

Allar frásagnir eru settar fram nákvæmlega eins og þær voru skrifaðar inn á svæði Facebook-hóps kvenna að erlendum uppruna:

1. „Ég er í ofbeldis samband í margara ár. Ég get ekki og má ekki fara frá manninn minn það er bara svona hjá okkur menning. Ég veit að engin skilir þetta enn það er svona það er bara svona.Ég vil segja að það sem ísland þarf að laga er fordóma og ekki vilja til að hjálpa konum eins og mig sem get ekki bara hlaupa frá manninn og börn.Tvo skipti var lögreglan og barnavernd að koma heim til okkur. Einu sinni lögreglan sagði við barnavernd kona að við búam eins og villidýr. Hann sagði það hjá mér og börn. Maninn minn talaði meira íslensku og þá var að tala við hann enn ekki með mig enn samt var ég victim. Þegar ég fara til viðtal hjá barnavernd ég sagði að manninn minn þarf hjálp psychologist hjálp hann geri mig ofbeldi mikið ofbeldi. Börn þarf hjálp og ég þarf hjálp. Þau bara spyrja af hverju ert þú ekki að fara til læknis þegar hann meidir þig það er ekki skrá af hverju ert þú ekki að hringja lögreglan þau segja við getum ekki gera fyrir þig ef þú segja ekkert. Ég sagði ég er að segja núna. Spurningum er alltaf eins og ég er ekki að gera rétt. Núna er barnavernd ekki að koma meira enn allt er ekki búið hjá okkur. Ég vil ekki fá lögreglan sem segja ég er villi dýr og barnavernd sem segja ég gera rangt. Ég vil hjálp fyrir okkur allir getur verið glöð og safe í heimili."

2. „Í mínu vinnunni eru bara mig og tveir karlamenn. Þau meiða mig ekki með höndum en með orðum. Þau segja stundum heimsk útlesnk hóra og tussa. Ég veit hvað það þýðir ég vil ekki að þau segja svona en ég vil ekki öskra í vinnunni ég geri það heima."

3. „I am studying here in Iceland. The first woman in my family to go to University. We decided Iceland because all of the world says here in Iceland is much equality for women and a peaceful society. They do not say it is expensive and not always fair to people from other countries. I had to take a job working at nights at a bar restaurant because my house is too expensive and I can only have so much pay because of University grants. I hate working there for long time men are always saying things and grabbing me like some dog or something. But now I have quit. One night I have worst time of my life. I remember I am working and nothing more until day later I wake up like somebody have driven truck over my whole body. I have no clothes on me and I do not know this place I am in. I am getting in panick and some man I don't even see before comes to the upstairs and says to me no no don't be hysteric everything is okay. Your boss is coming to get you now. After short time there comes my boss. He takes me crying from this house of hell. He drives me for long time saying relax he will pay me extra salary because this happens to me but I cannot tell about this or I will loose my chance to finish University. They will take it away from me because I work in his place for money off the books. He pays me like this, I never asked. I cannot tell my family it will be their shame too if I cannot finish University and have to leave the country for crime."

4. „A friend of mine called me last night. He saw that we were with this group and asked me if he could share with me his wife's story if I would be her voice here. She has left him and taken their children. Not because there was violence in their relationship but because living here had broken her down. She was excluded in the work place bullied by men and women. She for example had many times received degrading comments about the size of her ass either said to her face or within earshot. She was never really given an opportunity to learn the language properly and because her self image was increasingly low she simply did not trust herself to be able to learn the language. She was increasingly ill and could not work and eventually was let go. She had friends but was just the same slipping into

depression. The straw that broke the camels back was when she was reported to Child protective services here in Reykjavík. The preschool staff reported her for the way she spoke with their child. Never did she hit the child she loved her children she cared for them with integrity. She could not believe that it was now her position in life to defend herself against accusations that she was a bad mother, when she felt the only thing she had in life to be happy about was her children. This families experience with Child protective services was horrible they felt that they were treated as second or even third class citizens. Their home was examined and they were questioned more than once about things that just simply did not exist in their home. He has a good job here and he believes he has earned the respect of his colleagues but his wife because she is a woman and a woman of color never earned that respect and in the end she could not even ask for it. She lives now in another country where she believes their children will not be discriminated against as she was here. She told her husband that she worries less for our son than for our daughter. She only wants for her to be a strong, confident intelligent young woman and in Iceland she did not trust that this could be possible“.

5. Þegar ég byrjaði á ný vinnustað stelpur sem voru þar undan mig sagði mér að passa einn yfirmaður. Hann var dóni og með "busy hands" sem fara þar sem þau vilja. En stelpur sagði að ég má ekki svara með læti því að hann getur vera vondur og stundum hafa stelpur verið rekin ef það er að kvarta eða rífa kjaftaði um þennan mann. Ein sagði mér "best er bara að daðra og hlæja svo verður þetta ok. Hann var hræðilegir ég hata þennan mann hann er ekki bara með donalegur munurinn hann er líka með mjög donalegur hendir sem vil gera meira en snerta og klípa. Ég fór til yfirmaður allir ekki eigandur enn þessi stjóri sem er yfirmaður allir og ég sagði hann frá allt. Veistu hvað hann sagði við mig "Ætlar þú vera með stæla hér, þú ert bara búin að vinna hér í 3 mánaða. Best er ef þú vilt halda vinnu að læra að leysa úr þessu sjálf." Svo nú trúar ykkur ekki hvað gerist næst. Minn yfirmaður kom til mín nokkra dag seinna og tók mig ein í herbergi. Hann öskraði á mig hótaði að nauðga mig áður en ég verð rekin ef ég fór að klaga aftur á honum. Ég fór heim og fór aldrei aftur þar ég náði ekki einu sinni dót. Ég fékk double laun þegar næst kom útborgin. Ég veit ekki ef hann geri sama við íslenska stelpur það eru ekki svo marga íslensk sem starfa þar.

6. „I am 26 yrs old, i don't want it to mention where i am from, i was married for 4 years to a man who abused me mentally since i was 18 yrs old, i left my country to study abroad, first time away from home and my parents, i had a lot of difficulties adjusting long story short i met this man on my worst moment i was crying by a fountain in belgium because i had no money left and my father was going to marry me to an older man so he stopped paying for my studies and i didnt want to i wanted to be independent so bad this man used that moment made me believe that he was kind and wanted to help.

i stood infront of my whole family after knowing him for 4 months my first bf ever my first relationship and said i wanted to marry this 35yr old man my parents told me it was a bad idea i insisted i didnt spend much time with him alone never lived with him they obliged to me as i was very "disobedient" as they called me because i didnt follow the norm, i married him in my home country my dad gave me some money to start he took all my money and told me i was unable to handle said money because i was stupid and couldnt count, he took me to iceland and the nightmare started he used to treat me like a maid and i though at that time i was doing it out of love, he became very angry with me the whole time he would stir up trouble where there was none like how i take long showers and why i never want to preform all the sexual acts he wants no matter what they are he tries to convince me that a good wife would do as she is told then it got worse he used to do it while i am asleep i would wake up horrified and unable to scream or say anything he made me stop

going out he refused to let me go back to school or work he didn't let me go to a female doc and i wasn't allowed to get contraceptives i was held hostage.

whenever i made a friend he would drive them away he would tell me i was too kind and ppl would hurt me it escalated to the point he convinced i was mentally ill and that people from my country were aggressive and i was a sociopath then when am broken he would be gentle with me but only when i lost all contact with reality i would be crying on the floor unable to even go to the bed he would force me to do sexual acts as a "punishment" then be kind to me this lasted for years i got pregnant and he wanted to force me to get an abortion and that was my breaking point i couldn't leave before because he had control over my money housing i had no one i decided even though i have ntg my child was more important so 5 months pregnant i got a job and started saving money without him noticing i met a lot of ppl that supported me quietly but many that met us would never consider that that person was so abusive a year later my daughter was already 1 year old i started to get things under my belt i am ashamed to say i continued to do whatever he wanted for the sake of my child my little girl had to witness him screaming at me sometimes he didn't even care if my daughter was around he would physically carry me and have sex with me it was rape 😊

i knew i had nowhere to go so i stayed and continued my plan i saved money we got a new apt i managed to get my name on the lease and whenever i told him i would leave him he would say u are too ill mentally and physically and they will take ur daughter away from u and that i will live on the street the day i made him move out was the best day of my life other than my daughters birth it will take me another year to get a divorce and he still lurks around my life but i became much stronger now i kept it all to myself then i met a very very kind man Icelandic native he knew all of my troubles helped me enormously very supportive and kind and is a good father to my daughter who suffered such traumatic events until now she is still in therapy

i cry when i write this but at the same time i am just happy its over because at that time i thought it was gonna be like that forever just helpless..My parents didn't know my problem was is i kept it quiet because somehow i thought it was my fault 2 years in therapy now i am happier i live a wonderful independent life i have my own business and the man i am with builds me up everyday my daughter is much much better and is developing beautifully i hope one day i will have enough evidence to get full custody with no visitation rights so i never have to see his face ever again but even now i stand tall and strong in front of him he will never break no man will ever break me but i am sorry for the man i am with now as he had to deal with the leftover of that trauma and he handled it beautifully with patience and love so not all men are bad some are very very good “

7. „I am a psychiatric occupational therapist. When I first moved to Iceland almost 44 years ago I was offered a job at the psychiatric hospital and asked to show other staff what modern occupational therapy is all about. I had 6 years of university education (Bachelors and Masters degrees) and 7 years of work in the field including being a supervisor of students and teaching at Columbia University. Here in Iceland I was put at a salary level of someone without any university education and had to fight for the first half year to be paid according to my education and experience. I was told that my years of experience in my profession abroad did not "count" because they were not in Iceland. I was also the only professional at that hospital who had to punch in and out of work at a time punch clock. I had been doing that for 2 years when one of the doctors saw me and asked why I was doing that because it was only the janitors and kitchen workers who were required to do that. I was not trusted to go to any supplies stores to buy materials needed in my job. Rather I was allowed to look in stores and then they sent a nurse to make the purchase, because I,

as a foreigner, was not trusted, even though they wanted me to demonstrate what professional, highly educated occupational therapists could do for psychiatric patients. I quit after 2.5 years and still get a knot in my stomach when I drive past that hospital. I was not sexually harassed but I was undervalued and treated unfairly because I was a female foreigner. After quitting at the hospital I became head of a patients rights organization and set up a drop-in center and self-help empowerment groups for psychiatric patients and their relatives and a monthly lecture series about mental health issues. I did this for 5 years without pay. I lobbied the mayor of Reykjavik to get some funds for these activities but when I asked for a small stipend to pay me for being basically a crisis intervention service on duty round-the-clock, I was told that things seemed to be going so well the way that they were and that there was no reason to put any more money into this venture. I quit after 5 years of unsalaried professional work because I was burned out and when I said I couldn't afford to work for no pay any longer, a number of people said they had never viewed what I was doing as a JOB.“

8. „I love Iceland a lot and it has given me a lot of opportunities, it has however also turned it's back on me. I am not playing victim and I will never do so. I only intend to share my story. I was married to the father of my son. We were together for a long time but we separated when our son was two months old. I got full custody since my ex was already in Norway at that time. Everything was ok until he all of a sudden demanded me through a lawyer to send our son to Norway who was at that time 6 months old and was still breast feeding. I mean "Hello?". Then the battle began. I thought it would subside but it just got worst. He created stories about me and talked to a systumaður. While I was with our son in Iceland and he was in Norway, I had to attend the scheduled meetings arranged by him through the phone with the systumaður. I can not anymore count the amount of time I wasted going to those meetings only to talk to a systumaður who clearly took his side and stopped me from finishing my sentences. I even took a friend with me and it didnt help. The systumaður we talked to didn't have any interest on hearing my side of the story and already had concluded that everything that my ex said was true. So yes, after all my experiences, I don't want to say it but I will, I was discriminated and no matter how hard I tried to tell them my side of the story since I requested for another systumaður, their ears were closed. I don't live in Iceland anymore, not for the time being. I've never felt so good in my life since all of the years I had to attend all of those waste of time of meetings. Now, I can live here in Spain and my ex and I are even, he can't anymore schedule meetings for me to attend while he just sits down, makes phone calls to the sherrifs department and make my life a living hell. We do have a schedule when he will be with our son, the thing is, he never followed his schedule and every year, it favoured him because he was the one who was not living in Iceland. Once for example, it was not his Christmas but because he was around then I was told to give him our son. "Hello?"what about my holidays? The same stupid reason (he doesnt live in Iceland) and I did. This is just one of those things that made me gave up on that country. Im sorry to say this even though I love that country so much, I will stay away and be at peace rather than deal with such kind of nonsense that the sheriffs department has poured on me. I mean come on. 5 and one and half years of my life and every year just got worse. Meetings, ridiculous demands and bad energy.“

9. „I worry about my daughter. I think she is sexually active and she is too young and maybe something has happened to her even. I think she is because her self image is low. I feel like she is competing for attention with Icelandic girls sence a young age. She is dressing in a way that calls a boys eyes to her body. She said to me she is ugly, her skin is too dark, she wants blond hair, she is ashamed that she has to translate for me and does

not want other girls to hear it. She said once the only way to get a Icelandic boyfriend is to do sex acts with them. How can we stop this how can I make her strong and protect her from this?"

10. Hello everyone. I am in middle of custody battle and my story can be read here. Right now its progressing, but we have had to wait for ages in the women shelter, and it might take few more weeks to get home. I have heard that Icelandic courts rule favouring Icelanders, and that abusive men have won custody if there was a foreign mother against him. I am now fighting against that, and would like to stand for those who have already lost and who might have a battle coming up in the future...today we had mediation in front of the judge...i feel defeated. How much can someone lie?! Seems like he has no limit. I hope the judge sees what is true and most important; rules on what is the childs best interest... Though the father tries his best to make everyone believe child has to have both parents close to him. Which is not the best in all cases,like ours. Oh and still he keeps on saying i am at womens shelter without a good reason. yeah right, mr. Abuser

11. „Þetta gerist fyrir nokkrum árum síðan: Einn dag for ég úti búð og hitti þar kunningja (karlmann) sem ég spjallaði oft við þegar ég hitti hann. Kannski er betra svo það sé í samhengi ég taki fram að ég er týpa sem talar við alla og er frekar hress. Kem fram við alla alveg eins, konur, karlar, börn og framvegis. Þessum kunningja mínum fannst mjög viðeigandi og sniðugt að elta mig þarna í búðini á milli hillana til þess að segja mér að hann þrái mig svo mikið. Hann reyndi einnig að kyssa mig. Honum fannst ég svo sexi og flott og talaði u það.Hann hefur aldrei hitt svona flotta konu. Ég væri alltaf að daðra við hann og gefa honum undir fótin. Hann tjáði mér það að Hann vissi alveg að mig langaði í hann og spurði mig hvort ég vildi fara með honum upp í hótél herbergi um helgina. Hann vildi sem sagt riða mér. Ég svaraði strax að hann ætti hætta þessu og ég vildi ekki neitt með hann hafa. Mér dauð brá að ég flytti mér á kassa en það stoppaði hann ekki heldur hélt hann áfram og elti mig þangað. Þannig ég for úti bíl og keyrði heim eftir að ég sagði við hann að það kæmi ekki til greina að ég geri það sem hann er að biðja mig um. Ég var gift kona og stundaði alls ekki slíkt. Það sem mér valdi ennþá meira vonbrigðum er að þegar ég kom heim þá var eiginmaðurinn sammála honum um það að ég hef gefið honum undir fótin Rosalega var þetta vond tilfining."

12. „First I wanna thank you all for this page and the promise that we are gonna tell some stories that are gonna make people notice us and know its not our fault and only our problem. This society has to change. Too many people are angry for the wrong reason. If those people who treat us bad for being immigrants have to live like some of us and feel like less than human sometimes, maybe they could soften up and care for more than themselves and be kind. I am not gonna share everything but I want to tell you. I was held like a sex slave when I came here years ago. I had to pay with sex for my house, and food and maybe air I don't know. Today I am free I have my own money and my own power. I decided to not be ashamed because that man will pay for what he does when he die. The lord gonna forgive me."

13. „Mín saga: Ég er buin að búa í hjónabandi í mörg ár þar sem ég var beitt adlegu ofbeldi, rökkud niður og gat ekki gert neitt rétt. Minn fyrirverandi eiginmaðurinn horfði á mig sem hlut sem hann gat notað í hvað sem er og hentast með mig eins og hann eigi mig. Hann tók oft ákvarðanir fyrir mig og hvað væri best fyrir mig eftir hans sannfæringu sem var aknnski alls ekki eitthvað sem mig langar að gera. Það sem mér finnst erfiðast að

viðurkenna, sæta mig við og tala um opinbert (líklega vegna þess að ég skammast mín fyrir það) er að hann notaði líkaman minn nánast alltaf undir kynferðisleg athæfni hans þegar honum syndist þó svo svarið var nei hjá mér.

Allt sem gerðist á heimilinu þurfti hann vita og skipta sér af. Hann sá um allt og peningamálin sérstaklega. Ef ég þurfti fara eitthvað eða kaupa eitthvað þá þurfti ég eiginlega spyrja um leyfi. Marg, marg oft brjáláðist hann yfir buðaferðum mínum og þá er ég tala um matvöru buð sem dæmi. Ég mátti ekki kaupa hitt og þetta í mat. Hann þurfti að hafa stjórn á öllu. Ég var þerna á mínu heimili og þjónustaði hann eftir þörfum og hans löngun. Þegar honum fannst það vera í lagi að ég fari í þá fá skipti þá voru allskonar verkefni sem voru sett fyrir og ég þurfti að gera svo ég geti farið. Elda, þrifa, taka til og undirbúa svo hann þurfi ekki gera neitt á meðan. Hann var ekki heldur hrifin af að ég skilji börnin eftir hjá honum nema þegar ég var að fara vinna. Þá var það allt í góðu. Hann vildi helst að ég væri búin að redda pössun fyrir börnin þegar ég for eitthvað sem var ekki vinna. Hann gerði mikla kröfur til mín, ég átti vera fullkomin eiginkona, fullkomin mamma, fullkomin ástarkona, frábær vinnukraftur, frábær kokkur, alltaf fin og brosandí og þar fram eftir götuni. Hann studdi mig aldrei né hrósaði. Hann hjálpaði mér aldrei í neinu hvorgi í vinnu né heima og ekki heldur með börnin. Ég þurfti sjá um þetta allt ein. Ég vann í tveim vinnum og við áttum stórt heimili og mörg börn. Ef ég var lasin eða veik þá þurfti ég gera allt sjálf líka plús þola hans kómennt hversu mikil aumingi ég var. Hann fann alltaf eitthvað sem var ekki rétt og kallaði mig mjög oft heimiska og að ég hef ekki vit á hlutunum. Hann fann alltaf ástæðu til að gera litið úr mér bæði heima og fyrir framan aðra. Einnig fyrir framan börnin. Ítrekað hefur hann ásakað mig fyrir að halda fram hjá og hefur gert skandall út af því fyrir framan annað fólk, einnig vini okkar. Allt sem honum datt í hug var mjög sniðugt og flott. Allt sem ég vildi gera var heimskulegt og óskynsamlegt. Ég og börnin þurftum haga okkur eins og hann vildi og sagði. Hann braut mig niður trekk í trekk andlega. Eftir öll þessi þá vaknaði ég einn dag upp úr vonda draumi og sagði stopp! Ég tók börnin mín og for í burtu. Engin hjálpaði mér í þessu. Tengsla netið mitt var stórt en engin trúði orði sem ég sagði því hann var svo frábær (kom svo síðan annað í ljós með timanum að hann var það bara alls ekki). Ég upplífdi höfnun þá nánast frá öllum sem ég þekkti, foreldrum, vinum og vinkonum. Annað áfall sem ég þurfti díla við. Loksins eftir að ég for frá honum þá hef ég öðlast nýtt líf, dásamlegt líf! Þurfti að visu að vinna úr mörgu en það hafðist á endanu með hjálp sálfræðings.”

14. „XX do you think that people really don't care about us? Do you think Icelandic people happy holding us at the bottom and not helping us up when we are vulnerable? If my neighbor had just once called the police when my husband beat me in front of my children. She could talk english to me if she needed something from me but could not talk to me when she saw my bruised face. My son is a teenager now he is in trouble I think he is taking drugs I know he is drinking. I can't help him he yells at me too even my husband is gone now he left us. At my job I feel like nobody wants me to learn good Icelandic. I try but it is really difficult language. This is important because many times at work I know nothing about things and it keeps me at the bottom. If I learn Icelandic will more people like me and help me?”

15. I received a request today to start a conversation regarding discrimination and mistreatment in the work place. Our friend asked me not to share her story but through our discussion we talked about things that I have heard and even experienced before and some I haven't heard or experienced. I was able to give some advice about certain work related things. For example when I moved here I worked cleaning and at a preschool. Nobody explained to me my rights. I went to work sick many times. Once I got strep throat and I continued to work and on the third day with a soar throat and high fever I started

bleeding from my throat. My then boyfriend now husband said what are you doing going to work you are sick you have sick days. Nobody told me this. Nobody explained I could use money from the union to pay down the cost of for example Icelandic courses. I learned after two years of cleaning that I was getting paid 20.000 kr. less than an Icelandic woman cleaning the other half of an office space the same size as the one I was cleaning. I was never abused physically or sexually. I was never harassed sexually or violently by co-workers but basically I either worked alone cleaning or with women in a preschool. Our friend spoke of these things. Have any of you had to deal with these things? How did you handle them, how did your bosses handle them? (If they did)

16. „My baby girl was sick and I needed to go pick her up at leikskola. I asked my boss if I could go he said no finish first your work here. It was many things to do I know It take me long time, but I started. After one hour leikskola call again. I say to boss I have to go to my baby she is sick. He said "ok you can go but first you suck me off". He was not laughing only looking at me I was scared. I am married woman. Then he laughed very loud and said go but you don't get pay for the rest of the day.“

17. I worked in a cleaning position for a "wealthy family" here in Reykjavik. She was paid under the table by them. "When I came to clean I never knew if the wife would greet me with a smile or frown. Sometimes I cleaned well and was thanked and sometimes nothing was clean enough. A few times when I came to clean her husband was home. He flirted with me made jokes in poor english about sexual things which made me uncomfortable. I could always feel his eyes on me when I was cleaning. I did not like it but never said anything. He did not do anything really wrong I just said all men are like that. One day he came home while I was cleaning in the bedroom. He stood in the doorway and I could not get around him without coming so close that it made me uncomfortable when I squeezed by trying not to touch him. I forgot a cleaning rag in the bedroom and had to go back in for it. He followed me in, pushed me against the wall with his body. He held my wrists and smelled my head and neck then licked my cheek down to my chest between my breasts. He said "I always wanted to know what a woman of color tasted like". Two days later I got an angry phone call from the wife. She accused me of stealing from her kitchen and said I was fired not to ever come back and to never contac

18. „Hvað er hægt að gera þegar við búum út á land og það er ekki kvennaathvarf? Ég las sögu um kona sem fékk að fljúga til Reykjavík enn ég get það ekki og held að fleiri konur er í sama stöð. Og hvað gerist þegar við þurfum að koma aftur heim? Getur einhver sagt okkur meira um hvernig við náum að koma úr ofbledissamband út á land. Mér finnst erfitt að treysta fólk mun hjálpa mig ef ég hringja löreglan eða eitthvað."t her husband again or she would turn me in to the police. I was terrified."

19. „I am ashamed to say when I moved here I had to "pay" my way by having sex with the man who brought me here. He did not beat me but he did not love me either. I do not want to share my story before I came here. You can only imagine what that was like if I would come and live with a man like this. Not just for him but for two of his buddies sometimes. I had to do this for 3 years then he got another immigrant even younger than me. I had nothing but a job with low pay he found me a place to rent and paid for that for a while. I hate men now and will never enjoy sex. I do not ever want to bring a child into a world where these things happen. I hope I can learn to love myself.“

20. „I have read what stories are here but you know it isn't just sexual and men abusing and holding us down. I worked cleaning for a woman who beat me with her words and her hands. She slapped me with her hands and with things. She paid me with money and threatened me to turn me in. It was extra work to have enough to feed my kids my other job paid so little just for our flat. If I would get caught working for cash I could never get citizenship. That woman always talked to me like the lowest person on the planet but because I held my head up did what was asked of me. I never treated her like she treated me in the end she could not live without me doing her work. I left that job and her abuse in my past but people should know it happens here in this country and women do it to.”

21. „Stundum skil ég ekki hvað líf á að vera um eða af hverju ég hef verið sett í þetta hlutverk sem ég fékk. Sumt fólk finnst gott að hukka öðrum og segja "that which doesn't kill you will make you stronger". Bullshit. Stelpur ég skal segja ykkur ég hef mjög oft hugsað nei takk ég vil frekar deyja. Mér finnst að ég mun aldrei ná einhvern sigur hér á Íslandi alltaf þegar ég held hluti ganga vel þá kemur "truth" og "reality" aftur til baka. Ég get ekki segja ég er fátæk kona enn ef ég gæti fá betur starf og meira laun og vinna með fólk sem verður at least sama um mig og hjálpa mig þá kannski. Ég var nauðguð þegar ég flutt hingað og já ólett. Ég skammaði mig. Heima er mjög bannað að fara í fóstureyðing og líka bannað að eiga barn þegar þú ert ekki gift. Hér eru fólk alveg sama um mig, um þess að ég vildi ekki barn vegna maðurinn sem gerði þetta. Ég elska barn mitt ekki segja annað enn ég er alltaf sorglegt að ég get ekki gera betur fyrir okkur. Ég lend meira en einu sinni í vondum kærastum sem lemja og öskra á mig. Nobody cares, nobody helps. Núna er ég ein. Ég er sterk ég er mjög sterk maybe of sterk...enn stundum vil ég deyja en frekar fá að vera alltaf glöð. Takk fyrir að leyfa mig segja þetta kannski að tala með ykkur er gott fyrir mig.”

22. „I have asked that my story be generalized but I want women and society to know how I have suffered at the hands of both people and the systems designed to protect people. I have been stripped of my self worth and any hope. I cry every day with no hope. The man I married his family, the people I work with, and the people who work for social services and child protective services have broken me down. I am illiterate in my native language it is difficult for me to learn to read and write english or icelandic. I don't understand my rights nobody has explained them. My husband's family has taken over my banking records and seen to this that my children were taken from me. I don't even understand how or why. The people I work with have excluded and bullied me I can trust only one person my friend who is also an immigrant but even she is powerless sometimes. People with power of language, information and being Icelandic have not helped me. I believe some of them have even broken laws by sharing private information about me. I do not want to many details to be told I only want for people to know these things are happening and we have to make a change.”

23. „Ég er með vinkona sem flutti hingað með dóttir hennar. Hún bjó með maður sem misnotaði 11 ára dóttir hennar kynferðisleg og beit hana ofbeldi bæði andlegt og líkamlegt. Hún tilkynnti lögreglan og þau gerði ekki neitt og bauð hana ekki einu sinni upp á túlkþjónusta eða talaði við dóttir hennar. Maðurinn hennar beit henni mjög gróf ofbeldi nauðgaði hana og hótaði að drepa bæði hún og dóttir hennar ef hún tilkynnti honum aftur. Aftur einn ár maðurinn var ákærður fyrir annan glæpur og for inn í Litla Hraun. Vinkona mín flúði út á land með dóttir sín. Nú er hún gift góður maður enn lifir enn með hræðslu að "vondur karl" mun einhvern tíma finna þær. Hún vildi ekki koma fram en bað mig um að segja ykkur frá og ég vil ekki heldur að nafnið mitt kemur nálægt þetta mál aftur.“

24. „Þegar ég flutti hingað fyrir mörgum árum þá voru ekki margir konur af erlednum uppruna. Ég gifti íslenkan mann sem var eldri en mig en ég trúði að hann var góður maður. Hann var drykkfeldir og í upphafi var það bara rifildi sem for okkur á milli. Enn ég segi meira kannski um þetta síðar. Ég vil segja frá fyrstu fimm ár þar sem ég upplifði einangrun og niðulagingu af verstu tagi. Ég talaði ekkert íslensku og við bjugguðum út á land. Hann var alltaf að minna mig á hversu mikið það kostaði honum að fá mig hingað og gifta mig og bara að ég væri hreinlega aukin kostanði fyrir honum. Sjáid þið til hann leyfði mér ekki einu sinni vinna eða sækja íslenskakennslu svo að ég gæti fara að vinna. Það var ömurleg. Einu sinni hann let mig já það er rétt hóttaði mig og pýndi mér að sofa hjá bróðir hans því að þeir voru að djúsa saman heima hjá okkur og bróðir hans vildi bara prófa mig. Mágkonan mín vissi af þessu og sagði ekkert við mig ekki einu sinni fyrirgefðu. Sjúkt. Eftir það ég treysti engan nema mig sjálf. Ég lærði íslensku, ég for að vinna, ég alaði upp okkur börn og ég reif kjaft við maðurinn minn þegar ég vildi. Ég fyrirgef honum aldrei ekki einu sinni í dag þó að hann er dainn.“

25. „My husband beat me. He owned me he did what he wanted with me. I am a broken women I stopped thinking of like rape because I just did not or could not say no. It was my "purpose" in life. In his life. When we lived in my homeland my brothers and my father stepped in and kept my husband in line. Reminded him that he did not own me. We married young. My father made him allow me to go to University. After we moved here I had no one. I was alone. Until my friend (I hope you think of me as a friend too) Nichole helped me. Not even my neighbors helped even if they heard my screams or his even when things went bump and bang from our home. One time a woman who lived underneath us stopped me and said. "You live like an animal letting him treat you like that either have some self respect and leave him or the two of you move home to your country. We don't want it here!" My children were standing with me when she said this to me. I still wonder why she never called the police or helped me in anyway. One day Nichole simply said hello like she does with a smile. I just couldn't hold my head up and cried. I am an educated woman I speak three languages and I was a woman who was stuck in hell. Not working, no friends and living in fear of my husband. I showed Nichole bruises around my neck and wrists, she wept with me. She held me. I felt loved. She gave me all the information I needed, gave me her private number offered to drive me to kvennaathvarf. Just the act of love and to know somebody stood with me was enough. The next time he attacked me I called the police then my friend. I went to her home and waited while the police removed him from my home. We are divorced now. I live alone with my boys and he has left the country. I hope my boys don't remember him and what he did to me I hope they learned nothing from him. I will raise them to respect women.“

26. „I saw what you said about rassinn saga. I work with a man who always clapp and pinch my ass and sometime my breast! He is one of the boss. He say only black lady have nice ass like me. Nobody say anything. I hate it but what can I do I need to work I need money.“

27. „Ég var að vinna hjá fyrirtæki í ræsting. Ég var ein á kvöld. Ein kvöld kom maður sem var að vinna þar, hann var með lykill. Ég hef aldrei sé hann áður ég vinna bara á kvöld ég sé aldrei fólk þar eða næstum aldrei og þau tala ekki með mig. Hann talaði með mig mikið. Hann var skemmtilegur mér fannst. Hann kom aftur og aftur margir kvöldir kannski hitti ég þennan maður tíu sinnum. Ein kvöld hann kom og mér finnst svo erfit að segja þetta hann RAPED (nauðga er ekki nóg að segja fyrir mér) mig. Þar á gólf sem ég skúra kvöld aftur

kvöld. Hann sagði að ég vildi þetta hann fann það þegar ég talaði við hann. Hann sagði ég má ekki segja frá ég má ekki hugsa hann vildi meiða mig hann var bara vildi profa útlensk kona eins og mig ég var falleg og góð. Ég for aldrei aftur að vinna. Ég spurði vinkona mín að þrifa fyrir mig næstu dag. Þegar hún for í geymslu hvar ég geyma skúringu dót það var umslag með nafnið mitt á. Hún kom með það til mín. Inní umslag var 100.000 kr peninga." Please ekki segja nafnið mitt ég vil ekki leyfa fólk vita þetta um mig en ég vil að þennan mann skammar sig og lesa þetta í blaðið. Takk fyrir mig."

28. „I had just purchased a chair for the Preschool I worked in. I was walking up to the school with the chair and a group of men who work for Reykjavíkurborg were leaving the school.

Ég: „Góðan daginn eru þið búin að laga hliðið?"

Hann: „Já það þurfti að skipta út stykki og fasta hliðið á ný við staurinn. Hvað ertu með þarna?"

Ég: „Stóll fyrir starfsmönnum mínum. Það þarf stundum að endurnýja svona hluti hjá okkur."

Hann: „Já það þarf að hafa eitthvað undir rassanum á þetta lið. Enn ég held að það eru engan með eins fínn rass og þessi útlenskan rass sem þú gengur með"...og hann hló og hinir tveir líka á meðan ég labbaði í burtu með æluna upp í kok. Vitið þið fyrst ég skammaði mig og vildi fela rassin og mig sjálf. Svo var ég reið vegna þess að hann var og er bara hálfviti!"

29. A male coworker of mine struck up a conversation with me at work one day. He asked me how long I had been in Iceland. I said just over a year. He then asked me immediately how long I was planning to stay. As if it was a given that I would leave eventually and unthinkable that I would want to stay here. I told him I felt good in Iceland and was planning to stay. He asked me if I thought Icelanders were prejudiced. I answered yes. and mentioned as one example how Icelanders often speak to me in English, assuming I don't speak Icelandic just because of the way I look. He cuts me off and says "that's not prejudice! Icelanders, especially older people, just aren't used to immigrants". I believe that even if it comes from ignorance or is unconscious, this kind of behaviour is a result of prejudice. The conversation continued for a while and I did my best to hold my ground and explain my side. Although this experience is more an instance of racism, the way this coworker was addressing me: constantly cutting me off, not listening at all, not allowing me to finish my thoughts, immediately dismissing everything I said, was definitely affected by me being a woman. I doubt he would have spoken to a male colleague that way.

30. Eitt sem ég vil benda á er að eitt vandamál í sveitinni er að vinnufólk (oft konur frá löndum þar sem mikið atvinnuleysi er t.d. Austur Evrópu) eru ráðnar í sveitinni undir svokölluðu "aupair" samningi oftast bara til "munlegur". Löglegi aupair samningur gerir ráð fyrir að barnapían vinnur 5 daga vikuna (max 30 tíma) við barnapössun og LÉTT heimilisverk. En í rauninni eru þær Oft á tíðum eru þær láttnar vinna alla daga vikunnar, við að þrifa gistihús eða hjálpa til við mjaltir. Þar sem þær eru háð atvinnurekanda fyrir fæði og húsnæði og oft einangrunuð er mjög erfitt fyrir þær að leita sér hjálpar. Vinnumálastofnun veit af þessu vandamáli en virðist ekki geta komið í veg fyrir það. Unfortunately a lot of times the girls do not dare to speak up, living with the family, depending on them for food and accommodation. I have heard of unacceptable things about other girls working on farms. We told them that this was not acceptable to and

asked them to supply the information to those girls. Often we heard then back that the girls said: We know, but we do not dare to speak up.

I know it is very popular for girls also to work on horse farms because they love horses but often they do not get the salary they should get according to minimal wage just pocket money. But if you have a look at the facebook group Farm and Aupair Jobs there are quite a few of people from Africa, Asia who seem to be willing to do anything for nothing - just to get here. They are easily abused. Not registered, not insured.

31. I have been pondering this new movement of voicing our negative experiences regarding sexual assault and abuse. It is a fascinating moment in history that we are going through, and the real question I am left with is “what next”?

I too am a survivor of rape, and totally inappropriate sexual manipulation in my work experience. One boss told me every month that he would pay part of my salary only if I gave him a kiss but if I sat on his lap while doing it he would pay me in full. Another told me that “every company needs a dumb blond to blame when things go wrong, and you are our token blonde.” despite me having a much higher education than him. The list goes on with endless accounts of black mail, usually taking advantage of the fact that I have been a single mother in dire need of my pay to feed my family. All of these positions have been while working at prestigious luxury brands, with a big name job title, the kind of job people around called a “dream job.” But on reading the posts in this group, I consider myself one of the lucky ones. My experiences have been disgusting and sometimes painful but manageable, and I survived them all by getting up the next day and resolutely putting one foot in front of the other, and focusing on the beauty I have in my life.

The interesting thing about all of this is that I was also hiding in a closet. It’s a new version of being in the closet, the one of surviving rape or sexual assault. And we are in a new worldwide “coming out” process, fumbling our way through the fall out. There is a strength that comes with voicing the horror out loud, especially when backed with the support of a band of sisters that stand with us while the inevitable backlash of blame and mean spirited remarks come flying back at us. My grandmother and mother’s generation would never have dreamed of saying on a public forum like facebook, “I was raped.” These things were kept hidden away, hushed and forgotten. We are a lucky generation that we can find solace and support in each other.

So back to the original question: What next? what good does it do? How do we help?

Well, if I may offer my two cents... I go about life focusing on what little ray of sunshine I can add to this world, by bringing kindness and beauty. I am a painter, I am a business woman, so I make sure that every aspect of my work does something to bring more love into the world. If one woman can look at a painting and find some comfort in it, then I have done my job. If one business deal I make can empower another woman, bringing her a healthy way to feed her child, then my business is a success. I believe that now that we have these new found voices, that we are no longer bound by shame and fear, we should focus on bringing more kindness and beauty to the world. What we focus on expands, so lets expand love, lets expand kindness towards all, and use our voices wisely to bring light into this dark reality.

One problem is that in close knit societies like in the countryside where everybody is related and befriended nobody dares to speak up - be it concerning animal abuse or in this case abuse of workers.

32. Thanks you for creating such a group because i know and believe that many if not all immigrant ladies in Iceland could use a safe space to talk about what they have or are going through. We all may agree that we have chosen Iceland or Iceland chose us and we made it home but from personal experience, i know living in this nation as an immigrant is not easy. The pain and struggles tend to come from all angles, marriage, work environment, social welfare, language, race, even to simple things such as making friends. I have heard a fair share of my struggles in the years i have lived in this country and when read the stories written in this forum, i absolutely understand your pain and respect you for being brave to share your stories. The reason i said "Thank you Nichole for creating this group" is because as sad as it may sound, history of these struggles keeps repeating itself, just with differnt people. And since sometimes the law and society fail us, we have no where to turn but burry ourselves in sorrow without the financial stand to even afford therapist to listen to us. So maybe this platform does not have experts in solving problems but it has experience and i believe a problem shared is half solved. Indeed it is time for Iceland, our nation to consider us as part of their nation.

33. Me personally the women shelter is the one home that l know where there is always some one ready to give u the warm hug,a shoulder to cry on,a warm plate of food and a hand to hold on to when the world is breaking infront of u and all you wish for is for it to open and swallow you alive..

The shelter gives u hope,strength and the will to continue.. Mostly we dont have family to run to and friends most of the time they become judgemental,bias,all kinds of advice good n bad and also they make your pain their story to talk about.

We seek refuge at the shelter for guidance,vunerability and also understanding..it is the only place l know foreign women can truly understand the system and discover who you truly are,its easy to abuse someone that has no one to help them understand the laws of another place and alot of men have misused the trust given to them..Out of experience l have lived in the shelter for 3mnts,l was broken,confused,alone,jobless,homeless and very broke..I came out healed,peaceful,with a home and a month later a job.Around the time l was at the shelter l was waiting for a divorce and my ex husband had already filled for it,that meant the residence permit l had (dvarlaleyfi)is invalid,my citizenship forms were still at the immigration and unknowly l was in Iceland without a permit meaning immediatly after the divorce,l will be living illegally in Iceland, bt because l was at the shelter for that period of time a letter from them gave me a citizenship...So,the shelter is like a pool full of clean water ready to wash off all the dirt that relationships come with and also being alone in a foreign country and you dont know what to do..Thay why some of us foreign women go to the shelter,it is the only place...

34. My ex took total advantage of the fact that he was the only person i knew in Iceland and i didnt Have any family here. He Would not allow me to make friends and instilled so much fear in me , my first week in Iceland he Would present a letter written in Icelandic and prompt me to do anything he said or i sign the papers and there will be serious consequences . Of course i did not know What the letter entailed i was confused and fearfull. He was physically and emotionally abusive, i still Have scars on my body from this relationship . His sisters and mother knew he was abusive and did not say anything . I suspected that he was having an affair but he denied it, eventually i caught him having an affair in our room and i took off and never seen that bastard again.