

Denmark

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Born on 13 April 1968. Master's degree in Political Science from the University of Copenhagen 1993. Head of section in the Ministry of Finance 1993-95. Special adviser and in Agency for Financial Management and Administrative Affairs 1995-98 head of secretariat. Since 1989, member of the Social-Liberal party's executive committee, EU-committee etc. 1991: Stagiaire in the European parliament for the Social-Liberal Party. Has written articles and lectures on political and organizational topics, including on the EU.

Quality education for all: living together, democracy and social cohesion

Education must be based on fundamental values: solidarity, tolerance and understanding between people. I believe that there is a need for placing these fundamental principles on the agenda because societies currently are changing from homogeneous societies into more multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies.

To avoid prejudice, antagonism and even racism, we have to reconsider how we live together. To see intercultural coexistence not only as a normal way of life, but as a source of enrichment.

Teaching common values and ideas is fundamental. The basic principles of democracy, tolerance and human rights are incorporated in the curricula in the Danish educational system, but to become meaningful they must be practised.

Democracy isn't only formal rules. Democracy is also a way of living. To learn democracy children have to meet democracy in everyday life. Only this way they can acquire the experience that democracy is worthwhile and that it makes a difference to take active part in society. The teachers have a big responsibility in creating a democratic way of living together in the classroom.

Education for all, life-long learning and life-wide learning are seen as main driving-forces behind the development of society. The rapid changes require skills for readjustment, adaptation and updating in all fields of life – and throughout life – for everyone who will play an active part in society.

As a Danish example of what Education For All means, initiatives are taken to give the about 9 % of the pupils who come from immigrant and refugee families a highly qualified instruction and educational offers in accordance with their specific needs.

Education is crucial to our ability to live and act in the global community and in the creative knowledge-society, but education must lean on the other pillars of society: Family, local society, the workplace – and the global society. ☞