

Social Adjustment of African children in Icelandic Compulsory Schools

Catherine Enyonam Sævarsson



Final Thesis towards B.A. Degree

in International Studies in Education

University of Iceland, School of Education

May 2011

Final Thesis towards B.A: Degree

Social Adjustment of African children in Icelandic Compulsory Schools

Catherine Enyonam Sævarsson

260673-4679

University of Iceland

School of Education

Faculty of Education Studies

International Studies in Education

May 2011

.

Adviser: Hildur Blöndal Sveinsdóttir

Abstract.....	6
---------------	---

Introduction.....	7
-------------------	---

Chapter

1. Theoretical Background

1.1. Migration.....	9
1.2. Types of Migrants.....	10
1.3. Culture.....	13
1.4. Identity.....	15

2. Methodology

2.1. Semi-Structured Interview.....	17
-------------------------------------	----

3. Findings-main themes

3.1. Purpose of migration.....	20
3.2. Life in migrants' country compared to life in Iceland.....	24
3.3. Culture in Iceland.....	25
3.4. Issues of cultural identity.....	26
3.5. Integration and migration experience.....	28
3.6. Language support.....	33
3.7. Self-confidence.....	35

Discussion.....	38
------------------------	-----------

Conclusion.....	40
------------------------	-----------

References cited.....43

Appendix.....45

Abstract

In Icelandic compulsory schools, all nationals are supposed to take teaching instructions in Icelandic. Article 16 of the National Curriculum guide, Compulsory School Act (2008) states that “Pupils whose mother tongue is not Icelandic are entitled to instruction in Icelandic as second language.” The aim of this objective is to empower immigrant children to study and become active participants in Icelandic community. Does the culture of African children serve as a hindrance to adjusting socially in the school? Significantly, this study looks into the factors such as Icelandic proficiency, peer relationships, weather, food, family relationships, and school experiences. Furthermore, the study would explore theories of migration, types of migration, purpose of migration, culture and identity. Five immigrant children from Africa have participated in this study. The participants include two current and three past students from different Icelandic compulsory schools. Suggestions are made to recover the situation while I will drawing the conclusions that “African children can adjust socially well in Icelandic schools, and can contribute even more positively if they are given extra attention in schools in regards to language, to breaking the cultural barrier between them and the native children. In addition, through positive motivation they will acquire the knowledge and the skills to interact meaningfully with other children as well as other people in their new environment”. It is very essential to offer citizenship education to all students, including compulsory schools in multicultural society like Iceland.

Introduction

My personal experiences of social adjustment in Iceland arouse my curiosity for the investigation of social adjustment of immigrant children from Africa in Icelandic compulsory schools.

Cultural elements like language, food, weather and clothing affect my adjustment process greatly. For example, I hate stuff meetings because I barely understood discussions made at the meeting, and it is so uncomfortable for me to be asking people to translate into English for me. After I gained admission into University of Iceland, I registered for an introduction course. Unfortunately, the instruction was in Icelandic and I dropped out two days after the commencement of the course because I did not understand anything from the lecture. Another impediment was food. Icelandic meals especially breakfast are too light for me. For example, a toast with a cup of coffee makes me lose concentration especially when I go to lectures. It is weird when the desire to eat “kenkey and shitor” (a popular Ghanaian breakfast) occupies my mind all day long in situations like this. Sometimes, I have to drive home during lunch break just to eat African food. A frequent climatic change in Iceland is scary; storms, frosts, darkness, brightness all day long, among others affect me. Differences in climate in Iceland and Ghana were one major issue. Total darkness in December and brightness in summer affect studies and work. Most especially, the aggressive winter changes affect my social life. I dress in lighter clothes most of the time forgetting that Icelandic weather is not the same as the weather in Ghana thereby falling sick all the time.

Being school assistance in Icelandic compulsory school gave me the opportunity to interact with foreign kids most especially African children. The experiences shared by many of them through interaction made me believe that language is the major obstacle that affects social adjustment of African immigrant children at the compulsory school level in Iceland. Language acquisition, which is considered as part of culture contributes a very large role in immigrants’ self-identity. Since immigrants’ main cultural boundary is language, in new environment like Iceland, learning Icelandic is inevitable.

Elovitz and Kahn (1997) argues that gradually, over a period of some years, the emotions evoked by painful losses have to be worked through for the successful adaption to occur. Generally, this

extensive progression begins after an initial period of culture shock. Immigrants find themselves in a strange environment peopled by strangers. The general way of relating to people may no longer be; “appropriate or understandable in the new culture. The impact of an unknown culture upon those new comers who attempt to merge with it arouses anxiety and confusion in them and profoundly tests the overall adequacy of their personality function. A sense of discontinuity severely threatens their identity” (Elovitz and Kahn, 1997:251).

The question I seek to answer is how do immigrant children for that matter my participants adapt in the Icelandic society in general and educationally? The aim of this study is to explore the adjustment problems African immigrant children face in Icelandic compulsory schools. Information is gathered on attitude toward weather, food, language, race, and clothing; furthermore, information on how these children connect their own identity to the schools’ cultural traditions in their daily lives would be analyzed. I will look at some theories in relation to that, and I will also use the analysis from the interviews to identify some educational implications that emerged. What measures can be taken to help these children in their integration process.

Chapter 1

Theoretical Background

This chapter investigates some psychological theories of migration with a discussion of reasons why people migrate. Culture will be discussed with a focus on weather, food, race, and language. The theory of identity will be discussed with focus on conflicts that immigrant children from Africa faced in constructing their identity in foreign countries.

1.1

Migration

Migration is a demanding development. It involves substantial losses of beloved people and of a familiar culture left behind. Comfortable patterns of living and relating to people are fairly interrupted. Lost is the sense of belonging, symbolized by being intuitively understood in the native language and culture. The subjective feeling of safety and connectedness is lost. These numerous and deep losses are burdens to bear while trying to adapt to the new country. This effort to adapt is accompanied by mourning for the abandoned culture. Lewis (1982) states that “..., for the individual migrant it can be a dramatic experience since it can involve the abandonment of relatives and lifelong friends, national loyalties, and even cultural heritage and costume.” I became so excited when I have to move to Iceland with my husband. In Iceland, I experienced different cultures such as language, food, clothing and women smoking. I felt lost and detached from my beloved family, friends and all those whom I had grown up to know as Ghanaian born living in Ghana. It misses not only the cultural but also the emotional elements that make up the subject of migration (Raghuram, 2006).

The definition of a migrant is a person living outside their own country for a year or more, for that matter, migration, “consists of individual who, under the influence of great number of factors, move from one place to another at a certain time”. (Oderth, 2002, p.5) Therefore, a person(s) who moves from one place to another is referred to as a migrant. Koser (2008) explains circular migration as short or long term, repetitive or cyclical movements without any declared

intentions of a long lasting change of residence, in this categories includes commuters, holiday makers and students who move back home within school terms.

The definition of a migrant person is complicated in reality because the concept 'migrant' covers a wide range of people in a wide variety of situation, and secondly because it is very hard to count migrants and determine how long they have been abroad. Furthermore, just as important as defining when a person becomes a migrant, is to define when they stop being a migrant, one way for this to happen is to return home or become a citizen of a new country, and the procedures governing that transformation varies significantly (Koser, 2007).

1.2

Types of Migrants

Koser (2007) identifies three types of migrants as:

1. Voluntary and forced migrants: Voluntary migrants are people who have left their own country voluntarily, whereby forced migrants are people who have been forced to leave their country for another reasons due to conflict, persecution or environmental reasons like drought or famine. Forced migrants are usually described as 'refugees' (Koser, 2007). Cullen, (2000) explains that refugees or asylum seekers are those people who flee their countries of origin because they are being prosecuted by the state. Refugee today, take quite a different turn; people seek asylum due to all kinds of national disaster like tsunami (Thailand, Japan), earthquake (Japan, Haiti), famine, political war (in Libya, Ivory Coast etc), plague, flood among others.
2. Labour migrants: These are people who move from their own country to another to find work, or better job opportunities and working conditions. They are in turn classified as low skilled and highly skilled. Somewhere in between economic migrants are people who move basically for what might be considered as social reasons, commonly these are women and children who are moving to join their husbands who have found work abroad through what is called the family re-union. It is worth mentioning however that, an increasing proportion of female migrants are moving independently and for economic reasons (Koser, 2007).
3. Illegal/irregular and legal migrants: the concept illegal/irregular migrants covers a wide range of people, principally migrants who enter a country without document or with forged document, or migrants who stay legally but then stay after their visa or work permit has expired. Legal migrants are migrants who enter a country with legal documents to support their stay (Koser, 2007).

1.3

Purpose of migration

There are enormous reasons why people migrate from place to place. Totaro's work (Totaro, 1976, as cited in Raghuram, 2006: 15) states, "Migration is seen as an effect of rational economic decision-making process undertaken by individuals." Raghuram (2006) notes that "Migrants move to the destination which maximises the net economic return on migration." This explains that the main reason why people move to another destination is wage. To add to that, people move from low-wage countries (origin) to high-wage countries (destination) in search of job to make their life better. For example, most African immigrants would not have come to live in Iceland if the economic situation here is worse than their countries of origin, so wages or economic situations play a major role in human migration. Raghuram identifies that this sort of decision is common among individuals than social bodies.

Anna Lucia D'emilio (2007) has identified these key factors associated with migration:

"There are four key factors associated with migration:

1. Lack of adequate employment opportunities in the countries of origin and low-wages)
2. Family reunification and ties to the country of destination
3. Seeking educational opportunities and improved services (health care, access to material goods and services)
4. Increased demand in destination countries for unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled workers (nurses, teachers, social workers) coupled with higher wages than in the country of origin." (Anna Lucia D'emilio, 2007: 3)

Majority of Africans migrate internationally due to economic reasons to improve their living conditions. One main reason why I travelled with my husband to the "North Pole" is to come and work so that I can build a better future for me and my family. However, my first priority is for my family and I to have a comfortable life when we return home in future.

1.4

Culture

A basic definition of culture for our purposes refers to patterns in the organization of the conduct of everyday life (Pollock, 2008). Banks (2010) explains that culture consists of the patterning of the practices of “doing being human”- in our routine actions, in our interpretations of meaning in those actions, and in the beliefs that underlie our meaning interpretations. Kalman (2009) also defines culture as “the way we live” (p.4) that includes the clothes we wear, the foods we eat, the languages we speak, the stories we tell, and the ways we celebrate. Kalman (2009) further explains culture as the way we show our imaginations through art, music and writing. Culture deals with our root, where we come from, where our ancestors come from, the things we believe in, the things that makes our lives different from the lives of other (Kalman, 2009).

Cultural background plays a very important role in child rearing and has a large impact on the way a child develops (Millam, 1996). Culture comprises the way of behaving; the way we do things and the mean by which we do things. Culture is in us and all around us, just as is the air we breathe (Banks 2010).

Culture is a vital component of variance and variance resolution. Cultures are like underground rivers that run through our lives and relationships, giving us messages that form our perceptions, attributions, judgments, and thoughts of self and other. Though cultures are powerful, they are often unconscious, influencing variance and attempts to resolve variance in unnoticeable ways. Cultures are more than language, dress, and food customs. Cultural groups may share race, ethnicity, or nationality, but they also arise from cleavages of generation, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, ability and disability, political and religious affiliation, language, and gender among others. (Hood, Hopson and Frierson, 2005).

Two things are vital to remember about cultures: they are always altering, and they relate to the symbolic dimension of life. The symbolic dimension is the place where we are constantly taking meaning and enacting our identities. Cultural messages from the groups we belong to give us information about what is meaningful or important, and who we are in the world and in relation to others -- our identities. Cultural messages, simply, are what everyone in a group knows that

outsiders do not know. They are a series of lenses that shape what we see and do not see, how we perceive and interpret, and where we draw boundaries. In shaping our values, cultures contain starting points (those places it is natural to begin, whether with individual or group concerns, with the big picture or particularities) and currencies (those things we care about that influence and shape our interactions with others (Fisher, 1997)).

1.5

Identity

Woodward (2004) argued that identity seems to be about the question, ‘who am I?’ and that if identity provides us with the means of answering the question ‘who am I?’ It might appear to be about personality; the sort of person that I am.

Identity is different from personality in significant respects. We may share personality traits with other people, but sharing an identity suggests some *active* engagement on our part. We choose to *identify* with a particular identity or group. Identity requires some consciousness on our part. Personality describes qualities individuals may have, such as being outgoing or shy, internal characteristics, but identity requires some element of choice. For example if we consider a situation where, travelling abroad, hearing the voices of those who speak our own language, you will feel both a sense of recognition and of belonging. In a strange place, finding people who share our language provides us with something and someone with whom we can identify. (Woodward, 2004)

Identity is inextricably linked to the sense of belonging. Through identity, we perceive ourselves and others see us, as belonging to certain groups and not others. Being part of a group entails active engagement; therefore, identity is a continual process and not static. Identity is constructed through interaction between people. In knowing which people are the same as we are, we sometimes use *symbols* to label others and ourselves, like a badge, a newspaper, the language we speak, or perhaps the clothes we wear (García, 2005). Sometimes it is obvious. Sometimes it is more delicate, but symbols and representations are important in marking the ways in which we share identities with some people and distinguish ourselves as different from others. Although as individuals we have to take up identities actively, those identities are necessarily the product of the society in which we live and our relationship with others. Identity provides a link between individuals and the world in which they live. Identity combines how I see myself and how others see me. Identity involves the internal and the subjective, and the external. It is a socially recognised position, recognised by others, not just by me (García, 2005).

The link between myself and others is not only indicated by the connection between how I see myself and how other people see me, but also by the connection between what I want to be and the influences, pressures and opportunities which are available. Material, social and physical constraints prevent us from successfully presenting ourselves in some identity positions – constraints that include the perceptions of others. The subject, ‘I’ or ‘we’ in the identity equation, involves some element of choice, however limited (we are potentially able to choose the group we want to identify with). The concept of identity encompasses some notion of human agency; an idea that we can have some control in constructing our own identities. There are, of course, constraints, which may lie in the external world, where material and social factors may limit the degree of agency, which individuals, may have (García, 2005).

Chapter 2

Data Collection

This part describes the data collection method and tool that the researcher used to collect the information. Qualitative research method was used. Kvale & Brinkmann (2007) states that “... qualitative interview seeks qualitative knowledge as expressed in normal Language.” This implies that qualitative research deals directly with words from the subjects own mouth. The purpose of this research method “is to understand themes of the lived daily world from the subjects’ own perspectives” (Kvale, 2009:25). It involves personal contact. I chose this method because qualitative research gives the researcher the opportunity to explore deeper into his or her study. One advantage is, because one talks direct with the participant, detailed information can be obtained. It also gives the researcher and the participant the opportunity to ask for the clarification of unclear questions.

The interview method used is Semi-structured interview. It allows for close personal communication, which encourages shared message between the interviewer and the interviewee(s). I chose the interviews focus on the factors such as language, cultural identity, low self-confidence, food, weather among others that affect adjustment of immigrant children in the Icelandic compulsory schools.

In collecting data, informed consent was obtained from my participants. “My respondents were contacted for voluntary participation. Kvale et al (2009: 70) explains informed consent as “informing the research participants about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design, as well as of any possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project.” A written consent form that contains important information about the research needs to be described to the participants. This form explains what the interview entails and how the information from it will be used in my paper.

I informed my participants that I would like to tape record the interview and I might be quoting them in my project, as Lichtman (2006) explains it as to “get the story in participants own words“ (p.215). The topic was discussed with the participants by which, the reasons for the interview were discussed; its importance and most essentially, participants were assured of confidentiality of all the information the interviewer may seek from them; that the private data

identifying the participants will not be disclosed (Kvale et al, 2009: 72). Interview settings were however arranged and a suitable location (the participants' residence where I believe they might be more comfortable with) was agreed upon. I prepared for the interview with couple of open-ended questions as instruments, which would help me gather the information on the project. When using semi-structured interview a portion of the questions and their order is pre-determined (Neville, Paul, Guy, Chris and Daniel, 2005).

Kvale et al (2009: 71) states that "With schoolchildren, the question comes about who should give the consent-the children themselves, their parents, the teacher, the school superintendent, or the school board?" Since my project involves children's adjustment, I deemed it necessary to seek the consent of both the parents and children themselves. Due to this, parents of my participants (children under 18) were contacted, and children (participants) were briefed and requested for a voluntary participation. Adults (participants who are past students), were contacted directly and briefed on the topic. On the day of my first contact with my participants, we discussed interview dates, venue and time according to my participants' wish. I made follow-up contacts by reminding my participants including the parents involve of the interview dates to avoid failure, and to prepare them towards the interview. Regular contacts with the participants reminds them of the interview. It is very important because it creates a relaxed atmosphere on the day of interview, which allows free flow of information.

Typically, the researcher has identified specific characteristics of individuals to study (Lichtman, 2006). My participants were selected because I identified them as people who migrated from different parts of Africa to join compulsory schools in Iceland as part of their upbringing process. In addition, they have specific characteristics that can help me gather information on *Adjustment of African children in Icelandic Compulsory Schools*. Another reason for selecting my participants is due to my closeness with them or their parents. I became friends with my participants' parents few days after I arrived in Iceland. Although, this happened naturally, I consider it my adjustment process. Getting to know people of your own race would somehow reduce the culture shock in ones new environment. I find it more interesting to interview participants from different parts of Africa because of my African origin. Friends from Reykjavík, Hafnarfjörður and Keflavík whose children are in elementary schools have been contacted

through telephone. Many rejected my request due to time factor and fear of publicity. Interestingly, only my target group in Keflavík accepted my request.

After I confirmed the interview dates, time and locations with my participants, I quickly went through my question guide to make sure that the questions were adequate for gathering enough information on the topic. Before I set off for the interview, I had my jotter, pen, a watch, copies of my interview guides and two audio recorders with extra batteries on me. I visited the individual participants in their residences to create good and comfortable atmosphere for my them; this enables them to share their experiences openly.

Real names of my respondents have not been stated in this paper because I assured them that their real name would not be published. All the participants live in Keflavík. My first participant is from Kenya called Enid (not real name), she is 12 years old in grade 7. She arrived in Iceland nine months ago. My second participant Araba (not real name) is a past student of one of the compulsory schools in Rey'afjörður; she is now 21 years old. Her country of origin is Ghana, and she has been in Iceland for the past seven years. My third participant, Kofi (not real name) is also from Ghana, a 23-year-old young man who also arrived in Iceland thirteen years ago. My two other participants are from Nigeria. One of them has been living in Iceland for more than 9 years; he is Femi (not real name) 16 years, and now a first year student of a secondary school in Keflavík. Last, is Ngozi (not real name) who also comes from Nigeria; she is 13 years old and has been in Iceland since 2007. She is in the 8th grade now in one of the compulsory schools in Keflavik.

Chapter 3

Findings

This chapter discusses main findings from the interviews. These are purpose of migration, life in immigrants' country compared to life in Iceland, cultural and identity issues, immigrant experience and integration, and language support. Transcriptions from the interviews have also been quoted and analyzed.

3.1

Purpose of migration

According to research one major reason, why children migrate is to join their families in the destination countries: family reunification and ties to the country of destination (Anna Lucia D'emilio, 2007: 3). It is interesting to note that all my participants have moved to Iceland because their mothers live here. Four of them whose mothers are married to Icelanders said that there were always conflicts between them and the new wives of their fathers at home hence their migration to Iceland. In Africa, it is very common that divorced women take full custody of their children rather than men. Some men from African origin practise polygamy. Zeitzen (2008) defines polygamy as "...the practice whereby a person is married to more than one spouse at the same time, as opposed to monogamy, where a person has only one spouse at a time" (this type of marriage is practiced in Iceland). Zeitzen explains that there are three forms of polygamy. First, are polygyny where a man marries several wives, polyandry where many men marry one woman, and lastly, group marriage that is the combination of polygyny and polyandry where several men marry several women. Among the three polygamy practices, polygyny is common in Africa; this involves male dominancy. Therefore, women who are not comfortable with the practice quit the marriage or file for divorce traditionally or legally. In the cause of that, most women flee with their children abroad if only they can foot the cost of travelling.

Our mother took custody of us (three younger kids) when I was 5years old, my dad did not bother because he had many kids and wives that he could not afford to cater for. This sort of

situation is always unbearable for divorced women like my mother. To this end, women move with their children to their new destinations. Those who could not afford moving out with their children place their children under the care of the women's parents or other close relations of the women. In migrant households with migrant mothers, children were more often in charge of other family members rather than the father (Cortés, 2007, p.3).

“If my biological father had not married few women, I would have been staying with my father after mom left Ghana. Because mommy was scared that my step moms would discriminate against me she asked my grandma to take custody of me”

(Araba, 21)

“The last time I saw my dad was when I turned 7. He came to my birthday party, and that's it. I don't know if I can recognize him anywhere in the world, but what I know is that he's alive”

(Enid, 12)

“When my mom left me behind, he did not care about me. I was not regarded as one of his family, but I am his no.1 son today because he needs my financial support. I mean, I send him money when he asked for it”

(Kofi, 23)

Many children left behind suffer from depressions, low self-esteem which can lead to behavioural problems, and at increased risk of poor academic performance as well as interruption of schooling (Carolyn Bakker, -Pels and Reis, 2009). Most kids from broken homes are subject to child abuse, child labour and even become street children who engage in drugs, alcohol, rape among other social vices. Bakker et al. (2009: 2) states that “Children constitute a vulnerable group and a child could become more vulnerable when one or both parents migrate.” Migrant children left behind could easily get out of control: they develop behaviour problems hence affecting child's development and future opportunities (p. 4) as well as education.

“ Hmmmmm! I dropped out of school for the first time when I was just 8years old because my auntie that I stayed with abused me through beatings, hard labour, mention them, she treated me like I don't know what, and this made me very aggressive to the extent of attacking my school

mate on regular bases. No teacher ever liked me, they spunk me harder, so I just gave up and went to live on the street to fight for my freedom. It was such a releave for me to join my mother in Iceland otherwise I don 't know what my future would be like....huh!“

(Kofi, 23)

“In fact, after her departure from Nigeria, I stayed with eight different family members. I couldn 't stand the pressure and discrimination “

(Ngozi, 13)

Remittances from migrants to their home countries are important income generating sources for third world countries. In many developing countries, the money that immigrants send home is a more important source of income than the official aid provided by richer countries (Koser, 2007: 10). Remittances are also associated with increased household investments in education, entrepreneurship, and health—all of which have a high social return in most circumstances (Dilip, 2007). Children whose parents are abroad send money home for their children's upkeep. This include education, apprenticeship, building houses or motgage, and other forms of economic support.

“Remittance from my mom was monthly, just anytime we needed financially Just one phone call from my Grandma, 'money don come now'(money has arrived). My mother did send us a lot of money for my upbringing and for her building project. I would say, we lived in affluence”

(Ngozi, 13)

“Remittance from my mom kept coming monthly. You know what I mean! Whenever we needed financial support, my mother did send us a lot of money for my up-bringing”

(Araba, 21)

Children serve as pension scheme for parents. Due to high rate of illiteracy and unemployment, it has become a lasting tradition in Ghana where children are compelled to give financial support to

their parents as soon as they started working. I send money to my mother monthly because she has no pension benefits since she was self-employed, and had not contributed to any pension scheme during her youthful age. Government and company workers are the only categories of workers who contribute to pension scheme in Ghana. Therefore, they are the only people who benefit from pension schemes.

“Ever since I started working in Iceland, I always send some token to my grandma because she played a very important role in m upbringing when mommy left me behind”

(Araba, 21)

“Daddy did not play any active role after mom broke up with him, but I love him the way he is. He is the only father I have, so I send him money sometimes because he is just common farmer who only works for domestic purposes”

(Kofi, 23)

3.2

Life in immigrants' country compared with life in Iceland

My participants acknowledged that economically, Iceland is a more comfortable place to live. They declared that the Icelandic economy is very good and cater for all, unlike in their home countries only people who work in government establishments are entitled to social security and unemployment benefits. Two of my participants stated that despite the economic hit in Iceland, there are still jobs available. They said that even though the Icelandic economy is in crises the government still manages to pay the unemployed.

“Recently, I obtained a job in the leikskóla as skólaliði when I finished my maternity. I needed no certificate to secure this job, but many foreigners are sitting home now speculating around that there is no job in the system. Why did I get a job, not even with a certificate? Are we serious? Eeeh! We Africans should remember that the opportunities we get in Iceland do not exist back home. Working mothers in Ghana get only three months maternity leave and their husbands get no leave. But, in Iceland, both working women and men get maternity and paternity leave with pay. There is so much freedom here, my sister”

(Araba, 21)

“Aaaaaa, Iceland is cool. I lost my job about two years ago, but I still get my unemployment money similar to when I was working, so why bother to find job. You know (he refers to me), I’m single and I have no financial pressure”

(Kofi, 23)

3.3

Culture in Iceland

My participants confess that cultural factors such as language, food, clothing, and weather did not affect their adjustment in any way except for the language. They admit that apart from language, they could easily cope with other aspects of the Icelandic culture. The Icelandic language is very difficult to learn, but with determination, it can be easy. A male participant said that because he plays football with his Icelandic peers he grabbed the language very fast. On the contrary, the other male respondent confesses that during his school days he encountered nervousness whenever they had lessons because he could not read and understand materials in Icelandic. Many textbooks are abstract in content, and depict a reality which the children have never previously encountered (Strandberg, 1997). Because these children come from complete different geographical locations with different cultures, it can be very demanding for them to understand instructions in the target language.

“I couldn’t cope with studies because my teachers expected me to do everything in Icelandic without getting help in English. It’s very boring to be in Icelandic schools, how can I contribute to group work when I don’t understand what my group members are saying? He stopped with a look as if he was waiting for an answer from me, but when I said nothing he continued; I just don’t like to be in such environment. After all, I dropped out in my own country where language was no barrier. There are jobs out there that don’t require degrees to get” (he shrugged his shoulders.)

(Kofi, 23)

“I think I’m getting a lot of help from my teachers. They talk to me in English after all other attempts fail. I’m impressed about their teaching methods”

(Enid, 12)

3.4

Issues of cultural Identity

Identity provides a link between individuals and the world they live in. The immigrant can easily copy the culture of the host nation depending on how long he or she stays in that country. For example, learning the dominant's cultural and social practices such as language, food, festivals, and way of dressing can improve the relationship between the dominant and the non-dominant groups. The participants agree with me that all they learn at school can gradually change their cultural identities because they realize that their way of doing things has changed entirely.

"I dress like an Eskimos today for the fear of flue. I always say to myself. It's such a punishment for me to dress in layers of clothes when I first came to Iceland, but what happens today? It becomes part of my daily life"

(Araba, 23)

"I really don't care about the weather; the only thing is to dress properly. Fortunately, there are room heaters everywhere in Iceland, and the school compound is just a stone throw from my residence"

(Enid, 12)

They admit that social activities such as festivals, games, family gatherings, church activities among others are important for immigrant children's adjustment and empowerment. The participants emphasize that although language is the main boundary between foreigners and natives, they think it is important because social gatherings serve as entertainment places for different groups of people. It is a socially recognised position, recognised by others, not just by me (García, 2005).

“Although, mom does not allow me to go out and meet friends she approved of my church meetings and gymnastic. It gives me the confident to use my little Icelandic vocabulary to communicate with different nationals who could not speak English”

(Enid, 12)

3.5

Immigrant experience and integration

Problems such as language barrier, weather, food, culture, among others are the challenges immigrant children face. Immigrant children believe that positive atmosphere in the school encourages social integration. Conteh (2003) emphasizes that “Workers should acknowledge and respect children’s skills in speaking more than one language (p. 175).” Four of my respondents admit that despite the enormous problems, approximately 95% of their teachers and school workers understand their mix feelings. They recognize that teachers including other school workers interact with them constantly (immigrants) through simple conversations. Such positive atmosphere motivates immigrant children towards the new language (Icelandic). The language of a society is the key to entry to the community – all the relationships, which create and bind together a community require a common language (Baksi, 1997).

“One of the skólaliðar Ásta (not real name) was my favourite. She told me she went for a holiday in Kenya and she thinks it’s fun. I was close to her during recess more than other skólaliðar because she told me she would like to visit my country (Nigeria) in the future, and this makes me feel good. That woman is so much fun”

(Ngozi, 13)

“My Maths teacher often speaks English with me to help me understand and solve mathematical problems in Icelandic”

(Enid, 12)

Immigrant children feel that their peers (Icelander) often attack them by making racist comments about them. Pine and Hilliard’s work on racism (Pine and Hilliard, 1990: 595, as cited in Coelho, 1998, p. 198) explained that racism is described as *mental illness characterised by perceptual distortion, a denial of reality, delusions of grandeur (belief in white supremacy), the projection of blame (on the victim), and phobic reactions to differences*. The three participants express disappointment in the behaviour of some native students towards immigrants in the school.

Numerous verbal attacks and racial discrimination statements are used to degrade their nationalities.

“farðu ógeðslegt útlendingur (get out of here, you disgusting foreigner), why did you come to Iceland”

(Kofi, 23)

Misconceptions about Africans due documentaries shown on the television about some African old traditions make people believe that Africans are primitive. Some people conclude that Africans are still primitive people: there is lack of civilization in the entire region. Presently, it is hard to find humans living in trees. The most common primitive houses one can see in the 21st century are mud huts. I do not deny the fact that people live in mud huts today. In my country (Ghana), there are many mud huts in the northern part of the country including remote areas. Personally, I slept in mud huts until the year 2000 when my siblings and I built a modern house for our mother. In my opinion, civilization has spread all over the world; ways of doing things have changed completely. More so, Africans have different cultures in different geographical locations, so people are different.

“One day, one of my mates asked: Do you live on trees in Africa? I saw hungry African kids on the TV last time and I heard from friends that Africans are hungry people”

(Araba, 21)

Another immigrant experience is that students ignore immigrants in social gatherings like the dining hall, assembly and so. With whom do they mingle? Other immigrants from Asia and so forth if there is any. Coelho (1998) states that “The feeling of exclusion and isolation from the life of the school and the community of the classroom is one of the most painful memories for many young immigrants.” Personally, I do experience hidden prejudice even among teachers at my workplace. Although, I have been working there for about four years, some group of teachers had never responded when I greeted; they pretended they have not heard me. This is

heart breaking and I wish there is a platform to discuss this, but it is hard to discuss it because the person does not disrespect or attack you verbally, so there is no confrontation to make.

“I had only one friend from who’s from Thailand in the entire school. We have been together for about two years when she got transfer to another school. I felt so isolated when she left”

(Araba, 21)

It is interesting to note that only one male participant declares that he experienced no discrimination in the school.

“Aaaaaa, I don’t know! Maybe I didn’t understand what discrimination means then. In fact, my mates were good to me even on the football field”

(Femi. 16)

I believe that females are the vulnerable because all the three respondents report incidence of prejudices

“It hurts my feelings when my colleague students make fun of me because I’m from Africa. But, I’m just thankful to God for making me whom I am. It’s extremely embarrassing to listen to racist comments like hvelvitis útlendingar, but I’m used to it”

(Ngozi, 13)

About, Stephan & Vogt’s work on Prejudice Reduction (Banks, 2010) states that research indicates that children come to school with many negative attitudes toward and misconceptions about different racial and ethnic groups. Some immigrant children become school dropouts because of prejudices they experienced in schools.

“I broke down into tears when they isolated themselves from me. Even when I get closer, they pulled out. My class teacher did all she could to get them closer to me, but they always shun my company, so one day, I told my mom that I wanna go back to continue my schooling in Ghana.

There I would make more friends. I'm getting crazy here and she said ok, and I've never gone back to school nor go to Ghana"

(Araba, 21)

Cummins (2001) notes that "...most of these parents had very little schooling..." Illiteracy on the part of some parents discourages and de-motivates children from going to school. Parents should play active role in their children's education through personal relationship with the school authorities where they can have access to reports about their kids' progress and problems in school. I believe that because of illiteracy and language barrier, that parent's daughter dropped out of school. This is because her relationship with the school authorities concerning her ward was not good.

The National Curriculum (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2007) lays more emphasis on multiculturalism. Multicultural education gives all students equal opportunity to study in school. Banks (2010),

Multicultural education is at least three things: an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and a process. Multicultural education incorporates the idea that all students – regardless of their gender, social class, and ethnic, racial or cultural characteristics – should have an equal opportunity to learn in school.
(p.3)

All students need an education that will help them reach their academic potentials, learn the skills for living in a multicultural society, and develop the global awareness that is essential for future citizens of the world (Coelho, 1998:196). The need for multicultural awareness among the majority is extremely necessary. In addition, parent's involvement in their children's education enhances children motivation towards school.

"I wish my mom had forced me to go back to the school when I told her I was not going back to school. I regret it as I'm standing here because I felt I am missing many opportunities. I swear I shall definitely go back to school because I don't want to end like my mom"

(Araba, 21)

Araba's dream is to learn Icelandic to pave her way through to the university because she intends to become an accountant in future. She realizes that illiteracy or being a school dropout is impediment to social development. She lamented that because her mother hardly speaks English language or Icelandic, so her social relationship with non-Ghanaians is full of misunderstandings that affect her in so many ways.

3.6

Language support

Four of my participants were honest about their teachers and some students who are bilingual students give lots of support to their learning in the school. It was nice to hear that most teachers motivate and encourage immigrant kids to learn the target language. They said their teachers were so concern about their progress in the school, so they provided many forms of help that would enhance their learning. English translation was common because English was the only language they understand.

“My dad was so helpful and motivating. When I first arrived in Iceland, he read storybooks for me before I went to sleep. Something I had not experience in Nigeria. I mean, I was soaking it although I did understand just few words in Icelandic. This has aroused my interest for reading and I started to read on my own after few months of starting school”

(Femi, 16)

“Although, my stepdad read for me every evening before bed, my siblings (half siblings) always helped me with reading after school”

(Ngozi, 13)

Reading is important in school because leads to knowledge. Learners construct meanings through reading. Carrasquillo and Rodríguez (2002) explain reading as a way of relating sounds to printed symbols, which is known as *decoding*. Reading is one of the four skills in language learning that helps learners to accumulate more vocabulary. Weaver’s work on reading (1988, as cited in Carrasquillo et al, 2002:87) defines reading as “the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction (transaction) among the reader’s existing knowledge, the information suggested by the reading language, and the context of the reading situation.” We see ourselves throgh stories we read or listen to. Denman work (Denman, 1991, as cited in Gay,2000) states that “Our personal experience ... takes on a cloak of significance... we see that it is to live, to be human.” Therefore, it is vital for all students most especially second language learners to learn how to read to enable them accumulate more knowledge. Edwards (2009) also notes that

“...home reading usually means children reading their school texts not with Mum or Dad nor even with Grandma or Grandpa, but with those members of family who are already fully proficient in English, i.e. the older sisters and brothers.” Edwards explains further that older siblings expose young readers to scaffolding situations according to learners’ needs. That is, when beginners repeat words or text after older kids according to how it is done in the mainstream school then gradually, the children would begin to read on their own until they show any sign of help.

“I did not get any help from my Stepdad concerning my Icelandic communication skills. He always speak English to my Mum and I at home. The only help I get was from my teacher who explained exercise in Icelandic, but through gestures which made it easier for me to understand. My teacher also read for me, but I didn’t get much help from my parents. Mum would have helped if she spoke Icelandic”

(Kofi, 23).

3.7

Self-confidence

The majority of my respondents admit that they gained more confidence as they began to speak Icelandic. This has improved their relationship with pupils and staffs: that they are more relaxed than ever. They identify also that they began to make more friends than before and this has really made their adjustment smoother. Interestingly, peers respect their opinions, and there is a mutual respect for one another in the school environment because they understand one another and agree and disagree on common issues in the classroom.

“I feel more comfortable when we’re playing together than previously where most of the students would be making fun of something I said wrong. Then, I grow furious, would not talk for hours due to their behaviours. Oh, what a freedom I have today, Thank you Jesus, can now talk among people”

(Ngozi, 13)

“I think that because I’m confident about my Icelandic, I ‘m not afraid of making contributions in class any longer.”

(Femi, 16)

“When I dropped out, I stayed home for a while, and started working in the fish when I turned 17. I made many friends, and the language was flowing just like that. It actually improved my self-confidence”

(Kofi, 23)

“I worked in few places including leikskóli after I dropped out. This helps me to improve my Icelandic. I’m happy today that at least I can communicate, and the only thing left for me is how to write”

(Araba, 21)

“Although, I’m new in Iceland, but I’ve seen a lot of changes and outcome from my schooling. I learn new vocabulary every day. In fact, my relationship with the natives is better than when I started; II make them laugh a lot with my broken Icelandic. [laugh]”

(Enid, 12)

I chose the young participants who are immigrant children from Africa with the believe that they I can illicit all the information I needed for this project, and that worked. In fact, these young participants have a lot. I became a bit emotional listening to parts of their conversations about the negative experiences they had.

Purpose of migration, identity, culture, integration, immigrant experience, language support and self-confidence are the main topics that raised concern while analyzing the interview. Although, my participants indicated series of personal characteristics as very important to enhance immigrant children’s adjustment in Icelandic compulsory schools, the issue of first language support led me to the conclusion that immigrant children from Africa need maximum assistance with their first languages or national languages such as French, English among others to aid better understanding of the Icelandic language.

Results from my research revealed that immigrant children’s mothers migrate to Iceland to join their spouse. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) identifies that “Marriage was the most common form of partnership across the OECD for the period 2006-09” (OECD, 2011). As a result, children move to Iceland for family re-union. OECD report states that “Children of immigrants account for a significant part of the youth population in OECD countries” (OECD, 2011:46). The population of immigrant children has increased tremendously because single parents most especially females move to their host countries with whatever number of children they have if only they can afford the cost. Good education, poverty, war, depression, conflicts, child abuse, child labour are the main reasons why children migrate.

Cultural experiences in the school system resulting to culture shock for some immigrant children. According to my research, language barrier is the only key factor that affects children adjustment. The study revealed that out of the five participants, one of them completed compulsory school without any difficulties; two dropped out of school because little or no

language support from home and the school while, two students are still in the school and very optimistic about good academic achievement. This indicates that other cultural elements such as food, weather, and clothing have little or no negative impact on immigrant children's social adjustment. Additionally, the problem of school dropout is linked to teachers and most especially, parents. The focus is on parents because the interview revealed that the mothers of those children who dropped out of school have low or no educational background hence their supports for their kids' education were very low. To certain extent, the adverse educational outcomes reflect the impact of social disadvantage, that is, the parental generation often has relatively low educational attainment compared with their native-born counterparts (OECD, 2009).

The study points out that individual from the target group experience discrimination hidden prejudices in Icelandic compulsory schools. Such experiences deter many second language learners leading to increase in school dropout. In addition, integration becomes difficult resulting in delay of language proficiency in the target language.

Lastly, the project discovers that language support for young children is needed by providing instructions in mother tongue for second language learners (L2). The study identifies that because of little or no language support at home and in the school compound; some children lost interest and quit the school. With language support, proficiency in the L2 will increase thereby boosting learners' self-confidence.

Conclusion

It can be tough to be an immigrant as one can clearly see from my findings and analysis. As immigrants in Iceland, we need to work on learning Icelandic, for it is the basis for all other avenues and opportunities to excel. Immigrant children in Icelandic Compulsory Schools need efficient instructional language support to adjust socially. Act. No. 91, Article 16 of The National Curriculum Guide for Icelandic Compulsory Schools (2008) states “Compulsory schools may accredit pupils’ knowledge in their native language, in the case of pupils who are not native speakers of Icelandic, as part of their compulsory education, replacing compulsory education in another foreign language” (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2008). Teachers are the key to educational excellence and equity (Hernández, 1989). Teaching is a demanding profession; however, it is believed that with the right school environment, training and preparation, which should include more time with students under experienced teachers, migrant children from Africa, would be empowered. Education being the only tool of survival for some third world countries, my participants made a touching suggestion to the Ministry of Education to supplement education by providing them special bilingual teachers who could help them to understand other subjects such as social studies, science, mathematics etc. They pledged that they are willing to learn the language to become active participants in the Icelandic society; therefore, they demand equity in education. Nevertheless, there is disproportionate failure among some immigrant and minority groups (Coelho, 1998, p. 199). According to two interviewees, they became school dropouts due to the unavailability of language support they get from their teachers and parents. This is a major contributing factor to low- academic performance among immigrant children. The respondents echoed that lack of motivation results to boredom and laziness in students towards second language learning. The use of mother tongue for instructions as stated in the curriculum is highly acknowledgeable, but one problem is that African spoken in the entire continent. However, I will appeal that since many African states use English, French and Portuguese as their second language, these languages should be used in Icelandic compulsory schools as the subjects’ mother tongue to promote successful teaching and learning.

Immigrant children experience cultural shock when adjusting to their new environment. Resultant unpleasant experiences are sometimes classed as ‘cultural shock’ (Holden, 2002).

Experiences such as prejudices, verbal attack, isolation, discrimination and racism are unbearable for young children in school. Multicultural education is one solution to unit dominant and non-dominant groups to avoid segregation of immigrants.

The population of immigrants in Icelandic schools is increasing rapidly. Research shows that in 2008 – 2009 immigrant children in the compulsory schools of Iceland were 2,069, which constitute 4.7% of the overall Student population. However, another statistics indicate that “The percentage has been on the rise ever since and was at 8,1% in 2009 (Hagstofa Íslands, 2009a, as cited in Þjóðarspegginn, 2010). Therefore, I would like to suggest that a public International School should be established competent Multicultural teachers who can train immigrant children by the use of mother tongue and Icelandic (bilingual), as it is done in the private International school of Iceland.

Reference:

Anna Lucia D'emilio, B. C. (2007). *The Impact of International Migration: Children left behind in selected countries of Latin America and the Caribbean*. New York: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Baksi, N. (1997). My two languages. *Nordic Roads to Multiculturalism - How to Help Minority Children to Become Multilingual*, 7.

Banks, J. A. (2010). Multicultural Education: Characteristics and Goals. Í C. A. James A. Banks, *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives (Seventh edition)* (bls. 21). USA: Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Bruner, J. (June, 2001). *Making stories*. New York: Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachuseetts, London-England.

Carolín Bakker, M. E.-P. (2009). *The Impact of Migration on Children in the Caribbean*. Barbados and Eastern Caribbean: UNICEF Office for Barbados and Eastern Caribbean.

Challen, P. (1967). *Migration in the 21st Century: How will globalization and climate change affect migration and settlement?* St. Catharines: Grabtree Publishing Company.

Coelho, E. (1998). *Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Schools*. Clevedon: WBC Book Manufacturers Ltd.

Conteh, J. (2003). *Succeeding In Diversity: culture, language and learning in classrooms*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.

Cortés, R. (2007). *Global Report on Migration and Children*. Mexico and Moldova: UNICEF-UNDP.

Cullen, P. (2000). *Refugees And Asylum-Seekers In Ireland*. Cork: Cork University Press.

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire*. Clevedon: Cambrian Printers Ltd.

Cummins, J. (2001). *Negotiating Identities: Education for Empowerment in a Diverse Society*. Los Angeles: CABE.

Development, O. f.-o. (2009). *International Migration Outlook: Sopemi 2009*. Sopemi: The Secretary-General of the OECD.

Dilip, R. a. (2007). *Increasing the Macroeconomic Impact of Remittances on Development1*. Washionton D.C: The World Bank.

Edwards, V. (2009). *Learning to be Literate: Multilingual Perspectives*. Bristol: PEFC.

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, & and Practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Hernández, H. (1989). *Multicultural education: a teacher's guide to linking context, process, and content/ 2nd ed*. New Jersey: Prentice Hal, Inc.l.

Holden, N. J. (2002). *Cross-Cultural Management : A Knowledge Management Perspective*. London: Henry Ling Ltd.

James Banks, C. A. (2010). *Multicultural Education. Issues and Perspectives*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Boyden J, G. M. (2005). Children's Risk, Resilience, and Coping in Extreme Situations. Í M. Ungar, *Handbook for Working with Children and Youth: Pathways to Resilience Across Culture and contexts* (bls. 3). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Kaabwe, A. T. (2000). *Educating tomorrow: lessons for girls' education in Africa*. Cape Town: Juta & Co, Ltd.

Kendall, D. (2007). *Sociology in our time*. Belmont- United States of America: Courier corporation/Kendallville.

Lewis, G. (1982). *Human migration*. London: Billing and Sons Limited.

Lichtman, M. (2006). *Qualitative Research in Education*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Millam, R. (1996). *Anti-discriminatory Practice: A Guide For Workers In Childcare And Education*. London: Redwood Books.

Nancy L. Hadaway, M. J. (2007). *Breaking Boundaries With Global Literature: Celebrating Diversity in K-12 Classrooms*. Newark: International Reading Association.

Raghuram, P. (2006). Dis/Placing Migration Theories. Í R. B. Margot Wallner, *Migration Happens: reasons, effects and opportunities of migration in the South Pacific* (bls. 13). New Brunswick: Transactions Publishers.

Rodríguez, A. L. (2002). *Language Miniority Students in the Mainstream Classroom - 2nd Edition* . Clevedon: Cromwell Press Ltd.

Steinar Kvale, S. B. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Strandberg, M. (1997). The Viking Age in our Native Countries - Across Cultural Approach. *Nordic Roads to Multiculturalism - How to help Minority Children to Become Multilingual* , 73-76.

Zeitzen, M. K. (2008). *Polygamy: A Cross - Cultural Analysis*. New York: Berg.

OECD (2011), *Society at a Glance: 2011, OECD Social Indicators, OECD Publishing*. Retrieve May 1, 2011. Retrieve from

http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/soc__glance-2011-en

http://skemman.is/stream/get/1946/6693/18661/1/308-314_UlrikeSchubert_FELMANbok.pdf

Appendix :

My name is Catherine Enyonam Sævarsson. It is2010, and the purpose of our meeting today is to conduct an interview on the topic: “Adjustment of African children into Icelandic compulsory schools.” Issues such as migration, culture, integration, identity connected to your experiences (positive/negative) in your present or formal compulsory school(s) in Iceland would be discussed. In addition, how you maintain your identity as an African during your adjustment process. The purpose of this interview is purely academic, and I assure you confidentiality of the content of the interview.

Personal background:

- Please, mention your name, age, country of origin, languages spoken.
- When did you arrive in Iceland?
- Mention whether you have family in Iceland (black/white).
- Mention your present/formal compulsory school in Iceland. Which year did you commence the compulsory school in Iceland?
- Can you say something about your life back home? For instance, how many African dialects do you speak, and how was your social/cultural life in your last school in Africa?

Life in Iceland:

- How can you compare African weather to that of Iceland? What effect has the weather on your schooling? Did you sometimes absent yourself from school due to bad weather?
- What is your opinion about the Icelandic food? What is your favourite Icelandic food?

Language:

- When did you start learning Icelandic, and where?

- What is your opinion about the language when you started schooling in Iceland?
- How did you interact with your Icelandic peers when you first started school?
- Did you get instructions in your mother tongue?
- Did the school authorities provide you with a bilingual/special Icelandic teacher?
- Did you get English translation? If yes, in what situation did you get help in English?
- How long did you take to master Icelandic?
- Did you watch Icelandic programmes when you first came? If yes, mention your best Icelandic programmes. How helpful were those programmes to your Icelandic communication skills?
- Did you have good relationship with your Icelandic peers, state how?
- How do you think your friendship with the native children help you in becoming fluent Icelandic speaker?
- How did your parents influence your Icelandic communication skills? Do you speak Icelandic at home?
- Do you think your Icelandic language skills have any positive effects on your African parent(s)? Give reasons.

Racism:

- Did your peers make racist comments about you in school? If yes, state the kind of comments made, and how did you feel?
- Were you bullied when you first started schooling, and how? Can you tell me what your reaction was? Did you report such incidents to the school authorities?
- What measures did the school put in place to combat bullying in the school?
- Do you think their intervention was helpful? Give reasons.

- Do you think all immigrants have equal treatment in the school? Do African children face discrimination and bullying because of their skin colour more than immigrants from Asia, USA, and so on.? What makes you think so?

Migration:

- Can you tell why you migrated to Iceland? Can you share your experience of the journey?
- What are your expectations in Iceland? Did you meet them? How is your relationship with your Icelandic family?

Culture:

- How is Icelandic culture different from that of your home country? For example, factors such as language, food, weather and clothing, how different is that?
- What is your opinion about discipline in Icelandic compulsory schools? How can you compare this it to discipline in your country, which is better?

Self-confidence:

- Are you confidence enough to speak Icelandic among your peers?
- Do your peers respect your opinion?
- Can you compare your self-confidence from the time you first arrived in Iceland to today?
- How do you see yourself as part of the Icelandic community? How do you socialize with the community, and through what means do you maintain your identity as an African?

Support of mother tongue/target language:

- Did you get extra tuition on Icelandic when you first started schooling in Iceland? If yes, did that help your Icelandic skills? How fast have you improved your Icelandic?

- How often do you speak Icelandic outside school?
- What is the relationship between school authorities and your parents?
- What is your opinion about the language?
- Do you think the language has negative effect on your academic performance in some way?
- Do your teachers give you maximum academic support during your adjustment process? Mention the form of support offered.
- Do you still get those help
- Did you work sometimes when you were schooling? If yes, when do you normally work and why?
- Did you complete your basic school? Have you any plans for further education?
- Do you have anything more to share about your experience in Icelandic compulsory school?

Thank you!

