IMPACT REPORT 2021

HackYourFuture

INDEX

ABOUT US

HackYourFuture is a coding school teaching computer programming to refugees, asylum seekers and other disadvantaged groups with limited access to higher education and the Danish labour market. Over the 34-week course, students acquire the necessary technical and interpersonal skills to become professional web developers within an in-demand field. The non-profit organisation's goal is to have their students land a job after graduation. Thereby, they narrow the employment gap in the tech industry, while building cultural bridges and facilitating newcomers' integration.

ORIGINS

Originally founded in Amsterdam in 2016, HackYourFuture was born to address the 2015 European Migrant Crisis and the growing demand for developers. That year a large number of people fled their home countries and came to Europe seeking asylum. The Dutch founders saw an opportunity to intervene and create a win-win situation for the newcomers and their host country. By teaching computer programming to refugees, they would obtain relevant coding skills to improve their chances of finding work after obtaining their asylum. Simultaneously, the Netherlands would gain the developers they were in dire need of.

In 2017, a group of volunteers observed a similar situation in Denmark, where the high demand for web developers could not be filled with homegrown talent. Thus, they founded HackYourFuture Denmark with the vision of supporting the inclusion of newcomers and aiding them to be economically independent.

At the moment the program is active in Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Brussels and Toronto.

VISION

HackYourFuture aspires to be an inclusive self-sustained and sustainable community of tech professionals. A community that proves the talent of individuals facing challenging situations in Denmark. We want to be the go-to place for inclusivity and diversity in the tech industry. Our goal is the employment of the students in the tech industry, bringing more diversity to tech.

MISSION

We help people to hack their own futures.

What does that mean exactly?

HackYourFuture addresses the need for more web developers and diversity in the tech industry in Denmark. It does this by offering relevant tech education to individuals facing challenging situations that prevent them from fulfilling their professional potential. Thereby we

bridge the gap to the labour market, making employment as a web developer possible.

So what makes the organization unique?

Our success criterion is not graduation, but employment.

Our teachers and mentors are professional web developers that take the responsibility to share their knowledge and passion for technology with people who need it the most.

We treat everyone equally, while also acknowledging the different backgrounds of our students. We offer equal opportunities to everyone by creating a supportive and inclusive learning community.

Our screening and selection process considers both technical skill and the degree of marginalisation of the applicant. Where others may see liability, we see potential.

We change the perception of what our students can achieve in Denmark through ambitious and meaningful projects. We create and celebrate role models that coming generations can aspire to.

We want to create a lasting impact on the lives of our students and thus their social surroundings. We don't give up on anybody easily.

THE PROGRAM

The course is a free 34-week program for people with and without a coding background covering the fundamentals of full-stack web development with a focus on modern JavaScript. Students acquire up-to-date technical skills as well as interpersonal competencies to enter the Danish labour market.

The program is taught by 150+ volunteer mentors, who are all professionals working in IT. They are passionate about coding, and they not only share their knowledge with the students but also their networks, professional insights and the latest trends of the tech sector.

Students must be competent in English, have strong determination and a real passion for coding, as they are expected to commit to a minimum of 30 hours per week of study and homework.

Weekly classes take place every Sunday for four hours at a co-working space in central Copenhagen. HackYourFuture's curriculum includes technologies like: HTML/CSS, GIT, Javascript, Databases, Node.js, React. In addition to the teaching sessions, HackYourFuture coaches and supports the students online throughout the week. Over the course of 34 weeks, students benefit from company visits, workshops from tech experts and individual career coaching that prepares them to land a job after graduation.

FOCUS AREAS

This report focuses on the following indicators to measure HackYourFuture's impact:

1. Employment in the Danish tech industry.
We believe landing a job is the key entrance to a more integrated position in society. We support people to become economically independent.

2. Gender equality.
We advocate for gender balance in tech by including at least 25 % female students per class and offering them support in their tech career.

3. Residence status.
We encourage applicants from non-tech backgrounds and diverse nationalities to join the program. We see diversification as an advantage.

4. Transparency. We are committed to accessibility and transparency. We are happy to share knowledge, best practices and results.

IMPACT

To illustrate the impact of the organisation's activities we have analysed the progress of their our fundamental objec-

tives. Based on quantitative and qualitative research gathered since the organisation emerged, it is clear that the work of HackYourFuture has had a positive effect on their students and has been praised to be a supportive community.

1. Employment

HackYourFuture's main goal is employment (in tech) after graduation as they consider it is the most important for their students and the most relevant performance indicator of their impact. Yet it is also worth mentioning the graduation ratio since it provides an insight into the complex structure of HackYourFuture.

In Fig. 1, it can be seen that while half of the total students successfully complete the program, a quarter accounts for dropouts and nearly a fifth represents the passive students. The latter group are those students who have not dropped out, but are currently "on pause" and not actively participating. Often this is due to family or personal circumstances that lie beyond HackYourFuture's influence. The students who leave the program be-
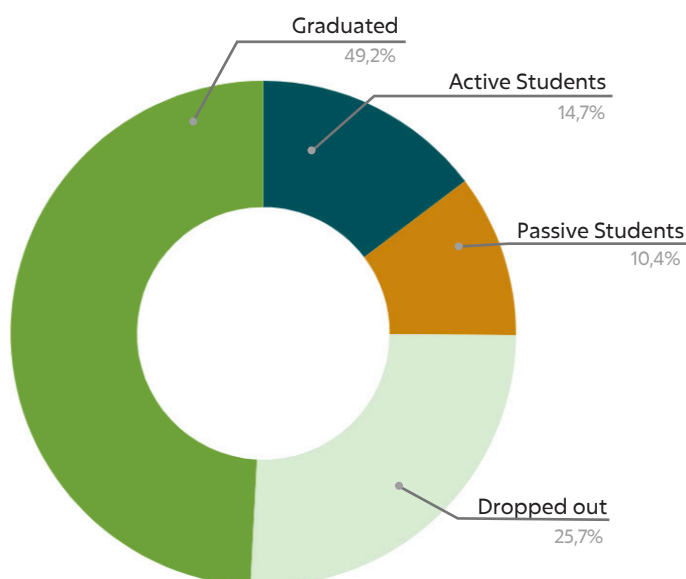

Fig. 1: Graduation ratio

Graduated
49,2%

Active Students
14,7%

Passive Students
10,4%

Dropped out
25,7%

fore graduating base their decisions on various different reasons. Some of the most common reasons are: other work or occupation, family or residence status issues, health situation, studies, pregnancy & childbirth, deportation and forced relocation. Of all the students who drop out, the vast majority are refugees followed by asylum seekers and migrants. This further highlights the challenging and delicate circumstances some students are in.

Fig. 2: Dropout status
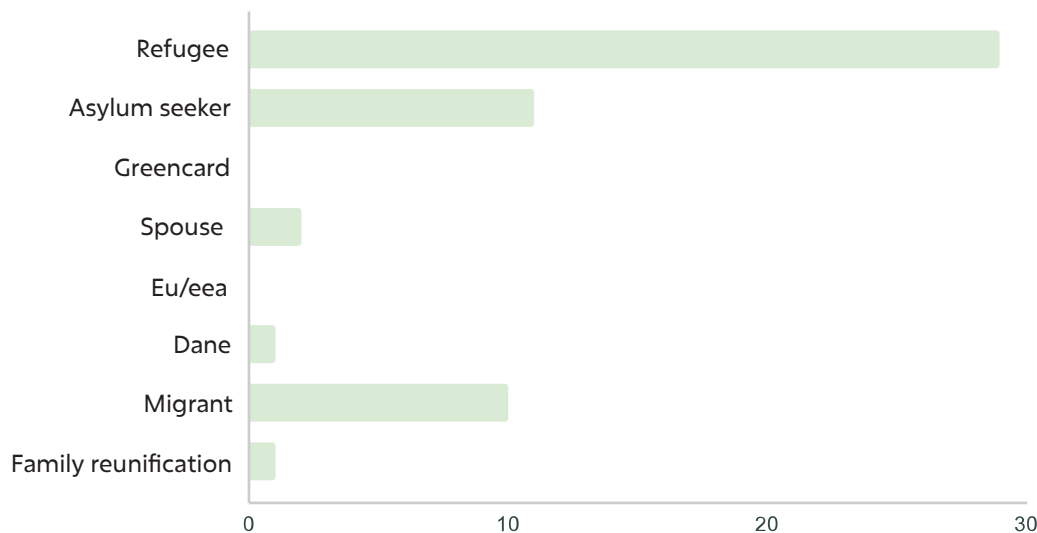
In Fig. 3, we can observe the employment ratio after 6 months from graduation. 84% of the students successfully find some sort of employment whereas 16% remain seeking a job. Furthermore, over half of the students land a paid position within 6 months, while almost 30% are in unpaid internships at this stage. It is worth mentioning that the organisation counts internships as part of employment although many do not offer monetary compensation.

This is because in Denmark a *virksomhedspraktik* (internship) is considered as one of the first steps into the job market and frequently, it leads to a paid position.
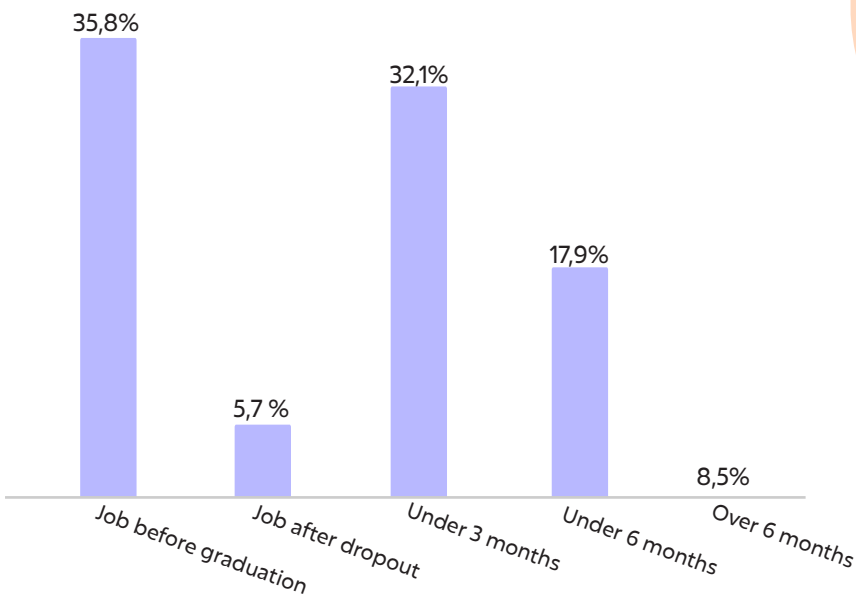
Fig. 3: Employment

- Paid work
- Unpaid internship
- Seeking job
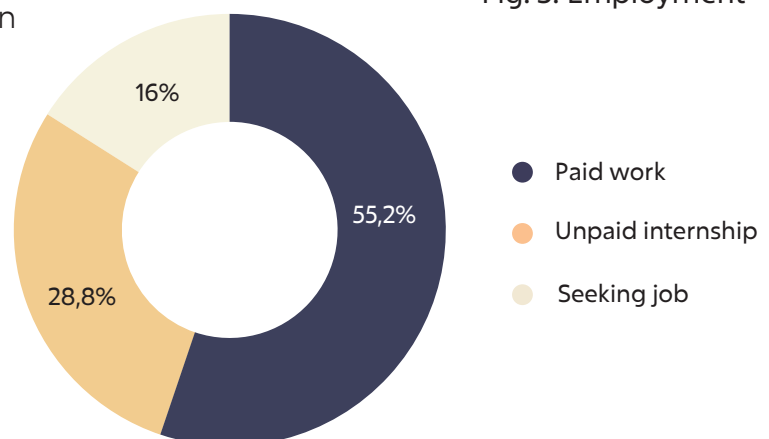
The high percentage of students in either internships or paid roles is definitely due to students' individual efforts and arguably, a consequence of HackYourFuture's work too. After graduation, the organisation assists students building a strong CV, a profile on GitHub and Linkedin, as well as an online portfolio to showcase their projects. Moreover, they prepare them with several mockup interviews sessions, share job openings with them on a daily basis, and continuously reach out to companies to allocate graduates in full-time positions.

Out of the students who find their first job or internship, it is worth noting that almost 35% of students find a job before finishing the program, whereas another 6% start to work after some time despite dropping out. Oftentimes, this is due to a change in their career paths or a fortunate offer. An almost equal percentage

of 30% of students remarkably find employment within 3 months. Moreover, nearly 18% find employment within 6 months. The remaining group takes longer than 6 months after graduating to find their first job in tech.

From Fig. 3.2, it is clear that students require a large amount of time to transition from an unpaid internship to paid work, compared to only a rough 15% that lands a position within 3 months. This is, in part, due to some graduates' lack of experience and also, to the lack of willingness from companies that do not hire graduates without relevant experience.

Fig. 3.2: Work after internships


Fig. 3.1: Work after graduation
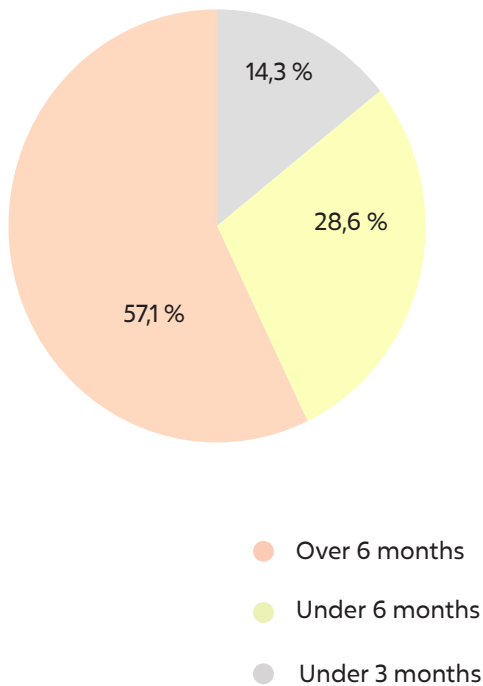
2. Gender equality

HackYourFuture also combats gender inequality by ensuring that a minimum of 25% of the students in the program are women. In order to reach that outcome, the organisation emphasized their focus on inclusive and gender non-specific language across all communication channels, overrepresentation of women in visual communication materials, website and social media channels, workshops to assist women for the test assignment, workshops about women in tech, and drawing attention to female role models. In Fig. 4, it can be observed that from all students who have enrolled or graduated, almost half of them are females. HackYourFuture's efforts are clearly illustrated, as they not only achieved the gender inclusion goal but successfully surpassed it. This is particularly relevant as the tech industry and the web programming sector are known to be primarily male-dominated.

Fig. 4: Gender ratio
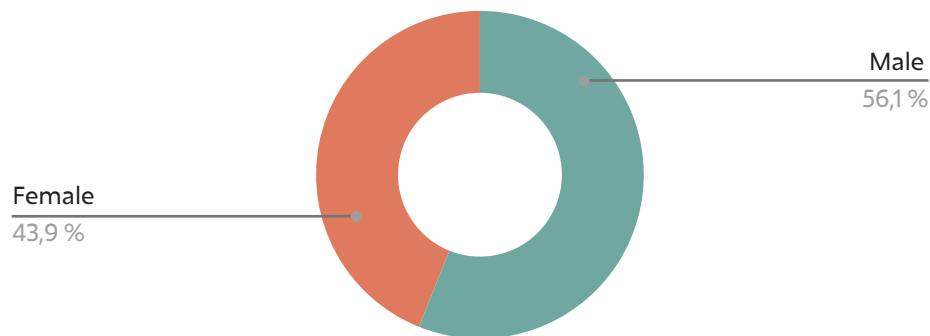
Male
56,1 %

Female
43,9 %

Since the beginning of HackYourFuture, more than half of the students per class were men. However, from class 07 until class 18, the organisation has experienced an increase of female pupils that reaches at least half of the total number of students per class. In the most recent classes, the majority of students are women (Fig. 5).
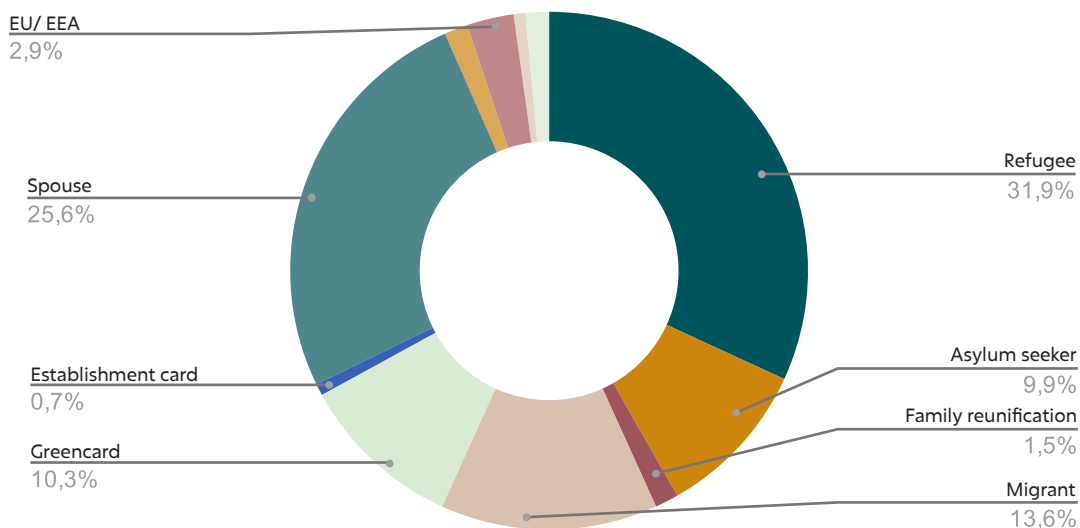
Fig. 5: Gender ratio per class

● Male
● Female
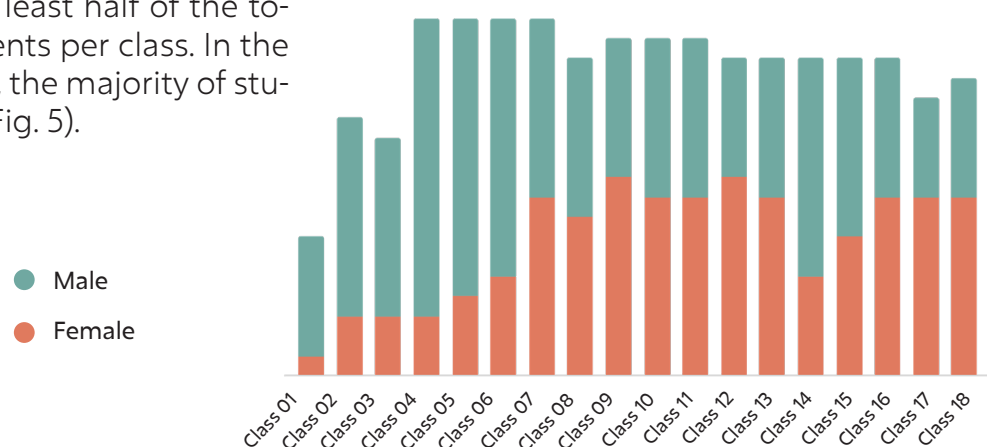
3. Residence status

HackYourFuture seeks to build the bridge to employment in the tech sector by welcoming applicants from non-technical backgrounds and diverse nationalities. In our selection process, the non-profit prioritises students with delicate circumstances over those who could potentially afford an education or have better access to the Danish market and society. As reflected in Fig. 7, over 30% of the students are refugees. The following larger groups are: accompanying spouses (slightly over 25%), over 13% of migrants, nearly 10% of green card holders, followed by almost 10% asylum seekers. However, the number of refugees and asylum seekers have been fluctuating since 2015 as the Danish government tightened immigration policies and discouraged seeking asylum in the Scandinavian country.

Fig. 6: Residence status

EU/ EEA
2,9%

Spouse
25,6%

Establishment card
0,7%

Greencard
10,3%

Refugee
31,9%

Asylum seeker
9,9%

Family reunification
1,5%

Migrant
13,6%

MENTORS

HackYourFuture relies largely on the work of volunteer mentors and teachers. They are crucial elements within the structure of the organisation as they voluntarily share their knowledge, experience and their network with students. Moreover, all mentors are full-time web developers working in top companies such as Zendesk, Danske Bank, Mærsk, Elastic, Green Mobility and Nordea. This is a great advantage for HackYourFuture students, since they benefit significantly from mentors' up-to-date insights in the tech sector.

HackYourFuture counts on a pool of 150+ volunteer mentors who participate in the community according to their time and interest. They interact with students either directly in the classroom or online on GitHub by writing detailed feedback. They cover different roles, such as Lead Teacher, Teacher Assistant or Homework Mentor in the 9 different modules. By the end of the course each class will ideally have been in contact with 36 different tech professionals.

They come from various places although the most common nationalities among them are Denmark (28%), followed by India (7,6%), Germany (4,8%) and Portugal (4,8%)[1]. Alongside their full-time jobs, mentors dedicate a great number of hours to different teaching tasks and events. The core mentoring activities of the coding school—including Sunday classes, weekly homework reviewing and preparation—account for 2646 hours a year.

Additionally, they also participate in study groups, work supplementary volunteer hours, teach masterclasses and organize and coordinate workshops. In total, they collectively spend 3788 hours a year on all these activities.

If mentors would be compensated for the time they devote to volunteering at HackYourFuture, this annual salary position would be roughly 1,181,300.00 kr. — assuming a median hourly salary of ~312 kr.

core volunteer activity

2646

hours/ year

total volunteer hours

3788

hours/ year

hypothetical mentor salary

1,181,300

kr. / year

1. Mentor nationality based on a sample of 100 individuals.

BUDGET

For the purpose of this impact report, HackYourFuture's operating-budget of 2020 has been analysed. Their total annual budget consisted of 1,394.000 kr.

In 2020, HackYouFuture experienced a higher amount of expenses compared to minimal revenue growth. The organisation's biggest expenditures for that year encompassed: employees' salaries, an independent 3rd party evaluation by LG Insight, office and teaching material, transportation and food.
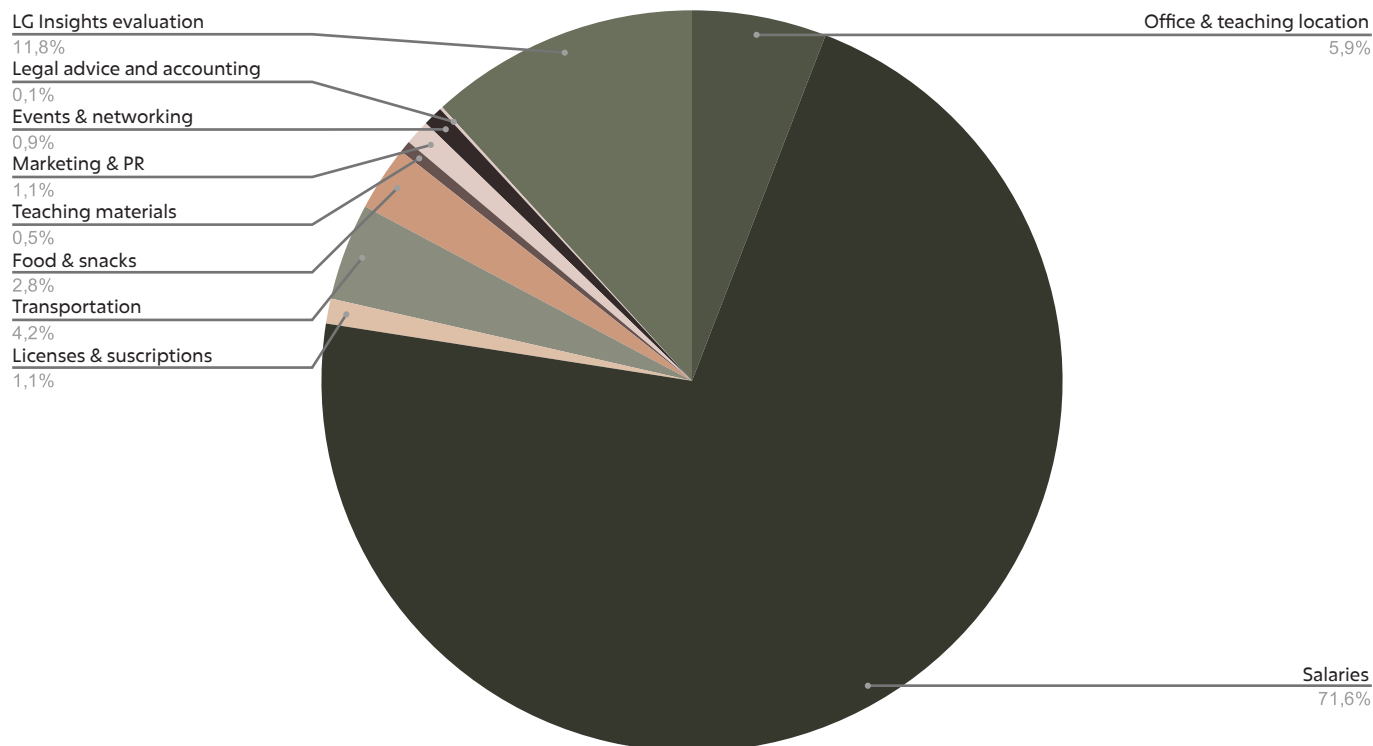
The graph below illustrates that over 70% were spent on staff salaries, followed by a rough 12% on an evaluation report, and nearly 6% was dedicated to office and teaching material.

Considering there are currently four employees in the organisation, the average monthly wage per worker is 19.056 kr before taxes. Under Danish standards, this is considered to be a low salary compared to the average in the country.

As a non-profit organisation, HackYourFuture relies predominantly on external grants and private donations. During the year 2020, the organization was supported by Den A.P. Møllerske Støttefond as part of a 3-year grant period from mid 2018-2021.

HackYourFuture offers free education to all of their students. However, if they would charge their beneficiaries to be part of the program, the average cost per student would be 23,233.33 kr. — assuming the enrollment of 60 students per year. On the other hand, if the organisation charged per graduated student, the cost would be 34,850.00 kr.

Fig. 7: Budget

LG Insights evaluation
11,8%

Legal advice and accounting
0,1%

Events & networking
0,9%

Marketing & PR
1,1%

Teaching materials
0,5%

Food & snacks
2,8%

Transportation
4,2%

Licenses & suscriptions
1,1%

Office & teaching location
5,9%

Salaries
71,6%