

**CITIZENSHIP AND LIFELONG
LEARNING MONITOR 2019**

DENMARK





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ABSTRACT

The following report represents one of eight national case studies feeding into the SOLIDAR Foundation's annual Citizenship and Lifelong Learning Monitor 2019. The purpose of the Monitor is to take stock of the developments at European and national level in terms of citizenship education policies and lifelong learning policies. The Danish report is focused on the general three main themes: digital citizenship, citizenship education and intercultural dialogue. It accounts for challenges, governmental approaches to them, and civil society approaches to them for each of the three themes. Denmark has been a leading EU country when it comes to the percentage of citizens having basic digital skills and when it comes to the civic score that its pupils are attaining. The digitalization initiatives have been moving surely, with plans to ensure that every citizen would have access to ultrafast broadband by 2020. Though the

civic competences of pupils are well developed, and participation in society is reported at high numbers, the Danish system has a lack of oversight of how citizenship education is provided in the various areas, and a majority of teachers report the need for more training on civic competences. To avoid sliding back on the current civic scores, a more structured look into reforming citizenship education curriculum and implementation is needed. The country is suffering from serious academic underachievement for the migrant background population. These pupils are 3.5 times more likely to underachieve compared to their native peers, and it points to an unequal education system. The two-track education system must be eliminated, while the civil society should be engaged on this topic, to develop synergies among all members of the community and facilitate a better integration of migrant background people.

INTRODUCTION

The situation in Denmark reveals a country in which a large percentage of the population has basic digital skills, while many youngsters have advanced knowledge of civic issues. The situation is boosted by investment in the digitalization of schools as well as by overall investment in education. However, increased inequalities in academic attainment have led to many socio-economically disadvantaged pupils and pupils with a migrant background to lag behind the rest of the pupil population. This is bound to have long-term consequences in terms of social cohesion which can have serious repercussions on the promotion of civic values. Moreover, teachers are insufficiently supported and there is a shortage in the profession, setting up a scenario which in

the long run can undo the outstanding progress that Denmark has reached so far. However, while citizenship education is insufficiently entrenched in the school curriculum, the Danish youth is performing exceptionally well in civic competence acquisition. This prompts a need for more focus on citizenship education, providing a structure that will facilitate maintaining civic competence acquisition to similar levels. SOLIDAR Foundation members highlight these issues while also advocating for better cooperation among the CSO sector and the government to combat the challenges related to ensuring that all citizens engage in lifelong learning for social inclusion, and they can keep up with the technological and societal developments that unfold at a rapid pace.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

SOLIDAR Foundation members report that the term digital citizenship has not been included in the official communications of the Danish government. However, the approach to the promotion of digital competences, which is presented in the [Digital Strategy 2016-2020](#), details a profile of children that should cope socially and ethically in the digital world. Digital culture is the term employed by Danish authorities to capture a variety of digital competences that the young generation must build up to critically use IT tools and to better understand their digital footprint on the internet¹. It is worth noting that the focus, in the 2020 strategy, is mostly on the young people's acquisition of digital skills, as only their competences as responsible citizens in the digital realm are considered.

The Digital Strategy prioritizes building the capacity of the digital public sector and boosting up Denmark's digital infrastructure. By 2020, it is envisioned that all households will have a fast broadband connection – 100 Mbs/s download speed and 30 Mbs/s upload speed². **The recognition that access to internet is a public good underlines an understanding from Danish authorities that the society is becoming more digital while also positions them in a situation where they must take responsibility for digital citizenship.** The digital public services have been ranked by the UN as the worldwide leading provider³, a status which has only been con-

solidated with the most recent governmental reforms. 90% of Danish citizens have used the e-government services to submit official documents, a considerably larger number than the EU average⁴, while electronic interaction has been made mandatory and a digital mailbox for every citizens is a direct link for interaction among citizens and public authorities⁵. Such an approach is successful for the reason that 71% of adults report having at least basic digital skills, again tremendously large compared to the EU average (57%)⁶, while 95% of the population aged 16-74 has used the internet at least once in 2017⁷. Therefore, the Danish government uses its citizens' digital prowess in an effort to push digital interaction, but while also starting to acknowledge the responsibility to educate citizens on the appropriate conduct online. However, it is worth mentioning that though Denmark is above the EU average in terms of the acquisition of digital skills, the number of citizens with at least basic skills has been decreasing since 2017. This has been one of the reasons for which Denmark was marked as 'Good but to monitor' on the latest European Social Scoreboard in terms of individuals' digital skills⁸.

Given the government's commitment to the acquisition of digital skills from a young age, the formal education sector has been undergoing a reform period. National descriptions of digital competence have been included in the curriculum, as Denmark is piloting from 2018

1 The Agency for Digitisation of the Government of Denmark (2016). A Stronger and More Secure Digital Denmark: Digital Strategy 2016-2020. Available at: https://digst.dk/media/16165/ds_singlepage_uk_web.pdf. Last accessed: 19 December 2019.

2 Ibid. P.52.

3 United Nations (2018). United Nations E-Government Survey 2018. New York: United Nations. Available at: https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2018-Survey/E-Government%20Survey%202018_FINAL%20for%20web.pdf. Last accessed: 19 December 2019.

4 European Commission (2019). Country Report Denmark 2019. Accompanying the document 2019 European Semester: Assessment of progress on structural reforms, prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, and results of in-depth reviews under Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011. P.40. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/2019-european-semester-country-report-denmark_en.pdf. Last accessed: 19 December 2019.

5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (2018). Digitalisation in Denmark. Available at: <https://denmark.dk/innovation-and-design/digitalisation>. Last accessed: 6 January 2020.

6 European Commission. Country Report Denmark 2019. Pp.27-28.

7 European Commission (2018). Education and Training Monitor Denmark 2018. P.6. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-report-2018-denmark_en.pdf. Last accessed: 6 January 2020.

8 European Commission. Country Report Denmark 2019. P.26.

until 2021 the inclusion of ‘technological comprehension’ cross-curricularly as well as within an optional ICT subject for the secondary education level⁹. For now, it is too early to assess this piloting stage or to consider the direction in which digital education will advance in Denmark, but it is encouraging to see initiatives related to digital education and to easing the integration of citizens in an increasingly digitized society. The curricular elements related to digitalization included across the different educational levels are protecting a reputation online and distinguishing between multiple digital identities, the misuse of data, as well as the protection of others’ and one’s own data and combating digital abuse in the workplace¹⁰. Digital communities are considered across the curriculum¹¹, again highlighting a certain understanding of digital citizenship even if not outspokenly tackled. Given this, teachers are expected to develop a critical understanding of digital technologies and of how to work with ICT in class. Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers are mandated to include digital education in their curriculum for primary and lower secondary teachers¹², however, only 46.7% of the teachers report that ICT was covered in their ITE, which is below the EU average¹³. **Only 39.5% of teachers feel prepared to use ICT in the classroom¹⁴, revealing that there is much room for improvement in the provision of ITE and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and especially in ensuring teachers have support for the digital transformation.**

A Technology Pact was launched in January 2018¹⁵ to involve tech companies in preparing Danish citizens for the labour market’s digitalisation. The aim is to increase the number of STEM graduates to 20% over the next 10 years, but more importantly it sets a link among civil society, the business sector and the government in approaching the digital skills that citizens need¹⁶. Beyond this Pact, other stakeholders have also been involved in the digitalization process. Social partners have been closely working with the government for the transition of workers to a more digitized society, while the CSOs have been contributing to enhancing citizens’ capacity to internalize the operations of a more digital society.

9 European Commission (2019). Digital Education at School in Europe. Eurydice report. P.27. Available at: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/en_digital_education_n.pdf. Last accessed: 19 December 2019.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid. P.39.

12 Ibid. P.53.

13 European Commission (2019). Education and Training Monitor 2019. P.88. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/volume-1-2019-education-and-training-monitor.pdf>. Last accessed: 19 December 2019.

14 European Commission (2019). Education and Training Monitor Denmark 2019. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-report-2019-denmark_en.pdf. Last accessed: 19 December 2019.

15 Government of Denmark (2018). Teknologipagt skal løfte danskernes digitale og teknologiske kompetencer. Available at: <https://em.dk/nyhedsarkiv/2018/januar/teknologipagt-skal-loefte-danskernes-digitale-og-teknologiske-kompetencer/>. Last accessed: 19 December 2019.

16 Ibid.

CASE STUDY



SOLIDAR Foundation member, [Forum for International Cooperation \(FIC\)](#), recently launched its coordination of the EU-funded project *#YouthAgainstCyberbullying*. SOLIDAR Foundation, together with its members [IDC Serbia](#), [PGA Hungary](#), [CEMEA](#) and [ARCI](#) have joined as partners. The project will run until 2021 with the aim of providing training on how to combat cyberbullying and of creating digital tools to support the fight against cyberbullying. This topic has become very pervasive in Denmark with many teachers reporting a rise in cyberbullying. Therefore, FIC took note of this, realizing how this issue is replicated

across Europe. The partners will prepare 30 young people from project partner countries on how to address this topic and on how to multiply this training towards secondary school pupils in their country of origin. The digital tools that will support them in this work will be an online platform for raising awareness on the topic and for providing victims with a channel for communication, a mobile app to facilitate communication across parents, guardians and children in reporting and fighting cyberbullying, an e-brochure to inform policy-makers on the steps that they should take to eliminate cyberbullying.

The steps taken in the Danish society for digitalization are encouraging, as Danish citizens are engaged in using digital tools and are supported within formal, non-formal and informal education in adapting to the needs of the digitized society. However, though the

digital infrastructure is impressive, attention must be paid to complacency as lately there have been decreases in terms of digital skills acquisition while the formal education system is not appropriately adapted to preparing teachers to embed ICT in education.

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

SOLIDAR Foundation members report that citizenship education is approached as a cross-curricular topic in the Danish formal education system. They report that it employs a civics education model, which is more focused on imparting knowledge of the geography, history, constitution and governance of Denmark rather than on the development of skills linked to societal participation. Our members also discuss the presence of the EU dimension within topics, revealing disappointment at how the topic is being treated. It mostly is accounts for events of importance at European level, such as the most recent European Parliament elections, but knowledge of the functioning of the EU is not well-established in the curriculum.

There is a lack of oversight of citizenship education provision in Denmark due to the decentralized education system¹⁷, though this does not involve different educational system as Denmark is a unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy¹⁸. Though the general tendency is indeed to be a cross-curricular topic, it is offered as an independent subject in 8th and 9th grade. Topics that the citizenship curriculum takes into consideration are participation, co-responsibility, rights and responsibilities in a free and democratic society¹⁹. As the subject has been receiving increased attention since the 1990s, teachers have been also prepared

to tackle it in the classroom. Since 2017, Denmark is one of the few European countries providing citizenship education as a specialization for teachers. Before this, teachers specialised in other subjects were in charge of the citizenship topics' inclusion in the classroom²⁰. Since this upscaling of the subject, teachers report feeling more comfortable with teaching in multicultural/multilingual settings compared to the EU average. 26.3% of the Danish teachers report feeling comfortable with this, while 36.8% identify such elements being present in their ITE²¹. Both numbers are above the EU average, but still low. Competence frameworks are used to ensure that teachers obtain the needed competences, and these frameworks refer generally to: a practice of being open, tolerant and respectful, reflecting on cultural identity and diversity, knowledge of human and children's rights, promoting social critical thinking, among others²².

The topic is well-established, and though concerns could be raised about its cross-curricular nature, lack of supervision, and the large amount of teachers who are not comfortable with multiculturalism in their classroom, the results are impressive. The civic competences of Danish students are above average and they are performing much better than pupils in countries where citizenship education is more entrenched in the curriculum. The 2016

17 European Commission. Education and Training Monitor Denmark 2018. Pp.4-5.

18 Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina (2011). Becoming Denmark: understanding good governance historical achievers. Contextual choices in fighting corruption. Pp. 36-47. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265812682_Becoming_Denmark_Historical_Designs_of_Corruption_Control. Last accessed: 6 January 2020.

19 European Commission. Education and Training Monitor Denmark 2018. Pp.4-5.

20 European Commission (2018). Education and Training Monitor 2018. P. 21. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/volume-1-2018-education-and-training-monitor-country-analysis.pdf>. Last accessed: 19 December 2019.

21 European Commission. Education and Training Monitor Denmark 2019. P.6.

22 European Commission. Education and Training Monitor 2018.



International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) posits Danish 8th grade students as scoring the highest on civic issues internationally²³. Moreover, there is a high rate of engagement for pupils in extra-curricular responsibilities, especially from the ones coming from low-income households²⁴, again revealing a high degree of civic responsibility even if this topic is not prioritized in formal education. The explanation for this is unclear, but the Danish government increased its efforts on the subject, to complement the capacities of their citizens and prevent a backsliding. The most recent agreement of January 2019 on fine-tuning the primary and secondary school reform of 2014²⁵ shows an attention paid to developing a wide range of skills for pupils that

will aid their personal development for a successful inclusion in society. An increase into the hours of teaching history, art, and foreign languages, coupled with a reduction of the overall number of schooling hours and with an emergence of more practical topics such as craftsmanship²⁶ shows a greater care offered to developing well-rounded individuals and not just following labour market demands.

Citizenship education in Denmark seems to be approached in a successful way given the tremendous civic competences that the Danish citizens exhibit. However, more actions need to be established to facilitate structural support for the topic instead of relying on the inertia of an exceptionally active citizenship base.

23 European Commission. Education and Training Monitor Denmark 2018. P. 5.

24 European Commission. Education and Training Monitor 2018. P.11.

25 European Commission. Country Report Denmark 2019. Pp.30-31.

26 European Commission. Country report Denmark 2019. P. 30.

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

The early leaving from education and training (ELET) rate remains relatively high in Denmark at 10.2% in 2018, above the EU average and insufficiently decreased from the Danish ELET rate of 2009, 11%²⁷. This rate also includes a disproportionate gender gap with boys leaving school at a rate that is 4.9 pps higher than the one of girls²⁸. Though the gap between native-born and foreign-born ELET pupils is the smallest in the EU²⁹, it is worth mentioning that Denmark has one of the poorest records in terms of academic achievement for pupils with a migrant-background in comparison to native pupils³⁰. This worrisome trend is not sufficiently explained yet, though the insufficient number of teachers reporting feeling comfortable to work in multicultural environments, which was discussed in the previous section, can be an explanation for this.

The participation of adults in education is well above the EU average at 23.5% but in a serious decrease since the rate of 2009, 31.3%³¹. These numbers, together with the situation related to ELET, point towards an inadequacy in the efforts of the Danish education system to reform by putting the learner at the centre of the educational process. Even more, the education reform of 2014 does not seem to have improved pupils' well-being, with disadvantaged pupils still academically performing below the rest of the Danish pupil population³².

The learner-centred, whole-school approach is difficult to be implemented in a system that struggles with a pronounced shortage of qual-

ified teachers, capable to cater for the needs of the students. This is the situation in Denmark and it is exacerbated by the ageing profession, with 45% of teachers above the age of 50³³. Precarious contracts and non-qualified teachers seem to be the short-term solution³⁴, but these 'patch' solutions are the ones that prevent the harmonious implementation of a learner-centred system. Moreover, the number of teaching hours is one of the highest in the EU at all levels but upper secondary education, where it is the lowest in the EU³⁵. This situation is strenuous for the workload of precariously employed or ageing teachers, while it also means a high intensity work on the pupils' side. This makes it difficult to focus on the need of every pupil and to work towards their personal development and inclusion in society. It remains to be seen if the plans for the new educational reforms will look into the hours of teaching and potentially reform this situation, as it is envisioned³⁶.

The most worrisome situation is, however, the fact that the educational opportunities are not offered to all pupils, given that the most disadvantaged, either socio-economically or because of their migrant status, have PISA scores below the results of native pupils. The migrant background pupils below the age of 15 are 3.4 times more likely to underperform in science compared to their native peers³⁷. Denmark is only one of eight European countries in which asylum seeking children and irregular migrant children do not have the same rights as native-born pupils in terms of

27 European Commission. Education and Training Monitor Denmark 2019.

28 European Commission. Education and Training Monitor 2018. P. 30.

29 European Commission. Education and Training Monitor 2019 Denmark. P. 7.

30 European Commission. Country Report Denmark 2019. P. 30.

31 European Commission. Education and Training Monitor Denmark 2019.

32 Ibid. P. 7.

33 Ibid. P.4.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid. P. 5.

36 European Commission. Country report Denmark 2019. Pp.30-31.

37 Ibid. P.30.

education³⁸. In light of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, this is highly problematic and it reveals the systemic lack of equal opportunities which manifests later in the life of migrant background pupils and in the life of generations of migrant background learners. Inclusive and whole-school education is prevented in this way. The differences continue even as migrant background pupils are integrated into education, since Denmark is only one of three European countries to use separate tests for migrant learners³⁹. Though this can be conducive to easing the integration of migrant background pupils, considering the disappointing academic results gap, it seems in fact to lead to an instance of othering the migrant population and creating a two-stream educational system. However, all migrant pupils have access to tailored support, especially for acquiring Danish language competences, which is not the case in many other European countries in which pupils have to first access education to be eligible for tailored support⁴⁰. However, those pupils entering education experience a system in which there is no teacher training provided to assist teachers in dealing with this situation⁴¹, which implies an inability to address pupils' needs and appropriately focus on them.

The Danish authorities are currently not doing any monitoring of the policy areas related to migrant students in primary and secondary education⁴², further deepening the problem as the authorities are not collecting information about why students with a migrant background underperform or about the implementation of reforms that should aid them.

SOLIDAR Foundation member, FIC, engages in various projects for the integration of migrants and refugees in society and the labour market in Denmark. They are contributing to the gaps that the Danish government is not filling on the topic of integrating migrants and refugees in education and the society. The work of such CSOs on catering to the holistic needs of learners is essential, as though the academic performance is above the EU average in Denmark, there are many groups of pupils which in one way or another are left behind, contributing to rising inequalities. Education should be accessible for all.

38 European Commission (2019). Integrating Students with Migrant Backgrounds into Schools in Europe : National Policies and Measures. Eurydice report. Pp. 13-14. Available at: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/integrating_students_from_migrant_backgrounds_into_schools_in_europe_national_policies_and_measures.pdf. Last accessed: 19 December 2019.

39 European Commission (2019). Integrating Students with Migrant Backgrounds into Schools in Europe : National Policies and Measures. Eurydice report. P. 64. Available at: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/integrating_students_from_migrant_backgrounds_into_schools_in_europe_national_policies_and_measures.pdf. Last accessed: 19 December 2019.

40 Ibid. P. 87.

41 Ibid; P. 105.

42 Ibid. P. 66.

FUNDING

Denmark remains one of the countries that spends the most on education in Europe, with 6.5% of GDP dedicated for the sector in 2018, above the EU average of 4.6%. The expenditure of over 6% was a regular fixture in Denmark, with the numbers nearing 7% in 2009⁴³. This has contributed to the high educational performance in the country and also to the high wages for the teaching profession. However, the high teaching wage has no longer the same incentivizing power as before,

due to the low progression in terms of wage increase across the teaching career⁴⁴. This has to be addressed considering the need to retain more teachers in the profession. SOLIDAR Foundation members report stability in terms of funding for the CSO sector, but it must be mentioned that this is applicable for organizations with a long-standing history and strong capacity. This study cannot establish whether this applies for smaller-scale NGOs.

RECOMMENDATIONS



DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

- ◆ Monitoring the recently introduced reforms related to digital citizenship and citizenship education to ensure that they are conducive to citizens obtaining the needed competences to be active participants in the society;
- ◆ Review of ITE and CPD for teachers to ensure that they are comfortable to include ICT in the classroom;



CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

- ◆ Inclusion of citizenship education as an individual topic in formal education
- ◆ Review of ITE and CPD for teachers to better prepare them on the acquisition of civic competences;



INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

- ◆ More support measures for the integration of migrants and refugees in education;
- ◆ Better collaboration with civil society and parents on the introduction of a whole-school approach in schools;
- ◆ Better monitoring of the implementation of education policies related to migrant students, constant reviewing of the policies and quality assessment to ensure that these pupils' needs are addressed;
- ◆ Ensure each pupil benefits from their right to education, effectively ending the two-stream educational system created that puts pupils with a migrant background in a disadvantaged position.

43 European Commission. Country Report Denmark 2019.

44 European Commission. Education and Training Monitor Denmark 2019. P. 4.

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