

# Chapter 16

## The Possibilities and Limitations of Tourism Development in Greenland Impacting Self-efficiency and Socio-economic Wellbeing of Coastal Communities



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**Abstract** Almost all of Greenland's population live in coastal areas. Coastal tourism in Greenland has the potential to diversify the local economy from fishing and the fish-processing industry to tourism-based entrepreneurship that possibly could reduce the gender and income inequality in Greenland and the outmigration of the younger generation from small settlements in search of opportunities in large cities, and abroad, and the revitalization of traditional culture. Tourism in coastal Greenland exposes the reality of climate change to visitors from the outside world, the consequences of melting ice sheets on people, nature, and the traditional way of life and could promote an alliance between the locals and visitors through honest dialogues and data collection through citizen science-based excursions. Tourism also creates an opportunity to improve and modernize local infrastructure that benefits the local population with a higher standard of living.

The negative impacts of tourism rely heavily on the lack of negotiation power of the indigenous people in Greenland against the pre-established tour operators (from Denmark) and other non-Greenlandic carriers who would receive the largest economic benefits unless strong government policy protects local interests and resources. Responsible tourism and tourists are the building block of sustainable tourism. The limitations of a short tourist season and a bottleneck situation during the high season creates investment that is risky and costly. Thus, a thorough and ongoing social-economic-environmental impact assessment would be mandatory steps in harmonizing tourist expectations and local understanding of sustainable Arctic coastal tourism in Greenland.

**Keywords** Arctic tourism · Arctic cruise tourism · Skill matching job creation · Social sustainability · Coastal tourism · Nature-culture tourism · Responsible tourism

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## 16.1 Introduction

### 16.1.1 *Tourism, More than an Industry*

According to data published by World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 2017, one in ten jobs was tourism related, which generated U.S. \$1.6 trillion in export, and accounted for 10% of global GDP from “direct and indirect activities combined”. Tourism is more than an income generating industry, it is also one of the pillars of cultural preservation, environmental protection and a medium of peace and security (Source: UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2018 Edition). The 1985 Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourist Code reinforces the “human dimension of tourism” and reiterates the claims that tourism contributes to social, economic, cultural and educational sectors of national societies and improves the international community (World Tourism Organization (WTO) 1985). Tourism has made positive contributions to the preservation of cultures, when globalization has been a force for cultural homogenization (Cohen and Kennedy 2000, p. 226).

Despite all these benefits, economists, economic developers, and governments have either failed to take tourism seriously because of the widespread notion that tourism is only “fun, and games, recreation, leisure, unproductive” (Davidson 1994, pp. 20–21) or, used only as an economic activity, a vehicle of consumerism, when the government focuses on “growth fetishism” (Growth Fetish, Clive Hamilton 2004, p. ix). The precaution from WTO: tourism is an irreplaceable factor of solidarity in the development and dynamic growth of international exchanges, multinational enterprises of the tourism industry should not exploit the dominant positions they sometimes occupy; they should avoid becoming the vehicles of cultural and social models artificially imposed on the host communities; in exchange for their freedom to invest and trade which should be fully recognized, they should involve themselves in local development, avoiding, by excessive repatriation of their profits, or their induced imports, a reduction of their contribution to the economies in which they are established. Partnership and the establishment of balanced relations between enterprises of generating and receiving countries contribute to the sustainable development of tourism and an equitable distribution of benefits of its growth (WTO 1999).

### 16.1.2 *Tourism in Greenland*

In Greenland, the average growth for the estimated tourism revenue was 5% in the period from 2006–2015 (source: stat.gl). During the Icelandic tourism boom, Greenland also enjoyed significant growth: 23.8% in 2015 and 9.9% in 2016, respectively, in the number of tourists through the partnership with Icelandair with arranged short trips/day trip from Iceland. Even with a conservative projection of an

annual growth of 5% in the estimated tourist revenue it will look as predicted in Fig. 16.1 in the period through to 2030 (Source: stat.gl).

An annual growth of 5% requires an ongoing investment in the infrastructure of the country (number of beds and flight seats over the year) in order to be able to receive the growing number of tourists. This scenario is based on the current airport infrastructure. UNWTO (UN’s tourism body) has forecast an annual global tourism growth of 3.3% between 2010 and 2030.

On a practical note, the lack of infrastructure hinders Greenland’s efforts to welcome more tourists than its present capacity. However, the expansion of three airports in Nuuk, Illulissat, and Qaqortoq and the port in Nuuk, call for a massive infrastructure overhaul countrywide. These steps are necessary to ensure the supply lines can cope with continued development. Following the footsteps of Iceland’s tourism board, a strong year-around tourism sector could strengthen Greenland’s economy and thus making the communities more socio-economically viable in the long run. Greenland’s geostrategic location between Europe and North America can become the new “tourism hub” growing in importance in the coming years. With the growing interest for the Arctic, Nuuk is in a good position for when it becomes possible to use the North West Passage and be the first choice when politicians, businesses and tourists look to the North. As part of Nuuk City Development project, the mayor of Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, Asii Narup, has announced the construction of 4200 new homes over 10 years to welcome new visitors from all over the world (Arctic Circle Conf. 2018).

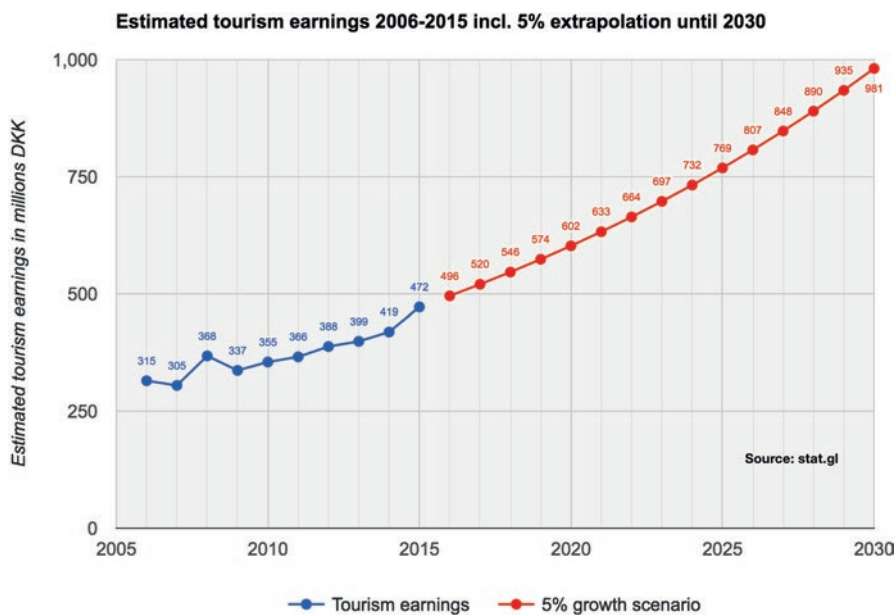


Fig. 16.1 Projected Tourism Growth in Greenland. (Source: Greenland in Figures 2018; www.stat.gl)

As Nuuk continues to grow and expands its capacity for inhabitants, so does the possibility of tourism. Following Iceland's successful marketing strategy combined with a growing global interest in the Arctic as the last frontier, Greenland has a coinciding rise in political, scientific, and societal interest in tourism. Today, tourism is considered as one of Greenland's three economic pillars, next to fishing and mining, and a promising lever for the Arctic nation's future economic development (Source: Stat Greenland). Its successful development could potentially help pave the way for Greenland's financial dependency from the Danish Commonwealth to become an independent Arctic country.

The government of Greenland has been involved with periodic research related to tourism conducted by researchers across towns and settlements to understand the local ideas about tourism, to draw an authentic picture based on local needs and available resources or the lack of them (INUSSUK, Arctic Research Journal 2, 2011). Equipped with research data, and local knowledge, Greenlandic politicians and businesses are hoping and planning for substantial growth in tourism to diversify its economy through sustainable development. With the construction of three transatlantic airports by Air Greenland, the country's national carrier, and a vibrant national tourism campaign (Visit Greenland) constructed by local and international expertise, and the increasing carrying capacity of the capital city Nuuk, a broader societal discussion of how (much) tourism should be developed, in what ways, and by whom, becomes an urgent necessity. The potential tourism practitioners in Greenland are facing the challenges and tremendous potential posed by tourism. Its development could be linked to other spheres of society social-cultural and environmental dimensions, turning tourism from an industry into a potential catalyst for social change. In Greenland, tourism may increase the social capital of local residents through engaging with visitors and developing new skills (George 1999 and Reid 2003). However, the government can compromise the community ownership of tourism by giving developmental rights to foreign investors in hopes of creating tourism activities, facilities, and infrastructure through exclusive rights of activities in delimited areas thus creating foreign competition. Arctic cruise tourism holds a special promise for coastal tourism development in Greenland, and without the implementation of sound rules and regulations for big scale cruise lines to operate in pristine marine environment, in remote coastal settlements, tourism can cause damage to the environment, economy and culture of Greenland.

### ***16.1.3 Comparison with Iceland***

Tourism is Iceland's number one economic activity. The strength of Icelandic human capital has been the key component in tourism development. The interplay between local and global informally acquired skills originates from tourism (Nordal and Kristinsson 1996). The informally acquired skills of international exchange in Icelandic society are gathered from the interaction with visiting tourists and the guest workers supporting the tourism related activities. Since the early 1950s,

Iceland has managed to transform into a transatlantic air travel hub utilizing the old US airfield at Keflavík. The role as hub was established through a network that connected the USA (and later Canada) and Europe, as a low cost flying option based on the business of Loftleiðir and in 1953, flights took off between USA and Europe via Keflavík. This business model of using Keflavík as a hub between North American and European cities, helped to build up an international air traffic network for Iceland far beyond what the Icelandic market itself could sustain. As Greenland prepares for three new international airports, this story could become relevant for Greenland's near future as direct flight connections to both North America and Europe; for purposes of developing research, education, government, business and society, could have transforming effect. One can only imagine how internationalized Greenlandic society and its economy could become, and how many international tourists could be in Greenland en route Europe as a stop over in Nuuk, Ilulissat, and Qaqortoq, following Iceland's model of Reykjavik as stop over hub for European travel.

In order to create a "rational tourism growth" research, collaboration, and planning are the key factors. With the help of NATA (North Atlantic Tourism Association) and Air Greenland, Visit Greenland (VG 2016) carried out market surveys in 2016–17 in four core markets in Germany, Great Britain, France and USA with the help of the research agency NIT Kiel. Four thousand respondents in each country filled out online questionnaires, which has given valuable insight into the potential of the markets in terms of potential travelers to Greenland. The surveys included question about volcanoes/hot springs/geysers and specific nature and culture based tourism to understand who would rather choose other destinations such as Iceland before Greenland or to show that tourists are exactly sure of what Greenland has to offer (Source: Greenland Tourism Report 2018).

## 16.2 Possibilities of Tourism

### *16.2.1 Refocusing on Human Capital Through Tourism (Now) in (Future) Capacity Building in Remote Settlements*

Gender and income inequality are widespread in Greenland. Income inequality measured by the so-called Gini-coefficient is about 33.9, 2015 estimate ([www.indexmundi.com](http://www.indexmundi.com)), while in the Nordic countries it is about 25, and a Sub-Saharan country with an index of 50. Approximately 15% of the population lives in relatively poor families, 10% in poor families and 5% in very poor families (Statistics Greenland 2014). There is a significant difference in the educational achievements between youths growing up in settlements and in towns. Though increasing, the education level in Greenland remains the lowest in the Nordic. More than half of all 25–64 years old have no education beyond lower-secondary education, compared to about 25% in other Nordic countries; about a quarter pursue a vocational education

and only 16%, the majority women, pursue higher education. (Source: <http://bank.stat.gl/UDEISCPROB>). In Greenland, approximately 84% of males have no education apart from primary school. The unemployed part of the workforce has a high proportion of unskilled workers. For the higher education, the unemployment rate is very low. Another distinct feature in the Greenlandic labor market is a large seasonal variation in employment, due to the climate and the geographic dispersion, which limits mobility (Source: Greenland Statistics).

In Greenland, and in many other Arctic countries, there is a rather large group of people who do not have a formal education and, thus, have fewer opportunities in life. But they still have skills: some are specialists in hunting or fishing, some are skilled handicraft men/women, and some are artists, without a formal educational paper to prove it. In contrast to westernized standards of success, some of these people might be perfectly content with their situation and get by on a subsistence economy, navigating in an informal economy, while living a traditional life of a hunter and fisherman. However, they are limited in the labor market because of their lack of documentation for their skills (Kleist and Knudsen 2016). They might be further challenged because they do not wish – or are able to – continue in a formal educational system. Therefore, skill mapping to use the informally acquired skills as well as traditional activities (hunting, fishing, dog sledging, country food cooking) is a crucial factor in order to obtain a fuller picture of how these skills are beneficial in building a socio-economically healthy society in Greenland utilizing its potential workforce (Knudsen 2016).

Although not clearly explicit, arctic nature-culture tourism is based on traditional knowledge, and in current Greenlandic context, it is practical whether and how traditional knowledge can be used – not necessarily according to a western model of society but rather in a modern Inuit society where activities may be combined without compromising the opportunity to continue the traditional activities of Greenlandic society. Greenlandic people have managed to live and thrive in the harsh arctic conditions for centuries and have acquired invaluable skills that passed down from generation to generation through practicing the daily life. However, in present day formal education based employment opportunities, their skills are invisible and unrecognized by the job market. The lack of appreciation of the qualification of this group and failing to map the informally acquired skill sets with potential employment opportunities are a great loss of value to society and to the individual. It is also the root cause of domestic violence in Greenland, where women are most adaptable with their higher education and, thus, more mobile, while men are stuck in the traditional male dominant culture. Any careful observation would make the correlation of nature and culture tour based on the skills and life experience of the Greenlandic people, especially the hunters and fishermen as tour guides and operators, thus lifting the value of self. This perspective attaches different values to local knowledge and counters the westernized economic reasoning that has dominated policies of centralization. Sustainable development should be regarded as the ‘third way’ in that it transforms the experiences and relations from traditional society and the understanding related to global, industrial developments, which includes a new understanding of the interplay between man and nature (Holm and Rasmussen 2000). It also emphasizes the need for the population to become involved in articu-

lating and developing a sustainable policy for institutions and infrastructures through participatory processes (Hersoug 1999). The ‘cultural dimension’ is important within educational transition: from home to school (perhaps in another city) to further education (perhaps in another city) and, finally, to the job market (perhaps in another city). Tourism has tremendous potential in bridging these gaps.

### ***16.2.2 Link to Education, Formal Training, and Language Development***

In Greenland, the tour guide and tourism education might represent more than just improving the service level of tourism and tourism development, but, more essentially, could be an interesting starting point to get young people back to education and job market perspectives, especially in smaller settlements and remote areas (Ren and Chimirri (2017). The adventure guide education in Campus Kujalleq is based on the Icelandic model and is created in dialogue with different Greenlandic tourism stakeholders. The new program that started in 2013 is an alternative to the Arctic Guide program or the previous government sponsored “Outfitter” program. It is for people who want to help tourists on trips in nature lasting over 8 hours. The aim of providing a qualification for academic studies is realized within the areas of business economics and socio-economics combined with foreign languages and other general subjects. The education program’s goal is to develop the students’ capacity for in-depth studies and their understanding of theoretical knowledge as tools for analyzing realistic issues (knowledge of safety protocols, operating modern equipment, professionalism, certification and license process) while applying their cultural and traditional knowledge (Source: Campus Kujalleq <http://cak.gl/in-english/>). Tourism Education Program Campus Kujalleq offers three programs within tourism education: A 2½-year academy profession program, and two guide program of one semester. The arctic guide program focuses on guiding techniques and background facts necessary to a guide working in arctic communities. Through tourism, informally acquired skills under the conditions of the Arctic are increasingly touched by globalization where the foreign tourists and local mingle exchanging their worldviews. Thus, tourism allows Arctic citizens to participate in global networks and transactions.

### ***16.2.3 Gender Equality and Harmony by Balancing the Modern and Traditional Skills***

The process of urbanization has led more Greenlanders living in the cities, with a significant rate of out migration from small settlements the capital or even abroad. Women in rural Greenland are generally more educated than men and are more adaptive socially and geographically to seek employment in service sector jobs

outgrowing from traditional gender expectations of the society. However, men have been stuck in the old tradition of being a provider through hunting and fishing skills. In the past, these skills were considered as the key activities of the society. The survival of a family is now becoming obsolete as Greenland transitions towards a modern society and imposed quota and restrictions on hunting animals. There has been a shift in family dynamics in Greenland. Greenlandic men now depend on the steady income of educated women to be able to continue to practice the traditional masculine roles in the society (Rasmussen 2014). Since men are less adaptive than women, the lack of mechanized (mines) jobs, left Greenlandic men with fewer options.

The tourism industry in remote coastal Greenland could become a catalyst to encourage participation of women in regional development. By helping women with business grants and entrepreneurship training (bed and breakfast, restaurant/café, souvenir shop), the government cannot only diversify the economy of remote settlements, but this inclusion of women also helps with the mainstreaming of gender equality based policy and policy measures. In Southern Greenland, more women participate in municipal government, as they are more financially independent and globally connected through tourism. While managing sheep farms, the locals in the South have managed to have an extra income by hosting tourists in their farm house, without substantial investment in a business venture. Additionally, hospitable by traditional custom, sheep farmers have reported a sense of personal wellbeing by connecting with the tourists-the outside world. Therefore, this type of tourism continues to be a favorable medium for personal-socio-economical outlet in south Greenland amongst the sheep farmers.

However, in Northern Greenland, women are not involved in this level of governance due to lack of financial opportunities and lack of global exposure (Rasmussen 2014). As Greenlandic men are more inclined to participate in traditional hunting and fishing, together, both men and women can combine their traditional knowledge/skill and modern education/formal education (English language, communication, service training) as a hybrid form in tourism related entrepreneurships and serve as an intersection for job creation, traditional lifestyle, and integration of local voices, especially voices of women in politics and regional development.

#### ***16.2.4 The Concept and Status of ‘Knowledge’ in the Arctic in Regards to Climate Change***

*If people come to Greenland and see how much the glaciers have been retreating and realize it's for real, and change the way they use energy, then maybe the net benefit will be for the globe, for the climate. (Malik Milfeldt, the Greenland Tourism and Business Council ([smithsonian.com](http://smithsonian.com), October, 2011))*

People, who share a history of living off the land and the sea as hunters, fishermen, farmers etc., are highly dependent on interpreting the signs of the surrounding envi-



ronment through the in-situ everyday observations of flora and fauna in the natural world. To ensure a continuation of this way of life, it is essential for these people, and for the communities in which they reside, to learn and to pass on their experiences as these relate to the co-habitation with their environment (Ingold 2000, p. 195). These people are known for possessing in-depth ecological knowledge, an understanding of, and an appreciation for environmental variations and seasonal changes and how these influences, for example, the harvest of local marine mammals upon which local subsistence continues to be sustained (Berkes 2000; Huntington 1998). Traditional knowledge also draws on the experience made across the changing arctic seasons which also reflects the passage of time, through both contemporary and intergenerational transmission of experiences made with the immediate environment (Duerden 2004; Ingold 2000). Others worry about the effects on traditional ways of life. With less summer ice cover, hunters who use dog sleds are limited, says Hanne Nielsen, who teaches Greenlandic and Danish languages in Nuuk: "Climate change has had a really harmful influence on people's lives, not only professional hunters and fishers, because ordinary people also fish and hunt." Climate change is one of the motivations for travel to see peripheric locations Stromberg (2011). Most people do not travel to understand the impact of global warming on their destination but rather out of curiosity to "see them before they disappear." Nature-culture based tourism puts the community as the "human face" during a challenging time and thus invoking sentiments and sense of responsibility into the tourists through honest dialogues and portraits of people and place interconnected via climate change.

In August 2018, an iceberg melting to the north of Greenland made the world news as the oldest and thickest ice in the arctic crumbling, thus opening previously inaccessible sea routes opened up for the first time in the history (The Guardian, August 21st). Although data reliability could not be on par with scientists, part of the US Study of Environmental Arctic Change project, scholars identified Arctic tourism as an important area of human activity that should be monitored as a social component of AON (Fay and Karlsdottir 2011; Kruse et al. 2011). Citizen science based polar expedition is one way to utilize tourism as a force to address the challenges of climate change in coastal Greenland where tourists can participate actively in data gathering. It is significant that the tourism sector globally is already engaged in citizen science research; it is active also in similarly oriented activities through both "conservation tourism" and "participatory environmental research" (Scheepens 2014). Having an "experience" is at the heart of tourism and therefore visitors to the polar regions desire the inclusion of citizen science, an aspect desirable for both the destinations and other tourism stakeholders, which should be important for strategists reliant on observational monitoring. If a critical hurdle to engaging citizen science is the absence of alignment between community and research priorities (Pandya 2012), then tourism may offer a particular opportunity to engage given the potential that exists to align the environmental priorities of visitors, communities and researchers alike (Mason et al. 2000)

Women are more acute than men in internalizing the effects of climate change. Their specific ways of engaging with the changing environment: fishing, skinning

the animals (assessing the fat content of seals or marine animals), berry picking, fish drying, collecting eggs, are more engaging on a personal level as women focus more on relationships and social fabric of community explaining the impacts of climate change. However, women are not present to discuss their extensive knowledge in a formal level while tourism may bring an informal yet powerful personal narrative by women to understand the effects of climate change in Greenland. Focusing on male dominated hunting activities and material resources only presents an incomplete understanding of the impacts of climate change and a great deal of women's expertise is lost. Through women-led hunting/fishing/gathering tourism or even creating a social gathering over Kaffemik (social gathering with coffee, and sweets, a recipe for a cozy time in Greenland) to listen to women's stories, the outside world gets the full impacts of the climate change. Women in Greenland are nature adapted, sociable, and focus more on non-material relations, they project the indirect effects of climate change, such as limited ice leading to less connectivity between settlement thus weakening sense of community, food security, education, language vitality, and good housing.

### **16.3 Limitations of Tourism in Greenland**

Daniela Tommasini, a researcher at North Atlantic Regional Studies (NORS) Roskilde University Denmark was appointed by the Ministry of Education and Research of Government of Greenland to conduct almost a decade long research project related to tourism in Greenland (1995–2004). She traveled throughout Greenland to interview tourists, entrepreneurs in the tourism industry and local residents and assessed the socio-economic impact of modern-day tourism, its past development and potential for the future. This chapter is based on her first-hand experience with locals about their dreams and realities involving tourism in Greenland. Her case studies have contributed “Visit Greenland (VG)” marketing company an honest overview of local's perspective in nature-culture based tourism and as a possible tool for the revitalization of marginal communities.

Her fieldwork from various towns and settlements with tourism potential has analyzed the limitations of tourism; extremely short bottleneck tourist season, poor infrastructure, lack of trained personnel, lack of English language skills, competition with foreign tour operators, and little awareness of tourism among local population. The report suggested aiming towards inexpensive investments and infrastructure: “The key words are control, guidance, and limitations, if tourism is not to create problems” (Master Plan 1.3.4.). Nonetheless, due to all the above factors, traveling in Greenland is still an expensive activity and the tourism industry still has not generated any surplus to Greenland, and remains heavily subsidized by the government.

### ***16.3.1 Foreign Competition and Historical Prejudice***

During high season competition is very high between local Greenlandic guides and international tour guides who basically work for free for major cruise companies just to gain a unique experience of working in Greenland. Anna Burdenski, a master's student from Aalborg University, Denmark, conducted interviews with the students of Campus Kujalleq in Qaqortoq as part of tourism, her master's thesis. Student # 9 from Campus Kujalleq in Qaqortoq shared both hope and realistic despair, "We have a lot of guides who travel around the world and work on an international basis but they do not have any knowledge about the particularities of Greenland. We see it, as you said; the experience is enough for themselves, so they do not need to get paid and how can you compete with practical free labour? And that is a huge problem. We see this especially within the cruise business. The cruise companies they are very particular type of business, because they smell money, let us put it like that, and it is hard core about the money than it is about the experience. As soon as they would have local tour guide on board who wants to get paid on Greenlandic salary basis, they would be like 'oh no honey, no', and at the same time they are crying to us about 'why are there no Greenlandic guides? Why cannot we have Greenlandic guides?'. As soon as we ask them about how much they offer to pay, they are very surprised about paying them. They are looking at it as it should be a privilege from those guides to work and be with the cruise company. So I think international companies are having a very hard time adapting to that (Burdenski 2018)."

"Even though the Greenlandic society is a very heterogeneous mass, intergeneration negative attributes are stuck with them over long periods of times. While this is setting them back in international recognition, job opportunities with international companies & reputation, it is an immense hurdle to work against this wall of negativities. Fighting against this, takes much more effort, engagement & courage to stand up to. It is an unnecessary setback, which international people have put onto the Greenlandic society. While becoming aware of it & trying to find ways to overcome the burden, it might be undetermined but desired, that tourism as a tool of understanding other cultures, can counteract to prejudices many people, communities & societies are facing" (Bjørst 2008).

At present, all big scale tourism operations in Greenland is foreign owned. One of the major foreign tour company is "Greenland Adventure by Icelandic Mountain Guides." On its website it states; "For many on the Greenland Adventures team, our love for this country has been strong since childhood. In fact, the majority of the team are native Greenlanders that have migrated to Iceland." With the knowledge of English language, and an established track record of guiding business, many foreign tour guide companies are successful businesses in Greenland in comparison to locally owned businesses which lack professional certification, advertising, and language skills.

### ***16.3.2 Language Barrier***

The common language of global tourism is English which creates another serious limitation in building confidence among the Greenlandic people in becoming a tour operator. This rudimentary demand is paired with the expressed need for raising service levels and thus calls for improving the relatively low educational level in Greenland. Indeed, Greenlandic people do not feel comfortable in communicating in English and strong initiatives and training courses need to be in place by the government. (Finne 2018) A journalist for “High North News” newspaper, reported that understanding the incompetency it presents in global context, the Government of Greenland declared that it will work to have English replace Danish as primary foreign language in Greenland. An expert committee, convened by the previous government, found that Greenlandic, Danish and English fulfill separate functions in Greenland and are likely to continue to do so for some time to come.

Vivian Motzfeldt, Greenland’s Naalakkersuisoq (Minister) for Education, Culture, Research and Church, in a press release from Motzfeldt’s department said that the Naalakkersuisut has been working to establish agreements with English-speaking countries like the United States and Canada regarding an exchange of English-speaking teachers to Greenland. “They are to help grow young people’s competence so that they in a long-term perspective may become so confident in English that more future teacher students will choose English as one of their specializations.”

The future course of Greenland is determined by a political negotiation of ‘who we are’ and how to realize the ideal. Current debates about language policy are, at the core, about ‘whom’ we should be.’ The growth in tourism industry in Greenland paves the road to language competency, global connectivity, and self realization as an independent nation.

### ***16.3.3 Arctic Cruise Ship Tourism***

The presence of the cruise ships in the Arctic water, creates a struggle between environmental and economic concerns in the era of climate change. While cruise tourism does not burden a small coastal settlement with accommodation needs, their presence nonetheless can be overwhelming and unwelcomed to the local community especially if there is lack of communication between the community and the cruise-ship about the arrival, program, and attitude of the tourists visiting the settlements. Coastal Greenlandic communities are not very fond of cruise tourism as it does not generate any substantial income opportunity albeit receiving an influx of people for a short amount of time. Cruise ships usually show up unannounced and it could be during the seasons when villagers travel to hunt or fish in different locations.

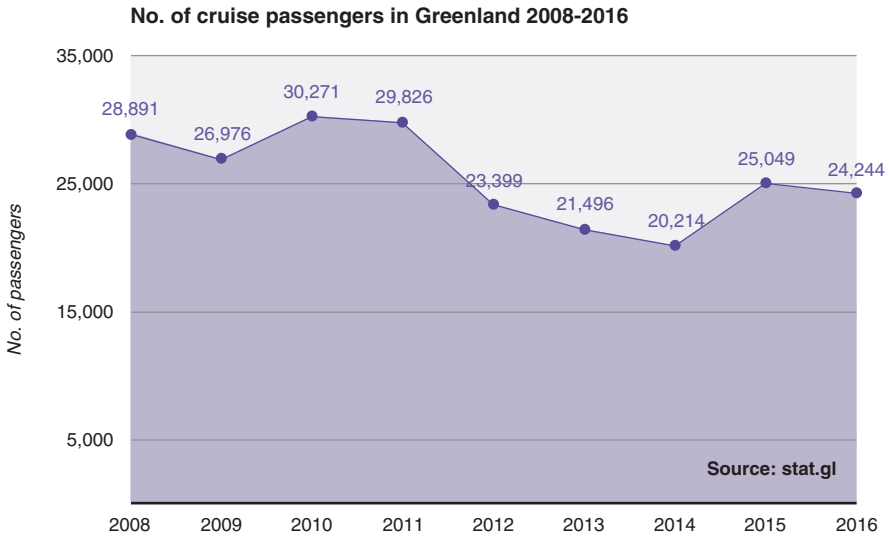
Usually, tourists do not buy anything from local community except a few postcards. On the other hand they purchase imported fresh produce that the local community members await for months. Due to lack of infrastructure (sitting area, restaurant, public toilets, etc.) there is no chance to engage in any Kaffemik, traditional dance performance, etc. (local idea about cultural tourism). Although local people make an effort by wearing their festive traditional costume, and display their handicrafts, tourists do not buy them and research investigations revealed that tourists are either ignorant about the significance of the animal bone carvings, due to lack of cultural understanding, imposed ban on animal fur and bones in their home country, or they find them not aesthetically pleasing (Tommasini 2011). Lack of respect for local customs, and treating the inuits as an “object of curiosity” by taking pictures of them and their homes without permission and asking private questions make the encounter between a local and a tourist not so welcoming. Additionally, locals also worry about their community problems getting exposed to foreign travelers, alcoholism and scattering of garbage throughout the settlement. And, most importantly, big cruises are dangerous to marine animals, especially narwhal, when they enter the breeding ground in the fjords.

This is why Arctic Council’s one of the working groups, Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) has created Arctic Marine Tourism Projects (AMTP). They produced the Best Practice Guidelines in 2015 to analyze and encourage sustainable tourism in the polar water. Among other goals, two topics related to Greenlandic cruise ship tourism:

- Takes into account regional variations, types of vessels and tourism operations and multiple stakeholder perspectives
- Considers the intended audience(s) for best practice guidelines

Due to the challenges and disconnection between cultural understanding, cruise ship tourism has not been successful in remote, and small settlement and the data related to Greenlandic cruise tourism reflect that finding in Fig. 16.2.

Some operators with a longstanding history in the Arctic – in particular members of the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO) – tend to be familiar with the risks, issues and considerations related to Arctic marine tourism. Generally, these operators set a positive example, including for those less experienced with the challenges of Arctic marine tourism like pleasure craft. Indeed, many of these experienced operators have good relations and communications with local communities and coastal administrations and conduct their operations in a responsible, safe, cultural and environmentally sustainable way. On their website, AECO declared, “The Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators” (AECO 2018) is an international organization for cruise operators. Our organization’s main objective is to ensure that expedition cruises and tourism in the Arctic are carried out with the utmost consideration for the fragile, natural environment, local cultures and cultural remains, while ensuring safe tour operations at sea and on land.” To inform the visiting tourists about the local environment, social, and economic situation, AECO has



**Fig. 16.2** Projected Tourism Growth in Greenland. (Source: [www.stat.gl](http://www.stat.gl))

created several informative guidelines: visitor guidelines, wildlife guidelines, community guidelines, biosecurity guidelines, etc. In addition, on their website, there is a special section dedicated to “Cultural and Social Interaction” it reads:

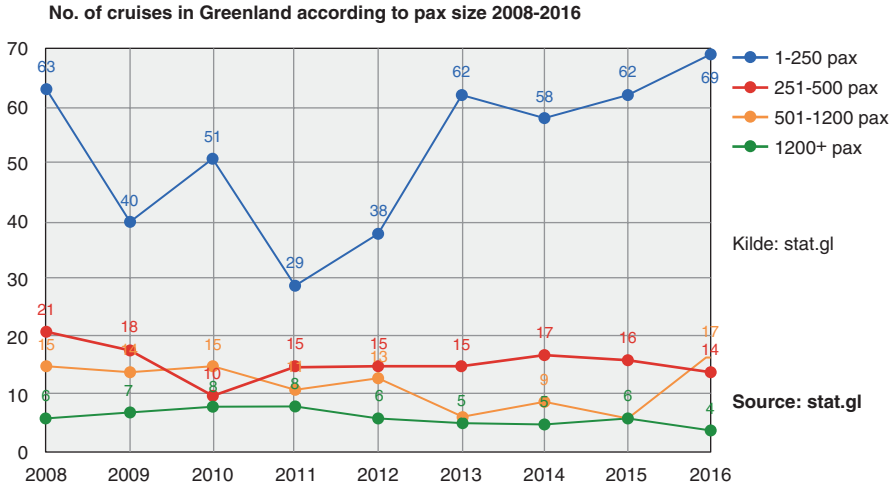
*For a small and sometimes isolated town or settlement in the Arctic, the call of a cruiseship is often a welcome and happy event. Locals may find both ships and their passengers interesting. But tourism in Arctic regions is growing rapidly. Anyone involved needs to be cognizant to the economic, social and cultural impact the growing tourism may have on local communities. Responsibility for respectable interaction and local benefits also rests with the tour operators and visiting guests being respectful and understanding of the local culture.*

**Respect local cultures:**

- Work against prejudiced attitudes
- Respect privacy; keep a good distance from private houses and never glance or photograph through private windows
- Talk to and not about people you meet
- Do not visit graveyards or other areas of religious or cultural significance without permission
- Ask before you photograph – a hesitation means NO
- Cairns may be signposts – do not alter them
- Never barter or import banned substances to a community
- You are encouraged to buy local souvenirs and products, but be aware of the legalities of importing/transporting purchases into other countries e.g. CITES – Convention of 3 March 1973 on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora/ The Washington Convention, [www.cites.org](http://www.cites.org)

**Cultural understanding:**

*Tourism is a great way of learning about, promoting and creating tolerance between people of different backgrounds and cultures. When visiting foreign countries and cultures,*



**Fig. 16.3** Projected Tourism Growth in Greenland. (Source: [www.stat.gl](http://www.stat.gl))

*guests may find things very different from home. It is important not to judge other cultures based on one's own sense of reality, norms and values, but try to understand that cultures are qualitatively different.*

To the contrary, the expedition ships (passengers up to 250 people) have been steadily increasing and if cruise tourism in Greenland is to fulfill an overall strategy for economic and environmental sustainability, expedition tourists fit into that strategy (Fig. 16.3). This type of tourism fits the targeted tourists criteria; nature lovers, culture lovers, pioneering mindset to match an adventure destination such as Greenland. In this type of adventure travel, usually the local fishermen and hunters are involved with their small boats to take the tourists in the inner fjord areas to enjoy the whales and narwhal without causing any disturbance to the wildlife as well as participate in kaffemik, traditional drum dancing in the settlements.

## 16.4 Conclusion

*“We’re in a time of reconciliation, and tourism is one of the best ways to get people face to face and getting to know each other. For us in the NWT we’ve got 33 communities, 11 official languages and each of those communities has their own vibrant and rich culture and unique story that helps define them and everyone of them can benefit from this area of tourism because it’s something anyone can participate in if that’s what they want. Tourism not only creates and sustains jobs it helps preserve language and culture,”* says Keith Henry, the president & CEO Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (interviewed by Ellis Quinn, journalist “Eye on the Arctic” circumpolar news project, Radio Canada International).

### ***16.4.1 Indigenous Cultural Tourism: A Success Story from North West Canada***

Ellis Quinn reported on Oct 5th, 2018 that government of Northwest Territories' Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), and Northwest Territories Tourism (NWTT), signed a memorandum of understanding to develop Indigenous cultural tourism in the territory and included new annual investments of up to \$257,000 (Quinn 2018). The majority of the 2018–2019 funding will be directed towards workshops and marketing, to help the growing local businesses to be able to better handle visitors from southern Canada and international visitors, as well as creating greater awareness about what is NWT has to offer. In some small settlements, the unemployment rate is between 5% and 10% resulting from sustainable form of eco-tourism that was thoroughly well planned from land use to monitoring visitor impacts by some community-owned tourism development. The governmental agreement was based on ongoing mentorship in the community, and a strong support system. Understanding the reality of unreliable mining business and to create a balanced, sustainable economy, the government has started to take tourism seriously.

This success story provides hope for the development of tourism in the remote coastal towns and settlements of Greenland. "Tourism is a social/economic phenomenon that acts both as an engine of economic progress and a social force. Tourism is much more than an industry. Tourism is more like a "sector" that impacts a wide range of industries. Tourism is not just businesses or governments – it is people. Supporting rational tourism growth and development needs to be viewed in this broader context (Davidson 1994, p. 26)."

Arctic societies and economies have historically been and continue to be natural resource-based, which have integrated these societies in global networks. Tourism relies increasingly on natural and cultural elements. And this sector would transmit the formally and informally acquired skills of Greenlandic citizens to participate in global networks and transactions.

According to research by Freya Higgins-Desbiolles, it is important to qualify the emphasis on tourism's economic contributions by highlighting its other positive impacts (McLaren 1998; Wearing 2001; Wearing 2002; Scheyvens 2002; Reid 2003) which include improving individual wellbeing, fostering cross-cultural understanding, facilitating learning, contributing to cultural protection, supplementing development, fostering environmental protection, promoting peace and fomenting global consciousness which contributes to the formation of global society (Cohen and Kennedy 2000, p. 212 for the last point; WTO 1999 for the former point). In the 1990s, many analysts acknowledged the power of tourism as a social force. Barnard and Spencer argue that "to ignore tourism in our accounts of culture contact in the 20th century is probably as great an omission as to ignore slavery in the 18th century or colonialism in the nineteenth".

Tourism indeed is an agent of positive change when the pace and scale remain appropriate to the capacity of the community, at current and future times (through



careful socio-environmental, assessments). Instead of focusing on mass tourism in Greenland, the focus should be have a complete assessment of the possible negative impact that large numbers of tourists can have on communities. “Factors found to contribute to the success of tourism development in peripheral regions include the presence of a leader, effective private and/or public sector partnerships, the identification and development of specialist attractions, government control and support, good market research, and community involvement” (Blackman et al. 2004, p. 59). Tourism development is often considered as viable alternative for peripheral regions. The realities of tourism are not always clearly understood. The long-term success of the tourism industry depends upon the acceptance and support of the host community (Murphy 1985; Wearing 2001). Successful tourism development does seem possible for peripheral regions but is not a rapid or simple solution: it requires substantial long-term governmental support and extensive training, research and planning processes. The potential exists, however, and a growing number of tourists are seeking the sort of specialized experiences available in peripheral regions (Blackman et al. 2004). How to build and enhance the community capacity for tourism? It is only possible when the big industries (airlines, brand name hotels) work with the local organizations (i.e., tour guide companies) by providing tools for actual practice, including suggested steps (housing deveopment in Nuuk) for building local capacity for development, models and framework and lessons for participants in real tourism development situations by continously sharing the success story of participants and building the confidence in the community, and industry, collectively.

Long before the era of commercialized Arctic tourism, Greenland has always been a magnet for the well known explorers who came to this land to reach the north pole. Their legendary expeditions are still inspirations that lure the modern day travelers to follow their path, or experience the off-the-beaten path and become a “Pioneer” (the current marketing slogan of Visit Greenland). Due to the remoteness of the place and harsh arctic condition, organized tourism has been the practical solution for decades. The current Visit Greenland campaign is based on investigative research to understand local perspective and expectations of people in the settlements perceive tourism, and what they see as the best way to develop and offer a high-quality tourist product, which has the ability to attract tourists to their remote and beautiful areas. Offering a unique experience to visitors may well develop a “niche tourism” for very special tourists in a very special place while helping build a strong local economy and social and cultural sustainability in Greenland.

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