

# Multicultural Congress

## 2012

**What do immigrants in Reykjavik say?**



Reykjavíkurborg  
Human Rights Office

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## I Introduction:

The Multicultural Congress was held for the second time, on November 10, 2012 in the Reykjavík City Theatre. This was a project by the Reykjavík Human Rights Office to motivate immigrants in the city to express their critiques with regards to their access to information and services that the city currently offers and to suggest possible resolutions for facilitating an easier and mutual integration for them and the Icelandic society.

This year, the main objectives are:

- ✓ To enhance Reykjavík's multicultural society and to create a conference for immigrants.
- ✓ To encourage immigrants to speak out for their rights.
- ✓ To increase networks among immigrants and interconnection between the City of Reykjavík and immigrant communities.
- ✓ To help improve services for immigrants and to make them more efficient.
- ✓ To elect seven representatives of the Multicultural Council who will be significant advisors for the City of Reykjavík concerning immigrant issues.

The discussion on the congress this year focused on immigrant access to information. The results from their discussion will be introduced and will be used to improve services of the city, specifically in disseminating information more efficiently to immigrants.

## II Preparations for the Congress:

The Reykjavik Human Rights Office was appointed for the preparations, arrangements and execution of the congress. The Human Rights Council also appointed a working party for the preparations, which was consisted of:

- Margrét Kristín Blöndal from the Best Party
- Bjarni Jónsson from the Social Democratic Alliance
- Grazyna M. Okuniewska from the Independence Party
- Claudia Overesch from the Left-Green Movement
- Anna Kristinsdóttir, the Reykjavik Human Rights Director
- Jóna Vígdís Kristinsdóttir, the project manager of the Congress

The working party had a total of five meetings and had selected other counterparts who were also involved in the multicultural society, such as the current Reykjavik Multicultural Council, immigrant interest groups, and city employees who worked on immigrant issues.

## III Immigrant statistics:

All the information in this chapter is based on Statistics Iceland ([www.statice.is](http://www.statice.is)).

Immigrants are defined by Statistics Iceland (2009) as those who are born abroad with 2 foreign-born parents and 4 foreign-born grandparents. Second-generation immigrants are individuals who are born in Iceland but with both parents born abroad in addition to having grandparents who are born abroad.<sup>1</sup> On January, 2012, the first and second generation immigrant population<sup>2</sup> in Iceland was 28,326 or 8.9% of the

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Iceland. **Immigrants and persons with foreign background** 1996–2008, p. 15-16

<http://www.hagstofa.is/lisalib/getfile.aspx?ItemID=9077>

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Iceland. **Immigrants by sex and municipality**, 2012

total population, of which 12,974 lived in Reykjavík city. Immigrants who had gained Icelandic citizenship were included in this sum.

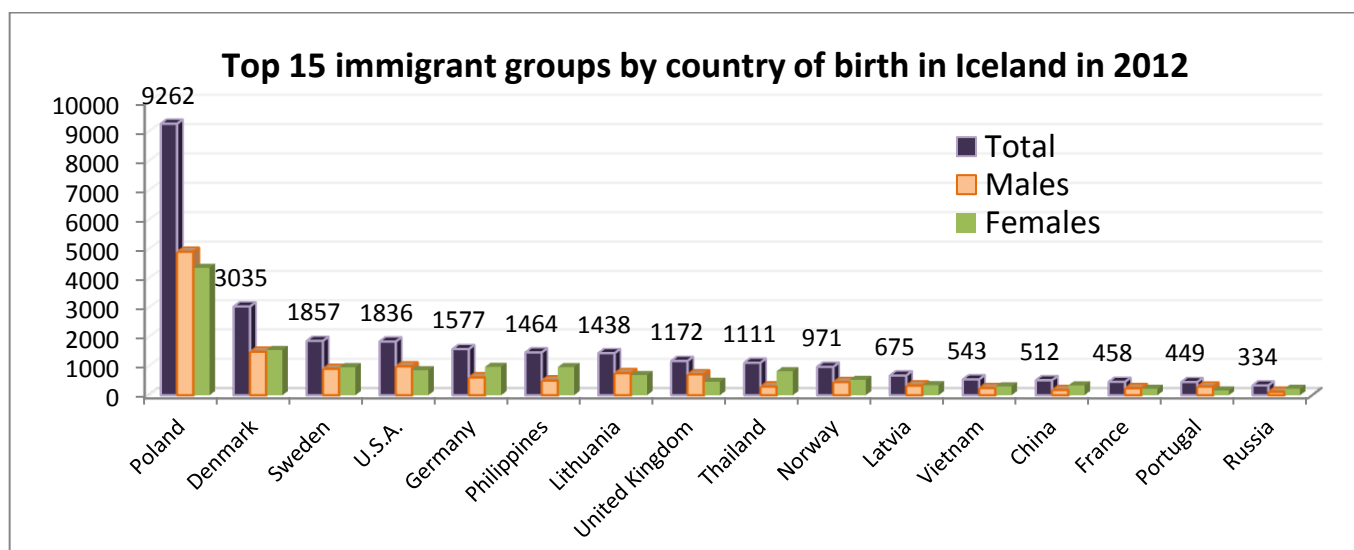


Figure 1

Figure 1 shows the top 15 immigrant groups based on their birth country in the beginning of 2012. There are 9262 Polish-born immigrants in Iceland and 3033 are residents of Reykjavík. They continue to be the largest immigrant group in the city and in the country.

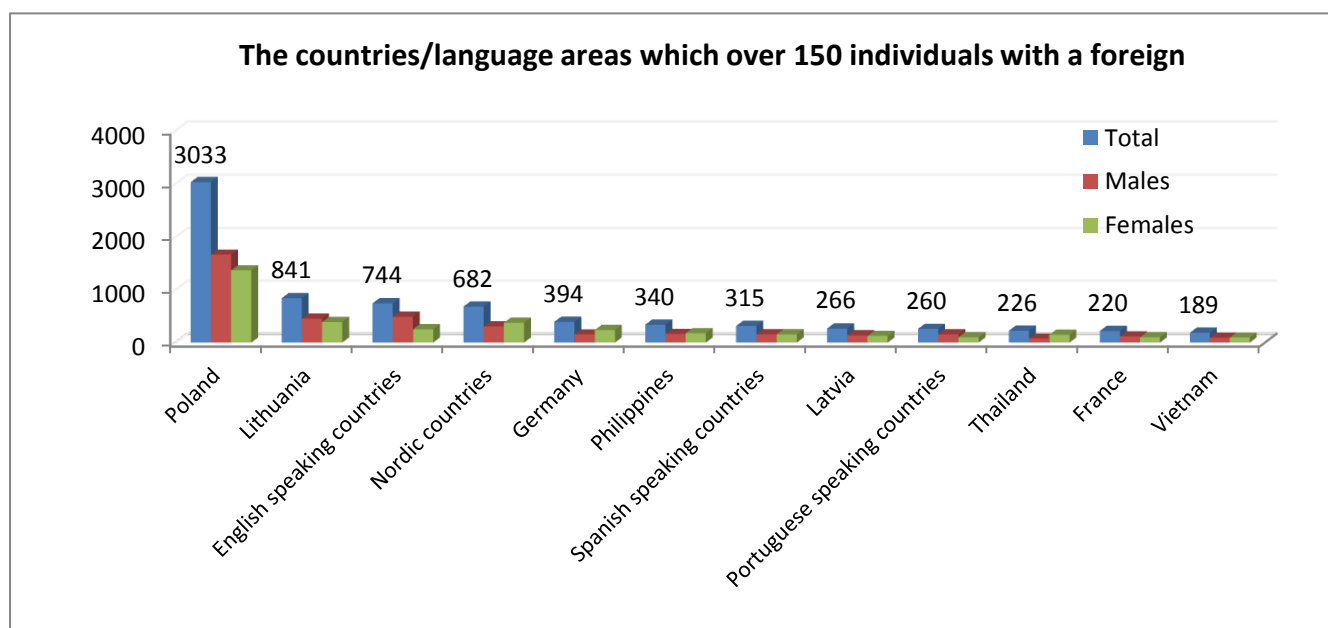


Figure 2

Figure 2 shows the countries or language areas<sup>3</sup>, which constitute over 150 individuals, in Reyjavik in the year 2012. Citizens from the Nordic countries are grouped together (Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland), as well as English speaking countries (Australia, Barbados, U.K., U.S.A., Ireland, Canada, New Zealand, and Jamaica), Portuguese (Portugal, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Brazil and Angola), and Spanish (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela) speaking countries.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Iceland. Population by sex, municipality and citizenship, 2012



Figure 3

Figure 3 shows a total of [8,679](#) immigrants who gained Icelandic citizenship since 1991. The most number of immigrants who gained Icelandic citizenship was in the year 2008 and it has decreased in the years thereafter<sup>4</sup>. Throughout the years 1991-2011, there had been 3619 immigrant men and 5060 women who gained Icelandic citizenship.

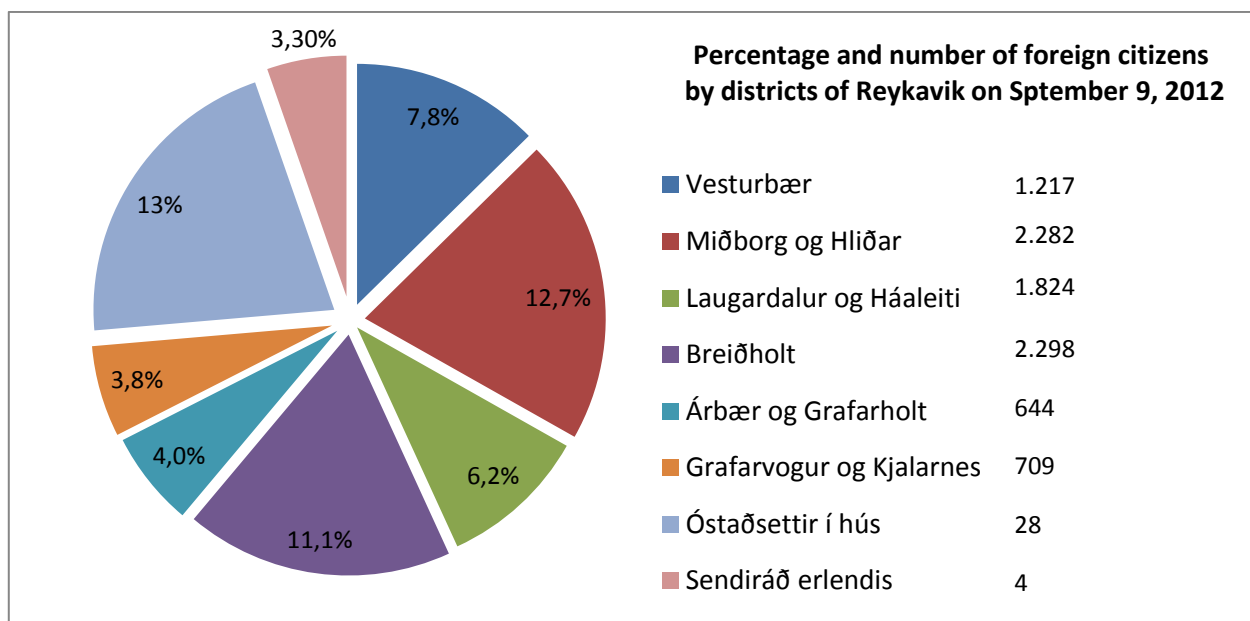


Figure 4

Figure 4 shows the percentage of foreign citizens<sup>5</sup> within each district of Reykjavík. A total of 9006 foreign citizens or 7.6% of the total population are in the city. The districts Miðborg and Hlíðar and Breiðholt have the highest number of residents. Immigrants with Icelandic citizenship are not included in this figure.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Iceland **Foreign citizens gaining Icelandic citizenship by former citizenship, sex and age 1991-2011**

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Iceland. **Percentage and number of foreign citizens by districts of Reykjavík on September 9, 2012.** Information specifically requested by the Reykjavik Department of Welfare.

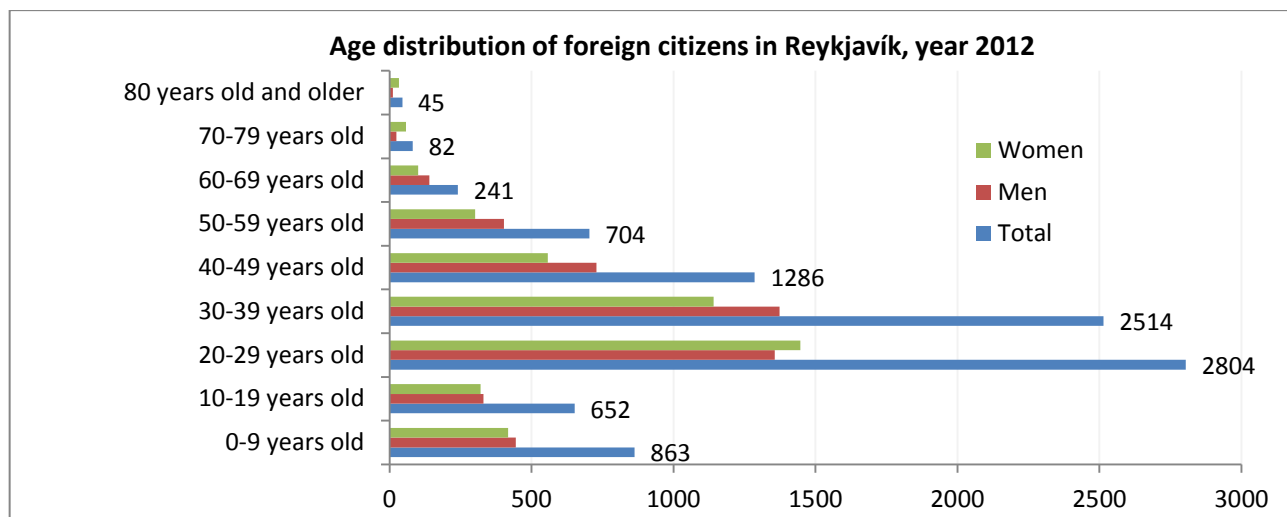


Figure 5

Figure 5 shows the age distribution of foreign citizens<sup>6</sup> in Reykjavík in which the age group 20-29 years old remains to be the largest group.

#### IV Arrangements of the Multicultural Congress:

The Multicultural Congress was advertised in newspapers, the city of Reykjavík's website and Facebook page, mailing lists and other institutional websites concerning immigrants. In addition, printed materials were distributed in various places. These advertisements were translated into 5 languages (English, Icelandic, Polish, Lithuanian and Filipino). Over 100 participants registered for the congress via the Reykjavik Human Rights Office's email while about 200 claimed to join the conference on the Congress' Facebook event page.

For the discussions, participants were grouped together into 14 tables. There were up to 10 participants per table, each with its own moderator who facilitated the discussion and a secretary who was provided with a laptop to take down notes. There were 8 languages offered and participants were asked which one they preferred upon registration: English, Icelandic, Spanish, Polish, Vietnamese, Filipino, Russian and Lithuanian. Most of the moderators and secretaries of the respective languages were trained before the congress by Hulda Karen Daníelsdóttir, an educational counsellor.

Languages	Population
English	744
Filipino	340
Lithuanian	841
Polish	3033
Russian	103
Spanish	315
Vietnamese	189
<b>Total</b>	<b>5565</b>

Table 1

This table shows the number of people with foreign citizenship in Reykjavík whose countries have the following official languages. Immigrants who have gained Icelandic citizenship are not included in these figures. These languages were used in the congress. Those who wished to participate but whose languages were not offered were welcomed to join either the English or Icelandic speaking tables.

The discussion among participants was divided into two parts, an hour before and after lunch. The first discussion was focused on immigrants' experiences about community

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Iceland. **Population by sex, municipality, citizenship and age**, 2012

education, culture and arts, democratic participation, sports and recreation, media and citizens' rights and responsibilities. The second discussion centered more on their views about their means of getting information and how to improve their access to information on various fields such as media, government institutions, non-government organizations and publications. A mind cloud was handed to each table wherein participants could take down or draw their best ideas, suggestions, and comments from their discussion. These mind clouds were collected along with all the notes from secretaries and then later on translated into English and Icelandic.

During the lunch break and throughout the whole congress, information stalls were accessible to participants, which were located near the entrance. These stalls were composed of public institutions, non-government organizations and etc. who are working with and for immigrants.

#### **Information centre:**

- The City of Reykjavík – services for immigrants
  - Reykjavík Human Rights Office
  - Spice
  - City Service Centre of Breiðholt
  - City Service Centre of Miðborg and Hlíðar
  - School and Recreation Department
  - Kampur Leisure Centre
  - City Library
  - Reykjavík City Museum
- Mímir Continuous Education
- Informacje.is - News and current affairs website in Polish
- Icelandic Human Rights Centre
- Directorate of Labour
- Language School SKOLI.EU
- Equality Centre
- Multicultural and Information Centre
- Mother Tongue Association on Bilingualism
- Convergence of Cultures
- Family Friend project
- W.O.M.E.N.
- Víðsýni and Vision News Media

## **V The Multicultural Council:**

Elections for the Multicultural Council were organized and implemented by the Reykjavík Human Rights Office. The laws and regulations for the council were stated in September, 2012. The council is a voluntary serve as immigrant representatives for two years. Any immigrant above 18 years of age and has a legal residence in Reykjavík can become a candidate. The seven candidates with the highest votes would be elected as members of the council and the next seven candidates would be substitute representatives. To secure the diversity of elected candidates, there should be no more than two candidates from the same country within the elected council. And same rule applies among the substitute representatives. However, the structure of the main representatives should not have an effect on the substitutes. Therefore, it is

allowed to have one or two representatives from the same country in the council and then another one or two from yet the same country as substitute representatives.

Advertisements for Multicultural Council candidates began in September and ended on October 20. A total of 15 candidates presented themselves for the elections and were advertised on the website of Reykjavík. On November 5th, they introduced themselves to voters in an open-meeting at Iðnó Theatre and Restaurant.

Reykjavík residents with foreign citizenship, Icelandic citizens born abroad and foreign citizens born in Iceland, 18 years old and older were allowed to vote. An identification card was necessary to be shown upon voting. Pre-election day voting was held both on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of November, from 10am to 3pm at the City Hall. The Election Day was on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November from 10am-3pm at the City Theatre. Voters were allowed to choose up to seven candidates from the list of 15. The electoral committee later announced the new representatives on November 12<sup>th</sup>.

The Multicultural Council for 2012-2014:

- Candace Alison Loque (Philippines)
- Aleksandra Chlipala (Poland)
- Jessica Abby VanderVeen (U.S.A.)
- Harald Schaller (Germany)
- Tung Phuong Vu (Vietnam)
- Juan Camilo Roman Estrada (Columbia)
- Josephine Wanjiru (Kenya)

Substitute representatives:

- Ronald Surban Fatalla (Philippines)
- Natalia Boyko (Russia)
- Godson U.O. Anuforo (Nigeria)
- Amir Mulamuhic (Bosnia)
- Luiza Klaudia Potuczek (Poland)
- Agnieszka Sienkiewicz (Poland)
- Rey LeClerc Sveinsson (Puerto Rico)

More information about the Reykjavik Multicultural Council is found at: [www.reykjavik.is/mcc](http://www.reykjavik.is/mcc)

## VI The Results

The key findings from the discussion in the Multicultural Congress are revealed in this chapter. The full replies from each group can be seen in the Appendix along with information on the languages spoken in respective groups of participants.

### VI.A Community Education

*What information do immigrants need when you arrive to Iceland?*

The information that the participants mostly needed when they arrived was information on their mother tongue about permits, job opportunities, their rights, public offices, health, education, parenting, insurances, housing, bank information, tax reports and organizations. They also discussed the need to know where to get information and who to talk to. Furthermore, there was a general emphasis on the importance



to learn the Icelandic language, culture and history, especially to those who did not have Icelandic partners or relatives and might not have a direct link into the Icelandic society.

*How did you get that information?*

Most participants claimed they would typically get information from websites of public institutions, Icelandic spouses or relatives, and other immigrants from the same country especially “the contact person who brought me to Iceland”. Some of them claimed they would be informed by employees of public institutions, Facebook pages and groups, booklets from the airport and city centres, employers and colleagues and Icelandic classes. One participant claimed she received a step-by-step handbook on what to do upon arrival into the country from the company which hired her.

*How can information be improved?*

Almost all the groups complained that they would often get different or wrong information from various places and so it would be necessary to have an information centre for foreigners that could act as an overall information database in different languages for immigrants and public institutions, where there are counsellors, and an updated or modernized website.

- ✓ Centralized centre for immigrants in the capital region which is more supported by and in collaboration with the local government and other organizations.
- ✓ Short advertisements in newspapers and brochures using different languages, which are for free and often delivered to households, are great tools for spreading information
- ✓ Available brochures in the airport as soon as people arrived in Iceland.
- ✓ Workplaces should send their foreign employees to Icelandic classes during working hours.

## VI.B Access to Cultural events

*Do you know what is available? Do you go to such events?*

The majority implied that they were aware and that they participated in cultural events. They also recognized the importance of integrating into Icelandic society thru taking part to such events. Few participants asserted, however that older generations would only go to events where their mother tongue would be spoken.

*Where do you get information?*

Most obtained information about these events through reading printed materials, using Facebook and other websites, and from other people. A few of them acquired information through television, swimming pools, public libraries and immigrant communities.

*If you don't participate, what prevents you from participating?*

The three main reasons why participants could not go to cultural events were because these events cost too much, information tended not to be clear and inaccessible, were not published with enough notice, and lack of time due to work and familial duties. Other popular reasons were language barrier, laziness and inaccessibility for the ones with young children.

## VI.C Democratic Participation

*Do you keep up with what's happening in Icelandic society?*

There were varying responses to this question. A few claimed yes, others somewhat, and the rest not at all. They also said that understanding politics was difficult and they don't have access to information: “we need to learn more about the constitution before we could even take part in it”.

*Do you vote?*

Many of the participants could vote and even some intended to vote once they gained their Icelandic citizenship. However, those who disputed that they did not vote gave reasons such as not being an Icelandic citizen, not being aware of voting rights, not being informed, and feeling insecure even after they gained Icelandic citizenship: “I don’t participate because I feel like it’s not my place”.

*Do you go to meetings? (E.g. meetings in the school for parents, meeting held for the citizens of the municipality, political meetings, meetings held in the house where you live)*

Some replied that they tended to go to such meetings. Other participants claimed that they would regularly go to gatherings related to schools and religion. Others implied no but they were interested. A few said they should organize such meetings themselves.

*Are you interested in participating but do not for some reason? If yes, what is stopping you?*

They generally replied that they were interested. Various reasons were mentioned, and the most frequent reason was that immigrants were being ignored. “We can’t participate because we are not involved in the discussion, and we’re not taken seriously” said one participant. They also pointed out that language barrier prevents them from participating and that immigrants themselves should do better. There were three main suggestions for this:

- ✓ The Multicultural Council should direct this problem.
- ✓ There should be an organized introduction by ALL the political parties to immigrants so they could choose later on.
- ✓ Immigrant communities should be willing to organize an assembly that would address this issue among many other things.

**VI.D Sports and Recreation***Do you know what kind of sports and recreation are available in Iceland? Do you engage in such activities?*

Participants were divided in this topic. Some were knowledgeable about what’s available but others not. Most go to swimming pools and gym and no more. Some named other activities like football, knitting clubs, hiking and climbing, dancing workshops, volunteer work, etc. Others would like to go to such activities but there’s not enough information on activities for adults.

*Where do you get information on these activities?*

Immigrants seemed to get information mostly on Facebook groups, especially groups that were for immigrant parents, and internet websites like mbl.is and reykjavik.is. Others received information from work, from other people, church, libraries, schools and immigrant communities.

*If you do not take part, what is stopping you?*

The main reason turned out to be the lack of time because of irregular working hours and familial responsibilities. The next most popular reason was the lack of motivation or interest and lack of information: “what is available, how much is refunded, how much are the benefits”. Then they mentioned that these activities were expensive, they experienced a language barrier and that it could be, “difficult to be welcomed in existing groups”.

Furthermore, cultural differences were discussed in the groups such as participating in these activities was uncommon for some cultures. Another group revealed that people tended to be banned from sports and recreational places as “kids might be afraid of them”, or “they stared too much at women”.

## VI.E Media

*Do you read newspapers or check news-websites in Icelandic?*

The majority affirmed that they read newspapers and news-websites in Icelandic like visir.is, mbl.is, and fréttablaðið. Some of them go to the newspaper-sessions at the library or use Google translate. Others suggested that news podcasts translated in different languages would be great.

*Do you read about Icelandic issues on websites that are in English or Polish, for example on the city's website or on informacje.is?*

The majority again affirmed that they did. Almost all the groups read Grapevine, others named Iceland Review, Informacje.is, Islandia.org.pl, and Russian websites. However a group of participants stated that even though they read the news, they would unlikely “get the full information that they needed, about what’s going on”.

*Do you listen to the news on the radio?*

The participants were divided in this question although more participants claimed yes than no. Participants listened to the news on the radio while driving and sometimes at home. The others who didn’t listen explained that they couldn’t understand much.

*Do you watch news on TV? If not, why?*

Most participants affirmed that they were likely to watch news on TV but not everything. Those who claimed no, explained that they didn’t have television, or because of language barrier and lack of time. A group stated that, “it would really be good to have English subtitles on Icelandic news; we are even prepared to pay for it.”

## VI.F Citizen’s rights and responsibilities

*Do you find it desirable to get Icelandic citizenship?*

The majority of the participants explained that they had grown to be attached to Iceland. They have family here and considered this as home. These were the main reasons why they felt it necessary to apply for Icelandic citizenship. Specifically for immigrants who were not from EEA, they would gain more rights and benefits as an Icelandic citizen. They added that it would make traveling to other countries easier and that it would end the complicated processing of permits. A group of participants asked what it meant to have an Icelandic citizenship and then pointed out that immigrants applying for this should have civic education. The ones who chose not to have Icelandic citizenship justified that they were not staying in the country for a long time and others were in a dilemma as they would have to sacrifice their previous citizenship.

*Do you know what requirements must be met in order to get it? Do you think there is a lack of information on those requirements?*

The majority affirmed that they were aware about the requirements although some felt that the list was insufficient or lacking, while others argued that there was no shortage of information but there was unfavourable attitude the employees at the Directorate of Immigration.

*Do you find the application process complicated?*

Most participants thought that the process was complicated and that it took too long and was expensive whereas others argued that the process in Iceland was better than in other countries with “less bureaucracy and better technology.”

*Do you have any comments on the application process?*

Participants mentioned that some of the requirements were quite unfair such as: a foreign citizen shouldn't have to be too dependent on Icelandic spouse and wait number of years to apply for Icelandic citizenship. It could be harder for foreign citizens who wouldn't have access to their embassies in Iceland; and there's a need for legal representation and support for refugees and asylum seekers. They also suggested the following:

- ✓ Information about the application process to be translated in different languages especially for elderly immigrants.
- ✓ Information should be more accessible in other institutions
- ✓ There should be booklets about citizenship and civic education
- ✓ Information as to which office and representatives to approach if there's questions

**VI.G Information for immigrants***Where do you want to access the information needed: on the web, on brochures, by meeting with consultants, or in some other way?*

It was generally agreed that information should be available in diverse ways (through websites, Facebook, consultants and brochures) to accommodate the different needs of people so it needs to be translated in different languages. "Websites are generally insufficient; esp. English translations do not mirror the Icelandic texts." The most common emphasis discussed among all the groups of participants was to establish a centre for immigrants to have all the information in one place.

*What kind of information do you find being most important?*

The 3 most popular themes discussed were about:

- ✓ Occupational issues: where to get jobs, workers' rights, taxes, unions
- ✓ Medical and health services
- ✓ Rights and responsibilities: legal advice especially on issues like violence

Other kinds of information mentioned were about all kinds of changes or current affairs, cultural events in advance, school information, parenting matters, transportation matters, permits, how to invest in oneself and information for special cases of immigrants like for refugees and asylum seekers. They also insisted on getting correct and consistent information, which was not always the case.

*Suggestions on ways to improve information geared towards immigrants?*

- ✓ The main suggestion among all the groups of participants was to establish a centralized information centre with better performance and comprehensive, interactive and up-to-date website with different translations. Although a counter argument followed: "why should one learn Icelandic if I [one] can get everything in English?!"
- ✓ Other groups talked about immigrants needed to be more active and collaborative towards immigrant organizations. They could organize more meetings like this Multicultural Congress to be able to stimulate discussion and reach the appropriate authorities who could present themselves in these meetings.
- ✓ The Multicultural Council's role was talked to be important in this process of information dissemination.
- ✓ Information should be available where immigrants frequently go, such as at bus stations, workplaces, Kolaport, etc.

## VI.H How is the exchange of information between immigrants?

*Do you give practical information to each other? Is that information usually reliable?*

Most of the participants claimed that they tended to share practical information and give advices to each other, especially among friends and in social networking websites. “Sometimes one gets really specific question and one doesn’t know how to help where to direct someone.” This type of information varies and it usually needs to be verified but others confirmed that in most cases the information is correct.

*Are you paying for practical information?*

Most participants asserted that they didn’t pay for this kind of information but some people say that “it’s not unheard of, to pay for information,” and a group talked about their willingness to hire interpreting services in some cases.

## VI.I How do you reach people who are isolated?

*Can you give us advice on that? What ways are possible?*

- ✓ Information dissemination in workplaces, schools, churches, university, social centres, cultural events and in other special interest groups like W.O.M.E.N. story circle and in voluntary services in different immigrant circles.
- ✓ Organize informative meetings.
- ✓ Bilingual/multilingual and culturally competent representatives whom people can trust and reach easily.
- ✓ Sending mails and reaching social networking websites.
- ✓ Short articles in free newspapers about announcements translated in different languages.
- ✓ Mandatory home visits and phone calls for one-one-one information dissemination but it may breach privacy rights.

## VI.J The media and their coverage on immigrants

*Are you aware of the media coverage on immigrants? If yes, how do you feel/think about it?*

The most common response among the participants in all groups was that the media coverage on immigrants tended be negative as it generally created hostility and fear towards immigrants and created negative stereotypes. Newsworthiness tended to be biased with wrong information wherein immigrants were misrepresented.

It was also mentioned that there should be more coverage on positive matters about immigrants and the scopes should be more inclusive. It appeared to other participants as though immigrant coverage in the media was generally non-existent.

*Is there a difference in the coverage of women on the one hand and men on the other?*

Some participants claimed that men got more negative attention while women’s issues were generally positive and that there were more groups and associations for immigrant women. Others thought that coverage were quite equal.

*Can we influence the media? If yes, how do we do that?*

There was a general affirmation that immigrants could influence the media by becoming more active. This should be one of the jobs of the Multicultural council to be the contact persons of Media. But it

would help if the Icelandic media talked with immigrants and not just about them: “It is important that the media can use information not just from Icelandic newscasters, but also from foreign newscasters too”.

An upcoming news website was introduced: Víðsýni-vision which would be the information media by Icelanders and immigrants collaboratively for everyone.

#### VI.K Government institutions

*Can institutions improve their communication and information? If yes, then how?*

- ✓ Better translations in all government websites which mirror the Icelandic texts and not just summaries.
- ✓ Cultural competence of staff is needed
- ✓ The information from employees need to be consistent, correct and clear
- ✓ The information in Reykjavík website is difficult to find – proofreading for immigrants is needed
- ✓ Make use of immigrant professionals

#### VI.L Non-government organizations associated with immigrants

*Are they doing a good job? Can they do better?*

Most claimed that NGOs were doing a great job although some were unfamiliar with such organizations. NGOs tend to be scattered so there is a need for a centre. It is very useful that most of the organizations use Facebook. However, NGOs and immigrants need to work together because others are not familiar with their services. Some participants have established or are establishing NGOs.

*Are they reaching immigrants in general or only particular groups?*

They stick to their specific groups.

*Should they gain more support and if yes, then how?*

- ✓ The government should offer temporary free working space for NGOs
- ✓ More subsidies from the government
- ✓ Immigrants need to be actively participating in these organizations and recommend them to more people

#### VI.M Publications

*Have you seen or read the brochures that have been published for immigrants?*

Some groups were familiar with brochures like “First Steps”, “Your rights”, about mother tongue and work in Iceland, whereas other groups were not: “Are they available? Where are they?”

The ones, who weren’t aware of these published texts, asserted that the brochures needed to be more accessible, distributed to immigrants and on posted on the internet.

*Is there a need for brochures on any specific topic, if yes then what?*

General information should be in one place. There should be Information about practical matters like: medical, legal, tax, occupational, educational matters, how to get loans, addresses of all public institutions, etc.

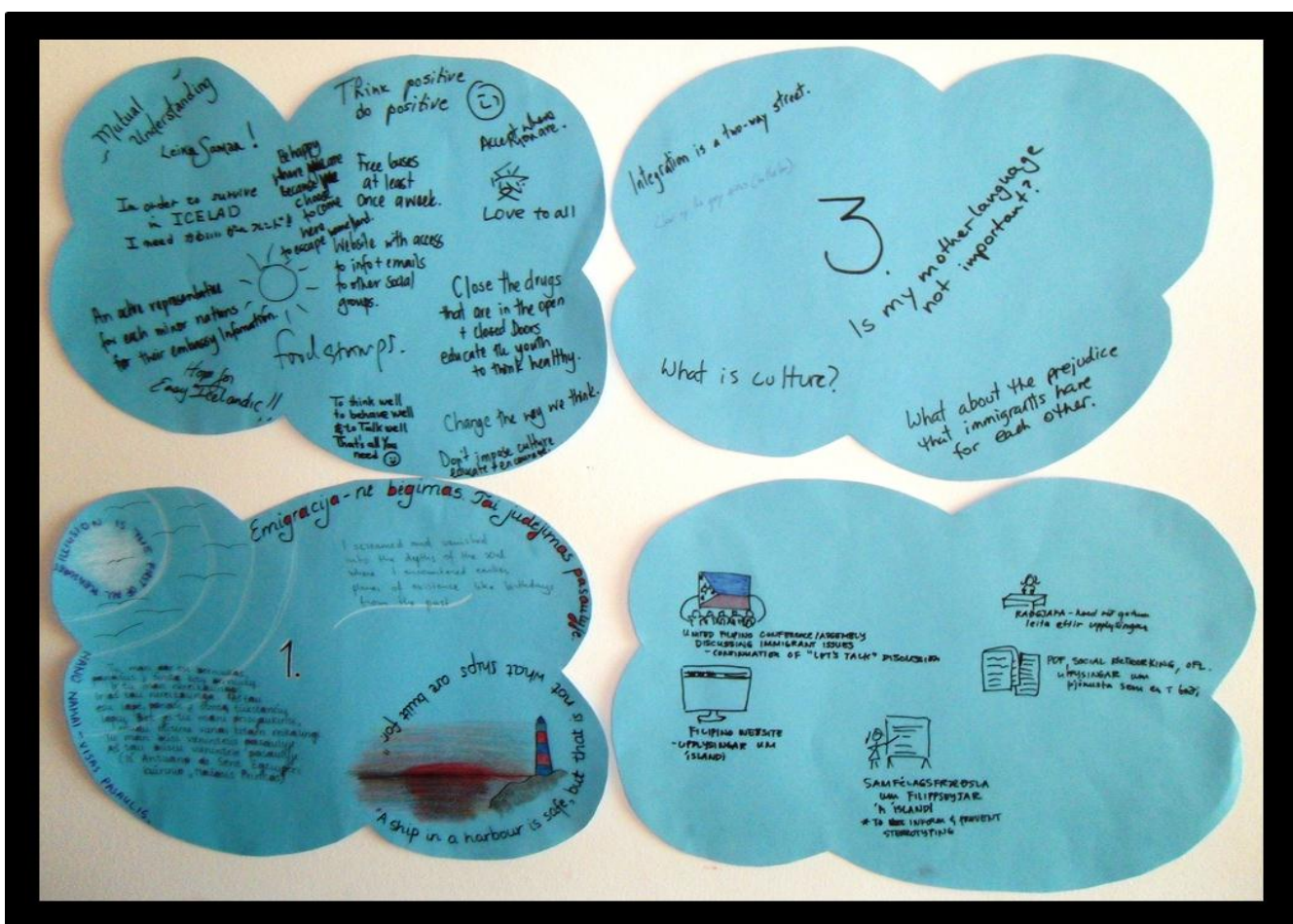
*Are brochures a better info material or is the web better or is it necessary to use both?*



Both should be available to accommodate the diversity of people. The brochures should not appear in accidental places but in familiar ones. A website, like 'immigrant.is', could be good wherein people could send out questions and get precise answers.

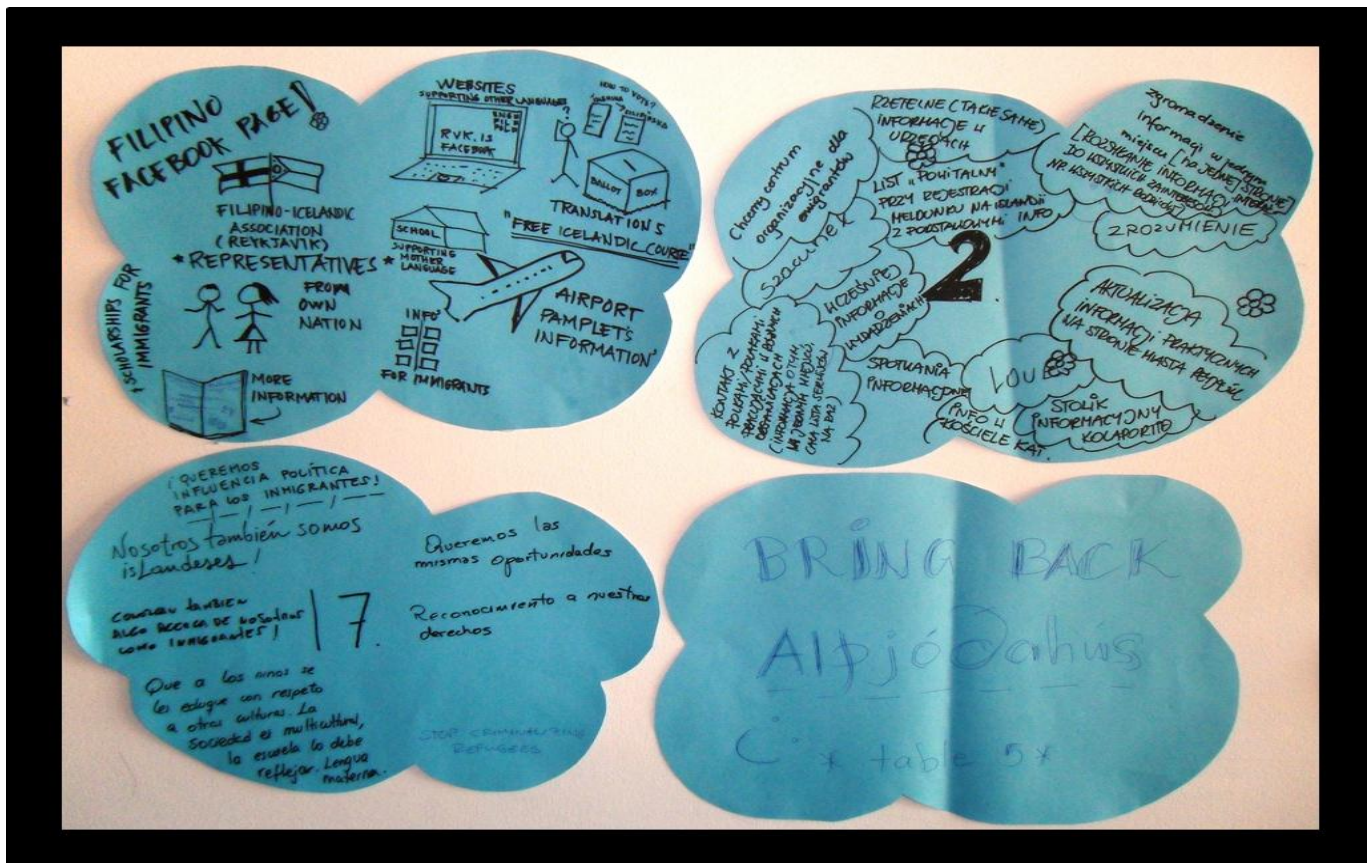
### VI.N The Clouds

Each group was given a cloud-shaped paper and participants were encouraged to draw or write down the best ideas, comments or suggestions by the end of their discussions. The full texts (translated) can be found in the Appendix. The clouds are shown here:

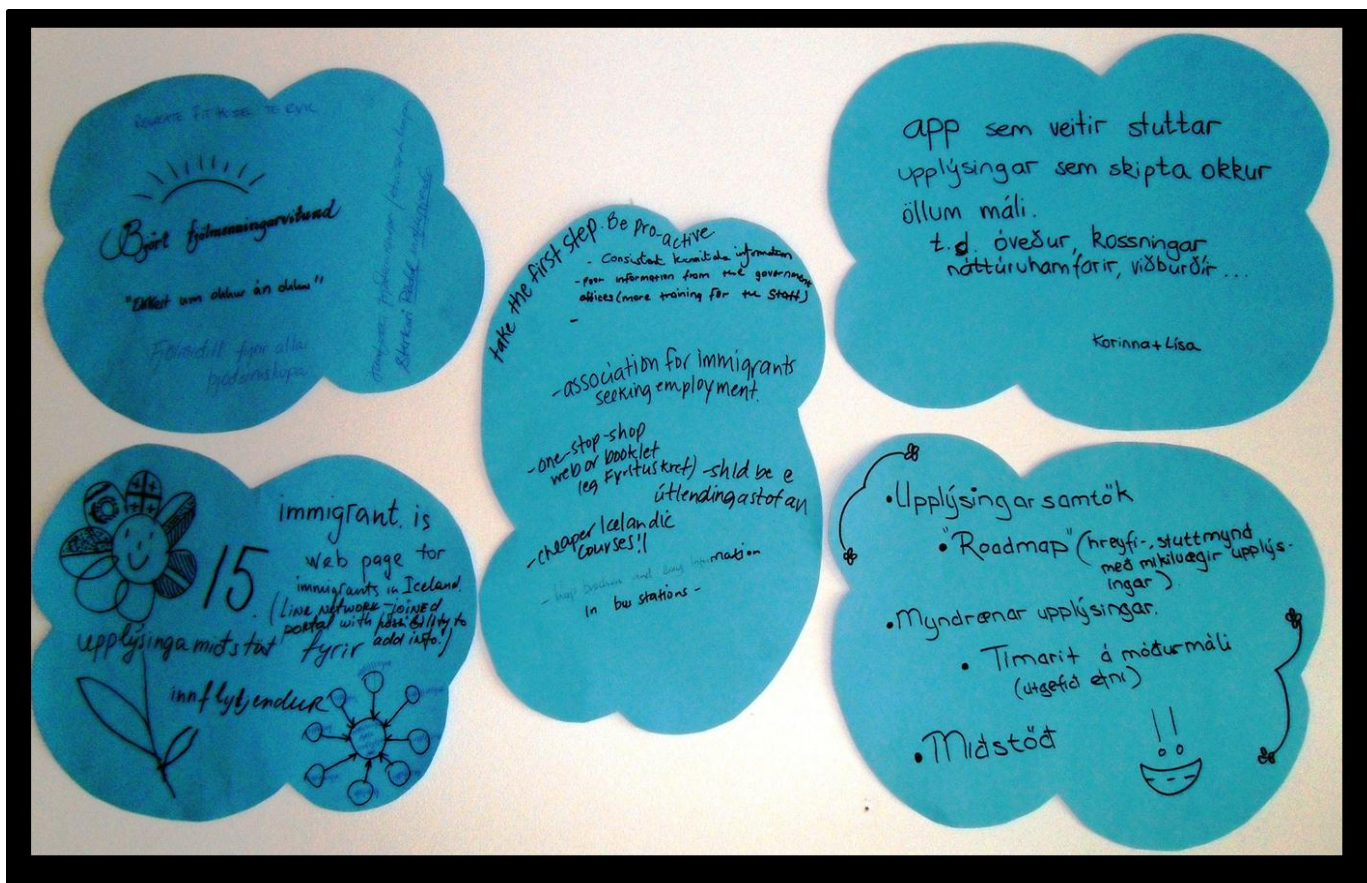


Picture 1





Picture 2



Picture 3



## VII Next steps

The results will be reported to the Human Rights Council and Multicultural Council of Reykjavík. It will then be introduced to the City Council and to other departments within the city. It will subsequently be presented at an open meeting in which the participants of the Congress would specifically be invited along with the media. Copies of the report will be sent to the ministries and institutions of the government.

Lastly, the Reykjavik Human Rights Office in collaboration with the Multicultural Council of Reykjavik will work on proposals for improvement based on the report.

## VIII Appendix

Here are the questions asked among the participants of the congress, year 2012 and the answers gathered from each group. These notes are revealed here as they were written by the respective groups although some responses were translated. The responses are marked according to the languages spoken on each table:

**English = 4 tables**

**Filipino = 2 tables**

**Icelandic = 1 table**

**Lithuanian = 1 table**

**Polish = 2 tables**

**Russian = 1 table**

**Spanish = 1 table**

**Vietnamese = 1 table**

### Group work before noon

#### VIII.A Community education - How does society work, i.e. values, traditions and customs.

##### VIII.A.1 What information do you need when you arrive to Iceland?

###### English:

- Cultural values are important to our well-being, again, it would be helpful to have a central institution that provides general information – in schools the history of Iceland is taught and it's very valuable to learn. One person talks about refugees who are signed up in language classes and they have finished Icelandic 1, 2, 3 and yet they are still thrown out of the country. Why is money being spent and why are they investing their time studying when they are then just thrown out of the country?
- It is very important to understand the culture of a place, cultural intelligence is important, you can read about it, but you really need to go through the process and learn it properly.
- One person says she finds it a tricky subject to talk about unified cultural values because we are all individuals and might not share values so strictly. Icelanders also have a cultural baggage.
- We are all humans, and we all need the feeling of belonging somewhere, he is married to an Icelander, but he worries about those who do not have that link straight into Icelandic cultural society.
- If a new person comes to Iceland they should try to obtain as much information about the culture to stave off a culture shock.

- One person says H.I. has a semester course for foreigners (exchange students) – Cultural studies – that would be ideal for those who actually live here or plan to live here and it is taught in English and covers a great deal of the culture in Iceland and its history.
- Things surrounding life as a parent in Iceland
- About your society of origin.

**Filipino:**

- Job opportunities and qualifications
- Banking. Information about Online banking, etc.
- Everything else
- The Multicultural Council and Alþjóðahus (Intercultural Centre) are two very important tools for that.

**Lithuanian:**

- How to get the social security number, about tax system, about available jobs, apartments for rent, possibilities to learn the language.

**Polish:**

- About work, address registration, our rights, websites, public offices location, reliable information from the public offices, driving license actualization, information about health service
- How to apply for kennitala, how to find job and how to apply for it, insurances, health service, Icelandic tax report, permit for stay, doctor certificates and our rights

**Russian:**

- Information on mother tongue: about education, Icelandic courses, medical services, health system, banking services and payment of bills, about available jobs, labour unions, available apartments, Directorate of Labour, registration and social security number, religions, working rights, driver's license, education system, immigrant communities and organizations in Iceland.

**Spanish:**

- People need to get booklets about access to services, public life, private life, health, we need a centre of information where to go to ask for different issues, we need to know a person, a name, who could be responsible for giving information, and information where to find this person, use the media to advertised his/her location.

**Vietnamese:**

- Perspectives from big families
- Information about the educational system for children (playschool, day care, etc.)
- If it's possible to get grants or scholarships for schooling.
- Get information to be accessible for the elderly people, several people don't know how to use computers.
- Perspectives from individuals
- Social security number, medical check-up, education, tax reports, etc.

**VIII.A.2 How did you get that information?****English:**

- UTL, website
- Facebook, Reykjavik.is,

**Filipino:**

- Firstly they get information through people from the same country. People of the same origin are the first individuals who can relay information to the newcomers.
- One participant came to Iceland in 1993 to Ísafjörður, situation back then was very different. No information. But she had an Icelandic husband. Two participants say that information comes from spouses who are Icelanders therefore the Information flow was easier for them.
- Then participants mentioned the internet, social media. One particularly mentioned he had to be independent and develop self-awareness and confidence to learn and to reach the information from surroundings because he couldn't depend 100% on fellow Filipinos for information.

- Institutions are very welcoming towards newcomers; they will speak English to you and will help with informing immigrants on their rights as residents of Iceland. Self-interest, one must also have an open mind towards their surroundings and environment.
- One certain institution, the national hospital, upon hiring a Filipino nurse from the Philippines, sent out a step-by-step what to do, where to go before she arrived Iceland. She said that this person from the hospital was in charge of contacting foreign workers and informing them about their job and how to live in Iceland. And until now, she uses the handbook because it has a rather complete pack of information of what an immigrant should do upon moving to Iceland.
- Another participant complained that she didn't get this kind of information even though she's a nurse but she was brought to Iceland by her Filipino spouse. She has been here for 5 months and it was mostly difficult for her to get information about job opportunities as a nurse. She has just currently been certified as a nurse assistant and she will have to learn Icelandic to get certified as a nurse here.
- An opportunity in Icelandic classes before starting to work should be very helpful too, to be able to understand all the information which is mostly in Icelandic.
- One participant said she gained information through an Icelandic course in Námsflokkar.
- (We get information from) work, family, acquaintances who have experience in the process.

**Lithuanian:**

- Brochures (airport, city hall)
- Personal interest in obtaining information and other affairs
- Searching in the internet, people who I know, newspapers, websites of organizations
- Participating in events

**Polish:**

- From information flyers and booklets, friends and acquaintances, websites, offices, employers, "Foreign in Iceland" website on Reykjavik page or Facebook page.
- From other Polish speakers
- Internet.
- Public Forum on the internet
- Family
- Contact person who brought me to Iceland
- Asking directly in the public offices

**Russian:**

- Booklets in the Directorate of Immigration, internet, school for foreigners, National Registry, information booklets, and by asking friends

**VIII.A.3 How can information be improved?****English:**

- Learn from the mistakes, learn by the experiences.
- More point formed on website for those who might not enjoy reading long script or understand English well.

**Filipino:**

- It would be better to have information or pamphlets which have text in English or our own language.
- It would also be better if there's a lot of information at the airport or pamphlet to be able to know where to go and get documents and application forms. We hope we can have access to all the information and we need it in one place and not in different places.

**Icelandic:**

- There should be joint services for immigrants in the capital region because it is important to hear the voices of those who live in the neighbouring municipalities as well. The multicultural council should have been a collaboration of all the municipalities in the capital region. Social studies are necessary,

it may as well be compulsory for immigrants to have social studies, to know their rights and responsibilities are very important. An individual who doesn't know his/her rights is in a vulnerable position and people can easily take advantage of his/her innocence. A place like Alþjóðahús (Intercultural Centre) is lacking.

- **Workplaces should send their foreign employees to Icelandic classes during working hours. Support in school for children of immigrants who speak Icelandic as a second language.**
- Incorporate social and cultural studies in Icelandic classes. About the access to information, the immigrant should find right away where to find information.
- Collaboration between other immigrants, colleagues and employers. The information when you first come to Iceland: booklets are good things. Those who have learned to live in Iceland have to be advisers about what is needed and how information is given or offered to immigrants and how to get educated.
- A centre for immigrants is needed much like Alþjóðahús was (Intercultural Centre).
- When arriving into the country for the first time, one needs to go to several places, when it should be one place and be operated from there.
- A procedure is needed in the administration which concerns special cases of immigrants: for example, those who apply into schools and have a different educational background than the traditional one.

#### **Lithuanian:**

- Information should be updated if the presentation is delayed
- There is no system of information
- More information in websites of organizations
- To support organizations by providing them information
- Enhance the communication between organizations and local authorities
- References on the municipalities' websites which indicates the information in the Lithuanian language
- Information on events and politics in Lithuanian
- Positive thinking

#### **Polish:**

- Information Centre for Foreigners in Reykjavik, updated and modernized website with information for foreigners, informational meetings, courses, receiving papers with instructions from National Registry, more collaboration, through the church, information point at Kolaportið
- Information should to be updated and clear – very often we get different or wrong information in different places
- People should share information more
- Information Database of the key offices for immigrants should be connected

#### **Russian:**

- Create a website in Russian.

#### **Spanish:**

- We need that the multicultural council will be better supported by the city and other institutions. We need respect to diversity and respect for our opinions.

#### **Vietnamese:**

- A centre is needed, some kind of a centre that is accessible for both parties who want to obtain information or to reach one another.
- A place where people can call and get information in their own language, meet the person, counselling.
- A website with information about the whole process of immigration, what needs to be done upon arrival into the country, where to go to get the social security number and legal residence?

- People are usually directed to apply this and that document but aren't given more information where to get these documents.
- The information is there but people need to be informed where to find this information.
- Not through the Directorate of Immigration, but each municipality looks after their own group.
- It needs to appear to be accessible for everyone.
- Roadmap! Make it fun and not formal: Animation, for example or short videos to instruct people what to do.
- Information on Facebook, several people don't know about this.
- Distribute papers on their own mother tongue which is similar to Grapevine (work with other nationals and each nation can distribute papers in their own mother tongue).

#### VIII.B Access to cultural events (i.e. museums, concerts, movies, theatre, dance).

##### VIII.B.1 Do you know what is available?

###### English:

- Yes
- Yes, it is well-documented if you are aware of publications or have access to English speaking Icelanders

###### Filipino:

- We know of places like Harpa, Borgarbókasafn, The National Theatre, Museum in Hlemmur, Listarhúsið, Árbæjarsafn, Listasafn

###### Icelandic:

- Information about events in the papers, in many features and forms: for example, Grapevine, etc.
- Encourage institutions and companies who advertise about cultural events to have a few lines in different languages.
- If you want information about cultural events then you can go to libraries, and get help reading the papers.
- Study about the society through arts, visits to the museums, etc.
- People don't go to places like Kjarvalsstaðir, etc.
- A need to open up culturally-related Icelandic classes which organize people to go to museums, teach to Google Laxness in Polish for example.
- Different interests in arts and culture, a place where immigrants can go and participate in artistic projects, where to go to be in Mosaic, painting, several kinds of collections and arts, people need information about those.

###### Lithuanian:

- All sorts of cultural events (theatres, movies, concerts, shows), festivities, coffee houses
- Information is given with too short notice
- Those who want to find out information, they will find them. Iceland Air Waves off venue, Museum Nights, open events, events with free entrance, Cinema with English Subtitles or English language movies.

###### Russian:

- Yes.

##### VIII.B.2 Do you go to such events?

###### English:

- Yes
- Yes, it is important to integrate with local people in order to appreciate the event

**Lithuanian:**

- Theatre, cinema

**Polish:**

- If one is having some extra time for it
- Often they cost too much
- Language barriers keep people from participating in events, such as going to the theatre
- Information or announcement are coming too late
- Rather yes but older generation participate only in events where Polish is spoken

**Russian:**

- Sometimes but not everything.

**VIII.B.3 If yes, where do you get information on what is on?****English:**

- Library, newspapers
- Word of mouth, other foreigners, ads and billboards

**Filipino:**

- Participants get information through printed materials and TV.
- Participant 1 says Fréttablaðið is an important tool in finding cultural events as it is free and delivered to every household.
- Participant 2 says she finds info through internet, public libraries, Iceland review (news website in English)
- Participant 3 says he gets his info from other tourists (is a member of couch surfing club), and from other fellow Filipinos.
- Participant 4 says she gets information from the Filipino community
- Employees of the City of Reykjavík, we have a culture card (menningarkort) which we can use to have discounts and sometimes free-entrance to some venues.

**Lithuanian:**

- Facebook, advertisements on newspapers, television, acquaintances,
- Personal interest on looking for information

**Polish:**

- Facebook, Midi.is, Fréttablaðið, mbl.is, Grapevine, informacje.is, friends and acquaintances.
- 

**Russian:**

- Facebook, Russian social networking websites, brochures in libraries, newspapers for foreigners

**Vietnamese:**

- Information on Facebook, papers
- Workshops, swimming pools for example

**VIII.B.4 If not, what prevents you from participating?****English:**

- Too lazy to read the advertising in Icelandic language.
- Sometimes, it is not possible for me to accommodate my child's wagon to an event.

**Filipino:**

- Working hours are the main reason why they can't afford 'luxury' of theatre and museum visits. But it also comes down to self-interest.
- But it is really hard to go and watch because the flow of information is lacking. Sometimes, the entrance fee is too expensive.

- There should be a website for the Filipino community to be able get the information about events. Or even access in [www.reykjavikurborg.is](http://www.reykjavikurborg.is) in our language or Facebook page, schools (kindergarten, elementary and university).

**Lithuanian:**

- Difficulties in the language, price, lack of time

**Polish:**

- lack of time, money, other obligations and activities, sometimes lack of addresses on the advertisement of the events, feeling lazy

**Russian:**

- Lack of time, expensive, lack of information

**Vietnamese:**

- It varies if the person speaks Icelandic or not. For example, people who speak Icelandic can get information from the daily newspapers.
- For example, to have the movies subtitled.
- There could be more information in libraries and museums, shows, and be accessible.

**VIII.C Democratic participation - (i.e. Elections, meetings, politics, political and social debate)****VIII.C.1 Do you keep up with what's happening in Icelandic society?****English:**

- Somewhat
- No, I do not have cable television or a radio at this time.

**Filipino**

- Constitution amendments, we need to learn more about the constitution before we could even take part in it.
- Democratic involvement is complicated as understanding politics is very difficult

**Lithuanian:**

- We don't have full confidence on official institutions
- I'm interested in politics, I obtain information from the media

**Polish:**

- yes as much as I can

**Russian:**

- Immigrants don't participate in the political life mostly because of limited knowledge in the language.
- Lack of information in such events

**Spanish:** yes**VIII.C.2 Do you vote (when you have the right to do so?)****English:**

- One person says he votes – as he is a citizen of Iceland – but immigrants do not get information, for example on TV, like now there are primaries going on in the political parties but how many people know of this? Are people registered in the political parties? The media does not provide this information in languages outside Icelandic.
- Some yes some not.
- I certainly will when I have the rights.

**Filipino:**

- Yes about voting besides one: "I don't participate because I feel like it's not my place."
- We vote but most Filipinos don't vote because they have difficulties in understanding Icelandic, thus they lose interest to vote.
- Some find it hard to vote because they don't know what the voting is about, which haven't been explained and more information about it haven't been translated in English or own language.

**Icelandic:**

- A lot of immigrants don't vote, several of them don't show up at meetings, and think that it's not important. Maybe it's insecurity, or maybe even hostile attitudes from neighbours. Foreigners are taught poorly about political issues, etc. People don't know whether they can vote or not, they need to be educated about it. They need to be educated about politics and voting rights.
- Renters do not have voting rights in resident's associations.

**Lithuanian:**

- Lack of information in Lithuanian about the elections

**Polish:**

- Not if I'm not a citizen of Iceland

**Russian:**

- No because of lack of information in Russian. Not enough election campaigns.

**Spanish:**

- Yes, but some cannot yet.

**Vietnamese:**

- Voting: information is lacking for people who don't speak Icelandic or English. People don't know their voting rights, education and political parties.
- People should be invited to an educational meeting with everyone and not just for each political party, to make it neutral. So people can get information and then choose what they want to vote for.
- People don't know their rights
- Reach the younger generation too, give information through children and then they can give information to their parents.

**VIII.C.3 Do you go to meetings? (i.e. meetings in the school for parents, meetings held for the citizens of the municipality, political meetings, meetings held in the house where you live).****English:**

- Most of them are interested. Question is how much we can involve in these activities?
- Not at this time but in future will organise event related to this idea.

**Lithuanian:**

- I do participate,
- Personal interest
- Free interpreting services in such gatherings

**Polish:**

- Yes, for example in the meetings of local communities

**Russian:**

- No because of lack of information in Russian

**Spanish:**

- Yes!!

**VIII.C.4 Are you interested in participating but do not for some reason? If yes, what is stopping you?****English:**



- It can be hard to obtain the relevant information and there could be great positive changes done in order to include immigrants in the democratic process.
- Most people want to be able to follow democratic developments but the language barrier proves the main stumbling block.

**Filipino:**

- We should organize another 'Let's Talk' discussion among Filipinos in Iceland and create a sort of assembly wherein they can be informed of what they need to know and they can also express what needs to reach the authorities. A representative should act as the voice of Filipinos.
- Involvement and participation of all Filipinos in Iceland in issues like this. We need to do better!
- Most people are active in some activities like in churches and schools but not others like about politics.
- We cannot participate in most meetings because we are not involved in the discussion or just outside of it because we don't know what is being talked about. And sometimes, we are ignored by the Icelanders.

**Lithuanian:**

- Lack of information in Lithuanian about the elections
- Difficulties because of the language
- Transparency on information among political parties

**Polish:**

- Yes. Language skills prevent me from participating.

**Russian:**

- There is a will, but we do not participate because we don't feel that we are part of the Icelandic society. There is a lack of information in Russian.

**Spanish:**

- Icelandic people are afraid of foreigners; we are not taken seriously, even with university titles we feel discriminated for not being Icelanders. It is very hard to fight against the prejudices. We need better legislations and we need committees that organize the integration and will be able to direct our propositions to the congress.
- Multicultural Council needs real representative influence. A support does not exist for these groups, courses how to work on multicultural dialogue (Multicultural Council)
- When immigrants have organized themselves institutionally they haven't been taken seriously
- We need to change it culturally, legislation is not enough. It is psychologically difficult to become part of the community.

**VIII.D Sports and recreation (i.e. sports, workshops, choirs and dance)****VIII.D.1 Do you know what kind of recreation is available in Iceland?****English:**

- Yes, informed by job about some things.
- Some don't know where to search.
- A lot of info about this is gained by word of mouth.
- Informed by spouse. Difficult to find info without Icelandic spouse unless it's a pool!
- Difficult to find information on the net.
- Some problems with finding specific sports for example tennis
- 'Away from Home' group on Facebook is the main source for many
- Organisations or institutions are responsible for providing information regarding recreation, but no region should be left out, most information found is about Reykjavik.

- One person used to live in Keflavik where he attended a gym and played football, but they were stopped from using those services. 25 people wrote to the minister of the interior complaining about preventing them from using social services like the gym, but they made some poor excuses for not doing anything about it. One person asked why they were prevented from the gym, and they were told they stared too much at the women there. Some people do not have this direct access to activities. People were prevented from playing football in Keflavik and told that kids might be afraid of them!
- Another person says that they use the swimming pools and gyms in their neighbourhood.
- Another person talks about going to the pool and that they can access information on swimming pools websites, but they want to find yoga and other activities which is much harder to find information on
- Another person says they use the swimming pools, the hot tubs.
- Most of us know about it.
- Yes, aware of Salsa group and another person is part of a choir.

**Filipino:**

- What kind of activities are there? "I want to go to Zumba classes. I don't know where".
- There's a lot of information on reykjavikurborg.is, multimedia, schools, libraries (Borgarbókasafn, Gerðuberg), Church, work, and also word of mouth.

**Icelandic:**

- Social participation. Integration. It is important to be aware that social participation is a key in being an active participant in the society. In some societies, social participation is not known, for example in Poland and Thailand. People meet in their homes. Social activities are uncommon if any at all. It is needed to encourage people, look into the case, children dropping out of social participation, they play differently or they're impossible to talk with.
- Children are often shown an incorrect way, or even set aside. The will is often there but there are a lot of hindrances, sometimes geographically, ignorance, for example people don't know about the leisure card.
- Foreigners don't often get into teams like in football. An example is Africa United, where only foreigners involved.
- We need to start from the top, educate.
- Sports participation is determined by willingness.

**Lithuanian:**

- Lack of information for adult groups

**Polish:**

- Yes.

**Russian:**

- Sports events, handball, swimming, dance, Aikido, yoga, gym

**Spanish:**

- Only in Reykjavík, you need to have an interest, gym, swimming
- Some have took part but little
- I do know some offers but I go only to the swimming pool.
- Everybody goes to the swimming

**VIII.D.2 Do you engage in such activities?****English:**

- Hiking, pool, table tennis, board games, kids to football, football with friends, knitting club, gym, volunteering, climbing
- Yes. Chess, swimming

- see above

**Filipino:**

- Mostly no
- Only one participant attends workshops. Mostly dancing, hip-hop, zumba, jazz ballet.

**Lithuanian:**

- I participate but not everything

**Polish:**

- Yes, gym, yoga

**Russian:**

- Yes I do.

**VIII.D.3 If yes, where do you get information on those activities?****English:**

- Facebook, online, word of mouth\ask at work. Many people create their own groups because they can't find the info.
- Feel there is lack of formal sources
- From the internet. A lot of lectures. School or university.  
word of mouth

**Lithuanian:**

- Information for children are accessible in their schools

**Polish:**

- Yes, ja.is, mbl.is, visir.is, informacje.is

**Russian:**

- From our friends, school, work places, and from the Russian association

**Spanish:**

- Internet or talking with people once do you speak Icelandic

**VIII.D.4 If you do not take part what is stopping you?****English:**

- Lack of info in appropriate language
- Difficult to be welcomed in to existing groups
- Where do newcomers find info on volunteering? Ask the 'Away from Home' FB group.
- Another person speaks as a parent, for financial reasons she chooses to allow her son to go to guitar lessons and not do activities herself, it's also time constraints.

**Filipino:**

- Financing is tight for most the immigrants. Cultural barriers can also hamper foreigners from taking part in activities. Most immigrants are self-discriminatory.
- Workshops are expensive and some people have no interest.
- Irregular working hours are reasons why they can't participate.
- There's a lack of information on these activities == or they don't reach us!
- (reason why immigrants don't take part in leisure activities): People's priority is work, lack of money, lack of time, language barrier and responsibilities with the family

**Lithuanian:**

- What's available for adults, how much is refunded, how much are the benefits – lack of information in one place.

- Sports activities are too expensive (membership fees and sports clothes), poor compensation or benefits
- Personal interest

**Polish:**

- Yes, laziness, little interest, little motivation, little information

**Russian:**

- Price, lack of time

**Spanish:**

- Work, we do not have too much time to spend on recreation and familial obligations.

**VIII.E Media- how do you use the media?****VIII.E.1 Do you read newspapers or check news-websites in Icelandic?****English:**

- Yes i.e., mbl.is, television news, free Frettabladid print edition good,
- Yes, but not at first. News reading came with vocabulary
- Yes, use reading newspaper sessions at the library
- Yes, many read online news with Google translate, translations not good but readable.
- Most people attempt to read the paper
- Some sort of news podcast would be nice
- Closed caption on television \*in Icelandic\* would be nice to help learn Icelandic
- Mbl.is which most people read is written in difficult Icelandic, but most people read. Visir.is is easier Icelandic but not most foreigners read. Design of mbl.is better as a possible reason (both as online and print formats)?
- It would be really good to bring back the 'Folk' multi language newspaper that the Reykjavik council used to produce.
- Very often the news sources will get facts wrong about immigrants\immigrant issues, but will not correct their mistakes. Poor fact checking. Unnecessarily and constantly mention foreigner's nationality, particularly in criminal cases. This makes things difficult for foreigners. A media ombudsman\press council is needed to make complaints to when media outlets violate their own ethics code.
- We use Vísir (visir.is) a lot, people also obtain information from their own original countries
- Listen to radio and watch TV (one who has been here for 18 years)
- Read the Grapevine
- We read the Grapevine, and it's good to follow them on Facebook and comment on their news too. Mbl.is with an automated English translation. Many people have Icelandic spouses who can help them understand. It's also good to use Icelandic news as Icelandic language training.
- Yes, both newspaper & news-websites
- Yes, websites and grapevine read news online.

**Filipino:**

- (We get our information thru) the newspapers, television, social media and our co-workers.

**Lithuanian:**

- Reading newspapers on the internet: visir.is

**Icelandic:**

- The television is a very mis-used form of media. Talk shows about immigrant issues with immigrants participating in it would be very appropriate for discussion forums.
- Immigrants are invisible in the media. But their opinions on the country's issues are significant. If the demographic changes in the country are not considered, then politicians will lose their power.
- Translating news summaries in different languages is necessary. People barely know about the current events, like the news about the eruption of Eyjafjallajökull after several days, the financial crisis was on the news in their home countries and they get their news from there.
- The city of Reykjavík can put information in 'What's on' which would be very useful for the immigrants as well as the tourists.

**Polish:**

Fréttablaðið, informacje.is, visir.is

**Russian:**

- Yes but not all.

**Spanish:**

- Participant 1 does not speak Icelandic but received monthly Iceland Review in English.
- Participant 2: I am not so interested in the news, I only search what I am interested on, but through my family I do get to know some things.
- Participant 3: used to read Fréttablaðið sometimes but her husband let her know
- Participant 4: Because of my job I need to be well informed, I dedicate one or two hours daily to become well informed about Icelandic issues and worldwide.
- Participant 5: I do try to read news daily in order to get to know what is going on and also to practice my Icelandic.

### VIII.E.2 Do you read about Icelandic issues on websites that are in English or Polish for example on the city's website or on informacje.is?

**English:**

- Do you read Grapevine? Yes and the Iceland Review.  
They read but not to get the full information that they need, just what's going on.
- yes, partner is heavily involved with informing the news
- Do you read Grapevine? Yes, we all do

**Filipino:**

- yes we listen and read news

**Lithuanian:**

- Icelandic review. Do you read Grapevine? I read it.

**Polish:**

- Yes, informacje.is, islandia.org.pl

**Russian:**

- Yes but not all. I read information on Russian websites.
- Do you read Grapevine? Yes, most of us.

**Spanish:**

- Mbl.is in English, Iceland review in English and grapevine
- Do you read Grapevine?
- Yes, everybody does it, it is funny and sometimes it is very interesting, all depends on the contributions.

**VIII.E.3 Do you listen to the news on the radio?****English:**

- Not many people do
- One doesn't listen to the radio because he doesn't have the facilities to do so, but he reads news on the computer, mbl.is for example – in English – he goes through Fréttablaðið and picks out what he finds interesting, look at the currency exchange. Now mbl.is in English
- Some yes and some not, lack of understanding for the listening in the radio.
- Yes we all do

**Lithuanian:**

- Bylgjan, RUV 2

**Polish:**

- Yes mainly when driving a car

**Russian:**

- No.

**Spanish:**

- Yes, especially in the car, talk shows, sometimes at home.

**VIII.E.4 Did you watch the TV news?****English:**

- Yes. See above comment about closed captions
- At the university some teachers really encourage people to look at certain TV programs to know what's going on and to understand the language better.
- Icenews, Fréttablaðið, would be very good if there is news in English on TV, for family time when everyone is sat together in front of the TV.
- English Channel with the Icelandic subtitles.
- No, most do not.

**Lithuanian:**

- RUV, fréttir, Kastljósið

**Polish:**

- Yes, many do not have Icelandic TV,

**Russian:**

- Yes but not everything.

**Spanish:**

- Yes, sometimes.

**VIII.E.5 If not, why?****English:**

- Some don't have a TV.
- No access

**Filipino:**

- What hinders us is mainly the language. We have difficulties understanding what's in the news.

**Polish:**

- No hindrances

**Russian:**

- Not enough Icelandic language skills, we watch Russian TV, lack of time. It would be really good to have English subtitles on Icelandic news, and we are even prepared to pay for the subtitles.

**Spanish:**

- Sometimes we do not have time.

**VIII.F Citizen's rights and responsibilities****VIII.F.1 Do you find it desirable to get Icelandic citizenship?****English:**

- Yes, as most can be dual citizens now
- Most take the decision very seriously
- No, as some will not be here long term
- Yes, see it as a gateway to Europe
- Yes, want to be able to vote and have a say the country their children are being raised in.
- Yes, pay taxes here and want to vote.
- Yes, feel an attachment to the country.
- No, don't feel attached
- Refugees upon entering the country are criminalized and put in jail for 2-4 weeks and are on probation for one year. They are not given the appropriate information to know their rights and the process of applying for asylum. Most often they are lacking proper legal representation and support. For them it is highly desirable to obtain citizenship as it can be a matter of life and death. However, they are left to wait in Keflavik in close proximity to the airport that can be 1-2 years!
- Another person says she's not that aware of it, but now that she has a child here she wants to become a citizen and still retain her US citizenship. It's important to be able to have dual-citizenship.
- Another person says that if they stay here longer she wants to become a citizen, but she'll have to surrender her current citizenship in order to do so – but she wants to take more of an active part in society.
- One person says they are interested in obtaining citizenship as she has to renew her temporary residence permit every year, but 5 years if one is married.
- Most of them yes
- Yes, great importance, others are not as concerned.

**Filipino:**

- (A participant) "I have an Icelandic family and also for my spouse. As we have moved to Iceland, there's a lot of benefits and it's better to have citizenship."

**Polish:**

- Yes, as a citizen I will have more rights.

**Russian:**

- Yes because the Directorate of Immigration complicates the process (if you don't have Icelandic citizenship)

**Spanish:**

- Participant 1: yes, I like to be critic of what's going on and because of my daughter I wanted it. To have the citizenship it implies that you are ready to take part on the project of the society.
- Participant 2: I find it necessary. It is different to be from outside Europe.
- Participant 3: Yes, of course, Iceland is my home, is a question of principles, here I became an adult.
- Participant 4: yes, I really would like to have it, I really like to live in Iceland, and it is very nice to be here.
- Participant 5: I received it last year and for me as Colombian it is very desirable because of the world's situation. I feel myself Icelandic, Iceland is my home and also for traveling abroad, it makes things much easier.

**Vietnamese:**

- Icelandic citizenship, what does it mean? What rights do you have when you're a citizen of Iceland? It must be compulsory to have an educational meeting when a person gets his citizenship.
- What's desirable about the citizenship? To be approved as part of the country and to be a legal entity of the nation. It maybe depends on where you come from, Asia or Europe.

**VIII.F.2 Do you know what requirements must be met in order to get it?****English:**

- The law was 3 years of marriage to an Icelandic citizen that would enable one to become an Icelandic citizen. Then (she) did not want citizenship but as soon as she had a baby, she wanted to become an Icelandic citizen and it was fairly easy, but it has changed quite a bit (she has helped a lot of people applying since) and there seems to be more tension in the system and the authorities do not provide sufficient service, there are also legal concerns and people need information and legal advice.
- One person says you have to pay a lot of money to learn the Icelandic language in order to qualify for citizenship – then you do an exam and hand it in for registration, but then you have to pay a fee, that fee should be removed (that fee is for the processing of the application). A person married to an Icelander should not have to wait 5 years, it should be 3 years. It causes a fragmentation of the family. So a partner is too dependent upon their Icelandic spouse.
- One man has been a citizen for 12 years and thought the citizenship desirable, it makes one believe one gets better treatment but when push comes to shove it doesn't change that much. It does allow one to travel more freely. One of the passages to fill out in the process regards criminal record, but his previous country has no information on him for the time he has lived in Iceland as a foreign national but they should ask not his original country but Icelandic authorities as that's where he has been living.
- One person says it is important to have a language requirement in order to gain citizenship, because it makes people think about whether or not they really want citizenship, as well as being informed about the cultural landscape and history.
- Yes, to most of them/us.
- More needs to be learned for some. Some know already. There is no New Zealand embassy.

**Filipino:**

- Yes we know the requirements for it.

**Lithuanian:**

- Of course

**Polish:**

- Yes, criminal records and 7 years of stay in Iceland

**Russian:**

- Not enough information.

**Spanish:**

- Yes. I know where to go.

**Vietnamese:**

- Support for living, criminal record, tax reports, attending Icelandic classes and passing the Icelandic exam.



**VIII.F.3 Do you think you lack information on those requirements?****English:**

- Somewhat don't have enough information and get confused when we go to the immigration office and got the different answer.
- Yes, one would like to put themselves forward to represent fellow people from New Zealand.

**Lithuanian:**

- There is no shortage of information.

**Polish:**

- If you are interested you are able to find them

**Russian:**

- Yes.

**Vietnamese:**

- A complicated process to go through. The list is insufficient, and there is a need for adequate information.

**VIII.F.4 Do you find the application process complicated?****English:**

- Someone found out the process is too complicated; they asked her from one place to another place.
- Most already have their citizenship and some have just started to learn about.

**Filipino:**

- The process is big, strict and takes too long, there's several documents that are needed. And it's also expensive.

**Lithuanian:**

- The Lithuanian law does not allow dual citizenship

**Polish:**

- Time consuming and expensive to translate all the documents

**Russian:**

- The process itself is not complicated but the attitude of employees at the Directorate of Immigration is not correct. They don't provide the right information, it is a long process, they often lack documents but people are not informed.

**Spanish:**

- No, it is less complicated than in any other country, less bureaucracy and better technology.

**VIII.F.5 Do you have any comments on the application process?****English:**

- [www.utl.is](http://www.utl.is) is the good information for this issue for the people who wants to get the citizenship.
- Some feel that the operators at the immigration office are incompetent or uninformed in general.

**Filipino:**

- Questions: If my application for citizenship was denied for the first time, do I have to pay again? What needs to be done so that this application process or achieving Icelandic citizenship to be easier? Is there anyone or office we can go to or a Filipino representative or immigrant to be able to know what to do?

**Lithuanian:**

- Those who are interested to apply for the Icelandic citizenship can find information.
- The application form and documents are not complicated

**Polish:**

- For Older people there should be different rules, language exam is too easy.

**Russian:**

- Improve the services of the Directorate of Immigration, clear or transparent way, possibilities to follow the application process, a need to have information in English (in Russian if possible), at least in the Directorate's website, interpreters should be offered for free.

**Vietnamese:**

- a ceremony, make something more out of it
- Information should be available on more institutions and not just in the Directorate of Immigration.
- All the information are in Icelandic, it would be nice to have it in one's mother tongue. For example, when people go to the Directorate of Immigration, they only get a paper which is about the documents they need to hand in to apply for the Icelandic citizenship. But this information is in Icelandic, and even Icelanders sometimes don't understand, let alone immigrants. Why not have this information in immigrants' mother tongue?
- Modes of information, for example booklets or book.

**Group work in the afternoon****VIII.G Information for immigrants****VIII.G.1 Where do you want to access the information needed; on the web, by reading brochures, by meeting with consultants or in some other way?****English:**

- All 3, but in more diverse languages.
- The web (utl.is) or directorate of immigration, face to face.
- First web, then brochure, then face to face. All are important. Sometimes the embassy is useful source of information in own language.
- Sometimes you have to be very forceful to get the right information.
- Sometimes it is hard to find information in Icelandic on the internet. Don't know the correct terms to put into Google, weak with Icelandic etc.
- All information should be able to be consumed in different ways i.e. web, brochure, and especially **face to face**, in order to cover all people, accounting for, literacy levels, language comprehension etc. for people to engage.
- Information is useful to have the internet
- not everyone has an internet access
- Immigration should be responsible for handing out information (UTL)
- Brochure
- There needs to be an information package as soon as one enters the country, information regarding kennitala, bank accounts, insurance
- The group talks about the usefulness of Alþjóðahús and how important a function it provided
- Information on public websites is generally really insufficient, even if it's in English it's just a short text if it's provided at all – the information provided does not mirror the information in Icelandic, it's brief and covers little, VMST is an example of this. The Icelandic text is not directly translated
- There is a need for Alþjóðahús to be back in service, that's the focal point of all foreigners here, without that information will be scattered, but with an international office here in Reykjavík a central point of information and support is provided and prevents misinformation.
- It's also useful for Icelanders to get information from a place like Alþjóðahús
- On web, meeting with consultant.

**Filipino:**

- We want the information to be translated into English or own language either on paper or brochures so we can understand the information better. It would be great if there's a representative from our country for us to be able to easily understand the information.
- Information can be in Facebook, translators, and public information in our own language.

**Polish:**

- On the web, through the brochures, booklets, asking adviser, Facebook, Reykjavik website, meetings
- The conversation with adviser is the best, booklets for those who don't use internet, mainly internet

**Russian:**

- Centralized information centre for foreigners, brochures and website.

**Spanish:**

- All of them, consultants are very important for the face to face communication, but brochures and the web are essential for general information.

**VIII.G.2 What kind of information do you find being most important?****English:**

- Workers rights
- Rights and responsibilities
- ALL information for daily life i.e. unions, where are leikskolas, bus information etc.
- More importantly CORRECT information needs to be given out. More official organisations engaging and monitoring social media (e.g. in FB like the police do).
- Parenting/children issues, rights for working
- Where to get a job, education, how to invest in ourselves.
- Again people agree on the need for Alþjóðahús – parliament should restore Alþjóðahús.
- Medical information, where to take Icelandic classes.
- One person talks about a bad experience with a job and that they did not know their rights, about their union, about taxes. One gets the tax letter in Icelandic and many people do not read much into it which can cause problems later down the road. Legal advice, driver's license.
- It's very important that every office/institution gives the same information, i.e. provide coherent and clear information. If you don't have a kennitala (like refugees) you should have some sort of a registration in the system, because it's the law. Currently, refugees are just registered in criminal records, not the national registry. There is no public information. You cannot find information about them; they live like ghosts in the country. Sometime for years. Even if people want to register and go to the registration office they will tell you that you cannot register without kennitala.

**Filipino:**

- The information we want to know are about: education, work, health, benefits, public information from the Service Centres, advertisements and news.

**Lithuanian:**

- With regards to legal, medical, social, jobs, tax system (tax report)

**Polish:**

- Everything about taxes and health service
- About all kinds of changes and about cultural events with a long notice

**Russian:**

- Matters concerning visa, resident permits, medical help

**Vietnamese:**

- Rights. Lack of information. Women who are for example subjected to violence, usually just have to bite the bullet, because they don't even know their rights, where to complain and where to ask for help. INFORM the immigrants about their rights!!

- The Directorate of Immigration is not sufficiently accessible.
- Countries outside of EU don't get equal rights as countries within EU.
- No active organization among Vietnamese people. Such an organization is needed which covers everything and not just social life.

### **VIII.G.3 Any suggestions on ways to improve information geared towards immigrants?**

#### **English:**

- Ensure that the Embassies have the information from the Icelandic authorities so they can appropriately direct their citizens.
- Send out information packages when people apply for kennitala
- Ask communities to translate some government pages as a community effort/contribution
- See above about engaging on social media
- Suggestions on how to improve information – Alþjóðahús and actual translation of information (for example on public websites)
- Have the news with English subtitles, like the movies or for the news to be delivered in English.
- Counter point: why should one learn Icelandic if I can get everything in English?
- If coming for work, personnel get involved. Gov't agencies should do more to give
- Correct and accurate information, relevant and clear information regarding rights.

#### **Filipino:**

- Work place, Hlemmur bus station, proposed website for Filipinos in Iceland, Filipino Social Events. Unified as Filipino community- so we don't have to feel like individual islands.
- Proposed Filipino Assembly would provide all information about Iceland prior to arrival such as Icelandic Course, also immediate family members or spouses can send out Icelandic courses books and CD.
- Multicultural Council will continue its work as the main source of information.
- In the Filipino Assembly, the representative chosen will act as an adviser or who can reach authorities about issues of Filipinos but he/she will have to be trusted about confidentiality, and must be a professional counsellor. (The issue about this representatives having 'family' here can be problematic because rumours often spread that way).
- Translators will be in the assembly and that they are to be reliable and can be trusted for confidential matters. Filipinos who come to Iceland in most cases are in clans. That has to be broken down or discouraged. The Filipino Assembly should be mostly comprised of Filipinos who are willing to be nationalistic and will only belong to one group and not many groups or clans. Culturally speaking clans are acceptable but since we are not in the homeland we must be visible in our adoptive country as one group. The assembly would be responsible in educating the locals of our many cultures, through a cultural event A Filipino fiesta for example.
- The Mother tongue non-profit organization will be under the assembly. And other organizations that are focused on Filipino immigrants should be unified.
- A meeting should be organized and be advertised earlier - even just 2 times a year – it would be nice to have a meeting with all the representatives from different nations and then the representatives can meet with people from their own countries.

#### **Lithuanian:**

- There's a need for an information centre
- Support the Lithuanian organization, and provide them detailed and up-to-date information

#### **Polish:**

- better organization, different graphic format, it would be useful to collect all the information in one place
- public system of information online, main information about everything in one place one database

#### **Russian:**

- Centralized information centre for immigrants, wherein people can get detailed information in their mother tongue about whatever matter.

**Vietnamese:**

- The Directorate of Immigration is the immigrants' first stop, but it is not their job to take care of all immigrants. It is necessary to distribute this responsibility. Alleviate the responsibility from the Directorate of Immigration and create a centre or some place in every municipality which specializes on informing and serving immigrants in a personal manner.

## VIII.H How is the exchange of information between immigrants?

### VIII.H.1 Do you give practical information to each other?

**English:**

- Facebook – but it's hard to gauge its trustworthiness. Sometimes it's insufficient.
- People who have made friends find it easier to access information, but those more socially isolated face a -much tougher task in finding reliable information.
- Many people are contacted for information – and again an international centre is brought up. Sometimes one gets really specific questions and one doesn't know how to help, where to direct someone.
- Many people here – who have lived here for a long time – have very little information about education, for instance are unaware that Reykjavik University and the University of Iceland are two different entities.
- Yes, in much of the cultures information is shared and is for free

**Lithuanian:**

- We share information.

**Polish:**

- during social meetings, at work, internet, through the emails, phone calls, from the Polish Consulate
- Facebook, Nova calling each other, e-mail, social meetings

**Russian:**

- Yes we give practical advices to one another.

**Vietnamese:**

- It's mostly word of mouth. Person to person.
- The information we get is mostly from our consulate that represents our country.
- We also get info from offices: like the Directorate of Immigration, the Intercultural Centre, libraries and also internet chat, facebook, emails and posting events.

### VIII.H.2 Is that information usually reliable?

**English:**

- Yes

**Filipino:**

- Sometimes reliable and it depends.

**Lithuanian:**

- Not always, information can change or does not satisfy the needs of everyone

**Polish:**

- Reykjavik website is not updated it doesn't follow the changes in the rights,
- Not really, often those information need to be verified

**Russian:**

- Information can vary, but correct in most cases. Its reliability is built upon personal experience.

**VIII.H.3 Are you paying for practical information?****English:**

- no

**Lithuanian:**

- Always free of cost
- We contract interpreting services if the language is not learned after N-years (which is different based on how other countries are). There is a need for a Lithuanian-speaking counsellor for legal and social issues.

**Polish:**

- We heard that many people do pay for information service
- No but there are people who charge for helping people to get information and arrange some tasks

**Russian:**

- No

**Vietnamese:**

- Do not have to pay for information

**VIII.I How do you reach people who are isolated?****Can you give us advice on that? What ways are possible?****English:**

- Icelanders will often ignore foreigners, even if they are alone.
- What ways are possible?
- Mandatory home visit when registering for the social security number to talk without husband there about interests, how to access info etc.
- Icelandic language lessons are important not just for learning Icelandic, but for creating friendships and providing information as well. They need to be supported by the government.
- Icelandic classes are TOO EXPENSIVE especially if you are not in a union or on unemployment.
- When you get the social security number, you should be required to attend XX hours, for free (of Icelandic classes), and follow up by authorities if they don't attend (welfare check) to ensure that people don't fall through the 'social' gap.
- To distribute the brochures.
- Books in UTL, university, Cultural House, Social service.
- No answer
- Reaching out to the work places that employ many Poles, construction sites, fish factories etc.
- Companies are having a representative or spokesman for the foreigners in their company who makes connections and interactions between communities, passes information and is the contact person for both communities etc.
- Using competent people who would like to help and know both languages.
- Having informative meeting about Icelandic society and life, rights, and dealing with everyday things for unemployed
- Create some voluntary system in different immigrants circles

**Filipino:**

- It's hard to reach them. An organizer of Filipino mother tongue teaching says that even though she sends out written information and invitation through SMS, website, Facebook page and Facebook private messages, she still has to call people individually who turns out to have lots of questions and presumptions who would never 'reply' otherwise. And still most people wouldn't take part. So people remain isolated for various reasons.
- One participant mentioned that this needs to be a one-on-one 'information giving'. But for this to happen, we would need the record of all the people, which is a breach in personal confidentiality.
- Through schools. If there is information they can send to the students then they'd give to their parents. If not, then thru emails of the parents or letters/notes.

- Put information about the events like in newspapers, and notice boards at work, in libraries, and places like Kolaport, churches, malls and kiosks, bus stops or main bus terminals like Hlemmur, Mjódd and Ártún and if possible, in buses --- where lots of immigrants go to.
- One representative is needed who is active, or somebody who works as a public relations officer who would go and talk to people who isolate themselves from Icelanders and people from same countries.

**Lithuanian:**

- Through specific interest groups (churches, sports clubs, cultural events)

**Polish:**

- Organization of the meetings, information spots, brochures and booklets
- At work places, at the hotels for workers, through the schools, Kolaportið and Church.

**Russian:**

- Through social networking websites, e-mails, phone calls
- Through the telephone directory and national registry, emails.

**Vietnamese:**

- Numerous people who do not communicate with Icelanders and other people from their country.
- In the library, there is something called Women's Story Circle, and there all the women met up and talk about their stories.
- Short article in the daily newspaper in mother tongue.

**VIII.J The media and their coverage of immigrants****VIII.J.1 Are you aware of the media coverage on immigrants?****English:**

- People used to – generally – talk about Filipinos in a bad way, the stereotype was negative, when Icelanders look at us they show pity, it's because of Icelandic media, which still has a lot to learn,
- A media person says it would be great, since they are in a reactive mode, that there would be a central point where they can acquire information and gain contacts to report on issues concerning immigrants.
- Kastljós doesn't for example report on issues concerning the group. There needs to be more scope given, proactively, for immigrant issues, and the providing information to immigrants regarding general news and news that concern them specifically. The media should also show interest in immigrants as people of Icelandic society.
- One of the problems is that media publications sell themselves with negative stories, for example, that immigrants are a cost to society, as oppose to a benefit.
- Coverage needs to improve and become more inclusive in all forms of media: publications, TV, radio, internet.
- Not all of us aware of it.
- Only negative stereotypes are noticed or misrepresented. It's pretty bad and needs to change.

**Filipino:**

- Yes.
- We rarely notice media coverage in immigrants and most are about crimes. It would be really nice to find a space in the news that covers about immigrants doing something positive. Also, it would be nice to have some news in English especially when it's important so it would be easier for immigrants to understand.

**Lithuanian:**

- Limited

**Polish:**

- The image of the Immigrant is negative, media concentrate on negative never on positive side, they create hostility towards immigrants and fear

**Spanish:**

- Non-existent

**VIII.J.2 If yes, how do you feel about it/think about it?****Filipino:**

- News coverage on immigrants is often biased. For example, last week headline about a 'Foreigner' being caught driving over the speed limit, such a headline will in itself paint a negative picture of all foreigners. They should be sensitive on labelling or stereotyping. It should not matter if it's a foreigner or a native who commits a crime.
- Positive news doesn't usually attract to read the news. Rúv was not informed of this multicultural meeting, a participant heard this complaint earlier. Not much positive coverage of foreigners. There should be a positive coverage of events.

**Polish:**

- Bring the positive as well
- Articles about immigrants are presenting them almost exclusively in criminal context. If there is immigrant appearing on TV his opinions and words are cut off

**Russian:**

- Newspapers for foreigners but there's not enough information there, and it's not accessible.

**Spanish:**

- It needs economical support to develop it

**Vietnamese:**

- Not as newsworthy as when European persons are for example troublesome, then it's all of a sudden more issue when Asians are involved.
- Generally rather negative coverage
- In reporting, there's little inclusion about immigrant issues.
- It's more newsworthy if it's something negative, but it's generally unmentioned in news when immigrants do something good. Usually, they paint a negative picture of Polish, for example.
- Icelanders need to be educated about other nations.

**VIII.J.3 Is there a difference in the coverage of women on the one hand and men on the other?****English:**

- Women's issues are generally positive but for men more negative.

**Filipino:**

- In our opinion, the coverage on women and men are rather equal but there are situations wherein they are not equal like the salaries of women vs. that of men.

**Lithuanian:**

- There is no difference.

**Polish:**

- yes, men get more attention
- no we find it equal

**Russian:**

- We think that there's more information for women, more groups and societies.



**VIII.J.4 Can we influence the media?****If yes, how do we do that?****English:**

- Yes, by participating in these kinds of talks and meetings.
- And maybe have more of these talks. Perhaps there needs to be new people getting in the mix. Some immigrants that have been here for a while are not willing to speak out and not participate and create change

**Icelandic:**

- Vísion/Viðsýni news-website will begin in January, 2013 and there will be information in various languages. Immigrants get a chance to express themselves on a range of issues. This is an information database both for immigrants and Icelanders. The emphases are on cooperation and diversity. And Icelandic will be the official language of this media with subtitles.

**Filipino:**

- We can't influence the media, because we are in Iceland. A participant who was a news writer wants to write again. Make news coverage or a TV program about foreigners.
- Organize Filipino festivals, literary festival, and film. Philippine tourism authority can perhaps help us with that. But this is essential because Icelanders have this stereotypical view of Filipinos in Iceland and about Philippines. One participant works at the hospital and she had to bring books, pictures and CDs about Philippines because her co-workers asked her: 'Aren't you glad you came here and now have refrigerator, washing machine oven...?' They know only negative stuff or barely know anything about Philippines!
- Yes we can have influence if we there is a person or representative we can let know about our ideas to help immigrants.
- If there is a website or Facebook for immigrants like Filipino, we can put in our good ideas and where we can also ask questions if we need information

**Lithuanian:**

- We should provide information to the media, which reflects the issues of immigrants
- Wherein immigrants are not talked about but talked with.
- Encourage the media to provide positive information

**Polish:**

- yes only if you know Icelandic, without it you are limited
- Immigrants need to be more active.
- yes if you are very determined
- Participation of immigrants in the Media, showing immigrants and events in which they are participating or organizing
- Immigrants should inform media about the events that they organize
- Icelandic media should allow immigrants to express themselves in native languages and other languages
- Reporter should be more active in reaching out to the immigrants
- Each national group could have a spokesman that press can contact (Fjölmenningsráð).

**Russian:**

- Yes we can do that, if there is such a skill to write about sensitive information or news. It is important that the media can use information not just from Icelandic newscasters, but also from foreign newscasters too, if immigrants are more active.

**Spanish:**

- Yes we can! We should! Spots on television and radio to show the diversity of the society. (immigrant issues)

### VIII.K Government institutions - communicating and giving out information

#### Can institutions improve their communication and information? If yes, then how?

##### English:

- 50% don't know about mcc.is
- Information on Reykjavik City website is difficult to find
- Utlendingarstofan constantly gives out different/wrong information to people. It depends who you ask to what answer you get.
- Again, the Directorate of Immigration (all departments in fact) needs to give out CONSISTENT information.
- A lot of people don't understand that you have a right to an interpreter when dealing with government departments
- Utl.is needs to be better organised so things are easier to find.
- Clearer rules, and to be better informed when the laws are changed. Front line staff often appears not to know about rule changes.
- Sensitivity or cultural training for front line staff.
- Many websites, hi.is, banking websites, other companies, etc. don't actually have the same information in other languages (when you click on the English tab, for example) esp. English. Only summaries which hugely unhelpful. Perhaps [there should be] a test group of immigrants to read over their sites?
- How did you find out about this meeting today?
- Flyer on swimming pool, work, Facebook (majority)
- Government websites need to have better translations. It varies how good a service one gets when one calls to seek out further information, sometimes they are not that comfortable to speak English
- No one knew of the Multicultural Centre in Ísafjörður! It was the first they heard of it.
- Yes
- -don't be so rude when speaking to foreign people on the phone or be insolent.
- -information should be available freely. have more public meetings and have more
- Mentorship between the cultures

##### Filipino:

- Institutions don't have information about our country and cultures. They lack knowledge about us. Make use of Filipino professional as useful resources! Net banking awareness for all Filipinos (to be able to reach us better)

##### Lithuanian:

- There is a need to have a systematic information in Lithuanian

##### Polish:

- by translating their websites

##### Russian:

- Yes. Information for immigrants in their mother tongue, positive relations on both sides, convenient working hours (evening hours)
- 

### VIII.L NGOs associated with immigrants

#### VIII.L.1 Are they doing a good job?

##### English:

- A woman from Philippines talks of starting an NGO to provide information for her fellow countrymen, she is a volunteer for the Red Cross serving immigrants and refugees, she has been here for 15 years, and she found it to be need for other NGO's and for NGO's to do more.
- There are small NGO's – scattered – but a Multicultural Centre would bring those NGO's together.

- There is the African association, which unites all the Africans in Iceland and is a good ambassador for African's in Iceland...but all these associations need a focal point, again referring to the need for an Alþjóðahús.
- W.O.M.E.N. – Seeds – Red Cross – the library – these are things one hears of here and there, but it's hard to seek out the information directly, information needs to be centralized.
- Many groups are using Facebook; some have plans to start up information websites.
- In this table some of us do not know what the meaning of NGO
- Some are not aware of those organizations; some are pleased with the services or help.

**Filipino:**

- NGO's don't know of our issues that we need to reach out to them. Assumptions about immigrants are usually wrong. For example an educational workshops for us by the government and also by us to them. We need to find a way to break the barrier of stereotyping. They generally belittle us!

**Lithuanian:**

- Some of them work well (Mímir, Red Cross)

**Polish:**

- Red Cross seem to be most efficient organization helping immigrants in Iceland

**Russian:**

- Yes, free non-government organizations help immigrants.

**VIII.L.2 Can they do better?****English:**

- NGO's need to have a meeting point.
- They should, especially when they are going to help or assisting the immigrants.
- More awareness needs to be made in these issues by everyone.

**Lithuanian:**

- To promote sharing of information

**Polish:**

- Generally those institutions are not known to people. They should promote their services much stronger.

**Russian:**

- Yes, inform better the immigrants about current events, inform us about their organization. They should give out more information.

**VIII.L.3 Are they reaching immigrants in general or just some particular group?****English:**

- Just some of them know.
- If people look they will find it, some organizations are doing well, other stick to their purpose. Volunteer work from immigrants

**Russian:**

- In most cases, they work for specific groups.

**VIII.L.4 Should they gain more support and if yes then how?****English:**

- They should

**Filipino:**

- There should be free space; temporary free space offered the city government for those organizations. We don't have financial resources so we need subsidies. Participation of events.

**Polish:**

- We can be active within the public institutions, workers unions, register ourselves in the public institutions their mailing lists, and then recommend those institutions on Facebook and advertise the events and rights

**Russian:**

- Yes they can do their jobs better if they have better finances.

**VIII.M Publications****VIII.M.1 Have you seen or read the brochures that have been published for immigrants?****English:**

- Few have seen brochures with information for immigrants, those who have say they are very limited.
- Their rights and responsibility as a new person. some have seen some have
- Internet (web sites)

**Filipino:**

- Printed materials and brochures are still useful. The information is already there. The immigrant must have an open mind for the information that is mostly ready for all to reach. Brochures are only accessible when you are actively seeking information. It needs to be printed in Fréttablaðið for it is free and is handed out to people
- The printed materials sit on specific places. They need to be more accessible, or as one participant said, distributed to immigrants.

**Polish:**

Yes, brochure for the newcomers in Iceland, educational materials from Mímir, Grapevine, and the bus schedule in Polish

- Yes, "First Steps", "Your Rights", Grapevine, Mother Tongue, Work in Iceland

**Vietnamese:**

- There's very few published materials. There are some but not so much. Where do people get these booklets? Are they available?
- Official institutions need to maybe talk together, get all the booklets and work together make the information more accessible to the immigrants.
- Make a database

**Russian:**

- Yes, the brochures like "First Steps", from the Mother tongue Association, from Red Cross, and others that are allocated at Mímir...

**VIII.M.2 Is there need for brochures on any specific topic, if yes then what?****English:**

Medical information and people refer to the above discussion.

- How to get loans, how to get documents.

**Polish:**

- Yes, there is missing general information brochure with all the information together
- the addresses of the public Institutions where they are located

**Russian:**

- Yes, on a lot of topics for specific immigrants (healthy system, practical issues in education, tax, occupation), and update that information regularly.

**VIII.M.3 Are brochures a better info material or is the web better or is it necessary to use both?****Polish:**

- Yes for older people and those who are not an internet users.

**English:**

- Both
- Most say both some are strong regarding website. Information should be available in all languages and have current information regarding these important items.

**Polish:**

- Yes, brochures are better for older people who are not internet users but they should not appear in accidental places but in some concrete spot where people interested in them are going to pick them up

**Russian:**

- Make a website that is updated regularly (e.g. immigrant.is wherein it's possible to send questions and get precise answers.

**VIII.N Finally.... is there anything you would like to add?****English:**

- Multi cultural or Multi national council? Culture is more than dress and food, it is the small daily interactions that make up culture and this is where most of the differences lay. Exchanges of Icelandic and other culture need to include more interaction than just dressing up and sharing food.
- We need to put the association in a working place.
  - To create the proper website for the immigrants.
  - Cheaper & proper Icelandic course.
- Suggestions for information on a publicly accessible You Tube video and have it in English and have it amended when necessary.
- Food bank needs to not rush people and give sustainable food. More access and information regarding free food stations
- Icelanders are being encouraged to accept foreigners and their skills in order to take advantage of the skills instead of making them do menial jobs.
- Wish that everyone would get along.
- Attitude could change from Icelanders and from foreigners in Iceland.
- A need to reach out and maybe get more people involved to generate acceptance and more ideas for improvement.

**Filipino:**

- The assembly or representative will be responsible in educating the newcomers and those who are already here.
- We need to survey what are the most common problems that Filipinos face in Iceland.
- One of the problems among immigrants is that they have difficulties in schools because the main language used is Icelandic and it's expensive to learn Icelandic. If this was free, it would help the immigrants better and it would generate interest among the youth to study who have just moved from other countries.

**Icelandic:**

- The government should set up an efficient multicultural education, which is encouraging for everyone in the system, employees of the government and municipalities.
- To get rid of insecurities and work against prejudice.
- There should be implementation of EU's decree on banning racial discrimination. People usually avoid seeking their rights on the grounds of discrimination. All the changes must be rectified by

financial funds, for example, earnings for participating in the Multicultural Council, grant funds for information dissemination and discussion.

**Lithuanian:**

- The living conditions are very good.
- Thank you, City of Reykjavík for this event and support for immigrants.
- YOU ARE DOING A VERY GREAT JOB!!!!

**Polish:**

- The Multicultural Council should have a power and collaborate with different public institutions and pursue the goals of immigrants, collaborate closely with offices like Institution of Foreign nationals, Council of Foreign Nationals, Office of Foreign Nationals, should pass on the affairs and problems of immigrants directly to the institutions which are in charge of them.
- The Multicultural Council should have a clear policy and directions and promote itself as an organ who is speaking on behalf of all immigrants not only in Reykjavik but in whole Iceland. There should be no differentiation in Reykjavik and the rest of the country
- We need to take care of elderly immigrants and disabled people who are excluded from society now.
- We need to find meeting point for immigrants at least once a month, Fjölmenningsráð meetings should be open for other to join.

**Russian:**

- It is important to collect information in one website, with possibilities to add news in one centralized information-website that is moderated.
- Centralized information centre.

## VIII.O THE CLOUDS

**Table 1 (Lithuanian)**

I screamed and vanished  
into the depths of the soul  
where I encountered earlier  
planes of existence like birthdays  
from the past

- “A ship in a harbour is safe, but that is not what ships are built for.”
- “Illusion is the first of all pleasures.”

**Table 2 (Polish)**

- We want a Centre for the Immigrants
- Same and regularly updated information in all the Offices
- Respect, understanding, love
- Informational meetings
- Updated practical information on the website of Reykjavik
- Information in Catholic Church
- Information in Kolaportið
- Information about the events that are published early enough
- Collecting adequate information in one place or website for example information for the parents...
- Welcome letter at the address registration Office (Þjóðskrá) with all the basic information and where to seek help.
- Keeping in touch with Polish-speaking people who work in public offices and information about those people in one place, or piece of paper.

**Table 3 (English)**

- Integration is a two-way street.
- Clear up the grey areas in the immigration laws.
- What is culture anyway?
- Is my mother tongue not important?
- What about prejudice that immigrants have for each other. Needs addressing too.

**Table 5 (English)**

- Bring back the Intercultural Centre (Alþjóðahúsið)

**Table 7 (Vietnamese)**

- Information association
- “Roadmap” Animations, short videos with important information
- Illustrative information
- Magazines on mother tongue (published material)
- centre

**Table 8**

- App (Application) which provides short information which matters. For example, bad weather, elections, natural disasters, events, Korinna & Lisa

**Table 10 (Filipino)**

- United Filipino Conference/assembly discussing immigrant issues, continuation of “Let’s Talk”.
- Filipino website-upplýsingar um ísland.
- Social Studies education about Philippines in Iceland. To inform and prevent stereotyping.
- Counsellor-whom we can reach for information.
- PDF, social networking, etc. Information about services offered

**Table 11 (English)**

- Take the first step and be proactive
- Consistent Kennitala information
- Poor information from the government offices (more training for the staff)
- Association for immigrants seeking employment
- One-stop-shop – web or booklet (e.g. First Steps) should be at the Directorate of Immigration
- Cheaper Icelandic courses!!
- Keep brochure and easy information in bus stations.

**Table 12 (English)**

- Mutual understanding
- Play together
- In order to survive in Iceland I need a cute girlfriend!
- Hope for easy Icelandic!!
- Food stamps
- Be happy where you are because you chose to come here to escape home/land
- Free buses at least once a week
- Website with access to info and emails to other social groups
- To think well, to behave well, and to talk well, that’s all you ☺
- Close the doors that are in the open and behind closed doors
- Educate the youth to think healthy
- Change the way we think
- Don’t impose culture-educate and encourage



- Accept where you are
- Love to all
- Think positive – do positive

#### **Table 13 (Filipino)**

- Filipino Facebook page!
- School supporting mother tongue language
- Free Icelandic courses
- Instructions on how to vote translated into Filipino
- Information pamphlets at the airport
- More information for immigrants
- More information for immigrants in the papers - Fréttablaðið og Morgunblaðið
- Websites supporting other languages for instance more languages on Reykjavik Facebook

#### **Table 14 (Polish)**

- Thematic Icelandic Courses
- Courses and meetings for disabled and elderly foreign people
- More interaction

#### **Table 15 (Russian)**

- Information centre for immigrants
- Immigrant.is - web page for immigrants in Iceland. (Link network-joined portal with possibility to add info)

#### **Table 16 (Icelandic)**

- Relocate Fit Hostel to Reykjavik
- Bright Multicultural Competence
- Nothing about us without us
- Media for all the immigrant groups
- Equality among ethnic and cultural groups
- Stronger voice of immigrants

#### **Table 17 (Spanish)**

- Stop criminalizing refugees
- We want political influence for immigrants
- We are Icelanders too!
- Also to know something about us as immigrants!
- We want the same opportunities!
- Knowledge about our rights
- Children should be educated about respect for other cultures. The society is multicultural and the school should reflect it. Mother tongue.