

Kaity Hampton
EUC Vest Esbjerg, Denmark
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kaityhampton@yahoo.com

When the opportunity to study in Denmark was presented to me I was immediately interested because the chance to view my industry in another part of the world would allow me a new perspective and insight into the field. This would also be my first time traveling to Europe, something that would greatly expand my view of the world.

Starting out I expected there to be a large language barrier and this was intimidating to me. But within the first day I realized this wouldn't be an issue because even if someone couldn't speak English there was always someone close by that was helpful and willing to translate. Before I left I did a small amount of research on the size of the country and some of their main historical events which I was later able to connect to the displays we saw while touring museums. Looking back however I wish I would have taken more time to research some common phrases so I could communicate with them at least slightly in their own language.

When we arrived in Copenhagen we walked to the Cabinn Hotel, it was located near the center of the town and in walking distance of most everything and was the perfect location to stay at. While in Copenhagen we got to walk around and view some of the sights by ourselves before taking the train to Esbjerg to meet up with our hosts. When we all met the array of activities they had planned for us was amazing. We did everything from working on job with them to learning to do a heights rescue, which was especially rewarding for me as it helped me to challenge my fear of heights and work through it.

The main difference in the education systems of our country and theirs is the connection with employers. While students are going to school in Denmark they are working with a company and spending part of their time at school and the remainder working. This is very different from ours as we first complete our education and then begin searching for a job; I believe their system is beneficial as they are not only gaining knowledge but work experience as well.

The housing arrangements were spectacular, we got to stay in the same dorms as the students at EUC Vest so it not only gave us perspective at what it would be like to be living there while going to school but also provided the opportunity to get to know some of the students better. When we first arrived at the housing we got to get settled into our rooms and get familiar with everything housing offered, such as a gym and cafeteria. The location was beautiful and the streets laid out in a way to make it easy to walk most everywhere or be able to easily take a bus if needed. There were never any safety concerns and in the future I hope they continue with these accommodations as they went above and beyond my expectations.

While there everyone went out of their way to help out in any way possible, even people not associated with the exchange. I found it very easy to be able to talk to everybody and got a better insight to the culture by doing so. The main difference I experienced was the friendliness. People were always polite and courteous and open, whereas in our country we have a lot more people worried about themselves instead of the people around them.

Without the generous donation from the Scan|Design Foundation this exchange wouldn't have been possible for me. While I was in Denmark I exchanged my US dollar for the Danish Krone and just used cash, it's also possible to use your Debit/Credit card but there tend to be a lot of bank fees so it isn't the best option to use. Per week I used about 200 USD but that amount can vary a lot depending on your choice of recreational activities. The only unexpected expense I had was actually after I came home, I wouldn't suggest using the airport parking, it works better to have someone drop you off. A large difference between our education systems is the cost of living. While we have to pay for housing and our tuition their education and housing cost is covered for them.

Everyone at BTC that made this trip possible did a fantastic job. The timeline, accommodations and support we received was phenomenal. Having Jeff as our lead gave another dimension to the trip as he had been to Denmark before and knew what would have to most connection back to our career choice and the different sights that would have the most impact.

This program is best suited for students that are driven in their field and will not only take this as a personal opportunity to experience another culture but to see the differences the culture makes on their profession. I would advise them to be completely open to the experience and take in as much as possible because this is truly a once in a life time trip. Overall it was more than I ever could have expected. Without the Scan|Design Grant this trip would have never been financially possible for me at this point in my life. The chance to get a peek into the culture of Denmark was the greatest benefit of the exchange and I would like to thank everyone that worked so hard to make it possible, I truly appreciate it.