



## Global Giving Introducing the “Women Rebuilding their Communities” Fund

The earthquakes that struck Central and Southern Mexico in September 2017 have had devastating effects, and civil society needs to start redirecting its efforts from the immediate emergency response towards support for the long road of recovery and reconstruction. As a response to the disaster, Fondo Semillas has launched the [“Women Rebuilding their Communities” Fund](#) (*Mujeres Reconstruyendo sus Comunidades*) to support long-term recovery efforts in the Mexican states affected by the earthquakes: Oaxaca, Chiapas, Puebla, Morelos, the State of Mexico, and Mexico City.

### **About Fondo Semillas**

Founded in 1990, Fondo Semillas is a Mexican nonprofit organization that funds grassroots women’s groups with the aim of improving the living conditions of local communities and promoting gender equality. Since its founding, Fondo Semillas has seen that women-led grassroots organizations are essential to achieving long term social change, as they are the experts in the needs and priorities that exist in their own communities. On this premise, Semillas provides support to over 100 grassroots women’s organizations per year through *grantmaking*, *capacity building*, and *facilitating strategic alliances*. Over the past 27 years, Fondo Semillas has invested more than \$10 million dollars in over 900 women-led projects, directly benefiting more than 600,000 women and indirectly benefiting 2.4 million others.

### **About the “Women Rebuilding their Communities” Fund**

In September 2017, several consecutive earthquakes hit Central and Southern Mexico. Due to their high intensity, as well as corruption and negligence surrounding legal requirements for construction, the unexpected disasters resulted in over 400 deaths and significant physical, economic and social damage across 6 states. By September 28th, the Mexican federal government had already reported 250,000 affected homes.

In the context of natural disasters, help is often focused on responding to the immediate emergency needs and there is little support for long-term recovery efforts. Fondo Semillas’s strategy with the “Women Rebuilding their Communities” Fund is to harness citizen participation in the wake of the crisis, channeling support towards local processes of social and economic revitalization and thereby creating



more resilient communities in the event of future natural disasters. Fondo Semillas believes that the significant inclusion of women in the post-disaster recovery process is fundamental to ensuring the sustainability and success of those actions for communities as a whole. This initiative therefore seeks to support the community leadership of women, and at the same time takes into account the specific ways that natural disasters disproportionately affect women.

As part of the “Women Rebuilding their Communities” campaign, Fondo Semillas will continue fundraising until the end of 2017, and will select the beneficiary organizations during the first quarter of 2018. Fondo Semillas will open a call for proposals to women’s groups in all of the affected Mexican states. Reaching the campaign goal will allow 30 organizations to be funded with an average donation of 15,000 dollars each. The money raised from the campaign will support the selected organizations to implement recovery and rebuilding efforts over an 18-month period, such as:

- Participatory evaluation of damages with specialized advisors
- Reconstruction of community infrastructure and work spaces for women's groups
- Prevention of sexual violence and protection of the health of women affected by the disaster
- Community reconstruction programs that assure that indigenous women have property titles to their homes
- Installation of sustainable environmental technologies such as solar panels, rainwater collection systems, and management of water basins
- Economic recovery of the affected communities through women-led income-generating projects such as women's cooperatives
- Creation of community resilience plans for future natural disasters

Organizations will be selected by a committee of experts and human rights defenders who specialize in topics such as gender and natural disasters, community development, and participatory methodologies. Fondo Semillas has previously established selection criteria to ensure that community organizations work with a human rights and community development focus, and have no political or religious affiliation. Organizations that seek to work in conjunction with others and form partnerships, and groups that work in states where less financing is available will be prioritized. As a standard across all of the organizations supported by Fondo Semillas, projects must include a gender lens and women must participate in the decision making and leadership of the organization.



Once organizations have been selected, the funds will be distributed and the individualized accompaniment process will begin. Fondo Semillas will also assure that the selected groups have the specialized technical support necessary for effective, long-term recovery. Fondo Semillas has already formed alliances with some of the leading Mexican institutions that can provide specialized technical assistance to grantee groups. For example, Epicentro will ensure transparency in the projects and provide legal aid to grantees, Ruta Civica will provide support in documentation of cases of loss of life or property and will facilitate strategic litigation, Cooperación Comunitaria will provide technical support in local construction, Fundación Cántaro Azul will support grantees in the use of eco-technologies and water collection systems, and Iluméxico will provide aid in the installation of solar panels, among others.

Expected results from this initiative include:

- Stronger and more visible leadership of grassroots women in their communities as a result of their role in the improvement of public services, exposing corruption cases, exploration of new livelihood opportunities, reactivation of local economic activities, enhancing gender equality in earthquake recovery programs, among other strategies
- Improved capacities of grantee organizations and effectiveness in their reconstruction projects as a consequence of the technical accompaniment and capacity building support
- New and strengthened alliances among key actors engaged in earthquake recovery

### **How will Fondo Semillas report back?**

For over 25 years, Fondo Semillas has always complied with the highest standards of transparency and accountability, which is why Fondo Semillas has been consistently chosen to work alongside recognized funding institutions such as the European Commission and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as private funders like the Ford Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the OAK Foundation, the NoVo Foundation, and Open Society Foundations, among others. Fondo Semillas also has an international network of more than 400 individual donors to whom it reports back and is held accountable.

Donors that contribute to the “Women Rebuilding their Communities” Fund Semillas will receive ongoing updates, including grantee testimonies and videos,



regarding how their resources have been invested. Upon the conclusion of the “Women Rebuilding their Communities” initiative, Fondo Semillas will also conduct an external evaluation of the program, which will be broadly disseminated among donors, allies, and grantee partners.

**Women Rebuilding their Communities  
Total Budget in USD**

Direct grants to 30 grassroots organizations	\$ 450,000.00
Technical capacity building to grassroots organizations	\$ 90,000.00
Emergency grants for security and rapid response	\$ 7,400.00
Monitoring visits	\$ 9,100.00
Capacity building meetings	\$ 27,580.00
Communications materials	\$ 3,320.00
External evaluation	\$ 3,600.00
External consultancies	\$ 2,090.00
Salaries for project management, accounting and accountability to donors	\$ 74,410.00
Administrative costs	\$ 32,500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 700,000.00</b>