

Primary Findings

1. Residence

- Approx 56% of the participants in the study immigrated to Iceland in the last five years (2004-2009).
- Most of the immigrants residing in the Capital Area lived in the Downtown area/Westside of Reykjavík (26%) or in Árbær/Breiðholt (19%).
- A large majority (80%) did not want to relocate within Iceland. Those who wanted to relocate mentioned a different place outside the Capital Area (11%), 4% wanted to move to the Capital Area and 5% were uncertain where to move to.
- 80% of those who responded said that they thought living in Iceland was very or rather good.
- More than 60% of those who responded felt that they had integrated into Icelandic society rather well or very well.
- Approx 41% of those who responded lived in rental housing on the general market compared to 39% who lived in their own house/flat. Only 7% lived in a rental housing provided by their employer, 5% lived with a spouse, relatives or friends and 4% lived in rental housing from the local council.
- Of those who had children, 78% had a child or children in Iceland and 57% had a child or children that lived in their native country.

2. Legal Status

- Most of the respondents had citizenship in their country of birth but 188 respondents had citizenship in Iceland. Many of whom had both Icelandic citizenship and citizenship in their country of birth.
- Approx 62% of the participants had been informed about their rights in the Icelandic community when they moved to Iceland. Most of them got information from friends and relatives or on the Internet.
- The least educated respondents were the likeliest to have received information about their rights in the Icelandic community when they moved to Iceland. Respondents born in Thailand or the Philippines were more likely to have been informed than respondents born elsewhere.
- Scarcely half of the respondents (47%) thought that gender equality was similar in Iceland as in their country of birth. One third of the respondents thought that less gender equality existed in their country of birth compared to Iceland.

3. Family

- Approx 67% of the respondents were married or in cohabitation. One third had an Icelandic spouse.
- Approx 65% of the respondents had a child or children. Thereof 41% had two children and 39% one child.
- In general, parents were very satisfied with the preschool, elementary school and the junior college / technical school their child or children attended.
- Most of the parents who had a child or children in preschools attended teacher-parent meetings (75%). Among reasons why parents did not or seldomly attended

- teacher-parent meetings was language difficulties. Three out of the eight individuals who did not attend because of language difficulties had familiarized themselves with the circumstances in which they had the right to use the service of an interpreter, and equally as many had used the service of an interpreter.
- Approx 74% of parents who had a child or children in an elementary school always attended teacher-parent meetings. Women were more likely to attend than men, 82% of female respondents attended teacher-parent meetings compared to 45% of the male respondents. Those who attended seldomly or never said that they did so because their spouse attended the meetings, language difficulties and/or because they had difficulties getting leave from work.

4. Language Skills

- Approx 70% of the respondents always used their native language when speaking to their children. Respondents from Poland and those respondents that had finished vocational education or apprenticeship were more likely to use their native language when speaking to their children compared to other participants in the survey.
- Approx 95% of those who had finished university degree were able to communicate in languages other than their native language, and the same applied to 72% of respondents that had finished vocational education or apprenticeship.
- Approx 40% of the participants claimed to have rather or very good understanding of Icelandic compared to 33% that said that their understanding of Icelandic was rather or very bad.
- More than one third of the respondents were able to communicate rather or very well in Icelandic compared to 39% who thought they expressed themselves rather or very badly in Icelandic.
- More than the majority of the participants thought it was rather or very difficult to learn Icelandic, 4% said it was very easy and 15% rather easy.
- Those respondents that found learning Icelandic rather difficult or very difficult were asked to give reasons for the difficulties associated with learning the language. Most thought the Icelandic language was very different from their native language (66%), a quarter had never taken a course in Icelandic and others had difficulties attending courses because of work or family.
- A vast majority of the respondents (86%) was interested in learning Icelandic or learning the language better.
- Three quarters of the respondents had attended courses in Icelandic. Most of whom (30%) had attended one course but 13% had attended five or more courses. It was most common that respondents had attended courses at Mímir (30%) or at work (26%) and in most cases they paid for the course(s) themselves (49%) or their employer defrayed the cost.
- Approx 49% of the respondents thought that the knowledge they had attained through the Icelandic courses was very or rather useful in their everyday activities.
- Only 18% of the respondents had attended a course in Icelandic that was taught in their native language and 49% had been taught in English.

- Two third of the respondents were interested in learning a language other than Icelandic, the most common languages being English, French, Spanish and Italian.

5. Participation in Extracurricular Activities

- Approx 42% of those who responded knew about an association/organization of/for fellow countrymen (-women) in Iceland and half participated in these association's/organization's activities.
- Approx 39% of the participants claimed to participate in extracurricular and social activities (e.g. sports, physical training, theater, choir and so forth).
- Respondents from Poland and those who had finished vocational education or apprenticeship were the most unlikely to take part in extracurricular and social activities and to associate with people from their native country in organized associations.
- Approx half of the respondents were a member of a religious group or association in Iceland, most of whom were registered with the Roman Catholic Church (75%). Comparatively more respondents from Poland and the Philippines were members of a religious group than any other nationality.
- One fourth of the participants voted in the last municipal elections in Iceland, in May 2006. Of those who didn't vote in the elections, 41% did not live in Iceland at the time and one third wasn't eligible to vote.
- More than 60% of those who responded believed it to be rather or very likely that they would vote in the next municipal elections, in the year 2010.
- Two thirds of the respondents claimed to have voted regularly in their native country.
- A small part of the respondents (4%) admitted to have participated in activities of political parties or other political organizations in Iceland.
- 8% of those who responded had very much and 16% rather a lot of interest in participating in activities of political parties or other political organizations in Iceland if they were given the chance to do so.
- 57% of the respondents. were fairly dissatisfied with how political parties in Iceland present themselves and their issues to people who understand little English.

6. Utilization of Public Service

- Approx 27% of those who responded had used the service of an interpreter. Roughly one third had used the service of an interpreter once, but one fourth had used the service twice.
- Approx 26% of the respondents had not familiarized themselves with the circumstances in which they had the right to use the service of an interpreter free of charge.
- Scarcely 50% of those who responded claimed to trust interpreters rather or very well to keep confidential the conversations they interpret.
- Approx 10% of the respondents could not make themselves understandable when seeing a doctor without help from an interpreter.

- Approx 37% of the respondents answered spouse when they were asked whom they trusted best to interpret for them when they needed interpretation. One fifth answered friends from their home country and 19% answered Icelandic friends.
- When respondents were asked whether or not they needed assistance of an interpreter to communicate with municipality personnel, 15% answered yes and in most cases (78%) they had received such assistance when needed.
- Approx one third of the respondents used the service provided by libraries. Most (41%) used the service less than once a month.
- Vast majority of the respondents had access to the Internet (95%), most had access at home or at work.
- Approx 83% of the participants claimed to be members of a trade union or a similar organization and two third were familiar with the services provided by their trade/labor union. Roughly one third of those who responded had sought help from a trade/labor union in Iceland.
- Of those participants who had attended courses, conferences and/or seminars to increase their possibilities on the Icelandic job market, 41% got the tuition-fee refunded in full from their trade/labor union but 36 % got the tuition-fee refunded partly.
- Merely 30% of the participants filled out their last income tax return by themselves. In most cases a spouse/relative, an accountant and friends/co-workers filled out the tax return with the individual who needed assistance.
- When participants were asked where they got information about what was going on in Iceland most mentioned the Internet (69%) and friends and relatives (58%).
- The Internet was also the most common method to obtain information when participants were asked where they got information about what was going on in their native country (86%) but 67% mentioned friends and relatives.
- Few of the participants living in the Capital Area had ever used any of the services their municipality offered. However, 94 individuals had done so and thereof most had received housing benefits or sought general information. One fifth had exploited specialist services for children.

7. State of Health

- Half of those who responded to a question about how often they had gone to a dentist for a check up claimed to go once a year. Approx 3% of the respondents had not gone to see a dentist in a decade or more.
- Almost all of the respondents claimed to exercise physically, i.e. exercise so that they got tired or sweaty.
- One fifth of the respondents admitted to smoking every day but 53% had never smoked.
- In the last 12 months 38% of the respondents had not drunk at least five drinks on the same day. Approx 12% had done so one time to three times a month.

8. Employment

- Most of the respondents (62%) had been working in the last three months before they moved to Iceland.

- A vast majority the participants (81%) was employed in Iceland when they filled out the questionnaire. Scarcely one third was working in an unspecialized occupation or as an unskilled laborer in Iceland, but only 12% of the respondents had been working in such occupation before they moved to Iceland. Approx 50% of those who worked as a professional or a specialist in their native country had similar jobs (professional/specialist) in Iceland.
- Scarcely 50% of the participants earned 200 thousand ISK or less the month before they answered the questionnaire.
- Half of the respondents sent a portion of their wages to their home country every month.
- Most of the respondents (78%) got someone to assist them in getting their first job in Iceland and in most cases it was relatives or friends from their homeland who assisted them.
- Two thirds of the respondents claimed to be rather or very satisfied in their current job.
- One third of the respondents had taken a sick leave in the past month before answering the questionnaire. Average number of days off from work due to illness was three in the month in question.
- Three out of every four did get a summer vacation in the year 2007, the average of 31 days.
- Approx 91% of the respondents had signed an employment contract in their current job. Two thirds claimed they understood everything stated in the contract and scarcely one fourth understood some but not all things in the contract.
- A bit more than one fifth of the respondents admitted to have had some troubles at work. Majority of those who had sought help approached their bosses/superiors or co-workers.
- Almost half of the respondents had not been able to use their education in full at a job they had in Iceland. Most of who believed they needed to improve their Icelandic to get a job in their field (54%) or that they hadn't found a suitable job (23%).
- Approx 74% had not tried to get their education evaluated/validated in Iceland.
- One fourth of the participants were interested in starting their own business.