

**Parliamentary Resolution
on an action plan on immigrant issues.**

(Submitted to the Althingi at its 135th legislative session, 2007–2008.)

The Althingi resolves that actions on immigrant issues should comply with the following plan, which is aimed at improving the reception of foreign persons immigrating to Iceland and making it easier for them to become active participants in Icelandic society and pursue their cultural traditions.

Tasks to be addressed by the Government.

The following are tasks that are to be tackled in order to guarantee immigrants' rights, give them access to public services and assist them in the process of integration:

1. *Legislation on integration of immigrants.*
 - 1.1 Compilation of a bill on integration of immigrants.
2. *Information on immigrant issues.*
 - 2.1 Database on immigrant issues.
 - 2.2 Database covering studies of immigrant issues.
 - 2.3 Attitude surveys among immigrants.
 - 2.4 Survey of attitudes towards immigrants.
 - 2.5 Wage equality for all.
3. *Dissemination of information to immigrants.*
 - 3.1 Review of the dissemination of information to immigrants.
 - 3.2 The information website mcc.is.
 - 3.3 Computer link to Island.is.
 - 3.4 Booklet: "First Steps".
 - 3.5 Clear and accessible information on rights available in a number of languages.
 - 3.6 Safety in the home.
 - 3.7 Translation of Consumer Guidance materials.
 - 3.8 Translation of information about Icelandic agriculture.
 - 3.9 Translation of information on vocational training courses in the fish-processing industry.
 - 3.10 Information on buying and selling property.
 - 3.11 Information for all.
 - 3.12 Immigrants' internet access.
4. *Residence and work permits.*
 - 4.1 Simplification of registration of EEA citizens living in Iceland.
 - 4.2 Coordination of the Foreign Nationals Act, No. 96/2002, and the Foreign Nationals' Right to Work Act, No. 97/2002.
 - 4.3 Increased monitoring of the residence and work permits of non-EEA citizens.
 - 4.4 Review of legislation.
5. *Interpreting services.*
 - 5.1 Adoption of rules by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science on interpreting services.
 - 5.2 Adoption of rules by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration on interpreting services.
 - 5.3 Rules on interpreting services in the health services.
 - 5.4 Interpreting services for disabled persons who need special services.
 - 5.5 Rules on interpreting and translation services in connection with the diagnosis of disabled

- children and children suffering from developmental disorders.
- 5.6 Training courses for interpreters.
- 5.7 Course for interpreters.
- 5.8 Rules on interpreting services at the Child Welfare Agency.

- 6. *Reception on change of residence.*
- 6.1 Model for local authorities' reception schemes.
- 6.2 Continuous flow of information to the local authorities on immigrant arrivals.

- 7. *Central and local government as employers.*
- 7.1 Recognition of foreign vocational and academic qualifications by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
- 7.2 Recognition of foreign vocational and academic qualifications in the health services.
- 7.3 Education and continuing education in the health services.
- 7.4 Educational campaign for workers in the local authorities' social services.
- 7.5 Instruction on multicultural issues for the staff of Orkustofnun (the National Energy Authority).
- 7.6 Courses on multicultural issues for the staff of the Housing Financing Fund.
- 7.7 An increase in the number of police staff with multicultural backgrounds.
- 7.8 Courses in the National Police College on immigrant issues.

- 8. *Employment and participation in the employment market.*
- 8.1 Improved monitoring of workplaces.
- 8.2 Awareness-raising for employers.
- 8.3 Closer monitoring of health and safety at work in occupational sectors where there is a large proportion of foreign workers.
- 8.4 Publication and dissemination of information.
- 8.5 Courses for foreign/immigrant workers.
- 8.6 Access to labour-market measures.
- 8.7 Support programme for teenage immigrants.
- 8.8 Courses on setting up companies and putting commercial ideas into practice.

- 9. *Taxation.*
- 9.1 Coordination of the periods of validity of tax cards and residence and work permits.
- 9.2 Tax payments by foreign nationals without tax returns.
- 9.3 Settlement of foreign workers' tax balances in the year in which they leave Iceland.
- 9.4 Special tax cards for foreign workers who come to Iceland for temporary engagements.
- 9.5 Translation of information and materials relating to taxation.
- 9.6 Information website on taxation.

- 10. *Education.*
- 10.1 Plans for the registration and reception of children of foreign origin in kindergartens (pre-schools), junior schools and senior schools.
- 10.2 Icelandic teaching as a second language in the junior and senior schools.
- 10.3 Revision of the general curriculum in Icelandic as a second language for senior schools
- 10.4 Development and publication of educational materials.
- 10.5 Publication of a Lexin dictionary/picture dictionary.
- 10.6 Examination of the position of immigrants in the senior school system.
- 10.7 Funding to the senior schools for pupils whose mother tongue is not Icelandic.
- 10.8 Translation of information about the senior level of schooling.
- 10.9 Translation of information on the registration procedure for senior schools.
- 10.10 Recognition of mother tongues (other than Icelandic) in the junior and senior schools.
- 10.11 Books in immigrants' mother tongues.

- 10.12 Closer contact between the schools and the homes of children of foreign origin.
 - 10.13 Definition of demands made of teachers who teach Icelandic as a second language.
 - 10.14 Training in the teaching of Icelandic as a second language as part of teacher training.
- 11. Health Services.*
- 11.1 Circular to managers in the health services.
 - 11.2 Review of registration in the health services.
 - 11.3 Plans for pre-natal examinations and infant health monitoring.
 - 11.4 Information for all.
 - 11.5 Publication of informative material.
 - 11.6 Information about health-service institutions.
 - 11.7 Health inspection of immigrants.
 - 11.8 Preventive measures for all.
- 12. Social services.*
- 12.1 Social services for all.
 - 12.2 Review of the Local Authorities' Social Services Act.
- 13. Disabled Persons' Affairs.*
- 13.1 Accessible information about rights and entitlements.
 - 13.2 Special informative material for groups and individuals.
 - 13.3 An interactive website in three languages.
 - 13.4 Joint project concerning contact with disabled persons' interest groups.
 - 13.5 Supply of information to immigrants.
 - 13.6 Plan for translation of diagnostic reports.
 - 13.7 Terminology database.
- 14. Child Welfare.*
- 14.1 Guidelines for the local authorities' child welfare committees.
 - 14.2 Registration of child welfare cases involving children of foreign/immigrant origin.
 - 14.3 Information for the parents of children of foreign origin.
 - 14.4 Recommendations and guidelines for treatment homes regarding children of foreign/immigrant origin.
- 15. Icelandic teaching for adults.*
- 15.1 Grants for Icelandic teaching.
 - 15.2 Grants for Icelandic teaching materials intended for immigrants.
 - 15.3 Evaluation of the quality of Icelandic courses for foreigners.
 - 15.4 Vocation-related Icelandic courses for fish-processing workers.
 - 15.5 Reading skills and Icelandic learning for immigrants.
- 16. Against prejudice and discrimination.*
- 16.1 Campaign against prejudice and antagonism.
 - 16.2 Civics instruction for immigrants.
 - 16.3 Civics instruction for immigrants.
 - 16.4 Educational and awareness-raising material on gender equality issues.

Comments on this Proposal for a Parliamentary Resolution.

In accordance with its policy declaration of 23 May 2007, the Government has approved an action plan on immigrant issues as follows.

I. Introduction.

Trends in recent years have shown unequivocally that Iceland is part of the international community: both the labour market and other aspects of life in general have undergone substantial changes and moved in the direction of a multi-cultural society. The effects of these trends on the health and growth of the economy are beyond dispute. Iceland is no longer “an island”; it participates in international competition for workers and business enterprises, ideas and creativity. The free movement of capital, services and persons has created opportunities that were previously unknown. The preservation of economic welfare and competitive advantage in Iceland in future will depend partly on attracting talented people to the country and creating conditions in which the range of resources and abilities they bring can be harnessed to develop and advance Iceland’s position in the international community. Countless opportunities would follow on from this.

Fortunately for Iceland, the basic values of democracy are well established here, i.e. human rights, equality, the freedom of the individual, community assistance, solidarity and tolerance.

Icelandic society has every possibility to be a leader in terms of the successful and mutual adaptation between those already living in the country and new immigrants of foreign origin. It is important that this should happen, since Iceland can learn from other nations’ experience. Immigrants to Iceland make a significant contribution to the community. Iceland is in a special position in that immigrants to the country play an active part in the national economy, paying taxes and dues to the community. Our aim is that all people living in the country should be equally able to take part in the life of the community, enjoying the quality of life that it has to offer, and protection of their rights, while making their contribution in return. In order for this to be possible, the Government, institutions, the business sector, the local authorities, the cultural institutions, non-governmental organisations, ordinary people and the immigrants themselves must work together.

In drawing up this action plan, efforts have been made to obtain accurate information about the cost of individual measures. The total cost has not been assessed, but it is clear that the cost of many of the individual measures proposed lies within the budget allowances of the government ministries and institutions. Foreseeable costs are stated in various parts of the plan; elsewhere, it is not possible to name exact figures. All proposals have been prepared in consultation with those responsible for the measures involved, and it is assumed that they will secure the necessary funding when the measures are introduced.

II. Comprehensive action plan.

The Government’s political covenant of 23 May 2007 provides for the drawing up of a comprehensive action plan on immigrant issues, aimed at aimed at improving the reception of foreign persons immigrating to Iceland and making it easier for them to become active participants in Icelandic society and pursuing their cultural traditions. It goes on to state: “It must be ensured that foreign nationals on the Icelandic labour market enjoy rights comparable to those enjoyed by Icelandic workers, and that all engagements of foreign workers for employment be made in accordance with current collective agreements. Social dumping on the labour market must be prevented. Special efforts must be made in providing Icelandic teaching for foreigners. [...]. It is important that the Government, business sector and the community as a whole work together to combat prejudice against minority groups, irrespective of whether these prejudices are based on their origin or other factors.”

The Minister of Social Affairs and Social Security commissioned the Immigration Council to supervise the compilation of the action plan. The plan presented here is based on the political covenant and the immigration policy approved by the Government in January 2007. In addition, efforts have been made to draw on the valuable experience gained over the past few years by those who are involved in dealing with immigrant issues in government institutions, non-governmental organisations and various service-providers; these have submitted useful tips and suggestions to the Immigration Council, e.g. at the

council's conference held in January 2008.

In the course of preparation of the plan, a letter was sent to all the ministries asking them to examine the standing of various issues with which they, or the bodies under their control, are concerned and to point out where improvements might be made in their work and the services already provided, and also what new tasks should be undertaken in order to achieve the Government's aims in immigrant issues.

It is envisaged that this action plan will be reviewed in two years' time after the publication of a progress report on the results achieved, and that a new four-year action plan will then be submitted to the Althingi.

The Government will seek to involve the immigrant community, NGOs, private non-profit institutions and the business sector in the broadest possible consultation on the implementation of this plan, so making use of the specialist knowledge and skills that have been acquired regarding immigrant issues in many spheres, including the Icelandic Red Cross and the Intercultural Centre (Alþjóðahús).

One community for all.

Immigrants are to have unhindered access to social services, whether these are provided by the central government or the local authorities, and services are expected, to the extent practicable, to meet the requirements of an increasingly heterogeneous society. It is evident that this action plan is the first of its kind to be approved by the Government. It presents tips and suggestions to a large number of entities in society which play important roles in enabling immigrants to integrate smoothly into Icelandic society, and gives them encouragement in what they are doing. Mention is made of planned and necessary amendments to various pieces of legislation to take account of changes in the community. Various reform measures are described which are aimed at gathering information on immigrant issues and making information available to immigrants. Attention is given to simplifying and coordinating the processes involved in granting residence and work permits, interpreters' services and the reception of new residents when they change their place of residence. Measures are also described which are aimed at improving monitoring and increasing the protection of immigrants' rights. The action plan also contains an account of measures designed to ensure immigrants' access to Icelandic teaching and also to general schooling and the welfare services. Finally, the plan contains provisions for awareness-raising in society at large and measures to combat prejudice and antagonism.

Legislation on integration of immigrants.

The Minister of Social Affairs and Social Security intends to prepare the compilation of a bill on integration of immigrants containing provisions on matters that are not covered in general legislation in individual spheres. Iceland's commitments under international agreements will be taken into account when the bill is compiled. The following are some of the principle points which must be addressed in a bill of this type.

- Providing information to immigrants and gathering information on immigrant issues.
- The division between central and local government of responsibility for services to immigrants.
- The role of the Immigration Council as regards advice to the Government and the formulation of policy on immigrant issues.
- The role of the Multicultural Centre (Fjölmenningarsetur) as a fundamental institution for the collection, utilisation, coordination and dissemination of information.
- The role of the Development Fund for Immigrant Issues in supporting studies and developmental projects in the sphere of immigrant issues.
- The obligation on the part of government authorities to provide interpreting and translating services in cases involving substantial bilateral interests in the spheres of finance, security, law or welfare.
- The obligation on the part of government authorities to engage in public awareness-raising and measures to combat prejudice and antagonism towards foreign nationals in the Icelandic community.

- The establishment of channels of appeal for those who consider they have been discriminated against on grounds of their religion, opinions, national origin, race, colour or ancestry.
- The compilation of an action plan on immigrant issues and reports by the Minister of Social Affairs and Social Security in order to ensure further development in this sphere.
- The reception of refugees, including rules on how they are to be received.

Other legislation.

The action plan describes bills on a new Foreign Nationals Act and a new Foreign Nationals' Right to Work Act, which are currently before the Althingi. Also before the Althingi are draft bills on kindergartens, junior schools and senior schools in which major steps are taken regarding children's right to maintain their mother-tongue abilities, linguistic stimulation, Icelandic teaching and educational assistance, and also the publication of educational materials. Steps are to be taken to ensure that when planned revisions of other statutes, such as the Local Authorities' Social Services Act and the Disabled Persons' Act, go ahead, consideration will be given in them to the needs of immigrants. One of the points that will be attended to when these revisions take place is the definition of the right of users of the services to have the services of an interpreter. It is important that the Althingi should keep immigrant issues under constant observation when setting legislation that may have an effect on immigrant's lives.

Collaboration between central and local government.

The local authorities play a key role in the integration of immigrants into the community. They are responsible for a range of local services; they operate kindergartens and junior schools, handle Child Protection issues and provide social services of many types. Many of them have adopted a special policy regarding integration of immigrants, and those that do not yet have such a policy are urged to set about formulating one. The Immigration Council has supported development projects at the local government level which are aimed at establishing a powerful and structured reception system for new residents of foreign origin. The Multicultural Centre has been entrusted with the role of disseminating knowledge and skills gained from these services and drawing on them when compiling a model for reception programmes which the local authorities can adopt. In addition, the local authorities will be able, through the Multicultural Centre, to pool information, translations, etc., so avoiding duplication and inefficiency in the allocation of funding.

Importance is attached to collaboration between central and local government in dealing with immigrant issues. The local authorities have extensive authorisations allowing them to launch services or projects designed to meet the needs of their inhabitants; these needs may vary widely from one local government area to the next, since the proportion of immigrants varies greatly. In connection with additional obligations on the part of the local authorities in this sphere, the rules of the Local Authorities' Equalisation Fund are to be reviewed so as to enable it to give better assistance to the work of the local authorities aimed at the integration of immigrants, and collaboration between central and local government will be established regarding the financing of new projects. Finally, it should be mentioned that improvements are to be made in the registration of immigrants in the National Register; a continuous flow of information to the local authorities on movements to and from local government areas is one of the preconditions for the local authorities to be able to give support to the reception programmes.

The third sector.

Iceland's NGOs, continuing education bodies, various private non-profit organisations and companies have developed services for immigrants, and for the community as a whole, in the field of multicultural facilities and services and other immigrant issues. These services range from counselling for companies regarding the multi-cultural society and individual counselling for immigrants to interpreting services and Icelandic teaching and measures to combat intolerance and antagonism, to name only a few examples. This is an initiative that must be welcomed. The Government considers that this is a valuable resource, and urges government organs, institutions, the business sector and the community at large to harness it by organising projects and engaging in collaboration, so capitalising on the special skills and experience that

have been developed. The website and other services of the Multicultural Centre will be a valuable back-up in the work of these entities, and are intended to ensure that the principal information provided by the government and public bodies is accessible in one place and available for unrestricted use by other parties in their work. The Development Fund for Immigrant Issues also plays an important role in supporting development and new ventures of all types in this field.

Community projects.

Below follow some suggestions for the attention and encouragement of many entities which play an important role in the integration of immigrants and the community to the changes that have taken place; these include employers, trade unions, political parties, NGOs, the media, sports movement and cultural institutions. Immigrants themselves should be encouraged, not least, to avail themselves of the remedies and facilities offered by the community and to make their own contribution to them. It is important for the development of a democratic society that immigrant organisations themselves should grow stronger; this would facilitate collaboration between government entities and the immigrant community. In the same way, it is important to encourage immigrants to participate in the fundamental democratic institutions side by side with other members of the community, political parties and interest groups, in order to stimulate discussion and develop mutual understanding and contribution towards the shaping of our society.

Employers.

Immigrants in Iceland have made a significant contribution to the economic prosperity that Iceland has enjoyed in recent years. Many employers, both in the private and public sectors, fully realise that without immigrants it would have been virtually impossible to develop their enterprises in the way they have done, or achieved comparable results in their operations. Employers have an obligation not to discriminate between their workers on grounds of origin, race, religion or colour, and to ensure that they all enjoy their negotiated and legally-enshrined rights on the labour market, including measures to ensure safety and health at work. In addition, employers play a key role in facilitating the integration of immigrants into the community, e.g. by making it possible for them to learn Icelandic and receive instruction in civics and encouraging healthy communication between immigrants and native Icelanders in the workplace. It is important that employers should not discriminate against job applicants on grounds of their origin, and should seek to support immigrants in employment and ensure that they have the same opportunities for professional development as others. This would promote the best utilisation of human resources, for the mutual benefit of immigrants and the community. Employers who shoulder their responsibilities in this field make a significant contribution to general welfare and social solidarity among all people in Iceland, both at present and in the future.

Trade unions.

Many of the trade unions have taken the lead in securing important rights for immigrants and contributing to immigrants' adaptation to Icelandic society and their integration into the community. This has particularly been the case in their efforts to ensure that foreign workers employed on a temporary basis on the Icelandic labour market, and also immigrants who have settled permanently in the country, enjoy the same negotiated wages and terms as other workers. Many collective agreements contain provisions on various opportunities for education and training. It is important that the trade unions use their influence to ensure that immigrants among their members avail themselves of these provisions, and of all other contractually-defined rights and entitlements, to the same extent as other workers on the labour market, so proceeding with professional development and making use of their skills and talents in the same way as other members. Furthermore, the trade unions are urged to ensure that their committees and councils reflect the composition of their membership, and that immigrants are encouraged to be active and take seats on such bodies. The Government will assume that the trade unions will continue to be vigilant regarding immigrant's rights and their position on the Icelandic labour market, and will rely on them to do so.

Political parties.

Political parties are among the most important fundamental institutions in the democratic system under which we live. It is their role to reflect and interpret the demands of society and to seek ways of securing the national interest at any given time. They also represent a platform for the individual to receive training in working democratically and playing representative and confidential roles for the community, both at local and central government level. The political parties must regard it as a priority to activate immigrants in their programmes, both to ensure that their voices are heard within the democratic institutions and also that the parties themselves demonstrate an understanding of the entire social spectrum and its variety of needs. Doing this will contribute towards mutual respect and cohesion between all people in the country.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The large number of NGOs flourishing in Iceland and grassroots movements of various types are an indication of the rich human resources in the population, both at the local and national level. In many of the rural communities, these are the organisations that unite the inhabitants, also providing them with a platform to work for the good of others. Their spheres of operation may involve interests of various types, charities, cultural activities and leisure pursuits. The leaders of these organisations can do much to facilitate the integration of immigrants and bring them into contact with the native population by attracting immigrants and encouraging them to undertake administrative work and other official functions, so opening up a forum for them to work side by side with native Icelanders at their hobbies and interests.

The sports movement.

The sports movement plays an important role in the lives of children and young people, and is a forum for the development of social contacts and a positive self-image. The preventive value of involvement in sports (against alcohol and drug abuse) is beyond doubt. There have been various indications that the children of immigrants do not pursue sports to the same degree as those of native Icelandic origin; this is something that must be changed. Therefore, the sports movement is encouraged to seek ways of attracting children and young people of foreign origin. In doing this, it would join with the local communities in accelerating and facilitating integration and reducing prejudice and intolerance of all types. In addition, the sports movement is also encouraged to increase participation by parents of foreign origin in the work of the sports club; this would demonstrate respect and support for the aims regarding integration. Finally, local authorities and other state bodies are encouraged to work with the sports clubs towards these goals.

The media.

The media should reflect society as it is at any given time, and they also have a formative influence on it. Reporting of immigrants' activities and immigrant issues in the media plays a significant role in determining whether immigrants will succeed in adapting to, and becoming assimilated in, Icelandic society, and how the society as a whole will adapt to changing times. Responsible coverage, access by immigrants themselves to the media and efforts to reduce intolerance and prejudice are all important factors in determining cohesion in society and promoting enlightened discussion. Media that wish to shoulder their responsibilities towards the democratic society may never fall into the trap of establishing or perpetuating stereotypes and generalisations. Thus, the media are urged to set themselves ethical rules on the reporting of issues involving immigrants.

Cultural institutions.

Artistic and other cultural activities of all types are pursued at a high level in Iceland, contributing to education, entertainment, critical thinking, self-examination and examination of the world at large in Iceland. In this, the interplay of different cultural currents creates a rich resource for stimulating all types of new creativity in the cultural and artistic sphere. It is important that the diversity of society should be reflected in its artistic and cultural life, and that immigrants should be both participants and spectators in this. Making it easier for immigrants to cultivate their own cultural traditions and to present them to others contributes towards diversity and tolerance. In this, immigrants' cultural and regional societies can play an important role. The Government is willing to support the contribution made by immigrants towards cultural life in Iceland, since this will enable them to pursue their own cultural traditions and to present them to the community at large, at the same time simulating other forms of vigorous and creative activity.

III. Institutions dealing with immigrant issues.

Here follows an account of the councils, committees and other bodies under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security which are responsible for various immigrant and refugee issues.

The Immigration Council.

The main role of the Immigration Council is to address the principal matters that have a bearing on integration of immigrants into Icelandic society. Amongst other things, the council is to act in an advisory capacity to the Government, at both central and local level, on policy in various areas and propose action plans on immigrant issues and monitor their application. The Immigration Council also functions as the board of the Development Fund for Immigrant Issues. The council consists of a representative appointed the Minister of Social Affairs and Social Security (this representative also being chairman of the council), an immigrant who is appointed without nomination and representatives of the Union of Local Authorities, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

The Refugee Committee.

The Refugee Committee replaced the Refugee Council in 2005; it consists of representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs and the Icelandic Red Cross. The committee's main responsibility is to make proposals to the Government regarding the reception of groups of refugees from specific areas. The committee's proposals are based on collaboration with the UN High Commission for Refugees, and in all cases an agreement is made with a specific local authority and the Icelandic Red Cross covering services for refugees during the first year of their residence in Iceland. The committee has set itself reference guidelines which can be found on the homepage of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.

The Development Fund for Immigrant Issues.

It was decided in March 2007 by the Minister of Social Affairs at the time to establish a Development Fund for Immigrant Issues and to allocate ISK 10,000,000 to it each year. The fund is intended to encourage studies and developmental projects in the field of immigrant issues, the aim of these being to facilitate integration of immigrants into Icelandic society and to enable society to meet their needs. The emphasis is on projects that conform to the letter and spirit of the Government's policy on integration of immigrants. The rules of the fund, and application forms, are to be found on the website of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.

The Multicultural Centre.

The Multicultural Centre was established in 2000 on the basis of a parliamentary resolution. Its role is to facilitate communication and contact between Icelanders and foreign nationals, to work with institutions and local authorities on the development of services for foreign nationals, to prevent problems

arising in dealings between people of different cultural backgrounds and to facilitate the integration of immigrants into Icelandic society. It is also intended to take measures to ensure that the dissemination of information by government entities to immigrants is cohesive, coordinated and efficient, and that government entities have access to models when providing services and support to immigrants.

The principal tasks of the Multicultural Centre are as follows:

- To make information available to individuals, e.g. by telephone counselling and by presenting material on its website, mcc.is.
- To supervise coordination and advisory services on the presentation of information on the functions of, and services provided by, central and local government.
- To provide advice on policy formulation and the presentation of information within the executive sector and provide guidance on procedures and working rules.
- To monitor studies and development projects.
- To have information available on Icelandic teaching programmes, educational courses and services.
- To maintain a register of private interpreters and interpreting and translating services.
- To initiate and engage in joint projects aimed at eradicating prejudice and antagonism.

IV. Tasks to be addressed by the Government.

1. Legislation on integration of immigrants.

A bill on integration of immigrants is to be compiled. Priority should be given to having the bill address only those matters that have a bearing on immigrant's integration and are not covered in other legislation. The main aim should be to cover immigrants' rights and obligations and the assistance and services that are available to them in the same way as they are available to other people in the country. Principal matters to be covered include the presentation of information for immigrants, data collection on immigrant issues, the role and functions of the Immigration Committee, the Development Fund for Immigrant Issues, the Multicultural Centre, the Refugee Committee and services to refugees who are accepted by Iceland according to quotas. These activities already take place under *ad hoc* government resolutions and ministerial decision, or as experimental projects based on parliamentary resolutions, and it is important to give them a grounding in legislation.

Aim: That legislation should be enacted on integration of immigrants.

1.1 Compilation of a bill on integration of immigrants.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.

Description: A task committee should be set up with the role of compiling a bill on integration of immigrants, addressing various matters regarding the presentation and dissemination of information, the legal standing of immigrants, including their right to interpreting services, creating a legal basis for activities of institutions, councils and committees involved with immigrant issues.

Execution: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.

In collaboration with: Immigration Council.

Period/timing: September 2008.

Estimated cost: Work contribution by staff.

Funding: Within budget framework.

Product/result: Draft legislation (bill).

2. Information on immigrant issues.

Improvements should be made to statistical data on immigrant issues so as to give government entities, researchers and other relevant parties involved at any given time the best possible information on the number, origin, age and distribution of immigrants in Iceland, by local government area. Looking to the

future, it is particularly important that it should be possible to use this information to analyse the status of the second generation of immigrants, even though they will by then have received Icelandic citizenship. The Multicultural Centre should be commissioned to maintain a register of studies in this area, and to keep them accessible, and also to monitor attitudes both among immigrants and towards immigrants. Combating prejudice and antagonism towards immigrants is a pressing task for the community at large which the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security will support by having informative and awareness-raising materials produced for unrestricted use by other parties, in addition to which the ministry will join with NGOs and other parties in campaigns against prejudice and antagonism. It should be pointed out that the Development Fund for Immigrant Issues will be used to support studies and development projects in the field of immigrant issues.

Aim: That statistical data on immigrant issues in Iceland should meet the needs of government entities, the research community and others parties concerned.

2.1 Database on immigrant issues.

Responsibility: Statistics Iceland.
Description: Improvements should be made to the registration of immigrants in the database of Statistics Iceland to ensure that data is available at any given time on both first and second generation immigrants, this applying both to foreign nationals and to those who have received Icelandic citizenship. A distinction should be made between those whose parents are/were both of foreign origin and those who have one Icelandic parent.
Execution: Population department.
In collaboration with: Immigration Council.
Period/timing: Permanent.
Estimated cost: ISK 4,200,000.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Database on immigrant issues.

2.2 Database covering studies relating to immigrant issues.

Responsibility: Multicultural Centre.
Description: Information should be gathered on studies relating to immigrant issues, particular projects, procedures adopted by the local authorities for receiving immigrants, models for reception schemes and the dissemination of information in the principal languages used by immigrants.
Execution: Multicultural Centre.
In collaboration with: Immigration Council, Union of Local Authorities, etc.
Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: A database on the Multicultural Centre's website, www.mcc.is.

Aim: That government authorities and other parties should have information on immigrants' attitudes, experience and personal circumstances.

2.3 Attitude surveys among immigrants.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description: Attitude surveys to be carried out among immigrants covering, amongst other things, their personal circumstances, attitudes, access to information, experience of integration and other matters with a bearing on their lives and emotional well-being.

Execution: Immigration Council.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre and research bodies.
Period/timing: At intervals of 4–5 years.
Estimated cost: ISK 10,000,000 per survey.
Product/result: Attitude surveys among immigrants.

Aim: That government authorities and the community as a whole should have information at any given time on public attitudes towards immigrants.

2.4 Survey of attitudes towards immigrants.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description: Surveys of attitudes among the general public towards immigrants, including prejudicial/antagonistic attitudes.
Execution: Immigration Council.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre and research bodies.
Period/timing: Every two years.
Estimated cost: ISK 500,000 per opinion survey.
Product/result: Surveys of attitudes among the public.

Aim: That immigrants on the labour market should enjoy wage equality with other inhabitants of the country, irrespective of gender, origin or colour.

2.5 Wage equality for all.

Responsibility: Centre for Gender Equality.
Description: A survey to be made of men's and women's wages among immigrants, the findings to be compared with general wage-levels on the labour market to establish whether or not wage equality applies, both in terms of national origin and gender.
Execution: Centre for Gender Equality.
In collaboration with: Centre for Gender Equality and Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Period/timing: 2008–2009.
Estimated cost: ISK 1,500,000.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Study (survey).

3. Dissemination of information to immigrants.

Together with Icelandic teaching, the dissemination of information to immigrants is, without doubt, one of the most important factors that enable immigrants to enjoy the quality of life available to the community and to play a full role in it. Consequently, a major effort should be made on upgrading the availability of information for immigrants, with all ministries and government bodies reviewing the information they provide and the means of dissemination with a view to the needs of the immigrant community. Immigrants include foreign nationals who do not intend to reside in Iceland in the long term, yet have a right to information on their rights and obligations and basic services. Then there is the group of immigrants who have settled in Iceland: while they have not yet acquired a command of Icelandic, they need both specific information and services. Thus, government bodies must assess in each individual case what interests call for the presentation of the principal languages spoken by immigrants in Iceland.

The Multicultural Centre will be responsible for collecting all important information, pooling and coordinating it and presenting it on its website, mcc.is, in collaboration with Island.is (www.island.is). This will establish, in a single location, an official source of information for immigrants, service providers and others who need it. An employee has already been engaged for this project.

The individual parts of this plan also include many information-related projects applying to the particular services discussed; these are not mentioned specifically in this section.

Aim: That immigrants should have access to information on Iceland's system of government, society and public services. This information should also be presented in Icelandic.

3.1 Review of the dissemination of information to immigrants.

Responsibility: All ministries and government bodies.
Description: A review of websites, periodical publications, guidelines, forms and other informative material with the requirements of immigrants in mind; this material should be presented in Icelandic, English and the mother tongues of the largest immigrant groups.
Execution: A person responsible for this task should be appointed in each ministry and government body, with the Multicultural Centre in charge of the project as a whole.
In collaboration with: Immigration Council and Island.is
Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Information provided by ministries and government bodies in the appropriate languages.

3.2 The information website mcc.is.

Responsibility: Multicultural Centre.
Description: Development of a comprehensive information website in several languages, presenting all the main information on immigrants' rights and obligations in Icelandic society, e.g. the role of central and local government authorities and their institutions, including schools, information on courses in Icelandic and other informative courses, interpreting and translating services, first steps on the labour market, certificates and identification papers required when entering Iceland and leaving the country, application forms, etc.
Execution: Informatics project manager of the Multicultural Centre.
In collaboration with: Ministries, government bodies, local authorities, educational services, schools, etc.
Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing.
Estimated cost: Work contribution by employees.
Funding: ISK 7,000,000 of the budget allocations already made to offset the effects of economic recession.
Evaluation criterion: Count of website visits; surveys, etc.
Product/result: Website: mcc.is

3.3 Computer link to Island.is.

Responsibility: Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
Description: A link to be added to the homepages of Iceland's overseas ministries leading users to the website Island.is (www.island.is).
Execution: Foreign Service.
In collaboration with: Island.is
Period/timing: 2008.
Estimated cost: Negligible.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Link to Island.is

3.4 Booklet: "First Steps".

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description: Regular review of a booklet in nine foreign languages on immigrants' first steps in

Icelandic society, updating the text as necessary. This booklet to be distributed and made available at the principal places frequented by immigrants (social centres, information desks, service providers, government offices, etc.).

Execution: Immigration Council.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre, Union of Local Authorities and the bodies and entities referred to in the booklet.
Period/timing: The booklet was first published in autumn 2007; revision to be carried out in spring 2009.
Estimated cost: ISK 1,500,000.
Funding: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security; work contribution by the staff of the government bodies referred to in the booklet.
Product/result: Revised edition of booklet.

Aim: To review and publish clear and accessible information for persons of foreign origin, the aim being that they should be able to find out about their rights to social security in Iceland in a language that they understand.

3.5 Clear and accessible information on rights available in a number of languages.

Responsibility: Icelandic Social Security Institute.
Description: Clear and accessible information to be made available on the homepage of the Icelandic Social Security Institute, and also at its service centres, the Directorate of Immigration, the local authorities' social service centres and other places where foreign nationals seek services and advice. It should be available in English, Polish, Thai and possibly other languages.
Execution: Information department of the Icelandic Social Security Institute.
In collaboration with: Intercultural Centre.
Period/timing: May 2008–January 2009.
Estimated cost: ISK 2,000,000.
Funding: On the publicity budget of the Icelandic Social Security Institute.
Evaluation criterion: The aim is that the staff of the Social Security Institute, and others involved in helping people of foreign origin to enter the Icelandic welfare system, should be able to refer to information in a language understood by those applying for assistance. Evaluation of the success of the project to be made through surveys among immigrants and the staff who provide them with assistance.
Product/result: Information on a homepage and in the form of a booklet.

Aim: That immigrants should have access to clear and reliable information on the most important points regarding safety in the home.

3.6 Safety in the home.

Responsibility: National Fire Prevention Agency.
Description: A booklet on safety in the home in English, Thai, Polish, Spanish and Russian, covering fundamental points in connection with emergency telephone numbers, exit routes, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
Execution: National Fire Prevention Agency.
Period/timing: 2008.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Booklet.

Aim: That immigrants should have access to clear and reliable information on consumer affairs.

3.7 Translation of Consumer Guidance materials.

Responsibility: Ministry of Commerce.
Description: At the earliest opportunity, the Consumer Guidance website (neytandi.is) should be translated into the principal languages used by immigrants, and its contents should also be disseminated to Island.is and mcc.is.
Execution: Consumers' Spokesman.
In collaboration with: Consumer Affairs Office (Neytendastofa).
Period/timing: 2008–2009.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Consumer Guidance website in the principal languages used by immigrants.

Aim: That immigrants should have access to clear and reliable information on Icelandic agriculture.

3.8 Translation of information about Icelandic agriculture.

Responsibility: Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture.
Description: Information about Icelandic agriculture should be translated into four languages and put on the ministry's homepage. The homepage should also contain links to material which is of use to foreign workers in the agricultural sector.
Execution: Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre.
Period/timing: April–December 2008.
Estimated cost: ISK 350,000.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: Website counter.
Product/result: Information on the website of the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture.

Aim: That immigrants should have access to information on vocational training courses in the fish-processing industry.

3.9 Translation of information on vocational training courses in the fish-processing industry.

Responsibility: Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture.
Description: Information on vocational training courses in the fish-processing industry to be translated into Polish and one other language and presented on the homepage of the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture.
Execution: Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre.
Period/timing: Spring 2008.
Estimated cost: ISK 150,000.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: By website counter.
Product/result: Information on the website of the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture.

Aim: That immigrants should at all times have the same access as other people in Iceland to the services of the Housing Financing Fund, and to clear and accurate information on buying and selling property, so that they are able to defend their financial interests.

3.10 Information on buying and selling property.

Responsibility: Housing Financing Fund.
Description: To provide more information in the principal languages spoken by immigrants on

the mortgage loan system of the Housing Financing Fund, other methods of financing and the procedures involved in buying property in Iceland, in the form of booklets/leaflets, and to have the basic forms, e.g. for assessment of repayment capacity, and other application forms, available in more languages. This information is to be made available on the websites of the Housing Financing Fund and the Multicultural Centre.

Execution: Housing Financing Fund.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre and Intercultural Centre.
Period/timing: 2008.
Estimated cost: ISK 1,000,000.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: Number of languages corresponding to the user group.
Product/result: Information on websites; booklets and forms.

Aim: That immigrants should at all times have the same access as other people in Iceland to heating subsidies, and to clear and accurate information on how and where such subsidies are to be applied for, so enabling them to defend their financial interests.

3.11 Information for all.

Responsibility: Ministry of Industry.
Description: Publication of a booklet/leaflet and translation of the application form for heating subsidies into the principal languages spoken by immigrants, stating in what areas of the country and how these subsidies are paid. Translation of an extract from the Regulation No. 284/2005, with subsequent amendments, on heating subsidies. This information, together with application forms, to be placed on the websites of the local authorities in areas where subsidies are available, and also on the websites of Orkustofnun (the National Energy Authority), the power utilities that are permitted to receive subsidies, the Multicultural Centre and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Execution: Ministry of Industry.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre, Intercultural Centre, Orkustofnun, local authorities and power utilities.
Period/timing: 2008.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Information on websites; booklets; forms.

Aim: To provide immigrants with easy access to the internet in the local government areas where they live.

3.12 Immigrants' internet access.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description: Libraries should be encouraged to expand internet access for immigrants, e.g. by establishing computer facilities for library users.
Execution: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
In collaboration with: Association of Library Directors, libraries and local authorities.
Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: Number of visits by immigrants to libraries.
Product/result: Internet access in libraries.

4. Residence and work permits.

Two pieces of draft legislation have been submitted to the Althingi: a bill proposed by the Minister of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs on the amendment of the Foreign Nationals Act, No. 96/2002, with subsequent amendments, and a bill proposed by the Minister of Social Affairs and Social Security on the amendment of the Foreign Nationals' Right to Work Act, No. 97/2002, and the Workers' Freedom of Employment and Residence within the EEA Act, No. 47/1993, with subsequent amendments. One of the aims of these proposed amendments is to ensure that citizens of non-EEA states who live and work in Iceland should hold the requisite residence and work permits. For this purpose, it is proposed that the granting of such permits be simplified and coordinated. Furthermore, it is proposed that registration be improved, including making it possible for EEA citizens to register with a single party on arrival in Iceland. Other amendments proposed are designed to bring the provisions of the Foreign Nationals Act into line with current practice regarding residence permits for workers' family members.

Aim: That citizens of EEA states should be able to register their residence in Iceland in a simple manner.

4.1 Simplification of registration of EEA citizens living in Iceland.

Responsibility: Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs.
Description: Simplification of the registration system to enable persons who are entitled to live in Iceland without special residence permits (i.e., citizens of EEA states) to register with a single government body at the beginning of their period of residence (*cf.* the proposals in the bill to amend the Foreign Nationals Act, No. 96/2002, with subsequent amendments).
Execution: Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs.
In collaboration with: Directorate of Immigration and the National Registry.
Period/timing: To be set out in a regulation in the first half of 2008.
Estimated cost: Costs involved in changing computer systems.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: New and simplified registration system.

Aim: Coordination in connection with the granting of residence and work permits for citizens of non-EEA states.

4.2 Coordination of the Foreign Nationals Act, No. 96/2002, and the Foreign Nationals' Right to Work Act, No. 97/2002.

Responsibility: Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs; Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description: Measures to ensure that those who receive residence permits under the Foreign Nationals Act will also receive permanent work permits under the Foreign Nationals' Right to Work Act.
Description: Bill presented to the Althingi in 2007. Legislation to take effect in mid-2008.
Execution: Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs; Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Period/timing: Spring 2008.
Estimated cost: Negligible.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Coordinated legislation covering the granting of residence and work permits.

Aim: That citizens of non-EEA states living and working in Iceland be in possession of the required residence and work permits.

4.3 Increased monitoring of the residence and work permits of non-EEA citizens.

Responsibility:	Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs; Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description:	Collaboration between the government bodies dealing with immigrant issues, including mutual exchange of information, to prevent non-EEA citizens from being able to reside and work in Iceland without holding the required permits.
Execution:	Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs; Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
In collaboration with:	Directorate of Immigration, National Registry, tax authorities, Directorate of Labour and the police.
Period/timing:	Bill presented to the Althingi in 2007. Further details to be set out, as necessary, in regulations in the later part of 2008.
Funding:	Mostly within budget framework.
Product/result:	Measures to ensure that non-EEA citizens will not be able to reside and work in Iceland without action being taken by government authorities.

Aim: Amendment to the legislative provisions on residence permits to bring them into line with current practice.

4.4 Review of legislation.

Responsibility:	Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs.
Description:	Review of the provisions of the Foreign Nationals Act dealing with residence permits.
Execution:	Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs.
Period/timing:	Bill presented to the Althingi in 2008. Further details to be set out, as necessary, in regulations in the first half of 2008.
Estimated cost:	Negligible.
Funding:	Within budget framework.
Product/result:	Amended provisions regarding residence permits for family members.

5. Interpreting services.

The right of immigrants to the services of interpreters, or, in other words, the definition of circumstances in which the services of interpreters are required, is one of the matters which must be examined when draft legislation on integration of immigrants is compiled. The Government sees it as a natural complement to upgrading Icelandic teaching for immigrants to take steps to ensure that important information on Iceland's system of government and the rights and services to which they are entitled are translated into the principal languages they use. Immigrants have a legally-defined right to the services of an interpreter in the context of the courts and the health services. Elsewhere within the administrative system and in government institutions, it could be a matter of mutual interest to ensure that correct and high-quality information passes between officials and immigrants. These interests may be in the spheres of finance, security, law and welfare, for example as regards child welfare, health and safety at work or communication between parents and school staff. Therefore, many institutions will be setting themselves rules on interpreting services in the near future. In this context it is important to support training courses and specialised programmes for interpreters in particular areas, e.g. the health and social services.

Aim: That language difficulties should not prevent the exchange of information between parents and school staff.

5.1 Adoption of rules by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science on interpreting services.

Responsibility:	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description:	After draft legislation on pre-school and junior school education has been approved, rules are to be drawn up (<i>cf.</i> Article 9 of the Pre-School Bill and

Articles 16 and 18 of the Junior School Bill) guaranteeing that information that is necessary in communication between parents and the school will be interpreted.

Execution: The School Department of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
In collaboration with: Union of Local Authorities.
Period/timing: Spring 2008.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: By agreement between central government and the local authorities.
Product/result: Rules on interpreting in for pre-schools (kindergartens) and junior schools.

Aim: That immigrants on the labour market should be provided with interpreting services when urgent health and safety considerations are at stake.

5.2 Adoption of rules by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration on interpreting services.

Responsibility: Occupational Health and Safety Administration.
Description: Rules to be drawn up on interpreting services, guaranteeing workers with limited knowledge of Icelandic interpreting services if circumstances arise in which they are needed, e.g. in the event of occupational accidents or when other urgent health and safety considerations are at stake.
Execution: Occupational Health and Safety Administration.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre and others.
Period/timing: 2008–2009.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Rules on interpreting services.

Aim: That language difficulties should not prevent the exchange of information between individuals and workers in the health services.

5.3 Rules on interpreting services in the health services.

Responsibility: Ministry of Health.
Description: Coordinated rules to be set on interpreting services for persons who do not have a working command of Icelandic, in accordance with their entitlement to such services (see the Patients' Rights Act, No. 74/1997).
Execution: Director-General of Public Health.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre.
Period/timing: First half of 2008.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Rules on interpreting services.

Aim: That interpreting services should be available to all adults with disabilities, disabled children and their parents.

5.4 Interpreting services for disabled persons who need special services.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description: Interpreting services to be available for those who need to seek special services from the regional offices, with clear rules about when and how interpreting services are to be provided. For example, the rules should include guidelines on the number of consultations.
Execution: Regional Offices for Disabled Persons' Affairs.
In collaboration with: The regional offices and other parties providing services for the disabled, the Multicultural Centre, etc.

Period/timing: 1 January – 1 March 2009.
Estimated cost: ISK 300,000.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Rules.

Aim: That language difficulties should not interfere with the exchange of information between specialists involved in the diagnosis of developmental disorders in children, counselling and follow-up measures, on the one hand, and the children's parents on the other.

5.5 Rules on interpreting and translation services in connection with the diagnosis of disabled children and children suffering from developmental disorders.

Responsibility: State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre.
Description: Improvements to be made to the guidelines and rules of the centre as regards interpreting in connection with examination, diagnosis, counselling and follow-up measures. Plans to be made for the translation of diagnostic reports that are given to parents after diagnosis has taken place.
The State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre is to provide guidance on rules of this type for those involved in primary diagnosis.
Execution: State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre.
In collaboration with: Those involved in primary diagnosis.
Period/timing: 2009.
Estimated cost: ISK 1,000,000.
Funding: Proposed in the state budget legislation.
Evaluation criterion: Published in the State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre's handbook.
Product/result: Improved rules on interpreting services, translations and how they are to be carried out.

5.6 Training courses for interpreters.

Responsibility: Ministry of Health.
Description: Courses should be held in interpreting within the health services to take account of the needs of staff and service-users of foreign origin.
Execution: Director-General of Public Health.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre.
Period/timing: 2008–2009.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Courses.

5.7 Course for interpreters.

Responsibility: State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre.
Description: Course covering interpreting in the field of diagnostic work (of developmental disorders and disabilities in children) and counselling for their parents.
Execution: State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre and the Ísafjörður High School.
Period/timing: 2008.
Estimated cost: ISK 300,000.
Funding: From course fees.
Evaluation criterion: Offer of a course to be advertised in the autumn semester 2008.
Product/result: Course.

Aim: That language difficulties should not prevent the exchange of essential information between the child welfare institutions and their staff, on the one hand, and parents on

the other.

5.8 Rules on interpreting services at the Child Protection Agency.

Responsibility: Child Protection Agency.
Description: Guideline rules to be drawn up on interpreting services to guarantee that parents and children of foreign origin will be offered interpreting services when the need arises.
Execution: Child Protection Agency.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre.
Period/timing: June 2008.
Estimated cost: ISK 500,000 per year.
Funding: Within the framework for 2008.
Evaluation criterion: That all children and parents who lack a working command of Icelandic receive interpreting services.
Product/result: Working rules on interpreting services.

6. Reception on change of residence.

There is growing interest among local authorities in establishing organised reception procedures to be followed when immigrants of foreign origin settle in the various local government areas. Some experimental projects of this sort are in preparation and have received support from the Development Fund for Immigrant Issues. The aim of these reception procedures is to give new arrivals information on the local community, presenting the services available in the area (both those provided by the local authority and state bodies) and the opportunities available for involvement in societies, clubs, etc., the intention being to engage immigrants as early as possible in the life of the community and prevent their becoming socially isolated. Thus, the idea is that immigrants should receive all main information in one place, and that this will make for more rapid integration and adaptation and open their access to services. In many cases, allowance is made for new arrivals in a community having personal helpers or social contacts from NGOs such as the Icelandic Red Cross, or from other parties working within the local government area, and this arrangement has proved successful. One of the prerequisites for establishing reception schemes of this type is that the local authorities receive information about new arrivals quickly and securely from the National Registry, and therefore the National Registry's services to the local authorities should be reviewed. The Government wishes to support this scheme, and the Multicultural Centre will be entrusted with making models, and information on the experience gained from these experimental projects, available to other local authorities.

Aim: To make it easier for local authorities to establish organised reception schemes for new arrivals (immigrants), so contributing towards their integration and participation in the local community.

6.1 Model for local authorities' reception schemes.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description: A model to be prepared, covering the reception procedures to be followed by the local authorities and aimed at ensuring that immigrants will at the earliest opportunity become active members of the community; they will receive information about the services provided in the area by the local authority and central government as soon as they arrive. This model should be prepared on the basis of the experience gained in experimental projects of this type in local government areas in various parts of the country.
Execution: Multicultural Centre.
In collaboration with: Individual local authorities and government bodies, and the Union of Local Authorities.
Period/timing: March 2008 – April 2009.

Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Project to be carried out, in part, by the project manager in the East Fjords region; this position is financed by the Government allocation to offset the effects of economic recession in October 2007.
Evaluation criterion: The proportion of local authorities with reception schedules in place by 2010.
Product/result: Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.

Aim: To enable local authorities to contact foreign immigrants in their areas.

6.2 Continuous flow of information to the local authorities on immigrant arrivals.

Responsibility: Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs.
Description: It is planned that the methods used to record resident numbers and movements by the National Registry be reviewed, this review including the technical features involved and resulting in notifications being sent to the local authorities about all foreign immigrants who move into their areas.
Execution: Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs.
In collaboration with: National Registry.
Period/timing: Depends on how quickly technical innovations are made.
Estimated cost: Part of the cost of technical innovations at the National Registry.
Funding: Part of the cost of technical innovations at the National Registry
Product/result: Automatic supply of information to the local authorities on immigrant arrivals.

7. Central and local government as employers.

The Government urges all public bodies, whether they are owned by the state or the local authorities, to take measures to make it easy for their employees of foreign origin to attend Icelandic courses and to ensure that they enjoy complete equality with other employees as regards wages and terms, entitlements, facilities, professional development and continuing education. In particular, they are encouraged to make it easier for immigrants to make use of their educational qualifications by having their foreign training, academic and practical, assessed more easily than is the case at present. Furthermore, it is recommended that the directors of public bodies seek to provide their staff, as appropriate, with instruction on various cultural backgrounds and the multicultural society, with deliberate measures taken to combat prejudice and antagonism of all types towards minority groups. It should be noted that in many cases, engaging immigrants for work can improve services, so enhancing the skills and ability of the staff as a whole to understand and meet the needs of customers or clients in a more diverse society.

Aim: That the evaluation of foreign academic and vocational qualifications be simplified.

7.1 Recognition of foreign vocational and academic qualifications by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description: Simplification of the evaluation of foreign academic and vocational qualifications, with the relevant information translated into other languages and made accessible on the website of the ministry and that of the Multicultural Centres (www.mcc.is).
Execution: Continuing Education Department.
In collaboration with: The Iðan Educational Centre and the Business Sector's Education Office.
Period/timing: In progress.
Estimated cost: ISK 1,000,000.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Simplified process of evaluation and recognition, and information on the internet.

Aim: That the evaluation of foreign academic and vocational qualifications in the health

services.

7.2 Recognition of foreign vocational and academic qualifications in the health services.

Responsibility: Ministry of Health.
Description: Simplification of the evaluation and recognition of foreign vocational and academic qualifications in the health services, with the relevant information translated into more languages and made available on the ministry's website and that of the Multicultural Centre (www.mcc.is).
Execution: Ministry of Health.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre.
Period/timing: In progress.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Simplified process of evaluation and recognition, and information on the internet.

Aim: That workers in the health services be given, in their training and in continuing education programmes, instruction on different cultures and viewpoints and customs based on religious backgrounds insofar as is relevant when dealing with immigrants who avail themselves of the health services, and particularly as regards events such as childbirth, illness, suffering and death.

7.3 Education and continuing education in the health services.

Responsibility: Ministry of Health.
Description: A letter to all educational institutions involved in the training of workers in the health services, emphasising the importance of teaching in this sphere.
Execution: Director-General of Public Health.
In collaboration with: Educational institutions involved in training workers in the health services.
Period/timing: First half of 2008.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Letter and educational training.

Aim: To ensure that workers in the social services have the knowledge required to provide persons of foreign origin with the necessary services.

7.4 Educational campaign for workers in the local authorities' social services.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description: Courses to be organised for workers in the local authorities' social services, following the approval of a new Local Authorities' Social Services Act, specifically to address the needs of a multicultural society.
Execution: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
In collaboration with: Union of Local Authorities and the Social Science Faculty of the University of Iceland.
Period/timing: 2009.
Evaluation criterion: Proportion of local authorities for which courses are provided.
Product/result: Courses in all parts of the country.

Aim: That workers receive instruction about services in a multicultural society.

7.5 Instruction on multicultural issues for the staff of Orkustofnun (the National Energy Authority).

Responsibility: Orkustofnun.
Description: Courses on communication in a multicultural society.

Execution: Orkustofnun.
In collaboration with: Intercultural Centre.
Period/timing: 2008–2009.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: Proportion of staff attending courses.
Product/result: Courses.

7.6 Courses on multicultural issues for the staff of the Housing Financing Fund.

Responsibility: Housing Financing Fund.
Description: Courses on communication in a multicultural society.
Execution: Housing Financing Fund.
In collaboration with: Intercultural Centre.
Period/timing: 2008–2009.
Estimated cost: ISK 500,000.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: Proportion of staff who have received instruction.
Product/result: Courses.

Aim: To increase insight into immigrant issues among the police.

7.7 An increase in the number of police staff with multicultural backgrounds.

Responsibility: Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs.
Description: The number of staff of the regional police forces with multicultural backgrounds and language skills that are of use in handling cases involving foreign nationals/immigrants.
Execution: Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs and the National Commissioner of Police.
In collaboration with: National Police College.
Period/timing: 2008–2009.
Estimated cost: Negligible.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: More diversity of background among police personnel in the regional forces.

Aim: To increase specialist knowledge and awareness of immigrant issues within the police.

7.8 Courses in the National Police College on immigrant issues.

Responsibility: Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs.
Description: Special courses to be held in the National Police College aimed at increasing specialist knowledge and awareness of immigrant issues within the police.
Execution: National Police College.
Period/timing: Autumn 2008.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within the budget of the National Police College.
Evaluation criterion: Proportion of police officers receiving instruction.
Product/result: Courses on multicultural issues at the National Police College.

8. Employment and participation in the employment market.

The most important tasks facing the government authorities over the next few years in connection with employment among foreign nationals and immigrants involve coordination of registration, simplification of the procedures for granting work permits and increased monitoring to ensure that valid permits are held. Also, they must ensure compliance with obligations regarding training and with the provisions of

law and collective agreements, that training and active monitoring of health and safety at work is effective in the case of workers of foreign origin, and that immigrants will at all times have access to the remedies offered in labour-market measures if local or temporary unemployment becomes a problem. The Directorate of Labour shall give particular attention to measures to support young people of foreign origin on the labour market. Finally, courses are planned by Impra aimed at supporting entrepreneurs among immigrants in setting up their own business ventures.

Aim: That foreign workers on the domestic labour market should enjoy the same wages, terms and other rights as other workers.

8.1 Improved monitoring of workplaces.

Responsibility: Directorate of Labour.

Description: A collaborative venture involving the government and the social partners to monitor observance of applicable legislation and collective agreements and ensure that work permits are valid following the approval of draft legislation on foreign nationals and foreign nationals' right to work.

Execution: Directorate of Labour.

In collaboration with: Trade unions, the Icelandic Confederation of Labour, the Confederation of Icelandic Employers, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security and the police.

Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing.

Estimated cost: ISK 5,000,000–6,000,000.

Funding: Within budget framework.

Product/result: Improved monitoring.

8.2 Awareness-raising for employers.

Responsibility: Directorate of Labour.

Description: Awareness-raising and information on the Internet for employers covering the laws and regulations applying to the engagement of foreign workers, whether this takes place under the Foreign Nationals' Right to Work Act, the EEA Agreement, the EFTA charter or the agreement between the Government of Iceland, on the one hand, and the Government of Denmark and the Home-Rule Administration of the Faroe Islands on the other.

Execution: Directorate of Labour.

In collaboration with: Tax authorities, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, the police, the National Registry and the State Social Security Institute.

Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing.

Estimated cost: Work contribution by staff.

Funding: Within budget framework.

Product/result: Informative materials for employers on the homepage of the Directorate of Labour and in circulars.

Aim: That foreign workers on the domestic labour market should enjoy the same protection when at work as other employees.

8.3 Closer monitoring of health and safety at work in occupational sectors where there is a large proportion of foreign workers.

Responsibility: Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Description: The Occupational Safety and Health Administration to carry out closer monitoring of occupational sectors in which there are large numbers of foreign workers, e.g. the construction industry, the fish-processing industry, shops and restaurants, and

in care-providing services, etc., in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act, No. 46/1980, and to increase the flow of information between it and the Directorate of Labour concerning workplaces where these matters are not in satisfactory order.

Execution: Development and Monitoring Department, and regional offices, of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

In collaboration with: Directorate of Labour.

Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing.

Estimated cost: Within budget framework.

Funding: Within budget framework.

Evaluation criterion: Reduction in the number of accidents.

Product/result: Closer monitoring.

Aim: That information, education and training concerning safety and health at work should come to the attention of foreign/immigrant workers.

8.4 Publication and dissemination of information.

Responsibility: Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Description: Publication of informative materials, in Icelandic for employers, and in the principal languages used by immigrants for the foreign workers in the various occupational sectors, both in the form of booklets and materials on the homepage of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Execution: Education Department of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

In collaboration with: Employers.

Period/timing: 2008.

Estimated cost: Within budget framework.

Funding: Within budget framework.

Product/result: Booklets and information on a website.

8.5 Courses for foreign/immigrant workers.

Responsibility: Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Description: Course materials to be prepared, and courses offered, on health and safety in the workplace, in some of the principal languages used by foreign workers on the Icelandic labour market.

Execution: Education Department Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

In collaboration with: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.

Period/timing: 2008–2010.

Estimated cost: Within budget framework.

Funding: Within budget framework.

Product/result: Courses and course materials.

Aim: That immigrants should at all times have the same access as other people on the labour market to labour market measures, the aim being to ensure that they will continue to be active participants in the labour market.

8.6 Access to labour-market measures.

Responsibility: Directorate of Labour.

Description: Measures to be continued to enable foreign nationals who hold permits/entitlements to live and work in Iceland to participate in labour-market measures if they lose their jobs, the emphasis being on individually-tailored services and the active participation of the individuals concerned. In particular, attention is to be given to the position of immigrants who lose their jobs in the

fish-processing industry.
Execution: Directorate of Labour.
In collaboration with: Labour market councils, the local authorities and the trade unions.
Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: Unemployment among immigrants not to be higher than among other people.

Aim: That young immigrants have access to comprehensive counselling and support to develop and use their talents and abilities in studies and at work.

8.7 Support programme for teenage immigrants.

Responsibility: Directorate of Labour.
Description: A support programme to be drawn up for teenage immigrants so as to make it easier for them to pursue studies that are suited to them or to increase their chances of success on the labour market, based on proposals from the project 'A Future in a New Country' (*Framtíð í nýju landi*).
Execution: Directorate of Labour.
In collaboration with: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and Fjölsmiðjan.
Period/timing: 2008–2009.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: Results to be assessed two years after the measures are established.
Product/result: Support measures.

Aim: To activate entrepreneurs among immigrants.

8.8 Courses on setting up companies and putting commercial ideas into practice.

Responsibility: Icelandic New Business Venture Centre (Nýsköpunarmiðstöð Íslands).
Description: The courses *Sóknarbraut* and *Vaxtarsprotar*, and also *Brautargengi*, which is specifically for women, to be adapted to the needs of immigrants so as to give them access to courses for entrepreneurs to enable them to put commercial ideas into practice.
Execution: Impra.
In collaboration with: Intercultural Centre, Multicultural Centre and various experts from the business sector.
Period/timing: First course to be ready in autumn 2008; further courses to be held as needed.
Estimated cost: ISK 4,000,000.
Funding: Impra, grants and moderate course fees.
Evaluation criterion: Number of courses and participants.
Product/result: Commercial ideas/business plans produced by the participants.

9. Taxation.

Work should continue in the Ministry of Finance and the office of the Director of Taxation with the aim of simplifying the payment of tax by foreign workers, this to be done both by improving the availability of information and by enabling them to send in tax returns over the internet. The issue of tax cards should be coordinated more closely with the periods of validity of residence and work permits, e.g. by issuing special tax cards to persons who come to Iceland for temporary periods of employment. Furthermore, procedures for settling tax accounts for the year in which individuals leave Iceland should be made simpler and more efficient so as to enable foreign nationals to settle their tax accounts before leaving the country.

Aim: That the periods of validity of foreign nationals' tax cards and residence and work permits be coordinated.

9.1 Coordination of the periods of validity of tax cards and residence and work permits.

Responsibility: Ministry of Finance.
Description: Coordination of the periods of validity of tax cards and residence and work permits, and the issue of temporary tax cards for citizens of non-EEA states (*cf.* the interim report presented by a task committee in February 2008).
Execution: Ministry of Finance.
In collaboration with: Director of Taxation, Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security, Directorate of Labour and Directorate of Immigration.
Period/timing: In progress.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Coordinated periods of validity.

Aim: To make it easier for foreign nationals to send in their tax returns over the internet and to make tax payments by foreign nationals as simple and efficient as possible.

9.2 Tax payments by foreign nationals without tax returns.

Responsibility: Director of Taxation.
Description: Tax payments by foreign nationals to be made as efficient and simple as possible.
Execution: Director of Taxation.
In collaboration with: Bodies involved in immigrant issues and employers' associations.
Period/timing: The aim is to have a scheme by which foreign workers' tax payments will be made without tax returns in 2009.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: Simpler and more accurate payment of taxes.
Product/result: Fairer and more accurate taxation; greater contentment among tax-payers.

Aim: To finalise taxation in the year in which the individual leaves Iceland, so simplifying the process of levying and collecting taxes.

9.3 Settlement of foreign workers' tax balances in the year in which they leave Iceland.

Responsibility: Director of Taxation.
Description: To enable foreign workers to settle their tax debts (balances) completely before they leave Iceland.
Execution: Director of Taxation.
In collaboration with: Directors of taxation and State Accounting Department.
Period/timing: 2008.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: An improved service towards those who are leaving Iceland, with far better and more accurate tax payments. Fewer estimates when annual taxes are made payable.
Product/result: Fairer and more accurate taxation, simpler processing of tax returns and greater contentment among tax-payers.

Aim: To monitor correct registration and ensure that only persons who have residence permits receive tax cards.

9.4 Special tax cards for foreign workers who come to Iceland for temporary engagements.

Responsibility:	Director of Taxation.
Description:	The issue of tax cards to be reviewed with the aim of bringing their validity period into line with the holders' work permits.
Execution:	Director of Taxation.
In collaboration with:	Directorate of Immigration and Directorate of Labour.
Period/timing:	2008.
Estimated cost:	Within budget framework.
Funding:	Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion:	More effective monitoring.
Product/result:	Improved overview and more correct registration.

Aim: That everyone should have simple access to the information and materials necessary to fill out their tax returns.

9.5 Translation of information and materials relating to taxation.

Responsibility:	Director of Taxation.
Description:	Translation of tax returns, i.e. the principal forms, instructions and information booklets about taxation in Iceland, into the languages spoken by the largest groups of immigrants.
Execution:	Director of Taxation.
In collaboration with:	Intercultural Centre.
Period/timing:	2008.
Estimated cost:	Within budget framework.
Funding:	Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion:	Better supply of information.
Product/result:	Improved service to those whose mother tongue is not Icelandic, whether they have settled in Iceland or are working here on a temporary basis.

Aim: To enable immigrants to obtain clear information about taxation in their mother tongue on the internet.

9.6 Information website on taxation.

Responsibility:	Director of Taxation.
Description:	Design and development of a website with accessible information in foreign languages.
Execution:	Director of Taxation.
In collaboration with:	Multicultural Centre.
Period/timing:	Under constant development and updating.
Estimated cost:	Within budget framework.
Funding:	Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion:	Better presentation of information.
Product/result:	Improved service on the website www.rsk.is/international to those whose mother tongue is not Icelandic, whether they have settled in Iceland or are working here on a temporary basis.

10. Education.

The school system, i.e. the kindergartens, junior (compulsory-level; to age 15) and senior schools have a great responsibility regarding immigrants' education and integration, and also as regards preparing the entire younger generation of Iceland for life in a more diverse society, in which the ability to see matters in an international dimension may be crucial for the development of the economy and for Iceland's position in the international arena in the future. This constitutes a valuable opportunity to encourage

young immigrants to become fully-fledged representatives of Iceland through the combination of a sound knowledge of the values of Iceland's democratic society and their knowledge of other societies and their languages and cultures.

The task facing the school system is first and foremost to give support to civic education, provide opportunities for learning Icelandic, make it easier for immigrants to pursue studies in other subjects, provide them with the appropriate study materials, work to promote their integration and to eliminate prejudice and antagonism towards them, and to educate teachers to meet the more varied needs of their pupils.

It is also the responsibility of the educational authorities to stimulate research, to make the transfer of information easier, to provide funding and in other ways to support educational bodies to enable them to tackle these tasks. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science has presented bills on pre-schools, junior schools and senior schools to the Althingi taking these new tasks into account.

This action plan lays the foundations for efficient flow of information and improved collaboration between schools and parents of foreign origin. Some of the projects set out in the Government's policy on the integration of immigrants and having a bearing on education have already been implemented, e.g. the publication of a revised main curriculum in Icelandic as a second language in the junior schools. It is envisaged that in the review of the legislation on libraries will take account of the role of libraries in conveying information to immigrants and helping them with studies in their mother tongues.

Aim: That adaptation by pupils of foreign origin to the Icelandic school system should be a simple and trouble-free experience.

10.1 Plans for the registration and reception of children of foreign origin in kindergartens (pre-schools), junior schools and senior schools.

Responsibility:	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description:	Each individual school to draw up a plan covering the registration and reception of children of foreign origin, taking into account their backgrounds and ability in Icelandic and their mother tongue and, as appropriate, other languages, the aim being to make it easier for them to learn and to take part in, and adapt to, the life of the school. Working schedules of pre-schools (kindergartens) should include, amongst other things, reception plans for children whose mother tongue is not Icelandic. The junior schools should then receive these pupils in accordance with a reception plan drawn up either by the school or by the local authority. Provisions on these matters should be included in the agreements of the senior schools.
Execution:	Curriculum Department and School Department of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
In collaboration with:	Union of Local Authorities and the senior schools.
Period/timing:	Permanent.
Estimated cost:	Within budget framework.
Funding:	Under the state budget.
Evaluation criterion:	Proportion of schools with reception plans.
Product/result:	Reception plans.

Aim: That pupils in junior and senior schools should be entitled to teaching in Icelandic as a second language.

10.2 Icelandic teaching as a second language in the junior and senior schools.

Responsibility:	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description:	It is stated once again in the new bill on pre-school (kindergarten) education that children already receive teaching in Icelandic based on the premises adopted at the relevant school level and based on individually-tailored study. Even clearer

provisions are included stating that junior-school pupils of foreign origin are entitled to teaching in Icelandic as a second language (*cf.* Article 16 of the bill on junior schools). Under Article 35 of the bill on senior schools, senior school pupils would have the same right. Pupils' right to teaching in Icelandic as a second language is to be defined in greater detail, as are proposals for the structure and evaluation of such teaching.

Execution: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
In collaboration with: Junior and senior schools.
Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing.
Estimated cost: Cost to be estimated when the legislation has been passed.
Funding: Division of costs between central and local government to be estimated when the legislation has been passed.
Product/result: Provisions in the Junior School and Senior School Acts.

10.3 Revision of the general curriculum in Icelandic as a second language for senior schools.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description: A general curriculum to be issued in Icelandic as a second language for senior schools.
Execution: Curriculum Department.
Period/timing: A draft has already been produced.
Product/result: General curriculum in Icelandic as a second language (ÍSA).

Aim: That pupils avail themselves of their right to learn Icelandic as a second language in pre-schools (kindergartens), junior schools and senior schools.

10.4 Development and publication of educational materials.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description: Support for the development and publication of educational materials for use in teaching Icelandic as a second language in kindergartens, junior schools and senior schools.
Execution: School Department of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Educational Materials Development Fund.
In collaboration with: National Centre for Educational Materials.
Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework and grants from the development fund.
Evaluation criterion: Number of educational materials for the school level in question.
Product/result: Educational materials for teaching Icelandic as a second language (ÍSA).

Aim: To support the publication of electronic dictionaries for various languages.

10.5 Publication of a Lexin dictionary/picture dictionary.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description: An Icelandic edition of the Lexin dictionary/picture dictionary intended for people who have little knowledge of Icelandic, children, young people and new immigrants. The first stage would consist of over 1,000 pictures and 5,000 words; the second stage would add a further 10,000 words.
Execution: Project manager for immigrant issues.
In collaboration with: Task committee of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Army Magnusson Institute in Iceland.
Period/timing: First stage 2008; second stage 2010.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.

Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Picture dictionary in nine languages.

Aim: To support the position of pupils whose mother tongue is not Icelandic in the senior school system.

10.6 Examination of the position of immigrants in the senior school system.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description: An examination to be made of the position senior school pupils whose mother tongue is not Icelandic; the committee making the examination being expected to submit proposals on remedial measures.
Execution: School Department of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
In collaboration with: School principals in the senior schools.
Period/timing: It has not been decided when the committee will be considered as having completed its work.
Product/result: Information and proposals on remedial measures.

10.7 Funding to the senior schools for pupils whose mother tongue is not Icelandic.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description: The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to earmark specific funding each year to meet the needs of senior school pupils whose mother tongue is not Icelandic.
Execution: School Department.
Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing
Estimated cost: ISK 19,000,000 on the national budget for 2007.
Funding: On the national budget.
Evaluation criterion: Proportion of senior schools making use of the offer.
Product/result: Grants to the schools.

10.8 Translation of information about the senior level of schooling.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description: The booklet "*Studies after Junior School*" to be translated into the eight principal languages spoken by immigrants.
Execution: Project manager for immigrant issues.
In collaboration with: Senior schools.
Period/timing: 2008.
Estimated cost: ISK 2,000,000.
Evaluation criterion: That drafts of booklets have been produced.
Product/result: Information about the senior school system in eight foreign languages.

10.9 Translation of information on the registration procedure for senior schools.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description: The registration website for senior schools to be translated into some of the principal languages spoken by immigrants.
Execution: Project manager for immigrant issues.
In collaboration with: Senior schools.
Estimated cost: ISK 500,000.
Product/result: Information on the registration procedure for senior schools translated into several languages.

Aim: That school pupils receive, where possible, the opportunity of maintaining their mother-tongue proficiency.

10.10 Recognition of mother tongues (other than Icelandic) in the junior and senior schools.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description: The junior (compulsory level) schools should be permitted to recognise mother-tongue proficiency of pupils whose mother tongue is not Icelandic as fulfilling part of their compulsory educational requirements instead of obliging them to participate in compulsory courses in a foreign language. Mother-tongue proficiency on the part of senior (post-compulsory) school pupils of foreign origin should be recognised and assessed in terms of credit units. Immigrants' mother tongue competence should be maintained by distance-learning or other means, where possible.
Execution: Curriculum department.
Period/timing: Spring 2008.

Aim: That support be given to libraries in their efforts to establish holdings of books in foreign languages.

10.11 Books in immigrants' mother tongues.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description: Monitoring and support of projects by libraries to collect books in foreign languages and to make books available in inter-library loans which may be of use to schoolchildren in maintaining and extending their mother-tongue proficiency.
Execution: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
In collaboration with: Association of Head Librarians, the local authorities and libraries.
Period/timing: Permanent.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: Number of foreign-language books, and loans made.
Product/result: Holdings of foreign-language books.

Aim: That it be made easy for parents and guardians of foreign origin to take part in the work of the schools that their children attend.

10.12 Closer contact between the schools and the homes of children of foreign origin.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description: The school authorities and teaching staff are to make a priority of establishing strong connections with the homes of children of foreign origin, e.g. by urging parents to attend meetings concerning their children and to attend parent-teacher interviews. Standardised letters and messages to be sent from the schools to the homes to be translated into the mother tongues of as many as possible of the parents who do not speak Icelandic.
Execution: School Department of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
In collaboration with: Junior schools and the Multicultural Centre.
Period/timing: In progress.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: Proportion of parents of children of foreign origin who attend parent-teacher interviews.
Product/result: Standardised letters.

Aim: An increase in the number of well-educated teachers who have been trained in the teaching of Icelandic as a second language.

10.13 Definition of demands made of teachers who teach Icelandic as a second language.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description: Definition of the minimum requirements to be made of teachers of Icelandic as a second language.
Execution: Scientific and University Office of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
In collaboration with: College of Education
Period/timing: 2008.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Defined demands to be made of teachers of Icelandic as a second language.

10.14 Training in the teaching of Icelandic as a second language as part of teacher training.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Description: Training in the teaching of Icelandic as a second language to be included in ordinary teacher training, in addition to which special courses to be held for teachers already in employment in teaching Icelandic as a second language.
Execution: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
In collaboration with: College of Education, the University of Iceland's Department of Continuing Education, the University of Aurora and Reykjavík University.
Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Specially trained teachers of Icelandic as a second language.

11. Health Services.

Immigrants are supposed to have the same access to the health services as other people in Iceland. In order for them to be able to avail themselves of these services, it is vital that information on the health system and the social insurance system should be accessible in the principal languages spoken by immigrants. In addition, it may prove necessary to ensure that they have access to information about specific diseases and treatment methods. The Patients' Rights Act grants those who do not speak Icelandic a legally-protected entitlement to interpreting services, but attention must be given to improving the education of interpreters who specialise in work within the health services and to establishing databases of specialised terminology to assist them.

It is a matter of urgency to ensure that immigrants make use of pre-natal medical inspections and infant care services and that speedy and correct responses are made in the event of special health hazards that may arise. Health-service workers should be given instruction regarding the various cultural backgrounds of patients which may be relevant when administering treatment. It is also important that registration be improved so as to make it possible to monitor in the long term whether specific health problems affect immigrants to a greater extent than other social groups.

Aim: That immigrants should at all times have access to satisfactory health services in the same way as other citizens in accordance with the Health Services Act, the Health Insurance Act and the Patients' Rights Act.

11.1 Circular to managers in the health services.

Responsibility: Ministry of Health.
Description: A circular to be sent to the directors of health-service institutions to emphasise the obligation of their managers to monitor and sure that all operations of the institutions conform to the aim of ensuring equality of access and satisfactory health services.

Execution: Director-General of Public Health.
Period/timing: 2008.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Circular.

11.2 Review of registration in the health services.

Responsibility: Ministry of Health.
Description: Policy to be adopted, and instructions issued, on registration in the health services to take account of the activities of the services, the health problems suffered by the services' clients and the remedies available in the case of services to immigrants.

Execution: Director-General of Public Health.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre.
Period/timing: 2008–2010.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Instructions and procedural rules.

11.3 Plans for pre-natal examinations and infant health monitoring.

Responsibility: Ministry of Health.
Description: Special plans to be drawn up at primary health clinics for pre-natal examinations and infant health monitoring to take account of the needs of parents of foreign origin.

In collaboration with: The primary health clinics, the Maternity Care Centre and the Child Health Care Centre.
Period/timing: 2008.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: Proportion of mothers and infants of foreign origin making use of the full service.
Product/result: Plans on pre-natal examinations and infant health monitoring.

11.4 Information for all.

Responsibility: Ministry of Health.
Description: Forms, instructions and educational material to be translated into the principal languages spoken by immigrants and published in print and, as necessary, on the internet; glossaries of key terminology in the health services also to be published.

Execution: Director-General of Public Health.
In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre.
Period/timing: 2008–2010.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Information in the form of booklets and on the internet.

Aim: Information on health insurance and the structure of the health services to be accessible to immigrants.

11.5 Publication of informative material.

Responsibility: Ministry of Health.
Description: A booklet to be published in some of the main languages spoken by immigrants in Iceland containing practical information about the health services, health insurance, patients' rights and instructions on steps to be taken in emergencies.

Execution: Ministry of Health.

In collaboration with: State Social Security Institute and Director-General of Public Health.
Period/timing: 2008.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Booklet.

11.6 Information about health-service institutions.

Responsibility: Ministry of Health.
Description: A circular to be sent to the health-service institutions calling on them to prepare basic information about their services and publish it in some of the languages spoken by immigrants in Iceland, both on their own websites and on the website of the Multicultural Centre (www.mcc.is).
Execution: Director-General of Public Health.
Period/timing: First half of 2008.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: Proportion of health-service institutions with satisfactory information on websites.
Product/result: Information on websites.

Aim: That attention be given to health problems specifically affecting immigrants in order to improve their health.

11.7 Health inspection of immigrants.

Responsibility: Ministry of Health.
Description: When the regulation on medical examinations of immigrants is reviewed, points of emphasis are to be specified in their medical examinations when they first arrive in Iceland in connection with the issue of residence permits. Responsibility for these inspections, and for providing treatment for health problems that may be identified, to be specified.
Execution: Epidemiological/infectious diseases expert at the office of the Director-General of Public Health.
Period/timing: 2008–2009.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Regulation (revised).

Aim: That preventive measures regarding health should embrace immigrants.

11.8 Preventive measures for all.

Responsibility: Ministry of Health.
Description: Informative materials on specific risk factors and health to be made accessible in the main languages spoken by immigrants in Iceland; deliberate educational and awareness-raising projects on preventive measures and health campaigns, aimed at immigrants, to be carried out in workplaces and schools.
Execution: Public Health Institute (Lýðheilsustöð).
In collaboration with: NGOs, schools, etc.
Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Informative materials and educational work.

12. Social services.

The Local Authorities' Social Services Act, No. 40/1991, provides for a wide range of services to the inhabitants of local government areas. The aim of the Act is to ensure financial and social security and to promote the welfare of the inhabitants of the areas on the basis of mutual aid. This aim is to be secured by securing the standard of living of those in need, providing assistance to enable inhabitants to live for as long as possible in their own homes and taking measures to prevent social problems from developing. It is vital that the Act should reflect the reality resulting from the increase in the number of immigrants in Iceland, and it is proposed here that it be reviewed for this purpose.

Aim: That the local authorities ensure that immigrants have the same access to social services as other inhabitants of the local government area.

12.1 Social services for all.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description: Special consultation to take place between the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security and the Union of Local Authorities with a view to ensuring that immigrants' children and other family members should have easy access to social services. Among other things, the key sections of the Local Authorities' Social Services Act should be translated into the languages spoken by the largest number of immigrants.
Execution: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
In collaboration with: Union of Local Authorities and the Multicultural Centre.
Period/timing: 2008–2009.
Estimated cost: ISK 500,000.
Product/result: Information on the local authorities' social services, and translations of it.

12.2 Review of the Local Authorities' Social Services Act.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description: Special attention to be given to the needs of immigrants (both children and adults) when the Local Authorities' Social Services Act is reviewed, including as regards interpreting services in interviews where social counselling or emergency assistance is given to foreign nationals/immigrants.
Execution: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
In collaboration with: Union of Local Authorities.
Period/timing: 2009.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Draft legislation (bill).

13. Disabled persons' affairs.

Immigrants are to enjoy the benefits of the same services as native-born Icelanders regarding disabilities of every type. The tasks to be tackled by the institutions concerned in this area are centred mainly on information and awareness raising among the immigrant community on the services and remedies that are on offer, but also among the workers in the various service sectors so as to ensure that cultural differences, language difficulties and other factors will not hamper diagnosis, the provision of services or the supply of information. In this context, it is important that those providing treatment should be well informed about various cultures and cultural backgrounds, and that support be given to the training and means available to interpreters in this specialised field.

Aim: To make immigrants aware of the services available to the disabled and to inform them about their rights and entitlements.

13.1 Accessible information about rights and entitlements.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description: Accessible information to be made available at the regional offices, in at least five foreign languages, about the public services on offer.
Execution: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
In collaboration with: Regional Offices for Disabled Persons' Affairs, service providers who have taken over services to the disabled according to contracts; the Multicultural Centre, etc.
Period/timing: May 2008 – January 2009.
Estimated cost: ISK 500,000.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: When all those who are registered as being of foreign origin have received an information booklet about their rights; this is scheduled for February 2009.
Product/result: Information booklet.

Aim: That immigrants who are disabled be offered special instruction on the principal aspects of the welfare services that are specially designed to meet immigrants' needs.

13.2 Special informative material for groups and individuals.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description: Special informative material to be prepared for use at publicity meetings dealing specifically with the various services provided as part of the welfare system.
Execution: Regional Offices for Disabled Persons' Affairs.
In collaboration with: Service providers who have taken over services to the disabled according to contracts; the Multicultural Centre and parties offering interpreting services, etc.
Period/timing: January 2009 – December 2009.
Estimated cost: ISK 500,000.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: That at least 100 individuals make use of the service.
Product/result: Ten courses.

Aim: That information and publicity material of all types on disabilities be available, with interactive contact on offer.

13.3 An interactive website in three languages.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description: A website where disabled persons are able to put questions and receive answers in three languages.
Execution: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
In collaboration with: The regional offices, other service providers who have taken over services to the disabled and the Multicultural Centre.
Period/timing: 1 January – 1 March 2009.
Estimated cost: ISK 500,000.
Evaluation criterion: That 80% of disabled persons who require services are able to make use of them.
Product/result: Website in connection with those of the ministry and Island.is (www.island.is).

Aim: To increase contact between the parents of disabled children and disabled people's interest groups.

13.4 Joint project concerning contact with disabled persons' interest groups.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description: A joint project aimed at having service-providers draw attention to the activities of disabled persons' interest groups, acting as intermediaries in establishing contact between disabled adults, and the parents of disabled children, and the interest

groups.
 Execution: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
 In collaboration with: Disabled persons' interest groups (NGOs), regional offices, State Social Security Institute, other providers of services for the disabled and the Multicultural Centre.
 Period/timing: 1 January – 1 May 2009.
 Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
 Funding: Work contribution by staff.
 Evaluation criterion: That half of those who seek services from the regional offices should establish contact with the interest groups.
 Product/result: Procedures and joint forum for activity defined.

Aim: That information on disabled persons' affairs, services available for disabled children and payments for care-givers should be accessible to immigrants.

13.5 Supply of information to immigrants.

Responsibility: State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre.
 Description: The State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre's website should be upgraded, taking into account the needs of immigrants, with principal information about matters relating to disabled children, payments to care-givers, etc., translated into the languages most commonly spoken by immigrants and presented on the website. The websites of the Multicultural Centre (www.mcc.is) and Island.is (www.island.is) should include links to the website of the State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre. Links with information about disabilities, presented on the websites of institutions in other countries, in the languages most commonly spoken by immigrants, should be included.
 Execution: State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre.
 Period/timing: Autumn semester 2008.
 Estimated cost: ISK 300,000.
 Funding: Within budget framework.
 Evaluation criterion: This project is now almost complete, and information will be printed and placed on the website of the State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre very shortly in Serbo-Croatian, Russian, Polish, Spanish, English, Filipino and Thai.
 Product/result: Revised website and written information in the languages most commonly used by the immigrant community.

13.6 Plan for translation of diagnostic reports.

Responsibility: State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre.
 Description: A plan to be drawn up for the translation of diagnostic reports which are given to the children's parents after diagnosis has been completed.
 Execution: State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre.
 Period/timing: 2009.
 Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
 Funding: Within budget framework.
 Product/result: Plan for translation.

13.7 Terminology database.

Responsibility: State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre
 Description: A database to be established, with professional terms and their translations into the languages most commonly spoken among immigrants, in order to make it easier to interpret for immigrants, and for them to understand, information about various types of disability and their symptoms.
 Execution: State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre.

In collaboration with: Multicultural Centre and the Icelandic Language Institute.
Period/timing: 2008–2010.
Estimated cost: Within budget framework.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Product/result: Terminology database.

14. Child Welfare.

It is essential that the child welfare authorities maintain their vigilance and monitor to see if any particular assignments or measures will be necessary to ensure that the children of immigrants receive the protection and support that children are guaranteed, irrespective of their origin, under Icelandic law. For this purpose, it is important that the child welfare authorities hold records to meet this purpose and that they ensure that the necessary information reaches parents who receive support from the institutions that are active in this area. The Child Welfare Agency (Barnaverndarstofa) will support the local authorities' child welfare committees in order to help them carry out their functions.

Aim: That children of foreign origin should receive the protection specified in Icelandic child welfare legislation.

14.1 Guidelines for the local authorities' child welfare committees.

Responsibility: Child Welfare Agency.
Description: Guidelines to be prepared to help child welfare committees fulfil their legal obligation to prepare action plans on child welfare issues with the aim of improving the position of children of foreign origin.
Execution: Child Welfare Agency.
In collaboration with: Local authorities' child welfare committees.
Period/timing: 2008.
Estimated cost: Work contribution by staff.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: That half of the action plans reflect issues affecting children of foreign origin.
Product/result: Guidelines for child welfare committees.

Aim: That the welfare of children of foreign origin be monitored so as to make it possible to lay the foundations for possible child welfare intervention when necessary.

14.2 Registration of child welfare cases involving children of foreign/immigrant origin.

Responsibility: Child Welfare Agency.
Description: Children of foreign origin to be identified in statistical processing, and sheets showing total figures to include data on the numbers of children of foreign origin involved in cases dealt with by the child welfare authorities, so showing whether they reflect a normal correlation with the total population in terms of numbers and the types of case.
Execution: Child Welfare Agency.
In collaboration with: Child welfare committees.
Period/timing: 2008.
Estimated cost: Work contribution by staff.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: That 80% of committees submit satisfactory registration.
Product/result: Survey of the number and nature of cases involving children of foreign/immigrant origin.

14.3 Information for the parents of children of foreign origin.

Responsibility:	Child Welfare Agency.
Description:	Information which parents receive when their children are admitted to treatment homes to be translated into their mother tongues.
Execution:	Child Welfare Agency.
In collaboration with:	Treatment homes.
Period/timing:	2008.
Estimated cost:	ISK 500,000.
Funding:	Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion:	That all parents who do not have a working knowledge of Icelandic are able to receive information in their mother tongue.
Product/result:	Booklets and interpreting services.

Aim: That institutions operating under the Child Welfare Agency set themselves targets and procedures regarding the treatment of children of foreign/immigrant origin; these should be published in the Child Welfare Agency's annual report for 2009.

14.4 Recommendations and guidelines for treatment homes regarding children of foreign/immigrant origin.

Responsibility:	Child Welfare Agency.
Description:	The Child Welfare Agency to lay down guidelines for treatment homes regarding children of foreign/immigrant origin; these should cover issues including racial prejudice and antagonism in the homes. Also, plans to be drawn up regarding treatment and patient discharge.
Execution:	Child Welfare Agency.
In collaboration with:	Treatment homes.
Period/timing:	Procedural rules to be ready by 1 January 2009.
Estimated cost:	Work contribution by staff.
Funding:	Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion:	All treatment homes to set themselves targets and procedural rules.
Product/result:	Targets and procedural rules.

15. Icelandic teaching for adults.

Great strides have been made in recent years in Icelandic teaching for adults, especially after the decision by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to allocate ISK 190,000,000 to support educational bodies and companies in holding Icelandic courses and producing teaching materials and a course curriculum for teaching adults Icelandic. This curriculum has now been produced, and is based on the Council of Europe's framework guidelines for foreign language teaching. The aforementioned allocation has also meant that Icelandic courses are cheaper for the participants. Further similar allocations should be made for this purpose.

The most important tasks ahead involve the construction of quality benchmarks and the production of course materials, and further granting should be made for the holding of courses. In making grants, consideration should be given to building up vocation-related Icelandic teaching and ensuring that Icelandic teaching is also made available to those who are not on the labour market. In particular, efforts should be made to include those who have little or no formal education.

Aim: That adult immigrants, both in and outside the labour market, should have access to good Icelandic teaching.

15.1 Grants for Icelandic teaching.

Responsibility:	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
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Description: Grants are to be made to educational bodies and companies which meet the formal requirements set by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science regarding Icelandic teaching for immigrants (*cf.* the memorandum sent by the Minister to the Government in autumn 2007).

Execution: Project management committee in charge of Icelandic teaching for immigrants.

Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing.

Estimated cost: Within budget framework.

Funding: Within budget framework.

Evaluation criterion: Number of courses supported/number of participants.

Product/result: Courses supported by grants.

Aim: To ensure a supply of course/teaching materials which correspond to the aims of the extant curriculum.

15.2 Grants for Icelandic teaching materials intended for immigrants.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Description: Particular encouragement should be given to the production of teaching materials in accordance with the curriculum and the quality assessment instruments; production of materials should be supported, for example, by grants from the Senior Schools' and Adult Education Development Fund and the Start-up Fund (Sprotasjóður) in accordance with the draft Senior Schools Act.

Execution: Project management committee in charge of Icelandic teaching for immigrants.

In collaboration with: Authors of course materials.

Period/timing: Permanent/ongoing.

Estimated cost: ISK 25,000,000 during 2008.

Funding: Within budget framework.

Evaluation criterion: That teaching materials should be available for learners of varying ability.

Product/result: Grants for production of teaching materials.

Aim: To monitor the quality of Icelandic teaching.

15.3 Evaluation of the quality of Icelandic courses for foreigners.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Description: Quality benchmarks to be produced for Icelandic teaching for immigrants.

Execution: Project management committee in charge of Icelandic teaching for immigrants.

In collaboration with: Analysis and Assessment Department of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

Period/timing: Completed in 2008.

Estimated cost: Within budget framework.

Funding: Within budget framework.

Product/result: Quality benchmarks for Icelandic teaching.

Aim: That workers of foreign origin in the fish-processing industry should have access to quality vocation-related Icelandic teaching.

15.4 Vocation-related Icelandic courses for fish-processing workers.

Responsibility: Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture.

Description: Development and implementation of vocation-related Icelandic courses for workers in the fish-processing industry.

Execution: Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture.

In collaboration with: Vocational training committee for the fish-processing industry and the Multicultural Centre.

Period/timing: 2008.
Estimated cost: ISK 3,500,000.
Funding: Within budget framework.
Evaluation criterion: Assessment of results at end of course.
Product/result: Vocation-related Icelandic courses.

Aim: To enable immigrants, irrespective of where they live, to increase their reading skills, their knowledge of Icelandic and their ability to seek and find information.

15.5 Reading skills and Icelandic learning for immigrants.

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.
Description: A development project in which efforts are to be made, using informatics technology, to enable immigrants who are not familiar with the Latin alphabet and who have received little formal education in their home countries, to learn to read and to have access to Icelandic teaching appropriate to their abilities, irrespective of where they live.
Execution: Multicultural Centre.
In collaboration with: University of Iceland; West Fjords University Centre; parties involved in adult education and NGOs.
Period/timing: 2008–2010.
Estimated cost: To be analysed in further detail.
Funding: Public funding and grants.
Product/result: An open-access teaching website, communications network and increased professional teaching skills available for the benefit of immigrants who have little formal educational background.

16. Against prejudice and discrimination.

An integral aspect of a democratic society is that all its members should be aware of their rights and obligations, at the same time having scope to take part in the life of the community and to exert an influence upon it. For this to be possible, they must be aware of the fundamental values of the society, its infrastructure and the methods of functioning of democratic institutions. Respect for the opinions of others and freedom of expression go hand in hand.

The Government wishes to join with the business sector, the educational system, NGOs and the community at large in combating all forms of prejudice against minorities, whether they are based on origin, colour or other features. Prejudices rely on ignorance and stereotypes, and if mixed with suspicion or fear, they may result in a danger that immigrants' human rights and well-being will be jeopardised; in fact, they constitute a threat towards the fundamental values of that enlightened welfare society that Iceland is. It is therefore important to make regular surveys of public attitudes towards immigrants, and to take awareness-raising measures against prejudice when there is reason to so.

On the basis of the coalition Government's political covenant, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security intends to organise a campaign against prejudice, seeking to engage broad support from NGOs, the media, the business sector and immigrants in formulating it and putting it into practice. In this context, it is important to make use of the expert skills that have been acquired by parties such as the Icelandic Red Cross, the Intercultural Centre and many others who have specialised in working at immigrant affairs.

Aim: That the Government, the business sector and the community at large join forces in fighting to combat prejudice and antagonism towards minority groups.

16.1 Campaign against prejudice and antagonism.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.

Description: The ministry to take the lead in mounting a campaign against prejudice and antagonism towards immigrants in collaboration with the broadest possible support and involvement by NGOs, the media, institutions and immigrants themselves.

Execution: Immigration Council.

In collaboration with: Various human-rights organisations, the Multicultural Centre, etc.

Period/timing: 2008–2009.

Estimated cost: ISK 10,000,000.

Evaluation criterion: That at least half of respondents in a survey taken by the market-research company Gallup should be aware of the campaign.

Product/result: Campaign against prejudice and antagonism against immigrants.

Aim: That suitable educational and awareness-raising material should be available at any given time for use in the campaign against prejudice and antagonism towards immigrants.

16.2 Education and awareness-raising against prejudice and antagonism.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.

Description: The ministry is to have a teaching-material package prepared, in Icelandic, on the causes of prejudice, tolerance and cultural literacy, this to be offered for use in schools, NGOs and in workplaces.

Execution: Immigration Council.

In collaboration with: Various human-rights associations and bodies.

Period/timing: 2008.

Estimated cost: ISK 300,000.

Product/result: Teaching materials for courses against prejudice and antagonism.

16.3 Civics instruction for immigrants.

Responsibility: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.

Description: A package of course materials to be produced in several languages, presenting Icelandic society and its fundamental values, information about the principal international human-rights conventions, etc., to be offered to educational parties for use and to be put on the ministry's homepage.

Execution: Immigration Council.

In collaboration with: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Multicultural Centre.

Period/timing: Autumn 2008.

Estimated cost: ISK 2,000,000.

Product/result: Package of course materials.

Aim: That immigrants to Iceland receive instruction about gender equality and about their legal rights.

16.4 Educational and awareness-raising material on gender equality issues.

Responsibility: Centre for Gender Equality.

Description: Educational and awareness-raising material to be produced, in some of the languages most commonly spoken by immigrants, about gender equality issues in Iceland, including legal rights, with both men and women as target groups.

Execution: Centre for Gender Equality

In collaboration with: Intercultural Centre and Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security.

Period/timing: 2008.

Estimated cost: ISK 300,000.

Funding: Within budget framework.

Product/result: Booklets and transparency sets.