

SPOTLIGHT REPORT

CHALLENGES FOR DENMARK
ON THE WAY TO ACHIEVING THE
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
– IN THE PERIOD 2017-2021

JUNE 2020



PREFACE

In 2021, Denmark has every opportunity to enter in earnest into *the Decade of Action*: The 10 years we have left to work towards the Sustainable Development Goals which we – as a nation and as one world – have committed to achieving by 2030.

The Decade of Action is our chance to back up that promise. There are three important milestones ahead of us in 2021, which we can and must exploit in order to take some major steps forward: recovery after the COVID-19 crisis – which gives us a chance to make some fundamental and necessary changes for a more sustainable society; the government's new National Action Plan for Denmark's implementation of the SDGs; and the important event which is Denmark's Voluntary National Review, the "SDG exam" at the UN High Level Political Forum.

In 2021, we stand before a global climate crisis, a global nature and biodiversity crisis, a global inequality crisis and a worldwide curtailment of the scope afforded to civil society. The spread of COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021 brought with it a whole host of unforeseen and negative consequences on our economies, societies and our rights. In our SPOTLIGHT Report 2020, we called on Danish policymakers to adopt the many concrete recommendations as initiatives for dealing with the consequences of the coronavirus crisis. Now – one year later – with Denmark emerging from the coronavirus crisis in a generally good shape, we are in urgent need of real and long-sighted plans for a new, responsible, resilient and sustainable recovery – *Building Forward Better and Greener*. As we enter the *Decade of Action*, we need to use the crisis to relaunch the Sustainable Development Goals, and to produce much-needed and accelerated political action.

The second natural opportunity we have this year for action and change is Denmark's new National Action Plan for the SDGs. In September 2020, Finance Minister Nicolai Wammen announced that an action plan was on the steps – this was a long-awaited and welcome statement, as Denmark has been without an instrument for the implementation of the SDGs ever since the new government took office in 2019. Now, in the *Decade of Action*, the country's National Action Plan needs to be ambitious, forward-looking and focused, with a clear analysis of the challenges ahead and a real political commitment to overcoming them.

It is therefore positive that the Government's recently launched National Action Plan contains concrete initiatives for action – however, a much higher level of political ambition than that presented in the National Action Plan is necessary, if Denmark is to achieve the goals in 2030. It is not enough to name ongoing initiatives and highlight our strengths. It is imperative that we make a targeted and concrete effort in the areas where Denmark is lagging behind.

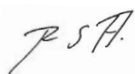
The third important stepping stone is Denmark's "exam" on the Sustainable Development Goals in July 2021. In the *Voluntary National Review* on implementation of the SDGs to the United Nations, Denmark will present the progress made over the course of the four years since Denmark's last review, in 2017.

The Danish civil society organisations which are members of Global Focus and the Danish 92 Group have, over the last four years, used their joint SPOTLIGHT report to place focus on Denmark's greatest challenges to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals, both nationally and in relation to Denmark's international activities and relations. In 2021, the SPOTLIGHT report looks back and assesses Denmark's contribution to the SDGs over the last four years and the overall trend which defines the road to their attainment.

And this trend is unequivocal: Action is needed!

This goes for all 17 SDGs – and especially for those goals where Denmark is lagging behind. It also goes for the fundamental principles of Agenda 2030 regarding the three dimensions of sustainability, for policy coherence and for the principle of leaving no one behind. And not least, it goes for the institutional mechanisms which Denmark has established in order to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. On all fronts, there is a lack of political will, concrete objectives, ownership and involvement, and of an ambitious National Action Plan which can enable political priorities and a truly transformative development of Danish society.

In the face of this trend, civil society's SPOTLIGHT Report 2021 puts forward a range of concrete recommendations for what steps Denmark needs to take in order to truly enter the *Decade of Action* – now.



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Chair, Global Focus



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BACKGROUND

This SPOTLIGHT report has been prepared by the member organisations of two Danish NGO networks, Global Focus and the Danish 92 Group, in the spring of 2021, through the networks' joint working group for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 in Denmark and globally. The purpose of the report is to highlight the challenges faced by Denmark with regards to fully implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in Denmark and making a maximum contribution at the global level. As well as highlighting individual challenges, the report also puts forward recommendations as to how political action can be leveraged to solve these challenges.

The secretariats of the two networks coordinated the development of the report and produced the content for this section, *Behind the SPOTLIGHT Report*, and are therefore responsible for the contents of this chapter. Member organisations belonging to the two networks have drawn up both the thematic chapters and the texts which highlight the specific challenges facing each of the individual SDGs and targets, as well as the recommendations for political action. All of the

authors¹ behind this year's report are jointly responsible for the thematic chapters. For the chapters on individual goals, however, only the authors of each individual chapter are responsible for the content, including the recommendations for political action. The authors of the chapters on the 17 SDGs are cited under sources. Member organisations have in some cases drawn on expert knowledge from actors which are not members of Global Focus or the Danish 92 Group.

Graphic layout is by graphic designer Maja Wesnæs and the report has been printed by KLS Pureprint A/S.



- 1 Dignity, the Danish Red Cross and World's Best News are not responsible for the thematic chapters but only for those chapters on the 17 SDGs for which they are listed as co-authors.

READING GUIDE

This reading guide provides an overview of the report which can be useful to understand its form and content.

1. PURPOSE

This SPOTLIGHT report has been prepared by the civil society organisations which are members of Global Focus and the Danish 92 Group. This is the fourth year that the report has been published, presenting policymakers and other stakeholders with the opportunity to read about challenges and recommendations relating to Denmark's implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The report encourages policymakers to use its contents actively in order to better understand the challenges Denmark is facing and to take action based on

this knowledge. At the same time, the content of the report is sufficiently broad that general political stakeholders can also use it to acquire knowledge on a wide range of different subject areas. Moreover, for the first time, this year's report also serves as civil society's contribution to Denmark's Voluntary National Review to the United Nations on the status of Denmark's implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is to be presented to the UN's *High-Level Political Forum* in July 2021. The report thus places focus on the challenges faced by Denmark with regards to SDG implementation over the four-year period between 2017, when Denmark last reported to the UN, and now, 2021.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

As well as analysing the individual goals, the authors behind the report wish to highlight a number of themes, which are essential to the attainment of the SDGs and which are also in focus as part of Denmark's official national report to the UN. The report therefore contains six chapters with analysis of these specific topics.

A chapter on **COVID-19 and sustainable recovery** was inevitable in 2021, as Denmark appears to be emerging from the crisis in a good position, but with an absolutely urgent need for the government to adopt a more long-term mindset and use the crisis to create real political action, securing green, social progress.

A chapter on the **three dimensions of sustainability** highlights that the social, environmental and economic dimensions are all equally important and must be met on an equal footing, in order for any kind of development to be considered sustainable. In order to understand the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, and how these are to be implemented, the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development must be completed.

A chapter on the central principle behind the SDGs, **Leaving No One Behind**, points to the need for Denmark to live up to its commitment to bring everyone along in the pursuit of sustainable development, and to do so by aiming to *reach the furthest behind first*.

The chapter on **institutional mechanisms and structural conditions** points out how crucial it is that a new Danish National Action Plan addresses Denmark's challenges, and that it be based on a gap analysis which can secure the basis for necessary political priorities and thus a basis for a truly transformative development of society.

The chapter on **means of implementation** establishes that financing will be crucial if the SDGs are to be met. Beyond financing, it also argues that Denmark should pursue policy coherence, ensuring that policies support – and do not undermine – the possibilities of other countries to attain the SDGs. This principle of *policy coherence for sustainable development* is deeply embedded in the SDGs.

The last thematic chapter on **monitoring and evaluation** emphasises the importance of establishing a mechanism for the evaluation, monitoring and follow-up of the Sustainable Development Goals. The mechanism must include an official annual status report, a shadow report developed by an independent body, an annual debate in Parliament, broad stakeholder involvement and the preparation of a voluntary report to the UN every three years.

The thematic chapters are then followed by 17 chapters which analyse Denmark's contributions – both nationally and internationally – towards each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. They assess the general trends within Danish efforts for each of the goals in the period between 2017 and 2021; and they put forward a number of concrete recommendations for political action.

3. ASSESSMENT OF TRENDS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGS

The report looks back over the general development of Danish SDG implementation since the last voluntary report was made to the UN in 2017 and through until 2021. Progress is illustrated for each goal through a graphical representation with a curve which goes up over time in the case of positive development, down in the case of negative development, and which remains flat for status quo. Each graph has two different curves, which represent Denmark's national and international efforts respectively.

4. EXPERT FOCUS ON SELECTED CHALLENGES

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the 169 targets provide a holistic framework, as they are all interdependent. The solution to a challenge within one particular goal or target may have positive or negative effects on the attainment of others.

The authors of these texts have focused on selected targets and challenges, which reflect the expertise in their networks and their member organisations and thus bolster the integrity and technical quality of the report. Goals and targets which are also relevant to the goal under discussion, but not explicitly described in the text, are listed at the bottom of each page under the heading: "Remember these goals and targets".

5. FOCUS ON POLITICAL ACTION

The report focuses on presenting concrete proposals for political action. Political decision-makers – either as part of the government or the opposition, regardless of party colours and ideology – can use the contents of this report to learn more about the challenges facing Denmark and to take action based on this knowledge.

Through this report, Danish civil society thus hopes to generate clarity around Denmark's challenges in fulfilling the SDGs and to direct focus towards the core of the problem, towards necessary changes, and towards real, tangible solutions. The general conclusion is that too little is being achieved too slowly and that there is an urgent need for action – now.

COVID-19 AND THE SDGS

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the worst crisis to hit the planet since World War II. With the Sustainable Development Goals as point of departure, the UN has developed an analysis framework for the possible socioeconomic consequences of COVID-19. Within this framework, the overarching assessment is that Denmark in general has succeeded in its management of the pandemic and in mitigating its potentially very severe socioeconomic consequences. However, we have also seen the following challenges:

HEALTH FIRST

COVID-19 has put healthcare systems worldwide under extreme pressure.¹ Most countries, including Denmark, have had to work hard to balance infection rates with number of respirators and access to protective equipment and vaccines. The situation has been particularly hard on healthcare professionals at hospitals, where women have systematically borne the greatest burden. In September 2020, it was reported that more than 7000 healthcare employees had died worldwide as a result of COVID-19, revealing the precarious situation that healthcare workers have been forced to contend with – not just in developing countries.^{2,3} Older people have also been among those worst affected, with illness and death occurring among the elderly to a much greater extent than in other groups.

ECONOMIC REACTION

The relief packages made available by the Danish government have helped to keep socioeconomic impact to a minimum and by providing compensation at a rate of 90%, the government has protected a large part of the commercial sector. It is positive



that the government has taken these initiatives in order to safeguard Danes against unemployment and other consequences. However, the relief packages should have placed greater requirements on their recipients; such as respect for human rights and the environment and not to place funds in tax havens.

SOCIAL COHESION AND RESILIENCE

The COVID-19 crisis has revealed just how vulnerable our global financial system actually is and how dependent the world's nations and companies are on one another.⁴ The OECD has stated that one of the roads out of the crisis is for companies to exercise responsible business conduct.

A focus on human rights and the environment within global corporate value chains will contribute considerably towards securing resilient supply chains.⁵ Unfortunately, developments in this area are lagging behind. International studies show that importing companies, including those in Denmark, do not place sufficient focus on responsible business conduct⁶ and that existing problems in global supply and value chains have only been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic – among others for migrant workers.⁷

RECOMMENDATIONS

We consider that Denmark has fared well during this first half of the COVID-19 crisis and we recommend that the government now adopts a more long-term approach and leverages the crisis to make fundamental changes in society:

- Use the crisis to *Build Forward Better and Greener* – i.e., transform the economy and secure green and social progress. Use the crisis to relaunch the SDGs, to press on the accelerator and to bring about action.
- Bolster preparedness and resilience with regards to the management of future pandemics, including the stock-piling of PPE, and bring experience to bear on the healthcare system.
- Introduce a 'smart mix' of measures to promote responsible business conduct including legislation, sectorial initiatives and the provision of advice within this area – for example at embassies, incubators, etc.
- Incorporate Denmark's multi-year support for the "Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator", including vaccination programmes (COVAX), into the new development policy strategy.
- Denmark must work via the WTO to help make it possible for countries in the Global South to begin the production of vaccines and other important medicines in connection with COVID-19.

THREE DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable development has three dimensions: social, environmental and economic sustainability. These three dimensions are equally important and must co-exist on an equal footing in order for a development to be considered sustainable. Realisation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs must be based upon an integration of the three dimensions of sustainability. It is important to understand that the 17 SDGs constitute a whole and that they must be realised simultaneously. Financial goals often occupy a governing position without being balanced in relation to social and green considerations – this is a global phenomenon and Denmark is no exception.

Since 1945, the global population has tripled and technological advancements have made it possible for us to constantly produce more. Accordingly, our consumption of the natural world and its resources has increased dramatically. Sustainability has *not* been a dominant value. Rather it has been production, productivity and economic-material growth that have led the way. This lack of focus on social and environmental sustainability has had major consequences. Over the same period, the economic growth paradigm has been a central element in Denmark and in the creation of our welfare society.

The result has been a rise in wealth – but it has also meant that our welfare society has become increasingly less sustainable over time.

It is unsustainable to continue to allow material growth and wealth to serve as the predominant benchmarks for societal progress.⁸ Restructuring the economy through *relative decoupling* (of economic growth from environmental impact) and the promotion of a *circular economy* can help to reduce the pressure on ecological systems. However, current meta-studies indicate that even absolute decoupling on a global scale, in all sectors and over sufficient time, will not be possible in practice.⁹ This assessment has far-reaching consequences for global economic strategies which aim to promote sustainable development.

Focus on these challenges has increased over recent years – including in Denmark. Some municipalities and companies are seeking to do away with this one-sided focus on economic growth. But Denmark is still far from realising the SDGs. Particularly within the field of climate change, the government has been criticised for being too slow and too unambitious in the green transition.



**SOCIAL
SUSTAINABILITY**



**ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY**



**ECONOMIC
SUSTAINABILITY**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must – nationally and globally – strive only towards economic growth (measured as growth in GDP) which is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.
- Denmark must ensure that greater importance is attached to welfare and environmental considerations than has thus far been the case in the adopted policies.
- Denmark must review or *screen* new legislation in order to ensure that its primary purpose does not bring about negative effects in relation to any of the Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁰
- Denmark must allocate additional funds for climate aid (and not simply reallocate funds from the existing development aid budget). Development aid and climate finance are two different obligations that Denmark has towards developing countries.
- Denmark must incorporate nature-based solutions¹¹ into national and global policies as these have a huge potential to exert a positive impact on the environment, the climate, biodiversity and general development.
- Denmark must bolster cross-cutting coherence within its sustainability efforts in order to address those structural barriers which prevent us from creating a sustainable society.



LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

NATIONALLY

Through the Sustainable Development Goals, Denmark has committed itself to comply with the promise to leave no one behind (LNOB). This means that all of the goals must be met for absolutely everyone and that we must endeavour to *reach the furthest behind first*. The Agenda 2030 Declaration also states that the most marginalised groups must be empowered, which is to say that they must be guaranteed the authority and the capacity to independently influence their own development.

At the strategic level, focus on the principle of LNOB remains limited. The latest political National Action Plan does not address this principle and the most recent Voluntary National Report (VNR) from 2017¹² makes mention of it only briefly, in relation to partnerships. While it was positive that civil society was able to participate in the actual VNR presentation, involvement must be improved so as to establish an adequate level of ambition and ensure that SDG implementation reaches everyone. The generally critical conclusions drawn by the Danish National Audit Office (Rigsrevisionen) on the lacking efforts of ministries to implement the SDGs also overlooked the principle of LNOB.

The claim that Denmark is almost on track to successfully fulfil the SDGs overlooks those who are furthest from being included in sustainable development. Real compliance with the principle of LNOB in Denmark would mean improvements for the almost 60,000 children and their families, who live in poverty, and the approximately 6000 homeless citizens who have no roofs over their heads. It would put an end to discrimination on the labour market through equal pay for women and

men and the equal treatment of jobseekers regardless of their ethnicity, religion, age or disability. It would also lead to better inclusion of refugees, the elderly and people with disabilities in a more digitalised society. It would ensure better understanding for - and increased representation of - minority groups such as religious minorities, LGBTQ+ persons and Greenlandic citizens. Simply put, it would mean guaranteeing and respecting the rights of people who, for various reasons, are particularly marginalised or vulnerable. Compliance with the principle of LNOB would also mean a redoubled anchoring of human rights as these two concepts are mutually reinforcing.

INTERNATIONALLY

The principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) is, with the exception of *The World 2030: Denmark's Strategy for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Action*,¹³ not mentioned in Denmark's global strategies. This gives the impression that the consequences of Denmark's international efforts for population groups which are marginalised, particularly vulnerable or furthest behind, are not seen as relevant within areas outside of development policy. This is a problem because it entails a risk that Danish foreign, trade and climate policies will contribute towards further marginalising population groups which are already vulnerable. *The World 2030* mentions LNOB as a framework for Danish development aid and humanitarian action, but on an overarching level, LNOB is reflected only sporadically within Denmark's country policies for development cooperation.¹⁴ Seven out of 11 of Denmark's current country policies, which are updated after 2015, do not mention LNOB explicitly. The tendency, however, is that over time, the country

strategies come to reflect the principle of LNOB. None of the country strategies adopted between 2015 and 2018 mention LNOB, while all strategies updated after 2018 mention the principle of LNOB, albeit to varying degrees.

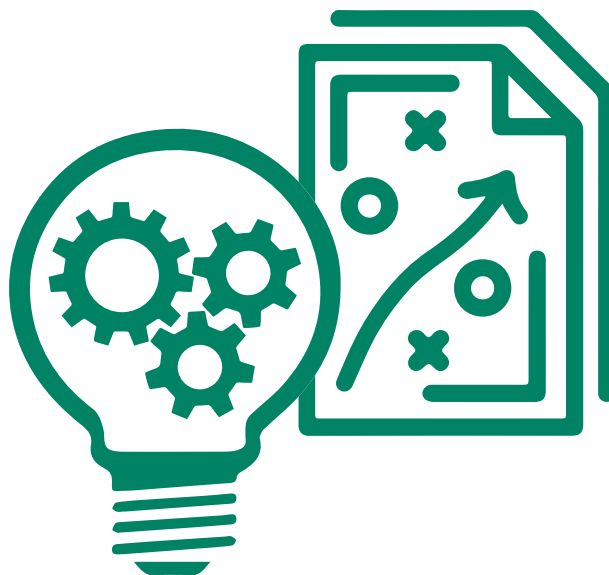
This suggests that the sparse strategic focus on LNOB is also reflected at the practical level.¹⁵ Based on interviews with representatives from the Danish Foreign Service and the Danish embassies, the pattern which emerges is that specific efforts are not usually made to operationalise LNOB and the term is

rarely used explicitly in the articulation of initiatives or included as a crucial – or required – element in the development of new country programmes. On the other hand, there is an implicit assumption that LNOB is automatically complied with in Danish development aid, for example as a result of the human-rights based approach and the focus placed on the reduction of poverty, peacebuilding and vulnerable groups. Moreover, it has been pointed out that initiatives, which address vulnerable and marginalised groups, are often difficult to scale up and can therefore pose a challenge.

RECOMMENDATIONS

If Denmark sincerely wants to secure the SDGs through its national and global efforts, there is a need for greater political focus on the promise of LNOB. This should be taken as a compass to help Denmark reach the finish line in 2030. Focus should be placed on starting with those on the outermost fringes of current systems, societies and power – in order to best include and empower these groups – specifically by:

- including systematic analyses with a focus on intersectionality in the National Action Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals and in the implementation of relevant national and global strategies so as to **concretely define which groups are furthest behind and need support** in compliance with LNOB. Moreover, specific annual goals should also be established, which include empowerment with a view to equipping individuals to participate independently in sustainable development.
- the government developing a specific **action plan for securing the principle of LNOB** globally and nationally, which should include the development of methods to concretise and operationalise the concept for ministries to help promote the conscious and proactive implementation of LNOB.
- securing much greater **participation from those who are actually concerned**. Marginalised population groups – and their representative organisations, which are typically overlooked – should be systematically involved as key actors who can contribute valuable knowledge and insights into existing barriers, needs and relevant solutions and with regards to the monitoring of efforts.
- allocating **adequate and targeted funding** to compliance with the principle of LNOB. On a global level, Danish development aid needs to be sufficient and flexible enough to also encompass smaller groups in a meaningful way and match up to local needs. Nationally, it is important that there are resources available for long-sighted efforts as this also boosts trust between the state and target groups.
- **collecting disaggregated data** on marginalised groups to enable an analysis and evidence-based approach towards local marginalisation dynamics, so that implementation of Danish efforts on the principle of LNOB can be monitored.
- performing **LNOB screenings** on at least two levels. On the one hand, on all new legislation and political strategies in order to reduce the risk of a negative spillover effect, which could end up affecting some of the most marginalised groups in society. On the other hand, as a starting point for ministerial work on the targets they are responsible for, so that their efforts can be primarily aimed at those furthest from the forefront of development.
- making work on sustainable development **more cross-cutting rather than siloed** and by introducing a **smart mix of measures – e.g. legislation and guidance – to promote responsible business conduct** towards all vulnerable groups.



INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS AND STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS

ACTION PLAN FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Denmark adopted its first National Action Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals at the end of March 2017. The action plan served as a backdrop for Denmark's first VNR in New York in July 2017, but it has not otherwise been used as a basis for the monitoring and planning of the government's work towards implementation of the SDGs. In its highly critical report on Denmark's efforts to implement the SDGs, published in September 2020, the Danish National Audit Office asserted that the action plan built on the assumption that Danish politics were already on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁶ The plan thus did not contribute any new or real action.

Following the change of government in June 2019, a memorandum of understanding was published, which stated that Denmark was actively working towards the 17 SDGs. But it was not until September 2020, immediately before publication of the Danish National Audit Office's report, that the Minister of Finance announced that he would now begin work on a new National Action Plan. The action plan was expected before the end of 2020. At the time of writing – several months later – Denmark is still without an adopted action plan. A draft version of the new plan has been shared with some stakeholders, and a final NAP will be presented at a conference organised by a private sector organisation in mid-June, 2021.

This prolonged absence of a clear plan for the implementation of the SDGs suggests that the government has not considered Denmark's attainment of sustainable development to be a

matter of great political priority. In practice, this also means that the government has lacked a crucial instrument of governance in its work to attain the goal, and that its ministries – just as the National Audit Office pointed out¹⁷ – have, from the adoption of the SDGs in 2015 and through until the present day, only sporadically adopted new initiatives or developed special plans to attain the SDGs.

OPENNESS AND INVOLVEMENT

This lack of transparency and engagement across successive governments is an important problem. It creates ambiguity around intentions and political will among the central parties involved, including Parliament, and in the general public. A major reason for this is that the Ministry of Finance, which bears responsibility for the Sustainable Development Goals, has not opened up the work done at the ministry itself or at its line ministries for transparent scrutiny or monitoring. For example, the names of the contact persons responsible for SDG implementation at the line ministries are confidential, which has been an impediment to an open debate about the SDGs with the relevant people and ministers. Since adoption in 2015, the government has only to a limited extent made use of its options to involve and extract important knowledge and input from non-governmental sectors and from civil society.

At the UN General Assembly in 2015, the country's prime minister at the time committed Denmark to realising the 17 Sustainable Development Goals before 2030. The responsibility

for this commitment was placed with the Ministry of Finance, however none of the finance ministers to hold office since then have taken any initiative to follow up on the country's promise that: 'Denmark is ready to do its part'. Other countries, such as Finland, have chosen to place responsibility for the SDGs with their Head of State, which signals that SDG implementation has been made a top priority. The exact placement of this responsibility is hardly crucial in and of itself. What is crucial, however, is that the government, led by the prime minister, takes clear and unequivocal responsibility for ensuring that Denmark has in place the necessary strategy and National Action Plan for implementation of the SDGs before 2030.

PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL

Parliament has signaled in several ways that there is a desire to shoulder its share of the responsibility for SDG implementation. We have seen this, for example, through the cross-party 2030 Network, through the establishment of the 2030 Panel, and through the Finance Committee's parliamentary working group. But successive governments have not yet involved Parliament in the work on the SDGs.

Civil society welcomed the government's announcement, in the action plan from 2017, that an assessment was to be launched of the Sustainable Development Goals in relation to all 'bills and other measures submitted to Parliament for a decision, as well as plans and programmes developed by the government'. In other words, an impact analysis or a screening mechanism to support and ensure the quality of legislative work. But now – four years later – Parliament still lacks the possibility to assess the impact of adopted laws on the SDGs.

In the spring of 2020, the government undertook the trial screening and impact assessment of four selected bills whereby¹⁸ three topics relating to the SDGs were assessed. However, the trial did not bring any useful results. Again in the spring of 2021, the Minister of Finance announced¹⁹ that focus on the SDGs was to be sharpened within the government's legislative work and that going forward, the screening programme would place focus on both positive and negative consequences of legislation and that it would be expanded to encompass all 17 SDGs and all 169 targets. Specifically, the ambition is to screen all bills included in the legislative programme for 2021/2022. Civil society looks forward to seeing this screening and impact assessment mechanism put into effect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The government must resolve for the forthcoming National Action Plan to serve as a true planning instrument for its long-term work on the national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is crucial that the action plan addresses the challenges that Denmark is actually facing and that it is based on a 'gap-analysis' (based, for example, on measurement points from the baseline project named Our Goals (*Vores Mål*) and global indicators), which can ensure a foundation for necessary political priorities and thus form a basis for a transformative development of society.
- The government must give greater priority to the involvement of civil society and other non-governmental sectors so that vital expert contributions can be locked into future planning and reporting, as well as official projects relating to SDG implementation. In order to ensure participation and anchoring, the government should establish a multi-stakeholder platform.
- The government must realise its promise of a new and comprehensive screening programme for all bills, and Parliament must be secured the opportunity to shoulder its responsibility for the Sustainable Development Goals through necessary appropriations on the annual finance acts and co-responsibility for an annual monitoring cycle on Denmark's attainment of the SDGs.

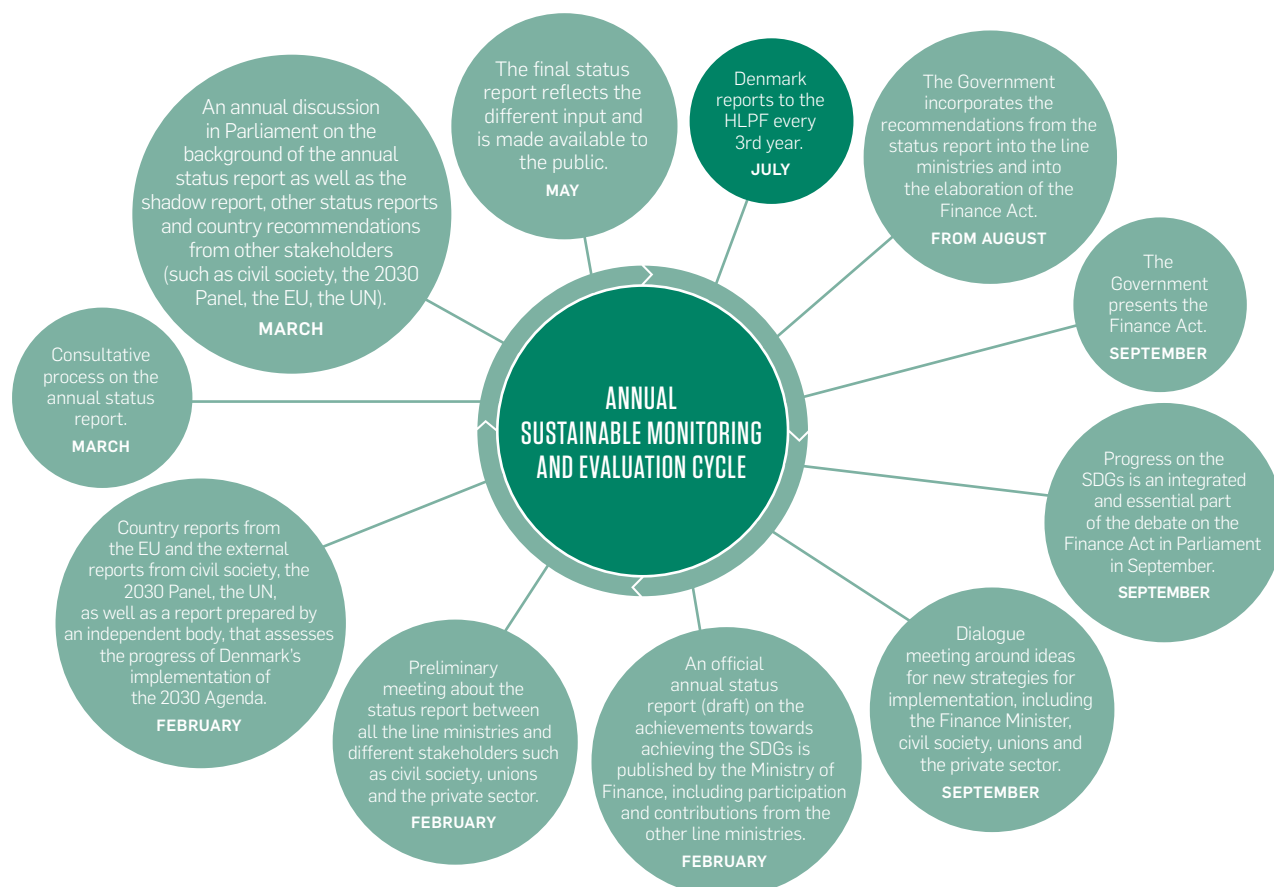
MONITORING AND EVALUATION

No mechanism for the monitoring, evaluation and follow-up on the SDGs has been established in Denmark. It is important that a single mechanism is established to make this work easier and more accessible for different actors, so that more can get involved. We recommend that such a mechanism, at a minimum, include the following:

1. **An official annual status report** on attainment of the SDGs and Denmark's international contribution drawn up by the line ministries.
2. **An annual shadow report prepared by an independent body.**
3. **An annual discussion in Parliament** on the background of the annual status report as well as the shadow report, other status reports and country recommendations from other stakeholders (such as civil society, the 2030 Panel, the EU, the UN).
4. **Broad stakeholder involvement** – both in the preparation of the annual status report and in the annual discussion.
5. Preparation of a **VNR to the HLPF every three years.**
6. **In the event of a change of government**, a status report should be prepared by the independent body.

It is crucial that the right mechanisms be set up and in particular that they are able to monitor, evaluate and follow up on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Denmark. It is for this reason that we propose an annual sustainable monitoring and evaluation cycle. The cycle must be inclusive in nature and the process must ensure dialogue with various different stakeholders. At the same time, it is also important that the cycle helps to strengthen coordination with all ministries and with Parliament in order to ensure policy coherence.

As part of the official annual report, the line ministries must report annually on the progress of the 2030 Agenda and measure this against both global and national indicators. Internal coordination between ministries should take account of the overarching principles in the 2030 Agenda: that no one should be left behind (LNOB); that implementation should be guided by a holistic approach and on the basis of the three dimensions for sustainable development in order to reduce/remove negative externalities and spillovers; and that the 2030 Agenda is universal in that it applies to everyone and to all areas. Internal coordination of the progress report is led by the Ministry of Finance which bears responsibility for the SDGs in Denmark. A possible cycle could look as such:



MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

FINANCING

If the SDGs are to be reached, it is crucial that there is financing. Unfortunately, it has been a struggle to secure funding on both international and national levels. The previous National Action Plan for the SDGs was not followed up with financing for implementation. Neither in the form of specific funding for activities which would facilitate the SDGs, nor through the integration of the 2030 Agenda into the annual Finance Act.

POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In addition to financing the SDGs, Denmark can also contribute towards implementation by ensuring coherence across policies, so that the government's actions support – and do not undermine – the possibilities of other countries to attain the SDGs. The principle of policy coherence for sustainable development is deeply embedded within the SDGs and has specific indicators under SDG 17 (17.04 and 17.04.01).

Unfortunately, Denmark has not systematically integrated the principle of policy coherence into its work on the SDGs, neither in its initial National Action Plan for the SDGs, nor by adopting a specific action plan for policy coherence. In 2014,

the government at the time adopted such a plan,²⁰ but work to bolster the principle of policy coherence has been continued only to a very limited extent in the country's subsequent implementation of the SDGs. This also becomes clear when Denmark's efforts are held up against the UN's newly developed guidelines for reporting on SDG indicator 17.04.01, which measures a number of relevant mechanisms to ensure policy coherence.²¹ For example, Denmark has not committed to ensure policy coherence at the highest political level; has not established a timeline for achieving policy coherence and it has not established a dedicated budget or any reporting mechanisms for policy coherence.

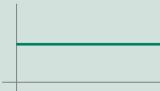



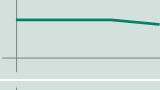







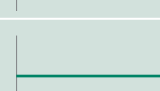












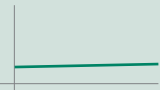








The consequence of this failure to take a systematic approach towards securing policy coherence is that Denmark's policies serve to undermine the sustainable development of other countries in a range of different areas. For example, through a lack of awareness around the negative consequences that new trade or tax agreements can have on developing countries, such as the EU's trade agreements with the South American trade bloc, MERCOSUR.

On the other hand, one area in which Denmark has worked actively for policy coherence is in creating greater transparency in the accounts of large companies, so it is clear where profits are generated and where taxes are paid. Denmark and several large Danish companies are leading the way within this area in the EU.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The government must outline a plan for the financing of Denmark's work on attainment of the SDGs – both within national borders and beyond them. Specific funds must be allocated to the implementation of the National Action Plan and to integrate the 2030 Agenda into the Finance Act, so that eventually, the SDGs will come to guide the distribution of funds in the Finance Act.
- The government must place the principle of policy coherence for sustainable development at the centre of its new National Action Plan and work systematically to integrate all elements – and to report annually on the UN's guidelines for SDG indicator 17.04.01. Among other things, this includes conducting systematic analyses on the consequences of policies for developing countries and the SDGs, which the new extended screening of both positive and negative consequences of Danish legislation should ensure.²²

OVERVIEW: ASSESSMENT OF DENMARK'S WORK WITH THE SDGS

SDG		TARGETS IN FOCUS	NATIONAL	INTERNATIONAL	PAGE
1	No Poverty	1.3			15
2	Zero Hunger	2.1 • 2.2 • 2.4			16
3	Good Health and Well-being	3.4 • 3.7 • 3.8			17
4	Quality Education	4.1 • 4.3 • 4.5 • 4.7 • 4.8			18
5	Gender Equality	5.1 • 5.2 • 5.4 • 5.5 • 5.C			19
6	Clean Water and Sanitation	6.1 • 6.3			20
7	Affordable and Clean Energy	7.2 • 7.B			21
8	Decent Work and Economic Growth	8.1 • 8.4 • 8.5 • 8.8			22
9	Industry, innovation and infrastructure	9.1 • 9.4 • 9.5 • 9.A • 9.B			23
10	Reducing Inequality	10.1 - 10.7			24
11	Sustainable Cities and Communities	11.1 • 11.2 • 11.3 • 11.7 • 11.A • 11.C			25
12	Responsible Consumption and Production	12.1 • 12.2 • 12.4 - 12.8			26
13	Climate Action	13.2 • 13.A			27
14	Life Below Water	14.1 • 14.2 • 14.3 • 14.5 • 14.6			28
15	Life On Land	15.1 • 15.2 • 15.5 • 15.9			29
16	Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	16.1 - 16.2 • 16.3 • 16.10			30
17	Partnerships for the Goals	17.1 - 17.2 • 17.4 • 17.14			31



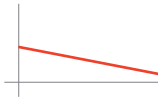
SDG 1 NO POVERTY

TARGETS
IN FOCUS



Implement social protection systems

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



NATIONALLY

Denmark still does not have an official poverty line. Statistics Denmark²³ calculates an annual measure for relative poverty which includes low-income families without assets, students excluded. The report shows that relative poverty increased from around 200,000 people in 2015 to 242,000 in 2019.

The unemployment benefit was reformed in 2016 in such a way that the benefits of immigrant families in particular fell below the low income threshold. At the same time, many asylum seekers came to Denmark (10,000 compared to only 800 in 2019) with the new government also bringing in financial compensation to the most severely affected families with children.²⁴

One in six Danish state pensioners is not far from the line representing 60% of society's median income, which is the official threshold used by the EU to establish risk for relative poverty.²⁵

Immigrants and refugees who have lived in Denmark less than 40 years receive a fractional pension, which is calculated based on how long they have been in the country. Despite additional support, they fall into the poorest group of pensioners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Danish government must define a threshold for poverty or risk of poverty
- The Danish government must use a future benefits system to prevent people from falling into poverty. Consideration should also be paid to differing housing costs between and within regions, and to the number of children in families.
- The Danish government must equate fractional pensioners with Danish pensioners to a greater extent.

INTERNATIONAL

Globally, extreme poverty fell from 15.7% in 2010 to 10% in 2015 and 9.2% in 2019. However, the World Bank predicts that the number of people in extreme poverty will increase by 150 million people in 2021 as a result of the crisis. Poverty is particularly high in low-income countries and in countries with conflicts. In 2019, 736 million people were living in extreme poverty at global level, 413 millions of these in southern Africa. Almost half (46%) of those living in extreme poverty are children under the age of 14.

In 2019, the number of elderly people (+65) was 703 million, of which two-thirds live in low-income countries. 20% of the elderly people in these countries are in receipt of a pension from their state. The amount received is rarely enough to lift elderly people out of poverty.²⁶

Many of the world's elderly work to support themselves and their families, but because of the toll on their bodies and chronic illnesses, they are at risk of becoming financially dependent on their immediate family. However, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, many countries²⁷ have introduced extraordinary support to elderly citizens in the form of pension advances, the payment of one-off cash benefits and foodstuffs (41%). These payments were generally small and are no longer made, despite the continuation of the crisis.

Over one-third of workers in Sub-Saharan Africa live on less than USD 1.9 per day. Work thus does not guarantee a reasonable standard of living.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Danish government must support the UN's proposals to establish a global fund for a social security net which can guarantee protection to the vulnerable and socially excluded, including children and people with disabilities. This security net must build on a rights-based approach.
- The Danish government must work to ensure that the elderly are guaranteed a decent and universal state-financed pension which treats men and women equally
- The Danish government must contribute towards building capacity around the development of social security net systems in low-income countries
- The Danish government must take the lead and work to suspend the debt repayments of developing countries so that such countries can use state resources for their recoveries and to eradicate poverty.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS





SDG 2 ZERO HUNGER

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



NATIONALLY

In Denmark, at least 4–5% (i.e just under 100,000) of Danish households are affected by food insecurity.²⁸ Such lacking or uncertain access to the acquisition of sufficient foods of an adequate quality is inextricably linked to economic factors. According to a study undertaken by the Department of Food and Resource Economics (IFRO), disposable household income is a key factor in this regard.²⁹ It is therefore the case that people with low incomes and single parents are disproportionately affected by food insecurity. This is the case for somewhere between 31% and 48% of Danish recipients of transfer incomes such as cash benefits, disability pensions or unemployment benefits and up to a fourth of all single parents.

Food insecurity and food budget cuts not only have consequences for physical health, but they also have an impact on general quality of life and on physical wellbeing.³⁰ Despite the serious consequences, there has been no sustained focus on this problem and there remains an outstanding need to discuss solutions which might reduce food insecurity in Denmark.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Department of Food and Resource Economics (IFRO) must carry out regular studies into food insecurity in Denmark so that we have updated knowledge about the scope, causes and societal consequences of the problem.
- Denmark must support collaboration between the food sector and civil society organisations in order to ensure that fresh surplus food items can be safely and effectively redistributed to organisations for the socially disadvantaged. This might be through financial support, but also through a continuous focus on the legal framework conditions and administrative procedures which enable and support the donation of fresh surplus food items.

INTERNATIONALLY

Conflicts, inequality, climate change and a devastated food system mean that millions of people die from starvation each and every year. In 2020, 690 million people (approximately 8.9% of the world's population) were starving, which equates to an increase of approximately 60 million over five years.³¹ The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated an already fragile food system and it is estimated that more people are at risk of dying from socioeconomic consequences such as hunger and poverty as a result of the crisis than of the actual virus itself.^{32,33} It is further estimated that 183 million people are going to starve in 2050 as a consequence of climate change.³⁴

Denmark's support to multilateral organisations such as WFP,³⁵ FAO³⁶ and IFAD,^{37,38} which all work to combat hunger, has been stable over recent years, but as the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation makes clear, we are heading in the wrong direction with regards to SDG 2.³⁹ There is a need for a more strategic and long-term approach which recognises that hunger is a product of poverty and extreme inequality and that it is therefore necessary to address structural problems. Inequality also manifests itself between the sexes as food insecurity is globally higher for women than it is for children and for men.⁴⁰ It is also striking that the world produces enough food that nobody should have to go to bed hungry,⁴¹ yet one-third of all food produced globally is wasted.^{42,43}

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must continue to support the multilateral work to combat hunger and famine and it must develop a long-term and strategic approach to fighting hunger by seeking to reduce extreme inequalities and the underlying structural problems which are associated with gender inequality, conflicts and the climate crisis.
- Denmark must give funds to climate financing which is additional to its ordinary development aid and attach great importance to adaptation so that developing countries will have real possibilities to adapt to climate change and to ensure resilient food production.
- Denmark must actively recognise the role played by women in food production and strengthen their leadership in this area through reliable data and studies into how and why women are particularly vulnerable.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS





SDG 3

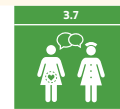
GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



Reduce mortality from non-communicable diseases and promote mental health



Universal access to sexual and reproductive care, family planning and education



Achieve universal health coverage

NATIONALLY

Between 2017 and 2020, children and young people have experienced growing isolation, mental vulnerability and unhappiness.⁴⁴ Lockdowns resulting from COVID-19 have considerably increased the risk of loneliness and of physical and mental dissatisfaction within this group, resulting in far-reaching consequences, already visible today, for the mental and physical health of an entire generation.

Obstetric care and midwifery are faced with a number of challenges which may have considerable negative consequences for many expectant mothers and new families. A particularly vulnerable group is pregnant undocumented migrants who are at greater risk of complications as they only have access to emergency healthcare; e.g. when actually going into labour or when they suffer from serious complications, and no access to preventive or routine check-ups with healthcare staff.⁴⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The government should develop an action plan for loneliness, mental health and wellbeing among children and young people and address the consequences of coronavirus lockdowns, paying regard to all aspects of children's and young peoples' lives and placing focus on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in society.
- Obstetrics should be given greater priority and this should include a guaranteed entitlement to good prenatal and midwifery care during childbirth. This must apply to all disadvantaged groups including undocumented migrants whose rights and access to healthcare services generally need to be improved and secured.

INTERNATIONALLY

Health has not generally been a priority in the period between 2017 and 2020 despite high inequality in access to health in the world's poorest countries. Such inequality will be exacerbated further by the coronavirus crisis and the most vulnerable groups in society will be hardest hit, such as refugees, internally displaced persons, girls, women and the elderly. Moreover, health is also crucial to the other sustainable development goals. Non-communicable diseases have been under-prioritised despite causing 71% of all deaths globally while almost 30% of the adult population in low and middle-income countries live with conditions such as diabetes, with the elderly in particular at risk.⁴⁶

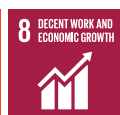
Mental health has also been under-prioritised despite a considerable increase in the number of people with impaired mental health, namely in countries which are affected by conflicts and catastrophes. In Africa, there are 1.4 mental health professionals for every 100,000 people; globally the figure is 9 per every 100,000.⁴⁷ Only around 1% of total development aid for health is allocated to mental health.⁴⁸ Mental health conditions and psychosocial dissatisfaction impair general health and undermine several of the sustainable development goals.

Denmark is a significant player when it comes to sexual and reproductive health including sex education, access to contraception and free abortions. An overlooked problem is side effects caused by modern forms of contraception which are one of the most common reasons for not using contraception in the Global South.⁴⁹

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Health needs to be made a priority of development policy with focus placed on the broadening of a universal healthcare coverage which attaches equal importance to physical and mental health and which includes communicable diseases and mental disorders within the remit of primary health services. Such a prioritisation must focus on providing coverage to those who are especially vulnerable and marginalised, and investments will need to be made in national healthcare systems as well as local actors with a view to improving health preparedness and response.
- Denmark must continue to prioritise the sexual and reproductive health of girls, women and other marginalised groups. This should include better evidence, including with regards to forms of contraception. At the same time, mental health and psychosocial wellbeing should be reprioritised as key issues for Denmark. Both areas need to be prioritised alongside long-term and humanitarian efforts.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS





SDG 4 QUALITY EDUCATION

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

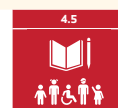
BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



Free primary and secondary education



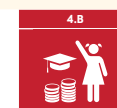
Equal access to affordable technical, vocational and higher education



Eliminate all discrimination in education



Education for sustainable development and global citizenship



Expand higher education scholarships for developing countries

NATIONALLY

Education has been impaired as a result of sustained cuts. Despite the abolition of the so-called reprioritisation policy, there is a need for targeted reinvestment following COVID-19 which has demonstrated the importance of education as a vector through which children and young people can receive social support, personal reinforcement and mental development.

The Danish education system is still characterised by widespread inequality in that parental background and income are too often decisive as to how individuals fare. It is therefore shameful that the erosion of the Danish state education grant (SU) which followed the SU reform of 2013 impaired the opportunities for everyone to pursue an education and that Denmark has simultaneously made it more difficult for non-Danish speakers to study in Denmark as a result of its cuts to study programmes in English. Not all Danish children and young people are taught about the SDGs and sustainability despite the fact that educational institutions call for a higher political prioritisation of both. Sex education in primary school does not provide children and young people with the education they are entitled to. The study programmes for young people at the age when they start becoming sexually active feature only sporadic information on issues such as gender, body, sexuality, boundaries, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must invest in education and focus on combating inequality in education
- The SDGs and sustainability must be taught at all levels of education and sustainable education must be introduced into the purpose statements of educational programmes
- Children must be given the sex education they are entitled to and teaching on gender, body, sexuality and boundaries should be strengthened at secondary level.
- Education must be understood not just as learning but as a vector through which children and young people receive social support

INTERNATIONALLY

Humanitarian crises and coronavirus have put great pressure on education and the expected cuts to public budgets will mean that even the current levels of (insufficient) financing are at risk of disappearing. COVID-19 is the biggest crisis that education has ever faced and it has demonstrated once and for all that education is also of great importance to the safety, nutrition and mental health of children and young people. In far too many places, students and teachers have been excluded from the decision-making processes for school openings and closures. During the school closures of 2020, more than 1.6 billion children and young people were sent home⁵⁰ – with the poorest and most marginalised of them, including refugees and displaced persons, often left without access to distance learning. It is estimated that more than 30 million of these children will never return to education.⁵¹ Girls are at particular risk due to an increase in the number of teenage pregnancies and child marriages and due to an inadequate level of access to sexual and reproductive health services.

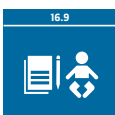
Aid is thus needed now more than ever in order to ensure the survival of public education systems. Denmark is a significant donor to the Global Partnership for Education and to Education Cannot Wait and has also recently joined Germany in supporting the UNHCR's DAFI programme, which helps refugees to access higher education. However, there is a need for Denmark to make education a strategic aid priority and to place focus on reaching those who are most marginalised and on supporting free, public education for all.

Education has increasingly become a political battleground with students and teacher organisations becoming subjected to enormous pressure from repressive regimes. Denmark should make itself an ally of these students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must follow the EU by making education a strategic priority and spending 10% of aid (including humanitarian aid) on education
- Denmark must prioritise education for the most marginalised.
- Denmark must support the development of stronger, more resilient and inclusive systems of public education which can secure continued learning during crises and catastrophes, including during the coronavirus pandemic and related school closures. Listen to young people, students and teachers at all levels of decision-making
- Denmark must strengthen sex education at all levels as a prerequisite for achieving SRSR. Restrictive legislation which prevents teenage mothers and pregnant women from continuing in education must be removed
- Establish a Students at Risk programme in Denmark in line with the one in Norway and Germany.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS





SDG 5 GENDER EQUALITY

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



End discrimination against women and girls



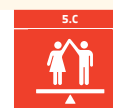
End all violence against and exploitation of women and girls



Value unpaid care and promote shared domestic responsibilities



Ensure full participation in leadership and decision-making



Adopt and strengthen policies and enforceable legislation for gender equality

NATIONALLY

The number of women who are victims of domestic abuse has increased since 2017. Each year, approximately 12 women are killed by their partners⁵² and 38,000 are subjected to physical partner violence.⁵³ In order to reduce those numbers, efforts must be made across all levels of society. The criminalisation of psychological violence in 2019 and the Police Agreement of 2020 are important tools, but in order to prevent domestic abuse and to intervene at an earlier stage, the authorities need to work more closely together while frontline staff such as municipalities and police forces require greater knowledge on violence.

The prevailing power imbalance is also reflected in continued economic gender inequality which, among other things, is driven by inequalities in the family distribution of housework and childcare, with women still performing on average one hour more of housework per day.⁵⁴ This contributes to skewed representation in politics and the upper tranches of the corporate world, and to a labour market which is segregated by gender.

Women and girls who are fleeing are particularly vulnerable but the absence of a gender perspective in the Danish asylum system and the suspension and reduction of the resettlement programme has curtailed their access to protection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must introduce designated parental leave for fathers and co-mothers
- The government must develop a national action plan to reduce the extent of partner violence, cover all initiatives in Denmark and report on all government obligations.
- Frontline personnel must be provided with the knowledge and competencies needed to spot victims and respond to suspicions of partner violence.
- Denmark must ensure the protection of women and girls who are fleeing through gender-focused asylum, resettlement and integration initiatives.

INTERNATIONALLY

SDG 5 is still one of the most poorly financed sustainable development goals⁵⁵ and there is a long way to go towards achieving global gender equality. This has been reinforced by COVID-19 which has led to an increase in sexual and gender-based violence, particularly partner violence, but also other rights violations such as child marriages.⁵⁶ The pandemic has further restricted access to good health and financial security for women and girls and has set the world back when it comes to securing access to fundamental rights such as the right to decide over one's own body and life.

Women's and feminist organisations are still excluded from financing and influence, even if they are locally anchored and well-positioned to secure the political, financial, sexual and health rights of women.⁵⁷ Despite the Grand Bargain's commitments to allocate 25% of humanitarian funding to local and national stakeholders, only 0.004 of Denmark's development aid went to local women's rights groups within humanitarian contexts in 2019.⁵⁸

Since 2017, the number of refugees and displaced persons has increased globally from 68.5 to 80 million with displacements lasting longer and longer.⁵⁹ There is a lack of focus on gender, SRSR and equality within humanitarian efforts, with inequality broadening and displaced women and girls faring considerably worse in relation to the protection of their fundamental rights. Women must still have access to contraception, safe childbirth and abortions. Women and girls in particular are in need of protection against gender-based violence such as partner violence and child marriages, yet this is an area which remains underfunded at the global level. This means that lives are lost, and there is a risk that more of the most vulnerable will be lost between now and 2030.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must take the lead in the fight for the rights and protection of women and girls, as well as their financial and democratic participation, with focus on the most vulnerable groups: i.e. LGBTQ+ persons, refugees and internally displaced persons
- Denmark must take a feminist and intersectional approach to all of its global efforts and allocate a minimum of 15% to equality programmes in humanitarian contexts, including at least 4% to local women's rights organisations
- Denmark must demonstrate global leadership in its international prioritisation and funding of efforts to protect and combat sexual and gender-based violence, including on "Women, Peace and Security".
- Denmark must integrate protection against gender-based violence into all Danish-supported humanitarian efforts and ensure lasting solutions for women and girls who have been displaced or forced to flee

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS

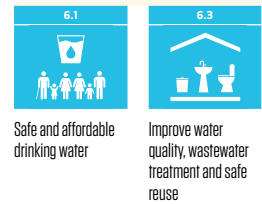
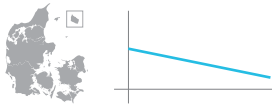




SDG 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



NATIONALLY

The majority of the Danish population accesses drinking water from around 2,500 smaller and larger waterworks. This water often does not comply with limits set by the EU for the content of pesticides. This is confirmed by an expanded analysis programme in 2019 that found pesticide residues in 45% of active waterwork wells, while the limit was surpassed in 12.7% of the wells. This is an increase of approximately 10% compared to 2018.⁶⁰

The Danish Environmental Protection Agency had not informed Denmark's municipalities about the EU rules and in a number of cases, drinking water with pesticide residues and other substances over the limit was illegally distributed to consumers.⁶¹ Many plants today use mixed drinking water containing pesticide residues. A statement to the Danish Parliament shows that over a five-year period, 46 waterworks in the country had supplied consumers with drinking water which contained values above the limit.⁶² Moreover, almost half of all households which extract their own groundwater, take up water which exceeds the threshold limit for pesticide residues.

Findings of approved pesticides in groundwater do not mean a ban on their use, as the authorities currently allow pesticides to be leached into the groundwater in average concentrations of 0.1 microgram/l per year, which corresponds to the limit value. This practice means that over time, all groundwater will come to contain ever greater levels of pesticide residues and that the sum limit of 0.5 micrograms/l will be challenged, when several pesticide residues appear in the same water sample. This means that the previously practiced precautionary principle is no longer applied.

In 2020, a ban was imposed on the commercial use of pesticides in the vicinity of drilled wells (so-called BNBOs), but not in vulnerable extraction areas. The ban does not apply to BNBOs in urban areas, where private operators and authorities spray pesticides onto sealed areas where no degradation occurs, because the biologically active root zone has been removed. A screening for 415 pesticide residues uncovered pesticide findings in 20.3% of 263 wells.⁶³ Including previously analysed samples, pesticide residues were found in 77% of the same wells and almost a third were over the limit. In other words, Danes can expect to find pesticide residues beneath the soil in all areas where such products have been used.

Agriculture only uses pesticides which have been approved by the authorities. Hence, the high number of pesticide residue findings indicates that the approval procedure is not fit for purpose.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The relevant authorities must take water samples from the pipeline networks from all waterworks so that they can respond rapidly to any contaminations uncovered.
- The government must introduce more restrictive regulations for the use of pesticides in areas where groundwater forms and it should establish Groundwater Parks – i.e. groundwater protection areas.
- The government must take responsibility for modernising the approval system and the approval of pesticides which end up in the groundwater must be stopped.
- The discovery of pesticide residues in the ground and drainage water by the Warning System must result in an immediate ban on sales in Denmark.
- The government must adopt a ban on the sale of pesticides to private individuals and introduce a ban against the private and official use of pesticides on sealed areas.
- The national monitoring programme should report analyses of drinking water in its annual reports; including both pesticide residues and other organic micropollutants.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS





SDG 7

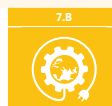
AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



7.2
Increase
global percentage of
renewable energy



7.B
Expand and upgrade
energy services for
developing countries

NATIONALLY

The target of 70% reduction of emissions by 2030, stipulated in the Danish Climate Act and the latest energy agreement, mostly inform Denmark's energy policy. National efforts were marginally boosted by the Energy Agreement of 2020,⁶⁴ but according to the Danish Council on Climate Change, current measures do not appear to be sufficient to meet the target set by the Climate Act. This is because a large proportion of the reductions between now and 2030 are based upon uncertain technologies such as carbon capture and storage (CCS). According to the Council on Climate Change, it will not be possible to guarantee the necessary reductions before 2030.⁶⁵ Additional measures and ongoing reductions will be needed between now and 2030.⁶⁶ The decision to end new oil and gas exploration in the North Sea is a necessary measure. However, the production end date of 2050 is not sufficient and there remain loopholes in the North Sea Agreement, which actually make it possible for production to be increased.⁶⁷ The new gas pipeline to Lolland and Falster and the Baltic Pipe will inevitably either end up as stranded assets or entail a breach of the reduction targets. These infrastructure projects thus constitute a risk to the green transition.⁶⁸ The large proportion of bioenergy and the lack of targets for aviation and shipping also remain problematic.⁶⁹

Staking success on negative emissions via CCS and bioenergy is a problematic approach, due to the uncertainty around feasibility; because of the intense need for resources; and because of the social risks involved.⁷⁰ PtX entails risks in the form of fossil gases and biomass and because it increases the need for renewable energies which first and foremost must be used to meet existing needs for electricity and heating.⁷¹ Any future conversion to biogas must be evaluated in relation to leakage during handling and with regard to the emissions from, and the conversion goals of, agriculture, including the need to reduce animal production.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must develop an action plan for reductions in the energy sector, total energy consumption and increased efficiency with a target of zero emissions by 2030.
- Denmark must ensure that CCS and other negative emissions are not included in the 70% target.
- Denmark must introduce supplementary accounts which provide a complete picture of emissions from biomass and set an end date for biomass, no later than 2030.
- Denmark must stop all possibilities to increase North Sea oil and gas production; develop a phase-out plan for existing North Sea production and cancel the Baltic Pipe and Lolland-Falster gas pipeline.
- The government must compose realistic estimates for future sea and land use for renewable energies, particularly with regards to SDG 15 and future measures for flexible energy consumption.

INTERNATIONALLY

The development policy priorities for 2021 include a focus on renewable energies.⁷² New sustainability requirements have been adopted for Denmark's Investment Fund for Developing Countries (IFU) which restrict how much support Denmark can give to fossil-based energy projects internationally.⁷³ However, Denmark still contributes to the Global Infrastructure Facility (GIF) which, among other things, supports the development of gas infrastructure. Denmark's export strategy for renewable energies is characterised by an excessive focus on middle-income countries, an expansion of bioenergy and insufficient focus on civil society involvement and the rights of indigenous peoples.

The EU's energy strategy remains insufficient due to its low reduction requirements and increased use of fossil gases.⁷⁴ The Energy Charter Treaty (ECT), which is a major international obstruction to the green transition, is currently undergoing a reform process, but the reform proposals put forward still seek to protect fossil fuel investments.⁷⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark and the EU must withdraw from the ECT.
- The EU must introduce stricter reduction requirements for CO2 emissions (minimum of 65% by 2030); ensure that emissions are calculated fairly; remove permits for new fossil gas investments and get rid of the blending requirement for biofuels in petrol and diesel.
- Denmark must develop an action plan for the technology transfer of renewable energies to low-income countries and exempt bioenergy from Danish export subsidies.
- Denmark must take the lead in cutting financial support for the GIF and ensuring that all support for energy projects must comply with a strict definition of renewable energy which excludes bioenergy, nuclear energy and large-scale hydropower.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS



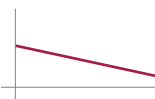


SDG 8

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

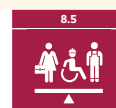
BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



Sustainable economic growth



Improve resource efficiency in consumption and production



Full employment and decent work with equal pay



Protect labour rights and promote safe working environments

NATIONALLY

From a global perspective, the Danish labour market model has ensured economic growth, a good work life, good framework conditions and high productivity. This has in general remained the case between 2017 and today. However, problems persist with regards to fulfilling SDG 8.

Economic growth must be sustainable, but growth always means increased pressure on natural resources and a larger global footprint. Denmark's ecological footprint is already much too big. If everyone on earth consumed as much as the Danes, we would need four planets to cope.⁷⁶

New atypical forms of employment and social dumping put pressure on salary and labour conditions and undermine the Danish labour market model in the long term.⁷⁷ Moreover, there is no equal access to the labour market. Despite rising employment⁷⁸ and a drop in unemployment, youth unemployment remains twice as high as it is in other groups.⁷⁹ This is the case in particular for people without qualifications. In general, far too many young people are neither working nor under education (NEET).⁸⁰ At the same time, employers continue to discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, age, disabilities and other protected characteristics mentioned in the Danish Anti-Discrimination Act.⁸¹ Unemployed people aged between 50 and 65 have difficulties getting a new foothold in the labour market and this in combination with rigid rules on the transition from work life to retirement mean a loss of valuable workforce.⁸²

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must reduce its overall ecological footprint.
- The government and its social partners on the labour market must draw up a cross-sectorial national action plan to reduce the NEET figure.
- Denmark must ensure that atypical forms of employment are covered by collective agreements.
- Denmark must seek to combat social dumping, in part through expanded agreements on value chain responsibility and social clauses as well as tightened controls.
- Denmark must commission systematic studies into the occurrence of discrimination on the labour market.
- Legislation and agreements must ensure a smooth transition from the labour market to retirement in order to retain valuable workforce.

INTERNATIONALLY

If the goal of abolishing child and forced labour is to be reached, greater efforts are required – not just from governments but from the corporate sector as well. The problems are still widespread among the global value chains of companies.⁸³ Investigations reveal that the number of Danish and European companies which act in accordance with international UN and OECD standards is still much too low.⁸⁴

The Danish development policy strategy states that Denmark will: *"promote more well-functioning labour markets in developing countries on the basis of labour rights and social dialogue"*⁸⁵ with framework conditions which also include a healthy workforce and the use of civil society organisations to support vocational training programmes. But Denmark's clear opportunity to act as a catalyst for well-functioning labour markets has been leveraged very little by changing governments.⁸⁶ Denmark should create the necessary framework conditions through development support and simultaneously ensure that Danish companies and their subcontractors comply with ILO conventions and the UN's guidelines for human rights and business. Interventions will be crucial in order to create decent jobs for an ever growing workforce of young people of all genders, within both formal and informal sectors of commerce and business, and in order to limit migration.⁸⁷

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must promote a fundamental reconstruction of international financial institutions so that real economic activities on a global scale can be kept within the planetary boundaries and remain in line with people's basic needs.
- The government must make it mandatory for companies and financial institutions to exercise due diligence and establish criminal liability through the courts in serious cases.
- Denmark must allocate sufficient development aid to our partner countries in order to ensure the proper framework conditions for well-functioning labour markets.
- Development aid must be a catalyst for labour market legislation and social dialogue which promotes decent jobs and sustainable employment.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS





SDG 9

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



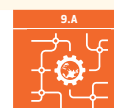
Develop sustainable, resilient and inclusive infrastructures



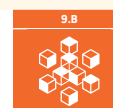
Upgrade all industries and infrastructures for sustainability



Enhance research and upgrade industrial technologies



Facilitate sustainable infrastructure development for developing countries



Support domestic technology development and industrial diversification

NATIONALLY

Denmark has a highly developed level of infrastructure and security of supply. The Danish business sector is oriented towards sustainable development, supported by research and innovation. Challenges in Denmark are concentrated on continued high levels of CO₂ emissions and resource consumption and on inequality between urban and rural areas; e.g. within the transport sector.

Since 2010, passenger traffic⁸⁸ on the roads has increased by 14%. During the same period, the number of passenger cars on the road has increased by almost 20%. The share of total traffic represented by public transport (buses and trains) has fallen from approximately 12% to under 11%. Journeys by bicycle have fallen by approximately 20% since 2014. Price developments favour transport by car over public transport. Intentions to switch to more sustainable methods of transport have thus far failed.

Following several years of decline, CO₂ emissions from Danish companies⁸⁹ have been rising since 2014. In 2014, CO₂ emissions from all sectors were 63.5 million tonnes. In 2018, when the latest figures are from, emissions had increased by just under 4%. Significant emitters of CO₂ such as shipping, aviation and the glass and concrete industry are emitting more CO₂ than before. Emissions from energy supply, on the other hand, have fallen considerably. In the debate on the green transition in Denmark, much focus is placed on reducing CO₂ emissions, reducing pollution and increasing the recycling of waste. But a real effort to restrict our overall footprint is lacking. Denmark is relatively high up in terms of expenditure on research and development with a total of 3% of GDP being spent on this. We are in fourth place in the EU. Public expenditure constitutes 1% of GDP (the highest in the EU) while expenditure from the public sector constitutes 2% of GDP. The bulk of public funds are spent on general science. More and more is being earmarked for green research.

Denmark has a high rate of patent applications compared to other countries, namely within green technologies. Denmark is well covered by digital infrastructure⁹⁰ – such as broadband and mobile networks. Broadband coverage (10Mbit/s) for private homes has increased from 96% to 98% since 2017. 98% of the country has mobile coverage although the networks are of different qualities and 10% of the network is overloaded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must develop a sustainable mobility plan for the conversion of the transport sector.
- Public transport needs to be reinforced through a modernisation of the railway infrastructure, coherent timetables and transport routes; by fomenting flexible transport options (buses, demand responsive transport, car sharing, etc) and by improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists all across the country.
- Denmark must convert industry and innovation into circular production by establishing goals and plans for reducing the consumption of materials such as minerals, for example.
- The government must implement proposals from its 13 climate partnerships and raise the CO₂ tax to DKK 1500 per tonne as recommended by the Danish Council on Climate Change.
- Denmark must ensure that all information and communication technologies create digital accessibility and develop user-friendly systems within all public services.
- The government must resolve to stop the public use of Facebook and other unregulated, private channels as primary sources of information.

INTERNATIONALLY

In recent years, Danish support to the development of industrial production and innovation in developing countries has been limited, with a large share going through the Investment Fund for Developing Countries (IFU). With the future focus of development policy resting on support to local areas and preventing migration, it will be necessary to consider new approaches in order to support innovative start-ups and SMEs in the world's poorest and most fragile states.⁹¹

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must support SMEs and innovative start-ups.
- Danish aid must strengthen local NGOs and small business organisations, in part through a strengthening of the network around businesses in both the formal and informal sectors.
- The government must work with new ways of incorporating Danish technological knowledge, research and know-how on sustainability in relation to these companies.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS



7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



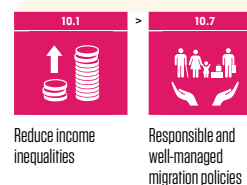
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



SDG 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



NATIONALLY

The last four years have seen rising inequality and declining social mobility.⁹² It has not been possible to secure a relative increase in income for the bottom 40% of the population. On the contrary, there has been a decline in the income share from 22.3% in 2017 to 22.2% in 2019. At the same time, the richest 10% owns 47.3% of total net wealth while half of the entire population owns just less than 5%.⁹³ There is still a high gender pay gap of 14.5%.⁹⁴ Between 2017 and 2019, the number of children born into poverty fell from 64,500 to 59,700 but the benefits ceiling and the so-called integration benefit continue to keep children under the poverty line.⁹⁵ Social inequality is exacerbated by rising discrimination. The Ghetto Package (Ghettopakken) from 2018 has been criticised by the UN for being discriminatory⁹⁶ and the number of registered hate crimes has increased by 17% between 2018 and 2019.⁹⁷ The government's rejection of common refugee policy solutions across the EU and its desire to undertake asylum processing in third countries⁹⁸ are an obstacle to Denmark's promises of international collaboration. Age-based discrimination is widespread and the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed failures in civil society's ability to protect the most frail within its elderly population.⁹⁹

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Ministry of Finance's calculation models must be restructured to ensure universal welfare and Denmark must draw up an action plan to tackle inequality.
- Denmark must abolish the benefits ceiling and the integration benefit and reestablish coverage for unemployment benefits.
- Denmark must also increase taxation on unearned incomes such as capital gains and inheritance.
- Denmark must abolish the so-called Ghetto Law and draw up an action plan to tackle discrimination.
- Denmark must resist initiatives which externalise asylum processing, work to ensure access to asylum in Europe by working in solidarity with the EU and introduce a more human refugee policy which encompasses the annual acceptance of 500 quota refugees
- The government must work within the UN to strengthen the rights of elderly citizens through a binding convention on the elderly.

INTERNATIONALLY

Extreme inequality has not diminished over the last four years.¹⁰⁰ A projection made by the World Bank suggests, that if income inequality increases by 2% per year, by 2030 there will be up to 860 million more people in the world living on less than USD 5.50 per day.¹⁰¹ We also know that there exists enormous inequalities between those responsible for climate change and those most affected by it, and that the world's richest 10% is responsible for more than half of all global CO₂ emissions.^{102,103} In recent years, Denmark has placed greater focus on gender equality, which has been expressed via its membership to the UN's Human Rights Council.¹⁰⁴ Unfortunately, there has been only little progress in this area on a global scale, and at the current rate we will not achieve true gender equality until the year 2099.¹⁰⁵ The world's rich are still significantly under-taxed and there has been a lack of wealth redistribution, both of which have hindered attainment of SDG 10.¹⁰⁶ Tax havens, including those within the EU, are a central factor in tax planning. Danish MPs agree that the battle against tax havens is an important one,¹⁰⁷ however the list unfortunately remains incomplete.¹⁰⁸ It is problematic that global decisions continue to be taken in the OECD, which does not include developing countries as members. However some improvements have occurred; for example, developing countries were consulted in the BEPS process.¹⁰⁹

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must use its development policy strategy to focus on the battle against inequality and poverty and on how the effects of climate change are felt unequally.
- Denmark's work to create gender equality must be given greater priority over the course of the next ten years if SDGs 5 and 10 are to be met.
- Denmark must continue to fight tax havens, in part by working to improve criteria for the European Union's tax haven blacklist.
- Denmark must continue to work for full public country-by-country reporting of all companies.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS





BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



Safe and affordable housing



Inclusive and sustainable urbanization



Provide access to safe and inclusive green and public spaces



Strong national and regional development planning



Support least developed countries in sustainable and resilient building

NATIONALLY

Denmark's cities are generally well-functioning, with most inhabitants enjoying a good quality of life. There are plans and initiatives in place to promote sustainability and reduce climate impact. However, there are also challenges, especially with regards to urban and rural disparities, pollution and congestion in cities, as well as unequal housing conditions.

The population in Denmark has increased by 300,000 since 2010, especially in and around larger cities. Copenhagen has grown by 20% over the period and this growth is expected to continue. Housing prices are rising in the cities and there is a lack of affordable housing for ordinary people. Many homes in rural areas are unoccupied and these houses have barely increased in value for a number of years. The standard of housing in Denmark is generally good and continuously improving. However, there are still 20,131 dwellings without a toilet or shared toilet, 22,913 with shared bathroom facilities and 41,801 completely without access to a bathroom. A further 141,500 properties do not have a room for every occupant. At least 61% of the total housing stock has energy label D or lower, while 33% have E or lower, which is to say non-sustainable in terms of energy consumption.

The largest cities are beset by congestion and air pollution. Even if electric cars will one day replace polluting vehicles, this will not alleviate the issue of congestion. Public transport is competing for place and space against an increase in private cars, at the expense of children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Green spaces in large cities are under pressure as a result of densification and increased construction. The distance to recreational green spaces is often greater than what constitutes a reasonable walking distance. This requires transport by bike, car or public transport and impedes children, the elderly and people with disabilities from enjoying easy access to green spaces. There are no requirements regarding green spaces in connection with new constructions.¹¹⁰

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must build more public housing in places where there is a housing shortage and renovate or demolish uninhabited houses in rural areas.
- All Danish homes must be brought up to at least energy label C and everyone must have a dwelling with its own toilet and bathroom, and at least one room per occupant.
- Denmark must create coherence in its public transport schedules, make public transport cheaper and power its public transport using renewable energies.
- Denmark must impose higher CO₂ taxes on polluting vehicles and establish more spaces for electric vehicles
- Denmark must introduce a congestion charge for cars in larger cities and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Denmark must include natural spaces which are accessible by foot as part of its urban and national planning and establish requirements for proximity to green spaces/natural areas for all new developments.

INTERNATIONALLY

Denmark does not place enough focus on smaller cities and their role in creating sustainable local communities, reducing pressure on regional capitals and providing alternatives to migration. SDG 11 has not been prioritised within Danish development policy despite the fact that more than half the world's population is now urban. By 2050 this will have increased to 6.5 billion people (two-thirds of the entire global population). Climate change is putting cities under increasing pressure and the nearly one billion people who already live in precarious conditions are most severely impacted.

More and more cities and settlements must therefore implement integrated policies and plans for inclusion, resource efficiency, adaptation to climate change and disaster resilience. Support must be granted to the least developed countries in the form of financial and technical aid so as to avoid slums and to build sustainable and robust buildings using local materials.¹¹¹

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In its development policy, Denmark must place much greater focus on urban development in smaller cities and support the construction of inclusive and secure urban communities which provide access to adequate housing and help prevent the formation of unsafe slums.
- Denmark must ensure and support access to political and economic participation for vulnerable groups and place greater focus on strengthening both local authorities and grassroots organisations in the most disadvantaged urban areas
- Internationally, Denmark must support a redoubled focus on inclusive urban development.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS



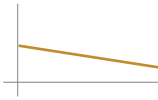
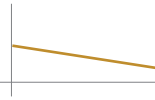


SDG 12

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



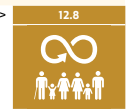
Implement the 10-year sustainable consumption and production framework



Sustainable management and use of natural resources



Responsible management of chemicals and waste



Promote universal understanding of sustainable lifestyles

NATIONALLY

In Denmark, we consume natural resources at such a rate that it would take four Earths for the entire population to live like we do.¹¹² Denmark's greatest challenge is our consumption, measured as ecological footprints, which must also encompass renewables, mineral-based and fossil fuels. In December, the government presented a draft action plan for a circular economy 2020–2032, which unfortunately focused too little on the reuse of products and too much on recycling materials. It said virtually nothing about reducing consumption. A Dane produces more waste than any other EU citizen,¹¹³ according to Eurostat.

In 2020, the current government presented a strategy for green public procurement, but the strategy primarily consisted of vague ambitions with regards to CO2 and contained very little reference to environmental and natural resources, with no mention whatsoever of socially responsible public procurement. According to the Danish Consumer Council (Forbrugerrådet Tænk), 19 in 20 Danish consumers expect products and goods to be manufactured responsibly. Moreover, seven in ten consumers are prepared to pay more for products which are produced responsibly, especially if they can access credible information about the item.¹¹⁴

Without the active involvement of all citizens, it will not be possible to overhaul society's consumption habits. The SDGs must therefore be incorporated into formal education, but also disseminated through informational campaigns aimed at encouraging citizens to adopt more sustainable lifestyles and shopping habits, to recycle more and to reduce their consumption.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must develop and implement an action plan for responsible consumption and production as part of a broader action plan for the SDGs.
- The government must present an overall strategy for a sustainable public procurement policy which incorporates all aspects of sustainability and applies at all levels: to the state, the regions and the municipalities.
- Denmark must use economic instruments to regulate behaviours, with a social balance.

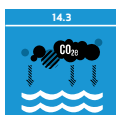
INTERNATIONALLY

The majority of Danish businesses are still lagging behind when it comes to corporate social responsibility¹¹⁵ in several sectors.¹¹⁶ It is expected that the problem will be addressed through legislation at EU level, but this does not absolve the government of responsibility for the efforts and actions of Danish companies and financial institutions. According to a new Voxmeter survey conducted by Amnesty International Denmark, seven in ten Danes believe there is a need for legislation on responsible corporate conduct.¹¹⁷

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It must be made mandatory for companies and financial institutions to exercise due diligence and they must be subject to criminal liability through the courts in serious cases.
- Denmark must stop its import of palm oil, soy and wood from non-sustainable producers and its import of irresponsibly traded fish and seafood.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS

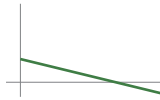




SDG 13 CLIMATE ACTION

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



Integrate climate change measures into policies and planning



Implement the UN framework convention on climate change

NATIONALLY

From 2017 onwards, climate change has moved higher and higher up the agenda for both people and politicians. The Danish Parliament has passed a binding climate act which stipulates a 70% reduction of emissions by 2030 and climate neutrality no later than 2050. It has also given considerable political power to the Council on Climate Change and entered into an agreement to stop new oil exploration in the North Sea. This is a breakthrough for climate action.

However, the government has not yet developed a long-term climate action plan, which specifies how the 2030 target is to be achieved. Several agreements reached in 2020 on e.g. energy, waste and transport, are expected to contribute about one-third of the necessary reductions ahead of 2030. The government is thus adopting a so-called 'hockey-stick' strategy, which relies on as-of-yet unproven technological solutions to enable significant emissions reductions shortly before the 2030 deadline. Such a strategy is highly uncertain, potentially expensive and incompatible with the 1.5 degree target of the Paris Agreement. Moreover, Denmark also needs to develop climate action plans for specific sectors, such as agriculture among others. Finally, Denmark has not yet taken responsibility for its climate impact abroad which, we are directly responsible for as part of our overall footprint and which includes emissions from air travel and the production of imported goods such as soy proteins.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must follow a linear reduction path towards 2030 in accordance with the original calculations and aim for climate neutrality by no later than 2040.
- The Danish government must develop a long-term climate plan with binding milestones which covers all sectors and illustrates how the 2030 and 2040 goals will be achieved.
- A general climate tax must be introduced and gradually stepped up to DKK 1500 per tonne CO2 by 2030.
- The government must integrate efforts to reduce Denmark's overall footprint in the global climate strategy.

INTERNATIONALLY

Denmark must live up to its global responsibility and take the lead in the battle against climate change. Between 2017 and 2021, Denmark has not lived up to its international responsibility in relation to climate finance. At COP15, Denmark committed to provide new and additional climate aid as a part of the overall commitment made by rich countries, with Denmark's fair share amounting to DKK five billion per year. Denmark currently provides around half that amount and since 2015, almost all of the climate finance is taken from the development aid, which is set at 0.7% of GDP, meaning that the world's poorest are left to pay for Denmark's international climate efforts. This makes it difficult to consider Denmark as a pioneer country in the green transition.

The close relation between climate change, natural resources and conflict exacerbates existing challenges for especially vulnerable groups, such as refugees and internally displaced persons, indigenous peoples, etc, who often live in the areas which are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. According to the UN, 40% of all violent conflicts over the last 60 years are rooted in access to scarce and dwindling natural resources. Denmark has failed to sufficiently integrate this context into its international efforts. Moreover, Denmark has not taken a position on how developing countries affected by climate catastrophes should be helped. This must be done with full respect for human rights, which is crucial in order to break down the silo mentality which exists between the Paris Agreement and the SDGs.¹¹⁸

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must contribute DKK five billion per year in new and additional climate aid, which is to say an amount on top of the 0.7% of GDP given as international development aid.
- Ahead of COP26, Denmark must work to agree on an action plan, which ensures that global climate finance, as agreed, is balanced between climate change adaptations and reducing emissions. To help correct the existing imbalance, 70% of Danish climate aid should be allocated to climate change adaptations in the poorest countries.
- Danish aid for climate change adaptations should place focus on displaced and vulnerable population groups and the importance of safeguarding healthy ecosystems, thereby reducing the risk of conflict and increasing climate resilience.
- Denmark must work to establish an international disaster relief fund with several sources of funding, which can be used when poor countries are affected by climate disasters.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS

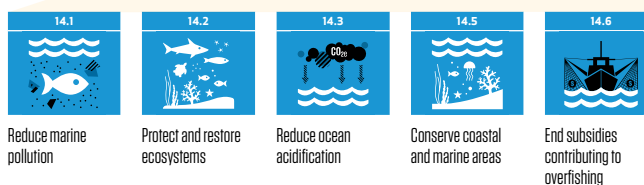




SDG 14 LIFE BELOW WATER

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



NATIONALLY

The seas around Denmark are not in a good state. For example, seven out of eight marine habitat types have a 'considerably unfavorable conservation status'.¹¹⁹ Even if 18% of the sea has been designated as marine protected areas, only 1.4% is actually protected against bottom-trawl fishing operations and only 0.02% (21.8 km²) is covered by a complete fishing ban.¹²⁰

The extraction of rocks and gravel is permitted in sensitive marine areas. Moreover, the seepage of plant nutrients and pesticides from agriculture constitute a great threat to the marine environment, particularly within inland Danish waters. The consequences include, among others, areas with extensive oxygen depletion and unhealthy cod stocks in the Baltic Sea, Kattegat Strait and the North Sea.¹²¹ Nevertheless, catch limits for cod, herring, eel, etc. have been set at higher levels than what researchers recommend. There is a lack of management plans for critically endangered marine stocks in the Baltic Sea and inadequate fishery controls using video surveillance.

We possess the necessary knowledge and technology to take development in the right direction. In 2021, there are several points of impact which Denmark can use to secure a more sustainable and eco-system-based management of marine resources. These include the Maritime Spatial Plan (Havplan),¹²² the River Basin Management Plans (Vandområdeplanerne)¹²³ and the Action Programme of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.¹²⁴

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must raise its level of ambition and secure marine governance which is efficient and eco-system-based through the Maritime Spatial Plan.
- 100% of Danish waters must be managed sustainably, 33% subject to special protections and 10% untouched.
- Denmark must fulfil the objectives for marine protection so that protected marine areas do not merely become 'paper parks', and it must oblige fishers to collect and recover lost fishing equipment (ghost gear).
- Nitrogen, phosphorous and pesticide emissions from agriculture must be reduced in order to revitalise the ocean.
- Sensitive coastal areas and vital fishing habitats must be protected, in part by reviewing the Danish Executive Order on Trawling (Trawlbekendtgørelsen).
- Electronic fishery controls must be extended to ensure compliance with international agreements and obligations.

INTERNATIONALLY

It is estimated that a total of one billion people, primarily in developing countries, are dependent on fish as their primary source of income and protein and that many more are dependent on fish as an important supplement to their diets. Nevertheless, the Danish development policy strategy and international efforts give little priority to the conservation of the world's marine ecosystems.¹²⁵

The global marine environment is challenged by resource extraction, climate change, acidification, pollution and plastic waste. 94% of the world's fishing stocks are either overfished or fished to maximum capacity.¹²⁶ Mangrove forests, coral reefs and seagrass meadows are among the most endangered ecosystems on the planet.¹²⁷ Due to a globally increasing focus on 'blue growth', international small-scale fishing movements fear that their ability to subsist on marine resources will be further undermined. Within the EU context, Denmark has blocked other countries from introducing fishing restrictions in protected areas. At the same time, the EU's free-trade agreements mean that small-scale fishing operations in developing countries lose control over fishing resources when the EU buys access to their waters. The EU's biodiversity strategy and the forthcoming UN biodiversity conference CBD COP-15 will have a major impact on how we manage and protect our seas and oceans in the future. In this regard, it is important to designate protected marine areas, to ensure the access of small-scale fishing operations and indigenous peoples to marine areas and to increase the proportion of marine protected areas under strict protection to at least 30%.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must work within the EU to ensure that fishing restrictions are set in line with scientific advice, within the EU and in marine areas shared with third parties, and to ensure a strengthened EU position in UN negotiations on a treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean's biodiversity in areas outside national jurisdictions.
- Strong institutional frameworks must be secured globally through a CBD COP15, which must have decision-making powers and funding to pursue biodiversity efforts at sea.
- Denmark must work for the EU to raise import requirements to promote sustainably caught and traceable fish products.
- Danish development aid must support projects which ensure and promote biodiversity.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS





SDG 15 LIFE ON LAND

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



15.1
Conserve and restore terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems



15.2
End deforestation and restore degraded forests



15.5
Protect biodiversity and natural habitats



15.9
Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity in governmental planning

NATIONALLY

Danish nature is under continued and persistent pressures. Recent developments in the state of Danish biodiversity indicate predominantly negative trends. This can be seen both from the updated Red List of Danish species, which reveals the extent to which certain species are endangered, and also from the latest reports submitted to the EU regarding implementation of the EU's Habitats Directive. This shows that only 5% of habitat types have a favourable conservation status, 95% have an unfavourable status, while the status for all ten forest types are 'highly unfavourable'.¹²⁸ Many goals and SDG targets should already have been met by 2020, but in reality they are far from being reached.

The loss of biological diversity in Danish nature is due primarily to the intensification of agriculture and forestry, e.g. in the form of drainage and cultivation, but also to construction and infrastructure which has gradually pushed untouched nature further back. Efforts to protect and manage Danish nature have thus far not been sufficient to curb the loss of biodiversity and have in no way managed to put current negative developments back on to a more positive track.¹²⁹

Increased political awareness and the concrete initiatives implemented by changing governments will hopefully benefit nature in the long run. Among the positive elements that we are still waiting to see the effects of are the designation of untouched forest, a ban on the fertilisation and spraying of Section 3 areas and the promise of 75,000 hectares of untouched forest and a total of 15 natural national parks on the latest Finance Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must set national goals for biodiversity which, at a minimum, match the EU's targets and new global biodiversity goals after 2020.
- There is a need to develop a Danish biodiversity strategy and action plan which follow the guidelines of the Biodiversity Convention.
- Denmark must increase its efforts to improve the state of nature, designate more and bigger contiguous wild natural areas, where nature looks after itself, and where a minimum of 30% of the land area is protected nature, and designate much more untouched woodland;
- Denmark must reestablish natural hydrology and ecosystems as well as the functions that larger animals have had in the landscape;
- Coherence must be improved in Danish nature via the establishment of small nature areas.

INTERNATIONALLY

Denmark's contributions to international biodiversity have been characterised by inadequate reporting and insufficient allocating of resources to relevant international agreements and conventions, first and foremost the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and IPBES (UN platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services). An exception to this, however, is Denmark's financial contributions to the IUCN, which were resumed in the Finance Act in 2020 and retained in 2021.

It is positive that in 2020, the government expressed its clear support for the EU's Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and its joint declarations on an ambitious global agreement for biodiversity (post-2020), which are expected to be adopted at the CBD's 15th Conference in October 2021.

However, Denmark has largely failed in its nationally binding obligation to meet the CBD's Aichi targets, which reached their deadline in 2020, and both current and new national and international political resolutions continue to be insufficient.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must formulate clear and measurable ambitions and priorities for international efforts and collaborations around biodiversity and increase its efforts for, and participation in, those international agreements to which Denmark is a signatory: e.g. CBD, IPBES, CITES and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Denmark must increase its funding for development aid in order to fulfil SDG 15.
- Joint EU and UN goals for biodiversity must be integrated into a national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP) which should include a plan for the withdrawal of harmful subsidies, funding, sector integration, land use, species management, etc.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS



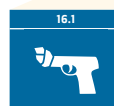
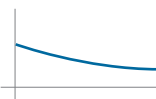


SDG 16

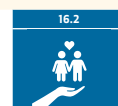
PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



Reduce violence everywhere



Protect children from abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence



Promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice



Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms

NATIONALLY

The freedoms of certain population groups are restricted in Denmark, as exemplified by the recent ban on face coverings in public places.¹³⁰ The new Danish act on the administrative revocation of citizenship and the repeal of the act's sunrise clause make it possible to deprive Danish citizens with dual citizenship of their Danish citizenship without trial. Draft bill L189, presented to the Danish Parliament at the beginning of 2021, and referred to as the Security Package (Tryghedspakken)¹³¹ will restrict future freedom of assembly, as the police will be able to exclude everyone from an area where individuals have demonstrated intimidating behaviour. The exact meaning of the term 'intimidating behaviour' is not defined in the draft bill and it is feared that it will encompass the freedom of assembly of minority groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must lift the ban and change the penal code to allow face coverings in public.
- Denmark must abolish restrictive legislation and respect freedom of assembly for all.
- Denmark must develop a clear plan for its use of the WPS Agenda¹³² within the Danish context.

INTERNATIONALLY

Denmark's development aid is increasingly allocated to 'fragile' countries. While it is positive that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has established a unit for Migration, Communities and Fragility, the human and financial resources allocated to this area are still insufficient. The conflict prevention and peace-keeping efforts funded by Denmark do not sufficiently take account of the relationship between conflict and climate change, which is necessary in order to better address the structural causes of instability which lead to forced displacement.

Both Danish development policy and foreign policy have given greater priority to strengthening civil society's room for manoeuvre on a global scale. This takes the form of funding pools for civil society organisations in danger,¹³³ increased funding for the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights¹³⁴ and action within the UN to better include civil society,¹³⁵ as well as increased criticism of governments which disrespect freedoms of expression, assembly and association.¹³⁶

The launch of Denmark's national action plan for Women, Peace and Security is an important step in the direction towards more ambitious goals in this area, but there is a lack of dedicated resources to implement the plan. A lack of regard for the 1325 agenda in domestic policy, for example in relation to female asylum seekers, is also a weak point. While the number of children who are subject to violence and serious abuse has increased globally over recent years,¹³⁷ not least due to the rising number of conflicts which last longer and more severely affect civilians than before,¹³⁸ Denmark has downgraded its focus on prevention, response and accountability in relation to violence against children in conflicts. UN peacekeeping operations play a critical role in maintaining international peace and security. While Denmark has contributed a considerable number of soldiers and police officers to these operations over the years, the number of Danish soldiers has fallen considerably and Denmark does not currently contribute any police officers at all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must increase its multi-lateral engagement with a focus on the 1325 agenda, Children and Armed Conflict and the R2 agendas and with regards to managing the causes of fragility. This should include a high level of synergy with climate adaptation efforts. This requires investment both internally to relevant ministries but also in the form of external aid to peacekeeping and security initiatives.
- In its candidacy to the UN's Security Council, Denmark must similarly place focus on the above mentioned agendas and strengthen its contribution to the UN's Sustaining Peace agenda, including through support to locally-led conflict prevention and peace-building initiatives.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS





SDG 17

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

TARGETS
IN FOCUS

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT



17.1	17.2	17.4	17.14
Mobilize resources to improve domestic revenue collection	Implement all development assistance commitments	Assist developing countries in attaining debt sustainability	Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development

NATIONALLY

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the OECD assessed that the funding gap to attaining the SDGs was in the order of several trillion US dollars. The pandemic has necessitated funding to an even greater extent than before.¹³⁹

Denmark is one of the few countries to meet its obligation to give at least 0.7% of GDP as development aid. Danish aid is still given as grants rather than loans, which is both positive and important. Several countries and international institutions give aid as loans, which puts recipients further into debt and can contribute towards pushing them into bankruptcy.¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, it is concerning that Denmark's aid contributions are at their lowest level in 40 years, at a time when the need is greatest,¹⁴¹ and as countries such as Norway and Sweden have raised their aid contributions.¹⁴² It is also concerning that in recent years, Danish aid has been subject to an increasing focus on the promotion of short-term national interests rather than the funding of the SDGs.

With regards to climate aid, it is disappointing that Denmark has interpreted the DAC rules in such a way that no further aid is given over the existing 0.7%. Denmark has instead opted for a greening of its existing aid contributions. This shifts focus away from the current unequal burden of responsibility for the climate crisis and also risks shifting focus away from the fight against poverty and inequality. Moreover, it is reprehensible that over-reporting occurs in relation to climate aid.^{143,144} As a result, Denmark is far from complying with its obligations under the Paris Agreement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must raise its aid spending to 1.0% of GDP, with 0.7% being earmarked for general development and 0.3% being earmarked for climate aid.

INTERNATIONALLY

In 2015, Denmark committed to doubling its aid for taxation and national resource mobilisation, through the Addis Tax Initiative, before the end of 2020. But Denmark is far behind in achieving that goal. In 2020, only a tenth of the amount committed was given.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, Denmark has increasingly channelled money for the tax build-up through the IMF, which historically has prioritised VAT rates that are higher than progressive tax reforms. Institutions have also maintained public-sector cuts even during the pandemic, which undermines development in central social areas, such as education.^{146,147,148}

Many countries lack emergency liquidity. Extraordinary support is needed to ensure that all countries have the requisite financial leeway to attain all 17 of the SDGs. The solution is a number of different initiatives, such as the IMF issuing new special drawing rights¹⁴⁹ (as was the case during the financial crisis) which can give all countries, including developing countries, a boost and the economic power to better invest their way out of the crisis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denmark must comply with the obligation in the Addis Tax Initiative to double aid for taxation and to utilise its experiences in helping to build progressive tax systems in developing countries.
- Denmark must work to establish a global debt mechanism with the capacity to handle all debt, including finding solutions for debt forgiveness, deferrals and restructuring.
- Denmark must exert pressure to avoid policies in the IMF and the World Bank which prescribe cuts to the public sector, increase inequality and reduce the ability of countries to achieve the SDGs.
- Denmark must advocate for and exert pressure on the IMF to issue new special drawing rights.

RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS



ANNEX: LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND - DANISH CITIZENS' VOICES

With the promise of Leaving No One Behind, Denmark has promised to include those who are furthest from being part of the sustainable development. Those who are often overlooked, marginalised or lost in the system. They must be seen, lifted up and supported to benefit from the implementation of the SDGs. Here are five stories from some of the people that LNOB is really about.

BARWAQO HUSSEIN (21):

Political science student at Aarhus University. Came to Denmark from Somalia at the age of five and grew up in the Tingbjerg housing project in the suburbs of Copenhagen.

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS?

Yes, I have. We learned a little bit about them at school and in high school, but not in much depth. I had never really thought of them as something I could actively contribute to. That realisation only came later, when I was volunteering with ActionAid Denmark, and through the way we actively used the SDGs in the Tingbjerg Youth Community. We use them as a tool to create change. For example, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities and the right to civic participation and to be free from discrimination. It was an eyeopener for me to learn that these rights are promised to us and that we are therefore fully entitled to stand up and demand that our politicians fight for them. It is a pity that so many people associate them only with the UN and developing countries on the other side of the world, as we also need to do better here in Denmark and become more sustainable. It's clear to me that we can be better.

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU FIND THAT YOUR PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY IS RESTRICTED?

I feel that this issue is particularly pertinent in the negative tone in the way people talk about and discuss Muslims. Both in the public discourse and in society in general. As a student of political science, I am naturally very interested in politics and as a volunteer I am very active in different ways, but I often refrain from participating in the public debate. There are so many negative comments and no matter how many times I present my point of view, I find that people believe they are entitled to define my reality. That is something I would rather spare myself. Now, our politicians consider that religion ought to have an influence on the citizenship application process. I feel that this is wrong, because religion is a private matter. Besides, Denmark has freedom of religion. As a stateless person, I do not have full democratic rights and I cannot vote in parliamentary elections, which I find regrettable given that so many of the policies adopted affect me personally. I have applied for citizenship and passed all the tests required of me, so now I just hope that the COVID-19 restrictions will soon be loosened so I can officially complete the process.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT?

I would recommend they work to help raise the tone in the debate and act as a role model for the general public. This is

something that has fortunately received more focus lately, but there is still a long way to go. Politicians have a special position of power and thus also responsibility, so I hope they will live up to that and promote a good tone. This might also inspire others to weigh their words and help to find motivation to participate in the public debate. Moreover, I would also recommend them not to let religion be a factor when it comes to citizenship. This will only lead towards discrimination, and with SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, the government has committed to minimise discriminatory legislation and include more people in society. This would be a step forward on the path towards practising the promise to *leave no one behind* which is a pervasive issue on the agenda today. ■

SARAH THOMASSEN (75):

Retiree. Exempt from receiving digital mail, through actively opting out of communicating with the public authorities via the Internet. Worked for 17 years as a hospital assistant and union representative. Then worked for 19 years for the trade union FOA, as union secretary.

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS?

Yes, through my seniors' club in the organisation *Faglige Seniorer (Professional Seniors)*, where others have talked about them. I have also come across them on TV and on the radio. But I don't know an awful lot and I have the impression that other people don't know much about the SDGs either, so a meeting at the club sometime soon would be very beneficial.

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU FIND THAT YOUR PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY IS RESTRICTED?

I haven't got a computer or a tablet, just my phone, which I use for text messaging and phone calls. I have no interest in getting a computer either. I just don't have an affinity for computers; I have tried using them but I end up hitting the wrong buttons and I don't understand the messages that pop up. In my time at the trade union, it became clear that technology was not something for me. I would make mistakes and get irritated, angry and mad. Today I have accepted that that's just the way it is.

With regards to computers and technology, I worked during a period when things were organised differently. I used a typewriter, but mostly I prepared handwritten drafts which the secretary then typed out and polished up. She was better at articulating things and setting our letters out neatly. I learned to use a computer for the calendar and to write brief email replies. It was the same for most of my colleagues.

ANNEX: LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND - DANISH CITIZENS' VOICES

Sometimes it's a bit vexatious and I get irritated when people tell me things like: "oh, you can access it online". I usually tell them the only net I have is my grocery net bag. Their comments just run off me. I live with the inconveniences of not having a computer, but I don't think it's much of a big deal in my everyday life. I'm not resentful and I've come to terms with it. My older friends have difficulties using a computer; they've never gotten used to them. Some of them are dependent on their children or grandchildren for help and have had no choice but to use digital means of keeping in contact with them, especially during the pandemic. I don't want to be reliant on my children in that way.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT?

I think the digital opt-out option works well for me and I would recommend that they keep it available as an option.

Global Seniors recommends that elderly citizens be consulted in the development of new digital solutions so that developers can build around the actual competencies of many elderly people, who have often been outside of the labour market for several years and so have not been introduced to new systems. Moreover, the public sector should also endeavour to use plain and accessible language so that their communications can be understood by ordinary people. ■

KÅLÀNGUAK ABSALONSEN (50):

Adopted from Greenland aged four by a Danish family. She suppressed her Greenlandic background and "stepped back from herself" up until two years ago.

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS?

Never. I have heard the term through Ilisimasavut,¹⁵⁰ but I don't know what it is.

WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF BEING MARGINALISED FROM SOCIETY?

That is a daily occurrence for me. I am not on an equal footing with Danes in my day to day life. Because they have their own story. I need to seek out and find my own. Some days I may not care all that much about it, but I am constantly aware of my status as a minority. Constantly.

At job interviews, I have to fight to present myself as a credible person. At the bar, I often get passed over even if I'm at the front of the queue. In the media, we're often portrayed as an anti-social presence, drinking beer and acting up on Christianshavn Torv, for example, and you only ever hear about social problems and so on. I've grown up with the way Denmark has told the story of what it means to be a Greenlander. It has never been a healthy depiction. It led me to take a big step back from myself. I've always thought of myself as white and it used to horrify me when people would ask whereabouts in Greenland I was from. I've spent my whole life being Danish, but I have always felt

different. We need to talk about what it is to be a Greenlander. To talk about how we have just as much right to be here. Because I don't want others to go through the same as me. My own children have felt embarrassed that I am from Greenland after being exposed to prejudices at school. It affects them and they will always get asked where they are from rather than being thought of simply as kids.

I also feel that there is this expectation that I should be grateful for having been saved. I can try to ignore that, but I always find myself having to adopt to a Danish perspective and needing to calculate how I express myself and defend my identity. For example, in relation to the recent debate on changing the name of an ice cream called Eskimo and what that means to me. I am made into a story, an experience, that I have to relate to even though I've only ever spent a week in Greenland since I was adopted. I spent many years laughing at jokes about Greenlanders in order to protect myself. If I used a Danish expression that plays on crass stereotypes about Greenlanders then nobody else would do the same. My adoptive parents naturally have a responsibility, but so does Danish society, for it has not helped me to develop a healthy relationship with what it means to be a Greenlander.

WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR THE GOVERNMENT?

- We must promote our history as Greenlanders. Children need to know from a young age that we are a commonwealth. There should be books about Greenland in our institutions and educational materials for children that are written by Greenlanders.
- Greenland also needs to be articulated as part of the Nordic Region. More Greenlanders ought to be represented in the media so that young people can see themselves reflected in them.
- The debate needs to be flipped so that Danes are instead asked the question: "what is it like to have been a colonial power over Greenland?"
- The debate on the Eskimo ice cream became this entertaining story in the media, but it runs much deeper than that. Politicians must dare to discuss what it means to be a former colonial power. Even if they take a little responsibility, they are also quick to step back and let people just shout at one another without pushing forward a proper debate. ■

ZEPHYR BORGÉN AL-MODAFFER (19):

Iraqi-Romani, non-binary lesbian, has experienced discrimination in the school system related to ethnicity and sexuality.

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS?

Yes, but when I saw the symbol for SDG 5: Gender Equality I gave up. By using only the male and female gender symbols, the UN misses the point and fails to recognise binary, intersex trans-gender people and others. It reveals how the UN views gender and makes me lose faith in the idea that things might improve.

ANNEX: LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND - DANISH CITIZENS' VOICES

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU FIND THAT YOUR PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY IS RESTRICTED?

In the municipality and through a lack of understanding for diversity. My family was in a very challenging place after we left Iraq, and I spent time in homes and went to a youth boarding school. But everyone struggled to understand and support me. When I came out as bisexual, the home forbade me from sleeping over with both male and female friends, which generated distrust and made me to think of my sexuality as something taboo. My caseworker had also written that my father, as a Muslim, was against my sexuality, but he is not practicing and our conflict had nothing to do with faith. The municipality puts people in boxes, but that is not how things are in real life. People need to understand, that not all Arabs are homophobes and that queer Muslims exist. After boarding school, the municipality couldn't help me, so I was homeless for a period and had to find my own way into the education system. I was bullied at several schools. Other students said nasty things to me, but the teachers just said I had to keep my head high. It didn't help, so my absence rate went up and I got kicked out.

The greatest help was to be met with understanding from others. At boarding school, a friend of mine helped me to understand my sexuality as non-binary. At production school, I met other queer people who helped build a positive environment where I could focus on learning. At Roskilde Technical College, I came across EiF,¹⁵¹ which is an organisation that works to improve conditions for LGBTQ+ people. It was nice to join together with others in the fight for diversity.

Today things are more stable than they have been before. I now have a place to live, thanks to a good counsellor. She was the first person from the municipality who actually understood how to help me because she saw me as who I am without judgement and without asking for explanations. It is nice to have some stability, as I think about what will come next.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR RECOMMENDATION TO THE GOVERNMENT?

The failure to understand diversity and LGBTQ+ people is a structural problem. Politicians should not just comment on how strange the situation is but participate openly in the debate. I want to participate actively and be heard, but I should not always be responsible for explaining things and promoting understanding. Those in power should take more responsibility. Caseworkers need to be more open and flexible and to listen, rather than just put us in boxes. Right from primary school, sex education is very hetero-normative with little mention of gender identities. Teachers need to be able to act against discrimination rather than just ask students to rise above it. Better conditions at school will increase our chances of graduating and getting jobs, which in turn will strengthen our representation in society. ■

VIVI DAASTRUP (60):

Early retiree and formerly homeless. Affiliated to the Danish National Organisation for Homeless People (SAND) and sold the non-profit street newspaper Hus Forbi for many years.

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS?

No, I haven't. I don't know what they are.

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU FIND THAT YOUR PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY IS RESTRICTED?

I often find myself having to adapt to the system and follow lots of rules that don't necessarily make sense for me. Instead of the system taking care of me, I feel overlooked and unheard. There are many challenges to being rootless and homeless and there are so many things we are not allowed to do. The law on camps makes it more difficult for us to spend the night together on the street so we can take care of each other. If I need to pee, I am too afraid to sit between two cars in case I end up getting fined. Coronavirus restrictions prevented us from selling Hus Forbi and from being close to each other. These are very basic needs that we were unable to have met without being labelled as criminals. I think that is a big problem which needs to be solved.

It is out on the street and in shelters where I have received the best support. When I was homeless, the others on the street took such good care of me and we became like a sort of family that looked out for each other. I also enjoyed giving and being there for others. For example, I helped a woman to pay for a ticket so that she could go and say goodbye to her terminally ill father in Norway. We would help each other unconditionally, but this sort of situation can lead to problems with the municipality in terms of explaining our financial means. But above all, it is through SAND that I feel truly seen and heard and where I can participate actively.

WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR THE GOVERNMENT?

We want our raison d'être back. As things stand now, we are disappearing into the void and falling between the cracks of the system's checkboxes and forms. We're becoming invisible without being heard or seen. But we all have a story to tell. There are so many opportunities for joy and quality of life if only we were allowed to take advantage of them. Right now, I value having a home and 200 kroner (around €26) to spend each day –honestly, I feel like a millionaire. But a roof overhead doesn't solve everything. First of all, I hope the government will reconsider the law on camps and increase the availability of public toilets. In the long run, I hope they will listen to us and involve us to a much greater extent so we can be accommodated and made visible. We are all entitled to an identity. ■

COVID-19 AND THE SDGS

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AUTHORS: OXFAM IBIS, GLOBAL SENIORS, EUROPEAN ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK DENMARK (EAPN)

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AUTHORS: OXFAM IBIS, FOEDEVAEREBANKEN

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ANNEX

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 **DIGNITY**
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EAPN

FN
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Danish United Nations Association


FødevarerBanken

GA GLOBAL
AKTION

 GLOBALE
SENIORER

GREENPEACE

 KVINDERNES
U-LANDSUDVALG

 KVINDE
RADET

act:onaid

nyt
europa
bæredygtigt og inkluderende

 **Our Fish**

 **OXFAM IBIS**

 **Red Barnet**

DfPA
Danmarks Faglige
Påvirkningsforening

 **RIKO**

 **RØDE
KORS**

**WORLD'S
BEST
NEWS**


WWF

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased by 1.5 million, from 2.5 million in 1980 to 4 million in 1995. The public sector has become a major employer in the UK, and its growth has been a major factor in the overall growth of the economy.

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