

The magazine for members of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong



DUTCHCHAM MAGAZINE

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Volume 193

Diversity & Inclusion

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Solving the world's problems
Ruud Sommerhalder, Partner, PwC

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The magazine for members of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong

Suite 3002, 30th Floor
Central Plaza
18 Harbour Road
Wan Chai
Hong Kong
E-mail: info@dutchchamber.hk
Website: www.dutchchamber.hk
Skype: Dutchchamberhk

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Diversity & Inclusion



The human brain is a fascinating thing, estimated to have 100 billion interconnected neurons, capable of interpreting a tremendous amount of continuous sensory sensations. Our brain is supporting cognitive, rational and creative abilities that allowed us to build a globally connected civilization.

Our brain houses a conscious and a subconscious mind. The subconscious mind regulates the functioning of our body without any conscious effort. This part of the brain is what evolved from Darwin's fitness for survival contest. The subconscious mind also houses our emotions and our ability to recognize patterns and respond; it allowed our species to survive.

The conscious mind is a relatively new 'addition' which has been around for several hundreds of thousands of years. This is where our awareness, reason and control over our subconscious mind resides. It is however much smaller, which makes our ability to consciously control the subconscious mind limited, and the reason why some of us occasionally lose control and let the animal survival spirits take over in the form of panic, anger or aggression. When the conscious mind regains its footing, we can admit this was not rational behavior. The inconspicuous – to ourselves – consequence of the vast subconscious mind, is the existence of unconscious bias.

This month's issue is not about the human brain, but about diversity. Ruud Sommerhalder, who is leader for PwC's Asia insurance practice, features in this month's magazine's "Interview with a Chief". He will discuss unconscious bias and how companies can deal with unconscious bias.

In the Lead Story, Jacob Feenstra of Campfire and Oscar Venhuis of The Desk will discuss co-working and how co-working can enhance diversity. Other topics in this issue include web accessibility, and the Gay Games Hong Kong as well as contributions by NGO CareER and FrieslandCampina, which has been in Hong Kong for 80 years.

Last but not least, the Consul General of The Netherlands, Annemieke Ruigrok, is interviewed about the recent visit of Prime Minister Mark Rutte to Hong Kong, the first visit of a Dutch Prime Minister to Hong Kong.

This year, the Dutch Chamber will focus on sustainability. We kicked off a Smart City Smart Environment Series with a presentation by Tom Uiterwaal on how to make Hong Kong a Sustainable Smart City. He will elaborate on this in this magazine. During the year we will organise more events, on topics such as plastic waste and green finance.

I wish you happy reading and look forward seeing you at one of the many events of the Dutch Chamber!

Maaïke van Meer
DutchCham Chairman

Solving the world's problems

In January, Ruud Sommerhalder of Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) was one of the panel speakers at an event co-hosted by a number of Chambers of Commerce in Hong Kong entitled, *Embedding Diversity and Inclusion in Your Organisation*. We spoke with Ruud about his own experience in relationship to diversity and inclusion (D&I) and why it is important for businesses, people and communities.



Ruud Sommerhalder

■ By Donna Mah



Please tell us a bit about yourself.

I grew up in the Netherlands with a Swiss father who was born in Indonesia and a Hungarian mother. I never really thought much about being different while growing up. It was all very natural and not something we discussed. I think that for me, this has created an openness to new things and people.

I started my career as an academic teaching international taxation at Erasmus University. I did a PhD and in-between I worked for a law firm in Italy. One of the senior partners was the Minister of Finance so I was involved in work related to tax policy. After obtaining my PhD, I continued to teach part-time and also joined PwC. In 2002-2005, I moved to New York with PwC. After a few years in NY, I moved back to Amsterdam and prior to moving to Hong Kong was based in Munich.

I joined PwC in Hong Kong in September 2017 and live here with my wife and daughters. We are still discovering Hong Kong and have found it to be a very liveable city with lots of nature that I hadn't seen on past business trips to the city. On weekends, we like to go hiking and on a recent hike had a chance to explore Shek-O and Big Wave Bay.

What does diversity and inclusion mean to you?

Growing up, it wasn't something that I really thought about. It was just something I lived and was very natural. As I got older, I started to realise that things that seemed natural and didn't need discussion to me, were issues for others. There are a few things that for others are perhaps issues, but for me, they were just a part of life.

For example, moving makes people feel unsettled and they don't like it. It makes me feel a bit unsettled as well, but for some people they don't have the interest and openness to "get" a new experience, or to learn something new.

I also learned about diversity from my own family. We all learn things unconsciously from our family, like eating habits, and exposure to differences and different things were just part of my upbringing.

At the beginning of my career, I myself tended to gravitate towards people who had a similar approach and said the same sorts of things. That touches on what is called "unconscious bias". This changed as I matured and also because of the training provided by PwC. The firm ran courses for all staff that helped to create awareness. These were sessions with both women and men and created a much deeper understanding about the different ways women and men think, work, and in particular how they collaborate. It was eye-opening. There were things that were presented that you just don't realise or take notice of. The courses helped me to be more aware of the differences. There is no right or wrong to this, but I believe the awareness helps and that in itself is an achievement.

What is "unconscious bias" and how can companies tackle this?

I think everybody has unconscious bias. You don't realise when it happens. We don't think about it when it is happening. I don't look like the typical Dutch man, and when I lived in Amsterdam, I was often given the English menu at restaurants if they didn't hear me speak. That's great that the restaurant staff were aware that they had non-Dutch readers coming to the restaurant, but also interesting that they would first assume that I didn't read Dutch based on my appearance.

You don't necessarily notice it when you do it yourself. For me, when I deal with people, I try to be as welcoming and open as I can. As for my clients, it differs for every organisation I've worked with. In our role, it is important that we have the courage to speak





up about issues that need to be tackled and show support for solutions that may not be popular. It is one of our core values.

There is also a need to repeat our messages. Physiologically, our brains are not set and are always evolving. Repetition to bring awareness to the issues and the messages will make people more open and more conscious of the benefits of a diverse organisation. And this is what we do. Are we doing it perfectly? No, probably not. Are we on our way? Yes, I think we are. Is there still a lot to do? Yes, we are always looking at ways to do things better.

Can you tell us a bit about PwCs Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) programmes?

In 2004, we launched our D&I programmes globally. Previously, each country had their own programmes and it was the first time that programmes were brought out on such a large scale. Our diversity and inclusion vision is to build a diverse and inclusive workplace for our people so that they can be innovative, realise their potential and have a rewarding career while enabling our clients to be continually successful.

Gender equality in the workplace is important to us, and PwC has made three commitments to promote this.

1. Engaging men as agents of change
We're aspiring to leverage our network to gain 80,000 PwC male commitments to HeForShe by December 2018. HeForShe is a global movement for gender equality developed by UN Women to primarily engage men and boys as advocates and agents of change.
2. Further supporting women in leadership roles
We launched a Global Inclusion Index to evaluate women's representation across all levels of our network.
3. Develop and launch an innovative curriculum
We've lent our educational expertise and footprint to HeForShe by developing the Gender IQ to educate and empower our people as gender equality advocates.

We are working toward building a strong talent pipeline in the region and our gender diversity initiatives include monitoring gender balances – we track and monitor gender mix of our key talents, pipeline, partner admission numbers, and talent development programmes; supporting work flexibility when we can; a maternity and infant care programme; a female mentoring programme; and HeForShe.

In China, the law requires companies to have 1.5-1.7% of its headcount made up of disabled people, failing which companies pay into a disability fund. PwC employs people with disabilities and is looking to increase the number in China.

What are some of the challenges you've faced in dealing with D&I issues?

There is a degree of programming, but what you really need is a deep-rooted shift in mindset in women and men. In my experience with women, when they have children, there is a high degree of guilt when they work. Losing women from an organisation for whatever reasons is a major concern.

If we look at the LGBT area, it is different in all parts of the world. In Europe, though far from perfect, I think that it's quite advanced. However, in other parts of the world including in Asia, I believe there is still a lot of work to be done.

How can organisations turn D&I challenges into business opportunities?

In my own work, whenever I have had a success, it has never been alone. It was always a combination of different things that people added as part of a group or team. The trick in an organisation is that it starts with leaders who dare to surround themselves with people who are different thinkers. At PwC, we are very aware of this. There is a clear relationship between success and people who have different ideas, capabilities and strengths.

Why diversity and inclusion is important: to solve important problems, we need diverse talents. PwC's purpose is to build trust in society and solve important problems.

At PwC, the business case for diversity and inclusion is very simple. Firstly, we are absolutely convinced it is the right thing to do for all of our people; and secondly, we know it is critical we have diverse talent, views and thinking if we are to solve the world's most important problems. And to be the world's leading professional services network for our clients, people and communities. •



Communicating diversity: the right or right fit

Most, if not all, companies have some form of Diversity & Inclusion as part of their HR protocols. But often times it's forgotten that everything a company does ranging from marketing to product development might impact a company's public diversity image.



Annemarelle van Schayik

■ By Annemarelle van Schayik, Account Manager at Telum Media, avanschayik@telummedia.com, www.telummedia.com

A small boy dressed in the latest fashionable H&M sweater set the world on fire in January. For those who missed it, a black kid was dressed in a sweater emblazoned with the words “coolest monkey in the jungle” for the retail giant's latest ad campaign. Both the Weeknd and G-Eazy ended their partnership with H&M, and the Swedish brand was left to deal with a massive PR setback due to its perceived cultural, social and racial oversight.

H&M has not been the only major brand caught up in a storm of overlooking a long list of race, gender, culture, generational and other distinguishing characteristics in ads, frontline interaction and employee inclusion. 2017 saw several global companies weathering major crises.

Remember United Airlines and it's handling of an “involuntary de-boarding situation”? Or allegations at Uber for its alleged unfair treatment of female employees? And then there was Pepsi's ad featuring Kendall Jenner that was supposed to send a “global message of unity, peace and understanding”, but left a bad taste in the mouth of those who had recently participated in protests and the Black Lives Matter movement.

In a time of increased consumer activism, ranging from public shaming across social media, boycotts or what a 2018 Weber Shandwick study called “BUYcotters” – showing support for companies by intentionally buying from them – neglecting diversity hurts the wallet. On top of that, it also affects employee morale and in return productivity. But in reality, it's tough to achieve more than lip service.

Even emojis have jumped onto the bandwagon. And while we can tick off cross-racial couples and diverse family structures, the #MeToo movement alone is evidence the business world has its work cut out for it. Not just that, with the world becoming increasingly connected and business growing locally, regionally and globally, the need for a diverse workforce not only increases, but it also brings with it even more potential differences and more defining characteristics.

Hong Kong, in particular, is an interesting case in point. Despite the fact that 93.6% of the population is ethnic Chinese, they speak a variety of Chinese languages, cut across a wide range of social classes, educational backgrounds, political affiliations and so on. For the non-ethnically Chinese, some arrived in the city with nothing more than a suitcase, others were sent here by

their employers while others are second or even third generation Hongkongers.

So, returning to the issue at heart, how do you communicate diversity?

Over the past years, LGBTQ rights have been a much-debated topic across the city. In 2014, gay teachers were banned from a Christian school in Hong Kong, with their contract stating it was a sackable offence. And despite the fact that it was in violation of our city's Code of Practice against Discrimination in Employment on the Grounds of Sexual Orientation, it's just a voluntary one.

Fast forward to 2017 and twelve financial institutions sought to make court submission on behalf of a lesbian couple seeking a dependant visa. A statement issued by a law firm stated, “They all have corporate policies, strategies and practices to promote diversity and inclusion ... They all seek to attract and hire top talent from around the world in line with their diversity policies in order to maintain our position in the world talent market place.” And many, if not all, of the involved companies already provide some pro-LGBT policies according to the SCMP.

For financial institutions, the business case may be clear from an employee perspective. But it also makes sense from a customer perspective. In 2016, HSBC simultaneously received applause and drew ire as it decked its two world-famous lions – Stephen and Stitt – in rainbow colours. Its brave statement calling for support for the local LGBT community and “equality for everyone” only worked because the bank never gave into public pressure. And no doubt, it probably landed them a few BUYcotters.

And HSBC has not been alone. The Hong Kong bid team to host 2022 Gay Games received the support of Credit Suisse, Cathay Pacific and Linklaters LLP. That said, the gay community may well be an attractive segment for diversity and inclusion programmes, as according to a 2016 study, the LGBT purchasing power is near US\$1 trillion rivalling other minorities.

Simply put, with hundreds of different characteristics, diversity is a tough game to play. But it's clear that a white and male majority no longer cuts it in 2018. Rather companies will have to decide what forms of diversity and inclusion they want to practice and build their HR practices around that. And most importantly, find the right tone to communicate that strategy effectively. •

FrieslandCampina – 80 years in Hong Kong

Celebrating its 80th Anniversary, FrieslandCampina Hong Kong continues to nourish lives and provide quality dairy nutrition as a health and happiness partner of Hong Kong families.

■ By Helena He, Managing Director of FrieslandCampina Hong Kong



Helena He

In a customer-centric world, developing a strong emotional connection with consumers and meeting evolving market needs is essential to build a successful brand in any local market. Celebrating our 80th anniversary, I am proud of the success that FrieslandCampina Hong Kong has achieved, built on a foundation of trust from local consumers and families as a health and happiness partner that provides quality and nutritious dairy products.

Since establishing our business in Hong Kong in 1938, we have grown alongside the Hong Kong people to become the city's fastest growing dairy brand. Hong Kong is now a key strategic market for FrieslandCampina, not only in Asia but globally.

Dairy heritage and expertise delivers quality excellence

Supporting our brands is FrieslandCampina's rich dairy heritage and expertise of more than 140 years, and commitment to quality excellence. As one of the world's largest dairy cooperatives that is fully-owned by our member dairy farmers, we bring together a wealth of knowledge, expertise, experience and resources to form our unique "from Grass-to-Glass" value chain. Through the Foqus Planet, a comprehensive quality and safety control system in line with international standards and guidelines, we control our entire production chain from farms to production and distribution. Such stringent measures enable us to deliver high-quality products to Hong Kong's consumers and customers, and enhance consumer trust in our brands, which is an important foundation for FrieslandCampina's continuous growth in the Hong Kong market.

A product portfolio for Hong Kong people in all stages of life

FrieslandCampina's product portfolio provides quality dairy nutrition to nourish the lives of Hong Kong people across all ages. Our clear market positioning and targeted go-to-market strategies help us achieve the leading positions in all the categories that we operate in. The FRISO® brand offers specialised nutrition for pregnant mothers, infants and toddlers and is currently the segment's best-selling formula brand in Hong Kong and Macau¹. DUTCH LADY®, promoting "Building Strong Families", is a co-leading UHT product in the local market for families, while its milky series is successfully leading the kids segment.

Our BLACK & WHITE® product has been used in making Hong

Kong-style milk tea for over 75 years and is a brand preferred by many local milk tea masters. It is always referred to as "a local Hong Konger with Holland blood" given the product is produced in the Netherlands but customised for the local Hong Kong market. In 2015, we continued to expand our product portfolio to launch OPTIMEL®, the industry's first age-tailored adult nutrition formula for adults and the elderly that offers progressive health benefits to address their nutrition needs.

*"We are committed to nourish the
lives of Hong Kong people across
all ages."*

Providing better nutrition for the Hong Kong community and its future generations

Recognising that our success comes from the community and our consumers, FrieslandCampina Hong Kong is devoted to giving back to the community by leveraging our expertise to ensure better nutrition for the growth and well-being of the Hong Kong people and generations to come. One of the key initiatives is "Hong Kong World Milk Day". Since 2013, we have supported the FAO's World Milk Day by educating Hong Kong families about the importance of a well-balanced diet with appropriate dairy intake and physical exercise for the development of a healthy lifestyle. We have also organised "Drink. MOVE. Be Strong"-themed school tours for primary students in Hong Kong.

Another key community program is our "Milk Tea Master Training" program, a multi-sector collaboration platform supported by our customers and NGO partners. The program aims to promote and preserve Hong Kong-style milk tea making craftsmanship, a unique and intangible cultural heritage of Hong Kong, and provide the unemployed with opportunities to re-enter the workforce. With many senior milk tea masters retiring, our aim is to also attract and recruit new members to local tea houses through this training program.

As FrieslandCampina Hong Kong moves beyond our 80th anniversary, we will continue to deepen our connection with Hong Kong's consumers, and bring new products and offerings to provide a robust selection of high-quality and nutritious dairy products to families in Hong Kong and the generations to come. ●

Catching up with Annemieke Ruigrok, Consul General of the Netherlands

In a relatively short period of about one and half years since she arrived in August 2016, Annemieke Ruigrok has had a chance to meet many people in government, business and other organisations, and to experience much of what Hong Kong has to offer. We caught up with Annemieke recently and she shared some of the highlights from her time here thus far.

■ By Donna Mah

“Absolute highlight”

The “absolute highlight”, as many of you may be able to guess, was the historic visit by Prime Minister Mark Rutte in April 2018. Since the first Dutch consul was appointed in Hong Kong in 1857, Mr Rutte as the Dutch Prime Minister, is the first to ever visit the city.

“That was very exciting. It generated a lot of positive publicity in Hong Kong and the Netherlands. It was good as it drew attention to Hong Kong as being different from Mainland China. In Hong Kong, we received a lot of positive attention for the Prime Minister and for the Netherlands from the government, from business and the media picked up the story as well,” Annemieke said.

Dutch Days

Mr Rutte’s visit coincided with Dutch Days, a month-long event filled with Dutch cultural activities. In its fourth year, Dutch Days is another highlight as, “It’s really nice to have a period of time in which to concentrate on cultural, economic and other events

connected to the Netherlands. It makes the Netherlands more visible and it generates positive publicity. I’m very, very happy to be able to organise Dutch Days together with our co-organizer Asia Week Hong Kong, partners and the team here.

“In 2017, it was the first time that economic and innovation projects were added to the Dutch Days calendar including events with topics such as social financing, dementia and innovative shoe fashion. In 2018, the museum lecture series covered innovations in the museum world, such as virtual reality museums.

“Dutch Days generates a lot of publicity for the Netherlands and helps to put the Netherlands in the spotlight,” said Annemieke.

*“This will lead to a deeper understanding
of each other’s cultures, which will
further strengthen our relations, today
and in the future”*



(L-R) Annemieke Ruigrok, Dutch Consul General, Matthew Cheung, Chief Secretary for Administration and Mark Rutte, Dutch Prime Minister at the official opening of the new office of the Netherlands Consulate General in Hong Kong.

Working Holiday Programme

While Mr Rutte was in town, he also witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Hong Kong and the Netherlands for the bilateral Working Holiday Programme for young people (18-30 years old). The programme aims to broaden the horizons of young people and foster understanding by giving them the opportunity to live and work in the other place for a year. The PM's visit was the catalyst that led to the terms of the MoU to be hammered out and agreed to before his arrival.

"This will lead to a deeper understanding of each other's cultures, which will further strengthen our relations, today and in the future," Annemieke said. The programme will be effective from January 2019.

Cooperation with DutchCham

The cooperation with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce continues to be a highlight for Annemieke. "We are happy to be in the same location as DutchCham again in our brand new office," she said. Both organisations have common goals and work together closely.

The Volvo Ocean Race

The Volvo Ocean Race made a stop in Hong Kong for the first time ever with two Dutch teams participating. The event was also sponsored by Dutch design and consultancy company Arcadis and attended by the Special Envoy for International Water Affairs for the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Mr Henk Ovink.

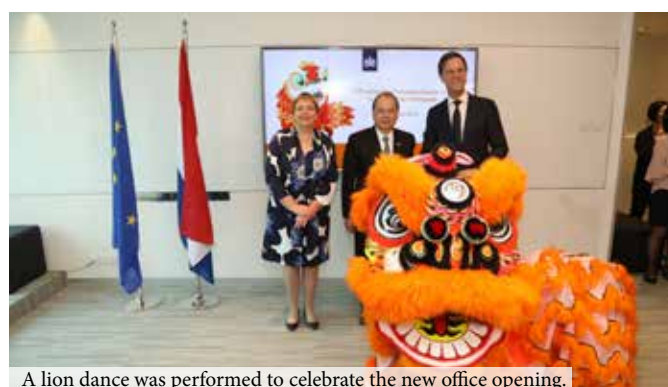
"Water represents man's most challenging and complex risk ... we can use water as leverage for impactful and catalytic change," stated Henk in his public lecture at the University of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong

As for Hong Kong itself, Annemieke is still amazed and happy about the diversity in the city. From the harbour to the high rise buildings, "it keeps amazing me how diverse it is," she said. Within the urban areas, such as Sham Shui Po, Mong Kok, Quarry Bay, each area has its own character or atmosphere. The rural areas (and sometimes urban areas) offer wildlife sightings (wild boars, porcupines, monkeys, birds, etc) which have also impressed Annemieke.

Horse-racing is a popular pastime in Hong Kong, and for Annemieke, the first horse-race she and her partner attended was also the first time they bet on a horse and the first time her partner won! "The races at Happy Valley racecourse in the evening surrounded by buildings provides a very special atmosphere," she said.

As a classical music lover, the Hong Kong Philharmonic and conductor Jaap van Zweden "never disappoints," she added. ●



A lion dance was performed to celebrate the new office opening.

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For more information please contact:



Tim Drew

Partner
timdrew@tannerdewitt.com
+852 2109 5572 (direct line)



Jan Willem Möller

Registered Foreign Lawyer
janmoeller@tannerdewitt.com
+852 2109 5582 (direct line)

Cross-gender sponsorships

“There is a special place in hell for women who don’t help other women.”

Quote from Madeleine Albright, US Secretary of State, Keynote Speech at the Celebrity Inspiration Luncheon for the Women’s National Basketball Association All Decade Team, 2006

■ By Naomi Sedney, The Inclusion Factory, naomisedney@theinclusionfactory.com



Even though Ms Albright’s famous words were spoken over a decade ago, they have continued to resonate with me, because I, too, am a firm believer that women have an obligation to help one another in general and at the workplace in particular. Despite years of advocacy for women’s rights, women have remained significantly underrepresented in senior-level positions.

Statistics from diverse sources clearly illuminate that female professionals are in need of greater support for career advancement in the workplace. According to Catalyst (March 2017), one of the leading non-profit organisations in promoting inclusive workplaces for women, women account for 5.6% of CEO’s and 19.15% of Board seats: ¹

And according to the HeforShe (a solidarity campaign for the advancement of gender equality, initiated by the United Nations), gender equality in the workplace will not be achieved until 2095. ²

But what about the numbers of Hang Seng Index (HSI) boards? Community Business (a not-for-profit organisation whose mission is to lead, inspire and support businesses to have a positive impact on people and communities) published its latest “Women on Boards - Hong Kong” report in March 2018 ³. The report indicates that, in 2018, out of a total of 632 directorships, 87 are held by women (13.8%). The report states, “Although this is encouraging, the progress is very slow compared with other markets and global financial centres, well below the target set by the 30% Club Hong Kong, of 20% women by the year 2020, working toward a long-term goal of 30%.” ⁴ The report continues “with less than three years to meet this ‘20% by 2020’ target, there needs to be much more stronger momentum across all HSI companies” ⁵.

One of the contributing factors to women’s lack of career advancement is the fact that high-potential women are not being actively sponsored the way men are. ⁶ Within this context, sponsorship refers to “a special kind of relationship ... in which the mentor goes beyond giving feedback and advice and uses his or her influence with senior executives to advocate for the mentee”. ⁷ **Given the fact that male executives primarily hold top-level positions, they can play a significant role in advancing the careers of women in the workplace by sponsoring them.**

Therefore, despite my firm belief in women supporting other women in the workplace, I recognise that women alone will not be able to alter gender disparity at higher-level positions. Therefore, to me, women supporting other women can only be considered to be just one of the means to an end, but not an end in itself.

An effective way that helps to address the underrepresentation of women in senior-level positions is cross-gender sponsorships. Research shows that cross-gender sponsorships involving male sponsors and female protégés are accompanied by significant challenges. Based on my academic research and my experience as a consultant and coach, it has become clear that male sponsors therefore require some guidance and support in their interactions with their female protégés in order to fulfil the objectives of their sponsorship assignments.

Both my experience and research illuminated **the extent to which underlying beliefs, biases, perceptions and emotions of male sponsors, whether at the conscious or unconscious levels, can drive actions that essentially sabotages the core objective of advancing the career of female protégés.** My experience as a consultant and coach led me to contribute to the success of such cross-gender and the development of targeted coaching programmes for male executives. As one retired male executive pointed out to me, “I wished someone had told me all of this, [my gender beliefs, biases and perceptions and how it affected my role as a sponsor] earlier in my career,” so that he could have been able to exert a positive influence on the lives of his female colleagues as their sponsor.

I therefore invite all male professionals who do take their role as sponsors of female professionals seriously to get support in cultivating the awareness of what is beneath the surface and learn how to pay greater attention to their attitudes and actions in their sponsorship work with female protégés.

If you want to know how you can be a successful sponsor of a female professional, you can contact me. ●

Naomi Sedney is founding partner of The Inclusion Factory. She is a Diversity & Inclusion consultant and coach, based in Hong Kong. She holds a Master’s Degree in International Law and an Executive Master’s Degree from INSEAD (Individual and Organizational Psychology).

1 “Women in S&P 500 Companies”, last modified June 14, 2017, <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-sp-500-companies>.

2 “The Narrowing, but Persistent, Gender Gap in Pay”, last modified April 3, 2017, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/03/gender-pay-gap-facts/>

3 “Women on Boards Hong Kong 2018”, [womenonboards_HONGKONGreport-digital.pdf](#)

4 “Women on Boards Hong Kong 2018”, [womenonboards_HONGKONGreport-digital.pdf](#), p. 10

5 “Women on Boards Hong Kong 2018”, [womenonboards_HONGKONGreport-digital.pdf](#), p. 10

6 “Why men still get more promotions than women, your high-potential females need more than just well-meaning mentors”, Ibarra, H., Carter, N. M., & Silva, C. Harvard Business Review, 2010, p. 80–85.

7 “Why men still get more promotions than women, your high-potential females need more than just well-meaning mentors”, Ibarra, H., Carter, N. M., & Silva, C. Harvard Business Review, 2010, p. 8

Make your website accessible to everyone

We tend to take browsing websites or using apps for granted, but it's not always as easy for people with cognitive, visual, hearing or physical impairments. With an ageing population, the number of people with such disabilities is expected to grow.



Maarten Swemmer

■ By Maarten Swemmer, Digital Business Consultant at Apprique, maarten.swemmer@apprique.com

The kinds of issues people with disabilities encounter are manifold. For example, small letters and low colour contrast between letters and background cause challenges for anyone, but they cause serious problems for people with impaired vision. At the same time, text-to-speech web browsers used by blind people cannot read graphical files that contain texts, no matter how large the characters or how good the colours contrast.

The HKSAR Census and Statistics Department determined that in 2013, 2.44% of the Hong Kong population experiences a seeing difficulty, 2.16% experiences a hearing difficulty and 4.47% has a restriction in body movement. These numbers were up 37%, 64% and 62% respectively, compared to 2007.

As part of any Inclusion strategy of any company, it would make sense to include these segments. Optimising a corporate website for people with impairments is one of the easiest steps. The effectiveness of your website would be greatly enhanced if the widest possible audience, including persons with disabilities, can access it easily.

- *"If blind people can read your*
- *website or people with hearing*
- *impairments can read the subtitles*
- *of your videos, so can Google's*
- *Search Engine!"*

What you can do

By optimising a website or other user interface and making the right design choices with colour contrasts and fonts, your website or app can be made better accessible for people with visual impairments. Technical enhancements can further improve accessibility with, for example, text-to-speech technologies and braille readers. When your company publishes videos on, for

example YouTube, adding subtitles ensures that people with hearing impairments can also understand the message. For the physically challenged to be able to interact with your company website more easily, you could, for example, make sure buttons and links are not too small or placed too close together.

When done well, measures taken to improve accessibility also improve the user experience in general, as well as search engine optimisation. If blind people can read your website or people with hearing impairments can read the subtitles of your videos, so can Google's Search Engine!

The Hong Kong Government is quite keen on web accessibility and has promoted this since 1999 (according to their website). Since 2013, through the "Web Accessibility Recognition Scheme" more attention has been drawn to this topic. Companies that apply will have their website assessed based on two levels of accessibility criteria, Silver and Gold. These criteria largely correspond with the Accessibility guidelines by the W3C, the World Wide Web Consortium. Experienced agencies, including Apprique, can help to address the issues raised in the assessment and to achieve the targeted level of accessibility. Companies that receive recognition for their efforts by being granted a reward may publish a corresponding "Silver" or "Gold" logo on their website.

Due to its dual lingual nature, a significant part of the population that can read Chinese cannot read English (well) and vice-versa. While illiteracy is very low in Hong Kong, some people are illiterate in one of the two main written languages. Although it is not part of the Web Accessibility Recognition Scheme, it is my opinion that making your website accessible to these segments should be part of your inclusion strategy as well. Adding additional languages to your website requires a relatively small effort.

Companies that want to make their website accessible to people with disabilities in 2018 can join Hong Kong's web accessibility programme before 7 September 2018 through the url below.¹²³ ●

1 Special Topics Report No. 62 "Persons with disabilities and chronic diseases" by HKSAR Census and Statistics Department, December 2014, <https://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B11301622014XXXXB0100.pdf>
 2 W3C Accessibility guidelines: <https://www.w3.org/standards/techs/accessibility>
 3 More information on the HKSAR Web Accessibility Recognition Scheme: <https://web-accessibility.hk/en> or <https://www.apprique.com/website-accessible/>

The Hong Kong Smart City Blue Print under Review

In December 2017 the Hong Kong government presented the Smart City Blue Print for Hong Kong. The Environment and Energy Business Council (EEBC) of the European Chamber of Commerce wrote a position paper reviewing the “SMART ENVIRONMENT” section of the blue print. In this article I will share the main findings and recommendations the EEBC identified related to Waste Management, Green and Intelligent Buildings, and reducing carbon emissions from electricity production in Hong Kong.



Tom Uiterwaal

■ By Tom Uiterwaal, Chairman of the Environment & Energy Business Council (EEBC) of the European Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong

Waste Management

Despite targets set by the Hong Kong government, the amount of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) going to the landfill is at a record high. On the other hand, recycling/recovery rates of MSW went down to 34% continuing the trend of the last couple of years.

The Hong Kong Government applied a “laissez faire” approach leaving the recovery/recycling of MSW to the private sector with limited support or regulations from the government. This resulted in an export-oriented industry of low value products with limited processing in Hong Kong, with recovery/recycling rates dependent on international regulations and price fluctuations. Furthermore, it's unclear what happens with the exported waste. A strategic change is required in the recycling industry to increase recovery/recycling rates in Hong Kong. More advanced processing of MSW needs to take place to produce high quality secondary raw material to meet the stricter requirements of markets like Mainland China.

Serious investments are needed to upgrade the recycling industry and governmental support by introducing subsidies or gate-fees is required to make recycling in Hong Kong long-term viable. Subsidies can be funded by implementing Product Responsibility Schemes (PRS) to assure the polluters pay principle. We also recommend creating a safe space to introduce new-to-Hong Kong recycling solutions whilst minimising regulatory disruptions.

Although waste production is at record high, secured supply of waste for recycling is still not available. The main reason is that waste going to the landfill is mixed and therefore unsuitable for recycling. Therefore, EEBC fully supports the introduction of the Waste Charging Scheme for MSW to enhance separation of waste at the source. EEBC also recommends introducing deposit systems for items like plastic bottles, glass and aluminum cans. Finally, the EEBC suggests setting up mechanical waste sorting facilities near the landfills for the Municipal Solid Waste.

Energy Efficiency of Buildings

In Hong Kong there are approx. 40,000 buildings (of which approx. 8,000 are government buildings) and they consume 90% of the

electricity generated in the territory, which equates to 63% of the carbon footprint. To drive a reduction of energy consumption, the real opportunities are in retrofitting and improving the energy efficiency of Hong Kong's existing buildings to lower energy consumption and related carbon emissions.

The EEBC recommends making it mandatory to published energy data of every building is a key driver to improve awareness and building energy performance. To strengthen the regulations and promote the use of thermal barriers (insulation) and energy recovery ventilation. Producing guidelines to enable the use of new-to-Hong-Hong equipment and energy efficiency technologies. EEBC invites the Hong Kong Government to provide a complimentary energy consultation for interested parties in becoming energy efficient. Finally, we would recommend supporting the role out of the smart grid throughout Hong Kong enabling both electricity consumer and producer to adjust electricity usage with reference to the data provided.

Reducing Carbon Emissions from Electricity Production in Hong Kong

Even though internationally renewable electricity production is becoming more important, in the Smart City Blue Print there is limited focus on renewable electricity production to reduce carbon emissions. The current share of renewable electricity production in Hong Kong is <1%. In the Blue Print Hong Kong's Realisable Renewable Electricity Potential up to 2030 is determined at 3-4%. The potential determined in the plan is so much lower than what's seen internationally because the scope is narrower. The focus is only on sun and wind while internationally a wide range of renewables are being supported. Furthermore, in the Hong Kong approach only renewables are considered from Hong Kong while internationally a mix of both local and imported renewables are being supported to reduce carbon emissions.

To increase the renewable electricity production in Hong Kong the EEBC supports the introduction of a Feed-In Tariff system, however, for a wider range of Renewable Energy Sources. We recommend defining Mandatory Renewable Electricity Targets and to include both local and international sources of renewables. ●

Interview Tim Haaksma and Tina Goguia on the launch of Ockel

We spoke to Tim Haaksma and Tina Goguia about the launch of Ockel, an ultra-small Windows PC.

■ By DutchCham



Tina Goguia



Tim Haaksma

Tim: I have a Master's degree in Management of Technology and Innovation and started my career at Philips. After four years, I decided to start my own venture, as I wanted to explore what I could do to enrich the market with innovative stuff. Over the years my company started to focus and became a mobile lifestyle company, making accessories for your smartphone, tablet and laptop, but not the hardware itself. Some 2.5 years ago my mindset changed. As we developed so many products, I got the sense that I had some pretty good ideas about hardware products as well. We first developed a pocket PC, a Windows 10 computer. It's smaller than your phone, with full size functionality.

The hardware director of Indiegogo, a crowdfunding platform, came by and asked us to launch this pocket PC on his platform. We were already passed the concept stage and I thought that I wouldn't need the financing. But he convinced me that we would gain an advantage towards early adopters. We got 500,000 USD and a lot of publicity. This allowed us to really make steps with our product. We upgraded the specs and added new functionalities. At first it was just like a normal PC. You bring your computer and then use the screens and keyboards available at the venue, or hook it up to your TV to use as a media player.

That concept landed well and the only negative feedback we ever got was that people don't always have a screen. So we decided to integrate a touchscreen as well as a battery. You can still connect it, but also use it autonomously.

Along the way we met up with Microsoft and Intel, who connected us with the right manufacturing partners. Over the last years we have been developing it on the technical side as well as from a marketing perspective, and we recently released the product to our backers. That's how it works with crowd funding, people who donate are the first ones to receive the product. These backers form an interactive community and we receive lots of feedback, allowing us to learn. That is atypical for the hardware industry, as they are usually multinational companies with billions of dollars in turnover. We are small and can interact with our customers. I believe that is often how innovation is established. It's a known concept in business science that large companies typically have an innovators dilemma.

A while ago I met Tina, who is very experienced in digital marketing. With online media you are able to reach millions of people, so that is what Tina is doing right now.

Tina: When I decided to work with Ockel I came up with a strategy to go global. From experience I know this can be difficult.

Backers form a typical crowd, further extending the audience can be tricky. To get started, I planned a very modest prelaunch campaign on Facebook. We started with the Netherlands and Japan and it went through the roof, so we decided to extend it to other countries.

Tim: Now we are going to the next phase of launching the product. We need to make estimations about conversions and manage the supply. We already know that the demand is quite overwhelming. I believe this is the case because it's different from any other product on the market. We always say that innovation is design plus function. New functionality and great looking design is what this product is about.

Tina: The product is well received. We no longer see that effect only on Indiegogo, but also for a larger audience. As we are rolling out the next phase, we see what is the best way to reach people, how they digest the information, whether it's enough information to trigger their interest. It shows the power of digital marketing. It's exciting to see how Facebook delivers. In the end it's targeting. We can target a look-a-like audience of people that already bought the product, as well as people that are into gadgets.

Tim: It's a mixture between the targeting and product proposition. People also like the story of us being a Dutch hardware start-up. That is already quite unique in itself. ●



Interview with Annette Wijering on the Dutch Trade and Investment Fund

Annette Wijering is manager of International Enterprise at the Netherlands Enterprise Agency. The agency implements tools which support entrepreneurs in their international activities. One of those tools is the Dutch Trade and Investment Fund.

■ By Nicola Chadwick



Annette Wijering



Nicola Chadwick

What does the Netherlands Enterprise Agency stand for?

The philosophy of the Netherlands Enterprise Agency is to support entrepreneurs who want to invest in or export to foreign countries by providing advice, networks and finance.

How does the Netherlands Enterprise Agency assist entrepreneurs?

At first, it is all about knowledge and information. Besides our helpdesk, website, coaches and events, the Netherlands has a worldwide network of embassies and consul generals who provide local inside information.

Once entrepreneurs have a better idea which country provides opportunities, we have specialised coaches who liaise with our worldwide economic departments in the Netherlands Embassy network. They match Dutch capabilities to overseas opportunities. Together we help businesses overcome obstacles and find the right contacts, for example, through trade missions and fairs. This improves their international competitive position.

The Dutch Trade and Investment Fund (DTIF) steps in when entrepreneurs have difficulty getting a loan or export finance and insurance from the market. For instance a lumber company proposes to start operations in Ukraine with production in the Netherlands. We support these kinds of activities because, among other things, it provides work for other Dutch businesses and brings in more tax revenue.

What motivates the Dutch government to provide programmes such as the DTIF?

As a relatively small country with an open economy, exports are vital. They generate over a third of the Netherlands' income and 2.2 million jobs. Overseas investments create another million jobs. The Netherlands is the 4th most competitive economy, but a lot needs to be done to consolidate its position.

That's why we help in the ways that are described above. On the financial side, according to EU reports, there is a market failure in the Netherlands. We also provide investment and export finance through DTIF in addition to the market, thus creating a level playing field for Dutch businesses operating abroad.

Even though a reputable company had been trading in China for years, it turned to DTIF to relocate its operations. This resulted in more jobs in the Netherlands and China and increased the

growth in turnover for Dutch enterprises.

DTIF was launched a year ago for many reasons. One, is that the further away the countries are, the more complicated it is for banks to estimate the risks. Secondly, banks do not count assets in other foreign countries, so a business with premises in Romania wanting to start operations in Hungary, starts afresh. Also, banks have less experience with the local market conditions, making them more inclined to avoid risks. Thirdly, the costs of assessing local risks is relatively high, while the interest you can ask of SMEs and mid-corporate companies for smaller investment and export finance needs is low. Finally, some countries are sensitive, such as Cuba and Iran, where there is a risk of sanctions.

The first company to receive funding from DTIF wanted to set up a rental company for heavy construction equipment in Cuba, a relatively risky project for a commercial bank to finance due to the target country. Thanks to DTIF the project developed an industrial terrain and created 60 new jobs. It also boosted Cuba's building sector, whilst the Dutch company was able to expand its business.

What conditions are the companies expected to meet?

DTIF is available when the commercial financial market is not able or willing to provide finance, despite a sound business plan for investment or export. Recipients must be healthy companies with a track record in the Netherlands and dominant control in their foreign operations. The programme adheres to international corporate social responsibility criteria and focuses on developed countries. We also have the Dutch Good Growth Fund for developing countries like Vietnam or Colombia. Together the two programmes cover the whole world.

Recently the largest ever Dutch trade mission took place in Hong Kong and China. How important is this market to the Dutch economy?

The Asian market is a growth market in which Hong Kong plays a key role as a hub to the rest of Asia. The mission is part of an annual programme. When the national and regional delegates return, we follow up with a Chinese Business Week, a trade fair and regional missions. Eventually we will develop a multi-year programme.

If you are a Dutch entrepreneur interested in investing in or exporting to a foreign country, read more about the Dutch Trade and Investment Fund, or contact us directly at +31 70 379 80 00. •



Name: Annemarelle van Schayik

Telum Media

avanschayik@telummedia.com

Passing the pen

Who am I: For the first 18 years of my life, Langenboom was my world. Luckily my family has always instilled a hunger for travel and culture in me so upon graduating from high school I moved to Beijing. I lived there for a year studying Mandarin, before moving to Hong Kong where I obtained my Bachelor and M.Phil in Chinese studies.

My professional background is: Ever since I was young I dreamed of becoming a teacher and for the longest time I planned to get my PhD and go into academia. But having worked at The Chinese University of Hong Kong after graduation, I quickly realised that increasingly universities are adopting models that work well for the hard sciences, but less so for the soft sciences. I then worked at a social impact start-up in Hong Kong, before spending six months working on a one-off project from the back of a minibs interviewing local youth entrepreneurs in eight African countries for a Dutch NGO. But Asia continued to call me, and I returned to Hong Kong.

I work for: Telum Media is a media intelligence company providing a pan Asia Pacific media database for PR professionals. Besides our data on media and journalists, we also provide weekly newsletters in which we cover the latest key personnel moves and feature articles, send out weekly job vacancies for journalists and organise exclusive events with journalists and media organisations for our clients.

I moved to Hong Kong because ... I wanted to learn more about the intricacies of China after having lived there for a year. To me, it made the most sense to study Sinology or Chinese Studies in Hong Kong as it allowed me to be immersed in a Chinese environment 24/7 and it has a decent academic standard and little academic censorship as compared to the Mainland. Granted, I could have done it in Europe or the States, but I've now equipped myself with speaking both Mandarin and Cantonese.

My most remarkable work story is: Visiting a female prison in Kenya where a youth entrepreneur had set up shop. In an attempt to give these women a chance to be able to make money upon being released, the entrepreneur taught them how to make reusable menstruation pads from banana fibre. In Kenya thousands of girls miss school for up to a week every month as they don't have access to proper sanitary products or they're too costly. We got to visit the workshop, crowding around 20+ women busy sewing, cutting and packing hundreds of menstruation pads.

I find most of my business contacts through: Networking events run as a red thread through my business (and personal) life. I'm also a Global Shaper and hundreds of fellow global shapers pass through our city every year.

Diversity to me means... Inclusiveness and respect. Real diversity should run core to any business as it can significantly impact the bottom line if tapped into. People from different walks of life, race, generation, religion and so on bring different life experiences and if they feel included and respected, they'll bring new ideas to innovate and to avoid that deadly "inside the box thinking" that can bring down even the biggest conglomerate.

25 years ago I was... 4 years old and running the neighbourhood.

One day I will be: Who knows. Life is full of opportunities and exciting new paths, I'll see where it takes me. ●



Community building

Building community in co-working spaces has little to do with the desks, facilities and Wi-Fi connection. The mutually-supportive people and organisations who are located in and near these spaces are becoming thriving communities within communities. We spoke with Oscar Venhuis from theDesk and Jacob Feenstra from Campfire about community building and why it's important for business.

■ By Donna Mah



Jacob Feenstra



Oscar Venhuis

Oscar Venhuis, Co-Founder and Chief Creative Officer theDesk

Many members may already know Oscar Venhuis as the Chair of the Creative Committee. He is the Co-Founder and Chief Creative Officer at theDesk, with three co-working and events spaces in Hong Kong. Oscar spoke to us about their mission “to build professional, inclusive communities across Hong Kong’s diverse districts”.

Building a community

Oscar began building theDesk co-working community with his business partners in June 2016. They began with a location in Sai Ying Pun and have expanded to two additional sites in Causeway Bay. As the Chief Creative Officer at theDesk, Oscar told us, “I articulate our vision, long-term strategies, what makes us unique and our inclusive community.”

According to Oscar, theDesk offers an inclusive community as its unique value proposition. “Traditional co-working spaces connect members with members. Whereas we connect members to one another and with our neighbouring businesses as well. This creates a larger businesses network with deeper trust, both needed to do business successfully,” he said.

“In Hong Kong, it’s quite common not to know your neighbours. We want to build a smart community by utilising the talent and resources within close proximity of our locations. From this, we can expand to larger communities by connecting these close proximity communities,” Oscar explained. theDesk is one of



Hong Kong’s premium home-grown co-working companies and works within a sector that is reinventing the way people work and building communities.

“Diversity makes sense for us. In a co-working space such as ours, the work environment fosters innovation and accelerates growth,” he added. As people from diverse backgrounds and experiences interact with each other, different viewpoints are expressed and that may cause some disagreements. However, Oscar believes it is “good to disagree”. By disagreeing, people begin to talk, to discuss and to learn from each other.

‘Old school’ interaction

Oscar and the team at theDesk proactively reach out to businesses and people in the neighbourhoods in which they are based. They currently have three locations: one in Sai Ying Pun and two in Causeway Bay – One Hysan Avenue and Leighton Centre. Future sites are in the pipeline to expand and build their network.

When asked about how theDesk builds their ‘close proximity’ communities, Oscars told us they do it ‘old school’ – “We talk to people. I think people need the human interaction.” While most co-working spaces focus on their paying members, theDesk is working to build community beyond the confines of their physical spaces with an inclusive, neighbourhood approach.

Building relationships

To promote theDesk and attract new members, the company does online marketing, but the main focus of their efforts is on building



Oscar Venhuis at theDesk



trust and relationships. “We invest a lot in content marketing and generate all of our own content. We start at a grassroots level – introducing businesses in the neighbourhood, general industry trends – building to a global level. Content has been crucial to lead generation,” said Oscar.

Oscar is not someone who likes to put labels on people. Having a diverse background himself, he doesn’t feel there is a need to define oneself with labels. Oscar is of Korean heritage, grew up in the Netherlands, went to school in the UK, is well travelled and has worked in different countries. Early exposure to different food and languages gave him an awareness that differences existed.

Why co-work?

“Diversity is great for innovation. Different viewpoints help people to innovate,” said Oscar. Co-working offers flexible work spaces, flexible terms, a shared economy, a different work environment for different work styles and an innovative environment that encourages discussion. It’s important to distinguish traditional business centres from co-working spaces. Oscar believes that most people are naturally sociable, so while they are at work and working, they also need the social aspect. Co-working can offer that.

“We get to know our members and we make introductions. We encourage people to talk to each other. This may or may not turn into business, but it does encourage relationship building and community,” he said. While there is the business side of theDesk, Oscar thinks it is equally important to help others without benefitting oneself. It is a value that he hopes others will adopt by example. Non-member neighbours are invited to drop by theDesk and the team are also happy to make introductions.

“If we can help others, then there may be monetary returns, but not always,” he said. But of course, monetary returns are not the objective.

Event series

Oscar told us that the team at theDesk have moved away from running their own events but are happy to host events in their venues. Though they’ve held some very successful events in the past, they noticed that their own members were not participating and that the non-members who attended the event were only interested in the event, and not the co-working space.

That is not to say that theDesk will no longer be organising events, but they will be carefully vetting them to ensure that they are really adding value. “We still believe in events, but they must be unique. We prefer to take a theme and build a series of events

around that theme over a longer period. I think people can get more value of the events and really learn,” Oscar explained.

The future of work

Oscar also spoke about cOS (community Operation System) and the concept of XaaS, or ‘eXperience-as-a-service’.

“cOS is our next generation co-working 2.0 platform connecting members, neighbours and wider business community. Within this cOS is a suite of community products, XaaS is a programme facilitating collaboration between members, neighbours and businesses to accelerate innovation and knowledge sharing,” explained Oscar. They are also putting together a senior advisory board made up of semi-retired people who will mentor, advise and consult with members. This ‘eXperience-as-a-service’ gives purpose to the mentors and provides professional help to the mentees. The programme also aims to help strengthen the community that theDesk is building from a grass-roots level into a global one.

Jacob Feenstra, Head of Sales & Marketing Campfire

Jacob Feenstra is Chair of the PR & Publications Committee and Head of Sales & Marketing at Campfire, a Hong Kong based company that started two and a half years ago. The business has quickly grown from its first co-working space in Kennedy Town to locations in Wong Chuk Hang, Quarry Bay, Taikoo and Causeway Bay being added in August. The company is also expanding its international footprint with a London Campfire opening in July and plans to open spaces including in Melbourne, Sydney, Singapore and Tokyo in the near future.

Jacob is responsible for the growth of the brand and business through new member development. Working with a team of marketing and sales professionals, Jacob’s responsibilities cover all the shared spaces – co-working, co-living and co-education – that Campfire offers.

Collaborative spaces, community and membership

Founded by three partners, Campfire not only operates co-working spaces, but is expanding its portfolio of shared spaces to include co-living and co-educational spaces.

The co-living space called Campfire Home in Sham Shui Po, is designed to offer members access to a diverse community with private bedroom, bathrooms, shared living and dining facilities, activities and one monthly bill that covers rent, utilities, internet and access to the co-working community.

The co-education spaces in Tseung Kwan O, is a new way of early childhood education, with a playground, kindergarten, cafe and selection of 14 local and international education partners who



Campfire Tai Koo

Lead Story



Campfire Wong Chuk Hang

will provide a diverse play-based learning curriculum. The spaces have been designed to foster and enrich life-long learning for children and adults.

“Our spaces offer people opportunities to meet, network and do business with a broad range of people. Each Campfire location is a community on its own as well as part of the greater Campfire network,” Jacob told us. “At Campfire, members are a part of something where you can build and grow – as individuals and in business.”

“We want to understand why members joined Campfire and also what they can offer the community. There are various reasons why someone joins a shared spaces network, for some clients, they want their team to work in an open environment with access to other people and ideas. Other people like being able to pick and choose an area to set up their work station depending on the task they are working on. While others want to meet industry colleagues, or have access to a broader team or community,” he explained.

Campfire has spaces with specific industry focuses, for example, in Wong Chuk Hang one location focusses on fashion and another on media which Jacob said, “creates a more cohesive network and presents business opportunities for the members.” The work that the team at Campfire does helps to create micro-networks within the Campfire network. Jacob also mentioned that they approach community engagement in two ways: 1. through social activities organised by Campfire to encourage team engagement, and 2. partnered educational business events on topics that are of direct relevance to the members businesses.

One such partner is Startup Grind, an independent start-up community involved in educating and connecting over 1 million entrepreneurs in over 365 countries. Startup Grind runs educational events at Campfire that are of interest to both Campfire and Startup Grind members. While not a core focus at Campfire, events help to boost the Campfire community and brand and offers networking opportunities.

Diversity and inclusion

In shared spaces, Jacob said, “Diversity and inclusion must be embraced when we work with so many individuals. There is an open work environment and a diverse group of businesses and individuals. Members enjoy being part of an environment like Campfire.”

With a diverse group in the workplace, Jacob also noted that people are used to dealing with people from different backgrounds. In his own career, he said he has never felt out of place anywhere. Having come from a diverse background himself, being Dutch, growing up in New Zealand and now working in Hong Kong, differences were simply a part of life.

“Campfire is a very welcoming place to work. It’s a fast-paced

place to work. A place where an individual’s contribution really matters. We are growing a global business very quickly so we have a lot of different people working together to do this. The team is working towards growing something big while being themselves. With the changing footprint, we have a very fluid environment,” he elaborated.

While opportunities are offered to members to interact with others, it is also up to the individual to do what they are comfortable with. Jacob’s view is that a diverse community is more productive and is a more complete community. A stronger community with different opinions and views to contribute. He does note that entrepreneurship is common ground for many members and they have a sense of being part of something that is growing. The feeling is echoed in the Campfire team as well. The team have the freedom to try new things and implement new ideas into the developing business model.

Changing scene

When co-working was first introduced into the market, many start-ups set up shop in shared spaces. The spaces were a cost-effective way to access workstations with included facilities. However, Jacob notes that the scene has changed since then.

“SMEs have moved to co-working, and large corporations are moving some of their teams across. The flexible rental of space with additional facilities and easier access to talent outside of their own businesses make co-working an excellent option to meet their needs,” he said. Aside from the flexibility of rented spaces, some of which are designed specifically for a client, the organisations also recognise the benefits of being in a diverse environment that offers a strong sense of community to its employees.

Industry focus

Campfire has strategically created spaces that have an industry focus. Jacob told us that the fashion-focussed location in Wong Chuk Hang has attracted a good mix of companies that sit alongside businesses related to their supply chain. The close proximity of suppliers can have some synergistic effect and help to increase productivity.

In the media-focussed location there is good crossover of businesses including bloggers, creative media, production companies, magazines and more, again offering opportunities to learn from and share with others in businesses that are different but operate within the same industry.

“Being in an environment where you can pick and choose where you sit. Meeting a broad range of people within your industry focus or outside of that. It keeps people really, really interested,” he added. “Teams work in an environment with access to other people. It increases productivity. A diverse community is a more productive community, a more complete community, which creates a stronger community.” •



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Diversity in Go Green

Waste management has traditionally been a 'male industry', but today there are many initiatives to bring in women. After all, a green environment is not exactly a 'male' topic, is a concern for all of us.



Bernard F. Scheffens

■ By Bernard F. Scheffens, CEO, WSS Asia Ltd.

Many corporations and institutions have, over the past years, welcomed women into their ranks. To achieve a green world and clean up our own mess is a higher objective than being 'just a job'. The Dutch Secretary for Environment is a woman and what better example can there be to demonstrate that women can play an important role in this industry and promote a green world to achieve a circular economy?

In April, a Dutch Trade Mission to China including Prime Minister Mark Rutte, visited China with representatives from six sectors of Dutch industry, including companies from waste management and circular economy. And representing these companies, the Secretary delivered a number of speeches, clearly demonstrating the drive and passion to achieve a circular economy for the benefit of all people.

Diversity is sometimes a topic accompanied by quite some discussion. Diversity in itself is broad in meaning. It is not limited to man/woman discussion about positions in business or government. It includes involvement of people from different backgrounds, cultures, races and so forth, based on respect and acknowledgement of skills and expertise. The basis of it all is a philosophy that the mix of qualities will enrich our work and our lives. And it can be fun too! (Have a look at the picture ...)

- *"We steered clear from the*
- *discussion about women in*
- *business. We knew that quality of*
- *work would do the trick."*

From personal experience in the IT industry, a traditionally male-dominated business culture, one can clearly see this turnaround. Some of the biggest IT companies in the world have women CEOs and in board positions. At one point, I reported to two women in a famous matrix organisation situation. It was an international role and I had never had such a good time before working with these highly qualified people. It was a great experience. People around me made funny jokes about it, but I never understood why. My approach was to work as a team to get the job done. We steered clear from the discussion about women in business. We knew that quality of work would do the trick. And yes, women bring qualities that sometimes men don't have and vice versa. So, what? It's time that we start to accept we can learn from each other and create a better future for all.

Having said this, it has not been easy. We still encounter many people with suspicion about women in certain jobs. But look at what is happening, for example, in Saudi Arabia. With new leaders, the position of women is changing for the better. Leadership has

been key in these developments. But do we need fixed percentages of women in board positions? Will this help in the long run? Would it not be better to create chances to demonstrate skills and passion, equally for men and women, and see who comes out the best? And yes, that is not an easy task, we all know that. It's a challenge and an opportunity at the same time.

In the Waste Management Industry, we see a lot of hopeful developments, in all ranks by the way. From work on the floor, in management, in boards, in government etc. The former undersecretary for environment in Hong Kong was a woman and highly skilled in the environment industry. I have already mentioned our own Dutch secretary.

We still have some work to do however. To incorporate certain principles about equality between men and women in organisations. To achieve equal pay for the same work done, for example. To create equal chances. It's about integrity, honesty to acknowledge us all as human beings who contribute to our common goals and, as they say in sports, may the best man win ... oops, may the best win ...

The change we need should not be imposed. It should be integrated into how we are raising our children, in our education systems, in our professional lives, in our leadership roles. In other words, it should be a part of ourselves. Like we need to grow to another type of economy. In China a few weeks ago, we met the CEO of a plastic recycling company. We were impressed by her knowledge, drive and passion for the company and its employees. Just another example we see throughout the industry. And why would we not support her in her effort to solve the plastic problem? ●



Women at the top

Like most EU countries, the Netherlands has been progressive towards diversity and inclusion, for example by trying to increase the number of women in board positions with private companies and in the public sector.



Rolf Sperling

■ By Rolf Sperling, Associate, Loyens & Loeff, rolf.sperling@loyensloeff.com

Striving for a balanced distribution

A key focus for the Dutch legislator has been the largest companies in the Netherlands, who should have a minimum percentage of female board members. Since 2013, the Netherlands has a formal basis in its corporate law that should ensure that “large” companies (around 5,000 for 2016) strive for a balanced distribution of board seats between women and men. In short, the goal is that at least 30% of the seats on the management board and supervisory board are held by women. However, the obligation is “to comply or explain”, which means that if a company does not comply, it must explain in its annual report a) why it did not reach a balanced gender representation, b) how it has tried to achieve a balanced gender representation, and c) what it plans to do to achieve the 30% target in the near future. Originally, this legislation lapsed per 1 January 2016. However, the 30% target has been re-confirmed on 13 April 2017, for the period up until 1 January 2020.

The idea behind the “comply or explain” policy is that ultimately the companies should not be forced to comply, but change in culture should generally be left to the businesses. In line with this approach, the importance of the largest 200 companies was further emphasised in 2014 by the Dutch employers’ organisation (VNO-NCW) and the Dutch Minister of Education, culture and science. The hope is that if the biggest companies comply, these leading examples will lead to change in other companies. However, there is an increase in criticism in the Netherlands that this legislation looks good on paper, but the “comply or explain” principle does not result in changes without an effective penalty. Other European countries with similar legislation have more strict penalties if a certain minimum threshold of female board members is not met. The penalties differ per country, but can entail that a non-compliant company will not receive government subsidies, that appointment of new directors is null and void or that fines are incurred.

- *“However, there is an increase in*
- *criticism in the Netherlands that this*
- *legislation looks good on paper, but*
- *the “comply or explain” principle*
- *does not result in changes without*
- *an effective penalty.”*

What are the actual results of this Dutch legislation?

Initiatives such as the Dutch Companies Monitor Women at the top (Bedrijvenmonitor Topvrouwen) and the Female Board Index

(which only covers the listed companies) continuously monitor the effect of the legislation. The most recent report for Companies Monitor Women at the top of December 2017 states that “the representation of women on both the management board and supervisory board of large companies is rising at a snail’s pace.” A snail’s pace means that on management boards the average share of women has increased from 7.4% in 2012 to 10.7% in 2016; for supervisory boards the numbers are 9.8% to 15%. The top 200 companies have had more significant improvements for supervisory boards (16.1% to 24.1%), but not so much at a management board level. Furthermore, a large number of companies still fail to (properly) explain in their annual reports why they do not comply with the 30% threshold. The Dutch Companies Monitor Women at the top states that only a small group of less than 9% meets all reporting requirements for the management board (6%) and/or supervisory board (9%).

*“the representation of women on
both the management board and
supervisory board of large companies
is rising at a snail’s pace.”*

Future developments

The Dutch Companies Monitor Women at the top shows that since the introduction of the 30% threshold the number of female board members has not increased dramatically. The committee responsible for this Monitor has recommended a number of new actions, the most important being an enforceable quota (as opposed to the current ‘comply or explain’ legislation). The quota would be slowly increased with 2 per cent per year, with the 30% threshold being reached in 2025.

Whether such enforceable quota is even achievable remains to be seen. VNO-NCW (lobbying for its stakeholders, the “large companies”) has already stated it would be a shame if the companies themselves would not be able to ensure further inclusion of women by themselves. Furthermore, Professor Lückérath (responsible for the Female Board Index) noted that she would not rely on the current legislator (consisting of a coalition that’s divided on the subject) to include an enforceable quote. Instead, she expects that the stakeholders of companies (e.g. shareholders, employees, customers) will provide the necessary pressure for change with companies to increase the number of women in board positions. In her view, the failure of companies to properly explain why they do not comply should not go unpunished. ●

Expatriates being assigned to Hong Kong – Any possible tax mitigation?

Hong Kong is an international business hub from where various multinational corporations operate their companies, branches or other forms of establishments. Such operational activity often also involves the employment of management personnel and/or experts from abroad being assigned to Hong Kong for several months or years. One of their major concerns is usually their individual tax position/exposures, not only in Hong Kong itself, but also in foreign tax jurisdiction(s) such as their home country. In particular, they may wonder whether there are any possible ways to mitigate their tax liabilities and whether they will become subject to any double taxation.



Willem Jan Hoogland



David Lo

■ By Willem Jan Hoogland (taxservices@hkwj-taxlaw.hk) and David Lo (david.lo@hkwj-taxlaw.hk), HKWJ Tax Law & Partners Limited

Scope of charge in Hong Kong

Hong Kong adopts a territorial source system whereby income from employment is only liable to Hong Kong salaries tax if it is arising in or derived from Hong Kong (i.e. sourced in Hong Kong). The source of an employment (i.e. a Hong Kong sourced employment or a non-Hong Kong sourced employment) is usually relevant in determining the taxability of employment income in Hong Kong.

Under a Hong Kong sourced employment, employment income is generally regarded as sourced in Hong Kong and hence wholly subject to Hong Kong salaries tax, unless certain tax exemption claims can be satisfied, such as the claim of no services rendered in Hong Kong, the 60-days exemption claim and the unilateral tax relief credit claim.

On the other hand, if employment is determined to be non-Hong Kong sourced, only the income derived from services rendered in Hong Kong including leave pay attributable to such services will be taxable in Hong Kong. Please note that the aforesaid tax claim

- *“As such, it is usually tax beneficial*
- *for employment to be qualified as*
- *non-Hong Kong sourced from a*
- *Hong Kong tax point of view.”*

of no services rendered in Hong Kong and the 60-day exemption claim are also applicable to non-Hong Kong sourced employment. As such, it is usually tax beneficial for employment to be qualified as non-Hong Kong sourced from a Hong Kong tax point of view.

According to case law, the major factors for determining the source of employment are (i) the place of residence of employer; (ii) the place where the employment contract is negotiated and entered into and is enforceable; and (iii) the place of payment of the employment remuneration. If the above three factors take place outside of Hong Kong, there are grounds to claim the employment as non-Hong Kong sourced. Having said that, every tax case has its own facts and circumstances and the Hong Kong Inland Revenue Department (“IRD”) may also look at other relevant factors when determining the source of an employment.

One has to be well aware that taxpayers are required to lodge any tax exemption claim, if eligible, in their individual tax returns. The IRD would then usually raise enquiries to the taxpayers to ascertain the validity of the tax exemption claim lodged. It is therefore recommended for an expatriate and his/her employer to properly structure the employment/Hong Kong assignment. The relevant information and supporting documents for the tax exemption claim have to be well maintained and a reply to the IRD’s tax enquiries have to be well prepared in order not to jeopardise the tax exemption claim.

- *“Certain remunerations, such*
- *as repatriation benefits, utility*
- *benefits, club membership benefits,*
- *insurance and medical benefits,*
- *can potentially be claimed as non-*
- *taxable in Hong Kong if certain*
- *conditions can be met.”*

Remuneration not subject to Hong Kong tax

While salaries, commissions, bonus and cash allowances are taxable income, certain remunerations, such as repatriation benefits, utility benefits, club membership benefits, insurance and medical benefits, can potentially be claimed as non-taxable in Hong Kong if certain conditions can be met.

Moreover, if housing benefits offered by employers are in form of provision of a rent-free/rent-subsidised accommodation, instead of cash allowance, the taxable amount of the housing benefits would potentially be reduced since the former will be taxed based on a deemed rental value (i.e. a certain percentage of the taxpayer's assessable income) rather than the actual housing benefits received. Please note however that the IRD may review the details/arrangements of the housing benefits provided by the employers, such as the employment/assignment contract and tenancy agreement, the housing benefit policy/scheme of the employer, how the rental is paid to landlord, whether strict control has been exercised by the employer over the rental reimbursement, if any.

Therefore, in order to successfully obtain any tax benefits, it is important to have the employment/assignment contract well drafted and have a good remuneration structure in place.

Double taxation

The employment remuneration earned by an expatriate may be taxed in Hong Kong and also the foreign tax jurisdiction(s) such as his/her home country, say due to his/her worldwide income being

subject to tax in the home country. Nevertheless, the expatriate may be entitled to claim unilateral tax credit relief in certain foreign tax jurisdictions in respect of the Hong Kong salaries tax paid on his/her employment remuneration derived from out of Hong Kong. Moreover, the double tax treaties entered into between Hong Kong and 38 foreign tax jurisdictions, including the Netherlands, contain certain clauses which could also provide relief on double taxation.

“Moreover, the double tax treaties entered into between Hong Kong and 38 foreign tax jurisdictions, including the Netherlands, contain certain clauses which could also provide relief on double taxation.”

Conclusion

The Hong Kong salaries tax system might look simple, but it is not straightforward. •



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Diversity and Inclusion

From South Stand to Bingham Cup – Hong Kong / Amsterdam 2018

■ Column by Ralph Ybema, rybema@chinaltd.com.hk



Ralph Ybema

Today's SCMP featured an article about a RTHK reporter who received (allegedly, this lawyer cannot resist adding) unwanted attention from two men in the South Stand during the Sevens. The author of the article saw fit to draw a comparison with sexual harassment of the MeToo kind.

What was the big fuss about? Two men standing on either side of the reporter in the South Stand decided to create their "KissCam" moment by simultaneously pecking her on the cheek. The reporter was clearly caught off-guard, but shrugged the whole thing off with a slightly embarrassed smile.

The article rather curiously concludes that non-consensual of necessity means the kisses constitute sexual harassment, conveniently glossing over the fact the reporter did not feel her treatment qualified as harassment at all. But why let facts get in the way of a good story, eh?

The author then takes this a giant step further to suggest the Hong Kong Sevens bin the KissCam altogether. Since on occasion, total strangers in the crowd have been pressured into exchanging kisses, the Sevens should find an alternative.

I beg to differ. Whereas I certainly do not wish to discourage the general public from attending the Hong Kong Sevens, I will make an exception for those incapable of seeing the funny side of a KissCam. In Southern Europe, total strangers get acquainted by exchanging kisses and whereas the South Stand is not exactly next door, in my humble opinion both are the better off for it.

Moreover, those with a diminished sense of humour might wish to consider simply avoiding the South Stand. It is not exactly a secret that in this section of the stadium

your regular Sunday school rules of engagement do not apply – despite the presence of nuns and monks aplenty. That said, I dare anyone to argue the South Stand is not a diversified and inclusive place. Anything goes there – the crazier the costume, the greater the sense of belonging.

Which begs the question: what if the reporter had been a man? Or the kissers were women – male or female reporter? Hands up if you feel our author would make a similar fuss – thought not.

Last week, I learned of another rugby tournament, the Bingham Cup. Curious as to why this event takes place in Amsterdam at the exact same time as the Amsterdam Sevens, one of the largest rugby tournaments anywhere in the world. The coin dropped when I read the tournament rules which state that "players and teams entering in the Men's tournament must be part of a member club of International Gay Rugby (IGR)".

Now, I was unaware such a thing as the IGR or rugby for gay people existed, but I get that even in ultra-testosterone rugby there is a market for clubs admitting players of any sexual preference. However, it strikes me as odd to refuse entry to straight players who are NOT welcome. It is the very opposite of diversified and inclusive, and I would even argue it goes against the very essence of the game. Rugby players don't care about colour or creed, you have the courage to stand on a rugby pitch and be exposed to someone breaking your ribs legally, you're a brother (or sister!).

To me, the South Stand is even more diversified and inclusive than the seemingly open-minded Bingham Cup. Not all will agree with me and that's perfectly fine, but South Stand regulars have nothing but glowing stories and memories that last a lifetime. And I'd rather be kissed by a total stranger in the South Stand than be told I can't participate because I am straight. Go figure. ●

CareER: boundless talent

CareER is the first joint higher education institutions student community for higher-educated students and graduates with disabilities and special needs. It was established in 2013 and started with three founders and a group of passionate higher-educated graduates with disabilities, aiming to create a platform for students to help one another through alumni experience sharing and a charitable job matching platform using our HR professional knowledge.



Walter Tsui

■ By Walter Tsui, Co-Founder of CareER, www.career.org.hk

It is the first platform for gathering a group of positive and energetic young talents with disabilities who would like to volunteer and change the way employers and society look at people with disabilities.

CareER revealed the findings of its “Employment of Higher-Educated Disabled Persons” Survey* in September 2016. One of the key insights is that higher-educated disabled persons face severe unemployment and almost 40% waited more than half a year before receiving a job offer. In fact, the survey found that higher-educated disabled persons are inclined to look for a job but lack the opportunities and channels. 97% of the higher-educated disabled respondents believe they have the ability to perform and achieve more; 93% of them said they had been actively seeking a job, while 100% claimed they would be committed to the job and would not easily consider changing their job if they had one. However, 88% of them believe finding a job is difficult.

The survey found that 77% of employer respondents consider the abilities of people with disabilities to be no different from those of people without disabilities; 80% of employer respondents agree that people with disabilities need not be streamed into low-level jobs with simple duties but should be given more complex tasks commensurate with their qualifications and competence. These findings show that employers generally recognise and trust the capabilities of people with disabilities.

To promote the employment of higher-educated disabled persons, CareER suggested the following ways:

1. Provide incentive to employers: with regard to the existing “Work Orientation and Placement Scheme” and the “Support Programme for Employees with Disabilities”, an increase in the frequency of the approval of subsidies and the acceleration of approval procedures would enable employers to make timely accessibility improvements to their office facilities.
2. Make good use of matching platforms for better mutual understanding between employers and disabled employees: this helps to connect corporates and higher-educated disabled persons. This will bring more employment opportunities to job seekers and enable employers to find and select workers with suitable qualifications and skill sets to add value to their companies.

Mr. Walter Tsui, co-founder of CareER, said, “The Labour and Welfare Bureau and traditional non-profit making organisations offer mainly information of low-skill, low-level opportunities which do not satisfy the needs of higher-educated disabled

Difficulties encountered in finding a job

- Over 70% of the respondents have encountered difficulties in finding a job.
- Finding available job opportunities is the top difficulty encountered, followed by discussion on remuneration, preparation for interviews and interviewing process.



persons. The survey found that around 40% of employer respondents believe they lack channels and opportunities to get to know people with disabilities. Both employers and students can take advantage of our services which will encourage more corporates to employ people with disabilities.”

Mr. Tsui continued, “We also suggest that the government proactively promote disabled-friendly web designs and pursue mobile and digital inclusion to empower people with disabilities with access to information and other services. CareER is organising the annual career fair dedicated to higher-educated disabled persons. We are also working with leading corporations to provide job search workshops to strengthen the capabilities of this important segment of our community and enable them to achieve success as part of today’s workforce.”

CareER organises empowerment workshops, students/alumni gatherings to create the first students’ union, alumni union and a charitable job matching platform for higher-educated people with disabilities in Hong Kong. Our organisation focuses on promoting the idea of boundless talent to fellow employers by cooperating with various multinational and leading corporations. CareER has over 380 members and is working with more than 60 employers across different sectors have placed over 140 candidates successfully. ●

**The Survey was conducted from 7 to 29 July 2016 by Cimigo, an independent market research company, and fully supported by AIA. It involved 309 respondents, including 103 employers (via phone calls) and 206 disabled (via face-to-face interview) persons.*

PR&Pub Committee on Diversity

As you might know, the Dutch Chamber has eight different committees. The PR & Pub Committee is responsible for all publications of the Chamber, including this magazine. We brainstorm to come up with relevant themes and articles. Here we explain what Diversity means to us personally and why we think it's important to highlight in this magazine.

■ By DutchCham



Pui O beach, Lantau Island at sunset. (Photo by Donna Mah)

Donna Mah

- *“There are so many opportunities*
- *to meet people from other cultures,*
- *eat food of different countries*
- *and to explore a city that is a*
- *heterogeneous collection of urban*
- *and rural, contemporary and*
- *historic, high-tech and traditional*
- *and much more.”*

Working with people from different parts of the world has been a big part of my life in Hong Kong. The diversity in my work life also translates into my children's school lives as they learn together with classmates from a diverse mix of countries and backgrounds. There are so many opportunities to meet people from other cultures, eat food of different countries and to explore a city that is a heterogeneous collection of urban and rural, contemporary and historic, high-tech and traditional and much more.

Having moved from bustling Causeway Bay to beautiful South Lantau, I have enjoyed both the buzz of the city and relaxed atmosphere of the countryside in Hong Kong. While both places hold a place in my heart, it is always good to come home to Lantau where the water buffalo roam.

- *“To me diversity means celebrating what is different in each of us and not having fear of differences in opinions or way of life, but learning from them.”*

Jacob Feenstra

As a cosmopolitan city with a vibrant and unique history of immigration, Hong Kong is one of the most multicultural cities in East Asia. To me diversity means celebrating what is different in each of us and not having fear of differences in opinions or way of life, but learning from them. Living in Kennedy Town, I really get to see and enjoy the blending of local and international cultures and see the constant evolution of the neighbourhood. I love walking along the waterfront on New Praya, it's a sigh of relief to the busy city and a amazing place to watch a eclectic and diverse community walk on by.

- *“There is a lot of respect for the elderly, and a strong will both in business and charities to improve conditions for this growing part of the population.”*

Monique de Raaij

I live in Stanley about five minutes from the beach from which all the dragon boats leave. The club with which I paddle three times a week and in which I'm involved is the best example of diversity. It is a mixture of men and women, old and young, experienced paddlers and newbies, expats and helpers, people from some 30

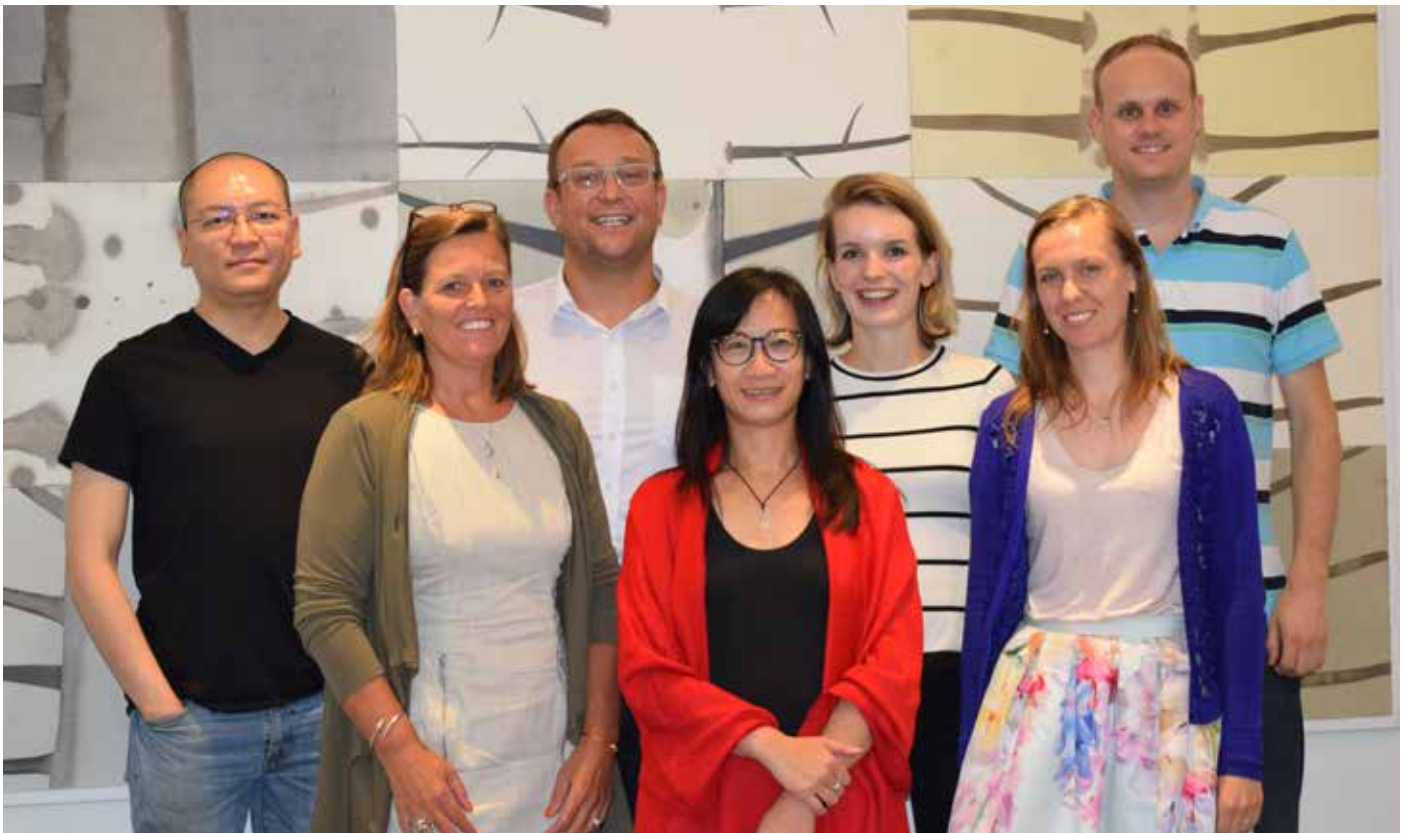
different countries, with different skin colours, religions and beliefs... it is actually the world at its best.

Recently I discovered a whole new meaning of the words diversity and inclusion. Amefa developed a line for people with dexterity problems. In a time span of two weeks, I have been invited to a seminar about dementia, was introduced to the wife of Mr Charles Kao, Nobel prize winner, met the Dean of PolyU, received the support from a lady involved in charities here in Hong Kong, was introduced to a big distributor of elderly homes in several Asian countries, now have meetings with hotel chains and receive positive feedback from all those I talk to. All because of this cutlery, which has been developed for and with help from elderly people and allows those who need it to use it without actually showing it is a special tool. There is a lot of respect for the elderly, and a strong will both in business and charities to improve conditions for this growing part of the population.

- *“It's under 40 minutes to the Island, yet a world apart.”*

Annemarelle van Schayik

What's one's normal is another one's crazy. So to me, diversity means embracing differentness and treating everyone with respect. Hong Kong has pockets of diversity, but it's a long way from being truly inclusive. The gap between haves and havenots is widening, the elderly are considered a burden by many, politics continue to alienate communities and even families, and certain migrants groups are treated worse than others. Living in Shatin Wai, the world I see is very much public housing estates, daipaidongs and elderly playing games or taking their birds (and the occasional turtle) out for some leisure time. It's under 40 minutes to the Island, yet a world apart. But perhaps that's what diversity means in Hong Kong. •



Asopie: The journey of a village boy

Wendell Paulus is the founder & CEO of Asopie Amazonian Natural Food with partner Roberta Boffo. The Surinamese entrepreneur was in the financial industry in Hong Kong after eight years studying in mainland China, where he earned a Bachelors in Geophysics and a Masters in Petroleum Engineering. He recently launched the first açai berry pulp in Hong Kong, a product native to his homeland of Suriname, and he named the company after his grandfather.



■ By DutchCham

Asopie was my grandfather's name. He was known as Asopie in the village where I was born and grew up – Abenaston village – deep in the Amazon rainforest, along the Suriname river in the Sipaliwini district, the biggest district in Suriname,” said Wendell. “Asopie, my grandfather was a well-respected figure in the village; he was my role model, he was a people person. He would wake up early in the morning and walk around the village just to greet everyone.”

“Asopie means connectivity between people. It is a brand that is sharing the uniqueness of my roots with the world and that stands for values, such as sharing, connecting with people and helping one another,” he continued.

Mainland China and Hong Kong were not only on the other side of the world from Suriname, but a world apart from the lifestyle and culture which he was used to.

“When I moved from my village to Paramaribo city, the capital of Suriname, I had to adjust to new surroundings. This was a challenge, but also an advantage as it made me curious about different cultures and people. I became thirsty for knowledge and adventure which pushed me to become self-sustaining at a very early age,” he said about moving.

He was only 14 years old when his journey began and he learnt to be self-sufficient, an attribute which fairs well in his new company. “Being one of the first from my village to go to university and study overseas is a privilege and an honour. I aspire to build something for the benefit of my country and being an example for future generations. After all my sacrifices and struggles, if just one kid

decides to embark on a journey like mine, then it means all that I have done has meant something.”

“Moving away from family was hard for me. But I kept envisioning this life ahead of me and had clear priorities. For me, education was everything and the only way to achieve my fullest potential. Suriname has a lot of natural resources. In the tribal villages we sustain ourselves in three ways: farming, fishing and hunting. In a world where organic produce and natural products are becoming popular, we as tribal people, are by definition the experts of organic and 100% natural eating and living. And yet the industries that are largely developed are mining and logging, which are causing tremendous destruction to the livelihood and habitat of our communities, destroying the forests, which are our safe haven. The forest supplies us with food, shelter, medicines and more.”

“Asopie is a sustainable company, as our mission is to enhance the lives of the tribal people, by using these century-long traditions and knowledge in producing organic and 100% natural products.”

“Asopie is currently distributing Amazonian natural food products to Hong Kong, with authentic açai berry pulp being our primary product. We are supplying food services as well as end consumers. And we are the only company in Hong Kong that’s doing door-to-door deliveries of frozen açai berry pulp,” said Wendell.

● “And yet the industries that are
● largely developed are mining
● and logging, which are causing
● tremendous destruction to the
● livelihood and habitat of our
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● which are our safe haven. The
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● “A harmonious balance in the
● people, process and product is
● essential for sustainable growth and
● success.” ●

“Açai was known as the food of the tribal people in the Amazon rainforest. Açai is now one of the most popular superfoods, celebrated for its richness in antioxidants, healthy fats and fibre. Asopie’s vision is to share the authenticity and uniqueness of Amazonian food products such as Açai, whilst protecting and preserving the forest and the natural resources of Suriname. We work directly with local organisations and farmers to create a sustainable and fair market. We believe in what we call the 3P’s concept: people, process and product. A harmonious balance in the people, process and product is essential for sustainable growth and success.” ●

Interview Dennis Philipse – Gay Games Hong Kong 2022

■ By DutchCham



Dennis Philipse

Could you briefly introduce yourself?

I am a Dutch national and long-time Hong Kong resident with a true passion for sports and supporting the LGBT+ community. Despite my busy job as a project manager in the IT Industry, in 2014, I created 'Out in Hong Kong (OIHK)', a not-for-profit group that welcomes and connects members and friends of the LGBT+ community with an interest in developing a fit and healthy lifestyle. In 2016, I became the chairperson of the group that bid and won for the Gay Games 11 to be held in Hong Kong in 2022.

First of all, can you explain what the Gay Games are?

The Gay Games is a world class sporting and cultural festival event organised by the LGBT+ community every four years, where everyone is welcome to participate regardless of sexuality, ability and gender. Founded in San Francisco in 1982, the Gay Games have become the world's largest sporting and cultural event led by LGBT athletes, artists and musicians. The event was most recently hosted in 2014 in Cleveland, Ohio, and involved over 10,000 individuals from 60 countries competing in 36 sport disciplines. The Gay Games pumped USD52 million into the local economy. The festival covers three themes: Sports, Arts & Culture and Conferences. The next Gay Games will be held in Paris in 2018. The estimated costs to host the event: USD7 million with event revenue anticipated at USD9 million.

Is it just sports, or are there other activities as well?

The Gay Games also includes cultural events like choirs and theatre as well as conferences around the theme of diversity.

How did you secure the bid for the Gay Games?

Hong Kong was chosen by The Federation of Gay Games (FGG) and announced at a Gala Reception in Paris last October following a final pitch by the three finalist cities: Hong Kong, Washington D.C. and Guadalajara, Mexico

The Hong Kong bid team successfully passed a site visit to the city in June 2017 and clinched the final judging round based on the city's world class sporting infrastructure, support across Asia as a

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populous region"* •

regional host and evidence of growing diversity and inclusion in the city.

We have linked Hong Kong's bid success to Hong Kong's strong commitment to diversity and Hong Kong's world class status since we founded the Hong Kong Bid Team back in 2014.

This is testament to Hong Kong's spirit and passion for increased inclusion and diversity. Bringing the Gay Games to Asia and Hong Kong as host proves the growth in openness in the city and across the region.

This wouldn't have been possible without the tremendous support from our team and partners, and of course the competing teams from Washington DC and Guadalajara for their strong bids, encouraging us to work harder to win it for Asia.

What will happen in the lead up to 2022?

After the announcement of our win in October, the Gay Games Hong Kong team worked hand-in-hand with the Federation of Gay Games and our legal partner Linklaters, to finalise the 42-page License Agreement in order to bring the best possible Gay Games to Hong Kong. Together with the Federation of Gay Games, we have big plans to ensure the event will become a trailblazer for increased progress in diversity and inclusion in the world's most populous region. Our next steps are to help with the success of the next Gay Games in Paris and to continue conversations with the Hong Kong SAR Government, sport associations and sponsors.

The next Gay Games will take place in Paris from 4-12 August 2018. For more information, please visit Paris2018.com.

In what way do you think the Gay Games will have an impact on Hong Kong and Asia?

The event will be worth an estimated HKD1 billion in transport, accommodation, food & beverage and shopping to the host city, attracting up to 15,000 participants and 40,000 spectators during a 10-day period in November 2022.

We believe that Hong Kong is the perfect city to represent Asia, the world's largest continent and home to an estimated 221 million LGBT+ people, but also a region where there is an on-going struggle to overcome homophobia and gain acceptance. •

Hong Kong Triads

Perhaps inspired by the Hong Kong television series OCTB, (now on Netflix - with subtitles), or my recent dinner meeting with Peter Mann, author of the very entertaining and recommended biography “Sheriff of Wanchai”, I became curious about the triads in Hong Kong.



Daniël de Blocq van Scheltinga

■ By Daniël de Blocq van Scheltinga, Managing Director, Polarwide Limited



Source: “OCTB” TV drama series

OCTB is not only the name of a television series, but the actual name of a police unit, the Organised Crime and Triad Bureau. OCTB is part of “B” Department of the Hong Kong Police Force, which also encompasses other units such as the Narcotics Bureau, the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau, and the Security Wing (VIP protection, and anti-terrorism).

The fact that the police has a unit dedicated to the triads not only indicates that they are still in existence, but that they are still active, clearly involved in crime and warrant a special police unit. According to the official police website, OCTB “Investigates complex organised crime and serious triad offences. It pools together resources and expertise from different sources to tackle sophisticated and syndicated criminal activities including money

“Triad societies started out as a 17th century political movement in China: the Hung Mun, as it was called, formed a closed group whose aim was to overthrow the new Qing dynasty, because they were led by the Manchus, who were seen as an ethnic minority and restore the previous ethnic Han Chinese Ming dynasty.”

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- *Hong Kong had over 60 different*
- *triad organisations, and that one*
- *in six local Hongkongers was*
- *somehow involved in triad activities”*

laundering. The assets of criminals involved in non-narcotic related crimes are also identified, restrained and confiscated. It also liaises regularly with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies for exchange of intelligence to prevent and neutralise illegal activities”.

The history of the triad societies is quite old. Triad societies started out as a 17th century political movement in China: the Hung Mun, as it was called, formed a closed group whose aim was to overthrow the new Qing dynasty, because they were led by the Manchus, who were seen as an ethnic minority and restore the previous ethnic Han Chinese Ming dynasty. The “patriotic” secret society had initiation ceremonies, codes of conduct including absolute secrecy due to the sensitive political nature of their mission and above all, complete loyalty towards one another; all members were considered “blood brothers”.

While their attempt to overthrow the Qing dynasty was clearly a failure (the Qing Dynasty lasted until 1912!), the Hung Mun survived, but by 1900 disintegrated into different local societies, triads, which were basically smaller gangs. When the Communist Party took over power in 1949, many triad members fled to Hong Kong, which really became the triad capital of the world. The reason that they had to flee is that Mao Zedong very quickly started a campaign to eliminate all secret societies in China. As a result, it is estimated that in the 1960s Hong Kong had over 60 different triad organisations, and that one in six local Hongkongers was somehow involved in triad activities!

Most triads have a formal military style organisational structure, with ranks and tasks assigned. Most of these ranks are called by a name and a number, based on the ancient Chinese I-Ching book (I-Ching is the most ancient Chinese book known, originally written around 1000 BC, and is a divination system using numbers). The head of the triad is the “Dragonhead” with number 489. Ordinary members are number 49, and everyone starts as such after an initiation ceremony.

The initiation rituals, which include an animal sacrifice, drinking blood and taking a long oath “36 oaths”, take place in front of an altar to Guan Yu, the Chinese general (died 220 AD) who is a deity in Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. The great irony is that in Hong Kong there is a statue of Guan Yu in every police station, as the local policemen also pray to the same deity to protect them. The most important triads in Hong Kong today are 14k, Wo Shing Wo, and Sun Yee On.

Wo Shing Wo, or WSW as it is often called, is the oldest existing triad and was founded in 1930 in Sham Shui Po. While maintaining its traditional stronghold in Tsuen Wan, it has extended its influence to Tsim Sha Tsui, Mong Kok and even overseas. By 2005, WSW had become Hong Kong’s No. 1 drug trafficker, with its drug dealing activities having spread to China, Japan, Thailand and Australia. WSW is involved in various criminal activities and some of Hong Kong’s politicians and businessmen are suspected to be supporters of the triad group. WSW is split into two main forces, one based in Macau and another in Shenzhen. WSW has also begun to emerge in Europe. WSW is very well organised and disciplined with a “Dragonhead” being elected every two years.

14k is the second largest triad in the world, with over 25,000 members operating internationally. 14K was formed by Kuomintang Lieutenant-General Kot Siu-wong in Guangzhou in 1945 as an anti-Communist action group. Originally there were fourteen members who were part of the Kuomintang, hence the name 14K. 14k is one of the biggest drug cartels in the world, smuggling drugs from South East Asia and anywhere else there is demand. Apart from drugs, the group is also involved in illegal gambling, loan sharking, money laundering, murder, arms trafficking and prostitution.

Sun Yee On was founded in 1919 and has an innocent sounding English name, “New Righteousness and Peace Commercial and Industrial Guild”. Sun Yee On is the largest triad organisation in the world, with more than 60,000 members. It is international, with activities in the UK, France, Belgium and the Netherlands to name but a few of the many countries the group is known to be operating in. In 2009, one of its leaders was murdered in front of the Kowloon Shanghai-La Hotel by the rival WSW gang. Sun Yee On has also had some in house rivalries between different factions led by rival leaders wanting to grab territory, meaning geographical terrain within which they extort bars, restaurants and shops for “protection money”, and run their own gambling dens and brothels. This is possibly due to the size of Sun Yee On which may have made it challenging to keep a very tight organisational structure with a clearly defined Dragonhead.

Clearly, the classical Hong Kong triad movies are based on reality: a common theme is indeed the rivalry between different aspiring triad leaders and the tricks they play to gain power. Another common theme is that of the infiltration of the triads by the police, and conversely of the police by the triads. Infernal Affairs is probably the greatest film with this theme.

Illustrating that this does happen even today, the SCMP published an article in August 2017 about a young police officer who had managed to infiltrate and gain the trust of the Wo Shing Wo triad. He had been undercover for eleven months gaining the trust of the gang leaders and gathering information which ultimately led to the arrest of 299 gang members. The stress of leading this double life had been so intense that the officer lost 13 kg in the eleven months. He has since been granted the rare permission to carry a firearm on him at all times, as he will be high on the triad target list for the rest of his life.

- *“the founders of the much older*
- *political movement Hung Mun would*
- *never have been able to imagine*
- *what their “patriotic” society has*
- *developed into”*
-

Just as Mao Zedong would never have envisaged the commercial “capitalism with Chinese characteristics” that China has developed today, the founders of the much older political movement Hung Mun would never have been able to imagine what their “patriotic” society has developed into. To confuse the picture, many triads are extending their activities to include legitimate businesses next to the usual counterfeiting, prostitution, drugs and money laundering. To make it even more complicated, the 2014 Mong Kok riots were said to have been quelled by triad members: what could be more legitimate than assisting the police to eliminate disturbances? The triads are part of Hong Kong’s fabric and are clearly here to stay. ●

Creative mixer

The Creative Mixer is a get together of people from the creative industry, in the broadest sense of the word.

Tuesday, 10 April |
Sohofama



SME Academy: An Ex-Google's Guide to Digital Marketing

During this workshop Ex-Google Tina Goguia (Founder and Managing Director Pandasia Digital) explained all the ins and outs of Digital Marketing.

Tuesday, 17 April |
Vistra



Company Visit: Hutchison Ports

During this company visit, we got an introduction to Hutchison Ports and their global footprint, as well as a tour of the Kwai Tsing Container Port.

Wednesday, 18 April |
Hutchison Ports



A New Cold War?

This year, Michael Every zoomed in on the current state of US-China tension and what that means for all of us.

Friday, 20 April |
Rabobank



The Hong Kong Smart City Blue Print under review

The Chairman of the Environment & Energy Business Council (EEBC) of the European Chamber, Tom Uiterwaal, presented the views of the European Business Community on how to make Hong Kong a world class sustainable smart city.

Wednesday, 25 April |
KPMG



Unleashing Passion in Wong Chuk Hang

Charlene Hua (African Coffee & Tea Café) shared her social mission, followed by Paul Zimmerman who dug deeper into the long-term vision of WCH. Saskia Wesseling unveiled the beauty of WCH through her camera lens.

Thursday, 3 May |
African Coffee & Tea Café



New Members' Corner

NEW SME MEMBER – Tina Goguia, Pandasia Digital Limited



Tina Goguia was born in Georgia and moved to the Netherlands in her early years. After graduating and having already some working experience in Account Management, she was hired by Google in Dublin to serve the Dutch SME market in an Account Strategist role. Her job entailed helping SME's and agencies with Google ad solutions. After three years, she went to Facebook to work in the Client Solutions team helping large corporations tap into Facebook ad solutions. She worked across different brands such as Unilever, Tommy Hilfiger and FrieslandCampina.

After 5 years in Dublin, she took one year off travelling in Southeast Asia and when nearing the end of her trip, she arrived in Hong Kong and has never left since then. Currently she runs her own fast growing Digital Marketing agency called Pandasia Digital providing Digital Marketing solutions such as Marketing strategy, PPC, Social Media Advertising and Data Analytics. In addition, she provides corporate and individual trainings in Digital Marketing.

- **Tina Goguia, Founder & CEO Pandasia Digital Marketing**
+852 5334 7516, tina@pandasiadigital.com, www.pandasiadigital.com

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER – Wildrik de Blank

I made Asia my home since I arrived in 1994 with MeesPierson Bank. Although I had worked in Indonesia prior for Shell in renewable energy, I was grossly unprepared for the experience awaiting me in North East Asia. Adapting from a Dutch to Hong Kong pace and the crazy 90's rollercoaster I found myself in, changed my perspective. This was surely where the Masters of the Universe dwell and I wanted to be amongst them. But I learned to be careful what you wish for as the Universe has a way to swallow you whole. Post-Hong Kong I managed to build a business from scratch in Sydney and ran the China initiative, but eventually wanted to move to what I thought was the better side of the table. So, I joined what was to become Asia's fastest growing and largest diversified commodity merchant, Noble Group. We were masters of the universe and conquered all continents, it was a true success story. However, it too became victim of an uncontrollable large continuum and I needed to find solid ground under my feet again. I took a brief retirement last year, which although enjoyable, wasn't the adventure I had envisioned, and soon found myself talking about new opportunities. In search of a better conversation with my children and through a desire to eventually leave a better footprint, I recently joined UPC Renewables in HK. We seek to build wind and solar projects across APAC and in a small way help improve the air we breathe and create more efficient economies. I am foremost pleased to now, after all these years, join you in the Chamber and hope to be able to pass on a little bit of the experiences I have gained. Thank you for inviting me.

- **Wildrik de Blank, wildrikdeblank@hotmail.com**

— NEW MEMBERS LISTINGS — TRADE SHOW CALENDAR —

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Hotel JEN – by Shangri-La

Michel Scheffers, General Manager

1/F, Hotel JEN Hong Kong, 508 Queen's Road West

+852 2974 1234

michel.scheffers@shangri-la.com

NEW SME MEMBER

Edelman Asia Limited

Stephane Hasselsweiler, Managing Director

7/F, Block B, Eldex Industrial Bulding, 21 Ma Tau Wai Road,

Hung Hom, Kowloon

+852 2774 4112

s.hasselsweiler@edelmanasia.com.hk

NEW STARTUP MEMBER

Olasso

Pieter Paul Wittgen, CEO & Co-Founder

pieter@olasso.com

EMCS Limited Hong Kong

Michiel Mak, CEO

+852 5414 5298

michiellmak@emcslimited.com

IN THE NETHERLANDS

BioProcess International European Summit

Location: Rai Amsterdam

Date: 23-25 April 2018

Organiser: IIR Ltd

Email: ls.registration@knext365.com

Website: lifesciences.knext365.com

Cryptocon

Location: Rai Amsterdam

Date: 4-6 May 2018

Organiser: International Blockchain Solutions BV

Email: info@rai.nl

Website: www.cryptocon.com

Interclean

Location: RAI Amsterdam

Date: 15-18 May 2018

Organiser: RAI Amsterdam

Email: registration@rai.nl

Website: www.intercleanshow.com

Support

Location: Jaarbeurs Hallencomplex

Date: 30 May- 02 Jun 2018

Organiser: Jaarbeurs

Email: info@jaarbeurs.nl

Website: www.supportexpo.nl

Provada (the real estate meeting point)

Location: Rai Amsterdam

Date: 5-7 June 2018

Organiser: Provada BV

Email: info@provada.nl

Website: www.provada.nl

Halal European Expo

Location: Jaarbeurs Hallencomplex

Date: 20-21 June 2018

Organiser: Jaarbeurs

Email: info@jaarbeurs.nl

Website: europeanhalalexpo.com

IN HONG KONG

HK Gifts & Premium Fair

Location: HKCEC

Date: 27-30 April 2018

Organiser: HKTDC

Email: exhibitions@hktdc.org

Website: www.hktdc.com/hkgiftspremiumfair

HK International Medical Devices and Supplies Fair

Location: HKCEC

Date: 7-9 May 2018

Organiser: HKTDC

Email: exhibitions@hktdc.org

Website: www.hktdc.com

HKTDC Entrepreneur Day

Location: HKCEC

Date: 17-18 May 2018

Organiser: HKTDC

Email: entrepreneurday@hktdc.org

Website: www.hktdc.com/eday

Belt and Road Summit

Location: HKCEC

Date: 28 Jun 2018

Organiser: HKTDC

Email: beltandroadsummit@hktdc.org

Website: www.beltandroadsummit.hk

Hong Kong Book Fair

Location: HKCEC

Date: 18-24 July 2018

Organiser: HKTDC

Email: exhibitions@hktdc.org

Website: hkbookfair.hktdc.com/en/

— TRADE ENQUIRIES —

These trade enquiries were received by the Economic Section of the Consulate-General of the Netherlands in Hong Kong. Interested parties may approach the companies directly or contact Betty Liu, Senior Commercial Officer on phone 852 2599 9202 or by fax to 852 2868 5388 or via email economic.section@netherlands-cg.org.hk.

Hong Kong companies wanted

Travel agents to arrange European tour

Company: Mondain 247

Contact: Ms Eugenie Kolff

Phone: 31 6 4134 0801

Email: tom@mondain247.com

Website: www.mondain247.com

We are an independent, member driven, non-governmental, non-profit business association which serves to facilitate business in Hong Kong and Greater China for its members by providing networking, knowledge sharing and company profiling opportunities. As the representative body of Dutch business in Hong Kong, we maintain close relationships with both the Dutch and the Hong Kong SAR governments.

DUTCHCHAM GOLD MEMBERS



MEMBERSHIP & ANNUAL FEES

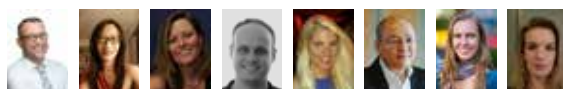
• Gold Member	HK\$ 20,000
• Corporate Member	HK\$ 8,500
• SME Member	HK\$ 3,500
• Associate Member	HK\$ 3,500
• Young Professional	HK\$ 750
• Start-up Member	HK\$ 1,750
• Overseas Member	HK\$ 2,500

NO JOINING FEE

GOLD, SME, & CORPORATE MEMBERS ENJOY VOTING RIGHTS

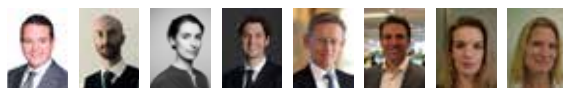
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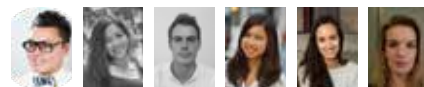
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