

Denmark – VIA University College

Institution	VIA University College
Interviewed Person	Maria, 32 years old is from Romania

I – Preparation

Maria, 32 years old is from Romania. After the FIF preparation course, she started her Pedagogic study, September 2017. Lacri has lived in Denmark with her husband for seven years. In Denmark, they have become parents to their daughter. She is now three years old.

Originally, Maria and her husband did not plan to stay in Denmark. However, after her husband graduated from his education, they decided to stay. Maria did not have a job when the child was born. When the child started in the kindergarten, Maria went to the Language centre to learn Danish. She did so for nine months. Then she got a job in the kindergarten, which meant that she had to stop with the language teaching, as this is no longer for free when having a formal employment. Maria tells that she got the job because of the support of her daughter's daycare assistant as Maria showed great interest in the childcare work. She started with a temporary employment of six months. During this employment, it became clear to Maria that the childcare profession was interesting for her. As she had learned about the FIF Preparation course for migrants at VIA UC, she decided to apply for it. Maria is an accountant by profession from Romania. To practice this profession in Denmark, it would take two more years of study.

II - Awareness

Talking about the VPL and her competences for the pedagogic profession, Maria states that she was not at all aware of the competences, she had for this profession. As an accountant, she had been working with facts and figures and she never felt that she was personally or emotionally involved in the work. As Maria reflects:

“Working with accounting is a complete different world”. “ In my study for the new profession it is much more about providing the best, you can”.

Maria tells that she became aware of her interest and competences for the area when she became a mother herself. It made the great difference for her as she had the opportunity to work with children and to have colleagues as well. When talking about other competences, which Maria has become aware of, she says that:

“Though childcare is also hard work, I really enjoy being together with the children, to observe them and to compare with my own daughter”.

Maria was encouraged by her colleagues to keep on working with the children and little by little, she decided to apply for the education.

III - Starting up

At the FIF Preparation course, the students were informed about the coming VPL as part of the admission application to the Pedagogic study. To apply for the admission for a target group, having not within the recent year passed their secondary education, applicants must ask for a VPL. Part of

the VPL is the development of a so-called motivated application. For the development of this, Maria believes that she was well supported by a fruitful dialogue with the FIF teachers.

IV – Documentation and support

Maria highly appreciates her teachers' support to help her make the documentation for the VPL.

"I am not so good to reflect on, who I am? I am not used to it from Romania. Here, we are more heading for education, work and family". "As an adult, I knew that we do not have the opportunities for whatever you like".

Maria had one week to fulfill the required documentation. For this, she used a portfolio, produced and administered by the Ministry of Education. The portfolio is called My Competence portfolio.

For Maria, *"it felt strange, she tells, to reflect so much on myself", "I was not used to it"*

V - Assessment

Part of the assessment phase was a self-assessment. Maria was asked some questions to which she had to grade her answer, like: *How good are you to give a message?* If Maria graded her assessment below seven, she was given an assignment to describe how she would give a message in order to measure it to more than seven.

Maria recalls it as difficult and awkward to assess herself and she appreciates the good feedback the teacher gave her – *"in a respectful way".*

When reflecting on the assessment, Maria finds that there was quite a narrow focus on specific subject goals and admission criteria, and not so much focused on which experience Maria brought with her.

"The teacher did not ask about my life in Romania – there was a strong focus on my time in Denmark"

After the VPL, Maria waited three months for the reply of her application to the study. She tells that she did not expect anything. Hence, she was very happy when she received the positive message that her application was accepted.

VI – Impact

During the preparation course and the VPL process, Maria talked a lot with her husband about education and about how the study influences on ones' self-understanding and awareness.

Maria reflects on the change and she concludes that culture definitely plays a role. She characterizes the Danish culture as individual – with a strong focus on the individual, and she mentions equality, trust and respect as aspects of the culture she has met.

Having got the access to the study she wanted, it is important for Maria to say that:



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“I got the chance to prove what I can so that I was not forced to make a living by cleaning”. “I wish to demonstrate to other migrants like me that they can have a good chance in Denmark, if they want to”.