


This is the story of Meriam.
And a bit of a Fontys story too.



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It is **October 2022**. Meriam has just turned 17. She is studying at a comprehensive school in her home town of Helmond. Her parents came to the Netherlands from Bosnia in 1994, having fled the civil war in the former Yugoslavia. This year, Meriam and her friends are going to explore their options for further education. She is stubborn: despite some of her classmates trying to talk her out of it, she has known for years that she wants to go into higher professional education. She knows that is better suited to her practical nature. But at which college it will be and, above all, which study programme, Meriam does not yet know. The choice is extremely difficult; she likes so many things and has so many interests. And there are so many professions and sectors that are important, socially and societally. Her parents, who never had the chance to study themselves, encourage Meriam to develop her talents. They go with her to open days and information meetings as

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- A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and red glasses stands on a modern staircase, pointing towards the camera. He is holding a large white arrow graphic that points downwards and to the right. The arrow contains a list of three options. The background shows a blurred office or public space with other people and large windows. A faint network diagram is overlaid on the right side of the image.
- a. I don't know yet
 - b. I still have my doubts
 - c. I know

often as possible and talk a lot with their daughter about this important decision.

But even so, how on earth is she supposed to make a decision?

She certainly doesn't want to regret her decision halfway through the first year...

In the meantime, it is **January 2023** and Meriam is making her first visit to Fontys. She is immediately enthusiastic: the informal and personal atmosphere, the inviting campus even in the middle of winter, the social engagement that is seen everywhere within Fontys, and the wide and varied range of study programmes all appeal to her very much. She gets the feeling that she can explore all kinds of directions at Fontys and that she can satisfy her curiosity to the fullest by taking minors and electives. Eventually, in March, a month or two before her final exams, she makes a decision.



It will be the Technical Nursing study programme at Fontys in Eindhoven.

*m*eriam's parents are very pleased with their daughter's choice: father Halil knows Fontys from his work. Recent graduates and trainees regularly come to work in the manufacturing company where they make parts for the automotive industry and they usually know their stuff. *Last but not least:* Fontys Eindhoven is nice and close by. Convenient, because it means that Meriam can continue living at home for the time being.

*I*t is **Autumn 2023**. Although it takes a while to get used to it at the beginning of her studies, Meriam soon realises that she has made a good choice. She quickly feels at home, both on campus and among her fellow students. The brand



new building, in which you really feel like you learn from practical experience, also feels good. And she also likes the intensive guidance she receives. The lecturers are almost all very approachable.

Her study counsellor is the 44-year-old Mark, one of the lecturers/researchers. Mark has been teaching at Fontys for about six years and previously worked in healthcare for many years. At that time, he made the switch to higher professional education (HBO) because he likes working with young people. From a social point of view, he also considers it very important to pass on his knowledge and experience to the care professionals of the future. The multidisciplinary development of people, focusing on their unique talents, is also close to his heart. The fact that Fontys is built on this approach makes it the perfect career choice for Mark.



It is **February 2025** when Mark asks Meriam if she wants to work, learn and do research in the so-called 'authentic learning and research environment' at the Elisabeth-TweeSteden Hospital in Tilburg. He is impressed by Meriam's drive to get the best out of herself and by her social engagement. It turns out to be a great move by Mark, because Meriam knows straight away that she has found her place; she can put all of her ambitions and practical strengths into practice here. What more could you wish for? Learning by working in the sector in which you want to end up and contributing to solving practical problems through research. And all of that while working closely with all kinds of different people: students, from first-year bachelor's to master's students and from all kinds of different disciplines, but also tutors/researchers, lecturers and professionals from the hospital.



Because of this close link between learning, research and working - Fontys focuses on developing people and their talents through direct and practical experience - Meriam really feels that she is contributing to social innovation. And therefore to society.

Does Meriam have any concerns or regrets about her choice for Fontys? No, she's way past all that. She's enjoying herself to the fullest.



Early in **2026** Meriam meets 48-year-old Marjan at the hospital. After a 20-year career as a nurse, Marjan now works in the care innovation department. One of the areas in which Marjan works is the innovation of cardiac surgery. The role of ICT, artificial intelligence and robotics is growing throughout the healthcare sector, but this is certainly true in one of the most complex forms of healthcare: cardiac surgery.

Marjan notices that, like her, Meriam is fascinated by the subject. Meriam chooses this subject as her graduation research topic; Marjan becomes her tutor in the hospital. Meriam devises a way to make use of students' knowledge and creative talents. The hospital gives her the opportunity to put her idea into practice. Together with Marjan, she organises a kind of tournament, a 'challenge' involving students from the TU/e, Fontys and Summa College. More than 200 students are challenged to come up with innovative and creative solutions or instruments to facilitate cardiac



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surgery. Experts from the field supervise the students and also assess the final results. The challenge, which takes place in the spring of 2027, is a great success and so is the working relationship between the experienced Marjan and the inquisitive Meriam.

Meriam completes her studies at Fontys with a grade of 8.5!

Understandably, Marjan is on the phone to Meriam straight after her graduation **in the summer of 2027**: would she like to come and be an asset to the care innovation department? And of course Meriam accepts, it's exactly what she wants to do. Working together very closely in a team consisting of people from all kinds of different disciplines and exploring new paths together to tackle existing problems or bottlenecks. Or working on improving processes with people who have



talent, who are driven and, above all, care deeply about their work and the patients. Another nice thing is that in the hospital she meets a lot of people she knows from her Fontys days, including people from very different study programmes. She sometimes gets the feeling that she is surrounded by Fontys alumni. In any case, she was wise to look so far beyond the boundaries of her own study programme, because now she can easily call on technicians, ICT specialists or other highly specialised experts in her work. And yet another nice thing is that she is still being asked to organise knowledge sessions for the new batch of students. Sometimes she does that at Fontys, other times the students come to the hospital. In addition, Fontys has asked her to keep the curriculum of the new healthcare programme in Venlo up to date. And she regularly supervises trainees from her own study programme and those in Venlo. Meriam is more than happy to do all of this.



It is now 2028 and Meriam feels completely at home in the hospital. Not that she will spend her whole working life there, she is far too ambitious for that. But it's perfect for the time being. She makes a meaningful contribution and notices this every day as the solutions she has helped to develop or extend improve patients' lives or make it easier for doctors and nurses to carry out their work.

Another important thing is that her employer gives her every opportunity to continue her education. A lifetime of development: this concept was spoon-fed to her at Fontys and it's really become second nature. Standing still is going backwards. Because changes take place so rapidly in her work, she can't imagine doing it without continuously updating her knowledge. The lines of communication are still short, so contact with Fontys for additional modules, courses and training is quickly established. And the great thing is that the opportunities on offer are not only very personal because Meriam can choose her own learning route and learning wishes,



but they also fit in well with her busy life. It's also nice to return to the nest from time to time and meet up with old acquaintances. Former students who are now teaching at Fontys or, like her, are returning for the next step on the road to 'a lifetime of development'.

*n*o, Meriam has never regretted for a second the choice she made as a 17-year-old student in 2023.

...and so as not to destroy the essence
within the series.

Gabriel Orozco's use of the moped as a motif is in keeping with the iconography that he has consistently pursued in his own work. In 2002, he created the sculpture *La DS*, in which he used a Citroën car. By cutting a section out of the middle of this classic car, he made a "one-seater": a hybrid between a classic and a complicated motorcycle which he made in 1994, in *Four Bicycles*. In 1994, in *Four Bicycles* (One Direction), he made a sculpture. With this Orozco was alluding to the Champ's 1917 seminal work, in which the motion of a bicycle was brought to a sculpture. Such a work is a product of interpretation are products of industrial work. Vehicles, which are products of industrial work, are brought into sculptures. *La DS*, by Gabriel Orozco, looks like a motorcycle.



The character of Meriam (like that of Mark and Marjan) is fictitious. But Meriam's story is a model for the opportunities students have when they study at Fontys. And for the path they can take from student to aspiring professional (and long afterwards!). Because the story takes place in the future (it is loosely based on the new 'Fontys for Society' strategy for the 2021-2025 period), certain other elements in the story may not (yet) be entirely realistic. But it does indicate the direction we have taken at Fontys, together with the relevant field of work, of course!

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