

# Annual Report 2024

(Abbreviated version)

December 2024



Author

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# Table of Contents

<b>HIC Core Activities</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2024 - Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Statistics</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Table of Events</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Drop-in Sessions</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>International Master's Students</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Volunteers &amp; International Schools</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Career &amp; Destination Programme</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Swedish for Students Course</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Ängelholm Events</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Collaborations with Business</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Plans for 2025 &amp; Acknowledgements</b>	<b>14</b>

# HIC Core Activities

Helsingborg International Connections is an independent *ekonomisk förening* that works in partnership with the City of Helsingborg to welcome and support international residents moving to and living in Helsingborg. Our core activities include:

Hosting and maintaining the HIC website, containing:

- Information about HIC and its activities
- Helpful links to other information sources

Sharing information on HIC social media platforms about, for example:

- HIC events, local activities, and places to visit
- Swedish culture and traditions
- Articles of interest to the international community

Distributing a monthly newsletter to the HIC community, including:

- Upcoming HIC events
- Seasonal information and selected local events
- Drop-in session dates

Responding to enquiries about living and working in Helsingborg

- Received via email and social media messaging
- At drop-in sessions

Connecting members of the HIC community with each other and other local actors

- By networking at HIC events
- By introducing drop-in visitors with people who may be able to assist them

Arranging 12 activities on behalf of the City of Helsingborg

- To include social, professional, and informative events
- The events will be arranged in consultation with the City of Helsingborg

Working with the City of Helsingborg to explore new initiatives that boost talent retention

- For example, job-seeking programmes for the international community

# 2024 - Introduction

2024 has been characterised by close collaboration between HIC and the City of Helsingborg's *Avdelning för kommunikation och näringsliv* (Communication and Business Department), leading to new joint initiatives that have benefited the local international community and increased the opportunities for talent retention.

We have worked closely with Wilma Johansson at the City of Helsingborg to plan the year's events and organise a career and destination programme for foreign-born partners and spouses of people recruited to Sweden for work.

With support from Helsingborgshem and Söderscen, HIC created and delivered a Swedish for Students language course. We also contributed to the production of the Local Guide to Helsingborg, part of The Insider's Guide to Moving and Living in Sweden booklet.

New *verksamhetsbidrag* (operational business funding) from Region Skåne helped to fund the career and destination programme and encouraged greater interaction and knowledge-sharing with the International Citizen Hub Lund, Malmö stad, and Media Evolution.

During the autumn of 2024, HIC collaborated with Ingka Group to create an intensive pilot programme for foreign-born partners of Ingka Group and IKEA coworkers and consultants based at Sockerbruket Multifunctional Hub, Helsingborg.

We have increased our relationships with businesses through joint events, talks, and business membership. 2024 marked HIC's 10th anniversary.



*Visit to the Port of Helsingborg*

# Statistics

Social media followers continue to increase year on year and the monthly HIC newsletter has an excellent open rate compared to industry standards.

The number of event registrations is lower than last year for two reasons:

- In agreement with the municipality, we shifted our focus away from one large event per month in order to focus on the Live and Work in Helsingborg programme and business development
- Event capacity was limited at some events due to the venue or tour group size

<b>Helsingborg Event Registrations</b>  540  (Some events were limited by venue size)	<b>Social Media</b>  Facebook followers: 3.8k  Linkedin followers: 1.3k  Instagram followers: 1.2k
<b>Monthly Newsletter</b>  Average open rate: 52.4%  (last 3 months)	<b>Ängelholm Event Registrations</b>  Ängelholm Cultural Exchange events: 150  Expats In Ängelholm: 80  (Some events were limited by venue size)

# HIC EVENTS 2024

Month	Social	Professional	Informative
Jan	Coffee Morning, After Work @Vagnhall 16		
Feb		Run, Start, and Build Your Own Business	
Mar	Coffee Morning	(Career/Destination Programme Start)	(Swedish for Students Start)
Apr	Pub Night @ Pub Nessie	People-Centred Workplaces at IKEA	
May	Coffee Morning		Visit to Helsingborgs Hamn
Jun			City Walk
Aug	Summer Picnic & Kubb, Coffee Morning		(New Students Welcome Rådhuset)
Sep			Welcome to Helsingborg
Oct	Coffee Morning	(Ingka Group Pilot Programme)	Autumn Walk & Talk
Nov	HIC 10-Year Celebration	Ways into Work	
Dec	Coffee Morning		Winter Lights Tour



# Drop-in Sessions

HIC Drop-in Sessions facilitate integration by allowing newcomers to ask questions in a friendly, welcoming environment. The ideal scenario is for people to visit us soon after moving to the city so that we can guide and support them. This is also the perfect time to give out *The Insider's Guide to Moving and Living in Sweden* booklet

The most frequent questions asked are:

- How to find a job or an internship
- How to register for Swedish lessons
- How to make friends
- Where to volunteer
- Which schools, sports clubs, or associations to join

When possible, we showcase job seekers on HIC social media platforms. This has resulted in new connections, tips, and collaborations.

We have also helped people with more serious questions relating to life-changing issues. In these situations, HIC's role is to guide the individual to the correct authority, however, we are aware that we provide a certain amount of emotional support, which is appreciated. Sometimes, people feel they have nowhere else to turn, so being seen and heard is important.

Drop-in Sessions are held every 2 weeks, on Tuesdays from 09:30-12:00. In 2025, they will alternate between Mindpark and the City Library.

1-2 people visit each drop-in session on average. We also receive regular questions via email and social media from people considering moving to the area, looking for accommodation, asking for help with their job search, or wanting advice regarding schools or a business idea.



# International Master's Students

HIC maintains a good relationship with international master's students and course coordinators at Lund University Campus Helsingborg.

This year for the first time, we had a stand at **Registration Day**, which gave new students the opportunity to learn a little about HIC while waiting to register and be processed.

The annual **Meet and Greet at Rådhuset** was held in late August, when we gave a more detailed presentation about HIC's work and activities. Many students wanted to ask questions afterwards or offer to be volunteers.

A large number of students attend HIC events and play an active role by helping with refreshments, checking in attendees, and taking photos or videos. We have provided **student volunteers** with references for part-time or student jobs alongside their studies, or full-time jobs after graduation. Students often have no other work experience in Sweden, so the references we provide are valuable to them and much appreciated. Knowledge received at HIC events has also directly contributed to internships and jobs with IKEA.

At the end of November, Sally will give a talk to the lecturers in the **Service Management** department. In December 2024, a Supply Chain student will become a **HIC intern**.

Together with the course coordinators for Service Management and Strategic Communications, HIC applied for funding from Lund University's *Pionjärsmedel* for a **career programme** for international master's students in 2025. The application was successful and the programme will be planned in collaboration with the coordinators and student representatives.

HIC attends regular **alignment meetings** organised by Helsingborgs stad with other local actors working with students, such as Campus Vänner, Sustainalink, and Mindpark.



*New international master's students attend a HIC event*



# Volunteers

Many people offer to volunteer for HIC. It is a valuable way to engage with the local community, meet new people, and showcase one's skills. Typical tasks include helping at events: checking in guests, preparing refreshments, tidying up at the end, and taking photos. We always have ambassadors in attendance so that everyone feels welcome. We regularly recommend other opportunities for volunteering locally.

We have provided references for HIC volunteers, enabling them to get part-time jobs locally, or full-time jobs after graduation. Leo Swales, our Volunteer Coordinator, manages HIC volunteers.



*HIC Volunteers at the 2024 Welcome to Helsingborg event*



*With the principals of the International School of Helsingborg*

# International Schools

We have a good relationship with the local international schools, for example, attending the New Parents' Day at the International School of Helsingborg every year. This year, we also had a stand at the school's Spring Fair. We distributed *The Insider's Guide to Moving and Living in Sweden* to parents on both occasions. The heads of each international school in Helsingborg registered to attend a workshop regarding talent retention in North West Skåne (this has been postponed to spring 2025).

# Live and Work in Helsingborg

## Career and Destination Programme, Spring 2024

HIC and the City of Helsingborg collaborated to create an 8-week programme for 15 foreign-born partners and spouses of international talents working in the Helsingborg area.

The programme was designed to give participants the tools required to more easily gain employment in Sweden and to experience Helsingborg as a vibrant city in which to live.

A number of professional speakers were employed to deliver the training sessions. Destination experiences were selected for their uniqueness to Helsingborg, and a variety of venues for training sessions was chosen to increase the participants' knowledge of the city.

Participants had the opportunity to expand their professional network at the final activity, a networking lunch with invited businesses and organisations.

The programme was well received, with around 60 people applying to take part. It was supported by Region Skåne.

***“Participating in the program was fantastic. I got to meet other participants and even had lunch with some HR professionals during networking sessions. It was a great opportunity to make valuable connections and learn from others' experiences.”***



*The programme participants and project coordinators*



# Swedish for Students

## Beginners' Language Course for International Students, Spring 2024

HIC, Helsingborgshem, and Söderscen collaborated to create a new initiative for international students at Campus Helsingborg.

The following issues had been identified:

1. Students often have to wait a long time to be accepted onto formal SFI courses
2. Finding the time to attend courses alongside university studies is challenging
3. Lack of Swedish is an obstacle to students' integration

Together, we devised the concept of a crash course in Swedish for students, by students. Helsingborgshem and Söderscen supported the project financially and HIC acted as Project Leader.

Two volunteer students were recruited as tutors, arranging their classes around agreed topics and using a variety of teaching methods to create an engaging, interactive course.

6 x 1.5 hour sessions were held weekly at @Söder. The course received 54 applications for 15 places. Students who had not received any Swedish tuition were prioritised. The participants came from 9 different countries. They appreciated the course very much!

***"The teachers were super kind and patient. We had very valuable conversations on the Swedish language and culture."***



*The first lesson!*



*Student volunteers and HIC*

# Ängelholm Events

## Expats in Ängelholm

Since 2022, HIC has arranged some social and networking events in Ängelholm to test the concept of running activities for the international community living there.

We arranged a joint event with Ängelholms Näringsliv and Koenigsegg in March, which incorporated a tour of the Aviation Museum and the Koenigsegg factory. As expected, there was enormous interest in this event!

Volunteers in the group have also arranged other activities such as bowling and walks.



*Tour of  
Ängelholms flygmuseum*

## Ängelholm Cultural Exchange

HIC received an Ängelholm Vision Fund grant at the end of 2023 to create four cultural exchange events at ÄHLM Market during 2024. The aim was to bring different cultures together, break down barriers, and reduce loneliness.

We were treated to four fascinating and enriching evenings, with speakers from Namibia, Catalonia, Pakistan, South Africa, India, Iceland, and Ukraine.

Our Swedish speakers talked about the Swedish choral tradition, cold bathing, living in different parts of Sweden versus the USA, and Christmas traditions.



*Our first speakers!*

# Collaborations with Business

## Event Partners 2024

Tillväxt Helsingborg

NyaföretagarCentrum Skåne Nordväst

Koenigsegg Automotive AB

Ingka Group

Helsingborgs Hamn

EURES

Jobbsprånget

WOW Foundations Sverige

Helsingborg Innovation District



## Talks and Presentations

Media Evolution / Malmö stad

Rotary Club International

Lund University Service Management Department



## Ingka Group Pilot Programme

In October 2024, HIC worked with Ingka Group to provide an intensive 2-week programme for partners and spouses of Ingka/IKEA coworkers and consultants. The programme was called **Empowering International Partners for the Swedish Job Market**.

## Other Collaborations

Future Place Leadership - HIC contributed to the Local Guide to Helsingborg

Nederman - New HIC Business Member

Invest in Skåne - Attended meetings and STEM UP project launch

Helsingborg International Connections



# Plans for 2025

January - Inspiration Evening for Internationals in Helsingborg

Starting in Spring - Career Programme for Students

Spring - Rescheduled Workshop for Businesses in North West Skåne

Live and Work in Helsingborg 2025 Programme for International Partners & Spouses

## Acknowledgements

We hope you have enjoyed reading about HIC's activities in 2024!  
We would like to thank:

The **City of Helsingborg** for their continued support and collaboration

**Region Skåne** for their operational business funding 2024-2026

**Wilma Johansson of Helsingborgs stad** for her work with HIC in 2024

All the **guest speakers** who illuminated our events and training sessions

Supporting actors such as **Mindpark** and **Helsingborg Innovation District**

**Leo Swales**, HIC Volunteer Coordinator and Drop-in advisor

HIC Board Members **Parul Ghosh** and **Åsa Kadom**

**Ängelholm Vision Fund** for supporting the Ängelholm Cultural Exchange project

The many **volunteers and attendees** who keep HIC inspired!

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