



XVII. MEZINÁRODNÍ KOLOKVIUM O REGIONÁLNÍCH VĚDÁCH

The role of non-profit organizations in a regional development in a context of social cohesion: the case of Iceland

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Introduction

- * Unclear definition but clear importance
- * Broad scope of activities of NPOs from providing public services to watch dogs of the society to creators and bulders of active citizenship
- * Different role in the society (several theories, several models)
- * Platforms of NPOs and welfare services provided by NPOs tend to ease possible conflicts and social exclusion



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Why Iceland?

- * changes in the cohesion of society:
 - * increasing number of immigrants (2.2 % out of total population, mostly concentrated in the capital) growing diversity of society, including
 - * growing risk of fragmenting society and deepening the processes of social exclusion
- * changes in technology, decision-making, social structure and social protection system
- * Unemployment rate of 7.6 % (2010) and other influences of the global crisis has shapen the Icelandic society to be aware of immigrants (even hostile attitude)



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Goal and methodology

* **Goal:**

- * to map the non-profit sector, its operation and contribution to regional development in the context of social cohesion in specific conditions in Iceland

* **Methodology:**

- * qualitative research
- * semi-structured interview with CEOs or directors of selected NPOs active in in the areas of human rights and welfare
- * Good practices of 13 organizations



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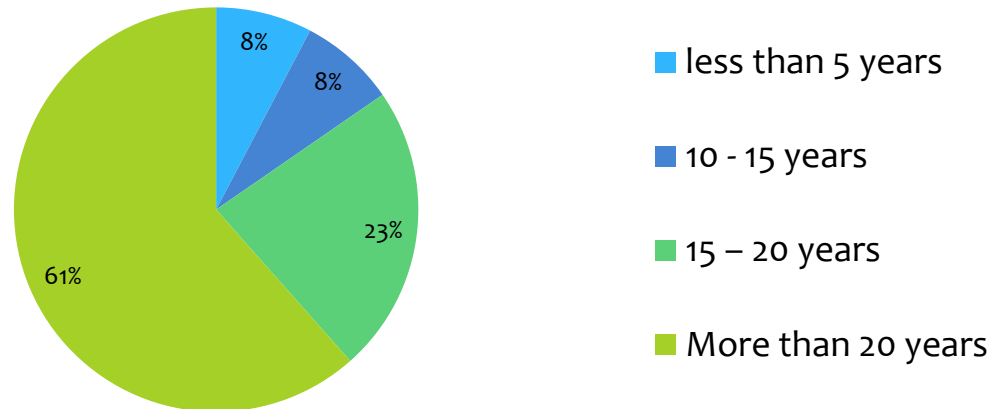
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Research sample

- * 7 associations, 4 charities, 2 public benefit organization

Length of experience of the respondents



Source: own research, 2013



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Operation of the respondents – activities of good practice in Human rights area

Infusion into human rights awareness raising

Organising a week long campaign against racism with participation of many volunteers and wide public

Free legal counselling for foreign nationals (help immigrants with general information, obligations and rights in Iceland, work-related issues etc.)

Control of the activities of government and municipality, commenting on legislation, drawing attention to causes

Networking with other NPOs in creating joint programmes and campaigns

Creating a meeting place which supports cultural connections between Iceland and the other Nordic countries but also invites different nationalities who came to live to Iceland to explore Icelandic history and culture

Increasing communication and co-operation between immigrants and Icelanders and encourages a harmonious multicultural society in Reykjavik by coordinating events and supporting cultural groups seeking to organize their own events and projects

Heritage language instruction

Research of the law in Iceland, in the Nordic countries and of the EU law focused on the extent to which anti-discrimination law in Iceland meets the current requirements of EU law

Operation of the respondents – activities of good practice in Welfare services area (social care, health care, education)

Changed the law and the regulations of the society and created a wake up moment about the rights of children from marginalised groups (e.g. divorced parents, immigrant parents etc.)

Establishing a multi-functional service centre that provides wide range of services which helps to raise funds in more effective way

Creating an action plan that empowers the co-operation between city of Reykjavik agencies, government and NPOs

Building long-term contracts with the government

Support multiculturalism and combat racism and discrimination at public schools in collaboration with the management of these schools.

Source: own research, 2013.



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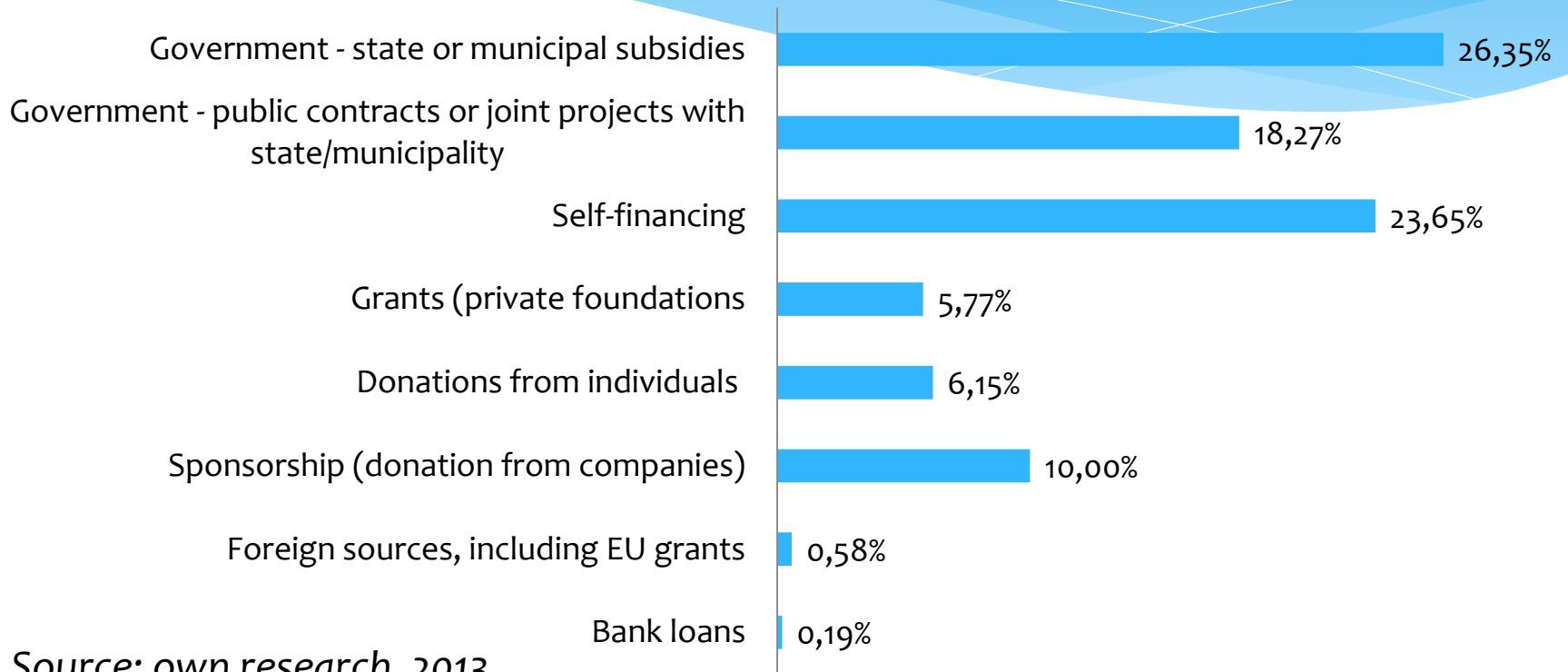


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Funding of the respondents



Source: own research, 2013.



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Conclusions

- * clear role of NPOs in Iceland in building the social cohesion
- * non-profit sector eased the economic crisis (decreased the demand on public budgets and more financial aid could be directed into solving the unemployment)
- * NPOs - changing the view on immigrants so these are not perceived as a threat and they also help immigrants to integrate into Icelandic society
- * some NPOs - highly influential in policy making process influencing new legislation
- * Predictions for Slovakia (2020):
 - * Increase of social, intercultural and interethnic conflicts
 - * A need for platform of civil society organizations of the third sector (building a non-ethnic global society in Slovakia)
 - * A need to learn to formulate, implement and enforce needs and interests of various groups and communities, learn to respect and communicate



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Thank you for your attention!

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