

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

VIGDÍS INTERNATIONAL CENTRE



VIGDÍS
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE



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Centre
Under the auspices
of UNESCO

Foreword

In 2022, the Vigdís International Centre for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding worked diligently in implementing its mission as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre committed to multilingualism and to raising awareness about the importance of languages and linguistic diversity. This was a year of transition in several aspects. Being the first year after the COVID-19 pandemic without any restrictions and alterations in operations, we have had a regular calendar of events, a rich programme and implementation of activities that had been postponed or were impossible due to the pandemic. Secondly, the centre's new strategy, in which the centre commits itself to be the national promoter and one of the major Nordic participants of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–2032 was developed. This new strategy spans over the next decade and has been developed and affirmed in 2022. The centre worked tirelessly and ambitiously for its shaping in line with the general mission of the centre as per the Agreement between the Government of Iceland and UNESCO, the Global Action Plan for the UN's International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–2032, UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022–2029 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In 2022, we were entrusted by the University of Iceland to manage the establishment of a permanent exhibition devoted to Vigdís Finnbogadóttir at the premises of the centre, which will highlight the path, work and legacy in the fields of gender equality, environmental issues, culture and language learning, and international issues of this exceptional personality and visionary. The exhibition will be housed in the centre's neighbouring building, Loftskjóstöðin, and serve as an extension and contribution to our exhibition profile, which already consists of the Living Language Lab. The new exhibition is to be a part of the active platform that the centre has created and the new building will also be included as a venue for UNESCO-related events on the centre's behalf when it opens in 2023.

The centre carries the name and follows the mission of Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, President of Iceland (1980–1996) and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for languages embodied in her statement 'The tongue holds

the treasury of memories, it lends us the words of our hopes and dreams'. Our work is thus devoted to promoting learning languages, multilingualism and translations as means for dialogue between cultures, communities, nations and individuals. Taking upon the task to focus our work on minority languages, small linguistic communities and indigenous communities' languages in the West Nordic and Arctic regions, the Vigdís International Centre has served in 2022 as an international platform for dialogue and collaborative action. Various stakeholders have come together at our centre, as we are an institution devoted to multilingualism and linguistic diversity and one that stands against various forms of persecution towards minoritised communities, often related to centuries of language oppression. We hope that 2022 was only the beginning of such a vital dialogue that will contribute to the well-being and prosperity of everyone.

The success of our work would have not been possible without a wide network of supporters, partners and experts, whom we would like to thank wholeheartedly. Firstly, we would like to thank Vigdís Finnbogadóttir for her visionary work, remarkable support and inspirational example to us all and to our many collaborators. In 2022, we strengthened our network of collaborators, not least in the context of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–2032, through strategic meetings as well as public events. We would like to express our gratitude to the governing board of the Vigdís International Centre for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding and our large network of partners for their invaluable contribution to our activities and events as well as to the centre's staff for their quality work and commitment.

We invite you to learn more about our activities in 2022 and hope you will enjoy reading the annual report of the Vigdís International Centre for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding.

Ann-Sofie Nielsen Gremaud
Chair of the Board

Sofiya Zahova
Director

Introduction

The main objectives of the Vigdís International Centre for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding are to promote multilingualism in order to increase greater understanding, interaction and respect between cultures and nations and to raise awareness of the importance of language as a core element of the cultural heritage of mankind.

The major operational framework of our work in 2022 has been the UN's International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–2032 (IDIL 2022–2032). We developed a national IDIL 2022–2032 strategy that reflects and informs all projects and initiatives at the Vigdís International Centre for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding and thus ensures their conceptual cohesion and operation on the one hand and their adherence to the overall aim of the Vigdís International Centre as part of IDIL on the other.

Our overarching goal, within the framework of IDIL, is to promote the strengthening of minority languages in various ways. Since 2022, our work has been focused on:

- Projects related to small linguistic environments and minority languages, with special attention to multilingualism, literacy and education, as well as their literatures and cultures;
- Raising awareness about the importance of translations for small linguistic and minority language environments;
- Creating a forum for discussions on the impact of language contact on small linguistic environments and minority languages and reviewing language policies to promote the viability of such languages;
- Promoting and sharing information on IDIL 2022–2032 and its projects, activities and results in Iceland.

We participated in the global processes through localised and well-calibrated activities, communicating our expertise in the geographical regions and thematic areas we have been working on and contributing by sharing the experience of Iceland. We have served as a platform for a dialogue on the challenges of

and prospects for social inclusion in terms of access to culture, cultural and language expression, linguistic rights and human rights, and multilingualism as a means for intercultural understanding in all fields of contemporary society.

This report presents an overview of the main programmes and activities of the Vigdís International Centre for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding with incorporated interactive elements and links to digital resources that might be useful for those who would like to learn more and follow the activities and programmes.

Research Projects



The Vigdís International Centre has a robust academic profile with expertise in researching languages and cultures in synchronic and diachronic perspectives as well as in their interrelation with cultural heritage, language policies and planning, language contact and multilingualism.



Let's not forget that each of the thousand languages on our planet is unique and very important for both individuals and humankind. The world culture owes its richness to the diversity of languages spoken by humanity.

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir

UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for languages

The strategic plan of the Vigdís International Centre since the start of operations in 2017 was focused on research and research collaborations and other projects in the West Nordic region, as decided by the advisory board that shaped the profile of the centre. The major achievements in the field of research outcomes, dissemination through seminars and conferences, publications and public outreach, concern the works of several networks engaged in language and cultural contact mainly from a comparative perspective throughout the region on monitoring and analysis of language contact in the region, language development, language policies, language planning and practices, as well as language instruction and studies in the Nordic languages and culture studies. In addition, the Vigdís International Centre has become one of the few research institutions promoting the multifaceted literary heritage of Europe's most marginalised minority – the Roma. International forums organised at the centre became the base for dissemination of research and building new research networks on this subject.

Highlights in 2022:

- Language and cultural contact in the West Nordic region. Network and research projects;
- Linguistic and cultural diversity in teaching materials for language teaching in the Nordic countries;
- Roma in the Centre programme on Romani literary heritage and culture;
- International conferences for researchers and practitioners.

Language and cultural interaction in the West Nordic region and Language Barometer

Since the start of operations in 2017, the strategic plan of the Vigdís International Centre focused its work on research and research collaborations and projects in the West Nordic region, including the Language and Cultural Contact in the region research programme led by Auður Hauksdóttir.



The research network was established/launched in 2015 and was a part of the preparatory work for the centre. The network consisted of scholars from the University of Iceland, the University of Bergen, the University of Copenhagen, the University of The Faroe Islands, the University of Greenland, the University of Uppsala and from the Language Secretariat of Greenland. The activities of the network from 2015–2022 was sponsored by the Nordplus Language and Culture Programme financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The main focus in the work and activities of the network was research in Language and Cultural Contact in the West Nordic region from a comparative perspective and included both diachronic and synchronic studies. In 2022, the network participated in and contributed to the collection ‘Sprog- og kulturkontakt i Vestnorden Om det færøske, grønlandske, islandske og norske sprogs møde med dansk’, forthcoming in 2023.

The Language Barometer project – a synchronic study of the contact with Danish and English in Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands

The project, which is led by Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir and Auður Hauksdóttir, entails the distribution of comprehensive surveys that gauge the nature of the changing linguistic context in Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland. The surveys target participants' views about and use of, their mother tongue, Danish and English and examines the changes in the linguistic repertoires of speakers in a post-colonial West Nordic region. Data collection has been completed in Iceland and is ongoing in the Faroe Islands and Greenland in collaboration with researchers at the University of Greenland and the University of the Faroe Islands. The findings have major implications for language and educational policy and practice in the increasingly multilingual participating communities. The Language Barometer project has funding from the Nordplus Language and Culture programme and from the University of Iceland Research Fund.

The Icelandic, Faroese and Norwegian language contact with Danish in 1850–1920

The project is led by Auður Hauksdóttir in collaboration with Professor Gunnstein Akselberg at the University of Bergen and adjunct Zakaris Hansen at the University of the Faroe Islands. The main focus is on Danish loan words and language attitudes in the three language communities from a comparative perspective. The research project has received funding from the Nordplus Language and Culture Programme and the University of Iceland's Research Fund. A part of the project is building up a parallel digital corpus with texts from the period 1850–1920.

Digital tools for teaching a foreign/second language in the West Nordic region

The research group also contributed to projects with practical applications of their expertise. www.talerum.is is an interactive game based on the usage of Danish in several communicative situations, developed with the support of the Nordplus Language and Culture Programme.

Icelandic Online is a language learning platform with six online web courses for computers, tablets and smartphones in free and open access, ranging from beginners to advanced levels. In 2022, Icelandic Online for Children, a new course especially for children between the ages of five and seven was completed. All courses were developed under the leadership of Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir.

Linguistic and cultural diversity in teaching materials for language teaching in the Nordic countries

SPROK is a collaborative international research project uniting researchers and teachers with the aim to present and analyse how vocabulary, language and culture have been communicated in study materials intended for teaching languages at the end of primary school. The research group studied selected materials intended for teaching Swedish in Finland, teaching Danish in the Faroe Islands and Iceland, as well as study materials for second-language teaching in Denmark with regard to pedagogy, input and cultural communication. In particular, the team aimed at analysing the pedagogical approaches applied and identifying at which level of competence these study materials are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The research group also focused on examining the study materials vis-à-vis the provisions of the Helsinki Treaty of 1962 (between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden). The study was innovative in terms of both methodology and subject of study and yielded important results from a national and comparative perspective, especially when it comes to meeting the requirements of CEFR and the Helsinki Treaty.



SPROGLIG OG KULTUREL MANGFOLDIGHED I LÆREMIDLER TIL SPROGUNDERVISNING I NORDEN

Om Møder/seminarer Aktiviteter Deltagere Institutioner Formidling Støtte

OCTOBER 3, 2018
SPROK er et samarbejds- og forskningsprojekt med de formål

- At undersøge udvalgte læremidler til svenskundervisningen i Finland, danskundervisningen i Vestnorden, samt midler til nabosprogsundervisning i Danmark, hvad angår didaktik, indhold og valg af emneområder.
- At analysere underliggende didaktik og pædagogik i formidling af indhold og sprog.
- Analysere det sproglige niveau.
- At sætte fokus på kulturformidling i de udvalgte læremidler.

SPROK ER ET SAMARBEJDS- OG FORSKNINGSPROJEKT MED DE FORMÅL

- at fastslå sprogligt og kulturelt billede i læremidler til undervisning af sprog i udskolingen
- at undersøge og udvikle en profil af læremidler i andet /fremmedsprog i grundskoler: dansk i Vestnorden og Danmark og svensk i Finland.

<https://sprok.hi.is>



Sproglig og kulturel mangfoldighed i læremidler til sprogundervisning i Norden

Dansk og svensk som fremmedsprog, andetsprog, førstesprog, nabosprog og transitsprog

Redigeret af Karen Risager

<https://vigdis.hi.is/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/sprogligt-rafr.pdf>

2022 was the final year of the project; the results of the research endeavours were published in the book *Sproglig og kulturel mangfoldighed i læremidler til sprogundervisning i Norden (Linguistic and cultural diversity in teaching aids for language teaching in the Nordic countries)*, in both an open-access electronic version and in print. Contributors to the volume are the project participants Þórhildur Oddsdóttir, Brynhildur Anna Ragnarsdóttir, Bergþóra Kristjánsdóttir, Eeva-Liisa Nyqvist, Páll Isholm and Olly Poulsen, and the Introduction has been written by Karen Risager, professor emerita at Roskilde University, Denmark.

The SPROK project's outcomes were presented at numerous scientific conferences and venues in Iceland, Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Finland. Seminars for presenting the results with a focus on future implications and recommendations were held for representatives of the Ministry of Education, the National Institute of Education, the Icelandic Research Fund and the Association of Danish Teachers, Nám (Faroese Centre for Educational Services), the University of the Faroe Islands and Danish teachers.

Roma in the Centre

The programme is oriented towards building an academically sound platform for researchers, experts, decision-makers and the general public. It includes projects in the field of education of Roma girls in Eastern Europe, popularisation of Romani literature and arts through publications and events, research on the history and culture of the Roma in Iceland, discussions on Romani languages in policies and practices in the context of minority policies, as well as incorporating digital humanities methods into the popularisation of the Romani literary heritage.



This year marked the final phase of the 'Roma in the Centre' project that fostered networking between Romani studies researchers and Roma experts from Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland through a series of workshops. It resulted in establishing a horizontal platform for a variety of initiatives including research collaborations within the Nordic states and globally.

The project 'Romls: History and Ethnography of Roma in Iceland' was launched with the support of the Icelandic Research Fund. It has two overarching goals – to provide the first-ever comprehensive historical

account of Romani presence in Iceland and to look ethnographically into the contemporary Roma community considering the perspective of Roma as part of Icelandic society. Several workshops and a meeting of the Romani Advisory Board were implemented in 2022 and the project was presented internationally.



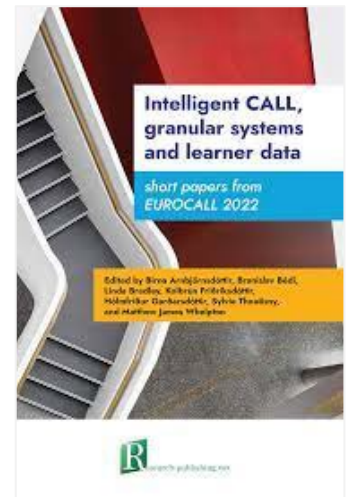
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TtqzMe4IA&t=6277s>

Our research in the field of Romani Studies contributed to the methodological guidelines and concept of the series of motivational and educational training for teenage Roma girls in all regions of Croatia as part of the 'Educated Roma Girls – Empowered Romani Communities' project. Our academic expertise was further applied in several projects in the field of Roma culture and arts. The project 'Andro Media // In Media' applied critical approaches to the study of Roma culture through undergraduate students' seminars and an international summer school for PhD students at Charles University durinh Prague in May–June 2022.

International conferences for researchers and practitioners

The Vigdís International Centre served as a hub for conferences that provided opportunities for researchers and expert professionals to disseminate exciting and cutting-edge findings from their field of study and to set up new horizons for networking, research projects and application of research.

EUROCALL 2022: Intelligent CALL, granular systems and learner data. This conference was an online event with 280 participants at which the newest developments in the field of technology for language learning from around the world were presented. Online publication was made with the conference proceedings.



Generation Asia conference (22–26 August 2022) was an interdisciplinary conference that brought 80 speakers from across the humanities and social sciences to discuss themes such as generational change, culture and politics and the impact of demographic changes in Asia.

The Nordic Intercultural Communication Conference (24–26 November 2022) had a strong focus on language sustainability and intercultural dialogue, with main themes of mobility, communication and cultural encounters within the Nordic countries, multiple Nordic identities, minority and majority languages in the Nordic context.



Immigration is often related to asymmetric cultural relations, and this creates a pressure towards assimilation (or at least integration) into the dominant culture and language.

Jens Allwood

Professor Emeritus, keynote speaker at the Nordic Intercultural Communication Conference

International Decade of Indigenous Languages

As the national promoter of UN's Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–2032, the Vigdís International Centre contributes to mainstreaming linguistic and cultural diversity through a focus on minority languages, cultures and literatures in the Europe and North America region.



The Vigdís International Centre is an important actor in conveying that languages matter to all of us.

Tawfik Jelassi

UNESCO Assistant Director-General for
Communication and Information

The International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–2032, a global UN initiative that followed the successful International Year of Indigenous Languages 2019, has the aim to safeguard, revitalise and preserve indigenous languages and improve the lives of the communities that speak them. The Vigdís International Centre had several achievements within the framework of IDIL in 2022. It contributed to the overall preparation of the Decade through participation in the Task Force for Making a Decade of Indigenous Languages and elaboration on the Global Action Plan. At the same time, the centre developed a localised national plan for IDIL 2022–2032 with several main priorities and programmes.

Highlights of our activities in 2022:

- The official inauguration of IDIL 2022–2032 in Iceland;
- Contribution to the preparation and promotion of IDIL 2022–2032;
- Cooperation with the Icelandic government in supporting IDIL 2022–2032;
- Creating the Icelandic language website for IDIL 2022–2032 as a digital resource.

Official inauguration of IDIL 2022-2032 in Iceland

IDIL 2022–2032 was officially launched in Iceland with an international event on 22 April with the participation of Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, President of Iceland (1980–1996) and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for languages, UNESCO and governmental officials, holders of the Vigdís Prize, distinguished academic speakers and other stakeholders from institutions and academia.



Greenlandic is not for sale!

Katti Frederiksen

Greenlandic writer and activist, and Vigdís Prize
Winner 2021

Highlights of the first part of the programme were the official opening ceremony at the Aula of the University of Iceland and the launch of the Living Language Lab interactive exhibition at the Vigdís International Centre for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding. The second part was devoted to the seminar 'Cultural production and language futures: perspectives from the West Nordics', moderated by the chair of the Vigdís International Centre's Board Ann-Sofie Nielsen Gremaud, with talks by Jonhard Mikkelsen (Vigdís Prize Winner 2020), Katti Frederiksen (Vigdís Prize Winner 2021) and Professor Peter K. Austin (SOAS, University of London).



Hopefully, the Decade for Indigenous Languages will inspire and engage people everywhere to foster understanding and respect for each other and our planet.

Áslaug Dóra Eyjólfsdóttir

Secretary of the Icelandic National
Commission for UNESCO

The participants underlined the inspiration that they have derived from the vision of Vigdís Finnbogadóttir that languages are the core of humanity and that every language has to be valued, preserved and supported through various forms of cultural expression. They also stressed the importance of promoting equality and diversity in thematic fields such as communities and languages, linguistic rights as human rights, language revitalisation and preservation.



2022-2032 | ALÞJÓDLEGUR ÁRATUGUR
Frumbyggjatungumála

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAfw0nz_cSE

Contribution to the preparation and promotion of IDIL 2022–2032

During the preparatory phase of IDIL, Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, Professor Emerita at the University of Iceland and Sofiya Zahova, Director of the centre, took part in the Task Force for Making a Decade of Indigenous Languages which set up the outline and elaborated the Global Action Plan of IDIL 2022–2032. The preparatory phase also gave opportunities for networking, building alliances with stakeholders from around the world and sharing experiences and visions for future initiatives.



We can all learn from the experiences of the Vigdís International Centre in creating such an exciting exhibition about languages.

Mariam Wallet Med Aboubakrine

Co-chair of the Steering Committee of IDIL,
Member, African Indigenous Peoples' Network

Parallel to and in coordination with the Global Action Plan, the national and institutional plan of the centre for the International Decade was elaborated in early 2022 and was presented at the forum 'From global to local: Making the International Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages' on 26 April 2022, organised as a side event to the 21st Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at the United Nations in New York, with the presentation of the Living Language Lab interactive exhibition generating great interest among the audience.

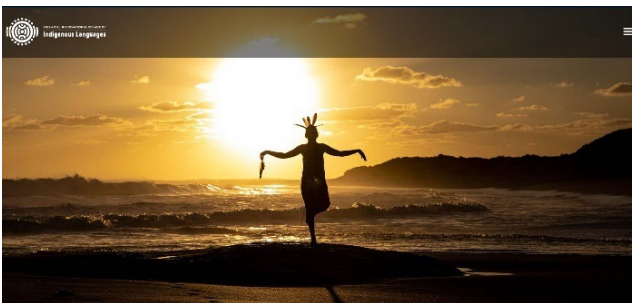


The technology has to support the pedagogy. This has been the guiding principle in the development of all the courses on Icelandic Online and is probably the key to the longevity of the programme.

Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir

Director of Icelandic Online and of the Language Lab interactive exhibition

A delegation from the Vigdís International Centre – Ásdís Rósa Magnúsdóttir (former chair of the board of the centre and director of the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute for Foreign Languages), Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir (Iceland’s representative in IDIL’s Task Force) and Sofiya Zahova (director of the centre) took part in the international high-level celebration of IDIL 2022–2032 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on the 13 December 2022. Professor Arnbjörnsdóttir gave the talk ‘Twenty Years of computer assisted language learning: lessons learned’ discussing the achievements and experience of Icelandic Online, which she directed, at the panel ‘Promotion of Indigenous languages on cyberspace’, organised at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on the eve of the official launch of the Decade.



<https://idil2022-2032.org/>



Cooperation with the Icelandic government in supporting IDIL 2022–2032

The Vigdís International Centre has been the official representative of the Icelandic government to the International Decade of Indigenous Languages. On a regional level, Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir was representing Iceland in the three-member committee for the Europe and North America region, together with Canada and Norway, where information was shared and joint initiatives to be undertaken in the region were discussed.

The Vigdís International Centre collaborated with the Permanent Mission of Iceland to the UN on preparing the Statement of the Government of Iceland submitted to the 21st Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in which it was underlined how crucially important language is for Iceland and that ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, in line with its Sustainable Development Goals, are high on the agenda of the Icelandic educational institutions.



Our aim is to contribute Icelandic knowledge and expertise on language documentation and preservation in the digital age; digital tools for language learning and revitalization; overcoming challenges small linguistic communities face; and the importance of translations and cultural production for language development, among others. With this, we hope to contribute to the general aim of The International Decade – to draw attention to the importance of linguistic diversity and the critical loss of indigenous languages.

Statement of the Government of Iceland,
submitted to the 21st Session of the UN Permanent
Forum on Indigenous Issues.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0PmGYU3evI>

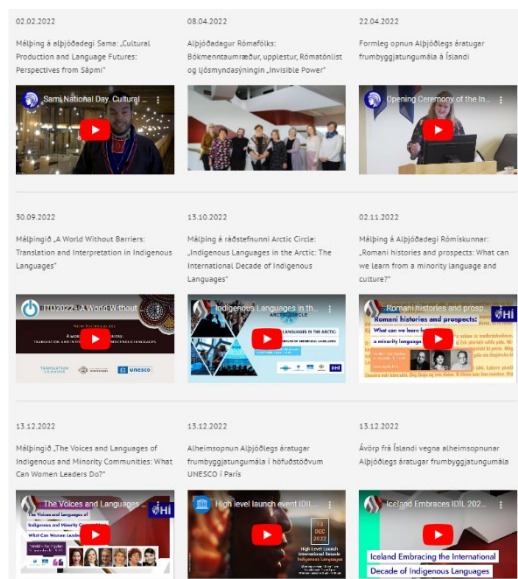
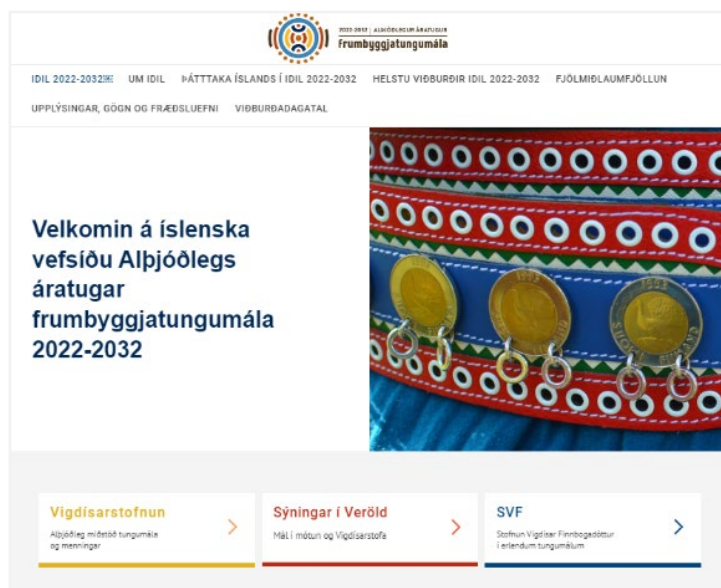
The Vigdís International Centre produced the video 'Iceland Embraces the International Decade of Indigenous Languages' featuring Vigdís Finnbogadóttir in her capacity as UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for languages as well as key Icelandic officials — the President of Iceland, Guðni Th. Jóhannesson; the Rector of the University of Iceland, Jón Atli Benediktsson; and the Chair of the Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO, Sæunn Stefánsdóttir. The video, together with the video message by Lilja Dögg Alfreðsdóttir, Minister of Culture and Business of Affairs, was circulated widely on the occasion of the high-level Celebration of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages in December 2022.

The Icelandic language website for IDIL 2022–2032 as a digital resource

The Vigdís International Centre created an Icelandic language webpage devoted to IDIL 2022–2032. The page was launched simultaneously with the IDIL opening ceremony in Iceland on 22 April 2022. The creation and maintenance of the page were supported by the UNESCO National Commission in Iceland.

The webpage raised awareness among the Icelandic public about the Decade through the translation of the official presentation of IDIL in Icelandic and links to all major global resources. On an everyday basis, the webpage documented and promoted all news and events realised in Iceland as part of IDIL 2022–2032 as well as the contribution of Iceland to the global events within the Decade.

Integrated into the webpage is a digital resources section with recordings of events organised by the centre as part of our IDIL 2022–2032 programme as well as all visual materials produced by us to promote and support IDIL 2022–2032. Through this digital tool, the Vigdís International Centre set up a virtual platform for raising awareness in both Iceland and worldwide and for inspiring dialogue and collaborative action where indigenous communities' representatives and allies can be informed, inspired and engaged.



<https://vigdis.hi.is/idil-2022-2032/>

Exhibitions



The Vigdís International Centre promotes and disseminates among the general public, and particularly among youth, UNESCO values such as intercultural dialogue, linguistic diversity, multilingualism, equality and sustainable development.



It is outstanding that the perspective taken by the centre and the new exhibition is to engage with younger people – teenagers, with young adults because they really are the future of the development of understanding of the significance and importance of multilingualism, multiculturalism, language diversity, and understanding.

Peter K. Austin

Emeritus Professor in Field Linguistics

Telling stories through exhibitions was a practice that the Vigdís International Centre launched in 2022 to upscale its mission to educate and draw attention to the importance of languages. Hosting exhibitions at the premises of the centre at the University of Iceland provided a great opportunity for large public outreach and enhanced educational value as well as for engaged and interdisciplinary conversation with stakeholders like academics, educational and welfare practitioners, artists, international experts, decision-makers, political leaders and lay citizens. The exhibition activities have been embedded in the larger public outreach strategy of the centre as a UNESCO institution to raise awareness about language as a core element of the cultural heritage of humanity and be an open-to-the-public platform in the field of multilingualism and linguistic diversity.

Highlights of our activities in 2022:

- The Living Language Lab interactive exhibition;
- Launching the work on Exhibition on the life, work and impact of Vigdís Finnbogadóttir.

The Living Language Lab exhibition

The Living Language Lab is an interactive exhibition designed by a team of linguists led by Professor Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir and developed in cooperation with the creative design company Gagarín. The exhibition is intended for children and youngsters and guides them through an interactive journey featuring the landscape of the diverse linguistic repertoires in Iceland and the history, development and distribution of languages of the world.



The exhibition was launched as part of the official ceremony for the inauguration of IDIL 2022–2032 in Iceland and has been operated in cooperation with the Language Centre at the University of Iceland. Since then, it has received organised school groups with over 400 students from schools in the capital area and was open to the public and participants at major events organised by the centre.



Visitors learn that we can actually save languages by learning them and using them.

Ásta Olga Magnúsdóttir
Concept designer, Gagarín

In cooperation with the Communication and Information Sector of UNESCO, the Vigdís International Centre started working on a dissemination strategy and incorporation of the experience and outcomes of the Living Language Lab exhibition into the World Atlas of Languages. As a first step in 2022, the centre produced the 'Living Language Lab' video about the exhibition.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICtc-EPhUf8&t=4s>

Exhibition on the life work and influence of Vigdís Finnbogadóttir

In the summer of 2022, following the agreement between the Government of Iceland and the University of Iceland in 2021 to support an exhibition about Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, who has endowed her archive and belongings as a gift to the university, the Vigdís International Centre started preparatory works on an exhibition about her, curated by the art historian Sigrún Alba Sigurðardóttir.



The exhibition tells the story of Mme Finnbogadóttir focusing on her significance for gender equality as the first woman in the world to become a democratically elected head of state, as the president of Iceland and as the leading visionary with a long-lasting impact on Icelandic society and influence in an international context. The narrative draws attention to Finnbogadóttir's involvement and impact on environmental issues and advocacy for the protection of the languages and cultures of small nations. Highlights of her visions as UNESCO's Goodwill Ambassador for languages and the overall work of the Vigdís International Center for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding will be incorporated into the story and the activities that the visitors will encounter.

The exhibition is planned to open its doors in September 2023.



Loftskýptastöðin, the former Icelandic Radiogram Center, will host the exhibition and be part of the centre's premises



A replica of Vigdís Finnbogadóttir's living room will be part of the exhibition

Language in Education and Cultural Expressions

The Vigdís International Centre raises awareness of the key role that languages play in education, cultural expression, knowledge sharing and mutual understanding.



Tölum saman – let's talk together – but let's make sure we can continue to do so in our own languages.

Guðni Th. Jóhannesson

President of Iceland

Language is a fundamental attribute of cultural identity for all communities and a means for their empowerment. Language is also a crucial element of educational policies and practices and the support of multilingual education is part and parcel of the promotion of social and gender equality. In today's global world, it is critical that linguistic diversity is kept alive and historically oppressed languages are promoted and supported. The intersection between languages, culture and education has been one of the focuses of our programmes and activities.

Highlights of our work in 2022 were:

- Fostering state-of-the-art methods in language teaching;
- Empowering girls and women of minority backgrounds;
- Seminar 'Cultural production and language futures: perspectives from Sápmi';
- Vigdís Prize for achievements in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity.

Fostering state-of-the-art methods in language teaching

The Vigdís International Centre has been traditionally scheduling a regular programme with training, workshops and public talks that enhance the skills of language teachers and educators.

In spring 2022, we hosted two workshops for teachers organised in cooperation with the Association of Language Teachers in Iceland (STÍL) – ‘Ways to motivate and engage students in online learning’ led by Kolbrún Friðriksdóttir in Icelandic and ‘How to teach (English) pronunciation and what’s important’ by Carrie Ankerstein in English. Both events focused on practical solutions for engaging and motivating students in language learning teaching.



On the 26 September 2022, the centre celebrated the European Day of Languages with an exciting international programme discussing the need for up-to-date teaching working methods that upscale teaching and learning. The pedagogue Birgit Henriksen, Professor Emerita from the University of Copenhagen, gave a plenary talk ‘Why do teachers do what they do?’ based on her recently published *Hvorfor gør jeg det, jeg gør?* (2020), elaborating on how teachers’ own ideas, knowledge and experience in language learning and teaching shape their teaching methods. The Spanish language teacher Ragnheiður Kristinsdóttir talked on the ‘Joy in language teaching’ opening a spectrum of diverse teaching and learning methods – including educational games and gamification as tools for increasing students’ activity and interest in language studies – that contribute to a positive attitude of students towards learning.

Empowering girls and women of minority backgrounds

The Vigdís International Centre is the Icelandic partner in several projects for strengthening civil society and support for Roma culture funded by the EEA and Norway grants that put at the forefront culture and education as a means for the empowerment of Roma women and support for women's rights and gender equality. We have been contributing to the 'Educated Roma Girls – Empowered Romani Communities' project led and implemented by the Croatian Romani Union 'Kali Sara'. In 2022 twenty workshops for Romani girls at secondary school level were organised with a focus on raising the girls' awareness about gender rights and gender equality, sexual culture and gender-based violence roles, the importance of individual agency and rights to education as a basic human right. The workshops also addressed gender- and ethnicity-based social exclusion practices and how these can be overcome through education and equality of cultures.



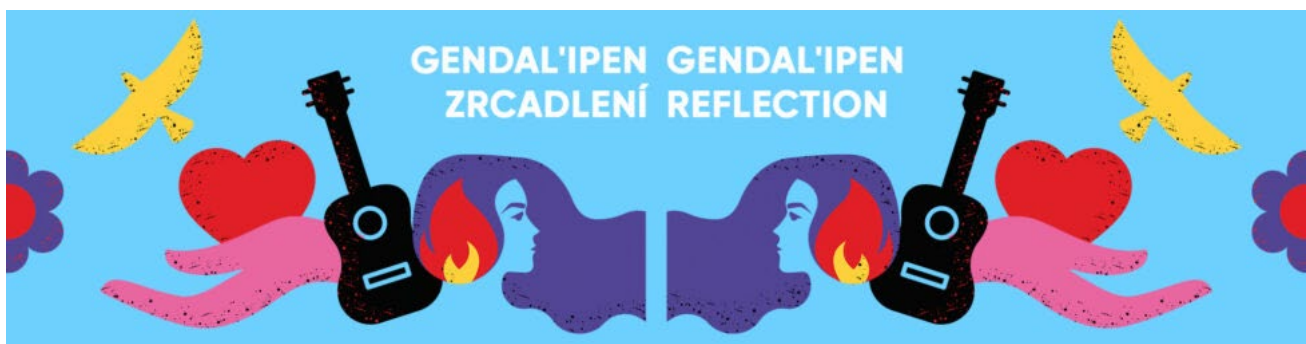


When both non-Roma and Roma women work together, the results are impressive: they get to know each other, they learn from each other, and of course, understand that we have more in common and common goals when it comes to gender equality and equal participation, which are very important for the mutual work and for successful integration.

Lilyana Kovacheva

Romani researcher, writer and activist

Gendal'ipen // Reflection project aims to support contemporary Romani artists, particularly Romani female creators and writers, in their professional artistic activities among the mainstream culture and society in Czechia and transnationally. In 2022, the project reached thousands of citizens who took part in the Romani culture and art festival Khamoro, art and photo exhibitions, performances, readings, book publishing and launch events, including a two-day cultural programme in Iceland on the occasion of Roma National Day. Our centre hosted the award-winning photographic exhibition Invisible Power featuring Romani female activists. Romani women refugees from Ukraine living in Czechia have also been included in the activities of the project.



<https://www.gendalipen.cz/english>

Seminar ‘Cultural production and language futures: perspectives from Sápmi’

On the occasion of Sámi National Day, the Vigdís International Centre for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding organised the event ‘Cultural production and language futures: perspectives from Sápmi’ in the form of a moderated discussion, combining both academic and on-the-ground insights, on aspects of the perspectives, practices and challenges of the cultural production in Sámi languages. Taking place in early February, the seminar marked the beginning of our programme on the occasion of IDIL 2022–2032, contributed to UNESCO’s commitment to indigenous peoples as a priority area and inspired a larger platform for discussion on the importance of cultural production for the preservation, revitalisation and support of indigenous languages.



The Sámi Parliament of Norway regards the International Decade of Indigenous Languages as a possibility to solve some of the issues and to fulfill some of our dreams regarding indigenous languages.

Mikkel Eskil Mikkelsen

MP at the Sámi Parliament of Norway

The speakers at the seminar were Annika Pasanen, professor at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences, Johan Sandberg McGuinne, teacher, poet and translator and president of Bágo, the Saami Writers’ Association in Sweden, Anne Lajla Utsi, director of the International Sámi Film Institute. Contributions were made by Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, member of the Global Task Force, IDIL 2022–2032, Mikkel Eskil Mikkelsen, member of the Sámi Parliament in Norway, and the new report on small languages in the Nordic region issued by the Institute for Language and Folklore (ISOF) was promoted.

Vigdís Prize for achievements in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity

Since 2020, the Government of Iceland and the University of Iceland set up the international Vigdís Prize awarded annually to individuals, organisations or institutions for their exceptional achievements and excellence in breaking new ground in the fields of cultural and linguistic diversity, multilingualism and translation. It has been named after Vigdís Finnbogadóttir to honour and highlight her extraordinary contributions in support of small language communities, multiculturalism and linguistic diversity.



After her mandate as President Vigdís continued supporting smaller language communities, promoting linguistic diversity and indulging her insatiable curiosity for other cultures. That is why this prize exists. It is precisely that desire, I am certain, which I too will continue to carry within me.

Juergen Boos

President and CEO of the Frankfurt Book Fair

Juergen Boos, the President and CEO of the Frankfurt Book Fair, was the 2022 winner of the international Vigdís Prize and the award was presented by Lilja Alfreðsdóttir, Icelandic Minister of Culture and Business Affairs, at an official ceremony at the Aula of the University of Iceland hosted by the Rector of the university Jón Atli Benediktsson on 5 October 2022.



In an international context, Icelandic is a small language, even a tiny one. Nevertheless, it is the key to our culture, and it is a key which we happily lend or give away. A key point for Icelandic is having friends and we most certainly have many of those. We are gathered here today to honour one of our many friends and bestow on him the Vigdís International Prize for 2022, namely Juergen Boos.

Lilja Dögg Alfreðsdóttir

Minister of Culture and Business Affairs

Mr Boos received the award for his tireless support of languages and cultures in his capacity as CEO of the Frankfurt Book Fair, the world's largest and most influential trade fair for books. The Frankfurt Book Fair features literary works by authors from all corners of the globe and each year a special programme is organised for a country or region as a guest of honour, with Flemish and Dutch, Brazilian, Indonesian, Catalan and Icelandic literature as examples. By introducing diverse literatures to the world's stage, Mr Boos has provided invaluable support to authors, translators, book publishers and their respective language communities.



Events

The Vigdís International Centre functions as a clearing house and a discussion platform that enhances cultural diversity and intercultural understanding through the promotion of dialogue, multilingualism, respect for cultures and nations, and the importance of translation and translation studies.



Our mission to raise awareness about the importance of languages has been realised through a variety of events that provided the base of informed conversations between researchers, experts, decision-makers and the general public. The centre served as both a facilitator and a platform for a dialogue on the challenges of and prospects for social inclusion in terms of access to culture, cultural and language expression, linguistic rights and human rights, primarily concerning minority, indigenous communities and women. Our annual calendar celebrating the UN, UNESCO and international days with curated programmes connected us to the international community.

Highlights of the year 2022:

- International forums promoting indigenous women's voices;
- Celebrations of UN days and international days;
- Translations as means for intercultural understanding;
- Promoting linguistic and cultural diversity and lifelong language learning.

International forums promoting indigenous women's voices

Women play a key role in passing on traditional knowledge and language to the new generations and at the same time often face the hardest forms of oppression. As a firm supporter of gender equality and an advocate for women's voices, the centre organised events conceptualised as a platform for various indigenous and minority women's perspectives that represent an intersection of human and language rights, gender equality, as well as leadership at the community, national and international levels.



My favourite moments are when I hear my daughters speaking with each other in Sámi.

Aili Keskitalo

Political adviser on indigenous peoples, climate and environment for Amnesty International in Norway

We organised the session 'Indigenous languages in the Arctic: International Decade of Indigenous Languages' at the annual Arctic Circle Assembly, the biggest forum in the region, uniting over 2,000 participants each year. The session combined both academic, governmental and on-the-ground insights on the indigenous women's perspectives and challenges related to languages in the Arctic area. Female speakers from the Sámi from Norway and Inuit communities from Canada and Greenland participated in the event.

The seminar 'The voices and languages of indigenous and minority communities: what can women leaders do?', organised by the centre as a side event to the Reykjavík Global Forum of Women Leaders on 9 November 2022, brought together two women of indigenous and minority backgrounds with long-term experience in community, political and organisational leadership – Sara Olsvig, International Chair of Inuit Circumpolar Council and Lilyana Kovatcheva, Romani activist and researcher, high-level representatives Katrín Jakobsdóttir, Prime Minister of Iceland, Eliza Reid, First Lady of Iceland and Irina

Bokova, UNESCO Director-General from 2009 to 2017, discussed indigenous and minority peoples' rights, the universal right to education and challenges of young girls to access it, gender equality, political participation as part of the sustainable development agenda, environmental knowledge, linguistic and cultural diversity.



I would like to challenge you to think about what you can do for the indigenous languages whether you are an indigenous language speaker or part of a community where indigenous languages are spoken.

Aluki Kotierk

President of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
and Co-chair of the IDIL 2022–2032 Global Task Force



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFENyXgl1PE&t=325s>

Celebrations of UN Days and International Days

The Vigdís International Centre undertook advocacy and awareness-raising work through the celebration of important UN days (labelled 'UNESCO days') and international days in the priority fields of operation of our institution:

The Sámi National Day (6 February) was celebrated with the seminar 'Cultural production and language futures: perspectives from Sápmi' featuring speakers from the Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish parts of the area who discussed the importance of cultural production for the preservation, revitalisation and support of indigenous languages, as well as the general well-being of individuals and societies, particularly in the Arctic and Nordic region.

International Mother Language Day (21 February) was marked by online campaigning promoting the Icelandic Online for Children project.



International Roma Day was marked by a two-day cultural programme highlighting the literature and culture of the Roma, with talks by female Roma authors, the exhibition 'Invisible Power' with portraits of Roma women and the music workshop for Roma children and their families.

International Yoga Day was celebrated with the seminar 'Yoga: A harmonious path towards perfection'.



West Nordic Day was celebrated with the seminar 'West Nordic collaboration in the Arctic' on 23 September, combining academic, official and on-the-ground perspectives with sessions on IDIL 2022–2032, collaborative approaches to current challenges in the Arctic and opportunities for research collaboration between the University of Iceland, Ilisimatussarfik and Frodskapasetur Foroya.

UNESCO World Day of the Romani Language was celebrated with the seminar 'Romani histories and prospects: What can we learn from a minority language and culture?' featuring some of the globally most acclaimed Romani academics and activists.

Translations as means for intercultural understanding

Translations play a crucial role in fostering intercultural dialogue and sharing experiences, particularly in the cases of works written or translated into less widely spoken languages. Building on the long-term experience of experts and collaborators of the Vigdís International Centre in the field of translation studies and translation practices, we have supported and publicised the following initiatives:



A journey into a foreign language is also a journey into your own language. While expanding your vocabulary and becoming conscious of foreign languages you also obtain a deeper and more profound understanding of your own language through, for example, translations.

Jonhard Mikkelsen

Linguist, teacher, publisher
and Vigdís Prize Winner 2020

International Translation Day was celebrated with a seminar of the Icelandic Translators' Association and promoting to the Icelandic audience the online seminar 'A world without barriers: translations and interpretation in indigenous languages' co-organised by Translation Commons and UNESCO.

We have been hosting the public launch events of translated books from various languages published by the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute of Foreign Languages with discussions by the books' translators on reflections from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

The panel 'Translation, online communication and citizen diplomacy' was held as part of the Nordic Intercultural Communication Conference, organised in the centre, with prominent speakers such as Gauti Kristmannsson, Professor of Translation Studies at the University of Iceland and Debbie Folaron, Professor and Jean Monnet Chair at Concordia University.

One of the centre's priority areas for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages has been translations and seminars with the participation of minority and indigenous speakers raised awareness about the importance of translations for language development and enriching and diversifying cultural expression.



The screenshot shows the website svf.hi.is. At the top left is the logo for HÍ (Háskólinn í Víkingum), featuring a stylized head profile and the letters 'HÍ'. To the right of the logo is a navigation menu with the following items: STJÓRN, FÉLAGAR OG STARFSFÓLK, RANNSÓKNIR, ÚTGÁFA, and UM OKKUR. Below the navigation menu is a large image of a stack of books. The books have various spines and titles, including 'Á fjarlægum ströndum', 'SUNNUDAGSMATUR', 'við kvikuna', 'Raddir frá Spáni', 'LANGUAGES OPEN UP WORLDS', 'TUNGUMÁL LJÚKA UPP HEIMUM', 'SPRÖG ÁBNER VERDEN', 'Pablo Neruda', 'Jorge Luis Borges', and 'T.S. Eliot'. Below the image is the section header 'Útgáfa'. The text in this section reads: 'Stofnun Vigdísar Finnbogadóttur leggur áherslu á útgáfu fræðiritra og þýðinga á erlendum bókmenntum. Milli mála – Tímarit um erlend tungumál og menningu birtir ritrýndar fræðigreinar á sviði erlendra tungumála, bókmennta, þýðinga, málvísinda og menntunarfræði. Einnig birtir tímaritið þýðingar, viðtöl, ritdóma eða bókakynningar eftir því sem rúm leyfir hverju sinni. Tímaritið var gefið út í bókaformi á árunum 2009-15 en hefur verið rafrænt frá árinu 2016. Tvímála ritröð Stofnunar Vigdísar Finnbogadóttur í erlendum tungumálum er ætluð unnendum erlendra fagurbókmennta og

<https://svf.hi.is/is/utgafa>

Promoting linguistic and cultural diversity and lifelong language learning

A vibrant programme of events oriented towards the general public and the international community in Iceland took place at the premises of the centre. These included the open talks 'Emigration and immigration in contemporary Polish literature and film' organised with the Polish Embassy and the Language Centre and 'Yoga: A harmonious path towards perfection' and 'Linguistic diversity in India' by Shilpa Khatri Babbar, visiting Professor of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Chair of Indian Studies at the University of Iceland.



Eight public lectures were organised in collaboration with the Faculty of Languages and Cultures at the University of Iceland, on topics related to language, culture and literature.

Six film screenings in foreign languages were hosted at the auditorium of the centre with relevance to UNESCO's emphasis on promoting multilingualism.

The centre traditionally hosts various days representing cultures and languages such as Spanish Days, Polish Days, Romani Days, etc.

Tribute to Professor Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir

Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, Professor Emerita at the University of Iceland, is a linguist with interests in language contact, bilingualism and multilingualism of individuals and communities. Birna is one of the leading experts on Icelandic as a heritage language, the impact and presence of English in the West Nordic region, academic writing and Icelandic language learning in virtual reality. She is among the leaders of the international research network PRISEAL, on the writing and publication of academic articles in English as a second language and its effects on knowledge creation. The application of Professor Arnbjörnsdóttir's research led to innovations through the utilisation of digital technologies – she has been the developer and leader of Icelandic Online, free-of-charge online courses that have received recognition in Iceland and beyond. Birna led a team of linguists and IT experts who developed the Living Language Lab exhibition.



As chair of the board and director of the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute of Foreign Languages from 2018 to 2021, Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir was a leading figure in the strategic development and research profile of the Vigdís International Centre for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding. In her capacity as Iceland's representative in the Task Force for Making the Decade of Indigenous Languages, she was instrumental in the development of the Icelandic Strategical Plan for IDIL2022–2032 and her valuable support and outstanding contribution to our IDIL activities with indigenous and minority communities were a key element in the success of our activities and in laying the fundamentals for our international collaborations.

The board and the team of the Vigdís International Centre express our deepest gratitude to Professor Arnbjörnsdóttir. Her professionalism, enthusiasm and support will leave an exceptional mark and be an inspirational example for all of us!

Acknowledgements

The successful planning, implementation and public outreach of our activities throughout 2022 would not have been possible without our fruitful collaborations within a large network of allies, partners, colleagues and funders.

The annual operations of the Vigdís International Centre for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding are possible with the support of the government and Iceland and the Ministry of Culture and Business Affairs. We are also grateful to a number of other Icelandic governmental institutions such as the Permanent Delegation of Iceland to UNESCO, the Permanent Mission of Iceland to the UN and the Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO. Our UNESCO mission has been consolidated through effective collaborations with UNESCO, in particular, Sector Communication and Information and Sector Education. The embassies of Canada, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Norway, Poland and Sweden to Iceland as well as representations of Greenland and Faroe Islands and the Nordic House in Iceland have been among our collaborators in the activities of the centre. Within the IDIL 2022–2032 we have had the opportunity to collaborate with the Department of Canadian Heritage at the Government of Canada, the Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, Sámi Parliament of Norway, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Council of Women World Leaders Inuit Circumpolar Council, Global Indigenous Language Caucus, Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat at the Arctic Council, the University of Tromsø – the Arctic University of Norway, Bágo Association of Sámi Writers, Sámi Film Institute, Sámi University of Applied Sciences, the Institute for Language and Folklore (ISOF) in Sweden. We have also continued our fruitful collaboration with established partners in Iceland such as the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies, Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature, Móðurmál – the Association on Bilingualism, the Association of Language Teachers in Iceland (STÍL), the Icelandic Association of Translators and Interpreters (POT), the Institute of Literature and Visual Arts and the Translation Centre of the University of Iceland. Many activities have been implemented in collaboration

with and with the support of the Rector of the University of Iceland, as well as with different units within the university – the Language Centre, the Institute of International Affairs and the Centre for Arctic Studies.

We are enormously grateful to the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute for Foreign Languages and the School of Humanities within which the Vigdís International Centre is operating for their commitment and smooth cooperation. We would like to particularly express our gratitude to Ásdís Rósa Magnúsdóttir, director of the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute of Foreign Languages and chair of the Board of the Vigdís International Centre from 2018 to 2021 for her devoted support, passion and professional guidelines throughout the year. Our gratitude also goes to Guðrún Kvaran, who has been the representative of the Ministry of Cultures, Science and Education (Ministry of Culture and Business Affairs since November 2021) on the board of the centre since its establishment until the end of 2022 as well as the board members from 2019 to 2022: Geir Sigurðarson, representative of the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute for Foreign Languages and Sæunn Stefansdóttir of the Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO. Our UNESCO identity and collaborations with UNESCO programmes have been strengthened in the last year due to the invaluable support and efforts of Áslaug Dóra Magnúsdóttir, senior advisor at the Ministry of Culture and Business Affairs and Secretary of the UNESCO's National Commission in Iceland and the devoted and tremendous contribution of Irmgarda Kasinskaite in her capacity as the representative of UNESCO's Director-General in the board of the centre until the end of 2022, for which we are tremendously grateful.

Governing board and team of the Vigdís International Centre



Ann-Sofie Nielsen Gremaud

Chair, associate professor of Danish, representative of the University of Iceland



Geir Sigurðsson

Professor of Chinese studies, representative of the University of Iceland



Guðrún Kvaran

Professor emerita of Icelandic, representative of the Ministry of Education and Culture



Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg

Programme specialist at Communication and Information Sector of UNESCO, representative of UNESCO Director-General



Sæunn Stefánsdóttir

Director of University of Iceland's Institute of Research Centres, representative of the Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO



Þórhallur Eypórsson

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Vigdís International Centre Annual Report 2022

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