



TheSocialMedwork

Biography: Sjaak Vink

Sjaak Jacob Vink is a Dutch entrepreneur, innovator and social activist. Fueled by a passion and dedication to help people access the very best healthcare no matter who or where they are, he founded [TheSocialMedwork](#) in November 2014. TheSocialMedwork is a social enterprise that uses existing regulations to help patients import the latest medicines that are not yet available in their country.

In addition to his primary business pursuits, Sjaak is also heavily involved in patient advocacy groups such as the [Abigail Alliance for Better Access to Development Drugs](#) in Washington DC and the Chicago based organisation [Cures Within Reach](#). Furthermore he's on the Advisory Board of the USA Pre-Approvals Access Programs. He is also a global ambassador for [Inspiring Rare Birds](#), a Sydney-based women entrepreneurs advocate group.

In 2011, Sjaak spearheaded the [Global Manifesto for Entrepreneurial Social Impact Change](#) which was signed by 600 global innovators and entrepreneurs, to change current business perceptions and encourage social impact business leaders. David Katz's UN-Award Winning [Plastic Bank](#), Willem Sodderland's [SeaMore](#) and Anju Rupal's [Abhati](#) are just a few world-changing organisations that were inspired and conceived as a result of this manifesto. In addition, this groundbreaking initiative laid the foundations for TheSocialMedwork.

In his early years, Sjaak co-founded the Rotterdam based marketing agency Het Stormt with creative director and photographer Jef Poldervaart in 1993. However, his innate sense to evoke social change propelled him to pursue alternative avenues. The sudden death of two childhood friends led him to found [Virus Participation](#), a participation and consultancy firm focused on social impact and sustainability. It was here, under the direction of [Cinderella](#) founder Professor [Dick van Bekkum](#), that Sjaak learnt of the complexities often associated with medicine approval processes and delays in access to innovative medicines. Later, inspired by a friend suffering from ALS who "wanted more tomorrows," Sjaak co-founded myTomorrows, a social enterprise to help patients gain early access to drugs undergoing clinical trials, via compassionate use laws, with former [Crucell](#) CEO Ronald Brus.

In 2013, Sjaak began advocating for medicines access on behalf of several cancer patients as the stark unfairness of geographical variance in medicine approvals became evident. He joined the Board of the [Abigail Alliance for Better Access to Development Drugs](#), of which founders Frank Burroughs and Steve Walker initiated for the [Right to Try Organisation](#) together with the [Goldwater Institute](#) - which resulted in the US' Right to Try Act.

These experiences all combined to inspire Sjaak to lead the foundation of TheSocialMedwork in 2014, joined by [James Heywood](#), co-founder of Patients Like Me the largest patient-network in the world, and [Bernard Muller](#), successful Dutch entrepreneur who also co-founded Treeway: a biotech company dedicated to curing ALS, as he himself was diagnosed with the disease in 2010. They were joined by [Katrin Schepp](#), Attorney at Law, who lost her father to cancer.

The pioneering idea quickly gained global attention, with the first angel investor being 23AndMe's [Esther Dyson](#) (leading healthcare innovator and one of TIME'S Top 10 Most Influential Women in Silicon Valley), quickly followed by [Rogier van Vliet](#) (former board member of conservation focused Oceana and supporter of the Global Investigative Journalism Network).