



MADRE

Fall 2015

www.madre.org

Dear Friend,

In September, we said goodbye to the incomparable Vivian Stromberg, as fierce a global activist for women's human rights as ever was.

A founder of MADRE, for decades she led us as the Executive Director. She stood squarely with grassroots women struggling for their rights worldwide. And she was my mentor and my

friend. Our hearts break at her passing, but they are filled again and again by all that she has left us.



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Whether or not you ever met Vivian, you already know her. You share her vision of a world where all women live full and joyful lives, and where all human rights are guaranteed. Her legacy lives on in you, in MADRE and in the vital work we support together.

Our grassroots sisters worldwide are determined to build safer communities and protect their rights. Like our brave on-the-ground activist partners in Iraq, who risk their lives to bring women and girls living in ISIS territory to our safe houses. Like our Indigenous sisters in Nicaragua who open their homes to shelter each other from violence. And like all our partners who refuse to settle for the status quo and who demand real action from policymakers.

Together with you, we take our anger at injustice and transform it into positive action. Vivian exuded that spirit with every breath, and so do our sisters worldwide.

In this newsletter, you'll read about young women who, thanks to you and to the leadership of our sisters, have transformed themselves into empowered activists. With your help, these new leaders are lighting our way, carrying the torch of past successes you helped make possible.

With gratitude,

Yifat Susskind
MADRE Executive Director

Your Support in Action:

Haven and Hope for Iraqi Women and Girls Fleeing ISIS: ISIS has systematically raped and kidnapped women and girls into sexual slavery. But you are helping to end the suffering. With your support, MADRE is opening a brand new shelter and rape crisis center for girls and women fleeing sexual slavery. Here, women and girls receive food, shelter, medical care and counseling.

Protection for Children of War in Colombia: “Before, no one valued me,” a young woman and former child soldier told us. “But then I came to you, and I learned to value myself.” Your support of our art therapy and counseling programs is now offering a new life to 75 young survivors of war and sexual violence. Thank you!

In Memory of Vivian Stromberg

Vivian’s legacy is a beacon, drawing us forward to be bold, creative and even more committed as we stand together with grassroots women worldwide.

What better way to honor the work of MADRE that Vivian devoted much of her life to—sustaining women’s organizing in defense of their rights, locally and globally—than with a gift in her memory.

YOUR GIFT TODAY HELPS PROPEL THE MOMENTUM THAT VIVIAN PIONEERED.



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Learn more at www.madre.org/vivian

MADRE EXPENSES

Program Services **87%**

Administrative & General **6%**

Fundraising **7%**



Thank you for all you make possible through your support of MADRE! We can only do this work because we have you standing with us. To learn more about the impact of your support and to donate, visit www.madre.org/mysupport.

You Are The Key to Change!

Meet these inspiring young women who transformed from survivors into empowered activists—thanks to you!



Samira's Story

Eight years ago, Samira was a young college student in Iraq, excited for what the future had to offer.

But her life changed when a trusted family friend raped her. Instead of love and support from her parents, they rejected her and told her that she should be killed for the shame she brought on her family.

Like all too many rape survivors in Iraq, Samira faced an unthinkable choice: run away or be murdered to restore her family's "honor."

Samira's name has been changed and she does not appear in photos here.

Women in Iraq face life-threatening violence. Your support brings them hope and healing.

How You Helped Unlock a Door to Change

But thanks to you, Samira was not alone.

With your support, MADRE and the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) help women and girls threatened with deadly violence find safety. We offer emergency transportation to our shelters,

food, clothing, counseling and community.

When Samira escaped to the OWFI shelter in Baghdad, she found safe haven and the support she needed to heal from her trauma. She received trainings about her human rights. Slowly but surely, she felt her power growing.



Yanar Mohammed, leader of OWFI, counsels a woman at a MADRE-supported shelter in Iraq.

Your Impact: Turning Survivors into Activists

At OWFI, Samira gained the confidence to rebuild her life. Now an OWFI leader, she reaches out to young women whose devastating stories mirror her own. And she finds comfort in helping them to heal and transform.

Thanks to you, threatened women like Samira find escape, protection, and friends to lean on. What's more, they reimagine their lives as empowered activists—together. Thank you!



"It's been a really long journey to get where I am today," Samira told us. "But now, I am conquering the world. If you asked me today about the most important decision I've made, it was opening the door and escaping my house."

Clara's Story

Thousands of young women have been caught in the crosshairs of Colombia's 50-year war. They've been uprooted from their homes, conscripted as child soldiers and targeted with sexual violence.

Clara was only eight years old when she was abandoned by her mother and forced to live on the street. Then, a paramilitary group took over her village. They told her she had a decision to make: work for us, or we'll leave you to starve.



Clara is not her real name, and she obscures her face in photos to protect her safety.

This isn't the end of their stories. Thanks to you, young women like Samira and Clara are not alone.

OPEN TO LEARN MORE



Theater classes help children of war to heal and grow.

Thanks to you, MADRE and our local partners Taller de Vida provide trauma counseling and healing art therapy to former girl child soldiers and survivors of sexual violence.

Clara managed to escape after two years in the armed group, and she found her way to Taller de Vida. With your support, Clara attended dance and theater classes, giving her a vital, creative outlet to express and heal from her traumas.

"I still have a long way to go," she told us. "But I freed myself through theater."

Today, Clara is a bright, confident young woman committed to helping young girls like herself. She works as a theater instructor with Taller de Vida, teaching children the same exercises she learned to help her heal from her own pain.

Now, she says, "I'm a survivor, and I will keep moving forward."

Thanks to you, Clara and other young women war survivors are transforming their lives from one of violence to one of peace. Thank you!



Yifat visiting a dance class at Taller de Vida.