

THE INTER NATIONAL

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MUFFINS AND RUSKS - OH MY!



DANISH JOB SEARCH: FIRST 90 DAYS



ACCESSIBLE - BUT NOT FOR EVERYONE



THE CAREER WE CAN CARRY WITH US

AUTUMN 2026 - WWW.THE-INTL.COM



THE TEACHER BECOMES THE STUDENT
MAKODA TRADED HER TEXAS CLASSROOM FOR LOVE AND A NEW
LIFE IN DENMARK.

MORE THAN A WELCOME

As autumn brings new arrivals, familiar traditions and a change of pace, **Lyndsay Jensen** reflects on what it means to feel welcomed in Denmark - from September's international celebrations to the conversations shaping the country we call home.



PHOTO BY INTERNATIONAL CITIZEN DAYS

AS THE INTERNATIONAL begins a new chapter with our seasonal issues, autumn feels like exactly the right place to start. A season of arrivals, changing colours and settling in, these next three months take us from September welcomes to October traditions and finally into the first glow of Christmas - with plenty to discover along the way.

Something about autumn in Denmark always feels like a new beginning.

Perhaps it is because September brings so many new faces. Students arrive for a new academic year, international employees begin new positions, families unpack boxes in unfamiliar homes, and accompanying partners start the sometimes daunting task of building a life and network of their own.

Or perhaps it is simply because after the long Danish summer - when emails go unanswered, offices empty and seemingly half the country disappears into a *sommerhus* - September feels like somebody has finally switched Denmark back on.

For us at The International, this autumn marks a new beginning too.

This is the first of our new seasonal issues, a change that lets us create something you can keep, return to, and enjoy throughout the months ahead. Rather than focusing on just one month at a time, we can now look at the rhythm of a whole season -

Because that has always been at the heart of The International: helping make Denmark a little easier to understand and, hopefully, a little easier to call home.

WELCOME TO DENMARK - AND FINDING YOUR FOOTING

September has become something quite special for Denmark's international community.

It is a major arrival period for international students, employees and their families, which makes the idea behind Welcome September particularly important. Across Denmark, municipalities, state authorities, universities, business organisations and associations come together for a national month dedicated to welcoming international citizens.

This year there are more than 60 events across Denmark and online, supported by more than 30 partners. There are welcome events in Aarhus, Aalborg and Odense, activities in municipalities large and small, career and networking sessions, cultural experiences, practical information and opportunities simply to meet another human being who might also be wondering how on earth you are supposed to make Danish friends.

And that last part matters more than we sometimes acknowledge.

Moving country is about much more than obtaining a CPR number, opening a bank account and learning that you need an app for practically everything. You can successfully complete every administrative task Denmark throws at you and still feel completely alone.

A genuine welcome is therefore not simply a nice gesture. It can be the first step towards finding your feet, meeting people and beginning to feel at home.

Copenhagen's International Citizen Days has become one of the biggest expressions of that idea.

The first International Citizen Day was held in 2019, bringing public authorities, private organisations and local communities together under one roof to help internationals navigate housing, careers and social life. Around 1,500 international citizens attended that first event.

The International was there too.

In fact, while our magazine began its own journey in 2018, we have been part of International Citizen Days since that first event in 2019 - something I am particularly proud of because our missions have always fitted so naturally together.

Six years later, International Citizen Days 2025 attracted around 6,000 attendees, with more than 7,800 registrations. What began as a one-day Copen-

hagen event has developed into a major two-day meeting place for the international community.

And in 2026, we will be back.

International Citizen Days takes place at Øksnehallen on 25 and 26 September, and The International will have a stand there once again. So please come and find us.

Come and say hello. Tell us where you are from. Tell us what brought you to Denmark. Ask us the question you have been too embarrassed to ask anyone else. Tell us what you love about living here - and, equally importantly, what drives you completely mad. If you have just arrived, come and meet us.

And if you have lived here for twenty years and still occasionally stare at a letter from a Danish authority wondering what on earth it wants from you, come and meet us too. You are exactly our kind of international.

WEEK ONE: BUILD THE FOUNDATION, NOT THE WHOLE HOUSE

In your first week, resist the urge to do everything. Focus on a handful of tasks that help you settle into Denmark more easily. Taking a trip to your International House or municipality in your location is a great start, as they are set up to support you in finding your place, whether it's a job, or to meet others or finding out about local clubs, etc. Depending on your location, you'll have opportunities to meet other internationals; if not, try social media! Ask in Expat groups and see who you can connect with locally.

WHEN A WELCOME BECOMES SOMETHING MORE

Of course, talking about welcoming internationals also raises a more difficult question this autumn.

What happens when someone stops being a newcomer?

For many internationals, Denmark isn't a two-year adventure anymore. It is where they work, raise children, pay taxes, build businesses, volunteer, buy homes, create friendships and grow older. It becomes home.

That is why the continuing pause in the processing of many Danish citizenship applications has understandably created frustration and uncertainty within parts of the international community.

Processing of naturalisation cases was put on hold following the Danish parliamentary election earlier this year while clarity is sought over the conditions that should apply in future citizenship cases.

Behind the politics and procedures, however, are real people.

People who have spent years learning Danish, fulfilling requirements and building their lives here, only to find themselves waiting again.

And perhaps that gives us something worth thinking about during a month built around the word welcome.

What does welcome actually mean?

Is it simply something we offer when someone arrives at Copenhagen Airport with two suitcases and a job contract? Or does it develop into something deeper - having a voice, participating in your community and feeling that Denmark isn't simply the country you live in, but your home?

Denmark is certainly not alone in having these conversations. Across Europe and much of the wider world, immigration, integration, borders and national identity have moved increasingly towards the centre of political debate.

It is reasonable to ask whether Denmark is being influenced by that wider political climate too - and what that might mean for the international citizens who have chosen to make their lives here.

There will be different opinions, and The International has never existed to tell internationals what they should think. Our role is to make sure they are part of the conversation.

Because welcoming international talent cannot only be about attracting people when Denmark needs their skills. Retention matters too. Community matters. Feeling valued matters. And knowing that your contribution to the country you call home is recognised matters enormously.

Perhaps that is why I still love events like International Citizen Days after all these years. Beneath the talks, stands, brochures and networking, the message is remarkably simple:

You are here. You are part of this. Come in. And sometimes those few words are exactly what somebody needs to hear.

So, wherever you are in your Danish journey, I hope this autumn issue keeps you company through the season ahead.

Let September be the month you say hello to someone new.

Let October tempt you outside into the forests before the last leaves disappear - and give you permission to enjoy *efterårsferie* whether you have children or not.

And when November arrives with dark mornings, colder evenings and Christmas lights appearing suspiciously early, lean into it. Find the *gløgg*. Eat the *cøbleskiver*. Light the candles. Begin making plans for December.

Autumn in Denmark can be wet, windy, dark and occasionally determined to test your choice of waterproof clothing. But it can also be beautiful.

And whether this is your first autumn in Denmark or your twentieth, we hope the pages ahead help you discover something new, find something useful and feel a little more connected to the place you now call home.

Welcome to our Autumn Issue. And if you are at International Citizen Days in September, please come and say hi. We would love to meet you.

Love,
Lyndsay Jensen
Editor-in-Chief & Founder



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THE COURAGE TO START AGAIN



After 18 moves across three countries, Canadian-born teacher Makoda Gascon thought she knew a thing or two about starting over. Now, newly married and building a life in Denmark, she finds herself on the other side of the classroom – learning a new language, navigating immigration once again and discovering that home may be less about where you come from than where you choose to belong.

Writer: **Lyndsay Jensen** / Photography: **The International** / **Makoda Gascon**

THERE IS A moment in almost every international's story when a new country stops being somewhere you are visiting and becomes something else.

Sometimes it happens slowly. A favourite café appears. You learn which super-market has the things you like. The streets stop requiring Google Maps. Perhaps you even begin to understand why everyone suddenly disappears for three weeks in July.

For Makoda Gascon, the moment was more concrete. She cancelled her return ticket.

After four previous visits to Denmark, Makoda arrived knowing that something was different. Her Danish partner was here. They had spent years building a relationship across borders, talking about careers, marriage, children and eventually closing the distance between them. Denmark was no longer simply her wife's country.

It was where they wanted to build their life.

"I think the biggest moment was realising that I was refunding my return ticket and committing to making Denmark my new home," she says.

For someone who has moved 18 times across three countries, you might assume another relocation would be relatively easy. But Denmark is proving to be a different kind of move.

Makoda has left behind a teaching career in Texas, her students, family, animals, friends and the comfortable knowledge of how everyday life works. She is learning Danish, navigating another immigration process and working out what

her professional life might look like here.

For perhaps the first time in years, the teacher has become the student.

HOME IS WHERE YOU MAKE IT

Makoda was born and raised in Canada, with family spread across the country. Her childhood included regular journeys between east and west and an early understanding that home did not have to mean one fixed geographical point.

She believes something stereotypically Canadian stayed with her: a willingness to talk to strangers and make people feel welcome.

"I always try to put in an active effort to be welcoming to others, just as I would want to be welcomed in any situation."

Moving was already a regular feature of childhood, although change was not something she always welcomed.

"When I was younger, I struggled a lot to accept it because of the unpredictable nature of it," she says. "Now, however, I feel that change is much more welcomed in my life."

After high school, another possibility appeared. Makoda's American stepfather could sponsor her move to the United States, and in 2017 she took the opportunity.

She first received temporary permission to work before gaining permanent residency through a green card. The experience gave her an early appreciation of how complicated immigration can be – and of the privilege involved in being allowed to become part of another country.

She also experienced very different versions of America. Life in Las Vegas offered what she describes as a “capsuled” view of the United States, shaped by tourism and entertainment. Texas offered something completely different: rural life, along with an experience of being a linguistic and cultural minority. The contrasts taught her something she has carried into Denmark. “You can make friends anywhere that you go, even if they may have opposing viewpoints, lifestyles or backgrounds.” Perhaps that is why Makoda does not see each move as replacing the person she was before. Canada did not disappear when she moved to America. America has not disappeared because she now lives in Denmark. Each place adds another layer.

WHEN THE TEACHER BECOMES THE STUDENT

Teaching was not an obvious childhood calling. As a teenager, Makoda wasn’t sure what she wanted to do. Yet there were clues. She became a stage manager for children’s plays, helped lead Shotokan karate lessons and eventually worked as a teaching assistant. She discovered she loved watching someone understand something because she had helped them get there. A Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education eventually led to a classroom of her own in Texas. Makoda spent her first year teaching first grade and her second teaching second grade, allowing her to continue with many of the same pupils. Leaving them was one of the hardest parts of leaving America. “Knowing that I wasn’t going to go to third grade alongside them, or at least be around them, hurt a bit,” she admits. “I feel that these first two years teaching will really stick with me.”

Her experience working with pupils for whom English was an additional language has taken on particular significance since arriving in Denmark. During her student teaching in Texas, Makoda worked on a predominantly Spanish-speaking campus. Sometimes children could not express what they wanted to say to her in English. Then, she understood intellectually how intimidating language acquisition could be. Now she understands it personally. “There is a sense of uncertainty that I would never have when speaking English or even French,” she explains. “There is a hesitation or a worry that what you are going to say won’t be understood.” She spent years encouraging pupils to try, make mistakes and keep learning. Now she has to offer herself the same patience. Danish is going better than she expected, although pronunciation remains a challenge when a brain accustomed to English and French insists on applying the wrong rules. One word has won her over: *tallerken*. She likes the way it rolls off the tongue.

LOVE, DISTANCE AND A ONE-WAY DECISION

Denmark entered Makoda’s life through the person who would eventually become her wife. Even before their relationship became romantic, the pair discovered that their ideas about the future were remarkably similar. Both wanted to teach, travel, marry and have children. When their friendship became a relationship, the conversation about eventually closing the distance started almost immediately. They also knew it could not happen overnight. Rather than putting their lives on hold, they continued pursuing their own goals. “We made sure to attain our own personal goals and grow up together instead of rushing to be close physically.” Makoda visited Denmark four times, gradually experiencing the country through her partner’s life and culture. Likewise, she shared Canada and America with her wife. When it came time to decide where their future should begin, Denmark made sense. They recently married in a civil ceremony, a day Makoda describes simply as “very much us.” Neither felt the need to create the perfect wedding according to somebody else’s expectations. What mattered was being married. The same practicality shaped the move. They researched, planned and talked about realistic expectations before Makoda left the US to join her wife. Now she is waiting for permission to remain here – a strangely familiar chapter for someone who has already experienced the American immigration system.



“HOME IS NOT NECESSARILY THE PLACE WHERE EVERYTHING IS EASY. IT CAN BE THE PLACE WHERE YOU DECIDE THE EFFORT IS WORTH MAKING.”

It is stressful and occasionally frightening, but experience has taught her that bureaucracy and belonging operate on very different timelines. The paperwork may still be deciding where she can live. Emotionally, the decision has already been made.

LEARNING DENMARK FROM SCRATCH

One of the things Makoda misses most about North America is surprisingly mundane: knowing how things work. There is confidence in understanding a country without thinking about it – where to go, what something costs and how everyday systems operate. Denmark has removed that expertise. Even shopping required recalibration. Seeing prices in triple digits initially jolted her before her brain remembered that Danish kroner were not dollars. There have been cultural surprises too. Public drinking took some adjustment after living in places where carrying an open alcoholic drink on the street would be prohibited. Danish family dynamics have also caught her attention; her own parents still message her almost every day. One Danish feature, however, receives an enthusiastic endorsement: public transport. Danes may complain about delayed trains and maintenance work, but after living in parts of North America where a car was virtually essential, Makoda has another perspective. “I will take delays over having to drive everywhere any day.”

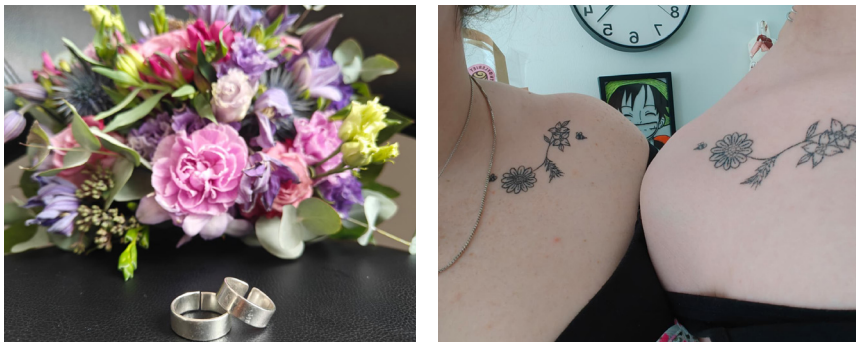
She is walking more too, and observing Denmark through the eyes of a teacher. Makoda is particularly struck by the independence afforded to Danish children. She remembers similar freedoms from parts of her Canadian childhood but believes many North American children now grow up in a more cautious environment. In schools where she worked, teachers worried about children climbing trees, sitting on top of monkey bars or playing with sticks. “The natural sense of wonder of the world they live in was taken away from many students that I was around, which saddens me.” In Denmark, she sees glimpses of that freedom still being protected. It is one reason she can imagine raising children here.

BUILDING A FAMILY BETWEEN CULTURES

Makoda and her wife have always spoken openly about wanting children. Her background in education has influenced what she values when imagining family life: nutrition, parental leave, freedom and the environment in which children are allowed to grow. As members of the LGBTQ+ community, Makoda says Denmark’s relative acceptance was also part of their decision to settle here. For Makoda, who identifies as pansexual, living in different places has taught her that acceptance and understanding are not necessarily the same thing. She does not want sexuality to define every interaction, while recognising the value of positive representation. Mostly, though, the future she describes is wonderfully ordinary. A home. Pets. Perhaps a few children. A career she enjoys. Peace. And if those children eventually arrive, Makoda wants Canadian and American traditions to sit alongside Danish ones. She wants them to understand where both of their parents came from and build their own identity from those influences. It reflects her approach to belonging. “I think it is important to add parts of yourself into wherever you choose to call home.” Integration, in Makoda’s version, does not require erasure. She hopes to become fluent in Danish and perhaps one day gain Danish citizenship. But becoming part of Denmark does not mean becoming less Canadian or pretending America did not shape her. Home can contain all three.

THE NEXT LESSON

Professionally, Makoda does not yet know exactly what Denmark will bring. She hopes teaching will be part of it, but she is also open to writing, educational content, communication or something she has not yet considered. “The great thing about being a teacher is that any profession will require some aspects of what I already love to do,” she says. “It is important to be open to what can be instead of being fixated on a specific career path for myself that may not exist in a new country.” International relocation often encourages us to measure ourselves against the person we were before moving: the job title we had, the language we spoke effortlessly, the friends we could call and the systems we understood. Suddenly, ordinary competence disappears. Makoda is trying not to see that as failure. Instead, she is learning perhaps the most difficult lesson she has ever had to teach herself: patience. Without a definite timeline for her residence process, this stage can feel liminal. She sets weekly goals and tries not to punish herself when progress is slow. Then she reminds herself that things take time. It is advice she might once have given a nervous pupil. Now she has to believe it herself. After 18 moves, perhaps Makoda understands something the rest of us sometimes forget: home is not necessarily the place where everything is easy. It can be the place where you decide the effort is worth making. She still feels Canada’s pull. She misses the vastness and forests of Texas. Maple syrup remains non-negotiable – including, somewhat controversially, on salmon. America is part of her. Canada is part of her. Denmark is becoming part of her too. Five years from now, she hopes the uncertainty will have given way to something far less dramatic: an ordinary life. A house. Animals. Children, perhaps. Meaningful work. And the feeling of finally being settled beside the person she spent so long waiting to live alongside. For someone whose life has involved so much movement, her ambition is strikingly simple.



“I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO ADD PARTS OF YOURSELF INTO WHEREVER YOU CHOOSE TO CALL HOME.”

“I would have a nice career and just feel at peace.” Perhaps that is what home ultimately becomes. Not the country printed on your passport. Not the place where you were born. Not even the place you have lived the longest. But somewhere you understand, respect and allow to change you – without asking you to leave every previous version of yourself at the border. Makoda has been the Canadian, the immigrant, the American resident, the teacher, the person helping children find the confidence to speak in an unfamiliar language. Now, in Denmark, she is the newcomer. And this time, she is learning that beginning again does not mean going back to the beginning. It means bringing everything you have already learned with you.



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IS DENMARK LOSING ITS FORGOTTEN GOLD?

For Autumn, writer **Aamna Tauheed** explores the story behind #TheForgottenGold and asks the bigger question: if Denmark is so successful at attracting international talent, why is it struggling to make them stay?

BEHIND THE WORDS..

Aamna Tauheed is a Denmark-based copywriter and communications specialist with a strong background in business communications. Passionate about storytelling, she writes compelling content that amplifies brands and drives positive change.



PHOTO BY KINCA HOWARD ON UNSPLASH

THE TERM “FORGOTTEN GOLD” refers to untapped international talent residing in Scandinavia, particularly in Denmark. It represents the voices of international professionals who struggle to gain visibility and opportunities in the Scandinavian job market. Instead of sharing stories about international professionals, this month The International Denmark examined the current situation of this “forgotten gold,” aka untapped international talent, living in Denmark.

Internationals’ professional and social struggles in Denmark have long been a hot topic in the country. Despite efforts to build careers, adapt to the culture and learn the language, only a few make it *hyggeligt*

(cosy) for themselves. The reasons are quite straightforward and vivid, according to them. A career stall, constant ghosting in the Danish job market, unrecognised previous experience and lack of integration eventually led them to another country.

According to Danmarks Statistik, in 2024, almost 52,580 internationals left the country, and in 2025, more internationals left Denmark than in any year on record. The country also slipped from 5th place in the IMD World Talent Ranking to 8th in 2025, underlining that attracting global talent and retaining it are two different things.

This is where the idea behind the #theForgottenGold movement takes another turn, highlighting

what happens when international talent leaves after years of professional and social struggle. Looking at the numbers for 2024 and 2025, can we say international talent has decided to leave Denmark?

DENMARK NEEDS THE TALENT IT ATTRACTS

Despite years of investing in infrastructure and efforts to attract international talent, retaining that talent remains a challenge. The country successfully draws global talent by offering English-language academic degrees, fast-track visa schemes, graduate programs focused on global talent, and targeted recruitment in tech and other sectors. These initiatives



“THEY ARE THE ‘GOLD’ THAT REFUSES TO BE FORGOTTEN AND REMAINS INVISIBLE.”

attract and bring international talent to Denmark, but arriving is not the same as staying. Training participants through career programs alone isn’t enough, as it can create the false impression that the country abandons them after training.

In the words of one of the forgotten gold participants: “ After the completion of my master’s degree, I participated in Copenhagen’s municipality seven-month graduate program especially designed for internationals. I learned a lot about Danish workplace culture and language, and I actively engaged in exchange groups and attended café meetings. I received a lot of guidance from the career advisors and assigned mentors, but I still feel lost, even after enough training. I am still struggling to find the right strategies to navigate the Danish market and build trust with people.”

Denmark needs internationals, and the economic reason for retaining them is hard to overlook. According to Copenhagen Capacity’s 2025 Expat Survey, internationals living in Denmark contribute approximately 360 billion DKK to the country’s GDP. These figures illustrate the extent of their contribution to the Danish economy. They are more than temporary fillers because they work in Danish companies, add value through their skills and experience, and pay taxes.

WHEN CONTRIBUTION ISN’T ENOUGH

Despite their economic contributions and efforts toward social and cultural integration, many internationals lack a sense of belonging. This is perhaps where the paradox of global talent attraction and recognition in Denmark becomes more visible. The country’s well-developed programs for attracting and integrating internationals do not translate into sustainable careers and lives in Denmark.

A recent research report by a non-profit organisation disclosed that many international professionals in the technology sector chose to leave Denmark because of stagnant careers and uncertain professional paths. The report identified cultural disconnect and the constant challenges of establishing a professional and social life in the new country as major reasons for their departure.

This pattern is also familiar from the previously shared #ForgottenGold stories. Discussing her job-seeking journey in Denmark, one of the Forgotten Gold said: “The frustration of not hearing back from companies and waiting for the right moment takes away my motivation. If the “right time” still hasn’t arrived after over a thousand applications and 150 coffee meetings, maybe it is time to think about going back home, or to consider it a systemic gap between internationals and Danes.”

The communications professional’s experience tells the same story. “In seven years of professional and social struggle, I secured only one job relevant to my profession at a pharmaceutical company, and I was laid off after the company’s downsizing. After that, I tried every possible strategy, including networking and

openly asking for help, but nothing worked. Now I don’t have any other option except to leave.”

HAS THE FORGOTTEN GOLD DECIDED TO LEAVE?

These stories and experiences do not mean that all internationals have decided to leave Denmark because of professional disappointments and career setbacks. Many internationals are still striving for professional opportunities in Denmark’s challenging job market. “It is not Denmark vs internationals; I don’t think anyone is intentionally trying to exclude people. It’s more about systems, habits, and perhaps a preference for what’s familiar,” said the forgotten story participant while discussing the systemic barriers.

WHAT CAN DENMARK DO?

Every departure is not a failure, and international mobility is the normal part of today’s labour market. Still, Denmark needs concrete solutions to address the systemic gap with international talent.

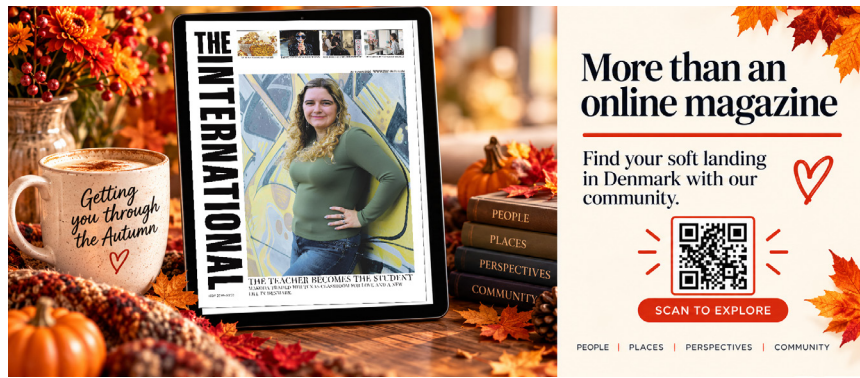
Denmark can retain international talent by valuing global experience, establishing clearer career pathways, and launching initiatives that support inclusion and diversity. Companies and recruiters should develop strategies to improve access to professional networks and growth opportunities.

Policymakers, institutions and municipalities need to collaborate to bridge the gap between companies and international graduates struggling to navigate the Danish labour market.

The aim is to give internationals an equal chance to showcase their competencies, because they are willing to contribute to the Danish labour market and society.

#THEFORGOTTENGOLD MOVEMENT

By sharing the experiences and stories of Denmark’s untapped talent, #TheForgottenGold Movement aims to draw responsible authorities’ attention to the international talent already living in the country. They are the “gold” that refuses to be forgotten and remains invisible. Recognising their talent and giving them the chance to contribute professionally matters more than tracking the numbers of internationals who left the country.



YOUR DENMARK JOB SEARCH: FIRST 90 DAYS

New to Denmark and ready to focus on your career? **Leslea Petersen** shares a practical 90-day plan to help you build your network, get visible and navigate the Danish job market with confidence.

BEHIND THE WORDS..

Leslea Petersen is the CEO of English Job Denmark, helping professionals and businesses retain international talent. With 20+ years in communications, she is passionate about diversity, recruitment, and supporting inclusive workplaces.



PHOTO BY MARTEN NEWHALL ON UNSPLASH

SEPTEMBER IS A busy month for job seekers and can feel overwhelming if you have just arrived, finally got your family settled, and now you need to focus on your career. Where do you even start?

Summer holidays are over, offices are full again, and companies that spent July and August quietly waiting are now organising interviews and hiring. Budgets are confirmed, teams are back, and job postings from 2026 will start building into real opportunities.

For many internationals who have just landed here, knowing quite where to start and where to

“IT ISN’T CLOSED, BUT IT IS BUILT ON CONVERSATIONS RATHER THAN JUST APPLICATIONS.”

find information can be the biggest hurdle. You are managing a new address, language, culture, and a job search all at once, and it is easy to feel that you should know how it all works! You don’t need to, but you do need a plan that breaks the next three months into easy, stress-free steps.

WEEK ONE: BUILD THE FOUNDATION, NOT THE WHOLE HOUSE

In your first week, resist the urge to do everything. Focus on a handful of tasks that help you settle into Denmark more easily. Taking a trip to your International House or municipality in your location is a great start, as they are set up to support you in finding your place, whether it’s a job, or to meet others or finding out about local clubs, etc. Depending on your location, you’ll have opportunities to meet other internationals; if not, try social media! Ask in Expat groups and see who you can connect with locally.



PHOTO BY HELENA LOPES ON UNSPLASH

Look for a community built around your job search; you really don’t have to do this alone. At English Job Denmark, that is exactly what our club exists for, and joining early saves people months of trial and error. Get free access to events, a community to support you, and learn how to build your online visibility. Using a service built for your exact situation isn’t a sign you need extra help; it means you learn from others so you don’t waste your time or a potential employer’s.

WEEKS TWO TO FOUR: GET VISIBLE

This is also the moment to reconnect with your professional community, and a great way to do that is to join a union. Engineers, look up IDA; those in economics, law, or public administration will find Djøf, for example (Unions are built around job types), and they run events for members building a career here, including internationals. These Unions exist to guide you and help build your network faster than you could build alone, and September is when many start offering their autumn events. Go to one, even if you are underprepared, because you will learn a lot and it will give you a great basis for starting job hunting.

After lots of advice from your club or union, take one afternoon to rewrite your CV with a Danish reader in mind. This does not mean getting rid of what makes your background distinctive. It means being direct: lead with results, keep it to two pages, and cut anything a Danish hiring manager would find hard to understand in a local context. A photo is welcome unless a specific job advert says no, and Danish CVs tend to be concise and focused on deliverables. Tailor each CV to the job advert, so do your research thoroughly.

Work on your LinkedIn, as this will be your big buddy in the job search. Half of all jobs are filled through this portal, so spend quality time building a profile that makes sense in Denmark, and I don’t mean write it in Danish, but look at relevant job titles here and explain any international organisations that may not be well known here. Your profile should clearly state what role you are looking for and why you would be a good fit. It’s the perfect place to network online.

MONTH TWO: WORK THE HIDDEN MARKET

By now you will hear, network, network, network and wonder why everyone is stressing about that. Denmark’s labour market runs heavily on referrals and introductions, and this is where many internationals lose momentum, because it can feel like a closed system built for people who already know people.

It isn’t closed, but it is built on conversations rather than just applications – you need a job strategy and not just a ‘see a job and apply’ tactic. You will hear a lot about coffee meetings, short, informal meetings where you get to know the

“NINETY DAYS FROM NOW, YOU WILL HAVE A JOB SEARCH STRATEGY, A NETWORK, AND A MUCH CLEARER SENSE OF HOW EVERYTHING WORKS.”

person and the company, rather than go equipped with your CV expecting an interview. Although please be prepared! Do your research and have some good questions ready. A fifteen-minute coffee with someone in your field might not lead anywhere specific now, but it builds a relationship and connection that might lead to something more concrete in the future.

MONTH THREE: KEEP GOING

By your third month, the earlier groundwork should be giving you opportunities and hopefully a few interviews. If offers don’t arrive immediately, that is not about your ability. The job search in Denmark typically takes longer than job searches at home, simply because you are building a network and a reputation from scratch. It’s a network-driven society, and the most important thing is to keep going. Go to events about careers and what you like to do outside of work, so you are naturally building your network and, more importantly, your ‘tribe’. You want good people around you to keep you motivated and support you.

Ninety days from now, you will not necessarily have a signed contract, but you will have a job search strategy, a network, and a much clearer sense of how everything works. This is especially important if you are looking to stay long-term and build a career you love.



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ACCESSIBLE - BUT NOT FOR EVERYONE

Denmark prides itself on equality and inclusion, yet for those who need more than a standard accessible toilet, everyday life can become restricted. **Lyndsay Jensen** asks whether it is time our building regulations caught up.

BEHIND THE WORDS..

Lyndsay Jensen is Team Lead for Changing Places Danmark and an Accessibility Consultant, advocating for more inclusive and dignified access across Denmark. Combining lived experience with collaboration across families, organisations, businesses and accessibility experts, she works to raise awareness of the barriers faced by people with complex disabilities.



“IMAGINE BEING QUALIFIED, WILLING AND ABLE TO WORK, BUT THE BUILDING WHERE YOU ARE EXPECTED TO SPEND YOUR WORKING DAY DOESN’T HAVE A TOILET YOU CAN USE.”

cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, spinal injuries, neurological and progressive conditions, profound and multiple disabilities and others who require assistance with personal care. We also need to remember people with stomas and other additional or invisible toilet needs, older people and the carers supporting them.

This is not luxury equipment. For the people who need it, it is simply what makes going to the toilet possible.

And this is where Denmark has a problem.

Our building regulations already require accessible toilets. BR18 addresses things such as access, manoeuvring space, the positioning of the toilet and washbasin and support rails.

But the specialist equipment at the heart of a Changing Places facility - particularly an adult changing bench and ceiling lift - is not part of those basic requirements.

So we can construct a public building, meet the required accessibility provisions and still have a toilet that some disabled people cannot use.

That is a gap I believe we need to address.

WHEN IT BECOMES PERSONAL

I became involved with the Changing Places movement around two years ago, but my understanding of the problem began long before that.

My son Bjørn is a wheelchair user with complex disabilities and requires full assistance.

When you live with that reality, accessibility stops being an abstract discussion about measurements, doors and symbols. You quickly learn to look at places differently.

Families like ours become very good at planning.



AI GENERATED

FOR MOST OF us, going to the toilet is something we barely think about.

We go to work. We meet friends for lunch. We spend an afternoon shopping, visit a museum, attend a concert or take our children somewhere for the day. Somewhere along the way, if we need the toilet, we find one.

Now imagine having to plan every one of those activities around whether there is a bathroom you can physically use.

A door displaying the familiar wheelchair symbol might suggest the problem has been solved. Inside there may be grab rails, additional floor space, an accessible washbasin and a toilet designed for wheelchair users.

But what if you cannot transfer independently from your wheelchair? What if you need assistance from one or two people? What if you require a ceil-

ing lift to transfer safely or need to lie down on an adult-sized changing bench?

Suddenly, that “accessible” toilet isn’t accessible at all.

For many people living in Denmark, this isn’t hypothetical. It is part of everyday life.

WHEN THE WHEELCHAIR SYMBOL ISN’T ENOUGH

A Changing Places toilet is designed for people whose needs cannot be met by a conventional accessible toilet.

The difference is practical. A Changing Places facility provides significantly more space, a ceiling lift, an adult-sized, height-adjustable changing bench, and enough room for the person, their wheelchair, and, where needed, assistants.

These facilities can be essential for people with

Before going somewhere, you find yourself asking questions other families rarely need to consider. What facilities are available? Is there somewhere suitable for personal care? Can we safely transfer him? How long can we realistically stay?

And sometimes the alternative is something none of us should find acceptable: adults and older children being changed on toilet floors.

Think about that for a moment.

We wouldn’t consider a public toilet floor an acceptable place to change a baby. Yet people with disabilities can find themselves with no other option.

That was one reason I became determined to push Changing Places forward in Denmark.

During the past two years, that work has grown into Changing Places Danmark. We have been raising awareness, identifying and certifying facilities and talking to businesses, architects, manufacturers, municipalities and organisations about what is actually needed.

And the more I have become involved, the clearer it has become that we cannot rely entirely on a few organisations and businesses choosing to do this voluntarily.

A TOILET SHOULD NEVER DECIDE WHETHER YOU CAN WORK

Recently, this issue received much-needed attention in the Danish media through the experience of Antoniett Vebel Pharaa, a young woman with muscular dystrophy.

Her story brought home the consequences of what we are talking about.

Antoniett has spoken publicly about how the lack of appropriate toilet facilities affects her ability to be away from home for long periods – including something as fundamental as being able to go to work.

Imagine being qualified, willing and able to work, but the building where you are expected to spend your working day doesn’t have a toilet you can use.

The choices become unacceptable ones: drink less, hold it, leave early or don’t go.

This is where the discussion becomes much bigger than bathrooms.

We talk a great deal about getting more people with disabilities into employment and creating a more inclusive labour market. But inclusion cannot simply mean giving someone a desk and step-free access to the building.

The basic facilities have to be there too.

Antoniett’s decision to speak publicly about something so personal has put much-needed attention on an issue that many families and disabled people have quietly dealt with for years.

THREE COUNTRIES, ONE SHARED PURPOSE

Last week, I travelled to Göteborg to meet with people from Sweden and Norway who, like me, are trying to change the way we think about accessible toilets.

We were also joined by White Arkitekter, which was particularly valuable because if we really want to change things, architects need to be part of the conversation too.

We are not all working under the Changing Places name. Veronica and Victoria have their own project in Sweden, but they strongly believe in the principles behind the Changing Places movement and, importantly, we all want the same thing: toilets that people with more complex needs can actually use.

Sitting around that table made me realise just how much has happened in two years.

When I started Changing Places Danmark, much of my time was spent explaining what a Changing Places toilet actually was and why we needed them. Now I was sitting with people from three countries talking about what we had learned, what was working, what wasn’t and where we could help each other.

And that makes sense to me.

If Bjørn travels with us to Sweden, his needs don’t change when we cross the bridge. A Swedish family visiting Denmark faces exactly the same problem if the toilet they arrive at doesn’t have the equipment their son or daughter needs.

We don’t need three countries constantly reinventing the wheel. We can learn from each other, share knowledge and hopefully make our voices a little louder by working together.

We also talked about something I feel very strongly about: the Changing Places name has to mean something.

If I look at a map and plan a family day out because a venue says it has a Changing Places toilet, I need to know what will be waiting behind that door. Is there a ceiling lift? Is there a proper adult-sized changing bench? Is there enough space? Can Bjørn actually use it?

Families shouldn’t arrive and discover that someone’s idea of a Changing Place

es toilet is simply a slightly larger accessible bathroom.

That is also why having architects involved matters. It is far easier to create the right space when a building is being designed than to discover afterwards that the room is too small, the ceiling cannot take a lift or there isn’t enough space for a changing bench.

Those are the kinds of practical conversations we need more of.

NOW DENMARK NEEDS TO ACT

For the past two years, much of my work with Changing Places Danmark has been about asking people to listen, understand the need and, where possible, choose to create better facilities.

And some have. We are beginning to see progress.

But I don’t believe we can rely on goodwill alone.

I would like to see Danish politicians look seriously at what we currently call an accessible toilet and whether our building regulations go far enough.

That doesn’t mean putting a Changing Places facility into every café, restaurant or small business. That would neither be practical nor necessary.

But I do believe we need a serious discussion about requiring them in major new public buildings and developments where large numbers of people are expected to spend significant amounts of time.

Hospitals, shopping centres, transport hubs, universities, cultural venues, arenas, tourist attractions and other major public destinations should all be part of that conversation.

There is precedent for this. England changed its building regulations to require Changing Places toilets in certain new large public buildings.

Denmark doesn’t have to copy another country’s model. But we should at least be asking why our own regulations allow us to continue constructing major public buildings that we already know some people will not be able to use fully.

And we need architects, municipalities and developers asking the question much earlier: who might not be able to use the toilet we are designing?

If accessibility expertise is involved while a building is still on the drawing board, the solutions become much easier.

SO, WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

Changing Places Danmark will continue working with facilities, providing guidance and certification, raising awareness and strengthening our cooperation across the Nordic countries.

But we also need the people making decisions about Denmark’s buildings and public spaces to join us.

So my invitation is simple.

If you are a politician, architect, municipality, developer or organisation responsible for a public space, talk to us.

If you are planning a new building or renovation, involve accessibility expertise before the drawings are finished.

And if you already have a facility that you believe could meet Changing Places standards, let us know. We can help assess it and make sure people who need it can find it.

Because ultimately this is not about asking for something extravagant.

It is about being able to go to work without worrying about whether you can use the toilet.

It is about a family being able to enjoy a full day out together.

It is about dignity, independence and being part of everyday life.

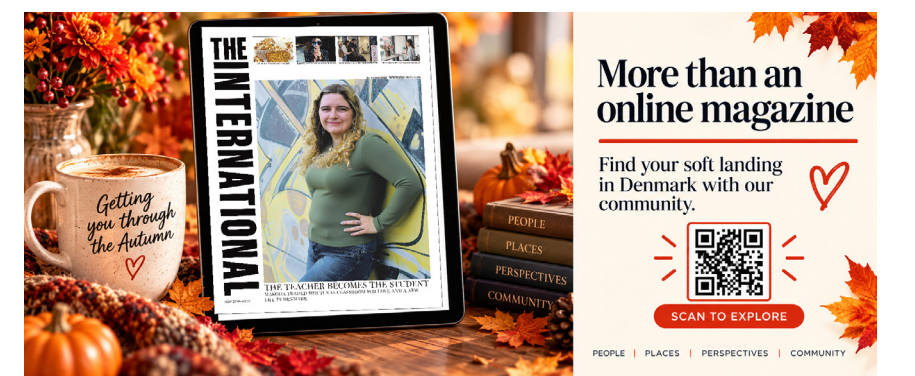
We have spent long enough explaining why these toilets are needed.

Now it is time to start building them.

Contact:

Team Lead - Lyndsay Jensen (lyndsay@changingplaces.dk)

www.changingplaces.dk



WHEN THE NUMBERS TELL A DIFFERENT STORY

New rules are reshaping the landscape for international students in Denmark. But as **Kelly Draper Rasmussen** digs into the latest residence permit data, the numbers reveal a much wider story about who is coming, who is staying - and what Denmark could stand to lose.

BEHIND THE WORDS..
Kelly Draper Rasmussen is a Denmark-based data analyst who makes complex immigration and labour data accessible through her Data in Denmark newsletter. Her research has informed national policies and supports international communities.



PHOTO BY FAIZUR REHMAN ON UNSPLASH

AS THE NEW academic year begins, international students arriving from outside the EU face tightened rules around work and residence. In June, the Ministry of Immigration and Integration published figures showing that education permits issued to Nepalese and Bangladeshi nationals were down 94% compared with the same period the previous year, after new measures were introduced in May 2025.

The Ministry did not comment on whether other nationalities were affected by the changes and did not note that the peak arrival time for new international students is not early summer but August and September. Nevertheless, in Jan-May 2026, education resident permits issued to non-Western students were down 48%, while those issued to Western students increased slightly, compared with the same period in 2025.

BEYOND THE HEADLINES

If we dig into the numbers a bit deeper, we can see more types of education resident permits available, such as for au pairs, interns, and accompanying family. If you combine all permit categories in the period they reported on, permits issued to Sri Lankan, Afghan, Pakistani and Iranian nationals are also significantly reduced.

This is a developing situation, and new students are arriving all the time. We can look at the most recent data up to June to see how the policy has affected international students in Denmark. During election campaigning, students from Nepal and Bangladesh were painted in the media as being illegitimate and underqualified, trying to enter Denmark's labour market through a back door. Their non-state-approved courses were also dragged through the mud, and educational professionals lost their jobs either through redundancies or the media storm itself.

There was no suggestion that other countries were exploiting favourable “loopholes”, but the tightening of the rules has still affected international students’ behaviour in several other nations.

WHO ELSE IS FEELING THE IMPACT?

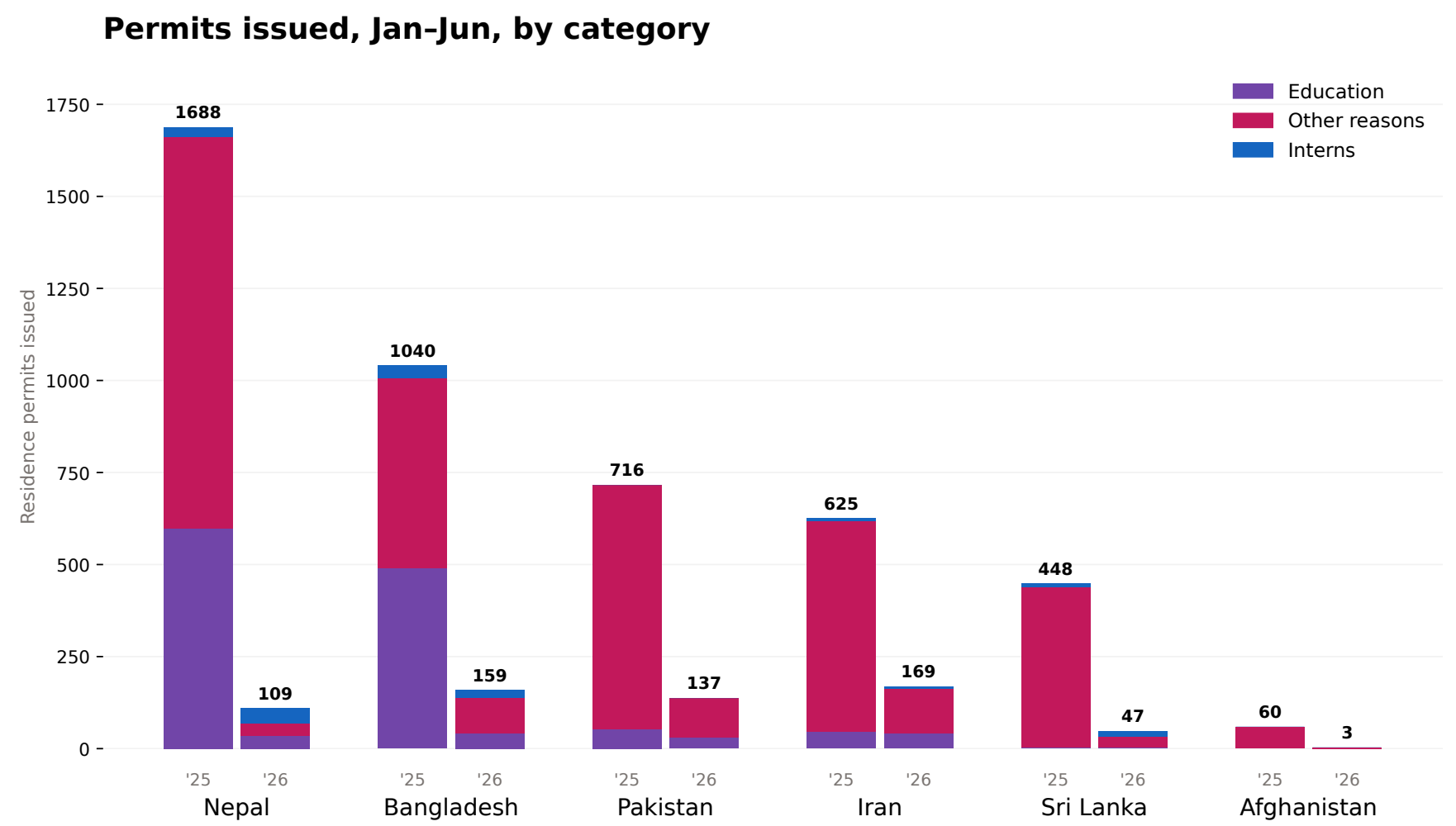
The USA, with a huge exchange student programme, issued more permits in the winter/spring than the year before, but we will have to wait to see whether the rule changes have affected the summer/autumn numbers. Numbers from June show a drop, but we cannot yet say whether this is a signal or statistical noise.

India had a steeper increase in permits when you include June, interestingly. That is a development to watch to see whether it is a blip that smooths out with more time and data, or the start of a new pattern.

In May 2025, the specific rule changes for third-country nationals in non-state-approved programmes were to remove the right to work during study, end the six-month post-study job search stay and prevent family members from accompanying the student.

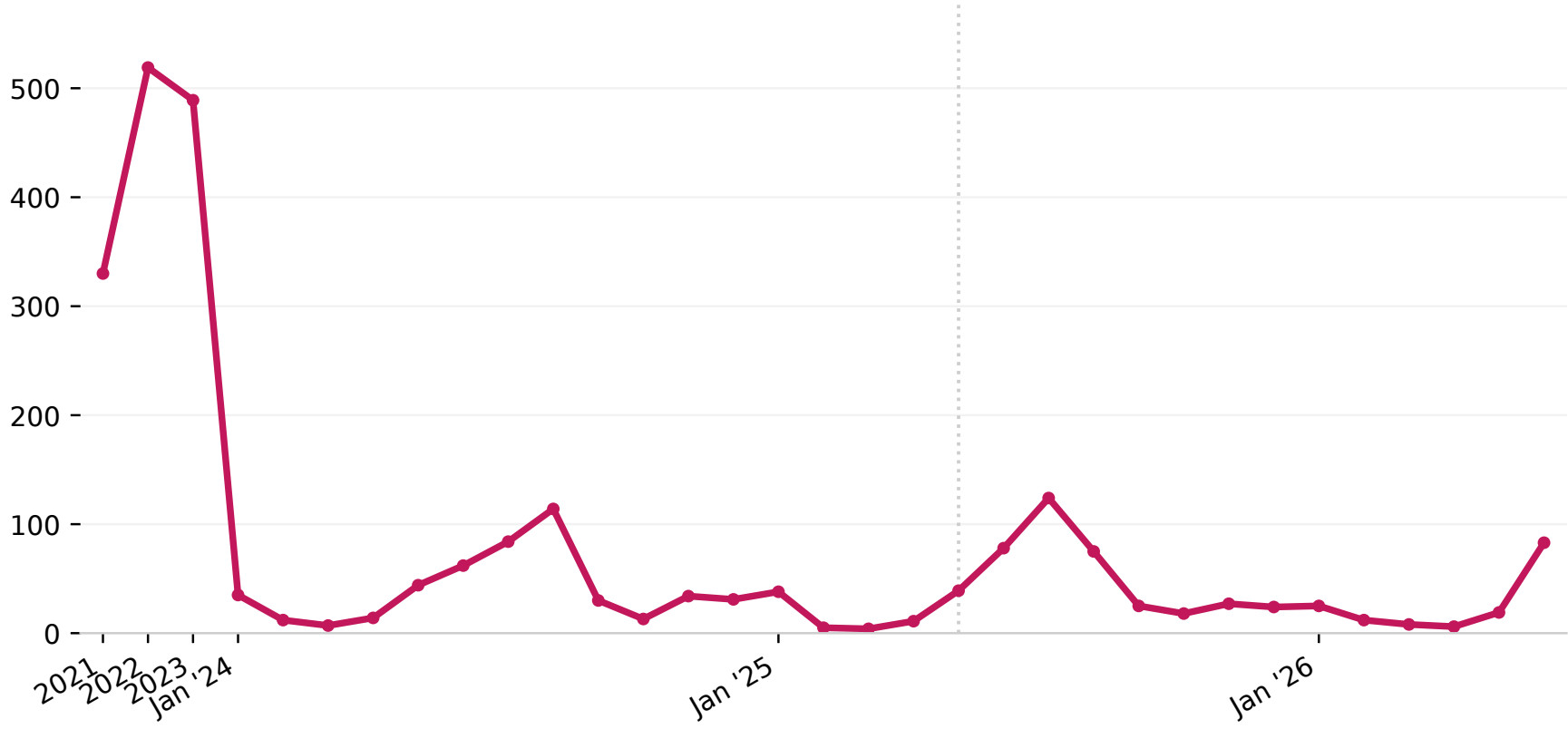
The previous administration planned to go further: extend the changes to family members to state-approved programmes as well, and tighten entry requirements. They also plan to reduce the job-searching window and review previously issued permits for those suspected of using forged documentation. The new administration has not made this law, but it is likely to affect applications beyond the two vilified nationalities.

“THERE WAS NO SUGGESTION THAT OTHER COUNTRIES WERE EXPLOITING FAVOURABLE ‘LOOPHOLES’, BUT THE TIGHTENING OF THE RULES HAS STILL AFFECTED INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS’ BEHAVIOUR IN SEVERAL OTHER NATIONS.”



Source: Statistics Denmark, Statbank VAN77M (monthly)

India



“DENMARK OFFERS COURSES IN ENGLISH, IN PART, TO ATTRACT ENGLISH-SPEAKING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND RECRUIT THEM TO OFFSET DENMARK’S AGEING POPULATION AND AVOID A DISASTER IN FUNDING ITS WELFARE STATE.”

USA

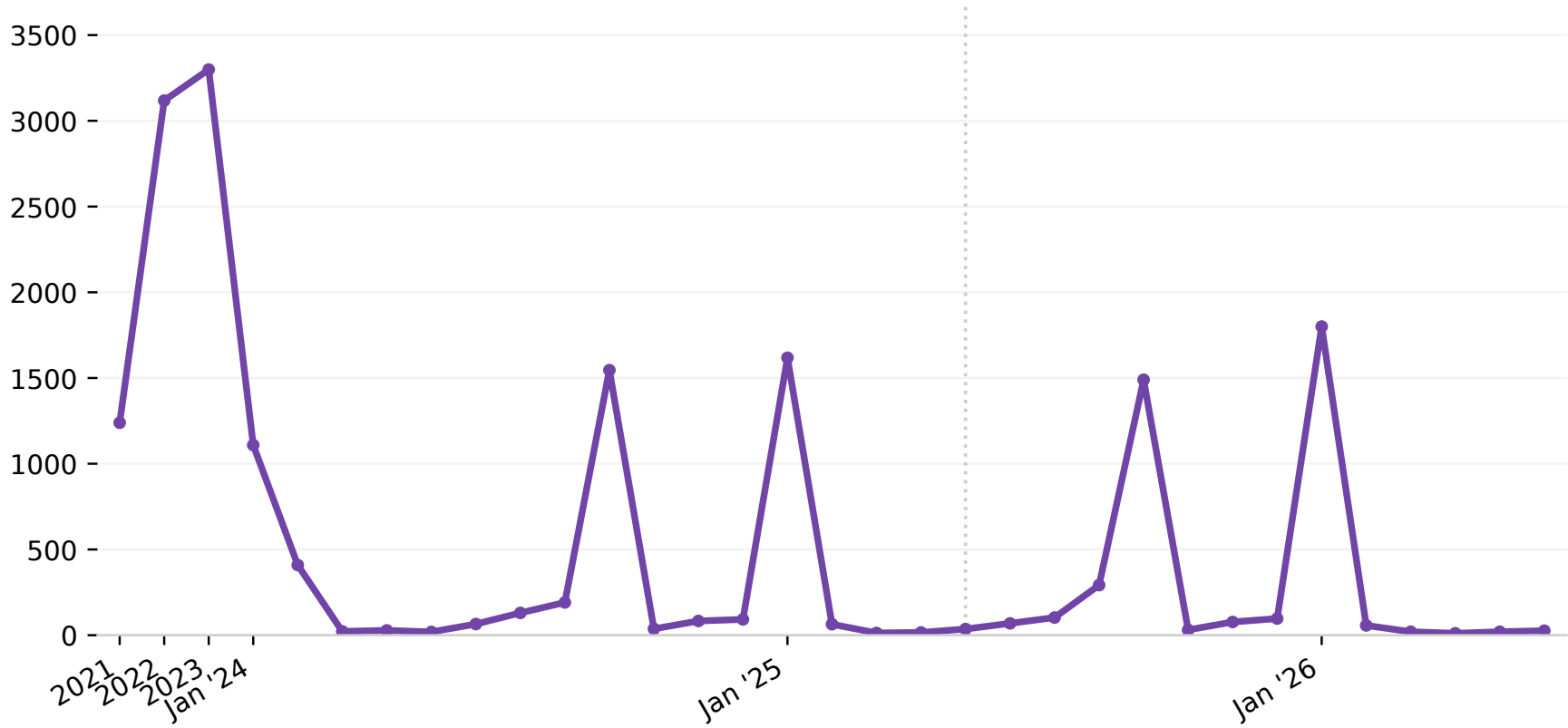


PHOTO BY VITALY GARREY ON UNSPLASH

“THE POLICY TO REDUCE HOW MANY STUDENTS HAVE PARTNERS IN GENERAL, AND WORKING PARTNERS IN PARTICULAR, SABOTAGES THE KOMMUNERS’ AIMS TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN BOTH EDUCATED AND SKILLED IMMIGRANTS.”

THE HIGHER COST FOR DENMARK

Another downstream impact of these changes is retention. Denmark offers courses in English, in part, to attract English-speaking international students and recruit them to offset Denmark’s ageing population and avoid a disaster in funding its welfare state.

The Danish kommuner have excellent retention of Bangladeshi, Nepalese and Sri Lankan newcomers. Figures do not show how students compare with workers in retention, but reducing how many arrive as students could mean the overall retention rates of internationals will deteriorate. Another factor, besides original citizenship, that affects how long (or if) an international stays long term in Denmark is whether they have a partner of any nationality. Having a partner at all cuts the odds of leaving by more than three-quarters. If that partner has a job, the odds are cut even further. The policy to reduce how many students have partners in general, and working partners in particular, sabotages the kommuners’ aims to recruit and retain both educated and skilled immigrants.

Nepalese and Bangladeshi students who had jobs were providing val-

ue to Denmark, and their portrayal in the press as labour market cheats (despite no rules being broken by these students and their spouses working in hospitality) has justified a raft of changes that will shut down much of the growth that international students gift to Denmark.



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THE CLASSROOMS IN DENMARK ARE CHANGING

A new school year is underway, and Denmark is rethinking how children learn - and international families are part of the story.

WORDS BY THE INTERNATIONAL..

Behind every story is our international community. Our team of writers brings together different backgrounds, professions, cultures and lived experiences, all united by a shared connection to Denmark. Through their words, they offer insight, inspiration and honest perspectives on making a life here.



PHOTO BY CDC ON UNSPLASH

SUMMER IN DENMARK has a habit of ending almost as quickly as it arrives. The summer houses begin to empty, offices refill, bicycles multiply on the morning commute, and children carrying school bags that somehow look almost as big as they are head through the school gates once again.

By September, the new school year is well underway.

For international families, those first weeks can bring a mixture of excitement and uncertainty. New words to learn - *folkeskole*, *børnehaveklasse*, *SFO*, *Aula*, *forældre møde* - and a school culture that may feel very different from what parents experienced.

But the 2026/27 school year is an especially interesting time to look at education in Denmark, be-

cause change is already happening in Danish classrooms.

A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO SCHOOL

One of the first things international parents discover is that Denmark does not technically have compulsory schooling. It has compulsory education - *undervisningspligt*.

Children normally begin *børnehaveklasse* in the calendar year they turn six, and compulsory education lasts ten years. Most children attend the municipal *folkeskole*, but families can also choose a private independent school (*friskole* or *privatskole*) or, under certain conditions, educate their children at home.

Importantly for international families, compulso-

ry education also applies to children living in Denmark, including those expected to stay in the country for at least six months.

Yet understanding Danish education requires more than understanding the rules.

The culture surrounding school can sometimes be the bigger adjustment.

Danish schools generally place considerable importance on independence, collaboration and participation. Children may address teachers by their first names, group work is common, and the relationship between home and school can feel surprisingly informal to newcomers.

And then, of course, there is *Aula*.

For many international parents, mastering Den-

mark's school communication platform deserves to be considered an educational achievement in its own right!

CHANGES ARE COMING TO THE FOLKESKOLE

Something particularly significant is happening behind the scenes during this school year.

Denmark is currently developing entirely new subject plans for the *folkeskole* through a process called *Fagfornyelsen*.

The existing *Felles Mål* will eventually be replaced by simpler subject plans intended to give greater emphasis to the essential content - or *kernestof* - that pupils should encounter within each subject.

Twenty-one subject committees, made up of teachers and subject-didactic experts, are developing the plans.

The second drafts were published in June 2026, and schools are now actively testing them.

Until the autumn holiday, participating schools are trying the proposed plans in real classrooms and feeding their experiences back into the development process. Teachers, schools, experts and other interested parties can also submit feedback during an open consultation period running until 15 September 2026.

The final plans are due to come into effect from the 2027/28 school year.

In other words, today's pupils and teachers are standing between two versions of the Danish *folkeskole*: the system families know today, and the one Denmark is trying to build for tomorrow.

NEW NATIONAL TESTS ARE UNDERWAY

Another [significant change is already taking place in classrooms](#).

Between 31 August and 25 September 2026, Danish public schools are conducting the new *Folkeskolens Nationale Færdighedstest* for the first time.

The tests are designed to give teachers an early picture of pupils' academic strengths and areas where they may need additional support, particularly in fundamental skills such as reading, writing and mathematics.

The intention is for teachers to have this information near the beginning of the school year so they can adjust teaching according to pupils' needs rather than discovering difficulties much later.

For international parents whose children are taking these assessments, however, it is worth remembering that language and academic ability are not always the same thing.

A child can be intelligent, curious and academically capable while still learning how to demonstrate that knowledge in Danish. That distinction matters enormously when children arrive from another educational system.

WHEN YOUR CHILD IS THE INTERNATIONAL ONE

Moving country as an adult is challenging enough. Imagine doing it at nine, twelve or fifteen.

International children aren't simply learning Danish vocabulary. They are learning humour, friendships, social rules and the countless unwritten codes that Danish children have absorbed without realising it.

Even something as simple as *madpakke* culture, cycling to school, class birthday traditions or understanding what happens during *uge 42* can reinforce the feeling that everyone else received an instruction manual you somehow missed.

Schools therefore play an important role that extends beyond education.

For an international child, school can be one of the first places where Denmark begins to feel like home.

That makes inclusion important - not merely ensuring a child occupies a chair in a Danish classroom, but ensuring that they can participate, make friends, communicate and feel that their background is an asset rather than an inconvenience.

The same principle applies to children with disabilities and additional learning needs. Inclusion cannot simply mean being physically present. Real inclusion means having the support and accessibility required to participate meaningfully in school life.

DENMARK STILL WANTS INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS - BUT THE PICTURE IS CHANGING

The international dimension doesn't stop at primary school.

Higher education is changing too.

More than 84,000 people applied for Danish higher education in 2026, although overall applications were down about two per cent compared with 2025. Interestingly, applications to welfare professions increased slightly, including nursing and social-work programmes.

“FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CHILD, SCHOOL CAN BE ONE OF THE FIRST PLACES WHERE DENMARK BEGINS TO FEEL LIKE HOME.”



PHOTO BY WOLFGANG WEISER ON UNSPLASH

At the same time, Denmark is changing its relationship with international students.

The number of international students admitted to English-language programmes based on foreign qualifications fell by 10 percent in 2026. Admissions from EU/EEA countries fell by 12 percent, while admissions from non-EU/EEA third countries fell by 13 percent.

Rules concerning students from third countries are also being tightened, with the government arguing that study residence permits must not become a back door into the Danish labour market.

Yet another development points in the opposite direction.

From 2027, Denmark's professionally oriented higher-education institutions will be able to create 800 additional places on English-language STEM and IT programmes, and several new programmes have already been approved.

It highlights an interesting balancing act.

Denmark needs international knowledge and talent, particularly in sectors facing shortages, while debating how to manage international education and migration.

For those of us in Denmark's international community, that is a conversation worth following.

MORE THAN ABCS AND 1-2-3S

Perhaps the beginning of a new school year is the perfect time to remember that education isn't confined to children sitting behind desks.

Internationals arriving in Denmark become students again in unexpected ways.

We learn how to pronounce *rødgrød med fløde*. We learn that an appointment at 10:00 means 10:00 - not 10:07. We learn the mysteries of MitID, cycling etiquette and Danish workplace culture. We discover that *hygge* is much harder to translate than the tourist brochures suggest.

And gradually, Denmark learns from us too.

Every international child entering a Danish classroom brings another language, another culture and another way of seeing the world. Every international researcher, teacher and student brings knowledge that crosses borders.

Perhaps that is the most interesting lesson as another school year gets underway.

Education is not simply about teaching people how the world already works.

At its best, it gives the next generation the confidence, curiosity and opportunity to imagine how it could work better.



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THE ART OF IN-BETWEEN

As summer gives way to autumn, **Ophelia Wu** explores how fabric, colour, proportion and texture can help us navigate the in-between season - making more of what we already own while staying true to our personal style.

BEHIND THE WORDS..

Ophelia Wu is a Copenhagen-based fashion consultant, journalist, with a career spanning Hong Kong, London, and beyond. She brings her passion for fashion, beauty, and interiors to brands worldwide while embracing the Scandinavian lifestyle.



CPH-FASHION-WEEK-BY-MALENE-BIRGER-BACKSTAGE-BRYNDIS-THORSTEINSDOTTIR



CPH-FASHION-WEEK-BAUM-UND-FERDINAND-BACKSTAGE-BRYNDIS-THORSTEINSDOTTIR

LAST MONTH, AS Copenhagen Fashion Week marked its 20th anniversary with the Spring/Summer 2027 collections, and another season of New York, London, Milan, and Paris Fashion Weeks is kicking off around now, we find ourselves in that beautifully annoying in-between period. Get ready for an ocean of street style and upcoming trend inspiration flooding your social media feeds. Take inspiration as you like, but be intentional about choosing what actually works for you.

While the fashion industry is already looking a year ahead, we are often looking ahead to the next season while still dressing for the weather by the week, or what we have today. Especially in Denmark, where you can never quite trust the weather (the actual weather and the app!)

Now is the time of year when our wardrobes can feel the most uncertain. It is not quite cold enough for coats and scarves, but it is no longer high summer, with the sun blazing for 16 hours a day. If you have limited wardrobe space and options, this is when it pays to be a little smarter about what you already have and how you put it together.

One might ask: can I not simply wear my summer clothes, add a jacket on top and call it an autumn outfit?

Not always.

Transitioning between seasons isn't about replacing your wardrobe twice a year, or moving half of it into storage every few months. It is about knowing what you already have and understanding how different elements work together. It is an art form. Danes and Scandinavians, in general, are very skilful at it because it blends practicality, personality, and functionality in ways that make sense to them.

It is also a good time to take a proper look at your wardrobe. Trends come and go, and there is a high chance that some of the seasonal pieces you bought were only ever intended for one particular moment. Others may simply have been worn to death. Before automatically buying something new, talk yourself through it.

When you consider fabric, colour, proportion and texture before making your next purchase or deciding what to keep, getting dressed becomes less reactive and a little less stressful.

Here are four things to consider when transitioning your wardrobe between seasons.

1. FABRIC AND WEIGHT

Look beyond whether something is technically labelled a “summer” or “autumn” garment. Fabric weight, breathability, structure and texture all influence how an outfit feels, functions and looks.

Adding another layer doesn't always make an outfit feel right for the next season. If everything underneath remains very lightweight and summery, the visual and physical balance can still feel off.

As the temperature changes, so does the role that fabric plays. Sometimes the difference is subtle, but you can feel it when an outfit starts to look and behave more seasonally appropriate.

2. COLOUR PALETTE

I love colour, and I love thinking about colour as a palette rather than a collection of individual shades.

Seasonal dressing isn't about following a prescribed colour chart or going to Pantone to find what's trendy. Colour affects how we perceive temperature, mood and even visual weight, but there are no fixed rules. Nobody will arrest you for wearing bright yellow in winter or black in summer.

Of course, there are colours that we tend to associate more strongly with particular seasons, but that does not mean they belong exclusively to them.

The most interesting wardrobes allow colour to evolve gradually. You can shift the overall feeling of what you wear without suddenly abandoning everything



CPH-FASHION-WEEK-BY-MALENE-BIRGER-BACKSTAGE-BRYNDIS-THORSTEINSDOTTIR



CPH-FASHION-WEEK-TINE-GOVA-BACKSTAGE-BRYNDIS-THORSTEINSDOTTIR



CPH-FASHION-WEEK-THE-GARMENT-BACKSTAGE-TONYA-MATYU

“TRANSITIONING BETWEEN SEASONS ISN'T ABOUT REPLACING YOUR WARDROBE. IT'S ABOUT KNOWING WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE AND UNDERSTANDING HOW DIFFERENT ELEMENTS WORK TOGETHER.”

you loved three months ago. Otherwise, you risk looking as though you have simply pressed a giant “AUTUMN” button on 1 September. And most importantly, Danes don't just dress in black, white, blue, navy and grey- don't be afraid to wear colours and patterns if they speak to you.

3. PROPORTION AND LAYERING

Layering is not simply about putting something over something else.

Every additional piece changes the proportion, silhouette and visual balance of an outfit. It changes the volume, affects the relationship between the top and bottom, and can either enhance or distort the body's proportions. This is why an outfit can contain perfectly good individual pieces and still somehow not look quite right together.

Layering is not always about adding more. Think about what you are putting on, what you might need to remove, and where each element sits in relation to everything else. Sometimes one well-considered layer does more for an outfit than three unnecessary ones.

4. TEXTURE AND DETAILS

It is not just about fabric or cuts. The finishing touches matter too: shoes, accessories, jewellery, hats, bags and all the smaller details that complete an outfit. These elements can subtly shift the character of what you are wearing without changing the entire look.

Clothing alone doesn't communicate season. An outfit can have the same silhouette and still feel completely different because of its texture, finish and details. The right detail does not necessarily need to stand out. Often, it works precisely because it supports everything else. The smallest visual decisions can change an outfit's overall character, and that is often where personal style becomes more interesting than simply following the season's trends.

Perhaps that is the beauty of these in-between months. They let us pause before rushing into the next season, play around, try things out, and evolve with the season. Fashion will keep moving forward, and we can enjoy looking ahead, but that does not mean our wardrobes need to move at the same speed. Fashion will keep moving forward, and we can enjoy looking ahead, but that doesn't mean our wardrobes need to move at the same speed.



THE TRUE MEANING OF BEING “FIT”

Alexandra Beck challenges the way we think about fitness, looking beyond appearance to strength, stamina, balance and mobility - and why real fitness is about building a body capable of supporting the life you want to live, now and in the years ahead.

BEHIND THE WORDS..

Alexandra Beck is a Swiss/Brit personal trainer and nutrition coach in Copenhagen, helping people of all ages find fun and consistency in fitness. A former communications professional, she now brings energy, and community magic to every workout.







PHOTO BY HENDRIK MORTEL ON UNSPLASH

I HAVE A slightly annoying question I like asking people: what exactly are you trying to get fit for?

We tend to use the word “fit” all the time. We want to get fit, stay fit, feel fit. We describe other people as incredibly fit. But when you stop and think about it, what does being fit actually mean?

Is the person who can run a marathon fit? Almost certainly. But what if they struggle to lift something heavy from the floor?

What about the person who can deadlift twice their bodyweight but gets completely out of breath climbing a few flights of stairs?

“BEING FIT ISN’T ABOUT HOW YOUR BODY LOOKS. IT’S ABOUT WHAT IT CAN DO.”

And perhaps more importantly, when did looking fit become interchangeable with actually being fit?

Because they are not the same thing. Fitness is more than one thing. Physical fitness is actually made up of several different qualities:

Cardiovascular fitness: how effectively your heart, lungs, and circulatory system can support you during sustained activity.

There is muscular strength: your ability to produce force. Muscular endurance: your ability to keep producing it repeatedly.

Mobility and flexibility allow your body to move through the ranges of motion you need. Balance and coordination help you control those movements. And power, which is our ability to produce force quickly, becomes particularly interesting as we get older.

None of these exists entirely in isolation, and being very good at one doesn’t automatically make you good at the others.

You can be an excellent runner and still benefit enormously from getting stronger. You can be incredibly strong and still need to work on your cardiovascular fitness.

If you can run 10 kilometres but require assistance opening a particularly stubborn jar, we may have identified a gap in the programme.

THEN THERE IS HOW FITNESS LOOKS

This is where things get really complicated.

We have become very good at associating fitness with a particular appearance. Lean. Muscular, but not too muscular. Visible abs certainly help.

The problem is that you cannot look at someone’s body and be certain about how physically capable they are.

Body composition can be one piece of the health and fitness picture, but it isn’t a fitness test.

A smaller body isn’t automatically fitter. A larger body isn’t automatically unfit. And the person who looks fantastic in gym clothes isn’t necessarily stronger, healthier or more physically capable than the person standing next to them.

When we reduce fitness to appearance, we miss most of what makes physical fitness useful in the first place. And I think useful is a much more interesting word.

What can your body actually do?

As a personal trainer, I’m interested in what happens inside the gym, of course. But ultimately, we’re training for what happens outside it.

- Can you carry your shopping home?
- Can you lift your suitcase into the overhead compartment without looking around hopefully for someone taller?
- Can you get yourself comfortably down onto the floor and back up again?
- Can you run for the Metro when the doors are about to close?
- Can you spend a day walking around a new city, climb the stairs when the lift isn’t working, move some furniture, ride a bike, play with your children or grandchildren, or try something new without immediately wondering whether your body will cope?

Fitness advertising rarely features those things. But they’re fitness.

And as we move through our 40s, 50s, 60s and beyond, I think this definition becomes increasingly important.

TRAINING FOR THE BODY YOU’LL NEED LATER

One reason I am such an advocate for strength training, particularly through midlife, is that muscle isn’t simply something that changes how our bodies look. It’s useful tissue.

We naturally lose muscle mass and strength as we age, especially if we don’t do anything to maintain them. Bone health becomes increasingly important too, especially for women around and after menopause.

We also tend to lose power faster than strength as we get older. Power helps you react quickly, catch yourself when you stumble, or get up a flight of stairs efficiently. Balance matters. Cardiovascular fitness matters.

Suddenly, training isn’t just about what your body can do this year.

You’re making deposits into a physical savings account you’ll hopefully be drawing from for decades.

That doesn’t mean everyone needs to become a powerlifter or train for a marathon - quite the opposite.

For most of us, being reasonably good at several things is probably far more useful than being exceptional at one.

Lift something heavy. Carry things. Push. Pull. Squat. Step. Rotate. Get your heart rate up. Move in different directions. Practise balance. Occasionally move quickly. And keep doing it.

YOUR DEFINITION OF FIT IS ALLOWED TO CHANGE

We really should normalise this. What you wanted from your body at 25 doesn’t have to be what you want from it at 45, 55 or 65.



PHOTO BY KOLBY MILTON ON UNSPLASH

There may have been a time when being fit meant running your fastest 10K, fitting into a particular pair of jeans or seeing a certain number on the scales.

Maybe now it means something else.

Maybe you want to feel strong.

Maybe you want to keep hiking on holiday.

Maybe you want enough energy to get through your day without feeling exhausted.

Maybe you want to pick up your grandchildren one day.

Maybe you simply want to trust your body.

No single exercise makes somebody fit, and no particular body shape proves it. Fitness is capacity.

It’s having enough strength, endurance, mobility, balance and cardiovascular fitness for the demands of your life, with a little in reserve for the unexpected.

And perhaps that’s a definition worth holding onto.

Because ultimately, being fit isn’t about creating a body that looks as though it exercises. It’s about building a body capable enough to let you live the life you want.



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EXPENSIVE DOES NOT MEAN BEAUTIFUL

Maja de Silva explores why a beautiful home isn’t defined by what it costs, but by how it feels, functions, and reflects the people who live there.

BEHIND THE WORDS..

[Maja de Silva](#) is a Copenhagen-based interior architect and photographer with an international background spanning Switzerland, the US, and Poland. She blends design expertise and visual storytelling to create intimate, thoughtful interiors while embracing a modern Scandinavian lifestyle.



“THE MOST SUCCESSFUL INTERIORS DON’T ANNOUNCE THEIR COST. THEY REVEAL THEMSELVES THROUGH BALANCE, WARMTH, TEXTURE AND PERSONALITY.”

DESIGNER/PHOTOGRAPHER: MAJA DE SILVA. LOCATION IN HELLERUP, CPH, DK

A **COMMON ASSUMPTION** in interior design is that the more expensive something is, the more beautiful a home will become. A rare material, a designer sofa, an important piece of art, or a custom-made object can certainly bring quality and character to an interior. But price alone has never been a measure of beauty.

A beautiful home is not created by adding expensive things. It comes from thought, proportion, atmosphere, and meaning.

The art of designing a home is, above all, understanding how someone wants to live.

A high price cannot compensate for a lack of harmony. Even the most exclusive furniture can feel wrong when its proportions don’t suit the room. A beautiful object can lose its impact when too many objects compete for attention. A prestigious material can feel cold or unnecessary if it doesn’t contribute to the space’s atmosphere.

Good interior architecture is not about how much something costs. It is about how everything belongs together.

THE QUIET POWER OF PROPORTION

Proportion is one of the quiet foundations of beauty. The relationship between a sofa and a coffee table, between a dining table and the room around it, between a piece of art and the wall it hangs on - these decisions can completely change the experience of a space. When proportions are right, a room feels effortless. When they are wrong, even the most expensive interior can feel uncomfortable or disconnected.

This is why designing a home requires restraint as much as creativity.

A home should not feel like a showroom. It should feel like a place that has evolved around the people who live there. The objects we choose should have a reason to be there. Perhaps they remind us of a journey, a person, a moment, or simply something we find beautiful. Meaning gives objects a different kind of value - one that cannot be measured by a price tag.

The same is true of space itself.

DESIGNED FOR REAL LIFE

A meaningful home supports the rituals of everyday life. Where do you have your morning coffee? Where do you read? Where do the children play? Where do you gather with friends? Where do you go when you need silence? These questions

matter as much as the choice of marble, lighting, or furniture.

A beautifully designed home should make life feel easier, calmer, and more natural.

Comfort is not the opposite of sophistication. In fact, I believe true sophistication begins with comfort. A home should invite you to sit down, stay, rest, and relax. It should work for your family and accommodate the way you actually live - not an idealised version of your life.

Beauty is also deeply personal. What feels beautiful to one person may not feel beautiful to another. The purpose of an interior is not to impose a particular aesthetic, but to create an environment in which the people living there recognise themselves.

This is where luxury becomes something much more interesting.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF LUXURY

Luxury is not necessarily a look. Gold, marble, oversized rooms, or recognisable names do not define it. Luxury can be the perfect amount of natural light. It can be an exceptionally comfortable chair. It can be having enough space to move freely. It can be a quiet bedroom, a beautifully considered kitchen, or the feeling that everything in your home has its place.

Sometimes the most luxurious quality in a home is simply that it feels right.

The most successful interiors are often not the ones that immediately announce their cost. They reveal themselves slowly. They have balance, warmth, rhythm, texture, and personality. They have spaces that feel considered without feeling over-designed.

Ultimately, a beautiful home is not a collection of valuable things. It is a composition of relationships - between architecture and furniture, between objects and space, between beauty and function, and, most importantly, between the home and the people who inhabit it.

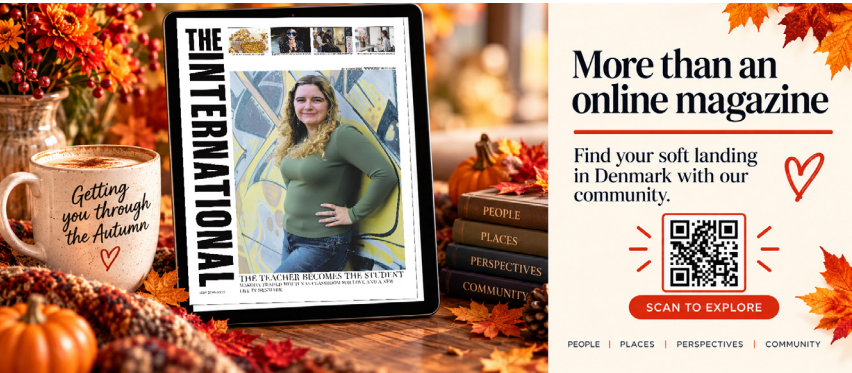
We should not design our homes to impress others. We should design them to support our lives.

Because the real measure of a successful interior is not whether someone asks, “How much did this cost?” It is whether you walk through the door and feel that you are exactly where you belong.

Luxury is not the look. Beauty is creating a home that reflects how you want to live.



“LUXURY CAN BE THE PERFECT AMOUNT OF NATURAL LIGHT, AN EXCEPTIONALLY COMFORTABLE CHAIR, A QUIET BEDROOM, OR SIMPLY THE FEELING THAT EVERYTHING IN YOUR HOME HAS ITS PLACE.”



DANISH AUTUMN: HYGGE, KARTOFLER AND MØRKE

Brooke Taylor Fossey’s guide through Danish summer culture, from *sommerhus* escapes to the Scandinavian love of outdoor living.

BEHIND THE WORDS..

Brooke Taylor Fossey is a Danish language coach and content creator based in Copenhagen. With a background spanning city planning, craft beer, and bagel-making, she now helps learners explore Danish language and culture on [@nearlydanishdame](#)

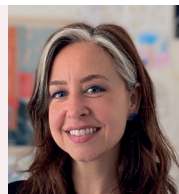


PHOTO BY KRISTOFER TROLLE

WHEN WE LEFT off in our June edition, I signed off with “*God sommer!*” dreaming of all the possibilities a Danish summer might bring. Now it’s September, and I have to be the one to say it: *Sommeren er slut*. The summer is over.

Summer, we barely knew ya! With a little tear in my eye at how fast it flew by, we welcome *efteråret* – the autumn.

I have to admit, though, I also look forward to Danish autumn because Danes do cosy so well. So let’s look at what September, October and Novem-

ber have in store for you – and the Danish words and expressions you’re sure to hear along the way.

VEJRET - THE WEATHER

Whether said seriously or, more likely, with a glint in the eye when someone arrives soaking wet from biking in the rain, you’re sure to hear:

“*Der findes ikke dårligt vejr; kun dårlig påklædning.*”

There’s no bad weather, only bad clothing. Ha!

There is definitely some truth to it: Danes have all the right rain gear. So ditch that umbrella (it won’t

“DANISH AUTUMN GIVES YOU PLENTY TO BOND OVER – RAIN, WIND, POTATOES, HYGGE AND THE OCCASIONAL LUCKY POTATO.”

do much good in the Danish wind!) and get yourself a proper rain jacket, rain pants, and *gummistøvler* – rain boots. My soaking wet sneakers remind me of

this regularly. After four years, I still don’t own a pair.

And if you’re new to Denmark, you may soon discover that small talk perhaps isn’t as big a hobby here as it is in some places. But the weather? Now that’s something everyone has something to say about. And Danish autumn gives you plenty to bond over!

Det blæser – It’s windy.

Det regner – It’s raining.

Det støvregner – It’s drizzling, literally “dust-raining.”

Det står ned i stænger – It’s absolutely pouring (“It’s coming down in poles/rods.”).

Det er blevet køligt – It’s gotten chilly.

Det er gråt – It’s grey.

HYGGE AND UHYGGE

Once October comes around, you’ll definitely hear another word: *hygge*.

Hygge is one of those wonderfully Danish words that is more than simply “cosy.” It can describe a quiet night alone knitting under a blanket, a Friday night with friends, candles glowing on the dinner table or a few beers at a bar with colleagues. Basically, if something gives you a warm, comfortable, good feeling, it can probably be *hyggeligt*.

There’s *fredagshygge* (Friday cosiness), *familiehygge* (family cosiness), *hyggeaften* (a cosy evening), and even *hyggebelysning* (cosy lighting).

And there is another word that becomes particularly appropriate as October rolls around – especially with the growing tradition of Halloween in Denmark: *uhygge*.

Hygge is the Danish noun for cosiness. *Uhygge* is its darker cousin: creepy, eerie, spooky or unsettling.

And from there, you get the adjectives: *hyggelig(t)* and *uhyggelig(t)!*

The u- at the beginning of a Danish word is often used as a negative prefix. You’ll see it in words like:

sikker / *usikker* – certain, safe/uncertain, insecure

enig / *uenig* – agree/disagree

lækker / *ulækker* – delicious / disgusting

høflig / *uhøflig* – polite / impolite

But Danish likes to keep things interesting. Not every u- word is negative. Try these on for size:

uimodståelig – irresistible

uforglemmelig – unforgettable

uafhængig – independent

And if you or your kids are going out at Halloween, instead of “Trick or Treat”, in Danish, it’s “*Slik eller ballade*” – candy or trouble!

KARTOFFELFerien AND KASTANJER

When week 42 rolls around, you’ll need to know two words:

efterårsferie – autumn vacation

kartoffel – potato

The autumn break was traditionally associated with the potato harvest. Children once had time off school to help harvest the potatoes – hence the old name *kartoffelferien*, the potato holiday.

Today, children still get a week off school, plane ticket prices skyrocket, and parents across Denmark try to figure out how to pass the week while they are still working. Danes no longer call it *kartoffelferien*, but the potato still holds an important place in Danish culture.

In fact, *kartoffel* is a very useful Danish word to know:

nye kartofler – yummy new/young potatoes

brunede kartofler – caramelised potatoes, a Danish Christmas classic

en varm kartoffel – a difficult or uncomfortable, often political, topic

at hygge sine egne kartofler – to look out for one’s own interests, in a negative way

And if someone calls you *en heldig kartoffel*, congratulations. You are a lucky person – *er, potato*.

And then there are the *kastanjer* – chestnuts.

If you have children in Denmark, you may soon discover the autumn tradition of collecting horse chestnuts and turning them into tiny animals with matches, sticks and a healthy dose of imagination.



PHOTO BY ANITA AUSTVIKA ON UNSPLASH

Meet the *kastanjedyr* – chestnut animals: possibly Denmark’s most wholesome form of autumn engineering. And if those little chestnut creatures look familiar, you may have seen them in an altogether more sinister setting: *Kastanjemanden*, the popular Danish crime series where the tiny *kastanjemænd* (chestnut men) play a rather important role.

THE NOVEMBER BLUES

As someone with a November birthday, I think November gets a bad rap in Denmark.

According to Danish poet Henrik Nordbrandt, the year in Denmark has sixteen months. In his famous poem *Året har 16 måneder*, November appears repeatedly at the end – a rather poetic way of describing how long this grey, dark, holiday-less month can feel.

But just as you’re starting to wonder if you’re cut out for the darkness, something else begins to appear: *jul*. *Julefrokoster*. *Julelys*. Christmas everything.

So find a *hyggeligt* spot. Pick up a hobby. Buy those rainboots (maybe I will too!). Learn to cook potatoes. And enjoy the calm before *jul*.

As the Danes say: *Vi går en mørk tid i møde*. Dark times lie ahead.

But you’re armed with *hygge*. And we have memories of long summer days to carry us through. *Det skal nok gå*. It’ll be alright.



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LOS NAVEGANTES: A NEW BEGINNING

For **Diana Medrea-Mogensen**, moving abroad and entrepreneurship have more in common than we might think. Both require us to adapt, take risks and learn to navigate unfamiliar waters.

BEHIND THE WORDS..

Diana Medrea-Mogensen is a Denmark-based entrepreneur, funding strategist, and educator working at the intersection of self-employment, learning, and inclusion. She founded We Are Entrepreneurs to support expats and underrepresented groups in building sustainable businesses.





PHOTO BY VLADA KARPOVICH ON PEXELS

I SOMETIMES WONDER whether I would ever have explored entrepreneurship if I had not moved to Denmark. I had never dreamed of owning a business, yet here I am, many years later, having built businesses myself and spent the last several years teaching entrepreneurship to other internationals.

My first business in Denmark started in 2012, not long after I arrived, when finding my place in the traditional labour market was proving difficult. I started a cake business, which meant that alongside learning how to live in a new country, I was suddenly learning how to operate a business in it.

Looking back, I suspect moving abroad helped make entrepreneurship imaginable at all.

There are around 10 million migrant entrepreneurs across OECD countries, and in 2022 immigrants represented approximately 17% of the self-employed population, compared with 11% in 2006. In two-thirds of OECD countries, immigrants are more likely to be self-employed than people born locally. The differences vary considerably between countries and migrant groups, and the reasons

are equally diverse, ranging from recognising new opportunities to difficulties accessing traditional employment.

Still, when I look at internationals around me, I think there is another piece of the story. Long before we start businesses, moving abroad may already be teaching us some of the skills entrepreneurship requires.

I like to call us *los navegantes*, the navigators.

BECOMING A NAVIGATOR

Those of you who have moved countries probably recognise the experience. We leave, we arrive, we adapt, we fight, we contribute, we change and are changed in return. We learn new systems, cultures and ways of communicating; we build relationships from nothing, make mistakes, solve problems, lose parts of what used to define us and discover others along the way. Sometimes we break a little, then we rebuild and continue.

There is a paradox in all this. We become resourceful partly because many of our

“WE MAY BE NAVIGATING THE SAME SEA, BUT WE ARE CERTAINLY NOT TRAVELLING IN THE SAME BOAT.”



PHOTO BY STAN KROTOV ON PEXELS

resources have disappeared. We learn to build networks because we have left ours behind; we become better at explaining ourselves because our previous experience may no longer speak for itself; we practise uncertainty because many of the things we previously knew how to navigate have suddenly become unfamiliar.

These are not necessarily advantages we would have chosen to acquire, yet they begin to resemble qualities we associate with entrepreneurship: adaptability, initiative, problem-solving, resilience, and the ability to make decisions without all the information.

THE WATERS WE COME FROM

We do not arrive empty-handed; however, we also bring our ideas about work, success and entrepreneurship with us.

Depending on where you grew up, becoming self-employed may have represented success, independence and ambition, or it may have been what people did when they could not find a secure job. The business owner could be admired for creating wealth and employment while simultaneously being regarded with suspicion as someone interested in money, avoiding rules or probably not declaring everything they earned.

Over the last decades, Silicon Valley, startup culture and social media have added another image: the entrepreneur as innovator, risk-taker and visionary who leaves the safety of employment to build something extraordinary. Entrepreneurship became romanticised, although the older suspicions surrounding business owners never completely disappeared.

As internationals, we navigate between these narratives while learning those of the country where we now live.

This matters because entrepreneurship runs on trust. Customers, banks, suppliers, collaborators and institutions all need to trust us in different ways, while research on migrant entrepreneurship has documented disadvantages in access to finance, professional networks and institutional support. Bias and discrimination can add further layers depending on origin, ethnicity, gender and industry, although that deserves an article of its own.

Internationals are far from being one homogeneous group. Someone arriving in Denmark with a senior position, substantial savings and an established professional network is navigating very different circumstances from someone arriving without employment, recognised qualifications or financial security.

We may be navigating the same sea, but we are certainly not travelling in the same boat. Some have yachts, others have sailing boats or motorboats, while someone else may be hanging onto a floating door and simply trying to reach the shore.

BECOMING LEGIBLE AGAIN

Before moving, our education existed within a context; our professional experience required less explanation, and our way of communicating carried meanings that people around us understood. We had relationships accumulated over years and knew whom to ask when something went wrong.

Moving abroad can remove much of that embedded capital surprisingly quickly.

I experienced some of this myself when I arrived in Denmark. Starting a business did not magically remove the disadvantage; I still had to understand the system, only now I also had customers to convince, regulations to follow and a business to keep alive.

Research suggests that migrant entrepreneurs can nevertheless bring particular advantages, including knowledge of different markets, languages, international networks and stronger cross-border orientation. Living between systems also gives us comparison; we know from experience that the way something is done here is not necessarily the only way it can be done.

This may be one of the most useful things the navegante carries: the ability to see both the system we are entering and alternatives.

OPPORTUNITY, NECESSITY, OR SOMETHING IN BETWEEN

OECD research shows that difficulties accessing salaried employment are one reason migrants enter self-employment, and in two-thirds of OECD countries newly self-employed immigrants are more likely than native-born entrepreneurs to have previously been unemployed.

That finding feels particularly relevant to me. I did not arrive in Denmark determined to become an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship appeared while I was trying to find a way forward.

Perhaps the distinction between opportunity and necessity is sometimes too clean. An obstacle can push us towards something that later becomes an opportunity, while an opportunity can demand skills we developed through circumstances we would never have chosen.

Years later, when I started working with other internationals through We Are Entrepreneurs, I began describing entrepreneurship as one possible route towards integration. I still believe that, although I understand the statement differently today. Entrepreneurship is not automatically the answer, and becoming international does not automatically make anyone a good entrepreneur. It simply means that some of us arrive at entrepreneurship having already practised starting again.

LEARNING TO NAVIGATE DENMARK

One of the most important lessons for a navegante is knowing where adaptability ends. Denmark offers considerable freedom to operate, but rules are taken seriously. Taxes, bookkeeping, employment conditions, permits, food regulations and deadlines are areas where assuming that there must be another way around something can become expensive. Good navigation requires understanding which currents can be worked with and which ones simply need to be respected.

The unwritten rules require just as much attention. Local entrepreneurs possess years of accumulated knowledge about how people communicate, where trust develops, which organisations matter and whom to call when something goes wrong.

As newcomers, we need to build some of that capital deliberately. We can join relevant organisations, return to the same networks often enough to develop actual relationships, speak with Danish entrepreneurs as well as other internationals, ask how things work and find people we trust enough to ask the questions that cannot be answered through Google.

At the same time, learning the Danish waters should not mean discarding everything we learned elsewhere. Our languages, cultural knowledge, international relationships and experience of other systems can reveal customers, solutions and opportunities that someone deeply embedded in one market may not notice.

We do not have the same boats, resources, maps or starting points, and some of us will have considerably rougher journeys than others. What many of us share is the experience of having left a familiar shore and learned to find our way somewhere else.

The challenge is to learn the waters we are in without forgetting everything the journey has already taught us.



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MUFFINS AND RUSKS - OH MY!

This Autumn, **Natasha Liviero** shares easy-to-prepare muffins and rusks that are the perfect treat to warm up your day. Enjoy them on the go or with a relaxing mid-morning or afternoon *kaffepause* - a little taste of comfort as the cooler days settle in.

BEHIND THE WORDS..

Natasha Liviero is a South African pastry chef with Croatian heritage and a passion for European patisserie. She spends her days crafting recipes, sparring with her cats, and sharing her pastry journey on Instagram [@natashaliviero](#).





PHOTOS BY NATASHA LIVIERO

PECAN AND ORANGE MUFFINS (MAKES 12 REGULAR-SIZE MUFFINS)

- INGREDIENTS:**
- 200g oranges/mandarins, deseeded and cut into quarters with the skin on
 - 200g light brown sugar
 - 100g pecans, roasted
 - 85g dried cranberries
 - 1 XL egg
 - 6g vanilla extract/paste
 - 125g full cream milk
 - 50g neutral oil
 - 50g butter, melted
 - 250g flour
 - 6g baking soda
 - 6g baking powder
 - 1/4 tsp salt
 - 3/4 tsp mixed spice
 - 200g icing/confectioners sugar
 - 100g pecans, roasted and salted, roughly chopped

- METHOD:**
1. Preheat the oven to 200°C (fan) and line a 12-hole cupcake tin with muffin liners.
 2. In a blender, place the oranges and sugar and blend for two minutes until smooth.
 3. Add the pecans, cranberries, egg, vanilla, milk, oil and melted butter and blend for a further two minutes.
 4. Add the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt and mixed spice and pulse for 10 seconds. With a spatula, mix in any remaining flour. Do not overmix the batter.
 5. Spoon the batter into the muffin cases, approximately 88g in each.
 6. Bake in the oven at 200°C fan for the first 8 minutes. Reduce the temperature to 180°C fan and bake for a further 10 minutes.
 7. Remove from the oven and rest for one minute before placing the muffin cases onto a cooling rack to cool completely.
 8. Sift the icing sugar into a medium-sized jug. Slowly whisk warm water into the icing sugar until you reach your desired consistency.
 9. Drizzle the icing over each muffin, then sprinkle with the roasted and salted pecans. Gently press the pecans into the icing to keep them in place.
 10. Store in an airtight container for up to three days.



BUTTERMILK NUT AND SEED RUSKS (MAKES 40 RUSKS)

- INGREDIENTS:**
- 50g full-cream milk powder
 - 150g light brown sugar
 - 100g honey
 - 250g butter
 - 350g flour
 - 100g wholewheat flour
 - 100g oats
 - 50g desiccated coconut
 - 100g bran flakes
 - 12g baking powder
 - 3/4 tsp mixed spice
 - 1/2 tsp salt
 - 150g mixed seeds, i.e. 50g each of flaxseeds/sunflower seeds/pumpkin seeds
 - 100g pecans, roughly chopped
 - 100g raisins (optional)
 - 250g buttermilk
 - 1 XL egg

- METHOD:**
1. Preheat the oven to 170°C (fan) and lightly grease a 33cm x 23cm baking tin.
 2. Place the milk powder in a frying pan and heat over medium heat, stirring regularly with a whisk or spatula. Continue stirring until it turns golden brown. It burns easily, so don't walk away from the stove! Set aside to cool.
 3. In a medium-sized saucepan, bring the sugar, honey and butter to a slow boil, stirring now and then until the sugar has dissolved.
 4. In a large bowl, add the milk powder, flour, wholewheat flour, oats, coconut, bran flakes, baking powder, mixed spice, salt, seeds, pecans, and raisins (if using).
 5. With a large wooden spoon, stir until all the ingredients are evenly combined.
 6. Add the buttermilk and egg to the melted butter mixture and mix to combine.
 7. Pour the liquid mixture into the dry ingredients and mix until thoroughly combined.
 8. Weigh the mixture and divide by 40 to know how much to weigh out for each rusk. Let the mixture rest for 10 minutes (this will make it easier to roll).
 9. Weigh portions of the mixture to the predetermined weight for each rusk, then roll each into a ball between your palms. If you are using raisins, push them into the ball, as they tend to burn if exposed during baking.
 10. Lay out eight rows of five balls in the baking tin for 40 rusks total.
 11. Bake for approximately 42 minutes. You will need to loosely cover the rusks with foil when you see them browning unevenly - usually, it's the outside ones.
 12. Check from the 25-minute mark.
 13. Once baked, remove the tin from the oven and rest for 20 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 80°C (fan).
 14. Place a cutting board over the top of the baking tray and gently flip over to release the rusks, then turn the rusks over onto another cutting board so they are facing upwards. With a serrated knife, carefully separate the rusks. Some crumbs are normal.
 15. Place a cooling rack over the baking tin used to bake the rusks. Place the rusks on the cooling rack, leaving enough space for air to circulate each one.
 16. Return to the oven to dry for 6 hours. Switch the oven off and leave to cool inside, with the door closed. I leave them overnight.
 17. Store rusks in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.





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THE CAREER WE CAN CARRY WITH US

From Denmark to Vietnam, **Jannie Aasted Skov-Hansen** explores how internationally mobile professionals can rethink the traditional career path - building a portfolio of skills, connections and experiences that can travel with them wherever life takes them.

BEHIND THE WORDS..

Jannie Aasted Skov-Hansen is a coach and founder of Here We Are Global, supporting dual-career couples and accompanying partners. Co-author of The International Career Couple Handbook, she has extensive international HR experience and currently lives with her family in Vietnam.



PHOTO BY MIZUNO K ON PEXELS

HERE WE GO again. For the third time, I said ‘Yes’ to my husband: I will follow you to Asia. And here I am, settling into our new life in Vietnam and exploring how to balance family life and continue my career. With + 20 years of experience in HR and project management, with the majority of these spent on advocating for the dual career opportunity, the challenge is again very real. How do I stay relevant in my field and keep my CV updated so I can start preparing my return to the Danish labour market

now? The repatriation challenge is all too familiar for many of us, I assume.

This concern alone makes us wonder how we imagine a career. As a linear career model: Find a job. Build seniority. Move country. Find the equivalent job again.

But international life rarely behaves that neatly. Our sometimes chaotic globally mobile lives are often anything but linear. Our partner gets relocated. A visa changes what work is possible. Local

employers value different experience. Professional networks disappear overnight. Qualifications don’t translate perfectly. A move happens at precisely the wrong moment, professionally. Enter the portfolio career opportunity.

A PORTFOLIO CAREER IS PROFESSIONAL DIVERSIFICATION

We understand diversification financially. Depending on a single asset creates risk. Yet many of us effective-



PHOTO BY VITALY CAREV ON UNSPLASH

ly put our entire professional identity into one asset: one employer, one industry, one title or one national labour market.

International mobility exposes that vulnerability. That is why I advocate for globally mobile professionals to stay in charge of their own narrative and build their personal and professional portfolio. A portfolio might combine employment with board work, advisory roles, teaching, speaking, mentoring, consulting, entrepreneurship, community leadership or a side project. Not everyone needs all of these, and employment can remain the largest part of the portfolio.

The benefit is that your professional identity doesn’t disappear when one component does. A portfolio career offers another model. Instead of professional identity depending entirely on one employer or job title, you build a portfolio of competencies, relationships, projects, advisory work, entrepreneurship, consulting, learning and employment that can be recombined as circumstances change.

WHAT I’VE LEARNED FROM MY EXPERIENCE

The community of dual-career couples and accompanying partners that make up Here We Are Global has endeavoured to shift the notion of networking from “Who can help me?” to “Where can I contribute?”

Rather than networking purely around job opportunities, we suggest asking: Where are the interesting conversations happening? Who is building things? What communities can I contribute to? What can I learn from people here? Who can I connect with somebody else in my network? In networking terms, this latter competency is known as being a ‘super connector’. I am always in awe when I meet these people and thrilled when I see my connections benefit from meeting each other to explore common ground and magic suddenly appears.

In essence, this is about contribution before transaction. It reframes networking from something uncomfortable and extractive into participation in a professional community. And this is precisely where portfolio careers have an advantage: projects, advisory roles, collaborations, volunteering/pro bono services, entrepreneurship and knowledge-sharing create more reasons to meet people than simply saying, “I’m looking for a job.”

PUTTING THE THEORY TO WORK IN MY NEW SETTING

Now it’s time to build another layer of my professional network and find ways to contribute while expanding my competencies. At the same time, it feels both thrilling and daunting. In practice, I keep a record of my existing professional ecosystem and consider how I wish to broaden my circles in Southeast Asia. Where can I use my skills, and what can I take with me a couple of years down the road? This takes curiosity, energy and grit. Right now, I am not sure exactly where I am headed. My focus is to create a meaningful schedule and slowly

“DON’T WAIT FOR DENMARK - OR ANY COUNTRY - TO VALIDATE YOUR PREVIOUS CAREER BEFORE CONTINUING TO BUILD IT.”

shape my work week. And that is ok as I find peace in my identity as an entrepreneur, coach, consultant, network marketing newbie and professional opportunity explorer.

I actively choose not to let my fear of the future (read: becoming unemployed upon my return to Denmark) guide my current decisions. However, I am mindful of the need to remain strategic and intentional about what I add to my portfolio and how I can make it relevant to a future employer. And, alongside that, stay open to opportunities for life to take me in other directions.

SHARING SOME INSIGHTS WITH INTERNATIONALS

So, how can you relate to my story and take something away from this piece? Knowing each situation is unique, and that your aspirations for life in Denmark may differ in many ways, the strongest message here is not that everyone should become an entrepreneur or freelancer. It is that you may benefit from seeing your work life as a portfolio of experiences and potential avenues waiting to be explored, regardless of how and if you are employed currently.

Don’t wait for Denmark - or any country - to validate your previous career before continuing to build it. Perhaps the most valuable career question when we move country isn’t “How do I continue the career I had?” It is “What parts of my professional life can travel with me. What can this place add to them, and what can I build here that I will carry into wherever comes next?”

