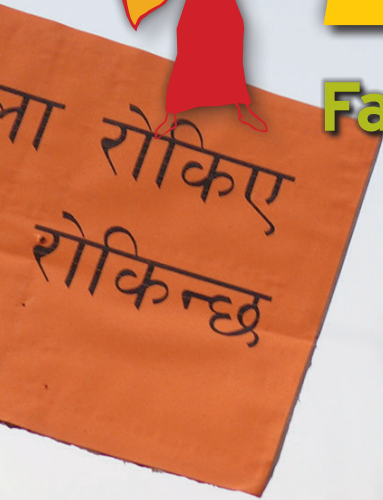




# MADRE

Fall 2020

speaks



The Future  
Depends on Caring





**MADRE**

Fighting for Feminist Futures

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## A Message from Yifat

# Dear MADRE member,

Imagine a world where caring for each other mattered more than anything else.

Lucille Clifton wrote that “we cannot create what we can’t imagine,” but we don’t have to go far to see glimmers of what this world could be. Our partners are already building it, day by day, in their communities.

In Lebanon, our partners are setting up schools to educate Syrian refugee girls whose childhoods have been stolen from them by war. In Sudan, women farmers are banding together to feed their families and neighbors, sharing seeds and their strength. And as the COVID-19 pandemic surges, they’ve united to protect each other and stop the spread of the virus.

Our partners are leading with love and care, and we see this dedication as they take concrete steps to confront crises. Each step brings us closer to our shared vision — a world where caring drives action, from local to global.

Right now, the world is at a crossroads. The scale of crises we face — from pandemic to racial injustice to climate catastrophe — has mobilized us like never before. Many are awakening to possibilities they never thought they’d see in their lifetimes.

We could realize the feminist call for a global ceasefire — an end to wars so that we can care for each other and heal. We could align the world in defense of Black lives and racial justice. We can name the policies we need to create a caring way of life — from robust health services to funding for care work — and win the fight to make them a reality. These aren’t just dreams. In the pages of this newsletter, you’ll see how MADRE and our partners are making them real right now.

While the forces of hate and authoritarianism confront us, we must all continue the struggle for the future we want. I hope our partners’ and members’ actions, which you will read about in this newsletter, will keep that fire burning inside you.



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In solidarity,

Yifat Susskind  
Executive Director

*On the cover:  
MADRE partners, Kamala Thapa and Yasso Bhattachan (left to right) in Nepal, show their caring by marching for Indigenous rights. ©MADRE*

# How We're Responding to COVID-19 Crisis



Here's a glimpse at how MADRE partners are responding to the pandemic — and the economic fallout and hunger crisis it has triggered.



In Kenya, where our partners at the **Indigenous Information Network** face drought, we have worked for years to set up tanks to collect rainwater for drinking and cooking. Now, community members are repurposing them as handwashing stations.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, we supported local women's groups to protect people from Ebola. Now, our partners at the grassroots women's organization **SOFEPADE** are using that hard-won expertise to equip hospitals, schools, refugee camps, and medical centers with supplies and disinfectants to protect against the pandemic.



We've been supporting our partners, the **National Women's Indigenous Forum** in Nepal, to strengthen communities by providing tools and resources to sustain local farms. Now, with MADRE, our partners can reach those most seriously affected by the pandemic lockdown and distribute food aid.

**Wangki Tangni**, an Indigenous women's organization in Nicaragua, has worked with MADRE to build a network of grassroots activists and train local midwives. Now they are providing them with supplies to prevent maternal and infant mortality as the area's hospitals become overwhelmed with COVID-19 cases. Our partners are also sharing information on keeping safe from COVID-19 through their longstanding human rights radio program, which reaches 115 remote villages.



Long before the COVID-19 crisis, our partners at **Food4Humanity** in Yemen had been advocating for a ceasefire to end years of war. Under the pandemic, they have amplified their call, as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world deepens. With MADRE support, they are also training local organizers and health workers to carry out their urgent work.

MADRE works with our partners at the **Syrian Women's League** to educate and protect refugee women, adolescents and children in Lebanon. Now, through the Garsah community center, they are offering a safe space for urgently-needed food, hygiene kits and mental health services.

MADRE supports our long-term partner **Zenab for Women in Development** in Sudan to build a strong network of women farmers in rural communities. Now, they are raising awareness about COVID-19 prevention in rural areas, distributing hygiene kits and food baskets to 10,000 families. ♦





# A Letter From MADRE Partners Uniting In Solidarity for Black Lives

*This summer, the eyes of the world turned to the US as an uprising surged against racial injustice and police brutality. MADRE and our partners worldwide recognize the power of global solidarity in the defense of Black lives. Many of our partners and global feminist activists worldwide know well the devastation of racist state violence and authoritarian attacks. In this statement, signed by over 100 organizations and individuals worldwide from Colombia to Yemen, they share their solidarity.*

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**A**s feminist activists, grassroots organizers and human rights defenders from Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, we stand with activists across the US marching and mobilizing for justice for Black lives. We mourn the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Ahmaud Arbery, Regis Korchinski, David McAtee, Sean Reed, Robert Johnson Jr., Ashlynn Lisby — and countless others — whose killings have revealed again the systemic racism and discrimination that Black people in the US have faced for generations. We say their names.

Our feminist struggles for justice, peace, and human rights are deeply tied to Black peoples' struggles in the US.

Our solidarity is deepened by our own experiences of racist US wars and militarism. We live with the bitter legacies of the US occupation of Haiti and Iraq, and the training and funding of militaries and armed groups in Colombia, Guatemala and Nicaragua. We struggle for an end to US-backed occupation in Palestine and to bombing and blockade in Yemen. We see the same weapons on your streets and ours. And we continue to confront the harms of US support for security forces that threaten our lands and our bodies, from Brazil to the Philippines.

And we too have experienced moments like this one — where people rise up to say “enough” and to birth a new future. We know that, right now, the future hangs in the balance between possibility and peril.

The brutal police and military crackdowns on protests across the US reveal the measures that some are willing to take to maintain the status quo. Police responded to protests with aggression, hurling tear gas, firing rubber bullets, and exploding flash-bang grenades into crowds. The US National Guard was activated and attacked activists by firing paint rounds and tear gas. Trump's threats, to use the label of “domestic terrorism” and to send in the military to quell the protests, are a familiar strategy. We know all too well that the designation of “terrorist” can be used to silence dissent, quash political opposition, and prevent activism. The same tactics used to target activists in our communities are being used to oppress Black people in the US.

But beyond danger, we know that there is possibility. It lies in each person who refuses racist authoritarianism and who takes collective action to demand justice.

And it lies in our organizing together for our joint liberation. As we share strategies across borders, honed by our experience facing down authoritarianism and oppression, we can build a movement that is all the more powerful. We can make changes that once seemed impossible — if we come together, mobilize, and demand transformational action.

To the protestors organizing tirelessly, putting your lives on the line: we are with you. We commit ourselves to the defense of Black lives. You have our love and solidarity to shape a more just, peaceful world. ♦

# VIVA Girls!

Through our VIVA Girls initiative, MADRE partners with young women and girls to support their leadership, amplify their voices, and build networks to connect girl leaders.

To learn more about VIVA Girls — visit: [madre.org/vivagirls](http://madre.org/vivagirls).



A girl leader gives a speech at the closing ceremony of the workshop. ©Mali Musso

## VIVA Girls Snapshot

### *Amplifying the Insights of Girls Living with Armed Conflict in Mali*

**A**fter their recent civil war, people in Mali are still recovering, and violence flares up even years after a peace agreement was signed. Women and girls were particularly targeted with violence during the war and now seek to rebuild their lives and communities. And through this, girls grapple with stigma and the narrow labels they are assigned by their communities: either victims or heroes who overcame great obstacles.



©Mali Musso



Girls capture their stories through photography during the workshop. ©Mali Musso

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*"I found my passion for photography through this program, and I am now excited to continue my studies. I really want to say thanks to Mali Musso because they selected the girls who really needed this."*

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**The Solution:** Sadya, a young activist and founder of a grassroots organization called Mali Musso, wanted to give girls the opportunity to tell their own stories in a new way. She wanted people to pay attention to the systemic issues girls face and to learn from the insights that girls in her community can offer.

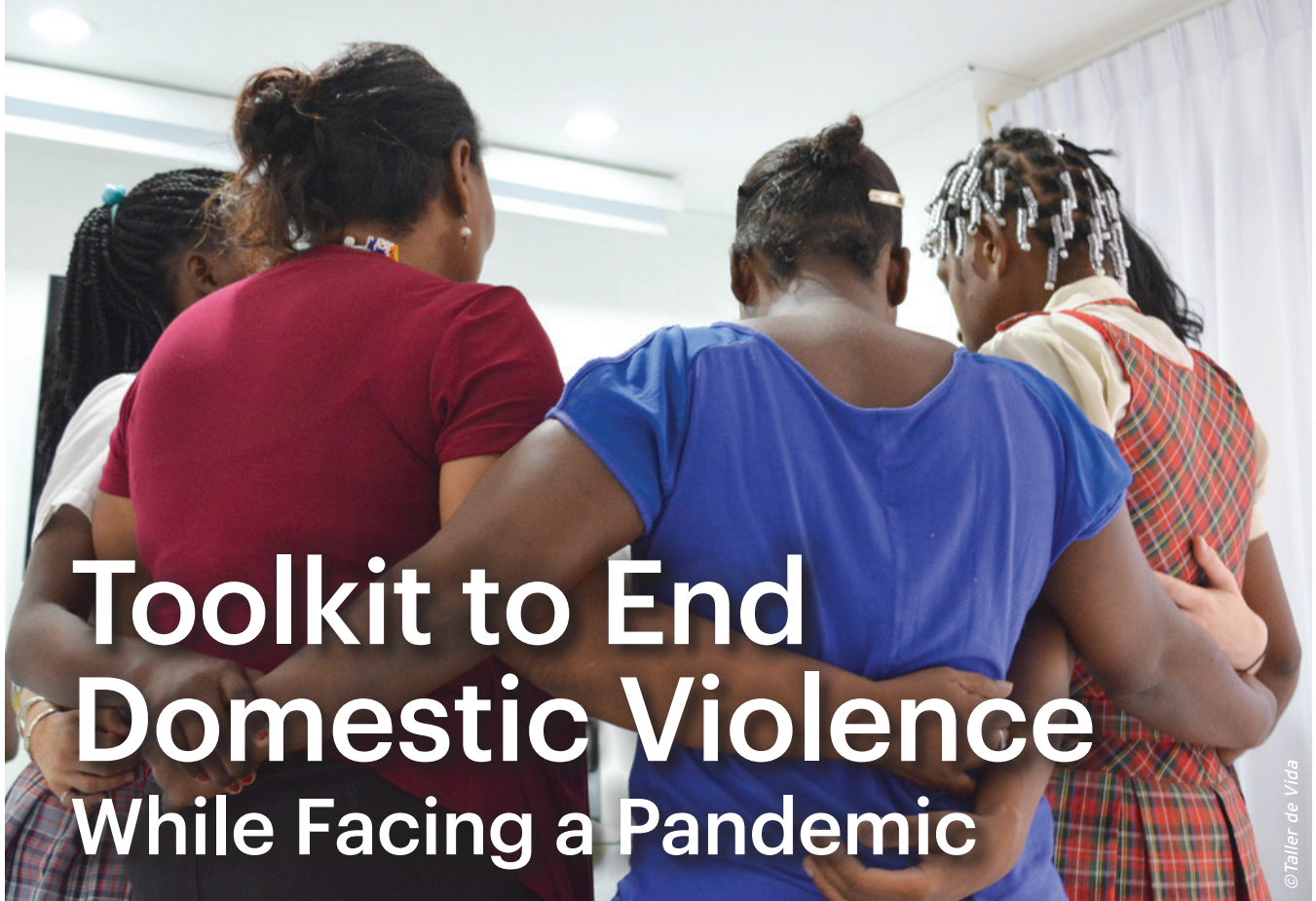
Through Mali Musso, and with a MADRE grant from VIVA Girls, Sadya held a storytelling workshop for 25 girls. There, girls expressed their perspectives through writing, painting, and photography. The workshops were designed to ensure that all girls — especially girls who never had the chance to attend or finish school because of the war — could amplify their voices. The workshop allowed girls to share how they personally experienced the ongoing violence in Mali and their forward-looking strategies to bring peace and justice.

At the end of the first workshop, the girls wanted to ensure that the lessons and opportunities from this workshop were shared beyond those present. To support this, Mali Musso has connected girls with mentors who can help them as they replicate and reimagine this workshop in their local areas. Already, some of the girls have conducted leadership and community-building activities, including a discussion on reproductive rights.

They are also capturing the insights of the girls into a booklet to bring the girls' voices into the spaces where decisions are being made about them, including in policymaking. The stories highlight the systemic conditions and impacts created by long-term conflict, like early childhood marriage, sexual violence and lack of access to education. They also highlight the brilliance and resilience of the girls.

Thank you for your support that sustains innovative work led by girls! ♦





©Taller de Vida

# Toolkit to End Domestic Violence While Facing a Pandemic

**C**alls and texts to domestic violence hotlines across the world have spiked under the pandemic — as people are trapped with their abusers, isolated from their friends and families, and blocked off from avenues of escape.

Lives are in danger every day. And for people facing war and poverty, like in the places where MADRE works worldwide, the picture is even more grim.

In warzones of Yemen or the Democratic Republic of Congo, health systems have crumbled, and care services for survivors of domestic violence are scarce. In rural, remote villages in places like Nicaragua, safety and shelter have always been difficult for people to access — even before the pandemic forced new restrictions on movement.

To confront this crisis, we must do more than simply raise awareness. **We need to protect people right away.** Thankfully, MADRE is mobilizing a plan of action with grassroots feminist partners worldwide to provide solutions.

Read the toolkit at [madre.org/domesticviolencecrisis](https://madre.org/domesticviolencecrisis) and please also share the toolkit widely with all who would find it helpful. This work is critical right now, and we are grateful to have your support.

**That's why we created an important new toolkit for confronting domestic violence during this pandemic.** It offers strategies by and for grassroots organizations around the world, including media messaging scripts, tips and interactive resources for community engagement.

What's more, domestic violence is too often narrowly defined as intimate partner abuse. But we know that it includes violations like forced early marriage and violence against LGBTIQ+ family members. Our toolkit provides concrete guidance to confront these multiple forms of abuse.

Our work with a global network of grassroots partners for over 36 years makes this toolkit possible. And we are using it to train organizations like those working with Indigenous women in Nepal, trans youth in Africa, and rural girls in Guatemala. With your support, we not only fund grassroots women's innovative solutions — we mobilize their knowledge to save lives. ♦



# A Meaningful Impact: Camilla's Journey to MADRE

**M**y name is Camilla. I grew up in Durban, a coastal town along the shores of South Africa and lived most of my young adult life with my mom and younger sister in Johannesburg. Growing up in a single parent household with a younger sister definitely shaped my views and experiences. I've always been sensitive to other single mothers like mine and have been drawn to projects centered around women in my surrounding communities. This became more apparent when I chose to attend an all-girls high school; I didn't realize it then, but I always had a need to create spaces for uplifting women's voices and experiences.

Shortly after graduating college, I completed my certification to teach English and set off on my travel journey. It's been five years since then, and I have been fortunate to have lived, worked and volunteered in Thailand, Vietnam, India, Brazil, Argentina and Peru. I'm currently based in China.

I discovered MADRE at a stage in my life where I was looking to make a more meaningful impact. From the onset of COVID-19, I took my quarantine time to research organizations that I could support. Sifting through the many uplifting options out there, I felt a tingling sensation when I came across *MADRE*— finally, an organization that spoke to me and addressed issues I feel passionate about! Empowering grassroots women through skill-sharing, advocating for just economic and environmental policies, and providing relief aid during the trauma of war and gender violence.

I recently became a monthly donor and am really excited to be a part of such a remarkable organization. There is so much more I would like to contribute, and for a start, being a monthly Lifeline donor to MADRE excites me because I share MADRE's values. I know my monthly donations are going to the right channels and contributing to a better world. As so accurately expressed by Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." ♦

## Channel your giving

to grassroots leaders creating lasting change by becoming a monthly Lifeline donor today!

As a Lifeline, your steady support enables our partners to build feminist futures — because they know they can count on you. Your monthly giving helps us respond immediately when disaster strikes and stand by our partners for the long term.

Please make a monthly gift to support MADRE's lifesaving work worldwide!

Visit [madre.org/LifelineFall](https://madre.org/LifelineFall) to learn more about what monthly giving makes possible!





## Watch and listen to recent webinars and online events by MADRE at [madre.org/media](https://www.madre.org/media)

- View a congressional briefing, **Indigenous Women Lead: Charting a Just Recovery From the Pandemic**, with MADRE Indigenous partners and Representative Deb Haaland.
- Watch a virtual event with MADRE Executive Director, Yifat Susskind, **Resilience Through Crisis: A Way Forward**. Yifat discusses MADRE's strategy as we confront the pandemic, authoritarianism, and racist state violence.
- Hear Yifat on the podcast **Live Girl**, where she discusses what it means to think like a mother and to root our action in care.
- Listen to Yifat on the podcast **Nobody Told Me!** She shared how COVID-19 is impacting survivors of domestic violence, and how women are confronting the crisis.
- And so much more!



**Stay updated**  
on our work with our  
partners worldwide at  
[madre.org/updates](https://www.madre.org/updates)

MADRE partners are care in action. From speaking up at protests and workshops to distributing food aid and demonstrating proper handwashing, our partners are making change in their communities. ©MADRE and ©Wangki Tangni