



Right Sharing of WORLD RESOURCES

3RD QUARTER 2022 | www.rswr.org

New Partnership in Guatemala

Dear Friends and friends,

I'm pleased to share joyful and exciting news — after careful consideration and listening to Spirit, RSWR has become clear to expand its grant funding program for women into Latin America, with Guatemala being the selected country.

This decision came out of the Board of Trustees' in-depth strategic planning in 2020. One of the identified focus areas for the next five years was to expand grant programming into another country, with a leaning toward Latin America.

Following an extensive examination of Latin American and Caribbean countries, seven countries were identified for consideration — Haiti, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Cuba, Bolivia, and Peru. The letters of interest we received from three organizations all seemed compelling as potential partners for RSWR.

During our time of discernment, Jackie Stillwell, RSWR General Secretary and Sarah Northrop, Program Coordinator, were able to visit Guatemala — spending in-depth time with Quaker women, in particular, gaining an understanding of women's hopes and visions of a better life for themselves and their families. They also visited the potential host organization.



Jackie Stillwell, RSWR General Secretary with Carmen Lizeth Pacheco Girón of Coosajo, Sarah Northrop RSWR Program Director and Karen Gregorio de Calderon COAL-FWCC Coordinator in Guatemala.

According to the World Bank, the level of poverty in Guatemala is

great, at 59.3%. While women in Guatemala, especially poor women, have been the traditional 'keepers of the home,' there is a strong desire to begin earning something to help their families out of poverty and into a more sustainable life. There is a strong Quaker presence in Guatemala, involving some 20,000 people. The three yearly meetings and Karen Gregoria, FWCC (Friends Committee for Consultation) coordinator for Latin America, are centered in Chiquimula. Local Quaker women are forming women's groups and hoping to organize for social action, much the way RSWR began partnering with women in Kenya many years ago.

During my time of RSWR Board service, I have had the opportunity to visit Kenya, India,
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Sarah Northrop and Jackie Stillwell meeting with women business owners in Guatemala.



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 PARTNERSHIP
WITH OUR SISTERS AND BROTHERS
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Alamelu Bannan - A Leader Changing her Community

In India, Right Sharing partners with NGOs that work with women. One such NGO, The Rural Women Development Trust (RWDT), is headed by a woman named Alamelu Bannan. She is willing to share her story with Right Sharing:

Alamelu was born to a poor family in the Arunthathiyar caste. Her home was a simple hut, and her parents were bonded laborers on a

farm, which belonged to wealthy people. The wages her parents received were very low, allowing them to eat only grains such as millet for meals.

When Alamelu was a child, her parents fell ill with smallpox and were unable to work while they were sick. The farm owner

brought Alamelu and her brother to work at the farm in their absence, forcing the children into bonded labor. At the farm they were exploited, punished, and treated cruelly.

At school, Alamelu's teacher, Mr. Vengadasalam, noticing that she had been absent for a long time, came to her home to check on her. When her parents told him about the situation, he went to

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The Mother Teresa Self Help Group under the care of the Rural Women's Development Trust and sponsored by Right Sharing.

GUATEMALA *continued from page 1*

and Sierra Leone and learn firsthand from women the value of RSWR's grant funding and training programs. Women own and manage successful businesses and have greater capacity to provide for their children, including paying school fees and providing for the well-being of their families. Women are taking leadership roles in their communities and gaining respect and recognition. Lives are being changed. As we build partnerships in Guatemala, we anticipate hearing and sharing similar stories of women's creativity, strength, and resilience. We expect to make our first grants to Guatemalan women's groups in 2023.

We are grateful that Way has opened for RSWR to expand its grant funding program into Guatemala. We welcome all Friends and supporters to join us with your financial gifts and prayers, as we move forward in partnership with women and Quakers in Guatemala.

—Marian Beane, RSWR Board Clerk



Sarah, Jackie and Karen visiting a small store similar in Guatemala.

the farm to find her. When he approached the farm owners to ask that they release the children, he was severely beaten in response. After this incident, the teacher returned with the local police and paid the family's debt to the farm owners – thereby releasing them from bondage.

Alamelu was able to return home and resume her education. Mr. Vengadasalam motivated her to study and be of service to her community. Her childhood experiences and her teacher's support inspired her to start the Rural Women's Development Trust and work to uplift her community. With a Bachelor's degree in Commerce and certification in Cooperative Training,



Rani, Jackie, Alamelu in the village of Periyapatti, Tamil Nadu, India. Rani received a sewing training from RWDT and now runs a tailoring business from her home.

she fights against the bonded labor system and has released many families from this type of exploitation. Having dedicated her life to the underprivileged, she has been doing development work since 1998. She has received recognition among underprivileged communities as well as from government departments as a women activist and worker for women's rights and development. In addition to her work with the RWDT, she is a fulltime social worker. She has devoted her life to ending bonded labor that has been forced on the Arunthathiyar caste and the root social injustices that cause it.

Alamelu works against such injustices as untouchability, the double tumbler system (at tea stalls, people of the Dalit caste are served out of different and lower-quality cups as compared to other customers), and female infanticide. Her work has been unpopular with people who benefit from the current social order. They have tried to attack her many times. A gang of men arrived to attack her at her house when she wasn't home, so they severely attacked her brother instead. He was admitted to a hospital, where he died. The grief from this event impacted her and compelled her to work even more against social injustice.

Rural Women Development Trust works with underprivileged women, forming self-help groups, encouraging savings, and helping them establish bank linkages. They work to free child laborers, bonded laborers, and manual scavengers, and help them to establish new sources of livelihood. They also offer human rights and health education.

On a recent visit to India, Alamelu met with Jackie Stillwell, Right Sharing's General Secretary. "Right Sharing is not dictating how Alamelu works...", said Jackie "... she is the driving force, and her power has linked Right Sharing with 200 women's groups. She is on fire to connect with and train women to help each other and help themselves. Alamelu has gathered hundreds of women and gotten the government to set aside land on which they could build houses."

RWDT has strategic goals for the future, including the following:



Alamelu Bannan

- Providing self-employment skill training to 2,000 formerly bonded and vulnerable women.
- Offering quality education for 3,000 children via 50 child resource centers.
- Building civil society organizations for collective action on Arunthathiyar development.
- Ensuring environmental justice and land, water sanitation, and health accessibility for underprivileged communities in the target area.

ALAMELU SAYS OF RWDT:

"To further the financial sustainability of our efforts, the women rescued from bonded labor have received skill training and income generating resources. This means a sustained income for the women and their families. The women have become decision-makers in their families and participate in public events."

Alamelu has become a force for change in her community and is nurturing that force in collective action. Many thanks to Ms. Alamelu Bannan for her willingness to share her story, which she does for the benefit of the community. Her childhood memories remain in her mind and push her to work for social justice.



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POWER OF ENOUGH

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POWER OF ENOUGH
WORKSHOP

WEDNESDAYS

OCTOBER 19 – NOVEMBER 23, 2022
7:00 – 8:30 P.M. EASTERN TIME (US)

In this workshop, General Secretary Jackie Stillwell leads us through queries – including:

“How can I balance my use of time, energy and ‘things’ to free myself to do God’s work, and to contribute to right order in our world?”

RSWR partner Satya with Jackie in Tamil Nadu, India. Satya weaves silk saris on a loom which she purchased with a loan from her women’s group.



RIGHT SHARING OF WORLD RESOURCES
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