# Youth Wiki national description

# Youth policies in Iceland

# 2019

The Youth Wiki is Europe's online encyclopaedia in the area of national youth policies. The platform is a comprehensive database of national structures, policies and actions supporting young people. For the updated version of this national description, please visit https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki

**Iceland ..... 7**

1. Youth Policy Governance ..... 8

1.1 Target population of youth policy ..... 8

1.2 National youth law ..... 8

1.3 National youth strategy ..... 9

1.4 Youth policy decision-making ..... 9

1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries ..... 10

1.6 Evidence-based youth policy ..... 10

1.7 Funding youth policy ..... 11

1.8 Cross-border cooperation ..... 13

1.9 Current debates and reforms ..... 13

2. Voluntary Activities ..... 14

2.1 General context ..... 14

2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering ..... 14

2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering ..... 15

2.4 Youth volunteering at national level ..... 15

2.5 Cross-border mobility programmes ..... 17

2.6 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities ..... 18

2.7 Skills recognition ..... 18

2.8 Current debates and reforms ..... 19

3. Employment & Entrepreneurship ..... 20

3.1 General context ..... 20

3.2 Administration and governance ..... 22

3.3 Skills forecasting ..... 22

3.4 Career guidance and counselling ..... 23

3.5 Traineeships and apprenticeships ..... 24

3.6 Integration of young people in the labour market ..... 25

3.7 Cross-border mobility in employment, entrepreneurship and vocational opportunities ..... 26

3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence ..... 26

3.9 Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs ..... 29

3.10 Promotion of entrepreneurship culture ..... 29

3.11 Current debates and reforms ..... 30

4. Social Inclusion ..... 31

4.1 General context ..... 31

4.2 Administration and governance ..... 31

4.3 Strategy for the social inclusion of young people ..... 32

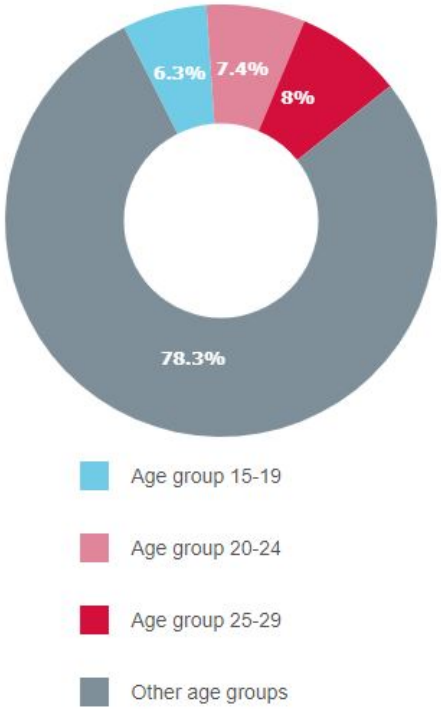
4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people ..... 32
4.5 Initiatives promoting social inclusion and raising awareness ..... 33
4.6 Access to quality services ..... 34
4.7 Youth work to foster social inclusion ..... 35
4.8 Current debates and reforms ..... 36
5. Participation ..... 37
5.1 General context ..... 37
5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy ..... 37
5.3 Youth representation bodies ..... 38
5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making ..... 39
5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation ..... 40
5.6 Supporting youth organisations ..... 40
5.7 “Learning to participate” through formal, non-formal and informal learning ..... 41
5.8 Raising political awareness among young people ..... 41
5.9 E-participation ..... 42
5.10 Current debates and reforms ..... 42
6. Education and Training ..... 43
6.1 General context ..... 43
6.2 Administration and governance ..... 43
6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET) ..... 44
6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning ..... 45
6.5 Cross-border learning mobility ..... 45
6.6 Social inclusion through education and training ..... 46
6.7 Skills for innovation ..... 47
6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media ..... 47
6.9 Awareness-raising about non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work ..... 48
6.10 Current debates and reforms ..... 48
7. Health and Well-Being ..... 49
7.1 General context ..... 49
7.2 Administration and governance ..... 52
7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity ..... 54
7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition ..... 58
7.5 Mental health ..... 63
7.6 Mechanisms of early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks ..... 63
7.7 Making health facilities more youth friendly ..... 67
7.8 Current debates and reforms ..... 67

8. Creativity and Culture ..... 68
8.1 General context ..... 68
8.2 Administration and governance ..... 68
8.3 National strategy on creativity and culture for young people ..... 69
8.4 Promoting culture and cultural participation ..... 69
8.5 Developing cultural and creative competences ..... 70
8.6 Developing entrepreneurial skills through culture ..... 70
8.7 Fostering the creative use of new technologies ..... 70
8.8 Synergies and partnerships ..... 71
8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture ..... 71
8.10 Current debates and reforms ..... 71
9. Youth and the World ..... 72
9.1 General context ..... 72
9.2 Administration and governance ..... 72
9.3 Exchanges between young people and policy-makers on global issues ..... 72
9.4 Raising awareness about global issues ..... 73
9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption ..... 73
9.6 Intercontinental youth work and development cooperation ..... 74
9.7 Current debates and reforms ..... 74
10. Youth Work ..... 75
10.1 General context ..... 75
10.2 Administration and governance of youth work ..... 75
10.3 Support to youth work ..... 75
10.4 Quality and innovation in youth work ..... 76
10.5 Youth workers ..... 76
10.6 Recognition and validation of skills acquired through youth work ..... 77
10.7 Raising awareness about youth work ..... 77
10.8 Current debates and reforms ..... 77
References ..... 78
Glossary ..... 79
Archive ..... 79

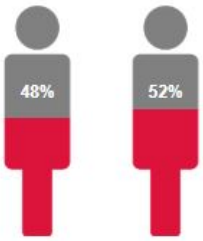
# Iceland

**Young People in Iceland**

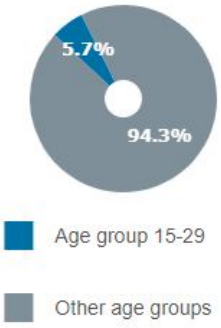
**Ratio of young people in the total population on 1st January**




**Ratio of men and women in the youth population**




**Ratio of young immigrants in all immigrants from non-EU countries**




**Total number of young people:**

75 577

## Youth Policy in Iceland

The Youth Act No. 70/2007 replaced an old bill on youth affairs from 1970, and denotes the general framework on youth policy.

Youth policy-making in Iceland is decentralized and there is no wholistic approach to policy-making in this field. According to the Youth Act, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for yout affairs, although policy-making may call for an involvement of other ministries, such as the Ministry of Welfare on issues regarding the welfare of young people, and the Ministry of Health regarding health issues of this group.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture appoints nine officials to the Youth Council, which consults and advices the top-level authorities on youth policy.

Much of youth-policy making takes place on the local level, where each municipality constructs its own policy regarding youth affairs in its district.

In youth policy-making, National and local authorities are supplemented by various government agencies and NGO's. Among the largest are The Office of the Ombudsman for Children and Home and School, the National Parents Association

# 1. YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE

Youth policy making in Iceland is governed mainly by the Youth Act No. 70/2007, according to which the minister of Education, Science and Culture is the responsible authority for youth affairs. However, it is clearly expressed in this chapter that policy issues pertaining to the youth category are not on the hands of a single authority, but are shared throughout the political spectrum, both on the national and local level. Youth policy is thus not exhausted in a single bill of law or even a few, but is embedded in all types of political categories and their corresponding legal acts, such as education, health care and wellbeing.

## 1.1 Target population of youth policy

According to the Youth Act No. 70/2007, youth is defined as children and young people from the age of 6 to 25 years old.

The Child protection Act No. 80/2002 applies to children and youth under the age of 18 years old.

## 1.2 National youth law

### Existence of a National Youth Law

Youth activities in Iceland are subject to the Youth Act no. 70/2007 that was signed in 2007.

### Scope and contents

The purpose of the Youth Act is to support children and young people from the age of 6 to 25, for participation in youth activities. National authorities and municipalities, in co-operation with youth clubs and youth organizations, support young people in participating in as various youth activities as possible. The Minister of Education, Science and Culture is the highest authority on youth affairs.

The act covers:

1. The operation of clubs and club organizations

2. Youth activities run by the national authorities, municipalities and schools.

3. Other operations that focus mostly on unaffiliated youth in organised youth activities.

The Act also covers the background of those permitted to work with or be in charge of children and young people in youth activities. Individuals who have been convicted for violations of the General Penal Code no. 19/1940 may not be hired to work with children and youth.

According to the Youth Act, state funding for the operation of the youth organisations is subject to parliamentary decision in the general budget but funding the operation of local youth clubs and youth organisation depends on the decisions made in the municipal budgets plans.

The Minister appoints representatives to the Youth Council and the Parliament allocates funds to the Youth Fund for promoting youth activities.

The Minister also promotes regular youth research which will be used to frame future guidelines for youth affairs and appoints five person advisory committee studies.

### Revisions/updates

The Icelandic Parliament first implemented the National Youth Act in 1970 that underwent minor revisions in 1989 and 2002.

In 1989 the maximum time of appointment for members of the Youth council was shortened from three years to two years. In addition, no single member could be appointed for more than two terms (8 years). In 2002 this rule was revoked.

The law was substantially revised in 2007 after the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture launched an inquiry into youth-related activities in 2003. Among the major changes made to the National Youth Act in 2007 is that the Ministry is responsible for conducting research into the subject of youth in Iceland.

## 1.3 National youth strategy

### Existence of a National Youth Strategy

There is no National Youth strategy in Iceland.

### Scope and contents

Does not apply.

### Responsible authority for the implementation of the Youth Strategy

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for the implementation of the Youth Strategy.

### Revisions/updates

Does not apply.

## 1.4 Youth policy decision-making

### Structure of Decision-making

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for making and implementing youth work policy. The Minister of Education, Science and Culture is the primary person in charge of the subject-matter.

According to the Youth Act no. 70/2007, the Minister assigns nine members to the Youth Council. Five representatives are appointed according to recommendations made by youth organisations and two representatives are appointed by the Association of Municipal Authorities in Iceland.

The council is responsible for identifying important procedures for the advancement of youth work and advise the central authorities on youth policy making.

In 2014, the Youth Council drafted a policy on youth work in Iceland from 2014-2018. Afterwards, the Ministry formed a committee to outline a course of action based on the policy draft. This is an ongoing work by the ministry.

Various other state and non-state actors are involved in youth policy but are scattered in different fields. The Directorate of Education in the field of education of young people and the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the supervision of the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child, which among other things ensures young people's access to governance.

The Ministry of Welfare is responsible for welfare issues of children and young people.

### Main Themes

The main themes addressed by the Youth Work policy have been identified through research work led by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

In 2003 the Minister appointed a committee to evaluate the status of youth activities in Iceland. The committee published a report (only in Icelandic) which influenced the Youth Act no. 70/2007.

Among the important themes recognized in the report were increasing research efforts in youth policy and increasing demands in the education of people involved with leading youth-related activities.

In addition it was considered important to find ways to increase the involvement of young people in youth work, to further the standards of work environment and ensure that the community would support young people in youth work.

### The National Agency for Youth

There is no centralised national agency for youth in Iceland.

## 1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries

### Mechanisms and actors

There exists some interdisciplinary committee work on youth affairs between ministries but no formal policy making takes place with a cross-sectorial approach.

## 1.6 Evidence-based youth policy

### Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy

According to the Youth Act no. 70/2007, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for upholding youth-related research which can form the basis of youth policy.

### Cooperation between policy-making and research

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture conducted youth research from 1992 to 1998. The Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis (ICSRA) was founded in 1999 in collaboration with the Ministry and municipalities throughout Iceland and conducts youth research via the Ministry's initiative.

Since 2000, ICSRA has conducted a national program of surveys, Youth in Iceland which consists of extensive data collection and information on family and adolescent welfare.

The national program was designed to inform the need for population-wide primary-prevention through research with the goal to stop and reverse observed increases in adolescent substance use (see Sigfusdottir et al., 2009).

#### Results of Youth in Iceland

ICSRA's Youth in Iceland surveys covers 5th to 7th graders in all primary schools in the Iceland, 8th to 10th graders in secondary schools and all 16 to 20 year old high school students in the country.

A set of core questions covers a range of demographic and social variables, including family structure, parental and peer support, structured and unstructured activities and past times, substance use, academic achievement and psycho-social adjustment.

The results from the Youth in Iceland study are used for two distinct purposes:

- For scientific articles published in peer-reviewed journals

- As basis for local prevention work amongst children and adolescents in municipalities across Iceland.

Results from the ongoing Youth in Iceland surveys showed that the substance use among Icelandic adolescents declined substantially over the 11-year period from 1995 to 2006 (Sigfusdottir et al. 2008).

Numerous municipalities throughout Iceland have used results from the Youth in Iceland surveys as a frame of reference in matters regarding youth. In 2007, Reykjavík introduced the Leisure Card, an annual grant for children and adolescents aged 6-18 to take part in organised recreational activities. More municipalities in Iceland have followed this example and introduced similar grants.

### National Statistics and available data sources

The research output of ICSRA has been published in peer-reviewed journals, covering a wide spectrum of important health and social issues concerning adolescents.

This includes smoking and alcohol use (Kristjansson et al. 2008b, 2009c; Sigfusdottir et al. 2008c); school satisfaction, health behaviour, and academic achievement (Kristjansson et al. 2008a, 2009a, 2009b; Sigfusdottir et al. 2007; Thorlindsson et al. 2007); physical activity and participation in sports (Eidsdottir et al. 2008); adolescent emotional well-being (Sigfusdottir et al. 2008); suicidal behaviour (Bernburg et al. 2009; Sigfusdottir et al. 2008b) and studies of custodial care of adolescents (Gudjonsson et al. 2007).

ICSRA works closely with governmental and non-governmental organisations in Iceland and abroad and provides expert and logistical support for youth research and intervention projects.

The Youth in Iceland data is collected in February each year and the results are presented in practical reports issued in April of the same year. Each municipality and school participating in the project receives a report on their local situation.

### Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field

Icelandic authorities allocate funds to youth research annually. In 2016 Youth in Iceland research received 9,6 million ISK and the Icelandic Youth Fund received 9,0 million ISK.

The Government does not typically fund evaluations of its youth related programs.

## 1.7 Funding youth policy

### How Youth policy is funded

There is no national youth policy in Iceland but the Parliament allocates funds to youth organizations and committees involved in youth work and youth research. The general budget is discussed and voted on by the Parliament.

### What is funded?

The state assigns funds to various organizations engaged in youth activities such as the Icelandic Boy and Girl Scout Association (only in Icelandic) and YMCA and YWCA.

It also funds the Icelandic Youth Council, and youth research, both independently and through the Icelandic Youth Fund. The Icelandic Youth Fund is formally under the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture but is administered by the Icelandic Centre for Research, which allocates its budget to research according to a specific protocol.

The following organisations receiced funding for the year 2016 (figures in millions ISK)

| | |
|---|---|
| Icleandic Youth Council | 1,0 |
| Icelandic Youth Association | 117,6 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Icelandic Boy and Girl Scout Association | 51,1 |
| YMCA and YWCA in Iceland | 37,1 |
| Youth research | 9,6 |
| Icelandic Youth Fund | 9,0 |
| Aggregated output | 225,4 |
| Total expandure | 225,4 |

The following organisations received funding for the year 2015 (figures in millions ISK)

| | |
|---|---|
| Icelandic Youth Council | 2,0 |
| Icelandic Youth Association | 107,6 |
| Icelandic Boy and Girl Scout Association | 41,1 |
| YMCA and YWCA in Iceland | 33,1 |
| Youth research | 9,6 |
| Icelandic Youth Fund | 11,0 |
| Aggregated output | 204,4 |
| Total expandure: | 204,4 |

These organisations are assigned funds from the state but in addition they are free to accept donations and seek funds from other sources. Their own budget might therefore be slightly higher that indicated in the general budget. The Icelandic Youth Association, for example, has domestic sponsorship in one of the Icelandic banks, among others.

In addition, various youth activities and local youth councils are funded by their regional governments but this does not affect to national policy making or funding.

## Financial accountability

No official data is available.

## Use of EU Funds

No information exist on the use of EU funds for policy making.

Iceland does take part in the Erasmus + initiative by the European Commission. Under Key Action 3 the European Commission allocates funds to Erasmus + countries aimed at innovation in policy reform. However, no documents exist in Iceland concerning policy work funded by this action.

Icelandic National Agency for Erasmus + Youth in Action hosts the youth part of the Erasmus + programme and distributes funding to young people in Iceland who wish to go abroad for volunteer work. It also coordinates the arrival of foreign volunteers to Iceland.

In 2015 the organisation received € 1.652.522 from the EU and in 2016 EU funding amounted to € 1.674.760. The organisation also funds various youth activities. Data concerning allocations and projects exists from 2011 up to and including 2015 (only available in Icelandic).

No official information on evaluations og youth initiatives are available in Iceland.

Successful applicants include upper secondary schools, youth organisations, the Icelandic Association for Search and Rescue, churches, artist groups and various individuals

undertaking projects on youth activities. The total allocation for these project, from year to year, are as follows:

2015: €136.319

2014: €344.217

2013: €337.104

2012: €430.983

2011: €259.111

# 1.8 Cross-border cooperation

## Cooperation with European countries

There is no formal policy cooperation in the youth field with other EU and EU-candidate countries.

There is however cooperation between the Nordic countries on youth issues within the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Council runs the Nordic Committee for Children and Young People (NORDBUK) which is the Council of Ministers' Advisory and Co-ordinating body for youth-related matters.

The Nordic Youth Council is another example of such a cooperation. The council is a forum for the political youth organizations in the Nordic countries.

## International cooperation

There exists no formal international cooperation on youth policy.

# 1.9 Current debates and reforms

### 2018/2019

The Icelandic government has plans to re-evaluate existing laws on the Ombudsman for children with the aim of introducing new judicial decisions. The aim of this reform is to ensure that Icelandic law is in full accordance with the demands the Convention on the Rights of the Child places on its member states and make the office of the Ombudsman more equipped to ensure that the convention is fulfilled in practice. The new provision will introduce a new responsibility for the office of the Ombudsman for children, namely, to collect and disseminate information and data about children and certain groups of children in the Icelandic community.

# 2. VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

Youth volunteering does not exist on a national level in Iceland. However, various youth organizations uphold some form of youth volunteering, either in terms of young people volunteering for administrative duties within the organisation or the organization itself upholds some form of social volunteering in which young people participate.

These organisations include the Icelandic Boy and Girl Scout Association, the Icelandic Red Cross, YMCA and YWCA, the Icelandic Youth Association (only in Icelandic) and the Icelandic Youth Council. Each of these organisation has their own unique history which has formed the basis of their youth volunteer work

## 2.1 General context

### Historical developments

No specific scientific data exists on the historical, social, cultural, or religious circumstances of youth volunteering in Iceland. That said it is a known fact that many movements in Iceland rely greatly on youth volunteering in their organisations and have done so for decades. These organisations include the sports movement, religiously based movements such as the YMCA, the Red Cross and many other non-profit organisations.

### Definition(s) and concepts

No official definition of volunteering exists in Iceland.

## 2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

### Governance

### Main actors

The Ministry of Welfare is responsible for policy making of the labour marked, to which volunteering activities apply to. Among other public actors involved with volunteering policy is the Directorate of Labour. Non-public actors include various youth organizations, such as the Scout movement, the sports movement and youth voluntary organisations such as International Cultural Youth Exchange (only in Icelandic), The Red Cross, the Youth Forum (only in Icelandic), the Icelandic Youth Council, YMCA and YWCA, and ICE-SAR, trade unions such as Starfsgreinasamband Íslands (English title unavailable).

No official law or regulation on youth volunteering exists, but volunteering activities might fall under other laws, such as Youth Act no. 70/2007, Children Act no. 76/2006, Child Protection Act no. 80/2002 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Children no. 19/2013(only in Icelandic).

### Cross-sectorial cooperation

No existing rules dictate cooperation between sectors, but in general policy making takes place at the top-level within the Ministry of Welfare, possibly in cooperation with other ministries where applicable, influenced in varying degrees by other public actors such as the Directorate of Labour and non-public actors.

# 2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering

## Existence of a National Strategy

There are no laws that cover youth volunteering. There is however a regulation no. 1224/2015 (only in Icelandic) on the use of volunteers through a contract made with an NGO or a non-profit organization. This regulation states that a volunteer cannot be used in a commercial setting where otherwise a staff member would have been hired.

According to this regulation, an unemployed person can become a volunteer for a period of time without losing their benefits. However, any individual going this route will need to be able to accept a job should it become available during this time.

The Erasmus+ Youth program has regulations that cover youth volunteering. The main principle is that volunteers cannot take responsibilities or routine tasks that would normally be carried out by paid employees. The volunteer must not carry out high-responsibility tasks alone or unsupervised.

There is an on-going debate in Iceland about youth policy which covers, in part, the youth volunteering sector.

## Scope and contents

Not applicable.

## Responsible authority

Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

## Revisions/ Updates

Not applicable.

# 2.4 Youth volunteering at national level

## National Programme for Youth Volunteering

There is no national program for youth volunteering in Iceland.

## Funding

Not applicable.

## Characteristics of youth volunteering

There are no official statistics on the level of participation of young people in volunteering in Iceland. There are furthermore no laws or regulations that identify specific target groups within the youth population who participate in voluntary activities.

Few organizations specifically target youth volunteering in Iceland but organizations such as sport-related organizations, volunteering organizations, religion-based organizations, humanitarian and rescue-based organizations have youth programs mainly for young people 16/18 to 30 years old.

Each organization has their own regulations and laws which are established to protect and serve the youth in the organization. These laws must respect the Child Protection Act, No.80/2002, but are otherwise decided by the organizations themselves.

### Low percentage of youth volunteering

Main sources of information on participation of youth in voluntary activities can be found in studies and articles. These studies have shown that women are in the majority when it comes to volunteering and that the percentage of youth in volunteering is rather low.

An article on participation in voluntary work was published in 2014 in the Icelandic Review of Politics and Administration According to the research most volunteer within sports clubs, or one in ten. The next highest participation rate was in humanitarian organizations, or around 6%, and the rest in cultural, rescue organizations and religious organizations with 4% participation.

The research also showed that just under one-third of the population that had reached 18 years of age had done some sort of voluntary work in 2009-2010. The age division of participating volunteers were as follows: age 18 to 29 was 26%, 30-49-year-olds 42% and 50 years and older 32%. (Hrafnsdottir, Jónsdóttir and Kristmundsson et al. 2014).

A study from 1994 shows that women are in majority when it comes to volunteering or 70% and that only 11% of volunteers were 25 years and younger and 16% were between the ages of 25 and 39 years. (Júlíusdóttir and Sigurðardóttir et al. 1994).

In a study from 2006 on the Red Cross volunteers, the total number of participants was 827 volunteers. The results showed that 70% of all volunteers were women. With the lowest number of volunteers between the age of 18 and 24 or 12.5% (Hrafnsdóttir et al. 2006).

## Support to young volunteers

Within the Erasmus+ program, the volunteers are insured, given pocket money, given travel support funding and should be housed and fed.

All volunteers, whether they come from Europe or outside Europe, need a social security number and are registered in Iceland. When six months have passed the volunteer is automatically registered in the Icelandic health system and will receive the same benefits as Icelanders within the healthcare system.

If volunteers come to Iceland through other voluntary programs beside Erasmus+ the volunteer will need to have insurance, either travel insurance when doing short-term volunteering or through other means.

## Quality Assurance (QA)

There is no official monitoring or evaluation of volunteering activities other than that offered by Erasmus+ through its final reports.

These final reports are sent to which National Agency for Erasmus+Youth in Action which reviews them and gives feedback to the host and/or coordinating organizations.

## Target groups

No official documents or information were found denoting target groups in youth volunteering. There are several factors which could explain why this is not done, or at least, not amounting to any national targeting campaign: unemployment among young people in Iceland is very low (see introduction to chapter 3 for further clarification) and there are many options for young people to re-enter education if they've fallen out during their upper-secondary education, or even earlier. Adult and ongoing education organizations such as Mímir and MSS, and other education organizations such as Keilir, offer young people and adults who have not finished upper secondary education preliminary courses into university studies. Reykjavík University offers people, including those who have completed these preliminary courses, further courses to fully prepare them for university studies.

Individual volunteer organizations have youth divisions where they specifically target young people but do not target any specific subgroups. Among volunteer organizations with such divisions are youth groups within search and rescue operations and within Icelandic divisions of international organizations, such as UN Women and UNICEF

In 2009, shortly after the economic downfall, the Ministry of Welfare and the Directorate of Labour launched a campaign specifically targeting unemployed young people. Among provisions offered were volunteer positions at various volunteer organizations.

# 2.5 Cross-border mobility programmes

## EU programmes

Iceland participates in the Erasmus+ program which the National Agency for Erasmus+Youth in Action is responsible for.

The agency monitors the participation of youth coming to Iceland as volunteers for short and long term EVS volunteering. They offer an on-arrival and mid-term training and monitor the organizations that receive grants from the National Agency. It also monitors the number of incoming participants including country of origin and other basic information about the volunteer.

Organizations that send out volunteers through Erasmus + programs are asked to register all outgoing volunteers on a database linked through the National Agency's webpage. By doing so the National Agency is able to monitor the number of outgoing volunteers, their main destinations and trends in participation including some other basic information.

The only legislation that discusses volunteering is the Youth Act 2007 which refers to enabling children and youth to participate in youth activities. The law is based on youth activities for children and young people, especially aged 6-25 years.

As the EVS volunteering is for youth from 17 years to 30 years of age it can be said that the law on youth participation and the target group is more or less reached. There is no other law that discusses specific target groups' participation.

The main authority is the Icelandic National Agency which operates under the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

## Other Programmes

The state provides operating grants, according to the general budget, to organizations that focus on bilateral and multilateral programs. The organization that receives most of its operating grant from the state is Snorri Fund.

The State has also granted the volunteering organization AUS operating grants from the year 2011. The grant accounts for 2-7% of its annual turnover. AUS sends and receives volunteers through Erasmus+ and also through its own program the International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE).

The state does not monitor the youth participation in these programs in another way than through the Directorate of Immigration which has to process the volunteers' visas.

The organizations working with these programs keep information on the exchanges which include participants' countries, trends and destinations of volunteers.

The Snorri fund offers its program to 18-28-year-old and AUS 18-30-year-old which corresponds to the law of youth participation of the Youth Act. Also, both organizations run their programs as educational and cultural exchange programs and thereby fulfill the Youth Acts criteria for participation.

There is no official monitoring or evaluation of volunteering activities other than that offered by Erasmus+ through its final reports. These final reports are sent to Icelandic National Agency which reviews them and gives feedback to the host and/or coordinating organizations.

## Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers

### Volunteers from EU countries

Volunteers arriving from EU countries will need to bring passport or other legal personal identification document. They are also asked to bring a birth certificate and document of marital status.

The volunteers take these documents to the Registers Iceland including a document from the volunteer organization confirming the volunteer's insurance, funding and financial support.

The documents are then processed by the Registers Iceland which will in two to six weeks send the volunteers an Icelandic identification number.

### Volunteers from outside EU

Volunteers arriving from outside EU need to go through Immigration to receive residence permit so they can volunteer in Iceland.

The volunteers need to fill out a residence permit application and submit the following documents: photo, criminal record, housing certificate, proof of support, health insurance, demonstrate adequate support.

Once the permit has been granted the person in question will either be granted access to Iceland or asked to retrieve a D-visa from the next embassy that processes visas to Iceland.

Once in Iceland, the volunteer needs to go to Immigration for a photo and go for medical examination within two weeks of arrival.

# 2.6 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities

## Information providers

The only public body that promotes youth volunteering is the National Agency for Erasmus+Youth in Action (only in Icelandic) which offers volunteering opportunities through its Erasmus+ youth programme.

## Key initiatives

The agency has its own website and Facebook page. Posters and booklets are often displayed in colleges and universities.

It takes part in various events which promote opportunities abroad, both as a participant but also as the organiser. It has, on several occasions, held events and campaigns to promote the Erasmus+ programme among young people.

Various non-profit and NGOs offer youth volunteering opportunities which they advertise on their homepage, social media and also as participants in various events.

Apart from the Icelandic National Agency there are no state-funded volunteer centres that assist youth in finding volunteer placements or promote volunteering opportunities.

# 2.7 Skills recognition

## Policy Framework

No official document exists in the national system that establishes a criteria for skills recognition of youth volunteer work.

### Existing arrangements

Icelandic youth who participate in the European Volunteer Service hosted by Erasmus + Youth in Action get a Youth Pass. That is an official document recognizing that they have participated in a volunteer project with the EVS.

## 2.8 Current debates and reforms

There is an on-going debate in Iceland about youth policy which covers, in part, the youth volunteering sector. In 2015 The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture approved the policy set forward by the Youth Advisory Board which had been under development for at least four years. The youth policy is focused on the factors that contribute to the necessary structure and development within the sector in Iceland. The policy defined seven main objectives to be aimed at in the coming years. The policy was worked on by the board in collaboration with various parties in the fields of youth and sports.

At the moment work is under way to establish a policy for the non-profit and NGO sector to clarify roles and the legal framework. This will affect organisations working in the youth volunteering field. This policy is being worked on in collaboration with the sector.

As has been demonstrated in chapter two there is very little legal framework around youth volunteering and no legislation that covers the topic. The non-profit and NGO sector has been pushing for a debate on youth policies and a clear policy/strategy from the government on youth issues. This includes discussions on youth volunteering. As more focus is being put on youth policies in Iceland and the necessity for a clear legal framework for the sector, it is hoped that more will be done in the future on the political and governmental field to promote youth volunteering and its importance for youth.

# 3. EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Iceland has among the lowest percentage of young people neither in employment or in some form of education or training. according to Eurostat, 4,5 % of people aged 15 – 34 were not involved in employment or training or education in 2017, compared to 14,7 % in the current European Union and 7,9 % in Norway. There are many contributing factors for this number being so low. First and foremost, perhaps is the economic climate, which was good in 2017. In the aftermath of the economic decline of 2008 the number reached 10,3 % and 10,5 % in 2009 and 2010 respectively. Another reason might be that in general, families in Iceland live with greater financial security. In 2016, the median value of disposable income for families with 2 children was 342.100 ISK compared to 248.600 ISK in 2008. In this time period the consumer price index increased by 33.70 % and inflation was low, under the 2,5 % inflation goal. Taken together, it can be assumed that families are able to support their children throughout their education or training.

## 3.1 General context

### Labour market situation in the country

The Icelandic labour marked is quite different when compared to neighboring countries. Its most distinctive features are its small size and its homogeneity, with only about 180.000 people working. It has a large public sector funded by the state and municipalities, which includes health care and education. Among other distinctive features of the labour market in Iceland is its high level of active trade unions to which most of the workforce subscribes. The labour market is quite deregulated in the sense that employers are free to hire and fire employees, react to an economic bust and adapt when jobs disappear (Aðalsteinsson & Hilmarsson, 2009).

The Icelandic government has quite an extensive role in regulating the labour market. I will make a short comment on each branch of the labour law. This list is not exhaustive, but will give a rough idea about the role of the state in regulating the private labour market:

#### Trade Unions

The Act on Trade Unions and Industrial Disputes No. 80/1938 recognizes the right of workers to form trade unions and federations of trade unions The purpose of these unions is to work jointly for the interest of workers in general. According to this Act, trade unions are made legal contracting parties for wages and terms of employment for their members (Norðdahl 2013). This power that trade unions have is termed collective bargaining or collective agreements.

#### Collective bargaining

Act No. 55/1980 on working terms and pension rights insurance stipulates that collective agreements are automatically binding for all workers and employers within its occupational area. It is not necessary for the applicability of collective agreements that the workers be members of the trade union in question (ibid.). Collective agreements can be of various different types. General collective agreements

#### Wages and working time

The state sets a framework around wages and working time as well. According to Act No. 55/1980 wages and other terms of employment agreed upon between parties in collective agreements are minimum terms for all employees in the relevant occupation, regardless of gender, nationality, terms of employment, etc. (ibid).

### Daily and weekly rest and maximum weekly working time

Working time and mandatory rest time are also put under state regulations. Act No. 46/1980 on working environment, health and safety in workplaces, conditions all employers to respect minimum standards of safety and health requirements, organization of working time in respect of maximum weekly working time, which states that the maximum weekly working time over a four-month reference period shall not exceed 48 hours per each seven-day period, including overtime. In addition, the Act regulates breaks during the day, organization of night work and shift work (ibid).

### Holidays and holiday allowance

The Holiday Allowance Act No. 30/1987 confirms the right of workers to a holiday and holiday allowance. The act specifies only the minimum rights, but further rights are agreed upon in the collective agreements of each sector based upon various factors such as age and duration of employment (ibid).

### Absence from work due to sickness

The Act Respecting Labourers' Right to Advance Notice of Termination of Employment and to Wages on Account of Absence through Illness and Accidents No. 19/1979 secures minimum rights for workers who are unable to work due to sickness or accidents, occurring during the worker's spare time. In such a case the worker is entitled to wages from his employer for a predetermined period of time during his recovery period. These minimum rights are further improved upon in a collective agreement.

### Accidents at work and occupational diseases

Minimum rights of workers in case of work-related injuries are regulated in the Act No. 19/1979. According to the Act, workers who cannot hold their employers, their subordinates or others whom they are responsible for accountable for their injuries have a right to sickness pay and in addition, day-time wages for up to three months. These rights are further improved upon in collective agreements (ibid.).

### Equal status and equal rights of women and men

This principle is established in the Act on the equal status and equal rights of women and men no. 10/2008. According to it employers are not to discriminate between employers based on gender in regards to wages or other terms of employment (ibid).

### Maternity and parental rights

According to Act No. 95/2000, parents that are active in the labour market have a right to receive maternity/paternity leave and parental leave. The same applies to parents who are self-employed, parents who are not active in the labour market and parents attending full-time education. The act aims to ensure that children have access to both their parents and to enable women and men to co-ordinate family life and work outside the home. When organizing maternity/parental leave, employers are obliged to make efforts in regard to their employee's wishes (ibid).

### Youth in the labour market

Youth unemployment increased dramatically following the economic downfall in 2008 and was considerably greater than the labour market as a whole. The unemployment rate among people aged 16-24 increased from 7,4 % in January of 2007 to 12,8 & in January 2009, reaching its peak at the end of the year at 16,7 %.

During recent years labour market conditions have improved causing a great decrease in unemployment rates among young people. In January 2012 the labour market showed improvement as unemployment rates of young people had dropped to 14,4 % and a year later the rate had declined to 11,5 %. In late 2015 the youth unemployment rate went below 8,0 % and had reached its pre-crisis level. In 2016 the rate stood at 6,1 % (Statistics Iceland)

### Definitions and concepts

There are no specific definitions of the labour market, as it is described in the Wiki, that might erode the comprehension of an external reader.

## 3.2 Administration and governance

### Governance

The Ministry of Welfare is the main top-level governmental authority responsible for youth employment and entrepreneurship. Other ministries also play a role in youth employment and innovation, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Industry and Innovation. National agencies such as the Administration of Occupational Safety and Health and the Directorate of Labour are also responsible for the wellbeing and status of young people in the labour market as described above. The Administration of Safety and Health is responsible for the inspection of health and safety standards in the work place and the Directorate of Labour is responsible for labour market initiatives which can benefit young people in search of employment.

Innovation Center Iceland is an institute which by law is subject to the Ministry of Industries and Innovation. According to the Act No. 75/2007 the Innovation Center Iceland is responsible for the advancement of innovation in Iceland by maintaining cooperation with non-public actors who support innovation and promote the ideas of small companies and the advancement of new business plans by research and development work.

Non-public actors also play an important role in ensuring that the Icelandic labour market is favourable to young people seeking employment and entrepreneurship. Many young people are members of trade unions who are responsible for collective agreements on behalf of their members and look after their interests. Icelandic Startupshelps start-ups grow domestically and internationally by accelerating their businesses and connecting them with industry experts, investors and international start-up hubs. Icelandic Startups also promotes entrepreneurs by helping them advance their network and develop their ides. Furthermore, it hosts the Golden Egg competitionwhich provides a platform for young entrepreneurs to get their ideas out there and is a helpful venue for their development. Contestants are offered to attend courses and receive consultation and assistance from industry experts to develop their ideas and communicate with potential investors.

In general, ministries at the top-level of government are responsible for policy making in the field of employment and entrepreneurship. The two ministries most involved with policy making in these fields are the Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Industry and Innovation. Various public and non-public actors influence policy making to varying degrees.

### Cross-sectoral cooperation

There are no specific rules outlining cross-sectoral cooperation. Ministries often consult with other public and non-public bodies when it comes to policy-making.

## 3.3 Skills forecasting

### Forecasting system(s)

There is no centralized scheme or mechanism in place regarding forecasts of the labour market, whether that forecast is focused on future jobs or the relevant skills they require. However it is possible to interpret the Act No 55/2006 on labour market initiatives as denoting the need to forecast the future needs of the labour market. In 2014, the Directorate of Labour published a report analysing future demands of the Icelandic labour market over the next ten year period in terms of work force, skills forecasting etc.

### Skills development

There are no public records which show in what way these efforts impact policy making.

## 3.4 Career guidance and counselling

### Career guidance and counselling services

For clarification it is useful to distinguish between career guidance and counselling in the school system and career guidance and counselling offered by other public actors.

Matriculation schools and universities offer career guidance and counselling to their students and are subject to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. According to the Act No. 92/2008, public matriculation schools and their services are financed by the local government. According to the Act No. 63/2006 Icelandic universities can be run as a public institution, a private non-profit institution, or according to other recognised form of administration. All universities in Iceland receive funding from the state according to the state's budget bill.

Lifelong learning centres also offer career guidance and counselling for their students, but they are subject to various trade unions and other public actors. Mímir-símenntun is owned by the Icelandic Confederation of Labour, and the Education and Training Service Centre is owned by the Icelandic Confederation of Labour, The Confederation of Icelandic Employers, the Federation of State and Municipal Employees, the Ministry of Finance and the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland.

The Directorate of Labour, subject to the Minstry of Welfare, also offers career guidance and counselling as part of their labour market initiatives for people of all ages.

Reykjavík Youth Centre provides career guidance and counselling specifically targeted at young people seeking employment. Reykjavík Youth Centre is run by the municipality of Reykjavík.

### Funding

Public funding is administered at the central level to each ministry. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the Ministry of Welfare are the two ministries most involved in the services of career guidance and counselling. According to the fiscal budget for 2016 the latter receives the highest funding among the ministries in the budget bill for 2016 with 301.010 million ISK while the former receives the third highest funding with 80.385 million ISK. The Minister of Education, Science and Culture then makes the final decision on the allocation of funds to i.a. matriculation schools and universities, all of which offer career guidance and counselling to their students. The Minister of Welfare allocates funds to The Directorate of Labour, which offers career guidance and counselling for the public specifically targeted at unemployed people, which of course includes young people.

There are no information regarding any special funding programmes for career guidance and counselling in Iceland.

### Quality assurance

There are no public documents indicating that systematic monitoring of the quality of career guidance and counselling, such as customer satisfaction enquiries or monitoring of the number of users reached, takes place in Iceland. However, the quality of career guidance and counselling is maintained by obligations of the Act no. 35/2009. Among these obligations is are the minimum standards of education required to receive legal certification and be able to work as a career counsellor. Furthermore, the Association of Career Counsellors in Iceland places all who bear the legal certification of career counsellor under compulsory professional and moral codes of conduct set to international standards.

# 3.5 Traineeships and apprenticeships

## Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a compulsory part of many vocational traits on the upper secondary school level and in teacher's education at the university level, but are offered as part of another university education as well, for example in law. Rules and regulation specifically regarding apprenticeships on the upper secondary school level are issued by the Ministry of Education Science and Culture.

The Act No. 840/2011 denotes the responsibilities of schools and the company/institution in question when preparing terms of agreement for student's apprenticeship. It also states the obligation of the receiving company/institution to provide minimal standard of working conditions. According to this act, apprenticeship agreements should be in accordance with collective agreements for apprentices in the relevant field of work.

There is a necessary cooperation between schools and the hosting company/institute regarding apprenticeships. Schools and companies/institutions sign an agreement regarding terms and conditions of the apprenticeship, whereby schools are obliged to ensure that their students complete the necessary apprenticeship for their vocation, and companies/institutions are responsible of fulfilling the necessary terms and condition of the quality of the workplace and ensuring that collective agreements on apprenticeships are respected. Iceland is a member of the AIESEC organization which empowers young people to seek apprenticeships/internships abroad.

No public documents suggest that specific target groups are targeted for apprenticeships.

As of 2016, Iceland stands outside the European Union, and so is not a participant in the Youth Guarantee scheme. The scheme is a commitment by the member states to help all young people under the age of 25 receive, quality employment, education and apprenticeship or trainee offers within a four month period after becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

## Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships

There are is no promotion of traineeships or apprenticeships which derives directly from the central authority in terms of facilitating the participation of young people, supporting and encouraging providers of traineeships and apprenticeships, or raising awareness of about traineeships and apprenticeships, other than what can be identified and interpreted as such in laws and regulations in this field issued by the relevant ministries. The participation of young people is facilitated through the legal framework on apprenticeships in the workplace (only available in Icelandic).

## Recognition of learning outcomes

According to the act No. 840/2011, companies and institutions receiving students for apprenticeship is responsible to educate and train the student and ensure that he has the necessary skills and knowledge in all relevant aspects of his profession. Apprenticeships are usually a compulsory part of most vocational education and training, and skills acquired thus count towards diploma, provided all terms and condition of the apprenticeship agreement are fulfilled as stipulated in the act No. 840/2011.

IDAN Vocational Education and Training Centre issues a record book which students undertaking apprenticeship are obliged to keep and hand in at the end of the apprenticeship period (The book is only available in Icelandic).

## Funding

According to the National fiscal budget for 2016, the Icelandic government allocated 21,2 million ISK to the Ministry of Industry and Innovation for the project involving traineeships.

Trade unions have special trust funds for traineeships for laymen to receive valuable training opportunities in their field. The role of these funds is to develop and increase the

supply of courses for members of these unions to gain a stronger position on the labour market.

### Quality assurance

According to the Act No. 840/2011, companies and institutions are required to fulfil certain obligations upon agreement between the company/institution in question and the relevant school. The first 12 weeks of the traineeship period shall be regarded as a trial period and within that time, both the school and the company can terminate the contract without providing any reason for their decision. If a company/institution fails to fulfil their obligations according to this act, it is required to find the trainee another place to conduct his traineeship in cooperation with the school. Starfsgreinaráð, a special committee subject to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture shall keep a file of all the companies that fulfil the set obligation and standards by this act.

In the beginning of the traineeship period the trainee is provided with a logbook, issued by Iðan – Vocational Education and Training Centrem, which documents the training period. Teachers at the work place can log the trainee's progress in various fields pertaining to the vocation and trainees can denote their experience of the working period. At the end of the training period, Iðan requires students to hand in the logbook for further evaluation.

## 3.6 Integration of young people in the labour market

### Youth employment measures

In response to the increase in youth unemployment after the economic crisis in 2008, the Directorate of Labour launched, in the beginning of 2010, an initiative called "Ungt fólk til athafna" or "Active young people". According to the Directorate's annual report for 2010, the goal with this initiative was to ensure that all young people aged 16 – 24 will be guaranteed a work resolution within three months from unemployment. The initiative was to activate young people in education or work in cooperation with main actors in the education system, volunteer organizations and the labour market. Emphasis was put on career guidance and counselling where participants were encouraged to take part in various resolution measures which aim to build skillsets. Special attention was given to young people that hadn't continued studying after primary school.

### Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

There are no public documents which suggest that top-level policy regarding work flexibility specifically for young people is in place.

### Reconciliation of private and working life for young people

There are no public documents which suggest that top-level policy regarding recognition of private and working life specifically for young people is in place.

### Funding of existing schemes/initiatives

Althingi allocated 600 million ISK for the initiative "Ungt fólk til athafna" or "Active young people".

### Quality assurance

According to the Directorate of Labour's annual report for 2010, The Social Science Research Institute within the University of Iceland was tasked with conducting a complete analysis on the initiative "Ungt fólk til athafna" ("Active young people"). The analysis involved conducting a survey where users were asked various questions concerning the initiative. Around 80% of users thought they received a quality introduction and assistance with finding a suitable resolution. The majority of users was satisfied with the resolution offered. A great majority expected that their participation would prove beneficial in terms

of skillset and opportunities on the labour market, increase their public relation skills and improve their wellbeing. Conclusions also indicated that those who had finished the initiative were much more active in their job search than those who had not.

# 3.7 Cross-border mobility in employment, entrepreneurship and vocational opportunities

## Programmes and schemes for cross-border mobility

Iceland is a part of the Nordplus program which is a cooperative platform between the Nordic and Baltic countries. The program aims to "strengthen and develop Nordic educational cooperation and contribute to the establishment of a Nordic-Baltic educational region.

Innovation Center Iceland hosts the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) in Iceland. The EEN is the largest technical transfer and business network of its kind in the world and helps businesses look for cooperatives overseas in the field of business, product development or research.

The Directorate of Labour oversees the operation of EURES (European Employment Service) in Iceland. EURES is a cooperative platform between employment services in the EEA states and operates within 31 countries in Europe. The aim of the EURES project is to increase the mobility of workforce between the EEA countries.

## Legal framework

No public documents suggest that there is a legal framework in place specific to the mobility of young workers. However young workers are expected to be able to utilize a general framework for increasing international mobility of workers such as the EFTA Convention.

# 3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence

## Policy Framework

Implementation of new laws for education from 2008 and the national curriculum is still going on. Impressions of the effectiveness of the governmental process implemented are divided. No specific official implementation plan for entrepreneurship education is in place. The implementation of the new curriculum (2011) has been a challenge for administrators and teachers as they are meant to implement a new way of thinking about and organizing education. Not only is there a difference in the content of the curriculum but also there is a fundamental change intended in the way evaluation is accomplished in all subjects and areas of learning.

The national curricula in Iceland from 2011 on three school levels in Iceland, pre-school, compulsory (6-16) and upper secondary (16-19/20) are based on six issues (concerns/ pillars): *literacy*, *sustainability*, *equality*, *creativity*, *health and welfare*, and *democracy and human rights*. The curricula are also framed around learning outcomes as knowledge, skills and competence. This thinking opens up for a cross curricular area such as entrepreneurship education. The most obvious connection to EE is to the creativity fundament but other fundaments can easily be seen as being integral in EE. For example, sustainability education emphasizes action competence, which is also a major emphasis in EE.

The schools now have to use a structured learning outcomes based matrixes and deliver a grade in letters instead of the conventional number based on the knowledge and skills only. In the national curriculum the competencies or learning outcomes defined are divided into two categories; competencies in action (working) and competencies in subject.

Competency criteria of learning outcomes for general education are meant to be developed for:

- communication and mediation
- creative and critical thought
- independence and cooperation
- use of media and information
- responsibility and evaluation of own education

# Formal learning

## IEE on pre-school level

On pre-school level, among skills to be emphasized and can be seen as encouraging entrepreneurial skills are: Creativity, expression, independence and initiative. Many pre-schools in Iceland work with creativity and encouraging children's´ agency although very few identify their work as entrepreneurial. However some examples of using innovation education as an approach in pre-school have been documented.

## IEE on compulsory school level

In the compulsory (6-16 years old) school curriculum EE elements can be identified in different school subjects such as arts, design and crafts, information technology and natural sciences. The clearest occurrence of EE competences can be found in the Science curriculum of the National Curriculum for Compulsory Schools in the category *Innovation and the use of knowledge*. In that category there is a clear progression from start of schooling to 16 years of age. Innovation and the use of knowledge has entrepreneurial skills incorporated into the curriculum. Although EE is not commonly provided in Icelandic compulsory schools many examples of considerable work with EE have been documented.

The National Innovation Contest for Compulsory Schools (i. Nýsköpunarkeppni grunnskólanna) is run for primary school students and is an encouragement for schools to work with innovation education. The contest is supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

## EE on upper secondary level

The focus on six fundamental issues in the upper-secondary curriculum gives a general fundament for cross curricular subjects or projects such as EE. Concepts such as autonomy and initiative receive more attention than in former national curricula. The word "initiative" (i. frumkvæði) can be found on seventeen pages in the curriculum guide for secondary education indicating an emphasis in the spirit of EE without linking it specifically to EE. EE as a specific subject in the upper-secondary curriculum is located within the curricula for business lines. However the schools have now more independence since 2011 to develop their own lines as long as they fulfill requirements of the general official curriculum. The tendency has been that only a small proportion of the student population in upper-secondary schools in Iceland takes EE courses, mostly on business lines. Some exceptions can be found where the whole population of the school takes an obligatory cross-curricular EE course including a considerable project they develop.

# Non-formal and informal learning

## FORD – Our future is now

A free organization called Friends of Rural Develoment has for a few years run a project for young people now called *Our Future is Now!* This is a programme where pupils in secondary schools compose and present plans for the future of their home community with a view to encourage them to stay or return to rural areas after their academic studies. The approaches and emphasis in the project are in the entrepreneurial spirit, encouraging creativity and action. It is operated in collaboration with local schools in rural areas. It is

largely the work of one enthusiastic person Fríða Ásbjörnsdóttir, with different financial support from firms and ministries, but builds largely on Fríða´s volunteer work.

### Junior Achievement Iceland

Junior Achievement Iceland has supported schools and teachers to work with EE and offers teaching materials and training for teachers. Next year 2017, 17 (of 34) upper-secondary schools in Iceland are expected to use the JAI materials to work with students on running a business and taking part in a national and international contest for the best product. Usually the students taking part in these courses are a small proportion of the whole school population.

### INNOENT Education

INNOENT an independent educational establishment was founded recently to respond to the need for training and teaching and learning materials in innovation and entrepreneurial education. The activities include teacher courses, teaching materials and running of courses outside school hours for children and young people of compulsory school age (6-16 years in Iceland) often in collaboration with Fab-Lab.

### Iceland Innovation Centre

The Iceland Innovation Centre (IIC) runs Fab-Lab centers in six different locations around Iceland. The centers offer services to individuals, firms and schools. Schools on compulsory and upper secondary levels near the centers collaborate with their staff and use the Fab-Lab facilities.

The IIC has recently (in 2016) taken over running and overseeing the innovation contest for compulsory schools and has taken a role in the board of Junior Achievement Iceland which had been struggling for a few years.

The IIC offers different courses for groups and individuals to encourage and support innovation and entrepreneurship. Among courses they offer are courses specifically for women.

The IIC also runs or collaborates on running 10 Incubator Centers around Iceland (five in Reykjavík).

### Gulleggið - The Golden Egg business plan competition

Gulleggid or *The Golden Egg* is a business plan competition in Iceland to encourage entrepreneurs to get their business ideas noticed. The Golden Egg offers a platform to make business- and execution plans for business idea and develop to a real start-up. Participants in The Golden Egg are offered courses, advice and assistance from experts throughout the process. The Golden Egg is Iceland's biggest business plan competition. Since 2008 over 2.000 business ideas have been handed in, resulting in over a hundred viable businesses.

## Educators support in entrepreneurship education

In Iceland education and training in EE for teacher students and practicing teachers is in 2016 and has been unclear, random or non existent in the main teacher education institutions in Iceland. Teacher education in the School of Education University of Iceland (SoI UI) and at the University of Akureyri do not have a policy for EE and the offers they have for this kind of training in general teacher education and for continuing professional development is random and unfocused. In the SoI UI courses or training in EE is haphazard, sometimes as an issue presented within different courses. Iceland Academy of the Arts offers teacher education in the arts and their courses have a strong emphasis on creativity and action competence.

The Icelandic Association of Teachers in Innovation and Entrepreneurial Education (i. now called FLINK) have off and on offered courses for teachers on compulsory and upper secondary level in EE. Junior Achievement Iceland also offers courses for teachers in

Iceland but they have not been regular and not very visible. INNOENT is now a provider of courses for teachers on different school levels.

A survey conducted on behalf of the ICC, Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Industry and Innovation sent to administrators in upper-secondary schools in 2013 showed that most administrators felt that education for teachers in EE was needed. They wanted such educational offers to be on one hand a part of the fundamental education of teachers in general and on the other hand that it was offered for schools on or near their locations and taking into consideration their different contexts and conditions.

# 3.9 Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs

## Access to information

According to the Act No. 75/2007, Innovation Center Iceland is obliged to grant information and guidance to regarding the establishment and running of start-up companies.

Icelandic Startups offer various types of services to entrepreneurs who are looking to start their own business. Their services fall under three main categories: idea, growth and community.

The two largest universities in Iceland, The University of Iceland and Reykjavik University are actively engaged with innovation and offer their students and faculty courses and advice on innovation and offer facilities for entrepreneurs.

## Access to capital

Entrepreneurs in Iceland have abundant access to funding opportunities for their start-up.

"Action for Job Creation" is a funding scheme by the Ministry of Industries and Innovation with the aim of supporting the early development of innovative ideas that could potentially receive further funding from funds and/or investors in the future.

The Tech Incubator (TINC) project is available for Icelandic start-ups that want to prove their business model and the potential of their product with less risk and less cost.

The Technology Development Fund, hosted by the Icelandic Centre for Research supports individuals, universities, business enterprises and public institutions conducting research and development activities, which aim towards innovation in Icelandic industry.

AVS R&D Fund of Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture in Iceland is a fund that supports research and development projects done by individuals, universities and business enterprises that aim to increase the value of fisheries.

Icelandic entrepreneurs can also apply for funding through European projects such as the Horizon 2020 – The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, and Eurostars, a funding programme for small and medium sized start-ups involved with research and development projects.

# 3.10 Promotion of entrepreneurship culture

## Special events and activities

Icelandic Startups hosts the *The Golden Egg* business plan competition for entrepreneurs to make a first impression with their business plan and is an ideal platform to transform a business idea into a real start-up. The organization has been involved with hosting the Startup Weekend, which is powered by Google for Entrepreneurs, where people can learn how to start up their business in 54 hours, including connecting with fellow entrepreneurs and learning from experienced innovators. Additionally, Icelandic Startups

offers short 30 minute meetings for free, where entrepreneurs can discuss their ideas and receive expert advice on potential next steps in the process.

Each year, Innovation Center Iceland and The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture host an innovation competition for compulsory schools in Iceland for students in the 5th – 7th grade (10 – 12 year olds). The aim of the contest is to increase the level of innovation in compulsory schools and spark a widespread interest in the innovation of young people.

### Networks and partnerships

There are no measures or initiatives organized at the top-level in terms of networking and partnerships and are specifically aimed at young people.

## 3.11 Current debates and reforms

#### 2018/2019

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, in due consultation with beneficiaries, has drafted a bill which awaits to be put through a deliberative process in the Icelandic parliament. The bill concerns Iceland's application for induction into the European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC), this consortium marks the cooperation of its member states to build up and maintain research infrastructure. The potential effects of this bill are significant for the Icelandic research and innovation environment, potentially with an increase in published articles, a driving competitive edge for Icelandic universities, increased student mobility as well as easier access to European competitive research funds.

# 4. SOCIAL INCLUSION

This chapter looks at how the societal infrastructure in Iceland facilitates social inclusion for young people. The main characteristics of the top-level authority on social inclusion is that a single, comprehensive bill on social inclusion does not exist, but the issue is rather dispersed among different legal bills in different categories. The main actors in social inclusion are various NGO's, which offer consultation and youth programs.

## 4.1 General context

### Main challenges to social inclusion

The main challenge regarding social inclusion of young people is financial in nature. Increase in disposable income among people under 30 years old has fallen behind other age groups. According to an analysis made by Arion Bank in Iceland, for the period 1990 – 2014, average disposable income overall in Iceland has had 41% increase. At the same time the average disposable income for people aged 16-19 decreased 17%. People aged 20-24 experienced 13% increase in disposable income, and 25-29 experienced 13% increase.

This has an effect on many things regarding the social inclusion of young people. For instance, while the increase in housing prices has been proportional to the increase in disposable income overall, the fact that young people have fallen behind in that respect makes it harder for them to buy their first property. As a result, many young people are staying at home longer than before.

### Definitions and concepts

There are no specific definitions or concepts which could potentially draw an external reader's understanding, of the information provided here, into question.

## 4.2 Administration and governance

### Governance

Social inclusion is a broad term and is intervowen into the policy fields of many ministries in some form, such as the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Industry and Innovation, and the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is, however, responsible for policy making in the youth field, as stipulated in chapter 1.

Various NGO's work to facilitate social inclusion among children and young people. Erindi is such an organization. Their main operation consists of consultation to parents and children up to 18 years of age. They also provide assistance and consultation to schools in dealing with many forms of communicatory issues, including school atmosphere and bullying. In addition, they offer crash courses for young people on self-image.

SAMFÉS (Youth Work Iceland) is a consortium of youth centres in Iceland. Founded in 1985, their main objectives include, to increase cooperation between Icelandic youth centres, to participate in international cooperation in the youth field, to facilitate societal and democratic participation of young people, to advance professionalism in the youth field by promoting education related to youth work and to influence regulation and policy making for youth in Iceland. Youth Work Iceland operates a youth board, into which 18 representatives from various youth centres are elected every year along with 9 substitute representatives. The youth board plays a key role in projects and decision making on behalf of the organization and the representatives have a chance to attend both conferences and meetings concerning youth work both in domestic and international context.

In general, ministries at the top-level of government are responsible for policy making that facilitates social inclusion. Various public and non-public actors influence policy making to varying degrees.

### Cross-sectoral cooperation

No existing rules dictate cooperation between sectors, but in general policy making takes place at the top-level within the ministries, possibly in cooperation with other ministries or local authorities where applicable, influenced in varying degrees by public and non-public actors.

## 4.3 Strategy for the social inclusion of young people

### Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion

No national strategy exists on social inclusion of young people.

### Scope and contents

No national strategy exists on social inclusion of young people.

### Responsible authority

No national strategy exists on social inclusion of young people.

### Revisions/Updates

No national strategy exists on social inclusion of young people.

## 4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people

### Programmes specific for vulnerable young people

The Directorate of Labour, which is subject under The Ministry of Welfare, conducts constant labour market initiatives which involve contracts with employers to employ people without employment, including young people. Beside these regular initiatives, the Directorate of Labour, the government issued a cooperative undertaking with the main actors of the labour market with an initiative called "Nám er vinnandi vegur". No official translation is available but a suitable English translation could be "Education is the road to progress". According to the Directorate's annual report, the initiative was launched in the spring of 2011 and was established to counter long term unemployment my creating opportunities for those people to commence education and break the vicious cycle of dreariness created by long term unemployment.

In 2010, an initiative was launched to create new summer jobs for students and unemployed people. Funds were granted to state institutions and municipalities to hire around 900 young people in between school semesters, many of whom had previously been unemployed and received benefits.

After the economic crash in 2008, unemployment rate among young people had risen to 16,7% at the end of 2009. In 2010, The Ministry of Welfare issued the project "Ungt folk til athafna" and delegated its undertaking to the Directorate of Labour. No official translation of the project is available, but a suitable English translation might be "Active young people" or "Activating young people". According to an annual report released by the Directorate of Labour The main goal of this project was to ensure that young people who had lost their jobs would receive some form of initiative to help them to get back into education or the labour market within three months. This was to be done in co-operation with the education system, volunteer organizations and main actors of the labour market.

## Funding

The project "Nám er vinnandi vegur" or "Education is the road to progress" was funded by the co-operation of the Icelandic government and the main actors in the labour market (http://brunnur.stjr.is/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/xsp/.ibmmodres/domino/OpenAttachment/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/9015822F8494D7F700257AE7004DFCDB/Attachment/nam_v_vegur_2012.pdf). 1,790 million ISK. Was delegated to this project (http://www.althingi.is/altext/144/s/0792.html).

The Icelandic government allocated 250 million ISK. In the effort of creating summer job opportunities for students and unemployed people (https://www.vinnumalastofnun.is/media/1089/arsskyrsla-vefur-2010.pdf).

The Icelandic government furthermore allocated 600 million ISK. For the project "Ungt folk til athafna", or "Activating Young People" (https://www.vinnumalastofnun.is/media/1089/arsskyrsla-vefur-2010.pdf).

## Quality assurance

The Directorate of Labour issues an annual report where initiatives undertaken are evaluated and its impact assessed (https://www.vinnumalastofnun.is/media/1391/vmst-arssk-2011-low-res.pdf, https://www.vinnumalastofnun.is/media/1089/arsskyrsla-vefur-2010.pdf). Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture conducted an evaluation report on the project "Nám er vinnandi vegur" or "Education is the Road to Progress" (http://brunnur.stjr.is/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/xsp/.ibmmodres/domino/OpenAttachment/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/9015822F8494D7F700257AE7004DFCDB/Attachment/nam_v_vegur_2012.pdf).

There are no public documents indicating the outcome of these evaluations.

# 4.5 Initiatives promoting social inclusion and raising awareness

## Intercultural awareness

The Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools, issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, includes six fundamental pillars which are meant to represented in the school work and should be evident in all educational activities as well as subjects and field of study. Among those fundamental pillars directly related to acceptance of cultural diversity are democracy and human rights and equality.

In 2010, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture wrote a statement concerning initiatives to counter prejudice and bullying in schools.

In 2012, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture held a seminar on educational issues in conjunction with immigrants. Among topics discussed were the importance of religious studies within the school system and that those studies reflected religious diversity.

## Young people's rights

There are no top-level initiatives regarding campaigns on young people's rights. However there are some non-governmental organizations which have taken such initiatives. In 2012, the Icelandic Youth Association held a three day seminar for young people where the topic of discussion was human rights and the media. The seminar was attended by 84 young men and women from 26 youth councils across the country.

### Key initiatives to safeguard democracy and prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism

The main initiative by the top-level government regarding the prevention of radicalisation and safeguarding democracy are the six fundamental pillars disclosed in the National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools (see subchapter on Intercultural awareness).

## 4.6 Access to quality services

### Housing

The Icelandic government has taken initiatives in an effort to increase the availability of a more affordable housing. In 2016 the government issued that it was to make funds available for endowment capital in order to establish a more affordable, secure housing for low income individuals and families. The government intends to make available 2.300 affordable rent apartments between the years 2016 and 2019, including 500 – 600 this year by allocating 1.500 million ISK in the national budget in addition to endowment capital from The Housing Financing Fund.

The Icelandic parliament ratified in 2016 Act No. 75/2016 regarding housing benefits which will take effect January 1st 2017. Housing benefits are set to replace rent benefits and responsibilities for payment of these benefits will be removed from local authorities to state authorities. The housing benefits are set to reduce the costs of rent for lower-income individuals and families.

### Social services

No top-level policy measures exist on social services applying specifically to young people. Young people are, however, entitled to public social assistance and services, although the nature of such assistance may vary according to age.

According to the Social Assistance Act, No. 99/2007, everyone, including young people, are entitled to a single parent's allowance if they are a single parent supporting a child under the age of 18 and are resident in Iceland.

The Social Insurance Admission may pay child pension to young people aged 18-20 in connection with school studies or vocational training if both of the person's parents are deceased, and also if one or both of the parents receive pension for retirement or incapacity. In such cases the Social Insurance Admission shall assess proof of school attendance or vocational training.

Young people, as do everyone in the same position, have access to home care allowance if they are supporting disabled or chronically ill children who live at home or in a hospital, amounting to up to 96,978 ISK per month. Under special circumstances this payment may be raised by up to 25%.

All persons who become widows or widowers before reaching the age of 67 may be paid grant of 27,429 ISK per month for six months following the death of a spouse. If the person in question is supporting a child under the age of 18, or in other special circumstances, he/she can receive a benefit of 20,565 ISK per month for a further 12 months, but never longer than 48 months.

### Health care

No documents were found which suggest that this issue has been addressed specifically.

### Financial services

No top level policy measures exist on financial services specifically for young people exists. Young people are, however, eligible for public financial services which might help prevent social exclusion, such as unemployment benefits and student loans.

### Quality assurance

There are various organizations, both governmental and non-governmental responsible for assuring that these services are up to standards. The Icelandic Consumer Centre safeguard consumers' rights and provide assistance if needed. Their services apply to various methods of consumptions, including rent and other social services. The Icelandic Consumers' Centre collaborates with the European Consumers' Centre. The Directorate of Health is responsible i.a. for monitoring health care providers in Iceland and ensuring that their services are up to the highest standards.

Care Quality Inspectorate for Social Services and Child Protection is an agency under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs which commenced operations in May 2018. Initially the Inspectorate's responsibilities will include administrative tasks and monitoring of social services provided by municipalities, by public bodies or on a contract basis, as well as supervision of specific aspects of child protection.

## 4.7 Youth work to foster social inclusion

### Policy/legal framework

No legal framework exists at the top-level that applies to the prevention of social exclusion through youth work. General legal framework on youth exists at the top-level which describes general terms such as the management of youth affairs, the operation of the Icelandic Youth Fund, working conditions in youth work, support of municipalities and research on youth affairs.

There are, however, certain characteristics reflected in the work of youth centres supported by local authorities that support the prevention of social exclusion of groups of young people perhaps more at risk of social exclusion.

### Main inclusive Youth-Work programmes and target groups

No work programmes aiming for the prevention of social exclusion amongst young people is organised or funded directly by the top-level government. However, the Icelandic government allocates funds to the Icelandic Youth Fund which supports youth work.

### Youth work providers in the field of social inclusion for young people

Reykjavík Youth Center has a diverse range of activities for young people with disabilities. Among them are after-school activities (16-20 years) as well as work with various clubs and groups. In addition the youth centre celebrates the Art Without Borders festival every spring, which is an art festival emphasizing on diversity.

Fjölsmiðjan is an institution which provides young people with the opportunity to train for the labour marked or continued studies. These are mainly young people who have been marginalized for some reason and are looking to get back on track.

### Training and support for youth workers engaged in social inclusion programmes

According to the Act No 70/2007 youth workers should be of legal age and are obliged to have the proper education, training, or experience to do their work (https://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf/youth_act70_2007.pdf). The Department of Education at the University of Iceland offers a variety of applicable courses for people wishing to enter the youth-work profession. Faculty of Sport, Leisure Studies and Social Education offers leisure studies, sports and health sciences and social education at both undergraduate and graduate level. All these subject are ideal for students who wish to obtain professional qualifications in youth-work. The Icelandic Government funds the Icelandic Youth Fund, whose purpose is to support innovative projects aimed at and for young people.

### Financial support

No public documents indicate that there are sources of funding made available for youth work particularly for social inclusion. Youth centres are funded by their local authority, while the top-level government funds the Icelandic Youth Fund. However, these bodies are relatively independent, i.e. youth centres are independent in choosing what projects they want to emphasize and the Icelandic Youth Fund selects projects for funding based on the merit of the application and other relevant factors. These sources might fund some projects on youth work for social inclusion, but not entirely.

### Quality assurance

No public documents indicate that specific quality assurance exists with regards to inclusive youth work programmes in Iceland.

## 4.8 Current debates and reforms

In the 2015-2016 Parliamentary year, the minister of welfare introduced a parliamentary resolution on matters regarding incoming refugees for the years 2016-2019. Although this parliamentary resolution does not specifically address youth work on social inclusion it encompasses both issues, i.e. youth and social inclusion.

The resolution emphasizes five main pillars:

a. Society: Icelandic society is to be a family-friendly society where all individuals receive the same opportunities, safety and enjoy fundamental rights.

b. Family: Icelandic society shall respect the needs of different family patterns. Furthermore, it shall create the best possible conditions for all families, particularly families with children. This should be accomplished without discrimination for nationality or origin.

c. Education: Immigrants/refugees will enjoy the same opportunities and status for education. Particular focus will be put on the affairs of immigrants regarding education and the goal of reducing school-leaving rates amongst immigrants will be addressed.

d. Labour market: A diverse background of the workforce will lead to the better and more competitive labour market, both in the public and private sector.

e. Refugees: Icelandic society shall assist and provide protection for those in need with respect to the fundamental change happening globally and their effect on Icelandic society.

In May of 2018, a new government agency commenced operations under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The agency, named Care Quality Inspectorate for Social Services and Child Protection, will initially be tasked with administrative duties and monitoring of the various social services provided by local authorities and public bodies, such as services for children, families, disabled persons, seniors and immigrants. The objective of establishing a special agency for these projects is to "strengthen the organisation of comprehensive services by the state and local authorities, making a clear distinction between administration and supervision, on the one hand, and provision of services, on the other."

# 5. PARTICIPATION

In many countries, young people are taking their first steps as full participants in a democratic society. In Iceland, the voting age is 18 in both parliamentary and municipality elections. The topic of this chapter is to disseminate how young people in Iceland can directly participate in political work as well as how they might influence policy makers through participation in the work of NGO's which specifically targets young people. In short, young people can participate in political work through youth divisions of their political party, which most parties in parliament have. This puts them in a better position to influence members of parliament, particularly in their respective party. Young people are also able to take part in NGO's and attempt to influence policy makers. Among such NGO's are Youth Work Iceland and The Upper Secondary Student Union.

## 5.1 General context

### Definitions and concepts

There are no definitions, concepts, or specific terminology regarding youth participation which might compromise the understanding of an external reader.

### Institutions of representative democracy

Iceland is a Republic with a parliamentary government. Althingi shares its legislative power with the President of Iceland. Furthermore, the President exercises executive power along with various governmental authorities. An example of this shared power can be found in the Icelandic Constitution, article 26:

If Althingi has passed a bill, it shall be submitted to the President of the Republic for confirmation not later than two weeks after it has been passed. Such confirmation gives it the force of law. If the President rejects a bill, it shall nevertheless become valid but shall, as soon as circumstances permit, be submitted to a vote by secret ballot of all those eligible to vote, for approval or rejection. The law shall become void if rejected, but otherwise retains its force.

Althingi is the main representative institution on a national level. Regional assemblies which advocate for the interests of the region and seek to improve the quality of life in the municipalities in the region. Each municipality has a municipal council which deliberates on the affairs of the municipality.

Voting is not compulsory in Iceland, regardless of the type of elections taking place.

## 5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy

### Young people as voters

According to Act No. 24/2000 concerning parliamentary elections to the Althing, all those who have reached the age of 18 and are domiciled in Iceland are eligible to vote in the parliamentary elections when the election takes place. According to the Local Government Elections Act No. 5/1998, every Icelandic national who has reached the age of 18 at the time local government elections take place is eligible to vote in that election. Furthermore, it is necessary that he is legally domiciled in the municipality in question.

Overall, the voting turnout is lower among young people (aged 18 – 29) than other age groups, in the latest elections regardless of the type of elections held, i.e. presidential elections, parliamentary elections or local government elections.

According to data from Statistics Iceland, the turnout percentage among the various age groups was as follows:

**The 2016 Presidential elections:**

18 - 29: 64,7%

30 - 39: 70,2%

40+: 81,4%

18 - 29: 67,7%

30 - 39: 74,2%

40+: 84,8

**The 2014 Local government elections:**

18 - 29: 47,5

30 - 39: 60,9

40+: 75,6

Results from the 2014 local government elections are based on a random stratified sample of eligible voters.

### Young people as political representatives

No top-level legislations pertain directly to young people as elected representatives or candidates in national and local elections. Young people fall under the general legislation of these matters which stipulates that a person must have reached the age of 18 to be eligible to elect and be elected for a seat in Parliament and local councils. Specific rules furthermore stipulate that for Parliamentary elections, a person must be an Icelandic citizen and hold current residency in Iceland, or be an Icelandic citizen with a residency overseas for no more than 8 years. Specific rules for local government elections dictate that a person must have a legal residency in the municipality in which the elections take place.

According to the Icelandic constitution, young people are not eligible to run for the presidency. A person must have attained 35 years of age, and be an Icelandic citizen.

## 5.3 Youth representation bodies

### Youth parliament

No public documents indicate the existence of a youth parliament in Iceland. However, on June 17th, 2019, on the 75th anniversary of Iceland's independence, young people aged 13 - 16 years were given a unique opportunity to familiarize themselves with the profession of elected officials and to advance matters of interest with elected members of parliament, when a special parliamentary session was held for young people. The session tackled issues regarding equality, the environment, and health.

### Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards

The Icelandic Youth Council is an organization subject under the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The Minister appoints nine representatives to the Youth Council for a period of two years.

According to the Youth Act No. 70/2007, the responsibilities of the Youth Council is to consult the national authorities and municipalities on youth affairs, give recommendations regarding focus areas and policies in youth affairs and seek ways to improve youth activities of clubs, organizations, and schools.

### Higher education student union(s)

The student council of the University of Iceland seeks to promote and protect the interests of students at the university. Its goal is to ensure that high quality, higher education is

accessible to all and to be readily available to represent and aid students. The council's representatives are involved in most decisions concerning the university's operations. Representatives for the council are elected each year through elections within the university community.

### School student union(s)

The Icelandic Upper Secondary Student Union seeks to guarantee the interests and rights of all Icelandic secondary school students. Its main roles are to take part in the resolution of disputes, be leading in social work and social education in the secondary school community, provide information regarding secondary education and ensure that quality secondary education is available to all.

### Other bodies

No documents suggest that other top-level bodies exist in Iceland.

## 5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making

### Formal Mechanisms of Consultation

No formal mechanisms of consultation exists between central authorities and young people. The Youth Council, appointed by the Minister of Education, serves as an advisory board for central authorities on youth affairs, but the council is not occupied by young people.

However, The National Youth Act no. 70/2007 states that local governments should actively pursue the foundation of local youth councils occupied by young people. These local youth councils do not have the capacity to directly affect national youth policy, but they can, through cooperation, usually in the form of meetings and conferences with local authorities and/or between themselves, impact local youth policies and influence the dialogue nationally.

### Actors

According to a report published by the Icelandic Association of Local Authorities, the number of municipalities which have local youth councils has increased from 14 in 2008 to 33 today. Representatives from all local youth councils meet regularly at a conference held by The National Youth Organization (UMFÍ) where important topics in youth affairs are discussed. Additionally in recent years, various non-governmental organizations in Iceland have appointed young people to their own youth boards, including UNICEF, UN-Women, Save the Children, and other organizations such as The Ombudsman for Children.

### Information on the extent of youth participation

No information or data on young people's level of participation is collected.

### Outcomes

Main outcomes:

Through participation in local youth councils, young people can advocate their views on youth policy, usually by defining goals and objectives they believe are important.

Public availability of outcomes:

The consultation of young people are usually made available in local government minutes and online news bulletins.

### Large-scale initiatives for dialogue or debate between public institutions and young people

No documents exists which describe any initiatives for dialogues between public institutions and young people.

## 5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation

### Existence of a national strategy to increase young people's political and civil society participation

No national strategy exists pertaining to the increase of young people's political and civil society participation. However, it is a matter widely discussed in Icelandic society.

### Scope and contents

No national strategy exists pertaining to the increase of young people's political and civil society participation.

### Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

No national strategy exists pertaining to the increase of young people's political and civil society participation. If such a strategy existed, it is most likely that the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture would be the responsible authority for the strategy's implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as it is the official authority in youth affairs. This is however purely speculative.

### Monitoring and evaluation

No national strategy exists pertaining to the increase of young people's political and civil society participation.

### Revisions/Updates

No national strategy exists pertaining to the increase of young people's political and civil society participation.

## 5.6 Supporting youth organisations

### Legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations

According to the Act no. 70/2007, local authorities are responsible for establishing and supporting youth organizations within their municipal boundaries. However, the top level government does provide financial support for various national youth organizations. The Act no. 70/2007 stipulates that the goal of local youth organizations is i.a. to advice local authorities on youth affairs within the municipality.

### Public financial support

The top level government does allocate funds to various national youth organizations. According to the national fiscal budget for 2016, the allocation is as follows:

The Icelandic Youth Council – 1,0 MM. ISK.

The Icelandic Youth Association – 117,6 MM. ISK.

The Iceland Scout Association – 51,1 MM. ISK.

YMCA and YWCA in Iceland – 37,1 MM. ISK.

Youth research – 9,6 MM. ISK.

Icelandic Youth Fund – 9,0 MM. ISK.

Allocation in total – 225,4 MM. ISK.

### Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants

No national or large scale initiatives exist which aim to increase the diversity of young people participating in youth organizations.

## 5.7 "Learning to participate" through formal, non-formal and informal learning

### Policy Framework

No policy framework exists in Iceland regarding social and civic competence of young people, beyond what is stipulated in the compulsory and secondary school curriculum.

### Formal learning

According to the Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for both compulsory schools and upper secondary schools, citizenship education is integrated into school subjects and are used to influence the choice of educational material and attitudes that are to be emphasised. The general aim of these aspects is to prepare children and young people to active participation in society, acquiring a vision of the future and ideals to advocate.

### Non-formal and informal learning

No information was found which suggests that citizenship education as a subject is a direct or indirect part of non-formal and informal learning.

### Quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning

No quality guidelines exist for non-formal learning in terms of citizenship education.

### Educators' support

The Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for both compulsory schools and upper secondary schools is always at the teacher's disposal in terms of invoking social and civic competences. These matters are, as has been mentioned, broadly construed in the curriculum, so the teachers themselves are quite independent as to how they integrate these measures into their subjects.

## 5.8 Raising political awareness among young people

### Information providers / counselling structures

No central authority is responsible for raising political awareness of young people. However, youth organizations have been working directly towards this goal.

### Youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights and democratic values

The Association for upper secondary school students and the Icelandic Youth Council, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Icelandic Association of Local Authorities, the Social Science Research Institute and the Office of the Ombudsman for Children, launched a project called "Kosningavakning" (no translation available). The aim of the project was to increase democratic awareness of young people and encourage them to vote on enlightened terms.

### Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people

No documents suggest that any measures have been taken to promote the intercultural dialogue among young people.

### Promoting transparent and youth-tailored public communication

No documents suggest that any initiatives have been taken in order to promote transparent public communication pertaining to youth.

## 5.9 E-participation

No documents were found which suggest policies or any other undertaking to encourage young people to participate in a democratic process through an electronic platform.

## 5.10 Current debates and reforms

Currently there are no debates or reforms in the top-level government in the field of youth participation.

# 6. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The scope of this chapter will be youth in education and training. National strategy regarding the prevention of early leaving from education and training, of which no comprehensive strategy exists in Iceland, but remains a significant topic in public discussion among pundits, educational professionals and top-level authority. How validation of non-formal and informal learning is carried out, which is usually a question of either how comprehensive a national strategy on such validation is or to which extent school's autonomy extends over that issue. Learning mobility is a topic that is covered as well, both in the context of formal education and non-formal or informal education, and awareness raising in regards of such education as well. The use of new media by young people is covered and what measures are taken to ensure safety in the use of such technology.

## 6.1 General context

### Main trends in young people's participation in education and training

In Iceland, education is compulsory from age 6 – 16. However, Iceland has a relatively high ratio of young people aged 18-24 who ´leave education and training with only lower secondary education or less, and are no longer in education and training´, (definition of early school leaving in the report) or 20 – 25% (Reducing early school leaving: Key messages and policy support 2013).

### Organisation of the education and training system

Compulsory formal education begins at the age of six and finishes at the age of 16, when students begin their upper secondary education. Students who wish to pursue further education after compulsory formal education enrol in an upper secondary school. Many upper secondary institutions offer both academic courses as well as vocational education and training. For further information on the organization of the education and training system for young people in Iceland, please visit Iceland's Eurydice webpage.

### Main concepts

There are no distinctive definitions of the Icelandic education system.

## 6.2 Administration and governance

### Governance

Althingi (the Icelandic parliament) and the Ministry of Education are responsible for establishing a framework of the education system. The daily operation of nursery and primary schools is in the hands of local authorities, who are each responsible for schools in their area. The Department of Education at the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture prepares policies for the education system and ensures their implementation. The department is furthermore responsible for administration issues on all school levels, i.e. nursery school, compulsory school, upper secondary school, and university as well as lifelong learning and scholarships. It also oversees any innovations in the educational sector such as distance learning and the publication of educational material.

Numerous NGOs and trade unions contribute to the discussion of educational policy and may thus have an influence on it, directly or indirectly to varying degrees. Trade unions such as The Icelandic Teachers' Union, and their member organizations, such as The Association of Teachers in Upper Secondary Schools and The Association of Teachers in Primary and Lower Secondary Schools, serves as a forum for an informed discussion of

the education sector and promotes progress and innovation thereof. Non-governmental organizations such as Home and School – The National Parents Association provides information, advice, and support for parents.

### Cross-sectoral cooperation

The Ministry of Education cooperates with local authorities, who are responsible for preschools and compulsory schools within their district. No laws specify how this cooperation is done in practice, but articles under the preschool act no. 90/2008 and the compulsory school act no. 91/2008 suggest for example that cooperation should be evident in an internal and external inspection of schools.

## 6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)

### National strategy

No comprehensive national strategy concerning early leaving from education and training. However, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture have cooperated with upper secondary schools to get to the root of the problem. The work mainly consisted of contacting the students who had dropped out to determine the main cause of their decision. The ministry published its conclusions in 2013 and 2014, but no reports have been found for later years.

### Formal education: main policy measures on ELET

From 2016 - 2018, the Directorate of Education, in accordance with a directive from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, designed and conducted tests among first-year-students in upper secondary schools in order to screen for potential leavers. Adjacent to this project, all upper secondary schools were asked to submit the number of students who dropped out before finishing with a degree and the reasons for doing so. By the directive of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Directorate of Education then followed up on this information by aiding schools with establishing actions to counteract the most common reasons students gave for early leaving.

However, the official results from this project have not been published. It is furthermore unclear whether such a short timescale can give us definitive answers on whether the actions taken delivered the results or whether they were circumstantial.

### Addressing ELET through non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

Fjölsmiðjan (name not available in English) is an organization aimed at people aged 16 – 24 years and provides a non-formal and informal learning environment with the aim to help young people, to re-enter the education or work environment. The organization was first established in Reykjavík in 2001 by the Red Cross, Association of Municipalities in the Capital Area, the Ministry of Welfare and the Directorate of Labour. It was established in Akureyri in 2007 by the Red Cross, Municipality of Akureyri, and the Directorate of Labour. The organization is funded by the municipalities and the state.

As discussed in chapter 1, Hitt Húsið is a youth organization funded and operated by the municipality of Reykjavík and offers young people job counseling as well as providing many types of courses that encourage young people's social inclusion.

### Cross-sector coordination and monitoring of ELET interventions

No documents suggest that any monitoring is performed by top-level authorities on ELET interventions.

# 6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning

## Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning

There are no laws in place in Iceland which conditions that non-formal or informal learning need to be validated for education. Furthermore, the National Curriculum guide for both primary and lower secondary schools as well as for upper secondary schools, stipulates no such thing. However, upper secondary schools are, individually, free to form their own policies on whether and how they validate non-formal and informal learning.

## Information and guidance

No information or guidance is provided by the top-level authority.

## Quality assurance

No quality assurance mechanism is in place for the validation of non-formal or informal learning.

# 6.5 Cross-border learning mobility

## Policy framework

The policy on cross-border mobility learning formed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture strives to ensure that students can choose and arrange their studies to suit their own personal needs and gain as much as possible. The main purpose of the Icelandic Student Loan Fund is to accommodate this goal by supporting students financially with both tuition fees and maintenance (http://www.althingi.is/altext/145/s/1512.html, only available in Icelandic).

## Main cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education

Exchange studies are offered in formal, general education. There are no top-level policies or laws which directly govern the arrangement of international co-operation among higher education institutions as they are relatively autonomous in so many aspects. However, Icelandic universities are engaged in international co-operation which helps students mobilize for their studies. University of Iceland is a member of the Nordplus, through which students can exchange to universities in the Nordic and Baltic countries, and Erasmus +, through which they can exchange to the European Union as well as Norway and Turkey (http://english.hi.is/university/europe%20). The university also co-operates with universities from outside Europe to which students can exchange.

The Erasmus + and Nordplus programs offer grants to students in the form of travel and residency. In addition, all students, whether studying locally or abroad, are entitled to a loan from the Icelandic Student Loan Fund.

## Promoting mobility in the context of non-formal learning, and of youth work

As described in chapter 2 on voluntary activities, Iceland participates in international programs which allows young people to go abroad as a volunteer for various subjects. Young people can for example participate in the European Volunteer Service, which is hosted by the Erasmus + program. However, no standards or quality criteria have been set by top-level authorities regarding these actions.

No public funding is directly allocated to these projects. However, institutions responsible for them receive public funding.

### Quality assurance

No system of quality assurance of cross-border learning mobility exists in Iceland.

## 6.6 Social inclusion through education and training

### Educational support

In chapter 12 on the Eurydice website, the national policy on people with disabilities, and how it pertains to students on all school levels, is described:

The Act on the Affairs of Disabled People, passed in 1992, stipulates that all individuals with disabilities (defined as mental retardation, psychiatric illness, physical disability, blindness and/or deafness as well as disabilities resulting from chronic illness and accidents) are to be enabled to live and function in the community.

Integration of all students in mainstream education, as far as possible, is therefore the policy in Iceland and no separate legislation exists covering special education either at pre-primary, compulsory or the upper secondary education level. The general aims of the legislation on each school level apply to all pupils including those with disabilities and special needs (https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Iceland:Educational_Support_and_Guidance).

Usually, students with disabilities are identified early and can thus receive education suited to their needs. This is because health service, educational and social workers pay special attention to children mental and physical condition. If a child is suspected of showing symptoms of disability, parents or guardians are notified immediately, and upon further assessment, parents are directed to the appropriate national agency. The four main national agencies concerned are: The State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre, Icelandic organization of the visually impaired, the National Hearing and Speech Centre and the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Unit of the National Hospital. Each agency seeks adequate solutions of diagnosis and treatment in consultation with the parents (ibid.)

Law for each school stage stipulates the specificities in terms of education disabled students should receive. The Pre-primary School Act, for example, dictates that

children who, because of their disabilities or because of emotional or social difficulties, need special assistance or training, are to be provided with such support, in their own pre-primary school in cooperation with the municipality. This is supervised by the head teacher of the pre-primary school in cooperation with the teacher, a developmental therapist or other specialist services such as a speech therapists or psychologist according to Ordinance on Specialist Services in Schools nr. 584/2010 (ibid.)

No specific policies exist related to support for students with disabilities in non-formal and informal learning environment. It is however included in the Act on the Affairs of Disabled People, where it says that all individuals with disabilities are to be able to live and function in the community. Municipalities are responsible to providing all such services to individuals with disabilities.

### Social cohesion and equal opportunities

Policies on social cohesion and equal opportunities are stipulated in the National Curriculum for Compulsory Schools and the National Curriculum for Secondary Schools. These qualities are not taught via a separate subject but rather they are to be integrated throughout schools day to day activities, as general objectives of the education system (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/139EN.pdf.

No programs, projects or initiatives are organized by the top-level authorities. However, top-level authorities fund organizations which operate under the values of equal opportunities, such as the Icelandic Youth Association (UMFÍ) (only available in Icelandic).

# 6.7 Skills for innovation

## Innovation in formal education

The Compulsory School Act No. 91/2008 states that innovation and entrepreneurship should be a part of compulsory school education, but does not indicate this issue further. The role of innovation in formal education is furthermore ambiguously outlined in the National Curriculum Guide for both primary and upper secondary schools. Innovative thinking is encouraged through the six fundamental pillars upon which the curriculum is built: Literacy; sustainability; democracy and human rights; equality; health and welfare; creativity. Schools have full autonomy in terms of how they choose to implement these principles into their work.

Skema is an organization within Reykjavik University which specializes in teaching children and young people aged 4 - 16 programming. In 2013, Skema was among the founding organizations of a fund called Programmers of the Future (IS: Forritarar framtíðarinnar, official translation unavailable). Schools and municipalities can apply to the fund to receive training for students and teachers by Skema's professionals.

## Fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work

Top level authorities do not organize any program or project pertaining to innovation. However, various organizations that work in the field of innovation and help students foster their innovative capacities through non-formal learning are state funded. One such institution is Innovation Centre Iceland, which is introduced in chapter 3.2 concerning the main actors in employment and entrepreneurship.

# 6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media

## National strategy

No national strategy on media literacy or the safe use of media exists.

## Media literacy and online safety through formal education

Media literacy and competence to use new media is discussed in the National Curriculum for Compulsory Schools and in the National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools. Chapter 18 in the National Curriculum for Compulsory Schools denotes a competence framework regarding the usage of media and information where, at the completion of grade 10, students should "[s]how responsibility in private communication on the net and in web media. It is, however, not discussed in a strategic manner and schools are given full autonomy in terms of how they implement this.

## Promoting media literacy and online safety through non-formal and informal learning

The Media Committee (Fjölmiðlanefnd) (website only available in Icelandic) is funded by top-level authorities. The committee's main purpose is to ensure that the media sector operates according to law. One particular responsibility is the protection of children in the media environment, i.e. protection from potentially harmful material to increased media literacy. In 2015, the Media Committee, in co-operation with SAFT (Society, Family and Technology) and Home and School (the National Parents Association in Iceland), published educational material for parents and children on internet security and media literacy (the material is only available in Icelandic).

### Raising awareness about the risks posed by new media

SAFT (Society, Family and Technology) is an organization run by Home and School (the National Parents association in Iceland). Its main objective is to educate parents and children on internet safety and safe use of new media. Furthermore, the organization seeks

to educate and counteract cyber-bullying. The organization publishes bi-annual public reports with information about their operation as well as their international co-operation. The latest report is for the years 2012 – 2014. In addition, the organization conducts surveys for parents and children.

## 6.9 Awareness-raising about non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

### Information providers / counselling structures

According to the Youth Act No. 70/2007, the Youth Council is responsible for the overall information and counselling concerning youth work on a national level. Local youth councils are then responsible for youth work in its specific area (it is noteworthy that not all areas have such councils).

## 6.10 Current debates and reforms

New draft of regulation signed in October 2018 on foundation courses to university study, designed for individuals who do not have a matriculation examination or who have one, but need to add courses to meet the minimum requirement for a particular line of study at university. These regulations, which are based on the Higher Education Institutions Act no. 63/2008 will replace old regulation on foundation courses no. 1266/2013.

# 7. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

This chapter deals with health-related issues for the youth age group and what is being done in Iceland to facilitate both physical and mental health.

## 7.1 General context

### Main trends in the health conditions of young people

Participation among children and adolescents in sport clubs and organized physical activities is very high in Iceland, but participation starts decreasing from the age of thirteen. According to students in upper secondary schools (age 16-20 years) about 45% are physically active 4 times a week or more, about 35% are physically active 1-3 times a week and around 20% do not participate in sports clubs or are physically active.

In 2016, 5% of students in upper secondary schools, (age 16-20 years) were using smoking tobacco and 38% were using alcohol. This has been decreasing for almost two decades. Other substance abuse was 18% (2016), but that has also been decreasing slowly over the last decade. It is interesting to see that only 5% of students in compulsory schools, age 15, were using alcohol in the spring 2016, when the same adolescents started upper secondary schools in the fall 2016 the percentage had increased to 25%. However, over the last two decades a great effort has been done to decrease the number of adolescents who start drinking at the age 15 or younger. In 1998, 42% of adolescents in compulsory schools, age 15, used alcohol compared to 5% in 2016. The Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis (ICSRA) has led this work in close collaboration with the Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, municipalities throughout Iceland and NGO´s.

There are though certain things that need to considered; more young people evaluate their mental health poorer than before, showing symptoms of anxiety, depression and loneliness. Further information (Icelandic): Youth, upper secondary school report, youth surveys from 1992 - 2013 (2014) file:///C:/Users/ingibjorg/Downloads/ungt_folk_framhaldss_2013.pdf

#### The Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis (ICSRA)

ICSRA has conducted the national Youth in Iceland program of surveys among 10-20 year old children and adolescents, consisting of extensive data collection and information dissemination concerning family and adolescent welfare. This evidenced, covering a wide spectrum of important health and social issues concerning adolescents, including smoking and alcohol use, school satisfaction, health behavior, and academic achievement, physical activity and participation in sports, adolescent emotional well-being, suicidal behavior, and studies of custodial care of adolescents. National youth population surveys have been conducted among students in upper secondary schools (age 16-20) in the years; 1992, 1997, 2000, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2016 and in compulsory schools every year among adolescents (age 13-15).

The outcome development from 1992 is very positive in general. Now parents are more likely to know where their adolescent are during the evening or night and with whom they are. Parentally support, supervision and communication is an effective prevention. Consumption of fruit and vegetables has increased among young people, and at the same time consumption on sugary soft drinks reduced. Through the years, the percentage of upper secondary school students continues to decline according to substance abuse, becoming drunk and tobacco use. Further information (English): http://www.rannsoknir.is/en/home/

### Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC)

Iceland participates in HBSC surveys, students aged 11, 13 and 15. This is a cross-national study gaining insight into young people's well-being, health behaviors and their social context. This research collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Europe, conducted every four years in 47 countries and regions across Europe.

According to HBSC surveys outcome, overweight rate is higher in Iceland than in most European countries. The prevalence of overweight and obesity is not increasing but remains high. About 20% of Icelandic adolescent, age 15, are overweight or obese. Icelandic adolescents, especially girls, are also more likely than most European adolescents to engage in weight-reduction behavior, meaning they are on a diet or doing something else to lose weight.

HBSC also reports a decrease of daily moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) is clearly shown between ages 11 and 15. Icelandic adolescent aged 15, 25% boys and 14% girls, report to do at least 60 minutes of MVPA daily, and that is rather higher percentage than in most European countries. Further information (English): http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/303438/HSBC-No.7-Growing-up-unequal-Full-Report.pdf?ua=1

Iceland also participates in the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD). Further information (English): http://www.espad.org/

**The Directorate of Health,** collects data, conducts surveys and collects and records statistics about health and well-being. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.landlaeknir.is/tolfraedi-og-rannsoknir/

- **Health and well-being of Icelanders** ("Heilsa og líðan"), age 18 – 79. A national health survey regularly collects data, since 2007 (2009 and 2012), about health, well-being, quality of life and major determinants of health including lifestyle and life conditions. Collection for 2017 is in progress. Further information (Icelandic): http://www.landlaeknir.is/tolfraedi-og-rannsoknir/rannsoknir/heilsa-og-lidan-islendinga/
- **Monitoring determinants of health and well-being, age 18 – 79**. The Directorate of Health monitors selected determinants of health and well-being every month. The selected determinants are well-being, physical activity, nutrition/ diet, and alcohol and tobacco behavior. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.landlaeknir.is/servlet/file/store93/item29044/Talnabrunnur_februar_2016_2.pdf https://www.landlaeknir.is/servlet/file/store93/item31880/Talnabrunnur_Februar_2017.pdf https://www.landlaeknir.is/servlet/file/store93/item32432/Talnabrunnur_Mai_2017.pdf
- **Public Health indicators** ("Lýðheilsuvísar"), divided into health districts. The Directorate of Health has published (2016, 2017) selected indicators with statistics from sources collecting data, mentioned in this section. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.landlaeknir.is/tolfraedi-og-rannsoknir/tolfraedi/lydheilsuvisar/
- **Sexual transmitted diseases** have been increasing in Iceland last couple of years, particularly among youth. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.landlaeknir.is/smit-og-sottvarnir/smitsjukdomar/kynsjukdomar/
- **High rate of Chlamydia trachomatis cases** in Iceland at age 15 – 24 has been a fact for years, particularly compared with population rate in Europe. Further information (English): https://ecdc.europa.eu/sites/portal/files/documents/Chlamydia%20AER.pdf
- **Young mothers, births by women, age 15 – 19**, is higher in Iceland than in other Nordic countries even though it has been decreasing. Health Statistics for the Nordic Countries 2017. Further information (English): file:///C:/Users/ingibjorg/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/QDWWB3PI/FULLTEXT01.pdf

- National nutrition survey ("Landskönnun á mataræði Íslendinga")(2002, 2010). Further information (Icelandic): http://www.mast.is/library/Sk%C3%BDrslur/LandskonnunMataraediislendinga2010til2011.pdf

**Statistics Iceland** ("Hagstofan")**.** The population projection is based on information from the National Register of Persons on population, births, deaths, migration and projected average life expectancy for the coming years. Iceland Statistics revises the population projection annually. Further information (English): http://www.statice.is/Statistics/Population/Population-projections

**Social indicators** ("Félagsvísar") (2016), a product from the Icelandic Welfare Watch as a part of the Presidency Programme 2014. Statistics Iceland publishes selected indicators. Information available e.g. about participation in upper secondary school at the age 16-17 that is very high 90% but dropout is also very high at the age 18-20 were participation is 60%. Employment rate, age 16-24 is 80% (2015) and working full time is 45% (2015). Unemployment in the age group 16-24 was almost 5% in the year 2000, increased after the economic collapse, and went up to 16% 2009-2010. Unemployment in that age group has decreased again and was 6,5% in 2016. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.stjornarradid.is/media/velferdarraduneyti-media/media/skyrslur2016/Felagsvisar_Februar_2016-Loka.pdf

Youth, age 20-24, living in their parents houses is 55% and that is considerably higher percentage compared to other Nordic countries. Further information (Icelandic): https://hagstofa.is/utgafur/frettasafn/lifskjor/felagsvisar-ungt-folk-i-foreldrahusum/

**Health history of Icelanders** ("Heilsusaga Íslendinga"). A large Cohort study is taking place on the health of Icelanders, age 20 – 69 (ongoing), part of the Global Cohort Initiative. Further information (Icelandic): http://heilsusaga.hi.is/

**The NordChild Study**. This is a cross-sectional time series postal study among children aged 2-17 years from the five Nordic countries; Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, organised by the Nordic School of Public Health in 1984, 1996 and 2011. The study included questions about the child and its family, the health of the child, health care utilization, the child's own activities and activities together with the parents. The questionnaire also included questions about socioeconomic factors and the parents' health and wellbeing. Further information (English): https://nhprn.wordpress.com/research/

Studies conducted at the University of Iceland in recent years, on health, physical activity and physical condition of children and adolescents in connection with lifestyle diseases:

- **Health behavior of young Icelanders** ("Heilsuhegðun ungra Íslendinga"). Follow up study with students born 1999. Further information (Icelandic): http://heilsuhegdun.hi.is/
- **Physical condition of young Icelanders** ("Atgervi ungra Íslendinga"). Follow up study with students born 1988 and 1994. Further information (Icelandic): http://vefsetur.hi.is/atgervi/

**School pulse** ("Skólapúlsinn"). This simple self-assessment tool provides school administrators and teachers regular and reliable information about students compared to national average. The surveys provide information about the student's well-being and school atmosphere. Surveys are available for compulsory schools and upper secondary schools. Further information (Icelandic): http://skolapulsinn.is/um/

## Main concepts

It is right to mention two things that could add to the picture of the health and welfare stated for youth in Iceland, in Chapter 7:

- Iceland Country Review; Joint Action on Chronic Diseases and Promoting Healthy Ageing Across the Life Cycle - Good Practice in the Field of Health Promotion and Primary Prevention. Further information (English): http://www.chrodis.eu/wp-

content/uploads/2014/10/JA-CHRODIS_Iceland-country-review-in-the-field-of-health-promtion-and-primary-prevention.pdf

- The Nordic Welfare Watch. The Nordic Welfare Watch is a part of the Icelandic Presidency Programme 2014. It is a three-year project, which aims at promoting and strengthening the sustainability of Nordic welfare systems through cooperation, research and mutual exchange of the experience and knowledge acquired. The objective is also to develop solutions and coordinate actions to meet future challenges and to develop welfare indicators, which can be useful for policymaking. Further information (English): https://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/nordicwelfarewatch/

# 7.2 Administration and governance

## Governance

**The platform of the current coalition government states, for example:**

- A health policy will be formulated that coordinates and strengthens health-care services, improves public health and promotes overall health.
- Policy-making and planning by the authorities will take into account the impacts on the health and well-being of the public. Direct and indirect future costs for society as a whole will be reduced by putting greater effort into preventive measures and public health.
- Access to mental health services will be increased, including the provision of psychological services at primary health-care clinics and in upper secondary schools.

The platform (English): http://www.government.is/government/coalition-platform/

**The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture**

- Directorate of Education Act 2015 No 91 10 July. Further information (English): https://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/frettatengt2016/Thyding-log-um-Menntamalastofnun-juli-2016.pdf
- The Directorate of Education has responsibility for certain administrative tasks from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The main tasks are e.g. to conduct administrative tasks related to the implementation of the national curriculum and monitor and evaluate school progress. Further information (English): https://mms.is/directorate-education
- Upper Secondary Education Act No 92 (12 June 2008). Further information (English): https://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/frettatengt2016/Thyding-log-um-framhaldsskola-juli-2016.pdf
- The National Curriculum Guide (2012) is a policy framework for Icelandic schools across educational levels and Health and Well-being is one of six fundamental pillars that has been developed within this framework that forms the essence of the educational policy in Iceland. More than 90% of the youth 16-18 years old attend upper secondary schools. Icelandic children and youth are mostly in schools from the age of two years till the age of 18. Further information (English): https://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/publications/curriculum/
- Sports Act No 64 (12 June 1998). Further information (English): https://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/frettir2014/Thyding-ithrottalog-mars-2015.pdf
- Policy in sports affair ("Stefna í íþróttamálum") (2011). Further information (English): https://www.stjornarradid.is/media/menntamalaraduneyti-media/media/mrn-pdf/stefnumotun_mrn_ithrottir_low.pdf

- Youth act No 70/2007. Further information (English): http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/2007_Iceland_Youth_Act.pdf

**Ministry of Welfare –** responsible for Health, Social Affairs and Equality

- Medical Director of Health and Public Health Act No. 41/2007. Further information (English): https://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/acrobat-enskar_sidur/Act_on_the_Medical_Director_of_Health_and_Public_Health_as_amended.pdf
- Action Plan for the Directorate of Health 2016-2017. Further information (English): https://www.landlaeknir.is/servlet/file/store93/item29903/EN-Action-plan_2016-2017_August-2016_final.pdf
- Health Service Act No. 40/2007. Further information (English): http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/acts-ofParliament/nr/20098
- Regulation on primary health care No. 787/2007 ("Reglugerð um heilsugæslustöðvar"). Further information (Icelandic): http://stjornartidindi.is/Advert.aspx?ID=2aa87f27-5da4-4494-95ca-fbed296b443e
- Public Health policy and action plan ("Lýðheilsustefna") (2016). Further information (Icelandic): https://www.stjornarradid.is/media/velferdarraduneyti-media/media/skyrslur2016/Lydheilsustefna_og_adgerdaaaetlun_30102016.pdf
- Mental Health policy and action plan ("Geðheilbrigðisstefna"). Further information (Icelandic): https://www.althingi.is/altext/145/s/1217.html
- Alcohol Act No. 75/1998 ("Áfengislög"). Further information (Icelandic): http://www.althingi.is/lagas/nuna/1998075.html
- Narcotic Act No. 65/1974. Further information (English): http://eng.innanrikisraduneyti.is/media/Log_og_reglugerdir/65_1974.pdf
- Tobacco Control Act, No. 6/2002. Further information (English): http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/acts-of-Parliament/nr/19484
- Action plan to reduce obesity – working group on behalf of the Ministry of Health (2013) ("Aðgerðaáætlun til að draga úr tíðni offitu"). Further information (Icelandic). https://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/Rit_2013/Adgerdaraaetlun-til-ad-draga-ur-tidni-offitu.pdf

## Cross-sectorial cooperation

The government established the ministerial committee on public health in March 2014. The Prime Minister (chair), Minister of Health, Minister of Education and Culture, and Minister of Social Affairs and Housing form the core members of the committee. Other ministers participate as needed. The main goal of the committee is to create a comprehensive public health policy and action plan. Public Health policy and action plan that will promote health-promoting community – with a particular focus for children and youth till the age of 18 ("Lýðheilsustefna") (2016). Further information (Icelandic): https://www.stjornarradid.is/media/velferdarraduneyti-media/media/skyrslur2016/Lydheilsustefna_og_adgerdaaaetlun_30102016.pdf

ICSRA works closely in collaboration with the Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, municipalities throughout Iceland and NGO´s to follow up and produce actions according the results of the studies.

The Sport affair policy is a cooperation work of the parties responsible for the field; the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, municipalities and sports organizations.

# 7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity

## National strategy(ies)

**Sports Act 1998 No 64 12 June.** The Sports Act provides a framework how organized sport work shall be manage in Iceland. The Ministry of Education, science and Culture shall assume overall responsibility for the field of sports to the extent to which it intervenes in that area. For this purpose, the Ministry shall gather information about the practice of sports and sports facilities throughout the country, and promote research in the field of sports. The act applies to physical training intended to improve physical and mental prowess, health and fitness but does not apply to sports activities carried out as part of the regular operations of health institutions or fitness centers. The principal objective of action by central or local authorities in the field of sports should promote opportunities for every one of the public to practice sports under favorable conditions. In cooperation of central and local authorities and independent sports movement, shall take into account the importance of sports activities for purposes of pedagogy and prevention. Physical education shall be part of the curriculum of every compulsory and upper secondary school in Iceland as further set out in Acts for each school level. Also in regulations and curriculum guides applicable to these school levels. Further information are available in English: https://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/frettir2014/Thyding-ithrottalog-mars-2015.pdf

**Policy in Sport, of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 2010-2015.** The Sport policy is a cooperation work of the parties responsible for the field; state, municipalities and sports organizations. State policy in sport is based on the fundamental view that general sports work in Iceland should be organized by NGOs. It refers to the Organization of the National Olympic and Sports Association, the Icelandic Youth Association, the special federations, sports areas, sports clubs and departments around the country. The State strategy in sports appears in the State Sports Act and the state financial contributions with the Minister of Education, Science and Culture emphasis, among other things.

The policy of the Ministry in sports issues takes into account the legal obligations of the state under the Sports Act and international act and agreements relating to issues of organizations and NGO´s involved in sports in Iceland. The following objectives shall be pursued:

- The environment and organization of sports work in Iceland will be improved and appointed a special place in Icelandic society.
- Public sports will be strengthened and citizens will be more involved in sports and general mobility.
- The sports activities for children and young people in schools and the activities of the sporting movement (e.g. spot clubs) will be strengthened.
- Competition and achievement sports will be strengthened.
- Most people will have the opportunity to pursue sports in the field of their interest, whether for pleasure, health or in terms of achievement.
- Education and research in the field of sports education will be strengthened.
- Icelandic sports life will always be free from drug abuse.
- The structure of sports work takes into account that everyone has the same opportunity to participate, whether it is training or competition.

To follow this policy, targets, sub-goals, leads and guarantors are set for each case. It is proposed to monitor the progress of sport policy with audits, studies and statistical measurements as appropriate. According to the policy, a special focus is on children, youth, and their opportunities to participate in physical activity in schools, in work, in the environment or in their leisure time. Further information (Icelandic):

https://www.stjornarradid.is/media/menntamalaraduneyti-media/media/mrn-pdf/stefnumotun_mrn_ithrottir_low.pdf

Policy in Sports is currently under review and development according to the timeframe 2010-2015 for the current policy. Expectations are that evaluation on the current policy will be made, concurrently. Those who are involved are the Ministry of Education, science and Culture, The Organization of the National Olympic and Sports Association, the Icelandic Youth Association and municipalities among others.

**Policy in sport affairs in Reykjavík 2012-2020** ("Stefna í íþróttamálum í Reykjavík"). According to the role of responsibility that municipalities have in spots in Iceland, Reykjavík the capital city has their own policy. The main features of the policy reflected in following five categories:

- General sports and participation of the families in sports
- Availability for children and youth to participate in sports
- Communication of the city and sports clubs
- Focus on internal work and services of the sport clubs with the inhabitants of the city
- Operation, structure and maintenance sport constructions in Reykjavik

Further information (Icelandic): http://reykjavik.is/sites/default/files/skrifstofur_radhuss/skrifstofaborgarstjora/Stefnur/stefnumotun_fyrir_ithrottir_lokaskjal.pdf

## Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

**The Organization of the National Olympic and Sports Association of Iceland (ÍSÍ),** is the highest authority for voluntary sports activities in Iceland, cf. the provisions of the Icelandic Sports Act. ÍSÍ is a national association of regional districts/sport unions and national federations. Members of regional districts/sport unions are clubs having the practice of sports in their program. Members of national federations are the regional districts/sport unions. Only one federation may be recognized for each sport. The purposes of the National Olympic and Sports Association of Iceland (ÍSÍ) are to promote, coordinate and organize sports activities, promote the development of high-performance sports as well as public sports and form, and organize and lead Iceland´s delegations at the Olympic Games.

ÍSÍ is the main organization for 30 National Sports Federations, 25 Regional Sports Districts, about 430 Clubs and over 800 Divisions. ÍSÍ´s members are over 160.000 and sport members are over 90.000 (2014). ÍSÍ operates three divisions; the Sport-for-All Division is the highest authority on public sports, the Development and Education Division and the Elite- and Olympic Division. The most popular sports in Iceland are football, golf, equestrian, handball, basketball, badminton, athletics, gymnastics, swimming and Sport-for-All. The greatest growth has been in golf and equestrian sports. The sport environment has been enriched in recent years with the addition of several new sports. Further information ( English): http://isi.is/english/

**The Icelandic Youth Association (UMFÍ),** is the national association of local youth associations in Iceland. Its objective is to "Cultivate the people and the country", and its slogan "Everything for Iceland". Its associated partners are 19 district societies and 10 directly linked organizations. UMFÍ covers 263 associations with 90,000 members and emphasizes that everybody can take part and that membership is a lifestyle. UMFÍ role is to co-ordinate the activities of the Icelandic youth associations and offer services to our associate associations and our members. Furthermore, UMFÍ represents the youth associations in external relations, for example when dealing with the authorities and foreign bodies.

UMFÍ was founded in 1907 and the main objectives whore; members started to cultivate forests, build swimming pools and meeting halls, construct facilities for sports activities, promote general meetings and promote debating societies where people could learn to speak in public. UMFÍ took part in the struggle for the construction of upper secondary schools, which then became the foundation of education in the rural areas. UMFÍ national meetings started in 1909 and have been held 27 times. These meetings have been called the Icelandic Olympics, being the largest and most impressive sports tournament held in Iceland. In 1992 UMFÍ initiated National Youth Sports Meetings (age 11-18), such meetings are held every year during the bank holiday first week in August with great participation in different sports. Participants are usually in company of their parents and family and they do not need to be a part of a team, everyone can participate. UMFÍ activities are very diversified all-round the country, supporting widely diverse cultural programs, while sports play a major part. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.umfi.is/

Although there is a great involvement of children and young people in organized sporting activities, a considerable dropout starts from the age of 13, according to results of researches (ICSRA). Iceland has numbers of fitness centers, swimming pools, mountains and green areas that are in use for public sports; not organized or organized by grassroots sport activities. Fitness centers become popular amongst young people during their upper secondary school participation and is sometimes kind of an extension for the one that does not anymore qualify for achievement/ competing sport activity teams like for football, handball, basketball etc. Grassroots clubs also offer periphery sports that do not belong under the ÍSÍ umbrella.

ÍSÍ and UMFÍ operate several of activities for public, with involvement of municipalities, work places, schools and so on. Examples of these activities are:

- **Life run** ("Lífhlaupið") ÍSÍ – The objective is to encourage the public to make physical activity a part of their daily routine. Work places and schools participate in a two or three week's competition in February every year. The competition is divided into three different groups; between schools (students) at the same level (compulsory and upper secondary) and work places. The competition goes for a number of days being active and number of minutes doing physical activity. This competition is known nationwide and thousands of people participate. Individuals can also use the platform or website to compete with themselves all year around. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.lifshlaupid.is/
- **Cycle to school** ("Hjólum í skólann") ÍSÍ – The objective is to encourage upper secondary schools students to make an active travel and the benefit is increasing physical activity as a part of their daily routine. Upper secondary schools participate for four weeks in September. Further information (Icelandic): http://hjolumiskolann.is/
- **Walk to school** ("Göngum í skólann") ÍSÍ – The objective is to encourage students in compulsorily schools (age 6 – 16) to make an active travel and the benefit is increasing physical activity as a part of their daily routine. Compulsorily schools participate for four weeks in September. Further information (Icelandic): http://www.gongumiskolann.is/
- **Cycle to work** ("Hjólum í vinnuna") ÍSÍ – The objective is to encourage public to make an active travel and the benefit is increasing physical activity as a part of their daily routine. Workplaces participate for three weeks in May. The competition goes for a number of days traveling by bicycle or foot to and from work and number of kilometers traveled. This competition is known nationwide and thousands of people participate. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.hjoladivinnuna.is/
- **European Week of Sport** ÍSÍ – #BEACTIVE – The main object is to introduce sports and public physical activities throw-out Europe to decrease sedentary behavior. One-week project in September funded by Erasmus+. Further information (English): https://ec.europa.eu/sport/week_en

- **Now We Move** UMFÍ – A European project were the main object is to get one hundred million European citizens to be physically active before the year 2020. The focus is on the municipalities to point out what is available in their surroundings and activate different clubs and grassroots to plan activities were people find something of their interest. Further information are available in Icelandic: https://www.umfi.is/verkefni/hreyfivika/ and in English: http://www.nowwemove.com/
- **Women run ÍSÍ** ("Kvennahlaup ÍSÍ") – This project started in 1993 and occurs every year one Saturday in June. The main object is to make it possible for all women to run along, they can choose from different distances (1-10 km). The run takes place in serval of different municipalities around Iceland and in other countries. There is no time tracking, just enjoying being together and physical active. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.sjova.is/um-okkur/markadsmal/sjova-kvennahlaup-isi/

Programmes or project aimed at specific targets groups addressed within the youth population, are targets like children (age 6-16), youth (age 16 to 20) and women according to the projects listed above. One target group has been addressed recently with focus on physical activity; people who seek medical advice at all age. Physical activity by prescription (FaR) was introduced in 2011 as a pilot project. The project has been implemented in all primary care service centers in Iceland. The objective is that general practitioners and other physicians can prescribe exercise to selected patients as part of their treatment programme. The exercise is specified and followed up, and is both an alternative and a supplement to traditional medical treatment. Further information (Icelandic): https://hreyfisedill.is/about/

Other activities available for young people including physical activity worth mentioning is the youth sector of **Icelandic Association for Search and Rescue** (ICE-SAR). Young people (age 16-25) have found their longing for action channeled into healthy, interesting and uplifting work. Further information (English): http://www.icesar.com/youth-groups

## Physical education in schools

**Upper Secondary Education Act No 92** (12 June 2008). The National Curriculum Guide for upper secondary schools, issued by the Minister, lays down the objectives and the organization of schooling at the upper secondary level. The act also applies to upper secondary schools to encourage students to participate in physical exercise. Further information (English): https://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/frettatengt2016/Thyding-log-um-framhaldsskola-juli-2016.pdf

**The National Curriculum Guide for upper secondary school: general section (2012).** Last couple of years the National Curriculum Guide has gone through changes because education in matriculation study programmes has been abridgement from four years to three years. This has influenced the scope and organization of the subject Sports and physical education to an enormous degree. The scope of the subject was uniform between upper secondary schools before the change, 8 (old) credits, 80 min per week every term, but now it ranges from 4 to 12 standardized upper secondary school credits (S-credits). Upper secondary schools have to plan study programmes for students to have an opportunity to take a course unit in sports every term. Upper secondary schools offer students variation of study programmes and they can offer a sport or physical education study programme. Quite a few schools do that in Iceland. Students, who parallel to their studies in an upper secondary school and are engaged in extensive physical training under the auspices of a special sports association and/or athletics association with a trained coach, can apply to the principal to be exempt from specific courses or parts of courses in sports or physical education. Further information (English): https://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/publications/curriculum/

**The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture conducted a survey in 2011**, to get an inside about different issues connected to Sports and physical education in upper

secondary schools. According to that survey, most schools offered one old credit in academic instruction in Sports and physical education and seven old credits in physical activity training. All upper secondary schools had teachers that had physical education as a major in their academic study. Most teachers use the same book and workbook; Training, health and well-being ("Þjálfun, heilsa, vellíðan") for the academic instruction in physical education class. Most teachers plan their physical activity lessons according to their knowledge and material published by the sports unions of ÍSÍ e.g. football, volleyball, basketball, handball, swimming, badminton, gymnastic, athletics and tennis. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.stjornarradid.is/media/menntamalaraduneyti-media/media/forsidumyndir/4020967_framhaldsskoli200112.pdf

According to the Compulsory schools **National Curriculum Guide** three lessons per week (120 min) in physical education is required. Two physical activity lessons and one swimming lesson per week. Compulsory schools can also offer students age 13-16 extra lessons/ programmes in physical education as an elective subject every term. Schools are encourage to make outdoor lessons a part of the students timetable and outdoor recess 2-3 times a day (10-20 min each time) is required for age 6-12, but choice for age 13-16. Further information (English): https://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/publications/curriculum/

### Collaboration and partnerships

Show character ("Sýnum karakter") is a collaboration work of ÍSÍ and UMFÍ. It is an initiative for training the psychological and social skills of children and young people in sports. The ideology for the project based on the knowledge that it is possible to train and strengthen the psychological social skills of practitioners just as physical skills. Last decades the focus has mainly been on physical and technical skills. The main objective of the project is to encourage coaches and sports organizations to put even more and extra focused emphasis on building a good character among practitioners, with the training of psychological and social characteristics of children and young people. The training of children and young people in sports allows sports clubs to take care of both the upbringing and the elite part of the sporting work, because good characters are well prepared to cope with life and also to succeed in sports. Further information (Icelandic): http://synumkarakter.is/#

## 7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition

### National strategy(ies)

**Public Health policy and action plan** that will promote the health-promoting community – with a special concern for children and youth until the age of 18 (September 2016).

The vision is; Icelanders are aware of the responsibility for their own health and the school system, workplaces and institutions are promoting health.

The main objective: In 2030, Iceland will be one of the healthiest nations in the world.

Specific objectives are:

a) All municipalities will be health-promoting communities, including pre-schools, compulsory schools, upper secondary schools, and workplaces.

b) Strategically preventions take place in education and training, nutrition, physical activity, mental health, oral health, violence and injury prevention and tobacco, alcohol, and substance abuse prevention.

c) Reduce the frequency of chronic diseases.

d) Develop social and health indicators, statistics that illustrate the social and health status of the population under different circumstances of various social groups.

e) Government policies and strategic plans will consider the health and well-being of community residents. Health in all policies requires evidence-based information on the impact of factors on health.

Further information (Icelandic): https://www.stjornarradid.is/media/velferdarraduneyti-media/media/skyrslur2016/Lydheilsustefna_og_adgerdaaaetlun_30102016.pdf

**Medical Director of Health and Public Health Act No. 41/2007**. The objective is to promote the health of the people of Iceland, including through more active public health activities, ensuring the quality of health services, and grounding public health work and health services in the best knowledge and experience at all times. In addition to domestic research and experiences, health promotion and primary prevention practice initiated by the health sector is usually based on guidance and recommendations published by e.g. WHO, EU and the Nordic council of ministers. The Directorate of Health has the role to undertake preventive and health-promoting tasks and to promote public health work in collaboration with other parties involved in the field. Further information (English).

**The Directorate of Health**, action plan 2016-2017 is based on the stated role of the Directorate and relevant, national policies. The policy and action plan includes the main policies, goals, and actions for each of the Directorate's five divisions. Every year a more detailed work plan is published. One of the long-term strategies is "Encouragement and support for health promotion - Support local authorities, schools and primary health care in their health promotion initiatives". Further information (English): https://www.landlaeknir.is/english/publications-and-videos/file/item29903/

- **Health-promoting community**, run by The Directorate of Health. 75% of inhabitants live in municipalities working on Public Health promotion. Website, action plan and supporting material. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.landlaeknir.is/samfelag
- **Public Health indicators,** published by The Directorate of Health. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.landlaeknir.is/tolfraedi-og-rannsoknir/tolfraedi/lydheilsuvisar/

**Action plan to reduce obesity** – working group on behalf of the Ministry of Health (2013) ("Aðgerðaáætlun til að draga úr tíðni offitu"). It is recommended that government actions consist of the promotion of healthy lifestyles on a broad social basis without a special focus on obesity or weight.

Proposals for priority actions; the top priority of the government is calling for the cooperation of all the ministries to coordinate actions to reduce unhealthy lifestyles and the increasing weight of the population.

- Tax on unhealthy food - e.g. sugar tax
- Regular monitoring on lifestyle (risk factors of chronic diseases) - evaluate activities
- Improve health services
- Prescription for physical activity – work systematically towards being a permanent option
- Nutrition counseling within the primary health care
- Implementation of the joint Nordic nutrition label – green keyhole
- Clinical guidelines on obesity for children (revised) and for adults
- Health impact assessment
- Mapping weight prejudice and prevent them

Further information (Icelandic): https://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/Rit_2013/Adgerdaraaetlun-til-ad-draga-ur-tidni-offitu.pdf

**Regulation on the use of the Keyhole food label in the marketing of foodstuffs**. Further information (Icelandic): http://www.stjornartidindi.is/Advert.aspx?ID=7b194b44-9e13-40f7-9e05-186a2ec428cf

**Regulation on the Maximum Levels for Trans-Fatty Acids in Foods**. Further information (Icelandic): http://www.reglugerd.is/interpro/dkm/WebGuard.nsf/key2/1045-2010

**Alcohol Act No. 75/1998.** Further information (Icelandic): http://www.althingi.is/lagas/nuna/1998075.html

**Narcotic Act No. 65/1974.** Further information (English)

**Policy on alcohol and drug prevention 2020**. The policy focuses on young people and vulnerable groups. It states that an action-plan shall be written in 2014 and measures to be taken will address prevention, treatment, post-treatment, monitoring and rehabilitation, it is still in process. The action plan is to be evaluated every second year. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.stjornarradid.is/media/velferdarraduneyti-media/media/rit-og-skyrslur-2014/Stefna-i-afengis--og-vimuvornum-desember-2013.pdf

- **Ministry of Welfare**, News on Policy on alcohol and drug prevention (2014). Further information (English): http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/newsinenglish/nr/34482

**Tobacco Control Act, No. 6/2002.** Further information (English): http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/acts-of-Parliament/nr/19484

**Official public policy on tobacco control**. The Ministry of Welfare and Directorate of Health, along with other stakeholders on ministerial and municipal levels, are currently preparing the policy on tobacco control. It is estimated that the policy will be followed by work on an action plan in tobacco control and tobacco prevention.

## Encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition for young people

**Health-promoting upper secondary school program**, part of the Directorate of Health strategy. All upper secondary schools are Health promoting schools in Iceland. Effective prevention strategies in the educational system that cover nutrition, physical activity, mental health promotion, violence and sexual health prevention and alcohol, drug and tobacco prevention. Schools are offered website, guidelines, and checklists criteria: bronze, silver, and gold, followed by an action plan and support. The program is long-term in action and succeeds to be sustainable. Research evidence from ICSRA. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.landlaeknir.is/hef

**Regulation on primary health care No. 787/2007**. Primary health care is managed by the state and should conduct health protection/prevention: sexually transmitted diseases, mental health, alcohol, substance and tobacco use, communicable disease, accident and health prevention for youth. Further information (Icelandic): http://stjornartidindi.is/Advert.aspx?ID=2aa87f27-5da4-4494-95ca-fbed296b443e

- **Primary health care, guidelines made for professionals** e.g. sex health education for schools, accident prevention and violence in close relationships. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.heilsugaeslan.is/kennsla-verklag-visindi/leidbeiningar/kynfraedsla/
- **Health behavior website**, the Directorate of Health and Primary health care are currently in the working process, developing a website with material intended for people who want to change their health behavior. Guidelines etc. for children, youth and adults. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.heilsuvera.is/

**Association for education prevention and health promotion** ("Fræ")**.** NGO organization, run by people interested in alcohol and drug prevention. They provide upper secondary school counseling, publish a newsletter and provide a website with information. Further information (Icelandic): http://forvarnir.is/

**Compass&Total conseling, website** ("Áttavitinn&Tótalráðgjöf"). Online information for young people, can ask questions about health, sexual health, mental health, physical health, etc. and professionals answer the questions. Information and articles about these issues are on the website. Further information (Icelandic): http://www.attavitinn.is/total-radgjof

## Health education and healthy lifestyles education in schools

**Upper Secondary Education Act 2008 No 92 12 June**. Addresses healthy lifestyle. Further information (English): https://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/frettatengt2016/Thyding-log-um-framhaldsskola-juli-2016.pdf

**The Icelandic national curriculum guide for upper secondary school** (2012). Health and well-being is now stated as one of the six fundamental pillars of education in upper secondary schools. The main health factors that are to be encouraged are: positive self-image, exercise, nutrition, rest, mental wellbeing, positive communication, security, hygiene, sexual health and understanding of one's own feelings and those of others. The main purpose of the health-promoting school work is to support schools to fulfill their role in incorporating health as a pillar of education. Further information (English): http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/publications/curriculum/

**Health and Well-being one of the six fundamental pillars** ("Heilbrigði og velferð – grunnþáttur menntunar") (2013). Explains the importance of implementing health promotion work into schools schedule and curriculum. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.mms.is/namsefni/heilbrigdi-og-velferd-rit-um-grunnthaetti-menntunar-rafbok

**Health-promoting upper secondary school toolbox**. Manuals, checklists, guidelines, videos, brochures, posters etc. on nutrition, physical activity, mental health promotion, alcohol-, drug and tobacco prevention. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.landlaeknir.is/hef

Recommendations published by the Directorate of Health:

- **Food-based dietary guidelines for adults and children from two years of age**. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.landlaeknir.is/servlet/file/store93/item25796/radleggingar-um-mataraedi-2015.pdf

**Physical activity recommendations**. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.landlaeknir.is/servlet/file/store93/item11179/NM30399_hreyfiradleggingar_baeklingur_lores_net.pdf

## Peer-to-peer education approaches

**Peer to peer counsel.** Located in Hitt húsið youth center own by the city of Reykjavík. The group consists of very diverse young people age 17-21. All peer consultants undergo preparation course that consists of presentations and lectures from professionals in the field of youth culture and the group gets through training in public speaking and facilitation. The topics of the preparation course include public health, self-image, alcohol, tobacco and drug use, sex, body image and respect, porn, rights of young people, addiction, mental health and bullying. The peer consultants visit youth clubs, schools and the summer work school with training programs. Special emphasis is on a strong self-image, healthy lifestyle, and the disadvantages of drug use and communication, both online and in person. No information are available about mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. Further information (Icelandic): http://hitthusid.is/en/counceling-and-empoyment/peer-to-peer-counsel/

**The Youth Council of the Icelandic Youth Association UMFÍ,** is available for young people age 16-25. The Youth Council is a forum for young people within UMFÍ who have an opinion on the association and want to help it grow. They work with the board of UMFÍ

in matters concerning young people. The biggest project of the Youth Council each year is a youth conference Young People and Democracy ("Ungt fólk og lýðræði"). The Youth Council has nine members from all over the country and works in accordance with best practices concerning gender distribution, age distribution and residence. The members of the youth council serve on the council for two years at a time and meetings are every month.

## Collaboration and partnerships

**Youth forum** ("Æskulýðsvettvangurinn"). Cooperation forum with The Icelandic Youth Association (UMFÍ), The Icelandic Boy and Girl Scout Association, YMCA Iceland, Icelandic Association for Search and Rescue (ICE-SAR). This cooperation focuses on projects working on prevention work e.g. bullying, sexual harassment and hatred discourse. Further information (Icelandic): http://www.aeskulydsvettvangurinn.is/

**The Youth Act**. The Minister of Education is the highest authority on youth affairs according to this act. The national authorities and municipalities will, in co-operation with youth clubs and youth organizations support young people in participating in diverse youth activities possible. This act is intended for youth activities for children and young people, especially aged 6 to 25. Youth activities are organized club or leisure activities intended for children and young people to use their spare time working in concert for ideals, goals and interests which they themselves value. Further information (English): https://www.stjornarradid.is/media/menntamalaraduneyti-media/media/MRN-pdf/youth_act70_2007.pdf

**Together group** ("Samanhópurinn")**,** group of professionals working in the field of prevention and promotion. Associated partners are 23 and represent municipalities, and serval of state institutions e.g. the police, the Directorate of Health, the Ombudsman for Children and serval of NGO´s. The main objective is to get a positive message to parents, about spending time together and knowing what your children are doing, the importance of knowing the friends of your children and friends' parents, etc. The goal is to prevent adolescent to start using alcohol too soon. Researches have shown a great decrease since 2000. The collaboration is funded; The Public Health Fund, the City of Reykjavik Prevention Fund and donations by the municipalities. Further information (Icelandic): http://samanhopurinn.is/

**Getting in the right direction** ("Náum áttum"), group of professionals working in the field of prevention and promotion. Associated partners are 12 and represent serval of state institutions e.g. the police, the Directorate of Health, the Government Agency for Child Protection and serval of NGO´s. The main object is to hold seminars about issues that concern children and youth prevention and promotion and well-being. The target groups are professionals working in this field and parents. Seminars are every month during the wintertime, to raise issues that require special attention. Further information (Icelandic): http://naumattum.is/

## Raising awareness on healthy lifestyles and on factors affecting the health and well-being of young people

**Week 43 – Prevention week** ("Forvarnarvika"). A collaboration of an Association of prevention NGO´s ("SAFF"). The group makes awareness of one prevention issue in week 43 every year. Awareness made for e-cigarettes in 2016 and the same will be in 2017. Further information (Icelandic): http://www.vika43.is/

**Medical Students prevention work** ("Ástráður"). Medical Students visit upper secondary schools and educate, inform and talk to students about sexual health. Website is available with information. This is collaboration work; the University of Iceland, medical student senate, upper secondary school authorities and counselors and student senate in upper secondary schools. The Ministries of Health and Education fund the project, among others. Further information (Icelandic): http://www.astradur.is/

# 7.5 Mental health

## National strategy(ies)

**A mental health policy and action plan for four years (2016)** ("Stefna og aðgerðaráætlun í geðheilbrigðismálum til fjögurra ára"). Written by, The Ministry of Welfare and the Directorate of Health, along with other stakeholders on ministerial and municipal levels. The policy focuses on integrated and continuous service to people with mental disorders and their families, young people–mental health and prevention and prejudice and discrimination. The policy states an action-plan with timeframe and measures. The Ministry of Welfare, the Directorate of Health and municipalities are responsible for the action-plan. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.althingi.is/altext/145/s/1217.html

## Improving the mental health of young people

**Health promoting upper secondary school programme,** administrated by the Directorate of Health. One of the main objects are mental health promotion. Checklists, guidelines etc. is available for participating schools. The programme is part of the Directorate of Health strategy and is included in the action plan and measures of the strategy for the Directorate. Research evidence from ICSRA. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.landlaeknir.is/hef

**Get it out – project on suicide prevention** ("Útmeð´a"). NGO´s, the Icelandic Mental Health Alliance and the Red Cross help line are responsible for the programme and focuses on young people. Main objects are to make it easier for young people to look for professional assistance when needed. Further information (Icelandic): http://utmeda.is/almennar-upplysingar/

**Compass&Total conseling, website** ("Áttavitinn&Tótalráðgjöf"). Online information for young people, they can ask questions about health, sexual health, mental health, physical health etc. and professionals answer the questions. Information and articles about these issues are on the website. Further information (Icelandic): http://www.attavitinn.is/total-radgjof

**PIETA House** ("PIETA hús") NGO. The house is in preparation process and will be opened in December 2017. They offer, free consulting from professionals and a support website for people contemplate suicide, relatives and survivors of suicides. The Ministry of welfare and other sponsors funds the project. Further information (Icelandic): http://pieta.is/

**Power minds** ("Hugarafl"). NGO project in close cooperation with state run resource for people with mental disorder getting follow up help after treatment. The Power minds programme is built on Judi Chamberlin ideas of how to work with people living with mental problems. Groups attend meetings and project work based on ways to recover with empowerment and recovery as a guiding light. One of the groups Young minds ("Unghugar") is for the age 18-30. Further information (Icelandic): http://www.hugarafl.is/

# 7.6 Mechanisms of early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks

## Policy framework

Current situation in mechanisms of early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks as mental health issues would depend on the schools, teachers, school psychologists, primary health care centers (school health care) parents and family. Few upper secondary schools have school psychologists among their staff, but that is not common. The main treatment for mental illnesses in Iceland is medicine. According to the new mental health policy and action plan (2016) will be changes.

**A mental health policy and action plan for four years (2016)** ("Stefna og aðgerðaráætlun í geðheilbrigðismálum til fjögurra ára"). Funding is secured. The main object is; increased well-being and better mental health of the population and a more active social participation of people who suffer from short or long term mental disorders. The policy has three other goals or tasks:

a. integrated and continuous service to people with mental disorders and their families, with nine actions tasks

b. mental health promotion and prevention, with four action tasks

c. prejudice and discrimination, with five action tasks

Two action tasks will be pointed out in part b) mental health promotion and prevention, according youth:

- Screening for anxiety, depression and the effects childhood shocks among youth in compulsory schools and appropriate support or treatment provided if they are at risk.
- To intervene early and to provide children who suffer, from anxiety or the consequences of shocking, support to reduce the risk of a situation developing in a worse way.
- Appropriate methods of screening for anxiety, depression and the effects of shocking among adolescents in compulsory schools. Children in need must be adequately supported or treated.
- Municipalities.

Examples of partners: Health institutions, The Directorate of Education and Local governments in Iceland.

- 2016–2019.
- Increased number of children treated for anxiety or depression after implementation is complete and for the next five years after that.
- A plan for the introduction of data-based methods to reduce suicide youth
- Finding the best strategies for reducing suicide youths
- A workgroup will be established, they will provide evidence-based methods that reduce suicide and suicide attempts by young people. The group chooses methods to implement in Iceland for this purpose. At the same time, cost will be cost estimated and implementation plan made.
- The Directorate of Health

Examples of partners: The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Local governments in Iceland and specialists.

- 2016–2017.
- Proposals for prevention of suicide youth together with the implementation plan will be available by the end of 2017.

One other thing worth mentioning from the action plan, psychiatric services will be available at 90% of primary health care centers in 2019. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.althingi.is/altext/145/s/1217.html

**Mental health among youth in Iceland**, report; Nordic Center for Welfare and Social Issues (Norden). Growing mental illness amongst young people is one of the most serious public health challenges facing our Nordic society. The project Youth in the Nordic Region focuses on young persons who suffer from or are at risk of suffering from mental illness, as well as their situation at school and their later transition to work and providing for themselves. A further important topic of the project is early retirement and retirement on mental health grounds amongst young adults. The report gives a quick, clear overview of who does what in Iceland in matters concerning young persons who suffer from or risk

suffering from mental illness. Further information (English): https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1071169/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Current situation in mechanisms of early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks according to alcohol, tobacco and substance use, Iceland is on the right track. Results from Icelandic national surveys (ICSRA) have been used to develop an effective prevention approach with a broad-scale and systematic assessment of the risk and the protective factors that predicted adolescent substance use in Iceland. The key components of this prevention approach included:

- Educating parents about the importance of emotional support, reasonable monitoring, and increasing the time they spend with their adolescent children.
- Encouraging youth to participate in organized recreational and extracurricular activities and sports.
- Working with local schools in order to strengthen the supportive network between relevant agencies in the local community.

According to **The National Curriculum Guide for upper secondary school** smoking and other use of tobacco is forbidden on upper secondary school premises. The handling and use of alcohol and other intoxicants is strictly forbidden on school premises and at social activities under its auspices. If something happens in these matters, upper secondary schools are to contact the custodial parents/legal guardians if the student is younger than 18 years of age. Further information (English): http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/publications/curriculum/

- **Alcohol Act** No. 75/1998. Further information (Icelandic): http://www.althingi.is/lagas/nuna/1998075.html
- **Narcotic Act** No. 65/1974. Further information (English): http://eng.innanrikisraduneyti.is/media/Log_og_reglugerdir/65_1974.pdf

**Official public policy on tobacco control** and action plan is currently in process. Iceland has though a strong legislation on tobacco control.

- **Tobacco Control Act**, No. 6/2002 (English): http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/acts-of-Parliament/nr/19484

**Policy on alcohol and drug prevention 2020**. The object is to prevent young people from using alcohol or other substance abuse. Evidence-based actions including marketing of alcohol for young people, checking that age limits for buying alcoholic beverages are respected and further enhance the school system's role in the welfare of children, e.g. through participation in health promoting schools, increased involvement of parents and NGO´s in prevention. No action plan is avalble and that includes no timframe, measures or funding. According to the policy, action plan shall be written in 2014 and measures to be taken will address prevention, treatment, post-treatment, monitoring and rehabilitation. The action plan is to be evaluated every second year. This is currently still in process. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.stjornarradid.is/media/velferdarraduneyti-media/media/rit-og-skyrslur-2014/Stefna-i-afengis--og-vimuvornum-desember-2013.pdf

**Addiction report** (2015-2016) ("Fíkniskýrsla"). The Parliament intention was to review narcotic policies, based on humanity solution. This report is a result of work done by a group of specialists appointed by the Minister of Health in 2014. The group should consider policy formulation based on actions to reduce harmful effects and side effects of substance/drug abuse. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.stjornarradid.is/media/velferdarraduneyti-media/media/frettir2016/Fykniskyrsla_30082016.pdf

## Stakeholders

Young people at the age of 18 become legally indented or "adults" in the Icelandic legal and welfare system. Upper secondary schools have a role in signposting their students that are at risk, especially age 16-18. All schools have education or social counsellor and some of them have a part time psychologist. Further information is provided in the **Upper Secondary Education Act** 2008 No 92 12 June (English): https://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/frettatengt2016/Thyding-log-um-framhaldsskola-juli-2016.pdf

The general practitioner or other health specialists at the Primary Health Care should be responsible signposting young people at risk, according to the **Regulation on primary health care** No. 787/2007. Further information (Icelandic): http://stjornartidindi.is/Advert.aspx?ID=2aa87f27-5da4-4494-95ca-fbed296b443e

## Guidance to stakeholders

**Health behavior website**, the Directorate of Health and Primary health care are currently in working process, developing website with material intended for people who want to change their health behavior, according nutrition, physical activity, mental health and well-being, alcohol, tobacco and drug prevention. Guidelines etc. for children, youth and adults. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.heilsuvera.is/

**The Directorate of Health website**, determinants of health and well-being. Guidelines, videos, articles, brochures etc. on e.g. nutrition, physical activity, mental health and well-being, violent and injury prevention, alcohol, tobacco and drug prevention, dental prevention, sex health promotion, health promotion etc. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.landlaeknir.is/heilsa-og-lidan/

**Primary health care website**. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.heilsugaeslan.is/

**Doktor.is – website** with questions and answers from medical doctors. Further information (Icelandic): http://doktor.is/

**Red Cross – helpline**. Further information (Icelandic): https://www.raudikrossinn.is/hvad-gerum-vid/hjalparsiminn-1717/hvad-gerum-vid-3

## Target groups

Young people:

- with mental health problems
- without work
- living in poverty
- vulnerable groups

## Funding

A large part of the policy actions, which are mentioned in this chapter about Health and well-being, are funded by state budget. Some of the activities carried out by NGO´s, are funded by the state budget but also by public funding. Public funding available:

- **The Public Health Fund** ("Lýðheilsusjóður"). This fund is financed with 1% of the taxes on alcohol and 0,9% of the taxes on the wholesale of tobacco, which is "earmarked" for prevention and health promotion. According to The Medical Director of Health and Public Health Act, the role of the fund is to support public health work that is in accord with the objectives of the Act, whether within the Directorate of Health or outside it. Further information (Icelandic): http://www.landlaeknir.is/um-embaettid/lydheilsusjodur/
- **The Icelandic Sport Fund** (Íþróttasjóður). The objectives of the fund are to improve sport facilities all over Iceland, to support research and innovation in the field of sport

and to gather information for policymaking. Further information (English): http://en.rannis.is/funding/youth-sport/the-icelandic-sportfund/

- **The Icelandic Youth Fund** (Æskulýðssjóður). The main objective of the fund is to help youth clubs and organisations in Iceland improve and expand their activities. Further information (English): http://en.rannis.is/funding/youth-sport/youth-fund/
- **The Lottery** ("Íslensk getspá"), is owned by The Organization of the National Olympic and Sports Association of Iceland, The Icelandic Youth Association and The Organization of Disabled in Iceland. A part of all sales is allocated to the work of these NGO´s. Further information (Icelandic): https://games.lotto.is/
- **The Icelandic Centre for Research** (RANNIS). RANNIS administers the main public competitive funds in the fields of research, innovation, education and culture in Iceland. Further information is available English: http://en.rannis.is/funding/
- **The City of Reykjavik Prevention Fund** (Forvarnarsjóður Reykjavíkurborgar). The fund's aim is to strengthen preventive activities in line with the city's Prevention Policy, both within the neighborhoods and citywide.

## 7.7 Making health facilities more youth friendly

According to the **Policy in Sport** (mentioned in 7.3), schools should make their playgrounds or environment around the school buildings incentive for youth to be physical active. The availability of branch of sport for young people sould be as diverse as possible. Municipalities and local sport clubs should increase public access to sports facilities and increase the number of sports, exercise and outdoor activities available for public.

## 7.8 Current debates and reforms

**The National Health Policy** is currently under progress. It will be the fundamental policy concerning health promotion and prevention in Iceland, including prevention of cardiovascular disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes. The vision of the policy is to achieve well-being, health and equality for everyone, including all ages and both genders. It will contain a framework for monitoring and evaluation, a time frame for implementation and target indicators.

**Act for e-cigarettes control** is currently under progress. It will be comparable to the Tobacco Control Act and will provide youth workers, teachers, parents etc. support to keep e-cigarettes from youth under the age 18. In addition, smoking e-cigarettes will be forbidden e.g. in schools.

**Action plan according to the Alcohol policy** is under progress. A delay has been in this work but hopefully it will show some progress soon. In connection with this work, **a policy on tobacco control and action plan** will be made.

**National nutrition survey** is in preparations process and will hopefully be carried out within couple of years.

# 8. CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

## 8.1 General context

### Main trends in young people's creativity and cultural participation

Data from Statistics Iceland on various cultural activities provide some gesture on the development, availability and attendance of young people in arts and cultural activities. Theatre production for children, number of theatre groups performing and attending guests between the years 1985 – 2014 suggest a great increase in the number of productions as well as attendance. What's also interesting is that while the number of theatre groups have decreased (from a peak of 8 in 2001/02 to 2 in 2013/14), number of productions has decreased only slightly (from 19 in 2001/02 to 15 in 2013/14). Total number of venues, however, seems inconsistent between production years. Number of venues increased from 18 in 1985/86 to 263 in 1990/91. The number then steadily decreased, reaching a low point in 1994/95 with only 64 shows, but reached a high point in 1999/00 with 485 shows. Between 2001 and 2014 the number has fluctuated between ca. 230 – 460 shows.

Data on the number of public concerts for children and families with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra also show a great increase in both supply and attendance. In 1985, no such venues were offered. In 2007, 5 venues were offered with total attendance of 3.962. In 2016, 13 venues were offered with attendance of 13.221.

No regular surveys are made that can shed further light on the context of young people's participation in cultural activities.

### Main concepts

There are no specific concepts within the national policy which could impair understanding of the information provided here.

## 8.2 Administration and governance

### Governance

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is the main governmental authority responsible for shaping the public policy in culture. However, most of the work carried out within the sector of creativity and culture is done by individuals or organizations, without any involvement of the central government. Municipalities shape their own policy further in regard to youth affairs, including creativity and culture. Many municipalities offer summer jobs to young people which are based upon enriching culture. The municipality of Reykjavík offers creative summer jobs through Reykjavik Youth Centre. Many other municipalities have offered similar experiences to young people, for example, Akureyri.

### Cross-sectorial cooperation

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the Prime minister's office share responsibility of culture, arts, and youth affairs. When it comes to policymaking, top-level authorities might seek consultation with various public and non-public actors in the field of culture and creative arts.

# 8.3 National strategy on creativity and culture for young people

## Existence of a national strategy

In 2013 the Icelandic parliament passed a parliamentary resolution regarding national policy in cultural affairs. In succession, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture published a document in which this strategy was outlined further, with one of its main parts being the participation of children and young people in cultural activities. Furthermore, the ministry published a special report on that topic in 2014, where it outlined a strategy for 2014 – 2017 (report only available in Icelandic).

## Scope and contents

Among the projects included in the strategy is to implement a special culture fund, which would be responsible for cultural and art projects which schools across the country could purchase at a reasonable price. The overall aim is to ensure that all children and young people have access to cultural venues of the highest quality, regardless of where they reside or their economic background.

## Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is the authority responsible for the implementation of this strategy.

## Revisions/updates

This strategy is new, so no updates or revisions have taken place.

# 8.4 Promoting culture and cultural participation

## Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture

As discussed in chapter 8.3 one of the main aims of the strategy for the participation of children and young people in cultural activities is to ensure that all children and young people have access to cultural venues and activities of the highest standard regardless of residency or financial background. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture aims to attain that goal by funding a special cultural fund directly aimed at children and young people across the country. This would be a state-funded project and the ministry would be the responsible authority. This project would be in cooperation with artists, compulsory schools, cultural boards, and municipalities.

## Disseminating information on cultural opportunities

Currently, there are no programs or initiatives, directly organized nor directly funded by the top-level authorities which aim to inform young people about cultural activities they could participate in. All such initiatives are at the hands of local authorities, schools and youth organizations.

An example of such initiative is the annual Children's culture festival facilitated by the City of Reykjavík. The festival is directed towards children and young people up to the age of 16 and aims to introduce this group to a variety of different art disciplines.

By-annually there is an art festival for children and young people (link only available in Icelandic) hosted by the Municipality of Garðabær. The aim of this festival is to headline different artforms by young people of different ages.

## Knowledge of cultural heritage amongst young people

There are no programs or initiatives, directly organized nor directly funded by the top-level authorities which aim to support young people’s discovery and appreciation of the

cultural and artistic heritage of European countries. All such initiatives are at the hands of local authorities, schools and youth organizations.

# 8.5 Developing cultural and creative competences

## Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training

Creativity is one of the six fundamental pillars upon which the National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools is based. It is not taught as a separate subject but is to be interwoven with all subjects and fields of study.

A large part of work done in youth centres focuses on creativity and art, which falls under a non-formal education.

## Specialised training for professionals in the education, culture and youth fields

No documents suggest that a specialised training for these personnel is funded or organized by the top-level authorities.

## Providing quality access to creative environments

In some cases, municipalities provide access to creative environments through venues intended for young people, either in formal education on outside education. For example, the Municipality of Reykjavík hosts a talent competition for all students in grades 8, 9 and 10.

Músíktilraunir as a large, nation wide music competition where bands compete and has marked the first step of various successful bands, some of which have made names for themselves internationally.

# 8.6 Developing entrepreneurial skills through culture

## Developing entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities

No documents suggest that top-level authorities are involved in the development of entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities, neither in formal or non-formal education.

## Support young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors

The Icelandic Centre for Research offers a few options for funding innovative young people wishing to participate in culture. The Professional Theatre Group's Fund awards individual funding to professional theatre groups. Funding can be applied theatre in general, theatre production aimed at a specific age group, puppet theatres, operas, dance etc.

# 8.7 Fostering the creative use of new technologies

## New technologies in support of creativity and innovation

There is no special top-level policy on using new technologies to support creativity and innovation. However, the National Curriculum Guides for both compulsory and upper-secondary schools suggest that skills using new technologies should be addressed within schools. Top-level authorities, furthermore, shape the legal framework surrounding the role and responsibilities of Innovation Centre Iceland, who has full autonomy of how they proceed with fulfilling that role. The centre supports many innovation and creative undertaking, as well as offering advice on European support services. These projects may include the enhancement of new technologies, but are certainly not limited to that spectrum.

### Facilitating access to culture through new technologies

No document was found which suggests that there are policies or programs which promote access to culture through new technologies.

## 8.8 Synergies and partnerships

### Synergies between public policies and programmes

In the strategy report on the cultural participation from 2014 – 2017, cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, municipalities, artists and schools are discussed. This particular cooperation, however, is not outlined in further detail. It is also reported that the ministry should be leading in establishing an advisory board comprised of the main state funded cultural institutions. Among them should be representatives from the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, The Icelandic National Broadcasting Service, The National Theatre of Iceland, National Gallery of Iceland, Icelandic Film Centre, among others. The objective of the board is to be a significant platform for discussion about cultural material for children and young people; to offer counselling to cultural institutions on the subject matter; to increase the status of cultural work for youth with state funded cultural institutions; to increase professionalism of cultural projects which are produced for young people or in cooperation with them.

In a draft for a new policy on design from 2019-2027 it is suggested that the Icelandic Design Centre should provide consultation to the top-level authorities and be available to take on certain responsibilities when it comes to the role of design in various sectors. For example, the centre should cooperate with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and work with education professionals to advance the role of design in education.

### Partnerships between the culture and creative sectors, youth organisations and youth workers

No public documents were found which suggests that such a partnership is in place.

## 8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture

### Fostering equality and young people involvement through cultural activities

No such policy is in place in Iceland.

### Combating discrimination and poverty through cultural activities

No such policy or program is in place in Iceland.

## 8.10 Current debates and reforms

#### 2018/2019

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture has drafted a new bill which has yet to go before the Icelandic parliament on stage arts. The aim of this bill is to advance stage arts throughout the country and provide favourable conditions for them to thrive. Article 3 stipulates the responsibility of the National Theatre to keep in mind the interests of children and young people when selecting projects for stage renditions.

# 9. YOUTH AND THE WORLD

In this chapter, the main concern will be the position of young people in Iceland in a globalised world. In Iceland, young people get a chance to influence policy makers and have an exchange with them, most notably through the youth arm of the political parties, but also through work for various NGO's, student unions, and youth boards.

## 9.1 General context

### Main concepts

There are no specific concepts in the following text which require further clarification.

### Youth interest in global issues

Youth in Action is a non-governmental organization in Iceland which gives young people the opportunity to impact their environment both domestically and on the global scale. Among international projects they endorse are Young People's Initiative, which offers people aged 15 – 30 in two countries or more to take their idea further and put it into practice, and Innovation in Youth Work, which helps fund large-scale, international cooperative projects on innovation in the field of youth work. Furthermore, Youth in Action also gives young people the opportunity to have a dialogue with government officials. Such projects can be both on the national and international level.

No surveys or studies were found which can help shed further light on young people's participation in international cooperation.

## 9.2 Administration and governance

### Governance

The affairs of young people are a collective responsibility between many ministries. There is no clear distinction when it comes to young people affecting policymaking on a global scale. This means, furthermore, that policy-making in this field is a collective responsibility as well. However, according to the Youth Act No. 70/2007, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture is the main factor when it comes to policy-making in the youth field. Local authorities are free to establish their own youth council but are not obliged to do so. If such a council is established, the local authority in question is responsible for regulating it. Local authorities are not required by law to support youth councils on a national level.

### Cross-sectorial cooperation

No documents were found which describe cross-sectorial cooperation in the field of global impact among youth.

## 9.3 Exchanges between young people and policy-makers on global issues

### Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the domestic level

Many political parties in Iceland offer have special youth wings which offer great opportunities to young people to become politically active and have an impact on policy-makers. Among the parties who have youth organizations are the Independence Party (Young Independents), the Left Green Movement, the Icelandic Social Democratic Party, the Progressive Party and the Icelandic Pirate Party. All these political movements give young people an opportunity to offer their views on political affairs, both domestically and internationally, and have both formal and informal dialogue with policy-makers.

### Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the international level

See information under Global issues exchange with policy-makers at the domestic level.

## 9.4 Raising awareness about global issues

### Formal, non-formal and informal learning

Although it should be an integral part in all school work according to the National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools and Upper Secondary Schools, most of formal teaching on global issues takes place in social studies, which is an overarching concept of all subjects which "pertain to society and culture in an informative and critical manner" (National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools, 2014). A rich environment for global issues in non-formal and informal learning settings is created through young people's participation in both youth organizations, both political (as described in chapter 9.3) and other types of organizations (such as described in chapter 9.1).

### Youth-targeted information campaigns on global issues

UN Women in Iceland has an active youth organization, open for participation from all young people aged 16 – 30. The youth organization is responsible for all information campaigns on women's rights in the global domain.

UNICEF is another organization with an active youth organization responsible for information campaigns on the status and rights of children and young people internationally.

### Information providers

Access to information on global issues is very decentralised in Iceland. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is the main government body responsible for information regarding foreign affairs, and especially regarding Iceland's status in the international arena. Information are quite accessible on their website under news and publications. However, there is no special web site area specially designated for young people. Other organizations are also responsible with giving information on foreign affairs. Organizations such as UNICEF and UN Women are also responsible for providing information.

### Key initiatives

Both UN Women and UNICEF have an overarching goal of raising awareness of their fundamental issues described under "Youth targeted information campaigns on global issues". However, no documents were found which describes those goals in greater detail. These campaigns may involve school visits and other type of public seminars.

## 9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption

### Green volunteering

No documents were found concerning a green volunteering program for young people funded by top-level authorities.

### Green production and consumption

No documents were found that suggest such a program, funded by top-level authorities and targeted specifically to young people, exists in Iceland.

# 9.6 Intercontinental youth work and development cooperation

## Intercontinental youth work cooperation

Youth in Action promotes intercontinental youth work. The organization provides financial support to Not-for-profit organizations, public institutions and non-formal groups of young people who are active in youth work. Among the projects they support are: international youth exchange, with each project lasting for 3 – 24 months; EVS volunteering projects for not-for-profit organizations and public institutions with each project lasting for about 3 – 24 months and training for youth work professionals with a duration of 3 – 24 months. This project is open for application from non-profit organizations, public institutions and informal groups who are active in youth work.

## Development cooperation activities

Youth in Action funds two types of initiatives which might fall under the category of development cooperation. These are: cooperative projects and policy development in youth work.

The cooperative projects are three in total: 1) Initiative of young people, which are intended for groups of young people aged 15 – 30 in two or more countries to put their idea(s) into progress; 2) Knowledge transfer, which are international projects whit the aim of knowledge transfer between professionals in youth work; 3) Entrepreneurship in youth work, large-scale projects with the aim of funding the work of professionals in youth work entrepreneurship.

One project is funded under the policy development scheme: 1) Meetings between young people and policy officials, which funds opportunities for young people to have a dialogue with policy officials. These projects can be both domestic and international.

# 9.7 Current debates and reforms

No documents regarding current debates or reforms were found.

# 10. YOUTH WORK

This chapter covers how youth work is facilitated in Iceland in a non-formal or informal learning setting. The chapter covers top-level legislation and top-level and regional level support and initiatives for this area, quality framework, as well as innovation and recognition of validation and skills acquired through youth work.

## 10.1 General context

### Historical developments

No information were found on historical developments of youth work as it is defined in the guide to content.

### National definition or understanding of youth work

There is no national definition or common understanding of the term in national documents.

## 10.2 Administration and governance of youth work

### Governance

As described in chapter 1, the ministry of education, science and culture is the responsible authority for youth affairs, and all youth activity is subject to the Youth Act No. 70/2007. However, day-to-day activities of youth affairs are the responsibility of local authorities, many of whom operate a youth council. Other actors involved in policy development in the field of youth work include the Icelandic Confederation of Labour, the Confederation of Icelandic Enterprise, the Icelandic Confederation of University Graduates, the National Union for Icelandic Students, and the Icelandic Upper Secondary Student Union.

### Cross-sectorial cooperation

No mechanism exists to ensure cooperation between ministries or other public sectors.

## 10.3 Support to youth work

### Policy/legal framework

There is no official policy on youth work in Iceland and few if any domestic regulation covers this area. However, initiatives have been made to improve the quality of non-formal and informal learning. In 2014, the ministry of education, science and culture delivered a report to the European Commission where it described the initial drafts to a qualification framework on education for Iceland and its correlation to the European education framework. The framework represents a new approach in looking at education, where the focus is primarily on the competence at the end of education, regardless of where that education has been achieved, rather than time spent in formal education. This facilitates a better understanding of non-formal and informal education.

### Funding

As mentioned in chapter 5.6 youth affairs are decentralized in Iceland so financial support for many of the activities undertaken is the responsibility of local authorities. The city of Reykjavík, for example, has various activities for informal-learning, one which specifically targets young people neither informal education nor on the job market. The city also operates leisure centers around the city that support the non-formal learning of young people.

The top-level government supports various national youth organizations, as discussed in chapter 5.6. Many of these organizations are directly involved in the non-formal education of young people. Among these are the Icelandic Youth Council, the Icelandic Scout Association and YMCA and YWCA in Iceland.

The Icelandic Centre for Research oversees Erasmus + on behalf of Iceland. This project supports various youth activities, including volunteering and student exchange.

### Cooperation

No documents were found whether and how national authorities promote frameworks of cooperation between all youth work stakeholders.

## 10.4 Quality and innovation in youth work

### Quality assurance

No centralized system exists on quality assurance of youth work.

### Research and evidence supporting youth work

No evidence suggests that national authorities support research in youth work specifically. National authorities devote parts of the fiscal budget to youth research but that is not specific to youth work.

### Participative Youth Work

No direct initiatives are made by the top-level authorities to involve young people in consultation specific to youth work. However, as stated in chapter 5.4 young people can have an impact on legislation through youth councils established at the local level. These may include the area of youth work but are not specifically directed towards it.

### Smart youth work: youth work in the digital world

No top-level policies are in place to foster the use of the application of digital technologies to youth work.

## 10.5 Youth workers

### Status in national legislation

The status of youth workers is ambiguous in the legislation, but it is reasonable to assume that the term applies to any individual organizing and delivering youth work projects. However, the legislation states that workers must be legally of age and possess the necessary training, education, knowledge or experience for the job.

### Education, training and skills recognition

Education and training are available for those who want to pursue a career as a youth worker. The most direct path is offered by the School of education at the University of Iceland where students can enroll in leisure studies on undergraduate and graduate levels.

Training is also available for those who seek to advance their knowledge in the field of youth work. For example, organizations involved in youth activities can apply for a traineeship overseas for their staff under the Erasmus + scheme.

### Mobility of youth workers

No documents were found suggesting that a national program or initiatives exist to enhance the mobility of youth workers.

# 10.6 Recognition and validation of skills acquired through youth work

## Existing arrangements

Participants in youth activities supported by Erasmus + can gain recognition of the skills and competences acquired via Youthpass. This is a self-assessment tool where participants list skills and competences acquired throughout the learning period. The tool is divided up into eight key competence areas:

- Communication in foreign languages
- Communication in the mother tongue
- Cultural expression
- Digital competence
- Entrepreneurship
- Interpersonal, intercultural and social competences and civic competence
- Learning to learn
- Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology

However, Youthpass is first and foremost a tool of recognition, a certification that confirms that the individual took part in the program in question. No laws or regulations stipulate accreditation towards a qualification in Iceland. It is the responsibility of each school to outline how or if he accredits the student's experience towards a degree.

## Skills

No national policies or recognition mechanisms identify competencies that can be acquired through youth work. The national curriculum for both compulsory and upper secondary schools stipulates key competences, but that applies to formal education.

# 10.7 Raising awareness about youth work

## Information providers

According to the Youth Act No. 70/2007, the Youth Council is responsible for the overall information and counseling concerning youth work on a national level. Local youth councils are then responsible for youth work in its specific area (it is noteworthy that not all areas have such councils).

## Key initiatives

No information was found regarding initiatives taken by top-level authorities to raise public awareness about youth work.

# 10.8 Current debates and reforms

## Forthcoming policy developments

Currently, there are no policy developments in the Icelandic system pertaining to youth work.

## Ongoing debates

No documents suggest any ongoing debates in this category.

# REFERENCES

## Legislation and official policy documents

Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men no. 10/2008

Act on Government Support for Technology Research, Innovation and Industry Development no. 75/2007

Act on Maternity/Paternity Leave and Parental Leave no. 95/2000

Act on Trade Unions and Industrial Disputes no. 80/1938

Act on Working Environment, Health and Safety in Workplaces no. 46/1980

Act on Working Terms and Pension Rights Insurance no. 55/1980

Act Respecting Labourers' Right to Advance Notice of Termination of Employment and to Wages on account of Absence Through Illness and Accidents no. 19/1979

Educational and Vocational Guidance Practicioners Act no. 35/2009

General budget no. 703/145 of Iceland for 2016.

Higher Education Act no. 63/2006

Holiday Allowance Act no. 30/1987

Labour Market Measures Act no. 55/2006

Upper Secondary Education Act no. 92/2008

## Data and statistics

## Studies, reports and academic publications

Aðalsteinsson, G. D. and Hilmarsson, E. 2009. *Sveltur Sitjandi Kráka, Fljúgandi Fær.* Reykjavík: The Educational and Training Service Centre.

Sigurðsson, K. 2014. *Færniþörf á Vinnumarkaði: horfur til næstu 10 ára.* Reykjavík: The Directorate of Labour.

## Official websites

Icelandic Startups (Klak Innovit ehf.) (last accessed 20/10/2016).

Reykjavík Youth Centre (Hitt Húsið) (last accessed 02/11/2016).

The Directorate of Labour (Vinnumálastofnun) (last accessed 24/10/2016).

The Golden Egg business plan competition (Gulleggið) (last accessed 20/10/2016)

# GLOSSARY

**Embætti Landlæknis**

The Directorate of Health.

**Fullorðinsfræðsla**

Adult education.

**Menntamálastofnun**

The Directorate of Education

**Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið**

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Responsible for policy making in education and cultural affairs in Iceland.

**Starfsmenntun**

Vocational education and training.

**Stúdentspróf**

Matriculation examination. A degree earned at the end of post-secondary education.

**Æskulýðsráð**

Youth Council. The minister of Education, Science and Culture appoints nine representatives to the youth council, whose main responsibilities are to consult with national authorities on issues regarding youth.

**Músíktilraunir**

A competition on the national stage aimed at young people, where bands compete. This competition is known as a starting point for many up-and-coming bands.

**Skrekkur**

A compulsory school talent competition for grades 8, 9 and 10 (young people aged 13 - 15).

**Hönnunarmiðstöð**

Iceland Design Centre.

# ARCHIVE

Information from previous years can be accessed and freely downloaded through the PDF files below.

**2018:**

- Iceland.pdf

**2017:**

- Iceland.pdf