

situation is the result of endemic challenges in the Greenlandic education system, compounded by, geographical, cultural and social factors (which are in particular challenging for the mental and emotional wellbeing of young students), resulting in high rates of early leaving as well as high percentages of drop-out from upper secondary education and training. Even though many of these manage to pass in their second or third attempt, graduation average age is close to 30, where valuable years have been lost. The educational system is also affected – especially at pre-school and primary/lower secondary level – by a shortage of qualified teachers and other staff.

In 2007, the GoG produced the first GEP, which outlined the challenges to the educational system and set quantitative targets notably for the recruitment of qualified staff (in day-care and primary/lower secondary institutions), percentages of children attending day-care, transition rates to upper secondary education and training, and reduction in drop-out rates. These quantitative targets have been accompanied by qualitative targets, notably for the provision of primary and lower secondary education. The GEP is evaluated annually and backed up by studies on selected issues. The GEP was updated in 2014, and the duration of this the current GEP II has been extended to 2024. It provides a coherent framework for the sustained cooperation between the EU and the GoG. The budget support period (2021-2027) thereby straddles the period covered by the present GEP II. A draft strategy for a new Greenlandic educational policy was elaborated in 2020⁴, recommending – among other things – that the period of compulsory schooling be lengthened to 12 years. However, during subsequent discussions in the parliament, it was decided not to implement this strategy in its entirety, but only to retain selected issues. In the meantime, following a snap election in April 2021, a new government was elected. The new Government of Greenland is currently reviewing the GEP and very keen to continue working with the Commission in the education sector and the Commission voiced strong support during recent exchanges. This renewed EU-Greenlandic education partnership programme (through the present action and successive ones expected over the period up to 2027 in the framework of the MIP) will contribute to achieving this political priority and inject new impetus in the reform efforts.

In addition to contributing to priorities of the Commission and of Greenland, particularly sustainable growth, human development and technology and innovation, this action primarily supports the achievement of SDG 4 ‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’. It also contributes to SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, and SDG 10 on reduced inequalities inequalities and to the consequent fulfilment of economic and social rights, and gender equality, in line with Denmark’s - and Greenland’s - human rights commitments. Education and training as well as digital accessibility are priority areas of EU-OCT cooperation in the proposed new DOAG 2021-2027.

Moreover, this action contributes to the EU Gender Action Plan III⁵ thematic areas “promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women” and “addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and digital transformation” among others.

Key stakeholders

The responsibility of implementation of the GEP lies with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Church, in close collaboration with other ministries and stakeholders. The Ministry of Finance is involved in all the stages of the implementation, and close links and mechanisms are in place to ensure coordination with all the implementing government departments. Additionally, the Ministry for Housing, Infrastructure and Gender Equality will be consulted to share their expertise and increase capacity to engage with the education sector to further Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.

The Ministry of Education has the overall responsibility for development and inspection of the entire Greenlandic educational sector, but the actual implementation of pre-school as well as primary and lower secondary education lies with the 5 Greenlandic municipalities. The Agency for Education (*Uddannelsesstyrelsen*) is an interface between the Ministry of Education and the municipalities. Since 2018, the municipalities are no longer represented by a coordinating committee, but define policies on an individual basis within the relevant legal framework. VET is carried out in self-owning institutions (*brancheskoler*), which each train for a specific sector of the economy. Vocational schools are headed by boards of governors that also have the responsibility for curriculum development. The majority of members are external, and consist of representatives of the social partners, notably *Grønlands Erhverv*

⁴ Naalakkersuisut: Et sammenhængende og fleksibelt uddannelsessystem, 2020

⁵ JOIN(2020) 17 final - EU Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025– An Ambitious Agenda For Gender Equality And Women’s Empowerment in EU External Action. [The Gender Action Plan III is supported through Presidency Conclusions by 24 Member States.](#)