

Press Release No. 01/2022

MetLife Foundation and Trickle Up project will boost family economy in rural communities in extreme poverty in southern Mexico.

- *6,000 indigenous women living in extreme poverty in 300 rural communities in Chiapas and Oaxaca will participate in a project to strengthen financial health and economic and social inclusion.*
- *The Project is funded by the MetLife Foundation and implemented by Trickle Up in Mexico from 2022 to 2024. MetLife Foundation's grant is \$1.5 million.*

Mexico City, March 8, 2022. Thanks to a **\$1.5 million** MetLife Foundation grant, Trickle Up Americas will launch the "**FUERTE**" Project — ***Strength, Unity, Empowerment and Resilience for Women in Extreme Poverty*** — in Chiapas and Oaxaca, Mexico. This project will last **3 years** and will seek to accompany **6,000 young indigenous women in 300** rural communities in 50 of the poorest municipalities in these states towards economic self-sufficiency.

The project aims to impact participants' capacity to generate income, promote rural financial inclusion, create savings groups, establish productive and income-generating activities, and transfer seed capital to develop business plans and promote ventures (microbusinesses), as well as strengthen knowledge of rights, self-esteem, empowerment and self-sufficiency.

The project will foster the innovative rural economy by identifying the skills and interests of the participating women in order to generate income opportunities through the management of local resources — combining agriculture, animal husbandry, the operation of stores selling daily consumer products, and artisanal activities — to allow them to have greater health and financial inclusion and be able to exercise leadership in the home and in the community.

"Trickle Up will work in coordination with local community and municipal authorities, government agencies, government representatives, local and international organizations, and universities and research centers with the purpose of exchanging knowledge, data and lessons learned from the implementation of the project through roundtable discussions with different relevant actors in Mexico," commented Jorge Coy, Regional Representative of Trickle Up for the Americas.

Partnerships with government agencies will seek the development of government strategies to address policy changes needed to improve the inclusion of indigenous women in the areas of intervention.

"For MetLife Foundation, it is important to integrate a gender approach into the projects we support whenever possible, and that they are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. With this project, we are advancing both of these components, supporting women from rural communities, helping them overcome poverty and reduce inequalities (SDG 1, SDG 10)," said Alfredo Esparza, Vice President of Government Relations and Sustainability, MetLife Foundation Mexico

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In Mexico, 7,364,645 people belong to 70 indigenous peoples, who speak 69 different languages. Fourteen of these communities are concentrated in the state of Chiapas and 13 in the state of Oaxaca. Eradicating poverty remains a challenge given that 43.9% of the country's population lives in poverty, with 8.5% in extreme poverty. But 27.9% of the indigenous population lives in extreme poverty, with the largest number of people living in conditions of vulnerability and marginalization in the southeastern Mexican states of Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca (SIC, 2021; INPI and INALI, 2020. CONEVAL, 2020).

FUERTE, is a project framed within the Graduation Approach, whose precursor is the MENTOR project — Empowering Women and Youth through the Graduation and Financial Inclusion Approach — implemented by Trickle Up simultaneously in Mexico, Vietnam and Bangladesh between 2018 and 2021 with the financial support of MetLife Foundation. In Mexico, during this period the project succeeded in enabling 94% of participants to graduate from extreme poverty and 80.8% to increase their economic contribution to the household with the creation of new local models of income generation, which also facilitated their access to savings groups.

The Graduation Approach is a sequenced, evidence-based, time-bound intervention that aims to help people living in extreme poverty build resilience and plan for sustainable livelihoods.

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About Trickle Up

Trickle Up partners with women in extreme poverty to build economic opportunities and drive inclusion. In partnership with local, national and international organizations, we work in the hardest-to-reach places in the world to reach underserved and vulnerable communities with innovative opportunities. Together we support women as they forge their sustainable pathways out of extreme poverty. To learn more about Trickle Up, visit www.trickleup.org.

About the MetLife Foundation

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The MetLife Foundation was created in 1976 to continue MetLife's long tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. From its founding through the end of 2017, the MetLife Foundation has awarded more than \$783 million in grants and \$70 million in program-related investments to organizations addressing issues that have a positive impact on their communities. In 2013, the Foundation committed \$200 million to financial health, and our work so far has reached more than 3.5 million low-income people in 42 countries. To learn more about The MetLife Foundation, visit www.metlife.org



Photos: Trickle Up Americas