

Resettlement in Iceland



MINISTRY OF WELFARE

Number of refugees coming to Iceland since the Icelandic Refugee Committee was founded.

Year	Municipality	Country of Origin	Number
1996	Ísafjörður	Krajina	30
1997	Hornafjörður	Krajina	17
1998	Blönduós	Krajina	23
1999	Hafnarfjörður, Fjarðabyggð, Dalvík	Kosovo	75
2000	Siglufjörður	Krajina	24
2001	Reykjanesbær	Krajina	23
2003	Akureyri	Krajina	24
2005	Reykjavík	Columbia/Kosovo	31
2007	Reykjavík	Columbia	30
2008	Akranes	Palestines from Iraq	29
2010	Reykjavík	Columbia	6
Total			312



The Icelandic Refugee committee

The Icelandic Refugee committee:

is a consulting body on refugees representing:

The Ministry of Welfare – the Minister of Welfare appoint the Chairman

The Ministry of Interior

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Icelandic Red Cross

The role of the committee:

- » The Welfare Ministry through the Icelandic Refugee Committee, is responsible for the selection, admission and integration of refugees in Iceland while working in close co-operation with the ministries concerned and the RC. **Only refugees that come for the resettlement program are under the responsibility of the committee.**



Decision making and selection

- » Budget
- » Contacting UNHCR regarding suggestions
- » Refugee committee drafts a proposal to the Cabinet based on information from UNHCR and capacity.
- » The cabinet approves the drafted proposal
- » The Refugee committee receives RRF files from UNHCR and select in cooperation with the Director of Immigration
- » Refugee committee contacts local municipalities
- » Ministry of Welfare: contracts with local municipalities and the local Red Cross. The state pays for the first year.
 - Too complex system for six persons?



The Program in Iceland

Two major players: local authorities and local Red Cross in a one year program

Local authority:

Comprehensive social services, counseling,

Counseling, social guidance with specially trained social workers, financial support, housing,

General Health care

Education: Preschool, elementary school, high school, adult learning, courses about Icelandic, swimming lessons,

Coordination between various institutions.

Psychological support



The Project

- » The local Red Cross
 - Reception and integration in cooperation with local municipality
 - To safeguard the interests of refugees and to provide general assistance.
 - Tracing service
 - Experties
 - Psychological assessment over the year.
 - Courses and first aid course
 - furnishings the apartments
 - **Support families**



Support families by the Red Cross: Ideology behind

- » Prevent isolation and promoting social inclusion by creating a relationship between local people and newcomers
- » Create a feeling of security and belonging
- » Orientation between peers
- » Promote mutual integration

Their role:

First and foremost to be there

Assistance of getting to know new society

Give access to social networking – access to society

All the supporting families are volunteers



The support families

- » Each refugee family is provided with three support families or friends.
- » In most cases a close friendship is created
- » Youngsters are connected with „friends“ of same age to prevent social exclusion
- » Practical information are share:
 - Where to find the best price on food,
 - Sports
 - Local holidays etc.
- » If the people do not click together?
 - New families are provided if there is an interested



Two committees:

The Project Execution Board:

Local Authority – Red Cross – (Ministry of Welfare)

Supervise the project, coordination, information.

People on the ground.

Meets on regular bases

The Consulting committee:

Local Authorities – Red Cross – Ministry of Welfare

If there doubts

Meets rarely



Working together

- NGOs can go into areas that local authorities or governmental bodies can not go into
- In many cases there is more trust towards NGOs than governmental bodies.
- Getting the community to take part via support families, esp. in cases of small towns is important.
- Transfer of information between projects



Working closely together

- » Roles not always clear:
 - For the refugee
 - between partner
 - towards the society
- » Different perspective between partners
 - Has caused confusion and debate
 - The good cop and the bad cop



Changes:

- » Project manager from the Ministry of Welfare
 - Increased in asylum seekers getting a refugee status
 - Finding ways so refugees receive the same assistance
 - The refugees are very diverse.

