

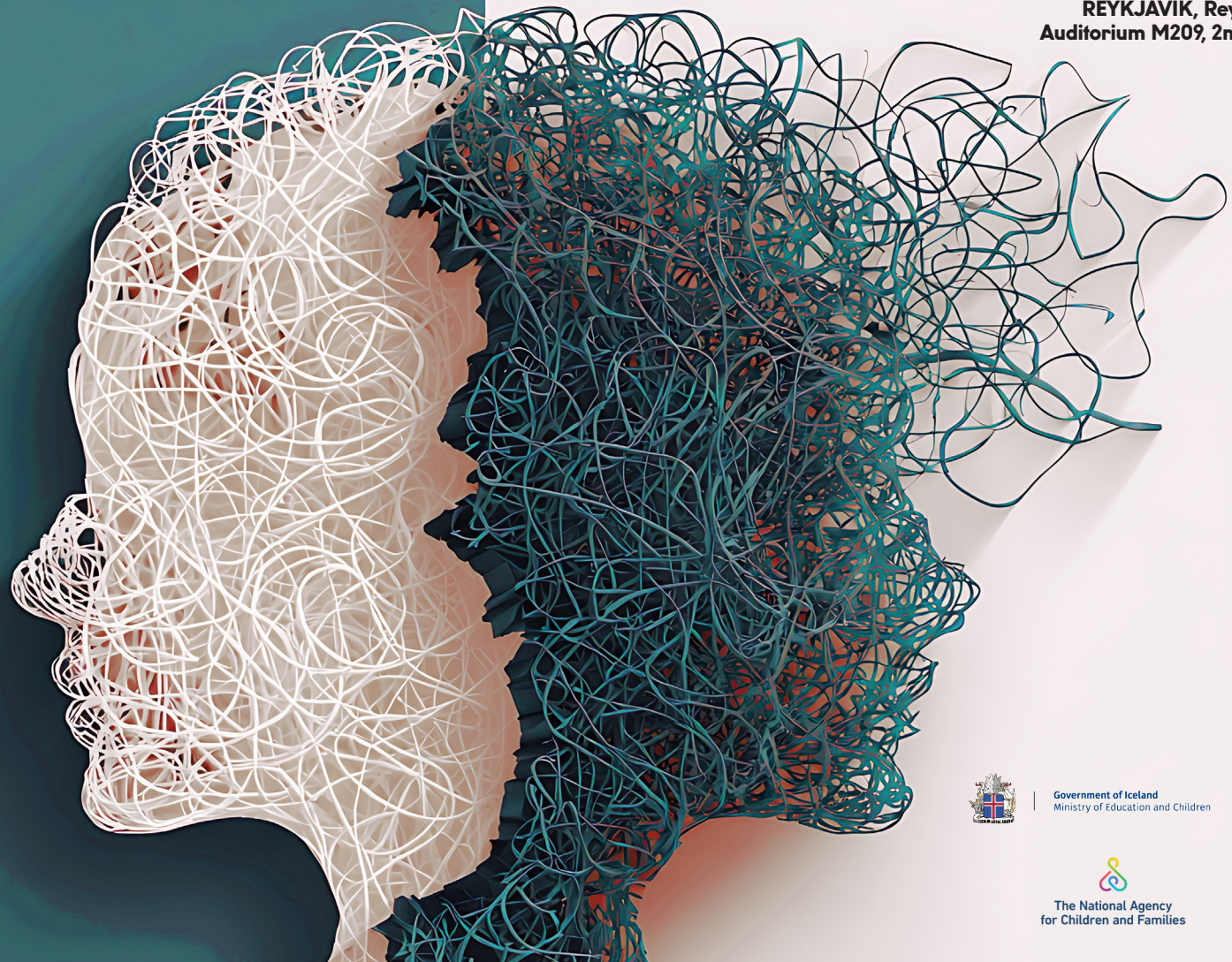


ICELANDIC PRESIDENCY  
2026–2027

# STARTING WITH TRUST: TRAUMA-INFORMED PATHWAYS TO RESILIENCE

8 OCTOBER 2026, 9:00 – 16:00

REYKJAVIK, Reykjavik University,  
Auditorium M209, 2nd floor (or online)



Government of Iceland  
Ministry of Education and Children



Government of Iceland  
Ministry of Justice

  
The National Agency  
for Children and Families

  
HÁSKÓLINN Í REYKJAVÍK  
REYKJAVIK UNIVERSITY

**HOSTED BY THE ICELANDIC  
PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL  
OF THE BALTIC SEA STATES, THIS  
CONFERENCE EXPLORES TRAUMA-  
INFORMED PATHWAYS TO TRUST  
AND RESILIENCE AMONG CHILDREN  
AT RISK AND VICTIMS AND  
SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.**

**THE CONFERENCE IS INTENDED  
FOR PROFESSIONALS ACROSS THE  
BALTIC SEA REGION WORKING IN  
PRACTICE, POLICY, RESEARCH, AND  
COORDINATION. WE WELCOME  
PARTICIPANTS FROM ALL DISCIPLINES  
WHOSE WORK SUPPORTS CHILDREN  
AT RISK AND VICTIMS AND  
SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING.**

**To register for the event, please  
complete this form:**

**[REGISTRATION LINK](#)**



**ÞORBJÖRG S. GUNNLAUGS-DÓTTIR** has served as Iceland's Minister of Justice since December 2024. A Member of Parliament for Reykjavík North since 2020, she represents the Liberal Reform Party (Víðreisn). She holds a Cand. juris degree from the University of Iceland and an LL.M. from Columbia University. Before entering government, she built an extensive legal and criminal justice career, serving as Deputy Prosecutor and Head of the Violent Crimes Division at the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police, Assistant Judge at Reykjavík District Court, and Prosecutor at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Her work has also included research on gender-based violence and service on the boards of several organizations supporting women and victims of violence.



**RACHEL WITKIN**, the keynote speaker, has more than 25 years of experience working with survivors of trafficking across education, law, advocacy, and specialist long-term support services. She is co-author of *The Trauma Informed Code of Conduct for All Professionals Working with Survivors of Trafficking and Slavery* and provides training internationally through St Mary's University and other institutions.

Rachel directs the MSCOS Community of Practice at King's College London, bringing together frontline practitioners, survivor leaders, and academics to strengthen practice and collaboration. She is also lead author of the ODIHR National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Handbook and advises governments and delegations on developing effective referral systems for victims of trafficking. A former Director of the Helen Bamber Foundation, Rachel established and managed its Counter-Trafficking Programme after many years of working alongside Helen Bamber OBE. Earlier in her career, she worked with Amnesty International, the British Refugee Council, and Winstanley Burgess, a leading human rights law firm.



**HILDUR SUNNA PÁLMAÐÓTTIR** is a lawyer who has served as a prosecutor with the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police since 2011 and has worked at the Ministry of Justice as a legal expert on gender-based violence, including human trafficking. Throughout her career, she has specialised in combating human trafficking and has contributed significantly to strengthening legal and institutional responses to trafficking while promoting the protection of victims.



**DR. PAOLA CARDENAS** is a clinical psychologist, Head of Barnahus Iceland, and Assistant Professor at the University of Iceland's Faculty of Social Work. She has worked at Barnahus since 2014, specialising in forensic interviewing, assessment, and evidence-based trauma treatment for children and families affected by violence. Paola holds a PhD in Psychology, a Cand.psych. in Clinical Psychology, and an MA in Family Therapy. In addition to her clinical work, she is actively engaged in research, teaching, and professional training, with particular interests in child abuse, trauma, refugee and migrant children and families, and culturally responsive services.



**HARPA ODDBJÖRNSDÓTTIR** is a clinical psychologist and forensic interviewer at Barnahus Iceland. Her work focuses on trauma assessment and treatment, forensic interviewing of children, and evidence-based interventions for children, adolescents, and adults affected by trauma. Prior to joining Barnahus, she worked with the Trauma Team at the National University Hospital of Iceland and has maintained a part-time private clinical practice since 2019.



**JÓDÍS BJARNADÓTTIR** is a social worker and specialist at the National Agency for Children and Families in Iceland. She has extensive experience in child and family services, child protection, refugee integration, and multicultural social work. Her current work focuses on supporting children and families from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, contributing to the implementation of Iceland's integrated services legislation for children and families, and providing training for professionals.



**MARGRÉT SIGMARSDÓTTIR** is a Professor at the University of Iceland's School of Education and a specialist in clinical educational and child psychology. She earned her PhD in Clinical Child Psychology from the University of Copenhagen in 2013 and has been a leading figure in the development and implementation of evidence-based parenting and school programmes in Iceland. As a pioneer of GenerationP-MTO in Iceland, her research focuses on supporting children's social and emotional development and preventing behavioural and adjustment difficulties through evidence-based interventions.