



# We're Thriving!

*Two Years of the Feminist Fund*

**FEM**  
**FUND**  
fundusz  
feministyczny



# Dear Persons,

Two years to the day have passed since the official launch of the Fund on January 8th 2018. These past 24 months have been simply incredible! Having worked closely with you, we managed to make our dream of the Feminist Fund come true, the Fund having become a firm presence on the feminist map in Poland and abroad. FemFund has had an impact on persons in its immediate surroundings as well as on others. Every day, we receive messages about how important the Fund is, giving us ever more energy to go on! We intend to continue raising funds from independent sources to support feminist activism and efforts to foster women's rights. We are great believers in the power of co-deciding as to how the money

will be best spent, and drawing on the force of persons in FemFund's inner circle. You guys and gals are amazing! We couldn't have done it without you!



Two years into its history, the Feminist Fund is a marvellous community of several thousand persons ❤️. We truly want the Fund not to lose its essential feature and the very pillar of its existence, all intense development notwithstanding: relations founded on trust, openness and authenticity. Much has happened over this past year! Mini-grants awarded during our second open call for proposals were disbursed. We renewed our collaboration with 19 fantastic groups and organisations, launching a three-year

co-operation format. We presented the Feminist Fund to a broader audience – our campaign “I Want a Better World for Her” surpassed our wildest expectations!

In 2019 we also finally got our “own room”, which made the work of our entire team much more comfortable!

The time has come for recapitulation, joy, and poignancy. Lo and behold – the second year of fund activities: our year 2019 in a nutshell!

**It is with great joy that we wish to share our 2019 lookout and lessons!**

*Justyna, Magda & Marta*

# The Fund Community

Over these past two years, the Fund has developed a wonderful feminist community of persons sharing similar values, trusting, supporting and inspiring one another. This community of women, girls and persons putting mini-grant money to direct use is growing day by day. The community includes groups applying for support and jointly deciding who will receive funding; donors willing to share their money with others; and last but not least, numerous other persons – allies whose help and support we could count on. We all believe that such values as solidarity, social justice and mutual trust are the very foundations of feminism and the Fund.

FemFund has been formed to enable feminists, women, and persons socialised for female roles to access independent, stable, and friendly cash available for their activities; to do what they need and want, following their own rules. Yes, money matters to us, its source and spending options are hugely important. It matters who and how uses it. This is why 2019 has been mostly about two large pursuits, quite new to us.

Firstly, we launched a new programme of regular co-operation with selected grant recipients. Nineteen feminist groups and organisations embarked upon a three-year journey of regular relations. Secondly, we organised our first professional

promotional and fundraising campaign with intent to expand the community of regular FemFund donors.

You may be part of the community already 😊. If not – and if you want to be closer to the Fund – you are most welcome. Support us with regular monthly payments, or join our mini-grant competition, and the collective-process of deciding who will share our piggy bank funds, with your group or organisation.

# Grantee Partners

*FemFund's Heart*



# Whom we support and why

The Feminist Fund provides financial assistance to girls', women's, and feminist activities. Our mini-grant calls for proposals are open to non-governmental organisations and informal groups with a history of limited funding application options. The Fund was formed with intent to support feminist groups established by women and/or by non-binary, transgender and queer persons, all particularly exposed to discrimination and violence in Poland. Our intent is to empower them in order for the voice of women and aforementioned persons to become stronger and more audible.

The vastly varied community of our grant recipients includes women and persons socialised for female roles. We are making a conscious effort to reach persons of different ages – teenagers, young and elderly people – women diverse in terms of disability and/or economic status, migrants, refugees, women from cultural and ethnic minorities, non-heteronormative women, and non-binary and transgender persons.

# **More money and longer-term co-operation!**

The open calls for proposals we organised back in 2018 showed us the great financial and non-financial power of mini-grants, how much can be done for relatively little money, and the resulting change to the life of individuals, groups, and entire communities. Since the force of a single mini-grant can be so huge, why not take it a step further? We would like to support feminist activism by one-time financial support as well as within the framework of long-term and more stable relations with the Fund. Such is the origin of our new grant programme addressing former grant recipients.

Our so-called “renewals” format provides selected groups and organisations with more substantial, stable, and longer-term funding.

In 2019, we invited as many as 19 groups and organisations whose work we found to be particularly important, difficult, unique and necessary to join a regular co-operation scheme.

**Nineteen groups and organisations organisations received respective grants of up to PLN 8,800 per year:**

**Bojka Scuba Diving Collective (Kolektyw Nurkowy Bojka)** – established to conquer the chauvinism of the extreme sports industry; focuses on organising scuba diving courses for women with disabilities and other groups of women and girls excluded from extreme sports for a variety of reasons.

**Sułkowice Residents (Sułkowiczanki)** – an inter-generational group of women from the Association of Rural Women in Sułkowice, with a focus on working to support the local community, development, and meeting other women from rural areas.

**Sex Work Poland** – uniting persons working in the sex service industry and their allies across Poland; provides assistance to sex workers basing on principles of trust, and supporting the self-organisation and self-determination of girls and women.

**Equality Province (Prowincja Równości)** – group of LGBT+ persons focusing on the rights of women and non-heteronormative persons in Kielce; most recently operating as an association, responsible i.a. for organising the Equality Parade in Kielce.

**Kopacze-Diggers Collective** – feminist-queer collective developing housing and workshop space for persons with a social and ecological activism focus.

**WomenStan Collective (Kolektyw Kobietostan)** – group of artists and social activists united in activities for and about women; the initiative was born of a refusal to accept the social marginalisation of selected groups of women – members of the collective work i.a. with female inmates of the penitentiary unit in Krzywaniec.

**Hańsk Women's Club (Klub Kobiet z Hańska)** – intergenerational group of women meeting at the local public library in Hańsk; they invite regional women leaders, and organise self-improvement and development workshops for Club members.



**Centre for Women's Rights Foundation** – Gdańsk Chapter – the Centre's TriCity chapter, providing daily free-of-charge and comprehensive assistance to women exposed to violence, and operating a support group.

**Travelling Women Foundation (Fundacja Kobiety Wędrowne)** – group of female refugees and migrants and Polish women of the TriCity area, focusing on activities to support other female refugees and migrants, such as violence prevention workshops and integration meetings.

**For the Earth Association (Stowarzyszenie dla Ziemi)** – supporting refugees in the Lublin region for the past few years working chiefly with female residents of centres for foreigners in Łuków and Bezwola; co-organiser of the Women's Meeting Club at the centre in Łuków, and the Club's local arts and crafts workshop.

**Diverse Initiatives Manufacture (Manufaktura Inicjatyw Różnorodnych)** – a group of eight activists – female friends from Opole and the neighbourhood, committed to changing their local reality; they engage in anti-discrimination education and herstorical activities, promote WenDo, organise the Women's Circles festival, and work with female inmates of the remand prison in Opole.

**Academy of the Young Deaf (Akademia Młodych Głuchych)** – several young deaf women engaging in daily work at an identically named Foundation, with intent to grow and learn – as individuals, as a group and as the Deaf community – about women's rights; organised the first feminism-focused campaign targeting the deaf person's community.

**Nomada Association (Stowarzyszenie Nomada)** – supporting migrants and ethnic minorities (chiefly the Roma community) in Wrocław; focuses i.a. on empowering female Roma leaders; has employed a Roma assistant as part of its staff.



**Informal female sex workers' group**

– group of female workers of assorted sex industry sectors from different cities, with a focus on sex workers networking, exchanging experience, and working to make their voice more audible.

**It's Important to Us! (To dla nas ważne!)**

– female pedagogues and psychologists from an educational school complex in Włocławek, working with female students over sixteen with intellectual disabilities to empower them in assorted areas (i.a. sex education, mindfulness).

**Batty Aunts Informal Group (Grupa nieformalna Ciotki Klotki)**

– group of female pensioners from Głucholazy, who had themselves experienced discrimination based on gender, age, and/or level of ability; they work to support their local female community while helping themselves as well, by filling the gap in access to cervical smear tests for women over 60, organising field trips to cultural events, and holding assorted skills courses for women over sixty.

**Map Yourself (Zmapuj siebie)** – collective of three girls empowering secondary school female students to make decisions concerning their own future regardless of stereotypes affecting women on the job market.

**Summer Breakfast Club (Letni Klub Śniadaniowy)**

– collective of several girls from Kielce who organised their own space – a user-friendly workshop where they can focus on DIY activities and meet persons with similar hobbies; they organise DIY workshops for women.

**Forest Women (W(y)puszczone)**

– ecological activists blending in feminism and faith in girls' agency with activities to support nature; they organise summer empowerment camps for girls, and for women and persons socialised for female roles.



# The power of mini-grants!

The year 2019 was also a time of implementing 19 mini-grants awarded before year-end 2018. Fund money was donated to the following:

- 40 women over 60 from Głuchołazy and neighbouring locations – cervical smear test patients; nearly 20 women over sixty – participants of a field trip to attend a concert in Katowice; female pupils from 10 schools – attendants of HPV-focused sessions;
- Women and non-binary persons who spent nearly one week in the Knyszyńska Forest, where they laid fires, chopped wood, studied nature, practised yoga, and engaged in intergenerational feminist sisterhood activities;
- The Good Mother-in-Law Collective/ Kolektyw Dobra Teściowa who launched a YouTube channel on sex education;



photo Emi Oksentowicz / .kolektyw





# The power of mini-grants!



photo Emi Oksentowicz / .kolektyw



- Girls from a kindergarten in Złotniki Kujawskie, who attended programming classes and were provided with new equality-focused books for the kindergarten library; women from Złotniki Kujawskie – attendants of the first One Billion Raising action and a field trip to attend a screening of the Strong-women film, regular activists of the Hollyhock Women’s Association (Stowarzyszenie Kobiet ‘Malwa’);
- A woman from the Roma community in Wrocław – attendant of a six-month paid internship in Roma family assistant capacity;



# The power of mini-grants!



photo Agata Kubis / .kolektyw



- Female students with intellectual disabilities from an educational school complex in Włocławek, who attended sex education classes over one term, and visited a gynaecologist's office;
- Female inmates of the Remand Prison in Opole, who attended self-defence, assertiveness, and boundary classes, and joined forces to create a mural in the prison's exercise yard;
- Female refugees resident in a centre in Grupa near Grudziądz, offered an opportunity to sew dream clothing for themselves, and talk to women with similar experiences;



# The power of mini-grants!

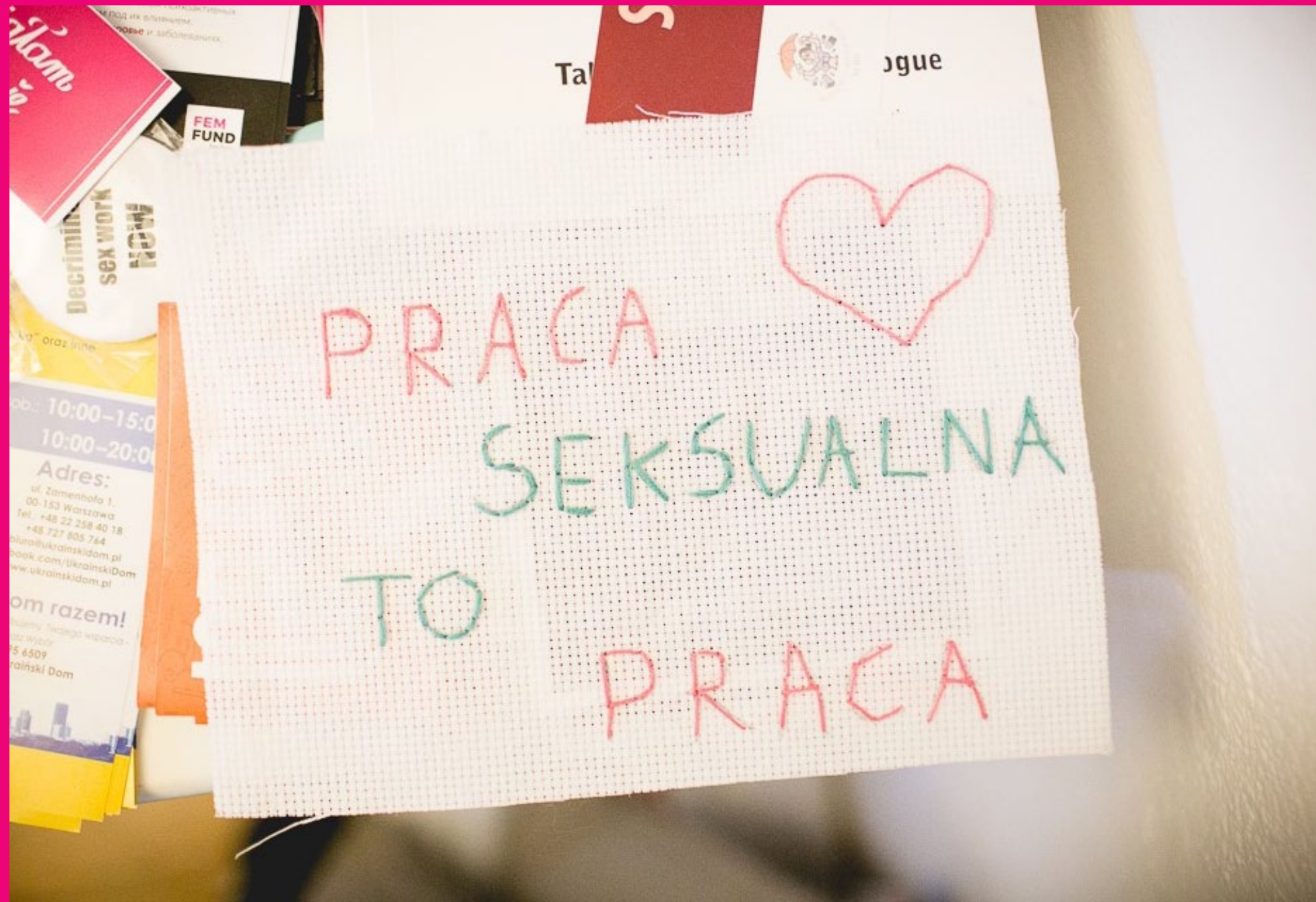


photo Agata Kubis / .kolektyw

- The Abortion Dream Team/ Aborcyjny Dream Team, who published a guidebook to pharmacological abortion and abortion in clinics abroad;
- Secondary school students from Biskupiec, who talked about their future and identified their strong sides during a self-improvement workshop;
- Sex workers from different cities, offered an option to meet and talk about their experience, and produce a follow-up publication with key information on the sex service industry;





# The power of mini-grants!



photo Agata Kubis / .kolektyw



- Female refugees from the centre for foreigners in Łuków, who attended a herstorical art workshop and created a genuine artwork, now part of the collection of the Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź!
- The Handywoman Collective/ Kolektyw Złote Rączki who built a Mobile Embroidery Unit (Haftowóz), a mobile open-air embroidery stand for use at feminist demonstrations and happenings;
- Women from Kielce, who learned DIY and furniture fixing skills;



# The power of mini-grants!



photo Agata Kubis / .kolektyw

- Women from the Deaf Community, first-time recipients of a women's rights and feminism campaign in the Polish Sign Language, who attended a meeting on gender-assigned roles and preventing gender-based violence;
- Women of Polanka Hallera and Skawina, including women exposed to violence, who met at empowering self-improvement workshops delivered by the Imagine Foundation/ Fundacja 'Wyobraź Sobie'.
- Young mothers from Przechlewo – attendants of psychological workshops organised by Familja – Space for Women/ Familja – Przestrzeń dla Kobiet;



# The power of mini-grants!



photo Emi Oksentowicz / .kolektyw

- Transgender persons from Toruń and Bydgoszcz, provided with assistance by a support group operated by the Agents/ Sprawczynie Group;
- Women with varied level of ability – first-time attendants of a Feminist Convention of Women with Disabilities in Poland, organised in conformity to the “Nothing About Us Without Us” principle by the informal Article 6/ Artykuł 6 Group.





# Grantee partners meeting

photo Emi Oksentowicz / .kolektyw



This year, all recipients of the 2nd mini-grant edition attended a now traditional meeting in Wilga near Warsaw, where they could meet and share everything they did, all their victories and letdowns, as well as information on how mini-grants affected them and the community of persons they work with or reside in. The meeting in Wilga was extraordinary for a variety of reasons – not least because it was held in two languages: Polish and Polish Sign Language.



# Not everything works out – and that's alright!

This year was truly a major lesson for all of us – in assorted areas of our work, the grant programme included. As the Feminist Fund, we are committed to success as well as to joining forces to learn from our mistakes and failures. This year, one successful grant recipient group dispersed soon thereafter. Another, despite all effort, was unable to deliver all activities planned as part of the mini-grant, and the grant was duly returned. It happens. We are not always successful! In the world of activism, it sometimes turns out that plans cannot be delivered in practice... and you know what? As long as we turn our failures into food for thought, it's alright!

Competition accessibility turned out to be another challenge. We want our call for proposals to be available to women and persons particularly vulnerable in terms of exposure to discrimination and exclusion, including the deaf, the blind, or individuals

with visual impairment. This year, the Fund grantee partnerscommunity was expanded to include a first-time deaf women's group member – the group will remain our regular recipient for another three years! Nonetheless, we see major and important challenges ahead – we have to improve the accessibility of our website and competitions to assorted individuals potentially interested in using the Fund's money. Such is our priority for the upcoming year.

Doing all that in a three-person team was a challenge in itself – furthermore, the past 12 months were also a time of overload, stress, and rarely planned overtime. We have no intention of going through such exercise again – which is why we will be welcoming the New Year with a larger team; furthermore, another round of recruitment is in the pipeline! 😊 This is a crucial moment, one we welcome with joy and excitement.

# Co-deciding and trust

You might already know that the format of our money-related decisions is rather unusual. The decision concerning mini-grant recipients lies mainly with participants of the mini-grant competition. Non-governmental organisation and informal group applicants participate in the competition, read applications submitted by others, and make joint decisions concerning FemFund's money. Consequently, applicant groups become allies rather than rivals – while grant recipients are mainly accountable before approving applicants for any funding-related decisions.

Participation and co-deciding mechanisms are topics we consider important, which is why – by offering new forms of support, such as extended collaboration with former grant recipients – we have been seeking new forms of participation-based decision-making. While we are making a conscious effort for the process itself

to be participative as well, the format we have chosen is... a little different 😊 Our decision-making panel has been expanded to include the Team as well as several persons from the Fund's Consulting Council, and a number of grant recipient representatives. The task force reads grant applications, engages in discussion, and selects groups and organisations for regular co-operation.

We have confidence in the collective wisdom of assorted viewpoints and experience of our task force members, and have placed our trust in joint decisions.

# **We recharge our batteries and support one another!**

This year, we wanted to achieve more than a stable financial back office for the Fund's activities. Self-care and community care remain a vital part of activism: we wish to support groups and organisations across the Fund's community in rest, recreation, and regeneration. Hence the concept for the first Feminist Regeneration project we designed in co-operation with RegenerAction – space for exhausted activists.

We invited representatives of the Fund's grant recipients and applicants to join our Regeneration project: a weekend self care and community care workshop. Taking a joint look at how we work and don't work in feminism, at how we rest, what recharges our batteries, and how we can care for one another is hugely important to us. Natalia Sarata and Asia Bordowa co-hosted the workshop.

Here's a handful of quotes from workshop attendants:

**”** *Thank you for your care and support; this is something we truly need these days: being reminded that in order to do something for others (our daily bread!), we have to take care of ourselves.*

**”** *I enjoyed the anti-capitalist – or systemic, in other words – analysis of the reasons for our weariness and exhaustion.*

**”** *[The thing I found most interesting was] the workshop as a whole: overall tranquillity and sense of security, understanding, lack of expectations, and an opportunity to enjoy acceptance.*



# The Power of Your Money:

*FemFund Donors!*



# Financial stability and independence

The Fund can operate to its own rules thanks to financial autonomy we have been granted, chiefly by institutional donors, private individuals to ultimately become our main focus. Ever since day one, we wanted feminist philanthropy to become the Fund's essential foundation: we wanted all women and persons sharing our values to put something in our joint Fund kitty; to share their money with other women and persons in need. Our final dream is to make the Fund financially autonomous – to make our activity directly dependent on funds provided by our allies the feminists.

We kicked 2019 off with a birthday party for donors supporting us with regular payments: 12 months ago, we had 60 regular donors; today, that number has tripled!

**185 individuals** are supporting the Fund with regular monthly donations totalling **PLN 6 651**, contributing to our stability and autonomy.

How did that happen? **128 new regular donors** joined us in the wake of our first major promotional and fundraising campaign, “I Want a Better World for Her”. I am sure some of you have seen the film pivotal to the campaign.

The film was our message to the outside world, depicting our vision of feminism with a place for everyone. It highlighted symptoms of patriarchy in the universal daily experience of women and girls. We also pointed to the kind of world we wish to create for women and girls: it is a world free of violence, stereotype and bias, of judgement and limitations; a world where girls and women may become who they want, where their opinions count; a world where they can enjoy their favourite things, and make decisions concerning their own life. It is a world where women and girls can feel safe and free.



# I want a better world for her campaign



photo Mateusz Dziekoński

Screened on social media and in art cinemas (*Muranów, Luna, Kinoteka* in Warsaw; *Kika* and *Agrafka* in Cracow; *Orzeł* in Bydgoszcz, *Centrum* at the Contemporary Art Centre in Toruń; *Iluzja* in Częstochowa; *Kinematograf* at the Museum of Cinematography in Łódź; *Muza* in Poznań), the film was accompanied by a public relations campaign.



# I want a better world for her campaign



photo Mateusz Dziekoński

Over 3 weeks, it was viewed by **170 000 persons**, our Facebook community growing to reach **4 852 individuals**.

Campaign outcomes are everything we have ever dreamed of 😊. To be precise:

- **43 one-time donations** totalling **PLN 4 775**,
- **128 new** regular donors contributing a total of **PLN 4 379 per month**,
- **PLN 53 000 per annum** for feminist activism!



**I want a better  
world for her  
campaign**





**I want a better  
world for her  
campaign**





**I want a better  
world for her  
campaign**



This is how FemFund donors describe their philanthropic motivation:

” In raising my daughter (with another baby on the way), I am driven by what I was taught at my own home – independent thinking; a sense of freedom; self-confidence. I can still recall the pain of being confronted with a world which expected something else of me, having identified me as a girl: self-sacrifice and subordination. I can still recall how that clashed with my self-esteem. I am not bringing my children up for myself – they belong to the world. I am supporting the Feminist Fund to make that world a friendly and open place for my children, allowing them to be who they are.

**Marianna**

” I have a two-year-old daughter whom I love dearly. She is active and curious about the world – I don’t want anyone to quash her self-confidence or creativity. My dream would be for her to be able to pick any career path, and enjoy the relationship she will choose for herself. I want her to be safe. This is why I support the Feminist Fund – with all my heart and financially. Thank you for being there! **Anna**

” We should all contribute approximately 5% of our earnings to charity – to make the world, and thus our own lives, a better place. If you don’t have a regular charity to support, or can set up another regular payment, I believe FemFund is a good choice. **Katarzyna**

” I support the Fund although I have a son. I know his life will be easier than that of his female buddies or younger sister. And I find that diabolically unfair. I can see how omnipresent gender-related stereotypes have become, and how swiftly children learn to divide their surroundings into the boys’ and girls’ world. This is why I find it particularly important to finance activities addressing girls as an unfavoured, discrimination-threatened group, especially given the current political situation of limited access to donations supporting such initiatives. **Joszka**



# Global Sisterhood

*The Power of Solidarity*



Since day one, the Feminist Fund has been engaging in co-operation with peer funds from other countries, and establishing partnerships with foreign institutional donors. We are happy to have become members of the **Prospera**, the international network of women's funds. Prospera has a membership of **38 institutions**, including Mama Cash, the oldest fund in the world to support women's rights, based in the Netherlands. The Prospera network is our space of powerful learning and development. Exchanges with colleagues from other countries and their support inspire and energise us. We frequently discuss challenges associated with the groundswell of extreme right-wing movements; the role of money and funding in supporting feminist movements; digital security; the process of creating institutional culture with the well-being of persons and

collective care at its centre; privilege and eliminating hierarchy in favour of a levelled playing field; the need for participatory grant-making; and, last but not least, mobilising resources for feminism, solidarity, and strategies for social change.

In the fall, the Fund was visited by Kemi Akinfaderin and Katarzyna Pabijanek from Prospera. They spent an intense three days with us, discussing well-nigh all areas of Fund activities. The institutional audit and fresh outside look were hugely valuable! We were provided with specific recommendations on how to boost ourselves from within to get better at working in the outside world. And we have been implementing all these recommendations step by step.



2019 was also a year of travel. We have had numerous opportunities to share our experience with an international community of progressive grant-makers, and learn from others. We attended the following events, among others: the *Women Deliver* conference in Canada, *Re-Conference* CREA in Nepal, and EDGE Funders Alliance conference in Brazil. We gained amazing experience, each event proving a turbo inspirational, motivational, and energising boost!

We also established closer relations with Funds providing us with financial support, including Mama Cash and the German filia.die frauenstiftung Fund. Inter-regional collaboration among women's and feminist funds in Europe and those operating in Latin America is to pick up shortly.

We can't wait to join that new experience! 😊

# Acknowledgements



*It would not be possible without you*



# Acknowledgements

photo Joanna Szpak-Ostachowska



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**This year would not have been possible without you, after all! Thank you for all your kind words and support!**



Anything  
is possible  
with you

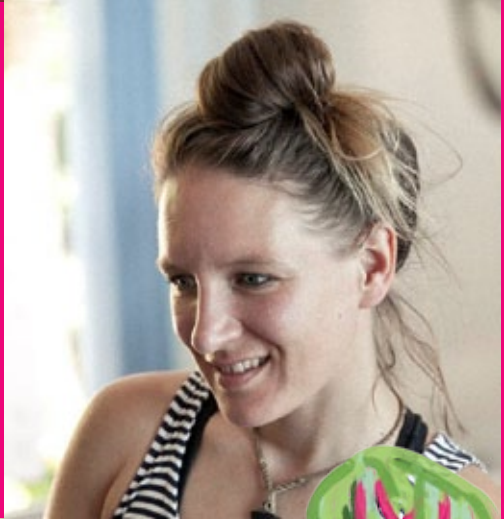


photo Emilia Oksentowicz / .kolektyw



# Join us!

femfund.pl

You can support feminist activism in Poland that contributes to creating more friendly environment for all of us!

If you like what we do, help us continue doing it. Set up a regular monthly payment! You can choose between two methods:

- Online payment system on our website:  
**femfund.pl/wsparcie**
- Transfer to our bank account:  
**79 9011 0005 3030 0080 2000 0018**  
Vistula Bank | transfer title: **Donation for statutory purposes**

*Your money is our power!*

**FEM  
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feministyczny

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