

# SUMMARY REPORT WURTH-WHILE PROGRAMME

**Academic year 2024-2025**

September 2024 to August 2025



# 1 BACKGROUND

Refugees who are waiting for a residence permit in the Netherlands cannot enroll in a full degree programme at a university. Thanks to the WURth-while programme, refugee students with an academic background can take several courses at Wageningen University free of charge. Participants can orient themselves by taking about three or four courses (one course per teaching period). In this way, even in times of hardship, they can continue to develop their talents.

The target group of the WURth-while programme consists of refugee students in the region around Wageningen. Most participants come from Wageningen, Ede, Arnhem, and Nijmegen. Other Dutch universities offer similar initiatives.

## 1.1 APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT

A total of 127 students applied this year. Of these, 76 students were able to participate in the courses, representing 58 unique students. Together they followed 76 courses, a clear increase compared to previous years. This growth confirms the strong need for this type of opportunity.

To avoid disappointment and ensure quality, we use a careful process consisting of three phases. We assess among other things: academic basic skills, English proficiency, motivation, and practical feasibility. After that, course coordinators evaluate whether a student meets the specific criteria for the course. Finally, we verify whether someone has not been affected by relocation or other circumstances that might prevent participation.

This year, 30 students did not pass the pre-selection, 9 students were not admitted to their chosen course, and due to changing circumstances, 12 students were ultimately unable to start.

Figure 1: student applications, outcome of selections, registrations and progress

	Applications	Rejected	Admitted	Withdrawn before start	Started	Dropouts	Completed
2024-2025	127	39	88	12	76	15	61

### Progress

The students who participate do so with great dedication. Most take one course, but some take two, three or even four during the year. The number of completed courses this year is 61, partly thanks to our stricter selection process, which leads to fewer dropouts and more continuity.

Figure 2: course registrations, courses started and courses completed

	Total applications	Started	Course completed	Succes rate
2023-2024	204	114	89	78%
2024-2025	127	76	61	80%

## 1.2 COURSE SELECTION

All chair groups made courses available for participation by WURth-while students. The selection of courses is very diverse and depends on the refugee student's prior knowledge. The Information Technology chair group, particularly the course Programming in Python, again attracted many participants this year.

## 1.3 NATIONALITIES

In the 2024–2025 academic year, WURth-while students came from 22 different countries: Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, India, Iran, Libya, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Russia, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

## 1.4 PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

WURth-while students were asked how they experienced taking courses at WUR, how they perceived the interaction with lecturers and fellow students, what it meant to them to be a WUR student, and what feedback they had for the project. They were very positive!

*“It gave me a break from the asylum procedure and environment. It added something to my identity, because I could identify as a Wageningen student.*

*Once, I saw someone on the train with a Wageningen student card; I immediately approached him and told him that I studied there as well. It made me feel part of the community of current students and alumni of Wageningen.”*

*“Keep going and don’t stop the programme, it is very helpful.”*

*“My participation in the course Fundamental Plant Pathology was extremely rewarding. It provided me with a wealth of knowledge about the latest techniques, theories, and developments in plant pathology. I was able to connect with experts and make new friends who shared my passion for plant health. All in all, it was a valuable learning experience that helped me advance my career in plant pathology.”*

## 1.5 FINANCIAL

The WURth-while project has an annual budget of €28,000, which is almost entirely used each year. Of this amount, €22,000 is spent on project coordination, and the remaining part is used to provide refugee students with a travel allowance so they can come to the Wageningen Campus.

# OUR MANIFESTO



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