



Population Dynamics in Greenland



Focus Group Meetings

Date of the focus group meeting: Ilulissat April 10th, 2017

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Name of the facilitator: Q2: Majbritt Didriksen Raal

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FG # 8

Q2: Ilulissat the April 10th, 2017, we are going to talk to the Professional Group.

Q1: Welcome, we are working on the final part of the project, we have started in Kullorsuaq in the beginning of March 31st, and we stayed in Kullorsuaq for six days, we have held several focus group meetings. Now we will be presenting some of the project findings, and we want to hear your opinions about the subjects, you will be debating. Q2 (Majbritt) will be the facilitator

Q2: Should I just start? This research is called PDG and has been researched in Kullorsuaq, I will read to you. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. As Q1 just mentioned it is not an interview but a debate, where your opinions are the point of focus. There are several different sets of questions that you will be asked as a group. These questions are related to our research findings in Kullorsuaq. Over the past three years we have conducted 92 interviews with people in Kullorsuaq ranging in age from 15 to 83. Our interviews included topics about family and relationship dynamics, access to contraception and reproductive health services, emotions, changes in Kullorsuaq, cultural beliefs and values, community norms, and the economy in Kullorsuaq and how all of these issues may or may not be related to individuals' and families' decisions to have children or not have children. The questions in this focus group are related to some of our research findings that we would like to get your opinions about. Because we are a group we would like to ask you all to speak one at a time; that way we can all hear what everyone has to say, everything you say will be translated later.

Q2: In the first section the subject is: Family Dynamics and the text I am about to read is a research result:
We would like to talk with you about the fluid family dynamics that are present in Kullorsuaq. Individuals describe belonging to relatively large family units and being raised by a number of individuals within or outside of the family unit. There were also descriptions of family members giving their child up for adoption to related couples who may be unable to have their own child. There are also intergenerational caretaking dynamics that link the youngest generation to caretakers who are not direct biological parents, and this changes the nature of parental identification among those raised primarily by non-biological parents. *It is important to understand that these family dynamics are considered normal and culturally appropriate for people in Kullorsuaq.* That was the information.

Q2: Given this information, we would like you to debate this: What is your opinion about this research finding?

A1: I can recognize the findings, I have been to Kullorsuaq several times, concerning the subject about having a child too early and those who adopt, these are recognizable.



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- A2: I recognize them all, they are quite recognizable but to understand that better, family dynamics what is meant by that, can you translate that to Danish?
- Q1: That the entire family partake in raising a child, they all affect each other.
- A2: I just want to understand that correctly.
- Q2: Flydende familie dynamikker (Fluid family dynamics in Danish).
- A2: The questions are quite interesting also that the research findings shows that, for instance, these have been known for a long time, though doing something about it has been limited, I know that fact as I am from Upernavik and have been to Kullorsuaq many times while I worked in Upernavik. The differences for them are that they live more isolated and remote and they are hard to get to because they live so remote out of usual traffic routes and then they live by their own culture. About having a child, I also know about those from my previous job, but it looks like Kullorsuaq is changing due to outside influence, thinking about information and other projects from the Government of Greenland and from the Municipality. Then also choosing a child, I have noticed that has changed, such as according my memory giving the children to people who are not their parents to be brought up, forgetting children's own needs, it is interesting that it is one of the findings, from the research. Things we already know are now being confirmed and documented, that is how I feel.
- Q2: Can I please ask a question? You mentioned that they are already known, who knows about them, are they documented in a report or by people?
- A2: It is mainly us people who live up north that they live the way they do.
- Q2: Is it common knowledge among people?
- A2: Yes, it is also good that it now is also known by researchers and documented in a report that can be used by all. When I was in Upernavik I worked within social services, there I knew the information I received and after I got here to Ilulissat the information I receive from A1's visits, these problems are such, I already knew about them and had already worked on them and delivered them to the responsible management but they don't seem to do anything about it. I am thankful that there is a research who had the same findings, that is how I feel, just as I have been heard now.
- Q2: Can I please ask you about what you meant by choosing a child, I have to translate this and would like to understand what you meant by it?
- A2: Here, before you asked a question, when you were reading up on the findings, for instance when parents are to have a child, when they have chosen to give away the child to a couple without children, maybe like a gift or in another way where they choose parents. I also know that the grandparents, the parents who wants to become grandparents tell their child to have a child though their child wants to get an abortion. They make their child stay pregnant and



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then they become grandparents, I have heard it is also a status symbol but their way of thinking may just show that they live in a very remote place. Though they are part of the society but their mentality and culture is different still.

Q2: To clarify, those who are to become parents who has a child which is pregnant, do they decide who is to have the child? Or those who can't have a child could ask if they could have the child? Which one is it?

A2: It could be both situations according to what I have heard.

Q2: **This is the next question: What is the role of young parents in raising their own children? And how can young parents be empowered to raise their own children?**

A1: It is noticeable that type of raising children goes in rings, if the parents are such then their children will also be such, that is very noticeable. I think somehow, just as A2 already mentioned, they are in a very remote location, maybe their knowledge about raising children is limited, maybe the need "tools" or within the family they just see it as something that just will remain as is. Maybe therefore the raising of children doesn't evolve more than it could, for instance as an example maybe other families encourage their children to get an education, don't have children until you are finished with your education, because living is very difficult. But in Kullorsuaq they deviate as the families do not encourage their children to travel or to get an education, I sometimes think that the responsible adults the old people their descendants must provide for them. I have sometimes come the understanding that they need to have many children so that they can "earn"/get money by having them because they can't find jobs, house/place of their own, they don't have a foundation but from child support has to be their income, I have sometimes experienced that when I am up there. They are uncertain which step to take or maybe because of limited knowledge, I don't know, but the findings are very clear such as personal finances, training/courses have been planned or wanted already from earlier years, how to be frugal with money in order to avoid the children being hungry, such things.

A2: Here also according what I know, it seems the way the raise children is based on what they see, from how they live their daily life's in Kullorsuaq, such as naming a child after someone, feeling sorry for some, pampering and maybe when someone had a child the way the raise the child, they say it is okay – have a child we will take care of the child, we will raise the child you can enjoy your youth, we have sometimes heard that, it is quite incredible when coming from outside of Kullorsuaq. Therefore, the way of raising before giving away responsibility the impacts could be those, neglect, not taking responsibility, inability to control ones finances, not supporting ones child.

Q2. **There is another question, maybe that would help start the talk/debate: How can young people be taught the skills necessary to be responsible parents? Like you who are parents how can you teach your children to become responsible parents?**



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- A1: I think, guidance, advice and what is normal on a daily basis, maybe guiding on what is normal within the community/society and then also surely what are the values at home, what are the backgrounds/basis, what are our values. Looking at the entire community/society but also here at this place/location, what are the differences and how can they be found/identified. Don't take away the task away from them but give them the responsibility.
- A2: And also in bringing the children up, being able to say no, we know and A1 has also mentioned it earlier, that they have given name to someone after someone who has died or they have a favorite child and children who always get a yes, it is noticeable up there. And maybe the children don't know their limits, and maybe a sexual abuse can be obvious but also empowering them to be able to say know, giving them tools to empower the children is something that we wish very much for.
- A1: Also scolding someone for having treated their child bad are also very obvious and common. Because this child is special for no one should ever do anything against that. That is someone special to me you have to treat that person right.
- A2: Giving them the personality of the dead person they were named after, even though the child has her/his own personality.
- A1: The child is like the person they were named after, the child should be like this, the way of living (lifestyle) seems very different from the rest. Even though we are close in Upernavik, with several hundred kilometers. But it is quite noticeable that because they live in a remote location they live life in a different way. Maybe I shouldn't include this, but Upernaviks settlements are many and Kullorsuaq is the most northern. Looking at those settlements with fewer inhabitants they have similar traits, for instance in Nutaarmiut, they are very similar though Kullorsuaq has many more inhabitants but it seems their remote location influences them to be as they are, not really following in today's life. It seems as if they have been left behind somehow, things that have become normal/common in the society are not yet normal/common for them.
- Q2: Yes the level of development varies from place to place.
- Q2: We will continue on to the third: How can grandparents be educated and/or encouraged to empower their children to raise their own children?**
- Q1: How should the grandparents be taught about letting their children and grandchildren taking care of their own children?
- A2: I think, the way of living long time ago, the grandparents own way of life, surely it is something to be respected, but they should also keep up with the development and to moving onto another way of living. Such as being able to fearlessly say, you now have a child and you must bring up your children. It seems to be in giving responsibility, in my opinion. Taking away or keeping responsibility at bay, though it may work for them, looks negative from a distance/looking from outside, it feels like: "hello stop, get it out" one feels



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like that but also their way of living, but also encouraging them to take another step, that is what I think about it.

- A1: Being able to set boundaries seems to be the..., surely the question here is who is going to teach such things, are the grandparents going to be taught for real, or are we to focus on the entire community in Kullorsuaq or are we going to focus on only those and work with those only? That is the question that forms within me. If the focus will entirely be on them and if we are to single them out, because you are a grandparent then you must be able to set boundaries or that seems to be question that is sensitive to answer, how are the grandparents to be taught?
- A2: I also get this way, you know, for instance when we look to our elders, they been told very much about responsibility, you have to this and that, maybe therefore when they had their own children they don't want their children to live like that. They have told themselves that "I don't want my child to live like that" and maybe they let their children with too much freedom. I don't know but that can be obvious, because I am the grandmother and the oldest, I am in charge or because I am the grandfather I am in charge. That still exists in the northern parts, it is quite obvious.
- A1: I remember that also in Kullorsuaq that someone has that position, then when that person died, then the community "control" seemed to fall apart. Then also later on another denomination started to blend into the community and it also added on that and therefore the community in Kullorsuaq seem to have lost bearing. According to what I remember from previous years, they were well functioning and then later on when I started my line of work within the Social Services, I was surprised to learn that communities and families though they lived together were hostile towards each other due to another denomination or based on where one stands. It was very unpleasant surprise to see such situation for real in such a small place, maybe because the way they were against each other was so obvious, when someone leaves then they will immediately start gossip about that person with such an anger that seems to be intense. But surely that must have had an impact on those young people, I am sure of it.
- Q2: We will continue on to: Intimate Relationship Dynamics. In our interviews people talked about a range of issues in their intimate relationships. Our research findings showed that people believed that a good relationship requires communication, sharing, personal maturity and economic stability. Bad relationships were characterized by affairs, suspicion and revenge, lack of communication and conflict solutions skill, abuse and disrespect. Casual sexual relationships also appear to be common. In your opinion:
- Q2: What do you think is important about this information in terms of young people making decisions about having or not having children? Is it clear?**
- A1: Surely here the results are very familiar and to hear them such as suspicion and casual sexual relationships, surely the possible outcome lays here, when the mother to be decides to have a child. But we also know about the father to be who doesn't want to have a child and the mother to be who wants to have child, then one of them "wins", then that could

maybe result in children who doesn't have a "father", with a single mother to raise the child. But also here the family may also partake in deciding in whether or not to have the child. I think maybe without thinking it through, I am not sure if I can say that, but it seems that having a child is seen as something done carelessly/hastily. Nobody think about where are we to live and how are we going to provide for the child, who is to have the responsibility, how are to r go about this. These are the thoughts that come to my mind in answering the question. Not having plans, according to what I hear the research results seem to be. They seem to act mainly without planning thoroughly, showing that the responsibility is not held by anyone.

A2: It is also sometimes obvious that the husband though he has a wife having casual sexual relationship resulting getting another woman pregnant, that could be somewhat obvious. Therefore that is how those conflicts occur and different situations such as jealousy and like. It is as if they have no boundaries and as if it is normal even with sexual relationships, they may use is playfully as if it is funny, about sexual relationships, despite the fact that it is not normal. Maybe they also see it as normal such as A1 mentioned about responsibility, without first thinking about how much the child can fill in life, carefree pregnancy or this giving a child away, it may not be too healthy for mind after it is done.

A1: Now the number inhabitants of Kullorsuaq has increased, there are many children and also some, maybe all of them have different fathers, or amongst siblings they may all have a different mother and one father, that almost just shows life without boundaries. And it is not discussed within the community, it looks like as if is supposed to be normal, it is not normal after so many have been influenced. It is there cousin, these siblings, such as you mentioned, having children outside of the marriage, by casual sexual relationships. It is understandable if, jealousy, hostilities and fights do occur while they live like that.

Q2: We continue on to the next, thinking about the result read to you earlier can you discuss: How do you understand this information in terms of what you know about Kullorsuaq and/or Greenlanders in general?

A1: It may be recognizable for many places in the rest of Greenland.

A2: In remote locations. For instance, I almost want you to come to Savissivik. They also live in a very remote place and is very similar, though Kullorsuaq is the subject.

A1: The way they are closed, it seems more like that.

Q2: We will continue on to the next subject: What do you think is the best way to work with people in Kullorsuaq to promote healthy, stable intimate relationships?

A2: We have discussed that earlier, such as it is very obvious to come to a place where people just wait around, they don't take any initiatives, getting them to take action on their own, getting to the point where they can form their own opinion and have the same values as other people, maybe, when we achieve that, then maybe we can empower individual



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citizens and then maybe get strong parents or households. Asking them, what is it you wish for? Working with them so that they can do something themselves, I know that previously there has been many different funding's for Kullorsuaq, there have been many initiatives, we just come there and maybe sometimes without asking them what they want? That may be out of sync between us that provide service and the citizens. Therefore, I think about how to empower them such as last I was up there working on prevention subjects, when someone came and said that they just realized that they had so many responsibilities concerning prevention, taking care of oneself, personal hygiene, such as the school responsible for our children's..., the giving away of responsibility, thought the responsibility is their own.

A1: I agree very much with A2's answer to the question and have nothing else to add.

Q2: We will continue on and discuss: What is the best way to teach people about conflict resolution skills and how to improve their pattern of communication in intimate relationships?

A1: I think that can be challenging for them, for the community because they have covered up their feelings for so many years, in order to survive, there are not many jobs available, the hunters can only hunt when the weather permits, there are many limitations for them. If the emotions are to be dealt with, I know that they need it and they articulate that but if they are to deal with the root, they is so much to deal with, it seems that the upper layers first must be dealt with, before the core (personal emotions) is reached. Individual people or partnership is to be reached/dealt with maybe the rest must be limited first, telling them that we are specifically only talking about this, not these or these, maybe it has to be limited first before the person/relationship can be reached, that is what I think.

A2: It can also lay here, were disagreements/conflicts are overcome in a healthy way, but not being hostile to each other. Because hostility can turn into anger but discussing the subject in a healthy manner, maybe because the living conditions as a person are so hard, they tend to take everything personally, they are talking about me, they mean me, as if they are main subject and because of those speculations they used up all their strength/energy on those. When we talk about problems in the community/society we are all affected because we all have emotions/feelings. Therefore, it is necessary to be more open, talking about something painful, how can we resolve this conflict, not by quarrelling or by fighting, if we talk about it, we can find a solution, how do we want to have a peaceful relationship, maybe it can be the ability to wish for something for themselves.

A1: Lately we have been following them, for partners if the husband is doing well with his fishing then their relationship start "thriving", when they have money then they start using their strength/energy on something else, we are aware of such situations. It is unbelievable and frightening, it can be hard to believe, surely money has a big influence on our life's today but maybe he may be fishing and when he comes home then they will immediately gamble for money. You may have noticed when you were in Kullorsuaq that almost everyone wears brand name clothing, they have the newest cellular phones, they just don't have money, I don't know. Such things are quite noticeable, as we arrive and according to gossip these



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people are not doing well and they are doing this and that, such as sexual abuse, job situation, everything seems hard and negative. When we get their the people are all smile and wears brand name clothing, that is so obvious, surely there are some people who actually are in a bad shape but the first impressions are something else, they don't seem to miss anything, new houses, snowmobile, boats, such things, that is somewhat surprising.

Q2: Do you come into the houses?

A1: Yes.

A2: Yes. I am thinking about the bigger newer houses but the houses who are older and it also depends on their "equipment", surely it is surprising for the families, to see have great the differences are, just in that settlement.

Q2: With that section 2 is completed, the subject in Section 3: Education.

We would now like to speak with you about education in Kullorsuaq. There was a notable focus on the importance of education, and youth having access to education; however local educational opportunities are limited. To advance into the tenth grade, youth often go to Upernavik or elsewhere for schooling, but many drop out due to the difficulties of being away from home. While it was described that there are a limited number of people with higher education in Kullorsuaq, education appears to be a value that is being supported by the current generation of younger parents in Kullorsuaq. While the Nuiki Project coming to Kullorsuaq was described a positive experience for the community, some individuals terminated their further education as a result of not being able to find a practicum site. This is an example of a worthwhile educational effort started in Kullorsuaq by the Greenlandic government that did not have adequate follow up.

Q2: What is your opinion about these findings related to people in Kullorsuaq's experiences with education?

A1: It is thankfully positive.

A2: It is positive to hear that the current generation supports education, and we know there has been different teachers up there and they now have started to have an impact. But they could be more. For instance it is very common that young people away to get an education return home before time. Last year we were in Upernavik to a place now called Majoriaq, there it was mentioned that many young people from settlements when they come to get an education then they have to come back home and when they researched the reasons for why they have to come home, is when the parents start having economic problems they get their children home so they can work and earn money by working or fishing, sometimes. Sometimes it is because they are longing home and one of the other reasons which has a big impact is having lost someone, having lost as a person or within a family, comes up when they take a step to get an education, and therefore they used up their energy grieving



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and have nothing left for school and therefore must return home. That is quite obvious and noticeable.

Q2: How can parents be educated or trained to support their children to stay in school if they have left Kullorsuaq to go to school elsewhere and then the children call home because they are having difficulties and want to come back to Kullorsuaq?

A2: With a whip – just kidding ☺ I can on the other hand understand parents with lack of energy/resources for not letting go of their children but if we look at the society now, it is almost impossible not to get an education and having to earn money, being able to support oneself should be the center of attention. Therefore it is important to encourage all parents when we have children lets us make them strong, to give them strength they can use in their own life but I also understand if the lack the strength/energy to do so. I will just come back to what do they wish for, what are the obstacles in terms of raising children or in supporting their children, that is quite interesting.

A1: I think that sometimes the emotions control too much, when things like that happen, the child already know that someone is feeling sorry for her/him because she/he is named after someone and therefore can get whatever she/he “wants” because she/he doesn’t have boundaries. They also learn how to “get” the adults in getting them what they want, in how they say something, in how they threaten, in how they do something, in how they behave I can’t get this person to do something, many of them are good at doing that. Then when they start going to school away from home, then their own will stop controlling their surroundings, they have to follow other boundaries and limitations, and they are not used to boundaries and then they start putting themselves in the “poor me situations” then my parents will accept what I want, they learn that while growing how they are placed/valued. And maybe when they come to away from home they stop having that sort of influence and then have to live by others boundaries/way of living where their own influence no longer rule. Then they may be more comfortable returning home after I get them to feel sorry for me, something like. That is what I think, because compared to their daily life the boundaries are quite different in other places then where they come from, maybe they won’t have strength/energy to cope with the new boundaries and rather just come home. But the parents don’t really know how things work there where their children goes to school, people from Kullorsuaq rarely leave Kullorsuaq. It is very fortunate to hear the research results that the current generation value education, the daily norm here is very different from that in Kullorsuaq, therefore people from Kullorsuaq should know what goes on here if they are to understand the child if they could tell/ask the child to stay instead of getting the child home. That is what I am thinking about also.

Q2: I think that you said something about that the number of those who get an education has risen but the results say that current parents see education as important and is something they value.

A1: I know that there is someone in Kullorsuaq with an education who can’t get a job, those without an education, the jobs are occupied by those without an education, something like that, it seems people with an education seem to be increasing in Kullorsuaq. Most of them



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take an education as teachers and within administration (clerk) and finish their education and it seems to increase.

A2: Maybe also those who think it is important with education, I so want to value them, they can say now that we are here then we have to so and so. I think that is so positive and they should really be supported.

Q2: The next subject is the last question in section 3: How can the educational needs of young people in Kullorsuaq be addressed? You mentioned earlier that they should keep in touch, do you other suggestions?

A1: I think that the strength we mentioned earlier, maybe the possibilities to keep it going could maybe be greater but I also know especially in Kullorsuaq, the possibilities are very limited. According to my knowledge since it was Piareersarfik, then there were one to two groups who has completed the course. But if there were to be established an education/school in Kullorsuaq maybe those who leave but just return back home could probably get an education there. Also increasing knowledge without leaving the settlement could also influence the way ones views things or the capability to view things and think in a different way and also emotions start changing with knowledge. According to my memory they can stay in Kullorsuaq up to 10th grade completing the public school, but there are no other opportunities after that in Kullorsuaq. But I also know that it is the same for settlements in the rest of Greenland, therefore they have to study at another place/city apart from attending Majoriaq, maybe it is possible to get learn more when away, maybe, but at home where they are comfortable though they may be different from others points of view. It is ambiguous here.

A2: In addition to this, there must be a policy, if we are to increase the number of students, is there possibility for job training up there or it looks like that there is a need for political framework, if we are to empowering to be away from home, it is okay. But if we are to develop people in Kullorsuaq, there must be political and educational have to be included if we are to lift that task about getting them educated.

Q2: Section 4.: Pregnancy, Abortion and Contraception.
Our next set of questions is about pregnancy. According to our interviews children are central to family relationships as well as cohesion. They are viewed as perpetuating family and community togetherness. Overall, planning pregnancies is viewed as healthier for one's life in Kullorsuaq. With regards to contraception many people reported challenges with contraception use from allergic reactions to condoms, forgetting to use contraception and negative side effects with IUDs and birth control pills. In addition, overall the interviews revealed that abortion appears to not be stigmatized, and as in other parts of Greenland, is normalized. Adoptions within extended families are a normalized alternative to abortion.



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- Q2:** Here is the first subject: How do you view this perception of children as central to family and community cohesion juxtaposed to this concept that abortion is considered normal?
- A2:** Here the reasons are very clear, their reasons and also that also is something that can be encountered in the rest of Greenland. Concerning abortions, the reasons could be that they have to leave to get an abortion, if I had to get an abortion while living in Kullorsuaq I have to travel to Upernavik to get an abortion. Maybe also the topics we discussed earlier such as jealousy, casual sexual relationships, maybe also it could be one had to remain pregnant against ones wishes because the person is afraid of someone to get an abortion, I don't know. It could be jealousy, having a bad relationship or being afraid.
- Q1:** If we think about that the number of pregnancies and abortions amounts to the same in Kullorsuaq and in the rest of Greenland.
- Q2:** If you were to compare the important of children and concept of abortion – how would think of them?
- A1:** About the subject itself apart from Kullorsuaq?
- Q2:** Both in Kullorsuaq and the rest of Greenland.
- Q1:** They are the same, the way of thinking in Greenland.
- A2:** I think it lays in being able to control oneself as a person, where does our personal boundaries lay. These reasons are too easy for my liking, being allergic to condoms or pills, I think the reasons are to careless. It has to be within in taking care of oneself, I say also because I have children, our most important prevention is a condom, it is important to inform so they understand, for instance I have a son, I started providing my son with condoms already when he was 13-14 years old, because he has to know that this is his foremost prevention, so that he doesn't get someone pregnant/child out of wedlock. Maybe that is something I use to scare him but I had to explain to him what the consequences are if he were to get someone pregnant out of wedlock, he has to pay child support until the child is 18 years old, maybe we don't explain enough, I don't know, when they are to take care of themselves. Or for instance, I have a daughter if my daughter is to have an abortion, that may result in not being able to get pregnant again for the rest of her life, it is important to explain more, that is my opinion. It is not enough to just say, use condoms or I can't just say I can't use pills due to side effects, therefore I can't use them, but I need to have protection for myself. For instance my mother has said, I haven't used prevention hence you shouldn't use them, though I am a different person, if I weren't stubborn person I may have had several children, as an example, but because I am stubborn and want to take care of myself lays here, because I am different than my mother surely I must have prevention. It could be there also, being able to provide them with the possible consequences so they can understand.



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- A1: I think, it lays in choice, if I were to get pregnant without planning for it, then the basis must be different maybe sexual abuse in which I haven't chosen for myself could be the basis. But if I have chosen that and have accepted that then the decision lays with me, it lays in the choice itself. If I had said that I can't have children but get pregnant anyway, and if I had chosen to get an abortion that is my responsibility. I think about them very much and the way almost the same but it is within the responsibility itself, taking the responsibility. Not just saying it is his/her fault or this is the law that gives me grounds to get an abortion. Maybe sometimes these opportunities are sometimes too easy, maybe after someone has had casual sexual relationship or something like that, just as we talked about earlier, it seems to be within the emotions sometimes. I have sometimes experienced that in meetings with the doctors in consultation meetings, pregnant women after 12 weeks who insists on getting an abortion without being able to say that they want abortion because they are pregnant with some other than their partner. There are many reasons for why women wants abortion but my opinion is that is lays with the choice, surely if they have partaken in the act, I differentiate for those who didn't consent to have sex.
- Q2: By Choice, did you mean choosing what one wants to do, is that what you mean by choice?
- A2: Yes. Surely, no one becomes pregnant without sexual encounters mostly thinking about Kullorsuaq. Not including artificial insemination and others but mostly choice to have sex and are equally responsible, but I don't they discuss whether or not they should use condom or not or I don't think they ask are you using pills or other prevention, most people think of that as taboo, something they don't want to discuss or talk about. I don't think casual sexual partner even discuss that since they have been utilizing time so efficiently as they seem to have. I think it is in the choice and it is equal responsibility.
- Q2: We are moving on to the next subject: What are the emotional, personal, and health consequence to individuals and families and ultimately Greenlandic communities because of this view of abortion?**
- A2: I think abortion has a great economical consequence for Greenland, it is not something we discuss, how much money is spent for an abortion, because it is free and the cost is not readily available for all to see, when I go to the hospital I would want to see how much an abortion cost as an example, sometimes seeing some facts can be eye opening. It is very easy to get an abortion, if I want to get an abortion all it takes is for me to go to the hospital, get an appointment but maybe we don't receive thorough information what the consequences can be for me, how much money will be spent for this, surely it may none of our business to know, but it may make a person think, that is what I think. For instance if a break a window, I don't only break that, if I were to replace it how much does it cost, how much to I have to pay for the carpenters to do the job, what would be the total cost, we don't think about the total cost for the society. Here, abortion has been greatly discussed because sometimes due to one's religion they have to remain pregnant or someone can even talk about it as murder but it seems to be a subject that needs to be discussed thoroughly among people in the society.



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A1: I think, surely possibility for abortion is legalized, there is framework for what can be done and what can't be done but we are still there we it is a personal choice to go through with an abortion. They have to justify for why they want abortion according to my knowledge from participating in those meetings, surely the doctor has an obligation to ask why the person choose to have an abortion, why don't they want to remain pregnant and there is legal framework to accept or refuse the request. It is also very sobering, wherein is the responsibility and then also why do they choose to get an abortion, sometimes the reasons could be lack of economic means, because I have to study, sometimes the reasoning's are very shallow, my way of thinking is here that it is a responsibility all the way from when they had the sexual encounter, surely it may be something they understand at a later time, has she fallen pregnant or not. But when one has fallen pregnant and wants to choose to get an abortion, that is also a great responsibility, just as A2 mentioned earlier sometimes it may be seen as murder, especially after the 12 weeks limit, after the fetus has begun to live after it has started to live. It seems to depend on how people see this and also getting an abortion may have become too acceptable in the society, though it may have negative consequences emotionally and physically, surely part of the abortion can also part of taking care ones physical health, it is very sobering, it makes me ambiguous about the subject.

Q2: What recommendations would you have about changing this view of abortion?

A1: I think that, the informational campaigns must be more clear, but not only information campaigns but they have to make them physically feel it, you know, to make them understand it/receive it, to make it tangible so they don't only go for the emotional understanding, to make them feel the value/the importance and many things seem to have influence.

A2: Surely because we are all different human beings and may live under different circumstances and the way we are raised is also different. We will always have some sort of problem in life, but thinking about this abortion, we discuss it and the close the debate. Maybe a continuous, you know, I think the health services should handle greater information campaign, maybe surely also other parts of the society. When it is such a great problem then we must bring it back up, the health services must partake in this work, according to my opinion.

Q2: We will continue on to the next subject: How can the use of contraception options that are respectful of what individuals need and want be promoted in places like Kullorsuaq and other parts of Greenland?

Q2: They are joking around about getting them some prevention and tying them up 😊

A1: If we are to be in a settlement, and from visits to the settlements I can see the difficulty in what the possibilities are and then the information mainly comes as posters but I can see that they don't have person they can easily contact, someone who knows what type of effects the pills can have, or which intrauterine device (IUD) to use, because there are differences and also there are some effects are hormone IUDs there are many different possibilities today's they even have something they can put in the arm, I don't even know all



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prevention forms. I know there is IUD because I use it myself but even though I am in the city and I know I can go to the hospital but as a citizen there are no other possibilities besides going to the hospital. In earlier years when there were PAARISA the condoms were readily available everywhere, they were the most obvious but now they are not as readily available as they have been. They seem to have gone away again.

Q2: Should they be as readily available as they used to be?

A1: Yes, I think so.

A2: I wonder if that previous way of keeping everything readily available have had an impact, but I think I have heard that during those years the number of children born decreased, but I am not certain about that. Anything that has been in the center of attention (focused on) for a long time can become normal, stopping it from day to day, such as in Kullorsuaq when that was the point of focus they followed it and then they just stopped when it stopped. Something like that, when something is up in time they will follow it and forget about it when it becomes part of the daily life/normal. Later when after a short time/few years when exactly the same problem reappears, because they are not continuously the point of focus, that could be the problem. But it is also important to hear what the society needs, and also who are to consult about it, that needs..., themselves, I don't the society doesn't contact anyone by themselves, now here in Greenland it is the authorities, the authorities, the authorities. It seems as if taking the responsibility in your own hands is diminishing compared to previous years.

A2: Having them look into themselves is very much there.

Q2: The last question in this section: What changes can be made to how reproductive health services are delivered in Greenland?

A1: With services courses ☺

Q1: It seems as it was brought up earlier, that they are not as visible and readily available as earlier, when Piareersarfik stopped.

A2: PAARISA.

Q1: Yes, PAARISA.

A2: Maybe we Greenlanders are too good at thinking that the authorities are going to correct that or something, but we should help to influence whomever we are. Now there is saying, sense of community is becoming more segregated, if we say something to children they will respond it is none of your business but we say something to children or other people aiming for something good. Somehow, segregation causes us to just run away from things though when we all focus on something then we will have energy to change things, and maybe that way the servicing would be less.



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- A1: I am here, what does the society value but also on the other hand, what are our responsibilities to the society, where is our responsibility, surely most often in groups anywhere where there is a goal for development, the framework is clear and management is clear, we have such and such opportunities, we have such and such tools, if they are all connected then it could run smoothly. But when we look at entire Greenland then we can see that there are deviations in Kullorsuaq, then what type of disconnection is then there. Then also on the other hand one wants to ask, if we remove all the authorities, let us look at ourselves in the society, then from then on let us see what our values are, now they seem to just wait around for the authorities even though they don't used to be like that. It is after the Government administrations has started that the waiting around has become a daily thing, this way of living, maybe the administration has started because of the global view, maybe they want to follow suit. If we now say, maybe Kullorsuaq is left behind, but if we turn it around and ask what do they have, maybe they are actually not left behind, there is always the other side, it is also important to adjust it to make it suitable but surely it depends on how it is viewed here. It is important when thinking about abortion then if we say that what does the authorities want to do but on the other hand what does the society want? What is it they want, because if these two can't juxtapose, surely then it will always be negative, if an understanding between these two are not met.
- Q1: I think that is very suitable for the next question.
- Q2: Taking into account what we have talked about today: **How can government officials work effectively with people in Kullorsuaq as well as in other parts of Greenland to support individuals and families in making healthy decisions about having children?**
- A1: I think, surely also, if it is be entirely connected, then the right ways must be used but if the individual people from the authorities then their accept must first be obtained, so that they are drowned from the top, or not contacted directly from the top. Such as those you need to get information from must know, the goal must be clear, planning together with them, because that also gives people ownership feeling may be lacking here in Greenland, having someone take ownership of something, mostly when the legislation is to change maybe only the different parts of the authorities are consulted I think, and not so much the society thought they work for them. I think it must be connected all of them, because we work for the society, we from the authorities work for the society but the society/community are those who needs to be visited especially, instead of just saying it from the top. Having them take ownership of the project, like we have also worked on this and that, and when they partake then it represents a higher value and people feel more valued hence wanting to take responsibility, it is more clear, to partake responsibility.
- A2: Maybe also where are the boundaries, sometimes the authorities can ... making them do this... what are they, as mentioned earlier to including them, that is very important.
- Q2: We have now completed section 5 and we now move on to Section 6: Research with Greenlandic Communities. Our final question is about conducting research with Greenlandic



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communities and with Greenlandic government officials. At present Greenland has an Institutional Review Board that can provide ethical approval for conducting research in Greenland. However, there are no clear guidelines, strategies or steps for how to engage Greenlandic communities in research.

Q2: The first question is: In your opinion, what is the most respectful way to work with Greenlandic communities on a research project?

A2: I have been thinking very much about Greenlanders conducting research, I am pleased that a research has been conducted in Kullorsuaq, at last factual research is about to be made available in Greenland. When research is conducted by educated Greenlanders, we know that they conduct research abroad, but when we look to other countries they like to conduct research in Greenland. Then also, I admire that you conduct this research together with Greenlanders, basing on their own culture and knowing that you can conduct your interviews in Greenlandic locations using the Greenlandic language, that makes me thankful. But here in this research, we need to be more accepting maybe by saying in the factual, we need to tell more, how, without avoiding to talk about the subjects (taboo) or circumstances, surely in places with few inhabitant, we may be protective of each other but the research is conducted in order to do good, it is important to publish it as a research to find solutions or tools in the society. Maybe in that way people, Greenlanders would be more willing to participate and be interested. I know about the one in Qaanaaq, Karen Littauer, when she was there and I went to Qaanaaq several years after she was there, in my previous job, I was immediately identified as someone who just came to lure them and they say that they were sure that I would publish something negative about them after I leave. They already had enough of that type of researchers that publish something negative about them when they leave the place. We all know that we have problems in Greenland but to reach a good purpose eeh..., all the inhabitants in Greenland we are quite unique they say, therefore being more open, somehow, and that there are more Greenlandic researchers, are what I see as more respectful.

A1 I think, surely in Greenland sometimes, it depends on what the research subjects are and in social research, such as the research in Kullorsuaq and the A2 mentioned, and then researches conducted in other locations, as if this with interviews. Surely, as mentioned earlier, in Qaanaaq, the negative publication to the world is distasteful and also we already have an idea what goes on in Kullorsuaq as an example, we know what the problems are but the sensitivity on the other hand is that it doesn't shame Kullorsuaq when published it surely something I can imagine/picture. It is very new in Greenland this type of research, surely everybody maybe adults who has not consented such as us, if they have not consented they would most probably not oppose. Or somehow, eeh those, when I accept or consent, than I accept that the results can be published or used in another way, but when they don't consent, these are really important according to my understanding (opinion). Do I want to participate or don't I want to participate, what is it, we need to have understand what the purpose is.



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- A2: And also in this research they have not only focused on the negatives, here, they talk about the positives first, it becomes more interesting, somehow showing the other perspective, I know we can say that if they are published in the news they would focus on the negatives.
- A1: But it makes me think about that the society consist of few people, we are only 50 something thousands, and live in remote places, they all have uniqueness and are sensitive, if somehow, I don't know maybe legally or in methodology, have a clear contract/agreement, but surely if it is to be legalized that our country is protected, in how they are presented, what is this and that, if they need to be bound to the law is something I think about, because they mentioned that there is no such thing in Greenland. I would like to find out if other countries have that.
- Q1: Other countries have guidelines, strategies or steps for how to engage communities in research.
- A1: That is what comes to my mind if we don't have those, then how can they be established and because we are so few there must be some sort of protection. Surely, I accepted this but I didn't see anything related to the legislation but this is something we partake in between us, that is also something I think about.
- Q2: Can I come with information about the subject?
- A1: Yes.
- A2: Yes.
- Q2: Normally, researchers here don't ask, they normally go right ahead and conduct their interviews, these researchers you see here, have decided to conduct their research based on highest ethical standards, that is why they do what they do.
- A1: But it is recognizable, I was interviewed not long ago where I had to sign a consent form, but this makes me feel more respected, that they ask first, surely it makes one think realizing that there are no guidelines, strategies or steps for how to engage communities in research, there must be established.
- Q2: What are some strategies and/or steps you would recommend for how researchers can involve Greenlanders in research other than simply being the subject of the research?**
- A1: I already mentioned it earlier, including people in the research, because they may also be able to harvest knowledge about the subjects that are being researched, that is what I think. Instead of just getting information then the researchers can provide information too.
- A2: Sharing can also take place where other countries knowledge and Greenlanders knowledge can be exchanged. Maybe eeh, in my experience, there may have been great conflicts



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within our Greenlandic culture, calling it uniqueness, and maybe some may say that the Greenlanders are too open, or too closed. But if we come to other countries we may experience them as being too closed. I think that it is very important that Greenlanders partake/are included in the research and there as mentioned earlier, there are too few Greenlanders conducting research in Greenland, researching Greenland.

Q2: We are continuing on to the third subject: What recommendations do you have for how to incorporate Greenlandic culture and how Greenlanders view themselves, their lives and their beliefs in research that is conducted in Greenland?

A2: Surely, the values vary from city to city, settlement to settlement, if we say values in Ilulissat can't be used in Kullorsuaq, therefore I think those, especially in the remote places religion is more used and then also as I said earlier the older people have the power. But if we go further south people are more independent, they have their own houses and they have something more they are responsible for, I would really like to include there values, not only in relation to religion.

A1: I can add to this, also because I have noticed that religion, thinking about Kullorsuaq, the common Lutheran Protestant and then later I think the Evangelists that came, thought there are there but many people believe in and use the customs or mentality are also very common, such as committing suicide can be taboo but on the other hand they don't matter. Maybe, I don't know how, they are different, something I have noticed much, also in smaller and remote locations/places, they are somewhat still influenced by the beliefs from the old culture. But then after Christianity has been introduced, the new customs, are very respected, but surely there are some who think in the old ways using expressions are still very valued. Though there has been many generations, the old ways has still some influence on the culture.

Q2: Here is the last question in this focus group meeting: Who in Greenland should be responsible for the ethical oversight of the research conducted here?

A2: That I don't know 😊

Q1: If you were the subject of research, who should be responsible for the oversight?

A2: If I were being researched who should be responsible for the oversight.

A1: In my own mind and of what I hear there is no legislation in our country in term of protecting the individuals, it makes me think that the Government administration or the Parliament, where are then, if there is nothing then it must be in the person, it makes one think because a lot of information is obtained and maybe some of them could be sensitive information, especially in a place like Kullorsuaq, pregnancy situations are a private matter, it is in the private sphere, what people choose to do, and the emotions are also something to be handled with care. But it can make one feel unprotected and then also the publications like



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here, about the Universities working together and they have to publish their findings, then who will advocate for the people, the people from Kullorsuaq in which the information has been obtained from, it makes one think, because we can't say, it is the Municipality. We don't have a board, therefore there are no one to protect them, that is what I think.

Q2: If they were to be protected, then according to your opinion then who should be the protectors?

A1: I think that the Parliament should establish law that could be the foundation for those.

Q2: A law to be based on?

A1: It doesn't have to be law it could also be part of educational law as a small paragraph or something like that, to ensure there is protection, when there is research like that. If there is nothing at all, according to what I hear... that is very sensitive.

Q1: There are some here and there, within the health services but there is not one that includes everything.

Q2: These researchers are interested in getting one for all types of research in Greenland and then also the researches within the health services are protected because of their sensitive nature.

A1: But there are many research fields that researchers conduct research in.

Q1: We are not controlled by any.

Q3: But my IRW is at MSU but nobody here.

Q2: Q3 is translated to Greenlandic. I added that it is also therefore these two are interested in establishing some sort of review board in Greenland.

A2: It is because they have to be protected, just like the ones we mentioned in Qaanaaq, everything was fine until the researcher left the place and then made publication people in Qaanaaq thought was too negative/damaging. There must be something in order to avoid suppression.

Q2: I would like to inform you how these two researchers went about their research. When they were about to start their research, Kullorsuaq peoples request to Naalakkersuisut was the foundation for the research. The first years were used to getting funding for this research, travel, lodging are very expensive. After they have settled the funding they went to Kullorsuaq to have meeting with the community members and then also establish a community participatory board (representatives from the settlement). Hereafter they have annually each travelled to Kullorsuaq and spent at least two-four weeks conducting their research. They stay with them and sometimes they had rent a house, they have even stayed with hunters house. Each time before they come to Kullorsuaq, they have sent



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research interview questions and other documents to the representatives to get their inputs on the questions, whether they are acceptable, if they have something to add or remove or adjusted before the researchers come to Kullorsuaq to conduct their research. Also all the people who are interviewed have also received the same information and consent form as you also have received though it is not a requirement, the researchers have decided to use the highest ethical standards. The people who are interviewed have also been informed that the results will be published to them first, to get their opinion on whether or not they have any corrections. This trip has been used for that, we have talked to five different groups in Kullorsuaq, and also in Upernavik we have talked to Health and social services here in Ilulissat we have talked to the politicians and you the social service providers.

- A1: I remember that, I think I have participated in my previous job in Upernavik, I can recognize some.
- Q2: Next stop will be Nuuk, where there will be meetings with Naalakkersuisut, when all the meetings are completed everything will be translated and analyzed. I have heard the researchers talk about that the final results/report must be shown to Kullorsuaq before there are shared with Naalakkersuisut and other authorities.