



Åsa Abel
Sweden
Graduate 2012
Business Area
Manager at
Region Gotland

- Åsa, please tell us about your academic and professional background.

I'm a biologist and I've taken courses in economy as well. My professional background is an environmental consultant, then I became a manager of a research group focused on products coming from the forest, such as newspapers, graphic arts industry, printed paper and products in the packaging industry.

- Please describe the learning experience, teachers, classmates, courses.

It was a wonderful year. It was such a broad range of teachers in this wind power programme both academically and professionally. Some of them came from the project management part and told us how to negotiate, told us about the environmental approvals, contracts, legal stuff, construction and who you need to talk before a wind farm can be built. We had engineers and people very skilled in judging the wind power in different areas and how to calculate the power of the wind. All these backgrounds that these teachers presented to us was a perfect mixture.

The students that attended this programme when I did, which was 2011 – 2012, came from all over the world. It was such a nice experience to meet different people from the States, from most of Europe, from Pakistan, from Asia. People had also different professional and educational backgrounds, all of us had a few years of working experience. Of course, we had a lot of engineers, but not only. People from non-technical backgrounds, such as the economic or law background also attended the courses and I found it so interesting.

- Was there anything that should have been included in the programme?

We had a massive schedule with a lot of courses ranging from wind resource assessment, how to evaluate the impact of wind power on the environment, we had courses in electricity, how to construct the turbine and everything connected to establishing a wind power project.

Myself, I'm very interested in how society works. The energy topic is very exciting and I would have found it useful to have had a more of an energy outlook, micro-producing, how we produce and use energy in different parts of society and future society. That was something that I missed.

- How has this education helped you?

It was an ego-boost for me to see that I managed to take part in this Master's programme. Even if I didn't have that technical background, with lots of hard work I managed to finish those courses

as well. As one of our teachers put it, you have a very steep learning curve and I totally agree with him. I now live and work on Gotland, I'm a manager of the operation and maintenance of a part of the infrastructure here on the island. A very useful part of the course was to always look carefully through your contract to know what is in it. Thank you, Richard! That has been very useful to me.



Evan Koebel

Canada

Graduate 2011

Project Manager, Origination and Development at
Algonquin Power and Utilities Corp.

- Evan, tell us about your academic and professional background.

My educational background is in business, I have a Bachelor's degree in international management and as a part of that degree programme I studied in Spain for a semester. At that point I was introduced to the world of renewable energy. So, I decided to pursue a career in renewables. Additionally, I worked for a couple of years in the geothermal industry.

- Why did you choose to study WPPM on Gotland?

Once I decided to pursue a career specifically in wind power, I looked for a Master's programme that would fit my needs, which was a challenge because most of the programmes were focused only on the technical aspects. This was the only programme that I found that offered both the mix of the technical and managerial competencies. The programme also offered some of the soft skills, for example project management and skills that complement the technical side.

Another reason was the international aspect of the Master's. It was interesting to do a programme that was overseas with exposure to new culture and students from all over the world. Of course, in the beautiful setting of Visby.

- Overall, evaluate the learning experience.

My educational experience on Gotland was mind-expanding. First of all, the programme gave me a wide variety of both technical and managerial skills that are practical and directly applicable in the industry. The teachers as well as the guest lecturers were directly from the industry so we got a lot of exposure to industry. Another aspect was the broad scope of the curriculum in the sense that we covered a lot of ground in just one year.

Working in such a culturally diverse class gave me the exposure to real life group settings, in which you're forced to work with people from different cultures. These days that's important because different cultures work in a different way and you need to learn how to work with these people, given the increasingly international background of many companies.

- Please describe your current job.

Currently, I'm a project manager on the business development team for a renewable energy developer and owner. I'm focused on the development of wind and solar power projects, utility-scale projects. I'm mainly involved in two things. Firstly, I'm responsible for development of solar and wind power projects, basically starting from scratch. We're developing projects in Canada

and US, and I'm working with the markets where we want to go, what the policies are and what the resource is like in various states and provinces and what the interconnection options are. Secondly, I'm involved in acquisitions of existing projects that mainly means projects that have been developed, but not yet constructed. We also investigate the project's financial, technical, legal, regulatory aspects, trying to find any areas that might be key risks and alleviate those with the goal of owning the project.

That's what I do, I certainly use the knowledge acquired in the course of the Master programme.



**Nikolaos
Simisiroglou**
Greece Graduate
2012
PhD Wind
Engineer at
WindSim

- Nikos, tell us about your academic and professional background.

My academic background starts with a Bachelor degree in physics at the University of Crete continuing with a Master's degree at Uppsala University Campus Gotland, namely Wind Power Project Management (WPPM). Further on, at the moment I am pursuing an industrial PhD with a software company called WindSim and Uppsala University.

- Why did you choose to study WPPM on Gotland?

I wanted to explore what the project management aspect is. During my Bachelor degree I didn't get any interaction with business, management, and finance. That's what I really wanted to look into and get more hands-on experience in wind power in the course of the Master programme.

- How would you describe the learning experience? Could you tell us about your classmates, teachers, the courses?

The professors were highly qualified and the courses were hands-on, we learned to use softwares such as WindPro, WAsP and WindSim. And now I'm employed by WindSim. In the courses, you'd learned general knowledge about wind power. Of course, we had limited time, that is one year, so going into depth in each subject was up to us. Everyone was free to choose how deep they'd look into the details.

Of course, I made a lot of contacts. It was a multicultural environment, so I really learned how to evolve and move in the multicultural setting. My classmates were from all over the world, from Asia, the United States, Europe. It was an eye-opening experience.

- Can you tell us more about your MSc. thesis? What was your topic and what motivated you to choose the topic?

My thesis was a wind resource assessment comparison of a complex terrain employing two types of software, WindPro and WindSim. Generally, I'm interested in the wind resource assessment so that's why I chose it. Plus, I managed to work in a company in Greece while I was doing my thesis, so I got more experience in the industry. When the Master's programme was finished, one of my professors proposed to me to start an industrial PhD. Industrial PhD is when

you do your PhD but at the same time you're employed in a company. And here I am, I must have fit their description.



Jacopo Antonelli
Italy
Graduate 2012
Wind Engineer at
Renewable First Ltd

- Jacopo, tell me about your academic and professional background.

I have a Bachelor degree in Energy Engineering from Italy and a couple of months later, I started studying the Master's degree of WPPM on Gotland. Following my graduation in June, I came back to Italy and started looking for a job. After 7-8 months, I found a job in England and I moved to over there.

- Why did you choose to study WPPM on Gotland?

During my Bachelor studies, I started developing an interest for renewable energies, specifically wind power. Plus, I liked the idea of Sweden, I wanted to study abroad. I also had a chance to be in touch with Maurizio, one of the students from the previous year, who suggested this programme and told me it was a good education. So, I applied for it and I'd been chosen. And as the time passed, one of the current students is my old classmate from my Bachelor studies to whom I recommended the programme as well.

- Was there anything that should have been included in the programme? Anything you missed?

One of the things that would be nice to have more emphasis on is regular and frequent interaction with the industry. Probably more guest lecturers by people working in the wind power sector. So that when the students finish the Master's programme, we can already have some contacts or we can already know what this industry is like.

- Describe your current job.

Currently, I'm a wind engineer working for a consultancy company. We work with projects in the range from 50 kW up to 1.5 MW. We are active in the initial site identification, up to installation, and maintenance. Every day I'm dealing with all the aspects that I was studying during the Master's. We also investigate whether the site is suitable to install a wind turbine, we deal with all the local authorities involved, we look at landscape issues and ecology aspects. We deal with the grid operators and discuss how to connect the wind turbines to the grid. In a nutshell, this Master's has really been useful because I'm doing exactly what I'd been studying for. So, if I didn't have the degree, I wouldn't have this job.



Eric Kamphues
The Netherlands
Director of MECAL
Independent eXperts BV

- Please introduce yourself and your company.

My name is Eric Kamphues and I'm a director of MECAL Independent eXperts, which is a part of the MECAL group. MECAL is an engineering and consultancy involved in multiple stages of wind power. The business unit I'm in charge of acts as a technical advisor in all life stages of wind farms. We're looking for the possibilities to improve the investments for owners of wind farms.

- Why are you positive to cooperation with our programme?

We've had very good experiences with the programme. There is a good fit between our company and the Master's programme. The work that we do is similar, we're involved in all stages of wind power projects, as is being taught during the programme, both onshore and offshore. We're also always looking for new talents and we like to do research together with a university to look for new possibilities and approaches.

- What does it provide your company to have students doing theses and internships?

We're looking for the results of the students' research. We have new ideas regularly and students with the university's support are a great way to get in-depth and search for a way to bring the theory closer to the actual business. Also internships or Master theses are a perfect way to get experience with potential new employees. Moreover, we're very happy to have motivated students from different parts of the world that are dedicated to what they're studying.

- What is your experience of hiring graduates from our programme?

We've hired three students from the programme so far. There's still a gap between theory and practice. You hear this often and that's also the case for the programme. That's why we like to be involved as bridging that gap matters. There can also be a downside when the students come from outside Europe. There are some constraints and it's not easy to organize work permits. Of course one can overcome this obstacle, but that's easier said than done.

- Please share some insights on how it is to work in the wind industry, both positives and negatives.

If you're looking for the best paying job, then wind power might not be the best industry to consider. There are better paid jobs with oil and gas and it takes a while for wind power to get there. However, people in this industry are often quite green-minded, open and social, which makes them nice to work with. Most of them have a goal to make the world a better place and by working with wind they can earn some money as well.

On a technical note, the wind power industry is challenging, diverse and fast growing. It's demanding and involves many disciplines to construct wind farms. The offshore environment in particular is extremely complex not only technically, but also organizationally, legally and financially. This helps it be an exciting business to work in!

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact me. Thank you!