
AFRAID OF BECOMING HOMELESS; THE EFFECTS OF A HOUSING CRISIS ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Wellbeing of international students in Groningen with a focus on community
integration and the housing situation

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Summary

The purpose of this research is to study the feeling of safety of international students in Groningen, with a focus on the housing situation and community integration. The feeling of safety is how comfortable a person is in a certain place. Factors like stress, bad housing quality or loneliness could potentially negatively impact the feeling of safety. The housing situation can be influential as there are high levels of stress apparent when international students are trying to find a room in Groningen, and when they are residing in emergency housing. The community integration can influence the feeling of safety as students can feel more comfortable when the people around them are familiar although language differences can have a negative influence. This research answers the following question; How does the housing situation and community integration of international students in Groningen contribute to their feeling of safety? This has been answered through a qualitative research method by conducting 18 interviews with international students living, or having recently lived, in Groningen. The housing crisis has had a big impact on international students, who have possibly been the biggest losers in this crisis. They are unable to find a room and are often forced in emergency housing. Competition is high and so are stress levels. This culminates in a decrease in study results, and a negative impact on the experience in Groningen. The study concludes with a relation between the housing situation of international students and their feeling of safety, being negatively impacted by discrimination, emergency housing and stress. There is little contribution of community integration to the feeling of safety.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Dutch are known for their proficiency in English and the Netherlands is regarded as a generally safe country, ranking high on the Global Peace Index (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2021). The Netherlands is the destined location for tens of thousands of international students from around the world each year (Nuffic, 2021). Research on the factors of international students for choosing their destination has described the importance of safety. Pimpa (2005) studied ten factors, with safety coming at the 7th place. According to a 2012 British survey (British Council, 2012), the factor of safety in the receiving country has been increasing in importance to the fifth most important factor. Xiong et. al (2017) found this as an even more important factor having it at the fourth spot, proving the steady increasing importance for the factor. Accordingly, Nyland et al. (2010) find that student safety is a systemic issue that needs to be addressed more completely. Safety has an influence on the quality of life and happiness. For the city of Utrecht, the housing situation of international students has been described, and it is at a worrying state (Fang & van Liempt, 2020). At the start of the academic year 2021/2022, the city of Groningen had a student housing crisis for international students. This led to students being “panicked and vulnerable for scammers, ridiculous rents and unethical practices” (Ter Veen, 2021). Many international students are very worried and fearful shortly after arriving in Groningen, but as shown in Utrecht this feeling often doesn’t leave. Another aspect which could improve this feeling is community integration. Research has shown that the neighbourhood and community relations can improve feeling of safety by familiarity (Mahmoud Farahani, 2020, Lindgren & Nilsen, 2011). Community integration is the integration of, in this case, international students with neighbours but also other students. While the Netherlands is recognized as a safe country, there are signals that the feeling of safety for international students is not at the same level. At the same time it has become an increasingly important subject for international students, therefore justifying the societal relevance of this research.

1.2 Research Problem

The aim of this research is to identify the feelings of safety of international students in the city of Groningen with a focus on housing. With this research it will be possible to identify potential problems voiced by international students that can be amended in order to improve their feeling of safety and, with that, their student life experience in Groningen. This aim leads to the following main research question;

- How does the housing situation and community integration of international students in Groningen contribute to their feeling of safety?

This main research question leads to the following secondary questions;

1. Are the feelings of safety of international students related to their housing situation?
2. Do international students with a higher degree of community integration feel safer?

1.3 Structure

This thesis is structured in the following way. First the conceptual framework follows from the research problem and the theoretical framework. This conceptual framework is central to the

methodology and data collection which is explained afterwards. Having described the data and methodology, the results of this collection are presented. This is done following the conceptual framework which will hereafter be introduced. First, the results of the interviews on the housing situation are explained. After this, the influence of community integration on the feeling of safety will be described. Concluding the results, the interviewees were asked for their recommendations for potentially improving the feeling of safety of international students, following the same aspects as the conceptual framework. All this leads towards the conclusion, which is the collective result of the experiences of international students in Groningen and describing the feeling of safety.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 International students, housing and safety: a review of the literature

Safety is a broad concept and can be divided into objective, and subjective safety. The feeling of safety is subjective and does not necessarily have to correspond to objective safety, which means the actual risk of crime or accidents (Koskela, 1997; Aalbers & Rancati, 2008). Feeling of safety 'refers to when an individual feels comfortable and not worried or fearful' (Lindgren & Nilsen, 2011, p.196). Feelings of safety of international students is a subject that lacks in discourse for the Netherlands, but also globally. Nyland et al. (2010) note the reason for this lack in global discourse due to a fear of being seen as an unsafe study destination by universities. The number of international students has been increasing steadily over the last decades for economic reasons (Lee & Wesche, 2000). Since the last decades the number of international degree students in the Netherlands has doubled from 48,372 in 2010 to 103,708 in 2020 (Nuffic, 2021). This has created problems for cities like Groningen in facilitating housing for international students, which has led to housing shortages (Marée, 2021).

Therefore, an important aspect of safety for international students is their housing situation. This housing situation can be divided in two aspects: on the one hand the space and place of the house, and on the other hand the quality and stability of the current dwelling. Firstly, with the space and place of the house its surroundings are of importance. The feeling of safety within public space has been studied intensively, and one of the most important aspects is busyness (Park & Garcia, 2020). Students are known to help in creating busyness, especially at night times.

The neighbourhood and community also have a role in increasing the feeling of safety by an attachment to the community and neighbourhood relations (Mahmoud Farahani, 2020). Lindgren and Nilsen (2011) agree on this and further emphasize this as with neighbourhood relations the fellow inhabitants become familiar which increases the feeling of safety. However, in this community aspect directly lies the problem for international students. Due to language differences and the temporary stay, it is harder to create relations and familiarity with the other inhabitants (Yildirim et al. 2021). Furthermore, the cultural difference can make it more difficult as explained in the following way: *"The requirement to relocate to an unfamiliar culture impacts on international students' sense of security. Thus, {...} the mere act of becoming an international student can reduce a person's sense of security"* (Paltridge et al. 2010, p. 355). In the same way, some international students felt unsafe as they had experienced aggressive hostility due to their cultural differences and speaking ability while in the workplace (Sawir et al., 2012). However, Arnold et al. (2015) have shown that it is possible for international students to integrate in the community by organizing activities. For the city of Groningen, Rauws & Meelker (2019) have established the difficulties for international students and in accordance with Arnold et al. concluded with a recommendation for more community activities between (international) students and non-student residents.

The other aspect of safety concerning the housing situation of international students is the quality and security of the current dwelling. Security in this aspect is the security of staying in the current dwelling, without the fear of being forced out, and the security and trust to find a new dwelling relatively easy when needed. Paltridge et al. (2010) have looked at the feeling of safety for

on-campus housing and have found that international students find more interaction with non-co-culturals and therefore improve social networks which, as expected by previous literature, increases their feeling of safety. However, in Groningen there is no form of on-campus housing. Students are spread out over the city, as part of government measures to combat problems of high concentrated amounts of students (Hubbard, 2008).

A comparable form of housing which is in Groningen is the purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA). These are buildings designed for, and used by, students and therefore have a high concentration of students. They come in Short Stay Housing, which are rooms designated for international students for one year, but also for a combination of Dutch- and international students. In the city of Auckland, the PBSAs have been described as “unsafe”, with “poor sound-proofing and warmth” (Collins, 2010, p.947). However, in the study of Fang & van Liempt (2020) these complaints were not voiced by international students who resided in designated Short Stay buildings, which are designated student buildings with a maximum term of one year. These complaints not being described by Fang & van Liempt (2020) might be due to a difference in building quality, but another reason may be that the housing situation was described by the international students to have often been becoming worse than their initial housing situation. Paltridge et. al (2010) and Fang & van Liempt (2020) agree on safety in designated student accommodations, but coming back to the definition of feeling safe, worriedness is an important factor which is described by Fang & van Liempt to be a problem for international students in Short Stay accommodations due to the temporariness of the dwelling.

The feeling of safety for international students on the common housing market is a field where Paltridge et al. (2010) call for more research. This is where international students must compete with Dutch students. Research showed that the feelings of safety are even worse in this field of student housing, with students describing enormous stress and worse quality of living (Fang & van Liempt, 2020) which therefore have a negative impact on the feeling of safety. The current housing crisis for international students in Groningen is described by international students to have the same effects (Ter Veen, 2021; Marée, 2021; Bormans & Sneekes, 2021). The international students are insecure and worried about staying in their current dwelling or having to look for a new dwelling. The amount of interaction with other people will be different between types of housing, as there are different amounts of house mates with different amounts of interaction. Current literature does conclude that more interaction with house mates increases the feeling of safety (Paltridge et. al 2010). For international students in Utrecht the housing situation has been described and is problematic, but the study has an institutional focus. The effects of the feeling of safety for international students is a minor factor. However, to improve the experience of studying in the Netherlands for international students it would be wise to look at factors which can improve the feeling of safety apart from the institutional change which, according to Fang & van Liempt (2020), is necessary. Therefore, this study will look at the feeling of safety of international students living in student housing in Groningen.

2.2 Conceptual Framework



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is shown in figure 1. Central to this study, and therefore to the conceptual framework is the feeling of safety of international students. On the left are the two variables that influence the community integration: language differences and community activities. These variables influence the community integration in their own ways. As the literature has shown, the community integration has an influence on the feeling of safety. Although it is harder for international students to integrate in a community, when they succeed it increases their feeling of safety as they know the fellow residents and therefore perceived risks are decreased. On the other side is the housing situation which influences the feeling of safety. The housing situation is influenced by three variables: type of housing, housing security, and quality of dwelling. The security of staying in the current dwelling has an influence on the housing situation as with uncertainty comes stress which decreases the feeling of safety.

2.3 Hypotheses

From these research questions, the following hypotheses derive;

H0: There is a relationship between the housing situation of international students in Groningen, and their feeling of safety.

H0: There is a relationship between the community integration of international students in Groningen, and their feeling of safety.

3. Data and Methodology

For this research a qualitative research method has been used. International students from different housing situations and different locations throughout Groningen have been interviewed. This paper is based on the interviews of a total of 18 international students living, or having lived, in Groningen. While the preliminary goal was to find only international students living in Groningen, this has been broadened to also include international students formerly living in Groningen. The reasoning for this is that there are international students who were unable to find a home in Groningen, and therefore had to move back to their home country after a period. It's important to take these experiences into account as well. For the same reason has an interest been taken in former housing of international students. Although these experiences are up to a couple of years ago, they are relevant for painting a picture of the effects on international students.

The method of finding interviewees was first via an ad on Facebook. However, this resulted in a strong volunteer bias and the amount of responses was also far below desirable. The two participants that responded did so due to their problematic housing situation of which they wanted to voice their displeasure. So to combat this bias, instead of letting the international students react to an ad, they were contacted by the researcher. This was done by contacting international students who had interacted with Facebook groups about housing in Groningen. There is still a volunteer bias, as the interviewees have to have been willing to participate. This was an unavoidable factor. But it did assure that the international students had an experience with the housing market in Groningen. Another sampling problem is that it excludes international students who do not use Facebook in their search for a room. Their experience of the housing market could potentially be different, as they are forced to use different methods of finding a room. However, there is much convenience in using Facebook and it is hard to find international students that don't use it. Furthermore, the focus of this research is in studying the wellbeing of international students within their housing situation and community integration, of which the search for a room is but a small part. In table 1, an overview of the characteristics of the interviewees can be seen.

The method of data collection is by interviews. In an interview, students will be best able to explain their feeling of safety and identify potential causes for negative effects. The expressions of international students will give the most important causes for the feeling of safety, while ultimately concluding in the current assessment of the feeling of safety for international students in Groningen. Another potential data collection method could have been through surveys. However, interviews give more data as the interviewee is able to delve more into the interviewees opinions and feelings by asking more follow-up questions based on the answers of the interviewees. This is not possible through surveys.

The international students participating in the interviews have received an explanation of the study. The interviews have been audio-recorded and transcribed. Using these transcriptions, it is possible to find patterns and relations between the interviews. In appendix B, a simple overview of the interviewees' answers to the research questions can be seen. This helps in identifying the relations.

The names of the students will not be used in any way in this research. At any point of the study do the students have the possibility to retract their statements. In this way, the privacy of the

interviewees is protected. The researcher is an outsider to the housing market for international students, but an insider to the housing market for students in Groningen. This leads to preconceptions of the housing market and experiences. To combat positionality, the researcher has aimed to give the interviewees as much freedom as possible during the interviews in answering the questions, and to refrain from making assumptions.

Gender	Male (N=10)	Female (N=8)
Current place of residence	Groningen (N=16)	Home country (N=2)
Study programme pursued	Bachelor (N=15)	Master (N=3)
Length of residence in Groningen	1-2 years (N=15)	More than 2 years (N=3)

Table 1: Characteristics of interviewees (N=18)

4. International students in the Groningen housing market

The results of the qualitative research will be presented in the following way. In accordance with the conceptual framework, first the effects of the housing situation and community integration will be discussed. This concludes in a final remark on the feeling of safety of international students in Groningen considering these effects. Furthermore, the results will delve in the potential improvements for the current situation. These are suggestions as presented by the international students themselves, during the conducted interviews.

4.1 Housing safety

The housing safety of international students has been identified as being influenced by three factors: the type of housing, housing security and the quality of the dwelling. In Groningen, there are several types of housing for international students. The conducted interviews have brought up the following types: SSH (by Stichting Studenten Huisvesting), emergency housing, SOS (Shelter our students), studios and rooms with shared facilities by private landlords. Table 2 shows the different types comprehensive and with further information. The types of housing will be explained combined with student experiences following the table.

Type of housing	Housemates	Temporary stay?	Rent costs
SSH	Depending on type of room. Up to 20 people sharing a kitchen.	Yes, only for a year.	€300 to €660 per month
Emergency housing	Yes, dependent on location. Possibility of sharing private room.	Yes, from August until the 1 st of September (since December 2021).	€350 per month
SOS	Yes, amount depending on place of residence.	Yes, term depending on place of residence.	Dependent on agreement, but rather low
Studios	No, apart from potentially sharing a hallway.	Potentially, depending on the type of contract.	Higher than average, but rent allowance possible from 23 years onwards
Room with shared facilities of landlords	Yes, amount dependent of residence.	Potentially, depending on the type of contract.	Dependent on the room. Average in Groningen was €395 in 2019 (Kences, 2021)

Table 2: Types of housing used by respondents in this research

A common complaint by the international students is the price of the student rooms by the Village, a private large housing corporation for international students which was used as emergency housing, (interviewees 1,11, 16) and SSH (interviewees 3,4,5,11,16). SSH rents out student rooms, flats and homes in various cities in the Netherlands. Rooms range from apartments to rooms with shared facilities like the kitchen. One important aspect of SSH housing is that a contract is for one year. For the student rooms in SSH the prices range from €300 per month to €660 per month (University of Groningen, 2021). Out of 18 interviews, 6 of them expressed their concerns of the high price. Not every one of those six interviewees has stayed in housing by SSH, for others it was the main reason

to look elsewhere. It must be noted that the cheaper rooms are often a lot faster gone and are a preference of international students (interviewees 3 and 4).

The problem is that international students don't feel they have a choice. A recent study has shown that currently there is a housing shortage of 26500 rooms for students in the Netherlands (Kences, 2021). Therefore, the students have been forced to change their criteria to get a room and continue their studies in Groningen. During the interviews, this has been expressed by interviewees 1, 5, 6, 7 and 11. For these students, this has sometimes led to higher stress levels worrying about their finances.

And at one point, I got so stressed with just having to look for a place that I decided to go for the more safer option, which was SSH. So yeah, that's what I ended up doing, even though it was quite expensive. (Interviewee 11)

Emergency housing has been set up by the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Hanze and the municipality. This has been facilitated in different ways. Hostels were used for example, and emergency housing was set up in SSH locations and the village. In recent years, tents have been used to accommodate housing which gained a lot of criticism (Groeneveld, 2018). Fortunately, this was not necessary in 2021. However, there were still complaints voiced by the interviewees about the emergency housing. One of the interviewees (7) recounts sleeping in bed number 95 in one giant room. Privacy has been a big issue in these locations. Furthermore, it's very hard to study in these locations.

Well, actually this meeting happens in the right time. Because today's the point where I can't bear it anymore, it's stupid. Do you know Martini house? [...] the rooms are conceived to host one person, but because of emergency and the housing crisis, they are now hosting two people in the same room. (Interviewee 9)

This interviewee has also explained how it's very hard to study while sharing a desk with a roommate. Therefore, this situation has had an influence on the ability to study for the interviewee, who is in the first year of her master. She's very worried about getting the grades to continue, while also having to find a new place to stay before the 23rd of December as the emergency housing was going to be closed from that day onwards. At the start of December there were still 200 international students staying in this emergency house, it was not likely all these students will find a room within 3 weeks at which point they have to opt to SOS and couch surfing. However, the length of emergency housing has been extended until the 1st of September.

SOS is an organization called Shelter Our Students which helps international students in finding a temporary stay in a house where other students are already living. The organization itself does not facilitate housing but asks students living in Groningen for taking in an extra international student. It is therefore illegal, as the international students cannot get registered at this location. Experiences of these rooms are mixed, but never completely positive.

It was a room that was previously used for smoking. So it had a lot of ash everywhere, empty cigarette packages. And I was just sleeping on a couch and my doors didn't lock. (Interviewee 7)

The rooms are often shared with the original residents, or the international students take a room which had before no particular use. It's about asking residents to give up some of their own space for housing an international student who otherwise has nowhere to go. The interviewees feel mixed about speaking out on the experiences they have had. While the situation has been dire in certain circumstances, it must be noted that the interviewees are very grateful for being given this opportunity by the organization, so they didn't have to move back home.

International students will often share their homes, as they often live with housemates. As Paltridge et. al. (2010) note, having housemates can help in the feeling of safety. The interviews have confirmed this to be true for most of the interviewees. Nine interviewees (1,2,7,11,12,14,15,16,17) agreed with the statement that having housemates helps in their feeling of safety. For example, sharing the stress of living in emergency housing brought a feeling of safety to interviewee 17. However, it can also decrease the feeling of safety, which was the case for interviewees 9 and 18. Too many roommates can create a scare and distrusting relationship as these interviewees experienced theft and excessive littering.

As table 1 shows, 2 interviewees are currently living in their country of origin. This is due to them not having been able to find a home. Two of these three interviewees have previously lived in Groningen, for over a year, but were going to be homeless and had terrible experiences with SOS and emergency housing. For the other interviewee it was possible to start a half year later with their studies. The first two students had started their study and are now following courses from another country.

Yeah, I really want to go back home in Groningen. We have semesters divided into blocks. And the first block just ended like last week. And because everyone is having physical classes I can't join them, so I have to resit the course. (Interviewee 5)

The university system of the RUG is, quite logically, not adapted to this and an interviewee has been failing classes due to not being able to attend the presentations. Studies continue and students are thus suffering from study delay. And it is therefore that international students are very scared of losing the place they currently live in.

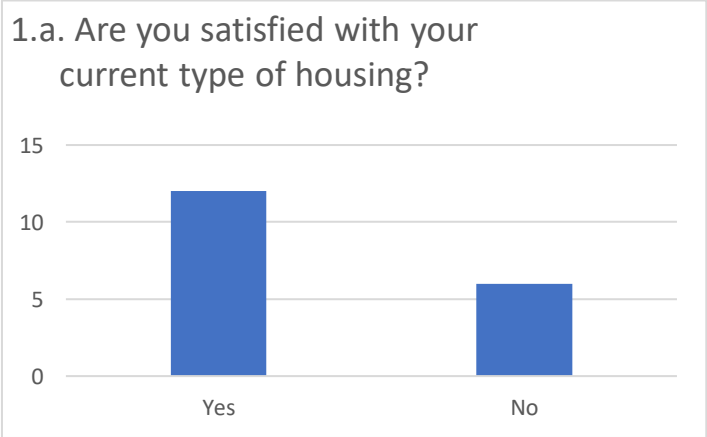


Figure 1: Satisfaction with current type of housing

As figure 1 shows, the interviewees are mostly satisfied with their current type of housing. It should be noted that of the 6 interviewees which are not satisfied, are the two interviewees who currently don't live in Groningen as they were unable to find a room. Of the other interviewees who

are not satisfied, two currently live in emergency housing (interviewee 9 and 14). These interviewees are still searching for a room.

4.2 Housing security

Housing security is the certainty a student has about staying in the dwelling they're in, but also the certainty of finding a new room if that is necessary. Problems with these can lead to worriedness and stress. Housing security is influenced by the type of housing which has been discussed in the former passage. As figure 1 shows, there are differences in the types of temporary stays. For SSH, the contract runs for a maximum of a year. From this day, every student formerly living in SSH will need to find a new room on the common student housing market. Due to contacts built up during the year these students have often gotten a broad idea of the housing market and its problems. They start searching early, often between March and May. This process has been experienced as stressful, frustrating, and dependent on luck by the absolute majority of the interviewees.

The common housing market has been described as quite comfortable. What is meant by the common housing market is the rooms where the students sign contracts with private landlords or housing companies. Except for one interviewee, the interviewees trust their landlords and are not scared of being evicted. There are other problems with landlords, but these will be discussed later in this paper. Out of 18 interviewees, 11 fear their situation if they were to be evicted and would have to find a new room within a short term. That would see them in a "nightmarish" process with several problematic factors.

4.2.1 *Discrimination on the housing market*

The housing market for students is shared by international students and Dutch students. There are several ways to get a room. Facebook has a lot of groups on which rooms advertisements are posted. All interviewees have experienced the "No internationals" posts that are frequent in these Facebook groups. Student houses consisting of Dutch students often prefer other Dutch students, the reason being they can keep speaking Dutch within their house. This has been experienced as very frustrating by the international students and makes them feel not welcome. Although the proficiency of English is very high with university and Hanze students, this is still a problem. In a housing market which already has a problem with finding enough rooms for students, this worsens the situation for international students in particular. The interviewees (3,6,9,14,16,18) recount the large amounts of messages they sent, receiving answers in only a small percentage, of which most are refusals. This leads to a helpless feeling. The only way the international students can get an advantage is by being as fast as possible. Constantly checking their phone and always keeping on their mind that they might miss a potential room.

It's just hard to keep the normal life because you have also to be on your phone all day long to check on all the announces. Because if you're there 30 minutes afterwards, then it's too late. It's super stressing. I hate it. (Interviewee 9)

Another aspect of discrimination on the housing market that has been described by international students is that of gender. Several of the interviewees note that it is easier to find a room as a female, than it is as a male (interviewees 4, 8, 12, 17). According to the interviewees, women are seen as less noisy and less messy. Under Dutch law, for private landlords, it is not illegal

to state a preference for a certain gender as it is in a private atmosphere (De Rooij, 2015). More research would be welcome on this subject.

“We’re sorry to inform you but we don’t take internationals” or “you’re ineligible for this housing”. That’s probably 80% of the messages I get back, and I probably only get about 20% of the messages back from the places I’ve applied to. I can understand this, but the irrational side of me is frustrated and mad... It’s tough. The few places that are open to international students are swamped. (Interviewee 16)

It’s hard to do something about this problem, the students note. They understand the reasoning of Dutch students, although they find it unwelcoming and a definite negative aspect of Groningen. One of the ideas proposed is one central website with a waiting line. Again, there is necessity for being as fast as possible, but it would presumably solve the problem of discrimination. Once on a waiting list, there is less to be done and the student in question does no longer have to keep looking at their phone. However, it is not yet known if Dutch student houses would be willing to participate in this, as their preference for Dutch students would not disappear. A waiting list like this is no new idea, as it is the norm in several European countries for campus housing, something that hardly exists in the Netherlands. The Dutch student housing market after the first year is mostly (semi) private student housing where the quality of the house is the responsibility of the landlord. The results of the interviews on this subject are very much in agreement with the 2020 study by Fang & van Liempt on the housing crisis for international students in Utrecht.

4.3 Quality of the dwelling

The quality of the room and house the international student is staying in can have an influence on the feeling of safety. Doors that don’t lock will create an uncomfortable feeling. The quality of the dwelling is dependent on the type of housing. Emergency housing and SOS have been described in lacking in quality by interviewees 7, 9 and 18. This has created a negative influence on the feeling of safety as the students did not feel comfortable. However, for most of the housing in Groningen the quality has been described as sufficient and comfortable living. Out of the 18 interviewees, 14 are satisfied with the quality of their current place, and for another two interviewees it is not applicable as their current place is in their home country. But as interviewee 11 explains, being an international student can negatively influence the communication and confidence with these landlords. This is in accordance with interviewee 6 who describes a feeling of being cheated because the knowledge of an international student is not on par with Dutch students.

When asked about their former experiences with housing in Groningen, 5 interviewees recounted a bad experience (interviewees 1,4,6,7,18). While this is less than the majority, 5 of the interviewees did not have a prior experience in another residence than their current. As figure 2 shows, half of the interviewees have experienced a bad quality of the dwelling. Bad experiences range from broken tiles (interviewee 6) to living in a room which was formerly used for smoking (interviewee 7). Currently there is no data form other cities in the Netherlands, so it is not possible to relate conclusions to this on whether this ratio is disproportionately high.

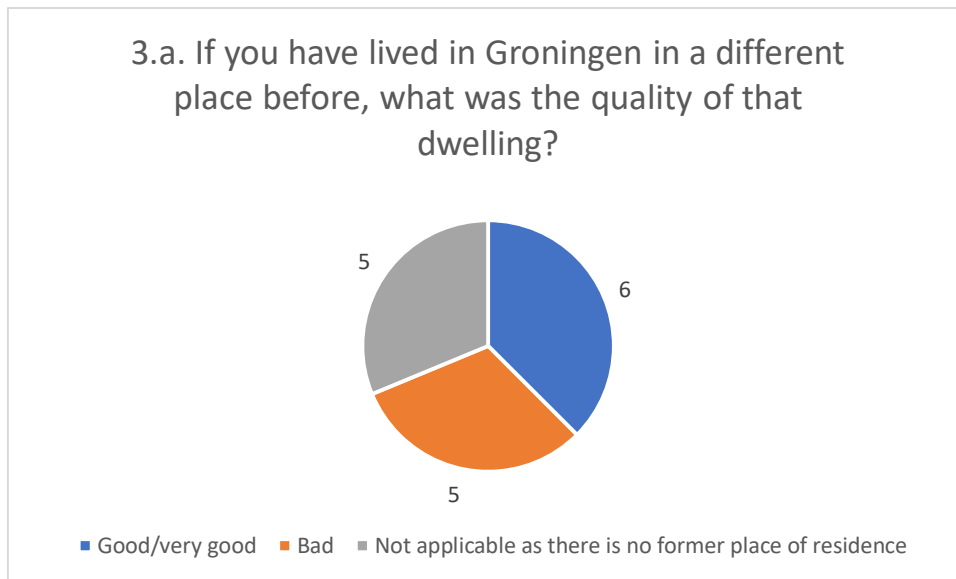


Figure 2: Answers to question on ideas for improving the situation.

4.4 Recommendations by international students

Concluding the interview, the interviewees were asked about their ideas for improving the housing situation in Groningen, and their feeling of safety. Every answer went into detail about the housing crisis. This is the most important aspect negatively influencing the feeling of safety of the interviewees during their stay in Groningen. Furthermore, it has the biggest impact on their experience of Groningen, which apart from this aspect has been overwhelmingly positive. This is in accordance with the contemporary studies about safety, which rate Groningen very high. The current problem is with the housing crisis, and this is something international students have been very vocal about. This culminated in September with the occupation of the Academie building in Groningen (Nu.nl, 2021).

There are two factors which, according to the interviewees, mainly contribute towards the housing crisis. This is a lack of housing for international students in Groningen, and a continuing increase of international students arriving in Groningen to study. The proposed ideas for solving the student housing problem can be divided in more student housing and student housing facilitated directly by the university. The difference is about responsibility for facilitating more student housing which, as figure 2 shows, lies according to the interviewees in the position of the university. While there are two main factors, all answers by the interviewees are focused on the housing situation. There is no mention of an improvement in community integration. Thus it can be concluded that this aspect is not seen as important by the interviewees, or requires no improvement.

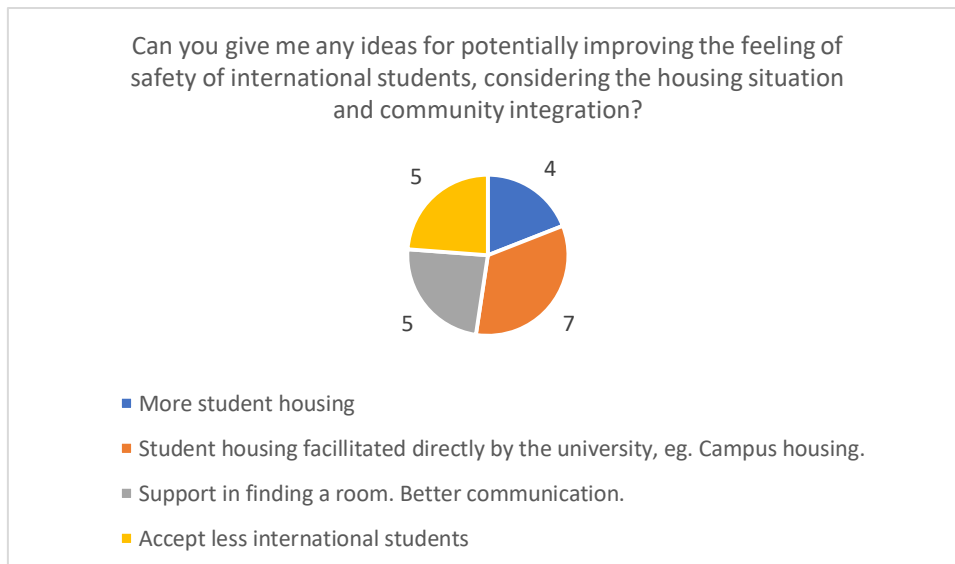


Figure 3: Answers to question on ideas for improving the situation.

It is not possible for universities to reject international students, as it would be discrimination based on nationality (van Unen, 2018). However, the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen has publicised it will no longer recruit internationally (Borst, 2021). This doesn't mean the international students will no longer find Groningen, but it relates to a criticism of the interviewees. The majority had no knowledge of the current housing shortage before deciding to move to Groningen, and they criticise the university for not being open about this. Information about this must be communicated towards potential international students if the problem persists.

The lack of housing is another problem which can't be solved in a moment's notice. There is a general housing crisis in the Netherlands currently (Kraniotis, 2021). However, if there were something to be done, the interviewees advise to look at the nations surrounding the Netherlands. Campus housing is more frequent, and as this is contact via the university, is reliable and secures a room. However, this security of getting a room will only be possible with enough housing or less students, which is therefore the most important problem to solve.

The other main factor could perhaps be solved more simple. The interviews showed that a lot of international students do not know about the housing situation in Groningen before they arrive here (interviewees 2, 4, 5, 13, 15, 18).

*I think you can't tolerate that, or at least the uni has to inform the people before they get to Groningen that that's a possibility. Because I had no idea, and I live in Germany.
(Interviewee 15)*

Currently, the website of the University of Groningen detailing accommodation for international students starts with a disclaimer. It's a recommendation to start searching as soon as you (student) have received an offer from the university. Furthermore, it includes a link to SSH and a website by the municipality, Hanze Hogeschool and the University which offers student rooms of reliable landlords (University of Groningen, 2021). It is therefore surprising that a significant amount of interviewees did not know of the situation. Improvements could be done by improving the visibility of the web page, or by producing a (digital) booklet for international students after they have applied to the university as interviewee 11 received from an independent agency in their home country.

5. Community integration of international students in Groningen

International students arriving in the Netherlands have the possibility to personally determine their amount of community integration. However, there are aspects which are harder to personally affect. Being more integrated in the community can increase the feeling of safety. Knowing the neighbours and housemates helps in feeling comfortable, especially later at night. Furthermore, the ability to converse with people without language restrictions is another way of improving this feeling. International students want to feel at home in the Netherlands, which is influenced by the level of community integration.

5.1 Language differences

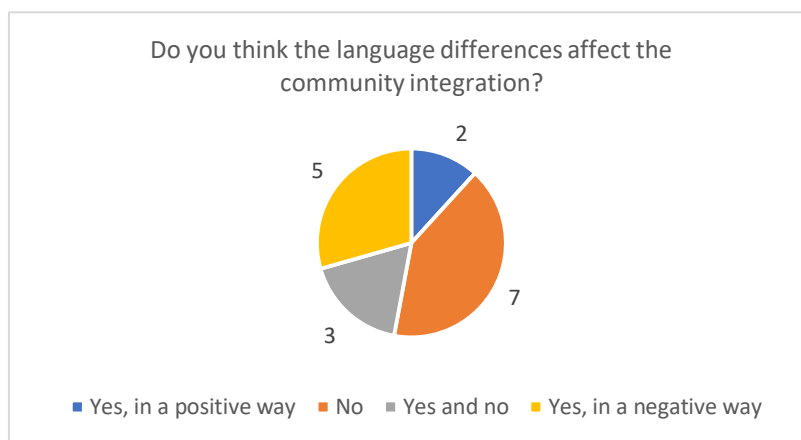


Figure 4: Answers to language differences affecting community integration.

The Netherlands is known for their proficiency in English. In fact, the Netherlands ranks first on the 2021 English Proficiency Index (EF, 2021). This has been experienced by the interviewees. There's no problem conversing with people in English. This has led to a very relaxed and comfortable feeling for the interviewees. However, at the same time, there is not always willingness of Dutch students to converse in English when the majority is Dutch. The interviewees describe a feeling of rejection and not being able to fully integrate, as the other Dutch students tend to talk Dutch and hang out with other Dutch students. This conclusion of no clear answer to the question is expressed in figure 1, as the interviewees are exactly divided on the question.

People here don't have that many issues with speaking English, especially randomly on the street or in the supermarket or anything, then communication is not the issue, but it is for more in-depth, like relationships. In my studies you can really see that there's a group of internationals and then a group of Dutch people. (Interviewee 4)

Most international students see a separation between Dutch students and international students. This is not ordinary for student cities, however, it is apparent that even in an English proficient as Groningen this is still evident. The interviewees dedicate this partly to the housing market, which as described before, is discriminatory towards international students. The reason for this discrimination being the language differences. The other factor in this segregation is about the way the student social life is positioned in Groningen, which will be delved in on later in this paper. To combat

segregation, international and Dutch students must interact. This can be done on the university campus, in classes, or in the neighbourhood.

5.2 Community activities

This section starts off with a sidenote, as the last 1.5 years have been very much influenced by the COVID pandemic. This has had an impact on the availability of community activities, and the possibilities of participating in these. Community activities are those organized within a neighbourhood but also activities organized purely for students, as they are a community within Groningen as well. Studies have shown that neighbourhood activities can improve integration within the neighbourhood between students in general and non-student residents, while student community activities can help in the integration of international students with Dutch students (Rivas et. al, 2019, Rauws & Meelker, 2019).

The interviewees were asked about their knowledge of community activities. As this is a broad concept, the answers were also broad. Out of 18 interviews, 13 interviewees knew of community activities in the city of Groningen. Further questioning led to the conclusion that the clear majority of these activities were exclusive for students. There were no mentions of local initiatives of community activities. Apart from the occasional conversation in the street and going to a party of a neighbour, there are no activities observed by the international students. Taking over the recommendation by Rauws and Meelker (2019), the municipality would do good in helping organize neighbourhood activities with partly (international) students and partly residents. Doing this will also help in making the international students feel welcome in Groningen, something some interviewees voice struggle with due to the housing situation.

Some of the interviewees with a current satisfactory room emphasize the importance of using contact to find a room via-via. The activities organized for students arriving in Groningen start with the KeiWeek and later the ESN week specifically for international students. These are the student activities that, when elaborated on, the interviewees meant as community activities they knew of. This creates the first contacts in Groningen, but the interviewees miss the connection with Dutch students. The separation starts in this week. After this week, the number of activities known by the international students is dependent on their Faculty. Another thing to note is the student culture in the Netherlands. Which is, according to the interviewees, very much based on student associations which they don't identify in other European countries.

There are not much activities to get to know Dutch students actually, I feel like there is a sharp division between Dutch students and international students also because you guys have this strong tradition about student associations. We had stuff that we don't we have no idea about, and it seems to be super important for some of you. (interviewee 9)

The difference in student culture leads to another form of separation. But here, again, the influence of the COVID-pandemic must be stated, and further research at a later moment in time could give more information on the regular situation.

The amount of community integration is influenced by language differences and community activities. However, the relationship between the amount of community integration and feeling of safety is not as apparent. There are definite possible improvements to be made when it comes to

community integration of international students in the city of Groningen. However, it does not have a big influence on the feeling of safety of international students.

6. Conclusion

The feelings of safety of international students are heavily related to their housing situation. They are worried about being able to stay in their current dwelling. In some cases, they know about a certain date on which they must move out. The closer these students get to this date, the higher their stress levels. Trying to find a room to no avail, while feeling unwelcome and being discriminated against is frustrating and worrying. Even for international students with a permanent contract, smaller levels of stress remain because of hearing from other students being evicted. The housing market for international students is at such a point that even a three months' notice may not give enough time. All this has an influence on the ability to study well, which will inevitably have an impact on study grades.

It is hard to currently identify the different degrees of community integration, as the COVID pandemic worsened, and restrictions have recently been harder. A part of this research was on the availability of activities organized for international students. These have not been observed by the interviewees, and it is very much possible that this has been due to the cancellation of most of these events. Reflecting on the 2019 study by Rauws & Meelker, community activities can improve the community integration of international students which is currently lacking. Currently it can not be said with full confidence that the community activities have seen for improvements for international students due to a lack of community activities which can partially be attributed to Covid. One aspect that has improved the feeling of safety for international students is the presence of housemates, where the results of the interviews are in accordance with the finding of Paltridge et. al. (2010).

Something that has been noted, is the separation between Dutch and international students. This also relates to the discrimination on the housing market, as it starts with a separation between housing for internationals and Dutch students. It has brought an unwelcome feeling to several interviewees and has therefore had a negative influence on the feeling of safety. These results are thus in accordance with the 2020 study by Fang & van Liempt in Utrecht. Potentially, this feeling of discrimination on the housing market for international students can therefore be generalized to student cities in the Netherlands. This discrimination can be attributed to language differences which also create a separation between Dutch students and international students which is in accordance with the findings of Yildirim et. al. (2021).

It must be noted that overall, the experiences of the student life in Groningen has been very positive, and the contacts with other international students and other residents have positive. The interviews have not shown a difference in the feeling of safety for different degrees of community integration. As interviewees with a lesser community integration have been positive in this aspect about their safety, as well as interviewees who have had a lot of contact with Dutch students as well as international students. But the importance of contacts in finding a new room has been evident, and is thus easier with a higher community integration. In that respect, a higher community integration can invoke a higher feeling of safety.

The overall feeling of safety for international students in Groningen is rather positive. This is in accordance with current research, as the Netherlands is one of the most safe countries in the world. However, the current housing crisis has led to highly increasing stress level and worriedness about housing for international students. This has resulted in a drastically lower feeling of safety

when it comes to housing security and has influenced the community integration. The experience has been called nightmarish, hell and forced international students back to their country of origin. A few international students are months after arriving in the Netherlands still living in emergency housing, where their possibilities to study are very low. The constant level of stress which comes with trying to find a new room has an influence on the mental health and study results of the students and blocks the opportunities for international students to experience student life as expected and integrate better.

The hypotheses have been tested using the interviews. A relationship has been found between the housing situation of international students in Groningen, and their feeling of safety. This is especially due to the housing crisis which creates uncertainty and stress for the international students. Returning to the definition of feeling of safety by Lindgren and Nilsen (2011), the interviewees express worriedness and feeling uncomfortable in some of the places they have had to live. The second hypothesis, about the relation between community integration and the feeling of safety is less apparent. Some interviewees have noted that being integrated and having friends can mentally help. Furthermore, as for example interviewee 1 notes, having connections can help in finding a room. But this relates more to the housing crisis and its effects than community integration of itself being related to the feeling of safety.

The main purpose of future research on this subject should be on the mental effects, but also on how to solve this problem. Current ideas by the interviewees are not all possible to work out. Furthermore, it will take multiple years to build more housing, while in August a new and possibly larger group of international students will come knocking in Groningen again. Furthermore, after the COVID situation has completely ended, the community integration can be better studied.

The results of this research are relevant to the international student population living in Groningen. As can be explained by the discrimination between international and Dutch students on the housing market, but also community integration which is different for international students, the findings of this research can not be generalized to the complete student population in Groningen. Another limited generalization is of the international population of Groningen. International students often have smaller economic possibilities than older working international people living in Groningen. Furthermore, their criteria for a house are different. International students search for rooms with roommates, who could have the preference of Dutch people. The differences are too large to make a strong generalization. One aspect where a strong generalization can be made is with international student populations in other Dutch cities. The results of this research are in accordance with the conclusions made by Fang & van Liempt (2020) for the student housing situation in Utrecht. Discrimination against international students and a continuous emotional impact are relevant in both cities. Other student cities could thus experience the same problems and can have a strong concurrence in the international student populations.

Reflecting on the research, the choice for a qualitative research has been the right one. However, this has come with some problems. The situation of international students was sometimes more elaborate or different than the preliminary research gave the idea. Two examples in particular have brought problems. The concept of community is one of broad definitions and conceptions. International students interact with other students in the city, Dutch and international, and there is

the concept of community which closely relates to the neighbourhood. This definition also includes neighbours of the students. This research has sought to combine both definitions, but this brought confusion to the interviewees who did not always have the same understanding of the concept. The conclusions from these questions are therefore more cautious. Another problem came with the concept of 'feeling of safety'. The common notion of safety is one where people relate to fear or the possibility that something could be done to them. To explain the concept as used in this research, the concept has been explained before the interview started. However, interviewees tended to reflect on the other notion of safety. A concept like 'wellbeing' could potentially have solved this misunderstanding. Another problem is in the weak data that was ultimately collected. Mistakes were made during the data collecting phase which meant that not every interviewee was asked all the questions. Data is thus not always complete for every research question. This makes it harder to derive conclusions from the smaller amount of data that was collected.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Interview guide

Interview guide

Introduction

- Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. This interview will last about 30 minutes. Your answers help me with my research, which tries to understand the feeling of safety of international students in Groningen with a focus on their housing situation.
- Consent: I need to have you sign this agreement saying that you've read my research information sheet and consent to this interview. Your participation in the interview can be ended at any time and the answers you provide are confidential. Is it alright if I record the interview so that I can make a transcript?
- Can you tell me something about yourself, and your current housing situation?

Housing situation

1. Can you explain in what type of housing you currently live?
 - a. Are you satisfied with this type of housing?
 - b. If you live with roommates, do they make you feel safer? If you don't, does this have a negative influence?
2. Are you certain about staying in your current dwelling? If not, how does this make you feel?
 - a. If you were to be forced out of your current house, how certain are you in finding a new house within the time needed before becoming homeless?
 - b. How did you get the current dwelling you live in?
 - i. Was it a stressful process?
 - ii. Has this had an influence on your feeling of safety in Groningen?
 - c. Have you had any other previous positive or negative experiences about the housing certainty you wish to share with me?
3. Are you satisfied with the quality of your current dwelling?
 - a. If you have lived in Groningen in a different place before, what was the quality of that dwelling?
 - b. Does the quality of your dwelling influence your feeling of safety?

Community integration

4. Do you feel safe in the community you currently live in?
5. Do you think the language differences affect the community integration?
 - a. How do you think that being an international student influences community integration? Can you name any other factors?
6. Do you have a lot of interaction with other students in your community? And do you have a lot of interaction with other residents in your community?
7. Are there a lot of community activities?
 - a. Do you participate in these activities?
 - b. Do they have an influence on your integration, if you participate?

Concluding

8. Do you feel safe in the city of Groningen?
9. Can you give me any ideas for potentially improving the feeling of safety of international students, considering the housing situation and community integration?
10. Is there something else you want to mention?
11. Thank you for participating in this interview.

Appendix B.1

Answers to interview questions.

	<i>Interview 1</i>	<i>Interview 2</i>	<i>Interview 3</i>	<i>Interview 4</i>	<i>Interview 5</i>
<i>Can you tell me something about yourself, and your current housing situation?</i>	I've been living in Groningen for three years. I live with my ex but will move out soon.	I started studying in September, and since then have been living with private landlords in Peize.	I currently live in a studio and I'm a third-year student.	I'm a fifth-year student living in Groningen.	I'm a second-year student, currently living in my home country.
<i>1. Can you explain in what type of housing you currently live?</i>	I currently live with my ex in a shared house with other students.	It's a bit far from Groningen, where I have a room in a house of private landlords.	It's a studio. I get rent allowance so it's not very expensive.	I live in a shared house with two other international students who are friends.	Not applicable.
<i>1.a. Are you satisfied with this type of housing?</i>	Apart from living with an ex, I'm satisfied with the type of housing.	More than content, although it's far I have everything I need.	I am. It's in a good location and quite big. It's also brand new.	I am, it's my home by this point.	Not applicable.
<i>1.b. If you live with roommates, do they make you feel safer? If you don't, does this have a negative influence?</i>	I've felt safe with roommates, and I haven't had any negative experiences with them. It's nice to know people.	The landlords live here, and there is another studio. It feels very safe living in Peize and in the house of the landlords.	I don't live with roommates, however, I do feel safe.	Yes, living with friends contributes to a more 'homey' feeling and safer.	Not applicable.

2. <i>Are you certain about staying in your current dwelling? If not, how does this make you feel?</i>	I won't be staying in the current dwelling, but I'm glad I've found a new room.	I'm quite certain, the contract is indefinite, and I have no reason to be anxious.	I've had some bad experiences with landlords in the past which have been stressful. But I haven't had any problems with the current dwelling.	Yes, I am. I have good contact with the landlord.	Not applicable.
2.a. <i>If you were to be forced out of your current house, how certain are you in finding a new house within the time needed before becoming homeless?</i>	Quite certain, as I have a lot of connections. That's the best way of finding a room.	Not certain. I couldn't find anything else before summer, and after getting the room I tried searching for a room in Groningen but without any results.	I've had this happen to me. I was very worried. But since then, I've been making more connections, also with Dutch students, so now I'm not as worried anymore.	Since I've been here for quite long, I have a lot of contacts. But when I was just here it was much harder to find a room and that was quite stressful.	Although I currently don't live in Groningen. I've been looking for over 6 months, and I haven't been able to find a new house before I would have become homeless.
2.b. <i>How did you get the current dwelling you live in?</i>	Through connections.	I found and advertisement online.	Via Kamernet.	Via an advertisement online for a group of three.	Not applicable.
2.b.1. <i>Was it a stressful process?</i>	No.	Yes, it was. I wanted something in Groningen but chose this because I was stressed, I wouldn't be able to find anything.	I was worried, but I found a new room quite quick, so it wasn't that stressful.	No. I was living in an okay room, and this just came on our path. For the former room, the process was very stressful.	The process of finding a house is incredibly stressful. Knowing the date is coming closer, while contacting hundreds of rooms without any luck.
2.b.2. <i>Has this had an influence on your</i>	Does not apply.	No, as I wasn't in Groningen back then.	No.	No.	No, I've still felt safe.

<i>feeling of safety in Groningen?</i>					
<i>2.c. Have you had any other previous positive or negative experiences about the housing certainty you wish to share with me?</i>	No.	No.	I've had a negative experience where the landlord sold the house and the new landlord was going to kick everyone out. I found a new room and moved out. Other roommates were bought out. I had about 3 months, which is an acceptable amount of time.	I haven't had any problems with that.	I've experienced discrimination towards students and especially international students. That made it very hard for me to find a room.
<i>3. Are you satisfied with the quality of your current dwelling?</i>	I am, and my new room will be bigger and at a location.	I am.	Yes, I definitely am.	I am. I've been living here quite long. Any problems are solved by the landlord.	Not applicable.
<i>3.a. If you have lived in Groningen in a different place before, what was the quality of that dwelling?</i>	I've lived in the Village. It was very bad and I found it to be overpriced.	I haven't.	It was okay. I didn't necessarily want to leave, but my new room is much better.	It wasn't great. The bathroom was very bad.	In the house I lived, which was part of SSH housing, the quality was very nice. It was, however, very pricy.
<i>3.b. Does the quality of your dwelling influence your feeling of safety?</i>	I do feel more comfortable in a room with a better quality.	No, it's all about the location.	Not asked.	I've found that living in the new room with a better quality has been	

				much more comfortable.	
4. <i>Do you feel safe in the community you currently live in?</i>		I do, very much so.		Yes, I've become quite close with our neighbours. And the neighbourhood is very nice.	Not applicable.
5. <i>Do you think the language differences affect the community integration?</i>	Definitely. Not in a positive way.	Yes, in a positive way. I'm more able to express myself in English. However, this is mostly with other students.	That's the main barrier. Now I can understand the language so it's better.	Yes and no. In general people don't have a problem with speaking English but with more in-depth communication the language difference can be an issue.	No, not at all.
5.a. <i>How do you think that being an international student influences community integration? Can you name any other factors?</i>	Because of the language differences being an international student does influence community integration. No other factors.	I've mainly made friends with other international students, and not many Dutch so being an international student does influence the integration.	The language difference is the main factor. Also, association culture is a very Dutch thing and I find that international students meet in different places and different ways.	Yes, I do see a distinction between international students and Dutch students which is because of language.	I haven't experienced any problems with integrating.
6. <i>Do you have a lot of interaction with other students in your community?</i>	I do have a lot of interaction with other international students. Some of them I meet in the neighbourhood. I don't have a lot of	I do interact with other people in the small community of Peize, but not very much.		As mentioned, I have a lot of contact with Dutch neighbours next door. But that's it.	Living in SSH housing I had a lot of interaction with different people living there. Not very much in other parts of the community.

<i>And do you have a lot of interaction with other residents in your community?</i>	interaction with other residents.				
7. <i>Are there a lot of community activities?</i>	I know about some.	No.	Not that I know of.	There were student activities organized, but not really community activities.	Not that I know of.
7.a. <i>Do you participate in these activities?</i>	No, I don't.	Not applicable.	No.	I did in some student activities.	No.
7.b. <i>Do they have an influence on your integration, if you participate?</i>	I don't need it. Perhaps it would, but right now I don't really want to.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Yes, I was able to socialize with international students and Dutch students as well.	Not applicable.
8. <i>Do you feel safe in the city of Groningen?</i>	I do. I don't have many worries, I feel safe and any problems I ignore.	I do, there are good and bad parts. But overall, I feel safe, even more safe than home.	Yes, I do.	Yes, I do. Because of my house and also the neighbourhood.	Yeah, it was my second home, I really fell in love with that city and the people living in it. It is lovely there.
9. <i>Can you give me any ideas for potentially improving the feeling of</i>	I haven't really thought about it, but I would say more student housing.	Just to build more student housing buildings, otherwise, I can't really see what they could do. And if	I think it would be a good idea if the government compelled universities to provide affordable housing for international students	Don't accept as many international students. And if you do accept more than the capacity, inform	There's not enough space to house this many students. There should be bigger building blocks. I'm from Eastern Europe

safety of international students, considering the housing situation and community integration?

possible, accept less students.

near the campus. The current SSH structure does not work and is too expensive. You have to be quick to get a room, like a concert ticket.

students before they come here.

where the infrastructure is different. A lot more people can fit under a roof.

Appendix B.2

Answers to interview questions

	<i>Interview 6</i>	<i>Interview 7</i>	<i>Interview 8</i>	<i>Interview 9</i>	<i>Interview 10</i>
<i>Can you tell me something about yourself, and your current housing situation?</i>	I'm a master student living in Groningen for five years.	I'm a first-year student living in Groningen	I'm a fourth-year student living in Groningen.	I'm a first-year master student living in Groningen.	I'm a first-year student living in Groningen.
1. <i>Can you explain in what type of housing you currently live?</i>	I'm living in shared flats with roommates.	I currently live in a rather expensive room, but it's a nice place.	It's an apartment of someone who sublets one of his rooms for extra income.	I live in an emergency housing facilitated by SSH housing. I share a room with another student.	I live in a two-bedroom house with two friends who are here on exchange as well.
1.a. <i>Are you satisfied with this type of housing?</i>	For sure, it's expensive but it has everything I want.	I would like to move to somewhere cheaper.	I'm just glad I temporarily have something, but I'll be moving out soon of which I'm happy.	No, I'm definitely not. I don't have any personal space. I share a one-person room with another international student. Furthermore, I share the kitchen with 80+ other international students which is disgusting.	I am. It's rather expensive but it's also very nice.
1.b. <i>If you live with roommates, do they make you feel safer? If you don't, does this have a negative influence?</i>		While some roommates can make it safer. I've experienced that too many roommates living under the same roof can make it less safe actually.		I don't feel at home. Personal belongings often get stolen. This is due to the high number of roommates. But still, I do feel safe here, but it is not positively	

<p>2. <i>Are you certain about staying in your current dwelling? If not, how does this make you feel?</i></p>	<p>I'm going to move out in a couple of months back to my home country, so I'm not too worried.</p>	<p>I know that I will probably have to move out within three months so I'm searching for a new room again. It's quite stressful but I'm glad I have something for the time being. But it makes me feel annoyed and disappointed about the Netherlands.</p>	<p>I will be moving out in a couple of days. I knew this was a temporary room, and I've found a new room to stay for a longer term.</p>	<p>influenced by roommates. At the moment of this interview, I'm not. I have to move out later this month and I haven't found a new room. It's super stressing. I have to be online 24/7 to apply for rooms. I know I won't be homeless. I can sleep at some friend's place. But I need a stable place for study and a healthy life again so I can succeed in my master.</p>	<p>Yes, I am. Due to the contract being at Airbnb there are not really possibilities to be evicted.</p>
<p>2.a. <i>If you were to be forced out of your current house, how certain are you in finding a new house within the time needed before becoming homeless?</i></p>	<p>Right now, it wouldn't matter anymore. When I came to Groningen it was very hard finding a room and very stressful. After a couple years it was relatively easy finding a new room with connections.</p>	<p>I've contacted homeless shelters earlier because I was fairly certain I would become homeless. I hope to find something within the coming months, but the experience so far has been terrible.</p>	<p>Not certain at all. This past summer I've been couch surfing [staying at places of friends] for two months before I found this temporary stay.</p>	<p>Currently I'm very stressed about finding a new room before becoming homeless. [Two weeks after the interview a room was found. The emergency housing has also been prolonged]</p>	<p>I would search for another Airbnb place which are often available.</p>
<p>2.b. <i>How did you get the current dwelling you live in?</i></p>	<p>I found it on Facebook and was the first to react.</p>	<p>I got it through the university.</p>	<p>I found it online.</p>	<p>I got it through the University after I arrived in Groningen and was unable to find a room.</p>	<p>Found it online on Airbnb.</p>
<p>2.b.1. <i>Was it a stressful process?</i></p>	<p>No, I already had a room that I was staying in and</p>	<p>Very stressful. I went from emergency housing</p>	<p>Yeah, retrospectively, I've no idea how I made</p>	<p>Very stressful. The official admission for the</p>	<p>I had heard of many students who were</p>

<p>2.b.2. Has this had an influence on your feeling of safety in Groningen?</p>	<p>this went very fast and straightforward.</p>	<p>to emergency housing. I never stayed somewhere long and had to keep moving, while also continuing with studies and trying to find a room.</p>	<p>it through, honestly. But I'm quite resilient. So, it was it was alright. It was never super nice. But it was alright.</p>	<p>master came in September. I started looking in August after an unofficial admission. This was already too late.</p>	<p>having problems finding a room. That gave a bit of stress, but I had no problems with Airbnb. However, if it didn't work out, I don't know what to do.</p>
<p>2.c. Have you had any other previous positive or negative experiences about the housing certainty you wish to share with me?</p>	<p>I've had a negative experience once, about four years ago where I had to move out in September and wasn't able to find a room for a long time. So, I thought I had to get something I'm not comfortable with, but got lucky in the end.</p>	<p>I've been moving from room to room. I've never been in any way certain about a place I was staying.</p>	<p>I had to couch surf because I was forced out of my former room by my landlord. I had one month notice. I do feel like being an international student has had a negative impact, as I didn't know the legality.</p>	<p>This has been my only experience.</p>	<p>This has been my only experience.</p>
<p>3. Are you satisfied with the quality of your current dwelling?</p>	<p>Yes, although the quality standards in my country of origin are higher, for Dutch standards it's very good.</p>	<p>While the price is way higher than I would like, the quality of the room is good.</p>	<p>I'm glad I'm moving out. The new room is totally within my criteria.</p>	<p>I'm not at all satisfied. The kitchen is very gross and lacking many supplies and is broken in many places. I share the room with another student. The rest is rather okay.</p>	<p>I definitely am. It's of very good quality.</p>

3.a. <i>If you have lived in Groningen in a different place before, what was the quality of that dwelling?</i>	I've lived in several places. Most were of a good quality. However, I have experienced bad landlords and broken tiles and boilers. I had to get out of that.	I've lived in big rooms with tens of other international students. And I've lived in a room which was a former smoke room and did not even have a door that could be locked.	The quality has been alright.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
3.b. <i>Does the quality of your dwelling influence your feeling of safety?</i>	In that case I didn't feel comfortable at all, but that's the only problem I've had.	Yes, in these cases it did. It was very uncomfortable and unsafe living without a door I could lock, or with tens of other students in the same room.	I've always felt safe, but I've heard a lot of horror stories. Being able to lock my windows, doors and so on made me feel safer.	It does, as I know that when I place things that are mine in the kitchen, I know that it will be stolen. There are far too less storage places in the kitchen that can be guarded in any way or even closed.	
4. <i>Do you feel safe in the community you currently live in?</i>			Right now, is the worst I've experienced so far.	I've built up good contacts which has made me feel safe. Although I have heard very bad stories about sexual harassment and drugs which were not safe.	Yeah, it's very good. Especially compared to my home country.
5. <i>Do you think the language differences affect the community integration?</i>	It's still a barrier, but I never perceived it that way. So, I haven't had any problems with that.	I only really have contact with international students who are often from the same country. So, with them I speak my own language.	I think so, but also in the other direction. I mainly hang out with people of my home country.	It's a large building, so that's the community I live in essentially. We all speak English as there are only international students. In my studies there are a lot of Dutch students, but I feel there is a big division. This is	Everyone understands English, so that's not a problem.

				due to the language differences.	
5.a. How do you think that being an international student influences community integration? Can you name any other factors?	Generally, Dutch people and students want to hang out with other Dutch people. But I felt very welcome here and met a lot of Dutch and international friends. So, it does for a little bit, but I haven't experienced that negatively.		I sometimes felt excluded when rooms are free, and they want a Dutch person. But otherwise in the community I feel like integration is alright. Although I have not really tried to get into the community that much.	Dutch students have a strong tradition of student associations. This is not really available for international students, and it creates a division. But the main factor is the language.	I'm not really integrated. I've had some activities. But I've mainly been in contact with other international students. I'm not that interested, so I haven't really thought about it.
6. Do you have a lot of interaction with other students in your community? And do you have a lot of interaction with other residents in your community?	I do. My interactions are with other students, and not so much with other residents.	I only really talk with people in my class. Those are my main contacts.	I've mainly met people via activities and study, so not in the community.	I have a lot of interaction with other international students living in the same building or other places. There is not much integration with other Dutch students, but I don't see this as specific to Groningen.	I have interactions with other international students here, but not much with other Dutch or people living here.
7. Are there a lot of community activities?	There were a lot of student activities.	There were some things, but I'm not a part of this in any way.	There were activities for students, but not necessarily local community activities.	There were some student activities at the start of the year.	There were some activities for students, but no local community activities.
7.a. Do you participate in these activities?	I did.	No.	I did participate in a lot of student activities.	No, because they ended before I was able to get to Groningen. This is due to the late admission acceptance of master students.	I did participate in a lot of student activities.
7.b. Do they have an influence on your	Yes, as I got to know many international		In my case not with Dutch people, but with	Probably, but I don't know.	They do, as by meeting Dutch people in these

<i>integration, if you participate?</i>	students, but also Dutch students which helped me integrate.		other international students.		activities you can understand Dutch news and learn more about the country.
8. <i>Do you feel safe in the city of Groningen?</i>	I do	I've had some unsafe incidents, but mostly felt safe.	Never thought about that, which probably means yes, I felt safe.	Yes, due to the friends I have met.	Yes, very.
9. <i>Can you give me any ideas for potentially improving the feeling of safety of international students, considering the housing situation and community integration?</i>	The university and municipality should take its responsibility. If they want this many international students coming here, they should come up with a plan to justify these students coming here and have the capacity for them. But also, there are more possibilities for housing for international students, but it's often not close enough to the city for them. They shouldn't take something they don't want but could look further than they do now.	Have the university have its own housing which is provided to students. Even living in the same room with one other student, as long as you have stable housing and certainty.	The university should take responsibility of finding each student a room. They should also communicate about the problems and create a reliable website on their University website because there are many scammers. Furthermore, there are many websites which require payment, while finding a room on those is not in any way guaranteed. It should be free.	In other countries I have experienced that the universities facilitate housing for international students as they know it is harder when you don't know anyone. Groningen should do this as well. It seems like they don't take it seriously. They could also lower the number of international students, but I think the problems are with the amount of rooms. When there is a shortage of rooms, this is felt most heavily by international students.	I found it hard to find good rooms for students. There should be more advise and help from the municipality to locate good rooms for students. And also supervise students in contact with their landlords. The landlord has all the power versus a student. Some supervision for the international students would be helpful.

Appendix B.3

Answers to interview questions.

	<i>Interview 11</i>	<i>Interview 12</i>	<i>Interview 13</i>	<i>Interview 14</i>	<i>Interview 15</i>
<i>Can you tell me something about yourself, and your current housing situation?</i>	I'm a second-year student living in Groningen.	I'm a third-year student living in Groningen.	I'm a second-year student living in Groningen.	I'm a first-year student living in Groningen.	I have just moved out of my room in Groningen where I stayed for three years.
<i>1. Can you explain in what type of housing you currently live?</i>	I live in a house with a couple of roommates with shared facilities.	I live with four roommates in a house for two weeks.	I live in an apartment which is way above my budget so I'm looking for someone to share it with.	I live in emergency housing facilitated by SSH housing.	It was a room where I shared the basic facilities with three other girls from the same country.
<i>1.a. Are you satisfied with this type of housing?</i>	Yes, one of my roommates is my classmate which is very nice.	Yes, I'm very satisfied with this. It's perfect.	I just found a roommate, so then it should be fine. Otherwise, it would be far too expensive.	No, I would much rather find something for the long term.	I was, although I didn't interact with the roommates very much, it was fine.
<i>1.b. If you live with roommates, do they make you feel safer? If you don't, does this have a negative influence?</i>	Yes, they do. Especially my classmate who I know for quite a long time. But I don't actually know my other housemates that well.	Yes, I live in a mixed house with Dutch and international students. One of them is the same nationality which is very nice.	I haven't really lived with roommates, so I don't really know yet.	Yes, it's nice to have people around. Especially in the evening and the weekends.	Yes, perhaps also because they were from the same country. We could speak our own language in house.
<i>2. Are you certain about staying in your current dwelling? If not, how</i>	Yes, until I go on exchange, I'm certain about staying here.	As far as I know for now, yes.	For now, I feel certain about staying here. I can stay here as long as I like.	I should be able to stay here at least until December.	Not applicable as I've just moved out.

<i>does this make you feel?</i>					
<i>2.a. If you were to be forced out of your current house, how certain are you in finding a new house within the time needed before becoming homeless?</i>	I'm not looking forward to it. But I don't have high expectations and I will just take anything I can get. It's sad but should be able to find a room.	I've been living with my brother, and before that I was couch surfing. If I were to get forced out, I could always still go back to my brother, but I don't have my own space there so I would not like that.	My experience these last months has been terrible. I had no idea it was this bad when I started looking. This room came just in time. I don't know what would happen now.	I'm currently still looking for a room.	I found my room quite quickly so while I heard the bad experiences from friends, I never experienced it myself. But because of these experiences, I would be worried.
<i>2.b. How did you get the current dwelling you live in?</i>	I searched online. After about 2 months we found this. I had luck.	I found it via an advertisement online.	I went to twenty viewings, this was the only one that came back to me.	I got it because I couldn't find anything else, so I got this through the university.	I got it online. The landlord search only for girls from my home country.
<i>2.b.1. Was it a stressful process?</i>	It was a nightmare. It's very hard to find a room. It was stressful knowing there is a date before which you have to have acquired a new room.	It was really, really intense. It was really worrying. I would spend every day online searching for rooms but finding nothing.	I'm here alone. I didn't have family here. I found a place for the month of August, and then had to find something. I found this, but it was way over my budget. I don't really want to get into it, but it was incredibly stressful.	Yes, and it's still very stressful. I'm pretty busy with it.	No, but looking back on the process I was probably very lucky. I had no idea how crazy the situation was. When I found out, I was very glad about the room I found so quickly.
<i>2.b.2. Has this had an influence on your</i>	Yes, it was a very stressful process. Furthermore, it happened during exams	It was quite a scary time, while I also had to couch surf or stay with my	I mean, it definitely caused a change in my mental health. I learned a few lessons.	It's a very long and busy process. I keep on messaging and reacting to posts while I almost	No, I was glad with the place I had.

<i>feeling of safety in Groningen?</i>	and the last classes, so I had to study a lot which increased the levels of stress.	brother during this time as well.		never get responses. That's stressful and hopeless.	
<i>2.c. Have you had any other previous positive or negative experiences about the housing certainty you wish to share with me?</i>	Yes, when I stayed in SSH housing, a location was closed. This meant that I had to move out one month before my contract actually ended. It cost a lot of energy in contacting the SSH organization to better our situation.	No.	No.	No.	Although I don't live there anymore, I was not certain about staying there when I lived there. I have never signed a contract, so in that way I was living illegally.
<i>3. Are you satisfied with the quality of your current dwelling?</i>	I am. But it doesn't matter me that much. I care more about the roommates.	I definitely am. I got to a point where I would accept anything. But it's perfect for me. In that sense I got lucky.	Yes, I am.	I am. I'm comfortable staying here for now. The quality is actually pretty good for the situation.	It was not exactly what I wanted, but it was clean, and I had everything I needed.
<i>3.a. If you have lived in Groningen in a different place before, what was the quality of that dwelling?</i>	I've lived in a SSH housing location at the Blekerslaan. This was relatively good. It was much better than I heard about other locations and the Village.			Not applicable.	Not applicable.
<i>3.b. Does the quality of your dwelling influence your feeling of safety?</i>	Not really.	No.		No, I would not say so.	
<i>4. Do you feel safe in the community you currently live in?</i>	I think I'm pretty lucky, I feel quite secure knowing that my classmate is right next	I feel super safe. I know the neighbourhood and it's close to everything.	Yes, I'm glad with the location and place I'm staying now.	Yes, I do.	I felt safe generally, but I did have unpleasant experiences. It was not a very good

door. The neighbourhood does not always feel very safe at night but walking home together makes it safer. I do feel scared at night, but I think that also has to do more with me and my experiences in my home country and not the city.

neighbourhood and for example a motorcycle was stolen. At night, I didn't feel that safe. But overall, it was fine.

5. Do you think the language differences affect the community integration?

Most people speak English. That has also made me feel safer.

I did feel a split between Dutch and international students, this is probably due to the language differences.

No, I'm in class with several Dutch students and everyone gets along equally.

I feel like it doesn't have an effect where I feel worse in the Netherlands. But if you compare with people from other countries, non-European, I have more of a sense of safety, because the nation is closer to mine. I was never scared I was lost or couldn't communicate.

5.a. How do you think that being an international student influences community integration? Can you name any other factors?

I interact with both the international community and Dutch community. I haven't found any problems with being an international student.

As I do feel a split between international students and Dutch students, it must influence in a way. But this is probably due to the language difference.

I don't think so, but due to COVID I have not been able to integrate as much as I would like.

I think I was able to integrate quite well in the student community. I had a very internationally mixed group of friends. I did not have that much interaction with Dutch students.

6. Do you have a lot of interaction with other students in your community? And do you have a lot of interaction with other residents in your community?	I do via my study. I don't have much interaction with other residents in the community.	I only just live here, so I have not interacted that much with people in my neighbourhood yet.	Not really. There are some international and Dutch students living in the same building, but I haven't interacted very much with them.	Due to COVID not so much.	I did have a lot of interactions. Not very much with residents in the neighbourhood. I did have neighbours who I sometimes interacted with, but they only spoke Dutch so that was hard.
7. Are there a lot of community activities?	Not that I know of.	There were activities organized by my study association.	I know about a couple of activities.	The most activities have been cancelled.	When I arrived in Groningen there were some.
7.a. Do you participate in these activities?	No.	Yes, I did.	Some of them, it's how I initially found people.	No.	Yes, I did.
7.b. Do they have an influence on your integration, if you participate?	Perhaps.	I mostly met other international students in these activities. It was very interesting, but not really integrating into Dutch culture.	My interaction has only been with other international students.	I don't know about that.	They do, although I didn't participate in many. I did not really seek it out.
8. Do you feel safe in the city of Groningen?	I would say so. I believe I feel safe in Groningen. Especially when I compare with my home country.	Yes, I definitely feel safe here.	Yes, my experience overall has been okay considering everything.	Yes, even though my situation is not as I would have liked, I enjoy it here and I'm comfortable here.	Yes, I definitely felt safe and would like to move back already.
9. Can you give me any ideas for potentially improving the feeling of safety of international students, considering	I think there are good options like SSH housing, but just for one year. In my home country they have accommodations for all students on campus. There's also the	I feel like the main issue is an overflow of students where there is no physical space for these students. New houses are built everywhere, but	If I were to solve the housing crisis with everything at my disposal, I would go for campus housing in Zernike. That's the norm in most places.	If the university wants more students, they should get involved in facilitating more housing. They should build something and make the investments.	There should be regulations on how many people can fit in the city and get a place to study. I'm pretty sure those are separated so there is no way of telling

the housing situation and community integration?

problem that a lot of houses with Dutch students don't want international students. But I don't know what to do about it, I don't understand it.

eventually space runs out. You don't want students to live too far, that's not the experience they want. So, there should be less students.

These could be apartments specifically for students.

how many people will actually come to the city and would be able to stay. The University has to be better in communicating the situation and make housing legal and safe.

Appendix B.4

Answers to interview questions.

Interview 16

Interview 17

Interview 18

<i>Can you tell me something about yourself, and your current housing situation?</i>	I'm a third-year student at Hanze but I currently live in the United States.	I'm a first-year student living in Groningen.	I'm a first-year student living in Groningen.
<i>1. Can you explain in what type of housing you currently live?</i>	Because I was unable to find a place before my lease ended, I now live back in my home country with my parents.	I live in a room where I share a common room and basic facilities with roommates.	I'm currently living in a village outside of Groningen. I live there illegally, without a bedroom door.
<i>1.a. Are you satisfied with this type of housing?</i>	No, I really want to move back to Groningen as soon as I can.	Yes, I'm just very glad to have a place for myself.	No. I'm very scared of being evicted, and the landlord has been quite angry with me. Also having no bedroom door is very bad.
<i>1.b. If you live with roommates, do they make you feel safer? If you don't, does this have a negative influence?</i>	I generally keep to myself, although it is nice to have roommates around. But it does not influence much.	I've only been living here for a week. But living in emergency housing, the roommates were good. Everyone was in the same situation. Sometimes this caused extra stress, but it was also nice to talk about.	I've lived in emergency housing with almost a hundred roommates. I definitely did not feel safe there.

2. Are you certain about staying in your current dwelling? If not, how does this make you feel?	Unfortunately, I don't have a room now which has been very stressful.	I'm still looking for something else, but for now I do feel certain about staying here.	I try not to think about it. I'm doing quite well mentally, the situation is far from ideal and it's highly stressful. I just keep myself distracted from those situations. It's a coping mechanism.
2.a. If you were to be forced out of your current house, how certain are you in finding a new house within the time needed before becoming homeless?	I've been trying to find a room for a couple of months now without any luck. If I were unable to move back to the US, I would probably be homeless.	I could probably go back to emergency housing, but I would not want to.	I could go to emergency housing, but I do not want to do that. I would go back to my home country and try to continue my studies there.
2.b. How did you get the current dwelling you live in?	Not applicable.	I found it online and got lucky with a viewing.	I got it online.
2.b.1. Was it a stressful process?	The process of finding a room has been incredibly stressful. I've always stayed hopeful,	Yes, I got my acceptance letter in August, which was apparently too late to get a room. So, I had to go to emergency housing where I shared a room with another international student. I did not have any personal space and felt discriminated trying to find a house. It's much easier to find a room if you're Dutch or a woman. I've paid 115 euro's for Kamernet.	Yes. Before I came here, I thought I had a room. But at the last moment the roommates decided to go for someone else. Then I went to emergency housing but there was no kitchen and no privacy. I got very sick. That's why I ultimately went for this room, just to get something. But it's still very stressful.
2.b.2. Has this had an influence on your feeling of safety in Groningen?	It was very hard to combine the study load with constantly trying to find a room. And it was a very stressful situation. But I still want to stay hopeful, I have to.	It has been very stressful trying to find a room. But overall, it didn't really bother me in my living conditions, because I was actually comfortable with my studies.	The process itself not. But I don't feel same in my room. If I would have found a good room, I would feel safer there.
2.c. Have you had any other previous positive or negative experiences	My previous experiences have been rather positive.	No.	No.

about the housing certainty you wish to share with me?

3. Are you satisfied with the quality of your current dwelling?

Not applicable.

It needs some work and a lot of cleaning, but it's very nice.

No, I really need a bedroom door. The landlord is willing to reimburse me if I buy one, but I don't trust her.

3.a. If you have lived in Groningen in a different place before, what was the quality of that dwelling?

I've lived in SSH housing, of which the quality was very good. And an apartment which was also very good, although quite expensive.

I've lived in an emergency housing building. It was pretty good, especially considering the situation. Maintenance was on top of everything.

I've lived in the emergency housing location of the Village. It was very bad. I did not have a kitchen and shared the room with about a hundred other students. I got really sick there. I don't ever want to go back there.

3.b. Does the quality of your dwelling influence your feeling of safety?

4. Do you feel safe in the community you currently live in?

I did feel really safe while I was in Groningen.

I've just moved here but considering the whole city then yes. I don't feel uncomfortable.

I have a lot of friends who help with getting my mind off the situation. That helps.

5. Do you think the language differences affect the community integration?

I've had no problems with this. Dutch people are almost always able to speak English without a problem.

Yes, it does. I'm working on learning the Dutch language.

I've been interacting with a lot of Dutch students, as well as international students.

5.a. How do you think that being an international student influences community integration? Can you name any other factors?

I don't really know. I'm not that outgoing.

I work with Dutch people and my roommates are Dutch so I live among the Dutch. That's why I really want to learn the language. That would help even more.

<p>6. Do you have a lot of interaction with other students in your community? And do you have a lot of interaction with other residents in your community?</p>	<p>Not really, but that has mostly to do with me. There were options and activities but I'm not an outgoing person and often stick to myself.</p>	<p>Via my course I interact with international students, and I also interact with people from the emergency housing.</p>	<p>Via my job I have a lot of interaction with other students. And also via my studies.</p>
<p>7. Are there a lot of community activities?</p>	<p>Yes, there were some student activities.</p>	<p>Not that I know of.</p>	<p>My study associations organize a lot of activities.</p>
<p>7.a. Do you participate in these activities?</p>	<p>No, not really.</p>	<p>No, I haven't.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>7.b. Do they have an influence on your integration, if you participate?</p>	<p>I think so.</p>	<p>I don't need it.</p>	<p>The activities helped me a lot.</p>
<p>8. Do you feel safe in the city of Groningen?</p>	<p>I did really feel safe, and I would move back as fast as I could.</p>	<p>Apart from the riots a couple of weeks ago, definitely.</p>	<p>When I'm in the city, I do feel safe.</p>
<p>9. Can you give me any ideas for potentially improving the feeling of safety of international students, considering the housing situation and community integration?</p>	<p>I think there should be a lot more involvement from the school side. More feeling of responsibility from them. The safety and wellbeing of students should be a priority, and housing is a big part of that. You hardly feel safe if you don't have a roof above your head.</p>	<p>There should be more affordable options. The university could open a student dorm house. I would also like more support on finding a house or making options available. It was a bit of a mess.</p>	<p>The university should give a warning and communicate better about the situation. They should also work with the municipality for more student housing, and perhaps install a numerous fixus. But the most important thing is better communication and warning international students.</p>

Appendix C: Interview transcripts

Interview 1

Twan Dimmendaal 0:02

For the interview, I won't be using your name in any kind of way. And if you want to retract any comments that you made, you can always just contact me again. And then I will do so. Just to start off, could you tell me something about your current housing situation?

Interviewee 0:22

Well, how to say I lived here for almost three years already. So, I've been moving around a lot. So when I first came here, the housing was really a big issue because I applied like, two months before the university stuff. But the housing was already gone. So I got the student housing, the Village. It's a container house, I suppose. And it's overpriced, like super expensive. And we share with 30 people on the first floor, they have three floors. Well, when I was there, it was okay. But I heard other buildings were also having trouble with people just not cleaning the kitchen at all. And the bathroom. The toilet is clogged and everything and I was so happy that I have my floor that people are really considering. Yeah, so that's that. And then I moved to a normal room in Helper Brink. And it was further from city so it's cheaper. But the room is so small, but I still can manage. I mostly got my room through people I know. So I never really was able to get it from internet or Facebook. And then I moved to my current room. It's because my ex has a room here. And then we broke up. So he still lives here, now I have to move again.

Unknown Speaker 2:19

So the room is for two persons?

Interviewee 2:25

No it's a student share house, the same as my old house. It's just my ex is downstairs and he has his friend over from Amsterdam, so he wanted to take all my room since we broke up. I'm going to move out, eventually,

Twan Dimmendaal 2:43

So right now you're looking towards other rooms again?

Interviewee 2:47

Yes. But I found a room three weeks ago. By again, connection with people. So my ex's friend found this through his connections. So he gave the room to me.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:03

Yeah, that's the way to go. So right now you just have to wait until you can move in to that new room?

Interviewee 3:12

Yeah. But it's been so long before we can find a room. So it was a really shitty situation.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:24

So apart from of course, the situation with your ex, are you satisfied with the house and the quality of room?

Interviewee 3:32

The housing is better. Location wise it's closer to the city. And I pay just 50 Euro extra. And my room is bigger, like way bigger. So I really like it.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:48

And, of course, you said that in the beginning. You got a room in two months. Before you started here. Which is the SSH village?

Interviewee 4:01

Yes.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:04

There you stayed for a year because then after a year, you have to move out. So I understand the experience in the village was reasonably okay. Especially with the stories that you heard from others?

Interviewee 4:18

Yes. When I left there, it was very bad.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:21

Okay, so you had to leave. And of course, you said it was too expensive.

Interviewee 4:29

Yes. Too overpriced for not having your own kitchen and bathroom. Because I heard my friend they are in another student dorm as well, but is a little bit more expensive just 50 Euro extra. You can get your own kitchen so it's actually cool. So I should have done that, but it's so far away from the city.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:59

Okay, just out of curiosity, how much is living in the village?

Interviewee 5:05

It was 500? It was supposed to be 495. And then they didn't finish the gym. And then after they finished the gym, they were like, we kind of want to add a little bit more. And then you might want to pay extra for a gym membership. And I was like, Okay, I mean, the five euros is fine. But changing the contract. It's a bit weird.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:30

Because what I've what I've heard from other international students is that when they move here they find it actually very, very expensive. Then they get to know the real housing markets situation here. And they say, well, perhaps it's not that expensive. Would you agree with that or just saying, well, still knowing the rest of the houses in funding, it's so expensive.

Interviewee 5:57

There's some people I suppose that take advantage of the situation. I know sometimes it can be too overpriced and super small. But in general, it's just reasonable.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:14

How soon after you started searching for a room after SSH did you find a new one?

Interviewee 6:31

So around two months.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:38

How did you experience these two months? Which I mean, this, you know, the during SSH?

Interviewee 6:48

I needed to pay double rent, and everything. So that was really expensive.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:55
you couldn't you couldn't give up your SSH room?

Interviewee 6:59
No, you cannot because then I would lose my deposit.

Twan Dimmendaal 7:06
And the deposit was more money than two months rent?

Interviewee 7:14
But some people are finding excuses like cancelling their studies. So to go somewhere else, and they were like, Yeah, I'm not going to live here anymore. And some people are having financial issues that they need to use their money for healthcare and stuff to get out.

Twan Dimmendaal 7:46
It sounds pretty bad. And especially that you feel like you have to do that in order to accept the room which is also quite far from the city and quite small. Because what would have happened? Otherwise? Do you feel like would this have happened if you were a Dutch student?

Interviewee 8:15
I think if you speak Dutch it's maybe easier, because most of the houses are looking for Dutch people and not really internationals, so I guess I suppose in a certain level, it's easier to be Dutch citizen. I mean, speaking Dutch.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:40
Yeah, the amount of houses where you are eligible, I guess, is quite a bit bigger. So right now you're about to move again?

Interviewee 9:00
It was really nice. I was so happy. Yeah, I have like a small living room, but I have like a kitchen inside my room. So I was pretty happy because it's also enough not too expensive. I heard they're going to raise the price. So I hope that is not going to be too expensive, because that will be disappointing.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:26
Yeah, but it's usual that during a change of residence, the price increases indeed. I think there are some law regulations that state that it can't be more than like 10% so if that happens, you could always look into that. And during the SSH housing and after that Did you feel safe within your the place that you had?

Interviewee 10:05
So like the new room?

Twan Dimmendaal 10:07
No, not the new room that you're going into. But over the past three years, with the different rooms that you had.

Interviewee 10:18
I feel pretty safe and very comfortable, I suppose. Because every time I move I know people there so I guess that makes it easier.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:29
And with the house in the village?

Interviewee 10:33
Oh, I get along very well with almost everyone because I'm very talkative.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:41
That's good. That was all about the housing situation. So now there's also the community integration. Where I think that that really worked out for you because as you said, you've got these new rooms via people that you know. So yeah, how did you get to know other people within the city of Groningen?

Interviewee 11:10
I know them from gaming sometimes. I sometimes go outside and just talk to people. Just make friends through friends. I guess I made friends when they have like a group of friends just chilling. Talk to people at school. At work, because I work part time job as well. So that helps a lot. I'm going to sports stuff in the park and just interact with people. Because why not?

Twan Dimmendaal 11:57
And are these mostly international students, but are also Dutch students?

Interviewee 12:03
Yeah. Mostly international people. Because I made friends from the student house, like the SSH housing.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:15
Do you think that language differences affect this this integration?

Interviewee 12:28
Definitely. Even like, relationship wise as well.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:37
How do you mean?

Interviewee 12:40
When I go to my exes parents. That's kind of also a language barrier. I think would be nice if I could speak Dutch.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:50
Are you trying?

Interviewee 12:53
I still have to look for the choruses. Because every time I apply for it, it's either way too expensive. And I'm always late to apply for the free courses. It's always something coming up.

Twan Dimmendaal 13:17
Did you feel like there were a lot of activities that were organized for international students?

Interviewee 13:22
I'm pretty sure there is. I'm just not actively looking for it.

Twan Dimmendaal 13:38

Did they reach out to you? Because there are some international student associations but also your study association. Or perhaps something in a neighborhood that could also be possible.

Interviewee 14:00

Yeah. I guess I don't really drink smoke or party so I guess not. I more or less interact with other people who want to go swimming or basketball or soccer or any activity outdoors, I would just ask them and sometimes they also asked if I wanted to go to tennis and everything. So yeah, it's more sports and not party instead.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:30

As a concluding kind of question, ultimately during these three years, did you feel safe in Groningen?

Interviewee 14:40

I think so. I mean, I don't know much about what could happen. That helps a lot. Because I think most of people just describe me as just very chill person. When they see me it's me just running in a field of flowers. No worries at all. I'm ignoring all the problems. So I guess I do feel safe in the kind of way until something happens.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:15

But were you stressed over these three years about the house that you were in. Like whether you will get evicted or in some other way?

Interviewee 15:43

The most stressful is that the housing contract doesn't really allow pets. Me and my ex f bought an hamster in the beginning. And then eventually we have a cat. So it was really risky.

Twan Dimmendaal 16:02

So yeah, that's kind of stressful. I understand. But apart from that?

Interviewee 16:09

No, not really.

Twan Dimmendaal 16:13

I understand that you've had quite a good experience on the housing market. Considering the situation. Could you give me any ideas for potentially improving this for other international students?

Interviewee 16:37

I think like everyone would say that they should just make more student housing.

Twan Dimmendaal 16:49

And then just for international students, or also for Dutch students?

Interviewee 16:55

It would be nice if it's equal, I suppose. Depends on how much internationals can accept it.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:13

Trying to equal and then somewhere in the city, or would you say more on campus?

Interviewee 17:24

Not too far from the city. So I would say even 15 minutes by bike and 30 minutes walking, that's doable. Better than somewhere that you have to take a train because for an international student taking the train is going to be expensive, because they don't have free transportation.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:45

That will be will be expensive. I think I've asked everything that I wanted to ask. I think I've got a good understanding. That will be it. Is there something that you would want to mention?

Interviewee 18:07

I think it's all good.

Twan Dimmendaal 18:11

Then I just really want to thank you for participating in the interview again, and really helps me with the research I wish you a very nice evening.

Interviewee 18:21

Yeah, you too. Have a good night.

Twan Dimmendaal 18:28

Thank you very much. Bye

Interviewee 18:35

Bye.

Interview 2

Twan Dimmendaal 0:00

I'll start the recording already. Anything you say you can always contact me and if you want to retract any statements that you made, and I won't be using your name in any kind of way, just for your privacy. So yeah, I've talked a bit about my research in the message that I sent you. So it's about feeling of safety of international students considering the housing situation housing market in Groningen. So yeah, just to start off, could you tell me something about your current housing situation?

Interviewee 0:35

Oh, well, right now I live at private landlords. So basically, I rented the room, or I talked to a landlord back in May, so that I could rent a room starting from September when I started my studies. But that was a bit of a stressful situation. Because in the first place, I wanted to live in a student housing like Upsilon or the student hotel or something like that. But they got booked extremely quickly, like within five seconds or something like that. So for the next two weeks, I had to keep looking on sites like Kamernet without actually finding anything helpful. Until I stumbled upon this, people that I live with right now. Right now I live in Peize. But it's a bit far from Groningen. It's not really within city. But I wouldn't say it's that far. I mean, there are like 10 kilometers, and there's a direct bus line. So that's great.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:44

So that's where you live right now. So you're a first year student?

Interviewee 1:50

Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:51

And you wanted to go apply for the SSH short stay student housing. When did this go open?

Interviewee 2:00

The registrations opened on 10th of May, I think, at 9am, or something like that. I wasn't able to actually access them because I had school. And I had to ask somebody else do that for me. But even so it didn't work out.

Twan Dimmendaal 2:15

And since that moment, you've been trying to get another room?

Interviewee 2:22

I've been trying intensely for one week after that. But I saw that I had no result whatsoever. So I ended up accessing this ad. Actually, I saw this ad, where I am living right now, previously before the SSH opened, but I thought, well, it's kind of far. Maybe I can find something better. And then after I missed the chance to live in SSH, I got so stressed that I said, Okay, I don't want to spend the rest of the summer looking for a room and not having any success. So I will just take this one.

Twan Dimmendaal 2:56

Yeah, I understand. So are you are you satisfied right now with the housing that you're in?

Interviewee 3:05

Oh, yeah, more than content. I mean, I've been considering if to keep looking for room inside Groningen. But honestly, I have everything I need here. Although it's far. I feel like it's better than anything I would be able to find in the city.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:23

So you're staying there right now? And is it on a limited contract? Or can you stay there for as long as you can?

The contract doesn't specify anything. So I think it's indefinite. So I probably can stay on forever.

So right now you're pretty comfortable where you are?

Interviewee 3:44

Yeah, it's okay. I have all the amenities, everything I need. I have basically a room which has kitchen included in it. So it's very practical.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:57

And of course, you were you were trying to get a room for about one or two weeks, which could have been a lot longer.

Interviewee 4:08

I had to make some kind of concession because initially, when I saw this ad, they had two studios available. And I said, Okay, I'm going to keep looking for something in the city. And then when I looked again, after two weeks, they only had one studio available. So even if it's 10 kilometers away, and four months prior, somebody still booked another studio. And so I said, this is too much.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:34

Yeah, I understand. It's nice to have something.

Interviewee 4:39

Definitely.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:40

So what I wanted to ask, did you did you know about current housing situation before you went to apply for SSH, and were trying to find a different room?

Interviewee 4:57

Honestly, at first when I first decided to study in the Netherlands, I had no idea. I had no clue. And I wish I had. Not that it would have changed my decision necessarily, but it would have been nice to know, in the first place. And then basically, when it was March, I started researching more and found out about the situation and up until May, I already had a very clear picture about the whole thing. So yeah, it was a gradual process of me finding out how bad it is.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:34

And then when it was May, of course, you missed out on SSH. And I can understand the stress that that must give. Alright, so right now you're living in studio. And I understand there's also another studio within the building, are you so you're with two students living there?

Interviewee 6:04

I live in a house owned by two Dutch people. My landlords, basically very nice people. And they have two studios available, which is in their house, that they rent to other people. So that's it.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:19

Do you have a lot of contact with this landlord?

Interviewee 6:24

Yeah, I mean, we live in the same house. So invariably, we still see each other on the hallway or something. And I was actually very lucky to be able to live with them. And for them to run the studio. Because every time I have a question about anything that's related, I can ask them because obviously they are touch and know how things work here. So it's very nice.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:48

And do you do you feel safe? Where you currently live?

Interviewee 6:53

Yeah, definitely. I feel like Peize, this village is very nice somehow, and everything is aesthetic and pretty and people are just doing there thing. And some of them just say hi randomly on the street. And I'm not used to that. Definitely. So I feel safe, 100%.

Twan Dimmendaal 7:15

It's a pretty nice village. Yeah, pretty small, of course. And I really understand that it's very safe there. So yeah, within that within the house that you're in, it's also very safe.

Interviewee 7:27

Yeah, definitely. I mean, it was quite surprising for me when I first got here that my landlords have a rule for locking the door. Like, if I find the key in the door, this means I do not have to lock it back. But if the key is not in the door, and the door's locked, I have to lock it back. And most of the time, they don't have the door locked, which is so weird for me, because I'm not used to that, again, from what I'm from everybody locks their doors at all times.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:02

So how's your integration within the city cloning have been and with other students?

Interviewee 8:10

It was a bit slow at first, or it's a bit slow. Now, I don't know exactly. But I've made a lot of friends, unexpectedly, and student facilities and the course is absolutely great. And honestly, I don't feel introverted when I'm about meet people or say hi to people, I don't know. I mean, it's very easy. Maybe it's about the language thing. Because I feel like when I have to talk in English to people, I can say whatever and be more extroverted and say anything I want. Whereas if I had to do that, in my own language, I would be a bit over boastful about everything.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:50

So you'd actually say that perhaps the language difference positively affects your community integration?

Interviewee 8:58

Yeah, that's nice. I also think that everyone is a student here, especially the internationals and everyone wants to make friends. So we're not at a loss.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:10

And do you have currently a lot of contact with other international students that are also Dutch students?

Interviewee 9:17

Right now I've mainly made friends with the international students. I'm Romanian, and I don't have a lot of Romanian friends. I don't know why, but neither do I have a lot of Dutch friends. So mostly internationals, but like people from Slovakia or Germany or other countries.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:42

And were there a lot of activities that were organized to help you with this and help you with meeting other people. Or was this mostly done through going to class?

Interviewee 9:54

There were definitely a lot of activities that are organized starting from the ESN week then the KeiWeek Introduction organized by the university and ESN, for example, organizes events every week and every day almost. But I personally didn't have time to attend all that because it has been such a new thing for me. And I had to learn how to live by my own basically. So I couldn't focus on attending those. But if you want to get involved in anything, you have all the chances, the responsibility.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:33

So, of course, right now in Peize, you feel very safe. When you go to Groningen into the city. Do you still feel safe? Because it's relatively far from home?

Interviewee 10:45

I don't know. I mean, it depends on the neighborhood in Groningen. Like, obviously, if I'm in the city center. Yeah, it's fine. It's perfect. But there are certain places where I haven't walked in yet. So I can't say for sure. It's 100% safe. But just like any other city, there are good parts and bad parts. But generally, I feel more safe than home.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:10

Could you explain this?

Interviewee 11:17

I don't know. I feel like people are in a way, they behave better. I don't want to say that they are taught better not to do certain things from when they're little and all that like relating to the education part. But I feel like they have a different mindset about everyone's way of expressing themselves. For example, I don't know if you were a more special type of person in Romania, some people would have looked at you like, that's kind of interesting. But here people don't judge they don't mind. Everyone can act however they want. So I feel more safe from that point of view.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:02

And how is your experience of Groningen been as a whole?

Interviewee 12:08

It's great. I mean, I wish the COVID restrictions weren't on. But that's happening all throughout the world. So you can't really help it. But I feel like it's a very nice city. And I haven't discovered it yet. But I love it. I love the old architecture, especially because I've heard that not every Dutch city has such old buildings. Because Groningen wasn't bombed in the Second World War that bad. Yeah, so I love that aesthetic.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:46

I have one final question. If you have any ideas for potentially improving this current housing crisis and housing situation of international students, by for example, the RUG or the municipality?

Interviewee 13:10

Just to build more student housing buildings, otherwise, I can't really see what they could do. I mean, I've been wondering since I came here, why do they accept so many students, if there aren't places for them to house them? Maybe that's more than their powers. Maybe that's not something they are responsible to do, like legally. But still, I feel like that there's something wrong here.

Twan Dimmendaal 13:36

Okay, more student housing. And then just for international students or also for Dutch students?

Interviewee 13:44

For every type of student, I mean, it doesn't matter where you're from. I mean, obviously, if you're coming from 2000 or 3000 kilometers away, it's good to know that you have a place to stay. But every student needs to be sure that they have a home, regardless of where they're from.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:06

All right, thank you. Thank you for those remarks. And thanks for all the answers that you provide. It really helps me a lot with the research. Is there something else that you would maybe want to mention?

Interviewee 14:18

Not really.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:20

Then that really concludes the interview. And I just really want to thank you very much again for taking your time. And yeah, for now. I just wish you a very nice day in Peize and enjoy your time Groningen.

Interviewee 14:41

Thank you and I definitely will. Have a nice day.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:46

Goodbye

Interview 3

Twan Dimmendaal 0:00

Hello, how are you?

Interviewee 0:05

Not too bad. I'm mostly doing like first year and second year courses like COVID kind of just took a chill one.

Twan Dimmendaal 0:13

Yeah. All right. Nice.

Interviewee 0:16

Have you managed to? Sorry, I just wanted to ask, how did you manage to already do your thesis?

Twan Dimmendaal 0:22

Well, I just been doing every course. And succeeding immediately in the first try. So then, yeah, this is the third year. And also, because I'm going away in January, so I had to do the thesis in the first semester instead of the second semester.

Interviewee 0:46

Okay, chill. Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:01

yeah, I think there's just a slight delay between us, but well, we'll work it out. So yeah, thank you for participating with this interview really helps me that. I, well, your participation in the interview can be entered at any time. And the answers you provide are confidential. Is it alright, if I record the interview so that I can transcript it?

Interviewee 1:29

Yep. All right.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:31

Thank you very much. I'll start the recording. So yes, I mentioned in the message that I sent you, it's about the feeling of safety of international students, including with the housing situation housing market. So how worried you are stressful or actually very comfortable? So could you first of all, explain the current housing situation like kind of room? And how did you how did you get that?

Interviewee 2:02

My current place? Yeah. Yeah. I kind of won the international student lottery two times in a row. So yeah, the second place I live in, so my current place. It's a studio. And in summer 2020. I was like, I was in the Netherlands, like the whole summer. And everyone was leaving, and living with their parents and stuff. So there was a bunch of empty studios. So I have a pretty cozy studio. And I'm 23 So I got the rent allowance so not too expensive.

Twan Dimmendaal 2:45

Yeah. Okay, that's nice. So you did you do that you search via Facebook? How did you really get into this this studio? As you know of it?

Interviewee 3:00

I found out the studio because of Kamernet. I literally just made I made an account in the summer of last year. Message five people and got this and just like, showed up to the viewing of this place. And I was the only person there, said okay, I'll sign the contract today.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:51

Alright, so yeah, it's it sounds like you won the lottery, of course. And you wanted the studio but is it really inside the box of your the criteria that you had? And how is the quality of the studio?

Interviewee 4:09

Yeah, the quality is like, I don't know pretty good. Like, a lot of these things. As you can see. It's the right size. Like any bigger and I probably wouldn't need the space. It's in a good location. I have a nice view of the factory. I mean, when I moved into the studio, it was brand new, so they refurbished it, I was like the first person to use the toilet system to use the kitchen.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:49

Okay, this sounds very nice.

Interviewee 4:52

Yeah. I mean, if I have any complaints, it might be that some people in the building complained about the ventilation they say it's not quite good enough, which I can kind of see because like, the ventilation in my bathroom, it's not as good as it could be. I could just email the landlord and ask them to get it fixed. And they probably would. So yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:24

So this is your second house, of course. And how did this go with the first one?

Interviewee 5:32

With the first one, what do you mean?

Twan Dimmendaal 5:41

How did you search it? How did you find it?

Interviewee 5:45

How? So this was in, like, 2017. I was in England, working a job and made a decision to study in the Netherlands. And yeah, it was August the 18th. And I had already messaged like, 100, 150 people on Kamernet saying, Hey, can I have a room? Even the ones that said, no internationals, it was worth trying anyway. And I didn't get a single viewing. And then I mean, you could also say it was my fault, because I didn't sign up for any SSH buildings, because I thought they were too expensive. But 300 euros, I now realize in hindsight, 300 euros a month is not that expensive. There was this one place that kind of shut out to me because it was like, 200 a month. And I was like, okay, this is the only place I can afford at the time. So I was like, hopefully I got this one place. And the guy said, there's a viewing in two days time. I was still in England, so I quit my job, dumped my girlfriend and then fly out, to the Netherlands, to go to the viewing. And then there's me and four other people. And three of them basically just go Yeah, fuck this place. It's 6.7 meters squared. I'm not living here. And then one of them is another international student, but this guy's a master student. And he's also British as well. And actually took the place and then we bumped into each other on the street. And he was like; "oh, yeah, I got the place, but I don't want it. Do you want it?" So it was only because I bumped into him again, I was actually able to get the place. So when I went to sign a contract for my old place, I just went along with him. And he was like, I don't want the place but the other guy who went to the viewing does. I don't know, it's to be this lucky. And I don't know what I would have done if I wasn't this lucky. I hear people who are just like waiting so long, and I can only empathize with them.

You know, because I didn't have a single problem with housing in the Netherlands. But I can see how shitty the situation is.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:36

Yeah, definitely. So why did you decide to ultimately move out of it? The first room?

Interviewee 8:50

This is why my luck was not so good. In the second room, sorry, in the first room. Basically, the landlord said, "Okay, we're selling the house". So they sold the house and then the new landlord was going to kick everyone out. "We're going to kick everyone out and we're going to make it into a bunch of studios". And yeah, then I started looking and then I found a new place and then I realized how good this place is. So I was like, I'm just going to move here. So I moved out and then, all my old roommates, they basically get some bribe money for leaving, which was 2000 euros. So yeah, because if your landlord says okay, you guys got to move out you might claim some squatters rights or something and then the landlord has to basically make you leave and give you like three months to do so. So yeah, they all got like 2000 euros from him, but I didn't because I moved out like a few weeks before.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:55

Do you know if they ultimately found a room these different roommates

Interviewee 10:03

Yeah, I mean most of them I'd actually graduated. And I mean, they're also all Dutch.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:16

Yeah, no of course this is a bit different. Okay, so when you when you heard this about that you had to move out, ultimately were you worried about the place that you were in and what was going to happen?

Interviewee 10:42

Yeah, I mean, I was a bit worried I guess you could say because, but I was never concerned because I do at least you know for instance, if for whatever reason landlords in the Netherlands do need to give you like plenty of notice. This is not like the US where they could just knock on the door and force someone out. So I was never too concerned. But yeah, like I've been pretty privileged in the housing situation.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:17

yeah, no, that's also nice to hear. Okay, so yeah, that's a good understanding of the housing situation, the experience that you have with that so then there's also the kind of community integration within the Netherlands which can help with feeling safety and also help in the housing market because as you said, you had some friends which helps in not feeling as stressful as you would have if you didn't have those friends. So yeah, these friends are they mostly Dutch or international students as well?

Interviewee 12:03

Yeah. Like the longer you live here, like the more Dutch friends you make.

I remember my first year like when I studied math. I basically didn't have any Dutch friends. Maybe one or two? Because it's like, fair enough. I can kind of see why Dutch people are not friends with as many internationals, because a lot of them, come and go.

Twan Dimmendaal 13:40

All right. And do you think the language difference also affects this?

Interviewee 13:46

That's the thing. That's the main barrier, you know, if one Dutch says another quick thing to another Dutch person, in Dutch, where even if it's just like someone says, statiegeld, even if it's just something like that, at the start, I would be like, Hmm, are they talking shit about me? When now I can understand a lot of the language/

Twan Dimmendaal 14:10

So that also helped.

Interviewee 14:17

Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:23

Did you also join any organizations for international students, like whether via your study are like the kind of associations?

Interviewee 14:36

No, this sort of, Association culture is a very Dutch thing. A lot of Dutch people assume that for internationals the only way they can come together is through an association. But no, and most internationals just text each other and just go like, Yo, you want to hang like this? Is this going on? Oh, hey, we're doing this on this day. It's kind of this very Dutch thing that you're hanging out needs to be done through this association. But also because if you're on the board of Ibn Batutta or something that's good on the CV, and you can actually argue about that in the job interview. But if you go back to France, they'll be like, "Okay, what did you do?" Well, we organized like events and like drank a lot. And they're going to be like, we don't care?

Twan Dimmendaal 15:36

All right. I think I'm actually almost done with the interview and the questions that I wanted to ask, could you give me any ideas for potentially improving the current situation housing situation for international students? What are your ideas?

Interviewee 16:00

Yeah, I'm actually very passionate about this solution I kind of have, it's not really being talked about that much. But it is quite a big change. I do think it would make quite a big difference. In the UK, when you study the university has to be able to provide housing to the students for the first year. Obviously, this is optional. And this is kind of already done.

Twan Dimmendaal 16:37

SSH, the short-stay student housing. Yeah.

Interviewee 16:40

Yeah. So if you study Liberal Arts and Sciences, you have to live there in the first year. It would be kind of good, in my opinion, if the government kind of compelled universities to say, you have to actually provide affordable housing to international students, because we want them to focus on studying and a lot of them also have to work when they study. A lot of them are kind of trying to work study at the same time, while moving to the new country. So if you just have it, that even if they come here last minutes, to have a room for them, which is decent for Groningen like 300-400 euros or I guess, 500 euros or something per month. And this is owned by the university. And it's every single year a new group of students come through and live. Now, this, allows the students to

come together as a community more and allows them to interact more with people in my course. Until they live in this, like students environments.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:51

but would it be per course a different kind of housing per faculty?

Interviewee 17:56

No I'm not suggesting that. But I do think to have a block of housing, near Zernike where it's just 350 euros, I mean, there's already ones there, but you have to sign up for it and wait six months for it, you know? I just think whenever there's no student housing, that's the whole problem. Well, I don't know. I get that problem. Okay, it's students who are experiencing this, you know?

Twan Dimmendaal 18:48

Definitely. Yeah. And would this be for just the first year because that's already the short-stay student housing, which you ultimately didn't apply for. But I mean, that's something that's also done by the RUG. For the first year international students.

Interviewee 19:17

Okay, well, here's the thing of SSH. When I was like, Okay, I'm going to go study in Groningen. Let me just look for housing. I then look on the SSH websites and see that there's rooms which are 500 euros or 450. When these rooms came out it was kind of like a concert ticketing. Concert tickets coming out and they will say,

Twan Dimmendaal 19:52

yes, you have to be quick.

Interviewee 19:56

Really quickly. At least that was my experience. And yeah, when I wasn't sure if I actually wanted to study in the Netherlands because I didn't know how feasible it was even, or at least I didn't look hard enough information. And when I actually applied end of August, there was no SSH, there's only rooms for like 600 euros. And it was at least a few months before that in August when it was like, and most, you know, a lot of university students do have the same thing where they're not sure whether they're going to, like, go to the Netherlands for three years, or they're going to stay home for three years, you know? So to make up your mind last minute, and be like, Okay, I'm going to do it in the Netherlands, I'm going to go there is basically how every single international students who was homeless in the first two weeks lived. I lived in the Netherlands in youth hostels for couch surfing, all these concerts during those two weeks of being homeless, you know?

Twan Dimmendaal 20:57

Thanks. I mean, that really gives new idea on the SSH experience, because I didn't really know that, that that's how it works, because it sounds like a solution. But I guess it clearly isn't that way. So thank you. Thank you for that. The elaborate answers. Is there something else that you want to mention?

Interviewee 21:23

Yeah, do you? Do you need anyone? Do you need any more people to like interview for this? Or?

Twan Dimmendaal 21:29

Hey, yeah, yeah, actually, I do. Yeah, I'm still searching for people.

Interviewee 21:34

Okay, who are looking for like, almost international students who had a lot of hassle and this type of thing.

Twan Dimmendaal 21:42

Well, that's also an interesting, but I'm just looking for any kind of international students. They have a felony right now. So I don't necessarily want to look at homeless people, but they are of course, very interesting for the research.

Interviewee 21:59

Okay. Yeah, I'll ask I'll ask a few people and the upcoming day. Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 22:08

Thank you very much. That's very nice.

Interviewee 22:11

Okay, cool. All right. Well, good luck. And enjoy the rest your evening.

Twan Dimmendaal 22:15

Yeah. Thank you. You too, and thank you for participating. Thank you very much. Have a nice day.

Interview 4

Twan Dimmendaal 0:00

I'll start the recording. So yeah, in my message, which I don't know if you read but it was about my thesis which is about the feeling of safety of international students in Groningen according to the housing situation, so the housing market, but also the community integration of international students in Groningen, which I wanted to ask you some questions about because of course, you had your room on Facebook with a post. And I saw that a while back, you also made a post in that same group. So could you explain to me your current housing situation? So obviously, you're moving out? But how did you get this room?

Interviewee 0:43

Through Facebook, actually, I live with two friends of mine. And we saw this post, where they were looking for a friend group of three people, which is quite uncommon. Because you know, if you want to move with someone, or only rent something with two people, that's normally not very easy. So then we were all like, that's our chance. So let's do that. And that's how I got here.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:16

Were you really looking for something? Or did you see it and jumped on the opportunity?

Interviewee 1:24

I wasn't looking for something. To be honest, I had moved a year before that to a place that was very far away, for Groningen conditions, just behind Martini Plaza, so it was always a nearly 20 minute ride. And there out of sheer kind of necessity, because when I moved to Hong Kong, for the first time, I could only stop rent, and afterwards, I had to find a room. And that time got quite tight. So then I have to say, when I lived there in the south, I didn't really want to live there. But I was also just so fed up by the whole housing situation that I wasn't looking at it. But my roommate once in a while, looked at these announcements. So then she saw this.

Twan Dimmendaal 2:20

I understand. So when you got it was a sub rent. Now, of course, you had to move out and how was that experience was trying to find a new room as an international student here.

Interviewee 2:34

I thought it would be easier because my whole idea about sub renting was that I could then already know people and then it would just be mouth to mouth. But turns out that wasn't really the case. I searched for like, I don't know, two or three months. And afterwards, I kind of spread the word and spreading fear around friends of mine that it's so bad. And then I think other people have had more luck than me. But yeah, I found something just like two weeks before I had to move out.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:18

That must have been pretty scary. Did you do all this via Facebook, trying to get a room and sending all these messages?

Interviewee 3:33

No, I also tried Kamernet too although know that it's mostly Dutch, but I know that you have to pay membership periods that they have. And then I also tried through different makelaars like DCWonen and stuff. But in the end, I found the room on Kamernet actually. And I moved in with two Dutch girls. So that was very nice.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:08

And before you traveled to Groningen before you started the semester here, did you know about this situation right here.

Interviewee 4:18

I don't really remember. I think I didn't. But then I went to several viewings, because I'm from Germany, like half German. So then I grew up in Germany. So then it was easier to go back and forth. And I had come to several viewings and I feel like if I remember correctly, the people told me to just you know, watch out for the housing situation and also for not so nice landlords.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:51

So how was the quality of the first room?

Interviewee 4:54

the quality wasn't great, the room was okay. The bathroom was not. But I also have to say I didn't really put an effort into asking for renovation or anything, but landlord was not present but available and happy to invest as well. I think when I was moving, he actually committed to renovate the bathroom.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:40

And then when you moved to this this place right now. How was the experience and quality of that place?

Interviewee 5:50

It's a very old house. It's a ground floor apartment, which is kind of made up an entire house, but then the landlord needs to get student housing out of it. Artificial wall and stuff, makes kind of small hall, which is not really great. But the rooms are very nice on ceilings, a lot of light. Not in the best conditions. There's some cracks in the walls because of the earthquakes. The bathroom was renovated. And we have small gardens. So that's very nice. And it's just the whole package of having a super nice location living with very good friends. And also just having a nice, old room, you know,

Twan Dimmendaal 6:50

And I guess you're moving out soon, because that was your Facebook post. So were you in any way, over the last months, scared of being some kind of type of evicted or something was also a worry, because I've heard that from other international students.

Interviewee 7:13

What do you mean with evicted?

Twan Dimmendaal 7:16

Where the vendor says, well, within six months, or even shorter a period of time you have to move out? Because for example, I'm renovating the room, or I'm making different rooms out of it.

Interviewee 7:30

No, I'm happy with long term stay. And we have a very good like contact with him. So that's good. We were very, very lucky this time.

Twan Dimmendaal 7:47

All right. And then there's also the community integration with other people or the students in the Netherlands. Your roommates are friends. So that often really helps with the feeling of safety. So do you feel safe where you where you currently live?

Interviewee 8:12

In the house or?

Twan Dimmendaal 8:14

In the house, but also outside?

Interviewee 8:18

Totally. 100% Like, I consider this my home by this point. I've been living here for three and a half years now. So yeah, it really is my home. Yeah. And obviously, living with friends, contributes even more homey feeling. And we also are quite close, we have become quite close to neighbors of ours, actually. And those are Dutch guys. So you know, my friend group is a bit more international, but this past year, we've made more Dutch friends as well. And I can't complain like the neighborhood is very nice.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:02

You speak English with these Dutch guys?

Interviewee 9:07

Yeah, actually. I mean, I understand a bit of Dutch. But they are very open to speaking English, which is also not always the case, which is also understandable.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:21

Because do you think that that the language differences have had any effect on effect on your community and integration?

Interviewee 9:37

Yes and no. Which is always a standard answer, of course. I mean, I just feel like in general, people here don't have that many issues with speaking English, especially randomly on the street or in the supermarket or anything, then communication is not the issue, but maybe more in depth, like relationships. In my studies, for instance, most of the time, you can really see that there's a group of internationals and then a group of Dutch people. Luckily, in my study association, that wasn't the case, but then, the main language of English. And then Dutch people that really want to speak English join and those that don't really feel like it don't join. But I mean, I also made an effort in learning a bit of Dutch, which I should have probably put some more. But as I said, it's just very easy to speak English and I guess, become lazy.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:42

So you didn't feel the need, trying to learn Dutch?

Interviewee 10:49

Maybe that's kind of needed. Sometimes. If you have really the need to learn it, then you will learn I guess.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:58

So were there a lot of activities organized for students, international students, by your Students Association, or by the university? Did you feel that they reached out to you?

Interviewee 11:17

Yeah, I feel that they reached out to me. I mean, there's ESN, for instance, but I didn't really feel like I needed that, to be honest, because I'd already lived abroad. And in the study association they don't really make a difference between whether your international or your Dutch so that I just had that as my social.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:54

So your social circle was also mixed with international and Dutch students?

Interviewee 11:58

Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:01

I haven't heard that very much have with the interviews that I've done so far. You're also the first one who mentioned ESN, although it's pretty big, but somehow doesn't get mentioned at all.

Interviewee 12:15

I didn't really like my ESN week to be honest. I also feel like ESN is maybe a bit more for exchange students?

Twan Dimmendaal 12:27

That's possible. So I think perhaps because of that. Earlier you mentioned that you were pretty lucky and sometimes not so very lucky. How did other friends of yours international students experienced the housing situation here in Groningen.

Interviewee 13:12

I feel like more easy. Maybe I made it up in my mind. But to my friends started off with SSH first year. And then one of my friends actually never went to a viewing, I think then everything else was mouth propaganda and then ended up here. Another friend of mine, like one of my roommates had to search. But then she was the one that also started too early, because I told her so and then found some super quick. And then one of my friends had didn't have room in the beginning. And then she also got something from a friend all of a sudden, she got jackpot. But I have another friend, and he's also male. So then he had a lot of issues, because he also wanted a studio. I guess there was a little bit of discrimination against internationals, but also males.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:18

Because there is this difference between trying to find a room as a male and as a female as a woman?

Interviewee 14:31

I see that. I've gone through several posts, searching for a room. Some actually really say, only girls. I don't know if it's an actual thing. It's what I have heard.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:47

And that's also why you're inviting guys now?

Interviewee 14:51

Oh, yes. Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:54

And you also mentioned SSH. What was the reason that it didn't work for you?.

Interviewee 15:08

I found it very expensive. I started looking quite early. But then there were only rooms from 500 euros plus. And at that point, our max was like 400. If I compare that to like SSH in Germany or like Spain, you'd pay depending on where but, you pay way less for just enormous room. Compared to Germany, that was just insane for student housing. So then I thought, I just try my luck in the normal housing market.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:56

That kind of concludes the questions that I wanted to ask you. I do have one more. I hear that you have had pretty positive experience overall. What are your ideas of improving the current housing situation for international students for the university and the municipality?

Interviewee 16:32

Maybe a little bit self-destructive, because I'm here myself, but just don't accept that many international students. Because excuse my wording, when it's a fucking business. And at this point you don't have that much capacity? I know, it's difficult because I think they cannot discriminate against so then they cannot put the whole numerous fixes. And then they just have to take in all people or something. Just don't get people here over the capacity. And then if you do, inform them, build more, but I guess that's a structural problem in the Netherlands anyways, so. A lot of pressure on the whole system. I also don't know how much the university and the government actually cooperate on that.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:37

Yeah, it's hard to define that cooperation, because they're both looking at each other and say, well, there's a problem.

Interviewee 17:47

And for other ideas, other than not accepting that many people and building houses. I thought about maybe just building a campus only for international students. Also leads to more segregation, I guess.

Twan Dimmendaal 18:05

And of course, wondering how expensive that would be. Because in a way, of course, SSH is already student housing for international students.

Interviewee 18:15

Yeah. Exactly.

Twan Dimmendaal 18:19

To afford affordable campus housing, that would be great. Of course.

Interviewee 18:23

Yeah. But then also making it a bit more fair as in having a whole platform, which is not Facebook, where rooms become available, and then you're on the list or something. But obviously, that need would need like a more central system.

Twan Dimmendaal 18:54

Thank you this, that's quite a lot of ideas. It's very nice.

Interviewee 19:00

Can I say another thing? That could be valuable for you. But when it comes to hospi's, I had quite a bad experience, which I try to do better now with our thing. Hospi's have just a bunch of people who are invited and then you just have to draw attention to you and be super loud.

Twan Dimmendaal 19:32

You have to make an appearance, you have to make sure that they know who you are.

Interviewee 19:37

Yeah, and it's a competition. For me, hospi's is also trying to get to know the person but in the first place is not possible. But then if you invite 12 people or something at the same time, that's just wrong in my opinion.

Twan Dimmendaal 20:04

I don't think it's very successful way of trying to find someone that really fits in with the group that you already have. But how did you actually change this for yourself? Because of course you did get like 200 messages?

Interviewee 20:22

How? Well I answered all of them. First of all, I spent like, you know, a couple of hours Sunday. Maybe I'm too nice, and then we did some selection. So then in the end, you know, we were super international friendly, but then we couldn't invite exchange students, for instance. And then my roommates didn't want video calls. So then we already made a pre selection. And then I also told them about the financials. And then less people answered. So then in the end, we still had 60 people left. And then from then we decided to invite 12 people for viewing, which we're going to be doing individually.

Twan Dimmendaal 21:16

That's a nice way of trying to improve the situation. Is there something else that you would want to mention?

Interviewee 21:37

No, actually, no.

Twan Dimmendaal 21:40

What I forgot to tell you in the start of the interview, was that anything that you say any comments that you made, you can always contact me to retract them. And then I will do so. And I won't be using your name in any kind of way, just for your privacy. That really is all there is to it. So I really want to thank you.

Interviewee 22:22

I really want to thank you very much, and good luck with the whole thesis.

Twan Dimmendaal 22:37

Thank you very much, and have a nice evening. Bye

Interview 5

Twan Dimmendaal 0:03

Any comments that you make, you can always contact me to retract them and then I won't use them in my in my thesis. I won't be using your name or in any kind of way that can relate to you. So you can speak freely, just to say so.

Interviewee 0:24

It's all right.

Twan Dimmendaal 0:27

Just to start off. Could you tell me something about your current housing situation? How you got to the room that you're in?

Interviewee 0:37

Actually, I'm in my home country. Because, as you know, there is a housing shortage and crisis in Groningen and not only in Groningen. So I'm here back in my home country. And as everyone is going to university on campus and everything, I'm going through my lectures online by myself. So yeah, it's kind of tough. I really, really want this to end because I don't know if I told you, but I've been looking for a room or studio since January, February, something like that.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:19

Because I've looked into the messages that you sent in the student rooms group. There are quite a lot, of course, where you reacted to and I saw is that you were trying to find a room for next January. So I understand that you're doing your master, right.

Interviewee 1:44

No, I'm actually doing my bachelor's. Yes, I'm a second year student.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:48

Alright. And so since January, you've been trying to find a new room? Did you have a room when you started your first year here?

Interviewee 2:00

Yeah, SSH Housing. It is only for first year students. So it was an option for me to stay there for a longer period.

Twan Dimmendaal 2:17

So then you started looking again in January.

Interviewee 2:20

Yeah, but my situation is kind of like complex because I was dating a girl for like two years and a half. And she was one year younger. And our idea was to go both to Groningen together. But in June or July, we broke up. And until June or July, I was looking for an apartment for two people. So by then every room or studio was already taken. And then after July, I started looking for something for myself. So it's kind of bad luck mixed with other stuff.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:00

Yeah, definitely. In June, July, that's when the SSH housing stops, right?

Interviewee 3:13

Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:14
So did you immediately go home?

Interviewee 3:21
When the academic year ended, I came back home. I needed to get my contract before I go back home.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:30
So since then, you've been studying from your home country?

Interviewee 3:39
Yes, actually, I was. In September, when the academic year began, I was in Rotterdam, with a friend of mine, so I can be closer to Groningen and if something pops up, I can immediately go to Groningen again and go to a viewing or something. And I've been trying to like to search in groups like with other people with my Bulgaria friends with other people I've tried. I've contacted in, in the Facebook groups. Nothing successful so far.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:20
Have you had any viewing?

Interviewee 4:27
I've been looking mostly Pararius. And I've been sending five or six emails on a daily basis. And I hardly got any response at all. And some of my friends were in Groningen and I got shocked because there is one story I heard that most agencies, as you know, first of all, don't rent out to students. You need to give like some income, which as a as a student, you don't. From what I've heard, and what I've experienced there is first of all, some, discrimination towards students and towards, non Dutch people.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:38
Yeah, have you experienced that as well, personally?

Interviewee 5:43
Not personally, but I know a few people that have.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:46
Alright, that's very bad to hear. Did you know about the situation before you moved to Groningen?

Interviewee 5:58
No, last year I've been looking for a room again for a long, long time. But in the end, there I had an option. Like I said, SSH as an option. So it was it wasn't a problem for me. But this year, different.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:19
So SSH was a backup? It wasn't your first option?

Interviewee 6:25
I wanted to be like, in a student house with other people. And then I ended up living in a studio for a really expensive price.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:37
Yeah, I heard a lot about SSH. It's quite expensive. How was the quality of SSH?

Interviewee 6:48

Well, it was nice. It was great, though. It was a great occasion. And I met a lot of people there. So it was nice. But the negative side of this is that, as you know, last year was partially online. Again, I spent two thirds of my year here in my home country. Because there was no reason for me to live there. And I was still paying rent. It's not a great start of my student years, I'd say

Twan Dimmendaal 7:28

I understand that. It hasn't been a very pleasant experience. So the process of finding in house, I think it will be quite stressful, especially in the last month. And right now, well, of course you're safe in your home country, but I still understand you want to go back as soon as possible?

Interviewee 7:49

Yeah, I really want to go back home in Groningen. We have semesters divided into blocks. And the first block just ended like last week. And because everyone is having physical classes I can't join them, so I have to resit the course.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:26

You can't complete them because you're not there.

Interviewee 8:30

Yeah, because they need to be on campus to present. Yeah, just because of that I don't have a shelter above my head I have to resit. So that's some extra stress on everything.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:45

Yeah, definitely. I guess you're studying but you can't finish anything.

Interviewee 8:53

Yeah. I can do stuff I've been trying. Because we have group projects, and even individual projects. And I've been trying, I've been working hard with my group, we've done amazing work. But in the end, I just can't bring this in the group presentation. So I have to resit. It is what it is eventually 2022 will be my year. I hope

Twan Dimmendaal 9:30

I think I have an idea of your housing situation and how that has been for you. So with the community integration, of course, as you mentioned, there COVID and so classes were online and also you spend a lot of time in your home country. Were there any activities organized for you, or did you participate in any as an international student?

Interviewee 9:56

Activities such as what?

Twan Dimmendaal 9:59

Well there are Student Associations for international students who perhaps reached out to you to get to join in a drink or some other activities. And of course, the Keiweek.

Interviewee 10:16

Yeah, there were some at the start of the academic year, but I was in Rotterdam, so I couldn't join them. And now as there are stricter regulations, these things like began to not happen at all.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:40

And how about last year when it was with all the online classes? Were there any online activities that were organized or not even?

Interviewee 10:54

We watched movies and stuff, we join on Discord on our group chat. We flip someone play a movie or we play games together, something like that.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:11

That was with people from your study?

Interviewee 11:17

Yeah, from my class.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:18

And these were all international, or were there also Dutch students?

Interviewee 11:24

Dutch and international, everyone.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:27

Alright, that's nice there. Do you think that the language differences? Do they affect this this kind of integration?

Interviewee 11:40

No, not at all.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:50

Concluding, in the time that you were in Groningen, did you ultimately feel safe?

Interviewee 11:56

Yeah, it was my second home, I really fell in love with that city and the people living in it. It is lovely there.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:06

Alright. And also the SSH that you were in, did you have contact with other people that lived there?

Interviewee 12:15

Yeah

Twan Dimmendaal 12:21

Because that also helps in getting to know other people. Because SSH, of course, it is a studio. But there are, of course, other people living in the building. So yeah, you've had quite a bad experience, I guess you could say. But what would you say are your ideas of trying to improve the situation for the municipality and the university?

Interviewee 12:48

Well, many people say that, like, generally speaking, there should be housing provided by universities. Yeah, that is one of the options. And one of the biggest issues in Groningen I think, is that the university is in such a small town, they attract a lot of students. And there is first of all, not enough space. And yeah, it's a daunting task for students to live there.

Twan Dimmendaal 13:19

The percentage of students in Groningen is of course very high. There are like, 40,000 students in a city of about 200,000. So that's very big percentage. So student housing, organized by the university.?

Interviewee 13:38

Yeah, or like here in Bulgaria. Because I'm a Bulgarian. The infrastructure is different. Let's say in the Netherlands, people build houses on one or two floors. But like in certain student cities I see this. I think there should be bigger housing blocks.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:02

So high rise buildings?

Interviewee 14:05

Yes. Well, that many people can live under the same roof.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:10

Alright. So yeah, thank you for this for those ideas. Are you hopeful for trying to find a room in for January?

Interviewee 14:32

Hope is all I have currently.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:37

I really hope that it works out man.

Interviewee 14:41

Thanks.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:42

You should definitely come back and find a room as soon as you can, so you can soon dive into the student experience. So yeah, that kind of concludes my interview actually. Is there anything else that you want to mention?

Interviewee 15:01

Currently not, but I wish good luck to everyone else you're going to interview that are in the same situation as I am. Because it's not easy.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:13

No man, I understand. I've had several of these experiences and the stories. So I'm trying to use them as good as I can in my thesis. But I hope that we can really do something about it. And good luck to you as well. And thank you again for you the best of luck. And thank you very much for participating in the interview. It really helps me a lot. And yeah, I just wish you a very nice evening, and good luck.

Interviewee 15:42

Thanks, you too. It was pleasure to help you.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:46

Thank you very much. Bye. All right. Bye.

Interview 6

Twan Dimmendaal 0:00

For the recording of this. So yeah, if you could start with a description of your current housing situation, like the type of house you live in, and how you got that?

Interviewee 0:15

One second, I'm on a VPN, I'm going to turn it off because it's slowing down a little bit. Can you give me the question again?

Twan Dimmendaal 0:41

So could you describe to me your current housing situation, so the kind of type of house you live in and how you got that?

Interviewee 0:48

So I'm living in shared flats, with roommates. Initially, I moved in there with a friend. So it just came out on Facebook. She was the first one see it, luckily enough. She got a viewing. She went there. We sent in our stuff, and we got it. It was super straightforward. This isn't like a big landlord company or anything. It was a private landlord that just used a friend of theirs as the broker. So not like very. We seemed legit. We wanted it. We got it. So yeah, that's it. It's very straightforward.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:38

And how long have you been living there?

Interviewee 1:41

Since August last year, so 13-15 months? And I'm moving out a month, I'm leaving the country. I was allowed stay here, but I won't for much longer.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:57

Have you been satisfied with that type of housing, at least?

Interviewee 2:03

Yeah. For sure. It's quite expensive. But it's not illegal, expensive in any way. It's almost 100 square meters. And up. Well, it's very cozy. But last year, I lived here I wanted us to have something super nice. And the landlords have been the best landlords ever. So nice. I was late on a payment once and that was all good. Any issue we had, if there was any has been solved by polite and helpful communication. So one thing I asked them to install fire extinguishers, which they're legally required to do and now I know that it's not because they're concerned anything like, it's they just forgot. So I'm all good with them.

Twan Dimmendaal 2:56

I mean, they should do that. But what that's all right. So that's for the last 15 months. And how long have you been studying here in Groningen?

Interviewee 3:05

Five years.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:07

So well, then, of course, you if you've moved on in some other places, and how has your experience on the housing market been? Because you say, Well, this time we actually got kind of lucky, because she was the first to react immediately. How has this been going for the for the rest of the time?

Interviewee 3:27

I lived in a lot of places. This is my seventh place. So in five years, which is really sick. I actually have not had much difficulties at all. I've had some difficulties with shitty landlords, not doing what they should do, or taking a month to fix something that should be fixed in a day. And just, squeezing a little bit extra money than they are legally allowed to, actually getting a place has never been an issue for me. Then again, I'm from Sweden and very white and looking like Dutch people. And I mean, I don't have anything about my looks or the way I talk or my background. It's hard for me to be a target like due to my ethnicity. So I am very, very aware both from inferring and hearing and having friends who are brown, for example, or just have a name that sounds very non Dutch that had very different experiences. So I'm aware of my privilege there. But in general, I've just been the reason I've been moving like so many times, is because two of them I think that there's other than staying, or three, they were just a limited contract to begin with, because I was subletting for like half a year. The first one I just got through housing, housing anywhere, I think it's called that same for students. But we didn't like each other at all. So I left prematurely. And then I've been having some contracts of friends where basically they were going away Technical High School, and the other ones, I got them and I got like a legit contract. But I just realized, after living there for a while that there was something really missing about it, like either landlord sucked, or something like I did notice is too small or like this. I think my standard is quite high. I'm also 27. Like, I guess, compared to like, whatever my standard was when I was 22. It's reasonable that it's grown a bit. But also in Sweden, legal standards for housing are very, very high. In terms of what kind of noises isolation you have between apartments, and freshness. So yeah, I've been moving around because either I had to because I was temporarily subletting or because I just found myself to not be satisfied,

Twan Dimmendaal 6:34

Then that's alright. But then it was quite easy for you to get a new place. Because also, when you're subletting you know that there's this this date, when you have to move? That also hasn't been a problem. Were you worried about that? That could perhaps be your problem?

Interviewee 6:51

let me think for a second here, with all the places have lived I guess it was a while ago. But this one time, it was kind of sucky. I had a place until that ended in September or something. And yeah, I looked around. Let's see here, this was a long time ago. This is like almost four years ago. And then as now it was a pretty bad situation with housing. And I get I took a little bit too long. Before I started looking, I looked around a lot. And but again, my standards are higher, right? So it's going through 100 places, so maybe I applied to 10. So me being picky is a factor. But no, it was quite difficult. Things did not work out at all. And the reason I was really worried for a while there because I had to leave and then I was thinking Fuck, I'm going to have to take something I'm not comfortable with, you know, and then you have to sign like, a half a month knowing that like, even from the beginning, knowing I don't think I'll be but the reason I got it in the end was because someone got back to me after someone else had cancelled and then again, I was very lucky to be the first visit. But I was very honored. You know, like, if you see something like that you have to be like, immediately Hi, yes, I'm coming like in another table thing like, probably right now but you get like you got to really jump on it. You got to, it's hard to relax those kind of days and weeks because you feel like you need to be on your phone all the time. Making sure that you don't take, I don't know 30 minutes to respond to a message because it's already like three people a bit.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:03

Quite stressful. That sounds quite stressful.

Interviewee 9:06

Yeah, other than that, it's been fine.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:08

All right. So you said that the your standards are pretty high, but how is the quality been in the rooms that you've lived in apart from the fire extinguisher?

Interviewee 9:21

Right now like only right now?

Twan Dimmendaal 9:24

Well, just in general

Interviewee 9:30

let me just think about what I what I mean by quality. Well, I mean, varying, definitely. I've lived in like some extremely new places that everything was working fine and all great. And you know, I just thought they were boring, like very sterile, you know, like no, no character in it. But again, that's like my taste but everything was working fine, very high standard, you know? A modern house even with the kind of like showers and kitchen, as well. And then I've lived in some places where it was just like yeah, I mean, it's a place that they we should not it definitely was illegal for us to pay that much rent is so old really want stinky toilet that, like a toilet that you know, like pipes that would stink. And the toilet will always be like shit to the point where my room smelled like shit sometimes because I was next to it. And they never fixed up like that. And the worst was I live in a collective ones for like a year and a half a lovely things because it was big and nice people and balcony, whatnot. But like the kitchen, for example. It had, what do you call it? Like these tiles on the floor that were super old and cracked, like you couldn't really walk their way or you shouldn't I did anyways. But you shouldn't really walk there with barefoot because like you could step on one of these little shorts that were basically lying around. And they only fixed that. And the other problem was in the house when the owner of course decided he wanted to sell. So you know, they really were that was a worst place they would take we would you'd have to hassle them for literally like two months sometimes become fixed something the front door lock was broken for more than a month. Anyone could just walk in that kind of shit. So they're really bad, obviously. And then other places has been like in the middle, okay, like, you know, a bit old bit worn out, oh, that's fine, but just non functional some way I find the Dutch way of building, I mean, not as all of it, but a lot of places they build or maybe it's like how landlords rebuild because they split, they want to make money, but it's just like what the fuck is this is like a house for an end. And it's like completely illogical how they place things and you can you can open a door, but only like half because they put something else in there to squeeze in and it's just like, I don't know, it is a shitty rude attitude. Trying to do that and living in a dysfunctional home in. In that sense. I'd like some practical stuff doesn't work. Maybe the boiler. You know, it's like, hit and miss. And sometimes it just doesn't work when you need hot water and stuff like that. That is sucks. I don't know you want your home to be functional. It's very important mental health. Right now. It's absolutely like, exquisite. Like it's like wooden floor, like a nice wooden floor like dark wood. It's really big, high ceilings. Everything works as it should. It's a little leaky, like heat wise. And that cost a bit of money. But I knew that when I moved in. And since I moved in, I've had the landlords do some, like, some ceiling and adjustments to make it a little bit tighter, like what they can do they have done, right. Again, super responsive, and they've never touched it. I even I even clogged the toilet once by throwing something. What I call is kitchen towels. And it's like paper kitchen towels, because we were out of toilet paper. And I completely clogged it and it started dripping on the business below. On there. It was really lucky to avoid like an expensive thing there. But they didn't even ask me to pay for it. They just said don't do it again. Okay, so I think everything

Twan Dimmendaal 13:41

that's what they should do, even though you did it yourself. And it was perhaps a bit stupid. I think they should do it without asking for payment because that's their role as a landlord. Yeah, but I mean, you hear stories of people that do have to pay.

Interviewee 13:59

You're not supposed to flush anything else but toilet paper and I never would normally but you know because toilet paper is made to dissolve and kitchen paper was made to absorb. So and these are really old pipes. So well anyways, like, again, they have never judged me anything for anything like other that they have done. It's expensive, but I knew that when I moved in, right, the only thing I would wish is that the heating would be a little lower but you learn how to save that like I always you know turn it off and I'm not using it's an easy habit now also good for environments. So I'm super happy with our apartment.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:37

Yeah, the very bad house with a tiles that were broken and all that. How long did you ultimately stay there? One and a half years? That's pretty long, actually.

Interviewee 14:49

mean, again, not everything was shit about it, but the people were great, you know, but the kitchen it wasn't and also, you know from the bathroom was above the kitchen and there was water was leaking through there on the regular like sometimes they've been dripping down a little bit so there was I don't even know if they fixed okay like they didn't even fix it they did a kind of patch it over kind of thing, but there was like at growing water damage from there you know and a little bit of like dust would fall down on the regular which is super unsanitary also in the kitchen. Yeah, definitely. And also Indian in general that happening is just I mean you got mold. We didn't I didn't particularly see like specifically see more but you know it's in there somewhere. We just get super fucking unhealthy. And then you also have the risk of it collapsing you know, at some point like given enough stress. So that's completely unacceptable but the landlord there is like a criminal. It's one time before I moved in there, they were like five days late on the rent. And I swear, on the door, just go boom, boom, boom, and the open is and it's like a motorcycle kind of gang that was sent there like you play today. It's one of these. Like, I think 80% of the private housing markets is owned by like, 10% of the landlords. Yeah, it's insane. And this is one of those who also has some ties to crime. Yeah, crime in general. I felt horrible that our money went to a person like that, who also didn't do any upkeep. But who had like, directly hostile attitude towards us. But I said anyways, because nice people. My room was nice, except for the shit smell. And yeah, other things were good. But this maintenance and quality was absolutely unacceptable, like illegal, like you should get fined big amounts for this and never be allowed to be allowed again. Yeah, that is really not the worst I heard. I mean, you know, but for me, it was the worst.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:08

Yeah, sure. Do you think that being in international students has had an influence on the way that they treated you as?

Interviewee 17:17

Absolutely. Not, because again, not because I think I'm a target because of our look or anything, but we all know that. It is, like, we don't bring our moms and dads like to come in there and then their own language go but, you know, demonstrate that they know that law or the law, I mean, I know Dutch a bit like enough, but it's I not enough, so I can go in there and you know, have our like, like, seriously give them like a lecture. And also this this, they suck at English so I think they did intentionally in that house. I think they intentionally just not. I mean, they intentionally only got international students. Try to read doing that. Because yeah, we just, you know, we're in a less favorable position. It's harder for us to exercise the rights and I mean, the renters rights. It's very much on the renter side, I mean, legally speaking anyways. And then also, at a limited stay in house galley was, you know, the old building that behind MediaMarkt where they used to have to do offices. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I live there once. And I know for a fact that they fucked me and some other

people always because they were international, because I wanted to, I got a room, I had a one year contract. And then another room became free. And I was in a position where I wanted the other room. And I could, while I could get a new tenant into my room, yeah. And so there will be no change really, for them in money. Just a little switcheroo. And I asked him about this and pushed a bit and they tried to I mean, I didn't do anything because he tried to charge me 400 euros as like a cancellation fee and I might Yeah, he does fun and be real like I signed that yeah, sign for this, but I'm within the same building that you own. I am arranging everything if anything, I'm sending you money, because I'm getting someone new instead of you getting like hiring an agency right to do it. And they tried to do that anyways, and I pushed you know what they did want to let go of it and then I find out that one of my Dutch friends living there is easy peasy, zero. And that had happens with several like that pattern was present that they would try to I'm not saying they didn't try to judge people. But basically they did and Dutch people said notice it. And then they just give up and even after I post and just said no, this bullshit you know, it is in the budget. I And that's it. That was apparently something that had happened in the same way for other people. Which sucked didn't make me like feel unwelcome in the Netherlands or anything. It's chalking this up to these landlords here being predators and calling it but most definitely, it's something that matters here as in anywhere, you know, but sadly here

Twan Dimmendaal 20:24

all right. So, yeah, then then that's really good. I have a view of your housing situation over the years. So then there's also the community integration, which can help improve the feeling of safety. So, you said that with your friends, you actually got often got to go to new room? So how's the community integration been going? Were there a lot of activities for international students like you that were organized, and where you could go to, for example?

Interviewee 21:03

Okay, so you mean by the Hanze?

Twan Dimmendaal 21:08

by the university, but also there are student organizations for international students. And do they want to reach out to you?

Interviewee 21:42

I mean, I've been to some, like, official activities, or whatever. And they've been nice, I think, decent dealt with that, for sure. I was part of Cleopatra, also, the students was super nice and welcoming. But I think Association life isn't really my thing. And this only think because it's like, it's been a long time since I participated in either of these. But I felt I felt like in general, all the males who get and so on from the Yeah, from looking at this, and that there seems to be quite a few things going on. But I haven't been to so many of them and go so I can be, you know, to the effectiveness. But socially, like, I have studied game and study astronomy, actually. And then I dropped out really quick because it wasn't for me. And so I started working at a Dutch company. And they were surprised by it's mostly Dutch people there. And they were super welcoming. And just very inviting, and try to help you learn the language and the culture. So I very quickly got like a lot of Dutch friends. I don't really hang out with people from there anymore. But I have a more than decent amount of Dutch friends. And international friends and a lot of them. I mean, we just spend time together. So yeah, how I felt suit. Yeah, except for like, by the housing market. Basically, I felt super welcome here. Where I felt that some people actively tried to, like, how's your experience here? And like, you know, you want to help me get help with Dutch or whatever. So yeah, no, no doubt socially, it's like, absolutely nothing left to desire from that. And of course, there are Dutch people who, you know, just prefer to hang with other digits, which nothing wrong with that. I mean, I wasn't particularly interested in seeking out internationals in Sweden.

Twan Dimmendaal 24:07

You understand where they come from?

Interviewee 24:09

yeah, of course. What else? I mean, you're not no one is obligated to take interest in that? Of course not. But it's very nice that some do. And some international sadly only hang with each other also, which I think is such a bummer, too. I mean, out of their choice but to live in a country and not really get to know the people who live here. But I have several friends who hang out like mostly with internationals even now I feel very, very lucky to have a super nice experience socially here and still feel very much have.

Twan Dimmendaal 24:38

Okay, that's very good to hear. It's very nice. And do you think that the language difference has been well as affected this in any way? Of course you didn't speak Dutch when you came here and you've learned a bit but do you think that has some effects?

Interviewee 25:05

I mean, anywhere it does, right, like any language barrier is a barrier, but it doesn't, you know, it's a barrier of some communication and signing, but that doesn't mean that it's a barrier of like, you know, these good intentions towards each other. Also, Dutch people love to speak English. And they are generally pretty good at it. And I'm super comfortable in English. And I tried to speak a bit of Dutch so it's, I mean, it's been a very much I mean, sometimes you want to speak Dutch, but they want to speak English. You know? I don't I don't blame them. I never felt like it was in any way like prohibitive for me Dutch also isn't so different. I mean, it is different from Swedish but I mean, knowing Swedish and English coming here made it quite easy for me to start learning the basics, like fast. So I never I just thought it was interesting to learn a new language. Because I mean, I haven't started that since I was what were six, I guess, in Sweden when we started learning English and seven. So it was just a joy for me, I enjoy. Okay, I dance down the street. But it was interesting and mostly fun for me to learn it. And when I wanted to learn it more actively, I had people around me who were more than willing to help with it. So I never perceived it to be a barrier. It's just something that I always wanted to learn a bit. And I did. So. That's absolutely fine.

Twan Dimmendaal 26:40

Yeah, that's very nice here. I mean, I've actually asked all the questions that I wanted to ask, I I'm glad that your experience as a whole in Groningen has been quite positive. There were other interviews where it wasn't that way. So it's nice to hear this. Because, yeah. Yes. Is there anything that you want to mention at the end of this interview?

Interviewee 27:07

Yeah. transcribe this. But especially for, for doing this for keeping on, you know, making spots for students that they know will not get. Or else at all. I mean, the fact that people have come here and had to go home, because they couldn't live in tents anymore. It's, it's embarrassing for, like, for calling in. And but it is like a roof fault. They knew this. I know. Some, like talk to some people who have been working for since early 2000s, maybe even a little bit in the 90s. And this whole attitude that they have are like this PR attitude that they have that basically yeah, you know, it's a problem. Very unfortunate, it became this way. And, you know, we're going to try our things to help it's complete bullshit. They were already like, internally, you know, between snap and so they were already talking about this, like, 20 years ago, that's, you know, just, I mean, then we didn't have this kind of, but the seeing looking at it, I mean, come on the sizes, right? Looking at realizing that, you know, if this keeps going demand, the demand will heavily outweigh the supply. But yeah, we get more money from students, so we don't care. I mean, yeah, not explicitly, but that was, those decisions were those instead, were taken, and they were not taking an ignorance of this. And they

just keep on going keep on going. I mean, the class before me in so I took a psychology bachelor, I'm doing a master now, but the class or the class after me. So that took in 500, or something from mine. And the next one, you know, they took in 1000, just like that, that split the class into classes to be able to make it like physical lectures. And so they are I mean, they the, you know, the housing blood is on their hands, they're not the absolute only one, of course, landlords are takes. And this housing market in general, like the prices are ridiculous, but they, they were knowing participator and like a driving force in this and it's just I like, in many ways, but the business side of it is too much of a business and it's they should be ashamed of themselves. It truly is, it would not have happened without them. sociated and they should be like, also, you know, legally to some extent more responsible for this like they shouldn't I mean, not deep into like university politics or anything, but just off the top of my head. It feels like them opening up more spots should come with some sort of Could you call it? Well, just like you would pitch a business rise, you have to present like a plan to make it feasible, real concrete plan to justify your decisions before to at least on the outlook show that Okay, so we know we have capacity for this and what we don't have capacity for right now. Like, what are we going to do to change it? I don't think they should be allowed to take in students as much as they want, because obviously, they've shown a terrible let me talk about judgment, but terrible priorities in that. That said, I will say, and this might sound hypocritical, because I say I have to have such high standards. I will I live in hell right now, you know, which is basically the other side of the Earth. For some people who are way too busy living to the center, I always lived. There are more houses, and then a lot of people thing, or, you know, make themselves think because they are not looking, they want to live just in city center or just outside like there are more and they don't know, I can't live 20 minutes away. I'm not saying they should take something they don't want to but you know, there are personalities. There are a bit more possibilities than people. But then again, I'm speaking for like myself, a person who looks like I'm like Premier or whatever. The people have to realize problems, other people who have the wrong name or the wrong looks or whatever. And they are having gifts to share the time anyway, I think they would find it. But also, of course, it's not just the location, but it's just a lot of people might be free, but it's an absolute chip place like it's a shithole it's, you know, half broken down. No one should have to live like that. So but mostly, it's their fault. I don't know exactly how much Hamza is. I mean, they're definitely part of this, but I think it is.

Twan Dimmendaal 29:57

Alright, that concludes the interview. I want to thank you again, and wish you a nice evening.

Interviewee 30:26

No problem, bye.

Interview 7

Twan Dimmendaal 0:00

I'll start the recording. And if at any point in time in the coming weeks you wish to retract the statements that you made, you can always contact me. And then I will get them out of the thesis. But yeah, for now, just to start, could you tell me something about your current housing situation?

Interviewee 0:23

Currently, I have, like three months. I live in the place where I live right now. It's a really nice place. It's a bit more than I would like to pay. Because my preference would be just the cheapest place possible. I assume it's cheap, but it's, I would go even cheaper.

Twan Dimmendaal 0:50

Yeah. All right. Just how much do you pay right now?

Interviewee 0:55

I don't know. I've paid 500.

Twan Dimmendaal 0:57

Okay, well, that's quite a lot, actually. So I hope you get a lot of back for it for those 500 euros. But how did you just start off? How did you get this room?

Interviewee 1:09

I called my university. They just fixed it. Like, they just found this place to me really, really fast. After more than two months of just staying in temporary housing. I just got the place very, very fast. Took like, less than a week already.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:36

Alright, so are you a first year student?

Interviewee 1:40

Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:40

Okay. So when you when you came here, you didn't find room? So for two months, you had to search and go through temporary housing?

Interviewee 1:53

Yeah. I've tried two different temporary housing and the hostel for some time. So

Twan Dimmendaal 2:03

okay, yeah. All right. We got out. Yeah, this is a very, very nice. So then you called the RUG actually?

Interviewee 2:16

Hanze.

Twan Dimmendaal 2:17

Okay. So then you called Hanze. And they said, Well, within two week, or after a week, they call back so well, we got this place for you. Basically, it's quite odd.

Interviewee 2:30

I was at this point, I was very surprised. I had literally called like homeless shelters. And this is like that.

Twan Dimmendaal 2:38

Yeah. Because did you know of this situation before you move to Groningen?

Interviewee 2:42

Oh, yeah. I, I knew that it's bad. Everybody told me that. But I didn't know that it's that bad. If I knew that it was that bad. I would have stayed in Norway.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:06

So how has this experience been like, going through temporary housing. I mean, it must be quite stressful, I would understand.

Interviewee 3:20

A lot of packing things and unpacking things, and it takes a lot of time. I really dislike it. Also, I think that I have made some of my books receive minor damages. Because of that. And this is something that feels like absolutely not the case. For me having a book that has, like turned pages, yeah, it has been a bit stressful, I suppose it would be more stressful for many other people. But for me, the main thing is just, it takes time. And it's really hard to move into this place. In between of my exams, really hard. I did an exam. And then, right after the exam, I got my things from my hostel brought them all here.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:26

And went to do the other exam.

Interviewee 4:29

Basically, I mean, I went to work and next day right after I went to exam so it's there's like a brief window of time that I could use between very, very important things. So it could be the case that it has somewhat changed my some of my grades there was like, reduced my case to some extent, but I still got good grades. So I don't know.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:03

That's unfortunate if may have had an effect on your study results instead. So how was the How was the quality of the temporary housing

Interviewee 5:14

Two different places .so the first one I got from SOS Groningen.. It was literally like, room that was previously used for smoking. So it had a lot of ash everywhere. Empty cigarette packages. And I was just sleeping on a couch and my doors didn't lock. Neither of my two doors actually locked.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:00

How long did you stay there?

Interviewee 6:03

I stayed there for a month. It was not particularly good. But I mean, I was fine. Also, I didn't need to pay for this.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:19

I mean, that makes it better. Still it's not a really great experience I would assume. So when you were still in Norway, how did your searching for room go? Like, did you try Facebook or something like Kamernet? How did you do that? Because there's also there's also SSH

Interviewee 6:47

So should I also be talking about other housing places?

Twan Dimmendaal 6:56

Well, I'm just trying to try to get to know the complete experience view including considering housing.

Interviewee 7:05

Okay. When I was in Norway, I stayed there entire summer. And basically from the beginning of the summer, maybe even a bit before that. I started looking for place in just Facebook groups. I paid some money to Kamernet. They just emptied my bank account every week. And they were completely useless. Actually had to block my bank card. They wouldn't just take my money. So those were completely useless. I also checked at home Groningen. And I'm not sure how it's supposed to work because I never received any answers.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:08

I don't know about that one.

Interviewee 8:10

Actually, I don't know if the others don't know about this one. So I can't tell you really anything about that.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:17

Alright, so right now the room that you're staying, you know what you got through the University. I understand that you have to move out in three months? So did you know this when you went into the room?

Interviewee 8:33

Yeah. I mean, it was cheaper, cheaper than hostel. So, yeah, I figured it's very reasonable to come here. Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:48

It's also nice to just have a couple of months where you don't have to unpack and pack your things again. So right now, instead, you're still searching for another room? A different room?

Interviewee 9:05

I have been searching for some time, but I'm just not doing it soon because experience shows that you should always be searching for a place in Netherlands.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:17

Yeah. As an international student, perhaps. Because just looking at the posts placed on the Facebook. You're talking about well, perhaps being homeless soon and while trying to get to know who to contact and all that. So you're already thinking about this what if scenario and what you're going to do.

Interviewee 9:47

At this point, I was fairly certain that I would be homeless.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:54

And was this before you were in the room that you are in now?

Interviewee 10:01

It was. Yeah, it was before. This point I was in the Village, the other emergency housing. This was ending.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:14

I understand Village as emergency housing was going to end, which is kind of hard to understand. It's quite a lot of international students that were still living there.

Interviewee 10:26

Yeah. At this point that weren't there, I think. Because then there was like, 15 people

Twan Dimmendaal 10:38

Do you still have any kind of contact with these with these people? I mean, they all have to or have to have been homeless. Or were kind of lucky, I guess and gotten the room like you. Or I guess they would have been homeless.

Interviewee 10:56

I have. I mean, I have added some of the people to Facebook, but I don't really know them. I think I've half forgotten half of them already. So that's what I think ultimately everybody found something.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:22

Okay, that's fortunate. So how is the quality of the room?

Interviewee 11:40

It's good. It's good. I have a place where I can get my book. So yeah. If there is anything to complain about, then I have two big windows. So I have to take extra great care to close the curtains

Twan Dimmendaal 12:05

So you're actually certain about not staying in the current place that you live in. How does this make you feel? What are the consequences for you?

Interviewee 12:25

It makes me feel annoyed really? I mean, it makes me feel disappointed about Netherlands and it definitely has made me think about quitting. One day I literally checked how to go to the northern pole of Svalbard just escaped from here. Not to deal with any of this. Sadly, I couldn't get a good project there.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:55

But you would have gone if you could?

Interviewee 12:58

Yeah, definitely. Because I mean, I suppose this is the main reason why I actually don't like it here. In other countries don't have to deal with this. I never cared about my housing. I don't even remember how I got my housing because my university kind of like, provides housing if you need it. So I never worried about that part of the housing application, maybe sometimes about money, but actually having a place that was never a thing because. I feel that it's not something that I want to deal with.

Twan Dimmendaal 13:56

It's not something that you even thought of having to deal with upfront. And it's is definitely logical that you don't want to deal with it. Because it's quite a hassle. And it's just a right to have a roof above your head. Which isn't in a former smoking room.

Interviewee 14:25

Yeah. I think if it wasn't the former smoking room, I would have been completely fine. I think long term I would have gotten lung cancer probably. So.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:43

Yeah, that's not very nice. That's of course the housing situation. Then there's also the community integration of which I'm interested in how that has worked out. To just start up, do you feel safe in the community that you're in right now, so within the building, but also the neighborhoods?

Interviewee 15:08

I mean, I once almost got beaten up by some minority guy but there was like a fight and no punches but he like pushed me on the ground for reading a book in a park, which is apparently very threatening. Right now I don't feel that about any of this, like, my neighbors are nice. Somebody keeps stealing everybody's alcohol from the fridge. But other than that, there is nothing to worry about.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:45

And when you were in the SOS housing, did you feel safe there?

Interviewee 15:52

In SOS housing, I felt safe and in the village, I also felt safe. But I can definitely say that, I felt safe there as well, but I can definitely see why some people wouldn't feel safe. Especially women, because it's just mostly just a lot of guys. Just in one giant room where my bed was number 95.

Twan Dimmendaal 16:33

That's all in one room?

Interviewee 16:37

Technically there were two rooms, but they were connected.

Twan Dimmendaal 16:41

Mixed with men and women?

Interviewee 16:44

Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 16:45

All right. Then I would understand why for a woman that will be well, slightly more unsafe. Well, for you. I mean, the experience has been rather safe.

Interviewee 16:57

Yeah, I mean, I would have stayed if I could. But then we didn't have many people. It was actually surprisingly convenient because I didn't pay much and I had everything they needed.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:13

And of course if it's if it's not as busy it's actually quieter. And it feels like you probably have a bit more privacy. Which of course makes the experience bit better. Do you do have a lot of contact with other students via your studies or your work?

Interviewee 17:38

I only really talk to people in my class. It's my class and international related stuff which I attend. Those are my main contacts.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:59
What is it?

Interviewee 18:03
International Relations Society basically like a club where we talk about politics in other countries.

Twan Dimmendaal 18:11
so that's mostly with other international students I presume?

Interviewee 18:18
Yeah, that's surprisingly many Estonians so it's sometimes even just talking with an Estonian as well.

Twan Dimmendaal 18:29
Okay, and are there actually a lot of community activities also as well by study association perhaps or did something happen when you when you lived in the village?

Interviewee 18:48
What do you mean?

Twan Dimmendaal 18:52
Were there a lot of community activities, which help in integrating with the Dutch community or other international students? So they're going to a drink or movie or integrating with each other through events that the university organized?

Interviewee 19:22
I guess the International Relations Society had some things as well. But not really, I don't think that we have anything to specifically integrate into the Dutch society so to say. I definitely fear that I'm like, not part of this in any way. I finished my studies and go back to studying

Twan Dimmendaal 20:01
So that kind of actually concludes my interview for now. I understand that for now you feel safe instead in the city of Groningen, right?

Interviewee 20:15
Yeah, I mean, there was this incident and I briefly felt unsafe. But this region of Groningen is far away from me. And I just know how to react in such circumstances. So I don't feel threatened anymore.

Twan Dimmendaal 20:43
Okay. That's good. Could you give me any ideas for potentially improving the current situation for international students in Groningen?

Interviewee 20:54
Yeah. Have the university have its own housing, which is provided to students like every university has? Outside of Netherlands? Right? Because yeah, I mean, in Estonia, I literally slept in the same room with some other student. He was like a Russian speaking musician. Completely different from me, but at least we both had housing.

Twan Dimmendaal 21:22
because there is short stay housing for first year students in Groningen, international students, especially. Did you know about this?

Interviewee 21:33

I think this could be this thing I'm staying in?

Twan Dimmendaal 21:38

Yeah, perhaps it could be possible. It's usually around 500 euros so that could actually be possible. But I don't know why you would have to move out in three months? Because that's for the complete first year. So from September through to July.

Interviewee 22:07

I don't know. Maybe this fall, I guess?

Twan Dimmendaal 22:15

Yeah. Yeah, that's possible. So you would say more housing, organized by the university for students only?

Interviewee 22:34

Yeah. I mean, I feel that it's not too much, because I understand that the Dutch people want to have the free market everywhere. But you can still get free market in the place. If you have such housing. But still have this stability in people's lives, people maintain it.

Twan Dimmendaal 23:08

Right. Thank you very much. Yeah, thank you for all the answers it really helps me a lot just to go through is there anything else that you want to mention to me?

Interviewee 23:26

No, I don't think so. If I come up with something I will contact you.

Twan Dimmendaal 23:36

Yeah, no problem. But I just really want to thank you very, very much for participating for making the time. I think there's quite a lot that I can use in my research with your experience. And I really hope that's, well your experience is going to be a lot better that some luck is going to come your way if you can find a nice cheap room and really experience Groningen student life because I do think it's quite amazing. But for now, the experience hasn't been that wonderful for you. So I wish you best of luck.

Interviewee 24:20

Thank you. Have a nice day. Bye

Interview 8

Twan Dimmendaal 0:06

I won't be using your name in any kind of way. And if at any point you wish to retract statements that you made, you can always contact me. So, yeah, just to start off, could you tell me something about your current housing situation?

Interviewee 0:22

I'm currently living in a temporary room next to Pathé. It was intended to be only open for me for one month, but I got an extension for another month. And yeah, that's what I'm looking at right now. So until the end of November, which is today.

Twan Dimmendaal 0:44

And then what's going to happen?

Interviewee 0:47

And then the person I'm living with, he sublets, one of his rooms. He has an apartment, but he wanted more money. So he was like, Okay, I have a spare room. I'm going to sublet it to someone. And he told me, I could stay until December as well. But I actually found a room. So I will probably move in like five or six days. Then the room gets free.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:12

And are you a first year student here? Or have you been studying here longer?

Interviewee 1:17

I'm doing my masters.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:21

And you're here since summer?

Interviewee 1:25

No, it's my fourth year living here, actually.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:28

Oh, wow. Okay, and how was your experience on the housing market been during those four years.

Interviewee 1:35

In the beginning was super easy, because I applied early to university. And I was looking for rooming quite early. And I got a place in one of the student housing, SSH, so that was totally easy. And then I had to move out after one year, then it was kind of hard to find something but one of my friends found something. So I was quite lucky, actually, because many people were looking for a long time for another room. I've been living in that house for two years. But then I had to get out because the contract ended and my landlord only wanted to sublet or to rent out the house to four new people. At the same time, everyone who was in the house had to move out. So he rented out to four new people at the same time. That was in July, I think I moved out in July. I got my bachelor's in that year, like in the beginning of summer, and then I didn't really know where to do my masters in because I got accepted from Rotterdam and Utrecht and Leiden. So I was kind of I was in between choices. I didn't know which one to choose. And I kind of chose pretty late to do my masters in Rotterdam. I tried looking for a place in Rotterdam. I didn't find anything. And then I was like, okay, might be easier if I start looking in a city where I already know people. So I decided to do online university in Rotterdam from Groningen. But the fact that I started in August for rooms here. I was couch surfing

the whole July. I started looking in August. And for August and September I haven't found anything. And since October, I'm in my temporary room.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:48

Yeah. So where were you staying between July and October then?

Interviewee 3:54

Oh, basically at friends. I was couch surfing for two months.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:00

Okay, so that must be quite stressful I would assume.

Interviewee 4:05

Yeah, retrospectively, I've no idea how I made it through, honestly. But I'm quite resilient. So it was it was alright. It was never super nice. But it was alright.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:20

So you're saying that after you had to move out of SSH, you were quite lucky. But then when you heard from landlord that you had to move out in July, when did you hear about this?

Interviewee 4:35

I think we had one month notice to be moving out. And at that time, I actually thought I would not stay in Groningen. I thought I would go to either Rotterdam or Utrecht or Leiden. So I was like, Okay, I'm going to move out. It's going to be easy. So I think I've heard one month prior that I would have to move on. Because the majority of my house mates were moving out as well. And I could not get an extension on my contract.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:10

Usually they are legally obliged to give you at least two or three months notice.

Interviewee 5:22

Probably, I have no idea about those legal requirements. I've tried to contact my landlord after I moved out by phone and by email, and he would never respond. So he was happy that I was gone out of my house, I guess.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:45

Yeah. Do you think that being an international student has had an influence on this?

Interviewee 5:52

Could be but, my landlord could actually he speak German. I'm German. So he did actually prefer German tenants in his house. Because then he could speak German with them. It's a tough question. I don't think with the current landlord, my nationality was an issue. Yeah, I think it was more that we were living in Paddepoel next to families and old people. My landlord had an agreement with them that he would only have female students living in this house, because male students apparently are too noisy. So he had like this verbal agreement with the neighbors, that only girls get into the house because they're quieter. But we were not that quiet. So we had, I think twice a year, maybe three times a year, we've had some complaints from the neighbors. And I also think they contacted the landlord about it. So I kind of feel like the landlord was pretty happy that we were moving out.

Twan Dimmendaal 7:11

Yeah, I understand. So right now instantly, you've got a new place. And is it within the criteria that you that you had already?

Interviewee 7:21
What do you mean?

Twan Dimmendaal 7:23
Usually people have criteria, like the amount that you are willing to pay for a room? In relation to what you're getting back for that?

Interviewee 7:34
So money wise, yes. It's totally in the criteria. Concerning the place like the location, I would have preferred it to be a little bit closer to center, or at least in the north of the center, which it's not, but money wise, it's totally within boundaries. Also, the size is fine. It's just the location.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:04
Well, that's fine, I guess, in a way.

Interviewee 8:08
So just a small problem. Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:14
Do you feel like being an international students has increased the problems on the housing market?

Interviewee 8:21
yeah, totally. First of all, on Kamernet, or generally on Facebook, or on so many different platforms, it's always like, no, sorry, no internationals, because Dutch people live in the house. And then they want another Dutch person, so they can speak Dutch with everyone, I guess. So that makes it much harder. And then also I feel like sometimes rental agencies don't really want to bother speaking English as well. So that also makes my life a little bit harder. Yeah, I would say yes.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:03
It's something that I was expecting, but still unfortunate. Have you been feeling safe with the houses that you were living in, like in the SSH, but also in the current place?

Interviewee 9:25
Never thought about that, which probably means yes, I felt safe and SSH was alright, because it was like, lots and lots of people and we have heard some horror stories about like, I don't know, if you've left your window open, people would break in and that sort of thing. That never happened to me, but I've also been quiet. I've always made sure that my windows are locked, my doors locked and so on. So I would say I've always felt safe. Also in the last place I've been and also in my current place. Yes.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:00
All right. Then there's also the community integration. So of course, you've been living for quite a while now here in the Netherlands. And well, first of all, did you also feel safe in the community that you were living in, and more like the city in general?

Interviewee 10:29
I think right now is like the worst that I've experienced so far. I'm living next to pathé and loads of homeless people. Just yesterday, I just wanted to go back home, it was 11 in the evening, and then there were like, two homeless people approaching me being like, Okay, do you have cash or something? So I wasn't necessarily feeling like threatened or anything, but it was just, like a little bit uneasy, right? So I didn't have that in Paddepoel. I don't know, people were just minding their own

business. So this is the first time that I felt like kind of uneasy and I think it's just because there's loads of weird creatures hanging around Pathé.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:13

So and how would you say your integration within the community? So the student life, but also surrounding that, like with neighbors, and so on? How has that been going?

Interviewee 11:29

So and so like, on one hand, I just told you that many Dutch people don't want internationals in the house, if it's only Dutch people, and they have room free, they want a Dutch person. So when it comes to that I kind of feel excluded. I have a couple of Dutch friends. So I feel like integration is quite alright. And also, I've been to Dutch parties in the summer. They always would approach me in Dutch. So they just they don't assume that I'm not Dutch, then if I just say can we talk in English? They will totally, they would they will do that. And they will be happy talking to me in English. On one hand, I kind of feel excluded. On the other hand, I have not really tried to get into the community that much. But whenever I do, I don't feel rejected.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:33

Would you say that the language difference has had an influence on your community integration or not?

Interviewee 12:39

I think so. But it's also in the other direction, right? Because I mainly hang out with Germans, just because we find each other and just because it's like, kind of easy. I guess for the Dutch people, it's the same, it's just so much easier to be speaking Dutch, like your mother language. So, yeah, language definitely has an influence on that.

Twan Dimmendaal 13:04

And were there a lot of activities that were organized for you to help you in this integration? For example, your first year coming into Groningen?

Interviewee 13:18

There was the Keiweek and the ESN week. I think I did one of those. It was many international people who would do that. So it was totally nice to meet new people, but didn't really help me with my integration into the Dutch community.

Twan Dimmendaal 13:41

Okay. Do you have any ideas of how this could potentially be improved? Or are you saying well, maybe that's not really necessary?

Interviewee 13:54

Good question. I know for my faculty, I was doing psychology and psychology faculty would do loads and loads of activities. Right before COVID Like we had pop quizzes and I don't know like those were things that got organized. So I feel like I would have had tons of opportunities for those things, but I was never interested. I could have I could have done something but I just didn't want to

Twan Dimmendaal 14:28

So you knew about these and they did reach out to you?

Interviewee 14:32

I just got bombarded with emails. So like, at least for my faculty, they did. They actually provide a quiet a wide range of opportunities.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:53

Okay. So could you give me any ideas also for potentially improving the feeling of safety for international students and then considering the housing situation

Interviewee 15:13

Considering finding new rooms easily?

Twan Dimmendaal 15:18

So the housing crisis, and the feeling of safety, how to improve this?

Interviewee 15:29

Yeah, first of all, would be nice if university would provide people with housing, which they don't? So they say, Okay, if you want to study here, it's your own responsibility to find a place to stay. Which on one hand, I understand, because it's so many international students, and I wouldn't want to take on the responsibility of finding each and every one of them a room. In the other hand, if they take so many people they should at least make sure that they can find housing somewhere, because I've known from so many people who had to end up in a tent, or who were homeless, just as I was. But kind of feel like either university should provide more buildings for students, or on campus living or something like that. And other than that, just in order to make it easier for international students, like I said, I'm enrolled in Erasmus University right now. And I feel like they are much more transparent when it comes to educating about how the housing crisis is going. So they have websites listed on their own university website on, which housing providers are reliable and which are scammers. You can start looking here or here or here. Those are all scam proof pages. I feel like our university doesn't really do that. They're like, okay, you can conduct SSH. And that's it. Other than that, it's your responsibility. I don't fucking care. Just take the tuition fee. And other than that, it kind of sucks. Every time you try to apply to a room, you have to sign up for a website, you have to pay 30 bucks in order to at least like to make a response in the first place to the, to the room. It's just about money making at that point. And now, that sucks, so more free websites, because I feel it's common that you pay 30 bucks a month, but you'll never get any responses

Twan Dimmendaal 17:52

So quite some critique on that.

Interviewee 17:56

Ah, it's the fucking worst. Trust me on that. It's so bad. Not only that, you don't get replies. But the whole layout of the app and website is so fucking bad. It crashes all the time. Do not recommend

Twan Dimmendaal 18:12

I understand.

Interviewee 18:13

Yeah. Other than that, I don't really know what to do.

Twan Dimmendaal 18:18

Oh, that's actually quite a lot of ideas and remarks and things to think about. It ultimately helps me a lot already. So that actually already concludes the interview from my sides.

Interviewee 18:37

Nice because I just smashed over my water and I want to dry that.

Twan Dimmendaal 18:41

Okay. Well, then I just really want to thank you again for participating and taking the time.

Interviewee 18:49

You're welcome. I don't know if you will think about that once you've finished your thesis, but it all would be nice if you contacted me, when you get a grade or something just out of interest.

Twan Dimmendaal 19:03

Sure, no problem, then I will do so. I just wish you a very nice evening. Have fun in your new room in a couple of days.

Interviewee 19:15

Yes. Thanks. Alright. Bye.

Interview 9

Twan Dimmendaal 0:01

So anything that you say you can always contact me if you wish to retract it, and I won't be using your name in any kind of way in thesis just for your privacy, so you can talk freely. So just to start off the interview, could you tell me something about yourself in the current housing situation for you?

Interviewee 0:23

Well, actually the this meeting happens in the right time. Because today's the point where when I can't bear it anymore, stupid. Do you know Martini house?

Twan Dimmendaal 0:41

I've heard of it and other interviews. I've interviewed some other people from here. From the Martini house.

Interviewee 0:57

Okay. So it's emergency housing. We are 200 people living here, all international students, most of them or bachelor students. But I'm Master Degree students. And the thing is, the rooms are conceived to host one person, but because emergency and housing crisis, they were hosting two people so I can show you have. So this is my bed. The bed of my roommates. We have one desk that we share. And we have we showed the kitchen with like, 80 people or something like that. And it's disgusting. And we don't have light in the kitchen, the fridge, or super small and you can find room to put your stuff and everyone still for it from everyone. this is my roommate. So yes. Terrible. And the thing is, the contract ends in December. So we have to find something else. By then. We have to find something else. But most of them haven't. So we're looking for it. And I mean, a part of being here is nice, because we're there is some solidarity between us and people are nice, but the place is just awful. And combining the housing situation with studies is super hard. And also because when you have 200 students, it's like noise every night party every night. And you want to be social as well. But then, it's just hard to keep the normal life because you have also to be on your phone all day long to check on all the announces. Because if you if you're there 30 minutes afterwards, then it's too late. It's super stressing. I hate it.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:26

So there are 200 in the building I understand. And all of them have a contract until December.

Interviewee 3:33

Yep.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:35

Okay. And that's like, till the end of December or tomorrow?

Interviewee 3:41

This is the funniest part. So the contract ends the 23rd of December. So right before Christmas. So as a present for Christmas, we become homeless.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:55

Okay. And I understand that you haven't found anything yet.

Interviewee 4:01

No. it's hard because you don't know. I mean, I won't be homeless, I won't be under bridges. I know it's because if I don't find anything, then I just sleep at some friend's place and move around into like one month, one month and one month and if I was doing my bachelor or if I was doing an Erasmus it

would be alright with me because I, I don't I don't need luxury. I don't care. But I just need a stable place so that I can study and have a healthy life again and succeed in my room in my master and that's the that's the thing that stresses me out.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:42

So it's your first year of your master?

Interviewee 4:47

It's the last it's a one year research.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:51

And I mean, how is that going with sharing a desk?

Interviewee 5:03

It's not going well. At first it was okay. But now, I think it's the combination of everything like getting tired of and stressed because at first I was there in September, I was like, okay, so I have until December to find something. So that's okay. But now, the more time goes, the more it's getting stressing, plus the darkness and the coldness, and the bad weather plus Corona restrictions, who makes everyone stay at home. So the 200 of us, always here. And so you'll never you don't have any privacy you you're never alone. Which can be nice, but can be not the end the stress and the workload of the master and looking actively, which is also time consuming and energy consuming. Makes it just awful. And, and also, why the fuck did they? Did they close the libraries at five? Because

Twan Dimmendaal 6:12

like the University Library? I think I was I was planning to go there tonight. But really?

Interviewee 6:21

Oh, eight at least. And I think at five. Because we were I mean, we I don't know because as an international student, we don't always receive the right information about restrictions.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:36

I mean, on Google the University Library, it still says it closes at 10 attend.

Interviewee 6:48

I hope it does. I heard it closed at five.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:53

like this is the one across from the Harmonie building. Yeah, it's closest at 10 It says on Google.

Interviewee 7:05

But is that because they said that the only thing that remains open remains open is the supermarkets

Twan Dimmendaal 7:15

Yeah, necessary shops and supermarkets. But I mean, I'm just having a look. Because I think there was this message from the university a couple of days ago. And I think they should have said something about it. So it says the food and drink services gyms and cultural organizations have been changed to 5pm the university doesn't say anything about that. So I think it's still until 10

Interviewee 8:25

is that I asked my Dutch flat mates and they said it's closed at five. They might be wrong. I hope they are.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:33

Well, I mean, I'm going to have a look tonight and then I'll find out myself.

Interviewee 8:38

yeah, no. Because if it closes at five, it just makes it impossible to study for us.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:49

And then you also still have from five from 5pm on which you really don't have a place to go. I mean, you could go to the library but then nothing more. But that's this of course situation that you're in right now. With how has this experience been over the years? Because I you're doing your masters here? Did you also do your bachelor here?

Interviewee 9:16

No, I just arrived in September.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:20

And did you know beforehand?

Interviewee 9:24

No, no, no, no, I wouldn't imagine it for a European country. I don't know. It's weird. I have some friends who just had to drop out for the from their studies because they didn't have a roof over their head. It's super sad and no, I didn't know I had no clue. I mean, if I had informed myself a bit more. I would have known I guess, but I didn't. So it was there's like, okay, let's move and I find something in August.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:09

Because when you started searching in August,

Interviewee 10:12

I had my confirmation of, that's also a thing for international students most of the time, or at least for master's students. I don't know how it works. But for me, we got our admission confirmation super late compared to their students. So all the houses are already booked. So I was officially enrolled in the beginning of September, actually. So I didn't search for it before. But I had the unofficial confirmation in August. So that's when I started to look for a house.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:56

And then you, I guess you immediately realize the situation.

Interviewee 11:05

But I was lucky enough that I could go here actually.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:12

Because there are other people who don't even get that opportunity.

Interviewee 11:16

And during the first week, so some lucky people were here. They moved to other places, because they found locally, something. And then, right after other people came, because there are so many people waiting. Like, during the first month of the semester, there was so many students just waiting for room. And they were like, Oh, I love this place. It's so much better than what I had before. Like, okay, so there is even worse. It's crazy.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:49

Yeah. Because what is what is the reason that Martini house is now getting shut down?

Interviewee 11:58

Because it's a shady building. Like the building has rats and stuff. It's really

Twan Dimmendaal 12:06

Not a big surprise with 80 people sharing a kitchen

Interviewee 12:09

Exactly. So SSH is selling it. Because I think they don't have the money to make it better. So they just sell it. So we didn't know if the we didn't know what happens afterwards, because we didn't even know who the next owner will be.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:32

Now, there's no information given about that?

Interviewee 12:35

No, we asked SSH, but they're like, maybe the new owner will be willing to keep you but we don't know.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:54

They don't know but they do sell it and with you. You're of course still living there. They do what they do. They do set it they do sell the building to different company.

Interviewee 13:09

I mean, they probably know who the owner is, but I don't know what's his plan or

Twan Dimmendaal 13:15

Okay. So yeah, that kind of concludes my questions about the housing situation. I mean, it's quite stressful for you. Do you feel safe in this building?

Interviewee 13:32

What do you mean? Like in what sense? Safe

Twan Dimmendaal 13:37

Safe is of course it's quite broad term. So we've talked about the worriedness and stress of finding a new place and all that but I mean, living in the building with 200 other people and sharing a kitchen with 80 other people sharing a room with another person

Interviewee 13:54

I wouldn't say I feel unsafe like I'm not scared of being killed or raped or anything but I feel safe but I don't feel home No, because your stuff always get stolen and stuff

Twan Dimmendaal 14:14

That happened to you as well?

Interviewee 14:19

Always all the time. Every day

Twan Dimmendaal 14:22

Like food?

Interviewee 14:24

food and pans and my cooking pots my everything. I think they were most of the people are respectful here but out of 200 people of course there are some people who just don't care and I think they just live out of stealing from everyone. I don't think they buy any food. I don't know how it works

Twan Dimmendaal 14:48

And within the communities, so the neighborhood that you live in surrounding the house, but also well going out in Groningen and the city center. You feel safe there?

Interviewee 15:03

So in the city in general, you mean, And the neighborhoods?

Twan Dimmendaal 15:12

Yes.

Interviewee 15:15

I mean, I feel safe here, but some stuff happened, actually. Which was not safe. Because, there was. there was some several cases of sexual harassment, drugs, like hard drugs, without consent and stuff like that. So it's not that safe.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:42

But it hasn't had an influence on your own feeling of safety?

Interviewee 15:48

no, because I, because I have good friends here. So I know, you know, I can count on people. And I don't think it will happen to me that I will be alone without anyone taking care of me in the buildings.

Twan Dimmendaal 16:08

That's nice. And how's the integration? Within the community with other students, whether they are Dutch or international?

Interviewee 16:24

They're all international students, because for to be to apply for SSH. I think you have to be international and first year in Groningen. So we're all even either first year of our master or of our Bachelor. The beginning was, at the beginning, it was a bit hard, actually, because I arrived a bit later than some of the people. And I felt like they all knew each other already. And I'm not that confident and extrovert at first, and I'm also not that fluent in English. And at first, it was hard to make friends. But now, now, it's no, it's okay. I mean, after several parties. And so I'm super lucky about my roommate. I really liked her we got along. Well,

Twan Dimmendaal 17:31

That's pretty lucky. I mean, it could be a lot worse.

Interviewee 17:37

But she's Norse so that helps. She does snore so I can't sleep properly. But apart from that, no, no, it's, it's okay. It's nice.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:48

All right. And apart from the people that you meet, within the building, like outside people from your class?

Interviewee 18:01

So it's nice. I don't know many people from my master there. Most of them are Dutch. So it's a bit more complicated to get to know each other, because they all have their friends already. And they speak Dutch between each other. But they're nice. But, you know, it's not the same thing as being here. And then there is another person who just arrived and has no friend looking for friends. I mean, I guess it's just, at the beginning, you feel lonely. You don't have any friends. You make some friends, but it takes time to have some deep relationship and stuff. but that's normal. I mean, the integration parts was kind of the same as what I experienced earlier when I moved to other countries. So it's not something specific to Groningen

Twan Dimmendaal 19:05

Were there any activity, so we're organized as well for you, as a Master's student, in getting to know like other Dutch students or other students?

Interviewee 19:16

There are not much activities to get to know Dutch students actually, I feel like there is a sharp division between Dutch students and international students also because you guys have this strong tradition about student associations. We had stuff that we don't we have no idea about, and it seems to be super important for some of you. And we're not like there is no international students induce Association rights or Dutch.

Twan Dimmendaal 19:53

I mean, I am one of those associations. I think we've got like About eight or 900 members right now. And I remember one German guy who came in this year who didn't really get to know people. And there's one other one Polish girl, I think she speaks English. And while she's been very, very sociable, and actually found a very big group of friends, but that's not the rule. That's the exception.

Interviewee 20:30

Because if you don't know about it, there's no way you end. And also, it's not part of our tradition. So it seems a bit weird. Whereas I guess so. And there are some stuff to meet other international students. I think the there is the KeiWeek. I didn't attend it. Because it's like mid August. I wasn't here in mid August. And I didn't know if it's special for international students. I don't think so. Maybe it's mixed. So that's, I guess, the thing to meet some of the Dutch people, but my friends who went there, they didn't? Yeah, they didn't become friends with Dutch people that much. They just met internationals. But I guess it's everywhere. The same, like back in France, because I'm from France. The international students also said a lot among them. So like, among the international schools. It's a bound they have together. But I did the ESN. week do you know? So it's like, integration only for international students.

Twan Dimmendaal 21:51

So do you have any ideas of how to potentially improve this? If it is necessary to improve this?

Interviewee 22:00

I think that the Keiweek shouldn't be mid August first of all, because most of international students aren't there, from mid August. So it doesn't really make sense. I guess it would be nice to have nice to have that I don't think you can change it. But like the Studies Association, Student Association, are they open to international students?

Twan Dimmendaal 22:30

They are open to international students. I mean, mine is. But of course, there's still a big barrier.

Interviewee 22:45

They are open officially. But you're not looking for international students. And that's new. I mean, but like, how would you even know about it? As an international student?

Twan Dimmendaal 22:57

Well, that's just what the Keiweek is for. So when you participate in the Keiweek which, of course, as you said is a bit too early for international students. When you do you, you go through all these different associations as part of activities. So that's the kind of welcoming and then immediately after the Keiweek, the introduction periods of these associations are also starts. So that's how you get to know them, and then immediately can be active in them. But after that, usually, it's just already a bit too late.

Interviewee 23:34

Okay, I didn't, didn't get that. I mean, the big improvement to be done would be to, to have housing for students follow the public policy, or university, etc.

Twan Dimmendaal 23:54

That was just the next question that I wanted to ask. Could you give me any ideas for potentially improving the feeling of safety, and then really looking at the housing situation? How to improve this this housing crisis that we have?

Interviewee 24:10

Even more houses? I don't know. But when I saw I did one year abroad in Norway, and the university provided us with the housing and in France, it's the same as an international student in exchange, you get a housing because goes the university knows that when you're not in the city, and you come from another country, it's super hard to find something. So I don't understand why they like, is there a reason they don't seem to take it seriously? Because it has been years and years? It's the case, right?

Twan Dimmendaal 24:47

Well, I think they are kind of taking it seriously, but there has been an increase in in the amount of international students that are coming here. And there are some Reasons why they can't make that amount smaller. So they have to accept international students from Europe.

Interviewee 25:09

Why, why? Why can they

Twan Dimmendaal 25:12

That has to do with the European Union, and it has agreements. Where they can't is something to do about discrimination. And so they can only do it per course. But a lot of courses don't want a maximum on the amount of students that they will receive. Because it also creates a bit of money and some structural problems, which I'm not too sure of. But I'm going to delve into that. But they say that they can't, they can't keep very much students out. But also they're looking at the municipality and saying, well, as university, we've got all these students here coming, but we can't build houses, the municipality has to do that. While the municipality says you shouldn't accept that many international students. So they're kind of looking at each other. And it's at an impasse. So like, there's nothing happening, not too much, or something,

Interviewee 26:15

they selling away the responsibility to the other one.

Twan Dimmendaal 26:18

That's basically what's happening as of right now.

Interviewee 26:23

Well, I'm pretty sure they are able to restrict the number of international students. I mean, they can, if they really want to, they can kind of fight for it, maybe it will have side effects for them like they can send. I don't know if it's like if it works like partnerships, so they can send many students and then they have to

Twan Dimmendaal 26:49

Yeah, I think that's something that that is a worry, kind of. But I'm really not too sure, actually. That's something I have to research into right now.

Interviewee 27:04

I think that I don't know, it sounds like an excuse.

Twan Dimmendaal 27:09

Yeah, that's, that's possible. So just build more houses, that's your idea?

Interviewee 27:15

Or less international students, less students? Because it's not that. I mean, it's not about international students. Actually, there are no rooms. And the fact is, the lack of room is more a problem of international students, because when there is a lack of roommates, how they're as an international to get it, but if they reduce the amount of international students, and they replaced them by the students, that probably will be the exact same. So we're just accepting this and it's weird that the municipality and the university don't like work together on it, because I feel like they both depend on each other. Because Groningen is such a big student city. So without the university, it's nothing. I don't know, I guess there might be an equal economic interests in that, like in accepting so many international students, or so many students,

Twan Dimmendaal 28:26

Especially from outside Europe?

Interviewee 28:29

Yeah. But that's fucked up. Because imagine you come from South America, you pay so much for your master, you pay so much for your flight, and then you arrive, you don't have a roof over your head, you fail your studies, you jump out.

Twan Dimmendaal 28:46

And you don't get your money back.

Interviewee 28:51

And you don't get your money back. And then you have to doesn't make sense. And it's also I mean, the point of Erasmus exchanges and stuff. I'm not quite of that because I'm doing my master here. But for those who are in exchanges, is an exchange. So if we treat as a European country, we welcome your Dutch students if we offer them houses, if we offer them a nice environment to study, it's super unfair, that's urine receivers that way. So maybe the differing the if the if the problem is really about the agreements on the Erasmus community and stuff, then it can be pointed as a problem and the rules can be changed by the Dutch government or the Dutch union. I don't know what but also maybe the foreign countries can represent you into Most of their, their students are not decently treated.

About the agreements on the Erasmus community and stuff, then it can be pointed as a problem and the rules can be changed by the Dutch government or the Dutch union. I don't know what, but also maybe the foreign countries can represent the interest of the students that are not decently treated.

Twan Dimmendaal 30:29

Because overall, considering all the factors, how is your experience of Groningen been?

Interviewee 30:38

Do you want a grade or?

Twan Dimmendaal 30:42

Well, not necessarily. Although I do wonder about a grade now. But yeah, just like, of course, housing has been has been terrible. In the mean, apart from the housing, there's also social activities.

Interviewee 31:05

I really liked the city. I'm just sad about the current situation, but I wouldn't blame the municipality for that. But that's super hard. And it's also a lot about personal things. So I don't know if it's, if it's representative of like, I don't know. Challenging, I would say, but I'm glad I moved here.

Twan Dimmendaal 31:39

I mean, that's fortunate at least. But what kind of grades would it be?

Interviewee 31:46

I can't give it a grade. It doesn't really make sense. Sorry. Because grades only make sense if you can compare it to the situation. Compared to my experience in Norway, for example, I would say it's worse or it's better. But the comparison is not even do able because one is in COVID situation, and one is not. But, I mean, yeah, no, it's not that bad. I think when you're in it, when you're in the day, you looked all day long for housing, and just everything seems to go wrong, and you feel like you're going to fail everything and you're wondering why the fuck am I here would be so easier at home, blah, blah, then it's really, really depressing. But then when you take a step back, and you realize your new friends are the thing, you've learned a lot, and you're like, Okay, I'm glad to make it. I made it.

Twan Dimmendaal 32:57

Alright. So yeah, that actually kind of concludes the interview for my side and the questions that I wanted to ask you. Thanks for the answers. Is there something else that you would want to mention?

Interviewee 33:16

No, I feel like I talked a lot. You will have a lot of work to transcript.

Twan Dimmendaal 33:24

Definitely. But that's, that's nice. That's the purpose of it. So yeah. I can really use this in my research, fortunately. So that's, that's very good.

Interviewee 33:36

Is it your bachelor or master bachelor's thesis?

Twan Dimmendaal 33:40

Third year bachelor.

Interviewee 33:46

Okay. But nice. It's, it helps you.

Twan Dimmendaal 33:51

Thank you. But yeah, then, then that's it. I guess. I really wish you very much luck in the coming weeks.

Interviewee 34:20

If you hear about anything, really? No, but really, yeah, that's a real message. If you hear about anything, or if you can ask around you or anything else, please send me a message.

Twan Dimmendaal 34:33

Yeah. And if I go to the library tonight I'll make sure to let you know. Yeah, so until 10 But yeah, just the best of luck. I hope it works out. And I hope that you have a very nice experience here after all, more than just half. Now, I just want to wish you a very nice evening.

Interviewee 34:57

You too. Thank you, dankjewel

Interview 10

Twan Dimmendaal 0:11

So just to start off the interview, can you tell me something about your current housing situation? And how you got the room that you're in?

Interviewee 0:19

Yeah. So I'm living, actually in a house with two bedrooms. And I'm sharing it with two of my friends who are here on the exchange. And we got it through, what's the name? Airbnb?

Twan Dimmendaal 0:38

Okay, well, you're the first person who I'm meeting who has a room for Airbnb. Isn't that kind of expensive? As you're paying per night.

Interviewee 0:47

Yeah. I mean, it's on average, like 1900 euro a month. Which is expensive. But we're three living here.

Twan Dimmendaal 0:58

So you divided by three. So that will be around six euros. And you're an exchange student here?

Interviewee 1:08

Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:09

All right.

Interviewee 1:12

I've spoken around a lot with, like other students here. And apparently, we were just really early to, like, start looking. We started like, in early March, pretty much.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:33

Did you immediately get what you want it with this route?

Interviewee 1:40

I mean, we looked around for a while. But as soon as we saw this place, it was like, first of all, we could rent the like, the whole duration. So that was one of the criteria we were looking for. And also, it was a fair price just between the three of us. We all had a ceiling of 700 euro a month that we would not like more than that each. And this place just fit into all of those criteria.

Twan Dimmendaal 2:18

All right. Very nice. So that 700 euros month. I'm sorry, but this it's quite a lot, actually.

Interviewee 2:25

Yeah, no, it's a lot.

Twan Dimmendaal 2:27

So before you came to Groningen, did you know about this, like, was this already something that you were thinking about? Well, it could perhaps be up to 700 euros a month?

Interviewee 2:40

Yeah. I mean, when I was looking around, to my application for the exchange, I was looking at the housing situation in different cities. I mean, I wasn't really looking at how many are there available? But more like how expensive is it? And I thought that generally in the Netherlands, it was pretty expensive. But at the same time, I'm from Sweden, and I live in Gothenburg which is like pretty big city there. And the housing situation is quite bad there too. So I'm used to like pretty high rates.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:23

Because like in a different way, of course it's quite expensive in Groningen but in a different way. There's also another problem with the housing situation which is that there's not enough rooms. Did you experience that your this yourself as well?

Interviewee 3:41

Not myself but I have a few friends here who are definitely in a pickle because they're also an exchange. But for longer term like the whole masters. And I can take for example one of my friends. He's been, it's not kicked out, but he said his contract runs out. So he has to move and he's looking at one room apartments for up to 1000 Euro. This really small apartment and a lot of people are saying to him because there are a lot of apps for different apartments but they say no students. That's a criteria; no we don't taking any students here and the other ones are super expensive.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:51

So you got this via Airbnb and how did your search go? Like how did you start, because I know Airbnb, and I know they have this option for long term stay. But I've never really looked at it because it's usually quite a bit more expensive than just normal rent rental.

Interviewee 5:16

And it was supposed to be much more expensive, but we got like, a huge discount when we looked for that long like it was 50% pretty much.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:32

So that actually took you over to step into Airbnb?

Interviewee 5:37

Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:37

Because when did you get this room? Exactly?

Interviewee 5:43

I think we officially booked it at the end of April. But we were in touch with the landlord since the middle of March.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:55

Because what were the other options that you were looking at? Housing wise? What if this fell through?

Interviewee 6:02

We did most of our search on Airbnb. But also student dorms, were also always a plan B. But as I've heard, not everyone got the room from there. So I guess we were just lucky to find this. Because otherwise, I mean, it seems almost impossible at the beginning. It would be a very tough situation to deal with if we didn't have any place to live at the start of this.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:36

Do you know of any other exchange students that have had problems with this?

Interviewee 6:44

Yeah, I mean, I've heard of many. I know, maybe two or three that had to switch places to live. That I know. Well, if you would like to do you want me to send our contact information?

Twan Dimmendaal 7:00

Yeah, sure. That would be great. I get that you've had quite a pleasant experience right now. How is the quality of the house that you're in?

Interviewee 7:23

Yeah, it's really good. But house wise, it's a very bad house, because they wasted so much space, but it works very well to living. I don't really have anything to complain about.

Twan Dimmendaal 7:45

What do you mean with how they wasted a lot of space?

Interviewee 7:52

It's like, six meters up to there. Super tall. I have all these designer things. I mean, they could have easily put another floor in this house instead of doing it like this. But it works. Very good for living.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:11

Alright. So I understand you there with two roommates who are friends from your exchange group.

Interviewee 8:20

Yeah, we knew each other in Sweden before. Everyone.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:26

So you're doing the same exchange here in Groningen?

Interviewee 8:31

Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:31

All right. Let me see. Because of course, because you booked it with Airbnb, there's no real problem for being evicted. If anything. There's no way that they can force you out.

Interviewee 8:48

No, not that. I mean, yeah. If we have a loud party every night, then maybe. But the security I have as an Airbnb tenant are pretty good.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:01

That's pretty nicely done. Because there's quite a lot of landlords in Groningen. Who are well, quite a bit of illegal.

Interviewee 9:11

Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:12

And they don't really adhere to the to the rules. But of course, with Airbnb, you've got this supervision in a kind of way. So I guess that's quite comfortable for you, living here. Moving on to the

community integration. Just as a first question, to start off, do you feel safe in the community that you currently live in?

Interviewee 9:42
Like in the house?

Twan Dimmendaal 9:44
Yeah. But also surrounding that. So in the house first, but also surrounding like the neighborhood streets, community as a whole.

Interviewee 9:54
Compared to Sweden, and like where I'm from, this is much better.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:59
What's the difference?

Interviewee 10:03
Like currently in Gothenburg? It's really bad gang criminality. Now, I mean, it's not that I noticed it a lot, but I noticed it much more there than I do here. So I don't even know if there's any big gangs in Groningen.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:20
Yeah, we got this drill rap. Which are these quite young guys who are walking around with knives. But that's Paddepoel and Vinkhuizen. And I don't know where you are, but I will assume somewhere in the center. So then you won't notice that very much.

Interviewee 10:42
No, I can really take a walk wherever whenever I can.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:49
Alright, it's very nice. So the integration with well, Dutch people in the Netherlands? How was your experience with that?

Interviewee 11:03
Yeah, I mean, I haven't met too many, like Dutch people. I had two or three maybe that I met and like, became friends with most of the friends here are international students also. But I haven't felt any like peer rejection whatsoever, either. So it's been good.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:25
All right. And do you think the language differences had an influence on this?

Interviewee 11:34
I mean, it feels like everyone understands English. So that's not been a problem. You can talk to anyone, and they will understand you. And also, reading Dutch, it kind of works out because it's quite similar to Swedish and also like English and German. So it's not the biggest language barrier. Plus it sounds pretty funny.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:13
I remember I read some Swedish text. And we had to translate it in a way that we knew of, and we got, pretty close, like, 80% of something because it's so similar.

Interviewee 12:26

Yeah, it is similar in text, but the sound is quite different.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:30

Yeah, definitely. So, yeah, then I'm also interested in the kind of activities that are organized for you. Of course, you're an exchange student. Do you feel that there are organizations that reach out to you and will organize activities for you?

Interviewee 12:57

Yeah, I mean, it was the ESN a week. But other than that, no

Twan Dimmendaal 13:05

]Okay, would you like this more?

Interviewee 13:10

Yeah it would be fun, but at the same time, the friends that that we hang out with here in this house we met this week, and we still have very good time with each other. So, it's not really needed.

Twan Dimmendaal 13:27

You don't really miss out on something.

Interviewee 13:29

No. But I mean, I can imagine, for someone I mean, we were already three people living here. So the social situation hasn't really been so bad. And plus, we live in a house so people can just come over and we can hang. But someone living in a small room, maybe alone, I think it would be very good to have more activities.

Twan Dimmendaal 13:55

All right. So of course, he said this quite a lot of interaction with other international students. So not really with other Dutch students?

Interviewee 14:07

They're like part of the group. Also, but not so many.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:19

I guess, as you're an exchange students, that's fine. Do you do think that you would like that more in the kind of way?

Interviewee 14:31

yeah, I think it would be fun. And also, it would help with one thing I'm missing is following what's happening on the news. And having a Dutch person who maybe has a bigger grasp of the situation. You have so much to talk about, and you can learn more about the country. I think it would be nice.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:04

Okay, then. Well, that already kind of concludes my interview but I just got a few concluding questions. I mean, I think you kind of already answered this, but do you feel safe in city of Groningen?

Interviewee 15:22

Yes. Very. Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:30

I mean, Sweden to me. Sounds just as safe as Netherlands. I really didn't know about the gangs.

Interviewee 15:38

Now, it's pretty bad. All right. But yeah, I mean, I could get into the politics, but I don't think you really need it for your research.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:49

it's just a bit of interest from my side. Of course, it's not really necessary for my thesis.

Interviewee 15:55

So you can look it up. If you're interested in that.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:58

I will do. So yeah, of course your experience with the housing market was via Airbnb. But you do know of other people that haven't had as good, of an experience. Could you give me any ideas that you have? Or these people have that you heard from them about improving the housing situation in Groningen?

Interviewee 16:33

I would say that maybe the municipality or the government needs to take some more actions to either help students find apartments easier, or put strict rules on landlords that you can't turn away students, or you can just throw anyone out for this. The same as how Airbnb gives you more security. Because if it's just you alone, a student versus a landlord, like in many cases, the landlord will just have all the power. And so with some supervision would be nice. I'd also like more information about how you can find apartments to students, because sometimes it could be hard to find the good websites to look at. Things like this.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:27

Because of course, you went via Airbnb. I don't think that's the really general kind of kind of way of finding a house here. Do you think that there was a lack of information on that site by the university or the municipality? Would you have liked to know more about this?

Interviewee 17:52

Yeah, I mean, as I remember it, the school, they sent out information, like only for the dorms. But as we know, the dorms are not enough apartments for all the students that are accepted each year. So if the school doesn't want to make like ads for other sites, then the ESN peer group could do it in their emails, because finding a place to live is essential. So yeah, just more information on the emails given to them.

Twan Dimmendaal 18:34

Alright. So yeah, just as a whole so far, how's your experience going?

Interviewee 18:43

It's been very nice. Of course, the restrictions is a bummer. But it's a real nice city super cozy, safe, in my opinion, at least. And I mean, you can go out and have a beer, wherever and there's always like, nice energy and good vibes. So yeah, I like it a lot.

Twan Dimmendaal 19:04

Very nice. Let's hope the press conference of tonight won't destroy that.

Interviewee 19:13

I mean, it's good to be hopeful, but I think it will get worse. It doesn't look very good.

Twan Dimmendaal 19:20

Now it's definitely going to get worse, unfortunately. But that really kind of concludes my interview. Is there something else that you would want to mention?

Interviewee 19:34

Um, no. I mean, maybe if you if I give you my email, you can send me the thesis at the end. It would be nice.

Twan Dimmendaal 19:45

It will take a couple of weeks.

Interviewee 19:49

Yeah, of course, when you're done.

Twan Dimmendaal 19:52

Alright, so you can message me via Reddit, with your email address, and then I'll make sure to do that.

Interviewee 20:01

Nice. All right. And also you have my full name do you need it? Or?

Twan Dimmendaal 20:07

Well, it's here with Google meets, but I won't be using your name in the thesis.

Interviewee 20:34

Yeah, it's good. But thank you for this was conducted interview. That's a very good interview. Really good flow.

Twan Dimmendaal 20:49

Thank you. This is actually very nice to hear that and I really want to thank you for participating really helps me a lot with the with the research. So I really want to thank you for taking the time for me and participating. I just wish you a very nice what, how much do you have left? Like two months?

Unknown Speaker 21:13

I think.

Twan Dimmendaal 21:14

I wish you a very nice remaining two months. Let's hope you there's lots of things to do. We'll see about that. But for now, I just really wish you a very nice day.

Interviewee 21:27

Thank you. You too, and good luck with your thesis.

Twan Dimmendaal 21:30

Thank you very much. Bye

Interview 11

Twan Dimmendaal 0:00

Just so you know, I won't be using your name in the thesis. And if at any point you wish to retract the statements that you made, you can always contact me. And then I will not use them in my in my thesis and delete them. Yeah, so that's that. So just to start off, could you tell me about yourself and your current housing situation?

Interviewee 0:28

I'm from Bulgaria. And I'm currently in my second year of my fine art bachelor in the Minerva Art Academy. And right now, I live in a house with multiple rooms. I'm in one of the rooms and other people live in the other rooms. So I basically have a couple of housemates.

Twan Dimmendaal 0:55

So you're a second year, right?

Interviewee 0:59

Yes.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:00

How did you actually get this room?

Interviewee 1:03

Well, it was a little bit difficult. So in the first year, I was in an SSH accommodation, which I think is an option that a lot of young first year students go to, just because it's quite secure. And the sense that, you know, it's just the website that will get the job done, you can trust the website, you can trust the company. But the bad part about it, that it's only for one year, which means that when I had to think about housing for the second year, I had to look somewhere else. Luckily, I got the contact information of a woman from one of my classmates, and this woman, owned a couple of buildings in Groningen. She looks after the building. So she knows if there are any rooms free. And if there are free rooms, she would offer them to students, and they sign a contract and they get a room. The problem for me was that I spent a lot of time in university, and especially in the winter, it's quite scary to always go home a lot very alone very late in the night. So I actually was not looking for a place alone. I was looking with a classmate. And that is, if you think that finding one room is difficult, well, finding a room for two or more people is a complete nightmare. It's extremely difficult. But thankfully through this woman, she said there are two rooms that are getting free. One in July and the other one the next month. So if you want you can take both rooms. And that's exactly what we did. So basically, my neighbor, my housemate one of them is my classmate as well. Just very, very convenient. But it was a very lucky situation.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:17

Yeah, because how long did it took for you to get this type of room?

Interviewee 3:23

Oh, there was a problem with SSH at some point where actually everyone had to move one month before the actual contract expired. It was because they wanted to renovate the building in which we were living. And they were originally planning on moving us, like the next month into different accommodations, but we spoke up against it. Okay. And instead of moving us, I think three months before our contract ended, they decided to let us stay, but we had to leave one month earlier. So I was looking for a room. Probably by the end of May, I had to look for a room. And I think at the beginning of June, we already had this option. And we went for the viewing. And I ended up moving in this room in July. And my friend moved in June. So it must have been the end of May. So it was

quite fast. But we also looked at many other different options as well, which didn't turn out very well.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:35

No, but you actually started quite late. If I'm being honest.

Interviewee 4:44

You could say that, yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:49

Well, listening to the other stories of international students. I've heard of people starting in February and also not getting a room.

Interviewee 5:00

I have heard stories about that. We just started in May. Originally we were looking for a place with three people, because we also wanted to have a different friend also join us. But that is absolutely impossible. To be honest. Unless even if you're can find a studio, but most studios aren't rented out for students. And most studios want either PhD students or families. So I feel like they don't really trust students with these new modern studios. So finding individual rooms was the best option that we could have at the time.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:41

And so I understand that you got the SSH because you understood the website, and you got it through the university. Did you look further than the SSH and trying to get a room?

Interviewee 5:54

Yes, for me that SSH was actually quite an expensive option. The problem was that when I was looking for a room back then I wasn't in the Netherlands, I was back home still, which meant that I didn't have the opportunity to go to viewings. I wasn't able to meet tenants and to see the room beforehand. So in a way, I felt really unsure. And I didn't feel that I had security looking for a room when I was 2500 kilometers away. And at the time, because of Corona, I didn't even have the option to travel here to look on the spot. And I remember, obviously, there are a lot of Facebook groups. But the thing about Facebook groups is of course, that they're scams and stuff. And you hear about that all the time. And at one point, I got so stressed with just having to look for a place that I decided to go for the more safer option, which was SSH. So yeah, that's what I ended up doing, even though it was quite expensive, but it was only for the first year. So I decided that it was okay.

Twan Dimmendaal 7:23

So just to get out of the stressful situation of having to find a room?

Interviewee 7:28

Yes, especially for internationals that aren't in the Netherlands already. It's so difficult.

Twan Dimmendaal 7:38

So were you satisfied in with the housing? When you were in this SSH building?

Interviewee 7:45

Yes, I was pretty satisfied. I think I got very lucky with the SSH building that I was put into. Because a lot of SSH buildings are very big. For example, the Upsilon and Ventia. They're very, very big SSH buildings with a lot of people in them. I think Ventia has like 300 people, it's a lot of people. But I think Upsilon has even more. But I got really lucky because I was put in a very small accommodation called Blekerslaan. The good thing about it was that normally they don't actually offer it to students.

But because of the corona situation, they made it available for students. Normally, I think they keep it as a backup building in case of emergency for international students outside of the EU. But I got very lucky because it was a very small accommodation with I think, around 30 ish people were there. On my floor, there was almost no one so it was always quiet. So I did really enjoy that. And from what I heard about the other accommodations from other students, like for Upsilon or Ventia, they had quite a lot of problems with a lot of noise complaints or like partying, especially in Corona times. That was very dangerous. They had really big parties were even the police was called. But in Blekerslaan because it was so small, everyone knew each other. And if anyone had anything to complain about, they can always just tell the others and they would stop. So it was kind of like a bit of community and everyone knew each other, which was good.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:32
Must be quite comfortable.

Interviewee 9:34
So yeah, I was generally satisfied. Of course, nothing can really be perfect. I touched up a little bit about this how I had to move in out one month before my contract actually ended. So what happened was, it was during a big Corona wave, because there were active Corona cases in multiple of the SSH account. But not in mine, not in the one that I was in, we had no Corona cases at all. And one day we woke up and we got an email that we will be that everyone from the Blekerslaan building will be moved out to the bigger accommodations because they needed to renovate the building. And that was, I think, two months or three months before the end of the school year, which meant that a lot of people had assessments and exams to study for, it was very stressful. So everyone was very against that idea. And especially because we knew that the other buildings that they were planning to move us at had active COVID cases, it was very dangerous for them to move us there. So what we did is we started writing a lot of emails, I think, everyone, we wrote like a draft email, and everyone from that accommodation, sent that email to SSH. And at the end, they decided to let us move out to stay in the building, but move out one month earlier than originally planned. So yeah, that was quite a problem. And that was a very stressful situation. But I think that was the really serious thing. That was a problem. But at least it got figured out at the end, so in general for the security that I got in that building, and luckily, it was quite a small building with the good people good community. I think I was pretty satisfied with my stay there. It wasn't perfect, but it was what I needed.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:36
So did you know about well, that there is a problem in the housing situation with international students in finding housing this during your SSH stay?

Interviewee 11:52
Yes, I knew that. I even knew about how difficult it is to find the place even before I started my university at all. I applied to my university through an agency. And when I got accepted, one of the first things they told me, they normally give the parents a booklet with a lot of information. And in that booklet, it was specified, how extremely difficult it is to find a place to stay on again. And we were recommended to look many months in advance. And obviously, you hear that and you think, okay, must be very difficult. But I feel like words can't even describe how difficult it can be. It's a pure nightmare, I would say.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:40
Can you give me examples of this? How you experienced that?

Interviewee 12:46
Yeah, of course, you have a lot of international students that are looking for places pretty much at the same time. So if you go to viewings, chances are, even more people going to the same viewing as

you. So all of a sudden, your chances of getting the room are a lot lower. Or just the fact that there already are so many international students, and then more and more students keep coming. It's kind of like where do these students go? Is there enough space for them? Because you can get a room but then chances are next year, you would have to find a different room. It's definitely a lot of moving around for international students. So almost like you pretty much don't really have a secure place to stay.

Twan Dimmendaal 13:46

And how is that for you right now? In the in the place that you're in right now? Do you feel secure there about your future there?

Interviewee 13:55

I wouldn't say so. But that's not necessarily the housing problems fault. It's more or less the fact that I am thinking of doing exchange and a minor, which would mean that I won't be in Groningen for a year. And next year, maybe if that does end up happening, which means that all of a sudden, if I do go on an exchange and a minor and I won't be at home again, when I come back, I won't have a place to stay and I have to look again.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:24

And I guess you're not really looking forward to that?

Interviewee 14:27

No, not at all.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:31

A year is quite long, of course. But apart from that, until you will possibly have to go in in the summer. You're quite secure with staying in the room?

Interviewee 14:48

Yes. I don't think that there will be like any sudden changes in the contract like there was with SSH. So I feel like at least for a year I have a place to stay.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:58

Assuming you're quite satisfied with the current place where you stay, was it also within the criteria that you had beforehand?

Interviewee 15:11

Oh, the truth is, I didn't have any criteria's at all. Because through my experience of looking for a room in Groningen, it's a little bit of like, you shouldn't have high expectations, you should just take anything that you can find, because anything is better than being homeless and not having a place to stay. So it could be a small room, but as long as I have a roof over my head, I'm satisfied.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:44

I do agree. But it's not really the right mindset, I would say.

Interviewee 15:53

Sadly, not. But you have to adapt to the situation.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:59

Yeah, I understand. It was quite interesting about the book that that you got about finding? Was it from your own university?

Interviewee 16:13

Oh no, it was because I applied through an agency in Bulgaria, they normally specialize in helping young students apply for universities in the Netherlands specifically. So when I was applying, they sent us kind of booklet. And that PDF, you find all kinds of information about programs, you know, bank accounts, travel costs, just everything you need to know about the city of Groningen. And I remember, because I went to a couple of consultations in real life with the people of this agency, they told me, from the first day on, just know you need to find a room very quickly. You need to start looking the moment you get accepted. And in the booklet, there were a couple of things about housing. SSH was, of course, one of them, and a couple of other ones. And outside of that, on the University website, you can also find a couple of housing opportunities available as well as links to websites, like SSH or anything else. So yeah, that's pretty much what it is.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:37

Alright, I didn't know about that. But of course, it's a different agency. So it's not really from the university itself.

Interviewee 17:45

Yeah, it's kind of a separate little thing. But the fact that they really emphasize on that really shows how critical the situation is.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:55

And it's good that they do.

Interviewee 17:57

Yeah, and when I was in the first year, I had some people from Bulgaria that I knew who were interested in also studying here. So I had to kind of, in a way help them. And I had to share my experience with them. And I really emphasized to them to start looking for a place really early on, because if you don't, you're very much doomed. But they were pretty lucky because I was there to help them. And I already had some experience. So I knew kind of what to do to help them. So the girl that I helped, one of them, she was stuck between choosing, if you want to the room in the village, or if she wanted a room in an SSH building. And obviously, because I was here, I already knew some people. I could ask people about the village, what their experience was in which one was better. So I could kind of give her guidance on that and tell her this is a better opportunity. And then for the other girl, it was more difficult for her. Because she wanted to come here with her boyfriend and looking for a place for two people is hell. It's very, very hard. So they were struggling a lot with that. I think it took them two months, they were looking for something but they were sending emails every day and they were always on the Facebook groups, but they never got any luck. So what I did was recommended the same person that helped me find this place. And they were actually able to find a studio for both of them through this person.

Twan Dimmendaal 19:41

Alright, and just out of curiosity, what was the better one between the village and SSH?

Interviewee 19:49

SSH, because I have a friend also who lives in village right now and she says that it's quite noisy and she has those complaints and it's very expensive, I think as well.

Twan Dimmendaal 20:02

Because the village is student housing for international students. But is it longer than just one year?

Interviewee 20:12

I don't actually know. I think I think it might be longer. Yeah, it's longer because now I have a second year student friend who is in the village.

Twan Dimmendaal 20:22

All right, then I've got an understanding of the housing situation. But also another thing that helps with the feeling of safety is community integration. So of course, you already talked about how you late at night don't want to walk alone. And that's why you searched for room with your classmate. Do you feel safe in the community that you currently live in?

Interviewee 20:57

As in the house that I live in?

Twan Dimmendaal 20:59

The house, but also the neighborhood, so the surroundings.

Interviewee 21:04

I think I'm pretty lucky, I feel quite secure knowing that my classmate is right next door. And also one of my neighbors is another classmate, and other classmates lives also close by because we all use the same person to find a spot, all of a sudden, we're all in this area together. But I don't actually know my other housemates that well, outside of just greeting them as simple hello, and knowing their names. I don't really interact too much with them. But I don't really spend a lot of time at home. I'm mostly always at work in the University. So I would say that I feel secure in my home. But what can be quite difficult is I live a little bit outside of the city center. I'm still very close to the city center, but it's a little bit outside of it. I live next to the big highway, the Europaweg, which is very noisy, and especially crossing is quite stressful. Because the highway, it's a very big street, there's a lot of traffic always. And yeah, but when it comes to safety in general, I've always heard how the Netherlands in general is a very safe country. But also, I think that it's because of my cultural background, I never really feel fully safe. Because I come from Bulgaria, where I was always raised to be very careful to especially at night because there is bad people. So when I came here, and sometimes when I tell people, I don't want to go home alone at the dark because I'm scared. And they always say, Why would you be scared Groningen is such a safe place. But that doesn't really make the fear go away. It's more of just like, I wouldn't say fear, but just I know subconsciously, I always need to be careful, I always need to be aware of my surroundings. And I don't necessarily think that that's the city's fault. It's also just my cultural background into how I was raised.

Twan Dimmendaal 23:18

Do you think perhaps that due to language differences? Or well, just cultural differences in another way would have an influence on that?

Interviewee 23:35

Maybe not really. Most people in the Netherlands speak English. But if somebody were to approach me speaking all the Dutch, maybe that would freak me out a little bit. Because I wouldn't know what the person would want from me. So in that case, maybe yes. Culture wise; Well, party culture is pretty big here. So maybe that can be quite unsettling. Or also, you know, people that smoke a lot or smoke weed that can also be a little off putting sometimes.

Twan Dimmendaal 24:19

So you said you don't really communicate a lot with other people that live in your in your building.

Interviewee 24:31

I just don't see them that often.

Twan Dimmendaal 24:33

Are these also international students or?

Interviewee 24:37

I think they're all international students.

Twan Dimmendaal 24:47

And with the interaction with other students outside of your own home, like do you know these through your courses through your classes, or perhaps were there some activities organized by a student associations or study associations?

Interviewee 25:06

I obviously am very good friends with all other people in university as I know a lot of upper classmates and from the younger classmates as well. But also I'm part of Honors, that given the opportunity to also get to meet a lot of people from different courses as well. And outside of that, I also am part of the activity committee in Hanze, which means that I organize events for honors students from Hanze. So that also very helped me a lot to just go to the Hanze Zernike campus because as an art student, as a fine art student, I don't ever go there because I don't have a reason to go there. So thanks to organizing these activities, I had the opportunity to go to Zernike campus quite often to meet a lot of people that are also from honors, and, of course, Hanze organizes, for example, kick off activities for the honor students where you can really get together and meet everyone, and it's quite diverse, it's quite mixed. So you can really meet a little bit of everyone.

Twan Dimmendaal 26:18

This is with a lot of international students, or do you also interact with Dutch students here?

Interviewee 26:25

Quite interesting when I was doing the kickoff for honors, because a lot of people that were organizing workshops for each other. And a lot of people didn't know that there were going to be international students, actually. So they only had workshops in Dutch, for example. So they had to adapt on the spot. I definitely interact with both the international community but also I interact a lot with Dutch people as well.

Twan Dimmendaal 26:57

It's not part of the research, but have you been studying Dutch as well?

Interviewee 27:03

Yeah, of course. In my free time study, Dutch Of course, I also speak German. So that also helps a lot.

Twan Dimmendaal 27:10

Yeah, it also makes it easier to learn Dutch, definitely

Interviewee 27:14

Easier and harder at the same time.

Twan Dimmendaal 27:17

Okay, how is it harder?

Interviewee 27:21

Because it sounds similar, yet a little different. Yeah, it's easy to make mistakes. You can say "studereren". But then that's like "studieren", as little mistakes like these you can make and you don't even realize until it's too late.

Twan Dimmendaal 27:39

So that's almost concluding the interview. I think we've kind of answered this question already. But ultimately, considering everything, do you feel safe in that environment?

Interviewee 27:59

I would say so. I believe I feel safe in Groningen. Because I can also say, because my parents, of course, they're in Bulgaria. I talk with my mom. And because I was never really separated from my parents, and did have to come here and live here on my own. So my mom told me how she is happy that I'm actually in Holland and in the Netherlands, because she feels safer when I am here, knowing that I'm here. She wouldn't feel as safe if I was in Bulgaria still. Even though I would have been closer to her, she wouldn't have fewer safe.

Twan Dimmendaal 28:42

That says a lot. Why actually did you choose to study in in the Netherlands?

Interviewee 28:56

I'm a fine art student. And I've always really had a passion for art. But I've also always had a passion for languages. And then Bulgaria, it was very difficult to find a way to combine art and languages, I pretty much had to only choose one of them. And my cousin, she studies linguistics, and she told me if you sign if you start learning linguistics, just forget about having enough time to do art. And I took that into consideration. And I decided, well, I want to maybe go abroad to be able to not only study art, but also study a language in my free time. And in the Netherlands I can do that. I can study art and learn Dutch at the same time. But also the truth is I never really wanted to stay in my home country to begin with. I don't really like the close mindedness of people there. I don't really like the Bulgarian outside mentality. So I was always more interested in international communities and being able to communicate with people from all over the world to learn from them, to see how differently we view the world, but how we can really work together?

Twan Dimmendaal 30:12

So, just overall, how's your experience of Groningen been?

Interviewee 30:17

I really like Groningen. I like the people. I like the people at the university. Dutch people are very welcoming. I know that there's a stereotype that people might seem a little direct and cold. But I think over time, you get to understand that that's just how they are and there aren't bad people. They're actually very kind people. And they're always there to help. So it's good.

Twan Dimmendaal 30:48

Nice to hear. Could you give me any ideas for potentially improving the housing situation for international students? Considering what perhaps the university or the municipality could do?

Interviewee 31:18

So I think there are good options, like if we consider things like SSH, for example, they have good buildings, they have great accommodations for students. But the problem is that it's only for one year, and then you're kind of left to survive on your own. I understand that the problem is in the fact that there just is not enough space for all of the students that keep coming and coming and coming. But considering the fact that almost all of the programs in the Netherlands are in English, and that attracts a lot of international students, I definitely think that some type of measures should be taken. In order to secure that these students, this huge amount of students can really have a place to stay. Like in Bulgaria, normally, each university has their own campus where they have accommodations for students. But in the Netherlands, the universities don't have that. So maybe that can be

something that could happen, like each university having its own little place for students, at least for the amount of time in which they're a student at the university. But I guess that could also be quite difficult, but it's definitely one option, or I would say there are a lot of links and places that you can use to find a room. So I wouldn't say that they need more, but I do think that universities already try to help as much as they can. You can always tell your teachers as well. Like I'm having trouble finding a room, do you know anyone that can help me? And maybe the teachers can help you somehow? But yeah, it's a lot of student initiative. I would say.

Twan Dimmendaal 33:34

Okay, for the international students you mean?

Interviewee 33:37

But even for this students who can be kind of hard sometimes. Another problem for international students is that sometimes, rooms are offered in houses. But the people living in the house only accept people who speak Dutch or Dutch people. That could be a problem for international students.

Twan Dimmendaal 34:02

What would you do about that?

Interviewee 34:09

I understand that they have a preference for people that they want to live with. And that's perfectly fine. But it just happens a lot. And it's kind of sad to think that you would be shunned out just because you come from a foreign country, and you don't speak the language, even though you speak English. So in terms you can still communicate with them just as much.

Twan Dimmendaal 34:43

All right. Then that really concludes my interview actually. So yeah, is there something else that you would maybe want to mention?

Interviewee 34:56

I guess maybe I could give advice to future students that are planning to come to Groningen. I think that if they have the chance to maybe get in contact with students that are already students at said university, that they can maybe get some guidance from those students as to how they found their rooms. Because even though they have, you know, the big companies like SSH, and village and so on, there are a lot of people that are kind of more hidden. Not so easy to find people that you can know of only through mutual communication, like mutual friends, just how my classmate gave me the phone number of the woman that helped me find this room, and I gave her number to someone else, they gave it to someone else. So definitely get in contact with students see where you can learn and definitely start looking very early. Very, very early, and get ready to pay a lot of money.

Twan Dimmendaal 36:20

A lot of money as a Bulgarian student, or as an international student as a whole.

Interviewee 36:30

I would say for sure, Bulgarian standards, but not only Bulgarian standard, it's more like Eastern European standards. Like the whole Eastern Europe. It's quite expensive, especially considering the fact that you need to pay I think, two months in advance. So you have like the deposit and everything paying

Twan Dimmendaal 36:53

For SSH or for any room? Because usually it's just one month.

Interviewee 37:02

I think that's for SSH for the bigger places. Which all of a sudden can be quite expensive.

Twan Dimmendaal 37:08

That's quite a lot of money. But also, of course, for Eastern Europeans, it's quite a quite an expensive place.

Interviewee 37:26

Yeah, you also have a higher standard and higher salary. I know that it's even more difficult for people that are outside of the European Union and outside of Europe in general, because they already pay very, very high tuition fees. And then also having to look for place and having no chances of coming here to search on the spot. It's very difficult.

Twan Dimmendaal 38:00

Yeah, no, totally correct. But that really concludes it. So yeah, I just really want to thank you, again, for participating and all the great answers that you gave, really helps me a lot with the research. So I can I can use that. Definitely.

Interviewee 38:19

Yeah, I hope I was helpful, although I'm really curious. That you said this is for your thesis. What are you studying?

Twan Dimmendaal 38:27

I'm studying human geography and spatial planning.

Interviewee 38:31

Okay, how did this idea came to be for this thesis?

Twan Dimmendaal 38:44

I think I was starting to research something about safety. We were debating about safety for international students. And then people were saying like, well, Groningen is one of the most safe cities in the Netherlands and the Netherlands is already so, so safe. Then I was reading more about it. And there was in research about Utrecht, and the housing situation and the effect it had on safety. And during that time the strikes were going on about the housing situation here. So I thought, well, I'll just see if that's the same case in Groningen. Find out what the effects of this current housing crisis really are.

Interviewee 39:35

Yeah, now that you mentioned it, how do you get is definitely a lot safer than the other towns, I would say because it's so secluded, so small. It's a good community. You feel secure, in some ways, but not always.

Twan Dimmendaal 39:53

It's got its bad neighborhoods. But usually, it's actually quite a safe city. but it has its faults. And one of them is the housing crisis currently. But for now I want to thank you again, and wish you a nice day.

Interview 12

Twan Dimmendaal 0:00

All right. Yeah, then start the recording. And if you could tell me just to start something about your current housing situation. So the type of room that you live in and how you got that?

Interviewee 0:13

Yeah, well, I just, I think it was about two weeks ago that I just found a room on my own, finally. But up until then, I was living with my brother. Because he has a studio and everything. So I managed, fortunately to stay with my brother and not kind of couch surfing from one place to another. So at least, I was lucky. But yeah, it took, I think about two months and a half for me to actually find the room right now. I started in August to look for a place. And as you're probably aware, it was super intense, the whole, his whole couple months have been crazy for me. But for now, I managed to find this room, which is, I mean, for me, it's perfect. It's actually all I needed, because I just needed space for myself to even study and not actually be forced to go to the library. Because if you're in someone else's space, you can't really expect to have them not do their own things, and just for you to study. So you kind of have to sacrifice and be willing to actually go out and study some other place like libraries. But for now, even if I don't feel like going out, or if it's raining, I can just study at home. And I just know that I have my peace and my place here. So at least that's good.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:38

That's very nice to hear that ultimately works out. Are you are you a first year student here?

Interviewee 1:44

I'm a third year students third year. So you'd expect a third year to know how it works. But still, yeah, it's for everyone. It affects everyone.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:54

Yeah, definitely. So how has been the housing situation as a whole, on the total of three years? How was that experience been?

Interviewee 2:04

Well, when I got here was the same as this year. So I had to stay with my brother at the very beginning for a month and a half. Because it was the same, I had to go through the same process again, as I did two years ago. And after that, I was able to find a house for a year. So my contract lasted a year because then the landlord had to sell the house. And so there was change of landlords and stuff. So I just decided to move out. And after that, I kind of took over my brother's studio for a while. While he was away, and then this year, I was supposed to go on exchange. But I decided not to because of Corona and everything. It really wasn't the best time to go abroad I think right now. So that's why I was kind of stuck with no room, no house, no nothing. Which most of the people that I know also from my course, who didn't get go to their exchange places. They also didn't actually manage to find houses soon enough. It wasn't just a me, I mean, definitely wasn't just a me situation. But also people from my course, that I've talked to kind of had the same issue of having given up the house because they thought they would go on exchange, but that didn't happen. So they had to go back and actually figure out a way to continue living in the Netherlands and finding a place for themselves without having to crush up random to people pleasing.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:41

Yeah, I understand. So when you when you were going to go on exchange you, you had a room right? But then you cancelled it.

Interviewee 3:50

I was settled. Yeah, then I decided to not have it anymore because I thought, Okay, let me just give up this what I have. Because it's going to be six months and in six months, I should figure out a way to get a room by then. But that didn't happen. So during summer, I decided it wasn't going to be

happening. And yeah, from I want to say like half of August until was it the beginning of November. I kept looking like restlessly for a house. And I just recently found one. So the time lapse that it took me to find something. Yeah, and there's people who still haven't found how so?

Twan Dimmendaal 4:35

And so they're staying at friends and all that.

Yeah, yeah, they're just crushing on couches here and there. I was lucky because I have my brother here. So it was comfortable in that sense because it's family so they kind of have to stick with me. But there might be situations where a person doesn't really want to around their space anymore and they don't really feel obligated for you to still be there. So they're just like, Okay, can you move out now? So then also the case, but in that sense, I got lucky, but it's still not an ideal situation to study without your own space because it takes a huge toll on your mental and just emotional space fear of like, it's a lot to deal with not having your own space and sharing something with someone else, when you're not really meant to be sharing anything in that sense. Because if you share a house, of course, but if you have your own room, it's something different. It's really like you really understand how, how important that is to have your own space, like your own kind of little sanctuary where you go back and you're relaxed, and you do what you need to do.

Yeah, definitely understand. Were you worried when you knew that you were going to have to move out of your, your place that you had and had to get back in the housing market again?

Interviewee 5:56

I was. Especially because I knew that, for my year, at least, there were a lot of incoming exchange students that were going to go, because of course, I always know that every year, there's a bunch of people that leave and come back. I knew firsthand that I wasn't going to leave and someone was going to come. So I was like, Okay, there's a huge imbalance of people coming to the Netherlands, but people not being able to leave them the Netherlands. And I actually saw that firsthand, because it's like, okay, this year is actually me, that's part of this whole exchange thing. So I realized, when I actually figured this out, I was like, Okay, this is going to be really intense, it can take me much more than it did two years ago to find a room now, which it did. But like I, I would spend every single day on five, six different Facebook groups, I would spend every day on agencies like Maxx Groningen, or DC Wonen or whatever, emailing them as soon as you see a room and they would just be like, No, I'll do it for you. And for so it got to a point where it was really, really intense. Not getting viewings now not even getting close to finding a house. So, yeah, it was really worrying for sure.

Twan Dimmendaal 7:15

Yeah, I understand. So now you do have a room, fortunately. And well, you said that you're satisfied with it. Did it match the criteria that that you had up front?

Interviewee 7:32

Yes, thankfully, yes. Okay. But I got to a point where whatever I could find would work. So I wasn't really like my standards. It's not like they were that high, maybe as it was at the beginning. It was just okay, you get a room get it? There's no time for you to actually still be waiting on. Oh, I could find something better. I don't know. Like, just get this one. Get out of my brother's place and just be on your own because it's getting too, too stressful. Very, very much stressful. But definitely like it's perfect room for me. And that has also got lucky in that sense, because I got an really nice room.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:14

Also good. Do you have any roommates?

Interviewee 8:18

it's five people in total in the house. They all seem really nice. And the house looks really nice.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:23

And they're also international students?

Interviewee 8:26

Yeah, from what I've heard, yeah. They're all students. Okay, they're masters students, or I really didn't have a chance to actually get to know them all. But yeah, I'm pretty sure they're all students.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:37

Yeah, I mean, often you see this with that there aren't really mixed houses of Dutch students and international students.

Interviewee 8:43

Yeah, there's a Dutch guy here and the rest is internationals and there's an Italian girl as well which is nice. Because I'm also from Italy. So it's nice to talk in Italian to someone at home and the others are international, so it's fine. It's perfectly fine. Also, the whole no internationals here no internationals there it doesn't help at all but it's fine. There are some instances where it was clear that I had to compete against Dutch people and it was going to be clear from the from the get going that Dutch person was going to get the room. So you're like okay, cool, but it is what it is I guess. But also that like adds up to the whole stress you have to go through as an international when finding a house because there are not every not every time that's for sure. But like there are some instances where you clearly see that there's no even there's not even like a chance for you to actually get a room because there they will prioritize the rich people or they will prioritize the girls over international girls or Dutch guys over international girls and guys, so

Twan Dimmendaal 9:58

Its a tough competition. It's on the same housing market, so that's really a problem. Alright, thank you. Now you have four roommates and within the community, like the neighborhoods and all, do you feel safe there?

Interviewee 10:19

Right here? Oh, yeah, I used to live here before this is like, super close to my old house. I'm also glad about that, because I know the neighborhood. And it's really nice neighborhood, I like it here. And like, it's close to the center. It's close to everything. So in that sense, I feel super safe, but in general in Groningen, I never really felt unsafe in that sense. Yeah, under the aspect I'm, I'm good. I have no complaints.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:49

No, that's good to hear. It's very nice. So do you have contact with other residents around the house? Or neighbors or anything?

Interviewee 10:59

No, for now? No. But I guess it's also because I just once saw someone living here and just smile at each other. So and that's it. But yeah, I know some people who live who now live, what was my old house? And they're close by, and I've talked to them already. But yeah, so it's, it's a super nice and chill neighborhood.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:22

That's pretty nice. And there are also activities organized by international students, usually by international students organizations, and I'm trying to know whether these have reached out to you

in any way do we know about them? If you participated in any of these activities, housing wise or not?

Interviewee 11:53

I know from what I've been part of, sort of, it was mostly my programs, associations. law, so it was the law associations, mostly that I had contact with. But it's also me that I didn't really participate in those organizations as much. So I'm not sure how much I can help. But I've heard, I've heard of, international organizations. And yeah, like I said, I maybe I've been to a couple events that were organized by the law associations that were especially involving international people. And yeah, they, they were really fun. And everyone was super nice. And you could feel like a whole wanting to know each other's cultures and just each other's stories and everything. So it was really interesting in that sense, but I can't really tell you more, because I haven't really been part of that.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:54

And did you have any contact with other Dutch students? Whether in these activities or your study?

Interviewee 13:06

Yes, and no, I think it was mostly through work. I used to work for Thuisbezorgd, and I work in a restaurant and you do meet Dutch people there that work. So I guess my direct contact with Dutch people is that it was also through viewings, for example, but you don't really get any type of contact with those people is mostly just, yeah, you're not Dutch go. But apart from it. Not because my course, since it's a law course. It's either Dutch people that studied Dutch law, like the Dutch program or international study my international program. So it's a little bit split in that sense. But yeah, I don't know. I haven't really had a proper clash with a Dutch culture and Dutch people. Fully at least. I've just looked at it from the outside, I guess. Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:05

All right. I think I understand what you mean. So of course, considering the housing situation, as you said, it's, well, it was quite a bad experience overall, I think. I mean, you do have a very nice room right now, which is great. But overall experience wasn't that nice. Do you have any ideas for how to improve this? Whether by the university or the municipality?

Interviewee 14:39

Yeah, I think I don't know the details of the whole housing situation here. Because when you're in it, what you think of is just finding a room for yourself. You kind of go into this selfish self preservative mode where you just need to survive. Maybe like, I need to find a room for myself. And that's it. That's all you think about. But since this year it somehow, for some weird reason, it felt much more intense compared to other years. I've talked to people, especially my course I've talked about this with other people and also in general, I feel like the main issue that we all find in this is that the university, both Hanze and RUG, they keep having students, like an overflow of students in the city where there's no actual physical space for all these students. For example, a law course that in another country could be a numerous classes course. Here, it's just for everyone to come. Come join us come study here, which is nice, because of course, it opens possibility to many more people to study maybe something that they would like to but I think, on a more logical logistical level, it makes not much sense because the capacity of the city is not as much to have all these students who study a lot, because we have a lot of students, a lot of students was very psychology there. There's a huge community of psychology students here, and mostly from Germany, as you probably know, but there's too many students that both study at Hanze and study at RUG. Plus, you have I think it's there's also a college here, if I'm not mistaken, University College. It still adds up to the number of students that come here, and it's mostly students that come here. So I think that's the main issue that somehow needs to be talked about it. Like between university and municipality, I want to say, but I think it's the university the biggest problem that keeps attracting students and doesn't really

put a threshold on this, because if you put a maximum number of people that can do a course, then then that I think it should somehow maybe hopefully solve the issue. But that's my main thing. That's what I think is the main issue right now. Because I can't really think of anything else apart from the increasing number of students that come here every year.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:17

Because right now, of course, the amount of students is already at too much, I guess you could say.

Interviewee 17:23

There are new houses being built all over town like North West, that there's always new constructions that are happening. But it's still, the space is that space, you know, you can't really build on top of houses. Like that's the space that you have for I mean, there's people who live outside of Bologna and have to take the buses and have to kind of sacrifice in that sense. Their city life and the actual life, how many people, which is not the same for so many other students who live in the city center and get to live close by, but there's others that have to sacrifice that and have to be like, either live or lower than, for example, or there's people who actually live in Assen or in small villages. And I mean, it's not fair to them, I guess, you know, because they came here for that experience, then they're missing out because, well, there's just too many of us.

Twan Dimmendaal 18:23

I understand. So just as a question, how, apart from the housing market, how has your experience in Groningen been over the years?

Interviewee 18:35

Oh, no, that's, it's fine. It's, it's a fun city. Very dynamic. It's very student friendly, because I guess there's many of us so has to be there's a lot of things to do. I think there's a lot of things to do for everyone. So if you're into a specific type of have no say music, that you find those events, if you're into arts, you have space to express yourself, also in that aspect. So there's a lot of options for everyone, I think, here during your studies, but I want since I'm finishing my studies, I think that's it like that's where it ends, because I don't think there's more for me to do here after I finished my studies like career wise. I don't think I would want to stay here. For example, for a job or anything, but so the Netherlands in general, yes, that career wise, it's also very good. But floating in itself. I think as a student city, it's perfect. Because, you know, it's very lively and very dynamic. And there's so many international people so you always get like, new inputs from people all the time. But yeah, apart from that, I think three years or that's it, like that's my maximum and stay here any longer because then I get bored of stuff, because I would want to do some something more and something different rather than just studying party setting, partying Like, it's fine for those three years, but then when it gets a little more than for me, of course, it gets a little boring. So I would be interested in more after that. But overall, like my experience here, it's really nice. It's a nice city. Unfortunately, I got to live as many others the whole pandemic situation, which was not the best, but I got to see the two sides of it. So I got to see like, lively, super dynamic city before COVID. And also like, the kind of more calm, get to know people city. So that was good to see the both sides of the city, but it was really a cool experience overall. So definitely, I would recommend it if I were to recommend it to someone I would definitely do.

Twan Dimmendaal 20:43

That's very nice. So yeah, that really kind of concludes my interview. Is there anything else that you want to mention?

Interviewee 20:55

Well, oh, not really, for now, I don't think I'm not sure exactly what you're writing about, or like how you want to go about your research. So yeah, well, if you need anything else, you can just let me

know if you might want to ask or want to go into detail on something else. But I think for now, I'm good.

Twan Dimmendaal 21:14

Yeah, I really just want to get an idea on the housing market situation and what kind of effects this has on international students. And the experiences they had.

Interviewee 21:28

Do you know about the SOS housing program?

Twan Dimmendaal 21:34

Yeah, I know about that. And I've interviewed some people who were in that. experience that

Interviewee 21:43

Yeah, because it got to a point where even that was for like, even for that. There were no more options for people. So yeah, it was pretty intense. I think you have a lot to write about, like, definitely. You definitely have a bunch of information that could help you.

Twan Dimmendaal 22:00

Yeah, I'm not going to have problem with reaching the maximum amount of words.

Interviewee 22:05

No, no, I think you could go over and over about this topic. But yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 22:12

But uh, yeah, I really want to thank you again.

Interviewee 22:15

Yeah, no problem. Glad I could help. And also, like, it's nice that people take this seriously and, like students themselves as well, like, they take it seriously. And they don't just like, oh, yeah, that sucks. That sucks. You know, because you hear a lot of Oh, damn, like, that's really sad. That's really bad. But if you take an actual serious interest, and you do something about it, like it's helps. I guess your research somehow would reach your teachers, right, like your supervisors or whatever. So if they see that, you know, the university might be biggest problem. Maybe it could also be talked about, like from the teachers to like, hire people within the university. Hopefully, because they really need to sort this out. .

Twan Dimmendaal 23:10

Let's just hope they come to a solution. Yeah. For now. I'm glad you have nice room. That's very nice.

Interviewee 23:18

Yeah, me too. Really me too. It's a relief.

Twan Dimmendaal 23:23

Okay, then. Yeah, I want to thank you again, and I wish you a very nice day.

Interviewee 23:30

Thank you. Good luck with your research. Thank you. Bye.

Interview 13

Twan Dimmendaal 0:02

I think in the message that I sent you talked a bit about what the research entails. So it's about the housing situation, feeling of safety. So how worried or stressful or actually comfortable international students are with the housing markets and, and the housing situation in Groningen? So yeah, first of all, could you tell me about your current housing situation?

Interviewee 0:32

So initially, I lived in a student housing, near Paddepoel. And then so that was like 500 a month to 600 a month. I wasn't aware of how bad the housing crisis was during my stay. For those six months, my moved in Feb, and then till July, I was at that place. And then during July, I just got to know that it was a bad crisis. So then I started scrambling, or rushing, and I'm here alone. I didn't have family here. So my family like my parents were as helpful as they could be from abroad. So they do everything they could online. But I started scrambling, I packed all my things into little bags. And then I found a place let me stay for the month of August alone. And we were just hoping that within the month of August, I'd be able to find a place to stay. Then I got lucky with this place, but this is way out of my budget. We kind of felt like we got pushed into a corner and we had to so we just said okay, because I went to maybe 20 viewings. Only three of them got back to me, and then only one which is what I've had now confirmed with me. So we felt like I had no other choice. So we went with and now I had to find a roommate.

Twan Dimmendaal 2:13

How is that search for a roommate going?

Interviewee 2:17

I found a roommate, that was actually pretty quick. So I mean, I've had the ability to be both the tenant and someone looking for a tenant. So that kind of gave me both perspectives. it's stressful, like when you're searching for places it's difficult because there's no guarantee that you will find a place. That's the issue with it. There's no fallback. There's no net. Like the stories I've seen of people living in tents that is terrified. So I'm grateful for this place. And then within a week of posting my ad I had like 15 people who wanted to text me, and then seven viewings, and then I started on one person.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:02

Are you a second year student right now?

Interviewee 3:07

No, there were a few issues. I'm a first year student

Twan Dimmendaal 3:14

okay, but last year was the first year that you were in Groningen?

Interviewee 3:17

Yeah, I came here early and stayed in that closet.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:21

Yeah, because I assumed that there's this short student housing, short stay housing, I think it's called for which is indeed about five to 600 euros. It's kind of expensive, and then you get to stay there for a year. Yeah. Which is well, for a year. It's quite comfortable. But I understand that that you didn't really know what the situation was?

Interviewee 3:46

No, I wasn't aware.

Twan Dimmendaal 3:48

And then I think in July, you are forced out, right?

Interviewee 3:52

Yes. And I mean, forced out is the way I'd put it because I obviously feel like the victim but in all honesty it's just quarter ended, and they had someone else to take up the room. But I mean, just because I was naive enough to not do my research. And I didn't know if the other situation. Then I got kicked out.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:15

Yeah, yeah. Where did you stay between when you were kicked out and when you until you found this room.

Interviewee 4:25

So I found this room and I was able to move in on the first of September because I assessed my budget. So they let me move in in September. So it was just for the month of August, but it was like this. Just this random place like someone who offered me and said I need to sublet just for the month of August, right. And then yeah, so I found out I mean, it wasn't great, but I had no options.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:54

No, no, I understand I guess it's nice. Just for a month or something At least. I understand that that would be quite stressful.

Interviewee 5:07

I mean, yeah, I don't want to get too into the, like, mental aspect of it. But yeah. Was it incredibly stressful? Yeah. I didn't want people to know. As in I didn't want to confide in my problems with everyone. So I would just like, stay to myself. I wouldn't really tell anyone except for my family. I no one really knew how stressful it was.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:36

Yeah, I understand. It's logical. But right now, you have a room, but it's really not within your normal criteria that you would have liked because it's too expensive as you said Are you still trying to find a new room? Or are you just saying, well, now I just want to stay here.

Interviewee 5:57

When I split it with a roommate the rent is feasible. Like it's still not within my budget, you wouldn't expect a college student to be paying this much for a room. But still. The contract is super flexible. They let me stay for as long as I want to. And the location is super nice. So I really like it. I haven't really settled in yet. So I personally want to stay alone, but the money is too much. So then we settled on getting a roommate. And as long as I have a roommate, I'll stay. Because it's easier finding a roommate than finding a house.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:39

Definitely. There are there are many, many students who are trying to find a house. Well, there are many students who have a place that in their house. So that's really, really the problem. Okay, well, that's very nice to hear that right now, you have a contract where you can stay for as long as you want That's very nice. So for now, it's quite comfortable?

Interviewee 7:01

I'd say so yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 7:11

Well, thank you. It's ultimately nice to hear. But your experience, of course, wasn't very nice. You are going to get one roommate and do you know many others that live in the vicinity of your house? Are you in contact with other people around the house, like the community integration?

Interviewee 7:37

So the day I moved in my neighbors were kind enough to knock on my door and say, Hey, we're throwing a party do you want to join? But I feel like that's where it ended. So then I went to that party. So this whole complex is just a bunch of students. So we all just kind of prefer to keep to ourselves, which I'm not really like mad. I also don't mind, just to keep to myself. But I don't know how the roommate's going to be, because I've never had a roommate before. So it's kind of like we'll see how that goes.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:15

Yeah, I understand. But are there also internationals in the building?

Interviewee 8:20

Yeah, there's two Dutch people and two international.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:24

Okay. So because with COVID, there aren't a lot of activities that are organized. So I'm really wondering how this is for international students that are coming to Groningen where we have quite a big student live with a lot of parties and activities. Did you actually feel like they was also the case for you? And could they reach out?

Interviewee 8:49

I mean, I could. So the way I compared is with my life in February to July, and then my life after September. So February to July, I kept mostly to myself. I talked more to my friends back home rather than people here. I spent a lot of time on my computer. Then, after September, I was able to integrate with the course. Are you familiar with Mesa? It's a media studies collective.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:29

Yeah. So did they organize activities for you?

Interviewee 9:32

Yeah, that's how I initially found people. There was a camp they organized. I went to that. There were a few nights they organized, I went to those. And then July to February, July was also online classes. It wasn't easy to make friends online. That was it. It just didn't work. But then after September it was it was easier to talk to people face to face. And by that I was able to go to a few things.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:05

Okay. Nice. All right. And that's also with a lot of international students. So not really as much Dutch students?

Interviewee 10:18

The camps, I mean, it is based on the course. So my course is very international. So that's like, I can imagine if I did a more like a Dutch heavy course, I'd be a lot, a lot of Dutch people. But my specific course has a lot of international students. So I think it's just that circumstance.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:40

I understand. Yeah. That's logical. I think I actually generally have good idea definitely about the housing market and housing situation, I understand it's quite stressful. And has this had an influence on your kind of feeling of safety and your experience in Groningen in a way?

Interviewee 11:12

I mean, it definitely caused a change in my mental health. I learned a few lessons. But I cannot fault the city for that. So I mean, where I come from, at least, you learn as I come from two different places. And both of them have their own separate problems. You cannot objectively say one is better than the other, like every place has its own problems. It's just that this city has a housing crisis. If it wasn't a housing crisis, it'd be something else. I can't fault the city itself. Okay. I should have done my due diligence is how I look at it.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:55

Yeah. All right. I understand that. But of course, and I understand that, when you started in July, it was a bit late. But then it still took you about two to three months to really get a new place. And it's also a bit more expensive than you would have liked because now you get a roommate, which makes it work. I don't think it's necessarily your fault, of course, because as you say, there is a housing crisis. Could you give me any ideas on how perhaps the municipality or the university could improve on this. What are your ideas?

Interviewee 12:39

I know it's a difficult project to undertake. But the most straightforward would be in campus housing. Because to my understanding, Zernike is far and is for a different faculty, my faculty is the harmony faculty, near the academic building, and so it's kind of like spread out. And I mean, if I didn't go out of my way, I would never meet some of some other faculties. And then I compared to a few friends in Canada from school, and all of them live on campus. And the way they work is that they are guaranteed a room. So if they don't get one, I have a friend who didn't like the rooms that were booked. So they're paying for her hotel. Like it comes out of either the university's pocket or the municipalities pocket or like a mixture of both that I'm not too sure. But if I were to solve the housing crisis with everything at my disposal, like no issues or anything, then yeah, I would undertake a project to establish, like a housing block, specifically just for students. Because I mean, that makes the most sense. There was a student city without student housing, it doesn't really make sense.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:08

I understand. So with guaranteed housing, by the university.

Interviewee 14:14

The thing is, the reason why I didn't do my due diligence is because I took them for granted, I automatically assumed that there would be student housing because that's the norm in most places. There's a university and a campus so there's campus housing. So I mean, I assumed that would happen and I came here and then I realized that's not the case. And then I started looking for answers.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:40

All right, I understand. That really already concludes my interview. So is there anything else that you would perhaps want to mention?

Interviewee 14:57

The only thing that comes to mind are the comments by, I forgot who it was, but they were important persons. The universities had comments regarding how the housing crisis will solve itself because of market forces, which, in my opinion, was not a well thought out comment to say, because they've reduced the housing crisis to just numbers and graphs, where then the housing crisis will fix

itself with the change of demand or whatever. And the people who are displaced or displaced for now, but I've been the person who was displaced, and you realize that if there are these many people who aren't really comfortable going to university is going to affect your image. So that was kind of not well thought out, in my opinion. But that's all I have to say to the thing really.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:57

Okay. All right. And just one more question, how has your overall experience of Groningen been?

Interviewee 16:06

Ah, I mean, there's a lot of internal biases. And like, when I first came here, I was super happy. And then, things happen, but that's all based on my previous experiences. The city objectively is a very nice city, vibrant student life. Yeah. I mean, I have personal biases. They're not only that, everyone has personal biases regarding anything.

Twan Dimmendaal 16:39

Can I ask what these personal biases are?

Interviewee 16:41

I mean, on surface level, it's the cold. I come from the equator where the lowest temperature is maybe 22. And so I cannot deal with this cold at all. That's one thing I really dislike about the city.

Twan Dimmendaal 16:57

But then you're going to have a hard Time to go.

Interviewee 17:00

Yeah, I've been told. So I mean, that's, that's what it was, but also being able to move to a different city. I've lived in one place my entire life. So being able to move to a different place and start something new. That's fun. That's exciting. So there's a pro and a con.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:21

Well, thank you. Thank you very much. Really, all my research, thank you very much for participating. Yeah, then that really was it. So I wish you very much good luck with the new roommates. I open. Thank you. And, and I wish you a very nice day. Yeah,

Interviewee 17:43

You too have a nice day.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:45

Thank you very much.

Interviewee 17:46

Good luck on your research. Bye

Interview 14

Twan Dimmendaal

Then I'll start the recording. As I said, the research is about the feeling of safety. How worried or comfortable international students are in relation to the housing situation, housing market and community integration. So first of all, could you tell me something about your current housing situation?

Interviewee

I'm staying at the SSH location Martinihouse and I rented since in August since the orientation days. It was emergency accommodation for students. When I started looking in Groningen, I went to three different locations, but I could not find anything. This was my only option.

Twan Dimmendaal

Is this your first year in Groningen?

Interviewee

Yes, it is.

Twan Dimmendaal

So you arrived here in August?

Interviewee

Well, I stayed in August for a week and then went back to my home country. In September I went to Groningen again.

Twan Dimmendaal

And since then you've been searching for a room?

Interviewee

Yes

Twan Dimmendaal

How has the search been going? Are you very busy with it?

Interviewee

Like, yeah, it's, I'm pretty busy. It's like hard. I've been looking for most five months, four or five months. I write messages every day. I've gotten some responses, but no room.

Twan Dimmendaal

Are you comfortable staying in the emergency housing?

Interviewee

It's okay, although I share it with someone else.

Twan Dimmendaal

That's nice to hear. Is the quality alright considering the situation?

Interviewee

Yes, from other students I've heard about houses that are freezing.

Twan Dimmendaal

How did you actually get in this emergency housing?

Interviewee

In August I immediately from the first day got to know about it in case I would not find anything. This was from another international student.

Twan Dimmendaal

And are you worried or stressful about certainty of staying in the current house?

Interviewee

When you get in, you can stay until the 1st of September or the 15th of October. I got the potential for 15th of October and could extend after that date until December. So that's my deadline.

Twan Dimmendaal

So for now, until the 23rd of December at least you are safe. So how is the community surrounding the emergency housing?

Interviewee

Well, I live with a lot of other students. Every floor has its own kitchen. That's where people are studying or playing board games. That's very nice.

Twan Dimmendaal

So you are with quite a couple of international students in the building and it's pretty social?

Interviewee

Yes, correct.

Twan Dimmendaal

And how has the integration with other Dutch students been?

Interviewee

In my class, the most are Dutch students. Everyone gets along with each other, it's not a problem. Everyone is equal.

Twan Dimmendaal

Were there a lot of activities organized by for example the study association and if so, did you participate in these?

Interviewee

Not yet, because of Covid. Some got canceled and I was also focused on my exams. When the exams are over I hope to go.

Twan Dimmendaal

So do you ultimately feel safe in the city of Groningen?

Interviewee

Yeah

Twan Dimmendaal

That's very nice. The process of finding a house, I would understand would be quite stressful. Has this had an influence on you, your study results or participation in class?

Interviewee

The first weeks were very stressful. For now I have a place so I'm comfortable, but when the deadline comes closer it will be more stressful.

Twan Dimmendaal

I understand. It really depends on whether you find a room between that time. Do you have any ideas for improving the housing situation for international students?

Interviewee

There's too few student housing in Groningen for the amount of students there are. It's very hard to find something for international students. More student housing should be built, especially for international students.

Twan Dimmendaal

And how would you say the university can do something about this?

Interviewee

I heard they are sending people to our country for doing events to get students to study here in Groningen. They should stop these events until the housing situation for international students has been solved and there are enough houses. If they want more students, they should be more involved in student housing.

Twan Dimmendaal

So how has your overall experience of Groningen been?

Interviewee

It's been good. I like being here. I'm glad I have a place for now and I can enjoy the student life and the city.

Twan Dimmendaal

That was the last question, is there anything else you would want to mention?

Interviewee

No.

Twan Dimmendaal

Then I really want to thank you and wish you a very nice day.

Interview 15

Twan Dimmendaal: Could you tell me about your current housing situation?

Interviewee: I was in the same room my whole three years, so I only have that story. I've recently moved. I found it via the Facebook marketplace. The first problem was finding a room, as I had heard that is quite a common issue. I basically applied to every room that I saw, and got invited to one viewing. I was very lucky because they immediately picked me. It was a German flat with just German girls. I had 4 German roommates. Basically they only allowed German girls, which I don't appreciate. But at the same time my model was to take anything I could get. It was fine.

Twan Dimmendaal: That's very nice, how long did it take before you got this room?

Interviewee: I don't remember that much because when I applied I was in the US. I was there for a year and then I was looking for flats from over there. I think I started looking somewhere in January, and then I looked for a couple times every week. It was around June/July when I actually got it.

Twan Dimmendaal: That was because you were going to do a bachelor here, or a master?

Interviewee: A bachelor, it was my first Uni experience. I had no idea how crazy it was.

Twan Dimmendaal: Then you lived there for three years. For first year students there's also SSH. Did you know about this?

Interviewee: A little bit, I always thought, I never really researched it because I found it was either really expensive. It was also hard to find rooms, but I didn't know which ones it specifically there were. I always heard it wasn't a nice place to stay so I didn't look into it that much but in my head it was always for if I didn't get anything I could look there. Now my sister lives in my room. She could take it over from me.

Twan Dimmendaal: So you live with roommates who are always German so you could always talk German. You don't here that very often.

Interviewee: That's crazy, one of my criteria, I had criteria before I knew how hard it was, was mixed international and gender, but I took literally anything I could get so that's fine.

Twan Dimmendaal: So the criteria that you had, when you got this room was it within these criteria?

Interviewee: I would say in, when I got the room I was like; fine. But when I saw where other people lived I was very happy. It was clean, I had my own sink, there was no mold, everyone had a door. It was very nice. I was living illegally as well, the landlord, she didn't sign my contract. But at the same time she was very caring when stuff broke. So that was perfect, it was just the people that weren't perfect.

Twan Dimmendaal: You knew that you were living illegally there, but did that also worry you in a way?

Interviewee: A little bit, I knew I had to go register with the city, and I was told that you had to do that within the first month. So within the first month I didn't have that contract. And I didn't know if she signed, because I signed it. She sent me the empty one, I didn't get a signed one from here. I intended to register at the city, but I never tried because I was too late and then I was too scared. So I literally just never went. But I don't know if I could've asked here about the signature. Maybe I lived illegally, but maybe not, I don't know.

Twan Dimmendaal: Alright, but now your sister lives in that room. Did you talk to hear about this, does she have the signature?

Interviewee: I think she's registered. But I know that we renewed the contract, and she got her own contract. I don't know if she did register, but she could have.

Twan Dimmendaal: Okay, so you did see people around you that were having trouble around you. Did that scare you in a way?

Interviewee: It was scary yeah. Also my sister was kicked out within a week. That landlord is criminal. I knew how bad it could be. I wasn't scared of losing my room, because it was not limited. My only fear would be for my sister. If you take whatever room you can get, you can get really weird roommates. With her there was a drug house. Like the walls had holes in it, the floor was gone. There was a room which was taped off. I was scared for her, but not for myself. And then also stories I heard from friends, very bad landlords that had the keys for example. That was a concern, but I didn't experience it.

Twan Dimmendaal: I'm glad to hear that. So that's all about the housing, nice that you stayed there for three years. This is one part of feeling safe with housing. Another part is the community integration, which can also help with feeling safe. Did you feel safe in the community? Were there more internationals in the flat that you lived in, or where there also Dutch people?

Interviewee: I felt safe generally, but I did have unpleasant experiences. I lived in Paddepoel, and I was told many times that it was the ghetto. I didn't know that when I moved there, but it is not terrible. In my house there were five of us, and there was a separate studio on top. She was a German PhD student but we only shared the entrance door and the stairs. Within that group I felt very safe, but there were a few break-ins in the street. And also, for example, my sister's motor cycle was stolen yesterday from that house. There were in a few concerns. There was also a stabbing really close to the house. But at the time I wasn't scared at all. I didn't see myself in the social circle of getting shot. But these things happened pretty close. And there was an incident where there was a chain message that said there was a strange man following people to their home, of which I'm quite sure he also stood in front of our house. But that were the most scary things that happened, and those were single occasions. So there wasn't a feeling that I thought, I live in the ghetto I'm scared. Also, when I went home at night from the city center, they were throwing fireworks at people on bikes. I sometimes didn't feel that great at night.

Twan Dimmendaal: Do you think that being an international student has an effect on that?

Interviewee: I feel like it doesn't have an effect where I feel worse in the Netherlands. But if you compare with people from other countries, non-European, I have more of a sense of safety, because the nation is more closer to mine. Usually people here don't do that. Usually the culture and how people behave is similar to German. I didn't want to move back to Germany at any point. Now I live in Berlin, of course with different size and proportions but I miss Groningen. I would go back tomorrow if I could.

Twan Dimmendaal: Do you think that the language differences do affect the way that you integrated in the community? Did you have any contact with people surrounding your house?

Interviewee: Sadly not, we had neighbors but they didn't speak English or German. I didn't speak Dutch, so we tried to communicate but it was pretty hard. So I didn't talk to people in my neighborhood. But I also didn't feel excluded because literally everyone speaks English or German. And they also offer it to you. If they hear you're German they don't speak Dutch anymore. Even if you've never been to the Netherlands before, I didn't feel lost. I was never scared I was lost or couldn't communicate.

Twan Dimmendaal: Did any student associations reach out to you? Because before you went here it was before the Covid situation. Were there a lot of activities where you connected with other international students or Dutch students?

Interviewee: No, but I'm trying to remember. On the first week of the Kei week you get the welcome package with the clubs and sororities introduced. That was all I got to know them. I feel there is a big separation Twan Dimmendaal: between Dutch and internationals in the student meetings/get to know parties. I was never asked or offered or introduced to anything. But I was also not seeking out student clubs. I did sign up for the ACLO and sport courses, but it didn't matter with the language. I couldn't tell who was Dutch and who was international. So of course you know Joost, who we both know and is Dutch, how about the friends that you met in Groningen.

Twan Dimmendaal: Were they mostly from your study and international students?

Interviewee: Everyone that I hung out with were of my study and my roommates. There was Joost, and there were 2 Germans, one Canadian, two Bulgarian. Very internationally mixed and we only spoke English.

Twan Dimmendaal: Alright I think that gives a good idea. So of course you did know of other people that didn't have a positive experience with the housing situation in Groningen. When talking with them do you know of any ways the university or municipality could improve the situation for international students?

Interviewee: Wishes I have, or something I was told by them?

Twan Dimmendaal: Both, if that would be alright.

Interviewee: In terms of what the Uni can do about housing, I also wrote a paper about that. Because I was very passionate about it. I was pissed because I don't feel the university does anything about it. When I heard that students had to camp, that was when I was like something's wrong. I feel like obviously it's hard because they're not responsible and I understand that's not what a uni does. But I feel like there should be at least some kind of regulations of how many people can fit in the city, and how many people will get a place to study in the city. I'm pretty sure that when I was reading about it that was completely separated. There was no way of telling how many people will actually come to the city and would be able to stay. So I feel like that's one of the biggest things. If there is a way to calculate how many people will have a room, or at least a rough estimate, that would be great. I know of people that had to move back home because they couldn't find a place to stay. I feel like that's not right if you want to get educated. That's the first idea I have. What I also heard was that the camps organized by the uni, they charged a lot for. I don't know because people who live there are also not happy, it might be worse when they tell it.

Twan Dimmendaal: Yeah, the situation within these tents is really bad, so any money they have to pay, is actually already a lot.

Interviewee: I think those tents should be for free if possible. I think you can't tolerate that, or at least the uni has to inform the people before they get to Groningen that that's a possibility. Because I had no idea, and I live in Germany. So if you move there from South-America, I think its crazy to get there and not have a place to study but do have to study.

Twan Dimmendaal: You hear a lot that people don't know how bad the situation is. But these are your own wishes, and what were the things you heard from other people?

Interviewee: I'm trying to remember but I don't think I ever got information from people from the uni. But there were actual protests, and I know they reacted to that. It's hard. Even people renting out their balconies is wrong, but its happening. There were tents on balconies, and they paid for a whole room for that. So that's what I think is crazy, but I know that its not the job of the uni to see

whether everything is legal. But maybe also the city itself should regulate it more, because there is so much illegal living space. I have a friend who lived in an attic, which they made in a room. There was only a ladder and no door. If there was a fire she could not leave the house. Stuff like that, which is very safety concerning. Make the housing that is there legal and safe. And inform the students that there might be a possibility that they can't find a place.

Twan Dimmendaal: I understand. Thank you very much for the elaborate answer. That's the end of the interview.

Interview 16

TWAN DIMMENDAAL I will start the recording and refrain from using your name. At any time you have the possibility to take your comments back. Could you tell me something about your current housing situation, what type of housing you live in, whether you have roommates?

INTERVIEWEE: My name is [], I'm American and a third year student at Hanze. My current housing situation is actually that I couldn't find a place before my lease ended, so currently I'm living in the United States.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL So you don't have a room right now?

INTERVIEWEE: No, I don't have a room in Groningen right now.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL Are you able to continue your study in Groningen, or have you had to stop?

INTERVIEWEE: I'm able to continue but it has been really difficult. I'm currently doing my study, hopefully for a short term, in the USA. This is unfortunately my experience in the current system.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL So right now you are in your third year. For your second and your first year of study in Groningen, did you have a room?

INTERVIEWEE: My first year I lived in SSH student house. It was good for what it was, definitely better than the situation I'm in right now. That's also when Covid started, so a lot of time was spent in my room away from everybody else. It was a generally positive experience, it served its function. After that I found a place in an apartment so I didn't have any roommates. It was a one-year lease and after that they weren't going to be able to rent the place anymore. I didn't find out about that until later, probably about March/April. My lease was going to end at the end of September. It was something I knew about for a while, and started looking immediately. Months would go on and on, it got closer to October and nothing.. In the span from May through about midway to September I had only viewing, out of the dozens and dozens of places I contacted. In the end she made a random decision, and just chose one of the people. In the last week or two I ended up getting two viewings, but again their final decisions were random draws. They didn't want to be the people to decide, they don't get a place. Most of the people were transparent with what was going. There was this one guy who I spoke with about a week before I left. I had made the decision, I'm not going to be homeless and contacted my parents to possibly move back. About four days before the end of the lease I bought the plane ticket. Then I met this guy and got a viewing, but the only day that would work for him was already too late, so I ended up getting a hotel in town just for a viewing.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL And that viewing also didn't work out.

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, that also didn't work out. My experience with the various people has been generally good. He was great and couldn't pick one because he liked u all.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL After you've contacted dozens and dozens of people and you find a room, the people want to do good but the situation itself is that there is not enough housing. That's tough. So are you still looking for housing in Groningen?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I want to go back so I've been continuing my search here. Since I've been here I've had one viewing. It was a two-person room so I interviewed with the guy I would be living with. About three days after the showing he texted me the guy that would move away was going to be staying. It seems that everything that can go wrong has gone wrong.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL I understand. Just to go back, you've started at SSH, which I'm familiar with, and it's often a problem when international students have to go on the common market because of the sudden influx and a lot of housing which are "only Dutch". How did the search for housing after

this first year at SSH go? Was that also as tough of a process as the last time? Because similar to the last time you have a date on which you have to move out.

INTERVIEWEE: At the end of the first year, I think I started in may looking and had to get a room for the end of July. I had a lot less time looking. I didn't know the situation yet, but it was a lot easier.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL Alright, but do you think you just got lucky?

INTERVIEWEE: Looking back, definitely.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL It's not that you actually got more responses, but this viewing you got lucky?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I got one viewing and that was the place I ended up living. I did have a feeling of <> because the place was a bit expensive. It was not too expensive for what it was, but it was a bit over my budget.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL So it wasn't what you typically wanted, but because of the situation you decided to do it anyway?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, and I think I would do it again. I didn't have as much time searching so I never felt that overwhelming want for Dutch Only students.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL But for the second time?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah definitely something I noticed.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL So you weren't very worried at the first time? How did this make you feel for the second time?

INTERVIEWEE: My first two years were Covid years. So much of it was online study. That was really frustrating. This year were back to larger classes and in-person classes. Personally, I thought I was finally going to have a normal year of studying, but did not turn out that way.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL I'm looking at the one hand towards the housing situation, of which I have an understanding now, but on the other hand the community integration which may also help with feeling safe in the city. Of course, Covid had quite a big role in that. Usually there are activities for international students, did you know about these and participate?

INTERVIEWEE: Not really, I'm not the most social person and generally like to keep to myself. I do have this internal want to be around people. On the surface I'm anti-social, but I want to be around people. Covid really put me back in that. That want for social situations I couldn't fulfill because I couldn't be around people and school was online.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL I understand it has had quite a bad influence.

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, and then I stopped seeking out. 95% of the time I'm going to be in my room and I'm okay with that, but looking back I wasn't okay with that. I didn't really seek out activities.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL Alright, but you don't usually have to seek out, as there are organizations which organize activities and seek out to you. But that has also been harder in the Covid years. Did you feel like that happened?

INTERVIEWEE: Is this stuff that the school advertises?

TWAN DIMMENDAAL It's not necessarily from school, but there are 'fraternities' for international students and also study organizations. They usually come by during college hours and on campus to try to get as much people as possible to participate in their activities. It was harder to organize but also probably harder to get to these people.

INTERVIEWEE: I agree

TWAN DIMMENDAAL I understand the community situation, as it was influenced by Covid. Can you give me any ideas for improving the situation referring to feeling of safety of international students in Groningen?

INTERVIEWEE: I think there should be a lot more involvement from the school side. More feeling of responsibility from them. Especially first year students. This is not something the school promotes; the housing situation is really bad. I knew about this before I left, as I had known someone already living here, but at no point did the school tell me that the housing situation is really bad. They have some links to SSH and the Village, but I don't think that fulfills the responsibility. The safety and wellbeing of their students should be a priority, and housing is a big part of that. It's one of the most important aspects of life. You hardly feel safe if you don't have a roof above your head. Hearing stories about homeless students or their sleeping in tents, that should be more than enough motivation to do something about this. Not blame the city for not building enough houses or pretending the problem doesn't exist which I think are things the school is guilty of.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL When you were in your second year, did you already hear from other people that the housing situation was a problem?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, I'd heard it was a problem, but after I found my place I didn't worry about it too much, I felt safe.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL When you heard you would be evicted, did you immediately get worried, or did you have the trust that you would find a new room within a couple of weeks again.

INTERVIEWEE: There was definitely that feeling of complacency, the first year I found a place in a month, the second year I found a place in a month. I'll start looking now, that's plenty of time I won't have any trouble. Then just all of the circumstances combined created this nightmare situation. It turned a normal problem into a disaster. It is a housing disaster. There are more students that can be accommodated for. That's not something any school should do. I understand that with a majority of programs the schools are obligated to accept you. It's not like the US where the schools reject 85% of the students that apply. But then it has the side-effect you get more and more students.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL Yeah, but there is no change in the housing availability, which could lead to a problem.

INTERVIEWEE: Exactly, it's not a big city

TWAN DIMMENDAAL Of course, for US standards it's quite small, although it is quite big for Dutch standards.

INTERVIEWEE: How many students are there?

TWAN DIMMENDAAL I think about 30-40 thousand

INTERVIEWEE: I've heard much higher numbers, but percentage wise that very much. Where I live the percentage much smaller.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL Groningen is a student city, it's a very big part of it. But that's also a problem

INTERVIEWEE: You have to have places for these students, if that's what the city is centered around. If it drives the economy you have to accommodate for that.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL It's also that international students coming to Groningen has been increasing in the last two decades. The housing market used to be almost only Dutch students, but now there is this influx of international students who want to participate on the Dutch market which the Dutch students often don't allow really. That creates a problem for the university who see all this housing,

but it's not available for the international students. But then perhaps there should be more housing just for international students, like SSH and the Village.

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, but those places are generally more expensive. That's where I see more ridiculous prices. I don't know if their doing it on purpose, or if they truly believe these are competitive housing prices.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL That's hard to say

INTERVIEWEE: A lot of the negative experiences I've had are not due to someone maliciously.. When I find a student house ad, and I message them and they say they don't want international students, I don't automatically think they are not good persons. I get that if you live with a bunch of Dutch people, you want to be able to speak your own language in house. I understand in most cases the want to have a Dutch person, someone who speaks Dutch.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL It shouldn't be a problem for the international students. Even if this is the case of Dutch students, it shouldn't create a problem for international students to find any student housing.

INTERVIEWEE: There are currently a few dozen places that are in my budget, but the majority of messages I've gotten back have been "were sorry to inform you but we don't take internationals" or "you're ineligible for this housing". That's probably 80% of the messages I get back, and I probably only get about 20% of the messages back from the places I've applied to. I can understand this, but the irrational side of me is frustrated and mad... It's tough. The few places that are open to international students are swamped.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL I've experienced that myself as well, and had decided to just accept the first 10, 20 people that reacted for a viewing.

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah so over there [Groningen] I would just be on my computer and refresh, refresh because I wanted to be one of the first 20. But now it's harder, because it is 04:45 AM right now, while it is in the afternoon in the Netherlands

TWAN DIMMENDAAL Why are you up so early?

INTERVIEWEE: Well tomorrow I have class at 5AM, which is 13 AM in the Netherlands. I try to get my sleep schedule back to the Dutch sleep schedule.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL I've asked everything I wanted to know, is there anything else you want to mention?

INTERVIEWEE: Well, I know it has been a very negative story. I haven't had a good experience with housing in the past months, but I've always stayed hopeful. I've stayed hopeful I will find a place and I won't be staying here forever. I'll find a place and be able to get a plane ticket to get back to the city I love living in. Generally most people would not say they have had a good experience with the city in general in the time I've spent there. 5 months after I moved Covid happened. I didn't really do anything outside of school and general life stuff. I didn't go out to bars and parks or travel to other towns. I didn't experience what you should experience when you go to a school in a different place. That being said, I absolutely loved my time there. Even after all the bad things that happened, it's an amazing city. Walking along the canal and looking at the old buildings with the sunset on the canal. It's definitely a place that I would want to stay after my studies. My girlfriend lives there, and we haven't talked about what we'll do after we're done. I do music so I could go anywhere, I wouldn't be worried having to move away for a job.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL But it wouldn't be a problem to stay in Groningen?

INTERVIEWEE: I would like that very much.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL That's nice to hear. Although the experience with housing and Covid was not what you expected, its good to hear the city of Groningen overall you did enjoy.

INTERVIEWEE: I've met so many great people, just in the last week I was there, all the people I spoke were so amazing. I loved the little 5 – 10 minutes I spent talking to them. I miss that here, people generally have a different attitude. Especially in a work environment it's generally a lot more stressful here. I think that contributes to the general happiness of people in Groningen. There's generally less stress. Being in that sort of environment has been really helpful for me. Even with all the stress from housing and Covid, I don't want to think about how that would have gone over if I was here instead of there.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL So although the situation did make you stress and worried, the actual city did work as a stress-reliever.

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, I want people to look at my story as a story of hope. Hopefully it will have a good ending and I will be able to find a place and move back. That people look at that and not give up. That people in my situation quit their study, its something that crossed my mind. But I've already invested two years in this and don't want to stop. I want to stay hopeful. That this will have a positive outcome.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL Contact me if you've found a place, I'm interested and really hope it will happen soon.

INTERVIEWEE: I was hoping it would happen this month, and it would be just one month, but probably not. I will get on an airplane as fast as I can. Hopefully this will have a happy ending. If you have any questions you can just message me.

TWAN DIMMENDAAL Thank you, this has really helped. I want to thank you for participating and have a nice day

INTERVIEWEE: Thank you, have a nice day as well.

Interview 17

Twan Dimmendaal 0:00

I just started recording right now. So yeah, in the message that I sent you, I talked a bit about my thesis and about feeling of safety for international students, considering the housing market housing, situation and, and community integration. And well, anything that you say you can always contact me and I will retract it, if you wish. And I will refrain from using your name in the thesis. So you can say whatever you want. Yeah. And then just to start off, Could you could you give me could you tell me something about your current housing situation?

Interviewee 0:38

I actually moved in, I found a room and I moved in yesterday.

Twan Dimmendaal 0:47

Congratulations

Interviewee 0:48

Thank you very much. I started studying I moved in Groningen on the third of September, and they only found a permanent room for the summer. So you can see the despairing there. Yeah, I've been living in emergency housing with SSH. Which it had very good convention conditions where I was, I was in Martini house. But it's not a place where you want to be when you are studying abroad. There are many space for yourself. I shared the room. I shared a kitchen, I shared utilities, I shared everything. So whenever I want to talk to closer friends, or to talk about something more personal with family or something like that, I always had to either go to my car, or go outside in the rain called to have some privacy. And so that was a bit complicated for me, because I really enjoy my own space.

Twan Dimmendaal 1:50

Yeah, yeah. Very nice that you have that right now. So it took from so the third in September of September, you arrived here in Groningen? Yeah. And then until now, the second of December. You were in between housing. So with emergency housing. And always in Martini house from the start? Yes. I was always in the same room. Okay. And before you can Konya? How did your when did you start searching for a room? And did you know about this, this current housing situation?

Interviewee 2:28

So I got my acceptance letter on sometime middle of August, beginning of August, which I learned later, is quite late to find a house. And I start searching on Facebook groups and on various websites and stuff. I had some Dutch friends and I asked for opinions. And I asked a lot of people, Hey, do you know any Dutch person that could probably have a contact or something like that? And everyone said, yeah, just look on the Facebook groups or use camera nets or rooms that are now. So I went and got a cabinet subscription. And on the 15th of August, I think yes, sometime between the middle and the end of August. I came to Groningen for a week, or like five days with my brother. He was visiting me where I was leaving. Because I was not living in Portugal. I was living in Luxembourg, and he came to visit me. And I was like, Okay, you're here. Let's go and you can visit another country as well. So it came to Groningen. And I was lucky enough that Martini house was already taking in people. And I didn't want to go to emergency housing. I wanted to be the very last resort, but I had to go there because I spent two days in Groningen. And I was asking around Hey, do you know if anyone has a room like people on the street? I was just asking people that was my go to try and find a room for the time that I was here. But everyone just said it's too late. Sorry. You should have looked earlier there was no room stray the Facebook group strike calmer net. Okay, sure. Thank you. And the night before I called my godfather and I called my father and I told them, hey, I don't think I'm going to go study. This is impossible. I'm not going to find a house. I don't want to leave in the streets. Just got to keep working and then off figure out something next year. My godfather was just

like, do you have options? Where what can you do? What can you not do? Where can you go if you start this year? And I said, yeah, there's these emergency housing situation. If you try there, no, because I don't know it's going to be I don't know if it's going to be good or not. So okay. You have the opportunity now just try it. So, yeah, I got a ruin Martini house on the 17th or something of August. And then went back to Luxembourg, because I was finishing working on the last day of August. So up until August 31, or 30s. I was working still. And so it literally came to drowning in to make sure I had the rope.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:01
In the emergency housing. Yeah.

Interviewee 6:03
Yeah. And I've paid around 115 I think on Kamernet?

Twan Dimmendaal 6:16
Really? Yes. 100. Jesus Christ. Oh, is that just a basic subscription? Or how does that work? 115.

Interviewee 6:28
Yeah, yeah, that was three months of subscriptions. It is pretty hard for me, because I'm not. I am not very light skinned. I'm not as white as everyone else. But I'm not I'm not black and I'm just tanned. I'm from the south of Europe and from Portugal. So it's, I was told by a Portuguese girl here that don't say out loud that you Portuguese people will not get you in because they think Portuguese people are very loud.

Twan Dimmendaal 7:01
Okay. And

Interviewee 7:04
also, I'm not a girl, and I'm not Dutch. So that also helped on the situation of sorry, no internationals. Sorry, only girls.

Twan Dimmendaal 7:15
Because I've heard that, of course, the one about no internationals is very frequent. I've recognized that a lot when I was searching for a room of course, I'm Dutch. But still I recognized it a lot. You see that? The one with just for girls, and that kind of world discrimination is perhaps not the right word. But do you do you know why that is? Do you have any idea?

Interviewee 7:45
I would assume it's because older landlords think that girls can be tidier and cleaner. You're not as loud. I would assume so. Because you know, boys will be boys.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:03
Yeah, no, I think that's it as well. But it's still quite odd in this day and time. Which, of course, led you down. So then, of course, in August, you were keep on keeping on searching. There must be quite stressful, I would think and frustrating. How did you miss this?

Interviewee 8:29
It was it was hard, because at some point, so I paid for a subscription on Kamernet, the whole of August, the whole of September. And then I had the opportunity to extend the Martini house until December 23. So I didn't pay subscription in November. But they not in October, but I paid in November. So I had a month where I was not looking for anything on common net just on Facebook groups. But again, I saw that it was not going anywhere. So I got coming out again. And that's actually

how I got the house that I'm in right now. Okay. It doesn't come in it. But it was very odd. Because I was going back to Luxembourg to get my third shot vaccine. And I couldn't make it on the viewing day. So I asked the guy, Hey, I can't make it. Make it on this day because I will not be in running. Is it possible to do it earlier? And he said yes. And actually was able to meet the person and talk to them a bit and get to know them instead of coming in on the viewing day where everyone else was coming. So I think I got an advantage report there. Yeah, that's nice. But I think I was just very lucky on that part.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:00

Yeah, yeah, I mean, I think luck is an important word here, considering the housing situation for international students. So ultimately would you say it was worth getting this camera net subscription?

Interviewee 10:18

It depends on how, what's the end goal? If the end goal is find a house, yes, it was worth it. If the end goal is just looking for a house, then it was not worth it at all. There was like, two weeks of meals in, in covenant subscriptions, like 100 euros, it's money. Especially the minimum wage difference from here to Portugal is huge. So I really feel the difference when it comes to 100 euros.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:55

And then, so how much did the emergency housing room cost?

Interviewee 11:02

It was 350 per month. Okay.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:04

And then you had a room which you shared with another person? Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And of course, you said already that you missed your own space. This have an effect on your well, feeling of safety, but also your study and all that?

Interviewee 11:23

Not really, I've been. So I haven't studied for four years now. Okay. And it was already tricky to start studying again. But I'm doing something that I actually like. So it was engaging. And it didn't really bother me in my living conditions, because I was actually comfortable with my studies.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:44

Alright. Nice. And living wise?

Interviewee 11:49

Everyone, there was very nice. Everyone's in the same situation. So we all know what's going on. So we try to be easygoing with each other. We all understand that when someone's more stressed. We know it's not just because exams are just because they're having a bad day. Everyone's stressed because we're not sure about tomorrow, know if we have a place to be or not.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:16

And how was the overall quality?

Interviewee 12:19

it was pretty good. It is actually very good for emergency housing kind of situation. There was a lot of people that are not very tidy, that made it a bit less good. But the overall structure of the house was pretty good. And the maintenance team was always on top of everything. If we told them today, this is happening. They'd be on. It's on the second week. Okay.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:49

That's nice. And your current room that you're in right now. How's the quality of that? Are you satisfied with it?

Interviewee 12:58

Yeah, it needs some work needs a lot of cleaning. But it's, it's very nice. I guess you can see like the windows, that's the only windows I get but it's it said it does have like a view window. But it's fine. The living room is pretty big. Like it's a very nice house, it just makes total sense.

Twan Dimmendaal 13:26

And you said within the criteria that you had beforehand, like with the how big it is, and how much you pay for it.

Interviewee 13:34

I If I had this price, outside, I'm currently paying 500 euros outside in the city center, like in the city center. And I have a room of a boss 16 square meters. Okay. It's a big room, and the living room and the kitchen and also pretty huge. So for the price of it, and the location. Sorry, I think it's a fair price. But I had to make it up to 50 to 500 to get it because if I was to go into it my initial budget I wouldn't find

Twan Dimmendaal 14:26

So you had to up your budget to get a room so you wouldn't stay in the emergency housing.

Interviewee 14:33

Yeah. And also looking for a second job.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:39

And are you also then still searching for a new room? I would understand that right now. You're in Dallas, but are you thinking about? Well, perhaps I'm going to start doing that. Well,

Interviewee 14:53

I will do that at some point. I will turn 23 soon. Okay. So I hope To find a studio with rental allowance that can help me pay less. And then I can save up some more money, maybe instead have some more financial freedom. But for now, I'm very happy with the room that I have. Because at least I know that I, like I have my private space. I can cook properly, because I really like cooking. And yeah, yes, he has a different sense of safety.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:34

And so then there's also kind of community integration in the Netherlands, and so I understand that you are studying right now or Yeah, okay. So well, just apart from that, within the new community right now, you're quite new. Do you already feel safe there? And within the new house, but also in the neighborhood?

Interviewee 16:07

The neighborhood it's, I have done know, a lot of people here literally just moves yesterday. But if we're talking, being adapted to the whole city, yeah, I think so. I'm not very city person. But I can go around and I don't feel uncomfortable going around even at night. So it's a pretty safe ish city. And people are nice in most cases. I only had one tricky case. But that's, that was at work. Okay. But here, most of the people actually want to help. And it's very nice.

Twan Dimmendaal 16:48

Yeah. Do you have a lot of interaction with other students, whether they be international or Dutch?

Interviewee 16:56

So both my current roommates are Dutch. Okay. So I'm the only international in the house. And I'm the only international at my work, okay. Because I work in a rather than a burger place burger shop. And I have quite like, I don't want to brag, but I have good cooking qualifications, not class, but experience. Very good cooking experience. So they took me for my experience. So I'm the only international my work. So I leave among the Dutch is nice. And internationals, I talk more with the people from Martini house and from school because I mean, international course.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:53

So how would you then say your community integration has been going? Because sounds quite positive?

Interviewee 17:59

Yeah, I I'm, I think it was quite positive, because I'm already used to this international environment. And I've had to get used to. I've lived in the past four years in like three different countries. So adapting to a new country. It's not difficult to me. I just need to find what is normal on this country. And the process is basically the same find out what people do that is normal, adapt. And I don't find it difficult at this one.

Twan Dimmendaal 18:37

And we just said that language differences still affect the integration.

Interviewee 18:44

Yes, I've been meaning to learn that because of work. I still do. But I kind of need to manage with work in school. But I've been learning words.

Twan Dimmendaal 19:02

nice. Alright, um, so yeah, that's very nice to hear, actually. It's very positive from the integration part. But ultimately, considering everything. Do you feel safe in the city of cloning?

Interviewee 19:21

Yes. Yeah. Good. Apart from the riots a couple of weeks ago. Yes. I assume there was one time thing. I hope so. Yeah. Yeah, definitely. And the COVID numbers are rising. Stupidly crazy high. But that has nothing to do with the city. It's more about

Twan Dimmendaal 19:46

government everywhere. Yeah. Yeah, that's not really there's not something about for the city. Before the housing situation and the overall feeling of safety but also the housing market. Could you give me any ideas of how the municipality or the university could improve this situation?

Interviewee 20:10

I would say make, like some affordable options outside of the city center. Okay. Okay. In the edges of the city, I think no international students would mind leaving in the edge of the city, as long as the room was guaranteed. Or even if the universities that comes in hope they would come up with options, opening. student dorm house will be great, I think. Because when they said, hey, when I got the email from houses, say, Hey, you're accepted, but you need to find a house by yourself. At first, I thought, sure, how hard can it be to find a house? And then I learned about the whole housing situation. It was a bit of a mess. So I think if they would give some more support on finding a house or making options available, that would be great.

Twan Dimmendaal 21:18

Yes. Okay. Thank you. Thank you for the ideas and the remarks. So that really concludes my interview. I've asked everything that I wanted to know, is there something else that you would want to mention?

Interviewee 21:34

No, that's all like. I know, if you if you could not mention, the countries I've been in, if it's not necessary. Yeah, no, I, that's fine. I'll do okay. That's definitely your I decided not going to mention my name. So that's,

Twan Dimmendaal 21:54

now I won't, I'll make sure to leave that out of the transcription, which I'm not even sure is going to be in the essay. But it's also part of this for me to kind of know what has been set and to go back to it. But that will do so. Definitely. But for now, I just really want to thank you again, for taking the time. And giving me the answers and responses really helps me with my research. And I'm very glad that you found a new room right now. And yeah, and I hope you can continue to experience. Well, quite a nice city. Yeah. Yeah. And just wish you very much of luck with that.

Interviewee 22:35

Thanks. What are you studying?

Twan Dimmendaal 22:37

Human Geography and spatial planning.

Interviewee 22:41

Okay, is that are you going with a housing crisis? Special?

Twan Dimmendaal 22:46

Yeah, yeah. Human Geography is also about, you know, how people if people live where they want to live. So whether students like the criteria that I was talking about, things like that, and also spatial planning, of course, yeah.

Interviewee 23:06

I'd be happy to read the final product. All right. If you're happy to share.

Twan Dimmendaal 23:10

Yeah, yeah. I mean, I hope I get a good grade. Then though, I'll send it to you.

Interviewee 23:16

That's fine. Cheers.

Twan Dimmendaal 23:21

Have a nice day.

Interviewee 23:22

You too. Bye.

Interview 18

Twan Dimmendaal 0:00

So, so that's the beginning of the interview should take about 20 minutes. And yeah, it's about the feeling of safety of international students in Groningen. And with that, I mean, whether when you're in a place, whether you feel afraid or feared or worried or comfortable. So if you're feeling safe, you're feeling comfortable in the place where you're in. And then I have the focus on the housing. So if you're in a room, do you feel safe? But also, are you worried about a potential eviction or what that will mean for you? Your housing situation Cloninger, but also your community? So if you have roommates, how will that help you? Or how are you participating in the world of zoning or community as international students and you know, that can help in feeling safe and feeling comfortable? So yeah, that's what the research is really about. If you have any questions or anything, feel free to ask me at any time. Yeah, but then I don't start with if you can tell me something about the housing situation you're currently in. So in what kind of room do you live?

Interviewee 1:21

Present? Or about the past few months? Let's go from start to finish or easier. And I was promised in May from my friend that I could take over her room. Okay. She's been an Erasmus. And then middle of August, her roommate decided that they wanted their friend and they told me I couldn't start looking then which is difficult. Yeah, it's like a mother who originally went nowhere. I went couch surfing and it just felt uncomfortable and I just felt guilty. And so I went to the emergency accommodation. And that we had I feel safe there. Got about two hours sleep the first night I was there. Really, I slept, I slept the top of my phone and while there's 100 people sharing a room and people talk, snoring it really wasn't ideal that I eventually felt a bit more safe there. But sleeping is still a big problem. And no privacy. But the worst thing was a lack of kitchen.

Twan Dimmendaal 2:35

There was no kitchen at all?

Interviewee 2:38

No, so I got quite badly sick, coughing all the time. I was there for three weeks. Okay, and then I left as the bedbug bit my body. I then moved to a place that's a big improvement but still quite, quite crap. The landlord was crazy and I don't have a bedroom door. There was no Wi Fi for the first half months. So I had these mobile data. All the data ran out to have to like one night I had to sit outside for Wi Fi on the streets like but then my Wi Fi has been resolved but the landlord was not the actual landlord. The actual landlord came in and said that that person had not been paying rent. He didn't even know where rent there. I told her it's mine for and she's also overcharging first. Its not in Groningen. But the worst is no bedroom door and I don't feel very comfortable that like of course. I don't feel safe. It just there's always a risk of being kicked out. And then I had another situation where my friend's brother was moving out and he wanted to get me to move in afterwards. So they contacted the landlord and I said No problem. Just give me his email. And then his friends out of the blue said congratulations. I don't know what happened. This was in July last year.

Twan Dimmendaal 4:54

You had the friend of a brother or the brother of friends and you contacted them with an email. But then then you go,

Interviewee 5:04

They gave me the email, and I heard nothing. So I ended up showing up at the viewing anyway, even though it wasn't for me. And they still pretended that like, I could take the place. It's been three days and rent starts on the first of November. I'm just assuming they're also ignoring me. So it's two

places I was like, promised, like get somewhere. And yeah, there's a lot of like scammers in Facebook, but I'm able to spot them so I've never lost any money or anything from them.

Twan Dimmendaal 5:39

Well, I guess that's a good thing, considering the whole situation. So what's in what kind of situation are you in right now as we're speaking?

Interviewee 5:51

See, I'm still in the same house where I have no bedroom door. It's even more illegal than the fact that you're making profit. And she talked trash even though it was not my fault. I paid the rent. And she went crazy. She started telling me that if I don't, I can fuck off. And all this other stuff. And she was very aggressive and rude. And I then got a door. And then she kind of calmed down. And a few weeks later, she's like, if you pay for a door yourself, I'll reimburse you, but I don't really trust her. So I'm not going to do that. Yeah. As soon as possible.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:30

Yeah, definitely. Definitely. So you're actually living illegally right now if I understand that correctly?

Interviewee 6:41

I couldn't get a BSN. But then I told the BSN people I was staying. I was staying in the village still. So I'm able to work thankfully. But I think other people my situation are not even be able to work. So it could be very expensive for them.

Twan Dimmendaal 6:56

So is this your first year in Groningen?

Interviewee 7:04

Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 7:05

So I understand that before you came here you had a friend who said you could take over their room?

Interviewee 7:19

I did not really look on Kamernet or SSH because I was told I had somewhere to stay. It was at the worst time, in the middle of August, that the roommate said they wanted someone else.

Twan Dimmendaal 7:35

All right. Right. That's another very, very nice first experience with the city. Of course, no.

Interviewee 7:43

I'm doing quite well mentally. I've got a good friend network. I'm active with societies. So I'm actually enjoying myself here. Stay here, just the combinations far from ideal, and it's highly stressful. But my whole like, our day to day life. I just keep myself distracted from those situations. I have friends. I don't really think about it too much. So yeah, it's quite manageable because of that. It's like a good long term coping strategy, but it's fine.

Twan Dimmendaal 8:16

I mean, yeah, and I think it's a good thing and just keep your mind off of it and just try not to think about too much. But how do you feel the searching for the room right now is going? How are you even hopeful for it?

Interviewee 8:33

Not entirely, it's like women and Dutch students get like much higher priority and also they prefer masters or doctoral students. So I'm at the bottom of the pecking order and I send all the messages on Facebook. The only responses I usually get are scammers or no response. I got one response, but it was a viewing with 60 people. I did not get elected. And then it's also that a lot of rooms are for women. They apparently feel much more comfortable in a house with only women. But even like men have this perception that women are cleaner so they prefer to have female tenants.

Twan Dimmendaal 9:28

Okay, well I didn't know about that. But I do know about the no internationals thing that's always worked for Facebook posts which really narrows down the amount of opportunities. Did you know about the situation before you came to Groningen?

Interviewee 9:47

Yeah, I think a good solution for one would get the university to stop advertising abroad for what amazing city Groningen is because there are people coming over telling how good the city is. And then people come over then and they're homeless.

Twan Dimmendaal 10:12

That was one of the main things of the protest about a couple of weeks ago. I don't know if you participated. But you know, you must have heard of it. On the website of the university, they say you're welcome. And, you know, you can have a great stay here. And we've actually got a lot of houses. But then you come here, and it's really not that. Well, and do you because you said, Well, you've got quite a big surrounding of friends and other students that you associate with, are there a lot of them that are in the same situation as you?

Interviewee 10:54

Well, most of the people I know are either Dutch or they're not in first year. So they're kind of fine. But there are people I did meet in the emergency housing and they're in a bad situation. They're now staying in another emergency housing, but it's better because has a kitchen and it's more privacy. That's in Martinihouse. But the one that I had in the village, as I was saying used to be like an example. That's another thing. That'd be nice if the university had like numerous fixus, depending how much housing they have available.

Twan Dimmendaal 11:29

And that's a problem. Because it's hard for the university to really know how much housing there is for international students, because they know how much student houses there are. But they don't really know how much are welcome for international students.

Interviewee 11:48

well. They could like, check how much students are applying for SOS and are applying for emergency housing. And they get like a figure. There's like 500 students in our house, we need 50 rooms available or something like, yeah, and then they could project an increase every year. All they care about is really getting to sign up as possible. So they get more money. I don't think they really care about the welfare of international students that much.

Twan Dimmendaal 12:21

I hope they do. I hope they can change something about this, because this is a situation which is well below inhuman. Because is that new emergency housing? Would that still be an opportunity for you? Or is that also out of the window?

Interviewee 12:39

I think it's fully booked already. Yeah, my friend got the last slide. And then the other one's been closed down. Same stuff kicked out of here. But that could also mean like an hour of transport insane and someone's couch. I don't mind that. But I just feel really, I feel kind of bad day and finances way. Yeah. I don't mind that they sit by a couch or commute. But I just felt like guilty.

Twan Dimmendaal 13:10

It's not something you can really do something about, but I do understand the feeling of guilt towards the person that's hosting.

Interviewee 13:19

Yeah, it's nice. Nice to let me stay at that. Yeah, exactly.

Twan Dimmendaal 13:23

Alright. So yeah, that's just not entirely positive, of course. I don't know if I would have been the same if I were in your place. So I think I do have a great sense of your housing situation, and well, the feeling of safety in that case. So now there's also the community which really has to do with participation in Groningen a community because of course, right now, you're in a way you're not really living in the city of Groningen.

Interviewee 14:23

Now, I do spend as much time as possible and I work in a tight space art course. So I do see a lot of people.

Twan Dimmendaal 14:32

So I understand you work at Thuisbezorgd. Do you also meet students at other places?

Interviewee 14:50

Yes, I'm quite active at my study associations. I have four study associations as I do two courses. There I've met a lot of nice people. It also helps with getting my mind on something else.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:20

So that really helps in well, your current situation mentally. In your study, is it a mix of Dutch students and international students?

Interviewee 15:43

Yeah.

Twan Dimmendaal 15:43

So do you also have a lot of interaction with other Dutch students?

Interviewee 15:51

Yeah. And I'm doing my best to learn Dutch. Try and learn to try and learn like Dutch like memes and stuff. Just culturally taking that.

Twan Dimmendaal 16:11

And I guess you're enjoying the city? It's just that the housing situation right now is just terrible for you, I guess.

Interviewee 16:28

Yeah, for sure.

Twan Dimmendaal 16:29

So yeah, well, what are your plans? Right now? It's just still trying to find a room via Facebook?

Interviewee 16:35

Because basically, why didn't try first there was like, 40 comments in each post? Now I try and deal with the first person to be able to comment. But it doesn't look too amazing. Also with the place I'm currently in as I have no certainty. I might ask to apply to college, see if I can study from my home country and just go to Groningen for the test. But my subject has labs so I'm not sure if that is possible.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:17

And that will mean you will move back to the country?

Interviewee 17:23

Back to my parents house.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:25

Of course, not, not something you really want. And also not something that international studying is about?

Interviewee 17:33

No, but it's better than going to a place without a kitchen. I got quite sick from that.

Twan Dimmendaal 17:44

Yeah, I do understand that. I think that's really concluding it. I understand you don't want to stay in the current place. But there is you the risk of getting evicted. Eventually, I guess. That's a really potential risk. So then it's hoping for a room in the quick future. But if that doesn't come early enough, then it would mean moving back.

Interviewee 18:34

Yeah, potentially. That's really unprepared obviously.

Twan Dimmendaal 18:37

Yeah, definitely. The last question is, can you give me any ideas? Of course, you've already mentioned a few earlier in this conversation, for potentially improving the feeling of safety of international students, considering the housing situation and community operation?

Interviewee 19:03

Well, I said earlier, stop advertising, maybe advertise but like a warning that housing isn't the guarantee. So internationals come thinking that I see so much so much posts on Facebook people saying, I'm going to go here next month and rescuing homeless people just not so much internationals, like I had no idea about the situation from friends, but I just assumed that I had somewhere but I'd like to say to people out there who aren't of the situation and there's like nothing mentioned at all. And I'm not sure what other cities are currently having a housing shortage. And I noticed there's like a disconnect between the municipality and the college but I think it's the college's responsibility. They might not have to build housing but they can limit the amount of international students and warn them. They shouldn't just say the municipalities bother them because they're the ones who are attracting students and lowering them. The emphasis is on changing the policies of the college.

Twan Dimmendaal 20:18

So changing the amount of international students that come that come here?

Interviewee 20:24

Just warn them. Be honest and warn them before they come here.

Twan Dimmendaal 20:32

And perhaps installing a numerous fixes?

Interviewee 20:37

There were also people in emergency housing last year. Last year, there were people who dropped out of college because they couldn't find a house and stuff. And they could also so yeah, at least, it might still be a mass housing problem, but then people will not be, like, naive or oblivious to the fact. They're at least warned. But that's like the minimum they definitely should do. Building more houses and numerous fixes are further along those lines. Apparently it is difficult to get numerous fixes here. So I'm not sure if that's a viable solution.

Twan Dimmendaal 21:30

I'll get to that. Yeah, I don't really know about that. But that's something for me to look into.

Interviewee 21:37

There's also lots of low rising houses, and they could be extended or something to get more rooms. I heard stories people have like a three bedroom house themselves, because they don't want to share it's just like, there's like there's unused rooms that could be used.

Twan Dimmendaal 21:55

My questions are answered really. Is there anything else you would like to mention?

Interviewee 22:06

And I think that that's it.

Twan Dimmendaal 22:09

I really want to thank you again for participating for this in this interview.

Interviewee 22:19

I wish you the best and hope that helps.

Twan Dimmendaal 22:20

Yeah, if you have any questions or anything if you find the room eye contact me please because I really hope that you do you know I That's with all the people I've interviewed so far. They their situation is has not yet been very positive. So with everyone, I'm asking to do this, because I do want to keep updated really? If you want. If not, that's fine. But yeah, I really wish you the best.

Interviewee 22:56

The best to you and your studies as well. Yeah,

Twan Dimmendaal 22:59

thank you very much. You want to start this as well, but also really with your housing situation. I hope you can stay here because it is a beautiful city.

Interviewee 23:07

Oh definitely.