



# Inaugural GFI Newsletter

GFI Welcomes New Board Chair José María Figueres

*local solutions for a global economy*

Tuesday, February 17, 2009

## *Making globalization work for the working poor*

The Global Fairness Initiative (GFI) promotes a more equitable, sustainable approach to economic development for the world's working poor by advancing fair wages, equal access to markets and balanced public policy to generate opportunity and end the cycle of poverty

### Investing in the "Missing Middle"



GFI's sister organization, The Synapse Market Access Fund is filling the often overlooked need for mid-level financing in poor communities around the globe. Making investments where microfinance cannot and commercial banks will not, Synapse is helping small-producer communities access financing and connect to high-value, sustainable markets for their products.

### [Learn more about Synapse](#)

### [Connect with GFI](#)

At GFI we believe in dialogue and see engagement as key to creating fair and sustainable development initiatives. Join our dialogue by

## Introducing the GFI Newsletter!

The Global Fairness Initiative is proud to announce the launch of our inaugural GFI Newsletter. Delivered to your desktop six times a year this newsletter will be your way to learn more about GFI, our programs, current development issues, and how to get involved in the global struggle to end poverty! In the difficult environment of the global economic crisis GFI is finding opportunities to improve lives and is bringing together voices across development sectors to solve our greatest poverty challenges. We hope you will join us in this dialogue and be a part of the movement to bring innovative and meaningful economic opportunity to the lives of the working poor. Thank you for your interest and we look forward to sharing our stories, insights and experiences in the months to come.

## José María Figueres named new GFI Chair



On January 5<sup>th</sup> GFI announced José María Figueres as the new chair of GFI's Board of Directors. President Figueres has been an member of the GFI Board since 2005 and is recognized as a global leader in sustainable economic development. Jose Maria served President of Costa Rica from 1994 to 1998, which time he created a comprehensive Sustainable Development strategy through investment in human development and the

implementation of innovative environmental policies. In the international arena he helped to create and lead the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, founded the Fundación Costa Rica para el Desarrollo Sostenible, and became the first CEO of the World Economic Forum in 2003. President Figueres's will play an important role in helping GFI address the challenges of globalization in this difficult economic environment and we welcome his leadership at this crucial time. We also extend our sincere gratitude to outgoing Board Chair President William Jefferson Clinton for his strong commitment to GFI since our founding and we wish him, Chelsea and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton the best of luck in their important work that lies ahead.

[In his own words... Jose Maria on the case of Costa Rica's development success](#)

connecting to GFI.

[Click here to get connected](#)

### Recommended Reading

#### ILO Employment Report

*ILO Releases 2009 Employment Report*

#### Modernizing Foreign Assistance

*The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network makes recommendations on U.S. Foreign Assistance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

#### Climate Change and the Poor

*Double Jeopardy: What the Climate Crisis Means for the Poor*

*By: Vinca LaFleur, Nigel Purvis and Abigail Jones - February 2009*

### Featured GFI Partner:

## **Fundación Mario Lopez Larrave**

**Promoting Labor Rights in Guatemala**



## GFI Program Highlight: PILAR

*GFI working to improve livelihoods of informal worker communities in Guatemala and Nicaragua*

*Promoting Informal Labor Rights in the Informal Sector (PILAR)*

**Countries: Guatemala & Nicaragua**

PILLAR \pi-ler\ “a supporting, integral or up-standing part”

Labor rights and strong workforce participation is a one of the fundamental pillars to sustainable economic development. Furthermore, as poor informal sector workers represent nearly 80% of developing populations, inclusive economic models that integrate the informal and formal sector are needed to generate growth and reduce poverty. GFI’s program “Promoting Informal Labor Rights” (PILAR) is constructing this pillar in Guatemala and Nicaragua by engaging informal sector workers, governments, employers, and civil society representatives in order to develop unique policies and actions that that encourage formalization and extend labor rights to informal sector workers.



“I have been working since I was 14 to make enough money to support my little brother to attend school. I am a young woman who works as a home-worker in Chimaltenango, Guatemala. I am a home-worker, primarily adolescent girls, represent a significant percentage of Guatemala’s informal sector workers. Through the PILAR program, GFI is working with these young women to help them exercise their rights to decent work and a safe working environment.

