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**From Undergraduate Student to Independent Researcher**

CHRISTIANNE BEEKMAN, Oak Ridge National Laboratory

I received my PhD in Physics from Leiden University in the Netherlands, I did my first postdoc in Canada at the University of Toronto and I am currently doing a postdoc at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. During this talk I will touch upon three different aspects of my career so far. First I will talk about the differences of conducting science and living in three different countries, and how this has impacted my career. In this part I will also cover issues concerning working somewhere as a foreign national and, as is often still the case, being one of the very few women. Since I have worked at Universities as well as a National lab, I will highlight the differences between the two. The third topic and perhaps the most important one is the importance of networking. At every stage of one's career it is important to connect to as many people as you can. Connections you make today will prove to be invaluable at a later stage in your career. For example, they will provide you with inside information on quality of schools and the research that is being performed there. This means connections allow you to make better informed decisions about where to do your PhD or where to do your (first) postdoc. If you are thinking of applying somewhere ask yourself who do I know there and if you don't know anyone make sure to connect to someone. These connections will sometimes even lead to job offers without ever officially applying. Making the right connections is absolutely the most important thing to ensure a successful (scientific) career.