



Mary's Pence

Funding Women. Changing Lives.

MISSION AND VISION

Mary's Pence invests in women across the Americas by funding community initiatives and fostering collaborations to create social change.

We envision a world where empowered women and their communities flourish in solidarity and justice.

OUR FOUNDING STORY

Mary's Pence, a play on the Catholic charity collection Peter's Pence, was founded by a group of women religious and lay leaders in 1987. The women were frustrated by the lack of funding for women's ministries from traditional church sources, particularly when similar men's ministries often received funding. The women thought together, "What we need is a Mary's Pence!"

DIGNITY FOR ALL

We believe that all people deserve to live with dignity, free from violence and oppression, and with the opportunity to create the life they imagine for themselves and their communities. We know that those who experience injustice are best qualified to create effective solutions, and that when women work together, communities are transformed.

BOARD

Sister Barbara Battista, SP | Terre Haute, Indiana

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WHAT WE DO

Women working together in their local communities have the power to create effective and lasting change. Mary's Pence supports grassroots women's organizations in the Americas in two ways.

MARY'S PENCE GRANTS

Mary's Pence funds women's organizations in the US and Canada that are working with their local community to create long-term systemic change. The organizations we fund are all small, with budgets under \$200,000. Yet they collaborate with diverse populations, advocate to change unjust policies, and educate to build skills and increase capacity. Our grants act as seed money for organizations that are newly created, and as support for organizations that have been working on the grassroots level for years.

Our granting process is intentional and holistic. In order to meet emerging needs, we do not restrict funding to prescribed issue areas. Rather, the kinds of issues that we fund arise organically as needs change and emerge within a community. We also provide our grantees with additional support including networking, retreats, information sessions and publicity.

These are some examples of issues we have funded recently:

- Increasing Economic Security
- Advocating for Just Systems
- Accompanying Women Experiencing Incarceration
- Liberating Women from Trafficking
- Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees
- Empowering Women Leaders
- Cultivating Health and Well Being

ESPERA COMMUNITY LENDING

ESPERA is a unique take on a micro-lending program. Mary's Pence has partnered with seven grassroots women's organizations across Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador to start community lending pools. The funds are collectively-owned by the women and they are the decision-makers. This increases their empowerment and commitment to the work. Mary's Pence staff from the region support the women as they manage the lending process and invest in agricultural initiatives, corner shops, food stands and other small businesses. The loans are repaid with interest into the local pool, creating a growing and lasting resource for the community.

Mary's Pence staff also provide coaching on business skills, encourage participation and relationships, work to increase our partner organizations' capacity, and strengthen connections among individual participants as well as our organizational partners.

Our current ESPERA partners:

- *Concertación de Mujeres de Suchitoto*, Suchitoto, El Salvador — partner since 2008
- *Asociación de Mujeres Rurales "Olga Estela Moreno,"* Bajo Lempa, El Salvador — partner since 2011
- *Unión de Mujeres Salvadoreñas*, San Salvador, El Salvador — partner since 2012
- *Centro de Promoción y Salud Integral*, Nindirí, Nicaragua — partner since 2009
- *Red de Mujeres Morelenses por una Economía Solidaria*, Morelos, Mexico — partner since 2010
- *Asociación de Mujeres Sembradoras de Esperanza*, Santa Cruz del Quiché, Guatemala — partner since 2009
- *Grupo Emprendedor La Epifanía*, Tegucigalpa, Honduras — partner since 2012

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