



MERCADO GLOBAL

Fifteen Years of Community, Resilience, and Strength
A single thread is stronger when woven with many others

Mercado Global was launched fifteen years ago with a mission to transform the lives of women, their families, and their communities – making a lasting, positive impact. Over the years **we have strategically expanded and increased the numbers of artisans in our programs**, while holistically deepening our connections to those we serve in a meaningful way.

Thanks to our generous supporters, we can continue working with our partner artisans in rural Latin America, designing thoughtfully curated collections for internationally renowned retailers.

Our fashion accessories not only transform an outfit, they help break the cycle of poverty – we provide the materials, tools, and trainings, that allow women to create modern pieces that incorporate traditional techniques, as they work and learn together in a safe space. They receive individualized support from our local teams, on topics ranging from reproductive health and self-esteem to financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills.

Through our not-for-profit model, **we offer critical income to indigenous regions of Guatemala**. By weaving together monetary support and tools, health and wellness education, along with access to the global market, Mercado Global provides the vital programming for families to gain financial independence and offers the support needed for success on a personal level and as part of a whole.

MERCADO GLOBAL

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The Power of Women

Core to our mission, is our belief that women have the power to change our world. When they are connected to opportunities and proper support systems, they reach their full potential while empowering those around them to do the same.



Across the globe, **women are known to invest 90% of their wages back into their families.** They're significantly more likely to send their children – especially their daughters – to school, improve their families' health, and become catalysts for positive and lasting change in their communities.

And in the United States, women make 80% of household purchasing decisions. With our long history of collaborating with the world's most well-known brands, we can give power back to the consumers, connecting them with ethically-sourced fashion pieces that are changing the lives of the women that are producing them.

Together, we can reshape the world of fashion to be more ethical, sustainable, and just – for all of us.

Our Transformative Model

With fifteen years of experience on the ground, we understand how to best utilize our resources to make the greatest impact, ensuring individuals and communities thrive:



Income Opportunities: The women in our programs have limited sources of income, in a region that is mostly funded by tourism. By providing technical trainings, the materials to produce our high-quality accessories, and the opportunity to work with major international retailers, we empower the women who become our artisans to be well-paid entrepreneurs.



Community-Based Education: Our indigenous staff members are vital to our work, as they are often women who were working as our artisans. They lead workshops that are crucial to changing community norms and improving the health, wellness, and financial outcomes of our artisans and their families.



Tool Distribution and Financial Assistance: With the help of our regional partners, we gift artisans with sewing machines and looms, so they may develop their craft and increase production, resulting in additional income. We provide matching monetary incentives for artisans to save a portion of their earnings, allowing them to build their resources. And in times of need such as a medical emergency, we're there to offer financial assistance.

Fifteen Years of Making a Difference

Our efforts have only been successful thanks to our countless donors, volunteers, and retail partners, who have remained committed to our mission – empowering women to help break the cycle of poverty.

Nearly **950 women** have been trained and graduated as a Mercado Global artisan

More than **5,500 children and family members** have benefited from our programs

Over **\$4.3M in sales** have directly supported individual artisans and their communities

We have recruited close to **800 retailers** who are now part of the ethical sourcing movement

Women in some of the most economically disadvantaged regions of Guatemala now have unprecedented access to education, training, and income opportunities through our programs and partnerships with retailers like Levi Strauss, Free People, and StitchFix.

With every purchase of a Mercado Global high-fashion accessory or home accent, our committed supporters are offering artisans and their families a higher quality of life.



Your support truly makes a difference in areas that are essential for individual and societal success:

- **Childhood Education:** 99% of our artisans can send their children to school now (more than 1,350 children) – in contrast from only 35% of rural Guatemalan children attending.
- **Nutrition:** Between classes on combating malnutrition and an increased income, food security for new artisans tripled within two years of joining our programs and more mothers are able provide enough food for their families.
- **Health Care:** Participation in our health trainings and educational workshops has drastically impacted the health practices and outcomes for our artisans and their families across the board. With a better understanding of health and hygiene, they increase their frequency of doctor's visits – 95% of our artisans' children are vaccinated compared to the 70% who are new to our programs.
- **Financial Empowerment:** Three quarters of artisans report a significant increase in income and all of them now have a bank account – in comparison to 27% of the indigenous Guatemalan population – and 75% are regularly saving part of their earnings.

Meet Our Artisans

Equipped with the proper training and skillset, high-quality materials and equipment, and access to international markets, **Mercado Global artisans earn three times the daily wage of the average Guatemalan.** They are far more involved in the financial planning and decision-making of their households – and have the knowledge and resources to better feed their families.

Our artisans can now focus on long-term plans – helping their children receive an education, ensuring their families are healthy, and saving for the future.

Julia, one of the first women to become a Mercado Global artisan, recalls our Founder and Executive Director, Ruth DeGolia, playing with her oldest son when was just 4 years old. Now, he has graduated high school and is studying to become an accountant.



“Mercado Global has allowed us to better understand the story and value behind our traje, our language, and our way of life. We learn the intricate weaving techniques of our ancestors and preserve our culture that is slowly disappearing.

“I hope that more women participate and aren't forced to wait for their husband's income. I see other women that have many small children and I know how difficult it is to support my two sons through high school – it's extremely challenging to provide food and clothing while also providing an education.

“Mercado Global has empowered us to be leaders within our community and respected as women artisans. They've given us the opportunity to preserve our culture and make it known to the world.”

Maria, a Mercado Global artisan since 2015, lives in the small town of Xejuyú II with her eleven children and husband. After one year of joining our programs, she was able to send four of her children to school. Through our financial literacy training, Maria has also learned to save money in order to maintain her household, with stable work and fair wages.

“Before, girls didn't have the opportunities to fulfill their dreams like they do now. I was only able to finish the third grade before I had to start working.

“I sew tablecloths, linens, and other textiles to sell in nearby towns as a way to provide for my family. I started coming to Mercado Global trainings so I can apply what I learn to improve my embroidery and sewing skills.

“I have a lot of dreams for my children, but I mostly want them to study and fight for a better future. I am grateful that Mercado Global has provided my family with more opportunities.”

