Building hope for women micro-entrepreneurs in Mexico

In Mexico, CREA helps women micro-entrepreneurs boost their businesses with training, mentorship and services, empowering them to improve production processes, develop distribution channels to reach larger markets and ultimately scale up their enterprises. Through an interactive business development programme delivered in four new training centres, 6,400 women entrepreneurs will acquire new skills, build self-esteem and generate local income and employment.

**DURATION:** 2016-2019  
**FOCUS AREA:** Women’s Social and Economic Development  
**COUNTRY:** Mexico  
**PARTNER:** CREA

**CONTEXT**

Small enterprises account for a large majority of businesses in Mexico. According to the OECD, 95.5% of Mexican businesses have ten workers or fewer – a larger share of the total than any other major Latin American economy (80-90% in Argentina, Brazil and Chile). Low-wage micro-businesses have been among the few sources of job growth in recent decades, employing almost three-quarters of the workforce. Despite their prevalence, however, the majority of these enterprises tend to stay small and have low productivity (only 6 to 8% of GDP), mainly because of their lack of access to credit and entrepreneurial skills.

Against this background, women continue to face major challenges entering the workforce in the first place. A culture of gender inequalities acts as a powerful deterrent, affecting their access to finance, skills and opportunities as well as their confidence and self-esteem. Traditional gender roles and a shortage of programmes or policies to support women’s entry and advancement in the workforce continue to stifle progress.
**ACTIONS**

Founded in 2008 by **Leticia M. Jáuregui Casanueva**, Latin America Finalist of the Cartier Women’s Initiative Awards in 2009, CREA recognizes the specific challenges that women micro-entrepreneurs face, as well as the distinctive impact their economic success has on their families and communities.

CREA’s participatory business development programme provides women both in rural, urban and semi-urban areas with management skills and entrepreneurial attitudes, building their self-esteem and ultimately helping them become successful business owners and leaders in their homes and communities.

The programme aims to open four new training centres in Zacatecas, Coahuila, Yucatán and Chiapas and train 6,400 women, offering them business education and tailored business services. These spaces will also support networking and collaboration, giving women a place where they feel empowered as part of a thriving community.

**EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Four new training centres are up and running in Zacatecas, Coahuila, Yucatán and Chiapas.
- 6,400 women enrolled in the CREA business development programme acquire leadership, managerial and financial skills (a business survival rate of at least 60% is expected).
- 28,800 individuals benefit indirectly from the growth of these new businesses.

**LONG-TERM STRATEGY**

In 8 years, CREA has trained more than 7,500 women entrepreneurs in Mexico and worked with over 16,000, positively influencing their lives and the lives of their families and communities. The CREA methodology is pragmatic, simple and scalable. Programme results will be measured by using a diagnostic tool based on the World Bank Impact Evaluation (2014-2017).