



2018



The United Nations University Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (UNU-GEST) celebrated the graduation of 23 fellows who were awarded a post-graduate diploma in international gender studies from the University of Iceland. The fellows come from 14 countries; four men and 19 women from Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Palestine, Uganda, Kenya, Lebanon, Tunisia, Nigeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. This cohort included the 100th fellow and in total 109 students have graduated from the programme.

Mrs. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir delivered the award for the best final assignment, named in her honour, the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Award. Mrs. Finnbogadóttir reflected on the issue by addressing gender equality as a universal, human right and the importance of breaking silences and taboos in this field. She expressed her conviction that the fellows will become leaders of change and role models for gender equality. This year, Ms. Masha Durkalić from Bosnia and Herzegovina received the award for the best final assignment for her research proposal: 'Feminist Activism in Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia: Political Potentials for Social Change.'



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The objective of UNU-GEST is to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through research and education. It targets young academics and professionals from developing countries and post-conflict societies working for government and civil society organisations.





Presidential Visit

In February, the 2018 cohort of UNU-GEST fellows had the honour of visiting the President of Iceland, Mr. Guðni Th. Jóhannesson and the First Lady, Mrs. Eliza Reid, at Bessastaðir, the presidential residence. The fellows were warmly greeted by both the President and the First Lady. After a short remark by the President addressing the fight for gender equality in Iceland, three of the fellows introduced the class of 2018 to the distinguished hosts. Sophia Nabukenya, who opened the round of introduction, gave insights into the realities of her work as a national youth ambassador in Uganda and how the knowledge and skill set she acquires in Iceland will impact her community at home. Luka Lazović from Serbia was the next to address the President and the First Lady as he gave an overview of the structure of the Diploma Programme and the wide range of final assignments the fellows are working on. Maaref Fadel from Lebanon concluded the formal part of the meeting by explaining how the program enables her and all the other fellows to express their ideas freely and research topics that are a taboo in their countries of origin. The fellows were invited to join President Jóhannesson and Mrs. Reid for light refreshments as well as an opportunity to speak to them and look around the presidential residence.



Social Media campaign launched on International Women's Day 2018

To celebrate International Women's day 2018, fellows and staff of UNU-GEST called for a variety of actions to accelerate gender equality and achieving the SDG by 2030. In order to raise awareness on these issues the media team created a campaign that was featured on all UNU-GEST media channels for 17 days in March 2018.

Humanities Conference



In March, UNU-GEST organized the panel "Rights and Wrongs: Gender Equality and Human Rights" as part of the Hugvísindafing conference which was held at the University of Iceland. Honouring the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the panel took an expansive approach to reflect upon the gender equality concept within the broader framework of human rights in contemporary culture. Staff members, fellows and associated scholars addressed the issue from different angles. Tereza Vujosevic, UNU-GEST fellow from Montenegro, spoke on law-driven discrimination in her home country, addressing the violations of human rights connected to a recently passed law on motherhood in Montenegro. Masha Durkalić, UNU-GEST fellow from Bosnia and Herzegovina, gave a presentation on feminist activism against neo-conservatism, discussing the preservation of abortion rights in Croatia. A third contribution to the panel was given by Andrea Jovanović, UNU-GEST fellow from Serbia, presenting her talk titled „Orthodox Women Inside Their Four Walls: Opposing Perspectives on Religion in Serbia“.

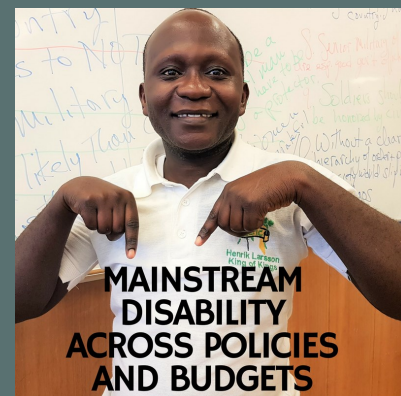




Field Trip to the Southeast of Iceland

In April, the UNU-GEST fellows, together with Dr. Irma Erlingsdóttir, the director of UNU-GEST, travelled to the southeast of Iceland as part of the module "Gender and Environment". The module opens with a theoretical introduction to the relationship between gender and environment and gender and climate change. It then brings in practical tools for integrating gender in the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of projects and investments in response to climate change. The field trip is made annually with the objective of witnessing climate change in Iceland and to put the learning into a global perspective.

The road to Höfn offers great sightseeing opportunities – and these were not missed by the fellows who visited the 60-meters high waterfalls Seljalandsfoss and Skógarfoss, the black sand beach Reynisfjörur and hiked for two hours in the national park Skaftafell for the visit of the waterfall Svartifoss, the Black-waterfall, named after the black basaltic columns surrounding it.



Snapshots of the Icelandic Outreach Programme



SENDIBOÐARNIR



On the first day of summer, four UNU-GEST fellows, Katuramu Peter from Uganda, Masha Durkalić from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Carmen Kishek from Palestine and Mercy Chaluma from Malawi were featured in a radio broadcast by the Icelandic National Broadcasting Agency, "Sendiboðarnir".

<http://www.ruv.is/spila/ras-1/sendibodarnir/20180419>

For the first time UNU-GEST fellows were presented on the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service in a popular TV programme called Landinn. The cohort of 2018 was featured in the programme during an annual fieldtrip to the Southeast of Iceland focussed on the relation of climate change and gender.

<http://www.ruv.is/sjonvarp/spila/landinn/24084?ep=71sb3t>.





Some of our fellows visited three Upper Secondary School in the Reykjavik area to meet with Icelandic students and to introduce gender inequalities in their home countries. Tereza Vujošević focused on the lack of women's political participation and entrepreneurship in Montenegro, Mercy Chaluma spoke about girls' education and harmful cultural practices in Malawi and Carmen Kishek discussed outdated laws in Palestine and the situation of Palestinian women under the Israeli occupation.



Harriet Achieng focused on sex education for youth in Uganda and on whose responsibility it should be, while Marko Matović discussed gender stereotypes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the lack of women's involvement in politics

Field Trip to the Búrfell Power Station



The 2018 cohort of UNU-GEST fellows were invited to stay at the National Power Company's, *Landsvirkjun*, Búrfell Power Station in south-central Iceland for a writing retreat focusing on their final assignments from the 15th to the 16th of March. 23 fellows, along with staff members Erla Hlín Hjálmaradóttir and Randi Stebbins, and visiting lecturer Marsha Henry, Associate Professor at the London School of Economics and Deputy Director of the Centre for Women, Peace and Security, visited the Búrfell Power station. UNU-GEST and Landsvirkjun are both founding members of Sustainable Energy for All, which is a global initiative to work towards the achievement of SDG#5 and SDG#7, the goal to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. This collaboration has resulted in Landsvirkjun's support of the UNU-GEST programme and its fellows. The day at Búrfell was divided into working sessions, conducted by Randi Stebbins, the module coordinator for the final assignments, sightseeing in the vicinity of the station, and a live session from a side event of the 62nd Commission of the Status of Women, held in New York, on the Road to End Child Marriages. On the way back to Reykjavik, the group went sightseeing at Hjalparfossar waterfall and Þingvellir national park.





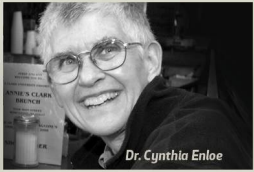
#IcelandToo: How Patriarchy is Perpetuated

Prof. Cynthia Enloe gives lecture at the University of Iceland

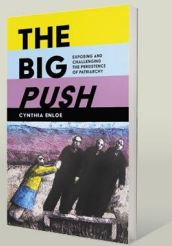


A full Aula at the University of Iceland listened to an encouraging and uplifting lecture by Prof. Cynthia Enloe in February, when she discussed her latest book "The Big Push: Exposing and Challenging the Persistence of Patriarchy" in context to the #metoo movement in Iceland. Cynthia was joined by panelists, Annadís Gréta Rúðólfsdóttir and Lilja Hjartardóttir, who shared their insights into the Icelandic context. Prof Enloe emphasized the importance of being able to identify the web of connections and causes of various patriarchal actions and the way they persist. Cynthia's point is that "patriarchy depends on us (aka feminists) to get tired". Its culture and power structure are already providing push backs against the new #metoo movement, facilitating an enabling environment to patriarchal situations such as constantly having to make distinction between the severity of sexual harassment and violence. One way to survive the push back and attempts at distraction is to develop and apply "feminist curiosity", as Enloe labels it, and have the feminist torchlights carried forward by many.

#IcelandToo? How Patriarchy Is Perpetuated



Dr. Cynthia Enloe



CLARITY ABOUT BENEFITS OF GENDER EQUALITY



ERADICATE CORRUPTION



PARENTAL LEAVE FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

Open Seminar on Conflict and Hunger

Putting a spot-light on the relationship between hunger and conflict was the focus of an open seminar hosted by the Institute of International Affairs at the University of Iceland, Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and UNU-GEST in March at the University of Iceland. The topic of hunger and conflict was discussed by Anne Poulsen, Director of the UN World Food Programme's Nordic Office, Dr. Connie Carøe Christiansen, Visiting Associate Professor at the Lebanese American University in Lebanon and Visiting Lecturer at UNU-GEST and Finnbogji Rútur Arnarson from the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs.



ÁTÖK OG HUNGUR
CONFLICT AND HUNGER



EMPOWER THE RURAL WOMEN FARMER





Highlights from RIKK & UNU-GEST Spring Term Lecture Series 2018



RIKK & UNU-GEST Program Spring 2018

► Noon Lecture Series

in the National Museum's lecture hall at 12:00-13:00

11 January, Sólveig Anna Bóasdóttir, Professor at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Iceland: *A world made new. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the making*



25 January, Ulrike E. Auga, Professor at Humboldt University in Berlin and Visiting Professor at Paris Lodron University of Salzburg, Austria: *Human Rights, Gender and Religion. Controversies in Political, Social, Cultural and Sexuality Discourses*

8 February, Ragnhildur Helgadóttir, Dean of the School of Law, Reykjavík University: *Human Dignity in Icelandic Law*

22 February, Elizabeth Klatzer, Economist and Specialist in Gender responsive Budgeting: *Budgeting for Women's Rights: Tax Justice and Gender Equality*

8 March, Magnús Porkell Bernharðsson, Brown Professor of History, Williams College: *Women's fight for rights in Egypt in the wake of the Arab Spring*

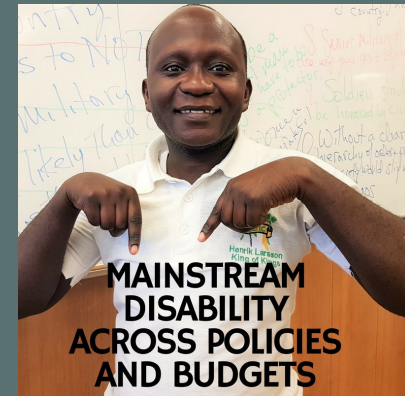
19 March, Linda Hogan Professor of Ecumenics, formerly Vice Provost of Trinity College Dublin: *Religion, Gender and the Politics of Human Rights: A Genealogical Perspective*



12 April, Vivianne Namaste, Professor at Concordia University, Montréal, Canada: Women's Health Organizing: *Lessons from Montréal's Haitian Community in the 1980s*

3 May, Andrea Peto, Professor of Gender Studies at Central European University, Budapest: *Anti-gender movements as challenges to human rights*

Symposium, 13 April, National Museum of Iceland lecture hall at 13:00-15:00





Alumni News



MEET THE NEW CLASS OF

WOMEN DELIVER
YOUNG LEADERSWOMEN
DELIVER

Bisharo Ali Hussein, UNU-GEST Alumni from Somalia, is one of the 300 change makers chosen to be part of the 2018 class of women deliver young leaders. Bisharo, whose expertise lie within the planning, establishment and management of development and humanitarian projects, graduated from our post-graduate diploma programme in International Gender Equality Studies in 2017. In her final assignment, Ms. Hussein wrote a project proposal on *Addressing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) through Promoting Literacy for Girls and Women in Rural Puntland-Somalia*, but she remains an avid advocate for the rights of women and girls, and works in Somalia. Together with young leaders from 121 countries, she will fight for gender equality by advocating for the health, rights and well being of girls and women. We extend our warm congratulations to Bisharo, and wish her well in her role as a representative of young leaders across the globe and a force for change.



Tony Bero a UNU-GEST 2015 graduate from Palestine, was a part of a 16-day campaign aiming to end violence against women. The campaign was carried out by UNRWA's Emergency Community Mental Health Project in 54 Bedouin communities in the West Bank, Palestine. The main objective of the campaign was to raise awareness that gender-based violence is an infringement on human rights. Topics discussed by the 1,463 participants included gender-based violence, alternatives to violence in education, non-violent communication in the family, and other family and child protection matters. UNU-GEST also welcomed Tony in Iceland in April where he supported fellows during their presentations on UNSCR 1325 to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Iceland.

Interns in the spring
semester 2018

Irina S. Ogurtsova from Estonia joined the programme in September 2017. Her internship is a part of her master's degree in Baltic Sea Region Studies at the University of Tartu. She is primarily responsible for the administration for admission of new fellows, the alumni strategy and communication with UNU-GEST fellows.

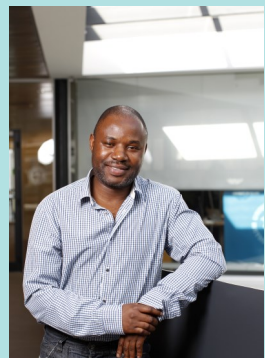


Nora Poloni joined UNU-GEST in January 2018 as a full-time intern after completing her MA in International Relations: Global Governance and Social Theory at the Jacobs University and the University of Bremen in Germany. Nora has been supporting our spring lecture series, ongoing social media campaigns and was in charge of the publication of the June newsletter. She has also been involved with research and daily administration.



Joseph Kazima, graduated from the UNU-GEST diploma programme in 2014, now serves as the Head of the Gender Mainstreaming Division of the Ministry of Gender in Malawi. He was honoured with the He4She campaign badge on 22nd March 2018 by UN Women. Kazima received the badge on the sidelines of the 62nd Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) for his achievements in the areas of gender equality and women empowerment.

Maaref Fadel, a UNU-GEST fellow from Lebanon, visited the presidential office in Reykjavík offering a gift to Mr. Guðni Th. Jóhannesson, the President of Iceland. Previously, on February 14th, the 2018 cohort of UNU-GEST fellows visited Bessastaðir, the Presidential residency. Ms. Fadel was one of three students to deliver a speech for the President and the First Lady about her experience in the UNU-GEST programme in Iceland. During the visit, it was discovered that the President had never visited Lebanon and as a result, she decided to bring the Lebanon to him.



Mzati Mbeko is the national director of Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) based in Malawi. Mzati was a speaker at the side event co-organised by UNU-GEST and UN Women Malawi, together with the governments of Malawi and Zambia, at the CSW62 stressing that despite the achievement in Malawi in amending the constitution so the minimum age of marriage is 18 years now, very important work lies ahead in closing legal loopholes and harmonising laws to further strengthen the battle against child marriage.

<https://www.facebook.com/unugest/videos/1475756175884607/>

Staff Changes at the UNU-GEST Programme

Two new projects managers will join the UNU-GEST programme in the autumn: **Guðrún Eysteinsdóttir** and **Védís Ólafsdóttir**. Eysteinsdóttir has been involved in higher education administration since 2001, having worked as a Student Advisor at the Icelandic Fulbright Commission, a Project Manager at the Institute of Public Administration and Politics at the University of Iceland, and at the UI School of Education. She holds a BA in Theatre Arts from San Francisco State University (1998) and a Master of Education in Higher Education from Harvard Graduate School of Education (2013). Védís Ólafsdóttir has worked for the last two years as a Special Assistant to the Director of the UNRWA Operations in Jordan. Ólafsdóttir has a BSc degree in International Business and Politics from the Copenhagen Business School (2009), and a MA degree in Ethnology from the University of Iceland (2012).

Erla Hlín Hjálmarsdóttir, the Head of Research Development at UNU-GEST since 2015, and **Kristjana Sigurbjörnsdóttir**, who has been the Studies Programme Manager since 2016, have moved to new posts at the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The UNU-Gest programme has benefitted greatly from their commitment, dedication and enthusiasm during this period. **Pétur Waldorff**, a Post-doctoral Research Fellow at UNU-GEST and the EDDA Research Center and a UNU-GEST Project Manager, has also taken on a new job at the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The UNU-GEST programme is most grateful for their contribution over the last few years and wishes them best of luck in their new roles.

Snapshots from Social Media

