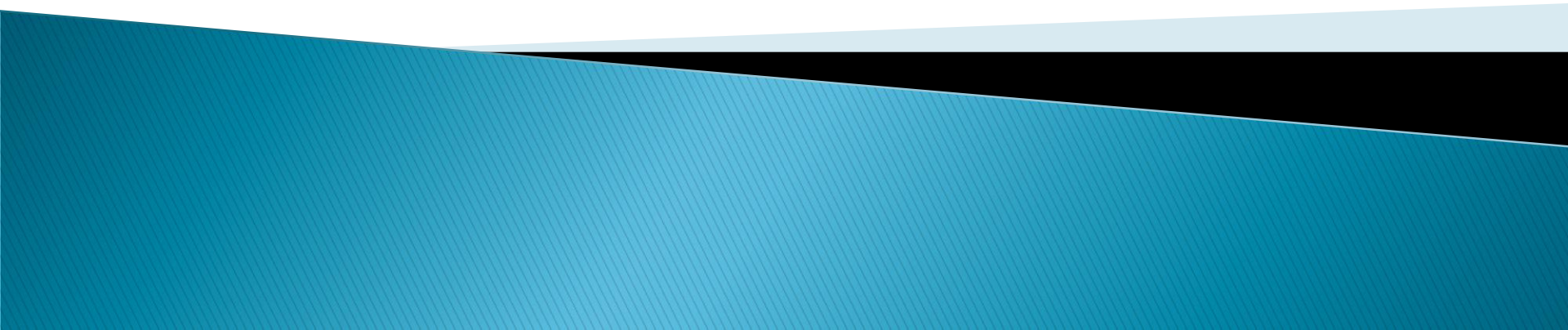


Improving the work–life balance

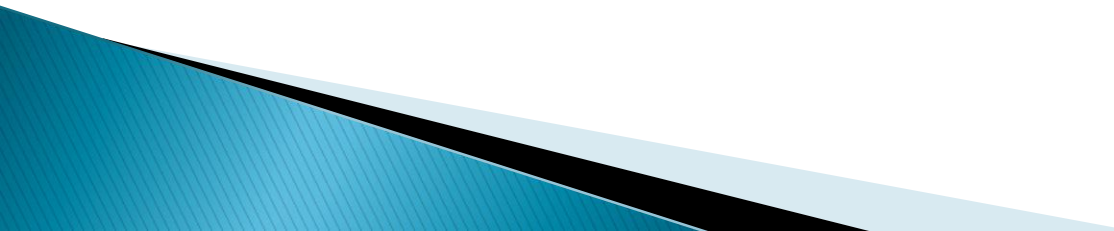
Brussels May 6, 2013



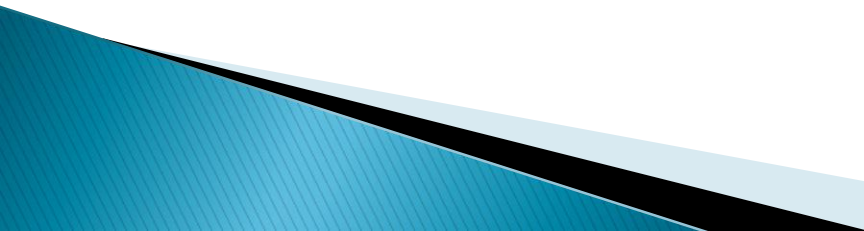
Iceland



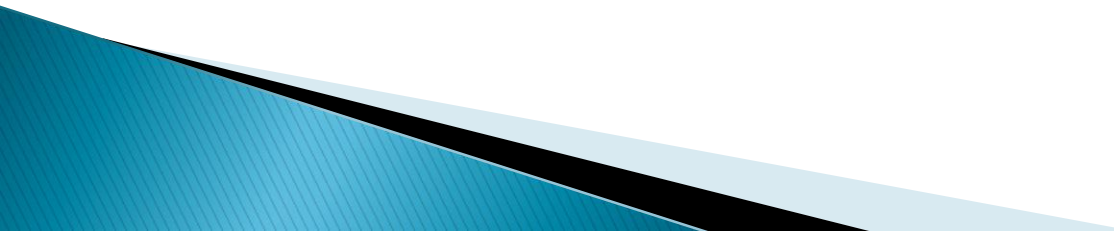
Work–life balance

- ▶ Iceland has been nr. 1 on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap list for the last four years.
 - ▶ The main reasons are equal rights and equal opportunities in education and health, as well as women's success for the last 30 years in increasing their political power.
 - ▶ The weakest side is gender equality on the labour market.
 - ▶ Iceland is not yet a women's paradise!
- 

What effects work–life balance?

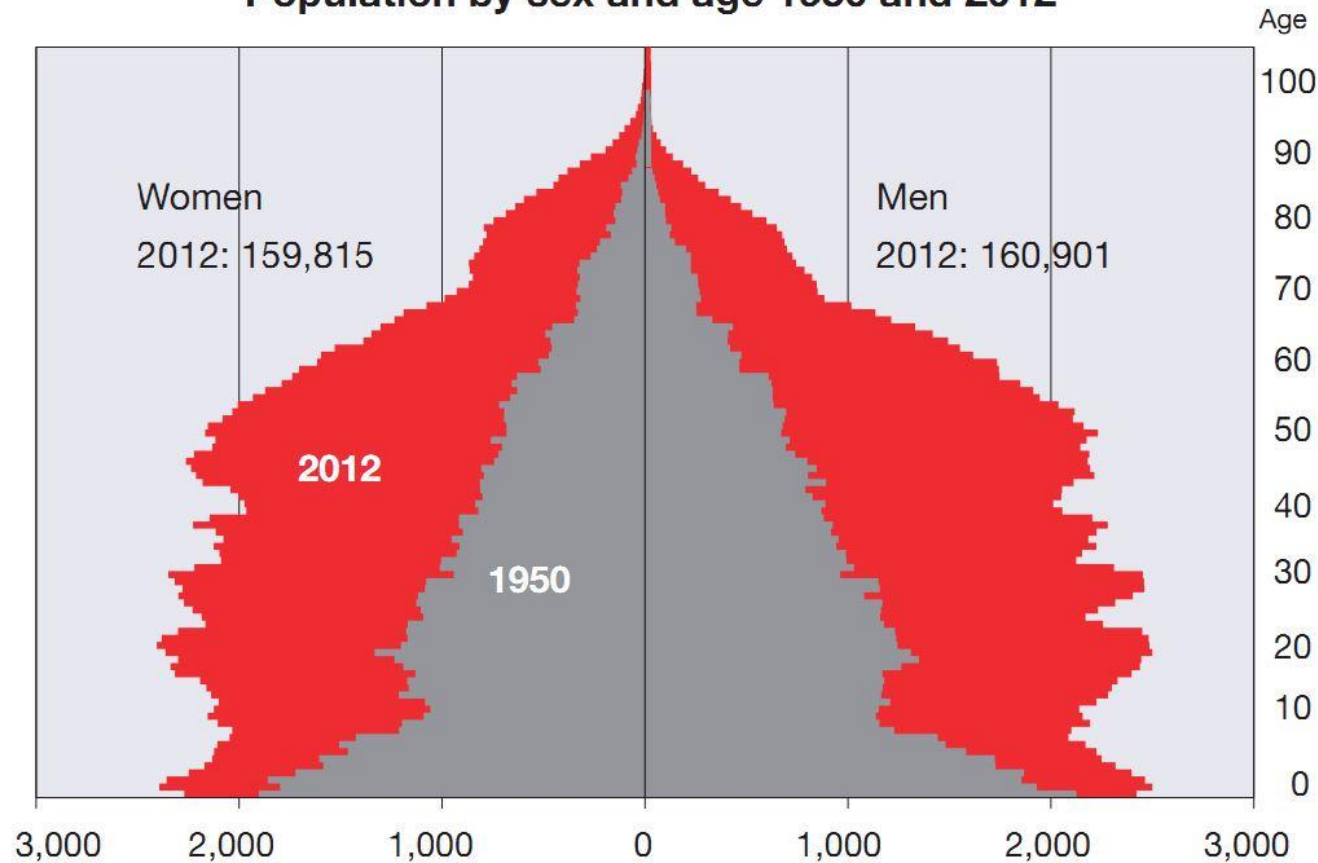
- ▶ Working hours and organisation of work.
 - ▶ Level of education and the gender pay gap.
 - ▶ Parental leave and number of children.
 - ▶ Access to child care and the organisation of the school system.
 - ▶ Sharing of housework.
 - ▶ Families and family support.
 - ▶ Old and sick relatives/health care.
 - ▶ Taxes and financial support.
- 

What effects life–work balance

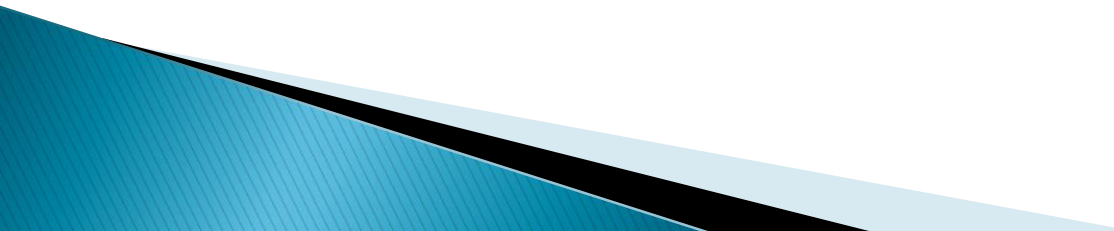
- ▶ Legislation and policies.
 - ▶ Social movements.
 - ▶ Level of security in society.
 - ▶ Other factors?
- 

Facts about Iceland

Population by sex and age 1950 and 2012

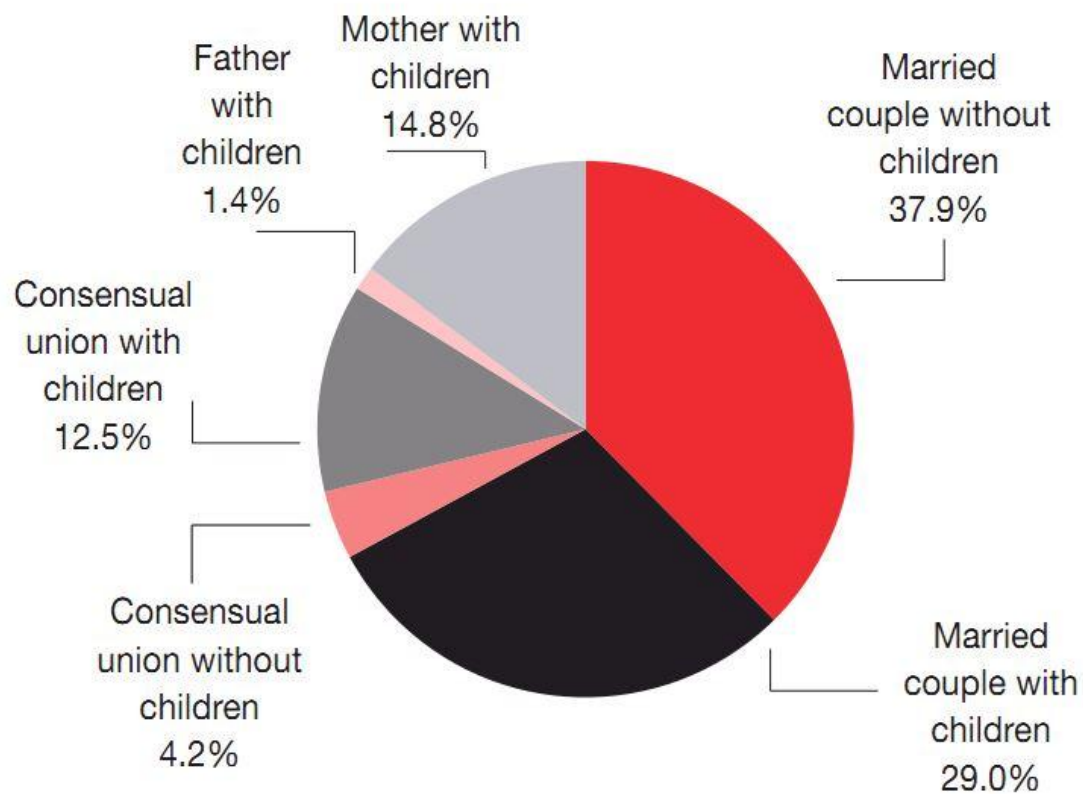


Facts about Iceland

- ▶ January 1st 2013 the population was 321.857 people.
 - ▶ The average life expectancy at birth is 83.6 years for women and 79.9 for men.
 - ▶ The total fertility rate in 2011 was 2.0.
 - ▶ For the last 20 years it has been between 2.1 and 2.2. The economic crises starting in 2008 has had its effect on the fertility.
- 

Families in Iceland

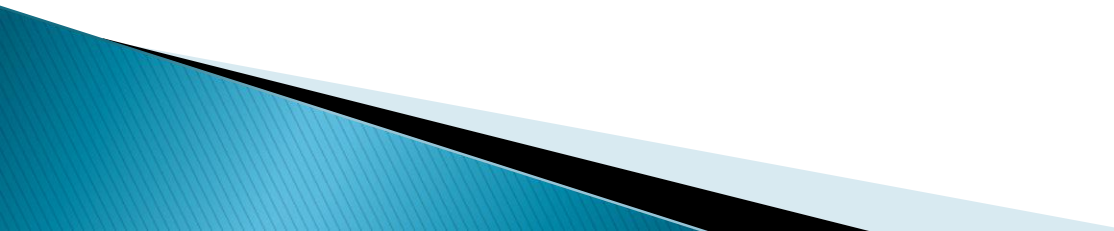
Families 2013



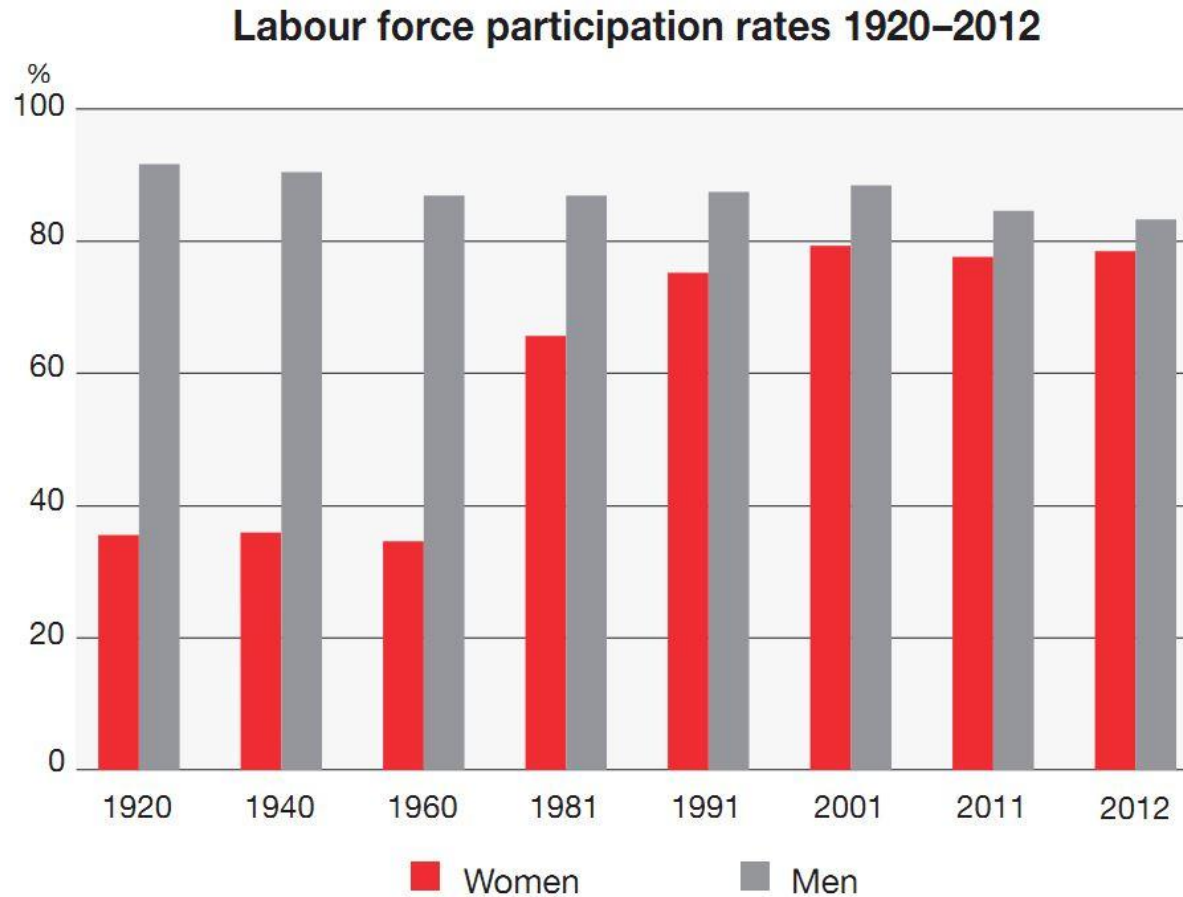
Facts about Iceland

- ▶ The mean age of mothers/fathers having their first child was 27.0 years for women and 29.8 for men in 2011.
- ▶ The mean age of spouses first marriage was 32.7 for women and 34.6 years for men in 2011.
- ▶ 25% of 16 years old and older are single.
- ▶ In 2012 78% of women were active on the labour market, 83% of men.
- ▶ Average working hours per week were 35 for women and 44 for men in 2012.

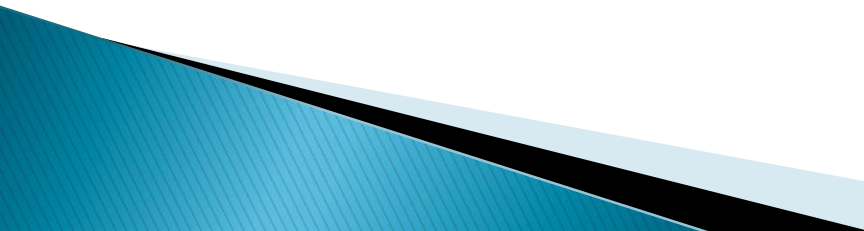
Participation on the labour market

- ▶ 65% of women on the labour market have a full time job and 86% of men.
 - ▶ That means that 35% of the women have a part time job, 14% of men.
 - ▶ The rate of unemployment in 2012 was 5.7% for women and 6.4% for men. The figures are now higher for women than men. 5% for men and 5.7% for women.
- 

The labour force

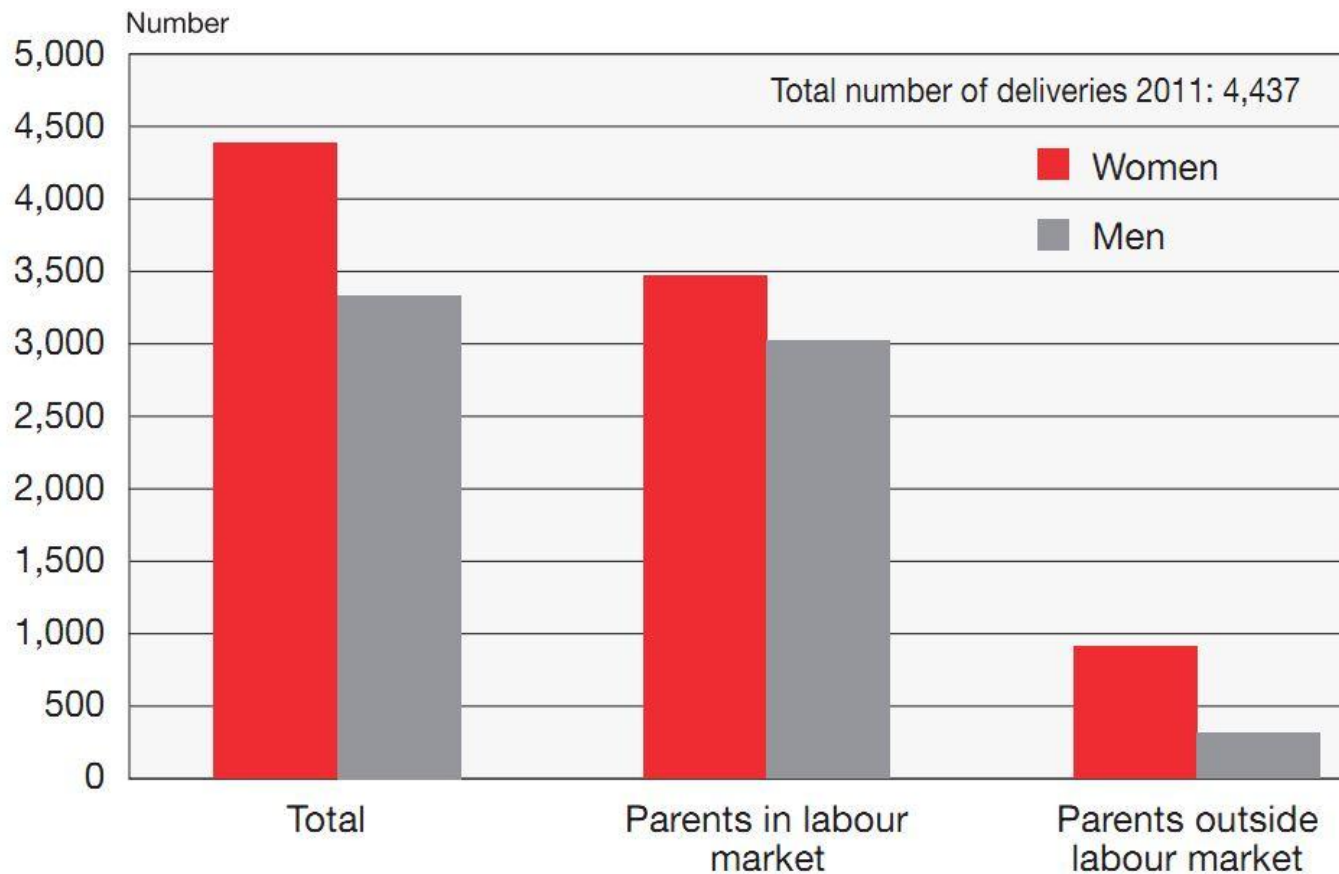


Parental leave and child care


- ▶ Parental leave is now nine months, three for the mother, three for the father and three months to share.
 - ▶ In the next three years the parental leave will become 12 months. Five for the mother, five for the father and two months to share.
 - ▶ This is what we call 5+5+2.
 - ▶ 79% of children between 1 and 2 years old attend preschool. 95% of children 3–5 years old.
- 

Parental leave

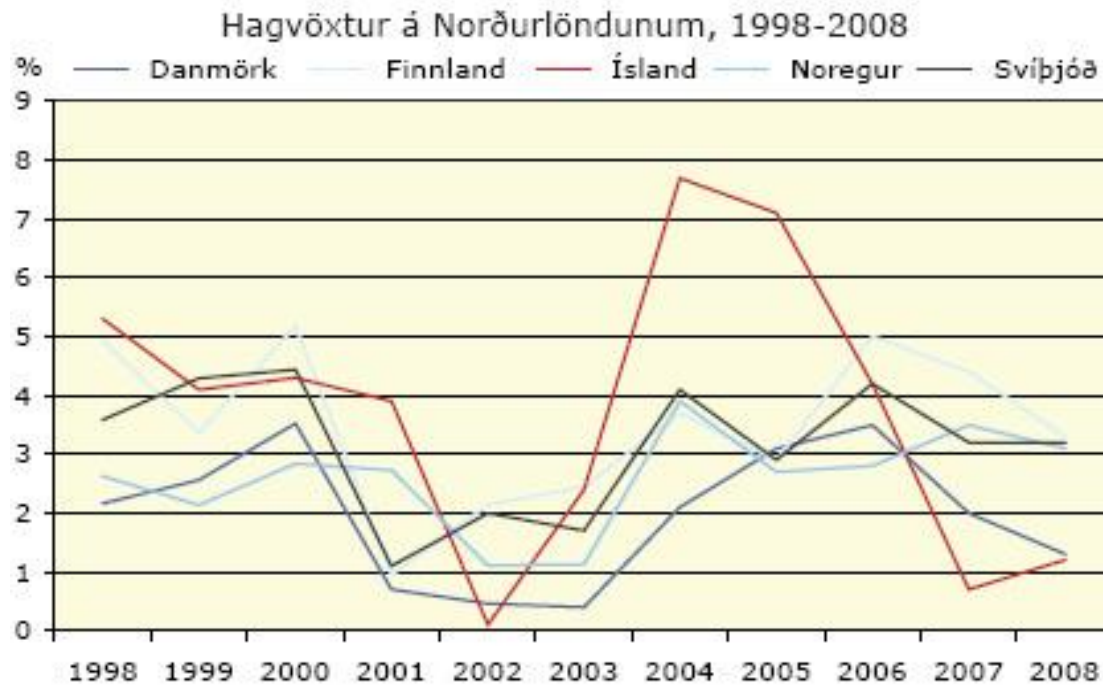
Parents receiving payments in maternity/paternity leave 2011



The History

- ▶ The Icelandic society has gone through transformation in the last 50 years.
 - ▶ One of the main reasons for economic growth in this period is the growing participation of women on the labour market.
 - ▶ Both the private and the public sector needed more workforce. The resources were found among women.
 - ▶ Social movements played a crucial role in developing Iceland towards a society that more or less respects equal rights of women and men.
- 


Economic Growth in the Nordic Countries



The History – the labour market

- ▶ The participation of women on the labour market in Iceland was fairly high before the 1960's due to the needs of the fishing industry and low family income.
- ▶ Between 1960 and 1980 the participation of women grew from 36% to 63%.
- ▶ Changes in the fishing industry, the growth of the service sector, the creation of the welfare system and the need for teachers to serve the “baby boom” generation, created “jobs for women”.

The History – taxes and legislation

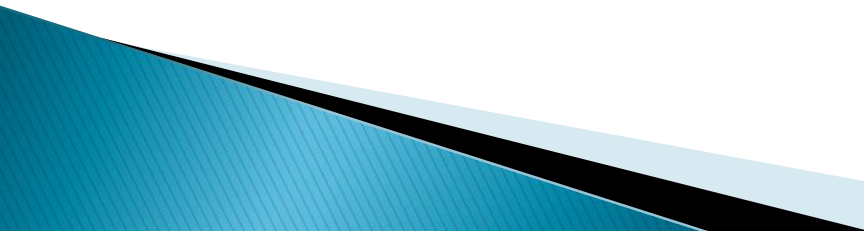
- ▶ In stead of supporting the one bread winner model, the policy makers, pushed by a strong women's movement, enhanced the dual earner model.
 - ▶ In 1957 the parliament decided that married women should only pay a 50% income tax, which meant that 50% of their wages was tax-free.
 - ▶ The 1957 act is an example of an affirmative action meant to make it easier for married women to enter the work force.
 - ▶ Around 1960 new contraceptives came into the picture.
- 

The History

Gender Equality legislation

- ▶ In 1961 an act on equal pay for equal work
- ▶ Act on free, but regulated abortion 1975.
- ▶ In 1976 the first act on Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and men. The main was on equal rights on the labour market.
- ▶ The act has been revised four times. Partly because of changes in local policies and social developments, partly because of UN policies (CEDAW and Beijing platform for Action.

Legislation and the Women's Movement

- ▶ Since 1976 the act on Gender Equality has mainly focused on equal rights on the labour market. After 2000 positive duties on behalf of employers came into the law.
 - ▶ The role of the women's movements and the labour unions in shaping a more gender equal society is crucial. The 1970's was the time of the Red Stockings Movement, which focused on the situation of women on the labour market.
 - ▶ Equal pay, child care, better organisation of the school day, equal sharing of housework, reproductive rights and maternal leave were on the agenda.
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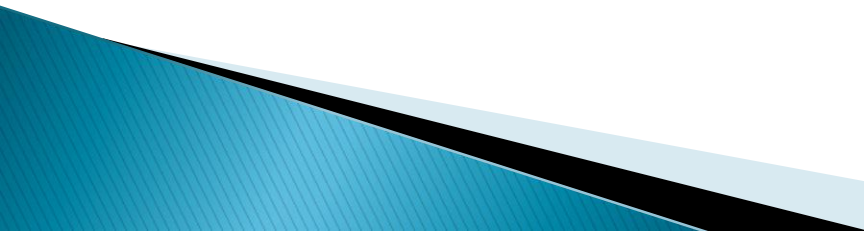
The Women's Strike in 1975




The Women's Strike 2005



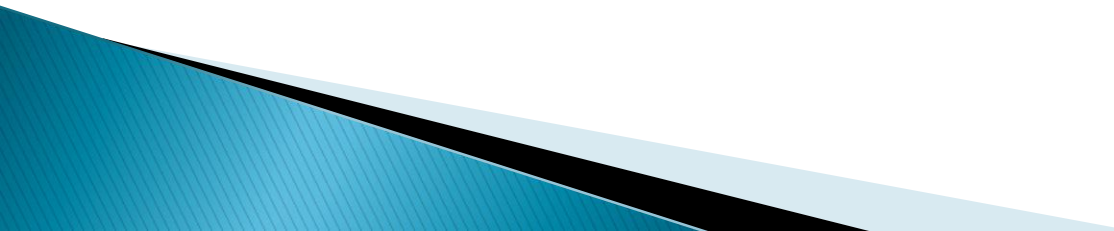
The role of Women's Movements

- ▶ The 1980's was the time of the women's lists. They put new issues on the agenda, such as the importance of equal representation in policy and decision making, violence against women and children and all the „old“ issues.
 - ▶ In the 1980's and 1990's family policies based on gender equality began to take shape.
 - ▶ Maternity leave and later paternity leave was developed, from only being the right of women, working in the public sector, to women and men on the labour market as a whole.
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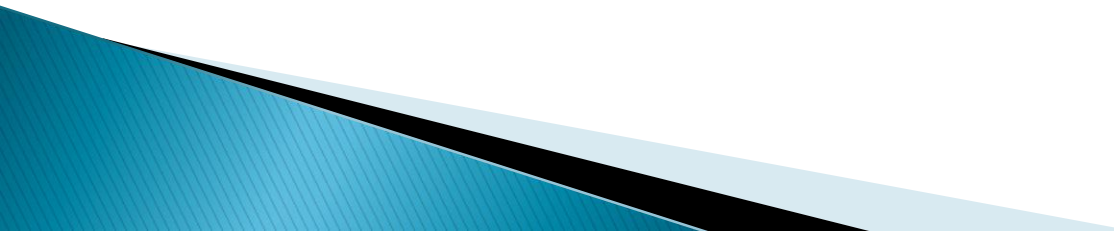
Reasons for new family policies

- ▶ Explosion in the educational system – loans for all students.
 - ▶ Day care services were build up all over the country.
 - ▶ Primary schools were reorganised, with meals in schools.
 - ▶ Financial support for single parents improved.
 - ▶ Services for elderly people were reorganised.
 - ▶ A strong health care system was build up.
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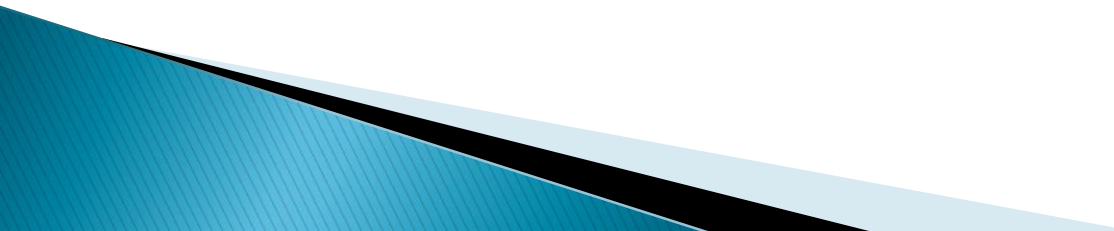
What now?

- ▶ Iceland is not a paradise for women!
 - ▶ Men in general still have a long working week on the labour market and that effects the family and the sharing of housework.
 - ▶ Most women still bear the double burden of work and family responsibilities.
 - ▶ Professions where women are in majority are under valued.
 - ▶ Education has not secured gender equality for women.
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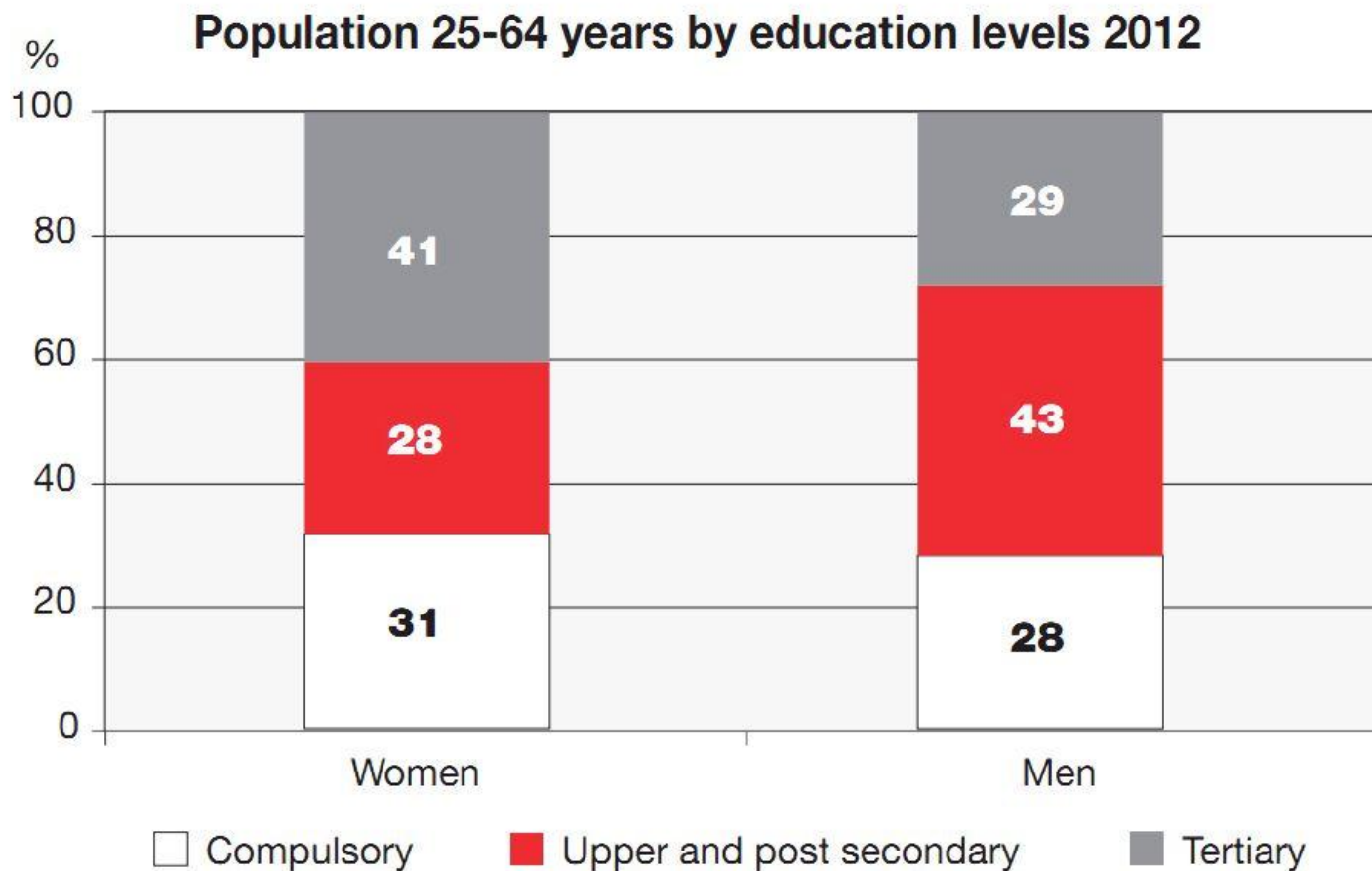
Challenges

- ▶ The level of women's education is growing fast, while the “drop out” of young men is a problem. What will the consequences be in the future?
 - ▶ Women are still a minority among those running enterprises, but it is changing rapidly because of a quota legislation.
 - ▶ The gender pay gap is narrowing very slowly
 - ▶ Sharing of housework is not equal and it is very traditional. The big change is in the caretaking and upbringing of children.
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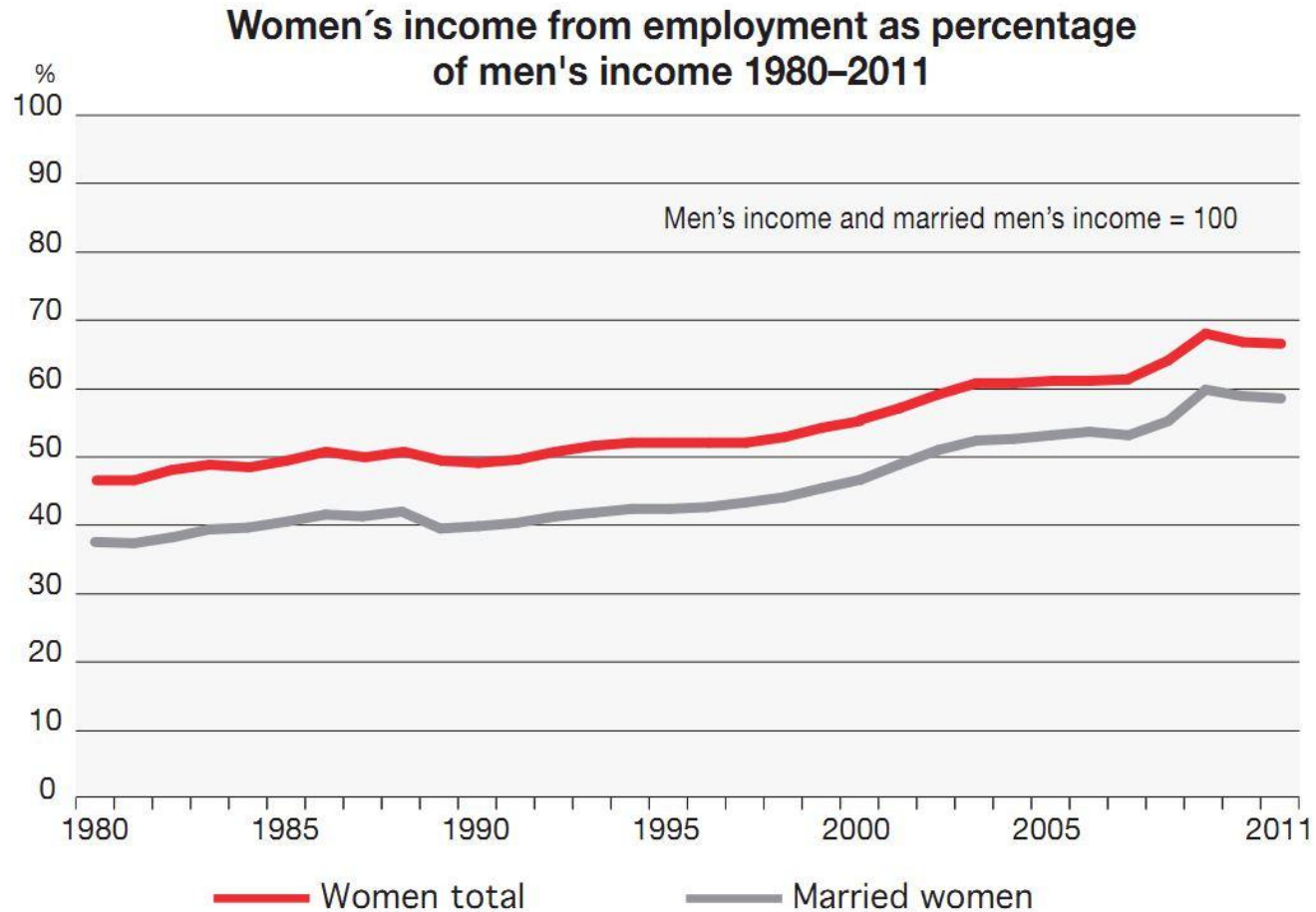
Challenges

- ▶ The gender segregated labour market is one of the reasons for gender inequalities. Stereotypes are difficult to change.
 - ▶ Violence against women is extremely worrying!
 - ▶ The young generation seems to be more conservative than their parents concerning gender equality.
 - ▶ What will be the long term consequences of the economic crises? Will our next government continue to protect the welfare system?
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Education

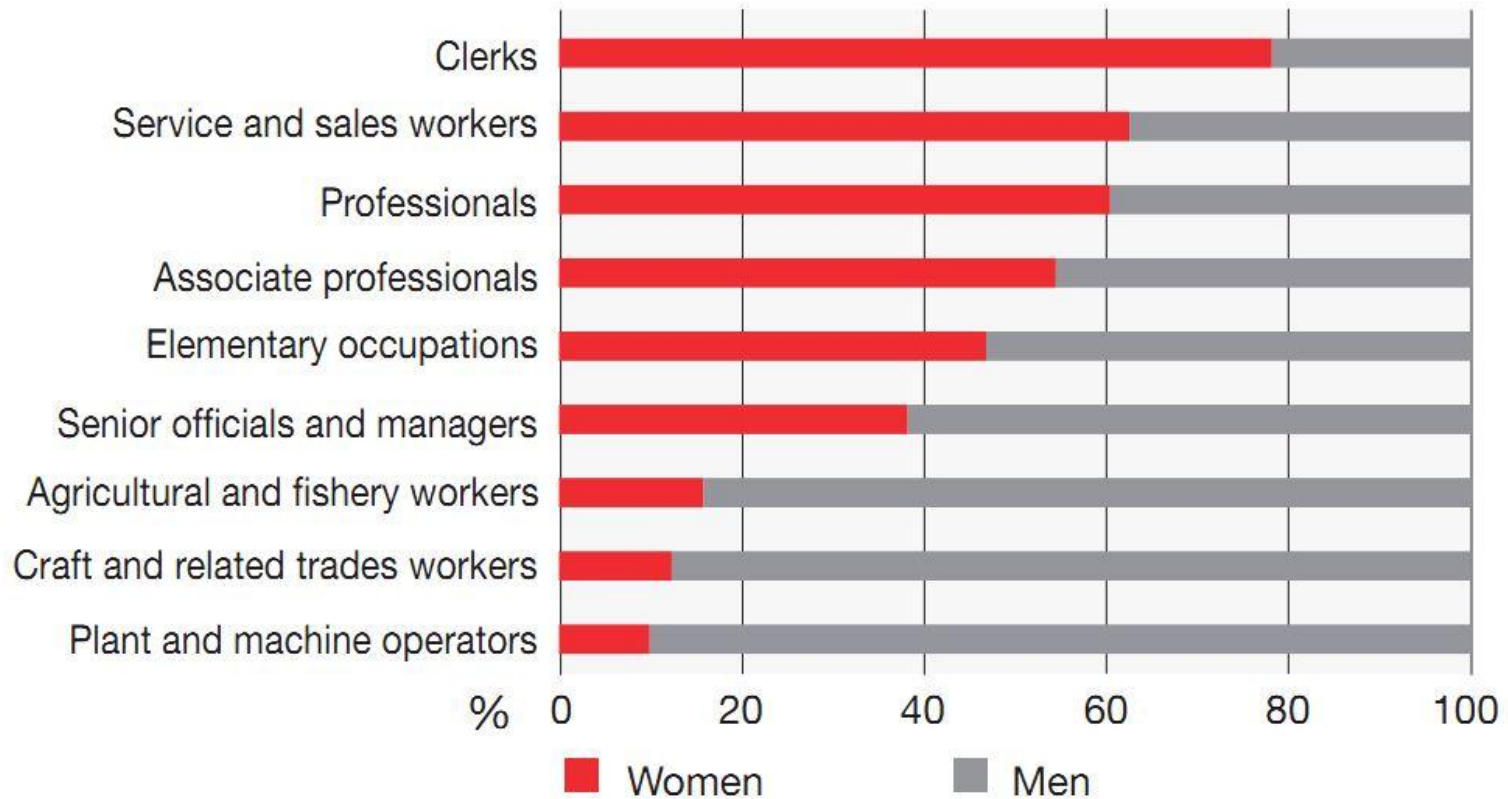


The Gender Pay Gap



Occupations

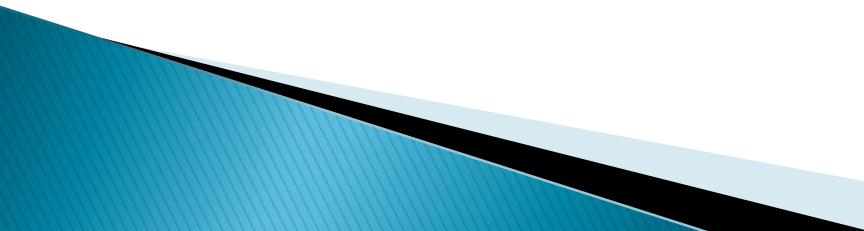
Occupations 2012



Conclusions

- ▶ The Icelandic society has gone through transformation in the last 50 years.
 - ▶ One of the main reasons for economic growth in this period is the growing participation of women on the labour market.
 - ▶ Both the private and the public sector needed more workforce. The resources were found among women and women wanted and needed work.
 - ▶ Social movements played a crucial role in the development of Iceland towards a more gender equal society.
- 

Conclusions

- ▶ In the 1970's family policies began to recognize the need for gender equality and the fact that a growing number of women were active on the labour market.
 - ▶ Laws were passed securing women equal rights with men. The state and the municipalities built up a pre school system. The primary schools were reorganised. Parental leave where fathers had their own non-transferable rights was nothing less than a revolution.
 - ▶ Families with young children got more financial support through taxes and special payments.
- 

Conclusions

- ▶ Last but not least Icelandic legislation secures equal rights for almost all kinds of families:
- ▶ Single parents, same sex parents, and families where parents live together (married or not married) or separated.
- ▶ But – in Iceland as in most other European countries the population is getting older
- ▶ So the goal must be to secure that people work and can work and have children.
- ▶ Gender equality is the most effective tool to reach those goals!