Olena

- Ukraine, 30-34
- MA in Informatik
- Erfahrung im Dev Ops
- Civic + private Hackathons



Stellensuche

I must live in Zurich. Zurich is really nice, you know, a lot of possibilities here. And that was my initial goal to settle here because Zurich is the best for the immigrants … this apartment is also not permanent. It was for four months only, so we moved. It's also another challenge in Switzerland to find an apartment. Zurich is quite big but also crowded. And I really like Basel…

Somehow here it works differently a bit… I can, I can say that not like fully know, but I'm a bit closer of getting how Swiss market works…. In my previous jobs, like in first one especially, we were working with US and Canada customers and all there you need to be like how to say not to be pushy but to be proactive to show that you can do something and here everyone is saying that you need to be humble but confident at the same time.

Maybe I should consider some part-time job like I don't know somewhere in the office as a clerk or at post or at university… I never had an experience with a physical demanding job …

Integrationsunterstützung

Olena bezieht keine Sozialhilfen und bezahlt für privat Sprachunterricht und für ein Integrationsprogramme

Not clear why all these programs, they are not provided when you apply for this refugee status in the country. Like you need to discover it somehow by yourself and it takes time, unfortunately.

Like before get to know about this [Prog X] maybe like four months or five months passed. If I knew it before, like maybe I will not like see two or three months just at home with my laptop. I would also do something to go somewhere to meet people to make it, I don't know, faster for me, faster integration.

Hackathon-Erfahrung

You need to provide some value to prove that you can do something because people also need to know who you are. ..You need to show that you're professional, you're reliable, you're good person….Like when I show some results I can reach people and say like hey we cooperated at this hackathon and I did this and this. Maybe you can look at this project that we did and maybe you could be interested and maybe you can say who you know with whom I can check and by that I can get a job at I believe a bit later.

It's also nice to build network, to be involved, to have some inspiration, motivation to meet new interesting people.

It's really helping not to, not to say, not to be desperate. It keeps you occupied. It shows that you can be involved in different types of habitats. Even to show yourself to different companies.

Lernen & Motivation

Um, yeah, it was, um, how to say, um, inspiring.

The hackathon was amazing. It was in Google office that was also interesting for me. …we connected it somehow with the sphere in which I am expert. It was connected to the like cloud migration so it was …perfect.

I believe Hackathon has given me some motivation, inspiration to not to give up and try to stay in the sphere that I was working before… somehow not lose my hope to find a job here with what I was doing before, yeah. It's really helping not to be desperate. It keeps you occupied. It shows that you can be involved in different types of habitats.

Netzwerke

We had fun. It was out of my comfort zone to work with the people with whom I never met before in my life, only once. But anyway, it was quite smooth and nice and I made several connections over there, added on LinkedIn.

I can reach people and say like hey we cooperated at this hackathon and I did this and this. Maybe you can look at this project that we did and maybe you could be interested and maybe you can say who who you know with whom I can check and by that I I can get a job at I believe a bit later. It's not immediately, yeah. And I'm not the type of person who will be like also disturbing people, yeah.

Verlauf

Amazing for me was that we received this letter that they are interested in our project and we can go further develop it… So despite the fact that I don't have work right now, I have some projects that I can work and I can like practice my skills, not to lose them, not to forget, to collaborate

We had already one meeting post hackathon and now with the team, this is me and two other people who are trying to like to came to a certain conclusion to understand how to develop it further. What we can do, who can do like infrastructure set up, who can code, who can manage this from like project perspective, like project management or product owner, yeah.

Olena found a part-time job at a small firm through her integration program. She has also had several technical interviews.


F
H

Kateryna

- Ukraine, 35-39
- Innenarchitektin
- Ehemalige Unternehmerin
- Kein Hackathon



Stellensuche

I don't know how many CVs I already sent and I tell you honestly, … it was maybe already thousand, so I three years I actually I can't find a job so and it doesn't matter if it's for cleaning, for service, for some other jobs if you don't have Swiss experience or Swiss CV or Ausbildung. I apply everywhere for some from small to high.

I think I need to just lie in my CV and say 15 years of work like Verkäuferin and just take out Inhaberin and put like employee 15 years, just, I don't know, clean floors or something.

They tell we're ready to hire you just we need Swiss German … it's not even about high German … if somebody calls and talks Swiss German, you need to understand.

When I put education as interior designer in Switzerland it's more decorator…. for us it's something between architect and decorator. We actually study much more than here in Switzerland… I'm proud I'm Ukrainian.

Integrationsunterstützung

I was in [] University in program CAS []. I was in two rounds of program [] integration and entrepeneurship. I usually go in for some different forums or some exhibitions. I have a job coach from social… in Thun.

End of the end, I got nothing from social assistance. I have no job; I have no income; they just ask for information…they just oppress you…it's not help…I can get that two years ago if my social worker will be a little bit more kind or smart. Continuing education will not help my situation. What I need is to have a proper education. And if I have a proper education, it's three years.

Kateryna ist immer noch auf der Suche nach einem Job, engagiert sich aber ehrenamtlich in verschiedenen Projekten, um ihre Fähigkeiten auf dem neuesten Stand zu halten.


F
H

Selam

- Äthiopien, 30-34
- MA in Informatik
- Studiert derzeit für den Master in Wirtschaftsingenieurwesen CH
- Erfahrung als Entwickler
- Kein Hackathon



Stellensuche

I'm learning B2 level German course, (..) but it's not enough, it's not enough to communicate with the person who, just like, as mother language, it's difficult.

I had two, three times interviews, both of them in German, one of them in English. They want either English and German or neither French and English or German, so at the time with the CEO, we communicated in a good way, but when he gives to me answer, it's rejected because we got another candidate who speaks German as mother language and he is, you know, he is better than you at the communication or something.

I don't understand what they want from the (..) applicants. In the job environment it's similar. I have all of the skills and the one with coding development, for example, it's called []. I have four years experience in that … it's international.

Integrationsunterstützung

Yeah, the Social Dienst they give you, they provide a lot of things, just like this event, and I have also one job coach, but most of the time you work on the resume, just how it's written, how to write the CV.

She supports me on that only, so it's not enough. I have already my resume in another country, already I worked in another country, so it's a good, clear and explicit resume. Job coaching is, it's not enough for me.

She told me, you know, you have enough degree, you can start immediately a job, you find a job, you don't need more education, but most of the time the companies who want someone, who learned in Switzerland.

Verlauf

Right now I am a little bit busy, because I am attending my master's degree in business information systems, and in the evening I have a German course, but if it [a hackathon] has good opportunity for me to connect, or to get a job, yeah, I will sacrifice my time.

I have to focus in German language to be at minimum B2 level, and I want to finish my master's degree also, so during that time I will apply in different of jobs and apprenticeships. The apprenticeship would help me to get the permanent one, so my future is to get a job and a better life.

Selam ist finanziert durch eine Stiftung für ihre 2. MA und Sprachprogramme.

Dmytro

- Ukraine, 30-34
- MA in Geographie und Informatik
- Doktorand Geoinformatik (Fernstudium)
- Civic Hackathon



Stellensuche

The main issue that I found out that you have to be a recent graduate [for internships]. So the companies usually expect you to be currently in bachelor or master degree or at least 6 to 12 months after your graduation. Another thing that I've noticed that there is a prohibition to apply for some internships or junior positions, if you have, if you're enrolled in PhD and after that I started to look for other ways …

I'm living in French speaking part and I am currently learning French. I do feel like it's possible to be employed. Most of the jobs that I've seen require English. But really something that is stopping me is probably the technical proficiency. So, I need to improve that. But also I enjoy learning French and I believe that it's a huge advantage just because you show the people your respect for the country, for the for the language they speak.

Integrationsunterstützung

I found a job integration program called [] for people with migrant backgrounds. I tried to apply there but I got rejected because they said that I was too little in Switzerland. At that point it was about five months ago, but now I have applied again and we'll try to see how it goes.

It seems to me like it's one of the very few tools that I can utilize because they can connect you with the with the employer and you can attend the job fair and actually meet the employer and participate in something like internship.

Hackathon-Erfahrung

I was really interested to participate in developing something that I could add to my portfolio.

It wasn't what I was expecting… people are motivated, they want to have things done and it's a completely different experience… It's this kind of format when you meet in person and you participate and you create a solution. I was impressed that some people were able to finish such sizable projects in a short period of time.

I didn't have a chance to contribute as a developer…I wasn't really so ready to do that type of job as I found out, because most of the people that I met there were very more professional than me and I just didn't want to let anybody down.

But it was a nice experience … I would love to participate next year and until that time get familiar with the many other tools so I can, you know … I could have greater chances to be to become a part of the team that will be working on a solution.

Lernen & Motivation

Mainly I learned that what kind of problems out there and what solutions you know companies are requiring you to provide.

It gave me a broader picture of what kind of problems exist and not just, you know, building a website or some kind of application.

Netzwerke

So it’s not just the regular project in your portfolio, but more teamwork and being able to have things done with other teammates and meet new people, making connections and you know, joining the community.

I wouldn't say friends, but you know, people that are enthusiastic and people that are in the same position like you and when you, you know, connect on LinkedIn.

When one person is succeeding when you know he or she is getting the job or internship you can reach out, ask about their experience, what they might think have helped them to get this internship, the job, maybe some specific approach and usually from my experience it's when the person is not really your opponent anymore, but the one who has succeeded, they tend to share some tips with you to help you understand how can you reach your goal too. Because at the end of the day people usually try to be supportive of other people.

Verlauf

I like the country and I like that there are a lot of opportunities to work in different fields and like frankly it would be very good to stay I think.

Dmytro continues to study and work remotely in Ukraine while learning French, planning to apply for internships in Switzerland and to program [] which includes an internship.


F
H

Emre

- Türkei (kurdisch), 20-24
- Studium in Physik (BA)
- Civic Hackathon



Stellensuche

Coming here was a bit hard for me because I felt I'm gonna lose my goal of becoming a theoretical physicist. I always liked science, physics, engineering and that kind of thing. Like it's the only thing I can do properly. I have no other talents than science in my opinion.

My first plan was coming here for a master's degree in ETH in theoretical physics. But I had to leave college in my third year. I was checking for jobs because I don't have necessary resources for studying here without working too.

I tried some other things, like working in as a dishwasher, waitress, receptionist. I was not as good as I was in science. I was a bit depressed, but I got over it in a few months and started to look for new ways for starting my education here or continuing if it's possible.

My German is in A2 level. They cut the courses at A2 and I was not able to go further, so English is better right now.

Integrationsunterstützung

No support at all. Like I said, they even rejected my participation in the [] program last year in [] University. The program was preparation for the Swiss education system, especially the refugees seeking higher education here.

I was already in German language courses and that was the reason they rejected. They said «we're already giving you language education, so that should be enough for you right now».

Hackathon-Erfahrung

It was not the thing I expected because I expected something more like focused on the parts of computer instead of the software.

I was not be able to apply some of the hackathons because it was in they were in German and I was only in A2 level in German.

I applied already for another one in August. They're looking fo rsome web designs.

Lernen & Motivation

At the Hackathon I realized I still have some chance in engineering too. So my plan is expand my knowledge in software and hardware engineering in technology.

I knew I had the spark in me, but didn't know I was this good at it. I realized I'm better than I thought in the hackathon.

I had my doubts about that. I thought I'm not going to be that good. I'm a perfectionist. So that's why I had insecurities, but I felt realize I'm better than I felt.

Netzwerke

I did expand my network in only one hackathon, so I think it is helpful.

I met some people that I can use or get help in the future for having connections in Swiss marketplace, some in software, some not directly in hardware, but connected to hardware and some political network too. I met some people that doing political stuff too in Switzerland.

Some I contacted.

Verlauf

I think I'm not gonna be able to get in here as I expected in Swiss marketplace and Swiss education system.

So I might take a risk and turn back to Turkey just for finishing my education [BA] there, because just one year left. I'm going to expand my knowledge in engineering, especially hardware and software engineering and computer sciences. Then I will move here again for getting master's degrees and working.

That's my plan right now. I'm going to try to lay low in Turkey. Not going to use cards, not going to use my name in any government places and not going to have a place to stay officially at least.


F
H

Mehmet

- Türkei (kurdisch), 35-39
- BA in öffentlicher Verwaltung
- Erfahrung im Finanz- und Rechnungswesen
- Neues Studium in Betriebswirtschaft
- Kein Hackathon



Stellensuche

Mehmet ist 2 Jahre auf der Arbeitssuche und bisher hat er nur eine Einladung zu einem Vorstellungsgespräch bekommen von fast 500 Bewerbungen.

Ich bin sehr flexibel – geografisch, beim Pensum und beim Gehalt. Ich würde auch ein Jahr kostenlos arbeiten, nur um Erfahrung zu sammeln. Praktikum, befristet … alles ist möglich.

Jeden Tag überlege ich mir einen Plan B. Mein Gehirn ist besser als meine Muskulatur, aber wenn ich keine Stelle finde, muss ich irgendeine Arbeit machen.

Mit einem anderen Namen und einem anderen Hintergrund, aber dem gleichen CV, haben sie mich eingeladen. Mit meinem eigenen Namen nicht. Das war enttäuschend.

Integrationsunterstützung

Ja, es gibt Programme und sie haben mich unterstützt, aber sie machen vor allem CV-Vorbereitung und Anträge zur Diplomanerkennung. Die Diplomanerkennung habe ich selbst gemacht.

Dann hatte ich noch einen Jobcoach in St. Gallen. Nach einer Sitzung haben sie gesagt: Sie sind hochqualifiziert, wir können Ihnen nicht helfen.

In meiner Gemeinde habe ich einen weiteren Jobcoach. Einmal im Monat sprechen wir. Wir haben etwas am CV gemacht, aber das brauche ich eigentlich nicht. Ich habe gelernt: Was ich brauche, ist Vitamin B.

Ich habe freiwillig gearbeitet in [] … zusätzlich im [] als freiwillige Dolmetscher und in Sankt Gallen bei [] für Environment…

Warum Kein Hackathon?

Als ich etwas recherchiert habe, hatte ich den Eindruck, dass das Programm und die Events fast nur auf den IT-Bereich ausgerichtet sind. Für andere Branchen habe ich kaum etwas gefunden. Deshalb habe ich mich zwar angemeldet, aber dann nicht teilgenommen. Das war einfach nicht mein Bereich.

Netzwerke

Ich habe hier meinen LinkedIn-Account eröffnet und inzwischen über 700 Kontakte.

Viele Schweizer interessieren sich für meine Geschichte. Ich kann die Emotionen in ihren Gesichtern sehen. Aber sie helfen nicht konkret – nicht mit einer Stelle, nicht einmal mit einer Chance auf ein erstes Gespräch.

Ich habe sehr gute Netzwerke und sie haben mir bei vielen Dingen geholfen, besonders beim Schreiben meiner Diplomarbeit. Aber für den Zugang zum Arbeitsmarkt reicht das nicht.

Verlauf

Ich hatte nicht erwartet, dass dieser Prozess so schwierig wird. Ich dachte: Ich bin fleissig, ich kann die Sprache lernen, ich bin aktiv, ich kann Netzwerke knüpfen, ich mache einen Master und Weiterbildungen – und dann finde ich eine Stelle.

Wenn ich zurückgehen könnte, würde ich nicht noch einmal hierherkommen. Vielleicht in die Niederlande, weil es einfacher ist.

Aber jetzt müssen wir an unsere Kinder denken – an ihre Schule und ihr Leben hier. Herzukommen war relativ einfach. Zurückzugehen ist viel schwieriger.

Wir sind hier, wir sind nicht unsichtbar. Und das ist Verschwendung. … Ich habe mein Land wegen Ungewissheit verlassen. Und jetzt bin ich wieder mitten in der Ungewissheit.

Serkan

- Türkei (kurdisch), 40-44
- BA in Informatik
- MA in Wirtschaftsingenieurwesen
- 20 Jahre Berufserfahrung
- Teilzeit-Remote-Arbeit für ein US-Unternehmen



Stellensuche

It's so hard for me to find a job in the Swiss market because people don't want to hire a refugee directly into higher positions. They want to see you first in a lower position, then maybe you can be promoted. I started to apply for entry-level IT jobs. I don't want to share too many skills or certificates anymore. It's some kind of disadvantage for me.

I have applied for nearly 80 jobs. Nearly 50% didn't reply, and the rest replied, 'OK, we found another candidate.' I got one or two interviews.

I had an interview for a good position about three weeks ago. First a soft-skills interview, then technical interviews. I passed, and the recruiter said, 'OK, I will share your profile with my manager.' I thought maybe this time I hit the bird, but then all communication stopped. Maybe at some point they realised, 'Oh, he is a migrant from Turkey.'

I was not expecting it to be this hard because two years ago my connections in Switzerland were successful and found a job in six months without learning German. But now it is so hard for me.

Integrationsunterstützung

I'm getting support from []. I have a job coach, and I also applied for [] six months ago.

I joined boot camps in Bern and Zurich at the same time. My job coach and mentors said, 'OK, you did all the things that need to be done. Now you just need a spark to make the magic.' So I'm still waiting for that magic. If you look at the rules for finding a job in Switzerland, I did all of the things. But somehow I'm still waiting for that spark.

Getting a language certificate is not a problem. I have an academic background and I know how to prepare for an exam. If I started preparing for C1, I could probably get it in a few months. But we have to use the language in daily life. I have a B1 certificate, but I'm not using German every day because I work for a US company and we speak English. I only use German when I go to Coop or Migros. I know that I need to work in a German-speaking environment—to explain myself, discuss, and speak German every day.

Hackathon-Erfahrung

It is important to show your abilities in action. A hackathon is a way to show myself to companies and other participants — proof that I have the skills on my CV, and something I can show on LinkedIn.

The team at the Hackathon was perfect. I created the team before we applied, so we were a very strong technical team. I was the project manager and also worked in DevOps. I knew everyone's skill set, divided the tasks, and we worked very hard during those 48 hours.

There were only one or two teams that shared a live application. We had crack code — an application we created in 48 hours. But during the presentation, we could not explain what we had built. The challenge was communication, especially German. Another team from India had perfect hard skills, but they could not connect with the audience. It was similar for us. We could not explain ourselves emotionally. If the hackathon had been in Zurich or Basel, we could have explained ourselves much better in English.

Lernen & Mobilität

I'm working this market for a long time. I've lots of experience in lots of different companies and lots of certificates, but there is not an end point in the IT market. Things change frequently so I have to keep my skill set fresh. For example, I just registered for the AWS summit last week. I started another certificate training and I'm trying to finish that before the Christmas.

My wife is also a high educated woman. She was a school manager in Turkey before. She also has a master's degree and she's applying with similar rate that I'm having at the moment.

I'm open for every kind of jobs in Switzerland, remote, other cities, other countries as well. I had an interview in Germany, which was a remote interview. So I'm OK with every kind of job I can prove myself in European environment.

Netzwerke

My Turkish network works very well in Germany, but not so much in Switzerland. One or two people tried to refer me for an open job, but somehow it was not accepted.

This is one of the biggest things I gained from the Hackathon. Before, I had around 50 connections from the Swiss market on LinkedIn; now I have more than 75. These connections helped me reach more people, and I also started to share more about myself and my work on LinkedIn.

When I go to events in Zurich now, I know I will meet people I have seen before. Switzerland is not a big country. If you focus on a specific field, you meet the same people again and again. We share events and open positions with each other.

For me, a hackathon is just the starting point of this kind of deeper connection.

Verlauf

I'm still working for a US company. The salary was OK for Turkey, but it is not enough in Switzerland. I could ask to increase my hours, but there are lots of people waiting to work in India or Turkey.

I was working as an IT recruiter before, so I know how hard it is to find the right person. You need to know what people can actually do. For immigrants, that is difficult because they don't have the references.

Maybe there could be an internship programme. After 6 months, you get a certificate you can do this kind of job. We are not begging for money. We just need an opportunity. If I could see the light at the end of the tunnel, it would be much easier. At the moment, I cannot see it.

My son also wants to go into informatics. We have a plan to attend another hackathon together, so maybe we can work together.

[Nach dem Vorstellungsgespräch fand Serkan eine befristete Stelle bei einer kleinen Schweizer Firma.]


F
H

Murat

- Türkei (kurdisch), 35-39
- MA in Betriebswirtschaft und Ingenieurwesen
- Studium in Wirtschaftsinformatik
- Civic Hackathon



Stellensuche

Jetzt suche ich Arbeit im IT-Bereich. Ich habe Erfahrung im ERP-Bereich (Enterprise Resource Planning). Leider möchten viele Firmen ein Schweizer Diplom, Anerkennung und Erfahrung.

Ich habe mich bei mindestens 20 Firmen beworben. Leider habe ich noch keine gute Antwort erhalten. Ich hatte Vorstellungsgespräche, aber manchmal danach keine Rückmeldung.

Mein Ziel ist einfach: einen Job finden und mich in der Schweiz gut integrieren.

Meine Frau ist Kieferorthopädin. Sie hat viel Erfahrung, aber auch sie hat bisher keine Anerkennung.

Mit ehemaligen Kollegen habe ich in Deutschland eine gemeinnützige Organisation gegründet. Wir machen verschiedene Projekte, vor allem im IT-Bereich und auch im Rahmen von EU-Projekten.

Integrationsunterstützung

Letztes Jahr habe ich an einem Projekt an der Universität [] teilgenommen und dort auch Deutsch gelernt. Jetzt habe ich B2 abgeschlossen und möchte auch C1 machen.

Das [] unterstützt uns und ich habe auch einen Job Coach. Sie ist wirklich sehr hilfreich. Aber ja, sie kann nicht viel für uns machen.

Ich habe auch bei [] eine Beratung erhalten und an einem weiteren Projekt teilgenommen.

Hackathon-Erfahrung

Wir haben festgestellt, dass einige sehr gute Teams ihre Lösungen schon vor dem Hackathon entwickelt hatten. Wir haben unseren Prototypen dagegen tatsächlich erst in diesen 48 Stunden erarbeitet. Das empfanden wir als unfair gegenüber den Teams, die sich strikt an die Hackathon-Regeln gehalten haben.

Schade fanden wir auch, dass es keine strukturierte Rückmeldung zu den Projekten gab. Individuelles Feedback wäre für uns und die anderen Teams sehr hilfreich und motivierend gewesen.

Die Jury hatte wenig Erfahrung mit KI-Projekten. Ich bin danach zu einem Jurymitglied gegangen und wir haben noch etwas darüber diskutiert, aber ich hatte den Eindruck, dass wenig Interesse an unserem Projekt bestand.

Insgesamt waren wir trotzdem sehr zufrieden. Wir hatten ein sehr gutes Projekt, und Hackathons sind für uns eine gute Gelegenheit. Wir würden wieder teilnehmen.

Lernen & Motivation

Jetzt habe ich an der FH mit Wirtschaftsinformatik angefangen. Mein erstes Jahr ist abgeschlossen. Später möchte ich noch an die Universität. Normalerweise würde das Studium drei Jahre dauern, aber ein Jahr von meinem früheren Studium wurde anerkannt.

Türkisch und Deutsch gehören zu ganz unterschiedlichen Sprachfamilien. Und wir müssen nicht nur Deutsch lernen, sondern uns auch um unsere Eltern, Familie und Kinder kümmern. Aber ich habe das B2-Zertifikat erhalten und die mündliche C1-Prüfung bestanden.

Wir haben aber Hochdeutsch gelernt und kaum Gelegenheit, Berndeutsch zu sprechen und zu hören. Ich bin seit ungefähr einem Jahr bei der Feuerwehr, und nur dort kann ich ein bisschen Berndeutsch sprechen und hören.

Ich engagiere mich freiwillig bei fünf Schweizer Vereinen oder Organisationen. Trotzdem ist es nicht so einfach, Schweizer Freunde zu finden.


F
H

Andrii

- Ukraine, 20-24
- 2 Jahre Angewandte Mathematik
- Keine Berufserfahrung
- Civic + private Hackathon



Stellensuche

Jetzt suche ich Arbeit, aber ich habe schon ungefähr 300 Absagen bekommen.

Ich habe Status S. Viele Leute denken: Wenn der Krieg endet, muss ich zurück und kann nicht mehr arbeiten. Für Arbeitgeber ist das wie eine rote Flagge.

Jetzt habe ich auch Job Coaching.

Hackathon-Erfahrung

Beim ersten Hackathon waren vor allem Studierende. Beim private Hackathon waren viele Leute mit viel Berufserfahrung. Viele hatten mindestens zehn Jahre Erfahrung in IT. Wir wurden sehr freundlich aufgenommen und unterstützt.

Das war das Beste, was ich in diesem Jahr erlebt habe. Ich konnte sehen, wie es wirklich ist, als Programmierer zu arbeiten, und was ich noch lernen muss.

Vor dem Hackathon hatte ich eine Website programmiert, aber ich wusste noch nicht genau, was ich machen wollte. Mein Job Coach hat mir von Hackathons erzählt. Für mich war das ein wichtiger Schritt — wie ein Schlag in die Richtung der nächsten Schritte.

Lernen & Motivation

Nach dem Hackathon war ich gleichzeitig froh und traurig. Zwei Tage lang war alles auf Tip-Top-Niveau. Ich konnte immer mit anderen Leuten auf Deutsch und Englisch sprechen. Danach musste ich wieder in meine normale Routine zurück. Aber ich hatte viel neue Motivation.

Nach dem Hackathon habe ich verstanden, dass ich noch sehr viel lernen und üben muss. In den letzten zwei oder drei Jahren hat sich IT mit KI sehr verändert und ist auf einem anderen Niveau als früher.

Vorher hatte ich schon ungefähr 200 Absagen und war in einer ganz anderen Situation. Ich war einfach traurig.

Vielleicht muss ich noch einen Bachelor machen. Ich möchte mein bisheriges Diplom vergleichen lassen und besser verstehen, ob ich als Informatiker arbeiten kann oder weiterstudieren sollte.

Zuerst Deutsch lernen. Dann muss ich noch Programmiersprachen lernen.

Netzwerke

Ich habe viele Kontakte zu ukrainischen Leuten, auch weil ich viele Deutschkurse besucht habe und dort viele ukrainische Kollegen kennengelernt habe. Mit Schweizer habe ich bisher sehr wenig Kontakt.

Beim Hackathon konnte ich mit meinem Team ganz neue Kontakte knüpfen.

Und auch mit Organisationen und mit den Leuten, die die Challenges entwickelt haben.

Verlauf

Andrii kam als sehr junger Erwachsener allein in die Schweiz. Sein Ziel ist, Arbeit zu finden, sein Deutsch weiter zu verbessern und später möglicherweise berufsbegleitend zu studieren.

Jean

- Congo, 45-49
- BA & MA in Informatik in Griechenland
- Berufserfahrung als Softwareentwickler in Griechenland und Frankreich
- Civic + private Hackathon



Stellensuche/Arbeitszugang

I had 11 years in Greece, and then some years in France. Then I went back to Congo because I wanted to build something for my country. Then the war started and I came back immediately. Since I have been here, I have just been transferred from camp to camp.

I have an N permit. I am somehow allowed to work, but not really. For me to get permission to work, the employer has to contact the canton and the canton has to deliver the permit. Usually, those things are almost impossible. So let's just say that I cannot work now.

I'm waiting for the second interview that will decide if I can stay or not. It's just the waiting that bothers me.

Integrationsunterstützung

We have a little support here. Basically, when you have an N permit, you receive almost nothing. They are feeding me and providing shelter, but nothing else.

I only started a German course one month ago. In my camp, there are almost 100 people, and many of them started the German course before me. I don't know — maybe because I can already speak French and English.

When integration programs send flyers to the camps, it is very rare that people respond positively. The people responsible for us do not communicate it properly. They just put the flyer on the billboard, but it is in German.

I'm pretty sure that in the same camp there are people with academic skills, and they just don't know how to make use of the opportunities.

Hackathon-Erfahrung

Just having the possibility to do something else than stay in the camp and wait was already a big plus for me. I was feeling like I was coming back from a vacation. I was a little bit sad that it lasted only two days.

For me, the hackathon was a way to occupy my mind and not fall into depression. Not only did I not fall into depression, but I learned a lot.

The one in [] was very good. It was my first introduction to AI. I joined a group of people who spoke English and were very kind, and they helped me understand what AI is. We had a lot of fun.

Everything was very well organized. The food was excellent, everything was free, and it felt like a holiday — almost too perfect to be true.

We didn't win the prize, but for me it already felt like winning. Just being there, instead of staying in the camp was important.

That experience made me look for another hackathon, and that is why I applied for the one in [].

Lernen & Motivation

They didn't learn much from me because I'm an old developer. I used to code in Java when Swing was still in fashion. I was learning from them — and they were not senior people. They were under 35.

Now I can say I'm not an AI expert, but I can produce an AI application. Before, AI was intimidating. With the help of the other members of the group, I started to understand that AI is much more than just ChatGPT or a simple agent. Now I'm not intimidated by it. If I had the opportunity, I would apply for a job in the AI field.

I also learned something about Swiss work culture. I asked someone how much they pay developers. He told me: "We never discuss this type of thing." For me, that was a big surprise.

A good thing about [] was that I could see what a university in Switzerland means and what the level of young people here is. I also realised that in Congo we are very far behind. For me, that was an important insight.

Netzwerke

I have some family in Europe. One family member lives in France and sometimes comes to see me. My mother lives in Neuchâtel, but she is in a place that is very isolated.

My general impression is that people here are shy or closed. People tell me: “No, it’s not that they are shy, it’s just the way they are.” If you don’t engage, they will not engage.

I play basketball, so I had the opportunity to meet a lot of people. I started to make some friends here, and that also helped me improve my German. For me, the integration part is not such a big problem.

I’m starting to like the way people live here — the quiet culture.

At the hackathon, I also met someone who had been a refugee himself. He came to Switzerland about ten years ago, did a coding bootcamp, and built a career here.

Verlauf

I had the opportunity to meet another person in Zurich who proposed that I participate in another project. I was able to produce a product using AI for a bigger institution. It's a competition with three companies. Tomorrow is the conclusion and I will present it. It's a big thing for me because in less than one year, I was able to do this stuff.

I'm still in contact with some of the people I met at the [] Hackathon. They are trying to build something on their own, and maybe they could integrate me too. It's not confirmed yet, but we never know.

Knowing what's going on in my country, I cannot go home. So maybe I will search for other ways. I don't know which ways.

There is no real market for software development in Congo. You can find a job, for example in a bank, as an administrator or at a help desk, helping people manage their PCs. It pays well, but it's not interesting. It's not informatics: you are not building, you are not writing code, you are not learning anything.


F
H

Iryna

- Ukraine, 20-24
- Fernstudium BA in Linguistik
- Spricht EN, FR, DE
- Keine Berufserfahrung
- Civic Hackathon



Hintergrund

When the war started, I lived in Finland for some time. I moved with my cousin. It was more a family decision and it happened very quickly.

But in the end, I decided to move to Switzerland because it is a safe and stable country. I also saw Switzerland as an innovative country with many opportunities to work and study. I moved completely alone. That was more challenging.

At the beginning, having a refugee background meant a lot of documents and things I had to understand. But in the end, I think became more independent, more self-efficient and more confident.

Switzerland is also an international country where you can speak English, German and French. Those are exactly the languages I study at university, so being here helps me practise and improve them.

Next year I will finish my studies.

Hackathon-Erfahrung

First of all, it was my personal interest and curiosity. I wanted to learn something new and build a network here in Switzerland — to meet new people, maybe make friends, and perhaps even find job opportunities.

Before the hackathon, I read the challenges and saw one that was connected to my own experience. I thought I could help because I had experienced some of these difficulties myself.

At first I was afraid because it was connected to AI and I'm not very good at IT. I told my friend: "I don't know if you need me there." But he told me they did not only need programmers. They also needed people to create ideas, brainstorm and build prototypes.

In the end, I realised that my own experience was useful. Some people in the team had never migrated to another country, so they did not always know what immigrants actually need.

I would like to see more hackathons for people like me — people who are not programmers but can still help society in other ways

Lernen & Motivation

After the first day, I was so inspired. I was telling everyone how happy I was to participate. I felt like: now I want to visit 100 more hackathons.

Before, I was not sure whether I liked working in a team. Through this experience, I realised that I really do. It was even more interesting to work in an international team because people's cultural backgrounds influence their opinions and how they interact.

I had used Figma maybe once before. For our project, we had to create a prototype, so in one evening I had to learn how Figma works. I realised that I like design and UI/UX. I also learned that I like presenting and selling ideas. It gave me ideas about what I could do.

It showed me: you have to be confident in yourself. You are talented, you know things, and you are capable of helping others and creating something new. Maybe I became a little narcissistic afterwards — like, "Yeah, I can do everything now." But it really changed the way I see myself. It made me happy about myself.

Netzwerke

I had this idea that when I came to Switzerland, I would immediately have a lot of friends and integrate into Swiss culture. In many ways it was like this, but at the same time it was challenging.

After the hackathon, I shared what we had done on LinkedIn. It shows that I'm working, developing, trying to integrate into the Swiss job market, interact with others and learn new things.

I made many connections at the hackathon. The students working on the challenges exchanged Telegram and Instagram contacts. It was interesting to learn who they are and what they do. Maybe in the future we can help each other.

I also stayed in contact with one of our mentors. Afterwards, he asked me to help other students by sharing my experience of the hackathon. We also talked about my job search. I told him I would be interested in an internship or a job, and he offered to pass my CV on.

Verlauf

I'm still not sure what will happen with the project from the hackathon. I want to continue working on it, and we discussed it a little, but I haven't received an answer yet. So I'm still waiting.

Here in Switzerland, I'm applying for a preparation programme where you can spend a year finding out what you want to do. That could be a first step into the Swiss job market.

I'm not sure yet whether I want to do a Master's. In Switzerland, I think I might need one to show employers that I am skilled. I could continue studying online in Ukraine or choose another field or university.

What surprised me here is that at 20, university is really just the beginning of adult life. In Ukraine, I had the feeling that at 20 you finish university, go to work, and then work for the rest of your life. Even though my family is in Ukraine, I feel happy being here in Switzerland. I feel safe, and I feel like I can have a future here.

Alexei

- Russland, 25-29
- BA in Linguistik & Philologie
- BA-Studium Informatik in DE
- Verliess Russland aufgrund politischer Aktivitäten
- Aufenthaltsbewilligung aus humanitären Gründen in DE
- Civic Hackathon



Hintergrund

I was born and raised in the Caucasus. I did not originally speak Russian. I learned it at school, took part in Olympiads and entrance exams, and eventually got into Moscow State University, one of the leading universities, to study linguistics, translation and philology.

At the same time, I worked in independent media and attended political meetings and demonstrations. After the war started and the military draft began, I left Russia for Kazakhstan.

While I was in Kazakhstan, I joined an educational project teaching Ukrainian children online. Through that project and my political background, I later received a humanitarian visa for Germany.
In Germany, I realised that I wanted to change direction. I learned German, passed the language exam and entered a programme that allowed me to start studying applied computer science.

I am not officially a refugee by status. It gets confusing, and I'm never quite sure how to describe it.

Hackathon-Erfahrung

I don’t believe that just taking part in hackathons will give you a great job. But you meet people from the companies you dream about working for, and you have the possibility to talk to them.

For me, hackathons are also about being on the cutting edge of technology, challenging yourself and exploring new fields.

This hackathon was different. I didn’t really enjoy the team situation. The people suggested to me by the matching algorithm were researchers who decided to develop a blockchain using the distributed systems to anonymize the transactions. I was not a big fan of going this route and that's the reason we didn't team up.

By then, most other teams were already established, and I had very few choices. Then the conflict happened at the end.

Lernen & Motivation

One of the hackathons I attended, it had a quiz from a track from Optiva, like a top financial firm in Amsterdam. Which had a quest to develop like a financial trading system in twenty-four hours, which is hella complicated but so interesting.

Another time I had experience of the first to be like to develop a self-driving face recognition system for the drone company, which is really interesting as well or one time I had an experience of attending an event where there was a master classes showing how to use vibe coding tools.

I often feel that I lack technical depth compared with people who started coding when they were 15. So whenever I have the chance to develop something myself, I try to do it. A hackathon gives me the discipline to work intensively and ideally have something functioning at the end.

Netzwerke

You meet the most interested, the most active, the most like proactive people, the ones who really have passions, interests, goals, career area as well….the people you are most likely to find interesting to have like common topics to discuss, maybe to build friendships and so on. That's the reason that some of the guys I met and or worked with before during the hackathons, I still have connections to them. We still chat or meet.

There was tension with Ukrainian guy because it was a matter of principle for them to speak Ukrainian with each other and English with us. Ukrainians often do not like speaking Russian, even though they understand Russian, but it's a matter of principle because of the war.

Verlauf

I just see Switzerland as a better Germany. Everything is similar, but better. I attended lectures as a guest student at the Technical University of Munich, and a lot of people see ETH as the better version of TUM.

For now, I want to gain technical skills, move to a big city, and get more experience in Berlin. Then I want to get citizenship.

After that: build a company, develop my own software projects, live my happy life, become a millionaire and travel to California.

Yes — that's the current plan.

Hack Integration



Weitere Informationen zum Projekt:
https://hackintegration.ch/

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