

Jury's report 2013 Cultural Interaction Initiative Competition

Dear students, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor and a pleasure to present to you the jury's report of the *2013 Cultural Interaction Initiative Competition*, sponsored by the Van Bergen Fund.

The objective of the Van Bergen Fund is to support initiatives that encourage cultural interactions among Leiden University students who come from all over the world, including the Netherlands, and who have very diverse cultural backgrounds. This will contribute to a real cosmopolitan and inclusive academic community which celebrates cultural diversity. More particularly the Van Bergen Fund encourages cultural interactions between Dutch students and students from abroad.

In response to the call for *Cultural Interaction Initiatives* 18 very well elaborated plans have been submitted. The jury, which consists of:

Joris van Bergen, founder and chair of the Van Bergen Fund,

Neeltje van Aardenne, advisor on student activities,

Theodore Ballan, former president of the International Student Network Leiden,

Sabina Beijne, head of Student Support Services,

Gert-Jan van Helden, member of the Board of the Faculty of Sciences,

Daan Jacobs, assessor of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Jos Schaecken, Dean of Leiden University College The Hague,

and myself (*Ton van Haaften. I am the Academic Director of Leiden University Centre for Linguistics*),

so, this jury was very impressed by the quality of all the plans submitted. It was happy to find so many interesting ideas, well formulated, inspiring and each of them very different from the other. We would have loved to have a presentation of all submitted plans, but time limits allow us only to have a pitch by the submitters of the winning plans.

This brings us to the hard duty we have had as a jury: the selection of the winning plans. Fortunately the Van Bergen Fund allowed us to choose three winners instead of one. The jury has assessed the initiatives on the basis of the following four criteria:

- (i) First, The originality of the proposal,
- (ii) Second, the contribution the proposal makes to the realization of the objectives of the Van Bergen Fund.
- (iii) Third, the feasibility of the proposal,

- (iv) And fourth, expectation that the proposed activity can be continued after the try-out period.

All winners will be asked to elaborate their plan further and meet with members of The Van Bergen Fund to discuss its details in the weeks to come. The Van Bergen Fund will then decide on the exact amount of money that will be needed to realize the plans.

I will now announce the winning plans in a random order, since there is no ranking between the plans:

1. Janneke Klop & Christiaan Veldman/Contrast Leiden: ***Be Present***

Contrast Leiden unites international and Dutch students by doing voluntary work together. The jury really likes the idea of bringing groups together by engaging them in this type of activities. *Contrast Leiden* uses the existing structure of the Present foundation's voluntary projects which has proven to be successful in the past. The jury would like to learn more about the kind of projects students will participate in. We are looking forward to discussing these practical details with Janneke and Christiaan.

2. Silke Mooldijk and Lieke Schreel/**The Dutch Language Committee of Leiden University College The Hague**

The Dutch Language Committee facilitates something that is much sought after by international students: learning basic Dutch in an affordable way. The jury is impressed by the successful pilot that the committee ran last year and is looking forward to new language activities. We would like to see the teaching program continued and hope the format can be developed further in such a way that it can be implemented in other university locations as well and for larger groups of students. The jury would like to recommend that the Dutch Language Committee start a dialogue with the Academic Language Centre. The jury also looks forward to discuss with the committee how to turn the concept into a lasting, self-supporting language program.

3. Rosita Uzunska-Dimitrova: **Creative Writing Class**

Rosita uses the medium of creative writing to encourage students to talk about their cultural background. Reading each other's work and comparing it, can shed a new light on cultural differences and similarities. The jury thinks it is a sympathetic idea that can easily be realized without great expenses. We have some recommendations for Rosita on the practical organizing of the workshops. We would like to discuss with her the strategies for recruiting both organizers and participants in the event. We're looking forward to her more detailed proposal on this point!

So these are the winners: Congratulations!