



MADRE

speaks

Spring/Summer 2008

WOMEN & WATER

SAVE THE DATE



NOVEMBER 10, 2008





MADRE

Rights, Resources & Results
for Women Worldwide

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From the Executive Director

VIVIAN STROMBERG

Dear Friends,

This year we celebrate MADRE's 25th Anniversary. Having been part of MADRE since its founding, I can hardly believe we've been at this for so long. Yet, when I stop to consider all that we've achieved in this quarter-century, the record is truly impressive. Together, we have saved lives. We



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have challenged and changed destructive policies at the local, national, and global levels. We have improved and advanced both the global women's movement and the international human rights framework. And we have provided women from our sister organizations—in every region of the world—with training and resources to play leadership roles in the social movements that are at the forefront of creating positive change.

These accomplishments lay the foundation for another 25 years of achievements. We can't predict all of the challenges that we will face, but we do know that the threat to our global water supply, which we explore in this issue of *MADRE Speaks*, will impact the lives and rights of women and their families worldwide.

We know that policies need to change—quickly—and that viable solutions to the water crisis must encompass three broad aims: to control climate change, enable sustainable development, and protect human rights. Yet, too often, these goals are pursued separately, even at cross-purposes. This compartmentalizing of issues has produced a host of false solutions that, in turn, trigger new disasters. For example, today's global food crisis is partly a consequence of decisions to divert land and water resources to grow fuel instead of food.

To address this kind of problem, MADRE has forged a new strategic vision for our work. The substance of our programs hasn't changed, but we have redefined them around three core areas: peace building; economic and environmental justice; and women's health/combating violence against women. With this new orientation, we can better highlight connections between the multiple crises that women and families are confronting worldwide. From there, we can create real solutions with our partners that not only avert the crises at hand, but reset the course of the world on a better foundation.

That's MADRE's mission as we move into our second quarter-century of remaking the world. I know how much we can accomplish with your continued support—because I know how much we have already achieved. Thank you.

Sincerely,

MADRE Speaks

Volume XXIV, #1

MADRE is an international women's human rights organization that works toward a world in which all people enjoy the fullest range of individual and collective human rights; in which resources are equitably and sustainably shared; in which women participate effectively in all aspects of society; and in which people have a meaningful say in decisions that affect their lives.

MADRE's vision is enacted with an understanding of the inter-relationships between the various issues we address and by a commitment to working in partnership with women at the local, regional, and international levels who share our goals.

Since we began in 1983, MADRE has delivered over 25 million dollars worth of support to community-based women's organizations in Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, the Balkans, and the United States.

Newsletter Staff

EDITORS: Yifat Susskind and Nancy Khweiss

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FRONT COVER PHOTO: © MADRE

THANK YOU TO OUR INTERNS!

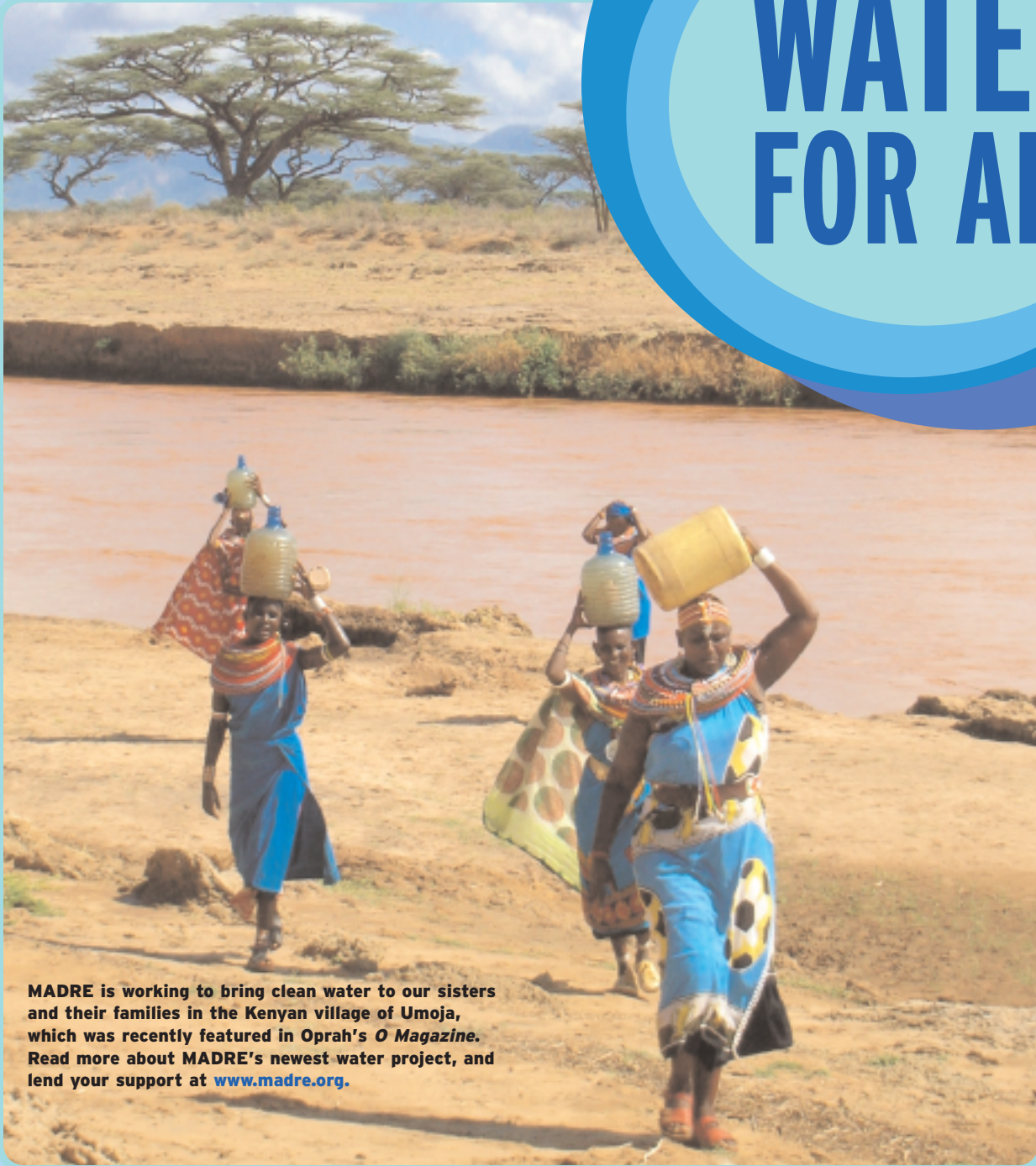
WINTER 2007

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WATER FOR ALL



MADRE is working to bring clean water to our sisters and their families in the Kenyan village of Umoja, which was recently featured in Oprah's *O Magazine*. Read more about MADRE's newest water project, and lend your support at www.madre.org.

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Having an ample supply of safe water is something most of us don't think much about. Turning on the kitchen tap or running a bath is usually an effortless decision. Yet, when we flush the toilet, we use as much water as most people in Kenya use in an entire day. Imagine that day. You spend six hours fetching and hauling heavy loads of water across a dangerous expanse. Once you get the water home, you conserve and manage every drop to have enough for drinking, cooking, cleaning, bathing the kids, and watering the vegetable garden that keeps your family from going hungry. Since the water is untreated, you never know what kind of microbes or pollution you and your family are drinking. >>

Water for All

For many of the women of MADRE's rural sister organizations, that imaginary day is every day. For others who live in cities, water is just as scarce and unsafe because of economic policies that reward pollution and price clean water out of reach. In total, 17 percent of the world's people lack access to safe water. This is a human rights abuse of staggering proportion—threatening more than a billion people and undermining a range of other human rights, including rights to health, environmental sustainability, economic justice, and peace.

Around the world, it is women and girls who are responsible for providing water to households. That division of labor makes water a critical women's human rights concern. This year, MADRE has joined a growing international movement that is creating viable solutions to our global water crisis. We are working to bring safe water to the communities of our sister organizations and advocating at the United Nations for passage of the first-ever water covenant to secure safe water for all.

Water and Health

Every year, nearly 1.8 million people (90 percent of them children under five) die from diarrhea caused by dirty water. Typhoid, cholera, and other deadly diseases are also spread by contaminated water, bringing the death toll from water-related diseases to a staggering 3.5 million people a year.¹ In fact, unsafe drinking water is the source

of 80 percent of disease worldwide and kills more children every year than wars, malaria, and HIV/AIDS combined.²

Without clean water, it's nearly impossible for people to maintain good hygiene for themselves and their children. Lack of personal hygiene contributes to the spread of infectious diseases and compromises people's dignity and confidence. Whether or not a community chronically lacks water, no mother wants to send her child to school with a dirty face.

The daily task of carrying water over distances is back-breaking work for women. In rural Africa, women commonly walk 10 kilometers a day to a water source and back—and twice that distance in the dry season.³ Often, women carry loads of up to 50 pounds on the head, hip, or back. Over time, the strain can deform the spine and pelvis, causing extreme pain and disability. A more immediate worry for many women and girls is the threat of sexual attack as they venture far from home in search of water.

In the rural village of Umoja, Kenya, where MADRE is working with women to build a water system, an 11-year-old girl is pregnant as a result of a rape that occurred while she was fetching water. The girl and her baby will be cared for by the women of Umoja, but in many communities, rape survivors are cast out and their children are permanently ostracized.

A WORLD TRANSFORMED



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TREMENDOUS HEALTH BENEFITS ARE ACHIEVED when people gain access to even small quantities of clean water.⁴ Simple measures, like washing hands with soap and water, reduce the spread of deadly diarrhoeal diseases by more than 35 percent. Ensuring clean water for washing can also prevent trachoma, a leading cause of blindness.

The UN Millennium Development Goals call for reducing by half the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Achieving this target would mean more than 200,000 fewer child deaths in 2015 and more than one million children's lives saved over the following decade. Across the world, children would gain another 272 million days of school, thanks to fewer episodes of diarrhea. And economic benefits of about \$38 billion

would accrue to some of the poorest countries. Financing these gains would cost about \$10 billion—less than half of what rich countries spend each year on mineral water.⁵

Water and Environmental Sustainability

Today, many women find that they must walk farther to fetch water as it becomes increasingly scarce. Only about 2.5 percent of the Earth's water is fresh and suitable for drinking. Climate change, pollution, and the unsustainable use of water for industry and factory farming are depleting this limited supply. In Peru, nearly all drinking water comes from glaciers that are melting fast and may be completely gone by 2015. Across Africa, all 667 major lakes are drying up.⁶ Lake Chad, once the third-largest lake in Africa, has shrunk by 90 percent, mainly because its waters have been diverted into canals. In Indonesia and Brazil, timber and biofuel plantations are monopolizing and depleting water sources. Around the world, industrial agriculture is contaminating groundwater with toxic pesticides.

These are serious problems, but they have clear solutions, including reclamation of polluted water, water conservation, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and government investment in water infrastructure. Where these measures have been implemented, they have worked well. The US Clean Water Act, for example, detoxified more than half of the country's polluted rivers and lakes (before the law was gutted by the Bush Administration).⁷ Organic farming is proving to be a reliable way to feed people and protect the planet. The problem is not that we lack solutions, but that we haven't yet achieved the political momentum to guarantee that our solutions are implemented. Generating that momentum is one of the goals of MADRE's Economic and Environmental Justice program.

Water and Peace

Increasingly, competition over scarce fresh water is sparking violent clashes between parched communities. The bloodshed in Darfur, for instance, is as much a "resource war" for water as an ethnic conflict. In the Middle East, the drive to control water is one of the less recognized objectives of Israel's occupation of the West Bank. On average, each Israeli settler there uses nine times as much water as each Palestinian.⁸ Since water flows across scores of national boundaries, symptoms of our growing global water crisis—including rivers that no longer reach the sea, sinking groundwater tables, and shrinking lakes—



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Globally, women in rural areas spend one-third of their daily lives fetching water. When water is brought closer to home, women's time and energy is freed up and can be devoted to other activities that benefit them and their families.

threaten to cause new conflicts between countries. As former World Bank President Ismail Serageldin has said, "If the wars of the last century were fought over oil, the wars of the next century will be fought over water."⁹

This is a chilling prediction but not an inevitability. Humanity has a strong track record of peacefully sharing water. In fact, the world's first known peace treaty, signed over 4,000 years ago in Mesopotamia (today's Iraq), was a water-use agreement. Now that fresh water supplies are more endangered than ever, the challenge is to build on that heritage of cooperative resource use and support policies that can promote an equitable distribution of this common global resource.

Water and Economic Justice

Though water scarcity is threatening ecosystems on every continent, the biggest problem is not that the world's water supply is literally running out, but that water is used unsustainably and unequally. Water needs vary from place to place, but a minimum threshold for daily use is about 20 liters a person. The average North American uses 600 liters of water a day. The average person in Africa uses six.¹⁰ Scarcity, then, is mainly the result of poverty and unequal access to resources.

For communities like those of MADRE's partners in Kenya, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, lack of water ser-

to corporations) as a way to make money to pay back loans. Once corporations "own" a country's water, they sell it back to communities, often at unaffordable prices.

In the cities of the Global South, poor people pay the highest prices for water—sometimes 10 times more than wealthier people living in the same city. Millions of families living in slums have no access to water at all. Until MADRE installed public water taps in the Barcenas neighborhood of Guatemala City, women there had to choose between spending 30 percent of their sweatshop earnings on bottled water or relying on water they knew to be contaminated by industrial pollution and sewage.

"The human right to water is essential for living a life of human dignity. It is the pre-requisite for all other human rights."

FORMER UN SECRETARY-GENERAL KOFI ANNAN

vices is a direct result of government discrimination against poor communities and Indigenous Peoples. But cash-strapped governments themselves are pressured by international financial institutions such as the World Bank to privatize their water sources (meaning sell them

Clearly, those suffering the most from lack of water also lack the political voice needed to assert their right to water. This includes poor communities in general and women in particular. Therefore, resolving the world's water crisis requires a political mobilization by and for those most threatened by the crisis. This mobilization is already underway, and important victories have been won, many in Latin America. In Bolivia, Argentina, and Chile, activists have compelled private water corporations to relinquish control over municipal water systems. Uruguay now recognizes the public's right to water in its constitution. And Porto Alegre, Brazil, has created a model public water utility that provides affordable and safe water to all residents.



©ELIZABETH RAPPAPORT

Access to clean water is one of the most powerful drivers of human development, extending opportunity, enhancing dignity, and creating a self-perpetuating cycle of improving health and rising wealth.¹¹

Water as a Human Right

Access to water is a human right. Not only does it underpin the most basic of human rights—people's right to life—access to safe water is also essential to the enjoyment of all other human rights. But international standards don't reflect that reality. Because water is defined as a need instead of a right, control over this critical resource has largely been ceded to corporations. That means that human rights standards need to be

Water for All

In Cameroon and Uganda, access to safe water has reduced child death rates by 20 percent.¹²

changed—and that is just what MADRE is doing. We have joined the international effort for a United Nations water covenant that would commit governments to treat water as an entitlement, guaranteeing that every person has a secure, accessible, and affordable supply of healthy water. Policies that are inadequate or unjust must be changed. We've done it before, and with your support, we can do it again and create a world with clean water for all. ♦

By Yifat Susskind,
Communications Director



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Like this child in Nicaragua, the communities of many of MADRE's sister organizations are among the 1.1 billion people (17 percent of the world population) who are denied access to sufficient and safe water.

Read more about MADRE's campaign online at www.madre.org/water.html

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Work of Women (WOW!) program. "Overview on Women and Water." *Water: The Essential Element*. (January 2007), <http://www.workofwomen.org/Jan2007overview.php> (accessed 16 April 2008).
- ² Barlow, Maude. 2007. *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*. New York: The New Press. 1.
- ³ United Nations Development Programme. "Water and Sanitation: The Gender Dimension." *Water Governance*. <http://www.undp.org/women/mainstream/WaterGovernance.pdf> (accessed 16 April 2008).
- ⁴ World Health Organization. "General Comment on the Right to Water." *The Right to Water*. (2003), http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/rtwrev.pdf (accessed 16 April 2008).
- ⁵ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2006. *Human Development Report 2006. Beyond Scarcity: Power, poverty, and the global water crisis*. New York: United Nations Development Programme. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr06-complete.pdf> (accessed 16 April 2008). 18.
- ⁶ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). 2006. *UNEP Annual Report 2005*.
- ⁷ Sierra Club. "The Clean Water Act: The Key to Cleaner Lakes, Rivers and Coastal Waters." http://www.sierraclub.org/cleanwater/sc_cleanwater_fs.pdf (accessed 16 April 2008).
- ⁸ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2006*, 34.
- ⁹ Serageldin, Ismail. August 2005. <http://www.serageldin.org/water.htm> (accessed 19 April 2008).
- ¹⁰ Barlow, *Blue Covenant*, 5.
- ¹¹ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2006*, 13.
- ¹² *Ibid.* 16.

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Select Program Accomplishments

Women's Health / Combating Violence against Women

NICARAGUA > Sexual Rights are Human Rights

New Partner! MADRE is now working with the Nicaraguan chapter of the Latin American & Caribbean Trans Network to end discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transexual, transgender, and intersex people, and build a strong international sexual rights movement. Together with the Network, MADRE has distributed condoms, provided health consultations for women, and trained activists to use human rights standards to combat discrimination on the basis of sexual identity. MADRE is also providing scholarships to three Nicaraguan sexual rights activists who will learn social project management and administration—skills that will help them further develop the sexual rights movement.

PALESTINE > Ensuring Safe Childbirth under Occupation

In partnership with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS), MADRE is making sure that women get the healthcare they need during pregnancy and childbirth. At the Maythaloun Birthing Center in the northern West Bank, women with healthy pregnancies receive prenatal, labor, delivery and post-natal care, freeing up spaces in over-burdened local hospitals for high-risk births.

Peace Building

IRAQ > MADRE Supports Art Action for Peace

On International Women's Day, supporters of MADRE's partner, the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq gathered to celebrate the long history—in Iraq and around the world—of women's struggle for human rights and to remember women killed in the name of "family honor." Hundreds turned out to enjoy and perform theatre pieces, music, and spoken-word poetry, and to raise a call for peace, genuine democracy, and human rights, including women's rights, in Iraq.

COLOMBIA > Promoting Health and Education for Families Displaced by War

In Cartagena, MADRE is working with women and families who have been displaced by Colombia's long-running armed conflict. MADRE provides funds for school-related expenses for 50 children and daily drinking water for 30 families. With our local partner organization, LIMPAL, MADRE ensures that women displaced by the conflict receive the training and support they need to emerge as leaders in the effort to rebuild their communities.

MADRE's Emergency and Disaster Relief Fund

One of MADRE's strengths is our ability to meet urgent needs of women and families as we work toward a long-term vision of social justice. Through our Emergency and Disaster Relief Fund, MADRE was able to act immediately and effectively when Cyclone Nargis hit Burma recently and after disasters struck Peru and Nicaragua last year. MADRE brought emergency relief directly to women and families most in need. Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to MADRE's Emergency and Disaster Relief Fund at www.madre.org/emergencyfund, call (212) 627-0444 ■ Or you can send a check to MADRE.



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Your contributions to MADRE support women and families in Palestine, Peru, Iraq, Colombia, and Sudan, as pictured left to right.

Economic & Environmental Justice

SUDAN > A Farmers' Union for Women Women in Sudan face poverty, drought, and armed conflict. But inspirational stories emerge—MADRE, in partnership with our sister organization, Zenab for Women in Development, is supporting women farmers whose

labor sustains their families and communities. The women are organizing into unions and demanding access to seeds, tools, and farming supplies. Now, we are working to obtain a tractor, which will enable the women to do three months' work of turning the soil in just half a day.

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the assistance you accorded us during these trying moments and time of need. Although the political situation is slowly returning to normalcy as a result of signing the peace accord by the two protagonists and parliament has enacted the two relevant bills into law, economically the gloomy situation will remain for quite some time.

As a result of insecurity, many people left their farms unattended and some were even torched during the mayhem. Food insecurity is therefore looming. Tourism, particularly for us in Samburu, was virtually brought to a halt. So, although no violence was experienced in Samburu, the overall effect did not spare us.

We thank the international community for the role they played to ensure sanity prevailed on the part of our leaders and for bringing the country back to normalcy.

Kindly, pass our sincere appreciation to all those who made their contributions to us, either in person or through friends.

With deep appreciation,
Rebecca Lolosoli, UMOJA UASO WOMEN'S GROUP



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PERU > Wisdom of Our Elders

Decades of armed violence and government repression have left many elderly Indigenous Quechua women without homes, families, or economic resources. With our partner organization, CHIRAPAQ, MADRE works to reintegrate these women into communities and to develop self-sustaining economic activities, such as farming and raising animals for wool. Through elder-led intergenerational workshops, the women are sharing their traditional knowledge of Quechua culture and history with youth in the community.

Emergency and Disaster Relief Shipment

In April, MADRE sent medical supplies and housing goods to the Center for Indigenous Peoples' Autonomy and Development (CADPI). The shipment included canes, walkers, sensor sticks, and other supplies for disabled people. These items will support CADPI's work to sustain Indigenous communities on the North Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua.

spring 2008 program accomplishments

Turn your Outrage into Action:

Creative Ways to Support MADRE

Sign up for **MADRE Speaks Online** and receive emails with action alerts, updates on MADRE's programs, and articles from women fighting for human rights worldwide. **MORE INFO:** www.madre.org/madrespeaks ■ madrespeaks@madre.org ■ (212) 627-0444



Donate School Supplies to MADRE's Helping Hands Campaign and provide children in Colombia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru, and Kenya with books, educational posters, games, new notebooks, crayons, and art supplies. **MORE INFO:** www.madre.org/helping-hands ■ helpinghands@madre.org ■ (212) 627-0444

Organize a Fundraiser for MADRE. Host a walk-a-thon, bake sale, movie night, concert—the ideas are limitless. We'll help you plan. **MORE INFO:** fundraising@madre.org ■ (212) 627-0444

Host a MADRE Speaker. Spread awareness about US foreign policy and women's human rights struggles around the world, and raise support for MADRE's programs. **MORE INFO:** speakers@madre.org ■ (212) 627-0444

PLAN A HOUSE PARTY TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN IRAQ

War and the rise of religious extremism have unleashed a wave of violence against women in Iraq. Our Iraqi sisters tell us they are experiencing domestic violence, rape, abduction, and forced marriages like never before. To raise awareness of the crisis and support Iraq's only network of women's shelters, MADRE is asking our supporters to come together to host house parties across the country. Please visit www.madre.org to find out more about how you can help support our sisters in Iraq.

Six Easy Ways to Give to MADRE

BECOME A SILVER SUSTAINER. Help launch MADRE's next 25 years by offering 25 months of sustained support for our programs for women and families worldwide. Visit www.madre.org/about/25thanniversary.html to learn more.



DONATE YOUR MILES. Your frequent flyer miles can facilitate human rights trainings for women in conflict zones around the world. (25,000 miles minimum)

ARRANGE A MATCHING GIFT. Many employers will match your gift to MADRE, doubling your contribution at no cost to you. Ask at work; many employers have a simple form that you can fill out.



DONATE A PORTION OF YOUR TAX RETURN. Put your tax dollars to better use by donating some of your tax return to help MADRE combat violence against women, support peace-building activities, and build economic and environmental programs around the world.

HONOR A LOVED ONE. We will send a beautiful card to the person you are honoring. It's a wonderful way to give an anniversary or graduation gift, just say "I'm thinking of you" to a special person, or honor someone's memory.



DONATE APPRECIATED STOCK, ART, OR REAL ESTATE. Claim a tax deduction for the full market value of appreciated stock, bonds, and other securities or property that you have held for over a year.

Contact MADRE at (212) 627-0444 or by email at fundraising@madre.org.

ENSURE THAT YOUR VALUES LIVE ON THROUGH THE JOCELYN CIRCLE

Including MADRE in your will is simple and powerful, and guarantees your continued support for women's human rights for generations to come. Dozens of other MADRE members have chosen to make a lasting impact on the world by joining the Jocelyn Circle, a special group of supporters who have included MADRE in their wills or estate plans. Please call Vivian Stromberg at (212) 627-0444 for more information.

SHOP THE MADRE WEBSTORE



MADRE's online store is expanding to offer you more ways to support women's human rights and find beautiful handcrafted gifts made by the women of our sister organizations. Check out our selection at www.madre.org/about/newfront.html or use the link on our homepage.



MADRE members making a difference

MADRE member Elizabeth Rappaport uses her incredible skill as a photographer to support our programs. Check out some of her wonderful photos in this newsletter and on our website.

Thank you, Elizabeth!

MADRE and Our Sister Organizations in the News



O, The Oprah Magazine

"A Most Amazing Village" A feature article on MADRE's Kenyan sister organization, the Umoja Uaso Women's Group.

Jerusalem Post

Re-prints MADRE's article entitled "Feed People, Not Cars: We Need a Moratorium on Agrofuels"

In These Times

"Biofuels are No Cure for Climate Change"

Common Dreams, ZNet, TruthOut

Post MADRE's article "Who is Killing the Women of Basra?"

OneWorld

"Tourism Treading on Indigenous Land, Says Rights Group"

UN Radio

Julie Walker interviews MADRE Communications Director Yifat Susskind on violence against women in Iraq.

CounterPunch, ZNet

Post MADRE's article "Bush's Legacy VS. African Women's Lives"

NPR Radio

"Iraq: What's Next for the U.S.?" Radio interview with OWFI Director Yanar Mohammed on the situation in Iraq.

OneWorld

"Gender Rethink Urged for Embattled Kenya"

WBAI Radio

Rebecca Myles interviews MADRE Communications Director Yifat Susskind on the conflict in Kenya and the impact on women.

Feministing, ZNet, CounterPunch

Post MADRE's op-ed "Iraqi Women Say No to US Occupation"

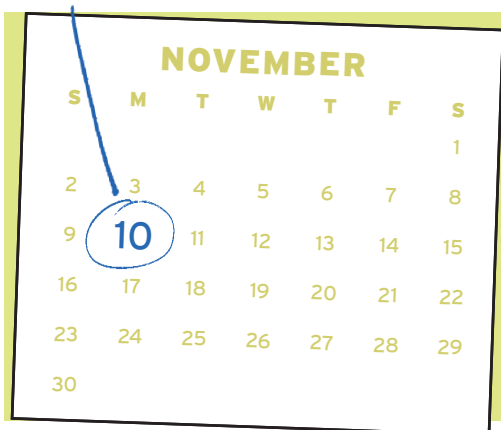
IRIN News

"Kenya: Making Ends Meet in Post-Election Samburu"

TruthOut, Guerilla News Network, OneWorld US, Common Dreams

Post MADRE's statement on the Colombia free trade agreement

Save the Date!



MADRE is celebrating 25 years of Rights,
Resources and Results for Women
Worldwide. Join us **NOVEMBER 10, 2008**

25TH ANNIVERSARY



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