



Country report

THE STATUS OF GLOBAL EDUCATION IN DENMARK

The general impression is that there is an increasing interest among educational institutions in Denmark for global education. This is especially the case at the upper secondary schools where school partnerships and a global focus in the teaching are seen as a way of profiling the school and addressing global citizenship. However, though there seem to be a general agreement in the sector and across most of the political spectrum that globalization is a fact and that education for global citizenship as a consequence is of importance, there has been no national strategy formulated from the side of the Ministry of Education. So far the challenges and obstacles to a further strengthening of global education which have been identified in several reports have not been addressed on a national level. These challenges include lack of a national strategy, lack of support for collaborations with schools outside of Europe and generally a need for a financial and administrative framework to support the schools (addressed in the report “*The internationalization that disappeared*” published by The Council for Internationalization of the Educations under the Ministry of Education in 2010 – available in Danish only).

Active citizenship and a global perspective is part of the curriculum of the Danish upper secondary education (STX). Cf. the Preamble of Law of Upper Secondary Education chapter 1: Objective of the education §1, paragraph 5:

The education and school culture as a whole should prepare students for active participation, joint responsibility, rights and duties in a society based on freedom and democracy. Teaching and the entire daily life of the school must therefore build on freedom of mind, equality and democracy. Students should thereby acquire the prerequisites for active participation in a democratic society and an understanding of the possibilities for individually and collectively to contribute to development and change, and understanding of both the local as well as the European and the global perspective.

It is clear from this preamble that there is room within the curriculum to address global issues. But with relatively few directions from the Ministry of Education, the extent of it is determined by the interest of individual teachers

and by the degree to which it has been made part of the strategic focus of the individual school. Naturally, schools also tend to look to where the funding is and the main funding option for creating international relations and collaborations is the EU-funded Comenius program under the Erasmus Lifelong Learning program. As Comenius has so far been an exclusively European program, for many Danish schools *global education* in reality tends to be *European education* based on cultural exchanges with European partner schools and so it is often a European or Western world perspective rather than a global perspective that is being promoted.

There is no funding for global education initiatives available for schools from The Ministry of Education. However, the ministry does contribute to the UNESCO Associated Schools Project in Denmark with a significant part of the yearly budget of the network. UNESCO ASP Denmark has about 35 Danish schools involved in one of three different international projects: Baltic Sea Project, Transatlantic Slave Trade and World Heritage Education.

On the other hand, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Danida) has an awareness raising / global education pool of 25 million DKK per year which both NGOs and schools can apply for. As a result most global education initiatives are funded by Danida and carried out by Danish development NGOs which publish teaching materials about global issues. The supported teaching materials are collected on a Danida-funded section of a national teaching portal operated by the Ministry of Education (Danish only: <http://www.emu.dk/tema/global-undervisning>). The issues covered are wide-ranging, however though a general evaluation of the pool was undertaken in 2008, there has not been any evaluation specifically assessing the teaching materials. A small part of the funding from the pool is spent on travel grants for visits to or from developing countries which can be awarded to for instance journalists but also teachers. Furthermore, based on a unique agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Danida will from 2014 fund the appointment of 4 "learning consultants" who under the Ministry of Education are to assist schools specifically in integrating a global perspective – with special focus on developing countries - in their teaching. The setup is still being negotiated and for now the hiring is awaiting the politicians' approval of the National Budget for 2014.

The five Danish regional government units also have some funding for regional educational development projects and currently one out of the five regions has allocated funding specifically for a project with an international dimension. The project involves 6 upper secondary schools and has a focus on school partnerships and online collaborations between the 6 involved

Danish schools and partner schools in as well as outside of Europe. Global School Partnerships is involved in the project as external consultant.

As previously mentioned, school linking initiatives in Denmark have traditionally been between Danish and other European schools, usually financed by the Comenius program. The program is currently administered by the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education but so far it has only been open for European partnerships and there has been no support available for establishing links with schools in other parts of the world. Another challenge of this program is that schools tend to find that the application process and funding possibilities lack the flexibility they need in order to make it fit into their planning.

Despite the lack of funding options, some Danish schools have organized individual initiatives and developed partnership projects with schools in different parts of the world. To further promote and support such initiatives, the organization Global School Partnerships was established in 2010, inspired by similar British school partnership programs. The organization now has app. 40 Danish member schools all involved in educational partnerships with schools in Africa, Asia and The Middle East. The organization is partly funded by membership fees.