



The Work and Study Issues of Immigrants in Iceland Fjölmeningarráð at the Equality Days 2013

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Agenda



- Introduction to the Multicultural Council
 - Background and Vision
 - Work of the Multicultural Council
- Research question
- Residents with foreign background in Reykjavík
- Problem cases
- Survey of the Multicultural Council
- Result and future outlook

The Multicultural Council



- Council of 7 members elected in November 2012 for 2 years



- Process of election
 - Eligible to vote are all residents in Reykjavik with migration background, from the age of 18 onwards
 - The election takes place every second year in November during the Multicultural Congress
 - The first election for the Multicultural Council was in November 2010
 - The next election will take place in November 2014

The Multicultural Council



- Our vision:
 - The role of the multicultural council of Reykjavík city is to be the ear and voice of the immigrants in Reykjavik and beyond.
 - Our work seeks to contribute to the development of well-informed interactions and harmonious relationships between the host culture and the immigrants' cultures.
 - We seek to foster an exchange of knowledge across cultural borders.
 - Our definition of culture is not limited to nationality (..) and our definition of immigrants also includes short-term residents.

The Multicultural Council



- Past events:
 - Multicultural Congress (November 2012)
 - Open meeting with representatives of the political parties that ran in April's parliamentary elections (March 2013)
 - Participation in the Multicultural Day in Reykjavík (May 2013)
 - Why do we need research about immigrant issues in Iceland? (May 2013)
- Current events:
 - Equality Days at the University of Iceland (October 2013)
- Future events
 - Conference on working issues among immigrants in Iceland (winter 2013)
 - Open meeting with the parties running for municipality (spring 2014)
 - Multicultural festival (spring 2014)
 - Multicultural Congress (November 2014)

The Multicultural Council



- Cooperation of the Multicultural Council
 - Collaboration with the Multicultural Centre / Fjölmenningarsetur (www.mcc.is)
 - Participation in the working group about Immigrant Issues in Iceland / teymi um innflytjendamál
 - Participation in the working group “multiculturalism and children” / börn og fjölmenning
 - Participation in the Immigration Council of Iceland / Innflytjengarráð
- Organizational belonging: Human Rights Office of Reykjavik City / Mannréttindaskrifstofa Reykjavíkur
 - <http://www.reykjavik.is/en/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-4890/>
 - Facebook: Multicultural Council / Fjölmenningarráð
 - Email: fjolmenningarrad@reykjavik.is

Research Question



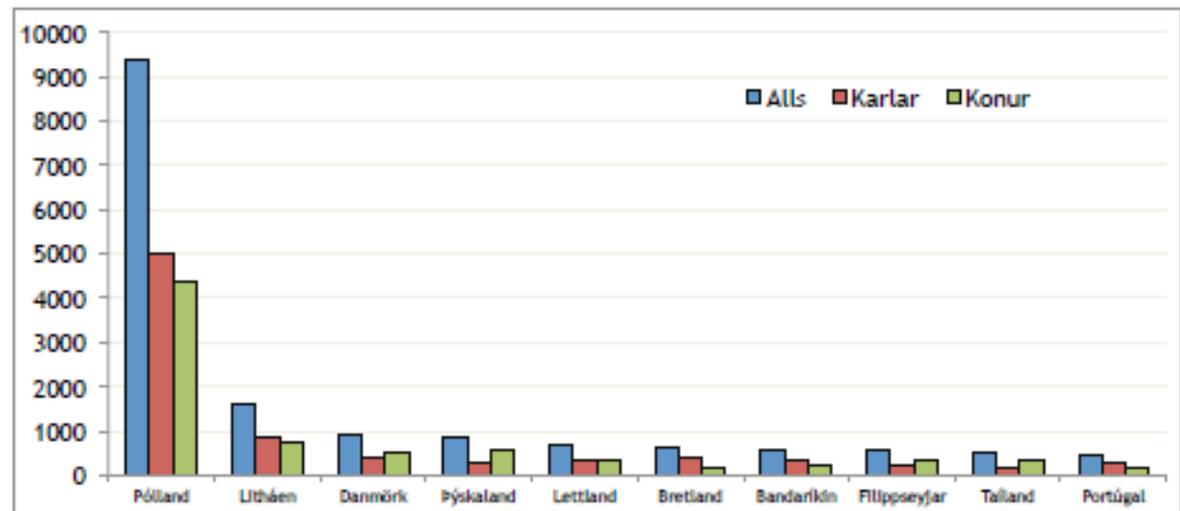
- What changes have immigrants brought to the Icelandic study and work environment?
 - Who are the immigrants in Iceland and Reykjavik?
 - What are the social and economic impacts of immigrants?
 - What is the regulatory implication of immigrations:
 - Administrative level in Reykjavik?
 - In the educational sector?



Residents with foreign background



- Immigrants living in Iceland
 - 25.926 immigrants in Iceland – 8,1%
 - From about 140 countries.
 - Nearly 8.000 people have been Icelandic citizenship.
- Population projection 2010-2060 (by 13 July 2010)
 - It is expected that the population in Iceland will be about 436.500 by 2060.
 - Number of foreign immigrants will grow much in coming years



Mynd II-6 Fjölmennustu þjóðernin í byrjun árs 2013. Heimild: Hagstofa Íslands 2013.

Residents with foreign background



- General census about immigrants
 - At the beginning of 2013, the number of immigrants was 25.926 – 29.130 if their children who were born in Iceland are included. That means 9,1 percent of the population are either immigrants or second generation immigrants.
 - Eight percent of all children in Iceland, aged 0-4 years, are considered second-generation immigrants.



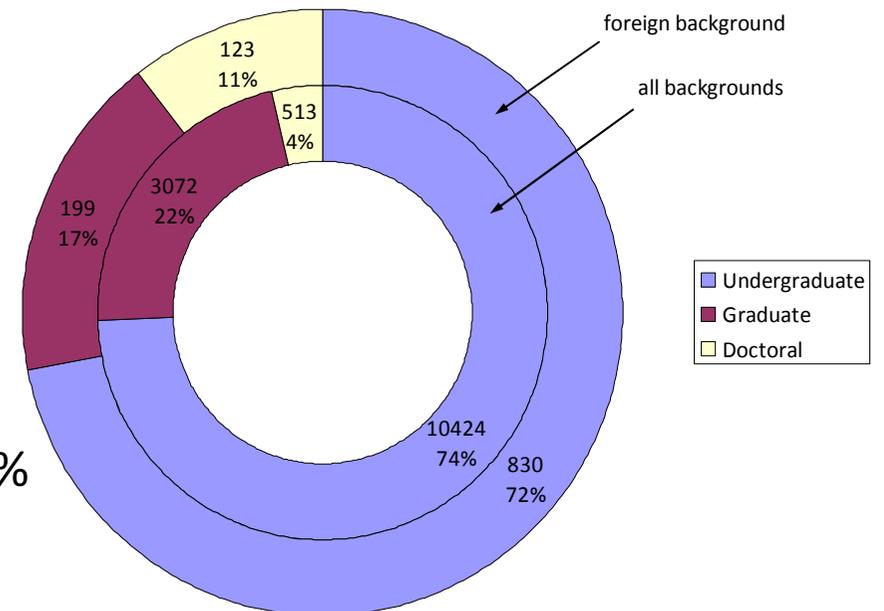
Residents with foreign background



Student issues of immigrants

- About 80 percent of children with an immigrant background commenced college in 2010, compared to 96 percent of children with no foreign background. Proportionally fewer immigrants complete their secondary education than their Icelandic counterparts.
- In 2013, 1.152 foreign students have been enrolled at HÍ, 271 (18.8%) of them are enrolled in the Icelandic for foreign students programme.
- Currently 14.009 students are enrolled at HÍ, of which:

- 830 foreign undergraduate (8,0%)
- 199 foreign graduate (6,5%)
- 123 foreign doctoral (24,0%)
- Share of Icelandic to foreign students vary between 2,1% and 44,9%



Residents with foreign background

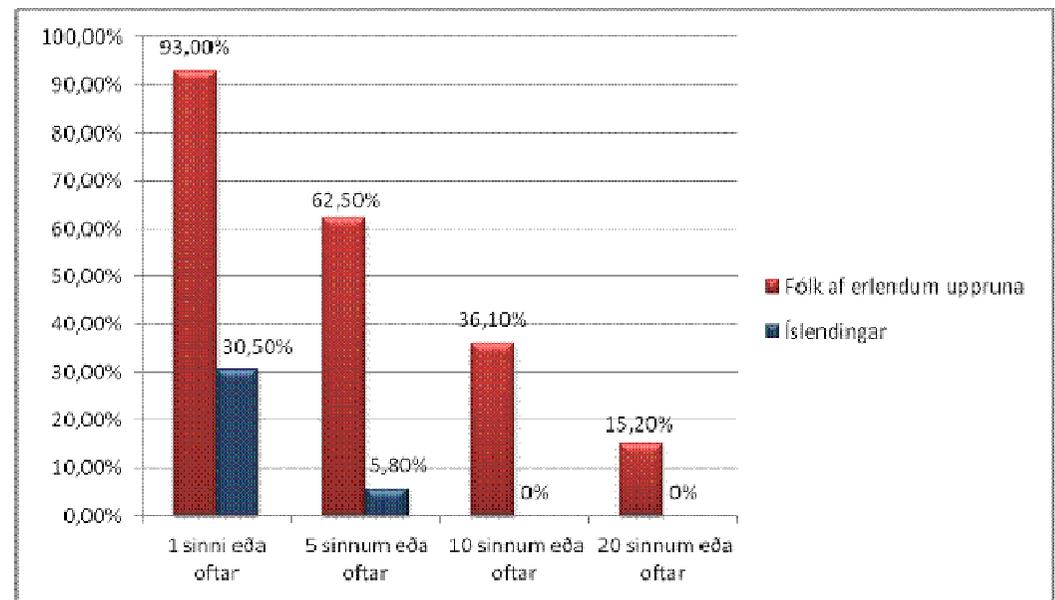


- Working issues of immigrants
 - The labour market consist of 183.000 active individuals, 14.800 (8,1%) of which are immigrants.
 - Almost every fifth unemployed person is a foreign national.
 - It is estimated that foreign nationals deliver considerably more to the country than they receive from it. According to data from the Directorate of Internal Revenue, foreign citizens with tax domicile in Iceland contributed almost ISK 10 billion in taxes last year. Reduced by welfare costs, the surplus created by immigrants was ISK 4,3 billion.
 - The budget for immigration issues has decreased significantly since 2008. It could be said that in 2008 almost ISK 21.000 was spent on each foreign national in the country, compared to ISK 9.000 by 2013 considering the current price level.

Problem cases



- Issues
 - Adult education / continuous education
 - Socio-political education / multicultural education for services providers
 - Employee counselling / accreditation of degrees
 - Access to services and regulations for immigrants
 - Translation services / access to information
 - Trade Union / Services for immigrants
 - Indirect discrimination



Survey



- The view and information about immigrants in Iceland is fragmented in extent and depth.
- The Multicultural Council of Reykjavik intends to bridge the gaps of information by surveys about the following themes:
 - Work and work issues
 - Language and communication
 - Family, school, healthcare
 - Finances, housing, and welfare
- To share with policy makers and the administration of Reykjavik City, in order to improve services for immigrants.



Result and future outlook



- Results

- Within the past decade positive efforts has been made, but the financial crisis has shifted priorities not in favour of immigrant issues.
 - The function of workers union for immigrants has to strengthen
 - Formal (e.g. University) and informal education seems to lack behind the development in an integrated multicultural society
- Assimilation vs. integration

- Future outlook

- The outlook for immigrants working in Iceland is difficult, because of:
 - Recent proposed cuts of government funding for immigrants
 - Lack of collaboration and network between immigrant organizations
 - Lack of harmonization of regulations and information for immigrants
- Especially non-EU members appear to be in worst situation than some years ago – report by the European Commission from 2012

References



- Links

- www.staticis.is
- Human rights office of Reykjavík: <http://mannrettindi.reykjavik.is/en/>
- Vision media: <http://visionmedia.is/?p=2652>
- MCC: <http://www.mcc.is/frettir/nr/2346>
- Háskóli Íslands: <http://www.hi.is/adalvefur/nemendur>
- Intercultural Iceland: http://www.ici.is/index_files/Page963.htm

- Literature

- Johanna Ann-Louise Carin Läärä (2012). *Social integration of unemployed immigrants : a comparison of integration programs in Jyväskylä and Reykjavík*. MA thesis HÍ
- Margo Elísabet Renner (2010). *WE WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TOO: The narrative experience of immigrants with career qualifications and their acceptance into the Icelandic labor market*. MA thesis HÍ
- European Commission against Racism and Intolerance: <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Iceland/ISL-CbC-IV-2012-001-ENG.pdf>