

Like

0

Tweet

1

Share

www.globalfairness.org

April 2012 - Vol 4 #4

GFI Newsletter: Celebrating Economic Inclusion

Commemorating SEWA's 40 years of success

It is with great happiness that GFI joins the Self Employed Women's Association to celebrate forty years of inspired work to help empower small-holder women producers in India and throughout the globe. In over 10 years of partnership we have witnessed their steadfast dedication to advancing decent work and sustainable livelihoods for India's poorest and most disenfranchised women.

SEWA has been at the center of the fight to end poverty in India and beyond, finding strength in unity and building a global membership of over one and a half million women workers. They have successfully organized and empowered millions of women over their 40 years of work, serving those at the bottom of the pyramid who have little to no access to formal employment, infrastructure, or services. What makes SEWA stand apart in their work to address poverty is their approach and philosophy, which is rooted in respect for the dignity and voice of their members and in venerating the Gandhian principles of self-help, non-violence and inclusiveness. At GFI we have seen first hand the remarkable impact of SEWA and its indelible role on in poverty alleviation.



Food Security and Informality?

Since our founding in 2003, GFI has worked with SEWA to implement models and programs to create greater access to high-value markets for smallholder producers. Through our partnership SEWA has launched multiple Trade Facilitation Centers (TFC), which provide an efficient and effective tool extending valuable training, infrastructure investment, production and processing improvements, and high standards of decent work and fair prices and wages. From our work with SEWA in India, we have expanded the reach of the TFCs to Central America, where thanks to

financial support of the Swedish Postcode Lottery, we started working in Northern Guatemala to implement market access programs for smallholder Guatemalan farmers. Lacking the organizational capacity of SEWA, communities in Guatemala had no cooperative structure and poverty and food insecurity were rampant. Drawing on our work with SEWA, GFI began our Guatemala market access programs by addressing the core needs of food security and inaccessible water for irrigation. Working with the community we brought together a partnership that shared knowledge and provided accessible training and irrigation technology to begin tackling fundamental needs.

Eighteen months later, the 2500 farmers involved in GFI's Verapaz Community Empowerment Program (VCEP) have a registered Association and have launched the first Agro-Ecological Market in Northern Guatemala. Drawing on lessons we learned first in our work with SEWA, we ensured that the legal and economic inclusion of workers remained central to the program so that farmers gained more than just a better crop yield; they gained the benefit of a strong collective voice to negotiate fair prices, and later to represent their issues to government and progressively access full economic citizenship. We have one more proof that entrenched poverty can be solved by establishing the legal rights needed for sustainable and competitive economic growth.

View the video below to learn more about the success of VCEP:

[Click to View Video](#)

Women and Informality: From Obstacles to Opportunity

GFI recently launched the report "Women and Informality: From Obstacles to Opportunities" delving into the underlying causes of female informality in 16 developing nations. Using quantitative analysis the report provides recommendations addressing the core issues. Key findings of this report include:

- Strong cultural and social attitudes in developing nations limit economic opportunities for women, creating an incentive to informal employment, including self employment. These attitudes include the relegation of household and childcare responsibilities to women, as well as limitations regarding where females can travel.
- Working mothers are particularly vulnerable to informality as a result of few affordable childcare options. However, female informality among working mothers is especially

detrimental to income equality.

- Data analysis consisted of a comparison of female informality rates with quantitative measures of gender-based societal norms. These measures included data series for fertility rates, the percentage of women married by the age of 18, the portion of the population below 14 years of age, and labor force participation by gender.
- Female informality rates were lowest in developing countries with more equitable allocation of work and family tasks. These countries include Ukraine, Botswana, Macedonia, Mauritius, Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, and South Africa.

The findings indicate that an effective strategy to reduce informality levels must include provisions specific to the needs of working women. Such a strategy focuses on the progressive transition of informal workers to the formal sector. Once entering the system the poor can use the law to advance their rights and interests as citizens and economic actors. It is only through legal empowerment that we can achieve long-term sustainable livelihoods and eradicate poverty. In the words of Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton, at the 2010 Fairness Award, "talent is universal, but opportunity is not."

"Sustainable long-term solutions require a mentality change. If we can see that we are all a large family living in the same world, we realize that the struggle of 15 million waste pickers is our struggle."

Albina Ruiz

2011 Fairness Award Honoree

Get Involved:

Can \$40 Really Make a Difference?



Did you watch the video? Well the impact you see there starts with just a \$40 investment in a small irrigation technology that has made a big difference. The Global Fairness Initiative launched the BeFair Campaign to bring low-cost technologies that improve livelihoods. Farmer Livelihood Kits use low-cost drip irrigation and specialized trainings to help farmers improve their nutrition and increase

News:

Follow us on Twitter and hear straight from the VCEP Farmers



Sra Juana Hernandez Ordonez reinvests her new income in buying school supplies and clothes for her children. She is happy her work is paying off and now she looks forward to better working conditions at the local market!

their incomes by as much as 50%. Your contribution of \$40 will deliver one irrigation kit plus technical trainings to an indigenous farming family in Guatemala and lay the path to real opportunity and empowerment.

Donate just \$40 or more and receive a BeFair water bottle!



**LEARN MORE AT
BEFAIRCAMPAIN.ORG**

**DOES YOUR BUSINESS OFFER
MATCHING FUNDS?**

Together we can make a big difference in the lives of thousands of farmers. Want to engage your colleagues in a high-impact campaign? EMAIL AALAP at ashah@globalfairness.org and find ways your office can help improve food security and economic opportunity to Northern Guatemala!



For the last ten years Elias Xol only planted maize, beans and chili. Today he harvests 11 crops, including mangoes, jocote, pineapple and coffee. His goals are to establish a demonstration farm and expand his crops so he can secure the future of his children.



Elma Caal has seen that with less work she can make more money out of her crops and now even hires a fellow farmer to help on her plot. Her entrepreneurial spirit shows as she speaks of her vision of the future: her priority is to improve farming methods so she can expand her papaya, cocoa, and annatto crops.



Follow us!



The Global Fairness Initiative - 2122 P St NW Suite 302 - Washington, DC 20037 www.globalfairness.org - info@globalfairness.org - 1 (202) 898-9022

