

# RADBOUD UNIVERSITY NIJMEGEN CASE STUDY

## ABOUT RADBOUD UNIVERSITY

Radboud University Nijmegen was founded by Dutch Catholics in 1923, as part of efforts to promote the emancipation of Roman Catholics in the Netherlands. As such, the university owes its existence to philanthropic funding. In 2015, there were close to 20,000 students enrolled at the University.

The University is most widely recognized for its work in the field of physics, and received particular acclaim in 2010 when it was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for its discovery of graphene.

Historically, universities in the Netherlands have been government funded. In Radboud's case, this meant that, previous to changes in government policy in 2010, there was very little organizational focus on diversifying its income stream. As government support was retracted, the university began looking at opportunities for philanthropic support both locally and internationally. As part of this process, Eelco Kiej was recruited to run the office of Fundraising and Development.

## THE ROLE OF GLOBAL PHILANTHROPIC

Eelco was already acquainted with Global Philanthropic through his previous work, and his experience led him to believe they had an approach that might fit well with the university. It was clear from the outset that one of his key objectives would be to help the university define a path for its fundraising and development work, and to understand the cultural shift that would be required for success. Eelco cited Global Philanthropic's "international experience" as an important factor in appointing them, stating that this "was what was needed for the international growth that the university aspired to".

Global Philanthropic were called upon to develop a brief, draft the case for support for the university, and test this in the philanthropic market. Three main objectives were set:

- 1) Ascertain whether there was an existing culture of giving amongst existing alumni that the university could tap into;
- 2) Assess potential donors' attitudes towards giving to tertiary institutions;
- 3) Assess how engaged alumni were with the university.

## THE PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

Global's team identified and interviewed several Radboud University alumni, within the Netherlands and abroad, engaging them across a range of issues around the three core areas outlined above. The key conclusions regarding the research brief were:

- 1) There was indeed an existing culture of giving within the Netherlands, although this tended towards the traditional areas such as responding to disaster relief etc.
- 2) Giving to higher education was considered to be a newer concept, so more work would have to be done to present this in a way that would appeal to donors.
- 3) The alumni interviewed were found to be fairly disengaged from the institution and given the historic funding from government, the need to grow an alumni culture had not previously been seen as important. However, the alumni interviewed said that they would be keen to be engaged more closely by the institution.

The outcome of this testing was presented to the executive management of the university including the deans of schools. It was noted that the outcomes were not a surprise to the university but the process was a useful step to "help shape and confirm the direction that the university wanted to go". The university is going through an internal process of shifting its understanding towards external fundraising and the work of Global Philanthropic has helped frame that conversation.

The findings of Global Philanthropic have provided evidence and analysis on which Eelco Keij and the rest of his team can formalise the fundraising and development strategy for the university.

Eelco specifically noted that he "appreciated the flexibility of the Global Philanthropic consultants and that they were respectful of the different context of working in Netherlands". He also highlighted the "ongoing engagement throughout the process" which created a good working partnership between himself and Global Philanthropic.

*"(I) appreciated the flexibility of the Global Philanthropic consultants and that they were respectful of the different context of working in Netherlands."* Eelco Kiej, Radboud University