

# Icelandic Regional Development Institute (IRDI)

## The Fragile Communities program (FC program)



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BYGGÐASTOFNUN

# Background for the Fragile communities program

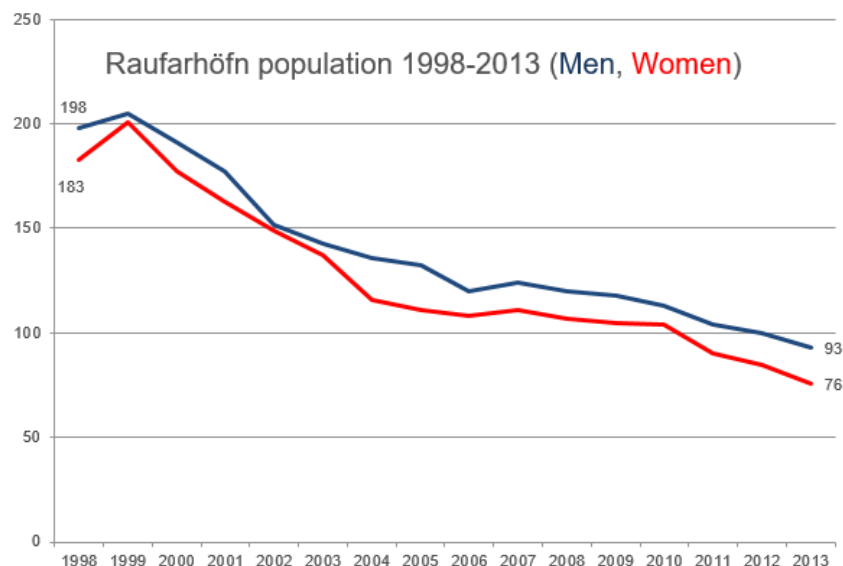
A number of rural communities in Iceland have for the last 10-20 years experienced difficult times for several reasons. For instance:

- **Lack of diversity in the local economy**, where fishing and/or farming traditionally are the largest sectors
- **Changes in access to fisheries** – since 1990s the quota system and vast technological changes have been driving accumulation of quota into larger companies and in fewer communities but with fewer jobs.
- **Decline in farming**, especially Sheep-farming, due to decline in sales plus technological changes
- **Seasonal tourism**. Tourism is growing but in the countryside in North-West, North and East-Iceland it is still merely thriving during the summer
- **Negative spiral in services**. Driven with decline in population, politics and technological changes, a negative spiral with decline in public services and other services has taken a big toll of jobs and people
- **Infrastructure development lags behind** in the rural communities



## Background cont.

- Merely Ad-hoc measurements used to help those communities suffering. Often after a hit of a big crises, such as huge loss of fishing quota and jobs.
- The village Raufarhöfn in NE-Iceland had since the year 2000 been hit the hardest in loss of quota and jobs, followed by over 51% decline in population in 14 years.
- The Icelandic Regional Development Institute (IRDI), the municipality and the local regional development agency decided in 2012 to initiate an effort in working with the local community in order to develop counter-measurements based on local ideas and efforts.



# The Fragile communities program pilot project, „*Raufarhöfn and the future*“

- Discussions and planning second half 2012
- A community meeting January 2013
- A two days, so called Open Space meeting where the local people defined the agenda and discussions but the process was lead by a specialist in community participation.
- The results were a number of ideas ordered by priority
- Highest priority was getting more fishing quota.
- One of the major priorities was to hire a project manager for Raufarhöfn
- Project manager from March 2012



# The Raufarhöfn project got attention from the Government and other communities in 2013

- Need for support in quite many communities
- Political willingness for the whole country to thrive
- Lack of other methods and limited success in helping some fragile communities so far
- Resulted in;
  - Formally introducing the new program as The Fragile Communities program
  - Political and financial support from the parliament from 2013
  - Twelve communities applying for participation in summer 2014
  - More demand than IRDI could serve simultaneously



# Three more communities to enter in 2013

- Late 2013 selection of three communities based on recommendations from local area associations in West-East- and South\_Iceland.
  - Bíldudalur, a former fishing village in Westfjords
  - Breiðdalur, a fishing and farming community in East-Iceland
  - Skaftárhreppur, a farming and service community in South-East-Iceland
- Program start with Open-space weekends but a rather vague follow up in the months after by steering committees
- No project managers the first one and a half year



## Need for to further define the Fragile communities program in 2014-2015

- Visit to Norway to learn about „Regional omstilling“ program lead by Innovation Norge.  
[www.regionalomstilling.no](http://www.regionalomstilling.no)
- In house evaluation of program by IRDI and partners in the local development agencies.
- Government evaluation of the program, performed by EY in Iceland. Finished spring 2015.
- IRDI developed and published guidelines for the Fragile communities program in early 2016.



# Lessons from 2012-2015

- Not feasible to work with too many communities at the same time
- Necessary to develop method for to select communities to enter the program at any given time
- A couple of years is too short. Work for up to five years in each community
- Necessary to have a project manager linked to every community/project
- Positive to be able to support initiatives with project grants
- Necessary to strengthen the alignment between the projects and the outside stakeholders, especially the government and its ministries and agencies



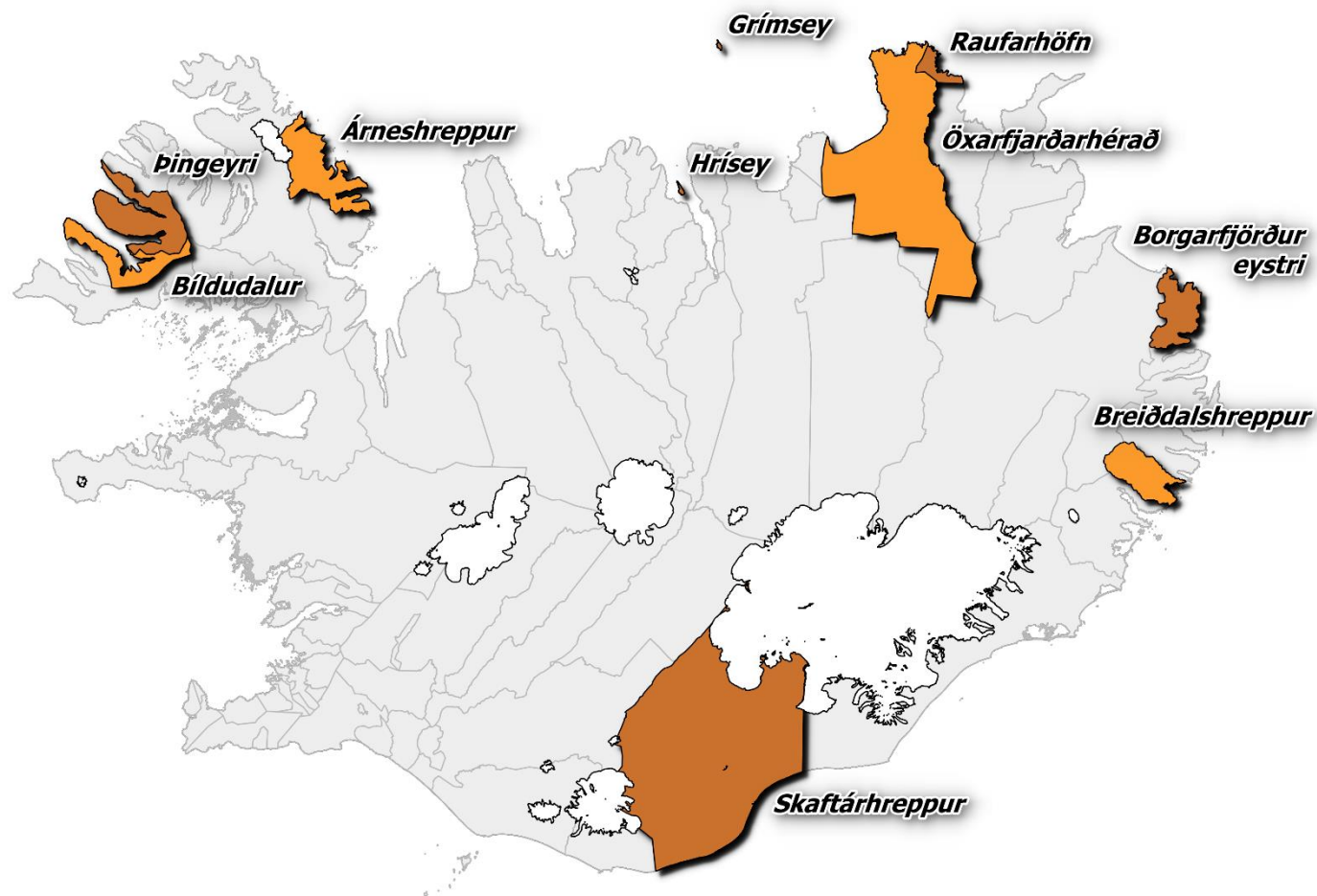


# How to select the communities?

- Not feasible to try to work with more than six to eight simultaneously given IRDI staff and program finance
- Defined a kind of „Scale of fragility“:
  - Demographical factors like number of inhabitants, age, gender balance etc. (50%)
  - The real estate market situation (5%)
  - Geographical situation and number of people in local labor market (20%)
  - Other factors (local economy, financial position of municipality, income, internet connection) (25%)

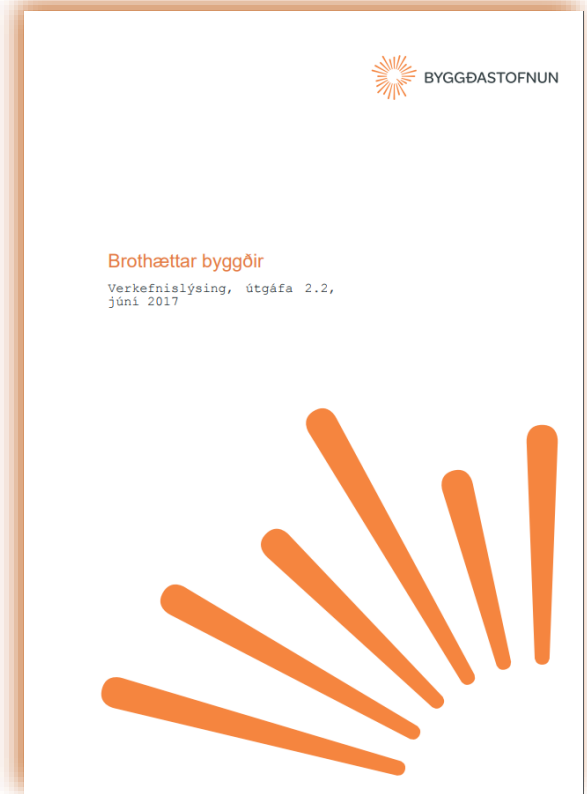


# Fragile communities 2012-2018



# Formal description of Fragile communities program 1. version published in 2016

- Emphasis on collaboration and empowerment of local population together with efforts to align local priorities and public municipal and government actions
- In every participating community a vision and goals are defined, based on analysis and conclusions from local week-end Open-space workshop.
- Work continued in a phased process, lead by a project manager once the goals have been defined and accepted by the community in a meeting.
- The program description can be found at <https://www.byggdastofnun.is/is/brothaettar-byggdir/verkefnalysing> (in Icelandic)



# Goals for the Fragile communities program in Iceland:

- Main goal:
  - To stop ongoing depopulation in the smaller villages and remote rural areas in the country
- Sub-objectives:
  - To increase resilience of fragile communities against deterioration such as depopulation, higher average age and crisis in local economy
  - To positively impact initiative and cooperation amongst the local people and increase their awareness regarding positively impacting their own community
  - To allow for involvement of local people in prioritizing matters to focus on
  - To align efforts and decisions made by the government, the municipality, public institutions, local business and the local people in matters concerning the fragile community
  - To use the program to identify matters that are relevant in several fragile communities and work on solutions in cooperation with the government and other stakeholders.



# Project board in each community

- The local people, 2-4 representatives
- IRDI, 2 representatives
- The municipality, 1 representative
- The Regional association of municipalities/The local development organization, 2 representatives



# Phased approach

- Preparations (< 6 Months)
  - Analysis of the situation in the community, discussions of possible participation in the FC-program and initiation of project board for the community.
- Development of strategy and goals (< 6 Months)
  - Community workshop (Open space), processing of assumptions from analysis and workshop, definition of goals and program orientation
- Execution (2 – 3 Years)
  - Work on projects, yearly revision of progress and goals
- Close ( ½ - 1 Year)
  - Work on ensuring progress and finding channels for unfinished projects in order to continue the efforts

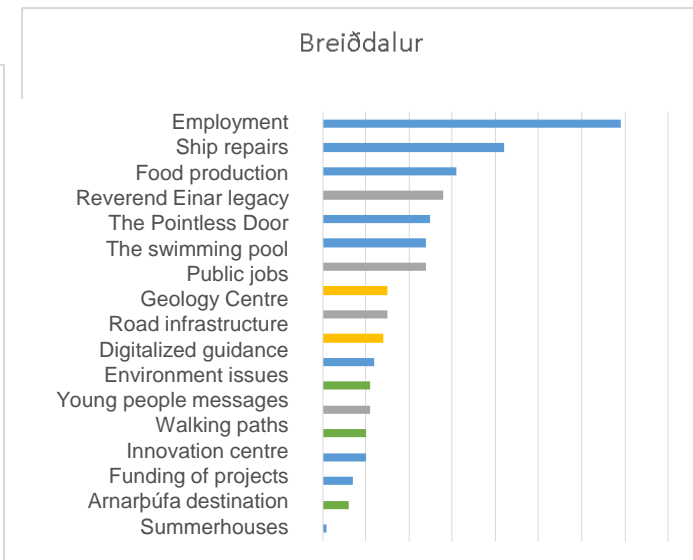
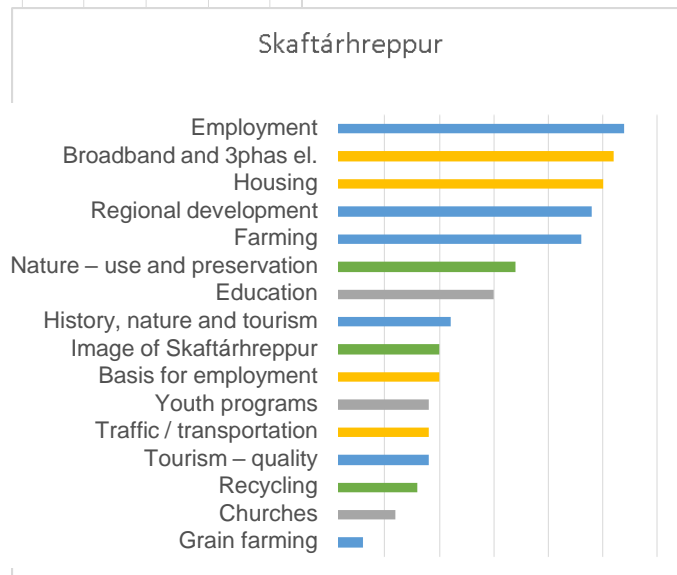
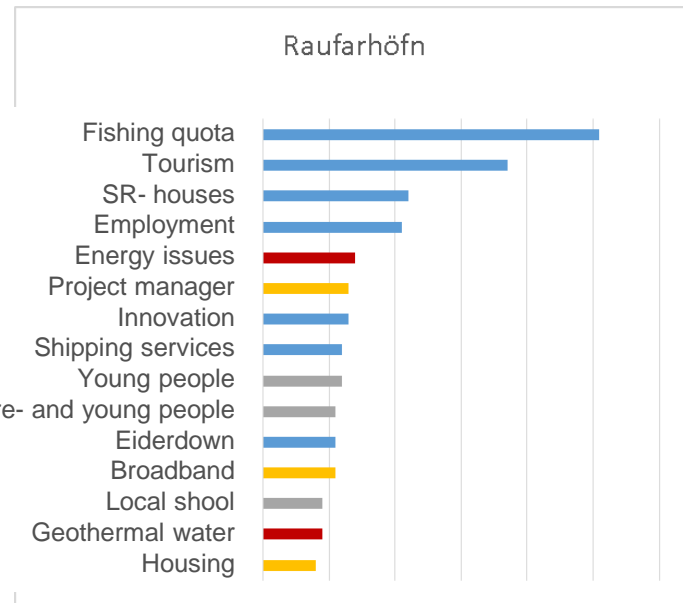
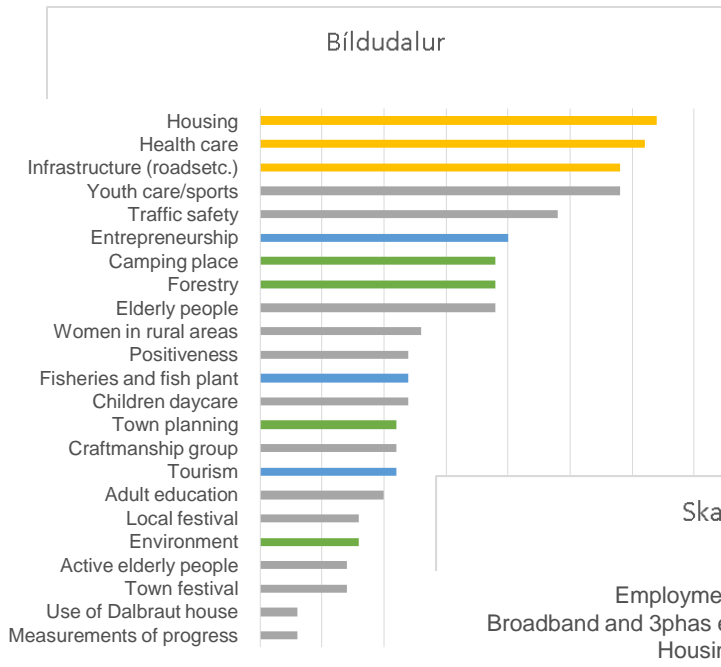


# Participation of local population is a key-factor in the program

- Possible involvement in application to FC program (residents' association)
- Represented in FC-board
- Weekend workshop and yearly public meetings
- Private efforts / projects
- Cooperation with FC-program manager and FC-board during the FC-project lifetime (especially execution and closing phases), for example with participation in consultation groups in various sub-projects



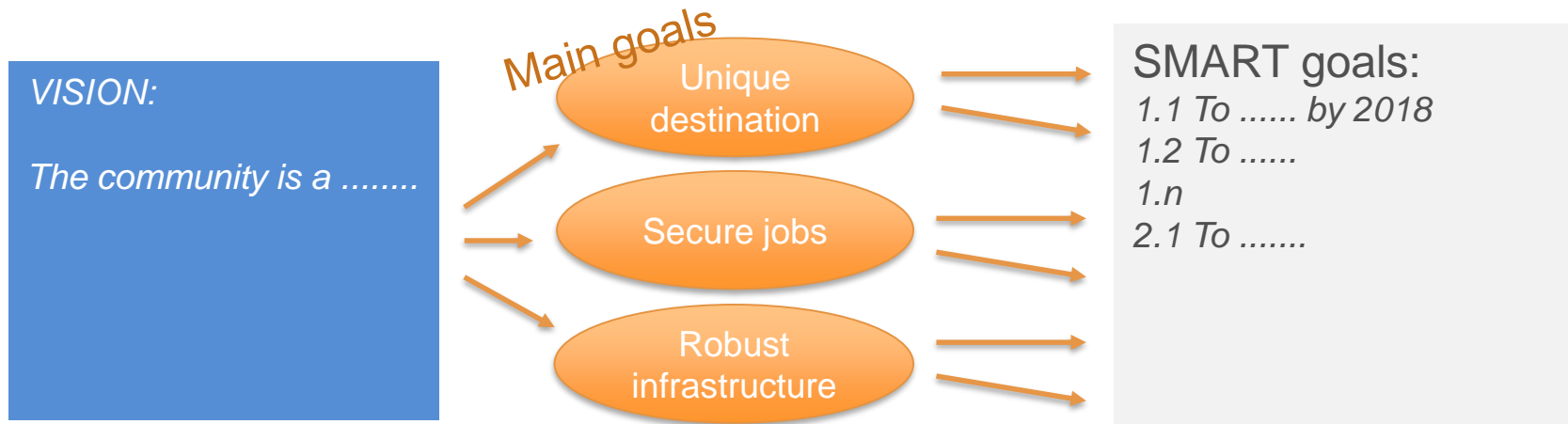
# Examples of prioritization from public workshop





# Project plan structure

- Vision for the community at the end of the program, based on public workshop prioritized tasks and analysis of situation
- Three to four Main goals to support the vision
- SMART goals to further define paths to the Main goals
- Tasks to be performed under each SMART goal



# Project plan for every FC-community

Skaftárhreppur til framtíðar  
**Framtíðarsýn 2020**  
 Greinargerð verkefnisstjórnar í október 2016



## Hrísey, perla Eyjafjarðar

### Framtíðarsýn 2018:

Hrísey skartar vel hirtu og fallegu umhverfi, sannkölluð perla. Samfélagunni í sjávarútvegi en býr einnig við nokkra fjölbreytni í atvinnu, með ferðaþjónustu er vaxandi atvinnugrein. Siglingar skapa sérstöðu eyja og miða þær að þörfum notenda þannig að eyjan er hluti af sameiginlegri grænni. Hrísey er fallegt og gott samfélag þar sem samheldni, rólegheit og náttúru

### Meginmarkmið:

Eftirfarandi meginmarkmið hafa það hlutverk að sameina sýn íbúa og annars staða á það hvert stefnir. Þeim er ætlað að "toga" samfélagið í átt að framfarismarkmiðum og aðgerða sem af þeim leiða.

- Aðlaðandi og aðgengilegt eyjarsamfélag
- Fjölbreytt atvinnulíf
- Sterkir innviðir



## Raufarhöfn og framtíðin



### Meginmarkmið 1: Sérstæður áfangastaður

- Starfsmarkmið:
- 1.1 Að 90% íbúðahúsa í þorpinu sé viðhaldið. Húfuðatriði að ásvindin sé góð vegna starfsemi í ferðaþjónustu og anda í þorpinu. Fyrir lok árs 2017. Ábyrgð: Íbúasamtök í samráði við ??????
  - 1.2 Delliskipulag SR svæðisins. Ábyrgð: Verkefnisstjóri ROF. Í lok árs 2016
  - 1.3 Að umnið verði frekar úr niðurstöðum vinnuhóps varðandi SR svæðið og að minnsta kosti tvær byggingar verði komnar í notkun fyrir lok árs 2017. Ábyrgð: Atvinnurekendur og verkefnisstjóri ROF
  - 1.4 Festa í sessi og auka starfsemi Rannsóknastöðvarinnar Rifs í hálfitt starf fyrir lok árs 2017. Ábyrgð: Stjórn Rannsóknastöðvarinnar Rifs ses.
  - 1.5 Skiltavæðing - Að uppfæra skilti í bænum með upplýsingum um söguna, úrnefni og fleira. Fyrir lok sumars 2017. Ábyrgð: Verkefnisstjóri ROF og íbúar.
  - 1.6 Að það séu móttökuskilti við leiðir inn í bæinn og að stíkaðar séu gönguleiðir á Sléttunni. Skilti á staðnum og ein gönguleið verði stíkuð fyrir vor 2017. Ábyrgð: Ferðafélagið Norðurljóð, Norðurþingi og verkefnisstjóri (ROF) ásamt íbúasamtökunum varðandi þorpið sjálft.
  - 1.7 Kortleggja eldri hús á svæðinu og gildi þeirra sem standa ennþá. Skoða Álsborg og skilti á húsum þar. Ábyrgð: Verkefnisstjóri ROF í samvinnu við Norðurþing. Þegar hafid og verður komið vel á veg með Heildarsýnarverkefni. Lok vors 2016.
  - 1.8 Að koma upp amk. einu mannvirki/aðstöðu til náttúruskoðunar á Austur-Sléttu fyrir árslok 2017 (Birding-Iceland). Ábyrgð: Fuglastigur í samstarfi við Ríf og verkefnisstjóra ROF.
  - 1.9 Að skapa tvö stórf í greinum sem nýta sérstöðu svæðisins og geta hófað til yngra fólks með fjölþætta menntun og bakgrunn. Fyrir árslok 2017. Ábyrgð: Verkefnisstjóri/verkefnisstjóri ROF.
  - 1.10 Að gera félagsstarf og listsköpun eldri borgara sýnilegt ferðafólki fyrir árslok 2016. Ábyrgð: MP í samstarfi við FER, Norðurþing og verkefnisstjórn ROF.
  - 1.11 Að gera höfnina aðgengilega fyrir ferðamenn fyrir árslok 2016. Ábyrgð: Atvinnurekendur við höfnina í samráði við verkefnisstjóra ROF (GPG, HH, félag smábátasjóðmanna og Norðurþing)
  - 1.12 Að skapa skjara sýn á það hvernig nota á heimskautsbauginn sem aðdráttarafli og vettvang fyrir upplifun ferðamanna. Fyrir árslok 2016. Ábyrgð: Norðurþingi í samstarfi við verkefnisstjóra ROF.



Mynd 2- Drekin. Meigi Ólafsson smíðaði listaverk á höfnina

## Grants for local projects

- During the last three years FC have been able to give grants to local projects that support FC-goals
- Approximately 40-56 thousand EUR/year in each community
- In late year 2017 there had been made decisions on 140 grants
- The supported projects are diverse and relate to both business and community. Examples are for instance events, local food production, tourism related projects and community projects



# A few examples of progress in Fragile communities

- More local participation and initiative
- Special program on fishing quota contracts administrated by the Icelandic Regional Development Institute, a program developed from the FC program in Raufarhöfn (FC pioneer community)
- Increased number of applications to other development funds and increased score
- Establishment of the Rif research center in Raufarhöfn, international cooperation and monitoring of nature. (INTERACT, CAFF)
  - <https://rifresearch.is/>
- Renovation and new activities in the old Fishing factory in Breiðdalsvík
- Cooperation with The National Energy Authority in Iceland, grants to energy-saving projects in houses in Raufarhöfn and Breiðdalur
- Many promising private projects, for example Breiðdalsbiti in Breiðdalur og Kind-adventure in Skaftárhreppur:
  - <https://www.facebook.com/pg/breiddalsbiti/posts/>
  - <http://www.kindadventure.is/>



# We are still learning



# Thank you for your interest in the Fragile communities program in Iceland



Further information at [www.byggdastofnun.is](http://www.byggdastofnun.is)  
or by e-mail: [postur@byggdastofnun.is](mailto:postur@byggdastofnun.is)

