

# WHO IS FEIF?

FEIF unites people in their passion for the Icelandic horse

FEIF is the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations, composed of Icelandic Horse associations in 21 countries. FEIF, from the German Föderation Europäischer Islandpferde-Freunde (Federation of European Icelandic Horse Friends), was established in 1969 in Switzerland. As a federation of national associations, FEIF is also the sum total of the members of these organisations. That means: FEIF really is you – and about 80,000 other people who love, ride, breed, care for, and passionately enjoy the Icelandic horse, wherever they may live, from Iceland to New Zealand. Phew – that is huge! But does it really help to answer the question? This series of FEIF leaflets on breeding, education, leisure riding, sports and youth work will explain the work of FEIF, and how we achieve our goals.



International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations

[www.feif.org](http://www.feif.org)

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Photos: Axel Weber, Gundula Sharman



YOUTH



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## FEIF YOUTH WORK A QUESTION OF BALANCE

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## Fairness and friendship

In all walks of life, those involved with young people know that the new generation does things differently: they use a different language, they engage with different media, and most of all, young people everywhere are striving to do things better. Youth work is important to all organisations within FEIF: we want to promote good horsemanship skills, we want to encourage openness and curiosity in how things are done in different countries, and in a world of conflict and deep suspicion of strangers, we need to meet, and learn to listen to others. Furthermore, we want to ensure the future development of the FEIF world, led by people with some experience, insight and a shared vision.

## The Camp and the Cup

Normally, when organising an event such as a summer camp, or training events for children and young people, the ground work is done locally, regionally or nationally. At international level there are endless issues with costs, language, liability, transport, finding a date, the list goes on. But a problem is only a problem, if you cannot find solutions ...

In that spirit, FEIF Youth Work began in 1988 with a FEIF YouthCamp held in the Netherlands, which has continued ever since in alternate years. The event is non-competitive, participants do not bring their own horses. But instead the focus is on collaboration, making friends across the Icelandic horse world, and learning about the (horse) culture of the host nation. A decade later in 1995, the first international FEIF YouthCup was held in Luxembourg. The FEIF YouthCup is an elite international sporting event, which happens every two years. Interested young people need to qualify at home,



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and some travel great distances to participate in a week spent in serious training and friendly competition. The development of top sport riders is mainly a national responsibility, but it becomes an international concern in the World Championships, where since 2013, there is a special award for young riders, complete with the title of Young Rider World Champion of a given discipline.

## Ideas and initiative

In spite of the fact that developments in social media and the internet have opened up great opportunities for collaborative work without borders, it is still true that effective youth work needs to be done on the ground, with real people and real horses. This is why since 2006, FEIF has recognized and also honoured the effort and imaginative work of countless trainers, volunteers and parents with the FEIF Youth Country of the Year Award. Important for this prize is not the number of events that are organised, but the originality and effectiveness of wonderful initiatives some of which might be happening near you.



## Leadership

Taking into consideration the great many children and young people involved with the Icelandic horse worldwide, the number of participants in the FEIF events is tiny. It is neither practical nor realistic to aim to involve all kids in international events. But what has happened, particularly in the last 10 years, is that national associations have taken up the ideas of FEIF and created events run very much along the lines of the FEIF initiatives. That is a great development! At FEIF Youth Work, we take being copied as a compliment. This is also true of the Young Leaders' seminars that started in 2016 with the aim to bring together and provide some training and opportunities for (self-)development for our young volunteers and future co-workers.

Wither from here? There are moves ahead to invite young adults into all committees to participate and contribute to the work of FEIF. At the proud age of 50 – it is time to prepare a new generation to take FEIF into a healthy and positive future.



**We want to encourage openness and curiosity, and in a world of conflict, we need to learn to listen.**