

**Røðan hjá Sirið Stenberg, landsstýriskvinna í almanna- og mentamálum í sambandi við ársfundin hjá Norðurlandaráðnum har skipaði Norðurlenska ráðharraráðið og NIKK skipaðu fyri ráðstevnu um sekssjikanu á arbeiðsmarknaðinum.**

Good afternoon, everyone,

As we conclude this engaging half-day conference, I am encouraged by the progress that has been made in addressing harassment in the workplace. Your insights and discussions have been enlightening, full of shared wisdom and fresh ideas, all with the aim of creating safe, inclusive, and respectful workplaces and environments.

Reflecting on the research carried out by NIKK on behalf of the Nordic Council of Ministers, it's clear that we have come a long way. And yet we still face a common challenge and culture of silence around these issues.

After the #metoo movement and the enlightenment for many about the subtle structures of sexism that run through our society, we needed knowledge and a common language in which to speak out. We needed it from many angles and often, and we can't get enough – so keep it coming. We need guidelines, we need policies and legislation. And we need education on how to behave. Training and dialog is crucial.

It's up to us to break the silence and to create an environment where everyone feels protected. And that is exactly what has been done here today and what we will continue to do. Harassment is not a personal problem, it is a structural problem, and we must act structurally.

And as we have heard repeatedly in this room today, we need to ensure that we have an intersectional understanding of this very structurally rooted problem. That we do not all have the same language or voice to vocalise our situation.

The Speak Up! project is a reminder of this responsibility. It shows that bystanders can play a powerful role in shaping the outcome of harassment situations. In a world where silence can be all too common, we must be the ones to speak up and encourage everyone to refuse to be silenced, and it is our responsibility to create the environments and frameworks that make this possible.

Today's projects highlighted different aspects of this complex issue. "**Power Plays**" showed how creative approaches such as memory work and forum theatre can help break the silence around harassment. "**Sexual Harassment in Tourism and Hospitality**" highlighted the need for inclusive policies in these vital industries. "**IWS-Nordic**" provides us with a way to understand and address harassment, giving us a common language to work with. "**Customer Sexual Harassment in the Nordic Service Workplace**" has challenged us to rethink some of our preconceived notions about workplace dynamics. And finally, the anthology "**re-imagining sexual harassment**" highlights the need for a collective responsibility, challenging the perception of it as an isolated incident and provoking us to have meaningful discussions about gender equality in the Nordic region. It is not about sex but about power as Marta (Padevan-Øzdemir) wisely said.

All this work demonstrates the power of collaboration and shared ideas to make meaningful progress. It reinforces the importance of Nordic cooperation and how it moves us forward together. By pooling our resources, knowledge, and experience, we are creating new insights and solutions that can make a tangible difference.

As we leave this conference, it's important to remember that while we have made significant progress, there is no silver bullet to eradicate such a deep-rooted problem. Implementing these findings in our societies and workplaces will require continued dedication, persistence, and commitment.

My hope is that we remain determined to confront the culture of silence. And that we, as Nordic leaders, researchers, and advocates, will continue to produce and provide knowledge, because the insight and knowledge you have given me and us today is the most powerful tool - and the very architect of transformation. Replacing tabu with research, as we heard Hanna Helseth reflect in her opening speech.

In line with the Nordic Ministers' agreement to "push back the push-back", let us remember that our work in advocating for change and gender equality remains crucial. As we have seen today, the root cause of sexual harassment lies in the underlying sexism and unequal hierarchies that persist even in the most gender-equal countries in the world.

Personally, this conference has given me a renewed sense of determination. The insights and knowledge shared today have been invaluable and I am committed to being a driving force for change in the fight for gender equality and thereby the fight against harassment. This is also a fight for our democracy.

Let me conclude by saying that I am grateful and happy to share this moment and these valuable insights not only with my Nordic partners, but also with our international colleagues. Our collective strength is strengthened when we stand together. This is especially true not only for larger nations, but also for smaller states and rural regions. It is through sharing research and understanding that we can make the greatest progress.

Thank you