Between two Worlds
Indigenous education within the formal education system in the Arctic: Greenland

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Ágrip


Helstu niðurstöður eru þær að Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia skólinn starfar eftir danska menntakerfinu, þar sem lögð er áhersla á bóklega kennslu eins og er algengt í flestum løndum. Skólinn hefur eina víku að hausti þar sem útikennsla fer fram hjá yngri bekkjunum; þá fer öll kennsla fram utan dyra. Einnig hefur skólinn boðið þrem til fjórum drengjum í 10. bekk sem ekki hafa áhuga á bóklegri kennslu að læra að skjóta sel, veiða hreindýr, útbúa hundasleða og fleira, þegar fjármagn leyfir. Þá hefur skólinn fengið eldre borgara til að koma og segja frá lífinu í gamla daga. Það má því segja að Qeqertarsuaq Atuarfia skólinn tengist nærsamfélaginu og noti menningararfinn í kennslunni, þó það sé í litlum mæli.
Abstract

Education is a vital aspect of people's development; no matter where we live, education is essential to us. To be educated is important for all individuals since education enhances knowledge and skills, including human and social values among individuals. The main objective of the research was to examine teaching methods in Greenland. How the Greenlandic education system works: Is education in Greenland associated with the community and cultural heritage? Are skills of indigenous people in the Arctic used in teaching? Theories and attitudes toward Arctic education were also examined, whether and how indigenous peoples use their knowledge for teaching, and how that knowledge works within formal school systems. The researcher visited a primary school in Greenland, more specifically at Disko Island on the west coast of Greenland, in a small village called Qeqertarsuaq. This location was chosen because the researcher’s hometown, Húsavík, and Qeqertarsuaq have a twin town partnership.

Participants in the study were staff and students at the elementary school in Qeqertarsuaq on Disko Island. Data was collected through individual interviews, conducted with three employees at the school in Greenland and, three students in 10th grade. The researcher was also able to talk to townspeople about their daily life. Furthermore, the researcher was given the opportunity to observe lessons at the school. The study is a qualitative case study.

The main conclusions are that the Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School operates according to the Danish education system, where emphasis is placed on academic teaching as in most countries. The school reserves one week in the fall, when all instruction in the younger classes is conducted outdoors. Also, the school has offered three to four 10th grade boys, who are not interested in literary learning to learn to shoot, hunt for reindeer, build dog sleds, and more, when funding allows. The school also invites senior citizens to come and tell the students about life in the old days. It can be said, therefore, that Qeqertarsuaq Atuarfia School is connected to the local community and uses cultural heritage in the teaching, although perhaps only to a small extent.
Prologue

This dissertation constitutes a master’s thesis worth 30 ECTS credit points in Educational Studies (Primary Education) in the Faculty of Education of the University of Akureyri. The thesis was written under the supervision of Embla Eir Oddsdóttir, Director of the Icelandic Arctic cooperation Network, and Valgerður S. Bjarnadóttir, postdoctoral researcher at the University of Akureyri.

I would like to thank my instructor Embla, for her continuous support and encouragement and Valgerður for helping me to bring this thesis to its final stage; thank you both. I would also like to thank my husband for always being there for me and for all the help and encouragement he has shown me during the time of my studies, and every single day; thank you my love. My family, I would like to thank you for always letting me stay when I came to Akureyri, you are the best. I would also like to thank Norðurþing’s youth and cultural committee for their contribution toward my trip to Qeqertarsuaq as well as the local trade union and the Icelandic Teachers’ Association for their grant.
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1. Introduction

An education gives you the freedom to create your own future and create a secure framework for your family. At the same time, your education will give you greater opportunity for active participation in the development of our country.

Minister for Education, Culture, Research and Church in Greenland 2015.
Nivi Olsen.

Education and access to education is the key to human development, and good education is crucial for us no matter where we live. Education can help us grow and expand our minds, extend our skills, values and knowledge in general. The content of education is also equally important, including the way in which it fulfils local needs. Education is most obvious in its institutional form as an official school environment (Johansson, Paci & Hovdenak, 2004). However, the learning process does not need to take place solely in the classroom; learning can be associated with the community the student lives in and the local cultural heritage.

In the North, many indigenous communities are creating educational models within the formal school system. These educational systems are based on traditional ways of learning and teaching. In Greenland the School Act from 2002 states that schooling shall create the basis for the student’s understanding and development of his knowledge about his social identity, values and culture. There is a challenge in indigenous education, and that challenge lies in creating a link between indigenous skills and knowledge and national standard curricula. Making this linkage is a slow process and needs to be based on the recognition of equal, yet different, world views and complementary systems of knowledge (King & Schielmann, 2014).

By interviewing two teachers, a principal and three students in Qeqertarsuaq Elementary School, Greenland, this thesis intends to explore whether and how education in Greenland is associated with the community and cultural heritage and whether and how indigenous skills are emphasized within the formal school system.

The thesis begins with a background chapter which focuses on basic facts about Greenland and its historical context. Following the background chapter is the literature review, providing a review of education in general, educational
conditions in Greenland, Greenland’s educational system, formal and informal education, indigenous education and teaching methods in Greenland. The research chapter sets the scene for the research goal and is followed by the method chapter which provides a description of methodology including interview methods, research participants and how data was collected and analyzed. The results section provides research findings, outlining the data, and a discussion where the data is reflected on in relation to the literature review. The discussion chapter reflects the data associated with literary criticism, followed by a concluding chapter which sums up the conclusions of this research.
2. The Greenlandic context

2.1 Greenland – Kalaallit Nunaat

Kalaallit Nunaat meaning “the country of Greenlanders” is a non-continental island, the largest in the world located between the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans. The majority of its residents are Inuit. The indigenous population in Greenland, used to call their country Inuit Nunaat meaning “country of human beings” (Greenland in figures, 2014). Their ancestors migrated from the Canadian mainland in the beginning of the 13th century and they gradually settled across the island. Three quarters of Greenland is covered by a permanent ice sheet, and with a population of 56,695 people (24 September 2019), Greenland is the least densely populated country in the world (Greenland in figures, 2014). Greenland dominates the North Atlantic between Europe and North America, and close to one third of the population lives in the capital, Nuuk. However, most inhabitants reside in small settlements and towns along the coast (Greenland in Figures, 2016).

The Eskimos migrated to Greenland approximately 4-5,000 years ago, and people living in Greenland today are descendants from the last migration of the Thule Culture. The Greenlanders call themselves “Kalaallit” and they are Indigenous Inuit peoples (Inuit means “human being”). Whilst 85% of Greenlanders are Inuit the remaining inhabitants are primarily from Denmark (Greenland in figures, 2014). The Greenlandic ancestors, the Thule culture settled in northern Greenland, and Scandinavian Viking settlers arrived in southern Greenland around the same time (Greenland in Figures, 2016). The official religion is evangelical Lutheranism, with nearly two-thirds of the population following it, whereas about one-third of the population follow other forms of Christianity. Traditional beliefs, including Shamanism, are still practiced by a small minority (Greenland in figures, 2014).

Igloos and dogsleds still exist, but life in the Arctic is far from the romanticized notions of many people, including the author of this thesis. Today modern technology collides with Stone Age traditions which creates a complex society where children watch satellite TV while chewing on whale blubber, and hunters learn first-aid skills to qualify as guides. Fast-paced changes during the past 40 years have brought problems, and many Arctic villages now resemble
tough inner-city neighborhoods in many respects. High unemployment, rampant alcohol abuse, low standards of education and all the associated problems plague many communities. Across the Arctic life expectancy is low and suicide rates are high. Children grow up fast and unfortunately witness various kinds of abuse, while many adults find themselves back at school in their forties hoping to make up for lost time (O’Carroll & Elliot, 2005).

Despite the harsh climate, isolation, social problems and, in some areas, basic standards of living, the indigenous inhabitants of the far north are categorically committed to their communities, so that even the young people are unwilling to leave (O’Carroll & Elliot, 2005). According to O’Carroll and Elliot (2005) deep appreciation of traditional lifestyle and of their land, and the huge importance of family connections, outweigh the lure of the bright city lights to the south. On the other hand, with a culture of welfare dependence and a low level of education, it will take years before most communities can look forward to any true political or financial independence. Providing meaningful employment and diversifying the economy for isolated communities without causing irreversible damage to the land remains a real challenge. The people of the far north are famous for their resilience and ingenuity in the face of difficulty, and although they may not know where life is going, an indestructible desire to maintain meaningful links to the land and to protect the indigenous culture and make the most of modern innovations is an excellent start (O’Carroll & Elliot, 2005).

Out of the approximately 57,000 residents of Greenland 50,000 speak Greenlandic; thus almost 88% of all people living in Greenland (whether of Inuit descent or not) speak the Inuit language. This high percent of Greenlandic speaking people is the result of paying attention to language issues, crowned by declaring Greenlandic (Innu) as the official language in the Greenland Self-Government Act of 2009 (Schweitzer, Sköld & Ulturgasheva, 2014).

2.1.2 The history

The Inuit inhabit a vast geographical area ranging from Chukotka in the Russian Far East, across Canada and Alaska to the east coast of Greenland. Nearly 150,000 people make this area their home, and although different dialects exist, they all largely speak the same language. Life in most Inuit settlements and towns resembles that of the Western world, with satellite TV, internet access and supermarkets. However, many smaller settlements have no running water, few facilities and a much more traditional and usually necessitous lifestyle. Family groups are still remarkably important, and in most towns, there is a complex network of family relations; often only a few extended families form the entire population. The extended family take care of
the elders, whilst children are not disciplined, in accordance with traditions. Children inherit the name soul and the name of their ancestors, therefore disciplining a child shows disrespect for the deceased elder. It is expected that children will learn from the consequences of their failures, not from the anger of their parents (O’Carroll & Elliot, 2005).

For many Inuit cultural identity continues to be strongly connected with spending time out on the land, fishing, trapping, hunting and camping. Some Inuit indeed maintain a rather negative view of urban spaces in the Arctic, identifying them as places where non-indigenous people have overshadowed Inuit practices and values. Many Inuit believe that living off the land creates a moral and intelligent person, whereby individuals cultivate the capacity to reason through and problem solve how to deal with the elements of snow, wind, ice and sea. An urban existence, on the other hand, has the potential to offer a new foundation for identity building, where reflection, freedom and innovation are key elements (Schweitzer et al., 2014).

Greenland is part of the Kingdom of Denmark together with the Faroe Islands. Even though Greenland is part of the Kingdom of Denmark it is not part of the EU, as it withdrew from the union on February 1st in 1985, following a referendum in 1982. Greenland issues its own stamps, has its own national flag, and is part of the Danish exchange union and monetary institution. Greenland was granted home rule in 1979 and in June 2009 a bill of self-government was passed following a referendum on the question on November 25th, 2008. On June 21st, 2009, 30 years after the introduction of home rule a self-government was established (Greenland in Figures, 2016).

The Inuit of Greenland were, according to some scholars, a self-governing people prior to colonization. The social structure in Inuit society was provided by the extended family, who coordinated its members and made decisions about where to hunt and gather, and where to set up camp. The oldest male had the leadership of each group in his hand (Loukacheva, 2007). According to Loukacheva (2007) the Inuit lived in multiple small groups, where each group had individual camps consisting of interrelated extended families that would live by common agreement. The system of governance with the Inuit in Greenland was flexible and based on consensus and decisions were made through discussion.

Danish assertion of sovereignty over Greenland was stronger than that of Canada over Nunavut. A political system based on Western concepts of religion, property ownership and law were intended to replace the existing Inuit social order and was backed implicitly by the Danish authorities. The instructions of 1782 established rules for codes of behavior and wages for
Danish merchants and Inuit, divided Greenland’s population into social categories, set off heavy penalties for “corrupting” the Inuit with things that might jeopardize their health and livelihood, such as alcohol. Marriages between Europeans and “pure” Greenlanders where prohibited, and Greenland was closed to outsiders by permitting only the King’s officials to have contact with Greenlanders (Loukacheva, 2007).

The 1782 document gave the impression that the Danish wanted to keep the Inuit away from the corrupting influences of the Europeans. The Inuit had to follow a code of behavior, and heavy penalties were imposed for providing the Inuit with alcohol and/or other things that might be bad for their health and livelihood (Loukacheva, 2007). According to Loukacheva (2007) the government of Denmark presumed that protecting Greenland from outsiders and exploiting the resources of the island for themselves would result in profits that would cover administrative and business expenses. This policy of making an “Arctic colony a Garden of Eden” where happiness would come through paternal rule and isolation, made Greenlanders both dependent on Danish guidance and would protect Greenlanders from outside influences. The strategy was to keep Greenlanders as junior Danish partners and to civilize them, without committing extra money to enhance their living conditions or pushing for any development of the Inuit population (Loukacheva, 2007).

Language is arguably one of the most important aspects of human culture and a vital factor for the survival of culture. Not only does language contribute to the preservation of memories; it is a tool for communicating information, and articulates a world view (Schweitzer et al., 2014) According to Loukacheva (2007) in the nineteenth century the spread of liberal ideas in Denmark resulted in a reorganization of communities in Greenland. The Greenlandic language was standardized in 1871, and the gap between an uneducated hunter and a literate Inuit minority (the future elite) increased social stratification. In the second part of the nineteenth century the administration of Greenland was rationalized by the creation of local administrative bodies, the Boards of Guardians which served the function of municipal councils. To accommodate the Greenlanders’ social conditions, Danish legislation was frequently updated. One important change was undertaken by the separation of administration and trade, and by the creation for the first time of two provincial councils in 1911 of Southern and Northern Greenland, with Greenlanders’ exclusive participation. Greenland’s upper class founded a nationalist movement in 1910 with the motto “forward and upward” and referring to Greenlanders as a nation (Loukacheva, 2007).
3. Background

3.1 The concept of education

Education is sometimes defined as contributing to the development of human capital, a non-neutral promotion of values, languages, history, skills and ways of behaving and thinking. This may also be regarded as a formalized process by which nations perpetuate their beliefs and values from one generation to the next (Arctic Human Development Report, 2004). According to Johansson, Paci and Hovdenak (2004) at times education is an arena in which different social groups struggle for influence, often in subtle ways. In the circumpolar north, access to education can be an important indicator of human development and the content of education is equally important; that is, how well it fulfills the needs of the locals (Johansson et al., 2004).

Education is a powerful tool for change according to Ukala and Agabi (2017). It is the heart of the matter of every society, for meaningful growth and development. Education is a vehicle for fostering cohesion, peaceful coexistence and natural growth. Education is the process of transmitting or obtaining general knowledge, developing the powers of judgment and reasoning, and preparing the student intellectually for mature life (Ukala & Agabi, 2017).

The diverse validation and understanding of different forms of learning reveals the complex nature of learning and education as core human activities. The understanding of education as a specific field of action draws attention to the limits that emerge around different forms of knowledge and the roles played by the various agents or participants who are engaged collectively and individually in knowledge relations. Education systems reinforce and draw upon boundaries of lesser or greater strength necessary to designate and preserve the kinds of practices, knowledge, narratives, skills, identities and characteristics considered essential for the ongoing survival and development of a particular social group. These boundaries are crucial for maintaining the legitimacy of particular forms of knowledge and of the pedagogical practices and social agents, whether these are religious leaders, Elders, professors, teachers or authorities designated to transmit or share this knowledge in accordance with historical and cultural practices that characterize any given society (Wotherspoon, 2015).

According to Guthrie and Callahan (2016) the liberal arts are skills or subjects considered essential for a free person to be actively involved in civic life. The
Latin interpretation of the word *liberal* means “worthy of a free person”. Liberal art allows individuals to be free and to follow those liberating experiences with learning. Because of the changes in societal needs and the demands of the modern world, there will be new challenges for liberal arts curricula. It is through a liberal arts curriculum, that students realize the possibilities of human potential (Guthrie & Callahan, 2016).

According to Wotherspoon (2015) the curriculum is also subject to processes of preference likely to favor the interests of dominant social classes. Similarly to other fields, education incorporates standards and practices at least partially determined by the capacity of the best positioned social groups to influence what is taught and how it is taught. According to Wotherspoon (2015) students who enter the education system without cultural, social and fiscal resources that would allow them to unlock the code and meet the obvious demands set by the field are likely to encounter cumulative barriers to their advancement through the system.

According to Ingvar Sigurgeirsson (2013) there are many different teaching methods, they differ in nature and can be implemented in many ways, and when a teacher chooses a teaching method, he/she should bear in mind three things: That the chosen method is well suited to their own goals; that the teacher pays attention to natural diversity so that teaching becomes interesting and challenges the students in a variety of ways; and, thirdly, the teacher should keep in mind that the methodology chosen best fits his work and personality.

According to Wotherspoon (2015), the field of education has distinct significance in contemporary societies, not so much for the knowledge conveyed by the curriculum, although certain forms of cultural capital are important to curricular success, and curricula can be differentiated so that access to some types of knowledge is restricted to select learners. The main significance is that credentials have become a primary guideline for entry into many professions and occupations as well as other valued opportunities in contemporary societies.

It is a relatively new idea that societies can be improved by direct human action. According to Latchem (2014), this concept owes much to the early 19th century social theorists who held that advances in science, technology and social organization inevitably lead to improvement in the human condition, and to the post-modernist and Marxist belief in the need for the constant disturbance of social conditions and the power of groups and individuals with the aid of technology, knowledge and experimentation to reshape their societies. Over the past 200 years such thinking has certainly made life better for countless millions. Nevertheless, 85.4% of the world’s population live in
developing countries where millions of children (more than half of them girls) still miss out on even the most basic schooling, and nearly a billion people are still incapable of writing their own names or reading a book (Latchem, 2014).

### 3.2 Education in Greenland

Greenland ceased to be a Danish colony in 1953 and became a territory within the Kingdom of Denmark. Thereby the inhabitants of Greenland were granted equal rights with the rest of Denmark, including access to education. The Greenlandic education system had to be changed to conform to the Danish model. The transformation required more resources than Greenlandic society could provide, therefore a considerable amount of teaching materials and a large number of teachers were transferred from Denmark to Greenland. In the seventies, out of the 800 teachers needed in Greenland only 200 could speak Greenlandic (Wenche & Wiborg, 2008).

According to Wenche and Wiborg (2008), in 1970s centralization of the Greenlandic school system posed a significant threat to Greenlandic settlement life and many of the young people had to leave their home settlements to attend boarding school. After the introduction of Home Rule, efforts were made to support the settlement schools and as a result cultural and social aspects of the Greenlandic society were protected. One of the first political actions of Home Rule was a new school statute, the language of instruction was to be Greenlandic, and the school subjects adjusted to the needs of Greenlandic society (Wenche & Wiborg, 2008).

One of the major challenges for the Greenlandic government, according to the Greenlandic Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Church (2015), is recruiting educated teachers in all schools in Greenland. Therefore, it is necessary to develop other options and find alternative solutions in order to meet the need for the best possible education for all children in Greenland. Municipalities are responsible for their local elementary schools, so it is in the interest of the Greenlandic government to fulfil the goals and visions for the elementary school in close cooperation with the relevant municipalities. In addition, the Greenlandic government will support well-targeted local measures such as tuition fees and suggested planning (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research & Church, 2015).

In the Greenlandic annual work plan for the school year of 2016 to 2017 the Government will pursue three main priorities and activities in the education sector: An evaluation of the teacher training program to ensure it is up-to-date and adapted to the Elementary School Act. Also, the teacher training program
must actively participate in, and be informed about, developments within the elementary schools so that the teacher training program can focus on current issues in today’s elementary schools. Likewise, an education program for principals must be created to strengthen their organizational, administrative and teaching skills. Last but not least, the limited infrastructure and scattered population in Greenland presents a challenge. For example, being able to recruit teachers for longer periods at settlements in elementary schools can be difficult, and students who have to move away from their homes to cities for further education can have problems. Hence the Greenlandic Government’s attempts to increase focus on how distance learning can contribute to a higher level of education, especially, but not limited to, high school and elementary school (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research & Church, 2016).

The modern lower secondary and primary school system has just about 8,000 students in 87 schools along the 4,700-kilometer habitable coastline, from Siorapaluk and Qaanaaq in the North to Narsaq Kujalleq and Nanortalik in the south, and to Ittoqqortoormiit in the East. The Greenlandic Ministry of Education statistics from 2017 show that 40% of the children that complete primary and lower secondary schooling, do not directly continue further schooling (Lennert, 2018). According to Lennert (2018) the presumption is that if Greenlandic students want to continue studying after primary and lower secondary school, they need to have a working knowledge of both Danish and English. There is one university in Greenland Ilisimatusarfik which offers 11 university degrees. Although there is a university in Greenland many Greenlandic students obtain undergraduate and graduate degrees in Denmark, where the tuition is free (Lennert, 2018).

The Greenlandic language has a fundamentally different organization and structure from the Indo-European family of languages. Linguistic developments in Greenlandic are constantly going on, where foreign words are partly incorporated, and in order to describe modern situations or things, new Greenlandic words are created. It remains a challenge to translate Danish academic, administrative and technical or legal texts into Greenlandic, and often those translations are difficult for the Greenlandic population to understand (Christensen & Hendriksen, 2014).

In the 2014 Arctic Yearbook, Christensen and Hendriksen (2014) discuss how most Greenlanders with a higher or vocational education are more or less bilingual in Danish and Greenlandic, and many are fully bilingual, especially those with a higher education. Within this group of Greenlanders, there are people who do not speak Greenlandic at all for different reasons. Nevertheless, a large part of the population of Greenland masters the Danish language only
at basic level or at conversational level, and many Greenlanders do not learn Danish at all. (Christensen & Hendriksen, 2014).

According to Johansson, Paci and Hovdenak (2004) education in the Arctic displays certain common characteristics. It involves fewer urban centers, but mostly small populations in remote communities and it is regionalized. The norm is cultural diversity and the erosion of small languages, and investments in education vary as do the costs. However, when comparing education across the Arctic, we must consider some major differences. According to Johansson et al., (2004) it is necessary to consider, for example, a comparison of systems of post-secondary education. For example, Canada has no independent universities in the North unlike other Arctic Council member countries, but comparisons in education systems must also take infrastructure into account. In the different communities’ populations vary, sometimes to the order of tens or hundreds. Is it possible for small communities to have the same quality of education as larger units and could the education quality even be better in the smaller communities? (Johannsson et al., 2004).

3.2.1 Greenland’s education system

In Greenland, elementary school is the most important focus area, for it is the foundation for all further education. Children must have achieved the competencies necessary for their future education by the time they leave elementary school. It is the parents’ responsibility to make sure that children have the best conditions for learning, a stable and secure environment where they have the required support to act on any opportunities that will carry them forward in their life (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research & Church, 2015).

The formal education system in Greenland resembles that of Denmark and many other western countries; similarly to the Nordic welfare states it is financed through general taxes. The linkages between the different parts of the Greenlandic education system are illustrated in Table 1. Students seeking education not offered at Greenlandic education institutions can obtain that education in foreign countries with study grants from the Greenlandic government. Education in all of the Nordic countries is free of access to Greenlanders. It is most common for Greenlanders to study in Denmark, when studying abroad (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research & Church, 2018).
The pre-school covers all establishments providing pedagogical offers for children 0-6 years of age, until the child goes to elementary school. From the age of 0-2 years of age the child enrolls in early childhood care, and from the age of 3-6 the child can enroll in day-care institutions, day-care for children with special needs is also included. In Greenland the majority of the preschools are publicly funded. The municipalities have the responsibility to provide pre-school services and elementary schooling. Elementary school starts when the child is 6 years old and is obligatory until the 10th grade. The elementary school is divided into three stages: the primary stage from year 1-3, then intermediate stage from year 4-7 and, finally, secondary stage from year 8-10. In general, English is taught from grade 4 in elementary schools, whereas Danish and Greenlandic are taught from grade 1. However, in the municipalities of Sermersooq and Qeqqata, English is taught from grade 1 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Church, 2018).
Primary and lower secondary schools in Greenland have three levels, for the youngest pupils a three-year level, for the middle group a four-year level and for the oldest pupils a three-year level. All children in Greenland are entitled to ten years of compulsory education and to attend school from the age of six to sixteen years of age. The children are tested at the end of the first two levels, to see if they have learned what they need to and also to give the teachers an opportunity to adjust their teaching accordingly. Final assessments are conducted at the third level, and a graduation document is issued (Norden.org. n.d.).

According to Lennert (2018), Greenland’s educational system, as in many other countries, is characterized by a multi-level decentralized governance system. This administration has contributed to the fact that more stakeholders and more decision-makers have become involved in primary and lower secondary schools. Having many layers of administration like this, makes the relationships complex. For example, responsibility is shared between decision makers across the governance system for primary and lower secondary school. The main challenge in multi-level systems of this kind, is the question of who will maintain the responsibility for steering and oversight (Lennert, 2018).

Investment in education is investing in human resources. The government of Greenland has, therefore, selected a few focus areas within the education sector. The Greenlandic government primarily focuses on the development of areas based on Greenlandic values. These values, which the Government wishes to apply to the entire educational sector, are motivation, sustainability, diversity and personal and mutual responsibility. The government of Greenland believes that the education system must accommodate and include all citizens in Greenland and should therefore cultivate diversity and support those who need help. The Greenlandic government believes that Greenlanders must strengthen the enterprise of our innovative, resourceful and creative youth and through this contribute further to the development of Greenlandic society (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research & Church, 2015).

In 1721 Danish colonization of Greenland began with the conversion and baptism of the population and the establishment of a Danish mission. Some schoolteachers were missionaries and Danish catechists in the early period of colonization who, because of poor linguistic abilities and insufficient local education, were not productive in serving the needs of the population. Hence a teacher’s college was established in Ilinniarfissuaq in 1845 to educate Greenlanders to become teachers. The School Act was published in 1905, the Teacher College grew, and some young Greenlanders were sent to Denmark for further education (Olsen, n.d.).
According to Olsen (n.d.) the Danish language was presented as a school subject in Greenland in 1928. Prominent Greenlanders began to work toward the ending of Greenland’s colonial status in the 1930s. By this time there was desire for increased and improved academic performance in the educational system, and the schools of the period did not promote significant changes regarding either the training of the teachers or the schools. In 1953, with changes to the Danish constitution, Greenland became equal to Denmark with the content of education and schools being progressively shaped in line with Danish standards. Teachers and administrators from Denmark were hired to implement the changes. The Greenlandic School Act of 1967 was almost identical to the public-school law in Denmark. The Danish law concerning a teacher’s education was applied to Ilinniarfissuaq in 1964, with a few adjustments to fit the needs of Greenlandic society. A temporary two-year teacher training program was established in 1973, to accommodate the public schools’ need to train Greenlandic teachers. This structure maintained legal status until the end of the seventies (Olsen, n.d.).

According to Hirshberg and Petrov (2014), self-determination in education is internationally recognized as a human right. Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration regarding the rights of indigenous people states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning” (UN DRIP, 2007, p.7). In Greenland, the effort to attain self-governance coincided with the move from colony to home rule; nevertheless, educational reform efforts in Greenland still faced resistance from many within the country and in Denmark (Hirshberg & Petrov, 2014).

Greenland Education Program II is the focal point of education policy in Greenland. Education is a central issue in accomplishing the long-term goals of the government of Greenland. The program was adopted by the parliament, Inatsisartut in March 2006 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Church, 2016). One of the main priorities in 2016 is that the Greenlandic government will continue to emphasize initiatives to improve elementary schools. This means a follow-up of the external evaluation of the elementary school system. Also, the Greenlandic government seeks extended focus on how distance learning can in fact contribute to a higher level of education. Furthermore, the Greenlandic government welcomes the new education programs and initiatives within the training sector and vocational education and the higher education sector (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Church, 2016).
According to the education strategy of the government of Greenland; the greatest resource of a country is its people; therefore, it is important for both the individual and society that everyone is offered educational opportunities. The Greenlandic government works hard to ensure that a multitude of students complete their education, in order to enable them to better support their family and themselves. One of the pathways toward Greenland’s common goal of becoming an independent nation is enabling more people to be eligible for education. The best way to achieve this is by involving stakeholders and through collaboration across ministries (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research & Church, 2015).

One of the major challenges facing the Greenlandic government when it comes to the elementary-school system is recruiting educated teachers for all schools in Greenland, particularly in settlements, where relative isolation and extreme remoteness is a challenge to the teacher. Only 50% of the teachers in settlements were fully qualified in the year 2013; this proportion increased, however, between 2013 and 2016, but then it dropped slightly in 2017. In the larger towns, educated teachers have a good chance of obtaining permanent employment, therefore they tend not to take up employment in the outlying settlements. The challenge of recruiting and keeping teachers in their jobs becomes more difficult, as a large number of existing teachers will retire in the near future and fewer new teachers are expected to graduate in the coming years. Thus the Greenlandic government needs to focus on finding alternative solutions in order to provide the best possible education for all children in Greenland (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research & Church, 2018).

The teacher education program at Greenland’s University (Ilinniarfissuaq) has the largest number of students in higher education in Greenland, with an annual intake of 66 new students during the past six years. The program is shaped by a college tradition and has a long history, focusing on general education and development of the students. The university underwent an evaluation regarding the teacher education program which showed that in 2016 the program had a number of serious quality issues and did not meet the need for qualified teachers in primary schools in Greenland (The Danish Evaluation Institute, 2016).

According to the Danish evaluation report (2016) many graduates were not sufficiently equipped to function in the primary school. Too many students did not achieve a high academic level in their main subjects, there also was a low-grade average at the final examinations and a relatively high number of students either gained a low grade or failed, although there were students that achieved good grades. Secondly, students did not gain sufficient skills to handle the different tasks attached to the profession of primary school teacher.
Thirdly, too many of the graduates had chosen Greenlandic with a practical or creative subject; often those combinations of main subjects did not correspond to the needs of the primary schools (The Danish Evaluation Institute, 2016).

According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research & Church in Greenland (2015) primary schools must prepare the children personally and academically for embarking on a program of youth education. The basis of the children’s development and learning is their strength and so their strength must therefore be developed. The primary school should include the children regardless of their background and the school should be able to accommodate the children in all their diversity. Regardless of social background, all children should have the competencies which are required to continue in the educational system. The aim of the Greenlandic government is to promote an elementary school that offers activities in line with the needs and qualifications of all children and where the staff are qualified to take care of children in relation to their physical, cultural, mental and social development. This way the school is supposed to develop a connection to the community and its well-being. Children and people with disabilities would also have the same rights and their needs should be met with special educational offers. At the same time, there must be a focus on developmental opportunities and inclusiveness for the strong students of the elementary school (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research & Church, 2015).

3.3 Formal and informal education

Informal learning has been defined as skills, development and learning people acquire in relations with friends and family and in the school of life. Formal learning is generally considered to occur within educational institutions, where the objectives of the study are measurable and predefined, with the teacher leading a process and the study concluding with a recognition, or a particular degree (Kolbrún P. Pálsdóttir, 2016) People’s learning throughout their lifespan is mostly informal, occurring in their community, work settings and their families and much of what they learn is by means of non-formal learning. UNESCO (1997) defines non-formal learning as sustained and organized educational activities that do not exactly correspond to the definition of formal education, much like informal education these may have different durations and may or may not confer certification. Formal education alone cannot respond to the challenges of modern society but requires support by non-formal educational practices; non-formal education serves as the standard partner in the lifelong process and needs to be accessible to all. These two forms of learning, non-formal education and informal
learning provide the basis for an enduring and critically important attitude; that is, the desire to go on learning (Latchem, 2014).

According to Melnic and Botez (2014) people’s life experience has a formative effect on the development of human beings, how people act, feel and think. Imported contribution resides in how people improve and learn through the educational procedure, both in informal and formal settings. According to Wotherspoon (2015) the processes of contemporary social life and dramatic changes in their nature, as well as rapid innovations in the development of new information technologies are transforming how we relate to and think about diverse forms of knowledge systems and learning. The expansion of contemporary education makes way for a staggering array of alternative arrangements and institutional forms, while formal credential-based learning comes to be complemented by extensive involvement in informal learning activities as people prepare to engage in community activities, jobs, family life and other less structured tasks.

According to Wotherspoon (2015) terms associated with informal learning draw attention to the tremendous scope of learning related activities in which humans are involved within and well beyond a formal education environment. It is generally differentiated from non-formal learning, which typically refers to more planned or organized learning that occurs outside of formal education systems and does not result in recognized credentials. In some cases, informal learning is distinguished from less clearly delineated types of learning that take place through haphazard situations or socialization, in order to draw attention to focused learning situations guided by deliberate personal efforts or mentorship (Wotherspoon, 2015).

According to Wotherspoon (2015) informal learning is referred to mostly in relation to lifelong educational activities and adult learning that extend past credential acquisition because of the prominent place that schooling or formal learning has come to occupy in the experiences of youth and childhood in most contemporary societies. Students learn social skills and receive essential information well beyond the curriculum during regular classroom interactions, while they count on skills and knowledge gained outside school, such as those acquired through community activities or a home computer, to meet many curricular demands. Formal education remains the standard against which other forms of learning are evaluated, but the relationships among these learning forms are changing in significant ways (Wotherspoon, 2015).

According to Manolescu, Florea and Arustei (2018), different forms of education, formal and informal, for example, have different distributed weight, from one country to another, often because of multiple decision-making
influences, and in most cases financial influences. Comprehensive vision should guide education processes, education needs to exist in order to be effective. According to Wotherspoon (2015) educational institutions are also modifying their practices and internal procedures, to offer more inclusive and flexible learning and teaching environments to accommodate students from various backgrounds. The focus on knowledge-related practices and alternative learning models contributes to improved options for success and educational engagement among indigenous people and their communities.

Woodhouse (2011) states that one way to comprehend teaching is to think of it as a process of storytelling about the subjects we teach, and about ourselves as professors. On the other hand, teachers offer a narrative about our own lives in the hope that our passion and interests will reach out to students and empower them to become engaged learners. Teachers tell stories about the subject matter itself, the reason for its importance, the questions it poses of reality and social relations, the way in which it has developed, the problems it may help resolve, and our own struggle to learn and teach it. Woodhouse (2011) also talks about how storytelling could well be one form of informal teaching, both inside and outside the classroom, where we empower children to tell stories about themselves and their problems, and in the process they may recognize the value of their lives as human beings in relation to others.

3.3.1 Informal education among indigenous communities

“Cultural values and identities remain the benchmark for national identity, cohesion, patriotism and harmonious coexistence in any society”
(Ukala, Catherine Chinyere & Agabi, Ogar G, 2017 p.17).

Informal learning activities attracting most attention among indigenous communities have in most cases been related to capacity development and cultural learning. Given the need for community revitalization and resilience, this is not surprising. It particularly applies to locales requiring substantial improvements in social, physical and economic conditions or in which members of the population do not have social resources that would enable them to take advantage of opportunities that do exist (Wotherspoon, 2015).

Indigenous communities in many nations and regions are undertaking a wide range of initiatives to encourage participants to sustain and rebuild their communities, integrate local knowledge and capabilities with skills, aptitudes and information vital to improving practices and outcomes in core areas like social welfare, health status, entrepreneurship and leadership (Wotherspoon,
According to Wotherspoon (2015) informal learning has been significant for maintaining and developing connections across generations with key aspects of indigenous heritage, including cultural practices, language, spirituality, and knowledge related to resources and the land. Informal learning practices foster mentorship and related communication and social skills and contribute to a sense of self-worth, confidence, and other essential bases of individual and cultural identities (Wotherspoon, 2015).

Indigenous peoples across much of the Circumpolar North had common experiences within education systems based on “Western” ways of learning, teaching and knowledge and operating with the intent of assimilation. Across the North and elsewhere, such as Hawaii and New Zealand, indigenous peoples have been working to create indigenous controlled education systems based on indigenous worldviews and epistemologies rather than on Western forms of schooling imposed on them for the past century or longer. In some circumpolar regions western education systems are being replaced entirely, while in other circumpolar regions these efforts are happening alongside the dominant Western education system (Hirshberg & Petrov, 2014).

In the North many indigenous communities are moving toward creating educational models within the formal school system that are based on traditional ways of learning and teaching. The effectiveness of education, formal or not, is an investment in human capital. This investment and its final outcome are knowledge production and transfer that ensures the prosperity and livelihoods of Arctic communities. Recent studies indicate that in the Arctic human capital is less related to formal levels of schooling than it is in the south, and formal education is not a sole source of human capital (Hirshberg & Petrov, 2014).

According to Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005), natural phenomena are best understood by indigenous students if they are cast first in indigenous terms to which they can relate. This might be the best way to bring significance to indigenous settings. As a good example, when choosing a spot along a river for placing a fishing net, you can explain the indigenous way of understanding by choosing a certain spot, by pointing out the movement of debris, the current and sediment in the water, the condition of the river bank, the likely path of the fish, the impact of the passing boat, upstream conditions affecting water levels, and so on. Once the student understands the significance of the knowledge being presented you can explain the choosing of the spot in Western terms, such as resistance, flow, velocity, sonar readings and tide tables. By doing this you illustrate how traditional understanding adds to modern explanation and vice versa. Learning could begin with what the community and the student know already and have learned in everyday life. Students might become more
motivated to learn when the subject matter is presented in a way that reflects a worldview that the students are familiar with and is based on something useful to the livelihood of their community (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005).

In the 1950s and 1960s the population of the Arctic increased rapidly as the natural resources of the north were utilized systematically and health care improved. Population growth has slowed down during the past decades and the inhabitants are of more varied origin. A diverse population creates the need for diverse religion, education, cultural education and international health care. Immigrants with their different professional backgrounds should be seen as an opportunity to support the Arctic region as many aspects of the current situation relate to demography. For example means of communication, scarce population, lack of available teachers and small student groups provide a challenge for education (Määttä & Uusiautti, 2019).

Määttä and Uusiautti (2019) discuss how the Arctic is a special area because of its conditions and history and this has affected local educational solutions. Thus, teaching is moving from Arctic information to Arctic pedagogy in the Arctic regions. Arctic pedagogy means a new kind of realization of teaching and learning, transcending the aforementioned boundaries and using opportunities offered by new technologies and social media. The aim of Artic pedagogy is to engage learners of different ages in regional, local and global cooperation and life-wide, lifelong learning regardless of whether it happens at work, school or in the third age (Määttä & Uusiautti, 2019).

According to Christensen and Hendriksen (2014), Greenlandic has been prioritized over the last decades as the main language in the public-school system and Danish has, therefore, become the first foreign language. This has strengthened the young people’s Greenlandic skills, although some young Greenlanders find it difficult to write and read Greenlandic. The language has also made young people vulnerable in terms of societal communication, particularly in relation to further education. When young people reach secondary schools most of the teaching is conducted in Danish, and also it is very demanding to learn English as a third language. The personal and social challenges faced by many in the continuing unequal context have a bearing on the level of education, as does the challenge of learning in a second language and in a foreign system. This means that a large group of parents do not have the skills to support their children’s education (Christensen & Hendriksen, 2014).

Furthermore, Christensen and Hendriksen (2014) point out how the combination of social and human challenges, for example the language barrier, has restricted social mobility in the community. It is also noticeable that social
mobility in major towns is modest, although mobility among young people from the smaller villages and towns is more prevalent. With limited mobility the gap between the communities is maintained and/or even deepened both in relation to mutual understanding and frame of reference and in economic terms. This means that the societal gap deepens, and it becomes harder for the elite, consisting of educated immigrants, mainly Danish and strongly bilingual Greenlanders, to understand the living conditions and therefore the frame of reference for much of the population (Christensen & Hendriksen, 2014).

3.3.2 Indigenous education

Learning about your past, you build pride. Being proud of your past, you gain faith. Without faith, there is no hope. And without hope, there is nothing.


According to the 11th Article of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (2007, p. 6), indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize and practice their customs and cultural traditions. This includes the right to protect, maintain and develop the present, past and future manifestations of their cultures, such as historical sites, archaeological and historical artefacts, designs, sites, technologies, ceremonies and performing arts and literature.

According to Ukala and Agabi (2017), indigenous education is the type of education which emphasizes teaching children from an early age knowledge delivered from one generation to another through oral tradition. This indigenous knowledge is preserved in the traditions and language evident in ceremonies, games, storytelling, parables, dances and songs, among other things. These methods of sharing knowledge are used explicitly through watching and imitating the elders. Essentially, indigenous education is part of life and not separated from the social culture but embedded in the culture of the people. Culture is a collection of shared beliefs, customs, values, attributes that set the people apart from other groups and determine their way of life (Ukala & Agabi, 2017).

The integration of indigenous culture in education is an important aspect to Arctic indigenous peoples located within the educational system. During the past decades, the level of integration has changed markedly, and it also differs from one country to another. In Greenland for example, the Greenlandic language has been taught in schools, some of the teachers or teachers’ aides have been Greenlanders, and subjects have been taught in Greenlandic. Most Greenland Inuit are, therefore, being taught Greenlandic history and culture,
even though less than half of Greenland Inuit think what they were taught was accurate (Rønning & Wiborg, 2008).

The Greenlanders, unlike other indigenous peoples around the Arctic, constitute the majority of Greenland’s population. In addition, Greenlanders have full legal decision-making powers in many areas, including education. Thus, education in Greenland is unique for a postcolonial society in its context, perspectives and policies. The content of education not only affects the opportunities for change and development in society but also the educational situation. Challenges in Greenlandic education are the same as those facing other indigenous peoples in the Arctic, namely, the pressure for better results and increasing the level of education among the population (Lennert, 2018).

According to Rønning and Wiborg (2008) in both Alaska and Chukotka, the number of indigenous teachers or teachers’ aids in elementary or high school classes has increased over the lifetime of the oldest residents. Indigenous language coursework and instruction in indigenous history and culture has also increased. According to King and Schielmann (2004) it is imperative to promote and support the survival and the use of indigenous languages in indigenous education, as a fundamental element in indigenous identities and cultures, since language helps shape specific ways of interpreting the world and of thinking. The knowledge and the cultural values of a community, society or group are embedded in their language and transmitted internally through this medium (King & Schielmann, 2004).

When looking at what the indigenous peoples were taught, about two thirds of the Alaska Inuit and about a third of Chukotka indigenous peoples thought that what they were taught about indigenous history and culture was reasonably accurate. The integration of indigenous culture in Arctic education systems has been improving, although there is still a long way to go, especially regarding the accuracy of meeting the Inuit standards about information regarding their own history and culture (Rønning & Wiborg, 2008).

According to Jacob, Cheng and Porter (2015, p.3), education is deeply tied to formal schooling, but it is also a process that extends far past the schoolroom door. The term “indigenous education” is defined as the process and path whereby individuals gain meaning and knowledge from their indigenous heritages. Indigenous education involves knowledge obtained, generated and adapted to fit the needs and contexts of indigenous peoples and transmitted through education methods to others. It is communitarian and communal, and as it is shared and reshaped across geography and generations it gains potency. Rather than looking at education as a one-time event or a series of set-aside time periods over a course of years, we look at education as a life-long process.
Indigenous education is a physical, mental as well as spiritual learning process; it transcends and embodies both the spiritual world as well as the world of the present. (Jacob et al., 2015).

According to King and Schielmann (2004), involvement and participation of indigenous elders as speakers of the indigenous language and holders of the traditional knowledge is an important aspect. Participation is a fundamental foundation to ensure that the educational demands of indigenous peoples are heard. Therefore, attempts should be made to have advocates of indigenous communities involved in decision making, for example on school boards (King & Schielmann, 2004).

In the earlier literature on indigenous education, which was mostly written from a non-indigenous perspective, the tendency was to bring to the native peoples the appurtenances of a western scientific worldview. Latterly, there was scant literature that embraced how to help western educators and scientists to understand native ways of knowing and their worldviews, as constituting knowledge systems in their own right. There was even less information on what it means for participants when such different systems coexist in the same organization, community or person. Maybe native people need to understand western society, but not at the price of what they know already and the way they have come to know it. Also, non-native people need to recognize the coexistence of knowledge systems and multiple worldviews and find ways to relate and understand to the world in varied perspectives and its multiple dimensions (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005).

According to Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005), indigenous peoples have their own way of relating to and looking at each other, the world and the universe. Indigenous people have constructed their traditional education processes around adapting modes of natural materials, observing natural procedure, obtaining sustenance from the animal world and plants, and using natural materials to make their implements and tools. All of this was made understandable through observation and demonstration followed by reflective stories in which the lessons were incorporated. However, indigenous approaches to education and views of the world have been jeopardized by institutionalized forms of cultural transmission and western social structures (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005).

According to Dentzau (2018) both Western science and indigenous traditional knowledge are ways of knowing the world. Western science, however, with its origin in the late renaissance, strictly believes that systematically studying the natural environment will generate the only true knowledge. According to Western beliefs, indigenous knowledge is in general thought to be imprecise
and lacking quantitative clarity (Dentzau, W. Michael, 2018). King and Schielmann (2004) feel it is important that indigenous community members, elders and parents be involved in establishing what their children should learn in indigenous education. The practice used by indigenous parents at home; teaching their children how to prepare food, keep house, go hunting for example, might be incorporated in the school.

King and Schielmann (2004) point out how combining traditional knowledge and practice with curriculum subjects in a culturally sensitive manner strengthens the connection between the school and the community and might, therefore, provide a basis for the community’s further essential development. Not including traditional learning modes in the classroom might result in inactive learners, out of tune with the teaching methods supported in school (King & Schielmann, 2004).

According to Johansson, Paci and Hovdenak (2004), before contact with outsiders was established, traditional indigenous education existed, and will continue to exist as part of indigenous mixed economies, cultural practices and traditional systems such as food systems. An important consideration is how indigenous perspectives are permeating Northern education, as part of more general policy and as a starting point for school curricula. Northern education has certain common characteristics: it involves mostly small populations in remote communities; and has few urban centers; it is regionalized; there is a cultural diversity; and elimination of small languages is common in those populations. School administrators and teachers may have different expectations than indigenous communities which may undermine local capacity and education can be thought of in terms of local capacity. It is crucial that the educational goals of the schools reflect those of the community. Inuit students can learn biology by studying a seal, but they can also learn biology by preparing the seal and eating it (Johansson et al., 2004).

According to Johansson, Paci and Hovdenak (2004), indigenous peoples throughout the world have for millennia sustained their unique knowledge systems and worldviews, even while undergoing major social upheavals because of transformative forces beyond their control. Many of the beliefs, values and practices associated with those worldviews have managed to survive and are now beginning to be recognized as being just as valid for the present generation as they were for those of the past. Indigenous knowledge, rooted in the long inhabitation of specific place, can offer lessons that can benefit both scientists and educators (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005).

According to Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005), indigenous peoples are involved in the annual cycle of subsistence activities and by doing these they
engage in a form of science. They know and have studied a great deal about
the local fauna and flora, they have their own versions and classifications for
physics, meteorology, earth science, chemistry, botany, astronomy,
pharmacology, psychology, and know their sacred inner world. Indigenous
societies have long sought to understand the regularities in the world around
them, as a matter of survival, doing so by recognizing that nature is underlain
with many unseen patterns of order.

As stated by Barnhardt & Kawagley (2005), efforts are under way to reconnect
education to a sense of one’s place and heritage. New approaches have begun
to arise, contributing to our understanding of the relationship between formal
education in Western society and those associated with indigenous ways of
knowing. The challenge now is to construct a system of education for all
people that respects the pedagogical and the epistemological foundations
provided by Western cultural traditions as well as indigenous traditions. Even
though the examples used in Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) are mainly from
the Alaska Native context, their intention should illustrate the issues that
emerge in any indigenous context where efforts are under-way to reconnect
education to a sense of cultural practices, place and manifestation (Barnhardt
& Kawagley, 2005).

As described by Barnhardt (2019), native elders in every cultural region in
Alaska, have for the past 10 years sought to reconnect with their cultural
traditions. With support from a variety of initiatives, the aim is to clarify their
expectations of what the upbringing of their children and grandchildren should
be like. Cultural values originating from Alaska Native Elders from each of the
cultural regions were written up to serve as core values by which the students,
community members and school staff where expected to engage with one
another and in light of those values educational practices were to be
implemented; respect for nature, unity, respect for others, honoring the
ancestors, cooperation and peace. Once adopted and identified by native
communities, these universal values provide a good basis on which to construct
an educational system, both relevant to all students, and applicable to native
students (Barnhardt, 2019).

Indigenous individuals, especially children, have the right to all forms and
levels of state education without discrimination. With regard to indigenous
peoples, states shall, when possible take effective measures in order for
indigenous individuals, especially children, including those living outside their
communities, to have access to an education in their own culture and language.
Indigenous peoples have the right to the diversity and dignity of their
traditions, culture, aspirations and histories which shall be appropriately
reflected in education and public information (UN DRIP, 2007, p.7).
Recognition of the autonomy and rights of indigenous peoples and of the social and educational conditions which frequently undermine these rights, began to gain momentum as the actions of indigenous leaders parallel with a series of growing challenges against centralized government power, scientific authority and other core institutions and principals associated with modernity in the latter half of the twentieth century. The emergence of serious environmental, social and political problems and the breakdown of many social and political boundaries that once seemed invincible began to reveal the limited capacity dominating institutional structures appeared to have to address new complexities and risks unfolding within a rapidly changing world order (Wotherspoon, 2015, p. 87).
4. Setting the scene

4.1 Qeqertarsuaq/ Disko Island

Greenland’s newest and largest island, Disko Island, located on the west coast of Greenland, combines interior icecap, unexpected flora, several warm springs, rock formations and a galloping glacier. There are only two permanent habitations on Disko Island; apart from Qeqertarsuaq there is tiny Kangerluk 30km to the northwest. Disko Island measures 120km from north to south and the same from east to west and it is an uncompromising and vast wilderness (O’Carroll & Elliot, 2005).

Photo 1 Qeqertarsuaq

I was able to get funding from Norðurþing’s youth and cultural committee, the trade union in Húsvík and from the Teacher’s Association of Iceland. I used the research funds allocated to me to stay for 2 days in Ilulissat and for 6 days in Qeqertarsuaq where I was able to visit the Qeqertarsuaq Atuarfia School, the town hall and the retirement home. Qeqertarsuaq being a small town, with approximately 887 inhabitants (in 2017), I was able to conduct data, both in informal interviews with locals, formal interviews with staff and students at Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School, and also by observations. I flew to Ilulissat in Western Greenland. From Ilulissat I took the ferry to Qeqertarsuaq where I stayed for six days. A “ferry” in Greenland is usually a small boat that takes about 15 passengers, and no cars. The roads in Qeqertarsuaq are not too bad; however, transportation between settlements and cities in Greenland is limited. There are no railways and relatively few roads between settlements, the best
way to reach settlements is by helicopter, plane or by boat when the sea is ice-free.

It takes about 2 hours and 15 min to sail from the mainland to Disko Island, and a rough sailing journey across the bay is not a fun ride. But even on a gloomy day the huge icebergs along the way take your breath away and make you forget for a little while about the bumpy ride and for one minute you realize how very small you are. As you get closer to the island and you see the rock formations and the glaciers surrounding the island, the bad sailing conditions become a distant memory. Sailing into the cove towards the harbor of Qeqertarsuaq, looking at all the welcoming colorful houses, realizing how small the town is. You can almost feel the tranquility of the town and have this peculiar feeling that you might have gone back in time.

Whaling has been of great importance to the town, and whaling, sealing and fishing remain the main trades in Qeqertarsuaq. Today, Qeqertarsuaq has a great amount to offer within tourism, including snowmobiles, dog sledding and hiking trips. In the summertime there are dog sled rides on the Lyngmarksfjeldet Mountain and the Lyngmarksbræen glacier where the tourist can stay a night in a hut, and the glacier can also be reached by a few hours of hiking from Qeqertarsuaq. There is a relatively well-established system of roads in the town. Three primary roads connect the various parts of town, although the system of roads is in need of maintenance. There are no pavements in Qeqertarsuaq, so pedestrians have to use the paths and roads between the houses (Qaasuitsup Municipality/Qeqertarsuaq, 2017).

On the outskirts of the town, most large areas are used for infrastructure and technical supply plants. The airfield in Qeqertarsuaq is a heliport located on Black Sands beach east of town, used several times a week during the winter. Air Greenland services the town, providing connections to Aasiaat or Ilulissat. A post office, a municipal office, a school, a sports hall and the church are all located in the central town area. There is a supermarket, tourist office, a travel agency, police station, a hotel Disko with restaurant Arthur and even several hostels and a camping site in Qeqertarsuaq. The school library also functions as the town library. The Arctic station is operated by the University of Copenhagen and is located east of town. The station teaches geology, biology and geography as well as scientific Arctic research (Qaasuitsup Municipality/Qeqertarsuaq, 2017).

According to Qaasuitsup Municipality/Qeqertarsuaq (2017), field studies are carried out by the Arctic station throughout Disko Bay. The station is visited by master’s students, scientists and students from all over the world as well as Greenlandic course participants. The town is also home to an ionosphere
station and a magnetic observation station. The sports hall was built in the late 1980s and offers a wide range of sports, and a soccer field is located at Black Sands beach east of town. Generally speaking, according to Qaasuitsup Municipality (2017) Qeqertarsuaq has a very active leisure and cultural life, and offers many outdoor activities such as running, hiking, riding, skiing, dog sledding, sealing, fishing and whaling. But there is a lack of playgrounds and actual leisure facilities.

![Photo 2. The field house for the students.](image)

The Danish name for Qeqertarsuaq was Godhavn, and it simply means “good harbor”. Because of the protected waters of the bay, European whalers settled in Qeqertarsuaq in 1773, long before the formal trading post was established. Trading thrived, and the town remained the most substantial community north of Nuuk until 1950 (O’Carroll & Elliot, 2005). According to O’Carroll and Elliot (2005), the town flourished over the years; fishing and hunting were the primary sources of income, a shrimp factory was built, and at one point the population reached over 1,000. However, as other Disko Bay communities began to flourish, Qeqertarsuaq quickly sank into its present laborious position. Today fishing and hunting is still one of the primary sources of income for the local people (O’Carroll & Elliot, 2005).

Qeqertsuup Atuarfia School had 117 students in the 2017 school year, and they range from the age of six up to sixteen years old. Nineteen teachers work at the school, a principal who also teaches some of the classes and two other staff members. The Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School was built in 1928/29 and teaching began on the 3rd of November 1929, so the school is celebrating its 89th anniversary in 2018. Surprisingly, there are no Danish teachers working at the school. All the staff members at the Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School are
Greenlandic, therefore the official language at the school is Greenlandic. It was quite unexpected, to witness the local language being used in both teaching and in everyday interactions.

Photo 3. Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School

The Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School follows the Danish education system, being under the Danish crown and under Danish laws. For this reason, the timetable at the school is in Danish, but the syllabus was all in Greenlandic which has been the official language of the Greenlandic autonomous territory since 2009. The school does not work according to any specific discipline model but focuses on teaching children respect. Respect for their school, respect for each other, their teacher and their fellow students, their parents and to respect their nature. Each class makes a class treaty where they put down their rules and then everybody in that class must sign the treaty.

Photo 4. Paintings on one of the school walls.
5. Method

5.1 Qualitative case study

This qualitative research addresses how education in Greenland is associated with the community and its cultural heritage. Are indigenous skills used in Greenlandic schools alongside the formal school system? As such, it is considered within the category of social research. The scientific approach to the study of educational problems is through educational research. In most cases researchers’ aim is to gain insight into an issue they do not understand and to find solutions to problems. Educational research is the way in which people gain useful and dependable information. Qualitative research is a suitable format for this study which reviews certain cases within one primary school through the use of interviews to explore how informal and formal education takes place, particularly with regard to teaching methods. (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010).

According to Creswell (2014), when conducting a study, the custom is to engage in a distinct set of six steps. The first step is identifying the research problem. Then the researcher needs to review the literature and specify a purpose for research. Next, it is time to collect the data the researcher will be working with, then analyze and render the data and finally report and evaluate the research (Creswell, 2014). In qualitative research, the researcher seeks to understand a phenomenon by focusing on the overall picture, but not breaking it down into variables. The goal of qualitative research is the whole picture and depth of understanding in preference to a numeric analysis of data (Ary et al., 2010).

The researcher needs to look at what people are doing and how they feel and think, and he/she must try to understand their reality. Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in many ways, but both qualitative and quantitative research requires us to obtain permission to start our study. The principal at Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School informed all the participants about the study, but no formal permissions were requested. (Creswell, 2014, p. 227). Creswell (2014) discusses observation and how it is the process of gathering firsthand open-ended information by observing people and places at the research site. The researcher was granted the opportunity to observe students and teachers at the school by monitoring three lessons over a two-day period. Also, the researcher talked to the townspeople and visited elders at the retirement home to ask about the life in the old days and their heritage (op. cit., p. 235, 236).
Researchers working with a case study may concentrate on an activity, event or program involving individuals rather than a group. Also, when the case study is used to research a group, the researcher is more focused on identifying shared patterns of behavior in the group. According to Creswell (2014, p. 493) a case study aims at looking closely into an event, activity, individuals or a process, on the basis of extensive data collection. With a case study, the researcher collects multiple forms of data, seeking to develop an in-depth understanding of the case that he/she is researching. Case studies use multiple methods, such as observation, interviews and archives when gathering data. Psychology and education researchers have used case studies widely (Ary et al., 2010).

For this research, a case study format was chosen because the researcher wanted to discover whether education in Qeqertarsuaq was associated with the community and cultural heritage and whether the school had any indigenous education. For these purposes, data collection was needed Not knowing anything about the site and the people who live there, and with little connection to the site in the beginning, the researcher decided to focus on interviews and observations. Observations were used as a method to plan the questionnaire and to prepare the researcher for the interviews as she was not at her home site. The researcher wanted to become familiar with the site and get to know the local people, their culture and tradition. In this chapter we become acquainted with the participants, and how data was collected. The interviews with participants were semi structured and the questions, presented in the Appendix, were prepared in advance.

5.2 Participants

The participants were schoolchildren, teachers and the principal at the Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia primary school in Qeqertarsuaq Greenland. Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School was chosen because of the twin town connection between Qeqertarsuaq and Húsvík, where the author of this paper lives. With help from Norðurþing’s youth and cultural committee the researcher was able to contact the principal at the school who made all arrangements for the researcher’s visit. The Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia primary school was also chosen in the hope that the researcher would be able to establish a working connection between the teachers at the two primary schools, and hopefully this visit to Qeqertarsuaq will bring the two sister towns closer together.

Six interviews were conducted, three of which were with the school’s staff and three with students. Participant A is the principal of the school who has held that post for two years. Participant B is an educated teacher who has taught at
the school for almost two decades and mostly teaches 8th to 10th grade. Participant C is an educated teacher who has taught at the school for 15 years. Participant C mostly teaches 4th and 5th grades. Interviews were conducted with three students’ from 10th grade. The teachers interviewed in this study were selected because they were able to speak to the researcher in English. The students interviewed in this study, were selected with help from the principal; those students were the only ones who took interest in the research and felt they could have an interview with the researcher in English.

Before the interviews took place, the study was introduced to participants (Enclosure 1) and their informed and written consent was obtained (Enclosure 2). In this way, participants were given information about the research and the importance of their involvement in the subject. The attendees were also informed that they could terminate their involvement at any time whilst the study was in process. Issues likely to arise are, whether you will disrupt the groups or individuals at the site, you might find yourself unwelcome, and you may cause permanent changes by your presence. Therefore, researchers need to be careful not to be rude or act inappropriately. The participants’ confidentiality is of utmost importance in any study (Creswell, 2014). The researcher chose to conduct interviews so the participants could convey, to the best of their ability, their personal information about the subject. In this manner the researcher hopes to acquire useful information about the participants and their opinions on the subject. The researcher attempted to keep an open mind regarding different views and to remain unbiased, respecting the residents of the island and the participants of this study. At the end of the study, all research data was deleted.

5.3 The interviews

The interviews were between 8 and 25 minutes long. They were recorded using a high-quality voice recording device. The interviewer also made additional recordings on his smart phone, just in case. The questions were open-ended, and the interviewer tried to maintain an easy going dynamic. First the interviewer asked the participants to tell her a little about themselves; name, how old and whether the participant was born in Qeqertarsuaq. Then the interviews turned to the school and the staff, how many teachers and students at the school. Also, questions were asked as to whether the school had any indigenous education alongside formal education. The interviews were conducted in English and translated from English to Greenlandic and vice versa with help from one of the teachers at the school. The teacher showed the students the questionnaire and then explained the consent paper to each student.
before they decided to participate. The students seemed comfortable with the teacher helping them to translate and the interviews were casual and laid back.

When conducting the interviews, the researcher ensured that the environment was relaxed and calm and that the interviews themselves were informal conversations. According to McMillan (2004), when establishing relationships, it is best for the researcher to maintain an honest, friendly and relaxed demeanor, remaining comparatively neutral; and not worry too much about collecting extensive information until after the initial introductory period, when a relationship has been established. McMillan (2004) also points out that when a researcher participates in daily activities, trust improves. This can enhance the level of conversations and give confidence to participants to speak openly about their views. The researcher did her best to participate in daily activities; for example the school staff invited the researcher to a dance, which featured only Greenlandic dances.

The interviews were all conducted at the school in a quiet empty room, so the interviewees experienced themselves being on home ground. The interviews all aimed to provide an insight into the work done with the children. The researcher also got to sit in on three lessons, the three days she spent at the school, providing the researcher with the opportunity to watch the students in class and note how they interacted with their teacher.

Being an outsider, it was important to have studied available data, from such sources as school curricula, main curricula for elementary schools and the school’s website, in order to prepare the interview frame. Ary et al., (2010) state that by examining the data, you can obtain a fuller picture of the schoolwork, get ideas, clarifications and acquire a better understanding of the subject. In the study, all the interviews were recorded and then transcribed verbatim by the investigator at the end of each interview. According to Ary et al., (2010), the format of qualitative research is generally such that data analysis is performed during data collection or when this is completed; nevertheless, it is common for data collection and processing to be interlinked and affect each other.

5.4 Data analysis and interpretation

According to McMillan (2004), it requires thorough understanding to analyze qualitative data, so that the researcher can make sense of text and images to form answers to his research questions. The data collected in this thesis was collected by recorded interviews and the researcher had to transcribe the completed audiotape recordings into a text file. Preparation of data for
analysis requires the researcher to organize a vast amount of information. This is done by transferring the information from written or spoken words to a typed file and then making decisions about whether to analyze the data by computer or hand (McMillan, 2004).

In this thesis, after the researcher had transcribed the recorded interviews, she chose to analyze the qualitative data by hand. According to Creswell (2014), “the hand analysis of qualitative data means that the researchers read the data, mark it by hand, and divide it into parts” (p. 263). Hand analyzing may be preferred too when one is analyzing a small database, and the researcher can easily keep track of files. In the case of this study, the interviewer preferred to be close to the data, and to have a hand on feel for the data without the intrusion of a computer (Creswell, 2014).

When back home in Iceland, the researcher listened to the tapes and began the process of analysis and converting the audiotape recordings. After reading the data several times, the researcher started layering the themes of the research with the questions from the interviews in mind and also with the research question in mind. Layering themes focuses on the idea of minor and major themes but when organizing the themes into layers the researcher continues from basic elementary themes to more sophisticated ones (Creswell, 2014).

In the results chapter a direct quote from the interviewees will be used which increases the validity and reliability of the study. The information provided by the interviewees does not have a generalized application, but solely reflects the participants’ perspective of the subject.

5.5 Ethics

According to Creswell (2014), the researcher seeks an in-depth description of a phenomenon when gathering data for a qualitative project. Often participants may be asked to discuss private details from their life experiences. As a researcher, it is essential to focus on applying correct procedures and avoiding mistakes. Therefore, it is important to work professionally, for example by informing the participants about the purpose of the study, staying away from deceptive practices, being respectful toward the research site, reciprocity, sharing information with the participants (which includes telling them about your role as a researcher), maintaining confidentiality, using ethical interview practices, collaborating with participants and maintaining confidentiality.
Confidentiality to participants was fundamental, as the study was conducted in one particular school located on a small island, and there were only few participants. All participants received a letter in the enclosures section. This was done to maintain anonymity and confidentiality to the participants. At the time of this study, no one but the researcher had access to the data, all of which was deleted by the end of the research.

5.6 Limitations

The disadvantage of this study is that it includes only one local school in Greenland and is, therefore, a small sample. And since the principal chose the interviewees on the basis of their English-speaking skills, the researcher only had access to the views of those few who knew English. Thus, the study might have overlooked a variety of experiences and opinions on different subjects from different areas. However, in qualitative research, the intent is not to generalize to a population, but rather to develop an accurate exploration of a central phenomenon. (Creswell, 2014).
6. Findings

The following section summarizes the main findings of the study. The main focus was to see whether education in Greenland is associated with the community and its cultural heritage and whether the skills of indigenous peoples are used in teaching at the Qeqertarsuup primary school.

There are three sections in chapter six containing the main themes from the interviews. The first section in chapter six is about the school and its teachers, how long the interviewee has worked as a teacher and whether and how the school adjusts the activities of the school to fit the needs of all students. Section two focuses on informal education and informal teaching, and how the students feel about their school. What do the teachers think of informal education, do they in fact know what informal education is and would they include informal education in their classroom if they had the opportunity?

6.1 The school and the teachers

There are nineteen teachers in the Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School in Qeqertarsuaq. In all there are 22 persons that work at the primary school including the nineteen teachers, the principal, the office manager and the janitor. All of the staff are native Greenlanders, so the main language spoken at the school is Innu, the language of Greenlanders. There are no Danish born teachers at the school. The schoolwork is built upon the Danish education system and follows the Danish curricula, although the school has its own school curricula like every other school in Greenland. There were 177 students registered at the school in the academic year 2017, yet classes are very small, with an average of only ten to twelve students per class. The Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School is very well equipped with laptops that students and teachers can use in class and while teaching, but many of the desktop computers are getting old. According to participant B:

We can use some of the computers to go on the internet, and for example skype. But lot of the table computers are old, and don’t work very well. But we have many computers for children to use [pointing at the laptops]

Participant C talks about how the internet is not very good, it is in fact very bad, there is internet but sometimes it doesn’t work:

The internet is slow, very slow. So, we are waiting and waiting and waiting. Because the computers we have here
it is very old. I said to principal if I am millionaire, I will
give apple for all the children. Because it is not good, we
have here.

When participant C was asked whether she would be willing to have her class
make a connection with a class in Húsavík, so the students could get to know
each other and make friends. Participant C said:

We can try, maybe – maybe it will work. Maybe it will be
better to write a letter in English and send it in the mail.

Therefore, use of computers in learning and teaching is not common at
Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School.

The teachers participating in the research were asked about students’ different
needs, and whether the school tried to adapt the environment at the school
according to the students’ needs. Two out of three thought the school was
doing a good job and one participant only talked about what the school was
doing for the children that need help with reading. According to participant A
the school makes sure that everybody is taken care of:

We have one child with autism and one child with Down
syndrome. And we have two special teachers that work
with the two children.

Participant C is sometimes happy with what the school is doing for children
with special needs. According to participant C:

I think the school is doing good for the children who has
difficult to read. We help them, we try to help them. If we
cannot we ask another teacher to help, and the student go
to others. And in the end the student comes back to class.

The school tries to make sure that everybody is taken care of. If a student is
having a hard time working in the classroom, the teacher can invite the student
to go into a quiet room and work there, with help from another teacher, before
returning to class again. According to participant B, four teachers work with
children who have special needs, maybe with reading, or just not being able to
sit in a classroom full of students.

Also, the school is planning to change all the chairs and tables for the students,
in order to make the environment more comfortable for the students to work
and study in. According to the principal, they have made it their mission to
upgrade one classroom every year. The school has a good, but small group of
teachers and staff and while visiting the school the researcher found the atmosphere to be very positive. You feel at home instantly, both within the school and also just walking about in town, you feel very welcome.

6.2 Indigenous education within the formal school system

Most of the residents in Qeqertarsuaq have boats and go fishing. According to participant B, fishing is family time for a lot of people in Qeqertarsuaq and both children and adults go out on a Sunday and catch fish for their home. This family time is part of informal education in a way, as children learn from their parents how to fish and how to process the fish when caught. Qeqertarsuaq was a big fishing community, with a fish factory and there used to be a shrimp factory on the island, whale hunting was also a big factor. But now the shrimp factory has closed and only a few of the fishermen go whale hunting. Hunting the land mammal is an important aspect of life among the people of the island, and young boys go hunting with their fathers and/or grandfathers, when the hunting season is at its highest peak; the Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School has always given the boys leave to go hunting on the mainland with their fathers and/or grandfathers. The people of Disko Island mainly hunt caribous, yak, seals and polar bears.

There is an informal education in the community of Qeqertarsuaq in the form of children learning from their parents or their grandparents. They are taught hunting skills and also about fishing. The Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School does not have any informal education in its curricula, and the school does not expect a parent or an elder to attend and share their knowledge about the old days or their indigenous heritage. But sometimes the teachers themselves have asked an elder to come and tell the children about the old days and about their indigenous heritage. According to Participant A:

Some twenty years ago we had some elders come to the school and tell the students about the old days, but then about ten years ago this stopped, I don’t know why this happened.

Sometimes, some of the teachers have an elder come to their class and tell the students about the old days. According to Participant C the teachers could (or the school) use the elders more as a way to inform the students, to come to the school and tell the students about the old days:
I think we could use them in that way to, to come and read for the students. Maybe next year, we were talking about it, but it has never succeeded yet. But sometimes we do invite the elders to come to the school and tell how it was many years ago, how they did live and something. I think it is a good way to get some information from elders.

Participant C: talked about a raw salmon fish and how she learned to put it on black berries, the raw salmon. How to make this pickled fish, she learned from her parents. Participant C is very happy that she learned how to do this, and she thinks it is important for every young person to learn this and other Greenlandic traditions from their parents, and according to Participant C they must learn it all:

There are many things we could talk about, like how to dry a fish we love dry fish with the fat from the seal. How to make this and the raw salmon with the berries and the leaves, I have learned from my parents, it is very important we have this for our future. And not to lose your heritage.

Participant C also talks about how she would like to see more outdoor education, and how all of the staff at the school love outdoor teaching and would like to do more of it. But sometimes it is problematic, for example “if we would take them out to go fishing, we must put on them rescue equipment and then it is allowed, but in private we all sail out and fish”.

Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School is very well equipped with cross country skis available to students. The winters in Greenland can be very harsh and if the weather is particularly bad children do not go outside. Participant B talks about how all the staff and students go outside together and cook over the fire on the day after the last day of the school year, to celebrate the end of school and the upcoming holiday. When asked about the attitude of the staff to outdoor education, participant B explains:

I think [teachers] like to go outside and do different kind of teaching. Our government used to say that ten grades should have, that they need to learn from start to the end with many different levels... where we have to teach them from the books. But the small classes, from 3rd grades, they use more outdoor or the nature, not the books. There is not so much outdoor education in grades seven to ten.

In a conversation with Participant A he told the researcher, that sometimes the school will offer boys who do not like or have trouble learning from books the opportunity to go outside instead and learn from nature and people in the
community. On one occasion Participant A had a hunter come to the school who took the chosen boys to show them the dog sled and the dogs and showed them how to harness the dogs to the sled etc. The hunter also showed them different tools to use when hunting. Talking to Participant B about what he called “impossible” boys she said:

I think those impossible boys normally have a special lesson. But first the teachers they have to write about a boy which is impossible, and then afterwards the head master he reads the notes and then he can maybe say, that [the boy] has to go a little bit out from the class, and have a hunter or fisherman come and…

According to Participant B the “impossible” boys in this concept, are boys who do not have the patience to sit for a long time and learn from the books. Participant B sometimes needs to write a letter to parents about the boys’ behavior, and then the teacher, principal and parents will meet up to talk about what is the best solution for the boy and what the school, teacher and parents can do to help.

Participant B would like to have more outdoor teaching, even just one class a day that would be outdoors, a class where the students were not learning from books. But there is not enough money to do this; if you want to have a hunter or a fisherman to come and show the kids some of their skills you always have to pay that person:

But it would be nice if we had a plan like that where the impossible students can be together and use nature or the other things outdoor.

Participant B talks about how often students simply do not like the books, and it helps those students to take them out and provide them with something practical to do, or as Participant B points out, “just sit down with them and talk with them”. Participant B has tried to break up the teaching and on one occasion when teaching the fourth grade, had an elder visit to tell the students about Christmas in the old times, and that worked very well. The teachers are doing their best to bring something new to the lessons and trying to have the community work more with them; to come to visit the school and the students, tell them stories or show them hunting skills. Participant A explains that some of the teachers bring their classes outside:

They go to the beach, and pick seaweed or they take the class to the mountains. This is always planned a week before. Unfortunately, the school commission press us [the
school and its teachers] that we have to learn only from books, not so much from outside, and that teachers should take care of the books. We as children, learn from our parents or the elders to pick the plants that we can eat and everything by the sea. Some teachers take the class out and pick plants and when they get back, they go to the kitchen and cook something. So, we are using a little bit from our old tradition.

Participant A talks about how the teachers at the school would like to have more indigenous teaching, but participant no 1 needs to talk to the teachers and the teacher needs to plan it ahead and give the syllabus to participant A, so participant A can see what all this means. But the Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School has had an outdoor education week for many years, where the three youngest classes go out for one week or do art. And Participant A would very much like to be able to bring a daily informal education program into the school:

Yes, I would. Because sometimes I think I miss the elders to come and tell us, no tell the children you can do it this way…. I miss it. The reason we are not doing this more is money, I think it is two things that are stopping us from doing this more, it is about money, we have no money in the school to do this, because if we want to have some person outside the school you have to pay them… and the teachers that want to plan the school year, they don’t think about some person outside the school… they don’t think about it.

Unfortunately, there is not enough money in the budget to include indigenous education. Participant A paid out of his own pocket for a hunter to come a few times to teach the boys about the dog sleds and hunting, two or three boys at a time and they would go out and shoot and fish, but of course he does not have the money to pay this hunter for many months. But also, in the case of Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School, the school administrators press the staff to teach mostly from the book, even though the participants in this study all expressed enthusiasm for having indigenous education within the formal education system.

Just like participant C talks about:

My dream for my school that we could have 50% the books when teaching and 50% where they [the students] learn from nature, or from grandparents and/or parents. We are
not using the elders to teach the children; we can use them more.

But participant C hopes that in the next few years more of the elders will come and visit the school so the students can have the opportunity to learn about their heritage and traditions. Participant A said there were two things that stopped the school from having more indigenous education. One was money, you always have to pay someone to come and the school does not have money do to that. And number two, when planning the school year, no one thinks about some person outside the school coming to teach or talk about the local heritage.

6.2.1. Indigenous Education: The Students’ perspective

One of the students admitted that he would like to have hunting as part of his education, as he would sometimes go with his father to hunt and liked it very much. A fifteen-year-old girl in 10th grade stated:

I would like to learn more without the books. I would like to be more in nature, with animals and learn more about the plants. And I like taking pictures, photos and I would like to be able to do more of that in the school.

Similarly, a fourteen-year old boy from the school said that he would like to:

Work more with my hands…. and not so much with books. I would like to have more classes where we are working with wood, like cutting out wood. And I would like to go with my father or grandfather and hunt, and that would be part of school.

The same boy remembered that when he was in 9th grade his class had to go out and work in the post office, the shop or the hospital for one week and he identified that as part of informal education. Furthermore, the school has physical activity outside when the weather is good, and all of the children in the 8th 9th and 10th grades go outside to do some exercises. And in the winter the children can use the cross-country skis and skates. Also, Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School, as most schools, has craft classes, where the students learn how to knit and build simple projects from wood, for example cutting boards etc.

According to the principal, Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School does try, with the limited amount of funding available, to focus somewhat on indigenous
education in its work. The principal’s dream is to have one special class at the school where the children only learn about hunting, and their history through the elders, parents and family; a class where both boys and girls would have those kinds of activities included in their education. Today, it seems to be more common that activities involving an indigenous focus are more directed towards boys, particularly those who the teachers identify as “impossible”.

6.3 Parental involvement in indigenous education

The Greenlandic government believes it is important for the future of Greenlandic children that parents take the responsibility to embrace their children’s learning. It is the parents’ obligation to ensure that their children have the necessary support for school activities at home and that children are ready to learn when they attend school. When the Greenlandic government finds that parents are experiencing difficulties fulfilling their responsibilities as parents, the government will make sure those families are provided with guidance and/or counselling and support at an early stage (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research & Church, 2015).

When asked about parental involvement, Participant A told the researcher that there is no involvement at all, or virtually none:

Sometimes we have one parent come here and work with class, maybe only for one or two hours for a whole year. So, there is no involvement. Even when we have our week of outdoor education they don’t come to help. I want them to come. We have talked about, uh, we have to have more cooperation. But when the students have finished with this week, they invite all parents to come to school and see what they have done.

As most other schools, Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School has a parents’ council. Participant A explained how every four years they elect three parents to fill this position, and that every month they have a meeting in his office and talk about what the school is doing and what will be happening in the next school year. It is only when you ask the parents to become more involved in the school that things get hard:

I want to have parents involved in the schoolwork, and we have talked about how we have to have more cooperation with our parents and teachers, so we can get the best education for our children…. For everybody. When we
invite parents into school and get them to talk about how you can help or help with the children, they never come.

In the 2016 school year, Participant A made three attempts to invite parents to the school for a parent/teacher meeting; the first time four or five people came, the next time only three and in the end only two came to the meeting. He discusses how many parents are interested in the school, but he just does not know why they don’t come:

But we have talked with these parents who work with me, and I have said we have… we must like … do not like a meeting but something else where we can get all parents to be involved, maybe on a Saturday afternoon we can have all parents in the school and all the children in the sport center and just some coffee and make it not so formal.

Participant A has the same problem with parental involvement as many other primary schools. He always wants parents to come and see what their children are doing at the school, but when the school has parent’s day only a few will come.

Participant C also talks about how there is next-to-nonparental involvement at the school. The teachers are doing their job at the school all alone and without with parental participation as they never come, and it is hard to persuade the parents to come to the school:

Sometimes, though, when we are doing characters or if we give the children character …. then they come. But not with food, sometimes in grade seven once a year they make some food … some Greenlandic food they will make with teacher, and then they invite parents and then they come, and they want to give some meat.

Participant C would also like to see parents more involved in the school — to come and assist her by reading books or telling the children stories about the old days, she would like to work with that. Participant C wants the parents to come more often to school because they never visit, it is always just the teachers that are working with the children.

Participant B explains how there is good parental involvement when the teachers need to communicate with parents about their child:

For example, if we have an impossible boy in the morning, we will ring the parents and the parents come here right away and we talk about the problem and the day after we
can see that… the student has been talking to his parents about the problem… we can feel it the day after.

When Participant B is asked whether the parents are involved in any of the education, whether they come to the school to read a book or to share their knowledge about indigenous heritage, the answer is no. But she mentions how it has not been hard for her to get the parents to come to the school when there is a meeting, and also when the students have to “show and tell” and if there is a school play, around Christmas or Easter, then it is easy to have parents come to the school.

The researcher also asked the three students about parental involvement, and all three of them did not want the parents to be involved too much in their school; all three explained how their parents/grandparents were involved in some way. One of the students wanted his parents to be more involved because the 10th grade is hard and there is a lot of schoolwork. This suggests that the students might want more help with their schoolwork at home, and that their parents should be more aware of what is going on in the school. However, they do not want them to attend the school, at least not when they themselves are on the school premises.

Even though the parents do not come to the school to participate in indigenous education, the students nevertheless receive this kind of education from their parents. One student tells the researcher how:

In the weekend, I normally go out in the nature with my father. Sometimes we go out on the boat and we go fishing, I like that a lot. To be in the nature with my father.

During the hunting season, the students bring a written letter from their parents, where the parents let the school know that the student is going hunting. The school always gives the student permission to take a leave to go hunting with their father and/or grandfather. Hunting is part of indigenous education for students where young people learn about their heritage from their parents and/or grandparents outside the school.

Another student goes hunting with his dad; they hunt out on the sea and also go to the mainland to hunt.

Now [in September] we go hunting for reindeer on the mainland, there are no reindeer on the island, and we gut and clean the deer before we bring it back home. And we also shoot some seal, but reindeer now. I like it a lot, to go hunting.
According to Johanson et al., (2004) the main location for indigenous education is not the schoolhouse. Indigenous peoples educate their children while embedded in communities and families, with cultural heritage (Johansson et al., 2004).
7. Discussion

The general aim of the Greenlandic Education Program is to contribute to a higher quality of life and standard of living of life through development of technical skills, better education and knowledge. In order to raise the education level of the population, the Greenlandic government seeks to establish a coherent and inclusive education system from pre-school to higher education (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research & Church, 2016, p.).

The aim of this research was to find out how the Greenlandic education system works, and whether education in Qeqertarsuup primary school was in any way associated with the community and cultural heritage. In the Arctic many indigenous communities are creating educational models within the formal school system, trying to connect the “two worlds” together, the informal education system being based on traditional ways of learning, within the formal educational system (Hirshberg & Petrov, 2014).

Based on the results, one can conclude that there is no indigenous education in the school itself, it is mostly conducted outside the school, parents and/ grandparents teaching their children old traditions and about their heritage at home. In this section, the result of the study will be presented in four sections that highlight its main themes.

One of the challenges that the Greenlandic government is facing is recruiting educated teachers in all schools in Greenland (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Church, 2015). In 2017 Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia Primary School had nineteen teachers working at the school, twenty-two employees altogether.

7.1 The School and the teachers

The teachers interviewed at the Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School talked about how they were doing their best to accommodate the needs of all students at the school. They are doing their best to work with the content they have been assigned although, for example, internet connections on the island and at the school are not at all exemplary. These very expensive, and most days it is impossible to use the internet for teaching at the school. There is not much indigenous education at the school, but there is that one week, where the younger grades have outdoor education and/or art classes for a whole week. The teachers at Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School are highly interested in informal education and the willingness to have more indigenous education is certainly there. But unfortunately, as applies to many other schools, there is not enough
funding and the school does not have the budget to offer more informal education, and even though the staff try to get someone from their community to come and share their knowledge about their indigenous heritage, the school always needs to pay that person. It is a sad development if the school cannot obtain sufficient financial support to have participants in the community teach the children about indigenous heritage.

According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Church (2015, p. 1-2) it is the community’s responsibility, through education, for example, to ensure that the foundation is strong and stable. The responsibility lies with parents and the community to ensure that children have the best possible conditions for learning, a secure and dependable environment where they have the essential support to pursue opportunities that will bring them forward in life.

7.2 Indigenous education within the formal school system

Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School follows the Danish curricula, and after talking to staff at the school their understanding becomes obvious that the Danish government wants the school to focus more on the books, that students learn from the books but not so much from indigenous education. This is more apparent in grades 8 to 10 – in those very classes where the principal would want to do more to support indigenous education within the formal school system, especially for all the boys that apparently do not want to learn from books. Nevertheless, the school has tried its best to provide activities that can be identified as indigenous education where the children learn from elders about their heritage, when the school has any extra money on its budget. The former principal even said that he paid from his own pocket, for a hunter to come to the school and teach the boys in the older classes, who had little interest in the books, how to go about hunting caribous.

Education is a life-long process rather than a series of set-aside time periods or one-time events over a course of years. Children, infants, young adults, youths and the elderly all play important roles in the indigenous education process. Generally, adults lead the indigenous education process, but from time to time children also take on this leadership, teaching their parents important lessons that they may have overlooked in their daily struggles. The base upon which all education systems exist, worldwide, has historical roots in multiplex indigenous people’s past. We all share aspects of culture, language and identity that help bind us together, whilst at the same time embracing differences (Jacob et al., 2015, p. 3).
The students interviewed were not sure what informal education is, but after a discussion with the researcher and with translation help from one of the teachers, the students understood what the term means. Two of the boys interviewed talked about how they would like to be able to go out and hunt with their father or grandfather; all of the students would like to have more teaching without the books, and learn from nature, work with their hands and not learn so much from books.

Indigenous education is a situation where individuals gain meaning and knowledge from their heritage. After talking to the teachers and students at Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School, it becomes evident that both teachers and students have gained knowledge and meaning from their heritage. Young boys go with their fathers and/or grandfathers to hunt, and from them learn the knowledge of hunting, and how to treat the dog sleds and the dogs. There is a saying that “it takes an entire community to raise a child”. Therefore, it is important that the educational goals of the school reflect the goals of the community. Perhaps the community in Qeqertarsuaq thinks that indigenous education does not need to take place in the school; this instruction should rather be in the hands of parents and/or grandparents. Schools prepare students for the skills needed to live a good life. Apart from formal schooling, traditional education systems continue to convey indigenous spiritual and cultural values (Johansson et al., 2004).

One of the teachers learned to prepare pickled fish from a family member. This was an old tradition passed down from an older family member to a young one. And two of the participants learned how to clean and dry hair from the musk ox and then knit sweaters and other warm clothing. Traditional indigenous knowledge has operated successfully over centuries to sustain populations as they interact with their natural surroundings (Dentzau, 2018).

Education is informal through the local community and through family contacts according to Rønning and Wiborg (2008). Thus education, both informal and formal, is not a neutral enterprise. Education concerns learning and developing languages, skills, values, information and knowledge meant to socialize people into becoming good citizens and also to contribute to personal development (Rønning & Wiborg, 2008).

### 7.3 Parental involvement in indigenous education

When assessing parental involvement in Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School, this appears to be in short supply at the school. The school has a parents’ council and every four years there is an election for a new council, where three parents
fill this position. Every month the council has a meeting with the principal, where they go over what the school is doing and what will be happening in the next school year. The council’s work is beneficial to the school, but when the Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School needs parents to become more involved things get harder, because it is hard to persuade parents to come and be more involved in the schoolwork. The principal wants increased cooperation between parents and teachers but when the school arranges a parent-teacher conference the parents do not come. The teachers also talk about the same problem with parent-teacher meetings, one of the teachers would like the parents to come and just see what the children have been doing during the winter, but when the school has a parent’s day only a few parents turn up.

The education strategy of the government of Greenland (2015) stipulates that it is a parental responsibility to ensure that the Greenlandic children have the best possible conditions for learning; that is, a stable and secure environment where the children have the necessary support to pursue opportunities which will help them in their life. Both teachers and parents must ensure that children in Greenland receive and utilize the greatest possible benefit from the fact that all children in Greenland have the opportunity to educate themselves and realize their dream. Teachers and parents together must inspire children in Greenland to gain an education and to develop the courage and desire to perfect their skills (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research & Church, 2015).

Support and participation of parents is important in primary education and early childhood care, not least when the indigenous language is spoken at home. As holders of traditional knowledge and speakers of the indigenous language, involvement and participation of indigenous elders is important. According to King and Schielmann (2014) a balance is important between non-formal and formal and between modern and traditional teaching methods in indigenous education. It is essential in indigenous education that parents, community members and elders are actively involved in determining what their young people should learn.

King and Schielmann (2014) talk about how parents teach their children at home, how to keep house clean and prepare food, for example. Those methods might be incorporated in the school. Combining traditional knowledge and practices with curriculum subjects in a pertinent manner strengthens the link between the school and the community. According to Wotherspoon (2015, p. 85) the boundaries implemented to differentiate forms of learning and knowledge in the field of education are shifting in contemporary societies, but these alterations encompass contradictory forces likely to undermine, as well as accommodate, ambition for social advancement among indigenous communities.
In Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School there is a positive parental involvement when the teachers need to communicate with the parents about their children. However, the school is having problems persuading the parents to come to a parent-teacher meeting. When there is a school play around Christmas or Easter, or the students have a show and tell day, the parents come to the school. When the researcher asked the three students about parental involvement, all three of them did not want the parents to be involved too much in their school, although one of the students wanted his parents to become more involved with his studies, because 10th grade is hard with demanding school work.

There is no parental involvement regarding indigenous education at Qeqertarsuup primary school. It is hard to persuade the parents and/or the grandparents, the elders, to come to the school and share knowledge about their indigenous heritage. Nevertheless, indigenous education does take place outside the school. The parents of students participating in this study take them hunting for reindeer and seal, as well as fishing, and teach them about nature.
7.4 Greenland education

According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Church (2016), the main focus in Greenland’s education is to ensure that teachers’ training programs are up to date, that teachers are actively participating in the training and also that they are well informed about developments in elementary schools. Therefore, it is necessary for the elementary schools to focus on current issues and it is of vital importance to concentrate on elementary schools for they are the foundations for further education. Also, it is important to be able to recruit teachers for a longer period in outlying settlements (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research & Church, 2016).

Greenland’s greatest resource is its people. Therefore it is essential, both for the individual and the society, that everyone is offered the opportunity for education, and the Greenlandic government is working hard to ensure that young people complete their education in order to improve their opportunities to support their family and themselves (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research & Church, 2015).

According to Lennert (2018), the lower secondary and primary schools in Greenland are a municipal responsibility. Unfortunately, neither the Ministry of Education nor the Agency for Education (a subdivision of the Ministry of Education) have any enforcement authority. The national parliament determines the governance and legal framework for the lower secondary and primary school, while the national government lays down the detailed provision. In each municipality, the municipal council determines by law the framework and goals for school activities. Each school has a school board that defines the principles for the organization of the school, albeit within the limits and goals set by the municipal council. This means that there is lack of connection in regard to educational reform in the Greenlandic education system. Even with the best of intentions, the multilevel governance structure seems to complicate the constructive steering and planning of the lower secondary and primary schools, perhaps because of insufficient clarity regarding tasks and roles, or simply due to lack of agreement (Lennert, 2018).

According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Church (2018), the elementary school system in Greenland needs improving so that the schools can prepare the students for further education. Thus the focus needs to be on increasing quality in the elementary schools in order to increase the percentage of children continuing into youth education. Furthermore, the budget on education needs to increase, so that the schools, not merely in the towns but also in the outlying settlements, can prepare their students for further education. For the year 2018, however, the total budget for education was
lower than the total amount spent in 2017. The teacher education program in Greenland also needs further development towards a modern profession-oriented teacher education with much better links to practice in the primary schools and emphasizing didactic skills, academic knowledge and professionally oriented competence among the students. The goal for the teacher education program should be to build an ambitious culture and resources to ensure that all students end up with relevant and strong skills, enabling them to become successful teachers (Ministry of Education, Culture & Church, 2018).
8. Conclusion

In this project, the investigator has discussed the education system in Greenland; formal, informal and indigenous education. The work of this study has given me a better insight into how Greenlandic education system works and whether education in Greenland is associated with the community and cultural heritage. The research has also increased my knowledge of Greenland, especially Qeqertarsuaq. When working on a task like this, there is never enough time and questions are endlessly added as the work progresses.

Attempts were made to follow the research questions and the purpose of the study was to dig deeper in order to gain a better understanding of the elementary school in Qeqertarsuaq and in what form it fosters indigenous education. The main objective of the research was to look at teaching methods in Greenland and how the Greenlandic education system works. Is education in Greenland associated with the community and cultural heritage, are skills of indigenous people in the Arctic used in teaching? Also, the investigator did her best to learn about the traditions and talk to the locals. All of the people on the island warmly welcomed the investigator and were willing to participate in the research and tell stories of their lives on the island. On behalf of the town council of Húsavík, the researcher visited the town council in Qeqertarsuaq and delivered a gift to the council in Qeqertarsuaq from the town council in Húsavík, with the hope of further cooperation between the two sister towns.

The researcher started teaching at preschool in Húsavík when working on this thesis, where the researcher has the oldest children in an outdoor class once a week. Here the children do all kinds of projects, cook outside, learn about the trees and/or about the flowers at our outdoor place, pick berries and mushrooms etc. They also get the opportunity to just be kids and climb the trees and play in nature. The researcher also started a project in collaboration with the museum in Húsavík, where the preschool children learn about the old days by visiting one of the old houses in town, where they make their own Christmas tree and read Christmas stories while learning about the house and how it was in the old days. Since coming back from Qeqertarsuaq, the researcher has kept in touch with the principal of Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School, wanting him to come for a visit to Húsavík, but unfortunately, he has moved to a different location. Thankfully, however, the researcher is now in contact with the new principal, cooperation is in progress, and hopefully a representative from Qeqertarsuup Atuarfia School will come for a visit to the primary school in Húsavík.

Informal education and learning, with elders teaching young people how to associate with nature and the biosphere in their home place, is well-known in
the Arctic. This is done in Greenland and this is also done in Iceland. We need to make sure that children connect with their surroundings, and that they learn about their heritage. If not in school, then from their parents and/or grandparents. Not learning from books can be enjoyable and challenging, adventurous and fun and it can help young people to learn through experience. Learning from nature, from our parents and grandparents, can help us appreciate and value our natural and cultural heritage. Education, be it informal or formal, can be regarded as a potent tool for influencing the long-term evolution of a nation by supporting and encouraging the physical, moral, mental and emotional development of children.

I hope this research will be an inspiration for those who work in primary schools and others that work with children. Furthermore, I hope that the project will motivate elementary school teachers to reflect upon their own attitude toward informal learning and that they can use this project to study different teaching methods with the aim of improving their work with children.
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Appendix 1: Teacher Interview Template English

English Template

School/ Staff:

- Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself?
- What is your status within the school?
- Which grades are you currently teaching?
- How long have you been a teacher?
- How many students are in the school?
- How many students are in your classroom?
- How does the school try to adapt the environment to the different needs of all?

Informal Education:

- What do you think the attitude of the staff is towards informal teaching?
- Can you tell me what kind of informal education classes the school has?
- How many informal education classes do students receive per week?
- Would you include daily informal education programs into your school program if you could? What kind of barriers prevent that from happening?
- What would you say the goals of your informal education program are for your students? For example, what do you want them to graduate with knowledge/experience of?

Parental Involvement:

- How do you define a good parental involvement?
- Are parents involved in informal education programs? If so, how are they involved?
• Is it hard to get parents to participate in schoolwork, for example on an open day like a parent/teacher meeting?
• Would you like to see more parental involvement or less involvement when it comes to informal education programs?
Appendix 2: Principal Interview Template English

English Template

School/ Staff:

- Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself?
- What is your status within the school?
- How long have you been a principal?
- How many teachers work at the school?
- How many students are in the school?
- How does the school try to adapt the environment to the different needs of all?

Informal Education:

- Does the school have informal teaching at the school?
- Can you tell me a little bit about that?
- Does the informal education program include any traditions from the indigenous Greenlanders? The Inuit’s!
- What do think the attitude of the staff is towards informal teaching?
- Can you tell me what kind of informal education classes the school has?
- How many informal education classes do students receive per week?
- Would you include daily informal education programs in your school program if you could? What kind of barriers prevent that from happening?
- What would you say the goals of your informal education program are for your students? For example, what do you want them to graduate with knowledge/experience of?
• What would you say the goals of your informal education program are for the school and its staff? For example, is there anything you would like to change in the informal education program?

**Parental Involvement:**

• How do you define a good parental involvement?

• Are parents involved in informal education programs? If so, how are they involved?

• Is it hard to get parents to participate in schoolwork, for example on an open day like a parent/teacher meeting?

• Would you like to see more parental involvement or less involvement when it comes to informal education programs?
Appendix 3: Student Interview Template English

English Template

**School/Student:**

- Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself?
- What class are you in?
- How many students are in your class?
- Do you always have the same teacher in your class? And do you always stay in the same classroom?
- Are you happy with your school? And your teachers?
- What is your favorite subject in school?

**Informal Education:**

- Do you know what informal education is?
- Do you think that your school has informal education classes?
- What are your favorite informal education classes at your school?
- Is there any special informal education that you would like to have at your school?
- Would you like to have more informal education classes in your school?

**Parental Involvement:**

- Are you parents involved in the informal education at your school?
- Are your grandparents involved in the education at your school?
• Would you like to have your parents/grandparents more involved in the education at your school?

• Do you think that the parents/grandparents should not be involved in the education programs at your school? If not, why not?
Enclosures

Enclosure 1

Introduction on Study

Between two Worlds

Traditional Teaching Methods or Unconventional Teaching Methods

Signed is a master’s student in elementary education at the University of Akureyri at the Faculty of Education School of Humanities and Social Sciences. My guide is Embla Eir Oddsdóttir.

Working on this thesis, one elementary school in Qeqertarsuaq Greenland will be visited, and it will be examined whether informal teaching takes place. One of the leading research questions will be answered.

“Is education in Greenland associated with the community and cultural heritage, are skills of indigenous peoples in the Arctic used in teaching?”

The aim of the project is, amongst other things, to further deepen the subject matter, look at different teaching methods in a Greenlandic elementary school, and see if we can develop a working relationship between the two sister schools in Qeqertarsuaq and Húsavík.

Data will be collected, and individual interviews will be taken from the staff, students, parents and elders who in some way participate in the work of the children. One interview will be scheduled for each participant and the duration of the interview will be 30 minutes. The interviews will then be copied and encrypted so that data cannot be traced to the relevant participants. The
school curricula and the National Curriculum Guide will also be discussed in order to gain a better picture of what teaching methods are used.

Only the investigator will have access to the data from the study, and the data will be deleted when the study has come to an end. By signing the letter below, I pledge to maintain confidentiality in the processing and storage of data and undertake their deletion after completion of the project and to maintain anonymity with regard to the participants of the study. If any questions arise, the investigator is ready to answer all questions.

Þórhildur Jónsdóttir
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Introduktion til studiet

_Mellem to verdener_

 Traditionelle undervisningsmetoder eller ukonventionelle undervisningsmetoder

Signed er en mastergradsstudent i grundskoleuddannelsen ved universitetet i Akureyri på Det Fakultet for Uddannelse, School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Min guide er Embla Eir Oddsdóttir. Arbejdet med denne afhandling vil blive besøgt en grundskole i Qeqertarsuaq Grønland, og det vil blive undersøgt, om uformel undervisning foregår. Et af de førende forskningsspørgsmål vil blive besvaret.

"_Hvordan kan vi overføre uformelle undervisningsmetoder fra Grønland til det islandske skolesystem?"_

Formålet med projektet er blandt andet at uddybe emnet, se, hvordan forskellige undervisningsmetoder anvendes i grunduddannelsen.

Indsamling af data, individuelle interviews vil blive taget fra de ansatte og forældre, der på en eller anden måde deltager i børns arbejde. Et interview vil blive mødt med hver interviewer, og interviews varighed vil være 30 minutter. Interviews vil derefter blive kopieret og krypteret, så data ikke kan spores til de relevante modtagere. Skoleplanerne og den nationale pensumvejledning vil også blive diskuteret for at få et bedre billede af, hvilke undervisningsmetoder der anvendes.

Kun efterforskeren har adgang til dataene i undersøgelsen, dataene vil blive slettet, når undersøgelsen er afsluttet. Ved at underskrive brevet nedenfor konfiderenter jeg mig i behandling og opbevaring af data og deres sletning efter projektets afslutning og anonymitet med deltagere i undersøgelsen.

Hvis der opstår spørgsmål, er efterforskeren klar til at besvaret alle spørgsmål.

Þórhildur Jónsdóttir. - Mobile: 894-5010 Email: hildajons@live.com
Enclosure 2

Date: _________________________

Informed consent

I confirm that I have read and understand the purpose of the research that will take place here and accept full participation. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason. I agree to take part in the above study.

I agree to the interview/consultation being audio recorded.

I agree to the interview/consultation being video recorded

I agree to the use of anonymized quotes in the publication

I agree that my data gathering in this study will be deleted after the study

_______________________________________
Name of Participant