



MERCADO GLOBAL

Progress Report – Fall/Winter 2021

The current global crisis – and the state of Guatemala – has posed a new set of challenges as we work to onboard more partner artisans, offering Indigenous women unprecedented opportunities to support their families at a time of such urgent need.

A recent report found that hunger is higher in Latin America than it has been in twenty years (United Nations Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition). **Guatemala is faring the worst of the region and half the population is facing food insecurity.** From 2019 to 2020, hunger rates increased by 30%.

And while 32% of men are impacted by food insecurity, **42% of women are facing hunger daily** and this disparity is rapidly increasing.

As of September 2021, **new Covid-19 infections in the Americas are nearly double the rate they were last fall** (Pan American Health Organization). In the communities we work with in rural Guatemala, the vaccine has simply not been available for the vast majority of residents – just **a little more than 10% of the country's total population is now vaccinated.**

Although the key revenue sources for the country are still at a standstill – i.e. tourism and remittances – Mercado Global has remained dedicated to bringing income, trainings, and aid to thousands of Indigenous families. In the past year alone, **we have brought 250,000 hours of work to nearly 1,000 partner artisans**, and are now focusing on expanding these opportunities and recruiting women in other regions of Guatemala and throughout the Americas.

Since March 2020, our team has been innovative in keeping communities safe, with food security, and access to critical income.

- **Sales Revenue:** Our sales revenue to retail clients *increased by more than 30%* in the past year. This was made possible thanks to our corporate partners who purchased thousands of masks, major retailers who carry our collections including Nordstrom, Bloomingdale's, Shopbop, Stitch Fix, and Charming Charlie, and our customers who shop directly from our website.

This support has had a tremendous impact on our partner communities – more families had enough to eat, more children were in school, and more women had a voice in decision making.

- **Mask Initiative:** With the launch of our buy-one, give-one mask collections, we have not only provided critical income to partner artisans but have also helped keep hundreds of thousands of migrant families and frontline workers safe. Vulnerable populations across the Americas have received our reusable, high-quality masks – including healthcare professionals, nursing home staff, postal workers, and the underhoused.

In partnership with three fellow nonprofits – Justice for Migrant Women, the Hispanic Heritage Foundation, and This Is About Humanity – we launched our **Masks for Migrants** campaign.

Together, we raised funds to *donate 250,000 masks* that have been distributed to migrant families at the U.S. and Mexico border.

- **Hand Sanitizer Distribution:** Our long-time partner, Free People, generously *donated 70,000 bottles of hand sanitizer* – a \$350k retail value – which has been invaluable for families across the Americas who lack access to running water and soap or other cleaning products. Nearly 45,000 bottles were distributed to our *70 partner artisan communities* in Guatemala, and the remaining bottles went to migrant organizations in the U.S.
- **Savings Incentives:** Despite the current economy and hardships facing families, through our financial empowerment programs that include matching a portion of their savings deposited into a bank account, we reached an *86% quarterly savings rate* for partner artisans. Only 27% of the Indigenous population in Guatemala has bank accounts, and rates are even lower for women.
- **Operational Restructure:** The health and safety of our partner communities will always be our priority – we now deliver all materials to artisans and are privately transporting Technical Trainers. We have *donated more than 5,000 masks* to Indigenous families in Guatemala, *distributed 15,000 pounds of food*, and incorporated a Covid-19 Awareness Campaign into our core programming.

Recruited **one hundred women** who have been trained and are earning critical income through Mercado Global

Donated and distributed **250,000 reusable face masks** to high-need communities

Launched **seven new collections with 363 styles** including bags, accessories, and masks

Collaborated with **17 major retailers** including Levi's®, Free People, Nordstrom, Bloomingdale's, Stitch Fix, and ShopBop