



The collage is a visual representation of the OMA brand, featuring a variety of elements:

- Top Left:** A circular inset showing a woman in a red dress holding a small object, with the text "OMA MARGARINE" below it.
- Top Right:** A circular inset showing an elephant's head with a red "M" logo on its trunk.
- Middle Left:** A circular inset showing a man in a white suit, resting his chin on his hand.
- Middle Right:** A circular inset showing a red swan.
- Bottom Left:** A circular inset showing a white envelope with the "OMA MARGARINE" logo.
- Bottom Center:** A large, textured, red, abstract shape that dominates the lower half of the collage.
- Bottom Right:** A circular inset showing a red car.
- Bottom Left (Large):** A large, textured, red, abstract shape that dominates the lower left corner.
- Bottom Center (Large):** A large, textured, red, abstract shape that dominates the lower center.
- Bottom Right (Large):** A large, textured, red, abstract shape that dominates the lower right corner.
- Bottom Left (Small):** A small inset showing a red car.
- Bottom Center (Small):** A small inset showing a red car.
- Bottom Right (Small):** A small inset showing a red car.
- Bottom Left (Small):** A small inset showing a red car.
- Bottom Center (Small):** A small inset showing a red car.
- Bottom Right (Small):** A small inset showing a red car.

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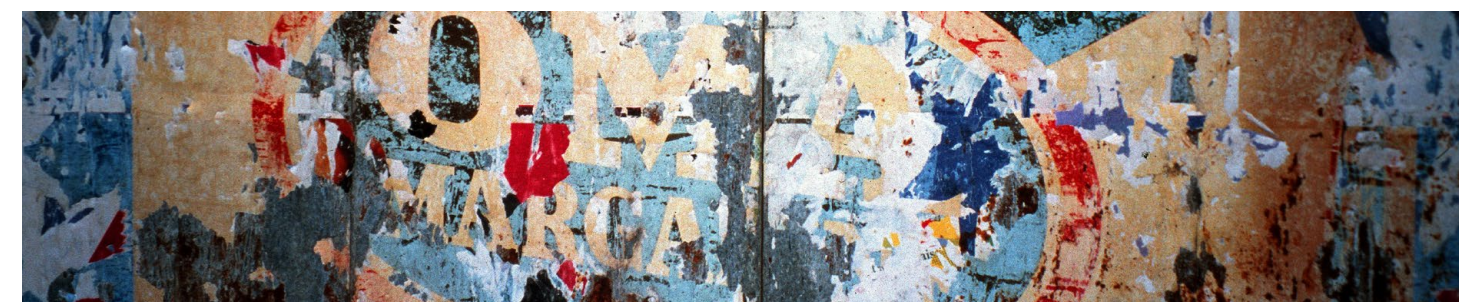
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# Articles of association of the Otto Mønsted Foundation

**The foundation's principal purpose is to contribute to the development of Danish trade and industry.**

The foundation was established in accordance with the will of wholesaler Otto Mønsted, dated 1916. The object of the Otto Mønsted Foundation is to contribute to the development of Danish trade and industry. According to the original deed of the foundation from 1934, the funds distributed by the foundation are intended for:

## O1

Supporting the education of talented young businessmen and engineering students or graduates with no private means. The diligence and endeavors of the grant recipients will be monitored as far as possible, and the support will cease if the conditions for receiving it are not fulfilled.

## O2

Educating teachers at business schools, the Technical University of Denmark and possibly the technical colleges in Denmark.

## O3

Promoting and developing plans and undertakings within trade and industry which the board of the foundation deems to have the potential for promoting Denmark's commercial and corporate sector or otherwise being honourable for Denmark.

## Otto Mønsted Foundation

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## Board of directors of the Otto Mønsted Foundation



**Nis Alstrup, Chairman**  
Former Chief Executive Officer,  
Aleris-Hamlet Hospitals A/S  
Joined the Board: 1 January  
2018



**Bjarne Kjær Ersbøll,  
Board member**  
Professor and Head of  
Scientific Advisory Services,  
DTU Compute  
Joined the Board: 1 January  
2018



**Vibeke Svendsen,  
Board member**  
Former Chief Executive Officer  
and Partner, Envotherm A/S  
Joined the Board: 1 January  
2022

## Executive Management



**Chief Executive Officer  
Nina Movin**  
CEO of Otto Mønsted A/S and  
the Otto Mønsted Foundation  
since 15 December 2016.

Photos: Dan Møller

**59,941,350\***  
Special purposes

## Grants 2025

**3,421,743**  
Research stays abroad

**3,667,419**  
International conference participation

**9,654,750**  
International  
visiting professors

**11,087,843**  
Merit-based  
study stays abroad

**580.000**  
The Bright Idea Award

\*The category "Special purposes" includes, as an extraordinary item, a donation of DKK 50 million to the University of Southern Denmark. See page 8.

# Number of grants awarded worldwide 2025



## North America

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Conference participation | 136 |
| Research stays           | 45  |
| Merit-based study stays  | 198 |



## South America

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Conference participation | 18 |
| Research stays           | 3  |
| Merit-based study stays  | 24 |

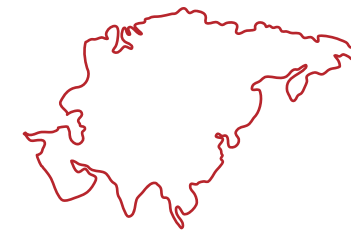


## Australia

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Conference participation | 17  |
| Research stays           | 20  |
| Merit-based study stays  | 205 |



Photo: Danish Museum of Science and Technology



## Asia

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Conference participation | 87  |
| Research stays           | 15  |
| Merit-based study stays  | 257 |



## Africa

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Conference participation | 3 |
| Research stays           | 1 |
| Merit-based study stays  | 4 |



## Europe

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Conference participation | 306 |
| Research stays           | 120 |
| Merit-based study stays  | 442 |

# The largest donation in the foundation's history

**In 2025, the foundation pledged a DKK 50 million donation towards the establishment of an innovation hub at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) in Odense.**

The year 2025 became an extraordinary one with the board of directors' decision to support the university's innovation vision with DKK 50 million. This is the largest single donation in the foundation's history and has been earmarked for the creation of a new, creative innovation hub on the Odense campus.

The new 3,700 m<sup>2</sup> facility is intended to become a vibrant environment for students and recent graduates with promising ideas and the ambition to turn them into reality. With a focus on entrepreneurship, start-ups and building bridges between students, investors and industry, the innovation hub will serve as a dynamic platform where ideas can grow into sustainable businesses.

The building will include event facilities, workshop areas and meeting places for students, start-ups and companies.

## Future-proof collaboration with industry

With the new innovation hub, SDU is demonstrating a strong commitment to improving the conditions for entrepreneurship, job creation and collaboration. The innovation hub will be located directly on campus in an area with strong engineering and business research and educational environments and will be connected to the university's other buildings by walkways.

The building will border a 45-hectare area, where the Municipality of Odense is planning the SDU Science & Innovation Park in collaboration with private investors.

This will give SDU's new innovation hub an optimal and highly visible location close to a completely new research and development environment with space for companies operating in knowledge-intensive business sectors.

SDU expects the construction costs of the new building to exceed DKK 120 million. In addition to the DKK 50 million donation from the Otto Mønsted Foundation, SDU will finance the remaining construction costs, supplementary works, furnishings and equipment.

According to Nis Alstrup, Chairman of the Otto Mønsted Foundation, the board takes great pride in supporting the university's ambitious initiative.

"We hope the innovation hub will inspire even more young people to turn their ideas into reality and contribute to innovation and growth in Denmark. Every year, when we assess applications for The Bright Idea Award, we are impressed by the talent at SDU. The new innovation hub holds tremendous potential for enabling even more students to realize their ambitions and create real value in practice."



SDU Campus in Odense.  
Photo: University of Southern Denmark.

# Research stay brings home the latest knowledge on AI microchips



## PhD student Darío Fernández Khatiboun from Aarhus University collaborated with international experts in California.

You do not need to switch on every light in the house to read a book. One lamp providing exactly the light you need is enough.

Most artificial intelligence systems do not work that way today. Many AI solutions consume enormous amounts of energy and therefore require increasingly larger data centers because, in practice and often unnecessarily, they "switch on all the lights" by performing far more calculations than a specific task actually requires.

This is the challenge that PhD student Darío Fernández Khatiboun from Aarhus University is working to address.

With support from the Otto Mønsted Foundation, he had the opportunity to undertake a research stay at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) from May to August 2025. There, he collaborated with international

experts in advanced AI models and gained new insights into how complex AI systems can be made smaller and more efficient without compromising accuracy.

Darío Fernández Khatiboun works with so-called neuromorphic technology, which is based on the way the human brain functions. His research focuses on developing new types of computer chips for artificial intelligence that imitate the brain's ability to activate only the parts of the system required for a specific task instead of using its full capacity.

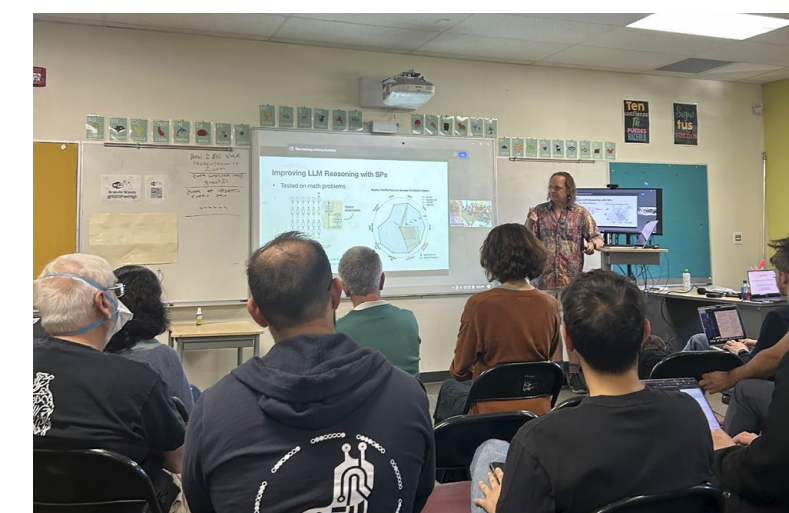
## Danish-American teamwork

The research stay made it possible to combine Danish expertise in hardware design with international research into advanced AI models.

This opens the possibility of integrating artificial intelligence directly into technologies ranging from industrial robots and intelligent sensors to self-driving cars and drones. In this way, AI systems can move out of large, energy-intensive data centers and closer to their practical applications, where they can operate autonomously in real time.

## 204 Research stays

The Otto Mønsted Foundation awarded a total of DKK 3,421,743 for research stays, distributed across 204 grants in 2025.



PhD student Darío Fernández Khatiboun from Aarhus University collaborated with international experts.

# Visiting professors 2025

## Technical University of Denmark

**Anna I. Krylov**

University of Southern California

**Barzin Mobasher**

Arizona State University

**Daniel Rettenwander**

Norwegian University of Science and Technology

**Dragomir Neshev**

Australian National University

**Francois Ganachaud**

INSA Lyon

**Hossein Farahmand**

Norwegian University of Science and Technology

**Jade Morton**

University of Colorado Boulder

**Jocelyn Rose**

Cornell University

**Kazuhide Ito**

Kyushu University

**Li Lan**

Shanghai Jiao Tong University

**Matthew P. DeLisa**

Cornell University

**Ramunas Stepanauskas**

Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences

**Tejas Gorur Sreemnivas Murthy**

Indian Institute of Science Bangalore

**Volker Blank**

McGill University

**Ioannis Economou**

Texas A&M University

## Copenhagen Business School

**Anthony Strittmatter**

FernUni Schweiz UniDistance Suisse

**Anupama Sen**

University of Oxford

**Bo Bernhard Nielsen**

University of Sydney Business School

**David Berry**

University of Sussex

**Deirdre Mary Tate**

Victoria University of Wellington

**Erik A. Mooi**

University of Melbourne

**Håkan Johansson**

Lund University

**Jing Li**

Simon Fraser University

**Kean Birch**

York University, Toronto

**Klaus Weber**

Northwestern University

**Martin J. Conyon**

Bentley University

**Mitchell L. Stevens**

Stanford University

**Nathaniel Hartmann**

University of South Florida

**Ofer Setty**

Tel Aviv University

**Sören Segger-Piening**

University of Osnabrück

**Stratos Ramoglou**

Bristol University

**Timothy LaPira**

James Madison University

## University of Southern Denmark

**Birgit Leick**

University of South-Eastern Norway,

School of Business

**Fabiano Bernardi**

Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul

**Naser Tavajohi**

Umeå University

**Paul Steffens**

University of Adelaide

**Praveen Kumar**

Indian Institute of Science

**Ulugbek Shaislamov**

National University of Uzbekistan

## Aalborg University

**Irena Petrinic**

University of Maribor

**Lang Tong**

Cornell University

**Marco Merkli**

Memorial University of Newfoundland

**Surya Prakash Singh**

Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

**Vassilis Stathopoulos**

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

## Aarhus University

**Ana Lucia Caneca Cavalcanti**

University of York

**Kakoli Bose**

ACTREC, Tata Memorial Centre

# Visiting professor strengthened research and talent development

**With a grant from the Otto Mønsted Foundation, the Technical University of Denmark (DTU) welcomed visiting professor Ioannis Economou from Texas A&M University in Qatar in February 2025.**

The grant funded a three-month stay at the Department of Chemical and Biochemical Engineering. The contribution of the visiting professor is regarded as having been highly valuable for the department's ongoing research, teaching activities and DTU's visibility within the global research community.

Professor Ioannis Economou primarily strengthened the university's capacity in the fields of molecular modelling and sustainable technologies – an area of key importance to the green transition and the energy systems of the future.

His research focuses on the development of advanced computer models for molecular simulation that can predict how atoms and molecules behave and interact with one another. This digital technology can, among other things, be used to design new materials, predict pressure and temperature conditions, and improve our understanding of how different liquids and gases behave. In many cases, these scientific simulations provide a sophisticated alternative to conventional laboratory experiments.

By using these efficient simulation methods, researchers can accelerate the innovative development of better batteries, new chemical products, carbon capture technologies and more efficient energy systems.

## Course for early-career researchers

One of Ioannis Economou's most important responsibilities during his stay was to lead a three-week course in molecular simulation: "Molecular Simulation of Fluids: Fundamentals and Industrial Applications."

The course was attended by 12 PhD students, five postdoctoral researchers and several international participants from Portugal and Brazil.

The program strengthened the participants' skills in advanced computational methods that they could apply directly to their own research projects, and the course evaluations showed that the participants had gained significant value from the experience.

During his stay, Ioannis Economou also delivered several lectures, served as external examiner for a number of PhD dissertations, and collaborated with both professors and PhD students across the faculty. In addition, he acted as a bridge to leading international research environments.

He also contributed to the preparation of applications for new research initiatives focusing on the molecular design of materials for sustainable technologies. This strengthened the university's position in the competition for international research funding, including applications to the Novo Nordisk Foundation and the European Research Council.



Visiting Professor Ioannis Economou from Texas A&M University in Qatar.



Grants for special purposes

2025

#### **Astra**

Science Talents in Primary and Lower Secondary Education 2025

#### **Bevar Ukraine**

Transportation of Humanitarian Aid to Ukraine

#### **Bevar Ukraine**

Evacuation Vehicles for Ukraine

#### **Biotech Academy**

Biotech Academy Camp 2025

#### **CIU for it i undervisningen**

AI Conference for vocational colleges

#### **Copenhagen Business School**

Explore Expanded

#### **Copenhagen Business School**

International conference on "Post-growth Bureaucracy" 2025

#### **Copenhagen Business School**

EAMSA 2025 Annual Conference

#### **Copenhagen Business School**

Summer University Programme for Ukrainian Students

#### **Copenhagen Contemporary**

The Contemporary Art Exhibition "Soft Robots"

#### **DAMRC F.M.B.A.**

Training primary and lower secondary school teachers in 3D printing technology

#### **Technical University of Denmark**

45th Risø International Symposium 2025

#### **Technical University of Denmark**

Two workshops within behavioral and experimental economics

#### **Technical University of Denmark**

2025 NAERE Workshop at DTU

#### **Technical University of Denmark**

Pre-conference on Innovation in Connection with the Danish EU Council Presidency

#### **Technical University of Denmark**

European study group with Industry

#### **Technical University of Denmark**

EurIPS: The European branch of NeurIPS

#### **Technical University of Denmark**

Enzyme Engineering Conference

#### **Danish Society for Pattern Recognition**

Scandinavian conference on Image Analysis 2025

#### **DJØF**

Doing Business In 2026

#### **Erhvervsjuridisk Retshjælp**

Further development of the legal aid service for business law

#### **Experimentarium**

New hands-on learning universe: "Building for the Future"

#### **ADBC Foundation**

Bloom – Festival of Nature and Science 2026

#### **lex.dk Association**

Quality-assured knowledge about Danish business and industry

#### **ITU Business Development**

Next Stop Denmark – From Frustration to Innovation

#### **Copenhagen School of Design and Technology**

Professional quality development collaboration between Cphbusiness and Greenland Business School

#### **Maker**

LITRA – The capital region's open workshop for technology, entrepreneurship and craftsmanship

#### **Nordic Study Abroad Community**

Nordic Study Abroad Community Conference 2025

#### **Otto Mønsted Foundation**

The Bright Idea Award 2025

#### **Science Stories**

The podcast "Stories of Danish Space Research III"

#### **Sound Hub Denmark**

Danish Soundtech Summit

#### **University of Southern Denmark**

Construction of a new innovation centre on SDU's campus in Odense

#### **University of Southern Denmark**

SDU Startup Night 2026

#### **University of Southern Denmark**

The talent programme "Below Zero"

#### **Teknika**

Digital skills enhancement for the teaching staff

#### **Tina Ibsen Formidling**

The podcast "RumSnak"

#### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark**

Study tour – Singapore's Innovation and Startup Ecosystem, Spring 2026

#### **Velkommen Hjem**

Ensuring a safe transition from military service to civilian working life

#### **Women in Front**

Networking meetings and events in 2026

#### **Youth Tech Forum**

Youth Tech Summit 2026

#### **Aalborg Universitet**

13th DHC+ summer school in Copenhagen

#### **Aarhus Symposium**

Aarhus Symposium 2026

# The Bright Idea Award 2025

**Cash prizes were awarded for solutions to global challenges when The Bright Idea Award was presented for the seventh time in November 2025.**

The annual award ceremony is a day many people look forward to – not least this year's finalists, who were seated in front of the Startup Stage at Digital Tech Summit in Øksnehallen on 5 November.

For the seventh consecutive year, the foundation awarded DKK 500,000 and bronze statuettes to some of Denmark's most talented researchers and start-ups.

As always, the prize money is intended to support the further development of the winning ideas. In 2025, both winning projects addressed solutions to global challenges – from securing access to clean drinking water and saving lives to protecting the planet's resources and reducing the carbon footprint through an alternative to lithium batteries.



The presentation of The Bright Idea Award on the Startup Stage is a popular event during Digital Tech Summit.  
Photo: Dan Møller

## A new format in 2025

The Bright Idea Award 2025 was presented in two categories: Best Early-Stage Idea and Best Late-Stage Idea.

As a new initiative in 2025, the Board of the Otto Mønsted Foundation decided that the jury should nominate three candidates in each category. The winners were announced on the Startup Stage and each received DKK 250,000, while the remaining four finalists were awarded a recognition prize of DKK 20,000.

Another new feature in 2025 was the introduction of an additional assessment criterion. The jury evaluated the extent to which each idea could contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The winning projects were excellent examples of this ambition.

The award ceremony ended with a networking event for this year's winners and finalists, previous award recipients, jury members and university partners. The exchange of knowledge about ongoing projects, funding opportunities and professional networks proved so valuable that the event will be repeated as part of the 2026 award ceremony.

## Enormous potential for clean drinking water

The winning idea in the late-stage category offers a much-needed solution in a world

”

...The two graduate students have developed a compelling technology that contributes to achieving the global goal of clean drinking water by 2030...

”

where more people die from the consequences of polluted drinking water than from natural disasters and conflicts.

The winners were Andreas S.H. Rygaard and Viktor R. Tamstorf from the Technical University of Denmark. The two graduate students have developed a compelling technology that contributes to achieving the global goal of universal access to clean drinking water by 2030.

The winners received DKK 250,000 to continue the development of Njord Aqua.

The winning innovation is a water purification system that can be installed directly in the water tanks supplying billions of people with drinking water and household water. Using electrochlorination, the water is purified highly efficiently and the system can even be powered by rooftop solar panels, where they are typically installed.

This opens up the possibility not only of pro-



Andreas S.H. Rygaard and Viktor R. Tamstorf from DTU have developed a solution for drinking water purification.  
Photo: Dan Møller



viding households with safe drinking water, but also with sufficient clean water for bathing, washing and cleaning, thereby improving hygiene and public health.

### The jury's statement:

*"The team has built convincingly on Denmark's strong traditions in water technology and developed a solution that can change the lives of millions of people over the next ten years while also offering significant export potential. Through a simple solution combined with a strong use case, the team has demonstrated outstanding technical and commercial results in connection with The Bright Idea Award."*

### Green battery technology as a strong alternative to lithium batteries

Lithium batteries are used in everything from electric vehicles to mobile phones, but they come at a cost in terms of scarce resources, environmental impact and supply security.

The winner in the early-stage category presented an alternative.

The team has developed a technology that converts plant waste into biochar for carbon-negative battery anodes. In this key battery component, the biochar serves as a storage medium for sodium ions, which are expected to become a sustainable alternative to the limited resource lithium.

The jury was impressed by the bright idea of transforming biological raw materials into biochar for sodium-ion battery anodes in a carbon-neutral process while at the same time achieving a performance that surpasses competing technologies.

The award-winning solution, BioNa, was developed by the team consisting of Thomas Howard, Szymon Dyszewsji and Johan Hjelm from the Technical University of Denmark, Zoe Kika from Copenhagen Business School and Peter Curraan from the University of Bath.

The team received a cash prize of DKK 250,000, among other things to support continued testing and development.

### The jury's statement:

*"Battery technology is a key element of the green transition and an area currently*

Thomas Howard received The Bright Idea Award on behalf of the entire BioNa team from Chairman of the Board, Nis Alstrup. Photo: Dan Møller

*characterised by geopolitical challenges. The jury was impressed by the bright idea of converting biological raw materials into biochar for sodium-ion battery anodes in a carbon-neutral way while simultaneously achieving performance that exceeds that of competing solutions. The team's presentation of its collaboration with Danish industry and its accompanying business plan also played an important role in the nomination.*

### Criteria used by the jury in evaluating applications:

- Excellence in concept, communication, analysis and documentation
- The degree of commercial vision and business understanding
- The likelihood that The Bright Idea can be implemented
- The value of the idea and its significance for Danish business and industry
- The extent to which the idea contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals



Photo: Dan Møller

## Recognition for the other finalists

### Early-stage finalists:

**Andreas Erik Gejl Madsen and Jesper Gluckstad**  
University of Southern Denmark

*HoloTile Quantum – solving a key problem in making large scale working quantum computers.*

**Christoffer W. Erbs and team**  
Aalborg University

*Organic thin-film solar cells with pigment from mushrooms.*

### Late-stage finalists:

**Jeppe Nørregaard**  
IT University of Copenhagen

*Defence against manipulative AI.*

**Nicolai Jerram Dahl**  
Technical University of Denmark

*Design optimization for analog microchips.*

### The award jury

**Kigge Hvid**  
Partner, JA studio

**Ole Kring**  
Former partner, EIFO

**Bjarne Kjær Ersbøll**  
Professor, DTU Compute, and member of the board of the Otto Mønsted Foundation

**Nis Alstrup**  
Chairman of the board of the Otto Mønsted Foundation

**Karina Bergstrøm Larsen**  
Director, Q-Consulting

**Christian Brix Tillegreen**  
Senior Business Developer, BioInnovation Institute

**Nigel Edmondson**  
Chief Executive Officer, MADE

**Vibeke Svendsen**  
Member of the board of the Otto Mønsted Foundation



## Do you have a bright idea?

The application period for The Bright Idea Award 2026 runs from 15 April to 15 August 2026.

Photos: Dan Møller

# Always looking for bright ideas

**For both the applicants and the BioInnovation Institute (BII), it is a win-win situation that Christian Brix Tillegreen serves on the jury for The Bright Idea Award.**

When Christian Brix Tillegreen heads to the canteen for lunch, a burger made with a MATR mushroom patty could easily be on the menu. Both the restaurant sector and the retail market have embraced alternatives to meat.

As Head of the Planetary Health department at the BioInnovation Institute, Christian Brix Tillegreen has followed the company MATR closely as one of the 20–30 projects that each year receive substantial BII funding to help transform impactful ideas into real businesses. He speaks enthusiastically about the fact that MATR is now building a factory, backed most recently by EUR 40 million from the European Investment Bank and Novo Holdings.

Since it was established by the Novo Nordisk Foundation nearly seven years ago, the Bio-

Innovation Institute has provided meaningful support to 140 companies through accelerator programs, business development, grants and access to facilities.

Christian Brix Tillegreen estimates that the bridge between academia and the market, which BII helps build every day, has created around 1,000 jobs during that period.

## A well-funded talent scout on the jury

Christian is a member of the jury that each year evaluates the applications for The Bright Idea Award. For both the applicants and BII, his participation is mutually beneficial in his role as an expert in biotechnology and, in particular, planetary health with a focus on green innovation – and as a talent scout.

Since the Novo Nordisk Foundation announced in January 2025 that it would allocate an additional DKK 5.5 billion to accelerate BII's activities, Christian and his colleagues have been preparing to intensify their search for innovative discoveries.



Christian Brix Tillegreen congratulates the prize winners in 2023 following the award ceremony. Photo: Dan Møller

"With the Novo Nordisk Foundation's donation, BII can spend the next ten years doing even more of what we already do, so I really need to go out and find bright ideas. Being involved in The Bright Idea Award gives me the opportunity to spot promising ideas at a very early stage and hopefully help create the next bridge for them.

Many of the ideas submitted to The Bright Idea Award are still in their infancy. But there are quite a few where I make a note to myself that this is an idea worth keeping an eye on because, given some time, it may be ready."

”

...That is very much what we do – taking bright ideas, helping them out of the academic environment, and actually building a business...

”

It is important to note that no ideas are shared without the applicants' consent and that the rules governing the sharing of knowledge are, of course, fully respected.

## A prize winner already moving forward

The possibility that Christian, in his role as a jury member, can help promising ideas progress became a reality for one of the 2025 winners of The Bright Idea Award.

As the winner of the early-stage category, BioNa, led by Thomas Howard, did not "just" receive a cash prize of DKK 250,000 for further development of its technology. Since the award ceremony, a dialogue has been established between the winning team and BII.

There are undoubtedly exciting sustainable and global perspectives in BioNa's technology, which transforms plant waste into bio-char for carbon-negative battery anodes as an alternative to lithium.

## The Bright Idea Award as a springboard

Christian Brix Tillegreen believes that the applications for The Bright Idea Award have become more diverse and that their overall quality has increased in recent years.

"It is a very positive sign that more academic disciplines are embracing entrepreneurship. Perhaps researchers have also begun to see The Bright Idea Award as a springboard. That is often what happens with this type of grant—it creates visibility around the projects."

Whether or not an applicant wins the award, the process of preparing an application is in itself a valuable exercise in translating an idea into a vision that a jury can understand and recognise as a future business with real potential.



## Christian's advice for applicants

Be clear about how your idea differs from existing solutions.

Explain how it fits into the industry it is intended for.

Focus on understanding the problem you want to solve.

## Apply for The Bright Idea Award 2026

The application period for The Bright Idea Award 2026 runs from 15 April to 15 August 2026.



Read more by scanning the QR code.



The purpose of the Innovation Festival was to spark curiosity, creativity and technological understanding among children and young people. One of the festival days is reserved exclusively for HTX students, who, like all young people, benefit from meeting like-minded students from other upper secondary schools.

Photos: Danish Museum of Science and Technology

# Innovation festival with inspiration, play and role models

**2025 marked the debut of a new festival at the Danish Museum of Science and Technology, which will welcome even more young participants in 2026.**

A visit to the Danish Museum of Science and Technology in Helsingør is a journey through centuries of innovation.

The museum showcases a wide collection of prototypes and technological treasures ranging from steam engines to space technology. Visitors can stand beneath the wings of Ellehammer's first aircraft or awaken their own creative spirit through the museum's LEGO exhibition, which tells the story of one of the twentieth century's greatest technological success stories.

In 2025, with support including DKK 300,000 from the Otto Mønsted Foundation, the museum was able to launch the Innovation Festival.

The festival premiered as a platform designed to stimulate curiosity, creativity and technological understanding among children and young people.

The main event consisted of two full festival days in August, supplemented by a range of activities throughout the year. Altogether, 7,192 children, young people and adults took part in the Innovation Festival.



The activities held throughout the year attracted a total of 7,192 children, young people and adults to the Innovation Festival.

The program not only inspired participants with enthusiasm for technology but also reached a somewhat overlooked group of young people by offering them a professional community and practical content they could apply directly in their education.

## Inspiration and Role Models

The main event was divided into a closed Friday program for HTX students and a Saturday open to the general public.

On Friday, 500 HTX students took part in keynote presentations, workshops and exhibition stands organized in collaboration with educational institutions, companies, inventors and the Danish Inventor Advisory Service.

The Danish Inventor Advisory Service showcased inventions that have become commercial products and demonstrated that many successful inventors have precisely the technical and vocational background that the students themselves are pursuing.

Students also had the opportunity to discuss their own examination projects with the advisory service and receive guidance from professionals, along with practical tools for innovation and entrepreneurship. According to the subsequent evaluation, this program was highly appreciated.

"What motivates me about the Innovation Festival is that it is a day dedicated exclusively to HTX. HTX is one of the best educational programs, yet it is often overlooked. Our students need the opportunity to meet others

like themselves, just as they do here today," Thomas Kryger Andersen, Principal, Hillerød Technical Upper Secondary School said.

Saturday's program was aimed at children, young people and families. Here, 300 children and adults participated in robot and satellite building, VR experiments, creative inventor workshops and programming activities.

## High expectations for 2026

An even larger event is planned for 28–29 August 2026, when the Innovation Festival returns.

"We are repeating the success with a dedicated HTX day on Friday. More HTX schools have confirmed their participation, and we expect up to 1,000 HTX students to take part in workshops with, among others, AI specialist Andreas Refsgaard, Aalborg University and others.

The Danish Inventor Advisory Service will provide feedback on students' examination projects and host prototype workshops. Students will also be able to meet representatives from Danish industry, entrepreneurs and higher education institutions at exhibition stands throughout the museum.

For example, the museum's exhibition Space – Round Trip will feature representatives from the Danish space industry," says Sascha Pepke Møller, Project Manager of the Innovation Festival.



# Meet some of the 2025 travel grant recipients

The most educational months of my studies in Cambridge, USA

**Bjarke Almer Frederiksen**

**Study:** MSc in Engineering Physics and Technology, Technical University of Denmark Exchange student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, USA

"I spent six months at MIT, where I worked on photonic neural networks as part of my Master's thesis. In addition to my research, I became involved in the international student community and helped organize a conference on quantum technology. It has been the most educational six months of my studies, both academically and personally, and I will carry these experiences with me throughout my career."



## A broader social and cultural perspective in Brazil

**Henry Louis Knightbridge Niberg-Zehngraff**

**Study:** MSc in Finance and Investments (CBS) Exchange student at Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (COPPEAD), Brazil

"My stay in Rio de Janeiro provided me with a strong academic experience. The teaching was practice-oriented and gave me insight into how companies work with technology, uncertainty and market conditions in emerging markets. Overall, the experience strengthened my analytical skills and my understanding of international markets. In addition, it gave me valuable cultural and societal perspectives. Everyday life in Brazil and my travels in the region highlighted how institutions, culture and inequality influence both economics and management."

1,130 students received travel grants  
In 2025, the Otto Mønsted Foundation awarded DKK 11,087,843 for merit-based study stays abroad, benefiting 1,130 students from Danish universities.



See many more travel experiences at:  
[otto\\_moensteds\\_fond](https://www.instagram.com/otto_moensteds_fond)



Climbing to 6,100 Metres in Bolivia

## A strong international network in Portugal

**Stine Gjørup Klemmensen**

**Study:** Surveying and Land Management, Aalborg University, Exchange student at Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal

"My stay has been absolutely fantastic, both academically and personally, and has given me new perspectives on education, culture and international collaboration. At the same time, I have had the opportunity to build a strong international network and experience Portugal both through my studies and in my free time. I can only encourage others to seize the opportunity for a study stay abroad if the chance arises."



## An experience that enriched and developed me in many ways

**Louise Nielsen**

**Study:** MSc in Engineering, Medical Biotechnology, Aarhus University, Exchange student at The University of Queensland, Brisbane

"My study abroad experience has given me an incredible number of valuable experiences, memories, new academic insights and wonderful friendships that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. The stay has been enriching and transformative in many ways—not only academically, but also to a great extent on a personal level. I feel that I am now much better prepared for the remainder of my studies and for the demands and challenges I will encounter in my future career."



## An important step towards understanding international business culture in Madrid

**Theo Harling**

**Study:** BSc in Business Administration and Project Management, Copenhagen Business School, Exchange student at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

"My stay has been an important step towards understanding how the interaction between Danish and Spanish business cultures can be utilised internationally and how to balance structure and flexibility in modern project management. Through classes, group work and collaboration with international students, I have experienced how Danish and Spanish cultures approach planning, communication and decision-making in different ways."



# Seize the opportunity to study abroad

Meet a few former scholarship recipients who were inspired to pursue an international career

**Martin Olesen, Head of Product, Corax Data & AI at Trifork, spent a semester at the University of Denver in 1998 while studying International Marketing at the University of Southern Denmark. Those six months in the United States laid important foundations for his international career.**

## What made the strongest impression on you during your stay?

"It was an incredible experience, both studying at the university and meeting people from all over the world.

Academically, the standard was very high, and I truly feel that I brought home a great deal of valuable knowledge. In particular, the courses in internet marketing sparked my interest in website development and digital campaigns—something that has been of tremendous benefit throughout my career.

On a personal level, I also brought home many memorable experiences. The ski slopes of the Rocky Mountains were only an hour's drive away, so I made many trips there. At the same time, the Denver Broncos won the Super Bowl for the first time, which resulted in a huge celebration that almost brought the city to a standstill."

## Which experience from your study stay have you retold the most often?

"I have often told the story of the Denver Broncos' Super Bowl victory, but also about my fellow students from Asia and their remarkable work ethic, especially when it came to written assignments.

They could stay up all night writing and were almost in a state of panic when the library reading room closed between three and four o'clock in the morning for cleaning."

## What significance did it have for you, as a young person, to travel abroad on your own and find your footing in a different academic environment and culture?

"It gave me confidence and the belief that I could manage on my own in new surroundings. At the same time, it gave me an even stronger desire to explore more of the world—

especially the United States."

Later in my career, I actually returned to the United States as Sales and Marketing Director for Carlsberg. That would probably have been a much bigger decision to make if I had not already experienced living abroad."

## Did your study stay influence your subsequent career?

"Yes, absolutely. While I was studying at the University of Denver, I wrote two major assignments – one on the marketing of alcoholic beverages and the other on digital marketing.

Those are, in fact, precisely the two areas I have worked with for around 20 years of my career – first at Carlsberg and later when I started my own digital marketing agency."

## Did it give you a network that you are still in contact with?

"Yes, it did. I am still in touch with some of them from time to time, and it is always nice to follow where life has taken them."

## What is your best advice for young students today?

"If you have the opportunity to study abroad, I definitely think you should seize it. It almost always brings truly special experiences and perspectives."

"Say yes more often than no when opportunity knocks"

## Lars Hauge, Project Director, COWI

"The most important lesson I have learned from living and working abroad is that it is wonderful to experience new cultures and discover that there is far more that unites us than divides us. My best advice will always be: say yes more often than no when an opportunity presents itself."

These words come from Lars Hauge, and they carry weight given his extensive international career.



Lars Hauge, Project Director, COWI

He has been stationed in both Hong Kong and South Korea, and from 2015 to 2020 he was part of COWI's executive management team as Executive Vice President, with responsibility for the company's international business outside Scandinavia, covering offices from Seoul in the east to San Francisco and Vancouver in the west.

Lars Hauge graduated as an engineer from the Technical University of Denmark (DTU). Since joining COWI in 1990, he has worked on major infrastructure projects and leadership assignments.

The Great Belt Fixed Link, the Øresund Bridge and the Fehmarn Belt connection have all been among the projects shaped by the experienced engineer, whose responsibilities have ranged from design engineer to his current position as Project Director for the Fehmarn Tunnel.

Have you also received a grant for a study stay abroad?

Then share your academic and personal experience with other students who dream of studying abroad.

You are very welcome to send a few words and some photos to [jh@omfonden.dk](mailto:jh@omfonden.dk), and we will post them on the Foundation's Instagram.



A semester at the University of Denver became the foundation for Martin Olesen's career, not least within digital technology, which he works with today.

# Conference grants 2025

## 567 Students Travelled Abroad to Return Wiser



### Armin Mohseni Ardabili

**PhD student, Life Cycle Engineering, University of Southern Denmark.** Participated in ETH Zürich Summer School 2025: Navigating the Energy Transition in an Insecure World

*"The summer school was an invaluable academic and networking experience that broadened my technical understanding, strengthened my international research perspective and will contribute directly to my ongoing PhD project."*

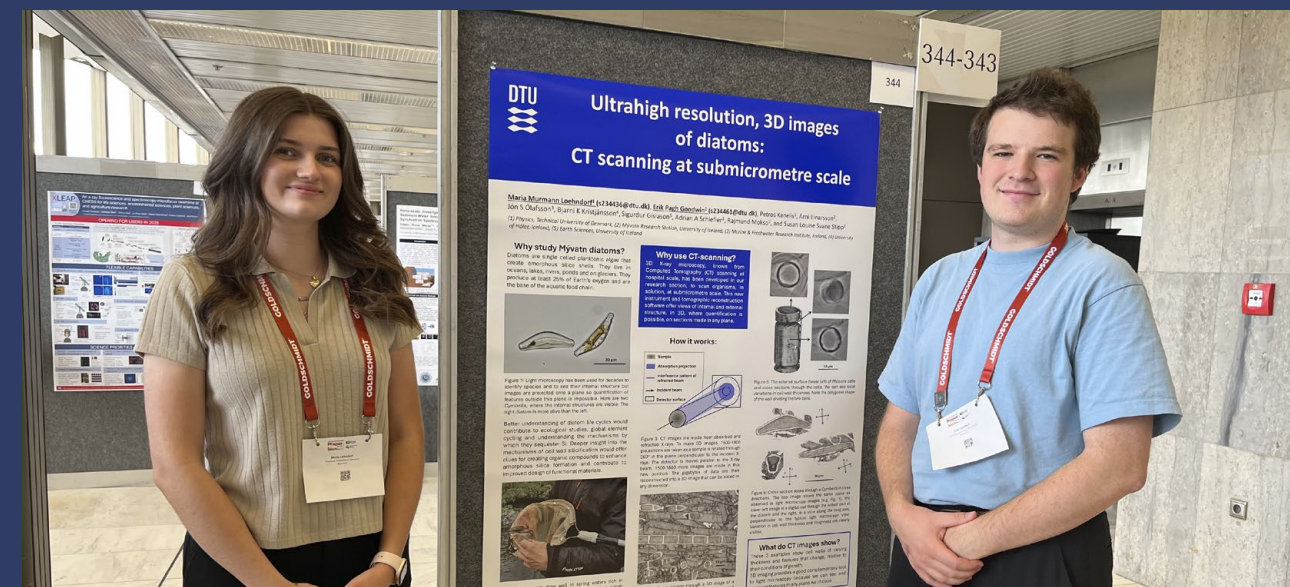


### Johanna Marie Gegenfurtner

**PhD student, Department of Applied Mathematics and Computer Science – Cognitive Systems, DTU.** Participated in the Northern Lights Deep Learning Conference and Winter School in Tromsø.



*"As a young researcher, it was extremely valuable to receive feedback on my work while also strengthening my ability to communicate research."*

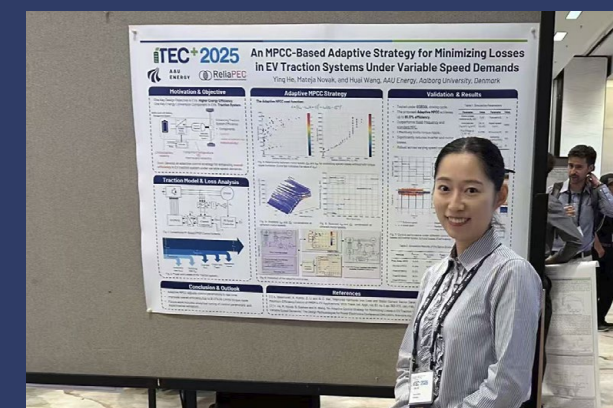


Maria Murmann Løhndorf and project partner Erik Pagh Goodwin in front of their poster prior to their poster session.

### Maria Murmann Løhndorf

**Bachelor student, Physics and Engineering, DTU.** Participated in the Goldschmidt Conference 2025 in Prague.

*"I had never imagined that I would attend an academic conference already during my bachelor's studies. It was a unique opportunity to experience the academic world first-hand. It was fascinating to see researchers from very different backgrounds, nationalities and research fields come together and engage in lively discussions."*



### Ying He

**PhD student, AAU Energy, Aalborg University.** Participated in the 2025 IEEE Transportation Electrification Conference & Expo in Anaheim, California.

*"ITEC 2025 offered outstanding opportunities to strengthen my professional network. I met researchers, engineers and industry representatives from many different disciplines and had enriching conversations with them."*

*This type of exchange is particularly valuable for early-career researchers, as it provides both academic feedback and opens the door to new collaborations."*

### Siv Pedersen

**PhD student, Department of Marketing, Copenhagen Business School.** Participated in the 54th Annual Conference of the European Marketing Academy (EMAC) in Madrid.

*"At the conference, I presented my research on 'Generative Experiments'—a new method for investigating consumer interactions with artificial intelligence using generative AI."*

*My presentation was met with great interest, and I received valuable and positive feedback that will contribute to the further development and publication of the project."*

*Several researchers and practitioners expressed a concrete interest in applying the method, and the conference gave me an excellent opportunity to expand my international network within marketing and technology."*

## 567 grants awarded in 2025

The Otto Mønsted Foundation awarded DKK 3,667,419 for international conference participation, distributed across 567 grants in 2025.

# An active effort to retain international expats

**In March 2025, the non-profit organization “Sammen på Tværs” received a grant from the Otto Mønsted Foundation to launch a new initiative aimed at improving the retention of international employees in Denmark.**

Numerous reports and studies confirm the challenge that many international employees in Danish companies choose not to remain in the country. Expats often lack social connections within their local communities, a challenge that is further reinforced by limited Danish language skills, making it more difficult to establish lasting relationships.

For businesses, this not only results in a loss of valuable knowledge and expertise but also creates significant costs associated with repeated recruitment and onboarding.

In 2025, “Sammen på Tværs” successfully developed and tested a model designed to strengthen international employees’ connection to everyday life outside the workplace by improving their language skills, expanding their social networks and increasing their understanding of Danish culture.

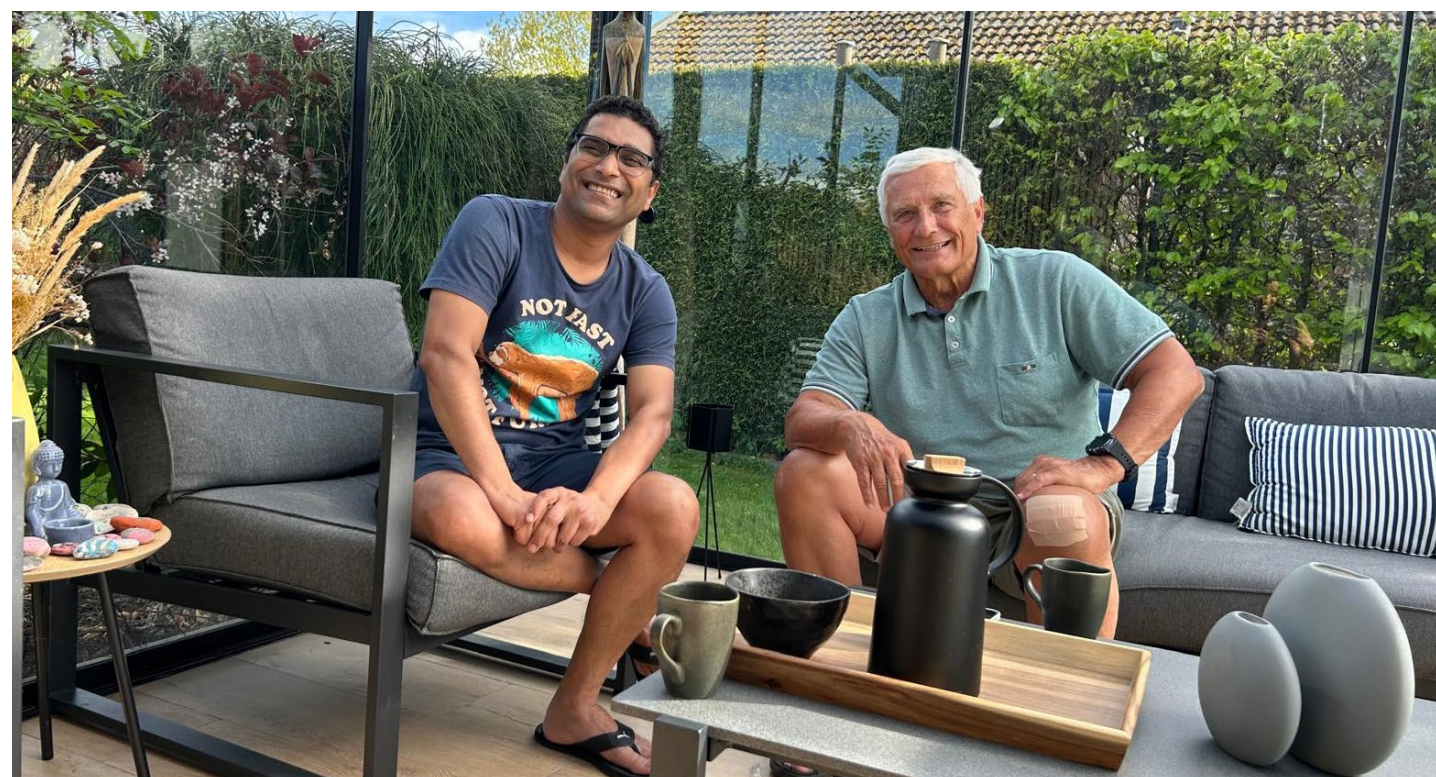
## Significant benefits for participants

A total of 37 international employees from Demant, Kayak/Momondo and Aarhus University were matched with volunteer senior citizens from their local communities.

Typically, they met for a couple of hours once a week in the volunteer’s home during the 12-week program.

“Sammen på Tværs” is the business-oriented continuation of Elderlearn, which began around ten years ago by matching international newcomers with senior citizens to strengthen language skills and provide insight into Danish culture.

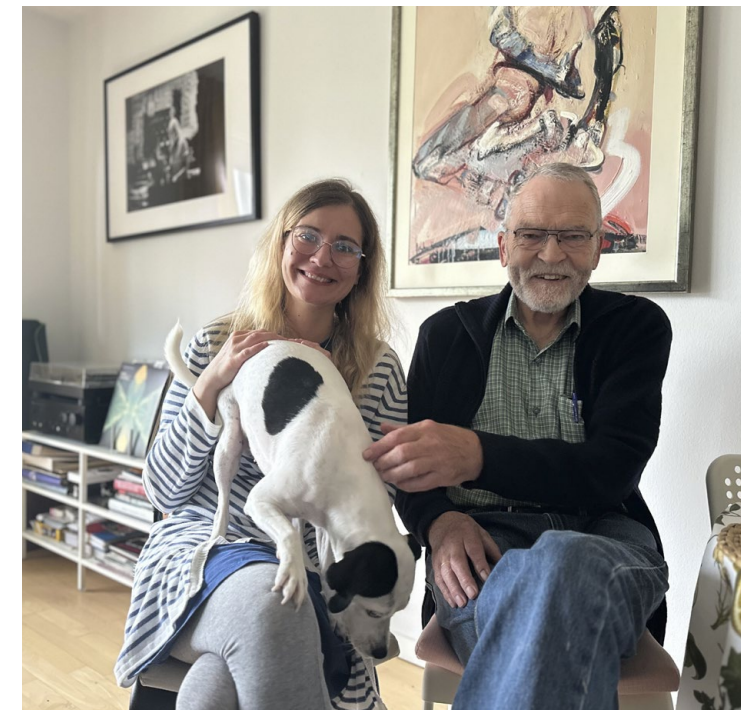
The organization therefore draws on many years of experience in creating successful matches based on thorough interviews, shared interests and careful preparation for the meetings that follow.



Mohit, 43, from Aarhus University and his match, Ole, 77. Photo: Sammen på Tværs

The subsequent evaluation showed the project to be a clear success. A questionnaire survey demonstrated the participants’ positive outcomes:

- 90% of participants feel they have become better at speaking Danish.
- 100% of participants continue to meet with their senior conversation partner (at the time of the evaluation).
- 100% feel that their meetings with their senior partner have gone “well” or “very well.”
- 100% would recommend a match through “Sammen på Tværs” to other international employees.
- 86% state that the program has made them feel more at home in Denmark.



Rasmus, 78, and Kamila, 37, from Poland meet every week for conversations in Danish. They talk about everything from culture and politics to the differences and similarities between Denmark and Poland. Photo: Sammen på Tværs

”

“We participate because we see it as a valuable opportunity to support our international employees in learning Danish while at the same time strengthening both their well-being and their connection to the local community. Many international employees find it difficult to identify informal and safe environments in which they can practice spoken Danish, and it can also be challenging to build a social network outside the workplace that provides a sense of belonging.”

*Catrine Rumohr, Expat Partner Advisor, Aarhus University*

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Photo: Sammen på Tværs



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“Thank you so much for launching this project. I love meeting with my partner, and it has helped me feel at home in Denmark. It feels like visiting my grandmother’s house, and we have wonderful conversations. It has helped me tremendously with my Danish.”

”

# The story of Otto Mønsted

**The Danish margarine manufacturer Otto Mønsted was born on 23 November 1838 at Lyngsbækgård near Ebeltøft and died on 4 September 1916 in Copenhagen as the wealthiest man in Denmark. He is quoted as saying: "Money is not the best thing, but being able to earn it is immensely enjoyable."**

In 1865, he established himself as a wholesaler in butter, grain and animal feed and, in 1883, founded Denmark's first margarine factory, Aarhus Butterine Co.

This was followed, among other ventures, by what was perhaps the world's largest margarine factory near London in 1894. In 1909, Otto Mønsted A/S was established, with Otto Mønsted serving as Chairman.

Otto Mønsted married Anne Sophie Mønsted in 1870. In 1899, they moved to Copenhagen, where he continued to lead his business.

As the couple had no children, they decided by testament that the greater part of their fortune should be transferred to a foundation – the Otto Mønsted Foundation (established in 1934 after the death of the surviving spouse, Anna Mønsted) – with the purpose of contributing to the development of Danish trade and industry.

The Foundation was entrusted with all shares in Otto Mønsted A/S.

The company continued its margarine production until 1981, when the margarine business was sold and the OMA trademark was acquired by Unilever.



Photo: Jens Christian Top, Scanpix

Since then, Otto Mønsted A/S has operated as an investment company, and the returns generated form the financial basis for the Otto Mønsted Foundation's grant activities.

## A pioneer of advertising

Otto Mønsted was not only a pioneer in the development of margarine production but also one of the pioneers of modern advertising. The company's primary trademark was OMA, an early three-letter abbreviation for Otto Mønsted Aarhus.

Many people still remember the famous slogan: "Say the name – OMA." It stands as a simple yet powerful testament to Otto Mønsted's talent for branding and marketing.

Just two years after OMA margarine was introduced, it accounted for half of the company's margarine production and was even sold through Danish pharmacies.

From the very beginning of his business in 1865, Otto Mønsted was a master at making use of the possibilities offered by advertising. He was personally involved in both the creative process and the branding of what was then referred to as "artificial butter" – the term commonly used for margarine.

The perception of margarine as a cheap substitute for butter changed through the well-known campaigns for OMA vegetable margarine. The plant-based product was marketed with artistic illustrations of exotic animals and distant peoples, creating associations with the raw materials imported from a vast and, to most people at the time, unfamiliar world.



Photo: Scanpix

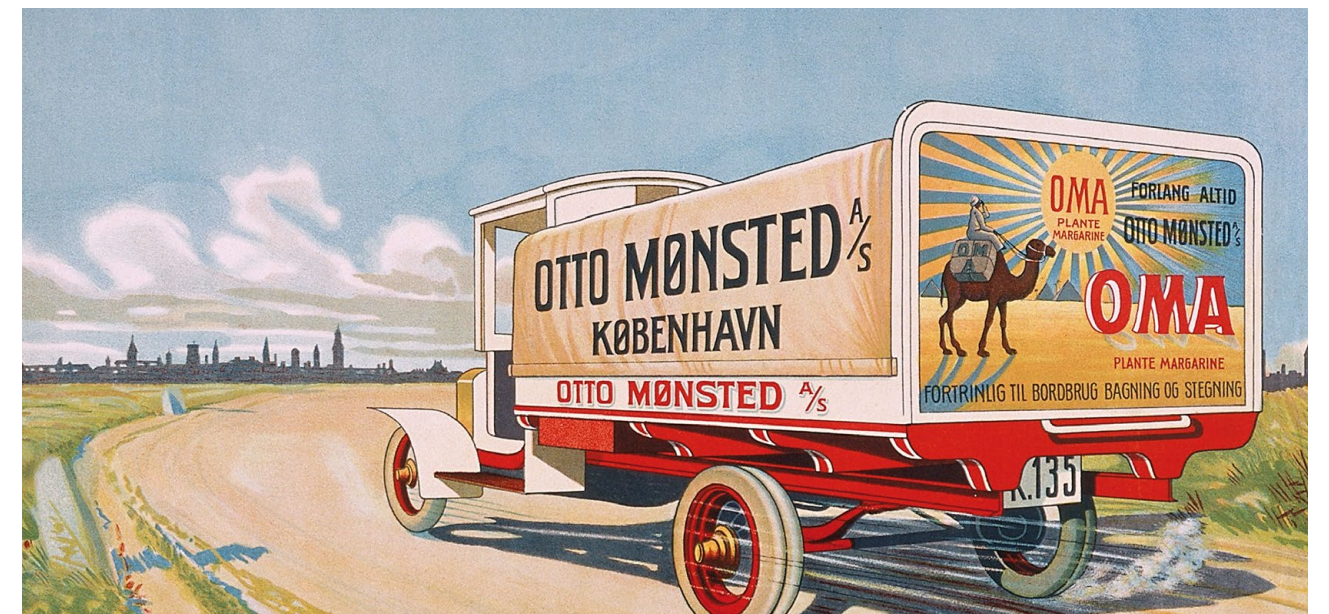
Otto Mønsted was also a pioneer in packaging design and outdoor advertising. The company was among the first to use extensive urban signage and was at the forefront of decorating delivery vehicles and, later, refrigerated trucks.

In 1912, these trucks attracted widespread attention because they could reach the impressive speed of 35 km/h, and they became an important part of the company's distribution network.

Otto Mønsted was also one of the first Danish business leaders to make use of illuminated advertising signs.

Overall, he lived up remarkably well to a statement found in one of the earliest textbooks on advertising:

"Ideally, the objective of advertising is only truly achieved when people smile at those who, through their ignorance, do not know, for example, Otto Mønsted and his margarine."



# Income statement

DKK thousand

|                                         |               |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------|
| Other operating income                  | 0             |
| Other external expenses                 | -1.468        |
| <b>Gross loss</b>                       | <b>-1.468</b> |
| Staff costs                             | -1.697        |
| <b>Operating loss</b>                   | <b>-3.165</b> |
| Income from investments in subsidiaries | 33.112        |
| Financial income                        | 36.904        |
| Financial expenses                      | -1.914        |
| <b>Profit before tax</b>                | <b>64.937</b> |
| Tax on profit for the year              | 0             |
| <b>Profit for the year</b>              | <b>64.937</b> |

**Appropriation of Profit**

|                                                     |               |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Reserve for net revaluation under the equity method | 33.112        |
| Adjustment of the distribution framework            | 3.183         |
| Consolidation of the Foundation's capital           | 28.642        |
|                                                     | <b>64.937</b> |

# Balance sheet

|                                  | DKK thousand   |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Assets</b>                    |                |
| Investments in subsidiaries      | 619.593        |
| Other securities and investments | 14.409         |
| <b>Financial fixed assets</b>    | <b>634.002</b> |
| <b>Fixed assets</b>              | <b>634.002</b> |
| Other receivables                | 767            |
| Corporation tax receivable       | 1.017          |
| Prepayments and accrued income   | 0              |
| <b>Receivables</b>               | <b>1.784</b>   |
| <b>Securities</b>                | <b>305.373</b> |
| <b>Cash and cash equivalents</b> | <b>24.942</b>  |
| <b>Current assets</b>            | <b>332.099</b> |
| <b>Total assets</b>              | <b>966.101</b> |

DKK thousand

**Equity and liabilities**

|                                                     |                |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Foundation capital                                  | 60.345         |
| Reserve for net revaluation under the equity method | 598.593        |
| Consolidation of the Foundation's capital           | 63.667         |
| Distribution framework                              | 170.181        |
| <b>Equity before minority interests</b>             | <b>892.786</b> |
| Payables to group enterprises                       | 515            |
| Other payables                                      | 131            |
| Grants payable                                      | 72.669         |
| <b>Current liabilities</b>                          | <b>73.315</b>  |
| <b>Total liabilities</b>                            | <b>73.315</b>  |
| <b>Total equity and liabilities</b>                 | <b>966.101</b> |

The consolidated financial statements for the entire group are available on the Otto Mønsted Foundation's website at [omfonden.dk](http://omfonden.dk) or at [virk.dk](http://virk.dk).

