WHY AARHUS for families

Aarhus and the surrounding area is a highly attractive place to live and work for young international families. In Aarhus you can enjoy life to the fullest while pursuing your career goals and taking care of your family.

Get to Know Aarhus! Read About:
/ Being A Young Family In Aarhus
/ Danish Culture
/ The Danish School System
/ Interviews With Expats In Aarhus
/ And Much More...
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WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT AARHUS? EVERYTHING!

WHETHER YOU ARE ATTRACTED TO THE RENOWNED WORK-LIFE BALANCE, THE CHARMING CITY ATMOSPHERE OR THE CHILDFRIENDLY SOCIETY, AARHUS IS A WINNER.

DENMARK'S SECOND CITY
Aarhus is Denmark’s second largest city with roughly 335,000 inhabitants of which 50,000 are students, making it the youngest city in the country measured by median age. Aarhus is a diverse and international city, which is undergoing rapid growth. Having embraced internationalization, Aarhus now welcomes more tourists and expats than ever.

BIG CITY VARIETY
Aarhus offers the variety of a major European city while retaining the charm of its past. Beautiful architecture, high gastronomic standards and world-class attractions such as AROs Aarhus Art Museum, Moesgaard Museum, The Old Town and the public library Dokk1 make Aarhus attractive for tourists and citizens alike.

CAPITAL OF CULTURE
Aarhus has gained immense coverage in both Danish and international media in recent years and has become a top destination whether for study, work or vacation. Investments in architecture and culture, and a boom in the number of great and prize-winning restaurants make Aarhus a well-deserved European Capital of Culture in 2017.

ATTRACTIVE SURROUNDINGS
Aarhus is attractively located so that you are never far from the energetic city life or calming nature. Family-friendly beaches, parks and beautiful forests are within walking distance and are perfect for small city breaks. The vibrant city center is populated with diverse shopping areas and lively cafés, to which the people of Aarhus tend to flock both after work and during the weekends. Moreover, people in Aarhus enjoy being active and you will see many people riding their bike or running in nature to stay fit. The city is situated within functional infrastructure, with highways as well as a new light rail that connects Aarhus and the surrounding areas.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY
Denmark is a family-oriented society, which is reflected in the generous maternity/paternity leave, the work-life balance and the way society in general is organized. Aarhus offers a family-friendly environment and is a great place for children. You will find an abundance of child-friendly places and activities that you and your children will love - and the renowned work-life balance leaves time to enjoy it all. Furthermore, Aarhus offers international education from kindergarten to university and a variety of after-school activities either at school.
or in one of the many sports clubs or associations in and around the city.

SAFE AND CLEAN
Denmark is world-famed for its cleanliness and safety (top 10 country in low crime rates), and Aarhus is no different. Crime and violence rates are low and generally do not impact people’s everyday lives. In Aarhus you can safely go for a walk day and night mostly anywhere, and you can send your kids out to play without having to worry about their safety. Moreover, Denmark highly prioritizes green and sustainable solutions. In the everyday life, this is reflected in waste sorting, unpolluted air and drinkable tap water.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
Most Danish companies do business internationally. Consequently, many companies employ expats with expert knowledge on foreign markets, cultural differences and other aspects of cross-border business. There are several big companies in and around Aarhus and a few of them have English as their corporate language. However, learning Danish is recommended as conversations during the lunch break and other social events at the workplace are usually in Danish. Furthermore, Danes appreciate when their international coworkers make an effort to learn Danish. You can enroll in language courses free of charge for three years upon arrival in Denmark.

EXPAT IN AARHUSS
The increasing amount of expats in Aarhus has brought with it certain offers for internationals to help ease the relocation process. As such, International Citizen Service West is designed specifically to help you get the authority registration process done in an efficient and seamless manner upon arrival in Aarhus. Further, to help you settle in and build a network, the non-profit organization International Community, Denmark’s leading community for expats and their families, offers more than 100 social and professional events a year in Aarhus. As an additional initiative for spouses and accompanying partners, Spouse Community Aarhus offers inspiration and empowerment through a membership-based social and professional network.

DANISH WORKPLACE CULTURE
The Danish workplace culture is usually ranked among expats as one of the most positive aspects of living in Denmark. But what is it that makes it so attractive?

\ Flat hierarchy: The Danish workplace offers an informal atmosphere where everyone is on first-name terms. Further, regardless of their title, everyone is encouraged to voice their ideas, participate in professional discussions and get involved in the decision-making process.

\ Flexibility and autonomy: Employees in Denmark are generally granted a fair degree of flexibility; for instance, timetables are not typically tight as long as deadlines are met, and workers are entitled to distribute their work load according to their individual needs.

\ Work-life balance: The official working week in Denmark is 37 hours, making it one of the shortest in the world. This ensures a healthy balance between work (career and goals) and life (time with friends and family, sports and leisure).

\ Dual-earner families: During the past few decades, women’s participation in the Danish labor market has been steadily on the rise, which has turned Denmark into the world leader in female working activity rate.

TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I HAD NEVER HEARD OF AARHUS, DENMARK TWO YEARS AGO. IT WASN’T UNTIL I STARTED WORKING FOR MY EMPLOYER, STIBO SYSTEMS, THAT I STARTED LEARNING MORE ABOUT DENMARK AND THE DANES THAT I WORKED WITH. SOMETIMES, I’D WONDER, WHO ARE THESE INNOVATIVE, EFFICIENT, AND ALWAYS CALM PEOPLE I WAS WORKING WITH ACROSS THE GLOBE?

At the time, I was working for our North American office when I noticed a position available at our Global Headquarters in Aarhus. I remember thinking what a great opportunity to further my career and to expose my family to a different culture while having a chance to see more of the world. After a few interviews, a short visit to Aarhus, and a talk with my family, we sold everything we owned and moved to Aarhus with just our suitcases... ok with just our 15 suitcases.

WHY AARHUS?

I get asked all the time, Why? Why would you leave the United States of America, one of the leading countries in the world for “tiny, little Denmark” (their words, not mine)? Are you crazy? Are you moving away from Donald Trump being your president? The answer to both of those questions is “No”.

When my wife and I visited Aarhus for the first time, we immediately fell in love with the charm of the city. We felt that for our family, the size of Aarhus wasn’t too big, certainly wasn’t too small, it was just right. Ultimately, we made the big decision to move to Aarhus for four important reasons: Career growth, a unique character building lesson for our kids, the charm of Aarhus, and to discover Danish culture.
EXCELLENT CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
Having worked for the world’s leading software company in Multidomain Master Data Management, Stibo Systems, I already knew that working at our headquarters would be an excellent personal career choice. What I was surprised to find out after moving to Aarhus is how thriving Aarhus and Denmark are as a technology hub. I’ve met many technology professionals working at innovative companies such as Vestas, Arla, Microsoft and Terma. Additionally, there is a vibrant start-up scene in Aarhus with a tech-entrepreneurial vibe.

HAPPY CHILDREN
But honestly, this move wasn’t all about me, it was more about our children. One of the biggest reasons we decided to move to Aarhus was to expose our children to another culture. At the time of our move, my daughters were 10 and 12 years old. They were established in their schooling in America and had long term friendships. As a father, taking them away from the life they have always known to a new unknown life was a big gamble. Thankfully, it was a gamble that has paid off. Our children attend a local international school in Aarhus, AAGE, and we could not be happier. Within the first week of school, both of our daughters had made friends and were even invited for a sleepover. Culturally, our children have been exposed not only to Danish culture but also to many cultures around the globe. As a parent, I could not ask for anything better. It has also been a surprising role reversal for me, to have my children tutor me on Danish after I’ve spent so many years tutoring them on other subjects.

THE CITY OF SMILES
Additionally, we feel that Aarhus and the Danish society which is built on trust make Denmark a very safe place to raise a family. We are not worried when our children are walking down the street in the way we would worry about them back in the US. There is generally a sense of community in Denmark where everyone embraces letting children have a childhood and everyone watches out for one another.

Simply put, Aarhus is a beautiful city. I understand how it earned its nickname “The city of smiles”. How can you not smile when a short bike ride will take you from the city center to the sea or the peaceful lawn of Marselisborg Mindepark. As Copenhagen’s little brother, Aarhus packs a big punch. Aarhus has fun dining experiences such as Aarhus Street food, amazing art at the ARoS museum, and a tremendous amount of living history and culture at the Old Town museum. Some of our favorite memories as a family have been made walking through Marselisborg Mindepark and then having a picnic by the sea.

THE GAMBLE PAID OFF - WE LOVE IT!
To say that we’ve enjoyed our move to Aarhus would be an understatement. We love it! Being able to swap the worries of traffic for the freedom of a bike, working for an innovative technology company, and watching my children expand their cultural understanding of the world, all while enjoying the enchanting backdrop of Aarhus and its surreal surroundings is a dream come true.

If you have the opportunity to move to Aarhus, I encourage you to take a gamble like my family did. For us, that gamble has paid off in ways we could not have imagined. As a family, we decided to leave our comfort zone and take the road less traveled and for us, that has made all the difference.
WHAT ARE DANES LIKE?
Generally, Danes have very liberal views on religion and politics compared to most Europeans. However, they are also rule-bound, and complying with the norms is important and appreciated. Wealth in Denmark is equally distributed, so there are relatively few billionaires and really poor people. Attitudes towards success and money are humble, and consequently bragging is unusual and socially unacceptable. Most Danes are outspoken and direct; they are used to having open discussions and being honest about what they think. While Danes may not always initiate small talk with strangers themselves, they are polite and will engage in conversation if spoken to. Danes love humor and it is a central part of Danish culture. Comedians make fun of famous people, and even the royal family, to their audience’s amusement. An important part of Danish humor, and conversation in general, is irony, which may take some time getting used to for internationals.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL VALUES
Altruism is a core value in Denmark. Danes are quite generous with those in need all around the world, so they often do volunteer work or simply donate money for charities. Moreover, Danes are increasingly concerned about global issues, so they buy fair trade and environmentally friendly products and recycle more than the European average.

THE “HYGGE” CONCEPT
When foreigners are asked to describe Danish culture, a special concept comes to mind: “Hygge”. Linked to coziness and warmth, “hygge” is normally associated with being comfortable and relaxed, as well as with having fun with close friends or loved ones, often while enjoying good food and something to drink. Candles are also connected to the idea of “hygge”, and many Danes love lighting them, especially when they have guests over.

DANISH CULTURE AND LIFESTYLE ARE RELAXED, AND COLLECTIVE VALUES ARE BUILT ON TRUST, SECURITY AND COOPERATION. VIEWS ON RELIGION AND POLITICS ARE RATHER LIBERAL, AND HUMOR IS DEEPLY ROOTED IN DANES. THE SUPPORTIVE DANISH WELFARE STATE GRANTS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL, THUS PROVIDING A STRONG FEELING OF SECURITY AND BELONGING.

FACTS ABOUT DANISH CULTURE:
- Denmark is historically a monarchic country. In fact, it has one of the oldest kingdoms in the world
- The state religion of Denmark is Lutheran Protestantism, and 76% of Danes are members of the National Church. However, most Danes do not consider themselves religious
- Modern design and architecture are intrinsic parts of Danish culture
- Many Danish products are considered design icons of the 20th century, such as the Egg chair by Arne Jacobsen and the PH-lamp by Poul Henningsen
- The iconic Opera House in Sydney was designed by the internationally recognized Danish architect Jørn Utzon
- The most famous contributor to Danish literature is the fairy tale author and poet Hans Christian Andersen
- Moesgaard Museum innovatively presents Danish history in a breathtaking architectural setting in Aarhus
- The environment is important to Danes, and Denmark is a world leader in renewable energy technology
- Approximately two thirds of Danes are members of one or more of Denmark’s 16,500 voluntary clubs and associations, which are excellent places for socializing
- A good work-life balance, equal opportunities and a strong welfare model have Denmark at the top of international “happiest country in the world” surveys
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SOCIALIZING CULTURE IN DENMARK
Danes are often said to be reserved and hard to make friends with. Some say Danes are like coconuts: you have to break through the tough shell to get in. Many Danes are private and have well-established circles of close and loyal friends. However that should not discourage you from making friends with a Dane! Though it might take some time, you just have to break through the shell. Socializing in Denmark is generally casual. It is common for Danes to meet with friends away from home, and they usually agree when and where to meet in advance. Danes are punctual, and by being on time you show your friend respect and appreciation. If you are unable to make it on time, let your friend know through a text or the like.

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BEING A YOUNG FAMILY IN AARHUS

A WORLD-RENOWNED WORK-LIFE BALANCE, WORKPLACE POLICIES THAT BENEFIT WORKING PARENTS AND AN EXTENSIVE SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEM MAKE DENMARK A GREAT PLACE TO HAVE CHILDREN. FURTHER, DANISH SOCIETY EMBRACES CHILDREN, AND YOU WILL FIND MANY CHILD-FRIENDLY PLACES AND ACTIVITIES IN AARHUS.

A FAMILY-ORIENTED SOCIETY
Denmark is a family-oriented and child friendly society that supports families and working parents from pregnancy until the child turns 18. The Danish society embraces children in every aspect, so parents can bring their children almost everywhere; restaurants generally have a children’s menu, and museums and other attractions welcome and engage children just as well as their adult counterparts.

GENEROUS PARENTAL LEAVE
Traditionally men were the only bread-winners in the Danish family, but this has long since been replaced by a dual-income model, and a majority of women now participate in the workforce. The Danish parental leave policy is among the most generous in the world, meaning that pregnancy and family life do not impede career ambitions for either parent. The mother can take up to four weeks before and 14 weeks after childbirth, and the father is entitled to two weeks’ leave from work. In addition, both parents can split another 32 weeks’ leave between them as they please. An increasing number of Danish fathers choose to take long parental leaves.

DAYCARE INSTITUTIONS
When it is time to return to work, Denmark has an extensive social welfare system that guarantees affordable childcare and after-school care for all families. Most Danish mothers return to work from maternity leave when their toddlers turn one, but children can be cared for in nurseries and daycare centers from around their six month birthday. Infants up to the age of three can attend public or private “vuggestue” (nursery), where educated teachers look after the children. In vuggestue, children do exercises, have a hot meal and play.

Most 3-6-year-old children go to “børnehave” (kindergarten). “Børnehaveklasse” (pre-school) prepares children for school, and the first grade starts at the age of 6-7. Families only pay a maximum of 25% of the cost of nurseries and day-care centers, since the Danish state subsidizes the rest. You can read more about the school system on pages 12-13.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE
In Denmark, many working parents look forward to spending time with their families at the end of the work day. Many companies accommodate this by having family policies that allow employees to meet the needs of their families. Common examples are flexible schedules and part-time work. Moreover employees in Denmark can usually work from home if they need to take care of their children, and workers are generally entitled to take one paid day of leave whenever their child is sick. In addition, all families in Denmark with children under the age of 18 receive a family allowance, regardless of their income.

A CHILD-FRIENDLY CITY
Children are an integral part of Danish society, and you can find public playgrounds all around the city. Forests, parks, and beaches in Aarhus make perfect places for outings with the children after work and on the weekends. Further, children are welcome most places, and it is thus not unusual for parents to bring their children to work or the gym – young parents who study at university might even bring their infants to class without anyone raising questions! Common activities arranged for families with small children include baby swimming, baby singing, playgroups and even special cinema sessions. The public library Dokk1 has an entire floor dedicated to children with books, play areas and fun events open to everyone.

PERSPECTIVES ON PARENTING
Danish children are raised to be independent and self-sufficient, so they learn to take responsibilities from an early age. Danes understand that childhood is a crucial stage of life, during which personality is shaped and social skills are developed, so parental attitudes tend to be liberal and tolerant. Teenagers are encouraged to take an after-school job, typically within the service sector, to become familiar with the responsibilities a job implies and to come to appreciate the value of money.

THE DANISH SCHOOL SYSTEM

EDUCATION IN DENMARK IS A DEMOCRATIC MATTER. HAVING ONE OF THE HIGHEST PUBLIC EXPENDITURES ON EDUCATION IN THE WORLD GUARANTEES A TOP-QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEM OPEN TO EVERYONE. THE DANISH SCHOOL SYSTEM HAS NINE YEARS OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION, AND FOR MOST DANES THESE YEARS ARE SPENT AT “FOLKESKOLE!” (PULIC SCHOOL). ALL CHILDREN ARE ENTITLED TO FREE TUITION AT PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS, AND MOST EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN DENMARK ARE FREE OF CHARGE.

THE DANISH APPROACH

Schools in Denmark offer high quality education that focuses on knowledge, innovative learning, cooperation and active participation. The Danish educational approach encourages dialogue and participation as opposed to competition and individual achievement. Students are taught to be independent and to develop critical thinking, which allows them to form their own opinions and contribute to discussions. Teaching methods focus not only on the students’ technical capabilities, but also on their social and interpersonal skills, and the importance of socializing and play is an important part of education in Denmark. There are no exams until students reach the age of 13 (8th grade), and homework often consists of group projects and written assignments. Tests and parent-teacher meetings ensure that the child is developing and meeting the learning goals.

THE DANISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Danish education system consists of three stages: Primary and lower secondary education (grundskole), upper secondary education (ungdomsuddannelser) and higher education (videregående uddannelser). Mandatory schooling includes one year of pre-school and nine years of primary and lower secondary education. This is offered at public schools, which are financed through taxes, but some parents choose to pay for private school instead.

Following primary and lower secondary education, which is completed at the age of 16-17, about 82% pursue further education. Students can choose from a wide range of secondary education programs to prepare them for higher education. These include vocational programs and STX (the upper secondary school exit examination), HHX (Higher Commercial Examination), and HTX (Higher Technical Examination). Several of these study programs are offered in foreign languages.

DID YOU KNOW?

Children start learning English in the 1st grade in Aarhus

INTERNATIONALS SCHOOLS

The number of foreigners working in Denmark is on the rise, resulting in international schools flourishing across Denmark.
Most international schools offer education in English, although a few offer teaching in German, French and Arabic. One of the advantages of international schools are that children are taught in English, but they still learn Danish, which is part of the curriculum. Aarhus houses two private international schools: Aarhus Academy for Global Education (AAGE) and Kochs International. AAGE offers an IB Diploma Programme for children aged 3-16 (PYP and MYP). Kochs International offers Cambridge certified courses for children between the ages of 5 and 16. Students at Kochs International can take both the Cambridge Final Exams and the Danish Final Exams. Tuition fees range from EUR 4,600 to 6,400 annually in both schools. International upper secondary education is also available in Aarhus at Langkaer Gymnasium, which offers an IB Diploma Programme.

**AFTER-SCHOOL CENTERS**

After-school activities are great for children as they provide the perfect platform for socializing, making friends and learning and practicing Danish. Children in public schools from level 0 to 3 can attend so-called SFOs (”skole og frisidsordining”), which are after-school centers usually open until 5 p.m. SFOs are part of the public school and thus subject to its objectives; it is usually located at or near the school itself. The child’s development and learning are consequently supported by the diverse social and creative activities and pastimes provided by the SFO. Child and youth workers supervise activities. In Aarhus Municipality, enrollment in an SFO takes place when you enroll your child in school. The fees vary from EUR 150 to 230 per month, depending on the age of the child. Children aged 10-18, who are too old for the SFO, can join a youth clubs, which arranges sports and cultural activities after school hours. There are also many sports clubs in Aarhus, and many children practice sports in these several times a week after school and on the weekends. Read more about clubs and associations in Denmark on page XX.

**EFTERSKOLE**

A popular choice between students aged 14-18 is the Danish boarding school (efterskole). There are around 250 efterskoler in Denmark, which are unique independent residential schools. These combine academics and social activities to strengthen students’ academic skills as well as their personal development in order to prepare them for their future education and career choices. Each school has its own distinct core values and offers specialized programs, such as music, drama or sports. You must pay school fees to enroll in an efterskole; these are subsidized.

**FACTS ABOUT EDUCATION:**

\- Teaching in Denmark must be varied to accommodate all students’ individual needs and preconditions for learning
\- Bilingual childrens’ Danish skills are highly prioritized
\- The educational environment and the students’ well-being are integral parts of the Danish education system
\- Danish citizens over the age of 18, and some foreign citizens, are entitled to receive state education support (SU) for his or her further education

**RELATED LINKS:**  [www.efterskole.dk](http://www.efterskole.dk) | [www.eng.uvm.dk](http://www.eng.uvm.dk) | [www.workindenmark.dk](http://www.workindenmark.dk)
FIRST CLASS WORKING CONDITIONS

DANES ARE NOT ONLY SOME OF THE HAPPIEST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD, THEY ARE THE MOST SATISFIED WHEN IT COMES TO THEIR WORKING CONDITIONS. IN DENMARK COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS ENSURE EMPLOYEES A SAFE WORKPLACE, FAIR WAGES, PAY DURING SICKNESS, TERMS OF NOTICE, FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS AND MUCH MORE.

The Danish labor market is known for its high level of flexibility when hiring, a social welfare system and active employment policies. Together, these three components constitute what is known as the ‘Flexicurity Model’, which combines market economy with the traditional Scandinavian welfare state. Flexicurity provides a dynamic labor market and high job mobility. A major reason for the high degree of mobility is that there are practically no barriers when changing jobs. Moving to a new job e.g. has no effect on pension entitlements or earned holiday time. The Flexicurity Model is the result of two decades worth of political reforms and collective bargaining.

MINIMAL LABOR MARKET LEGISLATION
In Denmark, labor market conditions are only regulated by law in exceptional cases. However, there are minimum requirements set by law in some areas. Examples of these are the Danish Employment Contract Act, the Danish Holidays Act, the Danish Act on Equal Treatment and the Danish Act on Allowance for Illness or Parental Leave.

HIGHLY ORGANIZED LABOR MARKET
Many employees belong to trade unions and many businesses are part of employer confederations, which are key features of the Danish labor market. This ensures collective bargaining agreements that cover a large percentage of employees and are widely respected. These agreements ensure employees safe work places, fair wages and work hours, pay during sickness, terms of notice, and much more. In addition to centralized negotiations, the collective bargaining system can also be found at the workplace level, where work councils will negotiate everything from wages to job content with employers. It is often suggested that the secret to the success of the Danish labor market is this smoothly functioning system, which labor organizations and trade unions have built up together.

TRADE UNIONS
Trade unions play a pivotal role in the Danish labor market. Trade unions assist in issues regarding pay and working conditions and can help in connection with work-related injury cases, rehabilitation and much more. Foreign workers and companies can also become members of these organizations. Your choice of trade union depends on your education, position and workplace. The various trade unions are associated with specific unemployment insurance funds, but you do not need to be a member of both a trade union and an unemployment insurance fund; it is possible to be a member of just one or the other.

WORKING CONDITIONS ARE THE SAME FOR EXPATS AS THEY ARE FOR DANES, INCLUDING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS AND TIME OFF.
CONDITIONS

WORKING FIRST CLASS

Parental Leave. The Danish Act on Equal Treatment and Contract Act, the Danish Holidays Act, and other laws regulate these issues. In exceptional cases, some conditions might be individually negotiated.

In Denmark, labor market conditions are shaped by social welfare policies, collective bargaining, and employment agreements set by law in some areas. Examples include maternity/paternity leave, sick days, and compensation for work-related injuries. These are regulated by law, not just collectively bargained agreements.

The Danish labor market is known for its high job mobility. A major reason for the high degree of mobility is that there are practically no barriers when changing jobs. Moving to a new job, for example, has no effect on pension entitlements or earned sick leave. Even though there are collective agreements that cover a large percentage of employees, many businesses are part of employer federations, which are key features of the Danish labor market. This ensures employees safe workplace conditions and can help in connection with work-related injury cases, rehabilitation and much more. Foreign workers are the most satisfied when it comes to their working conditions. In Denmark, labor market conditions are relatively favorable.

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS ENSURE EMPLOYEES A SAFE WORKPLACE, FAIR WAGES, PAY DURING SICKNESS, TERMS OF NOTICE, FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS AND MUCH MORE.

TRADE UNIONS

Danish trade unions play a pivotal role in the Danish labor market. Trade unions assist labor organizations and trade unions in the fair resolution of disputes. This smoothly functioning system, in which labor organizations and trade unions have built up together, is often suggested as the secret to the success of the Danish labor market. In addition to centralized negotiations, work councils will negotiate everything at the workplace level, where the hierarchical structure is flat and everyone has access to equal opportunities. Such equality is interpreted as a sign that all employees are trusted by their workplace. Of course, you must oblige to your professional responsibilities, but employers trust that you know how to manage your work-life balance in the way that suits you and the workplace best.

Danish ‘A-kasse’. Unemployment insurance funds are private associations that are affiliated with trade unions and other professional organizations.

As opposed to all other forms of social security in Denmark, unemployment insurance is voluntary. In order to receive unemployment benefits you must become a paying member of an unemployment insurance fund (in Danish ‘A-kasse’). Unemployment insurance funds are private associations that are affiliated with trade unions and other professional organizations.

HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The official work week in Denmark is 37 hours - one of the shortest in the world! Additionally, employees are granted a fair degree of flexibility, meaning that they can manage their work-life balance in a way that favors both their professional and personal life. Danish managers believe that a healthy work-life balance reduces stress and encourages commitment and innovation; more flexibility means higher job satisfaction. Employees in Denmark are generally highly motivated because they feel valued and trusted by their workplace. Of course, you must oblige to your professional responsibilities, but employers trust that you know how to manage your work-life balance in the way that suits you and the workplace best. An example of this is overtime. Managers generally do not expect employees to work overtime, except when a deadline is very close. In fact, less than 2% of Danish employees work very long hours, and overtime is typically compensated either financially or with time off.

FAVORABLE CONDITIONS:

- The Danish labor market is known for its high level of flexibility
- Employees enjoy one of the longest paid maternity/paternity leaves in the world, up to 52 weeks
- Employees earn the right to five weeks of paid holidays after 12 months of employment
- Employees receive salary during illness

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Social justice and economic equality in Denmark are among the highest in the world, and Danes take pride in pointing out that everyone has access to equal opportunities. This also applies to the Danish workplace, where the hierarchical structure is flat and everyone is regarded as equal. Such equality is interpreted as a sign that all employees are respected and treated equally.

Favorable conditions might be individually negotiated.

WHY I CHOSE TO MOVE MY FAMILY TO AARHUS

HOW WILL MOVING TO A COMPLETELY NEW COUNTRY AFFECT MY FAMILY? WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS? THEIR EDUCATION? THEIR WELLBEING? WILL I BE ABLE TO GET A JOB? AND WILL WE FIT IN IN AARHUS AS A FAMILY?

There are a lot of different questions that pop into your head when you consider starting from scratch and moving your family across borders. My family and I moved from Madrid to Aarhus in July 2015 because my husband got a job opportunity. Before coming to Denmark, we did a lot of research and tried to get to know this small country in the North. Despite of all our research, I was surprised when we finally arrived.

SMALL CITY WITH ALL THE BIG CITY POSSIBILITIES

What surprised me the most about Aarhus was the fact that you can find everything you need within walking distance. Aarhus has a vibrant city life with a wide selection of small shops, selling all different types of products. Aarhus has some really great restaurants - some are even Michelin-starred – a lot of cozy cafés near the city creek, and a broad selection of cultural activities for families. The fact that almost everybody speaks English in Denmark makes you feel very welcome.

Personally, I think the best thing about Aarhus is that you have everything in one place – the city center, the beautiful nature, the sea, and a lot of things to do with your kids. The museums, Dokk1 (public library), and playgrounds are all build so parents and children can enjoy them together.

The city center is near the countryside where you can enjoy both the beach and the beautiful forest. There is almost no traffic in the city, so you feel very safe and it is almost impossible to get lost, because everything you need is placed within walking distance. This is very reassuring when you bring your kids to a new city. Moreover, Danish society is based on

CRISTINA TARDEZ, FROM MADRID, SPAIN

Moved to Aarhus in July 2015 with her husband, daughter (7 years old) and son (4 years old).
trust and you get the feeling that “nothing bad will happen” to you or your kids. Even our 7 year old daughter can walk to school by herself and be happy and safe.

About 5,000 foreigners live and work in Aarhus – in addition there are thousands of international students – so you see and hear a lot of different nationalities when you walk in the city center, and that makes you feel that you are never alone here.

MY KIDS’ EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL

Before deciding about moving to Denmark, I wanted to make sure that my children could get an education with a high level of quality. Aarhus has a great international high school and a lot of different offers for international students. As an international citizen in Aarhus, you can participate in language classes, international playgroups, and international networks. Also you have different educational options in Danish if it is what you want. Some foreigners prefer that their kids attend a Danish public school that has very good rates – and is free – or else you can choose a private school.

The network organization, International Community, is a fantastic help – especially when we first arrived. They helped answering all our questions and made us feel part of a community. The organization offers e.g. mentor programs and a lot of social activities like sports, music, theater, and networking events.

JOB POSSIBILITIES FOR FOREIGNERS

One of my biggest concerns about moving was the issue about the possibilities for me to get a job in Denmark. It is very important for me to have a job, and it always has been, so I wanted to make sure that I moved to a city with career possibilities for internationals.

Aarhus has a lot of international minded companies, and due to Workindenmark’s (public employment service for highly qualified international candidates) job guidance, International Community’s many networking events, and a lot of personal hard work, I have now been working in one of Aarhus’ biggest international firms since August 2016. It was not easy, but I believe everybody can find a job if they work hard and stay patient.

FAMILY LIFE IS VALUED AND RESPECTED

After entering the Danish job market, I was positively surprised about the possibility to combine family and work life. Family time is very much respected in Denmark, which makes it easier to balance a career and family life. In Denmark there is a great work mentality, which means that the Danish companies are flexible and understanding if you need to stay home and take care of your ill child one day. This is essential when you do not have any relatives around as a foreigner. It makes it possible to have a great job and to prioritize your family life at the same time.

This has given us the opportunity to create a great family balance, and even though the sun is not always shining here, I would recommend Aarhus to other international families anytime.


RELATED VIDEO: Kate Thulin moved to Denmark in 2012 because of her husband’s work. Hear Kate’s story about being an accompanying spouse, finding friends and looking for a job in Denmark. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rbu-W3dsggC4
DENMARK - A COUNTRY OF CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS

DANES LOVE SOCIALIZING IN ORGANIZED CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS, AND THEY GENERALLY TEND TO MAKE MANY NEW FRIENDS THIS WAY. IN FACT, MEMBERSHIP OF CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF DANISH SOCIETY: SPORTS CLUBS, FOOD CLUBS, HOBBY CLUBS, CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS, ETHNIC CLUBS, YOU NAME IT. THERE IS A JOKE THAT IF TWO DANES SIT TOGETHER FOR FIVE MINUTES, THEY WILL START AN ASSOCIATION!

ADVANTAGES OF JOINING AN ASSOCIATION

Clubs and associations are the perfect places to socialize. Here you can meet Danes and other internationals on a regular basis who share your interests. In addition, being a member of a club helps you feel more relaxed and sociable and less stressed. Everyone is welcome to join, and it is a fun way to get to know people and form friendships. Becoming a member of a club is a great opportunity to meet Danes outside the office and expand your social network. To find out what associations are available in a particular area, you can ask your co-workers, your local library, or the municipality’s culture and leisure administration.

SPORTS CLUBS

The majority of associations in Denmark are sports clubs. Both indoor and outdoor sports activities take place all year round in Denmark and most people join to practise their favorite sport and stay fit. Two of the main umbrella organizations that make up for a large part of sports clubs in Denmark are DIF (Sports Confederation of Denmark) and DGI (Danish Gymnastics and Sports Associations). Together they represent more than three million members. Being a member of a sports club in Denmark is quite affordable, because most work is done by unpaid volunteers and municipalities cover part of the costs. In addition, many public sports facilities, including public swimming pools and indoor tennis courts, are available to be used by clubs.

HOBBY CLUBS AND OTHER TYPES OF ASSOCIATIONS

Hobby clubs are plentiful and offer a fun way to develop your passions. You can find clubs for everything from knitting, role-playing and photography, to games, bird watching or playing instruments. Political and religious societies, NGOs and charity organisations are also widespread throughout the country.

LEARNING DANISH

In clubs and associations you have plenty of opportunity to socialize with Danes and consequently learn and practice Danish. Talking about something that interests you with like-minded people lets you expand your vocabulary with words and phrases that will be useful in your everyday life!

EXPAT CLUBS AND NETWORKS

As an international in Denmark, you also have access to a great number of voluntary expat organizations and clubs where you can get in contact with like-minded people and maybe even meet other people from your home country. Many expat communities offer social events, practical information and fun activities. In addition, you can learn more about life in Denmark through professional and social events arranged by your local municipality and organizations such as Expats in Denmark, International Community Aarhus and International House Copenhagen specifically for internationals in Denmark.

JOIN A CLUB OR ASSOCIATION IN AARHUS!

In Aarhus, International Community is the main network for expats created to support international employees and accompanying family. International Community helps you settle in and expand your network through a range of seminars, events and online activities. International Community can help you find a local club or association that piques your interest. All it takes is for you to fill out an online form through their website.

SPORTS
Many children practice sports as an after-school activity, and sports clubs for children are plentiful in Aarhus. Popular sports include soccer, handball and gymnastics, but there is a wide range of sports on offer in the city. Besides physical activity, sports clubs provide the perfect platform for socializing, making friends and learning and practicing Danish.

FORENINGSMENTOR
ForeningsMentor offers to match children between the age of 6 and 17 with a club or association for free. They can either help you find a club or association corresponding to your child’s interest, or they can provide a mentor who can meet with you and your child in person and even join the activity the first couple of times until you feel comfortable going on your own.

CHILDREN AND YOUNGSTERS
The clubs and associations culture is also rich and widespread among children. Public schools offer children in up to third grade creative and social after-school activities in the SFO. Once children outgrow the SFO, they can join a youth club, which arranges sports and cultural activities after school hours. Youth clubs are for children aged 10-18. They do not offer childcare as such, but they provide a place for children and teenagers to stay in the afternoon while their parents are at work. Some youth clubs are also open for teenagers in the evening. Additionally, all the municipalities in Denmark have youth schools (ungdomskoler) for children aged 14-18 with both technical and creative courses, such as IT and photography. Enrollment is voluntary and activities are usually free of charge.
JOIN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN AARHUS FOR SOCIAL NETWORKING, SPORTS ACTIVITIES, WEEKLY NEWSLETTERS, FAMILY EVENTS, SEMINARS, AND MUCH MORE.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
International Community is a non-profit organization that supports international citizens during their stay in the Aarhus region, offering a wide range of free events, a big network, a weekly e-mail newsletter, online services, and other activities to 4,000 members – and everyone is welcome to join! You can meet International Community at International Citizen Service West in Aarhus every Thursday and Friday. Here you can hear more about their services, life as an expat in Aarhus and get more information about the offers and services in Aarhus.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER AND DAILY UPDATES ON FACEBOOK
Every Thursday at noon International Community sends out its weekly newsletter in which you can stay updated on events in International Community as well as events in all of Aarhus. It is free to sign up for the newsletter and it is a great way to get informed on what is going on and where to meet other expats and internationally minded Danes. You can sign up for the newsletter on internationalcommunity.dk. You can also stay up-to-date about what is going on in and around Aarhus by following their Facebook page, which is updated daily, as well as their Instagram profile.

YOUR GUIDE TO DENMARK
On the International Community website, you will find the “Your Guide to Denmark”. This guides you through your relocation
from before you arrive and until you settle in. Learn more about e.g. the educational system, banking in Denmark and the Danish tax system. You can also find insights about the Danish way of living and Danish culture.

MEET OTHER EXPATS
International Community arranges and hosts more than 100 events annually. Through these events, you can meet and network with other internationals and internationally minded Danes. Events cover sports activities, board games, theater performances, language exchange meetings, Friday bars and much more.

SPOUSE COMMUNITY AARHUS
Spouse Community Aarhus is a group of enthusiastic international spouses and accompanying partners from across the globe who have each made Aarhus their home. Their mission is to empower and inspire new and long-term spouses to make the most of their life in Denmark, and they aim to create an active, engaging and inclusive social community that connects experienced and established spouses with newcomers. Spouse Community Aarhus offers a wide range of activities and a lively network specifically for spouses and accompanying partners.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP
International Community in Aarhus is Denmark’s biggest community for expats. We are determined to help expats settle in when they arrive in Aarhus, and we know the importance of building both a professional and social network when arriving in a new country. You can quickly establish a network through our events, and we can help you find a club or association that matches your interests. If you have any questions or need any kind of help, we are here – just ask us! You can reach us by phone, e-mail, through Facebook and Instagram, or you can come visit us at International Citizen Service West every Thursday and Friday. We look forward to meeting you in Aarhus!

Whether you are attracted to the renowned work-life balance, the charming city atmosphere or the childfriendly society, Aarhus is a winner.

In this publication you will learn about Aarhus and Denmark as a great place to live and work.

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WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU TO AARHUS!

This publication has been made by: