

**Martha Isabel Ruiz de Pedraza**

Biodiversity Conservation in the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve

Latin America/Caribb - Mexico

email: [gesgiap@prodigy.net.mx](mailto:gesgiap@prodigy.net.mx)

Born in Mexico City, Martha Pati Ruiz Corzo grew up in the state capital of Queretaro State where she studied and became a history and music teacher. In 1984, she and her family made a radical change moving to the rural mountains of the Sierra Gorda to live self-sufficiently, gain knowledge of the region and its social processes and to serve Life. Having learned first hand the severe socio-environmental problems in the mountains derived from unsustainable economic practices, in 1987 Pati and her husband founded the Sierra Gorda Ecological Group which is now recognized by Ashoka: Innovators for the Public, Schwab Foundation and the World Economic Forum, the Rolex Prize for Enterprise and UBS Visionaris Prize. Designated federal director of the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve with a co-management model involving the local initiative in 1997, Pati subsequently became the Regional Coordinator of the largest Global Environmental Facility project in the UNDP portfolio for Mexico in 2001.