



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KEY WOMEN EDUCATORS
DELTA KAPPA GAMMA™

EUFORIA

Edition 65 Autumn 2025

Dear friends, here is EUFORIA, the Autumn edition of 2025. In this issue, you can read about DKG's work in different countries. Muriel Marsh reflects on her time as a State President, Norway has great plans on renewal and recruitment, we learn about Birgitta Persson from Sweden who received the State Pedagogical Award, there are some updates of the DKG in Germany, thoughts of DKG as a community, Iceland celebrating 50 years and their action plan for the next 2 years and podcast of female leadership among others.

The Conference in Brighton is still very much in the hearts of those who attended. I would like to thank the ones who organised it and all the wonderful women I met this summer. You make DKG great!

Thanks to all the members who contributed exciting articles to this issue. Many thanks to Evelyn Goodsell (GB) for proofreading the articles; she has been a great help.



Kristín Guðbjörg Snæland
Beta Chapter, Iceland

Greetings from your Regional Director

Now the leaves are colouring in yellow, brown and red, we know that winter is coming, and Christmas is on its way. So now it's time to organise St. Lucia's Day. The theme of this year is making handcrafted Christmas cards in an ugly Christmas Sweater. The Zoom meeting will be live on December 12th at 7 pm GMT+1 (Iceland, Great Britain at 6 pm, Norway, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands at 7 pm, and Finland and Estonia at 8 pm).



In my last letter, I told you about the upcoming launch of the new strategic plan. This plan is finished, and you can find it on the International website. It is a plan for the next four years, to guide us to the next century. The task force's revision of the Bylaws has finished its first draft. At the next Administrative Board meeting in the first week of November, we will begin reading and commenting on this draft. In the next months, there will be Zoom meetings Inside International and Town Halls where you will be invited to discuss the new bylaws, which we will bring to a vote at the next Convention in Colorado, June 30th to July 5th, 2026. Go to the international website regularly to find out when the meetings are.

This summer, we had a marvellous first Europe Forum conference in Great Britain, at the University of Sussex. We welcomed 102 participants and enjoyed great food and drinks, music and dancing, but the outstanding keynote speakers and workshop presenters were the major goals of this conference. We reached our goal. Thank you to Diana Bell and her team, and the European Forum, for the outstanding organisation. Also, a big thank you to Kathrin Hudgson who capped the finance in balance. The next European Forum Conference will be in Norway in 2027.

One of our keynote speakers was Louise Evans from Florence, Italy. Spoke about the 5 Chairs, 5 Choices about a way to communicate and the effect of

communication. Last weekend, I had the privilege to meet her in her home town and follow a seminar called the Path to Female Renaissance. We practised with the 5 chairs and experienced what impact the different ways of reacting have on the conversation and relations. Louise became a member of the Netherlands after the conference. We hope that she can inspire us all.

Every state chooses its new board, and the new state officers had a training in New Orleans (SOLT), before the International Conference there. It was an inspiring two days, and the state boards started writing their strategic plan and goals for this biennium. At that training, the State Presidents agreed on setting up goals for Europe. At our last ERD-SOP meeting, the state organisation presidents discussed a combined theme. We follow the international challenge to increase membership to 100 members in 2029, and we are going to work together on research and strategies on how we can get more creativity in all levels of education. Increasing Europe has already started with Louise Evans from Italy and Ewa Krajewska from Poland, who became a member in Germany. If you know anyone in another country who might be interested in DKG, please let me know, and I will reach out to them. Let us try to expand Europe with more members and states.

Marie-Antoinette Hubers de Wolf
Europe Regional Director 2024-2026





Welcoming European Members of DKG to a Vibrant New DKG Year: July 2025 - July 2026. It will be a year of

growth, connection and discovery.



The European Forum Committee members at the conference:

From left to right: Henna Perätalo, Muriel Marsh, Thi Finkemeyer, Marie-Antoinette Hubers-de Wolf, Carola van Zanen-van Rijn, Vilborg Ása Bjarnadóttir, Diana Bell and Kadri Mettis. (not in the picture, but also a member of the EFC is Ann-Katrin)

As we embark on a vibrant new year, we, all the members of the European Forum Committee 2025-2026, extend a warm welcome to all European members of Delta Kappa Gamma (DKG). This year promises to be filled with exciting opportunities to connect, learn, and grow together.



The European Achievement Award 2025

Marika Heimbach from Germany received the European Achievement Award 2025 at the Grand Dinner at the conference at the University of Sussex, Brighton, in Great Britain. She has been a member of DKG since March 1992. She did so many wonderful things for DKG Europe.

You can read more about this special lady on the website under the Achievement Award. Please do!!

www.dkgeurope.org/achievement-award.html



Focus on Educational Topics

Education remains at the heart of DKG's mission. This year, we will delve into various educational topics, exploring new methodologies, innovative teaching tools, and pressing issues in education today. Our first Educational Topic was on October 14th, and the Theme was: **The Ethics of AI**. The Speaker was Dorina Girbovan from Romania. Did you miss the Educational Topic? Look at the European website. <http://www.dkgeurope.org/educational-topics.html>

Celebrating St. Lucia Day

One of the highlights of the upcoming year will be the celebration of St. Lucia Day. This cherished tradition offers a beautiful opportunity for us to come together, honouring the light and warmth of the season. It's a time to celebrate our shared heritage and learn about each other's cultures and practices. We will celebrate this great event on Thursday, December 11th 2025.

Artists in the Spotlight

In addition to our educational pursuits, we will shine a spotlight on artists within our community. Art is a powerful medium for expression and learning, and we are eager to celebrate the creativity and talent of our members. Look forward to exhibitions, performances, and discussions that will inspire and captivate.

The next Artist in the Spotlight are two members from Norway, Anne Marie Solstad and Muriel Marsh.



Anne Marie Solstad



Muriel Marsh

Please look at the website, read more about these great ladies and admire their beautiful art! <http://www.dkgeurope.org/artist-in-the-spotlight.html>

Survey 2025

We sent out a survey after the conference. It was holiday time, so not all members participated. If you didn't participate, please help us and click on the following link.

<https://forms.gle/DBiiCxq1hdH716Tm6>

We thank you so much! The results will come in the next issue of Euforia.

Dates to put on your calendar: (In red is specific to Europe)

- December 1st DKG Ignite LMS Application
- **December 11th St Lucia Day**
- December 15th Bulletin: Collegial Exchange submissions
- **February Submissions for Euforia**
- March 1st Bulletin journal submissions.
- March International Achievement Award recommendations.
- March International Committee Recommendations
- May 1st, SOPS to request an International speaker from the International Speakers Fund
- May 15th Bulletin journal submissions (Be aware that the issue will come in August!)
- **June 30-July 4, 2026 DKG Convention Aurora, Colorado (Gaylord Rockies)**
- Be on the lookout, we plan more inspiring Educational Topics.

Closing Remark

As we move forward into this New Year, let us carry the lessons and inspiration from the conference with us. Together, we can create a year full of growth, connection, and discovery. Welcome to another exciting chapter with DKG! You are the heart of our society. Do you have questions, ideas or remarks contact the EFC member of your country or me.

We love to hear from you! On behalf of the European Forum Committee

Carola van Zanen-van Rijn
Chair of the European Forum Committee 2024-2026

Norway



Reflections at the end of a biennium



I would like to take a little time to reflect upon the last two years as State President. It was with humility and happiness that I took over the role, but also trepidation. I had been a member of the board for some time and had found my comfort zone! Members had given me a vote of confidence, and now was the time to take responsibility. Fortunately, DKG is firmly built on the collective: members supporting each other and building teams together.



Norwegians came to Finland in 2023



Astrid and Muriel in Stockholm

The first SOLT training in 2023 was a huge experiment with all officers from the whole society together for two days in the USA. Suddenly, faces were put to names, later becoming familiar on "Zoom"!



Singing Lucia songs

Becoming a member of the EFC was also a new and refreshing endeavour for me. The EFC had always been something of a mystery, but now the camaraderie became more visible. I have had the fortune to meet up face-to-face with its members twice. Thanks to the whole committee and especially Marie Antoinette for keeping us Europeans together.



Tampere 2023

DKG has also been through big changes, with the Avenue M report charting the challenges our society is facing and providing ideas for the way forward. The challenges uncovered are no different in Norway than in the rest of Society. The two years have flown by. I am immensely grateful to the board members who have always supported me. I am grateful for the new (and younger!) team that has taken over the reins this year.



These are my most important takeaways from these years:

- Have trust in your membership
- Do not be frightened to ask for help
- Accept that not all ambitions can be fulfilled
- Say YES when asked to take office, give a hand or just support
- Stay updated digitally
- Give complements as often as possible and learn to receive them as well!

I wish all the new members of our board in Norway the very best for this biennium. You have had a flying start with the training in New Orleans. We "oldies" look forward to cooperation and sharing our common aims and goals for the next two years. And of course, this applies to all in Europe.

**Muriel Marsh, Past President, Norway,
Delta Chapter.**

DKG-Norway Focuses on Renewal and Recruitment of Future Female Educators

The Epsilon chapter in DKG-Norway is intensifying efforts to recruit new, younger members to ensure local growth and organisational renewal. With an increasing number of retirees in the ranks, new thinking is crucial to maintain DKG as a relevant organisation for educators who have new thoughts and goals.



Kjellbjørg Øydne Austad



Ingrid Christiansen

Targeted Strategy for Growth DKG

Epsilon's main goal is to reach younger members. The strategy places great emphasis on personal contact and thorough information about DKG at local, national, and international levels. It was considered crucial to give potential new members the opportunity to ask their own questions to create the best possible interest and understanding of the organisation's offerings.

Orientation Meeting in February 2020

As part of the early effort, we planned and held an orientation meeting in February 2020 at the University of Agder (UiA). We approached contacts among the educators at UiA and adult education at Kongsgård School Centre to forward the invitation to colleagues. Nine teachers with diverse backgrounds and subject areas showed up. At the meeting, DKG was presented, including the organisations international structure, history, and current focus. The meeting,

which lasted about an hour, highlighted **the great joy, enrichment, and new friendships** the organisation has given members through conferences, meetings, and travels. Discussions included how membership could provide exciting new opportunities.

DKG: Opportunities for Competence and Leadership

The core offerings DKG provides to members, both professionally and socially, were emphasised. Special focus was placed on:

- **Competence and Self-Development:** This includes courses and meeting activities nationally and internationally. Learning and competence development can also happen through active participation, where members themselves can contribute with lectures or information at local, national, or international meetings and conferences.
- **Scholarship Schemes:** DKG offers three main types of scholarships: scholarships for personal and professional development, scholarships for implementing larger projects in teaching, and travel scholarships for participating in conferences. This provides special opportunities to focus on **leadership** and development.
- **Networking and Cooperation:** DKG functions as a knowledge disseminator, premise provider, and **friendship builder**. This includes national, regional, and international meetings, courses, and conferences. Epsilon, for example, has previously conducted useful and motivating cooperation with the Netherlands.
- **Professional Enrichment and Community Engagement:** The organisation emphasises experience exchange, leadership development, and the sharing of professional knowledge to handle challenges in one's own job situation. Targeted cooperation with, for example, education departments and directorates, universities, local schools, and the national labour and welfare administration system, is an important measure to secure new knowledge.

Strategies for Integration and Future Success

To motivate and inspire new members, emphasis is placed on inviting at least a few individuals from the same age group or work environment to create a common background and good cooperation opportunities.

After the orientation meeting, we handed out brochures and invited interested parties to attend local meetings as guests.

Epsilon has also had success in distributing the DKG brochure to female educators whom they considered suitable candidates, which led, among other things, to Helga Bates contacting us. She has been a highly skilled and sympathetic leader for the Epsilon Chapter from 2023-2025.

It is important that new members feel integrated quickly. Epsilon has secured this by assigning new members tasks early, which contributes to their thriving in the environment. A mentor system for following up on new members has also been proposed to ensure good experience exchange and cooperation.

We have since 2020 recruited eleven new members and are now 25 members in the Epsilon chapter, located in Kristiansand.

This summary is translated and written from notes originally written by

Ingrid Christiansen and Kjellbjørg Øydne Austad



Sweden



2025 Swedish State Pedagogical Award Recipient, by Marianne Skardéus

Birgitta Persson, Chi Chapter, Sweden



Birgitta Persson, who serves at Blåshamraskolan in Varberg, has been honoured with the Swedish State Pedagogical Award in recognition of her outstanding contributions as a special education teacher. In Varberg, she also supervises future special teachers and special education teachers at her school—a role that provides her access to the

latest educational research. Birgitta takes particular interest in the brain research conducted by Professor Rolf Ekman and his colleagues. Ekman’s publication, “Brain and Learning – Knowledge for a Future School,” has been especially influential. Working closely with school principal Linda Bellvik, Birgitta is dedicated to shaping the school environment so that every student can acquire meaningful knowledge—an achievement she believes is possible when the brain is engaged effectively.



The school's educational framework is aptly titled "Good Habits." Birgitta is particularly committed to the research methodologies of Ann-Louise Ljungblad, Senior Lecturer in Pedagogics and Special Education Methodology and Technology at the University of Gothenburg. She is a strong advocate of Relational Learning, which she regards as the most effective approach to learning.

The award is presented by the Swedish State, an affiliate of the international DKG – The Delta Kappa Gamma Society. Birgitta Persson's educational background is both extensive and impressive.

Academic and Professional Background

Birgitta began her studies in 1989, focusing on Childhood and Adolescence Studies. She subsequently obtained her teaching qualifications with a specialisation in Pre-School Education and continued to become a qualified teacher for the nine-year compulsory school system. In 2004, Birgitta completed training in Special Education Methodology and Technology, with a particular focus on Upper Secondary School Special Education. Since then, she has consistently expanded her expertise through courses offered by the University of Borås.

At the Habilitation of Youth in Borås, Birgitta deepened her understanding of various diseases and diagnoses, enhancing her competence in mentoring and guidance. Her experience also includes leadership roles within the church, such as leading children's activities and serving as churchwarden.

Community Leadership and Service

Birgitta's skills extend beyond education. She has been active in public service, serving as a lay judge in the District Court and acting as a wedding officiant. Her engagement in committees includes service with the International Committee of the Centre Women in Stockholm and the Skara Diocesan Council. Birgitta worked in schools across Borås for many years, concluding her service in 2014 at the Specialpedagogiskt kompetens centrum, where she was responsible for enrolling students in the Special Education Programme. Reflecting on her career, Birgitta notes, "This job I had when all municipalities in Sweden were obligated to really find out that all students were in the right school form and level. I was

so happy that throughout all my work experiences, I had gained so much knowledge about the feelings and reactions of people.”

Dedication to Chi Chapter and Lifelong Learning

Birgitta also served as chapter president of the Chi chapter in Borås. Even after relocating to Varberg, she remained committed, attending monthly meetings in Borås despite the 180-kilometre distance.

Members of the Chi chapter are immensely proud of Birgitta Persson and believe she is most deserving of this prestigious award.

Marianne Skardéus
Chi Chapter, Sweden

Germany



Updates

from DKG Germany

Here's the latest news and highlights from DKG Germany with emphasis on recent meetings, achievements, and collaborative efforts.

State Meeting in Erfurt: The Beginning of a New Chapter

On April 26-27, 2025, we met at the "Hotel Wilna"; in Erfurt, a great venue to hold our annual State Meeting. It was a special occasion where we elected a new committee.



A heartfelt thank you to Gitta Franke-Zöllmer for her outstanding contributions as State President! We are delighted that she will be continuing her work as Vice President. Additionally, Marika Heimbach will remain in her role as Treasurer, ensuring our financial stability.

The meeting began with passing an important amendment to our statutes. The ensuing report by Marie-Antoinette Hubers de Wolf, our European Regional Director, gave us an update on the work of the European Forum and on the Strategic Plan 2025-29, which will offer several exciting initiatives alongside the programmes supported by DKG Society International.

We also decided to donate 300 euros to the organisation 'Achern miteinander e.' in Achern (Southern Germany). Our DKG member Monika Huber is the chairperson of this association, which primarily supports refugees. The services and activities offered include family support, German language courses, homework assistance, childcare, as well as initiatives aimed at integrating interested newcomers into local sports clubs in Achern.

The event was a great success, thanks in part to an enlightening lecture on "Women's Lives and Women's Literature in the GDR", given by Professor Ilse Nagelschmidt. The lecture was followed by a lively and inspiring discussion. In addition to this, we had a choice of fascinating guided tours in Erfurt, including a visit to the breathtaking Japanese garden at the Erfurt Garden Exhibition, all of which added a delightful touch to our stay. As always, especially appreciated was the opportunity to meet and catch up with friends again.



DKG European Forum Conference in Brighton: Celebrating Education and Wellbeing

From July 18-20, 2025, a group from DKG Germany, including Gitta, Marika, Thi, Janny, Brigitte, and me, had the pleasure of attending the conference in Brighton. The conference centred around "Education and Wellbeing", the theme of a variety of talks and workshops that were on offer. We would also like to say a big thank you to our British colleagues for organising such a diverse and inspiring programme.



Our group in Brighton, together with Beverly Hall-Maugham, International Director

A special highlight for DKG Germany was the presentation of the European Award to Marika Heimbach in recognition of her contribution to DKG. Congratulations, Marika! Your hard work and commitment to our society have been outstanding!



A Heartfelt Brunch in Rastede

Afterwards, on a guided tour of Rastede, we learned about the town's rich history. This included significant and often shocking events of the 20th century, like Nazism, the persecution of Jews, and forced labour. Harrowing facts like these remind us of the importance of remembering our past to shape a more just and equitable future.

After a detour to the so-called "Ellernfest"—a local folk festival featuring plenty of food, drinks and amusement rides, where various clubs, associations and businesses from Rastede showcase their offerings—we reconvened in the conference room for coffee and cake.

This delightful interlude led to an in-depth discussion about memory culture in schools and society, particularly regarding the importance of memorials like the "Stolpersteine" (Stumbling Stones) in Germany and the Netherlands.

We were fortunate to have Anja Szyltowski, a local teacher, present her work involving and promoting memory culture projects. Her present particular project, centred around research into the fate of Jewish families and forced labour during the Nazi period, has evolved into a comprehensive initiative focusing on memory culture. As a result of the ensuing discussion, DKG Society International Germany has decided to contribute to a "Stolperstein" in Rastede and become a member of the "Stolpersteine Rastede e.V." society. Inspired by this, the motto for our work in 2025-2026 will be "Women Remember, Learn, Shape the Future".



Anja Szyltowski presents the project "Stolpersteine" (Stumbling Stones)

We concluded our inspirational day with a dinner together, thankful for the connections made and

the discussions held. A special thank you to Claudia, Daniela, and Jean for their

impeccable organisation, as well as to Marika, Thi and everyone else who contributed to the day's success. We look forward to further rewarding meetings like this one in the future!



Meeting with the ladies from Epsilon NL, with representatives from Stolpersteine Rastede e.V., Ulla Bojert (1st from left) and Anja Szyltowski (3rd from left)

Photos: Armin Krause

Warm regards,
Sabine Krause
(New) State President DKG Germany



Estonia



Continuing the Journey

As I begin my second term as President of DKG Estonia, I do so with gratitude, humility, and renewed determination. When I first accepted the position two years ago, I must admit that I knew very little about the Society's procedures, responsibilities, and the true scope of its mission. Those first years became a period of discovery. Not only learning how DKG functions, but also realising how profoundly it can shape both professional and personal growth. I saw how much can be achieved when passionate women educators join their strengths, experiences, and hearts in the same direction. The biennium passed far too quickly, and it felt as though our work had only just begun. That realisation encouraged me to continue, giving our ideas time to flourish and helping DKG Estonia grow stronger and more visible.



One of our key initiatives is the Early Career Educators Project, developed and led by Beta Chapter. The project brings together early-career educators eager to collaborate and share their classroom stories. Teaching is not only a deeply meaningful vocation; it is also one of the most rewarding professions in the world. Yet, new teachers often face significant challenges, including increasing workloads and the risk of burnout. The main aim of our project is to help new

teachers remain motivated, inspired, and confident in their roles. We strive to create a supportive environment where they can exchange ideas, discuss challenges, and celebrate achievements. In Estonia, as in many other countries, teacher burnout and the shortage of educators entering the profession are real and pressing concerns. That's why another key goal of the project is to equip participants with practical tools and strategies to prevent burnout. This initiative reflects Goal 1, Support Members, of the DKG Strategic Plan 2025–2029 and responds directly to Call to Action 1, which focuses on addressing educator burnout and strengthening the profession through connection and care.

Meaningful projects can thrive only when our Society is both visible and understood. Visibility matters not because of prestige, but because it helps us build genuine connections. DKG should be recognised in Estonia as a vibrant community of dedicated women who value education, collaboration, and shared growth. Through active projects, professional partnerships, and clear communication, we aim to reach new audiences and attract members who share our ideals. In doing so, DKG Estonia advances Call to Action 3, which encourages members to invite friends and colleagues to join, as well as Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan, focused on building human, financial, and professional resources.

Our greatest challenge as a Society is member inactivity, which often results from the heavy workload many educators face. Teachers in Estonia, as elsewhere, have demanding schedules and numerous responsibilities that leave little time or energy for additional involvement. As a result, even the most inspiring ideas may be postponed. From my own experience, however, every DKG meeting brings renewed motivation and energy. When members gather to plan, share experiences, or simply enjoy each other's company, the atmosphere is filled with friendship, support, and enthusiasm. This sense of belonging reminds us of the true value of DKG, as it restores the strength and positivity that daily work can sometimes diminish.

Therefore, to help our members remain inspired and active, meetings, informal gatherings, and especially conferences are of great importance. During the latest SOLT training, our DKG International President, Dr. Beverly Hall-Maughan, reminded us that our shared goal is to lead with authenticity and passion. Those words resonated deeply with me and inspired the theme of our next DKG Estonia

conference, "Authenticity and Teamwork." The conference will take place in Pärnu, Estonia, on 25 April 2026, and all our European friends are warmly invited to join us. Together, we will explore how being genuine, self-aware, and collaborative can make us stronger as individuals and as a community of educators.

Learning about my own strengths and weaknesses and understanding the power of authenticity have been among the greatest lessons I have gained from DKG. This organisation has shown me that true leadership begins with sincerity, empathy, and a willingness to keep learning. I am deeply grateful to the members of DKG Estonia who have once again placed their trust in me. Together, I believe we can continue to lead with heart, building a community that inspires, supports, and truly makes a difference in the lives of educators across Estonia and beyond.

Siiri Vimberg, DKG Estonia

The State President of Estonia



Iceland



DKG in Iceland

The first chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma in Iceland was founded in 1975, the Alpha Chapter. The organisation in Iceland has therefore celebrated its 50th anniversary this year. To mark the occasion, the state board decided to publish a book about the organisation in Iceland for 50 years, which will be released in the coming weeks. The book will be available in an online edition, and it will also be printed in a limited number of copies. The chapters in Iceland have also been encouraged to commemorate the anniversary in their local communities.



This summer, 14 Icelandic DKG women attended the European Forum conference in Brighton, England. Bryndís Jóna Jónsdóttir, president of the Gamma Chapter, was one of the keynote speakers at the conference. Her lecture was titled "Flourishing educators, flourishing education – the importance of educators' occupational well-being." My experience of the conference was, above all, one of unity, encouragement, and friendship. There was a sincere desire to get to know women from other countries, to engage in conversation, and to build connections.



Bryndís Jóna Jónsdóttir, one of the keynote speakers at the European Forum

Following the conference in Brighton, five state board members attended a training course in New Orleans, USA, for new national boards, organised by the international organisation. A goal was set at the training course to increase the membership of the International Society with 100 members by 2029, when the organisation will be 100 years old". The European group, under the leadership of Marie Antoinette, the European president, subsequently decided

to aim for an increase of 100 members in Europe alone during the same period. At both of these conferences, leadership skills were discussed, with an emphasis on teamwork carried out with confidence, kindness, and perseverance in tackling challenges.



The European participants at the training course in New Orleans.



The Icelandic board members are enjoying a good time in New Orleans.

The primary goal of our organisation is to strengthen the connections between women who work in the education sector around the world. It is of great importance to foster the personal and professional growth and self-confidence of women, and that work takes place especially within the local chapters. I believe that the best tool we have in today's world to promote peace and counter hunger and other man-made disasters lies in the increased education of women and in building connections between educational systems of societies. I like to think that this is the main goal and mission of our DKG organisation.

We are now experiencing troubled times here in the Western world — times we could not have imagined a few years ago. We are witnessing wars and conflicts in Europe and elsewhere, where ordinary people suffer the most from the situation. The rights of women and minority groups are under threat — rights that we once believed were well secured in our part of the world.

At the end of August, the executive board of DKG in Iceland met to prepare an action plan for the 2025–2027 term. The action plan is based on a long-term DKG plan that was developed in 2021 and is valid until 2031.

The main elements of the long-term plan are:

1. Participation in the organisation strengthens and supports members and offers opportunities for growth and development within the organisation's work.
2. To strengthen the organisation in Iceland so that members feel they are part of a unified whole, of which they are proud to be a part.
3. The organisation is recognised and respected in society for its work in the field of education.
4. To develop methods, tools, and projects that enhance the organisation's activities.

In the action plan for this term, 2025 – 2027, emphasis is placed on the following:

1. Empowering members to share their knowledge at meetings and conventions, encouraging active participation within the chapters and the national organisation, increasing membership and promoting participation in conferences both domestically and abroad.
2. Each chapter should hold a meeting with another chapter during the term, where a member provides educational content. Members are encouraged to attend meetings of other chapters. Each chapter should present information about the activities of the international organisation and encourage women to participate in international work, such as serving on committees.
3. Each chapter, or chapters in cooperation, should organise and host an introductory meeting about the organisation in their local community – for example, for women interested in educational work, administrators, staff of educational institutions, and associations.
4. Chapters should post their meetings and topics in the event calendar on the website dkg.is so that members can follow updates and request to attend as guests for educational sessions. The national board should consult with chapters about ideas for projects within the organisation and present those ideas.

At the meeting where we worked on our action plan, the participants discussed the many women of foreign origin who work in education in Iceland and how wonderful it would be to welcome many of them into our organisation. Who knows — this might even lead to DKG chapters being founded in their home countries. In the 10-year long-term plan of DKG in Iceland, emphasis is placed on increasing membership with diversity as a guiding principle. We have already expanded diversity within the organisation regarding educational work. It is also interesting to explore what else diversity can entail. We must also be mindful that with increased diversity, we must focus on inclusion — that every DKG woman feels a sense of belonging in the organisation, that she is a valued and respected member who holds significance and esteem within her chapter.

Hrund Logadóttir
The Icelandic State President

The Netherlands



Podcast: Is It Time for More Female Leadership?

On February 26, 2025, Marike Venema and Marie-Antoinette Hubers recorded a podcast together with Tjip de Jong from Tjipcast. Both are members of DKG Netherlands—Marike in Groningen and Marie-Antoinette in Amsterdam. The topic was about increasing female leadership in education. Marike has spent the past few decades as a principal at various elementary schools in the north of the country. Currently, she's the director of the Brederoschool, which has just over 550 students.

In the podcast, Marike describes how school leadership has changed over the years. When she started her career, there were hardly any female principals. Most schools were run by men. Female teachers mostly taught the lower grades, while male teachers usually taught the upper grades. Thankfully, things started to change as women began to claim their positions. The first management courses for



female school leaders were introduced. Marike herself took a five-day course in those early days—school and management—which, to her surprise, devoted an entire day to advice on clothing. These days, women are fully involved in the management world, and training for men and women is equal. Despite this progress, it still seems that women have to prove themselves more than men. You see this in every sector, including education. That’s why organisations like DKG remain so important. Even in Western countries, it’s crucial for women to help, mentor, encourage, and inspire each other to take on and aspire to leadership roles. Making a difference for women and girls in less democratic countries is even more important—there’s still a lot of work to be done.

People often distinguish between male and female leadership. Male leadership is seen as more masculine, female leadership as more feminine. Male leadership is thought to be more direct, assertive, and results-oriented—the male leader gives direction, delegates tasks, makes decisions, and creates a competitive atmosphere focused on tackling challenges. Female leadership is seen as more collaborative, empathetic, and focused on developing others. Encouragement and support are key, and the work environment is motivating, coaching, and relationship-focused.

It’s good to know and recognise the different leadership styles. A good leader uses both masculine and feminine styles, but especially the styles that fit them best. Marike has seen amazing female and male school leaders, but also ones who struggled—regardless of gender. Things often go wrong when empathy is

lacking; people need to feel seen and heard, and within the agreements and goals set together, there should be room for personal input and ownership. It's the principal's job to bring out the best in people, both individually and as a team. Usually, that works best in a positive and safe work environment. Honestly, it seems that women, generally speaking, are better at that than men, but women shouldn't lose sight of results and need to be able to make tough decisions when necessary. Using both masculine and feminine qualities is essential. Leading by example really matters. Maybe by using both sets of qualities, Marike has only ever had great, high-performing teams at the four schools and organisations she's led. Of course, things come up sometimes, that's part of the job. But it's all about how you handle and solve them. You always need to respect people and keep things in perspective. What's the cause, what's underneath, can we work it out together, what does the person need, can we make agreements and stick to them, and so on? The most important thing is a positive, safe, and professional work environment—a place where people work from a clear, shared vision, where you call each other out on the good things but also on the things that need improvement. There should be room for innovation that fits the school's vision, space for personal expertise, and a place where you can be yourself within the assignment. Happy teachers create happy kids. Happy kids are open to learning and creating, and that's what it's all about.

Marie-Antoinette Hubers is the Europe Regional Director and an international leader in the association across eight countries in Europe. She's also a member of the association's executive board.

She shares her experiences about how the association motivated her to take on a leadership role and the opportunities it gave her. She quickly became chapter secretary and then chapter president. After helping organise an international conference, she was given the chance to attend the Leadership Management Seminar (Golden Gift) at the University of Texas in Austin. Those two weeks gave her the opportunity to strengthen her leadership skills and discover what kind of leader she is. The seminar was a



life-changing moment, allowing her to grow both professionally and within the association. Growing up, she was often told she wouldn't make it, but thanks to this experience, she's been able to achieve many dreams. The association recognised her talents and encouraged her to contribute internationally for all members and non-members. She's grateful for the opportunities she's had and thankful to the colleague who introduced her. This year marks her 18th year as a member.

The podcast is still available on Spotify at Tjipcast, March 16, 2025. It is Dutch-speaking, but a translation can be downloaded.

Marie-Antoinette Hubers

Marika Venema



Great Britain



As the newly appointed UK State President, I was delighted to attend SOLT training in New Orleans this July. I returned home feeling excited to start my new role.



State Presidents in New Orleans

After discussions with chapter members, we agreed that the theme for this biennium will be "Creativity, Community, and Education." This reflects our shared concern about the decline of creativity in schools, where there is an overemphasis on core subjects and standard assessments. It is also felt that the needs of vulnerable children are not adequately addressed, and we see a worrying decline in traditional values, such as resilience among young people. We will be exploring these issues.

French Market



In October, we enjoyed a wonderful Zoom session led by Luke—a young man who struggled to “fit in” within mainstream education and was home-schooled until the age of eight. Through art and performance poetry, Luke discovered confidence and a sense of

belonging. His journey took him to university, and today he teaches at a specialist dyslexia school while also organising poetry events. His presentation was wonderful! We all thoroughly enjoyed it.

Beignets



Looking ahead, we are preparing our contribution for St. Lucy’s Day and meeting up at our Christmas ‘get together’.

Aileen Dickson
UK, State President

