

[DOI: 10.20472/IAC.2018.035.021](https://doi.org/10.20472/IAC.2018.035.021)

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BUILDING UP KNOWLEDGE IN RURAL PLACES

Abstract:

For over 70 years, there was only one university in Iceland, located in Reykjavík the capital of Iceland. Therefore, for anyone wanting to go to university the only option was to move to Reykjavík or attend a university in a foreign. That changed in the year of 1987 with the establishment of Akureyri University.

Akureyri University, located in the northern region of Iceland, has been instrumental in the economic growth of the region and a key factor in building up knowledge in rural places in Iceland. In the recent years, Akureyri University has developed teaching methods to be able to offer blended learning and distance learning study programmes. Now it possible for students all over the country to seek and get education wherever they may be located. The University of Akureyri has now around 2.000 students. Majority, about two thirds, of the students are off-campus students, using the technology to access their studies, their lectures, their classes and so on. Majority of these students are located in Iceland but about 5% of them are located outside of Iceland.

A qualitative research was done among several former students of Akureyri University in rural areas in Iceland. The aim was to study the impact of knowledge building and edification in the rural societies in Iceland. In this presentation the main finding of this research will be explained and the role of Akureyri University in building up knowledge in the rural parts of Iceland discussed. Technology has changed the ways of teaching and the university is now aiming to make all of the studies flexible and independent of time and space.

Keywords:

education in rural places, distance learning, impact of education on rural societies