Bulgarian Fund for Women supports and addresses the needs of organizations, unregistered groups, and activists who work on the promotion of greater equality, legal and policy reform and protection of human and women's rights. We support our community financially and through capacity building, connecting different movements and creating spaces for debate and unity to overcome structural inequalities together.

We envision that all women and girls live in a just and equal world where their voices are heard, and their choices are respected.

Our mission is to develop the women’s movement in Bulgaria and to promote philanthropy for women’s rights as a tool for achieving social change.

Our values are solidarity, accountability, diversity, self and collective care, fearlessness, responsiveness, and celebration of women’s victories and their rights.

Nadezhda Dermendzhieva
Executive Director

Gergana Kutseva
Deputy Director

Denitsa Mishonova
Financial Director

Rada Elenkova
Program Director

Svetlana Mihaylova
Strategic Partnerships Director

Teodora Petrova
Communications and Development Director

Sasha Milanova
Office Manager
2020 was a year of contrasts - of unreserved support for science and belief in conspiracies, of political inaction and solidarity in society, of despair and hope. It was the year of an unprecedented pandemic that reminded us of the other, hidden pandemic - domestic violence which escalated during the isolation.

It was a year of deepening social inequalities, repression and discrimination against the most vulnerable. But it was also a year of uplift, of creativity, of empathy.

2020 was a difficult year, especially for women. They worked from and at home and many had to undertake almost all the care of their children and family. Many women have lost their jobs and poverty has once again reminded us that it is female. Some lost their lives at the hands of their husbands and partners, while others quietly suffered physical, mental, economic, or sexual abuse at home.

Many women were at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19 without being well protected, and their work again remained invisible and underestimated.

2020 was also challenging for us at the Bulgarian Fund for Women - to take care of ourselves and our loved ones while protecting and supporting our partners; to move our work entirely online; to lend a hand to all in need; to postpone events; to suspend projects.

Nevertheless, we managed to keep our optimism, to keep the hope for a better future, to increase our confidence in the success of all our partners and supporters. We managed to complete many of our projects, new ideas were born, the digital environment opened countless opportunities for communication before us. We managed to continue working for our cause!

Our words for 2020 were security, peace, solidarity. We hope to keep them in 2021!
What We Achieved
2020 in Words and Figures

In 2020, BFW continued its work in four main areas:

- grantmaking to organizations, collectives and activists;
- fundraising;
- advocacy;
- awareness raising on topics related to gender equality.

The fund continued to follow its own thematic priorities:

- overcoming gender-based violence;
- political and economic empowerment of girls and women;
- support and empowerment of groups of women subjected to multiple discrimination and marginalization;
- increasing the capacity of young people to overcome gender stereotypes.

BGW implemented a number of online events and campaigns, provided for the first time core support to five organizations, and reported a significant increase in the funding distributed in direct grants and in the number of beneficiaries.
Grantmaking in 2020

The Bulgarian Fund for Women provides money, organizational strengthening and networking opportunities for grassroots groups, activists and organizations to advance women’s rights, fight social injustice and achieve gender equality.

The funds we raise are invested directly in the activities of small civil society organizations throughout the country. In some cases, we are the first, main and sometimes the only source of support for initiatives launched and led by women, girls and trans* people. We act fast and our application procedures are both rigorous and accessible, thus ensuring that emerging groups can tap into critical funding.

In 2020, we announced the first call for core funding to address the organizational and administrative needs of organizations working for women’s rights in order to improve their financial sustainability, capacity, planning skills and measuring the impact of their activities. That is why we prioritize long-term and flexible funding and support the building of a movement of strong women’s groups and organizations to make the change possible.
Grantmaking in 2020

Overview

55%
of the total budget was spent for direct grantmaking and capacity building

5 open calls  2 programs  55 organisations  18 collectives and activists  46 locations

over 186,000 beneficiaries

42%
of the grants were given for projects targeting controversial, traditionally marginalized and/or invisible issues and communities

31%
of the grants were given for the strengthening of social movements

83%
of our grantee organizations were led by women

29%
of the grants were given to newly established CSOs or individuals activists /unregistered groups

61%
from the supported organizations carry out their activity outside the capital

45%
of the grants are distributed to organizations outside the capital
CONTINUAL VS FIRST TIME SUPPORT

- New: 37%
- Continual: 63%

LOCATION

- Sofia: 50%
- Regional centers: 24%
- Towns: 26%
Investments in the development and civic participation of women and girls is a prerequisite for achieving greater public awareness and understanding on gender issues. Global initiatives and policy frameworks such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals pave the way for gender equality, including concrete measures to achieve it: increasing women's political participation, combating gender-based violence and discrimination, ensuring sexual and reproductive rights of women, etc.

The Bulgarian Fund for Women’s programs and calls for projects reflect the lack of such specific activities in Bulgaria. They meet the needs of different groups of women and girls - from ethnic minorities, with disabilities, from rural areas, survivors of gender-based violence.

The organizations, informal groups and activists we support work precisely for the realization of women's rights.

In the following pages we share an overview of our impact, together with and thanks to the projects and initiatives of our partners.
The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities between women and men in almost all walks of life, and cases of domestic violence have increased in all European countries, including Bulgaria.

This prompted us to initiate the creation of an Emergency Fund for Combating Domestic Violence in the Context of COVID-19 to help victims of domestic violence and to provide them with support through professional organizations working in the field in various cities in the country.

In partnership with Bulgarian Donors' Forum and BCause Foundation, we launched an urgent fundraising campaign aimed at corporate and individual donors. In a little over a month we managed to recruit BGN 73,192.

The funds were distributed to 14 organizations across the country, which manage crisis and counseling centers and work first-hand with victims of domestic violence and their children.

Hundreds of humanitarian packages containing food, medicine and basic necessities were distributed to the victims.

The aid was distributed directly and helped 499 people - 140 children under 18, 76 young people and 283 women.

Of these, 201 survived domestic violence; women from remote and rural areas - 80; those on the threshold of poverty and social exclusion - 193; women victims of trafficking - 4; refugee/migrant women - 75; women from ethnic minorities - 148 and people with mental and physical disabilities - 15.
The experts working in the Advisory Center of the Gender Alternatives Foundation share that the number of clients using the services of the center has doubled. Almost every case is associated with increased aggression and domestic violence due to being locked up at home or job loss of one of the partners.

“Thanks to the campaign in the media and social networks, conducted by the Bulgarian Fund for Women for the Emergency Fund for Combating Domestic Violence, more women dared to seek help. The more the problem is made public, the more victims will have the strength and courage to reveal themselves and seek support.
- Gender Alternatives Foundation

We would like to better inform the public about the importance and humanity of our work. During the epidemic, we did not close the Crisis Center, but continued to work for the benefit of those in need. We did not allow the infection of our clients and colleagues. Our greatest desire is to help women and children who have suffered domestic violence or trafficking. These are people who are in great need of understanding and support to cope with the accumulated stress, tension and pain of the experience.
- H&D Gender Perspectives Foundation

There are people who are on the brink of poverty. There are women who are economically dependent on their abusers. There are children who cannot change their parents... What motivates us to continue our work even in this difficult situation and with insufficient funds are the successful cases in which our clients manage to cope with their problems and move forward. That is why your donations to the Emergency Fund for Combating Domestic Violence are not only important but they can actually save lives! This is especially important for us as a team because success motivates us to continue.
- Women’s Association Ekaterina Karavelova - Silistra
Nine artistic projects exhibited in three galleries in Sofia from March 11 to May 30, 2020 presented a variety of perspectives on the role of women today.

The works of Albena Baeva, Alla Georgieva, Boryana Rossa, Veneta Androva, Nevena Ekimova, Darina Kokonova, Nikolina Nedyalkova and Daniela Takeva, Pavlina Sarbova, Polina Stoyanova and Marion Darova were selected among 107 conceptual projects by over 100 authors from Bulgaria and abroad.

The nine artworks were supported with BGN 30,000 through the Fund for Women’s Art Projects, established in 2017 in order to combat the under-representation of women in the professional arts and cultural sector, to give visibility to the work of women artists and to increase their access to financial resources.

Thanks to her participation, Veneta Androva received a nomination for the 63rd International Festival DOK Leipzig; Albena Baeva won a residency at the Mutek Montreal AI Art Lab. On June 3, 2020, the first Museum of the Woman. The private collection of Alla Georgieva opened in partnership with the National Gallery.

The main theme of this museum was the image of the woman, interpreted in the modern souvenir industry, advertising and design. The collection includes visual objects that treat the woman mainly as a sexual object, advertising samples using the female body to sell various goods as well as objects specially created for the museum by the artist. With the support of BFW, the collection of the Museum of the Woman was enriched and prepared for its first public presentation.

After the exhibition in the Vera Nedkova House museum, the collection is looking for a permanent home and continues to pose questions like: Have we achieved the awaited equality?; Do we need feminism?; What is the "role" of the woman today and can we even talk about a single collective female image?

In general - is everything (just) fine?
As a visual artist who works mainly with video and film, I am often forced to realize my projects without a budget. The fact that I had the chance to be selected with my project AIVA in the competition for artistic projects of women of BFW Everything is Just Fine gave me the opportunity to implement the project with a professional team. The entire production and post-production of the film would not have been possible at this level without the financial support of BFW, for which I am sincerely grateful!

Veneta Androva, AIVA

Through art, I try to uncover the increasingly aggressive and reactionary creation of "new" images of women and mothers that serve conservative ideologies and become increasingly popular today, finding political representation through nationalist and conservative parties involved in today’s government.

Boryana Rossa, DEVIATION: Women in Bulgarian cinema
#ItDependsOnUs / Human rights in action is a joint initiative of more than 30 civil society organizations that believe that a better life depends on each of us.

We are united around the idea that the society we want to live in is in solidarity, respects freedom of opinion and diversity of views, promotes dialogue between different social groups, respects human dignity and creates opportunities for the full expression of all people, regardless of their differences.

Many people work for positive social change every day, but sometimes society sees very little of what has been achieved. That is why all these civil society organizations, which do not seek excuses but offer answers and solutions, came together and implemented over 25 initiatives throughout the country.

Civic organizations in Equal BG (Ravni BG) Coalition work with the problems of different communities and offer possible solutions.

During the campaign it became clear that with very small legal changes, the lives of undocumented people, people living with HIV, people with addictions, young people from vulnerable groups, same-sex couples, to women who have experienced domestic violence can change drastically for the better.

We have shown that human and civil rights are the right of absolutely everyone, and #ItDependsOnUs to change for the better.
The Forum for Glocal Change has created the first and so far only Guide to Youth Civic Participation, which has filled a gap in resources in Bulgarian on youth civic participation and stimulated public discussion on the full inclusion of young people in democratic processes.

Environmental Association Za Zemiata (For the Earth) launched their campaign with a video showing easy steps for individual action to reduce the use of plastic, drawing people's attention to a petition against plastic pollution signed by 19,377 people; instructions on how to do a brand audit and a little-known problem for the general public such as the presence of a plastic layer in the advertised as an alternative to plastic cardboard cups.

The Association of European Journalists - Bulgaria gave visibility to the work of independent journalists and media across the country, who work in the public interest despite the deteriorating media environment. They told 34 stories about media and journalists, and the choice of the number is not accidental - this is the highest place Bulgaria has reached in the ranking for media freedom, unlike the current 112th position. The campaign also contains an explanatory element on how citizens can support free journalism in the country.

IVOR foundation has produced the first informational video, which highlights the reason why the number of HIV/AIDS victims has halved in the last decade. Apart from the fact that the video became a big hit on social media, the most important thing it informs about is ART - antiretroviral therapy, the treatment that controls HIV. In plain language, it is clear that an HIV-positive person who adheres to their treatment will live as long and productively as an HIV-negative person.

With a creative video, the Youth LGBT organization Deystvie showed that all gay people want is equality. An equality from which they are separated by at least 300 rights. Change is possible. Everyone has the right to a family. Yes, change will not happen now and immediately, but every day we can get closer to it together. Because together we are stronger.

After Equal BG (Ravni BG) we became much more recognizable and we were invited to participate in the preparation of the integrated plan of Gabrovo.
Forum for Glocal Change

Human rights are not divided: together we fight for the environment, women's rights, discrimination. We need more partnerships.
For the Earth

Thanks to the campaign, we were able to get people to go and get tested for Hepatitis C and they started treatment.
Ivor Foundation
The last decade has seen an unprecedented rise in fundamentalism and radical ideologies around the world, but this is especially true in Latin America and Europe. This threatens democracy, human rights and social justice. In response to the rising far-right wave, 11 Women's Funds from Europe and 8 from Latin America have come together to work in collaboration with dozens of local activist groups, organizations and networks in our regions to support the human rights movement in defense of democracy and its values.

Our partnership within the **On the Right Track** project includes conducting research and creating strategies for innovative communications, as well as support for local organizations working on the subject.

We started our informal unification in 2018, but the project was implemented in 2020, including the development of a cross-regional survey, conducting 7 inspiring webinars for skills and capacity building for the implementation of strategic communications and the distribution of more than 60 grants in the 19 countries represented in the project through local Women’s Funds.

Together with Calala Women’s Fund, the Bulgarian Fund for Women was the project coordinator for Europe. We were responsible for organizing the training webinars, in which we had the pleasure to meet and gain experience and knowledge from prominent communication experts such as Anat Schenker Osorio, Tom Brooks and Thomas Coombs - the creator of Hope-based Communications.
Programs Impact

Feminist Boot Camp 2020

In 2020, the fourth edition of the Feminist Boot Camp took place.

The 5-day intensive seminar brought together 16 participants from all over the country, aged between 17 and 35.

They had the opportunity to gain knowledge on topics such as feminism and gender theories and trends, history of the women's movement in Bulgaria, contemporary issues for women, gender (in)equality and human rights, as well as to meet the best experts, activists and lecturers in these fields.

In addition to sharing knowledge, the camp aims to build and develop skills in the participants to create and work on projects and campaigns related to women's rights. The five days were filled with intense discussions, sharing experiences and personal stories, as well as many group work and creative projects.

After the end of the camp, BFW opened an internal call for the participants and supported 3 projects with BGN 3,000 each.

"That was one of the most rewarding things that has ever happened to me. I gained more courage and a sense of belonging. This is a unique experience. A heartfelt thank you! I found myself in this community.
Lyubomira Kostova"

"A shock injection of confidence and practical team building skills.
Rosena Ivanova"
We amplify women’s voices in civil society as a means of promoting democracy because we believe that gender equality is fundamental to a truly democratic and economically developed society.

We raise awareness and build strong partnerships for campaigns in support of legislative initiatives/changes or against legal documents leading to inequality and discrimination.

We cooperate with our grantees and with other partners and create consortia for participation in various initiatives, campaigns, projects and movements.
Advocacy and Campaigns

_The Eternal Hits of Bulgaria – BFW's Campaign with the Greatest Public Response_

On the occasion of November 25 - the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, BFW organized the campaign _The Eternal Hits of Bulgaria_.

The start was given with an online event on Facebook, which premiered the first-of-its-kind album (a real long-playing record) with the same title. In vinyl, 11 "musical hits" sounded like millions of Bulgarian women heard them, but they had never sounded on the radio before.

The album _The Eternal Hits of Bulgaria_ is a compilation of monologues by rapists to women victims. Each of them has a title that coincides with that of a native pop hit from the recent past. However, these are not cover versions, but unadorned expressions of humiliation and mockery of women, which show how love sometimes degenerates into aggression. The texts describe literal cases of different types of violence. Unfortunately, in them many recognized the lives of their relatives and acquaintances.

BFW's call was to replace the worn-out record, which has been spinning non-stop for years. We called on the institutions to fulfill their commitments and to protect women subjected to systematic domestic violence by advancing the long-delayed legislative changes that society expects. We called on people to be the change: to talk about violence, to recognize it, to denounce it and to prevent it when and where they can.
In 2020, we continued the campaign against domestic violence and violence against women *Love Errors*, aimed at girls and young women to recognize early signs of violence and find more courage to stand up for their happiness.

We created a Little book that every woman should have. We presented the misconceptions unfolding in real stories through a series of illustrations and statements that spark instinctive disagreement, and with the help of analysis by a psychotherapist we told what love isn’t and what is violence.

We believe that with the Little book we have encouraged thousands of girls and women to love themselves more, to end their relationships in which they have not found support and respect from their partner, and to seek professional help. The book is available online at [loveerrors.bg](http://loveerrors.bg)
In 2020, BFW continued its strategic efforts and partnership with the Ministry of Justice to overcome domestic violence and violence against women and provide support to victims, implementing the project *For Love without Violence: National Campaign for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Services for Support*.

As part of the project, BFW provided free individual online legal and psychosocial consultations to 40 victims of or perpetrators of domestic violence, conducted a national communication campaign for violence prevention, reaching over half a million viewers and organized four information webinars with the participation of Bulgarian and international experts, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, representatives of institutions working in the field of combating violence.

The topics of the webinars covered the whole cycle and the different aspects of the problem of domestic violence: *Criminal Proceedings for Domestic Violence - Legal and Psychological Aspects, Communication in Case of Domestic Violence, How Difficult Is It to Leave a Toxic Relationship?, and Children and Domestic Violence*.

An open dialogue was set up on the psychological aspects of domestic violence, what professional support can be provided to victims, procedures and protection under the Child Protection Act, work with perpetrators of domestic violence, as well as practical guidelines for response.

An information leaflet *You are Stronger than Domestic Violence* was also created, explaining in an accessible way the main signs that signal that there is domestic violence in a relationship and the main steps that victims must take to protect themselves.
Advocacy and Campaigns

March for Women's Rights 2020: Feminism is for Everyone!

For the fourth year in a row, a March for Women's Rights was held in Sofia on the occasion of March 8.

The message of the procession was *Feminism is for Everyone!*
- for all who remember that women in Bulgaria have been fighting for their rights for more than a century;
- for all who want this struggle to enter history textbooks;
- for all those who are hurt by every victim of gender-based and domestic violence and want the government and institutions to take their political responsibility and take legislative actions;
- for all who want every woman to be able to go home alone at night without fear of being attacked or raped;
- for all who want to have full control over their bodies and make autonomous decisions for their life and body;
- for all those who do not want poverty to be female and for female labor to be exploited, underestimated, and often free;
- for all who do not want to be judged for their appearance and be put in molds.

In short - feminism is really for everyone!
November 25 - International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was traditionally marked by a series of events. BFW took part in a protest flashmob organized by the horizontal collective Feminist Mobilizations, which took place in front of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, responsible for equality policies.

In 2020, instead of a protest march, a campaign for mass entry of letters to (ir)responsible institutions was organized.

The decision was a sign of responsibility and solidarity with the exhausted nurses, the social workers, the teachers and all the other workers in the predominantly "female" professions who carried the Covid crisis on their backs. Organizing a live mass protest would have meant placing more weight on them.

After the flash mob, representatives of the Bulgarian Fund for Women and several other organizations working on the topic of combating violence against women - Animus Association Foundation, Emprove Foundation and Knowledge, Success, Change Association, met with Vice President Iliana Yotova.
Advocacy and Campaigns
Possible Solutions in the Fight Against Domestic Violence

As part of the UN International Campaign 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, the Bulgarian Fund for Women organized an online meeting dedicated to the prevention and combating of domestic violence and violence against women in Bulgaria.

The theme of the event, which took place on 3 December 2020, was Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women: Possible Solutions. The event was attended by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Diana Kovacheva - Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria; His Excellency Dr. Rob Dixon - British Ambassador to Bulgaria; Katya Krastanova, a psychotherapist from the Animus Association Foundation and Vanya Dzhumerska - National Coordinator for Prevention of Domestic Violence, Standing Together, Great Britain.

The event took place on Zoom and gathered over 65 participants from all over the country who took an active part in the discussion.

Possible solutions in the fight against domestic violence were outlined by presenting good practices from Bulgaria and the United Kingdom with a focus on the Coordinated Community Response model. The scale of the problem that millions of women and children around the world and in our country face every day was brought to the fore. The Ombudsman Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kovacheva and the other experts presented the need for improvements in the legislation in order for our country to be more successful in the fight against this pandemic.
Examining the case of the Covid-19 global crisis as a starting point, we re-emphasized the under-representation of women in important decision-making, as well as the importance of gender diversity policies.

Keynote speakers included Anke den Ouden, Microsoft’s General Manager for Central and Eastern Europe and Asia, and Maria Bobenriet, CEO of Women Win - a collaboration between the corporate sector and Women’s Funds globally.

The conversation focused on successful models and corporate policies aimed at the full inclusion and leadership of both women and the various and often underestimated or neglected groups - LGBT+ people, Roma, people with disabilities, and others.

The meeting was held online and brought together nearly 70 representatives of the corporate and non-profit sectors. The webinar was part of the Diversity Pays Off initiative.

"I've never been in the closet and I haven't hidden that I'm a lesbian, but when my company (NIKE) accepted me as a whole, it got the best out of me - talent, time, commitment. - Maria Bobenriet, Women Win"

"Having so many women in the company is not a coincidence - we had to work for it, developing our D&I policies. - Anke den Ouden, Microsoft"
Publications, Appeals, Positions

Shadow Report by BFW to the UN Committee of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

on Bulgaria’s progress and its positive commitments related to gender equality and the fight against violence against women. Recommendations from the report were included by the CEDAW Committee for Bulgaria to change the legislation and introduce mechanisms to monitor progress on equality between women and men.

Opinion on the draft of the National Strategy for the Promotion of Equality between Women and Men 2021-2030 and the indicators attached to it

sent by BFW to the Council of Ministers and the MLSP, in which it expressed its concern about the lack of strategic goals, intersectionality and misunderstanding of gender stereotypes and structural inequalities in the document.

Habitat of Women’s CSOs in Bulgaria in 2020 (analysis)

aimed at researching the needs and problems of women and girls and the organizations working for their rights. Some of the challenges are patriarchal culture, violence against women and girls, lack of funding for women’s rights and a strong women’s movement. The report also suggests possible solutions.

Opinion against the amendments to the Non-profit Legal Entities Act

which we sent together with other organizations to the MPs of the Republic of Bulgaria and which violates the right of association, the right to funding and limits the space for civil society, together with BCNL.

An open letter regarding the attacks on children’s rights and the Child Protection Act

which BFW supported and together with 70 other organizations sent to the European institutions, expressing its great concern about the crisis in the child protection sector and the use of children and their rights for political purposes, partnering with the NNC.

Opinion on No Justice without Racial Justice

which BFW, as a member of the International Network of Women’s Funds Prospera, sent to philanthropic organizations on the occasion of the Black Lives Matter movement and the urgent need to support it.
On March 8, 2020 we symbolically celebrated our birthday with **GRW PWR PARTY!**

15 years of tireless work for the rights of women and girls in Bulgaria, for achieving full gender equality, for combating gender-based violence, for more women in leadership positions, for prevention of breast cancer and unwanted pregnancies, for overcoming gender stereotypes and many other causes.

**Achievements**

**Bulgarian Fund for Women at 15!**

- **15 years**
- **200+ organizations, collectives, activists**
- **400+ projects**
- **1.5 million BGN**
We raise funds from local and foreign donors through various initiatives. In this way we support the development of the donation culture and a new vision of philanthropy as a tool for social change. The raised funds are invested directly in the activities of small women's CSOs in the country.

We also support cooperation between civil society organizations and the business sector, because we believe that social philanthropy is part of corporate social responsibility and we are convinced that when the non-governmental and business sectors join forces and invest in human development, civil society in Bulgaria will become a really significant and influential factor.
1 057 758 BGN
resources mobilized

971 284 BGN
total budget for 2020

27
donors and sponsors, from which 16 new, and 144% more funds attracted compared to 2019

76
individual donors, of which 345% more funds were raised compared to 2019

87%
are attracted by international philanthropic organizations - private foundations, women's funds and international NGOs

97 500 BGN
for a newly created reserve fund to ensure the resilience of BFW even in a crisis

EXPENDITURES BY TYPE

- 49% Salaries
- 22% Consulting & External Services
- 10% Office related costs
- 6% Reserve fund
- 3% Fundraising & Visibility
- 3% Direct grants
- 7% Capacity building