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Nordic Council of Ministers

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Nordic Co-operation Programme for gender Equality 2009



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1. Nordic co-operation

1.1 Co-operation in the Nordic countries

In spring 2005, the Nordic Ministers for Gender Equality (MR-JÄM) adopted the 2006–2010 Nordic Co-operation Programme for Gender Equality. Entitled *Focus on Gender: Working toward an Equal Society*, it serves as the foundation for gender equality work undertaken in the five Nordic countries and three autonomous regions. The Nordic Council approved the co-operation programme in its session in October 2005. In accordance with the Nordic Council's recommendations, the programme is supplemented with annual action plans.

For 35 years, the Nordic Council of Ministers has worked toward full gender equality in the Nordic societies. Equality between the genders means that care-work, power and influence are divided equally between women and men and that they share the same rights, obligations and opportunities in all areas of life in a society that is free from gender-based violence.

Taking into account the different skills, knowledge and experiences of men and women in all areas creates a better society for everyone. To achieve a truly equal society, it is absolutely essential that men participate actively in gender equality work.

Primary action areas in 2006–2010

The Nordic countries engage in a broad scope of gender equality work, and the Nordic Council of Ministers is obliged to limit its focus on several key areas.

In 2006–2010, the Nordic Council of Ministers has chosen to prioritise two main action areas:

- Gender and power
- Gender and youth

Both initiatives are aimed at taking on issues where the Nordic countries and autonomous regions share a common interest and that yield a common Nordic advantage. Concrete initiatives are formulated in annual action plans and presented for approval to the Ministers for Gender Equality.

Other action areas

During 2006–2010, the Council of Ministers will also work to integrate gender equality into the area of culture and communication.

The *Gender and power in the Nordic countries* project will be concluded in 2009.

1.2 The core objectives of the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality

Nordic gender equality work is founded on co-operation among the Nordic countries and autonomous regions in accordance with the guidelines described in a mission statement of the Ministers for Gender Equality, approved by the Ministers on October 15, 2007 (Appendix 1).

1.3 Primary action areas during the 2009 Icelandic presidency

Incorporating a gender equality perspective into all co-operation areas continues to be a priority. A strong, diverse workforce is a precondition for maintaining the leadership position that the Nordic countries occupy in international competition. It is therefore important to utilize the full potential of both women's and men's knowledge and experiences. The strength of the Nordic region lies in its democratic ideals, gender equality, and shared conviction of responsibility for the wellbeing and health of all citizens. It is also based on the generally held view that the knowledge, research, and innovation that

individuals, institutions, and social groups contribute provide the basis that is needed for progress.

Nordic work to promote gender equality through parental leave and care-leave systems has received a lot of attention. The impact of these statutes will be evaluated in the course of this presidency. There will also be an investigation into why there is a continuing delay in achieving equal representation between women and men in boards and politics. The advancement of gender equality co-operation with West Nordic regions will receive particular attention. Women's ability to influence climate policy will also be evaluated, as well as the impact of climate change on gender equality.

A conference will be arranged to present the results from the gender equality instruction that was arranged in kindergartens and comprehensive schools throughout the Nordic countries. Gender equality legislation in the West Nordic region will be the theme of another conference, and co-operation with the region will be launched to arrange the teaching of gender equality in kindergartens and comprehensive schools. In connection with the March 2009 meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), a Nordic side-event will be arranged to highlight the issue of gender equality and climate change. Afterwards, a report will be drafted on gender equality and climate change in preparation for the Copenhagen climate summit.

During its presidency, Iceland will begin the process of drafting a new Nordic co-operation programme for gender equality, for 2011 and thereafter.

1.4 The Nordic Gender Institute (NIKK)

NIKK's overarching task is to support the implementation of the current Gender Equality Co-operation Programme as well as engage in active dialogue with the Nordic Ministers for Gender Equality, the Committee of Senior Officials in Gender Equality (ÅK-JÅM), and the country that currently holds the presidency. An annual co-operation seminar is arranged for the boards of the Executive Committee for Gender Equality and NIKK.

NIKK is the most important resource for the Nordic Council of Ministers in carrying out the Co-operation Programme in Gender Equality. NIKK initiates, co-ordinates and implements gender research projects to study important questions relating to gender equality in order to infuse a higher level of information and awareness to political discussions and initiatives. Projects can take the shape of reports, evaluations, analyses and research projects that have their starting point in the current gender equality programme.

NIKK also monitors the progress of gender research and promotes it within and outside of the Nordic countries. NIKK's task is to function as an arena for the users and producers of gender-related information and knowledge in the Nordic countries, and to diversify its methods of information dissemination to more effectively popularise research findings among an ever greater audience, thereby supporting and enriching public debate. NIKK also works in close co-operation with Nordic information and documentation organisations to co-ordinate all information and documentation that pertains to gender research and gender equality.

2. International co-operation

During 2009, the Committee of Senior Officials in Gender Equality will continue to seek co-operation with various international organisations in accordance with resolutions of the Ministers for Co-operation in December 2002 and August 2003.

2.1 Co-operation with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

The Baltic and Nordic Ministers for Gender Equality have approved a new Nordic-Baltic Co-operation Programme for 2009–2010. The co-operation programme is intended to support the integration of gender equality in political decision-making processes in the Baltic countries at the local, regional and national level. Legislation, working life, education and the economy are all areas that must be explored and discussed from a gender equality standpoint.

The Nordic and Baltic Ministers for Gender Equality resolved at their meeting in 2008 to draw up a “Memorandum of Understanding” for combating sex trafficking.

2.2 Co-operation with Northwest Russia

During 2009, the Committee of Senior Officials in Gender Equality will continue to work with the municipal administration of the city of St. Petersburg in accordance with the *Protocol of Intent* signed by Nordic Council of Ministers Secretary General Halldór Ásgrímsson and St. Petersburg Governor Valentina Matviyenko in July 2007.

2.3 EU Co-operation

The European Union’s *Northern Dimension* focuses on issues that affect the northern parts of Europe. The Nordic Council of Ministers will continue to develop strategies for working alongside the EU’s Northern Dimension Programme and the *Partnership on Public Health and Social Wellbeing*. All work within this collaboration will incorporate gender mainstreaming.

2.4 Co-operation with the United Nations

Nordic gender equality work within the United Nations is founded on the Beijing Platform signed by UN member states in Beijing in 1995, as well as on Beijing +5. Co-operation generally takes the form of participation in annual meetings of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). In connection with the Commission’s 53rd Session in 2009, the Icelandic presidency will arrange a joint-Nordic seminar on *Men’s care-giving responsibilities in a life-span perspective* as well as a Nordic expert seminar on gender equality and climate change; see 3.1.2.

3. Projects and budget in 2009

The total budget for 2009 is DKK 8,610,000. In 2009, DKK 3,290,000 will be allocated to projects and DKK 5,320,000 to the Nordic Gender Institute (NIKK).

3.1 The Nordic Council of Ministers and the Committee of Senior Officials in Gender Equality (MR-JÄM and ÄK-JÄM)

3.1.1 Gender and power in the Nordic countries

The *Gender and power in the Nordic countries* initiative was begun in 2007. The project focuses on issues of power and influence in politics and business in the Nordic countries. The aims of this joint-Nordic project include:

1. By using available research findings and statistics, compare the representation of women and men in decision-making positions in different sectors of society in the Nordic countries and autonomous regions;
2. Uncover and analyse the reasons behind existing gender segregation;
3. Compile information about endeavours carried out in the Nordic countries and autonomous regions that have been successful in achieving more equal distribution of social power and influence between women and men;

4. Present measures carried out in the Nordic countries and autonomous regions that have succeeded in a more equal gender distribution in positions of power; and
5. Evaluate the gender equality policy resources and the opportunities for influencing gender equality policy in the Nordic countries and autonomous regions from the standpoint of structures of power.

The results from the Nordic project will be presented at a conference in Iceland in November 2009.

Council of Ministers financing in 2009:	DKK 100,000
Financing through the current presidency 2009:	DKK 200,000
NIKK financing in 2009 (conference):	DKK 200,000
Total	DKK 500,000

3.1.2 Gender equality and globalization

The Ministers for Gender Equality passed a decision in 2008 to launch a project to study gender equality and climate change.

Throughout the year, the Committee of Senior Officials in Gender Equality will carry out discussions on the globalization process and the NCM as well as ways to incorporate gender into Nordic efforts to address globalization. *Global Pressure – Nordic solutions? The Nordic Globalization Barometer 2008* was written to serve as a platform for the Nordic Globalization Forum on April 8–9, 2008, in Riksgården in Sweden. The Nordic Globalization Barometer identifies central issues related to the dynamics of globalization. Its aim is to stimulate and inspire fruitful discussion on how the Nordic region can be further strengthened. The Prime Ministers signed the Riksgården declaration concerning Nordic measures to in the area of globalization, energy, and climate. The chapter *The Competitiveness of the Nordic Countries* states the following:

“Fourth, strengths in the basic context and the general competitiveness environment are likely to be insufficient to sustain leading prosperity in the future; countries need to develop clear profiles of strengths and support a distinct positioning in the global economy. The Nordic countries have the ingredients to do so. Clear advantages exist in areas like gender relations and the environment; the task is to better leverage these advantages for economic benefit as well.”

In 2009, three different activities around this theme will be implemented.

- A conference on February 2, 2009, with participants from all of the Nordic countries. The aim of the conference is to draft shared, concrete proposals for the integration of a gender equality perspective. The proposals should function as the foundation for continued measures, to serve the needs of decision makers, organizations, and individuals.
- The conference will focus on the following areas:
 - Industrialized countries: Innovation, transportation and the labour market
 - Developing countries: Water, natural catastrophes
- In connection with the 53rd session of the CSW at the UN on March 3, 2009, a Nordic expert seminar will be arranged to discuss gender equality and climate change.
- In connection with the UN COP-15 meeting in December 2009 in Copenhagen, a side event will be arranged on gender equality and climate change.

At their meeting in 2009, the Nordic Ministers for Gender Equality will discuss further follow-up to the proposals made at the February 2, 2009 conference.

Council of Ministers financing in 2008:	DKK 200,000
Financing from the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation (MR-SAM) (sustainable development) in 2009:	DKK 100,000
Total	DKK 300,000

3.1.3 Human trafficking for sexual purposes

During 2009, the Ministers for Gender Equality will continue to combat sex trafficking. The Committee of Senior Officials in Gender Equality will engage in further discussions regarding Nordic Council recommendations on human trafficking with the Committees of Senior Officials for Social Security and Health Care, Legislation, and Working Life. During the year, a coordinating meeting will be arranged in Copenhagen to discuss ways in which to more effectively coordinate initiatives and activities aimed at combating human trafficking for prostitution. Representatives from international organizations and task-forces active in Northern Europe will be invited to attend this planning meeting.

3.1.4 Gender equality in a multicultural society

People in the Nordic countries differ in terms of their ethnic, social or regional background, age, family situation, sexual orientation, and physical health. A current challenge is to incorporate a gender equality perspective into the public debate surrounding all of the above areas. During 2009, the Committee of Senior Officials in Gender Equality will propose a project that focuses on multicultural Nordic societies from a gender and gender equality perspective, as a continuation of the project begun during Finland's presidency. The project will be implemented in collaboration with NIKK.

Council of Ministers financing in 2009:	DKK 300,000
NIKK in 2009–10:	DKK 300,000
Total	DKK 600,000

3.1.5 Organisations' participation in Nordic co-operation

Nordic networks and organisations organising joint-Nordic projects in 2009 can apply for project financing. It is important for various networks and civic organisations to have the opportunity to discuss common Nordic issues and to develop a common Nordic position on current gender equality issues.

Council of Ministers financing in 2009: Total DKK 200,000

3.1.6 Information and publications

The web page gender.norden.org provides information about Nordic co-operation. Each country will continue to disseminate information about Nordic gender equality policy through Nordic Council of Ministers fact sheets, reports, and various seminars and conferences.

Council of Ministers financing in 2008: Total DKK 200,000

3.1.7 Co-operation with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

Within the framework of Baltic-Nordic gender equality co-operation, a gender equality "fair" will be arranged in 2009 to explore shared goals and activities. The fair will serve as an arena for decision makers, officials, researchers, and representatives of civic organizations and NGOs, where they can obtain information about the latest themes in the gender equality field, find inspiration to start new initiatives, find partners and collaborators, and form new networks.

The Committee for Senior Officials in Gender Equality will explore other Nordic funding options for the implementation of activities within the framework of Nordic-Baltic gender equality co-operation.

Council of Ministers financing in 2008:	DKK 200,000
Council of Ministers financing in 2009:	DKK 100,000
Total	DKK 300,000

3.1.8 Co-operation with Northwest Russia

The Nordic Council of Ministers will work to achieve increased visibility for its work in order to promote greater interest among Russian authorities to further develop co-operation. In 2009, projects that were launched in 2008 will be concluded. Co-operation on current gender equality themes will continue in 2009 with the city of St. Petersburg in accordance with the framework provided by the *Protocol of Intent*.

Council of Ministers financing in 2008:	Total DKK 300,000
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3.1.9 Planning and follow-up

In 2009, DKK 300,000 is allocated for planning and follow-up of Nordic gender equality co-operation. The Committee of Senior Officials in Gender Equality will decide in the course of 2009 on the projects to which the DKK 440,000 will be allocated.

Council of Ministers financing in 2009:	Total DKK 740,000
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3.2 The Icelandic presidency

3.2.1 Parental leave – care-giving policy - gender

The Nordic welfare system is known for its broad scope of services and support systems, which guarantee all people a level of security in society. One of the central characteristics of Nordic welfare societies is strong support for parents of small children in the form of publicly financed and organized child care. Even though the Nordic countries have a lot in common in this area, developments of the last several decades have shown that the countries have chosen somewhat different methods to guarantee support to parents. In spite of a number of comparative studies on parental leave, on the one hand, and child-care questions, on the other hand, it is important to study the interaction between these measures, as well as others, including care allowances, in order to provide a comprehensive view of the developments that have taken place in the Nordic countries. A Nordic project will study the relationship between the five Nordic countries' child-care policies and the educational and career opportunities of men and women. The following factors will be examined: 1) Utilization of parental leave among men and women. 2) Child-care options after parental leave runs out. 3) The relationship between parts 1 and 2, and labour market participation, men's and women's wage and career development. 4) The impact of child-care related factors on the welfare of children and gender equality will be studied. The policy and scope and consequences of existing rights will be compared, and the countries' experiences with these issues will be examined in a goal-oriented way, with a diagnosis of the positive and negative aspects of policies. What conditions have shaped the countries' policies, and is it possible to measure the differences in the ways that the five Nordic countries have succeeded in this realm?

The Nordic research group consists of experts in the fields of child care and gender equality. Research findings will be made public through the publishing of a book and will be presented at a conference in Iceland in the fall of 2009. The study will be conducted in collaboration between the Council of Ministers for Working Life and NIKK.

Council of Ministers financing in 2009:	DKK 1,000,000
C. of Min's for Working Life in 2009:	DKK 250,000
NIKK:	DKK 50,000
Financing through the current presidency in 2009:	DKK 900,000
Total	DKK 2,200,000

3.2.2 Gender and youth

During its presidency, Iceland will focus on gender and young people. Nordic studies strongly indicate that the Nordic labor market shows clear signs of gender discrimination and highly standardized conceptions of “naturally” male or female work. A sharp gender divide exists within professions, in the labor market, and in terms of rank and position, all preventing full gender equality between women and men in the workplace. In order to minimize gender segregation in the labor market it is necessary to intervene when young people are making decisions about future vocational choices. Therefore, focal areas must include school educational and vocational choice advisors as well as visits to workplaces for both boys and girls.

The Nordic countries have produced study materials on teaching gender equality to kindergartens and comprehensive school students. During the 2008–2009 school semester, the Icelandic Social Security Ministry will spearhead a pilot project to launch gender equality instruction in kindergartens and comprehensive schools in five municipalities. Iceland’s Ministry of Education, Science and Culture will support the project.

In the fall of 2009, a conference will take place in Iceland to examine the teaching of gender equality in Nordic schools. The methodologies and results of gender equality instruction will be presented at the conference, arranged in collaboration with the Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

Within the framework of the project, a background document will be produced regarding gender equality teaching directed at kindergartners and school children. NIKK will update the report “Gender, equality and school”, which it produced in 2004 upon a request from the Nordic Council of Ministers (Nordic school cooperation, NSS). The report contains Nordic research and addresses development and gender equality work carried out in schools (including kindergartens, comprehensive schools and high schools) as well as a research overview, bibliography, and survey of the strategies used in the Nordic countries (“best practices”) in efforts to teach gender equality in schools in 1990–2004.

The Committee for Senior Officials in Gender Equality will collaborate with the Committee for Senior Officials in Education, NORDBUK, and NIKK on this project.

Council of Ministers financing in 2008:	DKK 300,000
NIKK:	DKK 50,000
C. of Min’s for Education (Nordic school work)	DKK 150,000
Total	DKK 500,000

3.2.3 Gender and culture

Supporting the arts, folk culture and artist exchange, and co-ordinating Nordic art and cultural life are important aspects of Nordic co-operation. Incorporating gender equality into this central area of co-operation can help reinforce and renew both. Gender has a clear significance when we consider what is produced within art and culture, and who produces it. Gender is also meaningful in how art and culture are transmitted.

Within the framework of a project, a comparison will be carried out between the five Nordic countries in terms of the education and cultural consumption of young people, compared to their free-time and sports training activities. The comparisons will be founded on existing Nordic research. The project will be carried out in cooperation with the Education Department of Iceland’s Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

Council of Ministers financing in 2008:	DKK 100,000
Council of Ministers financing in 2009:	DKK 200,000
C. of Min's for Culture:	DKK 50,000
C. of Min's for Education:	DKK 50,000
NORDBUK:	DKK 400,000
Financing through the presidency:	DKK 688,000
Total	DKK 1,488,000

3.2.4 West Nordic Co-operation

During its presidency, Iceland will take up the issue of co-operation with the West Nordic region. The examination of the role and development of gender equality legislation is a collaborative project between Iceland, Faroe Island, and Greenland. A conference is planned to discuss the regions' experiences with legislation and prognoses for the future of gender equality questions. There will also be co-operation in connection with the project "Gender equality in kindergarten comprehensive school".

Council of Ministers financing in 2009: Total DKK 500,000

3.2.5 Gender mainstreaming at the Nordic Council of Ministers

During 2009, Executive committee chairpersons and Nordic Council of Ministers secretariat employees will participate in a training seminar on gender mainstreaming.

Council of Ministers financing in 2008: Total DKK 100,000

3.2.6 CSW 2009 - Nordic Side Event

A joint-Nordic side event will be arranged during the 53rd session of the CSW. A Nordic panel of ministers will take up the subject of Men's care-giving responsibilities in a life-span perspective. The topic of a Nordic seminar comprised of experts is Gender equality and climate change (see 3.1.2)

Council of Ministers financing in 2008: Total DKK 150,000

4. NIKK – The Nordic Gender Institute

The Committee of Senior Officials in Gender Equality works with NIKK on the politically prioritised action areas chosen by the Nordic Ministers for Gender Equality in the current Nordic Co-operation Programme for Gender Equality. NIKK initiates, co-ordinates and implements projects that examine important gender equality issues and ensures that political discussions and initiatives are as informed as possible. NIKK has a contract with the Nordic Council of Ministers for 2008–10.

In 2009, the project examining gender and power and influence in the Nordic countries will be concluded. The EU-financed project *Gendered Citizenship in Multicultural Europe – FEMCIT* will continue, with NIKK responsible for a sub-project on social citizenship and parental policy. The project is implemented in collaboration with various actors in politics and gender equality administration.

NIKK's magazine will publish three issues during 2009, two in Scandinavian (on the issues of "gender and climate change" and "gender and power") and one in English. During 2009, NIKK's website will begin to play an increasingly central role in its information dissemination activity.

During 2009, a joint seminar with NIKK and the Committee of Senior Officials in Gender Equality will be arranged.

Nordic Council of Ministers appropriation in 2009: Total DKK 5,320,000

5. Calendar for 2009

5.1 Activities arranged by the Ministers for Gender Equality and the Committee of Senior Officials in Gender Equality

February 20	Committee of Senior Officials in Gender Equality meeting, Copenhagen
August 25	Committee of Senior Officials in Gender Equality meeting, Copenhagen
November 5	Ministers for Gender Equality meeting in Reykjavik
November 6	Committee of Senior Officials in Gender Equality meeting, Reykjavik

5.2 Activities arranged during the Icelandic presidency

February 2	Gender and Climate Change – Nordic Summit, Copenhagen
February 19	Joint seminar with the Committee on Gender Equality and NIKK, Copenhagen
March 3	Nordic Side Event, CSW, New York
March 5	Nordic expert seminar, CSW, New York
September 21–22	Gender and youth seminar, Reykjavik
October 22	Parental leave – care-giving policy – gender, Reykjavik
November 18–19	Gender and power, final conference, Reykjavik
November 2009	Gender and culture seminar, Reykjavik
December 3-4	NB 8 gender equality Forum, Riga, Latvia

5.3 Activities arranged by the Nordic Gender Institute, NIKK

28-30.1.2009	Men's research conference, Roskilde, Denmark
19.2.2009	Joint seminar with the Committee on Gender Equality, Copenhagen
20.2.2009	NIKK board meeting, Copenhagen
23-24.3.2009	Kvalitet 09, gender and gender equality in research, Oslo
10-11.6.2009	NIKK board meeting, Oslo
19-20.10.2009	NIKK board meeting, Oslo

5.4 Activities financed by the Nordic Council for Ministers

March 19, 2009	Gender Equality and Demography Conference, St. Petersburg
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5.5 Other activities

October 26–29	Nordic Council session, Stockholm
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