

Friday, August 14, 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.

www.globalfairness.org

Connect with GFI

At GFI we believe in dialogue and see engagement as key to creating fair and sustainable development initiatives. We have recently launched a new blog site and Facebook page.

[Click here to get connected](#)

Recommended Reading

Poverty, Energy and Society

An in depth look at the energy crisis in developing countries out of the James Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University

Remittances on the Decline

The World Bank suggests in 2009 remittances to developing countries will stall.

Improving U.S. Development Partnerships

GFI News:

Secretary Clinton Talks about GFI/SEWA Program during Recent Visit to Mumbai, India

On her recent visit to Mumbai, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton met with GFI's India partner SEWA (the Self-Employed Women's Association) and discussed the GFI/SEWA projects in Gujarat with GFI Board Member Reema Nanavaty. During her visit, Clinton emphasized the importance of initiatives seeking to economically empower poor women and highlighted GFI and SEWA's work to improve livelihoods for women producers.



Currently, GFI and SEWA are implementing a program that seeks to improve agricultural production and increase market access for over 27,000 women farmers in Gujarat India. GFI and SEWA are excited about the Secretary's visit and encouraged by the growing international interest in promoting women's economic empowerment. While Secretary Clinton expressed enthusiasm for

the progress being made, she was equally clear there is still much work to be done. GFI and SEWA are honored by the Secretary's visit and will continue to lead the effort to deliver innovative programming that creates meaningful opportunity for women entrepreneurs and economic empowerment for women in developing nations.

"Progress that has been made is extraordinary.

But much more needs to be done"

Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton

Other GFI Activities:

GFI has been very busy over the past 2 months! Here are some highlights of recent events and activities. For more details on our current programs and partners please check out our website: (www.globalfairness.org)

Reception with Ambassador Hunaina Al-Mughairy of Oman

On June 18th, GFI formally welcomed Ambassador Paula Dobriansky to the GFI Board of Directors at a reception graciously hosted by Her Excellency Hunaina Al-Mughairy,

The Brookings Institute provides suggestions on how government, business, and civil society could work more collaboratively to improve development initiatives abroad.

Poor Nations Demand Green Technology

USA Today discusses the struggles developing countries face when trying to “go green”

Featured GFI Partner:

John H. Chafee Center for International Business at Bryant University



Founded in 1988, the John H. Chafee Center for International Business at Bryant University provides consulting services, market research, trade seminars and training, and offers comprehensive trade databases to assist companies, educational institutions and others in maximizing worldwide opportunities. Through for profit and non-profit partnerships the Chafee Center brings expertise, data, and facilitates mutually beneficial education focused projects around the world.

Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman. As the former Undersecretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, Ambassador Dobrianski brings a wealth of expertise and international experience to GFI programs. GFI looks forward to working with Ambassador Dobrianski and the rest of the Board as we advance our mission to improve livelihoods for the world's working poor.

GFI shares results of a national public opinion survey on the Informal Sector in Nicaragua

On August 4th in Managua, GFI and local partner The Nicaraguan Institute for Humanistic Studies (INEH) presented the results of a national public opinion survey on the obstacles and opportunities facing informal sector workers in Nicaragua. More than 70 people attended the presentation representing a broad range of sectors and organizations including the Nicaraguan Central Bank, Ministry of Labor, Chamber of Commerce, labor unions, informal workers, and municipal governments.

The survey, conducted as part of GFI's Promoting Informal Labor Rights project (PILAR), captured each sector's perception on the challenges and opportunities to improve labor rights and decent work opportunities for informal workers. The results of the survey are being used to guide a series of policy discussions and trainings with local participants over the next ten months.

GFI works to bring green technology to India's Poor

In the coming months, GFI plans to expand our programming in India with a new initiative designed to improve livelihoods and increase energy sustainability for women salt farmers in the northern state of Gujarat. The project called the Salt Workers Economic Empowerment Program (SWEEP), introduces sustainable energy solutions to lower production costs so that the poor too can benefit from “green technology.” Capitalizing on sustainable technology and production methods, improved links to high-value markets and greater local control of energy costs, SWEEP will give women producers the tools, access and voice to better realize profits and achieve their personal and community livelihood goals.



India is one of the largest salt producers in the world and the Surendranagar District in Gujarat where GFI and local partner SEWA plan to launch the SWEEP program is in the heart of India's salt manufacturing area with nearly 900 square miles under cultivation. Despite the extremely harsh climate and labor intensive production process, much of the salt cultivation is carried out by women and adolescent girls. These women and girls face an uphill battle to economic success due to the high energy costs of diesel fuel and loss of profit to middlemen. Furthermore, as salt farming requires families to move far way from nearby cities, children are unable to go to school and the lack of access to energy prohibits farmers from conducting any additional income generating activities.

The SWEEP project will take an important step forward by introducing sustainable energy technology to replace the

existing diesel system and also create wider market opportunities and greater value-chain ownership to help improve livelihoods, and empower woman farmers to truly own their salt businesses.

Feature:

Going Green –Not so Easy

At least one-quarter of the world's population is living without access to electricity and an additional 2.4 billion people rely on non-renewable, non-sustainable biomass which is known to have negative health impacts. Not only are the poor in need of access to renewable, clean, and consistent energy sources, but they are also amongst those most impacted by the adverse effects of climate change. With little to no resources to adapt to climate driven changes affecting agricultural crop cycles or water resource availability, more and more people are being driven into extreme poverty. With growing consensus on the need to address climate change and the persistent problems of energy poverty around the world, giving the poor access to clean, renewable energy sources is now more than ever a fundamental development priority.

While the introduction of “green technology” looks to be a promising solution to developing country energy needs, actually realizing the potential of alternative energy solutions is extremely challenging in poor countries that lack the basic capital needed for initial investments in green technology. Furthermore, for poor communities accustomed to traditional production methods, the introduction of unfamiliar technologies can be viewed as threatening and undermining their daily livelihood.

New partnerships are needed on both a national and local level in order to bring green technology to the poor and help realize the short term livelihood benefits and longer term climate impacts that green solutions can bring. The development community can help lead the way by raising awareness about needed investment and developing appropriate local alliances to introduce new technologies in a non-threatening way that also empowers local communities to take ownership of the new technologies. As world leaders come together to address climate change on a global level, it will be important to ensure that the most vulnerable of workers are also able to leverage new opportunities for green investments.

“Access to energy services is a key component of alleviating poverty and an indispensable element of sustainable human development.”

International Energy Agency (IEA)

