



29<sup>th</sup> ICDE World Conference  
Costa Rica, 2023

**Joining Hands in Peace  
for the Futures of Education**



INTERNATIONAL  
COUNCIL FOR OPEN AND  
DISTANCE EDUCATION



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# Open, Flexible and Distance Education in a Nordic Context

*ICDE NordFlexOn Committee*



# AGENDA

8 November 2023

85<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary

85 years of making education  
accessible to *all*.



The NordFlexOn Network

The ICDE Global Advocacy Campaign  
(GAC)

Creating a new national association on  
OFDL: Iceland

Comparison of existing Nordic  
associations:  
case study  
Continuing work

Panel discussion: The ICDE GAC as a  
tool for further OFDL development in  
the Nordic region and elsewhere



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# The NordFlexON Network



Members community

Knowledge centre

Events

## NordFlexOn

NordFlexOn is a Nordic network for Open, Flexible and Distance Learning (OFDL), established by ICDE in 2019.



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# The NordFlexON Network

NordFlexOn aims to:

- Identify potential and current challenges for the uptake and development of OFDL in the Nordic region
- Advocate for quality OFDL in Nordic countries and beyond
- Facilitate cross-country collaboration and disseminate practice-based and research-based knowledge on OFDL across the Nordic region

The network started in Dublin 2019 at the **ICDE - conference**

<https://www.icde.org/>

The network is open and free to join for all relevant individuals and associations in the Nordic countries



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# The NordFlexON Network

- Can be an important forum to share information and research to strengthen the operation and membership of these associations and can provide opportunities to synchronize important events including conferences and webinars.
- Nordic transnational cooperation must be strengthened – we can learn from our similarities and differences.
- Been endorsed by the national associations in the OFDL area.
- Was was agreed that network members should have a connection to their national OFDL organization and/or ICDE. But only four do....



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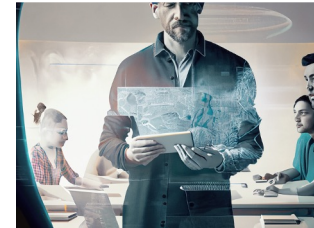
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# The NordFlexON Network



Six rep's who lead the network from OFDL associations from each country except from Iceland and the Faeroe Islands

- Denmark - FLUID:  
[Foreningen med flexible uddannelse i Danmark](#)
- Finland:  
[The Association of Finnish eLearning Centre](#)
- Norway - FuN:  
[Flexible Education Norway](#)
- Sweden – SADE/SVERD  
[Swedish Association for Open, Flexible and Distance Education](#)



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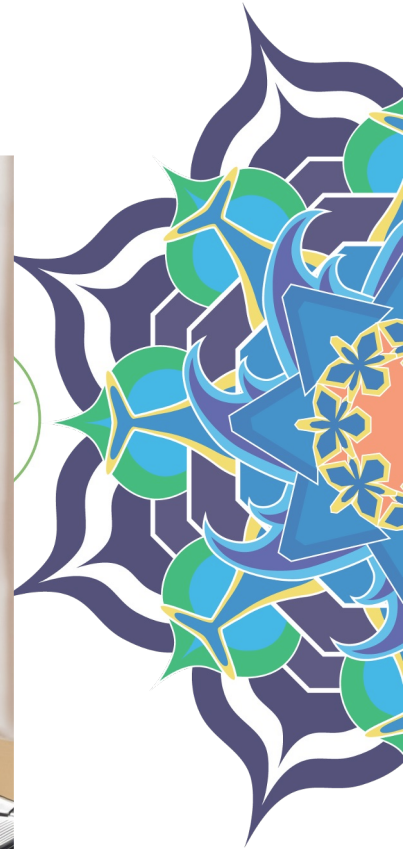
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# NordFlexOn network activities so far...

- **2018-2019** Idea phase 2018-20: Informal meeting at the EDEN conference 2018, online meetings and a survey in each country, Nordic meeting at the ICDE in Lillehammer; *ICDE Dublin, formal establishment*
- **2020-2022 – COVID!**
- **2022+** Online meetings with ICDE rep's – sharing COVID experiences; online network meetings, intro and presentations in Lillehammer (ICDE) and Dublin (EDEN) 2023; application work (NordPlus); *connection with the ICDE Global Advocacy Campaign;*
  - *Case study conducted by Iceland rep's to prepare establishment of Icelandic OFDL association*



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# European associations - ODFL

*EDEN - European Distance and E-Learning Network*

From 2019: **EDEN - Digital Learning Europe** <https://eden-europe.eu/>

Mission: To *advance digital education* in Europe at all levels by serving needs of individual and institutional members through: networking, acting as knowledge building community and advocating for open, inclusive and sustainable solutions...

**EADL - European Association of Distance Learning**

<https://www.eadl.org/>

Mission: To represent all *privately-owned and non-governmental* European organisations offering high quality and educationally sound distance learning. Aims to improve the quality and acceptance of distance learning to ensure the maximum benefit for students: provides a forum for open discussion and sharing

**EADTU - European Association of Distance Teaching Universities**

<https://eadtu.eu/>

is the leading *institutional university network* for online, open and distance higher education. It is at the heart of innovation in the European Education Area, and in particular in the European Higher Education Area.



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# International association - ICDE

## ICDE - International Council for Open and Distance Education

<https://www.icde.org/>

ICDE is the leading, global membership organisation that works towards bringing accessible, quality education to all through open, flexible and distance learning.

- Creating a **worldwide network** of online educators, policymakers, and innovators who collaborate on projects and initiatives, sharing best practices and industry knowledge.
- **Publishing and contributing to reports**, surveys and articles on emerging topics in the field.
- **Facilitating intercultural cooperation** at our various conferences, summits, and events.
- **Campaigning and advocating for progress and recognition** of OFDL on a worldwide basis, through our members.



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# GLOBAL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

FOR

## OPEN, FLEXIBLE & DISTANCE LEARNING



### ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

As the global network of Leaders and Professionals in the field of Open, Flexible, and Distance Learning (OFDL), ICDE enables members to collaborate in **promoting positive change** within OFDL on **the international stage**.

ICDE aims to be **globally inclusive** and **celebrate the diversity** of all regions to **engage all members and partners**. **Together, we are building a community of advocates to help shape the future of education across borders.**



<https://www.icde.org/global-advocacy-campaign/>

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# ICDE – GAC - goals

1. **Empower our members** to join forces and advocate together in their regions with a global ambition and global framework.
2. **Create the space** to discuss the challenges, the needs, and the priorities of OFDL seen from the perspective of the different organizations in the region.
3. **Provide members basic tools for designing** an advocacy campaign in their regions and adapt the content in different channels



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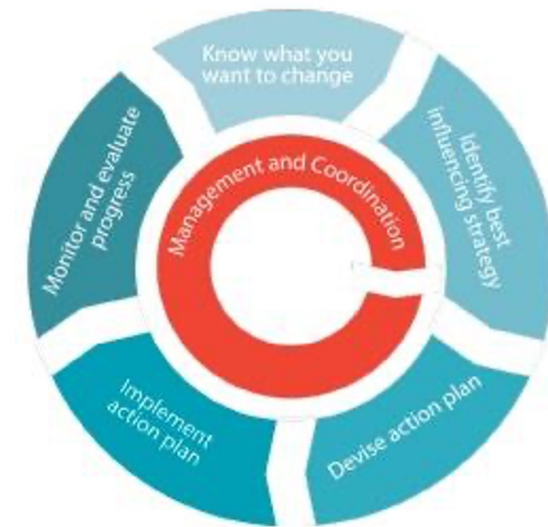
# ICDE – GAC – Toolkit

Available in 4 languages  
(English, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese)

- **What** is advocacy at the national level?
- **Why** advocate for quality OFDL at a national level?
- **How** do you advocate?
- **Who** can help you reach the target?



- **Goal(s)** – What exactly do you want to change?
- **Targets and strategies** for achieving the goal – Who do you need to influence? How are you going to influence them?
- **Action plan** – Who will do what, when, how and why?
- **Measurable objectives** – How will you measure success qualitatively and quantitatively?
- **Progress monitoring and evaluation** – How will you know if your plan is on track?



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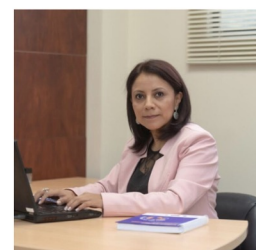
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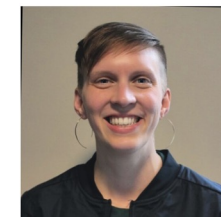


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# Creating a new national association: Iceland

Comparison of existing Nordic Associations: case study  
(Sólveig Jakobsdóttir, Sigurbjörg Jóhannesdóttir)

- Four ca. hourlong interviews online (by the Icelandic rep's) with rep's from four Nordic OFDL institutions in NordFlexOn network, and
- One interview with rep from an Icelandic association on school development
- Other international OFDL associations (web sites)

Continuing work within Iceland (led by Sigurbjörg Jóhannesdóttir, Sólveig Jakobsdóttir, Hróbjartur Árnason)



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# Nordic OFDL Associations: Comparison

Associations	Key concepts in name	Membership  	Finances - staff	Operation: conferences, seminars, publications	Challenges
FUN, 1968 	Flexible	<b>Institutions:</b> Adult ed., Univ., Upper sec. Examples of primary/lower sec.	<b>Government (2/3)</b> Membership fees (1/3) 4 people full time	+++	Financing, ( <u>man-power</u> )
SADE, 1984 	Distance, open, flexible	<b>Institutions &amp; individuals:</b> All school levels and adult ed	Membership fees, projects Volunteers	++++	Financing, Man-power
FLUID, 1988? 	Flexible	<b>Institutions:</b> Adult ed., universities.	Membership fees , 2 people, part time	+	Financing, Man-power
<u>SeOPPI</u> , 2002 	e-learning	<b>Institutions &amp; individuals:</b> All school levels and adult ed	Membership fees , projects 2 people full time	++++	Financing, Man-power



# Nordic OFDL Associations: Purpose - Aims

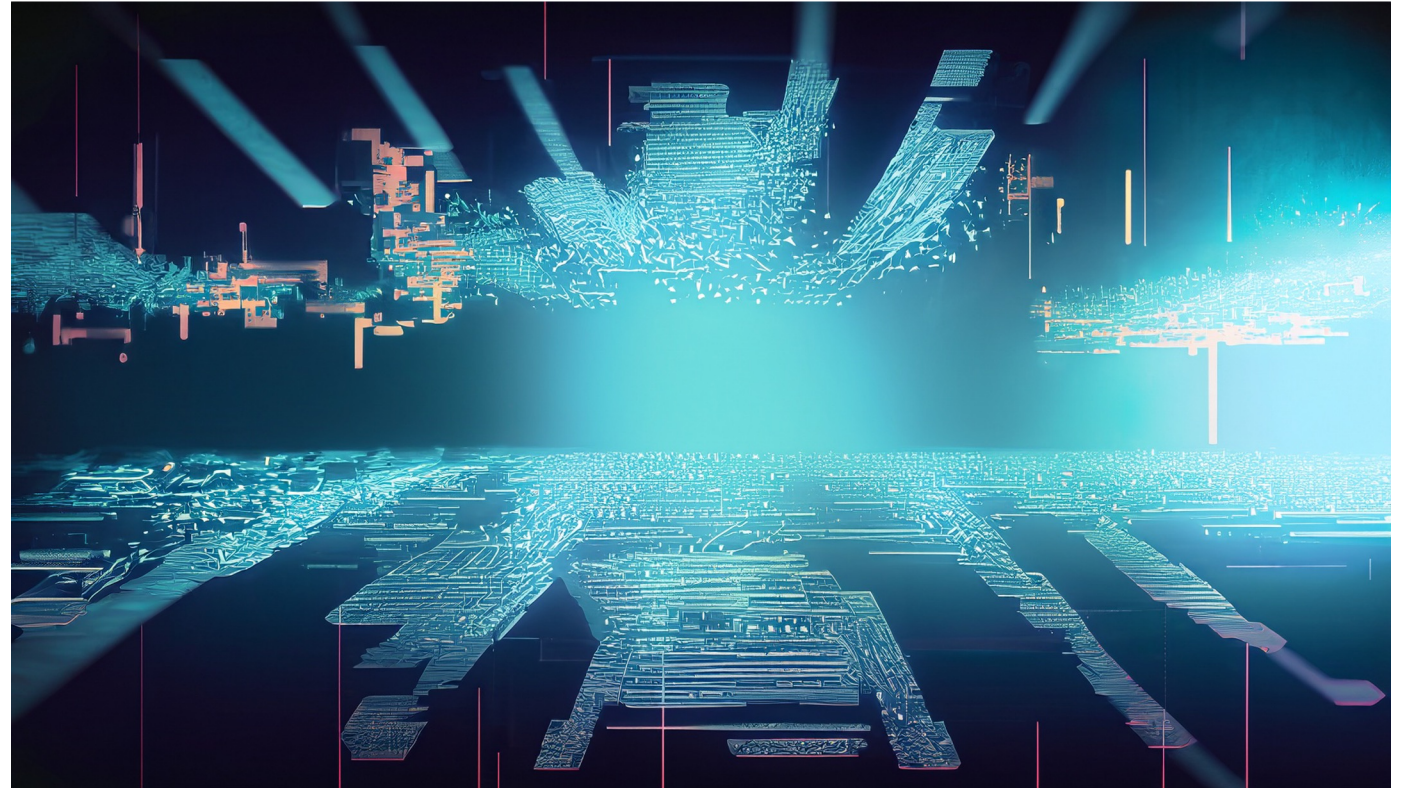


Aims				
<b>Share experience</b>		Initiate an exchange of experience		Share best practices
<b>Networking collaboration</b>	Promote <u>co-operation</u> among its members in matters and initiatives of common interest.	Create open communities		
<b>Knowledge building</b>		Promote development of knowledge	Spread knowledge of flexible and digital forms of learning and teaching within and between all educational sectors.	Carry out research
<b>Development, quality of DE</b>	Develop quality guidelines for the field	Contribute to the development of the area		Promote a new learning culture; impact development of a digital learning culture, come up with new ideas
<b>Other</b>	Make DE more visible, create incentives for those who want to make use of DE			

# Starting an Icelandic Associations for Distance and digital Learning

University of Iceland – School of Education

(with a long history of DE in teacher education) – is leading this work



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# Brainstorming Meeting, Iceland June 2023

## Agenda

- Case study main results – introduction of other ODFL associations
- Survey: should we create Icelandic DE association.
- Brainstorming on purpose, emphasis and target groups.
- Brainstorming on key concepts in name
- Survey: who wants to be involved in further preparation.



111 in 36 workplaces invited to a meeting  
35 (32%) attended from 12 workplaces



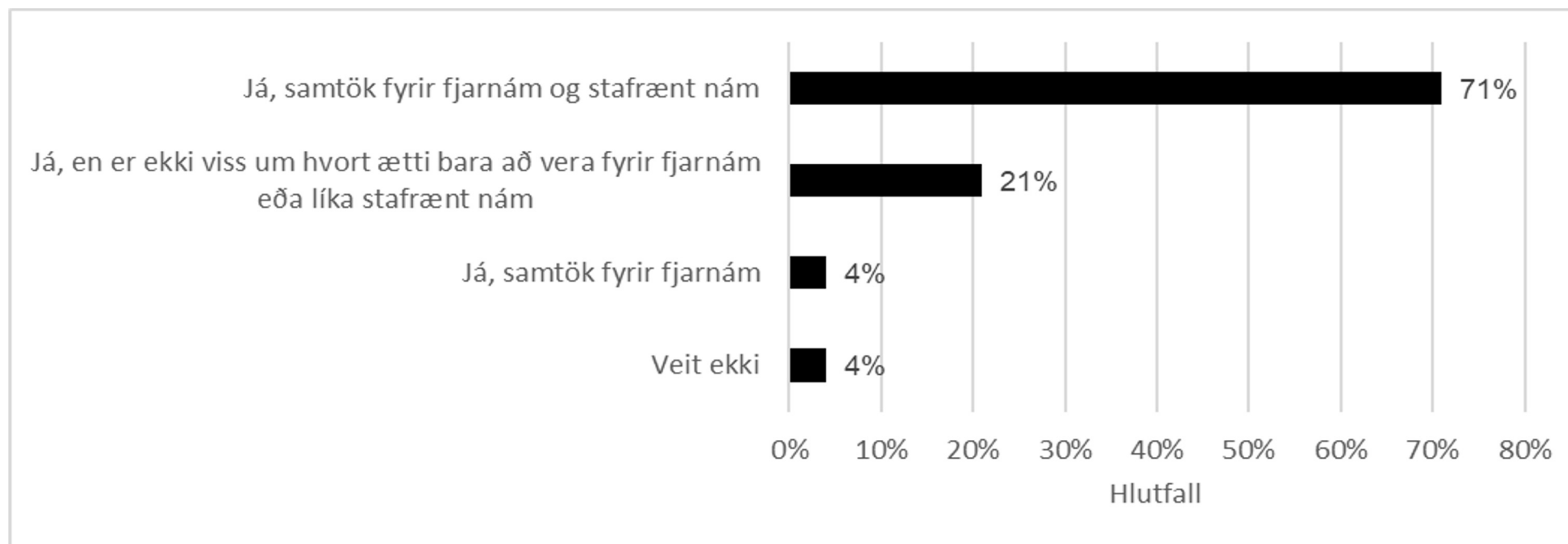
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# Should we create association in Iceland for distance and digital learning



**Yes ,association for distance and digital learning (71%),**

Yes but not sure whether it should be for DE only or also for digital learning (21%);

Yes association for DE (only) (4%), Not sure (4%)

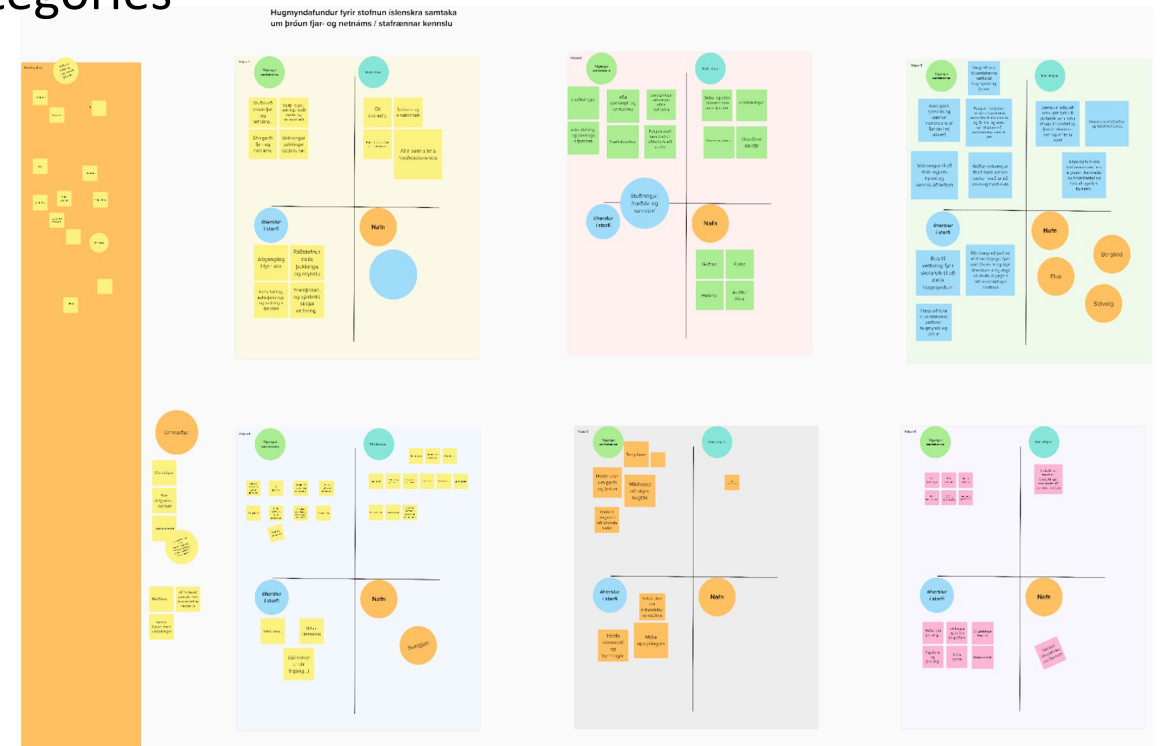




# What should be the purpose and aim?

Group-work at the meeting resulted in 10+ categories

- Access
- Advocacy
- Practice
- Development of DE
- Quality
- Competence development
- Dissemination
- Research and development
- Collaboration
- Visibility
- Events



# Target groups

- Main target group
  - Individuals (associated w different school levels and adult education)
- Other target groups
  - Informal educational entities in the area of adult education,
  - Work places and associations,
  - Formal institutions and/or school departments



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# The associations should be a forum:

- For collaboration:
  - Different institutions and educators
  - To share knowledge about what does and doesn't work
  - Between similar associations in the Nordic countries and beyond



Knowledge, ideas, technology, method, development in the area of DE and DL

- To advocate
- To increase our understanding of DE
- To share the latest teaching methods and technologies
- To share experiences
- To seek and provide support
- To find the latest research results
- To discuss the quality of DE



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# New ODFL association should be

- Forum for dissemination and collaboration.
- Host events
- Support and draw attention to research and development, e.g. regarding quality of OFDL, technologies and pedagogies.
- Increase visibility of OFDL
- Create pressure for government regarding OFDL-related policy.



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# Write key concepts you think should be included in the name for a DE association

Distance learning, digital learning, online learning, distance teaching, flexibility....



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# Conclusions and further work

There appears to be need for an association for DE in Iceland  
Preparation group started work in October with the aim to create the association before the end of 2023.



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# Key topics raised as relevant for the Nordic region and linked to the topic of lifelong learning



- Ecology of learning - education and learning as an ecosystem
- The importance of open, flexible, and distance learning for lifelong learning
- Technical and new skill requirements in the new labour market
- Accessibility and inclusion in education through flexible education
- Learning cycles (lifelong/lifewide).
- Integration of sustainable development goals into institutional strategies



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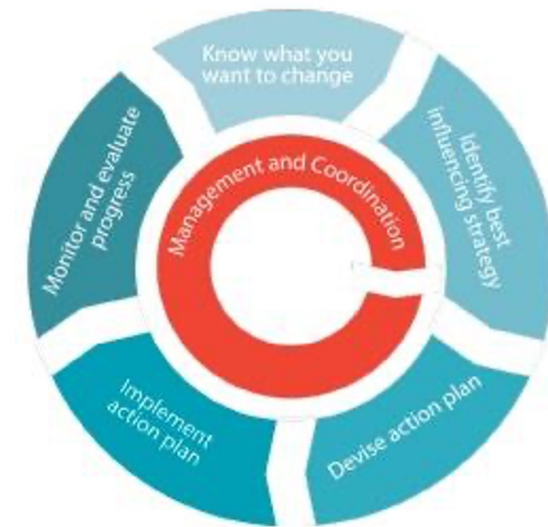
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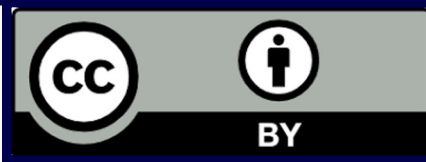
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Many images in this presentation were created by Sigurbjörg Jóhannesdóttir using the AI tool Firefly from Adobe



## THANK YOU!

## CARING IS SHARING, SHARING IS CARING







**Thank you!**

Ebba Ossiannilsson, Sweden; Sólveig Jakobsdóttir, Iceland; John Dalsgaard, Faroe Island; Jörgen Grubbe, Denmark; Kaisa Honkonen, Finland; Sigurbjörg Jóhannesdóttir, Iceland; Ebba Köber, Norway



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