



Nordic Council
of Ministers

10!

**Ten years of cooperation
through the Nordic
Gender Equality Fund**

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This publication is also available online in a web-accessible version at:
<https://pub.norden.org/nord2023-010>

Introduction

When the Nordic Council of Ministers established the Nordic Gender Equality Fund in June 2013, the aim was to stimulate Nordic cooperation in the area of gender equality. Since then, the Fund has granted funding to NGOs, public authorities, researchers and networks within the context of 79 different projects. In this publication, we present the experiences, insights and effects of these first ten years of the Fund.

In these projects, organisations from at least three different Nordic countries or the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Aaland Islands have cooperated to promote gender equality in the Nordic countries. Some also include cooperation with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Funding partnerships have resulted in everything from proposals for legislation and educational tools to conferences and policy documents.

This publication gives an insight into ten of these partnerships, one for each year in the history of the Fund, and the concrete results they have generated. In brief reports and interviews, project participants share their experiences, knowledge and insights from their efforts to promote gender equality. They reflect on the benefits of Nordic cooperation and how we can meet the challenges identified in the Nordic cooperation programme for gender equality. They also give us examples of how the perspectives of children and young people can be integrated into work to promote gender equality, and contribute to the achievement of global sustainability goals.

Thanks to the cooperation projects financed through the Gender Equality Fund, knowledge in the area has grown and spread across Nordic borders. By sharing these projects they will be able to benefit more people and inspire new and exciting Nordic cooperation projects in the future.

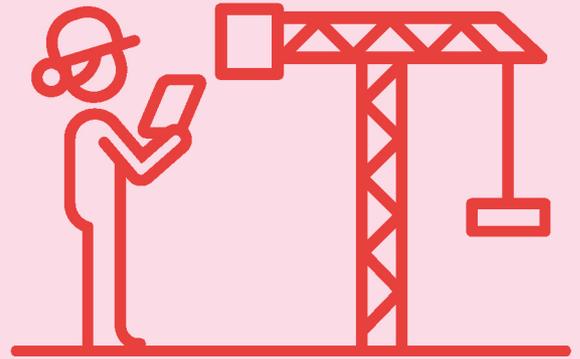
Nordic Information on Gender (NIKK) administer the Fund's calls, evaluations and follow-up. NIKK is located at the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research at the University of Gothenburg and since 2020 also administers the Nordic LGBTI^[1] Fund.

Gender equality is one of the common fundamental values of the Nordic nations. It is hugely important that we provide funds to non-profit organizations and academia working towards greater gender equality and also to the academic community. I have no doubt that the projects and research supported by this fund will help our governments in policy making and further progress gender equality in our societies.

– Katrín Jakobsdóttir, Prime Minister of Iceland.

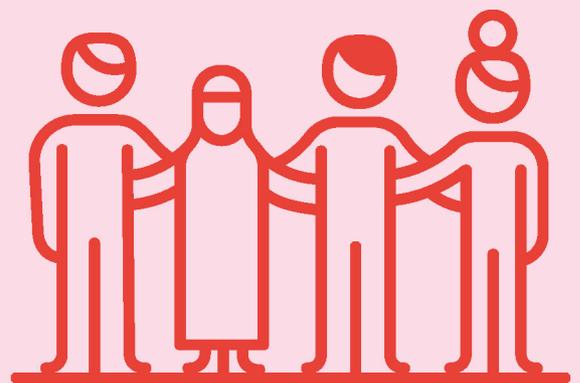
1. *LGBTI is an abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex. This abbreviation is used in the Nordic region, and in many international, contexts.*

KEY FIGURES



79

PROJECTS

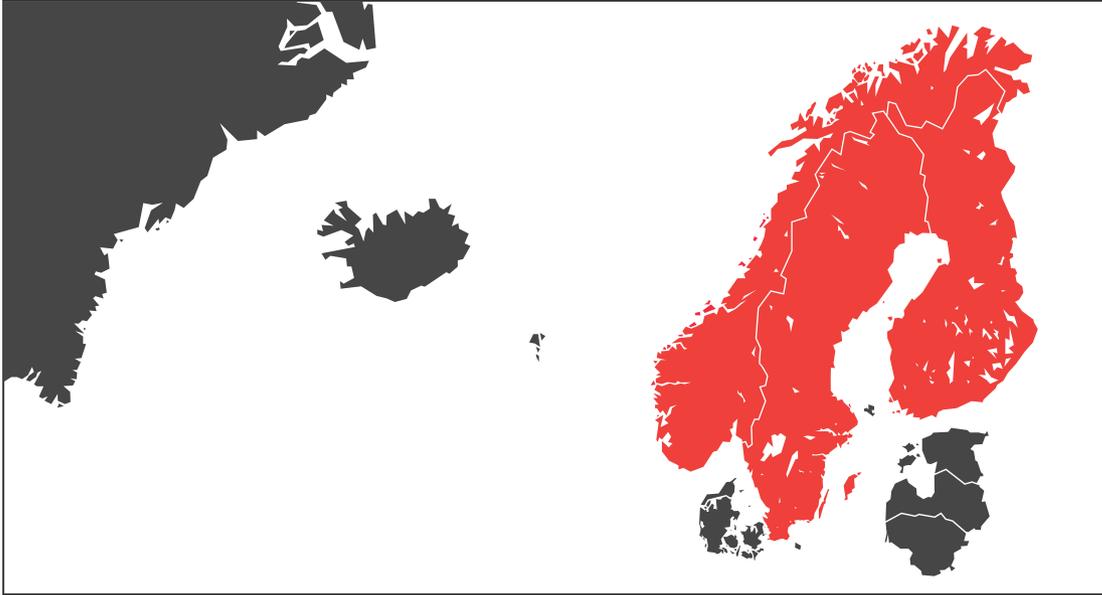


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ORGANISATIONS



Research network seeks solutions for the Arctic



FINLAND, SWEDEN, NORWAY, RUSSIA

The Nordic research network *Arctic Change Network* is studying changes in the Arctic from a gender perspective. It aims to strengthen cooperation between researchers at different universities and to raise awareness of the challenges in the area.

In 2013, researchers at three universities were granted funding from the Nordic Gender Equality Fund to establish the network via the two-year project *Gender perspective and climate in the Arctic*. During the project, network meetings were organised for researchers from different universities. The group also collected material for a larger research project on ageing in the Arctic. Shahnaj Begun, researcher at the University of Lapland, worked with this project as her doctoral degree project and has been part of the network since its inception. She has seen that the Arctic is facing a major demographic challenge, which is the result of many young people, and in particular of many young women, moving from the region.

The fact that young people are leaving means that there are not enough people who can take care of the elderly who remain. This is a problem that we need to discuss and where we should be able to find common solutions in the Nordic countries," she says.

Gender perspective on climate change

Shahnaj Begun names climate change as another major challenge in the Arctic and notes that climate change and demographic challenges are in part connected.

"Climate change is making the present and future uncertain, and unfortunately that is contributing to many young people not believing that there is a future here," she says.

She believes that it is important to analyse the effects of climate change from a gender and gender equality perspective.

"Climate change, for example, is making life more difficult for reindeer herding Sami people because their reindeer are finding it more difficult to locate food. This is affecting men in the first instance because it is more common for men to be the reindeer herders, but it also affects women when it becomes more difficult to make ends meet and when their traditional way of life is threatened."

Growing researcher network

Shahnaj Begun has experienced that their Arctic gender research network has opened many doors over the years – to new collaborations and to new research projects.

The network consisted of researchers from the University of Lapland in Finland, Umeå University in Sweden and the University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway. In the past ten years the group has grown and now includes researchers from Iceland's Reykjavik University and Canada's Manitoba University.

"The network has made it easier for us gender researchers who research in or about the Arctic to find colleagues to share ideas or cooperate with, and that is very valuable."

Gender perspective and climate in the Arctic

Year granted: 2013

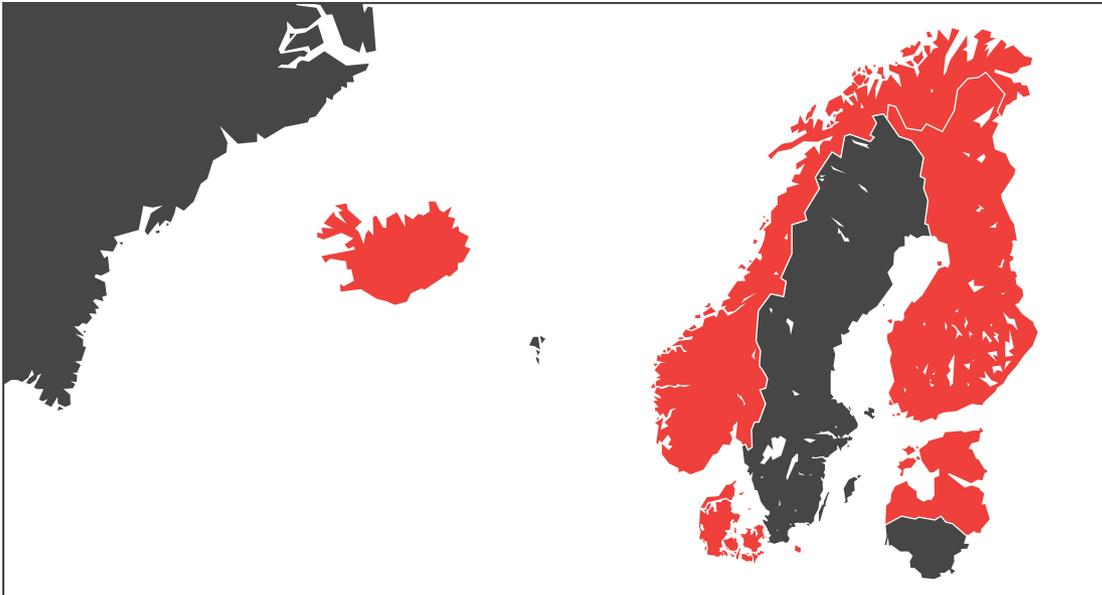
Subject: Gender equality and welfare policy

Funds granted: DKK 150,000

Partners:

- Unit for Gender Studies, University of Lapland (SE)
- Umeå University (SE)
- University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway (NO)
- Northern (Arctic) Federal University NArFU (RU)

Nordic-Baltic police cooperation against gender-based violence



DENMARK, ESTONIA, FINLAND, ICELAND, LATVIA, NORWAY

The project *Gender-based violence in the Nordic countries and the Baltic States* focused on raising awareness about men's violence. The project was financed by the Nordic Gender Equality Fund and ran from 2014–2015. It was led by the Nordic-Baltic Network of Policewomen (NBNP), which brings together women from police organisations in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

"We wanted to focus attention on these issues and increase knowledge within the police forces in our respective countries, especially in the area of human trafficking," says Inese Voloseviča.

She works as a police superintendent within the Latvian police and is a board member of NBNP. She chaired the network in 2015, when the project on gender-based violence was carried out.

As part of the project, a Nordic–Baltic conference was held in Riga in autumn 2015. The participants included police officers, decision-makers and representatives from various civil society organisations.

"It was very successful, with many great workshops and speakers. Our Latvian President, Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, took part and made a speech on human trafficking and gender equality. We feel that we had a great impact," says Inese Voloseviča.

Great international interest

As part of the project, NBNP also organised two programme items at the annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2015. This meeting

is held in New York and brings together thousands of participants from all over the world.

"350 people came to hear about our work in the network in the Nordic and Baltic countries. We were very surprised by that level of participation and interest in our activities," says Inese Voloseviča.

She notes that there is great international interest in how the police in the Nordic and Baltic countries work in combating gender-based violence.

"This is not just a problem here in our countries, it is a global problem," she says.

She believes that it is important to learn from each other at the international level in the fight against gender-based violence, and she feels that there are particularly strong reasons to cooperate in the Nordic countries and the Baltic States. Particularly in the fight against human trafficking, where this type of criminality transcends national borders.

"Because we are neighbours, it's important that we have good cooperation in these cases and that our focus for work in this area is the same," she says

Gender-based violence in the Nordic countries and the Baltic States

Year granted: 2014

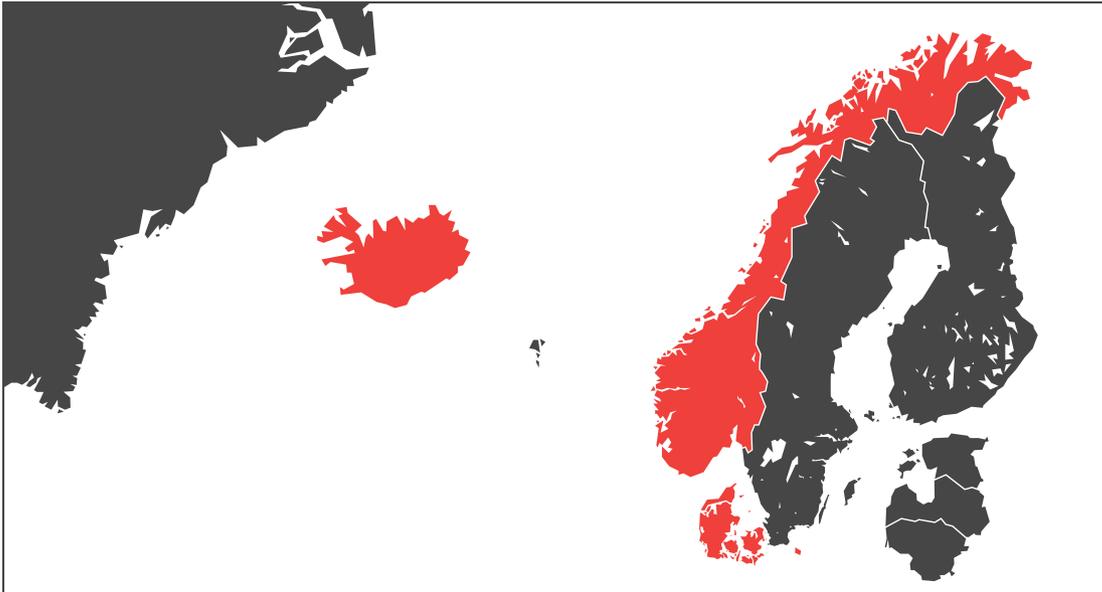
Subject: Gender-based violence

Funds granted: DKK 300,000

Partners:

- Nordic-Baltic Network of Policewomen (NBNP) (IS)
- Danish National Police (DK)
- Police and Border Guard Estonia (EE)
- Finnish National Police (FI)
- State Police of Latvia (LV)
- Ministry of Interior, Immunity (LV)
- National Criminal Investigation Service NCIS (Kripas) (NO)

Nordic cooperation against online violence



ICELAND, DENMARK, NORWAY

Sexist comments. Threats. Nude images shared without your consent. Online violence is a growing problem and the Icelandic Women's Rights Association saw the advantages of tackling the issue jointly in the Nordic countries at an early stage. In 2015, funding was granted to the organisation for a project carried out in cooperation with the Women's Council Denmark and the Norwegian organisation KUN Centre for Equality and Diversity.

"Our focus was on the opportunities women have to seek justice and legal redress in our various countries," says Brynhildur Heiðar- og Ómarsdóttir, former Secretary General and now senior adviser of the Icelandic Women's Rights Association.

Iceland the exception

Within the framework of the project, the three organisations produced the report entitled *Preventing online gender-based violence in the Nordics*, published in 2017. One of the sources for the report were interviews with victimised women in Norway and Denmark. In the report, women describe their experiences of their contacts with the police and the courts. But it proved impossible to give any attention to cases from Iceland according to Brynhildur Heiðar- og Ómarsdóttir.

"It was difficult to find people to interview – not because women in Iceland are less exposed to this kind of violence but because they saw no point in reporting it. Under Icelandic law at the time, there were few opportunities to pursue their case legally.

Online sexual violence was not mentioned in Icelandic law and very few perpetrators had been prosecuted. Women also refrained from reporting this kind of violence because they did not trust the police to take their cases seriously," she adds.

Placed the issue on the political agenda

Brynhildur Heiðar- og Ómarsdóttir believes that the Nordic project contributed to placing the issue of online sexual violence on the political agenda, especially in Iceland.

"We saw that more attention had been paid to the issue in Norway and Denmark. The fact that Iceland was the exception in a negative sense in the comparison I think put pressure on our authorities," she says.

"Iceland has since got a new law which has made it easier to get redress if someone has spread sexual images of a person without their consent. The law was promulgated in 2021 and means that it is illegal to share images as well as to threaten to share them.

"I'm not saying that we got the new law thanks to our project, but I believe that the project meant that a discussion was started and we got a better understanding that this is a form of violence," says Brynhildur Heiðar- og Ómarsdóttir.

Online violence against women in the Nordic countries

Financed by: Nordic Gender Equality Fund

Year granted: 2015

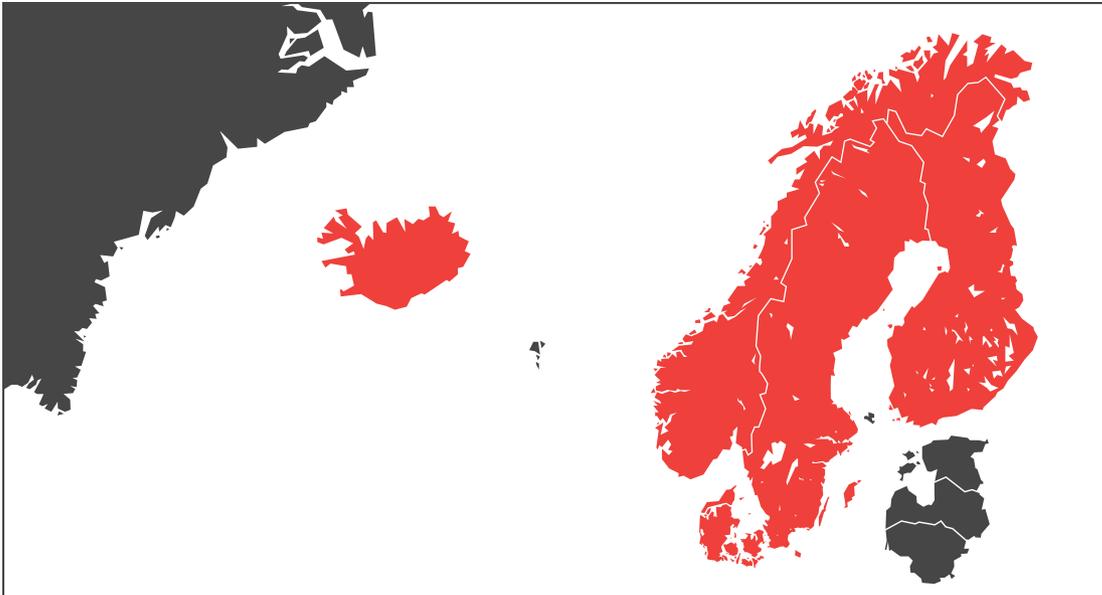
Subject: Gender-based violence

Funds granted: DKK 280,000

Partners:

- Icelandic Women's Rights Association (IS)
- Women's Council Denmark (DK)
- KUN Centre for Equality and Diversity (NO)

New Nordic platform focusing on men and masculinity



NORWAY, DENMARK, ICELAND, SWEDEN, FINLAND, USA

The winter of 2017 saw the first ever Nordic MenEngage conference. MenEngage is an international movement that aims to challenge destructive masculinity norms and engage men in gender equality efforts. The Nordic conference, which was granted funding from the Nordic Gender Equality Fund, was held in Oslo under the banner “Making the Invisible Visible: Transforming Social Norms among Boys & Men for Gender Justice in Practice”.

The conference focused on conditions and challenges in the Nordic countries, and brought together organisations from all the Nordic countries. The initiator was the Norwegian organisation *Reform*. The chair of this organisation, Ole Bredesen Nordfjell, says that after taking part in several international conferences on men and equality, he saw a need to gather in a Nordic context. He believes that gender equality organisations in the Nordic countries can benefit greatly from cooperating with each other.

“Of course, we can learn a lot from organisations from other countries too, in Europe and the rest of the world, but it is easier to share experiences and conduct joint campaigns within the Nordic countries because our societies have similarities. For example, we have similar welfare systems and school systems. In the Nordic countries, we also began to involve men in gender equality efforts earlier than many others, for example by introducing paternity leave,” he says.

Broke new ground

Around 100 participants attended the conference, which focused on common challenges and examples to learn from. Organisations from several different countries –from among

the Nordics and beyond –presented their activities. During the seminars, topics such as men's violence, the experiences of men with migrant backgrounds and the absence of men in the social care professions were highlighted. -

Ole Bredesen Nordfjell feels that the conference broke new ground in several ways, for example through the approach itself. The goal was to create a platform where participants could learn from each other and find solutions together, and this was a defining feature of the whole event.

"The participants didn't have everything laid on – everyone who was involved contributed to the content. I think that was a great success," he says.

He also highlights the intersectional starting point of the conference.

"It was important for us to make room for different experiences and perspectives, and I think we succeeded in doing that," he says.

Enhanced collaboration in the Nordic region

Ole Bredesen Nordfjell believes that it was thanks to its intersectional starting point that the conference helped to highlight new issues and inject new energy into Nordic gender equality organisations that focus on men and masculinity. In addition, he has been able to observe that the conference has led to deeper cooperation between organisations in different countries and he believes that the event strengthened organisations as well as individuals.

"You can feel very alone sometimes when you're working with gender equality, especially those of us whose focus is men, the feminist work, but during the conference it became clear that there are many of us pushing towards the same goal," he says.

Nordic MenEngage Conference – Making the invisible visible

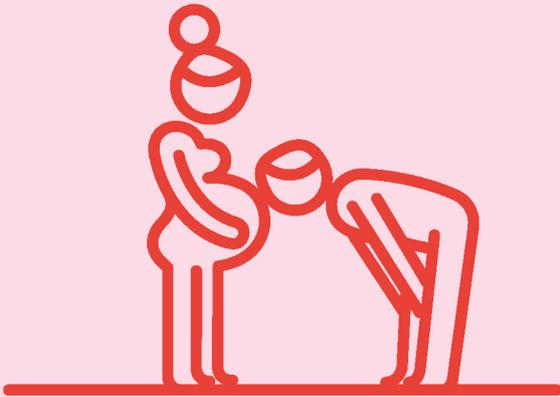
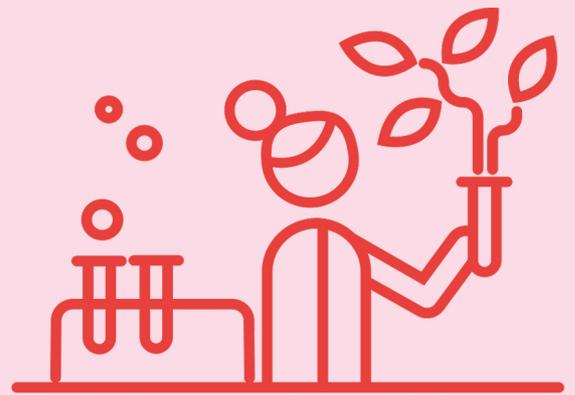
Year granted: 2016

Subject: Masculinities

Funds granted: DKK 400,000

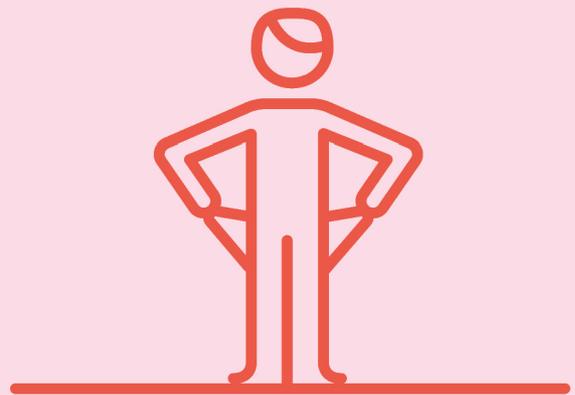
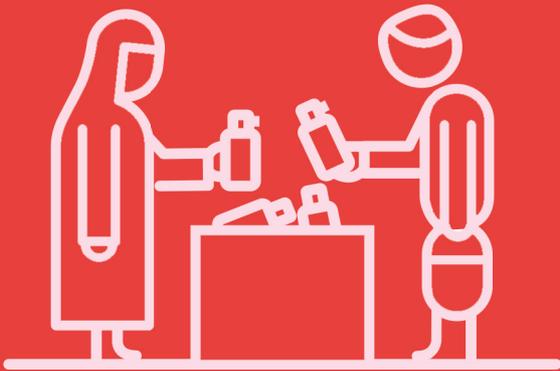
Partners:

- Reform – ressurscenter for menn (Reform – Resource Centre for Men) (NO)
- Forening for Fælles Ligestilling (The association gender equality for all) (DK)
- Jafnréttisstofa (Centre for gender equality) (IS)
- Män för Jämställdhet (Men for gender equality) (SE)
- MenEngage Alliance – global secretariat (US)
- Poikien Talo (Boy's House) (FI)
- Profeministimiehet (Profeminist men) (FI)



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SEMINARS



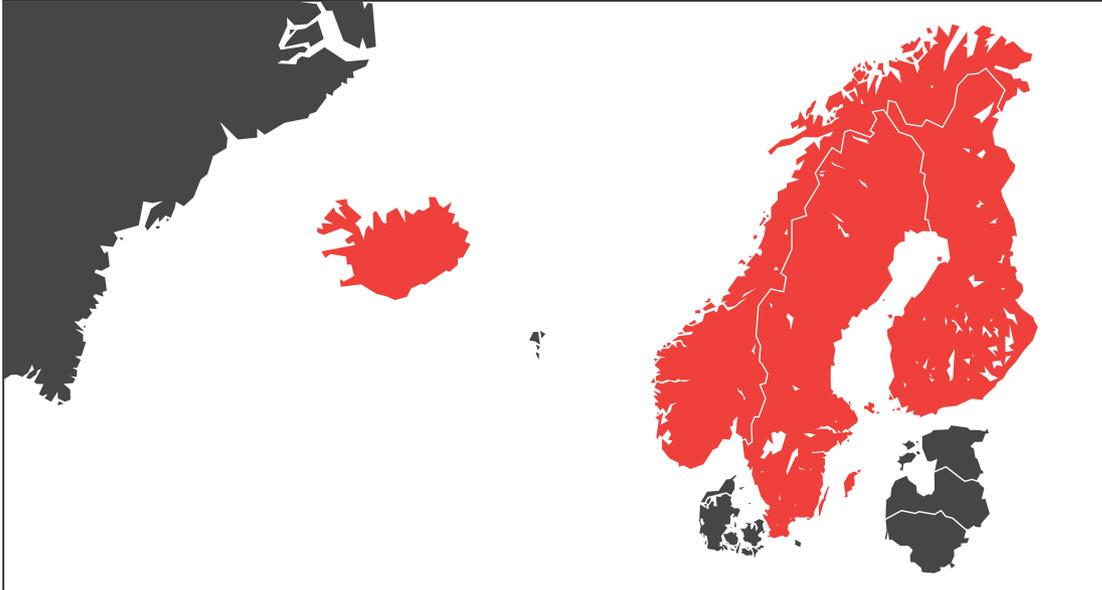
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PUBLICATIONS



Support for young norm challengers in workplace learning

NORWAY, ICELAND, AALAND ISLANDS



NORWAY, ICELAND, ÅLAND ISLANDS, FINLAND, SWEDEN

Many efforts are being made to encourage young people to dare breaking with gender norms in their educational choices, but how do you best support these pupils once they have made their choices? This was the focus of the project *Gender equality in workplace learning in the Nordic countries*, which the Nordic Gender Equality Fund financed in 2018.

"It's not enough to say that we want more men in schools or to start projects that will get girls more interested in engineering. If the pupils don't feel comfortable at these workplaces, they won't stay," says Gunilla Rooke, teaching adviser at the Swedish Agency for Education and one of the project's co-ordinators.

The project was a collaboration between actors in Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the Åland Islands. The goal was to get a picture of what support the pupils receive during workplace learning (APL), the practical component of their studies, and what the needs of the supervisors and school staff are for them whosupport the pupils.

"The pupils get a shock"

Gunilla Rooke notes that many workplaces are infused with outdated norms and that many pupils get a shock at the first encounter with the world of work.

"It can be girls who arrive at construction sites where there are no changing rooms for

them, or where the changing rooms are full of pictures of naked girls. Or boys starting to work in health care or in preschools being confronted with a culture that is suspicious of them or shuts them out.

All the Nordic countries that were part of the project face similar challenges, she concludes.

"There is very little talk about the structural problems that put up obstacles in the way in education and the workplace. That surprises me," she says.

Gunilla Rooke feels that their project contributed to more people having their eyes opened to the gender equality challenges in relation to workplace learning. She has also seen that the project has strengthened relations between the participating organisations and made it possible to continue working together.

"The Nordic countries have similar education systems, so we have great opportunities to support each other and make progress together," she says.

Nordic Conference in Stockholm

During the APL project, a Nordic conference was held in Stockholm with participants from schools as well as various industry organisations. In the wake of the project, new training initiatives have also been implemented with the aim of strengthening the skills in gender equality of those responsible for supporting pupils during their workplace learning placements. In this way, Gunilla Rooke believes that those who are responsible for supervising the pupils out in the workplace have become better equipped.

"The project helped us to see what efforts we need to make linked to workplace learning," she says.

In her view, much work remains to be done in improving support for pupils who make non-traditional educational choices.

"If we want to encourage these pupils, we need to be better at supporting them so that they can complete their educational choices. This is a challenge for both industries and schools," she says.

Gender equality in workplace learning in the Nordic countries

Year granted: 2017

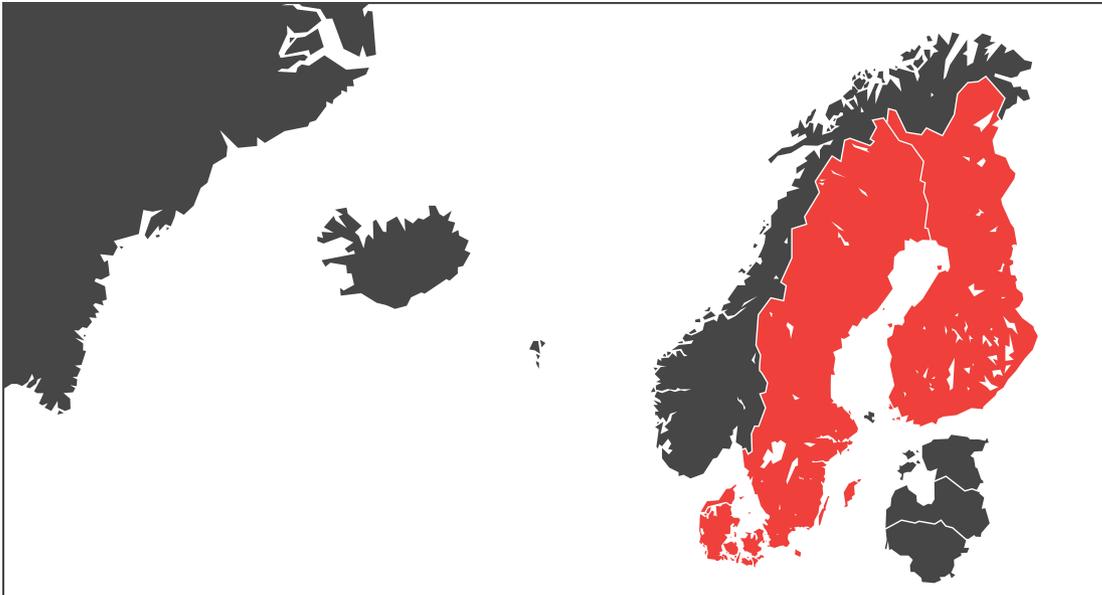
Subject: Working life and the labour market, education and training

Funds granted: DKK 400,000

Partners:

- Akershus fylkeskommune (Akershus County Municipality) (NO)
- IDAN (IS)
- Ålands Yrkesgymnasium (AX)
- Yrkesakademin (FI)
- Finnish National Agency for Education (FI)
- Swedish Agency for Education (SE)

GenderLAB, a workshop methodology for change management



DENMARK, FINLAND, SWEDEN

There are no universal solutions for working with gender equality that fit everywhere. It is therefore difficult to give advice on how to make progress in this process of change. This was the starting point when actors from Denmark, Finland and Sweden developed the workshop methodology GenderLAB.

The methodology was developed in 2018–2019 through the project *Co-creating gender equality from classroom to organization: Innovations in Nordic welfare*. During the project, workshops were conducted on a trial basis in Copenhagen, Helsinki and Stockholm.

The starting point for this methodology is that the workshops utilise the participants' own experiences and their local challenges.

"The participants have to identify the problems themselves and come up with solutions," says Sara Louise Muhr, professor at Copenhagen Business School.

She describes GenderLAB's approach as being based on a combination of norm criticism and 'design thinking'.

Norm criticism is about making visible and changing taken-for-granted norms and structures. 'Design thinking' is a methodology that designers often use to find creative solutions to complex problems.

"We saw that these methods worked very well together," says Sara Louise Muhr.

Developing solutions together

During a GenderLAB workshop, the goal is for participants to gain knowledge of the gender equality challenges in their organisation and commit to change. From the workshop, they should also take with them a number of solutions that they themselves have been involved in developing.

"There should be concrete proposals that they can take home and implement the following day," says Sara Louise Muhr.

She explains that the workshops are structured as various components and exercises.

"To lose your prejudices and think outside the box, for example, you might brainstorm freely and come up with as many solutions as possible in four minutes," she says.

Successful cooperation

The GenderLAB methodology was developed by the Copenhagen Business School and KVINFO (the Danish Center for Research on Women and Gender) in cooperation with KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm and the GODESS Research Institute at the Hanken School of Economics in Helsinki. Sara Louise Muhr describes Nordic cooperation as a key success factor.

"We bring different perspectives and can see each other's blind spots. At the same time, we are not too different. We can learn from each other and share the belief that it is important to challenge norms and power structures," she says.

The GenderLAB methodology is distributed via websites at KVINFO and the Copenhagen Business School. These websites describe how a GenderLAB workshop can be carried out.

"You choose for yourself the size and scale of the workshop. You can conduct a GenderLAB workshop on a small or large scale, with moderators who make sure that everything function smoothly," says Sara Louise Muhr.

She explains that the workshop methodology has been shown to have potential outside the gender field.

"In 2019, for example, we held a QueerLAB during Copenhagen Pride."

Co-creating gender equality from classroom to organization: Innovations in Nordic welfare

Year granted: 2018

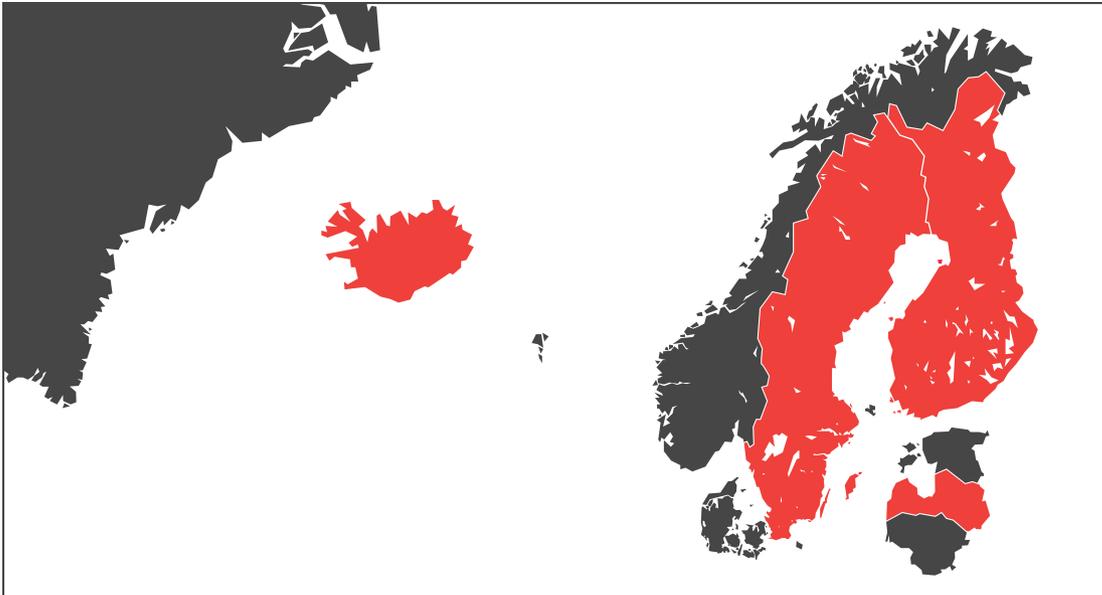
Subject: Gender equality and welfare policy

Funds granted: DDK 310,000

Partners:

- Copenhagen Business School, (DK)
- Hanken School of Economics, (FI)
- KTH Royal Institute of Technology (SE)

Mobilisation against sexual harassment among young people



SWEDEN, FINLAND, LATVIA, ICELAND

In the wake of the #MeToo movement, representatives of various Nordic children's rights organisations saw that more knowledge was needed about how sexual harassment sometimes functions as a form of bullying.

The Nordic countries are world leaders in preventing bullying, but when it comes to sexual harassment we saw that more needed to be done. We saw that there was a need to link the fields of bullying and sexual harassment," says Åsa Gustavsson, expert at the Swedish organisation Friends.

She was the Swedish coordinator for the Nordic–Baltic project *Research-based knowledge against sexual harassment and bullying among children and young people*. The project was funded by the Nordic Gender Equality Fund in 2019 and resulted in a report and a conference which brought together actors working to prevent bullying.

The project included children's rights organisations from Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Lithuania.

Better support for victimised children

One difficulty in supporting children and young people who are bullied is that many of the victims feel ashamed. This means that they are reluctant to tell anyone about what has happened to them, and this applies to perhaps an exceptionally high degree to children subjected to sexual violence, according to Åsa Gustavsson.

She feels that one of the positives with their project is increased knowledge about how to make it easier for children and young people to start telling people about their victimisation.

"If we only ask children if they have been subjected to sexual harassment, they often answer no, but if we ask more specifically about various behaviours or if someone has done something to them without their consent, that's when these stories emerge," she says.

Sharing continues

In hindsight, Åsa Gustavsson feels that the Nordic–Baltic project has not only contributed new knowledge to the work to combat sexual harassment. An important side effect, she says, is that it has deepened relations between Nordic and Baltic children's rights organisations.

"Through the project, we had the opportunity to share methods and approaches, and that sharing has continued," she says.

A network of representatives from the participating organisations was established during the project and they have continued to meet regularly.

"Learning from each other is really valuable. By joining forces, we also have a stronger voice. Hopefully, that can help us to push through changes at policy level," says Åsa Gustavsson.

In the ongoing work to combat bullying and sexual harassment in schools, she feels that the vulnerability of young LGBTI people in particular needs to be made more visible.

"We are seeing that young LGBTI people are often at risk and are victims of various forms of violence."

Research-based knowledge about combating sexual harassment and bullying among children and young people

Year granted: 2019

Subject: Children and young people, sexual harassment

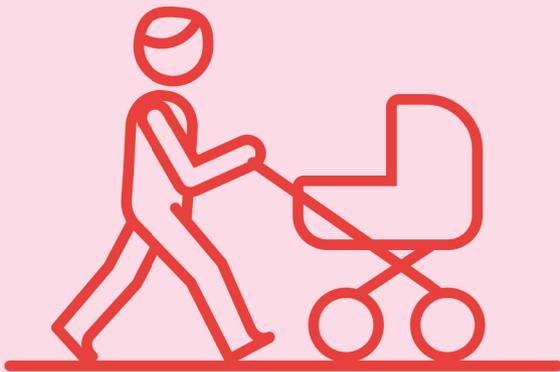
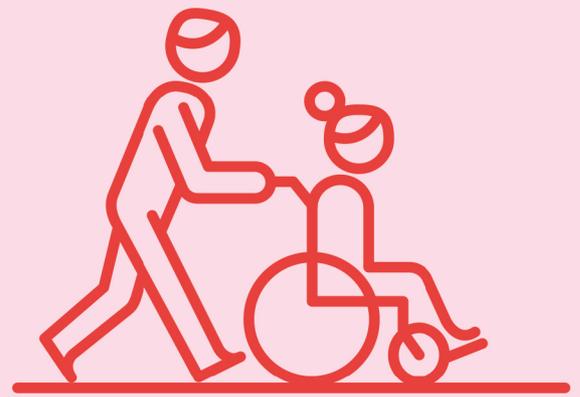
Funds granted: DKK 296,640

Partners:

- Friends Foundation (SE)
- Folkhälsan (Public Health) (FI)
- Mannerheim League (FI)
- Child Line/Vaiku Linija (LT)

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NETWORKS



25.5

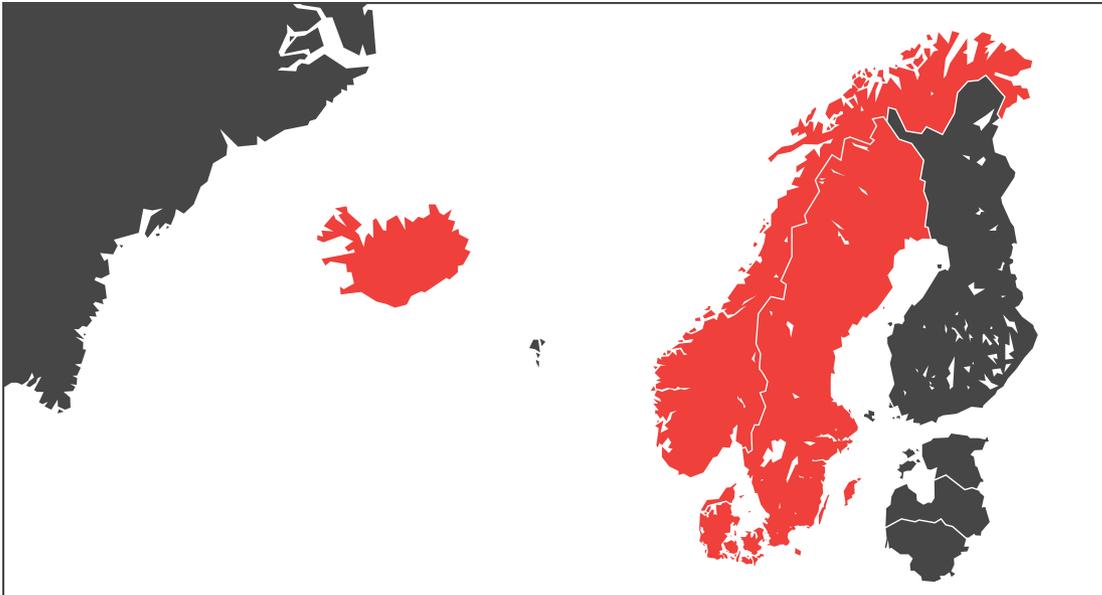
**MIO DKK
FURTHER FUNDING**

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PROJECTS



Diversity in the media – a matter of quality and democracy



DENMARK, ICELAND, SWEDEN, NORWAY

Gender balance in media world is the objective of the project entitled *New Nordic model for greater gender equality in the Nordic media sector*, which was granted funding by the Nordic Gender Equality Fund in 2020. Over three years, best practices will be collected and suggestions for new management and working methods will be developed. The project involves trade union organisations, educational institutions offering degrees in journalism, and the media in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland.

“During the project, we have collected and shared good ideas on how to tackle the challenges facing editors throughout the Nordic region,” says Marion Hannerup, who is leading the project with Gitte Rabøl.

They both have long experience in executive roles in the media and communications industry and both now work as independent advisers.

Male dominance – a democracy problem

The project aims to make male dominance visible and challenge it, both in media content and in media organisations in the Nordic countries. The fact that women are not given the same space as men is a democracy problem, say Marion Hannerup and Gitte Rabøl.

“It’s about who gets to speak and how, and it’s about who is ultimately accountable. There must be a better gender balance between male and female expert sources as well as in the corridors of management power,” says Gitte Rabøl.

In her view, the media industry is steeped in old traditions in which talent is primarily attributed to men and where men, consciously or unconsciously, have had each other's backs. In combination with the unclear career paths that are a feature of the media industry, women have found it more difficult to reach the highest positions.

Some countries are one step ahead

Gitte Rabøl and Marion Hannerup see that the media industries in the Nordic countries have progressed to different degrees in their efforts to make male dominance more visible and to challenge it.

"It's actually only now that television programs with panels where all the participants are men have started to provoke a reaction in Denmark. In other Nordic countries, they've had this debate for a long time," says Gitte Rabøl.

She hopes that the working method that they will develop within the project will be of concrete benefit to various actors in the media industry, and that the project will succeed in inspiring by pointing out positive initiatives.

"The University of Iceland, for example, holds a diversity week every year. Perhaps something similar could be done in other journalism courses in the Nordic countries," says Marion Hannerup.

She is convinced that media players in the different Nordic countries have a lot to learn from each other, and she believes that Nordic cooperation can speed up the pace of change in efforts to achieve gender equality.

"There is an affinity in the Nordic countries and a curiosity about how people are working in the other Nordic countries. And we are also happy to compare ourselves with each other, and nobody wants to be worst. We compete for best in class and that's a force that moves us forward," she says.

Diversity delivers higher quality

As Marion Hannerup sees it, the pursuit of gender balance is about justice but also about the quality of media.

"We are convinced that diversity improves the quality of journalism as well as democratic debate. We cannot afford not to prioritise this," she says.

New Nordic Model for greater equality in the Nordic media industry

Year granted: 2020 through the strategic programme call on the gender-segregated labour market

Subject: Working life and the labour market, gender-segregated labour market

Funds granted: DKK 1,600,000

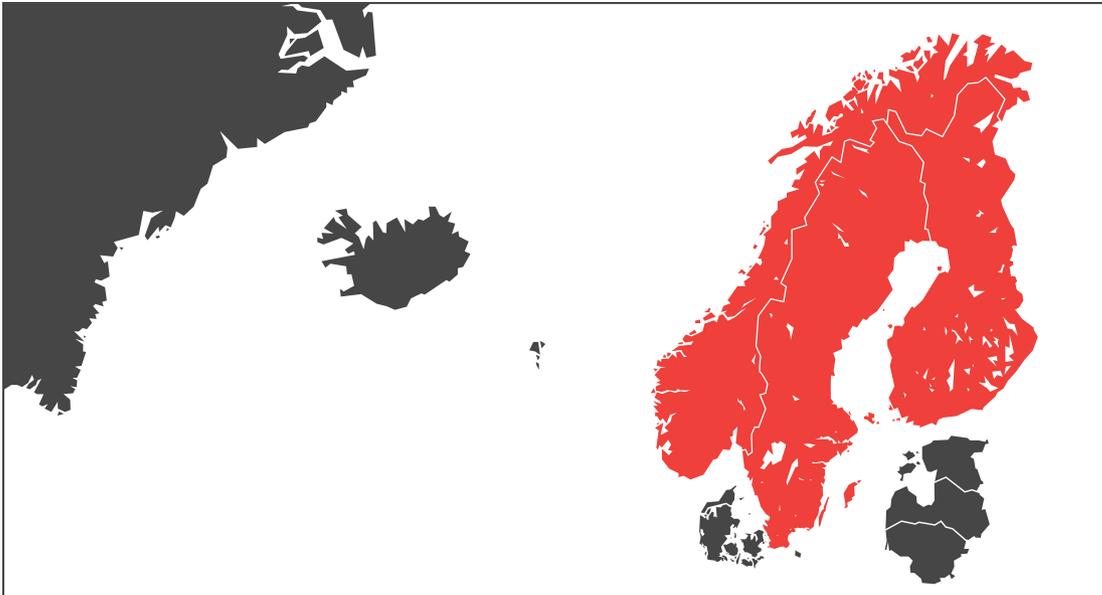
Partners:

- Danish School of Media and Journalism (DK)
- Bifrost University (IS)
- Swedish Union of Journalists (SE)
- Danish Center for Research on Women and Gender (DK)
- Danish Union of Journalists (DK)
- Norwegian Media Businesses' Association (No)

Associated Partners:

- Dagbladet Børsen (DK)
- Chef (SE)

Methodology for working with norm criticism in schools



NORWAY FINLAND, SWEDEN, ÅLAND ISLANDS

Students who don't fit the norm are particularly vulnerable to bullying, harassment and discrimination. The pupil council could lead the way to a school environment that is open and welcoming to everyone. This is the starting point for the project *Safe schools - Nordic method for pupil participation and norm criticism*.

Studies show that bullying in schools is particularly prevalent for pupils who do not fit the norms when it comes to gender expression, sexuality, skin colour or ableness. The norms are narrow and if you stick out in any way you risk becoming bullied," says Linn Bylund, Senior Adviser at the Norwegian KUN Centre for Equality and Diversity.

They run the *Safe Schools* project in cooperation with organisations in Sweden, Finland and the Aaland Islands.

"We saw that there was a lot of discussion about norm criticism in schools in all our countries, but there is not much happening in practice and we want to change that," she says.

New methodology material is being developed

Safe Schools received funding from the Nordic Gender Equality Fund in 2021. The project is developing and testing a methodology material for working with norm criticism in a number of secondary and upper secondary schools in these different countries. The material is intended for pupil councils, school managements and pupil ombudsmen (who investigate reports of harassment and bullying in schools).

Linn Bylund believes that the pupil councils can play an important role in the school's norm criticism work since the representatives that sit on these councils have better insight than the school management into what is actually happening between the pupils.

"To successfully make the school a place that is safe for everyone, the pupils' voices must be heard," she says.

An important task for pupil councils, as she sees it, is to make visible the norms operating in the school and which groups are being affected negatively. To accomplish this task, the pupil council representatives need to be able to see their own privileges.

"If everyone on the pupil council is white, they may not notice that there is racism in the school, for example.

The *Safe Schools* methodology should provide guidance on precisely these types of challenges, as well as concrete tips on how the people council can use normal criticism in their work.

"If you want a broad picture of the norms operating in the school, you could perhaps send out a questionnaire to your schoolmates, for example."

"School principals must listen"

Linn Bylund emphasises that the pupil councils' work can only have significance if the school management actually listens to them.

"It's not good enough to have a hypocritical pupil democracy, the school principals really have to listen," she says.

During work with *Safe Schools* it has emerged that many pupil councils feel that it is difficult to reach the school management. The methodology material therefore includes a model for how this communication can be structured so that the pupil council's views cannot be ignored, fended off or forgotten.

Linn Bylund believes that there is much to gain from working together in the Nordic countries in efforts for a better school environment.

"We have similar school models and face similar challenges in work with norm criticism. I believe that we can speed up the process by joining forces rather than focusing our efforts in different directions."

Safe Schools - Nordic method for pupil participation and norm criticism

Year granted: 2021

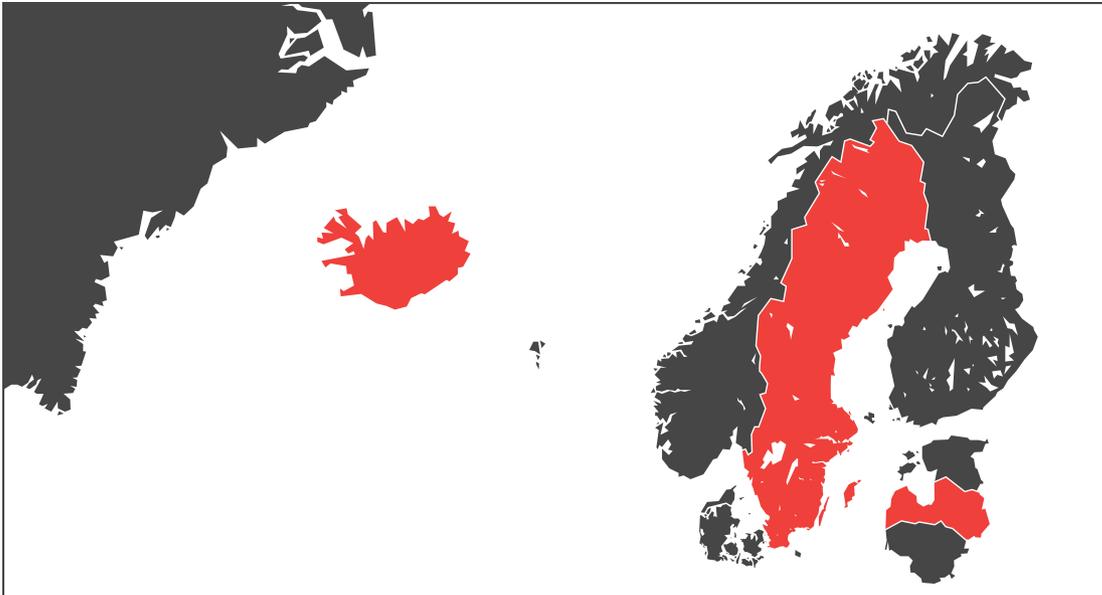
Subject: Children and young people, education

Funds granted: DKK 498,170

Partners:

- KUN Centre for Equality and Diversity (NO)
- Ekvalita, (FI)
- Elevernas Riksförbund (national school pupils association), (SE)
- Ålands feministparaply rf (Åland Islands feminist umbrella organisation) (AX)
- Elev og lærlingeombud i Trøndelag (Pupils and students in Trøndelag), (NO)
- Swedish-speaking School-student Union of Finland, (FI)

Gender perspective on crisis information during the (covid-19) pandemic



ICELAND, SWEDEN, LATVIA

How successful were Swedish and Icelandic authorities in their efforts to reach out to migrant women during the COVID-19 pandemic? Did this group receive sufficient information on how the infection was spread and the option to get vaccinated? This was the focus of enquiry in the Nordic-Baltic project *Gender-based health inequalities among migrant women during COVID-19 and public health responses in the Nordic countries*.

The background to the project is that both people born abroad and women as groups have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Both groups have been more diagnosed more often with COVID-19 and also appear to be more affected by the long-term consequences of the actions of the authorities. Migrants have also registered lower vaccination uptake and a disproportionately high percentage of deaths. However, the situation of migrant women during the pandemic is poorly investigated according to project manager Markus Meckl, professor at the University of Akureyri in Iceland.

He believes that one reason why both migrants and women were particularly affected during the pandemic is that many in these groups work in occupations where risk of infection cannot be avoided.

"If you clean, work in a factory or in health care, working from home is not an option," he says.

He points to overcrowded housing and the lower vaccination uptake as other reasons why migrants were particularly hard hit.

Latvian migrants in focus

The current project involves researchers from Iceland, Sweden and Latvia. They are investigating how successful be Swedish and Icelandic authorities were in reaching Latvian migrants, and in particular migrant women, with their information about the crisis. The choice to focus on Latvian migrants is due this group being relatively large both in Sweden and in Iceland.

During the project, the researchers will interview Latvian migrants in Iceland and Sweden but also residents of Latvia.

"We are curious about whether migrants' views on COVID-19 and vaccination reflect the prevailing attitudes in their home country," says Markus Meckl.

If it's the case that in times of crisis, migrants mainly seek information from their home countries, that is something that the Nordic authorities may have to consider when formulating crisis information and choosing information channels.

Gender perspective on crisis information

Markus Meckl believes that it is important to have a gender perspective on crisis information. During the project, he and the other researchers will investigate how important gender was in where migrants sought information about the spread of the novel coronavirus and the options for getting vaccinated.

"We don't know if there are gender differences, but there are likely to be," says Markus Meckl.

In his view, the authorities in the Nordic countries need to review how successful they were in reaching migrants with crisis information during the pandemic, and if it turns out that these countries have each done things differently, there is an opportunity to learn from each other. He hopes that their projects will contribute to knowledge for future crises.

"The COVID-19 pandemic is more or less over, but in the next crisis we must be able to reach the whole population. It may not be enough to simply translate the information into different languages – it may require more," he says.

Gender-based health inequalities among migrant women during COVID-19 and public health responses in the Nordic countries

Year granted: 2022

Subject: Gender and welfare policy, health

Funds granted: DKK 500,000

Partners:

- University of Akureyri (IS)
- University of Gothenburg (SE)
- Riga Stradiņš University, (LT)

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Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland.

Nordic co-operation has firm traditions in politics, the economy, and culture. It plays an important role in European and international collaboration, and aims at creating a strong Nordic community in a strong Europe.

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