

Come join leading academic researchers and key policymakers in this important dialogue!

Boulder-Bergamo Forum on Access to financial Services: Expanding the Rural Frontier

September 18th-20th, 2008
University of Bergamo – Italy

Registration Fee: € 400 Euros

Six hundred million people living in rural areas have annual incomes of less than \$2 per day. A great majority of these people have no access to formal financial services. Could access to finance help improve livelihoods, provide greater economic security and create greater economic opportunities for these people? If so, what types of financial services have the greatest impact? What program and institutions can deliver financial services to these areas? What government policies support the expansion of appropriate financial services to rural areas?

The *Boulder Institute of Microfinance* in partnership with the *University of Bergamo* has designed a forum to bring together leading academic researchers with a group of key policy makers who guide government programs. We want to bring the best current research to the table and have the type of dialogue that shapes the direction of future inquiry in a way that that is most relevant to decision makers. The primary purpose of this inaugural conference is to shorten the cycle between ideas, innovations, rigorous research, and its practical applications on policies with the final goal of expanding the delivery and access of financial services to poor people.

This year's conference focuses on the special challenges of delivering and expanding the frontier for rural finance and is supported by the *Rural Finance Program at The Ohio State University*.

We have been pleased with the level of interest and excitement that this Forum has generated in the academic community. We have leading researchers such as **Gershon Feder** (World Bank), **Dean Karlan** (Yale), **Jonathon Morduch** (NYU), **Jerry Skees** (U. of Kentucky), **Robert Townsend** (U. of Chicago), and **Dale Adams** (The Ohio State University) signed up to deliver plenary presentations. We will also have presentations and dialogues by over 40 distinguished policymakers, academics, practitioners, and funders from around the world whose voices will represent different academic and applied viewpoints. Included among these are **Juan Antonio Morales** (former Finance Minister of Bolivia), **Crispin Bokea** (Central Bank of Kenya), **Kiatipong Ariyapruchya** (IMF / Bank of Thailand), **Prabhu Pingali** (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), **Peer Stein** (IFC), **Thorsten Beck** (World Bank), and **Alexander Sarris** (FAO).

CALL FOR POSTERS

The conference will also include presentations of 20 posters selected by an academic review committee. Researchers and practitioners are invited to submit poster proposals addressing issues related to rural finance. Top 5 poster authors will receive full scholarships to the conference. There is also the opportunity to have your papers published in University of Bergamo's *Savings & Development Journal*. Deadline to apply is **June 15th, 2008**. Selected poster authors will be informed by July 1st.

For more information about the program, please visit our website or contact us:

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