

PRIORITY THEMES FOR FELLOWSHIP PROJECTS

2022/2023

The themes below are listed in no particular order. While we will give special consideration to project proposals related to these themes, applicants are free to propose fellowship projects on any civic-minded topic.

War & national identity

Russia's war against Ukraine exposed the problems of imperialism and colonialism in the region. How does the war exacerbate contradictions and influence the situation in the region? How does this impact the promotion of democratic values of rule of law, equality, justice and freedom? Where do the toxic traces of imperialism appear in cultural and social life and how can they be overcome? How do educational and cultural projects reinforce decolonisation strategies?

How does the formation of national identity affect the development of civic initiatives in the region? What role do historical myths and historical memory play in today's conflicts? How to restore local historical memory? What is national identity based on? How deeply does propaganda penetrate into issues of national identity and what can be an alternative basis for the formation of national identities in the region? How can authoritarian regimes use the strengthening of national identity and patriotism to put pressure on civil society and suppress civic initiatives?

Mobilisation potential of civil society in wartime conditions

What changes are traditional civic organisations and initiatives undergoing due to wars in their counties? How are volunteer networks and self-help groups formed? What is the role of civil society in places near the line of contact and in temporarily occupied territories? What new volunteer initiatives have emerged in response to the situation created by the war? What is the role of professional NGOs in comparison with grassroots volunteer groups and movements?

How does civil society deal with the trauma of war crimes? What are the civil society initiatives aimed at the preservation of cultural heritage in times of war. How can anti-war campaigns help to mobilise people? How to carry out anti-war campaigns while subject to military censorship? What are some examples of successful anti-war campaigns?

New principles in civic work

What are the new approaches to financial stability for civic initiatives. How is monetisation possible in the civil sector? What new forms of structuring charitable activities ensure the sustainability of the civic sector. What new forms of crowdfunding are emerging? How are cryptocurrencies used to support the civic sector? How does the civic sector survive and operate under political pressure? How to build communication between activists who remained inside the country and those who were forced to leave? How to develop civic initiatives in conditions of forced emigration?

Media & propaganda

How do authoritarian regimes manipulate conflicts for their own purposes? How do some countries use so-called threats of internal or external "extremism" to justify an increasingly repressive domestic atmosphere and aggressive foreign policy? What are conditions like for independent media in the countries under study? What tools are used to control the media in different countries and how can they be resisted? How is state-imposed ideology used to mobilise society in different countries? What fundamental concepts does propaganda use, and what tools, channels and formats does it use to disseminate them? How can civil society resist this? What innovative solutions are used by the media in the studied countries? How strong is the influence of local and foreign propaganda? What are the strategies to resist propaganda during a war? How do media in exile from repressive states function? How to recognise fake news and deal with the growing influx of false information?

Digital security & Internet access

How to maintain access to the receipt and dissemination of information in the face of aggressive censorship? How to keep in touch with the audience when social networks or even the entire Internet is blocked? How to build a security system for vulnerable activist groups and NGOs in the face of new digital threats? What new solutions exist for the safe and efficient collection of donations? How to protect freedom and privacy in "smart cities" with a developed infrastructure for citizen surveillance?

How does civil society resist cross-border information pressure from neighboring authoritarian countries that discredit civic movements and undermine democratic values.?

Anti-corruption & war crimes investigations

What successful examples of anti-corruption initiatives and media investigative projects exist in the region? How to form teams for such investigations? What are the positive examples of international collaborations for anti-corruption investigations and promoting them to broad audiences? How can the results of anti-corruption investigations be used to mobilise audiences? How to promote anti-corruption initiatives in times of war? How to develop activist investigations into the activities of those who grossly violate human rights? How can investigative initiatives be used to identify perpetrators and supporters of war crimes? How can sanctions be used as leverage against such individuals?

Women's leadership

How does the participation of women in political life and the life of civil society influence the development of political and civic initiatives in the region? What are the current trends in women's leadership. What is the role of women in the anti-war movement? How is women's leadership carried out under pressure from traditional communities and authoritarian regimes? What are the best examples of women leaders from countries in the region promoting democratic values at the national and international level? What examples of women leaders are changing the perception of cultural stereotypes and historical myths?

Online education

What approaches need to be improved or developed in order to create affordable and quality online education? What programs have been implemented in the region and why? What effective ideas should be developed? What is the best way to involve the target audience in online education programs? How does non-formal education contribute to the formation of national identity?

Environmental initiatives

What is the role of civil society in solving and preventing environmental problems? How can activists build relationships with the local communities? How to use culture and art to draw attention to environmental issues?

How to interact with the authorities and lobby for solutions to environmental problems while maintaining independence? How to overcome problems resulting from war?

Urban initiatives

How is public space used in the studied countries and what needs of citizens does it satisfy? What is meant by public space in post-Soviet countries? How can local communities revive public space? What are successful city initiatives, why were they successful, what did not work? What decisions need to be made to bring about urban transformation? How to model urban space after a war?