



# Annual Report 2020

International  
**Welcome Centre**



**Utrecht** Region





# The welcome centre

The International Welcome Centre Utrecht Region (IWCUR) believes that starting a new life abroad should be easy and enjoyable. It is our mission to create a region where internationals enjoy living, working and studying. Through our services, we help them navigate this new chapter in their lives.

The IWCUR received 3834 visitors in 2020:

- 1700 internationals conveniently arranged their residence permit at the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) desk.

- 1637 internationals registered with their municipality at the civil affairs desk.

- 497 internationals received current and accurate information in English about living, working and studying in Utrecht Region at the information desk.

The number of internationals visiting the welcome centre fell during the months March to June due to the COVID-19 measures. In line with the government restrictions, we continued our services in a way that is safe for our visitors and staff, either online or offline.



# Building connections

In 2020 we worked on increasing our brand awareness. Our aim is to help internationals find the IWCUR as a place where they can receive information and support.

## Marketing

We increased the IWCUR's online visibility through:

- improving our website, which resulted in more website visitors: 17,327 in total, which is an increase of 38% relative to 2019.
- sending six newsletters to internationals and three to our partners with an average open rate of 51% and an average click rate of 24%.
- our activities on social media: our number

of followers on Facebook increased by 291%, on LinkedIn by 58% and on Instagram by 150%.

We improved our offline visibility by sharing information with internationals and companies via brochures and magazine advertisements, and by developing and distributing IWCUR merchandise.

## Events

Our events provided internationals with opportunities to meet fellow internationals, the IWCUR team and our partners. In 2020 we organised webinars, virtual networking meetings and the online Living & Lifestyle Event. The events were successful and well attended.



# Moving forward together

## Partners

The IWCUR collaborates with companies from Utrecht Region. Our partnership program helps companies increase their brand awareness among internationals and connects internationals with trusted providers of high-quality services that are tailored to their needs. We also provide international staff members of companies with useful information. In 2020, we partnered up with 50 businesses active in a wide range of sectors: coaching, culture and leisure, education, employment, finance, healthcare, housing, law and relocation.

## Utrecht Region's municipalities

The IWCUR offers its services to internationals living not just in the city of Utrecht but in the whole Utrecht Region. Every municipality within the region can join our centre so that their international citizens can benefit from the IWCUR's services. In 2020 the municipalities of Woerden, Oudewater and Stichtse Vecht have expressed their commitment and Zeist and Oudewater have indicated similar

intentions. More municipalities will follow in 2021.

## Regional and (inter)national initiatives

The IWCUR has participated in various initiatives in the Netherlands and abroad to promote our region and further improve our services for international citizens. We are, for example, part of a national network of expat centres and work closely with regional initiatives and national ministries.

## Social issues

The IWCUR is actively involved in addressing several important social issues in Utrecht Region. We have established an ambassadors club consisting of 17 internationals who help foster the internationalization of the region. Furthermore, we have joined the Utrecht Omarmt Network and we have started to collaborate with an activity app to reduce loneliness among internationals. Finally, we offered graduation internships for students.