



GLOBAL FAIRNESS  
INITIATIVE

# ANNUAL REPORT

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2024

# LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER

## **GFI had several notable achievements in 2024.**

Alongside our partners, we piloted a worker-led data collection methodology to address inequity in both data and thought leadership. The new methodology culminated in the release of two studies conducted across seven countries in Africa.

We deepened our work around climate resilience for workers, who increasingly experience harsh vulnerabilities due to climate change. The *Hariyali* Green Villages initiative, led by the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is an innovative program that brings clean energy technologies to the community, empowering local entrepreneurs to lead climate preparedness and advocacy in their communities.

For years we have championed worker protections and improved social safety nets. We were pleased to see local governments and stakeholders carry forward efforts to create protections for informal workers, such as in Tunisia, where the government launched a national Self-Entrepreneur Platform for informal workers to register their businesses.

Seeing this progress, provides us with the determination to help the working poor confront the challenges they face. We believe that GFI's approach, supporting locally led and sustainable solutions is more relevant than ever.

In 2025 and beyond, we look forward to bringing GFI's unique approach to create a just future of work.

With gratitude,

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



# EMPOWERING WORKER VOICES

The informal sector in Africa constitutes a majority of the workforce, and they work long hours under harsh conditions with few protections. Many informal workers, especially women, lack a voice and formal place at the table to create impactful and sustainable change in the social dialogue space.

In Tunisia, GFI worked to strengthen informal workers' collective voice, and to create spaces for constructive, multi-stakeholder dialogue to promote social justice and accountability through the Inclusive Labor Dialogues.

Informal worker leaders were trained on policy and advocacy, and co-facilitated dialogue sessions with local authorities, public institutions, and other stakeholders. The dialogues addressed topics such as workers rights, national and local policies, and reforms.

**19**  
LOCAL  
DIALOGUES

OVER  
**200**  
INFORMAL  
WORKERS  
INVOLVED

**In November, the Government of Tunisia launched the Self-Entrepreneur Platform.** This launch represents a significant milestone in the implementation of the 2020 Self-Entrepreneur Law, which aims to support the formalization of Tunisia’s informal labor market, and the platform was a recommendation from GFI’s work in the Tunisia Inclusive Labor Initiative.

The Self-Entrepreneur Platform (<http://www.autoentrepreneur.tn/>) will serve as a critical tool in facilitating the formal registration of informal self-entrepreneurs and their transition to the formal economy.

Entrepreneurs from diverse sectors, including waste-pickers, agricultural workers, construction workers, and platform workers, will be covered under the law, and the platform will enhance their access to economic opportunities and legal protections.



**Pictured above: Tunisia Inclusive Labor Institute Program in 2017**



AUKMW and BOTTAX-Kenya Union members conduct surveys in Mombasa and Nairobi.

**GFI's new Inclusive Labor Institute (ILI), was launched to create ownership of knowledge and data by informal workers,** and to create data-led advocacy on labor rights and international development from the grassroots. Over the past two years, GFI has supported a Council of leaders of informal unions in Africa, who led the research direction for two commissioned studies.

*Organizing and Labor Trends of Informal Workers in Kenya* investigated the barriers and opportunities for workers to join unions. Our partners the *Amalgamated Union of Kenya Metal Workers (AUKMW)* and the *Bodaboda, Tuktuk and Taxi Workers Union of Kenya (BOTTAX-Kenya)* guided the study direction, participated in hands-on training, then conducted over 750 surveys.

With support from Dataworld Research Limited, the study identified recommendations for unions on how to improve union membership, which are now being considered by union leaders in their membership strategy. BOTTAX-Kenya is also replicating the data collection process on another program that aims to advance collective bargaining agreements.

*Women's Voices and Leadership in Organizing Africa's Informal Economy* aimed to determine the barriers preventing women from reaching leadership positions, and learn how unions, organizations, and governments can address these challenges.

“Apparently the training we did with GFI has come to add extra benefits. **All the knowledge and skills that were picked from your study will be applied into this other program.** Thank you.”

-Cynthia Bridget Wanyonyi,  
General Secretary at BOTTAX

The study was conducted in partnership with informal worker unions and organizations in six African countries: *Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses de l'Economie Informelle du Côte d'Ivoire* (FETTEI- CI) in Cote d'Ivoire, the *Informal Economy Workers' Forum of Ghana* (INFORUM) in Ghana, *Petty Traders and Informal Workers Union of Liberia* (FEPTIWUL) in Liberia, *Syndicat des Travailleurs Domestiques et Indépendants de l'Economie Informelle du Rwanda* (SYTRIECI) in Rwanda, the *South Africa Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union* (SADSAWU) in South Africa, and the *Tunisia Inclusive Labor Initiative* (TILI) in Tunisia.



Members of the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU) conduct and participate in a focus group discussion.

**“It was a great experience and also an education *to empower and encourage women leadership in informal workers to fight for the better future.*”**

**-Feedback from a domestic worker and enumerator in South Africa**



Union leaders and representatives from each country held events to raise awareness of the findings with local government, labor inspectorates, trade unions, NGOs, local media and other stakeholders.

We are excited to scale-up the worker-led model to build knowledge skills, and increase the collection of grassroots data in the next phase of this work.



Charles Konnah, President of the Petty Traders and Informal Workers Union of Liberia (FEPTIWUL) gives remarks during a focus group discussion in Liberia.

# DISSEMINATION EVENTS



Top row, from left: FEPTIWUL Event in Liberia, TILI Event in Tunisia, Marcelline Adopo at FETTEI-CI event in Cote d'Ivoire

Bottom row, from left: Deborah Freeman at INFORUM event in Ghana, BOTTAX event in Kenya, and SYTRIECI event in Rwanda.

# WORKER LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

The repercussions of climate change are reverberating across the globe, and increasingly severe heat waves cause ripple effects on the health and livelihoods of informal workers, especially women.

GFI is supporting the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in their transition to a greener future, and SEWA has conducted focus groups and workshops to understand the impacts of climate change on members, and solutions to minimize its effects. Under SEWA's tutelage, thirty-two climate entrepreneurs have participated in skilling around green technology and communication campaigns to increase preparedness.

SEWA's *Hariyali* Green Villages program improves clean energy access in rural India by bringing in scalable market solutions. It has expanded to a total of 173 designated green villages spread over the states of Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra.





Green Village include a suite of clean energy and environment-friendly technologies such as:

- Cool roof to reduce ambient household heat
- Energy efficient kit which includes solar fans, solar lantern,
- 2 solar LED lights for lighting and thermal comfort
- Solar fencing to deter wild animals against crop damage
- Solar traplight against pests and insect damage
- Biogas plants for clean cooking

"Our members belong to various trades, some are home-based workers, while some are salt-pan workers. ***More or less, everyone suffered from heat strokes and exhaustion.***

Lack of drinking water led to frequent UTIs. Food spoilage due to unavailability of storage facilities led to increased cases of diarrhea and vomiting. SEWA sisters who were working in the scorching heat had to face weather's wrath and suffered from skin rashes. All this not only affected our health but also decreased their work productivity."

- Gauriben Darji, SEWA Member (Patan)

# ABOUT GFI

**The Global Fairness Initiative** 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.

Since 2003, GFI has partnered with hundreds of marginalized working communities in Latin America, Africa and Asia to enhance economic opportunities and build sustainable livelihoods.

GFI is a 502(c)(3) tax-exempt organization in the United States.



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