

About the philosophy

- ***Why has Incubators for Immigrants been founded?***

Incubators for Immigrants was founded by a number of like-minded entrepreneurs who agreed that a positive action had to take place instead of the endless conversations. By using another constructive way to look at 'the problem', they discovered a solution that removed the bureaucracy and with that they gave refugees the same opportunities as Dutch entrepreneurs. In this way the refugees could appear powerful again. A solution based on the fact that every human being has a right to the same opportunities, including the refugees who arrived in the Netherlands. The foundation hopes to contribute to the refugee problem and simultaneously to adjust the perception of refugees. It would be amazing if our way of thinking (and above all: taking action) would not only give the refugees an opportunity to integrate and give them something meaningful to do in our society, but also to inspire others (organisations, individuals, companies) to participate, contribute or do anything else to help.

About the foundation

- ***By whom was Incubators for Immigrants founded?***

Dennis Vermeulen, Jeroen Leinders and Herbert van Hoogdalem started the initiative. They activated a board consisting of Arthur van de Graaf, Rikko Voorberg and Sonja van Alphen. The initiators resigned themselves to the Advisory Board. After all, everyone should simply should do what they do best.

- ***Could you tell us more about the board?***

Great idea. Here we go:

Sonja van Alphen is an all-round freelance communication specialist. She has more than 15 years of experience with internal communication, marketing communication and branding. She is ad interim responsible for the communication & branding for campaigns of Microsoft Netherlands. Sonja was responsible for B2C and B2B campaigns for premium brands such as Eneco, Aon Groep, T-Mobile, KPN and NIBC Bank. She combines her years of experience with her passion to (potentially) connect people.

Arthur van de Graaf (former CEO of SEEDS, founder of GetACrowd.nl) has been active in the banking industry for 19 years. He is the founder of SEEDS, the first crowd-funding platform in the world that owns a bank. In 2014, he coordinated the biggest donation based crowd-funding campaign on earth, The Ocean CleanUp, and in 100 days time more than 2.000.000 dollar was raised by more than 38.000 people in 160 lands. He has extensive knowledge and experience with Innovation working within Dialogues Incubator and the Innovation Centre of ABN Ambro. He is involved in several start-ups as co-founder or mentor and he is participating in various acceleration programs such as Google Start-up Week, Start-Up in Residence of the City of Amsterdam, Founder Institute and the Bloomberg Mayor's Challenge.

Rikko Voorberg (theologian, writer, cultural entrepreneur) is the founder of the Pop-Up Church and is known for articles and initiatives that drew national attention (such as a Lesbos-travel and Fully Welcome-campaigns). He is one of the initiators of the Refugees Church; the first initiative of refugees to protest against the unresolved situation. He combines Performance Art (Nuit Blanche, ADE, Eye Film Museum) with new socially relevant interpretations of Christianity. He writes for multiple newspapers, gives lectures and makes installations.

- ***Is the foundation registered in the Chamber of Commerce?***

Is the foundation registered in the Chamber of Commerce? Does she have bylaws? Naturally. You can find everything [here](#).

- ***I read something about the Advisory Board, or board of decisiveness. In which way are the advisors involved with the foundation and what is their role?***

The members of the Advisory Board bring their skills, their network and their time. They assist the foundation if necessary in the areas of their expertise, and they give the board advise where possible, necessary or desirable..

- ***Can I become a member of the Advisory Board?***

By all means, yes! Especially if you are suffering from a bit of decisiveness. The more people roll up their sleeves, the better. If you think you can make a relevant contribution, please don't hesitate and [contact](#) us.

About Politics

- ***Is Incubators for Immigrants an initiative by the government?***

No, IFI is a purely private initiative of a group involved entrepreneurs who are concerned about the discussion and the image of the refugees. We aren't affiliated with any government authority, political ideology or party. That doesn't mean that we don't want to enter a discussion or cooperation with the government. On the contrary.

- ***To what extent is the IND involved in the initiative of Incubators for Immigrants?***

Not at all. But this can still change over time: we are busy to make contact with every authority who could constructively contribute to the problem.

- ***Is incubators for Immigrants involved in the political debate about 'refugees'?***

No. The foundation doesn't practise politics. We don't really like politics as entrepreneurs anyway. We rather solve problems than (continuously) talk about it.

About the organisation

- ***How is Incubators for Immigrants handling refugees who don't speak English?***

Good question. Surely this can be a barrier to be an entrepreneur in the Netherlands. And naturally we have to help the entrepreneurs to learn English as fast as possible, and most of all: to learn Dutch. We need to have interpreters and Dutch teachers for this (who can [register here](#), by the way).

- ***How does Incubators for Immigrants communicate with the refugees in general?***

We're still searching for the most efficient way. It's obvious the communication will initially be online, through mail. But once we have selected the initial business plans, we naturally will facilitate live meetings. Live meetings between operators and the foundations as well as entrepreneurs themselves.

- ***Can't you be more specific about the volunteers we need? Could you give us some examples?***

As said: interpreters and translators. But also people who want to help us with the internal organization, the administration, social media and communication. Most of all: entrepreneurs or enterprising people. People who can evaluate business plans just as well as we do, people who are strong in exploiting an idea to a plan and eventually to a business. It works if you have a strong and relevant network, and if you think to yourself: "but I can do this or that, then we surely need you too!". feel free to [sign up](#).

- ***How will the refugees know of the initiative of Incubators for Immigrants?***

We hope our initiative strikes like a bomb and that all the newspapers are going to write about it. Besides, we are going to be quite active online, make contact with relevant organisations, network with people or initiatives that can bring us in contact with those. And of course we are going to contact the AZC's. If you would like to participate, and want to spread this idea like an oil slick and want to help us get in touch with the right organizations: feel free to [contact us](#).

- ***On the basis of what criteria is a Business Plan evaluated and by whom?***

The people who set up the foundation and the board members are entrepreneurs themselves who will help other entrepreneurs with their expertise (business incorporations, marketing, corporate strategy, coaching, business development, communication). We have experience with start-ups, so we know how to evaluate a business plan. That doesn't mean that we don't need help. We do it voluntarily and we hope that we will be overwhelmed with submissions. Do you think you can contribute? We can't say it enough, then please [sign up](#).

- ***If the plan is finally approved, what will be the role of Incubators for Immigrants?***

The name already says it: we are an incubator. It means we guide and advise, but expressly not that we take on the work of others. The foundation (and everyone who's involved) ensures that the process of the (selected) idea to an actual company is properly facilitated. We're not teaching them how to be entrepreneurial; we're not going to take them by the hand. However, we can give the entrepreneurs the right coaches to guide them, to bring them to the proper authorities, guide the way to get them out of the starting blocks as fast as possible.

- ***Who guides the immigrants to the start-up of their business?***

We do this all by ourselves at the moment, as board and advisory board. But we hope that gradually more and more incubators will join us or take our idea as an example.

- ***How is the Inco Business Group involved?***

That's a very good and relevant question. We don't want any confusions about that. Dennis Vermeulen, CEO of INCO Business Group, has the personal conviction that every human being has liberty rights. The freedom to decide where he or she wishes to live, for example. Throughout his business he translated that belief of freedom and that you can also be an entrepreneur wherever you want – obviously within all legal and regulatory frameworks. Because the refugee problem touched Dennis and he believed there was a 'simple' solution, he decided to sponsor the creation of the

Foundation with his company. Nothing more. INCO facilitates the start of this idea, and is in no commercial or legal way involved – this one of the reasons that Dennis isn't in the board, but only a member of the Advisory board. Transparency above all, that's our belief.

- ***How are the immigrants accompanied during the process of the start of their own business? And after this start?***

We are developing a program for that at the moment. A program that's based on our own experiences, the methods we used and the specific insights that relate to the group of people we're going to help in this case.

- ***How many plans is IFI expecting the upcoming year?***

Yes, that's an interesting one. And is quite exciting too. We just have to wait and see how the reactions will proceed, but we estimate 100 plans per month. And no, these plans will undoubtedly all be good plans.

- ***Do you have success stories, proven concepts and business cases?***

For the specific case of refugees, no. We first made every effort to get the foundation off her butt. And we wanted to facilitate the purpose of the idea as good as possible. We all have much experience with start-ups (very good ones and bad ones). Added together, we estimate that the board and the advisory board were involved with 1500 starting companies the last 10 to 15 years. And at least 300 of them wanted to start in another country or wanted to start in the Netherlands. Enough grounds for the foundation Incubators for Immigrants to start a number of success stories as soon as possible, we think.

About money

- ***What will happen to my donation?***

The set up of the foundation is sponsored by the Inco Business Group and that's where it ends. The board members work unpaid of course, and the members of the advisory board are working for nothing. You can imagine that it costs money to keep the foundation alive. It's minimal, but still important. We dislike grants – we're entrepreneurs. The incoming money will be spent to secure that the foundation can do her job properly and to give the selected entrepreneur a very limited initial capital. Because we are a foundation, our bookkeeping is obviously public.

- ***Do you have an ANBI-status? With other words: are my donations deductible?***

We don't have an ANBI-status at the moment. However, we're working on it. But we initially focused on getting the plan ready to go. For an ANBI-status we need two additional board members, for example. Once we have the ANBI-status, we'll report this immediately. So sign up for the [newsletter](#) and stay tuned.

- ***If I have a bag full of money and want to invest in your start-up, what should I do?***

No good business plan survives without capital. So there will undoubtedly be opportunities for VC's and informal investors. In cooperation with our own network of investors, we're exploring the possibility to create a special fund. A fund that can invest in the selected start-ups, but in the context of transparency and to prevent conflicts of interests, we want to see this explicitly separate from the foundation at this time. Once we have more clarity, we'll let you know through our [newsletter](#). But if you want to participate, or if you have ideas, you can always [contact us](#).

About ambassadors, incubators & sponsors

- ***Why don't you have a Dutch celebrity as an ambassador?***

Well, that's a good one. We didn't think about it actually. We were particularly busy with the content.

- ***What is the role of an ambassador if I want to be one?***

Well, we are looking for people with relevant expertise and a relevant network of course, who are equally as motivated as we are. And who can connect with the right people at the right places. Don't hesitate to [sign up](#). Even if you're not a celebrity.

- ***If I want to become a sponsor, what will this involve?***

This means that you deposit money and that your logo will be on the website (if you want this or find this important). It also means that the helped refugees and we will be eternally grateful. If you want to sponsor us, but not with money (but for example with time, talent, expertise or something else), you're more than welcome! An email is enough.

- ***What is an incubator and can I be one?***

If you like start-ups and you made this your daily work (and if you're good at what you do), then we would like to get in touch with you. We have are with six people at the moment and it's going to be pretty busy. The more entrepreneurs join us and participate, the better. And: as an incubator you will be named on the site (and ambassador too of course). Interested? Do you have time? [Sign up here](#).