

| THE INSPIRATION FROM YOUNG HZPC

TEXT JAN HOOGLAND PHOTOS DIANA TOREN EN ANTSJE CNOSSEN

A buddy for new colleagues, applying the knowledge of experienced people effectively, supporting young people with introduction to the Aurora programme. When you speak to young people, you often pick up on new ideas. Young people see improvements, have fresh eyes and are eager to learn new things. Young HZPC connects these young people. With each other, internationally and with other generations within the Holding. Diana Toren, Kim Mast and Arjan van Tilburg, from the board, explain what HZPC offers to Young HZPC, and vice versa.

Board of Young HZPC: Arjan van Tilburg, Kim Mast and Diana Toren



Besides providing enthusiasm, the board members also have to keep themselves up to date. They believe in the added value of Young HZPC and are keen to demonstrate this. All three have their own story. But they are linked by a common view of cooperation within HZPC.

The connecting factor

Arjan is a little late. He has just returned from the port, where seed potatoes are being loaded into containers. Arjan van Tilburg grew up on an arable farm where seed potatoes were the main crop. He saw his own future in the agricultural world. He studied Business Administration & Agrifood business. 'To conclude my studies, I completed my graduate internship in Tanzania. There, I supervised local seed potato cultivation and wrote an English-language cultivation manual. After my internship, I knew I wanted to work in the seed potato sector. Then I got in touch with STET, where I now work as area manager.' Arjan mentions the sense of family as a strong point within STET, but also feels part of the holding company. Partly because of Young HZPC.

Young HZPC was founded in 2013 with the aim of connecting young people with each other and the organisation. 'But we also want to show what we can do for others within HZPC', Diana adds. Diana Toren grew up among seed potatoes. In Oudeschip, close to Eemshaven, her parents have been growing for HZPC for years. 'Thanks in part to Klaas Gast (head of field sales at HZPC), I was able to complete an internship at HZPC in the UK in 2016. After completing my bachelor's and master's degrees in Dronten, I went on working holidays in Australia and New Zealand. There, I helped with mini tuber production, trial harvests, baking trials, potato selection and worked as a machinery operator on a large-scale arable farm during the potato and onion harvest.'

Diana feels at home with HZPC. 'Food production is very important for the world's population. HZPC plays a great role in this with its breeding, Dutch seed potato production and trade. Thanks to my HZPC trips to Tanzania, Finland, Spain, Italy and India, among others, I know the value of 'our' seed potatoes and 'our' varieties. This international character of HZPC appeals to me. There are many opportunities to develop yourself and plenty of colleagues who want to help you, as long as you express yourself clearly. You have to make your voice heard.'

Taking new ideas further

Young HZPC organises knowledge sessions, (foreign) excursions and lunches with a member of the management team every year. During one of the last knowledge sessions, grower Jacob van den Borne shared his experiences with precision farming. This session was organised by Young HZPC together with colleagues, but open to all. And last summer, a group of young people were given a tour of different parts in the chain during a field day, including presentations at HZPC Research, trial fields presented by colleague Falko Hofstra and arable farms visited by colleagues Willem Ties Oosterhuis and Diana Toren. During this type of activity, various conversations may be conducted and new insights and ideas often emerge. Kim: 'The strength of Young HZPC also lies in the network. A point of contact has been created, where new ideas can be taken forward.' →

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Kim Mast studied International Business and Management Studies. At HZPC, she was able to combine her graduation thesis with a collaborative internship that lasted 10 months. Before that, she worked at a financial services company as a business customer advisor. Kim: 'When I joined HZPC, I immediately noticed a difference from my previous employer. Although HZPC is an international and highly professional company, the atmosphere is less formal. People ask how you are and there is a lot of contact.' All three subscribe to the power of connection. When people know how to find each other, growth happens faster. Colleagues increasingly know how to harness the power of young people within HZPC. A good example is the competitor analysis, a project Young HZPC carried out on behalf of Excom.

You learn the most from colleagues

Young HZPC lowers thresholds. Diana: 'In November, I started my new position as a commercial management specialist. For this job, I am in Germany every week. Thanks to Young HZPC, I already knew some of the colleagues there.' And although Arjan makes friends easily, it's even easier when you arrive in Metslawier and immediately see familiar faces. Young people also learn about potatoes faster thanks to the network. Kim: 'You only find out how much goes on behind the scenes in relation to potatoes, when you work at a company like HZPC. There is so much knowledge. And thanks to Young HZPC, you have faster and more frequent contact with (international) colleagues and that's great because you learn the most from your colleagues.'

Next project

Besides plenty of inspiration for innovation and improvement, including for the onboarding process for new colleagues, the next concrete initiatives are already on the cards. The board members would like to stress, however, that these projects also involve collaborations with colleagues who are not at Young HZPC. Diana: 'Young HZPC can take the credit for everything, we are also supported by colleagues, such as our sponsor from Excom, Robert Graveland and Roberto Ravier, for example, who helped us

organise the study trip to Italy. But with Young HZPC, there is a clear point of contact to reach out to young people. Connections are made faster that way and that's really valuable for a company where growth is key.'

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Contact Young HZPC

Young HZPC consists of colleagues up to the age of 30 within HZPC Holding. At present, the group comprises 69 talented colleagues hailing from the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, Poland and the Netherlands.

Involve young people in initiatives

Is there an idea which HZPC, STET or ZOS youngsters could actively support or where they could provide a useful contribution?

Please contact Kim Mast via kim.mast@hzpc.com. Or call one of the board members.

