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## Site Visit - The implementation of the Bologna Process in Iceland and with focus on regional development

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## Site Visit - The implementation of the Bologna Process in Iceland and with focus on regional development

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**Institution:** Iceland University, School of Education, and CCER, Iceland

**Participants:** Staff of CCER (Centre for Continuing Education and Research); Solrun B.Kristinsdóttir, Asdis Hrefna Haraldsdóttir, Sigrídur Erla Jónsdóttir and Asdis Jónsdóttir, Amalia Björnsdóttir (Head of the Board of CCER) Anna Sigurðardóttir (Counsellor and guidance for the School of Education) and President Jon Torfi Jonasson, Iceland University, School of Education)

**Visit carried out by:** Ebba Ossiannilsson, Lund University, Sweden, 16 jan 2009

### Brief overview of the University

The University of Iceland is a progressive educational and scientific institution, renowned in the global scientific community for its research. It is a state university, situated in the heart of Reykjavík, the capital of Iceland. A modern, diversified and rapidly developing institution, the University of Iceland offers opportunities for study and research in almost 300 programmes spanning most fields of science and scholarship: Social Sciences, Health Sciences, Humanities, Science and Engineering.

Some of the resources available at the University are uniquely Icelandic. These include the manuscripts preserved in the Árni Magnússon Institute, Icelandic census records dating from 1703, exceptionally complete genealogical data and climatological, glaciological, seismic and geothermal records. The University of Iceland holds a leading role internationally in renewable energy and environmental research.

*The Centre for Continuing Education and Research (CCER)* is an institution within the School of Education, University of Iceland. Its main activity is to provide continuing education and in-service training for teachers and trainers at pre-, primary and secondary level. CCER provides several different services, including ULLL programs, short courses and tailor made courses for schools and educational institutions. It also runs a study program for driving instructors and administers publishing of two educational journals. As well, CCER manage several projects for the city of Reykjavík and the Ministry of Education and functions as a centre for counselling regarding education and research and runs research- and validation projects. The CCER is self-financed. Participants pay tuition fees in accordance to the length and the cost of the course. Experienced project-leaders and administrators both within CCER and School of Education organize courses and other projects carried out in CCER.

*Continuing Education (CE)* at University of Iceland has responsibilities for the whole University "Since establishment in 1983 the institute has been the biggest provider of CE (continuing education) in the country and has offered ambitious courses and certificate programs at academic level. Number of courses and participants have grown year by year. Around 400 short courses and study programs are held yearly with more than 12.000 participants.

There is a variety of daytime, evening, and weekend courses and subjects range from vocational refresher and update courses, personal development to general interest courses in languages, literature, philosophy, the Icelandic sagas, geography and history among others. The organising body responsible for the planning of activities is based on active participation of organisations outside the University". These include: The Confederation of University Graduates, The Association Chartered Engineers, The Society of Engineers, The Teachers' Association, The



Architects Association, The Association of Icelandic Economists. In addition there has been close cooperation with a variety of employers' federations, enterprises and research and cultural institutions. Thus the institute works actively in bringing together the academic and the professional fields with the aim of improving the educational level for adults.

The CE-institute is self-financed. Participants pay tuition fees in accordance to the length and the cost of the course. A number of experienced project-leaders and administrators organize courses and supply teachers and participants with service. The institute has in recent years placed increased emphasis on offering longer courses and programmes ranging from 1-3 semesters. Certificate programs include: Business and administration, Family Therapy, Childcare, Health Economics and Management in Health Care, Management of Human Resources, Social Networking, Management and Administration of Official Institutions and Marketing and Export-management.

### **Activities, developments and role of the Bologna Reforms**

It has initially to be said that a lot of things according to the Bologna process has been in place far to before the Bologna process in Europe, due to not at least International co-operation with mainly USA and Canada. For example the three-cycle system has been there for long time and also Quality Assurance, fair recognition, social dimension, employability, attractiveness and not at least mobility. Here it can be mentioned as well that nearly all staff has been abroad taking education and this has had a huge impact for the University as such, values, attitudes, flexibility, inter- and intra co-operation and internationalisation (globalisation).

CCER was/is an institution within University of Education which merged with the Iceland University in summer 2008 and became School of Education. Within University of Iceland there are changes going on, both due to the Bologna process but also to national and University needs internally and for more transparency, There will be a new organisation as described above and also according to new roles of Universities, such as; the Vice-Chancellors "Inventing Tomorrow's University, Who is to take the Lead? Observatory for Fundamental University Values and Rights" An Essay of the Magna Charta Observatory. (2008). The University will support informal learning and enhance formal LLL, and further build graduate studies both on Master and PhD level. Driving forces are both students needs and development and for employability. Driving forces can be both students and institutions within and without the University and also other stakeholders as well as the regional development.

### **Lifelong Learning and some interesting cases**

ULLL can be described as professionals who need support and education but are not in the normal application system. More courses are within credits, ECTS, but there are also courses without credits.

The University should provide LLL development; the University is in re-organisation phase and in School of Education with besides the faculties, there will be different committees, such as Committee of teaching, Committee of research and Committee of regional development (co-operation within society) CCER will work closely with that one. The purpose of LLL is on demand from local governments, schools and ministries. Anticipated developments on LLL are probably to open up more for ULLL in mainstream education. The University offers counselling and support. School of Education has in process special support for, for example teachers on the east coast of the country to support them. Other examples are support for students, information giving and career service, They also offer group counselling 6 weeks with fee and special support for special groups e.g. disabled students. Courses are offered both in afternoons and on Saturdays and are often tailored made, provided mainly by academics but also by professionals. Courses from CCER are offered both within in schools and at learning centres. Many innovative ideas are



for the moment going on at CCER, for example to offer course for the Nordic countries about Nordic Nature and about the Saga's. Further there are plans to develop more courses with ECTS as LLL courses as the demands from the participants for ECTS valued courses increases.

There has been an increase of applicants to Universities due to the situation in Iceland for the moment, many people appreciate and see the value of education for employment.

Sources for CCER are mainly through individuals fee but also private from example from publishing of the educational magazines and running projects and doing research at demand such as evaluation on schools and projects.

The University work on demand and are working re-active, maybe more than pro-active. Some interesting examples are courses for Driving Instructors (30 ECTS) and in Publishing.

Due to the re-organisation of the University and new roles for Universities there is a process of developing the future of the LLL unit.

### **Regional development**

The President stressed the discussions and demands on the Magna Charta Observatory-Inventing Tomorrow's University. Who is taken the Lead? (see below). Consequences of those ideas of a (modern) university, the stakeholders, quality and the university and the future of the university has to be implemented at the Universtiy of Iceland.

Regional collaboration takes place with different stakeholders and for different aims. It is very often through informal dialogues and internal networks, however the University of Iceland try to be very sensitive for needs in society and for the country. Regional development is important due to Iceland is a small country, but on the other hand it is a large country as co-operation and regional development is with the world depending target groups and goals. Iceland University goes for to be a "Top University" and an International University and then co-operation, local, national and international and with different stakeholders is crucial.

Several regional perspectives can be seen;

- University on regional level and for political reasons
- University of Iceland, encourage by the government to develop regional research centres and excellence University centres
- Regional development is also based on development on distance education
- Several centres of Excellence are to be developed such as in the health section, pedagogy, geology, marine biology and old arctic centre
- University of Iceland will develop courses both in Icelandic and in English as being an international university, top 1
- Iceland is a country were 99% of children has access to Internet, this means a huge potential for developing mobile learning and e-learning

For example the student counselling centre are in co-operation with trade unions within the fields and with for example teacher associations, further with ministries and certification centres, centre for student grants and for medical health issues. They also co-operate to a great extent in international project as Retain, pretension in teaching and training [www.retinproject.net](http://www.retinproject.net). Teaching Flex and Alternative teaching methods mainly within internet has been in use for more than 25 years ago. Another project is about PPS Personal Profile& Support for learners (LdV project).

CCER co-operate with different municipalises around the country, schools and educational institutions, ministry of Education and professionals in educations.



### **Main objective of regional collaboration**

It is crucial to be in partnership and work within networks and different stakeholders, below are some of the main objectives:

- \*Broaden the potential market for the courses/services developed
- \*Participation in regional economic development
- \*Share resources
- \*Address specific issues
- \*Being a “Top 1 University” on the International arena
- \*Getting students and income, survival reasons
- \*Responsibilities for the country
- \*Networking and interaction gain all partners
- \*The CCER work with learning centres in the country
- \*Especially at CCER schools, students and teachers are very important

Partnership/collaboration is both on local - regional - national - and international levels. All levels of co-operation are important but maybe main collaborators are on national level as the country is rather small, but on the other hand , due to this the international area is crucial.

### **Summary of the university role of the collaboration:**

The below roles are not in any specific order;

- \*Provide local municipalities/schools/educational institutions with professionals to take care of ULLL courses regarding educational matters (spec CCER)
- \*Research
- \*Creditability
- \*Access information
- \*Educational achievements
- \*European masters and joint programmes
- \*Development of centre of excellences
- \*Networking
- \*Funds

### **Success factors of regional collaboration**

- Strategic position between Europe/USA/Canada, with English as second language and a close co operation with the Nordic countries is a success factor to a large extent.
- International approach
- Several centre of excellences
- Being an institution within school of education and have the contacts with professional academics (CCER)
- Collaboration with municipalities/schools/educational institutions (CCER)
- Well educated and service minded staff (CCER)

### **Obstacles to successful regional collaboration**

- Not enough marketing (CCER)
- Competition with other course providers (CCER)
- Lack of funding and time (CCER)

Nothing especially was stressed on University level



### **Additional information**

Kristinsdottir, S.B. (2009).Supplimentary study program (SSP) for teachers at pre-, PRIMARY- and lower secondary level. Case study for BeFlex+

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About University of Iceland  
<http://www2.hi.is/id/1002800>

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