Text: Sanne Tummers
Photos: Joris Hilterman

# Living and working on the Sorbonnelaan student campus

The area on the Sorbonnelaan in the Maastricht neighbourhood of Randwyck looked somewhat bare and remote about two years ago. This was mainly due to the modular and temporary appearance of [**the student houses that were quickly built there**](https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/news/extra-housing-units-maastricht-um-students). Meanwhile, the area is increasingly taking on the character of a real student campus thanks to the green areas, meeting places and the mix of students coming and going every day. The campus is now home to over 800 students. What’s it like to live and work here? We asked during a tour of the campus grounds.

About the location:
Some 900 studios have been built on the Sorbonnelaan site in Randwyck over the past two years. These are largely occupied by students. In addition, a small part has been set up as an assisted living facility for care organisation LEVANTO Group. In this way, different people come together at the location. The studios are 18m2 and have their own kitchen, bathroom and toilet. Most are offered furnished. The complex is managed by Plaza Resident Services and has a caretaker present on weekdays. In addition, someone from the management company is available 24/7 in case of emergencies. Residents can use various communal areas. They also live opposite MUMC+ and in close proximity to UM’s Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience, Faculty of Health Medicine and Life Sciences and the Faculty of Science and Engineering.

### **Sergio Aspers, Property Manager Plaza Resident Services:**

‘For parents, it is often reassuring to leave their son or daughter here. After all, these are frequently young students leaving home for the first time. In the case of international students, this is often far from home as well. Then this feels like a safe environment. The student studios meet all contemporary requirements when it comes to safety (fire and otherwise). In that respect, you might be better off here than in a room somewhere in an old building in the city centre. Moreover, there is camera surveillance and a caretaker present during the day.’

### **Manuel Baptista (19) from Portugal, first-year student Economics & Operations Research at Maastricht University:**

‘I started my housing search very early when I knew I was going to move to Maastricht, but it was very difficult to find something. Through Plaza Resident Services' website, I eventually ended up here and then things moved fast. My first year is now over and I have completely found my niche here. I really like the fact that I have my own kitchen and bathroom. It feels like my own place. And if I feel like having company, I find it here or I go into town. My faculty is in the city centre, so I go there regularly anyway.’

### **Gilbert Kole, Caretaker Plaza Resident Services:**

‘Obviously, you are dealing with students who are experiencing their first taste of freedom and come from all corners of the world. That requires extra supervision from time to time, and makes it important to keep communicating about the rules and agreements we have here. At the same time, it also ensures that the atmosphere is good and there is a lot of personal contact. Now that quite a few students live here and there are places to meet inside and outside, the campus is very lively and happening. We also hear this from local residents; they experience it as pleasant and see it as an added value for the neighbourhood.’

### **Esin Cam from Turkey, first-year student Maastricht Science Programme at Maastricht University:**

‘When I just moved in, I was worried that I might be a bit isolated here at a distance from the city centre, but it ended up being much better than I expected. Even though everyone has their own place, there is a lot of social contact among us. There are so many nationalities walking around here. That makes for a nice atmosphere where I feel at home. The public transport to the city could be a bit better. Especially if, like me, you are not used to biking a lot in the cold and rain.’

### **Daphne Philippen, Personal Attendant LEVANTO Group:**

‘From LEVANTO, we offer assisted living places to over 20 residents here. These are young people aged between 16 and 27 who, for all kinds of reasons, need ( often temporary) support in living independently. There are certainly quite a few challenges to living together with students here. For instance, it is sometimes difficult for our residents to appreciate that students are freer to make their own choices. On the other hand, very nice contact develops among them. Students and our residents seek each other out in the common areas. You notice that our residents are positively stimulated by, for instance, other languages and new sports and ways to spend time. There is even a resident who repairs students' bikes. That's great to see!’

Shahana Musharat (31) from Bangladesh, student Data Science at Maastricht University:

‘My first impression when I came here? Actually, it was good right away. For me it's a real relief to have my own facilities and not have to share anything. Finally my own place: that makes me very happy. The studio is not big, but if you want, you can go somewhere else too. Contact with others is also very easy here. Everyone is very helpful; we are all in the same situation: far from home in an unknown city. That creates a bond. And of course I am very close to the faculty, within walking distance. You can easily get to the city by bike. I really like the route along the water, at least when it's not too cold.’

*In text box:*
Smart solutions in tackling housing shortages

As in many other university cities in the Netherlands, it is often very difficult for students in Maastricht to find housing. Together with the municipality, province and other partners, Maastricht University focuses on creative and innovative solutions inside, and certainly also outside, Maastricht in order to help every student find a home. In this series, we would like to take you along to some of these places and talk to residents and others involved about their experiences at that location. This edition: the Sorbonnelaan in Randwyck, Maastricht.