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Building Social Bridges
by entrepreneurial thinking



Role models

Denmark



Chris

“You have to believe in yourself”

The way to Denmark

Chris came to Denmark in 2008 right after he finished high school in Romania. When he went to high school, two people came to visit from Boris Agricultural School in Skjern, Denmark, who presented a program that made it possible to come to Denmark and study for 2 years. He signed up, and travelled to Denmark to start his studies in Boris. After completing the two years, he decided to continue his studies for another year to train as a farmer. Then he got a full-time job on a bull farm where they bred slaughter calves, where



he worked for a year. In December 2012, he was fired because the farm had a tight budget. It one was a difficult time, it was almost Christmas and Chris had planned to go home to Romania to celebrate Christmas with his family, but he could not afford the travel home. He was very frustrated and did not know what to do. He had 2-3 weeks' notice and it was almost impossible to find a new job so close to Christmas. He therefore started talking to his friends who also worked in agriculture, but they could not help him find a new job. A friend suggested that he take a new education so he could find a job in another industry and leave farming.

Chris then began to investigate his options and found an English education in logistics, at the Business Academy in Vejle, where he could start already in January 2013. He had learnt a lot of Danish through his work and also went to language school during the period he was studying in Boris, but he still chose to take the education in English because it was easier for him. It all went very quickly and he had to examine the rules very quickly. As a student, he would only get student benefits, so he had to familiarize himself with the system to find out if he could work alongside his studies. Fortunately, it all worked out and he moved to Vejle to start a 2-year training as a logistics economist.

During his studies, Chris became very interested in motivational speakers such as Brian Tracy, Tony Robbins, Less Brown and especially Richard Branson, who Chris met in person when he toured in Denmark. Richard Branson is one of the biggest entrepreneurs in the market and Chris has been greatly inspired by his speeches. Chris has read many books and listened to many audio books on motivation and

self-development, and it was during his education that he developed a strong desire to build a successful career. In 2015, Chris got his first job as a supply chain coordinator in Vejle, which was his first office job. In 2016, he got his dream job at Siemens Gamesa, who make wind turbines, where he is still employed today. It is his dream job because they stand for creating a better world and future for the environment. Since he was a student, he has wanted to make a difference for nature and to help create a greener world for the future. Today, Chris and his wife are also vegetarians because they want to help take care of the climate.

Chris is involved in many projects and he likes to help others. In 2018, he started a Romanian-Danish cultural association together with 6 other Romanians. They still operate it today, however, they are not so active at the moment due to the corona crisis. They were colleagues in a folk dance group, where they danced together until 2017, when their choreographer moved back to Romania. Then they started the association instead. They thought it would be good to start an association, because there are many Romanians in Vejle municipality who need to meet and get help and support to get integrated do well. In 2019, Chris also started his small hobby business, [CV Tailor](#), where he helps others with their job search. For example, he helps with CVs, job applications, LinkedIn-profiles, job interviews and job coaching. Mostly foreigners make use of his business, but he also had a few Danish customers. Usually you get help from the Job Centre, your union or friends - but the help you get is not always professional and adapted to the individual's needs. Chris does not have much time for CV Tailor and he is not planning to grow the business, because he loves his job in Siemens. Still, he likes to make a difference and help others though his hobby business. Right now, Chris is still focusing on his own adventure with his family and work. He and his wife just had a baby. That is what he is prioritizing now, and he is happy to have reached a point in his life where he can sit back and enjoy life with his family.

Facts about Chris

Name: Chris Antochi

Gender: Male

Age: 32

Nationality: Romanian and Danish citizen.

Education: Logistics economist from Vejle Business Academy in Denmark. Agricultural education from Boris Agricultural School in Denmark.

Profession: Risk manager at Siemens Gamesa in Vejle. Hobby company - CV Tailor, where he guides in job search processes.

Interests: His family and full-time job is his primary focus and takes up most of his time. He is involved in running a voluntary association – the Romanian-Danish Culture Association, which he helped initiate. Otherwise, he enjoys spending time with his friends when he has time.

Languages: Romanian , Danish , English, some Spanish.

Find video interview with Chris on the project website:
<https://buildingsocialbridges.eu/>

Getting through the difficult beginning

For Chris, the challenge of finding his way in Denmark has been about finding self-confidence. Not feeling good enough because you do not have a good education or do not speak the language well enough. It can make you hold back. In terms of creating a career outside of agriculture, Chris had a goal in mind, but was in doubt whether he could achieve it. Was he good enough to take a new education? Who would hire him if he could not speak Danish? He had to overcome himself a little when he got his first office job where he had to speak Danish. But it went well! He can recognize the same feeling in others who come to Denmark, but it is something that can apply to all people. Some find it easy and others find it difficult to remove the barriers.

Some of what has helped Chris through his barriers, are the motivational speakers mentioned earlier such as Richard Branson, and the self-motivating self-help books that he has read and been inspired by. It has taught him that if you are open-minded and build discipline, you can learn new things. He has built discipline in the way he approaches opportunities and tasks. He has become more positive and now sees opportunities instead of limitations. It is important to be optimistic and believe that something positive can happen. There are many opportunities for success. Of course, you can make mistakes, but how do you relate to your mistakes? Instead of changing your goal, you need to change your strategy to achieve that goal. Then you have to try again and not give up. You have to persevere and keep working towards your goal and keep trying. Often, barriers are also about one's own self-confidence. It is not easy in the beginning. Many have said negative things to Chris, for example that it would be a bad idea to start the Romanian-Danish Culture Association. But Chris and the others have built it up quietly with good people. Most people think positively and it has a positive impact on those who think negatively. With his CV company, people said that there was no time and it would be tough for him, and that he would compete with the municipality and unions, but he kept going, and even though there have been ups and downs, he succeeded and the company is doing well.

Chris says that he has a drive and a will to succeed, which has helped him. In Romania, his family did not have a lot of money, and around them, they saw people who were in a better situation. This gave Chris a will to want to succeed in his life. He is used to hard work from Romania, especially in his family. They were part of the middle class in Romania. His father worked as an educational administrator in the local high school and his mother sewed clothes in a company. They have had a good life, but it required hard work, and they were limited in the things they wanted. Around Chris people in his family and in the city they lived in, were go-getters and had a large drive. His brother went to Spain when he was 22, just like Chris went to Denmark when he was 19. They come from a relatively small town, so Chris and his friends often went to other cities, such as Bucharest, in the summer to work. For Chris, it is important to take ownership of his decisions. He should not blame others or become a victim because the state or the family will not do more to help him. He takes responsibility for his own life. It is normal to think that you are a victim in a system, that you compare yourself with others and feel bad for yourself. He only wants to be inspired and not be jealous. He has always been that way. It is something he learnt from his father. He always said "you succeeded, it's good, I should not interfere in that".

It is also important to have passion. You have to love what you do, and not just have a job because it pays well. This value has helped Chris because even though he is employed as a risk manager, he also does other things in his work that he is happy about. They have a program called Cultural Change Makers, which is a team of 7 people working with culture internally at Siemens. He loves working with people from different cultures. Siemens wants to create an environment where everyone can thrive no matter what culture you come from. As a company, you will thrive when your employees thrive. Chris likes to contribute to that, just like in the Romanian-Danish Culture Association. Chris himself describes that what he has learned from his experiences is to be patient. The good happens to those who are optimistic and who believe in the good, although of course you also have to be realistic. He has also learned to be creative and how to find new ways of doing things. Whether it is about something with his family, personally, at work or in his association. He also goes to great lengths to help others and show empathy. It is good for you. It is important to help where you can with what you can. In connection with his hobby business, for example, he held two free webinars in the spring during the corona period together with the local association Vejle Expat Network, to support international people in Vejle in their job search.

The way into the Danish society

Social relationships and networks are important when it comes to settling in Denmark. Chris builds social relationships and networks when he knows he can learn something new and when it is related to his values. He does not get involved in things that do not fit with his values. Networking, especially on [LinkedIn](#) where Chris is very active, is important to him. When he had to look for a job, he used it a lot. Networking is, however, not a one-time thing, but something that has to be maintained. He has a large network of friends and colleagues from his work. Networks can open new doors, and you can get many new opportunities and experiences. Chris likes this and he tries to always say "yes thank you" to opportunities.

Networking is an important tool for being able to get help and learn. Both personally and in relation to work. Networking, for example, has given Chris a lot of experience in how to talk with and act around other people – both professionally and personally. When you build networks, you learn that you have to talk differently to different people, depending on who they are and where you meet them. It has also taught Chris to enjoy talking to new people and to help others with how to talk and present themselves. Networking is also good for learning from other people and being inspired. For example, look at how they behave. He has only been to a few real networking events, but here he has seen how others speak and, for example, give a speech or presentation. He has always had a hard time talking in front of a crowd of people and gets nervous. He himself has learned from looking at others and has asked them how they do it. They have given advice on practicing at home, speaking from his heart and not learning the speech word for word.

Friends also play an important role in Chris' life. It is friends who have inspired him in the direction he has taken. However, the family and Chris' wife are the biggest support. All inspiration and motivation comes from there. He gets a lot of support from his wife and they are good at supporting each other. They had a little girl last year and now he is supporting his wife so she gets time to get back to work and get her career going again. If she is going on a course with work, he will take care of the children and the house. It is about supporting each other as a family. They work in the same place and that was also where they met each other. They are a good team. They do not always see things the same way and are good at different things so they can help each other and complement each other, professionally and personally.

Good advice

To people who are new in Denmark and who are searching for a way to create a life here, Chris says that it is important to trust in yourself and think positively. What you want is possible, and you must believe that you can achieve it. For Chris, it was an ambitious goal he set for himself. To go from working with agriculture to being able to make wind turbines in Siemens, and to be able to work for a greener future for society and children. But he succeeded. It is also important to be able to think creatively and be constantly open to new opportunities and learn new things. If you keep doing the same thing, you will end up in the same place. Here, too, one can be inspired by the stories of others, such as Chris', and learn from them. One can also learn from other people's mistakes, and try to avoid making the same mistakes.

Passion and knowledge are an important foundation. It is important to work and get paid for what you do, but it is also important to love what you do and work in a place that fits with your values. Whether it is a workplace or your own company. You need to have the courage to make it happen and to go for what you

believe in. You need to make a plan for how to become successful, find out which people can help you on that journey and make sure to get to know people who can support you.

In order to build a network and get to know new people who may be able to help you, you can for example, join a networking group. There are many both Danish and international networks in and around Vejle. You can also become a volunteer in an association and expand your network through it. It has both a professional and personal benefit. You can learn professional skills such as how to coordinate and make events, but just being a volunteer and helping others can be a gift at the same time. You may spend a few hours on it, but the joy it gives you to help others, even when you are busy, is worth it. Chris loves spending time in the Romanian-Danish Culture Association and he keeps going even though he does not really have much time for it. Chris also thinks it is important to be grateful for what you have today, where you have come to and what you have achieved. He is. Chris hopes that others can learn from his story that "your goals are possible", and to see new possibilities in their own lives, instead of limitations. It was possible for him, and it is possible for others.

The future

Chris has not yet finished his journey, but right now, his goal is to enjoy the adventure. He thinks others make a mistake when the journey means nothing to them, and they only focus on the goal. The joy comes in the journey. Achieving a goal gives only temporary joy, and then you chase after a new goal as quickly as possible to achieve something new. He has changed a little since he was younger. Now he has achieved the major goals he has set, so now he wants to enjoy what he has. His goal is to be the best person he can be, and be a great example to others. He just wants to keep doing what he is doing now and keep getting better at it. Maybe new goals will come later, the future will tell. Professionally, he has some dreams for his job, but he is not in a hurry with that. He has a great family and it is important for him to enjoy the time with them. His children are 6 and 1.5 years old and he wants to enjoy the time while they are young.

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Co-funded by the
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