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local solutions for a global economy

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## GFI Newsletter

### This Issue: Women-Led Growth

#### Our Work: South to South Exchange a Reality!

The World Bank has awarded a grant to GFI's partners Pagsung and SEWA for women shea nut pickers from Ghana to travel to India to learn from SEWA's experience in building a successful model of a women-led business venture. This is a unique opportunity for women to share stories and strategies for overcoming economic, legal, and cultural barriers and for developing business practices tailored to their needs. The training in Gujarat will be held in early September and will focus on the development of the Trade Facilitation Centers and SEWA's brand, RUDI. Read more about their history below.



#### DID YOU KNOW ?

Fifty percent of the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day and largely lacks access to basics like nutritious food, sanitation, potable water, education, energy, and medical care.

New technologies and low-cost innovations can bring essential services and economic opportunity but are inaccessible to the world's working communities.

#### GREEN ECONOMIES FOR THE POOR

The Global Fairness Initiative launched the BeFair campaign to bridge the technology gap and leverage renewable technologies to improve lives. Each year the BeFair campaign promotes a new technology, creates livelihood opportunities, addresses the innovation gap, and delivers environmental and economic sustainability.

#### YOU CAN HELP

With your support the BeFair campaign delivers over 5,000 Farmer Livelihood Kits to smallholder farmers in Guatemala. These kits use low-cost drip irrigation and specialized trainings to help farmers improve their nutrition and increase incomes by as much as 50%. A contribution of \$40 will deliver one irrigation kit to an indigenous farming family in Guatemala.

**DONATE \$40 OR MORE AND RECEIVE A FREE BE FAIR WATER BOTTLE MADE FROM RECYCLED PLASTIC!**



Thanks to the leadership of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and its 1.5 million members, Trade Facilitation Centers (TFCs) are now a reality in Gujarat, providing a safe space for women producers to develop business plans, learn about finance options, discuss policy changes, and more. The centers also serve as marketing and sales hubs for producers of agricultural commodities such as cumin, wheat, chili, sesame seeds, and castor oil as well as garments and other finished products.

SEWA used an initial grant from the



women farmers and workers.

GFI was involved from the beginning -- supporting some of the first ventures helping small rural female farmers get fair prices for their goods, improve processing, and create sales jobs. SEWA's focus on stringent quality control, advance bulk purchasing, targeted marketing, strategic geographic expansion, and the recruitment and training of high quality front-line sales staff, has made RUDI a competitive venture, successfully selling its brand to local retailers. Hours are adapted to women's schedules, benefitting the poorest members of SEWA.

### Feature: The Myth of Organic Certification

For a year our team in Guatemala has been searching for ways to make organic certification feasible for subsistence farmers in Northern Guatemala. With no roads, nascent quality control and uniformity of production, and not even a common language to communicate with cooperatives or buyers, the poorest producers -- mostly indigenous farmers and women -- have little buy-in on certification. For example, many farmers collaborating with GFI under the Verapaz Community Empowerment Program (VCEP) who did achieve organic certification for achiote (annatto) under a now-defunct non-GFI program cannot continue without the significant assistance external donor funds provided.



After analyzing capacity, product quality, available infrastructure, and existing markets, we determined that organic certification was not feasible under existing conditions. Talks with the certifiers made this quite clear: they explained that small farmers who previously found a market niche for organic production when supply of non-organic production was high (and prices low) no longer had an incentive to continue producing organic as soon as prices for non-organic produce rose again. Without subsidies, and being able to get good prices without the extra work and paperwork required for organic certification, farmers reverted to the most cost-effective methods they found.

Organic certification is a false promise for subsistence farmers who live under extreme poverty and cannot sustainably or independently achieve certification. So how to make certification truly inclusive? Start by promoting the process



**LEARN MORE AT**

[www.befaircampaign.org](http://www.befaircampaign.org)

### BeFair Events Update

This year the Befair Campaign will be spreading the word about green livelihoods throughout DC!

In the month of July, the team was at Bethesda and the DuPont Fresh Markets to share on what a low technology can do to improve nutrition, water access and increase incomes.

Don't miss another opportunity to get hand information on the progress of campaign. Connect with the GFI team Saturday morning August 27, at Columbia Heights Fresh Farm Market.

### BeFair!!! Call for BeFair Fundraisers

Help the BeFair Campaign bring innovative life-changing technology to Guatemalan farmers.

Support GFI's drive to deliver irrigation kits to smallholder families by hosting a local fundraiser Happy Hour, or a House Party.

For just \$40 anyone can send a Fair Livelihood Kit, which includes the irrigation system and trainings on water management, crop diversity, and more.

Contact Alessandra at [adelgado@globalfairness.org](mailto:adelgado@globalfairness.org) for more information on hosting a fundraising event.



**S Y N A P S E**  
MARKET ACCESS FUND

GFI's sister organization The Synapse Market Access Fund is filling the often overlooked need for mid-level financing for poor communities around the globe. Many investments where microfinance cannot reach and commercial banks will not, Synapse

rather than the certification. Sustainable adoption of organic production will require small farmers to own the process, building better agricultural practices that are friendlier to the environment while also learning how to manage their small farms as a business. When small farmers see a livelihood benefit to organic production, they are more likely to pay the fees for certification themselves and then won't forego their investment easily.

helping small producer communities access financing and connect to high-value sustainable markets for their products

[Learn more about the Synapse Function](#)



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