Opportunities and limitations for international students in a Danish Job market

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Abstract

Global is a keyword in today's reality, a word that breaks barriers and forms new intercultural and international societies, mentalities that will eventually form global citizens, people that will have international and intercultural awareness.

The first to take full contact with these global expectations are international students that travel and study between all universities in the world, some adapting and settling in other places than their birth country, others going back to their mother countries and others continuously travelling following their career across multicultural boundaries and global borders.

Alongside this new global attributes and skills international students and global citizens have to grow and adapt wherever they are situated, this means coping and managing in a new cultural environment and new job market. In pursuing a career to make the next step as international early career professionals all international students start developing and growing a career culture that has to be flexible and adaptable to the social culture, work culture and job market they are in.

This paper, and all my work across a master study at Aalborg University (AAU) in Culture, Communication, Globalization focused on the stream of Organizational culture and organizational leadership, will follow young international professionals in Denmark and their experiences in their early career steps while still studying at AAU. My work and this paper will be based also on the experience I had in international career programs, the internship with AAU International office and the job with AAU careers working with and for international students.

International students have multiple tasks in a work-in-progress danish environment and society, and they are expected to succeed in integration, professional environment, academic life, and career. They are marketed with opportunities but faced with limitations and they face the struggle of finding a balance.

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Abbreviation list

- ❏ IS - International students
- ❏ CC - Career Culture
- ❏ YP - Young Professionals
- ❏ YPD - Young Professionals in Denmark
- ❏ ECP - Early Career Professionals
- ❏ IECP - International Early Career Professionals
- ❏ CCG - Culture, Communication, Globalization
- ❏ AAU - Aalborg University Denmark
- ❏ PBL - Problem based Learning
- ❏ CP - career program
- ❏ PF - Problem Formulation

1. Introduction

"It is a profound and necessary truth that the deep things in science are not found because they are useful; they are found because it was possible to find them." Robert Oppenheimer (Robert V. Moody - 17 February 1995)

Key Terms: *Opportunities, Adapting, Globalization, Internationals, Culture, International education, international students; Study-to-work transition; Talent mobility;*

In an ever changing daily environment, for every single one of us, a reality is migration in a globalized world, in particular on the workforce market. The way employers look at applications, do the posts for jobs or how they actually analyze and assess job candidates has changed and is still changing because of the way today's global economy is moving in our present reality. The whole process of recruitment has become a complex scanning system in which the candidates have to have multifunctional skills, relevant experience, technical know - how and be bilingual. These are in today's globalized society and economy must-haves. (Roberts, C., 1998). Since Roberts studied this changes other researchers over time towards 2021 only sustained and enriched his research with data collection and studies on subjects based year over year more and more on internationals, the talent mobility caused by international education,

adaptability of IS and their study to work transition. Mosneagu & Winther (2013) sustain this with research reaching the conclusion that highly skilled and talented people have become crucial economic sources, causing a rise of the knowledge economy. According to them, global competition has intensified even more as this new international economic source that applies knowledge has raised the standards in the need to fit the workforce market.

Kumpikaite, Vilmante & Glinska, Ewa & Aslan, Imran & Ramirez, Antonio (2016) for example have performed an intercultural study to show how IS adapts to job performance and requirements. They discuss the same constant need of development in knowledge and skills that future employees should have as well as the requirement to always be in line with new technologies and information creating pressure on YP and feeding the new wave of unemployment of young people.

We go to look even further in time and see that many abilities and skills that current employers or head hunters are asking for are learned and gained in many years of experience by many individuals. For example another requirement that has become a must-have is to understand people from different cultural backgrounds. Future employees have to possess this skill and show experience with it alongside building trust, showing respect, and being able to detail one's personal life so employers can assess who you are as an individual and if you match the organization. Early career might be very stressful for a young international student in this context, also very challenging. (Lindblad & Lundahl, 2020).

Globalization is a key concept in every society today. When talking about it you can think of economic growth, more consumers, more jobs, more travelling and more people moving and living in other countries than their native one. My attention goes in this paper to Denmark and the existing opportunities for internationals in this nordic country. Globalization did not seem to put pressure on this nordic module that has proven resilient and thriving. (Askeland & Strauss, 2014)

"Denmark is a relatively new entrant into the global competition for talent. This makes it an interesting case of an evolving host-country context where international students'

status transition represents a challenging process, both for policy-making and from the perspective of the individuals concerned." (Mosneagu & Winther, pp.181)

Askeland & Strauss (2014) claim in their research that the Nordic welfare based on equality is a multidimensional welfare state based on a high level of human wellbeing and that the values behind this were consolidated by social democratic parties. The meaning of this would be that the citizens are born in a social community that has in its core the people, it's citizens. The same researchers Askeland & Strauss (2014) are saying that universalism is a central aspect of the nordic model that means in theory that social laws protect every citizen regardless of their circumstances, risk-sharing between different classes.

Failure to adapt of IS is more common in newly formed international societies. Kumpikaite, Vilmante & Glinska, Ewa & Aslan, Imran & Ramirez, Antonio (2016) talk in their intercultural study on IS attitude towards jobs, about how a part of the problem in adapting of IS is the fact that they do not show the desire to work every day or aspire to this goal having a "do not care" attitude.

The other part in failure to adapt to the issue of IS consists in the way they evaluate themselves and their task related skills to a low point and those being the most important to employers in this way predisposing themselves to failure even before starting. The study also shows how the lack of basic needs, existence of cultural differences and lack of growth needs ,considered main pillars of IS that become YP, lead to the more and more common failure to adapt in newly formed international societies. (Kumpikaite, Vilmante & Glinska, Ewa & Aslan, Imran & Ramirez, Antonio 2016)
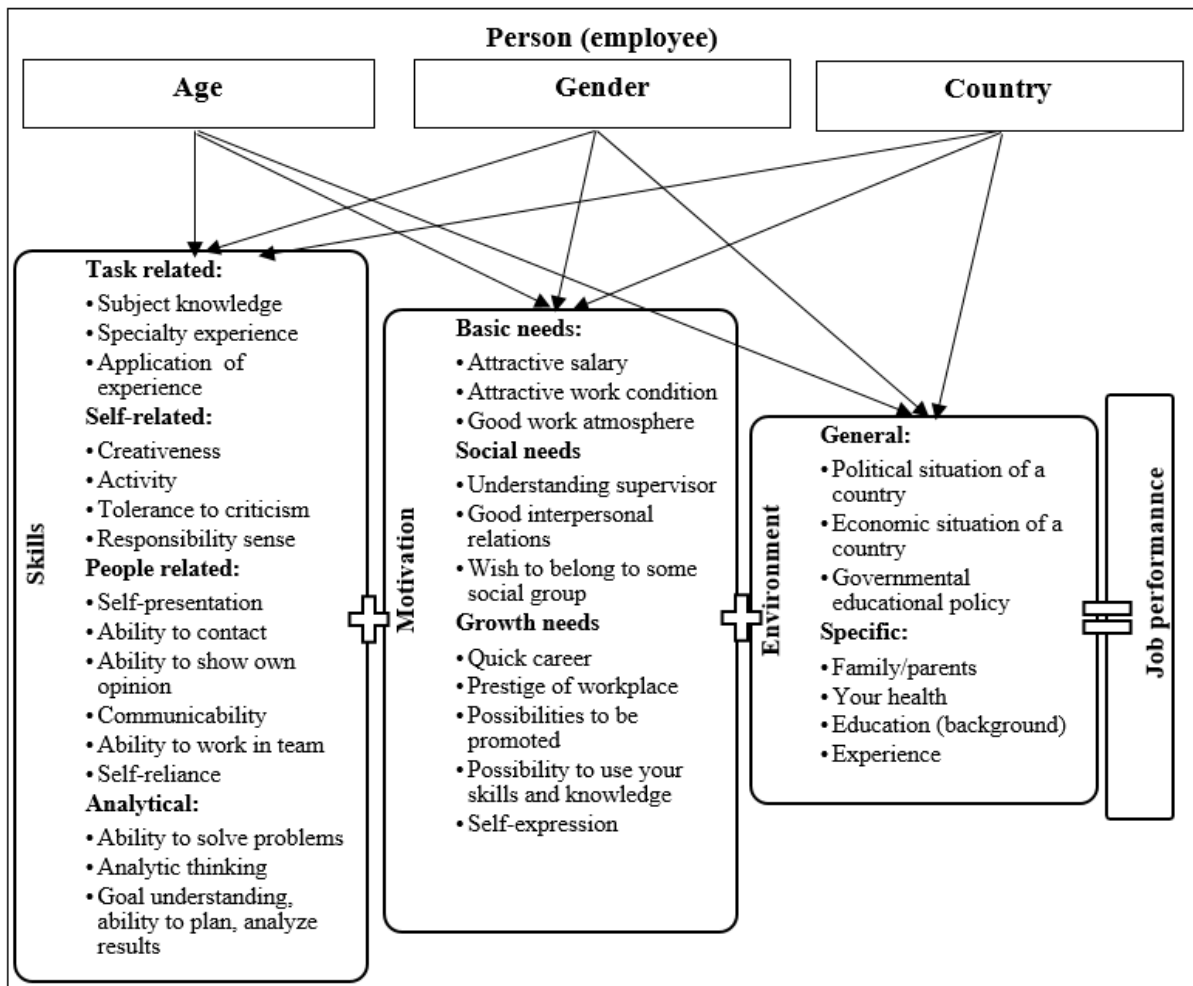
Figure 1. Conceptual model of students" attitudes evaluation. (Kumpikaite, Vilmante & Glinska, Ewa & Aslan, Imran & Ramirez, Antonio 2016)

The new organizations and societies face renewal of etnic strifes, having to find new ways to deal with feelings and actions of hostility and getting opposites together. Cause and effect in internationalization has become indispensable and must be dealt with. (Heifetz, R. A. 1944)

The people's failure of adapting has been discussed since Heifetz (1944) by giving reasons for why it happens. Heifetz says the reasons are misperceiving the nature of threats, if threat is perceived then the challenge can exceed the culture's adaptive capability, finding the means to adjust properly.

"Finally, people fail to adapt because of the distress provoked by the problem and the changes it demands.They resist the pain, anxiety, or conflict that accompanies a sustained interaction with the situation. Holding onto past assumptions, blaming authority, scapegoating, externalizing the enemy, denying the problem, jumping to conclusions, or finding a distracting issue may restore stability and feel less stressful than facing and taking responsibility for a complex challenge."(Heifetz, 1944, p.235 - 236)

A small conclusion even from the beginning of their research was that a real equality does not come as easily as presented on paper and the reason found is that the state cannot make up for differences in private networks, support systems and informal resources. Finishing this idea of their start of research we can clearly read that equality needs to be obtained not only by universal rights, equality in result for less advantage or different people is obtained only by support with the goal of obtaining the same opportunities.(Askeland & Strauss, 2014)

1.1. Motivation

My interest in the topic was developed alongside a planned personal journey on the international student path in Denmark. Alongside my studies at AAU in the CCG program I was an active volunteer for the international community in three organizations which opened new questions and issues that international students faced here in Denmark. This was the impulse I needed to start a long term plan for my studies, to organize towards a real problem solving goal, to identify and maybe answer or at least point out the major gaps IS face here in Denmark with a precise narrowed down subject in AAU and Region Nord of Denmark.

This motivation drove me to apply for the YPD, a one year CP part of AAU Carriers and Copenhagen Capacity where I got to know in more detail companies and IS from all programs of AAU, was able to hear what obstacles and issues they are facing and was able to also see the employers side and point of view in relation to IS and employment of international workforce.

My second semester project was done on the topic of IECP based on real time experiences and materials from the YPD. I managed to identify and define CC and what this means to IS, the role played in the retention of internationals and the opportunities offered towards that goal.

This motivated me to go forward and apply at IO of AAU for my internship and get accepted, here I did practical work for exchange international students. I was assigned to create a survey to measure their satisfaction with the Danish AAU academic experience and to find problems and issues they faced so the IO would create some solutions to solve them in the future. I had the opportunity to participate as an intern to the opening days of AAU where all the IS where welcomed and see from this other side how it is to prepare and think of what IS may need

All my work with internationals materialized in a student job also that I was offered by the YPD program, that I was also part of in my first year at AAU. This created even more opportunities to work with IS and go into more depth in my research and selected topic.

The aim of my structured work and studies with international students is to underline the multiple constraints and diverse opportunities that influence and shape IS and their career culture. Their perspectives, their goals and future plans, where they project these expectations, goals and where they end up to be implemented. In this context of IS daily lives as expats, students, internationals, individuals, workers and so on there is the need to better define and understand the linkage between career culture, international students, talent, opportunities, mobility and Danish working culture.

The research and studies discussed in this introduction clearly point out the need for solutions and further investigation. IS form themselves alongside their studies and become step by step in the last years of study YP with a new work mindset. They start gathering concepts and information from mentours to form their own CC, get into CP and slowly take the next step in being IECP, having internships and aspiring to jobs for when they finish studying. With the purpose of gaining a more in depth understanding of

these processes and defining the key concepts of this paper I need to review more theories and studies in a literature review.

2. Literature Review

"International students are seen as prospective skilled workers in the globalising competition for talent. However, little is known about the connections between international students' decisions to study abroad and their perspectives on continuing their career in the host country after graduation or subsequently settling there for a longer term." (Mosneagu & Winther, pp.181)

When introducing the concept of International Students in Denmark, there are many research gaps to be found, in particular relating to the specific danish study/work culture. Studies and theories will be reviewed to gain a better understanding of the opportunities offered, or not, to international students in the danish society and to have a more elaborate view on the whole process from study to work in Denmark.

Within recent studies and research that I will detail in the next paragraphs it is well known and acknowledged that international students experience difficulties in integrating and setting routes in their host country. The IS transition is delayed or in many cases stopped by social, psychical, political or managerial factors as well as psychological obstacles set by the IS close environment. Language skills or knowledge, even lack of it, networking, finding connections and friends, creating connections can cause anxiety and depression as well as losing the willpower or motivation to move forward or creating a future in the host country.

Tubb-Warbington, C. has studied for example international students' experience in 2021, the study focuses on how campuses have an important role in IS journey and evolution, tranzition and well being. How the campuses need to value internationalization. Also the need for hospitality, offering appropriate services and programs. IS will not maximize their potential without it and institutions will not draw new IS. (Tubb-Warbington 2021)

Facilitation of effective organizational on-boarding and supplements for facilitators make transition periods easier and help prevent loss of professionals that might consider giving up on their career goals (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

Greenfield, Davis, & Fedor (2012) study the IS professional development and the connection between study programs and CS that are now essential and a cornerstone in the forming and preparation of the international and intercultural mindset of students that will become working global citizens.

Attention has been drawn by the same Tubb-Warbington, C. in 2021 on the fact that not enough study was made on international programs and their effectiveness. How and if this programs are assisting IS in their needs going to the source and solution for their particular needs.(Tubb-Warbington 2021)

A study that went into depth with topics close to this thesis topic, opportunities for international students in a danish society, was conducted by two students of AAU at CCG in 2015. Walther, M. & Mølgaard Larsen,J. are two danish researchers, and master students, that discuss in their paper about the increased mobility of well educated people and the desire of international talented young people to have an international profile. Also they underline that for Denmark it is very profitable to retain international talent, they base their facts on socio-economic analyses.

Walther, M. & Mølgaard Larsen,J. (2015) identified problems in international programs in North Denmark caused by lack of adequate support for internationals, lack of international vision in this part of Denmark, based on statistic that pinpointed this region as the worst in retaining internationals and tried to give solutions through their research. Based on their surveys and focus groups the big part played in the integration process is accessibility to the labour market, stigmatization, language, network.

The extensive process of internationalisation undertaken by Danish universities in the past 10 years can be considered as a background to all we have talked through by now. It is a known fact that this process or possible development has been supported and encouraged by EU initiatives such as the 1999 Bologna Declaration. Danish

universities, especially programs that train and create future professionals that could potentially work in Denmark, developed an awareness on the existing need of replacing danish students that leave to study abroad thus started plans to attract IS. (Tange, 2008)
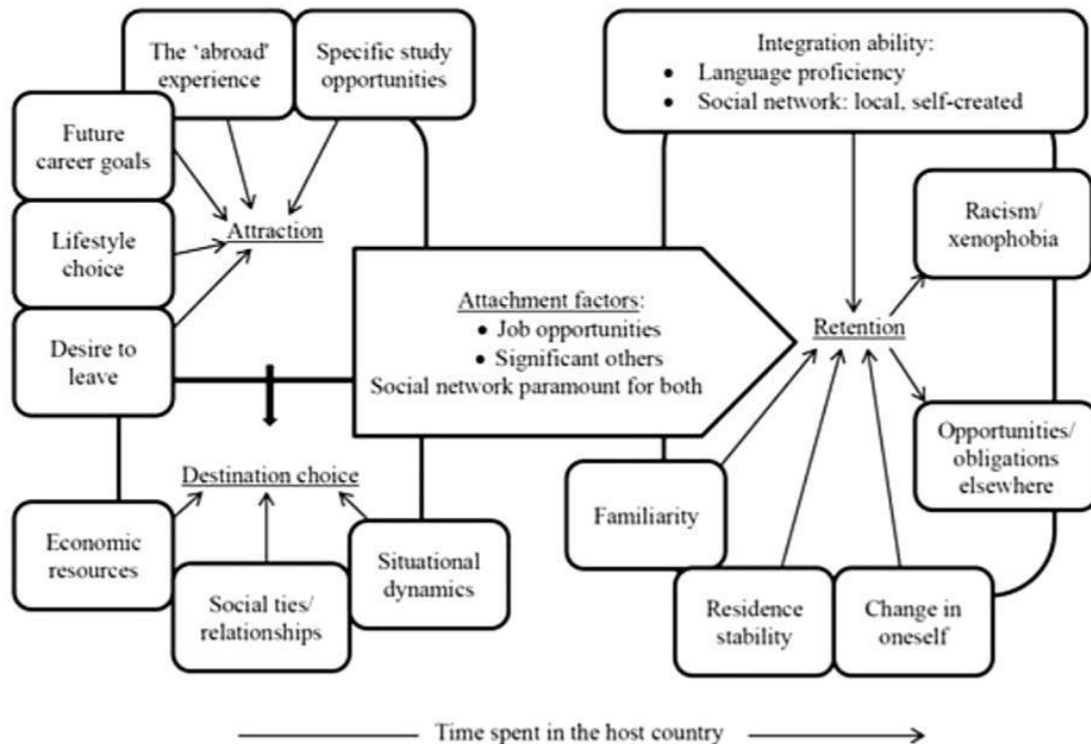
Figure 2. The relationship between attraction and retention factors of international students in the host country context. (A. Mosneaga and L. Winther, pp.185)

2.1 International education

International education has been placed or defined by researchers as providing for 'international understanding, peace, and global interconnectedness' (Ninnés & Hellstén, 2005, p. 2).

International education has appeared as a request, and in the same time needed, from students that in time grew their demands on being more diverse, gaining intercultural and international perspectives and knowledge, this being put in place by universities all

over the world through study abroad opportunities. These demands and requests have later concluded in expectations from professionals to have an international education. (Greenfield, Davis, & Fedor, 2012)

2.2 International programs

Mosneagu & Winther (2013) discuss in their research about how by being aware of the need of attracting and retaining 'talents and competencies of world-class', Copenhagen Growth Council has been setting new targets for increasing and achieving the share of foreign citizens with a university degree from 9.4% in 2010 to 10.4% in 2013. (Copenhagen Growth Council [Vækstforum Hovedstaden], 2010: 30).

Walther, M. & Mølgaard Larsen,J. (2015) talk about a specific program "STAY" constructed in North Denmark in collaboration with AAU, University College North Jutland, the municipality and the business community. The scope of this international program was even back then the retention of internationals in the region, in particular after graduation. The whole research was based on the fact that, together with the knowledge taken from 2015 studies, this region in Denmark was the worst in retaining international talent and because initiatives that were necessary to meet the need of internationals were not implemented the program failed.

2.3 Young Professionals

Early career is directly connected with YP. Stumpf (2014) researched the sense of embeddedness that follows YP giving them balance and equilibrium through all the early stages of their career. Another common finding, in YP first career stages, is that they tend to have more employers, changes in occupation, while still studying and a lot of time in the same year. YP seem to not be able to find balance and challenge all initial career goals they set for themselves initially. (Stumpf, 2014).

"When young professionals perceive their job as using their talents and providing them with valued benefits or perks, they experience greater subjective success. When

considering a job, organization, or occupational change, it was the number of linkages and amount of sacrifice they experienced that supported their decision to stay. It may be that viable alternatives would only be explored or considered if they were thought to be a good match — providing the anticipation of job fit and thereby reducing the amount of embeddedness job fit offers" (Stumpf, 2014, p 187).

2.4 Study-to-work transition

Graduating students face the transition from school to work differently, many go through this phase facing challenges and difficulties finding themselves in need of support, guidance and counselling. Under the pressure of their future life and the thought of failing in their careers or wanting to succeed quickly they put themselves in stressful situations that lead to a dysfunctional environment for career adaptability and building a career culture.

Evolution of the complexity of careers has been discussed by Stumpf (2014) and that is linked in a direct way to the transition of IS from study to work. This transition is made by CP, career events taking place from the time the IS are still studying, then being influenced by factors like mobility, variables of career success, embeddedness. Stumpf combined and studied all these concepts together with the first stages in early career professionals transition and young professionals that pass from IS to these two new stages in their career journey and make progress in their study to work transition.

"For universities, the focus on international graduates' employment in Denmark is becoming increasingly important, but it is not always the top item on the agenda for us – rather it is something nice-to-have than need-to-have" (Staff member, KU International Office, 2009). On the contrary, institutional actors representing business interests continue to propagate that despite the economic downturn since the financial crisis of 2008, the greater utilization of foreign talents, hereunder international students, is essential for Denmark's international competitiveness (Alcina, 2011; Danish Chamber of Commerce, 2011). Nonetheless, in the context of the recession, individual companies may be adopting a more short-sighted take on the issue as, for them, "it's more a

question of economic survival here and now" (Staff member, Danish Agency for International Education, 2009). " (Mosneaga, 2013, pp.17)

2.5 International Students and talent mobility

International students bring good business for Denmark, based on socio-economic studies and analysis 1996 to 2012. The catch is that the studies also say that it is good profit even if they stay or leave Denmark after graduation and the balance is made by the ones who decide to stay so the economic consequences are positive as they make up the cost of the ones who decide to leave. (Walther & Mølgaard Larsen, 2015)

IS will divide in several categories as talent mobility starts to be part of their CC and routine. Stumpf (2014) argues that ECP that have career success are also embedded in all their activities, from jobs to any other occupations, social or voluntary work. YP on the other hand, as Stumpf (2014) observed, have direct proportional needs with the practices of the organization and how this can serve them.

3. Problem formulation

The result after this paper's introduction, motivation and literature review together with my personal experience during my internship, student job, and my own experience as an international student led me to the following problem formulation:

How International students cope and manage in Aalborg University and how can this influence their future career culture as international early career professionals?

4. Theoretical framework

I will connect the gaps found in the literature by using three theoretical lenses, career and social based theories perspectives in connectivity with the central theoretical tool of this research paper: activity theory.

1. Activity theory, with strong origins in german philosophy, inspired by Kant to Hegel, in the writings of Marx and Engels, from cultural historical psychology of the soviet russion psychologist Vygot-sky, Leont`ev and Luria the activity theory today has become transcending in its own origins, international and multidisciplinary making it the perfect match for this paper. (Engeström., Miettinen, & Punamäki,1999). This theory looks at culture as a primary mediator in human activities and activity as a collective phenomena. (Ghaoui, 2005) Individuals or groups in a community pursue the activity working towards shared objectives or motives, transforming and recruiting their environment, shared tools, data, social and cultural structures and work practices. (Kuutti, 1996)

Hashim and Jones (2007) go into depth and talk about how they found that researchers in education, information systems and humanities have concluded that activity theory offers a worthwhile framework and it is the case of this paper as well as it understands the field and gaps I am researching. I can put this theory in use in this paper because by insisting that activity is mediated by tools it helps create and explain a connection between the user and the tools. Activity is not seen as a simple individual action, it is seen as being culturally and historically located, purposeful activity being the fundamental unit for human behaviour.(Kuutti, 1996)

The next two secondary lenses that will support the central chosen theory and connect the gaps found in the literature :

2. The work adjustment theory to underline and support the idea of choice and development. Work adjustment theory (Dawis, 2002, 2005; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) an important theory in career development. Supports the idea of choice and development based on the process of adjustment and accommodation of the individual. The importance of this theory is that it divided adjustment in four different styles (Dawis, 2005):

- Flexibility or the level in which the person tolerates what happened in his or her environment, how the person can become easily demotivated or dissatisfied with the current environment.
- Activeness represents the way in which the person decides to act upon what is happening to change or reduce the comprehension of the environment and occurrences.
- Reactiveness is the way the person acts on self adjustment and if it changes the environment.
- Perseverance refers to the ability to resolve, accommodate and adjust in the environment.

The work adjustment theory brings to the table a linkage between needs/abilities and satisfaction/satisfactoriness. It has been examined by international studies (Athanasou & Van Esbroeck, 2008) with mixed results that endorse the scope of this paper.The theory gives meaning to the connection between environment, satisfaction and career development seeking in the same time to explain the concepts from the cross cultural career settings and offering career guidance in the same time. Leung (2008) even concludes that the work adjustment theory constitutes a template of entry point in a career able to help and assist individuals with career choice and adjustment concerns.

3. Social Cognitive Career Theory that could bring to this paper the framework that can make readers understand the development of career interest, choice and performance on an international scale based on results generated from research studies with international samples. (Leung 2008). Sets the much needed framework to international career guidance.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002; Lent, 2005) offers 3 segments of career development that where build on the basis of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals (Athanasou & Van Esbroeck, Leung 2008):

- The development of academic and vocational interest based on self-efficacy driven by four primary information sources or learning

experiences, which are personal performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological and affective states.

- How individuals make educational and career choices based on outcome expectations,how the person's beliefs about rewards are associated with the actual performance, the consequences and outcomes.
- Educational and career performance and stability based on personal goals. It states the person's intentions in activities that generate certain outcomes, having the choice of what to pursue, setting an own level of accomplishment.

The two secondary lenses were needed to support the main theory chosen, and the overall theoretical framework of this paper, as a tailored and specific theory on the selected topic, does not exist. In this idea more lenses were added so that the theoretical framework will try to have a diverse framework to grasp all the research gaps through a complex interconnected view.

4.1 Activity theory

"Activity theory is a conceptual framework based on the idea that activity is primary, that doing precedes thinking, that goals, images, cognitive models, intentions, and abstract notions like "definition" and "determinant" grow out of people doing things" (Morf & Weber, 2000, p.81).

The unit of analysis is the work activity and this unit of analysis is also divided into components: subject, tool and object. The person being studied is the subject, the intended activity is the object and the device used to execute is the tool. (Hashim & Jones, 2007).

Hashim & Jones (2007) have also identified two additional units of analysis in the form of rules and division of labour, both having the specific effect on work activities. Rules will help define the actions of individuals, why and how they act. Division of labour is for the community of workers providing a distribution of actions and operations.This last two

units define the utility of the theory as they define the concept of community within the groups of activities and actions within the teams of workers. (Hashim & Jones, 2007).

Tool

Subject · · · · · Object   Outcome

Rules   Community   Division of Labour
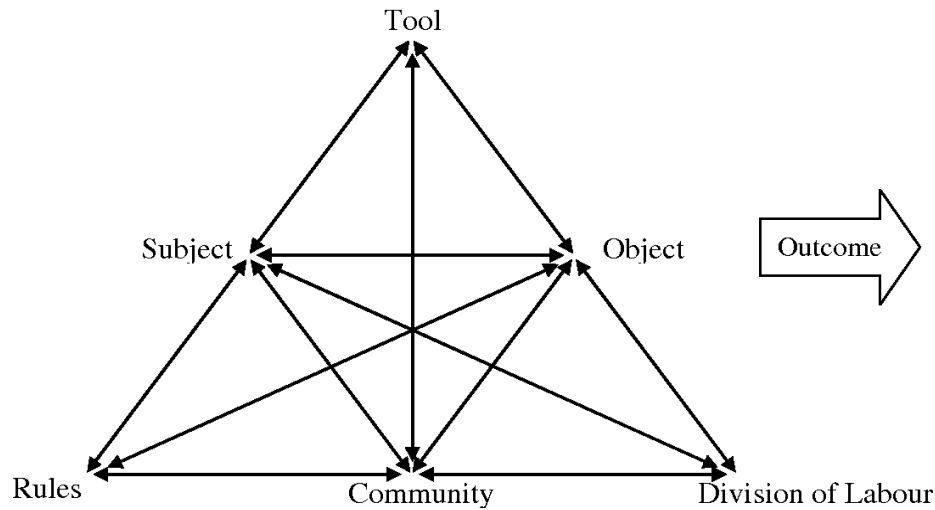
Figure 3. Engestroms Expended Activity Theory Model (Engestrom, 2001).

Hashim & Jones, (2007) talk about the development process of activity itself and the tools in the social system and how because they were created and transformed by people the remain of evolution can not be ignored and the traces of cultural and historical evolution will make their impact in the interaction between the subject and the object influencing this process. According to Hashim & Jones, mediation through tools and technology is not a neutral process.

Activity – Motive

Action   _ Goal

Operation – Conditions
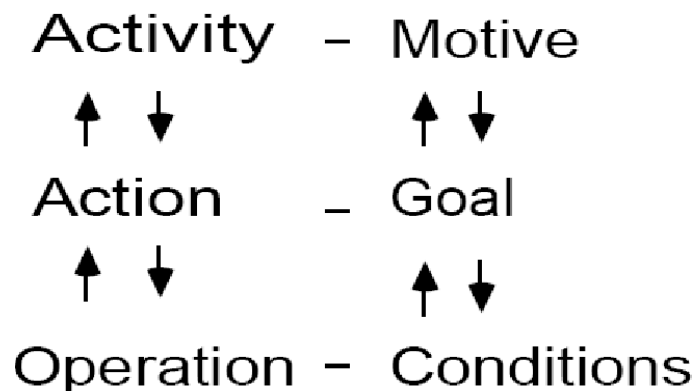
Figure 4. Hierarchical levels of an activity (Leont'ev, 1981).

Activity theory has been defined as having a holistic method and as Hashim & Jones (2007) are defining in their research activity theory offers also a contextual method of discovery. This particular method can help in supporting qualitative and interpretive research.

"Activity Theory is particularly relevant in situations that have a significant historical and cultural context and where the participants, their purposes and their tools are in a process of rapid and constant change." (Hashim & Jones, 2007, page 2).

The particularity of this theory, that made me as a researcher to choose it for this paper, is that it is drawn from understanding human consciousness that has been shaped by experience and also by the subjectivity of human awareness. (Hashim & Jones, 2007)

Hashim & Jones (2007) made a convincing argument in their research that is maybe the most relevant in this paper, that activity theory is valuable for research as it enables means of discovering human activity by studying the actions of the participant. This molds perfectly to this paper being a practical framework.

The base of the theory is analysing the individual that brings value to the research and in this case IS, IECP and YP pursuing their activity, objects of focus, environment, tools used to build their CC and future professional lives. (Hashim & Jones, 2007)

"A key attribute of Activity Theory is its focus on argumentative (dialectic) analysis on the interaction between people (human) and their mediated tools or artefacts (purpose) which have been shaped by human activity (technical elements)." (Hashim & Jones, 2007, page 12).

Hashim & Jones (2007) claim that this theory is useful as it gives a hierarchical description of activities decomposing them into actions and operations. Underlining in the study that the theory is being mediated by tools explaining the relation with the user. The overview of this theory is unique and complex because it doesn't see individual activity but it places it as culturally and historically located. A much needed cultural historical context being placed as the fundamental unit for the study of human behaviour. (Hashim & Jones, 2007)

For a better understanding of how International students cope and manage in Aalborg University and how this can influence their future career culture as international early career professionals I will explain the concepts that make the scope of this paper and draw upon a chosen theory that will help me work on the gaps found in the literature. A solid theoretical foundation is needed to be able to answer this paper's PF.

4.2. Explanation of concepts

4.2.1 Career Programs

We live in a globalized society in which career programs are set up to educate IS and students in general. To create a prepared and able workforce, and at the same time putting a great emphasis on IS as being valued members of the future society. "The purpose of retaining skilled and trained ECP in the local communities and forming active participants of the economical social life, as long as the young professionals are willing." (Stan, 2019, pp.11)

4.2.2 Career culture

Robert Kohls (2011, p.25) defined culture as "an integrated system of learned behavior patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society. Culture is the total way of life of particular groups of people. It includes everything that a group of people thinks, says, does and makes — its systems, attitudes and feelings. Culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation."

Taking in consideration my previous research and findings, as well as personal involvement in the social reality of the topic, the career culture definition needed updating and most of all improvement. "Career culture is the sum of expectations and values that appear indifferent to the environment, matching development and participation based on self reflection." (Stan, 2020, pp.32)

4.2.3 International Early Career Professionals

In my previous research, Stan.A (2019), I discovered that only few researchers take an international/intercultural perspective on EARLY CAREER PROFESSIONALS (ECP).

One of the relevant findings was the study on the connection between personal life and contract work of IECP. The main aspect being the focus the researcher put on early career and contract workers concluding in the fact that they possess flexibility and show willingness to work making themselves available and able. Resulting in the fact that this flexibility is unnatural and IECP find themselves pressured by a disconcerting contract and uncomfortable in the challenging work situation they are in. (Rao, 2017)

When talking about IECP we have in mind a term that is commonly used to indicate a generation with potential. Researchers like Kulkarni, Muia, Boulaftali, Blondon, Lauw, (2018) have addressed the potential that IECP demonstrates for success, becoming leaders and being established and accomplished professionals. IECP are not mentioned very often, actually little research is found on the topic. Baluku & Löser & Otto (2018) study IECP from diverse backgrounds, that being said their focus as scholars is focused on issues of expatriates.

These above mentioned studies would have been more useful if they had focused on the flexibility shown by early career professionals Rao (2017) and how it can be materialized going a bit further than suggestions of support. To be proactive and stay flexible are conclusions already over used, however, the main weakness of Baluku & Löser & Otto is the failure to address how internationals should give a global perspective to flexibility, proactivity and mobility.

"The term "early career professional" (ECP) is often used to indicate a generation of professionals that demonstrates the potential to succeed established professionals and leaders"(Kulkarni et al., 2018, pp 11).

How can they integrate their own view in the early career setting? In this way, the study fails to consider the influence on international young professionals. And here we will go further into our research to analyze and get a more focused and clear view of the concept in a danish social reality.

One of the main tools in this research is theory followed by the data I collected. My intention is to go back and forward between theory and data. Having this approach will make my research iterative: "involves a weaving back and forth between the data and

the theory" (Bryman, 2016, p. 23). The iterative approach will give me the adequate tools in finding the answer to this paper's problem formulation: How International students cope and manage in Aalborg University and how can this influence their future career culture as international early career professionals?

As stated in the motivation of this paper, "I am and was an active part of AAU in more than one social reality so my involvement and direct participation brings to this research preexisting knowledge". Because of this predicament the research I am conducting cannot be inductive or deductive.

In my research I will also draw upon one specific theory for a better understanding on how AAU influences the ability of IS to cope and manage and starting from here going towards understanding how their career culture is influenced or changed by this environment and the influences that come with it.

5. Philosophy of science

5.1 Interpretivist Epistemology

Social actors and social reality are essential in this paper and for this paper's outcomes. In this sense the paper will remain always linked in social reality and guided by interpretivism beliefs. To be in line with this belief social actors will be taken in consideration by acknowledging their opinions as well as beliefs and opinions being key factors in the paper. Social actors will play a crucial role through their experiences, these experiences will build the main data of this paper and provide a solid foundation towards a concrete and accurate result that will be able to be taken in consideration when creating solutions in future work.

As an interpretivist I have another strong asset that I will use in this paper, language. This also has a key role in my work, all my findings connected to the social reality and together with the social actors will need to be interpreted fully. Also the need to explain the findings so they make sense to the scope of the paper and it's findings, keeping them connected with the social actors and social reality. One of the pioneer researchers in this area, tried finding out the relation between language and the world so social

reality and Winch became step by step one of the main contributors of Interpretivism. The same Winch makes a crucial affirmation, in his opinion language determines what will count as the world. (Blaikie, 2007).

"Our idea of what belongs to the real of reality is given for us in the language that we use. The concepts we have settled for us the form of the experience we have of the world…(However) when we speak of the world we are speaking of what we in fact mean by the expression "the world": there is no way of getting outside the concepts in terms of which we think of the world… The world is for us what is presented through those concepts. That is not to say that our concepts may not change; but when they do, that means that our concept of the world has changed to." (Winch 1958: 15)

Winch and his stand on this matter helped Norman Blaikie (2007) to reach a conclusion, in Blaikie's view social relationships in their social reality are embedded in their own language. This specific language will be used by social actors when discussing or having conversation related to their world in any given opportunity or social context.

Debating my findings and the way of thinking is an essential aspect as well as having different approaches. I need to stay linked in social reality while constructing my questions and answers, while communicating and relating to their stories, while writing about their experiences and when reading their answers and the materials and devices counsellors and the CP have prepared to support them. Bryman (2016) said that staying linked in social reality means that you as a researcher are willing to acknowledge opinions, stay connected to the current social reality while experiencing the social actors' views and stories.

In this paper I will primarily be a researcher and interpret my environment while keeping a subjective approach. "Rather than aspire to an unachievable goal of "objectivity", it is better to simply be honest and transparent about one's own subjectivities, allowing readers to draw their own conclusions about the interpretations that are presented through the research itself." (Austin, Z., & Sutton, J. 2014, p.437)

Austin, Z., & Sutton, J. (2014), talk about reflexivity as the process where the act of engaging affects the process that is being studied in this context putting into question the notion of "detached objectivity". Further the researchers Austin and Sutton discuss in the same paper how the researchers own subjectivity in the context mentioned before is essential to the research process, the output depending on this subjectivity and any other variables of the research also. Explaining this shows how important this approach is for my paper and for the research conducted.

"Applications of reflexivity may include participant-observer research, where the researcher is actually one of the participants in the process or situation being researched and must then examine it from these divergent perspectives." (Austin, Z., & Sutton, J. 2014, p.437) Even though I am a student worker for AAU Carriers, a IS for CCG and AAU, a former intern at International Office of AAU, former YPD participant and not lastly a social actor I will keep the subjective approach of a researcher and analyze how counsellors and AAU employees look at IS and how IS and YPD participants look at the international and intercultural environment they are all in. How all of them put actions in the social world will be analyzed based on the activity theory.

Social actors "are constantly involved in interpreting and reinterpreting their world - social situations, other people's actions, their own actions, and natural and humanly created objects. They develop meaning for their activity together, and they have ideas about what is relevant for making sense of these activities." (Blaikie 2007, p124) The need of coming up with unexpected findings due to the nature of this research was another reason for choosing the interpretivist stance. The initial social context needs to still relate to the unexpected findings as the social world created needs to still make sense to the social actors and so they will be able to reproduce activities of their own. (Blaikie, 2007).

Not lastly, I will use the same subjective approach in the scope of analyzing and getting into details from different resources I had or have at my disposal relating with opportunities of IS in an international danish environment and how based on their own beliefs and actions they grow or influence their CC as IECP.

5.2 Ontology

Related to social reality is constructivism so it makes sense to make constructivism my ontological choice. Constructive ontology clearly acknowledges that these social realities are not ultimate truths especially being actors and participating in this social reality as actors. So I take in consideration the context in which they are happening and search for explanations and different meanings of these realities.

Social actors are constructing our reality and the way constructivism acknowledges that makes this position the correct one to use. Being based in social reality it interconnects with my work on all levels so the reality in which the paper is constructed, student, employee of AAU and a social actor being an international in a danish environment so interconnected with prezent reality making the findings based in social reality a much needed stand to be taken in this paper.

I could bring another good point to my paper and remind the readers how constructivism implies that social phenomena is not only produced by social interaction (Bryman,6 2016). By taking this stance I allow myself to use my own knowledge as an international student, working, studying and volunteering in an international and intercultural environment, as well as my active participation that created my own account of the social world. I will be presenting in this way a specific version of the social reality making the concept the creation of the actors in social interaction.

Another aspect is that being a social constructivist allows me to reach my goal and the purpose of this master thesis. To be able to reach my goal in answering this thesis PF: How International students cope and manage in Aalborg University and how can this influence their future career culture as international early career professionals?. To be able to give insight and new knowledge or unexpected information and findings to the decision making factors and people in AAU structure and possibly in the northern area employers that will be seeking ECP or YP in the future.

When taking in consideration this research we also have to acknowledge the time period in which it was done, in a time of a worldwide pandemic in which COVID - 19 has changed drastically everyone's social reality. Keeping this in mind we have to take in

account the issues and delimitations raised by this factor in this research. Remote working, studying and meeting in the online environment have become common routines for me and the social actors that participated in the data collection. The misfortune was that this made the interaction with IS harder and the process of bounding and relating directly with them non-existent.

Adapting like all social actors as a researcher I immediately figured that my future findings will not be the same so I needed to change to different channels and methods. This global issue narrowed down interaction's, events, social gatherings, social actor's perspectives, opportunities. Everything became digital and this digitalization was transformed into an indispensable tool that narrowed down and eclipsed my own tools that I intended to use and needed for optimal findings of this paper.

6. Research Design

6.1 Qualitative Case study

This paper will have a qualitative research design. I will focus on a case study, the reason why a case study was chosen was to concentrate on details as they are essential especially when dealing with life stories of IS and personal struggles as IS when forming a healthy CC in a foreighn country. So the case study is based on communication, virtually caused by the global pandemic restriction or face to face in rare occasions and prior to the pandemic. Sense making is also a key factor as it will allow me to see in the analysis beliefs, practices of IS, IECP and CC.

Bryman (2016, p.60) defines case study as "the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case". There are also five five distinguished types in which we can see the development of case study (Yin, 2009):

1. critical case,
2. extreme or unique case,
3. representative or typical case (exemplifying),
4. revelatory case

5. longitudinal case.

The representative case study is the one that defines this paper. Representative or typical case (exemplifying) "the objective is to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation" (Yin, 2009, p.48).

The case of this paper, how International students cope and manage in Aalborg University and how this can influence their future career culture as international early career professionals, exemplified a broader category of which I am a member, and because of this it aspect was chosen. The scope implies that the reason for the option chosen was not because it was unique thus the mentioning of exemplification. The paper's scope relates that the case was chosen because of the context it provides,(Bryman, 2016), being seen as the most suitable in answering this paper's PB: How International students cope and manage in Aalborg University and how can this influence their future career culture as international early career professionals?

Yin (2014) explained the case study concept very well saying that it is the appropriate choice if the research focuses on answering questions. How and why being answered and having in mind the aim to explain present circumstances of social phenomena makes case study the perfect choice. Also that this method contributes to everyone's knowledge, commonly used in sociology. One of the important aspects is that the method selected, in this paper case study, to be able to connect with the theory selected in the scope of working, examining and exploring a particular entity in a relevant context. (Yin, 2014)

 " With a case study, the case is an object of interest in its own right, and the researcher aims to provide an in depth examination of it" (Bryman, 2016, p.61). Going forward in seeing how International students cope and manage in Aalborg University and how can this influence their future career culture as international early career professionals, I will use qualitative case study as a method. The research and investigation will be based on multiple Q&A's from IS and materials from YPD online events.

6.2 Presentation of case

This thesis and the scope of the paper is to look in close detail at IECP, CC and IS, to study their environment and experiences. The focus will be set on how they cope and make their first career steps in the danish culture with focus on the AAU environment and north part of Denmark. Their early career steps will be followers through my work and previous research, some of them still studying at AAU, some graduates and some part of AAU as employees, counsellors and leaders.

Balancing everyday life and keeping focused in the same time as an IS, with all that it implies, work, studies, new culture, adapting and then making the next step as an IECP and transitioning towards job search, carer seminars, career events, networking, understanding danish work culture, career endeavours, development programs is the main environment that this paper will keep an eye on. How IECP maintain a work study balance, how they make a transition towards a good career culture and how all of this influences and marks their future plans is the basis of this paper.

All of the details discussed in this section will be connected with the data of this paper with the scope of finding the answer to the PF: *How International students cope and manage in Aalborg University and how can this influence their future career culture as international early career professionals?*

Data will be collected from AAU students, former and present, as well as employees and leaders of IS. Also all will be connected and based on the Young Professionals in Denmark (YPD) program by Copenhagen Capacity and AAU Carriers where I am a student worker and former participant in the program. All actions and data are also based on the Aalborg area, the program also runs with the help of International house in AAlborg and the coordinator in charge of the collaboration is also a graduate of AAU as well as a participant in the data collected.

YPD is funded by the European Union as well, the main reasons for creating this program was the retention of IECP and helping IS become IECP and form a good CC. To create better opportunities for internships and improve the IECP chances of getting a job, internship, graduate program and improving in this way the job market overall. The

collaboration with Copenhagen Capacity enforces the idea that the program works towards a better retention of IECP in Denmark and helping them to have a smooth and swift tranzition, a comfortable study to work journey.

6.3 Data collection

In this paper as a researcher I will be working with data from YPD that is CP within AAU coordinated by AAU Careers and Copenhagen Capacity. Will be looking into questions and answers from interviews done as a student assistant of YPD with IECP and online interviews used in the paper in the form of transcripts.

All of the data constitutes a convenient sampling (Bryman, 2016) because I work for the program and study within AAU. This being said, I can be considered an inside observer (Bryman, 2016) and this gives me access to communications, documents. Because of my previous work and research on the topic and my own participation in the YPD program last year I considered and selected the data knowing it's great potential in working on clarifying the concept of CC and the influence it has on IECP .
I also had an easy access to the data, this being said we will analyze:

1. Young Professionals In Denmark event Notes from AAU Careers - found in appendix 15.1
2. Questions and Answers for Inspirational Stories of 14 international students and final articles, 12 Q&A's as well as 2 transcripts of online interviews - found in the appendix 15.2
3. Competence clarification presentation pptx from AAU Careers within an YPD event from 2021 - found in appendix 15.3
4. Candidat analysis pptx from AAU Career within an YPD event from 2020 - found in appendix 15.4
3. Questions and Answers for Inspirational Stories Councillors of AAU and Leaders and final articles - found in appendix 15.5

Aiming for the best result in this paper my data had to be diverse to be able to get as much and complex information as possible that will support the research. Notes from specific YPD events that had the aim to improve the IS experience and help them make the first steps in becoming IECP's and grow or set the basis of their own CC. Two sets of Questions & Answers, one with IS, IECP and YPD's and one with counsellors of AAU, leaders, people that help and support the formation of CC.

The Q&A's have been made and used by me in my student job to create inspirational stories that have been published to AAU's website, posted on AAU International Office Facebook page and sent in the regular email towards all AAU students for inspiration and moral support. All the participants have agreed that their data and answers to be public knowledge and the coordinator of the program agreed with the data being used in this master thesis as it follows my previous work on the same topic.

As a researcher I considered relevant o also have presentation from some AAU careers events in the YPD program, one from an event that helps IECP's to shape and find their competences for the job market in this way defining a part of their CC and another one that sets and presents the job market for them in this way guiding them towards their future goals and how to reach them by knowing where to aim.

Currently working as a student assistant for YPD and AAU Careers, being a part of all the AAU environments looked at in this research, a former intern at AAU International Office and a IS in my final semester at CCG facing in my near future employment and ways to get it makes me an active IECP stills defining a CC as a new IS to the danish work culture and danish culture in general. This made me chose this data in this way using convenient sampling.(Bryman, 2016)

I have always been a part of the international IS community in Denmark as a volunteer even before being a master student at AAU and studies in UK as an IS while having a full time job and this give me advantages in working with the data collected being able to work and analyze the data in this new digitalize way force by the pandemic but still having the advantage of experience everything before. The pandemic and COVID-19

certainly changed things for everyone and that has to be taken in consideration and acknowledged.

The pandemic gave me the opportunity to assist and be part, as an employee, intern and student, of the way AAU handled this crisis situation and how it has affected their organizational culture and see the organizational leadership in full crisis. Thus the research became complex and unique giving me unusual situations, knowledge and experiences. Even if everything was socially restrictive as a researcher in this paper I had the advantage of different openings and the data collection.

7. Data analysis

"Finally, I think we believe that when we see an opportunity , we have the duty to work for the growth of that international community of knowledge and understanding with our colleagues in other lands , with our colleagues in competing, antagonistic, possibly hostile lands, with our colleagues and with others with whom we have any community of interest, any community of professional, of human, of political concern. [...] We think of this as our contribution to the making of a world which is varied and cherishes variety, which is free and cherishes freedom, and which is freely changing to adapt to the inevitable needs of change in the twentieth century and all centuries to come, but a world which, with all its variety, freedom, and change, is without nation states armed for war and above all, a world without war." J. Robert Oppenheimer, The Flying Trapeze: Three Crises For Physicists

Discussing about the circumstances in which the data was collected and taking in account all the delimitations and how the research took place the analysis needs to be based on content analysis.

"Content analysis is, of course, a technique that derives from the communication sciences. Today, however, it claims to be able to serve for systematic analysis in a wide range of scientific domains. Modern content analysis,. moreover, no longer targets only the content of verbal material. Both formal aspects and latent meaning content can be also objects of study" (Flick, et. all, 2004, p.266).

Social actors are an active part of all the environments that are needed in the context of this research and the findings are linked and I am able to see things in their perspective approaching thighs with an open-end strategy. The findings of this paper and the reason for them will be having a problem of generalization especially in this type of qualitative research. This method "does not lend itself to the declination of a clear set of linear steps". (Bryman, 2016)

"Cross-case analysis is used when the unit of analysis is a case, which is any bounded unit, such as an individual, group, artifact, place, organization, or interaction" (Mathison, S., 2005, p.129). The accessibility of my observations come from the fact that I am an active participant in all mentioned environments having a multiple role that allows me as a researcher to have an easy choice for triangulation of qualitative data. This is very important as it will make my findings and my data accessible, comparable and allow the reader to see similarities and differences.

Pole & Lampard, 2002, where points of guidance in this paper's endeavours because they allow me to be an observant and still not look for particularities, not giving any specific attention to any elements and creating a flat environment. So in this way I will be a participant, observer, IS, IECP and have an emphasized useful participation especially when reflecting and analyzing. (Pole & Lampard, 2002, pp.70)

IS need a voice, IECP need guidance and advice, AAU staff play a big role in the IS and IECP future path and their CC so to bring some clarity in all this circle and environment this research was born by using quantified data in a form of a case-by-variable data matrix. The participants in the Q&A's were given open questions to give them the possibility of spontaneous reactions and answers (Pole & Lampard, 2002). The data was collected in approximately ten months and the foundation for it started to be built on the first day I became a IS and then a IECP in AAU, Aalborg Denmark.

Existing literature on the topic of this paper was consulted to be able to use coding and being informed on the best ways of doing it influencing the open coding process by this secondary data on the matter. "Coding out performs qualitative content analysis in

research that needs this information in later stages of the analysis, e.g. the exploration of meaning or the study of the construction of narratives." (Gläser & Laudel, 2013, pp.1).

Data driven codes will be found in this paper as well as theory driven and I would like to remind the reader that this happened because of the iterative approach this paper is following.

8. Ethical considerations

As a researcher my aim is to obtain a better understanding of social realities. In the field of qualitative research life is described "from the inside out" and according to Flick et.al (2004) also from the point of view of those social actors who participate.
In this paper I will use this field of research with the scope of drawing attention towards processes, structural features and meaning patterns.

8.1 Trustworthiness

Guba and Lincoln (1985) developed the concept of Trustworthiness, the need of developing this concept came as an alternative method to the criteria of reliability, validity and objectivity. In this research trustworthiness will be used as a concept with the following criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

8.2 Credibility

The same Guba and Lincoln (1985) developed the concept of credibility. The aim was to replace internal validity in qualitative studies.
Findings in this paper are connected only with one institution, AAU and only the one environment consisting in the danish nordic society. The paper will always relate to the theory and will use multiple accounts of the environment's reality. In this way credibility was created in the paper.

8.3 Transferability

Based on the same Guba & Lincoln (1985, p. 359) transferability is useful in the research because it helps in showing the reader the utility of my research in different

contexts. Also how my research and findings could be used and applied in other contexts.

8.4 Dependability

According to Guba & Lincoln (1985) dependability's purpose is to confirm and prove that this paper's findings can be done again over time and that this is a realistic goal. Dependability serves a multiple purpose as it shows also if the findings of the paper are consistent so as a researcher I used the code recode procedure in the scope of obtaining the same findings.

8.5 Confirmability

This concept, confirmability, shows the reader in what way the findings are shaped and helps the reader see in what way the researcher's attitude has affected the findings. Is the researcher biased or the researcher permitted own interests to affect the findings, or if the researcher got affected by personal elements and affected the way the data was collected and the findings did not or did come from there. (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, pp. 319-323). A very important aspect of the research as I am an active student worker for AAU and AAU careers in their CP (YPD), also an international student of AAU, was an active part of International Office AAU as an intern and live in North Denmark as an active member of the community.

9. Analysis and discussion

International Early Career Professionals and Career Culture are major gaps in today's research, literature and society. I would classify them as phenomenons that can not be easily described or analyzed, complex concepts part of a broader organizational culture and organizational leadership. Complex integrated aspects of the modern danish academic life and danish work culture as well as future social and economic growth plans of North Denmark. In this paper these concepts will be analysed and discussed on the basis of activity theory.

"It is not possible to be a scientist unless you believe that the knowledge of the world, and the power which this gives, is a thing which is of intrinsic value to humanity, and that you are using it to help in the spread of knowledge, and are willing to take the consequences." Robert Oppenheimer, 1986, from Rhodes, Richard. The Making of the Atomic Bomb. (761)

All the data collected in my student job with YPD and AAU Careers will be used in this section and support me to analyze the empirical data collected. The Appendix will have all the materials and data collected that will be analysed in this paper and compared to answer this paper's problem formulation: *How International students cope and manage in Aalborg University and how can this influence their future career culture as international early career professionals?*

As a final product of the data collected from the Q&A's we have the final inspirational stories of IS and leaders, counselors of AAU and materials from the CP where I have a student job YPD, that are used to guide and support IS.

The theory chosen, Activity Theory, will be used to analyze all the data in the appendix of this paper and will be used to shed light on true motivations, arguments and tendencies. A main point of the paper will be to follow the intention of internationalization that is present in all the marketing tools of AAU, in theory and presentation but not necessarily in practice. Activity theory is particularly relevant in the context where the cultural aspect is significant, with participants that are in constant change, influencing them to bring modifications to their own purpose and tools. (Hashim & Jones, 2007) The paper aims to also have a closer view at the satisfaction and growing tendencies in this regard, and overall view based on data collected.

The Q&A's that become inspirational stories together with activity theory will be used as main data and consist of the foundation of this paper's analysis and discussion. Activity theory has a well defined role based on the main concept in it: understanding human consciousness after being shaped by experience. The arguments will be validated and supported by the data chosen with the purpose of connecting the theory with the core of

all my academic work within my two years in CCG and AAU with focus on my student job with YPD and AAU Carriers.

A reminder is needed, before we move forward, for the defined new concept of career culture as " the sum of expectations and values that appear indifferent to the environment, matching development and participation based on self reflection." (Stan, 2020, pp.32). In the purpose of addressing and evaluating IECP and the influence AAU and danish life has in their career culture the defined new concept needed to be taken in consideration when constructing the PF. In this way the discussion on how the facilitators, AAU and IECP, think, act, or do in relation to the context they find themselves in becomes relevant and indispensable to their future career plans.

Final findings will then be discussed through the Leont'ev process model of Hierarchical levels of an activity, illustrated below.
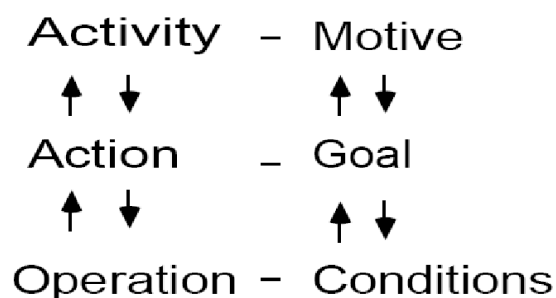
In this paper I will be having in mind the purpose of addressing IS and career culture for the final goal of answering the PF: How International students cope and manage in Aalborg University and how can this influence their future career culture as international early career professionals?

As a researcher there is the need to discuss and address how the facilitators of the career events and YPD as a CP of AAU as well as the IECP taking part in all the events, answering the Q&A's, helping in the advertising of AAU and of the success stories that will inspire future AAU students, how they think and act. It is essential and sensitive for this research to closely analyse what they say and what they do for their future career plans, how they feed their career culture and how they will develop based

on the first two. All the findings will be seen then through the lens of activity theory once again and in particular through Engestroms Expended Activity Theory Model (Engestrom, 2001), see below:
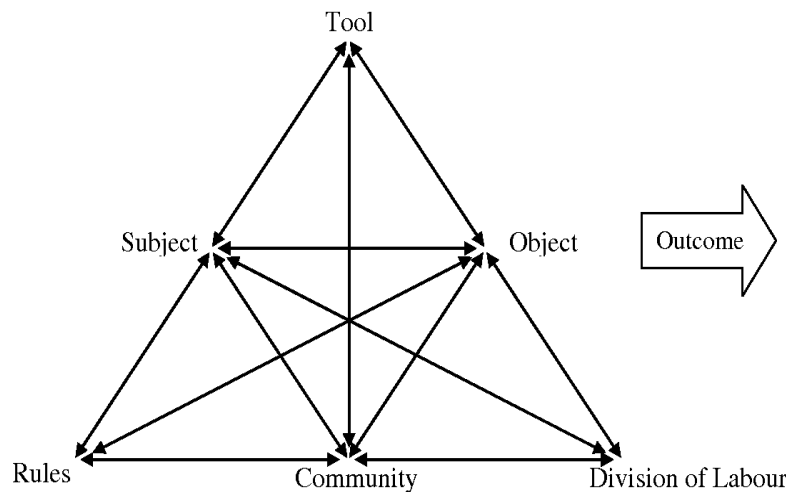
Analysing the data, that can be found in the appendix of this paper, took place in almost two years, a long term process, spreaded over several steps. The first step being my own participation in CCG, YPD and AAU, second step my previous research on YP, IECP and CC, my internship for AAU International office and all my 9 months as a student assistant for AAU Careers as a third step, fourth step the interaction and meetings with internationals from all programs of AAU as a participant in CP and as a AAU employee. And now as a fifth but not final step analysing and looking at the data collected over several weeks to be sure that I look at all the data separately as well as together. The data has been looked at several times and read for the research and also repeatedly when constructing the inspirational stories for AAU Careers. I made sure as a researcher that I understand all the details from the online events by looking over the materials and reviewing it a few times once every 3 or 4 days in the period of one month.

In this paper specific themes were discovered after the process of coding ended. The selection was made because of the repetitive codes that appeared in all the materials from appendix 15.1 to appendix 15.5. The reading of the Q&A's, transcripts from interviews, pptx from YPD events showed similarities as well as differences that lead

into developing the teams. All was done in connection with the data overall and the activity theory. (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) Thus we have unexpected themes, that generated data that allowed me as a researcher to iteratively tie them back to activity theory, and expected themes being more data driven:

Expected Themes:
1. Student job
2. Facilities/Facilitation
3. Expansion/Growth
4. Essential skills
5. Requirements
6. Expanding network
7. Flexibility
8. Expectations

Unexpected Themes:
1. Barriers
2. Uncertainty
3. Tailored applications
4. Relatable

IECP's behavior will in this way be better understood in their life at AAU as IS and we can also more easily see how this can influence their CC in the future through the Leont'ev process model of Hierarchical levels of an activity and in particular through Engestroms Expended Activity Theory Model.

The first lens will be through Engestroms Expended Activity Theory Model by explaining the relation with the above mentioned we will have the IS and IECP activity divided into subject, tool and object, the subject being the IS and IECP, the object being how they cope and manage at AAU and the tool is the CC and how it is influenced as it is the motor that executes actions and activities of IECP. To this we add the rules, represented in our paper by the AAU environment and danish job market, rules that will show how they are a result of social conditioning, and the division of labour representing the

distribution of IECP and IS actions in the community that is in fact affected the most by the two last elements. And so, through all of this, activities of IS and IECP and the influence on their CC can be analyzed.

The second lens will be through the Leont'ev process model of Hierarchical levels where activities of IS and IECP lead to action in their environment and to where these actions compose CC operations. For example the activity is starting a professional life with jobs, internships or projects, one of the actions is to send the personalized cover letters and cv's and reaching out to the network and recruiters is the operation. If IS and IECP are motivated enough to get a job and to adapt in the danish labour market the activity has a motive. On the other hand if the IS and IECP make themselves noticed by their methods of attracting employers the action will have a goal. And all operations come with conditions, the AAU academic international environment, the leaders and councillors of AAU, the difficulties they face as IS which will lead to changes and forming of the IECP mindset and CC into the danish labour market and not only.

9.1 Themes

9.1.1 Student job

Most IS need and have to take student jobs and even full time jobs to be able to support themselves. This is coming alongside all of the other struggles and worries and puts pressure on their CC and on the overall forming process and professional lives: "When thinking about getting a student job in Denmark there were two completely different paths: either getting a low-qualification job where Danish is not needed and amounts for enough working hours to get SU; or looking for a position in any of the research teams at AAU, which is of course much more interesting, although more difficult to find." (appendix 15.2.2)

Compromising and doing whatever they needs to have financial support is not always a path that they want to take but need to if they want to stay and follow their academic dreams as IS and then as IECP their professional ones, so many come already prepared mentally to face the difficult challenges: "I had no high expectations regarding

my first job in Denmark as an international student. From my home country I did some research and I saw that finding a part time job which fits to my experiences or studies will be difficult." (appendix 15.2.6)

Having a different journey can affect their motivation and lead their CC in wrong directions or lead them to give up, to move to different more welcoming environments, there are not many cases that stay strong and decide they will fight with the danish job market: "Finally I found a job as a morning deliverer. I was happy because I found something to do but I was tired because I had to wake up at 3 o'clock and ride bike 30 km per day. It was physical demanding, but I was relieved because the financial pressure has decreased. I was able to look for a better opportunity with new impetus." (appendix 15.2.6)

Alongside the pressure of academia, being in one of the most competitive and challenging universities of the world, IS have to face from day one a different more colder culture, a job market not very welcoming and a economic uncertainty that will not resolve on its on: "When I first arrived in Aalborg I printed my CV and went to most of the restaurants and cafés with the intention to find any student job. That didn't yield any results." (appendix 15.2.8)

When putting pressure on IS you can not expect that they will have good outcomes and especially have a high retention level. Challenging them economically, socially, culturally, academically in an environment presented as one of the happiest in the world is one of the reasons retention is not high. The pressure is imens for IS and IECP, higher than in other countries in particular because of the immense cultural difference, topped up by economic uncertainty: "Having two student jobs as the same time is very challenging, as you have to kinda divide your brain capacity and focus power, which might result in a more shallow and unproductive performance. As of my case, I really need to go extra miles in supplementing/gaining more working experience, hence the decision to keep two."(appendix 15.2.10)

Civil society expects that IS and IECP have more skills than actually needed, to be active, proactive, to contribute in taxes by working, to learn the language while still

doing a full time academic program, to do volunteer work, to be an active international in AAU events while the university is trying to prepare IS for the danish job market but maybe the danish job market is not prepared to be international or AAU does not have the right approach: "I would also add that becoming active in the civil society or having relevant study jobs during studies can actually give you the so-wanted professional experience as well as nurture your network that is proven to be quite important nowadays." (appendix 15.5.3)

Being diverse as an IS has become essential and being active, finding student jobs to start as an IECP has become a normal routine for AAU IS.

9.1.2 Facilities/Facilitation

"So, even though Aalborg may seem like a very monotonic place at the beginning, it is always possible to find something for anyone's taste." (appendix 15.2.2) Aalborg as a big city with good universities has many things to offer when talking about facilities: "One of the most surprising things we found when we moved to Aalborg was the amount of outdoor facilities."(appendix 15.2.2)

AAU has also prepared diverse events, CP and collaboration with the purpose of facilitating a better transition and retention of IS to help IECP make contact with the danish job market: "The job fairs were useful, I realized that everyone can speak English but without Danish language knowledge it is difficult to find a job in the northern region. However, I found a company who was open to tackle with an international student without danish knowledge. We had multiple conversation about an intern position, however due to the corona situation, the company had to change their plans and accepting an intern was no more possible." (appendix 15.2.6)

PBL as a facility is not always as perfect as AAU marketing and management portray it to be. "I had the majority of my group formed of danish colleagues and they talked only in danish sometimes and I felt really left out so it is good to clarify in the beginning if the language spoken will be english for example. It can be really hard feeling left out, you are there and you can not really know what is happening as you do not understand. Maybe it is not the same in every program." (appendix 15.2.7)

Like mentioned before when talking about the pressure of student jobs and economic distress alongside other issues, many internationals decide to take jobs, internships and opportunities elsewhere: "Then I also attended a Kickstart Aalborg meetup/job fair where a couple of startups presented themselves and said if they're looking for anyone. I talked to two of them who were looking for a UX/UI Designer and eventually got a student job at one. This lasted only a couple of months as I moved to another country for the internship."(appendix 15.2.8)

AAU tries to facilitate as many tools and ways towards the danish job market of IS so the CP are specially designed, IECP need guidance and support as well as career events to make contact with employers and the reality of the danish job market: "I kept an active eye out for any opportunities that might come on the internal job network we had within AAU for the students. I also monitored job postings on Facebook groups and LinkedIn..."(appendix 15.2.9)

Counsellors at AAU facilitate events and CP to support and enhance the chances of succeeding in the danish job market of IECP. They have specific and tailored views: "One of the benefits of group or class activities is that the students gets to hear and talk to each other. The find out that they are not the only one with the questions and doubts and that they are often quite resourceful them self and can actually help each other a lot. The best tools and exercises for teaching is those who can facilitate the important talks." (appendix 15.5.1)

The whole idea of having support and creating facilities for IS is strongly connected with interaction and interacting as main principles. This specific theme sets the basis of the overall AAU action plan with IS and IECP's retention. Interaction has to be the start of all plans, even those of collaboration with other institutions and people that can enhance the chances of reducing the retention of IS and make AAU's internationalization process smoother. All IECP are searching to belong so this feeling of belonging has to be helped by interaction and participation in daily AAU and community routines. In their overall process of trying to belong, IS face difficulties that bring them in stages of depression, finding it hard to cope and manage in a foreighn country. "If we look at the work that International House North Denmark, we have among others two specific programs that

could interested our internationals in North Denmark….I think It is important to mention as well that there are several other regional programs that are aimed at internationals. Several municipalities in North Denmark want to attract qualified workforce and population to their cities, and therefore they are offering support to search for a job and moving there."(appendix 15.5.3)

9.1.3 Barriers

Interculturality is a delicate topic, to integrate IS in a flat hierarchy and to assume they have to catch up and unlearn everything that they have learned they entire life in a few months is a part of the failure of the retention strategies: "Coming from the romanian culture I would have said that this is not appropriate as we do not have a flat hierarchy.." (appendix 15.1.)

Without being able to support themselves, IS can not integrate properly or have a normal academic or professional journey: "Based on these and the fact I have to support myself, I decided on my arrival to apply for any position I could. It means I applied for everything from a cleaner to an engineering position."(appendix 15.2.6)

Even though many of them succeed in coping and managing all the obstacles they face the language barrier that is a very common one raised by many danes: "I was lucky enough to get a job in a company where danish wasn't needed since their clients are mostly international, and even though this is the case for other companies, the language barrier is still strong." (appendix 15.2.11)

Putting so much focus on IS to learn danish is somehow ironic as IS have to work, go to their classes, maybe give a family life or social life in a new culture and community, face many issues with logistic issues and child up a network while learning danish. The expectations of an IS are huge and sometimes unrealistic as they do not balance the odds in an international and intercultural community with internationalization plans: "For me, language was always an obstacle I had to face. I got feedback from some companies that I needed to have at least a certain level of Danish language skills to be employed. An NGO even contacted me once to ask about my skills because they planned on hiring me. When I told them that I was just starting to learn Danish, I only

got the feedback that unfortunately that would not be enough, even though I assured them that I was working hard on improving my language skills."(appendix 15.2.12)

The language barrier is mentioned in every interview and Q&A so it is not a singular event or story, this could be something that AAU and the danish job market should work on of they want a higher score in retention of IECP and set realistic goals for them especially when danish is not necessary in the job tasks or does not influence the work performance: "I think the only real challenge of looking for a job as an international here is the language. Many positions, even when the job description is in English, require that you are fluent in Danish, and that's a big obstacle. " (appendix 15.2.13)

Making differences based on selective communication is not really defining danish marketed values or AAU values, some of the IS stories and IECP stories do not portray a international and intercultural environment in which a IECP would like to stay or grow: "Knowing at least a little Danish can make the difference between being able to have a sense of what goes on around you and maybe intervene in English on the one hand, and eating your lunch totally alone every day because nobody wants to switch to English. I have seen this happen in several organizations." (appendix 15.2.13)

When wanting to have professionals and become a more internationalized environment you have to choose your requirements accordingly. AAU has to open more to internationals and create a step by step strategy when it comes to language, as IECP are opened and willing but also need time and space to adapt, work, learn, volunteer, network and so on and doing it all at once leads to them leaving due to too much pressure in an already rigid environment: "All data and experience shows that learning Danish language and culture is central to a career in Denmark. You don't have to be able to talk Danish fluenty but if you can understand the language when some writes you or you are approached then you're a big step ahead a lot of the other internationals. I know it's easy said and hard to do – but it's the truth." (appendix 15.5.1)

9.1.4 Expansion/Growth

IECP are opened as they come to AAU as IS and have already a mindset based on growing and expanding their horizons culturally, professionally and personally: "I hoped for expanding my horizons and getting to know better other cultures that I could not interact with in my home country. Living in a dorm and working in teams with several people makes this process even easier, and I am very pleased with the way this helped me grow as a human being."(appendix 15.2.2)

As part of the danish job market IECP's are asked a lot of personal questions and need to give examples of how they are active members of their community and how they contribute to the wellbeing of it: "How does volunteer work help your daily life? What benefits does it bring? It helped me to meet many nice people and learn a lot from them."(appendix 15.2.3)

The need of retaining of IECP's is very clear by this point: "Denmark needs foreign workers, and its taxpayers generously offer free education and SU to many of us but then, when it comes to entering the job market, I think very little is done to allow us to get integrated and "pay back"."(appendix 15.2.13)

IERCP have developed a CC or are working on improving it so they are the type of people who want and need to be challenged in their professional life: "I wanted to be challenged, get a lot of experience in different areas where I normally maybe wouldn't maybe necessarily get experience with my degree, that was something quite exciting."(appendix 15.2.14)

Career counsellors of AAU play an important part in how IECP define their career culture. "I think for a lot of students and graduates its more a question of identifying their career opportunities than goals as such. Career goals are not absolute or static which means that you can work with your current goals but it doesn't mean that the process is over."(appendix 15.5.1)

9.1.5 Uncertainty

AAU is an institution of high quality, high global ranking and we might say a global point of guidance in academia. Even so AAU seems to be challenged still every day by the intake of IS and trying to transform them into IECP and the biggest challenge of all to retain them. AAU has a mission as an international and intercultural environment to interact with mixed cultures and mixed backgrounds. Perceptions of AAU and future plans should be focused on calming the uncertainty of IS with their new internationalization plans.

The Q&A's have been constructed taking in consideration standard sets of questions from AAU Careers and personalized after my experience as an interviewer with IS, YPD and IECP of AAU in general. The pandemic had to be taken in consideration also as it has affected everyone's social reality and was and still is a big part of IS and IECP's current journey in Denmark : "I did have contacts with some professors at university to join them as a student research assistant, however the uncertainty caused by the pandemic got in the way and we could not make a final agreement."(appendix 15.2.2

The lack of space, personal consideration and time of IECP's in a danish environment is ironic as the basis of the work culture is respect for every employee's opinion, life, personality. So when coming to integrating IECP's why do the danish job market raise the asks and requirements so much: "Like majority of us here, I have had a challenging time developing a strong and reliable network. Besides cultural differences, it can sometimes be tough to adapt to a new environment, especially when your main goal is to focus on the job search."(appendix 15.2.4)

A question has arised when analyzing life as an IS student, is PBL just a tool for the university to look good and IS are integrated just because this is the requirements of being an international university, even global as AAU prezent its goals, or is the desire of integrating IS and an international organizational culture genuine: "There are rules for every group in my study, every group has to have a international student (someone new), it was limited options, and the reason that rule exist is because if only foreigners

form a group they would not know how to upload the projects, how to write in the PBL method, work with the system or maybe it will take them much longer to figure it out." (appendix 15.2.7)

IECP's are introduced and bombarded with informations about the dansih work culture until it becomes a things they avoid. The multitude of information and the way is somehow delivered all at once by AAU can make IS get even more lost, so even though the AAU employees expect IS to research and take in big amount of informations at once all they succeed is to raise negative awareness on the way they communicate "... maybe the challenges lie in the lack of knowledge in understanding the danish working culture and how to apply for a job (in danish way)." (appendix 15.2.10)
"In the beginning, when you just arrive in Denmark, there are many things that make you feel insecure. The people may be different from those back home and you also have to adapt to all the other changed circumstances. If you also only receive rejections because you apply randomly everywhere, I can say from experience that it is really difficult. That's why it's important not to lose your head. " (appendix 15.2.12)

AAU advices and points of view of counsellors can be helpful but also it has to be questioned if their international and intercultural skills acn grasp and support truly the IECP: "I think a good first not no matter how you interpret the question is to get a grasp on yourself and your market. This means looking inward identifying your strongest interests and motivators and your core skills. Then looking outwards and get an idea of "the market" which is where those interests and skills are useful and in demand."(appendix 15.5.1)

IS have a learning process that they are facing on several levels, one of them being how to become an IECP and e opened for the danish job market and that many of them can not do on their own: "Most common challenges of students in general: knowing what they know – meaning the ability to put words to own skills. In addition, following this it is also a challenge for many to know how and where these skills can be used outside of academia." (appendix 15.5.1)

Goals and motivation comes from the environment you are in also, it depends on your personality and culture, but is is highly influenced by community, challenges faced, how one see itself in the future and where: "The first and most important part of navigating in one's career is to identify some kind of "goal". Not necessarily an "end goal" but some pointers that make it easier to find one's way around in the sometimes complex abundance of choices, opportunities and good advice."(appendix 15.5.2)

9.1.6 Essential skills

Many of the personal skills Is do not use in the beginning, they see step by step that especially in Denmark the personal activities and qualities are very important for the future professional life and employer: "Helping my friends at the gym has taught me how to detect and understand the needs of the person in front of me, and in the future that could help me when dealing with customers, a manager, a colleague... anywhere where empathy and attention to detail are essential skills." (appendix 15.2.2)

Balanced life for IS is not very easy to obtain or have. Actually the expectations and requirements of IS bring a big imbalance in the future IECP's daily lives here in Denmark: "What is your point of view of keeping a balanced professional and personal life here in Denmark? For me as an international it was not easy to keep it balanced, since we have to always work harder than Danes in order to find our place in the society, but I always tried to follow my own hobbies next to my job." (appendix 15.2.3)

Making connections and connecting with many people to raise IECP's chances of getting a job is easy to teach for coordinators and leaders of AAU and CP programs. Somewhere along the way they forget the overall picture and the environment in witch IS have to cope and manage so connecting is not the first priority or easy to achieve by that matter: "Similarly, consider adding to the Skills section and asking certain connections to endorse you for them, or asking a former manager to write a personal recommendation. I'd also suggest connecting with recruiters or talent acquisition professionals in industries/companies/locations that are of interest, as they'll often post

not only about opportunities they're involved with, but also will share from within their networks too. Overall, use (and in return, help) your network."(appendix 15.2.5)

IECP's may get lost in all this overloaded environment with requests and expectations from all parties so they can lose track of what they need to present: "One central "mistake" is to only talk about yourself and don't relate your profile and skills to the job ad or in terms of linkedin to what you are looking for. Student don't think about that they need to help the employer understand what it is they can do and how this is relevant for the employer and their business."(appendix 15.5.1)

Speaking a new language besides dansih and all other things an IECP has to do can be easy if coordinated or helped. IECP's need to be coordinated as they easily lose their path and coordination in a nre and overloaded with expectations enviroment: "Many students have a hard time translating what they can help companies with. Even though you have many usable and great competencies they need to be translated into the "language" of the company. Good communication in about getting people to hear what you want them to hear – and it is worth the hard work to tell them what you can do for them in their language." (appendix 15.5.2).

9.1.7 Tailored applications

Being just a simple IECP is not considered sufficient or meeting current requirements anymore: "I tailored my CV and did a cover letter that they appreciated because they said it was very specific to the job requirements." (appendix 15.1.)

To be a successful IECP you need to be creative, original and to demonstrate more than writing a common Cv and intent letter. IECP's have to personalize all materials sent specifically on the company chosen: "Competition in Denmark is high among job-seekers, which means that a lot of effort has to be put in each and every application to tailor it as much as possible to the specific position and company. Many times companies look for a candidate with a very specific set of skills. "(appendix 15.2.2)

CC has to be based on self reflection, on finding the correct competencies that the future employer is able to use in his advantage: "I have specifically tailored my CV for this opportunity, and I created a detailed cover letter that would empathize on my achievements and skills. " (appendix 15.2.4)

IECP's are expected also to find new ways of impressing the employers, to address their company in an original way and in the same time show them how they can help them grow their business or how they can bring value to the company: "I have updated my CV with richer keywords that reflect directly and clearly the skills and competences that I acquire during the study programme, projects work and previous part time jobs....In job applications, I tried to tailor the CV and motivation, as well as direct contribution that I can bring to the positions."(appendix 15.2.10)

AAU counsellors talk about the consequences of an untailored application: "I often see applications that doesn't really relate to the position it is meant to be related to. Imagine the company's perspective – what would they like to know and what would they consider relevant? Be sure to include them and their challenges and current projects – and how you can help them solve the challenges and complete their projects." (appendix 15.5.2)

9.1.8 Requirements

IECP"s have to put in extra effort, to show more interest and earn the right to an interview: "...an extra effort has to be put in the cover letter to show the recruiters that you deserve the job even if you do not meet some of the requirements. "(appendix 15.2.2)

IECP's are asked to know danish at different levels, sometimes even if it is not required for the tasks of the job creating more pressure and making a selection of what they really want to hire: "Without Danish language knowledge and network it is really difficult.

However, as a newcomer it is impossible to have network and danish is not a common language to learn it in my home country." (appendix 15.2.6)

IECP's have to demonstrate that they are sociable, that they are good at teamwork and that they do not work in an individualistic way as it is not the danish way: "Workplaces are searching for people who can work with people even if you are professionally perfect they will look into your personal level and how you can interact and work with others."(appendix 15.2.7)

IECP's have to be active and proactive on linkedin as it is the biggest hiring platform in Denmark and the one that employers use the moust to check one's network, recommendations, skills, projects: "Having an updated and organized LinkedIn profile was something I realized was very important from the start. It's not required for student jobs but becomes a must when looking for a full-time job or an internship. Most of the companies ask for your LinkedIn profile when applying online. Recruiters use LinkedIn profiles to get screen candidates, so making a good first impression there is good to have." (appendix 15.2.9)

IECP's have to always be open as they never know where an opportunity may arise especially when they do not come as easily in the north of Denmark: "Be open to new experiences and opportunities. Be methodical in your approach and be proactive in looking out for job openings. Make sure that your presentation on paper is as good as in real life because most of the jobs would screen you that way. "(appendix 15.2.9)

IECP's have to get acquainted with the danish work culture by any means, employers expect IECP's to already know how danish companies work: "...danish working culture, I think that is quite important, as you know there is a very flat hierarchy and managers actually want your input, like when they ask you for it.Just in general I think it is very important to be aware of danish working culture and to be ready to adapt to that in some way."(appendix 15.2.14)

9.1.9 Expanding network

Networks seem to be matters that count more and more each day, even in a digital era or I might say even more now than ever. All issues and problems that need solutions and answers have a starting point and in all of our career related issues in IECP's lives networks appear as a central focus. The addition is the need of expansion that conditions the rate of succeeding of IECP. In all materials studied and the data gathered, network and advice on how to expand it are very common. I will back this statements up with some parts of the data, like for example:

"As a matter of fact, one of the best ways of expanding your network is to try and find new people which share those same hobbies you had in your home country. If you want to become friends with the Danes then most of the effort will have to come from you probably, and always keep in mind that building solid and durable relationships takes time and care, so do not give up. "(appendix 15.2.2)

It is not enough anymore that the networks IS, YPD and IECP forme to be only with friends, colleagues, family, professors or people unrelated to own field, because the requirements are much higher and the expectations raised to levels that need expanding with having and adding contacts that can build up IECP's image, can add professional value and support the professional qualities of an IECP as asked by employers now. Also the IECP's need to contribute more, put more effort in marketing themselves and creating a good professional image and appearance: "...but focus on the quality of your own page and communicate with your network. Consider reaching out to people, whether to ask about their company's culture or what their job is like or what skills are required. Most people will be willing to give some insight and even advice." (appendix 15.2.5)

Some IECP's manage to land jobs by recommendation, this type of IECP's have personal skills that support them more socially and create bonds and connections easier: "I have never attended a job fair, nor have I ever sent an unsolicited application. All the jobs I landed were somehow recommended to me from somebody in my network."(appendix 15.2.13)

9.1.10 Relatable

Relating to the other students as an IS can be another challenge and a situation in which coping can be hard: "As a new student it can be challenging as other colleagues can know each other from their bachelor program and you may feel left out. It is different but also a learning curve that can bring satisfaction and help you evolve. Negative experiences are also helpful if you learn from them."(appendix 15.2.7)

As IECP's find it hard to cope and manage in a new environment it is the same with employers, they have a hard time in getting to know IECP from a piece of paper or online application so IECP's have to make them understand who they are: "While writing the cover letter, I made sure to establish parallels between the job requirements posted and my skills and achievements. This helps the reader understand your profile from their perspective and makes it easier. "(appendix 15.2.9)

Adaptability and being able to relate are pillars to a successful attitude and result: "My easiness to build bridges and speak several languages also made me become closer to both danes and many other internationals, gathering inspirations and ideas that I use nowadays. "(appendix 15.5.3)

9.1.11 Flexibility

There is a limit to IS and IECP's flexibility, a limit that is set not necessarily by themselves but by the place of study, location, community, economic predicaments and they find themselves in impossible situations of having opportunities but not able to take advantage of them in the location of study. Many IECP feel obligated to move towards Copenhagen or the south part of Denmark because the dansih job market is more flexible, opened, internationalized than in the north. So although AAU is famous for the academic programs it offers and the PBL method, IS and IECP struggle with the inflexibility and conservative organizational culture in the organization and in the job market of the area. "I contacted my ex-colleagues who work in Denmark to be referred

for engineer jobs. However, those positions were full-time positions in Copenhagen region which was not in my scope due to my studies in Aalborg."(appendix 15.2.6)

Many IECP's agree with temporary solutions that become permanent or boost their career and professional life, the goal is to do something as not trying leads to failure: "I agreed that time to work there, while I took into consideration, I have to commute in total 5 hours per workday. I planned to spend those hours to work on my project, read articles in order to spend time usefully."(appendix 15.2.6)

Many IECP's are opened and willing, they try harder, they work more and try to demonstrate that they are suitable and ready to be in the danish job market: "Drawing on my example, I have always been interested in the Danish culture and language. I think that these two aspects can be play a vital role in any employer's decision when hiring internationals. Just like in any other part of the world, by knowing the language and the culture you will have better chances to understand the reality around you, make friends and show your enthusiasm for working and staying in the region." (appendix 15.5.3)

Volunteering is seen as a door to the danish community and has helped many IECP's in opening some doors and stay in the danish job market: "If I can, I would honestly recommend you to try out several jobs or volunteering in different organizations from different industries and find what you really are passionate for. You might not start with your dream job anyway, but you will know how to get there way easier".(appendix 15.5.3)

9.1.12 Expectations

All IS come to AAU having hopes and dreams, they come prepared and willing to try what they can to make this experience work: "Of course, my expectations after graduation are higher, during my university years I am participating several events to make myself more suitable to Danish labour market. Eg. learning danish, culture and build network." (appendix 15.2.6)

IS have some expectations from PBL by the way it is marketed and a lot of the times this do not meet reality making their academic life and stay at AAU difficult. Some IS figure it out on their own but a lot of them find themselves without proper guidance and end up in wrong matches and inappropriate groups that will not only affect their academic life and performance but the building of their CC and their future professional life and self confidence: "Feeling appreciated in the group work is very important, for me it increased my self awareness and my confidence. It is crucial also in group work to not feel bad when asking for help, or to be looked down at because you need support. Make sure you team up with supportive people, more open colleagues, as they will make a big difference in the group work and group's dynamic. Your team members can influence your motivation. "(appendix 15.2.7)

Even though IS and IECP's are extremely open, flexible and willing, they still face the language barrier by the expectations employers show or members of their environment in the danish job market: "... many Danes are extremely stubborn when it comes to sticking to their own language and will very gladly isolate foreigners and straight up pretend they do not exist, rather than switching to English."(appendix 15.2.13)

Expectations and having them help many IECP's stay grounded and focused in still having and achieving their goals: "You should also be aware that interests, motivation and goals change over time – and they are allowed to. That's why it makes sense to stop every once in a while a evaluate your current path and goals (both short and long term)."(appendix 15.5.1)

The data in appendix 15.3: competence clarification presentation pptx from AAU Careers, appendix 15.4: candidat analysis pptx from AAU Careers where chosen to add support and back up to the way CP work with IS and IECP and to show a basis to the affirmations and answers in the Q&A's of all participants.

9.2 Expected findings

Internationalization is a very long and sensitive process, and a big part of it is self reflection.The counsellors and managers of AAU should reconsider the steps taken towards the retention of IECP as it is clearly not functioning as it is. Being able to relate and work with IECP comes from own experience, making IECP's feel understood and making them relate comes from a specific mindset that is very different from the danish mindset, a mindset that is currently working on opening and becoming international. The challenges a IS is facing within AAU have to be tackled without taking in account what is correct and just only for the danish community but for the overall community as a whole, in the end that is what internationalization means, to make room for internationals and find ways for all civil society to function efficiently.

9.3 Unexpected findings

AAU currently has an international and intercultural environment that is forever changing so the connectivity between themes found in the data and this paper's PF is exactly this environment that generates contact change. Networks, expanding the networks, targeted applications tailored within the network with a international and intercultural must have attitude are still changing so participation is needed to plan.

AAU as a international well ranked university has to rise up to the requirements and find ways of supporting IS and help IECP in finding the best paths to adapt to the danish work culture and the correct CC that will fit in the danish job market. A balanced way to help IS without putting so much pressure on them while making them feel welcomed and understood, giving them a sense of belonging so they can stay.

10. Conclusion

AAU and the danish job market have become, by their own choosing, an intercultural and international setting. This being said we can conclude that in this kind of environment everyone has the responsibility of creating equilibrium, to function and strive so that all participants to the social reality can be active and happy. That entails that every social actor does what they can do best, and what is in their power and

capacity of doing, for a positive outcome and for a proactive common environment with all participants of the intercultural and international environment.

Talking specifically about AAU, this high ranket sustainable and international, global university a special attention is set on the amount of work that has to be put in in IS, staff has to be interculturally prepared to work with youth to obtain good balanced result and raise the retention of IECP in the danish job market. This entails a much more open and truthful approach towards IS to help them have a belonging sentiment and to relate to their AAU environment in this way creating a balanced environment in their academic community as well as having more confidence and openness towards danish working culture and danish language. Currently IS and IECP are asked and expected to be more flexible than others, more adaptable, relatable, more understanding and focused on adapting and improving.

The desire of AAU growing internationalization process seems to be more defined by the brand and marketing of inspirational stories, success storied witch should paint a good and positive picture of being an IS of AAU and how easy and reachable the goal of success in the professional life of IECP in the danish job market is when in fact this is very hard to reach and handle at all levels. We could conclude alongside the themes seen through the theory that IS can cope and manage at AAU if they have strong personalities and endure a harsh culture with prominent conservative ideas that still struggle to become international at a global scale.

The answer to this paper's problem formulation: **How International students cope and manage in Aalborg University and how can this influence their future career culture as international early career professionals?**, can be seen in the themes discussed and analysed and also in the comments and small conclusions in the beginning of this chapter.

IS, IECP and especially CC are very broad concepts that I analysed, found and defined as major gaps in literature and social reality but unfortunately did not gather as much data as planned due to a worldwide pandemic, Interactions and face to face encounters, communications are vitals to this papers problem formulation so the work done with the

data able to collect concludes partially but still require in depth research when the pandemic is over. The aim in the future is to work with IECP and help them integrate in the danish job market and raise retention of IS in Denmark overall.

IS see coping and managing in AAU as a necessity as well as a challenging part of their life overall and most of the time they end up leaving Denmark. The IS that manage to find ways to better cope and manage the AAU life become IECP and start worrying about the danish job market and how to cultivate a good CC and grow their chances of a good professional life and achieving their goals.

It is not sure whether or not the findings from this paper would be surprising in 10 years because of the increasing focus on IECP, IS, International migration of study & work force and CC in society. The shift in how we see IECP, IS and its relationship to career culture, career opportunities and opportunities in danish society might have already happened, which would make the findings less surprising than they are at this very moment.

Another aspect is that it could be unsure if IECP will face the barriers it is facing today in 10 years. One of the reasons could be that the general knowledge about career culture among IECPs could rise because of the increased focus on for example the International career culture in the society. This could indicate that lack of knowledge would not be as big a barrier in 10 years if this were the case.

The last aspect that could have changed the findings could be the pressure IECPs feel from their own network, studies, coordinators and employers. In this note a tool that could have proven very useful considering the circumstances and the pandemic times, would have been my own professional experience. Primarily starting as a simple international student at Culture Communication and Globalization part of AAU and the danish higher educational system. Being a participant in the Young Professional in Denmark program by AAU Careers in 2019 then a student assistant for the same program in 2020 has surely opened my views and given me internal knowledge on the international students perspectives. Also doing my internship at AAU International office

and interacting also with the people that deal with exchange students as well as full time international students made me see all sides of the coin.

This will be the start of my future work with international students or internationals seeking for opportunities in North Jutland. My projects, work, networking and structures based on international students throughout my academic journey as a master student at AAU is the foundation for my future work. Developing all this new knowledge, working, studying and discovering a part of the gaps and notions that could help internationals, if developed and debated, made my CCG journey worthwhile and relevant.

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12. Appendix

15.1. Young Professionals In Denmark event Notes from AAU Careers

YPD Talks- 6th of January 2021
Invited - Alexa Hartaganu-Chincisan (former YPD from 2019 - 2020)

Alexa started with her presentation.

- 7 years ago she knew she wanted to pursue this career and because Romania did not have this kind of opportunities she looked for studies in other countries. This is how she ended up having a bachelor's degree in hospitality and tourism management in Denmark, her choice of place to study was made because she liked the practical way in which the studies are done. Currently she is in the 9th semester at Culture Communication and Globalization master from AAU.
- Switched from Romania, Spain and Denmark all her life, living in all three countries for several years, Romania being the native country. This developed her sense of internationalization more and gave her inspiration in future plans.
- She started with a dream to pursue a career in tourism but diverted to HR as an intern and now an intern at NTU International as a project assistant and her CV is half HR and half marketing.
- The master in CCG was the first step toward her new goals, supporting herself financially by taking a job as a waitress in a small bistro
- Advise: do not be afraid of pursuing a job that is different than the experience you have. Keep your CV simple and clear.Take time to get to know yourself better, do what brings you joy. Get to know what you really want to do.

Questions:
1. What was the process for searching and applying for an internship? When did you start and how did it all happen? (Irina Tinca)

    - I started in December, got an interview in January and a second interview around February and that is when I was accepted for my internship which started in August so a super early process. I would encourage you to do the same as there is a big competition outhere.

2. Were you looking only in Aalborg or were opened to other possibilities, options? (Martina)

    - For me it is a bit different, when I started NTU had already a collaboration with Aalborg University and even from my study times I knew I wanted to be an intern here and the first change I got I just took it.

- Lotte: In that sense you were really lucky because other people have to apply to several companies.

3. Elaborate about the process? You said you had two job interviews. What were some of the questions they asked and how did you prepare for it? (Lotte)

    - I tailored my CV and did a cover letter that they appreciated because they said it was very specific to the job requirements.
    - Beside the usual questions, tell me about yourself, why should we hire you and where I see myself in 5 years, they asked a lot of tailored and specific questions about the platforms they use. Asked me how experienced I am with Linkedin.

4. What questions do they generally ask the candidate? Are there questions about competencies matching with requirements?If they asked about your past experience. (Amin)
    - Mostly the classic questions.

5. What was your response to the question: Where do you see yourself in 5 years? (Lotte)

    - I'm pretty sure I am going to be in Denmark, that was my answer. That makes me really happy and I see myself in Aalborg and with them. It shows them you planned ahead.

6. What does a typical day at your internship look like? (Christian)

    - I am part of the big team witch mean that the project receives some proposal and we have to read the terms of reference that usually describes what the project is about, how many people we need to hire, what the budget is and so on and then usually I look for experts and because this projects are coming from the european bank or commission we have to have very strict templates. Most of the time I tailor CV's according to those templates and talk to new recruits about onboarding and so on.

7. You said the network is very important. Did you know someone in this company? (Gesine)

    - Yes, first of all AAU had a collaboration with them and I guessed that someone should have a contact there. Then a fellow YPD used to work there so I just contacted her and she put me in contact with another contact who was also working there and this is how I got the email from the hiring manager.
    - Another colleague contacted me about how my job is and showed interest in my day to day routine at my job, if they are hiring and so on. I think that is very smart because in this way you can have a better idea if you would like the job and if you want to apply rather than applying and ending up not liking it.

8. Do you have any specific advice for networking as an introvert? (Christian)
    - For me my biggest issue is that I am shy and do not ask questions about the company thinking that they assume I should be knowing that. If I am interested they will assume I should be knowing the answer. But they explain and answer the questions.
    - Lotte: they could also assume that you put a lot of thought in the question. It is always nice when people are finding your job interesting.

- Alexa: When I was working as a waitress, actually, I met a hiring manager once, and from a simple conversation as her waitress she ended up inviting me to have coffee and talk more about her company. Coming from the romanian culture I would have said that this is not appropriate as we do not have a flat hierarchy, or maybe I would not go, but she was super kind and made me feel very comfortable.

9. How did you get to go for coffee with the hiring manager?How did the conversation go? (Lotte)
   - We started talking about nationality, as there was like a game in the bistro owned by a danish chef but only with internationals working there, when customers asked where you are from we made them guess. After she answered and did not guess, told her and had a laugh and did some jokes.
   - I was straight to the point, told her I have an internship and that I am graduating and she straight away offered her linkedin contact and willingness to talk more.

10. What are your next steps now? You are graduating this summer. What are your plans? (Lotte)
    - Truthfully speaking I hope I will get offered a student job here and stay in this environment as I like it. If not after graduating I will contact the hiring managers at NTU again.

11. Why are you not thinking about speaking with your managers about the future now? (Lotte)
    - Because I really like what I am doing now.
    - Lotte: our advice to everyone is always keep close and in contact, especially with managers.

Note from Christian: Networking is about giving perspective also, not only about taking. So it is a give and take process. It is flattering to be asked questions about what you do, people like that.

Amin talked about how he has been in contact with Siemens since December and needs a reference, asked if he can give a contact from YPD AAU Cariers Team, Lotte accepted. He has been asked about what were his competencies for this job, salary expectations and checking presentation abilities and how he communicates. They also asked about life in DK. The next step was a second meeting with the hiring manager. He presented himself with a power point. They asked many technical questions.
Amin is waiting now for the last part of the interview.
Lotte: Did you feel at any point that you are stepping on thin ice?
Amin: I watched some youtube interviews and had some previous experiences with interviews. I gave confident answers, straight and clear.
Lotte: It seems you were very prepared, the stories are very important when you answer questions, a simple yes or no does not suffice.
Amin: I had notes and used all my notes and points prepared.

Lotte: Alberto you wrote suggesting about an event regarding negotiating at a job interview in DK, very good suggestions.
Alberto: I know in Spain how to negotiate but do not know how to discuss and negotiate working conditions in DK
Lotte: example about private pension in the public sector and private sector

Irina: She talked about her experience with the first exam in AAU, the first PBL experience, there were 4 people and she thinks that is too many, 2 members had major communication problems, they struggled

with the PBL structure and had to reorganize with the help of the supervisor. Now she is rethinking all the process and reflecting on what she learned and how she finalized this process.

15.2. Questions and Answers for Inspirational Stories Students and final articles

15.2.1 Andreea

BEING NEW AND FINDING PURPOSE

Being new in Denmark can be quite intimidating. Here, Andreea shares with you how being part of the Young Professionals in Denmark programme and seizing every opportunity helped her.
Last modified: 25.08.2020
EVERY STEP MADE COUNTS
It's overwhelming when everything is new. You lose your sense of comfort, you need to do everything from scratch, you may feel lost or alone, one thing is for sure; It is not easy or pleasant, new beginnings are hard for everyone.
I enrolled in the Master programme Culture, Communication and Globalization in Aalborg University and got accepted. After that a whole new world opened.
A lot of fears and insecurities tormented me; Am I good enough? Will I be able to manage all of these changes? After over 10 years from my bachelor degree will I still be up for the task? Will my competencies and qualities be good enough?
All of this started to disperse when I got accepted as well in the Young Professionals in Denmark programme where I found friends, new experiences, a place where I felt supported and gathered new strength to make my next steps in this new world in front of me.
The most important question would be how I got there? Well, by listening, by interacting, by actively participating and by just trying. You need to be out there knocking on doors.

"TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF"
The Young Professionals in Denmark programme gave me the opportunity to expand my network, to see more clearly what is important in Denmark's guidelines and how to work with myself better.
Every company visit opened my eyes by observing not only the employers but also the participants. This is because I strongly believe that we have so many things to learn from every experience we go through.
The Young Professionals in Denmark programme made me feel valued and gave me the support and tools to evolve.
Despite any obstacles, I went to every single event – not necessarily because all of them were relevant for the professional plans I had, or because I had some direct interest in the company – but to seize any opportunities. Because you can never grow if you are not open to being in other environments different from your own.
So now my answer to the question "Tell me about yourself" is clearer and set in my mind.
Step out of the comfort zone and put in that extra effort, it will be worth it.

OPEN YOUR HORIZONS TO WHAT YOU CAN LEARN AND WHO YOU CAN MEET
Always be active, show who you are by being part of the community, of all of its aspects and getting involved.
During this past year, I had the privilege to volunteer in a few organisations.

In ELSK Aalborg International, I was part of the social media team where I met many other internationals and was able to participate in activities.

In UNYA Aalborg, I took part in many gatherings and activities about sustainability. This gave me the opportunity to go to meetings with the municipality and expand my views about the Aalborg community and enrich my network.

I also volunteered to be a reader in Nine Lessons and Carols, which is a beautiful, traditional event in Budolfi Cathedral where music, songs and readings related to Christmas interchange. At this event I participated alongside wonderful people; rectors from AAU and UCN, the leader of International House North Denmark, international and Danish students, organists and choir from Budolfi Cathedral, as well as the university chaplains.

I had many company visits with the Young Professionals in Denmark programme that brought me to places I would have never seen on my own and managed to hear so many interesting and good stories that enlarged my horizon. All unique and unforgettable experiences that lead me where I am today. Experiences that came to me because I searched for the opportunities and jumped to the chance to participate in them.

EVERY ACCOMPLISHMENT HAS A PIECE OF YOU IN IT

It's all about experiences, about how you use your time and how you build your network. Put that extra effort in, show interest, be proactive, get involved and participate. Ask for help, listen to your colleagues and teachers, create relationships and grow. We cannot do it alone. Be flexible and prioritize, learn how to manage your tasks in alignment with your abilities. Be always open to explore and learn especially when trying to set roots in Denmark.

Young Professionals in Denmark is a complete and complex experience, another stage in my professional life, now I embark on my next adventure as a student assistant for AAU Career and as an intern for AAU International office. Looking forward to what will come next.

Link to article: https://www.careers.aau.dk/stories/show/being-new-and-finding-purpose.cid480888

15.2.2 Alberto

Q/A - professional time and leisure activities in Denmark

Name: Alberto Barragán Moreno
Age: 25
Education: MSc. Energy Engineering, specialization on Mechatronic Control Engineering
Year of graduation: 2021
Job: none
Company/Organization (if several student jobs/full time jobs, please add): none
Nationality: Spanish

1. What were your hopes/dreams for jobs and activities during your studies in Denmark?

When thinking about getting a student job in Denmark there were two completely different paths: either getting a low-qualification job where Danish is not needed and amounts for enough working hours to get SU; or looking for a position in any of the research teams at AAU, which is of course much more interesting, although more difficult to find. In my case, the preference was the latter, but I did not mind working as cook, cleaner, etc. just as a means to have my own economic support. I did have contacts with some professors at university to join them as a student research assistant, however the uncertainty caused by the pandemic got in the way and we could not make a final agreement.

In terms of activities, being aware of the rich mix of nationalities and cultures in Denmark, I hoped for expanding my horizons and getting to know better other cultures that I could not interact with in my home country. Living in a dorm and working in teams with several people makes this process even easier, and I am very pleased with the way this helped me grow as a human being.

2. How do you spend your free time in DK and how does it help and support your professional life?

In my spare time what I enjoy the most is cooking, specially with friends. I am always on the hunt for new recipes and inspiration. One of the good things about living in an international dorm is that we organize "international dinners", so I get to taste food from all over the world. I also love movies, which is a very nice hobby for the hygge-filled winter evenings. In spring and summer I like to enjoy life outdoors: going downtown, walking in the forest, playing sports and swimming at Fjordparken... we even did a camping trip to the beach in Blokhus! So, event though Aalborg may seem like a very monotonic place at the beginning, it is always possible to find something for anyone's taste.

3. How did you get to be a trainer in Denmark?

When I first arrived to my dorm, one of my neighbors gave me a tour around the facilities and explained to me how everything worked. At some point we got to the basement and then I realized we had a gym. It was pretty basic, but it was free and had everything I needed. After a few months working out a friend asked me if he could join one day to try it out, since he had never been too much into exercise. And so we did it. I prepared a basic routine for him and he liked so much that we started working out together three times a week. After him came two more friends, and a few weeks ago another one joined. Now we all go to the gym together and have a great time. As time goes by and they make progress I teach them new and more complex exercises, always making sure they have the right positions so they do not hurt themselves. It is very fulfilling to see them gain interest in improving their health and to become fitter and stronger each week.

4. How does your leisure activities and being a trainer affect your CV – and your future career possibilities in Denmark (e.g. what competencies do you get from these activities)?

Helping my friends at the gym has taught me how to detect and understand the needs of the person in front of me, and in the future that could help me when dealing with customers, a manager, a colleague... anywhere where empathy and attention to detail are essential skills. I have also become organized in a different way to the academic one: I have to observe how they do the exercises and how they progress, and then change or adapt the routine based on that. Most of the time I have to figure out how to get this information myself, since sometimes their feedback is scarce. This is normal: when we do things the wrong way, we usually tend to think we are right. Finally, I have also learned how to be a better "salesman". I had to design the workouts in such a way it was fun and entertaining so they would not quit after a couple of days.

5. Which challenges did you experience when applying for a job in Denmark (if any)? Did your free time activities help expand your network?

Competition in Denmark is high among job-seekers, which means that a lot of effort has to be put in each and every application to tailor it as much as possible to the specific position and company. Many times companies look for a candidate with a very specific set of skills. If you are not a complete match but still want to apply, then an extra effort has to be put in the cover letter to show the recruiters that you deserve the job even if you do not meet some of the requirements. Of course, living abroad means that some language barriers will appear, but I am learning Danish so that this stops being a problem in the future. From what I have learned so far, when recruiting graduates, many Danish companies are not so focused on finding a certain set of skills, but they are more interested in getting to know the person behind the CV. In this respect, my spare time activities serve as a means for the company to get a better idea of how I work, how I relate to other people, and if I will be a nice addition to their ranks.

6. Which advice would you give international students who struggle in their social life in Denmark or do not know how to adapt their leisure activities to danish culture?

I think it is important to take it easy and go step by step. Moving abroad is a great opportunity to broaden one's own comfort zone by discovering new activities, sports, culture, food... but that does not mean to leave behind your old hobbies. As a matter of fact, one of the best ways of expanding your network is to try and find new people which share those same hobbies you had in your home country. If you want to become friends with the Danes then most of the effort will have to come from you

probably, and always keep in mind that building solid and durable relationships takes time and care, so do not give up. In general, try not to become frustrated or anxious if some of the people you meet at the beginning do not crystallize into lifetime friendships. We have all been through this. In time, you will find a group of people who you really enjoy spending time with, and they with you. Lastly, learn to enjoy and appreciate your time with your own company.

7. Tell us a bit more about doing sports and being a trainer in DK.

One of the most surprising things we found when we moved to Aalborg was the amount of outdoor facilities. One would think that, given the not-so-nice weather most of the year, Danes would rather spend time with their acquaintances fortified in their vanguard-design houses. But they do not. They actually love life outdoors, as soon as a couple of sun rays make it through the thick, gray Danish sky. There are plenty of sport courts all around town, and many of them are free for anybody to use: football, volley ball, swimming pools,... there even are camping tables with small grills to do your own barbecue with friends. So yes, Aalborg is a very nice place for those who love sports or try new ones out.

8. Do you have anything to add?

For anybody moving abroad to start new studies or a new career: be curious, be active, explore, find the things you are passionate about and share them with the world. Talk to people, those who think like you and, specially, those who have drastically different points of view than you do. Learn, teach, share, debate. Dive into the local culture and traditions. Find a buddy or language partner if you are in it for the long run. Be empathetic. Keep your mind open and your plans flexible. Expect the unexpected and adapt fast. Set clear goals and be patient. You will pour a lot of effort and care to achieve them, but it all be worth it when you get there.

Link to final article:

https://www.careers.aau.dk/stories/show/how-your-spare-time-activities-are-valuable-in-your-job-search.cid500090

15.2.3 Alireza

Q/A – Experiencing life as a PHD in Denmak
Name: Alireza Matbouei
Age: 34
Education: PhD in Energy Technology
Year of graduation: 2021
Years/semesters studying in Denmark: 4 years
Job: Project manager

Company/Organization: AAU
Nationality: Iranian

1. What were your thoughts/dreams regarding your professional life in Denmark? – Why did you become a PHD in Energy Technology? ***I chose to come to Denmark among lots of other options that I had including PhD in the US and Germany, since I was interested in moving on majoring in sustainable energy and Denmark was the best place to make the dream come true.***

2. How was your road towards becoming a PHD at AAU? Did you have any difficulties? ***As an non-EU citizen my path to PhD in AAU was not easy at all and needs months of preparation including language tests, visa and so on.***

3. How was the process of becoming a PHD (e.g. did you follow up after a contact from a contact in your network, contact through a person in your list that you previously knew, was it unsolicited or unplanned, did you expand your network in this way too etc.)? ***I did not have any network in Denmark, so I just followed the normal applying procedure as most of other PhDs.***

4. How did you start doing volunteer work and why? Where do you volunteer***? I was social enough to get to know many people and groups. I was doing some volunteer work both in the campus and in the city.***

5. How does volunteer work help your daily life? What benefits does it bring? ***It helped me to meet many nice people and learn a lot from them.***

6. Did you experience any challenges being an international in Denmark in your professional life? If so, how did you manage them? ***Yes, as an international I had many challenges including language, culture, climate, finding job and so on. I just tried to overcome all the burdens with hard working and high spirit.***

7. Which advice would you give international students who want to pursue a career in Denmark? ***First, you should check if your field of study is in need in Denmark and improve your Danish language as much as possible.***

8. What is your point of view of keeping a balanced professional and personal life here in Denmark? ***For me as an international it was not easy to keep it balanced, since we have to always work harder than Danes in order to find our place in the society, but I always tried to follow my own hobbies next to my job.***

9. What would you think are the most important ways to get the best from AAU life and Danish life? ***In my opinion the best way to live here is to be yourself and stick to your roots and culture. In this way, you can be successful no matter what job you have.***

10. Any tips and tricks for the internationals pursuing a career here in Denmark? (for example engaging in volunteer work, making the community tool useful by starting conversations, making

danish friends, how to endorse or be endorsed and recommended, are the groups useful and so on?) **My advice is to just be improve your skills and be proud of yourself, you will find your way. There is no shortcut to success.**

11. Do you have anything to add? **Good luck**

15.2.4 Alexa

Q/A – International students on landing an internship and student job in Denmark
Name: Alexa Hartaganu-Chincisan
Age: 24
Education: Culture, Communication and Globalization
Year of graduation: 2021
Job: Project Assistant
Company/Organization (if several, please add): NTU International
Nationality: Romanian

1. What were your dreams/wishes for your internship before applying? And how does this match the internship position you got?

Up until the point when I arrived in Denmark, I knew this beautiful country would have a lot to offer. Once I have settled in, I realized that all the good things they say about the Scandinavian culture, are true. When it comes to my internship, I decided to challenge myself and start working in something new to me – project management.
Needless to say, I expected to have a rough start, however, NTU International has made my journey much more insightful and simpler than I ever expected. I had a smooth learning curve, with constant progress and added responsibilities that made me feel secure as an intern and professional.

2. How did you search for/discover available internship positions in Denmark (e.g. databases or contacting companies/organizations)?

I have heard about NTU International though my university and I have always dreamt of having a project collaboration with them. My project turned into a different direction; however, my goal was still centered around this company. Once I had the chance to apply for an Internship, I did. A few months later, I started this inspiring journey.

3. How was your process of applying for internships (e.g. how did you prepare your CV and Cover letter and who did you contact)?

I have specifically tailored my CV for this opportunity, and I created a detailed cover letter that would empathize on my achievements and skills. Creating a targeted CV for a job post is something I can highly recommend; although it is a tedious process, it can boost the chances of having a remarkable application.

4. Which challenges did you experience when applying for an internship in Denmark (if any)?

N/A

5. Which advice would you give international students who are looking for an internship in Denmark?

I always encourage fellow students to not fear exploring different opportunities. Whether it comes to a new job role, a new company within a new field, or a new chance…I would say: "Take it!" There is so much more potential hiding behind your comfort zone.

6. What is the outcome of you getting your internship position (e.g. what have you learned from the process of applying, does it help your future career,)?

During my internship I have learned much more about myself than I initially though. I realized I am capable of taking multiple responsibilities to help out my team; I noticed I have perfected some of the skills I knew I was good at, but never had the chance to prove; and I learnt that hard work pays off. It really, really does!

7. How did you get your current internship/ future student job (e.g. through AAU Job bank, by contacting companies, etc.)?

I have applied for this internship through the company's main website.

8. How does your student job affect your CV – and your future career possibilities in Denmark (e.g. what competencies do you get from your student job)?

I believe any type of experience can enhance your CV if you know how to promote your values correctly. Before having an 'office job', I have worked in a small Bistro and learnt many things that later on helped me in my career. From student-jobs like these you can perfect, for example, your multitasking skills, evaluate your team spirit and your leadership skills or develop your network.

9. Which advice would you give international students who want to find an internship that can transform into a student job in Denmark?

I have always been a hard-working person. A smart-working person too, but a hard-working person as well, nonetheless. I am oftentimes inspired by human interactions and cultures so for

me, an international setting has been very thrivingly helpful. I think when it comes to a company 'keeping' you in a later stage, for a student job, does not only depend on how much you work and how good your skills are, but also on how compatible your personality is with the team.

10. Did you experience any challenges being an international in Denmark when searching for a job/internship? If so, how?

Like majority of us here, I have had a challenging time developing a strong and reliable network. Besides cultural differences, it can sometimes be tough to adapt to a new environment, especially when your main goal is to focus on the job search.

11. Do you use your studies/education in your internship?

I certainly do. I am lucky enough to come from a personal background that allowed me to live in different cultures and I knew from 'Day 1' that my education will eventually strengthen some of my core values. I have specialized my studies in "Organization & Leadership" and now, I feel like everything goes hand in hand with where I am, and where I want to be professionally.

12. Has it helped you become more clear about what you want to do when you graduate?

I always dreamt of working with something that helps people, communities, or the World in one way or another and it makes me happy to know that now, I can work closely to Education and Development projects from all around the globe, driving small communities into sustainable change.

This education has clearly helped me envision my career in a positive way; particularly because it tied my skills and made me discover what my true professional strengths are. I believe, like majority of the things in life: 'It all starts with YOU', which means, finding your authentic self is a step you should not be postponing.

13. Do you have anything to add?

No

Link to final article:
https://www.careers.aau.dk/stories/show/how-to-land-an-internship-and-student-job-in-denmark.cid496439

15.2.5 Chrissy

Q/A – Linkedin as a tool for international job seekers in denmark
Name: Chrissy Patton
Age: 26
Education: Culture, Communication and Globalization with specialization in Organizational Culture and Leadership
Year of graduation: 2020
Years/semesters studying in Denmark: 2.5
Job: Global Talent Acquisition Coordinator
Company/Organization: Trustpilot
Nationality: American

1. What were your thoughts/dreams regarding your first job as a graduate? – Both before you graduated and after?

   During my 9th semester, I had an internship in HR at a small tech startup in Copenhagen and after, was hired part-time where I stayed for about a year and a half. It was a great learning experience and I was able to have a lot of responsibility and autonomy from the beginning. It also helped me realize that after I graduated, further professional and personal growth would require joining both a larger team and company, and hopefully, one with a global reach. I really wanted the opportunity to learn from others who already had a lot of experience and generally wanted to learn by working within larger organizations where much more is going on. It was also non-negotiable for the job to be in Denmark!

2. What kind of jobs did you apply for after your graduation? Did you use Linkedin? And how was the process (e.g. did you follow up after a contact from a contact in your network, contact through a person in your list that you previously knew, was it unsolicited, did you expand your network in this way too etc)?

   I applied for a lot of jobs within HR, recruitment, and talent acquisition – from entry to mid-level positions (why not try, especially in covid times?). That's what my only relevant work experience was in and those are also fields that I was most interested in working in. I almost exclusively used LinkedIn for job searching (and a few other sites, like Jobindex) because it seemed many jobs in these fields were posted there, when they might not be on other sites. I was also working on (and still am) growing my LinkedIn network with relevant contacts (whether related to field, location, or company) consistently, too. I always got in touch with someone from the hiring team before or just after sending my application, and this helped me get to the first interview in multiple cases. Whether it was after messaging someone or before an interview, I would say 99% of the time, the person I was going to speak or meet with checked out my profile – and I felt confident it gave a good impression.

3. How did you get your current job and how useful was Linkedin as a tool in the process (e.g. how did you hear about the job opening and what was the application process)?

   I actually first saw the job ad for my position on LinkedIn – I've always been interested in working at this company, so over time I had naturally made a few contacts there, and I believe one of them had shared the post. The job ad had my manager's name on it, too, so I checked out their page to learn more before sending a message asking if we could have a call so I could ask a few questions – I ended up being invited to a first interview during that call, and it went from there. While I might have eventually seen the position on another site, LinkedIn was especially helpful for research when writing my application and when preparing for the interviews – I looked at the company page, team members' skills and experience, and thought of how I could best contribute to that.

4. Did you experience any challenges being an international in Denmark when searching for a job? If so, how?

   Although there are a lot of international companies who use English in Denmark, I think Danish is still often preferred – even if it's not fluent. That didn't end up influencing my current job, but I experienced that in other cases. I think internationals have a harder time getting to the interview table than Danes for the most part, so it's so important that applications are strong (especially when you're in a less technical field like myself, compared to engineering, for example) and you're well-prepared. On the other hand, a lot of companies know they can benefit from international perspectives, especially if you have the skills to back it up and can clearly show the value you'll bring.

5. Which advice would you give international students who want to pursue a career in Denmark but are not using Linkedin as a tool?

   Make yourself a LinkedIn page right now! LinkedIn is used a lot here – there's no disadvantage to having one. Although, it's not enough to simply have a profile; you need to fill in all of the key areas, keep it updated and engage on it a bit – comment on other people's posts, share your own, etc. If you're hesitant to enage, at least have a strong profile. Having a profile alone can help broaden your network and even help you find opportunities you might have otherwise missed. Exchange some of your time scrolling through Instagram for scrolling through LinkedIn!

6. What is your point of view both when you were a job seeker - how did you use LinkedIn then, and how do you use it in your job?

   Besides using it to search for jobs and grow my network, I could easily see on LinkedIn if I had any contacts at a company I either was interested in or wanted to apply to, and could ask them a few questions. A lot of ads will also include a contact person and it's key to get in touch – even if you think you don't have questions to ask, think of something worthwhile as it will help you to stand out. But that said, if you make contact with someone who could hire you, be sure your profile is filled out and updated and that your questions are well thought out. In my position now, I help to

post jobs on LinkedIn and work closely with recruiters and therefore, see the importance of having solid profiles, especially when recruiters are sourcing for roles that are hard to fill. Try to use strong (and accurate) key words to describe your skills, for example.

7. What would you think are the most important ways to Get the Best From LinkedIn as a jobseeker?

   I really recommend spending some time on developing your LinkedIn profile. I don't mean necessarily mass adding people (though that's a strategy too), but focus on the quality of your own page and communicate with your network. Consider reaching out to people, whether to ask about their company's culture or what their job is like or what skills are required. Most people will be willing to give some insight and even advice.

8. Any tips and tricks for the job seekers on Linkedin? (for example creating engaging content, making the messenger tool useful by starting conversations, how to endorse or be endorsed and recommended, are the groups useful and so on?)

   Again, make sure the profile is updated and professional, and that you engage with others' content as well as possibly sharing your own - such as graduation, passing a language exam, certifications, etc.. Similarly, consider adding to the Skills section and asking certain connections to endorse you for them, or asking a former manager to write a personal recommendation. I'd also suggest connecting with recruiters or talent acquisition professionals in industries/companies/locations that are of interest, as they'll often post not only about opportunities they're involved with, but also will share from within their networks too. Overall, use (and in return, help) your network.

9. Do you have anything to add?
   I would just add that I really understand how hard job-seeking can be in Denmark, firstly as a non-Dane and secondly, as a non-EU citizen. Get any relevant experience you can and then document that on LinkedIn, always keeping it up-to-date. And don't be shy to connect with people! If you make a good impression there, you might already be one step closer.

Link to final article:https://www.careers.aau.dk/stories/show/chrissy-used-linkedin-to-find-her-job.cid500183

15.2.6 Janka

Q/A Guide – landing a job in Denmark
Name: Janka Kelényi
Age: 32
Education: Water and environmental engineer Master's program - AAU
Year of graduation: 2021
Years/semesters studying in Denmark: I am in my 3rd semester in a 4 semester program
Job: Production worker and quality consultant
Company/Organization: Entomass
Nationality: hungarian

1. What were your thoughts/dreams regarding your first job as an international student? – Is it the same dream after you graduate?

I had no high expectations regarding my first job in Denmark as an international student. From my home country I did some research and I saw that finding a part time job which fits to my experiences or studies will be difficult. In addition, I already have 8 years experiences in quality engineering, and I know this type of job requires everyday present in the company and capability to speak their native language. In my study field I have no experience and it is the same in all countries, finding a job without experience is difficult.
Based on these and the fact I have to support myself, I decided on my arrival to apply for any position I could. It means I applied for everything from a cleaner to an engineering position.
Of course, my expectations after graduation are higher, during my university years I am participating several events to make myself more suitable to Danish labour market. Eg. learning danish, culture and build network.

2. What kind of jobs did you apply for before getting your current job? And how was the process (e.g. did you follow up after a contact from a job fair, contact through a person in your network, was it unsolicited etc)?

I applied for everything from a cleaner to an engineering position. I went personally to hotels and restaurants to apply jobs and contacted cleaning companies too. However, it was not successful, because usually those already working there recommended their acquaintances, so they got the job.

I contacted my ex-colleagues who work in Denmark to be referred for engineer jobs. However, those positions were full-time positions in Copenhagen region which was not in my scope due to my studies in Aalborg.

The job fairs were useful, I realized that everyone can speak English but without Danish language knowledge it is difficult to find a job in the northern region. However, I found a company who was open to tackle with an international student without danish knowledge. We had multiple conversation about an intern position, however due to the corona situation, the company had to change their plans and accepting an intern was no more possible.

Finally I found a job as a morning deliverer. I was happy because I found something to do but I was tired because I had to wake up at 3 o'clock and ride bike 30 km per day. It was physical demanding, but I was relieved because the financial pressure has decreased. I was able to look for a better opportunity with new impetus.

3. How did you get your current job (e.g. how did you hear about the job opening and what was the application process)?

The company representative sent me an e-mail describing that they had received my resume from the "Hjørring erhvervcenter" and he thought it could be very useful that we had a short talk. And if I am

interested give him a call or send an e-mail. I still don't know how my resume went to Hjørring business center, because I mainly focused on the jobs in Aalborg and a maximum of one and a half hours travel distance from Aalborg. Nevertheless, I am glad that my CV was sent to them. I called them and we agreed to have a personal interview at the production site in Løkken. It was a 2,5 hours trip to get there, which was a bit shocking. However, it was nice to see the guys who started a business not too long time ago which is environmentally conscious, and it can take agriculture to a new level. The company produce insect, and they wish to produce the next generation of protein. In that path they aim to excellence in the field of biotechnology and to develop a specific genetic breeding program. They showed me the production plant and they were honest, they told me the job will be physically demanding as a production worker, because the production is the first priority, but they were planned to create the quality system which is planned to be my responsibility with time. They need help developing the production system and ensuring quality and performance from the product derived from it. I liked their plans and attitude, so I agreed to have a second interview where we can discuss our needs. After that they decided to hire me and I decided to work there.

I agreed that time to work there, while I took into consideration, I have to commute in total 5 hours per workday. I planned to spend those hours to work on my project, read articles in order to spend time usefully. After that, when we organized my first workday, they were told me that they live in Aalborg and they will pick me up close to my home and I can go with them to work by car. We can talk a lot during the trip, whether about corporate or personal matters. It is especially useful as there is no time for group coffee break during working hours.

4. Did you experience any challenges being an international in Denmark when searching for a job? If so, how?

Without Danish language knowledge and network it is really difficult. However, as a newcomer it is impossible to have network and danish is not a common language to learn it in my home country. So, I went to ask for help to International House and they gave me a list of companies where English knowledge was enough. I contacted most of the companies but after a lot of follow-ups they refused my application because of the lack of danish knowledge. It was a bit disappointing, but I did not give up. With their help I updated my CV and they were told me there will be an internship opportunity next year. It was nice to hear but that time it was out of my scope – I had to find a job that time and not a non-paid internship position next year.

5. Which advice would you give international students who want to pursue a career in Denmark?

Be open for any kind of positions because maybe that will lead to your dream job.

6. Tell us about your job process, thoughts about working in a small company in a small city – tasks, possibilities.

Small company form tasks point of view means that everyone has to be able to do any kind of tasks in production, the schedule is tight, due to the upscaling the workload increases and efficiency is crucial. It carries many possibilities, the bosses are colleagues at the same time, they are open and facilitate

everyone to participate in continuous improvement activities and open to listen new ideas. From my perspective, to create by myself a quality system is a nice challenge. I have experiences creating and improving several fields of quality system, but in this case I have to create the whole system.

7. Any advice for others who want to look for a job outside of Aalborg for example?

The public transportation is great, the travelling time can be spent usefully so don't be scared 😊

8. Do you have anything to add?

😊No

Link to final article:https://www.careers.aau.dk/stories/show/janka-s-journey-towards-finding-a-student-job-in-denmark.cid499052

15.2.7 Eszter - transcript, online interview

Everyone coming to Aalborg University has to choose a group.
It is very important to have a very good team and good team members as in some programs we can not change it, in my program it is not possible. After you choose your group members in the first 2 weeks you are stuck with them for 2 months.
In the beginning you do not really know how you can make a fit so it is a hard choice but it is not forever, you have to make it only for the next months.

The expectation
I think it is good to ask what their ambition level is. Or how other people take things seriously, especially the things you discuss and agree on.
I had the majority of my group formed of danish colleagues and they talked only in danish sometimes and I felt really left out so it is good to clarify in the beginning if the language spoken will be english for example. It can be really hard feeling left out, you are there and you can not really know what is happening as you do not understand. Maybe it is not the same in every program.
There are rules for every group in my study, every group has to have a international student (someone new), it was limited options, and the reason that rule exist is because if only foreigners form a group they would not know how to upload the projects, how to write in the PBL method, work with the system or maybe it will take them much longer to figure it out.
It was a good deed in this decision, they tried to get some integrity and get the stakes up. For me unfortunately in my first semester group it did not work very well as I felt that I was not getting involved. It was kind of chaotic for me to work at first as I was not really sure what to do, if it is good, not in the same page as my other group members so it was very hard to do good group work even though it ended up well and we got a relatively good grade but I was not happy with how the things went.
I stick with it even if they were only talking danish, I just sat there and felt completely useless in the group, sometimes I asked them to speak english, once and twice as it was very easy for

them to switch from english to danish especially if they did not know a work in english immediately switched to danish and continue like that and you are just there waiting for a moment to say Hey please talk english, not good in the first semester group, maybe because of the cultural differences.

I think it could have been avoided if in the beginning I would have been more clear about what I want, my advice would be make it very clear from the starters. Please get involved and make decisions together, not just a few voices. It is kind of hard to discuss every decision with 6 people, we were 4 danish students, 1 german and me, so I also think that a group of 6 is too much as it will take too long to agree on anything.

The group dynamic was not great the first time, I was not happy and probably they were not happy either, so it was a good change that in my second semester I found a new group. It was better chemistry and we were able to work at a different pace that fitted everyone.

Another issue I had to deal with in my first group was when I had to leave for a planned trip to England. I discussed it with them initially and they said yes, sure, it is not going to be a problem but when we came closer they were like ohhh you are leaving, like I was abandoning them. I suggest if you have a similar situation, have it in writing, so you can show them when the time comes, so give a proof and also send it to your supervisor to be informed.

We also had age differences that maybe made things harder, even if it is just a few years.

Preparing for the exam was another step. I suggested to them to work together even if it was an online exam. I was away in Hungary and I flew back to prepare with them even if it was an online exam and everyone just preferred to do it alone. So it was pointless for me to be back in Denmark and I did not succeed in the exam, I failed.

I think it was a bad connection with them. I learned that it is good to agree in the beginning on the terms, to have a good connection. In the beginning everyone is new, everyone is smiling, and you do not really know what is going to happen later. The group contract would be very nice and a good idea. You can even suggest if you speak another language than English you have to bring a beer next time or something like this to maintain a relaxed atmosphere.

The outcome from my first experience is to schedule everything, have it in writing and send it to your supervisor.

My second group, working on my 8th semester project, was better, the connection existed between all the group members. I feel that we worked very professionally and maybe handled things in a more mature way. I felt that the colleagues from this second group were more motivated, also danish, 1 international and 3 danes. I felt welcomed and involved. We had schedule's, everything was planned, we agreed to go to school every day before classes, or to stay after to spend time with the group and work. In this way we were not just attending the classes but solving and discussing issues from those classes on the same day together.

I felt the group dynamic this time and group work. In this way I learned more. And after covid came , I returned home motivated and eager to continue the work. We tried to still work together, I feel like I didn't do enough maybe but I got my best grades. The way we scheduled our times, the ambition that drove us all to a common goal and what we demanded of the group and ourselves made the result to be better. We decided from the beginning who does what and we divided the group 2 by 2 so every member has help and not to be lost and alone.

HOW DID THIS EXPERIENCES HELP ME

These 2 experiences helped me a lot. One of the tasks in my group work was to check on suppliers, it was about supply chain organisations. Not long after I got this interview from my internship and they asked me how good I am with data and sourcing so I was able to reply that I am doing the same thing in my project work and it is not going to be a problem for me.
On my first day in my internship I get this task to look after 4 suppliers. So the group work was very helpful for me and supported me in getting an internship.
Feeling appreciated in the group work is very important, for me it increased my self awareness and my confidence. It is crucial also in group work to not feel bad when asking for help, or to be looked down at because you need support. Make sure you team up with supportive people, more open colleagues, as they will make a big difference in the group work and group's dynamic. Your team members can influence your motivation.
I also see this now in my work environment, you get a task and then you get support if needed. The consistent schedule we made in the group work, 09 to 16, helped me get into a routine that seems very natural now during my internship when I start even earlier at 08.
First semesters are a really good learning experience. Be very careful about expectations and be involved.

What did I learn? POSITIVE and NEGATIVE

Positive: Improved my communication, learned more about mutual respect, worked in a more organized and scheduled way.
Negative: The pandemic that affected my second group work, struggling with motivation in a group.

Discuss with your group expectations and motivation. Make it clear. What is your motivation level? Are we meeting every day? Are we doing the work together? Are we going to sit together and solve it?

Group work is good, it can get too much sometimes, remain focused.
It can be really easy just to focus on the group work and spending time with your group members but don't forget to socialise with the rest of your colleagues also.
As a new student it can be challenging as other colleagues can know each other from their bachelor program and you may feel left out. It is different but also a learning curve that can bring satisfaction and help you evolve. Negative experiences are also helpful if you learn from them. Always be clear about what you want and what you expect.
Workplaces are searching for people who can work with people even if you are professionally perfect they will look into your personal level and how you can interact and work with others.

Link to final article:https://www.careers.aau.dk/stories/show/10-tips-to-make-your-project-group-excel.cid486071

15.2.8 Denis

Q/A Denis on landing a job in Denmark by unsolicited application
Name: Denis Macek
Age: 27
Education: MSc in Information Technology
Year of graduation: 2020
Years/semesters studying in Denmark: 2 years
Job: Product Designer
Company/Organization: BESTSELLER
Nationality: Croatian

1. **What were your thoughts/dreams regarding your professional life in Denmark in the beginning and now?**
   Something that I wasn't expecting before I came to Denmark was how friendly and welcoming everyone is. Not just personally, but professionally too. It is ok to say that you don't know something. Most likely no one will judge you for it.

2. **What kind of jobs did you apply for in the beginning? And how was the process (e.g. did you follow up after a contact from a job fair, contact through a person in your network, was it unsolicited, etc)?**

   When I first arrived in Aalborg I printed my CV and went to most of the restaurants and cafés with the intention to find any student job. That didn't yield any results.

   After a while, I attended a job fair which although talked to a couple of interesting people, nothing came out of it as they weren't looking for any people with my skillset.

   Then I also attended a Kickstart Aalborg meetup/job fair where a couple of startups presented themselves and said if they're looking for anyone. I talked to two of them who were looking for a UX/UI Designer and eventually got a student job at one. This lasted only a couple of months as I moved to another country for the internship.

3. **Did you experience any challenges being an international in Denmark when searching for a job? If so, how?**
   I certainly did. First of all, Aalborg is a quite small city in Denmark, so the amount of student jobs is already limited by that. And then, when you add that in addition to other internationals, that most Danes are also working while studying it becomes quite challenging because they have something that most internationals don't – speak Danish.

4. **Why did you decide to apply for a student job at 2Operate**

After I came back to Aalborg from my Internship I remembered that when I worked for the previous company they had an office in NOVI Science park where a lot of other startups have offices in. So, I went to NOVI's website to see all companies that have an office there and might have use of my skillset. After finding a couple I thoroughly researched what they're working on and how I would fit into their story. In the meantime used that information to edit my CV and cover letter accordingly. And after I was satisfied just sent them an email with this information.

But to answer the question, I applied for a job at 2Operate because I found what they're working on very interesting and thought they might benefit from my skill set to improve their platform and website, and I would get experience working in the telecommunication industry and learn more about UX/UI throughout it.

5. **How did you research the company? – what channels e.g. LinkedIn, personal contacts, company website, etc.**
   2Operate did not have any jobs listed when I applied, so I knew that I had to sell myself if I wanted to get a job. Because if they have an open position, you know that they are looking for someone, and are just looking for someone who will fit what they're looking for. When applying unsolicited you first have to pitch to them why you are the missing piece of the puzzle in their organization. By employing you, what the company will benefit from. Your fresh perspective? Your specific skillset? Etc.
   I used every channel they were on. So, their website, LinkedIn, blog page, google news... Putting in the work to get to know what the company does can make a difference between getting a job or just another "thank you for your application but we're not looking for anyone at the moment".

6. **How did you match the company's profile and tasks? And how did you find out about their needs? Did you call them before? What did you ask them?**
   Well, all companies explain what they are about on their website. So that's already half the battle. Just by that, you should be able to know if there is any chance that this company might benefit from your skillset. For myself, one aspect of my job is to make stuff easier to use and to be clearer. While I was researching the company, I noticed a couple of things that might make their website and platform a bit better in terms of usability. So, that's what I told them in my cover letter. I explained what they would benefit from if they hired me. What helped is that I already had examples of such tasks in my portfolio. This helps to eliminate any doubt that you can do the tasks described, and that you're not just saying stuff that you've read online.

7. **How did you contact them? Any tips on e.g. how you wrote your CV and cover letter?**
   I found their info email on the website and just sent them an email with a short introduction and my CV and cover letter.

As for the CV, if you're not especially good with design, get a simple template online, or ask your design friend to make one for you but do not use the Europass CV because it looks like you've put low effort into it.

As for the content itself, try to add a couple of bullet points for each work experience/uni project/education. Then, write the bullet points with action verbs and try to answer three questions for each bullet point (What? Why? How?) – For example *Conducted Usability testing to uncover possible issues on the website, to increase add-to-cart rate percentage. Which resulted in a 2% increase in add to cart rate.*

As for the cover letter, use a maximum of one A4 page, never more. I usually use the 3 paragraph structure. First is the introduction paragraph where I briefly say who I am, why I'm applying for this position, and why I'm interested in this position (so basically the first paragraph is the elevator pitch).

The second paragraph is where I describe one of my projects. I would use a project which would best align with something that they're looking for.

The third paragraph is where I would explain how my previous experiences and skills fit what they are looking for in more detail.

Protip: look what they've written in the job ad (or try to look for an old job ad if you're applying unsolicited) and try to build your cover letter from that. But obviously, do not lie about what you did and/know.

8. **How did you follow up after you sent your application?**

I was fortunate enough that they got back to me in a couple of days so I didn't need to follow up on my application.

9. **Any tips for other international students considering unsolicited job search in Denmark?**

Do your homework. If you're looking for a job that doesn't exist (is not listed) you have to show and explain to them why is that they need you and how you can help their company. Try to be confident but not arrogant in your application. No one is expecting you to be an expert, you're still studying, there will be time for that. Lastly, never lie in your application.

Sometimes it's better to reach out to smaller companies and/or startups. Since they are small you generally have a much better chance of someone reading your application and not just putting it through ATS software with the pile of the rest of them. Although, this might not apply to every industry.

10. **Which advice would you give international students who want to pursue a career in Denmark?**

Surely, you've heard this many times before, but try to continuously build your network. Sometimes you can get a job in an informal discussion with someone. This is especially beneficial if used with LinkedIn. Share what you recently learned in your Uni that you find very interesting,

or if you're struggling with something regarding your coursework, maybe write a post on LinkedIn to ask for help or if anyone knows anyone who might help. Building your network does not have to be boring.

People are generally very eager to help, so for example if there is something you'd like to learn about but do not know where to start you could just send a message to someone on LinkedIn for some guidance. In most cases people will be more than willing to help you, speaking from personal experience.

11. Do you have anything to add?
Searching for a job is through and requires a lot of work but also luck. If you're struggling with something try to extract what is it. For example, if you in most times get to the first interview, but not the second. Could be that your CV and cover letter are ok, but what you have to work on is preparation for the interview.

Link to final article:https://www.careers.aau.dk/stories/show/denis-found-his-student-job-through-unsolicited-job-search.cid506107

15.2.9 Harshita

Possibilities after graduation in Denmark
Name: Harshita Vishway
Age: 28
Education: Masters in Urban Design
Year of graduation: 2020
Years/semesters studying in Denmark: 2 years
Job: Urban Design Trainee
Company/Organization: WRK Architecten, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Nationality: Indian
Part-time Job: Lead Researcher & Podcaster at Semga Solutions, Aalborg, Denmark

1. What were your thoughts/dreams about getting a job in Denmark? What did you plan when coming to DK?

   I worked for 3 years in India before coming to Denmark for my graduation. After graduation, I wanted to get a job in Urban Design or Architecture which could help me work on projects within the EU, something that could help expand my knowledge and experience by a lot.

2. What kind of jobs did you apply for before and after graduation? And how was the process (e.g. did you follow up after contact from a job fair, contact through a person in your network, was it unsolicited, etc)?

Before graduation, I mostly sought part-time student jobs that could help me earn some money for regular expenses. I applied for staff positions at restaurants, bars, and supermarkets. I took cleaning jobs and volunteered for student-organized events.

3. How did you use Linkedin, job fairs, or other tools to support your professional journey in Denmark?

   I kept an active eye out for any opportunities that might come on the internal job network we had within AAU for the students. I also monitored job postings on Facebook groups and LinkedIn, from where I learned about Semga Solutions and their podcast.

4. How did you improve and work on your Linkedin after arriving in Denmark and how did it help you?

   Having an updated and organized LinkedIn profile was something I realized was very important from the start. It's not required for student jobs but becomes a must when looking for a full-time job or an internship. Most of the companies ask for your LinkedIn profile when applying online. Recruiters use LinkedIn profiles to get screen candidates, so making a good first impression there is good to have.

5. How did you get your current internship (e.g. how did you hear about the job opening and what was the application process)?

   I found the Semga Solutions job via Facebook groups for International students. And the Urban Design Internship I found through a website where people post job opportunities within the architecture community - archined.nl.

6. Why did you decide to apply for an internship after graduation?

   Since I wasn't fluent in Dutch or Danish, It was hard for me to find full-time positions, since the number of these that were open for candidates who only spoke English was very less. An internship was the perfect way for me to start because it gave me time to keep learning the language and getting better at it, while also starting my professional journey and making sure that at the end of 6 months, I'd be better equipped to apply for full-time positions.

7. How did you research the company? – what channels e.g. LinkedIn, personal contacts, company website, etc.

   Company websites, LinkedIn profiles for the companies, their founders, etc. Trying to find if there are any direct/indirect connections.

8. How did you match the company's profile and tasks? And how did you find out about their needs? Did you call them before? What did you ask them?

   Both the jobs I hold right now, had detailed job requirements shared in the posts or webpages. So it was very easy for me to understand what the expectations from the applicant were and if I met those requirements or not.

9. How did you contact them? Any tips on e.g. how you wrote your CV and cover letter?

    The job postings mentioned email addresses where I was required to send all the materials. I prepared a 2-page Resume covering my introduction, education, professional experience, and other achievements. I also either shared a cover letter or wrote it directly in the mail body. While writing the cover letter, I made sure to establish parallels between the job requirements posted and my skills and achievements. This helps the reader understand your profile from their perspective and makes it easier.

10. How did you follow up after you sent your application?

    I usually waited for 2 weeks after I sent out an application. Some job postings mentioned the date by which they would follow up with the applicants, so the wait was sometimes longer. For others, I would usually follow up by dropping another mail asking when I could expect a reply regarding the application. If I again didn't get any reply, or for applications where I filled online forms, I followed up by calling the phone numbers mentioned on their website and asking my questions directly. I like to think that this action helped me convey the point that I was indeed quite interested in the company.

11. What do you enjoy the most during your internship?
    Internships give you a safe space to focus more on the learning aspect rather than delivering from day one. For example in my case, I was new to the language and new to the way things work in a European office, so an internship for me was a good option since it allowed me to learn both within a safe time of 6 months and also to make some money to manage regular expenses.

12. Did you experience any challenges being an international in Denmark when searching for a student job? If so, how?

    The biggest barrier for me was not knowing Danish. Supermarkets, bars, and restaurant owners preferred people who could interact with all customers easily and hence preferred people who knew Dutch. Also, there are not a lot of student jobs in Denmark, especially with the Covid-hit year we had in 2020. The same stood for full-time jobs as well.

13. Which advice would you give international students who want to pursue a career in Denmark?

    Be open to new experiences and opportunities. Be methodical in your approach and be proactive in looking out for job openings. Make sure that your presentation on paper is as good as in real life because most of the jobs would screen you that way. It could take some time, but try to utilize all the resources and networks you can.

14. Do you have anything to add?

    Just as an end note, I would say that never give up trying for jobs. We learn from any kind of job even if it's not related to the field of study. Any opportunity helps you grow and explore yourself.

15.2.10 Hoang

International students experiences with Linkedin and building a network in Denmark
Name: Hoang Khoa Ho
Age: 25
Education: MSc Information Studies
Year of graduation: 2021
Years/semesters studying in Denmark: 6
Job: Student Assistant
Company/Organization: EPOS audio
Nationality: Vietnamese

1. What were your thoughts/dreams regarding your first job in Denmark? – Both before you came to AAU and now?
   I have always wanted to get a student position that matches with my education program, and it actually took me quite some time to land on one. Before attending AAU, I was kinda satisfied with a part time job (non-study related) for too long I think, and it took me a big leap into quitting the job and spent more time and effort in tailoring my CV and application, as well as updated my LinkedIn profile for the real job hunting.
   Now that I got not only one but two at the same time amid covid crisis, I think the time and effort was totally worth it.

2. LinkedIn – how do you use it, have you worked on it more strategically the past year, have you been contacted by companies through LinkedIn?
   To be honest, I was not so proactive through LinkedIn, though I had been recommended to update and spend more time in better presenting myself via my LinkedIn account, it was never a true focus on my plan. For the past year, as I mentioned earlier, I started to put a little more time on LinkedIn, I had also included my LinkedIn profile in every job application and tried to have more regular visits weekly (either they visit through the applications or I visit the recruiter, or folks working in the same field as my study).
   Indeed I had been contacted by several recruiters through LinkedIn, I guess the key is to put rich keyword/competences/endorsed skills and logged into LinkedIn regularly.

3. What kind of jobs and internships did you apply for and how did you use Linkedin in the process?
   I applied for student positions or junior positions in front end web developer and project coordinator. I referred LinkedIn profile in my application letter and CV.
   Also, I used LinkedIn to apply for many of the positions.

4. How did you improve and work on your Linkedin after arriving in Denmark and how did it help you?

I have only been introduced to LinkedIn when I arrived in Denmark, by my teachers in the first degree I took.

5. How did you get your current position (e.g. how did you hear about the opening and what was the application process, did Linkedin discussions and connections help)?
The current position I work I got through jobindex, LinkedIn was not playing a major role in the application process.

6. Did you experience any challenges being an international in Denmark when searching for a job/internship? If so, how?
I wouldn't say challenges per se, but maybe things would have been easier if I had known more people in my professional network, with references and recommendations.

I have heard many international friends blaming on the language barriers (Danish), lack of networking or experience, when their job search does not end in a position, or worse, even before applying for the position; maybe the challenges lie in the lack of knowledge in understanding the danish working culture and how to apply for a job (in danish way).

7. Which advice would you give international students who want to pursue a career in Denmark?
Stop staying in your own comfort zones and throw yourself out there with new challenges and opportunities, say it job matching, case competition, or professional meetups.

Second, don't waste the chance to talk to career counselors at your university, they truly know and want to help you landing your first job. I got great help in writing my CV, upgrading my competences-telling and hence boosting my confidence significantly in writing application. Confidence is key, mark my words 😊.

8. Do you have anything to add?
Since we are talking about LinkedIn and building network, I would like to add that, again, use your guidance from your career counselors in setting a professional and catchy LinkedIn profile.
I have a habit to ask for people LinkedIn in career-related events, even though that person might not work in the same field as my study.
Also, I think LinkedIn is also a good place to recruit (online) professional participants for your research surveys/interviews, you either got additional professionals in your network or expected respondents and sometime both; maybe you might even land on a job along the way.

Additional questions asked after first Q&A session:

● Tell us about the process towards getting your student job(s)? Where did you find it? What did you do regarding cv and application? What was the job interview like?

- I found the positions on Graduateland and jobindex.dk
- I have updated my CV with richer keywords that reflect directly and clearly the skills and competences that I acquire during the study programme, projects work and previous part time jobs. The updates were

highly inspired by the similar profiles on LinkedIn(I was looking for other people who work in the same field), YPD workshops and counseling session with AAU career counselor.
- In job applications, I tried to tailor the CV and motivation, as well as direct contribution that I can bring to the positions.
- The interviews were mostly based on what I have written in the CV and application, no extra tests needed.

- ● You mention that you have 2 student jobs at the same time – what are your considerations regarding this? Is it a lot to handle alongside your studies at AAU?

- Having two student jobs as the same time is very challenging, as you have to kinda divide your brain capacity and focus power, which might result in a more shallow and unproductive performance. As of my case, I really need to go extra miles in supplementing/gaining more working experience, hence the decision to keep two. Fortunately, one of them is kinda like a hobby to me, which I also do it in my spare time, so I thought why not take that as an advantage - leisure and work at the same time.
- I got the jobs while in the last two semesters, in which the lectures and assignments workload is not as heavy. Within the time frame for my thesis, I did decide to put one of the jobs on hold and presume after the delivery date.

- ● You mention that you have been contacted by recruiters on LinkedIn – what did they contact you about? What did you do?

- I got contacted by recruiters on LinkedIn primarily about their opening positions and they asked me whether I am available for the positions, and/or if I am interested to know more. On some other occasions, they were scanning more suitable candidates and put into their talents pool.
- I of course accepted to connect, reply in a timely manner whether I would like to proceed or not. With the positions that I am interested in, I did send my CV and application.

- ● You mention that maybe internationals' challenges in Denmark lie in not understanding Denmark – do you have any advice regarding how to get to understand Danish working culture etc.?

- I think the best way is to put your shoes through the door, be it a cleaning jobs or delivery jobs. Another suggestion would be that do not hesitate to join career counselling sessions, or other career events.

- ● What do you think are the key points regarding understanding Danish working culture and the Danish way of applying for a job?

- Danish employers do really look into your LinkedIn profile, so it is better to have a well-tailored profile.
- The strict organizational hierarchy does not seem to be a strong portrait in Danish working environment, a more personal and informal approach is welcome.

- Be open and tell your network (or even a company's employees) that you are looking for jobs, I got a part time job in a supermarket thanks for a short chat with the cashier. The same goes for friends recommendations.

I obviously mentioned some pretty subjective opinions, please feel free to omit should those fall out of the scope/main focus of the article :)

15.2.11 Juliana

International students experiences with Linkedin and career fairs in Denmark
Name: Juliana Guerreiro Barbosa Leite
Age: 29
Education: Msc International Marketing
Year of graduation: 2021
Years/semesters studying in Denmark: I am in the 4th semester of the master
Job: Digital Marketing Specialist
Company/Organization: Create it REAL
Nationality: Brazilian / Portuguese

1. What were your thoughts/dreams regarding your first job in Denmark? – Both before you came to AAU and now?

In Brazil I graduated in Social Communication and Advertising but in my first job over there I didn't apply what I learned and ended up having a negative idea of how working in the area would be. Because I was so discouraged, I decided to move to Australia to improve my english and have new experiences living abroad. There I worked with sales and customer service, but I didn't have any work experience directly related to my degree. So after two years living there, I decided it was time to come back to my diploma area and start a master in International Marketing in Aalborg University. When I first got accepted to the master I started researching about Denmark and how it is to get a job here. With my research I found that even though pretty much everyone here speaks english, it is easier to get a job if you learn how to speak Danish. I also found out that lots of students work in restaurants and bars as a student job and not in their study area. I knew all of this, but my dream was to arrive here and start working on a place that would allow me to develop competences related with International Marketing. I ended up getting a job as a Digital Marketing Specialist where the official language in the company is english. I also have friends that got english speaking jobs in marketing. Now I know that yes, definitely would help me if I knew how to speak Danish, but there are possibilities for english speaking people too. After I came to Denmark I also learned that there are a lot of startups and small and medium companies in Denmark, in which lots of them focus on technology somehow. I also learned that companies here expect you to be independent and proactive! I think that the work possibilities in Denmark are really interesting, with lots of different and promising areas to work in!

2. LinkedIn – how do you use it, have you worked on it more strategically the past year, have you been contacted by companies through LinkedIn?

Ever since I started my master at AAU, and with the help of the Young Professionals Programme, I updated my LinkedIn and reached out to people I thought would be relevant professionally at some point. I am constantly interacting with these people's posts. I have not been contacted by companies through LinkedIn but I heard it is very common.

3. Career fairs – how do you prepare for attending a career fair, how did you contact companies, and did you follow up.

I prepare my elevator pitch, highlighting my biggest accomplishments from recent times, print my CV and go to the career fair website to see which companies are going to be there.

4. What kind of jobs and internships did you apply for and how did you use Linkedin in the process?

I was lucky enough to get a job in my 3rd month in Denmark and the first interview that I went to, so I applied for a few marketing positions but not that much. I used LinkedIn as a networking tool, by adding HR managers and relevant people, but also as an addition to my CV, by showcasing career fairs that I participated in.

5. How did you improve and work on your Linkedin after arriving in Denmark and how did it help you?

Before coming to Denmark my LinkedIn did not have a lot of information. After I arrived and joined Young Professionals in Denmark I added a background photo, a description in about, I changed the information related with my work experience and education to include projects I work in. I didn't have any concrete feedback related to when I was trying to find a job.

6. How were your experiences with job fairs in Denmark? How many did you go to and where? (e.g. did you follow up after a contact from a job fair, contact through a person you meet at a job fair, was it unsolicited, did you make many Linkedin connections after job fairs and was that helpful etc)?

I participated in 3 job fairs in Denmark, because after that Covid came and with it the job fairs were canceled. It was an interesting opportunity to see some of the companies that exist in Denmark and talk with the people that work there to see what they expect from candidates. I did add a few people on LinkedIn and even reached out to some, but I didn't get an answer.

7. How did you get your current job (e.g. how did you hear about the job opening and what was the application process, did career fairs experiences help or linkedin discussions and connections)?

I found the company I am working for at www.crunchbase.com, a companies directory. There I saw that Create it REAL had just received an investment and it was one of the top growing companies in Aalborg. I went to their website and I saw they were looking for a digital marketing intern. It wasn't my intention to get an internship at that point since I was just finalizing my first semester, but I wanted a student job, so I decided to send my CV anyway. I didn't have any job experience in this field prior, but I did have a blog before so I had some experience with Wordpress and creating graphics, taking pictures and videos. I went to the interview prepared, I created an initial digital marketing plan for them and I also printed the graphics I created for my blog. The person that interviewed me, who later became my boss, asked me to send them a more elaborate digital marketing plan now that I knew who their target group was and I did create one. I do believe that I got the student job, even though they were looking for an intern, because I was prepared and I put the effort into creating the digital marketing plan even before the interview.

8. Did you experience any challenges being an international in Denmark when searching for a job? If so, how?

I was lucky enough to get a job in a company where danish wasn't needed since their clients are mostly international, and even though this is the case for other companies, the language barrier is still strong.

9. Which advice would you give international students who want to pursue a career in Denmark?

I have two pieces of advice to give. First, don't let the fact that you don't have all the right skills that the company is looking for stop you from applying for a job. Any experience you had before in your life could be useful, you just need to explain to the company how that can be useful. Second, be prepared. Look at the job description and before the interview prepare how you can help that company specifically based on what they are looking for. I am sure that the company would appreciate you taking that time.

10. Do you have anything to add?
No.

Link to final article:
https://www.careers.aau.dk/stories/show/juliana-got-a-student-job-though-the-company-was-looking-for-an-intern.cid504981

15.2.12 Laura

Bumps on the road towards landing a job in Denmark
Name: Laura Detels
Age: 23
Education: Development and International Relations (China and International Relations) M.Sc.
Year of graduation: 2022
Years/semesters studying in Denmark: since Fall Semester 2021/22
Job: Student Assistant - Trade Support
Company/Organization: centrica

Nationality: German

1. What were your thoughts/dreams about getting a job in Denmark? What did you plan when coming to DK?

Before I came to Denmark in September 2020, I didn't think about getting a job at first. Initially, I wanted to lay the general focus on my studies. However, I quickly realized – also through the help of the YPD - that I wanted to deepen my practical knowledge in addition to the theoretical insights I was gaining at university.
So, it was important for me not to look for a job at random, but to accompany my studies in the best possible way. Since I am particularly focused on international economics and also on global trade relations with China, I wanted to focus on jobs in this field.

2. What kind of jobs did you apply for? And how was the process (e.g. did you follow up after a contact from a job fair, contact through a person in your network, was it unsolicited etc)?

First, I registered on all possible job portals and for job alerts. Many larger companies offer to sign you up for their talent pool and inform you regularly about vacancies. But the AAU portal was particularly helpful for me. I tried to structure my search and not to apply for any job. Still, it was hard to keep focused for me.

After that, I took part in a variety of YPD seminars, edited and improved my CV and also spruced up my LinkedIn profile. Of course, I also took part in a number of virtual job fairs and got to know many interesting employers there as well. Unfortunately, these contacts haven't resulted in a professional relationship or a work contract. Nevertheless, I still keep in touch with most of the people I met at the fairs via LinkedIn.

I then became aware of centrica via the AAU job portal. I applied in the usual way for the open working student position. I did not apply via a portal, but simply by e-mail. Therefore, I wrote a cover letter and adapted my CV to the position and then submitted both. I had no contact with centrica beforehand.

3. How did you use Linkedin, job fairs, or other tools to support your professional journey in Denmark?

I professionally used LinkedIn even before my time in Denmark to actively exchange ideas with potential employers, but also with fellow students and people who share the same interests as me. Through the YPD, I then once again learned that I need to pay special attention to when designing my LinkedIn profile.

I have also already attended job fairs in Germany. However, it was only in Denmark that I learned how to actually use them successfully. This requires not only good preparation, but also follow-up.

4. How did you get your current job (e.g. how did you hear about the job opening and what was the application process)?

I heard about the position via the AAU job portal and directly applied in my first Master's semester, in October. In November, I was invited to an assessment day where I first had to take a two-hour logical and mathematical test. Afterwards, we did a case study, which we had to work on in groups and present later.

After the assessment center, the recruiters contacted me again by phone in December and invited me to a personal interview. It turned out that not only Trade Support, but also another department was interested in possibly hiring me. This interview took place in the beginning of December and I received feedback shortly before Christmas: Unfortunately, the other department had decided on another candidate in the meantime, although the recruiters had recommended me again personally. They wanted to come back to me in the new year.

In mid-January, I was called again and received an offer to start at centrica. This time, however, not in the classical Trade Support that I actually applied for, but in another department. This was a great surprise for me and I am looking forward to a challenging and varied job in a young department.

5. Did you experience any challenges being an international in Denmark when searching for a job? If so, how?

For me, language was always an obstacle I had to face. I got feedback from some companies that I needed to have at least a certain level of Danish language skills to be employed. An NGO even contacted me once to ask about my skills because they planned on hiring me. When I told them that I was just starting to learn Danish, I only got the feedback that unfortunately that would not be enough, even though I assured them that I was working hard on improving my language skills.

6. Which advice would you give international students who wants to pursue a career in Denmark?

In the beginning, when you just arrive in Denmark, there are many things that make you feel insecure. The people may be different from those back home and you also have to adapt to all the other changed circumstances. If you also only receive rejections because you apply randomly everywhere, I can say from experience that it is really difficult. That's why it's important not to lose your head. Make an overview of the companies you have applied to and become aware of your qualities. Even if it seems like the perfect job for you doesn't exist in Aalborg, because you might not be studying IT or energy, it's worth keeping at it and to persevere.

Some companies also require you to speak Danish. If you want to stay in Denmark in the long run, this is certainly important, but definitely not the decisive criterion.

Link to final article:https://www.careers.aau.dk/stories/show/bumps-on-the-road-to-the-student-job.cid504261

15.2.13 Luca

Professional road in Denmark
Name: Luca Collalti
Age: 32
Education: Bachelor in Market and Management Anthropology (MMA) @ SDU, currently last semester master student in Techno-Anthropology (TANT) @ AAU CPH
Year of graduation: 2019 for the bachelor, 2021 for the master
Years/semesters studying in Denmark: I have studied in DK for all 10 semesters (starting in the fall of 2016) but I have lived here since July 2015.
Job: Advisory research intern
Company/Organization: Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies
Nationality: Italian

1. What were your thoughts/dreams about getting a job in Denmark? What did you plan when coming to DK?

    When I came to DK I did not have any precise career plan. To be honest, I had none at all. I just wanted to leave that sinking ship that is Italy and I have always had an interest for Scandinavian countries. When I got here, my hope was to get into a bachelor about nutrition at VIA university college, mostly because I had no idea what else to do with my life. It was just a series of totally crazy coincidences that brought me to MMA first and TANT afterwards.
    At the very beginning, my only job-related dreams were to find one at all, and to get stability and a decent pay. As my studies went on and I learned more and more about the possibilities that they opened for me I started to have a more precise vision of what I'd like to do. Not that things are crystal clear now, but at least I am quite confident in the fact that I'd like to work with bridging "expert" knowledge and "laypeople" knowledge, either in contexts of public understanding/engagement with science or of R&D / design in the broadest meaning of the term.

2. What kind of jobs did you apply for? And how was the process (e.g. did you follow up after a contact from a job fair, contact through a person in your network, was it unsolicited etc)?

    I have been in DK for a whole year before starting university and, at that point, I basically had no qualification whatsoever and therefore looked for jobs accordingly, for instance in the service industry. I assume that my work experiences for that first period of time are not what you are after here, so I won't waste your time with that (but tell me if I'm wrong).

    Speaking of study-relevant jobs only, I have been applying to different student positions in fields as different as marketing, HR, consultancy and R&D / product development. I have never attended a job fair, nor have I ever sent an unsolicited application. All the jobs I landed were somehow recommended to me from somebody in my network.

The first position, marketing student assistant @ Mobile Industrial Robots (MiR), was mentioned to me by my at the time flatmate, who works there as an engineer and knew of the opening and of my interest for working in robotics.

I found out about the second position, marketing and communications assistant @ Hove A/S, because another friend of mine tagged me on the LinkedIn post that the recruiter herself had made.

Finally, the opening for my current position was posted by a professor of ours on the Facebook group for Techno-Anthropology, where he said that it would have been a good opportunity for a 3rd semester master student, which I was about to be at that point.

3. How did you use Linkedin, job fairs, or other tools to support your professional journey in Denmark?

As I said, I have never been to a job fair. I am not sure why. I guess it's because I don't do so well when it comes to first impressions on random encounters of the kind (I imagine) you have there.

I have actively used LinkedIn to look for job openings and applied to several of those, but with no results (except the one job I landed after that friend tagged me in the post). However, I have spent a good deal of energy into trying to make my LI profile as complete and attractive as possible, because I feel recruiters do use the platform and therefore it would be silly not to invest some energy into making the best profile I can.

4. How did you improve and work on your Linkedin after arriving in Denmark and how did it help you? What was the most efficient and helpful tool for you in job search?

I did not have a LI before coming to DK, but I got one soon after because I had heard several times that it is an important thing to have, and now I definitely agree.
The way I improved it is by making as complete yet clear as possible, with all sections nicely worked out with all the info that need to be there. I have also written 2 articles during my time at CIFS which definitely look nice on my profile, together with making occasional posts when I feel I have something smart to say that is worth saying (so not very often).

The way it helped me, other than the obvious already-mentioned tag, was to give me a sense of what jobs are available at all for international students and what full-time positions one can aspire to. Also, it allowed me to create a network of 400+ contacts, most of which in DK, which has not been super useful yet, but that I feel will be a nice resource to have, once I'll be done with university and in search for a job for real.

In my experience, the most efficient and helpful tools for job search are your eyes and ears. Keep them open, look in the right places (i.e. your own network; all sorts of relevant groups social

media, like the ones specifically for your study and those for your general professional area) and opportunities will pop-up.

5. How did you get your recent job at Copenhagen Institute For Future Studies (e.g. how did you hear about the job opening and what was the application process)?

   I have already discussed how I heard about it.

   As for the application process, I started by having a thorough look at the organization's website, so to try get a sense of what they're all about, and then wrote a cover letter that had the purpose of a) show them that I have read about them b) tell them something about what I can do and what I have already done and, most importantly, c) tell them something about who I am as a person.
   Point c) proved crucial, because CIFS is an organization where people care for having nice and interesting colleagues, especially when it comes to interns, since nobody can reasonably expect us to write an application that is all about previous work experiences and successes.
   I was very quickly contacted back and an (online) interview was set for the day after. It turned out to be a very nice and very informal chat with a guy who was an intern himself and who contacted me again the same day to offer me the position.

6. Why did you decide to apply for a student job at Copenhagen Institute For Future Studies?

   Partly because that professor of ours said it would have made sense for a TANT student to do so and partly because I am a huge sci-fi nerd, so the idea of working for an Institute for Future Studies really got me. Actually, I had also applied for a position at an anthropology-driven consultancy firm and got offered that position as well, *something like 1 hour later I got the offer for CIFS*, which is something that really surprised me because I am not used to the luxury of choice. I ended up panicking and choosing CIFS, mostly because I didn't know how to choose (the other place sounded very nice too) and so I simply picked the organization that came with the fastest offer. Probably not the smartest way to make a choice like that, but it worked out.

7. How did you research the company? – what channels e.g. LinkedIn, personal contacts, company website etc.

   Our professor had already sort of vouched for it by saying that it is an interesting place for a TANT student, so then I just stalked them on LinkedIn (but I can't say I've learned too much from it) and on their website, where I found more information.

8. How did you match the company's profile and tasks? And how did you find out about their needs? Did you call them before? What did you ask them?

   I did not ask them anything. I just wrote my application letter out of the gut feeling that I had from the job description and the website. The thing is also that they were not looking for anything very specific. They present themselves as this cool, international and interdisciplinary

organization that deals with the future and so I tried to match that, which was kind of easy for me because I am both international and quite interdisciplinary (and apparently they thought I was cool too: the person interviewing me told me "you seem like a bro" 15 minutes into our conversation. Magic of letting some personality shine in your application letter)

9. How did you contact them? Any tips on e.g. how you wrote your CV and cover letter?

   I simply followed the instructions provided in the job description. Not sure I can say much more about the way I wrote my application letter other than what I have already said.

10. How did you follow up after you sent your application?

    I didn't. I never did, for any position. I guess it's something I should start doing, from next time on, but I always feel weird or pushy about "following up". I assume that they'll simply let me know whenever they make their decision, and that contacting them before they do will make me look like I'm trying too hard to step in front of the line or something. Maybe I'm wrong though, I really don't know.
    Anyway, CIFS didn't even let me the time to consider following up, since they wrote me back one day after I sent my application in order to fix an interview for the day after.

11. What did you enjoy the most during your job search/professional road here in Denmark?

    I very much enjoy the fact that, in Denmark, if you look for a job, you'll find it. I don't know anybody who looked for real and did not find a job, and that's really a great thing, because where I'm from it does not work this way. Also, all job interviews I had were with nice and polite people and never turned awkward or unpleasant. Again, my experience in Italy is different.
    As for the professional road, I like the fact that there is one at all. When you join a company here, you can quite easily see the possibility of growing within it, both in terms of responsibilities and competencies, and in terms of salary, which is again very nice because you don't get the feeling of being stuck in an entry-level position forever (at least, for what I could see).

12. Did you experience any challenges being an international in Denmark when searching for a job? If so, how?

    I think the only real challenge of looking for a job as an international here is the language. Many positions, even when the job description is in English, require that you are fluent in Danish, and that's a big obstacle. I even speak somewhat ok Danish, but I know it's not at all what they mean with "fluent" and so I'm cut out even though I do somewhat know the language.
    Denmark needs foreign workers, and its taxpayers generously offer free education and SU to many of us but then, when it comes to entering the job market, I think very little is done to allow us to get integrated and "pay back".

13. Which advice would you give international students who want to pursue a career in Denmark?

    Well, learn Danish. Even if you'll never get to the level of fluency required for many positions, it's always good to know some Danish because many Danes are extremely stubborn when it comes

to sticking to their own language and will very gladly isolate foreigners and straight up pretend they do not exist, rather than switching to English. Knowing at least a little Danish can make the difference between being able to have a sense of what goes on around you and maybe intervene in English on the one hand, and eating your lunch totally alone every day because nobody wants to switch to English. I have seen this happen in several organizations.

Other than this, I wouldn't know. I have been here a relatively long time myself now, so maybe I am taking for granted some things that would be important to know for somebody who just arrived.

14. Do you have anything to add?

No, I have ranted long enough.

15.2.14 Hannah - transcript, online interview

Education: International Marketing, AAU in Aalborg

Year of graduation: 2019

Job: Graduate program in Danish Crown, Business Development

- Before applying to a graduate program? Plans and thoughts? Was your mind set on a specific one?

I just knew that I would find it interesting to work in a graduate program so I applied to quite a few. I was also quite open about what I would like to work with. My thoughts were that it would be interesting to have quite a few learning opportunities, to get insight into different areas of a company while also having support by a mentor or a buddy or something like that.

The Danish Crown graduate program appealed to me because you can see the entire value chain which I think is very interesting and very good knowledge to have alongside an international rotation which I found exciting. Just in general when I was applying I felt that they were paying a lot of attention to me as a person and I decided for that one basically.

- When you started your graduate program with them did you have any specific plans or dreams in mind with Danish Crown or any expectations?

I wanted to be challenged, get a lot of experience in different areas where I normally maybe wouldn't maybe necessarily get experience with my degree, that was something quite exciting. Then also to get a lot of knowledge about project management because that was something that I did not have much experience with and it was a part of this graduate program. You get training in project management and as a graduate you usually work on projects so I think that is for sure a very important part for me. There is also a leadership program in Danish Crown, so we also get leadership training on thinking on our leadership style or what kind of reflections we have on those leaders that we currently have, but we also

get training on how leaders behave in certain situations or how leaders get feedback for example. That does not necessarily mean that after two years I am a leader but it is more, you know, thinking long term and having this idea in mind that I could imagine myself as a leader.

- And how do you feel now that you are almost finished with the graduate program that started almost two years ago?

Time has been flying, I have learned a lot and have been involved in many different projects that I would not have got an insight into otherwise. Right now I am working on supply for example, so with production but also in investments with machinery which is finance a little bit, things that I would not have thought that I would work with so i think it is quite exciting. I always liked to learn new things, to be challenged, I find that quite rewarding and motivating.

And of course it is also weird that now I will have a permanent position, I mean after the graduate program, which is of course a very different experience I would assume. But I think it has been a great experience and I can truly recommend it to others that are having the same kind of expectations about their first position.

- So you are doing a full time job with them after you finish the graduate program?

Yeah, like that is still to be decided, because usually after the graduate program is finished you have to then apply for the positions that are opened, so that is still kind of in the process. But the idea is that I will probably stay with them. It is not defined yet.

- Your chances are definitely high of getting a full time job after finishing the program with them?

Yeah, I would say so, I mean of course it depends a little bit on the performance, but of course if you have a very good knowledge of the different business units and of the production, and of departments I think that is valuable for them as a company and see potential in keeping you.

- What kind of other graduate programs did you apply for in the beginning? Were they the same area or different types?

I also applied for Eco and for Falk. The others I applied for were more marketing related I would say. This one with Danish Crown is a bit more general and I really enjoyed that actually.

- So how was the process then, do you remember? For example did you send an application and followup or did you contact any people within the organization or in your network? Or did you send any unsolicited applications?

For Danish crown I simply applied and was already invited for an interview. Then there was a graduate event with AAU, a graduate fair I think, where different companies were presenting what kind of

programs or positions for graduates they have. There I have seen some companies and also Danish Crown and I could get a little bit more information about them. That was pretty good.In general I do not know if I reached out to any of the previous graduates.

- How would you describe all of your journey towards the graduate program with Danish Crown and within the program, overall?

My first rotation was in danish crown beef, that was in the business development department, and I did different projects there within marketing also a little bit related to sustainability. For example different customer requests or how we could improve sustainability in the production site.Then I was also working on the finance project there and that was basically/roughly my first rotation.

And then my second rotation I was in danish Crown foods in the bacon department, Europe department, but they mainly work with the bacon category and I was assigned to do that also. I did a lot of projects related to ouwer assortments, related to which kind of products are performing well or which ones should maybe be delisted. Also related to marketing, to make folders and brochures.

I was also part of different bigger projects with other countries, I was looking at E-commerce for example.

- What would you say that the most important things you learned from the program are?

The most important things that I learned is to be quite flexible and to be very self confident about any kind of projects that come my way. Basically in the beginning you may think that you can not do it because you do not know anything about it, but in time and then you learn more and you get better at it and usually people are happy to help and share their knowledge. So learn not to be afraid about something that you know nothing about in the beginning, I think you can always figure it out somehow. It is just about how to structure the process behind and to be curious and open about learning something new.

- Anything that surprised you during your graduate program?

We work in the food industry.Food, I think everyone has some experience with it, buying it from the supermarket but I think there is a lot of complexity behind how the product gets on the supermarket shelf. That is something that really surprised me. How many processes and tasks are actually involved in creating one product.

- When you applied for this graduate program, any helpful or efficient tools that supported you in your search that other students could potentially use?

I used Graduateland, and always researched the company, trying to find out as much as possible about them. I do not think that I have any special tips because they are very basic and simple things that I did.

- In the end, why did you decide to apply for a graduate program with Danish Crown? What made you decide that they would be a suitable place for you?

I thought that there would be a lot of development opportunities, like the leadership and the project management training. Also I found it interesting the fact that I could see the entire value chain and felt it is really exciting, being focused on Denmark but also international rotations. I also liked that we had consumer products, not only industry products, a lot of consumer brands are very interesting beeing marketing graduate.

- What products and projects have you worked on in your program that interested you the most?

Besides my beef department first rotation, my bacon second rotation as marketing assignments, I worked on something called fuel reduction. That means that you basically reduce the amount of products that you have and you reduce the ones that are not performing so well.
I was also involved in some market research and at the moment I am working in the way we are doing our investment in ouer machinery.
Also have a project where I am looking at ouer bacon production and try to find complexity.

- Do you have any recommendations for other students that are considering graduate programs?

It is very important to get a good understanding of what a graduate program entails, what it is about, what kind of courses they will get, what kind of models are there. I think that is very important to know and get a good understanding of this in the recruitment process for example.
Also to know if all of those aliens with what you want as there are some programs that are more general and some are more specialized so it is important to know what you would like from this time spent in this kind of program.

In general if you are interested in a graduate program I think it is very important to be very curious and open minded, to be up for the challenge basically. There will be many things that you have never heard before or have never tried so it is for sure also challenging sometimes. It is rewarding but you also need to be up for this challenge.
As far as the recruitment process goes just apply if you think it is interesting, be yourself and in the end it has to be a good match from both sides.

- During the interviews, any tips or advice on how others can make a good impression, have a successful interview?

Very important to know a lot about the company, what they are currently working on. To know something about their challenges, or at least have an idea of what the challenges might be. I think it is important to be aware of your own strengths and weaknesses. And not only to be aware but also to be

able to talk about it, to reflect on it and as everyone has areas where they still have to grow and work on as well as areas where they are very good at.

So I think it is very good if you show you are open and able to reflect on some of the learnings that you have had in the past.

It is always better to be too much prepared for an interview than too little.

Always good to have a range of questions that you have prepared before and that you will know what to say in those situations, challenging questions that they might ask.

There are also crazy questions that you can not answer but that is the purpose of those questions, to get you a little bit out of your comfort zone. There are many standard questions that you can prepare for instead and that can turn out very well. I think matching your competencies with what they are looking at, with the job description.

- As an international did you experience any difficulties in your professional journey? Or faced any challenges being an international in denmark?

Ya, I think there are still some challenges as an international working in denmark. But Danish Crown is on a journey in becoming more international, so there is a lot of drive to become more international. So it is cool to be part of that journey

- Which advice would you give international students or future professionals that want to pursue a career in Denmark?

Maybe to familiarize themselves with the danish working culture, I think that is quite important, as you know there is a very flat hierarchy and managers actually want your input, like when they ask you for it. Just in general I think it is very important to be aware of danish working culture and to be ready to adapt to that in some way.

- How did the PBL method help you in your work, in the practical tasks you had as a graduate in the danish crown program?

I think it helps a lot because with PBL you are always faced with a problem, very similar to a real life project. So I think for project work it is a great advantage to have and a great preparation as you are always faced with a problem and you need to find the best way to solve it and what is the best way to get to the best outcome.

And of course team work within the PBL is a very big part. At least in my case it was, and it is always good if you are able to work in teams and very helpful for a future position I would say.

- Was it hard to be a graduate student in a pandemic period?

For sure some things are a little different, and we are from home a lot more, but I think in general people have been very understanding and tried to get me into the office as much as possible.
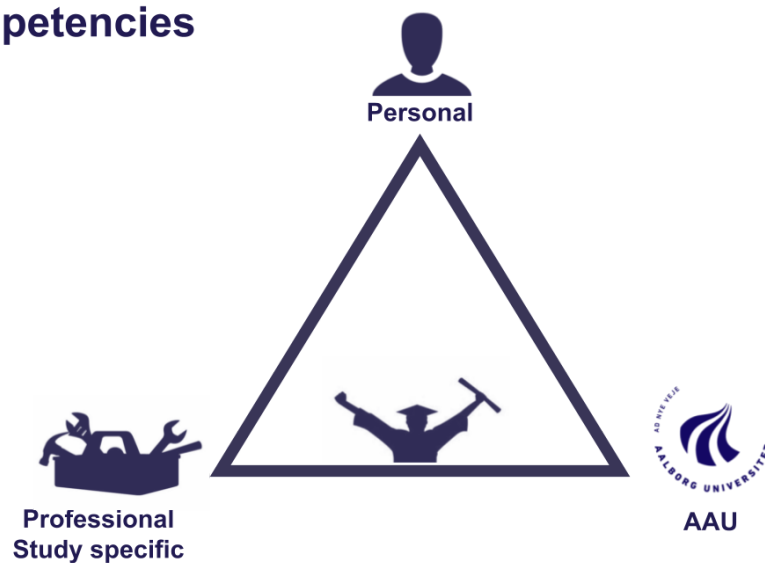
Some things have been different but I think it has not been a bad experience.
We had some of the modules online, and of course it was nicer if we had the training sessions in person when you are also together with the other graduates.

15.3. Competence clarification presentation pptx from AAU Careers

Find your personal competences –example from a job add

Your competences

- You have a natural sense of urgency.
- You are determined, comfortable with ambiguity and focused on "getting things done" in a pragmatic manner
- You have ability to maintain knowledge of new and evolving technologies and apply knowledge within an organizational context
- You are experience in being able to work on and lead multiple projects concurrently in a self-motivated, flexible and autonomous manner
- You have a positive "can do" attitude, balanced against strong discipline and a willingness to challenge and ensure effort is only geared towards value-adding activity
- You have passion for improvement and knowledge sharing
- You can create and describe high level solutions architecture.
- You can cooperate & communicate architecture on all levels
- You speak and write English fluently

Personal competencies

Use this as inspiration when describing yourself

Personal Competences

It is commonly known that personal competences and personality are of increasing importance in the process of hiring new employees. Some are of the opinion that if the chemistry is there, then the professional skills will be learned further down the road.

At a job interview, you will be asked to answer questions about your personality. A precondition to answer these questions is that you possess a clear understanding of the competences that define your personality. You can work systematically by asking e.g. your boss, your colleagues, your friends or your partner. You can also use the overview below for inspiration when identifying the competences that have been at play when you have experienced success.

Notice a competence should always be combined with an example of a situation where you have demonstrated this competence. If you merely list several competence to an employer it makes it very superficial, however, by telling a story either a successful or less successful (where you tell how you gained insight about yourself) one will make your competences real and interesting!

X	Competence	X	Competence	X	Competence
	Balanced		Humoristic		Calm
	Pending		Considerate		Realistic
	Dependant		Reckless		Result oriented
	Responsibly		Hearty		Risk taker
	Serious		Helpful		Skeptical
	Ambitious		Intolerant		Stable
	Analytical		Inventive		Structured
	Aggressive		Indiscreet		Stubborn
	Arrogant		Impulsive		Spontaneous
	Knowingly		Inspiring		Factual
	Pleasant		Intelligent		Cooperative
	Controlled		Demanding		Systematic
	Worried		Initiating contact		Independant
	Determined		Strong character		Petty
	Specific		Uncompromising		Vulnerable
	Charming		Conformal		Aspirational
	Defensive		Competitive		Withdrawn
	Diplomatic		Creative		Tactical
	Disciplined		Critical		Temperamental
	Discreet		Controlling		Trusting
	Dominating		Loyal		Tolerant
	Dynamic		Lawful		Thoughtful
	Overwrought		Targeted		Patient
	Easygoing		Methodological		Undiplomatic
	Efficient		Compassionate		Persevering
	Energetic		People oriented		Impressible
	Engaged		Motivating		Undetermined
	Enthusiastic		Moral		Investigative
	Empathic		Touchy		Unshakable
	Flexible		Opaque		Elusive
	Reasonable		Supercritical		Irreconcilable
	Formal		Resignedly		Extrovert
	Cautious		Objective		Unstructured
	Understanding		Convincing		Kind
	Enterprising		Thorough		Strong minded
	Emotive		Attentive		Humble
	Rude		Optimistic		Honest
	Good listener		Perfectionistic		Open
	Dielectric powerful		Practical		
	Happy		Proactive		
	Hectic		Reliable		

STARC

Tool that can help you describe and identify your experiences and competencies.

Here, 1. is you professional/work-related experiences and 2. is your study/project-based experiences.

- **S**ituation
  - 1. Which situation did the company find itself in?
  - *2. Problem-analysis and limiting it*
- **T**ask
  - 1. Which task did you set out for solving/were you assigned?
  - *2. Problem statement*
- **A**ction
  - 1.What did you do to selve the task?
  - *2. Methods/applied theories*
- **R**esult
  - 1. What were the results of your actions?
  - *2. Findings and conclusion (or implementation)*
- **C**ompetency
  - 1. Which competencies did you use/develop?
  - *2. Learning points (both the specific and more general)*

Work Individually
- ✓ Mature, professional accountability
- ✓ Responsibility
- ✓ Purposefulness
- ✓ "Backbone"
- ✓ Concentration ability

Working in teams
- ✓ Effective groupwork
- ✓ Project/ Group Planning
- ✓ Overview and focus on details
- ✓ Structural thinking
- ✓ Organizing skills
- ✓ Problem-solving
- ✓ Oral and written communication
- ✓ Defining problems
- ✓ international profile

Method
- ✓ Self-reflection
- ✓ Apply theory to practice
- ✓ Strategic and pragmatic thinking
- ✓ Solving complex issues
- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Info / knowledge collection
- ✓ Research skills
- ✓ High level of analytical and abstract thinking
- ✓ Forward thinking skills

Received Competences of AAU Students

Cooperation with Businesses
- ✓ Understanding of corporate structure and business ethics
- ✓ Working in a professional working environment
- ✓ Practical experience
- ✓ Questioning technique
- ✓ Social and business responsibility
- ✓ Initiative
- ✓ Holistic approach
- ✓ Effective and fast research tecniques

The ability to learn
- ✓ Recognise options
- ✓ „Starter" attitude - jump on tasks
- ✓ Ask questions - even the stupid ones
- ✓ Eager to learn more and extend knowledge
- ✓ Meta-knowledge

Know more about your competences at
https://www.careers.aau.dk/abilities/competencies/

Tell your story ☺

How can you describe your academic competencies to an employer?

- The purpose of this exercise:
  - Make employers aware of why they need to hire you. You need to highlight your competences and results.

- You may use the exercise both in your CV and cover letter/job interview/talks at company visits.
- Practice your story so it becomes fluent and a natural part of you.

EFU = **E**genskab – **F**ordele - **U**dbytte

CV

Cover letter/job interview

Task listed by the company	Task/facts (Egenskab) Description	What advantage is the company getting?	Profit (Udbytte) Possibilities for the company
	What have I done? Study specific competence:	What did I learn from this?	What will a company gain from this? Brag – in a good way ;-)
Inventing and prototyping new game designs Writing short form game design documentation about your designs	Programming/game design: Unity, Simpel C++ og C# Additional tools: Wordpress, 3ds, Blender Animation Test development	**8th semester** – "Kløveren", an augmented Reality game on a mountainbik. A multi game for the whole family using the local surroundings. Combination between experience and game design. Communication with test groups.	You will gain an employee who will be able to develop cutting edge products. This will **benefit** your company, **expand** marked shares and **increase** customer satisfaction
International experience games	Flow, theme and storytellling, branding, media analysis	**7th semester** – Amusements in Legoland – design of the best holistic experience Analysis of which attractions create the best experience for both Danish and tourist from outside of DK	LEGOLAND was very **impressed** with our project and is **implementing** some of the findings in their strategy. You will have a strong candidate with experience in **solving** real life challenges with an international focus in the games.

Words like: succeed, reduce increase, optimize, minimize, expand etc. Always good = $$
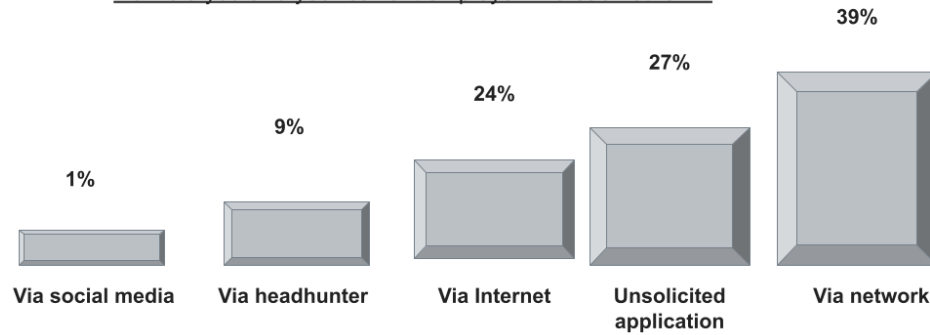
15.4. Candidat analysis pptx from AAU Careers

The network is the dynamic of the invisible job market

How did you and your current employer find each other? *

1%	9%	24%	27%	39%
Via social media	Via headhunter	Via Internet	Unsolicited application	Via network

* The question was asked only to the 789 respondents who answered, that an official job advertisement had NOT been made (51%)

AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

# The invisible job market is bigger than the visible job market *

* The invisible job market = All jobs filled without an official job posting.

Had an official job posting been made, when you got your current / most recent job?

Yes
47%

No
51%

I don`t know
2%

The invisible job market is larger in the small private companies.
(Only "no" answer)

Small private
69%

Medium-sized private
61%

Big private
56%
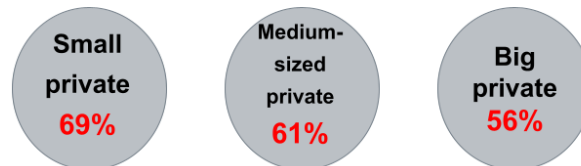
More managerial jobs than employee jobs are filled via the invisible job market **(57% vs. 49%)**.

AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

The invisible job market is larger for handyman jobs, sales and administrative work.

15.5 Questions and Answers for Inspirational Stories Councillors and Leaders and final articles

15.5.1 Andre

Q/A Top advices from an AAU career counselor

1. **What are the first steps a student or recent graduate should take in identifying their career goals, and when should they start this process?**

It depends a bit on what you mean by career goals ☺
I think for a lot of students and graduates its more a question of identifying their career opportunities than goals as such. Career goals are not absolute or static which means that you can work with your current goals but it doesn't mean that the process is over. Also there can be large and long sighted goals (e.g. first job og dream job in the long run) and small and shortsighted goals (e.g. semester goals, goals for internship semester/project oriented module, goals for a student job etc.).

I think a good first not no matter how you interpret the question is to get a grasp on your self and your market. This means looking inward identifying your strongest interests and motivators and your core skills. Then looking outwards and get an idea of "the market" which is where those interests and skills are useful and in demand. When you have done this part you are ready to start setting some realistic goals for your self. I would recommend both having a long term goal (which if often not very precise for most students) and the parting this goal into smaller and more presice short term goals. Thinking about how you can lay of some stepping stones for yourself that will get you in the direction of your larger and long term goals.

You should also be aware that interests, motivation and goals change over time – and they are allowed to. That's why it makes sense to stop every once in a while a evaluate your current path and goals (both short and long term). Does it still make sense to you? – if not what needs to be changed.
This also means that in terms of when the process should start I guess it starts when you enter the university on your 1.semester as an unconscious process. The question should maybe more be about when you should start to make it a more conscious process. And there is no right og wrong answer to this. It's obvious that these questions would make sense to visit every time you are faced with a choice on your study (choosing which master degree to attend, choosing a specialization on the master, choosing your 9.semster focus and if you want to do an internship and if so which internship etc.). But it could also make sense to look to these questions if you have doubt about your study during the Ba. for instance. And lastly we would highly recommend that you always stop and think about these questions before and during you master thesis as this is a good time to start applying for jobs.

2. **If a student still is not exactly sure of what kind of job they want, where should they start?**

It's usually beneficial to get inspiration from what other graduates from your study is working with. This inspiration can be found via our graduate surveys or LinkedIn.

It can sometimes help to set a set of hypothesis about your first job (e.g. I think HR sound interesting, but I'm unsure if its something for me). Then start to see how the hypothesis can be tested. Contact someone within HR to hear more about the job, see if a semester project can incorporate the subject to gain knowledge on the field, do research online, maybe try to get a student job within the field.

And remember that finding out what you don't want to do is just as important as finding out what you want to do. So don't see it as a failure if you engage in something that turns out to be the "wrong thing" for you.

3. **Can you walk us through a time when you worked with a student who had difficulties, or unanswered questions and what did you do?**

I cannot tell you about specific cases because of confidentiality.

But in general it's usually a mix of asking the right questions to get the student to think in different ways about the issue at hand and for me to inspire or contribute with me own point of view and to put the issue into perspective.

I always try to give the student some tools that they can use to work or think more about the subject after we end our talk. A think the issues are rarely solved in our meeting but the meeting can act as a catalyst for constructive thinking about the questions and then the student usually find their own answers. If not then they sometimes come back for another talk and then we try to get even closer to a solution together.

4. **What are the most common challenges of students? What are the most common questions about Linkedin and struggles and how do they solve them?**

Most common challenges of students in general: knowing what they know – meaning the ability to put words to own skills. In addition, following this it is also a challenge for many to know how and where these skills can be used outside of academia.

Most common questions about LinkedIn is usually about how to build a professional profile. What to write in the different sections etc.

About how they solve the challenges, I think I already answered this in one of the previous questions.

5. **What tools and exercises do you use to coach students?**

As mentioned previously it is a matter of asking the right questions. I often cannot give them the answers; they have to find their own personal answers.

I also use examples a lot. Give examples of what others have done or help the student to find the examples them self. It often help that the students have someone examples of similar cases to reflect on.

6. **What are your top examples from your teaching experiences?**

I'm not sure I understand the question? Examples of what? Tools and exercises?
One of the benefits of group or class activities is that the students gets to hear and talk to each other. The find out that they are not the only one with the questions and doubts and that they are often quite resourceful them self and can actually help each other a lot.
The best tools and exercises for teaching is those who can facilitate the important talks.

7. **How did you get your current job (e.g. how did you use tools, studies, Linkedin, counsellors and does it still apply today)?What would you do differently now?**

I used AAU Career during my studies to get feedback on my CV and attended both their mentoring programme and their talent programme back in 2015. I also worked as a volunteer matcher for AAU Match as a student. All of this means that I had knowledge about the organization and knew a few people working there before I applied for a job.

I applied for a shorter 6months project position and was af 4 months hired full time. The job I have today (in terms of jobcontent) is very different from the job I applied to back then.

I didn't use LinkedIn much back then – but I had an updated profile and used it to expand my network as a student.

As you can see my volunteer work and interactions with AAU Career more or less laid the stepping stone for my job – but it's important to say that it wasn't intended or a strategic choice. I did it out of interests, the opportunity just showed itself, and the timing was perfect.

8. **What are some common mistakes you see students making on their resumes and job applications, linkedin accounts?**

One central "mistake" is to only talk about yourself and don't relate your profile and skills to the job ad or in terms of linkedin to what you are looking for. Student don't think about that they need to help the employer understand what it is they can do and how this is relevant for the employer and their business.

As academics we tend to take it for granted that people can "guess" how our skills are relevant outside of academia, but it's our job as academics to make that translation. It's not easy I know but non the less very important.

9. **Please share a few main and important suggestions for LinkedIn, how did you become good at it and what you noticed students do (must do, don't do, should do).**

If you have a profile on LinkedIn it must be updated.

It's also at good thing to think about why you are on LinkedIn? What is it you are trying to accomplish? (e.g. expanding your professional network, get a student job, find an internship, find a job etc.) When you have an idea about why LinkedIn then you should adapt your profile to those goals.

If you a new to Linkedin first priority should be to get an all-star profile (a set og minimum requirements for profile information and network must be met).

Make sure that your profile is telling about your skills and interests in a not too academic language. Put emphasis on your potential value creation and in the experience and project section on the value that you already helped create.

Make sure to describe some of you best semester projects on your profile – you can add a section called "projects" where this is possible.

How to become "good at" LinkedIn -> practice and experiments. Find out what works for you in your network and for your current goals.

Don't be afraid to reach out and contact people on LinkedIn that you don't already know – that what the platform is there for.

Don't do: don't lie or write things that are not true. Follow basic rules on plagiarism and make sure to cite or quote the correct sources if you incorporate external knowledge into your profile. Don't try to sell on LinkedIn – people hate when you contact them with sales as the primary purpose – it's just another kind of spam.

10. **If we would have a top 3 things students should work on what would it be?**

Having a good basic profile in a language that other people outside academia and your subject of knowledge would understand.

Be curious and use the platform to gain knowledge on you field of interest and find out how the professionals are talking about your skillset and the tasks you could work with.

Don't be afraid to reach out – that's the whole idea of the platform.

11. **If we would have a top 3 of what students do not know about LinkedIn, what would it be?**

They are often unaware of all the valuable data that can be found on the platform. E.g. find companies and professionals within your field, find alumnis from your education and see their career paths, find relevant jobs and opportunities etc.

They are not aware about how to do good searches on LinkedIn. To "gain access" to all the good data you need to learn how to do good searches and more advanced/specific searches like boolean searching.

They are often not aware that LinkedIn is a social platform meaning that having a good profile is just as much about what you do on the platform (posting, commenting, interacting) as it is about what you write on your profile.

12. **Can you please give us some success examples of AAU international students or AAU graduates you know about.**

I think most of these cases are already described on out webpage: for instance:
https://www.careers.aau.dk/stories/show/chrissy-used-linkedin-to-find-her-job.cid500183

It also depends on what you mean by success. A success doesn't have to be that you got a job from being on linkedin. It can also be that you found valuable knowledge around your field of work or that you succeeded in growing your professional network. So basically a success should be defined be the goal you have for being on linkedin.

13. How can AAU international students and not only best take advantage of counselling services?

I'm not sure I fully understand the question.
If it's about how best to interact with our counselling service I would say the recommendation is to be well prepared. Lets say you want knowledge about CV's – then you should read our guides on CV's and make a draft of your own CV. Then you are ready to contact counselling to get feedback on your CV and further advice. This goes for basically all questions and inquiry's.

14. Which advice would you give international students who want to pursue a career in Denmark?

All data and experience shows that learning Danish language and culture is central to a career in Denmark. You don't have to be able to talk Danish fluenty but if you can understand the language when some writes you or you are approached then you're a big step ahead a lot of the other internationals. I know it's easy said and hard to do – but it's the truth.

15. Do you have anything to add?

No this is a very thorough interview – thank you for getting me to think about my practice ☺

15.5.2 Christian

Q/A Top advices from an AAU career counselor

1. What are the first steps a student or recent graduate should take in identifying their career goals, and when should they start this process?

   Firstly, they should think about what they want to do. The first and most important part of navigating in one's career is to identify some kind of "goal". Not necessarily an "end goal" but some pointers that make it easier to find one's way around in the sometimes complex abundance of choices, opportunities and good advice. It can help you in some of the choices that you have to make. There are no guarantees when it comes to "career-ing" and therefore, noone can say what you have to do to end up doing something specific. But a really good start to your

careers path is to just start thinking about what you want to do and how you up your chances of getting there.

2. If a student still is not exactly sure of what kind of job they want, where should they start?

   Find a "ballpark" answer. What has interested you the most in your studies or in other aspects of life? Why did that particular thing interest you? Maybe, you can't work with exactly THAT, but a really good exercise is to find out where you can get to work with parts of what interested you. E.g., if you know that you really liked working in a kindergarten as a spare time job because you wanted to contribute to the well-being of children, then you can use that same value as your pointer – where can you support children's well-being? In the public sector? By doing research? By working for a SME that directly or indirectly works wothin the field? When you identify such things, you got something to aim for.

3. Simply saying, "I need a job," is not helpful. How can job seekers go deeper? What examples do you have of students and steps taken towards their career goals?

   Be sure to set achievable goals. They help you stay motivated. And focus on what works.

4. What are the most common challenges of students? What are the most common questions about Linkedin and struggles and how do they solve them?

   Many students have a hard time translating what they can help companies with. Even though you have many usable and great competencies they need to be translated into the "language" of the company. Good communication in about getting people to hear what you want them to hear – and it is worth the hard work to tell them what you can do for them in their language.

5. How can the students know how to get what they need from Linkedin and counselling? How can they use the tools they have at their disposal for the best results?

   If in doubt, ask someone who can help! AAU Career is a pretty good bet when it comes to helping out with career related questions. But there are many great sources to knowledge – International House… Og andet.

6. How did you get your current job (e.g. how did you use tools, studies, Linkedin, counsellors and does it still apply today)? What would you do differently now?

   I studied applied philosophy and graduated five years ago and I am fortunate enough to work with some of the most important things that I found interesting during my studies; dialogue, individuals as part of a society, organizational understanding – and taking other people's perspectives seriously (in an ethical sense). My first job was at a private school for marginalized

young people. I got to do both teaching, which is part of my job at AAU Career, too, and support the development of the pupils with dialogue and development plans. Quite serendipitously, I found the ad for my current job and I knew that I had to apply for it.

I already knew my to-be colleague from my study so I called him to ask some questions about the position and about employability at AAU in general.

I got a call to go to an interview and I prepared really thoroughly. I had to prepare a presentation of a employability course for a study. It went well, I guess. And here I am.

7. What are some common mistakes you see students making on their resumes and job applications, Linkedin accounts?

I often see applications that doesn't really relate to the position it is meant to be related to. Imagine the company's perspective – what would they like to know and what would they consider relevant? Be sure to include them and their challenges and current projects – and how you can help them solve the challenges and complete their projects.

15.5.3 Miguel

Q/A Guide – Helping internationals as a former AAU Graduate

Name: Miguel Oliveira
Age: 30
Education: Culture Communication Globalisation
Year of graduation: 2015
Years/semesters studying in Denmark: 5
Job: Project coordinator at International House North Denmark
Company/Organization: Aalborg Municipality
Nationality: Portuguese / Polish

1. How is life after some years as a graduate of AAU and how are the skills gained during the years in AAU and working with PBL still help you?
   a. Working within the industry I love makes me feel motivated and happy. Ever since I graduated, my responsibilities in my job have grown each day. The fact that I have undertook several projects in groups during my studies at Aalborg University, and specifically working with the PBL methodology gave me a set of tools and inspirations to solve real life problems I face daily in my work. This is also helpful when I need to become innovative and "think out of the box", while trying to anticipate the next move and being ready with several solutions in my toolbox.

2. What is your current position and what can you tell us about it?
   a. I currently work for Aalborg Municipality in a project called International House North Denmark. We exist to support companies and international citizens in North Denmark. My role in the latest years have been to connect international graduates and the local companies. Beside this, I am involved in several projects whereby we service companies with consultancy, developing events and workshops and coordinating efforts among strategic partners at a local, regional and national levels.

3. Why and how are you helping internationals in your current position?
   a. I support internationals in several ways. To begin with, I often meet with highly specialized expats that either are on their way to Denmark or just move here to work. I am able to help them and their companies with their onboarding process and at the same time, sharing my knowledge about networking and the nitty-gritty's of living in the region. At the same time, I collaborate with our two universities in Aalborg whereby we support some international students that participate in career programs. In here, I try to guide and match these students withing the local business sector and making sure that they get employed after graduation. Last, but not least, I do engage with many internationals on a daily-basis that often just want to obtain information or tips in relation to establishing a company in Denmark or becoming aware of their rights and opportunities as students, employees and in general, international citizens.

4. Many internationals find it more challenging and even more difficult to find jobs and integrate in the Northern region of Denmark. What do you think and what can you advise them?
   a. I know many think it can be difficult to find a job in North Denmark. I would say it can be difficult, but it is not impossible. Drawing on my example, I have always been interested in the Danish culture and language. I think that these two aspects can be play a vital role in any employer's decision when hiring internationals. Just like in any other part of the world, by knowing the language and the culture you will have better chances to understand the reality around you, make friends and show your enthusiasm for working and staying in the region. I would also add that becoming active in the civil society or having relevant study jobs during studies can actually give you the so-wanted professional experience as well as nurture your network that is proven to be quite important nowadays.

5. Can you give us some examples of projects here in the north region that have as a target internationals.

   a. If we look at the work that International House North Denmark, we have among others two specific programs that could interested our internationals in North Denmark. The first one is the Spouse Space program which is an initiative oriented towards expats'

spouses and partners. Spouse Space is characterized by its monthly meetings, where the participants are asked to help decide the topics of the meetings. The meetings are organized in two halves; where the first half focuses on specific topics like jobs, networking, volunteer work, entrepreneurship etc., and the second half has a social and networking purpose.

b. Another program is the Expat Host Programme, which creates a bridge between internationals in North Denmark and assimilated international or local volunteers, who help them settle in. As a mentor, you gain personal satisfaction and the possibility to share experience, while learning about different cultures and approaches on life. As a mentee, you gain professional networking opportunities, advice, feedback, and an expanded base of skills to help you in your new life in Denmark. You can read more about these tow on our website www.ihnd.dk

c. I think It is important to mention as well that there are several other regional programs that are aimed at internationals. Several municipalities in North Denmark want to attract qualified workforce and population to their cities, and therefore they are offering support to search for a job and moving there. That is the case of GO VEST in Vest Himmerland, MOVE NORTH in Frederikshavn, HOBRO INTERNATIONAL HUB in Mariagerfjord or MOVE TO THY in Thisted, just to name a few.

6. Many internationals and professionals dream about the perfect job, the career in their dreams is many times difficult to reach especially as an international and in the north of Denmark. Are you in your dream job? How did you handle your own dreams, passions and professional goals and what can you tell other internationals that could be helpful and help them in their endeavors?

I could not be happier now doing what I do. As an international myself who came to study in Denmark and made the efforts to stay in the region, I am proud to be able to help other in the same situation, but also to inspire companies becoming aware of the potential in our international community. I was quite interested in the topic of internationalization since a young age, and while I was taking my university degree I was careful to become aware of what exactly do I want for my career and I envisioned several ways I could use my passion and education. By the time I decided to take a master's degree within Culture, Communication and Globalization I had some experience with local organizations by helping them internationalize and think global. My easiness to build bridges and speak several languages also made me become closer to both danes and many other internationals, gathering inspirations and ideas that I use nowadays. If I can, I would honestly recommend you to try out several jobs or volunteering in different organizations from different industries and find what you really are passionate for. You might not start with your dream job anyway, but you will know how to get there way easier.

7. What challenges do you still have being an international in Denmark and how do you deal with them?

a. To be honest with I do not see many challenges as an international in Denmark. Perhaps the most significant is the distance to my family and the lack of some things from home, such as the hot weather and local food. I enjoy living in Aalborg and being a part of the local society. I am a very active person and in my spare time I play handball in my local club (IK1919) and I produce music. I do also go fishing both in lakes and in the sea, and I have so many great friends with whom I can always share an evening or go for long walks by the water front.

8. Which advice would you give international students who want to pursue a career in Denmark?

a. See the answer in question 4

Link to final article:
https://www.careers.aau.dk/stories/show/supporting-international-students-as-a-former-aau-student.cid503777