

**The first
birthday of the
Feminist Fund!**

FEM
FUND
fundusz
feministyczny

A few words of introduction



photo Emilia Oksentowicz / .kolektyw

We are celebrating the first birthday of the Feminist Fund! It is uncanny – how much we have managed to achieve together. The Fund was born of a dream of feminist access to a flexible, independent, easy to use source of cash for community activities. Yet the Fund is about more than money itself. The Fund is a feminist community, focused on values such as **solidarity, equality, justice, mutual assistance, joint decision-making, and shared ownership.**

We give you the Fund's first year, in a nutshell. We can be frank in declaring that after these twelve months, we are proud, joyful, and satisfied no end! We hope that the Fund was also a positive experience for all of you.

If you are not part of our community yet – not a problem! You can support the Feminist Fund with regular monthly payments, or apply for mini-grants together with your group or organisation, and become a co-decider on where the jointly owned cash goes.

The next part of this overview lists more details about the Fund and our key activities in 2018.

With feminist regards,
Marta, Magda, Justyna

One year of the Feminist Fund

The Feminist Fund is the only organisation in Poland **providing financial assistance exclusively to girls', women's, and feminist organisations.** Our mini-grants are available to non-governmental organisations, but also to self-organised informal groups, particularly those operating in smaller locations, where women vulnerable to cross-discrimination and violence, may become decision-makers.

We are here to foster feminist movements in Poland **by providing money for activities engaged in by women, and by transgender, non-binary, and queer persons.** FemFund encompasses pensioners and teenagers; women migrants and refugees; women with disabilities and of varied health status; non-heterosexual women, women economically disadvantaged, and women living in smaller towns and villages.

The feminist community

We organised two mini-grants competitions, **providing assistance to a total of 40 magnificent feminist initiatives.**

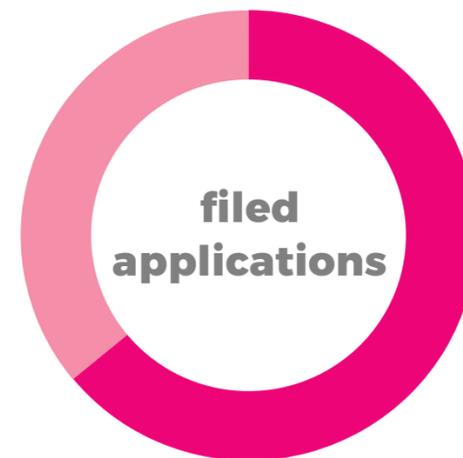
Organisations and informal groups from 125 locations filed a total of 348 applications for funding to support the implementation of their concepts and ideas.

Our calls for proposals proved an encouraging proposition for **informal groups**. A high 64% and 36% share of all applications were filed by feminist collectives / informal groups and non-governmental organisations, respectively. We are very proud to announce that our calls for proposals was effective in reaching multiple towns and cities as well as **villages and smaller localities**. More than one-half (53%) of all applications originated from beyond Warsaw and Poland's largest cities, a high 25% share filed by residents of villages and smaller localities (with a population below 50,000).



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64%
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To date, the Fund's money has been used to support the following:

- Nearly 80 women from the village of Sułkowice, who were provided an opportunity of consulting a gynaecologist in an informal setting, during two meetings at a local community centre;
- Girls attending a woodland camp in the Białowieża Forest, where they built huts, made bonfires, chopped wood, and discovered wild nature;



To date, the Fund's money has been used to support the following:

- Female sex workers from Warsaw, offered free-of-charge gynaecological and legal consultations and a self-defence course;
- Residents of Warsaw tenement houses, who publicised the issue of the lack of central heating in the capital city's social housing;
- Female inmates of the Penitentiary Unit in Krzywaniec, who joined forces with Kobietostan Kolektyw (WomenStan Collective) to stage "Maria K.", a play telling the story of Maria Komornicka / Piotr Włast;



To date, the Fund's money has been used to support the following:

- Several dozen primary school pupils (girls) from Lublin – inter-school football tournament participants;
- Women from the Low Beskids region, Lemkos included, who published an album with the oldest known Lemko songs;



To date, the Fund's money has been used to support the following:



photo Agata Kubis / .kolektyw

- Women with disabilities from Poznań, who organised yoga, meditation, and scuba-diving courses for their group,
- A summer camp for approximately 50 feminist and queer activists in Kopacze, operating two new compost toilets and a summer kitchen, fixtures and utensils included;

To date, the Fund's money has been used to support the following:



photo Agata Kubis / .kolektyw

- Women with visual disabilities from the Małopolska region, teenagers from Barlinek, pensioners from the TriCity area, lesbians, bisexual women, queer persons from Kielce, and female inmates of the custody detention centre in Opole, who attended WenDo self-defence and assertiveness classes;
- Women – violence survivors who met for six months in a support group managed by the Women's Rights Centre in Gdańsk;

To date, the Fund's money has been used to support the following:



photo Agata Kubis / .kolektyw

- Young people from Niepołomice, who attended sexual education workshops and violence, sexism and homophobia prevention workshops;
- Women migrants and refugees resident in the TriCity area, who got together at an anti-violence workshop and organised local inter-cultural meetings;

To date, the Fund's money has been used to support the following:



photo Agata Kubis / .kolektyw

- Twelve teenagers from Zielona Góra, who organised a workshop to discuss emotions, attitude towards their own bodies, empowerment, and self-esteem;
- Women from rural areas active in an inter-generation Women's Club at a library in Hańsk, who organised a series of internal meetings with local female leaders.

Another 21 groups are about to begin implementing their ideas :)

Community

For the past 12 months, we have done everything to remain in close touch with our community (that may mean you, too! :). Our Facebook group is now several thousand strong, our most popular posts having reached **over 60,000 persons.**

Over the past year, we also met you face to face in 10 cities: **Konin, Łódź, Wałbrzych, Cracow, Opole, Lublin, Olsztyn, Toruń, Białystok, and Gdańsk,** to tell the story of the Fund and of our grant-making programme.



Trust

The way we make money-related decisions is unique to the Fund. **Applicants are our main voice in deciding who receives our mini-grant.** Non-governmental organisations and informal groups participating in competitions read applications and make joint decisions concerning the recipients of the Fund's money. And we simply **trust these decisions.** :) We are certain there is no better way of making decisions concerning money to be allocated to feminist activism – money raised by a steadily growing community: by us, by you, by others.

Applicants seem to be of a similar opinion:

“ It was great to have a sense of actually being part of the choice, and of having influence over successful funding applications. **All the excitement with the process and reading other applications made us forget that the**

purpose of the process was also for us to receive funding for our own ideas.

“ Rivalry was replaced with satisfaction with doing something together. **The process of application assessment by each of the groups helps boost the feeling that we are doing something for rather than against one another.**

“ We had a sense of being part of something larger. It also gave us a sense of agency – of being able to influence the process, and our own future. **Thanks to such form of evaluation, the women in our group were empowered by the fact that their voice counts as well – that despite all the difficulties they encounter daily, they can – and actually do – influence their own lives, that their contribution is taken into account,** and that joint action may truly bring about change to the status quo.

Financial independence and autonomy

The Fund can operate according to its own set of rules thanks to financial independence developed on the basis of support provided by institutional and individual donors.

Over the first year, we managed to secure the **trust and confidence** of **seven extraordinary institutions**: The Sigrid Rausing Trust, Global Fund for Community Foundations, FundAction, the Stefan Batory Foundation, Open Society Initiative for Europe, Mama Cash, and filia.die.frauenstiftung. Without their support, it would have been impossible to launch or continue developing the Fund, to allow a certainty that we would not come to a standstill after 12 months :)

We believe that it is particularly important that the Fund has been supported by **300 private individuals**, who contributed a total of about EUR 11 000. We have also succeeded in developing a **focused community of regular donors**. **61 individuals** make regular monthly transfers, supporting our stability and autonomy.

Complete financial independence of the Fund is our long-term objective, based on individual payments by our growing community and by allies of the Fund.

Already today – **we wish to thank all of you very much!**

Global sisterhood

The Fund would not have been made possible without global sisterhood and the option of learning from other women's and feminist funds. Over the past 12 months, we have had the opportunity of being inspired by FRIDA The Young Feminist Fund, who taught us all about participatory grant-making.

Over this past year, we have also been tapping the experience and wisdom of funds operating in Georgia (Women's Fund in Georgia, Taso Foundation) and Serbia (Reconstruction Women's Funds, Trag Foundation). We took part in two study visits and enjoyed the amazing hospitality of these organisations.

We also told the story of FemFund to others. We got to know Rosa, The UK Fund for Women and Girls, as well as Edge Fund. We are part of the world network of the Prospera International Network of Women's Funds. We are learning from feminists and funds operating worldwide – and we will definitely continue our education!

We wish to thank...

These 12 months would not have been possible without many wonderful people. Our particular thanks go to: ♥ Jo Baker, who believed in our idea from day one, having spotted its potential immediately; and our ♥ Advisory Body, comprising: Natalia Broniarczyk, Sylwia Chutnik, Małgorzata Fuszara, Magdalena Grabowska, Kinga Lohmann, Katarzyna Rakowska, Natalia Sarata, Sylwia Spurek, Kasia Staszewska, Krzysztof Śmiszek, and Maria Świetlik. We wish to thank the magnificent organisations who provided us with legal status in the early days of Fund operation – ♥ the KARAT Coalition, and ♥ Women's Space Foundation. We wish to thank ♥ the team supporting our activities daily: Marianna Wybieralska, Michał Sepioło, Karolina Pomarańska; Agata Kubis, Martyna Tokarska, and Emilia Oksentowicz (the .kolektyw); and Aleksandra Muzińska.

♥ We wish to thank Andrzej

Pietrucha, Magda Pawlak, and Magda Sadłowska for *pro bono* fundraising consultations.

♥ *Last but not least*, we wish to thank Anka Rozicka, Sylwia Sobiepan, Ingeborga Janikowska-Lipszyc, and all persons representing institutions who offered us support and assistance.

Without you, this year would have been impossible!

**Anything
is possible
with you**



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If you like what we do, help us continue our work :-)

Set up a regular bank transfer!

Your money is our power.

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Should you decide to share an idea how to continue the Fund's development, drop us a line at **kontakt@femfund.pl**.