MINI-MAG

WOMEN AT THE HEART OF CHANGE



In this issue:

Testimonials from women in Paraguay, Indonesia, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Syria

Meet three inspiring women who are part of our history

Share Lent 2017

Development and Peace
CARITAS CANADA

Share Lent 2017

An invitation to be at the heart of change

The theme of this year's Share Lent Campaign is *Women at the Heart of Change*. Poverty and underdevelopment affect a disproportionate share of women because of poor education, lack of nutrition, precarious and low-paying employment, and discrimination. Yet women are often major makers of change in their homes and communities. United Nations statistics show that maintaining families and caring for family members lies primarily on the shoulders of the world's women, and on average most of the responsibilities for the home are borne by women (*The World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics*). In addition to their key roles in sustaining the present generation and forming the next, women have a special role in reconciling, rehabilitating and rebuilding, bringing "*order out of chaos, community out of division, and peace out of conflict,*" by sharing "*their special gifts in educating people to be more receptive and sensitive to the needs of others*" (Holy See's Apostolic Nuncio to the United Nations, Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace, and Security, October 25th, 2015).

In 2014, Caritas Internationalis recognized the central role women have in community, social and international development by partnering with *Voices of Faith* in presenting an annual award, "Women, Sowers of Development." The award has to date brought international attention to the crucial roles of women in growing food and in working with refugee families – the examples are from Nicaragua and Syria. Over the past decade especially, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace has focused on the rights and dignity of women, and their key role in the life of their communities and in promoting the common good. Development and Peace – Caritas Canada works with its partners to provide opportunities for women, including micro-financing and technical training, in countries where their rights are not recognized, their skills not appreciated or their participation limited.





Mary, the Mother of Our Lord, is for all Christians a woman at the heart of change. In her act of faith, giving flesh to the Word of God, she demonstrates how the Kingdom of God shows mercy, lifts up the lowly and fills the hungry with good things. "*In her we see that humility and tenderness are not virtues of the weak but of the strong who need not treat others poorly in order to feel important themselves. Contemplating Mary, we realize that she who praised God for 'bringing down the mighty from their thrones' and 'sending the rich away empty'* (Luke 1:52-53) *is also the one who brings a homely warmth to our pursuit of justice.... She constantly contemplates the mystery of God in our world, in human history and in our daily lives. She is the woman of prayer and work in Nazareth, and she is also Our Lady of Help, who sets out from her town 'with haste'* (Luke 1:39) *to be of service to others.*" (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 288)

This Lent, let us accept the invitation of Development and Peace to look at what it means for each of us and our community of faith to be at the heart of change.

(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI

Bishop of Hamilton and
President of the Canadian Conference
of Catholic Bishops

NOVALIS

A COMMON HISTORY IN THE SERVICE OF THE GOSPEL AND OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Created in 1935, Novalis works to spread the Gospel and its message of love, compassion and solidarity.

Through its various publications, particularly *Living with Christ*, Development and Peace shares an indispensable collaboration with Novalis.

On the occasion of our 50th anniversary, Development and Peace wishes to express its gratitude to the women and men who have contributed to making Novalis a precious ally in spreading our Church mission for the triumph of integral human development and peace.



novalis.ca

WOMEN AT THE HEART OF CHANGE

For Lent 2017, Development and Peace – Caritas Canada has chosen to put women at the forefront to highlight their role and their very special importance in every aspect of development, whether it be social, environmental or economic.

Women at the Heart of Change conjures up more than just the desire to reiterate the centrality of women as an engine of change. It is also to open people's hearts during this season of Lent to the sufferings, injustices and obstacles faced, every single day, by millions of women and girls all over the world.

It is to acknowledge the hard road that has been covered, often with great difficulty, by the women who have preceded us, and the courageous struggles they have led. It is also to recognize and question the deep roots of certain inequalities that persist in all spheres of our societies.

1967 • 2017 50 YEARS OF SOLIDARITY

Development and Peace has been at the heart of change for 50 years! Thank you for being with us!

It is to pay tribute to the extraordinary resilience of these women and girls, who carry within them the ideal of a just and inclusive world, and who, each in her own way, is working to make this ideal a reality.

It is to pray, as Pope Francis invited us to do in May 2016, "that in all countries of the world, women may be honoured, respected and valued for their essential contribution to society."

Above all else, it is to act in solidarity with and walk alongside those women and men who advocate for an equal and inclusive society, one in which women can participate hand-in-hand with men in building the world of tomorrow. Be at the heart of change!

Week 1



WOMEN KEEP THE LAND IN THEIR HEARTS IN PARAGUAY

"I would like especially to mention you, the women, wives and mothers of Paraguay, who at great cost and sacrifice were able to lift up a country defeated, devastated and laid low by an abominable war."

Homily of his Holiness Pope Francis, July 11th, 2015.

The work of Development and Peace – Caritas Canada is essential in Paraguay's current context, where the expanding cultivation of soya as a monoculture goes hand in hand with an increased concentration of agricultural land in the hands of a minority. Most small landowners do not have proper land titles and wind up expelled from their land, which increases levels of poverty.

The work of our partner Decidamos aims to reinforce peasant organizations so that they can promote farming that is respectful of the environment and defend peasant rights before the authorities.

Marta García and Silvia Rodríguez are both members of AMUCAP (the Caaguazú Association of Farming and Grassroots Women), an organization supported by Decidamos. Founded in August 2015, AMUCAP brings together Indigenous women farmers from south-eastern Paraguay who are taking action for a society based on social justice, while promoting food sovereignty and organic farming. Thanks to advocacy work done by the women of AMUCAP, the municipal authorities gave them permission to hold agricultural fairs. These enable women to sell their products and earn a weekly wage.

"AMUCAP is very important for the women in our community. It is through this organization that we get to know one other, exchange ideas, collaborate in preparing daily meals for our families and learn techniques for organic farming and marketing our crops.

The fact that women can now go to the market to sell their products allows them to feel that they are part of a whole. Farming in the countryside is impossible without the labour of women!"

– Marta García


Marta García

"There is a lot of injustice in Paraguay, and it is sad to see so many people without access to basic needs, especially those who do not have land. Decidamos' work is important because they offer training courses we can use to defend our rights. I wish that there was land for everyone, that women were free, that they have the freedom to organize and defend their rights, that they continue to struggle and that they never get tired, for their own good and for the good of all the women of the world."

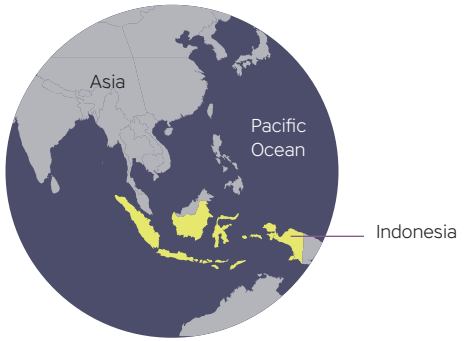
– Silvia Rodríguez



120
AMUCAP gathers women from more than 120 farmer and Indigenous families.

18
agricultural fairs have taken place since the beginning of the project.

Week 2



WOMEN ARE BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY IN INDONESIA

"The way we experience illness and disability is an index of the love we are ready to offer. The way we face suffering and limitation is the measure of our freedom to give meaning to life's experiences, even when they strike us as meaningless and unmerited."

Homily of his Holiness Pope Francis, June 12th, 2016.

Risya Syair, 22, dreamed of being a doctor as a child. Her introduction to medicine ended up being far different from what she expected. She was diagnosed with a brain tumour as a teenager, and the subsequent operation to remove the mass left her blind. As she learned to live with her new condition, she discovered a new passion: writing.

Risya started a blog to share short stories but after attending a workshop offered by Development and Peace – Caritas Canada partner the Association of Independent Journalists (AJI), it made her realize that she had a lot more to say!

AJI is an organization of independent journalists that has been working on fostering a free and fair press in Indonesia. This is critical in a country that has a poor human rights record and is still emerging as a democracy after decades of dictatorship. AJI has sought to promote human rights and in recent years, it has focused on strengthening the representation of women and other minorities in the media.



Risya with her proud parents.

In the city of Makassar on the island of Sulawesi, AJI began to offer workshops to women's associations so that participants could analyze and reflect on the portrayal of women in mainstream media and encourage them to change that view through writing. Risya realized that women, especially those with disabilities, are presented as weak and incapable by the media, and that her blog could be a way to change that view.

"Today, I write about the issues of discrimination faced by people with disabilities, especially women. Women who don't believe in their power and potential, when they read my writing, they will become motivated because they will see that women can do anything! When I became blind, I was sad and frustrated that I lost my dream, but my father told me that I can still heal people even if I am not doctor. I can heal through my writing."

AJI has helped Risya achieve that dream!

170 women
have participated in a media workshop offered by AJI. Now they can make their voices heard.

80%
of participants improved their writing and can now write a news report.

On behalf of all those women, thank you!



Week 3



WOMEN ARE BREAKING THE CHAINS OF VIOLENCE IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

"We must condemn sexual violence against women and remove the barriers that prevent their full integration into social, political and economic life."

Prayer Intentions of Pope Francis, May 2016.


Cécile Kazadi

In DRC, Development and Peace supports community radio networks

8
community radio stations

3.5 million
regular listeners

Hundreds
of programs broadcast in more than 12 national and local languages

For more than a decade, Development and Peace – Caritas Canada has been supporting community radio stations in six provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a country affected by more than two decades of conflict.

Due to a normalization of sexual violence in DRC, Congolese women are the target of systematic sexual attacks. In this context, community radio has become an essential tool for women struggling to change the climate of impunity in which these acts are committed.

Wherever community radio is broadcast, small groups gather to listen. This spontaneously creates core groups of people who can discuss and reflect on issues together. By enabling women to come together in groups, to communicate with one another and to have access to information about their rights, community radio becomes a powerful tool for change and for enhancing women's collective dignity.

The work of Development and Peace empowers women like Cécile Kazadi and her daughter to break the cycle of sexual violence and impunity, and to spread their message of hope.

Cécile Kazadi lives in the village of Mbalaka in the southern region of DRC and has participated in a group of RCK radio listeners for several years now.

"My eldest daughter was a victim of rape. I went to the radio station and got hold of the authorities who helped me take my case to court. They helped me to exercise my rights. The boy responsible was arrested.

Before, the other women in our village and I did not know our rights. Now though, thanks to RCK radio and our core group, our lives have changed in many ways. We are aware of our rights and rape is no longer a secret. When a girl is raped, we go straight to the police and we ask for justice. The RCK radio station helps us a lot. Thank you, because I have seen how this is truly working for change."

1 woman out of 3
in the world is a victim or has been a victim of physical or sexual violence.

(World Health Organization)

Week 4



WOMEN ARE CREATING A FUTURE FILLED WITH HOPE IN SYRIA

"Yes, I know what plans I have in mind for you, Yahweh declares, plans for peace, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

Book of Jeremiah 29:11.

We are working with the population in northern Syria, especially women, to give them the tools they need to provide — with pride and dignity — the essentials that will improve the living conditions of their families.

The projects supported by Development and Peace – Caritas Canada respond to the major crises caused by the war in Syria. They positively influence economic, social and political conditions there. We support projects that promote women's economic autonomy, as these projects have a positive impact on the status of Syrian women. They lay the foundation for an egalitarian society and break the cycle of poverty.

We support the Darna Centres, two vocational training centres for Syrian women. Women attending workshops at the centres receive monthly financial compensation and can have their children cared for while they are attending classes.

Hannan is married and the mother of three children. She has had to support her family on her own ever since her husband suffered a stroke that left him partially paralyzed. She recently took an 11-week sewing course offered at one of the Darna Centres.



Development and Peace provides Syrian women with the means to realize their ambitions.

Between June 1st, 2016 and May 31st, 2017:

280 women
will have had access to an 11-week sewing course, as well as psychosocial support.

265 women
will have taken an English course, 300 a computer course and 80 will have participated in courses in writing and reading.

80%
of the women who have taken the sewing course will be able to find a job related to their newly-acquired skills.

Visit **devp.org/testimonials** to see more testimonials from women like Loubna, who have participated in our projects.


Loubna

INSPIRING WOMEN WHO ARE PART OF OUR HISTORY

Carmen Quintana

Chile

When she was 18 years old, Carmen Gloria Quintana was set on fire by the Chilean military. They had arrested her while she was participating in a protest against the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. With second and third degree burns to 62% of her body, she was thrown into the back of a truck, dumped like garbage in a ditch and left to die. Her friend Rodrigo Rojas suffered the same fate, but sadly, unlike Carmen, he did not survive the ordeal. Development and Peace – Caritas Canada supported Carmen's visit to the United Nations in Geneva so she could give her personal testimony. Her words moved ambassadors to tears and led to strong international indictments against the brutal regime of General Pinochet. Carmen now works as a scientific attaché at the Chilean embassy in Ottawa and is the mother of three daughters. Hers is a story of true human resurrection.

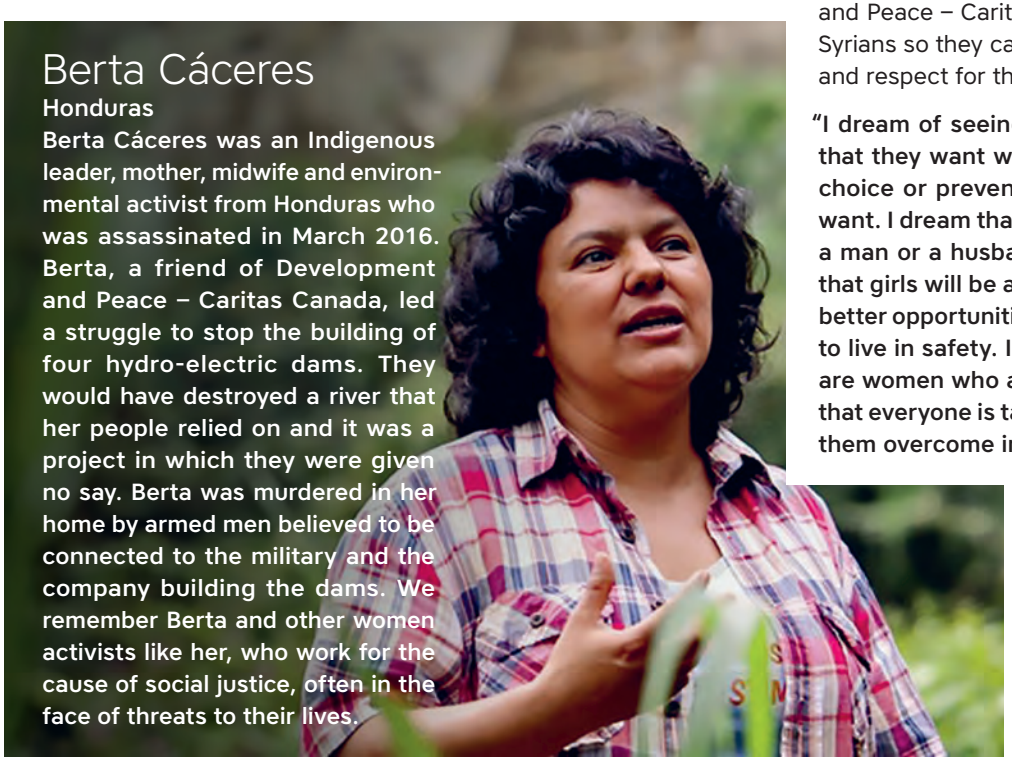


Photo: Wikipedia

Berta Cáceres

Honduras

Berta Cáceres was an Indigenous leader, mother, midwife and environmental activist from Honduras who was assassinated in March 2016. Berta, a friend of Development and Peace – Caritas Canada, led a struggle to stop the building of four hydro-electric dams. They would have destroyed a river that her people relied on and it was a project in which they were given no say. Berta was murdered in her home by armed men believed to be connected to the military and the company building the dams. We remember Berta and other women activists like her, who work for the cause of social justice, often in the face of threats to their lives.





Hanan Halima

Syria

Hanan Halima is a 34-year-old entrepreneur who fled her native Syria in 2013 due to the ongoing war there. She went to Egypt, where she took part in the creation of the Syrian Women's Network, which encourages cooperation between Syrian women activists and organizations. Following political instability in Egypt, she went to Turkey, where she still lives. She co-founded Aosus, a Development and Peace – Caritas Canada partner. It aims to empower Syrians so they can work for freedom, dignity and justice, and respect for their basic rights.

"I dream of seeing women able to choose the lifestyle that they want without anyone else interfering in their choice or preventing them from doing whatever they want. I dream that the concept that a woman must have a man or a husband to be secure will change. I dream that girls will be able to continue their studies and have better opportunities for education and work, and be able to live in safety. I hope that everyone knows that there are women who are suffering from injustice and I hope that everyone is talking about coming to their aid to help them overcome injustice and poverty."

Which woman inspires you? Go to **devp.org/insp-women** and send us a picture with a few words (2-3 sentences) explaining how she inspires you. This will be published on our website.

THIS LENT, OPEN YOUR HEART TO THE WOMEN WHO ARE BUILDING THE WORLD OF TOMORROW.



- Donate online at **devp.org/give** and receive your tax receipt immediately!
- Give to your Share Lent parish collection.
- Give by phone: 1 888 234-8533.

THANK YOU ON BEHALF OF THE MILLIONS OF WOMEN WHO ARE AT THE HEART OF CHANGE!

Share Lent 2017

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