



City of Reykjavík

Overview of human rights projects

November 2014



The Human Rights Policy

The City of Reykjavík's Human Rights Policy was approved in 2006 and revised in 2013. It is based on human rights and the principle of equality and aims to allow all persons to enjoy their human rights regardless of origin, nationality, skin colour, religious and political beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, age, financial situation, heritage, disability, medical condition or any other status.

Through working towards a uniform human rights policy, emphasis is placed on a coordinated vision for the benefit of city inhabitants, inasmuch as many of them belong to more than one of the groups it covers. The common thread or the main emphasis is however on gender equality.

Municipalities are according to the equality law in Iceland required to work on gender mainstreaming in all areas. The Human Rights committee and Human Rights Office are responsible for enforcing the policy.

The Human Rights Policy is available in several languages and can be found in English here: rvk.is/humanrights

The European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life

Reykjavik signed the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life in 2009. Signing the charter involves certain obligations but the city has, along with other local municipalities in Iceland that have signed the treaty, decided to focus on the following articles:



Article 6. Countering stereotypes.

Article 9. Gender assessment.

Article 22. Fighting gender based violence.

Reykjavik is additionally focusing on the following articles:

Article 10. Multiple discrimination and disadvantage.

Article 11. The employer role.

Article 12. Public procurement and contracts.

Article 20. Culture, sport and recreation.

Action Plan for gender equality

Municipalities are required by law, to submit an action plan for gender equality.

Reykjavík's Action Plan, valid from 2011 to 2015, contains 25 measures directed at countering stereotypes, gender mainstreaming, and equal opportunities within the workplace, culture, sport and gender-based violence.

Reykjavik Action Plan against gender-based violence and violence against children

Reykjavík's action Plan of 33 measures against gender-based violence and violence against children was approved by the City Council in 2012. The action plan aims to make the best use of the tools and opportunities available for city employees, to prevent violence by education of both students and staff. It also emphasizes giving support to victims of violence.



The plan was prepared by a group of people representing different departments of the city and professions working with victims of violence and with children and young people. The group sought information and advice both from scholars and grassroots organizations which have contributed invaluable in order to break the silence that has prevailed on the issue of violence in Iceland.

Research and several surveys done in recent years on violence in Iceland, both against women and children, has increased knowledge of the nature, extent and consequences of gender-based violence. That again has provided both the Icelandic government and municipalities with the opportunity to fight violence systematically. A survey on violence showed that about 42% of women in Iceland have suffered intimidation, violence and sexual harassment that caused them distress, after 16 years of age. Judging from the results of the study the violence was often serious. About 26% of women enduring violence in a close relationship said that their life had been in danger during the last violent incident, and 41% said that they had suffered physical harm. Reykjavík City is now preparing to implement special measures to address domestic violence. To this aim the city will seek cooperation with the capital area police department, other municipal governments in the capital area and grass roots organizations. Special focus will be placed on women of foreign origin and women with disabilities. The aim of the project is to send a clear message that domestic violence will not be tolerated, to improve the city's services to both the victim and the perpetrator of domestic violence and to strengthen cooperation between the institutions that work on the issue. Emphasis will be placed on taking appropriate measures as soon as violence in close relationships is detected. As a part of that measure a social worker will accompany police officers to the scene when domestic violence is reported.

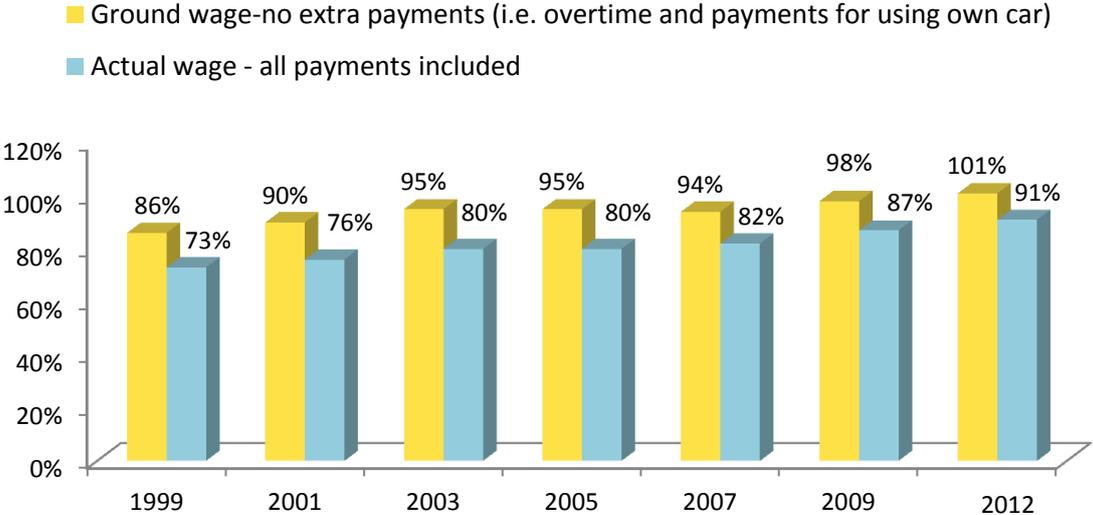
Gender equality in education (schools and leisure)

Equality is one of the foundations of the national curriculum for compulsory schools. To support this part of the curriculum the Department for Education and Youth has begun a twofold project; one part is a session aimed at training their employees in equality. The other part is a collection of materials, published on a special website, to use in teaching equality or how to mainstream it in to teaching. The same website, will have ideas for all kinds of projects and some guidelines for their implementation.

Gender pay gap – monitoring

The gender pay gap has lessened gradually, as can be seen in figure 1, since the City of Reykjavik started to monitor it in 1999. The figure shows the raw gender wage gap when no adjustments have been done for i.e. for overtime or occupation. The information is based on the wages of fulltime workers in October every other year from 1999. It is based on actual information from the City's data base (payroll).

Figure 1. Women’s wage as a percentage of men’s wage. Full time city employees shown October of each year.

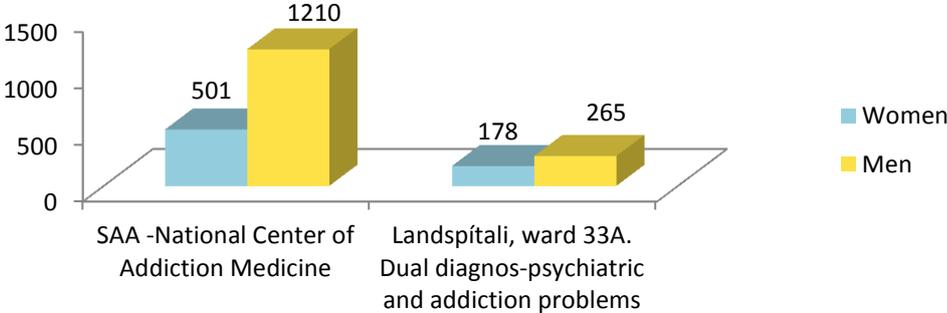


As can be seen in figure 1 the main difference lies in actual wages i.e. when payments for overtime and using own car for work purposes is included. In relation to this it is important to note that the city has two ways of paying for overtime. The mayor has put forth a plan to eliminate the gender pay gap that is now being worked on.

Statistics – women and men

On International Women's Day, March 8th, the Human Rights Office publishes a brochure on some statistics of women and men in Reykjavik. Some information is quite traditional, on population and professions while other information is presented in order to draw attention to specific issues. It can be the number of women and men visiting the city's swimming pools with men outnumbering women at all locations. Or it can be information on the percentage of statues in the city showing men on the one hand and women on the other or the admissions for alcohol and drug abuse by gender.

Figure 2. Admissions for alcohol and drug abuse treatment in 2013 by gender.

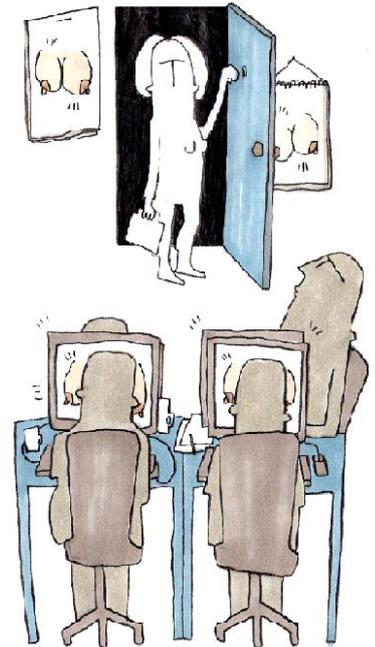


Pornification is sexual harassment

In 2012 The Reykjavik City Human Rights Office and MARK - Centre for Research on Gender and Diversity at the University of Iceland published a brochure in Icelandic and English called *Pornification is Sexual Harassment*. The brochure highlights how women experience pornography at work and discussion concerning their looks instead of performance in the workplace. It is argued that pornification, whether it appears in words or images, is sexual harassment.

Information on this topic has not previously been published in Icelandic and the brochure is intended for the staff of Reykjavik and the staff and students of the University of Iceland. It can be found both on the city's website and the University of Iceland website and can be used by everyone.

The brochure can be found here on the website: rvk.is/humanrights



Herstory



A brochure on a history walk published in cooperation with the Women's History Archives of Iceland. Draws attention to the often forgotten role women play in the shaping of cities. Is published both in Icelandic and English.

The brochure can be found here on the website: rvk.is/humanrights

Gender budgeting

Reykjavik has begun the implementation of gender budgeting. In the year 2012 the city ran a pilot project with the involvement of every department and office within the city, altogether 17 projects. Gender budgeting is now a part of the general budget process.

Gender budgeting objectives;

- ✓ Make the impact on both genders visible.
- ✓ Making it possible to respond and reevaluate policies, expenditures and sources of income to support the objectives of equality for women and men.

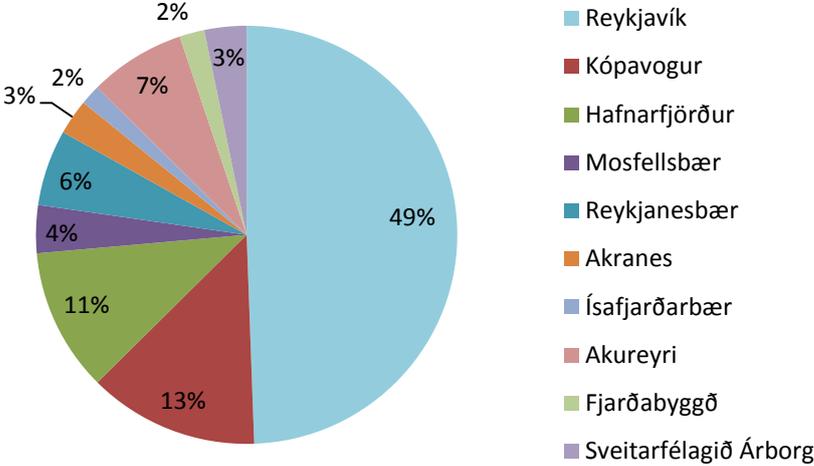
Using the tools of gender budgeting has already proved to be very fruitful as it has unmasked a lot of things both concerning decision making but also concerning the services of the city that were previously hidden. Information in English can be found on the website: rvk.is/humanrights

Immigrants in Reykjavik

In January 2013 there were 20.604 individuals with foreign citizenship living in Iceland, there of 9.984 women and 10.620 men. At the same time there were 9.350 people with foreign

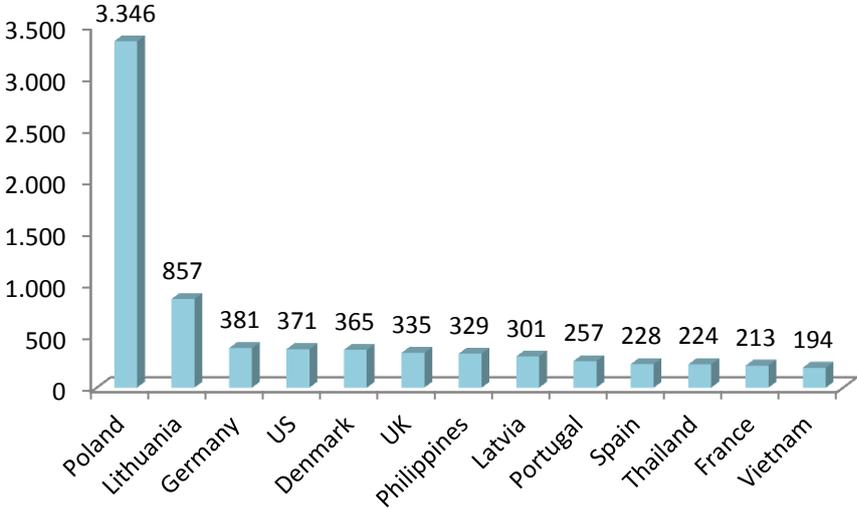
citizenship living in Reykjavík, 4.498 women and 4.852 men. 49% of foreign citizens live in Reykjavík as can be seen in figure 4.

Figure 4. Residence of foreign citizens by municipality January 2013



Immigrants from Poland are by far the largest group of foreign citizens in Reykjavík, see figure 3.

Figure 3. Individuals with foreign citizenship living in Reykjavik in 2013. Countries with more than 150 individuals.



The Reykjavik City Human Rights Office has offered services for immigrants since 2010. The aim is to increase immigrant access to city services, to promote civic empowerment and to enhance immigrant participation. Three counsellors offer information and counselling to immigrants living in Reykjavik.

The counsellors speak Icelandic, English, Polish, Lithuanian and Russian. Interpreters in other languages are provided free of charge when needed. Counselling takes place in City Hall, the Public Library, the Gerðuberg Cultural Centre, and at the Icelandic Church's Aid Centre.

The aim of the service:

- ✓ Identify which city services are available and help immigrants access those services, such as financial assistance, rent benefits, social workers.
- ✓ Give information about rights and obligations.
- ✓ Find solutions in family matters, e.g. child support, divorce and custody.
- ✓ To advise victims of gender-based and domestic violence as to where to seek help.
- ✓ Inform about residence permits and applying for Icelandic citizenship.
- ✓ Advise immigrants about work related issues.
- ✓ Help immigrants find local organizations that can address their needs such as schools of Icelandic and adult education centres, cultural and religious centres, women's and family help services and leisure and sport clubs.



The counsellors at the Reykjavik Human Rights Office maintain 2 Facebook pages for immigrants living in Reykjavik. <https://www.facebook.com/LivingInReykjavik>, <https://www.facebook.com/Reykjavik.Nasze.miasto>

Our Children and Ourselves

In cooperation with the Welfare Ministry the Human Rights Office published the booklet *Our Children and Ourselves* in multiple languages. The booklet is intended as a simple guide for parents and families of children about their responsibilities, children's rights, education and welfare. The booklet was printed but can also be found on the website rvk.is/humanrights

Multicultural Day in Reykjavik

Since 2005 Reykjavik City has sponsored and organized a special Multicultural Day celebrating the city's diversity. The day begins with a parade beginning in mid-town and concluding at City Hall where there is an exciting festival with fun entertainment, crafts, food and insights into various different cultures and countries.

The Multicultural Congress in Reykjavik

The Human Right Office has held two Multicultural Congresses. The first one was in 2010 and the second one in November of 2012.

The goal of the congress is to improve the city's services for immigrants.

People of foreign origin are especially invited to come and have an impact where the city's services need to be improved. Emphasis is also placed in learning about their opinions and experiences and finding ways to facilitate mutual integration.

Participation at both congresses has been good. The goal is to reach as many immigrants as possible and the discussion takes place in small groups sitting around round tables. The

discussions have been in the following languages: English, Icelandic, Spanish, Polish, Thai, Vietnamese, Cebuano, Russian and Lithuanian.

In 2010 the theme was services in Reykjavik and its many divisions and departments and ways to make these services more accessible. The theme in 2012 was immigrants' access to information and how this information is distributed. A summary of the congresses and the results are published and translated into a few languages.

The Multicultural Council

During Reykjavik's first Multicultural Congress elections took place for seats on the multicultural council. 7 individuals were elected to act as an advisory body for Reykjavik's Human Rights Council and other city institutions regarding immigration matters. 16 people from 13 countries sought elections; all of them were from Reykjavik and of foreign origin. In 2012 a new council was elected.

Employment - people with disabilities

Since March 2014, the Human Rights Office has a role concerning employment of people with disabilities. One staff member is tasked with mapping the work situation of people with disabilities employed by the city as well as identifying new methods to increase work market participation of people with disabilities in cooperation with government and municipal institutions.

Access

In May 2014 the administration and leadership for the disability access committee was transferred to the human rights office. According to the mandate of the committee, its role is to encourage that all buildings owned by Reykjavik City, other facilities rented by the city, as well as streets, pavements and other public spaces in the city, are accessible to people with disabilities suitable to their various access needs.



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