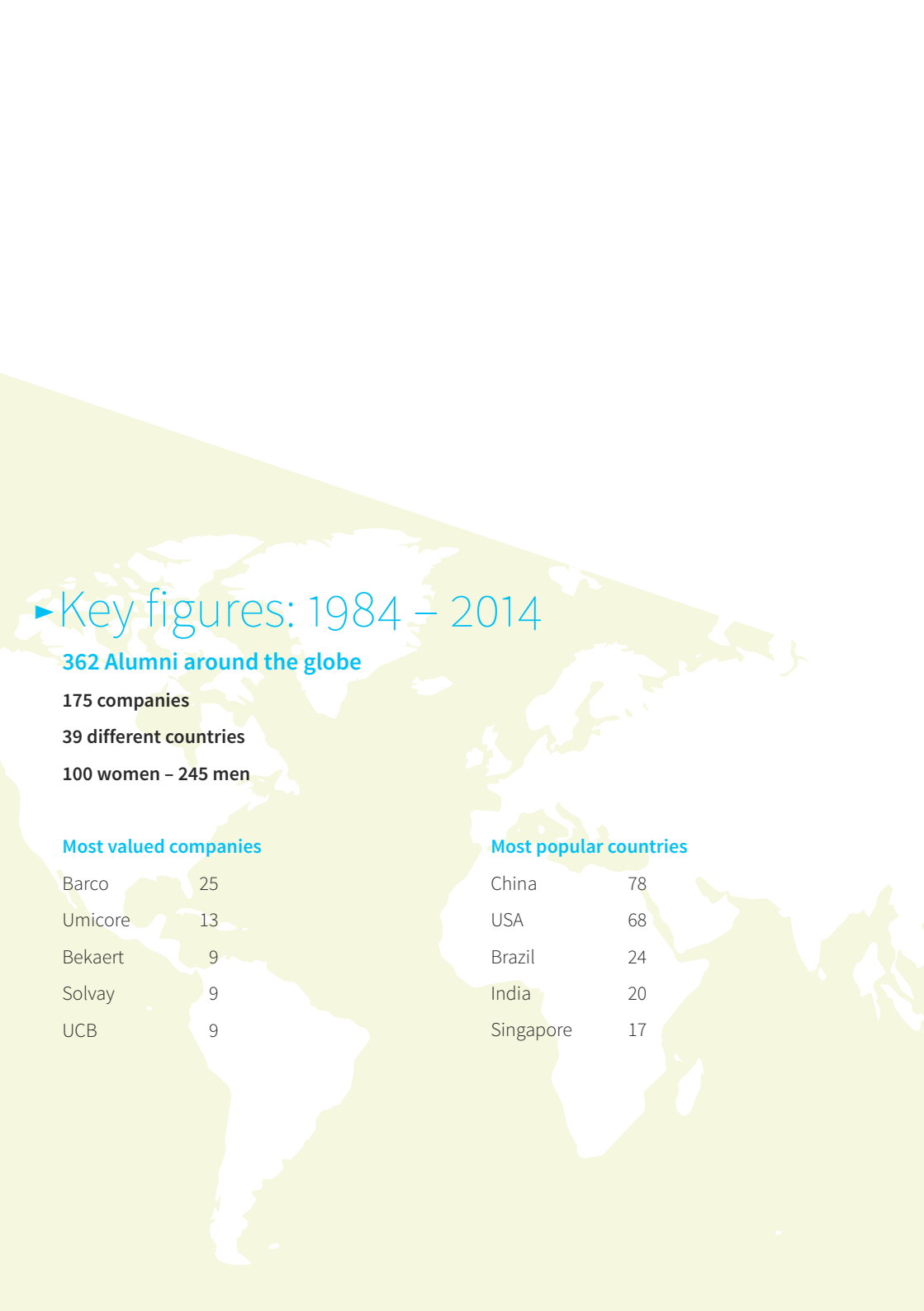


2015 Yearbook

2012 & 2013 Laureates



Prince Albert Fund
managed by the King Baudouin Foundation

A stylized world map in a light olive green color serves as the background for the lower half of the page. The map is centered and shows the outlines of the continents.

► Key figures: 1984 – 2014

362 Alumni around the globe

175 companies

39 different countries

100 women – 245 men

Most valued companies

Barco	25
Umicore	13
Bekaert	9
Solvay	9
UCB	9

Most popular countries

China	78
USA	68
Brazil	24
India	20
Singapore	17



Dear Friends of the Prince Albert Fund,

First of all, I would like to congratulate the candidates who have successfully completed their year abroad, as well as to thank the companies who have participated in the Prince Albert Fund programme. By doing so, these companies have given the candidates an extraordinary opportunity in their professional development.

Today is a very special day in the fund's history, a day when we celebrate the past and look forward to the future.

The Fund has been in existence for 30 years now. In that time, it has delivered successfully on the vision of its founders, as you will see from our statistics, as well as from the fascinating stories our 33 laureates present in this yearbook.

Within the overall values embodied by the King Baudouin Foundation, the Prince Albert Fund's mission has always been about contributing to the Belgian economy in a global context, by unlocking the talent of young international high potentials.

In software terms, you could say the last three decades of our programme have been "Prince Albert Fund 1.0". It's been an extremely successful thirty years, and we've done a lot with it, but the world has changed and now it's time for a smart upgrade.

That is what "Prince Albert Fund 2.0" is all about – *Evolution, not Revolution*.

Specifically, within our operating system 2.0, we aim to modernise and refresh our approach, so we can double the number of laureates over the next 15 years – while still maintaining an exceptionally high quality of talent.

I am very happy to lead this transformation together with the alumni, having personally experienced just how much a Prince Albert Fund grant can mean to a young professional.

Thank you "Prince Albert Fund 1.0", and welcome "Prince Albert Fund 2.0"!

Chris Burggraeve,

Chairman Prince Albert Fund
Alumni 1989



Prince Albert Fund
managed by the King Baudouin Foundation

► Our Steering Committee

The Steering Committee of the Prince Albert Fund is responsible for its strategic direction.

Composition of the Steering Committee

Chairman

Chris Burggraeve, Founder, Vicomte LLC, Alumni 1989

Members

Julie Abraham, Managing Director, Les Carrières de la Pierre Bleue Belge, Alumni 2004

Valérie Busquin, Managing Director, MarkQuest, Alumni 1993

Michiel Deturck, Partner, Vendis Capital, Alumni 1990

Jo Libeer, Managing Director, VOKA

Francis Ottevaere, CEO, JIMS, Alumni 2003

Vincent Reuter, Managing Director, UWE

Luc Tayart de Borms, Managing Director, King Baudouin Foundation

Pieter Timmermans, Managing Director, VBO-FEB

Olivier Willocx, Managing Director, BECI

Management team

Anne-Catherine Chevalier, Independent expert, King Baudouin Foundation

Anneke Denecker, Assistant, King Baudouin Foundation

► Our mission

Helping young talented Belgian professionals acquire experience in conducting international projects

Our mission is to contribute to the development of the Belgian economy and Belgian international business by leveraging Belgian companies and organisations to help talented young professionals discover and develop their true international leadership potential.

For three decades, the Prince Albert Fund has helped young Belgian professionals develop an international career by giving them opportunity to manage a 12-month business development project for a Belgian company outside Europe. This very selective entrepreneurial international experience has contributed to the careers of some 362 young people, who since have achieved senior leadership positions as entrepreneurs or in international business, thus succeeding in its aim to drive talent that will make a difference to society in general.

► Our history

A princely tribute to Belgian foreign trade

The Prince Albert Fund was set up in 1984 by the Federation of Enterprises in Belgium (VBO-FEB) and the King Baudouin Foundation to mark the 50th birthday of His Royal Highness Prince Albert, later to become the sixth King of the Belgians.

The Fund's aim was to embody the vision of a group of captains of industries to promote Belgian business abroad.



Prince Albert Fund
managed by the King Baudouin Foundation

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“The Prince Albert Fund is the perfect platform for working abroad. It really provides the right framework: the name and the reputation, the grant, the network and the intercultural training.”



Philip Berckmans

► Role

Philip Berckmans negotiated the local purchase of equipment in Brazil for Keppel Seghers, a Belgian leading specialist in the thermal treatment of residual waste through Waste-to-Energy (WTE).

► Responsibilities

When Brazil passed its first national waste management law in 2011, Keppel Seghers capitalised on this opportunity, building three Waste-to-Energy plants in the country. At the same time the company had to fulfil various governmental requirements, including the requirement that around 60% of the equipment had to be locally sourced. **Philip** was tasked with finding local suppliers in close collaboration with a local partner. This meant understanding the complexity of the Brazilian tax system, implementing procurement and purchase procedures as well as negotiating terms & conditions.

“My tasks included local sourcing, evaluating the capacity of the local suppliers as well as sales and business development. Thanks to my financial background I also knew how to analyse quotations”.

From day one, **Philip** felt part of the team and received a lot of support from his colleagues.

► How he benefited

By choosing to work in an emerging market like Brazil, in another field than he was used to, **Philip** wanted to step out of his comfort zone. ***“I was thinking about the next step in my career and this was exactly what I was looking. The experience definitely gave me the confidence to operate in unusual and intercultural settings. Ultimately I gained some important skills in terms of international business development”.***

For **Philip**, the Prince Albert Fund is a unique concept, as it gives participants the opportunity to work on a temporary business project in a Belgian company albeit abroad, without having previously worked for this company.

Company Keppel Seghers is a Belgian provider of environmental solutions and services. Its headquarters are in Willebroek (Antwerp) and the group has offices in China, Qatar, USA, UK, Argentina, Brazil, Spain, Germany and Singapore. It is a leading player in the market of Waste-to-Energy plants with over a hundred plants worldwide.

“Facing a shrinking market in Europe, the Prince Albert Fund gave our company the opportunity to become more active in new and large emerging markets, such as Brazil.”
Keppel Seghers

“I had the chance to choose a project that matches my interests, both professionally and geographically.”



Jonathan Courcelles

► Role

Jonathan Courcelles joined Eternit Asia Panels, a subsidiary of the Etex Group, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. His objective was to increase the sales of building materials, focussing more particularly on the fibre cement boards segment.

► Responsibilities

In a context of the continuous growth of the Asian construction market, Jonathan's role was to analyse the building materials market and expand the regional distribution network. In addition to marketing and sales activities, he also helped develop new products. ***"I was immediately assimilated in the company as a new employee. My job as a business development executive was quite diverse as I was responsible for the exports in many different markets including the Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Australia and New Zealand."*** Jonathan came to realise that Asia was much more culturally diverse than he expected. There are several cultural groups and each has its own way and customs when it comes to doing business.

His market analysis supported the long-term development strategy of the group in its plan to implement new industrial projects.

► How he benefited

The Prince Albert Fund gave Jonathan the international opportunity he was looking for. He confirms how important it is to choose the right project and company right from the start. In that respect, the discussions he had with alumni of the Prince Albert Fund were really helpful.

"I believe it would have been more difficult to convince Etex to hire me without the Prince Albert Fund's support. Nonetheless, I'm glad that I was selected and was able to achieve good results. We even continued our collaboration after the project. Ultimately, this programme is more than a 'one-shot project'. It allows you to launch a career within the company."

Company The Etex Group is a leading industrial group with a worldwide presence. It manufactures and sells high-quality building materials and solutions – cladding and building boards in fibre cement and plaster, roofing materials, highly efficient fire protection and insulation, as well as ceramic floor and wall tiles. With headquarters in Belgium, the group operates in 45 countries.

"The Prince Albert Fund was an excellent opportunity for both the candidate and the company. We were searching for a young motivated professional, with an entrepreneurial mindset while Jonathan was looking for an international experience in that specific region." Etex Group

**“The Prince Albert Fund allows you to invest
in the project that suits you best, using
your talents to the fullest.”**



Michiel De Potter

► Role

Based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Michiel De Potter was in charge of the marketing for fibre cement façade materials for the Etex Group in the Asia Pacific Region. He was tasked with developing the marketing and communication strategy geared towards leading architects.

► Responsibilities

The project for which Michiel was responsible was part of a bigger investment strategy for the Etex Group. In order to kick-start the market for fibre cement façade materials in the region, the company established a new office there. Michiel participated in the entire marketing process, reviewing the audience, defining the communication channels as well as the organisation of sales support tools and branding.

“With the assistance of the team, I was able to really tailor the project in line with my vision and aspirations, which worked quite well. We succeeded in creating a relevant database of over 1,000 architects, establishing a personal relationship with each and every one of them.”

A digital marketing campaign aimed at the company's target groups using social media allowed the brand to retweet to over 20,000 people.

► How he benefited

Michiel relied on his background as an architectural engineer to further develop his expertise in marketing, focussing on architects and urban planners. ***“The Prince Albert Fund really allowed me to explore a new field, namely marketing, which is a new skills that I can use if I ever decide to apply for a job in the export market for building materials. I have also learned to take full ownership of a project.”***

After the project, Michiel worked for another subsidiary of the Etex Group, in a similar position, in the Benelux market.

Company The Etex Group is a leading industrial group with a worldwide presence. It manufactures and sells high-quality building materials and solutions – cladding and building boards in fibre cement and plaster, roofing materials, highly efficient fire protection and insulation, as well as ceramic floor and wall tiles. With headquarters in Belgium, the group operates in 45 countries.

“When building our new team in the Asia Pacific Region for one of our flagship products, we were very happy to benefit from the expertise of a Prince Albert Fund candidate who was able to contribute his knowledge of the architectural sector.” Etex Group

“My project within the company was so diverse. I have learned a lot, among others about scouring the market for investment opportunities and infrastructure expansion.”



Jan Grommen

► Role

Jan Grommen worked as a business consultant at Katoen Natie's Terminal Cuenca del Plata, a container terminal in the bay of Montevideo, Uruguay. Since the company won the concession to operate the Uruguayan container terminal, it has continuously invested in high quality infrastructure, consolidating its competitive position in the region. Jan's mission consisted of attracting even more cargos, exporters and importers.

► Responsibilities

Jan's task for the most part consisted of business development. After several months spent collecting data and getting to know the industry, he started to analyse a Feasibility Study for building a dry port (an inland intermodal terminal) in Rivera, a city directly connected by rail or road to Montevideo.

He also travelled extensively in the region in order to follow up on various projects such as the purchase of a container facility in Florida or investment opportunities in Paraguay. ***"It was an absolute privilege to be able to witness the dynamics of this market from inside."***

► How he benefited

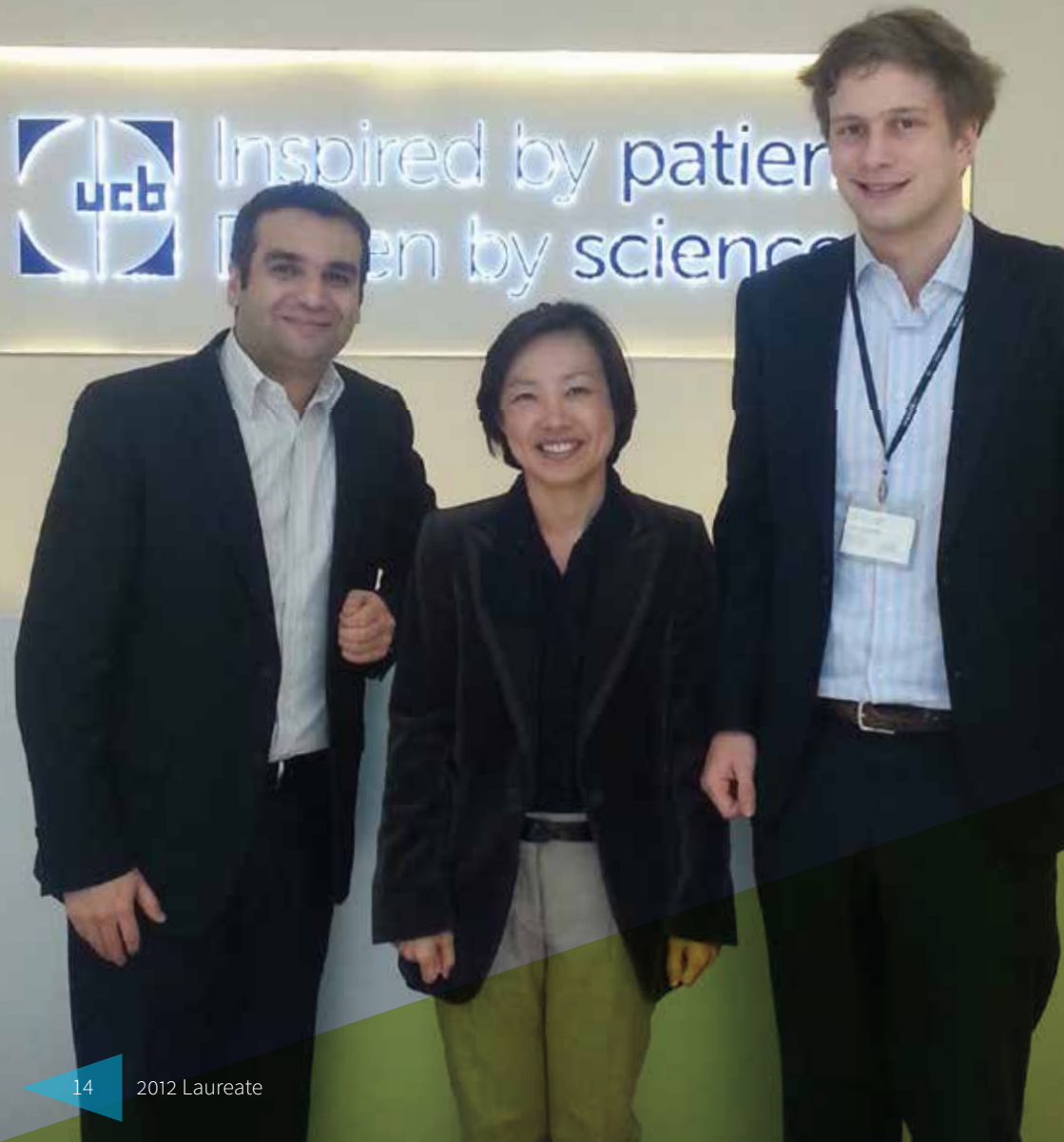
As Jan was involved in every aspect of the company's strategic development he met a huge number of different people working in the port industry, something he would not have been able to do in any other environment. ***"I met with the national port authority, customs officials, governmental institutions, Uruguayan exporters, export organisations ..."*** Jan feels that he learnt a lot during his 12-month assignment with the Prince Albert Fund, about port operations but also about international trade and Latin America.

Company With facilities in 28 countries on five continents, the Belgian company Katoen Natie acts as a global supplier of logistics and distribution services.

It combines engineering, technology and port operations to offer worldwide, tailor-made solutions to the chemical and automotive industries, and to the consumer goods, electronics & retail sector.

"Our business in the shipping container business offers constant challenges. With the Prince Albert Fund, we have found the resources that helps us to stay ahead of our competitors." Katoen Natie

“I worked with talented people in the field,
who were involved in the company’s
long-term strategic decisions.”



Bertrand Huybrechts

► Role

Bertrand Huybrechts's work in the pharmaceutical Group UCB, in China, was divided into two phases. He initially helped the company to implement its business strategy in the Chinese market. Subsequently, he was part of a new products launch in the New Brand Division for the Asia-Pacific Region.

► Responsibilities

After his first month on the job in Shanghai Bertrand started to follow Chinese medical representatives in the field (he had studied Chinese for more than 4 years). ***"I was directly implicated on the ground, understanding the culture involved when promoting drugs on this continent. Sales techniques, ethics, attitudes... everything is quite different from the Belgian regulated market."***

Bertrand also assisted the Business Development manager targeting potential partners for the out-licensing of UCB products. ***"This was one of the most interesting aspects of my project, as it meant evaluating the cost opportunity of the investment."***

With the help of Asia-Pacific Operations, he also created a scoring model ranking the countries according to their market attractiveness.

► How he benefited

The Prince Albert Fund certainly boosted Bertrand's career as he did not have any experience in the pharmaceutical industry. He was happy to be able to work for a multinational company in order to develop solid skills for the future. He also enjoyed working on brands that can help cure people suffering from severe diseases. ***"I realized that UCB invests the majority of its revenue in R&D compared with other companies, a strategy that I really respect. After six months of hard work, my manager asked me whether I was interested in spending another year in Asia. That was the best reward I could have imagined as it confirmed that my Prince Albert Fund year had been a real success."***

Company With its unique mix of expertise in biology and chemistry, UCB is a Belgian pharmaceutical company with operations in approximately 40 countries. The group aspires to be the patient-centric global biopharmaceutical leader transforming the lives of people living with severe diseases.

"It is definitely worth investing in the development of young motivated professionals through the Prince Albert Fund as it gives you the option of retaining them after the one-year assignment." UCB

**“I feel that I added value to the company’s
key accounts, acting as a link
between bio-engineers and
the financial department.”**



Julie Lefevere

► Role

Julie Lefevere joined the financial head office of Durabilis in Lima, Peru. She was tasked with contributing to the drafting of a sustainable business plan for new investors in order to develop Stevia One, a stevia production unit and a major new partner of Durabilis.

► Responsibilities

Along with the Durabilis team, **Julie** participated as a Junior Business Analyst in the development of a business and sustainability plan for the company's Stevia One branch. The objective was to find external private investors to support the stevia producer's ambitious growth perspectives, helping the company to become the world's leading producer of natural stevia sweetener for the global food industry.

“The Finance Department was facing a lot of challenges and was very glad to see me coming. That said, I still had to carve out my position as a Financial Controller.”

To better understand the dynamics of the product and the financials behind it, **Julie** decided to work in the field in the region of Moyobamba, in the north of Peru. Throughout the entire process, she followed up on investors and liaised with the banks, providing them with the required information as well as contributing to improving the financial model.

► How she benefited

“Thanks to the Prince Albert Fund I was able to contribute to many of the organisation's activities. I learnt a lot in the financial field, which is very demanding. You need to submit good market reviews as well as legal, environmental, social and financial audits in due time. I found it great to be able to help steer the company in a given direction and gain the confidence of the management.”

Company Durabilis is a Belgian based investment company with a sustainable development perspective. It mainly provides support to agribusiness project in low income countries. Currently the company has a positive impact in 8 different countries, mainly in Africa and South America.

“We are young and ambitious entrepreneurs wanting to make a change and help sustainable enterprises in their development. This was the first time we worked with the Prince Albert Fund and we are truly convinced of the enthusiasm, quality and motivation of the candidates.” Durabilis

**“I’ve managed to build bridges between
the Belgian way of working and
the Brazilian way.”**



Louis-Alfons Nobels

► Role

Louis-Alfons Nobels joined the sales department of Soudal Brazil, the company's subsidiary that was established in São Paulo in 2012. As the commercial ambassador for this Belgian company he was tasked with expanding the company's operations in this emerging market in close coordination with the Belgium-based International Sales Manager.

► Responsibilities

To develop the Soudal brand's presence in the Brazilian market, **Louis-Alfons** had to perform flexible and multi-functional tasks. He had to deal with new challenges in sales, import and export legislation and on the operational side.

"I quickly adapted to the day-to-day rhythm. This is possibly due to the fact that I had already lived in Brazil before. I visited potential clients and tested products at their production site."

Louis-Alfons also managed to significantly improve the communication between the headquarters and the Brazilian branch. The fact that he could rely on a strong executive management team in Belgium helped him to easily identify with the company. By the end of the year he was able to post some tangible results. ***"I managed to open up a new market segment. In the period of one year, we managed to achieve an important growth of our sales."*** Louis-Alfons feels he substantially contributed to the development of Soudal Brazil's presence as a supplier on the Brazilian market.

► How he benefited

"After five years of professional experiences in international project management, international politics and foreign trade, my Prince Albert Fund project for Soudal was a real opportunity to consolidate my previous skills. It helped me reorient my career in the challenging environment of an emerging market."

Company Soudal is a leading independent manufacturer of sealants, PU-Foams and adhesives for professional experts and private users. This 100% Belgian company with headquarters in Turnhout has developed as an international player in chemical building specialities with 11 manufacturing sites on 4 continents. In 2011, Soudal was awarded the prestigious prize of Belgian Business of the year.

"Traditionally, we look for young employees with common sense, perseverance and initiative, who are able to work hard. We found all these characteristics in our Prince Albert Fund's candidate." Soudal

“Establishing a new business branch for a company abroad from scratch gave me the drive to plan to start my own business at some point.”



Karen Teuwen

► Role

Karen Teuwen was responsible for laying the groundwork for the opening of an import and sales office for Oleon, an oleochemicals company, in Brazil. She set up the infrastructure and the procedures in order to increase the client base in Latin America.

► Responsibilities

Opening a new office in Brazil firstly involved a legal phase: information on tax rules, logistical possibilities, trading practices... During her assignment, Karen followed up on different phases of the programme, including networking with foreign companies in Brazil to gain an insight into the business community there and developing the marketing for Oleon products. ***“In the food segment, we identified the top 50 potential clients in Brazil. I was also able to secure a crucial meeting with Natura, a Personal Care account that Oleon had tried to approach for years, through my personal contacts!”***

Karen also compiled a calculation model for the cost of nationalised products identifying risk factors, which earned her entry with key decision makers and opened the doors for future business.

► How she benefited

“My experience with the Prince Albert Fund allowed me to map the huge Brazilian market for oleochemicals products - main players, main competitors, main prospects.” Karen was able to subsequently experiment with this know-how on the Mexican market. ***“When I applied for the programme, I had already started a career in banking. The Prince Albert Fund was a good alternative to an MBA, as this project would be a more practice-oriented version of it.”***

Company

Oleon is a leading producer of oleochemicals with production plants in Belgium, France, Germany, Norway and Malaysia. The company's head office is located in Ertvelde near Ghent. The company specialises in the conversion of natural fats and oils into a wide range of oleochemical products, such as fatty acids, glycerine or technical oils that are essential ingredients for numerous industries – food, cosmetics, lubricants and other specialty materials.

“With the Prince Albert Fund project, we were able to increase Oleon name recognition on the Brazilian market for personal care, food and coatings.” Oleon

“I worked with Belgian engineers, American executives, Taiwanese partners and Japanese customers. A truly multicultural approach!”



Koen van Besien

► Role

Based in Taipei, Koen van Besien helped the software company Amplidata develop a hardware appliance which, combined with its software, could be proposed as a full computer data storage solution to the Asian Pacific market.

► Responsibilities

As a venture capital funded company, Amplidata is ran very differently than a traditional SME. Koen was part of a team of two people, working very independently. As a result he also had huge decision-making powers. ***“The advantage of a start-up is that things move very fast and you sometimes have to make very quick decisions on your own. On the other hand, you are also expected to assess the risks associated with these decisions.”***

Thanks to his technical background, he was able to really help Amplidata with the outsourcing of a reliable hardware appliance. He also identified business opportunities, searching for prospects and developing a good business model based on the company's solution. ***“Koen helped us with the technical support and pre-sale in order to promote our solution in the region,”*** says M. Wang, his company coach in Taiwan. ***“Together with our Belgian colleagues, he also solved some engineering problems, which was very beneficial to our customers.”***

After a year, the company was able to close its first sales deal in Japan, ***“a very gratifying operation as Japanese customers are not the easiest of customers!”***

► How he benefited

Koen appreciated the fact that the Prince Albert Fund gave him the freedom to choose a company and develop his own project. He also felt very lucky to work with a highly-experienced Taiwanese boss who introduced him to the different ways of doing business in Asia. ***“The fact that I was able to easily find another job working with another Belgian company, here in Taiwan after my assignment shows how well the Prince Albert Fund programme worked out for me.”***

Company Amplidata is a Belgian software company that creates big data cloud storage systems. This venture capital start-up is backed by a group of 50 investors worldwide and has offices in the U.S., Egypt and Belgium (Ghent).

“Our Belgian team was really reassured by the fact that there was somebody with the same mindset on the other side of the world, which significantly facilitated communication.”
Amplidata

“It took a lot of efforts to develop the necessary contacts but I was able to rely on a fantastic professional support network.”



Johan Vandebek

► Role

Johan Vandebek worked for AppliTek, an SME that manufactures on-line measurement and monitoring devices for industrial applications. His goal was to set up a new office in Bangkok to develop the company's activity in the emerging South East Asian Region.

► Responsibilities

Johan took the time to find the project that would best suit the level of responsibility he was looking for. He chose to work for AppliTek, a small Belgian SME, which was given the opportunity to send someone overseas thanks to the Prince Albert Fund. ***"Selecting an SME to me seemed completely in line with the principles of the Prince Albert Fund."***

AppliTek wanted to launch one of its new applications for the pulp and paper industry and drinking water monitoring. Johan started to investigate the local market and map potential customers in the region. ***"I had to develop a lot of contacts in a culture that was completely new to me. I was fortunate that Crown Prince Philip travelled to Thailand at the time on an economic mission. Joining this Belgian economic mission opened a lot of doors of many companies as well as giving me the opportunity to meet High Government Representatives, including the Prime Minister of Thailand."***

► How he benefited

Johan thought the option of contacting past Prince Albert Fund candidates upon his arrival in Bangkok was quite useful. ***"I immediately contacted the alumni that were still working in the region. This, in my opinion, is one of the greatest advantages of the programme, because you have access to an extensive network."***

Company AppliTek, located in Deinze, produces on-line analysis, testing equipment and monitoring solutions, with applications for various industries, such as renewable energy, petrochemicals, bio-fuels or the water industry. Its on-line analyser systems are key to full process control, from sampling to measurement, providing a solution to today's toughest monitoring challenges.

"Johan was always enthusiastic and we were trusted him to represent the company at professional trade shows or during company visits. The Prince Albert Fund project helped us meet our objectives in this highly competitive and complex market." AppliTek



“After a while, I became someone you have to know in Rangoon for any professional wishing to gain access to a specific business area or offices.”

Simon Van de Sande

► Role

Simon was posted to Myanmar to assess the potential and identify the opportunities in this emerging market for Dredging International, a division of DEME, the Belgian dredging and hydraulic engineering group.

► Responsibilities

After Dredging International had joined the Flemish Government's first mission to Myanmar in March 2012, the group considered opening a subsidiary in the country.

Simon was tasked with investigating this possibility, and with the building of a solid local network of dedicated partners in Myanmar, selecting and following up on potential projects for DEME. ***"The research had to justify DEME's long-term commitment to the challenge of the sustainable development of the country's basic infrastructure."*** He also created and maintained good relations with government agencies.

"DEME has an excellent reputation for training and human resource management, so I have always received the necessary support from our area manager." Simon's mission also included a thorough investigation of the Irrawaddy River for three weeks.

Although the country's political situation made it difficult to secure exports, ***"for the Burmese, dredging now equals DEME, and a number of interesting projects stand a good chance of materialising."***

► How he benefited

"Without the Prince Albert Fund, many business opportunities abroad would remain uncharted for Belgian firms and quite a number of participants would have had very different lives. During my assignment, I had complete access to the administrations and several ministries, as well as the offices of several Burmese business leaders, something that would be impossible today as they are inundated with Western businesspeople conducting market research."

Company

Dredging International is the main operating company of the Belgian dredging and hydraulic engineering group DEME. DEME has won a prominent position on the world market in a number of highly specialised and complex hydraulic disciplines. The group has created a network of branch offices and agencies on all continents. Today, the company is active in over 90 different countries.

"We welcome the opportunity to work with Prince Albert Fund candidates as they also provide an alternative view on our business and on the way we interact with our shareholders." Dredging International

“Learning how to adapt to another culture really improved my business skills.”



Peter Vanham

► Role

Peter Vanham set up the U.S. division of Eddy Merckx Cycles, the bike company of the best road bike racer the world has ever witnessed, Eddy Merckx.

► Responsibilities

Peter was tasked with setting up the company's U.S. division, focussing initially on the East Coast. After just three months on the job he was promoted to the position of Country Manager U.S., with responsibility for the company's marketing and operations and reporting directly to the global CEO.

Peter started by creating and implementing a solid business plan for the company – a “ready-to-use” operational strategy.

“During my 12 months on the job I developed an in-depth knowledge of the American market, especially from the logistics and manufacturing perspective, establishing close relationships with local companies and local dealers in the process.”

At the same time Eddy Merckx Cycles was also looking at ways of marketing its bikes online. To this end Peter created an e-commerce website and ran it on a day-to-day basis. ***“By the end of 2013, we had billed over USD 100,000, proving that our strategy was the right one!”***

► How he benefited

During his year in the U.S. Peter says ***“learning how to adapt to another culture also improved my business skills. The course from the Prince Albert Fund about cultural differences and the need to adjust certainly raised my awareness about this issue. It helped me overcome this more easily, without the worry of a ‘culture shock’”.***

After his programme, Peter continued to work for Eddy Merckx Cycles before being accepted by Wharton for an executive MBA.

Company Eddy Merckx Cycles was founded over thirty years ago in Zellik, Belgium with the aim of producing the finest bikes in the world.

Over time the company became a modern global player focussing on international growth, concluding agreements with no fewer than 14 international partners in 2014.

The U.S. market is considered crucial for the brand's expansion abroad, having the potential of becoming its second most important market.

“Determined to succeed in the U.S., our company considered the Prince Albert Fund project as one of its more important initiatives in the last few years.” Eddy Merckx Cycles

**“Developing an innovative business
in a fast-moving market was the
most challenging experience.”**



Thomas Van Winckel

► Role

Thomas Van Winckel helped AdsWizz's U.S. division to become a leading global advertising solution provider to the online audio and radio industries. Besides international expansion and finance, he was also responsible for the company's sales relationships in America and in other international markets.

► Responsibilities

Upon his arrival in the U.S., **Thomas** was the sixth employee to join the team. Being part of a small structure meant he was directly involved in a wide range of activities within AdsWizz. ***"I had the chance to focus on various missions from international expansion to financial controlling and agency relations. I also searched for new partners and successfully negotiated international partnerships."***

The company's objectives were even more challenging because the online advertising market is still a relatively new market, even in the U.S. This experience proved to be very enriching as **Thomas** got to know a new product and new technologies in the radio industry. AdsWizz was very pleased with the results of the project, which translated into more buys on its network and a bigger revenue stream for 2014.

► How he benefited

Thanks to the Prince Albert Fund, **Thomas** was able to spend one year in the exciting start-up world of Silicon Valley working with the online music industry, ***"which made me even more passionate about technology."*** **Thomas** explains that he has recommended the programme to Belgian acquaintances ***"as it is without a doubt the best way to develop new skills and become an international entrepreneur."***

Company AdsWizz is an innovative technology provider of online audio and video advertising solutions, with headquarters in Brussels. This young start-up has also offices in California and in four European locations. The company is gradually becoming a leading global advertising solution provider to the on-line audio and radio industries.

"As a start-up experiencing exponential growth, we were really happy to rely on a motivated Prince Albert Fund's candidate to help us develop our strategy for the U.S. market." AdsWizz

“I was lucky to be on the road at least three days a week. From Los Angeles to Vegas, Seattle, Denver, New York, Boston and back to Atlanta...”



Pieter Wilmots

► Role

Pieter Wilmots was tasked with launching Unilin's newest invention – UNICLIC for furniture – in the North American market, by setting up the distribution of the product and partnerships with local manufacturers. He was based in Calhoun, Georgia.

► Responsibilities

UNICLIC for Furniture is an innovative technology to connect two panels without having to use external tools or glue. As a result, it is a much faster and easier way of assembling panels. In the frame of the Prince Albert Fund project, **Pieter** set several objectives for the launch of this new product on the U.S. market: conduct market research on kit furniture in North America, list industrial market players and relevant distributors and identify potential industrial acquisition targets for the group. **Pieter** soon became the key account manager for potential customers in the U.S. He focussed on distributing Clic products as well as on establishing partnerships with manufacturers interested in licensing this new technology.

“We were able to meet with the major retailers in a very short time so that we could introduce our revolutionary product to them. But even though we were able to sell the product to the two more important North American furniture retailers, we did not achieve the expected volumes as our price setting and standards are considered too European.”

► How he benefited

“The last thing I wanted when leaving Belgium was to work on an international project abroad which involved me sitting at a desk all day. Fortunately, this was not the case. I was involved in so many different tasks: logistics, marketing, product development, sales, etc.”

Company Unilin produces laminate floors, engineered wood, vinyl floors, boards, decorative panels, finished products, roofing elements and insulation panels. The Belgian company is part of the American company Mohawk Industries Inc., which is listed on the New York stock exchange. Unilin has 20 production units around the world.

“The overall approach of the Prince Albert Fund project was perceived as professional. The candidates are very skilled and ambitious and thus match the profile we're looking for.”
Unilin

“Seeing something grow that
you have initiated is the most
amazing feeling imaginable.”



Jan-Willem Billiet

► Role

Jan-Willem Billiet's assignment was to develop the South African business of LC Packaging, a company specialising in agricultural packaging and flexible industrial containers (FIBC).

► Responsibilities

In South Africa, LC Packaging sells packaging to the mining, chemical, fertiliser and food industries. The project consisted of optimising the logistical setup in that region, applying for lower import duties on the company's imported raw materials, launching an online store to target smaller African customers and identifying new markets in the neighbouring countries.

"The most challenging part of my Prince Albert Fund programme was to find, identify and develop new markets. They could be anywhere in Southern Africa. Namibia proved to be the biggest untapped market. There were no language barriers and there is an existing trade agreement between Namibia and neighbouring South Africa."

LC Packaging successfully entered the Namibian market and laid the foundation for entering the market in Mozambique as well.

► How he benefited

"The support of LC Packaging was never-ending and I always received guidance whenever I needed it. I now work full time at LC Packaging as a Business Development Manager based in Johannesburg, South Africa. My focus is on key accounts in the DRC, Zambia, Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Madagascar. Thanks to the Prince Albert Fund, I had the luck and opportunity to visit and do business with over 10 different African countries."

Company

LC Packaging is a Netherlands based packaging company run by the fourth generation of family shareholders. Recently a Belgian company took a 50% interest in the company. There are 14 different subsidiaries spread across Europe and Africa and two main divisions: agricultural packaging and FIBCs (flexible intermediate bulk containers, also known as bulk bags). The African branch, founded four years ago, is mainly active in the FIBC field.

"During his Prince Albert Fund year Jan-Willem was able to effectively develop our presence in Southern Africa. He established new customers in the DRC, in Mozambique, in Zambia, in Namibia, and assisted the company in drafting a strategy for future commercial success in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Angola. His efforts and commercial have led to the establishment of LC Packaging Namibia in Q4 2014." LC Packaging

**“It was such a challenge
to be part of a company’s
growth story...”**



Koen Decourt

► Role

Koen Decourt supported the launching of the activities of EcoNation, a Belgian clean-tech company, in Southern Africa, its third strategic market within its internationalization plan. Cape Town was his first home base before he relocated to Johannesburg.

► Responsibilities

The “LightCatcher”, EcoNation’s patented green technology, is a solar light system that offers “free” daylight for up to ten hours a day. While the technology itself is revolutionary, the business model is equally interesting. The company makes the initial investment and customers are charged on a monthly basis through a LiCom (“Light Investment Company”) at an advantageous rate. The Prince Albert Fund project focused on South Africa to develop this market.

“The challenge was to cooperate with the distributor in setting up all activities and procedures to introduce the LightCatcher in a sustainable manner and to make sure that after one year, the distributor could operate independently.”

As the regional manager for Southern Africa, Koen became the single point of contact for the distributor and customers, liaising with the Belgian head office. After one year, EcoNation’s sales to the exclusive distributor totalled EUR 120,000, making the Prince Albert Fund project profitable.

► How he benefited

During his Prince Albert Fund year, Koen learned to scan the energy industry in the Southern African market. ***“Subsequently, I was given the opportunity to share this knowledge on energy efficiency during several conferences, notably at VOKA (Zaken doen in Zuid-Afrika). I was also invited as a guest speaker to SA’s international energy-efficiency congress ICUE (International Conference for Industrial Usage of Energy) and to seminars such as Superspar Development Program”.***

Company EcoNation, which is based in Gentbrugge, is a Belgian clean-tech start-up that developed the internationally acclaimed intelligent daylight system, called “The LightCatcher”.

EcoNation among others received the 2014 Technology Pioneer Prize of the World Economic Forum. It has offices or representatives in Belgium, China and Morocco to serve the European, Chinese and Northern African markets respectively.

“We were not familiar with the Prince Albert Fund concept at all, but it quickly proved to be a wonderful tool to internationalise our business activities and identify high potentials that can help develop the company in the long term.” EcoNation

“Living and working in the San Francisco Bay Area,
a place that probably has the highest percentage
of entrepreneurs in the world, clearly
helped me to develop a much
more entrepreneurial
mindset.”



Evert Desmidt

► Role

Evert Desmidt explored the U.S. bicycle market on behalf of, the Belgian high-end bicycle manufacturer. He conducted a comprehensive market analysis and gave recommendations to develop the U.S. business. He also investigated opportunities to expand the business in Latin America.

► Responsibilities

Ridley had great growth potential in the U.S.A. After having been represented by local distribution companies a few years ago in the U.S. market, Ridley wished to re-evaluate the market and define a new strategy to achieve the company's goals using different distribution channels. ***“For somebody like me who loves cycling, being able to spend one year in this industry and representing Ridley in different locations across the U.S. was definitely exciting.”***

Evert conducted in-depth market research, exploring the different sales channels, the competition, consumers, the different segments, the U.S. media landscape, previous marketing initiatives, the logistics, sourcing, and so on. ***“After that, I developed a grassroots marketing plan for Ridley cyclocross in the U.S. coordinating its execution. I also explored distribution opportunities in Latin America based in San Francisco.”***

► How he benefited

“After working for two big Fast Moving Consumer Goods corporations for six years, the Prince Albert Fund gave me the opportunity to leave my traditional working environment for one year and try something very different, something with a much more entrepreneurial mindset. For someone like me who has always dreamt of starting my own venture but who was still working for a big corporation, the Fund was the ideal step in between these two careers.”

Company Ridley Bikes was founded in 1997 by Jochim Aerts who has been producing frames for Belgian bicycle companies since 1990. In just a few years, Ridley became the market leader in Belgium for racing bikes. While the brand's core market is still Belgium, Ridley today sells bicycles all over the world. Ridley is the proud bicycle sponsor of several professional cycling teams. The company is headquartered in Paal-Beringen, Belgium.

“Ridley is really convinced of the benefits and the impact of the Prince Albert Fund concept of young international managers.” Ridley-Bikes

**“My ambition always was to work
in an international environment
but until now I had never
really succeeded.”**



Peter De Sutter

► Role

Peter De Sutter's assignment was to participate and contribute to all business activities of Vemedia Pharma, initially in Moscow and then in Hong Kong – including sales, marketing, logistics, finance and administration.

► Responsibilities

Vemedia's product portfolio mainly consists of strong proprietary brands. The company has a very strong international position in three key categories: Calming & Sleeping, Medicated Foot Care and Urinary Tract Infection products.

"I was first sent to Moscow where Vemedia had opened a branch two to three years earlier to evaluate the collaboration with the local partner and provide the necessary support. I ended developing and implementing a crisis management plan as I attempted to improve and restore the communication between the two parties. Finally, I was also tasked with searching for another potential partner in Moscow. I was very closely involved in this process, which was an excellent learning experience. After this assignment the deal was to move to Hong Kong for six months."

In Hong Kong, Peter's task was to support the team and to identify new opportunities for Vemedia products on the Asian market.

► How he benefited

"Before the Prince Albert Fund, I had very little international experience and the programme allowed me to remediate this in just one year. I even had the opportunity to work in two very different settings, Moscow and Hong Kong! This experience was the jumpstart I needed to launch my international career."

After his project, Peter was offered a job with Vemedia as an export manager, allowing him to continue working in a challenging international environment.

Company Vemedia Pharma is a producer and distributor of OTC (Over-The-Counter) and consumer brands throughout Europe. This company originally started out as a spin-off of Solvay Pharma in 2002. Its products include medicinal products, nutritional supplements (vitamins, minerals and herbal products), cosmeceuticals, medical devices and insecticides. Vemedia currently has a market presence in the EU, Asia, Australia and South Africa and plans to develop its business in the rest of Africa and Latin America.

"Peter is a strong communicator. He can analyse issues fast and he reports in due time. And last but not least, he was greatly appreciated within the organisation." Vemedia Pharma

**“This experience helped me to realize
into which direction I want my career
to evolve in the long term.”**



Ruben D'Hauwers

► Role

In Yangon, Myanmar, Ruben D'Hauwers worked as a project manager for SBE Consulting Engineers, which specialises in the design of maritime infrastructures and harbour constructions, civil and structural engineering, steel structures and geotechnical design.

► Responsibilities

After having obtained a Flanders Investment and Trade grant for a feasibility study in Myanmar, SBE conducted a multi-criteria analysis for the construction of four multi-purpose dams (hydro-electricity, navigability, irrigation and flood management) along the Irrawaddy river – where 60% of the population of the country lives. In his capacity of project manager **Ruben** was in charge of the relationships with the Myanmar government and the local companies.

“The macro-economic and political situation in Myanmar was challenging due to fact that most of investments in large infrastructural projects are in the hands of Chinese and Japanese investors. But because of the instability in the region at the time, before the elections (foreseen in 2015), I convinced the company to conduct market research and business development in South-East Asia.”

He identified India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and Singapore as countries with a high growth potential for SBE and participated in a Flanders Investment and Trade mission to Singapore.

► How he benefited

Ruben was the first expat the company ever employed as well as one of the first engineers with a business profile, as the other employees were civil and industrial engineers. ***“The Prince Albert Fund project helped me to identify my passions for my future career: combining technology and business modelling to achieve sustainability and social impact.”***

Company SBE is an engineering consultancy & CAD office located in Sint-Niklaas, with important international references in maritime and harbour engineering, port development, integrated water resource management, civil engineering & geotechnical engineering and bridges, tunnels, infrastructure, real estate, industrial constructions among others.

“Ruben was able to bring a different perspective to the company, mainly because of his working experience in business development and his academic background in business.” SBE

**“The Prince Albert Fund does not only
open your eyes on your host country
but maybe even more on your
home country.”**



Lavinia Ducarme

► Role

As a project manager on the UCB APAC team, Lavinia Ducarme's role was to increase performance monitoring by creating a Key Performance Indicators dashboard, conducting market research on dynamics segments and forecasting.

► Responsibilities

Choosing to work for the pharmaceutical industry in Shanghai was not such a strange choice for Lavinia. ***"I come from a family of doctors. As a child, I used to play house with my sister and instead of food, we used pharmaceuticals. (...) My sister is currently also living in Shanghai funnily enough..."***

As a Shanghai office project manager, Lavinia worked on very diverse projects ranging from launch readiness to market research and patient-based model forecasting. The scope of these projects extended across various treatment areas including epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, immunology and multiple sclerosis.

► How she benefited

"Working for UCB, I discover an industry and value for which I have profound respect. But one year is very short and once you have proven your capabilities you need to quickly prepare for what comes after the Prince Albert Fund. I was very fortunate to be given the opportunity to extend my position: UCB offered me a fantastic job for another year in Asia Pacific, in markets that are still in a major growth phase."

During her year with the Prince Albert Fund, Lavinia was also able to develop her career through activities in a women's association. "I attended several conferences designed to enhance women's ambition and career. I will continue to stay active in this field in the future as it really helps women professionally."

Company UCB is a patient-centric biopharma company that focuses on severe diseases specialising in Central Nervous System and Immunology. UCB is very active in R&D. Under the patronage of the Queen Elisabeth Medical Foundation, the company also promotes neuroscience research with an Award. The company helps thousands of patients in more than 80 countries.

"UCB and the Prince Albert Fund have collaborated for a long time. UCB highly values this collaboration as it allows us to work with pre-selected candidates who are eager to learn and bring their dynamic and creativity to the team. Lavinia understood the patient centricity of UCB. She used her financial background to support the solutions leads and over time became familiar with the company's strategy." UCB

“The Asian style of management is quite different from the Western European style, particularly in terms of the way they respect the hierarchy.”



Amina Ermilate

► Role

Amina Ermilate's project was to launch Ice-Watch, the Belgian watch brand, in the Middle East and in Malaysia, based in the Hong Kong office.

► Responsibilities

Amina's main task was to assist Ice-Watch expansion in the domestic market of the Asian-Pacific Region and further develop the APAC travel retail market. ***"I was part of the International Team, whose role is to set the Ice-Watch strategy, to understand its market and develop tools to support the sales."***

This position gave Amina a good overview of the work involved in entering new markets including business plan proposal review, contract negotiations, customs and logistics matters and the client relationship.

"I also worked in the product development department where I was exposed to the brand design and more strategic decisions."

She successfully set up the brand launch and exceeded the initial set target by 27%.

► How she benefited

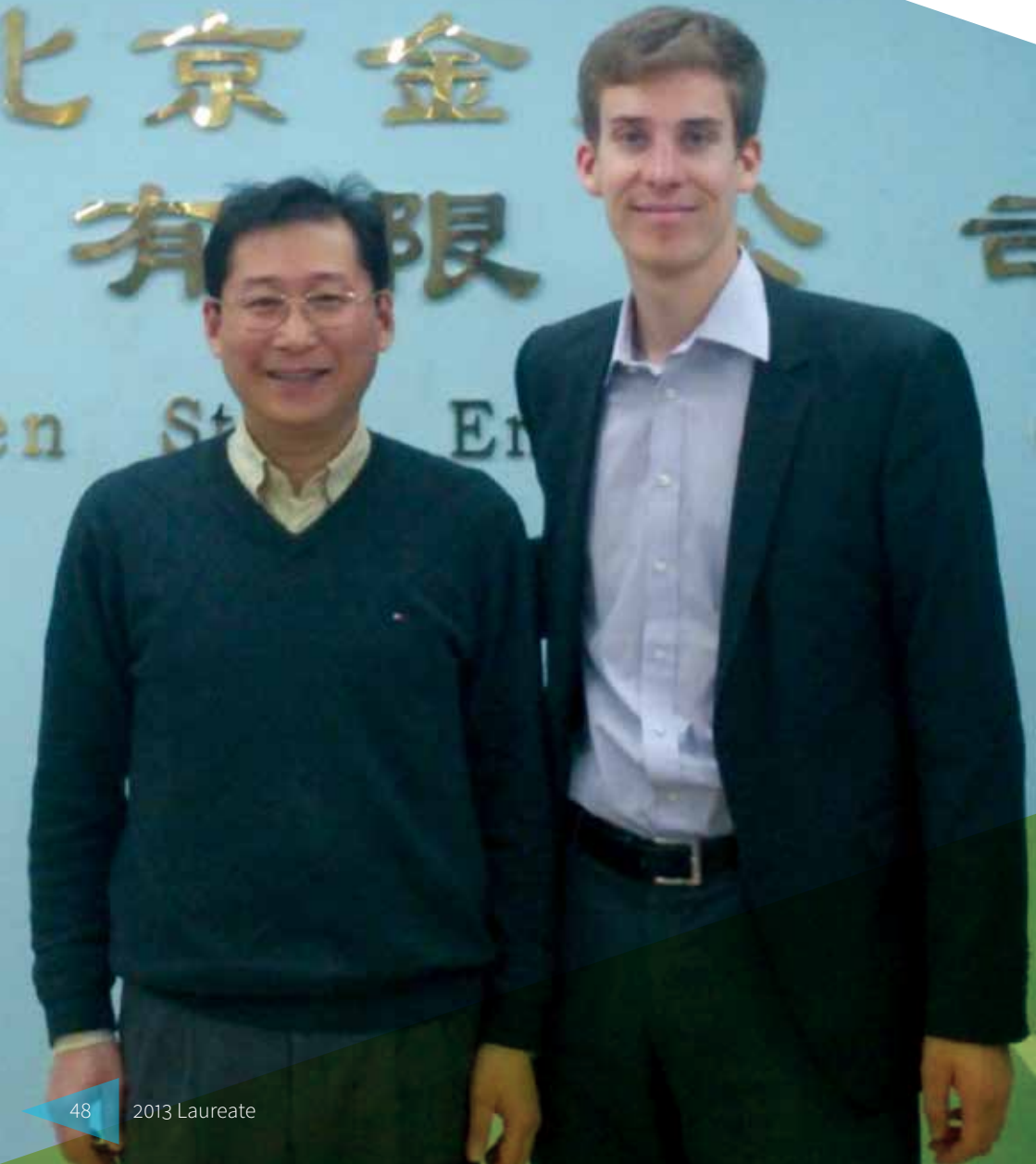
"The programme truly inspired me to reflect on multiculturalism. In today's world, where we open commercial borders, this type of experience is essential and fruitful." However, Amina's experience was not only interesting from the cultural perspective. Her mind-set switch exercise happened to be very valuable in marketing terms as well. ***"This experience allowed me to put myself into the customer's shoes. I also gained a very good insight into the essentials for successfully selling a product and creating impactful media support."***

Company

Founded in 2006 by Jean-Pierre Lutgen, Ice-Watch has developed a timepiece concept that conquered the world and is currently sold in 100 countries. The company's headquarters are in Bastogne while the logistical hub is currently in Hong Kong although the activities are progressively being transferred to the new warehouse in Belgium.

"Amina brought some new input to the Hong Kong team based on her previous working experience in Belgium. She successfully assisted our sole distributors, namely Malaysian, Indian and Middle-East partners in developing their domestic markets." Ice-Watch

“I definitely support the motto that the programme conveyed at some stage, namely ‘MBA put into practice’.”



Nicolas Greant

► Role

Nicolas Greant's project consisted of developing Waterleau's business in Mainland China and Hong Kong, working within the Sales & Marketing department under the International Business Development network.

► Responsibilities

Nicolas set up a new sales office for Waterleau in China, developing the business network and identifying several Waste-to-Energy (WTE) projects the company could bid for, establishing Waterleau as a key player in the Environmental Services market. In the WTE Chinese Market, the competition consists of 15 domestic and foreign players. As a result, ***"this Prince Albert Fund year was a real challenge, in combination with the language issue. Chinese was really a major problem although regular courses helped me to gain trust from and show respect to the customer. But sometimes it was difficult to gather market information, follow up on prospects or any other kind of communication."***

Nevertheless, according to Nicolas, he achieved 90% of the goals that were set. ***"We now have solid access to some major Chinese project investors"***. At the end of the collaboration, the company had won a project in Yanji, in the Jilin province.

► How he benefited

"When looking at tangible results, the key outcome to me is an increased level of self-confidence to take the next entrepreneurial leap. The Vlerick MBA programme gave me a taste of entrepreneurship whereas the Prince Albert Fund programme ('MBA put into practice') gave me the confidence to really take the plunge."

Company Waterleau is a global player providing environmental solutions to industrial and municipal clients. Its business is based on offering its own patented technologies for the treatment of waste water, polluted air, solid waste streams as well as for the production of process and drinking water and the generation of renewable energy. With 400 environmental engineers and specialists based in Belgium, France and Germany, Waterleau provides a wide variety of services including consultancy, conceptual design, engineering, own production of patented technologies and the supply of technological solutions.

"The limited bureaucracy in terms of contracting makes it less difficult to hire a trainee, which is a key advantage in this fast moving world." Waterleau

DEMAN
STRUCTURE SOLUTIONS

UNA SIMPLE ESTRUCTURA



“The project was also a chance
for me to finally move to a job
that suits me better.”



Liesbeth Houthoofd

► Role

Liesbeth Houthoofd joined the Chilean team of Veldeman Structure Solutions in Santiago de Chile, operating in the construction industry. She became their Business Development Manager for Chile and the surrounding countries.

► Responsibilities

“Considering my background I have plenty of knowledge and experience living in Latin America which is why I thought I would offer the most value to Belgian companies who want to expand or start up specifically in that region.”

At Veldeman Structure Solutions, they were interested in sending **Liesbeth** to Santiago de Chile to coordinate the office, analyse the market and hopefully boost their sales activities.

Her mission consisted of further developing Veldeman’s presence in order to enlarge the marketing and sales activities.

“With my boss in Belgium, I had agreed to tackle the target sectors one by one. First the events world, then the salmon industry and finally the vast wine producing industry. Even if the mission did not produce the expected results, I finally closed my first sale in July 2014, a month before my departure so I felt that this was a nice reward for a year of hard work.”

► How she benefited

“When I enrolled, I was a young professional that was stuck in a job where my potential was not being used to its fullest. My energy and talent was wasted. The selection board of the Prince Albert Fund seems to have understood my request...” The programme helped Liesbeth move into Business Development after having worked in Purchasing.

Company Veldeman Structure Solutions is an SME based in Bree that sells and rents aluminium tent structures for all kinds of temporary or semi-permanent applications for the events business, to sports centres and the industry.

“We were very optimistic about the Prince Albert Fund’s project as we could clearly see the opportunities for Veldeman Structure Solutions in Chile and Peru. After a year, we had a better understanding of the dynamics and players in one of the target industries in which we are interested.” Veldeman Structure Solutions

**“I now want to set up my own consulting
company to help develop enterprises
in the cell therapy sector.
MaSTherCell will be
my first client.”**



Thibault Jonckheere

► Role

Thibault Jonckheere helped develop the activities of MaSTherCell, cell therapy manufacturing partner, in the U.S., by developing the client portfolio and identifying various development options to launch operations.

► Responsibilities

During his Prince Albert year, **Thibault** paved the way for MaSTherCell to develop its U.S. activities, developing a more robust sales process and finding local partners to launch operations. During the past decade, cell therapy medicinal products have gained significant importance, particularly in the fields of ex-vivo gene therapy, immunotherapy and regenerative medicine.

“At some stage, the company I worked for experienced some major changes forcing me to adapt my role and project. I mainly focussed on the prospection of the North American market, coordinating the entire sales process, relying on my European scientific colleagues for technical aspects and advanced negotiations. I obtained very good results when it came to contacting potential clients. As a result the company decided that I should represent it at conferences (in Washington, Boston, San Diego, Houston).”

By the end of the programme, several significant development options were being discussed with local partners. New customers were also in the process of signing with MaSTherCell to develop activities in Belgium and the U.S.A.

► How he benefited

“I have really mastered the art of constant adaptation and improvement, which is inherent to an entrepreneurial approach. I will always remember how all the very bright and knowledgeable people at conferences, most of them doctors with twenty years in the field, gave me the opportunity to present our services and treated me as if I was one of their equals.”

Company Located in Gosselies, MaSTherCell, Manufacturing Synergies for Therapeutic Cells, is a cell therapy dedicated Contract Development and Manufacturing Organization (CDMO). The company was founded in 2011 to provide high quality process development and manufacturing outsourcing to the key stakeholders in the fast-growing biotech sector. With a team of 25 dedicated experts from academic and industry backgrounds, MaSTherCell offers a customer-driven and technology-focused approach and state-of-the-art facilities.

“For a young biotech company like ours, the Prince Albert Fund programme was a unique opportunity to have a professional help us by taking the lead on international projects.”
MaSTherCell

**“I had the chance to learn
a lot about management
and leadership.”**



Marie Logé

► Role

Marie Logé's mission was to manage and expand the Malaysian Branch of BKS. As Country Manager, she was in charge of the turnover, HR aspects, accounting and customer relationships.

► Responsibilities

BKS Malaysia is a small company with five employees. It represents the Malaysian cultural diversity, its richness and its challenges.

First, Marie had to get to know the market and the product range before being able to manage the Malaysian company. ***"As a newly appointed manager I faced several challenges including maintaining and developing the relationship with the current customers, managing the team of employees and developing a relationship with BKS Belgium. As Regional Manager I was in charge of our home market, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. I also had to develop BKS in new markets, namely Taiwan, China and Vietnam."***

She had also to develop the new activity of industrial knives, a new line that was launched in 2013.

► How she benefited

"Arriving as a 27-year old woman in a Muslim country to manage a team of employees that were all 15 years older initially was not that easy. When I arrived in Malaysia, I was immediately put in charge of a team of four people. The Prince Albert Fund was a fantastic experience because it turned my world upside down. At the same time it helped me rise to the huge challenge of becoming a manager!" Marie really appreciated working for a SME. ***"I had been working in a bank for two years and was interested in working for a smaller company, where I could make a difference and see the results of my work."***

Company BKS was established 30 years ago in Belgium as a service provider for any type of industrial knives. Over time, BKS developed a business unit focusing exclusively on the grinding and production of Pelletizing and Pulverising knives. Motivated by its success in Europe BKS opened a second re-sharpening centre for pelletizing and pulverising equipment in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in January 2011. BKS now has service centres in Europe and Asia for all needs of its customers.

**“After this assignment, I am convinced
that new opportunities abroad
will arise in the future.”**



Mathias Michiels

► Role

Mathias Michiels had the opportunity to support the business development of Lhoist Group, the world's largest producer of lime, based in Singapore. The goal was to gain a better understanding of the vast Asian market environment and pave the way for the future commercial activities in the region.

► Responsibilities

South East Asia is one of the main areas of focus for strategic growth of the Lhoist Group in the coming years. The company has acquired a limestone deposit in Malaysia and is investing in a local lime production plant. Lhoist previously only had a limited presence in this part of the world, which is why a small business team was put in place with the aim of mapping the market potential and initiate sales.

In this framework, **Mathias** studied various aspects including supply chain optimisation, regional market assessments, competitor benchmarking, and so on.

“Because we were operating in an environment with a lot of unknown parameters, the objectives and priorities evolved constantly, but ultimately, I was able to help out the Lhoist Group a great deal in their discovery of this region under permanent development.”

► How he benefited

“The emergence of the vast Southeast Asian market offers plenty of business opportunities. Thanks to the Prince Albert Fund, I had the chance to live the life of an expat in a big city, travel around Southeast Asia and interact with people from many different cultures. Of course, I hope my contribution has helped the group in building the foundation for a successful geographical expansion.”

Company The Lhoist Group is the world's largest producer of lime and related mineral products. This family-owned company with Belgian roots was established 125 ago years. The target markets for Lhoist products include steelmaking, environmental applications, construction and paper production. The group has established activities in Europe, North America and Brazil and recently started looking at ways of expanding its presence in the emerging markets.

“The Prince Albert Fund provided us a quality label for highly qualified people who can handle the responsibilities inherent to a volatile market.” Lhoist South Asia

**“The Prince Albert Fund programme
creates real value for our Belgian
community and Belgian
network abroad.”**



Bernard Nobels

► Role

Bernard Nobels's mission was to explore business opportunities for Ecorus in the U.S. solar market and to invest in and own a portfolio of photovoltaic power plants.

► Responsibilities

Ecorus entered the U.S. market in 2013. At the time they had just entered into a joint venture with Verterra Renewables, which is based in the New York area. This joint venture was incorporated in the U.S. as "Ecorus Americas". Ecorus Americas was searching for a Business Development Manager to extend the business on the West Coast while Verterra would concentrate on the East Coast.

Bernard accepted this position and was based in San Francisco.

Exploring business opportunities in the U.S. solar market meant contacting prospects directly and developing a network of channel partnerships (solar developers, installers, manufacturers) which allowed the group to bid on and own a portfolio of photovoltaic power plants. ***"During the first couple of months I identified and developed target opportunities all over the U.S. with a focus on the West Coast."***

In the margin of this project, a network was founded in the U.S. solar industry. **Bernard** also acquired a good knowledge of the U.S. solar market as well as establishing an overview of the opportunities and market entry barriers for the company.

► How he benefited

"Over a twelve-month period my understanding of the challenges of international business improved by cultivating better entrepreneurial skills. I would like to continue to work in the renewable energy industry. During my Prince Albert Fund year, an opportunity arose to participate and start working for a Belgian EPC (Engineering, Procurement, Construction) firm in thermal energy. I am also planning to stay actively involved in the Prince Albert Fund network as well as being available to help organise events and spread awareness."

Company Ecorus develops, builds, finances, maintains and operates large solar energy productions plants. The company was founded in 2010 as part of an investment holding.

"As a company we had very high expectations of our collaboration with a candidate of the Prince Albert Fund. Not all our expectations were met but overall it was a success. We would recommend the programme to other companies." Ecorus Group

**“I was so happy to be part of this experience,
exporting a European concept in another
culture. Now Americans can
enjoy the Belgian carrot
in the Big Apple!”**



Marie Page

► Role

Marie Page helped Exki open a new restaurant in New York, joining a team of five partners and staff members.

► Responsibilities

The opening of a new Exki restaurant required multi-tasking skills – HR, audit, logistics, marketing, real estate... The idea was to launch in a new market with the benefit of European experience, while keeping a start-up mindset.

Marie worked closely with the Chief Financial Officer, the Executive Chef in the Kitchen and various colleagues in the company's marketing department. ***“My team (Europeans, Americans and South Americans) was like a real family. This was the best environment to learn about the company, develop my brand awareness and find my place in the project. After a while, we started to have a lot of work in the run-up to the opening and I had to learn fast.”***

The restaurant was like a small laboratory where one had to observe, adapt, and constantly change to find the way to succeed.

► How she benefited

“HR Management and Marketing were my main tasks and are two sectors that require a good understanding of people's needs and motivations. You really have to put yourself in the shoes of a local, especially when working in another country. I was able to achieve this thanks to my fantastic team - everybody at his/her own level taught me a lot and helped me adapt to life in New York.” Marie, who holds an MA in Law, learned to express her creative side more. ***“I am now sure that I want a career in business development.”***

Company The concept behind Exki goes back to the late Nineties when three former Belgian classmates decided to create a fast-casual restaurant serving “natural, fresh and ready” food. Since the opening of its first restaurant in Brussels, the number of Exki restaurants grew to 72 throughout Europe.

“The establishment of a solid base for the development of Exki restaurants in the U.S. market was made possible thanks to the good understanding and capacity for adaptation of young Prince Albert Fund professionals to a new environment for the Exki Product.” Exki

“The best thing is that you can look back and see what you achieved over the past year.”



Maarten Pauwelyn

► Role

Maarten Pauwelyn assisted Pylos, a Belgian real estate developer, in setting up an investment office in Mozambique with the strategic goal of developing retail centres in different cities across the country.

► Responsibilities

In 2013, the company identified Sub-Saharan Africa as their next investment destination. Due to the similarities with Brazil (former Portuguese colonies), it decided to open its first office in the region of Maputo, Mozambique.

“When I was looking for a Prince Albert Fund project, I happened to read an article on Pylos’s international expansion strategy in Trends, a Belgian business weekly. I decided to call them and they offered me this challenging position!”

For Maarten, the goal was to work towards the group’s internationalisation, more specifically in Brazil and in Mozambique. The operation was built around two challenges for Pylos. Firstly, to act more like a global company, ensuring that the overseas entities were aligned with the group’s European activities in terms of processes.

Secondly, expand in Mozambique, a completely new market.

► How he benefited

“The Prince Albert Fund programme provided continuity in my life: I was born in Belgium, grew up in Brazil and moved back to Belgium to study and start my professional career. After two years of working in the strategic consulting sector, I felt the urge to move abroad again. Thanks to the Prince Albert Fund, I found a new challenge that put my life back on an international track.”

Following his collaboration with Pylos, Maarten was offered a full-time position in Lusaka, Zambia where he is currently working on setting up a new office.

Company Pylos Group is an international real estate developer, which was founded in 2001 in Brussels, Belgium. The group develops, renovates and rebuilds commercial real estate in Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Brazil, Mozambique and Zambia.

“I look back positively at the Prince Albert Fund project Maarten undertook with our group. His contribution was very important in terms of the start-up of the operations in Mozambique as well as in the general professionalization of our company.” Pylos Group

**“I learned how to manage an entire
e-commerce business,
a real asset in the digital
marketing era.”**



Manon Sikkema

► Role

Manon Sikkema's project at Le Pain Quotidien in New York, the Belgian bakery & restaurant chain, focused on growing and developing the company's e-commerce channel. This included everything from the development of the online platform to digital marketing and the daily e-commerce operations.

► Responsibilities

By mid-2013, Le Pain Quotidien made the first attempts to sell some of its retail products online in the U.S., opening an e-commerce shop. **Manon** joined the team with the goal to further grow the online retail segment and professionalise its processes.

Generating online traffic was an important aspect as this was directly related to online sales. Another major challenge was redesigning the website in order to translate the unique atmosphere that Le Pain Quotidien had created in its restaurants, making sure to provide a smooth customer experience.

"Even though the initial sales goals have not been met, I personally feel that the project was a success, as I have put the tools in place to drive a successful online business for the brand throughout the redesign process and with the launch of a new website." The manager confirmed that ***"Manon has greatly progressed the way we view e-commerce."***

► How she benefited

This Prince Albert Fund project has given **Manon** a first-hand view at working in a retail, customer facing environment, which was a new entrepreneurial environment for her. She was also very pleased with the set-up of the programme in the company where ***"there was a good balance between entrepreneurship and general guidance"***. But this is only natural as the CEO himself is a Prince Albert Fund alumnus!

Company

Le Pain Quotidien is a Belgian bakery & restaurant chain that has expanded across the world and now has over 200 stores on four continents. The company was founded in 1990 and has a strong history of operating bakery/restaurants since opening its first restaurant in Brussels.

"One of Manon's biggest contributions has been the development of our new e-commerce platform. She has taken everything she has learned throughout the year about e-commerce to rethink all aspects of our online store, optimising it for online traffic and integrating our brand message." Le Pain Quotidien



“The cherry on the cake of this experience is a diploma, which serves as official recognition and which will provide support for my career development.”

Laetitia d'Ursel

► Role

Laetitia d'Ursel's project aimed to start up and develop Waterleau's business, a company providing environmental solutions, in the U.S. market, introducing it as a key player in the U.S. environmental services market.

► Responsibilities

Waterleau is well acquainted with the Prince Albert Fund as other trainees have already worked for the company while it was expanding its business abroad. Laetitia set up an office in California, from where she reported to the International Sales Director in Belgium. ***"I was given the position of Business Development Manager North America, as part of the international sales team, and I was alone in the U.S., representing the office for the North American Region."***

The whole project consisted of three main tasks: Strategic market analysis, New Business Development and Marketing & Communication.

Waterleau had only done business through resellers in the past. But while being new in the U.S. market, which is a well-established market, the company's prospects were very good. After a year, a large network of potential partners had been developed and more than 900 new potential clients and partners had been identified and approached. ***"We have also started bidding on seven projects."***

► How she benefited

"Looking at the results and lessons learned, I'm quite proud of what the Prince Albert Fund and Waterleau gave me the opportunity to accomplish. I have been challenged by a new culture, but also by a new industry and a new approach to work, managing long distance business relationships and building trust."

Company Waterleau is a global player providing environmental solutions to industrial and municipal clients. Its business is based on offering its own patented technologies for the treatment of waste water, polluted air, solid waste streams as well as for the production of process and drinking water and the generation of renewable energy. With 400 environmental engineers and specialists based in Belgium, France and Germany, Waterleau provides a wide variety of services including consultancy, conceptual design, engineering, own production of patented technologies and the supply of technological solutions.

"Waterleau is very happy to collaborate with the VBO and King Baudouin Foundation. Our company takes on Prince Albert Fund trainees in its continuous efforts to expanding and develop business around the world."Waterleau

**“I truly feel bad at having to leave
Brazil, an amazing country with
so many opportunities.”**



Matthias Verheecke

► Role

Matthias Verheecke was seconded by Buysse & Partners to Sao Paulo, Brazil, to assist their Belgian portfolio companies with entering the Latin American market as well as to set up their business of private equity investments in Latin America through the fund-of-fund structure.

► Responsibilities

Brazil is a complicated country in terms of regulation and legislation. Matthias Verheecke's mission in Sao Paulo was relatively broad including setting up and managing a local subsidiary and developing a strategic roadmap for the Belgian portfolio companies (SMEs) to enter the Latin American market. ***"I also had to scout for new investment opportunities in the region and for local partners."***

In this framework, Matthias succeeded in setting up a local subsidiary for Buysse & Partners with the assistance of a local law firm. ***"Fully understanding the process of incorporating a company in Brazil was a preliminary condition before advising the portfolio companies to enter the market."***

► How he benefited

"I can now take advantage of this experience to assist companies that are looking at entering the Latin American market, which is not an easy one but which provides plenty of opportunities for those that have the willpower to work through the difficulties. The project offered me a first exposure to the private equity sector." Moreover, Matthias learnt a lot about cultural differences (e.g. in Brazil nothing is final until you have the signed documents ...), which according to him ***"was quite challenging and sometimes frustrating as I tried to achieve my objectives."***

Company Buysse & Partners is an independent investment group. Starting from a macro-economic perspective, they invest their own capital and that of their investors for the long term with one philosophy and spread across three investment categories: private equity in Belgium, private equity in Latin America and global unique partnerships.

"Mr. Verheecke was a good ambassador for Buysse & Partners and our portfolio companies resulting in interesting commercial leads. His extensive network and knowledge of the local infrastructure also proved very useful during the investor trip that was organised during his stay." Buysse & Partners

“I had the opportunity to participate in workshops in the Google, Facebook and Twitter offices in Silicon Valley.”



Nicolas Verschelden

► Role

Initially AB Inbev asked Nicolas Verschelden to focus on innovation, working in the company's Palo Alto office in California (named the BeerGarage). Subsequently he moved to a Strategic and Marketing position, based in New York.

► Responsibilities

The Palo Alto office is the smallest of all AB InBev offices around the world. It was created to help the company stay at the top of technological innovations. The office is split into two different teams: the North American team and the Global team. ***"This very particular setup made the intercultural relationships very interesting."***

Nicolas was assigned several tasks: Digital Trade Marketing, North America, the CSR initiative and a Smart Packaging project. ***"I had the opportunity to attend a YouTube Brand lab organised by AB InBev executives in Saint Louis, Missouri. Among other things, we reviewed the best brand practices on YouTube and some brand cases particularly retained my attention."***

Nicolas also followed up on an AB InBev initiative together with other leading global corporations, called the Together for Safer Roads coalition, creating "a world of safer roads for everyone." A global strategic plan was developed, as well as a communication plan based on human insights about road safety awareness.

► How he benefited

"A major occasion for me was when all the 'Connections' team members from all around the world gathered for the 'Global Connection Summit' in Los Angeles. I attended high-level workshops by the CEOs of leading companies on digital strategy and their vision of the future." Nicolas was also able to test the latest technologies in the world of retail, such as iBeacon, for Mobile Apps to understand their position on a micro-local scale, and to deliver hyper-contextual content to users based on location.

Company AB InBev is the biggest beer producer in the world and was established following a merger between the Belgian company Interbrew, the Brazilian company Ambev and the American company Anheuser Busch. The group has four main offices in the U.S.: New York (GHQ), St Louis (US HQ), Chicago (craft beers) and Palo Alto (technology hub).

"Nicolas delivered great results for the company in the areas he was asked to work on by bringing together the right stakeholders, partners, vendors and technology solutions."
AB InBev

► For candidates

Are you ready to kickstart your international career?

If you're keen to broaden your horizons and take on the challenge of an international career, the Prince Albert Fund might be just what you need.

Essentially, it is your chance to manage a one-year business project of your choice for a Belgian company outside Europe, giving you invaluable business and inter-cultural experience, as well as accelerating your international career as a member of a select network of the Fund's alumni.

How does it work?

The first step is to apply for the grant online (application for 2015 grant is open up to May 4th).

You don't need a project to apply – the first thing we look at is the quality of your candidature as an individual via a thorough selection process.

Once you're selected as a candidate, you'll receive a number of training and coaching sessions. Here, you'll be able to choose your own project and destination, either an opportunity from one of our candidate companies, or from your own contacts.

You get a Tax-free compensation of €25,000 from the Prince Albert Fund, while the company will pay for your housing, flights and mission related expenses.

And then you'll be off – one year, one country, one project, and it's up to you to make it work. Hand in a successful project report at the end of your mission and you have a chance to become a Prince Albert Fund Laureate, a distinction that carries real recognition in the world of international Belgian business.

Who can apply?

The ideal candidate:

- Is Belgian or is a EU citizen with a clear link with Belgium
- Holds a master's degree preferably in the field of economy, law, marketing, finances, engineering, economical sciences or in any other field with an additional degree in management
- Is fluent in English
- Is mature, motivated, eager to learn and to discover new cultures, open-minded and with an entrepreneurial mindset
- Has at least 2-3 years of professional experience
- Is younger than 30 (at the date of application)

Interested? Find out more on www.princealbertfund.be or join one of our info sessions and decide whether you're ready to spread your wings and take off!

► For companies

Looking for highly motivated young talent for your international business development?

The Prince Albert Fund offers a fantastic opportunity for Belgian companies with an existing international presence or planning an international expansion to take on pre-selected, high potential management candidates for a one-year contract at a low risk and attractive cost ratio for your company.

We are always on the lookout for challenging business projects abroad to match our grant participants.

How does it work?

The Prince Albert Fund carefully selects the best candidates each year. Once selected, they will be able to choose a company, project and destination.

As high potentials, they are not junior trainees – they should be given decision-making power and autonomy to encourage initiative and allow them to acquire relevant international experience.

The project must offer a challenge to explore and set out new strategies for your business. For each project, you should appoint a coach or mentor within your organisation.

The Prince Albert Fund provides the participant with an annual scholarship grant of €25,000 net. The company pays no salary, but pays a tax-deductible contribution of € 12,000 to the Prince Albert Fund to help cover operational expenses, as well as paying for the candidate's housing, flights and mission related expenses.

Who can apply?

Any company that fulfils the following criteria:

- Is Belgian
- Has or is developing an international presence
- Has a challenging international business development project to offer
- Is prepared to take a Grant candidate on board as project manager for a year
- Is ready to support the candidate with appropriate coaching during the assignment

Interested? Find out more on www.princealbertfund.be or contact us to propose a project!



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