

Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature **Membership Monitoring Report**



Reykjavík
UNESCO
City of Literature

Submitted on November 30th, 2017

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Sculpture of Reykjavík poet Tómas Guðmundsson by the Reykjavík City Lake.
Photo: Ragnar Th. Sigurðsson,

MISSION STATEMENT

As a UNESCO City of Literature, Reykjavík emphasizes the central position of literature in the city's and Icelandic nation's cultural life, its historical significance and contemporary value. Together with its literary partners, the City of Reykjavík is dedicated to further reinforce this infrastructure so that literature and writing will continue being one of the pillars of creative activity.

Freedom of expression is a core value of Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature and its Icelandic slogan, "Orðið er frjálst" (The Word is Free), reflects this emphasis. Reykjavík City of Literature is committed to the ideal that neither individuals nor societies can thrive in a healthy way unless its citizens are free to express themselves, their desires and convictions.



Reykjavík, the capital of Iceland. Photo: Ragnar Th. Sigurðsson.

Reykjavík, the capital of Iceland, was designated as a UNESCO City of Literature in August 2011, the fifth city in the world and the first non-native English speaking one to receive the title. Among the reasons for the designation were Iceland's strong literary heritage, a dedication to the literary arts and support for its continued development and the vibrant literary life in Reykjavík.

Reykjavík, the capital of Iceland. Photo: Ragnar Th. Sigurðsson. The Reykjavík City of Literature is inclusive and stresses that disparate voices be heard, independent of age, sex, origin and language. At its core, the City of Literature's work is focused on cultivating the nation's literary legacy, while simultaneously encouraging innovation with an emphasis on sustainable development through culture and cultural activities. The Reykjavík City of Literature office places particular emphasis on strong partnerships with all the many entities that strengthen literary arts within Reykjavík, both public and private, as the City of Literature is first and foremost the common property of all city residents, irrespective of age, gender, background or origin.

A city that lives up to its name is something else and more than just streets and houses; it takes place in the heads of its citizens.

Pétur Gunnarsson, writer

The Reykjavík City of Literature office was set up in September 2011. It is run within Reykjavík City's Department of Culture and Tourism and located at the Reykjavík City Hall. The office employs two full time project managers and has a twelve member board with representatives from public and private entities within the literary community. The City of Literature office is funded by the City of Reykjavík and also runs projects and programmes in cooperation with other literary organizations locally and internationally, seeking sponsorships and additional funding on project to project basis.

The Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature's first task was to take part in the Frankfurt Book Fair in September 2011, where Iceland was the guest of honour. The tone was thus set right away for broad cooperation with the Icelandic literary community as well as an international focus, and this approach has been kept alive since then. Various new project and programmes run by the City of Literature have seen the light of day in these past six years, such as the annual Reykjavík Reads Festival (launched in 2012), the annual Reykjavík Book Fair (launched in 2011), the Sleipnir reading promotion programme for children (launched in 2014), Gröndal Writer's House (opened in 2017) and the Reykjavík City of Literature's support for grassroots and intercultural activities in the city (ongoing since 2012). The City of Literature has run and taken part in numerous international projects in these years, both within the UCCN and with cities outside the Network. From the start, the City of Literature office has made annual strategic- and budget plans within Reykjavík City's Department of Culture and Tourism. In 2014 a more detailed five year strategic plan for the City of Literature was formed with the participation of the local literary community (see annex 1).

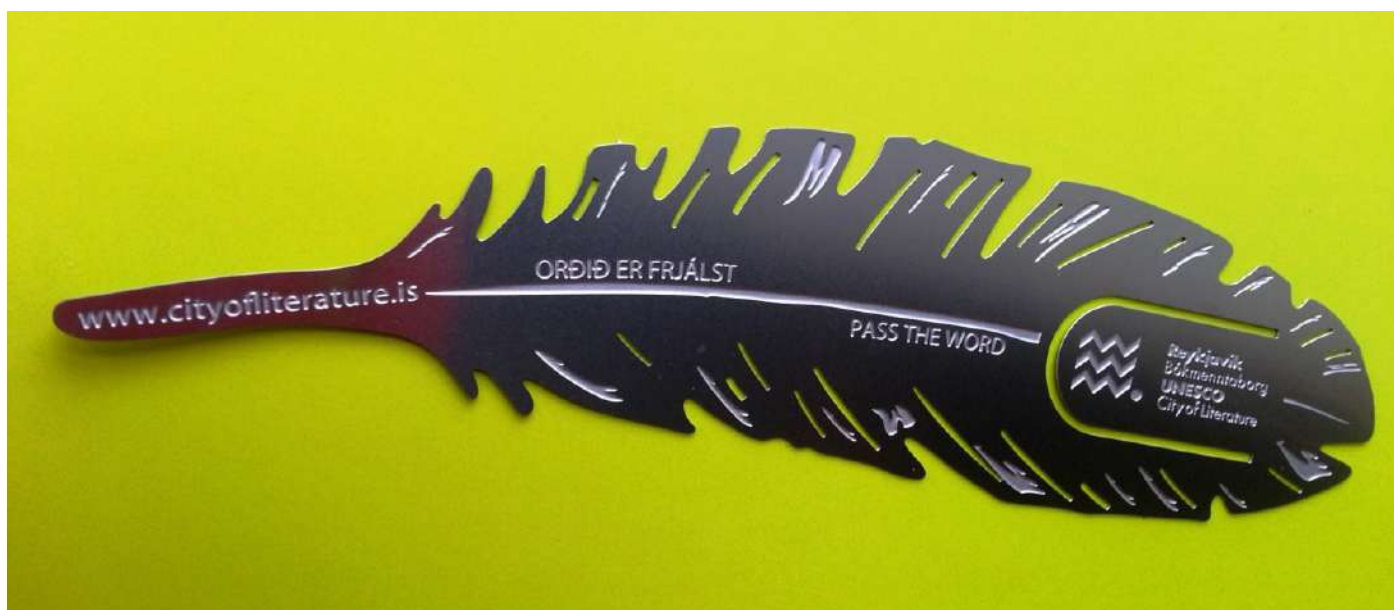
In this strategic plan, four primary pillars were named as instrumental in supporting the City of Literature's role in community:

- reading promotion
- dissemination of the literary arts
- the educational community
- international collaborations and foreign guests

It is worth mentioning that one of the chief goals within these areas is to broaden the ownership of the City of Literature – with an emphasis on partnerships – as well as its support of grassroots initiatives related to literary arts in the city. This current strategic plan is in effect from 2015 – 2019.

The Reykjavík City of Literature also works in accordance with the Reykjavík City Cultural Policy (see annex 2), the Reykjavík City Human Rights Policy (Annex 3) and the newly formed Reykjavík City's Department of Culture and Tourism Intercultural Policy. The City of Literature office took part in writing the Intercultural Policy (not available in English yet), and will be instrumental in implementing it, together with the Reykjavík City Library and other cultural institutions run by the city. Last but not least, the Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature is dedicated to implementing the UCCN Mission Statement, with eyes on the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION



2.1. Name of the city: Reykjavík

2.2. Country: Iceland

2.3. Creative field of designation: Literature

2.4. Date of designation: August 2011

2.5. Date of submission of the current report: November 2017

2.6. Entity responsible for the report: Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature Office

2.7. Previous reports submitted and dates: N/A

2.8. Focal points of contact:

Focal point:

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Reykjavík City Hall
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REYKJAVÍK CITY OF LITERATURE BOARD 2017:

Andri Snær Magnason (writer; chairman)
Skúli Helgason (Reykjavík Education and Youth committee; vice-chairman)
Árelía Eydís Guðmundsdóttir (Reykjavík Culture and Tourism committee)
Arna Schram (Reykjavík Department of Culture and Tourism)
Pálína Magnúsdóttir (Reykjavík City Library)
Guðrún Edda Bentsdóttir (Reykjavík Department of Education and Youth)
Áslaug Dóra Eyjólfsdóttir (Iceland Ministry of Education and Culture)
Bryndís Loftsdóttir (The Icelandic Publishers Association)
Sigríður Stefánsdóttir (Hagþenkir; Association of Non-Fiction Writers)
Guðni Elísson (University of Iceland, School of Humanities)
Guðrún Nordal (The Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies)
Kristín Helga Gunnarsdóttir (Writers' Union of Iceland)

3. CONTRIBUTION TO THE NETWORK'S GLOBAL MANAGEMENT

3.1. Number of UCCN annual meetings attended in the last four years:

Four

3.2. Hosting of a UCCN annual meeting and dates:

N/A

3.3. Hosting of a working or coordination meeting addressed to one or more specific UCCN creative field representatives:

Not a formal meeting, but when Reykjavík was designated as a UNESCO City of Literature in 2011, Reykjavík City invited the directors of Edinburgh City of Literature and Dublin City of Literature to Reykjavík for meetings and an introduction of the UCCN to the local literary community and public.

3.4. Hosting of an international conference or meeting on specific issues salient to the Creative Cities with a large participation of members of the Network:

N/A

3.5. Financial and/or in kind support provided to UNESCO's Secretariat in order to ensure the management, communication and visibility of the UCCN (type of contribution, estimated value, main objectives, and dates):

The Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature office provides in-kind support to UNESCO's secretariat in the form of review of applications for designation, promotion of the Network and UNESCO locally and internationally and the cost of attending UCCN annual meetings.

3.6. Membership of the Steering Group and period:

Reykjavík's Focal point, Kristín Viðarsdóttir, was part of the UCCN regulations drafting group formed prior to the current set-up of the steering group, as a representative of the Literature sub-network. Period September 2013 – September 2014. She has been a member of the Literature sub network's project cooperation group since it was formed in 2016.

3.7. Participation in the evaluation of applications (number of applications evaluated per year):

The Reykjavík City of Literature office evaluated and provided feedback on all submitted applications in 2014 (15), 2015 (12), and 2017 (13).

4. MAJOR INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE UCCN



Poetry in motion. Poetry lines on city buses during the 2013 Reykjavík Reads.

The Reykjavík City of Literature office and its partners run several projects and programmes that support the goals of the UCCN. Since its designation as a UNESCO City of Literature, Reykjavík has continued its support for literary initiatives in the city and started numerous new ones. Emphasis has been on cooperation, both within the public sector and with the private one, and special attention has been placed on new initiatives within the literary arts, grassroots activities and marginal groups. The following indicatives are some examples of this work, launched and headed by the City of Literature office since Reykjavík received the designation.

4.1. Reykjavík Reads

The Reykjavík City of Literature hosts the Reykjavík Reads Festival in October each year. This month long festival is dedicated to the art of the word in its broadest sense with a special theme each year. It celebrates reading and writing for people of all ages, children, teenagers and grown-ups. Themes have included *Voices of Women*; *Poetry in Motion*; the interplay of words and visuals and more.

Although the festival is hosted by Reykjavík City of Literature, it is a grassroots festival and all those who want to take part – organizations, institutions, businesses or individual artists – are encouraged to join in according to the theme each year. Reykjavík schools at all levels take part, as well as libraries, publishers and literary organizations. Among events and projects are workshops, public readings, literary seminars, literary texts in public spaces and street art, exhibitions, musical events, school projects and much more. The City of Literature encourages events and projects that work across art forms and has for instance organized projects that cross into music, visual arts and design. A publication of a book is usually part of the festival, published in printed form, digitally or both. Texts of all kinds have also been displayed in shopping malls, on buildings, city buses, shop windows and sidewalks.

The festival always has some international angle that focuses on introducing foreign literature and authors in Iceland, or connecting writers and/or other artists through cooperation projects.



Texts and graphics were created by Reykjavík artists and displayed on buildings throughout Reykjavík at the 2016 Reykjavík Reads. Photo: Roman Gerasymenko.



Books published for Reykjavik Reads Festivals.

The Reykjavik Reads Festival was awarded by the Iceland Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in 2014 as an outstanding and innovative initiative to promote reading and literature in Iceland.

4.2. Reykjavik Book Fair

One of the first initiatives of Reykjavik as a City of Literature was to establish the Reykjavik Book Fair in cooperation with the Icelandic Publishers' Association. This is now an annual public fair, where the people of Reykjavik and guests of the city can get a taste of all books published for the commercial market in Iceland that year during a weekend in November. The fair includes a literary programme for children and adults with workshops, panel discussions, readings, book signings and more. The fair has become the biggest literary event in Reykjavik that caters both to children and adults and is now a pillar stone of the so called „Christmas Book Flood“ in Iceland. All events are free and open to all.

In 2017, for the first time the City of Reykjavik and the Publishers' Association included a special Book Fair day, prior to the public fair, for Reykjavik grammar schools and preschools where the City and publishers joined hands in offering new books to school libraries in Reykjavik. The City put in an extra budget making schools able to buy more books than before, and publishing houses offered their books to schools at a special prize. The fair was a great success and municipalities outside Reykjavik followed the capital's lead and joined in. This initiative makes a big difference for school libraries and gives children better access to new books they are eager to read. Reykjavik City has plans of continuing this project and further enhancing it.



Writers and readers meet at the Reykjavik Book Fair. Writer Gerður Kristný helping customers. Photo: Roman Gerasymenko.



A young reader at the 2016 Reykjavik Book Fair.



Young readers interviewed for the Icelandic National Broadcasting Company at the 2016 Reykjavik Book Fair.

4.3. Sleipnir – Your Reading Buddy

Since 2012, the Reykjavík City of Literature has been developing a reading initiative for children under the auspices of Sleipnir – the eight legged horse of Odin from Norse mythology. Sleipnir can travel freely between worlds, and is thus symbolic for the mind-travel through time and space that we experience through literature and reading. It is safe to say that Sleipnir is no ordinary horse, as he stands for the power of imagination and the literary arts.

In the name of Sleipnir, the Reykjavík City of Literature organizes and takes part in projects that encourage children and young people to read for pleasure and to create their own adventures, stories and poetry through creative writing and storytelling. Children’s book authors are commissioned to write books about Sleipnir and the Sleipnir toolkit for schools has been developed. This is a toolkit for preschool- and elementary school teachers that helps them develop reading projects that focus on the joy of reading and the adventure of storytelling. This is an ongoing project that will be further developed in the coming years. Since 2016, the City of Literature has been offering story hours with Sleipnir for Reykjavík preschoolers, in cooperation with the Reykjavík City Library. The aim is that all preschoolers in Reykjavík will have the opportunity to meet Sleipnir before entering elementary school, with a follow up Sleipnir project being offered to all Reykjavík elementary schools for the first time in 2018.

In addition to the material aimed at children and teachers, the City of Literature office cooperates with the Reykjavík health clinics in the Sleipnir project. Parents bringing their children to infant check-ups receive a reminder from Sleipnir about the importance of reading for your child from the very start, in addition to readings tips.

Reykjavík City also awards books for children in the name of Sleipnir. The Reykjavík City Children’s Literature Prize is given out every year to books in three categories: books written in Icelandic; books translated into Icelandic; and illustrations in children’s books.

An international angle of the project was launched in 2017 when Melbourne City of Literature opened a website about Sleipnir’s travels in cooperation with Reykjavík (see 5.4.).

4.4. Let’s Read

In 2014, the Reykjavík City of Literature and the Icelandic Literature Center joined hands in establishing a nationwide reading campaign called *Allir lesa – Landsleikur í lestri* (Let’s Read! – A National Game of Reading). The game is modelled on group sports, readers form teams and take part by registering the time spent on reading for a period of three weeks on the game’s digital platform. The teams can be families, groups of friends, workplaces, school classes etc. The focus is on fun, team spirits, discussions, reading tips – in short reading as a social activity and a sharing experience that brings together readers of all ages and backgrounds. Everyone can take part, as children who do not read themselves can take part with parents, grandparents or others that read to them. The Reykjavík City of Literature and the Icelandic Literature Center created the game, ran it and developed it for the first three years, but have now handed it over to the Iceland Directorate of Education that will develop it further with an emphasis on the family and community aspect of the project.



Sleipnir greets children at the Reykjavík Children’s Culture Festival.



Father and son reading together. Photo: Katrín Inga Hjördísardóttir.



Eliza Reid, Iceland’s first lady, launched the 2017 Let’s Read game with the City of Literature and the Icelandic Literature Center on a Reykjavík bus. Photo: Eggert Jóhannesson.

4.5. Intercultural Work and Multilingual Writing Workshops

One of the core objectives of the Reykjavík City of Literature is to open up creative possibilities for marginalized groups and to ease their way into the literary scene. The office started this work back in 2012 with a writing and translation workshop, bringing together established writers of Icelandic origin and immigrant writers who's 'voices had not been heard on the mainstream stage. Since then, several such initiatives have taken place, and the City of Literature has taken a lead in Reykjavík in creating a platform for these marginalized voices and supporting them. More recent examples of this work are multilingual writing workshops for women, run in 2014 – 2015. The City of Literature offered free workshops for women of different origin, first as a short term project and then as a long term one when the demand and success became evident. The aim of this project was to:

- Empower immigrant women and create a platform for their voices.
- Give tools to female writers of non-Icelandic origin.
- Introduce these women to the local literary scene.
- Create a community and support network.



Poet Juan Camilo Román Estrada performing after a translation workshop in 2012.



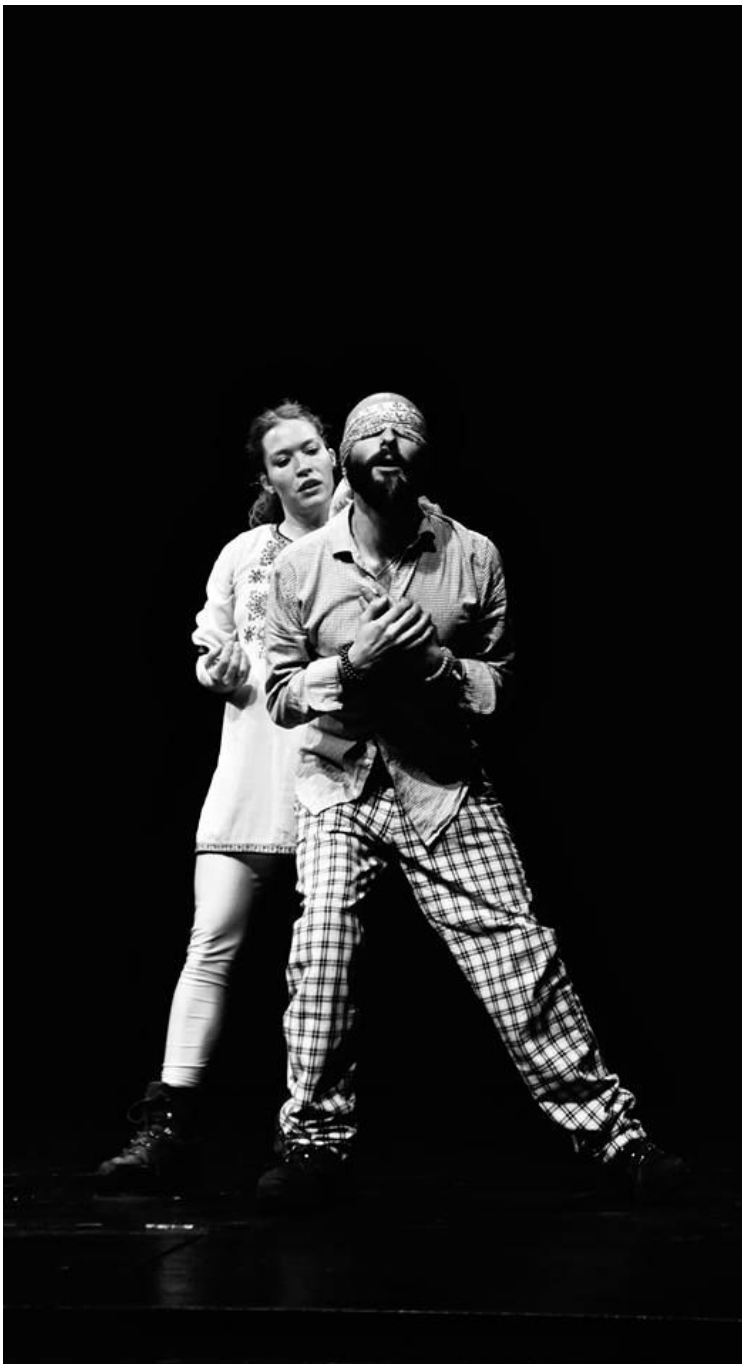
Multilingual writing workshop for women in 2015. Participants with workshop leader Angela Rawlings.

As in all other intercultural work, the workshops were open for native born women as well as immigrants. As a follow up to the workshops, the City of Literature organized events in cooperation with the women, featuring both them and more mainstream and established local writers. This initiative has led to the foundation of Ós Pressan, a community of women who now run their own publishing and writing collective. The City of Literature continues to support the group that has now been featured on national radio and in newspapers, had texts by some of the members published in well-known literary magazines and taken part in numerous literary events in the city. Ós has also started its own literary journal, host open writing events and workshops, and is now connected with a broader network of immigrant writers in the Nordic countries, NolitchX – Nordic Literatures in Change and Exchange.

4.6. Grassroots Support

Since its first year of operation, the Reykjavík City of Literature office has dedicated part of its budget to support for grassroots activities in the literary sector in Reykjavík. The aim of this informal fund is to encourage innovation and new projects and not least to pave the way for young and emerging artists. In the past years, the City of Literature has supported different grassroots publishing initiatives, made it possible for writers to collaborate across art forms and geographical borders, supported intercultural literary activities in Reykjavík, a creative writing and book publishing project for children and new theatre writing, to give some examples. Priority is given to fresh, original and creative projects that would otherwise not have official back-up and might not make it into the public light without this support.

The fund has proven to be a good addition to the already existing support for culture and the arts offered by the City of Reykjavík through its more formal cultural grant system. Part of the grassroots fund operations, or grassroots cooperation as the initiative is formally called, is to support the projects in more ways that financially – by working with the artists or entrepreneurs in various other ways, be it by offering advice, helping with connections, creating a platform for them to perform at or publish their work with etc. This grassroots focus will continue to be one of the priorities of the City of Literature operations in coming years.



Óvinir-Enemies – a project pairing Icelandic and UK artists for writing and performing new art. Supported by the grassroots fund in 2015-2016. Photo: Markús Már Efraím.

„As a young poet starting a young press in Iceland, I found the Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature office to be instrumentally helpful in the early stages of my career. They are hands-down the only organization in Iceland providing financial support to grassroots and/or avant-garde literature, and my press and my practice would not be what it is today had it not been for their support at the crucial early stages.”

– Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir,
poet and publisher of Partus Press



A book of horror stories by Reykjavík children, illustrated by professional artists and illustrators. A creative writing project supported by the grassroots fund in 2015.



Some of Reykjavík's city benches are literary retreats.



Guides of a literary walk tracing Reykjavík City of Literature's signs mapping women's literary history in Reykjavík.

4.7. Literary Mapping

Reykjavík City of Literature has an ongoing project of mapping the literary history in the city and making it visible in the city landscape. The aim of the project is to open up the cultural history of the city for citizens and guests of the city and to make literature a part of the city landscape and urban development. Bringing literature and arts out to open spaces is a way of disseminating culture and cultural goods and making art part of the daily experience of the citizens.

Some of the literary signs are the result of the project Better Districts that Reykjavík City has been running since 2012. The project is intended to enhance public participation in deliberative democracy and democratic decision making. Citizens propose projects through an online platform and a follow up election system is set up each spring where citizens can vote for projects that have been proposed in their neighbourhoods.

The City of Literature's literary mapping projects include literary signs, literary benches with readings from Icelandic literature and a culture-walk app for smart phones with guided literary tours in four languages.



Gröndal's House in Fishersund. Photo: Vigfús Birgisson.



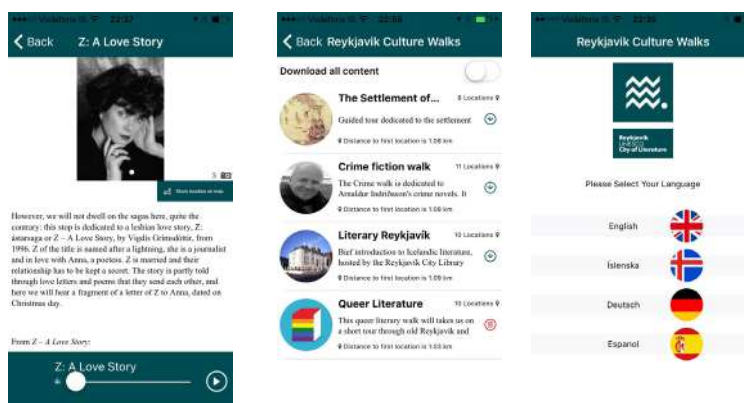
Gröndal's House in Fishersund. Photo: Vigfús Birgisson.

4.8. Gröndal's House

On June 17th 2017, Iceland's National Day, the Reykjavík City of Literature opened the literary house Gröndal Writer's House. This is a small 19th century house in the heart of the old town with big history. It is named after its former owner, writer, artist and scholar Benedikt Gröndal (1826-1907).

The City of Reykjavík bought the house for its cultural significance and history and renovated it in an authentic way for preservation. The house consists of work spaces for writers and other artists, a residency flat for visiting artists, and in the parlours on the main floor there is an exhibition dedicated to Gröndal and Reykjavík during his lifetime. The rooms are also used for small literary events and gatherings, musical performances, meetings and other events. The preservation and operations of Gröndal's House are part of a broader preservation and cultural history agenda of Reykjavík City as part of its sustainable urban development plan.

The Literature City office partnered with Icelandair Group in this project. The company supports the project with a three year financial contribution and the City of Literature in turn teams up with Icelandair by organizing literary events at one of their local hotel cafés. This partnership has been fruitful for both parties; as the venue has become a go-to place for various literary groups in the city, not least those of marginal or emerging authors. Thus this public-private partnership has enhanced the literary life in the city on various levels.



From the Reykjavik Culture Walks app.

5. MAJOR INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED THROUGH INTER-CITY COOPERATION TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE UCCN

5.1. PEN Congress

The 2013 PEN International Congress was held in Reykjavík. The Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature office was part of the organizational team, together with PEN Iceland, PEN International and the Reykjavík International Literary Festival. The theme of the congress was Digital Frontiers – Linguistic Rights and Freedom of Speech and one of the focus points was the threat facing small languages in a digital world, a topic increasingly relevant in Iceland.

The congress brought more than 200 international guests to Reykjavík that took part in the congress at then the newly opened Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Centre. The Reykjavík City of Literature office also organized public literary events during the congress time, in order for the local community to meet international authors visiting the city.

Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature has supported other international conferences in Iceland, such as NonfictionNOW (2017), Art in Translation (2014) and a 2017 seminar for international translators of Icelandic literature. Reykjavík City is also a major sponsor of the biannual Reykjavík International Literature Festival. Furthermore, the City of Literature is one of the founding partners of the Iceland Writers Retreat writing workshops that bring people to Iceland from around the world every spring for writing under the guidance of international and local writers.



PEN Congress in Harpa Concert Hall. Photo: Reykjavík City of Literature.

5.2. Iceland – Poland Partnerships

People of Polish origin form the largest immigrant group in Reykjavík and in Iceland generally. The City of Literature office has for this reason taken part in numerous literary projects building bridges between Iceland and Poland. Two of these projects are in cooperation with Reykjavík's sister city, Wrocław, and a third with the Polish Book Institute in Krakow, a UNESCO City of Literature. The first of the two Wrocław projects is

Transgressions – International Narratives Exchange, connecting short story writers in Reykjavík and Wrocław in 2014 with mutual artist visits and participation in festivals, as well as translations and publishing of literary texts. Norwegian and Lithuanian authors also took part in the project. The second project with Wrocław was the Storytelling Lab for Young Adults in 2015 - 2016, where teenagers in Reykjavík and Wrocław schools exchanged visits and worked together online over a period of one school year. Exhibitions with the work produced during the project were set up in both cities, following the project and a book was published with their texts and photographs. The Reykjavík City Department of Education partnered with the City of Literature office for this project.



Transgressions: International Narratives Exchange in Reykjavík. Photo: Roman Gerasymenko.

ORT – Poetry in Iceland – Poetry in Poland, was a long term project between the Polish Book Institute in Krakow and several partners in Reykjavík. The Reykjavík City of Literature office was one of the leading Icelandic partners. In Poland, the project was run in Sopot and Warsaw in addition to Krakow. Poetry was translated between the two languages and displayed on billboards, buses, train stations, sidewalks and streets and published on radio, in books and performed at literature and arts festivals in both countries. The project started in 2013 and ran throughout 2014 with a book with translation of Polish poetry, poetry posters and a children's book coming out in Iceland at the end of the period, published by local publishing companies. All of these projects were large scale projects that have contributed to an ongoing intercultural dialogue between Poland and Iceland.

5.3. Building Bridges

The Iceland – Poland projects are only part of the Reykjavík City of Literature’s international projects connecting artists across geographical boundaries. Writers from Quebec City in Canada and Reykjavík have worked together, Reykjavík and Edmonton (Canada) poets as well, and currently (fall 2017) the City of Literature office is running the international writing project Waters and Harbours in the North, together with Gothenburg (Sweden), Torshavn (Faroe Islands) and Newcastle (UK). During all of these projects, writers collaborate on texts in workshops and new literature based on their cooperation and the inspiration they get from one another and their travel experiences is created. The City of Literature views this as one of its pillars in broadening opportunities for creators and professionals in the cultural sector on an international level, as well as bringing fresh currents to Icelandic shores.

Some of these international projects have been across art sectors. Reykjavík and Montréal UNESCO City of Design thus joined hands when the Montréal designer Émilie Grenier stayed in Reykjavík for a month in 2015, working on her design project inspired by Icelandic urban narratives and Nordic texts. She took part in the Reykjavík DesignMarch Festival that same year. In 2016, the Reykjavík City of Literature took part in the literature-design project Peekaboo during the DesignMarch Festival. Icelandic and Polish illustrated children’s books were displayed in Reykjavík, with accompanying workshops for children and design talks and workshops for professionals. The project connected publishing houses in the two countries as well as writers, visual artists and designers.



Reykjavík teenagers took part in painting Icelandic and Polish poetry on Reykjavík sidewalks during the ORT project.



Icelandic poetry in Polish translation on billboards in Warsaw.

5.4. UCCN Collaborations

Reykjavík City of Literature has taken part in numerous cooperation projects within the UNESCO Cities of Literature Network. These include the Cities of Literature Summer Reading, the literary cook book *Savoir Fair* (<https://hail.to/dunedin-unesco-city-of-literature/publication/Bvhzt3x>), participation in two of Melbourne’s Digital Writers Festivals, contributions to poetry projects in Krakow, Edinburgh, Ulyanovsk, Dunedin, Melbourne and Tartu as well as cooperation projects with Seattle in recent years, then a city working on its bid to join the UCCN.

Reykjavík will partner with Krakow City of Literature at the end of this year by making free Polish e-books and audio books available in Iceland through the project Read PL (www.czytajPL.pl). Other projects in preoperational stage are the World Poetry Book spearheaded by Heidelberg City of Literature (released in summer 2018), and the worldwide Cities of Literature celebrations on the 2018 World Poetry Day, spearheaded by Granada City of Literature. Three recent UCCN projects are worth special mentioning.



Vigdís Ósk Hovser Harðardóttir from Reykjavík performing in Krakow.

Drop the Mic – Nordic-Baltic Poetry Slam Network is a project led by Reykjavík, Krakow and Tartu Cities of Literature with the participation of Heidelberg City of Literature and a poetry slam organization in Copenhagen, Denmark. The project, which ran from September 2016 – September 2017, aimed to engage the overlapping worlds of songwriting and poetry in an effort to advance participative literary arts; integrate communities; increase social and cultural understanding; engage youth and build a strong international community of poets and event organizers. Last but not least the objective was to create a sustainable Nordic-Baltic network for knowledge/talent exchange and mentorship via slam poetry. The project was supported by the Nordic Culture Point, making it possible for poets and event organizers to travel between cities, take part in workshops and training and perform at international event.

In Reykjavík, the project has resulted in a team of young slam poets now starting to organize local poetry slam events on a regular basis, attracting local youth and bringing out new poets. The City of Literature, together with the Reykjavík City Library, will continue to support the project.

The Cities of Literature organizing the project have also plans of continuing and expanding the project (see 6.2.a).

Sleipnir's Travels

Melbourne City of Literature partnered with Reykjavík in 2016 by developing a website dedicated to Sleipnir's Travels (read about the Sleipnir project in chapter 4.3.). The website opened in 2017 at the Bendigo Writers Festival in Australia. The site invites children to write postcards in the name of Sleipnir from his imaginative travels and adventures in their part of the world. The website is thus an interactive creative writing platform for children around the world. Any city with the UCCN that is interested in using this platform is free to do so and the site thus has the potential of connecting children from different countries through adventure and simple stories.



Granada Goes to Reykjavík.

In the fall of 2017, Reykjavík and Granada Cities of Literature partnered in a project centered around the first poetry book published in Granada in a bilingual Spanish – Icelandic edition. The poet, José Miguel Gomez Acosta, travelled to Reykjavík and took part in events with his Icelandic translators. His book, titled *El gran Norte* (*Norðrið mæra* in Icelandic) received the Federico Garcia Lorca poetry prize in Granada. A panel discussion about the bookstore scenes in Reykjavík and Granada was also set up during the sister city visit, with the participation of book store owners from cities as well as a publisher and an artist. The aim was to share best practices and connect businesses in the two cities.



6. PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR THE FORTHCOMING MID-TERM PERIOD OF FOUR YEARS

As stated earlier in this document, the Reykjavík City of Literature has developed a strategic plan for the years 2015-2019 with a focus on reading promotion, the educational community, dissemination of the literary arts, and foreign guests and international cooperation. These four pillars rest on the foundation of creativity, innovation, support for grassroots activities and a philosophy of inclusiveness and broad cooperation that are the core objectives of all Reykjavík City of Literature's activities. The City of Reykjavík is dedicated in its continued support for literature, reading and literary activities and stresses the importance of cooperation, both locally and internationally.

The following initiatives are only a few examples of future projects that support this strategy. As can be seen in the previous chapters, numerous existing projects will be continued and developed further as well.

6.1. Presentation of a maximum of three initiatives, programs or projects aimed at achieving the objectives of the Network locally

6.1.a. Sögur (Stories) – A Creative Project for Young People in Iceland

The Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature office is one of the partners in the project *Sögur* (Stories). Other partners include the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service (RÚV), the Reykjavík City Library, the Iceland Directorate of Education, Reykjavík City Department of Education and the Association of Icelandic Children's Book Writers (SÍUNG). This new and broad approach was introduced at a public seminar hosted by the Reykjavík City of Literature in October 2017. In short, the project aims to put stories by children (age 6-12) – whether written short stories, short films scripts, plays for the stage or radio plays – in the limelight. Children are encouraged to write and submit their work to the project's website and chosen pieces will make it all the way to a published e-book, the national tv and radio and the Reykjavík City Theatre stage. All the chosen art pieces will be performed by professionals, giving children the opportunity to see their creations put up in cooperation with artists and aired / published as art by adult professionals.

During the creative process, schools throughout Iceland will work on these creative projects and children can also choose to work on their own and submit their creations outside possible school projects. The project will be one of the highlights of the 2018 Reykjavík Children's Culture Festival in April. The festival, which is organized by Reykjavík City's Departments of Culture and Tourism and Education, showcases art and culture both for children and by children. During the festival, literature for children will also be highlighted and the Reykjavík City Children's Literature Prize will be handed out. It is given in three categories: for children's books written in Icelandic, children's books translated into Icelandic and for illustrations in children's books. The spotlight will also be put on the Children's Choice Book Awards during the festival in connection with the *Sögur* project, an initiative hosted by the Reykjavík City Library. This is an award, founded by the library in 2002, given to books (one written in Icelandic, one translated into Icelandic) chosen as the best of the year by children in Iceland through a nationwide online and on-site voting system.

The aim of the project is to increase interest among children in literature and storytelling, increase cultural understanding and cultural literacy, enhance creativity among children and to support children's culture in general. Last but not least, the project aims to create a platform for children's voices.

6.1. b. New Writings on Sovereignty

In 2018, Iceland is celebrating its centenary as a sovereign state. Iceland became a free and sovereign state on 1 December 1918, when the Union Treaty with Denmark came into effect. That day may be seen as one of the most important landmarks in Iceland's campaign for self-determination, which had then been in progress for nearly a century. Cultural programmes will be a big part of the year's festivities with a special emphasis on new and innovative projects with long term significance. The City of Literature will launch a new national project on this occasion aimed at young and emerging writers. Workshops will be offered to young writers in all four quarters of the country, in cooperation with local libraries and culture houses, with a common theme of sovereignty in a broad sense. The aim of the project is to support and encourage new writing and to bring the subject of sovereignty into discussion in a creative way. The workshops will in part focus on the meaning of sovereignty in a global world and questions will be asked about topics such as personal and national identity, nationalism, cultural openness and understanding.

The workshops will be followed up by exhibitions, on-line publishing and public events featuring the participating writers. Partners include libraries, culture house and local media. The City of Literature sees this project not only as a one year project celebrating the centenary, but also as the first step in building a national network of creative writing projects. A grant application for the launching of the project is currently being processed by the Centenary Fund, run by the Icelandic state.

6.1.c. Intercultural Understanding

In 2017, the Reykjavík Department of Culture and Tourism wrote an Intercultural Policy, signed into action by the City's Culture and Tourism Committee at the end of the year. The Reykjavík City of Literature was one of the parties writing the policy and will be instrumental in implementing it in the next years, together with the Reykjavík City Library and other cultural institutions run by the City. The City Library has been a leading force in Reykjavík in creating and developing cultural projects aimed at bringing people of different origin together, and the City of Literature will partner with the library in putting a focus on intercultural initiatives centered around writing, especially through the library's projects *The Women's Story Circle*, *Café Lingua* and the intercultural encounters *Flying Carpet*.

The focus of the policy is intercultural competence, intercultural understanding, mutual respect and inclusiveness. The City of Literature will put a special emphasis on projects in the next few years that support this philosophy. One of the key partners here, in addition to the library, is the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute at the University of Iceland. The newly opened centre *Veröld* that houses the Vigdís International Centre for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding is supported by the City of Reykjavík as part of the city's status as a UNESCO City of Literature.

6.2. Presentation of a maximum of three initiatives, programs or projects aimed at achieving the objectives of the Network on an international level, particularly those involving other member cities in the Network

6.2.a Poetry and Music

Reykjavík, Tartu and Krakow have plans of continuing their cooperation that was started in the project *Drop the Mic: Nordic-Baltic Poetry Slam Network*. These cities, with the addition of their new sister city Lillehammer in the Literature Sub-Network, will seek long term funding from the Nordic Culture Point with the aim of carrying on a three year project focusing on the interplay of spoken word poetry, theatre and music. As in the Drop the Mic project, artists will travel between cities, work together on site and online, new material will be created, experience shared and this time around translations will be part of the project as well as work across art forms. The project is scheduled to start mid-year 2018 and end with a series of events in the participating cities in 2021 as well as the production of digital material showcasing the work of the artists online.

6.2.b. International Writer Residency

In 2017, the Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature opened a new literary house in Reykjavík, Gröndal's House, which is the former home of writer, illustrator and translator Benedikt Gröndal (see 4.8.). A flat for visiting writers and scholars is part of the house and the City of Literature has plans of opening up a UCCN residency in the flat for writers in 2019. Currently, the flat is offered at a low rental rate to visiting writers, translators and scholars from abroad as well as housing a German writer invited to Reykjavik each spring by Goethe-Institute in Copenhagen and the Reykjavík City of Literature office.

In 2019, the Reykjavík City of Literature plans, in cooperation with local partners, to start a residency in Gröndal's House for writers from other cities within the UCCN, with a special focus on the Cities of Literature. Each year, an author or translator will be invited to stay at the house for approx. a month with travel, lodging and spending money included. This project will be run in partnership with two biannual festivals, the Reykjavík International Literary Festival and the Reykjavík Children's Literature Festival, and the residency writers will be featured at these festivals. The City of Literature office will seek further partnerships for this project locally with the aim of connecting the visiting authors to the local literary community and introducing them to local readers.



From the Reykjavík City Library Poetry Slam. Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir and Thelma Marín Jónsdóttir.

*This is a globe; its centre
rests beneath your feet
and shifts its ground and follows
you wherever you go.*

Einar Már Guðmundsson:
From *The Pulpit of Providence*

6.2.c. Sub Network Meeting 2021

Reykjavík will celebrate its ten year anniversary as a UNESCO City of Literature in 2021. The city hopes to host the Literature Sub-Network meeting that year – depending on a consensus within the Network - with an accompanying programme showcasing literature from the visiting cities for the local public in Reykjavík and guests in the city. As the UCCN is a growing network, we envision this being a major literary event in the city during the anniversary year, with estimated 35 – 40 cities from around the world being showcased in Reykjavík.

The event would serve three major purposes, to introduce Reykjavík and the literary scene to our partners in the Literature Network and share best practices, to further the work of the Sub-Network through work meetings and to promote the UCCN Network and culture from the participating cities in Reykjavík and Iceland.

Reykjavík aims to partner with the local media on this project and its local literary partners, such as the Icelandic Literature Center, the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir World Language Center, the Nordic House in Reykjavík and more.

6.3. Estimated annual budget for implementing the proposed action plan

Please present the estimated overall annual budget for implementing the proposed action plan, as well as the percentages that will be devoted to local and international initiatives. All of the resources that the city expects to contribute should be mentioned, not only including financial resources but also other resources (personnel, facilities, etc.). Please indicate any funding applications envisaged to national and international funding bodies, in order to complement the budget).

The Reykjavík City of Literature office has an annual budget from the City of Reykjavík. In 2018, this budget (including salaries) is 72.600.000 ISK (approx. 594.000 euros Nov 19, 2017). In addition to the contribution from Reykjavík City, the City of Literature seeks funding through grant applications and by cooperation with other public entities as well as private ones. As an example, in 2018 Icelandair Group supports the City of Literature with a 10.000.000 ISK, geared towards establishing the literary house and residency Gröndal's House, and Goethe-Institut in Copenhagen contributes to the German writer in residency programme.

Reykjavík City of Literature 2018 budget:

Staff, office and IT cost	28.000.000 ISK
Creative Projects	18.000.000 ISK
Gröndal's House*	21.000.000 ISK
Marketing	5.600.000 ISK
Total cost	72.600.000
Grants and income**	14.000.000 ISK

*Gröndal's House budget covers the house's operations, excluding residency invitations.

** This number excludes grants the City of Literature hopes to receive for the proposed Sovereign project as the result of the grant application is not yet in.

Reykjavík, Tartu, Lillehammer and Krakow will see Nordic funding for the proposed poetry – music project in 2018. The Nordic Culture Point already funded the Drop the Mic project and long term follow up funding will be sought.

For the planned Literature Sub-Network meeting in 2021, the City of Literature office will seek additional funding from Reykjavík City for the year 2021 and contributions from partners. Venues will be partly contributed by the municipality and partly be partners, such as the Nordic House in Reykjavík and the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir World Language Centre.

The proposed Gröndal's Residency will be run in cooperation with the Reykjavík International Literary Festival and the Reykjavík Children's Literature Festival as regards travel cost and festival performance, in addition to cost covered by Reykjavík City. Other outside funding may also be added for this project.

6.4. Plan for communication and awareness

The Reykjavík City of Literature office employs a marketing specialist that is responsible for its communication and awareness plan. A website in Icelandic and English holds information about projects and programmes, as well as introducing and promoting the UCCN. In 2016, a database on contemporary Icelandic authors, run by the Reykjavík City Library, was added to the website. The website also includes a timeline dedicated to Icelandic literary history, a calendar of literary events in Reykjavík and literary news. The Reykjavík City of Literature's Facebook and Twitter sites carry news about the network as well as that of literary project, programmes and initiatives. The office also works closely with the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service (RÚV) and other media, depending on projects. Other local partners also promote the City of Literature's projects and work, through different channels available to each of them.

The Reykjavík City of Literature office works with the Visit Reykjavík office and the Reykjavík City communications team on promoting literature in Reykjavík and with the Icelandic Literature Center on promoting Icelandic literature abroad. Currently, a marketing group for the Reykjavík Culture and Tourism Department is working on a new strategy that aims at bringing a stronger and more focused approach to the City's cultural communications plan.

The UCCN literary sub-network has a communications group and Reykjavík takes an active part in work organized by the group for international PR purposes. Furthermore, Reykjavík City of Literature is one of the participants, together with Norwich, Óbidos and Krakow Cities of Literature, working towards a research project on branding the Cities of Literature with the aim of creating a tool-kit that different cities could make use of in the future. The City of Literature will seek academic partnership within Reykjavík University for this project.

ANNEX

1. Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature Strategic Plan 2015-2019
2. Reykjavík City Cultural Policy
3. Reykjavík City Human Rights Policy