



Foto: Bike Kitchen

international

Starting in March, learn how to repair your own bike on the Roeterseiland campus



Thirza Lont,
30 november 2022 - 09:55

Betreft UvA Roeterseilandcampus studenten

Deel op  

Starting next year, students and staff on the Roeterseiland campus can learn to repair their bikes at the Bike Kitchen. Interdisciplinary

social science student Romee Nicolai (23) is involved in the project and explains. "A lot of my friends can't even fix a flat tire, but it's not complicated if someone just explains to you how to do it."

Romee Nicolai was born and raised an Amsterdammer, and like many Amsterdammers, cycles all over the city. There are routes she has been covering since childhood—first to school, to friends and later from Amsterdam-West to the Roeterseiland Campus (REC). She also worked as a bicycle courier for more than three years.



Romee Nicolai

That Nicolai has a passion for cycling is partly due to her father. With him, she built her own road bike last year. “You used to buy a bike for life. Now if just one thing breaks, people already trade in their bike for a new model, my father always says. That got me thinking.”

Not complicated

In the context of sustainability, it would be much better if people used their bikes “for life,” or at least learned to repair them themselves. “Because many of my friends can’t even fix a flat tire. But it’s not complicated if someone just explains to you how to do it.” From that thought, the idea of the Bike Kitchen started: a place in the bike shed under the REC’s A-building where students and staff learn to repair their bikes themselves with the help of professionals. Nicolai is working with several UvA students and staff here on the project and is in charge.

I’m curious, where does the name Bike Kitchen come from?

“Bike Kitchen is an international collective with branches in cities like Barcelona, Berlin and Helsinki. The name comes from Soup Kitchen. At a Soup Kitchen, you can make a meal in a group, for and by people who have little money. Since the Bike Kitchen, like the Soup Kitchen, focuses on repairing bikes together, we gave the initiative that name.”

You set up the Bike Kitchen in collaboration with the UvA. How did that come about?

“During the placemaking course, we worked a lot with people from the professional field. That’s how I got to know Suzanne Hansen. She works within the study Computational Social Science as a community-maker. She also works for the REC Impact project on Roeterseiland. I mentioned my side job to her—I worked for a bicycle courier company. We talked about the importance of cycling and how it fits into a sustainable city. Within the UvA, cycling professor Marco te Brömmelstroet, among others, had been toying with the idea of setting up a Bike Kitchen on campus for some time. And because I have such a passion for cycling and this initiative also fits within my studies, I was asked by Suzanne to participate. It is a social enterprise supported by sponsors and volunteers, for and by students.”

“If you make something together with people, you make a connection more easily, so Bike Kitchen also performs a social function.”

What is the importance of a Bike Kitchen?

“Coincidentally, I was talking to someone about that the other day. If you make something together with people, then you connect more easily. So Bike Kitchen also performs a social function, especially for international students, because they often don’t know many people. Our initiative gives them the chance to get to know their fellow students. The social aspect also includes making people feel good when they fix something broken themselves. In addition, a Bike Kitchen is sustainable. Our initiative ensures that people get more use out of their bikes and learn how to repair their bikes themselves. And cycling is environmentally friendly, too.”

What do you like about it?

“As project leader, I have a lot of responsibility. The leadership role is a position that suits me. In the hospitality industry, for example, I was always a manager and at the bicycle courier company I was responsible for recruiting, hiring and training people. I also like teaching people how to make their own things. People are amazed at what they can do themselves.”

When will the Bike Kitchen open?

“After the Christmas holidays, the renovation of the bike basement will start, with the space being renovated and converted into a bike repair area. We aim to open in March. The plan is for the space to be open three half-days a week, and to have a bike repair shop. Until then, I want to give workshops on the idea of a Bike Kitchen. I will probably also be there three days a week as a point of contact for staff and students. I’m really looking forward to it.”

Are you interested in this or would you like to attend a workshop? Check out the [Instagram account](#). For more information see [here](#).



During a Bike Kitchen workshop

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Foto: Sara Kerklaan

international

Pepijn Stoop | Where are the women in AI?



Pepijn Stoop,
28 november 2022 - 11:57

Betreft Kunstmatige Intelligentie UvA
Vrouwen in de wetenschap

Deel op  

Let me start off this column by stating two obvious things: diversity is important, and within artificial intelligence (AI) and computer science it could be a lot better. Although I had already noticed during the first two years of my bachelor's that the female-to-male ratio was always a paltry 25/75, it only really became clear to me during my first KI-related side job.

Even during my first college orientation four years ago, it was obvious to me: the computer science/KI corner is dominated by white, straight, cisgender men. Although I knew that this course was more popular with men, nothing could have prepared me for when I first walked into a computer science class at Leiden University.

There I stood in the doorway of the lecture hall with my painted nails, looking out over a sea of uniform Jack & Jones sweaters. There was exactly one woman in the room. When I sat down and grabbed my pink notebook, there were giggly comments about it. Ouch. Now that I work as a Machine Learning Engineer, I see the exact same pattern: not a single female developer works for us, and I am the only queer person in the workplace.

It is no secret that women still have a subordinate position in Dutch science faculty: Folia reporter Thirza Lont wrote about this as recently as February of this year. One could argue that AI and computer science at the UvA follow a similar pattern. But within that branch of natural sciences, the balance tips even further in the male direction: the male-female ratio within university computer science is on average 90/10. What exactly the ratio is at the UvA for bachelors' of KI and computer science cannot be found: neither on the bachelors' programs website, nor at external sources, such as Studiekeuze123.

In addition, within the bachelor's KI, the number of female lecturers has decreased to one in recent years. Computer systems professor Ana Varbanescu was replaced by a man this year, as was B. Afshari (named Bea among students) of Problem Solving and Search. Both professors were well-liked among students. Just the other day I was talking with fellow students about how enthusiastically Ana could always explain things and that she won a place in people's hearts in no time, especially among my female classmates. Although the faculty has long struggled with a high faculty turnover due to temporary contracts, I think this is a huge loss of role models and diversity.

This is in spite of the fact that women programmers have always been there: they decoded secret messages from the Nazis for the UK Intelligence Agency in World War II, programmed the code for the Concorde in the 1960s with pen and paper from home, and co-wrote the code that put the first man on the moon. Yet in 2022, we hide behind the fact that women are simply not interested in robotics, for example. The UvA should more actively promote female role models, at least in the undergraduate KI teaching team. More women within KI and computer science, especially in times of extreme labor shortages, are more than welcome.

Pepijn Stoop is an artificial intelligence student at the UvA.

Lees meer over Kunstmatige Intelligentie UvA Vrouwen in de wetenschap