

## Defining Marginalized: An Assessment Tool

### *Literature Review*

As a preliminary step to producing an assessment tool that could be used alongside the WFTO Guarantee System, the team conducted a literature review to situate the current perception of marginalization within the field of international development. To distill the most important aspects of this research, the definitions, measurement instruments, and indexes of several prominent international organizations were examined. Moreover, the impact of this particular form of oppression was analyzed and assessed through various case studies. Through this process, the team developed a framework to formulate a new, precise and inclusive definition of marginalization.

### Definitions and Indexes

The first stage of this review consisted of a landscape analysis of well-established definitions and measurements of marginalization. The team examined definitions from **USAID**, **OHCHR**, the **World Bank** and **DFID**. The team also reviewed measurement instruments such as the **Human Development Index (HDI)**, the **Gender Inequality Index (GII)**, the **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)**, the **Global Competitive Index**, and the **Canadian Marginalization Index**.

Upon synthesizing the findings of this research, the team noted that marginalization is often understood as both a current condition, and a dynamic process. As a condition, it means that excluded individuals or groups are unable to participate fully in their society. As a multidimensional and dynamic process, it refers to the social relations and organizational barriers that block the attainment of livelihoods, human development and equal citizenship. Essentially, Marginalization describes both a process and a condition that prevents individuals or groups from full participation in social, economic and political life. It derives from exclusionary relationships based on power.

### Case Studies

The second and final stage of our review consisted of surveying a series of case studies of marginalized groups in the areas various parts of the world. The main purpose of this research was to decipher similarities and patterns among these various manifestations of oppression.

In sub Saharan Africa, we noted several cases of violations of Fair Trade principles. By issuing large subsidies to their farmers, both U.S. and EU governments have created critical imbalances in international trade. Their policies have had a disastrous impact on two of Africa's chief exports: cotton and sugar. In Mali, where more than 3 million people (a third of its population) depend on income from cotton, an ever increasing number of economically marginalized farmers are pushed into in abject poverty and cut off from virtually any medical access.

A different type of marginalization that highlights the unintended consequences of poor local macroeconomic decisions exists in India. During a series of structural reforms and stabilization policies in the 1990s focused on tax reforms, foreign trade and investment, the Indian government failed to include any specific package for its agricultural sector. As a result of this exclusion, the overwhelming majority of Indian farmers has been suffering from poverty, inequalities in access to health and education and even experienced high suicide rates.

Finally, Guatemala provided an example of marginalization fueled by the "push and pull" factors of an increasingly globalized economy, particularly the demand for sugar. Guatemala is the second largest exporter of sugar in Latin America and has 70% of its local production geared towards export. The government of Guatemala has consequently allowed sugarcane export companies to aggressively rent or buy massive amounts of land, making the cultivation of other crops increasingly difficult. Moreover, while the government is allocating land to large-scale enterprises, farmers without clear titles are often pushed off their properties.

### Defining Marginalization

This literature review represents a very important step towards assessing the parameters that delineate the meaning of marginalization within the context of Fair Trade. After reviewing both definitions/indexes provided by some of the major players in the Development field, and analyzing the experience of various groups living in a marginalized state across the world, the team composed the following definition of this concept:

**"Marginalization is the systematic denial of the freedoms enjoyed by the wider society. This multifaceted and persistent disadvantage leads to exclusion from the process of development."**