

## A land of contrasts

In my work in the municipality Kommuneqarfi Sermersooq I daily witness that a lot of people in Greenland live a miserable life. Greenland is a well registered society. As municipal officer I get an insight into a huge range of social and economic conditions of the people in this country.

The income in Greenland is highly scattered. Beside the well-paid civil servants other people are living more or less of a combination of subsistence and the payment of various forms of support from the municipality and the Greenland government. The public finances in Greenland only are balanced because Greenland receives a considerable amount of money from a yearly block grant from the Danish state.

One of the main problems is that a large part of the population does not have the necessary education to succeed in the modern labour market. In these years, Greenland uses a large amount of money to change these conditions, but it is difficult to find the positive results of this great effort. The

problems mentioned here have roots deep in the original colonial country, Greenland.

The newspapers are filled with stories of social deprivation. Greenland has a relatively high level of homicide, suicide, violence and sexual abuse. Much misery emerged from a massive abuse of alcohol and cannabis.

In the summer I often go for an outing in the wilderness around Nuuk. Either by boat into the fiords or walking on a hike into the mountains of the peninsula around Nuuk. From the town, you walk directly into the wilderness. No roads. Only rarely you meet other people. Out here in the wilderness I find a scenic beauty so fabulous that it is almost painful. It is difficult to explain the feelings, the landscape give rise to. I lack words.

But often I sit here in this desolate and beautiful mountain scenery and philosophize about how humans can cause so many problems for themselves and others when the framework for life is what I consider as the most beautiful place in the world.



*Qorqut, The Godthaabsfiord, August 2011*