

Non-formal adult education in Iceland

New laws in adult education took effect on the 1.oct 2010. Purpose of the law was to fill in a gap in the legal framework within the icelandic law system. The purpose was to strenghten the formal foundation of the continuing education in Iceland and make it the fifth column of the educational system.

The aim of the new laws was to provide the individuals with little formal education more oppourtunities to be active in the society. Provide them with more educational possibilities and make it easier and more accessible to start their pursuance of education or training, strenghten their skill enhancement, building up the surroundings and resources to be able to meet te demands of the society for more knowledge and skills of workers.

The function of the laws is to coordinate continuous learning on behalf of educational providers which have the recognition by these laws and have the participation of govermental funds in executing it. In gaining recognition for continuous learning, which is the 5th column of the educational system and stands outside the formal school system, to enhance the possibilities for more recognition of training and experience which is gained outside the formal system, to strenghten the educational system and raising the level of education.

The definition of continuous learning is as follows: Whatever education, training, resources and guidance which purpose is to meet the needs of individuals with short formal education and is not formulated on the basis of the laws of secondary school system or universities. Continuous learning is to fit the needs of individuals to active participation in the society and companies. It is important that availability of educational possibilities is coherant with job participation. Cooperation with important stakeholders is important in executing these laws and the cabinet minister is permitted to assign tasks in connection with these laws to various institutions.

Regular cooperation is important with educational providers that work on the basis of these laws. It is important that to coordinate continuous education in the way that it fits other educational possibilities and also enhance the possibilities for validation of credits between the informal and formal school system.

According to the article 10 of the law a special educational fund shall be operated to promote educational opportunities for people with little formal education. The role is also to develop the environment for effective participation for these opportunities.

Distributions from the fund shall aim at three agendas:

- Cover expensis for training and courses
- Cover expensis for providing career counselling
- Cover expensis for inovational projects

The ministry of education designates a board of eight for the fund for four years. Relevant stakeholders worked together in writing these laws; unions, employees, ministry and the aim is to develop ad broaden the operations of The educational and training service in Iceland.

In recent years researches have been made to increase understanding of the influences which cause participants to drop out from upper secondary education, also there has been empahasis on the valdication process of recognizing prior learning and to find out if participants have run into any obstacles in reentering the formal school system. Special emphasis have been made in these researches of the value and role provided by career counselors in this process.

There has also been more focus on the quality of the educational possibility provided by the life long learning centres and one aspect has been to research how educational providers assess participants of various programmes in order to be able to provide them with sufficient information about their participation and also to secure successful transference between the the informal and formal system.

Large proportion of participants in adult education in Iceland has learning difficulties and research is needed in larger extent to find out reasons and resources in order to provide suitable pathways for the adult learner. The researches that have been made have showed that with suitable resources and programmes that has been offered to this group, it has made a huge impact on the participants esp. In self esteem and motivation and its important to develop this field more and also find ways to reach out to this target group.

The field of adult education is in a dynamic and developing stage in Iceland at the moment and hopefully that will continue. It's also time to look into what has been done and many aspects of the field are interesting in concern with androgogy, quality, career counseling, learning difficulties, suitable educational and training programmes, cooperation between the formal and informal systems and ect. Hopefully these topics will be addressed in the coming years in order to help us develop in the right direction.

The most relevant research environments and possible contact persons when it comes to researching the field of adult education The education and training service is the primary institution in developing and promoting new processes in cooperation with various other stakeholders within the field of adult education.

Education and Training Service Centre (<http://frae.is>), The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (<http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/>), Kvasir (<http://www.fraedslumidstodvar.is>), Leikn (<http://leikn.is/>), University of Iceland (<http://www.hi.is/>) og University of Akureyri (<http://unak.is/>).

The national umbrella organizations

Education and Training Service Centre
<http://frae.is/forsida/>
fraedslumidstod@fraedslumidstod.is

Kvasir

<http://www.fraedslumidstodvar.is>
kvasir@fraedslumidstodvar.is

Leikn

<http://leikn.is>
leikn@leikn.is

Continuing Education - University of Iceland

<http://ehi.is/>
endumenntun@hi.is

Continuing Education - University of Akureyri

<http://unak.is/simenntun/>
simennt@unak.is

Continuing Education - University of Bifröst

<http://bifrost.is/islenska/namsleidir/simenntun-haskolans-a-bifrost/>
bifrost@bifrost.is

Open University - Reykjavik University

<http://www.opnihaskolinn.is/>

opnihaskolinn@ru.is