

Freedom in a responsible way

Herstory of



**Practical experiences of the
REGINA Model Program**

Gödöllő, 2002-2013

**A systematic rural development approach to
reach sustainability and gender equality**

This is an online publication. We do encourage you not to print it. There are links in here to our programs and also to photo albums that are part of the publication but they are in different files or internet locations in order to keep the file size of the original publication smaller.

[Picture gallery about the herstory of REGINA](#)

[Picture gallery about the REGINA Garden](#)

Dear Reader!

I met the work of REGINA in 2005 and I also met the women who managed the organisation that time. It seems that this meeting had a huge impact on my life both in terms of external processes and learning and also my personal development.

After a few struggling years by now I feel that I can manage a stable organisation that proved the value of its existence. Women and her families, coming for us count on us and it is a very nice feeling. Our work would be meaningless without them.

I want to say thank you for the previous REGINA people and the ones who were encouraging me in my early volunteer work. I would especially like to thank for the work of the volunteers being with REGINA in both happy and struggling times.

A grateful thanks to the founder Kinga Milánkovics, who has always been standing by me, encouraged and supported me when I needed that. She is both a great expert and a good friend.

We would like to see many more similar women's organisation to operate in Hungary. We hope that reading the history of REGINA can be inspiring for other women's groups to start the realisation of their dreams and visions.

Pilcsik Tünde
current president



Dear Reader,

Putting this publication together we had to go through all the years of uplifting but also very hard and exhausting work that led to the current state of REGINA as a community and an organisation. Looking back I can hardly believe that the organisation still exists. There have been a number of fortunate circumstances in the most unexpected and needed moments, without what we would not exist as an organisation anymore.

It is a special moment now that we got funding from the American Embassy to compile this publication for what we are very grateful. Originally we were planning to put together a nice and happy brochure about the organisation, but on the way we changed our mind. The Hungarian situation of rural women, families, SMEs, the political and economic situation of the country, the state of NGOs and social service providers, the struggles of the poor, the growing violence both in the homes and in public spaces and in general the overall Hungarian atmosphere do not provide the environment in which we can honestly be happy. Many people are leaving the country and activists of REGINA are also struggling with everyday problems of work, kids, money, school, local and national decisions and measures affecting families badly.

So in the framework of this publication we try to show both the positive and negative aspects of the last 10+ years in terms of women's situation, the social and economic environment in which we operate and the development of this grass root, local community based women initiative. All the statements and observations are based on field experiences and the expressed opinion of the hundreds of women participating in the local processes in one way or another.

This is also the time to thank all the people, especially but not only women, who have been around for some or longer time and contributed to the work that has been done. As an estimation, about 80-90 % of all work was voluntary work of local women, which I believe is truly amazing. A very special thanks to Tünde Pilcsik, who is the president of REGINA Foundation since 2008. Her contribution to the life of REGINA is immeasurable, she has been the person who stabilized the organisational framework, the finances and the activities of the organisation after many difficult years of a young developing NGO.

Now, I invite you to a historic journey through the experiences of a Hungarian rural women's NGO.

Sincerely,

Kinga Milánkovics
founder



Beginnings

REGINA was funded in 2002 after the theoretical development of the REGINA Model Program (RMP). The theory was based on rural development and community development methods combined with real life experiences of young rural mothers being on parental leave in Hungary. These experiences, the identified problems and possible solutions were put together into a set of aims and activities. The concept was clarified in a survey in which women were asked about their problems, needs, opportunities, aims.

In 2002 the first website was built and a systematic development and community recruitment started. That time there was no money available at all, moreover broadband internet connection was not available either. A small ad was issued in the local newspaper in which women, interested in joining a local self-help group, were invited to form the very first REGINA group. In early 2003 the first group meeting of 5-6 women took place in Gödöllő in the home of the founder.

The first group of REGINA members had all kinds of different knowledge and skills and they all were willing to share these with the others. So we decided to organise internal trainings. Both the teachers and the learners were our own members. Teachers were volunteers and the training cost nothing for everyone. It was also a good opportunity for the teachers (mothers on long term maternity leave), to practice their profession, keep themselves up-to-date in their fields. We organised web design, organisational development, grant proposal writing etc. trainings.

Another significant need of the group was to have community events where we could freely and honestly speak about the hardships of motherhood, the difficulties of being at home with a child.

Women, being at home with children, do complain about the lack of sufficient child care facilities, child friendly community spaces. They also say that even if Hungarian politicians verbally ~~abuse~~ encourage and pressure women to have kids, there is no proper supporting social infrastructure. Women are often frustrated, isolated, depressed and their self-confidence declines during maternity leave. Especially, when they become financially dependent and economically vulnerable.

Therefore we organised group gatherings, group discussions and we were basically trying to have fun together.

Women joining REGINA were strong and also passionate about the community. We organised internal organisational development trainings and the group started to grow very quickly. By the end of 2003, we had 20+ members. The growing size of the community created a problem, we needed larger space to be able to sit down and do the trainings. That time community spaces were not so widely available. We had to rent a room from the local cultural center and we shared the price among ourselves. But the place was not cosy and it was often dirty and there was no possibility to have coffee or tea. SPACE as such, became a key element in the development.

There was a conference where Gábor Bujáki, director of the University dorms, was present and listened to the presentation of REGINA, in which we stated this difficulty.

Gödöllő is a small town of approximately 32.000 people. The town is located 28 km from Budapest. At the beginning of REGINA in 2003, many young, highly educated women moved out to Gödöllő with their families. A very typical family setup was that the man commuted back to the capital city to work, whereas the woman looked after the child or children in Gödöllő. They were typically isolated, suffered from the lack of community and social connections, local information and fulfilling discussions.

He became very supportive and said that we can have our meetings at the University dorm at half of the price we paid before. So for the next two years we had our meetings and trainings there.

Another one of the major problems women, REGINA members, had to face was the issue of paid employment. Most of us had jobs in Budapest previously and after giving birth, commuting back to such a distance became an impossible option. Kindergarten opening hours were and are not harmonised with work hours. Commuting to Budapest and back takes 3 hours per day. So for the women, finding a new, local job was a serious issue. And that time part time jobs were even less available than now. That time only 2-3% of all jobs were part time.

Larger scale development started in 2004

We are still in 2003, right before the EU accession. It was a rather rich period in terms of funding sources for NGOs and community initiatives. PHARE, HEFOP and other grants were available. REGINA was in a fortunate situation as we could write grant proposals in the framework of a local umbrella NGO. So we did, and got two large grants in 2004. That was the time when we could open the first reception in a small office in the local community house. Edit Six, NGO referent of the Municipality was a great help in this process as local NGOs were still not visible and supported by municipality operated organisations that time. Community work, civic activities were rather rare, the general public didn't understand these things so well.

In the framework of the current publication we do not intend to write down all the activities and aspects of our work over time. Since 2004 a rather fast and large scale development took place. We faced a typical problem of too fast growth, which turned out to be not sustainable. In 2004 with the support of the two large grants 5 women could start working for the organisation part time.

Unfortunately, after the EU accession large international funding agencies moved out and the EU bureaucracy created an environment in which such small scale rural NGOs could not participate in a way that would be appropriate for the sufficient field work. There were large nation-wide scandals around HEFOP projects, many NGOs felt disappointed and frustrated, many went bankrupt. The external environment became very non-supportive towards high quality field work. The whole funding system became far too bureaucratic and reluctant to understand what organisations, doing field work, were talking about. This situation has not changed ever since.

The EU grant system became simply bad and structurally destructive for small and medium size rural NGOs. Many of these NGOs therefore started to find alternative ways of financing. Even today small NGOs tend not to participate in those EU grants (e.g. TAMOP) and those who have no other options complain about how hard it is to do good quality and effective field work in the framework of these projects. Only a few larger NGOs are staying in that funding system by now.

Major organisational development related mile stones

- In 2005 REGINA became an independent legal body as REGINA Foundation was established.
- In 2006 we could open the first REGINA House which was a nice house in Gödöllő, with a small garden. It was a real and great space for women on their own and according to our knowledge the very first dedicated Women House of the country.
- By the end of 2007 we were not able to maintain the scale of the organisation. We ran out of funding and had to close the REGINA House.
- In 2008 we were very lucky as we could reopen it in a new location where the organisation only had to pay for the utilities but no rent. The new REGINA House is a more friendly environment and it has a huge organic garden that we started to develop with permacultural philosophy.
(pictures of the garden: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.194342927372344.48849.194303940709576&type=1>)
- Between 2010-2012 we ran a Charity Shop in a rented venue in the centre of Gödöllő, which we had to close as we could not fund it anymore. It was a reception site, a charity shop and a space for local women entrepreneurs, creating handcraft items, to enter the market.

(pictures are here:

<https://plus.google.com/photos/110858497085133835038/albums/5923514806547090465?authkey=CN6drNXKvlijTA>)

By the end of 2008 the major forming, storming and norming phases of the NGO development were done, and since 2009 REGINA as a professional organisation reached the performing phase.

REGINA Model Program

The mission of REGINA is to improve the situation and autonomy of women and to reach social and economic equality between women and men. Women, especially rural women suffer from a number of gender based difficulties which make them economically dependent and socially vulnerable. Major factors effecting lives of rural women negatively, in terms of economic and social autonomy:

- having children,
- lack of sufficient job opportunities,
- lack of sufficient public transport (responding to the needs of women, taking care of kids and the elderly or ill relatives),
- lack of sufficient social services (care work is done mostly by women),
- lack of access to information and resources,
- lack of access to decision making,
- lack of women spaces devoted to empowerment and participation,
- male violence against women (physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, economic),
- social pressure in relation with care work (household, unpaid work as “women’s work”)

REGINA Model Program (RMP) is a complex rural development and labour market reintegration program that intends to provide solutions for rural women’s gender based problems. According to the philosophy of the Model, women have the right to decide whether having children or not, and therefore it is important to have equal access to the labor market, regardless of having or not having children.

REGINA is an acronym and stands for the Hungarian term: Regional Information for Women, Mothers. The name itself represents that a key element of the Model is regionalism. It builds mostly on local resources such as local development, local social capital and informal information networks

driven by local women. Another important element of RMP is tolerance. Every woman, regardless of her religion, marital status, sexual preference, race, economic situation, etc., can become a member of the local REGINA community. REGINA does not differentiate among life styles and says that every woman has her own right to develop her own life-strategy. REGINA is independent from any religious or political movements.

Main focus areas of RMP

1. Local, women-driven, community development that responds to local rural women's needs.
2. Organizing community events.
3. Development of local information channels, both formal and informal, that fulfill women's gender based information needs.
4. Professional and mental development of women.
5. Developing self-confidence of women.
6. Developing a secure, safe and supporting environment in which women can openly share their problems, experiences, successes.
7. Development of local social services, including support for victims of domestic violence.
8. Development of local public transportation that responds to women's gender based needs and timetables.
9. Monitoring and reporting on women's needs in local and national level. Continuous needs assessment.
10. Searching for local employment opportunities that are sufficient for women. Promote communication between employers and employees, with special focus on the local NGOs and SMEs.
11. Creating local employment opportunities (telework, part-time jobs).
12. Cooperation with local NGOs and SMEs.
13. Cooperation with Local Authorities, social and cultural institutions.
14. Advocacy.
15. Scientific research on gender issues and their practical local implications.
16. Independence from any political and religious movements.

The model builds very much on spaces both real and virtual. The assumption of the model is that there is a huge potential and knowledge in the local women's communities but it does not have the space to become active and visible. Therefore RMP in action means that the people running a REGINA community are primarily responsible for providing spaces that are open for other women's initiatives. Providing spaces for other women to carry out activities is already part of the empowerment work. Women who are carrying out these voluntary activities are on one hand being empowered, on the other hand they are empowering other women for whom they provide their services.

The practical implementation of RMP means that based on strategic thinking and strategic development, a special gender sensitive network or fabric is being built. In this fabric of local social capital, women can provide and receive services, help, information, goods etc. By that processes all women of the community are getting stronger and more autonomous. The practical experiences of REGINA proved this model to be very efficient.

Asset based community development

REGINA has a wide range of activities and the majority of them are based on voluntary work. The actual activities are in line with the certain elements of RMP. We often receive questions about how we can have so many activities. So how do we do this?

We apply a method called “Asset based community development”, which is an extremely effective method (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asset-based_community_development). Other than what is described in the methodology, there are even more advantages from a gender perspective.

Facts:

- Skills and knowledge of women are not utilized in our society to its full extent.
- Women express that they are willing to do more fulfilling activities and less e.g. housework.
- Women very often lack of self-confidence, being under pressure of traditional gender roles, gender stereotypes and misogyny.
- There is not enough sufficient space in which these unutilized skills can be expressed and lived.
- Representation of women in politics and decision making is far too low.
- When women are provided with space and encouragement to do whatever they are willing to do, they start to flourish to an extent that was not experienced before.

REGINA as an organisation puts a lot of effort to women’s empowerment. We, as an organisation hold and maintain spaces, in which these unutilized skills and nurturing intentions can flourish. These activities are the services, offered by local women, that are at the same time the support and services, provided to other women. It is a win-win-win situation of three parties, the women offering services, the women receiving them, and REGINA as an organisation. In addition these three parties are artificially set, as in reality these three are not separate groups. Any member of the community can be member of any of the three. One can be service provider, service receiver and activist of the organisation, which happens quite often anyway. At the end of the day we are talking about an inclusive women’s community, in which members are supporting each other and themselves in an environment that is tolerant, open and understanding towards women’s gender based disadvantages. It is a very simple concept but because it is rarely applied professionally as a conscious concept, it is sometimes difficult to understand. For mainstream paternalistic way of thinking it seems to be difficult to understand the concept.

There is one more important issue to be mentioned. Service provider volunteers are typically experts of their fields. Offering pro-bono services are beneficial for them on practical level also:

- They and their services become more widely known in the community.
- They become more respected and promoted within and outside the community.
- Being part of such a supportive network brings them many other opportunities and information in other areas of their lives.

As a result of the above mentioned processes, local social capital, trust, information, problem solving mechanisms are growing and developing, which become an available actual capital and asset for the whole community.

Activities

Running a community house: REGINA House and a permacultural organic garden

It is the heart of the community, the actual and physical space. The size of the house is about 140 m², it has 4 rooms and a kitchen. There is an organic garden which is 2200 m², including a small playground area for kids.

(more info about the REGINA House in Hungarian: <http://www.reginanet.hu/haz/>)

Charity shop services, garage sales

In the REGINA House we accept donations of local people. These can be cloth, furniture, electronic equipment, kids toys, books, etc. These goods are then sold at a very low price. This is on one hand a fundraising activity and also a service for people who need goods at a very low price. This is our most effective service that people in severe needs can benefit from.

(more info: <http://www.reginanet.hu/haz/adomanyozas>)

Consultancy

With the help of local experts, we offer free consultancy services not only for women but for all members of the community. Consultancy areas are: legal, book keeping, entrepreneurship, health related, psychiatrist, child psychiatrist, breast feeding, support for victims of domestic violence.

(more info: www.godollomedia.hu/reginatanacsadas)

Trainings

Short and long term trainings are continuously organised. Trainings include: self-confidence development, organic gardening, private entrepreneurship, project management etc.

Clubs, circles

The REGINA House is open for all kinds of regular and occasional club gatherings (e.g. breast feeding, baby carrying, feminist film club, gardening club, health clubs, business women's gatherings, young mothers club)

Zafir Health Program

This is a relatively new activity launched in 2010. Its focus is on health protection and prevention.

There is a group of local private women's businesses who give special health checks and treatments to the members of Zafir Program. For the local people, participating in the program is free.

(more info in Hungarian: <http://zafirprogram.blogspot.hu/>)

Local food supply system

We organize community purchases of good quality food at a good price. We also promote local producers and support local farming women. They are typically very small scale producers.

Trout, chicken, eggs, honey, vegetables, jam, cheese are the regular products and there are sometimes occasional purchases e.g. special salt, sweetener, etc.

Community composting

We run a community composting project that we started in 2010. Green garden waste of the neighbourhood is donated to REGINA, which we compost in the garden.

(more info in Hungarian: <http://www.reginanet.hu/haz/aranyvesszo>)

School programs

We organise school programs in relation with school violence, active citizenship, and gardening.

These programs were started in 2010. We go to primary schools and participate in group discussions.

In the gardening program school children come to the REGINA Garden.

(more info in Hungarian: <http://www.reginakozpont.hu/haz/iskolaiprogramok> and <http://www.reginakert.blogspot.hu/search/label/iskolakert>)

Labour market (re)integration services

It is one of the oldest programs, started in 2005. The name of the program is “Munka helyben, munkahelyben”. We try to collect job announcements and provide the information towards the people looking for jobs. There are more than 2500 people signed up for the program. The consultancy services, the media services and the business development services are also part of this program theoretically. These are the outreach activities through which we can build connections with local employers. With the consultancy services we can help people writing their CVs and prepare for job interviews. Since the economic crises we receive less and less job announcements and we have absolutely no money to run this program at a higher scale, so these days it is not a very active activity. We could do a lot more in this area but not without funding. There are far too many people searching for jobs, and we cannot provide this scale on a voluntary basis. (more info in Hungarian: <http://www.reginakozpont.hu/munkahelyben>)

Media and information providing

We have been running a local online news platform called Gödöllő Regional News Portal (www.godolloregio.hu). We also write a column in a local monthly printed newspaper called Gödöllő News. We issue newsletters and information emails regularly which are currently provided to about 3000 people and 200 local SMEs and NGOs.

Advocacy, lobby work

It is a very important activity, one of the most important added value of REGINA. We have been doing local, national and international lobbying work.

Organisations we are members of:

- Hungarian Women’s Lobby
(the current president of HWL is the delegate of REGINA)
- European Women’s Lobby
(the current Hungarian delegate to EWL is the HWL delegate of REGINA)
- Hungarian Network of Mother Centers
(this network was initiated by REGINA in 2006)
- MINE International Mother Center Network

We also do local campaigns, actions (e.g. Mother Mile, Onebillion Rising) and we used to give a prize to child and family friendly local businesses but we stopped this in 2011 because of the lack of resources.

Gender and rural development related research

These are typically project based activities. Our last research project was finished recently. Its homepage is: <http://noihalozat.blogspot.hu/> (both in Hungarian and English)

We see all these services as essential or very advised to become fully integrated organisation of the women’s local community in a medium size town like Gödöllő. The variety of the services, especially in a smaller town or village, is important because these are all gates to the local women and their very diverse needs and problems. At the same time these services are also the tools and carriers of the women’s own individual empowerment processes. This rainbow of services provides the platform for the REGINA Women’s House to be able to be open and tolerant, as every woman can find something there which may be useful for her, if she wants to join. Therefore we think that the diversity of the services is very important. The practical experience shows that the fact that there is an open space is enough for women to join. They come with ideas and initiatives. It is than the role of the management to incorporate these community intentions into the processes of the Centre and fit them into the resource allocation structure of the organisation.

Analysing results, achievements, challenges

Besides all the difficulties we think that the experiences of REGINA show that RMP is a feasible and sustainable model that can be implemented in other parts of the country as well. It is effective and very cheap to maintain. One of the main policy level conclusions of our work is that it is possible to do effective women empowerment if there is serious will for that. There are two main material criteria that have to be present to support the intention: 1. space 2. one full-time and one part-time staff members who are professionally skilled and have the intention to maintain the system.

Requirements the spaces must meet

- located in the heart of the community
- easily accessible by the members of the community
- open space for all women with or without children
- tolerant, safe and secure space
- announced opening hours
- announced services
- run and managed by the women themselves
- advised names: Women House, Mother Center, Women's Center
- trained staff and volunteers, in terms of gender and gender related difficulties of women including: labour market issues, social services, violence against women, structural violence against women, local information and services available in the community
- independence from all political parties and religious groups

Activities of the spaces

- open house with previously announced opening hours
- women are welcome to pop in to rest, have a coffee or tea, to change nappies of the kids, to breastfeed
- trainings, courses
- counselling and consultancy services (legal, entrepreneurial, book keeping, labour market, social services, physical and mental health, local information, violence against women, etc.)
- self support groups
- community events
- clubs, circles

Service structure of a women center

The core of the women centers is to provide space in which personal and community development can take place. These spaces can be real, virtual and also mental. What we mean by mental space is that currently Hungary is not a secure place in terms of psychological needs of an individual. Women struggle from all kinds of social and traditional expectations and structural violence. The household work is still mostly the responsibility of the women and there is a growing political pressure on them to give birth. Single earner families are rare and even in those families financial dependence of women is huge. The Hungarian labour market is not open and available for those rural women who have kids, part time jobs are not widely available and childcare services are not harmonized with the working hours of fulltime jobs. In rural communities the black economy and the women's informal communities are the major resources that support the everyday struggles of women with children.

In these circumstances an open space with gender sensitive and gender aware women's community can give a boost to the local processes that are already taking place.

Therefore the main focus areas of the managements of the centers are:

1. making sure that the spaces are kept in operation,
2. coordinating and harmonising the initiatives of women of the local community, and by that contributing to the development of these individuals,
3. fundraising to provide the financial resources necessary to maintain the spaces,
4. making sure that gender awareness and continuous gender trainings are taking place within the organisation,
5. making sure that the tolerant and non-judgemental atmosphere remains respected by all members of the community,
6. gender sensitive community development, based on the assets and social capital available in the community.

If all the above is fulfilled, than the environment is ready to act as secure space for women and their activities. In ecological terms women centres act as habitats in which life can flourish. Managers are responsible to sustain the habitat, and the community as a whole is responsible to fill it up with content. The smooth cooperation between the two different activity areas is essential to reach sustainability. In the history of the development of REGINA it has been the most challenging task to carry out.

Financing the women centers

The classic women centers need the following **minimal infrastructure**:

Infrastructure that require continuous financing:

- a centrally located community space with at least 3 large rooms (1 for women, 1 for kids, 1 kitchen)
- ideally it has a garden with a playground for kids, and a fireplace for adults
- 1 full time and 1 part-time staff members

Infrastructure that do not require continuous financing:

- program coordinators (volunteers)
- consultants (volunteers)
- media coverage (free social media platforms are perfect)

In ideal situations the local Municipality provides the space free of charge and the community is responsible to maintain it and cover the maintenance costs. In Miskolc the Mother Center called Holdam Udvar was established like that. Members of the community renovated the space and organise their operation in a way that they are able to pay the utilities (e.g. special, fee based events). In Gödöllő, the REGINA House is a private property and REGINA can use it free of charge, but the organisation is responsible to pay the utilities, which is also covered by fee based services, charity sales and project funds (when available).

In Gödöllő there is one full time staff member and one part-time staff member, their salaries are covered by project funding currently.

Other running costs (bank, accountant, phone, internet) are covered by either fee based services or project money when available.

One of the key factors of this type of operation is that services are often provided by women for whom, offering these community services, also mean either personal and/or carrier development. Applying asset based community development¹ is a very effective method in the development of women spaces and empowerment work. At the same time very often this also relates to the entrepreneurship development of women.

Based on the above mentioned structures and infrastructures, women centers can maintain a sustainable operation. In addition to these, project based fundraising can also be a good tool to expand the service structure of the centers.

Annual estimated costs of running a Women Center

	per month (HUF)	annually (HUF)	per month (EUR)	annually (EUR)
utilities of the center (heating, electricity, water)	100000	1200000	333	4000
1 part time staff member net salary	100000	1200000	333	4000
1 part time staff member taxes all	100000	1200000	333	4000
1 full time staff member net salary	200000	2400000	667	8000
1 full time staff member taxes all	200000	2400000	667	8000
other running costs	30000	360000	100	1200
total:	730000	8760000	2433	29200

That means that running a women center in a professional way do not cost more than 30.000 Euro annually.

Social and economic environment and the future of REGINA

Hungary is a very ambivalent country these days. Life and future perspectives are not very promising and especially not for our children. We see the situation of women to become worse and worse, also the situation of rural areas and NGOs. So what can we expect? What can be a hope for the future?

We as an organisation very-very much believe in women, the power of women. But we also know that energy is not available unlimitedly.

So when we think about the future of REGINA we see two things. One is that the REGINA community is alive and many of the processes are going well and will go well even if the organisation would not be present anymore. Personal contacts, service structures, the social network and fabric live its own life regardless of REGINA, the organisation. In that respect REGINA already fulfilled its mission. The other is that social and economic circumstances put such a huge pressure on NGOs, including REGINA

¹ forrás: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asset-based_community_development

Asset-based community development (ABCD) is a methodology that seeks to uncover and use the strengths within communities as a means for sustainable development.

that at some point we may decide to stop and leave. Maybe even the country. We do not know it yet.

Neither state-level nor local decision makers do not seem to understand that they cannot solve economic and social problems without the people, without active citizens. They still seem to be afraid of their own voters. No wonder why the country is in its shape. Since the transition in 1989 we could not learn as a nation to incorporate the creative creating power of our own people into the development of the country.

So regarding the future... We don't know. We keep on going as long as we don't feel to stop.

People said these about REGINA

We sent out an anonymous survey form to ask for feedback on our work. Not only our members but also partners were asked for their opinion. These are some of the responses:

"If it is something that relates to REGINA, than it must be a good thing."

"This is a place where women are doing things for other women. The problems that are huge for you are understood. They are always helpful and through their own experiences you can also develop in any areas of your life. They charge you with positive energy and they always have some nice words to everyone."

"It is a useful intention of REGINA to coordinate local organisations and foundations of the Gödöllő Region. Besides this their activities attract many people and this make them very much needed in the region."

"They are women and family oriented."

"It is a kind, warm-hearted and friendly bunch of people. It is also a group of intelligent people who help one another and towards whom it is nice to turn. Their trainings are always very useful."

"It is an active, multidimensional organisation dealing mostly with women's problems. Wide range of activities, trainings, exhibitions, health-days, conferences, charity programs and many other projects are offered by them."

"Attention, kindness and problem solving."

"They welcome everyone, they are tolerant and they do a lot for the community."

"It is an empowering and supporting group, that is conscious, follows the everyday changes and opportunities of the town and tries to reflect on them in a flexible way."

"A community of people, which kindly help others. Anyone can ask for help openly, they always help."

"Unfortunately I don't meet REGINA people a lot these days, but I know that I can go there any time just like I would go home. A very open and inclusive group."

"A caring organisation that help anyone in need.

You need clothing? REGINA!

You would study? REGINA!

You would offer a gift? REGINA!
Cheap vegetables? Meat? REGINA!
Are you a WOMAN? REGINA!”

“I would like to thank you for everything you did for me so far. I learned a lot from you guys, which I can still make use of up till now. But the most important is that I know that I can count on you. Hope I can return this one day. I wish you a lot of luck and power for your work.”

“I learned this in REGINA, I as a citizen can and should be active and it is possible to shape the World from bottom-up together with the communities.”

Herstory

11 years is a long time and without a proper story teller it is not so easy to remember all the people who contributed significantly to the development and the community. However, in the framework of this publication we tried to make visible the names of those local women who must be remembered when we talk about the herstory of REGINA:

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