



Government of Iceland  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs



Directorate of Equality  
Iceland



MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS  
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

#eeagrantsequality

# The Tool Box

Gender Equality and Gender related issues;  
Best practices in Iceland

**Iceland**

**EEA Bilateral**

**Funds 2019**

## Introduction

Iceland is committed to join hands with all those who wish to prioritize gender equality and promote human rights as a means of reducing economic and social disparities.

The tools and the expertise to instigate change exist in Iceland, as well as long-standing experience of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Iceland repeatedly ranks number one in the world for gender equality World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index. Over the past few decades, enhanced respect for women's human rights and their active economic and political participation has boosted wellbeing and prosperity in Iceland. Lessons learned in Iceland can be highly valuable for other countries.

A recent OECD report reveals that promoting gender equality is likely to bring several benefits for societies and economies. Societies that are more gender-equal tend to be happier, healthier, more trusting and have more prosperous economies. Further, new research presented in May 2018 by the World Bank states that countries are losing billions in wealth because of differences in lifetime earnings between women and men. The Nordic countries, have been leaders in the development of modern family and gender policy, and the promotion of gender equality at home, at work, and in public life. Gender equality benefits men and women as well as society as a whole. The transfer of knowledge in this field is a priority on Iceland's behalf.

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## **The Directorate of Equality - Iceland (DE)**

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### *Project Proposals:*

#### *1) Equal pay standard*

The law on Equal Pay Certification entered into force in January of 2018, by additions to provisions of the Icelandic Gender Equality Act. The immediate effect was a requirement that all ministries and workplaces with 250 or more staff members on annual basis should obtain Equal Pay Certification by the end of year 2018. With minor adjustments to original aims this has meant that practical application and knowledge about implementing the gender pay standards has been acquired in numerous organizations.

Building on this experience the Directorate of Equality provides a workshop on the context for Equal Pay Certification and Equality in Iceland. In the workshop the history of gender equality and equal pay legislation will provide a backdrop for the analysis and presentation of the most recent developments in gender pay legislation. The workshops include presentations from specialist advisors and lawyers mandated the administration and implementation of the Icelandic Gender Equality Act. Accredited auditors from licensed auditing bodies provide insight into certification of the equal pay management system. In addition, corporate human resource experts give examples of the benefits of working within the framework of the equal pay system.

#### *2) Women Empowerment*

The Directorate of Equality (DE) has led many important projects, both national and European, that have focused on gender equality measures to support and promote gender equality in schools, in public institutions, in ministries, in politics, labour unions and municipalities and more. One of these projects was on the empowerment of women in Labour Unions in Iceland which contained six seminars all around the country. This project followed another national project on the empowerment of women who showed interest in political participation and both these projects received very positive feedback from participants.

The Directorate has valuable experience working with international as well as Icelandic partners on various projects. The European funded project called: Mobilize talent, on the economic empowerment of women supporting their active roles on company boards was well received. This project included research conducted by two Universities in Iceland on the attitudes of women and men concerning new gender quota, the participation of women and men on company boards and the selection of board members. The DE can provide seminars for

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women showing interest in working as directors in corporations, or on company boards. The DE has also published educational booklets on women's empowerment in business, in the media and in politics at the municipal and national level.

### *3) Education in for school personnel*

DE offers education on gender equality to schools at all school levels in Iceland. Icelandic schools are to educate students on gender and gender equality according to the Gender Equality Act and the national curriculum. The education provided by the DE has focused on gender stereotypes visible for example in study material, students' study- and career choices as well as in school culture. The DE has developed study material, guidelines for teachers and career choices, launched a tv serie for teenagers and radio show on gender issues. The DE offeres seminars for teachers, school leaders and other school staff on how to teach about gender equality, gender stereotypes, gender based violence and harassment in school settings aiming at a more just school environment.

### *4) Gender Mainstreaming*

The integration of gender and gender equality perspectives or gender mainstreaming is a method used in the implementation of gender equality perspectives into the general activities of an organization or company. The term is defined in article 2 of the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men no. 10/2008. It says that gender integration is ... "planning, improving, developing and evaluating policy processes so that gender equality in all areas is integrated into the policies and decisions of those who are generally involved in community policy making." that is used to achieve equality in daily work that affects the activities themselves, customers, clients or other people.

The DE offers seminars on gender mainstreaming for governmental institutions, municipality officials and other institutions. The seminars provide knowledge on how to gender mainstream and facilitate good and just services using the methodology.

## **The Icelandic Human Rights Centre (ICEHR)**

**Icelandic collaborator:** The Icelandic Human Rights Centre (ICEHR)

**Contact:** [margret@humanrights.is](mailto:margret@humanrights.is)

**Web:** [www.humanrights.is/en](http://www.humanrights.is/en)

### *Project Proposals:*

ICEHR provides education programmes to enhance understanding of concepts such as gender-based violence and violence against women and girls (VAWG). These programmes include lectures, case-studies, monitoring, strategy building, situation testing etc. All participants are required to be active in the education and to render their understanding of various issues and problems for group discussion and for clarification. The programme also includes education on the Istanbul Convention (CoE Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence).

The aim is also for participants to:

- Gain an overview of some of the key issues related to violence against women
- Be able to identify different types and sites of gender-based violence, its main victims and perpetrators
- Understand how violence against women is a human rights issue
- Be familiar with the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women
- Gain an overview of the causes and contributing factors to VAWG
- Be familiar with factors that can reduce VAWGs risk of violence
- Be familiar with different theories that explain victim-blaming.
- Be familiar with the effects of VAWG
- Gain an overview of the guiding principles when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies, procedures and services related to addressing VAWG.

ICEHR provides education programmes on trafficking in human beings which include education on the Palermo Protocol to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the CoE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, and national legislation on trafficking. The programme includes education on the definition of trafficking and prescribed actions under the CoE Convention aimed at Prevention, protection, prosecution and partnerships. Key prevention measures include education which entails identification of victims, resources and offers available to them, outreach, addressing the demand, awareness raising etc. Partnerships must include a clear definition of the role and tasks each institution, NGO etc., shall have and an effective, well organised system with clear channels and procedures as well as assignment of responsibilities, etc.

Equal treatment of women and non-discrimination on the basis of sex is a fundamental right, enshrined in all major human rights instruments. ICEHR provides education on UN Gender

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Equality Bodies. This programme includes education on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), UN WOMEN, Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the United Nations Gender Equality Studies and Training (UNU GEST) and the role of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women.

Hate speech and sexism against women. The education includes information and research on how hate speech on the internet manifests itself differently against women. Also, information on legislation against hate speech, awareness raising, training of public officials, internal supervision and codes of conduct, the role of the media and means to control social media, media literacy, government action plans against prejudice and discrimination, gender studies, data collection, registration and research as necessary tools to establish the status of minority groups, the extent of discrimination in society and to systematically counteract prejudice which might lead to hate speech.

Counseling and support for women. Legal and social work counseling for women, rules of conduct, confidentiality, outreach and more. Special focus on education on ways and means to overcome the isolation of immigrant/migrant women and their poor access to justice.

### *The organization:*

The Icelandic Human Rights Centre (ICEHR) is a registered non-profit umbrella organisation, established in 1994, consisting of 15 partners, including Amnesty International (Icelandic Division), The Icelandic Red Cross, UN Women, The Women's Rights Association, the LGBT organisation, the Association of Disabled, the Universities of Reykjavík and Akureyri.

Among the Centre's many activities is human rights education (equality, discrimination, LGBT rights, civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights etc.), publication (A report on hate speech, a brochure on the rights of transgender people in Iceland, a brochure on discrimination etc.), comments on law bills, shadow reports to UN and CoE bodies and legal counselling for immigrants. ICEHR organizes seminars, workshops and study trips on domestic and international level, on human rights issues. ICEHR is also the main NGO contact point for partner searches in Iceland for projects under the EEA Grants NGO Programmes.

### *Key person involved in the education:*

Margrét Steinarsdóttir is a lawyer, specialized in human rights and has vast experience in human rights education. She has organised and directed various human rights education programmes as well as seminars, work-shops and conferences regarding human rights issues. She also has 15 years of experience as a legal counsellor to immigrants in Iceland. Her areas of expertise include gender equality and gender based violence, trafficking in human beings, legislation on discrimination, legal advice, immigrant women 's status and issues, hate speech and sexism.

## **Icelandic Women’s Rights Association (IWRA)**

**Icelandic collaborator:** Icelandic Women's Rights Association

**Contact:** Brynhildur@krfi.is

**Web:** <http://kvenrettindafelag.is/en/>

### *Project Proposal:*

Feminist Activism and the Role of Civil Society in Social Change

Iceland is commonly recognized as one of the most gender-equal societies in the world. The main driver for this success in guaranteeing gender equality is the activist work of the women's movement in Iceland. The Icelandic Women's Rights Association offers an introduction via talks, seminars or participation in conferences to feminist activism and the effective strategies of civil societies in driving social change, based on best practices and lessons learned by the Icelandic women's movement in the past decades. The association also has experience in bilateral projects which have involved creating multinational feminist networks and teaching gender studies at the high school level.

### *Organization:*

The Icelandic Women’s Rights Association has fought for women’s rights and gender equality since 1907.

### *Key person involved:*

Brynhildur Heiðar- og Ómarsdóttir is the executive director of the Icelandic Women's Rights Association. She has experience in feminist activism and civil society participation and was a key organizer of the women's strikes in Iceland in 2016 and 2018.

## **Women of Multicultural Ethnicity Network – W.O.M.E.N. in Iceland**

**Icelandic collaborator:** Women of Multicultural Ethnicity Network – W.O.M.E.N. in Iceland

**Contacts:** [Angel@womeniniceland.is](mailto:Angel@womeniniceland.is), [info@womeniniceland.is](mailto:info@womeniniceland.is), [nichole@womeniniceland.is](mailto:nichole@womeniniceland.is)

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### *Project Proposal:*

W.O.M.E.N in Iceland can offer advice regarding our 'best practices' in working with marginalized women of foreign origin living in Iceland. We can share information regarding projects we have worked within our sixteen-year tenure here in Iceland. We have worked with various issues from creating social links and networks so women of foreign origin do not become isolated, through various projects for sharing culture and bridging socio-cultural gaps in society. We have primarily focused our efforts in recent years to inform, support and empower women of foreign origin in all areas of society. We have increased cooperative work with institutions and organizations in combating gender-based violence and discrimination against minorities.

Our main goal is to advocate for the rights of women of foreign origin in the labor market, in the justice and immigration system, in health and welfare systems, through assisting with getting educational validation and attaining equal access to education in Iceland. With the coming of #MeToo we have vastly increased our efforts in combating gender violence. As we are a nongovernmental organization we rely on volunteer efforts and collaborative projects. We offer peer counseling and free courses funded through various grants which we are fortunate enough to receive.

Our association was founded on October 24, 2003, with the object of uniting, creating awareness and addressing the interests and issues of women of foreign origin living in Iceland in order to bring about genuine equality for them as women and as foreigners in all areas of society.

## **IceFemIn - Icelandic Feminist Initiative**

**Icelandic collaborator:** IceFemIn – Icelandic Feminist Initiative

**Contact:** [icefemin@icefemin.is](mailto:icefemin@icefemin.is)

**Web:** <http://icefemin.is/> [www.kvennalistinn.is](http://www.kvennalistinn.is)

### *Project Proposal:*

IceFemIn offers talks, workshops, seminars, participation in conferences, consultations and assistance with developing strategies and strengthening women’s movements and co-organizing different kinds of events. Our purpose is to empower women, inspire them and encourage them to improve their situation and development in the society towards gender equality.

*The organization:* IceFemIn - Icelandic Feminist Initiative - is a movement founded in 2017 by Icelandic women who have been active feminists for many years and who have a broad experience in politics and activism, especially by founding, shaping and working within and for *The Women’s Alliance* (Kvennalistinn). We think it is high time we share our experience of founding a new political movement and tell the story of how initially a handful of women in Iceland managed to make themselves heard and initiated a fundamental change in their society. It was not easy, but it brought about the joy of sisterhood and empowerment. By telling our story and the story of the successes of women’s movements in Iceland, we hope to inspire other women and encourage them to take feminist initiatives in their own societies.

*The Women’s Alliance* managed to bring women’s issues into the limelight and change the political debate permanently. It put on the agenda women’s concerns and issues that had never been brought up in Parliament before, such as domestic and sexual violence against women and children, pornography and rights of homosexuals. At its’ initiative the first Emergency Reception Center for victims of sexual violence and a shelter for women were established. Among the bills issued was one proposing a longer maternity leave as well as suggesting a special paternity leave for men. As pacifists *The Women’s Alliance* wanted to disband military alliances, eliminate nuclear weapons and implement peace education. Environmental issues played a big role in the agenda of *The Alliance*, and its representatives in Parliament presented the first bill on a ministry of environment.

Everyone knows that humankind faces threatening problems such as increasing inequalities within societies and between nations, poverty, not least of women, accumulation of wealth, owned by men, expanding weapon industries, big corporations and climate change. It is more evident than ever, that women have to take the active role of „doers” both in private and public life, creating a new world true to their own values, heart and mind.

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*Key persons involved:*

Kristín Ástgeirsdóttir historian and activist, Kristín Jónsdóttir historian and writer, Sigrún Jóhannesdóttir education consultant

## **The Women’s Shelter (WS)**

**Icelandic collaborator:** The Women’s Shelter (WS)

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**Web:** <https://www.kvennaathvarf.is/?lang=en>

### *Project Proposals:*

#### 1. Temporary housing project

As history has shown us at the Shelter, women often find it difficult to leave their abuser as they do not have a place to stay when leaving the Shelter. Although the percentage of women going back to their abuser when leaving the Shelter is 13% we still find it too many women and too many children who sometimes have no other choice than going back to the abuser. Hence, a non-profit housing organization was established by the Women’s Shelter in 2016, aiming at building a house with 18 apartments for women to live at for two to three years when leaving the Shelter. Whilst living there, the women will be able to have more time to get the support and assistance from various aspects of the society in order to start a new life. Members of staff have now gained quite a good insight into how, what and why to open such an housing option for female survivors of domestic violence.

#### 2. Let’s talk about violence

One of the Shelter’s aims is to assist children who have to live at the Shelter to recover from the dramatic situations and influences which violence has had on them. In 2016 the Women’s Shelter premiered a short animated cartoon called *Let’s talk about violence*. The staff at the Shelter wrote the script and advised on the drawing of the cartoons. The main goal of the cartoon was to deliver clear messages regarding domestic violence to children. The message children are supposed to be left with is that domestic violence is not the family’s private matter, it can take place in every family and that the violence is never the child’s fault as adults are responsible for the child’s wellbeing. Children are encouraged to speak about the violence as there is always someone who can help. *Let’s talk about Violence, all around Iceland* is a project aiming at showing the cartoon to staff at schools and kindergartens all around the island in order to prepare staff for showing the cartoon to their students.

### *The Organization:*

The Women’s Shelter in Iceland is the only Shelter of its kind in Iceland. It has a history of 37 years in providing women and their children a shelter when staying at their own home is not safe or possible due to violence. At present thirteen professionals work at the Shelter. Members of the implementation team are the managing director, shift manager and the financial director. Other members of staff at the Shelter are a lawyer, a social worker and

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counselors with various educations such as psychology, gender studies, sociology, criminology, anthropology and family counseling. There is close collaboration with child protection services, the police, educational institutions, immigration authorities and other NGO's.

During the stay, women are offered interviews which can be in the form of general consultation, advice, support and information. Most of the women meet with a social worker and a lawyer to get general information on practical matters. Furthermore, a female police officer provides consultation at certain hours on permanent presence at the Shelter. The stay is free of charge for the women and their children and is open 24 hours a day all year round.

In 2018 the total number of women who had to live at The Women's Shelter in Iceland was 135. Their age ranged from 18-82 years old, 56% were coming for the first time, and 38% had their children with them. In 2018 there were 70 children living in the Shelter ranging from newborns to 17 years old in age. The average time of stay was 32 days. Average number of inhabitants per day, every day of the year was 17, of which 11 women and 6 children.

### *Key person involved:*

Hildur Guðmundsdóttir, is the ward manager at the Shelter and has held the position for the last couple of years. She has an extensive experience and hence understanding of the topic of domestic violence. She has lectured on the influence of domestic violence, the aims and roles of the Women's Shelter on various venues. Ms. Guðmundsdóttir has conducted various research on issues relating to domestic violence such as a study on casting a light onto the life of women of foreign origin living in the Shelter, where do they go after their stay and how can the Shelter improve its service to that vulnerable group. Ms. Guðmundsdóttir has a valuable experience from both working directly with the survivors and within the field of presentations and exchanging information.

## **The Women’s Counselling (WC)**

**Icelandic collaborator:** The Women’s Counselling (WC)

**Contact:** radgjof@kvennaradgjofin.is

**Web:** <http://www.kvennaradgjofin.is/english.html>

The Women’s Counselling is free legal and social work counselling for women (men also seek advice). It provides expert advice free of charge. It is open twice a week and people can either come for interviews or be advised via telephone or email. The advice covers any and all topics, is rendered anonymously and full confidentiality is guaranteed. The advantages of this set up is the anonymity, which gives those in difficult situations the courage to come, no records kept regarding those who seek advice, qualified experts are at hand (and students under supervision), legal and social work advice are an excellent combination and no appointments are needed

The Women’s Counselling is a part of the strong women’s rights movement in Iceland and has therefore been an active participant in bringing about changes for promoting gender equality, such as in legislation and official practices. The experience gathered in counselling for individuals is used to give advice to official institutions and bodies, like the police, ministries, social services etc. That is, the experience and know-how is taken further and put to use.

Through long lasting experience, the Women’s Counselling provides expert knowledge regarding equal rights as human rights, violence against women and girls, women entrepreneurship and various legal and social work issues. Advice on the founding, organization and operation of a volunteer NGO is also provided.

## **Ministry for Foreign Affairs/UN Women Iceland/Barbershop**

**Icelandic collaborators:** Ministry for Foreign Affairs/UN Women Iceland

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**Web:** [https://www.heforshe.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/toolbox\\_allinone\\_v2.pdf](https://www.heforshe.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/toolbox_allinone_v2.pdf)

### *Project Proposal: Barbershop Conferance*

A Barbershop Conferance to be organized in the respective recipient countries. The Government of Iceland has spearheaded a dialogue, conferences, the so called Barbershops, where the aim is to raise awareness among men, to stress their role, responsibilities as well as opportunities. Its purpose is to motivate “men and boys to commit to upholding gender equality.”

Iceland has developed a Barbershop Toolbox to enable others to mobilize the men around them for gender equality. The Toolbox is part of Iceland's commitments to the HeForShe movement and can be accessed on the movement's website.

Background: Why is it called a Barbershop? Most men have been to a barbershop or a locker room. These are spaces where men talk to each other and where behaviours and attitudes about gender relations - including what it means to be a man - are learned, discussed and reinforced. While relations between men and women are often discussed among men in barbershops, these conversations too often reflect the stereotyped roles of women and men, and rarely tackle serious issues at the root of gender inequality.

The Barbershop was an initiative taken by Iceland and Suriname in 2014 inspired by the HeForShe campaign and the Geneva Gender Champions initiative. The first conference was co-convened by the UN and the permanent representations of Iceland and Suriname to the UN, held at the United Nations in New York on 14-15 January 2105.

At the current rate, gender equality will not be reached until the year 2133. Something has to change. With men largely missing from the debate on equality, we are playing with only half the team. This is what the Barbershop is all about. It's a training camp of sorts, designed to equip men with the tools they need to take on an active role in achieving equality.

Barbershop events provide a setting for male-to-male discussions and reflections about their own behaviours, privileges, and roles creating barriers for women's empowerment and how men can instead become agents of change in realising gender equality. This way, the Barbershop platform encourages men to make a proactive commitment to gender equality at an individual and collective level, inspire other men to join them and bring the discourse on gender equality to barbershops and locker rooms around the world.

## **United Nations University Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (UNU-GEST)**

**Icelandic collaborator:** United Nations University Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (UNU-GEST)

**Contact:** irma@hi.is

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*Project proposals:*

### *1) Men as Allies*

The course Men as Allies has the objective of providing practical tools and critical insights on how to engage men and boys in promotion of gender justice and prevention of violence. The course is tailored to the needs of practitioners and advocates who work in development, education or youth sector.

Objectives of the course:

- Increase understanding of how practices of patriarchal masculinities (of various kinds) sustain gender inequalities.
- Identify the conditions of male socialization that are fueling patriarchal masculinities and specify strategies for challenging and influencing patriarchal socialization of boys.
- Explore the wider societal processes through which we can shift patriarchal masculinities and work to promote more transformative/healthy masculinities.
- Investigate what activities and types of involvement can be done on various levels to address men as allies: grassroots mobilizing, government initiatives at all levels, strategies and policies etc.
- Offer strategies for building community support and advocacy with institutions, governments (local, regional, national) and development partners to adopt policies and scale up programmes that reinforce personal and social change.

### *2) Teaching Gender to Youth*

Teaching Gender to Youth programme tackles several key aspects of the introduction of gender studies at elementary and high school levels, from generating political and institutional will to inaugurate the programmes, to curriculum development, teaching and student organizing. In Iceland, gender studies have been taught as either an elective, or mandatory subject at high school level since 2010 and, as of recently, pilot programs at elementary school level have been introduced as well.

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The GEST programme has since mid-year 2017 worked on formulating the course *Teaching Gender to Youth* with the objective to provide practical tools and critical understanding on how to advocate and develop curricula for teaching gender equality at schools. The course is tailored to the needs of teachers, curriculum developers, educational administrators and policy makers. A pilot version of the course was taught in the GEST postgraduate diploma programme in Spring semester 2018 for an audience of 24 fellows from 14 developing countries.

The main objectives of the course are:

- a) Provide knowledge and skills on how to teach gender studies at primary and secondary school level using interactive methods of teaching and resources available to teachers (especially in rural areas).
- b) Offer tools on how to develop curricula for gender studies at elementary and high school level that will include discussions about socialization of girls and boys, gender roles, gender stereotypes, understanding of gender equality, health and safety, division of labor etc.
- c) Examine strategies for advocating and generating support for gender reform at elementary and high school level, both on the macro level (policy makers and curriculum developers), and on the micro level (in schools – teachers and key mediators).
- d) Identify strategies to ensure pupil participation, and support pupils to organize and create their own gender equality projects in schools.

### *3) Gender Responsive Budgeting*

The GEST programme has developed a short course on gender responsive budgeting addressing government planning, programming and budgeting that contributes to the advancement of gender equality and the fulfilment of women's rights. It entails identifying and reflecting needed interventions to address gender gaps in sector and local government policies, plans and budgets. Budgets are important policy instruments for transformation to move society towards gender equality, to promote development and women's rights. The Gender Responsive Budgeting short courses are tailored to the needs of recipients, but following is a sample of different types of gender budgeting (GB) training offered:

- 1) Introduction of Gender Responsive Budgeting where the courses introduce core concepts and underpinning principles for Gender Budgeting work, practices, policy processes, instruments, tools and strategies.
- 2) Gender-Based Public Finance Reform Review where the course provides a platform for staff working on public finance reforms to implement GB in organizational processes to support different types of public finance reforms and performance assessments.
- 3) Process Assessments and Mid-term Reviews for Gender Responsive Budgeting Projects where the focus of the training is geared towards ongoing gender responsive budgeting efforts, and mid-term adaptation to programme implementation processes.
- 4) Increasing the Efficiency of Gender Responsive Budgeting bringing different stakeholders together for strategy building; civil society, academics, public institutions etc. to identify procedures for joint efforts to increase the effectiveness of GB work.

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### *About the GEST Programme*

United Nations University Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (UNU-GEST) is a post graduate teaching programme based at the University of Iceland. The GEST programme's mission is to use a multi-disciplinary approach to promote gender equality and social justice in developing, conflict and post-conflict countries through: Strengthening skills of professionals, scholars and organizations; high-quality, collaborative, and policy-relevant research; and creating a platform for transnational dialogue and knowledge exchange. The GEST programme offers short courses as a part of its academic programme which are specialized trainings catered to the needs of professionals in different fields and can be offered on site, and tailored to the need of the organization/institution. The GEST short courses are intensive trainings of the duration of 3-5 days, designed to contribute to capacity-building, expansion of knowledge base and development of institutional competences. The GEST programme seeks to incrementally expand its delivery of short courses in partner countries to EEA countries of Eastern Europe/ Balkans over the course of next years, see above.

## **The Metropolitan Police in Reykjavik**

**Icelandic collaborator:** The Metropolitan Police in Reykjavik

**Contact:** sbg@logreglan.is

**Web:** <https://www.logreglan.is/english/>

### *Project Proposal:*

The Metropolitan Police in Reykjavík has systematically changed its approach and handling of Domestic Violence cases. We have also changed our approach towards teenagers who run away from home, with good results. The Icelandic government has also made a funded multi-agency plan to work on sexual violence and the results within the Metropolitan Police have been very good. Bjarkarhlíð, a family justice center, has been founded and the police is a partner in that concept.

All of these initiatives are important for the well-being of women and children in the society.

The new gender-related approach has in all the three areas showed amazingly good results, and the Metropolitan Police in Reykjavik, Iceland, with its Chief of Police Sigríður Björk Guðjónsdóttir welcomes sharing of these practices and giving information on statistics and results.

## Capacent Consulting

**Icelandic collaborator:** Capacent Consulting

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### *Project Proposals: The Gender Equality Roadmap*

The Gender Equality Roadmap works to assess and transform the status of gender equality within an organization. It is a 360° approach that focuses on five key elements concerning gender equality. The main purpose of the roadmap is though to expose the unconscious gender bias that is often found in the culture, environment and structure of companies – whether it works in the favor of men or women.

Showing that Gender Equality is a high priority within the organization not only allows a greater ability to attract the most qualified people of both genders, but also provides a working environment that will want to make them stay.

The Gender Equality Roadmap uses a three-stage approach:

- 1. The status assessment* is done to document the current status of gender equality within the company and highlight any possible issues. The assessment focuses on several key elements such as culture within communication and within the working environment in general, corporate strategy, organizational structure, salaries and role models.
- 2. Transformation projects* are set up to relieve any issues that have been discovered. Once the projects have been implemented, the
- 3. Education and implementation* is the final stage is initiated where the organization is educated on how to follow up on gender related KPI's and ensure that the new changes are sustainable.

To ensure that the implemented changes are not forgotten along the way, they are also given an annual “health check” for the three years following the project to measure how well they are meeting their gender equality objectives.

The Gender Equality Roadmap is lead by the Nordic consulting company Capacent. One of the owners of the company Thorey Vilhjalmsdottir, is the leading expert in the project. She holds a BS in business from the University of Iceland, MBA from Reykjavik University and CEIBS business school in Shanghai, Cina. Thorey has a broad experience in running businesses,



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management, strategic policy making, marketing and innovation. She is a board member of UN Women Iceland and has been active in fighting gender based violence. Thorey also has a very valuable experience from governance and politics.

## Mundo travel and international consulting

**Icelandic collaborator:** Mundo travel and international consulting

**Contact:** margret@mundo.is

**Web:** <https://mundo.is/>

Mundo's experience with EEA grants:

- Consulting for Spain on EEA grants programme in Spain 2013-2016
- Training for beneficiary countries
- Conference organization
- Training for teachers

*Project Proposals.*

1. Equity and inclusion in the academia (ref. 2. *Research and 5. Social Dialogue – Decent Work*)

The homogeneous demography of academics through history is a restricting factor, limiting the aspects and approaches of the diverse groups of people that until recently did not have the opportunities to gain higher education.

The academic scissors of gender in the academia has been a concern for some time, with women counting for more than half of the students, but the proportion of women decreases with the rise of the academic ladder, ending with less than 20% of full professors being women. Students and academic employees mostly belong to higher socioeconomic class and Western universities also to hire western (and mostly native) tenures and professors.

Universities are becoming increasingly aware of those limiting factors and focus on how they can create and maintain a more inclusive environment for diverse people. Many different measures are needed for this, but training and education are important factors.

Mundo offers its expertise to design and organize seminars/workshops/trainings for leadership, professors and diversity officers within the academic settings about an intercultural and inclusive organizational culture.

2. Human rights and local governments (ref. 12. *Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency, 17. Human Rights – National Implementation, 23. Disaster Prevention and Preparedness*)

Local governments are involved with all daily activities of the municipality's inhabitants. A clear human rights policy and thorough implementation of it is necessary to create a diverse and inclusive society. Creating the policy can be tricky. The local government has to come to an agreement about the main focus and approach, the main components of the policy and the projects of implementation. The local government will also have to gain support among officers and inhabitants to avoid implementation gap.

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A participatory policy making has shown to be an effective approach in the sector of human rights. Involving NGOs and main shareholders in the beginning is important (including the national government and companies of different sizes), as well as the employers of the municipality.

Mundo offers its expertise to consult local governments of designing, writing and implementing human rights policies in an effective way.

3. Conference for change agents in organizations (ref. 1. Business Development, Innovation and SMEs, 5. Social Dialogue - Decent Work, 16. Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency)

A conference where gender and diversity officers, human resource managers and change agents in other roles would be empowering for those individuals, who often feel lonely and lack support within their organizations.

In a two day conference they would learn about effective tools and tactics as well as mistakes and failures to avoid. The conference would include speakers from the academia on change agents and diversity management; successful diversity managers and politicians and the participants would get time to expand their network, exchange experiences and learn from each other.

Mundo offers its expertise to organize and execute a large conference on this issue, preferably in Iceland.

- Training for City councils and Universities
- Evaluation of country programs from the point of view of gender mainstreaming
- Middle aged women - Mundo is known for programs on empowerment for women.

### *The organization:*

Mundo has a long experience working with EEA grants. Mundo was hired to assess the whole program of EEA grants in Spain during the years of 2013-2016 from the point of view of gender mainstreaming. Mundo will also work for Portugal. In my former role as the director of International Affairs at Reykjavík University I created a training center for universities in the beneficiary countries of EEA grants where we trained academics and university staff on internationalization of universities, set up training seminars on writing in English, leadership, spoken and written English and in many other fields that fitted the training needs of each institution etc etc We also took care of organizing conferences for partner institutions. In 2018 Mundo took care of training of professors from Poland and in 2019 Mundo is the organizer of an international conference on regional development in Iceland. Mundo has a department where we organize tailor made teacher's training.

### *Key person involved:*

Margrét Jónsdóttir Njarðvík is the founder and owner of Mundo. She has a vast experience of international relations. She holds a PhD from Princeton University and an MBA from Reykjavík University and was an associate professor at Reykjavík University and the director of

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International Affairs until she founded Mundo in 2011. Margrét founded the Association of Menopausia in Iceland in 2013 and holds a webpage - [www.breytingaskeidid.is](http://www.breytingaskeidid.is) as well as a facebook group of 5000 women on that subject. She was an Associate professor at Reykjavík University before she founded Mundo.

Sóley Tómasdóttir is a diversity consultant at MUNDO. Her expertise is based on a combination of political experience, public debates and academic knowledge. Sóley has been working as an independent expert on gender and diversity the last years, counselling organizational leaders and giving trainings and workshops on diversity and inclusion in the organizational settings. Sóley holds an MSc degree in pedagogy, gender and diversity from Radboud University.

## **Kara Connect – A digital workstation for professionals in Health, Education and Welfare**

**Icelandic collaborator:** Kara Connect

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**Web:** www.karaconnect.com

*Project Proposal: Focusing on digitalising women*

Kara Connect is an online GDPR secure workstation for professionals in Health, Education and Welfare. It is designed to relief professionals helping others of all kinds of administrative and security issues and at the same time give them added time and value in their practices as well as opportunities to scale their services. Citizens can reach specific professionals for their needs irrelevant of location in a secure online environment if they wish and use online tools to book, pay, get invoices, notifications and messages. Kara simplifies access to help.

Professional support (80%) and caregiving for family members (90%) is in the hands of women. All societies see increased difficulties in accessing their help for mental health problems, welfare support and special education training.

The Kara team helps individual therapists, clinics, municipalities and schools to digitalise, log and connect their services. In addition to on-boarding professionals into Kara we support and co-develop units that want to be more accessible to citizens, increase access to their support personnel, optimise and gather data points to project needs and to scale their services irrelevant of location of client or professional.

*Examples:*

- Connecting school counsellors and school psychologists for better access in different locations
- Supporting women in violence settings reaching support personnel
- Digitalising the work flow of Child Protection Services so that cases move more quickly through and support systems are connected.
- Speech therapist offices online for school children from 3 years
- Alcohol support system (AA) gives choices of volunteers and professional services
- Special education units in municipalities
- Support to children in foster care

## **Evrís foundation**

**Icelandic collaborator:** Evris foundation

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**Web:** [www.evris.is/english/](http://www.evris.is/english/)

Evrís Foundation specializes in working on EEA Grants projects. Evris Foundation is an Icelandic non-profit private foundation founded to enable the sharing of knowledge and experience with other European countries and enhance cooperation in various sectors between entities in those countries. It builds a tailor-made team of Icelandic experts with well-defined and required expertise for each individual project. Sharing know-how will facilitate problem-solving and the development of new solutions by public agencies and businesses alike for the benefit of all participants

Iceland is at the forefront of the movement for equal rights and gender equality in the world and has for many years been the frontrunner in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index

Gender equality is a constant work in progress and does not happen without efforts being made by human rights defenders, activists, politicians and others working towards the common goal of gender equality. Each step towards gender equality requires political will and the conviction that gender equality is beneficial for society as a whole. In Iceland, tools such as legislation, gender budgeting, gender quotas and public incentives for achieving greater gender equality have been developed, tried and tested for decades

Evrís Foundation benefits from the cooperation with experienced gender equality experts and advocates in Iceland. Evris-teams consist of experts from private and public institutions and universities, as well as independent experts. Together with project managers from Evris Foundation, Evris-teams have successfully delivered valuable contributions as a reliable donor state project partner.

## **City of Reykjavik: Human Rights and Democracy Office**

**Icelandic collaborator:** City of Reykjavík Human Rights and Democracy Office

**Contacts:** halldora.gunnarsdottir@reykjavik.is and valgerdur.jonsdottir@reykjavik.is

**Web:** <https://reykjavik.is/en>

### *Project Proposal: Together Against Violence*

In Iceland 22% of women aged 18-80 years old have experienced violence in intimate relationships according to a research. That is a scary fact in a country that is ranked number one in the World Economic Forum's global gender gap report. Violence is costly for the society as a whole and it is estimated that violence costing Icelandic society 31,1 billions each year. It doesn't only cost much in terms of money but has serious effects on the health and wellbeing of victims of violence and children that are raised in an environment where violence occurs.

In response to this situation the City of Reykjavik started in January 2015 a project titled *Together Against Violence* in cooperation with the Metropolitan Police Department, the Women's Shelter in Iceland and the Health Centres in the Capital Area. The focus of the project to fight domestic violence by using a multi-agency approach. As a part of that measure and if there is a child registered at the home where domestic violence is reported a psychologist, on the behalf of The Child Protection Department, and a social worker, on the behalf of the Welfare Department, accompany police officers to the scene. This procedure is followed up with a phone call within three days and by a visit by the police and the Welfare Department/social worker within a week and by further support. If there are no children on the scene people are offered the services of a social worker.

In this project, a special focus has been placed on people of foreign origin, people with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ people. Workgroups, with the relevant people taking part, have been founded in order to analyse the situation and make suggestions concerning how to better the services, in relation to domestic violence, for these groups.

### *Key person involved:*

Halldóra Dýrleifar-Gunnarsdóttir the project manager of Together Against Violence

## **City of Reykjavik: The Department of Finance and Risk Management and the Human Rights and Democracy Office**

**Icelandic collaborator:** The Department of Finance and Risk Management within the City of Reykjavík and The Human Rights and Democracy Office

**Contact:** [frejja.barkardottir@reykjavik.is](mailto:frejja.barkardottir@reykjavik.is)

**Web:** <https://reykjavik.is/en>

### *Project Proposal:*

Gender budgeting is a governing tool used to ensure the fair distribution of goods and assets according to the specific needs of different groups of people.

In 2011 the city of Reykjavík decided to start implementation of gender budgeting. The focus is to analyze service fields and implement equality impact assessments. The equality impact survey/assessment is a tool used to assess the impact of financial decisions before they are approved or rejected by the city council.

The City's human rights policy is founded on the principle of equal treatment, aiming to enable all persons to enjoy basic human rights regardless of their origin, nationality, class, language, skin colour, religion, atheism or non-religious convictions, political opinions, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sexual characteristics, age, disability, body build or type, health, ability or other status. This policy also applies when financial decisions are being made and the guideline of implementation of gender budgeting has been to intertwine the budget policy of the city and its human rights policy.

### *Key persons involved:*

Freyja Barkardóttir, project manager of Gender Budgeting and Halldóra Káradóttir, head of the Department of Finance and Risk Management within the City of Reykjavík.

## Maskina

**Icelandic collaborator:** Maskina research

**Contact:** thora@maskina.is

**Web:** <https://www.maskina.is>

Maskina specialises in gender surveys.

The Gender Barometer is an employee survey that assesses the status of gender equality in the workplace through collection of the experiences and attitudes of employees. The baseline of the Gender Barometer is the Icelandic labor market, where gender equality has consistently been ranked the highest in the world (World Economic Forum, Dec. 18, 2018). Through comparing and contrasting the experiences of employees of different genders, the Gender Barometer helps organisations understand how they stand in terms of gender equality and what factors they need to work on to create a more gender equal workplace.

The factors that the Gender Barometer assesses are:

- **Progression in the workplace**
  - Is everyone enabled to grow, develop and progress in their career regardless of gender?
- **Management support**
  - Do managers' actions reflect a gender equal workplace?
- **Workplace interactions and networking**
  - Do workplace interactions reflect a gender equal workplace?
- **Workplace flexibility**
  - Do employees have the flexibility they need regardless of their gender?
- **Fairness**
  - Are all employees treated fairly in the workplace regardless of gender?
- **Work-life balance**
  - Are all employees able to balance family life with work?
- **Harassment and violence**
  - Are employees experiencing gender-based or sexual harassment and violence in the workplace?

*Maskína research* is a research company in Reykjavik, Iceland, that was established in 2010. Maskina conducts both quantitative and qualitative research, such as customer surveys, employee surveys, marketing research, focus groups, in-depth-interviews, and more.

The leading experts in this project are Thora Thorgeirsdottir, PhD, Thorlakur Karlsson, PhD, and Thora Asgeirsdottir, MBA. Dr. Karlsson and Mrs. Asgeirsdottir are the owners of Maskina and have managed and participated in a number of projects on gender equality in Iceland in the

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private and public sector. Dr. Thorgeirsdottir has a PhD in Human Resource Management and is specialised in flexibility in the workplace and work-life balance. Both Dr. Thorgeirsdottir and Dr. Karlsson teach at universities in Iceland.

Reference: World Economic Forum (Dec. 18, 2018). Iceland most gender equal country in the world, World Economic Forum finds. Retrieved from: <https://icelandmag.is/article/iceland-most-gender-equal-country-world-world-economic-forum-finds>

## **FKA – Association of Women Business Leaders in Iceland**

**Icelandic collaborator:** FKA – Association of Women Business Leaders in Iceland

**Contact:** margret@undo.is

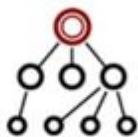
**Web:** <https://www.fka.is/english>

### **FKA is the Association of Women Business Leaders in Iceland**

FKA is a non-profit professional network for female Icelandic business leaders. It was founded in april 1999 and it's core purpose is to support women to manage and grow their business. FKA is looking for partners to collaborate on projects that include women's empowerment, women in rural areas, women in remote areas, and also for collaborators in our social change projects on women as board members, women in media and leadership equality. We welcome all proposals.

### **FKA MAJOR PROJECTS**

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#### **BOARD DIRECTORS**

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2009 – 2013

FKA lobbied for the legislation passed in 2013 for the 40% quote in boards > 50 employees



#### **WOMEN IN MEDIA**

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2013 - 2022

Ongoing project to improve the presence of women in the media, at 35% in 2017



#### **LEADERSHIP EQUALITY**

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2017 – 2027

Increase the number of women at the Executive level of companies in Iceland to 40% by 2027

### **THE OBJECTIVES OF FKA:**

- To ally women business leaders in order to empower them and draw attention to them in the business world and in the society.
- To encourage the exchange of ideas and knowledge and sharing of experiences, both national and international, between its members.
- To promote business between FKA women.

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- To promote exchanges, relationships and development of national and international contacts aimed at reinforcing partnerships and access to new markets.
- To encourage FKA women to use all possible means in order to re-educate themselves and be aware of all the latest developments which may effect the operation of their business.
- To make FKA business women a respected target group in the society for opinions, comments and guidance.
- Give attention to successful and exemplary businesses and companies.

### ROLE OF FKA NETWORK - DIVERSITY - VISIBILITY



- Promote positives changes in relation to women gender equality.
- Promote business relations.
- Serve the role as an observer in the Icelandic society.

If your association shares our vision – we are happy to look into collaborating with you and open for all collaboration initiatives. For further information please contact [margret@modo.is](mailto:margret@modo.is)

## **The Association on Women's Menopause**

**Icelandic collaborator:** The Association on Women's Menopause

**Contact:** margret@undo.is

**Web:**

The Association on Women's Menopause was founded in 2013 by Icelandic women interested in social, psychological, cultural and physical changes on women during menopause. We have a very active facebook group where over five thousand women share articles, opinions and thoughts about this period of change in their lives.

We have celebrated conferences on the subject, made videos and a homepage. We are interested in collaborating with our sisters in Europe on topics that are interesting for women going through this stage in their lives as long as it brings empowerment to its participants. Please contact margret@undo.is for further information.



**ÁHUGAMANNAFÉLAG**  
UM BREYTINGASKEIÐ KVENNA

## **Icelandic Association of Local Authorities**

**Icelandic collaborator:** Icelandic Association of Local Authorities

**Contact:** [anna@samband.is](mailto:anna@samband.is) and [ottarfreyr@samband.is](mailto:ottarfreyr@samband.is)

**Web:** <https://www.samband.is/english/>

### *Project Proposals:*

Gender mainstreaming in municipal schools, pre-schools and sport and leisure activities for children and youth. Establishing gender equality plans. Sharing experience on participation of women in politics at the local level. Combating sexual harassment at the workplace. Equal pay management systems.

Icelandic municipalities have according to the Icelandic Gender Equality Act, a legal obligation to make gender equality plans both in relation to their role as service providers and as employers. The plans shall provide framework for gender mainstreaming in all municipal activities.

Furthermore, the Gender Equality Act puts special emphasis on gender equality in the education system, in child-care services, and in leisure and sport activities for children. Icelandic municipalities are responsible for primary schools from the age of 6 to 16, and pre-schools. They also provide and promote leisure and sport activities for children and youth, in cooperation with local sport clubs and other youth organisations.

Around 90% of Icelandic children are enrolled in municipal pre-schools. This is probably the single most important factor explaining the extraordinarily high percentage (79%) of Icelandic women participating in the labour market. The pre-schools are defined as being a part of the school system and some of them have gender equality as one of their fundamental principles.

Icelandic municipalities can provide best practices in these fields and the Icelandic Association of Local Authorities, which is their member association, will act as an intermediary for the EEA Bilateral projects.

Furthermore, Icelandic municipalities can share political experiences in relation to the fact that 48,7% of municipal councillors in Iceland are women which is according to a recent survey, conducted by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the highest in Europe.

In addition to this, in relation to their role as employer Icelandic municipalities can also share their experience on processes to combat sexual harassment in the work place and on equal pay management systems.

## **Exedra**

**Icelandic collaborator:** Exedra

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**Web:** [www.exedra.is](http://www.exedra.is)

EXEDRA is a professional forum for discussion for prominent women leaders in Icelandic society, inclusive of all economic sectors and political parties. Within the group are current and former Ministers and other political leaders, ambassadors, business leaders, women from the arts, sciences, media and NGOs.

Founded in 2006, EXEDRA offers its members a platform for discussions on a variety of topics aimed to inspire and encourage its members to increase their knowledge and actively participate in improving society, with great focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women in leadership positions.

EXEDRA women meet once a month to discuss important current topics, share their experiences, network and foster collaboration among women of all professions. Among other events that Exedra hosts are bi-monthly sessions on current affairs to exchange knowledge and encourage open discussions, as well as a variety of indoor and outdoor activities that provide our members with a platform to exchange ideas, build relationships and support each other. Every other year we travel abroad to extend our network, meet with local leaders, attend seminars and visit companies and institutions.

EXEDRA operates a sister organisation for young female leaders called EXEMPLA. Collaborative events connecting women from EXEDRA and EXEMPLA serve to bridge the gap and encourage interaction between generations.

EXEDRA would like to collaborate with other female leadership networks and those looking to establish female leadership organisations in their countries with the aim of empowering women within their countries and across Europe to support each other and to take on leadership positions within their communities.



## Girls Rock! Iceland

**Icelandic collaborator:** Girls Rock! Iceland

**Contact:** [audur@stelpurrokka.is](mailto:audur@stelpurrokka.is)

**Web:** [stelpurrokka.is/about-us](http://stelpurrokka.is/about-us)

Stelpur rokka! (Girls Rock! Iceland) is a volunteer-run non-profit organization founded in 2012. We work to empower girls, trans boys, gender queer and intersex youth through music. Our core programming focuses on the rock camp. Campers learn to play an instrument, form bands, and write a song together. They participate in various workshops on music, gender and social justice, attend lunchtime performances by established women musicians and perform live at a final showcase in front of friends and family. At rock camp, campers amplify their already strong voices, strengthen their self-esteem, and collaborate creatively with positive role models.

We have also actively taken part in building up an international network of rock camps, both through bilateral collaborations (with f.ex. rock camps in Poland, Faroe Islands, Greenland and Togo, Africa) and larger projects, such as conferences for rock camp organisers in the US and Europe. In 2018 and 2019, Stelpur rokka! led a youth exchange project with 11 other organisations funded by Erasmus+, in the form of a collaborative international rock camp with over 100 participants and leaders.

In January 2020, we will open up a music centre for young people in Breiðholt, where they can form bands together and rehearse, attend workshops and concerts, get instrument lessons and even access a small recording studio. Breiðholt is the most ethnically diverse neighborhood in Reykjavík, and research shows that children of immigrants are far less likely to participate in extracurricular activities. We put strong emphasis on reaching out to children and youth who would benefit the most from being involved in rock camp activities, and offer activities both free of charge, and on a sliding scale fee (you pay what you can).

*Project proposals:*

### Outreach and accessibility

Reaching out to young people with diverse backgrounds is always a priority in our work. Even though we have years of experience by now, we still have a long way to go to make our programming accessible and feasible to different groups of people, and to be able to offer our participants the support and follow up they need. A big part of that is having a diverse group of volunteers, so each participant has someone they can relate to and look up to at rock camp. We have gained valuable experience in some areas, such as physical accessibility and supporting young asylum seekers, but we are always looking to improve and learn. Partnering

with other organisations (nationally or internationally), that have experience and expertise in specific areas, has for us always been the most fruitful way of improving practices.

### **Wellbeing and burnout amongst volunteers working within feminist initiatives**

Through our international collaborations in recent years, we have created trusting ties with our sister organisations across Europe and further. We share both our success stories and our struggles, and find ways to support each other. Some of these organisations have been active for over ten years, and others are younger. But what is striking is that almost all of them are dealing with burnout amongst staff and/or volunteers. This is not surprising with the scope and conditions of our work in mind (which can be very different from country to country). We support and empower young people who often come from very challenging situations, while at the same time having to justify our work and feminist ideals to the larger public, and deal with extreme financial uncertainty. Furthermore, many of the volunteers are musicians who might not have the knowledge or training to handle challenging issues that rise at a camp. We want to delve into these matters and find concrete ways to better support rock camp volunteers, so they don't burn out and give up on their important work. Not the least those who do not have support from their local communities and authorities, morally and financially (that is usually where the need for their work is the most!)