



Right Sharing

of WORLD RESOURCES

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HOW WE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP: *The Power of Right Sharing*

Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR) currently has two focus areas: “Right Relationship” and “Right Sharing.” Right Sharing work forms, trains, and funds women’s groups around the world through global partnerships that transform communities. The funds are shared with the partner communities in the form of micro-grants that stay within them. Led by Country Coordinators who are from the partner communities, the program invests in relationship building and training, and works exclusively with women’s groups, rather than with individuals.

The cohesion of these groups is vital to community transformation. It is the women as a team who support each other in their enterprises, save money in a group for personal emergencies, and create the social structure that enables the loans to be repaid and re-loaned to other women. Micro-loans to individuals, which do not offer this level of support, have a high rate of default. In Right Sharing’s mode of operation, the women identify, with the support of the Country Coordinators, areas of need in their communities and then address those needs. Three common themes for community needs are increased access to education, food, and safe transportation. Women’s groups have sold healthy food in their communities at critical access points and arranged for transportation and uniforms for school-aged children. The power of the group, and the group’s determination of how best to run its enterprises, are key components of RSWR’s program.

Funds granted to partner groups never return to RSWR. Instead, the grants go into the coffers of the women’s groups and then are distributed to the women in the form of micro-loans, which have an attached rate of interest that protects the money from the effects of inflation. In the countries with which we partner, personal or small business loans are difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. Moreover, the typical interest rates on loans are extremely high, sometimes up to 20%, and the loans may be offered by moneylenders who entrap people when the bills cannot be paid on time. Loaning money is not, however, the most important thing about the women’s groups: self-determination and group cohesion are more vital to a group’s ongoing success. Country Coordinators offer training on self-esteem, small business, money management, group dynamics, and access to government services that strengthen communities in a lasting way.



“Together Toward Success” women’s group in El Guayabo, Guatemala, meets for a training session

Continued on page 2

PARTNERING WITH WOMEN IN COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

GOD CALLS US TO THE RIGHT SHARING OF
WORLD RESOURCES, FROM THE
BURDENS OF MATERIALISM AND POVERTY
INTO THE ABUNDANCE OF GOD’S LOVE,
TO WORK FOR EQUITY THROUGH
PARTNERSHIPS WITH OUR HUMAN FAMILY
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

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RIGHT SHARING continued from page 1

Because of the many cultural and administrative differences among Guatemala, India, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and the United States, the way women's groups manage themselves varies. RSWR County Coordinators, who live in the partner communities, manage the programs and encourage the ethos of self-determination. The observations and leadings of the coordinators may change the programs on national and international levels. What stays the same across countries is that the women's groups are given the grant, they loan it out, and it is paid back to the groups. Any particular loan's specific conditions, interest rate, and what happens with the coffers vary. Often it has been observed that the more generous a women's group is in reloading the money to new women, the more successful the group is.

Country Coordinators have also observed that women's groups providing a significant training period have a higher chance of community and financial success. This has led the Country Coordinators to offer a full year of training before inviting a group to apply for funds, a process that encourages group cohesion and a more complete understanding of the granting process when funds are received. If a women's group is accepted following the year of training, its members will then receive three years of technical support, along with the grant. The Country Coordinators have, as a group, adapted the program based on their findings from the Consultation held last year in Kenya. RSWR's Right Sharing program continues to evolve, as we learn from one another and from the communities with which we partner.

Partner Updates

INDIA

Iswarya, a member of the Dalit Arunthathiyar community, lives with her parents and older siblings in a small hut with a thatched roof. All the children were able to go to high school, but only the elder son was able to go on to college, due to costs.

"Being a girl, there was little opportunity for me to work outside the home. But I was determined to find a way to help support my family. This led me to join a women's group in my village that was involved in income-generating activities. Mrs. Nandini of the **Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP)** guided me to start small savings in the group, so that I could qualify for the loan assistance. Later, ICDP approved my request and gave me a loan of Rs. 10, 000 (\$120) to start a business. I chose to sell vegetables, as there were no vegetable stalls in our village and families had to go to nearby villages to shop.

"I started the vegetable shop and grew in confidence every day, when I saw that my earnings were increasing. Soon, my family was able to attend to basic needs, including my elder brother's tuition for engineering studies. I am happy that my new venture led me to support my family needs and my brother's college studies, too.

"Though I am young, many community members look at me with admiration and talk to me with great respect. This is giving me great joy. My elder sister has joined me in running the shop. I pay her wages for the day from the sales. I give the profit to my mother to look after the family needs. I realize that this project is giving hope to many girls and women who are struggling in difficult situations in their lives."



Iswarya is a member of the the Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP) in India. Please see her story above.

Continued on page 3

PARTNER UPDATES continued from page 2

SIERRA LEONE

This group was visited by Program Director Sarah Northrup, Board Clerk Elizabeth Gates and General Secretary Jackie Stillwell, these are their reflections:

The members of the **Njama Women Farmers Association** in Sierra Leone represent a wide diversity in ages, from young nursing mothers to elderly grandmothers. When we arrived, they were singing and dancing. We could see the joy that they had in being with each other. Their instruments were plastic water cans and bowls.

The women already had their own agenda for our meeting, making sure each woman introduced herself and told her role in the group. Then they went around, and different women shared their joys and concerns.

The women grow groundnuts, cucumbers, corn, peppers, potatoes, okra, and watermelons. They plant groundnuts twice a year and vegetables in rotation every 3 months. You could tell that they had thought with intention about the rotation of crops and the timing of the planting.

Previously, they had individual microloans from large microloan corporations. The interest was very high and, if they couldn't repay their loans, the corporations prosecuted them. Some women who couldn't repay ran away from the community, leaving children behind. They told us that everyone pays their loans to the women's group. They have an emergency fund from which members can take personal loans and pay them back with interest.



The project has benefitted them by allowing them to send their children to school and pay transportation for them. Otherwise, children would need to walk 1-2 miles to school each day. They don't want the children to take rides from bikers, because the bikers then exploit them, especially the girl children.

One issue is that, when they walk into town to sell their produce, if they don't sell all of it, they must carry it back, and it spoils. They are working to establish a market in their own community. They just need to construct a roof over the market

stall and it will be done. The women don't have enough tools or enough seeds to cultivate all of the land available to them.

They were very appreciative of their chairlady and of the training that the Country Coordinators, Sallian and Sibella, gave them. One person said, "Because of the training, we have been able to implement the project successfully." The group was now united and working together. One training they appreciated was on management of disease. They used to have cholera outbreaks, but now they know better how to handle diseases.

Right Sharing in Your Community

This past summer, RSWR staff visited over 20 different Quaker communities. As we reflect on our time traveling among Friends from South Africa to Iowa and so many places in between, we are left with a deep sense of connection and joy at what the future holds for the world, for Friends, and for the work we do together at Right Sharing. Thank

you for inviting us into your gatherings and joining us in our shared work to build a more equitable world. We would love to visit your community and co-create space to explore how we can be in right relationship with the world and one another. Thank you for your continued partnership! We hope to see you soon!



Megan Fair visits with Friends from India and Nepal at the FWCC World Plenary in South Africa, August 2024.



RIGHT SHARING OF WORLD RESOURCES

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Would you
like to connect
with a women's
group?

See below!

SEEDING COMMUNITY

Are you looking to advance community and equity in the world? Is your Meeting or community organization seeking to grow together through a shared purpose and learning?

Right Sharing offers the opportunity for individuals, Meetings and other groups to partner with women in Guatemala, India, Kenya, and/or Sierra Leone through a Seeding Community Partnership.

The Seeding Community program is a special opportunity to more deeply experience the transformative power of RSWR's work. When you partner with a group of women, your gift will build mutual understanding and nurture community.

Learn more here:

rswr.org/seeding-community-partnership

*"A candle on the road"
Women's Group in
Maraxc6, Chiquimula
is in partnership with
John Dauer of San
Antonio, Texas.*



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