



Rauði krossinn

THE ACCESS TO
EDUCATION
FOR REFUGEES
IN ICELAND

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ABSTRACT

This report looks at the educational needs of refugees in Iceland and specifically in the capital area, and the educational opportunities available to refugees there. The report reviews the laws and rules regarding education for persons whose native language is not Icelandic. It examines the educational needs of refugees in Iceland on the basis of a needs assessment done among 82 refugees who have all received international protection in Iceland between May 2017 and November 2018. The report then explores whether laws and rules regarding education for persons whose native language is not Icelandic are being upheld or if steps could be taken to ensure that measures are in place to make education more accessible for refugees in Iceland. This is followed by a description of obstacles that refugees in the capital area experience when it comes to accessing education in Iceland, and the implications of such obstacles. Subsequently, the report looks at best practices so that the Icelandic government and institutions may learn from other countries. Finally, the Icelandic Red Cross gives recommendations for more inclusive and accessible education.

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BACKGROUND

The Icelandic Red Cross has had a role in the reception of refugees to Iceland from the very first reception in 1956, both in service and support to the newcomers and advocacy on their behalf. This role is stated in the current agreement the Red Cross has with the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The current Action Plan for Immigrants (Framkvæmdaáætlun í málefnum innflytjenda 2016-2019)¹ lays out a plan for governmental institutions to implement changes to improve the situation of immigrants in Iceland. There are activities in chapter C (C1. C2. C3. C4. C6.) related to educational issues, e.g. improved access and availability of education opportunities. Additionally, chapter B contains activities planned regarding improved access to information and reception plans (B2. B3. B4.). These activities have not all been implemented yet.

Red Cross staff and volunteers continuously make efforts to assist newly arrived refugees who are attempting to continue with their education in order to fulfil their aspirations, make use of their skills and participate fully and actively in their new home country. While making these efforts, it has become apparent that the situation around refugees' educational opportunities needs to be greatly improved.

Thus, the Icelandic Red Cross sees this report as an effort to speak into this situation, hoping it will be of help in the joined efforts of all cooperating partners to improve the reception of refugees to Iceland in general.

¹ Alþingi. Tillaga til þingsályktunar um framkvæmdaáætlun í málefnum innflytjenda fyrir árin 2016-2019. Available: <https://www.althingi.is/altext/145/s/1285.html>

INTRODUCTION

Over the last years, Iceland has seen an increase in positive decisions for applications for international protection. This means that more persons are receiving protection in Iceland each year, as can be seen in the tables below.

Positive decisions in 2016²

Protection	58
Subsidiary Protection	39
Humanitarian Permit	14
Quota Refugees	56
Family Reunification	6
KNÚ	Unknown
<i>Total</i>	<i>173</i>

Positive decisions in 2017³

Protection	84
Subsidiary Protection	37
Humanitarian Permit	14
Quota Refugees	47
Family Reunification	40
KNÚ	43
<i>Total</i>	<i>265</i>

Positive decisions in 2018⁴

Protection	104
Subsidiary Protection	39
Humanitarian Permit	11
Quota Refugees	52
Family Reunification	41
KNÚ	31
<i>Total</i>	<i>278</i>

The Icelandic Red Cross assists all those applying for and receiving international protection in Iceland. This report focuses on persons who have received international protection coming through the asylum system. Although data about this group is scarce, European statistics show that the majority of asylum seekers in the EU-28 are less than 35 years old. In 2017, more than four in five first-time asylum seekers were under 35.⁵

The Red Cross Reykjavíkurdeild has several projects in place that aim to assist refugees in the capital area to start build their lives in Iceland. Within these projects the Reykjavík department introduces refugees to Icelanders through the Refugee Guide Project (verkefnið Leiðsögumenn flóttafólks),⁶ provides practical assistance (for example with finding housing and employment) through the Open House project,⁷ and social activities to counteract isolation. Furthermore, the Red Cross has a role as advocate for refugees who sometimes struggle to access services.

To ensure that refugees are receiving the services they need or are entitled to, Red Cross staff conduct interviews with persons over the age of 18 once they have received international protection in Iceland. During these interviews Red Cross services are introduced and refugees' needs are assessed.

Over the last year, the Red Cross Reykjavíkurdeild has received many comments from refugees regarding their limited access to education. United Nations figures show that only 1% of refugees at university age have access to university, while the average worldwide is 36%.⁸ This has led the Red Cross to collect data on refugees' educational needs and the accessibility of education for refugees in Iceland. The focus has been on Upper Secondary Education (framhaldsskóli) and Tertiary Education (háskólanám eða annað

² Útlendingastofnun The Directorate of Immigration, 'Asylum Statistics – Concluded Cases 2017', viewed 20 December 2018, https://www.utl.is/images/t%C3%B6lfr%C3%A6%C3%B0i%202017/Allt_2017/T%C3%B6lfr%C3%A6%C3%B0i_%C3%A1rsins_2017_EN.pdf; Velferðarráðuneytið, viewed 18 January 2019, <https://www.stjornarradid.is/verkefni/utlendingar/flottafoolk/fjoldi-flottamanna/>; Útlendingastofnun, received by email on 11 January 2019; Kærunefnd útlendingamála, received by email on 9 January 2019.

³ Útlendingastofnun The Directorate of Immigration, 'Asylum Statistics – Concluded Cases 2017', viewed 20 December 2018, https://www.utl.is/images/t%C3%B6lfr%C3%A6%C3%B0i%202017/Allt_2017/T%C3%B6lfr%C3%A6%C3%B0i_%C3%A1rsins_2017_EN.pdf; Supra 2.

⁴ Útlendingastofnun The Directorate of Immigration, 'Asylum Statistics', updated 14 December 2018, viewed 20 December 2018, <https://www.utl.is/index.php/en/about-directorate-of-immigration/statistics#Conclusions1>; Supra 2.

⁵ Eurostat Statistics Explained, 'Asylum Statistics', updated 18 April 2018, viewed 20 December 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics#Age_and_gender_of_first-time_applicants

⁶ Rauði Krossinn, 'Flóttamenn', viewed 18 December 2018, <https://www.raudikrossinn.is/hvad-gerum-vid/folk-a-flotta/flottamenn/>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ UNHCR, 'Tertiary Education', viewed 19 December 2018, <https://www.unhcr.org/tertiary-education.html>

frekara nám), as the Red Cross Reykjavíkurdeild works mainly with persons who are over 18 years old and who would be placed in either of those levels of education.

Legally

When looking at legal instruments, it is clear what measures should be in place in framhaldsskólinn to accommodate the educational needs of foreigners and those who do not have Icelandic as a native language. The Upper Secondary Education Act⁹ (Lög um framhaldsskóla)¹⁰ states that framhaldsskólinn should devise a plan for the reception of students whose native language is not Icelandic;

Article 35. Languages; students whose native language is not Icelandic

[...] Upper secondary schools shall devise a plan for the reception of students. The reception plan shall be made available to students and parents and should include information about the studies and the operation of the school in general, as well as information for parents whose native language is not Icelandic and for deaf parents about the availability of interpretation services. Reception plans for students whose native language is not Icelandic shall take into account the students' background, their language skills and their competence in other fields of study. [...]

35. gr. Tungumál, nemendur með annað móðurmál en íslensku.

[...] Framhaldsskólar skulu setja sér áætlun um móttöku nemenda. Móttökuáætlun framhaldsskóla skal vera aðgengileg nemendum og foreldrum, þar sem m.a. koma fram upplýsingar um námið og skólastarfið almennt og foreldrum með annað móðurmál en íslensku og heyrnarlausum foreldrum er greint frá möguleikum á túlkajónustu. Móttökuáætlun vegna nemenda með annað móðurmál en íslensku skal taka mið af bakgrunni þeirra, tungumálafærni og færni á öðrum námssviðum. [...]

This includes measures for all refugees the Red Cross Reykjavíkurdeild is working with. The plan for reception is explained in more detail in a regulation about the right of students in Upper Secondary Education for Icelandic teaching (Reglugerð nr. 654, 2009 um rétt nemenda í framhaldsskólum til kennslu í íslensku), which does not seem to be available in languages other than Icelandic;¹¹

3. gr. Móttökuáætlun skóla.

Framhaldsskólar skulu setja sér móttökuáætlun fyrir nemendur með annað móðurmál en íslensku. Áætlunin skal taka mið af bakgrunni þeirra, tungumálafærni, færni á öðrum námssviðum og af þeirri kennslu og stuðningi sem veitt er.

Í móttökuáætlun felst m.a. að:

- a. unnið sé í nánú samstarfi við þann grunnskóla hér á landi sem nemandi kemur frá, sé um slíkt að ræða,
- b. skóli safni upplýsingum um bakgrunn nemenda og aðstæður foreldra, til að geta mætt einstaklingsbundnum þörfum þeirra sem best,
- c. gerð sé einstaklingsnámskrá sem taki mið af bakgrunni og málsvæði nemenda, tungumálafærni, kunnáttu og hæfni á öðrum námssviðum,
- d. skipuleggja samráð milli starfsfólks og sérfræðinga innan skólans um málefni nemenda,
- e. nemendum sé tryggður aðgangur að náms- og starfsráðgjöf skólans,
- f. styrkja félagsleg tengsl og gagnkvæma félagslega aðlögun milli erlendra nemenda og íslenskra til að rjúfa félagslega einangrun, sé hún til staðar,

⁹ Upper Secondary Education Act, 2008, No 92, Article 35, 12 June 2008, Available: <https://www.government.is/media/menntamalaraduneyti-media/media/law-and-regulations/Upper-Secondary-Education-Act-No.-92-2008.pdf>

¹⁰ Lög um framhaldsskóla 2008 nr. 92. 12 June. Available: <https://www.althingi.is/lagas/nuna/2008092.html>

¹¹ Menntamálaráðuneyti. Reglugerð um rétt nemenda í framhaldsskólum til kennslu í íslensku, 3. gr, 2009. Available: <https://www.reglugerd.is/reglugerdir/allar/nr/654-2009>

- g. í upplýsingagjöf til nemenda og foreldra sé gerð grein fyrir helstu starfsháttum skóla, þjónustu, samstarfi og reglum,
- h. tryggja að upplýsingar um annan stuðning séu fyrir hendi, s.s. um heimanám og aðra aðstoð, túlkþjónustu, samstarf við heimilin, foreldraviðtöl og -fundi, þjónustu í hverfi og nærsamfélagi og samstarf við stofnanir utan skóla,
- i. tryggja upplýsingagjöf til nemenda og foreldra um starfsemi skólans utan lögbundinnar kennslu, s.s. um félags- og tómstundastarf og íþrótt- og æskulýðsstarf.

Gera skal grein fyrir móttökuáætlun í skólanámskrá.

Móttökuáætlun skal vera aðgengileg nemendum og foreldrum, t.d. á vef skóla.

The regulation states that a reception plan should include, amongst other things, efforts from the school to understand the student's circumstances and to meet their individual needs. Furthermore, schools need to create an individual curriculum based on the background, language, skills and competencies of the student in other fields of study. Students need to be guaranteed access to the school's academic and vocational counsellor, and efforts should be taken to support mutual integration of students and ensure that the student and parents receive information. The school should ensure that information and other support is available, for example regarding homework and interpreting services.

The Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for Upper Secondary Schools¹² (Aðalnámskrá framhaldsskóla)¹³, published by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture also lays out the rules for framhaldsskólinn regarding students with a native language that is not Icelandic:

16.1.2. Students whose native language is not Icelandic

“Schools should make an effort to meet the needs of students of foreign origin through active teaching of Icelandic, by educating them about Icelandic society and culture, and by providing assistance with homework, peer-assisted learning, and through other forms of assistance. Each school is to issue a reception plan defining the main aspects of school activities in a language that the students in question and their custodial parents and/or lawful custodians of underage students understand. The reception plan is to include an individual curriculum guide that takes into account the background and language competence of the students in question, and organise the cooperation of them and the school personnel and clearly describe what assistance the school supplies, for example, regarding homework and interpretation. [...]

Upper secondary schools may accredit the native language of students as an elective or in lieu of another foreign language. Students whose native language is not Icelandic should be given an opportunity to preserve their native language as an elective, if they wish to do so. Upper secondary schools can offer such studies as class-based learning or distance learning or assess studies taken elsewhere. [...]

Students who resided outside the Nordic countries during compulsory school can apply to study a language other than one of the Nordic languages. Students who have been granted an exemption from studying a Nordic language in compulsory school can also be granted such an exemption in upper secondary school. In such cases, they are required take another subject in lieu.”

16.1.2. Nemendur með annað móðurmál en íslensku

“Framhaldsskólar skulu koma til móts við þarfir nemenda af erlendum uppruna með íslenskukennslu og fræðslu um íslenskt samfélag og menningu, liðsinni við heimanám, jafningjastuðningi og öðrum þeim ráðum sem að gagni mega koma. Hver skóli skal setja sér móttökuáætlun þar sem fram koma helstu atriði um skólastarfið á máli sem nemendur og forráðamenn ólöggráða nemenda geta skilið. Í móttökuáætlun felst að gerð sé einstaklingsnámskrá sem tekur mið af bakgrunni og tungumálafærni viðkomandi, að þróa námsaðferðir til að mæta viðkomandi nemendum, að skipuleggja samráð nemenda og starfsmanna skólans og upplýsa með skýrum hætti hvaða stuðning skólinn veitir til dæmis við heimanám og túlkun. [...]

¹² ‘The Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for Upper Secondary Schools – General Section’, *Ministry of Education, Science and Culture*, 2012, p.83.

¹³ ‘Aðalnámskrá Framhaldsskóla 2011 – Almennur Hluti’, *Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti*, 2011, p.83.

Framhaldsskólum er heimilt að meta móturmál nemenda til eininga í frjálsu vali eða til eininga í stað annars erlends tungumáls. Miða skal við að nemendur með annað móturmál en íslensku fái tækifæri til að viðhalda móturmáli sínu sem valgrein óski þeir þess. Framhaldsskólar geta boðið upp á slíkt nám í staðnámi eða fjarnámi eða metið nám sem stundað er annars staðar. [...]

Nemendur sem hafa dvalið utan Norðurlanda á grunnskólaaldri, geta sótt um að taka annað tungumál í staðinn fyrir Norðurlandamál. Nemendur sem fengið hafa undanþágu frá námi í Norðurlandamáli í grunnskóla, geta einnig fengið undanþágu frá Norðurlandamáli í framhaldsskóla. Þeir skulu þó taka aðra grein í staðinn.”

The Act on Public Higher Education Institutions (Lög um opinbera háskóla)¹⁴ fails to consider foreigners or students who do not have Icelandic as a native language. However, when persons do not meet admission criteria for higher education institutions, they may offer preparatory study programmes. Additionally, these institutions need to make provisions to ensure that teaching and special support is available to students with emotional or social difficulties.¹⁵

Regarding the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, Icelandic institutions are to develop procedures to assess their foreign qualifications even when a refugee does not have documentary evidence, as stated in the European Social Charter to which Iceland is a party.¹⁶ ENIC/NARIC¹⁷ has been set up in Iceland to assess foreign academic qualifications.

The Charter also prescribes the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion. As part of ensuring this right, Icelandic authorities need to take measures to promote the effective access to, amongst other things, education for persons who live or risk living in a situation of social exclusion.¹⁸ It is known that refugees are at increased risk of social exclusion in host countries.¹⁹ Measures should thus include the promotion of access to education for refugees in Iceland.

¹⁴ Alþingi, Act on Public Higher Education Institutions No 85, 2008; Alþingi, Lög um opinbera háskóla, nr. 85, 12 June 2008.

¹⁵ Alþingi, Higher Education Act 2006 No. 63, 13 June. Section VII Students, Article 19.

¹⁶ Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. Lisbon, 1997. Section VII, Article VII.

¹⁷ ENIC/NARIC Islands handles academic recognition. <http://english.enicnaric.is/>

¹⁸ European Social Charter (Revised). Strasbourg, 3 May 1996. Article 30.

¹⁹ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Social Policy and Development. 'Refugees and Social Integration in Europe'. 15-16 May 2018, p8.

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

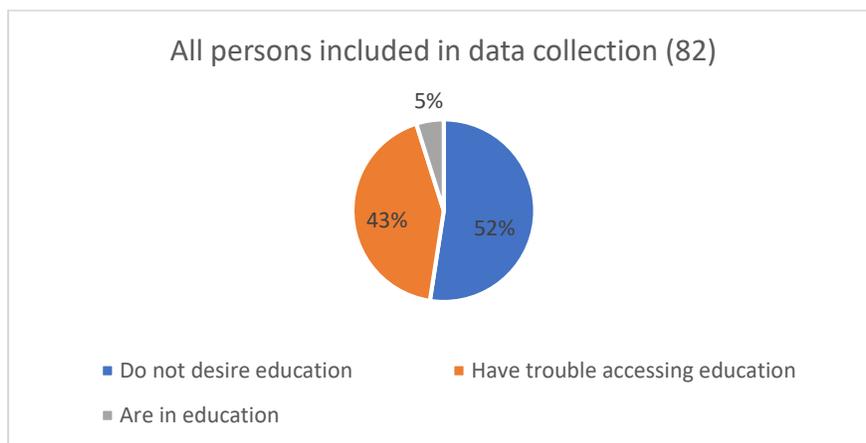
Red Cross Reykjavíkurdeild collected data regarding educational backgrounds and educational needs from 82 persons who have received international protection in Iceland between May 2017 and November 2018 (covering a period of eighteen months). Persons included in the assessment are aged 18-40. This data is from the area covered by the Reykjavíkurdeild branch only, meaning the capital area.

All refugees in this area have access to part-time Icelandic classes in schools such as Mímír,²⁰ MúltiKúltí and Tin Can Factory. Refugees can apply for a grant for Icelandic courses from the social services of up to 150.000 kr., which covers about three courses (Icelandic Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3).²¹ Each level contains 60 hours of lessons. Most persons who participated in the assessment have taken these Icelandic classes or are currently enrolled in them. However, many have said they desire further education, more full-time education and/or more intensive language training to prepare for further education.

Of the 82 persons included in the assessment, 39 have said they desire education in Iceland beyond the part-time Icelandic classes. This amounts to 48% of persons. The average age of those who are eager to receive further education is 26,1.

Merely 4 out of 82 refugees (5%) included in the data collection are receiving education at the time of writing: two are attending Tækniskólinn and two are attending Fjölbrautarskólinn í Ármúla (FÁ). The average age of those currently in education is 21,7.

For multiple reasons, explored later in this report, the remaining 35 persons (43%) have trouble accessing education in Iceland.

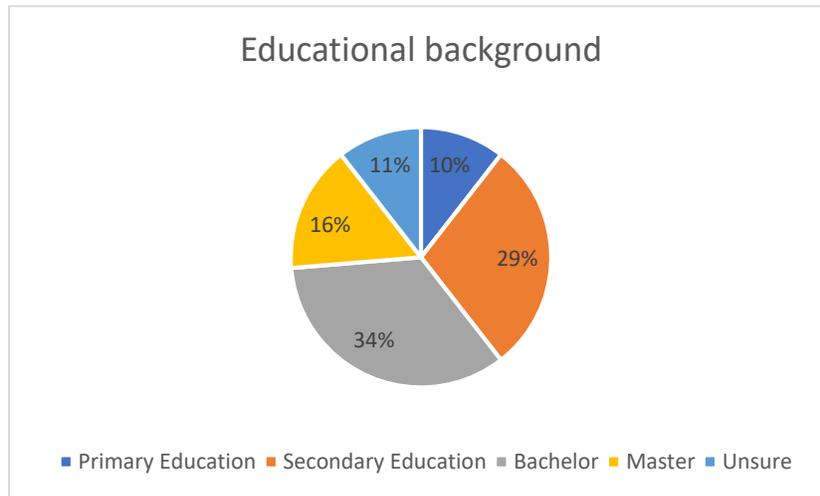


²⁰ Mímír also offers a 200-hour study programme called 'Icelandic Culture and Society' scheduled to start in Spring 2019. The study programme is equivalent to 10 credits at the upper secondary level. It encourages people to become active in the community, allows students to build networks and strengthen their position in the labour market. 'Icelandic Culture and Society' is a Level 4 Icelandic programme.

²¹ Ministry of Welfare. 'Leiðbeinandi reglur fyrir sveitarfélög um móttökupjónustu og aðstoð við félagslega þátttöku flóttafólks'. 6.gr.i. May 2014. p7-8.

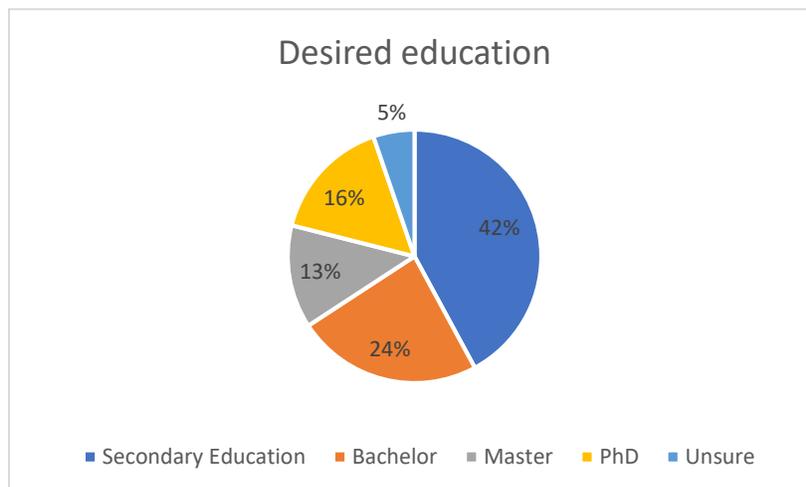
Educational Backgrounds

Refugees in Iceland have varying levels of educational background and therefore require education at different levels. Educational background in the graph below refers to the highest level of education that individuals have started outside of Iceland, but not all persons have necessarily completed their education at this level. Many were forced to flee their home countries before being able to finish their education.



Desired Education

The desired level of education of the Red Cross' refugee clients does not necessarily correlate to the educational background of refugees. Many understand that they may have to start their educational journey at a different point from which they left off due to obstacles such as limited English or Icelandic language skills, or the lack of physical evidence of their qualifications. In this needs assessment, participants were asked to state the type of education they would like to pursue in Iceland, which led to the results shown in the graph below.



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

To map out the educational opportunities in Iceland, the Red Cross Reykjavíkurdeild sent out a request for information to various upper secondary schools (framhaldsskólar) and universities (háskólar) in the Reykjavík capital area in November 2018. Information was requested about entry requirements, study programmes, additional support available for students whose native language is not Icelandic, and the schools' reception plans.

The information received illustrates that most entry requirements and study programmes do not take into account the specific circumstances of refugees, especially of those who have not finished grunnskólinn in Iceland. Specific study programmes for this group are limited in all schools. Although legal instruments state that framhaldsskólar are obliged to devise a reception plan for students whose native language is not Icelandic, not all schools have complied with these laws. Only few schools with a reception plan have clearly stated the plan includes an individual curriculum plan.

The table below provides an overview of the information that was gathered. A full overview of the questions sent and the answers received can be found in Annex I of this report.

	Entry requirements	Study programmes/ Námsbraut ²²	Additional Support	Reception Plan
Borgarholtsskóli	Grunnskólal próf with grades higher than B in English, Icelandic and mathematics. Preparatory courses for those with grades C or C+. Persons with grade D can register for framhaldsskólalbraut.	No specific study programmes.	Two counsellors who give assistance to students of foreign origin. Plans to start specific assistance for students with limited Icelandic knowledge in 2019.	No reception plan.
Fjölbrautaskólinn við Ármúla	Being at least 16 years old.	No full study programmes. Courses designed for non-Icelandic students: - Icelandic as a second language (five courses) - Icelandic as a spoken language (two courses) - English for beginners (two courses). Students with limited Icelandic knowledge can also follow art and/or mathematics.	Project manager has been hired to support students with limited Icelandic knowledge. Special student support for students whose native language is not Icelandic.	Yes, but only applies to students coming from Icelandic primary schools. Available in Icelandic only.
Fjölbrautaskólinn í Breiðholti	Applicants must have been in Iceland for a year and are expected to have some knowledge of Icelandic.	No specific study programmes. Five courses in Icelandic as a second language available.	Student service team (counsellor, psychologist, executive coach and a special education teacher), teachers assist with Icelandic and mathematics.	No response.
Fjölbrautaskólinn í Garðabæ	No response.	No response.	No response.	No, but do have a text repeating Aðalnámskrá framhaldsskóla regarding reception plans.

²² This refers to study programmes for students with limited Icelandic language skills/students whose native language is not Icelandic.

	Entry requirements	Study programmes/ Námsbraut	Additional Support	Reception Plan
Fjölbrautaskóli Suðurlands	Applicants must have a minimum grade (differs per course of study). Preparatory courses are available for those who do not have the minimum grade.	No specific study programmes. Courses in Icelandic as a second language available. Sometimes specific courses are set up to meet the students' needs.	Educational counselling, and support with Icelandic as a second language.	Yes: - Assistance with enrolment - Reception interview - Individualized curriculum plan Available in Icelandic and English.
Fjölbrautaskóli Suðurnesja	Being at upper secondary age (á framhaldsskólaaldri).	No specific study programmes. Six courses in Icelandic as a second language available.	Project manager has been hired to support students with limited Icelandic knowledge.	Yes: - Assistance with enrolment. - Reception interview - Project manager responsible for information sharing, homework assistance, notifying other teachers and monitoring student's progress. Available in Icelandic only.
Fjölbrautaskóli Vesturlands	No requirements for framhaldsskólabraut. Unclear what the requirements are for stúdentsbraut and vocational education.	No specific study programmes. A course in Icelandic as a second language available.	Counsellor makes a suitable timetable. General support provided in the Icelandic course.	Reception interview with interpreter if needed. Available in Icelandic only.
Físktækniskóli Íslands	No response.	No response.	No response.	No response.
Flenborgarskólinn í Hafnarfirði	No requirements. Places must be available.	No specific study programmes.	An Icelandic as a second language support group is available. General student support.	Yes: - Assistance with enrolment - Reception interview with interpreter if needed. - Individualized curriculum plan - Emphasis on inclusion in some general courses with Icelandic students for mutual integration. - Organized collaboration between teachers and specialists about student's matters Available in Icelandic and English.
Framhaldsskólinn Mosfellsbæ	Grunnskólaþróf or equivalent.	No specific study programmes. A course in Icelandic as a second language is available (2-4 lessons per week) with introduction to Icelandic culture and traditions.	Homework assistance with Icelandic teacher. General support for all students: - Supervision for students aged under 18 - Study and career counselling - Psychological support	No reception plan.

	Entry requirements	Study programmes/ Námsbraut	Additional Support	Reception Plan
Keilir	<p>Being 19 or older, having a high school diploma, English proficiency (for study programme 1. and 2.)</p> <p>Being 18 or older, having a high school diploma, English proficiency (for study program 3.)</p> <p>Being 18 or older, no criminal record, medical class 1 certificate, passing a screening test (for study program 4.)</p>	<p>No specific study programmes, but few study programmes in English:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nordic Personal Trainer Course (online) 2. Adventure Guide Studies 3. Aircraft Engineering 4. Integrated Professional Pilot Program 	No response.	No response.
Kvennaskólinn í Reykjavík	Students are ranked according to the average final grade in the core subjects (Icelandic, English, mathematics).	No specific study programmes.	Some support in extra Icelandic teaching during the first semester and longer if needed.	No reception plan.
Menntaskólinn við Hamrahlíð	<p>Passed grunnskóli requirements in mathematics, Icelandic, English and Danish. Grade criteria depending on number of applicants.</p> <p>International Baccalaureate: very good English and mathematics.</p>	<p>No specific study programmes.</p> <p>A course in Icelandic as a second language is available.</p> <p>International Baccalaureate track taught in English.</p>	Study hall support offered to understand study materials.	No reception plan.
Menntaskólinn í Kópavogi	<p>Grunnskólapróf with grades higher than B in English, Icelandic and mathematics.</p> <p>Students with C+ can enrol in stúdentsbraut but must take first level in subjects with C+ grade.</p> <p>Students with grades below C can enrol in framhaldsskólabraut.</p>	No specific study programmes.	<p>Icelandic courses for foreign students for a certain period, based on need.</p> <p>Temporarily ran a mentor system where Icelandic students met with foreign students outside of school.</p>	Yes, but only available in the school operating manual.
Menntaskólinn í Reykjavík	No response.	<p>Support lessons – Icelandic as a foreign language is organized at the beginning of the school year according to individual/group needs.</p> <p>Mother tongue in some cases evaluated for credits.</p>	Support team of supervisor teacher, counsellors, nurse and a social affairs representative. Peer support for homework and social inclusion.	<p>Yes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information gathered at beginning of school year about student's background and regarding their academic and social status.
Menntaskólinn við Sund	No response.	Possibility of getting mother tongue evaluated for credits	Project manager has been hired to support students with limited Icelandic knowledge.	<p>Yes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information meeting for students whose native language is not Icelandic - Reception interview - Screening of academic status and needs - Peer support - Collaboration between project manager and counsellors about suitable support

	Entry requirements	Study programmes/ Námsbraut	Additional Support	Reception Plan
Tækniskólinn	<p>Grunnskólapróf, with different grades required for different study programmes.</p> <p>For nýbúabraut the requirement is that a person is 16 or turns 16 that school year. There are 18 places available on each Level. Students are admitted based on age. This means that students aged over 20 have a slim chance of being admitted.</p>	<p>Special study programme for students of foreign origin: nýbúabraut.</p> <p>Two-year course of almost full-time Icelandic study (4 levels of Icelandic), including one English course in Level 3 and Level 4 and sports education for all levels.</p> <p>Level 5 Icelandic for students doing other courses of study in the school.</p> <p>Hoping to add mathematics, computers and life skills classes soon.</p>	<p>Four study counsellors and a psychologist available.</p> <p>Access to study hall.</p> <p>Teachers assist students with all kind of issues that are not related to their studies (translating letters, making phone calls, etc.).</p>	No reception plan.
Verzlunarskóli Íslands	<p>Grunnskólapróf.</p> <p>Verzlunarskóli has not accepted students of foreign origin unless they have a good grasp of Icelandic.</p>	<p>No specific study programmes.</p> <p>Students can request having their mother tongue evaluated for credits.</p>	<p>Assistance with Icelandic once a week, or according to circumstances.</p>	No reception plan.
Háskóli Íslands	<p>Dependent on course.</p> <p>For the BA in Icelandic as a second language: - Stúdentpróf equivalent; - proof of English: TOEFL exam (minimum grade 79) or IELTS exam (minimum grade 6.5); - and minimum requirements of a admission examination.</p> <p>For the practical study in Icelandic: - Stúdentpróf equivalent; - and proof of English: TOEFL exam (minimum grade 79) or IELTS exam (minimum grade 6.5).</p>	<p>No specific study programmes.</p> <p>BA in Icelandic as a second language (180 credits)</p> <p>Practical study in Icelandic as a second language (60 credits)</p>	<p>No specific support.</p> <p>General support for all students: - Study counsellors - Career counsellors</p> <p>Hí mentions that they are currently looking at how they admit refugees and asylum seekers to the university.</p>	
Háskólinn í Reykjavík	<p>Dependent on course.</p> <p>Unclear if special measures are taken for refugee students.</p>	<p>No specific study programmes.</p> <p>Short courses in Icelandic for students whose native language is not Icelandic (aimed at exchange students).</p>	<p>No specific support.</p> <p>General support for all students: - Individual interviews - Group counselling - Lectures - Psychological services</p>	

OBSTACLES TO ACCESSING EDUCATION

The data collected illustrates that the need for education and the interest in education is present, yet the responses from educational institutions show that the Icelandic educational system is lacking opportunities for prospective students with a refugee background to enrol in school and to successfully complete their desired education. Programmes to facilitate refugees' needs to continue or start their education in Iceland are not common enough, despite some schools being legally obliged to take steps to meet the needs of students of foreign origin, including refugees.

“S. er með ígildi stúdentsprófs frá heimalandi sínu og hafði hafið nám í lögfræði þegar hann þurfti að fara. Þegar við S. hittumst fyrst fyrir næstum ári síðan langaði hann að komast í íslensku sem annað tungumál í Háskóla Íslands. Hann sagði mér að hann vildi helst vera í háskólaumhverfi því að þar myndi hann kynnast fólki sem hann hefði áhuga á að umgangast. Núna ári síðar hefur hann misst vonina um háskólamenntun.” – Karen, leiðsögumaður S.

It must also be noted here that the schools that sometimes admit refugee students tend to move them into a vocational or technical track and away from academic courses. This may compromise subsequent opportunities for refugees aspiring to follow an academic track.

Refugees included in the data collection have mentioned that they encounter several obstacles when it comes to accessing education, namely language skills in both Icelandic and English, recognition of diplomas, a lack of information about the educational system in Iceland, and financial constraints.

Language training

Seen as some of the biggest obstacles to accessing education are the limited intensive Icelandic courses available to refugees, and the lack of financial support for intensive English language courses. English language proficiency is necessary for prospective university students because most study materials are available only in English. Additionally, English language is a necessity for those who wish to continue their education at, for example, Keilir or at master's level. Fully grasping the Icelandic language as well as the English language is a prerequisite to accessing education in Iceland. Without the opportunity to do so, education is simply not accessible.

A. has a bachelor's degree from Iran. He would like to study in Iceland because he thinks this will increase his chances of being employed in his field. Many courses at the universities are held in Icelandic, so he wants to take a more intense Icelandic course to be able to enter the university. He looked into applying to 'Icelandic as a Second Language' at Háskóli Íslands but does not think his (written) English is good enough to pass the TOEFL or IELTS test, for which he requires grade 79 or grade 6.5 in order to be accepted.

Recognition of qualifications

Not all refugees have been able to bring their transcripts or diplomas to Iceland and some have lost their papers on their journey here. Háskóli Íslands has an ENIR/NARIC matskrifstofa that assesses foreign qualifications. Persons can receive a background report when they cannot provide transcripts or diplomas. Such a background report may support their application for further studies. Security reasons sometimes

prevent refugees from using this service as persons in their home country may find out where they are when ENIC/NARIC in Iceland sends out requests for their documents.

Although the Higher Education Act from 2006 states that universities may offer preparatory study programmes for persons who cannot meet admission criteria, such study programmes are not available.

C. finished four years of a five-year accounting degree at her university in El Salvador when she was forced to leave. She is working for a trash collection company now and has doubts about continuing her studies in Iceland. She feels demotivated and knows she has to start again from scratch. C. is learning Icelandic and English on her own at the moment, alongside full working hours.

Access to information

Persons included in the assessment say they lack information about how to navigate the Icelandic education system and about the opportunities available to them. They simply do not know where to start enquiring about educational opportunities. There is no central office or proactive service in Iceland where they can obtain information regarding further studies, the availability of studies, the requirements for admission, the application process, financial assistance, and other support they may be able to receive.

“I need to know if the classes are in English because I do not know the Icelandic language. And will they help me financially or will I have time to work? At the moment, I have no knowledge of the educational system.” – C.

Financial constraints

Refugees often find themselves in places of financial hardship, and therefore worry about the costs of education. Most do not have a network in Iceland to fall back on and must fend for themselves. When refugee students have successfully enrolled in framhaldsskóli, their financial support is cut if they have been educated on a higher level in another country, even if the educational system there is not comparable to the Icelandic system. Simultaneously, they are not eligible to enrol in university with their foreign qualifications. This practice forces youngsters to drop out of framhaldsskóli to provide for themselves.²³ Financial support for framhaldsskólinn (jöfnunarstyrkur) for those wanting or needing to conduct their studies in framhaldsskóli away from their hometown has not been available to young refugees, until they receive Icelandic citizenship (usually after 3 to 5 years).²⁴

Despite the positive changes in the fall of 2017 that allowed refugees to take out student loans for various universities and colleges,²⁵ not everyone is aware of this. Many who do know about the student loan system have said they are afraid to take out a loan because they may not have the resources to pay it back. Additionally, the cost of education is not limited to enrolment fees, but also includes expenses such as transport to and from school, and textbooks.

J. was halfway through his degree in Plane Mechanics when he had to flee. He would like to go to Keilir but has not applied yet. He says there are many reasons he has not applied, but the main ones are that he worries his English is not good enough and that he does not have the money to pay for the course, even though he is working full time now. He fears taking out a loan and not being able to pay it back.

²³ Supra 21.

²⁴ Alþingi, Lög um námstyrki nr. 76, 2.gr.1, 26 March 2003.

²⁵ Icelandic Student Loan Fund (LÍN). ‘Allocation Rules 2018-2019 with explanations and examples’. 2018. p3.

Case: Rules on Financial Assistance from the City of Reykjavík

Two individuals with similar cases contacted the Red Cross Reykjavíkurdeild regarding their access to education. The 21-year old Z. from Afghanistan and the 21-year old L. from Iraq are both enrolled in Tækniskólinn and were receiving financial support during the start of their studies. However, both stopped receiving financial support suddenly. They did not receive any notice about this and were unsure why they stopped receiving the support.

When Z. stopped receiving financial support, his bus card ran out and he was unable to get to school. He was also unable to pay the rent for his room which was due that same week. As a result, his landlord threatened to evict him. After being in contact with Z.'s social worker, it turned out that his application for financial assistance was denied because in Afghanistan Z. had started a level of education that is higher than framhaldsskólinn.

L. from Iraq had been denied financial assistance on the same grounds. Her social worker had then appealed the decision of the social service centre to the Welfare Department of the City of Reykjavík (Velferðarsvið Reykjavíkurborgar). She wrote them a letter recommending that L. would receive financial assistance. The appeal was denied.

The Rules on Financial Assistance from the City of Reykjavík (Reglur um fjárhagsaðstoð frá Reykjavíkurborg) state that scholarships may be provided to persons aged 18-24 if they have not completed primary, secondary or upper secondary education (grunnskóli or framhaldskóli) and have experienced social difficulties:

18. gr. Námsstyrkir

Námsstyrki er heimilt að veita í eftirfarandi tilvikum. Aðstoðin miðast við fjárhagsaðstoð til framfærslu samkvæmt 11. gr. reglna þessara ásamt almennum skólagjöldum, innritunarkostnaði og bókakostnaði:

a) til einstaklinga á aldrinum 18–24 ára, sem ekki hafa lokið grunnskóla eða framhaldsskóla og hafa átt við mikla félagslega erfiðleika að stríða.

Although Z. and L. have finished Upper Secondary Education in their home countries, they are not eligible to start university in Iceland. In order to do that, they must go to framhaldsskóli in Iceland and receive a stúdentspróf. The Rules on Financial Assistance from the City of Reykjavík thus fail to take into account the specific circumstances of persons of foreign origin.

The ENIC/NARIC office at Háskóli Íslands sent an official letter to the Red Cross (Annex II) stating that Upper Secondary Education from both Afghanistan and Iraq is not equivalent to the Icelandic framhaldsskólapróf. This letter was forwarded to the Welfare Department of the City of Reykjavík (Velferðarsvið Reykjavíkurborgar).

At the moment of writing this report, Z. and L. are unsure whether they will receive financial support next month. Z. has been looking for jobs, in case he needs to drop out of school.

IMPLICATIONS

The World Health Organization states that “to reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment.”²⁶

When a person is not able to do what is meaningful and necessary in his or her life due to external restrictions, this is referred to as occupational deprivation. Occupational deprivation is “a state in which the opportunity to perform those occupations that have social, cultural and personal relevance is rendered difficult if not impossible.”²⁷ Occupational deprivation may be a source of psychological distress.

Occupational participation, on the other hand, is an important means to relieve the effects of trauma. Engaging in meaningful occupation, such as education, can contribute to enhancing a person’s wellbeing. In addition, education is a key factor to successful integration. Social integration can be supported when persons believe their life has meaning, when they are motivated and have a sense of purpose.²⁸ When persons are denied access to education they are at risk of getting stuck in poverty and having only low skilled and low paid jobs available to them. Persons are then at risk of being (further) marginalized, and this may create a divided society and pose a threat to the social cohesion.

The Red Cross has received comments from refugees who are affected by their lack of access to education on both secondary and tertiary level. Many refugees have expressed their frustration with Icelandic regulations regarding education and the lack of opportunities for them to continue their education in Iceland. Several individuals in this situation have reported feeling depressed and losing hope.

Nine years ago, S. completed a MBA in his home country and then started working in his field. Soon after he received international protection in Iceland, he started working in a supermarket and a kindergarten. S. is interested in courses offered by the University of Reykjavík but is afraid he cannot afford to pay for that.

BEST PRACTICES

Other refugee receiving countries have set up intensive language courses, mentoring activities, taster programs and other educational formats to specifically accommodate the needs of (prospective) refugee students. There are many possibilities to facilitate refugees with customized education opportunities. A few examples are presented below.

German Academic Exchange Service

The German DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) has taken measures to support refugees at German universities. The programme ‘Integra – Integrating Refugees in Degree Programmes’ offers preparatory courses at higher education institutions in Germany.²⁹ Currently, there are 160 universities and preparatory colleges in the Integra programme.³⁰ In 2016 over 6,800 refugees took part in such

²⁶ World Health Organization. ‘The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion – First International Conference on Health Promotion’. 21 November 1986.

²⁷ G Whiteford. ‘Occupational Deprivation: Global Challenge in the New Millennium’ in: *British Journal of Occupational Therapy* 63(5), May 2000. p200.

²⁸ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Refugees and Social Integration in Europe*. 15-16 May 2018. p10.

²⁹ Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst. *The Integration of Refugees at German Higher Education Institutions*. November 2017.

³⁰ Study in Germany. ‘Refugee Support Services at Universities’, viewed 18 January 2019. Available: https://www.study-in.de/refugees/studying/refugee-support-services-at-universities_53743.php

preparatory courses. Refugee students had an option to combine preparatory language courses with specialized courses. Over 700 courses were set up under the Integra programme. Specialized courses included engineering sciences, law, economics and social sciences, mathematics and natural sciences, linguistic and cultural studies, medicine, arts, music and sports science, interdisciplinary courses, and other courses such as intercultural training and courses on academic writing.³¹

DAAD also has a programme called ‘Welcome – Students Helping Refugees’ in which they offer a broad range of services to assist refugees with orientation at the beginning of their studies in Germany.³²

As part of German government policy, refugees take a compulsory integration course that consists of 100 hours of study on German history, law, culture and society, and 600 hours of German language.³³

Vrije Universiteit Brussels

The Vrije Universiteit Brussels has developed the InCAMPUS programme. Within the preparatory programme, student refugees receive personalized guidance and support, so they can continue to achieve academic success. The preparatory programme offers intensive language classes in English or Dutch, training on education methods, cultural orientation courses, and psychological support. Once students have finished the preparatory programme and continue into mainstream education, they will continue to receive linguistic and psychological support. Other services, such as information sessions and mentoring, will also still be available to them. In the last year of their studies, student refugees will be given special workshops and guidance on how to enter the workforce after graduating.³⁴

Hope College USA

Seven refugee students were given a scholarship to attend a summer bridge programme specifically designed for them. None of the seven students scored highly enough on their SAT scores to be admitted to the college but were given the opportunity to attend the programme despite this. The students met with a peer mentor every evening and with an academic support director every week for the entire semester. The students were provided with housing on campus and as part of the college work experience programme they also worked on campus part-time. The students took three courses together: Speech, Introduction to College Writing, and World Religions. Despite their SAT scores initially not being high enough to be admitted to the college, all seven students went on to study at the college and started the fall semester together with other incoming students. From that point on there were no special provisions made for the seven students.³⁵

³¹ Supra 29, p29.

³² Supra 30.

³³ UNESCO. *Global Education Monitoring Report 2019: Migration, displacement and education: building bridges, not walls*. 2018. p67.

³⁴ Vrije Universiteit Brussels. ‘Welcome Student-Refugees Programme’, viewed on 18 January 2019. Available: <http://www.vub.ac.be/en/welcome-student-refugees-programme>

³⁵ E Hirano. ‘Refugees in First-Year College: Academic Writing Challenges and Resources’. In: *Journal of Second Language Writing Vol. 23*. 2014.

Université Catholique de Louvain

Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL) in Belgium has launched a preparatory programme specifically for refugees who have started a course in their native country but were forced to quit, refugees at the age to begin university, and refugees who wish to change careers. One of the programme aims is to prepare refugees to start their university studies in Belgium and at UCL. The programme includes French language classes for students, enabling them to understand lectures about advanced subjects.³⁶

University of Barcelona

The University of Barcelona has a support programme in place for refugees and persons coming from areas of conflict. Students have access to language learning courses and can study at all levels at the university. Refugee students receive support for academic and social integration, accommodation, support for language learning, legal advice, and psychological assistance. The university has also established networks for the support of refugees on the academic and administrative level and with NGOs.

Australia

A local Australian college offers 'return-to-study' courses for refugee students and have set up outreach programmes. Within these outreach programmes short tailor-made courses can be created to meet the needs of specific disadvantaged groups, including refugees. Some refugees went on to study in 'mainstream' courses at the college after finishing the tailor-made course.³⁷ In the Sydney area there are also part-time preparatory courses offered by the universities. The universities additionally operate special access programmes that are generally targeted at mature entrants and school-leavers, but also include refugees. The success of this programme for refugee students is, however, unknown, as no data is collected specifically on refugee students, and many refugees in Australia seem not be aware that such a programme exists.³⁸

Sweden

Bridging programs are also offered by some Swedish universities. Within these programmes refugees receive language training, information seminars on how to navigate Swedish society, and invitations to audit lectures, amongst other things. Many universities offer language training through various programmes.³⁹

³⁶ Université Catholique de Louvain. 'UCL Launches a Unique Programme for Refugees', viewed on 18 January 2019. Available: <https://uclouvain.be/en/discover/news/ucl-launches-a-unique-programme-for-refugees.html>

³⁷ J Hannah. 'Refugee Students at College and University: Improving Access and Support' in: *International Review of Education* 42(2), 1999. p160.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p161.

³⁹ World Education News and Reviews. 'Higher Education's Role in National Refugee Integration: Four Cases', updated on 6 February 2018, viewed on 18 January 2019. Available: <https://wenr.wes.org/2018/02/higher-educations-role-national-refugee-integration-four-cases>

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the objective of the Icelandic government and the Icelandic educational institutions should be “[t]o include refugees fully in the national education system, studying in the same classroom with natives after a short period of accelerated classes, depending on prior access, literacy and language, to prepare them for entry at appropriate levels.”⁴⁰

The inclusion of refugees within the national education system can be achieved by taking the following measures and by implementing:

1. Intensive language courses
2. Customized programmes
3. Flexible documentation requirements
4. Proactive approach by government and institutions
5. Financial support

1. Intensive language courses

Refugees are disadvantaged when it comes to societal participation if they are not proficient in Icelandic. Being proficient in Icelandic can facilitate relationship-building with the local community, socialization and a sense of belonging.⁴¹ Intensive language courses, following the German example, can enhance refugees’ language proficiency and in turn increase their access to education in Iceland. It should be kept in mind that English language is needed to study at university level, whether classes are held in Icelandic or in English, because study materials will often be in English. Language courses in Icelandic and in English should be made available *and* accessible to all those receiving international protection in Iceland.

“In the future I dream of having a job as an architect. If I knew the language it would be easier for me to continue my studies.” – H. from Iran finished two years of his bachelor’s degree in Architecture.

2. Customized programmes

Framhaldsskólinn and universities need to have customized programmes in place that support the specific needs of refugees, in a way that persons are not forced into only taking vocational or technical courses but can also continue to an academic route if they desire to do so. Preparatory, bridging or taster courses should specifically be made available to refugees who wish to study at upper secondary or tertiary level. Such courses should include language classes that prepare students for understanding academic courses and materials once they are ready to move on from the preparatory courses and study among their peers. Such programmes and courses should have enough places to ensure access for all potential refugee students.

Refugee students need tailored support. This also means that institutions should offer training to staff regarding cultural sensitivity and the specific plight and needs of refugees. Relevant staff should be informed about the background of the student refugee, if the student agrees to this. In turn, staff should be supported by the institution and be given the time, capacity and training to support the specific needs

⁴⁰ Supra 33, p61.

⁴¹ Ibid, p47.

of refugee students. Refugee students should additionally have easy access to one-to-one support services, including psychological support.

H. from Iran had to flee his country after finishing only two years of his bachelor's degree in Architecture. He would like to learn Icelandic before enrolling at university again. He has heard about the course 'Icelandic as a Second Language' and wants to apply for that. H. did not speak any English when he arrived in Iceland. He is now learning English using YouTube videos.

3. Flexible documentation requirements

Rules regarding qualifications, diplomas and transcripts should be flexible for refugees who wish to enroll in upper secondary schools or universities. Refugees without evidence of their prior educational experience should be able to be admitted to colleges and universities based on different criteria. Information about documentation requirements should be available, accessible and centralized.

4. Proactive approach

Icelandic authorities, upper secondary schools and universities should make proactive attempts to recruit students with refugee backgrounds. They should also become proactive in distributing information about opportunities to study at specific institutions and about non-traditional entry routes. Information regarding the Icelandic educational system, the opportunities available for (prospective) refugee students, entry requirements, student loans, and so on should be available in one place, and in languages other than Icelandic. Such information should be available in at least English, but also in other languages spoken by the majority of refugees in Iceland, such as Arabic, Kurdish and Persian.

"When I am ready to apply for university, I hope you will help me with where and how I start." – T. has a diploma in business management and dreams of going to university in Iceland to get her bachelor's degree in the same field.

5. Financial support

Persons who attend framhaldsskóli should have access to financial support from municipalities or the government all the way through their studies. This should include individuals who have received higher education in their home countries but are not able to access higher education in Iceland with their qualifications. This should be regulated by law. Municipalities should additionally change the rules to include this group in their regulations and take into account their specific needs and circumstances. Since not all refugees can choose the place in which they live in during the first year of their resettlement in Iceland, financial support for framhaldsskóli (jöfnunarstyrkur) should also be made available for all refugees.

A. from Afghanistan has a master's degree in the geographical field. He has not applied for any universities in Iceland, because he is afraid that he will not be able to handle his expenses with a full-time study and no network to fall back on. He is now looking into getting funding to do a PhD program in his field of study, or to get related work experience.

ANNEX I

To map out the educational opportunities in Iceland the Reykjavík Red Cross sent out three questions to all framhaldsskólar in Reykjavík capital area and those close to Reykjavík, 17 schools in all. Additionally, the universities in Reykjavík were also contacted. Below is an overview of the questionnaire sent out and the responses received.

1. *What are the entry requirements for students?*
2. *Does the school offer any courses of study (námsbraut) or other courses for students with limited Icelandic knowledge?*
3. *Does the school offer any support for students of foreign origin, immigrants and/or refugees?*
4. *Does the school have a reception plan for students whose native language is not Icelandic?*

If yes:
5. *Where is the reception plan accessible for students and their parents (e.g. on the school's website or in printed form)?*

Borgarholtsskóli

1. Applicants need a Grunnskólapróf with grade B, B+ or A in English, Icelandic and mathematics. Applicants with grade C or C+ can be registered but must then take special preparatory courses in subjects with grades lower than B. Applicants with grade D in one or more mandatory subjects (English, Icelandic or mathematics) can be registered to framhaldsskólabraut with focus on academic training, arts, or vocational training.
2. No specific study programme for students with limited Icelandic knowledge. However, students with limited Icelandic knowledge will receive specific assistance from 1 January 2019.
3. The school has two counsellors who give assistance to students of foreign origin if needed.
4. No. The school is preparing a reception plan and it will be ready this spring and will then be accessible on the school's website.

Fjölbrautaskólinn við Ármúla

1. Applicants need to be at least 16 years old.
2. Not a full study programme for students with limited Icelandic knowledge, but there are some courses that are designed specifically for their needs:
 - Five courses for Icelandic as a second language
 - Two courses for Icelandic as a spoken language
 - Two English courses for those who have never learned EnglishIn addition, students with limited Icelandic skills can take art courses and/or mathematics if they're interested.

3. Special student support has been offered to students whose native language is not Icelandic. This support has so far been paid for with grants. The school's authorities want to make every effort to keep this support available.
- 4-5. This is on the school's website: <http://www4.fa.is/deildir/Nybuar/mottokuaaetlun.pdf>
(Note from Red Cross: In Icelandic only)

Comment from FÁ: There is both interest and willingness to develop more courses that could suit those who have not been to Icelandic primary schools and have limited Icelandic skills. The problem is that these courses have few students and that they need to stay small in order to achieve their purpose. On the other hand, it is inconsistent with upper secondary school funding.

Fjölbrautaskólinn í Breiðholti

1. As a guideline, students should have been in Iceland for about a year and taken the Icelandic courses available. Students are expected to have some knowledge of the language because all teaching is done in Icelandic. No other entry requirements.
2. No specific study programme (námsbraut), however the school does offer five courses in Icelandic as a second language (ÍSAN).
3. At the student's workshop (vinnustofa nemenda) there is a student services team; a student counsellor, a psychologist, an executive coach and a special education teacher. In addition, teachers come to the workshop to assist with Icelandic and mathematics. Students can also get assistance with mathematics two hours per week.
- 4-5. Fjölbrautaskólinn í Breiðholti did not respond to these questions.

Comment from FB: Unfortunately, the refugees who have recently arrived in Iceland have not done well at FB. They have dropped out, saying they need to know more Icelandic for the studies.

Fjölbrautaskólinn í Garðabæ

- 1-3. Fjölbrautaskólinn í Garðabæ did not respond to these questions.
- 4-5. We have a plan in our school curriculum guide: http://www.fg.is/Files/Skra_0070817.pdf Still, I wouldn't say that it's particularly accessible. We have been having a focus group within the school to examine these issues. Our group of newcomers is very diverse, yet not that big.
(Note from Red Cross: School curriculum guide is only in Icelandic)

Fjölbrautaskóli Suðurlands

1. Applicants must have a specific grade from grunnskóli (different grades for different courses of study). Those who do not meet these requirements can take a preparatory course (grunnenntabré).
2. No specific study programme (námsbraut). There are courses offered in Icelandic as a foreign language (ÍSA). FS has tried to accommodate students in various ways, as the status of these students can be different. For example, a course in which English and computer teaching was

mixed was created especially for students from Syria. In the Spring of 2018, a course was offered in Polish as a native language, but not enough applications were received to start the course.

3. The support currently available is mainly educational counselling and support with ÍSA courses.
4. Yes, we have such a plan. The one in use now is from 2011. We have a draft of an updated version that needs to be completed. It will hopefully be published this spring.
5. The plan is a part of the school curriculum guide on the school's website, both in Icelandic and in English: <https://www.fsu.is/is/um-skolann/skolanamsskra/syn-stefna-aaetlanir-og-markmid/mottokuaaetlun>

Fjölbrautaskóli Suðurnesja

1. Being of upper secondary school age (á framhaldsskólaaldri).
2. No specific study programme (námsbraut). Six courses are offered in Icelandic as a foreign language (ÍSA), and one more will be added in the future.
3. A project manager has been hired for support of students with limited Icelandic knowledge.
- 4-5. We have a reception plan on our website that has just been updated. We have a project manager for students of foreign that takes care of this.

Available: <https://fss.is/index.php/skolinn/almennar-upplýsingar/stefnur-og-adgerdaaaetlanir/mottoekuaaetlun-fyrir-nemendur-medh-annadh-modhurmal-er-islensku>
(Note from Red Cross: In Icelandic only)

Fjölbrautaskóli Vesturlands

1. No specific requirements for framhaldsskólabraut. However, there are admission requirements for stúdentabraut and vocational education (iðnnám).
2. No specific study programme, but there is an Icelandic as a second language course available.
3. An attempt is made to meet students where they are. For example, if a student is an exchange student or newly arrived in Iceland, then a suitable timetable is made in collaboration with a counsellor. General support for studies is provided in the Icelandic course mentioned above.
- 4-5. Yes, we have a reception plan: <https://www.fva.is/index.php/aaetlanir/mottoekuaaetlun>

(Note from Red Cross: In Icelandic only)

Fisktækniskóli Íslands

Fisktækniskóli Íslands did not respond to our request for information.

Flensborgarskólinn í Hafnarfirði

1. No specific requirements, except that there should be places available.
2. No specific study programme.
3. An Icelandic as a second language support group is available. The school also says they have good general student support.
- 4-5. Yes, we have a reception plan and it is here in Icelandic: <http://flensborg.is/skolinn/mottokuaaetlun/> and here in English: <http://flensborg.is/english/receiving-plan/>

We're working on having it in other languages as well. Do you have suggestions about what languages that should be in?

Framhaldsskólinn Mosfellsbæ

1. Grunnskólapróf or equivalent.
2. No specific study programme. A course is offered for students whose native language is not Icelandic. These are 2 - 4 lessons per week.
3. No specific support for students with an immigrant background. However, the following general support is offered:
 - Supervision (umsjónarkennari) for students under 18 years of age
 - Study and career counselling
 - Psychological support
4. The school does not have a formal reception plan, but in the the school curriculum guide, at the end of a chapter about reception of new students in, there is a section about resources for students whose mother tongue is not Icelandic, here: <http://www.fmos.is/skolinn/mottaka-nyrra-nemenda/>

Kvennaskólinn í Reykjavík

1. Students are ranked according to the average of their final grade in the core subjects (Icelandic, English and mathematics) from grunnskóli. To enter, students should preferably have B or higher in these subjects as they usually start their studies in core subjects at the second level. However, exceptions are sometimes made for students with a C + (or even C) in one of these subjects, if this is not the main subject of the course of study (námsbraut) chosen by the student.
2. No specific study programme.
3. Students of foreign origin and Icelandic students who have lived abroad receive support in the form of extra teaching in Icelandic and other subjects (if they are constrained by language difficulties) during their first semester of school and longer if necessary. However, in practice these are always students with quite good Icelandic (but without deep enough understanding or enough vocabulary to be able to study without support).
4. Unfortunately, we do not have a registered reception plan but we will work on creating it.

Menntaskólinn við Hamrahlíð

1. Students must have passed the requirements of grunnskóli in mathematics, Icelandic, English and Danish. The grade criteria then depend on the number of applicants. MH does not have any preparatory courses, except for mathematics in the fall semester. Students that have not passed grunnskóli requirements in Icelandic, English or Danish can therefore not be accepted.
2. A specific course of study taught in English: International Baccalaureate track. To get admitted students must have very good English and mathematics skills. There is an Icelandic course offered for students with little or no Icelandic. However, these students still need to take all other subjects (taught in Icelandic).

3. Study hall (námsver) is offered to support students with limited Icelandic skills. They receive support to understand the study material.
4. We do not have a reception plan for students with a mother tongue other than Icelandic.

Menntaskólinn í Kópavogi

1. Grunnskólapróf with grade A, B + or B in Icelandic, English and mathematics. Students with C+ can still enrol in stúdentabraut but must take the first level in the subjects with grade C+. In that case it is expected that the study period required before taking final examination will be longer than three years. A student with a grade of C or lower can enrol in framhaldskólabraut.
Admission requirements in the food and travel industry's basic department:
Grunnskólapróf or its equivalent. To begin study at the second level in core subjects, a student must have a grade B from grunnskóli or completed the first stage phase in those subjects. If students have a grade lower than B (e.g. C +), they can enrol in the basic section of the food and travel department and take preparational courses for those subjects.
2. There is no special study programme for students of foreign origin.
3. Menntaskólinn í Kópavogi offered Icelandic instruction for foreigners and Icelandic students who have stayed abroad for a longer or shorter period. The school also had a mentor system where Icelandic students met students of foreign origin and accompany them to a café, theatre or cinema, for example. This project was funded by Rotary.
- 4-5. Yes, we have a reception plan for students with a mother tongue other than Icelandic. Currently, it is only available in our operating manual. We are currently working on a new website for the school and it will be accessible there.

Menntaskólinn í Reykjavík

1-3. No answer

4-5. This year we have had an unusually large number of bilingual students in the first year. These students have all done very well in their studies. We follow our strategies for these students and also have a strong security system of professionals taking care of this group, consisting of a supervisory teacher, study and work counsellor, nurse and social worker. They form a support system for these students and go over each student's case.

It can also be pointed out that Menntaskólinn í Reykjavík is the only upper secondary school with student counsellors who are under the guidance of a study and work counsellor. As peer counsellors of other students, they have given quite a lot of support to bilingual students both regarding social inclusion and academic studies. We have also offered homework support hours where older students assist new ones. Information about a reception plan for students with a mother tongue other than Icelandic is to be found on the homepage of Menntaskólinn: https://mr.is/docs/nams/mottokuaetlun_erlendra_nemenda.pdf

Menntaskólinn við Sund

1-3. No response.

4-5. Yes, both a reception plan and an action plan. See: <https://www.msund.is/thjonusta/thjonusta-vid-tvityngdanemendurognemendurmedannadmodurmalenislensku>

and also: <https://www.msund.is/thjonusta/thjonusta-vid-tvityngdanemendurognemendurmedannadmodurmalenislensku/mottokuaaetlun-fyrir-nemendur-af-erlendum-uppruna>

Also, the school's home page has a Web Reader for all pages where all material is available read-aloud in Icelandic, also translated and read-aloud in 15 other languages. The school has also issued special rules for students who are struggling with specific learning difficulties. See:

<https://www.msund.is/thjonusta/thjonusta-vid-nemendur-med-sertaeka-namserfidleika>

Finally, it should be pointed out that the school has a special project manager (Nína Rúna Kvaran) who oversees supervision of students of foreign origin.

Tækniskólinn

1. Grunnskólapróf. Different grades are required for different study programmes.
2. There is a special study programme for students of foreign origin: nýbúabraut. The only requirement is being at least 16 years of age or turning 16 during the year. Due to the high number of applications, students over 20 years of age have a slim chance of being admitted.

Nýbúabraut is a two-year (four semester) course for student with no or limited Icelandic skills. However, students can enter any of the four levels according to their Icelandic proficiency. The first level is intended for those with no Icelandic, but at the fourth level students have begun to speak and understand Icelandic well. The program is almost a full-time study.

3. Students have access to assistance from four study counsellors and a psychologist. Students also have access to study hall. Teachers at nýbúabraut assist with all kinds of issues that are not directly related to individuals' studies, such as translating letters and making phone calls.
4. No

Verzlunarskóli Íslands

1. Grunnskólapróf.
2. There is no special study programme for students of foreign origin. The school has 'bekkjakerfi' which means that everyone is learning the same at the same pace. Therefore, Verzlunarskóli Íslands has not accepted students of foreign origin, unless they have a good grasp of Icelandic and are able to attend a class system.
3. No specific support for students with an immigrant background.
4. We have no special reception plan for students, but we have a teacher who assists each and every student according to his needs. This is mentioned briefly in the school curriculum guide (<https://www.verslo.is/media/skolanamskrar/Skolanamskra-Verslunarskola-Islands-2018-2019.pdf>) cf. text below.

Students with special needs

Verzlunarskóli Íslands tries as far as possible to accommodate students who need special resources. This includes students with dyslexia and those with examination anxiety.

Students with a mother tongue other than Icelandic also receive assistance with their Icelandic studies as well as students who have been living abroad for a long period.

In addition, the school shows regard for the numerous students who show outstanding achievement in the field of sports and art. Below are rules regarding deviations from general school rules.

Háskóli Íslands

1. HÍ offers Icelandic as a second language as a BA program (180 credits) and as practical study (60 credits).

The BA program is primarily intended for those who have a theoretical interest in Icelandic language, but students also get training in spoken and written Icelandic. Admission requirement is an equivalent to Icelandic stúdentspróf. In addition to that students must have show proof of good English skills, either with a TOEFL exam (minimum grade 79) or an IELTS exam (minimum grade 6.5). In addition, students must meet the minimum requirements of an admission examination. Technical requirements are based on Icelandic Online 1 and Icelandic Online 2 (online study material).

Icelandic as a second language as a practical study programme is an annual programme that concludes with a diploma degree. In the program, practical basic knowledge of Icelandic language is built up: language systems, vocabulary, understanding and expression. This route is intended for those who want to increase their skills in Icelandic primarily in order to cope with other studies or work in Icelandic society. Admission requirement is an equivalent to Icelandic stúdentspróf. In addition to that students must have proof of good English skills, either with a TOEFL exam (minimum grade 79) or an IELTS exam (minimum grade 6.5).

2. See point 1.
3. All students at HÍ have access to the services of study counsellors and career counsellors. Interviews can be booked, or people can show up at open interview hours. Open interview hours are open to everyone, not just HÍ students and an interview does not have to be booked in advance. Work is in progress on how to receive asylum seekers and refugees at HÍ. The Office of International Relations manages students who come as exchange students from abroad.

Háskólinn í Reykjavík

1. Short courses in Icelandic have been offered for students with whose native language is not Icelandic. These courses are aimed at exchange students.
2. No specific support for students with an immigrant background. However, all students are offered support in the form of individual interviews, group counselling, and lectures. Psychological services are also available to all students.

ANNEX II



www.enicnaric.is

Nína Helgadóttir
Rauði krossinn á Íslandi
Efstaleiti 9
103 Reykjavík

Reykjavík, 21. febrúar 2019.

Það staðfestist hér með að Baccalauria próf frá Afganistan og Al-Edadiyah/Al-Idadiyah (Sixth Form Baccalaureat) frá Írak, þ.e. lokapróf úr framhaldsskólum þessara landa, geta ekki talist að mati ENIC/NARIC upplýsingaskrifstofunnar sambærileg íslensku stúdentsprófi. Til að nemendur með þessi próf fái aðgang að íslenskum háskólum þurfa þeir annað hvort að ljúka einu ári við háskóla í sínu heimalandi, til að teljast vera með próf sambærilegt stúdentsprófi, eða fá nám sitt metið inn í íslenskan framhaldsskóla og ljúka stúdentsprófi.

Kveðja,


Gísli Fannberg
ENIC/NARIC Ísland.



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