

Arabic women in Akureyri

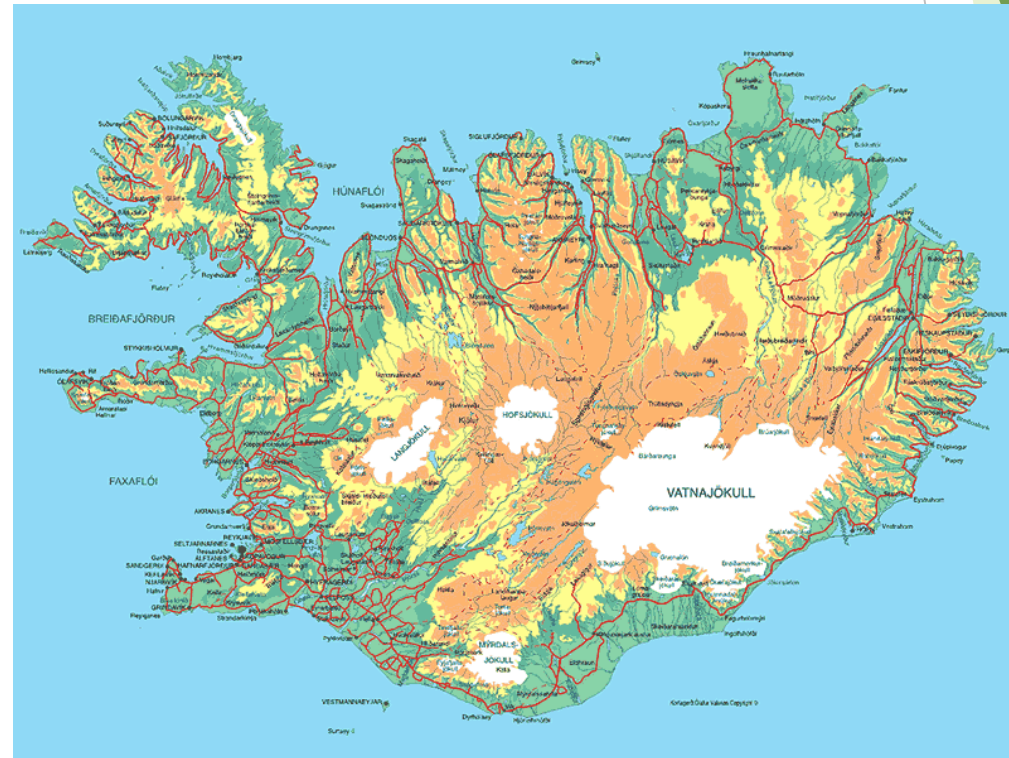
Fayrouz Nouh

Andrea Hjalmsdóttir

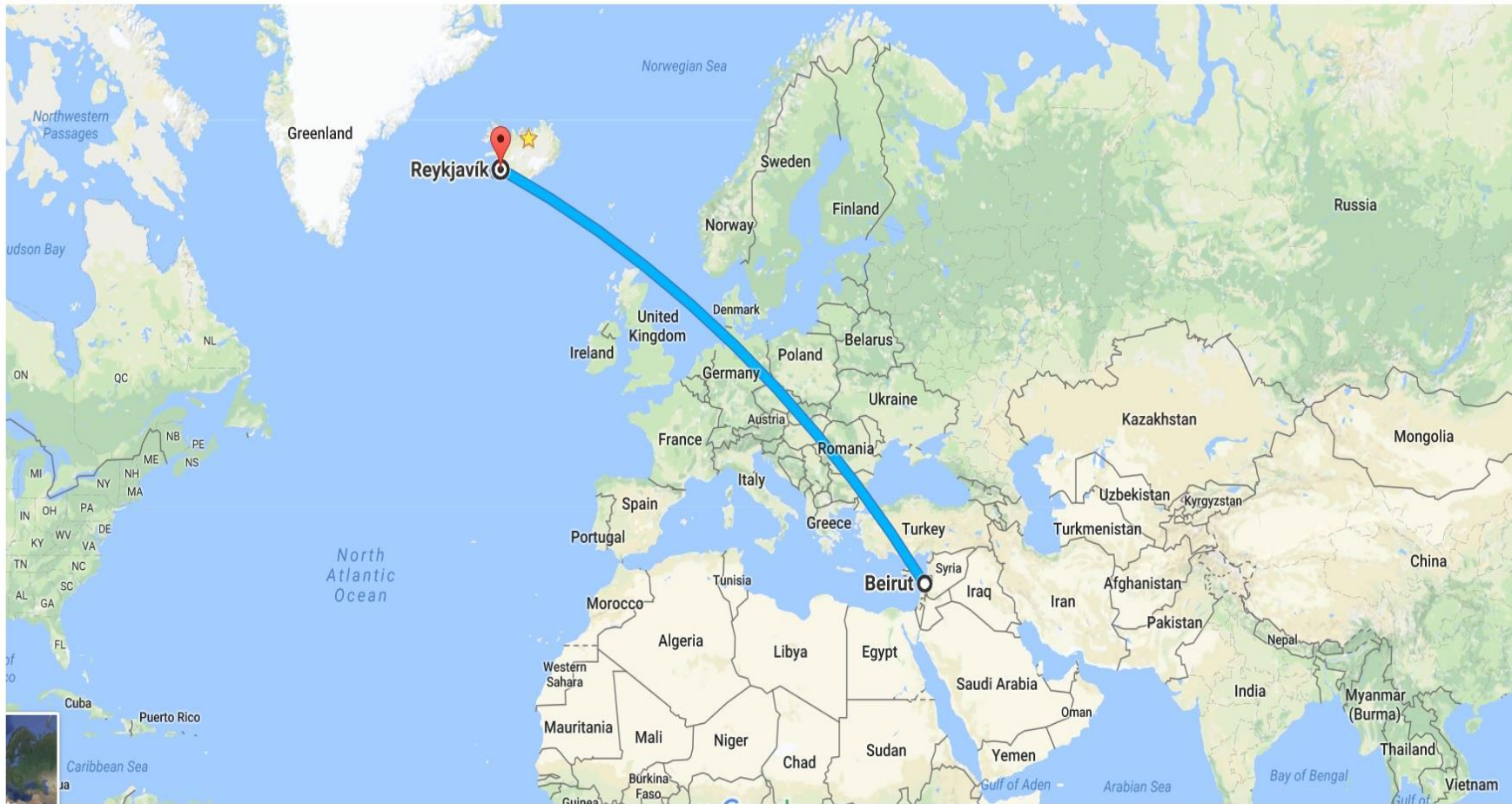
University of Akureyri

Akureyri

- ▶ Akureyri has app. 18,500 inhabitants
- ▶ Akureyri's population of immigrants is 5%
 - ▶ Fast growth in the last 20 years
 - ▶ Mostly European - 1/3 is from Poland
 - ▶ Akureyri has the highest number of immigrants with Icelandic citizenship
 - ▶ An indicator of integration?



From Syria to Iceland



Akureyri welcomes Syrian refugees

- ▶ 19th of January 2016 23 Syrians arrived in Akureyri
 - ▶ 4 families
 - ▶ 9 adults
 - ▶ 14 children
 - ▶ Two children born in Akureyri since the arrival
- ▶ 30th of January 2017
 - ▶ Family of 5 arrived in Akureyri

The project

- ▶ The immigration research team at the University of Akureyri
 - ▶ Fayrouz Nouh MA student at the University of Akureyri
 - ▶ Supervisors
 - ▶ Andrea Hjálmsdóttir and Markus Meckl with Stephanie Barillé
- ▶ The method is based on interviews with Arabic speaking women living in Akureyri
 - ▶ Preliminary findings from 8 interviews
 - ▶ Also other women from Arabic speaking countries have been interviewed
- ▶ The aim is to map the experiences of the Arabic women who life in Akureyri
 - ▶ Their main obstacles
 - ▶ What are the most positive things
 - ▶ Experiences of attitudes

Educational system

- ▶ Educational approach in Arabic country is different.
- ▶ Women said we used to build on teachers and homework in their country and they agree that in Iceland schools have more activity and no homework.
- ▶ Social life and friendship are good inside the schools and that makes their children happy at school.
- ▶ Some of the children don't have any friends out of the school time.
- ▶ Concerning about the children's future.

Lifestyle

- ▶ Lifestyle has been changed since they left their country.
- ▶ Women have no social life.
- ▶ They have security and safety but they feel bored and lonely.

Adapting

Adaptation was difficult due to several factors:

- ▶ Weather
- ▶ Food
- ▶ Language

Costume

- ▶ Women said that Icelanders are very curious to know more about the costume, and that is put more pressure on them.
- ▶ Young people are less understanding of the headscarves (hijab) therefore the younger women find it hard to cope with it.
- ▶ The women don't consider their costume as barriers for accessing the facilities in Iceland, they are all planning to have jobs (who don't already have job).

Religion

- ▶ Women as Muslim insisted on keeping their commitment in their religion;
 - ▶ praying
 - ▶ fasting
 - ▶ reading the holy Quran.
- ▶ Teaching their children about the Quran.

Gender roles

- ▶ Women in middle east normally don't work, their responsibilities are only inside their house;
 - ▶ she cleans and cooks and cares about children
 - ▶ while the responsibility for men is to work outside of the home and to earn money and bring the necessities of life for the family.
- ▶ All believe that their responsibility will not change even if they get job and share the household expenses.

Conclusion

- ▶ In the end we can say that everyone is doing well and they are happy with the way how people treat them and they feel welcome and appreciated
- ▶ But language is a barrier to communication with them.
- ▶ All mentioned wanting to have a job and some of them already have one.