

The Sound of Silence

In a century, the population of Greenland has almost quintupled. In 1901 there were approximately 12,000 people living in Greenland. As of 1 January 2012 there are 56,749 inhabitants in Greenland. This extreme population growth has given major challenges to the policy-making in Greenland.

The large majority of the population is born in Greenland, but about one tenth is from other countries, the vast majority comes from Denmark.

The affiliation to Denmark and migrants from Denmark has created a bilingual society. This again gives great challenges to particular the educational system, which uses a large proportion of Danish teachers, who does not master the Greenlandic language.

As everyone knows the identity and culture is deeply rooted in the language. I unfortunately do not speak the Greenlandic language. A significant difference between the Inuit and the immigrants from Denmark is not only the languages but also how the languages are used. An Inuit-friend told me once - where I as usual had talked much and long: *"It is different to be with you than with my kinsmen. They do not talk so much."*

That got under my skin! Since I have tried to learn to dare to participate in a conversation, where long pauses of silence leave room for a thought before speaking.

The photo shows a quiet summer day without many words in the Colonial harbour of Nuuk.



To men on a bench in the Colonial Harbour in Nuuk, August 2008