



THE CENTER FOR FINANCIAL INCLUSION

at ACCION International



MISSION

The Center seeks to connect the microfinance community with the major drivers of the global economy – e.g. capital markets and technology – and harness their capabilities to address the financial needs of poor people. By bringing these elements together, the Center for Financial Inclusion serves as a bridge between today's microfinance and a future of economic opportunity for all.

BACKGROUND

The Center for Financial Inclusion at ACCION International is an action, research center that works on behalf of the microfinance industry as a whole, serving as a bridge to leverage private-sector interest in microfinance. In collaboration with nonprofits, commercial banks, technology firms, regulators, universities, and many others, the Center works to bring the best minds and expertise to bear on challenges facing the industry as a whole.

Using tools such as convening, coalition building, research, information dissemination, training and piloting, the Center is dedicated to the proposition that low-income people deserve high-quality, regulated financial services, and that those services are best provided through sustainable, commercial programs that incorporate social purpose.

PROJECTS

The Smart Campaign

The Smart Campaign is a global campaign made up of microfinance leaders from around the world who believe protecting clients is not only the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do. By providing microfinance institutions the tools and resources they need to deliver transparent, respectful and prudent financial services to all clients, The Smart Campaign is helping the industry make good on its double bottom line promise and elevating microfinance as a model of responsible banking around the world.

The Client Protection Principles are the minimum standards that clients should expect to receive when doing business with a microfinance institution. There is consensus within the industry that providers of financial services should adhere to the following core principles:

1. Avoidance of over-indebtedness
2. Transparent and responsible pricing
3. Appropriate collections practices
4. Ethical staff behavior
5. Mechanisms for redress of grievances
6. Privacy of client data

www.smartcampaign.org

Financial Inclusion 2020

Financial Inclusion 2020 is an initiative of the Center for Financial Inclusion to explore and enhance the prospects for full financial inclusion around the world by 2020.

Full financial inclusion implies that all people who can use them have access to a full suite of quality financial services, provided at affordable prices, in a convenient manner, and with dignity for the clients. Financial services are delivered by a range of providers, most of them private, and reach everyone who can use them, including disabled, poor, rural, and other excluded populations.

The Center advocates a vision-led approach to financial inclusion, addressing the following four dimensions: Access to all important financial services, high quality in all services, delivered by varied providers, and access for all.

In 2009, the Center considered these dimensions in an analysis of the state of financial inclusion in Mexico, a nation with great potential to achieve financial inclusion. The result is a white paper that the Center offers for discussion.

PROJECTS *(cont.)*

Investing in Inclusive Finance

Microfinance institutions are rapidly attracting large volumes of private capital, yet they sometimes struggle with the absorption and deployment of these funds. A commercially sustainable, mainstreamed microfinance industry must be ready for investment. At the same time, investors must fully understand the microfinance landscape.

Through its Investing in Inclusive Finance program, the Center for Financial Inclusion explores the challenges and opportunities at the intersection of microfinance and investment. These areas include strengthening microfinance fund management, building relationships that foster healthy local capital markets, assisting MFIs with transformation strategies, and building MFI capacity to qualify for commercial investment and work effectively with investors.

Energy Links

On average, households in subsistence economies spend up to 30 percent of their income on lighting and cooking fuels. Children suffer from indoor smoke, and the environment suffers from the emission of greenhouse gasses and deforestation. As the developing world advances economically, pro-poor, sustainable energy solutions are needed - and they exist!



A young boy in Uganda reads by the light of his Firefly lamp - a solar powered LED reading lamp that is a clean and safe alternative to kerosene.

Energy Links, a project of the Center for Financial Inclusion, seeks to use microfinance as a platform for providing and supporting pro-poor energy solutions. The objective is to create commercially-driven, scalable, affordable, and clean energy products with widespread distribution.

CREDIT SUISSE
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Publications, Blog and Podcast Series

Since 1986 ACCION International's publications series have been addressing developments and challenges in the microfinance field. The Center for Financial Inclusion website is home to this rich resource library of publications, podcasts and blog posts. Visit our website to hear from a diverse selection of voices from the microfinance industry.

Microfinance for Bankers and Investors

Microfinance for Bankers and Investors, by Elisabeth Rhyne, guides readers through the landscape of financial-inclusion opportunities, learning from companies around the world that are leading the way in making profit while addressing global poverty. Available now on Amazon.com.

The Council of Microfinance Equity Funds (CMEF)

The Council of Microfinance Equity Funds is the membership organization that brings together the leading private entities that make equity investments in microfinance institutions in the developing world.

Harvard Business School

The Center is host to the annual HBS-ACCION Program on Strategic Leadership in Microfinance. It is the first executive education program to provide high-level management and leadership training to those shaping the microfinance industry, including CEOs of leading microfinance institutions and executives of mainstream banks entering the microfinance market.

Faculty Council

The Center for Financial Inclusion is fortunate to collaborate with an exemplary Faculty Council, made up of academics from premier national and international professional schools. In support of the Center, the Council aims to embed the study of microfinance and financial inclusion in the curriculum of professional schools so that all students have some exposure to the field.



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