ANNUAL REPORT
2022
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BFW’s Contributors in 2022
Support our Work!
The Bulgarian Fund for Women (BFW) is the only Bulgarian foundation which supports feminist organizations, collectives and activists that challenge the status quo and work towards a systemic change for women, girls, and all marginalized communities.

Our mission is to support the women's rights movement in Bulgaria through fundraising and developing philanthropy for social change.

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

We are striving to overcome numerous structural problems, among which lack of gender justice, ubiquitous sexism, and misogyny, increasing social inequalities, shrinking space for civil society, attacks against liberal democratic values, insufficient social engagement, and philanthropic support for human rights movements and for achieving social justice.

Our values are solidarity, self and collective care, diversity, accountability, fearlessness, responsiveness, and celebration.
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INTRODUCTION
As a feminist donor that purposefully supports organizations, collectives and activists working towards overcoming structural inequalities and achieving social justice, every year we from the Bulgarian Fund for Women strive to address the needs of our community in a better, flexible, and sustainable way. We believe that in 2022 through the financial assistance provided, the various capacity building opportunities and our diverse programs and initiatives we managed to live up to our partners’ expectations. Undoubtedly 2022 will remain scarred by the unprovoked war that Russia started against Ukraine, as well as by a series of serious challenges – a world still recovering from COVID-19 pandemic, climate, political and economic crises, mental health problems and escalation of violence. Against this backdrop and in such an extremely challenging local and global context we are proud to share that the Bulgarian Fund for Women keeps growing and developing, with an increase of more than 60% compared to 2021 in the funds raised for our work, in our annual budget and in the financial assistance provided for the civil sector.

In 2022 37 donors – international foundations, European institutions, and companies, as well as more than 100 individual donors supported BFW's work with more than €1.8 million. The funds were invested in developing a diverse and sustainable women’s movement in Bulgaria through 118 grants awarded with which we supported the administrative needs of 12 organizations, as well as many projects related to combating violence against women and domestic violence, achieving gender equality and climate justice, organizing marches and protests for women’s rights, mobilizing communities, empowering marginalized groups, etc. We are delighted to have also supported 20 organizations that were on the front line in helping women and children fleeing the war in Ukraine, with more than €103 000 that we raised through our Urgent Fund.

In 2022 BFW continued being an active member of the Prospera Network of Women's Funds by taking part in a complex process of strategic planning and adopting a 10-year development framework. BFW also kept following the trends in the global feminist philanthropy sector and continued making efforts to place Bulgaria on the map of international donors.

Thank you to our partners – those we support and those who support us – for working together in 2022! We highly value the power and resilience of activists, collectives and organizations in Bulgaria that do not give up their vision and goals, even during the hardest times, as much as we value the trust of our supporters and donors that stood firmly by our side during these challenging 12 months.

Nadejda Dermendjieva

Executive Director of Bulgarian Fund for Women
2022 IN FIGURES

- **Budget Increase Compared to 2021**: 59%
- **Total Budget**: €1,050,529
- **Donors**:
  - 37 Donors
  - 8 New
€666 296
ALLOCATED THROUGH DIRECT GRANTS

54%
INCREASE COMPARED TO 2021

118 DIRECT GRANTS
100 SUPPORTED PARTNERS
65 854 DIRECT BENEFICIARIES
1 811 897 INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES

2 144 986 DIRECTLY REACHED PEOPLE
50 938 VISITORS TO OUR WEBSITE
626 MENTIONS ON MEDIA AND OTHER WEBSITES
69 POSTS ON OUR WEBSITE
27 MEDIA INTERVIEWS
3 NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS
For BFW grantmaking and capacity building are two inextricably linked processes in which we are led by the belief that the appropriate type of comprehensive support for the collective actions of women, girls, LGBTIQ+ people and human rights supporters will lead to systemic and in-depth social, political, cultural, economic and ecologic changes – urgently needed for a just and equal world.
BFW contributes to building social movements and helps them be more connected, coordinated, and efficient. The activists and organizations that we support create and transform systems and communities to build a better world and counteract the shrinking space for civil society.

We keep prioritizing grassroots partners – those led by the communities whose rights they work for, organizations with small budgets, without a long project history, newly registered and / or operating in remote locations because BFW’s philosophy has been and will always be to support and give chance to vulnerable groups and communities that best know the problems and the feasible solutions, but many times they have limited capacity and access to funding.

Our programs are based on regular evaluations and analyses of the needs of the organizations, the most recent of which we published in 2022. 112 organizations from all over the country took part in a quantitative and qualitative

Study of the Needs of the Organizations Working on Women, Girls and Vulnerable Groups’ Rights in Bulgaria

One of the main conclusions of this study showed that work in the sector is characterized by continuous precariousness. Most of the participants point out that limited funding opportunities are the biggest challenge, with even the scarce resources available most often not being adjusted to organizational needs.
The access to state funds through open calls for social service providers is undermined due to insufficient transparency, inadequate budgets, political resistance against the causes for women’s and the LGBTIQ+ community’s rights and stirring up competition between people who otherwise work for similar causes.

Unpredictability and shortened funding timelines also have significant consequences for civil initiatives management. The predominant project-based funding often hinders long-term strategic planning and sustainability. It puts an additional load on organizational management boards that have to bridge budget gaps, to sustain their teams and to distribute the administrative burden of frequent application. It is no coincidence that a lot of respondents pointed out employee turnover and burnout as significant challenges for the sector.

The fact that few organizations view passing legislative amendments or attracting support from political representatives as significant impact indicators also speaks of the impossibility to do strategic
project-based work in the long term. In other words, organizations are perceived as excluded from the political processes in the country and / or solely as immediate service providers, and not as a corrective for the state and the business, as fully-fledged civil society participants focusing on advocacy, building coalitions in the sector, and increasing the engagement of the general public.

Conclusions also highlight the need for strengthening our partners’ advocacy and communication capacity. Only in this way can we make sure that experts with hands-on experience and in-depth knowledge can speak to authorities on equal terms and take part in the formulation of grassroots social policies.

In our attempt to address all difficulties identified we constantly adapt our funding mechanisms so that they are transparent, accessible, timely and flexible. Through a combination of operational support, project funding and access to urgent funds for emergency situations, funds are allocated in seven thematic portfolios: Invisible Issues and Communities, Strengthening Movements, Freedom from Violence, LGBTIQ+ Justice, Climate Justice, Controversial Topics and Girls and Young Women Empowerment.

We strongly believe that multi-year administrative and operational support is crucial for ensuring sustainability and stability for the civil sector. This is why in 2022 we supported 6 new organizations under our Mission: Possible program, through which we provided them with restriction-free funding.

BFW’s Open Opportunities year-round program has been created to provide funding to organizations even without an open call. It allows them to respond to emergent opportunities and dangers requiring immediate reaction – crises and issues related to security problems, advocacy, increasing message visibility, the issues and the experience related to women’s and human rights, without the need for them to compete with one another.

BFW’s project funding is carried out through quick and facilitated procedures that make it accessible even to incipient organizations, supporting them to gain experience and build their financial background to also assert themselves for other donors in the future. A key element for the success of the supported projects is the fact that BFW provides the funding in advance and does not require organizations to make their own financial contribution.

Under all BFW programs our partners can rely both on close cooperation and mentorship as well as on opportunities for capacity building and expanding their network of contacts and followers. This 360-degree approach guarantees that they are better prepared to achieve their goals, to work for their mission and to counteract the status quo and the shrinking space for civil society.
THEMATIC FUNDING AREAS

- Invisible issues and communities: 45%
- Strengthening Movements: 18%
- Freedom from Violence: 15%
- Controversial topics: 7%
- LGBTIQ+ Justice: 8%
- Girls and Young Women Empowerment: 5%
- Climate Justice: 2%

TOTAL GRANTS BY BFW THEME
TOTAL VALUE BY THEME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue and Communities</th>
<th>Grants</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invisible</td>
<td>€295,976</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening Movements</td>
<td>€118,764</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom from Violence</td>
<td>€94,471</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controversial topics</td>
<td>€53,978</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ+ Justice</td>
<td>€47,357</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate Justice</td>
<td>€35,238</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls and Empowerment</td>
<td>€9,364</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL GRANTS BY TYPE OF SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Support</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Funding</td>
<td>€316,962</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Funding</td>
<td>€209,068</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Response</td>
<td>€89,325</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Opportunities</td>
<td>€50,940</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
48% (18% more than in 2021) of the funds were allocated for multi-year administrative and organizational support so as to allow civil organizations to plan strategically, to be adaptive and to focus completely on accomplishing their mission.

92% of the funds were allocated to organizations led by women or by representatives of the groups whose rights they fight for.

16% of the funds were allocated to newly-founded organizations (registered less than three years ago) that other donors could consider risky.

15% of the funds were allocated to activists and collectives that have not been registered as NGOs, which could hinder them in working for their causes.

48% of the funds were allocated to partners BFW supports for the first time.

63% (11% more than in 2021) of the funds were allocated to organizations operating outside of the capital city – in towns and villages where funding opportunities are highly limited.
STATUS OF THE SUPPORTED ORGANIZATIONS

- Registered: 69% (€355,893)
- Newly Registered: 16% (€85,514)
- Unregistered: 15% (€77,492)

NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS BY REGISTRATION PLACE

- Capital: 55
- Regional: 42
- Small Town: 8
- Village: 1
- International: 12

16
Adhering to BFW’s “Theory of Change” during the last year we supported our partners’ development and resilience so that they take part in decision-making processes at local and national level, mobilize and transform their communities and stand among the leaders of the gender equality movement. We supported their efforts both through direct funding and through our capacity building. Even though our progress towards the final goal – a more just society, respecting women’s rights and choices – is time-consuming and difficult to measure, the mutual trust between us and the organizations we fund, as well as the impact evaluation of their efforts show us that we are on the right track.

Over the past year our partners advocated for legislative changes despite the political instability, they took strategic legal action, mobilized their communities for joint action, adapted to crises, not less successfully than the state and businesses, examined and solved “invisible” social issues, worked on site with the most vulnerable, and so on, and so on... On the next pages we sum up their achievements and we say thank you to them for their dedication.
our Mission: Possible program, through which we provided them with restriction-free funding. BFW’s Open Opportunities year-round program has been created to provide funding to organizations even without an open call. It allows them to respond to emergent opportunities and dangers requiring immediate reaction – crises and issues related to security problems, advocacy, increasing message visibility, the issues and the experience related to women’s and human rights, without the need for them to compete with one another. BFW’s project funding is carried out through quick and facilitated procedures that make it accessible even to incipient organizations, supporting them to gain experience and build their financial background to also assert themselves for other donors in the future. A key element for the success of the supported projects is the fact that BFW provides the funding in advance and does not require organizations to make their own financial contribution. Under all BFW programs our partners can rely both on close cooperation and mentorship as well as on opportunities for capacity building and expanding their network of contacts and followers. This 360-degree approach guarantees that they are better prepared to achieve their goals, to work for their mission and to counteract the status quo and the shrinking space for civil society.
At the start of 2022 the Cultural Studies Network held a national conference titled "Feminism: Mobilizations and Contexts". Various challenges and battles related to women's rights and problems in Bulgaria were discussed and as a follow-up the organizers dedicated the 23rd edition of Seminar_BG magazine to all articles, interviews and video recordings from the event.

In September 2022 LevFem hosted a four-day "Transnational Feminist Meeting" in Sofia, which was organized together with Transnational Social Strike (TSS). The event brought together 150 activists, workers, migrants and trade unionists from more than 20 countries and it went over a lot of topics, among which the challenges for women's employment and social reproduction, remuneration policies, fights for justice in Eastern Europe and beyond, gender inequalities, climate change, poverty and the ways they were all exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. You can find the complete details about the meeting in the Review prepared by LevFem.
Within the study report “It is Not Late to Dream: Dignified Aging for Women in Bulgaria”, the SolidarityWorks Foundation conducted in-depth interviews with 14 elderly women and 1 man about the needs and challenges they face with the advance of age – health issues, loneliness, poverty etc. Apart from participants’ emotional life stories related to their difficulties, fears and dreams, the report also reviewed the European and global discourse as well as the political practices related to aging. In this way the study aims to contribute to beginning a lasting dialogue with the Bulgarian institutions responsible for providing a dignified life for elderly citizens, to increase their awareness and to cause a bottom-up change.
In 2022 BFW kept providing flexible funding under Mission: Possible – the only donor program in Bulgaria which ensures restriction-free funding for the comprehensive functioning of an organization. This type of support allows for paying salaries to a team, renting an office, purchasing equipment and the addressing of other needs that are underfunded by the widespread "project-based" funding. Their coverage contributes to organizations becoming more sustainable and adaptive and focusing completely on upholding their mission and increasing their capacity and skills for strategic planning and measuring the effect of their work.
This type of support is key for the development of the entire sector as a participant in advocacy processes and top-tier decision-making, as a source of expertise and a corrective for state institutions and businesses. Mission: Possible strives to provide long-term funding (between 3 and 10 years) because the most essential changes take time.

“The Core Funding gave us a new level of sustainability and long-term planning that allowed us to increase our direct support by over 50%, the number of our events has risen ten times, the community we are developing has grown more than five times and the scale of our campaigns to change public perception has reached tens of thousands of people and went not only outside Sofia, but also outside Bulgaria. And all of this only during these 2 years in which we have been part of the program! It is not magic, but the magical combination of freedom of action, trust in our capacity, feeling of security and all of these going hand in hand with contagious courage. Because core funding is trusting your core, people's core and the mission's core, and it allows you to develop exactly this and not to pursue others’ priorities within others’ frameworks based on others’ project missions.”, Olga Mineva, founder of Emprove Foundation.

In 2022 we supported 12 organizations with a total of €316,962 under Mission: Possible. They include both partners from the first edition of the program whom we approved for refinancing as well as 6 new organizations. In this way over the past year the number of organizations receiving administrative and organizational support from BFW increased to 19 in total for the 3 editions since 2020.

One of our most recent partners is Association Medecins Du Monde – Branch Sliven that strives for a just and universal healthcare system. Among their remarkable achievements so far is acknowledging the need for free contraceptive access for uninsured women from the Municipality of Sliven, which since May 2021 has been covering the gynecological check-ups of about 20 women every month. With BFW’s support Medecins Du Monde is planning to extend its services oriented towards vulnerable groups, mobilize and coordinate advocacy efforts for passing a National Program for Sexual Health and Family Planning and work towards raising sensitivity to women’s specific health issues among experts and the general public.

Among the Mission: Possible grantees in 2022 is also the Center for Legal Aid – Voice in Bulgaria whose activity is highly needed in the context of Ukrainian citizens seeking asylum in our country. The Center provides legal aid and advocacy to also support and protect the rights of other immigrants and refugees seeking protection on the territory of Bulgaria. It is specialized in providing holistic support to vulnerable migrant women, including women who suffer from domestic and gender-based violence and human trafficking.
CRISIS RESPONSE

Urgent Fund for Women and Children Affected by the War in Ukraine
After Russia started a war against Ukraine, civil society organizations once again stood at the front line in support of people in need. They had to quickly redirect a great part of their efforts from dealing with the fading COVID-19 pandemic and their everyday activities to providing urgent assistance to Ukrainian citizens arriving in Bulgaria. Immediately after the Russian invasion BFW established the **Urgent Fund for Women and Children Affected by the War in Ukraine** with which we provided €103 175 to support the on-site work of 20 organizations from 9 locations that helped nearly 7 000 Ukrainian citizens.

During the first weeks of the war a great part of the efforts of organizations at the frontline were directed towards providing humanitarian aid – from meeting refugees at the border, accommodation, food, clothes, information in Ukrainian to ensuring urgent medical check-ups and medicines for pregnant women and people with medical conditions. It is no coincidence that some of the organizations supported by the **Urgent Fund** defined their work as “the difference between life and death” for many Ukrainians in a vulnerable position coming to Bulgaria.

BFW’s funding flexibility allowed our partners to direct it towards those aspects of their work that were in the most urgent need of support. In this way some of the newer organizations managed to achieve greater stability and to attract more donors, and others appointed coordinators or collaborators that at least partially alleviated the overwhelming workload and overtime work that organization’s teams and volunteers were faced with.

“As a new foundation, only four months old, that started from zero in the middle of a crisis, it was extremely important for us to receive support from BFW. It was very hard for us to fundraise actively while still working seven days a week and helping people in need”, from the report of the **Open Heart Foundation** Varna.

Even though the first weeks and months of complete unclarity are over, the organizations supported under the **Urgent Fund** noted that the demand for their work has not decreased. Many of them kept providing psychological, emotional, legal, and social support to Ukrainian citizens because war refugees’ experience poses a risk of unlocking traumatic experiences that would require long-term work to overcome.

In the first months after the invasion, people working at the frontline organized dozens of Bulgarian courses for Ukrainians, preparing them to feel independent and once again responsible for their lives. These efforts helped children successfully fit among their peers in school and adults to find jobs. Many organizations directed their efforts exactly in support of Ukrainian citizens’ integration on the labor market in Bulgaria. As a result, many Ukrainians began to work, sometimes even starting their own businesses, distancing themselves from the position of vulnerability and dependence caused by the war in their homeland.
**Open Opportunities** is a year-round flexible instrument designed by BFW specifically to support organizations in their adaptation to unpredicted external changes and new challenges such as crises, security problems, emergent opportunities for advocacy and awareness raising, organizing protests, etc. The program is open for applications all year round and funding is in line with our partners’ specific needs and context.

In 2022 under **Open Opportunities** we supported 7 initiatives with a total of €50 941. Here are some of them:

**Mission Wings Foundation** organized a march in Sofia called "Woman. Life. Freedom" as a sign of solidarity with women in Iran and against the cruel suppression of the protests in the country, provoked by the murder of the 22-year-old Mahsa Amini by the Iranian “morality police” for wearing hijab incorrectly.
BFW has been supporting Sofia Pride financially since 2011 by providing funds for security and safety during the march as it is still a target of provocations and attacks. On 18 June 2022 Sofia Pride held its 15th anniversary edition in support of equal rights for LGBTIQ+ people with the slogan “Proud to Be” and a record number of participants - more than 10 000 people.

Liana Georgi, a singer and activist for women’s and LGBTIQ+ people’s rights created a video for her song “Change” which premiered on May 17th, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. The video is entirely a Bulgarian production created by representatives of the LGBTIQ+ community, aiming to increase its visibility and social support to guarantee more than 300 missing rights.
The Youth LGBT Organization Deystvie continued its long-lived work on the now famous case of "Baby Sara", a three-year-old girl to whom Bulgaria refuses to issue a birth certificate as our country does not recognize the marriage of two women who are mothers. Despite the trial won at the EU Court of Justice and the unprecedented ruling of the Administrative Court of Sofia, binding Sofia Municipality to issue identity documents to Sara, the authorities kept refusing to do it, depriving the child of fundamental social rights and the right to free movement within the EU.
March 8 Open Call

In 2022 BFW celebrated 8th March with an Open Call Dedicated to International Women’s Day. We chose 11 out of all 72 proposals and supported them with a total of €15 190. They took place (almost) simultaneously in 7 locations around the country and involved hundreds of women from local communities. Here are some of the initiatives we supported:
Feminist Mobilisations organized the annual protest March for International Women’s Day with the slogan “No to War!”. In 2022 it took place for a sixth consecutive year and once again it asserted that March 8th is first and foremost a day to remember women’s achievements throughout history, but also a day for political discussions and activism, especially in the context of the unprovoked military aggression of Russia against Ukraine.

Young, Active, Creative Association and women activists from Karlovo and Sopot marked March 8th with the event “We Have the Power to Change the World”. Its goal was to popularize local women’s accomplishments in the area of environmental protection and to encourage women’s equal participation in decision-making related to climate change and sustainability. Danita Zarichinova from For the Earth Ecological Association was a guest lecturer and with participants she discussed ideas and recommendations for good practices that both municipalities can implement to be greener and more responsible.
The Association for Assistance of Mentally Disabled People from the city of Varna organized the initiative “Lipstick-Free Days”, whose goal was to address the difficulties faced by girls and women with mental disabilities and their families. Within the project eight inspiring stories were told about the accomplishments of women who have overcome the challenges and barriers of discrimination and the limits imposed by the surrounding world.

Women from the Roma Association Hayaci in the town of Novi Pazar prepared a book with “Roma Recipes” by women chefs from the Druzhba neighborhood that was gifted for March 8th to women from the non-Roma community who were invited to join in marking the celebration and tasting the dishes.

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Like every year so far, in 2022 BFW announced a funding open call for projects developing activities for preventing and tackling violence against women, girls and other vulnerable groups in Bulgaria. We received 24 applications and approved the initiatives of 9 organizations working in 7 locations – they received funding totaling €80,554. The applications that used the intersectional approach and focused on vulnerable women’s groups and/or marginalized topics were selected with a priority, we also encouraged the application of newly registered organizations. Some of the partners we supported were:
**Sappho Bulgaria Association**, in partnership with the informal horizontal collective of **Feminist Mobilisations** organized the now traditional protest on November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, with the demand for adopting urgent amendments to the Protection against Domestic Violence Act that can ensure prevention, protection and support for those affected.

**The WakeUp Foundation** won with a project involving five informational educational and advocacy activities among which monthly webinars for people who suffered from violence hosted by psychologists and lawyers; a podcast with experts and people with experience; publishing a book with the stories of people who experienced violence and an information campaign with a fundraising element and advocacy activities for adopting the amendments in the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act.

**The Vazovtsi Association**’s project is directed towards domestic violence prevention and focuses specifically on the issue with early marriage in the town of Varshets. There were interactive seminars and peer support groups held as well as surveys among girls about their needs to uphold their rights.
In 2022 we announced an open call under the second edition of the Fund for Art Projects by Women Artists with the aim to bring to the forefront the problem of women’s representation in the art world and their unequal access to financial resources.
“Many scientific and artistic achievements of women are unknown and invisible to the public and women artists, especially in Bulgaria, have been part of the artistic world for a relatively short time – less than 100 years. But even in the Western world remarkable artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe or Tamara de Lempicka often are not met with the acclaim they merit during the period of their most active work. This is why I think it is important society, critics, and galleries intentionally to look for, discuss and offer art created by women artists.”, Veronika Puncheva – a philanthropist and a donor for the Fund for Art Projects by Women Artists.

The open call titled “State of Emergency” aimed to contribute to taking a snapshot of women artists, for completing the chronological and historic picture of their participation and influence on events. We looked for answers in the present, in the context of the most current affairs, women artists’ specific biographical moment and the place where they are. We invited women artists from all spheres of contemporary visual arts to suggest projects for new artworks and we gave them complete freedom and opportunity for action.

We received 221 project concepts from authors and collectives from Bulgaria and abroad that were reviewed by an expert jury. Ten of them (made by eight women artists and two collectives) received funding totaling to €25,545 (up to €2,550 per project). The completed artworks will be presented at a joint exhibition, curated by Svetla Kuyumdzhieva, in the National Gallery in May 2023.
RavniBG’s Solidarity Fund

To increase solidarity between members of the informal coalition RavniBG, consisting of 38 progressive organizations, BFW founded the Solidarity Fund. It experiments with an innovative for Bulgaria mechanism, known as "participatory grantmaking" or grantmaking with the involvement of applicants themselves. The goal is to democratize decision-making and to transfer power from the funding donor to applicants for funding by involving them in the whole process of open call creation: from defining priorities, through determining deadlines, requirements, and evaluation criteria, to doing the evaluation process. In 2022 the second edition of the Solidarity Fund was carried out and all its organizational steps and decisions were made by the coalition members – out of 7 applications approval was given for 4 projects in 2 locations, at a total value of €7,661.
The Association for Assistance of Mentally Disabled People from the city of Varna organized the initiative “Lipstick-Free Days”, whose goal was to address the difficulties faced by girls and women with mental disabilities and their families. Within the project eight inspiring stories were told about the accomplishments of women who have overcome the challenges and barriers of discrimination and the limits imposed by the surrounding world.

Community Development

For a fourth consecutive year BFW organized its **Community Development Program**, funded by the Global Fund for Community Foundations, which aims to support community leaders and activists in their efforts to unite and mobilize their communities, to encourage initiatives related to bringing citizens together for a better public environment, to give opportunity for meeting and exchange between various groups and to popularize women’s inclusion in community development.
Another aim of the program is to support citizens’ informal inclusion and unity in the solution of public issues, left out of state support, as well as to popularize community philanthropy.

After reviewing 92 applications from 42 towns and villages, BFW’s team selected 25 community leaders from 16 locations. They went through theoretical and practical preparation, with the first stage providing the 25 participants with a three-day training, directed towards skills development for community building and organization, and in the second stage they had the opportunity to design projects, with the help of which to activate their communities and together carry out initiatives to improve everyone’s life.

After a selection process BFW approved 13 project ideas, carried out in 9 locations, amounting to a total of €11 217. Priority was given to those who addressed specific social inequalities through the so-called intersectional approach or ones who popularized community philanthropy through their activity.

“Creating and sustaining a community are extremely important elements for the success of every project. I am infinitely grateful for everything I have learned and for you having reminded me of the significance and power of empowerment”, shared a participant in anonymous feedback after the end of the program.
Equality and Climate Justice

In 2022 BFW held the second successful edition of the **Equality and Climate Justice Program**, funded by the Open Society Institute and aimed at the inclusion of active participants and local community leaders in environmental protection, overcoming climate change and tackling social inequalities. The program was meant to enhance knowledge about the intersection between gender equality and climate justice and engage participants and their communities in the process of solving the issue.

We selected 20 participants out of 34 applications from 23 locations across the country who took part in a three-day expert-led training on the topic. After the training an internal open call was introduced for projects focused on climate change and social inequalities. BFW approved 10 project ideas, carried out in 9 locations, and totaling €10 220.

"I think that all I learned here is essential for us. I want to pass on the knowledge and to include more people so that we work together for our own sake and for the common good. I borrowed a lot of new ideas from the participants, everything I heard would be useful to develop my ideas and implement them in the best way", shared a participant in anonymous feedback after the end of the program.
A Breath of Fresh Air, the first of its kind program in Bulgaria, funded by Clean Air Fund, also combined theory and practice – 30 approved participants from 16 different locations completed a three-day Clean Air Academy, discussing the topics of the consequences of air pollution and its disproportionate impact on women. After that participants had the chance to apply for BFW funding to carry out their projects. With a total of €20 395 we supported 16 initiatives (out of 20 applications in total), carried out in 10 locations, part of which are infamous for extremely poor air quality. Thus, the grantees took actions for tackling two simultaneously ongoing crises – air pollution that has affected 97% of Bulgarians at some point throughout their life, according to data from WHO, and the exclusion of the most vulnerable groups from the decision-making process.
In June 2022 BFW, with the support of Global Fund for Women and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation held its fifth anniversary edition of the annual feminist camp titled **Feminist Boot Camp All Stars**. 21 women aged 21-40 years old from 7 locations in the country took part.

The common goal of the initiative was to bring together the participants from all past editions so they can share their knowledge, experience and skills and jointly design projects dedicated to upholding women’s rights and empowerment.

Participants had the opportunity to discuss current topics related to feminism and women’s issues in Bulgaria such as domestic and gender-based violence, the need for timely health and sexual education in school, the difficulties encountered in small towns and villages, poverty, and many others.

“I would describe Feminist Boot Camp All Stars as a super energizing, uniting and, last but not least, a very safe and at the same time massive event! Thank you BFW for giving me this incredible opportunity to feel the comfort of this amazing place together with my daughter and all marvelous participants”, shared Bistra Poyukliyska from Trigrad whose attendance at the Camp we supported by providing care for her child.

After the end of the camp, we approved the three collectively-designed project ideas with the total sum of €15 282. They will be carried out in the city of Sofia (with a national scope) and in the village of Chepintsi, Smolyan district.
In October 2022 representatives of more than 50 organizations from nearly 20 towns and villages from across the country took part in BFW’s *Grantee Meeting*. They all work for women’s and girls’ rights and empowerment, elimination of violence, gender equality, strengthening the women’s movement, upholding democratic values, support and integration for vulnerable groups, environmental protection, etc.

The main objective of the meeting was to contribute to uniting the community by providing space for participants to exchange knowledge and experience with others, to discover like-minded people, to learn about current and future opportunities for support from BFW and to build a vision for the future of the sector together. Among the highlights of the program was the opportunity for intergenerational exchange of knowledge and experience, the introduction of BFW’s funding strategy and the study it is based on, the discussion with organizations that were already supported in the Mission: Possible program during which they shared the effect of flexible organizational funding etc.

“It is crucial to have long-term strategic planning which is based both on values and desired social effect as well as on the team members’ capabilities. Our organization naturally made the transition from the purely voluntary activities on site around the country to the need to also do advocacy work for equality policies by publishing reports and positions and taking part in institutional working groups. Thanks to BFW’s support we can continuously work for equality policies through advocacy activities”, Marina Kisyova de Heus, executive director of the *Ekaterina Karavelova Foundation*.

BFW’s capacity-building programs were attended by 351 people from over 30 towns and cities across Bulgaria, representing 99 civil society organizations that work towards social change. Our total investment in capacity was €43 788.
In BFW for more than 18 years now we have been working for a systemic and more effective fight against domestic and gender-based violence – serious and complex issues whose addressing requires political will. This is why in 2022 we kept insisting on the provision of more effective prevention, protection and support for those who suffered from violence.
With a positive position we supported the Law Amending and Supplementing the Domestic Violence Protection Act which was published for public discussion by the 47th National Assembly and which addressed some of the existing gaps in the effective legislation. Together with more than 50 civil society organizations we supported the proposed amendments which correspond, even though not fully, to a series of conditions and recommendations for Bulgaria from various European and international institutions and organizations.

On November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, for a consecutive year we went out on a protest against the issue affecting one million Bulgarian women and costing our county €6.8 billion per year (EIGE). At the event organized by Feminist Mobilisations once again we appealed for “Not a Single Women Anymore!” because the statistics we keep based on media posts showed that in 2022 at least 26 women were killed by men (mostly with a close relation to them). For the first time in the history of the protest there was a more prominent political presence, and on the same day the Law was once again put on the table for discussion in the National Assembly.

We managed to distribute more than 9,500 “Love Errors” booklets that dispel the most common myths justifying violence, through emotional personal stories and expert advice. More than 7,200 copies of “The Booklet Every Woman Must Have” were included for free in the November edition of our partners from GRAZZIA magazine, reaching women from all over Bulgaria.

To reinforce our advocacy efforts in December 2022 we organized a “Forum for Policies and Actions for Combating Violence Against Women” which was attended by representatives of almost all political parties, European and Bulgarian institutions, among which were the European Parliament, the Council of
Europe, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ambassadors and civil society experts working on the front line for combating violence against women. During the event attended by more than 120 people and organized together with the Bulgarian Platform of the European Women’s Lobby, members of Parliament declared their firm position in combating violence – we will see how they will uphold it in the future.
RavniBG Coalition was created upon BFW’s initiative in 2018 alongside 10 partnering NGOs. In 2022 it is already an influential intersectional coalition comprising 38 progressive civil organizations located mostly outside Sofia, with small budgets and limited access to resources. The main priorities of the coalition are empowerment of the civil sector in Bulgaria for taking part in decision-making processes, including representation and advocacy for the Council for Civil Society Development (CSSD), and improvement of the perception of the NGO sector in Bulgaria through various local and national campaigns and initiatives.

CSSD is a consultative body of the Council of Ministers and works for designing and applying strategies and policies in support of the civil sector. Its functions are to follow and make an annual review of organizational needs and achievements, to coordinate and supervise the application of the Strategy for support of their development, to collect information about their public funding, to assist the whole process of interaction between the state and local authorities, and civil organizations and to give positions on all related legal act drafts.

The RavniBG Coalition supported the campaign CSSD is not Another Abbreviation for defining the priorities of civil organizations in Bulgaria and transforming the Council into a powerful civil participation instrument, a platform for communication between the civil society and authorities and a place for reinforcing and protecting civil space.

Among the highest priority topics for organizations, as outlined in the campaign, are the adoption of public consultation standards by all institutions, advocacy and participation support and increase of the state resources for supporting civil initiatives.

Council for Civil Society Development

In 2022 the long-awaited Council for Civil Society Development (CSSD) was constituted and started work. In 2021 BFW was elected to be a member alongside 13 other organizations.

The RavniBG Coalition was created upon BFW’s initiative in 2018 alongside 10 partnering NGOs. In 2022 it is already an influential intersectional coalition comprising 38 progressive civil organizations located mostly outside Sofia, with small budgets and limited access to resources. The main priorities of the coalition are empowerment of the civil sector in Bulgaria for taking part in decision-making processes, including representation and advocacy for the Council for Civil Society Development (CSSD), and improvement of the perception of the NGO sector in Bulgaria through various local and national campaigns and initiatives.
Expanding the Study Focus of the “Read Between the Lines” Project

While we were trying to measure the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on organizations working for women’s and human rights, in 2022 our society found itself in the middle of another disaster – the Russian invasion in Ukraine, destructive for the Ukrainian citizens and economy and sending shock waves across the world. These complex emergency situations changed the dynamics of the Black Sea region and posed new challenges for human rights protection and promotion.

To react to the numerous complex and intertwining crises the "Read Between the Lines: (Post)pandemic Economic Effects on Women’s Rights CSOs from Bulgaria, Georgia and Ukraine" project undertook a change encouraged by the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation donor organization. The partnering organizations – BFW (as a leading organization), Ukrainian Women’s Fund, Women’s Fund Georgia, and the Taso Foundation (Georgia) – focused on studying the (post)pandemic consequences and the effects related to the military conflict in Ukraine, which the organizations in these three countries encounter.

An international team conducted 63 in-depth interviews with representatives of the civil society in Bulgaria, Ukraine and Georgia and analyzed the crisis-related response and sustainability models as well as the way they impact women’s rights protection and promotion. The study aims to inform various stakeholders about the context in which civil society operates and adapts to the new realities to meet the needs of its target groups. We hope that after its completion it will serve as an advocacy instrument for (funding) policy making for the civil sector and will give visibility to the good practices applied in response to crises.
In 2022 we continued our joint initiative with Kabinet.bg – a virtual clinic for urgent psychotherapeutic and emotional assistance, and we provided long-term and free support for women and girls at risk and difficulty. The #YouAreHeard campaign, that started in 2021, was carried out as a response to women’s deteriorated mental health as a result of the pandemic that additionally complicated their roles on the front line – of teachers, nurses, caretakers, workers with no opportunity to work from home, etc. Within the initiative psychotherapeutic assistance was provided to 546 people over 5104 sessions.

#YouAreHeard – A Mental Health Campaign
On The Right Track is an international initiative with a budget of over 4 million dollars that unites 20 women’s funds from Europe and Latin America. The project focuses on the so-called "anti-gender" attacks, the shrinking space for civil society as well as on the rise of fundamentalism and the extreme right-wing politics that can be seen both in Europe and in Latin America. Its main goal is to reinforce feminist, LGBTIQ+ and human rights movements, to preserve values such as freedom, democracy, and diversity.

What lies in the core of On the Right Track is cooperation between women’s funds and local groups, organizations, networks and feminist movements on the territory of the two continents, in order to support the efforts to counteract the regressive trends and to create a discourse that gives the general society an idea about the importance of living in a democratic society and having an opportunity to exercise our rights of women, LGBTIQ+ people and people from vulnerable groups.

The project advocates for greater and more flexible support for local civic organizations, groups, activists, and formations that are on the front line in the fight against radical ideologies, thus encouraging social justice. Alongside the financial support provided for women’s funds partners, the initiative publishes studies and documents the attacks of extreme right-wing representatives against human rights supporters with the intention to change the right-wing narrative and rebuild the positive perception of the progressive civil society. At the end of 2022 our team took part in an international meeting of the Latin American women’s funds and their partners that actively counteract fundamentalist attacks and regressive policies.
MyPath in Support of Migrant Women and Women from Ethnic Minorities

In 2022 BFW entered the crucial development stage of the MyPath project, part of the "Erasmus+" EU program for education, training, youth, and sport, in partnership with three other organizations from Austria, Germany and Portugal. The "MyPath: Career planning – participation of medium and / or higher qualified migrant women and women from ethnic minorities in the labor market" project involves civil sector companies and organizations working in the areas of re-training, tackling unemployment, coaching and professional trainings.

Work-related skill loss and deterioration is a common obstacle for migrant women but also for women from ethnic minorities that might often be overqualified for their job, or their labor might be undervalued within the so-called "male" sectors. As a result, they keep facing challenges that have a destructive effect on their equal participation in society.

Within the project partners prepared training materials, applying the newest practices, methods and learning activities, specially designed to develop the professional skills of medium and / or higher qualified migrant women and women from ethnic minorities.

After a meticulous evaluation of the barriers that target groups face in pursuit of professional fulfillment, the partnering organizations engaged educators with new teaching methods to reduce target groups’ skills shortage and increase their employment chances in their areas of expertise.
As the only feminist donor in Bulgaria, BFW develops philanthropy for social change, raises funds at local level and attracts international resources with which it provides prioritized support for the gender justice movement, but also to the intersecting fights for social and climate justice and reinforcement and protection of the human rights of all vulnerable groups.

We are part of these movements, and this is why we are in the best position to support them as we understand their needs and the challenges they face in their work.

Our fundraising philosophy is based on educating donors and popularizing our and our partners' work, securing diversity of the resources attracted and creating innovative, strategic, and efficient funding models like, for example, the so-called pooled funding. We attract funds from various local and foreign donors – private foundations, other women's funds, international NGOs and Bulgarian foundations, embassies, companies, and individuals. We appeal for more state funding and more resources for the civil sector, especially for covering organizations' administrative and operational needs.

We believe in the power of individual philanthropy, and we regularly hold fundraising campaigns, encouraging people to invest in women’s and girls' rights and social change. The result of these efforts is highly visible in the context of the series of crises our society is faced with. The latest one, the war in Ukraine that led to a humanitarian and refugee wave, proved that the Bulgarian society is extremely empathetic and willing to donate for the needs of the refugees and of the organizations supporting them 24/7 on the front line.
BFW’S FINANCES IN FIGURES

**MOBILIZED RESOURCES**

€1 821 194

58% GROWTH COMPARED TO 2021

**ANNUAL BUDGET**

€1 050 529

59% GROWTH COMPARED TO 2021
69% of the budget were allocated for funding and capacity building of the partners we fund.

38% of the funding sources were international philanthropic organizations – private foundations and women’s funds.

56% of the funds raised were European funding.
### TYPES OF EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries and staff expenses</td>
<td>21.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselors and external services</td>
<td>0.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office expenses and equipment</td>
<td>3.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memberships</td>
<td>0.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications and fundraising</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct financial support</td>
<td>63.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building</td>
<td>5.47%</td>
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### TYPES OF DONORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate donors</td>
<td>2.75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual donors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private foundations</td>
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<tr>
<td>European funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s funds</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>International NGOs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarian foundations, embassies, government</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BFW’S CONTRIBUTORS IN 2022

BFW’S INSTITUTIONAL FUNDERS:

- ma cash
- OAK Foundation
- European Union
- SIGRID RAUSING TRUST
- Fondation CHANEL
- URGENT ACTION FUND
- Gender Funders Co lab
- Global Fund for Women
- Erasmus+
- Prospera
- Clean Air Fund
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
- Изпълнителният директор НДРП БГ
- Projekt Kesher
- British Embassy Sofia
- Open Society Institute Sofia
- Civitates

BFW’S CORPORATE FUNDERS:

- nexo
- legrand
- SAP
- NAOS
- Bioderma
- Sofiya Voda

OTHER DONORS WHO SUPPORTED BFW:

- AVON BULGARIA
- UBISOFT
- MELON, PART OF KIN AND CARTA
- ALD AUTOMOTIVE BULGARIA
- TINA’S COLORS
- RAW & MORE