



@AeresUASIntOffice



#Alumni - Aeres UAS (University of Applied Sciences) - CAH Dronen

## Dear alumni,

*"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas" ... I can't believe we are already heading to the end of 2020. For sure a year that none of us will soon forget, a global rollercoaster it was. We all have been confronted with restrictions in various ways that have affected our personal and professional life. For internationals like us the restrictions to travel is something we couldn't have ever imagined.*

Everything was different in 2020 it seems, but I believe it has also allowed us to see things from a different perspective and it has given a momentum for innovation in many ways. In education we had been talking about online learning and better use of ICT in education, but it has proven to be hard to step out of our comfort zone when there was no real urgency to do so. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

This year we were kicked-out of our comfort zone, university was closed and it was time to really get some understanding of online education, all of us! And we did it, as a team. A team of teaching staff and students!

After summer we got back into the university with an adjusted programme, aiming to offer as much in-class experience as possible to students but also using lessons learned and offering part of the education online. Looking back at these

first months I believe I can proudly say that we succeeded in finding a way to offer the best education under the given circumstances. At the same time we clearly see we still have some work to do to reach the full potential. Our internationalization strategy for instance always strongly focused on mobility. This year we learned that internationalization at home is something we need to work on much more, enabling students to develop their internationalization competences without travelling. The multi-cultural Dutch society offers fertile but unused grounds for internationalization at home. This challenge to develop a sound offer of internationalization at home, also using our strong network of international partners, is something we are ready to start working on.

2020 was a blessing in disguise. We all learned that things should not be taken for granted. As an organization and as individuals we have experienced how versatile we are and that we can be problem solvers and even innovators when put in a hard place. Educational innovation has taken a giant leap forward, which would not have happened. As professionals we also learned that working from home is definitely feasible; less hours wasted in traffic and less air pollution, it can be done! 2020 was also a year in which we spend more time with our partner and children and I think everyone has experienced this as a gift. At the same time we all have missed friends and

family we couldn't see over these months. And we also learned that the social interaction in an office (and a classroom) is vital for us all.

2020 was a learning experience and I hope we can reap the benefits of it over the years to come, both personally, professionally, in education and in society. Christmas is a time of reflection and to count your blessings. This year more than ever before. Take care of your loved ones, reach out to those who might be lonely.

I would like to wish you all a merry Christmas and a healthy 2021!



**Natasja Spaargaren**  
 Head International Studies & Consultancy

A glimpse  
 into



# Secretly eating burgers at Schiphol airport during the night

**Name:** Paula Kampara – Muresane & Raul Emilian Muresan  
**Studied in:** 2011/2012.

**Paula** – European Funds Management;

**Raul** – International Horticulture Management

**Nationality:** **Paula** – Latvian, **Raul** – Romanian

## When you think back of your study time Dronten, what did you like the most?

**Paula:** We made a lot of international friends! Still we're meeting up in different countries and celebrating together!

**Raul:** International environment! Interaction with different nationalities was always interesting and the structure of study process was rationally organized.

**Paula:** I loved the challenges! I had real struggle when I started at the university with my English level and I studied for several hours each evening to pass the re-entrance exam.

## What were the main differences when you compare the education system in your home country and at Aeres University of Applied Sciences (back then the university had another name: CAH Dronten University of Applied Sciences)

**Paula:** Everything was new and studies in Dronten included many practical, individual works. Hello, Mr. Medema! I had never enjoyed any other study class as much as I loved yours! Another important difference - availability and focus on individual competencies. Evaluation of professional skills within different psychological tasks. Study process in Dronten itself was personal and well managed - each student had its own coach who regularly followed the growth and development of individual skills.

**Raul:** Right. First of all - study lines. They are not focusing on specific study course like horticulture. Main accent is on theoretical



study process within large study group subject like agriculture itself. Another important difference - many courses back in Romania are only theoretical, there are no practical activities included, so the knowledge you gain is mainly theoretical.

## Is there anything you have taken as "lesson learned" from Dronten that has somehow helped you in life? Or network (e.g. of friends) that you have developed during your studies?

**Raul:** Surely, we have many friends from Dronten time! Studies there help me to improve and develop my network. Also I want to mention cultural differences that we were experiencing on daily basis, developed new skills that are still very useful.

**Paula:** Indeed, to never give up. There are always at least 2 solutions for each situation, there must to be way out!

## Life works in mysterious ways. Could you have ever thought that Dronten will actually change your life (you have met each other in Dronten and now have a family together)?

**Raul:** No, that was never in schedule!

**Paula:** Oh, no, not at all!

## Can you tell us how/when your love story started?

**Raul:** In October 2011! When I first saw Paula! She came to meet





up her Latvian friends in our campus house – so nervous! Talking non – stop, visibly stressed!

**Paula:** Oh, dear! Yes, I remember it as it was yesterday. I had to pass re-entrance exam and it was everything on the plate – sort it out and study or get ready to return home. Funny, that day I never even really noticed Raul. First time he invited me to get some burgers in Schiphol airport was at the end of November. Remember us sitting, eating and playing the game of “where he is coming from or where he will fly to”. So from time to time (in nights, so no one would ever know) we used to drive to have burgers...

**What a story! It was 9 years ago... But where are you located now and what are you doing professionally?**

**Raul:** We’re living in Latvia and traveling the world! I’m in business related to logistics and still at least 3 months a year staying in Holland! Owing several transport companies running around Europe.

**Paula:** Yes, after obtaining a Master’s degree in business development I started my own small company. Now I’m owning and managing 2 successful full range beauty salons in Latvia!

**You both left your home country to study in the Netherlands. But Raul also had to move to Latvia. How does it feel there?**

**Raul:** We have to tell the true story! After studies in Holland I did my professional practice in France, then we moved to Romania

to continue my business in agriculture. After I decided to change my career and started to develop business related to logistics. For many years already I’m working in Holland also!

**Paula:** We’re simply a good team! Family and personal / professional growth have always been important to both of us, so finding compromises has never been difficult.

**Do you feel any “intercultural differences” in your family life? If yes, how do you deal with them?**

**Raul:** We live with them day by day.

**Paula:** I guess there are not really important or big cultural differences between us. Some various aspects have become more pronounced since we have children, like home language, time management between countries and grandparents, etc.

**If you would have to summarize your Dronten experience in one sentence, what would that be?**

**Raul:** The beauty of our life stays in challenges that we’re taking!

**Paula:** Adventure!

**It’s almost New Year. What is your wish for fellow alumni in 2021?**

**Paula:** Enjoy! It is such an interesting ride!

**Raul:** Take as many challenges as you can!



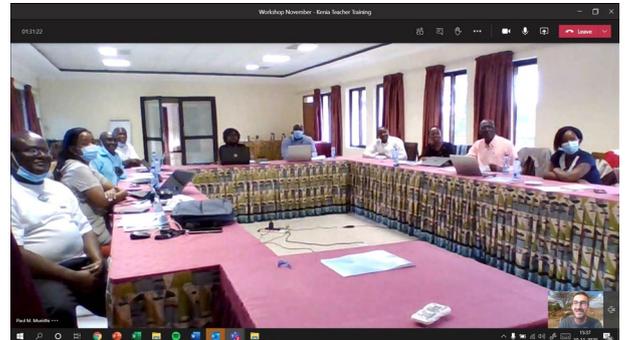


AERES UNIVERSITY

## International Project Activities

Besides providing education to Dutch and international students, Aeres University is involved in international (development) projects. Most of these are projects in which we cooperate with different partner organisations (consortium). These consortia consist of Dutch organisations and organisation or institutes based in foreign countries. In most cases educational institutes at University, Polytechnic or TVET level. In the projects we work together on developing or improving educational programmes or providing knowledge and support on specific agricultural subjects. These international activities play a role in the internationalization of our University. It creates possibilities to develop our international network, increases the international orientation of our own educational programmes and offers possibilities of sharing knowledge with institutes and colleagues internationally.

Currently we are working in countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Benin, Ghana and Indonesia. In most cases countries for which the Dutch government provides development funds. One of the projects we are working on is a project in Kenya in which we support the Kenyan Teacher Training College and Egerton University to develop a teacher training programme. In a normal situation we travel to these countries to work together with colleagues for one or two weeks. Due to Corona international traveling isn't possible and therefore all activities take place online. Which means meeting colleagues online instead of real life. Although all kind of ICT solutions are available it is sometimes a challenge to make good use of these facilities. The colleagues



in Kenya are also working from home and barking dogs, motorcycles, crying babies and poor wi-fi networks are just some disturbances on the line... At the beginning of December we were fortunate to have an online workshop and the colleagues in Kenya were allowed to gather at one place. This picture gives in impression of how it looked like. With face masks of course.

Daan Westrik  
Aeres International Project Coordinator

## SECRETS REVEALED: OUR STAFF MEMBERS

### 7 things you did not know about Lianda Dijkstra-Keijzer



1. I am born (1986) and raised in Dronten. My parents moved to Dronten in 1982 as my dad had a job as a teacher at CAH Dronten since 1981. My dad is the son of a dairy farmer and my mother the daughter of a plumber.



3. When I was 16 years old, I did volunteer work in a small village near Zalău, Romania. The day before I left, I came to the conclusion that I had lost my passport. In order to leave Romania, I spent 4 hours at the police station. After 10 hours, after customs did not let our company of 30 persons cross the border, we offered them cigarettes and a bottle of Coca-Cola, then we were finally allowed to go home.

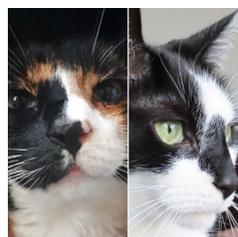


5. I started working with CAH Dronten in 2009. The plan was that I would clear out the International Office mailbox for only 5 weeks, but I never left.

6. My Netflix playlist: Virgin River, Emily in Paris, the Crown, Enola Holmes



2. Italy is my favorite country. I love the food, people, different country sides and the old small villages. An international market is not complete for me without tiramisu 😊 When my husband and I got married, all guests gave pasta as a wedding gift. It took us almost a year to eat it all! We hope to do a tour de Italy one day for 4-6 weeks.



4. I am a cat-lady. I have 2 cats of 11 year old: Messi & Angel.



7. Some colleagues nickname me: Sherlock Holmes



NICE-TO-KNOW

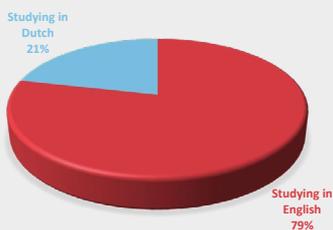
## Study year 2020-2021 in numbers

In 2020-2021 there are students from 31 different nationalities studying at Aeres University of Applied Sciences in Dronnten and Almere

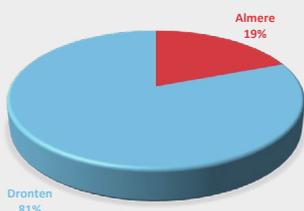


### Dutch and international Academic

177 NON DUTCH STUDENTS

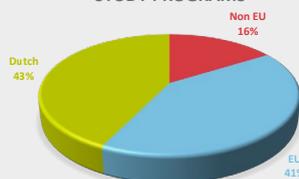


104 DUTCH STUDENTS IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

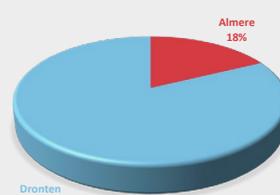


### International study programs

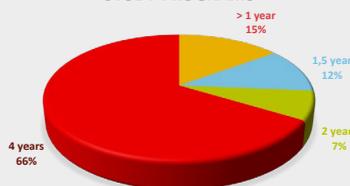
243 STUDENTS IN INTERNATIONAL STUDY PROGRAMS



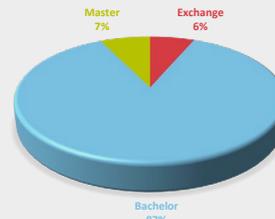
243 STUDENTS IN INTERNATIONAL STUDY PROGRAMS



STUDY DURATION INTERNATIONAL STUDY PROGRAMS



LEVEL OF STUDY PROGRAM



# HAPPY NEW YEAR!



At the sound of the tolling midnight bell  
a brand new year will begin.  
Let's raise our hopes in a confident toast,  
to the promise it ushers in.

May your battles be few, your pleasure many,  
your wishes and dreams fulfilled.  
May your confidence stand in the face of loss  
and give you the strength to rebuild.

May peace of heart fill all your days  
may serenity grace your soul.  
May tranquil moments bless your life  
and keep your spirit whole.

| Author unknown