



**May 20-21 in San Francisco, CA at the Westin and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts**

**Presented by Opportunity Fund, Kiva, and the US ACCION Network**

[www.microfinanceusa2010.org](http://www.microfinanceusa2010.org)

**Location: Westin Market St and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, CA**

***Microfinance USA is the place where microfinance practitioners, investors, and enthusiasts meet.***

**Featured speaker: Maria Shriver, First Lady of California**

### **Brief Conference Overview**

The overwhelming success of the 2009 statewide “Microfinance, CA” conference demonstrated the enthusiasm among various players in the private and public sectors for a gathering to exchange ideas and resources to grow domestic microfinance. **Microfinance USA** will continue to mobilize those involved in and curious about domestic microfinance to help expand the scale and scope of financial services available to small businesses across America. The two-day event will showcase on a national level how microfinance produces jobs, increases incomes, and creates opportunities to build stable and sustainable communities.

Expanding on the energy and momentum generated by the 2009 conference, **Microfinance USA** will bring together 800 - 1,000 investors, policymakers, social entrepreneurs, practitioners, small business owners, and curious individuals to engage with microfinance strategies and practices unique to the United States. Participants will deepen their understanding of U.S. microfinance and broaden their networks through interactive panels and workshops, tours of microfinance borrowers, and networking opportunities.

### **Draft Agenda for Microfinance USA**

#### **History and Current State of Microlending in the U.S.**

Many are familiar with “creation myths” about overseas microlending, but what are its origins in this country? This session will convene a group who were involved in the earliest U.S. microlending efforts thirty years ago, along with some newer practitioners. Panelists will discuss the changing policy, economic, and cultural landscape over the past decades, highlighting: where domestic microlending got started; how it’s grown, struggled, and succeeded; and where these microfinance leaders think the industry *is* heading and *ought* to be heading.

#### **Microfinance Miracle? | or | Microfinance Myth?**

Does microcredit reduce poverty? Is that even its purpose? What is its real impact and how can we measure it? Hear from leading researchers in the field on a sizzling debate regarding the impact of microfinance and whether the ‘microfinance buzz’ belies data that indicate a miracle, a myth, or something else.

### **Is Savings Even More Important than Credit?**

Providing tools and support to help families build small amounts of savings can empower them for generations. Join leaders of microfinance savings programs in a discussion on the increasingly important role of savings in poverty alleviation work in the U.S and around the world. Learn how incentive and education- based savings programs are designed and how commercial financial institutions are partnering with non-profits to provide matched savings accounts. Hear from individuals who are using savings to build assets and achieve their goals.

### **Leveraging Partnerships to Reach Millions**

Microfinance has been slower to scale in the U.S. than internationally. But innovative models and public-private partnerships are leading the way to a new wave of expansion into untapped markets in the U.S.. Panelists will share what they continue to discover about the need and demand for microfinance products in low income communities, and how they are leveraging partnerships and dollars in hopes of reaching millions.

### **What is a Fair Price to Pay for Good Credit?**

Emotions run very high around the issue of interest rates, and some MFI's abroad have suffered criticism for their high rates. Why is it that the price charged for money is scrutinized so much more carefully than the price charged for other goods? Here in the U.S., non-profit lenders have kept their interest rates lower for a variety of reason, including regulations, public perception and investor restrictions. But if we are serious about scaling up U.S. microlending, are much higher rates going to be necessary, so that earned income can replace philanthropic support? We will hear from several practitioners and thinkers on the question: What is a "fair" price to pay for good credit?

### **Innovations: Serving the Unbanked**

Serving the unbanked in the U.S. means much more than microlending. Join innovative organizations who are broadening the definition of microfinance with unique retail products, marketing, and storefronts to reach individuals living outside the financial mainstream.

### **The Role of Government and Job Creation in U.S. Microfinance**

As the leading contributor of net new jobs to the U.S. economy – 93.5% in the last 20 years -- small businesses truly are the engine of our economy. With high loan repayment rates and a proven ability to create jobs in the communities most heavily hit by the downturn, nonprofit lenders are seen by the government as valuable players in the economic recovery. Learn what steps the government is taking to continue to expand its investment in micro- and small business lending, and the challenges microfinance institutions face in accessing federal funding. Meet clients who have used very small loans to create and preserve substantial numbers of jobs—demonstrating the potential microlending has for job creation and economic recovery.

### **Improving Underwriting Efficiency and Response Time- MMS™**

Learn about Microloan Management Services (MMS), the first service center tailored to microfinance organizations in the US. Developed by ACCION Texas, MMS offers web application, automatic prequalification scoring, underwriting, closing documents and portfolio management services. MMS enables greater standardization of the loan approval process and a dramatic reduction in response time helping improve customer service and overall program outcomes. It is web based and virtually paperless from application to payoff. In its first year MMS processed 1500 applications and is currently servicing 7 organizations in 8 states.

## **Scale Academy**

What does it take to scale microlending in the United States? For the last three years, leading microlenders engaged in the Scale Academy for Microenterprise Development have been working hard to transform their institutions to dramatically increase the number of entrepreneurs they serve. The Academy, sponsored by the Aspen Institute's FIELD program and the Association for Enterprise Opportunity supports their efforts with grants, technical assistance and opportunities for peer learning. Grantees will discuss their goals, accomplishments, challenges, and pathways to scale, and share their lessons learned.

## **Serving the Unbanked: Case Study on Self-Help's Micro-Branch**

There are approximately 106 million un-banked and under-banked people in the country using alternative providers for their day-to-day financial services. Mainstream financial institutions have designed their products and services to serve financially stable families, and not around the needs of people who live paycheck to paycheck. As a result, alternative providers - like check cashers, pawn shops, consumer finance companies and payday lenders - have emerged to fill the void. The people in check cashing lines are missing something valuable: a place to save money, the chance to develop or repair credit ratings, personal security from robbery, and access to responsible credit. Self-Help Federal Credit Union is launching a pilot credit union concept, the "Micro-Branch", designed around the needs of families who are un-banked and under-banked through relevant and accessible products and innovative retail planning.

## **Taste of Microentrepreneurship SPONSOR \$20,000**

Microentrepreneurs representing some of the Bay Area's most popular and cutting-edge kitchens will delight guests with a "food festival" sampling of their culinary delights. Microfinance USA will include an evening reception from 5-7pm for an evening of networking, live music, hors d'œuvres and open bar.

## **The Rise of P2P Lending in the U.S.**

Peer Lending and Microlending are rising alternatives and complements to traditional bank loans. Senior Managers at Lending Club, Kiva, and US Virgin Money – three separate firms harnessing the power of P2P and online marketplaces – discuss how they are transforming the ways Americans lend to and borrow from each other. While their purposes and models differ, these growing firms demonstrate a burgeoning alternative to traditional notions of financing and philanthropy.

+ Tours of microentrepreneurs in Bay Area and film screenings,

## **Reviews from Microfinance, CA 2009**

I found it an excellent event and I was amazed that it was the first of its kind. I thought that the event was very interesting, brought together a wide range of speakers and participants, and was logistically very well managed at a very nice venue.

Bob Annibale, Global Director, Citi Microfinance

Microfinance CA was a tour de force.

Bob Friedman, Founder, CFED

Engaging, delightful, informative, and very impressively managed on every level.

Hilary Abell, Executive Director, WAGES

