



GENDER EQUALITY IN ICELAND

*Information on
Gender Equality Issues
in Iceland*

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Introduction

The purpose of this overview is to provide information about Gender Equality issues in Iceland. It provides useful information about the context, the legal and practical aspects of gender equality in Iceland, as well as current activities and challenges. The document attempts to offer insight into successes, best practices and lessons learned.

About the document:

- The document contains information and links to various resources on gender equality issues in Iceland
- The chapters are designed to give a comprehensive overview of various gender issues
- Most sections include links to further information on the topic as well as contact information for the relevant organizations and institutions
- Some information is repeated in various sections, in order to ensure accessibility
- The document is built on various resources but most of the information is taken from the most recent Gender Equality Conference report (Ministry of Welfare of Iceland, 2015) and Statistics Iceland

For further information, contact the Centre for Gender Equality:

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Facts about Iceland

- The population of Iceland as of 1st of January 2016 was 332.529.
- Around 80% of the population is urban, and the urban population is mostly located in the southwest part of Iceland.
- The population ethnicity is northern European and the religion is Evangelical Lutheran for the vast majority of the population.
- The number of municipalities in the beginning of 2016 was 74.
- The literacy rate in Iceland is 99%.
- In Iceland 90% of children aged 1-5 years are in day-care. Most municipalities pay 85% of operation costs of kindergartens.
- The fertility rate in Iceland was 1,81 children per woman in 2015, the lowest in recorded history.

The Government Offices of Iceland:

<http://www.government.is/>

Iceland.is, The Gateway to Iceland:

<http://iceland.is>

Stepping Stones

1850	Equal inheritance rights for men and women
1882	Widows and single women gain local suffrage
1886	Girls can enter secondary school
1900	Married women gain the right to control their income and personal property
1907	Icelandic Women's Rights Association founded
1908	Women gain local suffrage and the right to hold local office
1908	The first women's list participates in local elections in Reykjavik
1911	Women get equal rights to grants, study and civil service
1914	First women workers' association founded
1915	Women over the age of 40 gain national suffrage and the right to hold office
1920	All women gain national suffrage and the right to hold office
1921	New marital law guarantees equality for spouses
1922	The first woman elected to the Icelandic Parliament, from a women's list
1926	The first Icelandic woman defends a doctoral thesis
1957	The first female mayor in an Icelandic municipality
1961	Equal Pay Act approved by parliament
1970	First female Cabinet Minister
1975	Women nationwide take a day off on October 24
1976	The first Gender Equality Act and the Gender Equality Council is founded
1980	The first nationally elected female president in the world
1982	The Women's Alliance runs for the first time in local elections
1983	The Women's Alliance runs in parliamentary elections for the first time
1995	Equal rights of women and men stated in the constitution
1997	Fathers get an independent right to two weeks paid parental leave
2003	Fathers get an independent right to three months of paid parental leave
2005	Women take part of October 24th off on the 30th anniversary of the original event
2009	The first female prime minister in Iceland
2009	The first government with equal number of men and women
2009	A law banning the purchase of prostitution is approved by Parliament (Althingi)
2010	A full ban on strip clubs approved by Althingi
2010	A law is passed that obligates companies to have minimum 40% women or men in their boards
2010	A single marriage act is approved
2011	The government approves a three-year plan on implementing gender budgeting.
2011	A law authorizing the removal of a perpetrator from a home when domestic violence occurs.
2011	Iceland signs the Council of Europe Convention on Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
2012	The first woman elected bishop in the Evangelical Lutheran Church.
2015	Iceland celebrates 100 years of women's right to vote and run for Parliament.
2015	The Icelandic gender equality fund is founded.
2015	The first Barbershop Conference held in New York as Iceland's and Suriname's contribution to the UN Women's #HeForShe campaign.
2016	40 th anniversary of the gender equality law.

A Brief History of Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Iceland

Iceland experienced many social, political and economic changes during the 19th century, in addition to natural disasters and a substantial migration of the population to North America. In 1850 the population was around 60,000. During this period the fight for women's civil rights started taking shape. Here are a few important developments.

1850-1899

In 1850, women gained the same inheritance rights as men; until then, daughters only had the right to one third of the inheritance. In 1869 the first women's association was founded and in the following decades many more followed. Further legal developments took place, including widows and unmarried women getting a limited right to vote in 1882 and in 1886 girls got the right for an education and to study at the only college in Iceland. During that period, a number of developments took place that led to an increased profile and mobility of women in Icelandic society. In 1874, a women's college was founded. In 1894, the first women's rights organisation was founded: the Icelandic Women's Association, an organisation that had the purpose of fighting for women's rights such as women's suffrage. In 1887, Bríet Bjarnhéðinsdóttir became the first woman to give a public presentation; it was on the status and rights of women. In 1895, two women's journals started to get published.

1900-1919

The first few decades of the 20th century saw many crucial social and political changes. In the first decade, married women gained their financial competency. In 1902, women with the right to vote gained local suffrage and the right to hold local office in 1908. The same year, four women were elected to the city council in Reykjavik. In 1909 all women in Iceland gained the right to vote and run for office in local elections. In 1904, the women's association Hringurinn was founded, it was an association that contributed considerably to various social and welfare issues. That same year, women gained access to the main college in Iceland. In 1907, the Women's Rights Association of Iceland was founded and their first chairwoman was Bríet Bjarnhéðinsdóttir, the most ardent supporter of women's rights in Iceland and she had worked with the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA). In 1911, women gained full equal access to education, public grants and public office. In 1917 women gained the same rights as men regarding their children and in 1921 a new marriage law came close to ensuring equal rights for women and men in their marriages. Following the success of women's entry into local elections, women over the age of 40 gained the same rights in national elections in 1915 and in 1920, all women did.

1920-1969

In 1922, the first woman, Ingibjörg H. Bjarnason was elected to parliament. Women's group's contribution and influence on social issues continued to grow. In 1928 Mæðrastyrksnefnd (Mother's support committee) was founded to support widowed women and single mothers and in 1930, after

years of advocacy, the National Hospital was opened with substantial financial contributions from women's organisations. In the following years the education of nurses in Iceland improved considerably. In 1948, a male Parliamentarian, Hannibal Valdimarsson presented a draft law on the gender equality of women and men, which was thrown out based on the assumption that it had not been fully researched if women or men were discriminated against. In 1958, women were only 1% of all council members in Iceland. In 1957 and 1959 the first woman became mayor of Kópavogur and Reykjavík. In order to address the gender pay gap; in 1961, Parliament approved a law on wage equity, with the aim to bridge the gap by 1968.

1970-1979

In 1970, the first female cabinet minister was appointed. The same year, inspired by women's rights and feminist movements all over the world, the "Red Stockings" movement was founded and was a key radical force in raising awareness on various gender equality issues. In 1974 the first woman was ordained as a priest of the National Lutheran Church but it was during 1975, UN International Women's year, that many key events and developments took place. On October 24th 1975, more than 25 thousand women in Iceland took a day off to emphasize the importance of women's contribution to the economy, both in paid and unpaid work. Also that same year; a law on a 3 month maternity leave was approved, a new law on abortion, reproductive and maternal health was passed and the Women's History Archives was founded. The following year in 1976, the first equality law was passed and the Gender Equality Council was founded. However, after the parliamentary election in 1979, women were only 5% of the parliamentarians.

1980-1989

The pace of substantial changes in gender equality issues continued in the eighties. The fourth President of the Republic of Iceland, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir was elected in 1980. Vigdís was the first woman in the world to be democratically elected Head of State. A women's list participated in the municipal elections in Reykjavík and Akureyri in 1982, and women's participation went from 6% to 13% of all council members in the country. The Women's Alliance (Kvennalistinn) was founded in 1983. Its main objective was women's liberation and the increased representation of women in politics. When the Women's Alliance began, women were only 5% of MPs, but after the first election the alliance participated in, that number rose to 15%. In 1982, the public debate and awareness on violence against women had improved and at the end of that year a women's shelter for victims of violence in close relationships was opened. In 1984, women became the majority of new students at the University of Iceland; in 1986, a woman became a member of the supreme court for the first time; in 1988, a woman became the first speaker of parliament and in 1989, an education and counselling centre for survivors of sexual abuse and violence was opened.

1990-1999

During the 1990's, progress continued on various fronts. Research and academic advancement on gender issues was increased with the founding of a Centre for Women's and Gender Studies (1990) and the establishment of Gender Studies (1996) at the University of Iceland. In 1991, the Minister of Social Affairs established a committee on the role of men in gender equality issues. In 1993, an emergency reception centre for rape victims opened and a women's church was also established that year. In 1995, an article was added to the Constitution articulating that women and men should be equal in all respects. In 1996, same-sex couples gained the right to be registered partnerships. In 1994, women held a quarter of all council seats and in 2002, they held a third. Women occupied one fourth of all parliamentary seats in 1995, and in 1999, they were 35% of all MPs. In 1999, the movement came to an end when the members of the Women's Alliance became members of different political parties. In 1998, a group of young women founded Bríet, a feminist association for young women.

2000-2017

In response to stagnating public attitudes towards gender equality issues, the Feminist Association of Iceland was founded in 2003 and organised various initiatives and activities to raise awareness on various gender issues. That same year, the Men's group of the association organised a campaign focused on engaging men in the fight to end rape and other forms of gender-based violence. That same year, fathers gained the right to non-transferable three month paternity leave. During these years, many women became pioneers and leaders in their sectors: the first prime minister, the first minister of foreign affairs, the first minister of finance, the first minister of the interior, the first minister of the environment, the first bishop, the first university president, the first national youth association president, the first national sports association president, and the first bank-president. On October 24th 2005, and on the same date in 2010; to commemorate the 30th and 35th anniversary of the women's strike or the women's day off, close to 50 thousand women rallied in Reykjavík, and in various towns around Iceland. In 2015, thousands of women shared their stories of sexual violence on social media. Young women started the "breast revolution" to free women's bodies from damaging stereotypes. The year 2015 was dedicated to the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote and run for Parliament.

Other Important developments during these years include: full rights for gays and lesbians, a law banning the purchase of prostitution, a law prohibiting strip-dancing clubs, and a law that will obligate public corporations to have minimum 40/60 ratio of women and men in their boards. In 2009, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir was the first woman in Icelandic history to become prime minister and for most of the term from 2009-2013 there were an equal number of women and men cabinet ministers. After the parliamentary elections in 2009, women became 40% of the ministers and later 50%, with Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir as prime minister. Following the parliamentary elections in 2009, the number of female MPs reached its highest ever percentage, growing from 33% in 2007 to 43%. In 2010, women also reached the 40% mark for the first time as local council members. In the 2006 elections, they had 36% of local council member seats, while in the local elections in 2014 the number of women rose to 44%. The highest percentage of women in any local council is 45%. In the 2016 parliamentary election the percentage of women in the parliament rose to an all-time high of 48%.

Women's History Archives:

<http://kvennasogusafn.is/index.php?page=womens-suffrage>

Current Context

In the *World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report* from 2016, Iceland is ranked number one as in previous years. The report evaluates gender equality in different countries based on the gender balance in the areas of politics, education, employment and health. Iceland's performance is based on its achievements in improving gender equality; in the area of education, political participation and women's participation in the labour force. It is however pointed out in the report, that the gender pay gap is still a concern and that women still seem to have limited representations in executive management positions.¹

Since the beginning of 2008 a number of legislative changes that address gender equality issues have taken place:

- In 2008, the law on gender equality (No. 10/2008) was amended and for the first time an article on quotas was included. This article (No. 15) stipulates that when designating members for governmental or municipal committees, councils and boards, the ratio of women to men needs to be as equal as possible and where the members are more than three, the percentage cannot be below 40% of either sex.
- In 2009, the purchasing of sexual services was made illegal with changes to the 206th article of the criminal code (No. 19/1940). It is illegal to advertise and to benefit from prostitution, e.g. through pimping and other means.
- In 2010, a full ban on strip clubs was enacted with a change in the act on restaurants, accommodations and entertainment (No. 85/2007), banning the profiting from nudity.
- In 2010, an amendment to the laws on public limited companies (No. 2/1995) and private limited companies (No. 138/1994) obligated companies that have over 50 employees to have both women and men on their company boards and if the board-members are more than three, the percentage of women or men cannot be under 40%. These amendments also included changes that will make monitoring easier. These changes took effect in 2013.
- In 2011, the parliament approved a law (No. 85/2011) that improves the provisions that authorities have to protect victims of violence in close relationships. This law provides provisions authorizing the removal of the party accused for domestic violence from the household and putting in place a specific restraining order should there be a suspicion of domestic violence.
- In 2014, Althingi approved a law (No. 62/2014) which aimed to improve certain aspects of the existing law on gender equality (No. 10/2008). The law was made because of comments made by the supervision institution EFTA, which suggested that the current law on gender equality did not reflect a properly well-worded account of concepts such as direct- and indirect discrimination, gendered harassment and sexual harassment. Furthermore, a new article was

¹ World Economic Forum *Global Gender Gap Report 2016*: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2016>

added to the law under the section regarding wage discrimination, which allows the secretary to add regulations regarding the implantation of that section; including, implementing standards regarding wage discrimination.

- A new law was approved by Althingi in 2015 (No. 79/2015), which further improved on the existing law of gender equality (No. 10/2008). This new law bans discrimination regarding products and services.
- An amendment was made by Althingi to the criminal law 19/1940 in 2016. This change was made to fulfil the Istanbul Treaty which was signed by Iceland in 2011. The changes include an amendment on stalking, more severe punishment for domestic abuse and the extension of statute of limitations for victims under the age of 18.

Current Government Policy on Gender Equality

The current government as of August 2016, states in their platform that it will emphasize equal rights. “The government will direct concerted efforts at achieving real equality for all. The government will reassess those methods which have been used in the campaign for gender equality, with the aim of improving achievements in equal rights and counteracting gender-based wage inequality.

The financial independence of individuals is the basis for equal rights. Concern must be given to ensuring financial independence regardless of marital status, especially with regard to taxation, pensions and disability issues.

Emphasis will be placed on ensuring parental equality. The financial and social situations of parents with visitation rights will be investigated, with regard to whether their involvement in the tax and benefit system needs to be adjusted for their participation in the raising of their children.” (government.is/government/coalition-platform/).

Ministerial Committee on Gender Equality

In the fall of 2009, the previous government approved the appointment of a ministerial committee on gender equality. The formation was in accordance with the government’s objective to increase the focus on gender equality issues within the government. The committee is responsible for the government’s action plan on gender equality; action plan on gender mainstreaming and a gender sensitive review/assessment of governmental bills, plans and policy decisions that impact gender equality. The members of the committee are the Prime Minister, the Minister of Social Affairs and Equality, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Finance. A special advisor on Gender Equality issues to the Prime Minister has been appointed to support this work.

Plan of Action on Gender Equality

The parliament agreed on a new action plan in September, 2016 for the period 2016-2020, the action plan from the previous government expired in 2014.

The action plan is based on experience from previous action plans. It's divided into 7 chapters and introduces 21 projects to tackle within its timeframe. These projects include: to integrate a gendered perspective into all aspects of governmental policy- and decision making, to promote equal pay for equal work, to fight against gender stereotypes in the workforce and in the media, to promote gender equality in schools, to promote a less gendered labour market and equal opportunity for all. An interesting novelty in the proposed action plan is a chapter devoted to men and gender equality. The previous action plan included the creation of a working group of men to discuss and present a report on gender equality from men's perspective as well as propose solutions to various problems of gender inequality. That report influenced this chapter. The aim of this chapter is to involve more men in all aspects of gender equality policy- and decision making both domestically and internationally. It is proposed that the propositions of the aforementioned men's working group will be put into action. Another main emphasis of the proposed action plan is to combat gendered violence and violence against children. Lastly, the action plan mentions Iceland's international duties toward gender equality.

Gender Mainstreaming

The Government has highlighted gender mainstreaming as a key method within the governmental sector in accordance to the act on gender equality (No. 10/2008, art. 17). In 2008, the Centre for Gender Equality started working on a project called Side by Side, a gender-mainstreaming project funded by the EU Progress Programme. The aim of the project was to implement and develop gender mainstreaming in national policies and activities in Iceland. The project began with providing training in gender mainstreaming for top managers in ministries, in order to ensure their support and understanding of gender mainstreaming. Training was also provided for the middle managers of the government ministries, the division and department heads in the ministries and municipalities, as well as the top management of key public agencies and municipalities. A brochure for managers on gender mainstreaming was published and a handbook, which has been used in two universities in courses in gender studies and public management. The work on gender mainstreaming has continued in different fields, mainly focusing on gender responsive budgeting.

Further information:

<http://samstiga.is/samstiga/?D10cID=NewsDouble>

Gender Responsive Budgeting

In early 2009, the Minister of Finance appointed a working group on gender responsive budgeting. The group's task was to prepare proposals and suggest initiatives to implement the principles of gender responsive budgeting. Based on the working group's initial suggestions, gender responsive budgeting needs careful planning and needs to be implemented in steps with expert support and training. In accordance with the working group's suggestions, the Minister of Finance requested all ministries to propose pilot projects to coincide with the 2011 budget. Results of these projects were presented in

the bill for the 2012, 2013 and 2014 budgets. These projects were also highlighted in the government's action plan for gender equality (2011-2014), which states that this method would be implemented in phases during this period. The pilot projects served as a basis to formulate methods and accumulate experience to fully implement gender responsive budgeting. In order to raise the awareness of the government sector on this topic, the ministry held many training seminars and published a handbook. In addition, the ministry hired a project manager to oversee/promote the training and development of the projects. The working group developed two detailed action plans for a three-year period each. The working group also worked closely with the Centre for Gender Equality, within the context of the gender mainstreaming project Side by Side.

In 2015, the government approved the implantation/implementation of a five-year plan for the period 2015-2019. This new plan emphasizes utilizing gender budgeting in decision making processes. Other emphasises are: participation of all ministries, integration of gender budgeting into daily operations, learning by doing, knowledge creation, gender impact assessments of law proposals, analysis of gender effects of budget proposals, short-term projects, gender budgeting included in the state budget proposal, gender disaggregated statistics, cooperation and education.

The objectives of the five-year plan are as follows: 1) to make the impact on genders visible, so it's possible to re-evaluate policies, expenditures, and sources of income in accordance with objectives for equality. 2) The budget should be used in a systematic way to equal the status of women and men and promote the fair allocation of public funds, as well as fair raising of public revenue. 3) Gender budgeting should be integrated into all policy making, decision making, and in the daily operations of public administration. 3) If analysis reveals gender discrimination, it should lead to changed decisions so that public allocation of resources and revenue raising is fair and in accordance with the needs of both genders. 4) Gender budgeting should become a part of public administration and good economic management, with the participation of all ministries. 5) The importance of gender budgeting should be promoted through awareness raising and education.

The Ministry of Finance:

<http://www.ministryoffinance.is/>

Action plan against Human Trafficking

In 2009, the government approved its first Action Plan against Human Trafficking. The objective of the Action Plan was to enhance the coordination of actions that are necessary in order to prevent human trafficking in Iceland, and to further study trafficking of human beings. Furthermore, it specifies actions that are aimed at prevention and education regarding this matter, as well as securing that aid and protection to victims is provided. There was also an emphasis placed on actions that aim at facilitating the prosecution of the perpetrators. To oversee the implementation of the action plan, a specialist and co-ordination team were established. The role of the team is to supervise matters regarding human trafficking in Iceland, including providing training for professionals and civil servants, organising educational campaigns, supervision of research and the registration of cases of human trafficking. The Action Plan was in effect until the end of 2012, it was revised and a new plan was in effect for the period 2013-2016 but has since expired.

The Action Plan, including report:

http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/acrobat-enskar_sidur/The_Icelandic_Action_Plan_against_Trafficking_in_Human_Beings.pdf

Also in Iceland - Report on the Nature and Scope of Trafficking in Persons 2009:

http://redcross.lausn.is/Apps/WebObjects/RedCross.woa/swdocument/1041254/lika_a_Islandi_sam_antekt_ensku.pdf?wosid=false

Keeping the window open

In February 2013, the state police decided to start an experimental, one-year project to combat domestic violence in collaboration with the social services in the municipality Suðurnes. The main objectives of the project were: to increase investigations in cases involving domestic violence, decrease multiple offences, improve statistical analysis, to assist survivors and perpetrators, to make better usage of restraining orders and forcible evacuations from homes, and to push more cases through the justice system. The project, named Keeping the window open, was started because the state police noticed that cases of domestic violence were not getting optimal treatment. The project was a big success and increased the percentage of charges made against perpetrators significantly, and numerous survivors were grateful for the police and social services interference, the increase of restraining orders and forced evacuations.

Plan of Action 2006-2010:

Male Violence against Women in Intimate Relationships in Iceland - Report of the Minister of Welfare:

<http://jafnretti.is/D10/Files/Sk%C3%BDrsla-ofbeldi%20gegn%20konum.pdf>

Working group on engaging men in the promotion of gender equality

In the beginning of 2011, as part of the new action plan for gender equality, the Minister of Welfare appointed a working group tasked with the objective of creating proposals on how to increase the participation of men in gender equality issues. The group looked into a number of issues, including education and vocational choices, gender stereotypes and participation in care work. In addition, the group established partnerships for researching the status of men in Icelandic society. The work of this group was partially inspired by the experience of similar working groups established in the 90's and work done in the other Nordic countries. The working group was appointed for one year and the members of the group were all men. They published a report on their conclusions which was influential in the new action plan for gender equality.

Contact the Centre for Gender Equality:

jafnretti@jafnretti.is

Economic Participation and Opportunity

- In 2016, employed persons in Iceland were approximately 188.900, thereof 99.500 men and 89.400 women.
- Iceland has the highest rate of women's participation in the labour market amongst OECD countries, 78.2% (2014)
- Women are 47.3% of the Icelandic labour force. On average, women work 42 hours a week and men work 48.1 hours (2015).
- In 2014, governmental institutions totalled on average 21.202 fulltime positions (Ministry of Finance).
- In 2014, municipalities employed 20.362 fulltime positions (The Association of Local Authorities in Iceland).
- Unemployment was low for a long time; it was less than 2% in 2008. However, due to the economic crisis, in August 2011, unemployment rose to 6.7%, 6.5% amongst men and 7.0% amongst women. In April 2016, the unemployment rate had lowered to 4.9% amongst men and 5% amongst women.
- The average number of working hours per week for individuals working part-time in 2015 was 23.1 hours for men and 25.6 hours for women.
- In 2014, 64% of individuals working for governmental institutions were women, however more women work part-time than men (Ministry of Finance).

Participation in the labour market by both men and women has always been at a high level in Iceland and the participation of women in the labour market in Iceland is the highest among OECD countries. Women started entering the labour market at an increased rate in the 1970s. This development has been met with childcare for pre-school children, a legal right for parents to return to their jobs after childbirth and a nine month parental leave system. More and more women have a full time job and the level of education is high. In 1993, 53% of women in the labour market had a full time job. In 2008 65% of working women had a full time job, while 90% of men worked full time. This gap reflects the different situation of women and men in working and private life, not least the fact that women are still responsible for most of the housework and caretaking. On average, the rate of participation among women has been just under 80%, while among men it is about 86 in the last decade%.

In the wake of the economic crisis, which marked an end to a period of immense growth in the economy and job participation, the number of employed individuals decreased. The number of men in the workforce has decreased more substantially than the number of women. In 2008 men's job

participation was 87.1%, but in 2010 it had become 84.5%. In comparison, women's participation went from 77.8% in 2008, down to 77.6% in 2010. The changes following the crisis have been apparent in increased unemployment numbers for both women and men. In 2007 the unemployment average was 1%; at the end of 2008 it had reached 4.8% and reached its peak at 9.3% in early 2010. In December 2010, unemployment amongst women was 7.3% and 8.5% amongst men. Unemployment amongst men was hence lower for men in 2010 than 2009, but higher for women in 2010 than in 2009. There are also very interesting gender dimensions when looking at people outside the labour market. According to a work market survey by Statistics Iceland for 2010, 1900 individuals categorised themselves as homemakers, thereof 1800 women and 100 men. Individuals that are on unpaid family leave (each parent can take up to thirteen weeks, until the child turns eight years old) were 1200 in 2010, all women.

Since 2010, unemployment has decreased overall for both men and women. In April 2016, unemployment was 4.9% among men and 5% among women. In the last decade, the participation of men in the labour market has decreased while women's participation in the labour market has increased. The overall working hours have decreased and the gap between the working hours of men and the working hours of women has lessened. Overall, more women work part-time than men. In 2015, one third of women in the labour market was working part-time.

Directorate of Labour:

<http://english.vinnumalastofnun.is/home/>

Women and Men in the Private Sector

- The percentage of women in the labour market has remained relatively steady since 2008; in 2015 it was 48%, compared to 46% in 2008.
- The percentage of women employed as managers in Icelandic companies has not improved much in the last few years; in 2014 it was 22%.
- Overall, the percentage of women in corporate boards at Icelandic companies, at the end of 2014 was 26%.
- However, when the corporation has 250 employees or more, the percentage of women board members rises to 39% and the percentage of managers lowers to 8%.

In 2010, research had shown that although substantial improvements has taken place in the gender composition of middle management within corporations, the ratio of women in top-management and corporate boards had not changed much in ten years previous and few women had positions as managers in larger corporations (9% in companies with more than 250 employees). Labour market stakeholders continued to push for an improvement concerning women's representation and participation on corporate boards and in top management. In order to ensure more progress on these issues, the Ministry of Economic Affairs put in force legal amendments to ensure corporations take concrete actions in improving the ratio of women and men in their businesses. The legislation took effect in 2013, although as of 2017, not all corporations fulfil it.

- The Acts on corporations (No. 2/1995 and No. 138/1994) were amended in 2010 (No. 13/2010) to include a provision that requires corporations with more than 50 employees to have at least 40% women or men on their boards.

The Gender Pay Gap

- Women had 78.5% of men's total employment income in 2014, according to tax returns.
- According to a study in 2013, the gendered pay gap was 5.7%.
- A recent study shows that men are 90% of CEOs, executive managers and board members of companies with 50 or more employees.

An important issue in the government's programme on gender equality is bridging the gender pay gap. Since 1961, Iceland has had an Act on Equal Pay for Equal Work. Despite the law, the gender pay gap was still 16.3% in 2008 in general and up to 38% in rural areas. The 2008 recession led to the pay gap decreasing, since sectors where employment of men is more predominant, were initially hit harder by the crisis (Gíslason, 2011). Challenges identified for the gender pay gap include: gender segregated workforce, additional wage payments go to men, women's participation in managing corporations and institutions is low, women's work is valued differently from men's work, competition from the private sector, and women's tendency to value their own work less. One of the important challenges ahead is increasing the number of women on boards and as directors of corporations and institutions. Research has shown that there is a need to identify gender equality principles in wage policies of corporations and institutions and job evaluation needs to be standardised.

The Government continues to develop policies and promote initiatives that focus on decreasing the gender pay gap and its causes. This includes:

- Increased research on the gender pay gap and its causes.
- Development of Equal-pay standard, led by the Ministry of Welfare in cooperation with various work market stakeholders and the national standards body.
- A legislation was passed by parliament requiring that companies with 50 or more employees have at least 40% women directors after 2013.

Equal Pay Standard

An Interim provision to the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men No. 10/2008, states that the Minister of Welfare shall ensure that a special certification system is developed with appropriate stakeholders to certify the implementation of the policy of wage equality and gender equality. In following this provision, equal pay standard (ISO standard) has been developed in cooperation with Icelandic Standards (IST), the national standards body of Iceland. This project is led by the Ministry of Welfare in cooperation with the Icelandic Confederation of Labour (ASÍ) and Confederation of Icelandic Employers (SA). The standard was made public in 2012 and was implemented in several companies experimentally. The minister of social affairs and equality has

proposed a change to the gender equality act nr. 10/2008 which requires all companies with 25 or more employees to adopt the equal pay standard.

Parental Leave

- The parental leave system provides parents with 9 months paid parental leave: three months for fathers, three for mothers and also three months to share, or for one of the parents to use six months.
- The three months earmarked for the mother and father, are not transferable.

In 2000, the law regulating parental leave changed dramatically. The new system provided for the first time a 3-month paternity leave. This was designed in order to encourage fathers to be more involved in caring for their young children. Initially the leave provided parents, who had been working full time, 80% of their salary. This innovation was immediately well received by fathers and very quickly close to 90% used their paternal leave. The average number of days used by fathers in 2007 was 101 days, while women used 181 days. Research has shown that this has had the following effects: fathers are building up closer relationships with their children and women and men are on a more equal footing in the workplace. However, the new parental leave system has not made the gender pay gap smaller.

The challenge during the recession was to protect the structure of the parental leave system and encourage fathers to continue using their rights. The Government was forced to lower the payments because of severe budget cuts and that affected parents' use of their leave. From late 2008, to early 2011, the maximum payment was cut by over 40% and the ratio was cut down to 75%. This led to fathers using less of their leave. Between 2008-2010 the number of leave benefits to fathers decreased by 8.9% and increased by 4.5% to women (in accordance with an increased number of births). The Parental Leave fund stressed that these measures should only be temporary, to avoid having a permanent negative effect on the law's objective.

However, in recent years, the maximum payment per month for a new parent has decreased from 535.700 kr. In 2008 to 370.000 in 2014. In 2014, the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing banded together a working group to recommend a new course of action to better uphold the original purpose of the parental leave system. A special emphasis was to made to assure that the loss of income for homes was minimal when new parents take leave from work to care for their children. Another emphasis was to secure the transformation from paternity leave to day care. A study in 2013 found that women are the majority of parents which adjust their working schedule to bridge the gap between the end of the paternity leave and day care. The decrease in maximum payment has coincided with the decrease in birth rates, which is the lowest in recorded history. In October 2016 the government agreed on increasing the maximum payment per month to 500.000 kr.

Childbirth Leave Fund:

<http://www.faedingarorlof.is/umsoknir--eydublod/application-for-payments-from-the-childbirth-leave-fund/>

Taxation System

The Icelandic tax system makes joint filing for married couples possible, but individual taxation for income. However, personal allowance is 100% transferable between married couples. Spouse's income is transferable between the third and second tax band to decrease taxation in the third (and last) band. Capital income is taxed jointly. For unmarried couples individual or joint filing is an option, they can choose joint filing and then taxation is exactly the same as for married couples. There are no childcare deductions or reliefs, but child-care services are subsidized by municipalities. Subsidies are paid to the childcare provider but not to parents. Child benefits are granted for each child until it is 18 years old. The benefits are mean tested and paid to both parents. Child benefits are not taxable income. This applies both to individual and joint taxation, as long as the couple is registered as cohabiting.

Political Representation

Parliament - Althingi

- The 2016 elections had the lowest voting participation since 1942. 79.2% of eligible voters voted. Since 1995 voting participation amongst women has been higher than amongst men. In the 2016 elections, 79.5% of women voted, as opposed to 78.8% of men.

The last Parliament elections² were held in October 2016. This time was unusual because the previous government was supposed to serve until April 2017, but mass protests forced the government to hold a new election early. The election resulted in the highest number of women in Parliament in history, or 30 (48%). Women were the majority in three parties: Bright Future, The Progressive party, and the Left Green party. However, only three women were made ministers out of eleven possible positions (27%).

Inter Parliamentary Union:

<http://www.ipu.org>

² Iceland elects on national level a head of state - the president - and a legislature. The president is elected for a four year term by the people. The General Assembly (Alþingi) has 63 members, elected for a four year term by proportional representation. Iceland has a multi-party system.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_in_Iceland

Municipal Councils

- Leading up to the 2010 municipal elections, various actions were initiated to improve the number of women in local councils.
- In 2010, candidates were overall 53.2% men and 46.8% women.
- In 2014, candidates were overall 56% men and 44% women.
- At the beginning of 2015, 26% of mayors and municipal council leaders were women and 74% were men.

Voting participation in the 2014 municipal election was the lowest on record, a mere 66.5% of eligible voters voted. Voting participation amongst women was higher than amongst men, and older voters voted more than younger voters. 21% of eligible voters with a foreign citizenship voted and overall number of eligible voters with a foreign citizenship was 10.183 people.

The increase of women in local councils has been slow in the last 50 years, but with increased dialogues and focus on the importance of women's participation in politics, the percentage of women in politics has steadily increased. Following the 2010 elections, the highest percentage of women council members in history was achieved, almost 40%. This was a 4% increase from the 2006 elections. The highest percentage of female council members was in Reykjavík, or 47%. In one municipality no woman was elected. In the 2006 elections, five municipalities had no female council members. Even though the overall numbers have improved, there are still many challenges ahead as seen in the 2014 elections where the percentage of female council members dropped. Furthermore, in 2010, out of the 185 candidate lists, 139 were led by men and 46 by women, which is a mere 25% of the lists. The percentage of women in the second seat was 62% and in three out of the four larger municipalities, female council members were still less than 40% of members.

Women and Men in the Public Sector

The percentage of women working for state institutions in 2014 was over 64% and over 61% of ministerial staff were women. The percentage of women and men varies in different levels of the government structure. Positions that do not require a university degree are occupied 80% by women; for those that require a university degree the percentage is 56%. The imbalance is however more explicit when looking at more senior positions: in 2015, women were 36% of managers of state institutions, in 2015 women were 24% of Ambassadors, 6% of foreign service delegates, 30% managers of state institutions and 9% of police officers. However, when looking at some positions, the percentage of women has improved. The number of women serving as municipal judges has increased from 32% to 35%, but there are still a number of courts where all judges are men and all head judges are men. In the case of the Supreme Court, out of 12 judges there is one woman. In early 2011, the number of women holding permanent secretary positions became equal to men which it still is.

Ministry of Finance:

http://www.ministryoffinance.is/state_personnel/

Education

- The number of children attending kindergarten has increased immensely in the last 30 years.
- For children under the age of 2: 9% in 1981 and 44% in 2009. In 2009, 95% of children aged 3 to 5 attended pre-schools (kindergartens).
- In 2014, male and women students were roughly the same percentage in secondary schools.
- In 2014, women were 66% of graduated students at the University of Iceland.
- Women are 60% of graduated master degree students, but the ratio of PHD graduates is more gender balanced.
- The percentage of women studying in universities has risen to 63% in 2016, from 57% in 1993.
- Under the age of 74, 28.8% of women have finished a university degree and 21.7% of men.
- Within the age group 25-29 years, 41% of women have finished a university degree and 23% of men.

At the same time as women's education is increasing, the labour market is still highly gender segregated. Women are a large majority of those working in the public sector, mostly in care-taking, teaching and other services, while more men work in the private sector in construction, fishing and have most of the top positions in the finance sector. Many young men turn their back on university education, or even education in general.

- It is important to monitor the changes in educational choices of women and men and analyse its effects on the labour market.
- Access to day care has been stressed as a key factor in ensuring gender equality in the labour market.

Ministry of Education, Science and Culture:

<http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/>

Health

- Life expectancy in Iceland is on average at birth 82,9 years, 81,3 for men and 84,5 for women.

Iceland has universal health care. The health care system is largely paid for by taxes and to some extent by service fees and is administrated by The Ministry of Welfare. Healthcare expenditures account for a considerable share of the government budget. Every citizen is entitled to some degree of medical coverage. The legal framework concerning health services guarantees everyone access to the optimal health services provided in order to safeguard mental, physical and social health. The Icelandic health service has ranked highly globally due to favourable statistics on longevity and low rate of infant mortality. However, after the financial crisis in 2008 the Government made budget cuts in spending for health services (UPR 2011). In addition to the budget cuts, the economic crisis also affected the health of individual women and men. Increased unemployment, economic insecurities and other stress related issues led to various health issues. However, more research needs to be done before any clear picture can emerge. The economic recession has not only had effects on the health of individuals, it also led to temporary increased birth rates (2009) and an increased number of abortions (Resource: Konur í kreppu 2011). However, birth rates have lowered significantly in the past few years and is now at its lowest in recorded history and the number of abortions have decreased to relatively similar levels as before the crisis.

Reproductive Health and Rights

Since the late 1800's Iceland has experienced advances in health care issues and health care services. The women's movement was crucial in advocating for increased awareness on various health issues and played a key role in addressing infant and maternal mortality. Iceland has one of the lowest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world. With increased social engagement of women through women's rights organisations and political engagement as elected officials, women advocated for decades for the establishment of a National Hospital, through social and political lobbying and fundraising. The Hospital was opened in 1930. In 1975 an act legalising abortions was approved.

- In 2007, there were 4560 births, by 2009 there were 5027 births and then in 2015 there were 4129 births.
- In 2014, the infant mortality rate in Iceland was among the lowest in the world, i.e. 2.1 per 1000 live-births.
- The mortality rate for children under the age of 5 is 2 per 1000 live births.³
- In 2008, maternity mortality ratio per 100 000 live births was 4.⁴

³ World Health Organisation (2015), Iceland: health profile. <http://www.who.int/gho/countries/isl.pdf>

⁴ WHO, *ibid*.

- In 2014, under 30% of children were born to married parents (29,5%) which was the first time that number had gone under 30%. Approximately 53% of children were born in registered partnerships and 17% of children were born out of wedlock or partnerships.
- The number of abortions increased in 2008-2014, in comparison to the previous four years, i.e. 5% compared to the average during the period of 2000–2008.
- In 2000, women were 67.5% of individuals that got sterilization procedures; in 2014, they had gone down to 20%.
- In 2014, 121 women got sterilization procedure while 463 men did the same.

Birth Rates

Women's birth rate in Iceland has decreased by half from its highest rate in 1960, when women in Iceland had on average 4 children during their lifetime. By 2003 the birth rate was down to 2, but after 2005 it rose to 2.1 and in 2009 it was 2.2. Then it started to decrease again and by 2015 it was 1,805, the lowest in recorded history which many have attributed to the significant decrease in parental leave payments and the increasing financial burdens of young people. The average age of new mothers in 2015 was 27.4 years compared to 26.9 years in 2012. The average age of new fathers in 2015 was 30 years, compared to 29.7 years in 2012.

Abortions

In the current act on abortions (No. 25/1975), an abortion is permitted based on medical criteria and social conditions before the 12th week of pregnancy. After the sixteenth week abortions are only permitted based on medical reasons. According to the Directorate of Health, abortions increased every year from 2004 to 2009 when the total number of abortions was 981. Since then, the number of abortions has decreased and in 2014, the total number of abortions was 951. Most abortions are performed before the 9th week of pregnancy. In most cases the reason for the abortions are social conditions. The biggest increase has been amongst women aged 25-29, reaching an all-time high in 2009.

Cancer

Cancer registration in Iceland is compulsory and the Directorate of Health is responsible for all registration. A nationwide screening programme for cervical cancer has been operating since 1964 and for breast cancer since 1987. There is an on-going debate whether Iceland should take up nationwide colorectal cancer screening in the near future. Around one in three Icelanders can expect to be diagnosed with cancer during his or her lifetime. All cancer cases as of December 31st 2014 were in total 13.103 individuals, 5829 men and 7274 women. During the period 2010 – 2014, the average annual number of new cancer cases was 746 men and 704 women. Over 50% of cancers are diagnosed after the age of 65 years and cancer causes 25% of all deaths in Iceland. Five-year relative survival for all cancer has more than doubled since the year 1955.

Further information:

<http://www.krabbameinsskra.is/indexen.jsp?id=a>

Artificial Insemination

In 2008, single women in Iceland got the right to artificial insemination. This was previously only available to women in registered partnerships or common law-marriage. This change came following similar legislations in Denmark and Finland and was amongst other things a response to an increased number of single parents, growing public support for diverse family patterns and increased gender equality. This legislative change entails that single mothers that use this option can be registered as the only parent of their child.

Other Health Issues

- **Smoking:** According to a Statistic Iceland survey in 2014 46% of men had never smoked and 48% of women. The percentage of daily smokers has gone from 18.2% of women and 20.7% of men in 2007, down to 15.2% of women and 15.7% of men in 2009 and that downward trend continued in 2014, where a study found that 12% of women are daily smokers and 11% of men.
- **Sexually Transmitted Diseases:** The number of registered cases of STDs has increased in recent years. The ratio between women and men that have chlamydia has been constant since 2003; in 2014, men were 39.4% and women 60.6%, but the ratio for women and men with gonorrhoea has gone from men 75% and women 25% in 2007, to almost equal numbers.⁵
- **HIV:** Amongst individuals with HIV the ratio of women and men is quite different and has also changed substantially in the last few years. In the period between 2000 and 2016, men were usually in the majority of HIV infected, 13 in total. 4 women in total were infected during that period.
- **Deaths:** There is a considerable difference in the number of deaths of women and men. According to Statistics Iceland, in 2009 77 men and 56 women died of myocardial causes and of deaths caused by other coronary heart diseases men were 127 and women 90. In 2009 the ratio of men dying of other causes was higher, except for the number of individuals who died of accidental causes, of which women were 14 and men 11.
- **Vaccination:**
As of 2011, all girls aged 12 receive vaccination against HPV infections and cervical cancer.
- **Prescription Drugs Consumption:** Women aged 15-74 are the majority of individuals that receive drug prescriptions. The consumption of sleep and sedative medicines has increased since 2006 and women are 64% of prescription receivers.

⁵ Here we have to take into account that the numbers are very low, 15 men and 5 women in 2007.

Health statistics:

<http://www.statice.is/>

More on the Icelandic Health Care System:

<http://www.who.int/countries/isl/en/>

http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/80844/e82881.pdf

http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/103218/e88737.pdf

Violence against Women

- A study conducted in 2010 revealed that:
 - 42% of Icelandic women had since the age of 16, been subjected to violence, threat or physical contact of a sexual nature that caused distress.
 - 22% of women had since the age of 16, experienced violence in close relationships.
 - 1-2% of women aged 18-80 have been subjected to violence in close relationships in a 12-month period before the survey.
 - Only 22% approached organisations or institutions that provide services to victims of violence.
 - Only 13% reported the last incident of violence to the police.
- State prosecution office 2013:
 - 84 cases of rape were reported to the prosecution office
 - In 29 of these cases, charges were made
 - 21 cases led to convictions in district courts
 - 23 cases appealed to the Supreme court
 - 1 case before the Supreme Court resulted in acquittal.
- Statistics show that only a small proportion of rape victims file charges, and in even fewer cases indictments or convictions are given.

Protecting women against violence. Council of Europe, 2010:

http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/violence-against-women/cdeg_2010_12en.pdf

Research on Violence against Women

As part of the Action Plan against Violence against Women (2006-2011), an extensive research project was undertaken to assess the extent and nature of violence against women in close relationships. The research had 6 components that included a phone survey including 3000 women aged 18-80 (some results in bullet points above), and 5 qualitative studies researching the following sectors: municipal social services, child protection, pre- and elementary schools, health services, police and civil society organizations. The research results provide important information on this issue, services provided and gaps that need to be addressed. Plenty of challenges still exist for stakeholders and service providers that provide support or services for victims of gender based violence. These challenges include: the need for more expert knowledge, uniform registration of victims, uniform analysis of data, more training of staff, clearer organisation of roles and communications between stakeholders, more cooperation between stakeholders and increased services.

The National Commissioner of Police and the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police issued an extensive research report on domestic violence, reviewing 993 cases from the period 2006-2007. In those cases, the perpetrators were 787, 76% men and 24% women. 7% of the male victims and 15% of the female victims were reported more than once. In more than half the cases there was a previous history of violence.

A study in 2015 from RIKK found that approximately half of women (50,4%) in the service industry had been subjected to some form of sexual harassment and 26,4% of men.

Several studies have found that sexual violence against disabled women is more prevalent than previously thought. Furthermore, the violence is often silenced and the survivors are not given adequate legal- and/or psychological help.

On the lighter side, there has been significant progress in the prosecution of domestic violence. In 2010, 94% of cases reported to the police were dropped and in 2015, that percentage had dropped to 3%. This is a result of the Keeping the Window Open project and new legislations which allow the police to forcibly remove perpetrators from homes and issue restraining orders more easily.

Changes in legislation

In the last few years very significant changes in legislation regarding violence against women have taken place. After many years of advocacy from civil society and some parliamentarians, crucial changes have been put in effect by parliament, which helps combating violence against women. Act No. 61/2007 introduced amendments to the section of the General Penal Code (No. 19/1940, with subsequent amendments, see: <http://eng.domsmalaraduneyti.is/laws-and-regulations/nr/1145>), dealing with sexual offences. Amendments were made to Articles 194-199 of the code, covering rape and other offences against the sexual freedom of the individual (cf. Article 205) and also Articles 200-202, dealing with sexual offences against children (cf. Article 204).

In 2009, the government approved an action plan to combat human trafficking, which included several suggestions for changes in legislation. The same year the purchasing of sexual services was made illegal, with changes to the 206th article of the Penal Code. It is illegal to advertise and to benefit from prostitution, e.g. through pimping and other means. Iceland has thereby joined Sweden and Norway in defining prostitution as one form of violence against women that must be eliminated. The act is based on the Swedish model (No. 408/1998), which pioneered the notion that it is the role of the state to fight against the commodification of sex and therewith condemn the commodification of the human body. Another crucial step was taken in 2010, when a full ban on strip clubs was enacted with a change in the act on Restaurants, accommodations and entertainment (No. 85/2007), banning the profiting from nudity. This enabled the authorities to close down all strip clubs, which have been linked with prostitution, human trafficking and other illegal activities.

In June of 2011, Althingi approved a law (No. 85/2011) that improves the provisions in the Penal Code that authorities have to protect victims of domestic violence. This law provides provisions authorizing the removal of the party accused for domestic violence from the household and putting in place a specific restraining order should there be a suspicion of violence. It is based on the Austrian model, where the victim of domestic/partner violence is protected and the perpetrator is removed. The chief of police rules if there is a need to enact these provisions, and the district court has to confirm the

ruling within three days. In addition, the police have to notify the child protection authorities (if children are involved) and the municipality social services.

These changes in legislation have already had a significant impact on the prosecution of cases involving domestic violence. The increased cooperation between the municipality social services and the police have led to increased prosecution of perpetrators and protection for victims. For example, in the Suðurnesjum, the rate of reported cases dropped, has decreased from 94% in 2010 to a mere 3% in 2015.

The Istanbul treaty was signed by Iceland in 2011 and is currently being implemented. The treaty was made during a convention by the Council of Europe in Istanbul and it concerns the prevention of violence against women and domestic abuse. The Istanbul treaty is the first international treaty to obligate nations to protect and assist women who are survivors of sexual- and domestic abuse as well as education the public, the government and professions about the dangers involved and offer perpetrators some form of rehabilitation. Already, the Icelandic government has made legislative changes to the criminal law 19/1940 in order to comply with the treaty. The changes included a new chapter on stalking, more severe punishment for domestic abuse and the extension of statute of limitations for victims under the age of 18.

Plan of Action to Deal with Violence in Close Relationships and Sexual Violence

In 2006, the government launched an action plan containing 37 actions to fight sexual and domestic violence. The chief objective of the plan was to combat domestic and sexual violence directed towards women and children and to improve services for victims of such violence and those who are at risk. The actions include strengthening preventative measures, training of staff, ensuring appropriate assistance to victims and breaking the vicious cycle of violence by improving treatment available to perpetrators. Based on the 2006 action plan, five books on violence in close relationships have been published, one textbook for university and four for civil servants working in the field.

The action plan expired in 2010 and in 2012, a new action plan was under preparation and a working group was established to write it. The working group presented their suggestions but as of March 2017, no new action plan has been officially proposed.

Services

For victims of gender-based violence, sexual based violence and violence in close relationships, there are various organisations and institutions that provide services and support for victims. Here are few key service providers:

- **Emergency rape wards:** In Iceland there are operated two emergency rape wards for people who have suffered a rape, an attempted rape or other sexual violence. Specialised nurses, psychologists and doctors staff the wards. In addition, a team of lawyers work for the ward in providing victims with legal assistance and provide support for communicating with police authorities and judges. In 2015, 130 individuals came to the ward in Reykjavík and since it was opened in 1993, 1813 individuals have sought its services, thereof 689 (38%) aged 18-25.
- **The Women's shelter:** The Women's shelter is a shelter, for women and children when they are physically or psychologically abused in their home by a partner or other family member. The shelter also offers assistance for rape victims. It can provide shelter for 20 women. The shelter is a non-governmental organisation and was founded in 1982 and in addition to providing shelter and services for victims of violence in close relationships, the organisation advocates through education and raising awareness for an improved public and institutional understanding of the nature of violence in close relationships and improved protection for victims. In 2015, 396 women contacted the shelter for assistance, thereof 126 sought shelter and altogether 74 children.

Further information:

<http://www.kvennaathvarf.is/English/>

Stígamót - Education and Counselling Centre for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Violence: The centre is a non-governmental organisation founded in 1990 and provides counselling and education for survivors (women and men) of rape, sexual molestation, sexual harassment, pornographic exploitation and prostitution. The main focus of the centre is a self-help and empowerment approach. In addition, the centre works extensively on collecting data, providing training, education, international cooperation and raising awareness among the public and policy-makers. Since it opened, 7398 individuals have contacted the centre and in 2015, 677 individuals contacted the centre, 302 for the first time. In 2011, the centre opened a shelter for survivors of prostitution and human trafficking.

However, that shelter was closed in 2013 due to budgetary reasons. In addition, other organisations provide support for survivors of rape and violence in close relationships in different parts of Iceland.

Further information:

<http://stigamot.is/index.php/english>

Aflið: Education and Counselling Centre for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Violence: Aflið is a non-governmental organisation founded in 2002 in Akureyri as an association organisation of Stígamót. Aflið provides counselling and education for survivors of sexual abuse and/or domestic violence. Their main focus is to make individuals aware of their own strengths and assist them to use them to change their lives. The organisation has grown considerably in recent years and in 2015, a total of 1309 interviews were made. The number of new clients has been growing steadily, in 2013 they were 111, in 2014 they were 115 and in 2015 they were 121.

Sólstafir: Education and Counselling Centre for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Violence: Sólstafir is a non-governmental organisation founded in 2006 in Ísafjörður as an association organisation of Stígamót. Sólstafir provides counselling and education for survivors of sexual abuse and/or domestic violence. They view individuals who have experienced sexual abuse as strong survivors, not helpless victims and they aim to make them see their own strength and improve their self-esteem.

Dreklóð: Service Center for Survivors of Violence and their Loved-Ones: Dreklóð is a non-governmental service center for survivors of any kind of violence. They provide counselling for survivors of any kind of violence, such as sexual abuse, domestic violence and bullying. They also provide this service for disabled survivors, and the loved-ones of survivors.

- **A Peaceful home:** A Peaceful Home (formerly Men Take Responsibility), is a therapy program for men who resort to violence against their partners. The program started in 1998 as a four-year trial program and was modelled after the Norwegian *Alternative to Violence* program. In 2006 it was decided to restart the program, with financing from the Ministry of Social Affairs. This is the only therapy option available in Iceland for men who commit violence against their spouses. The therapy is based on individual and group psychological therapy sessions. This program is open only for men. There was a significant increase in the number of new individuals who came for interviews from 2012-2013 or 43.2%. This result can be attributed to the “Keeping the Window Open” project. In 2012, 34 new individuals came for an interview and in 2013, 53 new individuals came for an interview. In 2014, 54 new individuals came for an interview. The project is currently run in cooperation between the Women’s Shelter, Centre for Gender Equality and Ministry of Welfare, which funds the project. There is also a special programme for perpetrators under 18 years of age, run by the Prison and Probation Administration.

Further information:

heimilisfridur.is

Human Trafficking

Although very few victims have been identified, there are indications that Iceland has become a destination and a transit country for human trafficking in recent years, especially for women who are subjected to forced prostitution. Iceland may also be a destination country for women and men who are subjected to forced labour in restaurants and in the construction industry. Human trafficking is a criminal offence in Iceland. Fighting human trafficking is a priority for the Government. In 2009, a National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan was launched which outlined steps to improve prevention measures and formal provisions for victim assistance. A team to coordinate interagency anti-trafficking activities was set up in November 2009 to deal with human trafficking cases and assist victims, as well as to oversee the implementation of the Action Plan. Amongst the changes that have been implemented since the plan took effect, was the ratification of the Palermo Convention (Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000), this is in addition to new laws regarding prostitution and strip-clubs. Civil society organisations have been key actors in advocating for concrete measures against human trafficking and improved support for victims and survivors. In fact, services for victims are provided by such organisations, with governmental and municipal support. In 2010, STERK – Association against Human Trafficking and Prostitution, was established in order to raise awareness and provide education about the realities and consequences of trafficking in humans.

The Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings including report on Human Trafficking in Iceland. Ministry of Welfare, 2009:

[http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/acrobat-enskar_sidur/The Icelandic Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings.pdf](http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/acrobat-enskar_sidur/The_Icelandic_Action_Plan_against_Trafficking_in_Human_Beings.pdf)

Also: Report on the Nature and Scope of Trafficking in Persons. Red Cross Iceland & RIKK, 2009:

http://redcross.lausn.is/Apps/WebObjects/RedCross.woa/swdocument/1041254/lika_a_Islandi_sam_antekt_ensku.pdf?wosid=false

STERK – Association against Human Trafficking and Prostitution:

<http://www.sterk.is>

Media

- Despite improvements in recent years, women are still a minority in the Reporters Union of Iceland, but the percentage of women has never been higher (2015: 43%).

As part of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) research was conducted in Iceland in 2009, analysing one day of media coverage. The results, published in 2010, show that women are in a minority in Icelandic media, i.e. 27%, when looking at the number of women working in media, what is covered and who is interviewed. The coverage involving women varies depending on news topics. Women are more prevalent in news covering social issues than economic, science and health, where men are more of a focus. Further analysis shows that in much of the news coverage traditional stereotypes are maintained.

Things had regrettably not changed much for the better in 2015. A study commissioned by the Ministry of Welfare and conducted by Creditinfo found that men were the subjects of media coverage 70% of the time and women 30% of the time. In the Ministry of Welfare's report on the evolution of gender equality from 2013-2015, the study is mentioned. It says that the image of women portrayed in the media has damaging effects by re-affirming gender stereotypes.

Recently, internet media are becoming increasingly popular. Feminist websites such as knuz.wordpress.com and kvennabladid.is are a good source of feminist- articles and think-pieces.

Men and Gender Equality

- In April 2016, unemployment amongst men was 4.9% (5% amongst women).
- In 2015, the average number of working hours per week for men was 48.1 hours (42 hours for women).
- A recent study shows that men are 90% of CEOs, Executive managers and board members of companies with 50 or more employees.
- Fewer men graduate than women from the University of Iceland.
- In 2003, fathers got an independent non-transferrable right to three months of paid parental leave.
- The parental leave was immediately well received by fathers and very quickly close to 90% used their paternal leave.
- However, in 2014, 77% of fathers took paternity leave. This is a significant decrease from 2009, when 85.2% of fathers took paternity leave.
- In 1991 the Minister of Social Affairs established a committee on the role of men in gender equality issues. The committee delivered a report with recommendations in 1993.

- In 2003, the Men's group of the Feminist Association organised an annual national campaign focused on engaging men in the fight to end rape and other forms of gender-based violence.
- In 2011, the Minister of Welfare established a working group on men and equality responsible for putting forth suggestions for increasing men's involvement in issues related to gender equality.
- In 2013, that group published a report of their conclusions.
- In 2016, the report was influential in the proposed action plan for gender equality for 2016-2020 which was the first to have a sub-chapter on men and gender equality.

The Engagement of men in gender equality issues in Iceland has a substantial history and has been a recurring theme in the last few decades. Icelandic men have primarily organised themselves around parenthood and against violence against women.⁶ The engagement of men in gender equality has included supporting women's initiatives, governmentally established men's groups and various campaigns that engage men in combating violence against women. The most significant policy change the Icelandic government has implemented in order to change social attitudes and roles, was the parental leave act of 2000. This social policy initiative was designed to engage men in care work and change attitudes towards gender equality values (Gíslason 2008). The legislation was made possible after years of advocacy by various organisations and stakeholders, including the women's movements, parliamentarians, labour market organisations and men's groups. The engagement of men in gender equality has recently been highlighted by the current and previous Governments as a key element of moving forward in achieving gender equality. However, the progress towards gender equality has been slower than hoped and the changes of men's attitudes still have substantial limitations (Einarsdóttir, 2000).

A key element in addressing the challenges entailed in engaging men is increased research and data on the status and attitudes of men. The themes that have been researched are: men and parental leave, life-work balance and attitudes towards the gender pay gap. In a study from 1997 (Gíslason) which looked at Icelandic men's attitudes towards gender issues, the conclusion was that men in general have a positive attitude towards gender equality and they believe that women and men have the same rights and opportunities. However, when looking at attitudes towards domestic responsibilities and child rearing, it was considered the responsibility of women. In research conducted as part of the EC funded FOCUS project (Fostering Caring Masculinities, 2006) some positive changes in attitudes and participation were highlighted, even though women were still to a higher degree responsible for all household work than men except for mending the house and the car. The law on maternity/paternity leave in 2000 on the whole seems to have had a positive effect, at least so far as to involve more Icelandic fathers than ever before in the caring and raising of their young children. A study in 2014 about the attitude of youths toward gender equality shows that young men have still a

⁶ Ingólfur V. Gíslason quoted in *Men on the Menu*, NIKK April 2011

http://www.nikk.no/Men+on+the+Menu.b7C_wljY0.ips

somewhat conservative view towards domestic work and child rearing. However, overall their views have progressed since the same study was conducted in 2006.

Statistics about the custody of children after divorce indicates that parents are increasingly cooperating in the upbringing of their children. There has been a significant increase in joint custody since it became an option in Icelandic legislation in 1992 and now almost 75% of parents take that option. Research points in the same direction (Sigrún Júlíusdóttir & Nanna K. Sigurðardóttir 2000). But on the other hand, the numbers of single fathers have not grown in Iceland, clearly showing that it is still the mother who is the child's main care provider. However, some custody issues have been debated and various associations have been founded that focus on reforms on custody legislation and improved custody rights of fathers.⁷

Gíslason (2010) pointed out that having children has a positive effect on men's salaries but a negative effect on women's. The younger the child, the more pronounced are the effects. Having children has an opposite effect on the working patterns of fathers and mothers. The more children a man has, the longer his working hours are, while the reverse is true for women (Gíslason, 2006). Pétursdóttir (2010) pointed out in an interview study that many men see themselves primarily as breadwinners, reflected in their long working hours and their degree of participation in childcare and domestic labour, which is less than their spouses.

In 1991, the Ministry of Social Affairs (now the Ministry of Welfare) appointed a committee to look into the status of men in a changed social context, related to increased participation in parenting and household duties. The committee published a report in 1993. In 1994 the Gender Equality Council formed a committee, a Men's Group, focused on increasing men's participation in the discourse on gender equality. The work of this committee led to various initiatives and research studies. In the beginning of 2011, and as part of the new action plan for gender equality the Minister of Welfare appointed a working group tasked with the objective of creating proposals on how to increase the participation of men in gender equality issues. The group looked into a number of issues, including education and vocational choices, gender stereotypes and participation in care work. In addition, the group established partnerships for researching the status of men in Icelandic society. The working group was appointed for one year and the members of the group are only men. In 2013, the group published a report on their conclusions which was influential in the proposed action plan for gender equality for 2016-2020.

UN Women's #HeForShe campaign launched in 2014 and Iceland and Suriname contributed the Barbershop Conference. The purpose of that conference is to rally men and boys to uphold gender equality. It was first held at the UN in New York on 14th and 15th of January in 2015. The conference was made up of politicians, celebrities, diplomats and gender equality campaigners to discuss how to include more men and boys in the cause of gender equality. The name Barbershop alludes to places where men come together and discuss women. In such places, gender stereotypes are often reinforced, and it is in such places where stereotypes can be changed.

⁷ Félag um foreldrajafrétti: www.foreldrajafrretti.is

Youth and Gender Equality

In a recent study on Nordic Youth aged 16 to 19, a considerable percentage of Icelandic youth display conservative views on issues that relate to gender equality. When asked if women should stay at home and take care of the young children, 46.3% of the male youth and 28.5% of the female agree strongly or agree somewhat. The study showed that despite close to 90% of the Icelandic participants (male 87.8% and female 96.3%) agreeing that women and men should have equal rights, many of the answers depicted contradictory, even conservative views of both young men and women. Other studies reveal that attitudes among Icelandic adolescents towards gender equality have become more negative in recent years (Hjalmsdottir & Bjarnason, 2008). One particular study showed that tenth graders in 2006 were found to have more traditional ideas on the division of labour than the same age group did in 1992 (Hjalmsdottir, 2007). Negative attitudes towards gender equality and even an outspoken backlash towards feminism seem to be accepted among many youths (Hjalmsdottir, 2009). It has been indicated in various studies and debates that popular culture and increased consumption of pornography are having a major negative impact on the attitudes and views of youth, especially young men. The Nordic study showed for example that around 75% of the young Icelandic men participating in the study, viewed pornography once or more than once a week.

In 2014, the same questions were asked of that age group, i.e. tenth graders. The results were more promising than in 2006. The results were remarkably similar to the results from the 1992 study. Overall, the girls were more inclined towards gender equality. However, the views expressed by that age group still reflect a traditional labour division within the home.

The current Act on Gender Equality clearly states the importance of improving education on gender equality issues. The Centre for Gender Equality, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Welfare, various municipalities and civil society organisations have been increasing their focus on youth and gender equality issues. Several municipalities are working on projects focused on addressing the issue in youth centres and sports associations. The Ministry of Education recently added gender equality as one of the pillars of the main curriculum and in 2010, it published a textbook (Kynungabók) for youths on gender equality issues. The objective of the textbook is to provide youths (i.e. students in compulsory school, secondary school and even University) with a realistic picture of the status of women and men in Icelandic society and in addition to illustrate that gender equality concerns both women and men, to get them to look critically at cultural gender constructs and most importantly raise awareness amongst young people about their rights. The textbook is considered an important step in developing increased education on gender equality issues.

Kynungabók – Information about Gender Equality for Young People (only available in Icelandic). Ministry of Education, 2010:

http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf-namskrar/Kynungabok_2010.pdf

“Reality Bites” Attitudes Towards Gender Equality Among Icelandic Youth. Andrea Hjalmsdóttir, 2009. MA thesis:

https://circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/13141/ubc_2009_fall_hjalmsdottir_andrea.pdf?sequence=1

The Nordic Youth Research among 16 to 19 year olds in Åland Islands, Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden - October 2010

http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf_reports/Youth_and_welfare_Report.pdf

Youth College Students 16 to 20 years Education, culture, leisure, sports activities and future vision among college youth in Iceland
http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf_reports/Youth-in-Iceland_College-students.pdf

Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Persons

Since 1996 discrimination on the grounds of “sexual orientation” is subject to penalty under the General Penal Code. The same year, registered partnership between same-sex couples was given the same legal status as marriage except for certain limitations regarding adoptions. In 2010 this difference between marriages and registered partnerships was abolished, and the Marriage Act now applies to both heterosexual and same-sex couples. The status of a registered partnership can be changed to a marriage at the registration office, i.e. Registers Iceland. That same year an amendment was made to the Act on Artificial Fertilisation, whereby lesbian couples were given the right to in vitro fertilization. The National Organization of Lesbians and Gay Men in Iceland (now National Queer Organization) was founded in 1978, resulting in a more open discussion of homosexuality. Although prejudices were strong at that time, attitudes have shifted dramatically. The Organization has in the recent years emphasised the rights of transgender persons in Iceland. A recent opinion of the Althingi Ombudsman has highlighted the lack of legal framework and called for legislation in order to protect the rights of transgender people. Although there are no legal rules on medical treatment, a code of practice is followed, similar to that applied in other Nordic countries. Practice relating to name-change has recently been modified, following investigation by the Althingi Ombudsman. Change of name and sex in Registers Iceland is now possible upon request after one year of hormonal treatment. In March 2011 the Minister of Welfare appointed a working group on the legal status of transgender persons. (Source: Universal Periodic Review: Icelandic National Report 2011)

In 2014, the Ministry of Welfare sanctioned the creation of a special committee concerned with legal issues related to LGBTQIA people. The committee became operational in April 2014 but has as of yet (March, 2017) not published an action plan.

Samtökin '78, The National Queer Organization:

<http://www.samtokin78.is/>

Legal Framework

Constitution

The principle of equality is specifically addressed in a provision in the Constitution of the Republic of Iceland (see Article 65 of the Constitution, No. 33/1944, cf. the Constitutional Law Act, No. 97/1995), stating that men and women are to have equal rights in every respect. Iceland is a representative democracy and a parliamentary republic. The Icelandic Constitution is the highest-ranking legal instrument in the Icelandic legal order. All laws, regulations and executive actions must comply with its provisions. The Constitution not only provides the basis for the organisation of state power but also guarantees certain human rights and fundamental freedoms such as the freedom of religion, freedom from interference with privacy, home and family life and freedom of association and assembly. In 1995 fundamental amendments to the human rights provisions of the Constitution were enacted. Currently the Constitution is under review. An emphasis has been put on public participation in the review process. The Parliament appointed 25 delegates to a constitutional Council in 2011. The Council delivered its proposals for an amended Constitution to Althingi during the summer of 2011. Some of the proposed amendments regarded gender equality issues.

On October 25th in 2012, a nationwide election was held to vote on the specific amendments proposed by the Council. Some amendments were accepted but as of March 2017, they have not been followed through.

The Constitution:

<http://www.government.is/constitution/>

The Constitutional Council:

<http://stjornlagarad.is/english/>

Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men

Iceland has had a special statute intended to ensure equality between women and men and their equal status in all respects since 1976. The current Gender Equality Act dates from 2008. The aim of the act is to establish and maintain equal status and equal opportunities for women and men, and thus promote gender equality in all spheres of society. All individuals shall have equal opportunities to benefit from their own enterprise and to develop their skills irrespective of gender.

This aim shall be reached by:

- Gender mainstreaming in all spheres of the society
- Increasing education and awareness-raising on gender equality
- Working towards equal influence of women and men in decision-making and policy-making in the society
- Analysing statistics according to gender

- Increasing research in gender studies
- Working against wage discrimination and other forms of gender-based discrimination on the employment market
- Working against gender-based violence and harassment
- Enabling both women and men to reconcile their work and family life
- Changing traditional gender images and working against negative stereotypes regarding the roles of women and men

The law includes several improvements including:

- A minimum quota of 40% in governmental (state and municipal) committees and councils, if the body consists of more than three members.
- Gender mainstreaming institutionalised.
- Employees have the right to disclose their wages.
- Advertisements in media that are derogatory i.e. which demean, debase or disrespect women or men or counteract the equal status of women and men, are banned.
- Prevention against gender-based violence is prioritised.

The Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men No. 10/2008:

<http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/acts-of-Parliament/nr/4203>

Act on Maternity/Paternity Leave and Parental Leave

A large step in the direction of equality was taken when fathers' right to paternity leave was expanded to the same level as mothers' under the current Maternity/Paternity Leave and Parental Leave Act No. 95/2000. The paternity leave system provides parents with 9 months paid parental leave: three months for fathers, three for mothers and also three months to share. The three months earmarked for the mother and father are not transferable. The new system provided for the first time a 3-month paternity leave earmarked for men.

In recent years, the maximum payment per month for a new parent has decreased from 535.700 kr. In 2008 to 370.000 in 2014. In 2014, the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing banded together a working group to recommend a new course of action to better uphold the original purpose of the parental leave system. A special emphasis was to made to assure that the loss of income for homes was minimal when new parents take leave from work to care for their children. Another emphasis was to secure the transformation from paternity leave to day care. A study in 2013 found that women are the majority of parents which adjust their working schedule to bridge the gap between the end of the paternity leave and day care. In October 2016 the maximum payment per month on parental leave was set to 500.000 kr.

Act on Maternity/Paternity Leave and Parental Leave:

https://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/acrobat-enskar_sidur/Act-on-maternity-paternity-leave-with-subsequent-amendments.pdf

Childbirth Leave Fund:

<http://www.faedingarorlof.is/umsoknir--eydublod/application-for-payments-from-the-childbirth-leave-fund/>

Amendments concerning gender quotas in Corporations

Following an amendment to the laws on public limited companies (No. 2/1995) and private limited companies (No. 138/1994), companies that have over 50 employees are obligated to have both women and men on their company boards and if the board-members are more than three, the percentage of women or men cannot be under 40%. These amendments also included changes that will make monitoring easier. These changes took effect in 2013. Research has shown that official laws are far more efficient in equalling the playing field in the work force than pressure and will from civilians and organizations.

Gender Based Violence

Sexual offences

Act No. 61/2007 introduced amendments to the section of the General Penal Code (No. 19/1940, with subsequent amendments) dealing with sexual offences. Amendments were made to Articles 194-199 of the code, covering rape and other offences against the sexual freedom of the individual (cf. Article 205) and also Articles 200-202, dealing with sexual offences against children (cf. Article 204). One of the innovations introduced into the code was a broadening of the definition of rape, with the result that “rape” in Article 194 of the code now includes other forms of sexual coercion and the exploitation of the victim’s poor mental condition or inability to resist the action or to realise its significance. As a result of the amendment, offences in this category now carry far heavier punishments than before: imprisonment of 1-16 years, instead of a maximum of six years previously. Furthermore, circumstances leading to the imposition of heavier punishments for rape are defined in the law. Allowance is made for heavier punishments, firstly, if the victim is a child under the age of 18, secondly if the violence committed by the perpetrator is of major proportions and thirdly if the offence is committed in a way that inflicts particularly serious pain or injury. Authorisation was introduced by the amendment providing for consideration to be given to repeated offences within the broad category of sexual offences; thus, a previous conviction for an offence of this type may lead to a heavier punishment being imposed for a subsequent offence. Allowance is made for an increase of up to one half in the punishment imposed.

The implementation of the Istanbul treaty has already yielded a change in the legislation of sexual offences in 2016. The change included a harsher punishment for domestic abuse, a maximum of 16 year imprisonment depending on the severity of the offence. Another change was a new article regarding forced marriage, an offence deserving of up to 4 year imprisonment. Furthermore, the statute of limitations is to be expanded for children under the age of 18. The statute of limitations starts on the day the victim turns 18 years old.

Excerpts from the General Penal Code, No. 19/1940, with subsequent amendments:

Chapter XXII - Sexual Offences and Chapter XXIII - Homicide and Bodily Harm:

<http://eng.innanrikisraduneyti.is/information/nr/119>

Prostitution

In 2010, the purchasing of prostitution was made punishable by law, through changes in the general penal code. (Article No. 206). It is illegal to advertise and to benefit from prostitution, e.g. through pimping and other means.

Strip clubs

In 2010, a full ban on strip clubs was enacted with a change in the act on restaurants, accommodations and entertainment (No. 85/2007), banning profiting from nudity. This enabled the authorities to close down all strip clubs, which have been linked with prostitution, human trafficking and other illegal activities.

Violence in Close Relationships

In June of 2011, the Parliament approved a law (No. 85/2011) that improves the provisions that authorities have to protect victims of domestic violence. This law provides provisions such as authorizing the removal of the party accused for domestic violence from the household and putting in place a restraining order should there be a suspicion of domestic violence.

In April 2016, the Parliament approved a new provision of the criminal code no. 19/1940 on the punishment of perpetrators who commit violence in close relationships. This change was made because of a treaty with the European Council on the prevention and struggle against violence against women and domestic abuse.

Other Legislation

Acts in Respect of Children:

<http://eng.innanrikisraduneyti.is/laws-and-regulations/english/children/nr/916>

Inheritance Act:

<http://eng.innanrikisraduneyti.is/laws-and-regulations/english/inheritance/>

Law in Respect of Marriage:

<http://eng.innanrikisraduneyti.is/laws-and-regulations/english/marriage-and-civil-union/nr/112>

Rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons:

- Discrimination on grounds of “sexual orientation” is subject to penalty under the General Penal Code.
- The Law in Respect of Marriage now applies to both heterosexual and same-sex couples.

International Obligations and Legislation concerning Gender Equality

- The Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).
- All EU directives concerning gender equality.

Universal Periodic Review: Icelandic National Report 2011

<http://www.innanrikisraduneyti.is/media/frettir-2011/Mannrettindaskyrslan---lokaeintak-sent.doc>

Action Plans and Strategies

Parliamentary resolution on a three-year gender equality action programme, 2016-2019

Althingi has passed six action plans on measures to implement gender equality since 1985. The government approved a new action plan in 2016 for the period 2016-2019, the previous action plan had expired in 2014.

The action plan is based on experience from previous action plans. It's divided into 7 chapters and introduces 21 projects to tackle within its timeframe. These projects include: to integrate a gendered perspective into all aspects of governmental policy- and decision making, to promote equal pay for equal work, to fight against gender stereotypes in the workforce and in the media, to promote gender equality in schools, to promote a less gendered labour market and equal opportunity for all. An interesting novelty in the proposed action plan is a chapter devoted to men and gender equality. The previous action plan included the creation of a working group of men to discuss and present a report on gender equality from men's perspective as well as propose solutions to various problems of gender inequality. That report influenced this chapter. The aim of this chapter is to involve more men in all aspects of gender equality policy- and decision making both domestically and internationally. It is proposed that the propositions of the aforementioned men's working group will be put into action. Another main emphasis of the action plan is to combat gendered violence and violence against children. Lastly, the action plan mentions Iceland's international duties toward gender equality.

Plan of Action to deal with Sexual Violence and Violence in Close Relationships

In 2006, the government launched an action plan containing 37 actions to fight sexual and domestic violence. The chief objective of the plan was to combat domestic and sexual violence directed towards women and children and to improve services for victims of such violence and those who are at risk. The actions include: strengthening preventative measures, training of staff, ensuring appropriate assistance to victims and breaking the vicious cycle of violence by improving treatment available to perpetrators. The Government appointed a committee to write a new action plan to combat domestic and sexual violence for the period 2012 to 2015. The action plan was based on the lessons learned from the previous action plan (2006-2011), including extensive research on violence against women. In addition, the action plan focused on examining the context of sexually based offenses, prosecutions and juridical processes. The committee members were representatives from line ministries, the Centre for Gender Equality, state-prosecutor's office, capital police office, association of local authorities and NGOs that work with victims of domestic and sexual violence. However, no part of that action plan has been implemented as of August 2016 due to budget reasons.

Instead, three branches of government signed a cooperation agreement, the ministry of social- and housing, the ministry of internal affairs and the ministry of education to combat violence and its affects. The ministries are determined to increase awareness and education about violence and improve the teamwork and protocols surrounding police investigations.

In 2015, the state-police chief (ríkislögreglustjóri) commissioned new protocols concerning the treatment and registration of domestic violence reported to police. The new protocols were mainly based on the experimental project: *Keeping the window open* and new laws concerning restraining orders and evacuation from homes nr. 85/2011. Alongside the protocols, the danger evaluation for violence in close relationship model *B-SAFER* was implemented.

Plan of action 2006:

http://www.felagsmalaraduneyti.is/media/acrobat-enskar_sidur/Plan_of_Action_to_deal_with_Domestic_and_Sexual_Violence.pdf

Action Plan against Human Trafficking

In April 2013, the government approved a new Action Plan against Human Trafficking for the period 2013-2016. The objective of the Action Plan is to enhance the coordination of actions necessary to prevent human trafficking in Iceland. It specifies actions aimed at prevention and a special emphasis was made on education and prevention regarding human trafficking. A special team has held seminars all over the country to educate the community about the legalities and the identification of victims. There was also an emphasis placed on actions that aim at facilitating the prosecution of perpetrators. To oversee the implementation of the action plan, a specialist and coordination team was established. The roles of the teams were to supervise matters regarding human trafficking in Iceland, including providing training for professionals and civil servants, organizing educational campaigns, supervision of research and the registration of cases of human trafficking. It has since expired (March, 2017) and not new action plan has been proposed.

Also in Iceland - Report on the Nature and Scope of Trafficking in Persons 2009:

http://redcross.lausn.is/Apps/WebObjects/RedCross.woa/swdocument/1041254/lika_a_Islandi_sam_antekt_ensku.pdf?wosid=false

National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325

Iceland finalised its National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UN resolution 1325 (2000) in 2008. In preparing for the NAP the Ministry for Foreign Affairs consulted civil society organisations, academic institutions and its Nordic partners, which broadened the support and ownership of the NAP. The NAP is built on the main pillars of Iceland's foreign policy; respect for human rights; increased development cooperation and peaceful resolution of conflicts. Special emphasis is put on women's access at the negotiating table. The NAP is currently being revised and will i.a. take subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security in to account, (1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010)). It will be based on the Strategy for Iceland's Development Cooperation 2013-2016 and contain specific goals, clear indicators and transparent monitoring mechanisms.

Further information:

http://www.mfa.is/media/Utgafa/women_peace_security.pdf

Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Equality

The Minister of Social Affairs and Equality is in charge of implementing the gender equality legislation, and the Centre for Gender Equality is responsible for its administration. The Minister also appoints a Gender Equality Council and a Complaints Committee on Gender Equality. Within the Ministry of Welfare, a special department is in charge of Gender Equality. The Centre for Gender Equality, the Gender Equality Council and the Complaints Committee operate independently of each other.

Further information:

<http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/departments/gender-equality/>

The Centre for Gender Equality

The Centre is a national bureau and is in charge of administering the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men (No. 10/2008). The aim of the Act is to establish and maintain equal status and equal opportunities for women and men, and thus promote gender equality in all spheres of society.

The Centre provides counselling and education in the field of gender equality, for governmental and municipal authorities, institutions, companies, individuals and non-governmental organizations. The aim is to obtain a multi-dimensional continuous result. The centre also gives advice when needed, if individuals are considering sending complains to the Complaints Committee.

Strategies and methods:

- Mainstreaming
- Special actions and projects
- Awareness-raising
- Research
- Education and information
- Counselling
- Legal advice and supervision

Further information:

www.gender.is

The Gender Equality Complaints Committee

The task of the Gender Equality Complaints Committee is to examine cases and deliver a ruling in writing on whether provisions of act No. 10/2008 have been violated. The Committee's rulings may not be referred to a higher authority. In cases that may be expected to influence policy on the labour market as a whole, the Committee shall seek comments from the national federations of workers and employers before delivering its ruling. The rulings of the Complaints Committee shall be binding for the parties in question. The parties may refer the Committee's rulings to the courts.

Gender Equality Council

After each parliamentary election, the Minister of Social Affairs and Equality appoints a Gender Equality Council of eleven representatives. The representatives are nominated by the employees' and the employers' associations, various women's organisations, civil society organisations, academic institutions and the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland. The Gender Equality Council works in close contact with the Centre for Gender Equality and the Ministry of Welfare, with particular emphasis on promoting gender equality in the labour market and on the reconciliation of work and family life. The Gender Equality Council also contributes to the organisation of a bi-annual Gender Equality Forum in consultation with the Ministry of Welfare.

The Gender Equality Forum's purpose is to create a platform to assess and discuss gender equality issues in Iceland. The Minister of Social Affairs and Equality presents a report on the situation and developments in gender equality issues, including an overview and update of the projects implemented within the current gender equality action plan. The forum is open to all and the Gender Equality Council formally invites members of the Althingi (parliament), representatives of national and local government institutions, including their gender equality representatives, and representatives of social partners and non-governmental organisations that work on gender equality issues.

Municipality Gender Equality Committees

Following local government elections, the municipality's councils appoint gender equality committees to examine equal status and equal rights of women and men within their municipality. These committees shall advise local governments on gender equality issues, monitor and take initiative on measures, including affirmative action, to ensure the equal status and equal rights of women and men within their municipality. Each committee shall supervise the creation of a four-year action plan on gender equality that focuses on gender mainstreaming in all spheres of the municipality and actions to redress the imbalance in the representation of women and men within different sectors of the municipality. Gender equality programmes and action plans shall be submitted for approval by the relevant local government no later than one year after local government elections. Each committee shall every second year submit to the Centre for Gender Equality a report on the situation and developments in gender equality issues within the respective municipality.

Gender Equality Representatives

Each ministry shall have a gender equality representative with an expert knowledge of gender equality issues. The gender equality representative shall deal with, and monitor, gender equality work in the policy areas of the ministry in question and its institutions, i.e. the expert shall work on gender

mainstreaming in the fields administered by the ministry. Each year, the gender equality representatives shall send a report on the status and developments in gender equality issues in the policy areas of their respective ministries to the Centre of Gender Equality.

Educational Programmes and Institutions

University of Iceland

Gender Studies

At the University of Iceland, a Gender Studies programme has existed since 1996, for undergraduate, graduate and PHD students. The programme is now part of the Faculty of Political Science, but in addition many courses are available in other faculties. The programme focuses on providing students with broad and multidisciplinary perspectives. In addition, the objective is to provide critical knowledge and expertise in the practical implementation of gender equality principles.

The Centre for Women's and Gender Studies (RIKK)

The Centre is a research institution that was founded at the University of Iceland in 1991. It has been instrumental in coordinating and organizing women's studies and feminist research in Iceland. The Centre supports women's studies at academic level, publishes feminist research, orchestrates a lecture series and seminars during the academic year and provides an information service. The centre coordinates research projects on various subjects in the fields of sociology, gender research, anthropology etc. It participates in several Nordic and European projects and is now taking part in running several national projects. The centre also oversees Edda – Center for Excellence and GEST – The Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme.

Further information:

<http://www.rikk.hi.is>

GEST - The Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme

GEST is a joint project between the University of Iceland and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and is part of the Icelandic government's development cooperation efforts. The objective of the GEST Programme is to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in developing countries and post-conflict societies through education and training. Its main target group is professionals working for government and civil society organisations in developing countries and post-conflict societies undergoing reconstruction. The GEST Programme also offers short courses and seminars, which are open for professionals from both developed and developing countries. The GEST Programme is run by the University of Iceland and managed by EDDA – Centre of Excellence. The GEST Programme was launched in January 2009, and in January 2010, the first fellows completed the Programme.

Further information:

<http://gest.unu.edu>

Centre for Children and Family Research (ICE-CCFR)

The ICE-CCFR is a research and educational institution within the Faculty of Social Work and is located at the Social Science Research Institute at the University of Iceland. The Centre was established in 2006 in cooperation with institutions working on family issues in Icelandic society. City of Reykjavik's welfare service, the Ministry of Welfare, the Government Agency for Child Protection, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland Bishop's Office, Efling – Trade Union and Reykjanesbær municipality and later the Ombudsman for Children. ICE-CCFR aims to support research in the field of social work related to children and family affairs, policy, services and development. The institute will also take initiative in planning, developing and executing new projects in the field. By this the centre works for strengthening research in general and in social work and thereby enhancing scientifically based knowledge in the field. The objectives of ICE-CCFR are to produce high quality collaborative, inclusive research relevant to key issues in children and family affairs. The Centre was part of the violence against women research project published in 2010 and funded by the Ministry of Welfare.

Further information:

<http://www.rbf.is/about>

MARK - Centre for Research on Diversity and Gender

Mark operates within the Faculty of Social Sciences. The Centre was founded in the beginning of 2011 and is a forum for research and education in the studies of human rights and discrimination; and equality, gender and diversity studies in a broad sense. The objective is to enhance collaboration between domestic and foreign scholars, contribute to research and teaching in the field, provide consultations and reinforce perspectives by sharing knowledge. The Centre for Research on Diversity and Gender appertains to the Social Research Institute.

Further information:

http://english.hi.is/school_of_social_sciences/faculty_of_political_science/centre_research_diversity_and_gender

RannKyn - Centre for Research on Equality, Gender and Education

The centre was founded in 2010 at the School of Education at the University of Iceland. The objective of the institute is to provide a platform for academics and researchers in the field of education for research on equality, gender and education. The institute's aim is to achieve this through new research, support to students, cooperation, events and publications.

Further information:

http://menntavisindastofnun.hi.is/equality_gender_and_education/home

The Centre for Disability Studies

The Centre for Disability Studies (Rannsóknasetur í fötlunarfræðum) was founded in 2006. The Centre is an interdisciplinary site created for research in the area of disability studies in Iceland and which operates under the auspices of the Social Science Research Institute (Félagsvísindastofnun) at the University of Iceland. The Centre thus benefits from a wide range of experiences and expertise in a number of areas connected to disability. The role of the Centre is to increase and strengthen research in the field of disability studies, and the issues surrounding disabled people, by connecting research and teaching in disability studies, attracting scholars to work in this field and providing graduate students with a facility to do research. The Centre has a wide ranging collaboration with scholars, universities and research centres in a number of countries, and works with a number of disability advocacy groups, policy makers, agencies and professionals in the field of disability.

Further information:

<http://www.fotlunarfraedi.hi.is/english>

Women's History Archives

Women's History Archives are the repository of a large number of varied sources on the history of women in Iceland, including: Women's private papers, e.g. letters and diaries; plays, poems and stories by women; minutes of meetings, letters and other papers from Icelandic women's associations; newspaper clippings about the history of women, gender research, the struggle for equal rights and interviews with women. The mission of the archives is to collect, register and preserve records of the history of Icelandic women, past and present. The Archives act as a centre for the dissemination of information on the history of Icelandic women, helps find sources in this area, and encourages research on women's concerns. Women's History Archives are located in the National and University Library.

Further information:

<http://kvennasogusafn.is/index.php?page=english>

University of Akureyri

Research Centre against Violence

The Research Centre against violence was founded at the University of Akureyri in early 2011. The objective of the centre is to contribute to the combating of violence, including violence against children and violence in close relationships, through cooperation with institutions and organisations in Iceland and internationally. The centre plans to organise conferences, seminars and educational programmes in order to increase awareness on violence and its consequences. The centre also participates in research on this issue and provides research grants.

Secondary Schools

According to a study from 2014, in the school-year 2013-2014, an equal number of men and women were student body presidents. At the end of that school-year, 8 feminist organisations were operating in the secondary schools of Iceland. However, certain areas of school life did not represent an equal number of men and women. For example, a mere 9% of members in Iceland's film clubs and the study examined 11 videos produced by the film clubs. All but 3 failed the so-called Bechdel test (a film or video must have at least two female characters with names, who speak to each other about anything else but men). In the three videos that did not fail the test, prevailing gender stereotypes were present. The study concludes that the representation of gendered stereotypes has moved away from school papers to school films.

Further information:

<https://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/frettir/forsidugreinar/nr/8156>

Other Mechanisms and Institutions

Emergency Rape Wards

In Iceland there are two emergency rape wards in Reykjavik and Akureyri for people who have suffered rape, an attempted rape or other sexual violence. Specialised nurses, psychologists and doctors staff the wards. In addition, a team of lawyers work for the ward in providing victims with legal assistance and provide support for communicating with police authorities and judges. In 2014, 123 individuals came to the ward and since it was opened in 1993, 2452 individuals have sought its services. 265 individuals, 254 women and 11 men, came to the Emergency Reception Centre in the period 2013–2015.

The Icelandic Confederation of Labour (ASI)

ASI is a confederation of trade unions of general workers, office and retail workers, seamen, construction and industrial workers, electrical workers and various other professions in the private sector and part of the public sector. These trade unions are affiliated to 5 national federations, which in turn are affiliated to ASI. In addition, there are 7 national unions, which are directly affiliated to ASI. About two thirds of organised labour in Iceland are members of trade unions affiliated to ASÍ. The total number of members of ASÍ was about 109,000; thereof 98,000 members who were active on the labour market in 2010. Men were 53% of the members, women 47%. The role of ASI is to promote the interests of its constituent federations, trade unions and workers by providing leadership through co-ordination of policies in the fields of employment, social, education, environment and labour market issues. ASI represents the trade union movement at various levels of the government on issues such as labour law, employment and social policy, vocational education and training and occupational safety. The Confederation has a representative on the Gender Equality Council, has a Gender Equality Policy and a gender focal point. The policy's objective is to ensure that ASI is an active participant in the social discussion on gender equality and family issues, representing the views and focus of the labour unions.

Further information:

<http://www.asi.is/engpol/>

SA - Confederation of Icelandic Employers

The Confederation is a service organization for Icelandic businesses. Projects include negotiations of collective agreements with unions on wages and working conditions, the advocating of an internationally competitive legal and regulatory environment, and the interpretation and communication of decisions by governmental authorities that directly affect the business environment. The Confederation has a representative on the Gender Equality Council and also has various working groups, one of which is a working group on gender equality issues.

Further information:

<http://www.sa.is/um-sa/>

Federation of State and Municipal Employees

BSRB, Federation of State and Municipal Employees, is the biggest union of employees in public service in Iceland. The members work in the fields of postal services, customs, police, fire resistance, health care, education of pre-school children to name but a few. Municipalities as well as the governmental institutions employ BSRB members. BSRB is a confederation of 27 unions. Since BSRB was founded in 1942 the membership has increased steadily and is presently approximately 21,000 members, whereof two thirds are women. The Federation highlights gender equality as one of its priorities and has a representative on the Gender Equality Council.

Further information:

<http://www.bsrb.is/>

Association of Academics (BHM)

Association of Academics is the Icelandic organisation of trade Unions of Academics. There are 25 member-unions in BHM, consisting of around 11,000 employees. To be admitted to one of the member unions, an applicant must have completed a university program of at least 3 years' duration. The state, municipalities and other public entities employ most members, however in the last few years more members have been employed by the private sector. The three largest member-unions of BHM are The Icelandic Union of Natural Scientists, Frædagardur and the Association of University Teachers. Midwives, Psychologists and Veterinarians are among those with the longest academic education (6 years). The Association has a representative on the Gender Equality Council.

Further information:

<http://www.bhm.is/>

The Icelandic Teachers' Union (KÍ)

The Icelandic Teachers' Union has around 10.000 members, a majority of whom are women. KÍ fights for improved pay and better working conditions. Furthermore, The Icelandic Teachers' Union fights for improvements in education, one of the most important pillars of any society. Education is the key to social and economic health, to ensure that the future of Icelandic society is bright and that Iceland has a strong competitive position internationally.

Further information:

<http://www.ki.is/icelandic-teachers-union>

Civil Society/NGOs

In Iceland there exists a vast network of civil society organisations that focus on women's rights, gender equality and issues of gender-based violence.

The Icelandic Women's Rights Association (IWRA)

The Association was founded on January 27th 1907, in Reykjavik. In the beginning the main focus was on women's suffrage. In 1915, women 40 years and over received national suffrage and the right to hold office. The law was signed on June 19th and since then it has been celebrated as the Women's rights day in Iceland. IWRA's publication, named *19th of June*, was first published in 1951 and is one of the oldest magazines in Iceland. Main focus of IWRA currently is equality between men and women as elected officials in the Parliament and the municipalities, as well as gender balance in leadership positions in both public and private companies. Violence against women, prostitution, trafficking in women and the gender pay gap are also inequalities that IWRA works to eliminate.

Further information:

<http://kvenrettindafelag.is/about-us/our-history/>

Icelandic Women's Association (KÍ)

The Icelandic Women's Association was founded in 1930. The Association was established in order to unite all women's organisations in Iceland, especially those emphasizing the role of housewives. It now includes 200 organisations from all over Iceland. The Association supports various community actions, publishes a magazine and participates in various joint activities and projects with other organisations in Iceland, including Skottur and the annual UN 16 days of activism against gender based violence. In addition, the Association has a representative on the Gender Equality Council.

Further information:

<http://www.kvenfelag.is/>

The Women's Shelter

The Women's shelter is a safe shelter, for women and children who have been physically or psychologically abused in their home by a partner or other family member. The shelter also offers assistance for rape victims. It provides shelter for 20 women and is the only shelter in Iceland. The shelter is a non-governmental organisation and was founded in 1982 and in addition to providing shelter and services for victims of violence in close relationships, the organisation advocates through education and raising awareness for an improved public and institutional understanding of the nature of violence in close relationships and improved protection for victims. In 2015, 846 women contacted the shelter for assistance, thereof 126 who sought shelter, including altogether 74 children.

Further information:

<http://www.kvennaathvarf.is/English/>

Stígamót - Education and Counselling Centre for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Violence

The Centre is a non-governmental organisation founded in 1990 and provides counselling and education for survivors (women and men) of rape, sexual molestation, sexual harassment, pornographic exploitation and prostitution. The main focus of the Centre is a self-help and empowerment approach. In addition, the centre works extensively in collection of data, providing training, education, international cooperation and raising awareness among the public and policy-makers. Since it opened, 7398 individuals have contacted the centre and in 2015, 677 individuals contacted the centre, 302 for the first time. In 2011, the centre opened a shelter for survivors of prostitution and human trafficking. However, it was shut down in the beginning of 2014 due to budget reasons.

Further information:

<http://stigamot.is/index.php/english>

The Feminist Association of Iceland

The Association was founded March 13th 2003. The Feminist Association of Iceland is a free and independent forum with the goal to foster critical and feminist discussion in all areas of Icelandic society. The mission of the Association is to work for gender equality; to work against all kinds of sexual injustice such as pornography, sexist and demeaning advertisements, violence, trafficking and prostitution; to work against gender stereotypes; to work for working women, equal pay for equal jobs and more influence of women in resource and finance management; to make society more alert to both male and female viewpoints and roles. The Association bases its work on working groups, public forums and awareness raising campaigns.

UN Women National Committee Iceland

The UN Women (previously UNIFEM) National Committee has been very active in Iceland in recent years. Its activities include fundraising for UN Women, but also raising awareness, education, lobbying government and private sector stakeholders and participating in joint activities with other women's rights organisations in Iceland.

Further information:

<http://unwomen.is/>

STERK - Association against Human Trafficking and Prostitution

STERK was established in 2010, and is a prevention centre specialising in creating and disseminating information on the sex industry with a special focus on human trafficking and prostitution. Through research, education and awareness campaigns, the aim of the Association is to reduce the demand for human trafficking, prostitution, pornography and strip dancing. The main objective of the Association's activities is to reduce the number of women, men and children that are trapped in sexual slavery.

The Slut Walk

The slut walk is a part of a worldwide grassroots movements which challenge rape culture, victim-blaming and slut-shaming and works to end sexual and domestic violence. It was inspired by comments made by a Toronto constable who told women students to not “dress like sluts” if they want to avoid being victimized. These comments sparked worldwide outrage and students and others protested by dressing like “sluts”. Slut walks are now held worldwide, including in Iceland. The first slut walk was held in Iceland in 2011 and it has grown considerably since then. In 2015, in the wake of the free the nipple and beauty tips revolutions, the atmosphere was especially tense and some estimates put the number of people close to 30.000.

Further information:

<https://www.facebook.com/Drusluganga/>

Aflið: Education and Counselling Centre for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Violence

Aflið is a non-governmental organisation founded in 2002 in Akureyri as an association organisation of Stígamót. Aflið provides counselling and education for survivors of sexual abuse and/or domestic violence. Their main focus is to make individuals aware of their own strengths and assist them to use them to change their lives. The organisation has grown considerably in recent years and in 2015, a total of 1309 interviews were made. The number of new clients has been growing steadily, in 2013 they were 111, in 2014 they were 115 and in 2015 they were 121.

Further information:

<http://www.aflidak.is>

Sólstafir: Education and Counselling Centre for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Violence

Sólstafir is a non-governmental organisation founded in 2006 in Ísafjörður as an association organisation of Stígamót. Sólstafir provides counselling and education for survivors of sexual abuse and/or domestic violence. They view individuals who have experienced sexual abuse as strong survivors, not helpless victims and they aim to make them see their own strength and improve their self-esteem.

Further information:

<http://www.solstafir.is>

DrekaSlóð: Service Center for Survivors of Violence and their Loved-Ones

DrekaSlóð is a non-governmental service center for survivors of any kind of violence. They provide counselling for survivors of any kind of violence, such as sexual abuse, domestic violence and bullying. They also provide this service for disabled survivors, and the loved-ones of survivors.

Further information:

<http://www.drekaslod.is>

Other Civil Society Organisations working towards Gender Equality:

Zonta Iceland:

<http://www.zonta.is/>

The Women's Counselling:

<http://www.kvennaradgjofin.is/>

Icelandic Human Rights Centre:

<http://www.humanrights.is/>

Women Of Multicultural Ethnicity Network – W.O.M.E.N. in Iceland:

<http://www.womeniniceland.is/en/>

Soroptimist International of Iceland:

<http://www.soroptimist.is/>

Blátt áfram:

<http://www.blattafram.is>

International Cooperation

Foreign Policy

In its foreign policy, the Government of Iceland emphasises cooperation with the Nordic countries, the European Union, Arctic issues and the sustainable utilisation of natural resources. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations. Emphasis is placed on human rights, gender equality, peace and security *inter alia* by combating poverty, social injustice, inequality and famine. Iceland's development co-operation is based on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals with a special emphasis on areas in which Iceland is considered to have a comparative advantage, such as in fisheries, the harnessing of geothermal energy and gender equality. Special focus is placed on women's empowerment in general as well in particular relating to participation in and access to decision-making in mitigation and adaptation to climate change and in peace processes. Advancing the aims of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions on women, peace and security is a priority.

Iceland has representatives in various gender equality working groups or committees, including the EFTA Working Group on Gender Equality, Anti-Discrimination and Family Policy; the Council of Europe Steering Committee on Gender Equality; and Nordic Council committees. The Icelandic government also submits reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and attends the annual UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meetings. Iceland also participates in OECD DAC's Network on Gender equality, GENDERNET, which is a forum for sharing experiences and disseminating good practice for integrating gender perspectives and women's empowerment into key aspects of development cooperation.

International Development Cooperation

Experience shows that development assistance which is based on the equal rights of men and women is an effective approach in development. Assistance which is based on participation of both women and men, and takes into account the needs, perspectives and interests of both genders is more likely to deliver sustainable results. Iceland's development policy is based on this knowledge, and gender equality and women's empowerment is both a specific objective and a cross-cutting theme in Iceland's development cooperation.

Strategy for Iceland's Development Cooperation (2013-2016)

The Strategy is in accordance with Act No. 121/2008 on Iceland's International Development Cooperation. A key objective of the Act is to take a holistic approach to Iceland's development policy. Accordingly, the Strategy covers multilateral and bilateral cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peace-building efforts. The Strategy identifies international development cooperation as one of the key pillars of Iceland's foreign policy.

The strategy calls for a sharper focus and clearer prioritisation of Iceland's development cooperation. The main emphasis will be on three areas: natural resources, social infrastructure and peace-building, as well as on two cross-cutting themes: gender equality and environment. Mirroring Iceland's emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment, UN Women, is identified as one of four key organisations in multilateral development cooperation. Iceland's contribution to UN Women is both in terms of core funding as well as earmarked to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. Contributions have furthermore been allocated to projects in Afghanistan, Palestine and the Balkans. Icelandic experts have been seconded to UNIFEM in the Balkans, Liberia, Barbados and at the agency's headquarters. There is furthermore an effective partnership between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the National Committee of UN Women in Iceland.

The main objectives of Iceland's work towards gender equality and women's empowerment in development cooperation 2013-2016 are: mainstreaming gender equality into all development projects; promoting the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on women, peace and security; implementing Iceland's Action Plan on UN SCR 1325; implementing gender budgeting and increasing the weight of gender in policy making and projects implemented by international organisation. Iceland became a member of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 2013. Furthermore, The United Nations University in Iceland (UNU) established the UNU Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme the same year. Its objective is to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in developing countries and post-conflict societies through research, education and training.

Further information:

<https://www.mfa.is/media/throunarsamvinna/MFA-StrategyforIcelandsDevelopmentCooperation-2013-2016.pdf>

Gender Responsive Budgeting – MFA's Pilot project

The MFA's pilot project in gender responsive budgeting addressed Iceland's international development cooperation consisted in analysing a large share of Iceland's ODA in 2009. The analysis reached the part that the MFA is responsible for, or 60% of the total ODA (bilateral ODA through ICEIDA (40%) will be included in the analysis as of 2011). Whereas the contributions differ within (core and earmarked contributions to international organisations and NGOs, experts in the field), different types of methodology were used. First, core contributions were looked into by analysing the international organisations with regards to how gender equality relates to the mandate of the organisation and whether the organisations had gender policy and/or action plans. Second, the three UNU Training Programmes in Iceland were analysed by looking into both the internal and external side of the Programme activities. Finally, earmarked contributions were analysed, using the OECD DAC's Gender Equality Policy Marker, where projects were classified by whether they are intended to advance gender equality and women's empowerment or not.

The analysis revealed that out of 16 international organisations supported, 15 of them base their work on gender policies and/or action plans. One organisation, the Nordic Development Fund does not have a specific gender policy, but funds projects of implementing organisations that base their work on their own gender policies. Regarding the UNU Training Programmes, the analysis showed that more work can be done on mainstreaming gender in the programmes, even though the UNU Land Restoration Programme has been doing so from the outset. None of the Training Programmes have a specific gender policy, but base their work on the UNU strategic plan. However, they have plans to do so in the

medium term. Finally, the classification of the earmarked contributions showed that 74% of the projects have gender equality as a principal or significant objective, leaving 26% of the projects as not targeting gender equality.

In 2015, the government approved the implantation of a five-year plan for the period 2015-2019. This new plan emphasizes utilizing gender budgeting in decision making processes. Other emphasises are: participation of all ministries, integration of gender budgeting into daily operations, learning by doing, knowledge creation, gender impact assessments of law proposals, analysis of gender effects of budget proposals, short-term projects, gender budgeting included in the state budget proposal, gender disaggregated statistics, cooperation and education.

The objectives of the five-year plan are as follows: 1) to make the impact on genders visible, so it's possible to re-evaluate policies, expenditures, and sources of income in accordance with objectives for equality. 2) The budget should be used in a systematic way to equal the status of women and men and promote the fair allocation of public funds, as well as fair raising of public revenue. 3) Gender budgeting should be integrated into all policy making, decision making, and in the daily operations of public administration. 3) If analysis reveals gender discrimination, it should lead to changed decisions so that public allocation of resources and revenue raising is fair and in accordance with the needs of both genders. 4) Gender budgeting should become a part of public administration and good economic management, with the participation of all ministries. 5) The importance of gender budgeting should be promoted through awareness raising and education.

Further information:

<http://www.mfa.is/foreign-policy/development-cooperation/>

Strategy for Iceland's Development Cooperation (2011-2014):

http://www.utanrikisraduneyti.is/media/MFA_pdf/MFA---Strategy-for-Icelands-Development-Cooperation-2011-2014.pdf

Iceland Crisis Response Unit (ICRU)

Peace-building is a fundamental component of the United Nations; which Iceland supports in a number of ways. In addition to contributions to UN international peace-keeping,⁸ Iceland's participation in peace-keeping projects includes secondment of civilian experts to the field in conflict-affected countries. The Iceland Crisis Response Unit (ICRU) is a division of the Directorate of International Development Cooperation within the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In line with Iceland's Strategy for International Development, emphasis is placed on peace-keeping and peace-building with focus on vulnerable groups, such as refugees and children and the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security. To that effect the ICRU office oversees Iceland's participation in international peace-building missions and seconds civilian personnel to UN agencies

⁸ 6% of the annual contributions to UN peace-keeping is counted as development assistance according to DAC criteria.

with which it has a roster collaboration agreement. The ICRU has seconded personnel to missions in four main areas: Afghanistan, the Middle East, the Balkans, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

A civilian gender expert has been seconded to Afghanistan for several years and since 2000, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has provided funding for Icelandic experts in UNIFEM's offices in the Western-Balkans, Liberia and the Caribbean.

Since 2011, the ICRU has been represented in the field by an equal number of men and women on missions, all of whom get training on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security before departure. The ICRU intends to maintain that balance.

The Iceland Crisis Response unit also collaborates closely with national and local NGO's. National NGO's that get a government grant must account for how the project promotes gender equality, and local projects that empower women and girls are major recipients of Icelandic support to local NGOs.

Further information:

<https://www.mfa.is/foreign-policy/development-cooperation/icru/>

National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325

Iceland finalised its National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UN resolution 1325/2000 in 2008. In preparing for the NAP the Ministry for Foreign Affairs consulted civil society organisations, academic institutions and its Nordic partners, which broadened the support and ownership of the NAP. The NAP is built on the main pillars of Iceland's foreign policy; respect for human rights; increased development cooperation and peaceful resolution of conflicts. Special emphasis is put on women's access at the negotiating table. The NAP is currently being revised and will i.a. take subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security into account, (1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010)). It will be based on the Strategy for Iceland's Development Cooperation 2013-2016 and contain specific goals, clear indicators and a transparent monitoring mechanism.

Iceland's Plan of Action for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2008):

http://www.mfa.is/media/Utgafa/women_peace_security.pdf

Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA)

ICEIDA is a separate agency under the auspices of the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Agency cooperates with three partner countries, all in Sub-Saharan Africa, Malawi, Mozambique and Uganda. The principal goal of the cooperation is to contribute to social and economic development and to combat global poverty. Special focus is placed on the following sectors and sub-sectors: health, literacy, water and sanitation, fisheries and renewable energy.

ICEIDA operates on the basis of a gender equality policy adopted in 2004 and a gender equality plan of 2009. A Gender Equality Officer is appointed to lead and provide guidance on the implementation of the Agency's gender equality policy.

The emphasis on gender equality in ICEIDA's development cooperation is based on two principal factors. Firstly, the understanding that gender equality is a human rights issue and secondly, the affirmation that gender equality is a prerequisite for effective development. Gender equality is regarded as a pressing social issue and an important factor in the effort to promote human rights and democracy. In general, ICEIDA is working to promote gender equality and towards the target of mainstreaming gender perspectives into all its activities. To this end, ICEIDA cooperates with gender equality institutions and organizations and advocates gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting and gender segregated data collection. Some of the projects and programmes ICEIDA provides support to are designed specifically to increase gender parity and empowerment of women, while others tackle gender as a cross-cutting issue.

Further information:

<http://www.iceida.is/english>

ICEIDA's Gender Equality Policy:

<http://www.iceida.is/media/pdf/gender.equality.policy.pdf>

GEST - The Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme

GEST is a joint project between the University of Iceland and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and is part of the Icelandic government's development cooperation efforts. The programme builds on the experience of the UNU training programmes in Iceland and follows a similar structure. The overall objective of the GEST Programme is to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in developing countries and post-conflict societies through education and training. Its main target group is professionals working for government and civil society organisations in developing countries and post-conflict societies undergoing reconstruction. The GEST Programme also offers short courses and seminars, which are open for professionals from both developed and developing countries. The GEST Programme is run by the University of Iceland and managed by EDDA – Centre of Excellence. The GEST programme was launched in January 2009, and in January 2010, the first fellows completed the programme. In 2013, the programme was made a member of The United Nations University in Iceland (UNU).

Further information:

<http://gest.unu.edu>

Nordic Cooperation

Iceland participates in a number of Nordic gender equality projects. Most of these are carried out in connection with the Nordic Council of Ministers, under which a special ministerial committee, MR-JÄM, and a special officials' committee, ÄK-JÄM, deal with gender equality issues. Iceland held the Presidency of the Council in 2009. There was a strong focus on gender issues during the Presidency, which included Gender Equality in Education, Parental Leave, Gender and Power and Gender Responsive Budgeting.

Nordic Projects

Gender and Power in the Nordic Countries – politics and business (2008- 2009)

The project “Gender and Power in the Nordic Countries” (2008-2009) was carried out on behalf of the Nordic Ministers for Gender Equality and co-financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic Gender Institute (NIKK). In the research project “Gender and Power in the Nordic Countries”, an interdisciplinary Nordic research team mapped out and analysed the representation of women and men in politics and business in the Nordic countries during the last 15 years. The report is a source of information for political decision makers, researchers, students, and others who have an interest in Nordic equality policy. A final conference was held in Iceland in 2009.

Gender Equality in the Arctic (2014)

In 2014, a conference was held in Akureyri, Iceland to discuss gender equality in the arctic; the current realities and future challenges. 150 participants represented all member states of the Arctic Council; Canada, The Kingdom of Denmark (Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Iceland, Finland, Norway, The Russian Federation, Sweden, The United States of America and representatives of the Permanent Participants. The main part of the conference was divided into seven plenaries:

1. Gender Equality and the Arctic: Current Realities, Future Challenges.
2. Political Representation and Participation in Decision-Making: Gendered Dimensions
3. Regional Socio-Economic Development and its Gendered Impacts
4. Climate and Environmental Change, Natural Resource Development, and Gender
5. (Re-)Construction of Gender in the Arctic
6. Human Security: Gendered Aspects
7. Human Capital and Gender: Migration, Mobility, Education and Adaption

Parental Leave, Care Policies & Gender Equalities in the Nordic Countries (2010)

The research project looked at how parental leave is used in the Nordic countries, how it affects the relationship between parents and children, and the status of men and women in the labour market. During the Icelandic presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the conference “Parental Leave, Care Policies & Gender Equalities in the Nordic Countries” took place in Reykjavik in October 2009. The conference gave insights into the different policies adopted within the Nordic countries.

Conference report:

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/Skýrsla_foreldraorlof.pdf

Other Nordic Projects:

Gender Equality in Schools (2010):

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/Sk%C3%BDrsla_Jafnr%C3%A9tti%20%C3%AD%20sk%C3%B3lum.pdf

Prostitution in the Nordic Countries (2008):

<http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:701621/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

Gender and Climate Change:

<http://www.norden.org/is/utgafa/utgefild-efni/2009-765>

European Cooperation

Iceland has participated in the gender equality programmes of the European Union on grounds of the Agreement on the European Economic Area. The Centre for Gender Equality has both participated in and led projects under the EU’s gender equality programme dealing with issues as diverse as parental and paternity leave, gender mainstreaming, media stereotypes and measuring equality. Some of these projects are cooperative involving several European countries, in which the Government of Iceland has been one of the participants. Furthermore, under the Agreement on the European Economic Area, the Icelandic Government has had representatives on committees active in gender equality matters.

European Projects:

Sports, Media and Stereotypes (2004-2005):

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/sms_report_lokaloka.pdf

Modern Men in Enlarged Europe I and II (2004-2006):

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/Fathers%20Parental%20Leave.pdf

FOCUS: Fostering Caring Masculinities (2005-2007):

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/FOCUS%20-%20European%20Report.pdf

Break gender stereotypes, give talent a chance (2009):

<http://www.businessandgender.eu/is/til-baka>

Side by Side – gender mainstreaming I-III (2008-2012):

<http://samstiga.is/samstiga/?D10cid=NewsDouble>

Various Projects on Gender Equality

Gender Responsive Budgeting in Iceland

In early 2009, the Minister of Finance appointed a working group on gender responsive budgeting and based on the working group's suggestions, the Minister of Finance requested all ministries to propose pilot projects to coincide with the 2011 budget. Results of these projects were presented in the bill for the 2012 budget.

- **The Prime Minister's Office**
 - Analysing errands sent to the Ombudsman for Children in Iceland
- **Ministry of Education, Science and Culture**
 - Analysing applications and allocations of artists' salaries
- **Ministry for Foreign Affairs**
 - Analysing the Ministry's contributions to development cooperation (excluding state-to-state bilateral aid (ICEIDA))
- **Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture**
 - The AVS Research Fund
- **Ministry of the Interior**
 - Transportation repair/road construction and regional development policy: The social, cultural and financial impact of making a road tunnel in the north of the country on the lives of the inhabitants (research project).
 - Composition of the staff of the ministry's institutions
 - Looking at the increase of women in the police force and the influence of the Police Academy
- **Ministry of Welfare**
 - Resources for the unemployed
 - Unemployment benefits
 - Treatment facilities for young people
 - Waiting lists for cardiac catheterization
 - Waiting lists for hip/knee replacement surgery
 - Grants from the Ministry
 - Grants from the Prevention Fund

- **Ministry of Finance**
 - The transferability of personal tax discount between couples
- **Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism**
 - The Ministry's funds
- **Ministry of Economic Affairs**
 - Funds of the Ministry and distribution
 - Research on the debt status of the Icelandic household
- **Ministry for the Environment**
 - Allocations from the Hunting Fund
 - REACH: European Community Regulation on chemicals and their safe use

In 2015, the government approved the implantation of a five-year plan for the period 2015-2019. This new plan emphasizes utilizing gender budgeting in decision making processes. Other emphasises are: participation of all ministries, integration of gender budgeting into daily operations, learning by doing, knowledge creation, gender impact assessments of law proposals, analysis of gender effects of budget proposals, short-term projects, gender budgeting included in the state budget proposal, gender disaggregated statistics, cooperation and education.

The objectives of the five-year plan are as follows: 1) to make the impact on genders visible, so it's possible to re-evaluate policies, expenditures, and sources of income in accordance with objectives for equality. 2) The budget should be used in a systematic way to equal the status of women and men and promote the fair allocation of public funds, as well as fair raising of public revenue. 3) Gender budgeting should be integrated into all policy making, decision making, and in the daily operations of public administration. 3) If analysis reveals gender discrimination, it should lead to changed decisions so that public allocation of resources and revenue raising is fair and in accordance with the needs of both genders. 4) Gender budgeting should become a part of public administration and good economic management, with the participation of all ministries. 5) The importance of gender budgeting should be promoted through awareness raising and education.

Further information:

http://www.fjarmalaraduneyti.is/verkefni/kynjud_fjarlagagerd/

A Peaceful Home

A Peaceful Home (formerly, Men Take Responsibility) is a therapy program for men who resort to domestic violence against women. The program started in 1998 as a four-year trial program and was modelled after the Norwegian *Alternative to Violence* program. In 2006, it was decided to restart the program with financing from the Ministry of Social Affairs. This is the only therapy option available in Iceland for men who commit violence against their spouses. The therapy is based on individual and group psychological therapy sessions. This program is open only for men. Between 2006 to 2012 288 individuals came for interviews (2006-2012). In 2014, 54 new individuals came for interviews. The project is currently run in cooperation between the Women's Shelter, Centre for Gender Equality and Ministry of Welfare, which funds the project. The Prison Authority of Iceland runs a special programme for perpetrators under 18 years of age.

Contact the Centre for Gender Equality:

jafnretti@jafnretti.is

Further information:

<http://www.heimilisfridur.is>

Your Rights - Pamphlet for Foreign Women in Iceland (2014)

The Centre for Gender Equality published a pamphlet for foreign women in Iceland and others who are interested in learning about gender equality in Iceland, rights and obligations. The pamphlet is sponsored by the Progress programme of the European Union and the text is prepared by Stígamót in co-operation with the Centre for Gender Equality, the Ministry of Welfare, the Directorate of Immigration, Women of Multicultural Ethnicity Network, the Police Department in the capital area, the Women's Shelter and the Multicultural and information Centre. The pamphlet is printed in 7 languages: Icelandic, Polish, English, Spanish, Thai, Russian and Arabic and has useful information regarding the Icelandic justice system and the Icelandic community. The information includes sections on equal rights and status of the genders, residence permits, divorces, child custody, issues regarding right of access, finance, violence in close relationships and personal threats. It also contains references to further information, including addresses, telephone numbers and websites of several institutions and organizations.

Contact the Centre for Gender Equality:

jafnretti@jafnretti.is

The pamphlet in English:

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/ISL-Enska.pdf

Research

Publications available in English:

Gender and Power in the Nordic Countries (2011):

http://www.nikk.no/wp-content/uploads/NIKKpub2011_broschyr_K%C3%B8n-og-magt_Gender-Power.pdf

Also in Iceland- Report on the Nature and Scope of Trafficking in Persons 2009:

http://redcross.lausn.is/Apps/WebObjects/RedCross.woa/swdocument/1041254/lik_a_Islandi_sam_antekt_ensku.pdf?wosid=false

Evaluating Equal Pay in the Nordic Countries - Mælistukur á launajafnrétti á Norðurlöndum (2006):

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/Likelon-lokaeintak.pdf

Sports, Media and Stereotypes: Woman and Men in Sports and Media (2006):

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/sms_report_lokaloka.pdf

Parental Leave and Family Policies:

Parental leave, Care Policies and Gender Equalities in the Nordic Countries (2009):

http://jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/Skýrsla_foreldraorlof.pdf

Parental Leave in Iceland; Bringing the Fathers in. Developments in the Wake of New Legislation in 2000 (2007):

http://jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/parentalleave.pdf

Between Paid and Unpaid Work: Family Friendly Policies and Gender Equality in Europe (2006):

http://jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/BetweenPaidandUnpaidWork.pdf

Between Paid and Unpaid Work: On Reconciliation of Gender Equality and Daily Routines in Iceland (2006):

http://jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/island_gislihafn_en.pdf

FOCUS: Fostering Caring Masculinities (2006):

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/Fathers%20Parental%20Leave.pdf

Nordic experiences with parental leave and its impact on equality between women and men (2006):

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/Nordic%20experiences%20with%20parental%20leave.pdf

Fathers on Paternal Leave: Modern Men in Enlarged Europe (2005):

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/Fathers%20Parental%20Leave.pdf

Men do it! Stories of Fathers on Parental Leave (2005):

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/Men%20Do%20It.pdf

Culture, Custom and Caring: Men's and Women's Possibilities to Parental Leave (2004):

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/CCC_FinalReport.pdf

Challenges and Next Steps

In the last few decades, Iceland has seen many advances regarding gender equality issues, but full equality is still ahead of us. Many challenges are still to be addressed. It is crucial to ensure that women and men are equally represented in the future. Here are a few things to bear in mind:

- To ensure women and men are equally represented in governmental committees, councils and boards.
- To analyse the repercussions of budget cuts within the paternal/maternal leave system and paternity/maternity leave benefits.
- To increase the awareness of environment issues from a gender equality perspective.
- To ensure that all governmental data is accessible and gender-segregated.
- To continue the fight against gendered violence in all its forms.
- To fight for an improved parental leave system which allows new parents to take the time and resources necessary to care for their new children.
- To motivate more men to get involved in the fight against gender inequality.
- To fight against a gender segregated labour market.
- To better incorporate LGBT people in the fight for gender equality.

A new gender equality action plan has been proposed by the government and is awaiting approval. The proposed action plan is based on experience from previous action plans. It's divided into 7 chapters and introduces 21 projects to tackle within its timeframe. These projects include: to integrate a gendered perspective into all aspects of governmental policy- and decision making, to promote equal pay for equal work, to fight against gender stereotypes in the workforce and in the media, to promote gender equality in schools, to promote a less gendered labour market and equal opportunity for all. An interesting novelty in the proposed action plan is a chapter devoted to men and gender equality. The previous action plan included the creation of a working group of men to discuss and present a report on gender equality from men's perspective as well as propose solutions to various problems of gender inequality. That report influenced this chapter. The aim of this chapter is to involve more men in all aspects of gender equality policy- and decision making both domestically and internationally. It is proposed that the propositions of the aforementioned men's working group will be put into action. Another main emphasis of the proposed action plan is to combat gendered violence and violence against children. Lastly, the proposed action plan mentions Iceland's international duties toward gender equality.

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Main Sources

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Iceland in figures 2011. Statistics Iceland, 2016:

<https://issuu.com/hagstofa/docs/icelandinfigures2016>

Universal Periodic Review: Icelandic National Report 2011. Ministry of the Interior, 2011:

<http://www.innanrikisraduneyti.is/media/frettir-2011/Mannrettindaskyrslan---lokaeintak-sent.doc>

Sixth periodic report of Iceland. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2007:

Women's History Archives. Accessed August 5th, 2016:

<http://kvennasogusafn.is/index.php?page=english>

World Economic Forum *Global Gender Gap Report 2015*:

<https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2015/>

Women in the time of Crisis, (Konur í Kreppu? - only available in Icelandic.) Authors: Eva Bjarnadóttir and Eygló Árnadóttir. Ministry of Welfare, 2011:

http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/ritogskyrslur2011/Konur_i_kreppu_22032011.pdf

Your rights – Pamphlet for Foreign Women in Iceland. Centre for Gender Equality, 2014:

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/ISL-Enska.pdf

Labour Market, Parental Leave and Family Policies

Parental Leave, Care Policies & Gender Equalities in the Nordic Countries (2010)
Conference report:

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/Skýrsla_foreldraorlof.pdf

Homo economicus meets Homo holismus: Men and women discuss their salaries within different frames of reference. Author: Gyða Margrét Pétursdóttir, University of Iceland, 2010:

http://skemman.is/is/stream/get/1946/6730/18372/1/22-29_GydaMargretPetursdottir_STJbok.pdf

Equal Rights to Earn and Care - Parental Leave in Iceland. Editors. Eydal, G.B. & Gíslason, I.V. Reykjavík: Social Science Research Institute, 2008 (not available online).

Ingólfur V. Gíslason (2007): *Parental leave in Iceland. Bringing the fathers in. Developments in the Wake of the New Legislation in 2000*. Jafnréttisstofa. Félagsmálaráðuneytið:

http://jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/parentalleave.pdf

Fríða Rós Valdimarsdóttir (2006): *Nordic experiences with parental leave and its impact on equality between women and men*. TemaNord 2006: 531:

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Between Paid and Unpaid Work: On Reconciliation of Gender Equality and Daily Routines in Iceland (2006):

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FOCUS: Fostering Caring Masculinities (2006). Final report:

http://jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/FOCUS%20-%20Icelandic%20National%20Report.pdf

Plan of Action to deal with Domestic and Sexual Violence 2006-2010. Ministry of Welfare:

http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/acrobat-enskar_sidur/Plan_of_Action_to_deal_with_Domestic_and_Sexual_Violence.pdf

Protecting women against violence. Council of Europe, 2010:

http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/violence-against-women/cdeg_2010_12en.pdf

Human Trafficking and Prostitution

The Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings including report on Human Trafficking in Iceland. Ministry of Welfare, 2009:

http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/acrobat-enskar_sidur/The_Icelandic_Action_Plan_against_Trafficking_in_Human_Beings.pdf

Also in Iceland - Report on the Nature and Scope of Trafficking in Persons. Red Cross Iceland & RIKK, 2009:

http://redcross.lausn.is/Apps/WebObjects/RedCross.woa/swdocument/1041254/lika_a_Islandi_sam_antekt_ensku.pdf?wosid=false

Prostitution in the Nordic Countries. Conference report. NIKK, 2008:

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Political Representation

Gender and Power in the Nordic Countries. NIKK, 2011:

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Health

Iceland: health profile. World Health Organisation, 2012:

<http://www.who.int/gho/countries/isl.pdf>

Health statistics. Statistics Iceland:

<http://www.statice.is/>

Appendix - 1: Selected Links

Quick facts about Iceland:

<http://www.iceland.is/the-big-picture/quick-facts/>

Statistics Iceland:

<http://www.statice.is/>

Universal Periodic Review: Icelandic National Report 2011:

<http://www.innanrikisraduneyti.is/media/frettir-2011/Mannrettindaskyrslan---lokaeintak-sent.doc>

CEDAW REPORTS:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/CEDAW.C.ICE.CO.6.pdf>

The Centre for Gender Equality:

<http://www.gender.is>

Ministry of Welfare:

<http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/>

Nordic Cooperation:

<http://www.norden.org/en>

RIKK, The Centre for Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Iceland:

<http://www.rikk.hi.is>

NIKK – Nordic Information on Gender, a Nordic co-operative body under the Nordic Council of Ministers:

<http://www.nikk.no/en/>

Appendix - 2: Centre for Gender Equality Profile

The Centre for Gender Equality is a national bureau and is in charge of administering the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men No. 10/2008. The aim of the Act is to establish and maintain equal status and equal opportunities for women and men, and thus promote gender equality in all spheres of society.

The Centre provides counselling and education in the field of gender equality, for governmental and municipal authorities, institutions, companies, individuals and non-governmental organizations. The aim is to obtain a multi-dimensional continuous result.

Strategies and Methods of the Centre

- Gender mainstreaming
- Special actions and projects
- Awareness-raising
- Research
- Education and information
- Counselling
- Legal advice and supervision

For more on the Centre for Gender Equality:
<http://www.jafnretti.is/jafnretti/?D10cID=News>

Tasks of the Centre for Gender Equality

As stated in Article 4 of the current Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men No. 10/2008, the tasks covered by the Centre for Gender Equality:

- a. Monitoring the application of the Act
- b. Supervising educational and informative activities
- c. Advising government authorities, institutions, companies, non-governmental organisations and individuals on gender equality issues
- d. Making suggestions and proposals to the Minister, the Gender Equality Council and other government authorities on measures to achieve gender equality
- e. Making proposals on affirmative actions

- f. Increasing the level of activity in gender equality issues, i.e. by greater involvement of men in gender equality work
- g. Monitoring gender equality developments in society, i.g.. by gathering information and initiating research
- h. Providing assistance to gender equality committees, gender equality counsellors and gender equality representatives of local authorities, institutions and companies
- i. Working at preventive measures against gender-based violence in collaboration with other government authorities and organisations specifically involved in such preventive measures
- j. Working against gender based wage discrimination and other forms of gender discrimination in the labour market
- k. Mediating cases of dispute referred to the Centre for Gender Equality on the basis of this Act
- l. Changing traditional gender images and working against negative stereotyping regarding the roles of women and men
- m. Carrying out other tasks in accordance with the aims of this Act in accordance with further decisions by the Minister

For more on the role of the Centre for Gender Equality:

<http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/acts-of-Parliament/nr/4203>

Projects

Diverse Leadership

The seminar- and information webpage fjorbreyttforysta.is (Diverse Leadership) is owned by The Centre for Gender Equality and is promoted with support from the European Union PROGRESS programme for employment and social solidarity (2007-2013). The programme is implemented by the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment, social affairs and equal opportunities area, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy goals in these fields. The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

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The pamphlet in English:

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/ISL-Enska.pdf

Contact the Centre for Gender Equality:

jafnretti@jafnretti.is

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1. Gender Equality and the Arctic: Current Realities, Future Challenges.
2. Political Representation and Participation in Decision-Making: Gendered Dimensions
3. Regional Socio-Economic Development and its Gendered Impacts
4. Climate and Environmental Change, Natural Resource Development, and Gender
5. (Re-)Construction of Gender in the Arctic
6. Human Security: Gendered Aspects
7. Human Capital and Gender: Migration, Mobility, Education and Adaption

Conference report: Parental Leave, Care Policies & Gender Equalities in the Nordic Countries:
http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/Files/Skýrsla_foreldraorlof.pdf

Conference report: Gender Equality in the Arctic (2014)
<http://jafnretti.is/D10/Files/Gender-Equality-in-the-Arctic.pdf>

Research report:
<http://www.norden.org/en/publications/publikationer/2011-562>

Research Reports

The Centre for Gender Equality has published research reports on a variety of topics related to its mandate. In 2009, it published a report on gender-based violence in Iceland and the Nordic countries. In 2008, the final report of the Tea-for-Two project, *Tea for Two; Illustrating Equality* was published. In 2006, the reports *Nordic Experiences with Parental Leave and its Impact on Equality between Women and Men* and *Sports, Media and Stereotypes: Women and Men in Sports and Media* were published. In 2005, *Fathers on Parental Leave: Modern Men in Enlarged Europe* was published and in 2004, *Culture, Custom and Caring: Men's and Women's Possibilities of Parental Leave* was published. In 2003, the Centre conducted the Nordic research projects *Women Leave, the Men Stay* and *Welfare, Masculinity and Social Innovation*. Governmental bodies and administration look to these reports in their policy making, as well as the Parliament. NGOs occasionally refer to them in their lobbying efforts. The Centre takes part in various researches and has also published a number of reports in collaboration with other public institutions and ministries.

Gender Equality in the Arctic – Conference Report (2014)

<http://jafnretti.is/D10/ Files/Gender-Equality-in-the-Arctic.pdf>

Evaluating Equal Pay in the Nordic Countries - Mælistukur á launajafnrétti á Norðurlöndum - På sporet av likelön (2006):

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<http://jafnretti.is/D10/ Files/parentalleave.pdf>

Between Paid and Unpaid Work: Family Friendly Policies and Gender Equality in Europe (2006):

<http://jafnretti.is/D10/ Files/BetweenPaidandUnpaidWork.pdf>

Between Paid and Unpaid Work: On Reconciliation of Gender Equality and Daily Routines in Iceland (2006):

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Women and Men in Iceland (2016):

<http://jafnretti.is/D10/ Files/Women and Men 2016.pdf>

Gender Equality in the Arctic – Conference Report (2015)

<http://jafnretti.is/D10/ Files/Gender-Equality-in-the-Arctic.pdf>

Women and men as business leaders in Iceland-Research report (2015)

<http://jafnretti.is/D10/ Files/HI Final report eng.pdf>

Booklet on Gender Equality in Iceland (2014)

http://jafnretti.is/D10/ Files/GenderEquality_baekl-HQ.pdf

Plan of Action on Gender Equality Regarding Wages (May 2013)

https://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/Rit_2013/Plan-of-Action-on-Gender-Equality_02062013.pdf

Male Violence against Women in Intimate Relationships in Iceland – Report of the Minister of Welfare (February 2012)

https://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/rit-og-skyrslur2012/Ofbeldi_gegn_konum_enska_feb_2012.pdf

Your Rights (2014):

<http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/ Files/ISL-Enska.pdf>

Gender Equality in Iceland (2009):

<http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/ Files/Stepping%20stones.PDF>

Centre for Gender Equality (2007):

<http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/ Files/Bæklingur%20enska.pdf>

Awareness Raising

The Centre for Gender Equality is according to Article 4 of the Gender Equality Act mandated to raise awareness on gender issues. In accordance to this the Centre has implemented the following actions:

- Brochure on the role and tasks of the Centre distributed to every home in the country.
- Brochure with accessible information on the Gender Equality Act and the Centre.
- Handbook on the methods of Gender mainstreaming and how it has been used by various organizations and government in Iceland
- Handbook on gender budgeting in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance
- Handbook on gender impact assessment
- Brochure to promote the participation of women in local government and to encourage them to stand for elections.

- Regional seminars to promote the Act on Gender Equality. The Centre holds several seminars around the country to promote awareness of the legislation and its role and tasks.
- Television advertisements to raise awareness of gender based violence and encourage victims to seek assistance.
- Television advertisements to raise awareness of the gender gap in politics and encourage voters to elect both women and men in municipal elections.
- Numerous conferences on parental leave, gender based violence, gender stereotypes, gender equality in education and many more topics.
- Annual lecture series on gender equality issues, in cooperation with the University of Akureyri.
- 16-Day Campaign to Combat Violence against Women: Every year the Centre organises public events and activities in relation to the campaign.
- Every year the Centre publishes a calendar with special emphasis on the legal obligations of the Icelandic government concerning gender equality. Also posters on gender based violence. All posters have been distributed to all public institutions.
- Press releases: The Centre raises awareness of gender equality issues by means of issuing press releases on different topics, which are sent to all media outlets.

Appendix - 3: Gender Equality in Iceland – In Numbers

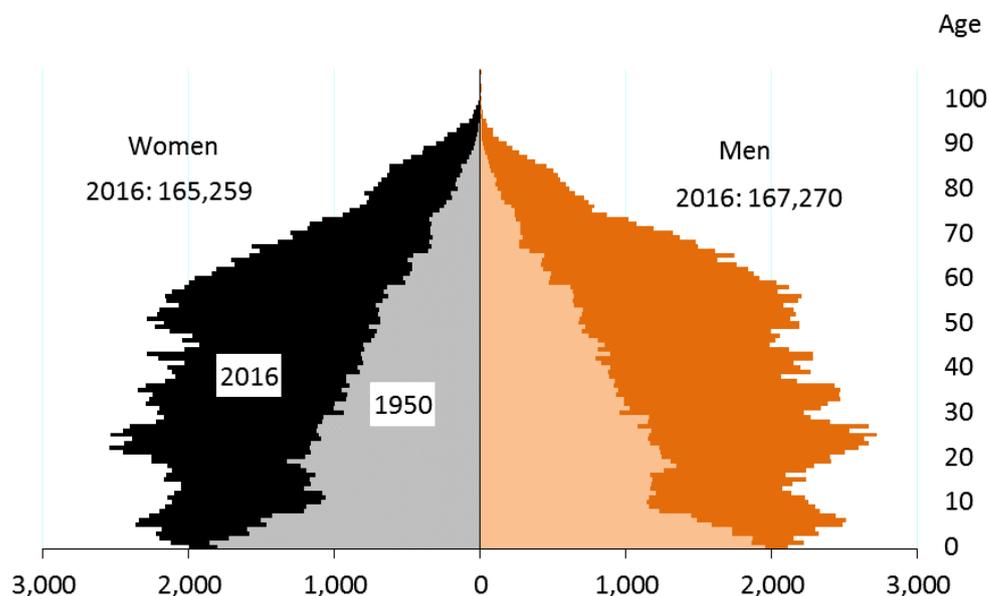


Figure 1: Population by gender and age 1950 and 2016

	Women	Men
Mean population	164.587	166.228
0–14 years, %	20	21
15–64 years, %	66	67
65 and older, %	15	13
Immigrants as percent of total population	9.5	9.0
Life births	2,010	2,119
Total fertility rate	1.8	
Mean age of mothers/fathers, first child	27.4	30.0
Mean age of spouses, first marriage (2011)	32.7	34.6
Self-perceived good health (16 years and older), %	73	80
Disability pensioners 18-66 years, % of age-group	9.7	6.0
Deaths total	1,114	1,064
Deaths per 1,000 pop.	6.8	6.4
Infant mortality	2.4	1.8
Average life expectancy at birth, years	83.6	81.0

Table 1: Population in Iceland in the year 2015

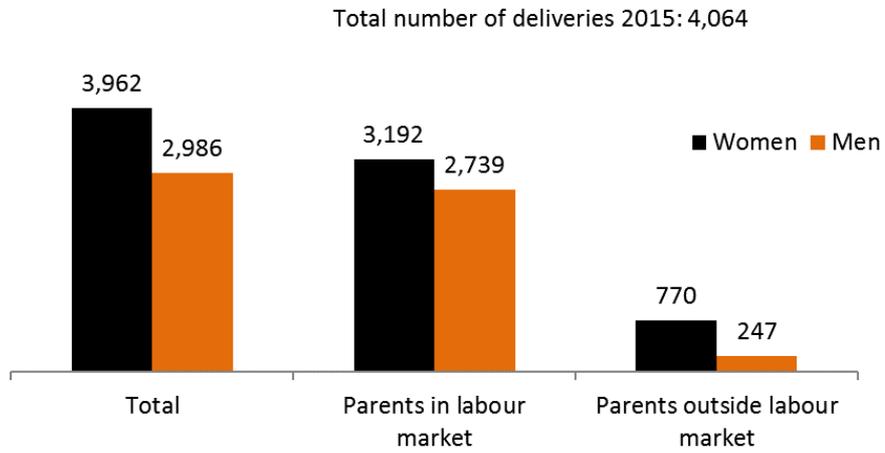


Figure 2: Parents receiving payments in maternity/paternity leave 2015

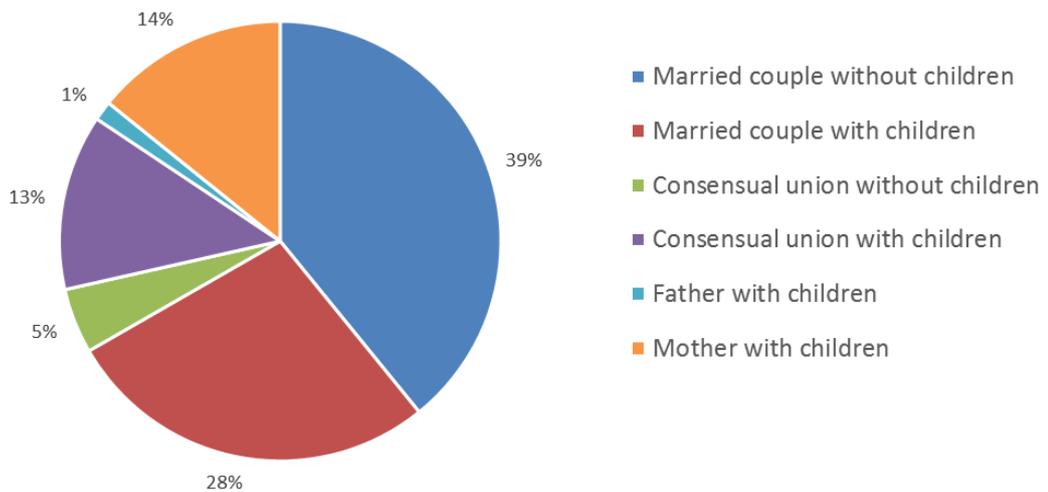


Figure 3: Icelandic families in 2016

	Overall violence	Intimate partner violence
Experiencing any violence	42%	22%
Physical violence	30%	20%
Sexual violence	24%	6%
Violence during the last 12 months (autumn 2007-2008)	4%	1-2%

Table 2: Women aged 18-80 who have experienced violence by males

Note: Based on a telephone survey of 3,000 women aged 18-80 years carried out in 2008. Net response rate was 73%. Source: Centre for Children and Family Research (ICE-CCFR) for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security. Survey on violence against women.

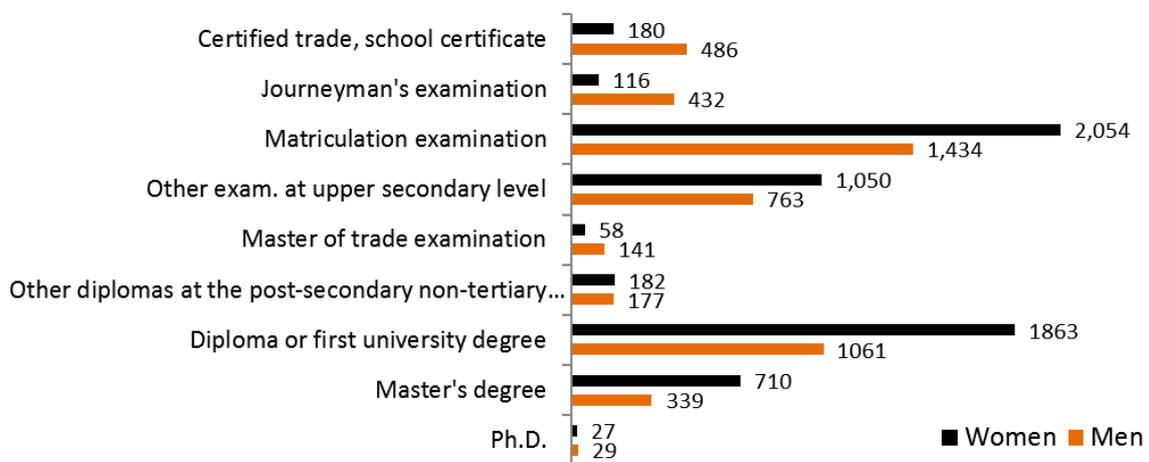


Figure 4: Number of graduations by diploma and gender 2012/2013

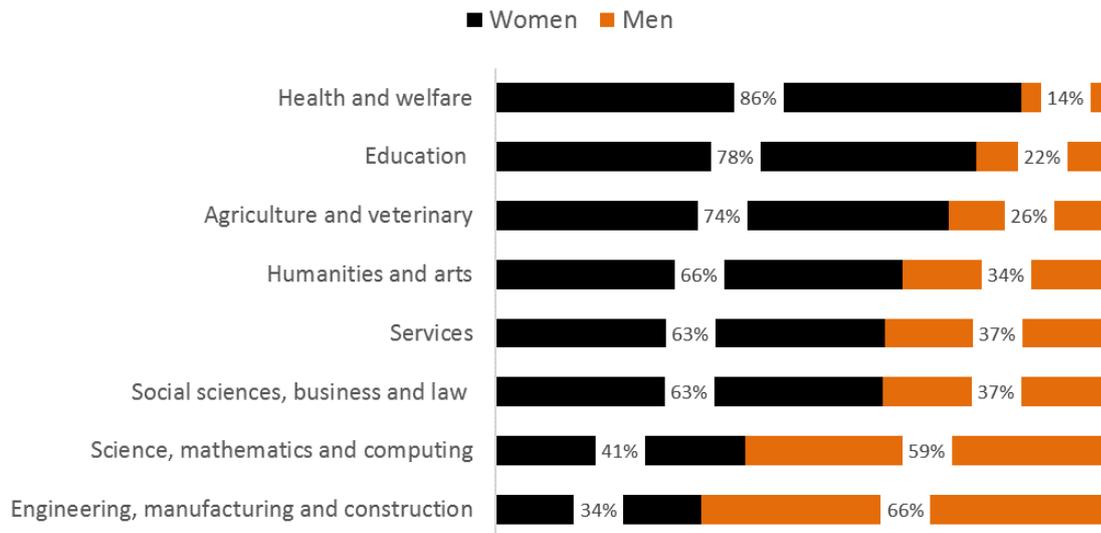


Figure 5: Graduations at tertiary level 2012/2013

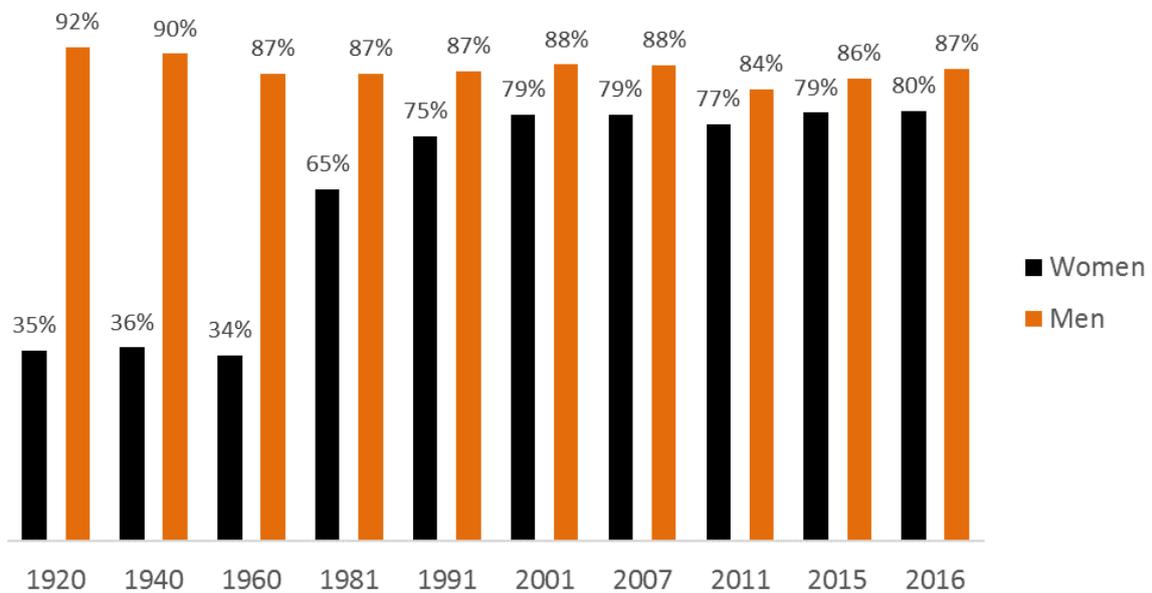


Figure 6: Labour force participation rates 1920–2016

	Women	Men
Labour force, number	92.100	104.400
Percent of labour force	47	53
Economic activity rate 16-74 years, %	80	87
Percent of employed, 16-74 years, %	77	85
Percent of employed full-time (35+ hours per week), %	65	85
Percent of employed part-time (<35 hours per week), %	35	15
Average working hours per week	36	44
Average working hours per week, full-time	42	47
Rate of unemployment, %	3.1	2.9

Table 3: Icelandic labour market in 2016

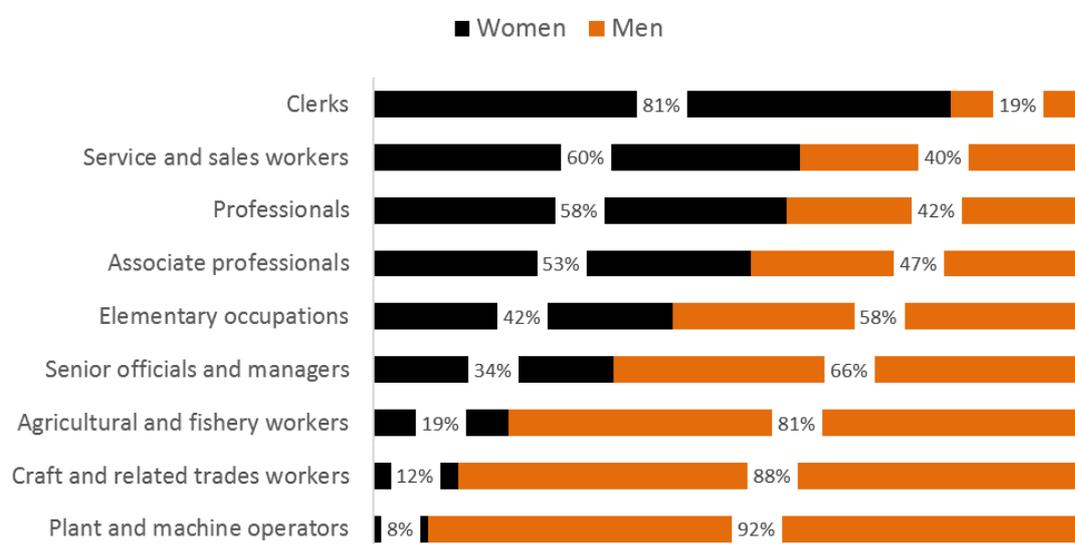


Figure 7: Gender division of occupations in Iceland, in 2016

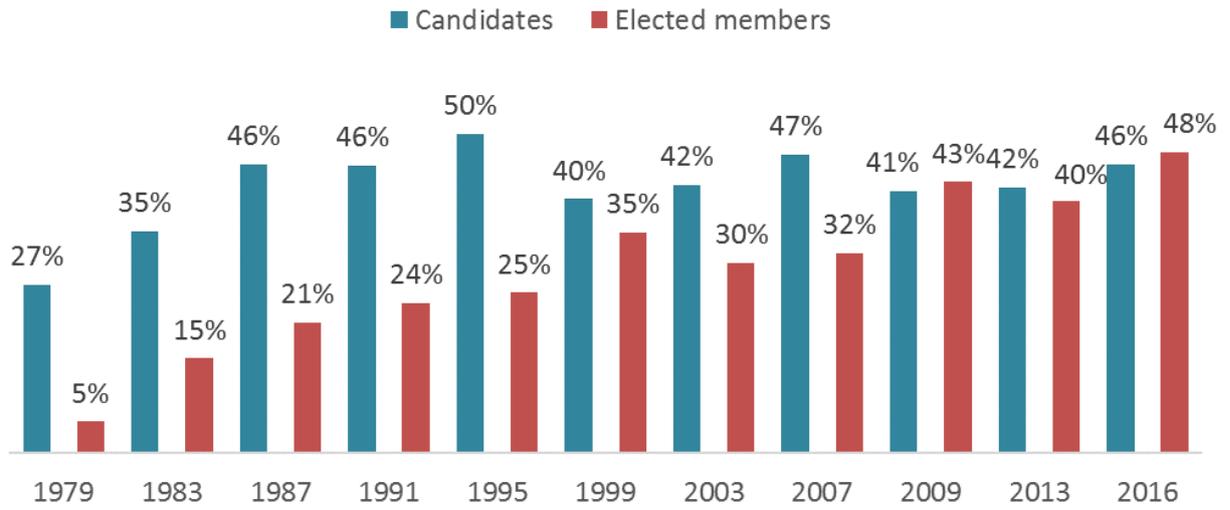


Figure 8: Women in parliamentary elections 1978–2016

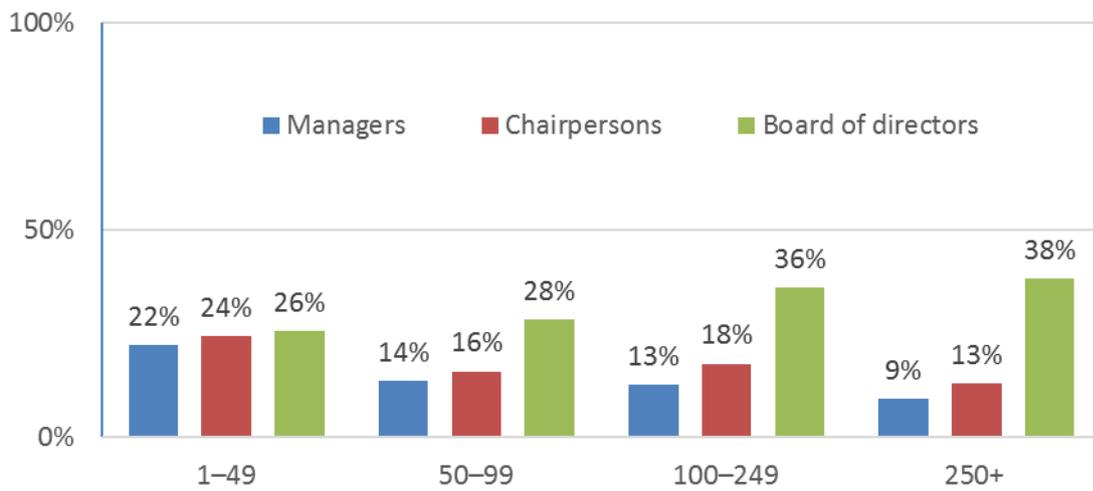


Figure 9: Women’s share of leadership in enterprises by size of enterprise 2015

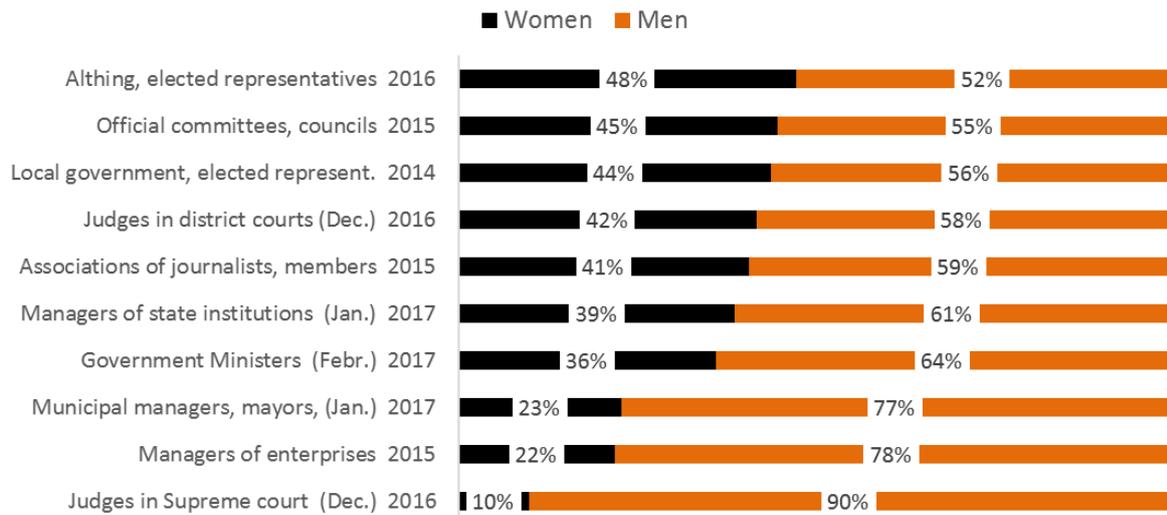


Figure 10: Positions of influence



Figure 11: Regular monthly salaries of full-time employees in the private sector 2016

