

Best Practices in Talent Attraction, Development and Retention

Research on International Trends and Policies

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Talent, not capital, will be the key factor linking innovation, competitiveness and growth in the 21st century.

World Economic Forum, [The Human Capital Report](#) 2015

How to attract, develop and retain highly educated and specialized talent has become a burning platform for governments across the world, with countries fighting for their share of a constantly shrinking talent pool in order to ensure prosperity.

It is a global battlefield with a diverse and increasingly aggressive spectrum of weapons. From promises of a brighter future with work-life balance and room for the family, to hard core tax incentives and permanent residence permits.

Everybody is in it. Countries that were previously fighting to avoid brain drain have become offensive. Countries that were formerly natural top destinations are no longer in a position to rest on their laurels. The winners are hard to predict. The losers are many.

The aim of this research, by DI Global Talent, is to examine Denmark's position and potential in the global fight for talent. To present international trends, identify best practices in leveraging talent, and to provide knowledge, inspiration and discussion points for further work on talent attraction, development and retention in Denmark.

Content

A Solid Danish Platform for Talent Attraction – But an Unexploited Potential	4
Ranking Analysis	5
Denmark as an Expat Destination	6
Discussion points	8
Global Talent Trends and Best International Practices	9
Mobility – Brain Circulation	9
Ireland – Global Irish.....	9
Taiwan – Attracting Returnees	9
Discussion points	10
Hubs and Clusters – Talent Magnets.....	10
Ireland – Make IT in Ireland.....	10
The Netherlands – I Amsterdam and Brainport	10
Canada – A Hotbed for Game Development	11
Estonia – Step into the Future	11
Discussion points	11
Business Beyond Borders – Autonomy and Flexibility	12
Switzerland – Local Autonomy	12
Discussion points	12
Career Opportunities – Management Practices.....	13
U.S. – “How to Win the Global War for Talent”	14
Discussion points	14
Education.....	15
Singapore – Internationalization of Education Combined with Investment in Local Talent.....	15
Developing Local Skills.....	15
Discussion points	16
Conclusion	17
Opportunities	17
Living the dream – in Denmark	17
World class – international – education.....	17
A warm welcome	17

A Solid Danish Platform for Talent Attraction – But an Unexploited Potential

Denmark generally occupies a top position in the most renowned global talent competitiveness benchmarking studies.

This research sums up the conclusions of three internationally recognized studies that are often referred to by government leaders: The [Global Talent Competitiveness Index](#) (GTCI) by INSEAD¹ (2015-2016), the [IMD World Talent Report](#) by IMD² (2015), and the [Human Capital Report](#) by the World Economic Forum³ (2015).

	GTCI	IMD	WEFORUM
1	Switzerland	Switzerland	Finland
2	Singapore	Denmark	Norway
3	Luxembourg	Luxembourg	Switzerland
4	United States	Norway	Canada
5	Denmark	Netherlands	Japan
6	Sweden	Finland	Sweden
7	United Kingdom	Germany	Denmark
8	Norway	Canada	Netherlands
9	Canada	Belgium	New Zealand
10	Finland	Singapore	Belgium

Despite a solid top ranking, Danish companies find it increasingly difficult to find the talent that they need. According to a DI survey of the business environment in Danish municipalities, [Local Business Climate 2015](#), 30% of companies have been unsuccessful in their recruiting efforts. Forecasts by the [Economic Council of the Labor Movement](#) shows a prospective lack of 70,000 people with vocational education, as well as a surplus of 65,000 unskilled people within 2025.

¹ INSEAD is one of the world's leading international business schools, headquartered in France. The fourth edition of the GTCI was presented at The Economic Forum in Davos in January 2016. The survey ranks 109 countries according to six variables (each deriving from a wide range of qualitative and quantitative indicators): Enable, Attract, Grow, Retain, Labor and Vocational Skills, Global Knowledge Skills.

² The International Institute for Management Development, IMD, is another top-ranked international business school, based in Switzerland. The second edition of the IMD World Talent Report, by the IMD World Competitiveness Center, assesses 61 countries worldwide on three aggregated factors: Investment and Development, Appeal, and Readiness (derived from indicators including education, apprenticeship, employee training, brain drain, cost of living, worker motivation, quality of life, language skills, and remuneration and tax rates).

³ First study of its kind that measures countries' ability to nurture talent through education, skills development and deployment at all stages of the human life cycle. It covers 124 economies.

The international competition for talent is fierce and there is currently consensus that the shortage of qualified labor will be one of the biggest challenges facing Danish businesses in the future.

It is a worldwide problem. In the IT industry alone, according to the EU Commission, the EU countries will lack [more than 800,000 employees within 2020](#). In Denmark, there will be more than [6,000 unfilled positions](#). Furthermore, a recent study by the Danish Business Authority, predicts that there will be [19.000 unfilled positions in 2030](#).

Ranking Analysis

To assess Denmark’s position in the global fight for talent calls for a closer look on the ranking results.

In the following table, top scores from the most relevant subcategories of the GTCI and IMD rankings⁴ are juxtaposed with the weakest scores within the same category.

Strengths (strongest scores)	Weaknesses (weakest scores)
GTCI (Global Talent Competitiveness Index)	GTCI (Global Talent Competitiveness Index)
“Enable” - overall score (3)	“Enable” - overall score (3)
Ease of hiring (1)	Competition intensity (39)
Ease of redundancy (1)	Cluster development (30)
Government effectiveness (3)	Political stability (21)
“Attract” – overall score (10)	“Attract” – overall score (10)
Gender earnings gap (1)	FDI and technology transfer (43)
Internal openness – social diversity (3)	Brain gain (38)
Gender equality (5)	Migrant stock (36)
	Brain drain (34)
	External openness (27)
	Prevalence of foreign ownership (21)
	International students (19)
	Tolerance to minorities (16)
“Grow” – overall score (2)	“Grow” – overall score (2)
Access to growth opportunities (1)	Use of virtual social networks (32)
Delegation of authority (1)	Reading, math and science (22)

⁴ Focusing on a country’s ability to leverage its existing talent rather than attracting talent from abroad, the Human Capital Report is not included in this table.

Freedom of voice (1)	Quality of management schools (20)
Tertiary education expenditure (3)	Lifelong learning (15)
Use of virtual professional networks (4)	Employee development (15)
“Retain” – overall score (21)	“Retain” – overall score (21)
Sanitation (1)	Taxation (98)
Pension system (6)	Flexible employment (36)
IMD (International Management Development)	IMD (International Management Development)
“Investment and Development” – overall score (1)	“Investment and Development” – overall score (1)
Public expenditure on education (1)	Ratio students/teaching staff (21)
Employee training (1)	Percentage of female in labor force (14)
“Appeal” – overall score (9)	“Appeal” – overall score (9)
Worker motivation (2)	Effective personal income tax rate (61)
Remuneration in service professions (2)	Cost of living (55)
Attract and retain talent is a priority for companies (3)	Foreign high skilled people attracted to business environment (31)
“Readiness” – overall score (6)	“Readiness” – overall score (6)
Language skills (3)	Labor force growth (30)
Finance skills readily available (4)	International experience among senior management (16)
Skilled labor readily available (4)	Science in schools sufficiently emphasized (12)

It seems that while Denmark’s solid ranking provides a strong talent readiness and competitiveness platform, this does not translate into equally positive results in terms of a strong ability to attract and retain talents. One clear illustration of this is that while Danish businesses consider talent attraction a top priority (3), foreign high skilled people are not correspondingly attracted to the Danish business environment (31).

Denmark as an Expat Destination

The gap between “talent readiness” (intentions and investments) and “talent attraction” (reality and results) is further illustrated by a number of expat surveys.

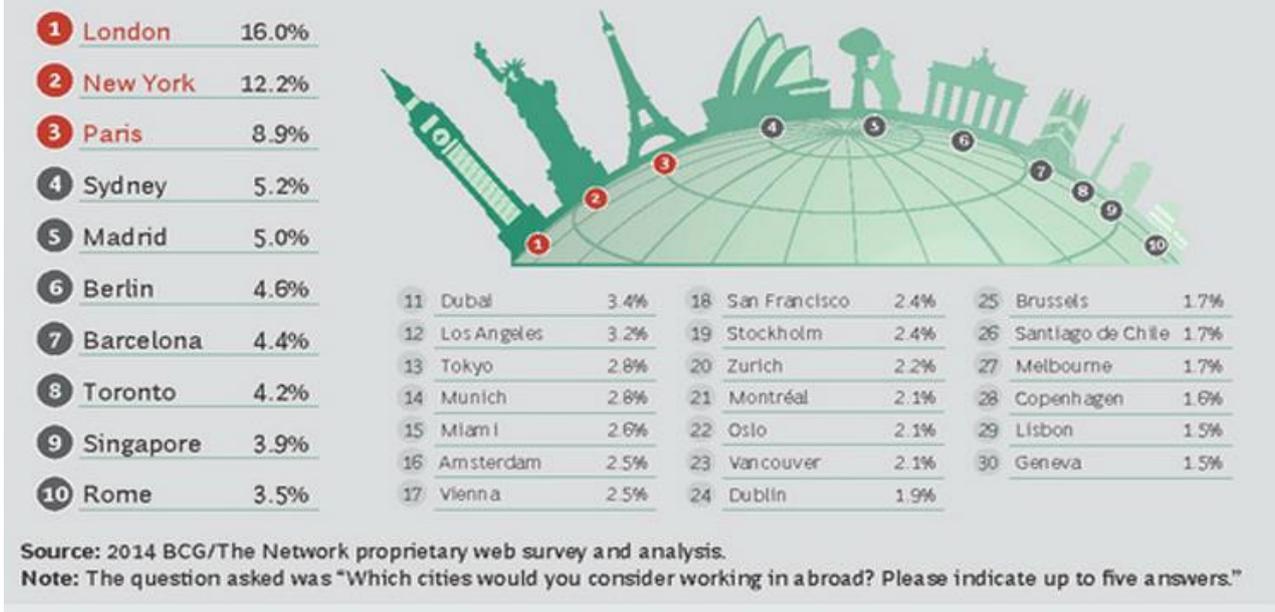
An analysis from Boston Consulting Group, [Decoding Global Talent](#) (2014), examines the appeal of specific foreign destinations. In this survey, Denmark is not cited among the top ten countries where foreigners would like to work.

EXHIBIT 5 | Top Ten Countries Where Foreigners Say They Would Work



In the same study, when asked “Where else besides your home country would you work?”, Copenhagen ranks 28.

LONDON, NEW YORK, AND PARIS ARE SEEN AS THE MOST APPEALING



In its [Expats Insider Survey](#) for 2015, InterNations, a worldwide community for expats, ranks the best countries for expats to live in. They asked 14,000 participants from 195 countries a series of questions relating to their abroad experience.

The resulting list of top destinations for expats is based on factors such as job opportunities, salary considerations, quality of life, and safety. In this survey, Denmark ranks 39. In a parallel survey, Expat Insider asks the respondents to name the “destination of their dreams”. In this survey, Denmark ranks 31.

Discussion points

- Denmark’s most negative scores, taxation and cost of living in particular, remain constant and highly tangible factors in the global fight for talent.
- It is questionable whether Denmark’s most positive scores can continue to counterbalance the negative scores in the longer run and, more importantly, whether these do in fact have an actual impact on talent attraction and retention (e.g. factors such as social diversity and sanitation).
- Denmark’s most positive scores are often related to factors that are less visible and need more explanation in the recruitment process (e.g. scores linked to co-management, freedom of speech, a flat hierarchy and good career opportunities).
- The weak score on “cluster development” should be paid particular attention. Companies today require increasingly specialized skills and top talents tend to look for career destinations where they can exchange knowledge and learn within their specific field of expertise.

Global Talent Trends and Best International Practices

The following aims at providing a global outlook on current trends in the fight for talent⁵ and to take a closer look at some of the countries, regions or cities that are sometimes referred to as best practices.

Mobility – Brain Circulation

Mobility is a key ingredient of talent attraction, development and retention. Trends are moving from *brain drain* to *brain circulation* where people having lived and learnt abroad may return for the benefit of their home country.

What were once 'lost actors' can now become 'national assets'. What was once a one-way flow of people can now become a two flow of people, knowledge and finance. Countries that historically lost the most to migration are now in a position to benefit the most. Brain drain can become brain gain and brain exchange.

[Why Diaspora Matters](#), 2015

Tightly linked to *brain circulation* is the importance of **diaspora**. According to GTCI, more than half of all UN states today have diaspora departments or ministries.

Ireland – Global Irish

Ireland appointed its first minister for the Irish diaspora in 2014 and published its first diaspora policy, Global Irish, in March 2015.

As part of this policy, a Global Irish online hub on the Department of Foreign Affairs website, provides pre-departure information for emigrants on the most popular destinations for Irish people, with details of Irish organizations and networks, and tips and advice on settling into a new home abroad.

It also provides information on returning to Ireland with details of jobs and training opportunities, housing, education, and how to set up a business.

Taiwan – Attracting Returnees

Taiwan experienced a major brain drain 50 years ago but has managed to woo back emigrants from Silicon Valley to build a thriving electronics and technology industry.

Some of this success can be attributed to strong economic growth and relative political stability. But three policies contributed to the success: actively networking with the Taiwanese diaspora so as to promote its return; subsidizing vocational rather than advanced education so that returnees would find a ready labor force; and the creation of science parks that replicated the Silicon Valley environment and lifestyle that the returnees were used to.

With its strong economy, Taiwan is now trying to attract foreign talent as well. It is increasingly easier to go and work there, with the opportunity to become a resident after having launched a successful business.

However, emigration still presents challenges. Talent from Taiwan increasingly goes to mainland China, where some of the most promising technology firms have been started by Taiwanese entrepreneurs (many concentrated in the Shanghai area)⁶.

⁵ Primarily based on the three benchmarking studies referred to above.

⁶ [The Global Talent Competitiveness Index](#), 2015/2016

Discussion points

- Denmark does not have a publicly presented diaspora strategy and there is currently limited awareness of the number and characteristics of highly educated Danes going abroad to pursue their career. Neither is there much information on Danish returnees.
- Danish expats considering their return are equally facing difficulties in particular if they wish to bring a foreign spouse/partner.
- In a time of *brain circulation*, it is crucial to raise awareness not only of the *inflow* of talents but equally of the *outflow*. To gain understanding of and to proactively work on the factors driving local Danish talents, at any level in their career, to leave Denmark and, in some cases, not return.

Hubs and Clusters – Talent Magnets

While much of talent development may lie in the hands of countries, highly skilled people are attracted more by cities and regions than countries. They do not think of the United States versus England or Australia versus Sweden, they think of Silicon Valley versus Cambridge and Sydney versus Stockholm.

The [Global Talent Competitiveness Index](#), 2015/2016

Clusters and hubs increasingly act as talent magnets as they create opportunities for talents to learn, grow and socialize with peers.

Today, a very large number of countries aim at positioning themselves in the global fight for talent through hubs or regional clusters, with a predominance of ICT.

Ireland – Make IT in Ireland

With Dublin as its absolute spearhead, [Make IT in Ireland](#) is an industry led initiative to help people find new careers in Ireland's tech sector.

It started in January 2013 with funding from the biggest tech companies in Ireland including Google, Twitter, Facebook, Microsoft, PayPal and others.

Initially the aim was to attract people from outside of Ireland. Today, it is split 50:50 between people moving to Ireland and people already living in the country.

Dublin (...) has been successful in building a reputation as a technology hub, and developing an attractive lifestyle for tech professionals has been an important part of the equation. Ireland is today the world's largest software exporter behind the US.

The [Global Talent Competitiveness Index](#), 2015/2016

The Netherlands – I Amsterdam and Brainport

Amsterdam is working actively to attract and retain more international talent. The [Amsterdam Economic Board](#), which brings together businesses, education institutions and government bodies in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, is committed to achieving this objective through its program "Amsterdam Works", under the brand [I Amsterdam](#).

Another regional initiative in the Netherlands is [Brainport](#), with Eindhoven at its heart, which actively promotes itself as a dynamic high-tech region.

Canada – A Hotbed for Game Development

Canada is one of the fastest-growing *hotbeds* for game development with more than 470 gaming companies. Since 2013 alone, the Canadian gaming industry has seen the establishment of more than 140 new companies. Together, they employ more than 20,000 people and generate far more related jobs in the Canadian economy. Almost 20% of the workforce in the Canadian gaming industry are non-Canadians.

One of the most quoted reasons for Canada's success in this clear focus are the numerous both national and provincial tax incentives programs, development funds, and various grants offered start-ups in particular.

Jayson Hilchie, ESAC (Entertainment Software Association Canada) president and CEO, says the industry's reliance on out-of-country talent is a benefit to Canada.

"A third of these temporary foreign workers end up becoming permanent Canadian residents," he said, adding that a further eight per cent go on to become citizens. "So we're actually creating new Canadians, per se. As far as I'm concerned, that's a really positive stat."⁷

Estonia – Step into the Future

As one of the newer protagonists in the global fight for talent, Estonia has recently stepped up efforts to become beneficiary rather than losing out in the *brain circulation*, branding itself as "the little Silicon Valley of Europe".

Part of a series of initiatives, the public portal Workinestonia.com, developed with funding from the European Regional Development Fund, has a clear message:

Do you want to step into the future? Work and live in a paperless digital and tech-savvy society, where innovation and forward-looking ideas are cherished; where your input is valued, thus paving a way for you to succeed? All this, while living in a clean, safe and spacious country with educated, smart and friendly people?

Discussion points

- According to [Cluster Excellence Denmark](#), Denmark has more than 50 clusters and innovative networks that aim to create growth and innovation nationally or regionally. However, in the GTCI, Denmark scores low on Cluster Development (30), leading to believe that there is significant room for improvement in this area.
- The reasoning behind branding and promoting such a large number of clusters in a small country like Denmark, rather than focusing on a few key strength areas, can be questioned. In particular, when taking into account that countries currently promoting themselves through hubs and clusters are the rule rather than the exception, leading to a fierce competition at all levels.
- Currently a lot of work is done to promote the major Danish cities as attractive cities to work and live in for foreign talents. As the spearhead, Copenhagen ranks consistently high in benchmarking studies on international cities. It is however worth reflecting on why the Danish capital has dropped from its usual number one spot to number ten in Monocle's annual survey on ["Most Livable Cities" 2015](#).
- As illustrated by the expat studies referred to above, there seems to be a gap between tourists passing by and foreign talents prepared to actually settle in Copenhagen.

⁷ Sources: [Essential facts about the Canadian video game industry](#), ESAC annual report 2015, [Why you should start your video game company in Canada](#), Venture Beat 2015, [Foreign workers filling talent gaps in Canada's fast-growing video game industry](#), National Post 2015.

Business Beyond Borders – Autonomy and Flexibility

A manager in an international company may be required to divide his time between the headquarters and the sister company, spending part of his time in one country, part of his time in another. In addition, technology brings along increased opportunities for working partly or entirely remote.

Increased mobility across borders leads to new requirements in terms of a more flexible legislation. Not only on a national level, but on a regional or local level as well.

Cities and regions in many countries enjoy a degree of administrative and fiscal autonomy that allows them to shape customized strategies to attract talent of specific kinds (...). Leveraging this autonomy, many cities and regions display a degree of agility (in changing rules, incentives and regulations) that makes them more able to target talent than national economies.

The [Global Talent Competitiveness Index](#), 2015/2016

Switzerland – Local Autonomy

With its 26 cantons independently promoting inbound investments and having individual strategies, Switzerland, a top scorer in international talent rankings, enjoys great flexibility in attracting and retaining talent.

Many of Switzerland's cantons make significant use of financial incentives to attract investment. Some of the more aggressive cantons have occasionally waived taxes for new firms for up to ten years; however, this practice has been criticized by the European Union and is consequently likely to be abolished between 2018 and 2020. Individual income tax rates vary widely across the 26 cantons.

However, the approval of a February 9, 2014 public referendum restricting the free movement of citizens from the European Union in and through Switzerland has strained relations with the EU. This could have negative economic consequences for Switzerland, and the Swiss economy in particular. The Swiss government is currently in discussions with the EU on this matter⁸.

Discussion points

- Denmark cannot compare or compete in the field of regional autonomy and flexibility.
- Danish national legislation is currently not geared towards the “international nomad”. The process of obtaining residence and work permit, along with a Danish CPR and tax card, is an administrative burden for companies employing foreign labor.
- Also, the Danish tax liability (full or limited) is likely to have a discouraging effect on many foreign talents considering taking up partial/project work in Denmark.
- This is very far from a *free movement of workers*. It should be an absolute priority to ease legislation in this field in order to make it not only possible, but also profitable for Danish companies to employ international talent on a flexible basis.

⁸ [Switzerland Investment Climate Statement 2015](#), US Department of State

Career Opportunities – Management Practices

Research shows that, among the needs and expectations of the millennial generation (across the world but notably in Asian emerging markets), the thirst for professional and personal development is prominent (...).

The [Global Talent Competitiveness Index](#), 2015/2016

When competing for global talent, the EU seems to be lagging far behind the US, Canada or Australia. Not only in the quality of high-skilled migrants it is attracting, but also in terms of offering opportunities for highly-skilled migrants to contribute to innovation, to be entrepreneurial and to start new businesses⁹.

Migrants originate from an increasingly diverse number of countries, but they move to a shrinking pool of prime destinations such as Us, Canada, Australia or Switzerland. The mobility of the top talent, such as scientists and inventors, is even more concentrated.

The [Global Talent Competitiveness Index](#), 2015/2016

Figure 3: Migration corridors of inventors: Top 10 South-North flows



Source: WPCO 2013, Database of Migrant Inventors

The [Global Talent Competitiveness Index](#), 2015/2016

However, according to GTCI, management practices are an important element in talent attraction and retention – and one on which the Nordic countries are positioned to outperform, scoring high on meritocracy, professional management and attention to employee development.

As GTCI expresses it: “If you want to live the American dream, go Nordic”.

⁹ Migration and Innovation: [Why Is Europe Failing to Attract the Best and Brightest?](#) (2015)

U.S. – “How to Win the Global War for Talent”

Despite its solid position as “land of opportunity”, the U.S seems to be stepping up its efforts to attract and retain talent. Following is an extract from a discussion article in the renowned magazine [Foreign Policy](#) (2015):

“As the U.S. economy gains strength while other countries face roadblocks to growth, now is the time for America to engineer a massive raid on the brain power abroad and capture the world’s scientists, tech-savvy talent, engineers, and mathematicians. (...)

Circulating in Congress now are at least [five bills](#) that embrace more visas for foreign graduate students studying in the United States. One example is the [Immigration Innovation Act of 2015](#) (...) which removes *all* quantitative caps on foreign graduate students in the United States who earn advanced degrees in STEM fields (...)

(...) In addition to amending current immigration law, we should go even further than just expanding visa opportunities for the graduate students who are in the United States. Washington should organize a public-private consortium composed of men and women from government and academia. This group would have two purposes.

First, it would be dedicated to proactively finding and attracting the best talent in the world in places that might not be on the conventional path. We don’t have to worry about students from France, China, India, and Israel finding their way to the United States. But what about targeting emerging-market nations such as Vietnam, Nigeria, or even Iran in order to identify the best and brightest and seeing whether we can get them to America’s shores?

Second, this new organization should create a fund to subsidize foreign talent, a fund based entirely on merit. Money could be raised from U.S. corporations and big municipalities, all of which have so much to gain (...).

For all the social tensions in the country, for all the political gridlock, foreigners are still lining up to stay in America, if only they could. Under what public interest rationale should they be pushed away?”

Discussion points

- Denmark scores extremely high on management related factors such as *Access to growth opportunities* (1), *Freedom of voice* (1), *Delegation of authority* (1) and *Employee training* (1).
- In this regards, Denmark seems in a strong position to answer the aspirations of very ambitious international talents by offering opportunities for a faster career advancement than what they are likely to find in many other countries with e.g. more hierarchical company structures.
- In order to promote Denmark internationally as a “land of opportunity”, it could be useful to highlight foreigners (numbers as well as profiles), who have made it to the very top of Danish international companies.

Education

(...) what makes a country attractive is the quality of educational opportunities, notably higher education. Since education is the entry point into the talent pool, countries such as the US, Canada, Australia, the UK and France have been using higher education as way of attracting young people with high potential from countries around the world since few nations can afford a world-class educational system. Singapore has rapidly built a world-class educational infrastructure, China is attracting students from India and South Korea, and the Gulf nations are investing heavily here. South Korea, Cyprus and many other nations aspire to becoming educational hubs.

The [Global Talent Competitiveness Index](#), 2015/2016

Singapore – Internationalization of Education Combined with Investment in Local Talent

Singapore has succeeded in positioning itself as a global education hub by attracting talented students, teaching staff and researchers from around the world. Of particular interest is the close linkage that exists between the internationalization of higher education and industrial policy with internationalization efforts being led not by the Ministry of Education, but by the Economic Development Board (EDB).

In 1998, the EDB established the World Class Universities Program with the aim of attracting at least 10 foreign universities to establish facilities in Singapore over a 10-year period. In 2002 the government took the concept a step further with the launch of the Global Schoolhouse Initiative. Under this initiative, continuing efforts to attract foreign universities were accompanied by a new emphasis on the attraction of foreign students. The numerical target was to attract 150,000 fully self-funded foreign students by 2015. As a result, the percentage of foreign students at universities in Singapore reached 18% at one point.

In addition, universities have stepped up their efforts to recruit foreign teaching staff and it is not rare to see 50-70 percent of the teaching staff at a university in Singapore being foreign-born.

Developing Local Skills

In parallel to the internationalization of its education, Singapore is investing massively in development of local talent notably through [SkillFuture](#).

SkillsFuture is a national movement to provide Singaporeans with the opportunities to develop their fullest potential throughout life, regardless of their starting points. As part of this initiative, from January 2016, all Singaporeans aged 25 and above will receive a \$500 SkillsFuture Credit to be used on top of existing government course subsidies to pay for a wide range of approved skills-related courses. These include courses at polytechnics, universities, private institutes as well as from online platforms.

No matter where you are in life – schooling years, early career, mid-career or silver years – you will find a variety of resources to help you attain mastery of skills. Skills mastery is more than having the right paper qualifications and being good at what you do currently; it is a mindset of continually striving towards greater excellence through knowledge, application and experience. With the help of the SkillsFuture Council, education and training providers, employers, unions – you can own a better future with skills mastery and lifelong learning. Your skills. Your asset. Your future.

With many English language courses and quality educations, Denmark is attractive for international students as a study country. Today 12 percent of all students enrolled in tertiary education in Denmark are international students. However, Denmark does not have a strategy to attract the best talented students from other countries. In 2013, EU judges ruled that international students from EU and EØS should also be entitled to Danish SU-grants provided they worked about 8 hours per week in Denmark. This has caused the cost of grants to international students to rise rapidly. Only 18 percent of the international students, who have completed a tertiary education, are working in Denmark one year after their graduation.

Discussion points

- While Denmark aspires to attract foreign students and aims at developing an educational system that is international by nature, it is questionable whether enough is done in this area to attract the best talented students.
- In addition, it is questionable whether Danish universities/institutes are perceived abroad as being international and of a sufficiently high quality to attract foreign top talents. According to a survey by [Times Higher Education](#), three Danish universities have currently made it to the top 100 of European universities: Copenhagen University (33), Aarhus University (46) and Denmark's Technical University (82). It can and should be questioned whether this is satisfactory.
- The number of international students choosing to follow and finish an education in Denmark has almost doubled since 2008¹⁰. While it is positive with the current focus on this valuable talent pool by actors such as Copenhagen Capacity and International House Copenhagen¹¹, more should be done at a national level to broaden collaboration and strengthen the link between companies and educations to retain international students in Denmark.

¹⁰ [Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2015.](#)

¹¹ [As part of the Greater Copenhagen Career Program, Copenhagen Capacity and International House Copenhagen have launched a targeted career path for app. 400 international students and graduates.](#)

Conclusion

Denmark occupies a solid ranking in international talent benchmarking studies. However, talent readiness and competitiveness, while providing a strong platform, does not translate into a top position when it comes to attracting and retaining talent.

New countries are emerging and governments across the world are becoming increasingly innovative and aggressive in their incentives to woo talents to their economies. This research has dealt with only a small fraction of international best practices – examples abound.

If Denmark does not opt for a national talent strategy, proactively branding our key strengths and continuously working on our weaknesses, we risk losing ground in the global fight for talent. In order to gain sufficient impact internationally, it is crucial with a coordinated national effort and a clear focus.

DI Consortium for Global Talent proposes a collaboration across political parties, academia and businesses with the aim of reaching a common voice on a targeted value proposition and an international talent strategy for Denmark.

This research has revealed a number of opportunities for further thoughts on talent attraction, development and retention in Denmark. More will undoubtedly occur from future work and discussions.

Opportunities

Living the dream – in Denmark

With its non-hierarchical company structures and unique work culture, Denmark has a strong but yet underexploited platform for satisfying the ambitions of career-focused international talents.

More should be done to highlight this positive aspect abroad. One way could be to associate international Danish based top-talents actively as “ambassadors” in a coordinated international effort, from graduates to senior board members and CEOs.

World class – international – education

The Danish education system is renowned and respected. However, more should be done to strengthen its international appeal among Danish returnees as well as international talents in order to make it truly competitive.

It should be considered to work actively to attract more international teaching staff as well as more international educational institutions/universities (in terms of establishment or in terms of collaboration).

Also, with an increasing number of international students choosing to study in Denmark, strong focus should be put on retention of this valuable talent pool.

A warm welcome

The reception of international talents in Denmark is world class with a number of model initiatives and measures along with an exemplary International Citizens Service. However, this is not communicated sufficiently today.

The Danish immigration debate is at risk of having a tarnishing effect on Denmark’s ability to attract international talent. It is of a common responsibility to ensure that the positive stories about international talents working and living in Denmark are being communicated. One way to do this is to associate Danish-based talents in a coordinated international effort.