



## IMPACT EVALUATION OF INNOVATIONS IN RURAL FINANCE

BASIS CRSP Policy Conference  
June 2006

The BASIS Policy Conference “**Impact Evaluation of Innovations in Rural Finance**” will bring together leading researchers, key development professionals, financial service practitioners and policymakers to discuss new impact evaluation research about innovations designed to enhance microfinance and deepen rural financial markets. The goal of the conference is to devise a set of well-grounded policy and programming recommendations for governments, donors and private sector actors interested in strengthening micro and rural finance.

In order to take advantage of growth opportunities, protect themselves in the face of shocks, and maintain their asset base, rural households and producers must have the ability to borrow, insure and save. However, many people do not have access to adequate financial services, and therefore must adopt alternate, less desirable production strategies. BASIS currently has several research projects across the globe focusing on ways in which both policy and institutions can be strengthened to provide key financial services to rural producers and enterprises.

The conference will provide research results about the nature and severity of credit constraints in contemporary rural financial markets and the benefits in relaxing credit constraints, especially for low-wealth households. This background will demonstrate the importance of diverse, well functioning credit markets for the economic growth of rural households.

The primary focus of the conference will be to gauge the effectiveness and impact of four key policy and product innovations in credit markets: (i) Credit bureaus that enhance microfinance institutions’ (MFI) access to information, (ii) Provision of index-based weather insurance for MFIs that engage in agricultural lending; (iii) Micro-health insurance as a feature of microfinance contracts; and, (iv) Bundling business training with microfinance loans. For each topic, financial practitioners will discuss their institutions experience with the innovation, its impact on alleviating credit constraints, as well as talk about the challenges that remain.

In addition to presenting research results on the specific innovations, and giving practitioners the opportunity to comment on their impact and effectiveness, we hope to provide a forum for open dialogue between researchers, implementers, and donors that will help pave the way forward for the piloting and implementation of further interventions that will lift some of the constraints to borrowing faced by low-wealth households.

Lessons will be drawn from each of these themes to address the issues of increasing rural access to financial services, improving the information available to providers, and enhancing rural financial institutions to enhance their ability to improve rural welfare, growth and economic development.

**DATE:** June 12-13, 2006

**LOCATION:** Horizon Ballroom, Ronald Reagan Building, Washington, D.C.

**RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS:**

Steve Boucher, University of California–Davis, USA  
Samy Calle, Caja Municipal Sullana, Peru  
Michael Carter, University of Wisconsin–Madison, USA  
Alain de Janvry, University of California–Berkeley, USA  
Dean Karlan, Yale University, USA  
Manfred Kuhn, Consumer Credit, South Africa  
Craig McIntosh, University of California–San Diego, USA  
Reginald Ocampo, First Macro Bank, Philippines  
Agnes Quisumbing, International Food Policy Research Institute, USA  
Elisabeth Sadoulet, University of California–Berkeley, USA  
Adela Sagastume de Rizzo, Genesis Empresarial, Guatemala  
Carolina Trivelli, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, Peru  
Jonathan Zinman, Dartmouth University, USA

**SPECIAL GUESTS:**

Lourdes del Carpio, Agricultural Insurance Commission – Ministry of Agriculture, Peru  
Emmanuel Esguerra, University of the Philippines  
Diego Fernandez Concha, PRISMA, Peru  
Ma. Piedad Geron, Credit Policy and Implementation Program, Philippines  
Fausto Hernandez, CIDE, Mexico  
Gilberto Llanto, CARD Rural Bank, Philippines  
Reynaldo Marconi, FINRURAL, Bolivia  
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