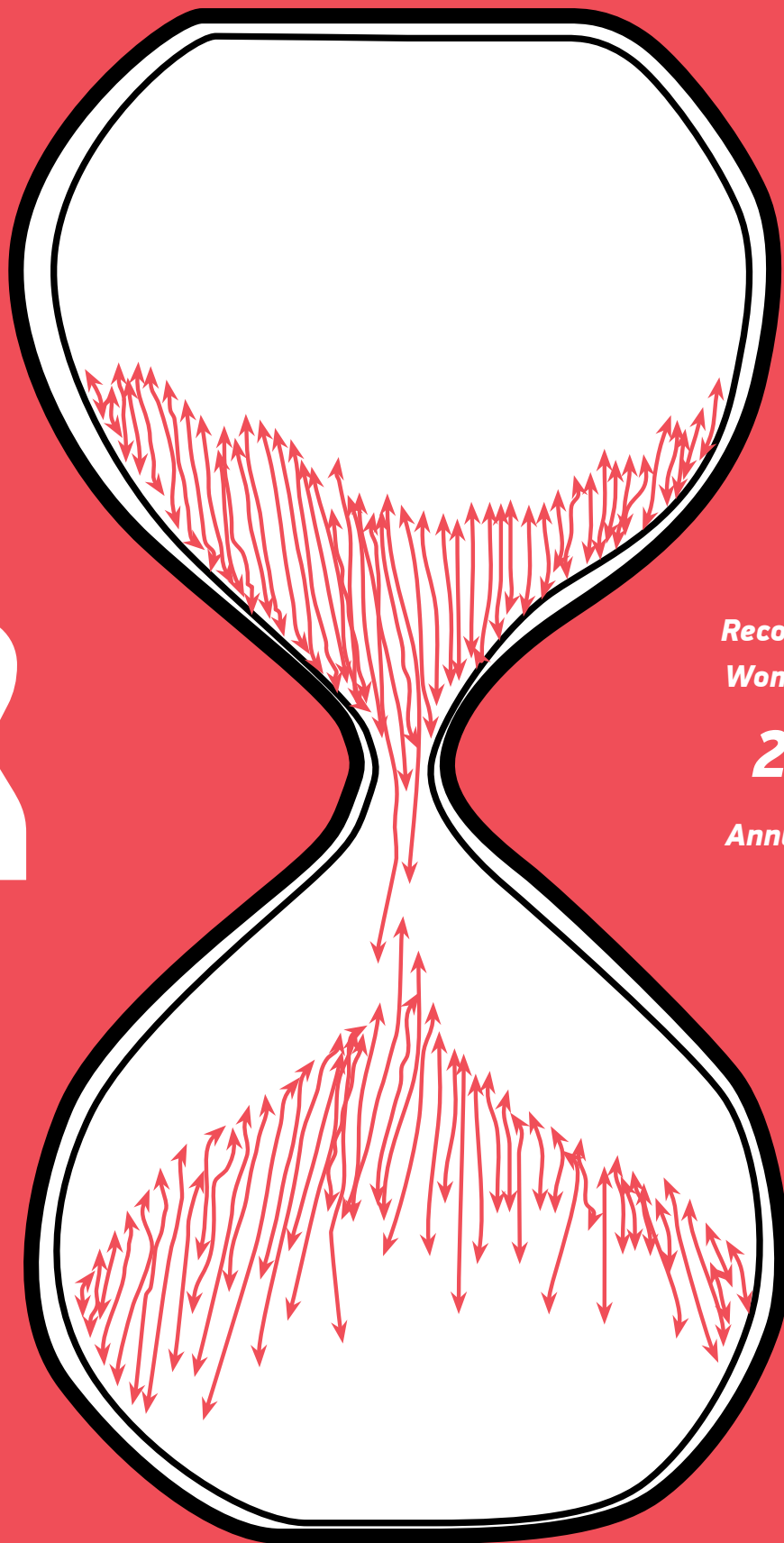


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*Reconstruction
Women's Fund*

2019

Annual Report

It is a great pleasure that we are able to share with you a review of the fifteenth year of operation of the Fund!

This year, we are providing an overview of 2019, with a deeper look at program reflections.

First of all, Reconstruction Women's Fund wishes to thank everyone who has supported us in different ways over the past 15 years, with whom we have been learning, developing, conquering and creating new spaces, experimenting, imagining, running, working, thinking, sharing.

This is a time to remember the contributions of our founders:

Slavica Stojanović
Svenka Savić,
Staša Zajović and
Mirjana Mirosavljević Bobić

and thank them for all their work, patience, openness and perseverance.

A lot of wonderful moments, learning, meetings, partings, challenges, discussions, fantasies and plans were a part of 2019.

We are grateful to all the groups, scholarship recipients, sister funds, donors and contributors, associates and collaborators with whom we have completed another year. We were delighted to celebrate with you in 2019 important anniversaries.



***15 years
of
the Fund***



***10 years
of
Joyfulness
Craziness***



***10 Years
of
March 8
Map***

2019 at a glance:

34

**GRANTS
WERE AWARDED
TO 31 GROUPS
FROM 12 TOWNS**

7

STIPENDS

Meet the supported groups [↗](#)

**GENERAL SUPPORT:
11 GRANTS**

**AWARDED SUM:
RSD: 11.762.914,00
USD: 112,046.9**

**SPECIAL FOCUS:
19 GRANTS**

**AWARDED SUM:
RSD: 4.221.054,00
USD: 38,812.32**

**ŽARANA PAPIĆ STIPENDS:
7 STIPENDS**

**AWARDED SUM:
RSD: 574.735,00
USD: 5,284.65**

**RAPID RESPONSE GRANTS:
4 GRANTS**

**AWARDED SUM:
RSD: 460.000,00
USD: 4,381.7**

Supported groups implemented activities in 45 towns in Serbia

(Aleksinac, Arilje, Bajina Bašta, Belo Blato, Belgrade, Bistrica, Bosilegrad, Čajetina, Dimitrovgrad, Gložane, Grdelica, Kikinda, Kosjerić, Lazarevac, Leskovac, Markovac, Mošorin, Niš, Nova Varoš, Novi Kneževac, Novi Pazar, Novi Sad, Pančevo, Pirot, Požega, Priboj, Prijepolje, Raška, Sjenica, Smederevska Palanka, Sombor, Sremska Mitrovica, Subotica, Šabac, Šišava-Lomnica, Titel, Tutin, Užice, Vinča, Vlasotince, Vrčin, Vršac, Zaječar, Zrenjanin, Žitkovac)

5 grants were for the YU region, and 2 focused primarily on the online sphere

Almost 30,000 people participated directly in the activities of the supported groups, of which over 70% are made up of women and girls.

The projects ranged from intensive work with 15 girls over several months, through groups providing various services to more than 800 women in combating various forms of violence, to public events with over 20,000 visitors across the country.

6 public events were organized



FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FUND OBSERVED

2019 at a glance:

In addition:

- We have been active in local and international circles
- We were hosts to Macedonian fellow activists on a study visit
- RWF has been selected for Strategic Thinking and Impact Fellowship and Salesforce Collaborative Process for women's funds as a part of Prospera's Women's Funds Capacity Building
- We expanded our team
- We continued to work on improving procedures and working methods
- We conducted an evaluation of Special Focus and consultations with the community

In 2019, our work was supported by filia.die frauenstiftung, Global Fund for Women, Kvinna till Kvinna, Oak Foundation/Trag and The Sigrid Rausing Trust.

What have we been doing in 2019?

According to the current strategic plan, 2019 focused on organizational development and internal processes, while 2020 and 2021 are primarily intended for program development. This entailed a lot of discussion, consultation, reflection, reflection on previous fifteen years of experience, consideration of strategies for the future, involvement in developmental processes with other women's funds, but also collecting inputs for further work on the programs in 2020 and 2021.

In the situation when the fund is changing, we believe that it is important for us to preserve the institutional memory, to document and validate the tremendous work and dedication

of women who have built, maintained and advanced the fund before us, to bring a new perspective, to remain in a state of constant awareness, so that we can react in a timely manner and adequately in line with our possibilities, and to leave useful information about our work to the people who will come after us.

We asked questions, problematized, opened constructive discussions in various circles, provided support to those who were unjustly impacted. We participated in protests and standing rallies, in art projects and the like. We continued to run, work, think, share.

Programs

*In the field of grant-making, we continued with the programs
General Support, Special Focus, Rapid Response Grants and
the Žarana Papić Stipends Program.*



More about current RWF programs

Special Focus

The RWF continues to keep in the focus the rooted concerns: militarism, nationalism, racism, the fight against all forms of gender-based violence and denial and violations of human rights. Special Focus, as a program directed at dynamic initiatives, contextual interventions and experimental learning, continues to operate as an activist laboratory, with the Managing Board making decisions about this program three times a year.

We have often been hearing that the topics of militarism, nationalism and racism are no longer relevant. But is this really true? In a situation when our won rights are abolished, natural and social goods are abducted, when people are intimidated, when obedience is required, when historical revisionism and spectacle erase collective memory and responsibility, when a collective idea is imposed that militarization of society and the intensification of the so-called “safety measures” is a solution to economic, social and other problems, when we are exposed to a flood of false information that avert attention from burning issues, when those who are considered others and different are denied human rights in the name of “defending” the nation, the state, and even under the guise of fighting for women’s rights - when implanted biological racism in the form of transphobia divides the movement, there is so much to do, right?

In 2019, we focused on projects addressing precisely these and related issues in different social spheres (activism, culture, art, social theory, media, sports, education, environmental care, migration, etc.), and that understand their causes and consequences. We wanted to support politically clearly established ideas, dynamic initiatives, experimentation, innovative approaches, alternative spaces, practices and contents that, through the prism of fighting militarism, nationalism and racism in all their forms, inspire, question, combat the depoliticisation and dehistoricization of feminism, recognize the weak points and work to strengthen the capacities of groups to deal with these problems, create spaces for learning and exchange, call for accountability, motivate action, empower, stand in solidarity with the oppressed, resist the devastating policies and narratives, and contribute to feminist and anti-militaristic fights.

We are fortunate to have been able to support bold, creative, provocative, critically minded and methodologically sound proposals that communicate with the relevant community, that is, which put on the table burning issues from a feminist perspective. As before, special attention has been given to informal groups, groups from small isolated environments, groups that bring a critical feminist vision to their milieu, new initiatives with a clear feminist and anti-militaristic policy.

More about current RWF programs



Special Focus 2019

- BeFem, Feminist Cultural Centre,
- Bibia, Roma Women's Centre,
- Center for Applied History,
- Children's Centre,
- Free Zone Film Festival,
- Hop.La!,
- Horkestar - Alternative Choir and Orchestra,
- NENA - informal group for peace and women's rights,
- Push-Back-Mapping Collective,
- Workers' Commune Links,
- Station service for contemporary dance,
- Šumadija Centre for Civil Activism Res Publika,
- UR NADA,
- Women in black,
- Women's Studies and Research, Novi Sad,
- Women's Centre Užice,
- Women's Movement 2020

More about current RWF programs

General support

We have also continued our General Support program, which provides more flexible support to groups with specific-approach, with which we have had long collaboration and which we consider our strategic partners. This program operates as a longer-term support to selected groups, with the idea of providing some stability and support to medium-term processes that are relevant for the local context, and which are not necessarily on the current priority lists of the majority of donors.

General support 2019

- Center for Women's Studies, Belgrade,
- Centre Living Upright, Novi Sad,
- Incest Trauma Centre, Belgrade,
- Out of Circle Vojvodina,
- Jefimija Užice - Counseling for women with breast cancer, Uzice,
- Fine Crafts Club, Mošorin,
- Roma Center for Women and Children DAJE, Belgrade,
- Roza - Women's Labour Rights Association, Zrenjanin,
- SOS Vlasotince,
- SOS Women's Centre, Novi Sad
- Women of the South Association, Pirot



More about current RWF programs

Žarana Papić Stipends

The Žarana Papić Stipends Program continues to evolve to support activists in acquiring knowledge in fields related to gender / women's and peace issues. The stipend is intended for activists (*not necessarily from women's organizations, although they take precedence) and academics, girls/women who wish to continue their education in gender studies and peace studies. Particular attention is paid to applicants from disadvantaged social groups.

During 2019, the RWF solidified its strategic partnership with the Master Academic Studies in Political Science - Gender Studies, at the Faculty of Political Science, managed by Katarina Lončarević. This study program has been prioritized and, depending on the funding available, stipends may be granted for other significant gender and peace programs in the country or abroad.

In 2019, the RWF organized two promotions of scholarship programs at the Faculty of Political Science. The recipients of our stipends from previous generations, Jovana Timotijević and Milica Miražić shared their experiences.

It is the policy of the RWF that all stipendists will pledge to volunteer to help with developing women's initiatives that need their expertise.

Stipends in 2019 awarded to:

Ivana Jankov
Katarina Mikić,
Milena Dimitrijević Tomić,
Miljana Trajković,
Sanja Dojkić,
Sonja Stojanović,
Tamara Urošević

Rapid Response Grants

A volatile political and social context and constant human rights violations create the preconditions for emergencies. It is the responsibility of responsible donors to actively respond and take a clear stand against any form of injustice. The most important features of a donor support are that it is fast, timely, context-aware and responsive to the real needs and demands of the people it is

targeted at. This is why we continued with the rapid response grants program, including an increased outreach to groups in crisis.

Rapid Response Grants 2019

Anonymous grant
Oktobar Social Centre
Association for agrarian development in Srem
Women in Black

What have we supported?

We know that changes have to take place at all levels: from the individual, through the collective, the community, the institution, the state, to the entire system of social relations. These processes are neither synchronized nor linear. Connecting people, sharing knowledge, developing skills, interventions in space, creating alternative spaces, correcting narratives and cultural practices, encouraging and empowering people to become involved in the fight for their rights, opposing devastating policies, and developing solidary models of

organizing and serving the community and nature, operate as pieces of a broader puzzle. They have to be interdependent, there has to be an understanding of the bigger picture, an idea of a better society, and a conscious upgrade of past experiences. Multidimensional but politically focused support can contribute to significant shifts and longer-term change towards a more just and accountable society. Having this in mind, we have supported the following:

Advocacy processes, campaigns, monitoring of implementations of conventions, holding institutions accountable, introducing a gender dimension into the education of employees in institutions and the media, advocating before institutions:

advocacy efforts and monitoring of the implementation of conventions that should improve the position and protection of vulnerable groups such as children and persons with disabilities; responding to cases of discrimination; meetings with employees of institutions and negotiations with competent authorities to promote the protection of

women's rights; trainings for employees of the institutions and media to be able to recognize the problem, have an appropriate response and adapt work with women, especially when it comes to gender-based violence, including learning and using sign language; campaigns against various forms of violence against women and girls, marking important dates

Activist spaces:

investing in the infrastructure of women's organizations; maintaining a media library as a meeting place for women in the South; the feminist library; building a classroom for earth architecture made of natural materials;

transforming an old farmhouse into a rural social centre for children and young people with accompanying educational and theatre activities in collaboration with elementary school, parents and neighbours.

Developing / preserving the community through creation and sharing of knowledge, skills development, actions:

expert feminist magazines and publications; documenting and popularizing women's activism; a case study of the affair that announced the current model of ruling via political and media manipulations, the persecution of intellectuals, the collapse of institutional autonomy, and the sanctioning of critical speech in public; mapping the status of women at risk locally; analyses of data collected by institutions and women's groups; exploratory documentation of the detrimental effects of nationalist and militaristic narratives on women's rights - a study of women's opinions on sexual, reproductive, labour rights in the context of abuse of religion; documenting, compiling reports and testimonies on violence and illegal systematic throw-out of people on the move, including the development of an online platform and mobile application for reporting and monitoring violence against refugees and migrants, which has been translated into different languages; public lectures/lessons on 90's history and anti-war resistance; performance on labour rights violations; a traveling theatre play about women in

transition; a documentary about the position of women reporters, presenting research and a traveling mobile mural about the position of female workers in culture; travelling reading anti-fascist choir; critical reading of literary production in the YU region and bringing together young authors and critics; a women's film festival addressing the current political challenges and consequences of right-wing politics; developing civic competences for female students focusing on peace activism and economic and civil rights; informing women of their rights; working to prevent forced early marriages and empowering Roma girls; working with refugees in refugee centres; developing volunteer engagement for the collective good and supporting those endangered or at risk; developing practical skills such as carpentry training and construction in the field of earth architecture, while regenerating existing spaces of public importance; expert conferences; art exhibitions; street actions; specialized portals, the online visibility and accessibility of feminist content; activist exchanges etc.

Specialized services:

SOS phone in Romani language; working with Roma women who suffer violence; information / counseling / psychological / legal / peer support for women with experience of violations of different rights and women

in violent situations; personal assistance and accompanying support for women with disabilities, including organizing vitists to gynecologist; holistic support to women with breast cancer

Organizational development and consolidation:

strategic planning; training of employees and volunteers, including training in community work and resource mobilization; participation in relevant events, networking meetings and activist exchanges

● — Considering the general deterioration of the situation in the society and the numerous challenges that the movement faces, on this occasion we make a review of the experiences and reflections we have gained through the activities of monitoring, sharing and learning with groups. They will serve us to further develop the program in the years ahead.

Main challenges

Violence remains an integral part of the system. Virtually all elected rights and freedoms are under attack. Access to resources is becoming increasingly reduced. All of this is reflected in different manners in different social groups.

Reducing opportunities for good education, adequate work, housing, access to health and social protection, and the destruction of urban and natural environments multiply risks and reduce available resources and mechanisms that ensure a dignified life. Additional barriers are in front of those who live in substandard settlements, where they have no access to drinking water and sanitation, electricity and telephone networks, where there is justifiable distrust in public services and institutions, where roads to schools, kindergartens, public transportation and shops are unsafe. According to a survey of Roma women's groups, 90 percent of women living in non-standard settlements live with some type of violence. We can also witness that migrants and refugees are stigmatized, movement is limited, and so is access to protections, and these are only some of layers of violence against "others". The majority population, yet, becomes partitioned along other lines of division, discrimination and (self) destruction. Extended anomie and anti-modernist breakdown of the social tissue are a fertile ground for retraditionalization. "The rise of clericalism and fundamentalism is having an impact on educational institutions, the family and the like and leads to an ultra-conservative and destructive model of democracy", a women's peace group said. Women are among the first under attack:

women's rights, women's bodies, women's experiences. For example, a breast cancer group cites a culture of silence and shame as an enormous risk to women's health: "It must be said that these are environments where stereotypes and prejudices exist in relation to malignancy in general and a tendency to make the diseases 'invisible', i.e. after returning from the hospital and from treatment, many women either retreat in their families or 'pretend' that they have never been ill, i.e. they hide the diagnosis, which is illustrated by drastic examples. In this way, it happens that retreat often results in the absence of the right support and withdrawal from treatment, which leads to tragic outcomes and thus makes the 'breast cancer phantom' even more taboo and even a threat to think about".

The bellicose rhetoric of the church and power-holders is used to divert attention from other socio-economic problems. "Depending on daily needs, women's existence becomes 'spare change', an argument for nationalists ('He should defend, she should give birth'), traditionalists ('woman is the pillar of the house'), militarists ('mother of the Jugović brothers') and other right-wingers. Behind these ideas are the political systems and political parties of all ex-YU states, without ever assuming accountability and/or attempting to restore women's dignity and right to work through social policy measures, legal regulations, court decisions, public advocacy. The working class has lost its identity everywhere, and a possibility of united action in defense of their rights has been completely weakened", says the group, which has been stripped of its space to work

with young people, because they point to the problems of current politics and the position of women.

A culture of silence is a culture of violence and oblivion. The stifling of critical voices and historical revisionism create unconscious and uninformed generations, subject to political manipulation and abuse. Groups that work with young people continuously report on the erasure and modification of collective memory, among other things, by keeping young people in the dark of ignorance that starts in the family and continues in educational institutions and the media: “It is interesting that I could not speak to any of our girls about the war in the region, they were mostly completely uninformed because their fathers were in the battlefield, and this is not discussed in their homes”.

From forgetting and denying, to losing the capacity to think alternatives; from the decay of solidarity to losing oneself in mythical mists. Narratives, policies, and imposed patterns of functioning eat away all segments of society. Public policies on a see-saw between neo-liberal and populist measures do not in any way favour human rights. The continuous decay of the public sector, deterioration of availability and quality of social services and social benefits, system ossification and unnecessary bureaucratization impact mostly poorer strata and shift the burden of care to the private sphere, that is, women. Party politics undermines institutions. Social solidarity is criminalized at all levels: from enacting legislation to deny free legal aid to the most vulnerable, to criminalizing attempts at defending roofs over people’s heads and natural resources.

The situation is further exacerbated by a real reduction of available (accessible) public funds, the manipulation of information that creates a false image of large-scale

investment in human rights and the non-transparent management of available resources.

In this context, gender-based violence is often understood in a very simplistic way, resulting in inadequate institutional responses (if any), reduced donor support, and a focus on remediation. Groups that trying to intervene at the level of local institutions have the idea of a “parallel monologue” instead of constructive negotiations with institutions regarding cooperation on the provision of social services that must be publicly funded, and also include expertise of the civil sector, in accordance with international Conventions of which Serbia is a signatory. It seems that when institutions are not pressured by major cross-sectoral projects, there is no interest in working with the civil sector, or at least not with those who ask questions and call for accountability. There is a clear lack of interest on the part of local authorities and representatives of the institutions to do the work for which they are paid and to accept the responsibility they have towards the entire society. “It happened to us that no one was answering the calls for cooperation we sent to the institutions, but also that they were very disagreeable and arrogant in the phone calls we made to them.” When institutional racism is added to this, the situation is insurmountable for many groups. Those groups that succeed in establishing cooperation with the institutions are in a situation where they have to repair the failures and blind spots of the state. Whether they are working with employees of the judiciary or healthcare, issues such as accessibility or the gender dimension are “something that is rarely thought about, if ever”, as the employees themselves say. On the other hand, there is a trend of turning social services into business and disregarding obligations from international conventions and recommendations of experienced women/self-advocacy groups.

In such a constellation, a part of the women's groups does not want any cooperation with the authorities, primarily because of the war and criminal history, and because of a complete distrust of the system.

The civil sector is certainly not homogeneous or immune to perpetuating violations of human/women's/minority rights. Even those who have fought for the preservation of certain rights, probably unknowingly but still irresponsibly, contribute to cementing the violations of other rights. Short-sightedness, unawareness of one's own privileges, and misunderstanding of broader cause and effect relationships and processes result in selectivity in the recognition and operationalization of human rights. Treating violations of women's rights as a tradition and culture of a particular population group, relativizing violence and not responding / inappropriately responding to a problem, testify about deeply rooted racist, sexist, populist, class discriminatory and other unacceptable public statements and measures. The approach of reducing people to passive users of programs and services has not yet been overcome. Progressive groups insist on the self-advocacy model and co-production, with sharing of roles, responsibilities and power. It is an invitation to institutions and donors and organizations and those who passively use the services.

Systematic pacification of social engagement, professional and thematic segmentation, in parallel with the creation of an atmosphere of competition within the civil sector, while fostering a "user" mentality, contributed to the creation of "balloons", reduced communication and potential to act: "inability to see needs from the position of the other" are the cause for selectively receiving information as it is the first step towards taking responsibility."

While groups call for the democratization

of the functioning of the civil sector and for more meaningful partnerships, funding for progressive groups is becoming more and more limited. Many women's groups point out that they are under constant pressure to combine sources of income to sustain the services and core activities of the organization.

More and more activists are raising their voice against precarious working conditions and endangering working rights, which are becoming visible everywhere: from large and recognized art collectives, to human rights organizations. Activists especially draw attention to the fact that they are forced to hire associates on unfavorable contracts, the financial uncertainty and the lack of funds for continuous community services to an adequate extent.

Insufficient funds that reach the groups in the field also result in the extinguishing of or reduced support to alternative education programs, knowledge creation/preservation, and long-term research work. The small amount of support can only cover smaller-scale research, which leads to segmentation and reduction of the research process and consequently affects the quality of research production.

Narrowing the space for action is also recognized as the centralization of cultural and activist content, the centralization of support and resources, and the centralization of power. Groups in smaller towns face a variety of challenges: from infrastructure to safety. One group says: "We expected a small turnout of participants from the region, however, when the applications started, we realized that this would be much more serious and demanding than we expected. Organizing these events was a big challenge, in two towns where they do not have adequate or sufficiently developed infrastructure - from transport, through accommodation, to meals for participants". Such challenges have been proven to be

overcome by mobilizing local resources, but the situation becomes even more complicated when it comes to topics that society refuses to tackle. Another group, dealing more explicitly with the war past, suffers discrimination in public competitions, as well as threats and attacks by unidentified persons. In such situations, although there is support from one part of the community, institutions do not respond, which is why human rights defenders are in a situation of constant risk.

A sense of fragmentation of movement and isolation is not uncommon. The groups emphasize the need to enhance communication inside the movement, including the regional flow of information: “Although we knew how much communication was lacking in the divided area of the former Yugoslavia, based on the reception in public of our articles, and based on the response of the audience, the publisher and the author, we could see how much communication was lacking between regional cultural scenes.” This is also true for other areas of activism.

Systemic pressures and differences in access to resources and opportunities pose a risk to relations both within and between movements. Insufficient awareness of the situation, unverified information, simplified assessments and rash reactions threaten the activist scene as well. Even spaces that operate as meeting places for years, places of discussion and transformation, face the risk of being reduced to grounds for non-constructive debate. The experience of several groups shows that online unmoderated space can easily become toxic and destructive. In addition to the need to improve (online) communication skills, one of the groups also emphasizes the need for a space for constructive discussions and openness to discuss tricky topics: This is why it is important to organize physical meetings and events, where there is space for direct and live exchange, in order to clarify and articulate

dissenting opinions, as well as a place for well-meaning criticism that would contribute to advancement”.

Autonomous activist spaces are particularly affected by lack of resources and flexible support. There are fewer donors who allow the acquisition and maintenance of premises that would serve as autonomous spaces for activist groups, thereby reducing the risk of forced evictions, that is, refusing to rent space to Roma groups, groups that work with migrants and groups with volatile finances. Many groups also have difficulties in acquiring work equipment.

Group maintenance is also a multidimensional problem. The stability of broader volunteer collectives fluctuates over time. People move and emigrate, find better paying jobs, or move to environments with lower costs and this also results in a loss of organizational knowledge and capacity. Groups from smaller towns are particularly affected by this, because their members go to bigger cities to study or to work. It also affects work redistribution, increasing workload. The needs of the groups for more comprehensive support in terms of team building, skills development (in the field of resource and community mobilization, resource management, team development, etc.) and the preservation and transfer of organizational knowledge are reflected here: “it is very important to build a team of younger members so that, when the time comes, there will be a successful shift”. Unless mechanisms for constructive conflict resolution are developed, there is a high risk that structural problems will be transferred to the personal level and that personal disagreements will jeopardize previous work. This is compounded by the health and psychological risks that activists are exposed to. The accumulation of macro and micro risks is fertile ground for burnout, especially in contexts where attacks on activists, uncertain support and messy

relationships are normalized. Different types of groups and collectives carry different risks that arise from the type of organization itself and the nature of the work. It is encouraging to think more seriously about individual and collective well-being: “What we lack is a broader evaluation of *events* and the work process, very often everything remains at the level of general impression, excitement and intensity that the *event* carries. It is for this reason that we experienced a failure similar to last year’s, when due to different professional commitments of team members (this year to a lesser extent) breaking deadlines occurred, and it slowed down the work process in certain periods. The lesson learned is the economy

of time, but also the conception of a feminist ethic of caring for the boundaries of one’s own body, and that apart from setting a work plan, we should be honest enough and acknowledge when we cannot fulfill our obligations and thus endanger neither the work process nor the capacities of other team members.”

Yet, burdens are piling up as organizations often find themselves in a situation where they need to simultaneously work on internal consolidation, finding new sources of funding, and participation in advocacy processes that are important at the given political moment. All of these are warnings that movements, groups and activists are at multiple risk and that comprehensive flexible support is needed.

Important points

During consultation with the community, an insight became crystal clear: that activism in general is too often reduced to one-dimensional and partitioned frameworks, specifically to “insist on advocacy and Davos activism”, while watchdog & edgy activism remain neglected. Uniforming of activism is also reported by groups, which find it increasingly difficult to cover basic institutional costs, but are expected to participate in networks, advocacy processes, and demonstrate impact in the short term. “Women and feminist groups do the most they can do, they persist more with personal enthusiasm, and much less with financial support.” Unless there is flexible support for a broader range of activist initiatives, a simplification of political understanding and action occurs, as well as centralization of power, loss of meaningful women’s voices, and co-optation/pacification/depoliticization of the movement.

The actions of women’s groups goes far beyond project frameworks. The presence of activists in the field is what maintains the continuity of the fight for human rights and bridges the divided social realities: “We believe that our presence in these trials and the monitoring of these court proceedings is important for two reasons. On one hand, we play the fundamental role played by civil society organizations, which is the monitoring of government institutions, in this case it is the court. On the other hand, we support both Marija Lukić and the Milojević family. We believe that solidarity with all those who fight against the people of the ruling regime is much needed. And not just solidarity as a

statement, but solidarity as a presence - as political, moral and emotional support. In this way, we show that those who are fighting are not alone in their struggles, that there is someone who supports them in that.” - Women in Black

The civil sector and women’s groups cannot serve as a substitute for the public sector, they can be a corrective and complementary addition. Community social services do not exclude public funding for services. Center for Living Upright reminds us of this: “... we communicated with the European Network for Independent Living, which supported the negotiation process to amend the decision [of the city to fund a personal assistance service] but could not support a fundraising campaign from other sources than public, because they believe that project and any other funding of the service except from the budget is mercy, and personal assistance is a basic right of every person.”

Self-advocacy groups, which operate on the principle of shared responsibility and co-production, are a good example of stepping away from the role of passive beneficiary and humanitarian approach, and shift the focus to the field of political activism, self-advocacy and the fight for the adequate implementation of human rights. This is what their activists say best:

“The purpose of assistance is to enable this for us, that is, to be independent. I emphasize that I can no longer imagine my life without personal assistance, because it enables me, and I am sure for all people with disabilities,

to live a life worthy of a person, that is, not to depend on the goodwill of the people around us, because that is the most difficult aspect. That I don't have to explain to people why I want to do something or go and why this is important to me, which is actually humiliating. Assistance gives us a possibility that when our family can no longer care for us, we do not have to go to an institution if we do not want to. To summarize, assistance is as important to me as the air I breathe, the water that quenches my thirst and the bread I eat, and this is provided by Articles 4, 9 and 19. of the International Conventions on Persons with Disabilities and General Comment 2, 5 and 7 of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for implementation of these articles and systemic laws of the Republic of Serbia in accordance with the Convention.”



“It is unthinkable for me to continue to live without personal assistance. The purpose is to be of benefit to society and to promote an improved and better quality environment. I do not see a point in going away from here, because in my lifetime I want to see less young people and new generations being denied the opportunity to function and be independent, whether they are with or without disabilities.”

Getting to know other people and sharing with them open up the space for learning and social engagement: “The level of information young people possess on the economic and social situation in the region is at a very low level, and therefore activism is often reduced to the local level, with no longer-term results. What I can certainly confirm, from both earlier and this experience, is that exchange through mobility works great. Developing a collective spirit, empowering, acquiring competencies, skills... is easier to come by if the participants are directed to one another for a certain period. “- Children's Centre

Public spaces are one of the key areas of political struggle: “The existing memorial culture in Belgrade that speaks of the '90s is also invisible to the younger generations; they walk by these monuments and do not see them, not only that they have no critical opinion, they have no opinion at all about these monuments. This is precisely what reflects the efficiency of the program, that these topics are discussed on the spots that testify about them, and not in closed classrooms or seminar rooms. In this way, participants are directly exposed to places of remembrance in a public space, past which they pass daily without knowing what happened there or what those places speak about. Also, staying in physical sense, or walking the paths of the protest walks also brings in another dimension to the learning process itself, apart from the intellectual one: emotional and experiential levels.”- Center for Applied History

There is always a need for knowledge, no matter how much control mechanisms try to uniform the narratives to which we are massively exposed to and reduce us to mere consumers of banal content: “While working on this book, the assumption was confirmed that there was a strong interest in the history of the feminist movement in Serbia / Yugoslavia and that this topic is one of those that can establish and sustain intergenerational, inter-professional, interdisciplinary and other links in the feminist (scientific) community. “- Women's Movement 2020

Undertakings aimed at a culture of remembrance and facing the past show that there is actually a public interest in these topics and that it is extremely important to provide financial support and facilities for their implementation. Although dominant structures are pushing society toward collective oblivion and denial of responsibility, full movie theaters, classrooms, guided tours

involving passers-by, and many other actions, show that a well-formatted approach to these topics is of interest to those who do not otherwise have access to such information. i.e. provides space for discussion space to those who are already in the topic but are systematically shoved into activist “balloons.”

It is important “to do things in public places, instead of in hidden spots, hotels, this hiding from people makes no sense” - emphasizes one of the interviewees in the consultation process.

Understanding of different social groups and, accordingly, choosing the appropriate working methods and formats, associates, as well as an adaptation of language, allow for the desired political messages and topics to reach a wider range of people and to offer them quality content that encourages reflection and social engagement. The Free Zone Film Festival has been successful for years in communicating with various social groups. The art group Hop.la also shows that understanding the environment and the people they work with are the key prerequisites for successful endeavors: “For the first time, we have implemented a project in a rural community, and realized that in such an environment, communication (both with the target group and partners) is conducted more effectively in direct contact (meeting, phone conversation) than indirectly (flyer, poster, email). In this regard, we conclude that it is useful to plan an on the spot stay in the period before the start of the project, and to participate as much as possible in the daily life of the village (visiting the market, shops, communication with neighbours, field work); in this way, an exchange of the necessary information is conducted more quickly and efficiently, but also the trust of the target group is gained.

In working with children, we reaffirmed our belief that we should not blindly stick to a

pre-made plan, but constantly listen to the reaction of the target group and model the program accordingly.



Possible (unwanted) selection (or self-selection) of children was also avoided; In the evaluation of the project, teachers pointed out that it was interesting that the so-called “bad students” were quite active in the program, they clearly recognized the program as something different from other extracurricular activities, and were not inhibited by previous experiences.” The most effective projects are community involvement projects that take care of everyone’s needs. Trust is built through communication and involvement in working together. Using local resources adds to the sense of belonging to the community.

The more complex the situation, the greater the chance that things will not go according to plans and copy/paste templates. True activism cannot be reduced to standardized patterns, log-frames, people counting and instant results.

Emergency situations and the severity of problems bring activist groups to the trap of over-ambitious plans and participating in too many fronts. Focusing on the goal and values sometimes pushes back planning of steps towards the goal, risk analysis and understanding of the position of the parties involved. “We have learned and realized that what we would consider self-evident does not have to be like that at all. In addition, we have learned to turn ambitious plans into less ambitious ones, while still achieving our goals.”

The importance of reflection and communication, the need to pause, the need for active listening, the tendency to hear, understand and articulate, are all confirmed as essential for persistence. Successful

groups treat the process of implementation of activities as a process of organizational learning and mutual adjustment of team members. Also, one of the interlocutors in the community consultation process emphasized the importance of intra-movement coordination, the need for joint planning, constructive discussions on issues that divide the scene, and joint advocacy and fundraising efforts.

“Pressure is often produced by ourselves, out of the responsibilities and perhaps exaggerated expectations that we place before us in this time of multitasking and never-completed jobs. When it comes to communication, it is of exceptional importance for all complaints and doubts about the activities of related groups should be communicated directly and in a friendly manner, since this is the only way we can learn. Sometimes we resent each other for things that are the result of scarce resources and precarities, the pressure of utilitarianism and production, which are, all together, the sources of our/your frustrations, not political elections, ideal chosen strategies and a meadow full of flowers. “The matter of time available is also related to this, the work dynamics and associated pressures: “Everyone says I will use my day off to do something I have to make up for. And this really does affect the deterioration of relations in collectives, because people do not have the opportunity to rest. We live in a system that makes us work constantly and if you don’t work, you feel - I don’t know how. The most significant activism is that we strive to work as little as possible. You can’t control that, how much people are committed to a particular project, is it a burden, does it include working at night/on weekends. Consideration should be given to how the projects for which the groups apply fit into their existing workload. It is important to think about how many small projects someone has to do in order to live.” - said the activist

in the community consultation process. One way to make it easier for groups is to communicate openly about workloads and to delay reporting deadlines, if necessary, to “give people space to have a weekend and rest, to have time to reflect and then send a report. To explain which delay is acceptable without compromising other things.”. In this way, better quality reports are produced, with deeper reflections, useful to both groups and donors.

Integrated self-evaluation practices, which operate as a natural part of the work process, show that such groups are more efficient and learn from previous mistakes.

Through such self-reflection processes, several groups have emphasized the importance of having mentoring support, especially when it comes to deeply underprivileged women. Developing mentoring programs for volunteers has proven to be a good mechanism for developing an organization: it allows volunteers to develop professional competencies, which makes them motivated to continue contributing to the organization.

The issue of decentralization and power sharing is a collective responsibility. “Donors should encourage the development of knowledge about the organization, structures and procedures. Procedures are the last dam of democracy. If you do not have a formal structure, you will have an informal one and then the weaker ones will have nothing at their disposal to defend themselves” said one of the activists in the community consultation process. Another interviewee said that she had learned the lesson that in order to preserve the team and the organization, it is of critical importance to have clear job descriptions (they can be modified according to the situation, but it is important to know who is in charge of what), as well as the procedures and protocols that are developed

and adapted based on experience. This also helps with introducing new people, gives a better overview of the situation and the capacity to respond in a timely and adequate manner. Regardless of the support coming from an institution of project funding, people need space to reflect, learn lessons, and rest so that they can better assess and avoid risks in the future, or be able to cope with them better. It is also important to have mechanisms in place to help people who are in the burn out, to give them space to regenerate and prioritize.

Process monitoring, presence in the field, responding, opposing repression, providing solidarity support, continuous review, creating space for personal and collective development and learning are important to avoid hazards such as recycling, depoliticisation, assimilation, dropout and demoralization.

Key successes

Strengthening organizational capacity:

“For the first time since Roza was established, we have our own workspace.”

“Fund of the Women’s Media Library is expanded by additional one hundred books, films, magazines and special programs in the field of human rights”

Educational programs and critical creative contents with capillary influence:

„The progress achieved we primarily see through the influence educational workshops have had on participants, and new knowledge they have gained and shared further on with their relatives, neighbours and friends. Their self-esteem also rises” - UR Nada

“A few days ago... our partner... called us to tell us that our performance was discussed as exceptional, people talk about the text, quote parts from it” - Children’s Centre

“After they saw the exhibition and listened to the stories, we asked the visitors about their impressions: *If one encounters a victim of violence, each of us has the first response: why haven’t you done this and that? In fact, somehow through this interactive exhibition, I have personally learned that it simply cannot be handled in this way.*”



“We are delighted that the faculty recommends us as a good place for

internships, as this indicates that they support our expertise”- SOS Women’s Centre Novi Sad

“By building the festival and new media spaces on the basis of the policy of friendship and solidarity, one group of women from the post-Yugoslav region managed to create places of the new feminist thoughts and actions, where women will feel safe and secure and have an ability to produce knowledge, creations, change, they are all on the same mission.”



“This space was created from love, first and foremost, from friendship policies. I think that it was felt all the time and that our new younger associates came not by invitation, but because they felt safe and secure there, and somehow they felt that they had the ability to produce knowledge, creations, change and that we were all on the same mission.”
- BeFem

Timely action prevents “dropping out” from the system:

“The good thing is that most girls [who participated in the program] are eighth-graders when it is a crucial time for decisions whether they would continue their education.

An indication that we have succeeded is that all the girls took the final exam and plan to continue their education. “- UR Nada

Developing healthy habits in women, taking responsibility for one’s life, reducing breast cancer mortality:

“Positive trend in reduction of breast cancer mortality - although the rate of breast cancer in the Zlatibor region is increased (57 / 100,000) when compared to Serbia (54 / 100,000), breast cancer mortality is lower (11 of 100,000) when compared to Serbia (19 of 100,000) !!!

The positive impact of early breast cancer detection through screening - the largest breast cancer screening response in Serbia is in the Zlatibor region - and it amounts to 93.1%, while, in total, it averages between 26 and 55% (Serbia average 45%).



Positive attitude to treatment (we do not have information that any of beneficiaries gave up treatment) and hope for healing, increased responsibility towards oneself (starting with a better attitude to nutrition and body to significant work on self-development and recognizing and changing their roles), establishing new social connections that are supportive, the ability to distance oneself and take an objective look at one’s life; the ability to obtain understandable information about the disease and reduce fears and resistance, easier acceptance of information that is not always good (e.g., metastasis).

Certainty is also enhanced, because by participating in the work of ‘Jefimija’, women get relevant information when they are at a loss, but are also able to reach an

appropriate form of diagnostics or treatment (less ‘wandering’ from doctor to doctor). It should be noted that women from the ‘non-ill’ population are less likely to go for preventative examinations and mammograms, as they are encouraged by the words and acquaintance of the members of ‘Jefimija’ at various events.



In the post-recovery phase, we have focused a great deal of attention on initiating insight into the responsibility of women for self-development and understanding how much they can contribute to their own self-preservation. This work is constantly crossed with gender roles, because the root of self-neglect and exhaustion are highly related to the onset of the disease and its late detection. This has been part of our regular work and the effect of this gender awareness is the development of self-awareness and assertiveness in the beneficiaries, i.e. building the skill to make boundaries, say no and/or work on self-preservation and building new habits that bring them into the zone of safety and self-fulfillment”- Jefimija

Successful combination of local public health resources and group expertise:

“An additional problem is the reduction of medical staff and the overload of staff in the departments since to this staff this is an additional task. Nevertheless, we know that for the most part, we manage to organize for almost all of the women who had to have a demonstration of physiotherapy exercises and that we are the only ones in the Serbian healthcare system who have this practice.”



“We have aligned our on-call shifts and self-help groups with the operating hours of the breast surgery clinic at Užice General Hospital. The health centre is open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and we at ‘Jefimija’ have shifts from 9 AM to 2 PM (two women for

experiential support and a psychologist). So now every woman (and the person accompanying her to for the examination) from the district (10 municipalities) can come to ‘Jefimija’ after the examination (diagnostic or follow-up) and talk about their dilemmas, fears, get all the necessary information and relax (with juice, coffee, tea ...).



“With the permission of the OB in the lobby of this health centre, there is a frame with ‘Jefimija’ material about the possibilities for support, but also an excerpt on the rights to free services and aids and ways to get them. The same material is also in breast surgery rooms.” - Jefimija

Improving the funding of the personal assistance service for persons with disabilities:

“Thanks to the advocacy initiative of the Center .., the Decision on Social Protection of the City of Novi Sad was amended by introducing the right to use the services of

personal assistance and personal escort to the child and the student, which is funded directly from the budget of the City of Novi Sad as of January 1, 2020. - Centre Living Upright

Expanding the fight for women’s labour rights across sectors and inter-organizational cooperation:

“When it comes to women’s work in the arts and culture, but also in general, solidarity between the actors on the stage is necessary and very important, so in the communication and in the organization the principles we stand for should be implemented. This project

is therefore important because it allows one important topic to be opened outside its home location without the participants being underpaid or otherwise (self) exploited in the process.” - Station

Reviving small communities:

“There are no registered accommodations, so we have asked the entire village to look for accommodation, vacant rooms and houses, in order to accommodate all lecturers and one part of the participants who have requested it. The other part was accommodated in the camp at the Miletic FC playing field, for which we made additional compost toilets. Food was our next challenge - from the search for a vegetarian chef, who can cook for 100 people under construction conditions, through finding a place to serve meals (two classrooms at “Isidora Sekulić” elementary school), through transporting food from us to school ... “



For both events, we had 51 trainers and lecturers and 88 registered participants from 32 countries (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, BiH, Macedonia, Montenegro, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, Italy, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, France, Luxembourg, Spain, Portugal, England, Germany, Finland, Estonia, Turkey, Israel, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Sierra Leone, India, China and Japan!)

Also, during the festival, some of the lecturers and participants gathered on their own initiative and started talking about the role of women in earth architecture, their projects, how and why they began... At their request, we went to visit the village’s oldest craftswoman, 97-year-old Ljubinka Dudić, who was a house painter until 15 years ago. “



“The project also had a much greater impact on the community - except that [guests from abroad] were accommodated with local families, food was served in the elementary school, which was also painted, we had evening activities with the community, more than 120 children participated in daily workshops, etc. All this contributed to much greater involvement of women from the village - some were already empowered and wanted to cook for the coming year; from a number of them we bought home produce; many lecturers also slept in their homes. ” - Fine crafts club

Developing key tools for documenting human rights violations:

“We get feedback from migration researchers who encourage us to go on, because in their opinion PBM (pushbackmap.org) with Border violence monitoring (borderviolence.eu) is the

most important tool and most comprehensive web site documenting violence.” - Push Back Mapping Collective

Establishing platforms that connect divided societies and make repressed topics and voices visible:

“By drawing public attention to these topics and production of books that advocate them, the K&K project has increased the visibility of these topics, especially among the younger generation, who, although present in cyberspace, has been denied basic education in the fight against militarism, nationalism and racism . “



“Also, during the follow-up of this project in 2019, the selection of literary critics was broadened, and it became a daily occurrence for publishing houses to come forward with proposals to follow their editions. This is a testimony to the site’s visibility, primarily because it is about books and topics that are not in the focus of dominant media. “-
Workers’ Commune Links

“The importance of the organization’s Internet media, the Disability Portal (portaloinvalnosti.net), in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, especially women with disabilities, has once again been recognized this year. On March 18, 2019, Marijana Canak, the reporter of the portal on disabilities, received the Equality Flower Award from the Zlatibor

County Dystrophy Association, for the Best Media Report published online: “On sexual development of young women with disabilities in Serbia: From personal experience”. The Equality Flower Award is presented for media coverage of disability issues, promoting the activities, rights and achievements of persons with disabilities, published in print, electronic or online media of national, regional and local importance. The Equality Flower Award promotes the social model of disability and activism of persons with disabilities and promotes their potential, achievements, rights, inclusive approach and creativity. ”-
Out of Circle Vojvodina

“At the recommendation of my colleague, I turned to the Women’s Media Library for help in finding books for a college paper about human rights. I was more than surprised by the atmosphere in the library, books at my disposal, and the kindness of women who work there. Indeed, few cities, and not only here in southeastern Serbia but elsewhere can boast this kind of cooperation. I have nothing but praise for the Žene Juga (Women of the South) Association)and I have to admit that I wish to join them”- a beneficiary of the Women’s Media Library

● — A big thank you to all the groups for their comprehensive reports, regular communication and constructive criticism. Thanks also to the activists who took part in the consultation process during 2019 and shared their insights, lessons learned, the problems that they have and proposals for the future.

Additional support

RWF is committed to developing and providing tailor-made support to the groups, which goes beyond the grants themselves. We strive to be available and help find ways to overcome problems, that is, to open new doors and establish solidarity connections.

Linking groups to actors that can support them in different realms:

- Interconnecting the groups we support in order for them to collaborate and exchange experiences
- Referring groups to relevant trainings organized by partner organizations and RWF donors
- Connecting groups to activist spaces where they can organize their events

Access to other funding sources:

- Sharing information about financial support opportunities
- Referral of donors to local groups
- Submitting recommendations when applying with other donors

Visibility:

- Promote the work of groups through our communication channels
- Connecting groups to the media
- Recommending groups to participate in panels organized by other organizations and actors
- Nominating groups and projects for activist awards
- Support in developing campaigns

Care for wellbeing:

- Talks in crisis situations
- Advocating respect for ethical standards in relation to employees, volunteers and the environment

Collective care

The RWF team encourages groups to actively take care of the well-being of the team and the environment. The approved support may also cover the costs of collective care and prevention of burnout:

“The psychological workshop that we had as a part of the educational workshops allowed

us to cope better and more efficiently with daily stress.” - Roza

Contributing to the local community, supporting the local economy and care for the natural environment are important parts of the political agenda of the groups:

“From the beginning, this is one of our main points - working with natural and locally available materials: soil, straw, chaff, wood, and we also try to obtain most of these raw materials from the people of the village. In addition, we also try to recycle materials and to re-purpose them. We try to include as many women from the village as possible in the project - apart from the accommodation provided by the community, we buy home-made bread at an old traditional bakery, and we get cheese, milk and eggs from unemployed women. We try as much as we

can, with construction activities we also have a small garden where we have a part of groceries that we need for workshops. Organic waste is composted. The food that we prepare is predominantly vegetarian. We have a compost toilet on the property, and the shower is also outside, with a solar water heater. For the purpose of the event, we have made 2 new compost toilets and 2 new urinals that we are particularly proud of, and 2 compost toilets have also been made for the camp at Miletić FC in Mošorin.” - Fine Crafts Club

Collective care

Reporting on projects supported through the Special Focus shows that women's groups take into account various aspects of collective care:

- that events should be organized in spaces accessible to persons with disabilities **53%**
- to make the content that are produced accessible and understandable to as many people as possible (except in the case of specialized content for a narrow target group) **47%**
- to ensure that all project participants are informed in a timely manner about all events, changes and other important information **73%**
- to make sure that hired people are paid on time **73%**
- to make sure that volunteer work is not misused **67%**
- to provide adequate food for participants with different preferences/restrictions (vegan, gluten-free, etc.) **53%**
- to make sure that leftovers of food and refreshments are not disposed of, but shared/donated **53%**
- to make sure that, whenever possible, purchases are made from local producers **53%**
- to use the most environmentally friendly and the most economical means of transport whenever possible (public transport or multi-party vehicle) **47%**
- to make sure that promo materials are not printed in excessive quantities **73%**
- to make sure that electricity, water and other resources are not wasted **40%**
- to minimize waste production and, if possible, recycle it **47%**

Collective care

The groups also shared some other examples of collective care:

“BeFem team member and environmental activist Milica Batričević insisted on the use of glass jars for water for speakers, and not plastic bottles.” - BeFem

“A part of the materials that Bibija produces is translated into Romani language. Volunteers are reimbursed for travel expenses, they can make photocopies of the material free of charge, they can use a computer and have access to the Internet and the library, if the project permits, they can obtain relevant literature.” - Bibija

“An example of best practice at meetings where the language used is not everyone’s native language, and where not everyone is in an equal position to understand, is to hire someone to type on a computer simultaneously, and that it is projected on a video beam. Even when they cannot type everything, it helps a great deal to democratize the meeting and equal understanding. It is also useful, if there are hearing impaired participants, regardless of the language used, to have a sign language interpreter.” - Push Back Mapping Collective

Groups about RWF Support

“A big thank you to RWF for recognizing the importance of the project, within the Special Focus program, which we think is unique to us, because rarely does anyone directly address the issues of militarization and racism. Also, we are pleased that this program is in line with our political views and actions, and our application fit in organically. Thanks also for the friendly communication, which went without stress and discomfort. “

“It is important to maintain a Special Focus. ... I would love to see a continuation of that, because in this way, many questions and initiatives are covered, and maybe some questions that we haven't had so far can be raised at SF. This is a specific type of support that fem groups usually do not have. Even some who are not sure that they would do some things, with this have an opportunity to try to do something different, to connect with other people and have some new initiatives... It is important to preserve these smaller grants, especially in order to decentralize support.”

“We have reached an enviable expert level in the field of problems that we deal with; we ourselves have to do self-evaluation in order to keep up and move forward, and the RWF encourages us by questions, proposals, visits, a joint search for better opportunities. ”

“It gives us the ability to allocate funds to document our work.”

“In the first months of the year, we usually have no funds other than General Support, so it is precisely this that enables ongoing expenses to be covered at all times.”

“General support is great support for us, in every way. We always get it long before the other funding, and it allows us to plan the beginning of the year and provides a wind at our back for all other activities. This year, it was of particular importance to us, since it allowed us to purchase tools and materials needed to prepare the conference and festivals we organized. As most of our other funds were received just before the event, without general support, we would not have been able to complete everything that was planned. “

“General support allows us to receive support from other donors and ensure a regular flow of funds.”

“Without general support, we would not have even dared to apply to calls of international agencies. Also, the RWF promotes the work of our organization on their social media and makes us visible in the circles of stakeholders relevant to our work. ”

Important successes over the past 15 years:

- **SPECIAL FOCUS** has shown at the time of complete depoliticization how important contextualization is and that feminism must transcend identity narrative and its reduction to solely to gender equality
- Through the Special focus and General support groups were supported, as well as topics that do not fit into the mainstream donor frameworks, and which bring something important and different to people's lives, which the state, even if the best in the world would not do (and would not be obliged to do)
- **EMERGENCY GRANTS** are a program that supports one of the main features of a local foundation, to respond in a timely manner. We support activists to seize the precious moment, prevent a certain situation from escalating, i.e. to protect themselves and remediate as much as possible the consequences of the gravest violations and breaches of human rights.

15 years of grantmaking

in numbers:

200+

SUPPORTED
GROUPS

860+

GRANTS

50+

TOWNS ALL
OVER SERBIA

130+

STIPENDS

APPROXIMATELY

20%

OF INFORMAL
GROUPS

100+

SUPPORTED
INDIVIDUALS

Local philanthropy

Local feminist philanthropy is one of the most dynamic programs in development, through which RWF integrates local resource mobilization and political education.

We are very happy with the successes achieved during 2019. December's online fundraising campaign Exchange for Change brought us more than 15 new donors! A total of 25 individual donors participated in the action, with whom we shared a small token of appreciation - a package of feminist printables materials. The funds were raised to

strengthen the RWF program. The total sum of the funds raised in the campaign was **RSD 41,600 dinars + EUR 192!**

We are very pleased that support has come from many different sides, from our neighbours, colleagues, friends, groups and activists we have supported in previous cycles, but also from the wider community from different parts of the country, recognizing the importance of investing in supporting women's groups in the fight for human rights.

Why we believe that individual donations are important?

Individual donations are a flexible source of funding and, as such, facilitate the support we provide to female activists, artists and academics, especially when it comes to contingencies. Individual donations are also a way to diversify money. But above all,

individual donations are for us an expression of solidarity with the women's movement, a reminder that women are not alone in their struggles and that the community recognizes and supports their efforts toward progressive change.

● — Thanks to everyone who got involved in 2019!

Public events

Double birthday!
15 years of Fund and 10 years of Joyfulness Craziness



In October, we celebrated a double anniversary at CZKD with many friends and associates of all genders.

Joyfulness Craziness is an annual meeting of independent artists and activists with the wider community. With a decade of Joyfulness Craziness, through the musical and stage performances of Lady K and Decadence, Ephemeral Confessions, and the Meki spoj

/ Soft Match duet, as well as through an art installation entitled *Reconstruction in 15 views* by Katarina Popović, we also celebrated our fifteenth birthday; we have reviewed the organization's history, key values and achievements. On this occasion, the community got to know a rejuvenated RWF team and said goodbye to Zoe Gudović, who designed the Joyfulness Craziness precisely ten years ago.

Public events

Sisters are doing it best

Sisters are doing it best has become, in previous years, a recognizable event during which we raise funds for a specific need identified in the community. This year, we have taken a small turn and organized two #SADIB events to strengthen our programs with community support.

SADIB16 raised money for the General Support Program. The programs and works of the groups that we support through this program has been promoted.

SADIB17 was used to fundraise for stipends for activists. The Žarana Papić stipends program was presented, and some of our previous scholarship recipients shared their experiences of what support meant to them.

RWF presented its model of the program and local philanthropy at a CIVICUS side event, held in April at the premises of the Trag Foundation, at the invitation of Barry Knight of Centris, UK.

Important successes over the past 15 years:

Presence, solidarity, experimental pushing of boundaries

- We have been actively participating both as activists and as a foundation in organizing events and protests during all these years.
- Actions for feminist philanthropy, such as SISTERS ARE DOING IT BEST have become a brand: people know that the #SADIB is an invitation to donate in a timely manner to important initiatives, for the well-being of activists, groups and collectives. We have established cooperation with cafes or public spaces where feminist actions have never taken place before.
- Joyfulness Craziness is an event that brings back to life neglected public spaces, creates spaces for exchange, socialization, solidarity and networking, promotes young artists and brings feminist activism closer. In the period of 10 years of the Joyfulness Craziness event, we succeeded in promoting, connecting, collaborating with over 200 artists and animate 6 public spaces in Belgrade.

“As the only women’s foundation that clearly promotes feminist policy and values, anti-war policy, policy against violence, and all forms of discrimination, we understand the importance of making sure that spaces where actions and events take place are accessible to all in order for more people to get to participate in the topics we deal with. In this context, we are aware that cultural content is not accessible to everyone, especially not to marginalized people, homeless people, migrants, people living in poverty, and it was certainly our intention to open these contents to all. That is why our event is an open scene where intersectional artistic content is crisscrossed with activist one, different generations and structures come together, there is always something for everyone, opinions are exchanged and opposed, and all this is important to us, because in times of disconnected relationships, lack of empathy, we live in a hurry, always looking for something new and better, so on the day when Joyfulness Craziness took place, we stopped to rejoice and be crazy in at all that abundance of diverse people and the idea we manage to bring together.” - Zoe Gudović, creator of Joyfulness Craziness.

Political education and documenting women's activism

March 8 Event Map ↗

10 Years of March 8 Map

The EVENT MAP for March 8 is useful, informative, educational, and this is one of the ways to record and archive the history of feminist and women's organizations.

In 2019, we marked 10 years of mapping of March 8 events, street actions, public debates, educational activities, riots and celebrations marking this date. The map covered 16 events in 6 cities.

The archive of the March 8 maps **can be accessed here.** ↗

Focus on focus

We continued at a slightly slower pace with the Focus on Focus section, where you can find information on some of the prominent projects supported through the Special Focus program:

Hop.La Art Art group! - the play Epic Game II: Dusan's Wedding day ↗

Performance *Dusan's Wedding day* brings a contemporary rethinking of the patriarchal patterns contained in epic poetry and offers to the audience, primarily the young one, an interactive reading of books on the school reading list.

LICEULICE no. 47 - If we stand aside in the presence of evil, we stand on its side! ↗

The 47th edition of LICEULICE magazine is dedicated to anti-fascism, its historical and contemporary context and various aspects from which we can observe it.

Translation of Joan Nestle's book - A Restricted Country ↗

This book is a collection of selected essays, personal and political at the same time, that encourage thought and action primarily against racism, misogyny, lesbophobia, semitism and other non-liberties.

In 2020, we continue to present inspirational projects from Special Focus!

Political education and documenting women's activism

Guest editions ↗

Ksenija Atanasijević: Ethics of Courage ↗

As part of the section Guest editions we have published a PDF version of the book by Ksenija Atanasijević: The Ethics of Courage which we co-published in 2011 with Women in Black and the Centre for Women's Studies. The book was edited by Ljiljana Vuletić.

They inspire and motivate us ↗

Through this section, since 2013, we have shared with you the voices and experiences of women who inspire us and that underline the importance of investing in feminist organizing. Last year, we published four interviews with inspiring women who presented their views on feminism, solidarity, and investing in women's fights.

Sandra Moran: Let's get to know each other, recognize each other and protect each other! ↗

Sandra Moran is a longtime activist, former musician and the first publicly declared lesbian in the Guatemala Congress.

“Solidarity is a relationship between people, a way of being together in the struggle for changes, for the future, a way of knowing and recognizing each other, our strengths, but also protecting each other. We had the experience of a lot of solidarity in Guatemala – from different countries and this solidarity saved thousands of lives when we were in war and in refugee status... So we know what solidarity is and how the relations that start from the

solidarity movement are very big, tight and finally we become like family, extended family. I believe we need solidarity, all of us – from all of us.”

Arundhati Roy: Imperfect Solidarities! ↗

Arundhati Roy is an author, essayist and screenwriter from India.

“Well, solidarity first of all means understanding, the first thing it means is common understanding. When I was outside yesterday at the meeting with groups of young women and they were talking about imperfect solidarities, I said “Do you know that is the best kind of solidarity? Because the perfect solidarity can end up being a tyranny.” So we have to also learn how to be in solidarity when we disagree with each other about certain things, or agree with each other about certain things – we have to be in solidarity which is not completely anarchic, which is useless, but also not completely hierarchical, all these issues... “

Laura Kanushu: Open the gates for women with disabilities! ↗

Laura Kanushu is a lawyer and former director of Uganda's Legal Action for Persons with Disabilities organization.

“I am aware that donors have focuses or areas they fund, but as I said, as long as you are talking about women, you can't avoid talking about women with disabilities. So I

Political education and documenting women's activism

don't understand when I write an application and get a feedback from a donor saying "We don't support disability" – since disability is not a person, a woman is a person, so if you are a donor and you say you support women's rights, don't tell me you don't support disability, because there is no person called "disability". That person is a woman or a girl.*** I think there has got to be solidarity for women, that we as women need to stop isolating ourselves and thinking "oh, I belong to this group, I only belong to the group of disabled, I don't belong to sex workers group..." – because at the end of the day, what unites us is that we are women and that's the point ... "

Jana Korb: Let's Think More Opportunities for Future! ➤

Jana Korb is an interdisciplinary artist who combines physical theatre with circus arts and dance with acrobatics with new media.

"Solidarity is very important, because we as women in this Western society (especially we white women) are very bad at solidarity – there is always competition and precarity. We are used to being just a few women in the male world, and are feeling threatened when another woman comes in, instead of showing solidarity with each other. Looking at the movement of black American women, e.g., and seeing their big solidarity amongst them and how they can form a movement, even some kind of revolution, makes me ask "Hey, why aren't all women like that? Why aren't women more like sisters with each other?" I find it very important to learn solidarity. We

dismiss male networking as unethical, but networking is very important. We should learn from these old boys' networks and have our own sisterhoods and ways to include people instead of competing."

Important successes over the past 15 years:

Visibility, accessibility, political acumen

- Documenting and archiving events of March 8 - [EVENT MAP FOR MARCH 8](#) .
- We have inspired many collectives across our country to make maps of events, both for March 8 in their cities and for some other dates relevant to feminist history.
- We are amplifying the voices that promote local feminist philanthropy.
- We translate important, and often sidelined, political texts and make political knowledge more accessible.
- We inspire and spread the word about similar inspirational endeavors, we promote feminist values and policies, groups, initiatives, we spread the idea of our work and the changes that we, as a feminist foundation want in this society

Find interesting political texts in the section [Critical topics](#). ↗

Collaborations and organizational development

Donor cooperation

RWF initiated and participated in exchange meetings with local and international sister funds in order to better support groups and to advocate for the transformation of rigid systems that impact women's activism, in order to make resources more accessible, flexible and tailored to the needs of groups in the field. Special thanks are due to Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace for organizing an online peer exchange (**Learning cycles**) on key topics relevant to community foundations around the world.

It is a great pleasure that we had an opportunity to contribute to the Trag process **of participatory grantmaking** for women's initiatives in the region. Democratization of decisions on distribution of resources is

an important but also challenging political principle. This experience helps us further think through the mechanisms of grantmaking, better respond to challenges, and focus on unfairly marginalized topics and more disadvantaged groups.

The RWF invests efforts to support advocacy initiatives of allied funds. Milica Mirazic, director of the fund, participated in a May 2019 at an event organized by Kvinna Till Kvinna in Sweden, during which narrowing of the space for women's human rights and fighting against the right-wing in the context of the European Parliament were discussed. On this occasion, she also made a brief **video statement**. ↗

Study visit of Akcija Združenska organization

In November, we were hosts to our friends from the Macedonian organization Akcija Združenska who came to us for a two-day study visit. During the visit, we exchanged knowledge and experiences related to

supporting the women's movement and discussed ways to overcome challenges. As always when we have guests, after the work we visited the activist collectives we work with.

Collaborations and organizational development



Foundations for Peace Network (FFP)

FFP is our strategic partner, a space for exchange, learning and joint initiatives to push the borders in the philanthropy sector.

Annual meetings of the network are an opportunity to discuss important political topics and take a stand on donor trends.

In 2019, we were a part of **peer learning @ training development team**, where we led the development of the Module for Local

Philanthropy for Peace and Social Justice. We want to make local donors more recognizable in the global philanthropic sector, share experiences of responsible fundraising and grantmaking, and contribute to greater involvement of local communities in systemic change.

The work of the FFP Network in the field of peace activism is presented in the **June edition of Alliance magazine** (Vol. 24, No. 2).

Collaborations and organizational development

Andrew Milner highlighted the Reconstruction Women's Fund's as a pioneer in the field of peace activism that has influenced the philanthropic community over the past 15 years.

We are transferring knowledge from the FFP network: Focus groups and knowledge sharing with peace activists from Northern Ireland

RWF remains committed to examining sectoral trends and global knowledge sharing.

In January, we organized **a focus group with peace activists** led by my colleague Sean Feenan from Northern Ireland. In 2019, Sean has been collecting the experiences of peace activists of both genders, and these experiences should serve as an inspiration and best practice examples for further work in conflict areas around the world.

We decided, after participating in an exchange with colleagues in Derry, to share that experience and launch a discussion about the social economy in (post) conflict areas from a feminist and peace perspective locally. We used Sean's guest appearance, since he organized an exchange in Ireland, to share the experience of working with former political prisoners in the field of social economy in Northern Ireland as part of the peacebuilding process. Conal McFeely, Rath Mor Centre and Cregan Enterprises in Derry, a former trade union member, presented via Skype his model of multisectoral association around social economy, principles of operations and relevance to the local community. Ivana

Stancic from Smart Collective analyzed the ecosystem in Serbia, and Nikoleta Kosovac presented the work of the street magazine Liceulice, which is one of the most successful social enterprises in Serbia. Through the discussion we have raised questions about contexts, understanding social and solidarity economy, backgrounds and political implications of these initiatives, especially in relation to women and communities in conflict areas. The event was held in DC Oktobar. After the event, visitors were able to support, through a joint dinner, a fundraising event for care for abandoned animals.

"The presentations were very interesting to me, especially the one about the Irish model, because until recently, I had no idea that there was such a way to connect communities and people in them. And the food was awesome :)"
- a student from the audience

Collaborations and organizational development



Prospera - international network of women's funds

MEL COP

We have continued to advance our knowledge in the field of feminist approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning through the MEL Community of Practice, a peer community of women's funds.

Our program coordinator Marija Jakovljevic has been selected for the MEL COP Steering Committee.

Strategic Thinking and Impact Fellowship (STIF)

STIF is a process derived from the MEL Community of Practice program, as a more specific form of support for women's funds. As a part of this fellowship program, RWF is working to advance their Theory of Change and MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning) practices. By the end of 2019, we attended a meeting in Nairobi where we worked together with other women's funds to establish a

Collaborations and organizational development

fellowship. We are especially grateful for the support provided by Boikanyo Modungwa, a consultant from Botswana, who will work in 2020 with the RWF team and the Monitoring board.

Salesforce collaboration: adjusting for women's funds

The process also stemmed from Prospera's MEL Community of Practice program, and RWF is one of four women's funds to participate in customizing a technology solution offered by the Salesforce platform to support feminist grantmaking and MEL activities.

A big thank you to Global Fund for Women, who were our hosts in October in San

Francisco and shared their experience with the platform, Prospera, for making this collaborative process possible, and to our colleagues from sister funds, from whom we have learned a lot!

Annual meeting of European Women's Funds

In October 2019, the European Women's Funds had a meeting in Georgia to exchange information on the situation in their countries, improve their security knowledge and continue work on developing strategies to more adequately support women's rights at European and global level through the initiatives *Knocking on the EU's Door* and *On the Right Track*.



Collaborations and organizational development

Pathways To Power Symposium

In November, we participated in the Pathways to Power Symposium: New Ways of Deciding and Doing, a Symposium on people-led development, organized in London by the Global Fund for Community Foundations.

Stakeholders gathered around the desire to transform power relations within the philanthropy community (#ShiftThePower) have raised issues of racism inside the sector, transformations of power relations between

the global North and South, meaningful non-extractive MEL, and many other things that constitute problems and motivate us. We recommend that you look at the GFCF analysis, requirements and reviews **on the website.** ↗

Coordinators Marija Jakovljević and Galina Maksimović wrote on the occasion **a blog post for Alliance magazine.** ↗

RWF team

Colleagues that indebted the fund and to whom we said goodbye in 2019.

Zoe Gudović, after 10 years of committed work, decided to shift to her artistic career. We are grateful to Zoe for all the spaces that she opened and the initiatives she launched. Zoe was the face of the Reconstruction. With her unique charm, openness and directness, she pushed the boundaries, brought people together, opened up tricky topics. Zoe managed to bring the fund closer to a variety of circles. She has successfully used the resources of the fund to revive neglected public spaces, to motivate people into solidarity activities and open space for women and girls wherever possible. We are grateful to Zoe for her contribution to improving our working conditions, team care, support and solidarity. We wish her all the best in further artistic and activist endeavors!

Milica Miražić first a scholarship recipient, then an associate of the fund, and finally a new director. She brought in a lot of experience and new perspective. She helped us identify weak spots and identify opportunities for further development, wholeheartedly supporting the initiatives of the work team. She made an important contribution to organizational development and improvement of working conditions. She

encouraged the individual and professional development of the team and motivated us to pay more attention to self-care. Although we knew that Milica had a great career in the field of psychotherapy in front of her, we hoped we would have a few more years to grow together. We certainly support her career change and are grateful for all the shifts she made in 2019 for us to continue to develop as a collective.

Selena Simić is our associate without whose support our philanthropic activities would not have been so successful. From event logistics to animating the community that gathered to donate, Selena's super skills, energy and resourcefulness give a special touch to community activities. Although Selena focuses most of her energy on furthering the phenomenal Rock Camp for girls and her band Nemesis, we hope she will be with us during the upcoming events.

RWF team

New forces

Ana Imširovic Đorđević is the first Operations Manager at the fund. The strategic development of the organization resulted in a new organizational structure, within which Ana took over administrative and financial affairs. Ana is systematic, efficient, has an eye for detail and concern for the collective and is a refreshment to the team. We are grateful that she has advanced and facilitated our daily operations. In addition to her phenomenal operational skills, Ana has brought decades of activist, artistic and translation experience. We are also fortunate to have another member committed to animal protection.

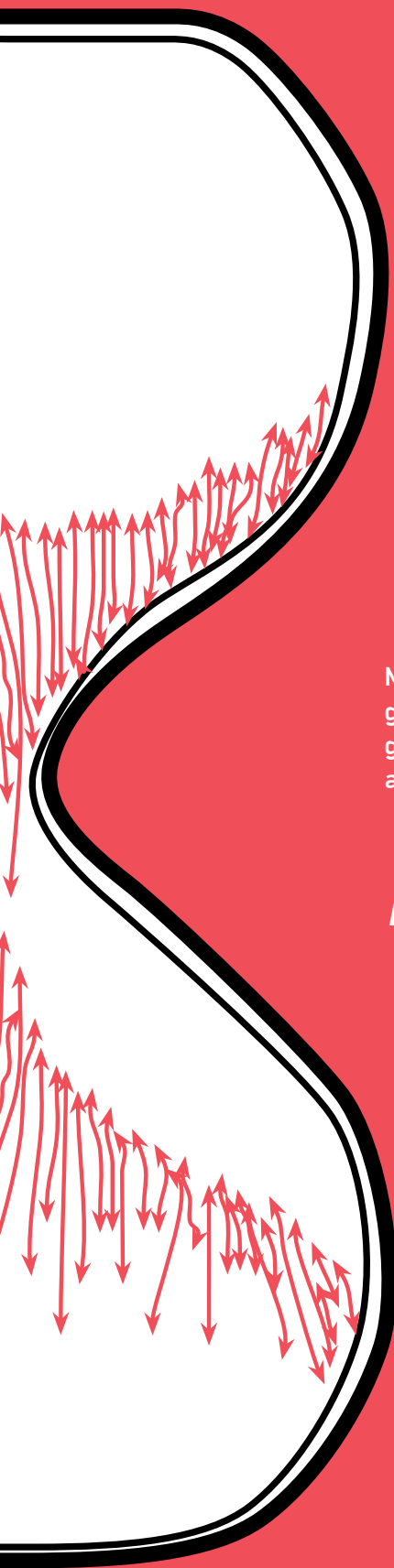
Galina Maksimović is the new power of the fund, in the position of Community Coordinator. Her primary focus is the further development of local feminist philanthropy and associated communication. Galina is a great support to the team, dedicated to learning, experimenting and developing collective care practices. She has brought in a resonant, politically brilliantly sound voice. Galina combines her experience as a playwright and activism, successfully upgrades current formats to date and expands the reach of local philanthropy.

The Fund goes boldly forward with its permanent associates Vajka Anđelković, Vladimir Jerić Vlidi, Katarina Popović and Dejan Brankov and the managing board comprised of Olga Manojlović Pintar, Dusica Parezanović and Slavica Stojanović.

Important successes over 15 years of the fund

Reconstruction succeeded in the things to which it committed itself:

- to grow slowly and steadily and not to put at risk neither itself nor partner organizations.
- not to interfere with the donor space of women's groups, but to help them reach donors who might not be easily accessible to them (whether it helps in writing applications, connects donors and partner organizations, lobbies donors to support groups, or applies on its own to donors who are not easily accessible to grassroots organizations or familiar with smaller groups in the field)
- that there is no bulky organization that would "eat" a lot of money: between 65 and 70% of the fund's budget goes to grants and the rest is program and organizational costs.
- to preserve the integrity and autonomy of the organization



Many thanks to institutional and individual donors, who have shown a great understanding for our work and the need for flexible support for groups in the field, who respect the autonomy of the fund and groups, and whose timely support and advice allow the RWF to remain what it is.

Become an individual donor of Reconstruction and support women's and other progressive groups!

Thank you all for being with us,
both when we celebrate and
when we fight! We are moving forward!
In solidarity,
RWF