

Press release

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The public sector in Greenland is taking an important step in the battle against bullying.

Close cooperation between the Mary Foundation, Save the Children and public entities in Greenland has paved the way for testing an adaptation of the programme "Free of Bullying". Eight selected schools and pre-schools on the arctic island are currently experimenting with the preliminary version of "Kammagiitta – Free of Bullying", which aims to prevent and combat bullying in Greenland's 90 preschools and 84 schools. Thanks to the LEGO Foundation acting as a financial partner, not only this initial pilot phase but also the project's continued expansion has been secured.

"The LEGO Foundation is about inspiring and developing children to become committed citizens. So it came natural to us to support a Greenlandic version of the anti-bullying programme "Free of Bullying". This is what the country's greatest resource, the children of Greenland, deserve," says Morten Aagaard, Director of the LEGO Foundation.

Danish-Greenlandic cooperation around "Kammagiitta – Free of Bullying" is comprehensive and pioneering. The Greenlandic mayors see the programme as a vital instrument in the endeavour to ensure a healthy preschool and school life, and of all central stakeholders involved, their backing is the most important. The Director of KANUKOKA (association of Greenland's four municipalities), Martha Labansen, is delighted with the profound commitment:

"I'm very pleased with the four mayors' support for the project. And I look forward to Greenlandic children benefitting from high-quality pedagogical tools over the coming years. This will enable them to grow up in secure children's environments and children's communities, that is, free of bullying," declares Martha Labansen.

"Important pieces have now fallen into place in a dynamic and constructive cooperation. Together we've created a project which matches really well with what we at the department and in municipal governments have been requesting in our ongoing work on 'the good school' and 'the good preschool' in order to strengthen children's communities in Greenland," adds Lise Lennert Olsen, Head of the Greenlandic Government Department of Culture, Education, Research and Church.

An important element is an evaluation, which is already busy following the project throughout its initial stage. *"The key to the project's success and sustainability is that the process is constantly monitored, documented and adjusted,"* explains Birgitte Hagemann Snabe, Director of the Mary Foundation. In Denmark, the Mary Foundation and Save the Children have achieved good results with their programme "Free of Bullying", which has thus far involved more than 70,000 children.

The steering committee behind "Kammagiitta – Free of Bullying" has just held a meeting in Ilulissat to discuss the project's further expansion.

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Background

In a report published in 2009, the Nuuk Department of Family Affairs and the Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI) together drew up a map of the wellbeing of 0-14-year-olds and their families in Greenland.

Some findings of this exercise are:

- Most children in Greenland aged 0-14 have good and normal lives, but a large minority – about a third of the children – experience serious difficulties.
- This large minority includes children who are teased and excluded by their peers, as well as children who are unhappy about going to school and about their life.
- 15% of responding adults find that their child is teased more than others of the same age, and 8% recount that their child is currently outside the community of peers. In addition, more than half the parents answer that their child is being teased or bullied by other children.