

A photograph of two young women with long dark hair, one with straight hair and one with curly hair, both smiling and looking at a tablet computer held by the woman with curly hair. They are outdoors, with a white lattice fence and greenery in the background. A large green circular graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Impact at the Core

Yearbook

2022 - 2023

Erasmus University Rotterdam
Making Minds Matter

The Erasmus University logo, featuring the word "Erasmus" in a white, elegant, cursive script font.

Colophon

Yearbook 2022-2023
Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR)

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Impact at the Core

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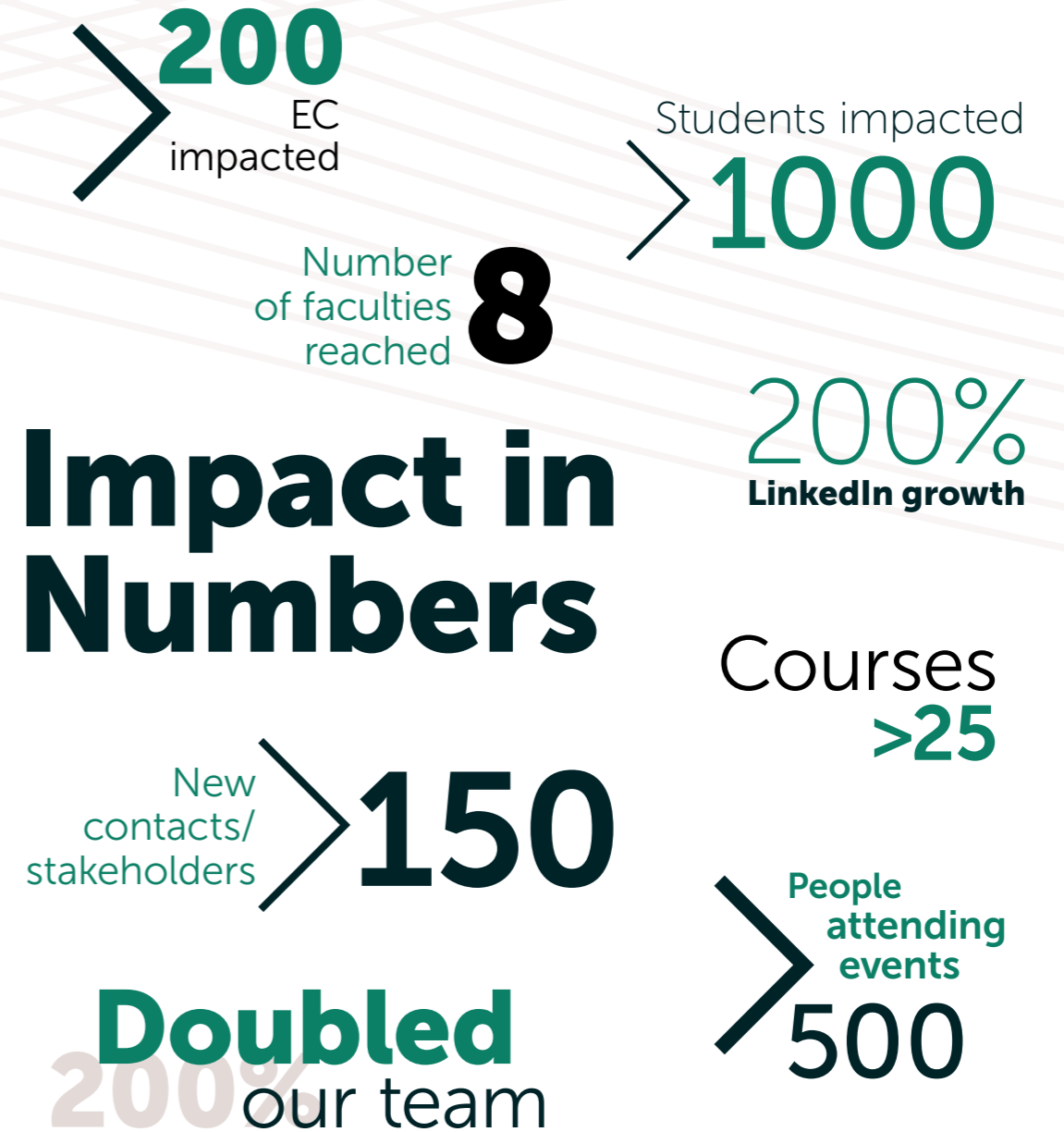
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Editorial

A lot has happened in the years 2022-2023. After spending years laying the groundwork our hard work came into fruition. This yearbook is a testament to a relentless pursuit of impact-driven education at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

With these pages you'll discover stories of changemakers and visionaries whose collective efforts have made a significant difference in the world of impact-driven education. As Impact at the Core we look back with pride at the steps we have taken as an educational community. Together we inspire change, challenge the status quo, and forge a path towards a future in which every educational programme at Erasmus University Rotterdam has an element of impact-driven education.



Impact at the Core

Where We Stand and Where We Are Headed



By Arwin van Buuren
and Bienenke Verheijke

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”. This quote ascribed to Nelson Mandela puts quite rightly much emphasis on the transformative capacity education can have. A university striving to maximize its societal impact has to invest in the quality of its education.

At EUR, we believe that the societal impact of our education is – in any case – tremendous. We are proud to have numerous alumni that contribute to a better, more sustainable, prosperous, and just world from a variety of positions and perspectives. With all faculties of EUR our focus is to bring society into the classroom. Students work on challenges concerning inclusive prosperity; energy transition; access to healthcare.

Impact-Driven Education

In our education, we teach our students to understand and contribute to the understanding of intrinsic complexity of these challenges. We believe that we can prepare our students much better for their future roles in society. For that we have to make students aware of the multiple perspectives on such issues, the value of their own knowledge in relation to such an issue and the role their own values and perspectives play when they become involved in such an issue. Students need to develop competencies to deal with uncertainty

and ambiguity, to collaborate across boundaries of their specific discipline or personal beliefs, integrate different values and apply their knowledge. We support students’ personal and professional development and stimulate their capacity to reflect upon their own role, values and motivations and to deliberately adjust what they do.

Impact at the Core

This is the core ambition of EUR. With the help of our program Impact at the Core we aim to enhance the impact capacity of our students, by confronting them with authentic societal challenges and teaching them the relevant competencies to deal with these challenges. The program of Impact at the Core is an important building block of the impact strategy of the EUR and helps – since 2020 – many bachelor and master programs to implement impact-driven education. With this education we not only prepare our students better on their future role in society, we also enable them to have an impact during their studies.

Where We Stand

Impact-driven education can get many different faces. We see beautiful examples of (thematic) impact-driven minors. Many programs offer their students an (either voluntarily or compulsory) internship. They do have courses in which students are challenged to work on a case from an external stakeholder, engage with stakeholders and present their work to a wider audience. Some programs invest a lot in bachelor or master theses which do have more than academic value, and do have meaning and relevance for societal actors.

A big achievement in 2023 was the fact that the very idea of impact-driven education was adopted in the Educational Vision of EUR. That means that all schools have committed themselves to implement it into their programs.

Moving Forward

It is our ambition to continue to build meaningful impact routes throughout our Bachelor programs with our highly motivated teachers and course coordinators. We will continue to help design inspiring impact tracks within our Master portfolio.

Bachelor Programs

An impact route throughout a bachelor can consist of a course in the first two years of the bachelor in which students get acquainted to the principles of impact-driven education, an impact-oriented minor, attention for competence development throughout the program and an impact-oriented capstone project.

Master Programs

In a similar vein, impact tracks on master level can be built of a module in which students work on an authentic issue, parallel to their courses, competence development (eventually combined with an internship), attention for impact-oriented research methods and room for an impact-driven capstone project.

Constraints

Of course, the conditions under which we organize this fundamental change in our education increasingly become more challenging. Impact-driven education necessitates building and maintaining vital stakeholder networks. It asks for other forms of interplay between teachers, students and stakeholders and presupposes teachers are able to take a more coaching and mentoring role. All these elements need attention and resources. Given the challenging financial conditions, we work with faculties to find ways to upscale impact-driven education in a cost-efficient way.

At the same time, we encounter a lot of energy and enthusiasm to continue this path. That motivates us to move forward and to set the next steps together with keen and curious staff members, passionate students and stakeholders who want to be inspired and enlightened. As we move forward together, let us stride boldly into the future, guided by the belief that education is indeed the most powerful weapon to change the world. Impact at the Core will persist in contributing to impact-driven education at EUR, inspiring hope and shaping a brighter, more inclusive tomorrow.



Story So Far

August
2020

After drafting our project plan with a cross-faculty working group, our plan has been officially approved.

February
2021

To get teachers acquainted with (the principles of) impact-driven education, we developed a Microlab together with Risbo.

December
2020

To promote cross-faculty learning, we started with building a Community of Practice.

December
2021

(Almost) halfway our project, we had a midterm evaluation in which we reflected with the EUR community and external partners on what we have learned so far.

August
2022

We developed the Impact Space Minor, combining all the lessons of the different projects we undertook with the faculties.

October
2022

To showcase, inspire and connect across EUR on impact-driven education, we organized the first Impact Education Week.

November
2022

Building on the principles of impact-driven education, we developed the Learning Landscape.

December
2022

Impact-driven education is at the core of the education vision 2030.

March
2023

We launched Riipen, a central and private EUR marketplace and experiential learning platform. It operates as a collaborative marketplace, connecting teachers with external partners to collaborate on projects directly relevant to your courses.

April
2023

Publication of the Position Paper for impact-driven education at EUR that summarises the collective understanding of impact-driven education at EUR.

December
2023

The Erasmus Hub! Rotterdam officially opened! The Hub! is a pop-up location that enables experimentation with active learning spaces.

Impact-Driven Education at EUR: Training Students for Today's Challenges



In a world that is changing constantly, we must question whether the current educational programs prepare students for their professional careers. As Erasmus University Rotterdam, we want our students to be able to deal with complex societal issues and to make a positive contribution to them.

Therefore, the education program Impact at the Core is working on implementing impact-driven education. Recently, this program presented its position paper "Impact-driven education at EUR". This describes how we as EUR can teach our students to deal with those complex societal issues. In other words, how can we increase the impact capacity of our students? But why is this so important for EUR? And what does this mean for our teachers? Rector Magnificus Annelien Bredenoord and Arwin van Buuren, Academic Lead of Impact at the Core, engaged in conversation.

Education with Impact

In fact, impact-driven education is inseparable from EUR's profile. Founded in 1913 from a need for qualified employees for the port, EUR has always sought to connect the university and the city. This connection is also emphasized in our strategy, Bredenoord explains: 'We would like to make a positive contribution to the city, the region and the world. We want our students, when they enter the job

market, to be prepared for the social issues they will face there.' That's why impact-driven education is so valuable, Van Buuren said: 'We confront students with the complexity of those issues as they play out in the real world. We force them to think about questions like: what can I do with what I learn here? How can I contribute to this issue? With this style of teaching, we hope to make students reflect on the role they can play. Personally, I think that this experience is very important.'

Bredenoord agrees: 'We get students out of their academic bubble by having them work with partners from the field. This allows them to experience the different sides of an issue firsthand. It's not just about knowledge transfer, but also about really seeing through and feeling the complexity of the issue. I think this is an important element of impact-driven education.' This highlights an important difference from traditional forms of education, for example, impact-driven education pays a lot of attention to the reflexive component, Van Buuren says. 'A social issue is never neutral. And how people relate to it is never neutral either. It's about values and interests.' 'Actually, this also confronts students with their own normative views

and emotions, and perhaps also with their prejudices,' Bredenoord adds, 'and if all goes well, they will reflect on this.'

On April 20, 2023, the Executive Board decided that the definition document "Impact-driven education at EUR" will be used as the didactic framework for the elaboration of impact-driven education in EUR's new educational vision. The university wants to pursue a certain uniformity with this, Bredenoord said. 'It's a common frame of reference: this is the way we as a university look at impact-driven education. This is how we nurture the impact capacity of our students and help them in their development as future change agents. This also means that faculty can use it as guidance for incorporating this type of education into their curricula. At the same time, with this document we wanted to give faculties the space to fill in this type of education to fit their own profile.'

The Role of the Teacher

'We hope as EUR that in this way we can help society by incorporating its concerns a place in our education. But this also requires a change in the role of our lecturers,' said Van Buuren. 'The lecturer is no longer just the one who transmits the knowledge, but rather the person who guides the student's learning process. Also, the lecturer brings in the societal partners, so that also means a networking role. It is very important that we support our teachers in this.' Bredenoord agrees: 'We should not over-ask them, and not every teacher needs to master all aspects of impact-driven education.'

'On the one hand, the teacher is given a more modest role,' Van Buuren explains, 'because this education moves away from the idea that the teacher is there purely for transferring knowledge. As a teacher, you

become part of the students' learning process. It is a crucial role, because the learning process students go through is quite challenging. There are uncertainties that do not occur in classical education. There is an element of surprise in which you as a teacher cannot predict the outcome either. This is because of the role the societal partner is given in education and because of the unstructured nature of the issues you bring in. If you give a student an issue from such a partner, you don't know what the outcome might be. In some cases, you don't even fully understand the problem. This puts the student's personal learning process at the center. And I actually expect that this will make teaching a lot more fun. Also, for the teachers because you are surprised yourself.'

"On the one hand, the teacher is given a more modest role."

The Next Step

In recent years, we at EUR have seen many fine examples of impact-driven education emerge. 'Such as the Master Economics of Sustainability,' says Bredenoord. 'I think this is a great example of a program in which students spend the year working on an issue that has been put forward by a societal partner. And in September the new Master Societal Transitions begins.' Van Buuren adds: 'You see impact-driven education reflected in many different ways. You see students doing great things in the neighborhoods. You see students

writing theses that actually play a role in policy processes or organizational choices. We have our honors programs and minors, like the Impact Space, for example. And of course, we also have the Convergence. It's pretty clear that all the education within the Convergence is impact-driven education by definition.'

'We are also still learning,' Bredenoord acknowledges. 'We have to be humble and honest about that, too. We have good examples of impact-driven education, but we are also learning continuously, evolving and developing. Moreover, the world is changing rapidly as well as the technological context in our education, think generative AI such as ChatGPT, so we will have to keep evolving. We now have the definition paper as a kind of foundation for the educational vision and the faculties are going to work with that. How are we going to shape that impact-driven education in all courses? Scaling up, that is now the next step.' 'Know that you are not alone,' states Van Buuren. 'Above all, be inspired by the definition document and the many examples that are already there. And know that there are parties at EUR, such as Impact at the Core, who can support you in designing impact-driven education'. Bredenoord concurs: 'We are going to make the step together to incorporate more impact-driven education. That is why we invest in the necessary facilities and assist programs that want to make this move. We ultimately want all of our students to at least become acquainted with this form of education and, if desired, to be able to gain further skills and depth in it.'

How are we defining impact-driven education?

With our education at Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), we want to prepare our students for a world characterized by uncertainties, ambiguities and controversies. Our future academic professionals will be confronted with intricate challenges related to erratic and unpredictable changes. Students should be given the opportunity to learn how to approach them and how to contribute to a more sustainable and just world, increasing inclusiveness and reducing inequalities. We will do so through impact-driven education.

You can read the definition document "Impact-driven Education At Erasmus University Rotterdam" here:



Shaping the Future of Education with a Vision

During September 2022 – May 2023, Erasmus University Rotterdam has updated its education vision. I have supported this process as a facilitator, and I will happily share more about this process with you.

Linda de Vreede, Project lead and policy officer
Impact at the Core

Each university has a distinct point of view on how to best educate their students. That distinct point of view of a university is laid down in an educational vision. The old educational vision of Erasmus University Rotterdam dated back to 2017 and was amended in the strategy of Erasmus University in 2019. Based upon Strategy24 and the midterm evaluation on the educational strategy in 2021, it was time to update our educational vision and to provide a preview of what we want the education at EUR to be in 2030.

During September – November 2022, we have organized three EUR-wide dialogues supporting the formulation of the new education vision. Following our midterm evaluation, we started with the question what the Erasmian Values actually mean for our education. The Erasmian Values are core to our strategy, but they have never been translated into concrete outcomes for our students, teachers and learning environment. That is why we asked the participants of our Erasmian Values dialogues to draft value circles, defining what the Erasmian values mean to them. This was a very interesting process to facilitate, considering values are very personal and it was unclear from the start how our academic community would concretize the Erasmian Values. The most striking thing is, that all attendees shared similar reflections on what behaviors reflect our values.

After the Erasmian Values dialogue, we moved onto the Impact-driven Education Dialogue. The midterm evaluation recognized that impact-driven education is at the core of our education and in this dialogue, we addressed what defines impact-driven education and what its essential elements are. Following the outcomes of this dialogue, impact-driven education provides an essential learning environment in which students learn to give meaning to- and apply the Erasmian Values. Following the input of the participants we could also conclude that there is a widely supported understanding of the main identifiers of impact driven education as identified by Impact at the Core.

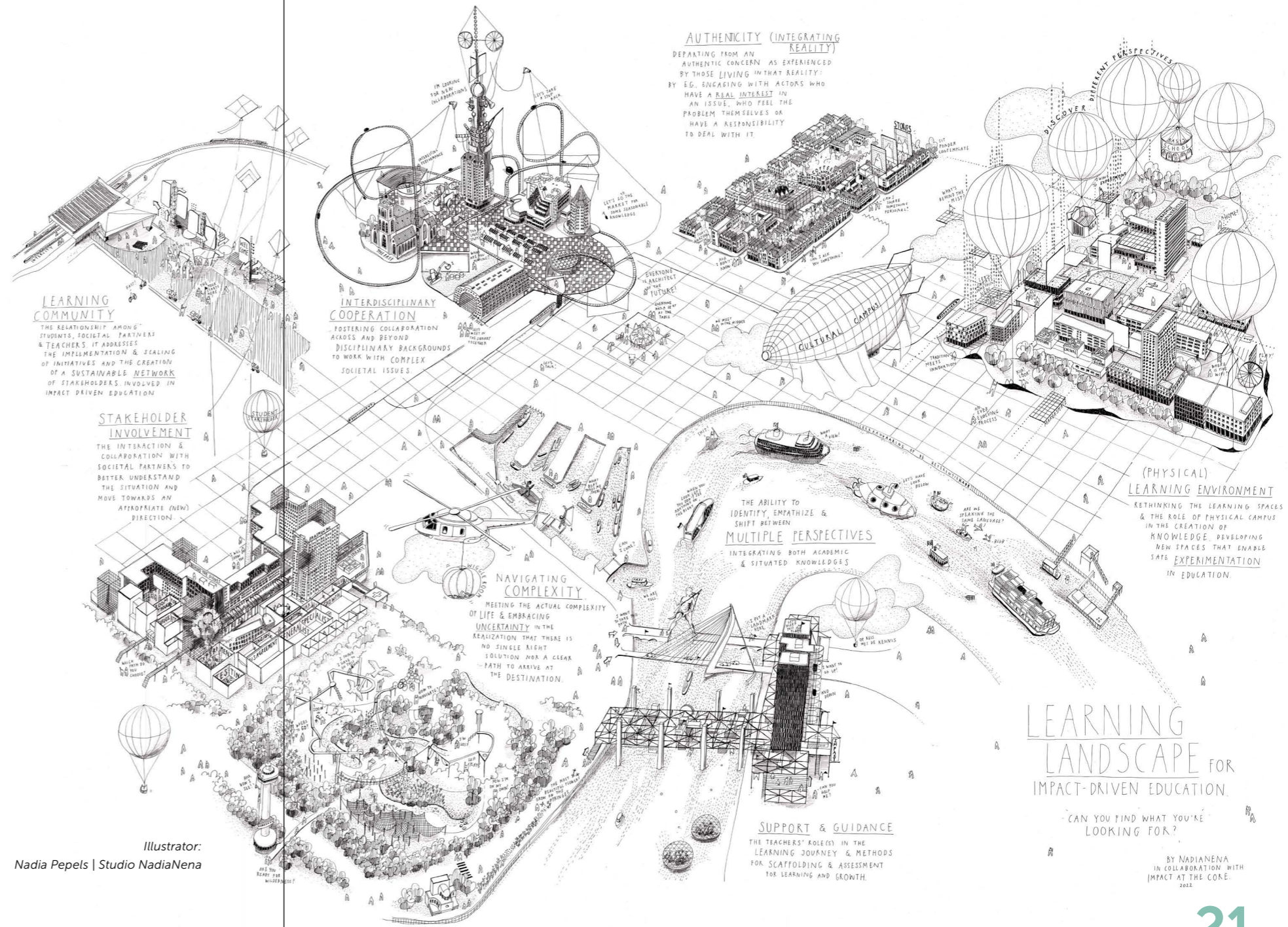


After the dialogues on the Erasmian Values and Impact-driven education, we ended with a dialogue on the Erasmian Classroom. In this dialogue we focused on what is essential in the way we teach and learn at EUR. We focused specifically on defining a safe and productive learning environment for teachers & students, with a clear focus on (student) wellbeing; what teachers, mentors, tutors, students & partners contribute to the 'Erasmian Classroom'; and how on campus and online campus activities contribute to the 'Erasmian Classroom'.

The input from these three dialogues have been translated into a new vision text by the Vice Deans of Education. Personally, I found this a very interesting co-creative process to support and to learn from and I feel proud to have been able to contribute to such an important milestone for the university.

The Learning Landscape for Impact-Driven Education

With the development of impact-driven education we challenge the current educational and organisational system we work in. While trying to blur boundaries, build bridges and blend disciplines, we find ourselves operating in a liminal space that is characterized by question marks. How should we navigate these new unknowns, and which landmarks can we use to recognise and understand this emerging (educational) environment? With our learning landscape, we pose the question: what if we could use Rotterdam as a metaphor to visualise and make sense of this educational environment?



Illustrator:
Nadia Pepels | Studio NadiaNena

By creating a rich and varied learning landscape for impact-driven education, Impact at the Core supports students as well as teachers to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies they need to succeed in their chosen field. The concept of a learning landscape emphasizes the importance of creating an environment that supports and facilitates learning. This includes providing learners with access to diverse and high-quality learning resources, as well as opportunities for collaboration and interaction with others. A learning landscape refers to the set of learning resources and experiences that are available to a learner in a particular context. That's why we have decided to visualise our learning landscape using the playground of students and educators at Erasmus University: the city of Rotterdam.

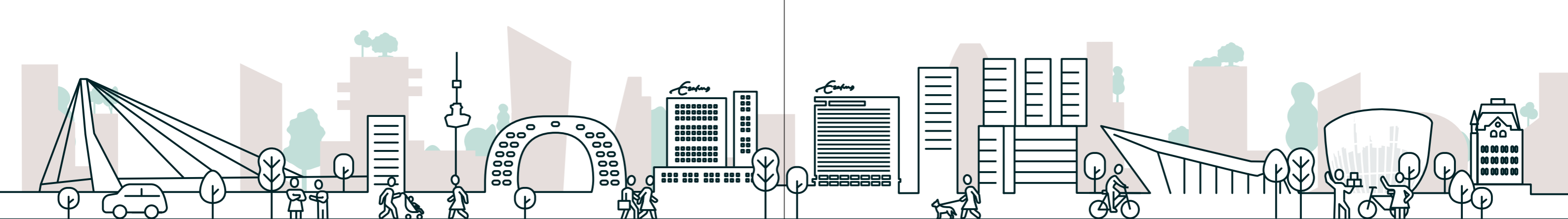
With the learning landscape we have tempered with Rotterdam's dynamics, infrastructure, architecture and urban plan to show what we would like our educational system to look like. We transformed Rotterdam into a utopian city: a metaphor for the desired state of Impact-Driven Education. It is an open, inviting and interactive metropolis of the future, forever under construction. By using the buildings, social dimensions, functions and visual cues in the urban landscape, we can take a different perspective on how we are (organising) learning.

Each area in the landscape represents one of the building blocks we use to design and organise our education. We have identified eight recurring pedagogical principles and design variables that guide us in conceptualising and operationalising this new way of making and doing education. On the one hand, we have five design prerequisites: fundamental ingredients of the learning process that deal with the integration of 'the real world' into an educational module. These five variables represent items that can be manipulated to fit the program context.

Complementing the five design prerequisites, three ingredients enable an effective and successful learning journey and relate to the possible pedagogical approaches that can be taken. These three ingredients are our 'known unknowns' and require active piloting and intensive, careful work to figure out new (best) practices. These still somewhat foggy areas require imagination, power and leadership to find suitable ways forward. The way these areas are manifesting depends on shapeshifting, volatile and uncertain dimensions that are contextual in terms of time, space and power-dependent and are often relationship-bound. Influencing factors are institutional resources, financial, cultural, political, etcetera.

These eight different principles both complement and interact with each other. They range from connecting with and involving external stakeholders in our educational design to assessing our student's work. Ultimately, with Impact-driven Education, we want to give students the opportunity to develop their 'impact capacity': the capacity to respond to societal urgencies in a way that matches the values of Erasmus University and the students' own personal interests and learning needs.





Authenticity (Integrating Reality)

Five design prerequisites

With Impact-driven Education, we depart from an authentic concern or a matter of care, as experienced by those living in that reality; by, for example, engaging with actors who have a genuine interest in an issue, who feel the problem themselves or have a responsibility to deal with it. In the drawing, they are metaphorically visualised with five local districts or zones: Erasmus MC, Het Park, the neighbourhood, Blaak and the Leuven/Wijnhaven.

3 (Interdisciplinary) Cooperation

Fostering collaboration across and beyond disciplinary backgrounds to work with complex societal issues.

5 Navigating Complexity

Meeting the actual complexity of life and embracing uncertainty in the realisation that there is no single correct solution nor a clear path to arrive at the destination.

4 Multiple Perspectives

The ability to identify, empathise and shift between multiple perspectives, integrating both academic and situated knowledges.

The (Physical) Learning Environment

Rethinking the learning spaces and the role of the physical campus in the creation of knowledge and developing new spaces that enable safe experimentation in education.

The three ingredients

In the drawing, you can identify these areas as either in transit(ion) or moving over and through other areas – for example, the balloons and lines of public transport that move through the city as tentacles. These objects are shrouded in clouds, hidden behind curtains, or under constant (de)construction.

3 Pedagogy and Didactics

The teachers' role(s) in the learning journey and methods for scaffolding and assessment for learning and growth.

2 Learning Community

The relationship among students, teachers and societal partners. It addresses the implementation and scaling of initiatives and the creation of a sustainable network of stakeholders involved in Impact-driven Education.

About the Learning Landscape

With my work as educational developer I am interested in creating projects that not only inspire practitioners to take a different perspective on their own work, but also to challenge the system they are a part of. With the creation of the learning landscape, I was curious about the different ways you can inspire, and challenge and I was looking for unconventional approaches.

Almar Bok, Learning Innovator Impact at the Core



One morning, I was reading an article in which the dominant education system was criticized (there are many of those), and it proposed a *new learning culture* to contribute to the transition towards sustainability.

It examines experiential approaches and identifies the need for an alternative conceptualization. The paper proposes the concept of learning landscape as a holistic perspective at organizing learning processes, emphasizing the complex multitude of influences impacting each individual's learning process. The learning landscape can be used as a model through which learning experiences can be examined, highlighting that no learning happens in the isolation of a single activity, class, or course, but is influenced by a myriad of factors. Some of them can be designed, but most learning emerges through unique combinations of (often unplanned) factors in context.

I noticed it is very similar with impact-driven education; it is shaped by many factors and these separate factors influence each other. My mind started to expand, and my imagination started to dance. I knew that I wanted to create a model that enables practitioners to share experiences, is built on their needs and perspectives, that it could be used to facilitate discussion, show tension, education's imperfections and identify potential trouble and challenges. But ultimately, the learning landscape needed to transport its audience into a world of ideas and possibilities. New but familiar.

This is where I – together with the brilliant Nadia Pepels and my trusted colleagues – started drafting a utopian Rotterdam: a transformed cityscape that invites its visitors to think differently about the way the city is functioning.



The city is created with educational building blocks – buildings, places and people are combined to form a fraction of a possible educational system. But the city is unfinished, it shows ideas, but it also *doesn't* show a lot of key ingredients that make this system work. This is for the visitor in the city to figure out, to test and to make visible. The learning landscape is a first attempt to make a possible system visible and invites new inhabitants to help create and finish the city so that everyone in it can flourish.

Minor Impact Space: Unleashing the Power of Impact- Driven Education

Imagine a learning experience that transcends the boundaries of conventional education, where students are no longer confined to passive roles as mere recipients of knowledge. Picture a place where education merges seamlessly with real-world impact, empowering students to become catalysts for change.

Welcome to Impact Space, an educational initiative that dares to redefine the purpose and potential of education itself.

At Impact at the Core we want that all students at Erasmus University Rotterdam can build competences that enable them to care for societal challenges through the educational designs implemented by the faculties. Since the start of our programme in 2020, our learning innovators have worked together with the faculties, answered their call, and helped them with the design of impact-driven education. Along the way a lot of experience and knowledge was gained. After two years of working on impact-driven education with and within the faculties, the learning innovators knew that it was time to take all those lessons learned and bundle them into one minor accessible for all students at Erasmus University Rotterdam. That's how the minor Impact Space came to live: a physical representation of the educational principles of Impact at the Core.

Designing the Minor

In a world where traditional exams and lectures have long been the dominant paradigm, the Impact Space disrupts the traditional educational model by offering an immersive learning experience that embraces the principles of engaging with real life issues, taking different perspectives and involving societal partners. Here, education transcends the confines of classroom walls and textbooks, embracing the dynamic interplay between theory and practice, between knowledge and its application.

The minor is designed by the eight principles of impact-driven education as portrayed in the Learning Landscape. In the designing process, our learning innovators experimented with several educational elements that set the Impact Space apart from other minors. The minor's starting point is the development and mastery of the abstract competency of "impact capacity", which emphasizes the agency within the context of impact-driven work.

To aid in this process, students receive tools and methods and reflect on their progress with both faculty and peers. The competency-based and holistic assessment model involves students in documenting and tracking their progress while collaborating with teachers to establish success and failure conditions. The minor features a "split" of teacher roles, with two teachers focusing on team and individual learning and two on project content, along with expert workshops on various topics. As an experiential program, there are no predefined external questions or challenges, and students learn by doing. Lastly, the minor's flow and phases are inspired by Kees Dorst's 'frame creation' methodology.

A Product of Co-creation

Students and teachers had a huge role in shaping the minor. Our learning innovators created two handbooks for the course, one for the students and one for the teachers. These provided some support, some insights, and some guidelines. But they were not syllabuses. There was no lesson plan set in stone. This allowed a lot of freedom for our teachers as well as our students. The minor was constantly co-created over the course of its 10 weeks. There was a constant change of direction. A change of attitude towards the way we educate our students.

Student Selina who participated in this first cycle of the minor confirmed that this is different from the regular educational approach: 'This minor and education is really different from the standard approach we have, like studying materials and learning, reading and making an exam and you get a grade, and you are done'. It also gives students a chance to work on a societal urgency and make an impact during their studies.

At the Impact Space, students are empowered to be proactive agents of change. They are encouraged to embrace their unique passions, talents, and perspectives, recognising that their voices and actions can shape the world around them. It is within this transformative educational landscape that students realise the power they possess to make a tangible difference in their communities and beyond.

The classes during the minor took place outside of campus at the Veldacademie in Rotterdam South. Ali, a student who also participated in the minor: 'I thought it would be interesting to do something within the community of Rotterdam and make an impact locally. I think it is very useful to be in the area you are working on as you get a chance to interact with the neighborhood and get a feel for it. This type of education is definitely more engaging and a lot more interesting, because this is really a different type of learning'.

"It gives students a chance to work on a societal urgency and make an impact during their studies."



Facilitating Impact to Travel both Ways

In the 2022-2023 academic year we at Erasmus University College started a pilot program with 'impact driven education' through collaboration with an external partner.

Jop Dispa, Lecturer in Social and Behavioural Sciences

The course titled 'Basestone Research & Writing Project' is the final course of the first-years skills curriculum at Erasmus University College. In the Basestone course, students are asked to run a full research cycle and complete a small-scale empirical research project. This year, we introduced a 'collaboration track' to the course. Instead of coming up with their own research project, students' research answered to questions posed by a societal partner. This partner, 'Stichting Walking & Talking' was introduced to us by Impact at the Core. Walking and Talking is a Rotterdam based foundation that organises regular walks to facilitate Dutch language learning for different types of newcomers.

The core motivation for seeking such collaboration was to enhance the connection between our student body and the city around us as a large number of our students is completely new to Rotterdam and the Netherlands. Combined with having our own student housing and building separated from the rest of Erasmus University, this often entails that many of our students experience that they live in a 'bubble' where they interact little with other residents of Rotterdam.

This also directly ties to how and where we have located 'impact' in this project. A first reading of impact driven education might suggest that our aim is to allow students to make a difference in the world around them. The direction of impact would be *one-dimensional*. Instead, this project was grounded in a *two-dimensional* aim to make impact. Though we hope that students' findings help our societal partner improve their work, we see it as equally important to facilitate new and insightful experiences for students and allow these to have an impact on how *they* experience their city and the larger world around them. When done well, this takes the definition of impact one step further and turns it into a mutually beneficial interaction that not only helps our societal partner but also broadens the



horizon and develops the skills and knowledge of our students. Ultimately enhancing the connection between their studies, they themselves, and the world around them. Perhaps even without a directly measurable short term-impact...

As educators, especially the latter should be of great importance when striving to bring the university closer to society. Not only does that entail making our work available for external partners or society at large in order to let it 'make impact'. It should also entail striving for more opportunities for listening to local partners and groups from whose experiences, stories, and expertise we and our students can learn a lot. In other words, listening to and learning from the world around us and thus allowing impact to travel both ways.

The Impact Education Week 2022



Having a positive impact on society as well as our students is what makes impact-driven education so powerful. We can only make minds matter when we prepare our students for society as it is: filled with complex transitional issues.

With this in mind, we organized the first Impact Education Week in October 2022. It was a week packed with impact-driven events for students, teachers, and our societal partners about

education. Everyone who is interested in making societal impact was invited to join, because creating a societal impact is not something you do on your own.

Over the next few pages, we shine the spotlight on two of the events we organized during the 2022 edition: the Impact Education Dialogue and the Impact Education Conference.

Impact Education Dialogue: Education and the Transitions in Rotterdam

Making a positive impact is at the core of the strategy of Erasmus University Rotterdam. Our society is being confronted with significant challenges and it is now more apparent than ever that our university wants to be at the heart of that society. Besides the

impact we make with our research, we realise that it is essential to focus on the impact we can make with our education because one thing is sure: with our knowledge and know-how we can make a significant contribution to the understanding of the challenges of our time.

Therefore, Impact at the Core organised the Impact Education Dialogue: education and the transitions in Rotterdam on Monday October 3rd, 2022. In a talkshow-setting, prof.dr. Arwin van Buuren (Academic lead of Impact at the Core) led the conversation between leading figures from both the Rotterdam municipality and the Erasmus University Rotterdam. They discussed what contributions our education could make to the transitions in the city. What is it that needs to be done by the university and Rotterdam? During this conversation, the table guests tried to come to a shared vision. This wasn't always easy, but like Arnoud Molenaar stated: "If it were easy, we wouldn't be here right now."

Making an impact with our education is not done in a day. This opens the floor to the following question: where do we start as a university? For Lyanda Vermeulen-Kerstens this couldn't be more clear. She thinks we should shape our education with the real world in mind and embrace a more

practical approach. An internship shouldn't be the only time students experience the world that awaits them after their education. There should be a long-lasting educational curriculum that invites students to go beyond the boundaries of our university. The *mbo* (intermediate vocational education) already organises its education in such a way. This would be an excellent opportunity for students who enjoy learning in a more practical way. The multidisciplinary aspect of this educational curriculum would prove to be incredibly valuable since our future asks for multidisciplinary professionals. Vermeulen-Kerstens emphasises the importance that students get paid for their time in the field. This is to fight against the inequality of opportunity amongst students. It is all about having choices and options to choose from. Some students thrive in the lecture halls. Others want to get their hands dirty in the real world.

It is a development that Jannelieke Aalstein would like to see as well. She would love it when students start their studies by going into the city to learn. Not to jump into action but to see what is happening. What catches your attention? And what would you like to change in what you see? Take this with you with everything you do during your academic career. In every class you take, and with every paper you write. Another change Aalstein would like to see is that the university would not invite the major to open the academic year but five 'regular' *Rotterdamers*. This would strengthen the message that after their four years at the university, the students will venture out into society to make the changes needed. Still, their journey to making an impact starts right here at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

About five thousand students start their education at Erasmus University every year. Most of them have no sense of direction or know what they want with their studies, so stated Ed Brinksma. Besides that, these students need time to get used to student life. Brinksma acknowledges that it is crucial for students to get the chance to broaden their horizons and

that they need to venture into the city to see for themselves the issues that taunt society. However, we must be realistic and realise that some students also come to the university for a more traditional approach to their studies.

“This would be an excellent opportunity for students who enjoy learning in a more practical way.”

Albert Wagelmans agrees. He adds that students should be taught in the discipline of their choosing before they can work with students and professionals from other disciplines on societal issues. A multidisciplinary approach is complicated, and all significant societal issues require a multidisciplinary approach. We see this at the *Convergence*. Experienced researchers who have enjoyed a monodisciplinary education first need to learn to understand each other's language before they can work together.

The university is on the right track considering multidisciplinary and cross-faculty collaboration. Both between the university and other sectors, as between the university and other educational institutes. What makes it difficult to spur ahead with our ambitions program is to get societal issues on the agenda in the rooms where it happens. This also counts for the municipality, Arnoud Molenaar states. He thinks that it could be helpful when the university could formulate the right questions. But besides that, continuity is invaluable to making a lasting change. Molenaar states that it is the *Rotterdamers* that make the city. The resilience of the city lies with them.

As a university, we should embrace a more demand-driven approach. There is no use staying in our ivory tower. We need to get into the neighbourhoods if we truly want to make an impact.

Learn to work from within the city, Beitske Boonstra agrees. A lot is happening at the university, but we don't share it enough with each other. We also receive this feedback from our partners in the city. There is a need for continuity; as a university, we must provide this. Boonstra speaks about the fire inside the students of Erasmus University. They want to do something meaningful for the society they are part of. We must teach our students that one can't create an impact alone. This is something we need to do together. This can take years of hard work. You need commitment and patience. But in the end, we will make an impact together with the city. That's what's it all about.

Arwin van Buuren, Academic Lead van Impact at the Core (tafelheer)

Ed Brinksma, president of the executive board, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam

Jannelieke Aalstein, deputy director issuemakers

Arnoud Molenaar, chief resilience officer, Gemeente Rotterdam

Lyanda Vermeulen-Kerstens, Head of the department Education, Gemeente Rotterdam

Albert Wagelmans, Professor of Management Science, Erasmus School of Economics

Beitske Boonstra, Assistant professor in Urban Governance, Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences

Vildana Gacic, Rotterdamse Douwers, Gemeente Rotterdam

You can watch the complete Dialogue in Dutch on our website:



“The truth is, if we want to make an impact with our education, we must re-think the way we educate our students.”

The Impact Education Conference: The Power of Bringing People Together

Here at Erasmus University Rotterdam we are all about creating positive societal impact and building bridges between our education and the world beyond our campuses. To accelerate the development, strengthening, and implementation of impact-driven education, it is important to bring people together so they can share their knowledge and grow together. With that in mind, Impact at the Core organized the first Impact Education Conference on Tuesday October 4, 2022.

People from all over the country gathered aboard the *SS Rotterdam* to share best-practices and share inspiration. The day was opened with a keynote speech by Prof. Dr. Arwin van Buuren (Academic Lead Impact at the Core, Erasmus University Rotterdam) and Bieneke Verheijke (Senior Programme Manager Educational Innovation, Erasmus University Rotterdam) about impact-driven education. In today's world, societal challenges are tumbling over each other. In this time in which there is so much to be gained, it is pertinent that we continue to ask the important questions when it comes to

impact-driven education. Do we really invite our students to think about what they can do in relation to societal challenges? Do we truly engage them with societal urgencies? The truth is, if we want to make an impact with our education, we must re-think the way we educate our students.

This conversation continued over two roundtable workshop sessions. Partners from Hogeschool Inholland, Hanze Hogeschool, Risbo, Hogeschool Rotterdam, TU Delft, Universiteit Utrecht, and UTwente travelled to Rotterdam to share their knowledge and best practices. We spoke about societal impact through co-design, Futures Literacy as a skill for students, Living Labs as Powerful Learning Spaces, the Rise of Community Engaged Learning, and much more. In every workshop, impact-driven education was approached from a different angle and discussed from a different perspective. Yet, they all came together in their ambition to bridge the gap between science and society through our education.

The discussion roundtables at the end of the day sparked interesting conversations between the participants of the conference. The importance of bringing students along for our impact journey was emphasized. After all, it is their education we are talking about. Another challenge the participants touched upon was the question: how can we make impact-driven education more equitable and accessible for all? To some, the academic world is seen as untouchable. How do we remove barriers and bring people of all backgrounds together? There are no easy answers—that is why we must continue the conversation. The subject of stakeholder involvement in our education was recurrent throughout the day.

The exchange of experiences helped to create an awareness of the different perspectives that come into play when it comes to external stakeholder involvement—especially as they play such a significant role in impact-driven education.

The Impact Education Conference was an inspiring event attended by many passionate professionals in the field of impact-driven education. The lively discussions and good conversations proved once again the importance of bringing people from different fields together. Whether they're students, teachers, researchers, or external stakeholders, all parties should have a seat at the table when we discuss the future of our education: impact-driven education.



“To accelerate the development, strengthening, and implementation of impact-driven education, it is important to bring people together so we can share our knowledge and grow together.”

Empowering Students as Active Historians

Impact-driven education means for me as a teacher that I am not only passing knowledge to students about the past, history as a discipline or historical cultures in a passive way; It rather means that I create a space in which student develop as reflective and engaged citizens and facilitate their growth by directly engaging them in research projects.

Dr. Iwona Gusc, Master coordinator of Applied History

Within the Applied History Master-track par example we develop new teaching techniques to apply historical methods and critical reflection about historical sources to concrete, societal issues, such as rethinking history from the perspective of a superdiverse society or preserving the history of the minority groups or searching for underrepresented histories. Within the course *Histories of Diversity* students learn about the role that oral history plays in rewriting and rethinking history. Yet they learn about it not only in theory, but also in practice. They learn about the impact oral history has and can have by conducting the interviews themselves with underrepresented or forgotten groups. When preparing for the interview they learn to look at the history from the perspective of certain minority group such as migrant communities.

This year students conduct interviews with children of the Polish war veterans who settled in Belgium and the Netherlands shortly after the World War II, last year project was about the recent wave of Ukrainian refugees. Our students are tasked with preparing and conducting the interview with the history witness. They are also asked to reflect on the validity of this method for historical research and for the society. I noticed that during the preparation phase students start reflecting on their own position in their community on local or global level; their own relation to family history, local history, national history or heritage and identity.

Preparing to talk with witnesses, who often represent different cultures or ethnical backgrounds, but also belong to a different generation, students do not only engage in the project on the academic level, but also connect with their own background and critically rethink societal questions underlying it. Next to that we also try to teach our students how to communicate the research practice, process



and findings to the non-academic public; How to approach the communities that we want to involve in the project, how to make connections with other institutions and last but not least how to translate and ethically communicate the research findings for the broader public. Moreover, the complexity of such projects exposes students to the research in practice and also forces them to collaborate a lot with each other, rather than just carry on their individual assignments.

As we teach this course in term 1, we are also happy to notice the immediate side effect of such approach: students are much more connected with each other and do not fear collaborations.



Shining a Light on Collaboration: Introducing the Community for Impact-Driven Education

On a cloudy Thursday afternoon in March 2023 we relaunched Erasmus University's Community for impact-driven education. Teacher's, learning innovators and other professionals gathered to shine their light on impact-driven education. The following months the community has been steadily advancing and is growing out to be a haven for educational professionals passionate about creating positive societal impact through education.

The Community for Impact-Driven Education

By bringing together teachers and learning innovators and faculty staff, we hope that this community will contribute to the upscaling of impact-driven education across all faculties of our university. During the first session we took our first steps into collaboratively defining our objectives and expectations as a community.

Three main ideas came up. Firstly, we want to create a platform to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices to continually learn together. Secondly, we expect to foster connections and collaborations to create a strong network of impact-driven professionals at EUR. Finally, we want to

work together! Co-creating practical solutions to address the challenges encountered during the implementation of impact-driven education, making resources available for everyone to improve their practice. All this work is aimed at making sure more students can benefit from impact-driven education and the positive changes it can bring.

With this community we hope to create a space where teachers, learning innovators and other professionals working on impact-driven education can come together and share knowledge. Whether these are lessons, wins, challenges, or bloopers, together we can learn and grow impact-driven education at Erasmus University Rotterdam!

Sub-Communities: Collaborative Spaces for Deeper Engagement

In the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, fostering innovation and meaningful impact is imperative. We are committed to pushing the boundaries of education by creating an environment that thrives on collaboration and co-design. As part of our ongoing mission to elevate the quality of education, we introduce two dynamic sub-communities that promise to invigorate academic discourse and enrich the learning experience for both students and educators.

First we have the Master's Design Community for Impact-Driven Education. The future of education is calling for novel approaches, and this sub-community is poised to answer. It is an upcoming initiative that brings together master program coordinators and dedicated educators to embark on a transformative journey. Together, they will craft innovative strategies for implementing impact-driven education within master programs, with a special focus on integrating these principles into graduation projects and theses. By harnessing the collective wisdom of our faculties, this sub-community aims to redefine the educational landscape and equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to make a lasting impact in their fields.

Second we have the Experiential Learning and Reflection Community. The journey towards impactful education is paved with experiences that shape students' perspectives. This sub-community is the result of a fruitful collaboration between 'Impact at the Core' and RSM. This sub-community is a testament to our commitment to holistic learning. As part of our overarching educational community,

we actively contribute to the coordination and alignment of efforts within the Experiential Learning and Reflection Community. Together, we aim to enhance the educational journey and inspire students to reflect upon their experiences, thereby promoting a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Moving Forward

At the heart of this ambitious endeavor is our community calendar. It serves as the linchpin, ensuring a seamless experience for participants who engage with our broader community events and sub-community activities. By meticulously coordinating events and avoiding scheduling conflicts, we empower our academic professionals to invest their time and energy where it matters most - in creating a transformative educational experience for our students.

In a rapidly changing world, the future of education depends on adaptability. By nurturing sub-communities that encourage deeper engagement and collaboration, we are at the forefront of this educational evolution. As we embark on this journey, we invite all our academic professionals to join us in the Community for Impact-Driven Education.

Do you want to join our community?

Send an e-mail to our
community officer Kelly Irvine:
impactatthecore@eur.nl



The Minor Legal Technology

In the academic year 2022-2023 the Minor Legal Technology was introduced in the third year of the Bachelor of the Erasmus School of Law. It was a result of a collaboration of teachers and learning innovators. The course is a great combination of theory and skills. Students are very enthusiastic about this minor. This is what the teachers say about the course:

Prof.dr. Evert Stamhuis - Professor of Law and Innovation,
Dr.mr. Cees Zweistra - Assistant professor | Theory and Methodology,
Mr. Ilona van Opdorp - van de Kooi - Researcher | Criminology

'One of the first things in the design of this course was building on our conviction that the central developments were taking place right now in the outside world. This brought us to thinking about how to involve external parties', elaborates Evert Stamhuis. 'Through our network it was easy to find these partners in the sector of social advocacy. The legal aid partners were willing to put a lot of time and effort in this course, because they immediately saw the potential for their organisation. In the end, they were surprised about the work that students presented at the end of the course. In the first run we learned a lot on how to work with external partners properly. To professionalise this trajectory with external parties we developed a stakeholder-journey after the first run, in order to inform the partners in a more structured way and to have more clarity about the mutual expectations.'

During the minor students have to develop a legal tech prototype for a real life challenge in the legal aid sector. 'What we try to do is equip students with a constructive-critical outlook on technological possibilities', Cees Zweistra says, 'but this remains a bit of a challenge.' Technology in the legal sector is generally either overlooked or taken as a mere instrument towards

greater efficiency. 'What we want is that students think about the impact of technology on their future professions. Not as a mere tool-for-efficiency, but as a central point of future dynamics in law and legal profession.' In the minor this outlook is part of the report that accompanies the specifications of the prototype. 'In the next year, we might decide to take this a step further by requiring students to formulate different scenarios for the tool they seek to develop.'

'We aimed to create an interdisciplinary and challenging course,' says Ilona van Opdorp – Van de Kooi. 'Through the innovative framework of design thinking, students were equipped with the tools to analyse problems from multiple angles, considering the viewpoints of diverse stakeholders and users. The consistent involvement of these stakeholders throughout the process played a critical role in validating the solutions and ideas of the students. The inclusion of students with a technical background within the group proved to be an invaluable asset. Their unique expertise and perspectives brought a fresh dimension to the discussions and problem-solving approaches. In this learning environment, students not only supported each other in their educational journey but also presented innovative ideas to the involved lecturers.'





Working Together with Societal Partners

An interview with Impact at the Core's Quartermasters

In early 2022, two quartermasters were added to the Impact at the Core team: Moon Fung Fong and André Hendrikse. They focus on engaging societal partners in impact-driven education; partners who deal with complex social issues in practice. We look back with **Moon Fung** and **André** on their first year at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

What do you do at Impact at the Core?

Moon Fung: Since last February, André and I have been working as quartermasters at Impact at the Core. Our immediate colleagues are learning innovators and they support teachers to make their courses more impact-driven. For example, to teach students to work multidisciplinary, but also that students work on authentic issues from practice instead of purely theoretical issues. That's where André and I come in: for this type of education, we connect to existing networks in the city and region around social themes.

Sounds vague, "quartermasters"...

André: You're not wrong, but it does cover what we do. Our assignment was not sharply defined when we started, and we have a lot of room to color it in. If EUR is serious about collaborating with societal

partners in education and realizing a greater impact, we also need to work on permanent structures, service delivery and relationship management.

Moon Fung: In our first few months, we worked out and defined our mission. In addition, of course a lot of time went into getting to know EUR as a large complex organization. The EUR community is a collective of very different organizations, programs, and projects. From faculties and research institutes to consulting organizations, study associations and temporary programs. For many people outside EUR, it's just one university.

André: Precisely! Also, we are not the only ones working on external relations for education within the university, so we work closely together with other programs.

Interesting! With whom do you collaborate within EUR?

Moon Fung: To do our work, it is important that we have a good understanding of what is needed within our education. Of course, we work with our direct colleagues who are involved in educational innovation. We support programs in which Impact at the Core is involved with specific stakeholder management. We also take questions from other programs that could use our help in working with partners.

André: We also have a growing network of colleagues who have many contacts with external organizations. We have called this the *Bruggenbouwers & Buitenspelers Netwerk*. We started this informal network together with Erasmus Verbindt, Erasmus X, and RSM, to help each other by sharing knowledge and contacts. Especially if we are going to scale up impact-driven education and research within EUR there will be many more relationships with external partners. We also try a little bit through internal cooperation to ensure that organizations are not approached by many different colleagues from EUR and that we maintain existing relationships well and don't have to keep rebuilding them.

Bruggenbouwers & Buitenspelers Netwerk, you say? How does it work?

André: The network forms an opportunity to get to know your colleagues who have a great external network. We do this by getting together a few times a year and exchanging tips and questions through a joint teams-channel. Perhaps it would be better to call the network a community, which fits better with the other networks that exist within EUR.

How do your educational colleagues know where to find you? And what concrete support do you offer?

Moon Fung: We are currently involved in several educational projects thanks to our direct colleagues at Impact at the Core. They are in contact with

faculties who have expressed an interest in working with outside parties on impact issues. These include RSM's HR subject and honors program to EUC's Health Psychology. Where we want to go to in 2023 is to make our so-called services visible to our internal community online and through newsletters. This way teachers know how to find us more easily and they also know, for example, what topics we are involved with.

André: Because we are active in various networks, we see more and more opportunities to make connections. We have learned that for the time being it works better to start from a concrete question from the educational side and find partners from there, rather than matching education with a question from a partner. We do that sometimes, but the demand from the university is still too diffuse to organize it well, and often there are practical conditions or educational requirements that make it more difficult. In the future, we do hope to be able to properly pick up supply and demand from both sides as the internal and external networks grow and become connected and with the help of a matching platform.

What is your process?

Moon Fung: When a teacher decides to work with societal partners, we send them a short form to fill out with practical questions. The idea behind the form is that we have a clear picture of what the subject is and what exactly the teachers are looking for. Is it an undergraduate or graduate course? How many students are involved? When does the course start? What type of issues are students concerned with within this course? But also, how many external parties are they looking for? Based on this form, we schedule an initial interview with the teacher in question. And in this conversation, we discuss the details and further procedure.

Why would external organizations want to work with EUR?

Moon Fung: Sometimes students work on a concrete question from an organization, and it yields useful results. I'm thinking of the minor Impact Space - two external partners were very happy with the recommendations students made on exercise and health among youngsters in Rotterdam-Zuid. In addition, external partners also participate because they want to build a structural relationship with EUR or would like to give something back.

André: We will take additional measures to engage organizations that have significant contributions to offer in education but may not immediately recognize the importance of collaboration. For instance, certain organizations operate under significant time constraints to address pressing societal needs and may not readily perceive the immediate benefits of collaborating with students on academic matters, which often entail communication in English. Continuously, we pose the question, "What benefits do stakeholders gain?" In this aspect, I believe we can exercise greater creativity. Collaboration is typically tailored to specific needs.

Moon Fung: Besides that, a relationship is not just between organizations, but is often tied to personal contacts. In that sense, we feel responsible that the relationship remains good, even when the collaboration is finished.

How important is it that collaboration creates a positive societal impact?

Moon Fung: Very important. If there is no clear positive, social contribution, it does not belong to Impact at the Core. Furthermore, it also ties in with my personal conviction: The big issues of our time require a different type of student/employee than, say, 20 years ago. We must prepare the new

generation to deal with truly complex issues that are multidisciplinary in nature. This also requires them to know how to collaborate with external parties and not stay safely behind the books.

André: The same goes for me. When I applied, I asked about EUR's ambition. Creating positive societal impact is a nice slogan, but just about every organization claims something like that these days. When asked how firmly this ambition is supported within the EUR and where it comes from, I was told, among other things, that students increasingly expect direct, social relevance from the university and want their education to contribute to their ability to realize impact themselves. This answer played an important role for me in my consideration. I understand well that collaboration with practitioners is sometimes a hassle, and that it is easier to teach with fictional cases or based on existing research. But if we want to create an impact, we have to go out more and bring in more from the outside. Colleague Jilde Garst of the DIT platform, among others, recently wrote that the university "is struggling to set a course, torn between guarding the existing practices and norms that have shaped our identity as an academic institution, and opening up to new values and ideas that allow us to better support our communities." We also notice this tension and we have to deal with it.

Moon Fung: You can see this in the new educational vision of Erasmus University and the development around engagement with society. It is great that in our role as quartermaster we can contribute to this.

Do you want to work with societal partners in your education? Please contact Moon Fung Fong and André Hendrikse via impactloket@eur.nl they would love to get in touch with you!

Beyond the Classroom: A Year of Research on Impact-Driven Education at Impact Space

Welcome to the research section of our yearbook, where we proudly showcase our research in designing educational programs that empower students to tackle societal urgencies.

By Joe Binetti &
Louise Smink



Our mission is simple yet profound: to cultivate future professionals who are not only well-equipped with knowledge but also possess the skills and mindset to make a lasting impact on the world.

Impact at the Core - Empowering Students to Drive Positive Change

Education is a powerful tool that can shape individuals' lives and transform communities. At Impact at the Core, we recognise the potential for education to be a force for positive change. By providing students with an education that goes beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries and challenges them to address real-world issues, we can nurture a new generation of professionals who are not just academically capable but also socially responsible.

Our approach to education is centred around impact-driven learning. Impact-driven education encourages students to work across disciplines, bridging the gaps between different fields of study. By collaborating with their peers, teachers, and professionals from various backgrounds, students learn to approach and analyse complex problems from multiple perspectives. This transdisciplinary approach prepares them for the challenges they will face in their careers, where the ability to work collaboratively and think critically is essential.

Defining Impact Capacity

To what extent does impact-driven education support the development of students' impact capacity?

We aim to shed light on the transformative potential of impact-driven education. By closely examining the experiences of those who have participated in this type of education, we have unveiled the profound impact of this learning model on students' knowledge acquisition, skills development, and personal growth, as well as on the teachers' agency and stakeholders' involvement.

Within the context of impact-driven education, we have characterised student agency as a set of skills that we call impact capacities. Even though impact capacity is an open concept, we have made a starting point with five enabling abilities.

The five enabling abilities of impact capacity – in no particular order – are:

- Ability to participate in interdisciplinary cooperation processes
- Ability to take perspectives
- Ability to navigate complexity
- Ability to participate with stakeholders in the process of learning and development
- Ability to engage as a 'real person' (authentic being) in real-world urgencies and drive change for good.

We wanted to understand how our educational programs empowered students to become positive agents of change. Through surveys, interviews, and observations, we gathered data on students' experiences, their understanding of impact-driven education, and the changes they observed in themselves due to their participation in our courses. The findings provided valuable insights into the factors contributing to the development of students' impact capacity and helped us refine our approach.

Research Methods: Qualitative Approach

At Impact at the Core, our research approach relies on qualitative methods to gain a deep understanding of impact-driven education from the perspectives of those directly involved.

Qualitative research methods delved deeper into the experiences and perspectives of the individuals involved. Through interviews, we uncovered the intricacies of the impact-driven learning process, exploring motivations, challenges, and transformative moments.

Focus groups created a collaborative space for exchanging ideas and diverse perspectives, shedding light on the social dynamics and collaborative processes inherent in impact-driven education.

Observations conducted in classrooms and educational settings provided first-hand insights into teaching methods, student engagement, and overall dynamics associated with impact-driven education.

It's crucial to note that the study consciously avoids the pursuit of generalisation from the specific cases under scrutiny to a broader context. Instead, the focus lies on attaining a profound exploration of the subject matter, aiming to extract rich and detailed insights. By doing so, we generated a comprehensive body of evidence that substantiated the effectiveness of impact-driven education.

Impact Space: An Example of Education for Change

Education has been recognised to change individual lives. We want to take the societal impact of education one step further by studying how people learn within an impact-driven learning environment and observing how they use academic knowledge and skills to make a positive change in the world. For this, we use the concept of student agency as a variable. Student agency refers to the student's capability to act on learning experiences in a way that reflects their ideas, purposes, and interests within and outside their classroom while having the possibility to shape their own learning experience. This variable helps us determine what individuals do during their education that can help them later in life to make changes in their contexts and eventually contribute to positive societal changes.

The most prominent example of this type of education has been the minor 'Impact Space' in its first running during the 2022-2023 academic year. The Impact Space provided a supportive ecosystem where students could learn from failure, iterate their process, and emerge stronger and more determined than ever.

Learning Beyond Boundaries

"At the Impact Space, I realised that education is not just about memorising facts and passing exams. It's about understanding the world and actively contributing to its betterment," said Sarah¹, a student who participated in the Impact Space minor. "The experiential learning approach pushed me out of my comfort zone and allowed me to explore complex issues from multiple angles. It taught me the importance of critical thinking, empathy, and collaboration."

At the Impact Space, the learning objectives are clear: to cultivate students' critical thinking, self-reflection, collaboration, and engagement with stakeholders. Through experiential learning, students embark on a transformative journey, where they unpack complex societal issues, engage with stakeholders, and design interventions for positive change. This process-oriented approach allows students to navigate uncertainty and complexity, developing a curious mindset that challenges the status quo.

The Impact Space minor has left a mark on the students who participated in this transformative experience. They described the course as a refreshing departure from traditional university settings. Students found value in the real-world connection and the interdisciplinary approach, which allowed them to gain different perspectives and expand their horizons.

"The tutors played a crucial role in creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment."

"The Impact Space minor brought together students from various disciplines, and that diversity significantly impacted our learning," said Mark, another student in the program. "Collaborating with students from different backgrounds not only enriched our projects but also broadened our understanding of the complex challenges we were addressing. It showed me the power of collective intelligence and the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in creating sustainable solutions."

One student highlighted the significance of building relationships with peers and tutors, emphasising the diverse backgrounds that enriched their learning journey. "The tutors played a crucial role in creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment," shared Lisa, a student in the program. "They provided guidance, encouragement, and valuable feedback throughout our projects. Their dedication and belief in our abilities motivated us to push our boundaries and achieve remarkable results."

Teachers as Facilitators of Change

In addition to examining the impact on students, we also sought to understand how teachers perceive and interpret impact-driven education. By gaining a deeper understanding of their perspectives, we could identify areas for improvement and collaboration. Our research team engaged in dialogue with teachers to explore their understanding of impact-driven education and their experiences in implementing it in the classroom.

Within the Impact Space minor, teachers took on three key roles: project facilitator, process facilitator, and content expert. They served as guides, empowering students to take ownership of their learning process. Teachers embraced the principles of Impact-driven Education, gradually shifting responsibility to the students, who become self-directed learners. This dynamic fosters autonomy, authenticity, and a sense of responsibility, shaping students into active agents of their own education.

1. Names have been changed to protect the identities of the individuals involved.

“Being a facilitator at Impact Space has been a transformative experience for me as well,” shared one of the teachers in the program. “Instead of being the sage on the stage, I became a guide on the side. Seeing students embrace their agency and take charge of their learning was inspiring. They truly exceeded my expectations regarding their creativity, problem-solving skills, and dedication to making a positive impact.”

Partnering with Stakeholders: Collaborating for Societal Impact

In our commitment to societal impact through education, stakeholders played a vital role. Collaborating with professionals and community partners, we gained valuable insights that shaped our programs. Actively engaging stakeholders extended our collaborative approach beyond classrooms, enriching our research and enabling the design of relevant, effective programs aligned with community needs.

Professionals shared real-world experiences, guiding the integration of industry-specific skills into our curriculum. Their input ensured our students were well-prepared for professional challenges. Stakeholder feedback served as a reality check, helping refine our educational models to meet evolving societal needs. Actively involving stakeholders fostered shared ownership, making them advocates for the transformative power of impact-driven education.

These collaborative partnerships extended beyond data collection, fostering ongoing dialogue and knowledge exchange. The result? A robust network of support, leveraging diverse stakeholder wisdom for sustained impact.

The Impact Space: A Launchpad for Future Innovators

As we conclude another fruitful year of research at Impact at the Core, we remain committed to fostering a transformative educational environment where our students become catalysts for positive change. Our research has provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of impact-driven education and has enabled us to refine our programs to serve our students and society better.

Education is not just about acquiring knowledge but about empowering individuals to make a difference in the world. By instilling in our students the belief that they have the power to create positive change, we are shaping a generation of professionals driven by a sense of purpose and a commitment to social responsibility. Together, we can harness the power of education to drive positive change and create a lasting impact on society.



Bridging the Gap Between Academic Research, Policy and Practice Starts with Education

“It takes 17 years for health research to be translated into practice”¹. This finding initiated a lot of translational research to bridge the gap between research, policy, and practice. I had the privilege to be part of this research field.

1. Morris, Z.S., Wooding, S., Grant, J. (2011). The answer is 17 years, what is the question: understanding time lags in translational research. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 104(12), 510-520. <https://doi.org/10.1258/jrsm.2011.110180>

Dr. Marieke Hartman, Co-coordinator Health Psychology at Erasmus University College



During my PhD and second postdoc, I have collaborated with policy makers, practitioners, and the community in a so-called “Academic Workforce Public Health” between AMC-UvA and the GGD Amsterdam. And in Texas, we provided training and tools to support health intervention developers in the selection and adaptation of evidence-based programmes and policies. Even though I loved working on bridging academic research and practice, I decided to follow my passion for teaching and continued working at Erasmus University College.

I was happy to learn, during the Senior-University-Teaching-Qualification trajectory, that EUR had impact-driven education high on the agenda. I started to realize that bridging the gap between research and practice already starts during education. Learning theory not only from books but leaving the ivory tower and getting a feel for what is important for policy makers and practitioners. Teaching students skills for the future (e.g., professional communication, perspective taking, and socio-cultural skills), while contributing to society directly by employing academic skills.

EUC’s Health Psychology course provided an opportunity for setting up such “impact-driven education”. In this course, students traditionally selected a health problem from the literature, and created a logic model based on a behavioural analysis. The aim was and is to gain insight into the causes of health-related behaviours such as smoking and physical activity, to create initial ideas on how to promote healthy behaviour change. I wondered: why would we not work with real-life cases, to directly address the needs of societal partners?

However, I also realized: setting up these types of collaborations takes time. Time that we as course coordinators often lack. How to make collaborating with societal partners for our courses feasible and sustainable? Therefore, I am happy with the help from Impact at the Core: for the extra hours and their

instrumental support, e.g., for building connections with societal partners, providing innovative ideas, and research support.

Was it worth the investment? I would think so! Of course, we did face some challenges during the pilot, including language barriers for international students and finding a balance between teaching Health Psychology content and skills needed for collaborations. Additionally, collaborating organisations could use more time for internal processes to get approval and mobilise colleagues. Nevertheless, the overall experience was positive. Students perceived the impact-driven approach as engaging, motivating, a realistic example how future work could look like, and felt like they contributed to society. Collaborating organisations were happy with the fresh perspectives after working for years in the field; with the munition (*evidence*) that they could use as arguments to initiate change; and awareness about the complexity of behaviour change. Although bridging gaps and making an impact are big words, seeds seemed planted for sure!

Projects Overview

An overview of the projects
we have worked on in 2022-2023

Rotterdam School of Management

Reflexive capacity

Faculty: **RSM**

Educational theme: **Student competencies, impact agency, reflexive capacity, professional development**

Project lead: **Ines Labarca Hoyl**

Faculty liaison: **Sahar Hofmeijer (project lead), dr. Taslim Alade (lecturer and course coordinator)**

Duration: **December 2022- July 2024**

Status: **Design phase**

The BSc Professional Development track at RSM aims to empower students to work in a dynamic and complex world with constantly changing societal challenges and demands. In the Professional Development track, students will develop as life-long

learners by developing transferable competencies through experiential learning, to become positive impact agents that thrive in the dynamic and complex world.

Transformative Learning

Faculty: **RSM**

Educational theme: **Master**

Project lead: **Esra Sertel**

Faculty liaison: **Esra Sertel**

Duration: **Continuous**

Status: **Planning and design**

The goal is to foster impact-driven & transformative learning experiences and equip students with transferable skills and attitudes through integrating Experiential Learning and Reflection within the

curriculum to support students' personal and professional competency development that will help them to create positive societal impact.

Erasmus MC

From Science to Society

Faculty: **Erasmus MC**

Educational theme: **Minor**

Project lead: **Joe Binetti**

Faculty liaison: **Silvan Licher (SL), MD, PhD & Natalie Terzikhan, PhD**

Duration: **2022-2023**

Status: **Ongoing**

This minor addresses three crucial topics that will help future professionals understand how they can affect society: 1) science communication; 2) open science; and 3) engagement of the public. When it comes to measuring effectiveness as a scientist,

'societal impact' is of growing importance. Through this minor, students will learn about the problems hampering or challenging the translation and implementation of scientific findings to society.

Erasmus School of Philosophy

DIT – MA Sustainability Transition

Faculty: **ESPhil / DIT**

Educational theme: **Master**

Project lead: **Almar Bok, Ines Labarca Hoyl**

Faculty liaison: **DIT – Neel van Roessel**

Duration: **2021-2023**

Status: **Ongoing**

In 2024 the faculty of Philosophy will start with a new Master's programme called 'Societal Transitions'; an ambitious transdisciplinary programme in which students are taught how to understand, interpret

and work on complex societal transitions. The programme is open to students from all academic backgrounds.

Erasmus School of Economics

Faculty: **ESE**

Educational theme:

Organisation and Strategy

Project lead: **Ines Labarca Hoyl**

Faculty liaison: **Yannis Kerkemeros**

Duration: **2023-2024**

Status: **Design phase**

This year, we have worked on redesigning the first-year bachelor's course in 'Organisation and Strategy,' to enhance student engagement and motivation, and develop their impact capacity in the field of economics. Through active learning and a focus on societal relevance, students will address real-world

organisational strategy challenges using their economic expertise. They will work on an 'impact case' where they will collaborate with a societal partner facing a societally relevant strategic problem in its organisation. The course is still in the design phase and will run during the first semester of 2024.

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Applied History Master

Faculty: **ESHCC**

Educational theme: **Master**

Project lead: **Lisette Ligtendag**

Faculty liaison: **Maarten van Dijk**

Duration: **2023**

Status: **Ongoing**

Redesigning the final project of the master's so that students gain science communication skills. Besides writing a thesis, students can also choose to write a policy paper, make a short documentary, write an

exhibition proposal in collaboration with a museum, or produce a podcast in collaboration with an external partner.

Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences 1/2

Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences 2/2

Thesis with Impact

Faculty: **ESSB**
Educational theme:
Bachelor and master

Project lead: **Lisette Ligtdag**
Faculty liaison: **Brenda Vermeeren**
Duration: **2022-2024**
Status: **Ongoing**

The project includes improvements both in the thesis (Bachelor's and Master's) and internship (Master's) process, and the final research *product* (Bachelor's and Master's theses). The process will include more

and structured interaction between students and the outside world to embed the research in the real world and enable bigger impact.

Impact-driven health psychology

Faculty: **ESSB / EUC**
Educational theme:
Impact-driven health psychology

Project lead: **Ines Labarca Hoyl**
Faculty liaison: **Marieke Hartman**
Duration: **2022-2024**
Status: **Ongoing**

The Health Psychology course at EUC equips students with the knowledge and skills to analyse health-related behaviours in target populations. Our mission is to cultivate a new generation of health psychology professionals who can make a positive impact on

individuals, communities, and populations. Our goal is to empower students to create meaningful and sustainable change in the lives of others.

EUC Basestone

Faculty: **ESSB / EUC**
Educational theme: **Research skills**
Project lead: **André Hendrikse**

Faculty liaison: **Jop Dispa**
Duration: **March – June 2023**
(first edition)
Status: **Ongoing**

In the Basestone course, students work on their research skills by designing, executing and presenting a small research project in a group of 3-4 students. The course offers a maximum of 30 first-year

students the opportunity to do a project for a societal partner. The role of Impact at the Core is limited to finding a partner that has a positive societal impact and provides research questions for these students.



Impact at the Core 1/2

Teacher Professionalization

Faculty: **Impact at the Core**

Educational theme: **Professional Development**

Project lead: **Lisette Ligtenag**

Duration: **Continuous**

Status: **Planning and design phase**

Impact-driven education requires that lecturers are capable of taking beautiful risks and instilling students with a passion for experiential learning while connecting them with the real world. This approach

involves preparation, and lecturers will receive support when needed to develop and enhance their skills, making it easier for them to become agents of change and innovation.

Impact-driven education in Master's programmes

Programme: **Impact at the Core**

Educational theme: **Master**

Project lead: **Linda de Vreede and Ines Labarca Hoyl**

Duration: **2023**

Status: **Starting**

Together with programme directors, researchers and lecturers, we will be designing impact-driven education for the Master's programmes.

We have started with the design of an impact methodology course. We will also explore the possibilities of an impact internship and thesis or product.

Impact at the Core 2/2

Riipen

Faculty: **Impact at the Core**

Project lead: **Daniël van Vliet**

Duration: **Continuous**

Status: **Implementation phase**

Riipen is an experiential learning/Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) platform that can be integrated within Canvas and makes it possible to bring wicked problems from external stakeholders into the

curriculum, driving our (strategic) impact-driven education (goals as a university. This also eases the workload of lecturers when implementing impact-driven education in their courses and programmes.

Minor Impact Space

Programme: **Impact at the Core**

Project lead: **Joe Bineti**

Duration: **Continuous**

Status: **Implementation and execution**

The Impact Space minor is based on eight principles of impact-driven education and focuses on developing 'impact capacity.' It emphasises experiential learning, collaboration and co-creation

between students and lecturers. Students work on societal challenges and have the freedom to shape their educational experience, enabling them to make a tangible impact on their communities.

Erasmus School of Law

Erasmus School of Law (ESL) is a very innovative and impact-driven faculty. From day one, students work together with external partners on realistic legal problems. Depending on the students' learning path, the impact-courses vary in methods and teaching and align with the competences of the particular phase in the program.

The overview of the projects is not exhaustive for the list of impact-courses within ESL. In the academic year 2022-2023, together with the program Impact at the Core, ESL has worked on the following new projects:

- **Law Clinic at Rotterdam Zuid, bachelor**
- **Enforce the Ethics-trajectory in the bachelor and master**
- **Perspectives on sustainability, master course**
- **Master Recht & Technology**
- **Extra-curricular Honoursprogramma Master Inclusieve Energietransitie**
- **Creating an Impact-Toolbox for teachers**

We also like to present the following two courses which ESL successfully designed. In these courses students meet external partners and work with them on a practical question. Moreover, students also get a better insight on the legal profession and the more practical side of the legal case.

The Law Clinic: Master International and European Union Law (IEUL):

In the Law Clinic of IEUL, students work on practical assignments and projects assigned by governmental and non-governmental organizations to ensure a better transition from theory to legal practice for the

master students. Students are challenged to work on real life cases, in which they have to identify the legal question and write and present a legal advice. Furthermore, students are asked to reflect on this process, by making two assignments during the course.

Privaatrecht in de Praktijk; Master Privaatrecht/ Commercieel Vermogensrecht:

In the course *Privaatrecht in de Praktijk* students work on a real life dossier at well know law offices. During the academic year, students will work on this dossier in different challenging settings.



From Science to Society

Impact-Driven Education at Erasmus MC

In 2020 we, **Silvan Licher** and **Natalie Terzikhan**, from the Department of Epidemiology at the Erasmus MC, became partners of a European Horizon 2020 project called: The [JoinUs4Health](#) project.

Dr. Silvan Licher MD PhD, Epidemiologist / GP in training
Dr. ir. Natalie Terzikhan, Manager Scientific Affairs and Responsible Research Manager Rotterdam Study



One of the aims of this project is to bring science closer to society, and to advance responsible research & citizens engagement in science through targeted education.

In the past three years, we worked hard to engage scholars, students, citizens and research participants in science and expose them directly or indirectly to the concept of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI). We also designed and implemented a new course named: From Science to Society, a podcast named What the Health and launched publicly available webinar series that are specifically dedicated to teaching and applying RRI principles.

Did you know that the From Science to Society minor course, is one of the few courses that offers impact driven education at the Erasmus MC?

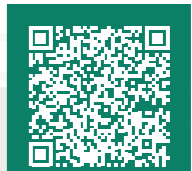
The course is based on the Open Science and Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) principles, in which the importance of for example transparency, inclusivity and reflexivity are heavily discussed and practiced. In this course, we not only offer open access lectures, but it also use innovative methods like Problem-based Project Learning to offer students the right set of skills that help them recognize current and future societal issues, and deal with them. The minor is open for students from all faculties.

Impact

Natalie: "It has been such a pleasure to work within the Joinus4health project. It's an incredible process to "infect" new generations with the ideas of RRI and open science. More fascinating is to see the bright in

their eyes and the belief that they- as future leaders- can make the difference by the knowledge that we provide them with.

It was so fascinating to see how collaborations came to be throughout the whole process of creating impact education. These educational activities helped us to meet people who share the same goals and values as we do in our Joinus4health consortium. It was so rewarding to see that we attracted likeminded people to collaborate with us. These included colleagues from Erasmus School of Philosophy, Impact at the Core, R.I.O.T. Science Club, Community for Learning Innovation and Erasmus Verbindt."



On October 25, 2023 the minor from Science to Society was awarded the Open Education Award.

The Team

From left to right:
André Hendrikse, Moon Fung Fong



From left to right:
Daniël van Vliet, Business lead; Linda de Vreede,
Project lead & Policy Officer; Bienneke Verheijke,
Senior Programme Manager Educational
Innovation; Arwin van Buuren, Academic lead



From left to right:
Manon Langeveld, Communication & Marketing officer; Kelly Irvine,
Community Officer

From left to right:
Ines Labarca Hoyl, Lisette Ligtdag, Denise Levy Abeliuk, Joe Binetti



From left to right:
Michelle Waardenburg, Project Management Officer; Linda de Vreede,
Project lead & Policy Officer

From left to right:
Joe Binetti, Postdoctoral researcher; Louise Smink, Junior researcher



of Success

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Impact at the Core team, I want to extend our gratitude to all our partners who have collaborated with us to create impact-driven education at Erasmus University Rotterdam.



Your support, dedication, and expertise have been instrumental in shaping the impact-driven educational landscape and fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation. Together, we have made significant strides in advancing our mission of empowering students to become change-makers and leaders in their fields, while at the same time contributing to the challenges our society faces. We look forward to continuing our collaboration and achieving even greater impact in the future. Thank you for your invaluable contributions.

Warm regards,

Linda de Vreede
Project lead Impact at the Core



The top half of the image features a complex, abstract pattern of thin white lines on a teal background. The lines are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement, resembling a perspective view of a grid or a series of overlapping planes. The lines are most dense in the center and become more sparse towards the edges.

Yearbook

2022 - 2023