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ILISIMATUSARFIK 2019





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**Culture**

3 Greenland’s theatre history through 200 years: 1820–2020 Birgit Kleist Pedersen

6 Young Greenlanders as Influencers — taking Nuuk City to the world Rosannguaq Rossen

8 The first ten years of nationwide television in Greenland Aviaq Fleischer

10 The world of theology in the West Aage Rydstrom-Poulsen

12 Give us this day our daily seal — the Greenlandic version of the Lord’s Prayer Flemming A. J. Nielsen

**Society**

15 Self-rule government, para-diplomacy and education in the Arctic Maria Ackrén

17 To be placed in a 24-hour care centre Bonnie Jensen

19 Foreign news in Greenland Signe Ravn-Højgaard

**Education**

21 Particularly meaningful teaching activities in natural science Lars Demant-Poort

23 Distance learning at a school in an East Greenlandic settlement Anders Øgaard

25 “Being happy about learning” Lars Demant-Poort and Louise Pindstrup Andersen

**Health**

28 Outdoor areas at sheltered housing units for the elderly in Sisimiut Kamilla Nørtoft, Lise Hounsgaard and Tenna Jensen

31 Customs that can support women in labour in Greenland Ruth Montgomery-Andersen

34 Perspectives on life as a senior citizen in Nuuk Tine Aagaard



ILISIMATUSARFIK 2019







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## Greenland's theatre history through 200 years: 1820–2020

Birgit Kleist Pedersen

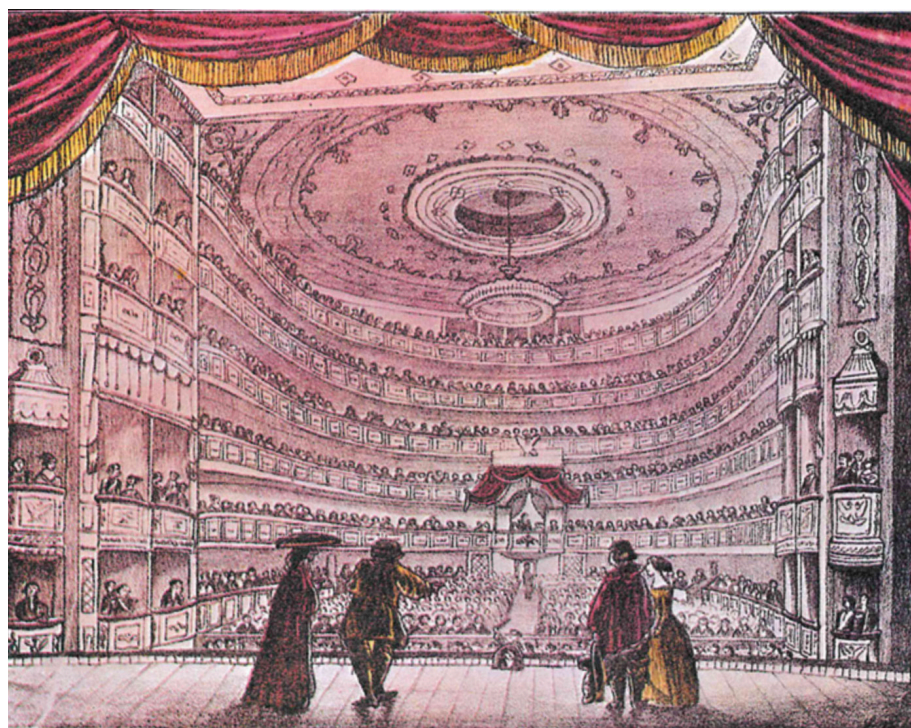
The theatre came to Greenland in 1819–1820, when Peder Kragh, missionary in Aasiaat, translated Bernhard Severin Ingemann's bible drama *The voice in the desert* – about John the Baptist. The material was known by the Greenlanders from the New Testament, and the hand-written manuscript was diligently circulated – “partly for reading, partly for copying, as everyone took great pleasure in it, and never could be sad from reading or hearing it,” as Peder Kragh noted in his diary. It was only in 1874 that he succeeded in getting his manuscript printed.

Two years before, on 28 October 1872, Greenlandic readers were for the first time introduced to a lithograph that represented a European theatre hall – in the nationwide newspaper *Atuagagdliutit*, established in 1861.

Translated, the caption reads: “Inside the large theatre seen from the stage. In front they are dressed up, in the far back, there are a lot of people watching.” With the prerequisites of the Greenlandic readers of the time, it

must have been difficult to understand the many details in the picture.

In the earliest stage of Greenlandic theatre history until the 1930s, it was Danes in Greenland who dominated the



issiginārfigssup ilua mitarfingmit issigalugo, tåuko sagdlit tissa mitartut. Inngaddit inugragssuit issiginartut.

Greenlandic theatre with performances derived from or inspired by European plays and Greek tragedies. Then several local acting genres developed, including genres that were critical of society. In 1936, the North Greenlandic priest Karl Heilmann (1893–1958) published two original three-act structured plays, *Isiginnaartitsissutit marluk*, about the transition to Christianity.

In 1934, priest and author Pavia Petersen (1904–1943), companion and lifelong friend of Hans Lynge, wrote a social-realistic, social-critical contemporary drama based on a personal Christian world view, *Ikinngutigiiit* (“The Friends”, Danish version 1938, printed 1958), that in the manuscript’s “*Prologue*” (1938) very interestingly characterises drama, tragedy, comedy and theatre with reference to the ancient Greek theatre. The drama provides guidelines for how to deal with the great questions of life: “Dramas benefit, help the people’s livelihood,” while the tragedy is defined as “spreading the gripping events”, and comedy is what “reveals the ridiculous in habits”. The





theatre is “of importance to people” and does not aim for “pleasure alone” but “seeks as salt to introduce good taste”.

During this period, Hans Lynge (1906–1988) was the main contributor to the Greenlandic performing arts, from manuscript to the final result on the stage – including stage directing, costumes, scenes and scene effects.

By virtue of his cooperation with the Greenlandic amateur theatre association *Nuummi Aliikkusersuisartut Isumnaartitsisartullu Peqatigiiffiat* (“Association of Entertainers and Actors in Nuuk”) and drama teaching at Knud Rasmussen’s High School, Hans Lynge has had a major influence on the amateur theatre scene. He also worked closely with both the Tuukkaq Theatre and the Silamiut Theatre until his death in 1988 – and he thus became an important part of the professional scene.

In 1975, the Tuukkaq Theatre was founded in Denmark. The purpose was to educate Greenlandic actors and to stage performances about subjects derived from Greenlandic culture. Thus, a professionalisation of Greenlandic performing arts began and a shift from traditional



spoken theatre towards physical theatre was initiated. There was a renewal of form and content with the body, dance, singing and masks as the most important means of expression, with less focus on the spoken word. Dissolution of the boundaries between hall and audience and between stage and actors is also part of the characteristic feature of this period, which was continued by the Silamiut Theatre in Nuuk from 1984.

Alongside the physical theatre, Silamiut also produced spoken theatre, partly based on original Greenlandic material and on external works and musical productions.

This was the case for the extravaganza *Qasapip ullua kingulleq* (“Qasapi’s last day”), based on Villads Villadsen’s poem (1965) about the Norsemen’s demise, which was the first “national piece” created in Greenland, understood as one of the great stories about us.





A fourth phase in Greenlandic theatre history began in 2011, when Greenland got a Theatre Act and a national theatre was established, *Nunatta Isiginnaartitsisarfia* (“Our Country’s National Theatre”).

Since then, the stage art has evolved further, incorporating everything from spoken theatre to physical theatre, for adults and children, both through the national theatre’s own productions and through guest performances.

So far, no unified presentation of Greenland’s theatre history exists. The idea is therefore to write such a book that will cover the period 1820–2020, describing an important part of Greenlandic cultural history and its importance to society.



Literature  
Birgit Kleist Pedersen:  
“Hans Lynge – en passionate amatør i  
tilblivelsen af den grønlandske teaterscene” (forthcoming),  
*Peripeti – tidsskrift for dramaturgiske studier*





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## Young Greenlanders as Influencers – *Taking Nuuk City to the World*

Rosannguaq Rossen

I am working on a PhD project on nation branding in Greenland seen through fashion. As part of this project, I have examined young Greenlanders’ use of fashion on social media to market themselves as role models and influencers, and not least to market a designer label.

From the mid-1970s, Greenlandic art, music and fashion were used in a new political awakening, especially among Greenlandic youth in Greenland and Denmark.

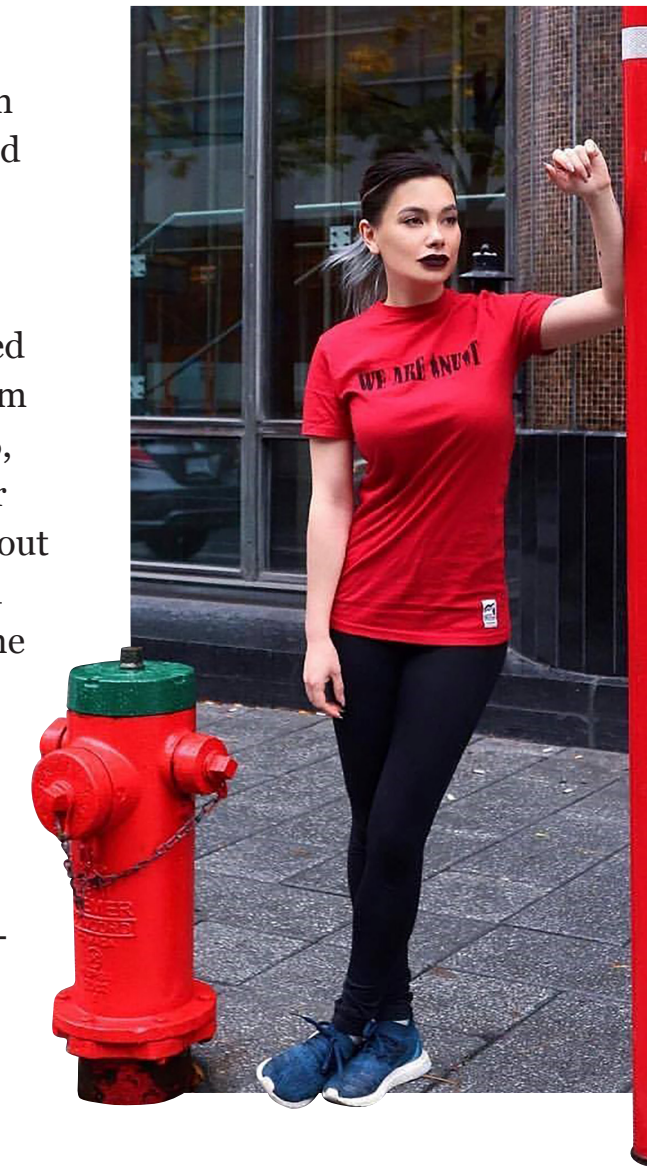
The Greenlandic cultural symbols, being items and clothes that many especially associate with Greenland, were used as political symbols in the struggle for home rule in 1979.

This tendency exploded again around 2009, the year of the introduction of Greenland’s Self-Government. Greenlandic fashion was now also used for the international marketing of Greenland, partly to fight prejudice about Greenlanders by using well-known Greenlanders and

Danes, and partly to improve the knowledge of fashion wear, which for the first time were also commercialised and mass-produced by Greenlandic designers in Denmark and later in Greenland.

But some of the young Greenlanders seemed to be tired of seeing cultural symbols in fashion, while nationalism flourished again in the media. Because of this, in 2016, two young men from Nuuk established a new designer label, Bolt Lamar ([www.boltlamar.com](http://www.boltlamar.com)), which stood out by not using Greenlandic cultural symbols but instead merged the names of two international celebrities – the sprinter Usain Bolt and the rapper Kendrick Lamar – as a response to the tendency of only wanting to wear fashionable clothes with Greenlandic cultural symbols.

The new brand was released four years after the popular brand from Nuuk, Inuit Quality Clothes of Greenland ([www.inuitquality.gl](http://www.inuitquality.gl)), became one of the few



Greenlandic brands “originating” in Greenland.

The Greenlandic brands are popular and are used to market themselves, the nation and the brand itself on social media – which the Greenlandic influencers do, for example on Facebook and Instagram, where there are good opportunities for

*The make-up artist and  
YouTuber Natascha  
Pedersen has 120,000  
followers on Instagram.  
Here in Toronto.*





reaching potential customers throughout the world.

The global world is just one click away for the approximately 37,000 Facebook users living in Greenland. With over 11,000 followers on Facebook, Michaela and Mala on Worldtour took Greenlanders by storm.

The two friends travelled around the world and uploaded pictures, movies and live videos on Facebook, which their followers enjoyed when they followed their fun everyday experiences.

But what and who are the influencers? So-called influencers reach out to thousands of followers on social media every day. In this way, they can affect a large proportion of people who use social media.

Greenlandic influencers, such as the make-up artist Natascha Pedersen (26 years), the Olympic freestyle skier

Laila Friis-Salling (32 years), and the friends who travelled around the world, Michaela Eliassen (25 years) and Mala Johnsen (26 years), have thousands of followers on social media – and therefore they can market Greenlandic fashion but also be role models for other young Greenlanders who have not yet travelled the world.

What these four young people have in common is that they all travel the world in order to follow their dreams. Fashion is now also used as a message that there is a world outside Greenland and Denmark.

Fashion has always been a statement that contains different messages about, for example, where a nation or community is heading. Do we move towards a political era? What is the political tone of a country?

Is there something that society is fearing or moving towards? Fashion reflects all that is in Greenlandic culture.



*M&M on Worldtour. The two friends Michaela and Mala had 11,500 followers on Facebook following their travels around the world. Here, Michaela Eliassen with a Bolt Lamar cap in South America.*





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## The first ten years of nationwide television in Greenland

Aviaq Fleischer

I conduct research on the first ten years of the Greenlandic TV channel KNR’s own production of television broadcasts that began 1 November 1982 at 7.30 p.m. Radio link communication was not yet established for the entire Greenlandic coast, so initially only 15 towns and settlements could watch – from Ilulissat in the North to Nanortalik in the South.

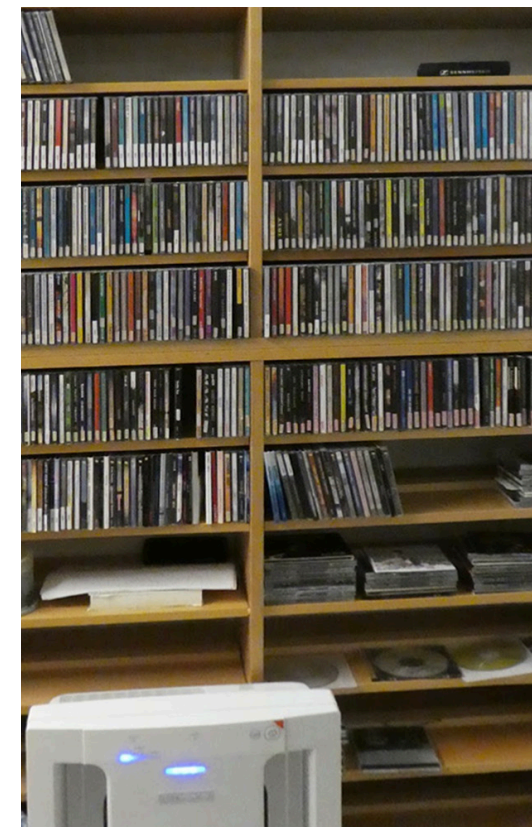
In the first live broadcast, lasting about an hour, Head of Radio Peter Frederik Rosing welcomed viewers – together with Premier of Greenland Jonathan Motzfeldt, programme editor Søren Bach and the chairman of the joint association of local television associations Mogens Bloch Poulsen.

When you go treasure hunting in an archive, you do not always know how much you will find – but fortunately, this very first broadcast is well preserved. We are told that KNR’s launch as a TV channel is the culmination of three years’ work

However, this does not mean that there were no TV sets in Greenland before 1982. Many had long ago purchased TV sets and video cassette players to watch broadcasts and films distributed by local TV associations. TV came to Greenland already in 1966, and the TV associations produced an average of 3–5 hours of daily broadcasts, except for one weekly TV-free day. In 1971, there were 15 well-functioning television associations, and in 1982 that number had grown to 25.

Old listings show which productions KNR has made. It’s hard to say whether old broadcasts can still be found, as much of KNR’s material is stored in boxes on dusty shelves, under the constant threat of damage from mildew and mould.

KNR’s director, Karl Henrik Simonsen, tells us that they are in possession of broadcasts corresponding to 10–15 man-years, only waiting to be digitised and archived properly. When I searched for the old programmes together



with KNR’s archivist, we were only able to find a quarter of them in KNR’s search database. Nevertheless, it has been possible to fill a 4 terabyte hard drive with nostalgia and new knowledge about the cultural life of the 1980s in Greenland.

Here are some examples from the years 1983 and 1984: *The elderly’s first conference in Sisimiut* (May 1983; 73, 60 and 51½ minutes). In three broadcasts, a group of elderly people in Sisimiut discuss topics such as alcohol, fellowship, being Greenlandic, the future and culture.





*Qaamarujuk 1930* (December 1983; 37 minutes). Jørgen Fleischer talks about Qaamarujuk, a place at the ice cap near Ukkusissat, which an expedition led by German geologist Alfred Wegener visited in 1930, when Jørgen Fleischer was a child. He talks about his experiences with these researchers, who arrived with ships and lots of equipment and also Icelandic horses.

*Aataalia* (December 1983; 32½ minutes). Jørgen Møller, called Aataalia, born in a settlement close to Maniitsoq that was later closed, talks about different sites at Maniitsoq, and he is introduced by various people who know him.

*Drum dance in the North* (October 1984; 42½ minutes). A group of drum dancers from Thule and the surrounding area (e.g. Sofie Eipe, Qaaqqutsiaq, Aviorut, Taatsiannguaraatsiaq Qaerngaaq, Atanga Qaerngaaq, Qisunnguaq Kristiansen and Aajaka Miteq) show their art and explain how to build the drum, what the individual parts of the drum are called and how to perform a drum dance.



*Sofie Eipe*

*250 years with Danes in Christianshåb* (August 1984; 25 minutes). The 250th anniversary of Poul Egede’s first service in Illukut at Qasigiannnguit on 25 July 1734 was marked with a broadcast that also deals with the establishment of the town of Qasigiannnguit and its development.

*The opening of the airport in Ilulissat* (September 1984; 23½ minutes). About Ilulissat’s new airport and Hotel Arctic, which was opened in October 1984.

*Suna tamarmi killiffissalik* (“Everything has a limit”; January 1984; 56½ minutes). Siiva Lange’s short story *Sooq-una taamaattut?* (“Why are they like that?”) was performed as a TV play in January 1984.

The cultural broadcasts deal with many other topics and were produced by KNR, Nuuk TV, Qaqortoq TV, Qasigiannguit TV, Sisimiut TV and other local TV associations.

TV shows can give us good insight into history and awaken our interest and inspiration for something we might not otherwise have thought about. TV is communication – a window to the world from your very own sofa.

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Rygaard, J. (2004). En tv-historie. In B. Jacobsen, B. K. Pedersen, K. Langgård, & J. Rygaard, Grønlænder og global (p. 167). Nuuk: Ilisimatusarfik.







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## The world of theology in the West

Aage Rydstrøm-Poulsen

My research is about understanding Christianity in our Western world, since it found its main expressions when the West created universities around 1200. That is a long time ago, but universities exist globally today. They represent a society's most ambitious research and teaching. They started in Paris and Bologna as organised associations of teachers and students – in Paris with theology as the most important subject, in Bologna with law.

Theology is about nothing less than the meaning of life, the view of human nature and the image of God – and great thinkers, primarily in France in the 12th century, have fascinated many throughout the centuries. For example, this applies to Martin Luther, who lived 500 years ago and contemplated Christianity in the Protestant version, which we in Greenland, together with the majority of the North-Western civilization, have lived with for the past 300 years.



*Martin Luther (1483–1546), professor at Wittenberg University.*

The great theologians of the 12th century contemplated Christianity and invented a number of great concepts that we use today, but of course they were also different and discussed among themselves. Some of them were mystics, some of them were more philosophical. The mystical theologians were absorbed in how to understand the divine through personal experience, while the philosophical theologians were more absorbed in under-

standing the divine by means of rational thinking. However, they were not different, and they largely came to the same conclusions. That is not surprising, since they all, of course, built their understanding of Christianity on the Bible. And they were all inspired by the great theologians of the first centuries in the history of Christianity, those we call the 'church fathers'.

The one who had the greatest influence on the Western world's understanding of Christianity was a bishop in North Africa in the 5th century: Augustine.

It is from this tradition that we in our North-Western world theology have generally inherited a focus on the concept of grace in the image of God. This implies a focus on Christianity as spiritual liberation from all destructive aspects of life, and thus of course dependence on this divine liberation. And it is from this tradition – and this especially applies to significant theologians of the 12th





century – that we have been given an understanding of the divine as a human reality. “God is love”, the Bible states (1 John 4:16). The 12th century can be called the century of love, because both poets and theologians were so fascinated by this all-encompassing and transforming phenomenon. Here, a revelation of the divine itself could be seen. Human love led to the idea of the spiritual union between God and the human soul, and it explained the trinity of God as a unity of people.

This applies in different ways to thinkers such as the Cistercian monk Vilhelm of Saint-Thierry, abbot Bernhard of Clairvaux, bishop Peter Lombard and the canon Richard of Saint-Victor – all from 12th century France.

My research into this tradition has led to a PhD degree in theology at the University of Copenhagen (1993) and the



*Peter Lombard (app. 1100-1160), bishop in Paris.*

doctoral thesis at the same university *The Gracious God - Gratia in Augustine and the Twelfth Century* (Akademisk Forlag, 2002), a number of articles in international journals, contributions to books, and papers for congresses on medieval studies held in Europe and the United States.

The most recent chapter is part of a book in the series “Brill’s Companion to the Christian Tradition” (Leiden / Boston) in 2019, and a paper is on the programme at the International Congress on Medieval Studies (Western Michigan University) the same year.







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## Give us this day our daily seal – the Greenlandic version of the Lord’s Prayer

Flemming A. J. Nielsen

Rumour has it that when Hans Egede came to Greenland in 1721, the Greenlandic population did not know what bread was. So, when the Norwegian missionary undertook the translation of the ancient Christian Lord’s Prayer into Greenlandic, he ran into a problem when he reached the sentence “Give us this day our daily bread”. He therefore chose to replace “bread” with “seal”: “Give us this day our daily seal”.

A German colleague recently told me that this rumour – that Hans Egede had introduced a seal into the Lord’s Prayer – can be read in many German school books. While I write these lines, one can also find this information in both the English and the German version of the article about Hans Egede on Wikipedia, and a large German TV station tells the same story in this article on their website: <https://www1.wdr.de/stichtag/stichtag-missionar-egede-groenland-100.html>.

But the rumour is not true.

Bread is a classic biblical synecdoche. A synecdoche is an expression where you let a part of something represent the whole. Instead of “£20 per person,” you could say “£20 per head” and let the head represent the whole person. This is also the case in the Bible where very often the word “bread” is a synecdoche for “food”.

In the Lord’s Prayer, when we pray “Give us this day our daily bread”, it not only refers to just bread but necessities in general. Naturally, Hans Egede knew this, so initially he tried the word “mamaq”, which did not work very well, as it does not mean “food”, as Hans Egede thought, but rather “yum, delicious!” We forgive Hans Egede, because this first attempt was penned in 1724 after only three years in the country, and he had likely often heard someone say “mamaq!” It was not long before he discovered the word “neqissat”, meaning “foodstuffs”.

When Hans Egede’s son, Poul Egede, published the four gospels in print in 1744, he used the word “timiusaq”



Hans Egede’s first attempt to translate the Lord’s Prayer may be seen in a dual language manuscript from 1724. In the left column you can see the Danish text, in the right column the Greenlandic translation. From the National Archives, Copenhagen.

(meaning “bone marrow-ish”) in his version of the Lord’s Prayer. This word was already written down by Hans Egede in 1725 and was created by the Greenlanders as an

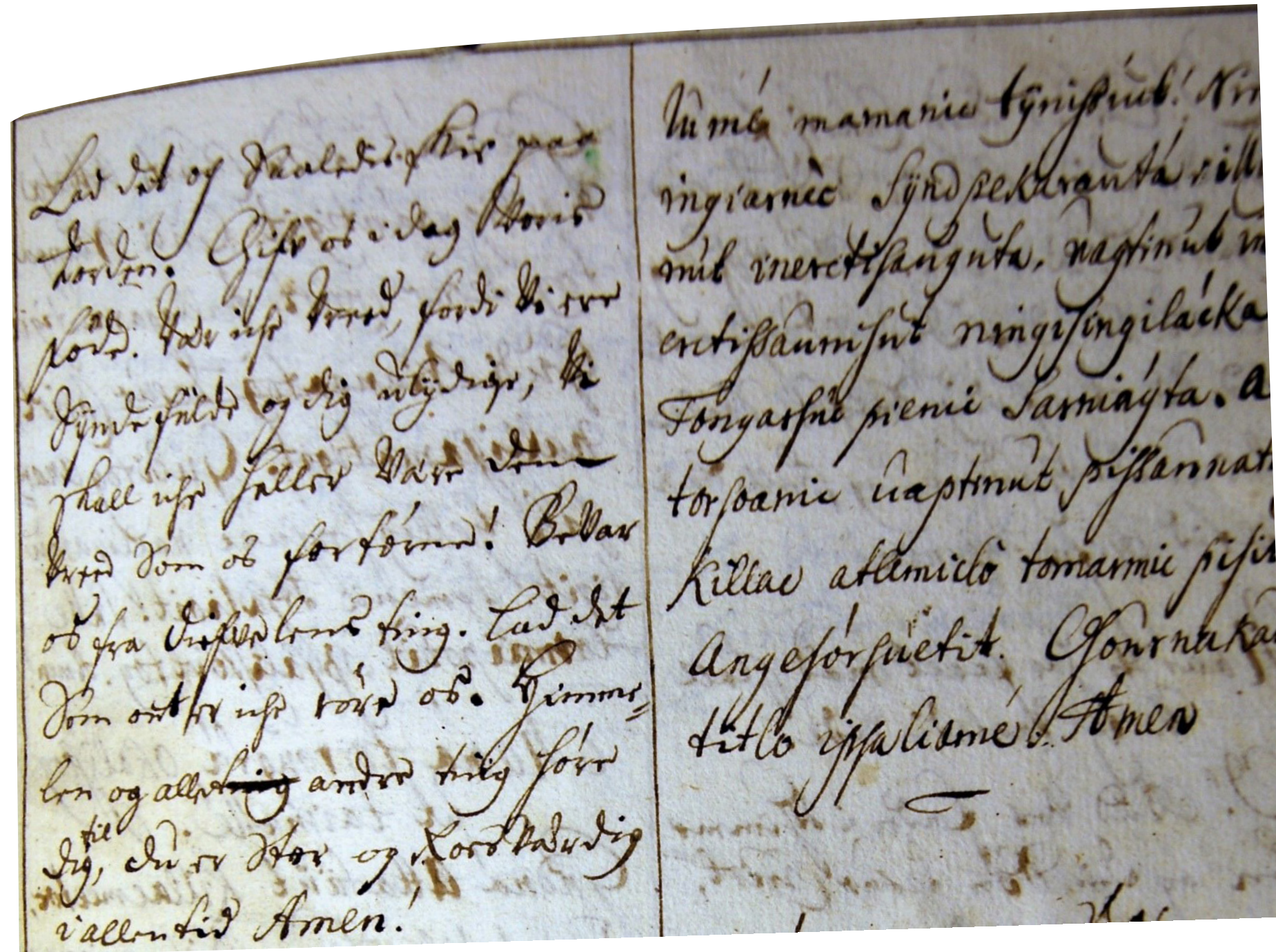




explanation of what bread looks like. Today, this word is used in the ecclesiastical language meaning “wafer”, and in Northern Greenland it means “hardtacks”.

The Moravian congregation operating in Greenland 1733–1900 had their own suggestion for the sentence “Give us this day our daily bread”. They came up with the expression “pissavut”, “what is us due”, the first time in a hymn book from 1754. The word was immediately taken over by the Danish-Norwegian state mission, and it remained in most Greenlandic versions of the Lord’s Prayer until the Greenlandic-born missionary and linguist Samuel Kleinschmidt (1814–1886) wrote “inuutissat” or “food”.

This word is first seen in print in the Greenlandic church ritual from 1888, but a note with the Lord’s Prayer in Kleinschmidt’s characteristic handwriting is preserved. From this note it appears that he has discussed how best to translate the Lord’s Prayer with his Greenlandic



Part of Hans Egede’s translation of The Lord’s Prayer. At the top of the right-hand column, the word “mamanic” is seen, an impossible inflection of “mamaq”.

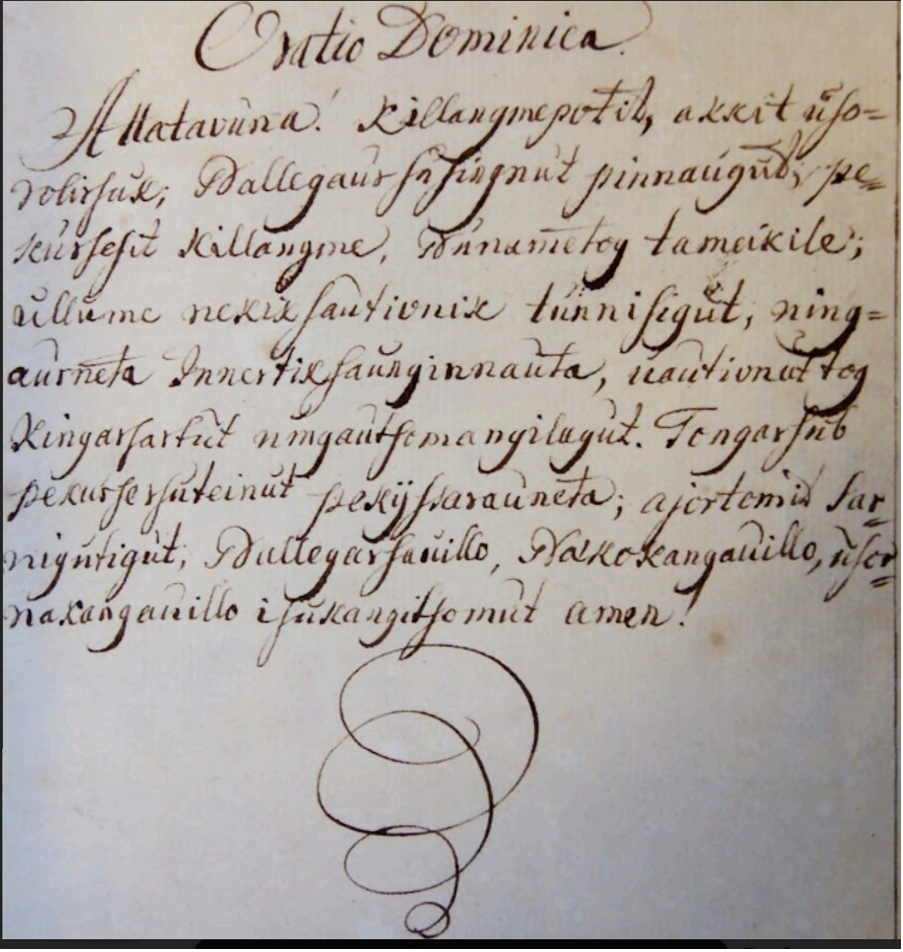


students. Together, they agreed on the word “inuutissat”, which today has changed slightly to “inuussutissat”, not really making that big a difference: “inuussutissatsinnik ullumi tunisigut”, “Give us today our necessities of life”.

As in many other countries, the missionaries and the Bible translation project influenced and changed both culture and language in Greenland.

However, while the arrival of Europeans in many other places caused extensive death and destruction in terms of human life, cultures and languages, such as occurred on the American continent only a few hours’ sailing from Greenland, the Greenlandic language was preserved thanks to both the Danish-Norwegian state mission and the German-speaking Moravian mission.

Today’s Greenlandic language is fully viable and is used in all essential areas of life: “in the street, in school, in



Hans Egede’s translation of the Lord’s Prayer in a manuscript from 1736. The word “neqissatsinnik”, “our food”, seen in the fifth line, is spelled “nekiksautivnik”. The Royal Library, Copenhagen.

bed, in church, in court, in parliament and in government offices”, as the historian Thorkild Kjærgaard once so vividly has expressed it.

Read more:  
Nielsen, F. A. J. (2015). Bibelen og det alimentære kulturmøde i Grønland.  
In F. Damgaard & A. K. de Hemmer Gudme (Eds.),  
Mad og drikke i bibelsk litteratur (Forum for Bibelsk Eksegese, 19)  
(pp. 326–351). Københavns Universitet og Forlaget Anis.  
[https://teol.ku.dk/abe/publikationer/forum\\_for\\_bibelsk\\_eksegese/f19/](https://teol.ku.dk/abe/publikationer/forum_for_bibelsk_eksegese/f19/)





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## Self-rule government, para-diplomacy and education in the Arctic

By Maria Ackrén

My latest published research has been in various areas, such as island autonomy, diplomacy and para-diplomacy, and education in Greenland. The book chapter “*Autonomy in Denmark: Greenland and the Faroe Islands*” covers Greenland and the Faroe Islands and is written together with Gestur Hovgaard. Here, we give a short overview over the secessionism movements in both regions and how these have developed over time (Hovgaard and Ackrén, 2018). The result is that although secessionism started during different time periods in these autonomous islands, it is largely influenced by external relations. In both cases, protests started in Denmark by well-educated Faroese and Greenlandic scholars, and they were in turn influenced by international cultural and political movements after WWII. Politics usually swings between secession and counter-secession movements in small island jurisdictions such as the Faroe Islands and Greenland (Hovgaard and Ackrén, 2018).

Another contribution in a similar field titled “*Autonomous Island Regions*” was a short article for the online

project “*50 Shades of Federalism*”. Here, the contribution takes a more conceptual approach, while listing possible definitions of island autonomy and how we can understand these territories (Ackrén, 2018a). These definitions are contrasted with the concept of federalism and how we can combine autonomism and federalism in further research.

The book chapter “*Diplomacy and Paradiplomacy in the North Atlantic and the Arctic – A Comparative Approach*” takes the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Nunavut and Svalbard into account. All territories have been of international interest in one way or another, and the three cases of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Nunavut are examples of where international involvement has been enhanced in recent years through what can be called para-diplomacy. Svalbard is under Norwegian jurisdiction but is regulated through an international treaty with over 40 signatory states – and is therefore an example of high-level diplomacy (Ackrén, 2018b).

The chapter “*Education*” is co-authored by Merete Watt Boolsen, Thierry Rodon and Fiona Walton. This is a chapter that has been part of an Arctic Council project through the “*Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic – Perspectives from the Baffin Bay/Davis Strait Region*” under the umbrella of the working group Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP). The chapter takes Greenland and Nunavut into account and gives an overview of the education situation in both regions – and it also looks at future trends and challenges within the area. Key messages taken from the chapter are the following: “education has become the key factor for adapting to new changes in the environment and in society at large; postsecondary education clearly contributes to regional and local capacity building, and there is a strong link between postsecondary education and community development; a significant development in northern higher education is the trend toward thinking in terms of ‘circumpolarity’; Inuit access to the knowledge economy is limited by complex and interrelated factors; and Inuit cultural and social values should be at the core of educa-

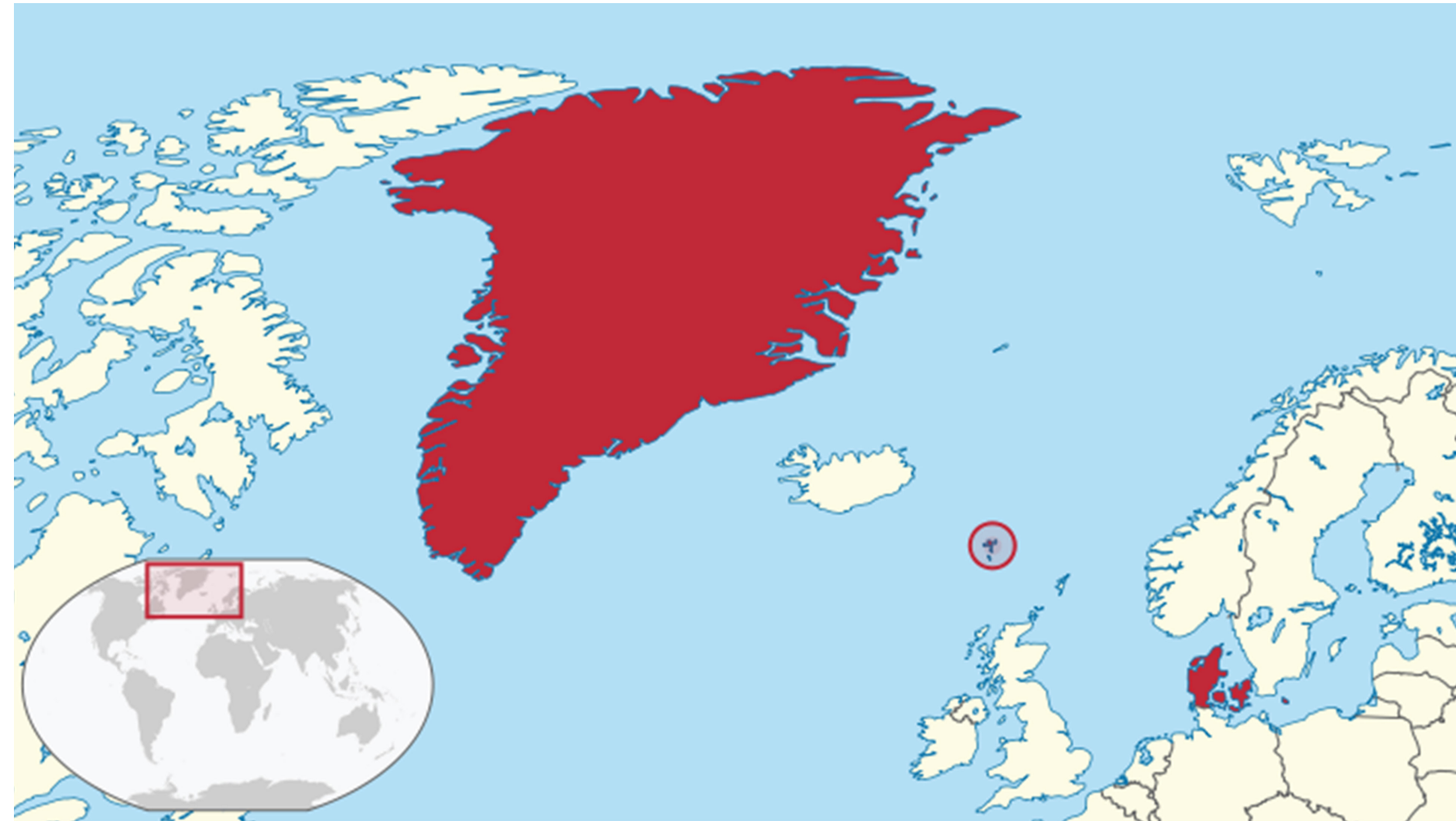




tional programmes” (Ackrén et al. 2018).

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## To be placed in a 24-hour care centre

Bonnie Jensen

What is it like to be placed in a 24-hour care centre if you are a child or a young person in Greenland? That is the theme of my PhD project, which I started 1 September 2017.

In Greenland today there are twenty-two 24-hour care centres for children and young people distributed throughout most of the country. In addition, in January 2015, six children and young people were placed into care in Denmark, and about 400 children were placed into care with foster families.

With a population of approximately 57,000 people, of whom almost 14,000 are children and young people under the age of 18, it means that approximately 4.5% of all children and young people in Greenland are placed into care outside the home. If we compare this with the rest of the Danish Realm, only about 1% of the children and young people are placed into care outside the home – both in the Faroe Islands and in Denmark.

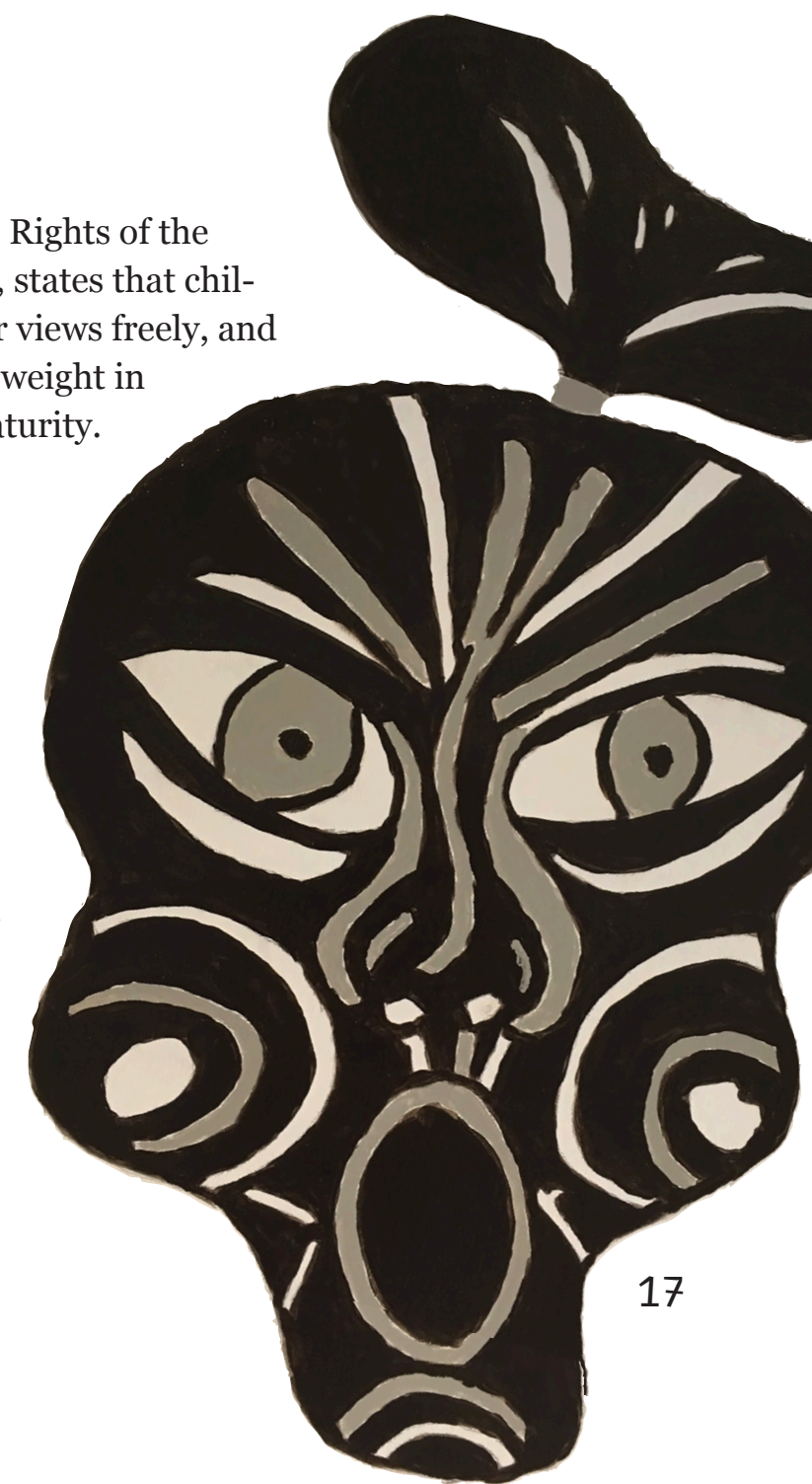
As yet, there has been no survey concerning what these placements mean for the individual child. There are reports and books about the work of the individual institutions, but what is lacking is a country-wide survey showing more clearly what works and what does not work. Fundamentally, I will seek to uncover how the placements have been solved so far, and I will try to make suggestions on how best to handle the placements in the future.

If we want to try to understand how being placed in a 24-hour care centre feels and how it is experienced, we have to ask those who have experienced it. The best efforts, both in the social field and elsewhere, are achieved when adequate help of adequate quality is offered.

The quality of an effort must be measured according to the extent to which it has addressed the problems, and especially whether the given effort was perceived as beneficial and relevant to the recipients.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Greenland joined in 1993, states that children should be allowed to express their views freely, and these views must be given appropriate weight in accordance with the child's age and maturity.

The specific stories of the individual children and young people can also contribute to greater knowledge of the issue of placements and are therefore important to get out in the open – but sharing their stories with me may also imply personal costs for the participants. There are many things to take into consideration when such a project is to be implemented and communicated afterwards. That is why I have consulted with the Research Ethics Committee in Greenland, who has approved my project.







To get a comprehensive picture of children's and young people's experiences that can show something about the field as a whole, many children and young people need to be interviewed.

I will also talk to other people involved: pedagogical staff, parents of children and young people placed into care, and adults who have previously been placed into care in a 24-hour care centre.

I hope to interview two girls and two boys between the ages of 12 and

18 from each of the 22 institutions in Greenland. However, there will always be situations where this is not possible for some reason – perhaps because no one in the age group is present or because it is not possible to obtain written consent from the parents.

I also hope to conduct interviews with younger children while their parents are present. In many 24-hour care centres, young people have the opportunity to stay after they have reached the age of 18 – while completing an education or waiting to be able to move back to their home town or settlement.

These young people, who are still placed into care but are in principle also adults living in the institution, are also represented in the study.

The interviews at the various institutions are well under way, and, in particular, the heads of these institutions are

very important collaborators. Many of them have vast experience and therefore know the history of the field. They willingly contribute with their knowledge and do a great job in obtaining written consent from the parents and making themselves and the institutions available for the project.

The project ends with a dissertation in the autumn of 2020.





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## Foreign news in Greenland

Signe Ravn-Højgaard

Images of an isolated tribe on an Indian island appear on the television screen. In Greenlandic, the speaker says that the tribe has killed an American missionary who tried to access the island. Moving on to a lot of shopping carts and shoppers in an American supermarket – it's Black Friday in the US, the host tells us, before he moves on to a feature about what is going on at Black Friday in the shops in Nuuk.

In 1½ minutes, *Qanorooq*, the main evening newscast in Greenland, has guided the viewers through the television coverage of the last 24 hours of news from the world outside Greenland. The news is made by international press agencies; the Greenlandic voice-over is made by the local TV channel, KNR. The news has no Greenlandic angle and is not edited locally.

Among other things, the research project *Tusagas-siutit 2018* has studied foreign news in the Green-

landic news media. The project showed that most of the foreign news – as in the said issue of *Qanorooq* – comes from international press agencies such as the Associated Press, Ritzau and Reuters.

Foreign news items are usually short and deal with major global events that rarely have direct relevance to Greenlandic politics or the current debate in the country.

They are news reports produced by foreign agencies, chosen by the Greenlandic media, and translated to Greenlandic – most often without much editing.

In Greenland, there is great interest in the Greenlandic news media: radio, television and newspapers. Many people get their knowledge of the world outside Greenland primarily through the Greenlandic media, whose news is mostly in the form of short news reports.

Only a small part of the foreign news in Greenlandic is independently processed stories produced by Greenlandic journalists, some of whom living in the countries concerned. As regards contents, this kind of news is different from the other news reports. Such stories almost always have a Greenlandic angle, because they are targeted at the Greenlandic audience. There are many stories from areas where Greenland has a political and cultural sense of interconnectedness – above all the Danish Realm, the Arctic and the North American Inuit areas.

For example, it may be stories about the views of the Greenlandic politicians in the Danish Parliament on the Danish government's policy – or stories about migration to the Faroe Islands. There has been a story about a fire





in a supermarket in Iqaluit, and there are stories about research or geopolitics in the Arctic. There are also stories about Greenlanders abroad, such as Greenlandic film directors showing movies at a Berlin film festival – and there are stories about familiar home situations in other contexts, such as polar bears going astray or dog sledding in Denmark.

This is a pattern that you also see in other countries; the selection of the foreign news items is often based on a ‘closeness criterion’. What has an impact on Greenland, or what resembles ourselves, is covered more than what is different or distant.

For this reason, Greenlanders abroad are covered a lot in Greenlandic foreign news, as are stories about icebergs or other recognisable situations.

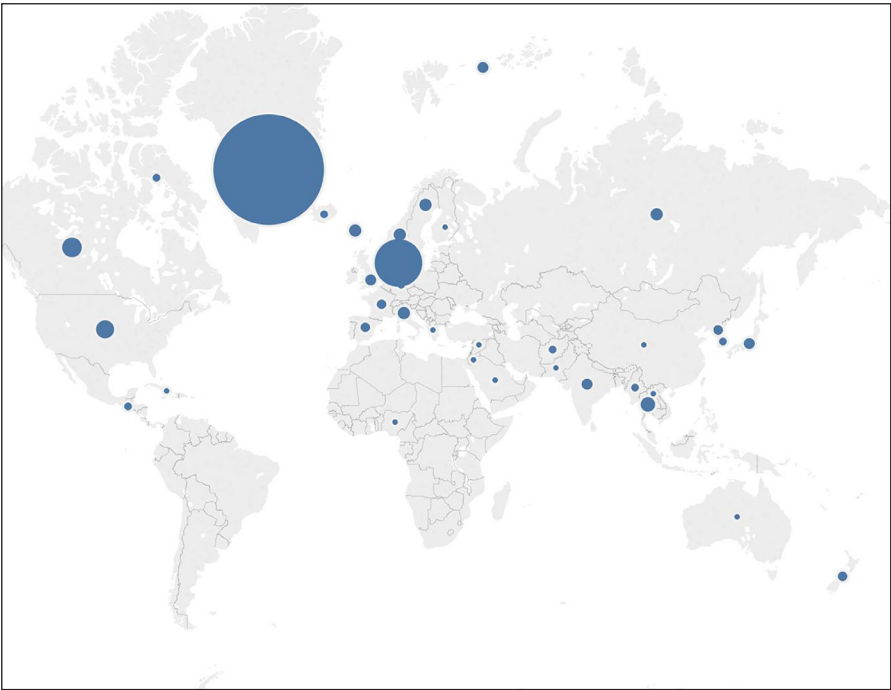
***Tusagassiuutit 2018***

The research project *Tusagassiuutit 2018* has mapped Greenlandic media and media consumption in Greenland and analysed the contents of the Greenlandic news. The project is funded by the Greenland Research Council, Greenland Self-Government and University of Greenland.

Read more here: <https://uk.uni.gl/research/mapping-the-media-in-greenland.aspx>

The closeness can also be linguistic and cultural – for example Inuit in Canada. And there may be political closeness in the form of the Danish Realm and geographical closeness to Arctic areas.

Foreign news journalism is not given a high priority by the Greenlandic news desks. The vast majority of journalism focuses on domestic news. It seems to be a deliberate choice. Journalists in Greenland are the only ones in the world who deal with Greenlandic domestic affairs, where - as thousands of journalists around the globe are present in the world’s hotspots, covering global events better than the few Greenlandic journalists could ever dream of.



*The map shows which countries Greenlandic news is about.  
The larger the dot, the more news from that place.  
Data is from Tusagassiuutit 2018.*

There are, therefore, good reasons why the Greenlandic news desks make the choices that they do. But this means that the part of the population who stick to the Greenlandic media, for instance because they only speak Greenlandic, only get a superficial insight into international politics and global events, since most of the foreign news is taken from unprocessed news reports from abroad.





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## Particularly meaningful teaching activities in natural science

Lars Demant-Poort

It is 20 July 2018. Twenty high school students from Greenland, Denmark and the United States say goodbye to each other after having spent 23 days together working on natural science research projects in the area around Kangerlussuaq. The students have gone through a development improving their understanding of how natural science is created; how natural science becomes a way to recognise the world.

The Joint Science Education Project (JSEP) is a collaboration between Greenland, Denmark and the United States established in 2004. It is a natural science summer school in Kangerlussuaq that for the last ten years has brought high school students together from Greenland, Denmark and the United States – twenty students every summer. Ten students from the four high schools in Greenland, five students from a selected high school in Denmark and five high school students from the US. For three weeks, they live together with five mentors from the three countries. The daily routines and duties are conducive to social co-

hesion and prepare the ground for the true purpose of this summer school: a natural science educational journey.

In addition to the five mentors, a strong research team from Dartmouth College (US), the SUMMIT research station at the top of the Greenlandic ice cap and a logistical support team in Kangerlussuaq (i.e. Kangerlussuaq International Science Support) assist the students on the journey.

Generally, students who have participated in JSEP say that the weeks in July, where they were working together with natural science students from other countries, have been crucial in terms of how they understand other cultures and how they perceive natural science and the impact of climate change on vital processes in nature. For the Greenlandic participants, JSEP also has an added linguistic challenge as the language spoken during the summer school is English – it is also here that the students from Greenland experience the greatest personal development.



Already during the first days of the summer school, the students launch into one of the most important disciplines of natural science: curiosity and wonder – hunting for the good research questions. Why, for example, does one lake have many mosquitoes while another lake has almost none? What is the relationship between a specific kind of soil and the type of plants that grow in the soil? What is the relationship between the CO<sub>2</sub> flux (respiration) of the soil and the age of the soil?





The students’ attempts at asking the right research questions prove to be crucial to their work, and during interviews at the end of the three weeks many of the students return to the very first days when there was a strong focus on asking these questions.

The students’ research questions also form the basis of the project that they have ten days to work on in groups of four or five. In other words, the students become active participants in a project that stems from their own wonder.

Every morning during the ten intensive days, students either drive into the field to collect data (such as mosquitoes, spiders, rocks, soil samples, ice or water samples), work on data analysis or have intensive discussions about whether enough data has been collected. The students’ abilities to analyse and reflect are developed.

While the students at the beginning of the project are a bit uncertain about how to make head or tail of a varied data set, only some fourteen days after arrival, they are entering into reflective discussions about contexts and processes. Apparently, something crucial has happened as regards how the students understand the phenomena they observe in the environment.

The many long days of fieldwork and data analysis end with a workshop at the airport in Kangerlussuaq, where incoming passengers are involved in the same reflections on phenomena as are the students – and the passengers are presented with the methods and results that the students have used.

In the last week of the project, students visit either the research station EastGrip or SUMMIT Station on Greenland’s ice cap in order to get a first-hand impression of some of the climate research based in Greenland.

I have had JSEP as a research project since the summer of 2018. The goal goal is to identify meaningful teaching activities, among other things in the interaction between teachers, researchers and students.

I also examine how the multicultural setup affects students’ participation in the project and its outcome in terms of learning, and I try to find out how the programme affects the further education of the high school students and how the basic ideas of the programme can be continued in other institutional contexts.

*“It has been the best three weeks of my life”*

(high school student from Greenland).

*“I have learned things I never learned at my high school – even though we have had the same course”*

(high school student from Greenland)

*“It has been the most educational time of my life”*

(high school student from Denmark)





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# Distance learning at a school in an East Greenlandic settlement

Anders Øgaard

In the autumn of 2017, at a school in a small East Coast settlement in Greenland, six pupils had a maths teacher who was in Tasiilaq. The pupils participated in a research project at the Institute of Learning about the possibilities for distance learning in mathematics.

We became more aware of how distance learning in mathematics can be planned, and we gained insight into how fragile distance learning can be under the current conditions for schools in settlements.

The project’s distance learning could not be carried out in such a way that teachers and pupils were able to perceive it as a stable and fixed part of the school’s normal teaching. For the teachers, it remained an experiment that did not go beyond intentions and setup. For the pupils, it only came to occasional activities with iPads in mathematics.

Where teaching in mathematics previously focused on knowledge and correct results, new teaching in the sub-

ject emphasizes that the pupils’ creativity and independent thinking are essential to their learning process.

In the research project, the idea was to carry out the distance learning from this new perspective, appreciating and involving the pupils, and making them conscious about their co-responsibility for their learning. The grade level of the final exams in mathematics shows an alarming and urgent need for another and much better teaching approach to mathematics in Greenland.

Internet connectivity in the East Greenlandic settlement was not fast enough for the teacher to be able to speak directly with the students. Teaching was thus carried out by the exchange of emails and assignments. These assignments were developed in collaboration with a consultant and the pupils’ regular maths teacher, who lived in the settlement.

The distance learning course began with the pupils trying to use iPads to solve a small number of maths assign-



ments, presented by the distance learning teacher in a small video clip, and the answers were then sent back by email

However, the following teaching activities were only partially implemented. The teacher and the pupils were to exchange assignments and results over the Internet; however, the communication was too slow, the teaching came to a halt and the distance learning had to be terminated. The pupils were interested and involved. They solved a few smaller maths assignments that the distance learning teacher sent them. They accepted that she was





their teacher, and they showed that they could use iPads to enter the distance learning situation. Thus, the difficulties were not owing to the pupils, which is a positive finding.

The reasons why the distance learning failed were primarily because of the lack of internet connection in the settlement. But there were also other challenges: Roles, responsibilities and expectations of the teachers involved made it difficult to maintain the teaching as distance learning. In a situation where the pupils solved an assignment that the distance learning teacher had sent, the teacher in the settlement was present to make sure that the activities were completed. This resulted in confusion about the division of responsibilities and about the roles

in the distance learning approach. In this situation, the teacher present accidentally interrupted the distance learning environment by reducing the distance learning teacher's teaching to assignments that the teacher in the settlement carried out with the pupils.

Initially, involvement from the distance learning teacher was professional and good, but she quickly saw her contact with the pupils diminish, lacking answers and responses from pupils and from the school in the settlement in general. This halted the otherwise motivated and competent teacher's involvement.

The distance learning teacher's overall experience was that she also had to take on more responsibility for the teaching than she had expected; a responsibility that she found unfair. She felt she was alone in tackling the challenges regarding internet connectivity and logistics, as well as getting the pedagogical thoughts implemented. The project has shown how limited the possibilities for

distance learning are on Greenland's east coast – and how fragile teaching can be when it depends on digital technologies. The project has also shown how distance learning in the school involves developing new teaching roles.

Despite the fact that the distance learning was not carried through to the extent expected, the experiment has provided relevant experience and knowledge in relation to moving on with the work of distance learning in the schools in Greenland – and with distance learning in primary schools in general.

Reporting from the research project can be found at: <https://da.uni.gl/media/4015417/fjernundervisning-i-matematik-i-oestgroenland.pdf>.





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## “Being happy about learning” A study of pupils’ teaching experiences in the Greenlandic secondary school

Lars Demant-Poort og Louise Pindstrup Andersen

How do Greenlandic school children experience the teaching? This question was the subject of a questionnaire survey distributed to the country’s pupils during the spring of 2018. Four hundred eleven secondary school pupils from nine settlement schools and eight urban schools answered a questionnaire where they were asked, among other things, to describe specific teaching experiences in the subjects Greenlandic, Danish, mathematics and natural sciences (biology, natural geography and physics-chemistry).

Generally, the pupils expressed that the teaching they experience can be characterised as traditional and book-based. Across subjects, they describe the teaching as an activity where they primarily read, write, do assignments and listen to the teacher.

We can also see that the pupils describe their experience

of school in relation to three topics: learning, active teaching and the social aspect. It is important for the pupils to learn something in school, but some pupils experience that this does not always happen. It is also important for the pupils that they do something and that they are active in class. As far as the social aspect is concerned, several of the pupils talk about problems with teasing and bullying.

The preliminary results indicate that the pupils are reflective and aware that school is a place to learn and that they also want to learn something. But the pupils do not always experience this during the daily teaching.

The American philosopher and pedagogue John Dewey (1859–1952) has demonstrated that you learn in situations where you act, experiment, do and think, reflect, consider and discuss what is happening. It is when there

is opportunity to experiment and think about what you do that experience and knowledge are developed – which can give rise to new experiments and thus new knowledge. This understanding of learning is in contrast to passive learning, where you are “filled up” with knowledge by just passively receiving information.

In continuation of Dewey, the American psychologist David Ausubel (1918–2008) argues for the importance that learning is perceived as meaningful. That happens when there is a clear connection between learning content, process and the context in which the learning takes place.

Receptive learning is described by Ausubel as teaching through the use of passive activities such as reading a book and solving assignments with no clear purpose other than to pass an exam. The goal is solely recollection, and such a teaching method will not be meaningful



for the pupil. A book-based, traditional way of teaching often does not activate the pupils – it is neither engaging nor meaningful.

In Greenland, we are currently working on a new primary school reform that is to meet a wide range of challenges that the current primary school has. Among other things, an evaluation report from 2015 points out that many young people are not ready to begin an education when they leave elementary school – and there are pedagogical challenges in the daily teaching.

The children’s experiences from elementary school are crucial to how they manage in the education system as young people. We need to know how children learn, but



we should also be interested in what children think of what they learn – because that has an influence on their relation to learning. Last, but not least, we know that education and teaching in the Arctic face particular challenges when the formal Western education system meets the local, Arctic conditions.

The current situation in Greenlandic elementary schools and the research suggest that we must take pupils’ experience of the teaching seriously. The difficulties here are

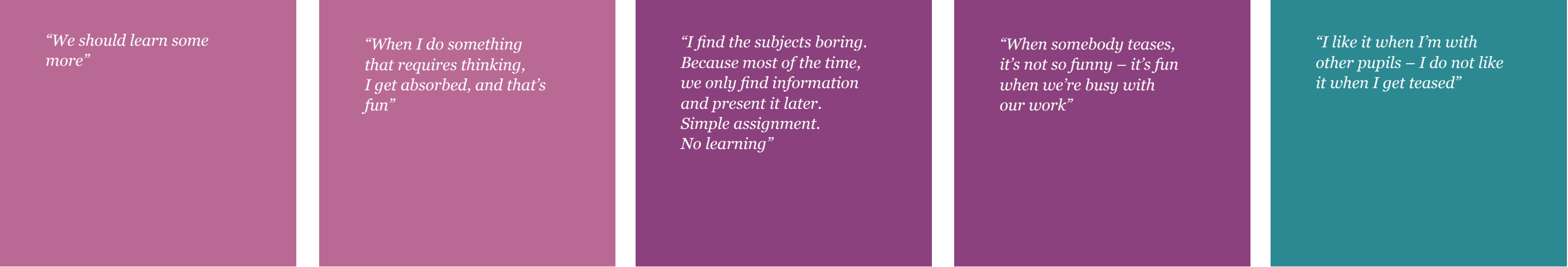
*“You get happy about learning”*

*“Mostly work with books and assignments”*

*I have always liked going to school and learning something new”*

*“We do not learn so much”*





that we do not know enough about how pupils experience the teaching and what basic school experiences they get. Our study tries to remedy this.

The study is funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Church and Danish Government grants for Arctic research.

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## Outdoor areas at sheltered housing units for the elderly in Sisimiut

– a co-creation project

Kamilla Nørtoft, Lise Hounsgaard and Tenna Jensen

Ageing in the Arctic is a partnership between Ilisima-tusarfik, other educational and research institutions in Greenland and Denmark, and the Greenlandic munici-palities. We collect knowledge about living conditions, health and quality of life as regards the elderly in Green-land and share this knowledge with the elderly care sec-tor, in educational contexts, in research contexts and with the wider Greenlandic population.

Both the elderly themselves, the care assistants as well as the administrative staff in the municipalities point to access to nature as one of the things essential for a good old age. As earlier in life, many elderly people can still go hiking in the mountains, go hunting and go out to sea fishing. However, there are also some who do not have those options.

In Sisimiut, some of the municipal elderly homes are lo-cated at an attractive recreation area with a view of both mountains and the sea. Here, options are available for

walks, berry picking and also skiing in the winter. Many of the residents, however, have to make do with enjoy-ing the view, because they can no longer go out there by themselves.

Meetings between providers in Qeqqata Municipality, a municipal development consultant and researchers from Ageing in the Arctic showed that all partners would like to try to remedy the problem. Consequently, with finan-cial support from the municipality, we conducted a series of workshops in June 2018 where the elderly residents were invited to contribute with input and experiences in order to come up with a possible solution to the problem.

Researchers from Ageing in the Arctic and Copenhagen School of Interior Design, home care providers, the mu-nicipality's development consultant and a development engineer from the municipality's environmental and engineering administration also participated in these workshops.



During the first workshop, residents were asked to iden-tify the best and worst places in the town. In this way, we





discovered what is important to them so that we could build on this knowledge during the process.

During the next workshop, we investigated how an outdoor area could meet the needs of the elderly and how it could be made accessible to different groups of users. During the third workshop, participants were invited outside so that they could look at the landscape together and point out the pros and cons of placing an access trail at different locations.

Before the fourth workshop, proposals were made for two different wooden pathways with large platforms that could provide access to nature. During this workshop, the participants decided upon which proposal should

be worked on in the project. With additional financial support from the municipality, the work on the construction of the wooden path has begun, and it will soon be ready for

use. Researchers from Ageing in the Arctic will conduct a follow-up study of the project when the outdoor area has been accessible to the elderly for some time.

The project is based on an equal partnership between researchers and employees from different departments in the municipality. By joining forces and contributing with our wide variety of experiences and areas of expertise, it has been possible to start a process of citizen-involvement in which we all become wiser, while the result can hopefully help to remedy a very specific problem for many elderly people locally.

Based on the project, our research group will develop general guidelines on how to work with citizen-involvement


**Qeqqata Kommunia**  
[www.qeqqata.gl](http://www.qeqqata.gl)

Workshopit uannga ingerlanneqassapput:  
 Qeqqata Kommunia, Arkitekt Aldring (AgeArc) og  
 Arkitektskolen København



**WORKSHOP 15/06 2018**

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*The three workshop posters are made by Sidse Carroll, Copenhagen School of Interior Design.  
The construction is photographed by Kristina Poulsen, Qeqqata Municipality.*

The interdisciplinary research and development project Ageing in the Arctic – Well-being, quality of life, and health promotion among older people in Greenland (<https://agearc.ku.dk>) (project number 14195) has received a grant of DKK 5.6 million from VELUXFONDEN's cross-disciplinary pool for collaboration between research and practice.

The project runs from January 2017 until the end of 2020 and is also supported by the fund Ensomme Gamles Værn.

ment in municipal projects. The principle of co-operation is common to several of Ageing in the Arctic's development projects, all of which have their starting point in research-based knowledge and specific needs in the individual municipalities. When we collaborate across

research and practice, there is a greater chance that the products and solutions we develop will ultimately have relevance and produce an effect for the project's most important target group: elderly people in Greenland.







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# Customs that can support women in labour in Greenland

Ruth Montgomery-Andersen

Pregnancy care is of a high standard in Greenlandic hospitals and health centres. Nevertheless, infant mortality is relatively high in Greenland and is on par with countries such as the Philippines. The Greenlandic health authorities are trying to solve the problem by moving many of the pregnant women to Nuuk by the time they are about to go into labour.

This applies to women who live in smaller settlements without a midwife service, and this generally also applies if there is a risk of complications at birth or during pregnancy.

During the last ten years, the number of places to give birth in Greenland has halved, and midwife positions have been cut. In 2008, there were twelve midwife positions in Greenland, and women had the opportunity to give birth in their local community if there was a midwife and they were normal, healthy pregnant women. As of 2018, only six such

places still exist where you can give birth with a midwife in attendance. Women in the small settlements have few opportunities to be examined by a doctor and only receive sporadic visits from a midwife. Only when they arrive at the hospital where they are to give birth are they attended to by a midwife.

That many pregnant women have to leave their local community and live alone in other towns for a longer period of time increases inequity between families.

Resourceful families with a large social network have good opportunities to make plans in connection with the upcoming birth and the time thereafter, whereas socioeconomically disadvantaged families have fewer opportunities to take responsibility for their own health.

The concept of family is fluid in Greenland. It includes not only blood relatives but also adopted relatives, namesakes,





friends and colleagues. For many, a feeling of security in connection with a birth is linked directly to family and local communities. The family is perceived as security, and a lack of opportunity to receive support from the family and the network is perceived as insecurity.


Greenlandic public health programmes and birth policies typically focus on physical wellbeing and rarely take into account the mental, social and spiritual dimensions. This fragmented way of perceiving and implementing health does not support Greenlandic core cultural values.

The trends and policy in Greenland have gone in opposite directions in relation to practices in other parts of the world. In Nunavut, a law in 2017 has ensured that all women who give birth outside their local community are entitled to have a companion present. In Alaska, the

Alaska Native Health Consortium pays for a companion to follow women who are sent south from their local community to give birth in Anchorage or Juno.

In 2016, 819 children were born in Greenland, of which 491 were born at Dronning Ingrid's Hospital in Nuuk. Of these, 267 were born to mothers from the coast.

This corresponds to 45% of all newborns from the coast being born in Nuuk.



The Greenlandic health service is in all respects modelled according to the Nordic system. It does not take into account good practices and scientific results from other areas of the Arctic or isolated districts in countries like Australia or what families and their communities themselves think is needed.

A project that works with this issue is the MANU project. MANU stands for *Meeraq Angajoqqaat Nuannaarneq* (“Children Parents Joy”) and is a parenting programme where the future parents are encouraged to reflect on their own childhood and to talk about the settings they wish to create for their children.

MANU was launched in 2017, and its point of departure is basic elements of Greenlandic core values. Teaching is offered to all future parents, from when the woman discovers she is pregnant until the child turns nine





months. One of the purposes of MANU is to help promote children's well-being and prevent neglect.

It can be said that there is a cultural space for births in Greenland, where the family's ability to strengthen social ties helps to promote their own health. Local communities are not necessarily satisfied with the official policy, but they support the mothers and the family's. Grandmothers, aunts and sisters continue to be responsible

for being present for their relatives when the pregnant woman has to leave close ones behind to travel to a place far away to give birth. By families and communities supporting these traditions, the family is strengthened.





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## Perspectives on life as a senior citizen in Nuuk

Tine Aagaard

In 2017, a research project was conducted in a partnership between the elderly care in Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq and the Institute of Nursing & Health Science at Ilisimatusarfik (The University of Greenland). The purpose of the project was to examine how senior citizens in Nuuk look at the possibilities of living a meaningful life as a senior citizen – and the opportunities offered by elderly care.

The starting point of the study was a rehabilitation initiative in home care – called Training before Care. Training before Care is a practical implementation of what is called “everyday rehabilitation”. In collaboration with the citizens, occupational therapists and physiotherapists assess their need for training in dealing with common daily activities – such as washing and dressing, cooking and cleaning, and getting out of the home.

The training itself is carried out daily by the home care assistants when they visit the home under the guidance of the therapists.

There is an increasing number of senior citizens in the population. Inadequate resources in healthcare and elderly care require healthier and more active senior citizens. The purpose of the Training before Care

project is to help citizens become more independent of help. In everyday rehabilitation, it is important that the citizens themselves help to setting goals for their training.



As part of the research project, six senior citizens were interviewed about their lives and everyday routines, and nine employees in elderly care were interviewed about their work. In addition, we conducted observations of the administration, at elderly events and in the day centre – and policy strategies concerning the elderly were also analysed. The material is limited, but the results nevertheless point to a number of trends.

The research project shows that the welfare benefits of home







care, both care and rehabilitation, are defined as “technical” services – such as dosing of medicine, washing and dressing, and practical training in making coffee or tying shoelaces. The help is aimed at physical functions. The goals for the training – which citizens are invited to contribute to – are about such technical progress.

The project’s insight into the lives and everyday routines of senior citizens has highlighted the fact that senior citizens are as diverse as all other people. They have different prerequisites and conditions for managing life as elderly persons, and they have different values and interests – and therefore also different needs for support. But the research has also highlighted some common features:

Firstly, senior citizens struggle to keep their lives and everyday routines together. They do not sit passively and wait for help.

Secondly, old people are proud of what they have accomplished during their lives and that they have resources and experiences that they want to pass on.

Thirdly, old people are not excited about needing help and training, but they demand it in order to keep doing

the things they appreciate. However, many experience that elderly care’s narrow focus on physical functions exposes their weaknesses. This can create resistance and can seem demotivating and pacifying. In this way, there is a risk that everyday rehabilitation will not have the intended effect.

The kind of social events organised for senior citizens by elderly care, which can be considered a part of rehabilitation, such as activity centres, are organised on the basis of a view of the elderly as less valuable to society – and as without a future. The majority of those interviewed in the project indicate that they feel excluded from society and treated as abnormal. The activities offered are often perceived as meaningless.

The project points out that senior citizens want to be treated as normal participants in the community. They want to contribute to local communities with their re-



sources and experiences, thus giving their lives meaning. Examples that were highlighted during the interviews include taking grandchildren out and teaching them about nature, helping to resolve conflicts between young people and local citizens, helping other senior citizens and spreading joy by singing in choirs.

In their senior citizens policy, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq writes that it “takes humanity as its starting point – meaning that being able to adapt to other people’s needs and situations is of great importance”. This project contributes with knowledge concerning some of the senior citizens’ needs and situations. In addition, the project contributes with criticism of the narrow physical focus on welfare services for senior citizens, and it points to the developmental possibilities of considering senior citizens as fellow human beings with a whole life, with knowledge and resources – and with both a story and some dreams of the future – just like everyone else.

Publications about the project:  
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Tikiusaaq, no. 1.  
<http://pk.gl/pk-organisering/fagblad-tikiusaaq/>  
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