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NEW POVERTY STUDY SHOWS BENEFITS OF LISTENING TO POOR PEOPLE'S LIFE HISTORIES AS AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMS

Released on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (October 17th), study focuses on the impact of listening and adapting as a critical tool in lifting people out of extreme poverty

(New York, NY), October 17, 2011 – A new report was released on an innovative pilot program designed to help poor women 'graduate' from extreme poverty. [Trickle Up](#), an international poverty alleviation organization that empowers extremely poor women to take the first steps out of poverty by starting small businesses, adopted the approach of listening to an individual's life history and using that information to help lift people out of extreme poverty. The report written by Karishma Huda and Sandeep Kaur from BRAC Development Institute (BDI) (in partnership with the MasterCard Foundation) reveals the benefits of listening and learning from the lives of the poor.

See two-page summary and report: ["And Who Listens to the Poor"](#)

The 2009 Trickle Up Ultra Poor pilot project, conducted in the Indian state of West Bengal, in a three-year joint initiative with the [Consultative Group to Assist the Poor \(CGAP\)](#) and the Ford Foundation combined assistance to women living on less than \$1.25 a day in the form of training and access to financial services, and close mentorship of women over the course of the project. To document the experience of the women in the project, BDI conducted 20 comprehensive case studies of Trickle Up project participants.

The case histories revealed a wealth of useful information and has helped Trickle Up understand how best to allocate its resources and assess participants' progress. When the aid organization delved deeper into poor people's life stories, it saw how program participants, who on a first assessment may have appeared to have similar needs, would require vastly different resources.

"Participants each have different starting points, based on the idiosyncrasies of their life histories," said William M. Abrams, President of Trickle Up. "The study showed that when program staff understood these unique idiosyncrasies, they were able to do such things as intervene in domestic disputes, provide additional training, or suggest lifestyle changes to promote better hygiene in the household. It has provided an important framework for understanding participants' lives and refining our program to set them on the right path."

The report and research conducted by Karishma Huda and her team at BDI was based on case histories that took into account a woman's early childhood, transition to adulthood, her experience of the assistance program, and her life nine months after the program ended. The new approach showed how a participant's life trajectory before she began the program had a clear impact on her ability to improve her life and circumstances.

Included Media: "The Test of Poverty" is a short documentary produced by Trickle Up that follows two women living in extreme poverty in West Bengal, India, as they participate in Trickle Up's pilot project and work to change the effects that generations of poverty have had on their families' lives.

View 18-minute film here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mfd9Pp2Zpgg>

View a shorter 4-minute version of the film here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_bUTKI2Lq0

About Trickle Up

Trickle Up (www.trickleup.org) empowers people living on less than \$1.25 a day to take the first steps out of poverty, providing them with resources to build microenterprises for a better quality of life. In partnership with local agencies, Trickle Up provides business training and seed capital grants to launch or expand a microenterprise and savings support to build assets. Trickle Up works in five countries throughout Asia, West Africa and Central America.

About CGAP

CGAP (www.cgap.org) is an independent policy and research center dedicated to advancing financial access for the world's poor. It is supported by over 30 development agencies and private foundations who share a common mission to alleviate poverty. Housed at the World Bank, CGAP provides market intelligence, promotes standards, develops innovative solutions and offers advisory services to governments, financial service providers, donors, and investors.

Information about the CGAP-Ford Foundation Graduation Program can be found here:

<http://graduation.cgap.org/>

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