

MADRE

Spring 2018

www.madre.org



35 Years of Fighting for Feminist Futures





©Midwives for Peace

Dear Friend,

Think ahead. What future are you fighting for? The question might seem impossible to answer. In a world where new crises seem to emerge every day, it can be hard to predict even what tomorrow will look like.

But it's so important that we try — because the future belongs to those who can see it.

Thirty-five years ago, the women who founded MADRE gave their answer to that question. They saw the future we all deserve — a time of peace and justice, where every woman and girl is guaranteed her rights and where every community thrives — and created MADRE as a vehicle to help carry us on the journey there.

I'm so happy to bring you this special 35th anniversary issue of our newsletter. In it, you'll find stories of the difference we have made — progress made possible by your support. I hope it inspires you to look forward to all of the powerful changes yet to come.

Together, we'll use the next 35 years to bring us even closer to our progressive vision and even closer to a world of gender justice.

We'll defend people and our planet against abuse and exploitation, and create a world where we live in balance with our resources and ecosystems. We'll prevent the next wars and support women peacebuilders helping their war-torn communities heal. We'll create new protections to end gender violence.

We'll do all this, standing on the shoulders of the powerful activists who came before us and standing side-by-side — you, MADRE and our incredible family of grassroots partners worldwide.

With eyes on the future,

Yifat Susskind

P.S. As we celebrate Mother's Day, I can't separate my dreams for the next 35 years from my hopes for my two sons and for all children. I know that the feminist future I'm pushing for will be a world safer and healthier for all children to grow up in. Thank you for doing your part to make that future a reality.

Cover images: ©Elizabeth Rappaport
Above, Executive Director Yifat Susskind (3rd from right) with members
of Midwives for Peace, a network of Palestinian and Israeli midwives.

Happy Mother's Day!

The Birth of MADRE

In the summer of 1983, a group of women from Nicaragua extended an invitation to a small group of women activists, artists and organizers in the United States. The Nicaraguan women were living through the worst days of a 10-year undeclared war, their communities targeted by right-wing contra militias illegally trained and funded by the US.



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The women who traveled to Nicaragua that summer came home with a commitment to the women they met there. They set out to build an organization that would respond to the needs of women and families worldwide, especially those threatened by US militarism. And they would give people in the United States the means to demand alternatives to unjust policies.

Inspired by the Women's Committees of Nicaragua — mothers determined to protect their children from violence and safeguard their futures — they named the organization MADRE.

To learn more about this history, visit www.madre.org/history



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Messages from the Mothers of MADRE

“Every day, my daughter teaches me about joy and curiosity. She’s so eager to learn and to connect with the world around her, and I want to give her every opportunity to feed that knowledge. As a mother and as a part of MADRE, I feel connected to all the women and mothers we partner with around the world, creating communities where girls are educated and encouraged to grow into leaders.”

-Natalia Caruso, Director of Partnerships, MADRE



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“When I set out to become a leader in my community, I did it for my children, so that I could create a safe and healthy place for them to grow up. And I did it for my daughters, so that they could look at me and say, ‘I can be a proud Indigenous woman leader, just like my mother.’”

-Engracia Mendoza, MUIXIL, MADRE's partner organization in Guatemala

Make a Gift in Honor of a Mother in Your Life

Are you looking for a meaningful way to celebrate a mother in your life this Mother's Day? Make a gift in their honor at www.madre.org/mother. We'll send them a beautiful card notifying them of your thoughtful gift.



Snapshots from 35 Years

1983 MADRE formed when women activists in the US joined hands with mothers in Nicaragua to speak out against the US-sponsored war in Nicaragua. Through person-to-person connections, we brought humanitarian aid and medical supplies to communities under siege across Central America.



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TODAY Thirty-five years later, the Nicaraguan communities we partner with have been transformed. We've helped them heal from those years of war, through women's clinics and community outreach initiatives that you support. And Indigenous women activists, like our partners at Wangki Tangni, have organized to push for policies from their government that confront gender violence and protect women's rights.

◀ **Rose Cunningham** leads our partner organization Wangki Tangni and was recently elected the first Indigenous woman mayor of her hometown of Waspam! Your support of MADRE has helped bring Rose tools and resources to organize her community and advance her leadership — thank you!



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1991 When the Gulf War was looming, we expanded our work into the Middle East. We brought together women from Iraq, Egypt, Palestine, Israel and the US to call for an end to the sanctions on Iraq. And we brought 10 tons of milk and medicines to hospitals in Iraq that were destroyed by US bombings.

TODAY Our alliances with Iraqi women's rights activists, like our partners at the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, have created new ways for social justice movements to grow. Your support helps sustain a network of women's shelters across Iraq that saves lives and mentors and transforms survivors of violence into the next generation of Iraqi women's rights leaders. What's more, we've helped forge connections between women and LGBTIQ Iraqis to push for gender justice together.



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◀ *“When we began our partnership with MADRE, we had one shelter in Baghdad. Now we have 11 shelters and safe houses throughout Iraq. Today, we are a leading women's rights organization, and things in our country are beginning to change. And we have changed. When ISIS invaded Iraq and enslaved thousands of women, we were able to take action. Now we are doing for those women what MADRE did for us: extending our hands in friendship and asking what they need to heal their lives and rebuild their communities.”* - Yanar Mohammed (left), Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq



©Daniel Smith

What's Next: Since 2014, our brave Iraqi partners have risked their lives to document human rights violations against women and LGBTIQ people by ISIS fighters. Now, we're using the evidence they've gathered to change international law — and not just for Iraqis. We're advocating for a new treaty on crimes against humanity to include protections for people everywhere who face abuse and violence because they defy gender norms. Visit www.madre.org/reimaginingjustice to learn more.

of Fighting for Feminist Futures

2001 With Colombia seized by a decades-long civil war, we launched partnerships with grassroots organizations to provide urgent care and long-term counseling for women and families. And we mobilized to spotlight the role of US policies in fueling war and rights violations there.

TODAY For the first time in generations, a new peace agreement has brought the end of war in Colombia into sight. But for the dream of peace to be realized, survivors will need healing and justice. Thanks to your support, MADRE and our partners have already created the activist networks that will help move peace from paper to practice. Today, we're working in communities to promote healing, and we're amplifying the voices of grassroots peacebuilders in policymaking.

“For decades, militants in Colombia’s armed conflict used rape to terrorize women and their communities. After experiencing such violence, these women need support to find their own peace. Through our work with MADRE, women are learning how to envision the peaceful future they deserve.” – Stella Duque, Taller de Vida

2007 We launched our Food for Life campaign to confront the harmful impacts of unsustainable resource use and economic greed. As more people began to realize the threat of climate change and search for solutions, MADRE and our partners provided answers rooted in the experiences of grassroots women on the frontlines of environmental crisis.



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TODAY Our work with Women Climate Defenders elevates the leadership of rural and Indigenous women to combat climate change. In places like Kenya, Sudan and Nicaragua, we help women protect their communities by digging wells, setting up greenhouses, installing clean water tanks and providing seeds for farming. And we bring women into policymaking spaces, from local to global, where they can demand policies that respect people and the planet. Visit our website at www.madre.org/climatedefenders to watch a video about this work!



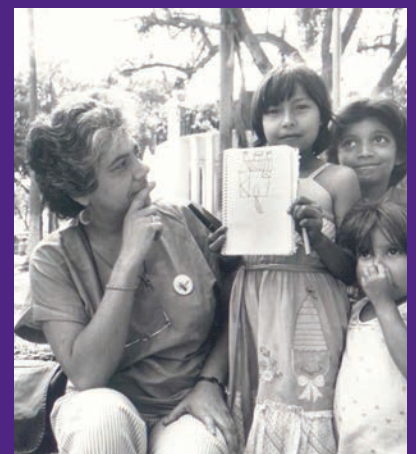
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Our Tribute to Vivian Stromberg (1941-2015)

“I am struck so deeply by what makes us MADRE, by how we become sisters — country to country, friend to friend, woman to woman — connected as much by the need to survive as by an extraordinary generosity of both heart and hand.”

– Vivian Stromberg, MADRE co-founder and former Executive Director

For decades, Vivian was a pioneering leader of MADRE. Her committed partnership with grassroots women leaders worldwide and her fearless advocacy for women’s rights propelled our work and our wins. And as we advance our progressive vision in the next 35 years of MADRE, we will be guided by her legacy. ¡Vivian Stromberg, Presente!



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Your Support in Action

► Your support enabled us to organize workshops on women's political participation and leadership in **Kenya**. Five members of our partner organization in Kenya, the Indigenous Information Network, ran for local office. What's more, two of them won their elections! Now they're positioned to create and strengthen policies that advance women's rights.

Visit our website to check out a profile of one woman who was recently elected, Alice Lesepe! www.madre.org/alice



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Thanks to you, our Helping Hands humanitarian aid program delivered an ultrasound machine to a remote community in **Nicaragua**! Doctors will now be able to prevent, diagnose and treat dangerous conditions for pregnant women.



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◀ On a recent trip to **Guatemala**, we brought together Indigenous women leaders helping their communities confront poverty, discrimination and the aftermath of genocide. We held traditional healing workshops, allowing mothers to teach their daughters about their culture as they struggle to build the future they want for their children.

"When I first visited this community in Guatemala 10 years ago, I could see that women were still weighed down by the trauma of the genocide they'd survived," Natalia, our Director of Partnerships reflected. "Now, it's different. After years of organizing together, the women can see new possibilities for the future. They tell me of their plans to step forward as leaders, educate their children, and demand change. This is the difference you can see when you partner with a community for the long haul."

As bombs exploded in Ghouta, **Syria**, women and families were huddled in shelters trying to survive. Thanks to your generosity, we sent emergency funds through our partners at Women Now for Development to distribute humanitarian aid and help rebuild a women's center destroyed by an airstrike.

► Thanks to your support, we distributed seeds to women farmers in remote communities in **Nicaragua** to prepare for the planting season ahead. With their crops, these women can feed their children and raise money to sustain their families.



©Wangki Tangni



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Travel with Us to Kenya!

We invite you to join Executive Director Yifat Susskind on a journey to Kenya, where Indigenous women are defending human rights and innovating sustainable solutions to climate change. From the capital city of Nairobi, to the vibrant rural communities of our partners, to a safari through the Maasai Mara, this will be a voyage to remember. We hope you'll join us! To learn more visit www.madre.org/kenya2018



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NEW CAMPAIGN!

No Borders on Gender Justice

The Trump Administration and right-wing governments around the world are targeting the rights of women, LGBTIQ people, Muslims, refugees and migrants, people of color and Indigenous Peoples. Communities that have long faced discrimination and violence are even more under threat.

We launched our **No Borders on Gender Justice** campaign to confront this crisis by connecting and supporting US and global social justice activists.

We bring activists together across borders and launch advocacy efforts to uncover and denounce violations and demand rights-based policies. We sustain the work of social justice movements, and we provide immediate protection to those most at risk.

Here are some campaign highlights of your membership in action!

Your support helps provide legal training for immigrant asylum seekers and know-your-rights education for Muslim women interfacing with ICE agents.

We're launching an international legal petition to challenge the treatment of immigrant women survivors of gender violence in US immigration detention centers. We're partnering with local organizations in the US Southwest to advance this work, mobilizing our global network of activist connections and our expertise in international human rights.

We're bringing US and global activists together to build strategies to confront the right-wing agenda and support each other's work. Visit us at www.madre.org/nobordersvoices to hear directly from the activists taking part.

Visit our website at www.madre.org/noborders to find out more about this campaign!



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YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION:

No Borders on a Mother's Love

The bond between a mother and child is powerful beyond words. She will risk it all and work harder than she thought possible, to make sure her child is safe and well.

Harmful government policies that separate families and undermine communities are an attack on that bond. This Mother's Day, we're standing with mothers under attack by right-wing policies of division.

- In Tijuana, Mexico, we're supporting a group of mothers who were deported from the US and separated from their children — sometimes for years on end. Our support helps them to provide legal aid and counseling, and to advocate for just immigration policies.
- We're partnering with a network of Palestinian and Israeli midwives. In the West Bank, where military checkpoints prevent pregnant women from accessing clinics, we help these midwives provide vital prenatal and birthing care.

Visit www.madre.org/amotherslove to find out more.

Your Gift to Honor 35 Years of Fighting for Feminist Futures

We have been fighting for feminist futures for 35 years now. Your gift to MADRE today will help propel us forward into the next 35 years, building on that progress and changing the lives of women and families worldwide.

Please make your most generous gift to transform lives, strengthen communities and advance our work with women and girls worldwide. To make a donation, visit www.madre.org/springnews