



IMPACT REPORT 2021

**"TO BE SUCCESSFUL, YOU HAVE TO HAVE YOUR HEART IN
YOUR BUSINESS, AND YOUR BUSINESS IN YOUR HEART."**

- Thomas J. Watson



FIVE YEARS OF IMPACT IN ROTTERDAM

2017



2018



2019



2020



COLOPHON CIC Report 2021

CIC Rotterdam

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Joyce
Kornet-
Vreugdenhil

DEAR READER,

We are proud to share our Impact Report for 2021, showcasing the growth and perseverance of our innovation community in the heart of Rotterdam. Focusing on the theme of “Growth” this year, the report represents the impact our community made in 2021 and shares some extraordinary examples of growth.

This year has shown that unprecedented times can actually be a breeding ground for innovation and creativity. We heard back from our community that 2021 marked a turning point. After a full year of weathering uncertainty amidst the pandemic, 82% of our surveyed members either accelerated their business or remained stable in 2021. Additionally, over 443 full-time jobs were created over the course of the year. Being able to keep our community base stable, despite the pandemic, has been deeply gratifying.

2021 was also an exciting year for us, as we further increased our physical footprint in the Groot Handelsgebouw and opened another 899m2 of office space. This expansion marks the completion of our original vision of CIC Rotterdam, bringing our innovation center to over 10,500m2 of shared office and event space.

Finally, this year we celebrated our fifth anniversary. When we landed in Rotterdam as CIC's first European location, we had envisioned establishing a thriving community of entrepreneurs and innovative businesses to support the regional ecosystem. A sincere thank you to our clients and partners for their tremendous support and trust during these five years and bringing this vision to life.

We cannot wait to embark on this next chapter of our journey, to keep growing as a community and supporting innovators in Rotterdam.

Joyce Kornet-Vreugdenhil

General Manager, CIC Rotterdam



TEAM ROTTERDAM
cîc

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

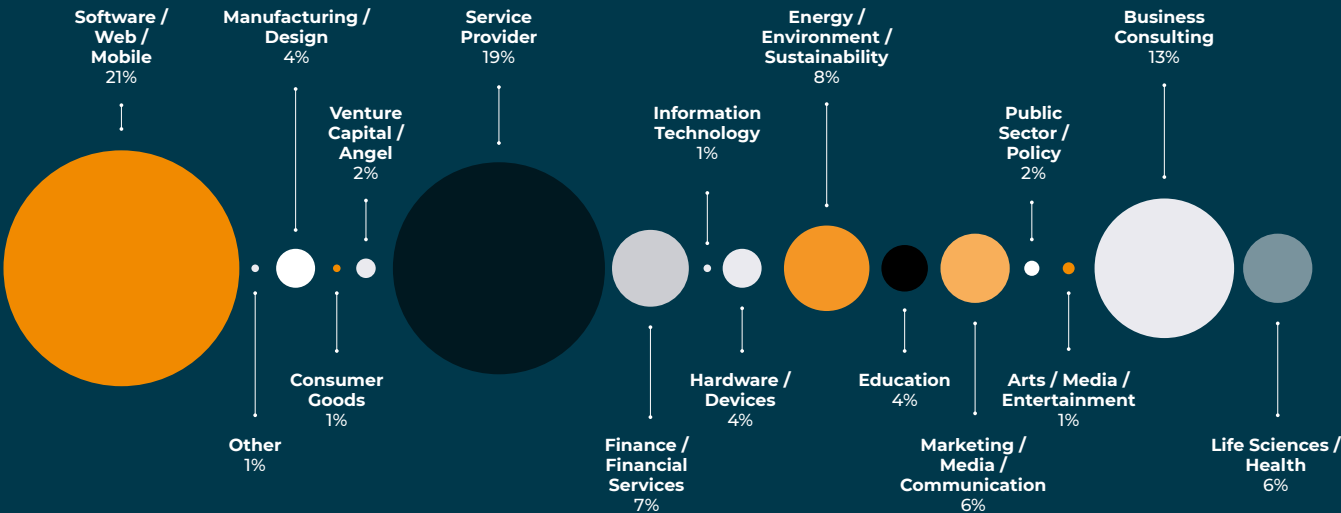
Our community is what makes CIC Rotterdam so unique. It's the people behind the startups, scaleups, corporations and other innovative companies at CIC that add the beating heart and impact which drives innovation forward in Rotterdam. We polled our clients to find out their

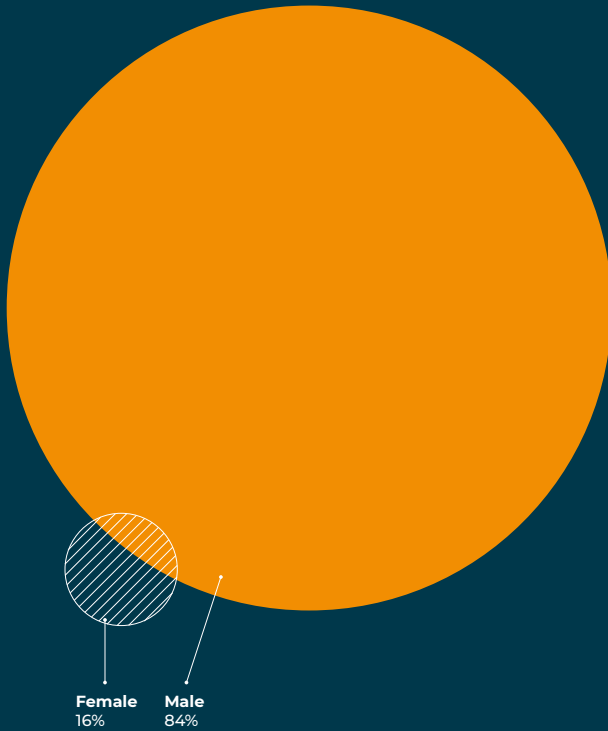
demographics, industry, who and what's driving them and the challenges they have faced in 2021.

The graph below has been taken from CIC's company-wide database, and shows that the majority of our clients work in

software / web / mobile, 21%, or are service providers, 19%. With such a broad spectrum of industries being represented at CIC Rotterdam, we are able to connect our clients to the services and network that they need in order for their business to thrive.

INDUSTRY OF CIC CLIENTS





GENDER SURVEY RESPONDENTS

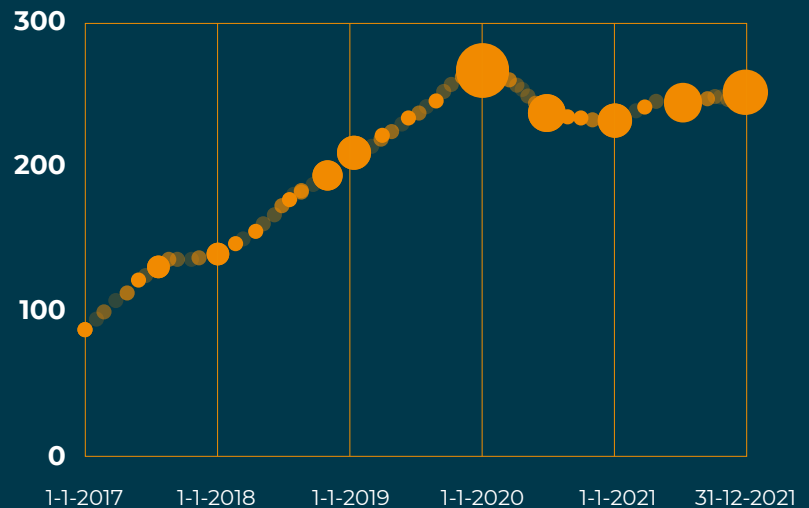
CIC aims to create a community representative of the world around us. Whilst there's a strong gender gap in survey respondents, we hope to change this narrative, and in 2020 we signed the Diversity Charter, pledging to further increase the number of female entrepreneurs in our community.

CLIENTS OVER TIME

We've been able to maintain a large number of dedicated CICers in our space, and even welcomed more promising new businesses in 2021.

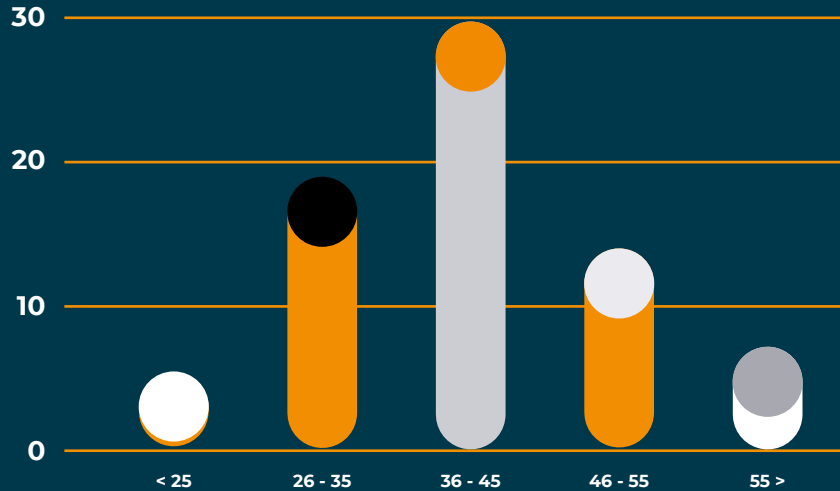
Like us, many of our clients have been feeling the impact of a prolonged pandemic, which has forced us to work creatively on how we can still provide them a home for their company. With flexible remote offerings such as our team day package and remote+, we have been able to help teams work together in a safe environment, whilst still enjoying the benefits of staying connected.

07



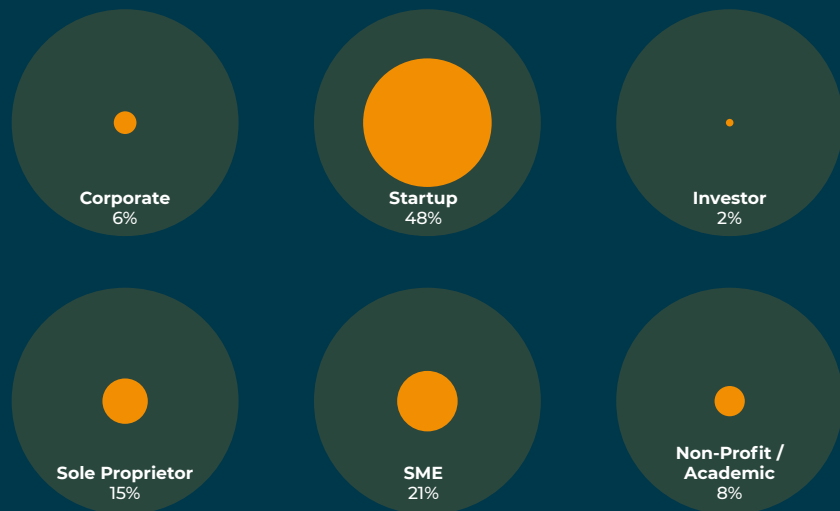
AGE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

As opposed to last year, where we housed a relatively young community, this year the majority of founders were in the age group of 36-45, an increase of 10% compared to 2020.



COMPANY CLASSIFICATION

We strive to create a community in which all innovators feel welcome, which is reflected in the broad classification of companies that can be found at CIC Rotterdam, as based on survey responses. We're proud to support not only a large number of startups, 48%, but also businesses of all sizes and across all stages.



JOB CREATION

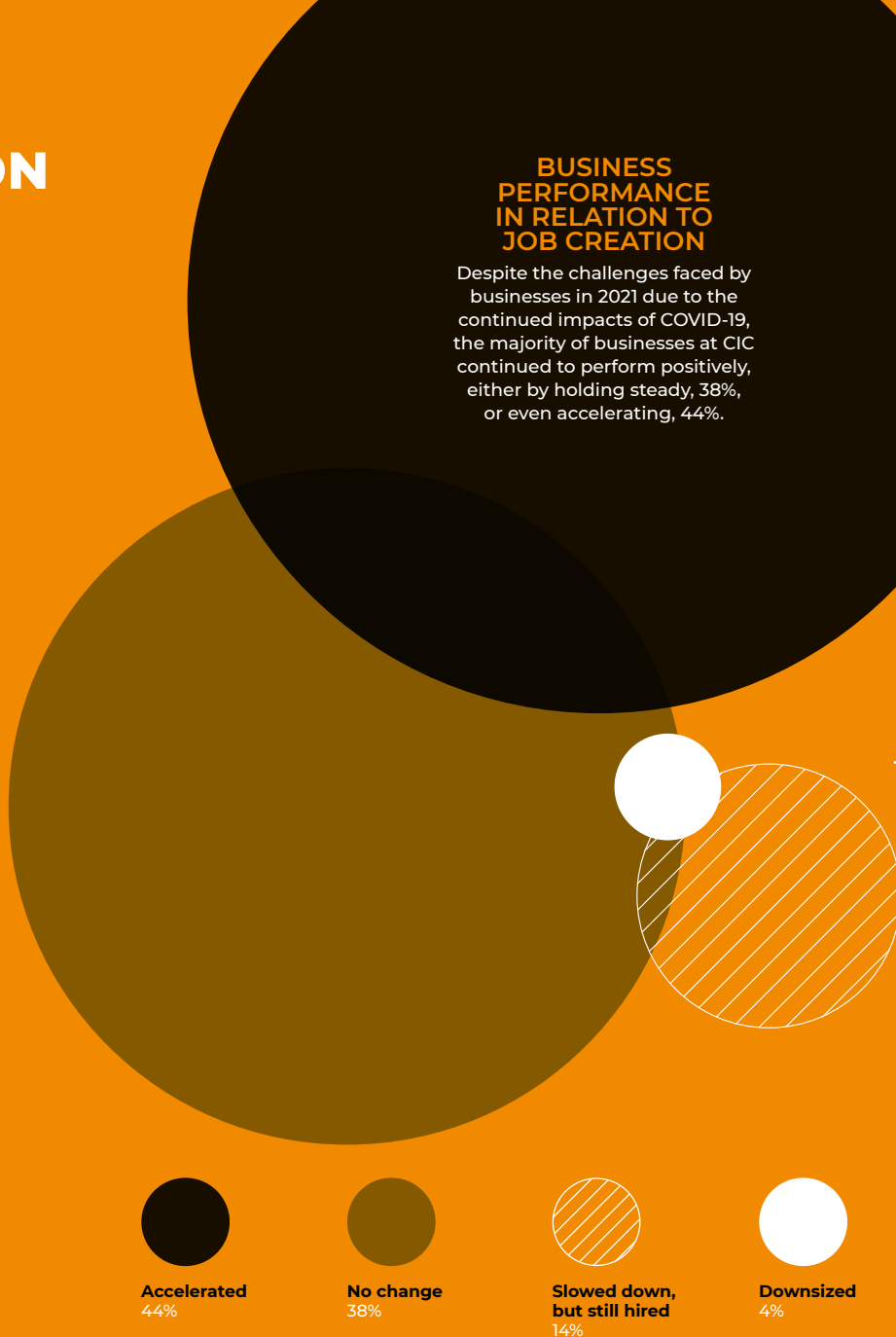
CIC client survey respondents created 443,5 FTE new jobs in 2021, contributing significantly to local and global economies. We're proud to be the home of a huge community of talented startups and individuals.

Collectively, our client respondents won more than 8 local and international awards in 2021, including but not limited to Best App Developer Netherlands; 1st Degree Knight of Rizal; KVK Innovatieprijs and the Dutch Financial Times' Top 50 Talent Award.

In 2021, 18% of respondents had headquarters based outside of the Netherlands, predominantly in the United Kingdom and Japan. CIC Rotterdam is also a proud facilitator of the Netherlands' Startup Visa Program, helping international startups launch their innovative product or business idea within the Netherlands. Despite 2021 being a difficult year for relocation, CIC worked to support businesses from Pakistan, Iran, Azerbaijan and South Africa to relocate to the Netherlands, with some already in our community and the rest joining early in 2022.

BUSINESS PERFORMANCE IN RELATION TO JOB CREATION

Despite the challenges faced by businesses in 2021 due to the continued impacts of COVID-19, the majority of businesses at CIC continued to perform positively, either by holding steady, 38%, or even accelerating, 44%.





INTERVIEW

1

LOX SOLUTION

THE INTERNATIONAL TEAM MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LOGISTICS INDUSTRY

Text by **Tessa Burger**

Making logistics transparent: that's what Lox Solution is all about. Every lost, late or damaged parcel constitutes an error in the logistics – and therefore an incorrectly invoiced delivery. Enter Lox Solution, a new player that is disrupting the traditional logistics industry. By taking care of claims, they ensure clients are always billed the right amount.

“We have created a tool that helps companies reduce their logistics costs”, explains Anna Rouleau. She co-founded Lox Solution with Dylan Hirsch and Melvil Donnart. Launched (from home) on 1 April 2020, their company has since grown into a transnational enterprise just entering its second funding round. “We’re growing extremely fast”, Dylan says. “We know all of

our solutions are well positioned and which direction we want to go in. We have seen that there's a lot of potential in our market that's basically up for grabs. So, right now is the perfect time to get investors on board."

DIVERSITY

With this immense growth also comes the challenge of finding the right talent. "It's an issue every growing company struggles with", says Anna. "Especially startups, because it's hard to foresee how time-consuming it can be." How are they solving it? "By working on our brand so it's clearer who we are, what we do and what the perks are of working at Lox." One thing that makes the company stand out is their diverse and multinational team, explains Dylan. In fact, two of the CEOs are French. "It's always great to have multiple nationalities around. Which is why we want everyone to know that we're recruiting. We're happy to consider applications from anyone who is motivated, regardless of their background. By mixing a lot of cultures and experiences, we can get different perspectives on things, which helps us improve our services.

Also, that will make it easier to expand internationally. Taking the business overseas is a lot easier if you have a local who already knows the ropes or has some connections."

The hard work of their international team has definitely been paying off. "Our platform and model is very scalable, internationally speaking", says Dylan. Lox launched in the Dutch and French markets simultaneously, and instead of going country by country and opening in successive markets after that, they scaled internationally in one go. Now, their clientele spans the globe.

THE FLEXIBILITY OF CIC

With the worldwide market effectively lying at their feet, why did Lox choose Rotterdam, and more specifically CIC, as its home base? The CEOs say it's partly coincidence. The three met while working at another company, and Anna and Melvil stayed in the Netherlands after leaving previous jobs. "And of course Rotterdam is great for start-ups, with loads of networking opportunities", Anna adds. The choice of CIC was more deliberate though, says Dylan. "We're a fast-growing company with new people joining every month, and we don't know for sure where we'll be at the end of each quarter. We wanted something very flexible, hence our office in CIC – so we could grow to bigger offices monthly as needed."



Anna
Rouleau
COO &
Co-Founder



Dylan
Hirsch
CEO &
Co-Founder



Melvil
Donnhart
CTO &
Co-Founder



INTERVIEW

2

ONETEAM

THE APP THAT'S CHANGING THE GAME FOR FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES

Text by **Tessa Burger**

It was back during his secondary school days, working part-time at a supermarket and a pizza chain, that Ruben Wieman had a light bulb moment. With all the separate employee manuals, WhatsApp groups, confusing intranets, newsletters and chaotic schedules posted on slips of paper in staff canteens, there was a helter-skelter of information. Employees didn't get encouraged to get involved in the company at all. So, Ruben came up with the solution: Oneteam.

Worldwide, the majority of employees are not sitting at desks all day, but are out working on the floors, with access to only their phones. Surprisingly, however, until a few years ago there was no one-stop staff app where frontline employees could find all the information and tools they need. There are targeted apps galore, of course, but none that comprehen-

sively link everything together. It was this gap in the market that gave Ruben the idea for Oneteam: a platform bringing together all information for workers.

IMPORTANCE

As well as creating convenience for employees, Oneteam is also about enhancing organizational engagement. “Workers aren’t sitting at their PCs all day”, Ruben explains. “Many work part-time or at different locations and have no corporate email address, making them very hard to reach.” Yet, these are also the people who deal with customers day to day and represent the company to clients. “It’s vital to engage them in the company and to ensure their success by means of good training and information. Employees want to have all that together in one place, and that’s what we built.”

MASSIVE AMBITIONS

Today, Oneteam is a thriving company with big plans for international expansion, but it wasn’t all smooth sailing. “My business partner and I were pretty young when we started, but still we tried to build and market an enterprise software product.

So there we were, 20 years old, proposing to big companies that they overhaul their whole software systems, which obviously was a pretty touchy subject”, laughs Ruben, looking back. But that didn’t stop them. On the contrary, from the outset Ruben had full confidence in his start-up and its potential. “I begged my parents to let me leave high school in order to invest all of my time in it, but they refused. I had massive ambitions, so I can’t say I never anticipated this growth.”

ENORMOUS GROWTH

Ruben persevered and after a few years of stable growth, recently the company suddenly

took off. “In the recent period we’ve experienced tremendous growth. We got a big investor on board and our client base now goes from supermarkets with several locations up to Belgium’s biggest pizza chain”, Ruben says with pride. “It was a good year. Of course, like everyone else, we’re dependent on external factors which affect our industry and target group, and that means we need to be agile.” Which is precisely why CIC is such an ideal location, adds Ruben. “The flexibility at CIC is fantastic. We don’t know what the future holds, so it’s great knowing we can scale back or up space-wise whenever it’s needed.”



Ruben
Wieman
Founder

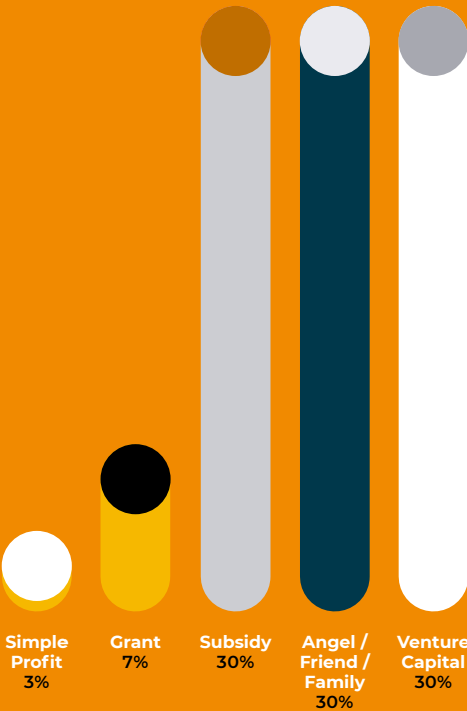
FUNDRAISING

Just over a quarter of survey respondents were able to raise funding in 2021, which amounted to a total of €9,7 million. Despite 82% of companies at CIC either accelerating or holding steady in terms of job creation in 2021, the amount of funding raised was significantly lower than in previous years.

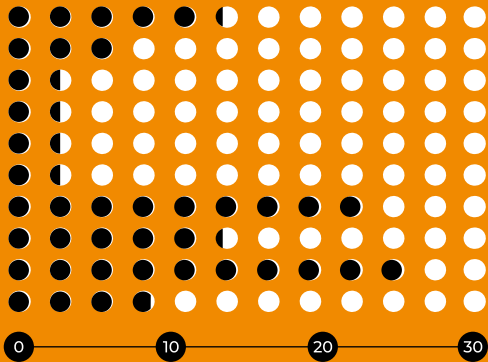
The top industries of those businesses that raised capital in 2021 were IT / tech, followed by

software / web / mobile companies. The type of funding raised differed between clients, with 44% of startups who raised money finding success through angel / friend / family fundraising. SMEs favored venture capital as their main source of funding, with 75% of SMEs raising capital by this means. Overall, companies at CIC equally sourced funding via subsidies, angel / friend / family investors and through venture capital.

TYPE OF FUNDRAISING

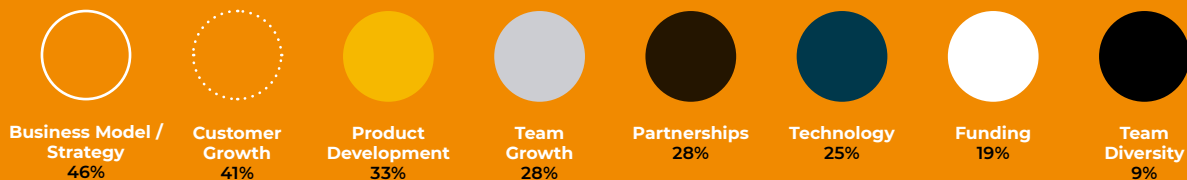
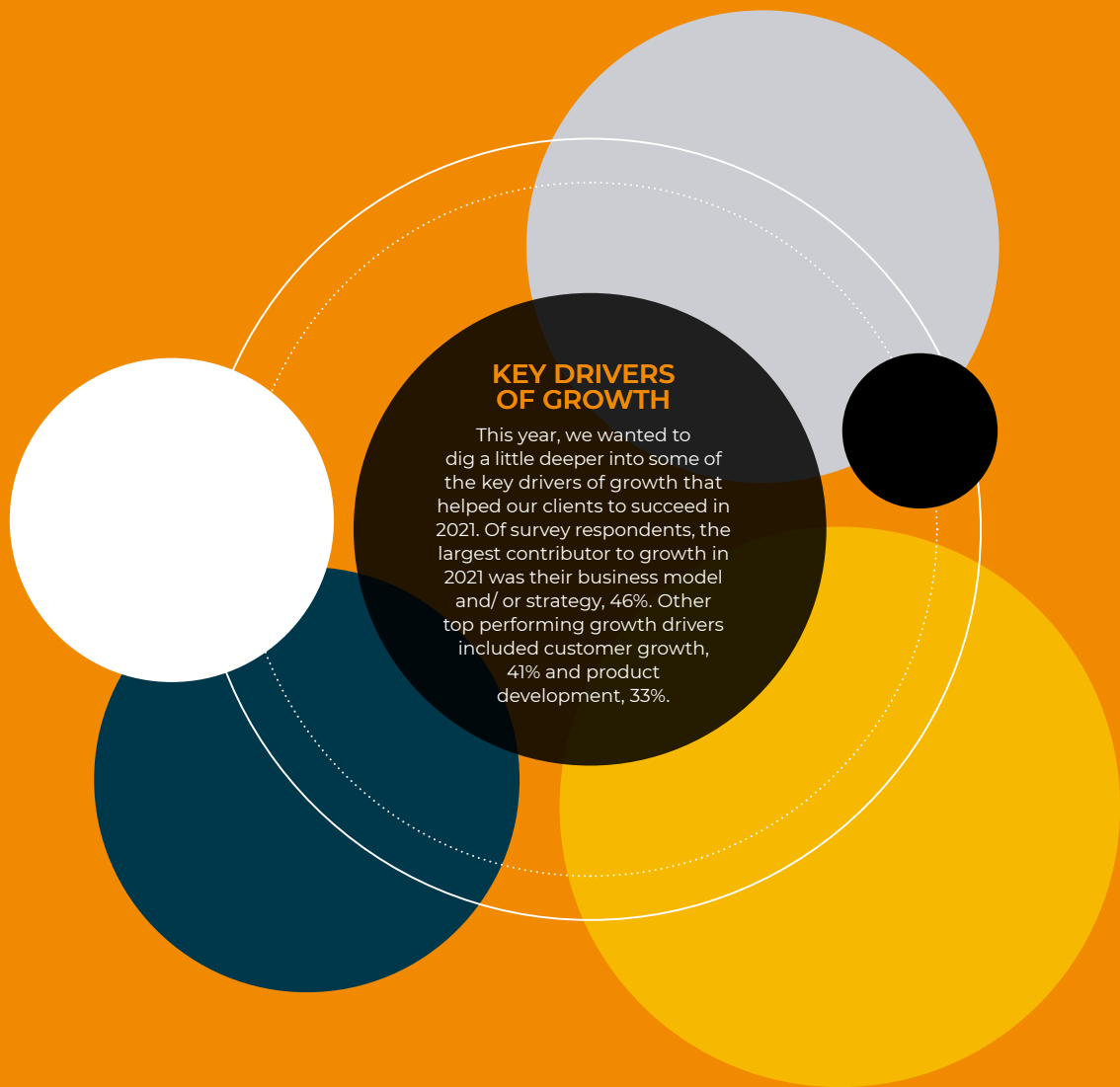


- Mobility 13%
- Tech 7%
- Network / Communication 3%
- None 3%
- Supply Chain 3%
- COVID-19 3%
- Customer Base 22%
- Team Connectivity 13%
- Hiring 25%
- Fundraising 8%



LARGEST BUSINESS CHALLENGE IN 2021

We asked clients what their biggest struggle was in 2021. A quarter of respondents said it was difficult to find the right candidates to hire, and 23% of clients said they struggled with their customer base.



INTERVIEW

3



Andreea
Moga
Chairwoman

TECHLABS

THE TECH INITIATIVE CLOSING THE DIGITAL SKILLS GAP

Text by Tessa Burger

“We build digital shapers”, says Andreea Moga, chairwoman of Techlabs Rotterdam. Techlabs is a platform that trains young people from all disciplines and backgrounds in state-of-the-art tech skills and the application of digital techniques to solve today’s problems. With free education for those eager to learn and gain experience in the field, the tech world has never been more accessible.

There are a lot of misconceptions about tech, according to Andreea. “People think it’s difficult and hard to learn, but with the right training, anyone can do it.” And that training is vitally important, as tech talent is in short supply worldwide. With digitalization changing the ways we work and do business, the need to accelerate technology skills education is greater than ever. Techlabs aims to do just that, offering a range of programmes keyed to different aspects of the field.

MISSION

“Our goal is to close the digital skills gap”, explains Andreea. “To be a place where ambitious individuals meet like-minded people and harness technology to solve pressing issues.” Techlabs’ programmes are underpinned by three main pillars that work to enhance learning results. The first, personalized online learning, ensures everyone gets off on the right foot. “Every student has a different level of knowledge and experience, and we try to personalize the learning journey by offering content that is specific to their needs”, says Andreea. Arguably, even more important

is the pillar focused on building a tech community. “We believe that learners are more likely to perform better if they are part of an environment where everyone is going through the same process and getting support and empowerment from each other.” By organizing events such as socially-minded talks and hackathons, Techlabs is growing that community day by day.

THE RIGHT MINDSET

Learning the theory alone is not enough, however, and this is where the third and final pillar comes in, which is all about engaging with existing companies. By presenting students with real-life challenges and a hands-on project, Techlabs works to foster a creative, proactive and entrepreneurial mindset. “We’re trying to create a spirit that’s

all about taking on challenges, problem-solving and coming up with solutions as a team”, Andreea continues. “But we also want our students to realize that it can be difficult and that it can even be good to fail sometimes.” Given how greatly working environments can influence our mindsets, CIC is the perfect location for Techlabs, Andreea notes. “It is a very high-octane kind of place, and we believe that being surrounded by entrepreneurs, startups and people from very diverse backgrounds helps our learners. It’s the ideal location for a tech learning community.”



Amy van
der List
Team
Rotterdam



Ntaba
Mazhindu
Team
Rotterdam



Derrick
Bakhuis
Team
Rotterdam



Maria
Baltoglou
Team
Rotterdam

VENTURE CAFÉ

In 2021, Venture Café Rotterdam, CIC Rotterdam's non-profit sister organization, continued to engage with and connect our innovation community together. Overall, Venture Café hosted a total of 49 Thursday Gatherings, all of which had an online component, helping to keep people informed and feel connected, despite the challenges of COVID-19.

In total, Venture Café Rotterdam held 315 sessions and worked with 157 program partners to attract more than 3,000 visitors to our space, both physically and virtually during their weekly Thursday Gatherings. As a proud signatory of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, their programming throughout the year reflected these ambitious but necessary goals.

In addition to the regular Thursday Gathering programming, in 2021 Venture Café Rotterdam kicked off a new monthly event series: Investment Café, aimed at structurally helping our community to navigate the investment ecosystem. With this series they were able to cover topics like investment possibilities, access to investors, brokers, the stock market, cryptocurrencies and more.

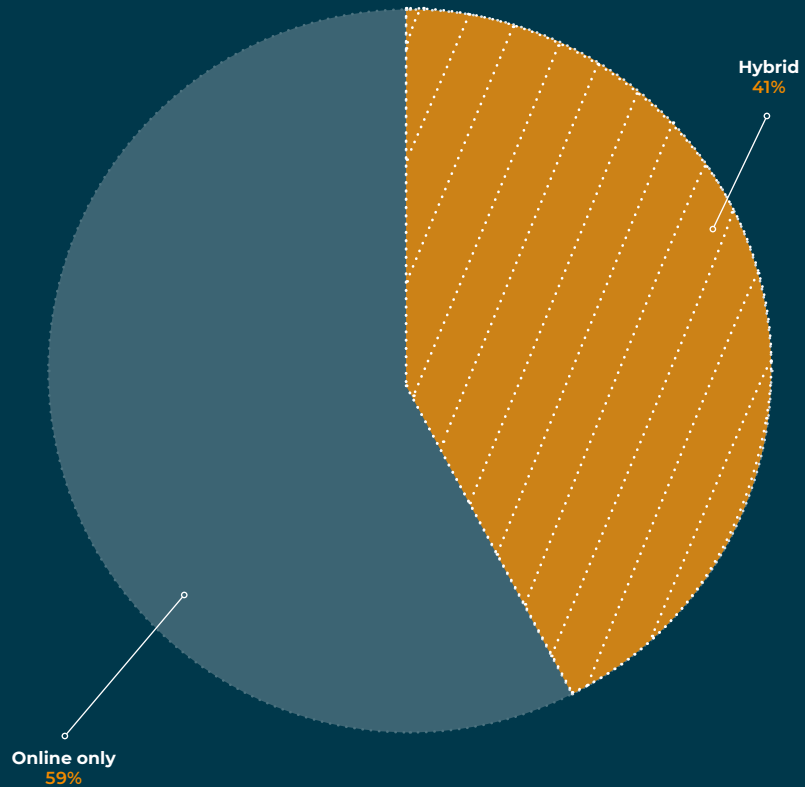
Program Highlights of 2021:

- 3 sessions at Upstream Festival with Up!Rotterdam
- Innovation Bridge Program with Venture Café Tokyo
- Demystifying cryptocurrencies with Icoinic Capital
- Connected and inspired female founders in a special sequence of four virtual sessions
- Digital Solutions for Entrepreneurs with Worth Systems
- Hosted Alpha Lab Hardware Cup with Venture Café Global Institute
- International panel on Cultivating Thriving Innovation Communities



Innovation is the ability to see change as an opportunity. Through experimentation, we created an organic program that truly reflects the needs of the community within our capabilities and constraints.

- Anoesjka Imambaks
Executive Director



Thursday
Gatherings
hosted



Sessions
held



Program
partners



Visitors
physically and
virtually



ALDERWOMAN ROOS VERMEIJ: “IN ROTTERDAM, WE BUILD AND IMPLEMENT SOLUTIONS”

Text by **Tessa Burger** Photography Alderwoman Roos Vermeij by **Mirjam Lems**
Photography Rotterdam by **Gerhard van Roon, Iris van den Broek, Ossip van Duivenbode**

A lot is happening in the Rotterdam business scene. But let's not forget that behind every booming business district is an alderman or -woman responsible for its economic affairs. Enter Roos Vermeij: with her Dutch parliamentary experience chairing the commission for economic affairs, she is the perfect person for this job. What are her thoughts on the city's current business climate?

In terms of the current business environment, what is going well and what could be improved?

Rotterdam has a unique position with strong economic assets, and we are lucky in the sense that there are several top education institutions in the city and surrounding area that collaborate and each contribute to an attractive, innovative business climate. Together with its partners, the municipality facilitates good conditions for establishing businesses and access to financing and international markets. However, entrepreneurs in the city face major challenges as a result of

the pandemic, climate change, increasing costs of raw materials and advancing digitization. These factors strike at the heart of entrepreneurship, but at the same time offer opportunities for innovation and improvement. For instance, create enough space for businesses, attractive places to live and work and bring in more professionals and talent. These are challenges we're investing in and we invite everyone to help.

Why is a healthy business climate important for Rotterdam?

In the future, what matters won't just be the number of companies choosing to settle in the city and the exact number of jobs, but attracting the right type that strengthen the ecosystem and add value to our city. It's important to create optimal conditions for companies to not only establish in the city, but to stay and grow here. We need to ensure that highly skilled and talented people want to stay and that visitors keep coming. This will require looking at the accessibility of the city and making it a place with attractive amenities and outdoor spaces, where people really want to live with high-quality education, a skilled population and sustainable work locations including space for businesses. All of this enhances the business climate and can make our urban economy resilient and future-proof.

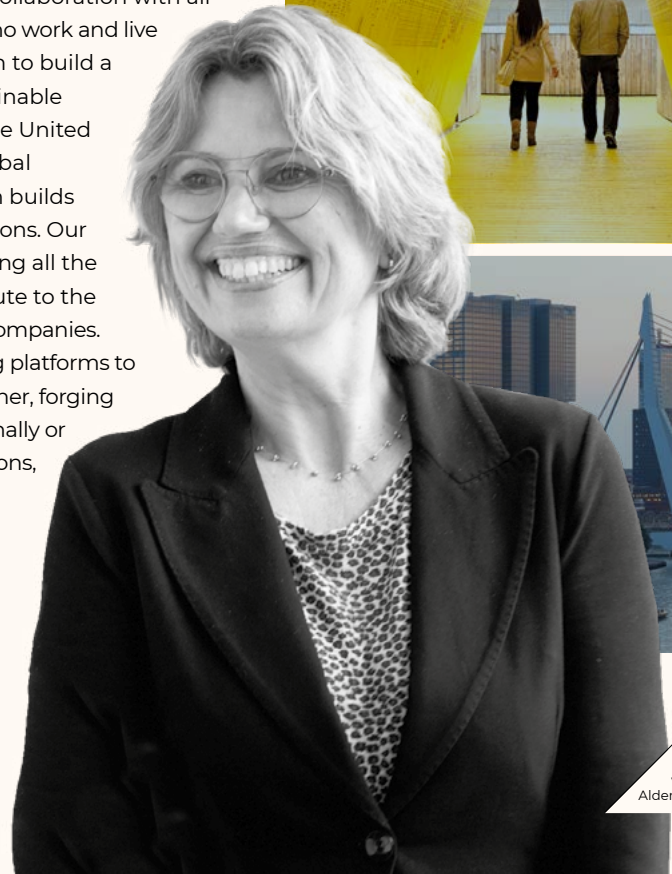
What part do innovation and entrepreneurship play in the future of Rotterdam?

We have a lot of innovative companies in our ecosystem. Rotterdam is a breeding ground for innovative entrepreneurs who are helping to shape a sustainable,

circular and digital city in the new economy. Unfortunately, many are currently struggling due to the crisis. Our 'Rotterdam stronger together' programme has been set up to help, with a clear set of actions defined in co-creation with innovation hubs such as CIC, large corporations, investors and entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, Up!Rotterdam is connecting and strengthening initiatives to provide easier access to talent, international markets and financing, thereby giving entrepreneurs and the city space to grow.

What does the future of Rotterdam as an 'innovation ecosystem' look like?

In Rotterdam we're always a step ahead. We 'do' innovation in collaboration with all the amazing people who work and live in our city, with the aim to build a better and more sustainable future for all. Where the United Nations addresses global challenges, Rotterdam builds and implements solutions. Our focus is on strengthening all the elements that contribute to the success of innovative companies. Whether that's building platforms to bring companies together, forging connections internationally or creating financing options, we make it happen – working with strong partners in the innovation ecosystem like CIC.



EVENTS BUREAU

CIC Rotterdam works with an in-house event management team, the Events Bureau, to provide even more ways to connect like minded entrepreneurs throughout our space and further. Any profits raised by Events Bureau goes directly back into supporting the mission of Venture Café as a non-profit organization.

The lessons they learnt in 2020, as they transitioned from in-person to virtual events, paved the way

for the Events Bureau to provide smarter, safer and exciting event packages in 2021. This year, the Events Bureau saw a growing trust of online and hybrid events amongst our clients, with a significant rise in demand for this service. By expanding their facilities, drawing on the latest research and their own experience, they were proud to offer event solutions to organizations both big and small.

EVENTS BUREAU NUMBERS 2021:

- 109 events sessions held
- 3.490 attendees
- 84% in person - 12% hybrid - 4% online



DRIVING DIVERSITY IN ROTTERDAM

In 2020, CIC Rotterdam made a commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging by signing the Dutch diversity charter. Since then, we've worked with a mission to ensure that CIC has diverse representation in our business and that we have inclusive and equitable practices. As a result, we strive to create a sense of belonging in our community by taking an active approach to dismantling systems that oppress or discriminate.

This year, CIC Rotterdam and Events Bureau partnered with Dona Daria, IDEM Rotterdam and the Gemeente Rotterdam by hosting and donating the space and refreshments for an event on Diversity Day. With a theme of inspiration, learning and networking, several speakers from different sectors inspired us with their views on learnings related to inclusion. Throughout the day, attendees worked towards a vision of the future of 2031, where diversity and inclusion are celebrated.

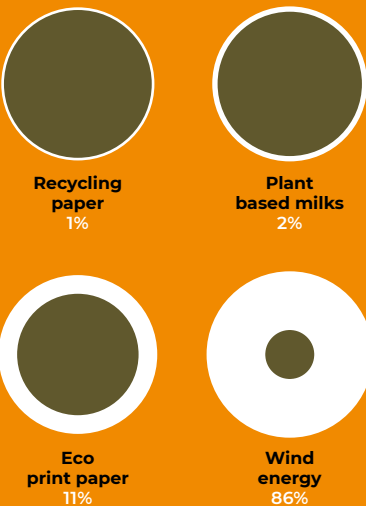
SUSTAINABILITY

CIC Rotterdam has a mission to reach climate neutrality by 2025. By implementing conscious consumerism in the products we procure and helping our clients improve their sustainable footprint through awareness and knowledge, we hope to lessen our impact on the world around us.

In 2021, CIC Rotterdam actively sought to decrease our ecological impact by committing to reduce our carbon (CO²) and water footprints. In tackling our

consumption habits, we've improved our supply chain to include eco-friendly products and ensure our energy supply comes from sustainable, wind produced electricity.

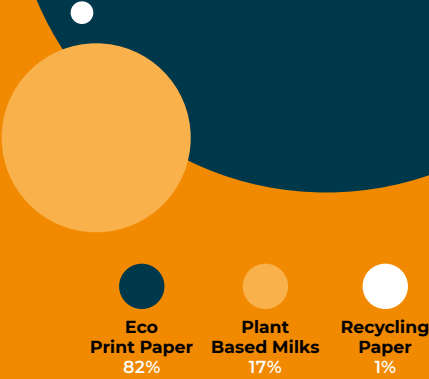
CIC Rotterdam's total water consumption in 2021 was reduced by 2.339.883 million liters due to the use of sustainable products like plant-based milks, recycled paper and eco print paper. That's the equivalent of 41.321 five minute showers.



CO2 SAVINGS FROM ENERGY CONSUMPTION

By continuing our commitment to purchasing renewable energy from Pure Energie (rated by the Consumers Association as the greenest electricity provider in 2021) and making changes to our consumption habits, in 2021 CIC Rotterdam was able to save 308.846 kg of CO₂ from being released into our atmosphere. This is the same amount of CO₂ that would be emitted by 52 homes' electricity usage in one year.

WATER REDUCTION SOURCES 2021



In addition to our water and CO₂ reduction savings, this year we proudly partnered with **"Groenten Zonder Grenzen"**, or Veggies Without Borders, an initiative that collects leftover food to cook free, healthy and sustainable meals. In the hopes of tackling food waste and to minimize the amount of leftover products being thrown away, CIC donated leftover fruit and vegetables from our kitchens to contribute to this important initiative.

82%

OF COMPANIES EITHER
ACCELERATED THEIR
BUSINESS OR HELD
STEADY IN 2021

443,5

NEW FULL TIME
JOBS WERE
CREATED BY
COMPANIES AT CIC

3.000

VISITORS JOINED
EVENTS AT
OUR SPACE OR
ONLINE IN 2021

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

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