

Iceland – country report

Nordic/Baltic meeting, 16th-17th March in Oslo, Norway

Short fact from Leikn, The Association of Adult Education, Iceland

Leikn has now 18 member organizations that run more than 50 offices all around Iceland. All members in Leikn offer education in one or another way for adult students. The annual meeting will be held in Reykjavik in week 22.

Board of the Association of Adult Education in Iceland 2014-2015

Chairman of the Board: Eyrún Björk Valsdóttir, Head of Education, Icelandic Confederation of Labor, Reykjavík. eyrun@asi.is

Assistant Chairman of the Board: Hildur Bettý Kristjánsdóttir, program director, Lifelong learning center SÍMEY, Akureyri. betty@simey.is

Secretary of the Board: Hulda Anna Arnljótsdóttir, director, the Educational Training Centre for Public Employees, Reykjavík. hulda@smennt.is

Treasurer of the Board: Guðrún Lárusdóttir, program director, Continuing Education at the Agricultural University of Iceland, Reykjavík. gurra@lbhi.is

Member of the Board: Smári Haraldsson, manager, Center for Lifelong Learning in the Westfjords, Ísafjörður. smari@frmst.is

Alternate Board: Sólveig Hildur Björnsdóttir, director, Framvegis educational center, Reykjavík. solveighildur@framvegis.is

Alternate Board: Guðrún Vala Elísdóttir, career counselor and teacher, Lifelong learning center in Borgarnes. vala@simenntun.is

National policy in Adult education in Iceland.

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

White paper (Hvít bókin)

In June 2014 the ministry of education published White paper - the Reform of Education. The White paper is intended to focus on which pillars of the Icelandic educational need to be strengthened and which methods are best suited to provide students with the education that legislation and the national curriculum requires. The law of Adult education is the fifth pillar of the educational system and in the White paper there is very little discussion of adult education and informal learning.



The White paper discusses the current status of the Icelandic educational system and on the basis of that analysis, presents draft of priorities and actions. Maximum weight is placed on the main objective to improve literacy performance, restructuring of study time and the reform of vocational education in the formal school system.

Interest groups from workers and employers associations, and Leikn, criticized harshly that no consideration was given to adult education / non-formal learning, particularly with regard to assessments into the formal school system. This criticism resulted in the ministry putting together a consulting group to remedy the lack of both involvement and consultation with the representatives of workers and employers.

The Icelandic National Qualification Framework (ISQF)

The Icelandic National Qualification Framework (ISQF) has been developed and designed within the formal educational system since 2008 and it will be formally launched at the end of 2015. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Research is responsible for managing the reference process and linking it to the EQF. As it stand now the ISQF contains 7 levels, one level less than the EQF.



All relevant stakeholders within the formal educational system have been approached e.g. teachers, headmasters and professional associations and most curriculums have been levelled. The ongoing activities now, involve discussion and setting up a cooperation forum with other stakeholders, outside the formal educational system.

ISQF level	Examples of Qualifications	EQF level
7	Doctorate degree	8
6	Master and Candidatus degree	7
5	Bachelor degree	6
4	Diploma at higher education level	5
3	Matriculation examination	4
2	Upper secondary school leaving certificate, other final examinations	3
1	Upper secondary school leaving certificate, other final examinations, compulsory school final examination	1 & 2

Leikn-The Association of Adult Education, and most stakeholders on labor market, e.g. the social partners (trade unions and employers), LLL- and educational training centers along with educational funds, have opposed to this approach and stressed the necessity for pre- entry level, so the ISQF involves career developmental opportunities for all workers and citizens. This is now being negotiated on along with questions regarding the ideology and implementation of the framework in Iceland. The main question so far not fully answered nor fully discussed, according to Leikn and other stakeholders in Adult education, are (to mention a few):

- 1) Unified or separate framework for formal and informal education?
- 2) Definition of qualification and educational measures (diplomas/certification in informal learning,
- 3) The use of Standardized Recognition of prior learning methods within the system to enhance transferability,
- 4) How to develop qualification that are fit for their purposes and are able to meet rapid changes in education and working life?
- 5) How to market the ISQF and build up trust?
- 6) Do learning outcomes map out and evaluate all educational experiences?

According to Leikn who has been an active partner in the dialog between the Ministry and informal/non-formal learning sector, many fundamental questions need to be discussed in more depth and more interest shown in really adapting the view of the informal learning sector into the ISQF.

Validation of general competences

The participants are validated in the NQF (National Qualifications Framework) in steps 1-2-3.

What are general competences?

- IT and computer skills
- Communication skills
- Essential skills; reading, writing, numeracy
- Communication and cooperation skills
- General safety
- Management and planning
- Continuous learning and personal growth
- Multicultural thinking and equality
- Information Processing
- Environment and sustainability



The gain for the individual:

To be able to focus on his strengths in communication and cooperation built on his past experience in working life or in personal life. Enhancing possibilities on the job market and in continuous learning. Making individual strengths visible for the person, job market and learning/ training institutions.

Evaluation of the adult education system in Iceland

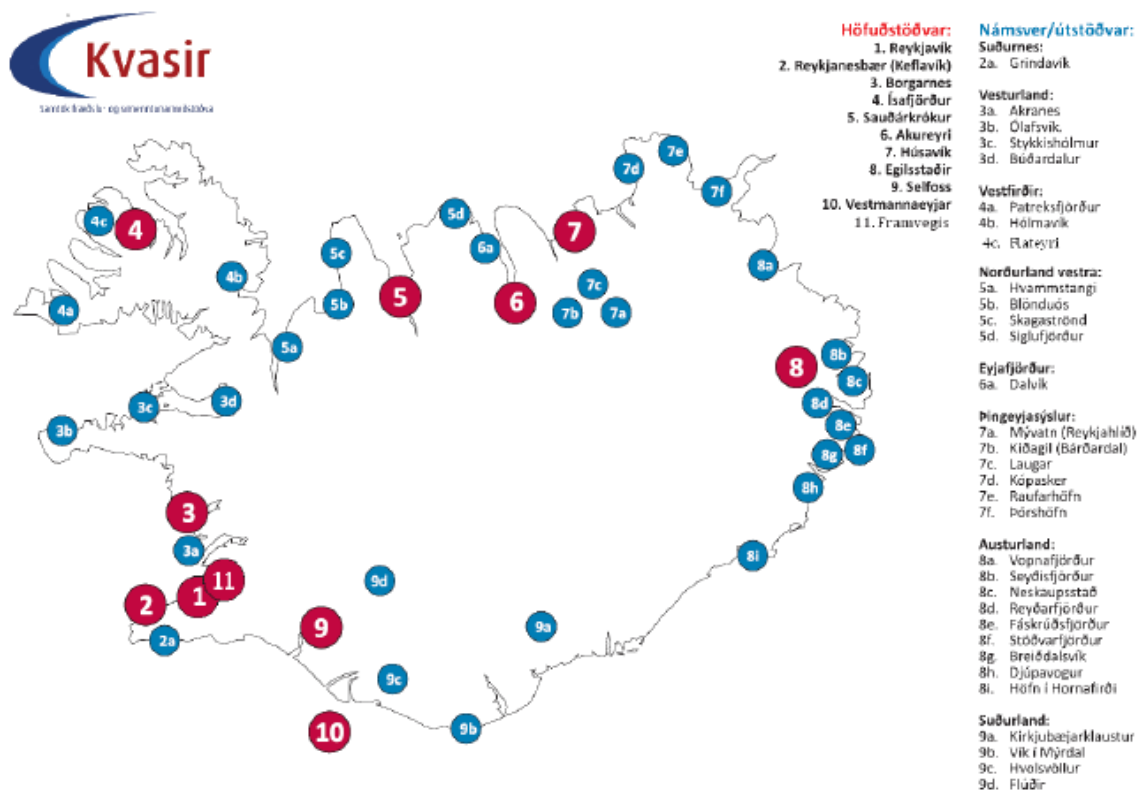
The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture requested, in June 2013, that Capacent Iceland would make a comprehensive assessment of the adult education system in Iceland. The evaluation, which focused on roles, division of labor and cooperation between The Education and Training Service Centre (ETSC), Education and Training Fund, educational partners, other stakeholders and the Ministry. The main goal of the assessment was to assess the development of the adult education system, the efficiency and utilization of funds and to check what results it has produced over the past

five years and to examine the relationship between stakeholders and decision-makers. Special emphasis was placed on assessing the impact and effectiveness of the system.

A parallel evaluation survey was conducted among the users of the service adult education system.

A parallel survey was conducted among the users of the service to evaluate their experience of the project.

The main conclusions of an evaluation were that users are generally satisfied with the adult education system. Funds allotted by the state are put to effective use and intended results have been obtained in most fields. The most promising opportunities lie in increased promotion of the adult education system, enhancing guidance and counselling and in clearer transferability of learning outcomes between systems. Interested parties should as soon as possible form a common vision of future adult education and define major issues to be worked on so that adult education will become the veritable fifth pillar of the Icelandic educational system.



Map that lists up the participants in the survey and there location and offices.

Pilot projects for increased education in western part of Iceland

Símenntunarmiðstöðin á Vesturlandi (The Lifelong Learning Center of Western region of Iceland) signed a contract with the University of Bifröst regarding a project which the Ministry of Education launched in 2014. Other partners were Fræðslumiðstöð Vestfjarða and Farskólinn, both Lifelong Learning Centers in the region.

The main goals of the project were 4 and aiming at the whole region (Norðvesturkjördæmi):

- To promote consultation for companies regarding education at work
- To increase cooperation of the economy and educators of occupational learning
- To increase the numbers of individuals who complete vocational training
- To improve the Icelandic knowledge of immigrants

Validation of real competence was introduced to people in the region and the emphasis was on a fishing industry, butchery, industrial mechanics, marine engineering, skippers, kindergarten assistants, social assistants and learning support assistants. 117 individuals have completed validation and over 3000 'units' have been validated.

90 individuals have started vocational studies in secondary schools, 28 individuals were registered to secondary schools (former dropouts).

Various methods were tried in Icelandic teaching. Foreign employees of one company participated in a distance learning course, a women's organization took care of teaching Icelandic in one area and one course was taught with a helping hand of a translator. 120 people attended two conferences about the multicultural society and Icelandic teaching.

A few learning projects were invented such as technical course for those individuals who have experience from work and would like to accomplish qualification in their field.

The project was completed on the 1st of March 2015.



New web-page - www.naestaskref.is - (Next steps)

Education and Training Service Centre for the Employment Sector plc. (Fræðslumiðstöð atvinnulífsins - FA) and Centre for Lifelong Guidance Expertise (Sérfræðisetur í æviflangri náms- og starfsráðgjöf SÆNS) collaborated on the development of a new website in cooperation with various stakeholders i.e.

Occupational councils, professional associations and educational partners.

The website is a part of a IPA funded project managed by the Lifelong learning center in 2012-2014 under the name: The development of competence assessment in order to increase the employability of adults with little formal education (Próun raunfærnimats til að efla starfshæfni fullorðinna með litla formlega menntun).



Various advisory partners participated on the project; The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, The Ministry of Finance and Economic affairs, The Ministry of Welfare, The Icelandic Confederation of Labor, The Confederation of Icelandic Employers, The Federation of State and Municipal Employees, The Association of Local Authorities in Iceland, The Association of Lifelong Learning and Adult Education Centers, The Association of Upper Secondary Schools, and Statistic Iceland.

The main objective of the website is to give individuals information and advice on the Icelandic Labor market, Educational opportunities and skills assessments/validations of real competence.

The website www.naestaskref.is (next step), was launched on December 4th last year at Lifelong learning center's annual meeting. At this point the website contains around 220 job descriptions, 100 course descriptions, and information on skills assessments/validations of real competence and education-and career counselling. A great demand has been for this kind of information website to enable individuals to make educational and career choices. Further development of the website is important but at this point funding is unclear.

March 2015

Leikn