
Alumni Interviewed - Hans Braunfisch

by Robin Lee Spencer

RL - What are you doing now and how does it fit into your future plans?

HB - Right now I'm a Management Consultant with Deloitte Consulting in the US. I'm currently working on a large retail client that's undergoing a global technology implementation. As far as this fitting in with my future goals is concerned, I'm really open to do a variety of different things in the future and I've never been someone who wants to limit my possibilities and opportunities. I think being in management consulting is nice because it gives me exposure to a million different types of work stream, industries and people all around the country and the world, depending on what project you're on. It has given me a chance to develop skills and capabilities in different types of work that I would be able to twist to fit in to a variety of different industries and roles in the future.

Overall I don't have a long term plan in place, and I think that what I'm doing right now won't force me into long term planning any time soon!

RL - How has GLOCAL helped your career so far?

HB - The GLOCAL degree is very unique and I think it differentiates me from other people in my line of work. There are people [at Deloitte] who studied a million different things, went to a lot of different universities, speak different languages and have unique experiences but GLOCAL is one of a kind. It's given me this stamp of approval from really reputable global institutions while on top of that pushing me out of my comfort zone for two years to study with people from around the world, function in foreign environments and learn different languages - that's not even mentioning anything we studied in class.

It does make you stick out as far as your credentials are concerned, and also gives you that much more maturity and a different lens to see the world through. I think that not only has it impacted me in an academic sense, but it has given me a better outlook on life and just made me a more interesting person overall.

RL - What would be your advice for GLOCAL graduates, present and future?

HB - My advice would be twofold, and possibly contradictory! The first is to always be thinking about what you want to get out of your experience, because GLOCAL's the kind of programme that gives you so many opportunities to do things, but they're not served up to you on a silver platter. We have ample time if you want to go out and work for a start-up, or be a teacher part-time - you can do it. If you want to travel the world in the summer you can do it, if you want to write research papers and try to get them published you have that time and the resources and flexibility to do anything you want. But it's not shoved in your face, and no one's saying "Hey, take one of these opportunities."

You have to make sure that you're curious and going and trying those different things and not just falling into a rhythm of going to class, doing readings and writing papers. Make sure that you're being proactive and really taking advantage of all the opportunities that you get.

On the other side... don't take it too seriously! Of course, study and read and do your best for papers and projects, but you have two years of living in foreign countries with people from all around the world. If you're not taking advantage of it and if you're not going on weekend trips with your friends, or not exploring your city because you're stressed about writing a paper, you're gonna be really disappointed when it's over. The things you're going to remember are spending time with your friends, exploring different cultures, or trying to get the Deutschbahn and it's 240 minutes late [laughs]. It's not just about writing about your favourite port city - you have to be sure that you're taking advantage of those extra-curricular experiences.-

Alumni Interviewed - Christina Kopanou

by Robin Lee Spencer

RL - What are you doing now and how does it fit into your future plans?

CK - I am currently volunteering at a local NGO, called Odyssea. Odyssea's main cause is to facilitate the social inclusion of vulnerable groups (refugees, migrants, unemployed Greek) through re-education. I hold the post of project assistant. My main responsibilities include the implementation of EU-funded educational programmes and organisation of events. It is a good opportunity to gain first-hand experience on how NGOs work and to explore various roles. This is useful especially for someone who wants to land a grad job in the third sector.

RL - How has GLOCAL helped your career so far?

CK - Glocal has helped me identify new opportunities and be more adaptable in challenging situations. It has also helped me approach work-related issues from a multi-dimensional approach.

Overall, glocal is an interesting degree but does not seem to be appreciated by employers in the private sector.

RL - What would be your advice for GLOCAL graduates, present and future?

CK - Glocal is a strong degree for people who aspire a career in research and academia. However, it lacks industry connections. I would strongly advise graduate with little or no work experience in the private sector to look for well-structured training programmes or graduate schemes which offer on the job training in order to be better equipped for the demands of the job market in Europe.-

Alumni Interviewed - Lia Barrese

by Robin Lee Spencer

RL - What are you doing now and how does it fit into your future plans?

LB - I'm a Junior Researcher hired by the University of Barcelona for the European 'Horizon 2020' project, to research the Global Production Networks of the Creative Industries. It matches perfectly with what GLOCAL taught us about the interaction between global and local, and with the creative industries field that I've been involved in since my Bachelor degree and professional experience in both the public and private sector. To be honest I'm researching about two creative industries – architecture and design – that are not my field of expertise, as I'm more interested in music, festivals and cultural experiences. Despite that, the professional network that I will build through this project (named CICERONE) is important. There are many Universities connected with the project (7 EU Universities), and many high-league

names such as Andy Pratt and Robert Kloosterman. It's a ground-breaking approach to researching creative industry, although it's really challenging because creative industries have never been studied through this approach and extension in the EU.

RL - How has GLOCAL helped your career so far?

LB - I could say it was as mixture between the personal and professional connection I made with Montse. For me this is an example of that shows that GLOCAL professors, the consortium etc. are our most immediate help available to us when entering the labour market, whether it's directly offering a job, providing good references. This is really valuable - our first real professional network. After the second Creative Cities class I invited Montse to have a cup of coffee to get to know each other, create a connection and see if

I we could work well together etc. If you think there is a Professor or contact who is interested in the same topics as you, it's important to generate, cultivate and maintain those relationships.

RL - What would be your advice for GLOCAL graduates, present and future?

LB - GLOCAL Alumni is definitely about maintaining networks, which is why I've felt driven to put so much effort into it from an early stage. You never know what GLOCAL connection could help you in the future. We're all really ambitious, which sounds bad in my language but in English it's a good thing, and for sure we're going to end up at least doing something that we want and we like. None of us will conform with settling down in a boring government office. We have this entrepreneurial spirit - even though I don't like Richard Florida, we're kind of a stereotype of the creative class [laughs].

We're going to go to places that motivate us, so I think it's really important to keep this network and capitalise from having been a GLOCAL. The bigger and better the programme becomes, the more helpful it will be to us. We should be aware of that because we can contribute to that happening.-

Alumni Interviewed - Salma Mohamed

by *Milan Kovačević*

MK - I've heard you just landed yourself a cool new job. Where will you be working and what will be your role?

SM - I will be working in a company that provides virtual reality solutions in different industries, but the software I'll be working with is mainly for high-risk industries. My role is business developer, or business analyst. In this field, the tasks of product owner, business developer, sales and account manager are quite fluent, so you can kind of move around. My title is business developer/analyst, but I can also perform some tasks of a product owner, sales person or account manager.

MK - How difficult was it to get this job? What were the major obstacles and challenges you faced in the job-hunting process?

SM - would say there were two major challenges. The Dutch language was a horrible challenge, because I found

so many really good jobs, which perfectly fit everything that I want to do, but then Dutch is a requirement. Sometimes, people would see that my CV is excellent for the job, and they wouldn't even send me a generic rejection, but be like: 'We've seen your CV and it's awesome, but we need Dutch because we mainly deal with Dutch clients...' So, I'd say that in the Netherlands, not knowing Dutch is a huge obstacle, even though it's one of the most English-speaking countries. Also, very few companies are willing to sponsor visas. When they know I'll need sponsorship after a year, they become reluctant. But I wouldn't say the visa issue is bigger than Dutch, at least in my field of interest. Honestly, I would consider myself a bit lucky, knowing the experiences of many of my friends, who applied for jobs here. The soonest any of them got jobs was by February, and they started applying way earlier than I did. Perhaps it's because my field is not saturated. You'll always need a business

developer regardless of the industry and field, but my interest is in the tech industry, which is booming, so maybe that's why it was a bit faster for me. It wasn't easy, but I would still consider myself a bit lucky.

MK - Did the GLOCAL programme spark your interest in this particular field, or was it something that existed before?

SM - I worked in the digital field for two years before applying to GLOCAL. During the programme, I developed an interest in urban innovation, but professionally, I am still more interested in the digital tech field.

MK - Can you list one thing about GLOCAL that you think was most useful for you career-wise, and then also one thing that the programme lacked in this regard?

SM - One thing that helped me in the job-hunting, and also in getting to know what I want to do, is the internships that I've done in Barcelona and here in Rotterdam.

MK - What would you recommend to fellow GLOCALs entering the job market? Do you have any specific advice for them?

SM - Apply early and always be picky, at least in the first few months. If you're applying in your home country, it's perfectly fine to stay picky as much as you can. But if you're applying in Europe, like me, you have a very tight deadline. I decided that I'm going to be super picky about what I want to do, and I was very selective, because it shows in the CV, motivation letter and interview if you're very interested in the topic. Mass-applying is cool, but it gets you nowhere. All of my friends I mentioned earlier—the ones that didn't find a job until February—were mass-applying, but that's not how you show that you're interested and passionate about the thing that you are going to be doing with the company, and that's actually what they are looking for. From the four interviews I had, I can say they are always looking for passion. They want to see that you're willing to give your most effort in this company. So, just know what you want to do.-

Alumni Interviewed - Shreya Choudhury

by Milan Kovačević

MK - How was your transition into the post-GLOCAL world? What have you been doing, what kind of jobs are you looking for? Is there any specific area that you're aiming for?

SC - We graduated relatively recently. In Göttingen, we finished our thesis in August, so it hasn't been that long looking for a job. Sometimes, it feels like a frustrating process, because obviously it takes time. You get a lot of rejections initially. It's difficult as well if you're a non-EU citizen, because of the visa regulations, and the companies sometimes also prefer if you're from the EU, because it's easier for them. That's a big challenge. Since I have a business background, I've mostly been looking in multinational companies and big banking corporations, which have a lot of graduate schemes. I've also been applying for analyst positions—research and business analyst—and

I'm interested in the development sector, working for charity and NGOs, or maybe an international development organisation. On top of that, I am also looking into PhDs, because I think it's a good way to develop my research skills further. With a PhD, I would have higher credentials as a researcher. So, yeah, I'm exploring different avenues.

MK - You mentioned being a non-EU citizen. That's one of the reasons I chose you for this interview, because I thought it would be interesting to see how non-EU people are doing trying to find a job in the EU. What were the biggest obstacles related to being someone who comes from outside of the EU?

SC - Apart from the UK and Germany, I don't have the right to work in other EU countries. So automatically, that minimises my options. Secondly, in the UK, the regulatory environment is

quite difficult. Unlike Germany or the Netherlands, they don't really give you time to look for a job after you graduate. In Germany they give you 18 months to find a job, but you have to show that you can finance yourself, so you need to have a considerable amount of money to extend your visa. In Germany, it's very important for companies to find someone who fits their work culture, so if you're not German, they are kind of sceptical to hire you.

MK - How important is the language?

SC - The language is important, but if you want to work for, say, start-ups in Berlin, it's not essential. Some of them give you German training classes, so I wouldn't say language is as big as a barrier, compared to the fact that they don't really know you as a foreigner. I think that is somewhat of a bigger determinant. Also, I think most of the jobs look for direct transferable skills. For example, if you want to apply as an analyst in Germany, they would like you to have some kind of direct experience related to it, otherwise they are not that interested. The only way you could probably get a job is to have a skill that no one here might have.

For example, language skills, so if they are looking for someone who knows about Asia and speaks the languages I speak, then I have a comparative advantage. Otherwise, it's very difficult.

M: Were there challenges and difficulties that were unexpected? Any major surprises?

S: Initially, I thought maybe if you can kind of show why you are a good fit for the organisation, they might consider you, especially if you have very close experiences, but unfortunately that is not the case. I was a bit surprised that skills are not given the most preference. Another thing in Germany I noticed is that unless you're in that specific city, they might also not consider you, if they think you have to relocate from another city. So that was another thing I wasn't exactly expecting.

M: That's quite unexpected, I agree. Thinking back about the GLOCAL programme, can you list one thing that you think is most useful career-wise, and then also one thing that the programme lacked in this regard?

S: I think that one of the most important things career-wise is probably letting us choose our own

optional courses, and come up with our own thesis topics and design our own research. I think that's very important because when you're in a workplace you have to take a lot of initiative and come up with a framework of how to work. It is helpful to think ahead and understand what kind of courses might potentially help you in the future, or what kind of thesis. I think that is very useful, but for most of us, it could have been better if we planned more and had a clearer picture of what we want to do in the future. So, I guess there could have been more career guidance services. I think that could have been incorporated, but study-wise, it just comes down to how you choose your courses, so it really largely depends on us.

MK - What would you recommend to fellow GLOCALs entering the job market? Do you have any advice for them?

SC - I would suggest strongly, if possible, to get some programming skills, or some coding skills.

MK - Coding?!

SC - Yeah, I think it's very important. Our background is quite impressive, and if you combine it with having this kind of data analytics skills, which is very important these days, I think it would be a very formidable combination, and most likely improve our chances of getting hired. Also, investing more in languages. If you speak a language—an important working language like German, Spanish, Italian or French on top of English—that's a big asset. If they don't have any technical skills, they should definitely look for jobs with multiple languages involved.-