

# Voices OF HOPE

## Guatemala

Teresa Coc Cajbon is from Guatemala but her mother tongue is Q'eqchi, not Spanish. As a child she was ashamed of speaking out in public because she couldn't speak the language, but not any more. Teresa joined the Asociacion Nacional de Mujeres Guatemaltecas (IXMUCANE), a women's association that runs Women's Rights and Health Program for women in Petén, the northern most region in Guatemala. It has 528 members and was set up by women who fled to Mexico during the civil war in the '80s, then returned in the '90s.

Since 1993, IXMUCANE has empowered women by improving their knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, educating them on their rights, preventing discrimination, exclusion, and violence against women. PWRDF funds have supported IXMUCANE with many training and capacity building projects over the years. For Teresa, Ixmucane helped her become literate and she no longer fears speaking out in public. Programs teaching women about sexual and reproductive health have empowered mothers to educate their daughters, and now early age pregnancies are on the decline. She also notes IXMUCANE informs women how to protect themselves about the law; programs have helped decrease violence against women.



**The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund**

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