

Hoi and Namaste!

Unusually, two seasons are concurrently upon us, Spring and Exam Season - why not enjoy both!

Reserve a study space at the university, and relish the fine few sunny days while walking there.

From the board, all the best for your exams, and happy spring!

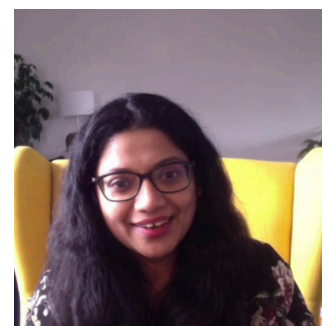
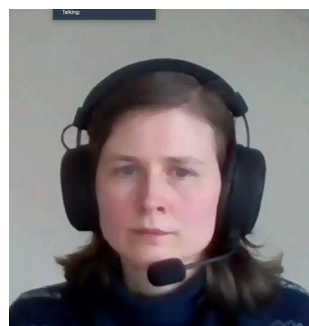
Stay safe and until next time
GISA Board 2021

Retrospective on our event

Women in Acadmia

Earlier this month, we welcomed six proficient academics from different fields for our online event, Women in Academia. We sought to get a better idea about the position of women in academia, and to understand some of the challenges that may lay ahead.

Professor of experimental solid-state physics, **Dr. Petra Rudolf**, kicked off the event by acknowledging the improvements in the role of women in academia that she has observed in her career. Particularly, the University of Groningen is a strong supporter of women's rights. However, the Netherlands has not had a tradition of women in academia. Our second speaker, Assistant Professor of Experimental and Behavioural Economics, **Dr. Noemi Peter**, added that in the Netherlands, women form a higher proportion in the humanities rather than the sciences and economics. She has found that males tend to gravitate toward these fields. Her research finds that in sibling households, brothers are pushed toward STEM, while sisters are pushed toward the humanities. She also commented that this matched her own familial experience, but stopped short of generalizing this research to all cultures and backgrounds. **Dr. Ritumbra Manuvie**, lecturer of law, offered that law has had an inherently androcentric perspective, which makes being a female law academician both a daunting and an exciting proposition. She also pointed out the strange fact that India has stronger and more specific laws for the protection of women than the Netherlands.



Recipe of the Month

Akoori

Ingredients:

- 4 eggs
- 2 large, finely chopped onions
- 1/2 tsp ginger-garlic paste / grind into paste 4-5 cloves of garlic with 1/2 inch of ginger
- 2 tbsp finely chopped coriander
- 1 or 2 finely chopped green chillies (optional)
- 1 finely chopped tomato
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil/ghee
- Toasted and buttered pav bun
- 1 tsp salt to taste

Method:

1. Heat oil, fry onions in paste till golden and soft. Drain excess oil
2. Add coriander, chillies, and tomato. Mix well and cook for 2 minutes. Withdraw the pan from the heat.
3. Beat the eggs until the yolks and white are just blended. Add to onion mixture, add the salt, and mix well.
4. Return the pan to the stove, cooking on a low flame while stirring the mixture till the eggs are soft and scrambled.
5. Eat with the bread while hot!

Post your dish pictures on social media using #cookwithgisa or #parsinewyear to be featured!



Dr. Oksana Kavatsyuk, assistant professor of nuclear and medical physics finds that in her calculus courses, stereotypes about girls in mathematics shadow the mentalities of her students, something that she is working toward solving. In her ongoing project, sponsored by the Comenius Grant, she is researching how to make university STEM programmes more welcoming for females, focusing on inter-student feedback, with her output to be recommended to RUG. Our final panelist, an assistant professor of social psychology, **Dr. Geetha Reddy**, pointed out that despite having equality in numerical representation, women in psychology lack equity in terms of both money and power. The equity gap she points to manifests in awards, priorities in authorship, and importance given to the research conducted by men. Especially, she focuses on utilizing comparatively liberal attitudes in western academia to give marginalized groups the spotlight.

Dr. Manuvie, as an activist, is researching how to involve women in a greater role in citizenship as well, agreeing that positive changes toward the psyche start when one is young. Dr Peter added that the cultural factors that cause women to gravitate towards the humanities, such as competitiveness and familial set-up, are not necessarily deterministic. Confidence is a malleable quality, which can be learnt, spurring competitiveness as well. Dr. Reddy alluded that barriers for women exist everywhere, and prejudicial attitudes in academics being directed toward marginalized peoples as well.

Dr. Reddy emphasized the importance of a transdisciplinary method, pointing out that true change requires epistemologies to be reconsidered to include people of marginal communities. To affect a positive change toward these points, Dr. Rudolf mentioned that without being provocative, people cannot rise out of their lethargy. The lack of role models for women in science can often foster the belief that "You can't be what you can't see".

Dr Peter offered a different perspective on women in science, positing that many women may have existed in science, but were not known for their contributions., being eradicated while men took the spotlight. Pointing out that women are more capable than they think, she mentioned the necessity of an assertive attitude: "Just do it, you are capable of doing it!" The other participants mentioned the importance of a strong-willed, curious, critical, and persistent attitude- one which absorbs and learns from failure. The importance of being conscious of the bias of structures around you is also essential, for both men and women.

Talk with Raahi

An interview with a former RUG student, Bart Swinkels, whose DutchCovidNews helps international students keep track of COVID-19 information in the Netherlands.

Could you describe your initiative?

I provide rapid, accurate, and easily accessible of COVID measures in English, for international students and expatriates. International students can get lost with the rapidly changing sea of information on COVID-19, especially because some of it isn't accessible in English. I've created a Twitter account, Whatsapp groups, and a website where one can stay updated about these constant changes.

How many people have you helped?

I currently have 18-20 groups on Whatsapp: 2 groups with my former college, 3 groups of expats, but the majority consists of other international students. So far, around 4200 people have joined these subgroups on Whatsapp.

Why did people join your WhatsApp groups?

Only 6 months ago, back in September, the coverage of COVID information and measures by the Dutch government was incoherent, and often incomplete. Quite a few of my international friends used to ask me where to find information, with a lot of questions overlapping. I started a [Whatsapp group](#) for my friends to find information on this to better understand what was going on.

What is your motivation? What do you hope to get out of it?

Well, initially, the platform was simply for my friends- but as it gained popularity, the initiative quickly snowballed into something a lot of people rely on. I will admit that it has often been hard to stay committed to this. However, the outpouring of gratitude that I have received from people helps me stay motivated, since it reminds me about the importance of such a resource. Even a thank-you from a single person makes it better.

How do you handle both your studies and this resource?

The hardest bit is answering individual questions, but I do relish the challenge of answering difficult questions - there's no template for them. A student texted to ask me if she could get her boyfriend from Ecuador to the Netherlands, which was a challenge to research. I took time out to help them out, and they truly appreciated it.

What do you see as an end result?

I plan to keep going until summer, when the Dutch vaccination campaign should put an end to COVID-19. If it keeps going till December, though, so will I!



Short Read of the Month

Dear patrons,

It's been a busy month. Our event went off without a hitch, and we're happy that we were able to bring together such a prestigious- and diverse- panel to talk about such an important issue. Hopefully, it'll have a deeper impact than the 'customary Women's Day event', becoming more than just a token. We published a slightly long retrospective here for exactly that reason. If you couldn't attend, do give it a good read! Also, if you think you might need what Bart Swinkels is offering, we suggest you sign up for his [Whatsapp groups](#), [website](#), or [Twitter](#) account here. Thanks Bart!

Stay safe,
Your loyal board.

jokEs

Why did the nurse need a red pen at work?

In case she needed to draw blood.

Your feedback on the newsletter would help us improve its quality immeasurably! You can send us your thoughts [here!](#)