



The Reykjavik Department of Culture and Tourism's  
policy on diverse culture in the city  
2017-2020.

# ROOTS AND WINGS

The art of celebrating the spectrum of culture and languages





“The city’s cultural resources are its residents,  
particularly those who create increase awareness  
towards the community’s various cultural dimensions.”

The Reykjavik Academy’s definition of the terms Culture, Singularity, Resource, Space



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**Working Group:**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Icelandic society of today is both diverse and colourful. People have a fundamental right to actively participate in cultural life. As the nation's capital, Reykjavik is a cultural leader, and the city's self-image is based on creative thinking, initiative, diversity and cultural heritage. The city's cultural life is created by the initiative and creativity of its residents and is propelled by the many individuals, organisations and institutions that contribute to it. The capital's cultural life is diverse and should encourage diversity. Diversity is at the core of the city's cultural self-image.

Culture, arts and history promote fellowship and positive curiosity for the diversity of society. The City of Reykjavik is open for opportunities to increase mutual understanding, respect and equality to the benefit of the community.

This policy, and attendant actions, are intended to ensure that account is taken of the modern society described above.

The policy is based, among other things, on the successful intercultural work carried out by the Reykjavik City Library, where art and creativity are used as the basis for co-operation between various entities in the community. Reykjavik City's human rights policy has also been taken into account, as well as the multicultural policy of Reykjavik's Department of Education and Recreation, *The World Is Here*. The EU report *How Culture and the Arts Can Promote Intercultural Dialogue in the Context of the Migratory and Refugee Crisis* has also been considered.

## VISION

The City of Reykjavik is guided by equality and human rights in all its work, as stated in the city's human rights policy. The diversity of cultural life is accepted and supported, with a focus on freedom of expression.

The City of Reykjavik's cultural institutions aim to open their doors to a diverse group of guests and to be a venue for fellowship, creativity and interactive cultural dialogue. Guests are to be welcomed with professionalism, respect, cordiality and trust. Reykjavik's cultural institutions should be an accessible gateway to diverse culture where different voices can be heard. A key element of this work is to view interculturalism as something that relates to all residents of the city and to refrain from viewing individuals as representatives of particular nationalities.

## ROLE

The policy forms the basis of the intercultural work carried out by Reykjavik's Department of Culture and Tourism and is based on the department's cultural policy. The name of the policy, "Roots and Wings", indicates that it is necessary for everyone to tend to their roots and history as well as increasing their experience and quality of life with creative challenges. Art is our common language, enabling us to connect with each other regardless of our different backgrounds.

*"The cultural sector offers common arenas and meeting places for collaboration, dialogue and debate. An active and dynamic cultural life, manifested in a diversity of cultural expressions, plays a key role in an inclusive society."*

Nordic Council of Ministers Strategy for Nordic Cultural Co-operation 2013-2020

Interaction between different cultures and languages enriches city life. Everyone has their story to tell, whatever their background, and we are all citizens of the world. It is the joint task of city residents in a multicultural society to weave these stories together and create new ones in collaboration. Cultural institutions are at the centre of social activities, arts and culture and are therefore an obvious venue to strengthen the bonds between people.

Everyone should be able to reflect themselves in Reykjavik City's cultural activities and take an active part in them. The role of cultural institutions is constantly being re-evaluated with regards to increasing diversity in society, and such institutions are always looking for opportunities to tend to different groups in society in their daily work.

## ACCESS AND GRASSROOTS

### OBJECTIVES

To ensure that people have a chance to participate in cultural activities on an equal basis, where different voices are heard and people feel that they are part of, and can influence, society.

That artists of non-Icelandic background have easy access to participation and information.

To promote collaboration regardless of fields of knowledge, language and attitudes where art is the common mode of expression.

**Reykjavik City's cultural institutions give all residents a chance to participate in cultural activities and support grassroots work in the field of arts and culture in the city.**

*"Equitable access to a rich and diversified range of cultural expressions [...] and access of cultures to the means of expressions and dissemination constitute important elements for enhancing cultural diversity and encouraging mutual understanding."*

UNESCO's Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)

The capital's cultural life is open to everyone. Thus, everyone can sense their share in it, participate on their own terms and encourage others to take an active part. Enjoying culture is not an isolated incident but a total experience that includes socialising, prelude, journey, education and conversation. The aims are to expand the group that visits cultural institutions and to counter cultural discrimination.

Information on the Department of Culture and Tourism's grants should be accessible and extend to immigrant organisations and associations. The city's cultural grants support established projects as well as nourishing grassroots and experimental work, which is often an indicator of things to come.



# FRIENDLINESS AND RESPECT

## OBJECTIVES

For cultural institutions to be accessible to all. For them to be trusted and respected and be sought-after places to meet and spend time in. For friendliness and respect to be prevalent.

For all employees to be well informed and competent in welcoming guests who have diverse backgrounds and speak different languages.

To create a venue that systematically counters prejudice towards different cultures, religions, nationalities, races and languages.

To create a sense of solidarity, respect and interest in diverse culture.

For people to enjoy fulfilling, friendly interactions and get the feeling that everyone is welcome and worthy.

For us all to be able to contribute to the cultural landscape of the city.

**The guests of Reykjavík's cultural institutions are welcomed with cordiality and respect regardless of their origin, nationality, social status, language, skin colour, religion, religious or life stance affiliation, lack of religion, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, sexual characteristics, age, disability, physique, body type, health, abilities, etc.**

## EDUCATION AND VENUE

### OBJECTIVES

To create a venue where education and events open a gateway into society and create a connection between people through arts and culture.

To encourage interactive cultural dialogue, intercultural competence and mutual understanding.

To create a venue where the diversity of society is highlighted and people can learn from each other, guided by mutual respect.

To promote cultural literacy, both as regards one's own culture and other cultures.

To nurture the creativity of children and young people.

To highlight the strengths and diversity of children's and youth culture.

To give all children increased opportunities in school and leisure activities to create through various modes of expression.

To give all children increased opportunities in school and leisure activities to enjoy arts and culture.

To create a venue for families to enjoy quality time together.

**Reykjavik's cultural institutions are a venue for creativity, education and dialogue.**

*"States' parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity."*

(UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)

# ACTION PLAN

The “Roots and Wings” action plan will be part of the Department of Culture and Tourism’s updated action plan for 2018, as many of the city’s cultural initiatives set forward in its Culture Policy correspond to the “Roots and Wings” policy for diverse city culture in 2017-2020.

The projects of cultural institutions should be measurable, to the extent possible.

## EXAMPLES OF NEW INITIATIVES:

- Reykjavik’s cultural institutions will form a special intercultural action plan in the spirit of the department’s new policy, “Roots and Wings”.
- Employees of cultural institutions will be educated about the policy and its implementation.
- The policy should be visible and active in the operation of Reykjavik City’s cultural institutions, both for employees and guests.
- The policy and action plan will be introduced to diverse groups in society.
- The cultural diversity of city residents should be visible in the operation of all Reykjavik City’s cultural institutions.
- For education, events and other activities, necessary information should be available in the languages of the most populous ethnic groups in Reykjavik.
- All municipal cultural institutions will collaborate with institutions, grassroots associations, organisations, language groups and other entities promoting cultural diversity.
- Reykjavik City Library;

A Nordic conference on Reykjavik City Library’s intercultural work held in Veröld on 22-23 May 2018 in collaboration with the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Icelandic UNESCO Commission.

Electronic handbook on Reykjavik City Library’s intercultural work since 2008; recording and inspiration of collaboration with institutions, city departments, artists, grassroots organisations, etc.

## PRINCIPAL INITIATIVES UNDERWAY:

- Reykjavik City Museum, Reykjavik City Library, Reykjavik Art Museum, City of Literature: Reykjavik Safari; an annual cultural walk in 6 languages.
- Reykjavik City Museum, Reykjavik City Library, Reykjavik Art Museum: presentations for language schools.
- Reykjavik City Museum, Reykjavik City Library, Reykjavik Art Museum: Guides for Refugees.
- Reykjavik City Library: “Menningarmót – The Flying Carpet”, “The Women’s Story Circle”, “Café Lingua – Language Rendezvous”, “Study Café – Homework Assistance”, “What’s in the News?”, “Visit the Library” introductory video in 9 languages.
- Reykjavik City Museum: Games project, in collaboration with the Red Cross.
- Reykjavik City Library: The Women’s Story Circle’s New World Map, artistic work, autumn 2017.
- Reykjavik Art Museum: “Many Languages of Art.” The project is intended to be a venue where education and events are tailored to the needs of people of foreign origin. The project received a grant from the Development Fund for Immigration Issues.
- Reykjavik UNESCO City of Literature: Diverse collaboration and support to writers of different backgrounds in Reykjavik.

**EXAMPLES OF REYKJAVIK CITY LIBRARY'S PARTNERS IN INTERCULTURAL WORK, ON WHICH THE CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND TOURISM PROJECTS WILL BE BASED:**

- Móðurmál – Association for Bilingualism
- The Red Cross
- W.O.M.E.N. Women of multicultural ethnicity network in Iceland
- The University of Iceland (Department of foreign languages, Icelandic as a second language)
- Veröld, the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute
- The Nordic House
- Reykjavik UNESCO City of Literature
- Preschools
- Primary schools
- Secondary schools
- Language schools
- Íslenskuþorpið (The Icelandic Village)
- Service centres
- Visual artists
- Theatre artists
- Various other associations and individuals



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[www.reykjavik.is](http://www.reykjavik.is)

