

Winter Newsletter



Dear network members! We hope you had a good start of 2023. As the winter is coming to an end, we wanted to update you on what we have been working on in the past few months and what is planned for 2023. In the past two years the Anders Utrecht network has mapped out [Utrecht's community-led initiatives](#) and together with member organizations developed the 7-part podcast series [Anders Utrecht Voice](#). In the third year, we focus on creating long-term collaboration between organizations and the university through practice-based research and workshops.

Organising Social Impact + Anders Utrecht

This year Anders Utrecht has entered into a new phase bringing together member organisations with students of the new Utrecht University master's program [Organising Social Impact](#). Students are collaborating closely with some of the [17 Anders Utrecht network members](#), bridging theory and practice in exciting and innovative ways. Throughout the academic year students learned about alternative economic organizing in the classroom and in the field by visiting Anders Utrecht members such as [Casco Art Institute](#) or [Weggefinkel](#). As part of a group project, some students visited two [Repair Cafés](#) in Utrecht, where they got help repairing broken items while chatting with volunteers about their work, degrowth and circular economies.

In encounters like these, Anders Utrecht strives to create connectivity between the university and local communities and organizations, instead of producing knowledge from inside the ivory tower of academia. Through facilitating close collaboration, we hope to change the role of the public university towards being actively involved with organizations working for social and ecological transformation and to produce valuable research for the Utrecht community. Many thanks to all the people and organizations who take time and energy to show their work, share practices and knowledge with students and immensely contribute to make this happen.

We are excited to announce that since February four Anders Utrecht member organisations collaborate with master's students from the program Organising Social Impact. Network member [De Voorkamer](#), a cultural meeting space that promotes inclusion and integration, is collaborating with student Valentina who is helping out with projects as part of her internship at De Voorkamer and writing her thesis to a topic related to the organization. Network member [Villa Vrede](#), a day shelter for undocumented people recently started working with master student Iva. As part of her internship Iva helps out on two days per week with needed tasks such as preparing and giving beginner's Dutch language and computer & digital safety courses. Through her work and thesis, Iva hopes to support Villa Vrede in lobbying for the rights of undocumented people, as well as to contribute to the day-to-day activities of the organization.

Network member [Utrecht Natuurlijk](#), an initiative which runs urban gardens, farms, education centres and promotes nature in urban Utrecht has recently started working together with master student Thomas. One to two days a week Thomas works in the office, as well as in the field and in the garden. As part of his thesis he plans on making a product or event which supports the cause of Utrecht Natuurlijk – connecting to nature in an urban setting.

Network member Casco Art Institute and master student Amaia have started their collaboration in February. In the coming months Amaia will join the Casco team in their project called the Unlearning Centre – an educational program which aims to create new habits in art institutions. The team collectively designs practical exercises and reflections that challenge how work is understood and practiced by valuing reproductive labour, care and collective ownership. Amaia will write her thesis on a related topic enhancing organisational practices for thriving community initiatives through her research. In these collaborations students draw on existing local knowledge and contribute to building an activist academy that works alongside local communities for social and ecological transformation.

Master's thesis at Villa Vrede

Roxane Stormer is a post-graduate student of the Organizations, Change and Management Master's program at Utrecht University. In collaboration with Anders Utrecht network member [Villa Vrede](#), Roxane recently finalized her master's thesis about partnerships between Civil Society Organizations, municipalities and the Dutch state regarding undocumented migration. Roxane's research shows how the work provided by Civil Society Organizations like Villa Vrede is important to the state and locates potential advancements of the rights of undocumented migrants within this. Through understanding and mapping out how their work is vital, Civil Society Organizations can change the landscape of their Cross-Sectoral Social partnerships with state and municipality to advocate for social justice. The thesis shows how change happens in the margins through Civil Society Organizations' usage of creative strategies of simultaneous collaboration with and avoidance of institutional actors. Click [here](#) to read the full master's thesis.

Call for collaboration

Anders Utrecht seeks to support its member organizations with the help of students who contribute to organizational activities and enhance practices through engaged fieldwork.

Does your organization want to collaborate with master's students? Can you use help with a scientific study to improve organizational practices? Contact us via andersutrecht@uu.nl to talk about future collaboration.

Updates on the Anders Utrecht team



Alina Miericke, project assistant

In 2022 we said goodbye to our project assistant Marie who greatly contributed to our workshops, communications and sustaining the network. Thanks for all your valuable work and inputs Marie! In 2022 we also welcomed two new team members! Anya Al-Salem is a master's student of sustainable development at UU and joined the team in December. Through her work, Anya is interested in contributing to a radical societal

transformation towards a system that prioritizes social wellbeing within ecological limits. Alina Miericke is an Utrecht University alumni and joined the Anders Utrecht team in October. Alina is helping out with organizational matters and communication and is your main contact point for information and questions about the project.



*Anya Al-Salem,
student researcher*

Workshop on 'volunteering fatigue'

In conversations with network members we noticed that some organizations struggled with finding and keeping motivated volunteers. As bottom-up community organizations, we largely rely on volunteer work to run our operations. What can we do as organizations to keep volunteers engaged and motivated in the long run? And how can we make the time as volunteers to contribute to our community in a way that feels affirming, regenerative and sustainable?

To address the problem of 'volunteering fatigue' Anders Utrecht organized a workshop in collaboration with scholars from Utrecht University. The workshop took place in January at network member Casco Art Institute and we were joined by [De Voorkamer](#), [De Vrolijkheid](#), [Academie van de Stad](#), as well as students from the master's program Organizing Social Impact and Utrecht University scholars.

We set out to tackle 'volunteering fatigue' in organizations by using the method of design thinking. Design thinking is a non-linear process of finding creative solutions to complex problems by thinking of the problem in novel ways and through using models such as prototypes or sketches. We split into groups each focused on a specific issue related to volunteering brought forth by an organization. For instance, De Vrolijkheid which organizes art projects for and with refugees, grappled with the problem that volunteers are often kept busy with providing assistance on rather practical matters, which takes away time from what the organization set out to do: creating art through which personal stories and emotions can be told and expressed. In the design thinking process the group came up with the idea to create an FAQ (frequently asked questions) with detailed answers to these questions gathered in one place. This allows volunteers to redirect people's questions and leaves more time for making art together. The workshop facilitated new encounters, bringing together different organizers with students and scholars in a fun and informative setting: practices were shared, ideas created and contacts exchanged. We are excited to see you at the next workshop!

Public Engagement at Utrecht University – Interview with Ozan Alakavuklar



Dr. Ozan Alakavuklar, researcher and lecturer at the Utrecht School of Governance. Foto: Lize Kraan

Check out the recent interview with Anders Utrecht initiator Ozan Alakavuklar in which he shares his motivation to start Anders Utrecht and his vision for what engaged fieldwork looks like. Hint: It requires getting your hands dirty, because engaged research "is no remote consultancy: it is truly seeing how societal impact is organized in day-to-day practice". As a researcher in New Zealand, Ozan noticed that there is a gap between academia and community work. He wondered how research has to be done differently to bridge this gap. How can the university become an anchor institution in the city that is a long-term partner for societal transformation? With this vision he started Anders Utrecht together with a group of Utrecht University researchers in 2020. Read the full article [here](#) or check out the UU magazine [Close-Up](#).

News from Anders Utrecht members

De Voorkamer

During the months of March, April, and May Bakr Al Jaber will be the artist in residence at De Voorkamer! [Bakr Al Jaber](#) is a 30-year-old Syrian poet. In his work, Bakr explores the relationship between universal beauty, war, and the duality of existence. During his Art Residency at De Voorkamer Bakr aims to facilitate a journey with a small group of people toward memories, identity crises, longing, and anger, using writing and poetry as a tool in order to reach a collective text. NB: The workshops in this Artist in Residence will be conducted in Arabic. If interested in learning more about this project, please get in touch by sending an email to betina@devoorkamer.org.



Bakr al Jaber, Artist in Residence at De Voorkamer

Does your organization have news you want to share with the network? Contact us via andersutrecht@uu.nl to include them in the next newsletter!

Agenda

May: Workshop – topic tba, depending on organizations' needs