

# Nordic challenges and possibilities in literacy teaching: *Notes from Iceland*

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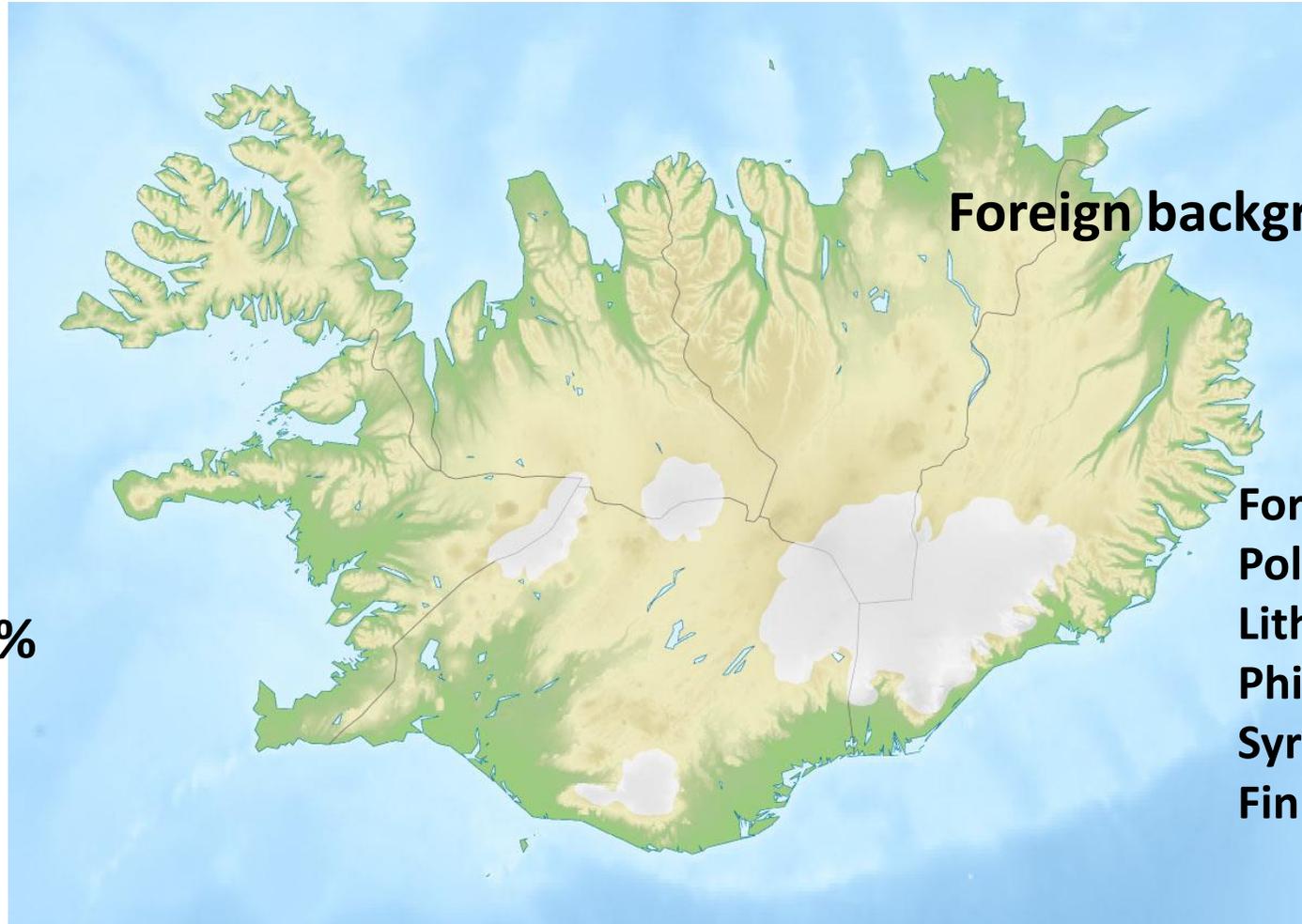
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# Iceland: Context

**Population: 356.991**



**Foreign background: 44.310 or 12,4%**

**Unemployment  
feb.: 6.700 or 3.3%**

**Foreign background:**  
Poland – 17.000  
Lithuania – 5.000  
Philip, VN, Thai – cirka 3.000  
Syria – 105  
Finland – 129 😊

# Changing landscape

- Growing group in Iceland
- Different group than before
- Lack of understanding of the time needed and specialization of teachers/teaching methods



# Challenges in Iceland

## 1. Policies, funding

- Analfabetics - no special funding or system within the system of Icelandic as a second language/Adult education

## 2. Teachers

- Literacy teaching for adults – not a special field in teacher's education
- Teachers in adult education are contractors!



# Challenges

## 3. Students

- Hidden group
- Diverse needs
- Each language group small
- Interest – time – perseverance

## 4. The language

- Complex grammar

Ex. Dansk: *Manden-mandens-min mand*

Icelandic: *Maðurinn-manninn-manninum-mannsins minn/mínum/míns*

- Use of English in Iceland



# Possibilities

- High percentage of immigrant participation in the labor market
- Volunteers – reading together
- Train people who speak language of students to teach/assist
- Connect phonology of Icelandic lang. with mother tongue
- CEFR for analphabets – Alpha 1,2,3,4 (2020)
- “Official implementation of immigrant issues“ + new legislation



# Example of comparison of phonology

- Complex and time consuming to explain specific sounds with words, f.ex. g-sound in the Icelandic word „sagt“.
- The arabic letter "خ" is pronounced exactly the same way – takes the student 5 seconds to understand this sound.



## Quotes from teachers

- „Students with little school background have poor study skills, do not understand the value of homework and need exceptionally long time to get going doing assignments in class“
- „Knowledge of other languages helps a lot.“
- „Doing everything helps – using pictures, interactive exercises, gamification, repetition (in different ways) + a big dose of patience and respect“



# Quotes from teachers

- „It is nice to use the students mother tongue as an active ingredient in the teaching, it creates good atmosphere, makes people smile and shows respect for different languages and the student's culture and personality as well.“



# Quotes from teachers

- „Group of students from the Philippines – all nurses so not illiterate at all. Very hard for them to associate sounds with letters and written words.“
- „Reading and writing groups – most grateful and ambitious groups I have taught. I wish there were more like that available and more support for teachers.“
- Small groups – long time – recognition of the need and the value of learning is imperative



# Velkomin til Íslands



## Takk fyrir!