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GFI Newsletter: Job Creation and Fair Trade

2010 Fairness Award Recipient Honored by Georgetown University

Ela Bhatt, founder of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India and recipient of the inaugural GFI Fairness Award, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters by Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service on May 19, 2012. In her address, Ms. Bhatt spoke about the importance of questioning the absurdities and inconsistencies the graduates will see in their lives. Her own questions led to her decades-long efforts to ensure recognition and protection for all workers. She encouraged graduates to "serve," stressing that development is an overarching means of "restoring balance" in the world.

Click on the link below to view Ms. Bhatt's address:

<http://www.georgetown.edu/webcast/2012-sfs-commencement.html>

... And Leads Discussion on Women's Trade, Labor and Finance

On Friday, May 18th, GFI honored Ela Bhatt at a luncheon bringing together President Jose Maria Figueres of Costa Rica, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Melanne Vermeer, and other leaders from labor, business, government, and the development community. Ms. Bhatt spoke of the challenges poor women around the world face as they struggle to improve, or even maintain, their livelihoods and the economic conditions of their families. Attendees then engaged in a lively discussion of these barriers and of the need to establish a council that would act as a single powerful voice for women workers and producers. This council of women leaders from all sectors would advocate for policy change ensuring women access to finance, markets, labor and human rights, and decent work. With the insights and recommendations offered by participants, GFI will work to make this proposed council a reality.



Ms. Ela Bhat with GFI supporter Mary Galetti

G8 Nations Need Greater Focus on Formal Job Creation

During the 2012 Camp David Summit from May 18-19, the G8 nations agreed to promote economic growth through job creation. Leaders from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the United States concurred that job expansion offers the best hope for the future. U.S. President Barack Obama noted that the serious economic downturn in the Eurozone affects the U.S. as well as other countries far removed from Europe. Thus, the success of these goals depends on coordinated collective action. This united effort to stimulate job creation must avoid the short-term solution of informal employment, which provides little opportunity for advancement, and instead focus on expanding the formalized workforce.

Although informal employment can supplement struggling economies in the short-term by bolstering production and income levels, informality is associated with long-term economic stagnation. Informal workers have little or no protection from labor abuses under national legislation, often receiving severely reduced wages in potentially unhealthy and unsafe work environments. Incomes earned and assets procured through informal work can't be used as collateral to obtain a loan, limiting the ability of both workers and firms to increase wealth and raise investment capital. Informality is also associated with a myriad of economic ills, including income inequality, high prevalence of poverty, and misappropriated tax and foreign aid funds. These issues can become systemic, affecting every aspect of society if left unaddressed. Moving toward formalized job creation is more essential than ever from the G8 during these trying economic times.

While strategies seeking to reduce informality and transition workers to the formal sector must be country-specific, they require collaboration from all levels of society, including the private sector, governments, and laborers. These strategies generally focus on reforming existing business regulations to create an incentive for informal firms to register their activities and hire more workers formally. Additional strategies involve revising tax codes, and adding to social security measures like unemployment insurance. Overall, reducing informality would not only expand the job market but also help to alleviate other issues G8 leaders cited at the summit, including food shortages, high unemployment, and severe poverty.

"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?



Have you seen the video? 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 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?**

News:

Join the BeFair Campaign on June 22 at Josephine's in DC!

The 30s and 40s group has been a strong supporter of the BeFair campaign since the beginning, and on June 22 they will once more join GFI at Josephine Lounge to raise awareness of affordable technologies for the working poor.

Spread the word!

Josephine Lounge

June 22, 2012

1008 Vermont Ave, Washington DC

[MAP](#)

On Monday, May 21, our VCEP program was featured in Guatevision!

See a quick video and hear farmers' opinions on the progress made so far!

[Click here](#)



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 in Northern Guatemala!



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