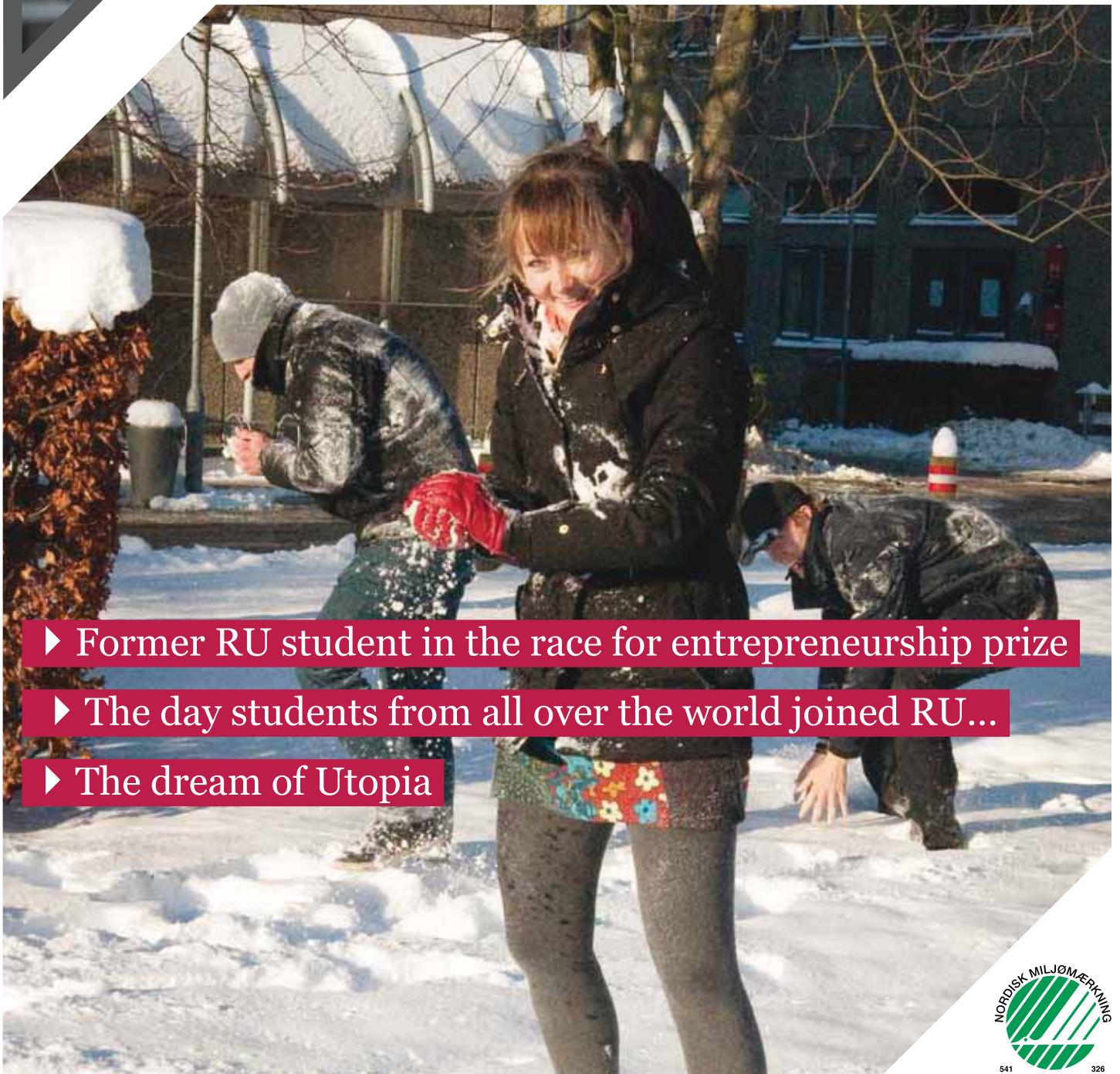


Universitetspladsen

RUglobal

Information and debate from Roskilde University

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WANTED: Practical Student Experience

By: Zdenka Pajtasova, Local Committee President, Aiesec

It is well known, that the knowledge you obtain at you studies at the university can be insufficient when you finally come to the “real life” and look for job. You get a lot of theoretical knowledge, but the scent of reality is missing. I am a Bachelor student with combination of Business and Global Studies, and even though I work a lot on different projects and have a student job, I still felt it is nothing hands-on I could offer to my future employers. In my opinion, it is important to try things out before money is in the question. And that is where AIESEC UNIC became a playground for me.

The idea behind the organization is smart – you do dozens of Danish and international students a favor, when you and your team help them to be sent and received at intern-

ship in Denmark or abroad, in one of the 110 member countries. Working at your local office in coordination with other national and international offices – in total more than 60,000 people worldwide.

AIESEC UNIC is one of the five local committees in Denmark, active at RUC, KU and DTU. As part of the organization, I was a member, a team leader and now I am a head of the committee managing 20 people. My experience so



far helped me to get the hands-on experience I have always dreamt about, and besides that, a lot of practical skills such as, presentation skills, leadership skills and making real sales. I have attended 3 international and 5 national Danish conferences, had meetings with real companies and met people all around the world. AIESEC is a platform to make YOUR ideas come true. Some of the projects we are organizing this term are a national conference, project about clean technology for students from developing countries, summer internships and events in the Student House. If you want to hear more about AIESEC or how to become a member, you can find us at www.aiesec.dk/unic.

The day students from all over the world joined RU...

50 international freshers from 22 different countries had their first day at RU on 16 January. RU Global accompanied them throughout this day and learned about their first impressions of RU and Denmark in general

Photo and text by Eva Lykke Jørgensen

It's an icy day in January, but in building 4 where the international students gather for the first time, it's warm, and they are treated to fresh breakfast rolls and freshly brewed coffee. People are chit-chatting in the corners and a brave student - a girl from Sweden - is going around shaking hands with all the other students. People greet each other with a smile, and you sense their excitement. Italians, Germans and Kenyans represent but three of the 22 nationalities in total gathered in the room. What they have in common is that they are about to participate in a two-week foundation course at RU before they can commence their respective programmes.

All international students at RU are offered the course which focuses on the learning culture at RU, and the students are given an introduction to problem-oriented project work, group work and the study culture at RU in general.

The International Office, the Centre for Language and Intercultural Communication Services (LICS), the Student Guidance Office, Campus IT and Roskilde University Library are all involved, helping the students settle in at the university by making presentations and talking to the international students about what it means to be studying at RU. During the course, some current RU students visit the international students to tell them about the challenges of project work, examinations and group formation at RU.

Helping students with practicalities

"Where can I buy a cheap mobile phone?", "Are the residence halls here at Trekroner any good?", "How do I get a yellow national health insurance card?" The students have lots of questions on their first day, but the course will answer all of them because it covers practical elements such as obtaining a residence permit, a national health insurance card, a bank account - but also how to get to know campus. In addition, the course aims to create networks among the students, and the student organisations, the International Club and the Student Council play an important role in this context.

Overall, the purpose of the course is to ensure that international students have a good and satisfactory student life - academically as well as socially.



International students in animated conversation on their first day at RU.

Four international students' first-hand impressions:



Arnaud Debize, Lyon, France.

Is this your first time in Denmark?

Yes, I arrived yesterday, and I'm very happy to be here. Right now we are attending the Foundation Course which is a lot of fun because so many international students from many different countries are gathered. People are pretty cool, everybody is smiling and open. It's great to see people from so many different countries of the world. I think it'll be an interesting semester – even if you are only considering this (ed. the meeting with the international students). The university is really big, but at the same time it seems rather quiet here, but I have heard it's because many students are taking their exams today.

What else is on the programme in the Foundation Course over the next few days?

The course takes two weeks. Later this morning, I will get the key to the residence halls, and this afternoon we are going on a tour of the university. We will visit the International Club at RU and see the different departments of the university. Tomorrow, we will go to Roskilde to see the Cathedral – and we will also be introduced to the Danish language and culture. Later this week, we will go on a trip to Copenhagen which will be pretty cool, I hope. Then, next week we will be doing a pilot project at RU, but we'll only be working on it next week. And on 1 February, we commence studying our respective programmes.



Anna Randefelt, Uppsala, Sweden.

I arrived in Denmark last Friday, but I've been here plenty of times before. I chose to be an exchange student in Denmark because my boyfriend is Danish and is doing his studies in Copenhagen and, of course, studying in Denmark allows us to be closer to each other.

How do you like meeting all the other international students?

So far, I've really liked it. I have met some really nice people, and a lot of them are in the same situation as me. The course is a good way of making us get to know each other. The university is a bit like a maze. It's really difficult to find your way around!



Katie Larsen, Georgia, United States.

Is this your first time in Denmark?

Yes, it is, and it's very different from the States. We have very different cultures and very different weather conditions.

At home in Georgia, I wear shorts and t-shirts at this time of year, and we don't get snow in Georgia.

What do you think of the university?

I like it. People are really nice – everybody is welcoming. So far, I've only been in Copenhagen, but everybody is just as great there and was more than willing to help me find my way to the university. The meeting with the other international students was good too. I have met a lot of new friends from different countries – I was a little shocked to discover that I was the only student from the States. I expected there to be more, but in a way it is quite cool that no one is from the same place as me.

Why did you pick Denmark?

My entire family is from Scandinavia, and I chose Denmark because it's centrally located in relation to the places I want to see in Scandinavia. Much of my family comes from Norway - I am looking forward to going up there to visit and meet a part of the family that I have never seen before.



Daniel Knapp, Frankfurt, Germany.

What is your first impression of the university?

I haven't thought much about that yet, but I think it seems all right. We don't have any campus universities like this in Germany, only individual buildings around the city, and you have to move between buildings. This is my first time in Denmark. So far, I like being here. I arrived yesterday and spent the night in Roskilde at Danhostel because I couldn't get the keys to the residence halls on a Sunday, but I got them today. I am going to stay at the Rockwool residence halls on Campus.

Why did you choose to go to Denmark?

I didn't prefer one country to another. I spoke to the people at the international office at my university, and they offered me to go to Denmark. I wanted to study abroad for two semesters and that's possible here – that's why I chose to go to Denmark. And I like it here.

The dream of Utopia

part 2



Mikkel Wendelboe

In the last issue of RUGlobal the sports enthusiast dreamt up yet another one of his crazy ideas, and in this issue, we bravely continue where we left off...Because how do we rescue RU from continuing its erratic course towards becoming a Dystopia deficient in sports and instead convert it into a multiple oasis offering all types of sports, where students, professors and staff bond through glorified physical exercise. If the latter were the case, I would feel I had reached Nirvana (big words, I know). That said, doing this on my own is a tall order, however, and for that reason the writer has again cunningly arranged for backup: Jacob Byskov and Kristel Pent, both members of our dear RUSIS executive committee, have again helped identify what could be done to improve conditions for sports at RU were funds unlimited. Therefore, dear board members, may we have your attention, please:

Text and photo: Mikkel Wendelboe, RUGlobal

– Back at the grind. The writer takes a deep breath, then glances at his precious notes. The ink has hardly dried up since the last article, but we have a lot more home-spun philosophy to do. There is not time to waste!

In the last issue, we listed a number of items that needed improving if we were to drag RU out of the “swampy mud” suffocating all sports activities – so we now quickly continue where we left off. Kristel and Jacob have yet again done some considering and thinking and have presented a number of ideas, while I have eagerly been making my notes and giving my comments.

“The all important goal for me when considering how we could improve social life at RU, is to better integrate all the activities. I’m not thinking so much of the organisational aspects, since I don’t believe the Student Council should necessarily have a monopoly on student activities; rather, I’m thinking about physical integration.”

That is Jacob giving his thoughts about grouping activities at RU, and I can only agree. Right now, things are scattered – just like the flower petals of a dandelion that’s grown slightly too big – and that is of absolutely no use whatsoever. The sports enthusiast furiously grinds his teeth, as Jacob continues.

A sporting Utopia. We deserve that, don't we?



“The way things are now, all activities are scattered throughout RU (the gym, the football pitch, the Trekroner hall, the hall of mirrors, the Friday Bar, film presentation (lecture halls)). Many therefore get the idea that nothing ever goes on at RU, so instead they go to Copenhagen. If all activities had been gathered at a student house, everybody in need of a social life would know where to find people and seek activities, and making contact across groups of friends and programmes would thus be easier. If at the same time this student house were located near the lake/railway station, stopping by the house on your way to or from RU to see what is going on and have a sandwich and a cup of coffee would be an obvious choice (a draft design by architects has already been made).”

Jacob also explains that the problem again is that somebody will have to get the dough out of their pockets, but at the same time he believes that to promote things at RU, that is exactly what is required. That observation is completely on the spot – no doubt about it! On my knees moaning, I therefore pray that the right people read this article (or that responsible students make themselves useful by carpet-bombing them with new issues of RUGlobal until they do). I wonder what the price of a trebuchet is nowadays?

The last item on the improvement committee’s list of proposals is a better programme during

the introduction period. While currently the introduction period is mostly a competition about downing the most aquavit/remoulade/fried onion shots and at the same time snatching the title as “naked runner of the week”, a lot could be done to instead strike a blow for sports.

“The lack of information during the introduction period and the lack of visibility in the student environment in general is a huge problem and probably also the easiest area where we could do things better. Why is an introduction to sports and athletics only an option for the different tutor groups instead of being mandatory? The way I see it, right now the only thing that matters during the introduction period is drinking, because, apparently, downing drinks is the best way to bond with your fellow students! That might be the case for some, but I also believe that there are many who would benefit from playing a team sport and participate in, say, a mini Olympics or a football tournament. That would be a way of introducing some of the sports options that are, after all, available at RU – if only somebody would care to organise it.”

Those are Jacob’s thoughts about the current state of things on campus, and again the writer agrees completely – not only on the statement, but also on the solution. If each of us were completely honest with ourselves, most of us would probably be better off with

a football match than a beer baton. (Boasting of a victory is also much more fun when you can actually remember what went on. Or what do you think?)

This also marks our final batch of suggestions for improvements this time round. I do hope you will take note of them, if only to give them some thought...These, then, will be my final words... and yet – maybe not the absolutely final... Although I am eager to write a preaching and solemn conclusion to this article, I will instead leave it to Kristel and Pent to finish off this game of thinking up ideas:

– Mens sana in corpore sano (Latin for “a healthy mind in a healthy body”) – physical activity also improves mental capacity. Wouldn’t it be much more cool if instead of students being subject to group pressure to get plastered, they were pressurised to participate in sports? If you are not keen on going running, you can always cheer others on.

The message of this article could hardly be expressed more beautifully than this....



Jacob Byskov is Vice Chairman of RUSIS, and together with Kristel Pent he has helped dream up the ideas described in this article.

Former RU student in the race for entrepreneurship prize

Miriam Thybo Møller and Carina Fogsgaard Christiansen are the people behind the project iAspire.dk. The two women were among the finalists in the entrepreneurial competition Venture Cup in Odense.

By: Nicoline Leisner, HR & communication

On Thursday, 26 January 2012, the Venture Cup finals were held in Odense. This was one of five finals held throughout the country in which the participants competed for DKK 25,000. Miriam Thybo Møller and Carina Fogsgaard Christiansen were set to present their ideas and plans for their project named iAspire.dk. Their project received great praise from the judges in the finals, although they did not win the grand prize.

The purpose of the project is to offer young people a place to turn to if they are unsure about their future. The project will make young people conscious of their own talents and resources and encourage personal reflection, thus making it easier for them to consider their choice of education and career.

Ambition guide paving the way

More specifically, the project is intended to result in an online network, in which you

can set up a profile. The network will offer numerous tools to help young people learn more about themselves.

»The network is intended to help young people find out what they really want so that they can make the right decisions for their future. This applies to decisions on education, career and family,« Carina Fogsgaard Christiansen explains.

The network will, for example, offer guidance in structuring exam preparations and writing CVs and an ambition guide. The ambition guide serves as a coach that prompts you to answer questions about yourself. In this way, you will identify the talents, resources and needs you already have. The ambition guide will thus encourage more profound personal reflection, which will enable users to make decisions and better plan their future.

Praise for the project

The two women entered the competition in the category People and Society; the category

with the highest number of applicants. The two women were therefore proud to be among the eight finalists. At the Venture Cup finals in Odense, they were asked to present their idea to an audience and a panel of judges.

»We were eight finalists, and we were each given three minutes before the audience,« Miriam Thybo Møller explains about the competition. Even though the two women did not take away the grand prize, their project received several compliments from the panel.

»They emphasised our presentation as being very reliable, and they believed in our project. I am very pleased after this experience,« Carina Fogsgaard Christiansen says about the finals. She believes she has learned quite a lot from participating.

»I simply learned a lot because we were forced to practise selling our project. This will make it much easier in future when we will try to attract sponsors for iAspire.dk,« she explains.



The Venture Cup is also based at SHEIK at Roskilde University and collaborates with RUinnovation to promote entrepreneurship on further education programmes in Region Zealand.

They just couldn't resist it

The two women met each other when they both worked as volunteers on another project. Carina Fogsgaard Christiansen talked about the idea for the project, and Miriam Thybo Møller was very enthusiastic.

»I could see the potential of the project and Carina's dedication. This gave me a sense of being able to make a difference for a group of people. So I simply couldn't resist joining the project,« she explains.

Miriam Thybo Møller is a former RU student and finished her studies at Communication and International Development Studies in autumn last year. Carina Fogsgaard Christi-

ansen is an ICF certified business & life coach, but calls herself an ambition coach.

Many are uncertain about their education

The idea behind iAspire.dk was born because Carina Fogsgaard Christiansen had experienced frustration and despair during upper secondary school, and it took a long time before she found her "true calling".

»I didn't find much motivation in upper secondary school because, suddenly, I did not wish to become a journalist after all, which had been my plan so far. After this, the things I worked with were mostly random, and not until later did I find out what I really wanted. I could definitely have used this kind of coaching myself,« Carina Fogsgaard Christiansen says.

She knows a lot of people who are not quite sure whether they have chosen the right education, and she would therefore like to help

more people make the right choice so that they do not waste time on the wrong studies or wrong jobs.

Project to be rolled out to the entire country

»I have a dream that this will be viable and will become one of the offers to young people in Denmark. It must be a national network and thus continue to be web-based,« Carina Fogsgaard Christiansen explains.

The project is not intended to replace the existing student counselling scheme. iAspire.dk is intended to be an offer you can use before you visit your student counsellor, and it will help you get a better idea of your own needs and resources.