

# MADRE

Spring 2025

## speaks

### IN VISION LIES HOPE

Over 40 years, MADRE has followed the lead of our partners — women and girl activists in more than 40 countries around the globe — when we're facing conflict, crisis, and injustice.

We grieve, yes. Then, we move forward. And we know what we need to do.

Even in the world's most challenging places, where women live every day amid hardship, gender violence, and the worst effects of climate disaster, our partners refuse to give into despair. They organize. They do it with hope and determination. Unbelievably, for many of us, they even do it with joy.

Their bravery and know-how remind us: despair is not a strategy.

MADRE's work moves forward with the same unflagging hope and determination because like them — *with them* — we are working to build the same world.

In times of crisis, unrest, and uncertainty, we seek out the potential for transformative change. We nurture a clear-eyed vision of what could be and, with our partners, we cultivate the innovative projects and practices to make it happen.

Your support for MADRE and our partners is helping this shared vision gain ground.

### THE FUTURE **WE IMAGINE:**

A more peaceful, sustainable, and just world, where women, girls, and other marginalized groups fully participate in making decisions and shaping policies; where their expertise and leadership is valued and upheld; and where they equitably hold power and resources within their communities.





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## Standing with Women in Haiti — The First and Last Line of Defense

UNDER AN UNSTEADY transitional government in Haiti, violent gangs continue to seize power — with women and girls disproportionately affected by increasingly brutal attacks on civilians. As acts of violence against women and girls spike ever higher, humanitarian aid organizations either leave the country or maintain a tenuous presence.

Despite the risks to their own safety,

it's a grassroots network of local women's organizations who are the first and last line of defense in standing against inequality and organizing community care.

With your support, MADRE is quickly getting emergency grants to organizers in the Haitian Women's Collective to provide essential resources such as water, hygiene kits, and first-aid supplies.

Critically, these women leaders have also established mobile clinics and organized mental health professionals to provide survivors of gender-based violence with counseling and access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Where leadership has failed them, women activists in Haiti are leading the way to secure safer spaces and a stronger future for women and girls.

**"MADRE has been an instrumental partner for the Haitian Women's Collective's development, supporting the capacity of over a dozen Haitian women-led grassroots organizations in our network for the past five years. In this time of crisis, continued support is essential — both to meet urgent needs and to make sure our voices are part of creating long-term solutions and building the future of Haiti."**

— Carine Jocelyn, founder of the Haitian Women's Collective

## Seeking Justice for Gender Apartheid

MADRE'S APPROACH to our work with grassroots partners is always two-fold: We support women and girl leaders to meet the essential needs of their communities through crisis, and we amplify their wisdom and ingenuity to effect lasting change.

We know women, girls, and other marginalized groups bear the worst consequences of war, authoritarianism, and scarcity due to climate disaster. One way we uplift a more peaceful future is by funding forward-looking community projects: from learning climate-resilient farming techniques, to educating young girls on their rights, to pushing for political representation and more equitable laws.

Another is to amplify their voices in international forums, where they can model global change, demand accountability, and advance more just and sustainable policies for the world we all want to see.

Since MADRE's inception 40 years ago, we've always worked on the cutting edge of human rights. As self-evident as it seems today, we were one of the first organizations to insist that women's rights are human rights. We were the first feminist organization to partner internationally with LGBTQIA+ activists and the first to recognize collective Indigenous rights.

In 2025, we're continuing to move the needle on human rights, calling on the UN to adopt an inclusive definition of "gender apartheid" as a crime against humanity under international law. We aim to win rights and recourse for women and LGBTQIA+ people in places where they are systematically discriminated against or persecuted — including those in Afghanistan under Taliban rule.



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## Meeting the Moment for Syrian Women and Girls

OFTEN, MADRE'S long-term, trust-based relationships with our partners mean we are well positioned to quickly channel emergency aid into the hands of women community leaders who know best how to distribute it where it's needed most.

However, we couldn't mobilize so quickly if our partnerships were forged only in crisis. MADRE is there for our long-term partners before traditional humanitarian aid organizations and the news cycle jump in and after they move on, because our relationships are forged in a shared vision for a future where women, girls, and their communities can thrive.

When the US announced troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, for example, we knew it would mean a Taliban takeover. We were able to send funds to local women's organizations right away, before the banks shut down, and facilitate emergency evacuation and in-country relocation for women's rights activists. And we were able to establish mechanisms for women's groups to continue their work

together, whether underground or in exile.

More recently, when the fall of the brutal Assad regime was already imminent, MADRE worked with our Syrian partners, Women Now for Development, to plan needed support for women refugees and the thousands of women we knew would be emerging from the regime's notorious prisons.

As refugees return to Syria and reunite with families, for some being the first time in as long as 14 years, our partners are working in Syria, Turkey, and Lebanon to provide transportation costs, logistical support for safe border crossings, and psychosocial support.

We're also supporting a network of trained mental health counselors to provide care to freed prisoners and to families who are confronting horrific realities regarding the fate of their disappeared loved ones.

Of special concern among the released prisoners are hundreds

of women and girls, most of whom endured extensive sexual violence at their captors' hands. Many are returning to freedom with children born of rape. While male detainees are often welcomed home as heroes, many of these women face rejection and potential violence from their families.

MADRE and our partners provide women and girls with safe shelter, food and other necessities, medical care, trauma counseling, and proper documentation for their children who have lived their entire lives in prisons.

Despite the brutality and loss they've endured during 14 years of war and decades of dictatorship, the women we work with are able to nurture hope for the future. It's an uncertain moment, but one in which meaningful change is possible. Syrian women are vital leaders and caregivers in their communities, and it will be key in the months ahead to support women's voices in shaping a more peaceful path forward.

## MADRE Partners Pioneer "Hyper-Local" Funding

MADRE KNOWS our grassroots partners — women leaders providing for their communities — best understand the challenges their communities face, how to distribute resources to meet the most pressing needs, and how to solve problems to move toward a better future.

That's why we've always taken an approach of solidarity, not charity, in our support for our partners' work. Their local efforts build the skills and resources to make their communities more self-sustainable by launching initiatives such as training women in climate-resilient agriculture — creating new livelihoods and meeting community needs in the process.

These small, local efforts — that sometimes fall under the radar of traditional humanitarian relief organizations, who

often consider them too rural and hard-to-reach — are often far from local in their impact. They hone successful strategies that can be scaled up or replicated by women activists in other communities, and that can be brought to the international community when women are given space to participate in discussions about policy, peace-building, and addressing the climate crisis.

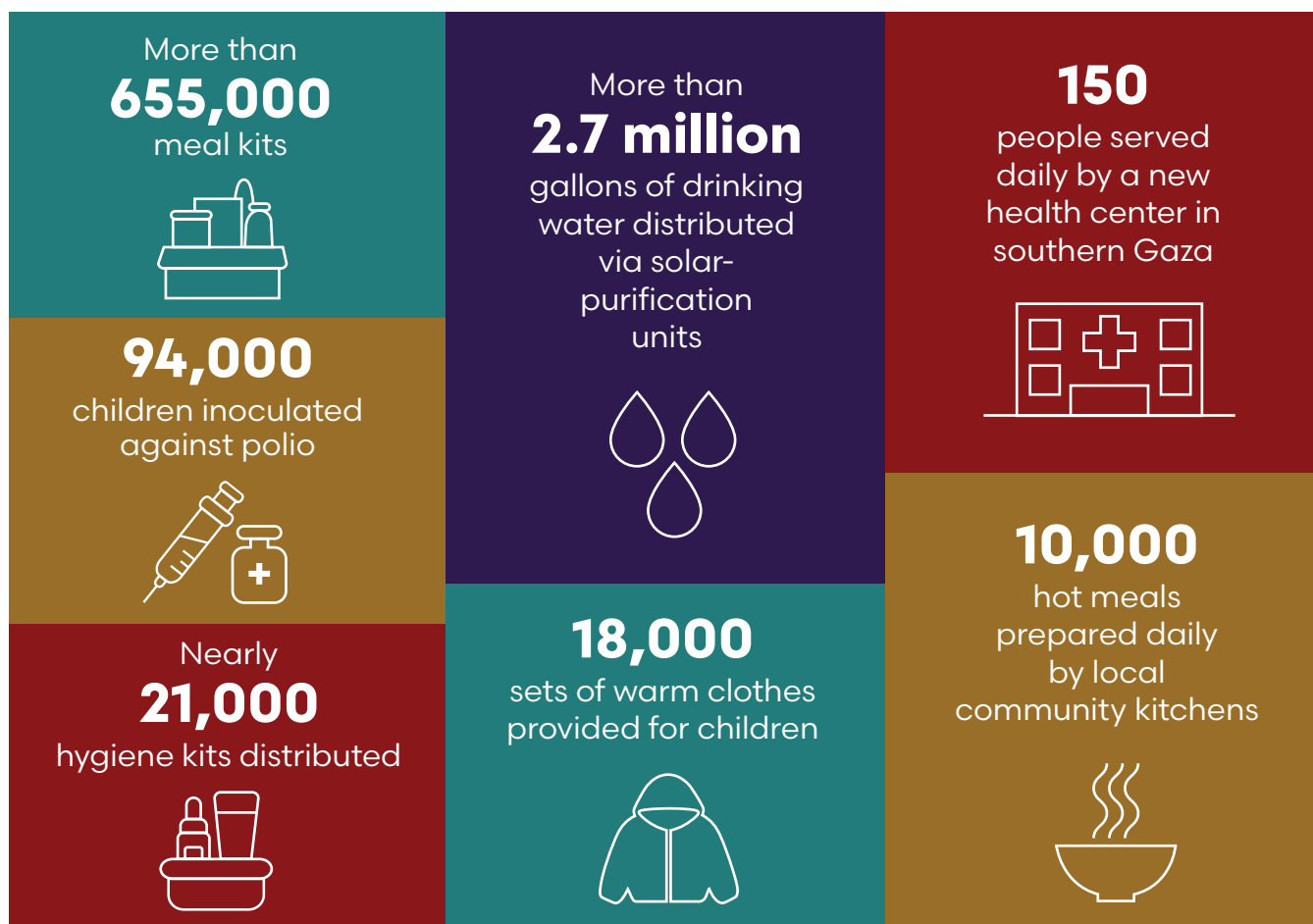
In 2025, MADRE is holding a first-of-its-kind learning exchange for local partners who regrant our support to fund small projects in their communities. This "hyper-local" funding — a new "first" for MADRE — continues to develop our long-time model: fostering trust-based, solidarity-based relationships that acknowledge the tremendous impact of support in the hands of our wise and experienced partners.

# Your Partnership Made an Impact for MADRE Partners in Palestine

Thanks to our trust-based relationships with local partners and the thoughtful support of MADRE supporters, we were proud to see the nimble response of grassroots women activists in Palestine to the terrible humanitarian crisis wrought by war.

As Israel blocked humanitarian aid and hospitals were forced to close, MADRE was able to get swift emergency support — **more than \$1 million** — to women working on the ground. Together, we reached **more than 731,000 people** with essential resources — through our local partners the Middle East Children's Alliance, Palestinian Medical Relief Society, Midwives for Peace, and World Central Kitchen.

Of course, there is much more work ahead to meet the needs of those harmed, displaced, or further marginalized by the brutal conflict. As we continue to build on our partners' efforts, here are a few more measures of your impact for Palestinian women and families last year:



On behalf of MADRE and our partners, thank you!

**MADRE**

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