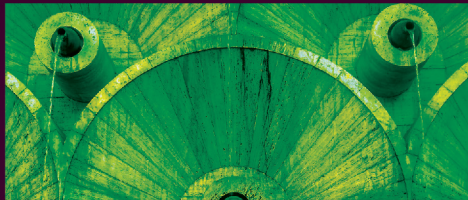
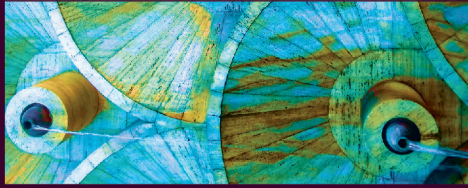
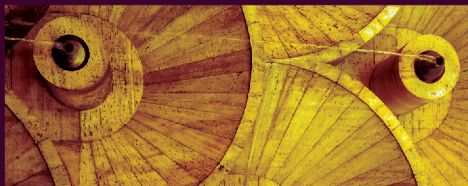
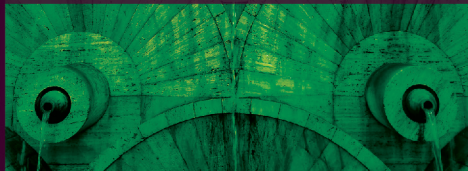




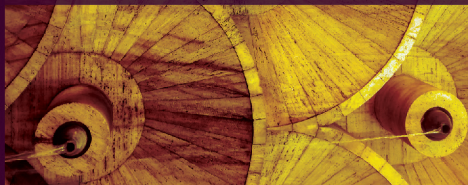
VALUES



CULTURE



LEARNING





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

2018 was the year of the Revolution.

The members of our organization actively joined the wave of the Revolution. The Revolution heralded the values that have been central to our organization's activities – real democracy, human rights, nonviolence, defeating corruption, and sovereignty.

The victory of the Revolution forced our organization to change. Previously, we had tried within all our projects to either interact with the state system as little as possible, or have close partnerships in special cases when we could build relations based on trust. Now that many of our supporters, partners, and beneficiaries hold public office, and, in general, state bodies are composed of people who mostly uphold the same set of values as us and our organization, it would seem logical for us to revisit the previous approach to our work. First, we would interact more actively with the state system, addressing the issues that the state itself was trying to tackle. Second, we would help the new group of state officials and civil society join forces to address the upcoming tasks.

We didn't change our main strategy and projects, but this new task enhanced their significance and certainly added to our workload. In August 2018, we organized a broad discussion with the participation of the newly appointed officials and civil society, hosting over one hundred people in Tsaghkadzor and discussing future tasks over several days. We summed up the results and continued to refine them, attempting to update our strategy and that of a broad circle of our partners, to provide consultancy to the state and, as always, support civil society. This laid the foundation for our new approach to working.

Both successes and challenges await this course of state reform. The new officials and civil society are both actively working to understand the necessary changes and how to achieve them. We are happy that our previous plans in some cases, as well as our new plans currently coincide with the vision of the state, for example, the abolition of all forms of violence. We are ready to provide all our experience and competencies to support the renewed state so that the right changes occur more quickly and effectively.

Applied over many years, our approach to discussing issues has now stopped being marginal and has become an equally powerful voice in the discourse for change. So far, this is a major positive development. However, we will not hesitate to continue criticizing the state, perhaps even more actively than before, because we are hopeful that officials will take our opinion into account and consider it.

In some cases, the new generation of officials that has come to power has not been quick to understand the range of issues to be addressed, because they did not expect to find such a large segment of the state “poisoned” with the kleptocratic and criminal system of the previous ruling power, which we called a rhizome (“tuberous root”). And it is still going to take a lot of effort to replace that system with a viable and effective one.

Moreover, manipulative forces and trolls have launched a campaign for the “souls” of

citizens, blurring the lines between real and fake news, trying to shake any confidence in the coming changes, targeting the weaknesses of the new officials, sneaking into their ranks, and availing of massive private assets that were most likely illegally privatized – all in order to discredit the revolution and make it fail. As our partner, art critic Ruben Arevshatyan puts it, “The most dangerous thing is happening, when the system itself internalizes the revolutionary rhetoric and turns this against the tendency for real change, which is currently still underway.”

In this respect, we have prioritized and reinvigorated our activities especially in the domains of promoting critical thinking, overcoming retrograde stereotypes and restoring the value of a good reputation. In the present conditions of broad freedom of speech and assembly, and given that only some branches of the state system have been renewed, these values are among the most significant that need to be comprehended by citizens so that they can correctly assess the situation, find their own way forward, and act correctly and actively. Our major priorities now include non-formal education, culture in the broad sense of the word—including behavioral culture—and sowing counter-regressive values.

Hence, the revolution is not over at all and is still far from its conclusion. Quite the contrary. We are continuing our work. Our staff members, the treasures of our organization, are dedicated like never before to the mission of helping society based on the EPF values. We are grateful to all our donors and the broad network of partners, without whom we would be unable to implement the projects and whose support was the guarantee for our small success in the context of the greater achievements that await Armenia. It was a modest, yet a very symbolic event in this reporting period that EPF received a grant from the renewed state of the Republic of Armenia for the first time ever in its history. I will quickly add that this fact has not hindered and will certainly not keep us from criticizing the state constructively, when necessary.

Gevorg Ter-Gabrielyan