



International Year of
Microcredit 2005



UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

International Year of Microcredit Conference 2005



**Towards an End to Global Poverty:
Empowering Communities
and Individuals through
Financial Inclusion**

**Sofitel Hotel, Melbourne, Australia
August 29 – 30, 2005**

www.icms.com.au/microcredit2005

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Critical Dates

Early Bird Registration Deadline:
Friday, 29 June 2005

Accommodation Booking Deadline:
Friday, 22 July 2005



Invitation from the Prime Minister



PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

MESSAGE: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MICROCREDIT CONFERENCE

The Australian Government warmly welcomes the 2005 International Year of Microcredit. Microfinance is a cost-effective way of increasing the economic opportunities available to poor entrepreneurs to enable them to improve their own living standards and that of their families.

Australia's aid programme has funded microfinance activities in Indonesia, China, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Bangladesh. One project alone has provided finance for self-employment and other income-generation activities to almost 23,000 poor households in Bangladesh. Making financial services, including credit and savings, more accessible to poor households has led to increased employment and household incomes.

I am pleased to support the United Nations Association of Australia International Year of Microcredit Conference. I commend the initiative and wish the conference organisers and participants every success in promoting microfinance as an effective tool in the struggle against poverty.

(John Howard)



Invitation from the Conference Convenor

At the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, all member states were called upon to work towards the goal of halving, by 2015, the proportion of the world's people (currently 22 per cent) whose income is less than one dollar a day. In proclaiming 2005 as the International Year of Microcredit, the General Assembly have recognized the important role that microcredit can play in the alleviation of poverty, when combined with savings and related financial services.

In support of this International Year the United Nations Association of Australia (Victoria) is holding a two day International Conference on August 29-30, 2005, at the Sofitel Hotel in Melbourne.

The Conference entitled *'Towards an End to Global Poverty: Empowering Communities and Individuals through Financial Inclusion'* will provide an opportunity to share the practical lessons and discuss the wider issues for business, governments and NGOs with leading international experts and delegates from both the developed and developing world.

A dynamic and creative conference program has been constructed to ensure equal relevance for both Australian and international delegates.

It gives me great pleasure to invite you to join me for this very important conference.

Patricia Collett Conference Convenor

Speakers

We are delighted to announce the participation and contribution of the following distinguished International Keynote Speakers:



Mr Gregory Casagrande

President, South Pacific Business Development Foundation (SPBD), Apia, Samoa

Greg Casagrande is the founder and president of South Pacific Business Development Foundation of Samoa (SPBD). SPBD is a charitable organisation serving over 5,000 poor families with training, unsecured credit and ongoing guidance and motivation to help them start and grow micro-businesses. SPBD Foundation is the first large scale successful microfinance institution in the Pacific Islands region. Greg's efforts and achievements have made him the subject matter of a Harvard University case study. Greg's work has been published by the US State Department and he is a frequent speaker at development conferences internationally. Greg serves on the United Nation's Board of Patrons Advisors Group for its International Year of Microcredit – 2005 and also serves on the Board of Directors of Planet Finance, a global microfinance financing, rating and training platform, and the Prague Institute, a global urban development think-tank.

Outside of microfinance, Greg is a promoter of entrepreneurialism in Auckland, New Zealand and is on the founding board of the Ice Angels, a network of angel investors. Greg also serves as Chairman of the Board for Auckland-based hi-tech companies, BioMatters and English-To-Go.



Ms Barb Gosse

Director of Asset-Building, Social Enterprise Development Initiative (SEDI), Toronto, Canada

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Barb Gosse is the Director of Asset-Building for Social Enterprise Development Initiative (SEDI). Established in 1986, SEDI was the first organization to introduce asset-building for the poor in Canada. The organization has benefited the lives of close to 16,000 poor, unemployed and disadvantaged people to date and is active in every province and territory in Canada. Barb Gosse maintains managerial responsibility of SEDI's learn\$ave project, a matched savings IDA program that allows low-income Canadians to enhance their own human capital in ways that offer substantial returns. As of June 2004, learn\$ave participants had saved \$3 million in personal savings, leveraging a further \$8 million in material credits. Barb is also responsible for the research and investigation of new asset-building opportunities through application to relevant political and policy environments. These projects currently include Home\$ave, Independent Living Accounts and Supports to Learning.



Mr John Hatch

Founder, Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA), Washington DC, USA

John Hatch is the founder of the Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA), one of the world's largest microfinance networks, operating throughout the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe. FINCA is the pioneer of the village banking method of microfinance, a method that has been adopted by over 400 organisations worldwide. The village banking method was conceived in 1984 by John Hatch, a Fulbright-trained economist and international development expert, as a radically different approach to poverty alleviation: a financial services program that puts the poor in charge. The village banking method gives the poor the opportunity to obtain loans without collateral at affordable interest rates, and provides them with the power to collectively disburse, invest and collect loan capital. To date, FINCA has benefited over 1 million families across 24 countries, creating 1.3 million self-employment jobs and \$336 million in additional family income.



Dr Michael Sherraden

Professor of Social Development and Director of the Centre for Social Development, Washington University, USA

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Michael Sherraden founded the Center for Social Development (CSD) at Washington University. In his role as Director of CSD Michael works on creating, implementing, and studying policy and community innovations, focusing on the least advantaged, and drawing lessons from historical and international examples. Michael has served as an adviser and consultant to the White House, Department of Treasury, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Health and Human Services, Progressive Policy Institute, Carnegie Council, and other organizations. He is the author of 'Assets and the Poor: A New American Welfare Policy' and is a recipient of the Flynn Prize, given to "a scholar who has connected social work research to other fields or new contexts, creating demonstrable change in social well-being." Michael's work has been funded by many foundations and government agencies, including the Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, CS Mott Foundation, German Marshall Fund of the United States, and National Science Foundation.

Sponsors

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Companies are invited to participate as sponsors and exhibitors during the International Year of Microcredit Conference 2005. The exhibition will be located within the conference venue at the Sofitel Hotel Melbourne. For further information on Sponsorship opportunities, please contact ICMS Pty Ltd on sponsorship@icms.com.au or +61 3 9682 0244.

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Victorian Communities

Conference Aims

- Increase public awareness and understanding of microfinance as an effective tool for the alleviation of poverty
- Promote inclusive financial systems and support sustainable access to financial services
- Identify opportunities to implement microfinance and asset building projects in Australia and overseas
- Encourage corporate sector involvement in microfinance
- Provide a forum for knowledge exchange and professional development for those already in the sector
- Encourage innovation and experimentation to build and expand the outreach and success of microfinance

Conference Content

All sessions will be facilitated by individuals who are leaders in their field. Conference topics these experts will address include:

- The Potential of Microfinance to Help Reach the Millennium Development Goals
- Microfinance as a Strategy to Address Disadvantage in the Developed World
- Microfinance: The Challenges for Community, Business and Governments
- Microfinance and Australia's Aid and Development Sector

- Microfinance and its Potential for Empowerment of Indigenous Australians
- Macro Effects of Microfinance
- The Role Microfinance in Asset Building
- The Role of Research, Education and Technology
- Benchmarking and Measuring Progress in Microfinance Programs
- Involving the Corporate Sector: What are the Benefits for Business

Melbourne - Your Host City

With a population of more than three million, Melbourne is Australia's second largest city. It is regarded as the cultural and fashion capital of Australia and renowned for its fine restaurants. It is a true multicultural city with more than one quarter of Melbourne's inhabitants being born overseas.

Melbourne is one of the great cities of the world. Its unparalleled attractions are its gardens and parklands, food precincts, arcades and great sporting facilities. Most of these attractions are situated around the Central Business District (CBD) or within an easy tram or train ride.

Although Melbourne sprawls around much of Port Phillip Bay, the main focus for visitors is the Yarra River, which forms the southern perimeter of the CBD. The river separates the city from the Southbank development and the parklands that surround the Royal Botanic Gardens.



International Year of Microcredit 2005 Conference Secretariat

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