

# [ Live & Learn ]

**A failed experiment, a rejected article: in academia such things tend to be labelled failures. As for talking about it? Not done! But that is just what WUR co-workers do in this column. Because failure has its uses. This time we hear from **Cristina Llavata Peris**, a teacher of Virology.**

Illustration Stijn Schreven

'Towards the end of my doctoral research in Wageningen, I was faced with a decision: what would be the next step in my career? A natural progression would be a postdoctoral research position abroad. However, my partner had a permanent post in the Netherlands so he didn't want to relocate to another country with me. And yet a tempting opportunity presented itself in Germany. It involved research

**'I turned down the postdoc in Germany and chose a job in Wageningen. Then came the blow'**

that seamlessly aligned with my doctoral work, and the team leader and colleagues were very nice. Everything seemed to fall into place. The job was mine if I wanted it.

Simultaneously, another job application was in progress in Wageningen. This role was less aligned with my expertise and interests, but it meant my partner and I wouldn't have to endure a long-distance relationship. It became a personal dilemma. My partner, friends, and

family all stated that the decision was mine to make. Their support was kind, but it placed the weight of the choice on my shoulders. The prospect of a long-distance relationship ultimately tipped the scales. I turned down the job in Germany and chose the one in Wageningen. But then came the blow: Wageningen did not choose me. I went from having two potential jobs to having none. To me, it felt like a failure. Ironically, one of the researchers from the German laboratory secured the position in Wageningen. Months later, I finally landed a new job. It wasn't a postdoc position, and it didn't involve plant research. Instead, it was a research position at a company specializing in the production of proteins using fungi. I remained there for four years until the company relocated to Leiden. Once again, I chose to stay in the vicinity of Wageningen, and I currently work as a lecturer at WUR. While I had to switch fields repeatedly due to my decision to stay in the Netherlands, I no longer harbour regrets about my previous decisions. In fact, I have now found my place in education.'

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