



CHICAGO GLOBAL DONORS NETWORK

April 5, 2004

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Dear Donor:

The Chicago Global Donors Network invites you to attend a seminar on **Microfinance: Empowering the World's Poor and Creating Equality** to be held on Wednesday, May 19, 2004 from 4:00 – 8:00pm. Dinner will be served.

There is no silver bullet for poverty. However, over the years, innovative development workers, bankers, and grass roots community organizers have organized various microfinance programs to meet the financial needs of the poor, including providing loans for housing and small businesses. Today, an estimated 67 million low-income entrepreneurs are borrowing and saving with microfinance institutions. Meanwhile, almost three billion people, or half the world's population, are living on \$2 per day or less and can use savings and access to credit to begin to build some financial security.

The Chicago Global Donors Network has assembled a group of microfinance experts to share their knowledge and experiences with you.

- **Dr. Martha Chen** (*keynote speaker*) is a lecturer in Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Her areas of specialization include gender and development, poverty alleviation, and the informal economy. Dr. Chen has resident work experience in Bangladesh (BRAC) and India (Oxfam), and continues to focus much of her energy on development in those countries.
- **Connie Evans** (*moderator*) is the founder of the Women's Self Employment Project, the nation's largest microenterprise program targeting low-income urban women. Ms. Evans has over 20 years of experience fostering economic development in low-income communities worldwide and has worked with the World Bank and the Clinton Administration on microenterprise initiatives. Ms. Evans is currently President and CEO of WSEP Ventures.
- **Mary Houghton** is co-founder and President of ShoreBank Corporation, a 30-year-old institution that is a pioneer in community development and microfinance locally, nationally, and globally. Ms. Houghton has been an adviser to the Grameen Bank, BRAC, and the Aga Khan Rural Support Program, and is a director of K-REP Bank in Kenya.
- **Sunil Sanghvi** is a Director at McKinsey & Company and Location Leader for McKinsey's Chicago Office. His deep interest around international development has led him to work on microfinance in India (World Bank) and agriculture in China and Indonesia (World Bank and ATI).

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- **David Grace** is Financial and Regulatory Manager of the World Council of Credit Unions, whose mission is to be the world's leading advocate, platform for innovation, and development agency for credit unions.
- **Beth Houle** is a Vice President at Opportunity International, a 30-year-old organization that strives to reach the world's poorest people through microenterprise development programs.

The evening's agenda will provide plenty of time for meeting other donors. The program will include an overview of microfinance, the business case for supporting it, and stories from the field describing a variety of evolving practices and impacts. There will be small group discussions over dinner, facilitated by experts in the field, focusing on various aspects of microfinance.

The seminar and dinner will be held on at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, 230 South LaSalle Street. The cost to attend is \$75 per person. Please return the enclosed RSVP form by Friday May 7th. This promises to be a very popular seminar; we encourage you to reply soon as space is limited.

Microfinance is proving to be an exciting and effective tool in addressing global poverty through building opportunity, prosperity, and security from the bottom up. We hope that you will be able to attend this important and informative event.

With warmest regards,

Rachel Golden
Chair, Microfinance
Sub-committee

Marjorie Benton
Co-Chair

Adele Simmons
Co-Chair