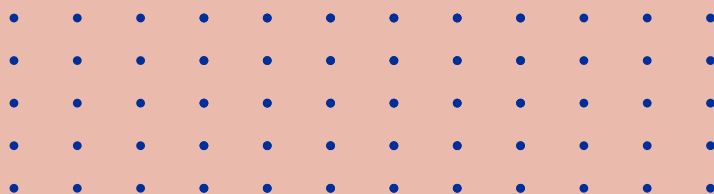





**Public Institution**  
**Open Society Fund**  
Company code 210063570,  
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Vilnius, LT-01128

# ACTIVITY REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2020

**MAY 10, 2021**





We appreciate and  
gather together  
responsible, open to  
change and socially  
pro-active people.



Public institution “OPEN SOCIETY FUND LITHUANIA/ATVIROS LIETUVOS FONDAS” (hereinafter referred to as the “OSFL”) is a non-profit limited liability public legal entity established by law for the purpose of pursuing the public interest through public benefit activities. The legal form of the OSFL is a public institution. In its activities, the OSFL follows the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the Civil Code, the Law on Public Institutions, other laws and legal acts and the articles of association of the Republic of Lithuania. The duration of the OSFL operation is unlimited. The financial year of the OSFL is a calendar year.

- + to develop the idea of the open society
- + to promote the formation of a mature, accountable, pro-active, and tolerant civil society in Lithuania
- + to contribute to Lithuania's progress on the path to democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

- 1 / to develop activities in the fields of civic society, education, science, culture, law, development of the knowledge society, social media, independent media, public health education, societal and other fields;
- 2 / to strengthen the protection of fundamental rights and minorities in Lithuania and Europe, to reduce the manifestations of discrimination and to promote tolerance in society;
- 3 / to strengthen communities, non-governmental, especially youth organizations; to contribute to their empowerment to shape and influence society;
- 4 / to strengthen the protection of socially challenged groups;
- 5 / to co-operate with partners in Lithuania, Europe and on the world stage, and to establish and participate in other legal entities that would help to implement the objectives of the activities of the Institution specified in the Articles of Association.



## YEAR 2020

**The main goal of the OSFL in 2020 was to properly prepare for and start implementing the Active Citizens' Fund program.**

### **Other objectives for the year 2020 were:**

- + empower the NGOs (especially the capacity of the regional and small organizations)
- + to develop the OSFL sustainability and development strategy;
- + implement other projects related to democratic participation, development and dissemination of the idea of the open society;
- + to establish and expand international cooperation.

### **OSFL operated in the three PRIORITY AXES:**

- I. ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACTIVE CITIZENS 'FUND
- II. NGO CAPACITY BUILDING
- III. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

## **I. ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACTIVE CITIZENS 'FUND**

### **1. Administering the Fund**

From 2019 OSFL, together with consortium partners „OSFL projects“ and „Geri norai LT“ administer the Active Citizens' Fund (hereinafter - ACF) financed by the EEA Financial Mechanism. The general objectives of the ACF are to strengthen civic society in Lithuania and to empower vulnerable groups. In 2020 the first open call for project proposals was launched in 5 impact areas: 1) increased citizen participation in civic activities (impact area 2); 2) stronger civic society oversight and advocacy for authorities (impact area 3); 3) increased support for human rights (impact area 3); 4) empowered vulnerable groups (impact area 4); 5) stronger civic society capacity and sustainability (impact area 5). The selection of projects took place in 2 stages: initially project concepts were selected in March-April and applicants were invited to develop them and submit final versions in June as concise grant applications. A total of 410 project concept applications were received, of which 159 were selected for further



development. In the second phase of the call, 152 detailed applications were submitted, of which 66 were funded (20 – impact area 1, 10 – impact area 2, 12 – impact area 3, 20 – impact area 4 and ), and 4 – impact are 5). 65 implementation contracts for a total amount of € 5,884,733.77 were signed.

In 2020 a standing call for proposals for ad-hoc projects in impact area 2 was launched.

During the reporting period, 11 ad-hoc project applications were received, of which 5 were funded for a total amount of € 24,325.45.

The administrative evaluation of project applications was performed by ACF project managers, and the qualitative evaluation was performed by 27 experts selected through an open competition.

## 2. Information events and trainings

In the five largest cities (regional centers) of Lithuania, **5 information days** were organized to introduce the ACF programme and the requirements for the open call, and **2 additional information days** were organized at the invitation of the Ignalina and Skuodas municipal administrations. The total number of participants was 515 people.

**10 ACF consultations** were held for the preparation of a detailed project application for applicants on the selected project concepts. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, consultations took place remotely. The following activities were organized:

- / 2 seminars for applicants of small project concepts, with 20 organizations, and 25 participants onboard.
- / 3 seminars for applicants of medium-size project concepts, with 41 organizations participated, and 57 participants onboard.
- / 5 seminars for applicants for large-scale project concepts, with 92 participants.

There were also **3 technical seminars** for project applicants who received ACF funding. Where 68 organizations participated, attending 101 participants.

Project operators were invited to training sessions to strengthen the capacity of project operators:

- / **Impact assessment seminar** (31 participants) and 27 **individual consultations** (35 participants).
- / **Creativity promotion / communication seminar** (48 participants) and 32 **individual consultations**.



### 3. Initiatives of bi-lateral cooperation

In the light of 2014–2021 the objective of the EEA Financial Mechanisms is to strengthen bilateral cooperation between Lithuanian civic society organizations and donor countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), the first ACF Lithuania open call was addressed to all 5 areas of impact, ensuring high-quality and mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation. Bilateral partnerships and their quality were among the project evaluation criteria, focusing not only on the partnership itself, but also on its value and mutual benefits. 16 projects involving partners from Norway and Iceland were funded.

Prior to the submission of applications, a bilateral partnership event was held with 40 participants, including 9 participants from donor countries.

Since the beginning of the ACF program in Lithuania, the OSFL has encouraged civic society organizations to take advantage of the ACF bilateral fund and to establish new, or strengthen old partnerships by launching a call for bilateral initiatives. This call focused on supporting Lithuanian NGOs that had already started developing projects with partners from donor countries, or were looking for partners. During the reporting period of the year 2020, 7 applications for bilateral initiatives were received and 4 were implemented. They were attended by 30 people.

### 4. Regional civic society initiatives

The next, parallel purpose of the EEA Financial Mechanisms for 2014–2021 is to strengthen cooperation between fund operators and non-governmental organizations administering the Active Citizens' Funds and its programs in 15 European countries. During the reporting period, the OSFL, together with its partners, focused on the planning and development of joint initiatives with other operators of the Active Citizens' Fund. Since September 2020, the OSFL team has remotely participated in four seminars initiated by the Romanian and Polish ACF community for action operators: "NGO Capacity Building", "Reducing the Influence of Populist Governments through Strategic Litigation", "NGO Financial Sustainability" and "Narrative Reform, in order to reduce radicalization", in which Lithuania's experience and insights were shared.

## II. NGO CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

In 2020, the OSFL paid special attention to strengthening the capacity of civic organizations by developing the skills of local leaders operating in the regions. The NGO capacity building program consisted of the NGO Academy, NGO Hour, Mentorship Program, as well as the "Extended Lithuania", an initiative implemented together with the Goethe Institute.

### 1. NGO academy

The NGO Academy offers a long-term learning process that aims to give participants the opportunity to become agents of change in their organization and community. In the long run, the aim is to strengthen the NGO sector by supporting smaller organizations in their mission and becoming important partners in the public policy decision-making process at the local level, while enabling NGOs to plan and implement social entrepreneurship practices.



The concept of an NGO academy consists of: selection stages and their principles, the structure of the academy program, and the structure of program modules. To facilitate communication, the program has been named “Aim ID. NGO Academy”, and with the help of partners, Vilnius Academy of Arts, Kaunas Faculty, Department of Graphic Design, the details of the image of the brand “Aim ID” were created – a logo, color palette, PPT template, FB template, etc. The website [www.siekioid.lt](http://www.siekioid.lt) was created.

## Stage I . Member selection and intensive trainings

Publicly distributed invitation – enquiry form. The target group is civic society organizations operating in the regions; and the priority group is organizations working with vulnerable groups of people. Representatives of the selected organizations participate in intensive three-day training courses online according to the Reach for Change methodology.

Requirements for participants are: 1 representative from the organization; the organization has at least 2–3 employees and / or volunteers; priority is given to candidates representing organizations active at the local level and organizations working with vulnerable groups.

The information was disseminated on the profiles of the social network FB “NGO jungle”, “Open Society Foundation Lithuania”, “Good wishes”, on the online platform, such as [www.apf.lt](http://www.apf.lt), in the network of municipal officials responsible for the NGO sector, and in other NGO networks.

Over 70 applications from local NGOs were received, from which we selected representatives of 50 organizations to participate in intensive training. Of the 50 selected and invited participants, 45 participants took part in the Intensive Training Program.

The aim of the intensive training was to provide a comprehensive introduction to the NGO’s mission and mode of conduct, to draw attention to the importance of communication, design, and strategic management. The main topics and methods covered in the training were as follows: Problem Map and Change Theory. These were also the main results of the training. Participants were able to work on an online platform created specifically for training, to receive either individual or group consultations. The invited guests of the training presented the topics of NGO nature, communication, and strategic planning.

## Stage II. Internal member selection.

Participants in the intensive training gained the right to participate in the selection for NGO Academy programs. After completing the intensive training, participants were invited to form their own NGO team of 2–3 members, with one team member having to take a leadership position in the organization. The internal selection consisted of two parts – a questionnaire with open questions about the organization and its aspirations and the team’s motivation to participate in the NGO academy and online interviews with the selected candidates. The selection was based on the following criteria: NGOs operate at local level; impact on the local community; inclusion of vulnerable groups; motivation – compliance of the needs of the organization with the program offered by the NGO Academy. 35 participants from 13 NGOs were selected to participate in 2 programs: Social Leadership Program and Social Entrepreneurship Program: “Not to Take, But to Give” (Vilnius Region), “Social Therapy House” (Kaunas Region), Diabetes Club for Children and Young People “DIABITĖ” (Vilnius), Family and Personal Development Center “Fellow Passengers” (Vilnius), Association “Lithuanian Skeptical Youth” (Kaunas), Association “Klaipėda Initiative for Democracy and Ecology” (Klaipėda), “Stay with Me” (Mažeikiai



District)), "Children of St. John" (Trakai region), "Global Citizen Academy" (Kaunas), Family Center "Let's be together" (Kaunas district), "The Gown of kindness" (Alytus), "Creativity and Employment Home" (Kaunas district).) and the "Sustainable." Social development' (Vilnius).

### Stage III. Implementation of NGO Academy programmes

Depending on the organization's mission and the nature of its activities, each team was recommended to join one of the programs: the Social Leadership Program or the Social Entrepreneurship Program. Non-governmental organizations working on public issues, based on or focused on volunteering, promoting public affairs have been offered a place in the Social Leadership Program. NGOs that can offer a particular service to the community have been invited to join the Social Entrepreneurship Program.

Each programme consists of 5 modules. The topics of the modules were selected after careful consultation with NGOs (a survey was also conducted through the FB group "NGO Jungle", together with the results of various studies, statistics, personal experience and insights, etc.).

The program of social leaders consisted of the following modules: strategic planning and management of the organization's activities; leadership, volunteering and community involvement; organizational project literacy; and financial sustainability and communication. Each module was designed in such a way that participants received group lectures and individual consultations, thus ensuring that the training material was applied in practice and taking into account the specifics of each organization.

The Social Entrepreneurship Program consisted of the following modules: Fundamentals of Social Entrepreneurship (Social Business Canvas), Fundamentals of Financial Literacy, Strategic Planning, Communication and Marketing, and Product / Service Development with a Design Mindset.

Each module was designed in such a way that participants received group lectures and individual consultations, thus ensuring that the training material was applied in practice and taking into account the specifics of each organization. Participants also received progress counseling.

Each module was led by 1 or 2 professionals with NGO education and/or business and academic experience.

After completing the module, the teams had a particular and practical result – an updated / elaborated organizational development plan.

### Stage IV. Evaluation meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to identify the competencies and strengths of the organization's management that are / have been acquired or improved during the training and to plan a further capacity building plan. During the meeting, the organizations shared their experiences in implementation of the individual tasks aimed at the growth of the organization.

## 2. NGO hour

"Aim ID". NGO hour is completed of a series of short information seminars for NGO representatives to share knowledge, experience, good practice and inspiration. During 2020 3 meetings were organized (broadcast live on the Facebook group "NGO Jungle"), 300 participants were invited and 1 thematic presentation was prepared:



- / How to organize distance learning: practical advice and solutions for the NGO sector. Lecturers L.Ragauskas and N. Kriaučiūnas.
- / Legal health of NGOs. Lecturer R. Jokubauskas.
- / Data protection. The presentation was prepared by O.Valainienė.
- / Psychological resilience. Lecturer E. Savickaitė-Kazlauskė.

### 3. Mentorship programme

The mentoring program emerged after the internal (final) selection of participants for the NGO Academy. Among those who did not attend the NGO Academy, there were NGOs that would need to meet the selection requirements, and have a high motivation and willingness to participate, however, their level of experience needs to be significantly lower than that of the selected NGOs. It was decided to offer the above-mentioned organizations to participate in the mentoring program – individually tailored long-term mentoring, which would help the organizations to develop certain competencies. 3 local organizations were invited to form teams of 2-3 people. The mentorship program consists of the following stages: analysis of the current situation of the organization, the identification of available and missing resources and competencies, the identification of needs to strengthen competencies and the selection of mentors with knowledge in the relevant fields, resulting in a 6-month mentoring process. After 6 months, the organizations, with the help of mentors, identify their achievements, set goals, and plan the actions needed to achieve those goals. Although the program is still ongoing, but the intermediate results and the evaluation of the participants are positively promising.

### 4. The Expanded Lithuania Partnering the Goethe's Institute

The OSFL together with its partner Goethe Institute implemented the project "Extended Lithuania".

The project would contribute to the development of a citizen's critical thinking and encouragement to become an active member of civic society. The project aimed to provide access to a better quality cultural and media offer.

The target group is the permanent residents of specific Lithuanian cities / districts, for whom the European experience is rather ambiguous, less noticeable or even negative, and the so-called returnees – people who "emigrated" from Lithuanian regions and worked for some time, studied abroad and now returned to Lithuania and may be a kind of stimulators of the country's potential.

Location was chosen in three regions / districts of Lithuania: Šalčininkai (near the border with Belarus and Poland), Visaginas (near the border with Belarus), and Klaipėda (near the border with Kaliningrad region).

The following stages of the project/activities were planned:

- 1/ Creative workshops / labs were planned in all three cities with the help of local people. The results of the creative workshops would be presented during a public discussion – a cultural event and these would become material for the development of the discussion. Classes with participants in creative workshops; 1 introductory + 4 workshops + 1 presentation of results.
- 2/ Public discussions ("open conversations") and presentation of the results of creative workshops – with the participation of nationally renowned discussion moderators. The so-called "returnees" or "returning" emigrants with the experience of living and working in the EU, business representatives should also be included / invited in these discussions.



- 3/ A cultural program tailored to a specific region.
- 4/ As part of the public relations and project communication campaign, the creation of a 90-second documentary film (short video) was planned about specific project activities in each region. We intended to distribute these video reports on the websites and social networks of the project organizers and partners.

The OSFL's responsibilities were related to the search for developers for the implementation of the workshops, the coordination of the content and implementation of the workshops, and the search for project coordinators in the local community and their information / coordination. Due to the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we managed to complete the following work:

- Šalčininkai:** Contact was established with the Šalčininkai community and a coordinator for project activities in Šalčininkai was found. There were 3 remote preparatory meetings with the coordinator of the Šalčininkai part of the project and one live visit to the site, during which the time and place for creative workshops were agreed upon. The Coordinator for creative workshops found, coordinated goals, activities. One workshop took place.
- Klaipėda:** The Coordinator for creative workshops was found, goals and activities of creative workshops were coordinated.
- Visaginas:** The Contact was established with the Visaginas community and a coordinator for project activities was found in Visaginas.

It was decided to suspend the project until improvement of the pandemic situation.

### III. PUBLIC EDUCATING AND TRAINING

In order to develop the idea of an open society, and promote the formation of a mature, responsible, active, tolerant civil society in Lithuania, the OSFL together with its partners implemented several initiatives in 2020: the nomination of an open society citizen at the National Equality and Diversity Awards, and projects "Dialogue of Transition Period" and "Re-thinking Europe". We also carried out a number of analyzes to understand and assess the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for the NGO sector and to assess the extent to which political parties pay attention in their election programmes to civic society, NGOs and citizen participation in public democratic processes.

#### 1. Nomination of the open citizen

For the third year in a row, the OSFL joins the initiative of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman – the National Equality and Diversity Awards, by establishing the Open Citizen nomination. In 2020 the Open Society Citizen Award was presented to Ligita Girskenė,



Chairwoman of the Klaipėda "Marij" Community. She has been awarded for her efforts in a breakthrough in the fight against environmental pollution. L. Girskienė and other activists working together with her called for the public's attention to the scandalous activities of "Grigeo" in Klaipėda. Extensive and intensive communication took place together with partners, subsequently, in total the OSFL reached over 4,000 people through their FB network, and the ceremony was broadcast on the LRT channel.

## 2. Dialogue of the transition period

In 2020 the OSFL continued the project "Transition Dialogue. Managing Democratic Change" "Pereinamojo laikotarpio dialogas. Demokratinis pokyčių valdymas" (Transition dialogue), which it had joined in 2019, together with organizations from Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia, Russia and Ukraine. The aim of the project has been to refine the diversity of the transition period, its impact on Eastern European societies and to understand how history and civic education can contribute to the formation of knowledge about this period. On October 28, 2020, a remote event "Conversations about the 1990s" was organized for the teachers of history and civic education during which scientists studying the transformation period shared the social and cultural contexts of the transition period and the role of ethnic communities in it. The number of media hits about the event reached 1.3 thousand. In 2020 the OSFL continued the project "Transition Dialogue. Managing Democratic Change // Pereinamojo laikotarpio dialogas. Demokratinis pokyčių valdymas". More than 7000 people were reached on FB. Special TV coverage was created and promoted over the channel of analytical media [www.nanook.lt](http://www.nanook.lt), along with the portal [www.olf.lt](http://www.olf.lt).

## 3. Rethinking Europe

In 2019, together with two civic society organizations from Poland, the OSFL launched the project "Rethinking Europe: The Importance of 1989 for Today" funded by the EU program "Europe for Citizens", which aims to review various forms of civic participation, political revolution and political disobedience; making sense of the democratic revolutions, the change in political participation and its prospects for the digital 21st century.

- / In 2020, one of the parts of the project was implemented, namely, study visits – consultations, during which talks were held with academic youth, researchers and public figures from Lithuania and Latvia. All meetings were conducted remotely. In order to better understand how the transition period and its history are seen by active young people studying the humanities and social sciences a meeting with history students was held on 22nd of September, and subsequently, on the 1st of October – with political science students. Also on October 15th there was also a remote meeting with young active people from Latvia interested in history and politics. A total of 23 young people took part in the consultation.
- / On October 19 a remote public discussion "Post-revolutionary hangovers: Is there always disappointment after the revolution?" during which scientists and activists from Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus and Ukraine discussed movements of Baltic countries in the end of the 20th century to Ukraine's Euromaidan in 2014 together with the events in Belarus following the rigged presidential elections in the summer of 2020. Participants in the discussion tried to understand why there is civic resistance, how it is inspired by the fall of the Iron Curtain, and what awaits civil society movements.
- / Also, in 2020, individual interviews were conducted with researchers from Romania: Marius Stan and Vladimir Tismaneanu spoke about events in Romania in 1989 and discussed what the whole time of change for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe meant. The interviews were published in *New Eastern Europe* magazine.



- / All information about the project is available at:  
<https://rethinkingeurope.mozello.it/>  
 The news was spread via the national channel [www.lrt.it](http://www.lrt.it), also [15min.it](http://15min.it), [bernardinai.it](http://bernardinai.it), LRT radio, portal [www.olf.it](http://www.olf.it), and OSFL Youtube. Over the FB network 15, 789 users were reached.

## 4. ANALYSES

In 2020, the OSFL team performed two analyzes, which were later presented to the public.

### ***“Non-governmental organizations in Lithuania during the COVID-19 pandemic: challenges, consequences and opportunities. Overview”***

In 2020 following the introduction of quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March, most NGOs were no longer able to function properly and to continue their operations. The OSFL prepared and implemented a survey of NGOs, which would reflect on how non-governmental organizations manage to cope with the threats and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The questionnaire, adapted to the market situation of Lithuanian NGOs, was distributed on social media in the group uniting Lithuanian NGOs, as well as through direct e-mails of organizations email addresses and through other platforms reaching the non-governmental sector. The aim of the questionnaire was to gather data on the challenges and problems caused by the pandemic for organizations.

The questionnaire was answered by 166 organizations / more than half of which (51, 6 per cent) operated in spheres of social affairs, health and education / 8 organizations operated in the sphere of human rights / 4 – in advocacy/culture, democracy enhancement, and sports / in total representing over 20 spheres of activity.

[The results of the research can be retrieved here.](#)

### ***„Why is it essential to check on how political parties envision non-governmental organizations?”***

An overview was prepared, the key assessment of which included the question of whether the Lithuanian Seimas (Parliament) and the Government understand the value created by non-governmental organizations (hereinafter – NGOs) and whether they will pay attention to the main bridge between people and the institutions. The programs of the parties that should enter the Seimas according to the latest polls were reviewed according to the following areas:

- / NGO – a public policy partner, i.e. whether the representation of different groups and their involvement in the public decision-making process is taken into account;
- / NGO – social partner, i.e. whether NGOs are given more confidence and tools to provide a range of social services to different vulnerable groups, and whether a place is provided during a pandemic for them;
- / The potential of NGOs, i.e. whether it is planned to strengthen the non-governmental organizations as a kind in order to make them stronger and more numerous..:

[The overview is available for access here.](#)



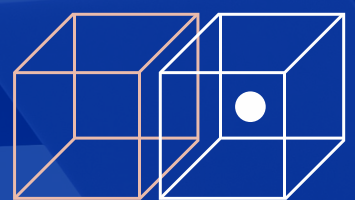
## 5. OTHER TAILORED SUPPORT

Under the agreement and the mutual cooperation agreement, the Open Society Foundation Lithuania supported the activities and administration of the Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis.

## 6. The funds received by the institution and their sources during the financial year and the use of those funds by type of expenditure

Received/expected funds and their sources during the year 2020	Amount, EUR	Type of expenditure
1. Goethe Institute	2,000	
2. Open Society Foundation	45,636	Direct costs of implementation and administration of OSFL programs, general administrative expenses, staff salaries, office expenses, other expenses
3. COVID (subsidy)	15,066	
4. DRA e.V.	5,620	Staff salaries, event and project operation costs
5. EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms Board	333,862	ACF programme administration and promotion expenses, ACF staff salaries, ACF staff travel expenses, office expenses, other expenses
6. FMO PDP2	100,000	OSFL activities implementation, ACF staff salaries
7. FMO Reg_Bilateral	42,436	ACF bilateral cooperation initiatives implementation, OSFL staff travel costs and other expenses
8. 2 percent Personal Income Tax	249	Implementation and administration of OSFL programmes expenses
<b>Total:</b>		<b>544,868</b>





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