



VET - Study visit

28. March 2012

Education in Iceland

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Some facts about Iceland

- Iceland is an island of 103.000 sq.km
- Population 319.575 (January 2012)
- Icelandic is the mother-tongue (North/Germanic origin)
- Homogeneous culture and history since 874 AD
- Immigrants were 2% in 1996, over 6% now
- Job activity is very high, but unemployment around 9% since 2008



Some facts about Iceland-2

- GDP high although the crisis in 2008 struck the country very hard
- Vegetation 24% - Wasteland + glac. 76%
- Sea area within fishing limits 758.000 sq.km
- Annual fish catch ca. 1,5 million tonnes
- Important sources of income: Production and selling of energy, fishing, industry, tourism
- Reykjavík- Paris 2200 - New York 4200 km

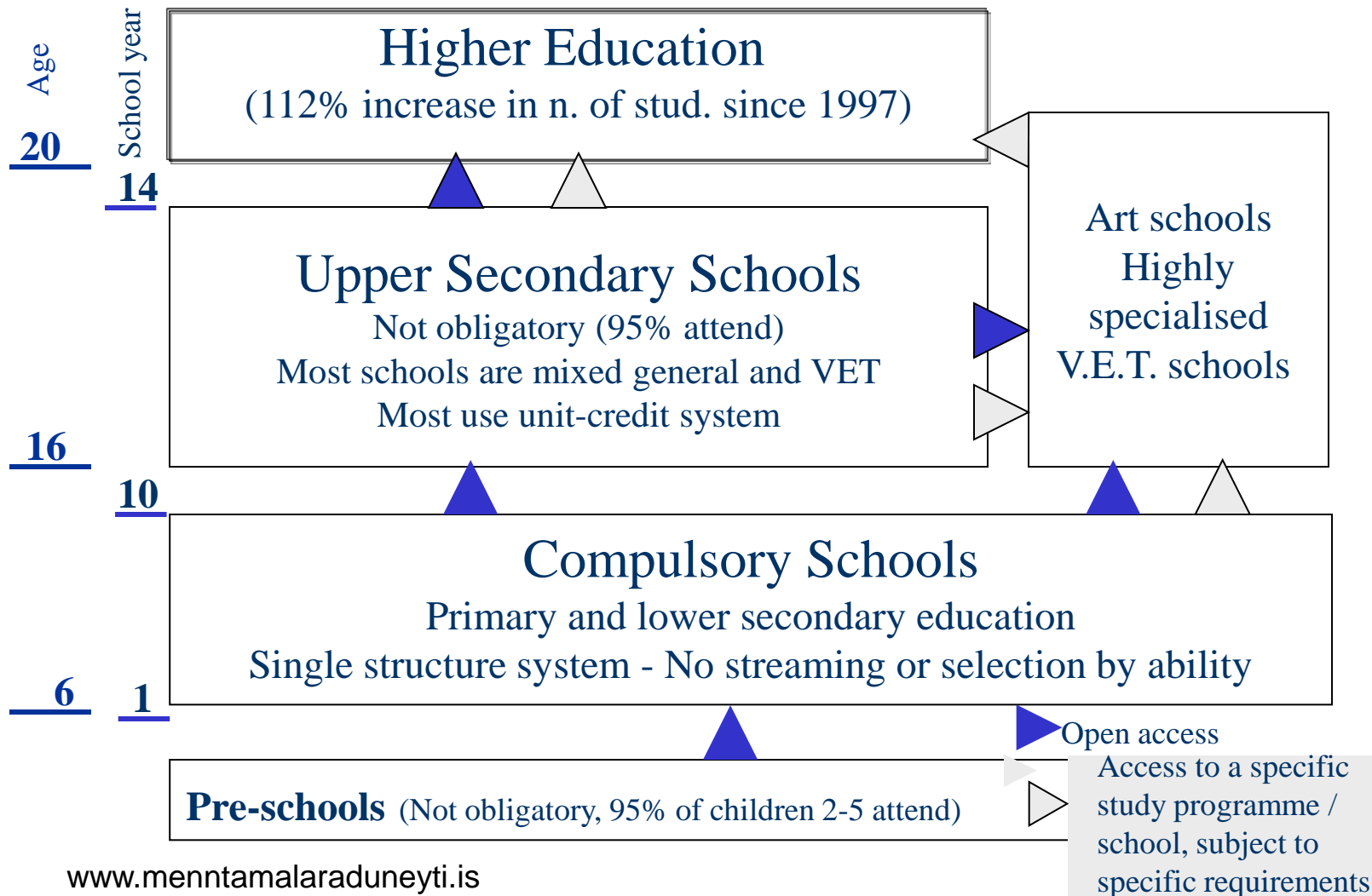


A fundamental principle...

...of the Icelandic education system is that everyone should have equal opportunity to acquire an education, irrespective of sex, economic status, residential location, possible handicap, and cultural or social background.



THE ICELANDIC SCHOOL SYSTEM





THE ICELANDIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

- statistics 2011 -

	Pre-school education	Compulsory	Upper secondary	Higher education
Number of schools	270	170	32	7
New law	2008	2008	2008	2006
Number of students	19.000	42.389	29.389	19.334 + 3000 abr



Some traits

Primary schools

- Mixed classes (pupils with different abilities are in the same classes)
- 180 school days a year
- Nationally co-ordinated exams in classes 4., 7. and 10.
- The teachers profession is regulated by law

Upper secondary schools

- Most are comprehensive (academic and vocational)
- Most upper secondary schools in Iceland operate according to a unit-credit system/modular system
- 175 school days a year
- The teachers profession is regulated by law



From the Compulsory School Act 2008

The role of the compulsory school, in cooperation with the home, is to encourage pupils' general development and prepare them for active participation in a democratic society that is continuously developing. Compulsory school practice and methods shall be characterised by tolerance and affection, Christian heritage of Icelandic culture, equality, democratic cooperation, responsibility, concern, forgiveness and respect for human values.



From the Upper Sec. School Act 2008

- The objective of the upper secondary school(s) is to encourage the overall development of all pupils and encourage their active participation in democratic society by offering studies suitable to the needs of each pupil.
- **The upper secondary school(s) prepares pupils for employment and further studies.**



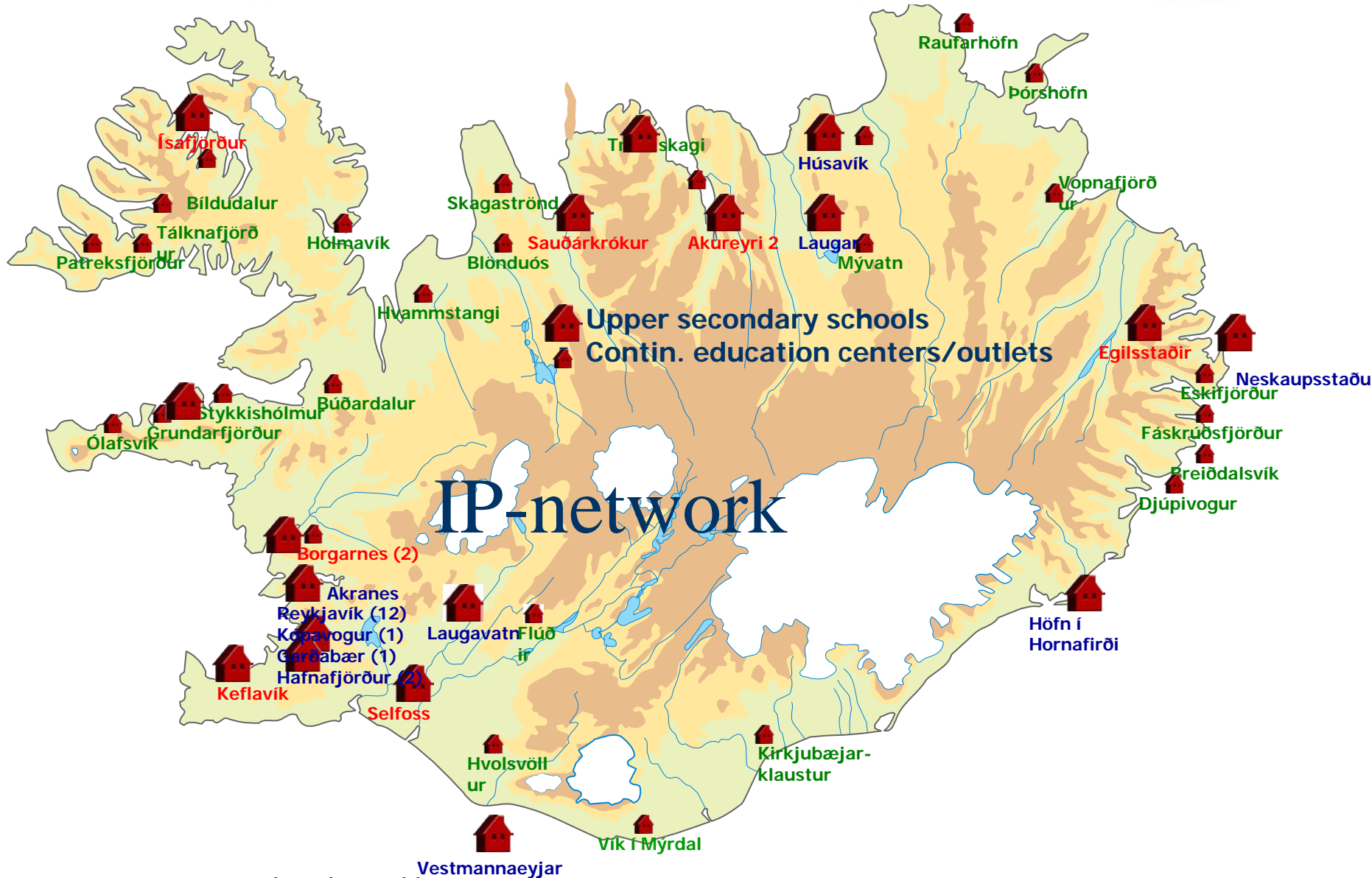
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

- The Icelandic parliament determines basic objectives and administrative framework of the education system.
- Education comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.
- Local municipalities are responsible for the pre-schools and primary and lower secondary schools (function and funding).
- The state runs the upper secondary schools and schools at the higher education level.
- The education system has been moving towards decentralisation both with regard to responsibilities and decision-making.



Teachers Education

- The teachers profession (pre-, primary and secondary) is authorised by law.
- A new legislation (2008) generally upgrades teacher education and a Masters Degree will be the minimum requirement for teachers for all school stages instead of a three year Bachelor Degree. The Act has been effective from the autumn of 2011.
- **Until 2011:** Teachers in pre-primary and compulsory schools completed a three-year programme of study leading to a Bachelor of Education degree.
- Upper secondary teachers completed a three- to four-year programme of study (leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Sciences) plus a one-year programme in pedagogy and didactics.





New legislation on education since 2006

- Act on Higher Education 2006
- Acts on Pre-School Education, Primary School Education and Upper Secondary Education in 2008
- Act on Teacher Education in 2008
- Act on Adult Education in 2010
- Opportunity to take a fresh look at education in a wide perspective



Objectives of the new legislation

- Stronger focus on the needs and abilities of the individual learner (reduce drop-out)
- Education more attractive (esp. VET), more relevant and more effective
- Quality assurance strengthened with focus on learning outcomes
- Equal status of academic and vocational education



Objectives of the new legislation - 2

- Guarantee of education for 16 - 18 years old
- Secondary schools get more freedom and responsibility in planning the education
- The involvement of parents more formal
- Status of private schools better defined and improved
- The school levels become better coordinated with more flexibility for students



Objectives of the new legislation - 3

- Lifelong learning perspective
- Shift to learning outcomes in stead of focussing on teachers and their actions in the classroom
- Recognition of non-formal and informal learning
- Decentralisation, empowerment of education providers



Students with disabilities

- Pupils both in primary and secondary schools have the right to attend school in the area where they live.
- The school is to undertake systematically the integration of disabled pupils in its catchment area into mainstream education.
- There are no separate schools for pupils with special educational needs at the upper secondary level. All pupils at that school level attend mainstream education.



The pre-school Act 2008

Article 21 – Organisation of specialist services

- Municipalities shall organise specialist services for preschools. Specialist services include support for preschool children and their families, as well as support for preschool activities and its personnel. The municipalities shall determine the organisation of specialist services and endeavour to provide the services within the preschool itself.



The Compulsory School Act 2008

Article 15 – *Compulsory education*

- Pupils are obliged to attend compulsory school cf. Article 3. Compulsory education may be provided by compulsory schools run by the local authorities, by privately run schools at compulsory school level or through other recognised means according to this Act.

Article 17 – *Pupils with special needs*

- Pupils have the right to have their special needs met regarding studies in compulsory school, without discrimination and regardless of their physical or mental attainment.
- If a child's parents, head teachers, teachers or other specialists believe that the child is not receiving suitable instruction in the compulsory school, the parents can ask that their child be admitted to special treatment within general compulsory school or to a specialised school.



The Upper Secondary School Act 2008

Article 34 - Pupils with special needs

- At upper secondary school level, pupils with disabilities, cf. Article 2 of Act no. 59 from 1992 on Affairs of People with Disabilities, and pupils with emotional or social difficulties shall be provided with instruction and special study support. Specialised assistance and appropriate facilities shall be provided as considered necessary by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Pupils with special needs shall study side by side with other pupils whenever possible.
- The Minister of Education, Science and Culture may, with agreement with an upper secondary school, authorise operation of special study programmes for pupils with disabilities in upper secondary schools.
- Pupils with reading difficulties shall, whenever possible, have access to specialised instructional material. The upper secondary school defines in its school curriculum guideness how it conducts screening and analysis for dyslexia, as well as its measures for follow-up and support for pupils analysed as dyslexic.
- Upper secondary schools shall strive to provide special support to pupils that have specific study difficulties or illnesses.



Focused Programmes 1, 2 and 3 in Upper Secondary Schools

- Four year programmes.
- Their main object is to offer education on individual level, to establish pupils' independence to live independently, participate in the world of work if possible and to enjoy the quality of life that active and independent participation in social life brings.
- **A special Curriculum for Focused Programmes is being revised**



2011

- 32 Upper Secondary Schools in Iceland
 - 29.389 pupils in USS
 - 370 pupils with disabilities in USS
 - 24 USS offer Focused Programmes
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- Few other USS accept pupils with disabilities without offering Focused Programmes



Useful Websites

- www.island.is
- www.menntamalaraduneyti.is
- www.eurydice.org
- www.statice.is
- www.greining.is