, how do they vote and what do they discuss. Thereafter, we had a Q&A with a member of the EUP (Toine Manders) and his assistant (Marijn Verhees) about what their (work)days look like. The day ended with a tour through the building, before traveling back home.*



*Our study trip started with a city tour through Brussels, follow by local beers in a cosy pub and a nice dinner.*



*The Year Representatives (JVT) designed a beautiful V&A sweater with all our names on it. Of course we wore them during our study trip and took a picture at the Dutch Representative Office to show them off!*



*After a few very interesting lectures at the Dutch Representative Office, we went to European Parliament to learn more about how it actually operates.*



*The famous Hemicycle in the European Parliament in Brussels, which can seat all 705 Members of the European Parliament. Amazing to see this in person!*



## Meet Koos Noordermeer

By Isabelle Moens and Cornelia Wieringa

**After a beautiful bike ride we arrived at the house of Koos Noordermeer (77), where we received a warm welcome from Koos, his wife Cilia and a cute dog named Tom. Since we are all dog lovers, Tom was the main topic of conversation for the first 10 minutes. As it turns out, Tom is his granddaughter's dog, that he temporarily took care of, because his granddaughter just gave birth, making Koos a proud great-grandfather. Although he loves dogs (and loves to spoil Tom with some liverwurst), he doesn't wish to get one himself because of his many hobbies. For example, he enjoys singing and does so in multiple choirs. He also likes to read and to transfer his knowledge to the next generation, leading to interesting insights and discussions. But the interview did not only consist of serious discussions, since Koos likes to joke around and we laughed a lot!**

Koos was born and raised in "het Westland". Although his family was a "working class family", he got the opportunity to continue his studies at the MULO instead of starting work immediately after finishing elementary school like his siblings. After the MULO, he studied at the Maritime Academy, which enabled him to pursue his dream: becoming Chief Engineer. Thereafter, he started working on merchant ships, on which he later travelled the whole world. In the end he was able to share this experience with his wife, who went with him at the end of his career. His knowledge about the world and his broad-

minded view provide a unique perspective of the world and a lot of wisdom, both of which can be of great value for the V&A students.

According to Koos, the secret behind becoming a vital 77-year-old consists of having a stable relationship, trying to put things into perspective, and finding a balance between putting effort into things and getting enough relaxation. He emphasizes that especially when you become older, it is important to have many connections in your network because you can help each other out. Sufficient free time enables you to build better relations and keep them when growing older. With his 77 years he doesn't feel old, however he does notice some physical limitations. Still, these do not stop him from doing one of the most important things to him: participating in life.

Koos cares about helping the V&A students, and the list with tips and tricks he made for the students prior to the interview proves this to be true:

- 1 Regularity and order! When you get organized, you can clear your mind. When you don't, your mind will stay busy, and tasks will take more time and energy.
- 2 The best way to learn something is by reflecting on an experience by holding up a mirror for yourself or asking someone else. Be open to feedback and learn from it. It can be painful sometimes, approach it in a positive way and do something with it!
- 3 When you want to reach your target audience: tell the full story, present your messages in a positive way and set achievable goals.
- 4 Have the courage to ask for help when needed and also to accept help when offered.

And this is just a small selection of all the wisdom he shared with us. Thank you for the tips and tricks, Koos! ■



*Koos and Isabelle both like to ride their bikes. However, when they cycled together when going in the same direction from the LUMC, Koos went way faster than Isabelle. Maybe the electric support in Koos' bike could play a part in it ;)?*





## Meet Drs. Frank Damen

### Managing Director Education and Training, LUMC

By Nicky Smits

**While Frank Damen may not be closely related to the field of vitality and ageing, he is one of the people who facilitates the studies of many students. He is the coordinator of not only nine academic programmes, but also the nursing programme and all specialisations, supplementary trainings, the Boerhaave institute, and two supporting departments: the education expertise centre and the education service centre. He and his five-headed management team are responsible for steering the organization in the right direction, eliminating potential bottlenecks, supporting innovation and translating general management strategies into practice. I enter his office at the end of a working day. Against a backdrop of flowcharts and mind maps he dives into a description of his function, goals, achievements, and plans for his own retirement.**

Drs. Damen has a background in business economics. He has been employed by the LUMC in several functions for the past seventeen years, and states that no matter the function, he has always been focussed on improving the organization and looking for ways to bring it closer to the “customer”: care professionals, teachers and students. He has steadily moved closer to the care process. But what drew him, as an economist, to the care sector? He was trained as a professional soldier at the Royal Military Academy in Breda before he got his degree in business economics. His first position after that was as head internal control at a military hospital. There he got inspired to contribute to the care process:

“As you might expect, military personnel are relatively healthy, so the hospital also treated civilian patients. It was such a great function and organisation, and seeing the patients go through a complex treatment of several days really sparked my interest in the process.” After fifteen years of other positions, he decided to go back to his first passion, and ended up at the LUMC.

His biggest goal is stimulating cooperation, innovation and enthusiasm. His biggest achievement of the last five years is situating education as a core activity of the LUMC, beside research and patient

*“Change is the constant in an organization.”*

care. “The medical faculty has the unique position of bringing education, research and patient care together. It is a challenge to balance, but gives us the opportunity of having the best doctors and researchers available to teach the next generation.” Not only has his team made great strides in improving the cooperation with line education and professionalizing the organizational structure, they also lifted the LUMC from two academic

programmes to five: Pharmacy has made a reappearance, clinical technology was created in cooperation with the TU Delft, and Vitality and Ageing was brought over from Leyden Academy. He has achieved this together with many others, he says, as he prefers to stimulate his team to be enthusiastic, take responsibility, and above all be open to change.

After six years as director, he says, it is time for more change and for someone else to fill his role. He retires in September, and he has plenty of plans: a volunteer position, assisting an old study friend with his financial consultancy firm, gardening, biking, and traveling through the Netherlands with his wife in their campervan. In conclusion, Drs. Damen spent his career spearheading change and

*“I enjoy creating a pleasant, professional and challenging work environment.”*

innovation and stimulating cooperation and enthusiasm. His quote regarding leadership will stay with me: “We have to commit to realizing what we have chosen as the best idea, whether it was my idea or not.” It has been inspiring to see that someone behind the scenes, with a seemingly unrelated background, has done so much to facilitate the existence and quality of our master programme. Drs. Damen and his team, by supporting our master, facilitate us students to improve the life and care of older individuals. ■





## ***Meet Theo Roes***

### ***Member of the regional Elderly Advisory Board and the national Council of Elderly and consultant***

By Cornelia Wieringa

**Retirement does not have to mark the end of your career. Theo Roes' resume is too extensive to include in its entirety, but the common denominator throughout his career has been advisory roles on societal issues at the interface of sociology research and policy. He was deputy director of The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) for many years before he retired. He is currently working as member of the regional Elderly Advisory Board, member of the national Council of Elderly, and as a consultant.**

Roes (77) started working at the SCP in 1986, when it was nowhere near the institute it is today. In those early days communication was key. They were trying to build a network and authority for the SCP; a perfect fit for Roes, who has a Master's degree in Communication Science. They used national media to spark a sense of urgency regarding relevant societal issues with the ultimate goal of eliciting political change. Years later, Roes found himself on a crossroad where he had to decide between pursuing a fulltime political career or becoming the new deputy director of the SCP. He chose the latter and looks back on this as the defining moment of his career. As deputy director he took many courses to further develop his leadership skills. For the approximately 80 employees of the SCP at the time he used an open door policy as a way of staying connected and up-to-date about ongoing projects.

He remains humble when asked about his successes. Luckily, he is willing to share his vision and practical approach regarding leadership. So what exactly is his vision? "Leadership is providing direction, not being the boss of something", according to Roes. Mechanisms of providing direction on a national and political level include agenda setting, educating the public and communication.

***"Leadership is providing direction, not being the boss of something."***

As a manager he viewed communication as one of his most effective tools as well and therefore he describes his own leadership style as communicative. Moreover, he considers a pleasant and inclusive general atmosphere a priority, as his experience has taught him that this increases productivity.

After retiring from the SCP twelve years ago, Roes has worked as an expert consultant for the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) and

Movisie – the national knowledge institute on social issues – among others. After an entire career focused around advisory roles at the interface of socio-scientific research and policy, he has become an expert on the subject. However, it is clear that he remains a researcher at heart who is always looking for facts to base his advice on, for instance by keeping up with relevant publications. Furthermore, he measures success by the amount of recognition from relevant persons for his work, especially (scientific) publications, not unlike other researchers.

***"It is my mission to make sure that older individuals are heard."***

When asked what ambitions he still harbours, which have kept him from slowing down, he answered passionately "it is my mission to make sure that older individuals are heard". He works with this goal in mind by giving advice on behalf of the Council of Elderly, for example to minister Hugo de Jonge (VWS) on matters that are relevant to older individuals. Recently the focus has been on preparing for older age: the so-called "third phase of life". Roes admits that this has triggered thoughts about his own future plans. Although he still feels motivated to continue his work for the Council of Elderly, he expresses

the wish to have more time for his private life in the upcoming years as he would like to travel with his wife. Some might call it retiring... ■





## Meet Lenny Geluk-Poortvliet

### Member of the House of Representatives

By Jeanita Berkhout

**The oldest person in the current Dutch Parliament is Mrs. Lenny Geluk-Poortvliet. Three years ago, at the age of 73, Mrs. Geluk-Poortvliet was sworn in as a member of the House of Representatives. “I was very warmly welcomed by my fraction the CDA. They really choose me, because I represent the older adults, who also need a voice in the House of Representatives!”**

“Am I a leader? No, I do not consider myself a leader.” That is the surprising answer of Mrs. Geluk-Poortvliet on the assignment of interviewing a leader. “I am a representative of the people. I serve the people; I am a servant. You might call it servant leadership.”

Already 43 years ago, Mrs. Geluk-Poortvliet started her career in politics. Three years later the CDA was founded. “When the CDA was founded, not many women were politically active. Women who wanted to learn to be politically active in a safe environment could join the women’s council of the CDA. That’s what I did.” “Safe environment might not be the correct words, but men simply have a different way of working.” Mrs. Geluk-Poortvliet convincingly indicates that women collaborate much more and also ask more often whether they should do something or not. “Women need more certainty, while men more often think: yes, why not, let’s try! This is something I also strongly recognize myself, that I first want to know for sure that I can do it before I start it.”

In 2002 Mrs. Geluk-Poortvliet was elected as a member of the local council and a little later as the councilor of Schouwen-Duiveland, Zeeland. Zeeland is also the place where Mrs. Geluk-Poortvliet grew up. Nowadays, she is living in Zeist, close to her three children and seven grandchildren. “They are also the reason why I wanted to be a member of the House of Representatives. I do not think much about my own future; if I think about the future, I think about the future of the country I will pass on to my children and grandchildren. And that is what everyone should do.”

*“Culture has my deepest interest, because I believe culture connects.”*

Until 2007, Mrs. Geluk-Poortvliet also worked in contemporary arts. In 1990 she opened her own art gallery: Gallerij Geluk (Gallery Happiness). This was “a remarkable point in life”. She organized expositions and invited many artists from the Netherlands, but her most special earnings were from East-European countries. Unsurprisingly, Mrs. Geluk-Poortvliet currently has culture in her political portfolio. “Culture has my deepest interest, because I believe culture connects.” She finds it very helpful to know how artists think. “In that way, I still benefit from my experience in arts and the current artists as well of course!”

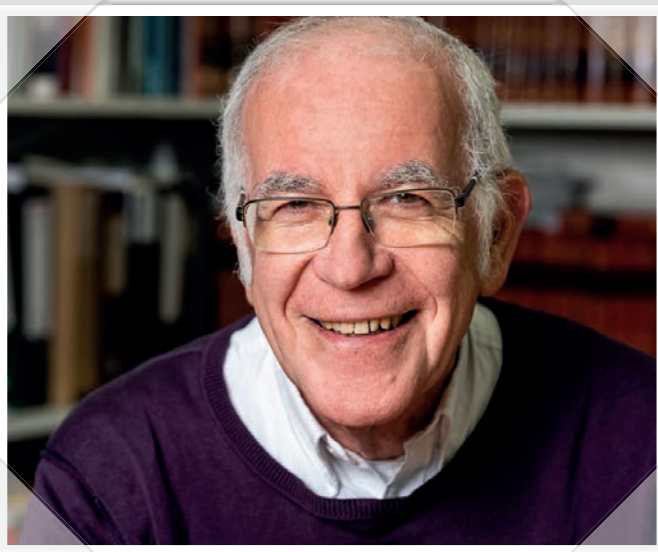
Mrs. Geluk-Poortvliet explains it is difficult for a fraction to compose their members. Each fraction needs diversity: enough females, enough males, enough different disciplines and enough variation in age. “I think it is important that all ages are represented, because you can supplement each other. Where the younger generation is very dynamic, the older adults find their strength in observing.” This positive view towards older adults is what Mrs. Geluk-Poortvliet wants to establish. How she says it: “the art of ageing”. “Sometimes people think older adults only need to be cared for. I plea that older adults are not to be put away as infirm, pathetic and in need of care. My motto is: age is just a number!”

*“I think it is important that all ages are represented, because you can supplement each other. Where the younger generation is very dynamic, the older adults find their strength in observing.”*

“People should not see ‘elderly’ as a specific group, but as part of the society.” Mrs. Geluk-Poortvliet wants to show older adults that there is enough they can do: continue working if you want, either voluntary or paid. “Why not? I am the living example. Some people might think: if you

can do it, I can do it!” Still, something is gnawing at her: “Why it so difficult to find a job at a certain age?” She wants the age discrimination at the labor market to stop. She believes older adults know a lot and can assist in a lot, which is something that should be embraced and used! So, her take home message will be: “Use the older adults! Do it!” ■





## **Meet Prof. Dr. Dick Swaab**

*Leading researcher in the field of neurobiology and author of “We are our brains”*

By Isabelle Moens

A room filled with books and articles was what I expected the study of a famous researcher to be, and a room filled with books and articles was exactly what I encountered when I entered the study of Dick Swaab. On his desk lay a pile of different language copies of one of the books he has written: “We are our brains, from the womb to Alzheimer’s”. This book has made him famous among the general public. However, explaining difficult subjects to the wider public is not the only thing that makes him stand out. He is also a leading researcher in the field of neurobiology.

Both his father and grandfather having been physicians, Swaab was surrounded by medical professionals from a young age. A good mix of genes from his parents enabled him to start a medical career. However, conducting research stole his heart, or rather his brain. His interests were broad, but the only place where he could start doing research immediately was the Netherlands Institute for Neuroscience, and he never left. He prevented the politically decided termination of the institute, and thereafter became its director for 30 years (from 1975 till 2005).

During this period, he learned much about leadership as director of an important organisation. From Swaab’s perspective, leadership could be described as a battle to get the organisation what it needs to perform best. According to Prof. Dr. Swaab, in order to be a good leader, it is crucial to

*“You will never be a great leader without the right genes and early development.”*

communicate clearly that you are not interested in the problem, but in the solution. As director you should only give advice when people can’t come up with solutions for the problems themselves, and be transparent if problems are not solvable. Although one can improve their leadership skills through practice, Dick Swaab believes in the term natural leader: “You will never be a great leader without the right genes and early development”.

In his role as director of the Institute, and as founder of The Netherlands Brain Bank (NBB), he experienced that doing research is important, but communicating the results and the importance of this research to the general public is just as important. One way of communicating these messages to the outside was through columns and later through his books, which are specially written for the general public. As a result of his communication, his findings have not only had influence in the medical field, but also in other professions and politics. For example, his research on the brains of transgenders incited an amendment to the law in the UK.

Currently he enjoys being the team leader of the 10 PhD-students of the neuropsychiatric disorders research group. He meets with his PhD students almost every day, and provides them with the right

*“I do not give my students fish, for I teach them how to fish.”*

tools to perform their best in the field of research. His current and 87 previous PhD-students are like family to him, his “scientific children” as Swaab calls them. When I asked him his secret for good leadership in this area he said: “I do not give my students fish, for I teach them how to fish”.

His passion for research can’t be ignored. When I asked him if he thought he would ever quit being a researcher he said: “Quitting? Yes, at some moment life stops and then it will be over. But before that moment I will absolutely continue doing research”. With this being said he should probably start looking for a bigger room to stall his books and articles, since his insatiable thirst for knowledge will never end. ■





**Meet Prof. Dr.  
Frans van der Ouderaa**  
*Senior researcher and  
business liaison for  
Dutch society for Research  
into Ageing*

By Irene Dijksterhuis

**Prof. Dr. Frans van der Ouderaa, a senior professor at the moment, mentions a quote from Tony Turnbell multiple times: “Everyone is a leader”. When it comes to making something new, whether that’s a product or research, it always has to start with you, as Mr. Ouderaa explains. “You are the leader of your own faith.”**

Yes, everyone is a leader in their own life, but Mr. Ouderaa has had quite some experience with being a leader himself as well. He received his doctorate in 1974 in Nijmegen after finishing clinical chemistry in Leiden. He worked for Unilever for 34 years, mainly in England, and in nine different jobs within the company. Ouderaa has a few important characteristics that are quite exceptional for a leader. First of all, he sees himself as someone who does not manage from the top, setting people up as he wants them to. He wants to know all the decisive details, wants to be among the people he leads. “As a manager, you must take expertise of your workers into account. How are you able to make that employee the best version of him or herself, without putting too much burden on him or her?”

Next to the wise words about the role of leader, Mr. Ouderaa emphasizes that being able to maintain a befitting work-life balance is well-advised in any case. “I’ve seen people working every evening and in the weekends. They always give 150%, and I highly doubt if that’s always a good thing.” But what particular personalities are needed then?

Asking about characteristics that a good leader should have, it seems to come back at one word: vision. “In my form of leadership, I always try to have a vision (...). To develop that vision, you need to know the problem and the subject into detail.”

Nowadays, Ouderaa is working on a vitality programme called VOILA (Vitality Oriented Innovations for the Life course of the Ageing society) for Leyden Academy. He particularly emphasizes that as a leader curiosity is crucial.

**“Everyone is a leader.”**

As a leader, communication is critical. You need to convince people that are above you, because often they are in charge of the money, and you need to stimulate and motivate the people you lead to work on the project. Here, the previously mentioned “vision” comes up again.

Lastly, Mr. Ouderaa described a conflict situation in which both parties initially had the same goal. He visualized it as a mountain. Taking the position of the other person might help to avoid conflicts as a manager, Ouderaa says. Abstaining from conflicts as much as possible can in any case be

advantageous. “Having the same end-point in mind, does not mean that you are at the same position on the mountain. Maybe the person you are talking to is still at the beginning, or on the other side of the mountain.”

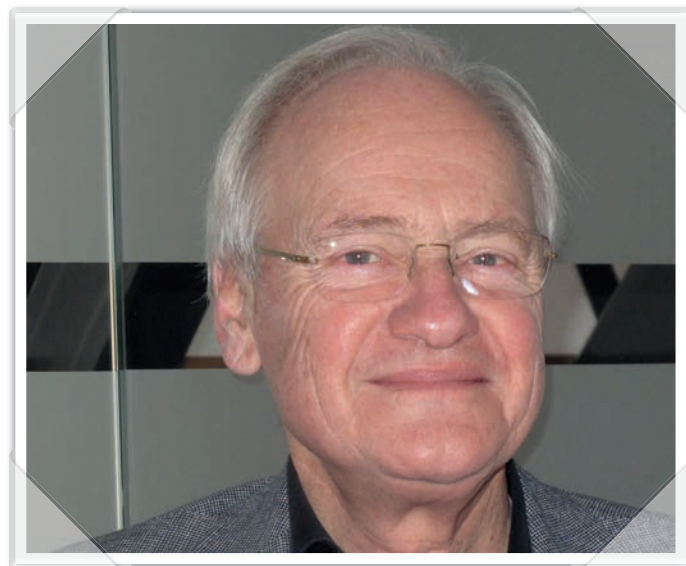
**“If you don’t know what you want, you will not recognize all the opportunities that come along and they will pass you by. If you know what you want, you are one step further.”**

In line with the mountain-story, sometimes it is hard to convince people of an idea which is probably something that everyone experiences. Especially nowadays in elderly care, it is challenging yet interesting how we can demonstrate them that what we found in research can be applied in daily life. Consequently, this is Ouderaa’s biggest goal and challenge.

That Mr. Ouderaa knows how to stimulate becomes clear when he comes back to the statement of Tony Turnbell that everyone is a leader.

“Where do you want to be in 5 years?” he asks. When he gets no clear answer he continues: “If you don’t know what you want, you will not recognize all the opportunities that come along and they will pass you by. If you know what you want, you are one step further.” Good homework question for all of us, I would say. ■





## *Meet Prof. Eduard Klasen*

### *Advisor Executive Board LUMC*

By Ephrem Tesfay

**“I was born on a Sunday and as my mother said, I have always been lucky”, professor Eduard Klasen told me when I met him in a café in Utrecht for our interview. It was the second time that week I travelled to Utrecht to meet him and fortunately this time, I was lucky.**

Professor Klasen worked as Board Member and Dean of the Leiden University in the last 10 years before his retirement. He studied Chemistry, did his PhD in Biochemical Genetics, was active in research for 14 years and became Director of the Pre-Clinical Laboratories in Leiden. He was appointed as director of the Dutch Medical Research Council at NWO, which he merged together with the help of colleagues into what is now called ZonMw, bringing together health care and research. He then became Director General of NWO followed by his LUMC appointment. Intrigued by the organization of research, proposal writing and integrity in research, he became part-time professor in Health Research Management. Ever since, he has been involved in several advisory and managerial boards until after his retirement and is currently amongst others member of the advisory board for the Healthy Ageing Network of the Northern part of the Netherlands (HANN).

The transition from scientist to manager and policy maker went naturally. His intrinsic interest for many different subjects, combined with hard and good quality work left a lasting impression with his colleagues and superiors. When moving to Groningen, one of the northern provinces of The Netherlands, he expected to have less work-related activities but people still approached him, despite the growing physical distance.

His managerial style can be characterized as non-hierarchical and inclusive while expecting commitment of his staff to achieve the best results. He always gave credit to the talented people for their achievements under his guidance, which he found is not a trick he learned but is part of his personality. As a father of two children, he experienced both had interests he did not share at first, but he supported them to explore their dreams and develop themselves.

It were his children that motivated him and his wife to move to the north of The Netherlands. They are sharing a house with their daughters' family; an idea the Dutch government hoped more people would embrace in the era of the ageing society. Professor Klasen thinks the government overlooked the financial implications which most people cannot afford, the rules and regulations hampering adjustments to houses and the challenges of a top-down approach in a culture that is not used to care for elderly parents as much as in, for example, southern European countries. He strongly believes the government should invest in nursing homes, adjust regulations to become (financially) supportive and encourage general practitioners to take lead in their initiatives to organize care for elderly patients within their own practices. To translate these ideas into practice, professor Klasen is involved in HANN, a knowledge and development network in active and healthy ageing. The network aims to connect industries, academic institutions and citizens in projects focusing on healthy ageing with five major themes; life science, medical technology, food and nutrition, care and cure and healthy life style. Professor Klasen works together with two colleagues to supervise the director of the network, the expenditure of the budget and to strengthen the connection between universities, industry and society. HANN became one of the few networks of active ageing in Europe awarded with a 4-star score by the European Commission as a recognition of excellence in healthy ageing innovative projects.

Being trained as a scientist himself, he was surprised to find that medical students in their first year of medical education are hardly interested in care for elderly patients. “An ageing person is the most interesting person”, said Dr. Klasen, “because they often have several diseases at the same time and are therefore very interesting to study”. He argued that more emphasis should go to elderly care from the start of medical school and improving care for elderly should be encouraged. He further stated that specialized training in geriatric medicine is going well but exists only in a few universities, it should expand to all eight universities. “Moreover”, continued Dr. Klasen, “appropriate geriatric teaching should be embedded in medical education to improve the competencies of graduating physicians and to inspire medical students in creating innovative elderly care.”

Next to healthy ageing, we happen to share another interest: cooking. When I reached home later that evening, I sent him some of my favourite recipes from Ethiopia and my thoughts started wandering about our interview and the responsibilities he bears on his shoulder even at the age of 71. “Build on what you have”, he told me; I would start today. ■





## Meet Prof. Dr. Ferry Breedveld

*CEO of Araim pharmaceuticals (New York) and member of the supervisory board of Sanquin, two hospitals and Ipsse de Brugge foundation*

By Wendy Meester

**Mr Breedveld enters the room and his extravert personality is tangible. He immediately takes control of the conversation by asking me to tell him something about myself. I tell him that I am a master student Vitality and Ageing and that I would like to know his view on leadership and vitality.**

He tells me about his study period at the LUMC and how he started his career at this same hospital. He got the opportunity for a PhD position at the rheumatology department and later went to Harvard to strengthen his research skills. After returning, he became head of the rheumatology department and subsequently head of internal medicine. At the age of 56, he was asked to become chair of the board of directors of the LUMC. "It came as a surprise that they asked me but it was an exciting experience for 9 years." He had never foreseen an academic career, let alone a career as director of a hospital, but "sometimes you'll just have to see what life brings you." Unfortunately, he was forced to retire from this pleasant position at the age of 65, as this is the rule for LUMC employees. Mr Breedveld says that it felt weird to him to stop his activities so suddenly when reaching the retirement age, that was not something that suited him. He is a strong believer that people should stay active and engaged in society after retirement.

Mr Breedveld started to appreciate private life more and more after retirement. He can't imagine how he used to work 60 to 70 hours a week for decades "I don't know how I found the time to do that and combine it with my personal life."

*"People should stay active and engaged in society after retirement."*

He is, however, not pacing down. Before reaching the age of 65, he started doing all kinds of part-time jobs and commissions. He never had to apply for this. Actually, he never had to apply for any job in his career ever. His persona is well known in the work field and opportunities always came to him. At this moment, Mr Breedveld is CEO of a pharmaceutical company in New York, member of the supervisory board of two hospitals and Sanquin. These jobs require 10 to 12 meetings a year so they can be

combined easily. Apart from that, he is also organising several events like the Dutch rheumatology conference and the 2022 Leiden Capital of Science event. "I like to have 2 or 3 appointments a day, that brings balance to my life."

Mr Breedveld is a member of a gentlemen's association where he meets with other men of his age and older. There he noticed that some of the members over-estimate their communicative skills, which are a little slower and not as sharp as during their prime. He therefore thinks that older people could sometimes be more modest and introspective when applying their talents to society. "There is a moment in life when things must come to an end."

Mr Breedveld has extensive experience with leadership and I was very interested to hear his views on this. He always was the kind of person that ended up as the leader of a group, this came naturally to him. He mentions several factors to be of importance for good leadership: good communicative skills, making connections, having a vision and being fun. "It is important to be fun, people have to like you!". He always tried his best to help and support the people he led. There were no boundaries for him: "Proofreading something at midnight? No problem! Having meetings on Sunday mornings? No problem!".

Although there were also less positive experiences during his career and not everything went as he had hoped for, Mr Breedveld says that he did learn from those experiences and that this learning curve will continue for the rest of his life. ■



## Meet Ariane van Santen

By Isabelle Moens and Jeanita Berkhout

The enormous bookcase filled with famous and lesser-known literature cannot be ignored when entering the living room of Ariane van Santen (75). She is a language-lover and enjoys reading books, but in the end linguistics stole her heart more than literature. Thus, we were not surprised when she told us that she studied and later lectured on Dutch Linguistics at Leiden University.

Ariane was born and raised in The Hague together with her twin sister, who was her best friend since birth. After high school, Ariane moved to Leiden where she studied Dutch Language with the intention to proceed

*“It is so interesting how new words are formed in the Dutch language.*

*E.g. ‘Seniorenmoment(je)’  
(= senior moment) which refers to a moment in which your mind shortly goes blank. This word did not exist in the past!”*

with a master’s degree in literature. Quickly it became clear that linguistics suited her better, and she was selected to work as an assistant of the professor.

Immediately after graduation, a job was offered to her as a faculty member for education and research, after which she completed her PhD. Officially she worked as a professor at the faculty of Humanities for 40 years, but in reality she stopped teaching just last year: “This lecture really was the last one”. Not only did she teach young students linguistics, but she also prepared courses about linguistics for people aged 55+ at the HOVO (“Hoger Onderwijs Voor Ouderen”). In addition, she has written several educational books together with colleagues. In her personal life she loved spending her spare time with her husband whom she met at the faculty of Humanities, where he worked as a French linguistics professor. They could share their passion for their individual disciplines with each other.

Nowadays, she is active as a member of the owners association of her flat, as a member of the elderly board, and as a (grand)mother. Of course, she still reads a lot too. She is more frequently noticing that she becomes somewhat older: “I realize that I am not twenty anymore”, but this insight gives her new energy instead of holding her back. “I should do the things I want now because then I can enjoy them longer.” And this joy is something she wants to pass on to the students: “Study something you love and do not think about job opportunities. When you are passionate about your subject, you will become better at it, and you will find a job that you will enjoy the rest of your life!” ■



*Isabelle reads “Turks fruit” a book written by Jan Wolkers and published in 1969, while Ariane is up-to-date with the “Client E. Bussen” written by one of her favorite authors Jeroen Brouwers which is published in February 2020.*



## Communication in Science

Congratulations on completing your Master! We have very much enjoyed our classes together, and it is always great to watch students succeed. Our favourite workgroups throughout the year have to be the ones you all let your creative juices flow and really got to work with the material and were asking questions, discussing your work with each other, and working together to grasp concepts. We are very pleased to see you successfully complete your Master, and it has been a lot of fun working with you on different projects and watching you grow and settle into the writing process. We wish you all the best of luck in the future, and we hope you can take away some tools from our workgroups and use them in all and any of your future endeavours!

Warm regards,

**Inge 't Hart, Emma Galloway, Kiran Kirandeep Kaur, Patrick Kiely, Martijn Demollin**  
The CIS team



## Science and Career

Dear students/alumni,

I really loved working with you all. I met you several times during the year, during lectures, working groups and walk-in hours. I experienced that you were very creative in finding an internship that suits you. You organized internships abroad to Barcelona, Copenhagen, Nagasaki, Auckland. And internships in the Netherlands, at different departments at the LUMC and several organizations outside the LUMC. For example: the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, CEG, RIVM, CBG, Active Cues, Vilans, Leyden Academy, the municipality of Leiden, Basalt rehabilitation centre, and Saffier nursing home. I enjoyed your perseverance to find the right spot and research.

About 15 of you planned to start your internship mid-April. But then came Corona. Internships abroad were cancelled, as were the internships at nursing homes and municipalities. Interviews, focus groups and expert panels with older individuals or professionals were not possible anymore. Research questions and methods had to be adapted. Or new internships had to be explored.

Together with your supervisors you thought out creative solutions, interviews of older individuals and professionals by phone, interviews of interns instead of professionals, analysing existing focus groups. You also showed vitality by turning disappointments into choosing a new or additional internship. A top vital solution was the request to do an internship on the impact of the Corona virus on older individuals as well as an internship on analysing meeting notes of crisis teams in nursing homes. You adapted and renewed your internships very quickly. On 20 April, 24 students submitted their "corona-proof" internship plan and 22 were able to start immediately or soon after. Some of you combined the internship with work in a nursing home, which I find very impressive. Other students planned their internship to start in June or September. Hopefully these can start in a normal way at the host organization. I admired your vitality. To give your internship and research a turning point so that it could still take place online, from home with online supervision, or at a later time at the host organization. I was really impressed. Thank you for the inspiring time, I wish you all the best for the future!

**Carla Bakker**  
Course Coordinator Science and Career





# From worldwide internships to our desks at home in the Netherlands

## Department of Gerontology and Geriatrics, LUMC

By Isabelle Moens, Luuk van Gerven, Merel Vangeel and Suzanne Debeij

**This mixed-methods project studies the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the 6 domains of positive health in older individuals, at the Department of Gerontology and Geriatrics of the Leiden University Medical Centre (LUMC).**

We enjoyed our internship a lot, even though we did not know this would be our internship up until two months before its start. Initially, our internship plans were completely different, but they were all cancelled due to the restrictive measures concerning the COVID-19 virus. Since we all felt the impact of the coronavirus on our lives, and we had learned much about older individuals, we could imagine that it would have a huge impact on the older population as well. As different studies were already developed to study the effects of the coronavirus on older individuals in hospitals and nursing homes, our interest was drawn to community-dwelling older individuals.

Even though we were sad our previously planned internships were cancelled, we were so glad to be part of this research project! We have learned so much: we were included in the whole process of setting up a study, writing protocols, getting approval, making questionnaires and performing interviews. There might even be a follow-up study! All these experiences gave us profound insight in the field of research and armed us with a variety of skills that come with it. In conclusion, this internship provided us with the necessary knowledge and skills for future research and was therefore a great preparation for our future careers.



*Isabelle has always been interested in Japan; not only its culture and nature drew her attention but also their innovations in the field of healthy ageing. In April she would have travelled to Nagasaki to perform an internship about its local homecare.*



*Luuk planned to study the prevalence and incidence of dementia in Denmark at the university of Copenhagen in collaboration with Statistics Denmark. For now his plans abroad had to be put on hold, but his ambition remains unchanged.*



*Merel would be studying opposing behaviour towards sensors in older individuals at the Centre for Ethics and Health in The Hague. As the corona measures became an urgent study matter within the CEG this topic was put aside for now.*



*Suzanne wanted to carry out her internship in a geriatric rehabilitation centre in The Hague. Since all care centres closed during the corona crisis, she could not carry out the planned interviews and unfortunately therefore she had to cancel this internship.*





*Working from home gave me a lot of extra time, which I used to explore new hobbies. I bought my first real road bike and I have already spent many hours on the road.*



*The advantage of doing your internship from home: you can work anywhere!*



*My work-from-home set-up.*



*I am lucky to live in The Hague so that I could meet up with colleagues for a coffee break or a drink on Friday afternoon. And at least I got to see the two towers of the Ministry of Health from my bedroom window.*

## *Working at “The Resident” from my own home* *Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports in The Hague*

By Charlotte Albers

**Doing an internship in Corona-times turns out to be one of the weirdest things I have ever done during my whole student career. Although I was lucky to be able to even start the internship, it was both shortened and delayed due to the strict measures. Luckily, after one month of literature research at home, I was still able to start my internship at the department of long-term care at the Ministry of Health in The Hague. Because I really enjoyed the course “Organization of the Ageing Society”, I was looking forward to doing this internship and to find out whether I would like to work in policymaking in the future!**

As I am living in The Hague, I was very lucky to be able to do an internship in my city. Although I could not really profit from that now, I am still happy to see the two towers of the Ministry of Health from my bedroom window. Also, many colleagues live in The Hague, which makes it possible to meet up with them for a coffee break or a drink on Friday afternoon.

During my internship, I was performing tasks for the department and doing my own research for my thesis. The research for my thesis was mainly about the position of the elderly care physician in the primary care setting. As the demand for care for the elderly is changing, it is the question of whether we should also change our medical care for the elderly. I was searching for best practice examples in both the national and international literature

and interviewed several elderly care physicians (“specialist ouderengeneeskunde”) and general practitioners to find out what their view was on implementing these examples. During the internship, I learned many new (social) skills which will definitely be helpful in my future career. Especially, because I am an expert in online coffee meetings and interviews now. I also learned how to be creative with books to set up a comfortable working place, a very helpful skill in the new “working from home” era.

*“Asking a lecturer for an internship was the best thing I did this study year!”*

Doing an internship from home also gave me a lot of extra time, which I used to explore new hobbies. I bought my first real road bike and already spent many hours on the road; really enjoying the beautiful surroundings.

Although the internship did not start as planned and wasn’t as you would imagine an internship at the ministry would be like, I really enjoyed my time there and definitely learned some important new skills! If I could give one tip: just ask a lecturer whether they might have an internship for you because it could give you exactly the internship that you want!



## Exploring isolation-based measures in nursing homes during the COVID-19 pandemic

### Public Health and Primary Care (PHEG) at the LUMC

By Marlinde van Dijk

The COVID-19 pandemic has unmistakably shaken things up, the lives of students all over the world included. For me, my original internship at the RIVM was put on hold as they (unsurprisingly) had different matters to attend to. Due to these unexpected circumstances, I decided to start my search for a new internship. With the help of internship coordinator Carla Bakker, this was completed very fast, and within 2 weeks I was able to write a new internship proposal.

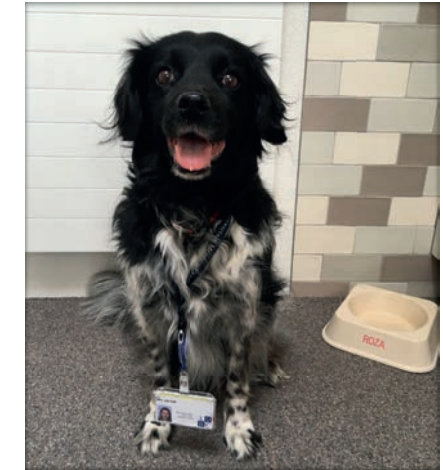
At the department of Public Health and Primary Care (PHEG) at the LUMC, they had just started a new project to monitor the Corona crisis in nursing homes all over the country. Documents, notes and spreadsheets from outbreak management teams of nursing homes were collected, and with a team of 17 researchers, we analysed these data. The aim was, besides doing scientific research, to create a weekly report to inform participating nursing homes and stakeholders such as the ministry of public health (VWS) and professional association V&VN ("Verpleegkundigen & Verzorgenden Nederland"), about the current state of affairs and what had been happening behind closed doors. Being part of this project has been very inspiring and fun, and on top of this, it was a good deal: more eyes and hands to help with the data analysis for the weekly report, and a large amount of interesting and useful data for my thesis.

My thesis focused on the organization of isolation-based measures in nursing homes in the Netherlands, and how this affects the daily life of their residents. Nursing homes have been dealing with isolation and seclusion many times before, during outbreaks of Noro-virus or Rota-virus for example.

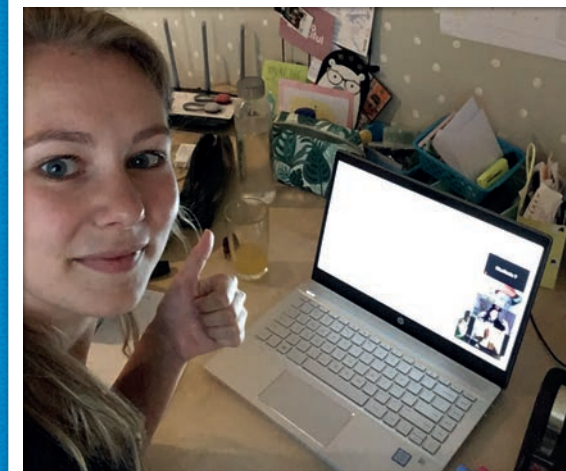
*"I think it is very important to continue research in times of crisis, as decisions are being made fast and consequences will surface much later."*

Doing an online internship has been challenging. For me, doing research includes being able to brainstorm, encounters with people who may have surprising ideas, and other things that help you think a little more outside the box. Adapting to a different environment, online meetings and a home office was something that I really had to get used to. But there are benefits of course: I get to pick my own coffee brand and there are many cuddle breaks with the pets!

*"I am very thankful that I had this opportunity. Not only was I able to still write my thesis, but I also was in a position to contribute to the COVID-19 crisis in a productive and fruitful way."*



*Meet my colleague, with LUMC badge and all!*



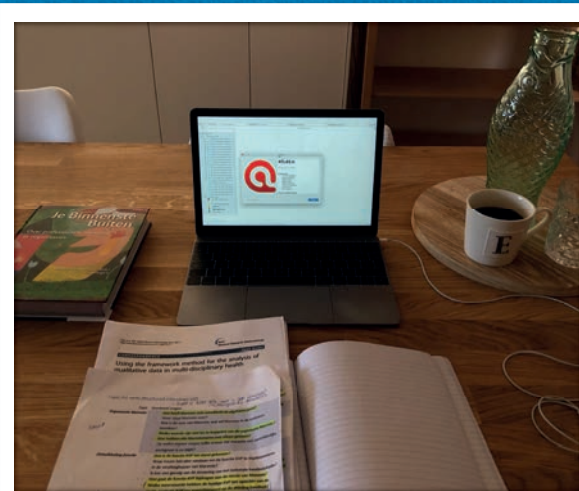
*Working from home with online meetings is going well.*



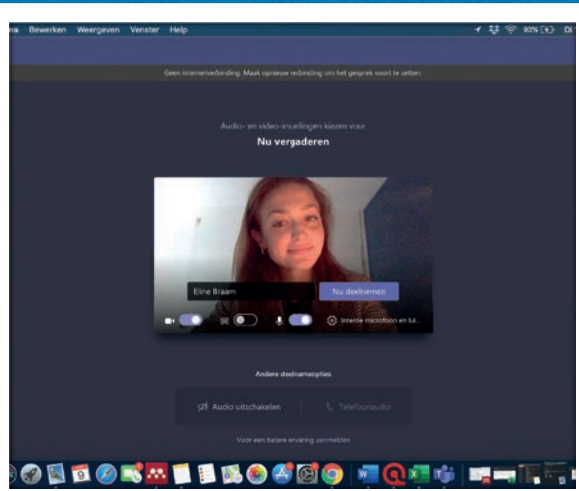
*Advantage of working from home is being able to work outside when the weather is nice.*



*“The elderly care is still not a sexy sector nowadays. This is also noticeable at Marente and might influence the quality of care for the elderly negatively. I hope that in the near future more people will be interested in the elderly care sector.”*



*My view while working from home.*



*Waiting for my interviewee to arrive at our online meeting.*

# *Shaping the professional identity of the Quality of Care Nurse*

## *Elderly care organization Marente*

By Eline Braam

Due to the reforms in the Dutch healthcare system, only older individuals with the most complex care needs are eligible for admission into nursing homes. This means that for the healthcare professionals working in the nursing homes the complexity of their tasks has increased as well. To manage the more complex care and enhance the quality of care for the older individuals in the nursing homes, a new role has been introduced: the Quality of Care Nurse (QoCN), which should serve as a role model and coach for the team and should help with coordinating the care. Considering the fact that the role of QoCN is relatively new, the elderly care organization Marente wants to gain a deeper understanding of this function.

Marente is an elderly care organization which offers home care, nursing home care, support for dementia and rehabilitation care in Leiden and its surroundings. The institution has 10 different nursing homes throughout the province South-Holland.

With my internship I studied the organization’s perspective on the role and identity of the Quality of Care Nurse at Marente in order to shape the so called institutional frame, which is part of the professional identity frame.

Having a clear image of your professional identity has several advantages which could ultimately result in a higher quality of care for the older individuals in the nursing homes. To shape this institutional frame, I conducted a qualitative study consisting of desk research and semi-structured interviews.

For me this was the first time conducting qualitative research, which I really had to get used to in the beginning. Luckily I received a lot of guidance and supervision from the research group “Verpleegkundige Intramurale Ouderenzorg” (VIO), which is connected to Marente. Due to COVID-19, I was not able to visit the nursing homes themselves and my whole internship was conducted online; the interviews, the supervision, etc., which was strange at first but worked efficiently after all.

With my research, I gave insights in the organisation’s perspective on the identity and role of the Quality of Care Nurse. The research group VIO will dive deeper into this subject and will contribute by shaping the professional identity.



## *A qualitative study investigating facilitators and barriers for successful implementation of patient reported outcome measures in the elderly care chain*

*Vilans, Utrecht*

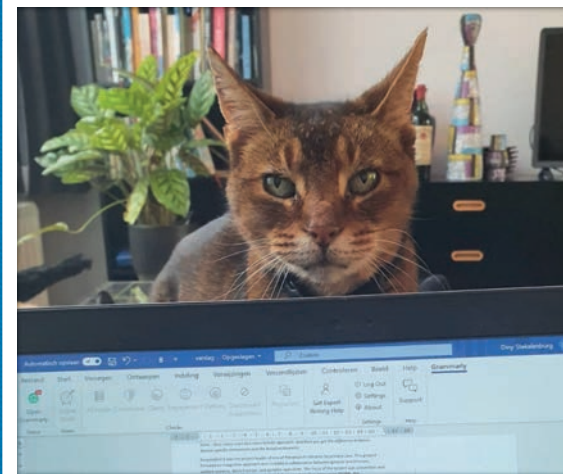
By Diny Stekelenburg

The provision of health care for older adults needs to change. Instead of the fragmented system that we have now, the ageing patient requires a more coordinated and integrated system of care. Furthermore, research shows that older individuals' expectations and goals of care are different from those of younger adults. To make matters worse, physicians are often unaware of these differences and how their older patients prioritize their treatment and health outcomes. A tool to tackle these issues that has been gaining attention is the "Patient Reported Outcome Measure" (PROM). PROMs are tools that provide us with information on how patients evaluate their health. These outcomes can help stimulate a discourse (or shared decision making) between patients and health professionals that focuses on personal health goals first, before considering potential treatment options. In order to help improve elderly care, I was commissioned by Vilans to explore PROMs in further detail.

A PROM that is gaining ground in elderly care is the TOPICS-SF. Currently, the use of this tool to support shared decision making in geriatric care is being evaluated in several hospitals in the Netherlands. One can imagine that the use of the TOPICS-SF is most beneficial if all professionals

involved in the care chain would use this tool. An older adult could be followed over time, making it easier to detect changes in his or her health. Furthermore, sharing the PROM-results amongst health professionals could improve coordination and could reduce the pressure on older patients, because answering the same questions from different health professionals will no longer be necessary. To provide recommendations on how to implement a PROM in the whole elderly care chain, I was commissioned by Vilans to investigate initiatives that use PROMs across the care chain. My goal was to find out what factors can hamper and facilitate a successful implementation of the TOPICS-SF for shared decision making that is used across the whole elderly care chain.

I spent several months interviewing stakeholders, such as physicians, researchers, and project managers. Because of COVID-19, I conducted these interviews through video calling. Although conducting interviews via the computer was a new experience, the project was very insightful. The great variety of expertise of respondents gave rise to an exciting and unique view on the factors that are crucial for a successful implementation, and also factors that harm the use of PROMs across the elderly care chain.



*My furry colleague was always "happy" to work together.*

*"Treatment priorities of older adults often differ from those reported by their own physicians. Therefore, shared decision making in elderly care is vital."*



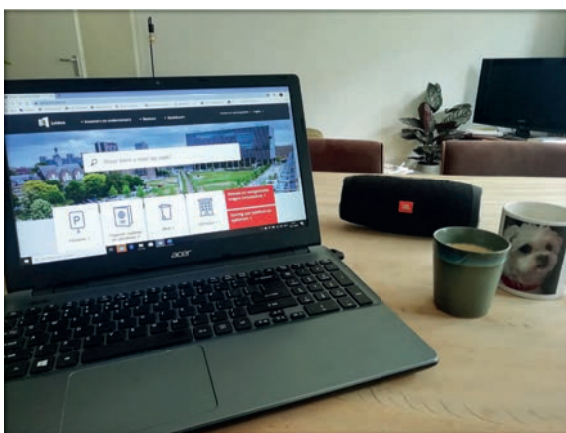
*Luckily, I had a nice workspace at home.*





*A change of scenery during the day helps to remain focused, especially if the view is this nice!*

***“The fact that my internship results will contribute to new policy, which will be brought into practice soon, is very motivating.”***



*Luckily the municipality of Leiden is up to date and everything is easily accessible from home.*



*Unfortunately, we all had to work from home due to COVID-19. Good music, good coffee and some fresh air during lunch kept me motivated!*

## ***How to reach elderly in need of psychosocial support: a qualitative study in Leiden Municipality of Leiden***

By Yvonne Timmermans

During the master V&A, the opportunity was offered to do an internship at the Municipality of Leiden. Since I wanted to broaden my horizon and experience what it is like to be part of a team in an organisation, I was immediately enthusiastic! Since the beginning of April, I have been part of team “Welzijn” of the Municipality of Leiden. Unfortunately, at the moment I’m writing this story, I only saw my colleagues via video call due to COVID-19. My supervisor and other colleagues really try to involve me as much as possible!

Let me tell you something about the topic of my internship: The municipality of Leiden aimed to design an action plan (Leiden op Leeftijd) to improve the quality of life of their elderly. As we all know, elderly live independently longer. Unfortunately, also psychosocial frail elderly in need of social support are forced to live at home longer. The municipality of Leiden asked me to investigate how to improve the process of reaching those elderly. What is the strategy used today? What could be improved? What is the role of the municipality and of other stakeholders? To answer these questions, I interviewed several stakeholders that are part of the environment of independent living elderly. You can think of general practitioners, district nurses, employees of housing corporations and directors of welfare organisations in

Leiden. What is needed according to them? The results led to an advice for the Municipality of Leiden.

Every step of doing qualitative research was new to me. The first weeks were filled with reading literature, contacting stakeholders and thinking of the right interview questions. The next weeks were filled with a lot of interviews. It was interesting to speak to different professionals. I was nervous in the beginning, but most of the stakeholders were very willing to help me and I felt more confident after a few interviews. The transcribing part took a long time, and wasn’t always fun. But I survived!

It was really cool to be part of team “Welzijn”. Twice a week, I participated in online meetings. I gained insight in several problems the Municipality have to deal with. Due to the Corona-crisis, they had to come up with solutions in a short amount of time. It was interesting to see, hear and read about the activities of colleagues.

Although I had to work from home, I am happy I got the chance to do this internship. The fact that my results contribute to new policy, which will be brought into practice soon, constantly motivated me. It wasn’t always easy, but enough coffee, music and fresh air during lunch helped me through!



# *Predictors of anticipatory grief in family caregivers of dementia patients who live in nursing homes*

*Department of Public Health and Primary Care, LUMC*

By Anneloes Plomp

My grandparents have shown me the importance of informal caregiving. My grandfather has been handicapped for ten years as a consequence of multiple strokes, and my grandmother is helping him a lot. Since three years, he cannot live at home anymore and he was admitted to a long-term care facility. My grandmother is left alone at home and she often feels lonely and worries about my grandfather sometimes. I feel that informal caregivers are supported quite well in the Netherlands by family members, the municipality and other parts of the community. However, when their care recipient moves out of the home, we tend to forget about them even though they still struggle with the disease of their loved one and the fact that they are now separated.

In my thesis, I looked into so-called pre-death or anticipatory grief that family caregivers of dementia patients experience. Because next to the fact that dementia is a terminal disease, family caregivers have to deal with ambiguous loss: the gradual cognitive and functional decline of their loved one while they remain physically present. We think that anticipatory grief is more prevalent in family caregivers whose care recipient with dementia lives in a nursing home, but strangely most research about this topic is done in family caregivers of community-dwelling dementia patients. I think we should put more

effort in supporting family caregivers who are left at home, especially when it comes to anticipatory grief because it has negative consequences for their mental and physical health. I looked into factors that we could potentially use as predictors of anticipatory grief in the family caregivers. So far, I have found that a spousal relationship between the dementia patient and the family caregiver, caregiver burden, conflicts with staff members of the nursing home and feelings of guilt in the family caregiver show strong associations with anticipatory grief. If staff members of the nursing home and social support systems know what indicates when someone is experiencing a high degree of anticipatory grief, we can provide better support and improve the quality of life of the family caregivers.

*“My grandparents have shown me the importance of informal caregiving.”*

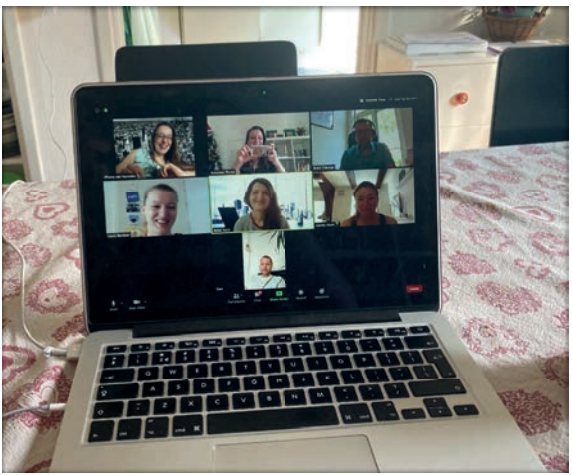
*“We think that anticipatory grief is more prevalent in family caregivers whose care recipient with dementia lives in a nursing home, but strangely most research about this topic is done in family caregivers of community-dwelling dementia patients.”*



*... until the libraries opened up again in June, which allowed for a change in scenery every once in a while.*



*Me, working from home...*



*Online meetings to keep in contact with my colleagues from the PHEG department.*



*“The Netherlands is considered to be one of the most innovative countries in Europe and I wanted to take this opportunity to live an international experience.”*



*Working from home on my internship about secondary cardiovascular disease prevention.*

## ***Secondary cardiovascular disease: a quantitative study***

*Department of Gerontology and Geriatrics, LUMC*

**By Thomas Bronchard**

Hi guys,

I'm Thomas and I'm doing my internship at the Leiden University Medical Centre. I've come from France to learn more about elderly care and the aspects around it. The Netherlands is considered to be one of the most innovative countries in Europe and I wanted to take this opportunity to live an international experience.

My work focuses mostly on statistics related to cardiovascular diseases. Today, practitioners cannot 100% prevent cardiovascular diseases, therefore they aim at maximizing prevention. For that, they use statins, which are cholesterol-lowering drugs. So my job during those few months is to determine if statins should be used for older people who already had a cardiovascular event in their life. In order to do that, I will statistically determine if statins are actually useful in elderly people for secondary prevention or not, thanks to previous studies for the data collection. All in all, if statins are useful, this will confirm the current guidelines for the treatment of older people. If they are not, then my work will show that a change in the guidelines is needed. My go-to: better safe than sorry.

My internship is only 10 weeks but there is still a lot to do. The first 2 weeks were about writing the introduction of my thesis and reading articles related to my topic. This week, I'm currently doing a statistic method, called "linear regression" to validate my protocol. My usual day is like this: I wake up around 3:30 during the night to go to my job. I come back around 6:30 AM and I am ready to work on my stats around 8 AM. I spend most of my days on my statistical software (R). I have 2 breaks during my day (one in the morning, one in the afternoon). I tend to finish my day early (like 4 PM) because I don't have an evening. I have to be in bed around 8 PM. On top of that, I have a meeting with my supervisor Dr. Noordam every Wednesday to check my results.

In the end, I hope to get some skills in statistics. It is not my preferred field of work (numbers and more numbers every day) but it is a good skill to present on my CV and many laboratories are interested in people who have some expertise in this area. Not many people claim they know what cox-proportional hazard models are, right?



## Meet Ronald Huiskens

By Isabelle Moens

**The moment it became apparent that a real-life interview was not appropriate anymore due to the coronavirus, Ronald Huiskens (69) immediately proposed to have an online interview session. He is the newest member of the V&A Elderly board and the combination of his enthusiasm, broad interests and curiosity have already made him a valuable member.**

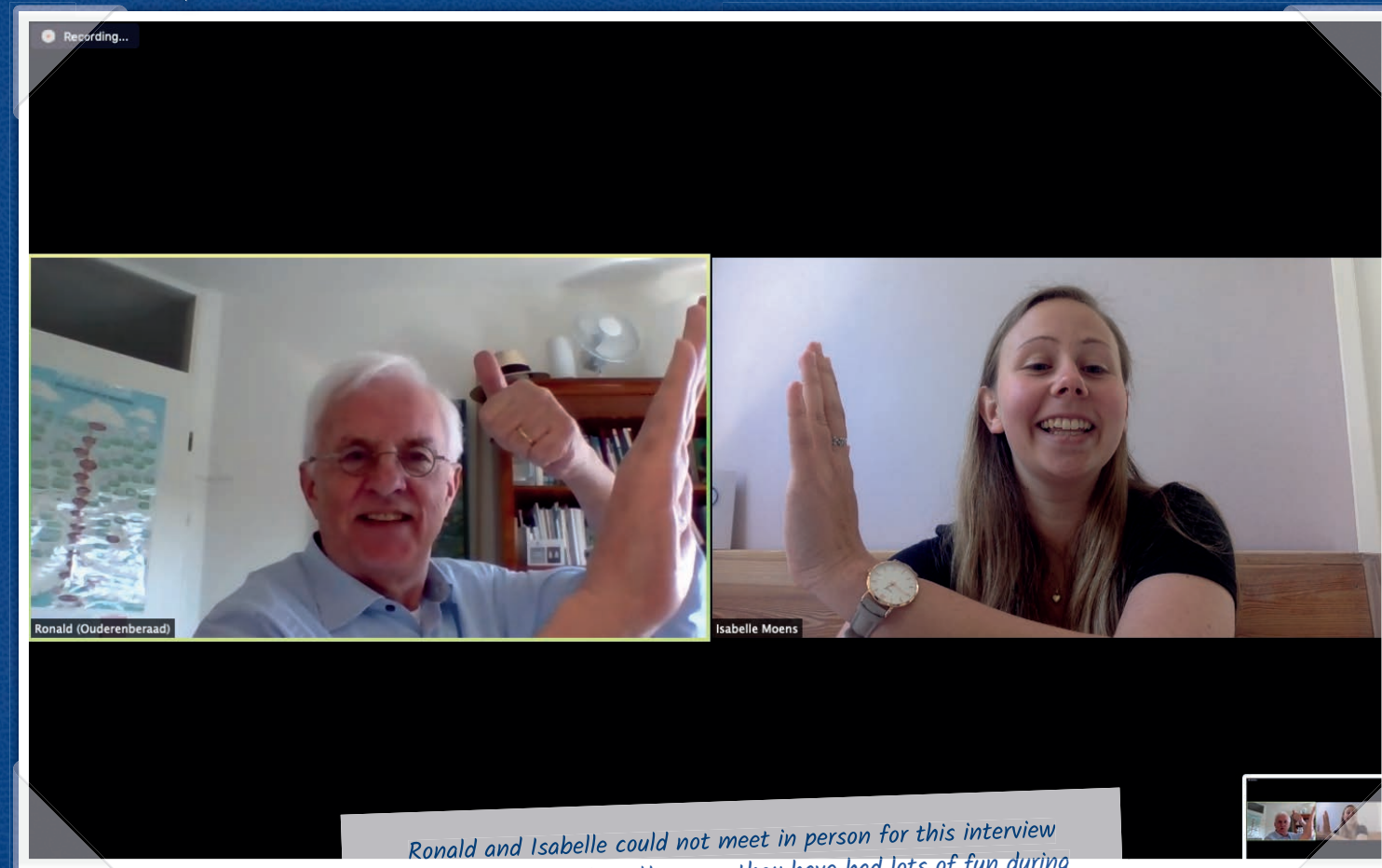
The Netherlands was far from being rebuilt after World War II, when Ronald was born into a loving Roman Catholic family in Voorburg in 1950. Only a few years later, he rode on the front of his sister's step scooter to their school in The Hague. However, the family did not stay in Voorburg for long. During his childhood, Ronald moved a couple of times because of his father's work. The final move was to Rotterdam, where Ronald proudly finished the HTS (Higher Technical School) through hard work and determination. Besides his school work, Ronald also followed ballroom dancing lessons from the age of 14 until he was 16. These lessons did not only teach ballroom dancing steps and choreography, but also paid attention to communication between boys and girls. This gave him the confidence to ask a beautiful lady to dance when he was 20 years old. This first dance, to a song by Creedence Clearwater Revival, would not be the last as Ronald married her six years later.

In the years after graduation and the wedding, Ronald worked for multiple companies. His career started off with

very technical work, e.g. at Blueband and Shell, and it was while working there that he discovered his interest in the commercial aspects of these jobs. Therefore, he started a job at Fokker Aircraft where he worked as product support manager. He coordinated actions which are required to keep the delivered aircraft reliable in its operation and the operators satisfied. When the organization, unfortunately, went bankrupt in 1996, Ronald could find part-time work and also started doing voluntary work for Mercy Ships, sea hospital ships sailing to Africa. This is where he rediscovered his faith in Christ and discovered his coaching possibilities. After 2 years, he found a job at KLM, where he started as project manager aircraft maintenance and later ended up, after a 4 year study, in the Human Resource Management. He worked there until his retirement, and he enjoyed supporting people as advisor in their career so much that he wanted to continue this work. Therefore, he decided to start a subsequent study, and became a POH GGZ (= Assistant of a General Practitioner, focussed on mental healthcare). Currently, he is still doing this job. He explained that his career path, which started very technical and has now become human-orientated and medical, is exactly a combination of his parents' careers, and he is proud to follow in their footsteps.

He wants to thank all the V&A students for choosing this Master and investing time in improving the quality of life of older persons. He is very proud of the students and wishes us the best of luck for our own careers and life paths. ■

*"Even though I am ageing,  
I keep looking ahead,  
discovering how I can continue  
to contribute to society and  
remain useful."*



*Ronald and Isabelle could not meet in person for this interview due to the coronavirus. However, they have had lots of fun during the online interview and decided that a virtual high-five suited the circumstances of the interview well!*



# Junior Lecturers and Student Mentors

Our journey together is almost over, but yours is just about to start! During the past year we got to know all of you both in- and outside of the working groups. Although the trips to Brussels and Cologne were obviously a lot of fun, we mostly enjoyed your eagerness towards helping the older population throughout the year.

Aside from us guiding you through all those difficult topics of Vitality and Ageing, we also learned a thing or two from you guys during our many interesting discussions. However, this was not always content related... Some noteworthy examples are: your Lego building techniques in Cologne, amazing dance moves with Lea at the iZi-housing and of course your ever-improving social skills during all the social events.

Thank you all for a fun year. We had a blast, hopefully you did too!

Leon, Winnie & Mareline



# Year Representatives

This year the honour of representing the master students 2019-2020 was up to us, 5 women. No surprise here since the cohort consists of 36 students of which only 7 are males, but a few challenge nonetheless. Five women having an opinion that have to represent another 34 women and some men... You would think this would easily become one big drama, but this couldn't be further from the truth! It is true, the meetings were sometimes heated, there were difficult panel discussions and hundreds of pages of feedback from the GOES-questionnaire to go through, but above all we accomplished quite a lot together. We organized a cosy evening drink with games and an interesting workshop about dancing therapy for the elderly that was very well received amongst the participants. Another thing we did was creating the very first official V&A year sweater!

My task as secretary is now completed, and I enjoyed reading and forwarding the hundreds of emails, taking minutes at all 27 meetings, staying in touch with the master-staff and all you guys and every other task that is part of being the secretary of the year representatives. Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts, for your enthusiasm, feedback and endless complaints. Thanks to you, the five of us were able to advise the coordinators and to help the coming generations of V&A students a little!

For now: lots of luck in your new master, with doing your internships, with taking a gap year, with your new jobs or with absolutely nothing for a while!

- Anneloes Plomp** Chair + member SAC
- Irene Dijksterhuis** Secretary
- Suzanne Debeij** PR + member OLC
- Nicky Smits** Member OLC
- Isabel Duijvekam** Member GOES + member OLC







*Top row:  
Ephrem Tesfay, Anneke Julien, Mian de Ronde,  
Irie Timmer, Eline Braam, Celine Peterzen,  
Yvonne Timmermans, Abe den Ouden,  
Suzanne Debeij, Isabelle Moens,  
Mara Jongeneelen, Irene Dijksterhuis.*

*Bottom row:  
Merel Vangeel, Jeanita Berkhout,  
Lenka Besseling, Diny Stekelenburg,  
Isabel Duijvekam, Anneloes Plomp,  
Cornelia Wieringa, Thomas Brochard.*

*Not pictured:  
Feline de la Court, Marlinde van Dijk,  
Luuk van Gerven, Michael Kappe, Wendy Meester,  
Åsa Mennema, Jasper Pieper, Diana Roeplal,  
Hella Schaevers, Aranka Schouten, Nicky Smits,  
Petra van de Velde, Yasmin Vente.*



## Charlotte Albers (24)

### Why did you choose the master V&A?

Last year I finished a master in health economics, policy and law and as this was such a broad master I was looking for a little bit more deepening. I also really think that there is a lot to improve in the care for the elderly and therefore I would like to combine the knowledge that I gained in the two masters to improve the elderly care.

### What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

I really liked the lectures and working groups of Fieke Harinck, because I enjoyed learning more about these skills and it's not part of most other masters. Especially the negotiation workgroup was a lot of fun!

### How do you see your future after V&A?

I would like to improve the organization of (elderly) care and I really enjoy thinking about the financial aspects of healthcare. Therefore, I am very interested in working for the Dutch Healthcare Authority (NZa) or Ministry of Health.

### What advice would you like to give to future V&A students?

Although it seems like a very busy year (and it is) it is also a lot of fun to spend a lot of time with your fellow students. So plan some activities with your working group, have lunch together and have some drinks together at the end of every course!



## Eline Braam (22)

### What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

Writing the innovation paper is what I liked the most, although it was the hardest assignment as well. You had to come up with your own innovation and set up a whole plan around it.

### What is your favourite V&A memory?

My favourite memories are the trips to Germany and Belgium! Especially the karaoke bar ;)

### How do you see your future after V&A?

Oh this is a hard question. I hope to be involved in a healthcare organization somehow, focussing on prevention.

### What advice would you like to give to future V&A students?

Go for it and try to network as much as possible!

## Jeanita Berkhout (25)

### Why did you choose the master V&A?

I love older adults and I think the topic of ageing is very relevant at the moment because of the current ageing population. I chose V&A as my second master, after Biomedical Sciences, to get more in touch with people/ older adults, to learn about the medicine part (OI), management and organisation of the ageing society (OAS) and about career perspectives.

### Which course did you like best?

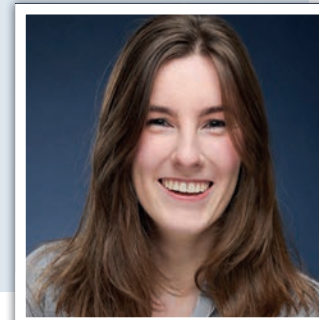
The second part of "The Older Individual", the innovation part, because it was open for your own creativity and with plenty of opportunities to discuss with older adults and others. Furthermore, the whole design thinking theory was new to me, so I learned a lot.

### What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

There's not one particular lecture or assignment that I liked best: it is the variety of it!

### What advice would you like to give to future V&A students?

Keep your eyes open for internship possibilities and career possibilities for after graduation!



## Lenka Besseling (22)

### Which course did you like best?

I really liked the biology course, as it was so completely different from what I was used to in my bachelor. It was challenging because of that, but the support from the master was amazing. And it was fascinating to learn about the biological processes that occur during the ageing process.

### What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

I really liked writing the glossy. It was so interesting to first chat with an expert in the field of (elderly) care and learn everything he did and achieved during his career. After that you got to get creative and write an interesting piece of text.

### What is your favourite V&A memory?

My working group is really the best thing about this master. It was a fantastic group of people, with whom I also did many fun activities outside of the study. This was really something that made the master so much fun.

### How do you see your future after V&A?

My ultimate dream is to start my own "zorgboerderij" for elderly people with dementia. Here, tailor-made care is provided and the elderly will be able to live their lives in the best possible way.



## MEET THE V&A STUDENTS

### Thomas Brochard (23)

#### Which course did you like best?

The whole BVA course because I love biology, and the alternative payments week during OAS.

#### What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

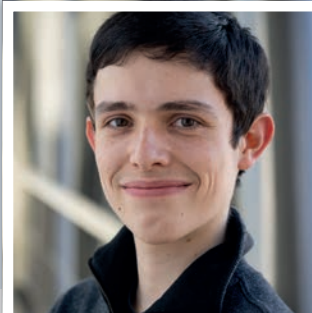
The management game during the OAS course, because it did not feel like an assignment but more like a challenge.

#### What is your favourite V&A memory?

The Bingo Game organized by the Year Representatives: we had a lot of fun with the game and during our discussions. Moreover, there were many snacks (yes, I really like snacks, too much maybe). And we had free drinks. Also, I discovered some Dutch board games (I played the one with the four places for like 30 minutes).

#### How do you see your future after V&A?

I would love to be a researcher in a lab.



### Suzanne Debeij (23)

#### Why did you choose the master V&A?

I worked with older individuals at a part-time job and I thought it was an interesting target group. I was curious about the way their care is arranged in the Netherlands and what I could do to improve it. Furthermore, I thought it was really nice that older individuals are a part of the master.

#### What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

The assignments I liked best were the orientation visits in general, but especially the orientation visit to a geriatric hospital and the visit to the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

#### What is your favourite V&A memory?

My favourite V&A memory is the study trip to Brussels including the conversations during the train journey, the beers in the evening and of course the trip to the European Parliament.

#### How do you see your future after V&A?

I would like to work as a junior researcher, advisor or policy maker. I would love to see what is happening at a location and to bring my knowledge into practice to improve the vulnerabilities.

## MEET THE V&A STUDENTS

### Marlinde van Dijk (25)

#### Why did you choose the master V&A?

I wanted to do something new, that would actually broaden my knowledge and contribute to my future career both practically and theoretically.

#### What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

I really liked the essay exam at the end of OAS, in which we had to design our own healthcare system.

#### How do you see your future after V&A?

I really hope to get a job in the health sciences in which I am able to interact with seniors and/or contribute to their health and (care) needs.

#### What advice would you like to give to future V&A students?

Make the most of it! There are a lot of chances to “design” this master in such a way that it caters to your interests and needs. Use them!



### Irene Dijksterhuis (24)

#### Which course did you like best?

I learned most during the first course, because it was very biomedical and focused on molecular pathways, ageing diseases, and senescence cells. Though I liked the second course more. OI was super diverse, which made it easy to stay focused. Also, I liked putting my knowledge into practice during the second part of this course.

#### What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

There were lots of interesting lectures, but the ones that I remember best are the lecture by Patrick Rensen about Brown Adipose Tissue (BAT) and the lecture by Huub Savelkoul about nutritional interventions and the immune system.

#### What is your favourite V&A memory?

The most memorable moments were definitely in Cologne, drinking beers instead of doing a city tour, having dinner with the best working group (3) and dancing through the night. Also, being part of the year representatives, because we were able to make suggestions for next year and we learned a lot, for example about working with the staff members.



## Isabel Duijvekam (22)

### Why did you choose the master V&A?

I did the bachelor Medicine, and before starting the medical internships, I wanted to learn something different and expand my knowledge of the healthcare sector.

### Which course did you like best?

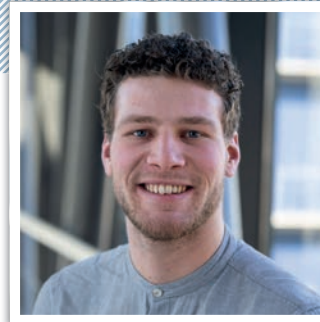
Organisation of the Ageing Society. It was new and very interesting!

### What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

I liked the debating classes and writing the policy brief the best. Both assignments challenged me to step out of my comfort zone, which I liked.

### How do you see your future after V&A?

I'll start next year with the medical internships, and then I hope to become a good doctor!



## Luuk van Gerven (26)

### Why did you choose the master V&A?

I appreciate life and all its aspects too much just to accept that people's place in society seems to diminish when reaching a respectable age. I am passionate about being able to contribute in an enthusiastic, collaborating, and a combative way to strive for increased vitality and joyful ageing of my fellow human.

### What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

Definitely the innovation paper. During this assignment we received extensive freedom to be creative. This really made you dive into it and look at the challenges currently faced by older individuals. It resulted in some beautiful projects and some of these projects are already implemented when you're reading this.

### How do you see your future after V&A?

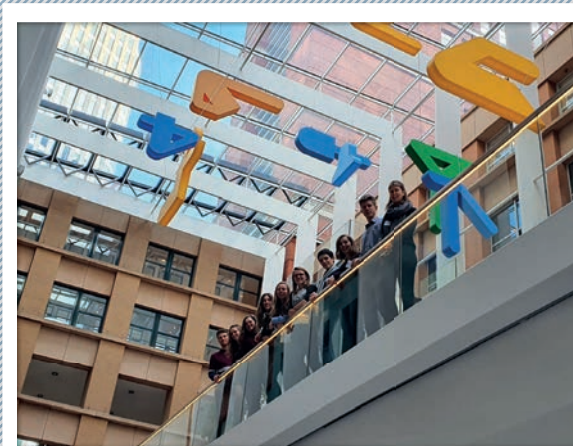
When I look forward, I prefer a career in which I contribute to the ageing society through different dimensions. This could be in the field of research, health care provision, health care organization, or policymaking. Throughout the year, I became enthusiastic and motivated to work at the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports in my career at some point. Eventually, I want to have contributed to generating an environment in which being old is as beautiful as growing old.



*During our visit to the Municipality of Leiden we used our collective knowledge to brainstorm on relevant issues that the municipality faces now and in the (near) future.*



*In the beginning of the year during Future Perspectives, we played a serious game which included working out who we were, so teamwork was the way forward.*



*Snapping a quick picture in the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, as you do!*



*Having fun in Brussels in our super comfy V&A sweaters!*



## MEET THE V&A STUDENTS

### Mara Jongeneelen (22)

**What was your favourite lecture/assignment?**

I liked making the innovation video, because I love to come up with new ideas and solutions for problems, and I was able to put my creativity into it.

**What is your favourite V&A memory?**

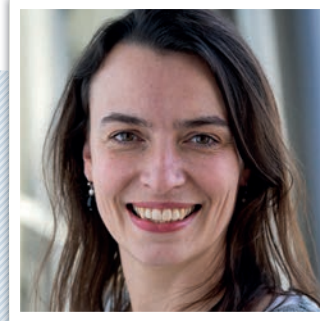
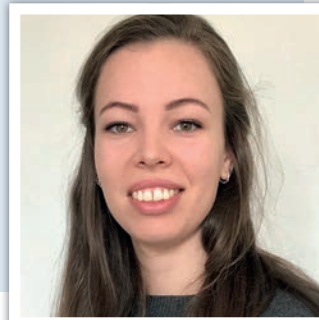
I really enjoyed the walks during the lecture breaks with people to get a cup of coffee.

**How do you see your future after V&A?**

I want to become a policymaker that helps in the transition to make our healthcare system more sustainable and available to everyone.

**What advice would you like to give to future V&A students?**

Don't be afraid to ask for help from one of the teachers. They want to help you and look for a solution that fits your situation best.



### Anneke Julien (35)

**Why did you choose the master V&A?**

My main motivation to choose the master V&A is the novel way used to approach ageing from a multidisciplinary perspective and the focus on vitality within ageing. This matched my interest in dementia well. I was also drawn by the informal and personal atmosphere, and the chance to gain academic skills.

**Which course did you like best?**

I can't choose to be honest... Biology of Vitality & Ageing was the most exciting subject, because all information was new to me. But then again, the Older Individual and Organisation of the Ageing Society were equally interesting and provided many new insights.

**What was your favourite lecture/assignment?**

My all-time favourite lectures: Cultural Narratives by Hanne Laceulle and Inflammaging, Ageing, Gender by Claudio Franceschi. I also really liked Jan Hoeijmakers' lecture on DNA damage and the lectures on street-level bureaucracy and change management.

**What is your favourite V&A memory?**

My favourite memory of the past year was my interview with Joris Slaets; we had such a great talk. And of course I really enjoyed all the closing drinks after finishing courses and the study trips to Cologne and Brussels.

## MEET THE V&A STUDENTS

### Wendy Meester (24)

**Which course did you like best?**

The Older Individual course. It helped me to empathize with older adults. I learned plenty of new perspectives and my previous views on vitality and ageing were challenged repeatedly.

**What was your favourite lecture/assignment?**

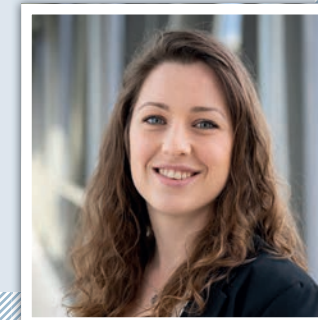
The interview with the older adult was a good experience. We had an interesting conversation about a broad range of topics concerning vitality and ageing and this helped me to empathize with older adults.

**What is your favourite V&A memory?**

The trip to Max Planck Institute, it was an amazing experience with the whole group.

**How do you see your future after V&A?**

I would like to advise people who write healthcare policies regarding older adults and ageing.



### Åsa Mennema (27)

**Which course did you like best?**

Organisation of the Ageing Society, because I never had lectures about these subjects. I always tried to avoid the finance part, but after this course I changed my mind.

**What was your favourite lecture/assignment?**

I liked making the video for OI. I never expected a good result and it was fun to film with my family.

**How do you see your future after V&A?**

I just want to start working. One thing I learned this year, is that I have to think step by step. I am open for anything jobwise, so I will see what the future brings me.

**What advice would you like to give to future V&A students?**

That they really have to enjoy their summer vacation. Time flies in your master year, because in this short period you have enough to do.



MEET THE V&A STUDENTS

Isabelle Moens (23)

**Why did you choose the master V&A?**

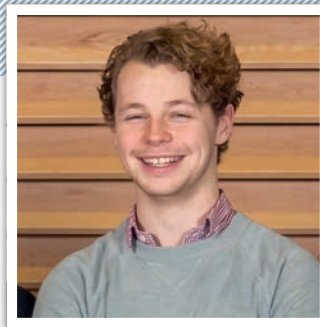
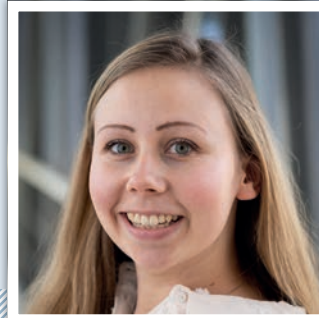
In my third year of my Medicine Bachelor my interest in the older population grew because of a course about this population. However, I missed the social and organizational aspect which is just as important in my opinion. This master did include those aspects, and gave me the opportunity to improve my (scientific) writing and debating skills as well. So the choice to sign up for this master before doing my medical internships was made easily!

**Which course did you like best?**

This is a hard one to answer, because every course and line broadened my knowledge and provided me with important skills for my future career and life. However, I enjoyed the academic development line the most as it consisted of discussing ethical themes and debating. Which are two things I really enjoy doing.

**What is your favourite V&A memory?**

I really enjoyed the drinks after the exams, especially the one after the OI video presentations. Because the students, the staff, and the older individuals that participated in the programme were present which gave a great dynamic! But of course the study trips to Brussel and Cologne are worth mentioning, because on those trips some of my fellow students really became good friends of mine.



Abe den Ouden (23)

**Why did you choose the master V&A?**

I think the older population is very relevant in this ever ageing society.

**Which course did you Like best?**

The Older individual.

**What was your favourite lecture/assignment?**

The Scientific Essay of BVA.

**What is your favourite V&A memory?**

The study trip to Cologne.

**How do you see your future after V&A?**

I will be doing my clinical rotations after V&A and then I plan to become a doctor.

**What advice would you like to give to future V&A students?**

Have fun!

MEET THE V&A STUDENTS

Celine Peterzen (23)

**Which course did you like best?**

Organisation of the Ageing Society, because I was really interested in the health care system in the Netherlands.

**What was your favourite lecture/assignment?**

I liked the lectures from Simon Mooijaart, because he presented interesting research about older people in the emergency room.

**What is your favourite V&A memory?**

The study trip to Cologne was my best V&A memory. This trip was educational, but also a good way to get to know my fellow students.

**How do you see your future after V&A?**

First, I will start with the master Management, Policy Analysis and Entrepreneurship in September.



Jasper Pieper (24)

**Which course did you like best?**

Biology of Vitality and Ageing. It was really interesting to learn about the possible ways to prolong life in the future.

**What is your favourite V&A memory?**

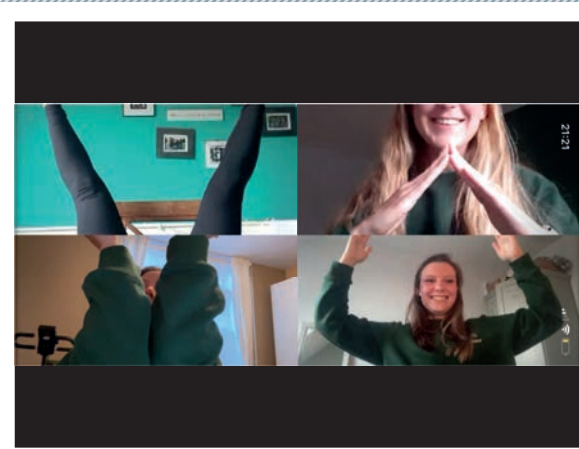
I think the most fun was the trip to Cologne. It was really nice opportunity to get to know the other students.

**How do you see your future after V&A?**

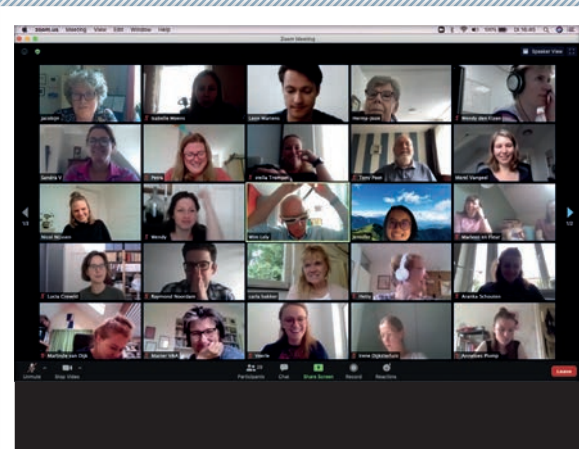
After V&A I'll continue my medicine studies. Just a couple more years to become a doctor!



MEET THE V&A STUDENTS



*Of course, V&A students were present at the online M.F.L.S. pub quiz in their V&A sweaters! Can you see what they try to portray?*



*There wasn't enough space to make one picture off all participants of the online escape room. But we had lots of fun together with the staff, students and older individuals!*



Jonathan Plender (30)

**Why did you choose the master V&A?**

To finish a master's degree after my Medicine Bachelor and to make use of my experiences in elderly care.

**Which course did you like best?**

Organisation of the Ageing Society because that was all new information and asks a completely different mindset compared to other (bio-)medical courses.

**What was your favourite lecture/assignment?**

The eye-openers were my improvement in writing different types of text in a functional way like: articles for media, leadership profile, press release, policy paper, scientific essays, proposals for innovations.

**How do you see your future after V&A?**

Becoming member of the Health Council or Nationale Zorgautoriteit

MEET THE V&A STUDENTS

Anneloes Plomp (21)

**Which course did you like best?**

I liked Future Perspectives the most. First, there was the introduction week where we could try the ageing suits. But also I really liked that we could have our own learning activities throughout the year.

**What was your favourite lecture/assignment?**

I really enjoyed the R&E week about qualitative research. It was all quite new to me and I got to interview a lovely lady who introduced me to "Fietsmaatjes", where I am now a volunteer!

**What is your favourite V&A memory?**

I have met so many new people and I made many new friends who mean a lot to me!

**What advice would you like to give to future V&A students?**

Really make use of all the assignments, you are mostly free to choose a topic, and use it to dive into your own interests!



Diana Roeplal (21)

**Which course did you like best?**

The Biology of Vitality and Ageing course, because I am fascinated by human biology.

**What was your favourite lecture/assignment?**

I liked the mini symposium very much, because it gave us the opportunity to be creative about our projects.

**What is your favourite V&A memory?**

When I remember how much effort and time the V&A master team puts in its students, it puts a smile on my face. I also really liked the visitation trips, because they were a great opportunity to get to know your fellow students and the V&A staff in an informal way :)

**What advice would you like to give to future V&A students?**

This is a great opportunity to be broadly educated about the growing ageing population from different perspectives in just one year. It doesn't matter what your background is, as long as you're interested in ageing and the ageing society, this might just be what you are looking for.



## MEET THE V&A STUDENTS

### Mian de Ronde (22)

#### Why did you choose the master V&A?

I wanted to have more knowledge about how our healthcare system works, and I've always had an interest in the biological ageing process.

#### What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

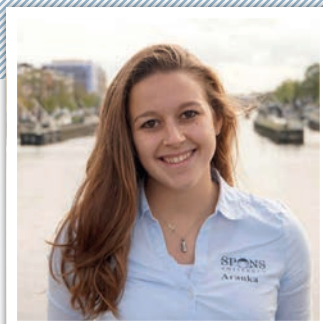
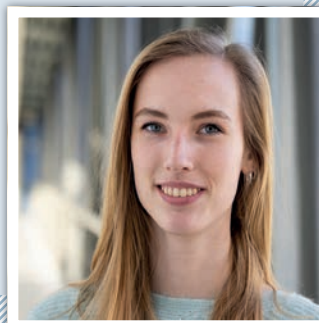
I liked the debates the best, because this is a fun way of interacting and a valuable skill to learn.

#### How do you see your future after V&A?

I do not have a clear vision of my dream job, but I know the ageing field has a lot to offer and I want to investigate further if this could contain my dream job.

#### What advice would you like to give to future V&A students?

Contact with the elderly during this master is very valuable, appreciate this chance and try to learn as much as you can from those individuals!



### Aranka Schouten (24)

#### Why did you choose the master V&A?

I wanted to study something more practical than my Bachelor Human Movement Sciences. Besides, I appreciated the division in modules within the Master programme; this ensures that you learn the about different aspects of getting older. Finally, due to my experience in the elderly care, I noticed how much can be improved in the Dutch (elderly) care; something I want to contribute to. It has showed me what interests me and what I want to do in the future!

#### What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

I liked writing the innovation paper, the lectures during OAS and the policy paper most. The innovation paper helped me to think about possible developments in healthcare. And that is exactly why I started this Master: to change the healthcare sector!

#### How do you see your future after V&A?

I am going to change the Dutch healthcare system! Whether this will be as a researcher, a consultant or manager of a healthcare organisation, I am not sure yet. However, I do not back-off from a challenge and I think have the right skills to contribute to make the Dutch (elderly)care system future-proof!

## MEET THE V&A STUDENTS

### Nicky Smits (27)

#### Why did you choose the master V&A?

I wanted to move from social sciences into a more medical field.

#### What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

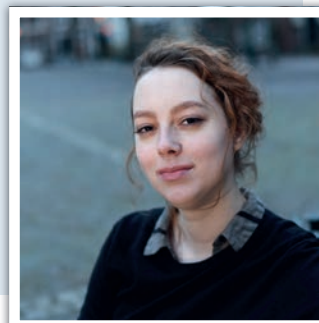
Interviews with the elderly board during the Older Individual course.

#### What is your favourite V&A memory?

Tormenting Linde by covering her in all the ageing suit components. And my very patient, very smart fellow students spending their time walking me through PubMed mesh terms again.

#### What advice would you like to give to future V&A students?

If you are from social sciences too: don't fear the statistics, it is much easier than it looks!



### Diny Stekelenburg (24)

#### Why did you choose the master V&A?

Ever since I started working in a nursing home, I've been very passionate about elderly care. The master "Vitality and Ageing" offers everything I wanted to know about ageing and older individuals.

#### Which course did you like best?

My favourite course in the master was "Organisation of the Ageing Society", because it gave a great insight into what is necessary to make our society "elderly proof". I am looking to pursue a career in policymaking, so I expect that I will be able to use the knowledge that I gained during that course in practice.

#### How do you see your future after V&A?

I would like to work for an elderly care organization, improving elderly care in the area where I live. Later on, I would like to begin my own nursing home, which offers individuals care and freedom, and offers activities in the garden, woodshop and with animals.

#### What advice would you like to give to future V&A students?

Get to know your fellow students. Everyone is passionate and enthusiastic about the same topic, which immediately creates a unique bond.



MEET THE V&A STUDENTS

# Ephrem Tesfay (33)

**Why did you choose the master V&A?**

I grew up with my grandparents. I grew up watching them struggling with age-related problems. The changes I witnessed in my grandparents inspired me to study medicine as a bachelor followed by the master V&A.

**Which course did you like best?**

Organization of the Ageing Society. I actually found out I like this course after I did the online course on “alternative payment models” and I think this course equips students with the knowledge and skills to work on the development of an innovative healthcare system. I like the course because I decided to direct my career to work on innovation of healthcare systems so that I can take it back to share my experience in my home country.

**What advice would you like to give to future V&A students?**

I would say that they shouldn't overlook any activities. It all fits together to bring out the best in you! Plus, make friends, spend some time together and if you are a foreign student, making friends will make your stay a whole lot easier and happier.



# Irie Timmer (23)

**Why did you choose the master V&A?**

I decided to do the master V&A, because I really liked the multidisciplinary curriculum. At the start of the master I was interested in the older people, however during the year my interest in older people only grew bigger and bigger.

**What was your favourite lecture/assignment?**

I liked the interview assignment for the qualitative research week best. This was not my first interview, however it was really interesting to interview an older person and to do my first small bit of qualitative research.

**What is your favourite V&A memory?**

My favourite V&A memory is the first study trip of the year to Cologne. During this trip I got to know almost everyone of the master and it was really nice to get to know everybody in a different environment. Also the drinks were really nice, haha!

**What advice would you like to give to future V&A students?**

My advice would be to find out what you think is interesting, but also find out what you do not like.

MEET THE V&A STUDENTS

# Yvonne Timmermans (23)

**Why did you choose the master V&A?**

I studied Medicine in Rotterdam, and didn't really know which direction I wanted to go. That's why I chose to broaden my horizon after I finished my bachelor. The master V&A brought every important aspect of healthcare together: the biological, individual and organisational part were integrated in one year. Learning and discussing with the wisest and most experienced people (the elderly themselves) made me really enthusiastic!

**What was your favourite lecture/assignment?**

I enjoyed making a video, in which I interviewed my own grandpa of 83 years old. I didn't like the editing-part at all (it took too much of my sleep), but seeing my grandpa this enthusiastic made me enthusiastic as well! He had his mini-moment of fame, and this makes me really proud. I hope I will be such a cool grandma 60 years from now!

**What is your favourite V&A memory?**

Our bus trip to Cologne really felt like a school trip. Singing songs, laughing out loud and teachers who gave us snacks. I felt like a 10 year old girl who went on a vacation on her own for the first time. I loved it!



# Merel Vangeel (24)

**Why did you choose the master V&A?**

After graduating as a physiotherapist, I really wanted to know more about the organization of healthcare systems in different countries. This master gave me the knowledge and prepared for a function in policy making!

**Which course did you like best?**

Organisation of the ageing society was the course I liked best, because it gave me an insight in how the Dutch healthcare system works and how complicated it is to change!

**What was your favourite lecture/assignment?**

Creating an innovation and making a movie of it was the best assignment of this master! It was so challenging and stressful, but the result was so worth it! It makes you realize that in the end, after all the hard work, everything works out. Plus, thanks to this project, I got to spend some quality time with my grandfather.

**How do you see your future after V&A?**

In the far future, I see myself as the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sports and living in a Tiny House!



MEET THE V&A STUDENTS

Petra van de Velde (24)

Why did you choose the master V&A?

I've been working as a nurse in nursing homes for 3 years now and I really love caring for the older people. Reading and hearing about the master got me excited and eager to learn more about all the different aspects of elderly care.

Which course did you like best?

The Older Individual! I could see a lot of my experiences in the course and I found it interesting to learn more about the background of certain problems the elderly care is facing right now, how the healthcare professionals are dealing with it and how they want to improve it.

What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

I really liked the assignment in the qualitative week of Research & Evidence. I had so much fun doing the interview and it really helped me figure out what kind of internship I wanted to do. It was both fun and helpful!

How do you see your future after V&A?

I would love to work at the Ministry one day, making sure that elderly care is as efficient and personalized as possible!



Cornelia Wieringa (29)

Why did you choose the master V&A?

After my bachelor in Biomedical Sciences I wasn't ready to leave research behind, but I wanted to focus more on people as a whole instead of miniscule elements of them in a lab. This master offered both the research and the focus on older people.

Which course did you like best?

My favourite course was OAS, because I loved learning about financing, types of healthcare systems and policy making, which was all new to me. And also because of the study trip to Brussels with the visit to the European Parliament.

What was your favourite lecture/assignment?

My favourite lectures were from the Older Individual course and if I need to choose one, then it would have to be the lecture on "Cultural Narratives" by Hanne Laceulle. It was very interesting and thought-provoking.

What is your favourite V&A memory?

The video pitches at the end of the Older Individual, followed by drinks with my fellow students, teachers and the older individuals involved in the master. It was great!

MEET THE V&A STUDENTS



*The students from working group 3 having fun and enjoying dinner together.*



*For Academic Development there was a debate during each course. We got the opportunity to practice with debating and at the end of the year we all improved our debating skills, which was emphasized with the good grades we received!*



*Junior lecturer Leon pictured with the students from working group 2 in Cologne on Sunday evening while we were out tasting (German) beers.*



*During the Coronavirus lockdown we met up for VriMiBo online, as a nice way to catch up on each other's lives and stay connected.*



## Meet Mary Leune

By Isabelle Moens

**Even though the restrictive measures concerning the coronavirus have a huge impact on most people's lives, Mary Leune (70) wants to make the most of it. Luckily for her she can still execute one of her favourite things: navigate the waters around Leiden with her husband on their humble boat. Considering the coronavirus measures, Mary and I decided to meet via telephone during one of the few moments she had her feet on dry land.**

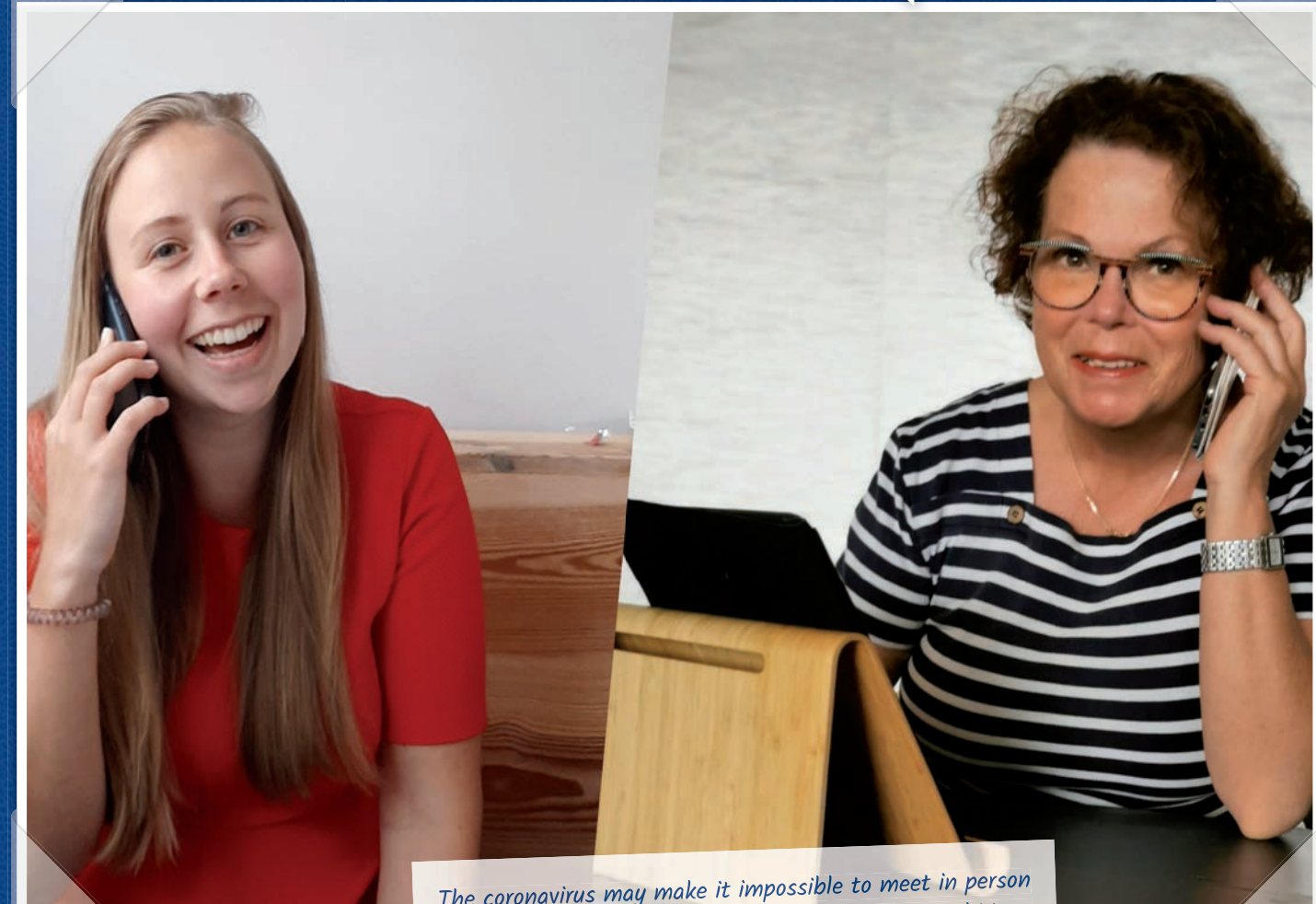
Mary grew up in the city centre of Leiden as the oldest of 5 children. She remembers her youth as a time of playing outside, having fun and doing a lot of sports. Her father always insisted on one thing: "you five should all do sports, because then you will be tired enough to get a good night of sleep. You can choose the sports that you want, but there's one rule: you should do it for at least one year." From an early age, Mary learned swimming, went fishing with her parents' boat and joined a gymnastics club. This all changed at the age of 13, when she participated in a sports event at her school: she excelled in running and was approached to join an athletics association. Here she participated in athletic sports at a high level for a long time. As she (normally) goes to the gym 3 times a week and plays tennis, I can say that she still is very active nowadays.

Due to having dyslexia, school was a bit more difficult than sports, but nevertheless Mary graduated from the MULO. She went to work at the office of the local paper in Leiden

(Leidsche Courant) for two years, where she also met her husband. She realized that a desk job wasn't the right fit for her and with many of her friends working in healthcare, Mary decided to become a nurse. After working in the ALZ (predecessor of the LUMC) for some years, Mary became a mother and stopped working to take care of her two children. When she was 28 years old, she wanted to work again and started an educational programme to become an activity supervisor (in Dutch: activiteitenbegeleider) and thereafter an education to become a Social Worker specialized in Older Persons. This was only the beginning, because she successfully worked different jobs taking care of older persons, as well as volunteering at the Alzheimer Café in Warmond, which she continued after her retirement. Doing both her paid and voluntary work, Mary learned a lot about volunteering, the most important lesson being "The volunteer work you perform should not keep you awake at night, it should give you energy."

When I asked Mary my favourite question, "Do you feel old?", she replied: "Ik voel me op leeftijd, maar niet oud", which is roughly translated to "I'm getting on in years, but I don't feel old." I thought that was a very well-phrased answer. With all her experience and knowledge, she would like to advise the students to go out on the streets and interview older persons there, or at organizations like "De Voedselbank", because, "We, members of the elderly board, are nice people of course, but we don't represent the whole older population in the Netherlands". ■

*Interview other older persons you meet in public as well. We of the elderly board are pleasant people of course, but we don't represent the whole older population in the Netherlands.*



*The coronavirus may make it impossible to meet in person for the interview, but that doesn't stop Isabelle and Mary. Modern technology enables Mary to share her wisdom with us from a safe distance.*





*Although our year together has come to an end, our mission of intergenerational exchange has only just begun!*