

**Feminist  
Fund**

in 2023

ANNUAL REPORT

# Embracing feminism



# Through darkness to hope

Dears!

As usual this time of the year at Fem-Fund, we sit down together to summarize the past 12 months. It was a difficult, intense and groundbreaking time of turbulence and change for us, but also a time of grounding in our values, in each other, and in you, the powerful feminist community!

We enter another year strengthened by past crises we have faced together as a team. It was a time we strongly felt the effects of our decisions from 2022, above all the launch of new activities and grants related to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Therefore, 2023 will remain in our memory as the year of a (rather difficult) institutional shift and internal growth. We implemented all of our programs while focusing inward – developing ways of cooperating and working that were the best for us and for the organization. We kept on exercising the muscle of being a team, we opened ourselves to differences, we created bold spaces for important and formative conversations. We see this as a result of the maturation of Fem-Fund as a stable and safe organization that occupies a prominent place in the women and queer rights movements in Poland. We are tired, but more strongly rooted, more resistant to attacks and connected to our vision of feminist change.

**In 2023, we became the organization we had dreamed of in the beginning:** one that supports the feminist movement in its diverse needs through several different grant programs (from seed money for new actors of change, through rapid response grants, to core support funding). At the same time, we consistently partake in developing intersectional feminism, bringing this content to online and offline spaces. Our attention is invariably focused on people from oppressed and marginalized groups. This is our center.

We conclude this year with complete clarity as to what FemFund as an organization needs most in the coming years. We need you! We reached a certain stage of the organization's evolution: over the last five years, we arranged for resources needed to start and grow this organization to its target size. We can now report that we have delivered this demanding but beautiful task! We cannot continue without you.

For the Fund to continue and keep on creating feminist change, we need the support of communities and allies.

We do not want and cannot ultimately rely on external grants. We want to find this support in you, also in financial terms.

Therefore, **please consider joining the growing community of FemFund's monthly supporters.** This is a great, although sometimes underestimated, contribution! Last year, we did broadcast this message to you and the world as part of the "We hear you!" campaign. This call for support will echo even stronger in the coming year and beyond, until FemFund becomes a fully autonomous, self-sufficient, and grant-independent organization. This idea continues to drive us and propel us to a new stage of FemFund's growth!

With feminist power and love,

*Ania, Gosia, Gosia, Ilia,  
Justyna, Magda, Magda,  
Marta*

PS For the first time our annual summary does not contain everything that happened – we felt that would be impossible. So, on the following pages, we offer a subjective 2023 FemFund digest: a collection of what we remember the most, the herstories of several Grantee partners, and some statistics for those of us who like hard data. :)



# **We hear you!** **campaign**

In 2023 we celebrated our fifth birthday!

And so we decided that this was the right year to boldly reach out to the wider community, beyond our bubble.

**We dreamed of a large campaign** addressed to people who do not know us yet, although we share the same feminist concerns and dreams. This is how the film "We hear you" was made, which we had worked on for many months.

If you don't know it yet, be sure to watch it (and if you do know it – we recommend rewatching it, it's just as moving)!



**Watch the campaign video!**





# We hear you! campaign

In many ways, this was a ground-breaking campaign for us.

- The spot was inspired by the herstories of women's and queer groups supported by the Fund. While working on the film, we were in close contact with the Grantee partners (some of them even played the main roles). That meant a lot to us!
- The video was viewed by 600,000 people, and it also had 1,800 likes on Instagram alone. It was shared by several hundred people, including many "large" accounts of feminists and influencers. Never before have we been able to reach so many people with our message.
- We were also joined by 30 people who declared to support the Fund on a regular basis! We would like to thank them immensely.
- We wanted the film to be accessible to people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, blind, and visually impaired. This is our first campaign with audio description and a PSL (Polish Sign Language) translator, who translated the entire video. ❤️





# Join us today and receive a bag with a feminist message!

In connection to the campaign, we prepared beautifully illustrated bags for you so that the feminist message can always accompany you and keep on spreading!

**You can still receive it as a gift** from FemFund if you join the group of our monthly supporters by March 8, 2024.

You can do this two ways:

- Through the PayU system on our website: **femfund.pl/wsparcie**
- Setting up a bank transfer to our PLN account:

**37 1940 1076 3247 5090 0000 0000**

IBAN: PL37 1940 1076 3247 5090 0000 0000

BIC/SWIFT: AGR IPLPR

Join us in supporting women and trans rights, so that everyone can decide for themselves, be free and safe.

*Your money means even more feminism!*



## *Center for Assistance to Nuns, Krakow*

One of the groups that was a direct inspiration for our "We hear you" campaign video is **the Center for Assistance to Nuns**. It is the first organization in Poland that fights violence within church structures. The Center is run by volunteers. Some of them have experienced violence in a female religious congregation or witnessed it.



***Our goal is to help women who experience various forms of crisis, abuse, or violence in religious structures and those who are facing difficulties after leaving the institution.***

For many women leaving a religious congregation brings feelings of confusion and extreme loneliness, and those who decide to leave usually start from scratch: they have no secular clothes, money, apartment, or job. Very often, they also do not have the support of their environment. The Center for Assistance to Nuns wants to provide this support.

The group started cooperating with FemFund by applying for support from the Feminist Emergency Service – the founder of the Center, Iza, reached out to us because she needed money for a deposit for a protected apartment in Krakow. The place is a temporary shelter for women who have left a religious order.

Thanks to receiving a FemFund MiniGrant in August, the Center for Assistance to Nuns also organized a weekend meeting to support 12 women who had left religious congregations.



## *Center for Assistance to Nuns, Krakow*

Center for Assistance to Nuns also received an Empowerment Grant. This is a solid support – PLN 60,000 to strengthen the organization in 2024, with the possibility of extending the grant for three more years!

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*Our meeting had an immense potential of strength. It was primarily reciprocal strength. The strength to listen, support, and experience together. The strength to tell and hear similar experiences. [...] The women attending the meeting had different experiences of being outside the religious structures. We were joined by those who were outside the structure for 3 years, but also those that had only spent 3 weeks outside. Mutual empowerment from people who have already gone through certain things and making room for the experiences of those who have yet to do so was true support in this particular moment.*









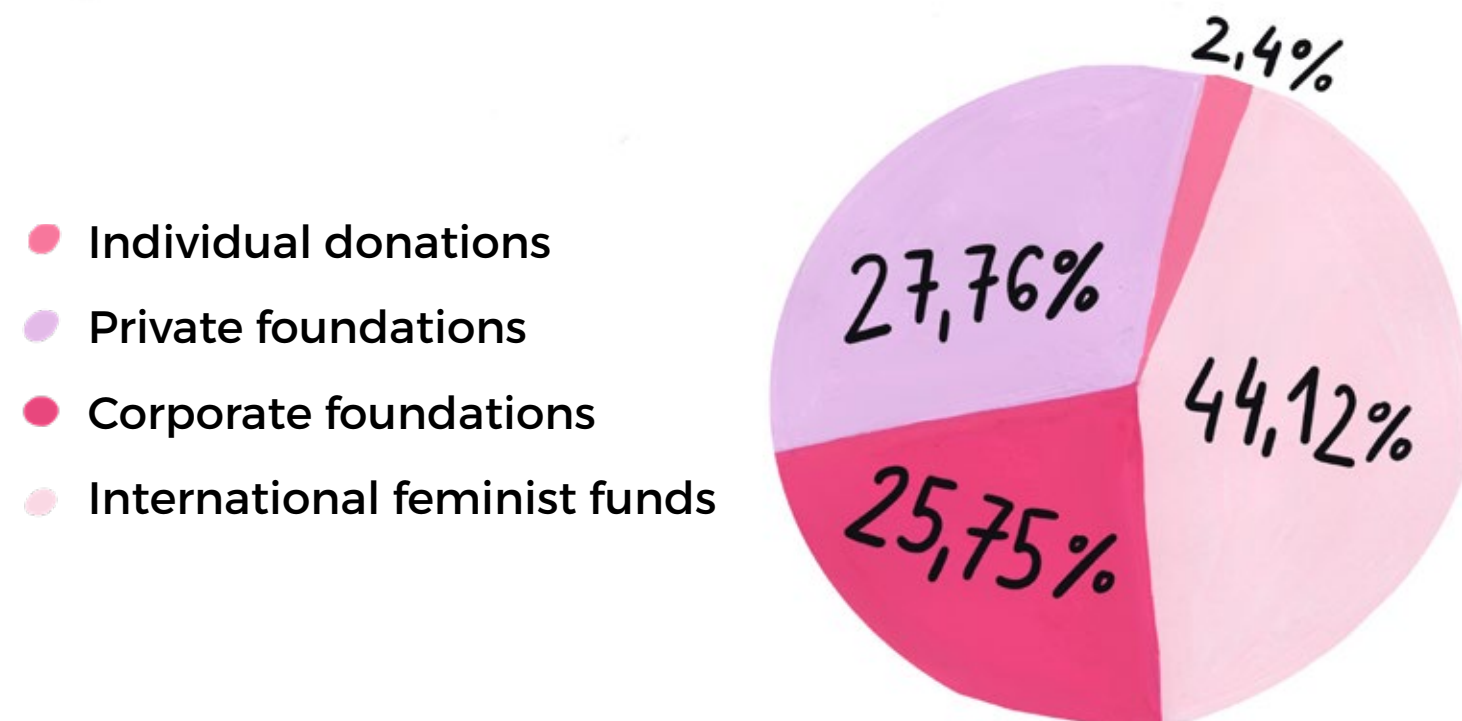
# Where did FemFund get its money from in 2023?

This is one of the questions you ask us most often. :) And that's good, because we need more talk about from where women rights and queer movements can get support.

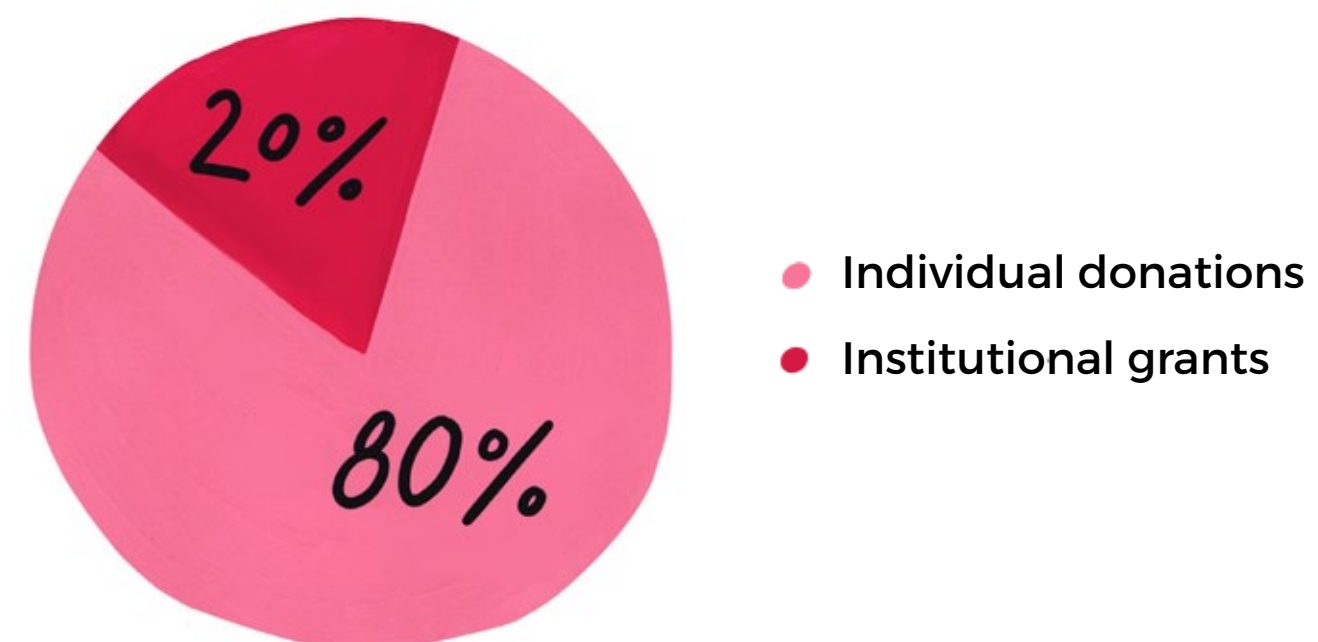
Here is what our income looked like in 2023. As you can see, donations from individual donors accounted for 2.4% of all funds we received to our bank account. We want to change this, because only a grassroots-funded feminist movement is a guarantee of real independence.

What it looks like now (data for 2023):

## INCOME IN 2023:



## HOW DO WE WANT IT TO BE?





# Where did FemFund get its money from in 2023?

Donations in numbers:

**212 people**  
**regularly donate**  
**to the Fund**

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117 people via the  
**femfund.pl/support** website and  
95 people who set up a monthly  
transfer with their bank. Thank you!

**On average, you**  
**donate PLN 48.89**  
**at a time**

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The smallest individual  
payment this year was  
PLN 5, and the largest  
– as much as PLN 5,000.









## *She-Wolves Collective, Karpaty Forest*

**She-Wolves Collective** is an anarcho-feminist and queer collective that blocked the felling of old trees in the buffer zone of the Bieszczady National Park for several years. She-Wolves received FemFund's support for two years after they implemented their MiniGrant project (cooperation in 2021–2023).

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*It was crucial for us to write the first application for a MiniGrant – in negative 20-degree cold, using electricity from solar panels set by young queer people in the middle of the forest [...]. The joint assessment of projects from our basket – full of inspiration and joy that so many people do so much good – was a breakthrough for us. The common wolf howl of people who had been told to sit quietly for most of their lives was life changing.*

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*The recognition of our agency and decision-making by FemFund was also groundbreaking for us – unlike many other sources of financing, with which there was a lot of stress and control leading to burnout. MiniGrants brought us a sense of trust and freedom in action and funds that we could use very flexibly, with attention to what was most important to us at the time.*

# FemFund has supported almost 100 initiatives throughout Poland – we/you are everywhere!

Last year, we gave support to **90 feminist initiatives**.

That's a total of **PLN 1,521,020** for the rights of women and queer, transgender, and non-binary persons!

**The largest grant awarded amounted to PLN 80,000**, and the smallest – to PLN 1,200.

The grants went to groups from **34 locations**. The largest of them is Warsaw, and the smallest – Baranówka in the Warminsko-Mazurskie voivodeship, inhabited by 170 people.

These numbers are a source of great joy for us, because behind each grant there are people who sowed a lot of feminist change in 2023. We are proud to co-create such a community. We/you are everywhere!





Kobięca Przestrzeń Integrantki (ukr. Жіночий простір «Інтегрантки») Hajnówka





## *Village Housewives' Association Chicks from Baranowka*

### **Village Housewives' Association**

**Chicks** from Baranowka is a young organization that supports the community of its village. Members of the group create handicrafts, organize workshops, engage in charity actions, and perform small tailoring work for their neighbors. The association operates in the Warmian village of Baranowka, near Frombork. It tries to show other women living in their village that they can also be active.

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*We treat the word "chicks" in our name very seriously, which is why we stick together, support each other, help others. We show other women living in the countryside that they can go out, see people, and that their coming from the area of a former socialist state farm does not define them.*

Chicks from Baranowka applied to the Feminist Emergency Service when their friend got a job in a town 7 km away. Unfortunately, due to the lack of public transport, she had no way to get to work – she was afraid that she would have to quit.

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*There is no public transport to the village, only a school bus that runs during the school year. Our friend has to ask her neighbors for a ride, or she has to walk, while it's a long way to go. We want her to be independent of others and be able to work, improve her living conditions.*

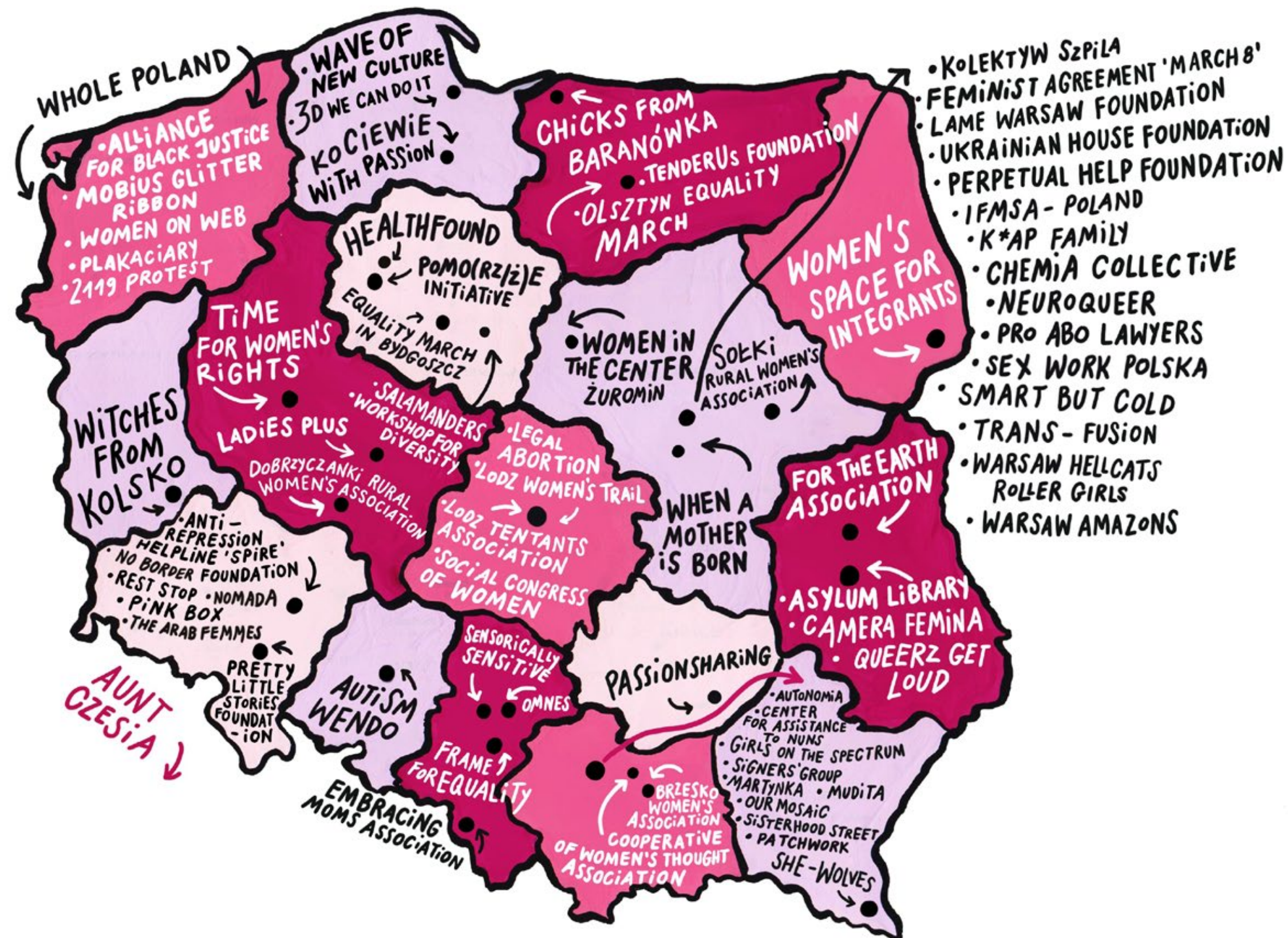
With the Feminist Emergency Service grant, members of the VHA bought a bicycle with basic accessories. They lend it to women in the village when they need to go to work, to school or go shopping.

Safe cycling! ❤️



# Feminist change is happening everywhere

Map of initiatives supported by FemFund in 2023









## *Diversity Workshop, Toruń*

For over a dozen years, Diversity Workshop has been working for legal and actual equality of LGBTQ+ persons from Toruń and the surrounding area. They also run the Rainbow Center for Support and Integration "Equator" (Równik), a safe space for LGBTQ+ persons: a place where they can meet, spend time together, participate in workshops and meetings. "Equator" is mainly attended by many LGBTQ+ teenagers and young adults. Psychological and legal support is also available on site. The Workshop is the only such organization on the map of Toruń.

The Association cooperates with FemFund as part of three-year Empowerment Grants+. In 2023, the Workshop gathered a group of over a dozen people who ran the "Equator" Center on a voluntary basis. Thanks to it, a lot was going on there: film screenings, lectures, group meetings for transgender persons, a theater group, a knitting circle, and much more.

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*Our group is more active because we have our own space. Many people who feel good in the Equator join our association and are not afraid to implement their ideas in a space that is familiar to them.*

## *Diversity Workshop, Toruń*

In September, the 4<sup>th</sup> Toruń Equality March took place. It marched through the streets of the city under the "The future is non-binary" slogan. This event was to give the entire LGBTQ+ community, and especially non-binary persons, the courage, strength and energy to change this world for the better. The march was a great celebration of the rainbow community in Toruń – it passed through the city with great love, care, and pride. We are happy and grateful that we could be there and celebrate together with the Workshop!

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*The future is non-binary, so let's create a world where we understand gender and sexuality as a spectrum. A world where all LGBTQ+ persons can feel safe regardless of how they define themselves.*

quote from the manifesto of the 4th Toruń Equality March









# The power of community

After five years, we can say with full conviction that FemFund is not only about money, but above all about the strength of its community. We feel it throughout the year, especially during meetings with the Grantee partners. We spent the weekend of 13–15 October near Warsaw with 34 people from 19 groups implementing their Mini-Grants. The Grantee partners traveled from Cieszyn, Człuchow, Hajnowka, Gdansk, Kolsk, Krakow, Lublin, Lodz, Niepolomice, Piekary Slaskie, Poznan, Stanowice, Torun and Warsaw! We were also joined by three children with their caretakers and two dogs.

It was the election weekend. Many of us were uncertain, fearful and hopeful anticipating what would happen after October 15. Thanks to spending this time together, we persevered in the feeling that regardless of the outcome of the election, we have support in each other. It was totally touching!

Each subsequent meeting shows us how much we need the space to build bonds, learn, but also to celebrate being a part of the community. We also feel a part of it. ❤️



# The power of community

It is impossible to put this experience into words, but we will try to do it with some quotes from the participants:



*The diversity of ideas is great: sports, respite trips, support groups, queer circles, fighting for the rights of women and persons – it's wonderful that we can share what we do!*



*It's easy to get closed off in your bubble, to see only your topics and only deal with them. I realized how many problems we are facing! It is important that there are so many diverse groups and so many diverse activities. This is my first meeting of the Fund's community – I am looking forward to more!*



*Because of my experience and what we do, a sense of community is important to me. That's why being a part of this community is so supportive – not only because of the idea we're pursuing, but also for myself.*

We are very happy that we co-create spaces where people can feel part of a larger whole – which is diverse and solidaristic, open to initiatives and groups that were not present in the FemFund community before.

*Photo!*





*It was totally moving!*





# Activism of groups supported by FemFund in 2023 in phrases

We don't have enough room here to describe all the initiatives supported by FemFund last year – we have already reached the point where it would require publishing a book.

However, we want to give you a little insight into what the groups and organizations in our community have been doing.

We present to you a map of feminist activism according to FemFund in 2023!





## *Pro Abo Lawyers Collective, All of Poland*

Pro Abo Lawyers are a grassroots collective, a feminist and pro-abortion voice in the legal community. They fight for decriminalization and destigmatization of abortion in Poland on a daily basis. They legally support those who are repressed because of their own abortion or assisting with abortion. They also educate, affect the change in the perception of reproductive rights in part of the legal and medical environment.



*We exist so that the current anti-abortion law harms as few people as possible, is applied as humanly as possible, and ultimately – so that it changes. We are openly and loudly pro abo.*

Pro Abo Lawyers have received the Empowerment Grant, which they allocate to their daily work. They launched free legal advices for people who need legal support in connection with anti-abortion law in Poland. The Lawyers' support can be accessed every day (by e-mail) or by phone during the on-call time. Every month, 10 to 15 people seek their support. Some of them are later represented by members of the collective in criminal cases. In 2023, they represented people in 16 proceedings. 4 of these cases are already in court, and members of the collective represent the charged individuals as defenders. They also provide ongoing legal support to Abortion Without Borders activists.



*Ultimately, we want the current law to change. Today, we see that its application by state institutions is influenced not only by the generally applicable principles of interpretation of the law, but also by the stigma around abortion, the patriarchal attitude towards pregnant persons, and the omission of international standards for the protection of human rights. We want to fight it.*

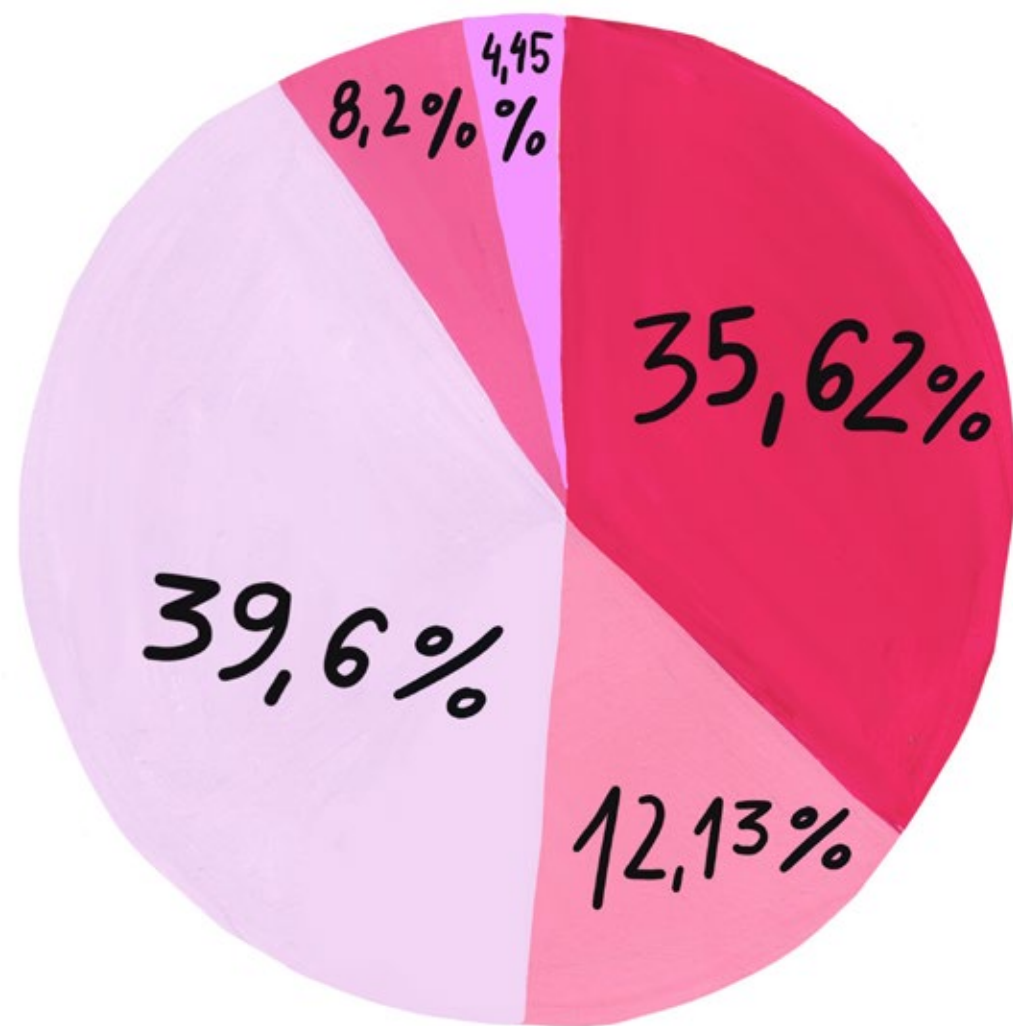
The collective issued a publication on the legal aspects of abortion in Poland and trained more than 30 people (lawyers) in abortion cases. Pro Abo Lawyers hope that this will reduce the number of convictions for aiding in abortion.



# FemFund in numbers

Our expenses in 2023 were as follows:

## EXPENSES IN 2023 :



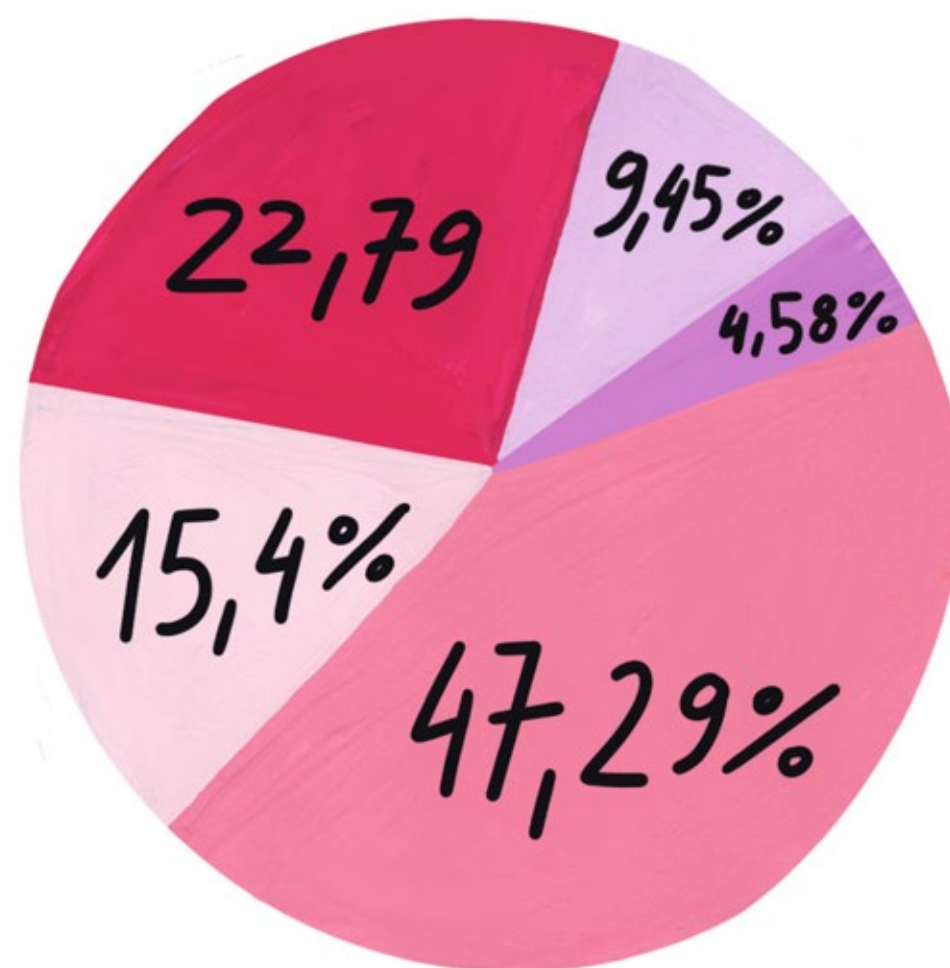
- **Grants** Minigrants, Emergency Service, Empowerment Grants, and others
- **Program costs** Grantee partners' convenings in Osieck, social media communication, accessibility consultations and others
- **Team remuneration**
- **Basic costs of the organization's operation and administration** renting the office, bookkeeping, car costs, audit, software
- **Development of the organization, team and persons, well-being costs** supervisions, FRIS assessment, introductory PSL cost, Prospera network membership and others



# FemFund in numbers

Grant expenses (35.91% of funds spent in 2023) is in detail:

## OUR GRANT BUDGET IN DETAIL :



- MiniGrants 6<sup>th</sup> edition
- 0,49 Accessibility Fund Grants
- MiniGrants+ cooperation with groups after their MiniGrants
- Feminist Emergency Service Grants
- Empowerment Grants 6+3
- Feminist Aid Grants Ukraine II stage



## *Witches from Kolsko*

Witches from Kolsko is an informal group of women living in a small village in the Lubuskie Voivodeship. They created a Women's Place of Activity in the Countryside (MAK), where they organize self-development workshops, concerts, exhibitions, and meetings with specialists, including psychologists and sexologists. They dream that the place of residence will never limit women's growth and that people from the countryside will become a large part of feminist change.



*Meeting women from different parts of Poland during our events, we noticed that no matter where the village is located, the girls living there face similar problems. Their role is often reduced to being a mother and a homemaker. The voice of rural women is poorly heard, and rural leaders have to climb many stairs, face social ostracism. We have walked this road, we know the rural environment very well.*

Witches have experienced firsthand how women can organize in a small community and what challenges they face. As part of the MiniGrant, they decided to share this experience with other local activists.

As many as 30 different groups from all over Poland applied to participate in the Witches' workshop "Strength and independence of women"! In September, the group embarked on a week-long tour and held 5 meetings for groups living in the countryside – members of village housewives' associations and local organizations, as well as unaffiliated leaders. A total of 64 people came to the meetings in Lipowe Pole Skarbowe (Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship), Dokudow (Lubelskie Voivodeship), Rzeczyca (Lubelskie Voivodeship) and Raczyce (Wielkopolskie Voivodeship) and in their own village of Kolsko!





# Donate 1.5% of your tax money to FemFund!

In 2023, FemFund obtained the status of a public benefit organization. This means that starting this year (for the first time!) you can support our activities by donating 1.5% of your tax money to us.

All you need to do is enter our **KRS number 0000714824** and the amount you want to transfer to us when settling your PIT tax.

More information on how to do this can be found at: **[femfund.pl/procent](https://femfund.pl/procent)**