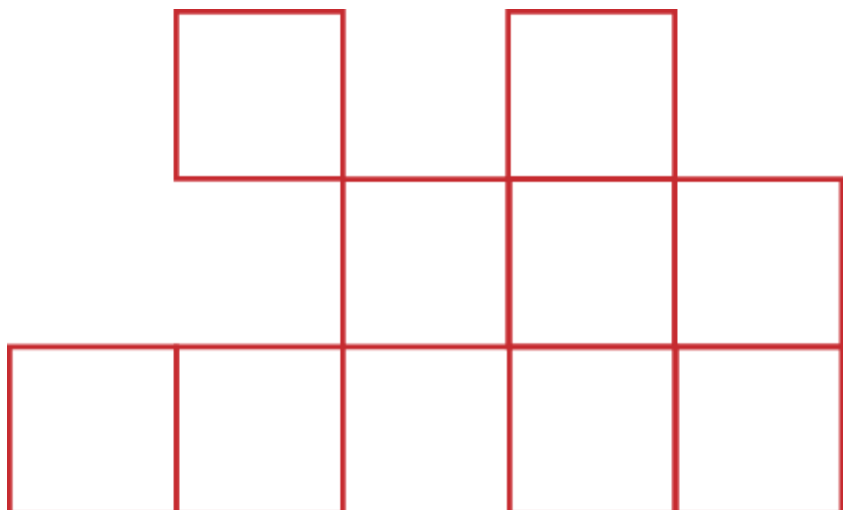




Housing for international students in the Netherlands

The Housing Hotline



This is a publication of the Dutch Student Union (LSVb). For questions or extra information, send us an e-mail at: lsvb@lsvb.nl

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Managementsamenvatting

Waarom dit rapport?

Huisvesting speelt een cruciale rol in de beleving van internationale studenten die in Nederland studeren. Het rapport 'Housing for international students in The Netherlands – The Housing Hotline' werpt licht op het perspectief van de internationale studenten. Het rapport geeft daarmee een eerste impressie van de problemen die individuele internationale studenten ervaren op het gebied van huisvesting in Nederland. Het rapport is uitgebracht door de Landelijke Studentenvakbond (hierna: LSVb), de belangenbehartiger van studenten in Nederland in samenwerking met ESN, de vertegenwoordiger van internationale studenten.

De LSVb wilde een plek creëren waar internationale studenten terecht kunnen met hun vragen, en op basis daarvan een eerste inventarisatie presenteren van de problemen die spelen op het gebied van huisvesting voor internationals. Om deze doelen te bereiken is op 24 juli 2017 de 'Housing Hotline' geopend. Internationale studenten kunnen via een formulier op de website van de LSVb hun vragen insturen, welke worden beantwoord door beleidsmedewerkers huisvesting in samenwerking met de juridische dienst. Na 7 maanden en 94 reacties is dit rapport tot stand gekomen.

Resultaten

Uit de reacties op de Housing Hotline zijn drie duidelijke problemen rondom huisvesting van internationals in Nederland naar voren gekomen.

Het vinden van woonruimte

Nederland Veel internationale studenten ervaren grote problemen met het vinden van huisvesting voordat zij daadwerkelijk in Nederland arriveren. Internationale studenten moeten vanaf het moment van aankomst in Nederland beschikking hebben over huisvesting. Internationale studenten hebben namelijk, in tegenstelling tot Nederlandse studenten, geen plek om op terug te vallen. Internationale studenten hebben vaak zeer beperkte kennis van de manier waarop de Nederlandse huizenmarkt voor studentenhuysvesting werkt, waardoor zij niet weten hoe ze te werk moeten gaan. Maar ook internationale studenten die wel kennis hebben van de Nederlandse markt ervaren problemen met het vinden van huisvesting. Ten eerste is hospiteren, de gangbare manier om in Nederland studentenhuysvesting te vinden, erg moeilijk vanuit het buitenland. Ten tweede willen niet alle Nederlandse studenten samenwonen met internationale studenten. Ten derde worden deze problemen versterkt door het grote woningtekort in de meeste Nederlandse studentensteden.

Beperkte kennis van hun rechten

Ieder land heeft zijn eigen wet- en regelgeving, gebruiken en manieren waarop een sector functioneert. De manier waarop de Nederlandse woningmarkt voor studenten functioneert is erg onduidelijk voor internationale studenten. Verhuurders, particulieren en corporaties, verschaffen vaak juridisch gezien onjuiste kennis aan de internationale studenten. Dit kan gaan om bijvoorbeeld administratiekosten of de manier waarop servicekosten worden verrekend. Internationale studenten geloven hun verhuurder omdat zij zelf geen kennis hebben van de Nederlandse wet- en regelgeving. Daarom is het van essentieel belang dat deze studenten toegang hebben tot voorzieningen die hen kunnen ondersteunen bij vragen.

Kwetsbaarheid: gemakkelijke prooi om misbruik van te maken

Dit probleem komt deels voort uit de problemen uit de vorige categorie, beperkte kennis van het Nederlands systeem. Internationale studenten beschikken niet over het een ondersteuningssysteem in Nederland waar zij op terug kunnen vallen. Verhuurders zijn zich bewust van deze kwetsbaarheid en maken daar (meer dan eens) misbruik van. Dit resulteert in betaling van volgens de wet niet toegestane kosten zoals administratiekosten, contracten met niet-ideale bepalingen, huurprijzen die niet volgens de Nederlandse wet zijn toegestaan, intimidatie en bedreigingen. Het is van essentieel belang dat verschillende stakeholders, zoals de gemeente en de onderwijsinstellingen, zich bewust zijn van de mogelijke gevolgen van de kwetsbaarheid van internationale studenten. Er zullen stappen moeten worden gezet om internationale studenten te beschermen tegen de consequenties van deze kwetsbaarheid.

Executive summary

Why this report?

Housing is a vital factor in the experience of an international student studying in The Netherlands. Housing for international students in The Netherlands – The Housing Hotline provides a first look at the issues of the Dutch housing market from the perspective of the individual international student. This report has been published by the Dutch Student Union (LSVb), which is the advocate for students in The Netherlands, together with ESN, advocate for international students. The LSVb wanted to support international students facing problems regarding housing, and provide a first inventory on the housing situation for international students in The Netherlands. To meet these goals, the LSVb has created the 'Housing Hotline' on July 24th, 2017. After 7 months and 94 reports from international students from all over the world, this report has been produced.

Results

The Housing Hotline has shown three mayor issues regarding the housing market for international students in The Netherlands.

Finding a room

Many international students face huge issues finding housing prior to their arrival. Housing that is available at the moment of arrival in the host country is a necessity for international students. Unlike Dutch students, international students do not have a place to fall back on. Because these students do not know how the Dutch housing market works, they do not know where to start. Other students do know where to look for a room but still experience issues finding a place to live. Firstly, 'hospiteren', the main way to find housing in The Netherlands, is basically impossible from abroad. Secondly, not all Dutch students are willing to live together with internationals. Lastly, these problems are increased by the huge shortage of student housing most big Dutch cities face.

Limited knowledge on their rights

Every country has their own law, implications and various other ways the national and local system works. These are very unclear to international students whom have never lived in The Netherlands. The Housing Hotline has shown that landlords or agencies frequently tell international students things which are against the law. Internationals believe that the things the landlord tells them are according to the rules. It is therefore necessary for international students to have access to services which can support them on these issues.

Vulnerability: easy target to be taken advantage of

Raises partly from the previous issue, the limited knowledge about the Dutch system. Next to this, international students usually do not have a support system in The Netherlands to fall back on. Landlords are aware of this vulnerability and (more than once) take advantage of this. This may have various consequences such as payment of illegal fees, contracts with non-ideal conditions, pricing of housing which is not according to law, intimidation and threats. It is necessary that various stakeholders like the university and the municipality are aware of the possible consequences of the vulnerability of international students. Measures should be taken to protect these internationals against the possible consequences of this vulnerability.

Introduction

Internationalisation is a hot topic. The amount of international students in and outside of Europe has increased over the last decades and is still growing at a fast pace. This trend is also showing in The Netherlands. Universities and universities of applied science have adopted various strategies to attract students from around the world. Between now and 2025, The Netherlands is expecting a rise of about 40% of international students (Kences, 2017).

At first glance internationalisation seems like a great development. First of all it provides benefits for host countries as well as provider countries (Classroom.com). Secondly, national school systems evolve as they receive input from students and teachers who have direct experience with other forms of curricula and methods of organising school systems. And lastly, International education programmes contribute to the economic development of host and provider nations and partnerships between universities can improve the relationships between universities in different countries.

The macro-perspective of the internationalisation of the Dutch higher education system shows various possible benefits for universities and nations. But the impact on individual students who choose to study abroad is still unclear. A great part of the problems these students have to face when they arrive in the host country is unclear to universities, policy makers and even to students themselves.

One of the vital factors that contributes to the experience of international students is the housing situation. Unlike local students, international students do not have a place to fall back on: They need a place to live from the moment they arrive in the host country. The Dutch Student Union (LSVb) and ESN received various signals about the current housing situation regarding internationals. Sadly enough these messages were not unanimously positive.

The LSVb is the advocate for (Dutch and international) students in The Netherlands and ESN promotes a mobile and international student life. We are interested in the students' perspective on the housing topic. Since many international students are struggling with their housing situation in The Netherlands, we want to support them. Apart from the argument of supporting international students, we are interested in the nature of the problems that they are experiencing. This report provides a first inventory on the housing situation for international students in The Netherlands.

The Housing Hotline

As stated in the introduction, the LSVb and ESN want to support international students experiencing issues regarding their housing situation while at the same time making a first inventory about the issues these students face. We've created a format where both goals could be met. This has resulted in the so-called 'Housing Hotline'.

We want to create an easily approachable place for international students to go to with their questions. The LSVb has an English website which is easily accessible and can be found through Google. The Housing Hotline can be found on this website:

<https://dutchstudentunion.nl/housinghotline/>. When students open this link, they find a pre-made form which can be easily filled in. An exact overview of the form can be found in attachment 1.

After the student has filled in the form, it gets sent to a special email address, housinghotline@lsvb.nl. The employees of the LSVb receive the form which allows them to answer the question directly. A policy officer, responsible for housing, and a legal officer work together in providing a helpful answer for the student. Students can always send another email if the answer has not been satisfactory.

After answering the question, the data is logged in a logbook. This logbook is managed by the LSVb and not accessible to the public. This logbook, as well as the content of the emails, have been used to create this report. The logbook contains the following variables:

LOGBOOK VARIABLES

Date of email

Number (1 t/m 94)

Name of student

Contact details (email address)

Type of student (exchange, degree etc.)

Type of complaint (category)

City

Story in short

Forwarded externally (yes/no)

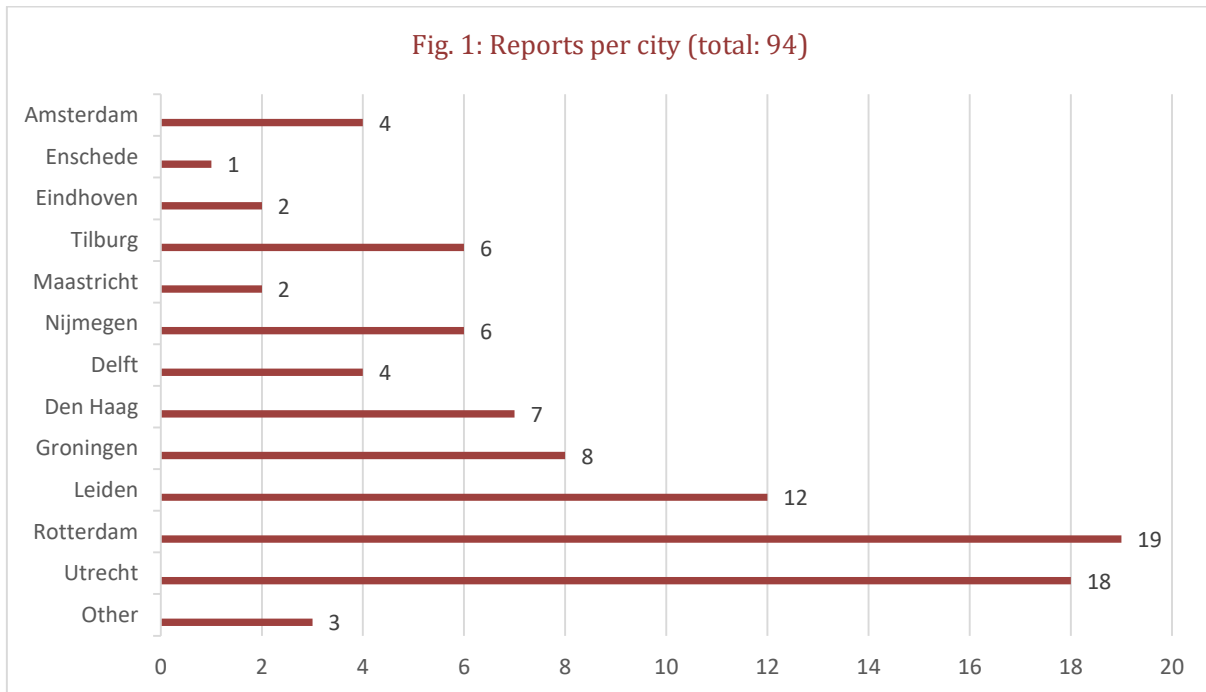
Found Housing Hotline via (University, Social Media, Other student etc.)

Answer (optional)

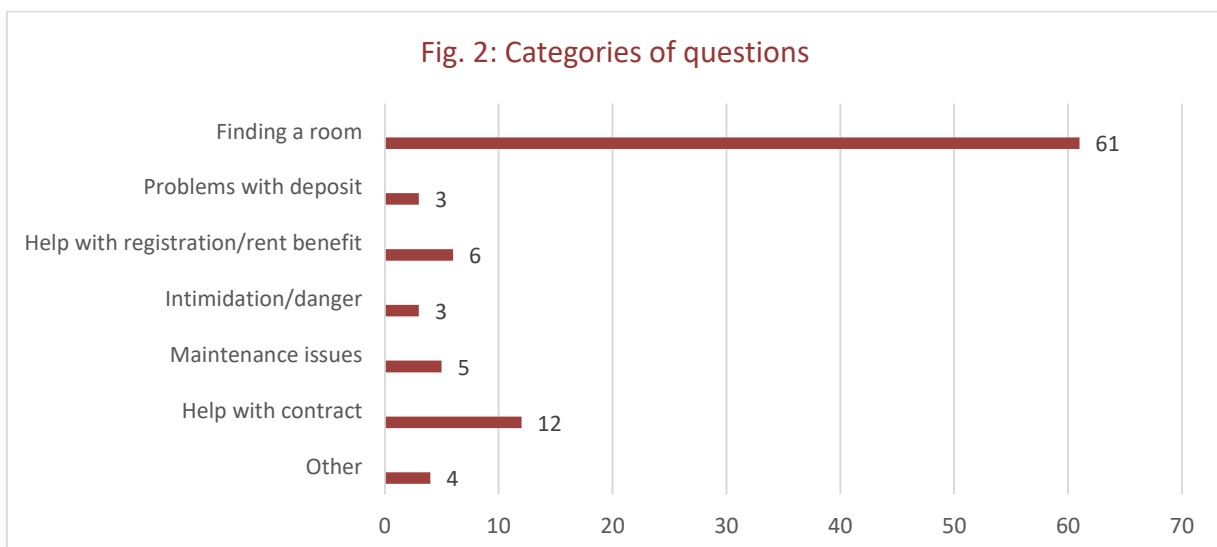
Second reply student (optional)

Quantitative data

The data used in this report has been collected between July 27th, 2017 and March 6th, 2018. The total amount of reports during this period has been 94. The reports has been logged per city. In figure 1, the reports per city can be found.

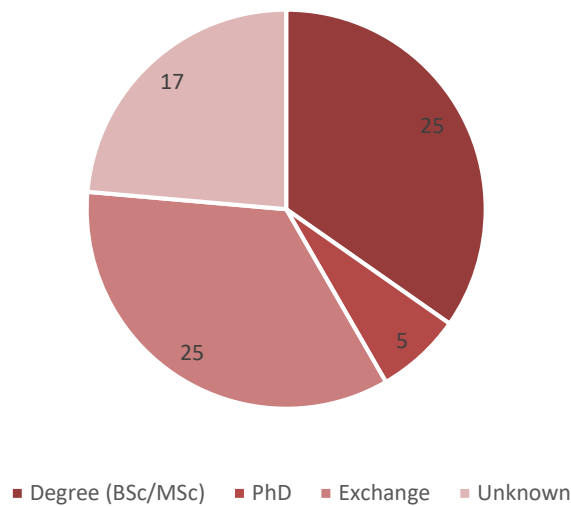


Other than the reports per city, the questions have been categorised by type. The categories have been established prior to the start of the Housing Hotline. For the duration of the project, these categories have been split up and merged when experience showed this was more suitable. Some categories embody more than one type of complaint. As an example, the category concerning help with contracts embodies questions regarding the language of the contract (the student couldn't read the contract because it was in Dutch), as well as questions regarding the termination of the contract. The categories, including the number of reports per category have been listed in figure 2.



Not all international students coming to the Netherlands can be seen under the same category. This report makes a distinction between four types of students. Exchange students are students who came to The Netherlands for an exchange programme such as Erasmus. These students usually stay for one semester up to one academic year, but exchange programmes which last more than one year are a possibility as well. A student falls in the category 'exchange' when they are primarily enrolled in an university programme outside of the Netherlands, and this university provides their final degree. The second category are the degree students, bachelor's as well as master's degrees. These students are international students which are primarily enrolled at a Dutch university programme and the Dutch university provides their final degree. The third category are PhD students. These students have completed a master's degree and usually stay in The Netherlands for more than one year, as a PhD typically lasts at least four years. The fourth category embodies unknown type of students. Some students have chosen not to declare anything or send an email apart from the form provided on the website. Figure 3 shows an overview of the distribution.

Figure 3: Types of students



Qualitative data

This part of the report gives an insight in the questions asked by students, to get a better understanding of the specific content of the questions.

Finding a room

The category 'finding a room' has led to 61 reports. The questions asked by students within this category varied. Some students already arrived in The Netherlands and ask for suggestions about where to look for housing in terms of agencies, websites or other platforms. *"I am looking for an apartment/flat in Amsterdam ... My budget is around 1000-1200€ at most including service costs. Can you suggest me some website or agency?"* – report 1. This category of students doesn't have knowledge on how the Dutch housing market works and where to look for a room. *"I am having troubles finding a good place, I would like if you can suggest me where is the best place to search this type of accommodation, which online pages do you recommend?"* – report 4.

Other students do know which platforms to use, but did not succeed in finding housing. *"I am urgently looking for a room in Delft and have tried Kamernet, Facebook groups and other housing sites."* – report 2. and *"I've been using facebook pages and Kamernet.nl for months without any success."* – report 5. Also, some universities do not reserve enough accommodation for the international students. *"I found that there is no reserved housing for [name University] exchange students from Jan-Apr 2018."* – report 11.

Other students have not arrived in The Netherlands yet and are not able to find housing from their home country. Especially the fact that they cannot physically visit the room makes it harder to find housing. Landlords, as well as other students, are not willing to rent out the room to an international student or accept an international student as a flat mate without physical contact prior to agreeing on renting out the room. *"I have been searching for a room in Groningen for over 1 month from now but I still got nothing. Most of the landlords want to meet me in person but I am still in my country (Vietnam), I am not able to go there to just have a look of a room, especially they do not want to talk through skype."* – report 3. and *"I have sent over 80 messages to advertisements on Kamernet and Facebook groups but have not even had a reply, let alone an invitation to a hospiteeravond. Everyone says 'NO INTERNATIONALS'"* – report 10.

The fact that these students are unable to find housing from their home country, might lead to a situation in which they arrive in The Netherlands without any place to stay. *"I will go there next week to start my studies, however I did not find anything and I am afraid that it is impossible. I ask for help."* – report 6. This can lead to heartbreaking situations where students have to stay in a hotel for excessive amounts of money or even have to live in a tent on a camp side. *"Also there are 10 more people in the same situation as us, having to live at a hostel because we cannot find places to stay"* – report 9. and *"Because I have not been able to find a room, I am living in a small tent on a camping place south of Leiden."* – report 8.

The Housing Hotline provided these students with a list of tips and tricks, focused on the specific city the student was trying to seek accommodation for.

Problems with deposit

The category 'problems with deposit' has gotten three reports which were specifically about the restitution of the deposit. Some students have left their room but are unable to get any response

from their landlord concerning the restitution of the deposit. This leads to the fact that they do not get their deposit returned. *“I had spoken to the landlord prior to moving out about the return of the keys and the deposit and she said we would arrange this once we had moved out, which I thought was fair enough. Since then she has not been in contact with us at all.”* – report 12. Some students have even been working to get their deposit back for over three months, without success. *“I have been trying to get my previous landlord to pay me the deposit back for 3 months and it's just not working.”* – report 13. The Housing Hotline has helped these students understand their rights and helped writing a formal letter to the agency or landlord.

Other landlords do answer but refuse to pay a part of the deposit back, without specific or legal reasons. *“I really believe that there was no damage in the house that justifies keeping so much money. My housemate and I tried to speak with her nicely, but she is not changing her mind. What can I do to have my deposit (or at least most of it) back?”* – report 30. The Housing Hotline has made these students aware of their rights and helped writing a formal letter to the agency or landlord.

There were some more reports which partly concerned the restitution of the deposit, but have been placed in other categories such as help with rental contract. This decision has been made because the answer focusses on the articles in the rental contract. For example, some landlords try to make up a certain deficit of the electricity bill by holding back the deposit. *“The issue now is that right before he was going to move out, he was contacted and told that he would not receive his deposit before they had checked how much water and electricity had been used.”* – report 14.

Help with registration/rent benefit

Registering with the municipality is mandatory if a student stays in The Netherlands for more than four months. A lot of international students are unaware of this rule because they are unfamiliar with Dutch law. Therefore, the Housing Hotline has received some questions regarding the registration with the municipality. *“I am going to RSM for exchange for about 6 months. I want to know whether I need to register in city hall. Since I have no idea about the regulations in Dutch.”* – report 15. Some landlords refuse to obey to this rule and tell their tenants not to register at city hall. This raises questions among international students. *“If the landlord says that it is not possible to register at his address, can I still register at the City Hall of Rotterdam?”* – report 16. The Housing Hotline has provided these students with information regarding rules.

Rent benefit is another subject which is unclear to international students. They might have heard of the possibility of applying for rent benefit, but do not know about the specific rules or where to apply. *“Someone mentioned that I may be entitled to a partial refund on my rent each month. How do I know if I qualify?”* – report 17. The Housing Hotline has helped these students by explaining rules regarding registration and rent benefit and provided some helpful links to websites where they can apply for benefit.

Intimidation/danger

The category intimidation/danger is the most painful category of all. Cases of intimidation and danger are very specific to the individual. The Housing Hotline has received three reports about cases of extreme intimidation and/or danger. In one case, the landlord sold the belongings of the tenant while he/she was away. When the tenant addressed this fact to the landlord, the tenant received threats. *“I have agreed with my landlord that he does some modifications and repairs for the apartment while I was away ... I came back ... to find all my belongings gone. This includes two laptops, a university laptop with all my work on and a private laptop, all my official documents, equipments and clothes. ... I phoned my landlord to ask him about my belongings. He replied that he*

threw everything away as he thought they belonged to the previous tenant. I pointed out that my name was on the boxes and the items were well packed and stored and that he should not have opened them. He said that he is not to blame and he does not know my name. He also threatened me that his family have a lawyers firm and that if I were to sue him I will not get anywhere. I have a voice recording of the conversation which I passed to the police. I found my belongings being sold on Marktplaats later” – report 18

Another poignant story of intimidation/danger concerns a story where an international student had booked and paid for a room from their home country, without signing any contract. When he/she wanted to leave the room, the landlord refused to return the deposit because of the absence of a contract. *“I had booked a room in Rotterdam on June. The deal sealed over the phone so there is no written contract. I paid rent for July and August without staying in the room plus deposit. ... I announced to him on 3rd of October that I will move out. Now he refuses to give me back the deposit ... his response was “because we do not have a contract I am not obligated to give you the deposit back””*

Maintenance issues

Certain types of maintenance are mandatory for the landlord to fix. International students are usually unaware of their specific rights regarding maintenance of the house but they do realise that a defect, mould for example, needs to be fixed by the landlord. *“There is a huge problem with mould and fungi growing inside the walls, apart from smelling terrible, it is very dangerous for our health.” – report 26.* However, when these students contact the rental agency, they get little to no response. *“The place is infested with mice and bedbugs. The landlord has contracted an (amateur looking) fumigator to come spray the rooms once in a while. The mice are largely gone but the bedbugs keep coming back, even though he sprayed my room 5 times already. ... I've contacted the landlord on numerous occasions as well as [housing corporation], but they just keep suggesting that the fumigator should come again. As this is obviously not working, they do not seem to be able to fix the problem.” – report 27.* and *“What I am trying to emphasise is that our apartment is in an uninhabitable state, the entire hallway is mouldy which not only affects my health but also the health of my roommates. This situation is not endurable and not meeting the standards that have been promised in my contract. I wrote [housing corporation] several E-Mails but they are ignoring them.”*

The Housing Hotline has tried to explain the necessary steps to get the rental agency or landlord to fix the defect. If this seemed impossible, the Housing Hotline has advised these students to send an official e-mail to the landlord/agency where they state the defects and give a certain timeframe to fix these. If the landlord refused to fix the defect, a tenant can get the defect fixed by a professional organisation and later bill the expenses to the landlord.

Help with contract

Rental contract for internationals aren't always written in English. Sometimes, they are written in Dutch. Of course, most international students are unable to read and understand these contracts. Therefore, some students have sent their contract to the Housing Hotline to be checked. *“Well, my future-landlord just send me a rental contract for my room, but it is written in Dutch. Obviously, I do not speak any Dutch and I do not understand most of the contract. Do you have any tips or even may help with translation?” – report 20.* The Housing Hotline has translated these contracts and checked the content of these contracts as well.

Other than the language of the contract, many questions the Housing Hotline has received concern the type of contract and the conditions for termination of the contract. After corresponding with the

students about their contracts, where some of the students sent us a copy of the contract, it turned out that the questions were mainly about the so-called Short Stay contracts. With a Short Stay contract, the student cannot terminate the contract earlier than the date which was agreed at the time of signing the contract. This caused some confusion for international students. They were confused about the fact that there was no possibility to terminate the contract, while the Dutch law regarding termination of contracts does allow a tenant to terminate a contract with a specific term of notice. *"I heard that Dutch law allows us to terminate our housing contract (and I checked it by myself of course). However student housing office does not allow us to terminate our housing contract and even if we want to leave our room earlier than our end-date of contract, we should pay for the rent till our contract lasts. ... Why do not they allow us to have the choice of early termination? And is there any way to solve successfully this kind of unfair system?"* – report 21. and *"According to website of Dutch government; 'tenant who has fixed-period agreement of up to 2 years can terminate my tenancy before the final date.' If this can apply my situation, I think I can shorten my period to stay. But according to my contract with [rental agency]; '3.Landlord and tenant agree that this is a rental agreement for a set period of time. This contract cannot be cancelled during this period.' Is it possible to write this sentence in the contract, though this may be against the description by Dutch government?"* – report 22. Short Stay contracts caused a lot of confusion among international students. Especially when the living conditions were not what they expected or they found out that the rent price of their housing was not in proportion with the quality of the room and rooms of other (national) students.

The Housing Hotline has explained the regulations regarding Short Stay contracts and provided these students with suggestions on terminating the contract such as seeking another tenant.

Another category which had been listed under 'help with contract' are questions regarding administration costs. It has shown that some agencies focused on international students ask up to hundreds of euros of fees which they list under administration costs. However, according to Dutch law these costs are called mediation costs, and are usually not legal. International students were usually not aware of this. *"The man renting out the apartment is representing the property owner, and does the contact with tenants for the property owner. I have to pay an agency fee the first month of 340 euro to get the apartment, is this allowed?"* – report 23.

Conclusions

This report has shown various issues international students experience when it comes to their housing situation in The Netherlands. From all the data, three main issues emerged. These issues can be briefly formulated as i) problems finding a room; ii) limited knowledge of the Dutch system regarding the housing market and iii) vulnerability which makes international students an easy target to be taken advantage of by landlords. These three issues will be explained further below.

Problems finding a room

Many international students face huge issues finding housing prior to their arrival. As stated before, housing that is available at the moment of arrival in the host country is a necessity for international students. Unlike Dutch students, international students do not have a place to fall back on. The Housing Hotline has received various emails from students who are unable to find a room.

Some students did not receive enough help or information on the Dutch housing market from the host university. The lack of information leaves them clueless about how the Dutch housing market works, as this can be extremely different from their home country. It has turned out that very basic tips like referring to websites of housing corporations or an explanation about ‘hospiteren’¹ can be a huge help. The fact that this basic information is such an eye-opener for these students, shows how little information they sometimes get from the host university.

Other students might know where to look for a room but still experience issues whilst trying to find a place to live. Firstly, ‘hospiteren’, the main way to find student housing in The Netherlands, is basically impossible from abroad. As explained before, the residents usually organize a meeting for possible candidates. Students who are not living in The Netherlands aren’t able to show up to this meeting. Apart from this, Dutch students are not always willing to organize a meeting via Skype or other social media, which leaves no chances for the international student to apply. Secondly, not all Dutch students are willing to live together with internationals in the first place. They place banners like ‘NO INTERNATIONALS’ above the advertisement, which reduces the number of possibilities for internationals. Lastly, these problems are increased by the huge shortage of student housing that most big cities in The Netherlands face. Even for Dutch students it can take months to find a place to live. Given the two factors listed above, this problem is even bigger for internationals.

Limited knowledge on their rights

Every country has their own law, implications and various other ways the national and local systems work. As these are already unclear to most Dutch students, it becomes even harder for international students to understand the Dutch system. Although the implications can be very serious if the situation is not handled correctly, a knowledge deficit can be fixed by some support from a Dutch resident with knowledge on the subject. Although this kind of problem seems easy to fix, the access to a Dutch person with the relevant knowledge is a necessary factor, and this is not always a given to everyone. It is therefore necessary for international students to have access to services that can support them on these issues.

Other issues which arise from the limited knowledge about the Dutch system are less easy to fix and have serious consequences. An example is when an international student is unaware of the legislation regarding issues such as maintenance of the house or the price limit for student rooms.

¹ The ‘hospiteeravond’ gives the residents the opportunity to choose their new roommate. They list the room online where possible candidates can show their interest. The residents will then organize a meeting for the chosen candidates. After this meeting, the ‘hospiteeravond’, the residents choose their new roommate.

This may lead to an international living in unbearable situations where a room is covered in mould or a kitchen or bathroom is falling apart. The same accounts for contracts which are frequently used for internationals, like the short stay contract or fees like administration costs. Most international students are unaware of Dutch law regarding housing and therefore believe that the things they're told are according to law or general practice. This might not always be the case. The Housing Hotline has shown that landlords or agencies frequently tell international students things which are against the law, like making up a certain deficit of the electricity bill and holding back the deposit. Because these internationals do not know any better, they believe that the things the landlord tells them are according to the rules. It is necessary that these students have a place where they can ask their questions regarding the Dutch system, so situations as explained in this paragraph can be prevented.

Vulnerability: easy target to be taken advantage of

The third issue, vulnerability to be taken advantage of, raises partly from the previous issue, the limited knowledge about the Dutch system. International students that do not know how the system works generally believe the things Dutch people tell them. Even if these things are in fact against the law. Not every international has access to a place where they can check the facts they have been told. The shortage of knowledge makes international students vulnerable to be taken advantage of.

Another factor which leads to vulnerability is the fact that international students usually do not have a support system in The Netherlands to fall back on. Their family and friends are most likely not living in The Netherlands. As pointed out earlier, this means that internationals need a place to stay from the moment they arrive in The Netherlands. They are therefore more likely to accept anything they can get, even if it is not ideal or not at all according to their wishes. Landlords are aware of this vulnerability and (more than often) take advantage of this. Some of the possible consequences of this vulnerability witnessed by the Housing Hotline are listed below.

Vulnerability can lead to

- Payment of illegal fees (mediation costs, high rent prices, no return of the deposit)
- Contracts with non-ideal conditions
- Cases in which the necessary maintenance of the house is not done
- Problems concerning the restitution of the deposit
- Pricing of the room which is not according to law
- Not being registered at the municipality and therefore staying in The Netherlands illegally
- Intimidation
- Threats (because they do not know the way the system works they believe a landlords' threats)

It is necessary that various stakeholders such as the university and the municipality are aware of the possible consequences of the vulnerability of international students. Measures should be taken to protect these internationals against the possible consequences of this vulnerability.

Attachment 1: Housing Hotline form

In order to be able to assist you as quickly as possible, we would like to ask you to answer the following questions:

In what category would you place your question/issue?*

What question/issue do you have regarding your current housing situation?*

*please be as specific as possible**

What is your name?*

What is your gender?*

What is your age?*

What is your e-mail address?*

What is your phone number?

fill in only if you wish to be contacted via phone

What kind of international student are you?*

What kind of programme are you doing?*

In which city do you live?*

--

If this is different from the city you study, please specify!

What is your current housing situation?*

From whom do you rent this house?

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How much do you pay for your current housing situation?

☐ tick this if this includes service costs

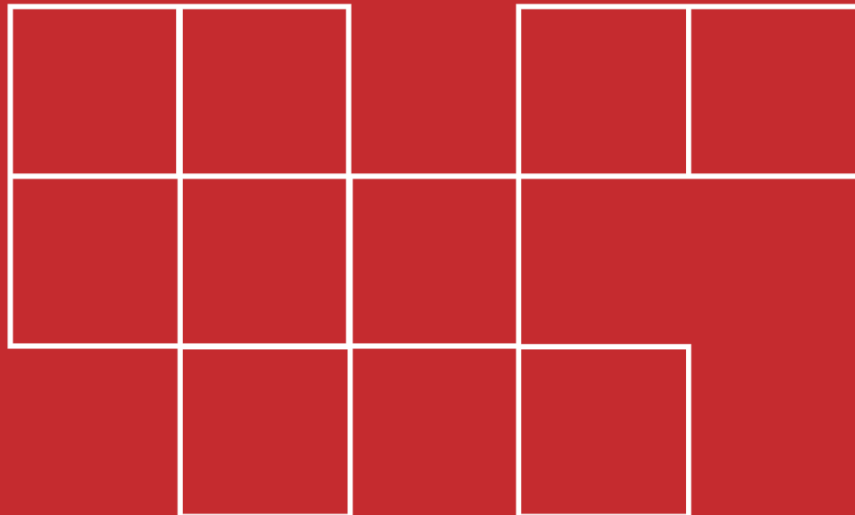
How did you get to know about this hotline?

University or school

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?



Send

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3500 BH Utrecht

Visiting adress:

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3511 BJ Utrecht

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