

IDCN'S CAREER EVENT AT AAU, NOVEMBER 23

Stand Out and Move Forward Career Branding for Job-seekers and Entrepreneurs



Catarina Bettencourt, AAU International Staff Officer

Through the low points of job search frustration and family crisis, Catarina founded her own social business in Denmark, [The World Kitchen](#), which has experienced tremendous success. The World Kitchen serves as a compelling platform for building friendship and understanding between Danes and new arrivals to Denmark. It was Catarina's experience building new professional skills as an entrepreneur that led to the unexpected outcome of a permanent HR position perfectly suited to her.

*Take a **break**; even feeling demotivated
from time to time is okay.*

*Try **everything** and
learn more about **yourself***

*Value your **new local friends**
and engage them for networking help*

IDCN Copenhagen's November career event at Aalborg University

was full of stories from the heart about paving new and unexpected paths in the face of challenges and transition. IDCN partner members benefitted from the personal stories of three speakers who shared their own journeys of hopeful beginnings, culture and career struggles, and new meaningful paths forged in Denmark—paths that were often made possible precisely because of their international backgrounds. Following these **inspirational stories**, attendees received practical tips for becoming entrepreneurs in Denmark and met with corporate members in a structured networking session.

*Recognize, accept, and embrace
your own **differences***

*Learn what **your needs** are
and make them a priority*

*Find your **commonalities**
with Danes*

Being different is not a bad thing. **Chanette** did not follow the expected Danish path but instead followed her own urging to study languages and work abroad. After an accident impacted her work life, she became aware of her personal need to contribute to society through meaningful work, which she fulfilled through her entrepreneurial ventures. The soft skills she developed through her international and entrepreneurial experiences are exactly what led to her successful HR career since returning to Denmark. Chanette reminded the audience that some of us just need a little time to find the right path, and it's important to be open to new possibilities.



Chanette Hemdrup Jakobsen,
AAU International
Staff Partner



Zikoh Jean-Luc Kouassi-Zessai,
Business Advisor [Business House Copenhagen](#)

Do you have an entrepreneurial spirit? Denmark makes it easy for you to start your own business. Zikoh believes that becoming your own boss can be flexible, freeing, and rewarding. If you are toying with the idea, he suggests starting small but thinking big. Your business can even start in your home or at a flea market. Business House Copenhagen provides free courses, workshops and counselling for Copenhagen-based entrepreneurs. They provide assistance on business strategy development, locating funding, and navigating the Danish market and legal requirements.



Nicol Foulkes Savinetti,
Founder
[Global Europeans](#)

During 20 years living in Denmark, **Nicol** has researched and published on encountering difference and has founded her own business that helps new arrivals settle here. In her talk, she emphasized that “well-being is at the center of success” and offered advice on taking good care of your needs through self-knowledge. On encountering difference, she encouraged the audience to be patient since it takes some practice to become comfortable with difference. She stressed the importance of adapting while simultaneously holding on to your core values.

*Show your **soft skills**; they are
what make you stand out*

*You may need to **push**:
“Be polite, but pushy.”*

*If the job isn't out there,
create your own job*

**Useful Links
to get you
started on your
new business:**

[Thehub.dk](#)
[Inno-overblik](#)
[Startupsvar.dk](#)
[Skat.dk/ownbusiness](#)
[Told](#)
[Fødevarestyrelsen](#)

Trade Unions in Denmark – How you could profit from a membership?

Denmark has the highest density of trade unions in the world dating back to the 1870s, when workers started to assemble to put pressure on employers. One reason for the high number of trade unions is that Denmark's labor market is characterised by flexicurity: a welfare state model with a proactive labor market policy. The labor market is flexible and dynamic, but there is a high amount of security for workers, for instance in the form of unemployment funds. Unlike many other countries, there is no minimum wage in Denmark, but rather, the unions negotiate rates of pay and conditions of employment with the employers. These agreements then affect all workers that fall under the agreement.

What are the advantages of being a member in a union?

- Negotiations of wages and contracts
- Mediation of conflicts at the workplace (unions are bound to discretion)
- Pension and employment funds
- Courses and workshops (many free of charge)
- Bargains on bank accounts, insurance, and holiday homes

How can a union membership help if you are unemployed?

Some unions offer special rates for members that are unemployed and are not eligible for unemployment funds. Dansk Magisterforening, for example, charges 114 kr. per quarter, while giving you the same service as a full member. Unions offer CV checks, specialised career advice, workshops and advanced training. You can use these to network and work on certain qualifications. On top of that, every union publishes a trade journal with high quality information about recent developments that could give you some more insight and a wider perspective on the job market in Denmark. ▀

Some unions are open for all workers and others are specialised unions for specific fields

- [3F](#) (Fagligt Fælles Forbund) – Denmark's biggest union, open to workers from all fields (English, Danish, German, Polish, Russian, Romanian)
- [HK](#) – workers within the retail sector and administrative staff within both public and private sectors
- [IDA](#) – for engineers and people working and studying in the fields of technology, natural sciences and IT
- [Arkitektforeningen](#), Danish Association of Architects
- [Dansk Sygeplejeråd](#), Danish Nurses' organization
- [Dansk Magisterforening](#), for people with a background in the humanities and higher university education

IDCN Success Stories

Trust your life, and do what you have to!

Former IDCN Copenhagen Events Team volunteer tells about her long way to employment in the new country

Please tell us about the road to your first job in Denmark.

When I came to Denmark in 2010, my main challenge was that I did not speak English. So, my first goal was to learn English because I wanted to continue my studies at the university. I think that local education is very important for getting into a local job market. It is a way to transition. The educational system in Denmark is completely different from the one in Russia. By studying, you already learn the working culture. You learn how to work in a team and many other things, so it is a perfect way to integrate. It took me 2.5 years to get an IELTS certificate and acceptance at CBS. I started my studies in 2013 and finished in 2017. Meanwhile, I also took Danish classes and finished Danish Education 3. I started actively searching for a job in Denmark in the beginning of 2017 and was finally employed in May, 2018. During this time, I sent a lot of applications and had 3 interviews. It was the hardest time in my life: you put in a lot of effort and write all these applications and cover letters. It takes time – but at the end you get nothing. It was very difficult.

What helped you not to give up during this long period?

First, it is maybe my character: if I have a goal, I just have to continue reaching for it. Also at some point in my life, I realised that every challenge in life is also an opportunity. I have managed to shift from negative to positive thinking, and it helped me dramatically. I started to trust in my life. I felt that I have taken many steps: I have learned English, I have learned Danish, and I have



Ekaterina Kalinichenko
Operations Assistant,
Cruise Away

undertaken local education. It was natural that the next step must be getting a job! Of course, on this way I felt frustrated many times. I was devastated. At some points, it was very hard. But on the next day, I got up and I had to continue.

Did volunteering at IDCN help you in your job search?

IDCN helped me, but in an indirect way. At IDCN, you learn how to network. You have mentors, who guide you in terms of your job search strategy. Also very importantly, you meet people in the same situation. Everyone is searching for a job and has the same challenges. As a result, you can see that you are not alone. It gives you energy and enthusiasm. Also, IDCN provides a good chance to train your self-presentation skills. I got an opportunity to practice, and when I got an invitation to an interview, I felt less stressed.

How did you finally find your current job?

I found it thanks to networking. My husband's former colleague informed us that there was an open position at his wife's company.

What is your advice to those who are still looking for a job?

Trust your life. And be open: we don't know from where and from whom we will get a job offer. ▀

I know how it is, to bring a spouse to Denmark

Birgitte Høj Ranch is a Senior Global Mobility Consultant at NNE. She is responsible for expatriation consultancy to managers and employees and coaching of expatriates and their families. For the IDCN career event on September 5th, 2018, Birgitte organised a workshop titled “Networking Across Cultures”. Recently, Birgitte has become a new mentor for IDCN’s Events Team.



How do you see your role at IDCN? Why is it important for you to support international employees’ spouses?

For me it is important to help our foreign employees at NNE. I want them to have a meaningful life here in Denmark so they remain at the company. If a meaningful life for them means that their spouses have jobs, maybe we can help. That’s why I think it is important that NNE is a member of IDCN.

And, you know, personally for me... my husband is from US. He returned to Denmark with me and our children. We did not have this support which big companies are giving to their employees today. I just went to US to study, and returning back to Denmark together with him was a personal decision of ours. So, I know a little bit about how it is to bring a spouse to Denmark. Neither of us had a job when we decided to move. But for me it was easier to find a job because I had references, I had my previous jobs in Denmark, and my experience of working in the States was also an advantage.

What do you think is the most challenging thing for a foreigner when searching for a job in Denmark?

I think it is to build up a network in the new country. That is why I am so glad that many NNE spouses sign up for IDCN because I think that IDCN is a good network. It is voluntary work, but you can still put it on your resume. And I see how active,

energetic, and qualified the volunteers are. It is amazing! There is a huge pool of candidates in IDCN which Danish companies can benefit from.

What are your recommendations to the IDCN members in terms of job search in Denmark?

Try to be outgoing, call up people, and reach out via Skype or LinkedIn to see if they have time to have a coffee.

I also like the idea of the mentoring program, that those who already are working can mentor new volunteers. Being a mentor for the volunteers, I would also use my network and help to build connections. **Networking is really a big thing.** I would also say, don’t give up. If you don’t get job interviews or are rejected after an interview, don’t be afraid to **call and ask why**. Later you can use the feedback for your next interviews.

Call before you apply. If I apply for a job, I would always call before I send an application and ask for details about the working process, responsibilities, etc.

I recommend also considering jobs which may seem not very interesting. Back in the US, I had experience from another country and an MBA, but I started as an assistant. **You can start with a lower level to get into an organisation** and then show your potential and get promoted or get references to move up within the company or to another workplace. ■

IDCN Copenhagen Podcast

In our new project, professionals familiar with Danish culture and job market share their knowledge about cultural intelligence, specificities of job seeking process, learning the language and other topics important to the internationals in Denmark.

In the first edition:

- Why is it difficult to make friends with Danes?
- Which topics to choose for a good conversation with locals?
- How much time do you have for small talk at a Danish meeting?
- What can be wrong with your «good morning»?



Listen to the interview
with **Mikkel Hougaard Orlovski**,
Leadership Development Consultant &
Intercultural Trainer, DTU

PART 1 What to talk about: Football or the Royal Family?

PART 2 Why don't they invite their colleagues home?



STAY IN TOUCH in 2019!

NEXT IDCN'S EVENT:

Ørsted

February 1, 2019

We wish you
Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year!



SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORY:

Found a job?

Started an internship?

Relocated?

Please let us know by email at:
membership.copenhagen@idcn.info

Join IDCN Kaffemik!

An informal monthly meet-up for all IDCN members. No registration necessary – just show up! Kids are welcome.

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