



# CONTRIBUTING TO THE HEALTHY FUTURE IN THE EECA REGION

ANNUAL REPORT 2021  
AFEW INTERNATIONAL

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>AFEW INTERNATIONAL IN 2021</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>OUR PROGRAMMES</b>	<b>6</b>
“YOUNG, WILD AND FREE” - THE FLEXIBLE FUND	6
EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUND FOR KEY POPULATIONS IN EECA REGION (ESF)	9
EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT OF HIV PREVENTION SERVICES IN UZBEKISTAN	11
HEALTH FOR KEY POPULATIONS	13
EU COVID-19 SOLIDARITY PROGRAMME FOR THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES	16
CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM ON DRUGS (CSFD)	18
TOGETHER AGAINST TUBERCULOSIS	19
COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT TO SRHR AND THE SOCIAL WELLBEING OF VULNERABLE ADOLESCENTS	20
VIRTUAL WORKSHOP FOR EECA INTERACT 2021	21
WORLD AIDS DAY 2021. END INEQUALITIES	22
<b>ON THE 2022 AGENDA</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>OVERVIEW OF THE ONGOING PROJECTS OF AFEW INTERNATIONAL IN 2022</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>AFEW INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISORY BOARD</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>AFEW INTERNATIONAL STAFF IN 2021 AND 2022</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>FINANCIAL RESULTS</b>	<b>27</b>



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# PREFACE

AFEW International produced this report during sad and difficult times for the region. The war in Ukraine has changed life for all Ukrainians, including underserved populations, and the country is experiencing a humanitarian disaster. Much of what has been achieved in recent decades in terms of access to HIV prevention and care services and harm reduction are now under extreme risk in the occupied territories. Supplies of medicines, food and water in cities are running dangerously short. And, it is likely that mortality from HIV, tuberculosis, multi-drug resistant tuberculosis and Covid-19 will increase in Ukraine, and rebuilding various systems will take a long time requiring significant resources.

Ukraine has the second largest population of people living with HIV and number of people with tuberculosis and drug-resistant tuberculosis in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. An estimated 250 000 people (nearly 1% of the country's population, about half of whom are women) are currently living with HIV in Ukraine. With hostilities occurring across the country, many vulnerable groups – that is, young women, children living with HIV, people who use drugs, gay, lesbian and transgender people, sex workers and people recently released from prison – face urgent needs for their daily lives and in accessing essential health, psychological and social support services.

Civil society organisations are displaying heroic efforts together with the national public system to deliver vital medical supplies and HIV services to people living with and affected by HIV. In addition, they are reaching people under extraordinarily challenging situations despite enormous obstacles. The civil society organisations upon which such delivery and care systems strongly depend need further international support in order to continue their work.

AFEW International and its partner organisations have placed solidarity with and support to Ukraine as their top priority. The AFEW Network is also preparing itself for a health crisis that, as a direct and indirect consequence of the war, will affect Ukraine, as well as the entire broader Eastern European and Central Asian region in the coming years.



*Health systems and facilities must be protected, functional, safe and accessible to all those who need essential medical services, and health workers must be protected.*

*Health must be a priority in the humanitarian response to this war. If not, we are at severe risk of losing the fight in Eastern Europe against the world's other pandemic, HIV, against the world's second leading infectious disease killer, tuberculosis, and of losing control of Covid-19.*

**Michel Kazatchkine,**  
Chair of the AFEW International Supervisory Board



The year 2021 was a transition year for AFEW International. After our flagship project, 'Bridging the Gaps', ended in December 2020, we needed to reassess our options.

In doing so, we defined the following priority themes:



AFEW International's role as a global and regional advocate for public health in the region free of stigma and discrimination.



Exploring hybrid organisational models (donor funding combined with activities to generate income) and social enterprising in order to generate revenue for civil society organisations.



Digitalisation, specifically the need to improve digital structures and skills among local partners.



AFEW International's role as a facilitator of change and advocate for legal and social justice in the broader Eastern Europe and Central Asia region, empowering communities to voice their needs, participate and make decisions for themselves

In 2021, we placed our priorities on organisational change, a renewed visibility and fundraising including alternative forms of revenue. AFEW International updated and developed its donor overviews, context analyses, background papers and fundraising materials to support the functioning of the AFEW Partnership.



Of course, we continued working on our programmes.

In 2021 we finalised the 'Young, Wild and Free...' programme, the Flexible Fund and the Emergency Support Fund for Key Populations in the Eastern European and Central Asian region.

We also launched the projects 'Expansion and improvement of HIV prevention services in Uzbekistan' financed by the Elton John AIDS Foundation and the 'Health for key populations' project, a joint project with the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum supported by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In addition, we continued the implementation of the 'EU Covid-19 solidarity programme in the Eastern partnership countries' with financial support from the European Union through a consortium with People in Need and the Netherlands Helsinki Committee.

We have also contributed to the 'Civil society forum on drugs' and 'Comprehensive support to sexual and reproductive health and rights and social wellbeing of vulnerable adolescents' projects, both supported by the European Commission.

At the end of 2021, together with AFEW-Kyrgyzstan and KNCV-Kyrgyzstan, we have also co-organised an institutional capacity-building workshop for tuberculosis control services and private healthcare providers in Kyrgyzstan.

In November 2021, we organised the second scientific workshop on HIV, hepatitis C and tuberculosis in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, EECA INTERACT 2021, which took place virtually.

This year in 2022, AFEW International will present a new organisational strategy, an opportunity for the organisation to refocus its efforts on supporting the wider needs and rights of underserved populations across Eastern Europe and Central Asia. AFEW International will continue to adopt a flexible, agile and responsive 36-month strategy anchored in a longer-term vision and a set of strategic objectives. Through this strategy, we aim to make important contributions to both the short- and longer-term public health and other needs of the communities we serve.



**Yuliya van Polanen,**  
Director  
of AFEW  
International



**Michel Kazatchkine,**  
the Special Advisor  
to the Joint United  
Nations Program  
on AIDS (UNAIDS)  
in Eastern Europe  
and Central Asia,  
Chairman of the AFEW  
Supervisory Board

# AFEW INTERNATIONAL IN 2021

AFEW International works for all those people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia who face barriers to accessing health, justice and social participation. We place a priority on those groups who are more at-risk, underserved, experience greater stigma and face more severe barriers.

From a nongovernmental, humanitarian and rights-based perspective, AFEW International promotes health and advocates for increased access to prevention, treatment and care for major public health concerns such as HIV, tuberculosis, Covid-19, viral hepatitis and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

As of 2019, AFEW has become a partnership of independent local organisations working in the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Currently, the AFEW Partnership consists of five members operating in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Netherlands, Russia and Ukraine, with AFEW International in the Netherlands serving as the secretariat of the partnership.

The AFEW Partnership works with and for 'key populations' — individuals and communities who encounter disproportionate burdens of HIV risk and disease and lack access to essential HIV services (including, but not limited to, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people (LGBTIQ), men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, sex workers, people living with HIV, (ex)prisoners, (labour) migrants, vulnerable youth and adolescents).



We:



**Advocate** for the human rights of key populations and for upholding their rights to health.



**Engage** communities in developing participatory approaches.



**Counter** stigma associated with HIV, hepatitis and tuberculosis by providing information to community leaders and creating a supportive environment.



**Develop** and support health services for key populations.



**Utilize** innovative strategies to promote healthy behaviours.



**Present** the Eastern European and Central Asian public health and rights context at the international level – via and to international fora, networks and experts



**Link** East and West and facilitate dialogue between governments, civil society, scientists and healthcare providers at the regional and country levels.





## IN 2021 WE HAVE FINALISED:

### “YOUNG, WILD AND FREE...”- THE FLEXIBLE FUND

In 2021, we marked the last year of the implementation of the **“Young, Wild and Free...”- the Flexible Fund** project, financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This project, originally planned to run from September 2019 until July 2021, was extended until September 2021 given the Covid-19 pandemic. In June 2021, AFEW–Russia and AFEW–Ukraine were invited to submit proposals and supported with additional funding for activities, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the project results achieved, which were implemented in July through September 2021.

Learning from and building upon the good practices from the ‘Bridging the Gaps’ programme, this project addressed the specific needs of young key population members and the barriers they experience in accessing sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV and harm reduction services through tailored approaches. AFEW International and its local partners were responsible for the scale up of good practices in reaching and engaging young people in Russia and Ukraine.

The project fostered new partnerships and demonstrated the added value of investing directly in tailor-made community-based initiatives on HIV testing and outreach for all partners.



#### Project activities in 2021

- Community-based participatory research in three Russian regions, which was key to engaging with the community and creating trust with young men who have sex with men, in order to document and respond to their needs and challenges.
- Research and new interventions for young people under 18 to prevent risky sexual and drug use behaviours in schools, colleges and technical schools in four towns in Russia.
- Offline exchange of best practices between AFEW–Ukraine and nongovernmental organisations from Russia on organising work with young people who use drugs.
- Capacity building and the engagement of young people via social towards the promotion of sexual and reproductive rights and health and human rights in Ukraine.
- Distribution of small grants to support communities of young key populations throughout Russia.

#### Project results:

By the end of the project, the partners demonstrated an increased understanding of and readiness to continue working with young people.

- Russian partners delivered 18 lectures to 507 students between December 2020 and April 2021, and produced new educational media and information tailored to young adults.
- Partners have better insight into and an understanding of young men who have sex with men’s needs through focus groups and online and offline questionnaires, complemented by the findings of youth-led participatory research.
- Organisations that provide support, services and guidance specific to young men who have sex with men’s needs have gained the trust of this hard-to-reach group.





Based on years of experience in HIV prevention among at-risk teen groups, the AFEW-Ukraine team has created a set of informative images about HIV prevention and treatment, contraception and safe relationships as well as on preventing drug use. These images should help professionals when working with teenagers via social media.

**ВІЛ НЕ передається через:**

The infographic consists of a central green box with a purple circle on the left. At the top, a white banner contains the text "ВІЛ НЕ передається через:". Below this, six circular icons are arranged in two rows of three. Each icon is accompanied by a label in Ukrainian. The first row shows: 1. Two children playing with toys (дотики). 2. A man and a woman kissing (поцілунки). 3. A bathroom with a sink and toilet (туалет). The second row shows: 4. People swimming in a pool (басейн). 5. Hands holding a coffee cup (побутові речі). 6. A dog lying on the floor with a mosquito above it (комахи і тварин).

**дотики**      **поцілунки**      **туалет**

**басейн**      **побутові речі**      **комахи і тварин**

Capacity building of and engagement with young people in the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights and human rights via social media in Ukraine



**Ekateryna Artemenko,**

*Project Manager, FOCUS MEDIA Foundation, Participant of the exchange programme between AFEW-Russia, «FOCUS MEDIA», the Coalition «Outreach» and Ukrainian nongovernmental organisations (July 2021)*

*For me, HIV service organisations in Ukraine have almost always been a reference point for organising work. Thus, in 2021, I felt lucky to take part in a study tour to Ukraine. No guides, manuals or online conferences can ever replace live communication! After all, the opportunity to plunge into the atmosphere and to personally ask questions of colleagues – that is the key to the emergence of new ideas.*



**Read more**

Under the ‘Young, Wild and Free...’ project, AFEW–Russia researched risky behaviour among secondary school teenagers in the Nizhny Novgorod region as well as among young patients at the drug use rehabilitation centre there.



**Irina Zarubina**  
(AFEW-Russia)

“We were surprised by a couple of interesting observations. First of all, students and patients of the rehabilitation centre mostly do not differ from each other in terms of sociodemographic characteristics. For example, they have a complete family (mom and dad) and go to school. This suggests that, despite an existing stereotype, a complete family is not protective against the development of risky behaviours.

And, second, one-third of teenage students have a low self-esteem and perceive themselves negatively in one way or another. They feel like failures, think they have nothing to be proud of and that they are useless. In addition, one-third of the students who responded feel like outsiders among others and this “strangeness” is the reason for their negative self-attitudes. These findings require special attention since low self-esteem and “strangeness” can influence the development of risky behaviours among teenagers”.

[Watch video](#)



[Change story](#)



[A participatory youth-led research on the needs of young key populations](#)



# EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUND FOR KEY POPULATIONS IN THE EASTERN EUROPEAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN REGION (ESF)

In 2021, the Emergency Support Fund (ESF), led by AFEW International and Aidsfonds, was finalised. Since 2018 with support from the Elton John AIDS Foundation, ESF aimed to achieve a comprehensive response to emergencies threatening HIV service provision for key populations in the Eastern European and Central Asian region and supported activities ranging from advocacy and prevention to treatment and care for HIV and related co-infections.

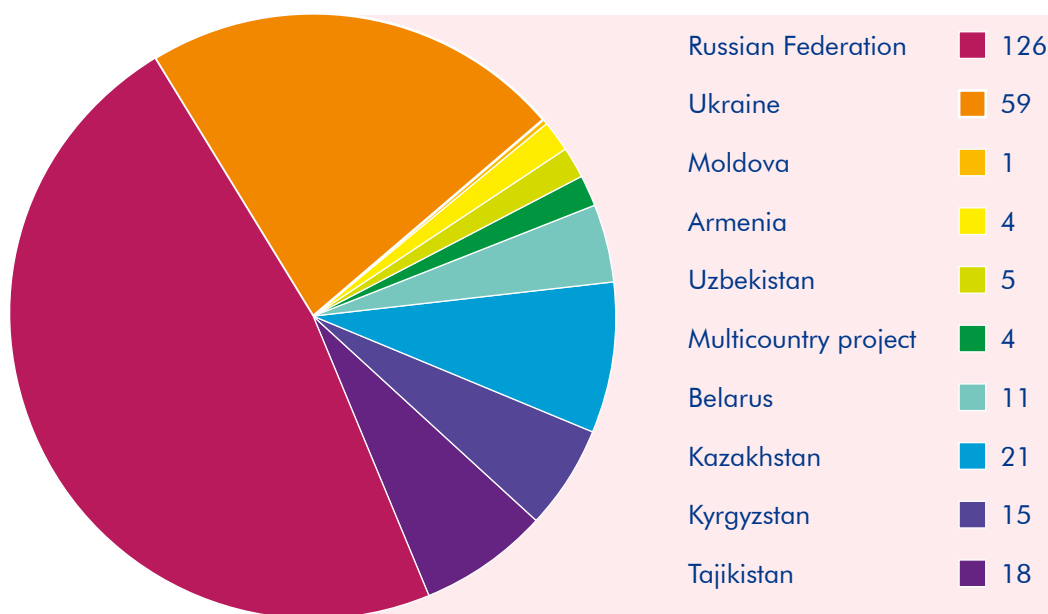
## Project activities in 2021:

In 2021, ESF received 161 applications, 77 of which were funded. Grant making ran until September 2021, accompanied by a comprehensive impact assessment study, which provided valuable insights into the programme's successes and lessons learnt.

## Project results:

During its three years of operation, ESF received more than 600 applications. In total, 230 projects from 10 countries in the region — Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan — were funded.

This support mechanism helped many organisations to overcome funding gaps, ensuring the continuity of services in emergency situations, particularly in countries where the space for civil society initiatives continues to shrink due to local legislative changes.



**161** received

**77** funded

**84** rejected



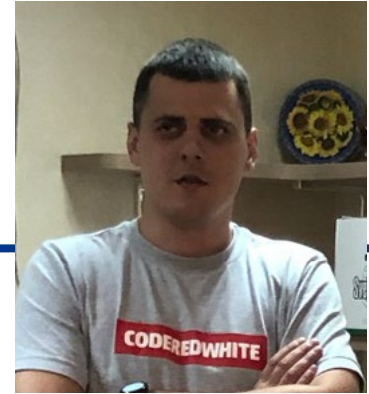
**Olga Gorbatyuk**

*Director of the All-Ukrainian Charity Foundation "DROP-IN-CENTER", Ukraine*

*"We are grateful to the [Emergency Support] Fund for helping us during a difficult situation and for allowing us to continue the work of DROP-IN-CENTER in the absence of regular funding. We were not only able to maintain the organisational capacity, but to also continue the activities of DROP-IN-CENTER in the interests of the key populations we serve.*

*Thanks to meetings of the initiative's group of social workers, we ensured regular monitoring and analysis of the current situation on harm reduction and the implementation of prevention programmes in Kyiv. We also conducted a series of training events on fundraising, during which our team members acquired new knowledge and skills in writing and submitting project applications, as well as becoming better able to translate the ideas they developed into practical social initiatives and projects".*

**Read more** 



**Egor Sekretov**

*manager of the STEP Charity Foundation, Russia*

*"The project, through the provision of emergency support, became the basis of the "Commitment" project, which received support from the Presidential Grants Fund (application No. 21-1-002469) in February 2021. That support boosted the project, with lectures on prevention and informational activities provided by doctors, psychologists, peer consultants and social workers. The project budget was increased by more than 100%. Based on our estimates, the provision of formula and humanitarian packages will continue until May 2021 using the scheme developed under the project supported by the Emergency Support Fund".*

**Read more** 



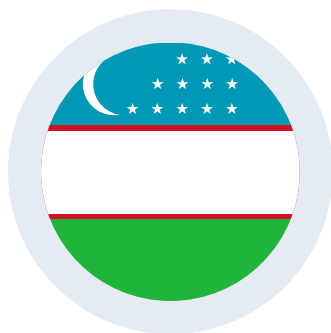


## IN 2021 WE LAUNCHED:

### EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT OF HIV PREVENTION SERVICES IN UZBEKISTAN

In May 2021, AFEW International together with the local partner nongovernmental organisation 'ISHONCH VA HAYOT' (a community-based membership-based nongovernmental organisation that unites key populations) launched a two-year project, 'Expansion and Improvement of HIV Services in Uzbekistan', with support from the Elton John AIDS Foundation. This project addresses existing gaps in key populations'

access to testing and relevant HIV services in Tashkent and aims to test over 8000 people belonging to various key populations including sex workers, people who use drugs and men who have sex with men. In addition, this project seeks to connect those who test positive for HIV to antiretroviral treatment services provided by the AIDS centre as well as identify and reconnect with patients previously lost to treatment



#### Project activities and results in 2021

Trained 16 outreach workers on assisted self-testing and HIV prevention information (28–30 September)

Supported the social centre in Tashkent to provide psychosocial and legal services and ensure adherence to antiretroviral treatment among key populations

Launched assisted self-testing for key populations in Tashkent city and connected identified HIV-positive people to the AIDS centre (beginning in mid-October)

Strengthened the interactions with AIDS centre nurses to improve treatment adherence

Launched collaboration between the AIDS centre and outreach workers on reconnecting with patients lost to treatment (i.e., those who tested positive for HIV and previously registered with the AIDS centre, but who did not return for a check-up and antiretroviral treatment).

[Read more](#) 



**Female, 28 years old, sex worker in Tashkent**

*“Right after I finished school, my family arranged for me to be married and I gave birth to a child, but the relationship with my husband did not go well and we divorced. Unfortunately, I had no profession, so I finished hairdresser classes. At some point, I got into an accident and damaged my hand, and I could no longer work as a hairdresser.*

*“Ishonch va Hayot” outreach workers became acquainted with me when I was working on the highway. They explained HIV to me, about how the virus is transmitted, about tuberculosis and also about how to use condoms. However, I refused to go for HIV testing.*

*Later on, after multiple chats with outreach workers, I agreed to go for an HIV test under the condition that I would not go to the AIDS centre or any testing place. They completed the testing on-site right there, and the result, unfortunately, was positive. To say that I was shocked is too mild. I could not accept my diagnosis for a long time. However, after some time and multiple peer-to-peer consultations, I agreed to register at the AIDS centre for treatment and further support.*

*Today, I actively participate in the HIV testing project. I became an “Ishonch va Hayot” volunteer, and I consult with sex workers on the highway now. I do not want other girls to find themselves in the same situation I was in”.*



UZBEKISTAN







# HEALTH FOR KEY POPULATIONS

In September 2021, the **EU–Russia Civil Society Forum** and AFEW International launched a five-month project to strengthen the capacity of Russian civil society organisations involved in supporting key populations in the context of HIV (people living with

HIV, women living with HIV, youth and adolescents living with HIV, LGBTI and men who have sex with men and people who use drugs). This project also provided support for collaboration and the exchange of best practices.



Four projects from Kemerovo, Omsk, St. Petersburg and Voronezh were supported with small grants of up to **4500 €**

AFEW International held two virtual training seminars and organised one face-to-face meeting in Moscow for four Russian nongovernmental organisations, which were selected as recipients of the open call for grants.

The overall purpose of the two trainings and the face-to-face meeting was skills-building and preparing activists for the implementation of their small-scale projects during the second half of 2021. In addition, the trainings granted them the best possible support and the opportunity to establish an engaged group ready for the new challenges of addressing public health issues in their regions.



On 15 December, **AFEW Russia** co-facilitated a meeting for small grants recipients of the **'Health for Key Populations'** call for proposals.



[Read more](#)

[Learn more](#)

**Project results:**

This short project provided a unique opportunity to prepare four Russian community-based organisations to implement their small projects and offer their services in the Covid-19 context.



These actions offered skills-building and mentoring as well as provided the skills and tools necessary for effective promotion and fundraising, and helped to ensuring the sustainability of organisations beyond the end of the project.



**Skills-building, empowerment and practical support of participating Russian nongovernmental organisations working with key vulnerable populations will allow them to better serve these populations and re-energise the public health nongovernmental organisation community in the Covid-19 recovery context**

Four Russian nongovernmental organisations received new skills and empowerment training to allow them to better serve key populations and re-energise the public health nongovernmental organisation community in the Covid-19 recovery context. These organisations are now linked to one another, ensuring a stronger civil society working towards improving HIV prevention, treatment and care.

**Natalia Korzhova,**

Manager at the centre for the facilitation of social disease prevention 'You Are Not Alone', Voronezh, Russia

*"All members of our team participated in the trainings and webinars, and acquired new work tools. We also gained experience in working together with representatives of the Civil Chamber of Russian Federation, and provided our contribution towards addressing stigma and discrimination that HIV-positive people often face, coming from the general population and medical workers of the Voronezh region".*



Photo - Alisa Ermakova



# OUR PROGRAMMES



## IN 2021 WE CONTINUED:



### EU COVID-19 SOLIDARITY PROGRAMME FOR THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES

The “EU Covid-19 Solidarity Programme in the Eastern Partnership countries” was launched in July 2020 with financial support from the European Union and in partnership with People in Need (PIN) and the Netherlands Helsinki Committee. Project activities took place in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

In 2021, we continued providing a comprehensive response to emergencies threatening key populations in the aftermath of Covid-19. Small grants were awarded to community-based organisations working with vulnerable groups through a range of activities, from advocacy and prevention to treatment and care related to the implications of Covid-19. AFEW International together with consortium partners responded to arising and anticipated post-pandemic challenges.

#### Project activities in 2021:

In April 2021, AFEW International launched a second call for proposals from community-based organisations. Small grants of up to €3500 were awarded for immediate material needs arising from Covid-19-related measures. From 61 proposals received, 10 projects received funding, amongst which 5 were from Ukraine, 2 from Georgia, 2 from Armenia and 1 from Moldova. We prioritised activities that were not (easily) fundable through other means and focused on providing support to smaller community-based organisations.

Throughout 2021, we continued sharing biweekly and quarterly updates on Covid-19 developments in the region. We kept track of the number of coronavirus cases per population since the beginning of the pandemic (22 January 2020). We also shared statistics about vaccination campaigns in these countries and provided useful resources on relevant, related topics.

Throughout 2021 we continued sharing bi-weekly and quarterly updates on the Covid-19 developments in the region. We were keeping track on the number of coronavirus cases per population ratio since the start of the pandemic (January 22, 2020). We were also sharing statistics about vaccination in these countries and useful reads on relevant topics.

 [Read more](#)



 [Learn more](#)

**Project results:**

- Since the start of the project, we have received more than 115 applications from community-based organisations. By allocating 19 grants to civil society organisations, *AFEW International* ensured that organisations could act in a timely manner and effectively to address the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, we ensured those organisations had the capacity to effectively respond to the short- and medium-term needs in and to influence longer-term policy reforms in order to support vulnerable groups and those disproportionately affected by the pandemic.



**Olga Stoyanova,**  
Project Coordinator, “Alternative” (Odesa, Ukraine)

“The project ‘Prevention of Antiretroviral Interruption in the Context of the Covid-19 Pandemic’ aimed to provide people living with HIV in the Odesa region with uninterrupted treatment. By doing so, we also aimed to maintain a high commitment to antiretroviral therapy. Under the framework of this project, our social workers mailed packages with treatment to all locations in the Odesa region. Additionally, the addressees received personal protective equipment: a medical mask and hand sanitiser. Thus, achieving both a high adherence to HIV treatment and preventing Covid-19 were both possible. In total, our project activities reached out to more than 2000 individuals”.

[Read more](#)



**Beka Gabadadze,**  
Advocacy and fundraising team, Queer Association - TEMIDA (Tbilisi, Georgia)

“During critical moments, when the country was in lockdown and people lost all sources of income, our team helped 100 LGBTIQ sex workers left without an income. We provided them with food and internet vouchers.

With the help of a community mobiliser and a social worker, we developed an application form for food and internet vouchers, and defined the criteria by which beneficiaries were selected. We selected recipients based on the following criteria: homelessness, unemployment and a lack of savings, amongst others. The application form was distributed to the LGBT sex worker community via dating apps (Grindr, Hornet, etc.), via Temida’s Instagram and Facebook pages as well as via dating websites.

Additionally, with the support of other donors, we began providing psychological services to beneficiaries through online sessions. The internet vouchers provided through this project ensured our clients could access individual and group sessions with two psychologists via Zoom, which helped trans and LGBT sex workers to improve their mental health”.

[Read more](#)



# OUR PROGRAMMES ▶▶▶

## IN 2021 WE CONTRIBUTED TO:

### CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM ON DRUGS (CSFD)

The Civil Society Forum on Drugs (CSFD) is an expert group in the European Commission created in 2007, based on a Commission green paper on the role of civil society in drugs policy in the EU. Since 2020, CSFD members and other civil society organisations active in the field of drugs policy and practice have been implementing a project focused on enhancing the quality and impact of their work as an expert group within the European Commission. This includes:

▶ A structured dialogue with the European Commission and other relevant international, European and national drugs policy institutions and civil society organisations in the field of drugs policy.

▶ Supporting the formulation and implementation of drugs policy through research activities and capacity building

The role of *AFEW International* within CSFD in 2020–2021 focused on contributing to the following activities:

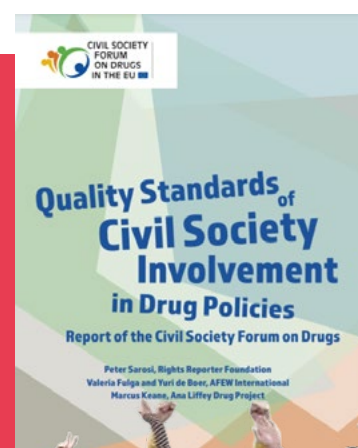
▶ Development of quality standards for meaningful civil society involvement in drugs policy formulation at the national level

[Read the Report](#) ▶

▶ Development of national civil society networking structures to improve the linkage between European and national civil society organisations;

▶ Strengthening the advocacy capacities of national civil society organisations through facilitation of an advocacy training event.

In November 2021, project partners organised a two-day workshop in Madrid for 40 civil society representatives from Europe. Since advocacy is an important tool allowing civil society members to achieve their primary goal of influencing public policies, this training workshop brought together representatives from civil society organisations working in the field of drugs in order to improve their capacity to formulate, implement and evaluate advocacy actions. Magdalena Dębowska (advocate and strategy expert) and Valeria Fulga (AFEW International) participated in the workshop through the presentation, ‘How to advocate for reform in difficult environments — responding to a shrinking civil society space’.



## TOGETHER AGAINST TUBERCULOSIS

In October 2021, AFEW International, AFEW-Kyrgyzstan and KNCV-Kyrgyzstan co-organised an institutional capacity-building workshop for tuberculosis control services and private healthcare providers in Kyrgyzstan. A total of 30 participants attended the workshop, including participants from the Ministry of Health of Kyrgyzstan, representatives from private healthcare providers, physicians from the national tuberculosis programme, representatives from nongovernmental organisations and international experts.

This project, financed by the TB Reach Wave 8 initiative of the 'Stop TB' Partnership/United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), aimed to increase the number of tuberculosis cases detected with the help of private medical healthcare providers. The workshop's goal was to explore experiences from different countries specifically related to engaging private healthcare providers in tuberculosis project implementation, in the public-private mix (PPM), analysing the pros and cons of such projects, providing recommendations and promoting PPM in Kyrgyzstan.

International experts virtually and in-person shared their country experiences with PPM. For example, an expert from Pakistan explained all of the steps involved in implemented PPM for tuberculosis projects in his country. He explained that in spite of numerous challenges only 5% of private facilities are involved in PPM, although they report around 20–25% of all tuberculosis cases.

[Read more](#)



# COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS AND THE SOCIAL WELLBEING OF VULNERABLE ADOLESCENTS

The goal of this project coordinated by public health and social development foundation 'FOCUS MEDIA' in Russia is to strengthen the organisational, methodological and advocacy capacity of nine nongovernmental organisations to provide comprehensive support for the sexual and reproductive health and rights and social wellbeing of vulnerable adolescents in the Nizhny Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don and Yekaterinburg regions of Russia.

The role of AFEW International was to provide support on implementing community-based participatory research methodology as well as to share knowledge on international monitoring and evaluation standards. In addition, AFEW International introduced how to incorporate change story formats and standards into organisations' work and reporting.



In July 2021, AFEW International contributed to the training of representatives from nine nongovernmental organizations. This training focused on exchanging intermediate results from projects and building the fundraising, communication and monitoring and evaluation capacity of participants.

Between October and December, additional support was provided to project subgrantees by an AFEW International consultant through one-on-one meetings, both online and in-person (during a site visit to Yekaterinburg). These consultations took place during the stage of their narrative reporting, which integrated the change story format and additional aspects of project reporting.

 [Read more](#)

01.2020 – 12.2022

## ПРОГРАММА ПОДДЕРЖКИ УЯЗВИМОЙ МОЛОДЁЖИ

Поддержка и развитие НКО, работающих с уязвимой молодёжью






# VIRTUAL WORKSHOP FOR EECA INTERACT 2021

In November 2021, together with the Amsterdam Institute of Global Health and Development, AFEW International organised the second scientific workshop on HIV, hepatitis C and tuberculosis in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, EECA INTERACT 2021. Due to the continuing restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic, this workshop was held virtually.

In total, 128 representatives of governmental organisations, foundations, research institutes and universities as well as journalists attended the event.

The virtual workshop consisted of three one-hour panels focusing on:

-  The integration of HIV, tuberculosis and overdose prevention services.
-  Surveillance, focused on data collection, validation and analysis.
-  The impact of Covid-19 on services.



 [Read more](#)

The EECA Interact 2021 live virtual event served as a preliminary workshop to the 2022 symposium, which we hope will take place as a face-to-face event in Riga, Latvia, on 9 and 10 November 2022.





## WORLD AIDS DAY 2021. END INEQUALITIES



**Olga Kuzmicheva,**  
Director of the STEP Charity Foundation, Nizhny  
Novgorod, Russia

*"I remember, during the birth of my first child, the nurse got spots of my blood [on her]. I remember her shouting, "You are going to infect us all!" I remember side glances and outright insults, phrases like, "Why did you give birth to him? He's got the virus?!", and their desire to get rid of me and my baby as soon as possible. Despite the fact that my baby was healthy, given my inexperience and mere ignorance, I believed the doctors. Unfortunately, back in 2000, the stigma around people living with HIV was extremely high.*

*I remember how in 2012 I was travelling by train and my leg became extremely swollen – a needle broke and got stuck in my heel. It was painful, but I still got on the train, and the pain just became worse and worse. After arriving, I barely made it to the first aid room. They took an x-ray and scheduled me for urgent surgery. But, once the doctors learnt about my status, they kicked me out. In a semi-delirious state, I was able to find another hospital, and two other doctors rejected me. Just one doctor was brave enough to perform the operation, but they asked me to leave the hospital right after it without allowing me any time to recover.*

[Read more](#)



**Egor Gor,**  
transgender

*"I was studying psychology and at the same time I was in the process of my transgender transition. I studied well, and I was respected in my group at university. My decision to pursue a second degree, a Master's degree in psychology, at the age of 35 was a conscious decision. By that time I was already running support groups for transgender people, consulting as a peer and learning from my mentor – a well-known transgender specialist.*

*One day, when I was choosing my dissertation topic, the deputy dean suddenly found out that my work was related to transgenderism and practically declared war on me. At first, she disagreed with the topic, directed transphobic rhetoric towards me, saying, "They are all alcoholics and die", amongst other things.*

*Then, she found out that I was going to change my IDs myself before graduation. One day, when I came to sit an exam, I found out that I wasn't allowed to take it. Why?! All of my credits were completed, my coursework was written and I had no outstanding fees. The reason stunned me: "We cannot allow you to take an exam. You promised to change your documents by March, but have not yet changed them." I really had not changed them, because changing documents was a very complicated process at that time, not entirely dependent upon me, but depending partially on the Registry Office, and there was absolutely nothing I could do".*

[Read more](#)

# ON THE 2022 AGENDA ▶▶▶

In 2021, AFEW International began developing its new organisational strategy for 2022–2024, offering us the opportunity to reprioritise our efforts related to supporting the broader needs and rights of the most at-risk and underserved populations across Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The finalised strategy will be presented to the public in mid-2022, revised and taking into consideration the current war in Ukraine and the resulting displacement of millions of people across the Eastern European and Central Asian region and European Union given the unfolding humanitarian and health emergency.

## Our major theme for 2022 and beyond is:

### **GIVING SUPPORT AND REMAINING A STRONG INTERNATIONAL VOICE ON HEALTH ACCESS AND RIGHTS FOR UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS IN THE EASTERN EUROPEAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN REGION**



Underserved communities face significant barriers to accessing essential health and social services whilst experiencing a high burden of disease and ill-health. These communities are also especially affected by HIV, tuberculosis and hepatitis C, all diseases of poverty, stigma, exclusion and ignorance.

The war in Ukraine and the imposition of sanctions on Russia will impact the entire Eastern European and Central Asia region, and could result in a severe health crisis in the region. Disruptions to diagnostics and treatment for HIV, multidrug-resistant tuberculosis and hepatitis C have the potential to drive new infections and excess mortality, particularly for these underserved communities in the region as healthcare systems come under additional pressure. Aid flows to Ukraine, whilst welcome, mean less funding for underserved populations, as well as funding for services and rights programming for the rest of the region, as donors redirect and repurpose funding to respond to the crisis.

AFEW International will continue to work with local partners, develop visibility and capacity strengthening efforts aimed at ensuring a continuation to critical services and programming whilst providing targeted technical and funding support. We will continue to advocate for underserved populations' service needs and ongoing funding in the wider Eastern European and Central Asian as well as European Union regions, with donors and policymakers in the Netherlands, the EU, as well as more broadly internationally.

# OVERVIEW OF THE ONGOING PROJECTS OF AFEW INTERNATIONAL IN 2022

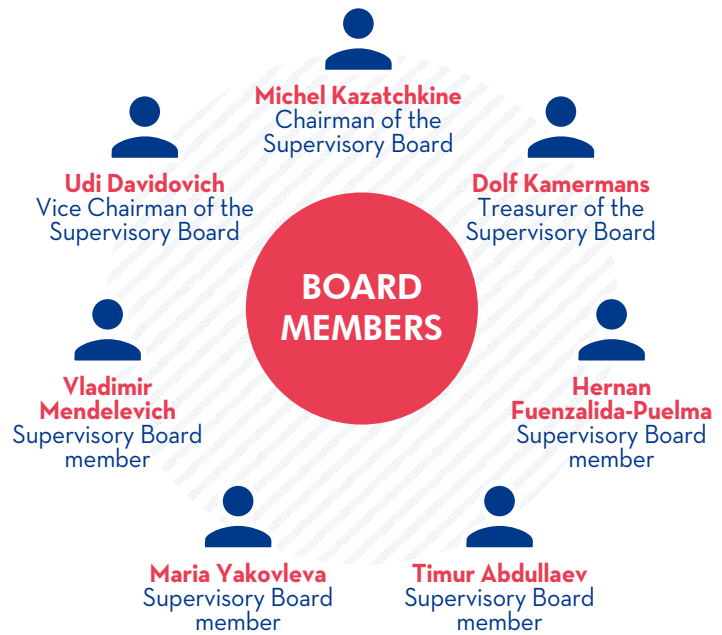
Project full name	Status in 2022 (new/continued/closing)	Donor	Regional focus	Description
<b>Combating stigma to end HIV/AIDS in EECA</b>	New	Gilead	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Russia	Improving the health, well-being, and social status of women most affected by HIV themselves: increased self-esteem, raised awareness on their situation and ways out, and concrete perspectives for action towards improving their health and strengthening their position in society. The project also aims to change attitudes in EECA societies on women most affected by HIV as to reduce stigma and remove barriers to appropriate health care: enabling communities and their organisations to influence public opinion, address key health care stakeholders and seek their cooperation.
<b>Expansion and improvement of HIV services in Uzbekistan</b>	Continued	Elton John AIDS Foundation	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	The project addresses the existing gap in the access of KPs to testing and relevant HIV services. Through the rapid HIV testing system developed by the community and the subsequent social follow-up of clients to the health facility, clients will be linked to ARV treatment in a timely manner. Community-based HIV self-testing has been effectively implemented in many EECA countries for several years. However, for Tashkent, this approach is new and has not yet been reflected in the national HIV protocol. The project aims to assist the Republican AIDS Centre of Uzbekistan in adapting the new WHO recommendations on the provision of HIV testing services.
<b>Advocating vulnerable groups' rights through a stronger civil society in Uzbekistan</b>	New	EU Delegation Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan	The project is dedicated to empowering underserved groups in Uzbekistan, such as people vulnerable to discrimination – women, people with disabilities, people living with or at high risk of HIV and migrants, and to protecting their rights and freedoms through strengthening and building local CSOs' own organisations and capacities, thereby strengthening civil society in Uzbekistan.
<b>EU COVID-19 Solidarity Programme For Eastern Partnership</b>	Closing	EU Commission	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine	The project strives for a comprehensive response to emergencies threatening Key Populations as the aftermath of COVID-19. Through small grants to CBOs, working with Key Populations, with activities ranging from advocacy and prevention, to treatment and care in terms of COVID-19 implications, based in countries of the Eastern Partnership countries, AFEW International responds to arising and anticipated post-pandemic challenges.
<b>Capacitating Public Health Initiatives in Russia</b>	New	MFA Germany	Russia	The project aims to strengthen community-based organisations in 8 regions of Russia by enabling HIV key populations and people living with HIV to organise themselves, to realise, formulate and express their needs and by providing them the skills, tools and means to act upon these needs. It will strengthen the Russian civil society as a whole by giving voices to the most vulnerable people
<b>"Comprehensive support to SRHR and social well-being of vulnerable adolescents"</b>	Continued	European Commission	Russia	Strengthening the organisational, methodological and advocacy capacity of 9 NGOs to provide comprehensive support to SRHR and social well-being of vulnerable adolescents in Nizhny Novgorod, Yekaterinburg and Rostov-on-Don regions of Russia.
<b>Comprehensive support for the Ukrainian PLHIV refugees coming to the Netherlands</b>	New	Various donors and in-kind contributions	Netherlands	To provide support to Ukrainians in the Netherlands, displaced by the war, with regards to both their immediate urgent needs such as access to ART treatment, psychological consultations, and humanitarian aid, and their long-term needs such as improving their quality of life by establishing sustainable access to healthcare.
<b>EECA INTERACT</b>	Continued	ViiV, Gilead, NIH, ANRS and others	Wider EECA region	Mobilizing a new generation of experts to discuss health crises, and bringing together scientists, clinicians, policymakers, and civil society to debate topics facing individual countries, while strengthening research and clinical networks in the EECA region.

# AFEW INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISORY BOARD

AFEW International relies upon the expertise of its Supervisory Board members for guidance and support. Thus, the Supervisory Board is comprised of professionals with extensive experience in organisational management, programme development and evaluation, financial management and research.

The Supervisory Board is charged with overseeing the overall operation of the organisation in order to ensure high standards of transparency and accountability. The Supervisory Board also approves the organisation's strategy and budget, as well as advises the Director and Management Team on strategic issues. In addition, the Supervisory Board evaluates and appraises the work of the Director. Supervisory Board members receive no financial compensation for their work.

As of 31 December 2021, the AFEW International Supervisory Board consisted of **seven members and two observers**



## OBSERVERS



 [Read their biographies](#)

The day-to-day management of AFEW International in 2021 was led by the Management Team, which consisted of the Director and the Director of Finance. The Management Team provides leadership and guidance to all AFEW International staff as we carry out our mission in the regions where we work.



# AFEW INTERNATIONAL STAFF IN 2021 AND 2022

2021 —▶▶▶— 2022

Director  
YURI DE BOER

Director of Finance  
YULIYA VAN POLANEN

Grant Writer  
MICHIEL BEKER

Project and Grant Officer  
VALERIA FULGA

Programme Development and Public Affairs Advisor  
YULIA KOVAL-MOLODTSOVA

Communications Officer  
OLGA SHELEVAKHO

Project Officer  
IRINA ORLOVA

Office Manager  
DIANA TSOY

Executive Director  
YULIYA VAN POLANEN

Director of Programmes and Public Affairs  
YULIA KOVAL-MOLODTSOVA

Grant writer and Advocacy Advisor  
MICHAL PAWLEGA

Programme manager  
PETRA KUIPERS

Communications Officer  
OLGA SHELEVAKHO

Operations Associate  
EKATERINA NIKIFOROVA

# FINANCIAL RESULTS



## Balance Sheet

(As of 31st December 2021, after appropriation of the year-end surplus)

	2021		2020	
	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR
<b>Tangible fixed assets</b>	1 7 677		12 454	
		7 677		12 454
<b>Inventory</b>				
For immediate and full use in the context of the objective		0		0
<b>Accounts receivable and deferred assets</b>				
Donors	2 392 114		450 945	
Other	3 547 534		10 858	
		939 647		461 803
<b>Cash and cash equivalents</b>	4	447 210		390 410
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		1 394 534		864 667
<b>Reserves and funds:</b>				
<b>Reserves</b>	5			
Continuity reserve		932 496		309 896
		932 496		309 896
<b>Funds</b>				
Special purpose funds	6	6 274		6 274
<b>Long-term debts</b>				
Subsidy commitments	7			
<b>Short-term debts</b>				
Subsidy commitments	7 383 170		383 353	
Other liabilities	8 72 593		165 144	
		455 763		548 497
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		1 394 534		864 667

## Statement of Income and Expenditure for 2021 (x1€)

	Actual 2021		Budget 2021		Actual 2020	
	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR
<b>INCOME</b>						
<b>Income from own fundraising:</b>	<b>10</b>					
- Grants from international Foundations / NGOs	A	0	0	0	0	
- Grants from Businesses		0	0	0	0	
- Other: Donations / Collections		84.328	0	0	33.215	
		<b>84.328</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33.215</b>	<b>33.215</b>
<b>Income from joint activities</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>930.247</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>275.000</b>		<b>859.746</b>
<b>Subsidies from governments</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>134.185</b>		<b>773.000</b>		<b>1.928.825</b>
<b>Other income/ loss</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>616.387</b>		<b>22.000</b>		<b>39.310</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>1.765.148</b>		<b>1.070.000</b>		<b>2.861.095</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>						
<b>Spent on objectives:</b>	<b>11</b>					
Capacity Strengthening	A	777.640	741.523		1.841.933	
Advocacy		194.410	185.381		460.483	
Research /Assessments		3.348	72.377		133.552	
		<b>975.398</b>	<b>999.281</b>			<b>2.435.967</b>
<b>Costs of raising income:</b>	<b>B</b>					
Cost of own fundraising		74.429	37.762		104.684	
Costs of obtaining governmental grants						
		<b>74.429</b>	<b>37.762</b>			<b>104.684</b>
<b>Management and administration:</b>	<b>C</b>					
Costs Management and administration		91.404	90.720		224.875	
Human Resource		1.317	6.237		45.416	
		<b>92.720</b>	<b>96.957</b>			<b>270.291</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>1.142.547</b>	<b>1.134.000</b>			<b>2.810.942</b>
<b>Balance of income and expenditure</b>		<b>622.601</b>	<b>(64.000)</b>			<b>50.153</b>
<b>Total allocation of Year-end result</b>		<b>622.601</b>	<b>(64.000)</b>			<b>50.153</b>



	Actual 2021		Budget 2021		Actual 2020	
	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>10</b>					
<b>Income from own fundraising:</b>	<b>A</b>					
- Grants from international foundations / NGOs	0		0		0	
- Grants from businesses	0		0		0	
- Other: donations / collections	84 328		0		33 215	
		84 328		0		33 215
<b>Income from joint activities</b>	<b>B</b>	930 247	0	275 000		859 746
<b>Subsidies from governments</b>	<b>D</b>	134 185		773 000		1 928 825
<b>Other income / loss</b>	<b>E</b>	616 387		22 000		39 310
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>1 765 148</b>		<b>1 070 000</b>		<b>2 861 095</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>11</b>					
<b>Spent on objectives:</b>	<b>A</b>					
Capacity strengthening	777 640		741 523		1 841 933	
Advocacy	194 410		185 381		460 483	
Research / assessments	3 348		72 377		133 552	
		97 398		999 281		2 435 967
<b>Costs of raising income:</b>	<b>B</b>					
Cost of own fundraising	74 429		37 762		104 684	
Costs of obtaining governmental grants		74 429		37 762		104 684
<b>Management and administration:</b>	<b>C</b>					
Costs: management and administration	91 404		90 720		224 875	
Human resources	1 317		6 237		45 416	
		92 720		96 957		270 291
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>1 142 547</b>		<b>1 134 000</b>		<b>2 810 942</b>
<b>Balance of income and expenditure</b>		<b>622 601</b>		<b>(64 000)</b>		<b>50 153</b>
<b>Allocation of year-end results:</b>						
<b>Correction of previous years</b>						
Continuity reserve		622 601		(64 000)		50 153
Continuation reserve: Russia 2012						
Restructuring reserve, additions						
Restructuring reserve, expenditures						
Restructuring reserve: Central Asia						
Special purpose funds, additions						
Special purpose funds, expenditures						
<b>Total allocation of year-end results</b>		<b>622 601</b>		<b>(64 000)</b>		<b>50 153</b>

AFEW International closed the 2021 financial year-end with a positive balance. Based on the Supervisory Board's decision, € 622 601 was added to AFEW International's reserves. An external auditor has reviewed and positively evaluated the statement of accounts for 2021. The full financial statement for 2021 is available via [our website](#).





CONTRIBUTING TO THE HEALTHY FUTURE IN THE EECA REGION  
ANNUAL REPORT 2021 AFEW INTERNATIONAL

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST  
AND SUPPORT!**

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO FRUITFUL  
COLLABORATION IN 2022!**

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