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**RUglobal**



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## Engage in your city, visit “The Crack”

The City of Copenhagen’s future integration policy, “BLAND DIG I BYEN” (engage in your city), is currently the subject of an extensive public hearing. In this context, the city has hosted a major event at the concert house of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR)



**WOBAL**  
– The  
interaction  
between  
institutions  
and cultures  
from around  
the world



For the first time  
Denmark has been  
hosting AIESEC Wo-  
bal project, a cross-  
cultural venture bet-  
ween universities  
and Efterskoler

## The Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation attending a debate meeting at RU



On Tuesday 21 September, the  
Minister for Science, Techno-  
logy and Innovation Charlotte  
Sahl-Madsen invited students  
and staff at RU to take part in  
an informal debate

# Engage in your city, visit “The Crack”

The City of Copenhagen’s future integration policy, “BLAND DIG I BYEN” (engage in your city), is currently the subject of an extensive public hearing. In this context, the city has hosted a major event at the concert house of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR). Fiction Pimps took part in the event and showed how public involvement can be achieved with their live installation “The Crack”. RUglobal was in for an impressive peak



*By: Anne Frida Christiansen, RUglobal  
Photo: Julie Johansen*

I step into DR’s concert house: you can tell from the atmosphere and activity that a major event is about to take place in a few hours. I go to the basement and enter studio 3, where I have agreed to meet Madeleine Kate McGowan, a student of Performance Design at RU and one of the co-founders of Fiction Pimps. The room is dark. As I enter the room, I hear voices and see people, but I cannot figure out where they are. Are they standing behind me, am I only seeing their reflections, or are they standing in front of me behind a clear glass panel? A couple of heavy, dark-coloured curtains are hanging from the high ceiling. I push one of them aside, and Madeleine Kate greets me on the other side of what turns out to be glass. The lighting is dim, and a number of mattresses lie scattered on the floor. Bottles are placed close together on the black floor. This is an image I recognise from Fiction Pimps’ website. A few spotlights brightly light up the black walls. Kate casually sits down on one of the mattresses lit by the spotlights. We are not allowed to sit long in this room before one of the staff forces us back into the real world. It is lunchtime, and we must eat our lunch in DR’s clinically white canteen.

*Kate explains about the lack of bottle messages from Copenhagen to a visitor to “The Crack”. In “The Crack”, Kate acts as the bottle message production manager who has learned that the number of bottle messages from Copenhagen has dropped, and they would like to change that.*

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## Publishing information

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- at 12 noon on the assigned date





A photo showing how Fiction Pimps use their bodies in the city space. This one is from a "Fiction Injection", which is another example of how the women use "The Crack".

#### **Fiction Pimps' own description of "The Crack":**

**Fiction Pimps lead you down unknown paths through a Crack, to another place, a space in everyday life, where words become fewer and visions larger. Here, each participant is brought into a state of mind so that he or she can make a personal contribution to a new common vision for our city – Copenhagen.**

[http://fictionpimps.com/?page\\_id=37](http://fictionpimps.com/?page_id=37)

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Here, Madeleine Kate blends in. She has already changed for the day's event and is wearing a white overall. While eating, she describes "The Crack" concept in vivid terms. The magic. The poetry. About bringing art into everyday life and exploiting the potential of relational installation art. About taking on a role that is not decipherable to everyone as either real life or fiction. About the police that responds fast to their presence when they move around the streets with their "Fiction Injection" Poetic Street Politics.

#### **A breathing space**

Madeleine Kate explains how Fiction Pimps seek to use "The Crack" to create a space in everyday life where the meaning and perception of time and place cease to exist. A space that is not associated with any religious phenomena and therefore welcomes everyone and rejects no one. About how to use such a space constructively, because it can make us see the world in a different way. Turn everything upside down and break with tradition and convention. Not by offering their own solution, but by sending out vibrations that make us see the world from a different perspective. She speaks her case very convincingly, so although I would normally be sceptical, I believe her. She talks about making a difference at COP15: the installation would make it possible for them to bring people into a certain mood. But she

seems convincing. Her words make sense. It seems probable that we could all benefit from stepping into a different space once in a while to return to reality with a different view on what we know so well.

#### **The academic background**

She chooses her words carefully and clearly makes a conscious effort to express herself as precisely as possible. She is well spoken and, every so often, she will glance out of the large windows, as if searching for the exact word that will best express what she wants to say. It is tempting to quote her for everything she says, because she speaks in perfect sentences. Her expressions are filled with academic terms, and she clearly benefits from her background from RU where she studies Performance Design. Together with Gry Worre Hallberg, a student of Theatre and Performance Arts, and Inga Gerner Nielsen, a student of Sociology and Modern Culture at the University of Copenhagen, Kate puts a lot of effort into reflecting on their projects using the knowledge they have acquired at university as their basis.

Kate constantly draws on her academic knowledge from university. Numerous concepts help express her reflections on what they do and what it does to people. She talks about rituals, about aesthetics. She talks about bringing poetry into everyday life. She talks about how we primarily focus on functionality and forget

about aesthetics in our everyday lives. She takes the coca cola bottle in front of us as a starting point. We see it as a bottle containing a fluid that we can drink. "The Crack" installation, however, where numerous empty bottles are lined up side by side, neutralises functionality, allowing aesthetics to prevail. Art is formed when the many bottles are placed together, she says, and I look forward to seeing it with my own eyes.

#### **A meeting with the "tower" and "The Crack"**

"The Crack" gives a whole new meaning to the bottles. I see that when the "tower" by the door lets me in around 4pm. The tower is dressed in white tie and tails and looks like a man from the past. He also wears a top hat that makes you think of H. C. Andersen and his world of fairytales. In his black jacket, he keeps a pocket watch, which he looks at now and then. Outside lie a couple of mattresses. Young and old arrive, curious to see the installation. Some sit on the mattresses, waiting to be let in. Others hastily move on, cheating themselves of an interesting experience. The tower is fighting a brave battle. He lets people in at random, and it is evident that some people feel that they have been ignored. "I was here first," someone says at the back. However, the tower stays calm. It is all about breaking with time; we might as well get used to it. You must leave your watch outside before you are allowed into "The Crack".

A boy is writing down his answer. He must then choose one of the many bottles and turn it into his bottle message before he moves further into "The Crack" universe, which also includes a boat trip from Copenhagen and back ....



"The Crack" is indeed a completely different universe. A young woman with striking red hair greets me. She is sitting on the floor in the pitch black room, looking a bit scary. She asks me to choose between a red, a green and a blue fluid: which one would I like to take a sip from? She speaks softly to me, as if we are in a completely different world, and when we have finished our drinks, she asks me go through the maze drawn on the floor. She urges me to respect the invisible walls. Which I do. When I have come through the maze, another woman greets me. I have been able to see her from the moment I entered "The Crack", but I am now facing her. She deprives me of my vision by blindfolding me. I wait a short while before being led into another room. Blindfolded, I now hear Kate's voice. She speaks softly as she leads me through the room. We walk a short distance, stop, and then move on. She leads me to a chair and asks me to sit down. I still cannot see anything. The room is filled with noises that make you think of a jungle. Every so often, this sound image is supplemented by the sound of sirens, similar to the sound of police cars speeding through the city.

#### **Bottle messages**

Kate tells me that she is a *researcher with the Institute of Research in and Production of Bottle Messages*. At the institute, they have noted a reduction in bottle messages from Copenhagen, and they would like to change this. I am therefore asked to write down an answer on a

pad. Kate leaves me for a short while so I can reflect on what she has just told me. I write down something to the effect that we should get to know each other. That we should meet each other where it feels natural, and not arranged or forced. Kate returns after a short while. She leads me to the many bottles that are still on the floor. Some of them have candles in them. I am asked to choose the bottle I like the most. After a while, Kate returns. In the meantime, she has introduced others to the universe where we are now; has led them through the room, just as I was led through the room. Other people are present in the room, including Klaus Bondam, Mayor of the Employment and Integration Administration in the City of Copenhagen, who is sitting on a couple of mattresses, cutting out pictures from various magazines scattered on the floor. In the big, dark room, others are lying on mattresses, wearing blindfolds. In here, many activities take place simultaneously, but at the same time it feels as if everyone exists in their own private world.

I slid the piece of paper with my answer inside the bottle and place my bottle message on a fine white cloth placed in the middle of the room. It looks like an old lace tablecloth you would find in your grandmother's basement. Subsequently, I am asked to lie down and imagine what Copenhagen would look like if I left the city by boat and then returned. I have been blindfolded again, so that I will not

be distracted by others in the room. I cannot tell how long I am lying here. At some point, I am dragged out of my thoughts and asked to find pictures and words in the magazines to visualise my recent thoughts on my city, Copenhagen. Suddenly, the words in the glossy magazines have entirely different meanings. The promising words and praises in the ads now reflect how I perceive Copenhagen. Content. Honesty. Charismatic leader. Summer bird. These are other words that I notice and that make sense. The words are associated with past historical events, but taken out of their original context, they get a whole new meaning. A couple of other people are also flicking through the magazines. Just like me, they are completely absorbed in their own project. I place the words under each other, just like a table of contents, on the white cloth where I placed my bottle message before. The bottom paper clipping says (with hope) "The fairytale continues ..."

#### **One question and one answer**

Before I leave "The Crack", I must ask myself one question. Then I must take one of the bottles placed on the white piece of cloth. It says: *No. Far from. It has been a long process, and it will be an endless battle. Ultimately, though, it is the only battle that is worth fighting. For me, but also for the people around me.* I am not sure if

*Continued on next page*

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this sentence directly answers my question, but it gives me something to reflect on.

I am not the only one to feel this way. A man comes out from “The Crack” shortly after me. I ask him how he feels about what he just experienced. Obviously, he is not quite back in the real world. His lingering gaze tells me that part of him is stuck in the universe we have just left. “It was special and interesting,” he says, followed by a long pause. “I wanted to stay in there and sail off,” he then adds. The answer to his question was calm. We chat for a while, and I learn that I received his bottle message.

I may not have engaged in the city, but I have engaged in another person’s life, and isn’t that the essence of it all?

Fiction Pimps make sure that all the ideas, visions and perspectives generated in “The Crack” are documented and incorporated in the hearing on the new integration policy of the City of Copenhagen.

*Are you curious to learn about the activities of Fiction Pimps? Visit their website [www.fiction-pimps.com](http://www.fiction-pimps.com)*

### **About Blender:**

Fiction Pimps took part in the Copenhagen campaign “VI KBH’R”, which was the main organiser of the event Blender, which aimed to encourage young people in the age group 18-25 to engage in the city. Through various activities, including “The Crack”, a panel debate (blender battle), rap battle, dance battle, dodge ball, the young people are asked to reflect on their visions for Copenhagen and to express these visions in various ways (dance, writing, rap, performance, etc.) [www.blanddigibyen.dk/blender](http://www.blanddigibyen.dk/blender)



*Here are all the bottles. Visitors to “The Crack” are asked to write down an answer on a piece of paper and subsequently choose the bottle they prefer among many bottles. The last thing you do before you leave “The Crack” is to ask yourself a question, choose a bottle message and find the answer in the bottle.*





# The one with the international students

By: *Lukas Maximilian Müller*

"I always thought that the international students at RU should have their own political organization. There's more and more of us every semester, and I just kept on thinking: 'Well, who's representing all these people?'" It's hard to argue with Natacha Petersen's enthusiasm when she is talking about "her people" which are otherwise known as the growing community of international students at our university. Without a particular representation outside the general student bodies like Studenterrådet and FritForum until now, she, together with other international students at RU have recently decided to create a political organization of their own. "Considering the amount of students in English language degree programs, it surprised me that nobody had taken up the cause until now", says Natacha, who was just chosen as the temporary chairwoman of the new political entity, "I knew that there was a social international club here at RU, so one day I approached them and asked: 'So, who's representing us politically?'"

The political wing of the international club (ICP) has come a long way since this first meeting a few months back. While the majority of international students at RU are still unaware of their existence, a team consisting of over seven nationalities is now working to raise awareness of international issues at RU. "Many foreign students who come here don't know who to turn to when they have a problem or an idea that they would like to implement. We want to make it easier for them to get involved in university life", says Aino Huxley, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year SIB student from Finland who is a member of ICP. Clemens Schwanhold, a native German from the same house, has

another issue he would like to take up: "A lot of important events and clubs are simply not offered in English, which makes it difficult for newly transplanted students to take part in activities at RU." Superficially, these issues seem to concern only foreign students, but Natacha sees ICP as catering to a greater crowd of students: "I'm Danish myself and I know that many Danish students are very much interested in having a more international environment here at our university. We think that everybody can gain something from having a more international RU."

The members of ICP think that their goals align well with the universities newly created strategy 2015. One of the three prominent scenarios outlined in the strategy paper sees an excellent international environment as one of RU's possible distinctive competencies. "We want to help the university to realize this potential," explains Natacha, "after all, we are all a part of this international environment and know how to improve it." About 500 students are currently enrolled in the three international basic studies programs at RUC and that might only be the tip of the iceberg. Counting students on the Bachelor and Master level as well as exchange students, the number of students in international educations at RU is getting close to 1000. "This is not a small minority, but actually a considerable part of our student body", says Rolf-Peter Greve, a German student currently writing his Bachelor's thesis in Cultural Encounters, "the university should really start thinking about the particular needs of this group of students. If RU could develop a reputation for being open to people who are looking for an international environment, it might become more attractive for foreigners and Danes as well!"

Being international is a broad concept and ICP is currently trying to make its suggestions a bit more concrete. For this reason, they are planning to organize a series of workshops for all students interested in further internationalization at RU. The main objective of these meetings is for the students to articulate their personal expectations for the future of internationalization at RU. Natacha wants the students to think about what being international means to them. "Some people are interested in having more social activities to make people familiar with one another. Others are more concerned with learning what it's like to manage a multicultural group. And then there are those who want to have a chance to be politically active on the university level without being able to speak Danish. The views on internationalization are very diverse." But despite all this, the ICP members seem to agree on a single most important thing: In the end, internationalization at RU will need broad support from the student base. And for them, that's not possible without first raising awareness of the existing international community at RU. "It's not so much about issue-based politics", says Natacha, "but we want to propose solutions at the same time." It's for that purpose that the workshops will be organized. "We want international students to make plans for the future of the international side of RU. After all, they are in the middle of it." A goal that sounds ambitious. For the team of ICP, it is no less than the essence of being a student at RU. "That's the beauty of RU. We can freely discuss our hopes and ideas and make them public", says Aino, "we just hope that people will listen to us."

# Bachelor degree

Suddenly, the three years have passed since you started and now you have a bachelor certificate in your hand – and then what?



◀ Sara Elben Hertig is an exchange student in Berlin where, among other things, she is working with languages and forms of study.

By: Anne Frida Christiansen, RUGlobal  
Photo: Private

Three years ago, a group of SAM-BAS students began their studies at house 20.2. Back then, they did not have the slightest idea of what epistemology and ontology is. At that time hugging rounds, PRR (the Planning, Space and Resources course) and governmentality were empty words with no meaning to them. Now, three years later, many of them hold a bachelor certificate from RU in their hands – and then what? In the bachelor certificate, which is sent to them, Rector Ib Poulsen has written that the certificate provides many possibilities and lists the following:

- Continue studying at RU by taking a master's degree
- Try out the labour market
- Continue your studies at another university
- Take a break before continuing your studies

Naturally, many continue their studies at RU, but others take on the invitation to take a 'break' and learn more about the world and themselves and their wishes for the future, or try out the labour market. By using Facebook, RUGlobal has been around the world to follow some of the students who left RU for a while. Here are their different stories from the big world.

## Sara Elben Hertig, Germany

*In which courses do you hold a bachelor degree?*  
Public Administration (single-subject bachelor degree).

*What do you do now?*

Right now, I'm still on summer holiday. In the spring, I chose to apply through the ERASMUS programme for a study abroad, and I was lucky to get in at the Free University of Berlin. So I moved down here recently and I'm trying to settle in, get to know the city and go sightseeing like any other tourist. Next week, I'll begin language school and I look forward to it.

*How did you get this idea and how did you get in? Why did you want to study abroad?*

I think it was a combination of several things. After three years at RU, I felt that it was time for a change. I definitely feel I have learnt a lot, and the teaching methods at RU suit me really

▶ Asbjørn Djurhuus in front of a mine clearance van in Afghanistan where he is currently helping an NGO administered by the Danish Refugee Council carry out budget follow-up.



◀ Mette Hartmeyer demonstrates her skills in an organisation in Thailand where she holds a work placement this semester.

▶ Andreas Wraae Nielsen who will spend the next six months "down under" on a sheep farm with about 6000 sheep.





# and then what?

well. However, I began questioning whether it was the only teaching method that suited me, and at the same time I wanted to experience something different for a while; see the world from a different angle. I had already checked the modules of the master's programme, and honestly the first module didn't really grab my attention. I don't think I have had much doubt as to whether this was the direction I should take, but the courses at RU just didn't sell very well. My wish to study abroad has probably always been there – at least during my time studying at RU. Owing to the above, it seemed the perfect solution to apply for a stay abroad this semester.

I explored the options and quickly concluded that ERASMUS seemed the most simple one. Then I checked out which universities RU collaborates with, and I thought that the selection was pretty limited in relation to language skills and professional interest. I was also surprised that RU only helps with language courses for a study abroad in countries where they don't speak the "major languages" (such as English, German and French). In fact, I only found one university that really caught my attention, but I was also completely hooked on it. In the end, I chose to only apply for that one university, which was quite a gamble and I was therefore particularly happy when I learned that I had been accepted at the Free University.

## *Which courses do you have?*

Their university system is different from the Danish, so officially I haven't signed up for any courses yet. The first week is spent "shopping around", but I have of course explored the possibilities and received a pre-approval from RU of the following courses: Political theory, political systems and international politics.

## *What is your working day like? How does it differ from studying at RU? How can you use your bachelor degree from RU?*

Right now everything is a complete contrast to life as a full-time student at RU because I really don't do much else than settling in in a new town and waiting to commence the courses. However, my expectations are that when the semester begins, my working day will to some extent be similar to the normal Danish student life. From what I have been able to find out

from the university's website, the teaching will be characterised by more lessons and more individual work than I am used to from RU. I also expect it to be different to attend classes in a different language, with a different approach than I might be used to, and it is very likely that there are a number of different norms that I have to learn – especially in the relationship between teacher and student. All this is just thoughts on how life might be in the coming semester, but of course I don't know for sure. So far, I cannot say that I use my bachelor certificate for anything, but my bachelor degree has definitely been essential for my admission to the German university, and I hope the professional qualifications I have acquired will be useful in my German studies.

## *How does your stay relate to your programme?*

The courses that I'm likely to choose are fairly close to the area I studied at RU, but I look forward to attending the classes in for example international politics. I expect the starting point to be somewhat different than if I had taken a similar course in Denmark since Germany has a far more dominant role in institutions such as the EU. However, from a professional perspective, the courses all seem very similar to what I would have attended at home – but with a few twists.

## *How do you expect to use your stay in relation to your career dreams?*

I expect to develop my professional skills within my studies, and at the same time I hope that I will gain some language skills which I also see as a great advantage for my further career. Besides this, I expect that my stay will help me grow as a person. Meeting other people from different parts of the world, each with their own idea of how the world looks like is going to be very interesting, and I hope I will gain a more balanced view of other people, student life, etc. On several different levels, I also expect this stay to benefit my future career.

## **Asbjørn Djurhuus, Afghanistan**

*In which courses do you hold a bachelor degree?*  
I hold a single-subject bachelor in Business Administration (HA).

## *What do you do now?*

I am stationed in Afghanistan by the Danish Demining Group, an NGO administered by the Danish Refugee Council.

## *What type of tasks do you have?*

I develop Excel spreadsheets for budget follow-up and overview. Budget follow-up means comparing the monthly expenses with the budgets available and then allocating the different expenses to the right budgets and expense lines in each budget. The overview is gained from the lists of inventory that are made. I am developing a sheet for simple inventory management providing the reader with a number of different options; for example, it is possible to enter what comes in, and the sheet will then automatically calculate quantity, value, previous consumption, etc.

These are my development tasks. I also handle the daily filing and ordinary inquiries that are received by such a department; for example, "I need an overview of the wages and salaries of the mechanics we hired within the past three months" or "I need a list of the travel expenses for projects in North Afghanistan".

Last but not least, the Afghan finance staff are having difficulties solving some specific balancing problems, and I have been asked to look into this.

## *What is your working day like?*

I live in a compound which means that my home and my office are adjacent to each other. I have about five metres to work, and I work from 7:30 to 17:00. We have a chef who serves dinner at 17:00 so work naturally ends at that time. If there is a need for it, I work a few extra hours after dinner. However, this is definitely the exception and not the rule. Besides this, it's an ordinary five-day working week with two days off.

## *How do you make use of your RU bachelor degree?*

What I use most from my education is the knowledge of organisations and organisational culture. The theoretical understanding of the overall picture of an administration and organisation is what I use. I don't use anything in practice, though. None of my tasks make me think "right, I remember this, I had

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a class about this". I mostly use my bachelor degree as ballast in the form of a theoretical frame of reference.

*How does your stay relate to your programme?*  
I've studied what is referred to as business and administration so it goes without saying, doesn't it? The stationing itself has nothing to do with RU, but my job is very much related to my programme.

*How do you expect to use your stay in relation to your career dreams?*

My dream is to one day become head of finance and administration, which is what the person I share my office with is. My tasks usually consists of direct assistance to her which means that I can use this stay for anything. I cannot think of anything that could be better in relation to later job opportunities within this field.

Finally, it should be noted that I have only been here for three weeks so my responses are heavily based on my expectations. My work assignments might vary somewhat at a later time, but for now this is the best response I can give.

### **Mette Hartmeyer, Thailand**

*In which courses do you hold a bachelor degree?*  
I hold a bachelor degree in Public Administration.

*What do you do now?*

I have a work placement with Church World Service Asia Pacific (CWS). It is a regional office located in Bangkok, Thailand. Church World Service is an American NGO that also collaborates with DanChurchAid in Denmark. In Asia, our office provides services to Afghanistan, Cambodia, Indonesia, India, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Laos PDR, Myanmar (Burma), Pakistan, Timor Leste and Vietnam. Each of the countries also has a country office.

We help build capacity, arrange courses in how small NGOs prepare budgets and comply with requirements from funds having funded them. In addition, we hold courses in security, staff management and project management.

*How did you get the idea and how did you get the job? Why did you want to go?*

I applied for several work placements, but competition is fierce when you want to go abroad. I happened to talk to Katrine at a party at the house of one of my friends. She had a very interesting job at an office in Bangkok,

which for some time had been contemplating hiring a trainee.

A couple of days later, I followed up on it; after a month and a half with e-mails going back and forth on tasks and practicalities, I arrived here in Thailand.

I wanted to go abroad to acquire more knowledge. Before I left for Thailand, getting to know the language, meeting a new culture and perhaps acquiring a few skills that are more practical than those acquired during my programme was my main objective. I can now see that it really pays off. I discovered that here my English is better than that of so many others, and I have an education which is longer than that of several others at the office, and that places an enormous responsibility on my shoulders and puts a lot of pressure on the work I do. I have started learning to speak Thai and regularly encounter cultural differences that are extremely charming and – at times – frustrating. At my office, we are nine people coming from six different countries.

*What type of tasks do you do?*

I am working on a big project about how to make the job as a humanitarian worker safer. Humanitarian workers have experienced an increase in the number of kidnappings and assaults and small-scale crime, which increases the need for incorporating safety into the programmes. "National staff" in particular is an exposed group, since they are often the first ones to arrive and the last ones to leave the affected areas. Consequently, we arrange courses in Developing Risk Management Awareness.

In that connection I will participate in three of our courses in Bangkok, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, respectively. There, I have to conduct interviews for a survey to be used for data material for a professor, who is to prepare a policy paper. It is also my responsibility to prepare a questionnaire to be submitted to a large group of NGO's.

The job holds many challenges; I am also helping provide the contents for a conference to be held in connection with the project. Doing that is difficult, because a conference must contain the most clear-cut issues and the most recent material in the field, which means that it requires a lot of research.

*What is your working day like?*

I work from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m. every day – on busy days, sometimes also a bit longer. In the morning I start by checking CWS' info e-mail inbox and sending responses to people's questions. The week before last, we held a course in this town, which meant that I worked all the time. In the evening the participants coming

from Burma/Myanmar, Pakistan and Thailand needed entertaining.

This week, I am busy preparing a draft document for our workshops. I accompanied my boss to a meeting about risk trends the other day, of which I had to prepare minutes and absorb all the input I possibly could for our workshops. Tomorrow, we will have visitors. They are people who have been working for the organisation for 20 years. They need a draft presentation of our projects, and I and a colleague are to present our project on that occasion. It is crazy how much I am allowed to do since we constitute just a small group in the organisation.

*How do you make use of your RU bachelor degree?*

I constantly make use of my degree. What we RU graduates are good at is looking ahead and identifying what deadlines we need. That is very useful. The Thais find that a bit more difficult. I believe that may be because they have a different school system where they are used to listen to the teacher. At many workplaces, it is the boss telling the employees every morning what tasks they are required to perform. We don't work like that because our programme coordinator is from Europe. Since the office has only been running for two years, working on projects, coordinating tasks and thinking ahead is still a learning process for many here. The other day for example, one of my colleagues found it extremely difficult to understand why deadlines are important when we don't know whether we are able to meet them. :-)

*How does your stay relate to your programme?*

I work a lot with organisation in practice and acquire knowledge of the interfaces between taking a neutral stance, and still trying to promote humanitarian values. Since it is a new work area for me, I also make use of the skills I have acquired at RU to analyse and identify relevant issues whenever I meet people. In addition, methodology considerations are incorporated into my survey.

*How do you expect to use your stay in relation to your career dreams?*

My career dreams are changing all the time, but I clearly understand the value of a master's degree. I contemplate the possibility of combining courses from International Development Studies and Public Administration and would like to supplement with some courses in international politics.

### **Andreas Wraae Nielsen, Australia**

*In which courses do you hold a bachelor degree?*

I hold a bachelor degree in Public Administration and Journalism.

*What do you do now?*

Currently, I am working on a sheep farm in Western Australia; there are 6000 sheep and 2000 hectares. I spend my time building fences, doing small-scale repair work, driving the flock and going on road trips during weekends.

*How did you get the idea and how did you get the job? Why did you want to go?*

I always thought it could be fun living in a deserted area; working as a trapper in Canada, a cowboy in the prairie or something similar. Instead, I ended up working on a sheep farm in Australia. It is a very deserted place. Perth is the most isolated city in the world with its 1.5 million inhabitants. In the rest of Western Australia, there are only 500,000 inhabitants. That makes it very deserted!

I got this placement through an organisation in charge of that sort of thing.

*What type of tasks do you do?*

As already mentioned, I spend my time doing small-scale jobs on the farm such as building fences and things, driving the sheep from one field to another, slaughtering a cow and digging holes in the ground. During the month of October, the sheep needs to be shorn, and then it is time for the harvest, where my job is primarily to sit on a harvester-thresher round the clock for a month and a half.

*How do you make use of your RU bachelor degree?*

There is no way that I can make use of my bachelor degree from RU. In fact, here I nearly need to prove that I am actually a good guy despite my having dared open a book or two! For that reason, I cannot claim that this stay is in any way related to my studies. I can, however, put forward the argument that since I would like to become a journalist and write about different people, etc., a stay in a different country widens one's horizon somewhat and may help us understand how other people

perceive the world compared to a Copenhagen student. I don't think that is such a bad thing.

*How do you expect to use your stay in relation to your career dreams?*

Since my stay is in no way relevant to my studies, it has no significant relevance to my future career dreams either. In fact, my career dreams have been put on hold while I am here. I am sure I will get there eventually! However, there is nothing like a stay like this which can motivate you to move on with your studies and a relevant student job when you get back again. Suddenly it becomes clear to you that there are more fun things to make money on than selling your arms and legs to an Australian farmer ☺.

*The next issue of RUGlobal has more stories about RU graduates travelling the big wide world.*

## Status for the IT systems

See a status for the IT systems here:

[www.ruc.dk/en/it-status](http://www.ruc.dk/en/it-status)

The screenshot shows the top of the Roskilde University website. On the left is the university logo with the text 'RU Roskilde University'. On the right, there are links for 'For students' and 'For employees', a 'Find Person' search box, and a 'Search' button. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: 'Frontpage > About the University > Organisation > Administration > Campus-it > News'. The main content area is titled 'Campus-it news' and contains two news items: 'RU's old homepages are working again - 13.07 2010' and 'RU's old homepages don't answer - 13.07 2010'. The second item includes a short paragraph: 'Due to an update of a main Xen-server RU's old homepages on the Magenta system are not responding at the moment. The server is checking the file system. We expect to be up and running again within a couple of hours.' To the right of the news items is a 'Live status' section with a sub-header 'email > Slow response times'.

Tips and tricks from Campus-it



# The Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation attending a debate meeting at RU

On Tuesday 21 September, the Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation Charlotte Sahl-Madsen invited students and staff at RU to take part in an informal debate

By: Anne Frida Christiansen, *RUglobal*  
Photo: Poul Erik Nikander Frandsen

On Tuesday 21 September the Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation Charlotte Sahl-Madsen visited RU. Lately, she has toured Denmark to visit its various universities. "I have regular meetings with the rectors, chairmen and directors of the universities, but as a Minister I would also like to visit the universities and see them with my own eyes, get an impression of what is going on and what individual challenges they are facing" said Charlotte Sahl-Madsen to the more than 100 audience members in the big lecture hall after Rector Ib Poulsen had welcomed her.

## Quality in teaching

"What is the effect of legislation? We honestly believe we do the best we can" the Minister said, "but we are not always aware of the consequences". Charlotte Sahl-Madsen emphasised that this was a debate meeting and that she would like an active dialogue with the audience members. "For this reason, I won't stand on a platform today", she said and continued: "It is more important for me to stand on a platform in Parliament; today, I want to initiate a dialogue and share views". Charlotte Sahl-Madsen had a list of subjects she clearly wanted to discuss with the audience members.

"Quality in teaching" was the first subject on her list. "What makes good teaching? In this debate, we will probably end up generalising, but for the sake of the debate, generalisation is necessary since we cannot discuss concrete subject-specific fields. However, what framework fosters good teaching? Charlotte Sahl-Madsen asked the audience. Before the meeting started, she had tried to get an overview of who were amongst the audience – how

many students, teachers and administrative staff. A showing of hands indicated that it was a mixed crowd.

The first to take the floor was a student who stressed the importance of "top-motivated teaching", performance technique and the importance of teachers having a gift for teaching. The Minister commented continuously on the different perspectives introduced to provide her opinion in relation to the statements, but obviously also to make sure she had understood what had been said. Didactics and educational theory constituted her follow-up remarks to what was being discussed. In this context, another student came up with a suggestion for how to strengthen teachers' communication skills. "RU has competences, for example within Communication. Why not make use of those to offer courses for the other departments at RU? was her rhetorical question.

In the Minister's view, knowledge-sharing is a core issue for the university world in general, and she was pleased that it was now on the agenda. She highlighted that it is important that we improve our knowledge-sharing skills in the Danish society.

Another answer to what constitutes good teaching dealt with project work and the role of the supervisor. Others stressed that the availability of an adequate number of seminar rooms is key to providing a better study and educational environment.

A teacher focused on research-based teaching, stressing that, all things being equal, research-based teaching means commitment from the teacher.

To this, Charlotte-Sahl-Madsen added that research-based teaching is a golden egg which in Denmark we should cherish and protect. Further, she referred to a trip to Shanghai where research-based teaching had attracted a lot of attention. In relation to some of the issues that Charlotte Sahl-Madsen raised, she also emphasised that RU's management has a responsibility and – the opportunity – to do something about the issues that apply to RU.

## The financial framework

Also the Danish PhD schools and PhD programmes were discussed as were the abolition of group examinations; however, this subject did not excite the crowd the way it did at a similar meeting last year when then Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation Helge Sander visited RU. A subject of a somewhat different nature, causing the audience members to smile, were the rumours that RU is paying the same rent for the Marbjerg Mark facilities as KU is paying for its facilities in central Copenhagen. With a smile on her lip, Charlotte Sahl-Madsen talked of real estate agents, the day's episode of "Hammerslag" and the many skills that a Minister is required to master. She did, however, also make it clear that that sort of information does not form part of her off-the-cuff-knowledge, for which reason she needed assistance from her civil servants who informed us that the universities pay a certain percentage of the rateable value of their property. In this context University Director Peter Lauritzen stated that RU's rent is lower than KU's. Charlotte Sahl-Madsen took the opportunity to tell the audience about the new campus act that provides universities with more possibilities to build halls of residence and cafés on campus.

*Charlotte Sahl-Madsen answers the audience members' questions to the best of her ability. Several of the audience members found it difficult to understand how at one and the same time it is possible to increase both the cooperation and competition between the universities, which was what the Minister encouraged the universities to do in future.*



Before long, also the financial framework and conditions at RU were discussed, primarily by the academic staff. In relation to the talk about research-based teaching, they urged Charlotte Sahl-Madsen to explain why RU is underfunded in respect of the basic funds for research compared to other senior universities in Denmark such as for example the University of Copenhagen. She tried to give an evasive answer, but other academic staff members kept inquiring into this field, which was clearly something many people wanted an answer to. The debate quickly developed into a talk about figures, and the Minister also had to resort to asking her civil servants for assistance to be able to provide adequate answers. Also University Director Peter Lauritzen provided input to the debate and backed the academic staff members in this situation.

### **Increased competition and cooperation?**

On the other hand, Charlotte Sahl-Madsen gladly talked about improving the cooperation between the universities, in Denmark as well as across borders. Many academic staff members agreed with her that this was desirable; however, also in this discussion, disagreements between the Minister and the audience members could be identified. Many acknowledged that the structures have been built in a way that does not exactly encourage the universities to cooperate, rather the opposite; here the Minister highlighted the consequences of old habits and again called for cooperation to take place. She also emphasised that universities will be in a much better position to take home international funds if they cooperate across borders.

In this context, Charlotte Sahl-Madsen made it clear that she is an advocate for universities to compete for students, as she believes that this will lead to higher quality teaching and improved study environments. In this context, she mentioned the revision of the university act that would reduce the number of rules and regulations and thus the degree of detail, if it were up to her. With the revision, the Minister would like to see the universities' opportunities to elaborate on their differences be increased. "With the introduction of the act, we must ensure that what we want to see happen for the universities actually also happens; however, how it happens, I think is a decision to be left increasingly with the universities", the Minister said and subsequently encouraged the administrative staff and RU in general: "If you come across things where you say to yourselves: "Why on earth are we working on this – will it generate growth?", then let us know because it is absolutely necessary that the administration is as effective as possible."

### **Insight and vision**

Internationalisation was another subject that was introduced by Charlotte Sahl-Madsen and which she wanted to discuss with the audience. The Minister suggested that by constantly asking ourselves how to apply the knowledge generated and how to use our insight to identify better solutions, we will know how to utilise the opportunities provided through internationalisation. This is crucial in order to be able to seize the opportunities that arise, and we need, according to the Minister, "to get a move on" because we have something to offer. One thing is what purpose Denmark must serve out there in the world; what we must and can offer foreigners coming

to Denmark, for example to study, is another thing. In this context, the Minister made it clear that she would like to see that many of the problems related to being an international student in Denmark be solved, and that we can do better as a society.

The emphasis on the importance of the universities to Denmark as a knowledge society made some of the audience members ask the Minister why the financial conditions of the universities have not improved. She responded that funds for education and research and the amount of resources have never been as plentiful as they are today. Not many of the audience members seemed to accept that allegation.

The hour allocated for the debate meeting quickly passed, and Charlotte Sahl-Madsen stressed that she could easily have spent more time with the audience, since there were a number of items on the agenda that she had had no time to discuss during the plenary session. Lots of hands were still waiving in the air, and consequently Charlotte Sahl-Madsen encouraged the audience with unanswered questions to send an e-mail to the Minister, using the address: [min@vtu.dk](mailto:min@vtu.dk). "I don't want to discuss just finances. I much prefer to discuss the universities' role in society, and you are more than welcome to send an e-mail", the Minister said and continued her visit at RU where she was presented to a number of examples of RU research by Professor Benni Winding Hansen and Professor Jesper Ryberg and Associate Professor Bente Halkier. After that, she met with the RU management.

# WOBAL

## - The interaction between institutions and cultures from around the world

For the first time Denmark has been hosting AIESEC Wobal project, a cross-cultural venture between universities and Efterskoler. University students from all over the world have, for the last five weeks, been around to Danish Efterskoler to speak about racism, cultural integration and human rights. The idea of the project has been to break down cultural obstacles and open up borders

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*By: Joakim Østergaard, student at Roskilde University*

- Teenagers in Denmark today have great opportunities to go abroad and experience different cultures. By the project we have wanted to encourage this, says Eve Egdemann project manager of Wobal.

The project has been arranged by AIESEC, the world's largest global youth organization. AIESEC has local offices all over the world and is driven by voluntary university students. In Copenhagen AIESEC has two offices; one at CBS and the other one UNIC, is a cooperation between RUC, KU and DTU. Since the foundation of AIESEC in 1948 students from all over the world has been working in a global network to mediate traineeships and arrange conferences crosswise.

### **Social learning as interaction**

By the Wobal project, AIESEC in Denmark has invited students from all over the world, but the main focus for the students has not been to learn from the Danish institutions, instead they have been here to educate. The idea is that students from different countries

have been resided at Efterskoler to teach and share their experiences from the cultures they are representing. Hence to this, ten students have for the last five weeks been sent out to different locations in Denmark to talk and discuss racism, cultural integration and human rights. The manager of Wobal in Denmark, Eve Egdemann from Germany, is studying International Business at CBS. She explains the interesting potential of Wobal by the purpose it is representing. The project is an attempt to offer young Danish students an opportunity to learn from the diversity of different cultures.

I met with some of the Wobal project interns at their introduction week in Copenhagen. In spite some intense days and a rainy sightseeing they all seemed eager to talk about the project and what they could contribute with.

- The project is great since it focuses on teaching and developing other young students, says Bruno Bruel, 26 years old from Brazil. Bruno studies business in Porto Alegre, southern Brazil and he had just finished another internship in Estonia before he came to Denmark. By the Wobal project he explained his expectations was to make other young people willing to explore the world, since

social learning takes place in the interaction and discussion between different cultures.

### **An effort to interact Efterskoler with Universities**

But Wobal project has not only been an attempt to interact between different national and geographical cultures. Furthermore the purpose of Wobal has been to open up for Efterskoler and universities to cooperate. According to Eve Egdemann, the relation between the two educational institutions does not have much of a tradition in Denmark. Whether or not the launching of Wobal has succeeded with this establishment is hard to tell, but as Eve explains Wobal's focus on human rights, racism and cultural integration can hopefully offer a mind-opening perspective for some young people.

- And this is of course important, since integration and cultural differences is a huge topic in Denmark as well as many other countries in Western Europe, Eve says.

### **Success in Finland**

Though Wobal is new in Denmark the same concept has had success in Europe before. One example is Finland where Global.me has been hosted for several years; a project based on the



*The AIESEC Wobal Project is an attempt to establish a cooperation between universities and Efterskoler, through interaction by students from all over the world*

same values and principles as Wobal. Global me is driven by AIESEC in Finland, in cooperation with the Finnish ministry of education. Due to the success in Finland, many different actors have supported Wobal in Denmark. Financial support from Dansk Ungdoms Fællesråd (DUF) and Efterskoleforeningen has made Wobal free of charge for the interns. The covering of accommodation has given a broad diversity of applications for the project. And by giving students with less financing opportunities a chance to explore new cultures, Wobal can gain a variety of different students that can contribute with the interaction they can offer.

October 19th is the final date of Wobal. Whether or not the project then has had a positive impact on the Efterskole students and/or the interns, no one can tell in a short perspective. But hopefully Wobal can open up for other projects with broader angels in correlation with different institutions and diverse cultures.

Efterskole is an independent boarding school for lower secondary students ([www.efterskole.dk](http://www.efterskole.dk)).

