

Accessing Economic and Civic Power: Women in the Global South

Date: **Tuesday, 11 March 2025**

Time: **4:00 – 5:45 pm EDT**

Location: **Both In-person & Virtual**

(Translation into Spanish will be available for virtual attendees)

[Register at this link.](#)

This intergenerational collaboration between [Mary's Pence](#), [Loretto at the UN](#), generously hosted by [Altagracia: Faith & Justice Works](#) in the Inwood neighborhood of Manhattan, lifts up the work of ESPERA, a unique program focused on economic autonomy and civic engagement of rural women in Central America and Mexico.

Concept Note:

ESPERA's unique model is based on working long term in solidarity with women's organizations who have a strong commitment to their families and communities. Local leadership is key to sustainability. We have a focus on strengthening the women's leadership skills related to strategizing and planning, and we encourage developing strong networks with others locally, nationally and regionally.

ESPERA partners with 14 women's organizations, mostly rural, across Central America and Mexico, some as small as a dozen members, others as large as 350 women. This session will provide a platform for an intergenerational exchange, where attendees will gain valuable insights into the strategies that have empowered ESPERA women to drive economic and social change. Discussion will include:

- **Tools for Wholistic Economic Growth**
- **Ecological Sustainability Practices**
- **Grassroots Organizing from a Feminist Perspective**

The work is possible because we have a long-term relationship with the women based on trust and mutual respect, and shared learning - and that work focuses on four areas: increasing women's economic autonomy, sustaining and strengthening the local leadership of women, increasing family agriculture with a focus on increasing food security, and emotional and mental health.


Mary's Pence
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Rural women in Central America and Mexico are particularly vulnerable, they have less access to personal financial resources, more difficulty accessing funding for community organizations, and they are being and will continue to be impacted by climate change. All this leads to food insecurity, less access to education, medical and mental health care, etc.

Key Takeaways

- The Power of Collective Action
- The Importance of Long-Term Commitment
- Feminist Leadership in Practice

Program

Welcome: Beth Blissman, Ph.D., Moderator (Loretto at the UN)

Setting the Scene: Overview of Mary's Pence Katherine Wojtan (Executive Director)

Keynote: The Power of the ESPERA Program Mabel Martinez (ESPERA Program Lead)

Panel Discussion:

Intergenerational Perspectives on Accessing Economic and Civic Power

Speakers:

- Teen Representative based in NYC (Academy of Mt. St. Ursula)
- Teen Representative based in El Paso, TX (Loretto Academy)
- Teen Representative based in the Denver, CO (St. Mary's Academy)
- Representative from the Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanza de la Ciencia ([FUNDAEC](#) - Invited)

Question & Answer Time

Brief Bio of Keynote Speaker: Mabel Martinez (ESPERA Program Lead, Mary's Pence):

Mabel has more than 15 years of experience at international cooperation organizations in advisory roles and coordination of gender programs and projects, especially programs for the political, social and economic empowerment of women in Honduras and Latin America. Mabel is committed and linked to the struggles for social justice in Latin America. Mabel has a degree in Legal Sciences from the National Autonomous University of Honduras. She is convinced that changes towards freedom, equity and justice are urgent and possible.

