

CSFI

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF FINANCIAL INNOVATION

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Microfinance Banana Skins: A round-table discussion of the new CSFI survey. To be held on Wednesday, November 18, from 12:30-2:15 pm.

Microfinance has always prided itself on being a bit special: helping to overcome financial exclusion and poverty, and insulated from the buffeting of the “real world”.

That may no longer be totally the case. The CSFI's latest Microfinance Banana Skins survey of the risks facing the industry suggests that questions are increasingly being asked about the validity of its mission, and its ability to withstand the pressures of the marketplace, particularly in these difficult times. In fact, microfinance may be at something of a crossroads between the commercial and philanthropic worlds. Which way will it go? Does it even have a choice when it depends so heavily on outside credit and investment? What will be the impact of the credit crunch, and how will it reshape the industry? How will it scale up commercially?

We shall be discussing these and other questions at a round-table for which we have put together an expert panel consisting of:

- Bob Annibale. Bob is Global Head of Citi Microfinance, one of the largest commercial banks in the business as an investor in, and adviser to, hundreds of microfinance institutions around the world.
- Roy Pratt. Roy is a former retail banker and now a consultant to the microfinance industry, and has made a special study of microfinance clients, including the problem of overindebtedness which now looms large among the industry's risks.
- Sandra Hamilton. Sandra is an Associate Director with Fitch Ratings Financial Institutions Group, and an analyst on a number of microfinance and bank ratings in emerging Europe.

In addition, of course, David Lascelles – the author of the survey, and the Centre's Senior Fellow – will present his findings, which are based on more than 400 responses from 82 countries.

The round-table will be an excellent opportunity to hear and discuss the latest about microfinance, and form a view about its prospects. If you (or a colleague) can join us, please let us know by emailing sophie@csfi.org.uk or by telephoning 020 7493 0173. As usual, wine and sandwiches will be provided.

Sincerely yours,

Andrew Hilton
Director

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