Dear Members of the Dual Career ~ Spouse Network

Merry Christmas and welcome to December in Copenhagen! Even though Copenhagen has been preparing for Christmas for the past month, it hasn’t truly been Christmas time yet.

You can find Christmas markets on almost every corner, hear Christmas carollers on streets around the city, and smell the many delicious treats being made in the food stands throughout the inner city. You can simply not avoid the Christmas feeling in Copenhagen.

Throughout the month of December, there will be many Christmas initiatives in the city. However, we also have our very own Christmas Party for you and your family! On December 5th from 13 to 16, we will be hosting a Christmas Party at ISM with Christmas treats, Danish Christmas songs, a craft station for Christmas decorations for the ISM Christmas tree, and a quiz about Danish Christmas traditions. We will be serving some Danish Christmas classics like æbleskiver and gløgg. We hope to give you the perfect Christmas spirit and a great start to a wonderful month!

Of course, there are many other Christmas activities during December in Copenhagen. Among other things, Tivoli Gardens reopened on the 19th of November with their annual Christmas decorations. Experiencing Tivoli in Christmas time is truly a must! It is a true Christmas wonderland with decorations and Christmas shops everywhere. There are always many copenhageners in Tivoli at this time of the year, so make sure to visit outside rush hour, if you would like to avoid the big crowds.

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We will also make sure to update you during the month on Christmas happenings in the city in our Facebook Group. As so much is happening all the time, we also recommend simply taking a stroll in inner Copenhagen, as this is the perfect way to feel the Christmas spirit of the city. And who knows? Maybe we will even get a bit more snow this year, before the Christmas days are here!

Mary K. Kobia, Mark de Vos & Katrine Sandahl Mortensen
ISM Dual Career Team – University of Copenhagen

“It seems like everything sleeps in winter, but it’s really a time of renewal and reflection.”

– Elizabeth Camden
How long did it take for you to find a job in DK?
It took me 8 months to find a job.

What has been most challenging about your job search?
The hardest part was to acknowledge that I had entered a job market with a new set of rules, and I just needed to adapt to it.

What is your best advice to someone who is not living in DK, but looking for a job there?
This is an advice that a friend of mine gave me, and she got her job in Novo Nordisk back when she was in Israel. I asked her how she managed to do it with no network on her first attempt. She told me that she happened to have the exact set of skills that they needed. It helped me twice: first to understand that I needed to adjust my CV and CL to fit for what they are looking for. Second, when nobody called me back, I told myself that maybe I didn’t have the right set of skills that they needed – but I am still awesome. Don’t stop believing...

How has IDCN helped you?
IDCN helped me in so many ways: the meetings helped me to get out of my house to see other people in the same place as me. They pushed me to be a better version of myself in the job search. Last but not least - they told me over and over again - it can be done, people as new as you have found a good job in Denmark and so will you.

What surprised you the most about the Danish job interview?
That there are so many (I had 3).

What is your best advice to someone going for a job interview?
Talk to Mary and Mark!!!
Understand before what is expected to happen in the interview: how it is going to be there, where is it, what is the purpose of the meeting, and what is expected of you?

What kept you going, when things didn’t always turn out the way you expected?
I must say I got my power from my friends and husband. In these last 8 months, I felt that I was fishing for compliments and strength. Before applying, before “the phone call”, before the interview – I wrote and talked to my friends, asking them to remind me why the hell I thought I am strong enough to leave everything I know back at home, follow my husband, and try my luck in Denmark.

What are you most excited about doing in your new job?
I am excited to be part of a team, to work with new people and to get to know some Danish people - maybe practice my Danish with adults and not only with my 5-year-old son’s friends.

Reflecting back on your job seeking process and experiences in DK, what advice do you have to give to other spouses?
It takes time. I think I could not get this job earlier, I was not ready. I had a culture shock. I was busy with helping my family settle down, I needed to get to know the Danish culture and cope with it. So don’t stop believing....
How long did it take for you to find a job in DK?
I started looking for a job in DK the moment we knew that we were moving. As I had no idea what to expect from the Danish labour market or what they expect from employees, I almost always got rejected. After a few months, I received help from Mary with CV, cover letter, interview preparations, etc. and I can say that this improved my job search a lot!

What has been most challenging about your job search?
Getting to know the Danish culture & work life: how can I sell myself as a Dane?

What is your best advice to someone who is not living in DK, but looking for a job there?
Get (professional) help. I knew about IDCN since March 2020, but waited too long before reaching out to them. Also, think outside the box: you have more experience than you think. Moving to another country can be the chance to improve other aspects of your (professional) life.

How has IDCN helped you?
It is a valuable network where you can make friends, connect to people with another background. It helped me with the (lack of) social contact, especially in these COVID-19 times.

What surprised you the most about the Danish job interview?
Teamwork makes the dream work: it’s all about ‘how does the candidate fit in our team?’ In Belgium we usually are looking for the right experience & skills, where the Danish companies are looking for a great team fit.

What is your best advice to someone going for a job interview?
Prepare: what do you know about the company and how do you think you will fit in? Be positive: I know being unemployed is difficult, but a positive mind-set and general kindness will certainly help you in leaving a good impression after an interview.

In Belgium we say “een nee heb je, een ja kan je krijgen”: “you have a no, you can get a yes”. Dare to ask for an interview, for a chance. What’s the worst that can happen?

What kept you going when things didn’t always turn out the way you expected?
This is up to you. I became happy from running, cycling and walking my dog. Do what makes you happy and make time for it.

What are you most excited about doing in your new job?
Helping people/companies to improve and learning new things about a high tech evolution: artificial intelligence.

Reflecting back on your job seeking process and experiences in DK, what advice do you have to give to other spouses?
Get (professional) help, network, do what makes you happy, and dare to ask for chances!