

SHARE LENT SHORT TALK

Hello, my name is _____. I'm grateful for this opportunity to talk to you about Development and Peace – Caritas Canada's Share Lent Campaign *Women at the Heart of Change*.

This is a very special year. It marks the 50th anniversary of Development and Peace! Yes, for 50 years, Catholics in Canada have been reaching out to our sisters and brothers around the world through Development and Peace and its annual Share Lent appeal. Together, we have been on a journey to seek a world free from poverty, violence and oppression – a world full of the peace of God.

In those 50 years, the generosity of the faithful has meant that over 600 million dollars have been invested in more than 15,000 projects in over 100 countries! Some of that investment has even contributed to the work of Nobel Peace Prize winners! Rigoberta Menchú, for instance, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992, received support from Development and Peace in her efforts to defend and advance the rights of Indigenous peoples in her country, Guatemala.

Rigoberta is just one of many thousands of women who have been able to work for their own development and the development of their families, communities and countries thanks to the solidarity of people like you. If we look closely at success stories of overcoming poverty in our history, we often find "Women at the Heart of Change."

Let me give you an example that touched me.

[Choose one of the examples below]

Ismène Elismar Garçonnet is at the heart of change in her community. This mother of three in Haiti was one of the chief engineers on a project led by our partner ITECA to build new houses after the 2010 earthquake. Thanks to the project, Ismène was trained in how to make reinforced masonry and other skills. The project employed 600 workers and tradespeople, and 800 houses were built. When Hurricane Matthew hit Haiti in October 2016, only one home was damaged by the 200 km/hr winds! Yes, together we are building back better and stronger! I encourage you to read more about the work of Development and Peace by taking some of the materials **[indicate where to find the materials]**.

Hanan Halima is at the heart of change in her country. She is a 34-year-old refugee who fled the war in Syria with her family back in 2013. She went to Egypt, where she took part in the creation of

the Syrian Women's Network, which encourages cooperation between Syrian women activists and organizations. Following political instability in Egypt, she went to Turkey, where she still lives. She is one of the co-founders of Aosus, an organization that aims to empower Syrians in order to guarantee freedom, dignity and justice, and respect of basic rights. Development and Peace supports Aosus' Beit Almonah project, whose goal is to offer job opportunities to women and families that have little or no income in Eastern Ghouta, an area in Syria that is heavily affected by the war. Participants dry fresh vegetables to make food baskets. Last year, 2,000 baskets were distributed to families in need. Yes, together we are building a better world! I encourage you to read more about the work of Development and Peace by taking some of the materials **[indicate where to find the materials]**.

Cécile Kazadi is at the heart of change in her village of Mbalaka, in the southern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For two decades now, this country has been torn apart by a war that is marked by systematic acts of sexual violence committed against girls and women. Development and Peace has been supporting community radio networks in six provinces. They provide, amongst other things, information to women on their rights and legal recourse in the case of rape or sexual violence. When the daughter of Cécile was raped, she went to the radio station where they helped her bring the case to justice. Her daughter's aggressor was then imprisoned. The story of Cécile and her daughter shows the power of information and education. Yes, together we are building a better world! I encourage you to read more about the work of Development and Peace by taking some of the materials **[indicate where to find the materials]**.

On behalf of **[name of the woman you chose from the examples above]** and all of those who count on our financial support, I would like to end by saying thank you. Thank you for being generous today and for helping to ensure that our parish, **(parish name here)**, will be there to be part of the journey ahead for the next 50 years. It is the journey of love, compassion and solidarity that Christ has entrusted to all of us – it is the journey towards a fair world for all.

THANK YOU!