

# Final report 2021/2022

## Introduction

The following report summarises all the main initiatives at Rethinking Economics NL in the year 2021/2022. Its aim is to provide a comprehensive overview of the activities and to acknowledge those who contributed to them. Our goal this year was to revive the social aspect of our network while keeping the intellectual aspect up to par. Even though the lockdown at the beginning of the academic year made it difficult to get together, we nevertheless made the best out of the unfortunate situation. This document serves as a reminder to the things we can achieve with our network and how our message resonates with other organisations. Thanks to the collective hard work of many members for contributing to our mission of making the education of economics more interdisciplinary, real-world based and pluralist.

*~Chair of RE:NL 2021-2022, Tim Mulder*

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# National initiatives

## 1. REthinktank event

*Goal: to bring rethinkers together in person after a long time of online meetings during the pandemic, and to foster inspiration, conversation and collaboration.*

On the 7th of November in Bilthoven RE:NL hosted its first REthinktank. The goal of the REthinktank was to bring rethinkers together in person and to foster inspiration, conversation and collaboration. The event hosted three speakers who are actively contributing to changing economics education according to RE values. The first speaker was Joris Tieleman, who together with Sam de Muijnck wrote the book 'Economy Studies: A Guide to Rethinking Economics Education'. Our second speakers were Julika Frone and Prithviraj Basu Malik who spoke about rethinking economics at the level of high school education. Beforehand, in between and after there were breaks with drinks, homemade brownies and soup, accompanied by inspiring conversations.

The event was attended by over 30 rethinkers from different locations, including people that had not yet been introduced to our organisation. As a result of the event there were at least two project ideas that were being continued afterwards. One of which inspired the topic of the next REthinktank which will be hosted in October 2022 at Utrecht University. The feedback from the participants of the REthinktank was very good. It is motivating and inspiring to come together and to be able to discuss RE topics in person. The REthinktank combined the social and academic aspects of RE:NL.

Project leader: RE:NL Board (Tim, Katharina, Ilse)

Main contributors: Joris Tieleman, Julika Frone, Prithviraj Basu Malik

## 2. Continuation of Conversations with the deans interview series

*Goal: continue to establish constructive relationships with deans of economic faculties throughout the Netherlands by having a conversation about their curriculum.*

After conducting interviews with Arjen van Witteloostuijn (dean of VU) and Erik Stam (dean of UU) last year, we continued the Conversations with the Deans series this year by talking with Wilko Letterie (vice-dean of Maastricht University) and Roel Beetsma (dean of UvA). The goal of this series is to have an open conversation with the deans to build a positive lasting relationship with the universities, critically assess state of current and future plans for economics education, reflect on how the education has been transformed since the Thinking Like an Economist report, provide ideas on how education can be transformed and discuss issues of societal relevance to support our arguments to transform economic education. After conducting these interviews we published three of the four interviews. Especially the conversation with Erik Stam got considerable coverage on YouTube, because he reposted it on LinkedIn. The interview with Roel Beetsma still needs to be published. Moreover, the

deans of Radboud and Erasmus still need to be interviewed. Overall, the interviews show the willingness of deans to listen to our concerns. This makes it an important channel to spread our message.

Project leader: Tim Mulder

Main contributors: Jan Frohn (Maastricht), Moritz Odersky (Maastricht), Hannah Scheibe (Maastricht), Yusufhan Balci (Rotterdam), Hanneke (Nijmegen), Evan van Soerland (Amsterdam) Ilse Meijer (National board), Katharina Buchsbaum (National board)

### **3. KVS discussion**

*Goal: Create awareness for economic pluralism within academic circles and faculty members.*

We got invited to the KVS Economenvereniging at the University of Amsterdam. Various representatives engaged in a panel discussion, presenting their view on the diversification of the current economics curriculum at the University of Amsterdam. Our goal was to represent Rethinking Economics as a student initiative, asking questions and to observe the different stands the panellists represented. Hereby, we got in touch with the new Dean of the Economics faculty at the University of Amsterdam.

Project leader: Katharina Buchsbaum (National board), Aleksandra Twadowska (Ex-Board member)

### **4. Partnership with de Jonge Klimaatbeweging (JKB)**

*Goal: establish collaborations and partnerships with like-minded organisations.*

We had several meetings with JKB, an organisation of students that strive to include the voice of the future generation in the debate about climate change by doing projects with students, politicians and the business community. We agreed to underwrite their cause and think with them about their upcoming Jonge Klimaat Agenda 3.0. In turn, they agreed to promote our organisation within their network and they expressed their willingness to contribute to upcoming events.

Main contributors: Ilse Meijer (National board), Tim Mulder (National board)

## 5. SHAER equal trade certification REthinktank project

*Goal: Research project about a new type of cacao trade certification to establish fairer trade terms for cacao farmers in Africa.*

In this project research has been performed about a new type of trade certification, which has its main goal to establish more equal trade with regard to the cacao industry in Africa. The SHAER equal trade certification would make cacao farmers stakeholders of the product they sell. This would mean that they will share in the profits which are made along the cacao value chain. They would become a percentage stakeholder and according to their stakeholder status they would be compensated accordingly. The research project dealt with examples of companies which already utilize this concept, explained the concept in further detail, and we performed a small case study where we analyzed one of the largest sellers of cacao end products; Tony Chocolonely.

The project is a good example of an expression of dissatisfaction with the current system and the need to revolutionize the current outdated concept to achieve a just world where inequality is pushed back.

Project leader: Jeroen Buis

Main contributors: Pritviraj Basu Mallik, Miguel Andrade

## 6. Rethinking Podcast

*Goal: Make plural and diverse ideas in economics available and accessible to economic students and economists that they would otherwise not hear or learn about.* The Rethinking Podcast was set up in August 2020 to bring plural ideas to economic students and economists who want to learn about everything that is (not) taught in university. Next to that, I wanted to set up the infrastructure for other Rethinkers so that possible series could be set up by them. The podcast is now available on more than eight platforms, in both video (YouTube) and audio (such as iTunes and Spotify) format. Next to that, the podcast has a committed listenership, with many listening to a new episode within 48 hours of it coming online.

Project leader: Julika Frome (Head of Social Media and Podcast)

## 7. Christmas book exchange

*Goal: Community building within Rethinking Economics NL*

Around the Christmas holidays, we organized a national book exchange for members of RE:NL. Here, each member was able to send their book to another randomized book exchange partner. Overall, it presented itself to be a positive experience and managed to establish connections across the different cities of the Netherlands. Rethinking Economics is placed in.

Project leader: Katharina Buchsbaum (National board)

## 8. Academic interview series

*Goal: Highlight teacher's stance on economics of the future, RE, the role of economics education in the discipline of economics, and reflect on the role of economics in society.*

Throughout last year Ilse conducted several interviews with academics and teachers at Radboud University. These interviews were turned into blog form and posted on the website of RE:NL. The purpose of the interviews were to highlight teacher's ideas on economics of the future, their stance with regards to Rethinking Economics, the role of economics education within the discipline of economics, and for them to reflect on the role of economics in society.

Constantina Markou has supported the editing process of the posts. The remaining interviews are still to be posted.

This project has contributed to the expansion of our academic community. And hopefully it will inspire rethinkers to have these conversations, either in interview form or a talk during the break of a lecture, with their economics teachers.

Project leader: Ilse Meijer (Nijmegen, National board)

Main contributor: Constantina Markou (Nijmegen)

## 9. Merch committee

*Goal: Create Merchandise line*

We designed and planned a Merchandise line for Rethinking Economics NL, containing Sweaters, T-Shirts and mugs with a graphic print. The print contains our Logo and represents all groups of Rethinking Economics within the Netherlands.

Project leader: Katharina Buchsbaum (National board)

Main contributors: Jan Frohn (Chair Maastricht), Alexia Richard (Board member Rotterdam)

## 10. Interview with De Nieuwe Wereld

*Goal: Increase coverage of RE mission on social media*

Together with Sam de Muijnck, chief economist of Our New Economy (ONE) and Martijn van der Linden, lector New Finance, Rethinking Economics was invited for an interview with De Nieuwe Wereld about Economic mismanagement starting in the education of Economics. De Nieuwe Wereld is a platform that brings people from different disciplines together to reflect on major changes due to a combination of rapid technological developments and globalisation. It is an initiative of philosopher Ad Verbrugge in collaboration with anchors Jelle van Baardewijk, Marlies Dekkers, Marthe van Rijn and Thomas Bollen. This interview was conducted by Thomas Bollen and, at the time of writing this report, got 4903 views.

Main contributors: Tim Mulder (National board)

## 11. Local board meetings

*Goal:* create organisational awareness and foster collaboration and provide updates per group and discuss open questions

Last year we held several local board meetings. Two of these were online, one of them was in person. The purpose of these meetings was to create organizational awareness and to inspire our local boards to establish collaborations in projects. The local board meetings were also a space where we could discuss questions and challenges each was dealing with, where we could brainstorm over possible solutions, and where everyone could share experiences on best and worst practices. Although it was harder for everyone to get together in person, we noticed that during these meetings our goal was reached the most.

Project leader: Tim Mulder (National board)

Main contributors: Ilse Meijer (National board), Katharina Buchsbaum (National board), Jan Frohn (Maastricht), Moritz Odersky (Maastricht), Hannah Scheibe (Maastricht), Henning Seland (Maastricht), Yusufhan Balci (Rotterdam), Alexia Ricart (Rotterdam), Yanting (Rotterdam), Hanneke Kuipers (Nijmegen), Constantina Markou (Nijmegen), Willem Derks (Nijmegen)

## 12. Social gatherings

*Goal:* Revive the social aspect of our network

On may 13th several Rethinkers from several cities came together for drinks at Belgisch Biercafe Olivier in Utrecht. In light of our aim to revive the social aspect of our network while keeping the intellectual aspect up to par, beer was drunk and topics were discussed. Noteworthy was the discussion about the current monetary state of the world and the Keynes versus Hayek debate. This activity showed that getting together in-person strengthens the social fabric of our network. Unfortunately, a social gathering like this only happened in May. The only way is up!

Project leader: Tim Mulder (National board)

Main contributors: Yusufhan Balci (Rotterdam), Jan Frohn (Maastricht), Jeroen Buis (Nijmegen)

# Local groups

## RE:Rotterdam

### 1. Erwin Dekker lecture on the Austrian School

*Goal: Showcase the main tenets of the Austrian school of economics to students and open the debate around heterodox economics. Organised a lecture with world renowned scholar Erwin Dekker about the Austrian school, followed with a interactive social session*

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Main contributors: Yusufhan Balci, Yanting Wang, Alexia Ricart (All Rotterdam)

### 2. Stanislav Shmelev Lecture on sustainability

*Goal: Open up student discourse about sustainability*

*Hosted a lecture with ecological economist Stanislav Shmelev*

Main contributors: Yusufhan Balci, Yanting Wang, Alexia Ricart (All Rotterdam)

### 3. Bookclubs/Discussions nights

*Goal: Discuss the ideas of curriculum change and economic pluralism in a social setting*

*Hosted various book clubs and discussion nights about a wide array of topics. We discussed books like Sapiens and Economy Studies.*

Main contributors: Yusufhan Balci, Yanting Wang, Alexia Ricart (All Rotterdam)

### 4. Collaboration with Erasmus sustainability Hub

*Goal: Collaborate with other student initiatives on the field of sustainability*

*Hosted a lecture during the Erasmus Sustainability Days, with guest speaker Lain Todd about Economics & Sustainable Transition.*

Main contributors: Yusufhan Balci, Yanting Wang, Alexia Ricart, Anna Stepanyuk (All Rotterdam)



## **5. Essay Competition**

*Goal: Encourage to students to think about societal challenges and further expand our network*

*Organised an essay competition for students to write about Post-Pandemic challenges. The winners were encouraged to take active part in the local group.*

Main contributors: Yusufhan Balci (Rotterdam), Yanting Wang, Alexia Ricart

## **6. Developmental Economics lecture**

*Goal: Build bridges between our academic and student networks*

*Hosted a lecture with guest speaker Irene van Staveren, who is a senior member of the Rethinking Economics Netherlands academic network to present about heterodox and developmental economics. The lecture was followed by an interactive session.*

Main contributors: Yusufhan Balci (Rotterdam), Yanting Wang, Alexia Ricart

## **7. Rethinking Economics Rotterdam Picnic**

*Goal: Organised a networking event for our network*

*Organised a picnic for like minded students meet each other and network. This lead to an increase in attendance of other events afterwards.*

Main contributors: Yusufhan Balci (Rotterdam), Yanting Wang, Alexia Ricart, Melih Yesilel, Anna Stepanyuk

# **RE:Nijmegen**

## **1. Social Activities**

*Goal: Introduce the organisation to new, possible members*

*By holding several activities at the bar at uni and in the city centre, we could inform other students about Rethinking Economics. Since we were in a more informal setting, people felt more comfortable to show up for the formal activities afterwards since they knew who were involved.*

Main contributors: Hanneke Kuipers, Willem Derks, Constantina Markou and Femke Schootstra

## **2. Radboud Impact Festival Lecture with the Green Office**

*Goal: Introduce Rethinking Economics to the Green Office at Radboud*

*This year, we organised a lecture about Climate-Resilient Economics given by Dr. Juliette Alenda-Demoutiz at an event held by the Green Office at Radboud called the Radboud Impact Festival. Because of this setting, we were able to gain more members who were intrigued by environmental economics but they were also intrigued to learn more about other forms of pluralistic economics. Moreover, now Rethinking Economics Nijmegen is also known at the Green Office, which is a first step in making the local group become affiliated with the Radboud University.*

Main contributors: Willem Derks and Constantina Markou

## **3. Bookclub**

*Goal: Discuss the ideas of curriculum change and economic pluralism in a social setting*

*We have discussed multiple books about heterodox economics in a group setting at university. Compared to last year, we asked members which book they would like to discuss with the group. The person that presented also prepared a short presentation to bring up some possible discussion points. At the end of the year, we decided to make it a social activity as we noticed that social activities make the threshold lower to join the activities and Rethinking Economics. People are not only looking to learn more, but also to meet like-minded people and discuss with them.*

Main contributors: Hanneke Kuipers and Femke Schootstra

# **RE:Maastricht (PINE)**

## **1. Event Series on Housing Crisis**

*Goal: To shed light on an issue that many students are directly affected by in their daily lives and connect this with the need to rethink the economics of housing*

*The first part of this event series was an online guest lecture by Josh Ryan-Collins (UCL). By arguing that mainstream economics' misunderstanding of credit and land contributes to this crisis, Josh perfectly combined the housing topic with the goals of RE.*

*The second part of this event series was a workshop given by SOS Maastricht, a student-founded organisation seeking to help students to find a place to stay. This added local, Maastricht-specific facts to the discussion, following the motto "know your own economy".*

Main contributors: Hannah Scheibe, Moritz Odersky, Henning Seland, Jan Frohn (all Maastricht)

## **2. PINE x Sustainability Week 2022**

*Goal: To establish the need to rethink economics in the sustainability discourse and forge alliances with the sustainability community*

*PINE had the chance to organise an event as part of the university-wide Sustainability Week, which is hosted annually by the Green Office. We organised an online guest lecture about post-capitalism & degrowth given by Anitra Nelson. By thus presenting more radical ideas that depart from the ecomodernist sustainability discourse, we managed to insert more pluralism into the Sustainability Week. Moreover, we reached a wider audience of students who usually don't go to RE events.*

*From the one-time collaboration arose a long-term affiliation with the Green Office. For example, PINE is now among the many student organisations who can use the resources of the Sustainability Hub.*

Main contributors: Sofia Bellavita, Hannah Scheibe, Moritz Odersky, Henning Seland, Jan Frohn (all Maastricht)

## **3. Marx Reading Circle**

*Goal: To educate ourselves about key thinkers in the heterodox tradition and recruit Marx fans and critics alike*

*We organised a reading circle on Marx's magnum opus: Capital. Whereas the first few meetings had a very high turnout, not least because of the myth surrounding this historic thinker, the number of active readers decreased the higher the level of abstraction. Nevertheless the reading was very educational for us.*

Main contributors: Jan Frohn, Hannah Scheibe, Moritz Odersky, Henning Seland (all Maastricht)

#### **4. Guest Lecture on Digital Capitalism**

*Goal: To finish off the academic year with a final guest lecture and attract students interested in digitalisation & tech*

*Last but not least we organised an online guest lecture with Jan Zygmuntowski. Jan's diverse research interests include labour economics, technology and data governance. His interdisciplinarity as well as his criticism of neoclassical ideas made him fit the goals of RE.*

Main contributors: Pola Melonowska, Nela Partyga, Henning Seland (all Maastricht)