



# Iceland's report on Beijing +30

Thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)

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## Introduction

Important steps have been made towards gender equality in Iceland in past decades. Among the achievements is the increased participation of women in politics, both at central and local government levels. Important legislation has been passed to ensure a more equal society, such as legislation aimed at increasing the number of women in leadership positions, and to combat gender-based and sexual violence and harassment.

Iceland is fully committed to implementing Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development both nationally and internationally. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been integrated into government policy on social, economic and environmental affairs, with a particular emphasis on building a peaceful and just society, free from fear and violence.

Iceland has one of Europe's highest rates of women's labour force participation. Despite this, gender segregation in the labour market remains persistent, i.e. in the form of large, gender-based differences in educational and career choices between women and men. The wage gap between men and women has narrowed in recent years, and this applies equally to income from work, the unadjusted wage gap, and the adjusted wage gap.

The promotion of human rights for all, including LGBTI persons, is a cornerstone in Iceland's foreign policy and its international development cooperation – in line with Agenda 2030 and the government's domestic priorities. In particular, Iceland has been a vocal champion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, a key driver for the achievement of the SDGs. The Icelandic government regards gender equality and women's empowerment as a policy priority. This is reflected both in Iceland's international development cooperation and all international advocacy for the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls as a prerequisite for peace, progress and development. Several actions to be undertaken to advance gender equality are listed in its government agreement from 2021.

The World Economic Forum's latest report on gender equality, published in June 2023, states that gender equality is nowhere greater than in Iceland, based on the Forum's methodology. Iceland topped the Gender Gap Index, which includes 146 countries, for the fourteenth year in a row and is the only country to have closed more than 90% of its gender gap. The main reasons for this are women's political participation, high level of education and equal access to health care, together with other factors. However, it is important to be aware that there are still inequalities and power imbalances that are not assessed in the index. Despite real success in many areas, Iceland still faces a variety of challenges and has some way to go before closing the remaining gender gaps.

The first comprehensive Icelandic legislation on the equal rights and equal status of women and men was adopted in 1976. Government policy on gender equality was formulated and a special Gender Equality Council was established to enforce the legislation. The legislation was amended in 1985, 1991, 2000 and 2008, and a further,

comprehensive revision was made in 2019, resulting in the adoption of the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender in 2020.

The objective of the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender (hereafter the "Equality Act") is to prevent discrimination based on gender and to maintain gender equality and equal opportunities for the genders in all spheres of society. All persons shall have equal opportunities to benefit from their enterprise and to develop their skills irrespective of gender. The term "gender" in this Act means women, men and persons whose gender is registered as neutral in Registers Iceland unless otherwise stated. Multiple discrimination is addressed for the first time in the current Equality Act, and people with neutral gender registration are specifically included.

Iceland continues to work to secure *de jure* and *de facto* gender equality, and to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls to leave no groups or individuals behind.



## About the report

This report reflects the continued commitment of Iceland as a UN member state to be accountable for gender equality, women's rights, and the empowerment of women, and answers a questionnaire sent by the UN to its member states. The report was prepared following the guidance note for comprehensive national-level reviews issued by UN Women. It primarily cites examples of measures that the government of Iceland has implemented in the field of gender equality and provides an overview of selected achievements, challenges and priorities during the past five years and for the five years to come. The report does not attempt to provide an overall or exhaustive description or analysis of the status of women's rights and gender equality in Iceland.

The reports consist of six parts corresponding to those of the UN questionnaire. As a number several of the questions in the questionnaire overlap, Iceland has chosen to provide a coordinated answer to the questions in the six overarching dimensions of the questionnaire. This is done to deliver a holistic report which can be read without consulting the questionnaire.

The Prime Minister's Office has coordinated the reporting process, which has included all relevant ministries and public authorities. The report's main aim is to describe principal achievements, challenges and priorities in the progress toward gender equality, providing examples of government policies, projects/interventions/measures and new legislation

Civil society organizations in the area of gender equality have submitted examples of projects contributing to implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA). These are provided in an appendix to the report.

## Legal Framework and Public Administration

### Legal framework

The principle of equality is specifically addressed in a provision in the Constitution of the Republic of Iceland (see Article 65 of the Constitution, Act No. 33/1944, cf. the Constitutional Act, No. 97/1995), stating that men and women shall have equal rights in every respect. The Constitutional Act of 1995 introduced fundamental human rights provisions to the Constitution, with older provisions repealed or amended. Human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as the freedom of religion, the right to privacy, home and family life, and freedom of association and assembly are now guaranteed. Iceland's long-term objective is to ensure that universal human rights and fundamental freedoms become a reality for everyone in Iceland, as stated in Article 65 of the Constitution.

The first comprehensive Icelandic legislation on equal rights and equal status of women and men was adopted in 1976. Government policy on gender equality was formulated and a special Gender Equality Council was established to enforce the legislation. The legislation was amended in 1985, 1991, 2000 and 2008, and a further, comprehensive revision was made in 2019, resulting in the adoption of the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender in 2020. [Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender](#)

This was followed by an implementing Act on the Administration of Matters Concerning Equality: [Act on the Administration of Matters Concerning Equality](#)

The acts aim to prevent gender-based discrimination and to establish and maintain gender equality and equal opportunities for the genders in all spheres of society. All persons shall have equal opportunities to benefit from their enterprise and to develop their skills irrespective of gender. The term "gender" in this Act means women, men and persons whose gender is registered as neutral in Registers Iceland unless otherwise stated. Multiple discrimination is being addressed for the first time in the current Equality Act as well as people with neutral gender registration.

Iceland continues to work to secure de jure and de facto gender equality, to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls to leave no groups or individuals behind.

A comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation is in force in Iceland, covering all areas of human endeavour, including the labour market. areas both inside and outside the labour market. The acts provide for equal treatment of individuals irrespective of their racial and/or ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability, reduced working capacity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual characteristics and gender expression.

Acts:

[Amendment adding Discrimination Factors](#)  
[Equal Treatment in the Labour Market](#)

## Prime Minister's Office

Responsibility for gender equality was transferred from the Ministry of Welfare to the Prime Minister's Office on 1 January 2019 and a special Department of Equality was established. The Department is intended to act as a coordinating body within Government Offices, as well as to lead policy-making in the area of gender equality. It has also been entrusted with representing the Prime Minister's Office in matters on gender equality towards individuals, stakeholders and civil society organisations; in providing general information to the Icelandic parliament *Althingi*, and its committees, as well as carrying out various tasks at the international level. It handles matters concerning equal status and equal rights irrespective of gender, equal treatment outside the labour market, equal treatment in the labour market, gender autonomy, the Directorate of Equality, the Equality Complaints Committee and the Gender Equality Fund. The Department employs six experts and a director, all in full-time positions.

The Prime Minister's Office is primarily responsible for the enforcement of the acts on gender equality and anti-discrimination and the Act on Gender Autonomy, together with overall governmental coordination and policy-making in this field. The Prime Minister's Office monitors the enforcement of policies related to gender equality, using dashboards to make it easier to follow up on the actions taken.

## [Gender Equality in Iceland](#)

### The Directorate of Equality

The Directorate of Equality is a special institution under the administration of the Prime Minister. Its role is defined in the Act on the Administration of Matters Concerning Equality, No. 151/2020, and in the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender, No. 150/2020. The institution handles the administration of all matters covered by laws on equality, i.e. the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender, the Act on Equal Treatment Irrespective of Race or Ethnic Origin, and the Act on Equal Treatment on the Labour Market. The statutory role of the Directorate for Equality is, among other things, to work on the prevention of gender-based violence and gender-based and sexual harassment, in collaboration with other public authorities and organisations involved specifically in such prevention. In addition to its managing director, operations manager and legal counsel, the institute employs five specialists with diverse education in social sciences and gender studies.

The budget appropriations to the Directorate of Equality have increased, on average, by a scant 8% annually over the last five years. It employs eight people, of which five are women and three are men. The budget allocated to the Directorate of Equality totalled ISK 135,600,000 in 2021 and ISK 141,400,000 in 2022.

The Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender expanded and clarified the role of the Directorate of Equality in connection with equal pay certification and equal pay confirmation and increased its number of employees by one full-time position.

## **The Gender Equality Consultation Platform**

A gender equality consultation platform, the Gender Equality Council, is to convene at least once a year and shall include representatives of the social partners, the academic community and gender equality organisations provided for by law. The Council acts in an advisory role for the Minister's policy-making on issues relating to gender equality. The Minister shall meet with the Council once a year and it submits its meeting minutes to the Minister. A summary of the minutes shall be published as supporting documentation to the Minister's report on equality, which shall be presented to the Althingi once during the government's term of office

The ministry responsible for equality is in charge of the administration of the gender equality consultation platform, including making the forum known to the public and offering opportunities for participation. The ministry decides on the Council's other projects as appropriate. Its expenses are paid by the National Treasury.

## **Parliamentary Resolution on a Gender Equality Action Programme**

Every four years the Prime Minister submits to the Alþingi a motion for a parliamentary resolution on a four-year gender equality action programme after having received proposals from the ministries and after consultation with the Directorate of Equality. Discussions at the Gender Equality Forum (see below) shall also be taken into account. The Parliamentary Resolution on a Gender Equality Action Programme for the period of 2020–2023 is the seventh of its kind. The progress of the Action Plan can be viewed on a dashboard set up by the Prime Minister's Office. Each action on the Action Plan is now directly linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In spring 2024 a new resolution awaits confirmation from Althingi.

## **The Equality Complaints Committee**

The Equality Complaints Committee has been in operation since 1991. It consists of three lawyers appointed for period of three years. The task of the Equality Complaints Committee is to examine complaints cases and to deliver a ruling in writing on whether provisions of the gender equality and anti-discrimination acts have been violated. The Committee's rulings may not be referred to a higher administrative authority but can be referred to court. In cases that may be expected to influence labour market policy, the Committee is to request comments from the national federations of workers and employees before delivering its ruling. The rulings of the Complaints Committee are binding on the parties concerned in the cases. The parties may refer the Committee's rulings to the courts. The Directorate of Equality, the Gender Equality Council and the Complaints Committee operate independently of each other.

In 2022, the Equality Complaints Committee published for the first time a report on its activities during the year, in accordance with a new provision in the Act on the Administration of Matters Concerning Equality. The report is published electronically on the government's website and reviews the work of the committee, the main results and guiding principles that can be derived from the Committee's decisions. The report is intended to make it easier for people to monitor the implementation and

interpretation of the equality legislation.

[Annual Report 2022](#)

[Annual Report 2023](#)

## **Gender Equality Representatives**

The Equality Act introduces gender equality representatives chosen from the employees of each ministry. They shall have “expert knowledge of gender equality issues and “deal with, and monitor, gender equality work in the policy areas of the ministry in question and its institutions“.

## **The Gender Equality Forum**

According to the Equality Act, the Minister responsible for gender equality shall publish a report on the status and development in the area of gender equality and host the Gender Equality Forum to discuss the report with stakeholders. The report shall provide an overview of the progress made in implementing the government’s Action Programme on Gender Equality, as well as other issues reflecting the objectives of the Equality Act. The report is to be published and the forum held bi-annually or twice during each government’s four-year mandate period. The forum has been convened seven times. in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015,2018, 2020 and 2022.

## **Gender Statistics**

Gender statistics is an important tool to evaluate the situation of equality affairs and reflect the differences and inequalities between women and men in all areas of life. The Prime Minister's Office and the Directorate of Equality and Statistics Iceland have co-operated in the publication of a pamphlet on gender statistics. This information is now available online:

<https://statice.is/statistics/society/social-affairs/women-and-men/>

<https://www.government.is/topics/human-rights-and-equality/equality/gender-statistics/>

## Section One: Core Elements

In the last five years, specific focus has been placed on implementation in two areas of the BPfA, namely violence against women and women and economic independence.

While the effort to provide effective assistance and resources for survivors of gender-based violence continues, there has been a growing focus in recent years on preventing gender-based violence within future generations. In 2020 a parliamentary resolution was passed on prevention measures among children and young people to combat sexual and gender-based violence and harassment, which provides for a fully funded action plan for the years 2021-2025. The action plan sets out, for the first time, comprehensive prevention and education, integrated into the school curriculum as well as youth and leisure activities at all educational levels, in a wide-ranging collaboration with institutions, scholars and civil society organisations involved in prevention and education. A special steering group led by the Prime Minister's Office is tasked with following up on the programme's 26 actions and harmonising the work. As an example, a campaign with new visual materials, educational slides and teacher's guides is created each year for all secondary schools and community centres in the country. The campaign's website includes a quiz where young people can check the status of their relationship – whether it is healthy, unhealthy or violent – and can obtain information and advice.

Closing the gender pay gap remains a challenge in Iceland and the issue has been high on the political agenda. Research has revealed that the main reasons for the gender pay gap is the gender-segregated labour market and the undervaluation of women's work. Wages are generally lower in heavily female-dominated occupations, such as health care, social care and education, than in male-dominated occupations. Therefore, a working group with representatives from the social partners was entrusted with setting up a pilot project on the assessment of the value of jobs to analyse what aspects characterize women's work which may be undervalued, in order to eliminate the wage gap due to the gender-segregated labour market and the systematic undervaluation of traditional women's jobs. One of the goals of the job evaluation pilot project was to create a system that could encompass the equal value approach to pay equity provided for in the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender and promote gender pay equity. The working group has presented a proposal for a system with a specific focus on eliminating gender bias in valuing different jobs, which is expected to greatly assist ongoing efforts to close the gender pay gap.

In 2021, multiple discrimination was specifically prohibited with the entry into force of Act No. 150/2020, on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender, in order to promote equality based on the principle of "leaving no one behind" and to increase the legal protection of the most vulnerable groups of people. The legislative change lays a better framework and foundation for authorities to implement the principle of leaving no one behind in their policy making.

## **Section Two: Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks**

### **Priorities to accelerate progress for women and girls**

In a global context, Iceland has been successful in achieving gender equality and has been at the top of the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index for fourteen consecutive years in a row, indicating that it is the country with the narrowest gender gap. Major progress has been made since the first comprehensive legislation on equal rights and equal status of women and men was adopted in 1976 but there are numerous challenges that still need to be addressed, such as closing the gender pay gap, securing equal political and economic power between women and men, and eliminating gender-based violence. The main lesson learned in Iceland is that gender equality does not come about of its own accord. It requires hard work to secure progress, and the collective action and solidarity of the women's movement are vital in fostering political will, together with tools such as legislation, gender budgeting and mainstreaming, and sometimes gender quotas or special measures to achieve progress.

The following chapter describes priorities over the past five years, 2019-2024, and the corresponding achievements, as well as the main challenges in the same period, corresponding to the questionnaire sent by UN Women to member states.

### **Eliminating violence against women and girls**

In its policy-making, the government has emphasised working systematically on actions against gender-based violence, reforming the handling of sexual offences in the justice system and strengthening prevention measures and education against sexual and gender-based violence and harassment.

This has been done by reviewing and amending legislation, adopting action plans in the form of Parliamentary Resolutions, increasing budget appropriations earmarked for these issues, for example, to the police, and providing grants to various organisations working on these issues.

### **Legislation accelerating progress for women and girls**

The bill of the Minister of Health amending the Act on Healthcare Practitioners concerning the reporting of domestic violence was adopted in May 2023. With the adoption of the Act, healthcare practitioners are now authorised to report domestic violence to the police at the patient's request. In such cases, the patient's general personal information, information about the patient's injuries, as well as other information related to the violence and the patient's situation, may be passed on to the police where considered necessary for the police to take appropriate measures to ensure the necessary protection and support for the patient. It is necessary to increase the flow of information from the health system to the police in these cases and improve cooperation to ensure protection and support for the victim and reduce the likelihood of repeated violence. The objective of the Act is to satisfy more clearly

the obligations that Iceland has undertaken under the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

### **Preventive measures and awareness-raising**

The government has embarked on various preventive measures and awareness-raising based on the recommendations of a working group on prevention and awareness-raising to combat sexual offences and gender-based violence and harassment.

The National Commissioner of Police has, in cooperation with the police departments nationwide, worked on the prevention of digital violence among children and young people, including an awareness-raising campaign at the beginning of 2022. A presentation was distributed to all compulsory schools in the country with teenage classes, intended for students in the 8th grade, concerning digital violence and the importance of consent in digital and sexual communication. This included instructions for teachers and an information letter for the children's parents in Icelandic, English and Polish. Where community police were active, the educational material was followed up with visits to compulsory and secondary schools. Information and advice on Internet safety for children has also been added to the website of the emergency helpline 112 (112.is).

### **Awareness-raising campaign against child abuse**

The awareness-raising campaign "Take the Step" (Taktu skrefið) against digital sexual relations between adults and children was launched in the fall of 2023. The campaign encouraged persons who view, search for, display, save, possess or distribute sexual material involving children to cease these activities and seek the help of experts through the resource "Take the Step".

### **Awareness-raising against sexual violence- three phases**

The first phase of the awareness-raising campaign was titled "Is everything okay?" (Er allt í góðu?) and started in early March 2022, focusing on partying and social activities. The campaign encouraged the public to be on the lookout for violence and ask the question: "Is everything okay?" if they were concerned and call the helpline 112 if the response was negative.

The second awareness-raising phase took place in the summer of 2022 with the "Have Fun" (Góða skemmtun) campaign, focusing on events, festivals and partying throughout the country to encourage having fun without violence. The public was encouraged to be aware of what was happening around them and call 112 if someone needed help. Training was also provided to bars and night clubs employees on how best to ensure the safety of guests.

The third phase of the awareness-raising took place in the run-up to Christmas 2022, focusing on partying and events in the weeks before Christmas. The public was encouraged to have fun but to remember that having fun means that everyone should be safe from sexual violence and harassment. People were also informed that if they had concerns about sexual violence or harassment they should contact 112.



### **Sexual violence awareness campaign directed at men**

The awareness campaign "Don't be that guy" (Ekki vera þessi gaur) was launched in December 2021. The awareness-raising was aimed at men between the ages of 18-35 and, among other things, was aimed at increasing awareness of unsuitable attitudes and where the boundaries lie in interaction with others. The campaign was intended to spotlight attitudes towards sexual offences and also to point out that sexual violence starts earlier than many people think. At the same time, the campaign was aimed at countering the demonising of perpetrators and opening up discussion of unacceptable attitudes in men's relationships with women.

### **Awareness-raising about domestic violence**

The awareness-raising campaign "Tell someone" (Segðu frá) began in October 2020. The public was encouraged to report domestic violence and seek help from 112. Persons who visited the website 112.is during the campaign were often seeking information on psychological violence. Among the most read content on the site was material designed especially for young people.

### **There is HOPE (Þú átt VON)**

The main focus of the Directorate of Equality's project "There is HOPE" is to share best practices that have proven successful in combating violence in close relationships, to form connections between parties, offer education and raise awareness among Icelanders. The awareness-raising emphasises showing victims of violence in close relationships that there is hope of a better life. The experience of victims and perpetrators in exiting such situations with the support of professionals is highlighted and a diverse variety of services offered.

### **Actions to benefit victims**

Appropriations to law enforcement in connection with sexual offences and gender-based violence were increased by ISK 200 million in the budget for 2022. The number of full-time positions for investigating sexual offences was increased by 12, and the work processes of the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police were revised with the aim of speeding up proceedings.

A service portal for victims of sexual violence was opened in December 2021, as a digital service area in the police and prosecution data system. The objective of the service portal is to improve information disclosure to victims and defendants. The violence portal of the website 112.is now provides information about what the victim can expect when the case is handled in the justice system.

The government has funded three full-time positions for experts in domestic violence cases (two social workers and one psychologist) to assist victims of domestic violence from all over Iceland.

Victims of sexual violence have been guaranteed psychological support after questioning by the police. This is in collaboration with the trauma team of the psychiatric department of the National University Hospital (LSH), and all police departments in the country will offer victims of sexual offences follow-up interviews.

Victims of sexual violence will be referred to LSH's trauma team for a follow-up interview. The team's services will not be limited to the follow-up interview, but instead are adapted to the needs of each individual. During the interview, the need for ongoing support and processing for each person will be assessed, including treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder.

Work has been underway on the development of electronic risk assessment on-site for domestic violence among relatives and connected persons that will be connected to the LÖKE police records system in co-operation with the National Commissioner of Police and the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police.

The Development Centre for Primary Healthcare in Iceland has prepared educational material and issued a new procedure for healthcare personnel regarding the reception of victims of sexual violence, on the one hand, and educational material for victims, on the other. The Development Centre is carrying out this project in collaboration with the project manager of the emergency reception for victims of sexual violence at the National University Hospital.

In the parliamentary resolution on a Gender Equality Action Programme for the period of **2020-2023**, Action 13 provides for the drafting of a strategic national plan for the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention). In the fall of 2023, the Minister of Justice appointed a working group to prepare such a national plan with time-specific benchmarks for evaluating the implementation of the provisions of the Convention. Since its establishment, the working group has met regularly and the work on the national plan is well under way.

## **Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice**

### **The Equality Act**

A comprehensive revision of legislation on equality resulted in the adoption in 2020 of the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender and the Act on the Administration of Matters Concerning Equality. For the first time, multiple discrimination is covered in the law.

The objective of the Equality Act is to prevent discrimination based on gender and to establish and maintain gender equality and equal opportunities for the genders in all spheres of society. All persons shall have equal opportunities to benefit from their own enterprise and to develop their skills irrespective of gender. The term "gender" in this Act means women, men and persons whose gender is registered as neutral in Registers Iceland unless otherwise stated. This objective is to be achieved in part by the following means:

- by observing gender equality perspectives and working towards gender and equality mainstreaming in policy-making and decision-making in all spheres of society;
- by working to secure the equal influence of women and men in society;

- by specifically improving the position of women and increasing their opportunities in society;
- by working against pay discrimination and other forms of gender-based discrimination in the employment market, including by having companies and institutions fulfil the conditions of equal pay certification or equal pay confirmation;
- by enabling everyone, irrespective of gender, to reconcile their work and family life;
- by increasing education and awareness-raising on gender equality;
- by analysing statistics according to gender;
- increasing research in gender and equality studies;
- by working against gender-based violence, gender-based harassment and sexual harassment;
- by changing traditional gender images and working against negative stereotypes regarding the roles of women and men;
- by promoting gender-neutral classification of jobs;
- by focusing especially on the status of people whose gender is registered as neutral in Registers Iceland; and
- by working against multiple discrimination.

### Code of Criminal Procedure

Amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure regarding the improvement of the legal status of the victim were made in 2022. Among the main changes for victims were, among other things, increased access to data at the investigation stage, the right to be present at a closed hearing, the right to submit documents, the right to put questions directly to the reporter during the hearing of the case in court, and the right to speak briefly at the end of the main hearing.

### Action Plan

[Action Plan for the Handling of Sexual Offences 2023–2025](#) was published in March 2023. In drafting the plan consideration was given, among other things, to recommendations from the report of GREVIO, the monitoring committee on the implementation of the Council of Europe’s Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Through this action plan systematic efforts directed at improving the handling of sexual offences in the judicial system will continue. Emphasis is placed on speeding up the processing of sexual offence cases, for instance, with increased budget appropriations and an increase in the number of full-time employees investigating sexual offences. In addition, the aim is to improve the experience of and services for both victims and defendants, including by offering victims a suitable support interview with a professional following questioning by the police, and increasing information disclosure by the police to victims on the progress of their cases.

## Health care, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

The aim of the [Termination of Pregnancy Act No. 43/2019](#) is to ensure that the right to self-determination of women who request termination of a pregnancy is respected by granting them secure access to health services.

Any woman who so requests shall have the right to have her pregnancy terminated up to the end of the 22nd week of pregnancy. In all cases, pregnancies shall be terminated as soon as possible, and preferably before the end of the 12th week of pregnancy.

## Right to work and rights at work

The government has taken various measures to address the gender pay gap, including the Act on Equal Pay Certification of 2018, which is aimed at counteracting the gender-based pay gap and boosting gender equality in the labour market. The gender pay gap is a reality that all nations struggle with and the International Labour Organization (ILO) has, for example, issued a guide describing which tools and instruments can be used to address the gender pay gap.

In connection with the collective bargaining agreements concluded between members of BSRB, the largest federation of public employees' unions in Iceland, with the state and local authorities in the spring of 2020, the government announced that efforts would be directed at eliminating the wage gap arising from the gender-segregated labour market by correcting the systematic undervaluation of female-dominated jobs.

The Prime Minister appointed a task force, comprised of representatives of government and social partners, on Pay Equity and Equality in the Labour Market, in September 2021. The task force's role was based on the proposals of a working group on the re-assessment of the value of women's work. The emphasis on re-assessing the value of women's work can be attributed to the fact that a large number of studies in recent years have shown that the gender-segregation of the labour market and the undervaluation of women's jobs are the main reasons for the gender pay gap. This discussed in detail in the report of the working group on the re-assessment of the value of women's work.

A working group with representatives from the social partners, hereafter referred to as the Task Force on Pay Equity and Equality in the Labour Market, was entrusted with setting up a pilot project on the assessment of the value of jobs to analyze what aspects characterize women's work which may be undervalued, in order to eliminate the wage gap due to the gender-segregated labour market and the systematic undervaluation of traditional women's jobs.

The report of the Task Force was published in January 2024 and is available in English together with the proposed job evaluation system: [Job Evaluation - Report of the Task force Job Evaluation System](#)

## Unpaid care and domestic work

In the end of summer 2022, the Icelandic government decided to start preparations for a time use survey, focusing on unpaid domestic and care work, with the aim of capturing the gendered reality of households. Statistics Iceland conducted the first Icelandic Time Survey in the third quarter of 2023 and the results will be published in 2024. The survey results will be used to assess the distribution of unpaid labour contributions between genders. The survey sought to measure the time spent in paid work, the division of household chores, free time, and rest linked to various parameters, for example, the number of children, care of family members, income, place of residence, and origin. It will also seek to measure satisfaction and attitudes towards tasks and the division of labour in the home. The results will be valuable for policy making in the field of gender equality and social affairs, and supplement other statistical data on living standards and equality.

## Parental leave

Amendments have been made to the Act on Maternity/Paternity Leave and Parental Leave, No. 144/2020. The Act aims to ensure the child's access to both parents and to enable parents to reconcile work and family life. Each parent had an independent entitlement to parental leave of up to six months, of which up to 6 weeks can be transferred from one parent to the other.

## Actions to promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls

The Act on Equal Treatment in the Labour Market explicitly prohibits all discrimination in the labour market, whether direct or indirect, based on race, ethnic origin, religion, life stance, disability, reduced working capacity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual characteristics or gender expression. This is important to promote active participation by as many people as possible in the labour market, given the importance of this in preventing social isolation and poverty.

The Act on Equal Treatment Outside the Labour Market, No. 85/2018, applies to the equal treatment of persons irrespective of ethnic origin, religion, life stance, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual characteristics or gender expression in all fields of society, with the exception of the labour market.

The original Act No. 85 of 25 June 2018, on Equal Treatment irrespective of Race and Ethnic Origin, took account of the content of Directive 2000/43/EC on equal treatment regardless of race or ethnic origin. The Act was subsequently amended by adding more discrimination factors and the title of the Act changed to the Act on Equal Treatment Outside the Labour Market.

Its clear prohibition of any and all discrimination is aimed at promoting the active participation by as many people as possible in Icelandic society regardless of the discrimination factors previously mentioned and preventing social isolation of individuals for the same reasons.

Equal treatment outside the labour market includes e. g. social protection, including social security and healthcare, social advantages, and access to and availability of goods and services. Social advantages are benefits of an economic or cultural nature which are provided either by public authorities or private organisations, including access to swimming pools, family theme parks, libraries and theatres (sometimes called the public sphere in this context).

## **People with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities or expressions, or sex characteristics**

The Act amending the General Penal Code, No. 19/1940 (concerning child sexual abuse material, hate speech, discrimination etc.) was passed by the Althingi in June 2022. The main changes were as follows:

Firstly, in determining punishment, cf. Art. 70 of the Act, consideration shall be given to whether the offence can be attributed to specified aspects concerning the victim personally, therefore making the offence a type of hate crime. Among the aspects considered are sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics. Furthermore, the provision on hate speech was amended to include sex characteristics in addition to sexual orientation and gender identity.

## **Action Plan on LGBTI issues**

In June 2022 a Parliamentary Resolution was adopted on an Action Plan in LGBTI Issues for 2022-2025. The programme is the first to deal exclusively with the issues of LGBTI people. It includes an action focusing on domestic violence to raise consciousness of domestic violence among LGBTI people and combat it. The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Labour Market is responsible for the action and has worked with the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police and the National Queer Organisation of Iceland (*Samtökin '78*) in preparing the project. A dashboard has been created, showing the status of actions in the approved Action Plan for LGBTI issues.

## **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Action Plan**

Iceland ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2016 and approved an action plan for its implementation at the beginning of 2024. The plan includes 60 actions designed to implement the provisions of the Convention. Its first phase covers the years 2024-2027, and the second phase is expected to extend until the year 2030.

The actions are divided into five categories: Awareness and education, accessibility, independent living, education and employment, development of services and legalization.

Action E.11 in the action plan provides for increased protection of disabled people, especially disabled women, and for handling complaints about violence. A working group led by the Minister of Social Affairs and the Labour Market is tasked with

finding ways to increase the protection of disabled people against violence, especially disabled women e.g. by assessing what legal and regulatory changes are needed.

### Measures to prevent the negative impact of crisis

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Icelandic government emphasized awareness of effects of the crisis on gender equality. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, in collaboration with the Prime Minister's Office's Department of Equality, regularly published information about the effects of the actions that were taken on different genders, as well as mentioning those actions that were specifically intended to promote gender equality. Regular gender analyses were also made of the effects of regulations adopted to contain the spread of the pandemic.

One of the government's most important actions against violence entailed minimizing the social effects of the quarantine measures by keeping preschools and primary/lower secondary schools open and not setting a curfew. Support resources for victims of violence remained available, but adapted their operations to the quarantine rules. Additionally, a special anti-violence task force was established to manage and coordinate the work on elaborating anti-violence actions during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of ISK 215 million were disbursed to various actions aimed at raising public awareness of domestic violence and violence against children, strengthening services and support measures for victims of violence, and supporting the development and implementation of other projects in this field.

Stígamót – the Center for Survivors of Sexual Violence was allocated a grant of ISK 20 million to respond to the increased demand for its services and to reduce waiting times. Additionally, the Women's Shelter Association received a grant of ISK 100 million to improve the Shelter's housing so that its services could be made available to all women who need them. The funding also supported the building of a new halfway house that is accessible to people with disabilities, which opened its doors in the autumn of 2021 to women and children who have been staying at the Shelter and are prepared to start a new life in a new place.

Furthermore, a one-off allocation of ISK 1 billion was used to make payments to hospital and healthcare establishment staff, the majority of whom are women in low-income jobs, to reward them and soften the increased strain placed on them by the pandemic.

In 2020, grants of ISK 55 million were provided to civil society organisations that serve vulnerable groups, to respond to the increased strain and to give general support to their clients because of the consequences of COVID-19. The following actions have received support:

- The awareness-raising project **"There is HOPE"** (Þú átt VON), which made the available resources visible on social media, increased educational activities and disseminated information throughout society with an emphasis on showing victims of violence that they do have hope for a better life.

- Improvements within the police force, the public prosecutor's offices and courts system, educational activities and preventive measures for different age groups, and assistance in getting clear handling of the cases of victims of electronic aggression.
- Actions by the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police intended to prevent repeated offenses in domestic violence and violence against children, to stop the perpetrators' continuing criminal behaviour and ensure the safety of children in violent cases, and encourage perpetrators to seek the help of a treatment/rehabilitation specialist to stop violent behaviour.
- An online elaboration of a cognitive treatment method for trauma, in collaboration between the psychology services of the National University Hospital, the Directorate of Health's National Centre for e-Health and the Development Centre for Primary Healthcare in Iceland.
- Enhancing parental skill training that is open to all parents before the birth of their child and for the first 1000 days of the child's life, provided through the healthcare portal [heilsuvera.is](https://heilsuvera.is), with a focus on enhancing parenting skills and thus reducing the risk of neglect, abuse and violence against children, especially children who are in a vulnerable situation.
- The creation of an electronic domestic violence procedure at the [heilsuvera.is](https://heilsuvera.is) website, aimed at improving healthcare workers' procedures and responses to evidence of domestic violence.
- An analysis of how violence against people with disabilities can be recorded in the police case file system without violating their right to protection of personal data so that analyses can be made of notifications of violence against people with disabilities.
- Peer-to-peer learning courses for people with disabilities, with the aim of increasing awareness of legal rights, self-understanding and body respect, with a focus on discrimination and different manifestations of violence and how to seek assistance if the participants consider themselves to have been subjected to violence or to have had their rights violated.
- Professional advice to NGOs, both within interest organisations of people with disabilities and those who provide services due to violence. This will be done in the form of data review, consultation with professionals and advice on policies to combat violence against people with disabilities. The aim is to promote information for people with disabilities about existing services and to make services for victims of violence more accessible to people with disabilities.
- Preventive education against sexual and gender-based violence and harassment for young people aged 15-20 with neurodevelopmental disorders, based on teaching young people ways to nurture their own sexual health, self-image and boundaries in communication, as well as to identify manifestations of violence, resources and support for those affected.



## Priorities over the next five years

In the gender equality policy area, two main objectives are defined, namely, to eliminate the gender pay gap and gender-based violence. These objectives correspond to the SDG targets 8.5 and 5.2, respectively. SDG target 8.5 aims to “achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.”

### Gender-based violence

Efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls are ongoing, and many of the projects, awareness raising and actions in parliamentary resolutions are still running according to their time schedules. See also Section 3 in this report and the government’s Report on Actions against Gender- based and Sexual Violence and Harassment ,as many projects will be ongoing for the years to come.

[Government Actions against GBV](#)

### Equality in the labour market

The report and the proposals from the Task Force on Pay Equity and Equality in the Labour Market are to be implemented in the years to come. Their implementation supplements the work of previous years on implementing the Equal Pay Standard, which will continue as it is an ongoing project and a valuable tool for companies to ensure equal pay in the workplace. With the revision of the Equality Act in 2020 the smallest companies in the private market were given the chance to seek Equal Pay Confirmation instead of full certification making it easier for them to comply with the requirements in the law on equal pay for equal work and work of equal value.

### Gender budgeting

Gender budgeting has been practised in Iceland since 2009 and has been mandatory at the state level since 2016 under the Public Finance Act. In its implementation of gender budgeting, Iceland has drawn on guidelines from the Council of Europe and the OECD, among others. The work is framed by a five-year plan on gender budgeting and its implementation is overseen by a steering committee on gender budgeting, led by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and with the participation of all ministries. The ministries’ representatives work with steering groups in their respective ministries that are responsible for implementing gender budgeting within each ministry.

In the coming years, Iceland intends to build on lessons learned domestically and best practices internationally when developing its gender budgeting practice. Increased focus will be placed on developing and integrating a more intersectional approach to the gender analysis of existing budget measures and on the gender impact assessments of new measures. As part of that process, consultation and cooperation with diverse groups of people will be redefined and formalized. Gender data will continue to be one of the focus areas, where analysis of data needs will continue, and steps taken to increase access to gender-relevant and gender-disaggregated data. Furthermore, dissemination of information acquired through gender budgeting efforts will be enhanced, to facilitate more informed decision-

making and to increase accountability. Finally, opportunities to better align gender budgeting and other public financial management tools, such as performance budgeting and spending reviews, will be explored.

### **Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development**

Iceland is fully committed to the implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development both nationally and internationally. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been integrated into government policy on social, economic and environmental affairs, with a particular emphasis on building a peaceful and just society, free from fear and violence. Domestically, the government aims to identify and better serve marginalized groups in society and to build partnerships to address the large environmental footprint of the modern lifestyle. Iceland is still a net contributor to climate change, but aims to achieve carbon neutrality at the latest in 2040. Internationally, Iceland shares its expertise in gender equality, land reclamation and the use of sustainable natural marine and energy resources through the operation of four United Nations Universities in Iceland and other international development co-operation, contributing to global progress on SDGs 5, 7, 13, 14 and 15. The promotion of human rights for all, including LGBTI persons, is a cornerstone of Iceland's foreign policy and its international development cooperation – in line with Agenda 2030 and the government's domestic priorities. In particular, Iceland has been a vocal champion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, key factors for the achievement of the SDGs.

### [Sustainable Development Goals Iceland](#)

#### **Well-being Economics**

Iceland uses well-being economics to strive to put people at the heart of decision-making processes and share the goal of well-being – to create prosperous, sustainable and fair societies for current and future generations. Well-being economics have been catalysed by efforts to achieve gender equality and to improve equal opportunities for all. The well-being economy is intrinsically linked to the Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Well-being is enjoying health, happiness, and prosperity. Describing well-being therefore requires moving beyond applying only traditional economic metrics such as gross domestic product (GDP) to measure the quality of life and welfare of a population. It is necessary to consider environmental and social factors that affect people's daily lives, such as health, housing, employment, education, income, communications and air and water quality.

The Agreement on the Platform for the Coalition Government of the Independence Party, the Left-Green Movement, and the Progressive Party of 2021 states that well-being can be best secured with a solid economy, equal opportunities and actions to encourage innovation and benefit the environment and the climate.

### [Well Being Economy](#)

## International actions

For many years the Icelandic government's projects and contributions, both in bilateral and multinational cooperation, have promoted gender equality and improved the status of girls and women. UN Women, which is one of the focus agencies in Iceland's multilateral development cooperation and a leader in international policy-making on gender equality, plays a coordinating role among UN agencies working systematically towards increasing the participation of women in all areas of government and in political, cultural, legal and socio-economic affairs.

Icelandic foreign policy places major emphasis on gender equality and empowerment of women, as well as the rights of LGBTI people, which is reflected both in international development cooperation and in international advocacy. This emphasis is reflected in Iceland's priorities in chairing regional cooperation mechanisms. In 2023 Iceland held, among other things, the presidency in the Council of Europe and the presidency in the Nordic Council of Ministers. In both instances, Iceland has focused on gender equality and human rights issues.

Additionally, Iceland is an active member of the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) together with the ILO, UN Women, OECD, Jordan, Switzerland, South Africa, New Zealand, Germany, Australia, Republic of Korea, Panama, Canada, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and the International Organization of Employers (IOE). The aim of EPIC is to accelerate progress towards SDG target 8.5 by leveraging expertise across a diverse range of stakeholders through concrete actions on the ground and in workplaces.

The Icelandic government also supports the UN University Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme at the University of Iceland (GRÓ-GEST), which through interdisciplinary research, teaching and dissemination aims to promote gender equality and social justice in developing countries and conflict areas and post-conflict countries. From 2009 until now, 195 fellows from 34 countries have graduated with a GEST postgraduate diploma in international gender equality studies. The GRÓ-GEST program contributes to women's economic empowerment on multiple levels.

## **Section Three: 12 Critical Areas of Concern**

### **Inclusive Development, Shared Prosperity and Decent Work**

#### **Gender equality in the world of work**

The government has taken various measures to address the gender pay gap, including adopting the Act on Equal Pay Certification of 2018, which aims to counter the gender-based pay gap and boost gender equality in the labour market. The gender pay gap is a reality that all nations struggle with. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has, for example, issued a guide describing which tools and instruments can address the gender pay gap.

In connection with the collective bargaining agreements concluded between members of BSRB, the largest federation of public employees' unions in Iceland, with the state and local authorities in the spring of 2020, the government announced that efforts would be directed at eliminating the wage gap arising from the gender-segregated labour market by correcting the systematic undervaluation of female-dominated jobs.

The Prime Minister appointed a task force, comprised of representatives of government and social partners, on Pay Equity and Equality in the Labour Market, in September 2021. The task force's role was based on the proposals of a working group on the re-assessment of the value of women's work. The emphasis on re-assessing the value of women's work can be attributed to the fact that a large number of studies in recent years have shown that the gender segregation of the labour market and the undervaluation of women's jobs are the main reasons for the gender pay gap. This is discussed in detail in the report of the working group on the re-assessment of the value of women's work.

A working group with representatives from the social partners, hereafter referred to as the Task Force on Pay Equity and Equality in the Labour Market, was entrusted with setting up a pilot project on the assessment of the value of jobs to analyze what aspects characterize women's work which may be undervalued, in order to eliminate the wage gap due to the gender-segregated labour market and the systematic undervaluation of traditional women's jobs.

The report of the Task Force was published in January 2024 and is available in English together with the proposed job evaluation system:

[Job Evaluation - Report of the Task Force](#)

[Job Evaluation System](#)

#### **Parental leave**

Amendments have been made to the Act on Maternity/Paternity Leave and Parental Leave, No. 144/2020. The Act aims to ensure the child's access to both parents and to enable parents to reconcile work and family life. Each parent had an independent

entitlement to parental leave of up to six months, of which up to 6 weeks can be transferred from one parent to the other.

### **Distribution of unpaid care and domestic work. Time use survey**

At the end of summer 2022, the Icelandic government decided to start preparations for a time-use survey, focusing on unpaid domestic and care work, with the aim of capturing the gendered reality of households. Statistics Iceland conducted the first Icelandic Time Survey in the third quarter of 2023 and results will be published soon. The results of the survey will be used to assess the distribution of unpaid labour contributions between genders. The survey sought to measure the time spent in paid work, the division of household chores, free time and rest according to, for example, the number of children, care of family members, income, place of residence and origin. It will also seek to measure satisfaction and attitudes towards tasks and the division of labour in the home. The results will be valuable for policymaking in the field of gender equality, social affairs, and general statistical matters about living standards and equality.

### **Reducing the gender digital divide**

Iceland's cybersecurity strategy for 2023-2037 and action plan has a specific focus on marginalized groups and gender equality. The strategy includes several actions addressing the gender digital divide. There is a clear indication of different genders experiencing online threats differently, and the implementation of the strategy will focus on addressing this and promoting equality. An example of a concrete action is the protection of children and vulnerable groups when it comes to the integration of ground-breaking technology into society, like the Internet of Things. The participation of women in cybersecurity matters will be encouraged through the implementation of the strategy.

Online survey action type: Mainstreamed gender perspectives in national digital policies

[Miðlalæsi - Questionnaire for Icelandic Media Commission](#)  
[Icelandic National Cybersecurity Strategy](#)

### **Gender and AI**

The government's Action Plan on Gender Equality 2024-2027 includes a specific action on mapping the challenges and biases related to gender in the use of artificial intelligence, for example, by the government when it comes to providing services or allocating funding. Although this action has only recently started it has already found several areas where the government must be conscious of biases in the use of AI. This action is implemented jointly by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation and the Directorate of Equality, and will conclude with a report and action proposals by the end of 2025.

Online survey action type: measures to create conditions for gender-responsive digital learning environments

### **STEM and ICT in higher education**

The reduction of gender-specific stereotypes in students' choice of higher education is an important action for the Icelandic government, as gender-based stereotypes in

university studies are still very prevalent in Iceland. For example, women are much more likely to study nursing or teaching while men are more likely to choose STEM-related fields. To address this, an information and marketing campaign has been launched directed at children at lower school levels, while a study has also been launched to research the experience of women and men studying these fields in order to identify barriers. Actions related to this have been ongoing for several years, where students at lower levels are invited to visit technology departments of universities and attend some of the courses. An interest group has also been established by women in information and communication technology at the University of Iceland, aiming to increase visibility and provide women in ICT with a safe space. The target population for the project is students and higher education institutions

[Ada - Hagsmunafélag kvenna í upplýsingatækni við HÍ](#)

### **Financial contributions to gender equality actions/activities/efforts??**

Financial contributions dedicated to actions to promote gender equality have been increased in keeping with the widening of its scope since the submission of the last report. The average increase over the last five years has been around 11.4% from year to year. That figure does not include the operating costs for the special Department of Equality and Human Rights at the Prime Minister's Office or the pay for experts working on projects related to the implementation of the Parliamentary Resolution on a Gender Equality Action Programme within the ministries. Each of the 12 ministries in Iceland has one gender equality representative. The number of staff at the Department of Equality and Human Rights has increased from four to seven since the gender equality policy area was moved to the Prime Minister's Office in 2019. Additionally, various agreements have been concluded with a view of enhancing and developing cooperation and collaboration between the authorities and civil society organisations involved in gender equality and human rights matters. It is quite impossible to grasp the total amount, but to name an example, the Treasury spent ISK 235 million on agreements with organisations assisting victims of violence and the operation of shelters in 2020, according to the budget and, in addition, several ministries allocated a total of ISK 55.5 million ISK to women's shelters and family justice centres the same year.

### **Gender budgeting**

Gender budgeting has been practised in Iceland since 2009 and has been mandatory at the state level since 2016 under the Public Finance Act. In its implementation of gender budgeting, Iceland has drawn on guidelines from the Council of Europe and the OECD, among others.

The work is framed by a five-year plan on gender budgeting (only available in Icelandic) and its implementation is overseen by a steering committee on gender budgeting, led by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and with the participation of all ministries. The ministries' representatives work with steering groups in their respective ministries that are responsible for implementing gender budgeting within each ministry.

The introduction of gender budgeting is to significant extent a question of changing the mindset of those who generally prepare budgets and fiscal plans. Knowledge of

gender issues and an understanding of people's social situation is a prerequisite for further work. Training and knowledge sharing have therefore been pivotal parts of the work. Processes and procedures have been developed and gender budgeting is integrated into traditional budgetary procedures at all stages. To increase understanding of the current situation, gender analysis of government expenditure areas is conducted and updated annually in a base report on gender budgeting (only available in Icelandic). In drafting its five-year fiscal strategy and annual budget, the government must make decisions on social and economic priorities. Gender budgeting considers the impact of different options by analyzing the situation of different groups and evaluating the options with this information in mind. Challenges and opportunities relating to gender equality, as well as objectives and activities to address these, are highlighted in the strategic planning for each expenditure area that accompanies the fiscal strategy. Line ministries also account for the gender impact of their budget proposals and the overall gender impact of the annual budget is assessed and the results published in the budget bill. Finally, progress relating to set objectives and planned activities is reported on in each Minister's Annual Report.

A prerequisite for all gender analysis is gender-disaggregated statistical data. In order to enhance access to gender-disaggregated data a working group has been formed, whose task is to improve overview of gender-disaggregated data and to facilitate standardization of its collection and use among public entities.

## Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

### Gender Equality fund

The state's Gender Equality Fund supports projects aimed at promoting gender equality and allocations from the fund are made every two years. ISK 100 million were allocated from the Fund each year in 2016–2020, for studies and projects aiming to promote gender equality.

In 2021, the Fund allocated ISK 25 million, but henceforth the allocations will be made biennially, with a total of ISK 60 million ISK allocated in 2023 and again in 2025.

The Board of the Fund determines the number of grants and, as a general rule, the grants must be awarded to:

- projects that aim to erase the gender pay gap and promote gender equality in the labour market and business;
- projects that highlight the societal, environmental and economic benefits of increasing equality and strengthening equality globally;
- projects intended to combat gender-based and sexual harassment, gender-based violence and intimate partner violence;
- projects that promote education and prevention to eliminate gender-based and sexual harassment and gender-based violence in Icelandic society;
- projects that promote education and prevention work for young people about violence, harassment and bullying, as well as rhetoric that promotes such;
- projects that promote education for young people on responsible attitudes towards sex, pornography and gender-based violence;
- projects that promote increased knowledge of prevention and coordinated responses to intimate partner violence;
- projects in the school system that are intended to promote a strong and positive identity for boys and girls, such as through increased education in gender studies;
- projects that are suited to increase young people's participation in social projects and political activities and promote their increased electoral participation; and
- research projects that shed light on the genders' status in the present and the past.

Among the projects funded in recent years and the funds granted are:

- A research project examining immigrant women's experience of employment-based violence in Iceland and develop culturally appropriate tools to respond (ISK 9 million ISK in 2020).
- A campaign carried out by UN Women in Iceland to raise awareness of women's lives in refugee camps. The project raised ISK 18 million monthly sponsors multiplied
- A short film about digital sexual violence for 12-16 year olds along with educational material for discussion between teachers and students. The



producers and actors visited schools and discussed the film with youth (ISK 4 million in 2016).

- A prevention campaign that aims to educate youth about key concepts, such as boundaries and consent, and the difference between healthy, unhealthy and violent relationships (ISK 9 million ISK in 2019).
- A campaign on “positive masculinities” (including the production of a web series and social media education, a total of ISK 8 million in 2020).
- Research involving the creation of a virtual reality courtroom and inviting survivors, both those who have experience of the justice system and those who are contemplating whether to press charges, to take part. The aim is to evaluate whether virtual reality can help survivors in the court process (ISK 9 million in 2020).
- A project inviting girls in ninth grade of compulsory schools to universities and tech companies, to raise their awareness of the possibilities in tech studies and tech-related jobs, as well as counter stereotypes (ISK 2.5 million in 2016).
- An online chat for youth to talk about violence (5 million ISK in 2021).
- A peer-course held by an NGO of feminist disability activists for women of foreign origin with disabilities (1,6 million in 2021).

### **Svanni Loan credit insurance fund**

The Svanni – loan credit insurance fund is owned by the City of Reykjavík, the Prime Minister’s Office and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation. Only companies that are majority (51%) owned by a woman / women and managed by a woman / women can get credit insurance. Guarantees are only given to companies in operation.

It is possible to receive loan for the following:

- marketing,
- product development,
- new methods of production

See info on the funds' webpage: [Svanni Credit Insurance Fund](#)

### **Equal access to funds regardless of gender**

In pursuance of the Gender Equality Action Programme 2020–2023, the whole process behind the allocation of grants has been revised, from the preparation of advertisements and applications to the process of evaluating the applications. The application process has been under revision in cooperation with the Icelandic Centre for Research, so that more factors can be analysed by gender and can be taken into consideration when choosing projects to support with grants, as well as giving precise gendered information about allocations.

### **The Welfare Watch**

The Welfare Watch was launched on the initiative of the Icelandic government in the beginning of 2009 to monitor the social and financial consequences of the financial crisis for families and households in Iceland, assess the measures already taken,

propose improvements, and implement them on behalf of the government. The Welfare Watch has been staffed by representatives of various stakeholders, e.g. from the labour market, municipalities, government agencies and ministries – all parties who in one way or another are connected to the welfare system and work on welfare issues. The Welfare Watch has played a crucial role in helping to improve the situation of various groups in society who needed support. It has also been an important forum for discussing the issues surrounding the disadvantaged in society. It is, however, still important to monitor developments and receive proposals for improvements.

### **Actions in response to the COVID-19 epidemic**

Action Team on Violence and its actions An Action Team on Violence was established in 2020 for the purpose of directing and coordinating work on the implementation of measures against violence in times of economic hardship and trauma. The team's work was focused mainly on general awareness raising about violence against children and domestic violence, and on strengthening services and support resources for victims of violence. When commencing its work, the action team put forward seven main proposals, all of which have been set in motion:

- the National Agency for Children and Families was expanded and provided with additional funding to meet the increased need for services and eliminate the waiting list that had developed;
- the emergency hotline 112 was strengthened and developed to enable people to seek assistance in connection with domestic violence and violence against children. See further discussion below about the violence portal of the hotline;
- access by residents in rural areas to services in connection with domestic violence has been improved and to this end support was provided for a pilot Women's Shelter in Akureyri in August 2020. The project is still in operation;
- increased support was provided to children in vulnerable situations, with greater emphasis on their protection. The Reykjavík Metropolitan Police received a grant to devote special efforts towards children and young people in vulnerable situations, the experience of which was very positive;
- a pilot project was established which involves strengthening and developing cooperation between District Commissioners, the police, social services and child protection authorities in matters concerning the welfare and well-being of children, with special emphasis on protecting children who live with or have experienced domestic violence;
- the National Commissioner of Police was entrusted with conducting an assessment and analysis of violence against the elderly and disabled in order to provide them with better protection against violent crime. A report on violence against disabled people was published in January 2021 and a report on violence against the elderly was published in March 2021. The reports included recommendations for actions to improve the situation of the elderly and the disabled against violent crime;
- grants totalling ISK 25 million were provided to projects involving actions against violence, with an emphasis on collaboration between NGOs and public bodies.

## Actions to improve health outcomes for women and girls

### Parliamentary resolution and a plan of action for 2021–2025

The first comprehensive plan on [preventive actions among children and young people against sexual and gender-based violence and harassment](#), together with a plan of action for the years 2021-2025 was approved by the Althingi in the summer of 2020 and is fully funded. The plan is based on Iceland's international commitments, including those concerning the eradication of violence against women and children. Its implementation is monitored by the Prime Minister's Office. The resolution includes 26 actions and the budget allocation for the term 2021-2026 will be ISK 170 million.

For the first time comprehensive improvements are proposed, based on preventive actions that are integrated with teaching and work at all school levels, in leisure centres, community centres and other youth and leisure activities. The Prime Minister's Office is responsible for co-ordinating working methods, clarifying responsibilities, analysing overlaps and establishing good cooperation between the responsible parties in the implementation of the plan. There are 18 responsible parties, including the following key parties: the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland, the Directorate of Education, the Government Agency for Child Protection, the Directorate of Health and local education offices. Since the parliamentary resolution was approved, a prevention officer has been hired by the Association of Local Authorities, whose role is to follow up on the plan.

The overarching goal is to increase education on preventing and acting on gender-based violence, deepening the discussion and raising awareness and understanding in society. This will be done at all school levels in collaboration with health care, leisure centres and community centres. The main purpose of the prevention policy is to:

- develop age-based and gender-sensitive education and prevention material about GBV, emphasizing digital/online violence;
- develop and promote gender-sensitive education at all levels of the curriculum, that informs students of their rights and paths of recourse, and equips them with the skills to understand and analyse social norms, gendered stereotypes, and power dynamics.

The website “Stop Violence!” (*Stopp-ofbeldi.is*) has been created, providing a variety of learning and educational material aimed at the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence in a single location. Interactive online courses with basic education about sexual and gender-based violence and harassment have been published on the website of the National Agency for Children and Families, explaining symptoms of children who have experienced sexual violence and how to react if a child reports violence, intended for persons who work with children and young people. More details on the further progress of individual actions can be accessed on a dashboard showing the status of actions in the parliamentary resolution.

The focus is on children and youth within educational institutions.

## Education outcomes and skills for women and girls

The reduction of gender-specific stereotypes in students' choice of higher education is an important action for the Icelandic government, as gender-based stereotypes in university studies are still very prevalent in Iceland. For example, women are much more likely to study nursing or teaching while men are more likely to choose STEM-related fields. To address this, an information and marketing campaign has been launched directed at children at lower school levels, while a study has also been launched to research the experience of women and men studying these fields in order to identify barriers. Actions related to this have been ongoing for several years, where students at lower levels are invited to visit technology departments of universities and attend some of the courses. An interest group has also been established by women in information and communication technology at the University of Iceland, aiming to increase visibility and provide women in ICT with a safe space. The target population for the project is students and higher education institutions

## Menstrual products free of charge in schools and leisure centres

In 2021 the Ministry of Education encouraged all upper secondary schools to provide menstrual products free of charge for students. They all now provide these products free of charge. Furthermore, municipalities were encouraged to do the same in compulsory schools and leisure centres for youth and most of them have taken such action.

## Improvements in education outcomes and skills and schools environment

#Metoo: The Ministry of Education & Children has commissioned a new video to enhance upper secondary school students' comprehension and awareness of bullying, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment and violence. The video aims to foster important and constructive discussions within the school community about respect, acceptance and boundaries, including in relationships and communication. The video, complete with discussion prompts for teachers, is accessible to schools at this link: [Metoo respect, acceptance and boundaries](#)

The Ministry of Education and Children recently published a guide for school personnel on how to respond to instances of bullying, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment and violence involving students in upper secondary schools.

The **"Stop Violence!"** initiative was launched on the website of the Directorate of Education and School Services. This initiative provides study materials for students at all levels - preschool, compulsory, and upper secondary, as well as teaching instructions and advice. Specialized materials have also been developed for professionals working with children and youth with disabilities. These measures, among others, have significantly improved access to violence prevention teaching materials.

Online interactive courses have been launched with basic education on sexual and gender-based violence and harassment for personnel working with children and

youth. The courses were launched in four versions, for pre-school, compulsory schools, youth centres, and upper secondary schools.

The Ministry commissioned an online teacher's handbook for upper secondary schools focusing on sexual health and behaviour. This handbook includes detailed instructions for teachers and other staff members. The content is organized into three categories: consent and boundaries, pornography and sexual freedom, and sex and rape culture.

The Office of Sports and Youth Activities Communication Counsellor was established under Act No. 45/2019, following a declaration made by women in sports in connection with the #metoo movement. They declared their intolerance towards the discrimination, violence, and harassment that had previously been accepted in sports. The Counsellor's role is to ensure a safe environment for sports and youth activities, enabling children, teenagers and adults of all genders and backgrounds to participate in these activities. They can seek assistance free of charge and have their rights upheld in relation to any incidents and misconduct, without fear of repercussions. The Sports and Youth Activities Communication Counsellor aids organizations or associations covered by the Act in establishing action plans and supports individuals participating in sports and youth activities who have experienced violence or harassment.

### **Re-evaluation of women-dominated job sectors**

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the spotlight was on women-dominated job sectors. The field of care work, caretaking within the healthcare system and children's education, largely women-dominated professions, have not been valued as highly as technical jobs or jobs in the financial sector. The COVID-19 pandemic starkly showed us how important these women-dominated fields are, how they are the foundation for everything else, and how our societies come to a halt if they fail to function properly. To tackle this undervaluation of women-dominated fields, the government has paid special attention to the wage gap explained by the gender-segregated labour market. An action group mandated to eliminate the gender pay gap that is explained by the gender-segregated labour market and the systematic undervaluation of traditional women's jobs has published a [report](#) and put forward proposals to tackle the undervaluation and gender segregation. The focus is on pay equity and not only on equal pay; by doing so it is possible to compare not only the same or similar jobs but different jobs that require the same or similar level of skill, responsibility and effort.

## **Freedom from Violence, Stigma and Stereotypes**

### **Parliamentary resolution on preventive actions for youth**

A parliamentary resolution on preventive actions among children and young people against sexual and gender-based violence and harassment, together with a plan of action for 2021–2025 was approved by the Althingi in the summer of 2020 and is fully funded. The plan is based on Iceland's international commitments, including those concerning the eradication of violence against women and children. Its implementation is monitored by the Prime Minister's Office. For the first time, comprehensive improvements are proposed, based on preventive actions that are integrated with teaching and work at all school levels, in leisure centres, community centres and other youth and leisure activities. The Prime Minister's Office is responsible for co-ordinating working methods, clarifying responsibilities, analysing overlaps and establishing good cooperation between the responsible parties in the implementation of the plan. There are 18 responsible parties, including the following key parties: the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland, the Directorate of Education, the Government Agency for Child Protection, the Directorate of Health and local education offices. Since the parliamentary resolution was approved, a prevention officer has been hired at the Association of Icelandic Municipalities, whose role it is to follow up on the plan. The website Stop Violence ([stopp-ofbeldi.is](http://stopp-ofbeldi.is)) has been created, providing a variety of learning and educational material aimed at the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence in a single location. Interactive online courses with basic education about sexual and gender-based violence and harassment have been published on the website of the National Agency for Children and Families, explaining symptoms of children who have experienced sexual violence and how to react if a child reports violence, intended for persons who work with children and young people. More details on the further progress of individual actions can be accessed on a dashboard showing the status of actions in the parliamentary resolution.

### **Action Plan for the Handling of Sexual Offences**

The Action Plan for the Handling of Sexual Offences 2023-2025 was published in March 2023. In drafting the plan consideration was given, among other things, to recommendations from the report of GREVIO, the monitoring committee on the implementation of the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Through this action plan systematic efforts directed at improving the handling of sexual offences in the judicial system will continue. Emphasis is placed on speeding up the processing of sexual offence cases, for instance, with increased budget appropriations and an increase in the number of full-time employees investigating sexual offences. In addition, the aim is to improve the experience of and services for both victims and defendants, including by offering victims a suitable support interview with a professional following questioning by the police, and increasing information disclosure by the police to victims on the progress of their cases

## Parliamentary resolution – measures against violence

The Action Plan on Measures against Violence and its Consequences for 2019- 2022, submitted by the Minister of Social Affairs and Children, was approved by the Althingi in the summer of 2019. The main objectives of the government's action plan are to promote awareness of the issue through prevention measures and education, to improve procedures and handling of cases within the justice system and to strengthen support for victims. A status report was published to follow up on the Action Plan. Among those actions which have been completed are the establishment of a comprehensive professional council on bullying at all school levels, as well as in sports and youth activities; the creation of a knowledge centre on violence against children; and awareness-raising work in society on the importance of combating hate speech. Furthermore, education about violence has been promoted among persons working within the justice system; emphasis has been placed on raising awareness about bullying and violence in the workplace; and an information website about violence has been set up (112.is) where violence can be reported and information obtained on remedies and services available to both victims and perpetrators of violence. The activities of Bjarkarhlíð, a service centre for victims of violence, have also been made permanent. The first National Consultation Forum was held on actions against violence and its consequences.

## Parliamentary resolution – Immigration issues

In June 2022 a parliamentary resolution on a National Action Plan on Immigration Issues for 2022-2025 was adopted. One of the actions under the plan is aimed at ensuring that victims and perpetrators of violence of foreign origin know the services and resources that are available. Furthermore, those providing services and emergency response receive training on immigration issues, cultural sensitivity and multiculturalism. The action consists of ensuring that education and resources for victims and perpetrators of violence throughout Iceland take into account the needs of immigrants who do not speak Icelandic or English sufficiently well, and pay special attention to the needs of children.

## Parliamentary resolution – LGBTI issues

In June 2022 a Parliamentary Resolution was adopted on an Action Plan in LGBTI Issues for 2022-2025. The program is the first to deal exclusively with the issues of LGBTQ people. It includes an action focusing on LGBTQ people and domestic violence with the aim of creating knowledge about domestic violence among LGBTQ people and combating it. The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Labour Market is responsible for the action and has worked with the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police and the NGO Samtökin '78 in preparing the investigation. A dashboard has been created, showing the status of actions in the approved Action Plan in LGBTQ issues.

[Action Plan on LGBTI issues.](#)

## Grants and funding- service centres

### Aflið

A three-year contract has been concluded with Aflið, an organisation for victims of sexual violence in the town of Akureyri. The contract provides annual funding of ISK 18 million in 2022-2024, for the following projects:

- counselling and support for victims of violence;
- the operation of a branch in East Iceland;
- increased services for persons of foreign origin;
- work for the executive council and board of Bjarmahlíð, a centre for victims of violence in North Iceland;
- support for a Women's Shelter in North Iceland;
- education on prevention;
- creation of promotional materials;
- operation and project management.

### **Bjarmahlíð**

Bjarmahlíð is a service centre for victims of violence and opened in Akureyri in April 2019 in collaboration with the government. The service centre is a forum for cooperation between public bodies and non-governmental organisations that assist victims of violence. The service centre offers integrated services and counselling for adults who have been subjected to violence of any kind. Victims are given the opportunity to receive support and counselling free of charge after being subjected to violence. The government has provided the project with annual financial support since 2019. In addition, Bjarmahlíð received a grant of ISK 2.5 million in 2021 to shorten waiting lists by introducing digital technology and the use of communication apps enabling services for persons reflecting their residence, age, origin or disability.

### **Bjarkarhlíð**

The operational basis for Bjarkarhlíð was permanently secured from 2019 onwards with an annual financial contribution from the government. The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Labour Market concluded an agreement with Bjarkarhlíð for a permanent financial contribution of ISK 20 million annually and also provided an additional ISK 15 million annually from 2019. In 2021, Bjarkarhlíð received a grant of ISK 2.5 million in 2021 to shorten waiting lists by introducing digital technology and the use of communication apps enabling services for persons tailored to their residence, age, origin or disability. Since 2020, Bjarkarhlíð has received an annual grant of ISK 3 million to operate a response team for human trafficking cases, which is summoned when human trafficking cases arise or when such cases are suspected. At the beginning of 2023, Bjarkarhlíð launched a pilot project providing services to victims of violence in West Iceland and the West Fjords, with financial support from the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Labour Market amounting to ISK 6 million.

### **Women's Counselling**

The Ministry of Justice granted the Women's Counselling a grant to provide legal advice to victims of gender-based violence in January 2023. The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Labour Market has also supported its activities.

### **Women's Shelter**

The NGO has received an annual budget appropriation from the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Labour Market in recent years, most recently ISK 85.6 million in 2023.

### **Sigurhæðir**

Since it began operation, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Labour Market has provided annual support for the activities of Sigurhæðir, which is run by the



Soroptimist Club of South Iceland and is a service resource for women living in the south of the country who have experienced violence. They are offered co-ordinated advice, support and treatment.

### Stígamót

Stígamót, a centre for survivors of sexual violence, has received an annual budget appropriation from the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Labour Market. In addition, the organisation received the following grants:

- In 2023, a grant of ISK 1.5 million was awarded for its activities.
- In 2021-2023, the Prime Minister's Office provided an ISK 12 million grant annually for the project "Sick Talk" (Sjúktspjall).
- In 2022, a grant of almost ISK 5 million was awarded for projects to mobilise men in combating violence and for analysis of Stígamót data on perpetrators of violence.
- In 2021, a grant of ISK 10 million was provided to strengthen services for young people and shorten waiting lists of victims of gender-based and sexual violence.
- In 2021, a grant of ISK 15 million was awarded to services for young people and to shorten the waiting list of victims of gender-based and sexual violence arising from the increased pressure during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other grants
- Grants of ISK 18 million were provided to those police districts which are directly involved in victim centres. The grants are intended to further develop interdisciplinary cooperation against violence and reduce the likelihood of repeat offences of gender-based violence.

### Grants to other NGOs

The Prime Minister's Office supported NGOs providing assistance for victims of violence in the run-up to Christmas 2022. The institutions or organisations in question were Bjarkarhlíð, Bjarmahlíð, the Women's Shelter, Rótin (an advocacy group for non-binary people)/Konukot (a shelter for homeless women), Sigurhæðir and Stígamót, each of which received ISK 1 million, for a total of ISK 6 million.

See also:

[Government actions against Gender-based and Sexual Violence and Harassment Policy Brief on Iceland's Roadmap for Ending Gender based Violence by 2026](#)  
[Report to GREVIO on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#)  
[Report on implementation of CEDAW](#)

### Act on sexual privacy

The bill of the Minister of Justice amending the General Penal Code, Act No. 19/1940, concerning sexual privacy was adopted by the Icelandic parliament Althingi in February 2021. The legislation was prompted by increased digital sexual violence in Icelandic society. No definitive definition of the term was made available, but it refers to conduct involving the use of digital communication to create, distribute or publish sexual images of others without permission. However, such violations can also occur without the use of digital technology. The Act includes amendments to provisions of

the General Penal Code concerning sexual offences, on the one hand, and violation of personal privacy, on the other. It also provides for changes to the Act on Criminal Procedure to ensure the effect of the amendments to the Penal Code adopted. The Act aims to strengthen the legal protection of individuals given the societal changes that have taken place with the increased use of technology and changes in attitudes towards sexual offences in Iceland.

### **Act on stalking**

The bill of the Minister of Justice amending the General Penal Code, Act No. 19/1940, concerning stalking was passed by the Althingi in February 2021. It added the following Article: "Any person who repeatedly threatens, pursues, monitors, contacts or by other comparable means stalks another person through conduct liable to cause fear or anxiety shall be subject to fines or imprisonment for up to 4 years."

### **Act on child sexual abuse and hate speech**

- The bill of the Minister of Justice amending the General Penal Code, Act No. 19/1940, concerning child sexual abuse material (CSAM), hate speech, discrimination, etc. was passed by the Althingi in June 2022. The main changes were as follows:
- Firstly, in determining punishment, cf. Art. 70 of the Act, consideration shall be given to whether the offence can be attributed to specified aspects concerning the victim personally, therefore making the offence a type of hate crime. In addition, as a general rule, it should contribute to increasing the punishment if an offence is committed in the presence of a child under 15 years of age.
- Secondly, and closely related to the first point, the hate speech provision of Art. 233 a of the General Penal Code was expanded to include ethnic origin unequivocally and to provide protection for people with disabilities and people with atypical sexual characteristics comparable to that of other groups considered to need special protection.
- In the third place, a similar amendment was made to the first paragraph of Art. 180 of the General Penal Code so that the same groups enjoy protection under that provision as under Art. 233 a. This means, among other things, that it is a criminal offence to deny persons with disabilities a product or service on the same terms as others.
- Fourthly, the CSAM provision of Art. 210 a of the Act was divided into four paragraphs. CSAM is defined and the maximum punishment increased, while at the same time it is stipulated that the provision does not apply to personal contact between young people if further conditions are met.
- Fifthly and finally, a new provision was added, Art. 210 c, on repetitive and related violations of the CSAM provisions, i.e. Articles 210 a and 210 b.

### **Action Coalition on gender-based violence**

Iceland is a co-leader of the GBV Action Coalition in the UN Women's Generation Equality Forum, where the country has a joint commitment with the government of Finland. In the Action Coalition the countries commit to advocating for the integration of online gender-based violence in relevant international fora, processes and instruments that address gender-based violence, to ensure visibility of online

gender-based violence and understanding of its seriousness, and for measures to be taken to tackle it comprehensively as part of gender-based violence. To combat online gender-based violence effectively it is necessary to increase visibility and understanding of the problem and take effective measures against it.

## Awareness-raising projects

### Harmless? (*Meinlaust?*)

In September 2022 the Directorate of Equality launched the awareness campaign *Meinlaust?* The campaign was intended to draw attention to the manifestations of gender-based and sexual harassment in society and to make people open their eyes to the relationship between such behaviour and ideas about masculinity, boundaries and acceptance.

Gender-based harassment is one of the most widespread problems in the world; it takes many forms and has far-reaching consequences for individuals, families and society as a whole. In the awareness-raising campaign, emphasis was placed on behaviour that many consider innocent and the intention was to highlight a social pattern that is not as harmless as one might think.

In the awareness-raising campaign, stories were told that are based on real accounts of people in Iceland in the form of comics. Emphasis was placed on social media, where people were encouraged to participate in the discussion and share their own experiences under the hashtag #meinlaust or by tagging @meinlaust.

The awareness-raising campaign was carried out in accordance with the parliamentary resolution on a Gender Equality Action Programme for the period of 2020-2023 and was funded by the Prime Minister's Office.

The budget of the project was ISK 7 million.

[Meinlaust](#)

### Harmless? #2

Following the success of the awareness campaign *Harmless?* the Directorate of Equality decided on a follow-up action using the same idea in cooperation with the National Queer Organisation of Iceland, to draw attention to micro-harassment that queer people experience in society and to get people to open their eyes to the consequences of micro-harassment.

Micro-harassment is a term applied to everyday actions, comments or environmental factors that are degrading or humiliating to people belonging to marginalized groups. Each act, environmental factor or comment may not seem to be of major significance on its own, but when marginalized people experience it regularly, even daily, it increases the discomfort they experience due to their social status and makes their marginalization tangible.

Micro-harassment is sometimes even intended as a compliment, and those who indulge in it may even be unaware of the consequences. As a result, micro-harassment can be difficult to spot and it can be even more difficult to point out to perpetrators that their behaviour is having a harmful effect. In the awareness-raising campaign stories were told that are based on real accounts of people in Iceland in the form of comics. Emphasis was placed on social media, where people were

encouraged to participate in the discussion and share their own experiences under the hashtag #meinlaust or by tagging @meinlaust.

### **Harmless? #3**

The next Harmless? awareness campaign was made in cooperation with Þroskahjálp, an NGO promoting the rights and interests of disabled people, with the intention of drawing attention to the manifestations of micro-harassment that disabled people experience in society and to make people open their eyes to the consequences of micro-harassment.

As before, the campaign was based on true stories and told in the form of comics.

### **Harmless? #4**

The fourth and last awareness campaign was conducted in collaboration with the non-profit organization Her Voice (*Hennar Rödd*). Her Voice works with the aim of increasing public awareness of the position of women of foreign origin in Iceland.

The campaign was, like previous versions of Harmless? based on true stories and told in the form of comics.

The message of Harmless? was clear: Nothing changes if we turn a blind eye to micro-aggressions. Let's open our eyes and stand together!

The budget for Harmless#2-4 was ISK 4 million.

[Meinlaust](#)

## **Equal representation in the media**

In Art. 26 of the Media Act, No. 38/2011, it is stated that media service providers shall, in all their activities, uphold democratic principles and ensure freedom of expression. They shall respect human rights and equality as well as the right to personal privacy, except in cases where the media service provider's democratic role and the right of the public to information dictate otherwise. Media service providers shall take care to meet requirements regarding impartiality and accuracy in news and current affairs content and ensure that a variety of opinions is expressed, including both those of men and women.

## **Act on child sexual abuse material, hate speech, discrimination etc.**

The bill of the Minister of Justice amending the General Penal Code, Act No. 19/1940, concerning hate speech, hate crime etc. was passed by Althingi in June 2022. The main changes were as follows:

Firstly, in determining punishment, cf. Art. 70 of the Act, consideration shall be given to whether the offence can be attributed to specified aspects concerning the victim personally, therefore making the offence a type of hate crime. Among the aspects considered are sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics. Furthermore, the provision on hate speech was amended to include sex characteristics in addition to sexual orientation and gender identity.

## Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

### Participation in state and local government committees, councils and boards

According to the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender, gender perspectives are to be taken into account when appointments are made to national and local government committees, councils and boards. Care shall be taken to ensure as equal a representation of men and women as possible, and not lower than 40% of each gender when there are more than three representatives in a body. This shall also apply to the boards of publicly owned limited companies and enterprises in which the state or a local authority is the majority owner.

### Gender quotas in the private sector

Following amendments to the Act on Cooperatives (No. 22/1991), Act on Public Limited Companies (No. 2/1995), Act on Private Limited Companies (No. 138/1994), and Act on Partnerships (No. 50/2007), companies that have over 50 employees are obligated to have both women and men on their boards of directors and if the directors are more than three, the percentage of women or men cannot be under 40%. These amendments also included changes that will make monitoring easier.

### JÁTAK – Diversity on the ballot

Prior to local government elections in 2022, the Directorate of Equality and Icelandic Women's Rights Association initiated the campaign #Yes, please (**#Játak**) in collaboration with the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Infrastructure, the Multicultural Information Centre and the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland. The campaign was carried out in accordance with a parliamentary resolution on a strategic regional plan for the years 2018-2024. "Játak" is a play on words, a combination of "yes, please" and "effort".

Municipalities provide all kinds of services for all kinds of people. This makes it important that the candidacies for local elections reflect the diversity found in our communities.

#Játak encouraged candidates for city, town and rural governments to consider diversity, safeguard the equal rights of all genders and put together lists of candidates that represented the diverse spectrum of society.

The aim of the coordinated effort of #Játak is to increase diversity in the candidacies for local government bodies, to ensure that as many genders, and people of different ages and backgrounds are united in developing their community.

The campaign consisted of pictures and videos with attention-grabbing messages and playful use of words, mainly posted on social media. An e-mail was sent to political parties and candidates in all municipalities to encourage them to consider the position of women on their lists, as well as pointing out the importance of having a diverse group in local government. As a follow-up, the Directorate of Equality invited rural, city and town representatives to an online meeting to discuss equality, diversity and the responsibilities of local authorities.

The budget of the project was ISK 6,173,904.

[Awareness Raising Játak](#)

## Women's education and training in media and ICT

### STEM and ICT in higher education

The reduction of gender-specific stereotypes in students' choice of higher education is an important action for the Icelandic government, as gender-based stereotypes in university studies are still very prevalent in Iceland. For example, women are much more likely to study nursing or teaching while men are more likely to choose STEM-related fields. To address this, an information and marketing campaign has been launched directed at children at lower school levels, while a study has also been launched to research the experience of women and men studying these fields in order to identify barriers. Actions related to this have been ongoing for several years, where students at lower levels are invited to visit technology departments of universities and attend some of the courses. An interest group has also been established by women in information and communication technology at the University of Iceland, aiming to increase visibility and provide women in ICT with a safe space. The target population for the project is students and higher education institutions

<https://www.facebook.com/ada.felag/>

<https://www.ru.is/stelpur-og-taekni#stelpur,-stalp-og-taekni>

### Government entities to promote gender equality

The policy area of gender equality was transferred from the Ministry of Welfare to the Prime Minister's Office on 1 January 2019. The primary role of the Prime Minister's Office is the enforcement of acts on gender equality and anti-discrimination, as well as overall governmental coordination of this policy area. The move has also the potential to advance further policy making on gender equality and gender mainstreaming of policies and decision in all line ministries and state institutions.

The Directorate of Equality is an institution under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office which supervises the implementation of the Equality Act, provides advice, public education and information concerning gender equality for central and local government, institutions, companies, individuals and non-governmental organizations, and initiates special work, research and projects in the policy field. It also helps, when needed, with preparing complaints to the Gender Equality Complaints Committee.

The gender equality policy area has been strengthened within Government Offices and its framework has changed since the previous report was submitted.

At the end of 2017, a gender equality council of ministers was appointed to coordinate the ministers' and government's work in the field of gender equality and to follow up on those emphases in the coalition platform that broadly pertain to gender equality. Six of the government's ministers are standing members and other ministers participate as needed.

At the beginning of 2019, the gender equality policy area was transferred to the Prime Minister's Office and a special Department of Equality was established. The Department is intended to act as a coordinating body within Government Offices, as well as to lead policy-making in the area of gender equality. It has also been entrusted with representing the Prime Minister's Office in matters pertaining to gender equality with respect to individuals, stakeholders and civil society organisations, general information provision to the Althingi and its committees, and

various tasks at the international level. It handles matters concerning equal status and equal rights irrespective of gender, equal treatment irrespective of race and ethnic origin, equal treatment in the labour market, gender autonomy, the Directorate of Equality, the Equality Complaints Committee and the Icelandic Gender Equality Fund. The Department employs six experts and a director, all in full-time positions.

### **Action Plans and Programmes**

- Action Plan for the Handling of Sexual Offences 2023–2025
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2020-2023
- Action Plan on preventive actions among children and young people against sexual and gender-based violence and harassment, 2021-2025
- Action plan on LGBTI issues 2022-2025
- Action Plan on Measures against Violence and its Consequences for 2019-2022
- Iceland's cybersecurity strategy for 2023-2037 and action plan
- Action plan on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- National Action Plan on Immigration Issues for 2022-2025
- National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (2024-2027)
- Parliamentary resolution on strategic regional plan for the years 2018-2024

### **Consultations with women's organizations and civil society**

Policy-making is done in cooperation with stakeholders in an open consultation. Stakeholders have an important impact on policy-making and implementation at all stages. When it comes to policy making and implementation of law a cooperation agreement is in force with the Icelandic Women's Rights Association. The Association play an important role in the government's policy planning on gender equality issues. Stakeholders and civil society contributed to the preparation of the national report and several of them sent reports on initiatives in gender equality issues which are published in the Appendix to this report.

## Peaceful and inclusive societies

### Women, peace and security

Gender equality is a priority of the government of Iceland, featuring prominently in both domestic and foreign policy. Throughout the reporting period, the government has made considerable efforts to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, in many instances in the context of its women, peace, and security agenda.

The government of Iceland will launch its fourth National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS NAP) in 2024, which is also a part of the government's overall gender equality strategy for 2024-2027. In formulating the NAP, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has engaged relevant ministries, government organisations, universities and civil society organisations. In response to growing global security challenges and more political polarisation affecting an increasing number of women and girls, the fourth NAP focuses on actions to be implemented both domestically and through foreign and development policy cooperation, including in conflict areas. As in previous plans, the actions in the fourth NAP aim to support the four main pillars of the UNSCR 1325 resolution and subsequent ones: participation, protection, prevention, relief and recovery.

Iceland has ranked as the most gender-equal country and the safest country in the world in the reporting period. This has allowed the Icelandic government to be a strong and credible advocate for gender equality as a precondition for prosperity and peace. As a part of Iceland's WPS NAP, the government has prioritised advocacy at the UN, in OSCE, NATO and other multilateral organisations. Iceland was among the few NATO members who initiated the establishment of a core friends' group for WPS, at the alliance's headquarters in Brussels, to encourage further operationalisation of the agenda and inspire the WPS policy process at NATO. The policy outcome will be presented at the NATO Summit in Washington in the summer of 2024. Iceland has also seconded a senior diplomat to the office of the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for WPS during the reporting period.

Throughout the reporting period, gender equality and women's empowerment featured prominently in Iceland's international development cooperation policy, as both a cross-thematic emphasis and a specific objective under the key theme of enhancing social infrastructure and peace efforts. The new policy adopted by the parliament for the period 2024-2028 places increased emphasis on gender equality as a specific focus area, with five dedicated objectives, in addition to cross-thematic links. The five objectives are the empowerment of women and girls; improved civil rights; improved legal and social protection of LGBTI+ persons; improved sexual and reproductive health and rights; eradication of gender-based and sexual violence; and increased participation of men and boys in the struggle for gender equality.

Special consideration is also given to respecting human rights in emergency and conflict contexts and strengthening the response to and prevention of gender-based violence. The increased emphasis now being placed on this issue in Iceland's development cooperation is based on Iceland's own development experience, the fact that respect for human rights and gender equality is a prerequisite for prosperity and peace and the importance of addressing the global backlash on human rights and gender equality.



## Leadership and participation of women in peace-building

A considerable part of Iceland's support for women's leadership, representation and meaningful participation in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding has been channelled through development cooperation. During the reporting period, Iceland has partnered with multilateral organisations such as UN Women, UNFPA, and UNICEF, in addition to the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA). Special support has also been provided to UN Women in Afghanistan, Jordan, Palestine, Ukraine and Turkey for Syrian refugees, and to UNFPA in Afghanistan, Ukraine, Yemen, and Syria.

In the latter half of the reporting period, Iceland has emphasised support for women and girls in Afghanistan. To this end, Iceland partnered with the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) in Afghanistan, which directly supports women-led civil society organisations in the field of peace-building. Furthermore, the Prime Minister of Iceland hosted a side event on the margins of the UNGA High-Level Week in 2023 in collaboration with UN Women and Afghan women, providing them with a platform to discuss the deteriorating situation of women and girls in Afghanistan with international partners and governments.

As an example of WPS NAP actions in Africa, Iceland partnered with UN Women in Mozambique in the reporting period on a project titled "Promoting women's and girls' effective participation in peace, security and recovery in Mozambique", which aimed to assist the government of Mozambique in developing their WPS NAP with special emphasis on capacity-building. Part of the project was to provide coordinated assistance to women and girls who have been victims of violence to assert their independence and contribute to their economic empowerment.

Support to the GRÓ Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (GEST), which operates as a UNESCO Category 2 centre, is an integral part of Iceland's contribution towards increasing participation of women at all levels of peacebuilding and peace processes. The programme welcomes gender equality experts from low-income countries and post-conflict areas to participate in its postgraduate fellowship programme at the University of Iceland. One of the programme's key academic modules is Gender, Violence and Security, where international leading experts in peace and security as well as gender-based violence, contribute to the module. The module is to increase participants ability to understand, discuss and convey knowledge of gender dimensions of security, especially regarding international legal obligations, UNSCR 1325 resolutions, security sector reform and emergency operations, but also in the context of sexual harassment and violence at the workplace, in policies and in legal structures. Furthermore, GRÓ GEST has developed and released a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Gender, Violence and Post-Conflict States, where international scholars introduce core theories, case studies and policy frameworks necessary for understanding the interplay between gender and violence in post-conflict contexts. GRÓ GEST also provides a PhD scholarship within the field of human security.

The Nordic Women Mediators Network (NWM) brings together five national networks of women professionals from Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden in peace, security, and mediation to connect, share experiences, evaluate and strategize. NWM Iceland organised several seminars, workshops and lecture series on women

and security, including a concept paper outlining initiatives and policy options to tackle the backlash against gender equality and cooperation with CSOs to strengthen women's leadership in peacebuilding. Furthermore, the Icelandic network coordinated the NWM's network participation in the Global Alliance in 2023, bringing together several women's mediator's networks around the world for strategizing and networking on a global level.

During the reporting period, Iceland has hosted several international conferences on aspects of the WPS agenda. For the past seven years, the Reykjavik Global Forum has gathered over 500 women leaders annually from around 100 countries for a constructive conversation on women's leadership, representation and participation. Increasing the number of women in peace-building and conflict prevention is a priority of the Forum. The government also has a collaboration agreement with the Institute of International Affairs at the University of Iceland, which regularly includes the theme of women, peace and security in their seminars, workshops, and conferences. Furthermore, the government co-organises with Höfði Reykjavik Peace Centre an annual international conference at the University of Iceland on peace and security. The 2024 conference is expected to coincide with the NWM's annual meeting. It will focus on the importance of strong dialogue and women's participation in seeking sustainable and peaceful solutions to conflicts.

### **Accountability for violations of the human rights of women and girls**

Iceland used its presidency at the Council of Europe 2022-2023 to demonstrate how gender equality is a core principle of its human rights policy, with great emphasis on women's rights and gender equality. In times of deteriorating international security, it is more important than ever that all individuals are subject to the same norms and principles of international human rights law. The Prime Minister of Iceland addressed this issue, with a special focus on the rights of women and girl's refugees in a conflict-ridden world, at a special side event organised by Iceland and the Council of Europe at the 67th Commission of the Status of Women (CSW) in New York in 2023. The Reykjavik Declaration of the fourth Summit of the Council of Europe, held in Reykjavík in May 2023, pointed out that gender equality and the full, equal, and effective participation of women in public and private decision-making processes are essential to the rule of law, democracy, and sustainable development.

Another concrete example of Iceland's work on accountability in relation to women and girls in conflict and armed situations is the multi-year support provided to the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), which provides essential legal support and protection services for women in Palestine.

### **Elimination of discrimination of the girl child**

#### **Parliamentary Resolution on preventive actions for youth**

A parliamentary resolution on preventive actions among children and young people against sexual and gender-based violence and harassment, together with a plan of action for the years 2021–2025, was approved by the Althingi in the summer of 2020 and is fully funded. This first comprehensive plan of preventive actions is based on Iceland's international commitments, including those concerning the eradication of

violence against women and children. Its implementation is monitored by the Prime Minister's Office. For the first time, a wide range of improvements are proposed, based on preventive actions that are integrated with teaching and work at all school levels, in leisure centres, community centres and other youth and leisure activities. The Prime Minister's Office is responsible for co-ordinating working methods, clarifying responsibilities, analysing overlaps and establishing good co-operation between the parties responsible for the implementation of the plan. There are 18 responsible parties, including the following key parties: the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland, the Directorate of Education, the Government Agency for Child Protection, the Directorate of Health and local education offices. Since the Parliamentary Resolution was approved, a prevention officer has been hired by the Association of Local Authorities, whose role is to follow up on the plan. The website Stop Violence (stopp-ofbeldi.is) has been created, providing a variety of learning and educational materials aimed at the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence in a single location. Interactive online courses with basic education about sexual and gender-based violence and harassment have been published on the website of the National Agency for Children and Families, explaining symptoms of children who have experienced sexual violence and how to react if a child reports violence, intended for persons who work with children and young people. More details on the further progress of individual actions can be accessed on a dashboard showing the status of actions in the parliamentary resolution.

## Reducing the gender digital divide

Iceland's cybersecurity strategy for 2023-2037 and action plan has a specific focus on marginalized groups and gender equality. The strategy includes several actions addressing the gender digital divide. There is a clear indication of different genders experiencing online threats differently, and the implementation of the strategy will focus on addressing this and promoting equality. An example of a concrete action is the protection of children and vulnerable groups when it comes to the integration of ground-breaking technology into society, like the Internet of things. The participation of women in cybersecurity matters will be encouraged through the implementation of the strategy.

Online survey action type: Mainstreamed gender perspectives in national digital policies

[Miðlalæsi - Questionnaire for Icelandic Media Commission](#)  
[Icelandic National Cybersecurity Strategy](#)

## Gender and AI

The government's Action Plan on Gender Equality 2024-2027 includes a specific action on mapping the challenges and biases related to gender in the use of artificial intelligence, for example by the government when it comes to providing services or allocating funding. Although this action has only recently started it has already found several areas where the government must be conscious of biases in the use of AI. This action is implemented jointly by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation and the Directorate of Equality, and will conclude with a report and action proposals by the end of 2025.

## STEM and ICT in higher education

The reduction of gender-specific stereotypes in students' choice of higher education is an important action for the Icelandic government, as gender-based stereotypes for in university studies are still very prevalent in Iceland. An example of this is that women are much more likely to study nursing or teaching while men are more likely to study choose STEM-related fields. To address this, an information and marketing campaign has been launched addressing directed at children at lower school levels, while a study has also been launched to research the experience of women and men from studying these fields in order to identify barriers. Actions related to this have been ongoing for several years, where students at lower levels are invited to visit technology departments of universities and attend some of the courses. An interest group has also been established by women in information and communication technology at the University of Iceland, where the purpose of the group is aiming to increase visibility and provide women in ICT with a safe space. The target population for the project are students and higher education institutions

## Acts and policies on the environment

### Gender Equality in the Arctic

Under the auspices of the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group, Iceland has led the Gender Equality in the Arctic project from its inception in 2013. The first phase of the project produced the Gender Equality in the Arctic -Current Realities, Future Challenges conference in Akureyri.

The second phase was focused on the development of a circumpolar network of experts and an online platform. See report: [Gender Equality in the Arctic](#)

### Gender assessment in policy planning and law-making

Each ministry is responsible for integrating gender mainstreaming into its policy-making and decision taking and this is effected through various centralized processes. For example, the templates that are used in connection with policy-making and fiscal planning feature gender mainstreaming. Additionally, when drafting legislation, the ministries are obliged to take into consideration and report the effects of bills on the genders through each stage of law-making. The Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs ensure that this is carried out. Ministries are also obliged to report on the effects of fiscal planning proposals on gender equality and the outcome of the evaluation is taken into consideration in preparing the draft budget. Additionally, a gender equality evaluation shall be included with matters that are put before the government, and the Prime Minister's Office is expected to publish a brief on the follow-up.

## Section Four: National institutions and processes

### Parliamentary resolution on gender equality

The Prime Minister's proposal for a parliamentary resolution on a Gender Equality Action Programme for the period of 2020-2023 focuses on the government's most urgent projects in this policy area. It is not an exhaustive listing of the projects that are considered to be urgent. The program is divided into five Chapters and 24 projects that are scheduled to be carried out during its term of validity. This arrangement is meant to ensure that the government's emphases and prioritization in the area of gender equality are clearly shown. All projects are linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Emphasis is placed on gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming in all policy-making and decision-making.

Implementation of the Act on Equal Pay Certification and measures designed to increase gender equality in the labour market is also a priority in the Action Programme which focuses, inter alia, on the harmonization of family life and work life and increased gender equality in the companies' boards of directors. The Chapter on gender-based violence and sexual violence defines the government's projects regarding the implementation of the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), which Iceland ratified in 2018.

Some projects have the objective of increasing the participation of men and boys in all gender equality activities while others are focused on all policy-making within the policy area to take better note of their social position. The proposal includes projects that concern increased emphasis on gender equality within schools; continuing cooperation between the universities' gender equality officers; research into the withdrawal of women from scientific work; boys' dropping out of upper secondary education; and reducing gender-based study choices, inter alia with measures to increase the participation of girls in education in the fields of technology, science and mathematics. Efforts will also be made to ensure an even gender ratio among artists concerning the availability of cultural events and art under the auspices of the state, as well as in the consumption of culture, and to take into account gender equality perspectives in the implementation of the regional development plan.

Iceland's international obligations in the field of gender equality are also mentioned in the Action Programme. Iceland has ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its optional protocol and has urged other states to enforce

its provisions in full. The proposal provides for a project on the introduction of gender equality certification in Iceland's development cooperation in collaboration with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, to continue to emphasize the role of men in gender equality activities in the international arena. The Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources has defined a project on gender and consumption to raise awareness of the circular economy, the environmental and social impacts of the fashion and textile industries, and the power of consumers to promote acceptable and more environmentally sound

manufacturing methods, with an emphasis on socially responsible consumption of fashion, reuse and recycling. An emphasis will also be placed on making the voices of women heard with regard to climate issues and for provisions regarding gender mainstreaming to be included in international agreements on trade, environment and climate. Iceland will continue to support actions for gender equality in the international arena in various ways, not least by being a progressive nation and a model for all things concerning gender equality and a leader in safeguarding human rights and progress in the world.

The full text of the action programme:

[Gender Equality Action Programme 2020-2023](#)

## Gender Budgeting

Iceland's approach to gender budgeting focuses on mainstreaming gender into strategic planning, program development and budgeting. The approach is two-pronged: on the one hand, the gender impact of the current budget is analysed to identify challenges to be tackled in strategy, programmes or with budget allocations, and on the other hand, the gender impact of new budget decisions is analysed and gender perspectives highlighted throughout the decision-making process. This has generated a thorough understanding and awareness of the budget's gender impact within the public administration in Iceland, increasing gender mainstreaming throughout the policy cycle.

Gender tagging, where budget items are tagged based on their impact on gender equality, is not practiced in Iceland. Information on the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women is therefore not available.

## The Well-being Economy

The concept of the Well-being Economy is linked to gender budgeting and in 2019, the government decided that six well-being priorities should be used to guide policy-making and goal-setting in each year of its five-year Fiscal Strategy, as provided for in the Public Finance Act, No. 123/2015.

These priorities are:

- Mental health
- Housing security
- Active study and work
- Carbon-neutral future
- Flourishing innovation
- Better communication with the public

The well-being priorities are forward-looking in important areas which reflect the government's strategy. The priorities are intended to form the basis for discussion of the ministries' 35 policy areas in the five-year Fiscal Strategy. The priorities of mental health, housing security, and active study and work are part of many policy areas, while those that deal with a carbon-neutral future, flourishing innovation, and better communication with the public concern all functions of the ministries.

[Well-Being Economy](#)

## Stakeholders' role in policy making

Policy-making is done in cooperation with stakeholders in an open consultation. Stakeholders have an important impact on policy-making and implementation at all stages. When it comes to policy-making a cooperation agreement is in force with the Icelandic Women's Rights Association. The Association plays an important role in the government's policy planning on gender equality issues.

Stakeholders and civil society contributed to the preparation of the national report and several of them sent reports on initiatives in gender equality issues which are published in the Appendix to this report.

## CEDAW and UPR

In 2017, a special Government Steering Committee on Human Rights was appointed. The Committee is the formal human rights consultation platform for all the government's ministries. One of its main tasks is to follow up on recommendations received by the Icelandic government following Universal Periodic Reviews (UPRs), as well as concluding observations from human rights treaty bodies, such as CEDAW. Iceland's last review under CEDAW took place in 2023 and the last UPR in 2022. This was the Ninth Periodic Report on the implementation and a special focus was put on how the Icelandic government guaranteed the rights of marginalized women, for example, women of foreign origin, disabled women, and women with substance abuse problems.

CEDAW's concluding observations are taken into consideration in policy making, e.g. in preparing the government's gender equality action programme.

[Iceland's Ninth Periodic Report on the Implementation of CEDAW](#)

## Section Five: Data and statistics

### Gender-disaggregated statistics

Access to statistical information disaggregated by gender is one of the key prerequisites for assessing the impact of fiscal measures on gender or otherwise integrating gender and equality considerations in decision-making. With this in mind, Act No. 150/2020, on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender, stipulates that public bodies shall strive to differentiate between genders during all statistical processing, unless special reasons, such as privacy interests, preclude this.

Mapping the availability of gender-disaggregated statistical data, which has been carried out in connection with the publication of a [status report](#) on the mapping of gender perspectives, indicates that the recording and processing of gender-disaggregated statistical data needs to be improved. In June 2020, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs appointed a working group on gender-disaggregated statistical data, which is intended to improve the overview of gender-disaggregated statistical data and promote harmonized collection and use of gender-disaggregated statistical data by public bodies.

Statistics Iceland collects statistical information about Icelandic society, processes it and communicates it to users. Data are disaggregated by gender where possible. In addition, various organizations and municipalities collect and publish gender-disaggregated information regarding their activities.

### Statistics on gender-based violence and domestic violence

The National Police Commissioners Office has in recent years developed new methods for gathering statistics on gender-based violence and domestic violence. In June 2021, guidelines were set for the registration of digital sexual offenses in the police registration system. In January 2022, rules were set for the mandatory registration of victims of violence. In September and October 2023, rules were put in place to improve the registration of homicides, incl. for sexual offenses and assault and homicide. The police conduct an annual survey of victims of violence in intimate relationships and sexual violence.

### Time-use Survey

At the end of summer 2022, the Icelandic government decided to start preparations for a time-use survey, focusing on unpaid domestic and care work, to capture the gendered reality of households. Statistics Iceland conducted the first Icelandic Time Survey in the third quarter of 2023 and results will be published soon. The results of the survey will be used to assess the distribution of unpaid labour contributions between genders. The survey sought to measure the time spent in paid work, the division of household chores, free time and rest according to, for example, the number of children, care of family members, income, place of residence, and origin. It will also seek to measure satisfaction and attitudes towards tasks and the division of labour in the home. The results will be valuable for policymaking in the field of gender equality, social affairs, and general statistical matters about living standards and equality.



## Gender-disaggregated Data

Gender statistics are compiled regularly as a part of monitoring compliance with the Equality Act and for implementing gender budgeting, since it was introduced in the year of 2009. In collaboration with Statistics Iceland, the publication Women and Men in Iceland is published every year, both in Icelandic and English, by the Directorate of Equality. In addition, besides regular sex-disaggregated labour statistics, Statistics Iceland has in collaboration with the Action Group on Equal Pay (a cooperation between the social partners and the government) published research and statistics on gender equality in the labour market, with a focus on labour market trends, wages and the gender pay gap for the period 2008-2016. Such research will continue in the future as part of monitoring the implementation of the Act on the Equal Pay Certification from 2017. Statistics Iceland furthermore publishes data on various social groups, including immigrants, disaggregated by sex, country of origin and residence, while statistics are lacking about other groups, such as persons with disabilities and queer people.

<https://statice.is/statistics/society/social-affairs/women-and-men/>

<https://www.government.is/topics/human-rights-and-equality/equality/gender-statistics/>

## Section Six: Conclusion and Next Steps

This report has sought to provide a picture of actions taken to enhance gender equality and women's rights in Iceland over the last five years. The report gives neither a complete nor exhaustive picture of gender equality in Iceland, nor does it include an overview of all the measures taken in the field in recent years.

The fight for gender equality as well as human rights, in general, is an ongoing and never-ending project in which it is crucial to stay vigilant at all times

While Iceland stands at the forefront in terms of gender equality, the journey is not over. By continuing to innovate in policy-making, legal reforms, and general awareness, Iceland aims to close the gender gap. The commitment to gender equality must remain unwavering, adapt to new challenges, and ensure that progress is inclusive and sustainable for all members of society.

Despite the remarkable progress, gender-based structural inequalities still exist in Iceland as well as across the globe. As in other countries, discrimination multiplies when gender intersects with other characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability. Gendered characteristics persist in the labour market, where women make up the majority of teachers and care workers and men are more likely to work in transportation, construction, and industry. Men are also overrepresented in leadership positions.

Equal pay and economic independence are the keys to women's liberation and important factors in our work toward eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls.

Therefore the gender pay gap is one of the biggest obstacles to achieving gender equality, in Iceland as well as globally. The eradication of violence against women, which the #metoo movement so clearly exposed, is another and, as mentioned, these factors are interlinked.

It is crucial to continue to combat gender-based violence. Iceland is committed to continue strengthening its support systems for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, ensuring they have access to justice and comprehensive support services. Public awareness campaigns and education on consent and respectful relationships are vital in preventing violence and promoting a culture of respect and equality.

Iceland is committed to working towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It is evident that SDG 5 on gender equality is the goal most countries are furthest from reaching. As a frontrunner when it comes to gender equality, Iceland will continue to use its voice internationally to share its experience of moving towards gender equality and the benefits it has made in Icelandic society.

## Appendix- Civil Society Initiatives

### Stígamót

Stígamót is an Education and Counselling Centre for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Violence. Since it was established in 1990, its main focus has been twofold; firstly, providing various free services for survivors of sexual violence (including individual interview sessions, counselling for family members and self-help groups), and secondly, raising public awareness regarding sexual violence. Development of new contextual approaches, methodologies and the advocacy for improved policies and practices regarding sexual violence and abuse has been an integral part of Stígamót's work from the start.

In the last few years, the organization has been increasingly focused on improving both its outreach and services for various marginalized groups, including disabled survivors, male survivors, survivors of prostitution and most recently, upscaling efforts in working on the issue of sexual violence against and amongst youth. This is due to the fact that the majority of survivors who come to Stígamót (around 70%) were subjected to sexual violence before the age of 18. Therefore a large segment of the work is focused on early trauma and we stress the importance of early prevention.

Through various waves of awareness and visibility in recent years the public discourse on sexual violence has grown and matured to a certain extent. Young women, in particular, have brought these issues under the spotlight, often sharing their own experiences of violence and highlighting where society and its institutions are not fulfilling their role in preventing and addressing various forms of sexual violence. However, calling out violence has often led to backlash and a push to keep the status quo. Stígamót has therefore worked to continue pushing forward, speaking on behalf of survivors, while also supporting survivors and other's fighting against sexual violence. This has included highlighting the experiences of people in prostitution and giving them a voice. Recently Stígamót has attempted to shift some of the focus (and responsibility) on perpetrators, using information provided by survivors to gain insight into who perpetrators are and what their connection is to their victims. With this focus we are attempting to affect the public discourse on perpetrators of sexual violence and bring about a culture of accountability.

In all of the work Stígamót has done, we see that prevention measures are crucial, both as part of the formal education curriculum but also through media and various forms of activism. In the last few years Stígamót has developed two specific prevention education projects: *Sjúkást*/"Crazy Love" and it's off-spring *Sjúktspjall*/Crazy Love Online Chat, focusing on raising awareness amongst youth about violence in intimate relationships; and *Bandamenn*/Allies, training workshops for Engaging Men on combating sexual violence against Women.

## **Sjúkást - Crazy Love**

The last few years have seen an increase in actions and initiatives addressing sexual violence towards youth and violence in intimate relationships among youth in Iceland. It has, however, been pointed out that not only do prevention initiatives need to be more extensive and sustainable, they also need to address more concretely the issues that youth are dealing with, respecting their realities and providing them with appropriate information, skill sets and services. Stígamót developed an annual prevention campaign titled 'Crazy Love' in 2018. The campaign focuses on raising awareness amongst youth (ages 13 -20) on violence in intimate relationships. The campaign stresses the importance of consent, boundaries, and healthy relationships. At the centre of the project is an extensive information resource/website that provides various educational materials about different forms of relationships and violence, including tools to identify and address abusive behaviour. Other topics include sex, pornography, gender equality and feminism, activism and information on how to seek help. The campaign includes a variety of actions done in cooperation with youth groups, youth centres and associations. The campaign also uses social media, in addition to traditional media and different print materials to raise awareness. Each year the aim is to highlight new issues relevant to youth - the 2024 campaign focused on (im)balance in relationships. The campaign aimed to show that certain attributes and/or behaviours can put people either in positions of power or weakness in their relationships, therefore throwing them off balance. The goal was to get young people to reflect critically on their own positions and relationships while striving to stay in balance.

## **Sjúktspjall – Crazy Love Online Chat**

Through developing the Crazy Love campaign, it was clear that youth needed both an outlet and support concerning sexual violence, relationships, boundaries and consent. In March of 2022 Stígamót launched an online chat targeted at youth (13-20 year olds) offering them a safe and anonymous place to discuss such issues with counsellors from Stígamót. The chat is open 3 nights a week and can be accessed through the Crazy Love website. It is a low-threshold service as the only thing needed is access to the internet, with physical location therefore being no hindrance. The chat receives over 300 visitors a year and gives Stígamót both a valuable opportunity to provide counselling and support to youth as well as to gain insight into their position and experiences, which is used to adjust services, campaigns and messaging towards young people and their caregivers.

## **Bandamenn - Allies**

Stígamót has since 2018 organised training workshops for men who want to engage in combating violence against women. The objective of the training is for participants to achieve a deeper understanding of a broad set of issues and concepts relevant to gender-based violence, including why it is crucial that more men are engaged in the topic. The overall goal of the training is to support agents of change, including professionals in their home institutions and peer groups who are committed to engaging in a transformative dialogue and working with beneficiaries to create spaces of change. The objective is also to create a sharing and learning space for

men, in order to better understand and articulate their role in this debate, as well as design ways and strategies on how to get involved. In 2022 Stígamót set up a specific website for the training, where information about the training, videos and training handouts are made accessible. The training and the materials are based on Stígamót's practice and the survivor-based approach to addressing and combating gender-based violence.

## Kvennaverkfall – Women’s strike

Name of CSO (civil society organization)	All trade union federations and about 40 women’s and LGBTQIA+ organisations.
Target population	Women, non-binary people and the whole society.
Description of activity	<p>Women in Iceland have a history of striking, the first time was the historic event of 1975. Since then, it has been repeated several times. On October 24th 2023 women and non-binary people in Iceland went on strike for the whole day. They did not show up for work, did not perform household or care work and took time off from the mental load that they usually bear. The slogan was “You call this equality”. Iceland has for the past years been celebrated as an equality paradise, but the organisers protest that idea. We still have a wage gap of around 20% and gender based violence is a huge problem in society, a large percentage of women and non-binary people have been subjected to violence in their lifetime and progress seems very slow. The main focus of the strike were these two major issues, and we maintain that these are two sides of the same coin. Women will not be free until they have financial independence and are safe from the constant threat of violence. The strike was a massive success, 100.000 women and non-binary people gathered in the city center of Reykjavík and events also took place around the country.</p>
Link to further information	<a href="http://www.kvennaverkfall.is">www.kvennaverkfall.is</a>
Budget	21.000.000 ISK
Impact, evaluation results and lessons learnt	N/A
Relevant information/ data	<p>Report available at: <a href="http://www.kvennaverkfall.is">www.kvennaverkfall.is</a></p> <p>Only in Icelandic</p>

## Report on the Childcare Gap

Name of CSO (civil society organization)	BSRB – Federation of State and Municipal Employees
Target population	Government and municipal authorities, society as a whole
Description of activity	The so-called childcare gap, the time after maternity/paternity leave has ended and before a child gets into kindergarten, has been a focus of BSRB for the past years. In 2017 BSRB published a report on the issue and that was repeated in 2022. On average the childcare gap is 5,5 months, and the situation is worst in the capital area. This affects families, and women especially and BSRB will continue to fight for this to be fixed. When collective agreements were signed in early 2024 part of the government statement was to close the gap in the coming years.
Link to further information	<a href="https://www.bsrb.is/static/files/Utgefid_efni/skyrsla-bsrb-umonnun.pdf">https://www.bsrb.is/static/files/Utgefid_efni/skyrsla-bsrb-umonnun.pdf</a>  Report in Icelandic
Budget	Part of BSRB budget
Impact, evaluation results and lessons learnt	N/A
Relevant information/ data	Report available at: www.  Only in Icelandic

## Shorter work week – Better working hours

Name of CSO (civil society organization)	BSRB – Federation of State and Municipal Employees, other trade union federations, employers in the public sector (State and municipalities)
Target population	Workers in the public sector
Description of activity	BSRB has been campaigning for a shorter work week since 2008. In the years 2014-2019 there were two pilot projects going on where a share of the employees at Reykjavík city and at selected government institutions had a shorter work week. Research was done on this, and the results were positive. In 2020 BSRB negotiated, along with the other trade union federations, with the public employers on a 36 hour work week (from 40) and a possibility for a 32 hour work week for shift workers. There is a gender dimension to this. For example, this gives men more time to do work in the household and childcare, where women still bear the heavy burden. A large share of shift workers in the public sector are women, for example in health care, and a lot of them work part time. In connection with the shorter work week, it was negotiated that part time workers could increase their share of work (for example from 70% to 80%) and still work the same number of hours. This would in turn raise their wages and therefore contribute to closing the gender pay gap and the pension gap. This turned out to be a success, with a large majority of part time workers using this option.
Link to further information	<a href="https://betrivinnutimi.is/english/">https://betrivinnutimi.is/english/</a>
Budget	
Impact, evaluation results and lessons learnt	N/A
Relevant information/ data	Report available at: <a href="http://www.betrivinnutimi.is">www.betrivinnutimi.is</a> Only in Icelandic



## Re-evaluation of women-dominated jobs

Name of CSO (civil society organization)	BSRB – Federation of State and Municipal Employees, other trade union federations, employers in the public sector (State and municipalities)
Target population	Workers and employers in the public sector, the government and society as a whole
Description of activity	The gender pay gap in Iceland still stands at about 20%, for overall salary. For years Statistics Iceland has confirmed that the largest share of the remaining pay gap is because of the gender segregated labour market. It has been one of the main demands of BSRB to correct the under-evaluation of women dominated occupations, such as workers in health care, care and education. As part of the government statement in connection with collective agreements that were signed in 2020 the government appointed a working group to investigate the matter. In 2021 a task force was established, and a report published in 2024. This will continue to be one of the main demands of BSRB.
Link to further information	
Budget	
Impact, evaluation results and lessons learnt	N/A
Relevant information/ data	Report available at: <a href="#">Report of Task Force</a>

## Better service for victims of sexual harassment at work

Name of CSO (civil society organization)	BSRB – Federation of State and Municipal Employees, ASÍ – the Icelandic Confederation of Labour and VIRK rehabilitation fund
Target population	Trade unions and employees in Iceland
Description of activity	Sexual harassment continues to be a great problem in the work environment. Research has shown that about 1/3 of women in the labour market experience sexual harassment or violence during their working life. Few of them seek the assistance of their trade unions and it is common that victims of abuse leave their workplace. BSRB, ASÍ and VIRK rehabilitation fund have joined forces to provide better service to victims of harassment and violence at work. Trade union staff will receive training and a special service will be set up at VIRK, which will focus on psychological first response to harassment and violence. The project has only just started (2024) but the trade union federations and VIRK will continue to work together to develop this new service.
Link to further information	
Budget	
Impact, evaluation results and lessons learnt	N/A
Relevant information/ data	Report available at: <a href="#">www</a> . Only in Icelandic

## FO-campaign

Name of CSO (civil society organization)	UN Women Iceland
Target population	General public in Iceland
Description of activity	<p>UN Women Iceland's FO-campaign has been running continually since 2015, raising awareness on gender-based violence around the world.</p> <p>The campaign not only supports UN Women projects in different countries that have the aim to eradicate GBV, but it also <i>increases general understanding and knowledge about gender equality and GBV worldwide among the public in Iceland.</i></p> <p>The 2023 campaign received funding from the MFA and had a focus on Sierra Leone, where the Icelandic government has operated bilateral development projects for numerous years.</p>
Link to further information	<a href="https://eadn-wc02-4283996.nxedge.io/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Arsskyrsla-2023-002.pdf">https://eadn-wc02-4283996.nxedge.io/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Arsskyrsla-2023-002.pdf</a>
Budget	3.000.000 ISK in 2023
Impact, evaluation results and lessons learnt	8.732.000 ISK raised for UN Women Sierra Leone in 2023
Relevant information/ data	Report available at:

## From Social Isolation to Integration

Name of CSO (civil society organization)	Kvennaráðgjöfin (e. The Women's Counselling)
Target population	Our main goal is to give legal and social work information and counselling to women, on any given matter, however we assist anyone seeking our services, regardless of their gender.
Description of activity	<p>The Women's Counselling was founded in February 1984, and dozens of social workers and lawyers have been doing voluntary work for the Women's Counselling ever since, including students doing master's studies in these subjects. The main purpose of the activity is to provide information and advice to women, but as mentioned above, we are open to all, both women, men, and nonbinary individuals. People can come see us in person, send an email or call during opening hours. Our website, <a href="http://kvennaradgjofin.is">kvennaradgjofin.is</a>, also provides useful information.</p> <p>At The Women's Counselling, we want to help people who cannot afford to pay for legal advice and thus equalize the situation of people from different groups of society, not least those who have less money at their disposal as well as immigrants to Iceland, disabled people, women in abusive relationships and other vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Our services are free of charge and those who turn to us need neither give their name nor any other personal data.</p> <p>The Women's Counselling also offers counselling to official bodies on all matters regarding women and women's rights. We also take part in the annual meeting of the Equal Rights Council (Art. 24 of the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of the Sexes, no. 150/2020). We use the experience we get through the counselling for promoting women's issues in discussions within the Parliament of Iceland, Ministries, women's organisations, and equality bodies.</p> <p>For the past 11 years, the Women's Counselling has shared experience and provided a significant amount of assistance and teaching by partnering in projects organized by the EEA Active Citizens Fund. Some of these projects have been organised and carried out in cooperation with the Icelandic Human Rights Centre, the National Contact Point for organisations in beneficiary countries seeking partners in Iceland. The projects aim at joining together the work of non-governmental organizations in the same field in beneficiary and donor countries. A considerable amount of work has been done in connection with ACF funded projects, especially by volunteers organized by the Women's Counselling. The cooperation is based on the philosophy of exporting Icelandic experience and ingenuity from Icelandic associations to the so-called third sector in beneficiary</p>

	<p>countries and to learn from their expertise and experience and thus creating an effective cross-country cooperation.</p> <p>The Women's Counselling is also a founding member of 4 Family Justice Centres for Victims of Violence in Iceland, we participate in the boards of the centres and offer legal counselling at the centres, in Reykjavík, Selfoss, Suðurnes and Akureyri.</p>
Link to further information	<a href="https://www.kvennaradgjofin.is/">https://www.kvennaradgjofin.is/</a>
Budget	4.000.000 ISK
Impact, evaluation results and lessons learnt	<p>Our experience shows that it is of vital importance for women (and others) to have a place to go for free legal and social work advice. To a large degree, people are unaware of their rights and obligations, especially when facing hitherto unknown and difficult situations such as, sexual, or domestic violence, harassment, divorce, custody issues etc. Through our services we have managed to make the process easier for those involved, diminishing their fears and uncertainties and empower them of course by providing them with necessary and correct information.</p>
Relevant information/ data	<p>Report available at: <a href="http://www.kvennaradgjofin.is">www.kvennaradgjofin.is</a></p> <p>Only in Icelandic</p>

## The Consultation Forum of University Equality Officers

Name of CSO (civil society organization)	The University of Iceland, The University of Akureyri, Hólar University, The Agricultural University of Iceland, Reykjavik University, Iceland University of the Arts, and Bifröst University.
Target population	Staff and students at the universities across Iceland.
Description of activity	Each university in Iceland has an equality officer, and across the seven universities these officers operate the consultation forum. The universities all work together to tackle gender equality and wider equality issues and share best practices. The biggest communal activity is the annual Equality Days project held in February each year since 2009. All the universities collaborate together on two events and then each university arranges events on their own campus, with a total of over 20 events. Equality days offer diverse events, with everything from workshops, to concerts to keynote speeches. All events are free and accessible and many of the events are streamed and recorded for later access. Future plans include setting up a learning platform, funded by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, to disseminate talks and discussions on equality, human rights and wider equality issues, in both a podcast format as well as short studio-recorded talks.
Link to further information	<a href="http://www.jafnrettisdagar.is">www.jafnrettisdagar.is</a>
Budget	Roughly 3m ISK in addition to work by equality officers and other university staff (ca 3-4 months)
Impact, evaluation results and lessons learnt	N/A
Relevant information/ data	

## From Social Isolation to Integration

Name of CSO (civil society organization)	University of Iceland in cooperation with Statistics Iceland and the Office of Equality. Sponsored by the Gender Equality Fund.
Target population	Icelandic women and the society as a whole
Description of activity	<p>The main purpose of the study was to examine whether the equal pay standard had achieved its goal of ensuring that decisions about pay did not include discriminatory practices based on gender. Interviews were conducted with all four certification bodies to explore the implementation and the certification of the standard. Furthermore, changes in the gender pay gap were analysed based on Statistics Iceland's data on wages during 2012-2020.</p> <p>The analysis was based on data from organizations that participated in the wage study for the whole period. Wages of men and women within organizations before and after the equal pay certification were also compared. Certification bodies see the certification as a successful step in the interest of pay equality. However, serious observations were made regarding lack of instructions from the government.</p> <p>The gender pay gap has decreased by almost eight percentage points from 2012 to 2020 although little difference was visible between wage trends in organizations that have received certification and those that had not. Thus, it is not possible to confirm that the implementation of the standard has had any direct effect on the gender pay gap during this period. It may have had an indirect effect through public discourse that led to a general decrease. Although the equal pay standard increased the quality of work regarding wage settings, there were concerns about inaccurate work practices and that the standard could lend legitimacy to the differences related to occupational segregation and the gender pay gap. The lack of guidelines for precise working practices was seen as a problem that the government should respond to quickly and clearly.</p>
Link to further information	An article – see below
Budget	6.000.000 ISK
Impact, evaluation results and lessons learnt	N/A
Relevant information/ data	<p>Report available at: <a href="https://doi.org/10.13177/irpa.a.2022.18.2.4">https://doi.org/10.13177/irpa.a.2022.18.2.4</a></p> <p>Only in Icelandic</p>

## Nursing: Introduction for 15 years old boys

Name of CSO (civil society organization)	Landspítali - University Hospital of Iceland, Nursing department of the University of Iceland and University of Akureyri
Target population	Young boys
Description of activity	<p>Description of activity</p> <p>In 2020, the Gender Equality Fund of Iceland supported a project led by the University Hospital of Iceland (Landspítali) to introduce the nursing profession to 15-year-old boys at schools. The project aimed to challenge the stereotyping of nurses, because the rate of male nurses in Iceland is very low, only 3%. 1100 boys from 47 schools took an active part in the workshops; they got for example the opportunity to give an injection, how to care for wounds and provide nursing care to a person after an accident, using a role-play teaching method. The boys showed great interest. Success of the project will become clear when the boys choose a career path in 2026 and 2027.</p>
Link to further information	
Budget	4.700.000 kr.
Impact, evaluation results and lessons learnt	N/A
Relevant information/ data	<p>Report available at: <a href="https://hjukrun.cdn.prismic.io/hjukrun/336e66e6-0ff5-4be9-8ddf-9b76409957ed_Str%C3%A1kar+hj%C3%BAkra.pdf">https://hjukrun.cdn.prismic.io/hjukrun/336e66e6-0ff5-4be9-8ddf-9b76409957ed_Str%C3%A1kar+hj%C3%BAkra.pdf</a></p> <p>Only in Icelandic</p>



## Gender equality

Name of CSO (civil society organization)	Young Professional Women in Iceland (hereafter, UAK).
Target population	Women in Iceland, ages of 20-35.
Description of activity	<p>UAK is a non-profit organization, founded in 2014, which strives to promote gender equality through education, discussion, and empowerment. The organization's main purpose is to strengthen the position of young women in the Icelandic labor market by addressing challenges young professional women in Iceland face.</p> <p>UAK's main activities: There are approximately three to four hundred members in UAK every year and the organization hosts around seventeen events throughout the year. Each event focuses on a specific topic related to reaching gender parity. These are some of UAK's main activities the past two years:</p> <p>Annual Conference: In 2023 the conference focused on achieving "Equality In Our Lifetime" and was inspired by the UN's report on the progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The gender snapshot 2022. The report showcased a serious regression in gender equality across the world. Climate change, COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine were listed as the main contributing factors that gender equality will be achieved in three hundred years' time at the earliest and not in 2030 as planned. UAK's main concern was that equality issues would be further neglected and the goal of the conference in 2023 was to highlight what actions need to be taken to achieve gender equality sooner than current forecasts suggest. One of the keynote speakers in 2023 was Iceland's Prime Minister, Katrín Jakobsdóttir.</p> <p>Gender based violence: According to studies, Iceland is the best place in the world to be a woman and the country has a near perfect score on the gender equality scale thanks to collective action and solidarity by human rights activists in the past. Although Iceland has come a long way we can never stop fighting and talking about issues like the gender pay gap (women in Iceland still have less economic power than men, earning approximately 10% less on average) and gender-based violence. Domestic violence accounts for half of reported cases of violence in Iceland but violence against women is also a global epidemic and we cannot talk about equality until women everywhere are safe. Therefore, UAK actively fights against gender-based violence, which according to the organization's members, is one of the main reasons Iceland has not fully reached gender equality. Thus, UAK has put its emphasis these past couple of years on awareness raising, hosting events, and organizing meetings regarding gender-based violence. Moreover, UAK was invited to visit the National Police Commissioner of Iceland to discuss what changes the police has made in recent years, ongoing projects in regard to crime prevention with an emphasis on gender-based violence and violence against children.</p> <p>Financial independence: UAK has been in cooperation with NASDAQ Iceland to promote financial literacy and diversity in the stock market. UAK has hosted events, raised awareness, held workshops, provided members with proper tools etc. but financial independence is a huge factor in reaching gender equality. As stated at the 68th annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68), which UAK attended, "globally 10.3 per cent of women live in extreme poverty today, and they are poorer than men."</p> <p>Women's health: UAK put women's health on the forefront these past two years by addressing how matters like the menstrual cycle, hormonal balance, endometriosis, infertility, mental- and physical health can effect one's career and promote awareness of women's health in general. The aim was to highlight the effects these issues can have on the labor market</p>

	<p>and the society as a whole. Hence, address issues regarding how both employees and employers can take necessary steps to ensure employee's good overall health?</p> <p>The Negotiator: In 2022 UAK hosted a three day course in effective negotiation techniques for women in cooperation with the Open University in Iceland. The course covered key issues in negotiation techniques and participants had to take part in several practical case studies, which covered aspects like strategic preparation, development of offers and anchors, analyzing interests, needs, alternative constraints, how to address cognitive biases and stereotypes, how to navigate complex multi-party negotiations etc.</p>
Link to further information	<a href="https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/">https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/</a>
Budget	Funded by members and sponsors.
Impact, evaluation results and lessons learnt	N/A.
Relevant information/ data	<p>Annual Conference: <a href="https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/uak-radstefnan-2023/">https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/uak-radstefnan-2023/</a>, <a href="https://www.visir.is/g/20232403772d/ny-rannsokn-stefnir-nu-i-ad-jafnretti-naist-eftir-300-ar">https://www.visir.is/g/20232403772d/ny-rannsokn-stefnir-nu-i-ad-jafnretti-naist-eftir-300-ar</a> and <a href="https://www.visir.is/g/20232404187d/thurfum-ad-bida-i-thrju-hundrud-ar-til-ad-na-jafnretti">https://www.visir.is/g/20232404187d/thurfum-ad-bida-i-thrju-hundrud-ar-til-ad-na-jafnretti</a></p> <p>Gender based violence: <a href="https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/events/tolum-um-ofbeldi/">https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/events/tolum-um-ofbeldi/</a>, <a href="https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/events/heimsokn-til-rikislogreglustjora/">https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/events/heimsokn-til-rikislogreglustjora/</a> and <a href="https://www.visir.is/g/20232480297d/ungarathafnakonur-radast-a-rot-vandans-i-jafnrettismalunum/">https://www.visir.is/g/20232480297d/ungarathafnakonur-radast-a-rot-vandans-i-jafnrettismalunum/</a></p> <p>Financial independence: <a href="https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/events/fjarmal-101/">https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/events/fjarmal-101/</a>, <a href="https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/events/ny-kynslod-fjarfesta/">https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/events/ny-kynslod-fjarfesta/</a>, <a href="https://k100.mbl.is/brot/spila/14839/">https://k100.mbl.is/brot/spila/14839/</a>, <a href="https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/events/hvar-er-fruin-i-hamborg-fjarfestum-til-framtidar/">https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/events/hvar-er-fruin-i-hamborg-fjarfestum-til-framtidar/</a>, and <a href="https://vb.is/frettir/hvetja-konur-til-ad-fjarfesta/">https://vb.is/frettir/hvetja-konur-til-ad-fjarfesta/</a></p> <p>Women's health: <a href="https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/events/styra-hormonar-starfsferlinum/">https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/events/styra-hormonar-starfsferlinum/</a>, <a href="https://www.visir.is/g/20232375935d/bidja-um-launahaekkun-korter-i-egglos">https://www.visir.is/g/20232375935d/bidja-um-launahaekkun-korter-i-egglos</a> and <a href="https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/events/likaminn-musteri-salarinnar-kvenheilsa/">https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/events/likaminn-musteri-salarinnar-kvenheilsa/</a></p> <p>The Negotiator: <a href="https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/namskeid-i-samningataekni-hja-opna-haskolanum/">https://www.ungarathafnakonur.is/namskeid-i-samningataekni-hja-opna-haskolanum/</a></p>