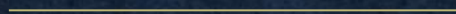


WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES OF PROMISE TO UNLOCK
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Global Fairness Initiative

2022 ANNUAL REPORT





A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Karen Tramontano

At the Global Fairness Initiative, we are focused on helping the world's working poor build equitable and sustainable paths to progress, even in the face of challenges—and since our last report, we have continued to confront a range of complex issues as a global community. The COVID-19 pandemic focused a magnifying glass on the gaps in our institutions that impact our economic security, and many of those gaps still remain. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has created new hurdles for geopolitical efforts across the globe. Uncertainty and vulnerability are as present as ever for the working poor.

Yet the truth is that this sense of uncertainty reinforces what makes GFI's work so essential. By rooting solutions in the economy, we are helping communities create resiliency so they can adapt in the face of global insecurity. By working alongside local leaders, we are helping the most affected individuals develop solutions for sustainable growth. By building an expansive, comprehensive and durable network, we are generating the tools to help prepare ourselves and communities of promise to weather emerging obstacles and sudden threats.



Our work has already made an impressive impact. So far, GFI has helped to implement hundreds of programs with thousands of communities, mobilizing millions of dollars to change the trajectory of the lives of the global poor for over more than 20 years. Our projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have created economic opportunities across the globe. Together, we have helped form the foundation of workforces, economies, and communities that will continue to transform lives and livelihoods for generations to come.

These are remarkable results—but we have not achieved them alone. Our success has been made possible by the extraordinary partners who fuel our efforts, from market actors and civic organizations to governments and global influencers—and with local organizations, communities and workers at the center. In every case and every instance, we have been lifted up by our multi-stakeholder network, and driven forward by the commitment of individuals like you to our shared progress. Time and time again, in moments of uncertainty, these are the people, the partners, who have risen to the occasion.

We recognize that as problems change and continue, solutions must evolve, which is why we are constantly working to better understand the needs of the communities we serve. Still, from our efforts at the grassroots level for informal workers, to our support for empowering women, our commitment to creating positive change has never been greater or more effective. At the same time, there has rarely been more energy for organizing and creating small, but effective change—and we are committed to harnessing that energy for progress.

There is no doubt that the coming years will test us, not just at GFI but as members of a global community. We will face new challenges—from rising impacts of climate change to conflict-fueled disruption around the globe. But I am confident that, with your support, we will continue to make vital progress. As long as we can count you among our GFI community, I am certain that we will continue to transform lives and communities for good.

Thank you, once again, for your partnership and your commitment to the mission we share.

With gratitude,

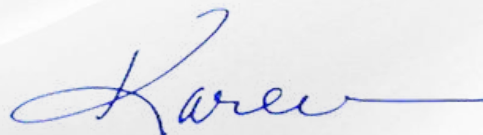
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kareem", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Table of Contents

7 VISION

8 PRINCIPLES

9 VOICE

11 PROGRAMS

18 FELLOWSHIP



“GFI is taking the globalization debate beyond polemics, fostering productive dialogue and **advancing revolutionary approaches to the challenges arising from global trade and development.** In an increasingly interdependent world, it is vital that we leave no voice unheard and no inequity unchallenged.”

Bill Clinton
Former President of the United States
Founding GFI Board Chair



VISION

We empower local voices and connect individuals and organizations to create comprehensive, effective and resilient solutions that alleviate poverty by focusing on four values

- **Informality:** We build awareness of issues around informal work and create public solutions that offer benefits and protections.
- **Local Market Success:** We help small-holder producers and entrepreneurs enter the market and improve productivity.
- **Worker Justice:** We promote safe, fair and sustainable working conditions that support competition and worker dignity.
- **Community Resilience:** We help communities decrease vulnerability and increase preparedness so they can survive and thrive for the long term.



OUR PRINCIPLES

We partner with communities, market actors, civic organizations, governments, and global influencers who are united by a set of shared principles:

- **People are powerful:** We believe the world's poorest communities—especially poor women—have the ability to succeed and thrive.
- **Local voices matter:** We believe the people closest to the problem are also closest to the solution.
- **Economics are key:** We believe the economy is a vital engine for growth.
- **Collaboration is essential:** We believe long-term success is more likely when stakeholders work together.

OUR APPROACH

We put local communities at the center in order to help develop a sustainable and resilient path forward, engaging partners through a multi-stakeholder framework to help ensure broad-based and long-term success. Our efforts involve:

- **Identifying barriers:** We partner with a local organization to center worker voices and identify barriers to progress.
- **Developing opportunities:** We help local leaders design projects that support equitable access and decent work.
- **Activating partnerships:** We implement projects through a multi-stakeholder framework that links local communities with market actors, civic organizations, governments and global influencers.
- **Scaling for impact:** We start at scale so initiatives include all voices and have maximum impact immediately.

WHY GFI NOW?



The Global Fairness Initiative is a leader in bridging the connection between capacity and opportunity and creating meaningful and sustainable livelihoods for small farmers, textile workers and marginalized poor communities throughout the globe. Demand has grown for GFI's innovative programs to reach further into Africa, Asia and Latin America and we are committed to meeting the need, but never to growing beyond it.



GIVING WORKERS VOICE

Since GFI was founded, we have worked deeply in communities around the world - bringing together partners and elevating local organizations and their solutions for a fairer economy.

Nepali NGO Coalition:

GFI works with 5 local Nepali NGOs to implement program activities for Better Brick Nepal and the Bridge School Program. Most of the NGOs are focused on women's and children's issues and are located across Nepal. The NGOs include: Prayas Nepal, Integrated Green Development Nepal, National Educational & Social Development Organization, Urban Environment Management Society, and Society for Integrated Allied Nepal.



Kuepa:

Kuepa is an innovative, for-profit organization that provides adult students in Latin America with an effective way to complete their secondary studies as well as to learn and develop the hard and soft skills necessary to succeed in the labor market. Through an online platform that circumvents problems of distance, time, and expense, combined with innovative technology oriented on-site instruction, Kuepa offers the best option for returning students who are seeking to improve their work skills and secure full employment in Latin America.

kuepa

Tunisia Inclusive Labor Institute:

Created in 2020 to sustain and augment the progress made through GFI's efforts to improve the lives of Tunisia's informal workers, the Tunisia Inclusive Labor Institute (TILI) is a Tunisian NGO working to advance the rights of the millions of Tunisians working informally. Core to the Institute's mission is ensuring that past and future reforms benefit all workers in Tunisia's informal economy, including particularly marginalized groups such as migrant workers and informal employees of formal enterprises. To achieve these goals, the Institute will leverage years of experience and a strong reputation and connections throughout the region to organize informal workers and empower them to advocate for their rights. The Institute is structured around three pillars: knowledge, organizing, and regulatory reform.



Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA):

Registered in 1972, SEWA is a trade union and organization of poor, self-employed women workers who earn a living through their own labor or small businesses. SEWA's primary goals are to organize women to ensure that every family obtains full employment. SEWA's belief is that all women should be autonomous, both economically and in terms of their decision-making ability. While based in Gujarat, India, SEWA has experience organizing poor producers throughout India, Asia and the globe.



Program Supporters

CITI Foundation

The Citi Foundation works to promote economic progress and improve the lives of people in low-income communities around the world. The Foundation invests in efforts that increase financial inclusion, catalyze job opportunities for youth, and reimagine approaches to building economically vibrant cities. The Citi Foundation's "More than Philanthropy" approach leverages the enormous expertise of Citi and its people to fulfill their mission, and drive thought leadership and innovation.



Ford Foundation

The Ford Foundation believes in the inherent dignity of all people. But around the world, too many people are excluded from the political, economic, and social institutions that shape their lives. In addressing this reality, the Ford Foundation is guided by a vision of social justice – a world in which all individuals, communities, and peoples work toward the protection and full expression of their human rights; are active participants in the decisions that affect them; share equitably the knowledge, wealth, and resources of society; and are free to achieve their full potential. Across eight decades, the Ford Foundation's mission has been to reduce poverty and injustice, strengthen democratic values, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement.



Humanity United

Established in 2005, Humanity United is a foundation committed to building peace, promoting justice, and advancing human freedom in the areas of the globe where these ideals are challenged most. Humanity United leverages its resources to accomplish a broad range of goals, but places an emphasis on finding solutions to global challenges such as mass atrocities and modern-day slavery. Humanity United works across the fields of public policy making, research, civil society, international justice, and advocacy to help disparate communities share information and ideas, and collaborate in ways that amplify their impact.



Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life.



Better Brick Nepal

Supported by Humanity United

Better Brick Nepal's goal was to transform the brick industry by eliminating child, forced, and bonded labor. We do this by incentivizing kilns to improve conditions for workers through access to better production techniques, stronger operations and the creation of a market for ethically produced bricks. Better Brick - Nepal was a collaboration between GFI, GoodWeave, and Humanity United. Better Brick - Nepal partnered with 5 local Nepali organizations to implement the work on the ground. Significantly, BBN certified 16 BBN on the entire BBN Standard, which requires kilns to eliminate child, forced, and bonded labor, and ensure acceptable conditions of work. Throughout the program, BBN worked with over 40 kilns to promote worker voice, build capacity for workers and owners, and provide educational opportunities to children. Within the last year, 2,465 workers received training on BBN standards and 515 children participated in ECEC's or in their local educational facilities, mitigating the dangers they would typically face on dangerous kiln sites.

During the final phase of funding, efforts were directed towards institutionalizing the program's impact within industry and within municipalities, and worked alongside workers, kiln owners, local partners, government officers, and local and regional stakeholders to create better engagement and increase involvement to end forced, bonded, and child labor within the industry. Kiln owners took ownership of issuing worker contracts and increased the pace and adequacy of responses to Worker and Grievance Committees requests; municipalities worked alongside BBN to obtain a child labor-free status and implement labor friendly policies within their districts; and training and capacity building activities were conducted on labor audits to municipal, regional, and kiln level stakeholders. In addition, GFI hosted more than 50 training courses on the BBN model aimed at assisting and improving worker welfare practices. As BBN concluded this year, GFI's efforts to empower Nepal's informal worker continues with the local partner SIAN, who will oversee the National Stakeholder Council (NSC) and Brick Kiln Network.



HUMANITY
UNITED



Tunisia Inclusive Labor Dialogue

Supported by Open Society Foundation

To amplify the voice of the informal sector in the public sphere, and enable a more inclusive, democratic approach to empowering informal workers, the Global Fairness Initiative (GFI) and Tunisia Inclusive Labor Institute (TILI) are building networks across Tunisia to increase the capacity of informal workers to influence a national discourse on their rights; strengthen informal workers' collective voice and action; and create spaces for constructive multi-stakeholder dialogue and debate to promote social justice and accountability. Through creating a platform for social dialogue, informal workers and leaders will better understand and engage with the functioning of the state and its institutions to understand the root causes and the public discourse underlying informal workers' rights. In doing so, workers and leaders become more capable and rational advocates for their rights and economic success.

To develop a foundation, the ILD initiative implemented a survey to informal workers and conducted focus groups to understand the current state of informal workers' attendance, comprehension and perception of social dialogues. Key grassroots stakeholders within the informal sector were identified and are being included into new workforce of leaders and social partners who will represent workers in the decision-making processes and be a crucial voice in public forums. One training and capacity building of leaders have been conducted, and 2 more will be completed by the end of the summer 2023. ILD has also started the development of a platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration to strengthen informal workers voice and unity, and reduce the populist discourse. The platform will host public materials and resources to enhance the capacity of informal workers, increase workers' rights, and encourage economic justice.



Tunisia Informal Organizing Initiative

Supported by The Ford Foundation

In Tunisia and around the world, structural barriers have prevented informal workers from advocating for their rights and wielding political influence. The Informal Organizing Initiative (IOI) was developed to create a mechanism for informal workers to effectively organize and collectively promote progressive and pragmatic changes with a unified voice. Anchored within the newly established Tunisia Inclusive Labor Institute, IOI is collaborating with partner networks to build workers' and civil society's capacity to actively take part in the organizing process, and to increase government and private sector engagement with the informal economy.

In partnership with local NGOs across Tunisia, IOI has conducted a stakeholder mapping to identify stakeholders in government, civil society, and informal worker communities to begin the organizing effort. Since last year, IOI have created technical committees of leaders who will be spokespersons for the organizing movement, and will assist in managing the process and protocols for various informal workers and associated organizations. Within the current period of funding, IOI will build capacity among stakeholders and informal workers through workshops, and a national forum with local and international partners will lay the foundation for the creation of a representative union of informal workers.



FORD
FOUNDATION



Creando Tu Futuro, TechPower

Supported by the Citi Foundation

As a region, Latin America faces significant challenges in the area of youth employment. Nearly 20 million youth are neither employed, nor studying, a group often referred to by the pejorative "ninis" (ni estudian, ni trabajan) and seen as a societal burden instead of the potential economic engine that they might otherwise represent. According to the Inter-American Development Bank, youth in the region between the ages of 15 to 24 experience unemployment rates three times the rate for adults, with far higher unemployment rates for those who are low-income, and especially women.

The Creating Your Future / Creando Tu Futuro - Workplace Skills Program (CTF), implemented in collaboration with Kuepa, a leader in blended learning services for professional development, is an innovative job skills training program aimed at building a strong foundation of technical and life skills knowledge for low income youth in Latin America. Launched in 2015, the program has developed and is delivering a blended platform of online learning modules and instruction that has reached over 20,000 students in Argentina, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Peru, and Mexico. The CTF program provides beneficiaries with instruction through five unique modules: math and literacy skills; workplace communication; technical and technology skills; and a blend of personal financial management and job search skills. The central goal of the program is to maximize the employability of participants by empowering them with the fundamental technical and personal skills necessary to secure full employment, and achieve sustainable personal and professional success in their future careers. CTF also offers the TechPower IT skills program to young women in Bogota, Colombia.

CTF continues to partner with numerous local NGOs, foundations, companies and other organizations, including local governments, to inform and recruit students in Argentina, Colombia, Peru, Dominican Republic, and Mexico.



Creando Tu Futuro Mexico

- Served 808 **Youth**
- 63% of Beneficiaries Were **Women**
- Worked With 14 **Partner Organizations**
 - 86% NGOs
 - 14% Public Sector
- Presence in **29 of the 32 States In Mexico**

PARTNERS



- Children International
- Escuela Superior de Turismo
- Fundación Nemi
- Centros de Integración Juvenil

- World Vision
- Fundación Centro Histórico
- Aquí Nadie se Rinde
- Casa Alianza
- Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Puebla



GRASSROOTS CENTER ON WOMEN IN WORK

Supported by the Gates Foundation

The voices of women informal workers have often been overlooked.

The voices of women informal workers have often been overlooked, especially by the highest levels of government and trade when determining economic and development policies. The Grassroots Center on Women in Work (GCWW) will develop mechanisms to gather and disseminate data knowledge at the grassroots level to inform and develop policies that directly impact women workers' rights and economic empowerment. The Center will create interventions and opportunities to support two tracks: knowledge sharing and collaboration, and advocacy and activism.



The Center will also develop a first-of-its-kind digital platform to promote, inform, and instigate equitable worker-centered markets at the grassroots level, and act as a hub for knowledge about the markets and economic conditions of women workers in the informal sector across the Global South. The Center will facilitate cross-border partnerships through the platform and through the Council on Women in Work, supporting collaboration between grassroots organizations and sharing knowledge between grassroots partners and grass-tops advocates.



GRASSROOTS CENTER ON WOMEN IN WORK

cont.

GFI is collaborating with the Tunisian Inclusive Labor Institute (TILI) and the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) to develop a model of grassroots data collection and train leaders on implanting strategies on the ground. The Center has partnered with 6 formal and informal worker unions to test the model and conduct a cross-country study focused on a priority issue which impacts women informal workers across sectors. Another comprehensive study focused in Kenya will also gathering data. Information from the studies will be shared this year on a digital platform, which has been created to promote close partnerships between Global South entities and between the Global South and Global North affiliates and organizations. Within the last few months, the Council on Women in Work has formed from a coalition of unions and has begun prioritizing workers' needs, tailoring local and national policies, and engaging with the Center to create informed and relevant change regarding women's work and the markets in which they operate.



INCLUSIVE
LABOR
INSTITUTE

BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation



SAPIN FELLOWSHIP

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UDC

GFI created the Sapin Fellowship in 2011 to honor Dr. Shirley Sapin, an activist devoted to the civil rights movement and committed to equality and opportunity for all. The Fellowship offers an opportunity for college and post-graduate students to work for a semester with GFI on issues of global economic development and global workforce equity. Fellows work with GFI staff on a number of initiatives, gaining exposure to international development issues, non-profit management, and access to a wide network of affiliated organizations and businesses throughout the Washington, DC region and beyond.



SHIRLEY SAPIN



In 2023, GFI announced a partnership with the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) College of Arts and Sciences to make the Sapin Fellowship exclusively available to students from UDC. Torrey Thomas, a UDC Junior pursuing a degree in Global Studies, was the inaugural UDC Sapin Fellow. He joined the GFI team to work on issues and programs at the heart of GFI's mission to create a more equitable, sustainable world for the working poor.

"I am honored that GFI has committed the Sapin Fellowship to support CAS students," shared April Massey, Ph.D., Dean of the UDC College of Arts and Sciences. "The mission and values of the organization and the intent of the fellowship experience align seamlessly with the College's quest for immersive and transformative activities that will position our graduates competitively. I look forward to the continued partnership."



TORREY THOMAS





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