

Small settlements in decline

One of the main trends in the contemporary Greenland is the demographic decline of the small settlements.

The small settlements often have difficulty maintaining sufficient job opportunities for the population. Except a few jobs in the public sector the employment in the settlements is excessively dependent on traditional fishing and hunting.

The settlement Eqalugaarsuit is such an example. When the Greenland Home Rule was established in 1979 163 people were living in this small settlement in South Greenland. Today, the number of citizens is exact halved and the decline is expected to continue in the years to come.

The development is both a result of lack of employment opportunities and the phenomenon that local young Inuits get an education, and

they cannot use their education in their native settlements. It is a mega trend known from small settlements all over the world.

The women are first to leave the small settlements in Greenland. Perhaps Eqalugaarsuit one day will be abandoned –just as it has happened for many other small settlements around Qaqortoq through the ages. Many believe a significant part of the Inuit's culture and identity will disappear, when the small settlements are abandoned.

Eqalugaarsuit is isolated in a beautiful landscape on the west side of a large, desert island - and nevertheless located under an hour by boat from the largest town in South Greenland, Qaqortoq. Perhaps many houses in the settlement will be transformed into summer residences of citizens living and working in Qaqortoq?



The settlement Eqaugaarsuit, South Greenland, September 2015