

## Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission  
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



# COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH POLICY IN ICELAND



Last updated: 14.october 2014

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## **1. Context and principles of national youth policy**

### **1.1 Context of national youth policy**

Formal youth policy is not available in Iceland although we have the Youth act named in chapter 4, see link.

Unfortunately there are no active youth policies in Iceland. We have the Youth act but there is a council on behalf of the Ministry of education revising the act now and will finish their work in the beginning of January 2015. [http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf/youth\\_act70\\_2007.pdf](http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf/youth_act70_2007.pdf)

### **1.2. Principles of national youth policy**

Please define national youth policy by referring to

- it's conceptual basis (view of young people)
- the main target group (age group, specific groups of young people)
- the political organization of youth policy (territorial organization, share of competences)

Not applicable in Iceland (see above).

## 2. Statistics on young people

Mention the number of all young people from the ages of 15 and 29 who live in the country

(if you do not have statistics covering this age range, please give the number of young people specifying the age range used; for EU Members States the figure has been collected and made available by Eurostat)

Number and Percentage of young people in global population

- In total there are 70.031 Icelanders from the ages of 15 to 29. All the Icelandic nation counts 318.452 people. <sup>1</sup>

Number and Percentage of young people by gender in global population

- See table below

Age:	Male	%	Female	%
15 year old	2.287	0,72%	2.136	0,67%
16 year old	2.366	0,74%	2.250	0,71%
17 year old	2.418	0,76%	2.368	0,74%
18 year old	2.458	0,77%	2.296	0,72%
19 year old	2.413	0,76%	2.259	0,71%
20 year old	2.548	0,80%	2.456	0,77%
21 year old	2.398	0,75%	2.343	0,74%
22 year old	2.546	0,80%	2.384	0,75%
23 year old	2.358	0,74%	2.219	0,70%
24 year old	2.192	0,69%	2.136	0,67%
25 year old	2.191	0,69%	2.243	0,70%
26 year old	2.312	0,73%	2.238	0,70%
27 year old	2.369	0,74%	2.321	0,73%
28 year old	2.476	0,78%	2.313	0,73%
29 year old	2.468	0,77%	2.269	0,71%
TOTAL:	35.800	11,24%	34.231	10,75%

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<http://hagstofa.is/?PageID=2593&src=/temp/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN00101%26ti=Mannfj%F6ldi+eftir+kyni+og+aldri+1841%2D2011++++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Yfirlit/%26lang=3%26units=Fj%F6ldi>

### 3. Actors and Structures

#### 3.1 Public authorities

##### 3.1.1 National public authorities:

Ministry in charge of youth is The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

- Minister is Illugi Gunnarsson
- Duration of mandate is four years

Youth Department in the Ministry – Department of Cultural Affairs

- Main tasks of the Youth department:

The Department of Cultural Affairs handles administration and policy formulation in cultural affairs under the Ministry's jurisdiction, for instance, concerning the arts and cultural heritage, the mass media, and sports and youth affairs. Its area of responsibility includes relations with public cultural institutions and museums, sporting organizations and other NGOs, enterprises and individuals. The Department also supervises public support for arts and culture, including the administration of artistic and cultural funds. <sup>2</sup>

- Number of people who work in this ministry in the youth department

There is 1 1/2 position working on Youth in the Ministry.

- Director responsible for Youth in the Ministry

The Director of the Department for Cultural Affairs is Karitas H. Gunnarsdóttir

Contact person in the youth department competent for European youth policy:

Head of Division is Erlendur Kristjánsson.

- Other national public bodies who are directly involved in youth policies

The issue of youth is a cross-sectorial between Ministries but there is only a special youth department in the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

- Other Ministries

Ministry of Welfare <http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/ministry/structure//nr/2458>

## The Office of the Ombudsman for Children

The Ombudsman for Children in Iceland is appointed by the Prime Minister to a period of five years. In his/her work, the Ombudsman for Children is independent and not subject to instructions from the authorities.

### What is the role of the Ombudsman for Children?

The role of the Ombudsman for Children is to further the wellbeing of children and to look after their interests, rights and needs vis-à-vis public as well as private parties in all walks of life. The Ombudsman for Children is expected to be a protector of all children up to the age of 18.

### Scope of the Ombudsman for Children

The Ombudsman for Children shall seek to ensure that, in their dealings, public authorities, central and local alike, individuals, societies and other associations of individuals, and representatives of legal persons, give full consideration to the interests, needs and rights of children. The Ombudsman for Children shall point to, and make proposals for, improvements in the children's lot wherever he/she considers this to be needed.

### What falls outside the scope of the Ombudsman for Children?

The Ombudsman for Children does not deal with disputes between individuals. Nor does the Ombudsman for Children take up the cases of individual children of which the legislature has entrusted the solution to others, such as the public authorities, the courts of law or the Althing Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman for Children has, nevertheless, the obligation to provide the parties involved in such cases, and who seek his/her advice, with guidance as to courses open to them either in administration or the courts of law.

### Who can turn to the Ombudsman for Children?

Everyone, children and adults, may apply to the Ombudsman for Children for all matters pertaining to children.

### Conditions for a matter being taken up by the Ombudsman for Children

Matters may be put to the Ombudsman for Children either orally or in writing. Indications shall be well reasoned. The Ombudsman for Children will himself/herself decide whether an indication warrants his/her taking up of a matter. His/her decision on this is final.

### The handling of a matter by the Ombudsman for Children

Where the Ombudsman for Children concludes that an indication gives rise to a further investigation of a matter he will seek information from the parties indicated. In order to be able to carry out his task the Ombudsman can demand from the authorities all the information he deems to

be required, such as reports, documents, records and other items. Similarly, he can demand this kind of information from individuals, societies and other associations of individuals, and representatives of legal persons, where he deems that they have, through acts or omissions, infringed the rights, needs and interests of children in society.

The Ombudsman can, furthermore, summon the parties concerned, or go to see them in order to gather additional information and to have a closer look at some details. The Ombudsman has free access to all institutions which house children or deal with children in one way or another, whether publicly run or by individuals, societies or other associations of individuals.

The conclusion of a matter

The Ombudsman can conclude a matter by dismissing it with or without specific instructions, dropping it at any stage or following it through with observations, recommendations, instructions and proposals for a remedy. The Ombudsman can also conclude a matter by issuing a reasoned opinion.

Conclusions by the Ombudsman for Children in matters submitted for his/her consideration are not by law binding on the authorities, individuals, societies, other associations of individuals or representatives of legal persons. Those concerned are, however, expected to heed the observations, recommendations and proposals made by the Ombudsman for Children for improvements in the children's lot.

[http://www.barn.is/barn/adalsida/english/the\\_ombudsman\\_for\\_children\\_act/](http://www.barn.is/barn/adalsida/english/the_ombudsman_for_children_act/)

### *3.1.2 Regional public authorities with competencies in the youth field*

Not applicable in Iceland

### *3.1.3 Local public authorities with competencies in the youth field*

The capital of Iceland, Reykjavík and other towns has Sports and youth councils and also Preventive councils.

## **3.2 Youth welfare services (comprising public and/or nonpublic actors)**

**Every generation have the same access to welfare services in Iceland. Although the service may be better and more convenient for all ages.**

### **3.3 Non-public actors/structures & youth services with competencies in the youth field**

Mention and describe non-public actors/structures who are directly or indirectly involved in youth policies, and have influence in the policy-making process and in the decision making process.

LÆF (The Icelandic youth council) has worked with local councils in shaping youth policies f.ex. by hosting conferences focusing upon the role of the youth in the society and direct regular talks with authorities.

### 3.3.1 Youth Councils

Describe the national youth council. Please refer to its role and objectives as well as to its composition (member organizations). Please mention if there are youth councils on other geographical levels and describe their role. Refer to their objectives and give a link to their website (and contact person).

The capital of Iceland, Reykjavík and other towns has Sports and youth councils, Preventive councils and LÆF (The Icelandic Youth Council) is an umbrella organization for all the youth councils in Iceland.

The aims of LÆF are to encourage co-operation of Icelandic youth organizations, to work for their common goals, to encourage and promote youth activities and youth issues, to represent Icelandic youth organizations abroad, to have friendly relations with youth organizations all over the world, and to work for international causes of young people. Only democratic nongovernmental organisations that are nationwide organizations and put their main emphasis on work with children and young people can become members of LÆF.

The main task of the Council is to arrange informative courses and meetings along with interests watch for young people. Our projects differ but can all be placed under our four main goals: be active interest organizations for young people in Iceland, give the best service at all times, be contact person for youth organization towards the Government and be active in international work.

Their website is <http://www.aeska.is/laef/page/english> and contact person is MMr. Hreiðar Már Árnason [youth@youth.is](mailto:youth@youth.is)

The Association of Local Authorities in Iceland is an umbrella organization for every town in Iceland. On their website are links to every town and on those sites is information on the youth councils in each area. <http://www.samband.is/um-okkur/english/>

### 3.3.2 Youth NGOs

Please mention the most relevant youth NGO's which are not members of the national youth council. Please refer to their objectives and give a link to their website (and contact person)

UMFÍ (Icelandic Youth Association <http://umfi.is/>) Mr. Sæmundur Runólfsson General Secretary [saemundur@umfi.is](mailto:saemundur@umfi.is)



KFUM&K (YMCA <http://kfum.is/> ) Mr. Tómas Torfason General Secretary [tomas@kfum.is](mailto:tomas@kfum.is)

Scouts (<http://www.skatar.is/vefur/default.asp> ) Mr. Hermann Sigurðsson General Secretary [hermann@skatar.is](mailto:hermann@skatar.is)

**3.4 National network(s) for knowledge on youth linking all actors in the field (policy makers, researchers, young people and their organizations, NGOs)?**

If yes, give names and contacts and explain its structure. Please also explain your role within this network (as EKCYP correspondent). If no such network exists, please explain why and if there have been any attempts to set up such a network.

**Unfortunately there is no such a network in Iceland and has never been. Studies on youth work has not been done in any form according to policy and their participations in organizations.**

#### 4. Legislation

Articles of the constitution concerning youth explicitly

National legislation on youth

In Iceland there is the legislation called Youth act, as follows:

##### CHAPTER I General provisions

###### Article 1

The purpose of this act is to support children and young people for participation in youth activities. Youth activities are organised 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. In all organised youth activity social, preventive, pedagogic and educational values should be considered, aiming to enhance the personal qualities and democratic awareness of participants. All activities involving children and young people should focus on their well-being and encourage them to show initiative and active participation. This act is intended for youth activities for children and young people, especially aged 6 to 25.

###### Article 2

This act covers: 1. The operation of clubs and club organisations that manage youth activities on an open voluntary basis, provided that the clubs and organisations are based first and foremost on volunteer work and self financing. 2. Youth activities run by the national authorities, municipalities and schools, as far as applicable and where no other laws or regulations apply. 3. Other operations that focus mostly on unaffiliated youth in organised youth activities.

###### Article 3

The national authorities and municipalities will, in co-operation with youth clubs and youth organisations support young people in participating in a diverse youth activities possible. State funding for the operation of the youth organisation is subject to parliamentary decision in the general budget. Funding for the operation of local youth clubs and youth organisations depends on decisions made regarding the municipal budget plans.

##### Chapter II Governing of youth affairs

###### Article 4

The Minister of Education is the highest authority on youth affairs according to this act.

## Article 5

The Minister appoints nine representatives to the Youth Council. Five representatives are appointed according to recommendations made by youth organisations, as further stipulated in a regulation. Two representatives shall be appointed by the Association of Municipal Authorities in Iceland. The Minister appoints the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the Youth Council without recommendations. The appointment term in the Youth Council is two years.

## Article 6

The purpose of the Youth Council is to:

1. Consult the national authorities and municipalities on youth affairs.
2. Recommend focus areas and policies in youth affairs.
3. Give advice and opinion on issues regarding youth activities.
4. Seek ways to enhance and improve youth activities of clubs, organisations schools and municipalities and encourage cooperation between these groups in the field of youth affairs.
5. Plan meetings and conferences on youth affairs.
6. Participate in foreign cooperation on youth affairs as determined by the Minister.
7. Promote training and education for leaders, instructors and volunteers.
8. Conduct any other business assigned to it by the Minister.

The Minister may issue more detailed regulations regarding the operation of the Youth Council. Expenses incurred through work and projects of the Youth Council shall be paid from the State Treasury.

## PART III Youth Fund

### Article 7

The Parliament allocates funds annually to the Youth Fund for promoting youth activities. The Youth Fund may receive independent donations.

### Article 8

The Board of the Youth Fund shall have three Directors appointed for a term of two

years. The Chairman of the Youth Council is the Chairman of the Youth Fund, but the Council appoints two Directors and two Alternates. The Minister appoints one of the Directors of the Youth Fund as Vice-Chairman.

#### Article 9

The purpose of the Youth Fund is to support the following projects carried out by youth clubs and youth organisations:

1. Special projects for children and young people and/or with their active participation.
2. Training of leaders, instructors and volunteers.
3. Innovations and development projects.
4. Joint actions of youth clubs and youth organisations.

The Minister allocates grants from the Youth Fund after receiving recommendations from the Fund's Board. The Minister may set more detailed rules regarding grants from the Youth Fund.

### Chapter IV Work environment in youth activity

#### Article 10

Those working with or in charge of children and young people in youth activities should be legally of age and should have received training and education and have acquired knowledge or experience for the job. Group leaders, instructors, volunteers and other staff are not permitted to consume alcohol or other intoxicating substances during organised youth activities or while on trips with children or young people.

Individuals who have been convicted for violations of Chapter XXII of the General Penal Code, number 19/1940 may not be hired to work with staff mentioned in article 2 who works with children and youth under the age of 18. The same applies to those who have been sentenced for violation of the Narcotics Act number 65/1974 in the last five years. This provision includes also those who are entrusted with the management of children and young people under 18 years old within a framework of volunteer work. Administrators of schools, day-care centres, summer camps, sport and recreation centres and other such institutions or places where children and young people congregate or stay for a long or short time and to whom article 2 applies, have the right to information from the penal registry upon that individual's consent, on whether a particular individual who has applied to them for employment has been sentenced for violations covered by paragraph

3. For operations by state, municipality or other parties that fall within the scope of this Act, care shall be taken that they meet conditions of laws and regulations on accessibility, facilities, health and safety.

## CHAPTER V Support of municipalities or youth activities.

### Article 11

Municipal governments set rules on how independent youth activities in their area are to be supported. Municipalities operate youth committees or similar committees as determined by the municipal government. Municipal governments see to it that local Youth Councils are set up. The purpose of these Youth Councils is, among other things, to advise municipal governments on local youth issues in the respective municipality. Municipal governments issue more detailed rules on the purpose and selection for their Youth Councils.

## CHAPTER VI Youth research

### Article 12

The Minister promotes regular youth research which will then be used in framing future guidelines for youth affairs. The Minister appoints a five person advisory committee on youth studies. One of these persons shall be appointed according to recommendation by the Youth Council, one according to recommendation by youth organisations and one according to recommendations by the Association of Municipal Authorities. The remaining two persons are appointed by the Minister without recommendation. The Minister appoints two committee members as Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The term of the committee is three years.

## CHAPTER VII Other issues

### Article 13

The Minister can, in a regulation, set further provisions on the implementation of this act.

### Article 14

This Act enters into force immediately.

When this Act enters into force the Act number 24/1970, on youth issues expires.

Done at Bessastadir, 28 March 2007.

## Regional and local legislation on youth

### *Other Laws and Regulations*

- [Constitution of the Republic of Iceland](#)
- [Administrative Procedures Act No. 37/1993](#)
- [The Ombudsman for Children Act No. 83/1994](#)
- [Act On Legal Competence No.71/1997](#)
- [Act in Respect of Children No. 76/2003](#)
- [Child Protection Act No. 80/2002](#)
- [The Social Assistance Act No. 99/2007](#)
- [Act on the Rights of Patients No. 74/1997](#)
- [The Social Security Act No. 117/1993](#)
- [Act on the Affairs of the Handicapped, No. 59/1992](#)
- [Icelandic Nationality Act](#)
- [Amendments to the Icelandic Citizenship Act](#)
- [Act On Foreigners No. 96 /2002](#)
- [Regulation on Foreigners](#)
- [Act on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Decisions on the Custody of Children and the Return of Abducted Children, etc. No. 160 27th December 1995](#)
- [Law in Respect of Marriage No. 31 of April 14th, 1993](#)
- [Act on Registered Partnership No. 87, 12 June 1996](#)
- [Artificial Fertilisation Act No. 55/1996](#)
- [Adoption Act No.130/1999 / Loi sur l'adoption](#)
- [Inheritance Act No. 8, 14 March 1962, cf. Law No. 48, 16 May 1989](#)

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf/youth\\_act70\\_2007.pdf](http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf/youth_act70_2007.pdf)

- [Act on Maternity/Paternity Leave and Parental Leave, No. 95/2000](#)
- [Act on the Protection of Privacy as regards the Processing of Personal Data, No. 77/2000](#)
- [Regulation regarding the work of children and adolescents, No. 426/1999](#)
- [Pre Schools Act No. 90/2008](#)
- [The Compulsory School Act No. 91/2008](#)
- [The Upper Secondary School Act No. 92/2008](#)

[http://www.barn.is/barn/adalsida/english/other\\_laws\\_and\\_regulations/](http://www.barn.is/barn/adalsida/english/other_laws_and_regulations/)

Child Protection act, see link below.

[http://www.barn.is/adalsida/english/child\\_protection\\_act/](http://www.barn.is/adalsida/english/child_protection_act/)

## **5. National Policy Programmes on youth**

National programmes on youth.

Action plans i.e. official strategies

Programmes and actions for specific target groups

Ungt fólk til athafna – Young people as active workforce. The government has assigned Directorate of Labor the task to activate unemployed young people as workforce. The task is to ensure that unemployed young people will be offered a job or activity resource within 3 months of unemployment. Running the task, the Directorate of Labor turns to firms and organizations to hire people for short term in the beginning with the possibility of long term hiring. The hiring party then receives the amount of unemployment benefits from the Directorate of Labor and pays salary instead to the employee. Another way to activate the unemployed is introducing them to available education, voluntary work and grip work.



## 6. Budget / Public expenditure allocated to youth

National level

Not applicable in Iceland

Regional level

All areas of Iceland are calculated here below, the link will give more options <sup>4</sup>

Category:	Expenditure:	Amount per Year:
Youth and Sports	Revenue and Cost	18.482.936.000 ISK
Youth centers	Revenue and Cost	1.447.070.000 ISK
Grants for Youth and Sport	Revenue and Cost	6.341.227.000 ISK
Total:		26.271.233.000 ISK

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<http://upplysingaveita.samband.is/dialog/varval.asp?ma=02106AES&path=../database/Arsreikningar/&lang=3&ti=06+%C6skul%FD%F0s%2D+og+%CD%FEr%F3ttam%E1l+++>

## **7. European Dimension of youth policy**

This section should outline how European strategies, policy commitments and programmes are implemented at the national level.

### **7.1 Council of Europe.**

There are number of projects and activities that are implemented at the national level. The Compass has been translated and has been promoted as democracy lesson in schools and among the youth sector. Compasito will also be translated soon and we hope that it will be used well as Compass. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has a Youth fund which youth organization can apply for various projects. Last year the fund put a special emphasies on democracy projects. Does your country contribute to the European Youth Foundation?<sup>5</sup>

### **7.2 European Union.**

#### *7.2.1 Implementation of the Youth in Action programme*

Evrópa unga fólksins is the National Agency in Iceland for Youth in Action, where young people from the age 13-30 can apply for grant making projects and receive advice. They also manage the Icelandic Eurodesk called Evróvísir.

<http://www.euf.is/euf/forsida/>

[http://euf.is/euf/evrovisir/um\\_evrovisi/](http://euf.is/euf/evrovisir/um_evrovisi/)

#### *7.2.2 Follow up of the EU Youth Strategy (2010 – 2018) on the national level*

Please describe if there is a national strategy for following up the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018).

Not applicable as Iceland is not a full member state for The European Union

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<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Ms. Valgerður Þórunn Bjarnadóttir

## 8. Further sources of information on youth policy in Iceland

Please list relevant websites and print publications (not older than two years)

The Parliament of Iceland – Althingi <http://www.althingi.is/>

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture <http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/>

UMFÍ – Icelandic Youth Association <http://www.umfi.is/>

Youth in Action – Iceland – Evrópa unga fólksins <http://www.euf.is/euf/forsida/>

BÍS – The Icelandic Scout Association <http://www.skatar.is/vefur/default.asp>

KFUM&K (YMCA) <http://www.kfum.is/>

LÆF- The Icelandic Youth Council <http://www.aeska.is/>

ÍTR – Sport and Leisure council of Reykjavík <http://www.reykjavik.is/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-3693/>

Iceland has Sport and Leisure councils in almost every town, links from <http://www.samband.is/sveitarfelogin/>