



ANNUAL
REPORT
2025

**ROOTS AND
WINGS**
FOUNDATION

Amplifying the social impact of local action — unstoppable grassroots initiatives



In a shrinking civic space, we have supported people, relationships, and organizational capacity-building with funding and expertise. In this way, we have reached deeper layers within society and strengthened the capacity of communities across the country to act. We have also moved closer to achieving other important goals: strengthening the culture of giving and individual responsibility. Our annual report presents what we did in 2025, how we did it, and the context in which we worked.

Supporting people, relationships, and organisations



In 2025 – continuing on more than a decade of experience – the Roots and Wings Foundation (RWF) helped build civic infrastructure in diverse ways: strengthening both smaller and larger circles of local action, local communities, the culture of giving, and bolstering women’s perspectives. We have supported 83 civil society organizations across Hungary, and have been continually amazed and reassured that grassroots initiatives are unstoppable.

Over the years, with growing awareness and increasing effectiveness, we have realized we are able to amplify the social impact and sustainability of these initiatives through human, financial, and professional support.

With over eleven years of experience in an increasingly depleted civic world, our clear take away has been the lasting value of supporting organizational capacity-building, people, and relationships – ideally over the long-term and with flexibility

– rather than “projects.” We believe in emphasizing quality human and professional relationships, reflexivity, experimentation, and organizational well-being, areas that often receive too little attention, often out of necessity, to the center of our partners’ work.

Over the past decade, we have also developed methods that ensure we reach and mobilize deeper layers within society, acting as a catalyst to strengthen agency, autonomy, and the demand for democratic structures.

Furthermore, while this report presents our what and why of the last year, by the time these lines are read in 2026, Hungary will have undergone a decisive parliamentary election. Regardless of the outcome, it is our intention to continue our work with unwavering commitment. To this end, in 2025 we launched the Future Fund – a fund meant to provide the basis for flexible, targeted, and intelligent support in the future.



Civil actors facing greater threats than ever before

In 2025, the relationship between Hungary's political actors and civic initiatives was perfectly illustrated by the widely debated and quickly forgotten bill submitted in the spring by pro-government MPs, including the prime minister. According to its title, the bill was intended to ensure transparency in public life. Under the proposal, the Sovereignty Protection Office would compile a list of foreign-funded civil society organizations engaged in "activities influencing public life." Upon government approval, those included on this list would be banned from receiving funding from abroad, and domestic financing would also be undermined. While shelved for the time being, the tone of Viktor Orbán's March 15 speech fits closely with the spirit of the draft legislation: "After today's festive gathering comes the Easter cleaning. The bugs have survived the winter. We will dismantle the financial machinery that used corrupt dollars to buy politicians, judges, journalists, pseudo-civil organizations, and political activists." In our experience, this rhetoric in and of itself – even without threatening legislative drafts coming into force – damages the civic world and erodes trust.

In ways previously unseen and unpredicted, mounting political pressure finally unleashed a strong counter-effect; across the country, unprecedented numbers of people turned their attention to local and national public affairs. The growing prominence of community action represents a serious opportunity to strengthen the civic sector and increase the social impact of our foundation. It has become evident that Hungarian society, once marked by apathy and fear, has turned a corner and embraced determination, agency, and courage – and this presents a major opportunity for us.



Supporting communities via trust, safety, learning, and experimentation

“Explorers” take on serious challenges

At the beginning of the summer, the Women’s Solidarity Program launched “Explorers,” an unconventional call for organizations and communities looking to more consciously integrate women’s perspectives into their work. We chose six organizations – PONT MI Association, Kacsakő Association, Foundation for the 21st Century Pedagogy, Országos Lélek-mentők Foundation, Papírsárkány Children’s Foundation, and Unda 62 from Cluj – who would receive between HUF 500,000 and 1 million, along with the multi-layered professional and human support needed to implement their experimental projects.

Explorers ventured into difficult terrain in every sense: in many cases, they took on obstacles, reconsidered their ideas, and redesigned their plans multiple times – and we followed suit to deliver the attentive, caring, and intelligent assistance this required. Additionally, the projects lasted longer, and required more

resources and attention than anyone had anticipated during the planning stages. Together with the teams, we experienced success, low points and setbacks, and in the end, realized that the programs often turned out better than originally imagined. This reaffirmed what we already knew: the funder’s role, rather than solely monitoring how money is spent, should be to catalyze development work and enhance impact through attention and trust.

Hence, it came as no surprise, but still gave us great joy, that most of the supported organizations committed to continuing their experimental programs. Thus, we contributed to enabling an increasing number of organizations and individuals to actively improve the situation of women within their own sphere of influence. This means a more livable and empathetic world for everyone, which is precisely the goal of the Women’s Solidarity Program.



ALUMNI: sharing learning and reducing isolation

Trust, safe space, attentiveness to one another, shared learning – the ALUMNI initiative set out to meet these basic community needs on a lasting basis by reaching out to former grantees of the Women’s Solidarity Program. Over the course of more than a year, representatives of the ,From Street to Home’ Association, the Hiányzó Láncszem Foundation, the movement Más Állapotot a Szülészetben!, the Experiential Youth Association – Élménytár Study Hall, and the She for She Foundation met regularly

through the organization of our foundation. They talked, learned from each other, came to understand the environment, one another’s organizations, and themselves more deeply. They experimented with new tools, such as a filmmaking workshop with Sári Haragonics, and took part in an Alumni Tour, visiting one another.

As the program neared its conclusion at the end of 2025, we saw meaningful relationships had developed among the participating organizations, despite their strong differences in size and field of activity. A mutually supportive network had formed, and future cooperation was discussed, confirming that meeting other organizations and learning together reduces isolation and provides new frameworks for self-interpretation.



Growing cooperation among community foundations

In 2025, the Community Foundation Support Programme focused on strengthening cooperation among Hungarian community foundations. At the national meeting held in Eger, we declared that it no longer makes sense to distinguish between organizations based on the number of years they have been active; we can only speak of a partnership and national network of ten equal community foundations. The Eger event was preceded by the traditional season-opening summer picnic in Budapest, and a project presentation day in early March.

These encounters continually astonished us with the level of attention, interest, and care representatives from various community foundations showed towards one another. It bolstered them to know that in very different towns, people just like them are taking action, struggling with similar problems, and experiencing similar joys. These meetings strengthened the belief in all of us that deeper cooperation among community foundations can bring about greater national impact and visibility, and reinforce each individual organization's mission to meaningfully serve as catalysts of local action and cooperation.

The completion of two joint, foundation campaign films was an important milestone in the life of the program. They successfully met the challenge of clearly and attractively explaining the role of a community foundation, and how these institutions strengthen the local culture of action and solidarity. Hence, we consider the first Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) grant supporting the network of community foundations a success.



The films can be viewed by clicking the links below:

[*Life Has No Meaning Without Communities >>*](#)

[*Community Foundations Work for You, With You >>*](#)

Community foundations in numbers, 2025

TOTAL FUNDS RAISED LOCALLY

33 246 798 HUF

TOTAL FUNDS DISTRIBUTED
LOCALLY

27 869 012 HUF

142

NUMBER OF
VOLUNTEERS
MOBILIZED

1702

NUMBER OF PEOPLE
REACHED THROUGH
SUPPORTED PROJECTS

EDUCATION

16

SPORTS
AND
LEISURE

2

CULTURE

11

NUMBER OF SUPPORTED
CAUSES

29

COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

5

HEALTH AND
SOCIAL AFFAIRS

6

ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION



Revitalising Small Towns: strengthening self-confidence, preparing for action

The Revitalising Small Towns programme combines financial and long-term, intensive professional support to strengthen local community leaders and their organizations, and to ensure the sustainability of their initiatives. Rather than chasing short-term performance indicators, the three-year-long program's methodology is built on safety, reflection, learning, and developing agency. It first identifies characteristics and issues that are crucial or specific within the community, and then opens outward toward the wider community. This is carried out through individual mentoring, regular field visits, multi-day shared learning, annual professional and financial planning, and reflective feedback. Joint evaluations carried out by the grantees and RWF professionals have three main focal points: specific activity results, dimensions of empowerment, and personal development.





The program supports seven grantees at six locations, all of whom have demonstrated that meaningful action is wanted in small communities, which can be activated for both community and collective action. In 2025, for example, Szentes organized a student exchange program; Karcag introduced foreign foods and cultures; Szécsény began renovations on a future youth house; Komádi held a 500-person, communitywide Christmas celebration; Szentendre turned a civic environmental issue into a complex city-wide issue; and Szeghalom helped replace virtual communities with real ones.

As a supporting organization, we've learned more and more about how best to activate small-town communities through local leaders and institutions. In a polarized environment, we've seen that the key to conflict management is continuous local presence, not neutrality or keeping one's distance. We have also found that community leadership is a practice and attitude, not a position. Furthermore, creating sustainable activities depends not on personal endurance alone, but on the existence and functioning of an organization. And finally, meeting people from other towns and learning together reduces isolation and provides new interpretive frameworks.



Fostering individual responsibility and the culture of giving

Alongside the support we provide communities, we aim to encourage as many people as possible to take part in the life of communities, and support collective efforts with their ideas, work, and money. Below we detail our 2025 efforts towards achieving this goal.

Breaking records with Live Crowdfunding Night 2025 – a new approach

At the end of November 2025, together with MagNet Bank, we took a new approach to organizing a Live Crowdfunding Night, which resulted in exceptional success. By the end of the evening, the three civil initiatives – Útelágazás Foundation from Pécs, Labor Café from Nyíregyháza, and Zöldendre Association from Szentendre – received a total of HUF 6,696,000 from more than one hundred donors. This amount, unprecedented in Hungary, will enable these organizations not only to continue their work, but to realize their dreams. [A film about the memorable evening can be seen here.](#)

The evening's success solidified our new strategic perspective. Live Crowdfunding Night, once thought of as a simultaneously playful and responsible form of donor engagement, became “productized” and carried out in cooperation with a major market player, MagNet Bank. With the help of our expertise, MagNet tested a new and striking methodology of social responsibility, and their employees experienced the feeling of serving as catalysts for local social change.



NADE! leaps forward thanks to community giving

NADE! (Nők Adományoznak Együtt! Women Give Together!), our giving circle and Hungary's first women's giving circle, provides the opportunity for dozens of women to meet throughout the year, and learn about and discuss the situation of women in Hungary. By the end of 2025, their monthly contributions to a joint fund produced HUF 3,337,470, which together they distributed according to their values and criteria. Five women's initiatives received this support to use freely towards the security of their work and operations: the Névtelen Utak Foundation, the Gondoskodás Gyermekéinkért Foundation, the Dajer Foundation, the Élet.Érzés Association, and the Lélekbőr community theatre project.

The two-year story of NADE! clearly demonstrates the power and complexity of community giving. It simultaneously: mobilized new donors, deepened donor commitment, provided a profound understanding of one aspect of the (civil) world, created a sense of belonging to a community, invited participants to accept each other's realities, and provided trust-based support to underfunded social initiatives.



BB Social Justice Fund

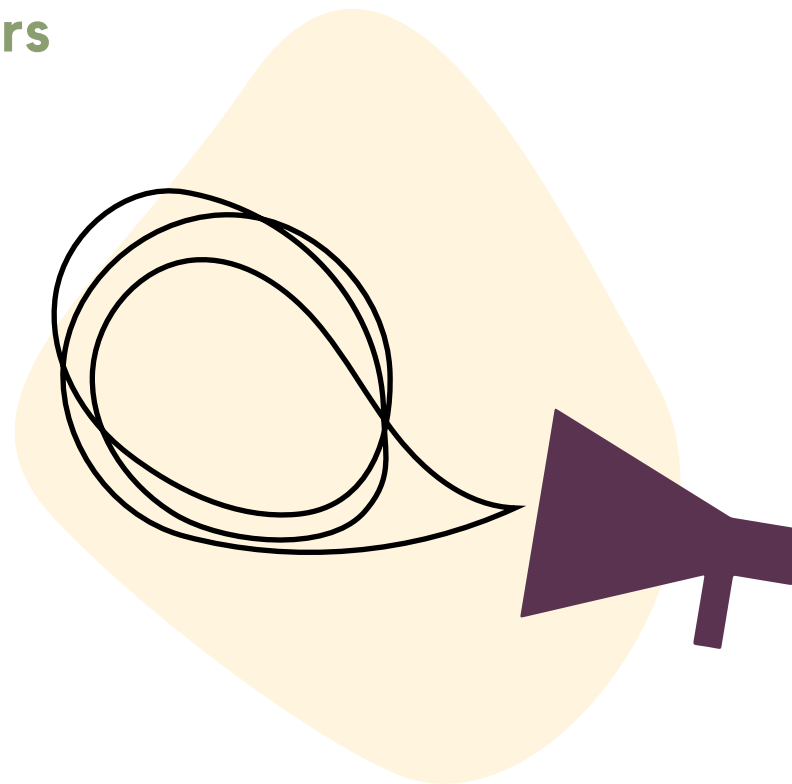
RWF has also worked with private donors

In a historical milestone, private donors worked in close cooperation with Roots and Wings to channel HUF 20 million towards strengthening social justice. Through this amazing endeavor, we found that the values of the culture of giving that we consider humane and conducive to real social change can exist on a large scale. To ensure this, we first listened to and took into consideration the donors' aims and areas of interest, and then helped by selecting organizations, determining the appropriate donation structure, and overseeing the necessary legal procedures.

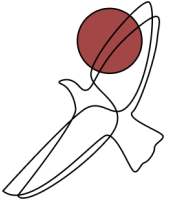


The BB Social Justice Fund was set up by RWF to deliver support from private donors to organizations working on forms of social justice in Hungary. The Fund transparently, on a basis of trust, and according to the organizations' real

needs, supports six civil initiatives: Experiential Youth Association, Fényhozók Foundation, Hiányzó Láncszem Foundation, Józan Babák Association, Konkáv Foundation, and Működők Association.



Organizing fundraising performances – Deep Breath and Breathe!



We experimented with fundraising performances, a new format that simultaneously promotes our foundation, raises funds, and strengthens individual social responsibility. The first performance, the monodrama, Deep Breath, was performed by Hanna Pálos, and the second, Breathe!, also featured Dávid Vizi. We would like to thank the actors and the Orlai Production Office for their collaboration.

In line with our work, following the performances, we held a roundtable discussion with the actors and experts about the dilemmas that emerged. Altogether, around 250 people attended the performances. They expressed their commitment to our work and support of our foundation.



Embracing a new international role

In 2025, the Roots and Wings Foundation entered a new international philanthropic and private foundation space by devoting more time, attention, and energy to actively taking part in international, professional discussions shaping the future of civic funding today. From Bucharest to Nairobi, we took part in numerous online and in-person conferences, professional meetings, and workshops.

At these events, we regularly presented our work, led workshops, and shared the Hungarian experience of a shrinking civic space, institutional pressure, and how to support communities, build new relationships, promote philanthropy, and maintain financial stability in such conditions.



What still seemed like a specifically Hungarian phenomenon a few years ago has increasingly become an international pattern: the weakening of democratic institutions, the shrinking space for civil society organizations to work in, and – alongside the disappearance of independent media – mounting political pressure against independent philanthropy around the world.

In this rapidly changing environment, learning and professional renewal has become especially important to us. Our staff took part in thematic training and dozens of professional programs in order to gain a deeper understanding of international trends, and the innovative responses being developed to address them.

Global tendencies are worrying, yet many promising trends have emerged – abroad and in Hungary as well. Coalitions and collaborations are strengthening, collective funding models are appearing, trust-based fundraising and grantmaking are gaining ground, and alternative fundraising models, community philanthropy and ecosystem-level investments are spreading. Increasing emphasis is being placed on building long-term civic infrastructure, and on strengthening resilience and preparedness.

For us, an international presence means learning from others as much as positioning ourselves. By sharing Hungarian experiences, we have become active participants in the collective thinking that seeks new ways of sustaining community agency worldwide. Our work attracts lively inter-

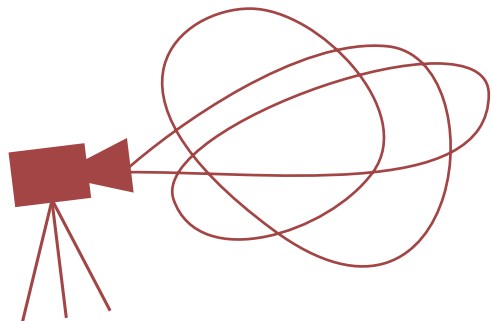
est because Hungary's long-shrinking civic space has become part of a broader global trend, and thus the quality of our internal operations, the methodology of our support, and the foundation's growing strength, despite these trends, offers an exciting example to many.



Demonstrating the power of community action

As part of our work, we consider it vitally important to demonstrate the impact the Roots and Wings Foundation's support has had on civil initiatives that strengthen their communities. Along with presenting the good examples and stories of those we support, we aim to inspire people to act, participate, donate, and broadly foster hope and initiate dialogue.

In 2025, we presented the grantees of our Revitalising Small Towns programme. They surprised us with their determination and the imagination with which they set about revitalizing community life. [They spoke about how public discourse can be created and moved from the virtual world into real space.](#) They showed [the impact of children's football on an entire settlement and their dreams.](#) They [amplified the voices of young people, and organized them into a diverse and genuine community.](#) [They helped Roma people integrate.](#) [They embraced green causes as community issues, and used youth work to initiate dialogue between radically different social groups.](#)



We pay attention not only to the visibility of those we support, but to our own actions and the value we add to these efforts as a foundation. We are grateful to our partners in this work, nlc. and Marie Claire magazine, who helped us explain why we consider communities important, and how we amplify their impact. [They offered us the opportunity to discuss what the visibility of women's perspectives means to us, and why we launched the Solidarity Women's Programme.](#) Readers got a [close-up view of the women's giving circle, NADE!](#), within [the context of the challenges facing women leaders working in the civil sector.](#)



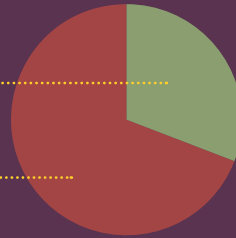


In spring 2025, we launched [RWF merchandise](#) to combine beautiful objects, Hungarian design, and social awareness. The symbols of our cause can now be worn and used. We hope this will help us reach even more people.



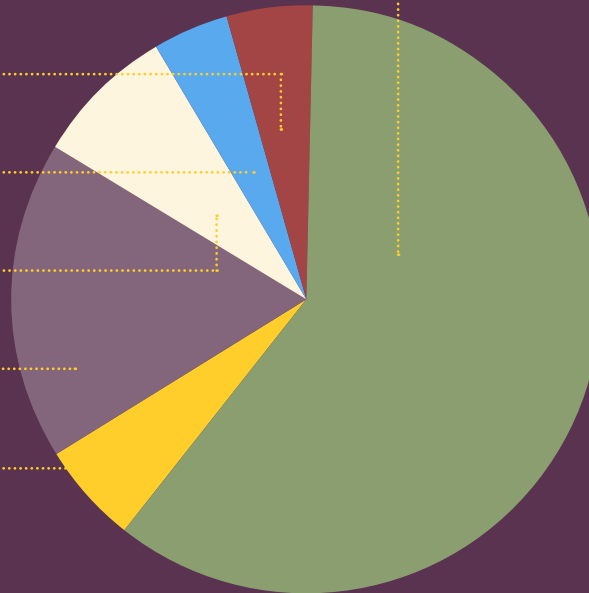
thousand HUF

FUNDS RECEIVED	
Domestic	43 375
International	96 534
TOTAL:	139 909



thousand HUF

EXPENDITURE	
Staff wages	81 649
Remuneration of external experts	6 524
Travel expenses	5 555
Promotion & Events	10 604
Grants	23 670
Office and administrative costs	7 210
TOTAL:	135 212



Sponsors, finances

Shifting our financial model

“The greatest challenge for our foundation is sustaining our programs, and to do so we are making great efforts to find new partners. What is already clear is that the most difficult task is identifying and securing flexible resources that can be passed on to those we support” – RWF 2024 annual report.

We have completed part of that task. At the end of 2025, the Solidarity Women’s Program gained a new and significant supporter in Fondation Chanel. Now, along with the model we’ve used in previous years – “working with a small number of major supporters” – we stand on several legs. We have won the EU Stronger Roots grant, our domestic sources have expanded and diversified, and in addition to our anniversary fundraising campaign, income from the services we provide to private donors and companies also make up a significant chunk of our foundation’s budget.

Including the amount carried over from the previous period, approximately HUF 214 million was available to the foundation in 2025. Of this, around HUF 135 million was spent last year, while HUF 79 million was carried forward to 2026. In 2025, we allocated HUF 25.3 million to fundraising. The majority of this was used to pay the salaries of our colleagues involved in grant monitoring, idea development, proposal writing, and maintaining relationships with (potential) international donors. A much smaller portion—approximately HUF 1.5 million—covered the

costs of our anniversary ambassador campaign, supporter events, and merchandise products. Our detailed financial report, which forms part of our public benefit report, is available on our website together with the auditor's report. If you have any questions regarding our finances, please feel free to contact us.



● Solidarity Women's Programme

PONT MI Association (Kondoros)

Kacsakő Association (Budapest)

Foundation for the 21st Century Pedagogy (Budapest)

Országos Lélek-Mentők Foundation (Budapest)

Papírsárkány Children's Foundation (Kistarcsa)

Unda 62 (Cluj)

„From Street to Home” Association (Budapest)

Hiányzó Láncszem Foundation (Gagybátor)

Másállapotot a Szülészetben! Movement (Budapest)

Experiential Youth Association – Élménytár Study Hall (Pécs)

She for She Foundation (Budapest)

Névtelen Utak Foundation (Budapest)

Gondoskodás Gyermekünkért Foundation (Budapest)

Dajer Foundation (Budapest)

Élet.Érzés Association (Érd)

Lélekbőr community theatre project (Budapest)

● Revitalising Small Towns Programme

Szabolcs Márk Kis (Karcag)

Anita K. Nagyné Karácsony (Komádi)

Alíz Mária Martók (Szentes)

Janka Becsey (Szécsény)

Petra Sára Kiss, Zsófia Lázár (Szentendre)

Andrea Baraksó-Kovács (Szeghalom)

● Community Foundation Support Programme

Pécs Community Foundation (Pécs)

ITT-HON Community Foundation (Tatabánya)

Kétker Community Foundation (Budapest, 2nd district)

Community Foundation for Miskolc (Miskolc)

Cegléd Community Foundation (Cegléd)

Jóbuda Community Foundation (Budapest, 3rd district)

Community Foundation of Csaba (Békéscsaba)

Helyi Szálak Community Foundation (Nyíregyháza)

Ferencváros Community Foundation (Budapest, 9th district)

● Organizational

Útelágazás Foundation (Pécs)

Labor Café (Nyíregyháza)

Zöldendre Association (Szentendre)

Experiential Youth Association (Pécs)

Fényhozók Foundation (Baks)

Hiányzó Láncszem Foundation (Gagybátor)

Józan Babák Association (Budapest)

Konkáv Foundation (Budapest)

Működők Association (Napkor)

Pro bono supporters and volunteers to whom we owe special thanks for their work:

Antonia Burrows, András Dés, László Dés, Gusztáv Győri, Ágnes Hadházy, Zsuzsanna Kállay, Viki Keszler, Emese Kukely, Réka Lovasy, Csilla Marosi, Kata Pálos, László Prácser, Tímea Ágota Rózsa (ICG), László Szalay (ICG), Ella Salgó, Zsófi Simay and Csaba Simay

Experts with whom we work regularly:

Gábor Héra, Kinga Kánya, Erika Schmidt, Julia Szanton

THOSE WHO TOOK PART IN DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMS:

Enikő Baranyai, Iván Bardócz, Gabriella Benedek, Julcsi Dés, György Hámori, Eszter Kállay, Krisztina Koncz, Edit Kovács, Zsuzsa Mekler, Péter Peták, Dóra Simay, and Dóra Szegő

Our foundation is a member of the Self-Regulatory Body of Fundraising Organizations.

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