

Opportunities for NGOs and International Organisations in The Hague

Webinar transcript – October 7



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Diana Eggleston : A very warm welcome and good morning, everyone. Even good afternoon and good evening for some, it's great to see so many of you have signed up and from quite far away. Thank you for joining our webinar. I'm Diana Eggleston, a business advisor responsible for Impact Economy and NGOs at The Hague Business Agency. We are a publicly funded non-profit organization and we assist foreign companies, NGOs and international organizations with their expansion to the Netherlands. To do this, we work with a wide network of trusted service providers, with government and partner organizations. Every day, people in The Hague work towards creating a safer, better and more just world. The city of The Hague is proud and delighted to welcome new organizations who contribute to this mission. As the seat of Dutch government, The Hague is a hub for sustainable development, and we're very curious to see how many of you are already engaged with parties that are actually based in The Hague. So we'd like to run a very quick poll. My colleagues are just putting this up now. I'll give you a few seconds to respond. The results show that 70 % are already engaged. Maybe you're based in The Hague or maybe you're already collaborating. And we hope that we will encourage the other 30 percent to also get engaged after this webinar.

00:02:30

Diana Eggleston : Today, I'm joined by Pepijn Zaagman of the Municipality of The Hague. Jill Wilkinson of The Hague, Humanity Hub and Marc Dunnewijk of Bridgde Legal and Finance, we were all looking forward to being in our webinar studio together today. But as you can see, we're all working from home. In the next half hour, we'll give you an overview of the peace and justice sector in The Hague, will share with you how we build community for cross-sector collaboration to address the global challenges and will inform you about the process of establishing an entity in The Hague. The recording of this webinar will be available on our website - businessagency.thehague.com. We'll also put that in the chat box for you. And you'll also, of course, welcome to reach out to either me, any of the other speakers or one of my other colleagues. Please also follow us on LinkedIn and Twitter. Now, I'd like to invite Pepijn Zaagman to take the floor. Pepijn is a policy adviser in the Municipality International Affairs Department and in this role, he is the account manager for several international organizations and NGOs. These organizations make a valuable contribution to solving the global challenges, for example, through international criminal law or humanitarian innovation and, of course, also peace building. Pepijn is proud to serve for the Hague, sorry. Pepijn is proud to serve as a liaison for the Hague's International Peace, Justice and security sector and he enjoys helping organizations to maximize the impact. Pepijn the floor is yours.

00:04:18

Pepijn Zaagman : Thank you, Diana, and thank you to The Hague Business Agency for the invitation to take part in this webinar and to share a little bit about the work of our team and of our city's international sector. Now, for those of you who may not be aware, though, I think based on the poll we just saw, most of you are. The Hague profiles itself as the international city of Peace and Justice. This is a profile which covers numerous traditional legal and security issues. But the scope of the international activities taking place in our city continues to grow each year. We'll come back to that a little later in my presentation. Now, our city has a long history as the legal capital of the world going back hundreds of years. Hugo Grotius wrote his famous *Mare Liberum* here in 1609, which still forms the basis for modern international law to this day.

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And the famous philosopher B. Spinoza also spent the last years of his life working in The Hague. In 1899 and 1907, the first peace conferences took place here with a view to setting standards for conflict resolution between nations. These conferences resulted in the creation of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, a body which mediates disputes between countries and is still based in The Hague to this day. In 1907, philanthropist Andrew Carnegie also financed the construction of the Peace Palace, which to this day remains the symbol for The Hague's coming of age as an international city. Both the PCA and the International Court of Justice, the principal organ of the United Nations, are housed in the Peace Palace. However, the current scale of the city's international sector really began to take off after the end of the Cold War when in the early 90s, international cooperation in the fields of law and security saw something of the Renaissance. A number of international organizations, including the Yugoslavia Tribunal and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, were set up here. This also led to a spinoff of a large number of NGOs setting up their offices here. Today The Hague is the proud home of more than 200 international organizations and NGOs, which we are very happy to have in our community. In 2003, the municipal executives decided to set up the International Affairs Department where I work in order to better cope with this fast paced growth of our international sector. Our team today counts 30 dedicated professionals whose core tasks include the relationship management with the international organizations and NGOs based here in The Hague, as well as the acquisition of new organizations active in the field of peace and justice. We work closely together with our colleagues at the Dutch Foreign Ministry in both of these areas.

The Hague's international community today is so diverse that you can group them into several different clusters. I'd like to just explain the different ones that we have. Thanks to the presence of the International Court of Justice, we probably can call ourselves the second UN city after New York. And we have a number of other UN bodies here that allow us to back up that call, including UN OCHA, its office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UN ICJI, its Interregional Crime and Justice Institute. We have a number of judicial NGOs, such as the International Bar Association, that have a presence here to work closely together with the International Criminal Court as well as other legal institutions. There are many human rights NGOs here as well, such as Mercy Corps and the Nobel Prize winning Mukwege, a foundation that deal with themes such as peace and achieving justice for human rights violations. We also have organizations such as the World Resources Institute that deal with themes related to climate change and water security, which are obviously becoming increasingly important. And what all of these different clusters have in common is that they contribute to creating a better and safer world in some way, shape or form.

The role of our team at City Hall is to help facilitate them in their needs where possible, in order for them to be able to do that to the best of their ability and to stimulate partnerships across these different clusters. Now, in addition to having a large international ecosystem here in the city, the egg is also an important meeting place for debates and conferences on peace and justice issues. For instance, this December, we are hosting the World Press Freedom Conference, albeit largely online. And this meeting will focus on press freedom worldwide. We'll bring together journalists, human rights defenders and policy makers. Now, as I mentioned at the start of my talk, our international activities continue to grow and expand each year. Our team sees a number of new trends as a result of this. One is an increase in the number of organizations that are working on peace and justice

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issues in the digital domain. There has been an increase in the number of human rights violations in cyberspace and many organizations here in The Hague have been hit by these as well. And in many cases, clear frameworks are still lacking to be able to tackle such issues, we are noticing that The Hague is also quickly becoming a meeting place for these discussions. For example, in 2018 and 2019, we hosted The Hague Summit on Accountability in the Digital Age. These conferences brought together public and private stakeholders for dialogues on ways to support and human rights based and accessible open internet. Another trend we are seeing is an increasing awareness for the need of humanitarian interventions. Now, as I'm sure most of you who are listening are aware of, the need for humanitarian assistance only continues to grow and in the last 10 years has become increasingly complex. And with the current Covid crisis, which, of course, is also very much a human rights crisis. This is now even more so the case. This is why a few years ago, the municipality helped to set up the Dutch Coalition for Humanitarian Innovation, which with its partners comes up with creative solutions to increase the impact and reduce the cost of humanitarian action.

Finally, for us as a municipality, it is also important to involve the citizens of The Hague wherever we can, not only to show what we do, but also because we believe that you really need to include civil society actors in order to be able to truly achieve international justice. To that end, we have become an official SDG city earlier this year in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs, present us with a great way to show the important work being done by our international community in tackling issues like inequality and climate change, but also that we are doing this for them as well. We also organized that just peace month every September, which gives students and citizens here in The Hague and in other places the opportunity to visit the international organizations and learn first-hand about their work from the people that they have in the field. Now, I could continue with many more examples, but from my story so far, you can probably gather that the international community is a crucial part of The Hague's DNA and that we cherish it very much. Thanks for listening. I really hope that you will choose to join our community here in The Hague, and I'm happy to share more during our Q&A discussion later on, Thanks.

00:11:54

Diana Eggleston : Pepijn, thank you so much. This was a really great introduction overview and also it makes me proud once more to be part of this great ecosystem. You just referred to the Q&A and to our viewers, there will be time for your questions towards the end of this session. And also, if time doesn't permit us to get to, all your questions will answer by email later on. So it's now my great pleasure to introduce Jill Wilkinson. Jill Wilkinson is the managing director and also known as Chief Everything Officer at The Hague Humanity Hub. Jill describes working with the Hub community as a pioneering adventure. She cares deeply about sustainability in the broadest sense and is fascinated with innovation in a multi-stakeholder context. It is Jill's strong belief that connection and collaboration between diverse parties are crucial ingredients for creating a better world. A native Canadian model has adopted The Hague as her home and loves helping the unique community in the city of peace and justice to thrive. Jill the floor is yours.

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Jill Wilkinson: Thank you very much, Diana, for the kind introduction and good morning and good afternoon and good evening to everybody, who is has joined this webinar. I'm very excited to be able to present the humanity hub and our role in this. It's a great opportunity to explain the disease because it's not so easy to understand that we have something called humanity hub and how that works and supports the ecosystem. So let me try to tell you a little bit about the history of how this actually came about. And then I'll go into what we actually do for our members and to support the community. So as Pepijn explained, the history of the city of The Hague is a city of peace and justice.

The city has been asking many of the constituents in the ecosystem in the past about how can we help you to do more, to have more impact? How what can we do as a hosting organization or host city to help you be more successful? One of the answers that came back was, help us to know who else is here and to be able to connect with them and be able to share our work and expertise with each other. People were telling us that in the past they met each other at conferences in other cities, but then found out they were just walking down the street from each other and they didn't even know that they were neighbours. So the question arises, how do you do that? Do we create another conference or do we have something else? And what came up with a solution to provide a meeting point of meeting space, a physical hub where people can actually get together and get to know each other and create a community that increases the transparency of who's working on what and how we can actually support each other. So that was the initial sort of idea of the birth of Humanity Hub. The city founded an independent foundation so that's what we are today. We're independent of the city, founded independent foundation, and invested in a beautiful space that functions as a meeting space and as a flexible office concept and as private office for some organizations.

We open our doors in January of 2018. And as some of my members have described it since then, it has been kind of a controlled explosion. So when we talk about the pioneering adventure I started at when the Hub opened as the managing director took over from the project team that had set it up. We were overwhelmed with the interest, with the need for connection with the number of parties connecting to us to join, to use the office space, but even more importantly, to be able to share their work in whatever form made sense. So just to give you an idea, in the first year, we had 90 events taking place in our space on this topic that we didn't even couldn't even have conceived of in advance, people really wanting to work together and share what they're working on. In the meantime, we have had in the last two and a half years until Covid arrived, more than two hundred and fifty events on the topic of peace, justice and climate as well. And I want to talk about peace and justice and what that means, but it's very broad that I've been able to help us connect all kinds of professionals on what people are working on. This idea of the meeting place, the idea of a place space for collaboration has definitely taken off and proven its value. At the same time, when we started the Hub, we wanted to see what the community needed and figure out how that would what that would turn into. So the idea of exactly how it should work has been emerging as time goes on and been very much a collaboration between members in the ecosystem about what do we need, what should the Hub be. And we've been developing that in the last two and a half years. It's been quite a learning. What brings people together?

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What do they want to work on together? What does membership mean to different people? How do they want to use the membership? We have used quite an entrepreneurial approach of let's just develop what is necessary and what is needed. In the meantime, we just to give you an idea, we have about 250 professionals who are paying members of our community. Many of them use the hub as their office space, but not everyone does, it's not a requirement. We really want to grow the membership to include everybody, who wants to use this platform for connection. And we, our members come from 85 different types of organizations.

We're focused on diversity. So of course there are many NGOs and governmental organizations like you and OCHA, for example, and Mercy Corps, but also we have members from universities and knowledge institutes from social enterprises, from tech start-ups. We have independent consultants and service industries who have all joined our community to collaborate on creating a more peaceful and just world. It's very interesting to see. The breadth of expertise that comes together on this and also very interesting to see how people define their contribution to peace and justice, and that's something we've trying to be focused on, is on inclusiveness, which has led to having some organizations working on climate and water and not looking at that does not peace of justice it's only this it's only that. Interesting, we just have a recent organization that joined us that is working on how space technology and sensing and satellite information can contribute to good. Just to give you an idea of the breadth, there's really quite an interesting sort of diversity and that's really great to facilitate. What we have noticed is that by having this meeting space, we have become an incredibly fast and smooth entry point for new organizations coming to The Hague. For any of you who are interested in joining this ecosystem and I saw in the poll that you are showing that you already have some collaborations, what we do is assist you in with finding the right partners, with finding the right connections to be able to help you establish your organization, but also to establish good working relationships with other organizations that you can profit together from. So that entry point, just to which we had no idea how this would really work, but what it has done has been amazing. Just to give you an idea, we have there have been 45 organizations have established a presence in The Hague in connection with the Hub in the last two and a half years, of which 20 are from foreign countries. So like I said, we didn't really know this was going to happen, but it has happened and we're focusing on how we can support that process even better. As I mentioned, we have members, so we are an active community. We bring community together in whatever way we think makes sense, but mostly based on what the community is asking us to do. We have been defining together with community relevant themes to be working together on and sharing expertise on and also relevant formats to bring people together. As an example, we've developed something called the Community Programming Board and the Community Programming Board is a group of our members that are talking together about what themes are relevant and what format can we bring together, and they've already defined and we've already been working on this, for example. And you can imagine, I think, in this last time, how does Covid affect your work and how you're working, what you're working on and how are you dealing with that? There's an incredible amount of knowledge being developed, a lot of expertise and experience being developed. Through our community, people are sharing that with each other and that's been super beneficial for them. What Pepijn mentioned, both the security aspect as well as our digitalization changes your work, is absolutely a change area and innovation area for all of our constituents.

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And they are interested in sharing knowledge and learning about that. There's many more it goes to along to tell you all of the things that we have discovered. But we are, it's really interesting to see how people can collaborate with each other and actually help each other and share expertise.

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Jill Wilkinson: Just to give you an idea about physically what the Hub is right now. The Hub is in the centre of The Hague, a beautiful three appointed three floors in a beautiful office building that have to be about two thousand square meters. We have about 80 desks in private offices, eight different private offices. We have about 90 co-working spaces. We have seven meeting rooms and event space. We can handle events up to about two hundred and fifty people in our space. So that's a really fantastic asset that we have to offer. And it is available for anyone to use, but especially for our members at a very attractive price, because that's what our purpose is, is to support connection and collaboration with our members. We have a very flexible office concept, so it allows organizations who are coming into The Hague to start at a very low entry point with a virtual office, with a mailbox, and then grow their population as needs be and we often function as a throughput for organizations that are growing, start small and then move into private office facilities or even their own facilities elsewhere.

I have two announcements I would really like to share today, I'm really proud of. We are opening a new location in the international zone of The Hague on the 1st of January. So we have more space available because the demand is so high. So that's really exciting. The second announcement I would like to make is that we will be announcing at the end of this month a bit of a preview that we will become a SDG house as part of the Netherlands SDG House Network. This will, I believe, allow us to be a point of connection for even more diverse actors to connect and collaborate on achieving this stable development goals. I think I've covered everything so far, I'm happy to take any questions in the Q&A.

00:23:12

Diana Eggleston: Jill, thank you so much for your ever inspiring contribution. I'm sure there will be a lot of interest in the Humanity Hub. I'd like to hand over now to Marc Dunnewijk is a partner at Briddge Legal and Finance, which is set up after merging with another colleague's firm in 2011. Briddge is a one stop shop with a broad range of services, including immigration, corporate employment, corporate and employment law, accountancy, tax and financial services, H.R. Services, Payroll and recruitment. Marc, please share with the NGOs what the basic steps are that they need to follow in order to incorporate in the Netherlands.

00:25:10

Marc Dunnewijk: Thank you, Diana. Thank you for the invitation for giving a short presentation. The downside of my presentation is that at the end of it after having heard Pepijn and Jill with interesting presentations, we are up to the do the boring legal stuff, if you don't mind me saying so. But I'll try to keep it brief and give you the highlights. The last few years we've seen quite a lot of NGOs coming to The Hague and we were very happy to be able to assist them, quite a lot of Brexit clients, as we call them. I went through those files and were searching for the highlights of the topics that interest them most. I think for you, most important thing is how do you set it up from a former corporate law perspective. In that respect, I want to make it first overall general remark.

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The Netherlands in itself is a very easy place to do business. From a legal perspective, everything is rather well organized. The systems are in place, it's a stable environment, stable meaning there are only limited changes through the years. When there are changes that are announced upfront and not out of the ordinary, like any jurisdiction, we have red tape here. There is bureaucracy, but in most cases I can explain to my clients where it's coming from. There is a reason for it and it's recognizable and always solvable. So in that respect, there are limited surprises. And I think that's what most of you are looking for, an environment where you can prosper and focus on what you're here for and not being kind of diverted all the time by bureaucratic or technical issues that need to be solved in this respect. And like I said, the same goes for corporate law, giving you this. The basic understanding is that compared to other EU jurisdictions in the Netherlands, only limited local elements are needed. I'll explain if you set up an entity here, most often all you need locally is an address. And you heard Jill say that that is something that they can quickly be arranged for. And that means that, for instance, members of a board of a foundation or other legal entities do not need to be residence and they do not need to have Dutch citizenship. Often we do see them coming from abroad. But that's a different topic of conversation. But like I said no local corporate security need it or rather possible to conduct your business or your activities from abroad while slowly growing here. And then, like I said in the beginning, often only a local address is needed while you set off here. Now trying to keep it straightforward. For now, most of our clients decided to incorporate what we call a stichting, which is the equivalent and of course, with many jurisdictions, you can argue about the details, but in principle it's the equivalent of a foundation and a foundation is a separate legal entity and is relatively easily easy to establish via a notarial deed. So what we do, we draft the articles of association in which the specific objective of the NGO or international organization is mentioned and worked out, and that is part of those statutes which then are passed by a notarial deed to keep in mind. But I think this is all ideological. The objective can, of course, not be making a profit.

If you are active in that respect for corporate income tax purposes, I'll get to that in a minute. Just to be complete, we do sometimes see associations from abroad setting up their presence here. And then the question is, which is the best vehicle for them a Dutch vereniging or a stichting, which is, like I said, similar to a foundation. You will understand an association is more linked to having members and members paying annual fees and so on. So I think that the distinction is clear for now. So to be complete what we often see are NGOs from abroad who want to have their presence here with the foundation, but they want to have significant influence on what's happening here. We structure that by having our corporate team draft articles of association, which include supervisory board, and then the supervisory board exists of members abroad. To add to that, in the Netherlands, often these type of foundations qualify for what we call ANBI status. Quite a few of you must have heard of it, but for some of you, it must be new. It means that they are qualified and recognized as being an institute for public benefit, and that means that's very broadly defined. There needs to be support of culture, education, science, research, religion, health care, and that allows you to be exempt for gift tax, meaning that Dutch residents who donate can deduct it for tax purposes. So that's an advantage.

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Marc Dunnewijk : So that's for the basics with respect to corporate law, one of the questions which also was asked, how does it work out for taxes in the Netherlands? And I can give you, I think, a quick overview of how that works. We have three types of taxes, which could be relevant in the case of an NGO or an international organization landing in the Netherlands, often once again going to what I saw in my files and the straightforward situation is that VAT is not applicable. Value added taxes or what often is called sales taxes is not applicable. It's charged by the companies and individuals servicing you, and it's simply part of the invoices paid and if your cost basis. So that's with respect to VAT, not very complicated. With corporate income tax in 99 of 100 situations is also straightforward. A foundation, if it's not, not working on any profit oriented activities you do not qualify for corporate income tax. No corporate income tax return needs to be found. To be complete sometimes NGOs have certain activities which do focus on, for instance, a consultancy, and they do charge third parties for that. That means you slowly, but surely become into the realm of more profit oriented activities if that is a significant part of your activities here.

We often advise our clients to do that via a separately owned legal entity, a closed company with limited liability. So it is possible. It's just it needs to be structured in the correct manner. So I touch upon VAT, I touched upon corporate income tax. The most important issue often is which tax and where you start hiring people. For many of you, I hope the quick description that we have a pay as you earn system here in place in the Netherlands will be recognizable. That means that the future foundation in the Netherlands can act as the employer of racket of employees residing and working out of the Netherlands, and that it will be running a monthly payroll fire, which the correct contributions are made into the system and to the Dutch budget. So it's a simple calculation, gross NET, making the NET salaries to the employees and paying into the budget. What is owned by the employee and you as an employer. In the beginning these type of things setting it up, take a little bit of time and effort. But it's not that complicated when you have it up and running. For many of the employees coming from abroad who will start to work for you here. There is a very advantageous tax arrangement, what we call the 30% percent ruling following only which only 70% of the income, the resulting 70% of the income is taxable in the Netherlands, the 30% is assumed to cover the extra costs they have for moving to the Netherlands. Many of our clients are pleasantly surprised when they do the gross net calculation and see the resulting salaries when they have the opportunity to start working with people coming from abroad or recruited from abroad. That combined with rather fast tracking programs we have in the Netherlands for residence permits and work permits, allows NGOs to become quickly active here with attractive employment agreements. With respect to immigration, like I said, systems in place fire which employees recruited from abroad, from outside the European Union can quickly qualify for residence permits. Their families can join them. Children under eight can join them. Their spouses or partners are allowed to work here. So it's a very straightforward and open system compared to other EU countries, where it's often very difficult to get associates or employees qualified. To complete, I'm looking at the clock, so I need to be a little bit quick here. But what is also important for you to know is that very often the Dutch Foundation is also the employer of record of employees working in other EU jurisdictions. In The Hague, for instance, we have quite a few NGOs

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who have employees in Germany, Italy, Spain, the UK, as it happens, even with Brexit. What we do is we registered a Dutch foundation in those jurisdictions for payroll purposes and we take care of running a local payroll for those employees working in those jurisdictions. So that is something to keep in mind, because quite often clients think that, they need to set up a separate entity there. Often that is not the case. It can be done out of the Netherlands because you have that opportunity to arrange it in the in a practical way from here. I think those are the main topics I wanted to touch upon in this short ten minutes, and I'm very much looking forward to questions in the Q&A and to be able to answer them. Thank you, Diana.

00:35:20

Diana Eggleston : Marc , thank you. Wow, you managed to pack so much content into a very short time. Thank you. We are going to drop a flyer in the chat box for you, which summarizes sort of the reason why the Hague could be a great place for you, for those who are not yet here. And then also, it lists the services that we provide for you at The Hague Business Agency. So our services are free of charge and always highly confidential, and they range from tailor made fact finding trips to introductions within the ecosystem, but also very practical help such as finding office space or connecting you to the right service provider. Before we move on to the Q&A, I would like to ask you to kindly give us feedback on the quality of this webinar. We will evaluate that later, because, of course, we're always keen to improve and also to see if there was anything missing that you were expecting from this part of the session. And if you wish, you can now start. I see there's already questions coming in, but please submit your questions. If you hover your mouse over the bottom of the screen, the Q&A box will appear. Please feel free to pop the questions in there and I already there's quite a few already. Maybe Pepijn you want to start with just a couple of numbers. 'How many NGOs have opened their office in The Hague in the last five years?' is one of the questions

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Pepijn Zaagman: What we see in over the last few years is that every year, give or take, roughly 10 new international organizations or NGOs set up an office here. So if you're asking about the last five, that would be roughly 50 approximately, something that I also forgot to mention in my talk is that the international sector we have in The Hague is also very important for The Hague's local economy, and it's probably the most stable sector in the Hague's economy. We saw that eight years ago during the last financial crisis and we're seeing it so far during the current Covid crisis that the international community we have and this has also been confirmed by research we carry out on the economic impact of the international sector on the Hague's economy every two years. That it's not really being hit by, that it remains stable and always continues to grow and it's even the prognosis that despite the current Covid crisis we are going through and the inevitable economic backlash that we're going to see from that, that there might even continue to be some light growth in the international sector as well. And I hope genuinely hope that will also be because some of the NGOs listening here today are choosing to go ahead and join our community here. But the international sector accounts for roughly 40.000 jobs here in The Hague and also indirectly 2200 jobs in the local economy. So very important for us.

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00:38:27

Diana Eggleston: Thank you, Pepijn. There are two questions from the same person which I would like to share between myself and Jill. The first one is **'where do organizations look to find our piece from the Dutch government and other EU donors?'** And the second question, which I will hand them straight over to you, Jill, is **what platforms etc do NGO's use to network and find opportunities to collaborate?** In terms of the requests for proposals accessing Dutch government or European donors? The answer is that here we rely on our trusted network of service providers. We do have highly experienced funding consultants and also those that are already well established in the Netherlands who can support you with that and then also at the European level. So we would connect you to these experts and Jill for the platforms, for connection and collaboration.

00:39:32

Jill Wilkinson: I actually would like to add to your answer, Diana, about funding within the Hub community we already have some people and certainly a lot of very experienced fundraisers. They are already sharing knowledge with each other. Of course, in some cases they compete with each other, but in many cases they are just sharing knowledge about pending calls, about EU changes in EU policies and all that sort of thing, things that are relevant for each other. Just to know that there is a support network available for that.

The second thing about the platform, there are probably a zillion different platforms the way people connect, and that's something that is a bit of I would say something we're trying to help solve by making something open and inclusive and available to everybody. We have an online platform based on slack that is open to anybody. We started it up for our members to be able to collaborate and talk to each other, but we have expanded it now to be open to anybody who wants to apply to join that platform. If you are interested in joining the platform and talking to the community that we have on that, please just drop me a line.

I think you're sharing the contact details Diana of everybody and websites so you could always let us know how to join that. There is also for development work. There is a National Association for development work called Partos. Many people are members of Partos that supports development agencies in the Netherlands it's a national association. There are many individual groups that get together on various issues. In The Hague, for example, international organizations work together on communications. There is a facilitated network of communication professionals that is supported by the city so many different ways.

00:41:21

Diana Eggleston : There are two questions that I can group, the first one is **which countries do we currently get most requests from?** And the second one, **why do Brexit cases want to come to the Netherlands?** Brexit is really one of the key words. There's a lot of requests at the moment from the UK. But also, of course, Brexit does not only affect NGOs that are currently based in the UK, but also those that are looking for a place to establish a European office. So, for example, from the far East, from India and from the US, as you can imagine in historically, they would have set up their European office in London in order to be in Europe. But this is no longer the case. So we get a lot of requests from almost everywhere. The reasons why NGOs, let's say from the UK, have quoted for looking to establish in The Hague. One of them and it's really interesting because I learn something new from

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each client that I interact with, one of them told us that it's also the image of being an international NGO and they said, how can we be in Britain? That is clearly not part of the EU anymore and claim that we are truly international NGO. Secondly, in order to attract talent, of course, it'll be much more difficult to attract European staff, for example, to move to the UK, especially with all the uncertainty that's still around residency and NGOs that influence EU policy, of course, they want to stay close to Brussels. They want to stay in the EU in order to continue doing that, also access to EU funding. So that's obviously a very crucial point. But also very interestingly, recently I spoke to an organization and GDPR is a crucial element for them because they keep a lot of their beneficiaries data, but also collaborators from within the EU. They are certain that those collaborators might not be too keen to have their data based in the UK post Brexit. So these are some of the reasons. And then, of course, a couple of academic organizations, who do research with academic organizations in the in Europe have actually shared with me that they have been very politely disinvited from collaboration with their European counterparts because they are concerned that they might not maintain the access to EU funding.

00:44:23

Dianna Eggleston : Why does the city government support NGOs or want to attract more NGOs to the Hague?

00:44:34

Pepijn Zaagman : The short answer is because we don't want to take the sector for granted. As I mentioned in my answer to the previous question, we see now over an extensive period of time how important the sector is for our local economy. During my talk, I mentioned how important it is when you look at our history, it's really become an interwoven part of what the city is and who its residents are. But we also realize that we can't really just sit still. We continuously have to adapt to the trends going on all around us, such as Brexit that you were just mentioning and really actively play a facilitating role and to constantly make the community here feel welcome and to be able to do their work to the best of their ability. And we're also noticing the great spin off that the NGO International Organization Community is having on other parts of The Hague as well. If you take, for example, the student community that we have here, The Hague is also very much grown as a student city, if I'm not mistaken The Hague today has more students than Leiden and Delft, which are two very well-known Dutch university cities combined. We're also seeing an increase in the number of international students roughly 10 percent of the student population is from abroad here in The Hague. A lot of the reasons that they come to do their degrees in The Hague is because of the availability of the international sector around them for internships, but also for career opportunities afterwards. So this is why we are also really happy now that Leiden University has really expanded, that the T.U. Delft has now set up a branch here. So we're expecting that to continue to grow as well. And that is a big part thanks to the international sector as well. So it's not only its own little bubble, it's really becoming interwoven with other parts, other walks of life in The Hague as well. And I'm also seeing that at City Hall as well. I work at the International Affairs Department, but the Hague's international character has really become a part of other branches and other services in the city government as well, whether it's the Economic Affairs Department or Public Affairs Department or Education Department, they all have dedicated professionals that focus on the international components of their work.

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00:47:02

Diana Eggleston : Thanks Pepijn, Jill, did you want to add something to this?

00:47:06

Jill Wilkinson : just to add to your story, what we are also seeing and what I'm hearing from many of my constituents is that the International Peace of Justice City and the whole DNA of this history that we have, is really an inspiring source for the impact economy. We are also seeing is that there is an increase in social entrepreneurs and an impact economy organizations that are really working on doing business and doing good. This is a different sort of vibe and feel that is purely inspired by or is very much inspired by this vibe that we have in The Hague, which is quite unique. So I think we also see growth in the economy in that I don't know the exact numbers on that, Pepijn maybe you can speak about that. But it's just a very interesting collaboration or mashup of these different sectors of the economy that's starting to happen more and more.

00:48:04

Diana Eggleston : Thanks, Jill, and actually, there's the next question also I will hand to you, so the question is, **if we have an idea to start an international organization or expand an existing one in The Hague but lack experience and don't have the people to form the right team, is there assistance on that part? Who would what would the process be? How can one get involved with the humanity hub?** So it's a long question. It's three questions, actually. If you can give a quick answer, that will be great.

00:48:35

Jill Wilkinson: Dimitros, thank you for this question. This question is a common question that we get at the Hub. We are a kind of an incubator for many new ideas. We are always welcoming organizations and people who are saying, I'd like to get this started, how could we do this? When we talk about the assistance, the assistance is really building on the experience of our community so far, as I mentioned earlier, we've had 45 new organizations join our community that were not present in the hub before. And many of those are what you might term as new ideas. So they're starting NGOs or international organizations with grand visions and a journey to get there. And we want to support you in that journey and use the expertise of our existing ability to be able to help you. From the formal establishment point of view that's where you have Diana and Mark to help you deal with the establishment points of things. But for the inspiration and the strategy, development and the collaboration and learning from others, that's where we can help.

00:49:40

Diana Eggleston : We're trying to inspire also a little bit, right Marc. Thank you, thanks so much Jill . And you'll actually have the next question for Marc. It's a very inspiring one, I think, but it's a crucial one as well, which is **how much does it cost to register and not for profit charity in The Hague figure?**

00:50:03

Marc Dunnewijk: It's a very valid question. And it's important, of course, because NGOs and international organizations need to be aware of the costs and their budgets. I do think in general, it's based upon the plan you have to start up here. We can assess what is actually involved. So that allows us to start making a calculation with respect to payroll, employment agreements, immigration, etc , etc. In general, just to start up to, for instance, to incorporate the foundation. You're talking about

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1500 euro on average, and that is inclusive, the cost of the notary public and activating the future foundation for which tax purposes and take all the related steps with respect to registration and the discussion about the objective of the foundation and so on. Like I said, I think I mentioned that in most cases there is no actual need to have an audit on the accounts and so on. So it's often rather straightforward question of book keeping. And that, of course, depends on the volume of the activities here and the volume of invoices coming in and so on. I do understand for my clients coming from abroad, especially from the UK, that the costs for the daily running costs are significantly lower than in the UK. But once again, 1500 is just a start up phase. The recurring cost depends on the scope of the activities. I hope that answers your questions, but I'm very open for having a full discussion on this if needed.

00:51:44

Diana Eggleston: What would be the next steps if we're interested to learn more what we do hope that you wish to learn more, please get in touch. I'm very happy to schedule what we call an intake call just to assess what you need, what your plans are, and then how we can help. The next step would be to actually organize a so-called tailored fact finding trip for you. At the moment, these happen virtually, of course, as you can imagine. But this will be then an opportunity for you to connect with players in the ecosystem that are relevant for you. And at the Hague Business Agency, our objective is to provide you with all the introductions and the information so you can make an informed decision. Hopefully that decision will be to join us here in The Hague. I think we are quite at the end with the questions, we will share all the websites and the contact details of the speakers with you.

My colleagues, we work very closely on building this ecosystem, and we hope that you found the webinar interesting and that you inspired that you to explore options to actually join our ecosystem. Now, just before we close a couple of announcements, Pepijn already referred to the just peace month. It has started last week. It will run until October 24th, which is the seventy fifth anniversary of the U.N. It's a month of activities around peace and justice here in The Hague, you can join virtual tours of some of the international organizations. You can join workshops and connect with the community. So the website, please check the program. It's 'justpeacethehague.com' again will send the info in an email. And then at the end of October, we will be hosting Europe's biggest impact meetup Impact Fest. It will run virtually this year from October 27th to 29th. This year's edition is entitled 'Accelerating Innovations for the New Economy'. And although the main focus is on world social entrepreneurship, doing good and doing business, we also have quite a few NGOs joining us. For example, there will be a very relevant workshop hosted by the Dutch Coalition on Humanitarian Innovation. And so please check out the program there as well as. Our next webinar will take place on November 11th. This will fully focused on Brexit, but mainly targets the commercial sector. So there will be a lot of questions and topics discussed around tax and finance. In the meantime, of course, please visit our website 'businessagency.thehague.com'. Follow us on LinkedIn and Twitter. Thanks again, everyone, for joining. Thank you to the panellists and have a great rest of your day.