

de volksbank

Beter voor elkaar Annual Magazine 2023

HOW WE MADE A DIFFERENCE FOR THE NETHERLANDS



**People first.
Then money.**



**Money creates
happiness**

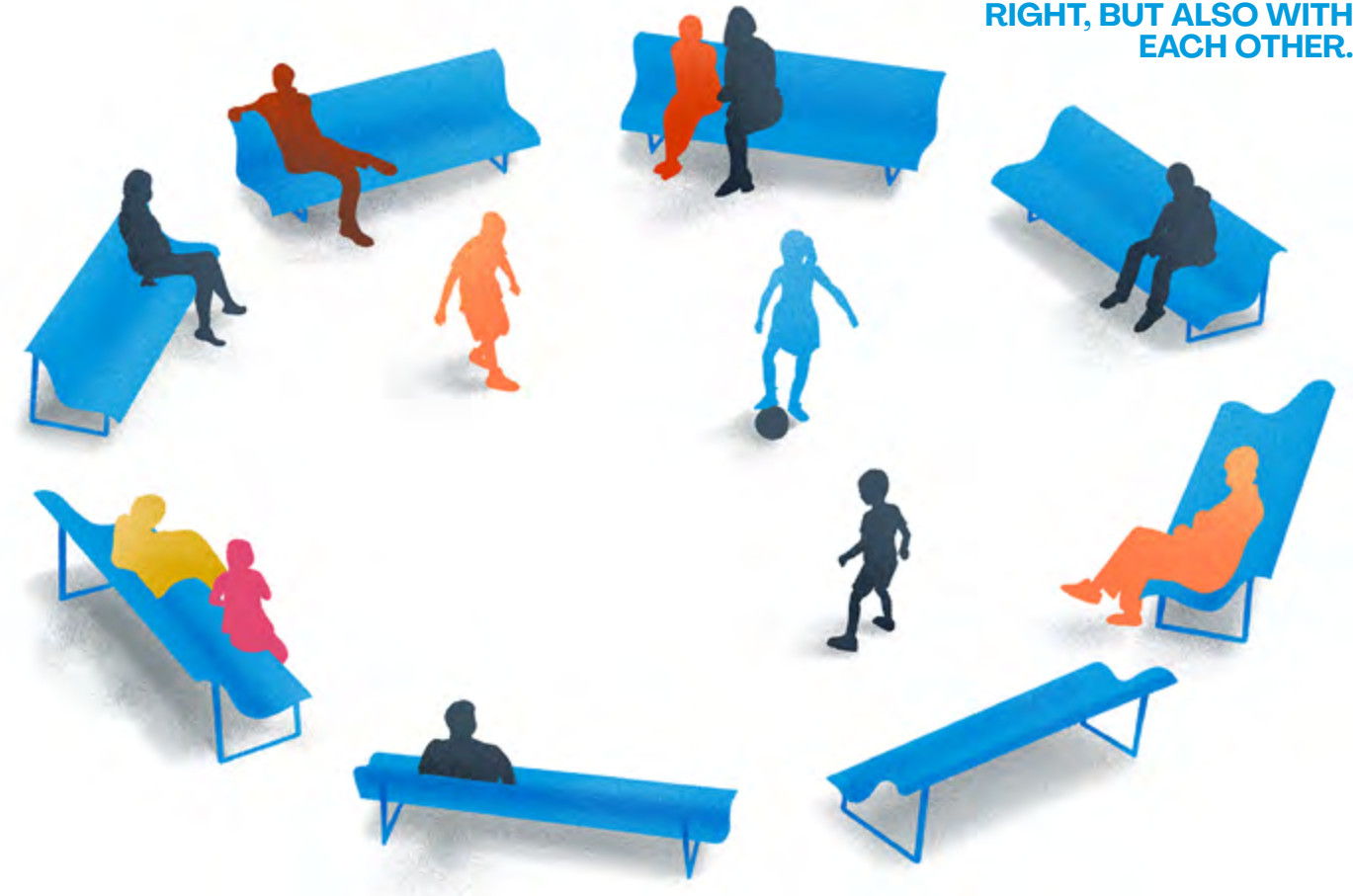


**The socially engaged
community bank**



**We see your
potential**

“
**TOGETHER WE WORK
 ACTIVELY TO MAKE OUR
 COUNTRY BETTER. EACH
 BRAND IN ITS OWN
 RIGHT, BUT ALSO WITH
 EACH OTHER.**”



What's this? A magazine issued by de Volksbank?

Yes, that's right, because we are there for everyone. That includes you – whether you are a customer or not, whether you know us really well or have never heard of us. We are the parent company of SNS, ASN Bank, RegioBank and BLG Wonen. Being a bank with more than 3 million customers, we want to stand out with our social impact. Put differently, together we make the Netherlands a little bit better. You will read in this magazine how we did that in 2023. That's a good way to get to know us a bit better.

Being bank people, we obviously love figures. But we understand all too well that the figures are not always clear. That's why this magazine gives you the stories behind the figures. Quite often, those stories are actually not about money at all – they are about people.

Each one of our brands presents its objectives and commitments and tells you what it did in 2023 to fulfil them. They do so by means of columns, overviews, short stories and interviews with customers and employees. You will also find a few figures here and there.

This magazine is published in addition to the official reports that together make up de Volksbank's Annual Report: the Integrated Annual Report and the corresponding Pillar 3 Report. Occasionally, we refer to them by means of a link in the text. You can click on it if you would like to know more.

We enjoyed making this magazine for you. We hope you will have just as much fun browsing through the pages. Enjoy!

The editors,
 on behalf of all of
 de Volksbank's employees



DOUBLE INTERVIEW

“ THE RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR CUSTOMERS HAS INTENSIFIED.

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75%
climate-neutral balance sheet

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Once again the most customer-friendly bank

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OUR STRATEGY

Building a better society together



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SOCIAL IMPACT

MAKING AN IMPACT IN THE NETHERLANDS; HOW WE DO IT

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1.7 mln

As much as 1.7 million children have used Eurowijs teaching materials

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Martijn Gribnau, CEO of de Volksbank, and Gerard van Olphen, Chair of the Supervisory Board, jointly look back on what de Volksbank and its brands have accomplished in 2023.

“
**THE RELATIONSHIP
WITH OUR
CUSTOMERS HAS
INTENSIFIED.**

M

Martijn eagerly and energetically set to work at de Volksbank in June 2020, just before a new strategy was to be launched: 'Better for each other - from promise to impact'. Gerard was already familiar with the bank, as he was the Chair of the Executive Board of the company formerly named SNS REAAL. He returned in August 2021 as the Chair of de Volksbank's Supervisory Board.

Martijn and Gerard, how would you say the bank is doing now?

Martijn: ‘Building a strong relationship with customers and creating a positive social impact – that’s where the focus lies for our bank and for all colleagues. I’m glad to see that we made progress on both counts in 2023. For example, we now have more customers who have purchased multiple products and services from us. That says something about the relationship with our customers, which has intensified. ASN Bank, RegioBank and SNS were also named the most customer-friendly banks once again. Getting appreciation for our role as a social bank is also apparent from the fact that we were recently included in Sustainalytics’ 2024 Top-Rated ESG Companies List. ESG stands for ‘Environmental, Social and Governance’. I’m proud that we’re doing so well on those aspects.’



← Martijn Gribnau, CEO of de Volksbank as from June 2020

Martijn: “That’s a possibility. I think that maybe not all customers really understand why we’re doing this. As a bank, we need to comply with strict laws and regulations. These constantly necessitate all sorts of improvements – from data quality to credit risk models and IT investments, as well as programmes that guarantee safe and secure banking, for example. Occasionally, we’re forced to pass on some of those costs in our products and services.”

De Volksbank wants to be a social bank that makes an impact on Dutch society. Isn’t this just smooth talk?

Martijn: “No, it definitely is not. I can confidently say that our employees truly feel they’re making a contribution with their work, regardless of the brand or department they work for. Social commitment is in our DNA. Our brand BLG Wonen, for example, made sure decades ago that Limburg miners could buy their own home. Today, we’re still making every effort to create a housing market that is accessible to everyone.”

Gerard: “That’s a perfect case in point. I think that many people also don’t know that, since 1970, ASN Bank has been a bank for people who consider war and peace, human rights, discrimination and the environment to be important social issues. Today, ASN Bank is a frontrunner in the areas of climate, biodiversity and human rights and de Volksbank has adopted ASN Bank’s sustainability policy in full.”

Martijn: “In addition to sustainability, we’re also committed to creating a financially healthy country, and we help people in times of financial adversity. That means that we come up with ideas to prevent problems and that we support people in finding solutions.”

Gerard: “These examples show that there’s a solid basis for the bank to truly make a difference, although I think the bank should continue to take steps towards far greater achievements. It can do this by making even more specific choices and setting priorities; adding focus to the social identity will result in a much more powerful impact.”



← Gerard van Olphen, Chair of the Supervisory Board of de Volksbank as from 2021

Gerard: “The year 2023 was successful in financial terms, too, although the results do reflect that de Volksbank’s income greatly depends on interest received. The ECB raised the interest rates last year to fight inflation. That’s why it’s important for the bank to create other sources of income as well, such as fixed fees. In my role as a Supervisory Board member, I’ve also seen positive initiatives to improve the relationship with customers, including a new online banking app and the introduction of the Bespaarhypotheek. At the same time, customer satisfaction didn’t change compared to a year earlier. This may be related to the bank starting to charge monthly fees for the basic banking package.”

Could you give a hint as to what 2024 will bring? How will de Volksbank and its brands present themselves to us?

Martijn: “We’ll continue to build on the strongest possible relationship with customers and on increasing our social impact. In 2024, this process will in any event be supported by five social themes we have recently defined and that clearly reflect the strength of all brands. And this strength, in turn, is reflected in their products and services. SNS, for instance, focuses on a human approach to banking and accessible services, ASN Bank on the climate and biodiversity, RegioBank on supporting local businesses and BLG Wonen on contributing to an accessible housing market.”

“
ADDING FOCUS TO THE SOCIAL IDENTITY WILL RESULT IN A MUCH MORE POWERFUL IMPACT.



Gerard: “I agree. Because we have chosen themes, we can focus on these themes and make an even more tangible impact. That will certainly help us achieve the strategic goals. At the same time, de Volksbank needs to become more robust in financial and operational terms, and cost control is an important means to that end. Combining these growth ambitions and priorities is a challenge, but I’m convinced they can go hand in hand.”


Martijn: “There will also be a new CEO this year, because I’m leaving de Volksbank. That’s why I’d like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers, as well as our partners and other stakeholders, for the trust they have placed in us. And, of course, I’d like to say a special thank you to all employees for their major contribution to everything we have accomplished in 2023.”

DE VOLKSBANK N.V. ANNUAL MAGAZINE 2023

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OUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Payments & savings  
 SNS, ASN Bank and RegioBank offer various current and savings accounts.

Insurance 
 SNS offers all kinds of private and business insurance products. In addition, ASN Bank offers sustainable non-life insurance in collaboration with a.s.r.

Investments 
 All our brands offer the ASN Sustainable Mix investment funds. In addition, ASN Bank offers a number of specific investment funds.

Mortgages 
 Each brand offers various mortgage products and additional home-related services.

Business financing 
 SNS and RegioBank offer business loans and a business mortgage. BLG Wonen also offers the SNS Business mortgage.

location Den Haag

de volksbank
main office Utrecht


location Den Bosch

location Sittard


location Groningen



193
SNS Shops
1,508,000
customers

425
branch offices
698,000
customers


802,000
customers


> 3,000
independent advisers
249,000
customers

EMPLOYEES

4,407
FTE of which
3,449 internal

CUSTOMERS

> 3,26 mln

OUR BRANDS

With our four brands, we focus on consumers, independent entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises. They can turn to us for products and services in the areas of payments, savings and mortgages. Each brand has its own distinctive profile and character.

Four bank brands, one promise

De Volksbank is the parent company of SNS, ASN Bank, RegioBank and BLG Wonen. Together, starting from our ‘better for each other’ promise, we like to make our country just a little bit better all the time. Because we believe that banking is about more than just money. It is a way of being of value. Not only for ourselves, our employees, customers or shareholder, but for society as a whole. After all, it is not for nothing that we are called de Volksbank.



SNS is committed to equal growth opportunities for everyone. In this way, the bank helps people achieve their goals and realise their dreams. SNS believes that if people can grow in their own way, the Netherlands will become a stronger country.

[Read more about SNS](#)



RegioBank is committed to making and keeping less populated areas and communities liveable. By having a role to play in making connections and contributing to social and economic vitality. So that everyone can enjoy having a home, working and living in small towns and villages.

[Read more about RegioBank](#)



ASN Bank strives to make sustainability accessible to all Dutch people. To enable everyone to use their money to do good things for people, animals and nature

[Read more about ASN Bank](#)



BLG Wonen is committed to a society in which people can live contentedly in a way that suits their wishes and financial situation. Now and in the future.

[Read more about BLG Wonen](#)

The best of 2023



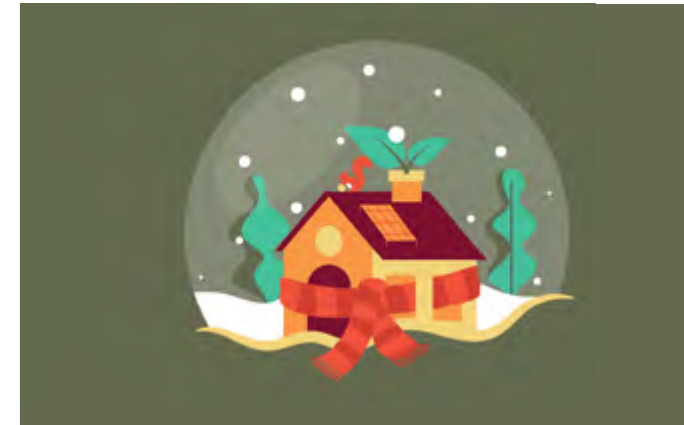
NATIONAL MONEY WEEK

By now a tradition, every year in March. Money week in 2023, the year in which *Eurowijs* - our teaching programme for young children - celebrated its 10th anniversary, was again packed with financial education. With no fewer than 1,000 guest lessons, 375 *Bank voor de Klas* guest lessons, a workshop especially for parents and a visit by a school class to our headquarters in Utrecht.

300,000
children received
the teaching materials

VISIT BY SIGRID KAAG, FORMER MINISTER OF FINANCE

De Volksbank hosted a special guest on 27 February: former finance minister Sigrid Kaag paid a working visit to two of our locations. She was accompanied by senior ministry of finance officials and a representative of NLF, our shareholder. At the SNS Shop in *Voorburg*, she discussed the importance of a bank that gives personal attention to its customers and that has plenty of branches. And at ASN Bank in The Hague, she discussed various issues that we are working hard for as a bank; sustainability, housing accessibility, financial care and an inclusive society.



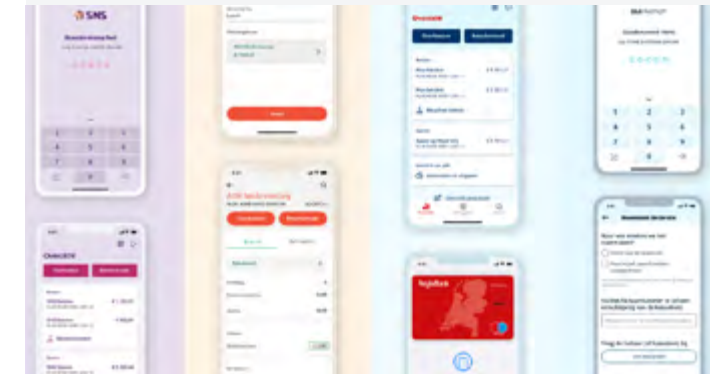
SUSTAINABLE WINTER WEEK

Last year, the group of people with financial worries grew due to factors such as risen energy prices and high inflation. As a digital bank, The Hague-based ASN Bank opened its doors for a week to customers in need of a listening ear. In addition to providing ample opportunity for some good conversation, there was a programme full of workshops on sustainability and energy efficiency.



NEW APP FOR ALL BRANDS

As from April 2023, all customers of SNS, ASN Bank, RegioBank and BLG Wonen were able to use a renewed app. This is important, as a good app directly contributes to a stronger customer relationship. Besides the app getting a fresh new look and working faster, we also improved existing features and added new ones.



SPECIAL CAMPAIGN FOCUSING ON LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS

A community in which people can live and work pleasantly is important. Because, if you ask RegioBank, a more pleasant society starts in your own community. And that is precisely where entrepreneurs play an important role. As a socially engaged bank, RegioBank was happy to give local entrepreneurs the attention they deserve in a special campaign.



PEOPLE FIRST. THEN MONEY.

That was the name of SNS's campaign launched on 1 February. The clear message of the campaign is that SNS does not put money first, but puts people first. That it is about who you are. And what you want to get out of life. That is why SNS does not look at people's salary or bank statements first; instead, SNS looks at people, their plans and the challenges that come with them.



QUESTIONS THAT CALL FOR A PEOPLE'S BANK, IN OTHER WORDS, A VOLKSBANK

"Why can't we get a mortgage, even though we pay a super high rent?" is one of the questions that came up in 2023 in de Volksbank's TV commercials. This campaign was launched in September and showed sincere portraits of people calling for change. With critical questions about social issues that they - and lots of others - face. And for which de Volksbank, together with its four bank brands, is working on solutions.



BOOK OF GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

SNS published the book 'Young shoulders', in which the growth opportunities for young adults in the Netherlands are explored. What (financial) challenges do they face? And what can be done about them?



SIGNATURES FOR A LIVING WAGE



TOGETHER WITH PARTNERS, ASN BANK COLLECTED 240,000 SIGNATURES FOR THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE FOR A LIVING WAGE IN THE GARMENT INDUSTRY, WHICH WAS LAUNCHED BY THE BANK.



THIRD NATIONAL VILLAGE SUMMIT

On 15 June, RegioBank organised the third edition of the annual National Village Summit to highlight the importance of all rural areas in the Netherlands. This time in the Frisian village of Warten. Local entrepreneurs, national and local politicians, administrators and academics discussed liveability in these less populated areas.



HOUSING NEEDS IN LATER LIFE

In May and June, a BLG Wonen campaign encouraged people over the age of 57 to start thinking about their housing needs later in life. Would they adapt their home, move or make it sustainable, for example? Downsize to a smaller home? Or split their home to give their child(ren) or another first-time home-buyer a chance to obtain an affordable home. Many situations and just as many possibilities!

MOST CUSTOMER-FRIENDLY BANK ONCE AGAIN

According to consumers, de Volksbank's bank brands ASN Bank, RegioBank and SNS are the three most customer-friendly banks in the Netherlands, for the second year in a row. This score was revealed in May after a large independent survey by MarketResponse. Like last year, our bank brands occupied the complete top-3 podium positions, this time with ASN Bank holding the number 1 position.



HIGH SCORES IN THE FAIR BANK GUIDE

In May 2023, de Volksbank scored highest on all surveyed themes. This independent assessment method shows how sustainable banks are on the basis of their ESG policies. These great scores are an extra motivation to (continue to) work on our sustainability policy and its implementation. This is how we make even more positive sustainable impact.

Sustainability policy ratings of eight banks

	EerlijkeBankwijzer	ABN-AMRO	bunq	de Volksbank	ING	NIBC	RoboBank	Van Lanschot	Wolp
Taxes	3	3	9	4	5	5	7	6	
Animal welfare	5	5	9	5	4	7	9	2	
Gender equality	5	6	8	4	5	4	5	4	
Climate change	4	8	10	5	10	7	9	5	
Human rights	8	9	10	7	9	8	10	8	
Nature	6	7	10	6	10	8	9	8	
Weapons	6	9	10	5	9	7	10	8	

● Very good ● Enough ● Mediocre ● Bad ● Very bad



HOUSING DEBATE

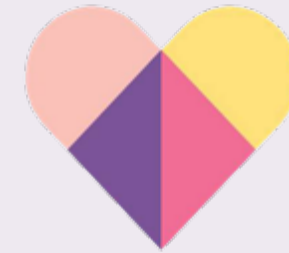
To discuss housing issues and, above all, to look at possible solutions, BLG Wonen once again organised the Housing Debate in 2023. This year's theme was 'Is tied accommodation the new term of employment?': what can employers do to help reduce the current housing shortage of 390,000 homes?

[Read more about this on page 35](#)



COMMUNITY WISHES

December was marked by RegioBank's annual Make-a-Community-Wish campaign: what wish do people want to come true for their community? Anyone could submit a wish for a better living environment, with a chance of the wish being granted. Think of a much-needed community centre facelift, a nice playground or a duo bike for less mobile residents, each of which came true in previous years. Thanks to the help of local residents, RegioBank, their independent advisers and partners.



SNS CELEBRATES ATTENTION DAY

Thursday 28 September marked Attention Day; a day on which SNS showed what every day is really about: genuine attention for every person, personally and close by. Because that way, they can really help customers move ahead.

A special bus journeyed across the country to surprise customers who deserved some extra attention because of a special story. In all SNS shops, Attention day was also celebrated together with customers. And during a special show in Tivoli Vredenburg Music Centre, some customers were treated to an inspiring evening dedicated to the search for happiness.



BLG WONEN AND ASN BANK TOGETHER AT MORTGAGE TRADE SHOW

On 5 October, BLG Wonen and ASN Bank employees were together for the first time at *HypoVak*, a leading mortgage trade show for over 1,500 mortgage advisers and other professionals from the financial sector. There - naturally from a sustainably-built stand full of greenery - they spoke to visitors about the developments in the Dutch housing market, as well as about what their joint mortgage products could mean for customers and society alike.



SUSTAINABLE VOTER'S GUIDE

In the run-up to the general elections on 22 November, ASN Bank launched the Sustainable Voter's Guide in October. After all, only one in five voters had a good idea of where political parties stood on sustainability. More than 88,000 people viewed this voter's guide for a 'green vote' before going to the polls.



BEST BANK

Every year, 13,000 Dutch people are asked by the Dutch Consumers' Association what they think of their bank. Respondents give their opinion on online and mobile banking, banking fees and charges, communication and service. RegioBank once again emerged as the best bank in the Netherlands, for the seventh time in a row. ASN Bank and SNS finished in second and fourth place respectively.



Source: bankenmonitor 2023

“GOOD FOR THE WORLD AND FOR YOUR WALLET.”



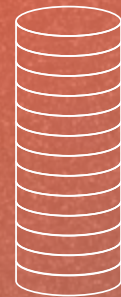
BESPAARHYPOTHEEK

As from September, SNS, RegioBank and BLG Wonen offer the *Bespaarhypotheek*; we introduced this new product to help customers finance a home or sustainable plans. We offer an attractive mortgage rate if customers own or buy an energy-efficient home with energy-efficiency rating B or higher. The interest rate of this mortgage automatically decreases when customers repay their mortgage or make their home more energy efficient, thus saving on both their energy costs and their mortgage rate.

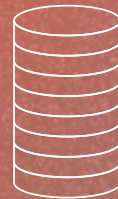
2023

➔ For more information on these and other figures, see the Integrated Annual Report 2023.

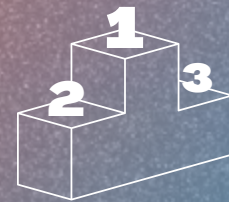
€ 431 million
net profit in 2023



€ 240 million
net profit in 2022



most customer-friendly bank



our brands in 1st, 2nd & 3rd place in the survey into the most customer-friendly bank conducted by MarketResponse

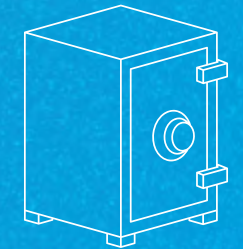


4,407
employees

9

new employees with a distance to the labour market employed by our Work Ability Desk

€ 49.2 billion
Residential mortgage portfolio



€ 43.6 billion
retail savings



2 million
current account customers
we grew by 97,000 customers



3.26 million
customers in total for our
four bank brands



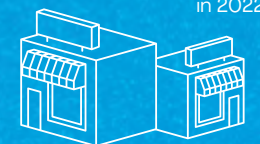
75%
climate-neutral balance sheet
(2025 objective achieved)



1.030
guest lectures
by our employees

€ 4.2 billion
assets under management

€ 1,235 million
SME loans
€ 1,085 million
SME loans in 2022



To measure is to know: the numbers behind customer relationships

As a bank, how do you know if you have a strong relationship with your customers? At de Volksbank, we measure that in three different ways; we look at the Net Promoter Score (NPS), the Customer Relationship Score (KRS) and the number of active multi-customers. The 2023 figures show a stable relationship.

Net Promoter Score

The NPS measures how likely it is that customers of our brands would recommend their bank to others. The higher this score, the more satisfied and loyal customers are. At the end of 2023, the average NPS for all our brands was -1, stable compared to year-end 2022.

Customer Relationship Score

Together with the Behaviour Change Group, de Volksbank developed a model to measure the Customer Relationship Score. This score shows how strong the relationship is that customers experience based on their satisfaction, trust and love for the brand. You guessed right: the higher the score, the stronger the relationship. The average score for our four brands in 2023 was 53, also stable compared to last year.

Number of active multi-customers

The number of customers actively banking with our brands, i.e. who hold more than one product, rose from 1,087,000 to 1,164,000 in 2023; a satisfactory increase indeed.

Better for each other

‘Better for each other’ is our promise to the Netherlands. And that’s not just a promise: most of all, we make it visible and put it into practice by being there for our customers and by understanding the issues at play in society. We are convinced that social problems call for human solutions.

Take the frustration of first-time buyers in the housing market, for example. Or the numerous families that struggle to make ends meet, or the concerns of hundreds of thousands of people who are unable to keep up with developments in this digital age. We set to work on these sore spots by ensuring that people can visit our branches for personal advice or help at any time, contributing to more equal opportunities in the housing market, and supporting customers in times of financial adversity.

It was for good reason that we introduced our strategy ‘Better for each other – from promise to impact’ in 2021. This strategy should help us grow as a bank as we strengthen our relationship with customers and increase our social impact.

How will we achieve this? By growing our four brands even more. Together – with branches all across the country and knowledge, experience and decisiveness in abundance – we can make a far greater impact than each one of us could achieve in isolation. We believe that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; together, we want to make the Netherlands a slightly better – more sustainable, liveable, fair and financially healthy – place every day.

And yet every brand grows in its own way: SNS targets young people and generates more income from recurring fees. ASN Bank is accelerating its growth

as a digital, sustainable bank. RegioBank is strengthening its local presence even more by expanding its range of services. And BLG Wonen is growing its mortgage production even further by increasing its distribution reach among intermediaries and improving the services provided to advisers and customers. SNS, ASN Bank and RegioBank also focus on the provision of services to small business owners.

Growth does not come without effort. To start with, we build a strong customer relationship based on good relations. We would also like to allow you as a customer to handle your banking affairs in the way that suits you. For us as a bank this means that we need to structure our processes accordingly, we need to ensure that you can speak with us digitally in several ways, and we must offer precisely those products that you need at any given time.

We have introduced a smart digitalisation process for this purpose. We are investing in our IT and are simultaneously working on risk management and compliance. To provide a better response to what customers need, we started working in a different – agile – way. We are becoming much more efficient now that we are increasingly collaborating with partners and outsourcing work. All these changes are needed if we are to become this customer-focused, agile bank that offers you, as a customer, everything you need in the way you prefer.

WITH WHOM AND FOR WHOM?
Our customers, society, our employees and our shareholder: they all have a stake, in their own way, in what we do as a bank. That is why we always involve these four groups in what we do and prefer to work together.



“
WE ARE BUILDING A DEMONSTRABLY BETTER SOCIETY TOGETHER: MORE SUSTAINABLE, MORE LIVEABLE, FAIRER AND FINANCIALLY HEALTHIER.

“The strongest relationship with customers won’t happen by itself”

The strongest relationship with customers in the Netherlands. It won’t happen by itself, you have to work for it - as in any other relationship really. And that’s precisely what we do.

EDITORIAL

ONCE AGAIN THE MOST CUSTOMER-FRIENDLY BANK

Last year, we proved once again that we are there for our customers: according to them, ASN Bank, Regio-Bank and SNS were the most customer-friendly banks in the Netherlands for the second year in a row.

Marinka van der Meer, Chief Customer Officer of de Volksbank: “Customer opinion is important for a bank whose goal it is to have the strongest customer relationships and wants to make social impact. The fact that so many people give our brands high marks shows that our services suit them. And that they greatly appreciate our personal attention and commitment. We could not be more proud of that! We remain deeply committed and dedicated to our customers.”



Marinka van der Meer,
Chief Customer Officer
of de Volksbank



DILEMMA

A STRONG AND RELIABLE RELATIONSHIP

Building a strong relationship won’t happen by itself. Sometimes we have to make choices that actually seem to put pressure on the relationship. As a customers you may notice this. For instance, because you have to provide certain data, pay a higher fee for your basic banking package, or have to wait longer to become a customer. Why exactly is that?

As a bank, we contribute to a safe society and a reliable financial system. Therefore, we need to assess potential risks properly.

According to laws and regulations such as the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorist Financing Act (Wwft) we are obliged to have a clear picture of our customers. And so it is important that we know them well.

This goes beyond names and addresses; we need to have a picture of what customers do with our products. And why they bank with us. That’s why we check data and transactions, and check your identity. Fair’s fair; it costs time and money to do that properly. But in the end, it is this reliability that ensures a good relationship.

SOME WORDS FROM OUR CUSTOMERS

Naturally, we also regularly ask customers of all our brands for feedback about our services:



“ WE HAVE OPENED A SAVINGS ACCOUNT FOR OUR CHILDREN. WE WANT TO INVOLVE THEM IN THE SUSTAINABLE CHOICES THAT WE MAKE.

ASN Bank
Peter (38)
Customer since: 2013



“ WHEN I AM 12, I CAN PAY FOR STUFF ONLINE WITH THE APP.

SNS
Anna (11)
Customer since: 2019



“ COMPARED TO OTHER BANKS WHERE THE APPROACH IS BUSINESSLIKE, HERE YOU REALLY EXPERIENCE THE PERSONAL APPROACH.

BLG Wonen
Tim (40)
Customer since: 2016



“ BEFORE YOU EVEN HAVE SOMEONE ON THE PHONE AT ANOTHER BANK... HERE YOU JUST WALK IN.

RegioBank
Martine (39)
Customer since: 2017



Wondering how we measure the relationship with our customers? Take another look at page 18 / 19.

BETTER FOR EACH OTHER



‘Better for each other’ is our promise to the Netherlands. We are there for our customers and for society. Looking beyond our own interests, we see and hear people and understand the issues at play in society. To make our social impact even more tangible, we at de Volksbank are working hard to make our balance sheet climate neutral. And, together with our brands, we are looking for solutions to make the Dutch housing market more accessible.

CLIMATE

Together, with ASN Bank leading the way, we are committed to improving the climate. Our goal is to have a climate-neutral balance sheet in 2030; our loans and investments will then cause no more CO₂ emissions than we avoid. We achieve this by investing in a sustainable way, in solar and wind energy for example, and by helping our mortgage customers make their homes more energy efficient. In 2023, we reached 75% of our target of having a climate-neutral balance sheet by 2030. This means that we have already achieved our interim target for 2025. We also seek to make our own business operations more sustainable by purchasing green energy and responsible products and services.

[Read more on page 34](#)

HOUSING

De Volksbank wants to enable proper and sustainable housing and contribute to an inclusive housing market where everyone has a fair chance and access to a suitable

mortgage solution. That is why we will phrase an objective intended to make more homes accessible to households earning up to twice the average income and help customers in arrears on their mortgage payments to make a sustainable recovery in order to ensure that they can continue to live in their homes. We will do so by providing financial care at important moments in their lives.

[Read more on page 35](#)

FINANCIAL HEALTH

Our aim is that everyone in the Netherlands is financially healthy and can therefore live comfortably and enjoyably. This means that we help people in times of financial adversity. Focusing on the prevention or reduction of financial stress, we do not use debt collection agencies but find the best solution together. We are also committed to improving the financial knowledge of Dutch citizens. If children learn how to be money smart, they will handle their money in a much more sensible way when they

are adults. That is why de Volksbank invests in financial education and makes free teaching materials available to all schools in the Netherlands.

[Read more on page 26](#)

INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

Aiming to promote equal opportunities, we ensure that our services are accessible to everyone. We set great store by offering accessible and understandable products and services. Our four bank brands enable us to serve different groups in society, both private individuals and SMEs. We do this online and through our branches. As an employer, we advocate diversity, inclusion and equal remuneration. We also give our employees the opportunity to make a social impact in their day-to-day work and to do voluntary work.

[Read more on page 28](#)

[More information about our social goals is available in our Integrated Annual Report](#)

For a financially healthy Netherlands

As a bank, we want to make an impact by helping customers to live a financially healthy and carefree life. That starts by offering knowledge about money and how to manage it. But also by helping people who are struggling financially.

KEEPING UP FINANCIALLY

In 2023, a [survey](#) by De Nederlandsche Bank (DNB) showed that one in six Dutch people have difficulty managing banking matters independently. In other words, a large, diverse group of people are less able to keep up financially. For us as a people-oriented and social bank, it is particularly important to see this. And actually offer solutions.

We do this by keeping our SNS Shops and RegioBank branches open, providing a low threshold for people who have questions to walk in. And by having a good customer service desk that you can reach through various channels. By providing information on financial topics and workshops for people who are less digitally literate. By providing care in times of financial stress. And through our Eurowijs programme, where children learn about money from an early age. By doing all this, we ensure that we can help people in a way that suits them, and that we really make a difference.



“IT IS IMPORTANT THAT CHILDREN LEARN TO HANDLE MONEY WELL AT A YOUNG AGE. WITH THIS BASIC FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE, THEY CAN MAKE BETTER FINANCIAL CHOICES LATER IN LIFE AND PREVENT MONEY PROBLEMS. THROUGH EUROWIJS, WE OFFER FREE TEACHING MATERIALS FOR ALL PRIMARY, SPECIAL EDUCATION AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL GROUPS

Hilde Krens, Financial Education Manager at de Volksbank

PODCAST: STRESS CAUSED BY FINANCIAL WORRIES

Last year, in our podcast we talked about financial stress with Henna Kapar, expert by experience and customer, and Sanne Reijnen, behavioural expert at de Volksbank. How does one get into financial hardship and what are the consequences, including social ones? And what can you do to turn the tide?

[Listen to the podcast on our website](#)

HELPING FINANCIALLY DISTRESSED CUSTOMERS

Many people who can normally afford their fixed costs are increasingly experiencing financial worries about the future, partly as a result of rising prices. Our brands help customers who are (potentially) in financial distress.

Financial peace of mind

Financial worries are something we prefer to prevent, and reduce where possible. Our Financial Peace of Mind team proactively approached customers in 2023 to ask if they were experiencing financial worries, and to offer help. Of course, this team is also there for customers contacting us themselves and indicate that they have financial worries. So, we help customers as much as possible to make good financial decisions. For now and for the future.

A helping hand

One of our customers, Eugène, talked about his financial worries in a video last year. And about the helping hand that eventually helped him get back on his feet. Losing his job and physical discomfort meant that Eugène and his wife went into a downward spiral. Bills and reminders were piling up. Payment arrangements were no longer possible, and Eugène got stuck in the 'system'. Not only with the bank, with other authorities too. "You are at the mercy of the gods. The bailiff shows up on the doorstep and seizes your goods. And that's the end of it." Although a realistic scenario, luckily it did not come to that.

[If you are curious about Eugène's story, watch the video on YouTube](#)

OUDERWIJS

INFORMATION AND TIPS FOR PARENTS

In 2023, we introduced *OuderWijs* ('ParentWise'), the new online platform for parents to help with their child's financial education. It provides information and tips to teach your children how to handle money and how to protect them from financial temptations and dangers, which are, after all, increasingly lurking in games, apps and social media. And many parents worry about this.

[Take a look at OuderWijs](#)



EUROWIJS

Since Eurowijs's launch in 2013, de Volksbank employees have been giving guest lectures, in which - in addition to Eurowijs - we also work with Banks in the Classroom, a financial education package compiled by the Dutch Banking Association.

300,000

The teaching materials went to 300,000 pupils in 2023.

1,030

De Volksbank employees gave 1,030 Eurowijs guest lectures and 375 Banks in the Classroom guest lectures.

[View the Eurowijs teaching materials at www.eurowijs.nl](#)

1.7 mln

As much as 1.7 million children have used Eurowijs teaching up and until now.

8.7

Schools give our teaching materials a score of 8.7 out of 10.



PODCAST: ONLINE TEMPTATIONS

In 2023, we also made a podcast about discussing financial online temptations with your child(ren). The podcast is hosted by Hilde Krens, Financial Education Manager at de Volksbank and Camiel Tetteroo, father of three adolescent sons

[Listen to this podcast via de Volksbank website](#)

Better for each other: a society in which everyone can participate

We are committed to an inclusive society. A society in which everyone can participate. Nicely put, but what exactly does this mean? It means that we make our services accessible to everyone. And that we increase employment opportunities, allowing more people to work.

ACCESSIBLE AND EASY

PERSONAL AND NEARBY

It is important to us that the products and services that we offer as a bank are accessible and easy to understand. And that everyone can come to us to get ahead financially. We advocate open and honest communication with customers. Whether on the phone or online. Our four brands each interact with their customers in their own way, thus complementing each other and serving different groups in society together.

ASN Bank, for example, works with an Internet-only model and communicates intensively and mainly online. Customers can also go one of the SNS Shops for the ASN Mortgage. BLG Wonen works together with independent advisers spread across the country through whom it also offers the SNS Business Mortgage. SNS and RegioBank have a low threshold and local presence, with branches across the country, with RegioBank specifically focussing on villages and small towns with a population of up to 20,000.

Combined, our brands have national coverage. So customers always have a branch near to them for help and advice, because they sometimes prefer person-to-person consultation. With an expert who has extensive knowledge, and can explain matters in plain language.

618

Branches where people can stop by for help and advice.

THINKING ALONG

PERSONAL CONTACT FOR YOUR GOALS

At SNS, every customer has a personal growth coach. Your growth coach can contribute ideas when you need it. You can contact your growth coach to spar, list your options, map out a plan together with you or just to ask a question.



“MY GROWTH COACH HELPED ME PUT MONEY ASIDE FOR MY FIRST HOME.”

TIP
Also listen to our podcast on volunteering! In it you will hear the director of NLvoorelkaar and a colleague who does lots of volunteering. You can find our series of 'Better for each other' podcasts on our website or in your favourite podcast app

[Listen to the podcast](#)



GIVING A GOOD EXAMPLE

AN EMPLOYER THAT MAKES YOU FEEL AT EASE AT WORK

An organisation that promotes an inclusive society should also look at itself in the same way. And we do; de Volksbank wants to be a bank where employees feel at ease and can be themselves. We stand for diversity, equality and inclusion. And together we like to make our country just a little bit better all the time.

VOLUNTEERING 'IN THE BOSS'S TIME'

As a bank, we encourage volunteering, also among our own colleagues. We do so together with our partner NLvoorelkaar, the largest volunteering platform in the Netherlands that brings together the supply and demand for help. Because an hour of voluntary work is worth a great deal. That is why all employees of de Volksbank are given a few hours to volunteer during working hours. For them, NLvoorelkaar has a dedicated platform; in 2023, we did 8,414 hours of volunteering together.

8,414

In 2023, our employees completed 8,414 hours of volunteering.

[Learn more about how we promote diversity, equality and inclusion at de Volksbank in the chapter 'Our people make the difference'.](#)

Our people make the difference

Everyone who works at de Volksbank should be able to feel at home there. It is precisely by appreciating all the differences in background, personality, perspective and qualities that we achieve the best results.



“**DE VOLKSBANK GIVES ME THE SPACE TO DEAL WITH MY DEPRESSIONS IN MY OWN WAY. AT PREVIOUS EMPLOYERS, I NEVER HAD THE COURAGE TO DISCUSS MENTAL HEALTH. HERE, I DO FEEL THAT KIND OF FREEDOM.**”

Demian Polane,
Corporate Communications
de Volksbank

85%

Did you know that in 2023 ... 85% of our employees said they felt at home at de Volksbank?

IN THE WORKPLACE

“Being able to be your true self”

On 9 October 2023, de Volksbank signed the Diversity Charter of the Dutch Social and Economic Council (SER). As a bank, we thus propagate that we stand for equal opportunities. Something that suits us well indeed. By doing so, we also become part of a network of organisations inside and outside the financial sector.

Jacqueline Touw, Chief People and Organisation Officer of de Volksbank, explains what it means for her to feel at home in a certain place:

“For me, it means being able to be comfortable being yourself. Your true self. And that this is treated with respect. I've been working at de Volksbank for over a year now, and felt at home right away. The sooner you get rid of the 'odd man out' feeling, the sooner you can be yourself. And that's the most important thing.”

This is how diverse diversity is

Last year, we shared a number of personal stories from colleagues. They told us what diversity means to them. For one of them, for instance, it is important for us as a bank to pay attention to events like Pride. And for another, discussing mental health has made a world of difference. As you can see: diversity has many different facets. And that is precisely why it is important that we, being a social bank and employer, pay attention to this.

A job for everyone

With the SER Diversity Charter, de Volksbank also commits to another specific goal: the sustainable placement of people with an occupational impairment. We want to guide twenty-six people with limited capability for work to a permanent job by 2025. For example, people who have a hearing or visual impairment, or a chronic illness. In 2023, we welcomed nine new colleagues with a distance to the labour market.

Our Work Ability Desk guides and supports people to a suitable workplace. We also have a wheelchair-accessible head office, an internal AD(H)D network, special reading software and autism coaches.

A better world starts with yourself

Many of our employees also make a personal commitment to society. By giving Eurowijs guest lectures in schools, for example, or by making time available for volunteering. New in 2023 were the special OuderWijs workshops, organised for and by colleagues, to help parents with their child's financial education. Because, let's face it; sometimes we could use a little help ourselves to teach our children how to manage money properly.



“**WE REALLY HAVE TO KEEP INSISTING ON ACCEPTANCE. I HAVE WORKED IN MANY PLACES WITHIN DE VOLKSBANK, AND WHO I LOVE HAS NEVER BEEN AN ISSUE. BUT BY NO MEANS IS IT LIKE THAT FOR EVERYONE.**”

Kees Beemer,
Customer Services
ASN Bank

IMPACT AWARDS

AND THE AWARD GOES TO ...

... colleagues or teams who made the greatest impact. Every year, we present the Impact Awards, which consists of two categories: 'Strong customer relationship' and 'Social impact'. Anyone who does something special for our customers, or who makes society a little bit better, may be nominated. And has a chance to win that award at the end of the year.

In the Social Impact category, the Analysis & Policy team was nominated. This team is responsible for developing our sustainability policy. Although these colleagues mostly work in the background, they are very important to the organisation. As is evident from the 2023 Fair Bank Guide, in which de Volksbank was awarded the highest score for its sustainability policy.

And how about the SNS colleagues in Drachten and Heerenveen? Their cooperation with Friese Poort, the regional Secondary Vocational Education training centre, resulted in a nomination in the Strong Customer Relationship category. The team organised guest lectures for students on everything that comes your way when you turn 18 in terms of finance and much more. The lectures were such a success that they are now scheduled every six months.



The Analysis & Policy Team of de Volksbank

For everyone with green intentions

ASN Bank stands for sustainability in many areas, with an emphasis on climate, biodiversity and human rights. The bank wants to promote a sustainable, just society. How? By making it possible for everyone to use their money to do good things for people, animals and nature. To achieve this, the bank cooperates with other financial institutions and social partners.

HUMAN RIGHTS

On the European agenda

The year 2023 was dominated by the 'Good Clothes, Fair Pay' campaign by the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI). ASN Bank wants European legislation for companies that have their clothing produced in countries such as India and Bangladesh. This legislation demands a living wage for the people who make our clothes. Teaming up with partner organisations and citizens from several EU countries, ASN Bank wrote a legislative proposal. To push for legislation, the ECI goal was to mobilise one million signatures from EU citizens exactly within a year. Unfortunately, this goal was not achieved; they collected 240,000 signatures. Nevertheless, the initiators were allowed to come and explain the proposal to the European Commission.



“FOR ME, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO BANK WITH A BANK THAT IS ACTIVELY WORKING FOR A BETTER WORLD.”



STARTING POINT FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE LIFE

With the *Vanaf Hier* website, ASN Bank helps everyone to make sustainable choices. Whether you are already very green, or could still use a lot of help. From inspiring stories to help choosing a sustainable gift. *Vanaf Hier* is the starting point for a more sustainable life.

→ [To vanafhier.nl](https://vanafhier.nl)

BIODIVERSITY

Looking at investments in nature restoration differently

In collaboration with the Foundation for Sustainable Development (FSD), ASN Bank published the *Make Nature Count* study for the second time in 2023. The central theme of this study is the economic value of nature. To what extent do investments in nature restoration result in economic gain or loss? This is how ASN Bank looked at investments in nature restoration made by ASN Impact Investors in the ASN Biodiversity Fund in last year's study.

“Through our studies, we not only help the financial sector to make more sustainable decisions, but other organisations and the government too. To this end, we work with the concept of ecosystem services; services that nature provides to humanity, such as CO2 storage, pollination and air purification. We map these services and express their value in monetary terms. This knowledge allows stakeholders to use nature to improve decision-making.” - Mieke Siebers, Executive Director of FSD.

Linda van Dongen,
Head of Climate of the
Center of Expertise for
Sustainability



DILEMMA

AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE ENERGY TRANSITION

“How can we achieve an equitable energy transition in the Netherlands? And why is this so important? We can only achieve the 2030 climate goals if everyone can participate. And by everyone, I mean tenants and homeowners across all income groups. Unfortunately, this is currently not the case; the costs of the energy transition are unfairly distributed. Households of modest means were hit hardest; they are mostly small-scale users and relatively pay too much. Moreover, they are more likely to live in moderately to poorly insulated houses.

The research report on the approach to climate change by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) already showed that many citizens expect the energy transition to lead to growing inequality. Of the respondents, 58% think it will widen the gap between rich and poor, and 48% think more people will live in poverty as a result of the transition. This also makes the energy transition a poverty issue.

According to the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB), almost 1 million people live below the poverty line in the Netherlands. More and more Dutch people are struggling to make ends

meet, partly due to high energy prices and inflation.

So how do you achieve a fair energy transition? I think by linking climate measures and poverty reduction. For instance, by obliging landlords and housing associations to properly insulate their rental properties. By freezing or reducing the rent of homes with high heat loss. Or by providing subsidies upfront, in the form of discount vouchers on insulation, which would also enable low and middle-income households to make their homes more sustainable at a reasonable price.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if parties began to see the need to opt for a green and social policy with a focus on insulation, energy saving and renewable energy. A policy in which everyone can participate through fair cost-sharing. A naive thought? Not if you look at the [research](#) by the SCP. Moreover, we need speed. The Dutch government's 2021-2030 Climate Plan states that in 2030 – a mere 6 years from now – the Netherlands will emit 55% less CO than in 1990. The meter currently stands at 31%. Hopefully, the new government will also see that time is running out.”

CLIMATE

Pushing ahead with climate policy

Immediately after the fall of the government in June 2023, ASN Bank called on the government to press ahead with its climate plans. Thanks to ASN Bank's efforts, the Dutch Banking Association also joined the call on behalf of the sector, as did other organisations such as the Dutch Sustainable Energy Association, *Natuur & Milieu* and *Urgenda*. In early September, the Dutch House of Representatives' standing committee of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy considered a number of topics and almost all of them were qualified as 'non-controversial', thus allowing implementation of the climate policy to continue.



64

organisations appealed to the fallen cabinet on behalf of millions of Dutch people.

We see your potential

Owning your own home is important. It gives a sense of security and happiness. Since 1954, BLG Wonen has been committed to making good housing possible for everyone. That's why the bank wants to make the housing market more accessible and why it stands up for people for whom owning their own home is not self-evident. Such as first-time buyers, single people and self-employed people. For all these people, BLG Wonen is working on financial solutions.

THE HOUSING DEBATE

To make solutions to housing problems a subject of discussion, BLG Wonen organises the annual Housing Debate. Should employers do more to reduce the shortage of 390,000 homes? During BLG Wonen's fifth edition of the Housing Debate, these, and other questions were discussed in detail. BLG Wonen also presented a new study on tied accommodation as a term of employment. Over half of the polled employers already offer some form of housing assistance. By offering financial assistance, or by helping their staff find a home.

5

Last year, the 5th edition of the annual Housing Debate was organised.



Sander Schimmelpenninck, a Dutch opinion maker, gives his views on the theme of the fifth BLG Housing Debate: 'Housing as a term of employment'.



“OUR SECOND CHILD HAS ALSO MOVED OUT OF HOME. THAT'S WHY OUR OWN HOME IS ACTUALLY TOO BIG NOW.”

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Splitting a property

When you split a house, you divide a large house into two (or more) smaller houses. Each house has its own entrance and utilities. Splitting your house could be a good solution, for example, if your house is getting too big, the maintenance too time-consuming or you want to free up money.

➔ [BLG Wonen will be happy to tell you more about splitting a house. Check out the questions and answers on BLG Wonen's website.](#)

Georgette Lageman, Manager of the Center of Expertise for Housing at BLG Wonen



THE BUY-TO-LET MORTGAGE OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR TENANTS AND LANDLORDS

“Private sector rental plays an important role in the accessibility of the housing market. This is because many tenants earn too much to qualify for social housing, and often just too little to buy a home. Consequently, they rely on the private sector, where rents have been steadily increasing in recent years. High-rent tenants may even spend as much as over 40% of their disposable income on housing costs.

This is a problem, as it also prevents them from saving to buy a home later. To do something about these exorbitant rents, BLG Wonen launched a social variant of the Buy-to-let mortgage. It allows landlords to rent out their home as long as these rents comply with the points-based system, in return for which they get attractive mortgage terms. Such as the extent to which the home can be financed in let condition, the mortgage term or the fixed-interest period. We check whether the points-based system is applied on the basis of the valuation report and rental agreement.

This creates more opportunities for both landlords and tenants. This is important, as not everyone wants to or is able to buy a home right away. This way, we keep the housing market affordable and accessible for these people too.”

THE BUY-TO-LET MORTGAGE

In order to keep the mid-rent private (free) sector segment affordable, BLG Wonen introduced the Buy-to-let mortgage in 2023. In doing so, BLG Wonen was the first bank to respond to the plans of the minister for Housing, Hugo de Jonge. The minister wants to increase the share of mid-rent homes by bringing more private-sector rental homes under the national points-based system, while at the same time keeping the renting out of houses attractive.

With the buy-to-let mortgage, landlords are to charge a fair rent on the basis of the points-based system. When they do, they get attractive terms in return.



SUSTAINABLE

BUILDING WITH WOOL AND GRASS

BLG Wonen is a great advocate of bio-based construction. We are talking about building techniques such as skeleton construction and the use of natural, fast-growing materials such as wood, wool and grasses (hemp, straw and flax). A bio-based house is highly sustainable because the building materials store CO₂. All our brands provide mortgages for biobased homes. Only, there was never much interest for this. This was reason for BLG Wonen and ASN Bank to convince mortgage advisers to finance bio-based housing. Together, they staged a campaign week in 2023, a series of articles, webinars and a stand at HypoVak, a major trade fair for financial advisers.

→ [If you are interested in the advantages of bio-based construction, watch this short clip](#)

“**BUY A HOME AS A TENANT? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE I THOUGHT. BUT IT WORKED OUT ANYWAY.**”



Quality of life in communities

RegioBank is committed to villages and towns that are pleasant to live in. To communities in which people can enjoy having a home, working and living. The bank understands that local entrepreneurship plays an important role in this. Both entrepreneurs and local residents can turn to their local and independent adviser for financial advice. This way, they have a bank nearby, as well as the convenience of online banking.



FUTURE AGENDA

National Village Summit

In 2023, RegioBank organised the third edition of the National Village Summit, about the strength of rural provinces. This time in the Frisian village of Warten. Some 150 local entrepreneurs, financial advisers, administrators, volunteers and experts attended the summit. RegioBank has been calling for a Minister of Regional Affairs for some time. To this end, the bank drew up a Future Agenda in collaboration with the attendees, containing action points to increase the potential of regional areas and liveability in villages. The Future Agenda was handed over to the House of Representatives' Committee of the Interior, including a vacancy text for a Minister for Regional Affairs.

LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS

MORE SOCIALLY ENGAGED

A liveable community needs enthusiastic entrepreneurs. That is why RegioBank focusses specifically on self-employed persons, SMEs, clubs and foundations. With the start and growth of their business. For, if the baker stays because the bank finances his shop, the greengrocer and the DIY shop will stay too, together creating a lively community that grows and flourishes.



“MY OWN PREMISES AFTER 3 YEARS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP. I WOULD NEVER HAVE GUESSED THIS TO BE POSSIBLE.

This is how the bank helped Corné and his climate engineering business to own premises in 2023.

[Watch Corné's story](#)



“NOW THAT WE CAN LIVE AND WORK SIDE BY SIDE, WE FACE THE FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE.

For Peter and his family with five children, the bank enabled him to create a workshop for his interior design company next to the house.

[View Peter's story](#)

“IT'S GOOD TO HAVE A BANK THAT IS FAMILIAR THE VILLAGE. AND KNOWS WHAT I NEED AS AN ENTREPRENEUR.”

CUSTOMER SURVEY

Most highly rated by customers according to the 2023 Consumers' Association survey

2 Number 2 of customer-friendliest banks in the Netherlands according to research by MarketResponse

“WHAT I LIKE ABOUT REGIOBANK IS THAT THEY ARE VERY PERSONAL, CUSTOMER-ORIENTED AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE A NUMBER. YOU CAN JUST WALK RIGHT IN.”

Torsten from Haelen, business customer of RegioBank



165 initiatives received financial support.

VOORDEBUURT FUND

Together with the *Oranje Fonds*, RegioBank has set up the *Voordebuurt* Fund. With donations from this fund, the bank supports social initiatives that promote local involvement and foster long-term relationships. In 2023, this fund disbursed €434,000. In addition, independent advisers helped initiators raise €346,000 through crowdfunding via the *Samen voor de buurt platform*, through which some 165 initiatives received financial support. Ranging from a refurbishment of the community centre, to the purchase of duo bikes and the construction of a playground. In 2023, initiators could also recruit (extra) volunteers through the *NLvoorelkaar* volunteering platform, of which de Volksbank is a partner.

ALL TOGETHER NOW AGAINST LONELINESS

Rein Wispelweij, Director of RegioBank: “We are already noticing that our local advisers are involved in local Coalitions to end loneliness in many municipalities. In these coalitions, municipalities, welfare organisations and now also bank branches join together to tackle loneliness. As a bank, we are pleased to encourage this initiative as we know that face-to-face encounters in the community are a prerequisite for building a stronger community for everyone.”

800

aldermen, policymakers and welfare organisations attended the national opening of the Loneliness Awareness Week. RegioBank shared what the bank does to encourage face-to-face encounters in communities all year round.

CERTIFICATE

REGIOBANK AND ENTREPRENEURS

A better society starts in communities. Local entrepreneurs are making an important contribution to this. That is why the bank wants provide entrepreneurs who do something extra for their community with more incentives. In 2022, the bank experimented with a ‘Social engagement test’ to make entrepreneurs aware of their role in the community. As a reward for their efforts, they received concrete tips and a ‘Social engagement certificate’. In 2023, RegioBank automated this process to help even more entrepreneurs become and remain socially engaged.

Equal growth opportunities for everyone

‘People first. Then money.’ That is the promise of SNS. What do you get from that promise as a customer? That you have your own adviser nearby, for example, who knows you personally. That contact is personal, even if you manage your banking affairs by phone, chat or video call. SNS is committed to equal opportunities and the growth of every individual. Money matters have a big impact on that. That is why the bank wants to improve access to financial knowledge, contribute to due recognition, and help improve the mental well-being of young adults.

ACCESS TO FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

HELP WITH YOUR TAX RETURN

Knowledge of money matters is important to grow in life. Did you know that incomprehensible language creates financial inequality? This is shown by [research](#) conducted by SNS. That is why the bank makes financial knowledge understandable and accessible, for example by explaining difficult terminology. And by helping over 1,000 customers with their tax returns for a fee of €75 in 2023.

8.6

the tax return service had a rating

MENTAL WELL-BEING

LESS PRESSURE, MORE GROWTH

Those who feel well, develop better. And look to the future with more confidence. Hence, mental well-being is also important for people’s growth opportunities. The new generation experiences more stress, performance pressure and uncertainty about the future. Also when it comes to money matters. That is why SNS started a partnership with the MIND Us foundation



“OUR AIM IS TO OFFER YOUNG PEOPLE INSIGHTS AND TOOLS. SO THEY CAN BECOME MENTALLY STRONGER AND LOOK TO THE FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE. ALSO IN TERMS OF MONEY MATTERS.”

Frederieke Vriends, director of MIND Us



NEW: the council of the future

Ten young adults aged between 18 and 35 formed the Council of the Future in September 2023. Over the course of one year, they will advise SNS on issues that concern them. For example, frustrations about the housing market or stress about student loans. Council members also attend meetings of the SNS Management Team. This gives the new generation a voice in the policies and organisation of the bank.

→ [Want to know more about the members? And how they view money matters? Check it out on the website of SNS.](#)

‘FUTURE MONEY TALKS’ HELPS YOU MOVE FORWARD

Moving forward in life. Who doesn’t want that?! Owning your own home, having a good career or building wealth for later. This isn’t getting any easier for young people though. That is why SNS created the online Future Money Talks platform especially for them; with concrete plans, tips and useful videos that show what is possible for them.

→ [To Future Money Talks](#)

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES DEBATE

In November 2023, SNS organised the Growth opportunities debate for the second time. Inspiring speakers, political leaders, experts, organisations and students talked to each other about equal growth opportunities. During this debate, SNS also launched its [position paper](#) entitled 'Equal Opportunities', a powerful statement about its own social role and that of the financial sector.

Joining the debate was another brand-new SNS partner: the Jong Ondernemen foundation. SNS and the foundation, which helps young people develop an entrepreneurial attitude, are connecting their networks and developing knowledge about 'the entrepreneurial generation'. They also actively draw attention to the social value of school programmes on entrepreneurship.

"Awesome, relevant and fitting", is what Jonas de Groot, Managing Director of Young Entrepreneurs, calls the partnership: "We are doing the new generation and the rest of the Dutch people a big favour by helping pupils and students develop their entrepreneurial skills. With a partner like SNS, we are able to provide even more entrepreneurial education in schools. We believe that, especially in combination with financial education, this is crucial for the future. All the more so when you realise that the new generation is an entrepreneurial generation."

➔ [Read about the Growth Opportunities Debate](#)



Jonas de Groot (General Manager Young Entrepreneurs), Kelly van den Bosch (SNS Future Council) and Angela Eijlander (Director of SNS) at the Growth opportunities debate



“**WE ENCOURAGE FUTURE PROFESSIONALS TO ENHANCE THEIR SKILL SET**

Erik van der Zwan,
director of WorldSkills
Netherlands

DUE RECOGNITION

NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH WORLDSKILLS

Bricklayer, cook, nurse, electrical engineer – to mention a few professions that we really need as a society, and that require specific skills. Yet this group feels underappreciated and inhibited in their development. That is why WorldSkills Netherlands and SNS have recently teamed up to give skilled workers the growth opportunities and recognition they deserve.

Erik van der Zwan, director of WorldSkills Netherlands, explains the importance of well-trained skilled workers: "We encourage future professionals to enhance their skill set. Through vocational competition programmes, we challenge tens of thousands of (preparatory) secondary vocational education students to get the best out of themselves. These people have the talent that we need to keep society and the economy running. The demand for well-trained professionals is more urgent than ever. Other key ingredients for a healthy career are proper financial knowledge and skills. By joining forces with SNS, we can pay attention to this too. In this way, we are helping the young skilled workers of the future get off to an even better start."

YOUNG SHOULDERS

Last year, SNS published a book: 'Young shoulders', an exploration of everything that is going on in society in the field of equal growth opportunities for young adults.

The book was written by three of our colleagues. They call it "extending a hand to anyone who wants to join us in this effort".



“**WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR IN A BANK? A GOOD FINANCIAL BASE TO CONTINUE TO GROW.**


Arie Koornneef
(Director ASN Bank)




Frank Soede
(Director BLG Wonen)




Angela Eijlander
(Director SNS)




Rein Wispelweij
(Director RegioBank)



Together and apart. That embodies de Volksbank with its four individual brands. And it is actually no different for society. We are individuals, each with our own wishes and needs, yet at the same time we cannot live without each other either; we need a society in which we feel at home. A society in which we can have our own home, live and work comfortably. And in which everyone can participate. As a bank, we not only strongly support this vision, we act on it! By helping people individually towards a financially healthy future, we make the whole country a little better every day. This is what all of our employees are committed to every day. We did so last year, as you have been reading in this wonderful magazine. And we will continue to do so. Better for each other. Also in 2024.

**ALWAYS A
LITTLE BIT
BETTER
TOGETHER**

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