

10TH ANNIVERSARY

BIGMONITOR

PRE-ISSUE

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LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

DANYA NOVAK





SECRETARY GENERAL

Distinguished Delegates, honorable Chairs, hardworking Staff and esteemed Guests; Welcome to BIGMUN 2020!

This year, the BIG9 and I are thrilled to be hosting BIGMUN's 10th annual session, and are excited for each of you to participate and bring your different perspectives to the tables of negotiation. We are proud to have delegations from close and far at the conference, and will be welcoming schools from 3 different continents!

The theme for this year's conference is Climate and Collaboration. We felt that this theme was pertinent to creating debate around current and pressing issues. To further this theme, we have made careful considerations about our consumption at the conference and the ways in which we could reduce our carbon footprint. We also included at least one climate-related topic in each committee which we hope will inspire the delegates to be more conscious about their role in impacting the climate.

BIGMUN is now celebrating its 10th anniversary! For 10 years, BIGMUN has been a conference of fruitful debate between students from all over the world. It is our hope that you, like the participants before you, will leave BIGMUN with a lasting impression, new friends, and a motivation to help to change the world for the better.

I hope that you enjoy your week here at Birkerød Gymnasium.
Welcome to BIGMUN 2020!

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ON THE COVER

Photo by Jana Stipac
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Letter from the Secretary General



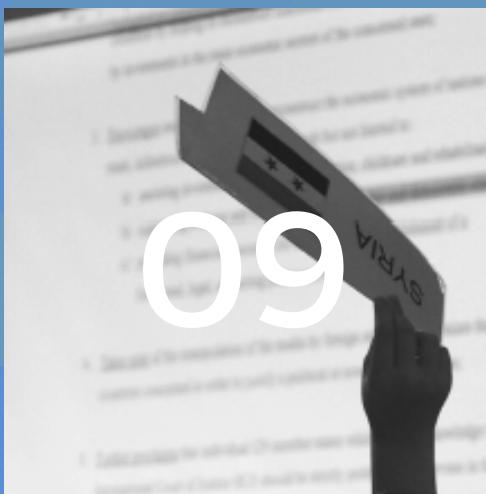
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MUN Needed Now More Than Ever



© Julie Hørdrum

THE LAND OF HAPPINESS

By Jana Gad

Despite the infamously miserable weather, the Danes are among the top when it comes to being one of the happiest countries in the world, according to the World Happiness Report 2019.

When referring to Danish culture, the term hygge (pronounced “hoo-geh”) often comes into the picture. Although difficult to define, and pronounce, the word hygge is usually associated with the feeling of coziness and relaxation. Hygge could be enjoying a delicious meal with your family and friends, or curling up by the fire with a delicious cup of hot chocolate, on a cold winter night. Nonetheless, while only a word, hygge connotes the underlying fundamental basis of the Danish culture.

Another fundamental basis of the Danish culture is that the concept of a hierarchy is non-existent. People working in highly regarded positions, such as doctors and lawyers, are referred to by their first name, rather than their last name. In fact, it would be considered disrespectful to refer to individuals by their last names.

LATEST NEWS FROM THIS ISSUE:

Model United Nations needed more than ever



© Aviaja Josefine



© Aicha Kabarra

Moreover, the Danes are extremely punctual individuals. Arriving on time for meetings and appointments is taken very seriously, so if you intend to meet a friend at 5:00pm, be there and square at 5:00 pm, sharp.

It would be frankly impossible to talk about Danish culture, without mentioning bicycles. The Danes truly love their bicycles with all their heart, and that is no form of an exaggeration. It is a vital form of transportation, alongside public transportation. Denmark is considered one of the world's most bike-friendly nations, with over 9 out of 10 Danes owning a bicycle. Quite frankly, you will find bicycles everywhere, even inside the trains!

Although religion is not of the utmost importance in Denmark, the Danes are crazy about Christmas. A mere second after Halloween finishes, the streets of Denmark begin to fill with hundreds of beautiful Christmas lights. Christmas is a time where Danes gather with their families and is seen by many as a form of hygge

A popular Christmas tradition for Danes is to watch the Julekalender (Christmas calendar) series, which runs from the 1st of December to the 24th of December every year. Danes will also enjoy a huge scrumptious dinner together, often plates of turkey, roast duck or pork. Other Danish traditions include: “J - Day”, an annual event where Danes flood onto the streets to get a taste of Tuborg’s infamous “Julebryg” Christmas beer on the 1st day of November; “Sankt Hans Aften” (“Saint John's Eve”) a day in June where locals gather by bonfires and sing songs together; “Fastelavn”, a Danish carnival tradition, held in late February, where children beat a barrel, like a pinata, and enjoy “Fastelavnsboller” (sweet buns filled with cream or jam).

Finally, although these features of the Danish culture may come as a shock to you, the Danish society is extremely friendly, and we welcome you with open hands and warm smiles to Denmark.



© Aviaja Josefine

EXTRA FUN-FACTS

Walt Disney's inspiration for the American Disneyland came partially from his visit to the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen

Strøget, in Copenhagen, is the longest pedestrian street in the world.

The Danish flag is the oldest in the world

The Danish monarchy has existed for over 1000 years

In March 2012, the Danish government entered into an energy agreement stating that Denmark will be entirely free of fossil fuels by 2050

Lego was invented by a Dane

Denmark is ranked second in the 2020 Climate Change Performance Index

The World Pride Event will be hosted in Denmark in 2021



BIGTALK for BIGMUN

By Olivia Rygaard-Hjalsted

So, there you are. A delegate in a sea of many, walking the grand halls of Birkerød Gymnasium, ready to partake in the tenth annual BIGMUN conference. Maybe you're nervous, excited, or possibly a little bit lost? One thing is for sure, though – you are so ready to meet and get to know some of your fellow delegates. Certainly, you have interesting and valid insights into the machinery of international affairs, and surely your peers do too? But how do you skip the trivial pleasantries of small-talk and initiate deep, substantial conversation about meaningful matters?

Enter the concept of ‘big talk’: an approach to communication founded and spread by the American Kalina Silverman. ‘Big talk’ is a social experiment intended to help spark conversations that matter between strangers by posing open-ended and thought-provoking questions. So, in the spirit of BIGMUN, the following set of questions below has been compiled to help all delegates safely navigate the high waters of conversing with strangers:



© Nameera Hasnain

1

Say ‘hi’, ‘hey’, or ‘hello’ to the subject(s) in question with whom you wish to converse.

2

Who are you, where are you from, and why are you here?

(This may seem like small-talk, and perhaps it is, but it is rather pleasant to have names to put on faces, and to know a little bit about the person(s) you’re chatting up. Note also that not all delegates may be equally comfortable with being directly bombarded by profound questions, so this first question functions as a soft approach to big talk.)

4

What have you achieved in your life that you’re particularly proud of? What would you like to achieve in your personal and/or professional life? What or whom inspires you to follow this ambition?

5

What do you think of Greta Thunberg and the movement she’s created? Do you agree with her methods?

PAUSE FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR DISCUSSION PARTNER TO REITERATE WHAT YOUR NAME IS, AND ASK YOUR PARTNER TO DO THE SAME, SINCE YOU'RE LIKELY BOTH TO HAVE FORGOTTEN.

6

To what extent do you feel empowered to ‘combat’ climate change? Do individuals have the power to make significant change through behavioral changes?

7

To what extent do you feel a responsibility for climate change or a duty to act in an environmentally conscious manner?

9

Is it ethical to fund outer space exploration when hundreds of millions of humans live in poverty and deprivation, which could at least partially be alleviated by redirecting those funds? Or when climate change is impacting the livelihood of all living organisms on the globe?

8

Thoughts on the impact of animal agriculture on our climate? Is it, for example, realistic to expect people to give up meat?

10

Capitalism depends on constant economic growth and the Earth has a finite supply of resources to fuel this growth. Does this make sustainability and capitalism fundamentally incompatible?

You can explore the concept of ‘big talk’ in greater detail on the website of Silverman’s project: makebigtalk.com.

MODEL UNITED NATIONS

NEEDED MORE THAN EVER

BY MIRIAM BRICKMAN

Here at Birkerød Gymnasium, MUN is a just before the end of the Second World War. The world was in chaos, but somehow that chaos was moulded into an alliance that would define all life after. When people think of the UN they think of human rights, looking out for humanity and enforcing good in the world. The UN does even more than that and it is a constant in our lives. Its mark is on everything from the control of narcotics and arms sales to environment and socio-economic rights.

24 years before the UN was created, the concept of Model UN (MUN) was already in play at Oxford University. Since the UN was not in existence at that point it was called the League of Nations (the early 20th century version of the UN). In just one year, it had already spread to Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, but it was still nowhere near the popularity it has reached now. of the situation.



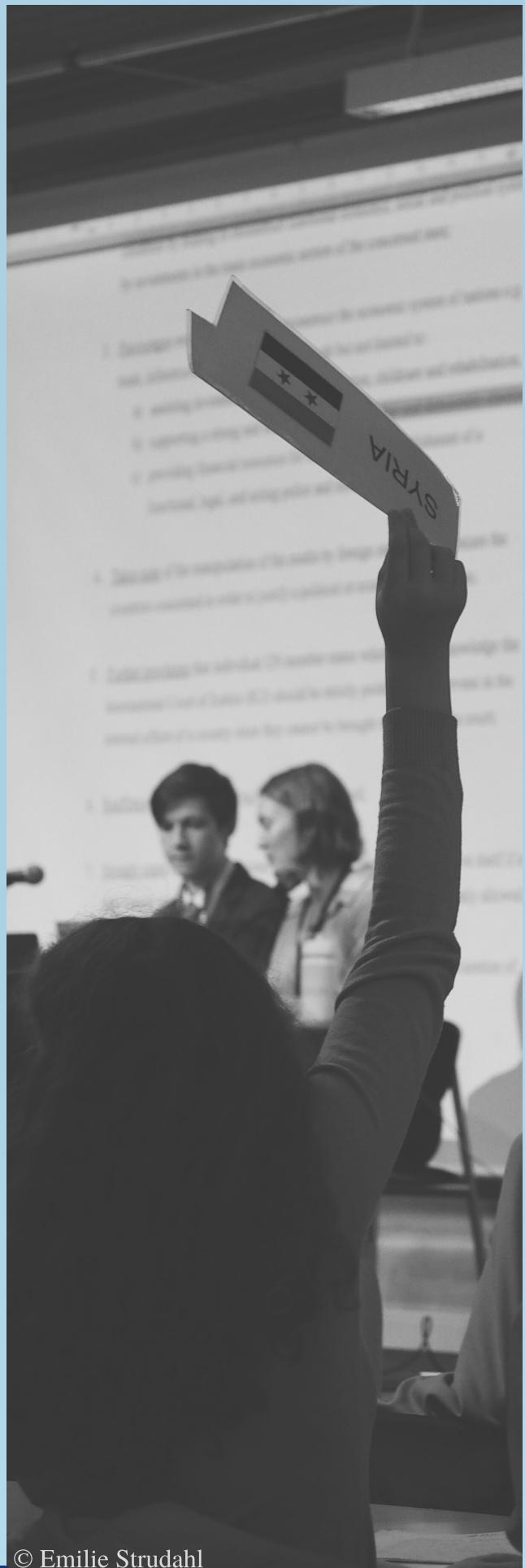
Here at Birkerød Gymnasium, MUN is a big part of our lives, especially for those in the IB. Once a week a group of students meets up to debate relevant UN topics. But it is about more than the debating, the core of MUN is the procedure. Through it, you are able to confuse and dominate your opponents while communicating a language that, for most, sounds foreign. The delegates are all able to use the procedure to their advantage.

The goal of MUN is to pass amendments in a greater document called a resolution, which will benefit the country you are representing. You can make motions to move into voting procedures, to submit an amendment, or to ask a follow up question. The structure of the session is simple, you start with presenting the amendment, then you go into time in favour and then time against, finally you vote. Throughout this procedure delegates pitch in amendments, which have their own time in favour and against. Delegates make speeches throughout, and after the speeches, questions are asked (only in MUN they are called Points of Information). If you know all that, you should be able to make heads or tails of the situation.

The spread of UN, and therefore Model UN, has created an open space where opinions can be shared and debated. It has ensured that we, the students, are conscious of the events going on in other places. In Denmark, we pride ourselves on having some of the most politically active youth in the world, ask anyone and they tell which political party they support or at least which one they would never be caught dead in. Therefore, it is important to recognize the hand the UN has had in creating our present and how it will help us create the future. With the looming threat of climate change, awareness is more important than ever, and hopefully the UN and MUN can have a role in combating that.



LAYOUT: MIKO NERVIOL



© Emilie Strudahl



THE SMALL THINGS WE CAN DO TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

By Jonathan Syberg

Something to keep in mind

BIGMUN is quite the hectic and exciting event, but that does not mean you cannot take a little time to help the environment while you are here.

BIGMUN requires a lot of our time and focus, but with today's environmental awareness and climate, it would be a good idea to put some time aside in order to make this MUN event a little eco-friendlier.

Why bother?

Firstly, we depend wholly on the environment for everyday life; recognized or not, all of the food, energy and resources used on a daily basis comes from the earth and with the rate that they are being burned up, climate change and pollution is skyrocketing out of control. Due to carelessness and unawareness, the environment has become the dependent anomaly of the modern world. Tragedies like the fires in Australia or the melting ice caps are devastating evidence for why a truly global effort is needed if the planet is to be saved. Simply put, protecting the environment protects us.

It's the small things:

Even though the struggle against climate change may seem daunting and a hopeless prospect, it is not. Everyone can all do their part to fight against it, and it involves the simplest of acts. For example, a multitude of bottles (plastic or metal) are going to be used at BIGMUN – but try and use the same one throughout the week in order to minimize your waste. When it is time to eat, you should try to finish what you have on your plate and in your cup. Food waste is not something we should have to worry about during BIGMUN, so if you find yourself unable to finish a meal, pack it up and save it for later (if possible). Clean up after yourself. You will be all around the school, so no matter where you are, it is always a help to each other and the environment if you can put your rubbish in the appropriate bin.

You're helping a big deal:

Bins for plastic and other waste materials will be available to us, so if you are having trouble locating some, feel free to ask so that others do not have to tidy up after you. Keep in mind that throwing out your plastic bottles is not your only option. If you have a 'pant label', the bottle can be recycled at a supermarket and you can save some money on your shopping. Denmark uses the pant system in order to make recycling more prominent and engaging. In short, remember that just the simplest act goes a long way, not only for us, but for the Earth too. Change is through the actions of many, and as cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Let us make an effort to work towards a healthier world at BIGMUN 2020, together



HOSTING INTERNATIONAL

By: Kaya Newhagen

As the annual conference of Birkerød Gymnasium's Model United Nations (BIMUN) approaches students may have some unanswered questions. The BIMUN conference is a week of meeting new people and promoting international awareness through the high-quality debates at school. This experience is furthered through the hosting of visiting students from other countries.

Anna Hudtloff, a current student in the IB at Birkerød Gymnasium, hosted two visiting delegates during last year's conference. I was able to interview Anna about her experience to get a better idea of the student hosting. The two girls she hosted were named Ava and Ariella they are from Denver, Colorado; USA. I asked Anna if she found her experience easy and comfortable she replied "Yeah, surprisingly easy. Of course there was a bit of small talk awkwardness at the very start but, 30 minutes into it, we were already laughing about all kinds of things. We quickly realized we had a lot in common when it came to interests." Anna also spoke about having her visitors throughout the conference. She said, "It was fun to have someone to chat to about the conference and it was super nice meeting during the day and seeing how each other were doing. We spent a lot of time texting during conferences sending updates about the different committees we were in. This gave us an insight to other committees and not just our own."

Since some of Birkerød Gymnasium's students have signed up to share their homes with visiting participants of the BIMUN conference, it may be helpful to get some inspiration of what to show your visitor and what to expect.



© Braden Robert Gustafson



VISITORS FOR BIGMUN

Some museums that are always interesting and cover the range of international modern art to Danish history are:

- The Louisiana Modern Art Museum
- Arken Art Museum
- The National Museum of Denmark
- Glyptoteket (An art museum built around the personal collection of Carl Jacobsen.)

Some outdoor activities include:

- A bike ride through Dyrehaven (A large nature park with woodlands and deer.)
- A walk around the Copenhagen lakes.
- A visit to Tivoli Grænен

Landmarks to show your visitor may include a visit to:

- The Little Mermaid statue
- Nyhavn, perhaps a canal tour. (A 17th century waterfront which is a classic sight in Copenhagen.)
- Kronborg castle near Helsingør
- Freetown Christiania (An international anarchist community.)



As for activities, Anna recommended showing visiting students the shopping street, Strøget, which is in Copenhagen. Anna said they all had a great time experiencing the world-renowned hygge Danish cafe-life and really getting to know each other there.

Anna stays in touch with both of her former visitors; she is even planning a trip with both of them this summer. I asked Anna if she had any advice on where to take future visitors and she said "My best advice is to take them somewhere where you can all have fun. For us it was Strøget cause we all liked cafes and had lots to talk about. Tivoli is also a good option, but it might be expensive so make sure they don't mind that. You only have 4 days with them, so there isn't much time to be awkward." If you are lacking any ideas for where to take the students you are hosting, here is some inspiration.

Take your new friend(s) shopping on the walking street Strøget and visit The Round Tower (Rundetaarn) or La Glace a nearby cafe and cake shop.

BIGMUN offers the opportunity to show the best sights of Copenhagen. So, whether it's a trip to Tivoli or sitting at a cafe getting to know your host student(s), the BIGMUN conference is approaching and in all cases your hosting experience will hold the chance to create long lasting international friendships.

Layout by: Catalina Maali





A CHARITY A DAY

HOW KAYAKING CAN SAVE OUR OCEANS

GREENKAYAK X PLASTIC ODYSSEY

Journalist: Julie Brinking

Underneath the surface of the still icy water of Copenhagen Harbour is an underworld of strange shapes and colours. But it is not fish. It is very difficult to see the bottom of the canals, yet even if it was possible the sight of it might leave people in shock. Most waste that ends up in the canals will eventually sink to the bottom. Before that, however, the plastic pollutes our water and vision of the canals from the water surface. We could all play the blame game in this situation and shrug off the responsibility from our shoulders over on to somebody else's while watching the plastic become a permanent part of our oceans – or we could kayak.

Paddle for the oceans

Since 2017 GreenKayak, an environmental NGO, has offered their kayaks for volunteers in Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Norway and Ireland. They offer enthusiastic environmentalists and kayakers with the irresistible experience of kayaking in harbours, canals, rivers and lakes for free. There are only two conditions. The kayakers must pick up any trash they meet on their way and document their trip to spread awareness of plastic pollution and what local communities can do to fight it.

25 tons of trash

Volunteers in the five countries across Europe have in the last 3 years collected almost 25 tons of trash. Their mission now is to build a global network of GreenKayaks so that we together can clean our oceans.

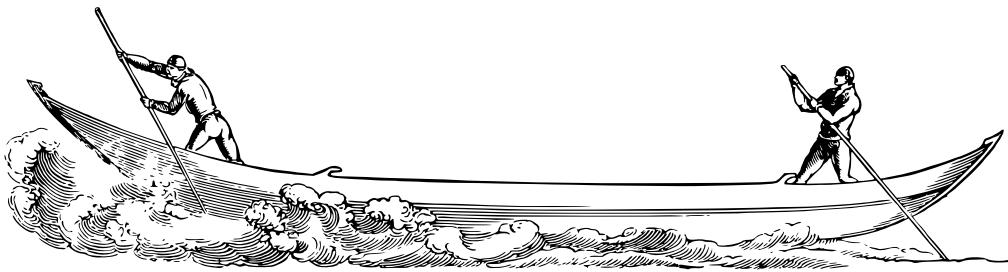
Luckily, GreenKayak is not the only company that is working hard on cleaning our waters. Plastic Whale in Amsterdam works on a solution instead of discussing the issue constantly without any progress. They have, since 2011, gone plastic-fishing in the canals of Amsterdam in boats made of reused plastic from the canals. In 2018, more than 11,000 people volunteered and collected 26,000 plastic bottles. That was enough plastic to create 3 boats and 15 furniture sets – yes, they also make furniture from plastic!





Feeling more adventurous?

If you are feeling a bit more adventurous, maybe consider supporting Plastic Odyssey, a group of four explorers from Marseilles, France. They are setting out on a 3-year expedition around the globe to educate the local communities most affected by plastic pollution and help to reuse plastic before it ends up in the oceans. If you live in respectively Africa and Latin America in 2020/2021, in Asia-Pacific in 2022 or in Asia and Africa in 2023 you can help by becoming a worldwide community ambassador for Plastic Odyssey. But perhaps this is a little far-fetched. In either case, you can always donate to their cause and join the community.



It is important that we save our oceans now. An unfathomable amount of plastic is let out into our oceans every year. Only 1% of that plastic floats on the surface and is visible to us. The rest is swirling around in the deep sea, where it over time will break down into microparticles that work its way into the marine food chain – and ours! If we do not act now then global health in all communities on earth are at risk, this includes humans as well as marine animals and all other living creatures. So, find your paddle and start in your local area!

For more information read about the organisations at plasticodyssey.org, greenkayak.org and plasticwhale.com or find out more in your local community.



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