



WRITING RETREAT

sponsored by CSPA, WCSG and WASS | 14-17 august 2023

Writing retreats have proven to provide a favourable environment for PhDs and post-docs to write papers, draft chapters of their dissertation, or prepare abstracts for conferences. The purpose of the writing retreat was to offer dedicated time and space for PhDs and post-docs to focus on writing, enhancing focus, motivation and productivity.

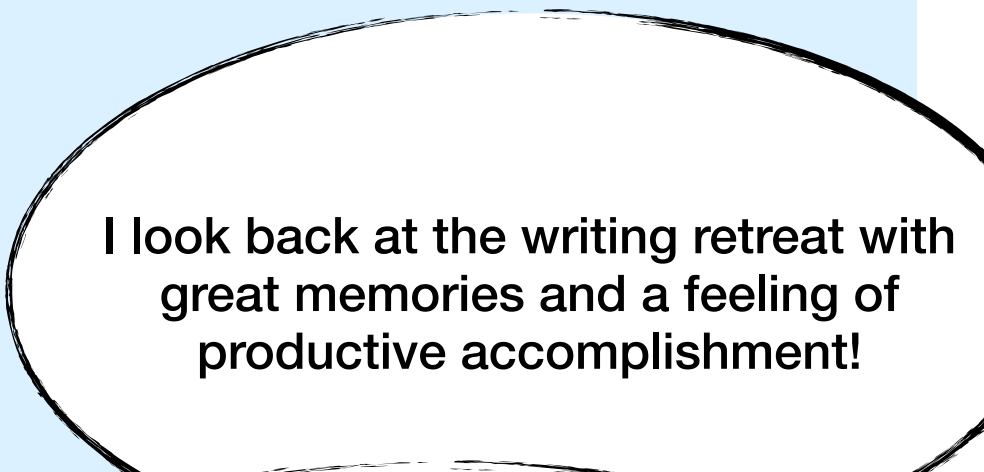
With this in mind, an enthusiastic team of PhDs within the Centre for Space, Place and Society (CSPS) and Wageningen Centre for Sustainability and Governance (WCSG) had decided to organise a writing retreat. The partnering of these two research clusters allowed to bring together the PhDs and post-docs of the following chair groups:

- Cultural Geography (GEO)
- Health and Society (HSO)
- Rural Sociology (RSO)
- Sustainable of Development and Change (SDC)
- Forest and Nature Conservation Policy (FNP)
- Environmental Policy (ENP)
- Public Administration and Policy (PAP)
- Law (LAW)
- Consumption and Healthy Lifestyles (CHL)

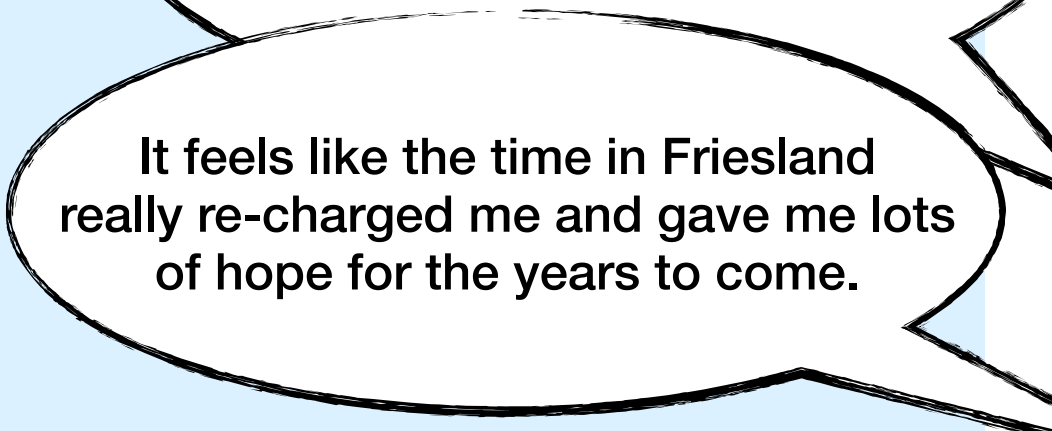
This report gives a brief overview of what the writing retreat entailed.

We are very grateful to CSPS, WCSG and WASS for their financial contribution to this retreat.

The organising team: Florian Albronda, Samantha Elkhuisen, Lisanne Geboers, Iris de Leeuw, Maria de Wit, Yulia Kisora.



I look back at the writing retreat with great memories and a feeling of productive accomplishment!

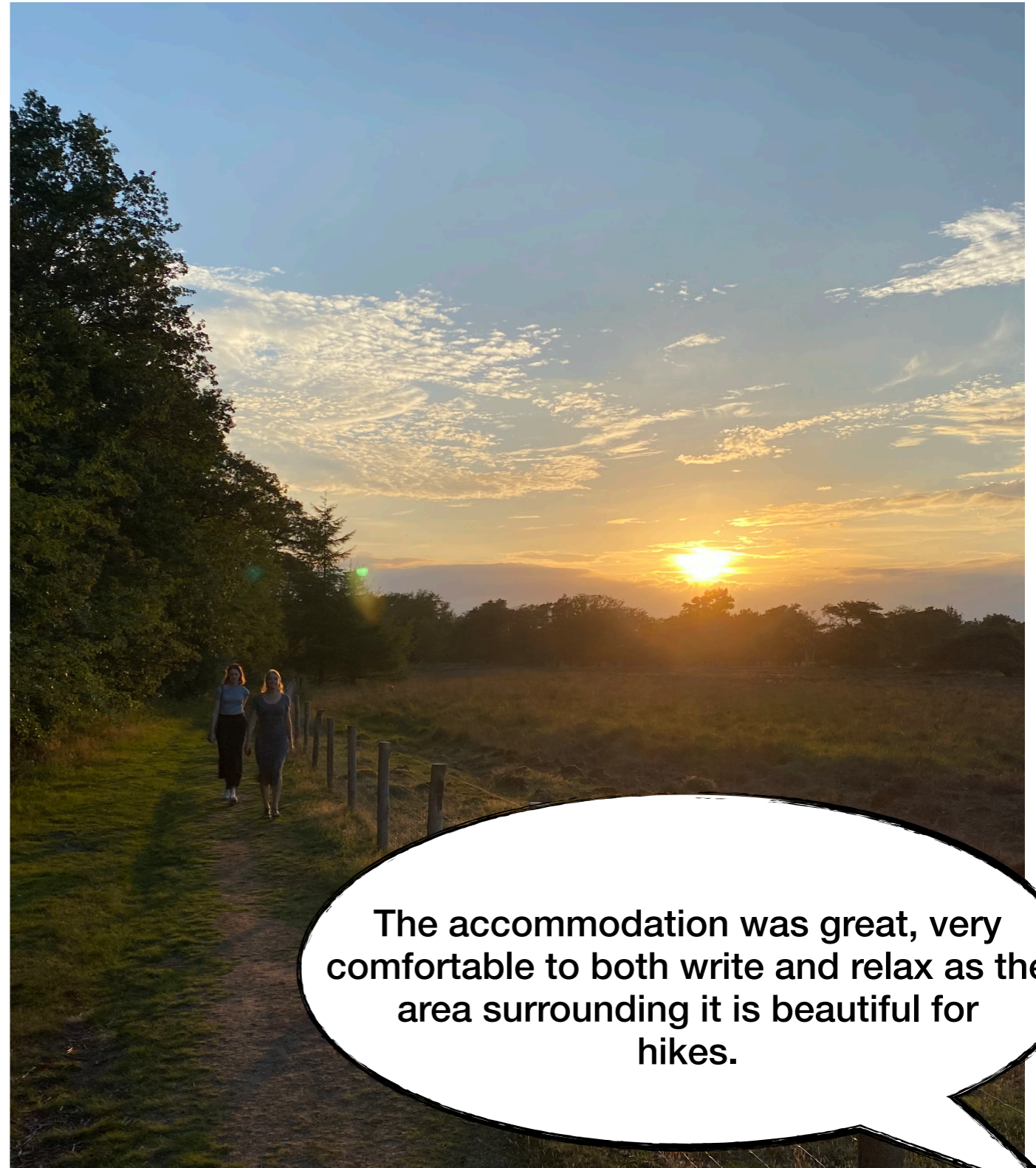


It feels like the time in Friesland really re-charged me and gave me lots of hope for the years to come.

The retreat took place at Nieuw Allardsoog in Bakkeveen, Friesland. Nieuw Allardsoog is located near a natural area which provided an opportunity to go on daily hikes in the picturesque fields covered with flowering heath and visited by horses and sheep. Admittedly distant from the Wageningen campus, the location was nevertheless easily reached by car(pooling) and public transport.

The accommodation had several working spaces that varied in size and type of sitting arrangements so everyone could set themselves up for their best productivity level. On top of two main working rooms, there was plenty of space available for those who needed to have a meeting, work by themselves or in small groups, or simply take a short break.

The retreat was fully catered with a vegetarian/vegan buffet-style breakfast, lunch and dinner and free unlimited coffee/tea to power up through the day.



The accommodation was great, very comfortable to both write and relax as the area surrounding it is beautiful for hikes.

02 Location



“Regarding the accommodation, there were enough spaces for people to sit and work. It helped me to do my writing in a space where not so many other people were sitting. For people who preferred to work in a room with other people, there were also plenty of possibilities. So it is nice to have possibilities for both preferences available.”



“The vegetarian food! It was really delicious and I was happy that there were options”

03 Programme | Writing

The programme was put together with focus on, first and foremost, securing a good daily structure and workflow for writing. The days were kicked off with two (voluntary) 30 minutes-long workouts lead by the participants themselves. Thanks to their skills and enthusiasm, we got to practice yoga, jogging, kickboxing and meditation. After breakfast, participants in the two biggest working rooms vigorously used Pomodoro-technique to give their day structure and allow for the synergy in working together. They later reflected that it helped them to maintain focus and track progress, as well as encouraged them to keep the practice of writing together alive. As one of the participants reflected: “Such events do not only create a great working atmosphere during the time of the retreat, but also left many of us with the ambition to continue writing together in self-organized writing sessions.”

| FINAL PROGRAM WRITING RETREAT 2023 | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| TIME | Monday 14 August | Tuesday 15 August | Wednesday 16 August | Thursday 17 August |
| 7:30 – 8:30 <i>Not obligated, walk-in when you want</i> | | 07:30 – 08:00 Energizing morning yoga by Alexandra | 07:30 – 08:00 Kickboxing by Helena | 07:30 – 08:00 Morning yoga flow by Dienne |
| | | 08:00 – 08:30 Sit spot by Ravi | 08:00 – 08:30 Morning run (easy talking tempo) by Sofia | 08:00 – 08:30 Morning walk by Thirza |
| 8:30 – 9:30 | | Breakfast | Breakfast | Breakfast |
| 9:30 – 10:30 | | Writing session | Writing session | Writing session |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | | Coffee break | Coffee break | Coffee break |
| 10:45 – 12:30 | | Writing session | Writing session | Writing session |
| 12:30 – 13:30 | | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch |
| 13:30 – 15:30 | | Writing workshop | Workshop 'Outsmarting the imposter' | Reflection on week Departure |
| 15:30 – 16:00 | | Coffee/tea break | Coffee/tea break | Writing session |
| 16:00 – 18:00 | Arrival; Coffee/tea | Writing session | Writing session | |
| 18:00 | Welcome; Dinner | Dinner | Dinner | |
| Evenings | Free time: writing, go on a walk, drinks, play games, relax, etc. | Pub quiz | Free time: board games, karaoke, movie night, etc. | |

During this program, I can be at my best level of productivity with a good balance in my resting and relaxation time.

The structured schedule, Pomodoro sessions, and very supportive environment allowed me to make significant progress on my paper.

Scientific Writing

On Tuesday, the workshop was provided by Griet Coupé from In'to Languages Radboud/Wageningen and focused on efficient writing strategies. In this workshop, we learned to identify different types of writers in ourselves and detect and overcome pitfalls in academic writing.

Outsmarting the Imposter

On Wednesday, the workshop was about building mental resilience in academia. Provided by Anna Tijsseling from Academic Authenticity, it encouraged the participants to explore their internal dialogues to identify one or more of five self-undermining narratives.

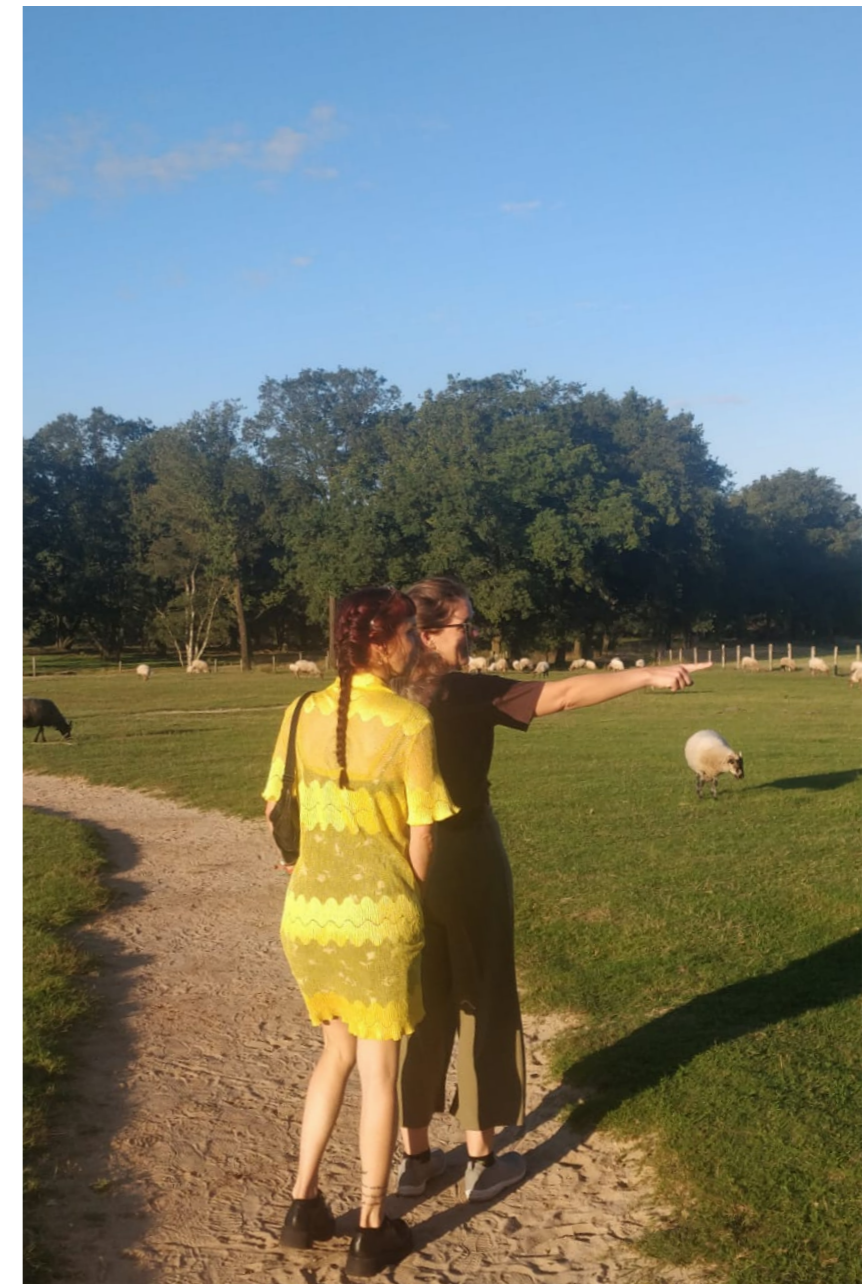


03 Programme | Social activities

In the evenings participants went on nature walks and socialised during a pub-quiz, board games and team sports. Many of us have greatly appreciated this chance to connect with our colleagues. All in all, many participants considered the retreat as a productive work week, well-balanced with convivial social activities and restorative power of nature walks.



“The writing retreat has been a PhD highlight, not just for the actual work achieved, but for networking and bonding with peers. The work time, good food, and evening activities were all in great balance. Saying it is “absolutely essential” is correct!”



“Being surrounded by fellows going through similar challenges is always a good reminder that we are not alone in this journey.”