



The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund

Le fonds du Primat pour le secours et le développement mondial

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Dear friends,

“Women hold up half the sky.”

(Chinese proverb)

May 14 is Mother's Day in Canada, the day we set aside to honour the women in our lives who have provided us with lifelong nurturing, caring, protection and advice. A special day when we remember their persistence, their energy, their strength, their laughter – and their perceptive leadership of home, family and community.



The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) is humbled by the amazing work of our partners around the world to promote gender and economic equity. Much of the work they do focuses on women and the powerful impact that supporting them has on their families, communities and countries.

I am encouraged by organizations like Madre Tierra (“Mother Earth”), and one of its founders, Ramona Leyva. Formed in 1993 in refugee camps on the Mexican border during Guatemala's civil war, Madre Tierra was initially established to support women in the camps and assist with their eventual resettlement after the war's end.



“While in the camps, we were responding to the malnutrition of our elders and children, and to the jailing of our youth by Mexican immigration authorities,” Ramona recalls. “We managed to keep our community together while developing the capacity for income generation. But one voice is not enough – we need to work as a collective to demand our rights.”

Madre Tierra has grown into a grassroots association of 300 local rural and indigenous women. It is organized, led and run by women, and focuses on capacity development, gender rights, reproductive health for both girls and boys, income generation and food security. Over the years, they have secured the rights of women to co-own land, work outside the home and to have a voice and vote on community and municipal councils.

Madre Tierra has changed the lives of women like Olinda Leiva, who first became involved when she was given a cow

Women of Madre Tierra

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to supplement the nutrition of her four children. Although her husband reacted with violence when she joined, Olinda's involvement with Madre Tierra has given her courage and the knowledge that "women are not here only to bear children and to be at home; women can be independent from men." Madre Tierra changed her husband as well – after attending an agricultural training session in which he observed how much the female participants were contributing, he gained a new respect and appreciation for Olinda, her work and her community leadership.

Madre Tierra also addresses the issues of environmental risk and the impact of large banana, sugar cane and African palm agribusinesses in Guatemala that have increased water scarcity, threatened the traditional seeds used in smaller farms, and contaminated both water and fields with pesticides and chemicals. The increased water scarcity is a threat not only to the environment but to food security in the region.

With the help of PWRDF, Madre Tierra has led the way in improved water storage by training women to obtain and install 1500-litre tanks for drip irrigation while, at the same time, advocating respect for their water rights with government officials.

PWRDF is honoured to stand with our partners, with women like Ramona and Olinda and with organizations like Madre Tierra in more than twenty countries around the world. We support women to counteract gender-based violence; to have healthy pregnancies and positive birth outcomes; to feed their children nutritious food; to have access to education and skills that can lead to employment; to have access to clean water and sanitation; to make their own choices to benefit themselves and their families.

In recognition of Mother's Day, we invite you to honour those who hold up half the sky with a gift to PWRDF.

Your gift – in any amount – will help women like Ramona and Olinda to break the cycle of poverty, overcome gender-based inequity, and realize the potential that is within themselves, their families and their communities. Your gift will ensure that communities have a secure source of nutritious food, clean water and access to education and training to improve lives today and tomorrow.

PWRDF knows that mothers, grandmothers, aunts and all women around the world do more than hold up half the sky – they hold the keys to a successful future.

For almost 60 years, PWRDF has been the Anglican Church of Canada's agency for disaster relief and international development. In that time, we have touched and transformed millions of lives with tangible evidence of God's love. Your generosity has supported women, families and communities to choose and create healthy, positive futures.

By making your gift today, you continue to be part of that way forward, that story of women holding up half the sky.

Blessings,



Will Postma
Executive Director

PS: If you prefer to make your gift online, visit www.pwrdf.org/donate, select "General Donation" from the drop-down menu and add "Mother's Day" in the comment box.