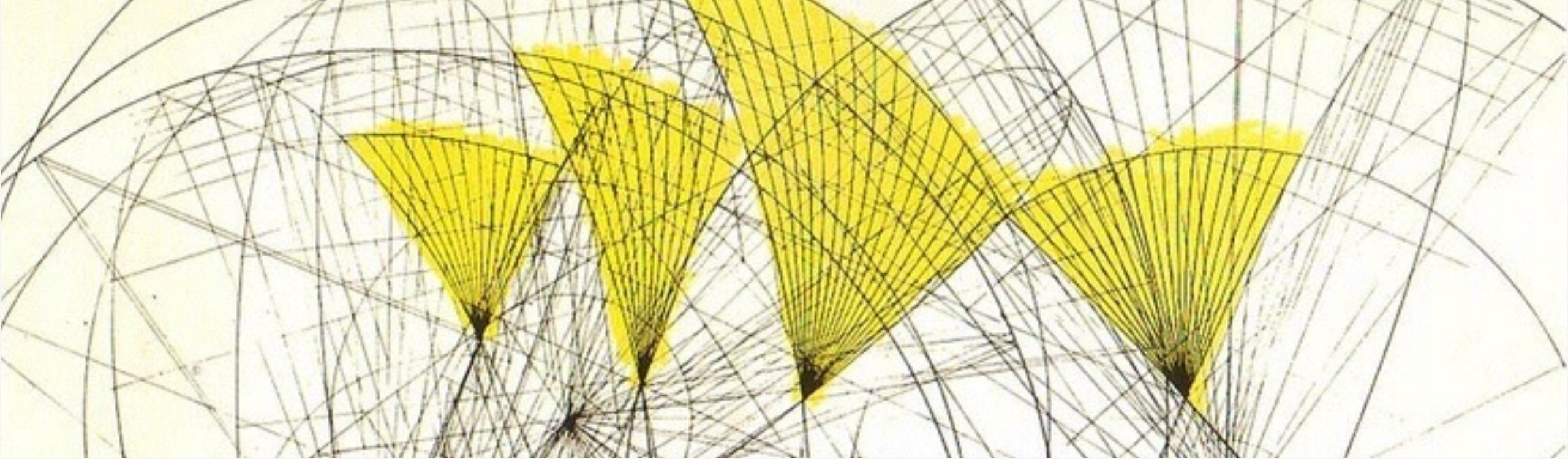


**MADE**  
**by the Opera House**

Communication project: Evaluation  
April 2017



# Index

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## 1. Introduction

- introduction
- process and interviews

## 2. General observations

## 3. Key findings

- the students
- the host firms
- collaborators

*The biggest surprise of MADE is the attention the program has gotten. It has been unduly successful.*

*Why has it been so successful? Everyone got behind the program from the very beginning until this day.*

*MADE facilitates a lot to happen.*

*And I think it has a massive commercial benefit for Denmark, and a massive cultural potential for Australia.*

— F O U N D I N G P A R T N E R

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# Introduction

**This material presents the first draft of findings and conclusions of the 'MADE by the Opera House Communication project: evaluation and symposium'.**

The following presents the key findings of the evaluation process, which has been carried out in both Sydney and Copenhagen. On the basis of the evaluation, a series of potentials for strengthening the program has been discovered. These are described in the following material together with specific action points which can be carried out in both short and long term.

The aim of the 'MADE by the Opera House Communication project: evaluation and symposium' is two-fold:

- An in-depth evaluation of the MADE program produced on the basis of qualitative interviews with all collaborators and participants in the project. The main learnings from the interviews are gathered in a report, and produces a set of recommendations for the MADE program going forward.

- A symposium with focus on cross-disciplinarity in the built environment with themes derived from the findings in the evaluation

This material presents the findings and main recommendations derived from the evaluation.

The project is carried out from August 2016 where the interviews began, and will run until after the symposium.

**Interviews have been conducted with :**

- Sydney Opera House
- Students from both Australia and Denmark
- Host firms in Copenhagen and Sydney
- Other collaborators and partners such as AMP Capital, the Architects Registration Board

# Process and interviews

The interviews were carried out in two parts: Interviews with Australian participants were conducted in Sydney in August 2016. Interviews with Danish participants were conducted during October and November in Copenhagen. A follow up online survey amongst the students was carried out in December and January 2017.

All results were collected and analysed in January and February 2017. The material was initially presented to the Danish Steering group at the beginning of April 2017. On the basis of feedback from the Steering group the material has been finalised.

In total 19 qualitative interviews were conducted with a total of 30 respondents. This involved nearly all the participating students, all host firms in Denmark and Sydney, and other collaborators such as the Sydney Opera House, The Architects Registration Board in Sydney, and APM Capital. Furthermore, all students have been given the opportunity to participate in an online survey.

The interviews were carried out by MADE project coordinator Sidsel Nygård (KADK) and consultant Nanna Hjortenberg from Golden Days Secretariat. In Denmark also assisted by Kathrine Amann (Golden Days Secretariat)

## Timeline:

- August: interviews in Sydney with the Australian partners
- September – November: interviews in Copenhagen with the Danish partners
- December- January: online survey with all students
- January – February: production of evaluation
- March – June: planning of symposium

## 2. General observations

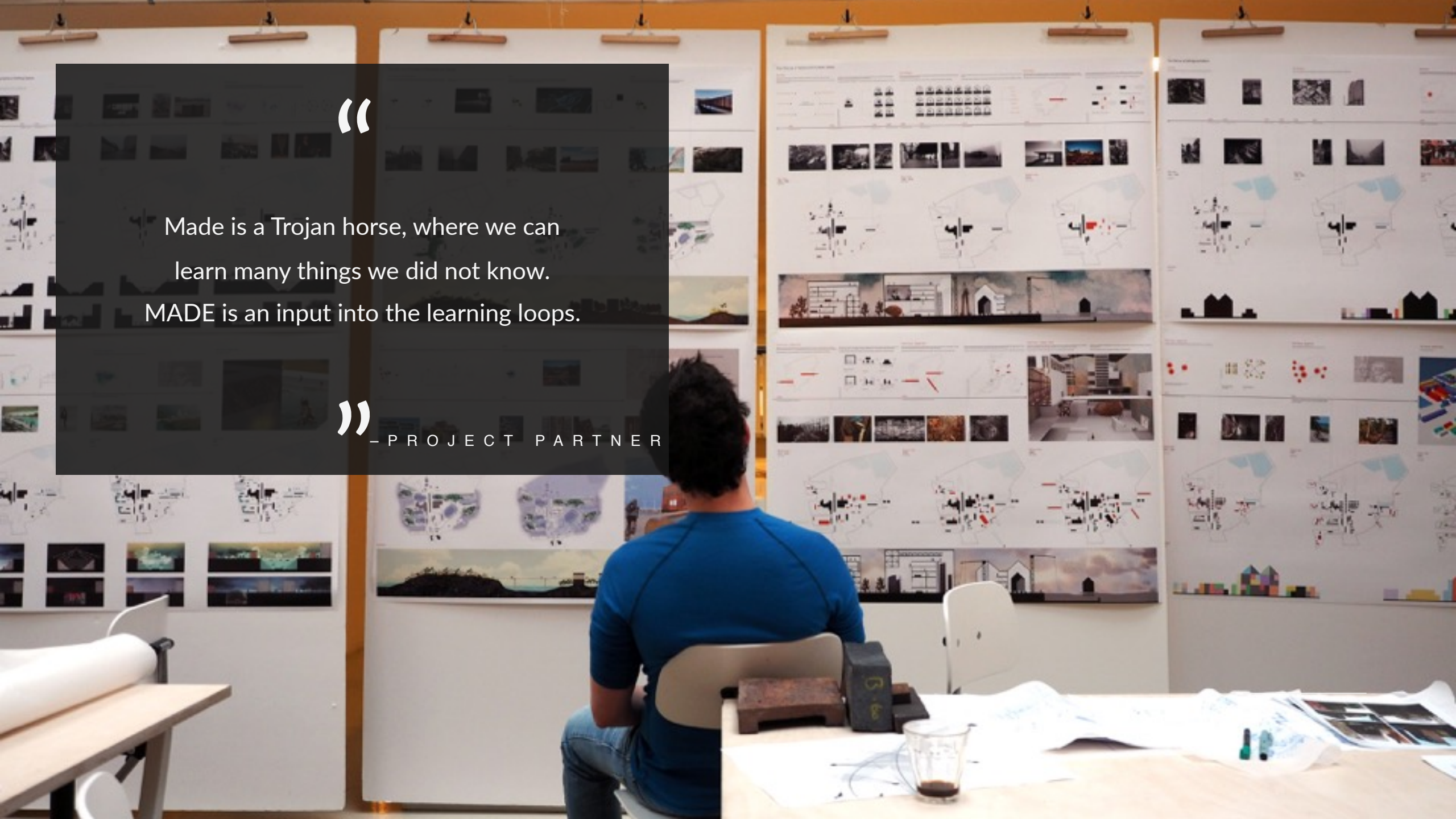
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“

Made is a Trojan horse, where we can  
learn many things we did not know.  
MADE is an input into the learning loops.

”

- PROJECT PARTNER



# General findings

The MADE by the Opera House program is highly supported by the participants. Whether it is the host firms, the students, or the organisations and institutions around the program, an overwhelming support and appreciation has been expressed for the program. The strength and the power of the program seem to have somewhat taken all participants by surprise – from the founding partners to the students. Many characterise the uniqueness of the program and describe it as something ‘so much more’ than an exchange program.

## *Personal inspiration*

One of the strengths of the program appears to be its ability to create a common, engaging platform with a lot of energy and support. This platform is not only a professional relation, but gains its strength from the personal connections and relations it builds between people, partners, and participants - and from the mutual inspiration and space for reflection beyond the everyday professional dilemmas, it is able to create.

## *Professional relevance*

However, MADE also gains its strong support by being highly relevant on a professional level. The program touches on one of the crucial challenges facing the built environment: How to create collaborative and multi-disciplinary teams that work and innovate together? In its condensed form, the 6-week program, MADE becomes a crash course in dilemmas connected with inter-disciplinarity. It is thus an eye-opening experience for the students, and it becomes a relevant reminder for the host firms of the challenges and difficulties in every project.

## *Dedication*

What strikes many of the participants in the MADE program, is the high level of dedication to the program across the line of partners and participants. The close daily contact with the project coordinators, the high level attendance of presentation, dinners etc., and the continual involvement of the MADE Alumni all contribute to creating a strong network around the project.



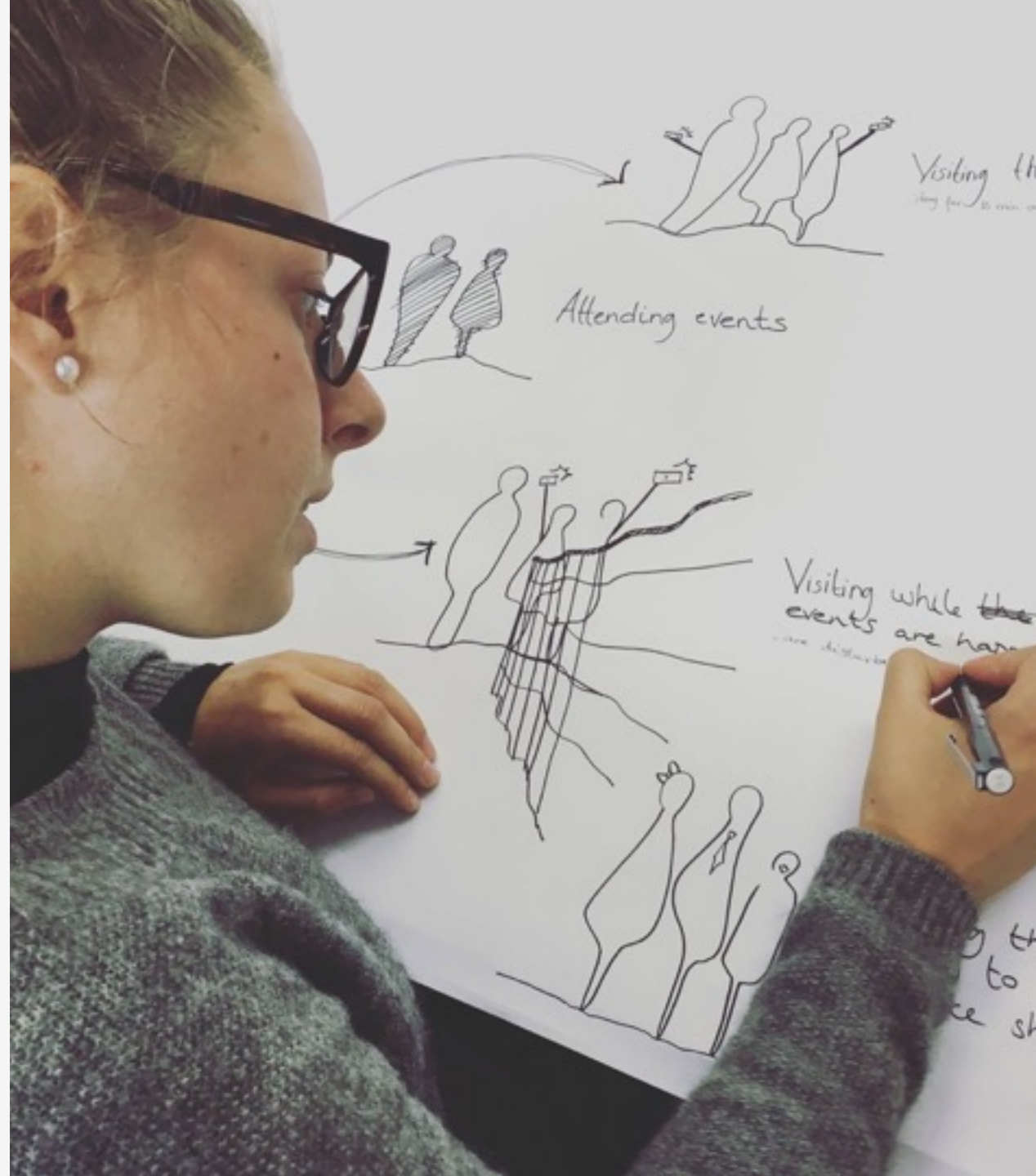
It activates the students and motivates them to perform their best.

Furthermore, it creates value and builds relations among the partners across organisations and professional fields. This dedication generates a momentum for the program which makes it stand out from other student or professional programmes, making it a privilege to be part of.

#### **Historical importance**

It seems central to have Jørn Utzon's work as the base for the program – both in Denmark and in Sydney – and having Jan Utzon personally involved. Jørn Utzon's work is a reminder of magnificent, world class architecture that in itself embodies mastering the discipline of multi-disciplinarity. Many of the participants express great pride in being associated with one of the greatest masters of architecture.

The work of Utzon, especially the Sydney Opera House, holds a strong fascination for the all the students, regardless of their academic background. It creates a natural, common inspiration for the teams and is a common set of inspiration and aspiration. Furthermore, many of the students emphasises Jan Utzon's presence at presentations and sees his input as a great privilege.



# 3. Key findings


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# Introduction

The following pages presents the key findings of the interviews divided into three sections: students, host firms and collaborators.

Each section will highlight the main findings of the specific group and presents potentials that can further strengthen the MADE program.





*The students don't feel they have been given a crown but an opportunity. They embrace the struggle. Work with it.*

FOUNDING PARTNER

---

# The students

During the interviews nearly all students from both Denmark and Australia describe MADE as a unique experience that challenge them and give them significant insight in both their professional and personal passions and competences.

## *Personal insights*

Many emphasise how MADE has made them grow both personally and professionally. The program has made them better communicators, listeners, and collaborators. And the program altogether matured them and gave them more confidence. For many MADE is a turning point in their studies and sets the directions for their future professional life.

## *Communication*

The student often describes how communication is a challenge in the groups and learning to communicate. To really listen and understand others is one of the main learnings of the project. They learn that different disciplines express different things with the same words. This insight is described as something they will bring into their future work and professional relations.

It seems as if the groups, who have the best process and collaboration are the ones that find a way or a method to create a common language. This happens either as a set of rules defined by the group itself or by exercises they decide to use to train their communication. Often processes like these are initiated by students with a double degree or a design background.

## *Accelerated learning process*

Many of the students describe the challenges of the condensed period of the program which includes them living and working together and having a very programmed set up with meetings, lectures etc.

The balance between dedicating time to masterclasses and actually working on the project is challenging to find. However, many students conclude it to be a premise of the program, and part of the accelerated learning process.

The condensed process also stresses the need for students to take bold choices and encourages them to leave their comfort zone. Many students and host firms refer to MADE as an opportunity to think bold and allow for experimentation - and possible failure - in order to learn and evolve. Many students embrace this, as failure is normally not an option in their academic tradition, and they push themselves beyond normal boundaries.

### ***Balancing academic profiles and collective collaboration***

Some of the students find it hard to activate their academic backgrounds during the MADE program, and all teams struggle with finding a way to work multi-disciplinarily. It is clear, that the groups which manage to create a successful collective communication are also the best at contributing with their individual professional competences.

Some state that the brief and even the host firms favour the architectural discipline and many ask for a more nuanced balance. However, this issue seems to have been most dominant at the beginning of the MADE program. Other ask for host firms which work truly multi-disciplinarily in order to get a better understanding of its potentials and to get a better guidance during their work.

The mentors play an important role in showing examples of how to work multi-disciplinarily. And a combination of truly multi-disciplinary offices and mentors provides an inspirational framework for the students and better allow the individual students contribute to the common process.

### ***Returning to school***

Part of the students find it challenging to return to their studies after the MADE program. Having gone through the intense process of the MADE program and experiencing a strong feeling of collaboration and multi-disciplinarity, some of the students find it hard to navigate in their traditional study program.

Some students state that their new passions and self-awareness of the potentials of multi-disciplinarity is simply not valued in their universities. Others find that their teachers lack qualifications to guide them in relation to multi-disciplinary dilemmas and issues.



“

It has been one of the biggest  
experiences in my life.

STUDENT

”

# The students – potentials

## *The network and alumni.*

The alumni network could be strengthened by finding new ways to engage the alumni students. Currently they contribute as social ambassadors which is of big value to the new MADE students. When alumni MADE students have been part of writing the brief or functioned as mentor, it has created a valuable overlap between the different groups. However, there still seems to be a potential to engage the alumni closer and keep them involved in either the master classes or other activities during the program.

Furthermore, the group of MADE alumni is a talented group of students across disciplines, who are highly passionate about the multi-disciplinary approach to working. This could be further cultivated, i.e. at the academic institutions, by involving them in workshops etc. with the rest of the students. Thus, using them as ambassadors for the agenda of multi-disciplinarity rather than 'just' as ambassadors for the MADE program.

## *A social forum turning into professional connections.*

The personal connections established between the students – across the groups – will become an important asset for the students – as well as the host firms – as they move into professional life and advance their careers. As one host firm states: 'the alumni are all high performers and potential leaders in global organisations' This is one potential which can be used better in the program going forward. One way to do this is to cultivate meetings between alumni students and alumni host firms in order to further stimulate and grow the relations and network across the years.

## *Designing the transition from the MADE program back to school*

Since many experience the end of the MADE program as 'back to normal', and are having difficulties in really using their new skills in their academic structure, it seems obvious to reflect on, how the loop back into education is designed so as to not disillusion the students.



Ways of doing this are manifold, but perceiving the MADE alumni as ambassadors for the agenda of multi-disciplinarity and involving them – in teaching, lectures, network sessions etc. – could help both the students in supporting their interest in the multi-disciplinary and to engage other students in this agenda.

#### ***The brief***

The students suggest making the alumni part of writing the brief for the next teams in order to better balance them in terms of multi-disciplinarity. This has already happened during the last year, and it seems the result is that the students have less difficulties engaging with their assignment.

Also, the brief should evolve over time in order to be less oriented towards the architectural practice and more inclusive towards the other disciplines. Small adjustments have already been made by the project coordinators, and this can be further evolved. The choice of host firms also play a crucial role and can help strengthen the multi-disciplinary profile of the MADE program itself.

#### ***The recruitment***

In selecting the teams, the right balance between talent and passion for collaboration is crucial. Different versions have been tried throughout the program, and these suggested to prioritise profiles with strong social skills, openness and maturity equally if not higher than academic qualifications. Prioritising candidates with a strong methodological profile and insights into process design and group facilitations would also add value to the group dynamics.



“

The transition from MADE and back to the schools is difficult and challenging.

The program needs to create a better connection and collaboration between the schools.

STUDENT

”

# Host firms

In general, the host firms enjoy participating in the MADE program. They find the students inspiring and talented, and enjoy the energy – and chaos – it creates to have five students nearly living in their office for the duration of the program.

The host firms' motivation for participating vary but several mention the opportunity to observe and potentially recruit new talent. Also contributing to a non-profit project with an ambitious professional profile is a driver for the host firms.

The Australian host firms wish to strengthen their relations to the Sydney Opera House. The House holds a special attraction to the firms in terms of being a cultural site of great national pride and by being one of the most professional prestigious buildings to work on. MADE creates an occasion to casually talk to and interact with collaborators in Sydney which the host firms normally engage with in a client-consultant relation.

The Danish partners are motivated by strengthening their relations to the academic world. And they use the occasion of hosting students to create social and informal sessions for their employees. There seems to be little business-value in the program for the Danish partners. It could therefore be suggested to connect the program closer to a business perspective.

This seems a rather simple task, since MADE deals with a the very relevant agenda of multi-disciplinary innovation. Connecting the program stronger to this agenda and doing it from a business perspective would help create a more stable base of alumni host firms and further strengthen the network and the attraction of being part of the program.

### *Different academic traditions*

The host firms in both countries reflect on the difference of the academic traditions between Australia and Denmark and how it affect the way the students work. The Danish students are characterised by their host firms as spending a lot of time and energy on redefining the questions of the brief and formulating their context and little time on the actual production. The Australian students are characterised by a faster production and prototyping.

This difference in academic traditions holds an interesting learning potential for both host firms and students, and the issue could be integrated in the master classes. This as an eye-opener for the students as well as it serves to better understand the communication between host firms and the MADE team.


“

**I see the difference lies in the professional skills.  
The Danes try to understand the problem more before  
trying to do the result. They break down the problem, do  
a long investigation before producing the end result.**

**Australian students have a different process,  
they investigate, produce a result, investigate  
and produce a result.**

”

– M E N T O R



*I am fascinated by how the students come together  
and produced ideas. Collaborative projects.*

— MENTOR IN HOST FIRM

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# Host firms - potentials

## *Collaboration*

For the host firms MADE program is a reminder of the challenges regarding collaborating on projects. It is a reminder of the importance of personal relations and connections in relation to making a collaboration work, and of the importance of communication and listening to collaborators – and clients – with a different professional background.

## *Host Alumni*

The host firm alumni network could be strengthened by finding relevant ways for the firms to reconnect the host firms with the program, not only to follow the program but also to build on the relations between companies – i.e. the architects and engineers to mature new professional debates. Or even new collaboration. A way to reengage the host firms could be by special seminars or master classes, or by integrating them in the general network of i.e. KADK or the Sydney Opera House concerning other activities.

“

**The most challenging thing for groups ... is that knowledge sharing is hard. It is a general problem. We did a big review of research 2-3 years ago and concluded it is more important to disseminate information (share experiences) rather than create more.**

**We are seeing in the MADE program that human contact is the way to pass on information. The young are being very curious about information.**

”

– MARIANNE FOLEY,  
SYDNEY OFFICE LEADER,  
ARUP

### *Create a common agenda*

The question of how to create multi-disciplinary work that is innovative and successful is a common agenda across the engineer and architectural firms involved in the MADE program. A stronger connection with alumni host firms could be made by strengthening this aspect of the program and offering more insights into methods and examples.

Also, invitations to the final presentations of the MADE programs would be a way to re-connect with previous host firms

### *Profile of the host firms*

It is worth considering host firms that operate outside the traditional practice of the previous architectural and engineering host. This would further emphasise the competences of the students and it would help broaden the scope for where architects, engineers, and designers can contribute and create value.

Host firms could be design firms or international companies such as Velux, Rockwool or similar, that are highly connected with the built environment and have a business focused on innovation, multi-disciplinary solutions and sustainability.

# Collaborators

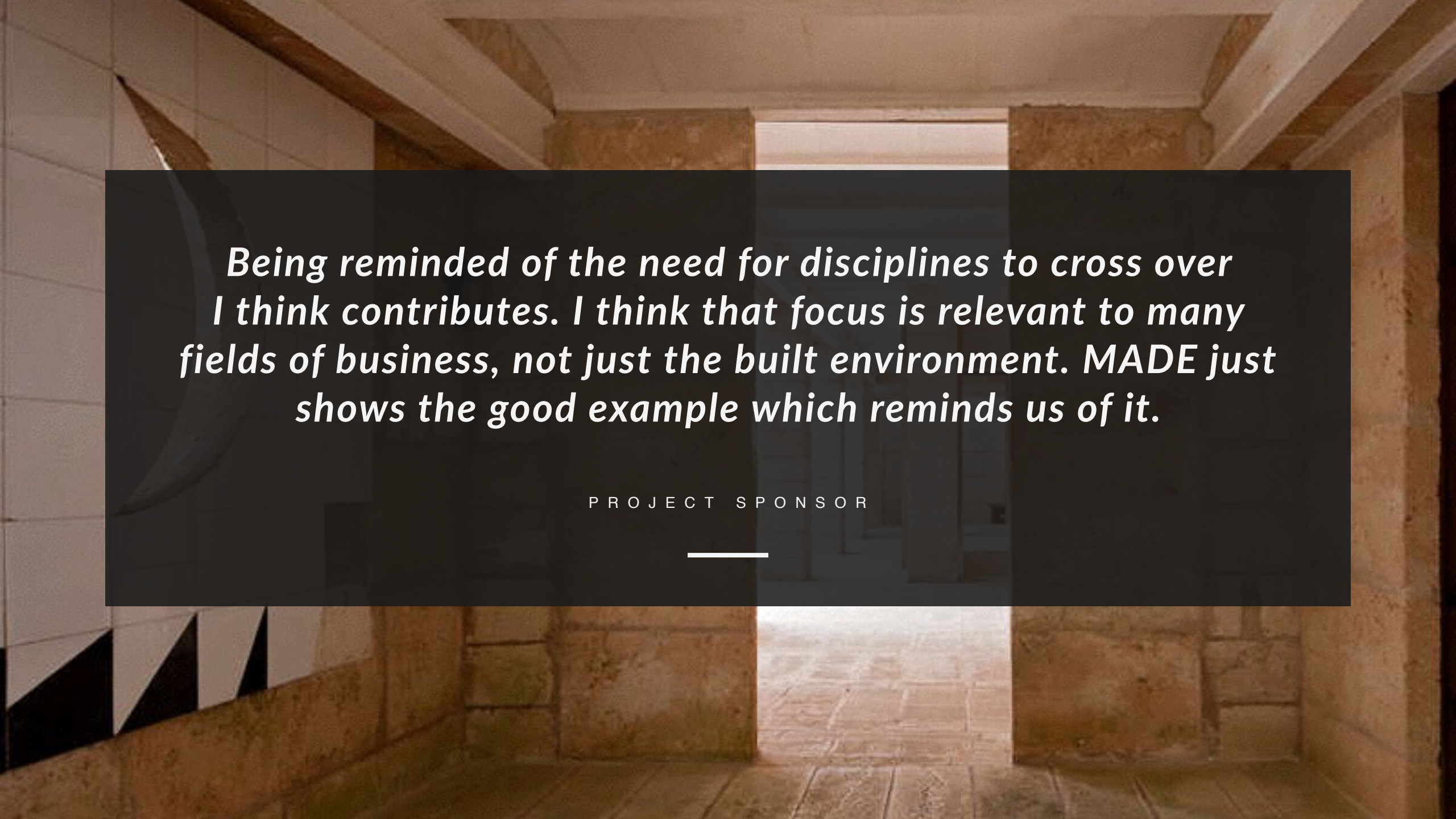
The level of involvement and the attraction of MADE vary for the collaborators of the program that are not host firms. The MADE program was initiated from the Sydney Opera House, and The House continues to use MADE in a very professional and forward oriented way. Here, the program is given great focus and dedication.

The Sydney Opera House connects MADE with other projects and combines the passion and talent in the program with partners and sponsors not directly involved in the program.

MADE thus create value across different initiatives and stakeholders for the Sydney Opera House, and this also feeds back into the MADE program, i.e. by bringing new partners or sponsors on board

MADE sees to contribute to the Sydney Opera House's overall strategy for development, and it shows that the House is more than a concert house, but also a cultural house and a meeting point for students, collaborators and sponsors.





*Being reminded of the need for disciplines to cross over  
I think contributes. I think that focus is relevant to many  
fields of business, not just the built environment. MADE just  
shows the good example which reminds us of it.*

PROJECT SPONSOR

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# Collaborators – potentials

## *Communication*

During the interviews it was expressed several times that MADE holds a communication potential that is currently not fully exploited. This is pointed out by both host firms, collaborators, and students.

The strengths of the program hides a lot of interesting stories that can contribute to the ongoing debates on competences, education, and challenges in the built environment in general. A higher level of communication is also thought to strengthen the recruitment of host firms and students.

## *Creating an agenda*

The communication of MADE can be improved by expanding the focus from a student program to the overall agenda of multi-disciplinarity, both on the web site, on social media, and through press work.

A stronger public profile would create additional value for the sponsor and collaborators and it will help bring new partners on board for the further development of the program. Also, the MADE program can be promoted as a 'best case' for both the host firms and the academic institution, showing how to engage in the agenda of innovation and multi-disciplinarity.

## *Strengthening the attraction of the program for the Danish partners*

The Sydney Opera House creates a natural and very attractive focal point for the Australian partners. The Danish program lacks the same kind of epicentre that continue to develop the professional and commercial interests in an attractive network.

A Danish partner – or network of organisations – which connects the MADE program with the larger debates within the built environment and the academic world would boost the program, strengthen the agenda of the

multi-disciplinary, and make it more attractive for host firms and other collaborators and new sponsors.

There seems to be various possibilities that could be developed further. One is connecting MADE closer to the new BLOX HUB in Copenhagen. Here, a cluster of organisations ranging from design, architecture, engineering, knowledge research, and technology is forming, and this could be connected with MADE. Either serving as the challenge or brief for the students or by involving the companies and organisations in the area i.e. in the master program and using them as knowledge resources.

This would also create value for the host firms, and even attract new hosts, as the BLOX HUB itself is focused on innovation, research and business development. In Denmark, this seems to be the place to reinvent a new 'Utzon model' for collaborating between disciplines and creating new and unique results.

Another, and not necessarily different, approach would be to connect MADE to the core of the strategic development at the KADK. The KADK is undergoing a strategic development which in many ways could both profit by and contribute to the MADE program.

The school's focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals as part of its main strategy holds a potential for the MADE program. It is equally connected to a large and urgent agenda, and it would be an attraction for students, host firms and collaborators to combine the agendas of multi-disciplinarity and the role of the built environment in solving some of the complex global challenge.

Also, MADE could be a valuable example for KADK, serving as a 'best case' for some of the new developments and ways of working that will develop at KADK in the coming years.

*It (SOH) is a symbol of the creative collisions ...*

*The Opera House is the manifestation of what happens if it works.... It represents a unique moment in history. How do you create an environment where superb creation can be made?*

— F O U N D I N G P A R T N E R

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# Concluding remarks

As the previous pages have shown, the MADE program is a powerful and unique initiative that creates great value on both a personal and professional level to the people involved.

A series of areas have been identified based on their potential for strengthening the program and expanding its reach. These can be summed up to three main focal areas which are described below.

## ***Reconnecting the Alumni***

The Alumni, both students and host companies, holds a strong potential for further development. By shifting the focus on the alumni from a 'MADE alumni' to a group of ambassadors with passion for the multi-disciplinary, the project can broaden its scoop and its value-creation for the people involved. The 'ambassadors' can be used strategically and can be invited back into the program.

## ***From student program to common agenda***

MADE deals with some of the most urgent challenges within the built environment - and in some regards also beyond. By being more articulated about how MADE contributes to the overall agenda of multi-disciplinarily and innovation the program will be able to create value beyond itself.

MADE has the potential to serve as a 'best practice case' on how to combine students and academic institutions with private business and using both historical examples of excellence and seeking new types of innovation. This shift will also strengthen the attraction towards the program for hosts and potential collaborators and sponsors.

## ***Broadening the network of collaborators***

The MADE program has run for several years and have gradually been adjusted and improved, and it now seems mature enough for engaging and involving other partners from outside the architectural and engineering practices. Expanding more towards design practices seems obvious but also expanding beyond this would boost the program.

