

REPORT



Episode V

Short-term exchange of groups of pupils

28 March – 1 April 2022

Varde, DENMARK

INTRODUCTION

24 students and eight teachers spent five days in Varde, Denmark, to learn about human rights and the rule of law, improve their English skills, become more knowledgeable of transnational teamwork, and raise everyone's intercultural awareness.

The exchange focused on a 2019 British comedy-drama film *Blinded by the light* (external text) and a group debate on the proposition “*Nobody wins unless everybody wins*” (task-based text).

Altogether 12 sessions were held, and the following agenda items were covered:

1. The Danish language and culture
2. Partner schools' home countries
3. A trip to Esbjerg and Fanø

Language with film

4. Film reviews
5. Character study and discussion questions

Content with language

6. A debate over equality of opportunity vs. equality of outcome (equity)
7. A role play on cultural differences

Social activities

8. Teambuilding
9. Photo-hunting

The instructor-compiled and/or –generated texts (content resources)

10. Body language
11. Amnesty International
12. Sustainable development
13. The Wadden Sea



THE DANISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The session was held by **Dorte Jensen** and **Maria Vennike** from 10iCampus. We learned about the Danish culture and practised introducing ourselves in Danish. We also had a chance to pick up some typical greetings and goodbyes along with numbers and phrases to express our opinions. About six million people speak Danish (a North Germanic language) as their mother tongue. Among them are those living in Denmark, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Southern Schleswig in northern Germany.

PARTNER SCHOOLS' HOME COUNTRIES

Each partner school presented their home country with the help of illustrative slides. The participants had an opportunity to learn about the partner countries directly from their peers, and the presenters did practise their public speaking skills in return.

Belgium is a country in northwestern Europe. The Netherlands borders the country to the north, Germany to the east, Luxembourg to the southeast, France to the southwest, and the North Sea to the northwest. Belgium covers an area of 30,689 km² and has a population of more than 11.5 million. The capital and largest city is Brussels; other major cities are Antwerp, Ghent, Charleroi, Liège, Bruges, Namur, and Leuven.

Denmark is a Nordic country in Northern Europe. It is the southernmost of the Scandinavian countries, lying southwest of Sweden, south of Norway, and north of Germany. Denmark covers an area of 42,943 km² and has a population of 5.87 million. The capital and largest city is Copenhagen; other major cities are Aarhus, Odense, and Aalborg.

Estonia is a country in Northern Europe. It is bordered to the north by the Gulf of Finland across from Finland, to the west by the Baltic Sea across from Sweden, to the south by Latvia, and to the east by Lake Peipus and Russia. Estonia covers an area of 45,339 km² and has a population of 1.3 million. The capital and largest city is Tallinn; other bigger towns are Tartu, Pärnu, and Narva.

Spain is a country in southwestern Europe with parts of its territory in the Atlantic Ocean and across the Mediterranean Sea. The country's mainland is bordered to the south by Gibraltar; to the south and east by the Mediterranean Sea; to the north by France, Andorra and the Bay of Biscay; and the west by Portugal and the Atlantic Ocean. Spain covers an area of 505,990 km² and has a population of over 47 million. The capital city is Madrid; other major cities are Barcelona, Valencia, and Málaga.



ESBJERG AND FANØ

Despite a cutting wind and crisp air, the participants enjoyed a day out immensely. We started with a guided tour in little groups conducted by the local Business Gymnasium students. Next up, we visited the House of Sustainable Development Goals, where **Gert Barslund** held a thematic session. Our trip then took us over the North Sea to the Fanø island and later back to the mainland to enjoy Man Meets The Sea Sculptures at Sædding Strand north of Esbjerg.

Esbjerg is a seaport town and seat of Esbjerg Municipality on the west coast of the Jutland peninsula in southwest Denmark. With an urban population of 72,044, it is the fifth-largest city in Denmark and the largest in West Jutland.

Fanø is a Danish island in the North Sea off the coast of southwestern Denmark and is the very northernmost of the Danish Wadden Sea Islands. Interestingly enough, the island's entire western shore is one long beach, and 30,000 tourists visit Fanø each summer.



LANGUAGE WITH FILM

The language with film module of a reusable pedagogical resource titled “Human Rights & The Rule of Law” helped the participating teachers to teach about stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination, and propaganda in films. Also, the film, the actors and the film-makers were introduced in great detail.

The participants were encouraged to watch the movie twice – for gist, first, and for greater detail, second. The module then provided everyone with detailed instructions on writing effective film reviews. As a result, six students from each partner school wrote 24 reviews altogether. See at:

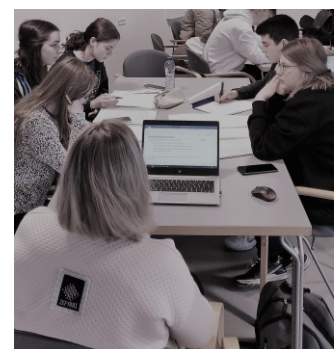
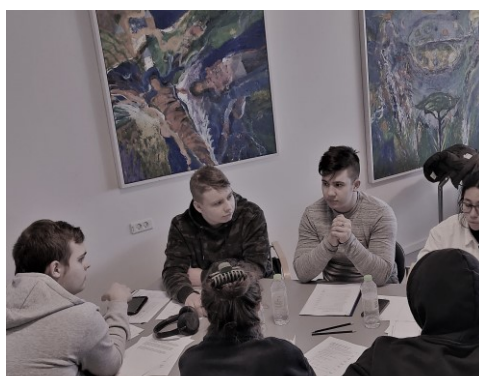
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- <https://griterasmusplus.eu/student-portfolio-v-4/>
- <https://griterasmusplus.eu/student-portfolio-v-5/>

On the spot, the transnational groups first discussed the characters of the film: Javed, Roops, Matt, Malik, and Eliza. They then completed two worksheets on a) how the characters saw themselves and what other characters thought of them and b) how many similarities and differences there were between Javed (the protagonist) and other characters.

Thirdly, the following discussion questions were covered:

1. The main character develops his worldview from Bruce Springsteen’s songs – sometimes successfully; other times not really. Why do you think that is?
2. What can a rock star from New Jersey and a British-Pakistani boy from Luton possibly have in common?
3. “A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of heart, the spirit is broken.” How do you understand this well-known proverb?

This session aimed to encourage our students to demonstrate their improved film literacy skills and apply their newly learned film-specific English vocabulary. Those who had fully done their homework benefitted most.



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CONTENT WITH LANGUAGE

In preparing for a debate on the given proposition, the participants were given a chance to improve their knowledge of different political ideologies and the rule of law. They were expected to study the materials provided via the content with language module of a reusable pedagogical resource titled “Human Rights & The Rule of Law”.

- The online content consisted of five parts: scope, content, activity, thinking and extra. The input materials informed our students about the political spectrum, two types of equality, solidarity, and responsibility in the EU. For scaffolding purposes, the material then provided our language learners with debating basics and guidelines on academic writing.
- The participants worked in two government groups and two opposition groups on the spot. They had two sessions for preparing for the debate and a final session to deliver what they’ve accomplished. Our teachers guided the groups with additional input materials, and the students had well-structured speech templates at hand.
- The groups finally held two debates discussing the differences between the equality of opportunity and equality of outcome and group solidarity versus individual responsibility.

See a video recording [here](#).



CONTENT WITH LANGUAGE

A Martian Sends a Postcard Home (Craig Raine)

Martian poetry was a **minor movement in British poetry** in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

In this poem, a Martian describes the human world in a way that makes everyday life seem odd and unfamiliar. For example:

- Books, which William Caxton first printed, are shaped like birds.
- When there's **mist** outside, it's like the sky wants to settle onto the ground because it got tired of holding itself in the air.
- When it **rains**, the world looks like imperfect images on TV. The rain makes colours dimmer.
- Like Ford's **Model T**, cars resemble rooms that you lock when you get inside.
- When you turn the key, the world starts moving. It looks like a movie displays the world passing by outside the window as you drive.
- Humans keep **time** through watches on wrists or clocks that constantly tick as if waiting for something.
- Humans have devices—**telephones**—that seem haunted by ghosts at home. When humans pick up these devices, they make noise that sounds like snoring.

The poem hints at approaching other cultures with an open mind.

So our participants played a role-play of "humans" and "aliens". Their task was to come up with the strangest questions and give as witty answers as possible. This activity drew students' attention to different perspectives of seemingly mundane life realities, improved their interviewing skills, and bolstered their self-confidence. Undoubtedly, it improved their English fluency skills, too.



SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

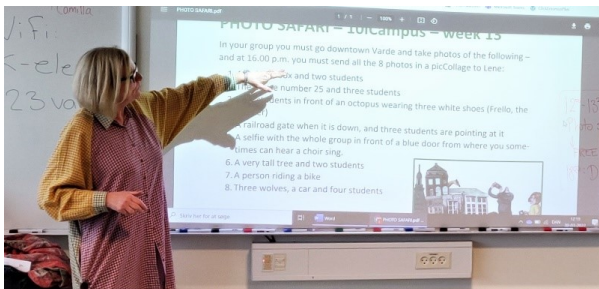


TEAMBUILDING

Most students loved the activities where they were able to collaborate via sporting tasks or role-plays. Also, sharing accommodation helped the participants to improve their intercultural communication skills.

LEGO COMPOSITIONS

Working together to express their ideas about sustainable development turned out to be both inspiring and challenging for the students. They had to negotiate different ideas within a limited time and create something tangible fast.



GOING PHOTO SAFARI

This activity encouraged the participants to go and explore the most characteristic corners in Varde. While doing so, they took funny pictures of themselves and different objects they had found.



BODY LANGUAGE

Bjarne Fugleberg ran a workshop on body language. The participants had tons of fun and understood how important it was to control their movements well. According to Talented Ladies Club, every public speaker should pay attention to the aspects below.

Posture

- Keep a good posture, stand straight with shoulders back, relaxed and feet shoulder-width apart. Do not cross your arms. Instead, put your hands in your pocket or slouch. Face the audience as much as possible and keep your body open.

Breathing

- Relaxed and deep breaths ensure that your voice holds power and can project. Use slow and measured breathing to pace your speech, pause to emphasise key points.

Gestures

- Use hand gestures to emphasise your words. Keep the audience's attention by varying your gestures, incorporating your head, arms and hands. Use positive gestures to sway your audience. When using visual aids, point and look at the relevant data. The audience will automatically follow your hands and eyes.

Eye contact

- When moving from face to face, make eye contact while speaking to ensure that the audience is engaged. When answering an audience member's question, maintain eye contact. It conveys sincerity and credibility.

Movement

- Move around the presentation space. Use movement to illustrate transitions from one subject or key point to another.

Facial expression

- A simple smile will make your audience feel more comfortable and at ease.



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Günther Paulsen enlightened the participants on human rights from the perspective of Amnesty International – a global movement of more than 10 million people in over 150 countries and territories who campaign to end abuses of human rights. Our students learned about various protest actions worldwide and why keeping watch on human rights has become such an important issue.

A VISIT TO VARDE MUNICIPALITY CENTRE

On Tuesday afternoon, **Sandie Eis Ravn** (a local politician) talked to us at Varde Municipality Centre. She shared her ideas about culture, education, youth, the elderly, the environment, and helping Ukrainian war refugees. The participants had a chance to ask questions and learn how local governments work in Denmark.

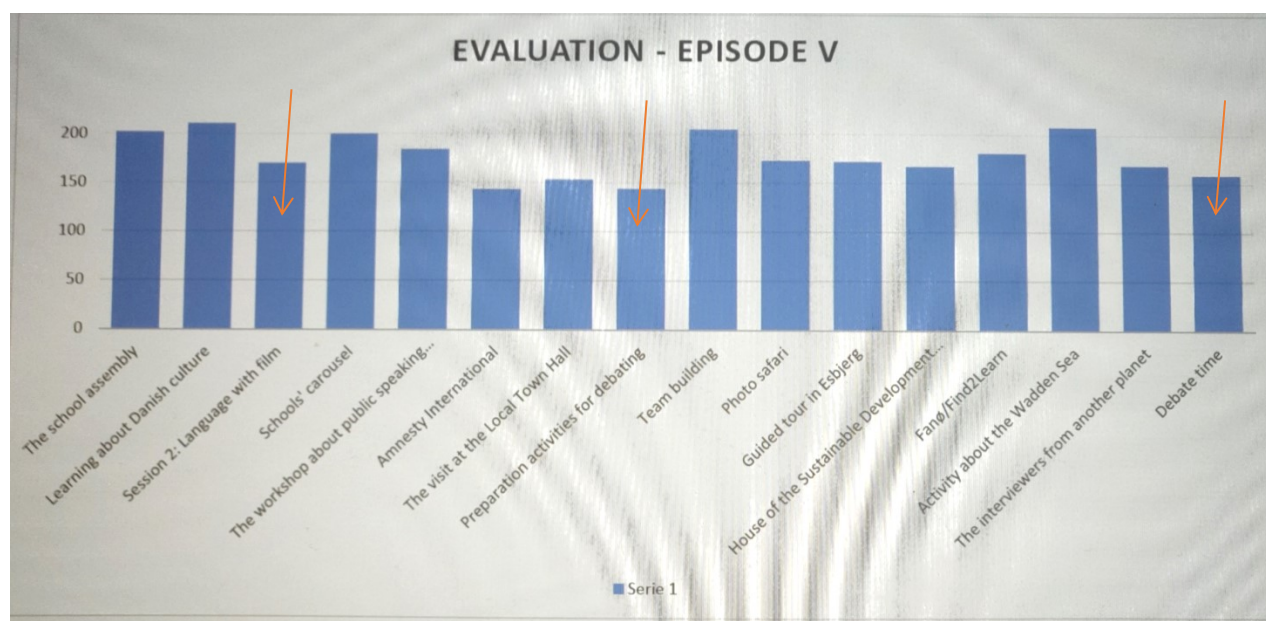


A VISIT TO THE HOUSE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In Esbjerg, we visited the House of Sustainable Development House to attend a workshop held by **Gert Barslund**. He talked about the 17 sustainable development goals, including quality education and gender equality. The students then had a task to express their ideas about equal rights between men and women with the help of mini-sculptures of LEGO.



HOW WELL DID STUDENTS LIKE THE ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT DURING THE EXCHANGE?



According to the votes given, the students best liked the opening ceremony along with the session on the Danish culture & language and the Wadden Sea. Team building, body language activities, and partner schools' carousel also went well. All this implies that novelty and excitement always work, especially when people only need to use the skills they already have.

However, the cognitively demanding activities required much more time and effort. Therefore, the activities on film and debate were less popular, which is a shame.

On the one hand, Corona restrictions considerably inhibited the preparation period before the exchange. That is why our students did not have enough time to expand their film and debate related vocabulary, learn new content and hone their text skills.

On the other hand, whenever transnational groups work on something challenging so as to deliver, there can be language problems, cultural differences, knowledge gaps and the like. Simple communicative English and improvisation may not always work.

Despite the above challenges, the participants did write their reviews and participated in group debates. They might not have liked what they did, but at least they learned about the Pakistani minority in Great Britain, Bruce Springsteen, equality, equity, solidarity, and responsibility. So all's well that ends well.

FINAL WORDS

The visiting partner schools' students and teachers would like to express a deep sense of gratitude to 10iCampus for having us. Many thanks for the cordial words delivered by **Mr Knudsmark** and **Mr Halbo Hansen**. And most importantly, cheers to our Danish team, along with **Lene** and **Camilla**.

This exchange was crucial because it had been two long years since we first met in Spain. During that time, many students had left, and we sometimes doubted that this project could survive at all. So, coming together once again felt like a saving grace in these testing times.

Now, the project we are running is 'smart' in every sense of the word. First off, it has already produced three sets of reusable pedagogical resources, and it boasts an attractive and content-rich website. Secondly, we are working on our students' innovative and creative English skills with film and content skills with language. Thirdly, we run two types of activities – those for fun and those for creative effort. And we always look into European values.

On behalf of the GRIT team

Triin Lingiene

