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OCTOBER 2024

Photo: Diversify

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Editor's note



Photo: Kristian Bust

If you're reading this, it's likely you're an international in Copenhagen, like me. Maybe you've lived here for many years, or perhaps you're new to Denmark.

Whatever your story, *The Copenhagen Post* is for you.

We're a news, business and culture media that connects English-speakers to Danish life. Through our daily online reporting, we help you to understand the key trends, news and debates going on in Denmark, to give you a richer perspective on the country you're living in.

This is our first print newspaper for over a year, and I'm proud to platform some of our favourite recent features in these pages.

In this October issue of *The Copenhagen Post*, Nigerian-born, US-raised, and

Norway-based economist Chisom Udeze shares her personal journey in our deep-dive cover feature: from struggling to find a social community in Norway, to building a Scandinavia-wide network for underrepresented professionals.

Plus, DEIB experts from Copenhagen Business School, Deloitte Denmark and Nordea give their take on how to build diverse teams and see them succeed in Denmark's biggest companies.

Then, as the new academic semester kicks off in earnest, we speak to a student community manager at Bascamp - one of Copenhagen's biggest university campuses - about the challenges and opportunities for new international students in the Danish capital. Read the Q&A on page 12.

And read first-hand accounts of two different job-seeking courses in Denmark: the Greater Copenhagen Career Program, and First Job Copenhagen. What was useful? How did it work? Did our interviewees get hired? Head to page 14 and 23 to find out.

For your Danish culture fix, jump to page 26, where we meet the historian behind Kend Din By - the cult Instagram project colourising Copenhagen's past.

There's plenty more, from BMOs (if you know, you know), to language-learning tips, and even an exclusive with the Chinese ambassador.

If you like what you find, join us at cphpost.dk and get all this and more, online, every day. And don't forget to sign up for Connect Club - our event series just for *CPH Post* readers that helps you discover the city while meeting new friends.

Thanks for reading!

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Copies: 10.000

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Ryesgade 106A, 2. th. - 2100 Copenhagen Ø
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Founded in 1998
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Published by The Post ApS
CVR: 43916181

Art Direction: Maja Laugaard Andersson
Printed by Erritsø Tryk



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A guided tour of Copenhagen City Hall, hosted by Connect Club.
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Diversifying the Nordics: How a Nigerian economist became a beacon for inclusivity in Scandinavia

Chisom Udeze, founder of Diversify, shares how struggling to find a community in Norway motivated her to build a Nordic-wide professional network. We also hear from DEIB experts from Copenhagen Business School, Deloitte Denmark and Nordea about how to build diverse teams and boost performance in the Nordics' biggest companies.



Chisom Udeze, founder of Diversify

Photo: Diversify

By Lena Hunter

Chisom Udeze, a Nigerian-born, US-raised economist who spent 14 years "shuttling around Europe" says that she is quite accustomed to change.

She smiles knowingly as she says it; in fact, she has not only shuttled around a few cities, but lived in the Netherlands and the UK and worked across four continents for clients including the European Commission, United Nations, and The Economist Group.

From that, it sounds like Udeze has the formula for relocating neatly worked out. "But then I moved to Norway seven years ago, and for the first time in my life, I just couldn't crack it," she says.

MOVING TO THE NORDICS: NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART

When Udeze came to Oslo in 2016, Norway's migration figures were turning a corner. After trending down for several years, the number of skilled migrants was increasing as international talents began to chase opportunities in the Nordics.

Like many others, Udeze took the leap and relocated. But while Norway's economic climate was good for international business and tourism, its social climate - like neighbouring Denmark's - was relatively homogenous.

Navigating Norway as a black, neurodivergent woman with a non-European upbringing and non-Norwegian work experience, Udeze says she saw a system "in denial" that struggled to accept minorities - let alone include them.

"I was thriving professionally, but I was struggling to integrate socially and emotionally. I felt isolated. It was the first time I got quite clinically depressed," says Udeze.

"I felt that in the Netherlands, the UK and the US, you just had to be skilled, and you could get work. You face a lot of different hurdles, but at least you could get in."

"There's this idea of the Nordics being this wonderful Xanadu where everyone has equal opportunities - but that's not the case."

"People are always saying 'be grateful, what are you talking about? Everything's great.' So if you come in and face setbacks, you internalise it. And the denial further exacerbates people's experiences of exclusion or discrimination or lack of opportunities."

THE DANISH CONTEXT

Unfortunately, Udeze's experience is not unique.

In Denmark, Associate Professor at Copenhagen Business School Dr. Poornima Luthra, an expert in workplace diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB), says a huge proportion of migrants face the same hurdles.

Despite over 15 years in academia, nine years living in the Danish capital, and having authored two best-selling books on inclusive leadership, Singaporean-born Dr. Luthra considers herself "very fortunate" to have found a job in Denmark.

"It is not like this for everybody. Especially when you're a trailing spouse and you come from a minority ethnic group, it is extremely challenging to find a job," she says.

That's backed up by data: in Denmark, 84 percent of people with an ethnic minority background state that they have experienced discrimination and prejudice, and 48 percent while they were applying for a job, property or loan, according to a 2023 report from the Danish Institute of Human Rights.

GRADUAL POSITIVE CHANGE

Figures like those reveal that a degree of apprehension in the Nordics towards migrants is still widespread.



Dr. Poornima Luthra, Associate Professor at Copenhagen Business School. Photo: Diversify



Diversify Nordics Summit 2023
Photo: Maciej Pulit

But in Udeze's seven years in Norway and Dr. Luthra's nine in Denmark, the number of migrants in the region has grown significantly.

In Denmark, the proportion of the total population made up of migrants and their descendants rose from 11.2 percent in 2014 to 15.9 percent in 2024.

And that's a good thing: internationals have a strong positive effect on national employment figures.

In April 2024, an analysis by the Danish trade association Dansk Industri found that 87 percent of the growth in employment in Denmark in the past 12 months was due to international hires.

In July, an analysis by Dansk Erhverv showed that foreign labour contributed DKK 76 billion to Denmark's GDP in the first three months of 2024 - equivalent to 2.7 percent of its total GDP.

With a worsening skilled-labour shortage in the IT, healthcare and engineering sectors, and employment amongst Danes already at a record high, com-

84 %
of people with an ethnic minority background have experienced discrimination and prejudice in Denmark

Source: 'Denmark: Experiences of ethnic discrimination', Danish Institute of Human Rights

panies need to hire internationals more than ever.

That means addressing the Nordic culture of exclusion that Udeze, Dr. Luthra and countless others from other underrepresented groups have experienced.

INCLUSIVE HIRING: WHAT COMPANIES CAN DO BETTER

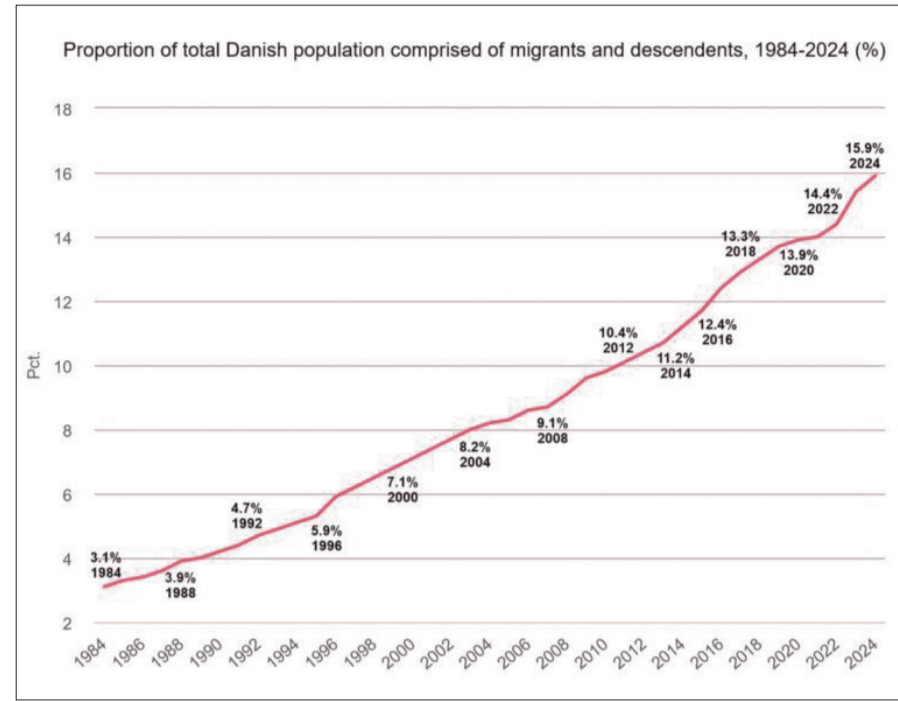
Dr. Luthra makes a clear distinction between integration and inclusion.

"In Denmark, most political parties and leaders of organisations talk so much about integration - but integration and assimilation is not what we're talking about when we talk about inclusion."

"Integration and assimilation means that you want people to fit into the dominant norms. We don't want that. We want people to feel included as they are, and then feel that sense of belonging," she explains.

"So you don't have to change your name, or a part of your culture, or change the way you dress or speak to fit in."

The solution is to address the "embedded bias" in the entire life cycle of employment, she says. For



“Diversity alone does nothing. The prerequisite for benefiting from diversity in terms of innovation only comes through inclusion.”

- Michael Watson, HR Partner at Nordea

“Many team events require you to be able bodied and neurotypical to really enjoy and take part

– but that can be exclusionary,” says Dr. Luthra. “10 to 15 years ago, diversity was not a big issue in the bank. But we realised that we could not only create a better workplace, but also more profitability by becoming more diverse.”

The most recent McKinsey Diversity Matters report found that companies in the top quartile of ethnic representation show “a 27 percent financial advantage over others”, and companies with representation of women exceeding 30 percent are significantly more likely to financially outperform those with 30 percent or fewer.

Meanwhile, those in the bottom quartile for both (ethnic and gender diversity) are 66 percent less likely to outperform financially on average.

companies, that means starting at the attraction stage - with the job description.

“What is the language that you’re using? Where are you casting your net when it comes to advertising for your job? Be intentional,” she says.

Next, she advises to reconsider the competencies in the description:

“Very often, the competencies that we put in our job description are either reflective of the leader themselves, of what the organisation considers to be an ideal candidate, or of someone who has been successful in the past.”

“We need to move away from that, because you’re hiring people who fit a certain prototype, a certain ideal mould.”

She adds that she frequently challenges organisations and leaders who say they want someone who “fits the culture”.

“We shouldn’t be hiring for culture fit. We should be hiring for culture add and values alignment,” she says.

Beyond that, inclusive hiring also includes anonymising CVs, and rethinking interview questions.

“If you’re an interviewer, ask yourself a flip question. Would I ask this question to another candidate? And if the answer is no, then you cannot ask that question.”

THE PAVEMENT ANALOGY

When it comes to retention and development, Dr. Luthra, along with social researcher Professor Claire Maxwell and executive coach Signe Biering, has developed a free resource for businesses to onboard and retain international talent.

‘Project Onboard Denmark’ is a series of digital tools and activities, informed by three years’ dedicated research, that help international employees feel welcome and able to contribute in the workplace.

But the work doesn’t stop after onboarding, says Dr. Luthra.

Company social events should be organised mindfully, so that they can cater to a range of different needs around food habits and alcohol consumption.

– but that can be exclusionary,” says Dr. Luthra.

“We can often think that catering for the outlier experiences of people who are from minority groups benefits only a few. But actually a lot of those accommodations benefit everybody. I think even your typical employees would enjoy some quiet time out and less sensory experiences. People who normally drink alcohol might say, you know what? Today I really don’t want to.”

She draws an analogy about pavements: “In the 1950s or 60s when they started putting slopes on curbs in the US – the reason they did that was for veterans and disabled folks to have easier access. Very soon they started observing people with strollers and bicycles using them.”

“So, something that was intended for an underrepresented group turned out to be beneficial for a wider community. I think that’s the attitude we need to take.”

ETHNIC DIVERSITY GIVES SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL ADVANTAGE

Nordea, Scandinavia’s largest bank with operations all over the region, has felt the shifting demographic in the Danish workforce amongst its own staff.

The Helsinki- headquartered institution employs nearly 30,000 staff across 107 nationalities and 66 languages. Its largest employee base is in Denmark.

Michael Watson is the HR Partner at Nordea, working with leadership, culture, wellbeing, psychological safety and D&I in the Capital Markets Division, with over 25 years of experience in the company.

Though diversity in the bank has grown significantly in the past decade, the work on inclusion has only come to the fore in the past five years, he says.



Michael Watson, HR partner at Nordea
Photo: Diversify

DIVERSITY IS NOT ENOUGH

However Nordea soon realised that simply being diverse wasn’t enough, says Watson.

“Diversity alone does nothing. The prerequisite for benefiting from diversity in terms of innovation only comes through inclusion.”

In terms of gender balance, one major hurdle in both diversity and inclusion in investment banking is that men are overrepresented in finance studies, so are more plentiful when recruiting straight out of university.

It’s not just a problem in Denmark; women are underrepresented in technical educations all over the world. Dr. Luthra, who studied electrical engineering in Singapore before embarking on a degree in HR, says she remembers it well.

“At the time there were only a handful of women who were doing an engineering degree. There was a lack of representation in faculties, in the educators who were teaching. But I also couldn’t see myself represented in leadership in the companies that I would potentially have wanted to work for,” she recalls.

Watson says Nordea started pushing back against that bias by aiming its recruitment efforts specif-

ically at people of underrepresented genders, ethnicities and backgrounds.

“We have managed to make headway by marketing ourselves more towards women and not focusing just on finance students, but more broadly across science, technology, engineering and math.”

He also says that inclusion is about taking a more “long-sighted” approach to onboarding.

“We’ve realised that onboarding starts long before the first day at work. It’s in how you brand yourself towards different communities, then in the interview processes and finally when you shake hands.”

For established staff, it’s just another colleague, but for the new hire it’s a “life event”, he points out. That’s why inviting new colleagues to pizza after work, or to sit with you for daily lunches, is so important.

“Inclusion is all about understanding how the experience feels from the new hire’s point of view,” he says.

BUILDING INCLUSIVITY AT A BIG FOUR FIRM

At Deloitte – the largest professional services network in the world and one of the Big Four accounting firms – the ratio of international employees at the Denmark office has also grown in recent years.

“We hired one of the first expats back in 2015 from the US in my team. So it wasn’t more than ten years ago that we started growing our community,” says Sumit Sudan, Managing Partner for the Large & Complex team at Deloitte Denmark.

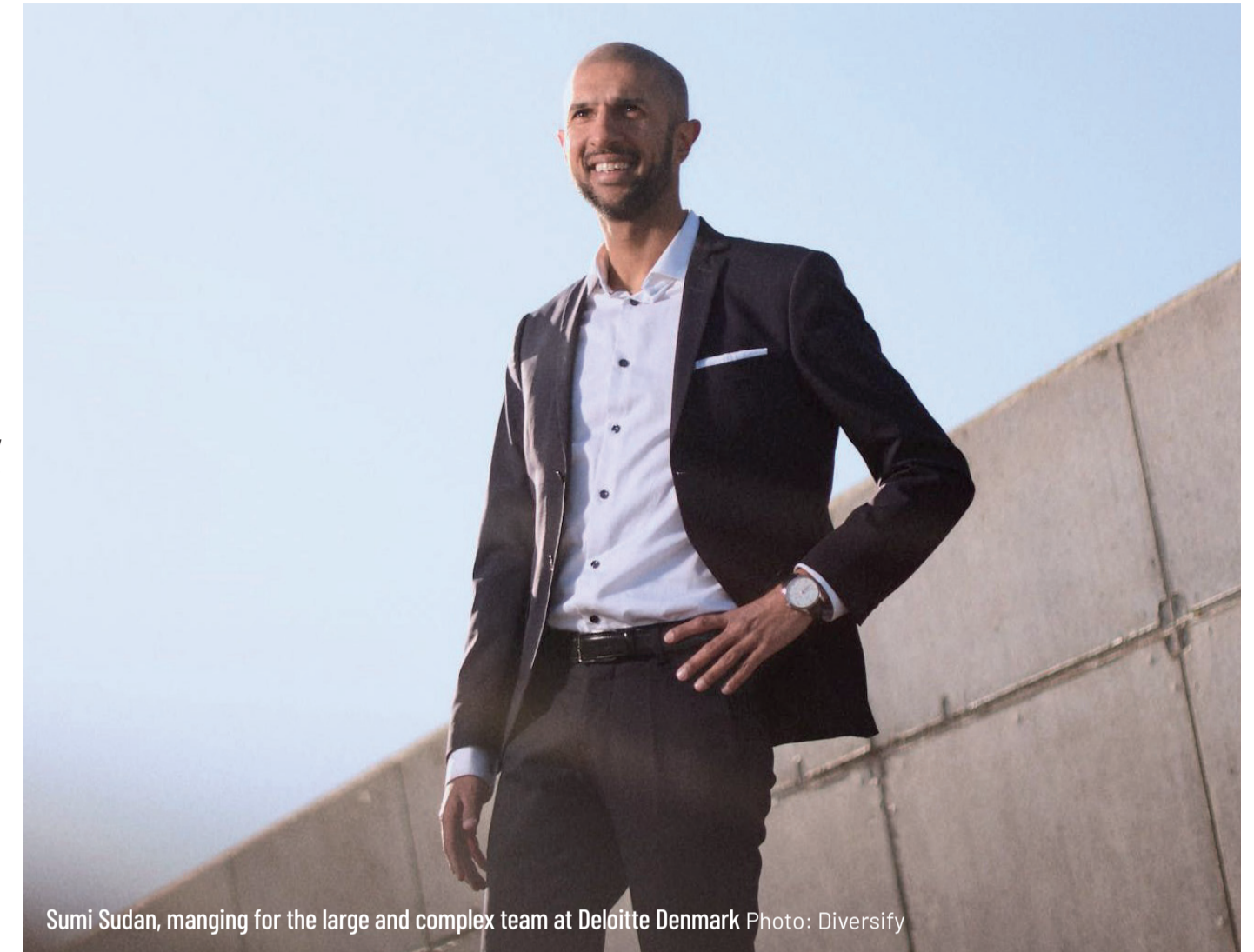
Today, around ten percent of its 3000 staff are from abroad – either expats stationed permanently in the country, or people on secondments, he says.

But on Sudan’s team of 200, the ratio of internationals is higher - up to 20 percent. “And in my core team of 70, one third are expats, from 17 different nationalities.”

By Danish corporate standards, that’s a very diverse group.

“Despite the team working together successfully today, it hasn’t always been like that. “In the beginning, the 17 nationalities were sitting in one corner, and the Danes in another. Then, we mixed it up,” says Sudan with a laugh.

He speaks with energy, warmth and knowledge – it’s easy to believe he is driving positive change in the Deloitte office – but he is quick to credit the company’s first international hires with getting the inclusion ball rolling.



Sumi Sudan, manging for the large and complex team at Deloitte Denmark Photo: Diversify

“They formed a community, met at regular intervals to discuss topics and then gave feedback to leadership about things we could do to make the employee experience better for people coming from abroad, or who don’t speak Danish.”

That feedback led to Deloitte changing the workplace language to English, he says.

“Danes still fall into this habit of sitting around the lunch table discussing in Danish, if they’re not mindful about it – but my job as a leader is to keep an eye on that, and guide towards an international community,” says Sudan.

He adds that language is only one form of inclusion, and that he strives to create a “safe space” where people feel able to raise ideas and concerns on a broad range of topics.

“It’s about building a culture where leaders think about an inclusive environment not only from the international perspective, but all types of diversity and inclusion,” he says.

EMPLOYEE GROUPS AND FRIDAY BARS

Like Deloitte’s first informal expat gatherings show,

having a relatable group inside a big corporation goes a long way to building a sense of community and belonging.

At Nordea, employees run their own ‘Employee Resource Groups’ spanning different faiths and beliefs, cultures, generations, and gender identities.

ERGs don’t just connect you with others like you, but create a platform for exchange with other groups, and offer the opportunity to host external speakers.

The cross-generational ERG, which is one of the newest ones, has been especially energetic,” says Watson.

“Nowadays we have employees from the late teens up to the late 70s at Nordea. The differences in values and mindsets in those four generations is large. I’ve realised that there can sometimes be more opportunity for innovation in the diversity of thought when generations are able to meet, than when different gender identities are able to meet.”

At Deloitte Denmark, one of the latest employee-run initiatives is the cross-cultural Friday bar.

DKK 76 billion
The amount that foreign labour contributed to Denmark’s GDP in the first three months of 2024

Source: Dansk Erhverv

“It’s about building a culture where leaders think about an inclusive environment not only from the international perspective, but all types of diversity and inclusion.”

- Sumit Sudan, Managing Partner for the Large & Complex team at Deloitte Denmark

"We had for example a Pakistani bar, a Filipino bar, an American bar. This Friday we have South African. The individuals from those countries are the ones that host it, and they bring their culture's sweets or beverage, or whatever it might be," explains Sudan.

"It's an informal way of mixing with your peers across leaders and team members, and to start understanding why people do what they do - and Danes love a Friday bar!" he adds with a laugh.

Like Udeze's and Dr. Luthra's, Sudan's insights into best practices for strengthening DEIB at Deloitte Denmark are informed in part by personal experience.

"Even though many perceive me as always having been a privileged person, because of my family background I always felt underrepresented - at least growing up here in Denmark," he says.

Now 43, he can better reflect on the challenges he felt early in his career: "The last 10 years haven't been a problem, but the first 10 or 20, I thought differently - maybe I was also treated differently."

"I felt I didn't have the same opportunities, or had to fight harder to prove myself, and that made me realise that I really want to help the next generation to achieve an equal playing field."

CONNECTING PROFESSIONALS OUTSIDE THE WORKPLACE

While Sudan is building inclusion strategies inside a global company in Denmark, Udeze does it outside

the workplace, with a network approach, by fostering a platform for entrepreneurship and professional mentoring for minority groups in the Nordics.

"I started going out to meet people in Oslo. I met Norwegians who had underrepresented identities: black Norwegians, brown Norwegians, Arab Norwegians who, even though this is home for them, have not felt included. There were internationals, quite a number of trailing spouses, refugees and asylum seekers."

Many of them, like her, were struggling emotionally and socially. "And on top of that, many didn't have work," she says.

"I thought, 'hey, I have two weeks away from my job. How about I put

together an event where people can teach others how to start their own businesses?' And that's how Diversify started."

DIVERSIFYING THE NORDICS

Those first informal meetings snowballed into formalised groups, mentorship programs, and eventually conferences and research - all centred around improving the level of inclusion in Norway's professional landscape through leadership training led by experts like Udeze.

Today, Diversify is a global organisation that works at the intersection of inclusion, democracy, freedom,



Photo: Nordea

climate sustainability, justice, and belonging.

It has also spawned an annual summit in Oslo: the Diversity Nordics Summit, now in its third year, which fosters dialogue and actionable change across industries.

Last year, DNS attracted over 1,100 attendees, including Fortune 500 leaders and professionals from diverse industries and backgrounds - and even more are expected in 2024.

Udeze's Oslo meet-ups have come a long way. For the upcoming conference on 27 September, some 90 experts from across Europe and the US will attend for talks and events about leadership, innovation, and sustainable change. It's an "unprecedented number", she says.

While Diversify is shining a light on Nordic inclusivity, Dr. Luthra observes that in Denmark, things are moving in the right direction.

"The proportion of minority employees in Danish companies is not where it should be nor representative of the 13 percent of the Danish population that comes from a minority ethnic background, but you see quite a lot more representation in the larger companies than you did even nine years ago, when I first moved here," she says.

Her two books on being an active ally to inclusion, published in 2021 and 2022, have garnered widespread acclaim from research, corporate and cultural spheres alike - a sign that the subject is becoming ever more mainstream.

Sudan agrees. He says today that there's "definitely hope for the international community in Denmark."

"Danish businesses can see that they are standing on a burning platform - that there is a scattered talent landscape they need to access and the global pool is strong. I think that should give hope."

"I WANT TO BE ABLE TO SAY I TRIED"

There's hope, but it's still hard. Udeze doesn't hide it. It takes a mental toll to build something from scratch and serious tenacity to keep going, she says.

"It can be lonely to build anything - especially to build a company that has a social equity mission. Community is so important to my mental health and well-being. I'm so grateful that Diversify gives me that."

"But it's really hard to do this work. I have learned not to ask for permission because I will not get a lot of 'go ahead and do it'. It drains, and some days I feel like I can't do it anymore."

"So why do I? As a racialized, neurodivergent woman, I have dealt with my fair share of exclusion and discrimination, and I cannot articulate how terrible that feels. I don't want my two kids to ever know how that it feels like. But I know in my heart that they will."

"The way I'm raising them up, I reckon they will probably be game changers, but they might also ask me what I did to create change to make their life easier. And I really want to be able to say I tried," she explains, voice steady but eyes bright with emotion.

"So that is why I do it, even when it's hard." ♦



Diversify Nordics Summit 2024 – Oslo, 27 September

Dr. Poornima Luthra, Michael Watson and Sumit Sudan will all speak at the 2024 Diversify Nordics Summit - a conference featuring 90 experts in the fields of leadership, innovation, and sustainable change.

DNS combines insights from Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Aland Islands and Sapmi with a global perspective via leaders from Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

"Danish businesses can see that they are standing on a burning platform - that there is a scattered talent landscape they need to access and the global pool is strong. I think that should give hope."

- Sumi Sudan



Diversify Nordic summit 2023
Photos: Anna Komarnicka



Diversify Nordic summit 2023
Photos: Masiej Polit

Books by Dr. Poornima Luthra

Diversifying Diversity: Your guide to being an active ally of inclusion in the workplace (2021)

The Art of Active Allyship (2022)

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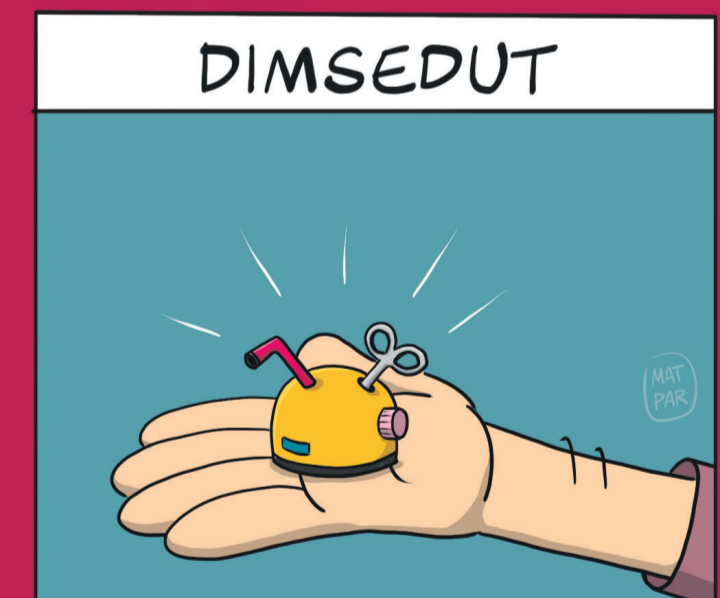
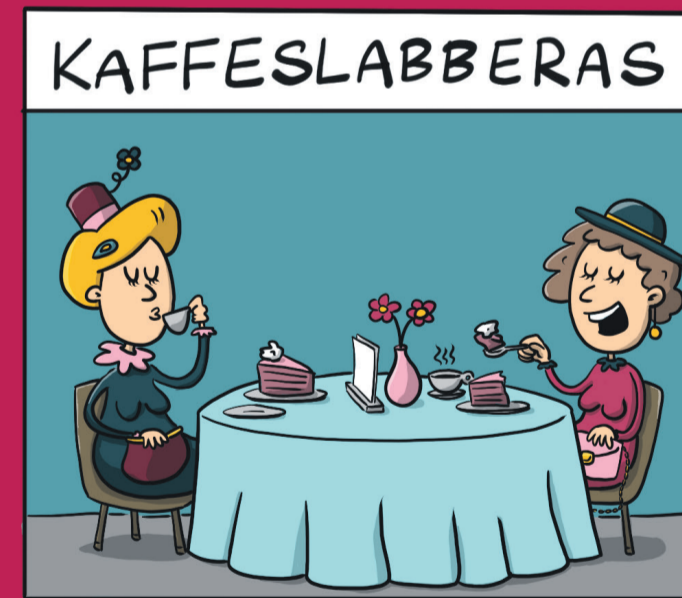
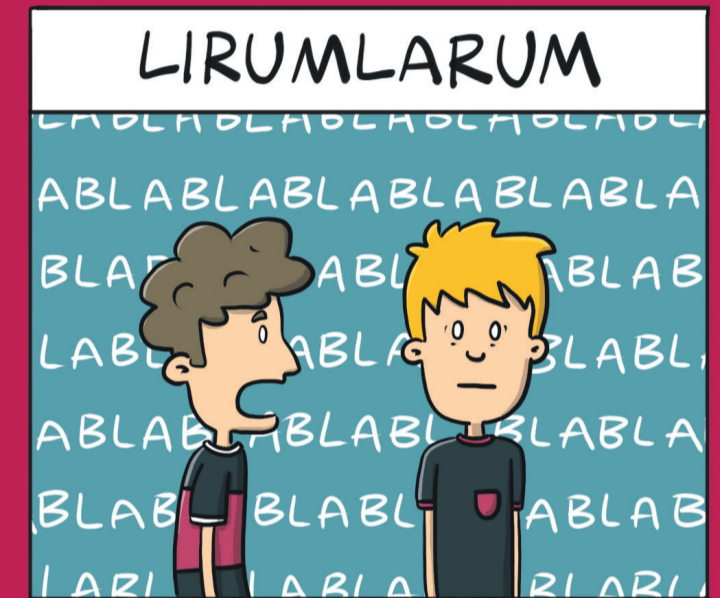
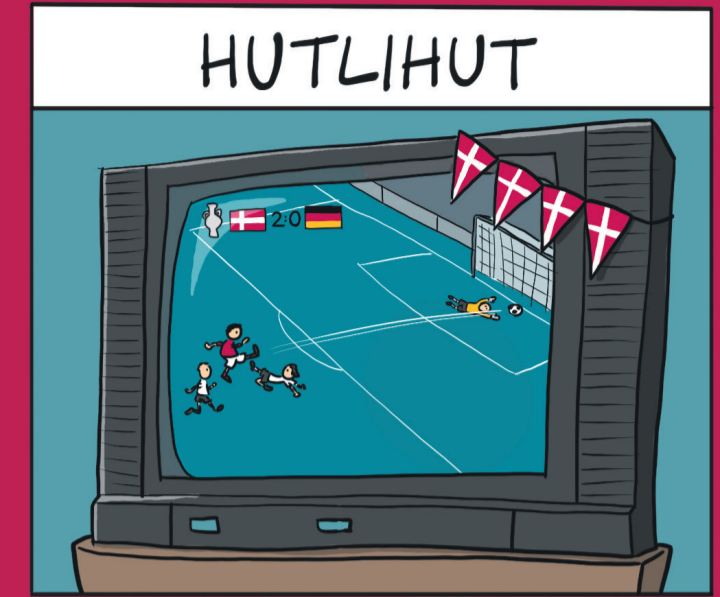
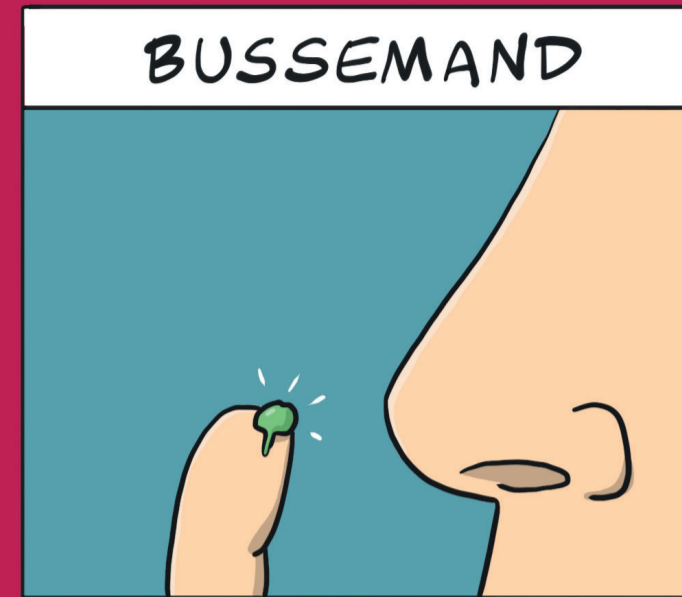
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Moving to Copenhagen to study?

Top tips from a student community manager



Photo: Basecamp

Laura Lombardi, Community and Operations Manager at Basecamp student accommodation in Copenhagen.

Laura Lombardi came from Italy to Copenhagen in 2015 as an international student. Almost a decade later, she is the community and operations manager at Basecamp, a student house accommodation in the very heart of Copenhagen city centre. Her job is to ensure all international students feel at home and have the best stay possible in Denmark.

By Christina Kronback

What were your own first impressions when you moved to Copenhagen?

I first came in July 2015 and the weather was amazing, everyone was biking and it all looked like a fairytale.

I studied at Copenhagen Business School (CBS) and it was so different from what I was used to, as there were

university organised parties at campus, weekly company presentations who were recruiting, and a lot of group work. It was all very exciting, but also challenging, as I had never lived so far away from home before.

What do students mostly ask help for? It is mainly practical help. With that in

mind, at the beginning of every school year we have prepared in advance a practical information pack.

It explains how to get a CPR-number, how to open a bank account, how to get a job, what to do regarding means of transportation, as there are many options. We also include other kinds of information, from the closest supermarkets to where to find salsa classes.

There are many foreigners working at Basecamp, so most of us have all gone through the experience of being a foreign student in Copenhagen, so we can share our experience as well.

Tell us a memorable moment where you helped a student out.

I once had a call from a mother living in Australia. She was worried about her daughter not socialising and keeping mostly to herself in her room.

I checked up on her and we had a talk about my own experience and how I understood people might have different social needs. In an easy and laid back way, our basebuddies involved her in various activities where she met several new people.

It worked well, as I noticed she slowly started to make friends and build her own network. I didn't get any more phone calls from her mum, which was a good sign. The cultural clash can be a bit of a challenge sometimes.

Does thriving academically go hand in hand with thriving socially?

I believe it depends on the person. On one hand, I think if you thrive academically, then you might also feel more comfortable to thrive socially.

On the other hand, if it takes time for you to get to know other people I think you can still thrive academically here in Denmark, because at university there is a lot of group work and networking events.

What things that you struggled with in 2015 do you still see students facing today?

Going through the whole system of how to get your CPR number, investigate if you are entitled to SU (state subsidy for students) as an EU student, and then after finishing your studies, the big questions: should you stay or should you go back home, and should you learn Danish or not?

Those are the kind of struggles I had and students still face nowadays.

Are there any new challenges that did not exist almost a decade ago?

Things have changed a lot in the last decade, the city has become much more international, we have so many more international students now, and with that comes more competition.

I don't want to get into politics, but it might have something to do with Brexit, as it has become more difficult

to study in the UK, many foreigners look for other cities where they can attend English-speaking courses.

Here, universities have a very good reputation, there is a good work-life balance and you can bike everywhere.

When I came to Denmark, Danish classes were free, nowadays you have to pay a deposit, which I understand as it decreases student drop out.

So you must be motivated to learn the language, but it can be difficult if you don't know if you're going to stay after you finish your course.

It can also be hard to start studying Danish when you start working, because it is harder with a less flexible schedule.

Of course, we have all noticed costs are rising. It can be a struggle to have a social life when going to bars or restaurants can have quite an impact on a student's budget.

What specific area of student life do you think needs more attention?

I think that loneliness is more common now.

When I do room inspections and ask the tenants how they are doing, most of them say they are home sick. It doesn't escalate for everyone, but for a lot of tenants it is a big challenge to move to a new country and get to know people.

It seems to be getting harder to socialise. I don't want to sound like a boomer, but being digitally connected may make you less open to getting to know people, especially face to face.

In case our tenants feel lonely or depressed, as staff and Basebuddies at Basecamp, we do our very best to help, but we are also aware of our limited knowledge and resources on how to approach this, so we make sure those in need get the right professional help.

Language can be a barrier. When you are studying, you meet so many foreigners and join international events and it can seem like you don't need to learn Danish.

But when you start looking for a job, I think your job options can be very limited if you don't know the language.

Why should a student choose Basecamp?

90 to 95 percent of our tenants are internationals, and many of them come from outside the EU countries, so visiting family over the weekend is not an option for them. With that in mind, we offer extra opportunities to build a network.

Our common areas are good places to meet new people, all our rooms have private bathrooms, and the majority have a small kitchenette.

We also have Basebuddies who organise monthly events, from walks around the city to pizza nights. ♦

"Laura's top 5 tips for new international students"

1. Learn the language: "That has to be at the very top of this list"
2. Volunteer: "It is not only very valuable but you also attend music festivals without having to pay for the ticket"
3. Get a part time job: "It's paramount in order to get some economic independence."
4. Attend cultural events, even on your own: "There are so many, from Copenhagen Jazz Festival to community dinners at Folkehuset Absalon."
5. Bike everywhere: "No matter the weather, just wear the appropriate gear and explore the city on two wheels."



Game area



Basecamp common area

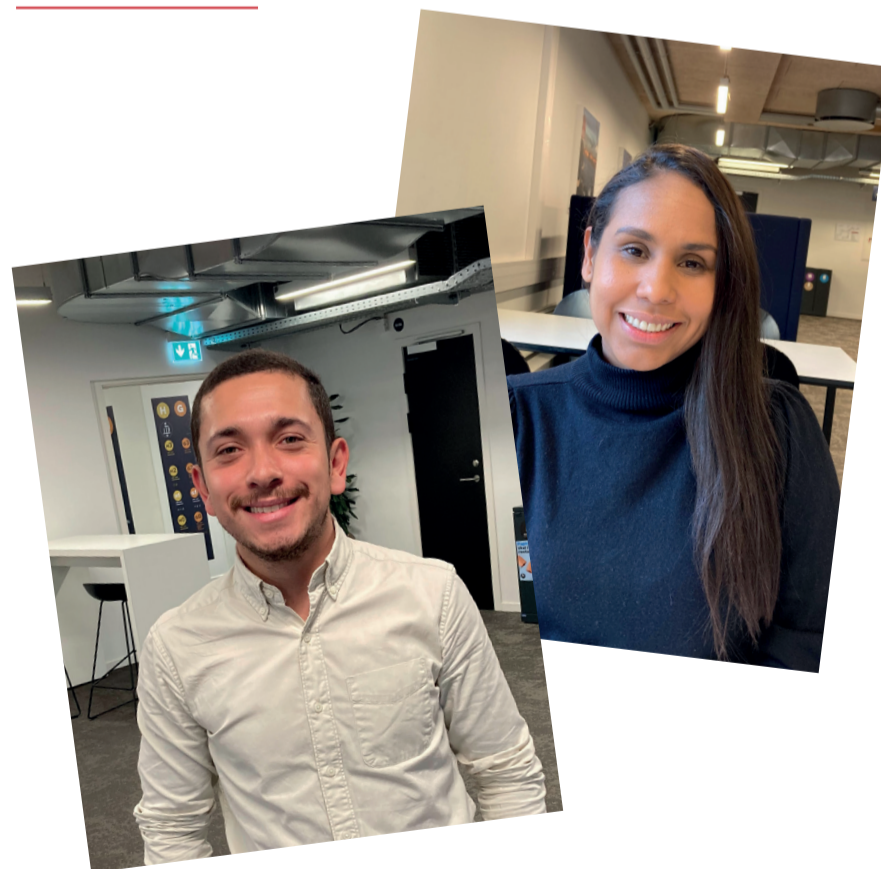


Photos: Christina Kronback

Take this one-week course to boost your Copenhagen job hunt

First Job Copenhagen is a week-long course that helps internationals to secure their first job in Denmark. The course covers resume-building and company research, and welcomes participants from all over the world.

By Nicolai Kampmann



Juan Pablo Alfaro Umana and Kelly Blanquicet

A good CV is more important than your cover letter when applying for a job, according to studies – and it's one of the many job-seeking tips emphasised by First Job Copenhagen.

The career course, held in English, equips Copenhagen-based internationals with tools for job searching, and gives advice on Danish work culture, LinkedIn, career counseling, and how to hack your elevator pitch.

EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

Each session, organised by Københavns Erhvervshus, sees experienced teachers share their tips and experiences with around 25 attendees who want to take charge of their job search in Denmark.

"We suggest that you stick to three messages and try to keep them short and clear. Limit yourself to that, if you can. Maybe you only get 30 seconds, at best up to 2 minutes, before the recruiters move on to the next application. That's the tough truth," said First Job Copenhagen teacher Jonas, during a recent session attended by The Copenhagen Post.

One of those taking advantage of the classes is Kelly Blanquicet, 41. She is from Columbia, and moved to Denmark with her Norwegian husband, who was hired by a Danish company after the couple had lived in Norway for 8 years.

"I want to increase my skills as a job seeker. I have been an IT tech engineer, part of a support team, in my previous work and am looking for something similar in Denmark. When you apply for a job in Norway, you do not have a photo on your CV, while it's normal here," says Blanquicet.

VERY POPULAR COURSE

The course runs every other week with up to 30 participants. You can register online and it's free.

As an international, you must have been in Denmark for a maximum of three years and have a Bachelor's degree as a minimum to participate. Copenhagen Municipality also has programs for unskilled workers called Get Started.

According to Copenhagen Municipality, 2 out of 3 participants get a job 3 to 12 months after the course.

LEARNING DANISH WILL MAKE IT EASIER

29-year-old Juan Pablo Alfaro Umana from Costa Rica hopes to be one of them. He has a degree in Business Economics and previously worked as a Senior Investment Manager in a bank.

"I am an optimist but also impatient. Many in the financial world are looking for English-speaking employees. I have been applying for 3 months now and have been to interviews. You learn from that. There are cultural differences and different ways of writing an application," says Umana.

"I am also in the process of learning Danish, as it will make it easier for me to really integrate with the Danes."

BE PERSONAL, BUT NOT TOO PERSONAL

One of the insights from the course is that in Denmark, it is very normal to share something about who you are in private with your recruiter – your interests outside work, for example.

"Be as specific about it as you can be, and describe why you are doing it," he says.

First Job Copenhagen encourages jobseekers to research a company before sending in their application. This shows that you are genuinely interested in the job and the broader mission of the company. ♦





Photo: Korean BBQ

Digitization is the secret ingredient in Chinese restaurateur's growth adventure

Publisher Jesper Skeel and Korean BBQ restaurant chain owner Zen discuss the ups and downs of independent entrepreneurship and how to crack the Copenhagen market, from both an international and Danish perspective.

Jesper Skeel &
David Laugaard Lose

Admittedly, I don't know much about the restaurant sector, but after 20 years as an independent entrepreneur, I have seen my share of mistakes and lessons when it comes to business management.

One thing is certain, self-employed success is rarely easy. It can be challenging to navigate the many disciplines that the role of contractor and employer requires.

If I say that as a Dane, then I know the road must be even harder for the international entrepreneurs who set out to crack the Copenhagen market.

I am curious about what it's like to be independent if, in addition to the trials I know myself, you also contend with a language barrier. How do you cope

when you have a smaller network to draw on when the hours are long, the children are sick, or you have to balance work commitments with playtime and family leisure?

That is why I was looking forward to meeting Zen, who has just opened his third restaurant in the Korean BBQ chain.

We meet in Vanløse, not far from where I grew up, in one of his restaurants.

I am immediately struck by the huge space and capacity for guests: Across three restaurants, Korean BBQ employs around 120 staff and can handle 1,000 covers in an evening.

In fact, it probably takes a great many guests to cover rent, staff, energy and raw material costs on an ordinary rainy Danish Tuesday evening like tonight.

Zen is a respected Chinese businessman - that's about the extent of the knowledge I already have about him - and it took a little persuasion to get him to agree to an interview.

We set aside an hour, and end up spending two hours talking, sharing experiences of being self-employed and tracing our backgrounds that led us here.

I came here to discover his entrepreneurial story - but I am also curious to hear whether his professional arc is a common one for Chinese self-employed business people in Copenhagen. I'm about to find out.

Like me, Zen grew up in Vanløse too. His Chinese parents ran a restaurant in the neighbourhood.

The hospitality industry is notorious for its long working day, and I ask Zen whether he has any reflections on a childhood with parents in that sector, what his thoughts are about work-life balance today, and how he finds time for both business and family.

"My parents have also been self-employed. When I think back, I see an evolution in that something has happened, from my upbringing in the 80s, to today, in the view we have on our family life, running a business and work-life balance. I think it has changed considerably," he says.

"Back then, I think my father didn't spend enough time with the family. Today we are in a completely different starting point. That is why I focus very much on the fact that as soon as I have free time, I use it with the family."

Very quickly it dawns on me that, even though we are sitting in his restaurant, I am speaking to Zen the contractor, rather than Zen the restaurateur.

He gives the impression that he could turn his hand to anything. Though he has grown up around the restaurant business, his mindset is more broadly entrepreneurial.

Zen has both the knowhow and the vision - and he dreams big. After all, you don't just walk into the restaurant industry and pull off 1000 covers across three venues.

But he has also leveraged creative solutions. Korean BBQ has been digitized; guests order their food digitally via a tablet mounted at the table, and dishes are served by robots.

At first I thought the robots were a gimmick to attract families with children, but no, it is a choice to minimize the waiting time for the guests.

Smart, I think - and perhaps also helps to reduce labor costs over time, especially on quiet evenings.

All his restaurants use the same technological platform, which he believes should make the customer experience easier, so that customers do not have to wait for a server to become available, but can simply order when they feel like it, and the order goes straight to the kitchen.

The same data also goes directly to the checkout system, and updates the stock status. It's efficient, precise and cohesive, and as the conversation goes on, it becomes clear that Zen is an expert in supply chain management.

Still, he says that the customer experience is top of the agenda when he develops new concepts for his restaurants.

"I'm concerned with giving customers a good overall experience. When they come to my restaurants, it should all go as smoothly as possible," he tells me.

He adds that even though he has developed a unique technology platform specifically for the Korean BBQ chain, there are still staff helping with

ordering where it is needed, and running the wider operations.

I sense he is not a chef, so I ask him about his educational background.

He sketches a picture of an entrepreneur who interrupted his Copenhagen Business School studies to start running a business - both to kickstart a career, but also to learn and gain practical experience on his own.

It's hard to separate what elements of his entrepreneurial spirit are down to instinct, and what is down to CBS learning - but Zen is doing something right.

His attention is trained on the market, on differentiating himself, and on thinking in competition terms - but his conversation is never mired in it.

"I'm concerned with giving customers a good overall experience. When they come to my restaurants, it should all go as smoothly as possible."

- Zen

Just as the robots are not just a random gimmick, the menu is well thought out with a focus on developing new dishes.

The Korean chefs in the kitchen are encouraged to experiment, making Korean BBQ stand out on the plate as well as on the books

from other Asian restaurants in Copenhagen.

That approach is comparable to merchandising in the webshop and retail space, where the range of products is continually updated.

And, where the menu is regularly refreshed with new dishes, the collection of data that Korean BBQ's digital menu enables can provide a huge advantage. That discipline, I think, unites both the restaurateur and the entrepreneur in Zen.

With the digital foundation in place, I am very curious about what the future holds for Korean BBQ and where the chain will expand next.

Is it Amager, Brønshøj or somewhere else entirely? Does he want to open 10 restaurants, get 1000 employees? What are his dreams as an entrepreneur?

In his reply, Zen speaks with the tempered realism that comes from experience.

The demand for Korean food in Copenhagen is not such that it would support 20 Korean BBQ restaurants - but the ambition is to grow, and there will be more venues, he says.

My own feeling is that new concepts could come from either the contractor or the restaurateur Zen - or both.

Perhaps he's playing his cards close to his chest. Time will tell whether Zen's ambitions lead to even greater gastronomic heights, or to new digital concepts in a completely different genre. ♦



Photo: Korean BBQ

Publisher Jesper Skeel and Korean BBQ owner Zen.



STEP INTO TRADITION:

Authentic Dim Sum at Hong Special

At Hong Special, we invite you to experience the true essence of traditional Chinese dining in Copenhagen. Our restaurant, designed to reflect the rich heritage of Chinese culture, blends the old-world charm of Cantonese cuisine with a touch of modern innovation.

Led by Chef Hong, who brings years of experience from China, we pride ourselves on serving authentic dishes like Denmark's First Red Rice Noodle Roll and our signature Hong's Special Duck combo with Shrimp Paste. Every dish is made with passion and a commitment to quality, offering a genuine taste of Cantonese tradition.

Step into our warm, authentic setting and let us take you on a culinary journey that honors the heart of Chinese cuisine.



Marcus Remmers, partner of the Planetary Health Investments team of Novo Holdings. Photo: Novo Holdings

Novo Holdings: “The challenges we face are too large for any single institution”

Marcus Remmers, partner of the Planetary Health Investments team of Novo Holdings, the holding company of pharmaceutical giant Novo Nordisk, discusses promising sectors for investment and innovation and reflects on why Denmark has a strong technology talent base.

Bernardo Basili Menini

Marcus Remmers, a partner of the Planetary Health Investments team of Novo Holdings, the controlling shareholder of Novo Nordisk, is an investment veteran with over 25 years of leadership experience.

Previously the Chief Technology Officer at Royal DSM, Remmers now focuses on accelerating investments in green transitions, food and health technology.

It's a broad church, he acknowledges. "The challenges we face—and that we at Novo Holdings want to help address—are too large for any single institution to solve alone," he says.

CPH Post: Everyone in this country and beyond is asking what Novo Holdings will do. So what will Novo Holdings do?

MR: I'm part of the Planetary Health Investments team, where we invest in food tech, health tech, materials circularity, energy, and water. These are areas we're really excited about, and we plan to increase our current investments.

Overall, what you could call the green transition is something we're very enthusiastic about.

CPH Post: Which markets are you looking to invest in?

MR: We are investing globally. We have offices in the USA, Asia, and Europe, and we seek out the best opportunities in these regions.

CPH Post: What are the most promising sectors in the medium and long term?

MR: In our space, we look at anything where biology at scale can make a difference. Biology is a very powerful force; take fermentation, for example—there's a lot you can do in terms of ingredients, proteins, and materials.

We're also exploring areas like building materials; one of our investments is in a company called Biomason, which develops bioconcrete. We are looking at various sectors and are especially excited about technologies that leverage biology.

Circularity is another key focus area, where we're interested in transforming waste into products that reduce resource requirements. Recently,

we invested in a company called Cirttech, which turns end-of-life car tires into components for new tires and shipping fuels.

CPH Post: What challenges do you identify as the biggest for our society?

MR: We take a systems view. Urbanization is a significant challenge, and addressing how we build sustainably is crucial. Climate change is another major issue, and we're focusing on both emission mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Lastly, there's the matter of food and agriculture, where sustainable solutions are desperately needed.

CPH Post: What role do public-private partnerships play in your strategy?

MR: The challenges we face—and that we at Novo Holdings want to help address—are too large for any single institution to solve alone. While we have significant resources, partnering with other investors, public actors, academia, and accelerators is essential.

We need to bring technologies to a stage where they can make a real impact. Customer needs must also

be central to this equation; it's about solving relevant issues for them.

CPH POST: What about international talents?

MR: Denmark has a great education system and a fantastic talent pool that fits well into big biotech companies, which is also evident in startups. There aren't many regions in the world with such a strong talent base. The universities and the ecosystem here, like what we see at TECHBBQ, make it an attractive place for people from diverse backgrounds.

CPH Post: How do you plan to solidify what has been done so far?

MR: We feel a responsibility to use our resources in the right way. We aim to be the best investors by working closely with our portfolio companies and engaging with them to grow successfully. This approach is the best strategy for being both sustainable and successful.

We don't see ourselves as merely owners of companies; rather, we're an organization that provides services—not just capital, but also knowledge, experience, and a network—to support their growth. ♦

China can learn from Denmark's green transition

China's newly appointed ambassador to Denmark, Mr. Wang Xuefeng welcomes the growing number of Chinese employees in Danish companies who are using their skills in a global world. China can learn from Denmark in several ways, he says – especially for the green transition.

Jesper Skeel

Next year will mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Denmark.

The Copenhagen Post sat down with Mr. Wang Xuefeng, the newly appointed Chinese ambassador to Denmark, to discuss the state of Chinese-EU relations, opportunities and challenges for transnational cooperation on the green transition, and the demand for international talent in Denmark.

Prior to his posting in Denmark, Mr. Xuefeng was the Chinese ambassador to Botswana from 2021 to 2024. He's very fond of Africa, but says he already feels well-adjusted to the Danish way of life.

Mr. Xuefeng warmly welcomes the readers of *The Copenhagen Post* to participate in the 75th anniversary celebrations, which will take place from now until next year.

DENMARK IS A FRONTRUNNER IN THE GREEN TRANSITION

Where can China take inspiration from Danish or Scandinavian solutions?
"Denmark has long been a frontrunner of green transition.

The Danish ambition and success in green transition have inspired the rest of the world and proved to the world that there is no contradiction between economic

development and green transformation. China has set its goals to peak CO₂ emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. Today, China's ranking of installed capacity of wind and solar power tops in the world. Carbon emissions per unit of GDP have been reduced by over 51 % compared to 2005 levels in 2022.

We look forward to further enhancing exchanges and mutual learning with Denmark under the Green Joint Work Programme, especially in the fields of climate and energy, environment and water resources, maritime affairs and agriculture, etc."

CREATING VALUE FOR COMPANIES

Danish Companies are becoming more dependent on attracting highly-skilled international labour from countries like China. What's your advice for Chinese professionals moving to Denmark?

"In the context of globalization, transnational mobility of talent is a common phenomenon. Highly educated international talents are in great demand for the development of multinational enterprises.

I believe that the Chinese employees working in Danish enterprises are among the best. I hope that they will continue to improve themselves in work, create value for the companies and make contributions to the industry. No matter where



Photo: Embassy of China



Photo: Embassy of China

The Chinese ambassador to Denmark Mr. Wang Xuefeng says he and his wife have adjusted quickly to living in the 'Kingdom of Bicycles'.

EU TARIFFS "WRONG DECISION"

The European Commission announced plans recently to slap tariffs on electric vehicles from China. Will China take countermeasures? How does China envision China-EU relations?
"Not long ago, I visited XPENG's Experience Store in the city center. I found that XPENG is very popular in Denmark.

The XPENG G9 has just been named the Technological Frontrunner of the Year at the Danish award show Auto Awards 2023.

The fast development of China's electric vehicle industry does not rely on subsidies, but on technological innovation, a complete industrial chain and sufficient competition.

The EU's ongoing anti-subsidy investigation to build up new tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles would be a wrong decision.

It will disrupt the EU's green transition process and global effort to respond to climate change. Climate change is a global challenge. All efforts to the green transition should transcend political differences.

China and the EU have extensive common interests and broad space for cooperation. The China-EU cooperation is in essence complementary and mutually beneficial. The two

sides should properly address economic and trade frictions through dialogue and consultation."

FOND OF AFRICA

Both you and your wife have now been in Denmark for a couple of months, how are you adjusting and what has surprised you the most?
"My wife and I arrived in Copenhagen on 1st July. We have adjusted quite well to life here. We enjoy our time here.

I presented my credentials to His Majesty King Frederick X on 19 September in Amalienborg. I had a very pleasant conversation with His Majesty the King. It was such a grand ceremonial occasion and will become one of the most beautiful memories of my diplomatic career.

We are very impressed by the culture and history of Denmark showcased in many historic buildings including Royal Palaces, castles, museums, galleries, etc. We have visited many of them in our spare time and there are more for us to explore.

We also like the green lifestyle here in Denmark. Denmark is known as the Fairytale Kingdom. It's also a Kingdom of Bicycles, and my wife and I have adjusted very quickly to cycling around in the city." ♦

"We also like the green lifestyle here in Denmark. Denmark is known as the Fairytale Kingdom."

— Mr. Wang Xuefeng

they are and what positions they hold, they should have the vision to contribute to the cause of world progress."

There are many questions regarding the current state of the Chinese economy. How do you assess it?

"China has always been among the fastest-growing major economies in the world and accounted for around 30 percent of global growth. China's GDP grew 5 percent year on year in the first half of this year.

The trade volume of goods expanded 6 percent year on year in the first 8 months of this year. The Chinese economy will keep the momentum of stable growth and remain on a positive track over the long run despite challenges.

With a mega-size market, full-fledged industrial system and a sound business environment, we have the confidence to achieve the growth target of around 5% for this year 2024."

COPENHAGEN RELOCATIONS

IMMIGRATION & RELOCATION SOLUTIONS
BY KEY RELOCATION

'Happy Transferees'



Tools to conquer the Danish labour market

Copenhagen Municipality offers various programs to get internationals into jobs. One of them is the Greater Copenhagen Career Program (GCCP), which helps graduates into their first job.

By Nicolai Kampmann

They are from India, well-educated and have just completed the targeted career program with mentors that Copenhagen Municipality offers twice a year.

Shamica Jaiswal and Kirtika Kumar are part of Denmark's future.

Both women are 27 years old and want to work in the pharmaceutical industry. Shamica Jaiswal has already landed her first job at Novo Nordisk, Denmark's largest and, probably, most talked-about company.

"GCCP has helped me to develop skills and look into myself – what I am good at? How can I use my skills to get a job? How to live in Denmark?" she says.

Kirtika Kumar, like Jaiswal, has a master's degree in pharmaceutical sciences from the University of Copenhagen.

On concluding the Greater Copenhagen Career Program, they attend a celebration at Copenhagen's City Hall along with other international graduates of the course, and look ahead to the future.

REMEMBER TO BE SOCIAL WITH THE DANES

There are graduates from many countries, and several speeches. One is from a former participant, Greek Anna Gkioka, who today works as Group Talent Acquisition Lead at Merck.

She encourages the many listeners to adapt to Danish work culture and appreciate the work-life balance, which is deeply rooted in many Danes.

It is also a good idea to bring cake to new colleagues. Danes thrive by meeting during working hours and having a cup of coffee and something sweet. Even if you're not into it yourself, it is important for an international to participate in the social meetings at the workplace.

"Especially for women, I encourage you to apply for positions, even if you do not feel that you master all the skills required. You can do it at least as well as the men."

LEARNING DANISH IS A SMART MOVE

The effort to get internationals off to a good start on the job market is led by, among others, Dorthe Kingo Vesterlund and Mahak Laursen.

They have seen a clear increase in the number of applicants for the various programs – and in general, that the interest in getting a foothold in the labor market is great.

"It is important to learn Danish. At the same time, it is also often an opt-out of internationals, because there is a lot that needs to be prioritized at once. Then you opt out of Danish, even though being able to speak Danish opens doors for you," says Vesterlund.

The GCCP has 160 participants each year divided into two teams of 80. Most recently, Copenhagen Municipality received 230 applications for 80 places.

Approximately 2 out of 3 participants find a job in Denmark after participating in the program.

MENTORS HELP A LOT

Along the way, the participants draw up a personal profile which maps out their strengths and weaknesses. Company visits are part of the content of the Career Program as well as an introduction to the informal 'coffee meeting'.

For Jaiswal, participating in GCCP has been a great help.

"My mentor helped me a lot – especially in relation to landing the job I have now. I got help developing my CV and got good feedback. I wouldn't have gotten that help from a mentor if I hadn't been part of GCCP," she says.

Kumar has learned that networking and lots of coffee-meetings are very important in the job search.

"Networking plays a huge part when it comes to getting a job in Denmark. We find that people are very open about giving advice regarding job hunting and who to contact. Cultivating your network is important in your job search," Kumar says. ♦

Twice as expensive to buy property in Copenhagen as elsewhere in Denmark

Home prices in the capital area are rising significantly more than in the rest of the country. New home buyers need to earn quite a lot to enter the market in Copenhagen and the suburban municipalities.

By The Copenhagen Post

It is almost twice as expensive to buy a home in Copenhagen compared to Denmark's second largest city, Aarhus.

At the start of 2024, a square meter in Copenhagen cost just over DKK 47,300 compared to Aarhus' DKK 25,200.

Copenhagen is approximately three times as expensive as Odense's 17,500 kroner and Aalborg's 15,500 kroner per square metre, according to new figures from Finans Danmark.

COPENHAGEN - AND THE REST OF THE COUNTRY

"Copenhagen just keeps getting more expensive. The gap to the rest of the country can be narrowed briefly by an economic crisis, but immediately afterwards it widens again", says Curt Lilliegreen, director of the Housing Economics Knowledge Center to Politiken.

The real estate chain Home points to the big difference between the most expensive and cheapest municipality.

"There are almost 1.7 million DKK in difference across the country between where you have to earn the most and the least to buy a house - these are

huge differences," says Henrik Hauthorn Jensen, housing market analyst at Home.

At the top is Frederiksberg, where a whopping 2.36 million DKK in annual income is required. That is actually a decrease in the income requirement of approx. DKK 96,000 compared to the past year.

The cheapest place to get a foothold into the housing market is in Vesthimmerlands municipality, where you have to earn approx. DKK 692,000 per year to buy a house.

AARHUS, ODENSE AND AALBORG FAR DOWN THE LIST

It is especially in Eastern Denmark that a house purchase requires a high income, where a family has a down payment of 5 percent and must borrow the rest.

Only in 26th place does a municipality west of the Great Belt appear - Aarhus, where the family has to earn approx. DKK 940,000 per year to buy a house of 140 square meters.

Odense is down to 36th place with DKK 838,000, and Aalborg No. 38 with an



Income requirements for a family for home purchase

1. Frederiksberg 2,360,110 DKK
2. Gentofte 1,918,584 DKK
3. Copenhagen 1,623,124 DKK
4. Lyngby-Taarbæk 1,539,766 DKK
5. Rudersdal 1,398,820 DKK
6. Gladsaxe 1,327,332 DKK
7. Hørsholm 1,300,167 DKK
8. Rødovre 1,214,881 DKK
9. Furesø 1,212,420 DKK
10. Hvidovre 1,182,196 DKK

Source: Realkredit Danmark

income of DKK 829,000 per year. Take the income requirement with a pinch of salt, as the calculations have been made based on a lot of assumptions, Home points out.

"Perhaps your finances look completely different to the model family in the analysis, so it is a good idea to get your bank adviser's help to set a budget so you know what you can buy a home for," says Henrik Hauthorn Jensen.

The wage development in the past year increases the opportunity for families to buy a house.

Salary income has been increasing over the past year. Most forecasts indicate that wages will grow by 5 percent in 2024. ♦

Family income requirement to buy a home in Denmark

The 'model family' described in the analysis has two children, a car and can afford a down payment of 5 percent of the property value.

The mortgage is a fixed-rate 30-year 4 percent loan with installments.

A fixed-rate loan with installments forms the basis of the credit assessment when buying a home.

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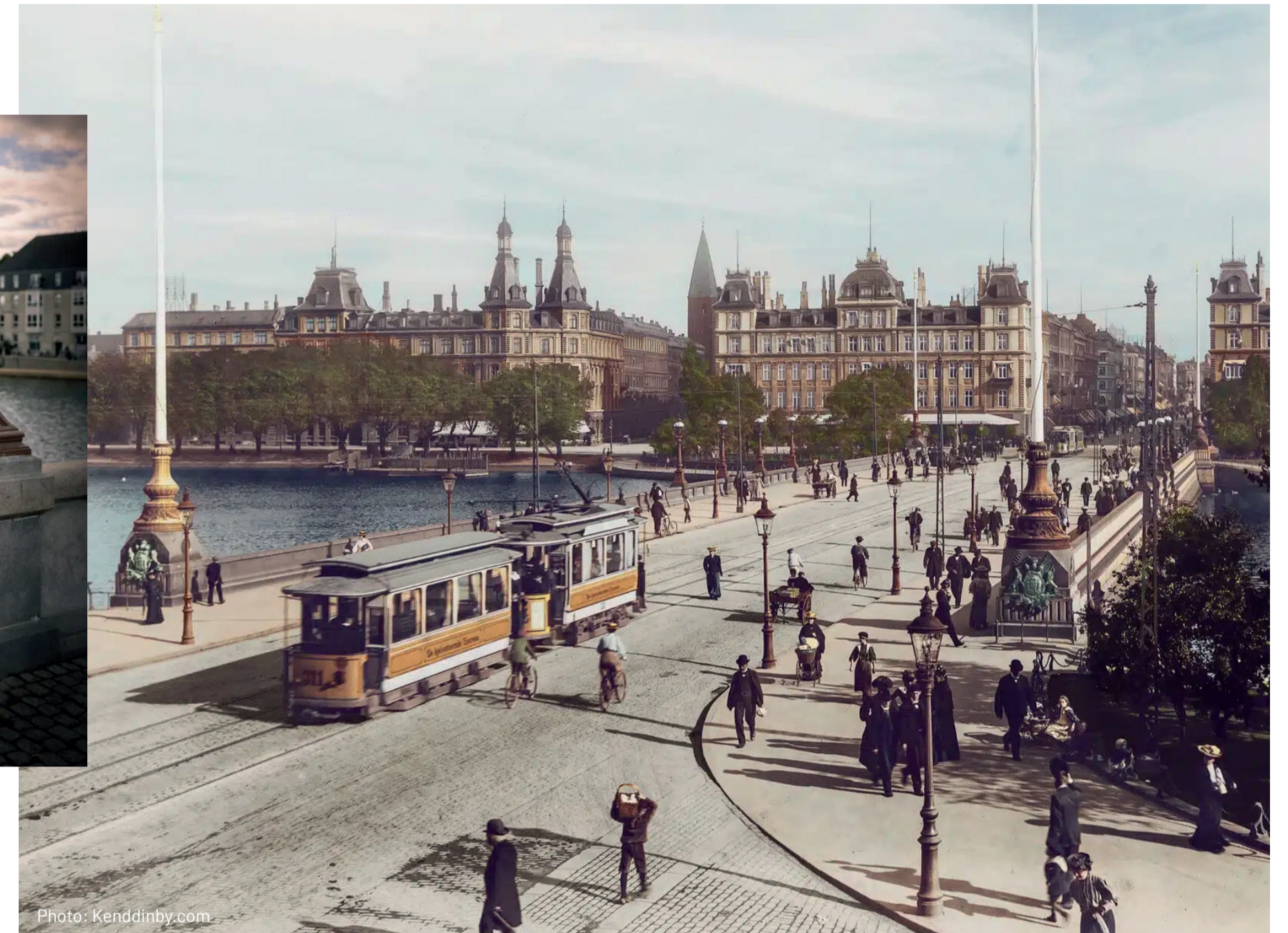
UCplus

Meet the historian behind Kend Din By - the cult Instagram project colourising Copenhagen's past

Roskilde University educated historian Mathias Stougaard is the name behind Kend Din By, a unique Instagram project that showcases never-before-seen sights and defining moments from the Danish capital's chequered history through carefully colourised visuals that bring the city's past within reach of the present.



Mathias Stougaard enjoys a quiet moment on Dronning Louises Bro, the location that inspired Kend Din By.



A busy day on Dronning Louises Bro, circa 1906-1909.

By Tina Dastur

This is one of my favourite places in Copenhagen," Mathias Stougaard tells me, as we thread our way through the intricate network of graves in Nørrebro's more than 250-year-old Assistens Kirkegård.

It's a glorious spring day in the capital, and the dappled May sunlight is streaming through the patchwork of leaves on the trees, bathing the bouquets on the headstones in a soft golden hue.

"There is so much history to be found here," he says. "Beyond H.C. Andersen and Søren Kierkegaard."

Stougaard enjoys chasing stories in his home city—stories, both big and

small, that can just as easily be found in the sprawling halls of iconic constructions as they can hidden behind the bushes in the average Dane's backyard.

It is this very love for history that prompted him to start penning his love letter to Copenhagen in the form of archiving project Kend Din By (Know Your City) five years ago.

That, plus some friendly banter by a childhood friend, who teased Stougaard for not knowing who Queen Louise was on one of their idle walks down Dronning Louises Bro.

In August 2019, Stougaard made Kend Din By Instagram official. Its first post was representative of what Stougaard hoped to achieve through this labour of love: to share the joy of discovering something new in something old.

The approach is simple. Stougaard

farms Copenhagen's digital archives for historical material, which he then painstakingly and meticulously colourises on Photoshop to enable the viewer to reflect on the past in a new and immediate way.

"We perceive the world in colour. Black and white visuals tend to look a little flat because it's difficult to pick up details. When you add colour, the image comes alive and you can picture yourself in that situation. In this way, it makes history feel nearer and more present," Stougaard explains.

With the help of an invaluable network of experts—including colleagues from his earlier stint at the National Museum of Denmark—he is able to gain key

insights into the colour palettes that dominated various periods in Copenhagen's history.

While he tries to ensure that his renderings are as realistically accurate as possible, he does exercise a degree of creative freedom, too.

**"I just love Copenhagen
I was born here and I
hope I die here."**

- Mathias Stougaard

"For example, I always try to include an element of red in my work because I love how the colour pops," he shares.

It's almost 0930, and the cemetery is filling fast with visitors—couples out on a morning stroll, mothers pushing tandem prams with drawn hoods, and packs of enthusiastic runners.

Amidst the activity, Stougaard tells me that while most of his followers appreciate his unique approach to storytelling, there are some who don't

agree with his use of technology in his process.

"History is a battlefield, and I understand why some people are critical of technology—specifically AI—intersecting with history. That said, I'm not afraid to experiment with it," he insists, adding that he is "fascinated by the opportunities new-age technology presents us with to educate people about history in new ways."

Stougaard is a modern-day historian, so I can understand his enthusiasm for working with digital mediums. He views it as a means to generate interest and engagement, to spark conversation, and to bring the past closer to the present.

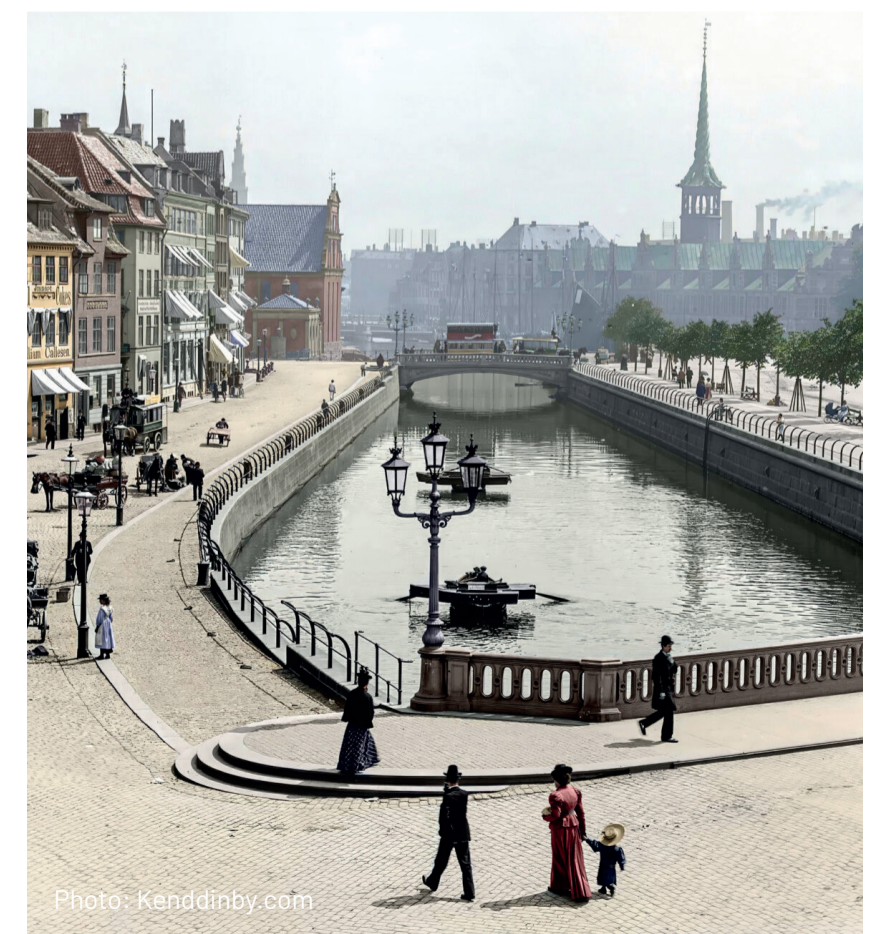
A little over a month ago, Copenhagen's fabled Børsen erupted in flames and its unique dragon-twined spire tumbled down in a blaze of glory. With it, the city's skyline and architectural

landscape lost centuries' worth of cultural history.

In the days after, Instagram was inundated with visuals of Børsen from its earliest days, leaving me to wonder about the push-and-pull of the past and the present.

"There's something romantic about it. It gives us something to hold on to that, in a way, verifies our own ideas of the past," Stougaard reveals, pre-empting my question on why we tend to reach for archival imagery in the wake of such historical losses.

Børsen, incidentally, was also one of the topics Stougaard discussed in great detail in an episode of Kend Din By's podcast series. Through this Danish-language podcast, launched in 2022, the historian peels back the layers of Copenhagen's past by educating listeners about places in the city that are taken for granted.



A day in the life at Slotsholmskanalen, circa 1896-1901.

"Copenhagen is a treasure chamber of stories, if only you know where to look," he says.

For example, he tells me about names and political slogans carved into the walls of Kødbyen by bored German soldiers during the German occupation.

"It's right in our backyard, and even I didn't know about it," he admits, adding that there's so much of this kind of "living history" around us that's there to explore. "And it's free!"

To enrich his audience's experience so that they are inspired to interact with Copenhagen's past in myriad ways, Stougaard has more recently also churned out of a series of colourised city posters (available on his webshop), started a mini blog that lifts the curtain on the capital's renowned landmarks, and entered into a collaboration with Danish photographer Christian Nielsen to produce a series of 'then and now' colourised videos of Copenhagen.

It's been almost an hour since the two of us embarked on our meanderings through the cemetery, but somewhere between the silent graves and our fervent conversation, time seems to have stood still.

I wonder if that's how time works for Stougaard. It must, I reason, if he's successfully managing to constantly invent and reinvent Kend Din By while simultaneously juggling the rigours of a full-time job at Det Kongelige Bibliotek.

Stougaard clarifies that it's not a matter of time, but of love. "I love what I do. I love that Kend Din By gives me an opportunity to express my creativity," he says.

"When I first entered the job market, I thought my career would limit me to a purely academic role. But Kend Din By has opened doors for me—first, helping me land my first job as a social media manager at the National Museum and now, as a digital marketing specialist at the Royal Danish Library."

As we turn a familiar corner on our way out, Stougaard bumps into an acquaintance he met the week prior, on one of his mandatory Sunday morning walks in the cemetery. The two exchange a few animated lines in Danish, before a "Vi tales ved" has us go our separate ways.

"I just love Copenhagen," Stougaard repeats immediately after, for what must be at least the third time that day. "I was born here and I hope I die here."

As we stand at the gates of Assistens, the resting places of hundreds of knowns and unknowns who've played a part in shaping Copenhagen's history over the years behind us, the aptness of his statement is not lost on me. ♦



A tram trundles down Kongens Nytorv in the year 1900.

Photo: Kenddinby.com

Tourists are using Instagram to plan their Copenhagen holidays

The tourism industry leans heavily on social media to attract travellers. Copenhagen is a popular destination and many of its spots have gone viral online.

By Lotte van den Hout



Daily there's a long line at Instagram hotspot Fabro, an Italian restaurant in Copenhagen. Photo: Lotte van den Hout

A friend of mine wanted to try Buka, a bakery in Copenhagen. She had seen it on Instagram. So had all the other tourists standing in line. The result? A pastry in the doorway, since it was too crowded indoors.

Outside Fabro, a city-centre pasta restaurant that went viral online, people queue for a dinner spot.

But the wait doesn't seem to bother them; Fabro has come up with a chalkboard system to ensure fair seating.

THE MODERN TRAVEL AGENCY

There are millions of destination recommendation videos on Instagram, ranging from restaurants to secret photo locations.

Nowadays, it's possible to plan a whole trip online instead of through the old-fashioned travel agencies.

Eric Braun, professor in Marketing and Tourism, explains that people's holidays begin on social media.

"You see photos and videos online from different spots, where you can already picture yourself in a few months. Afterwards, it's easy to find the practical things like accommodation online. But you get the first impression on social media," says Braun.

Content from local residents in the destination city is especially popular, since it's perceived as more authentic.

"When they're good pictures and videos, it can go fast on social media. Tourists aspire to travel to their destination. If they also like it, there are more nice photos and videos online, which can make places popular. Online travel influencers have followers, and this audience trust the influencer's advice," says Braun.

BAIT AS BUSINESS STRATEGY

Yet there are other online platforms trying to lure you into the city. Larger booking platforms, in particular, direct their budgets into digital destination marketing so as to fill up their accommodation.

"All the big players in tourism and hospitality focus on more tourists and more revenue," explains Braun.

Fortunately, Copenhagen is the capital city of Denmark, and capitals never go out of style. Thanks to its blend of top-end Scandinavian fashion, cuisine and design, the city of Copenhagen is a popular destination.

"Besides being the capital of Denmark, Copenhagen offers good public transportation, bike lanes and is a safe city. It has a good reputation along with popular neighborhoods to explore and a good atmosphere with different events throughout the year," says Braun.

#FOODGUIDECPH

"Without the nice Instagram posts, some restaurants wouldn't be as popular as they are nowadays. These companies are placed in the spotlight by travel influencers, locals and companies like Visit Denmark," continues Braun.

Nickie Mydung, owner of Lua and former owner of Buka and District Tonkin, has some rules of thumb for her social media content. She went viral several times.

"A lot of tourists came, both locals and international tourists. When things go viral, people will come from anywhere to try it," Mydung says and adds:

"We didn't contact any influencers, but we tried to show all the layers of our pastries. This showed our love for the product and atmosphere. The best way to

go viral, is let them come to you and show followers more than the average nice picture anyone can make."

She highlights that the real feeling on social media is important, but so is delivering in real life. They go side by side.

LOST 8,000 FOLLOWERS

Mydung also experienced the downside of social media herself. After a hack, she lost over 8,000 followers.

"Some followers thought we were closed, so we were really influenced by it. This shows that it has a great impact, so you need to control it."

But social media isn't everything according to Mydung. She sees little shops in the centrum that rarely appear on Instagram driving a healthy trade.

REDUCE THE NUISANCE

Baun points out that one advantage is, thanks to social media, that tourists spread out more in the city.

For instance, Nørrebro is becoming a popular neighborhood partly because of social media. "Social media could be a way to spread people over the city or to other destinations in the country. However, the visitors want to see the capital at least once," explains Braun.

LOVED BY STARS

Celebrities like singer-songwriter Dua Lipa and actress Lily Collins also share their tips on Instagram as well.

When Dua Lipa visited Copenhagen a few months ago, she loved the city. On Instagram, she faithfully documented her trip, and shared some of her favorite spots.

Meanwhile, Lily Collins has recently bought another house in Kartoffelraekkerne with her husband.

She occasionally shares Copenhagen pictures on her Instagram, such as from the Meatpacking District and the National Art Museum (SMK). ♦

"When things go viral, people will come from anywhere to try it."

- Nickie Mydung, owner of Lua

BUTTER, BUN & CHEESE

The recipe for a Danish lifestyle

A bun served with butter and cheese is the signature breakfast in Denmark. Now, the traditional BMO, characterized by its simplicity and quality, is reaching cult status beyond Danish borders.

By Clara Meyer

Around 20 people are queuing outside the bakery Apotek57 on Fredericiagade. Most of them are about to order a BMO, a *Bolle med Ost*.

On the next street corner at Atelier September, the situation looks similar. Throned behind the glass counter is a neatly formed mountain of whipped butter. "Many customers come specifically for the aesthetics," says Gerardo from Atelier September.

The rest come for the buttered bread. The BMO is one of the most popular items and has become a staple for both regulars and visitors: "It has become a signature item for the Copenhagen area," says Gerardo.

Short for *Bolle med Ost*, which translates to bread roll with cheese, it's technically just a simple bun with butter and cheese - a traditional Danish staple - yet it is increasingly becoming a hyped breakfast item.

And as easy as it sounds, all three

ingredients have to be perfectly curated for it to convince.

Atelier September uses 24-month-aged Comté cheese and bread sourced from a local bakery. Strictly speaking, it's no BMO if there is no bun, but you can also choose sliced bread instead of rolls in many other bakeries.

The cherry on top is the whipped butter: "The creamy texture and rich flavor complement the other ingredients," says Gerardo.

This gives Atelier September's cheese bread 5.4 out of 6 points - at least that's what the Instagram page @bolle.med.ost claims. Every week, the anonymous couple who runs the account rates BMOs. They have more than 10,000 followers and have already reviewed 110 different BMOs.

The pair share photos and text on Instagram, and have a detailed table on their website where they evaluate all aspects of a BMO. The current top scoring cheese bun is from Juno the Bakery, hitting a BMO score of 5.8. Juno uses the same cheese as Atelier

September. Alongside Gammel Knas and Vesterhavstost, Comté is a particularly popular choice. But it's all about the overall package.

The Instagram reviewers, both full-time mathematicians, take an average from five categories: "But the bun is more important than the butter", says the husband: "It needs to be crispy, with a soft inner. And a bit sour as well." Sourdough is usually used.

Sourdough bread was popularised in Denmark by the Copenhagen chef, baker and entrepreneur Claus Meyer - co-author of the 2004 written New Nordic Cuisine Manifesto, which calls on Scandinavian cuisine to focus on local and seasonal products.

In 2010, Meyer founded the first of his eleven Meyer's Bageris. In Bolle med Ost's BMO ranking, however, Meyer's Bageri scores relatively poorly with

A BMO from Sinne Gas in Østerbro, which scored a rating of 4.5/6. Photo: @bolle.med.ost

only 3.4 points. The cheese choice is the main downfall. Meyer uses Danbo, which, according to the Instagram page operator, tastes like plastic.

Nevertheless, Meyer had a major influence on Copenhagen's bakery scene. After the success of Meyer's Bageri, many other bakeries followed, such as the chain Hart Bageri (BMO score: 3.1), Lille Bakery (BMO score: 4.1) and Andersen & Maillard. The latter, founded by Noma chef Milton Abel, has a very good score of 5.4 and

The Instagram account @bolle.med.ost has more than 10,000 followers and has already reviewed 110 different BMOs

uses Arla's signature soft and salty Gammel Knas.

The founders of the bakeries show how closely fine dining and simple food are linked in Copenhagen.

"The bakery scene is dazzling at the moment," says the Instagram rater, yet only a few are ranked very high. In their scoring, they only pay attention to the quality of the BMO. The aesthetics of the cafés are described in the Instagram caption and the price is mentioned in the table.



Whipped cream at Atelier September
Photo: @bolle.med.ost

BMO guide to Copenhagen and the world:

ANDERSEN & MAILLARD
- Three locations in Copenhagen:
Nørrebro, Nordhavn, Indre By

APOTEK 57 - Indre By

ATELIER SEPTEMBER
- Three locations in Copenhagen:
Indre By, Østerbro, Hellerup

HART
- 10 locations in Copenhagen: Carlsberg Byen, Frederiksberg, Holmen, Islands Brygge, Istedgade, Kødbyen, Marmorkirken, Refshalevej, Stefansgade, Østerbro

LILLE BAKERY - Reffen

MEYER'S BAGERI
- Four locations in Copenhagen: Amager, Østerbro, Nørrebro, Frederiksberg

JUNO THE BAKERY - Østerbro

LA CABRA
- Three locations in Aarhus, one location in Copenhagen (Indre By), Two locations in New York, one location in Muscat, and three locations in Bangkok

SOFI BAKERY - Berlin

While most BMOs cost between 30 and 40 kroner, Atelier September charges 95 kroner. According to Gerardo, the high price would reflect "the high-quality ingredients and the craftsmanship that goes into every serving."

Juno is much cheaper at 35 kroner per BMO. However, this is also due to the simplicity of the bakery and the limited seating options outside on the terrace.

The generally comparatively low price is one reason why BMO is so trendy. Where you might pay 200 kroner per brunch in other breakfast cafés, a BMO and coffee is cheap and you can still afford a *kardemommesnurrer*.

Another reason for the success of BMO was the Covid lockdown. While cafés and restaurants had to shut down, bakeries were allowed to stay open. The BMO benefited from the regulations and remained popular long after restaurants had reopened.

But it had experienced a particular upswing in the last 12 months "following the hype for bakeries and Danish food in general", says the evaluator.

Gerardo from Atelier September has also noticed a recent upturn, which they attribute to "the growing reputation and the general trend towards appreciating simple, high-quality food."

The Danish signature breakfast is so popular that it is now available in other places of the world: Atelier September has just opened a pop-up café in Seoul. The Aarhus-founded bakery La Cabra, which also has a location in Copenhagen, opened stores in New York, Muscat and Bangkok.

According to the Instagram raters, SOFI bakery in Berlin is particularly good: "It's popping up all over the world which is a fun development."

The fact that insiders use the abbreviation BMO is also relatively new. Politiken first reported on the use of the abbreviation in May. The elimination of a syllable and the naturalization of a completely new term illustrate the growing cult status of the simple, classic Danish breakfast. ♦

SONG, SNAK & SELF-STUDY:

How a fun-loving approach to language helped an American conquer Danish

American expat Brooke Fossey is a self-professed Danish language nerd, and her Instagram profile @nearlydanishdame is testament to this. Diving into her unusual language learning journey, she discusses how it sparks joy and motivates her to keep going.

By Tina Dastur



Photo: Brooke Fossey

When I arrived in Denmark in May 2022, lots about Danish life and culture fascinated me: the small stuff, like the obsession with cycling and addiction to candy; the big stuff like the work-life balance and inspiring levels of body positivity; and the gargantuan stuff, like the language.

Danish may not have a direct translation for the word 'please', but it does have 'rød grød med fløde', and just the ability to casually slide that into conversation with locals was enough to motivate me to get started on my language learning journey in September 2022.

Two months ago, I cleared my Prøve i Dansk 3 (PD3) exam with *fortrinlige* grades, and if my language learning journey taught me one thing, it's that I love the Danish language. If there's something it didn't, it's how to get *rød grød med fløde* to roll off my tongue with ease.

Now, with limited avenues to continue on my language learning trajectory-module six (Studieprøven) being perhaps the most likely—I'm growing increasingly concerned about what to do with all the Danish occupying large quarters of my brain. Where do I use it? How do I build on it?

"Language is a funny thing. If you don't

use it, you lose it," Brooke Fossey told me over coffee and *kanelnegl* when I met her in a café at Nørreport on a characteristically wet 'summer's day' - putting my exact fear into words.

Just minutes earlier, she had pulled in on her trusty bicycle, braving the Danish *uvejr* to make the journey from Hellerup to our planned coffee date.

Her waterproof jacket looked like it was no match for the sheets of rain that now lashed the café's windows relentlessly. Still, she was upbeat, a broad grin lighting up her bright blue eyes.

Like me, Fossey is an expatriate in Denmark. Unlike me, she's American born and raised. Like me, she's completed her PD3. Unlike her, I'm yet to pass Studieprøven. Like me, she knows the challenges that come with continuing the language learning story after the *sprogskole* chapter. Unlike me, she's made concerted efforts to further hers through her Instagram account @nearlydanishdame.

"Learning Danish has always been purely because I wanted to, and that has allowed me to come from a place of curiosity, not obligation. Not feeling like it's a battle has helped me enjoy the journey and encouraged me to find fun ways to integrate learning into my life," she says.

Fossey's tryst with Danish started while she was still living in the US. On a pre-COVID weekend trip to Copenhagen, she and her family were won over, and Fossey resolved that on her next trip to Denmark's capital, she would order a coffee in Danish.

To start with, she used apps such as Duolingo, Drops, and Mango before hiring a private online tutor. By the time the family got the opportunity to move to Copenhagen, Fossey was almost PD3-ready and enrolled in module five classes at SPEAK.

It was some time during her PD3 journey that Fossey conceived The Nearly Danish Dame as a space to both solidify the things that she was learning and nerd out on the Danish language.

"I wanted it to be a little light-hearted and acknowledge my desire to understand it all, with a healthy dose of humour and acceptance that at 42, I'm never going to do it perfectly," she says.

Today, Fossey's account continues to be an expression of her inner nerd, but has also evolved to serve as a mini encyclopaedia for curious Danish language learners, with handy tips on navigating the language and motivation to keep going.

In the majority of her Instagram reels and videos, Fossey makes an effort to communicate the language's puzzling grammatical structure with quirky proverbs in Danish.

Her disarming candour and evident passion for *det danske sprog* have drawn keen engagement from her Instagram community, and the resulting knowledge-sharing has made her profile flush with fun ways to tackle a language that seems insurmountable to many.

Eager to discover the history behind the word *bil*? Been wondering what *træls* actually means? Want to know how to tell someone to 'hold kæft' without sounding rude? Need invaluable tips on how to best prepare for the PD3 and Studieprøven? Ready to finally figure out how Danish prepositions work?

Fossey's got (nearly) all the answers for you over on @nearlydanishdame.

Her Instagram community may just be 12,300 followers strong - a humble number by Instagram standards - but its success can be measured in how many choose to actively interact and engage with her posts and videos.

The comments are a direct reflection of Fossey's commitment to both her own language learning journey as well as that of her followers.

Despite working two part-time jobs, offering time to volunteer organisa-



Brooke Fossey keeps the Danish language learning process fun and unpredictable through her Instagram account, @nearlydanishdame
Photo: Brooke Fossey

tions, and raising two young boys, Fossey makes it a point to fit Danish into her hectic daily life.

"I try to religiously attend *snakkekлуб* at the library once a week at work. I have the privilege of speaking Danish pretty regularly at my jobs, too. I've watched basically everything on DR, with Danish subtitles. I also have some non Danes whom I Skype with in Danish. There's likely a lot of mistakes, but it's an opportunity to speak unfettered without feeling stressed. I also love listening to Danish music and enjoy learning the songs, fine-tuning my pronunciation along the way," explains Fossey.

Given the breadth of all she explores, I wonder if she has a favourite.

"It's tough to pinpoint because all work together from different angles and help with different blindspots," she tells me - but admits that she gets the "most light-hearted joy" from learning Danish through music.

"I especially love hip hop and rap from all time periods. It can be so sharp and witty and is a great way to practice your pronunciation," she enthuses.

If her dedication to unconventional learning is admirable, her commitment to learning at the cost of embarrassing herself is even more so.

"When I started my Instagram profile, I felt like I had to do everything perfectly and that if I made a mistake, it would embarrassingly be out there forever in public. But this language journey, both privately and publicly, has reminded me that the best way to learn is often through making mistakes. So, if I can just stay curious and not confrontational with the language, then

it's about getting better, not being flawless," Fossey says.

She insists that allowing yourself grace through the process is paramount:

"How can you know everything about a language? You never can, not even your *modersmål*. You have to acknowledge that language learning isn't linear. It's up and down and it plateaus, and you feel frustrated, and you make breakthroughs, and if you do a little bit every day, it builds and builds. Progress, not perfection."

As the rain continues falling in steady sheets outside, I sip the last of my flat white and Fossey put on her rainwear,

ready to take on the Danish elements yet again with the same grit and determination she does the Danish language.

I chew on her 'progress, not perfection' statement as I think back on my year-and-a-half-long road to the PD3 and contemplate my next steps.

Like Fossey, I embrace new languages, so I approach learning them with a sense of acceptance, not reluctance. For many others, however, it remains a daunting and overwhelming prospect.

To those still grappling with the *no-gens, nogles, and nogets* of *det danske sprog*, Fossey advises to keep chipping away at it.

"Language is the ticket to connections to people and places: in short, integration. It is what connects and binds us, and so if you are hoping to feel more connected to Denmark or Danes, stick with learning Danish. Even a little at a time. Find what sparks your joy with the language and use that to drive you when you feel lost or frustrated," she says.

"Or just write to me and I'll pick you up, as people have done for me when I have had my language letdowns. Even though it's a *lillebitte sprog* on the world stage, Danish can be your ticket to *hygge*." ♦

Why are Danes so Danish?

Thoughts on getting a job in Copenhagen

OPINION

After moving to Denmark, starting my own business, and getting a Master's, I decided I was ready to enter the Danish workforce. But devastation started creeping in around application 183. I understand that I am not the most qualified person in the world, but when you don't get a response from New Balance about selling shoes, doubt takes over.

By Jay Cannon

To be fully transparent, I'll start by saying that I am not an expert on Danish culture.

I don't know why Danes put their fork and knife to one side when they finish eating.

I don't know why they insist on waiting at a red light when no traffic is coming, and I don't know why they eat leverpostej.

I've lived here for just over three years now, and I've loved every second of it. Nothing makes me happier than knowing that my son will grow up in what I truly believe is the greatest place in the world, surrounded by the greatest people in the world.

In my experience, Danes as a whole get a bad rap. Sure, they don't always want to talk to you, and they might cut you off in traffic, but if you need something, they are there for you—unless they have plans.

READY TO GO TO WORK - IF ONLY...

Recently, I've been the recipient of this Danish decency, thanks to a LinkedIn post. Over the last 6-7 months, I've been on what we can call a job excursion. My first two years here, I went back to school to get my master's degree.

The following year or so, I worked for a company I started, which was basically volunteer work. Now, I was ready to re-join the working world, find a job, pay my taxes, and enjoy all the trappings that come with that, including, but not

limited to, Friday Bars—or so I thought. That jovial mindset was lost around application number 86.

Devastation started creeping in around application 183. I understand that I am not the most qualified person in the world, but when you don't get a response from New Balance about selling shoes, doubt takes over.

After living here for three years, I would say I am far less American than the day I stepped off the plane.

That said, one thing I undeniably possess is an American work ethic. I was born and raised on a chicken farm, and I have the work ethic of someone who was born and raised on a chicken farm.

I am college-educated, and I have experience. So why weren't they calling me?

I'M NOT YOUR EXPERT ON GETTING A JOB IN DENMARK

At this point, you might be hoping for an answer—something you could apply to your own situation.

However, as I mentioned earlier, I am not an expert on culture, work, or Danes. I'm sure there is a "how to get a job in Denmark" expert on LinkedIn, but I am not that person.

I don't know why they didn't call me, and I'm sure I don't know why they aren't calling you.

I was as close to rock bottom as one can get without actually hitting the rock.

That's why I turned to LinkedIn. I never really used LinkedIn—not because I didn't think it was helpful, but because LinkedIn is a place where you take yourself seriously, and that's something I refuse to do.

821,000 HAVE SEEN LINKEDIN POST

Regardless, I sat down and wrote a post to my 103 connections. I thought 30 people might see it, 7 would like it, and my wife would share it. That didn't happen.

As of writing this, 821,000 people have seen it, 7,337 people have liked it, and 570 people have shared it.

Things like this don't happen to me, and I can't give you a template on "how to write a LinkedIn post begging for a job," but I want to offer what I think is the reason this post resonated with so many people.

For the first time in a long time, I was unapologetically myself. On a platform where one can drown in seriousness, this post hit a nerve.

I believe it struck a chord precisely because it was serious, just not about my qualifications. I needed a job to take care of my son, and that's what I wrote.

I let go of the façade of being a "successful business owner" and allowed people I didn't know to see me as I was: insecure, defeated, and jobless.

THE WRONG OFFERS, TOO LATE

The irony in all of this is that the thousands of people reaching out to me



Photo: Jay Cannon

were the ones offering the jobs I had been applying to. In fact, someone sent me a link to a job I had been denied just that morning.

So how is that possible? I think it might just be that the Danes are too Danish.

"It's hard to get a job as an expat" is as ingrained in Danish culture as "there's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing."

After writing that post, I had a job four days later. Danes want to hire talented people, and I really don't think they care if you speak Danish.

The problem is the culture tells them they shouldn't. It's almost a rite of passage for someone looking to live here: fall in love with a Dane, pay your 110,000 kr., take your Danish classes, and apply to 200 jobs.

It doesn't make it right, it's just Danish.

I'm all for maintaining Danish culture, but in my opinion, there's nothing more Danish than someone moving here and trying to work.

BE A LITTLE LESS DANISH

Speaking Danish doesn't make someone Danish any more than speaking English makes someone American. Danes are resourceful and resilient, and there is no one who possesses those two qualities more than an expat.

Unfortunately, as sure as the winter days are short, this problem will continue. I can only hope that if you are in the same situation, you keep your head up.

And if you're a Dane looking to hire someone, be a little less Danish. ♦

Nordic Clinker Boat Traditions
UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

WOOD ON WATER

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