



# NEF

# State of Play

Network<sup>of</sup>  
European  
Foundations

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Philanthropy House – Rue Royale 94 – 1000 Brussels – Belgium

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation - Compagnia di San Paolo - Erste Stiftung  
Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian - Fondation de France - Institusjonen Fritt Ord  
King Baudouin Foundation - Open Society Foundation - Robert Bosch Stiftung

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## Civitates - A Philanthropic Initiative for Democracy and Solidarity in Europe

<u>Foundations involved:</u>	Adessium Foundation, Bertelsmann Stiftung, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Compagnia di San Paolo, Erste Stiftung, European Cultural Foundation, Fondation de France, Fritt Ord Foundation, King Baudouin Foundation, Oak Foundation, Limelight Foundation, Luminare, Mercator Stiftung, Nicolas Puech Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Porticus, Robert Bosch Stiftung, Rudolf Augstein Stiftung, Schöpflin Stiftung, Sigrid Rausing Trust, Stefan Batory Foundation, Wille Finance.
<u>Budget 2021-2023:</u>	9.3 million €
<u>Timeframe:</u>	2021-2025 (current)

Civitates is a programme developed and fiscally sponsored by NEF.

### Background:

Civitates is a philanthropic initiative for democracy and solidarity in Europe. It provides funding for civil society actors to come together, revitalise public discourse, and ensure that all voices are heard. The pooled fund supports cross-sectoral coalitions that strengthen the resilience of the civil society sector, initiatives that push for a healthy digital public sphere, as well as independent public-interest journalism in Europe. Since becoming operational in 2018, Civitates has provided 68 grants in 22 countries across Europe.

In addition to providing funding, Civitates has a Funding Plus component, through which the fund provides capacity development and networking opportunities to its grantees. Civitates, which has an annual budget of approximately 3M EUR, is supported by a large group of diverse foundations, of different shapes and sizes, which bring in a wealth of expertise and different perspectives.

### Latest developments:

#### ***New foundations***

Two new funders have joined the group since January 2021: Limelight foundation and Sigrid Rausing Trust.

#### ***New strategy for a healthy digital public sphere***

Civitates has tasked an external consultant to run a consultation process with experts in the field, which led to an outline of what Civitates' strategy going forward for the sub-fund on healthy digital public sphere could look like. The consultations followed on from previous detailed conversations with the current cohort of grantees and two discussions with the working group of the sub-fund in 2020. Sixteen interviews took place with policy experts, civil society members and the donor community. A range of geographies was included, and several interviewees were also able to talk about the field outside Europe, predominantly the context in the US and UK.

In March, the new strategy with a focus on advocacy and field building was discussed. Civitates aims to support organisations that advocate for regulatory approaches of the digital public sphere and address the current emerging, and future challenges of the field.

Civitates will proceed with a targeted approach, inviting around 20 organisations advocating for a healthy digital public sphere to apply for core funding for 2 years. The advocacy will be targeted at the various legislative proposals currently being debated and that have the potential to affect the digital public sphere including the Digital Services Act, Digital Markets Act, European Democracy Action Plan or Data Governance Act.

#### ***New strategy in development for strengthening civil society across Europe***

Civitates continues to support the work of civil society coalitions on civic space throughout Europe, allowing them to consolidate and roll out the strategies they had planned. The coalitions involve partners from different sectors and cities. Their approach varies, but all of them include both reactive and pro-active elements aimed at building up resilience and the capacity to stand up against the deterioration of democratic values in their sectors.

Civitates commissioned two reports to inform the next strategy period for this sub-fund: the first report looked at the impact the coalitions in the countries where Civitates-supported organisations are active. The second report

provided an overview of the state of the shrinking space for civil society in Europe and the strategies to address this issue. These reports will inform the decisions of the working group on the future strategy of this sub-fund. A discussion with the working group will follow later in March and the next steps will be agreed upon.

### ***Strengthening public-interest journalism organisations across Europe***

As of January 2021, Civitates is supporting 11 independent public-interest journalism organisations across Europe.

After two phases of selection meetings and based on the evaluations and discussions with experts from the field, Civitates selected 11 organisations that we will be supporting for the next three years. The grants amount to around € 2,5 million and range from € 62,000 to € 350,000 for the whole grant period. The organisations were selected based on:

- their journalistic excellence
- the importance of their voices in the public sphere and
- a consideration of how they fit within Civitates' mission to support democracy and solidarity in Europe.

All selected organisations have democracy and solidarity in Europe at the heart of their journalistic work and are dedicated to seeking the truth. They tackle issues, prepare investigations, and expose unlawful activities in ways specific to their context, and are eager to exchange, and learn from one another.

Since the start of the year, the secretariat has been busy getting to know the new grantees online. The grantee partners are expected to go through an organisational assessment with Deutsche Welle Akademie in the first half of 2021. The first grantee get-together is planned for May/June and will be held online. The goal of this meeting is for grantees and funders to get to know each other. A strategy for the monitoring and evaluation of the sub-fund is to be prepared and discussed with the working group later in spring.

### ***Civitates' approach to communication***

Civitates is revisiting its communication strategy as the communication needs of the Fund have evolved since the first communication strategy was drafted in 2018. Civitates would also like to develop a more structured approach on how to expand its outreach, which will entail revisiting the communication goals and the targeted audience.

## **European Artificial Intelligence (A.I) Fund**

Foundations involved: Mozilla (Chair), Luminate (Co Chair), King Baudouin Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Stiftung Mercator, Oak Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Ford Foundation, Bosch Foundation, and Fondation Nicolas Puech.

Budget 2020-23: around 4,6 million €

Timeframe: 2020-2023

NEF is the fiscal sponsor of the European A.I. Fund.

### **Background:**

The European AI Fund is a philanthropic initiative that aims to shape the direction of AI in Europe. The long-term vision is to promote an ecosystem of European public interest and civil society organisations working on policy and technology, based on a diversity of actors and a plurality of goals that represents society as a whole.

Over the next five years, the European Commission has ambitions to forge a plan for Europe's digital transformation, including AI. But without a strong civil society taking part in the debate, Europe—and the world—risk missing opportunities to better society and instead, might choose a path paved with societal harm. These harms include but are not limited to pervasive state surveillance; manipulation of democracy; discrimination through automated decision making; profiling of individuals by private companies; and monopolisation and concentration of power.

This fund aims to strengthen civil society's ability to take on this crucial role: to be a more visible and more effective voice in public and policy debates and shape the direction Europe's digital transformation should take. The fund's

goal is to bring in new actors to the debate, especially those that are working on issues affected by AI and Automated Decision Making (ADM) and who want to build their capacity in this domain.

#### Latest developments:

It has been a busy period for this nascent Fund which managed during the reporting period to finalise its first two calls for proposals.

Firstly, in December 2020 the Fund announced [its first cohort of grantees](#) that work on the **research side of the use of ADM and tech in response to Covid-19**.

Over the next six to twelve months, Algorithm Watch, the Ada Lovelace Institute, the Balkan Investigate Reporting Network (BIRN), the Global Data Justice project at Tilburg University, the Civil Liberties Union for Europe, and Superrr Lab will conduct research that monitors, documents and critically analyses the role that data, automated decision-making, and technology more broadly plays in Europe's ongoing tech response to the pandemic.

At the beginning of March, the jury and SC decided the final selection of the **grantees under the open call for proposals**. Sixteen organisations were selected for an increased overall budget to 1.5 million Euros. This cohort of grantees fits into a double objective:

- Enable civil society organisations with AI expertise to start building up strategic capacity in advocacy and policy to shape Europe's Digital Future in the mid- and long-term
- Help more civil society organisations build expertise on AI issues, particularly those who already have strong advocacy and policy capacity and whose work is affected or transformed by the deployment of AI/ADM

This means that the cohort entails 'expert' as well as 'non expert' organisations on tech. Therefore, the Fund has to design its convening and capacity development strands factoring this important feature. In terms of diversity of organisations: 7 belong to the digital rights landscape, 4 represent marginalised communities in the debate about AI, 2 are from the health sector, 1 from consumer protection, 1 from human rights, and 1 from environment. Seven of them work at the Brussels level, the rest are nationally based with a European component in their policy/advocacy work.

In the application process, several themes were commonly referred to as AI/ADM-related challenges. These include challenges regarding human rights (13 applicants); transparency (12); civil society engagement (11); the perceived neutrality of AI (11); and algorithmic bias (8).

The Fund will host 4 SC meetings this year, the first upcoming one being on March 24. This meeting will be an opportunity to rethink the governance structure of the Fund given the enlargement of the group of funders and of the Secretariat.

The Fund has confirmed Frederike Kaltheuner as its Fund director (consultant). She will work with Alexandra Toth, who will be working from the Philanthropy House as of April as the Fund manager.

The Fund has also welcomed the **Fondation Nicolas Puech** as a new partner.

## European Fund for the Balkans

Foundations involved: King Baudouin Foundation; Robert Bosch Stiftung (Chair); ERSTE Stiftung

Budget 2021: 1 million €

Timeframe: 2007-2025

NEF-EFB has a registered representation office in Belgrade, Serbia.

### Background:

The European Fund for the Balkans is a joint endeavour of the Robert Bosch Foundation, the King Baudouin Foundation and the ERSTE Foundation, that envisions, runs and supports initiatives aimed at strengthening democracy, fostering European integration and affirming the role of the Western Balkans in addressing Europe's emerging challenges. The current programme strategy is focused on three overarching areas – fostering democratisation, enhancing regional cooperation and boosting EU integration. By implementing different projects, initiatives and activities, the Fund supports the process of affirming the political credibility of the enlargement policy across the Western Balkans region, improving regional cooperation among the civil society based on solidarity and demand-driven dialogue, as well as providing means and platforms for informed and empowered citizens to take action and demand accountable institutions and democracy.

### Latest news:

#### **The EFB's opinion survey "The Western Balkans in times of Pandemic"**

In the autumn of 2020, the European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) commissioned a polling agency to conduct a survey among residents in all six Western Balkan countries on several topics, ranging from EU integration, elections, civic engagement and conspiracy theories. The opinion poll was conducted on a nationally representative sample consisting of a minimum of 1000 respondents aged 18+, by means of telephone and online interviews. Results of the public opinion survey are available [here](#).

#### **Trees of Friendship (October 30, 2020)**

In accordance with its aim of building local partnerships, EFB organised with local partners simultaneously in all 6 regional capitals (Belgrade, Skopje, Pristina, Tirana, Sarajevo, Podgorica) a tree planting activity. The aim was to raise awareness about the responsibility of own actions, as the 400 planted trees were compensating damage done by EFB business-related flights in 2019.

#### **EFB's special event at Belgrade Security Forum: Future of EU and the Western Balkans**

The EFB special event at the jubilee 10th edition of the Belgrade Security Forum: Future of EU and the Western Balkans took place in October 2020. The discussion featured the prospects on whether the future of Europe's debate is promising to close 2020 on a positive note, however without conviction that the concrete reforms and needed changes will be introduced to equip the EU for the many challenges it faces.

#### **Civil Society Forum of the Western Balkans**

The Berlin Process has taken up the EFB initiated Civil Society Forum as part of the process itself. The EFB co-organised with the European Council on Foreign Relations – Sofia office, and the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" Skopje the Think Tank and Civil Society Forum in November 2020. The topic covered the EU reaction towards geopolitics and geoeconomics in the Western Balkans, first from an expert view, and then from a personal/activistic perspective.

#### **The 25th anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement "Hostage State – How to free Bosnia from Dayton's paralysing grip" – policy brief, short movie and conference**

The EFB has joined forces with the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) in preparing a whole package around the 25th anniversary of the Dayton peace agreement. The policy brief is to be downloaded via this [link](#). A [short movie](#) giving a voice to the young people of Bosnia and Herzegovina "Voices of Youth" has been produced. The EFB took an active part in a [high-level conference](#) including the former president of the USA, Clinton:

## **EFB in support of independent media in the Western Balkans**

The European Fund for the Balkans has established media partnerships with several media in the region, as part of its strategic approach to support independent media and raise awareness on shared values of transparency, liberty, solidarity, and openness. Media outlets Autonomija (Serbia), Tirana Times (Albania), SBunker (Kosovo), 360 Degrees (North Macedonia), and PCNEN (Montenegro) agreed to work on the joint agenda and to put the activities and campaigns supporting citizens' initiatives and democratisation at the forefront.

### **Engaged Democracy Initiative (EDI)**

EDI aims to involve local movements and organisations, researchers, social businesses, engaged citizens and journalists in a hierarchy less and horizontal regional network (rhizome) for supporting, promoting and pursuing values of open, solidary and democratic societies across the Western Balkans region. As discussions are now possible only online, a platform that will give a safe space for an exchange to all interested will be created. The special challenge is to find [ways to connect local actors on a regional level](#).

### **Regional awareness raising and educational campaign "Balkans United for Clean Air"**

Western Balkan countries have the lowest air quality in Europe. Having the regional perspective of this common burning issue, the "Balkans United for Clean Air" campaign initiated by the European Fund for the Balkans will be realised across the region in partnership with numerous organisations in each country. Every two weeks a different topic related to air pollution is addressed, like consequences on mortality rates, air pollution and Covid-19, big polluters, the necessity of monitoring and information, etc.

*#BalkansUnitedForCleanAir regional campaign in the regional media*

The #BalkansUnitedForCleanAir campaign has appeared in the news in more than [30 online and printed media](#) outlets in Serbia, Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The results of the regional public opinion poll mentioned above were used for writing four BiEPAG analyses. They were promoted separately through a series of online events with experts on the Western Balkans region and with partners including the European Policy Centre, the Atlantic Council and the Oxford University.

The three so far published papers are:

[BiEPAG publication "Between a rock and a hard place: Public opinion and integration in the Western Balkans"](#); [BiEPAG publication "The suspicious Virus: Conspiracies and Covid-19 in the Balkans"](#); [BiEPAG policy brief "No longer voting for the devil you know?"](#)

### **The Western Balkans on their Path to the EU: Challenges and Opportunities for the European Integration of the Western Balkans**

At the end of 2020, a joint online event with the Danish Foreign Policy Society took place. Denmark is among those EU member states being skeptical, so "The Western Balkans on their Path to the EU: [Challenges and Opportunities for the European Integration of the Western Balkans](#)" was discussed with regional experts, but also with Danish politicians.

### **The BiEPAG blog**

Lately, the blog covered the following topics: [Will there be a political earthquake following Kosovo elections?](#); [New BiEPAG's policy brief – Why the Balkans' collective action problem might be easier to break than we think by Tena Prelec and Jovana Marovic](#); [BiH as Multi-National State: Are Constituent Peoples Really the Crux of the Matter?](#); [Why should Bosnia not be left behind? Searching for new peace.](#)

### **Western Balkans Fellowship Programme at the Austrian Parliament starting in May**

The EFB has a joint Western Balkans Fellowship Programme with the Austrian Parliament that will start hopefully in May. Six fellows from each country of the Western Balkans have been selected.

## European Programme for Integration and Migration

Foundations involved (Partner): Adessium Foundation, Aga Khan Foundation, Barrow Cadbury Trust, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Compagnia di San Paolo, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Fondation de France, The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, King Baudouin Foundation, Oak Foundation, Robert Bosch Stiftung, Open Society Foundations, Fondation Abbé Pierre, Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation, Porticus Foundation, Kahane Foundation

Foundations involved (Associate): Fondazione Cariplo, Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Torino, Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Cuneo, Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Padova e Rovigo, Fondazione Monte dei Paschi di Siena, Fondazione Peppino Vismara, John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, Fondazione Con Il Sud

Budget: 7.8 million € (2019-2023)

Timeframe: EPIM has existed since 2005. Its current strategy covers the timeframe 2019-2023.

EPIM is a programme developed and supported by NEF.

### Background:

The European Programme for Integration and Migration is a pooled fund, currently supported by 24 private foundations with the goal to strengthen the role of civil society in building inclusive communities and in developing humane and sustainable responses to migration, based on Europe's commitment to universal human rights and social justice.

EPIM gives grants to projects led by civil society organisations across Europe and strengthens grantees and the wider field through capacity development, knowledge support and the connection of actors from local, national, regional and EU levels. Funds are allocated through targeted Thematic Funds on Migration and Detention; Asylum in Europe; Long-term Prospects and Protection of Children and Youth on the Move in Europe; Access to Rights for Mobile EU Citizens; Strategically Communicating on Migration in a Changing Environment; and Building Inclusive Societies.

### Latest developments:

#### **EPIM's Strategy Recommendations for the years ahead**

Five years after introducing Thematic Funds to strategically provide funding to civil society work on migration, EPIM conducted a Strategic Review of the Thematic Portfolio in 2020. The exercise was an opportunity to test the relevance of EPIM's current thematic foci in light of current and future needs and opportunities in the field. The process resulted in the adoption of [9 recommendations](#) which will guide improvements of EPIM's thematic work in the coming years.

### **Developments in Thematic funds**

#### Thematic fund on Migration and Detention

**Aim:** Ensure that migrants who are subject to European migration systems have access to fair, transparent and efficient procedures to resolve their migration case, so that detention is reduced to a tool of last resort applied only when it is legitimate, proportionate and necessary.

**Grantee organisations in 2021:** International Detention Coalition (IDC), Cyprus Refugee Council (CyRC), Association for Legal Intervention (SIP), Centre for Legal Aid – Voice in Bulgaria, HumanRights360, Italian Coalition for Civil Liberties and Rights (CILD), JRS Belgium, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland.

**Main developments:**

- In the context of the 2020 strategic review of EPIM's thematic portfolio, the decision was made to merge the current Thematic Fund on Migration and Detention and the Thematic Fund on Asylum into one overarching Thematic Fund, focused on addressing different manifestations of EU migration control. A strategy for this new Thematic Fund, which aims to build on current work, will be developed in 2021.
- EPIM has commissioned an external mapping of priority contexts for the (continued) implementation of Alternative to Detention (ATD) pilot projects, which will guide EPIM in its decision-making regarding support efforts for national and regional advocacy on ATD beyond 2021.

***Thematic fund on the long-term prospects and protection of children on the move in Europe***

**Aim:** Children and youth on the move in Europe, regardless of origin, gender, status and age have access to their rights and are protected holistically with the highest possible efforts, equal to other children.

**Grantee organisations in 2021:** Mentor-Escale; Minor-Ndako; Defence for Children Italy; Collegio del mondo unito dell'Adriatico; Cespi; International Centre for Policy Advocacy; Intersos; Esserci; Fo.Co; Oxfam Italia Intercultura; La Rada Consorzio di Cooperative Sociali; Centro Ambrosiano di Solidarietà Onlus; Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo dei Paesi Emergenti; P.G. Frassati; Programma Integra; SEND; Società Cooperativa sociale Progetto Tenda; Velos Youth; The Young Republic; Oxfam Italia; Missing Children Europe; Defence for Children International Greece.

**Main developments:**

- The Thematic Fund is currently developing a new strategy for 2021-2023, to be approved by the end of April. Since the field consultation showed exacerbation of needs and the continued relevance of working on this topic, the focus of the new strategy will be to sustain and strengthen existing work and focus areas, deepening the longstanding topics of access to quality alternative care for migrant children and youth, including after they turn 18; as well as the participation of migrant children and youth in advocacy.

***Thematic fund on communicating migration in a changing environment***

**Aim:** Increase the weight of their messages and recommendations and contribute to more nuanced political and public discourses as well as policy-making on migration in and across EU Member States as well as at Brussels level.

**Grantee organisations in 2021:** Migration Policy Group (MPG); Refugees Welcome Italia/Refugees Welcome International; Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM); European Network on Statelessness (ENS), International Detention Coalition (IDC).

**Main developments:**

- The Thematic Fund has been conducting a review of the Thematic Fund strategy and is working on a strategy for the timeframe 2021-2024 to be finalised in March and approved by the Steering Committee in April 2021. The process has been informed by stakeholder interviews conducted by the Consultant Ophelia Field. All foundation representatives who have been involved in the TF so far have expressed intention and interest to remain committed to the TF work.

***Thematic fund on Asylum in Europe***

**Aim:** To ensure that people in need of international protection are able to access European asylum systems that are humane fair, effective and capable of offering protection

**Grantee organisations in 2021:** JRS Europe, HIAS Europe, Border Violence Monitoring Network (through Rigardu e.V), Safe Passage International, Danish Refugee Council, Profundo Research Foundation, Hungarian Helsinki Committee

#### **Main developments:**

- As a result of the second round of its [rolling Call for Proposals](#), EPIM selected 3 projects for funding. The 3 projects are led by [Danish Refugee Council Italy](#), [Profundo Research Foundation](#) and [Hungarian Helsinki Committee](#) and respectively address human rights compliance at the EU's external borders, improved use of EU funding for asylum, and exclusion from protection and deportation based on alleged threats to national security.
- EPIM awarded a grant to [European Council on Refugees and Exiles](#) (ECRE) to continue reinforcing civil society advocacy on refugee rights in Europe.
- Following the 2020 strategic review of EPIM's thematic portfolio, EPIM is exploring the merging of this Thematic Fund with the Thematic Fund on Migration and Detention, to strengthen efforts to monitor and address manifestations of the EU migration control trend.

#### *Thematic fund on protecting access to rights for mobile EU citizens*

Aim: Ensure that mobile EU citizens and their family members are able to effectively exercise and enforce their free movement rights in law and in practice.

Grantee organisations in 2021: European Citizen Action Service (ECAS); European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA); Médecins du Monde (MdM); European Alternatives.

#### **Main developments:**

- As the current Thematic Fund strategy is coming to an end in 2021, EPIM is undertaking a strategic review to explore challenges and opportunities in the field and to determine thematic priorities for the continuation of the Fund.

#### *Thematic fund for building inclusive European societies*

Aim: To help enhance community cohesion structurally in various European societies so that this leads to collective and individual improvements in the quality of life and social relationships of all members of the community, including migrants.

Grantee organisations in 2021: DUO for a JOB; Rising You; International Council for Cultural Centers; SINGA France; Womenability; Interventionbüro; SINGA Deutschland; Welcoming International; Artemisszio Foundation; MigHelp; ECRE; PICUM; SPEAK; Altekio, Asociación La Bolina, SOS Racismo Gipuzkoa; Saathi House; New Women Connectors

#### **Main developments:**

- EPIM has been undertaking a strategic review of the Inclusion Thematic Fund to revisit the remit and priorities of the Fund. A new strategy will be developed for the period 2021-2024, to be finalised in April 2021.

## **The Evaluation Fund: Reducing Violence Against Children**

Foundations involved: Oak Foundation (Chair) and anonymous donor

Budget: around 4 million € for 2011-2021

Timeframe: 2011-2021

NEF has been involved in the development of the Evaluation Fund: Reducing Violence Against Children since its inception.

#### Background:

The Evaluation Fund: Reducing Violence Against Children is a pooled funding initiative aimed at reducing violence against children by supporting rigorous evaluations of childhood violence prevention interventions in low- and middle-income countries. These evaluations help us to understand what works (and what does not) in the

prevention of violence against children across countries and contexts. The findings from these evaluations feed into national and regional policymaking and programming so that all children may live a life free of violence.

Since 2011, The Evaluation Fund has supported 22 research studies in 17 countries and is in its third phase of programming, which will continue through the end of 2021.

#### Latest developments:

##### **East Africa Projects: Research Uptake and Online Learning Sessions**

Following its call of June 2019, [four projects were selected for funding](#): **FAIR project**; **GST Agile project**; **UPRISE project**; and **ECPC evaluation project**, which began between March and April 2020. With a diversity of research designs, the complexity of partnerships, and differing scope and rigor, grantees were invited to identify areas where additional capacity was needed with support from the Fund.

Working with grantees, the Evaluation Challenge Fund devised a series of **online learning sessions** that encompass a variety of topics relevant to the projects, as well as to provide a collaborative space for project partners to share learnings, challenges, and solutions. These sessions should address three key areas of need: **1) relationship-building** (both in terms of researcher-practitioner partnerships as well as among the 4 projects); **2) varied capacity support on evaluation, research design & methods**; and **3) research uptake**.

Since beginning these workshops in October 2020, the Evaluation Challenge Fund has now hosted three sessions. The first was an introductory session and included over 40 participants from across Africa, India, the US, the UK, and Europe. The following two workshops have focused on supporting grantees in developing research uptake strategies. Maintaining the ambition of local ownership, an expert in research uptake from East Africa was contracted to design and lead these workshops and provide one-on-one sessions with project teams. These sessions have ensured a degree of accountability and sustainability that a one-off, in-person workshop may not have been able to achieve.

**Next steps:** For research uptake to be successful, it must involve all actors of the project, especially the practitioners. Therefore, the Fund is including an additional session focused particularly on the researcher-practitioner partnership in achieving research uptake objectives. This session will be designed with the facilitator and content expert to ensure that it is engaging and useful to the grantees.

##### **Lessons learned on VAC prevention and building the evidence base for what works**

Over the last year, the Evaluation Fund has been working to disseminate the findings of past evaluations to practitioners and decision-makers to help inform evidence-based programming and policy-making. As part of this effort, the Fund publishes [evidence briefs](#) of each study – an at-a-glance review of the key findings related to the effectiveness and impact of a VAC prevention intervention.

To-date, 14 evidence briefs have been released highlighting the key learnings of evaluations conducted in Burkina Faso, Colombia, Jordan, Uganda, South Africa, Indonesia, Burundi, Ethiopia, Dominican Republic, Albania, China, Kenya, and Rwanda.

As the Evaluation Fund approaches the end of its final funding phase, the Fund is exploring how best to package the learnings as a pooled funding mechanism focused on VAC prevention research in LMICs and the findings of this body of research. To-date, the Fund has commissioned a meta-evaluation of the studies supported to better understand what, from a research perspective, has contributed to more robust findings.

## Fair Energy Transition for All (FETA)

Foundations involved: King Baudouin Foundation (Chair), Mercator Stiftung, Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt, Fondazione Cariplo, IKEA Foundation, Schneider Electric foundation and Open Society European Policy Institute. It is implemented in collaboration with IFOK and Climate Outreach as well as with national facilitators and policy experts.

Budget 2020-22: 1,9 million €

Timeframe: 2020-22

NEF is the fiscal sponsor of FETA.

### Background:

The Fair Energy Transition for All project aims to improve the development of fair energy transition policies by providing national and EU policy-makers and stakeholders a better understanding of the perceived impact of energy transition policies on the living conditions of economically disadvantaged people. To do so, a consortium of European Foundations will organise a consultative and listening process with vulnerable people in Europe.

This project is a new addition to the NEF portfolio: it started in the spring of 2020 and will last until 2022.

The project will organise consultations and focus groups in nine European countries: Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Denmark and Romania.

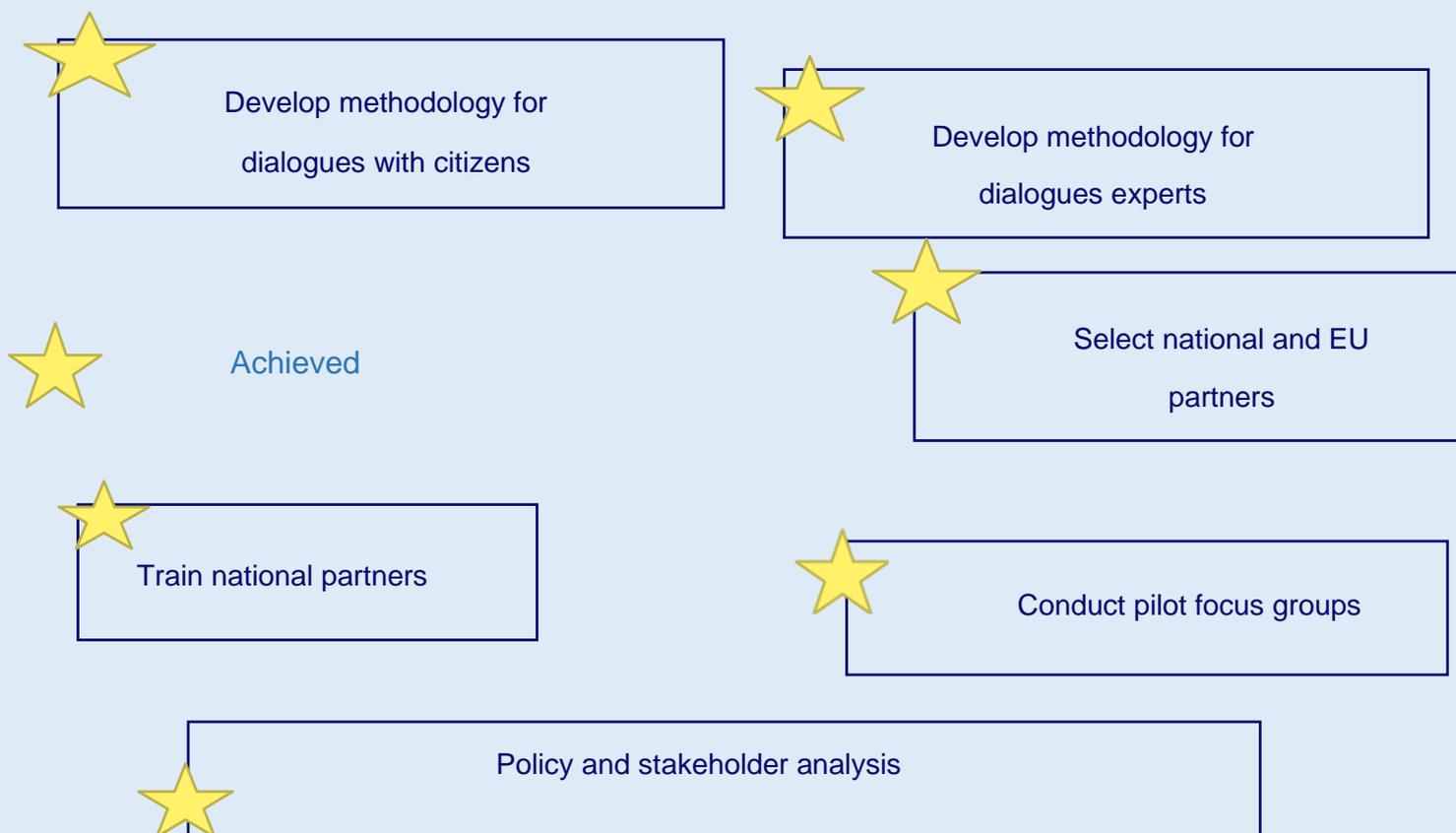
The ultimate aim of the project is balanced energy transition policies that take into account the concerns of and solutions from disadvantaged people.

### Latest Developments:

SC Members agreed to adapt the methodology to move forward given the Covid-19. The project has been put on hold for 6 months to plan for an offline version for the focus groups in the different participating countries. The focus groups should take place during May and October 2021. Hence the national expert meetings should be organised between November and December 2021, and the EU Task Force early 2022.

The Belgian Minister for Energy Tinne van der Straeten, to whom the King Baudouin Foundation presented the project, emphasised that it is important to have quality results, that talking to people takes time, and that it is not an issue to postpone by 6 months. Operational contracts have been postponed accordingly.

## A summary of 2020: Time to prepare



### Joint Action for Farmers' Organisations in West Africa (JAFOWA)

Foundations involved: Compagnia di San Paolo; Fondazione Cariplo; Fondation de France (Chair), and Fondation for a Just Society (USA).

Budget 2020: around 1 million €

Timeframe: 2016–2022

JAFOWA is a programme developed and supported by NEF.

#### Background:

JAFOWA seeks to reinforce Farmers' Organisations who work with smallholder farmers, pastoralists and fishermen, to manage good quality local food systems that benefit their families and communities in ecologically sustainable ways. It aims to support a strong and equitable farmers' movement in West Africa. This movement proposes local and regional policies, promotes ecological solutions and enables the leadership of women and youth.

JAFOWA supports farmers' organisations (FOs) through grant making and capacity development with a geographic focus on Burkina Faso and Senegal, shifting its focus on the agroecological transition in these two countries in 2018.

### Latest developments:

JAFOWA has adapted its monitoring system to the current context. The programme has identified two strong local teams with a high level of expertise in agroecology. Backstopping missions could be organised respectively in December 2020 for Burkina and in January 2021 for Senegal.

Apart from two projects in Senegal, the other 6 unfold their operations with good progress. Those 2 projects will need to start their activities and will be granted no cost extension to achieve their goals.

The missions gave a fresh impetus to the dialogue between JAFOWA and the project bearers. The consultants provided interesting recommendations to enhance the agro-ecological practices of the FOs.

JAFOWA will conduct its 1<sup>st</sup> workshop on agro-ecology later this year. Given the travel restrictions it is likely that the workshop will be held nationally. Where possible (Burkina) it could be held offline. The SC members will discuss later in March the different options and agree on the format.

In JAFOWA's capacity development toolbox, the partners can rely on small additional grants ('coups de pouce') to support their emerging needs. In March, the partners were made aware of this mechanism by which they can propose activities that will meet their knowledge needs. In April, the SC will review the proposals received.

Gender is an important stream of JAFOWA's revised strategy. JAFOWA wishes to engage the partners interested in an internal audit on their gender approach. This audit will be proposed to all JAFOWA partners: 14 FOs (from 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> calls for proposals). Following the audit, JAFOWA will provide technical and financial means to the partners to enhance their gender approach. The SC members will reflect on the design of these means with the support of the team of consultants' expert in gender that will have conducted the different audits.

The King Baudouin Foundation attended the last SC meeting. The Foundation is looking at diversifying the countries in which it operates in Africa. In Congo, the foundation supports entrepreneurship and farmers' organisations. It was envisaged as a potential entry to funding on a project basis for specific material needs (such as water access). This will be re-discussed.

## **Privatisation in Education and Human Rights Consortium**

<u>Foundations involved:</u>	OSF, Wellspring
<u>Budget 2019-2020:</u>	300.000 \$
<u>Timeframe:</u>	January 2019- Dec 2020

NEF is the fiscal sponsor of the PEHCR.

### Background:

Since 2014, a group of over 100 organisations from all parts of the world have been working together as part of an informal arrangement, the Privatisation in Education and Human Rights Consortium (PEHRC). In the current climate of increasing privatisation in education, the Consortium emerged from the need to strengthen joint and international collaboration to respond to challenges that may arise from the rapid growth of private actors in education and to raise the issue's profile as a human rights concern.

PEHRC aims to increase the collective impact of our organisations' work, through strategic coordination of advocacy activities, to enable civil society organisations to monitor and where necessary, address the impact of the growing privatisation in education more effectively, and to reorient attention to the support and improvement of quality, accountable, public education systems that deliver on the right to education.

The Consortium provides practical support to collaborative work and to strengthening collaborations over the short and mid-term.

Specific objectives:

- To build a stronger, citizen-led movement critical of privatisation in education.
- To implement the Human Rights Guiding Principles on States' obligations and the role of private actors in education (Working Group on Guiding Principles).
- To define solutions: to develop a strong alternative (counter) narrative and to propose a viable alternative (Working Group on Positive Evidence-Alternatives).

- To take action to address key issues at national and international levels.

#### Latest developments:

PEHRC's Google Group remains active with members regularly sharing updates and identifying synergies. The Consortium holds bi-monthly global calls for all members to join as well as needs-based/interest groups on specific subjects that members want to strategise on (e.g. the Abidjan Principles, building an alternative narrative, the World Bank Spring Meetings, amongst others.)The coordinator shares a monthly newsletter where all of the updates shared via the Google Group by members, as well as upcoming events, proposals/calls, webinars, etc. are shared with members as well as an update on joint activities, as well as a bi-weekly briefing, which shares the latest news in privatisation and education which the Consortium monitors weekly in the news.

The coordinator, with input from members, has been compiling a document that captures Covid-19 responses globally. This has led to the development of an extensive database for general education and privatisation monitoring, Abidjan Principles monitoring, positive examples of the monitoring of public systems as well as litigation monitoring, a shared calendar, and an actor-system mapping.

The monitoring of Covid-19 responses in education has been used to pull together a blog which was published on the GEM website and translated into French and Spanish.

The Alternatives and Counter-Narrative needs-based group hired a consultant to conduct a case study research of positive public education systems, which was completed in October 2020. The group now has a determined set of co-publishers who are moving these cases towards publication, and for dissemination at events and through advocacy materials.

PEHRC is in the development stages of a website, which is currently being developed by a website steering committee, and one of PEHRC's Fellows.

The initiative has recruited two Fellows to support the Coordinator, who have been instrumental in keeping up the monitoring activities for the Group.

A set of five virtual meetings took place in November-December 2020, where the Consortium reviewed its strategy, and provided a space for sharing, and mapping and planning for the year ahead. The meetings were attended by up to 100 participants from over 25 different countries, and a range of regions. One of the sessions was opened to partners beyond the network and was interpreted into French and Spanish. Numerous activities suggested by members during the meetings are now being moved forward, facilitated by the Coordinator, such as a new communication platform to engage with members regularly, bi-monthly learning webinars, the formation of sub-groups with academics and youth, to mention a few.

## **Transnational Forum on Integrated Community Care (TransForm)**

Foundations involved: King Baudouin Foundation (Chair); Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo; Fondation de France; Graham Boeckh Foundation; Robert Bosch Stiftung; Fund Danielle De Coninck (managed by King Baudouin Foundation), Conconi Foundation, St. Paul's Foundation

Budget 2017- 2021: 670.000 €

Timeframe: 2017-2021

Transform is a programme developed and supported by NEF.

#### Background:

TransForm is a joint initiative of Foundations in Europe and Canada that aims to put the community at the centre of primary and integrated care. Integrated Community Care recognizes people and communities as co-producers

of care. It seeks to examine how partnerships that engage and empower people in local communities can be developed through trans-disciplinary and cross-sectoral collaborations.

The overarching aim of the Forum is to mobilise change at policy and practice level by engaging policymakers, practitioners and key stakeholders in knowledge generation and sharing of promising and best practices.

A series of transnational conferences on ICC and site visits form the backbone of the project. IFIC, the content partner, support the Forum through research and networking. Three transnational conferences took place in Hamburg, Turin and Vancouver and created a crescendo of learning on ICC as well as a community of practice.

#### Latest developments:

##### **Call for Proposals: Changemakers Forum on Integrated Community Care**

On March 8, TransForm launched a new call for proposals that seeks to identify and value socially innovative initiatives from across Europe and Canada that support the capacity of local communities to deal with public health issues and the care needs of people throughout their lifetime. By creating and supporting a [Changemakers Forum](#), TransForm seeks to maintain the impetus towards driving progress and innovation in integrated community care.

Fifteen selected initiatives from across Europe and Canada will be invited to join a Changemakers Forum that will guide and support the TransForm coalition and its partners in identifying priorities and activities to advance to the field of integrated community care. This forum will serve as an international advisory group and learning community that will connect participants with stakeholders across Europe and Canada, and will be supported through workshops designed by and tailored to the interests, priorities and needs of participants.

##### **Covid-19 & ICC: a future-robust strategy**

Following two expert workshops held in November, consultants from ShiftN helped TransForm and its partners to build the contours of a future-robust strategy for ICC in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic through the development of an [Insights Paper](#). While Covid-19 has exposed the fragility of our care systems and heightened inequalities within our society, it has also provided an opportunity for integrated community care initiatives to fill the gaps where institutionalised responses could not. Moreover, the pandemic has confirmed that community health and resilience, anchored in efficacious and accessible primary care, must remain a priority.

##### **Approaches to ICC: latest publications**

Beginning in late 2020, TransForm has worked to develop a series of papers focused on 6 different approaches to ICC: Kinder Communities, Vibrant Communities, Asset-based Communities, Compassionate Communities, Caring Communities, and Community Health Centres. In early 2021, the [Kinder Communities](#) approach has been published.

In addition to the publications mentioned above, the [ICC4All Strategy](#) has now been translated and published in Italian, French, Dutch, and Spanish.

##### **Looking towards a next phase**

TransForm is approaching the end of its first phase in June 2021 and is looking towards a second phase. Partner Foundations are currently discussing parameters, strategy, and budget for a second phase, and are also working on an outreach plan to expand the partnership beyond its existing members.

At the NEF level, Giulia Barnhisel has taken over with great stewardship the programme management of TransForm since the beginning of January 2021, also working half time for the Evaluation Challenge Fund.