

Innovation Flash

Issue 4, September 2009

The Newsletter of the ILO's Microinsurance Innovation Facility

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INNOVATION GRANTS

How to apply for the next innovation grants

The next call for applications will be announced in December 2009, with the application deadline in March 2010. If you have questions about the eligibility and selection criteria and the application process, contact microinsurancegrants@ilo.org. Also it's a good idea to check out our [innovation grant section](#).

Exchanging experiences on consumer education

The Facility organized a workshop on consumer education and protection in August with [CNseg](#) in Brazil. The objective was to exchange information and foster links among grantees working on the topic (CNseg, [FFH](#), [Fundaseg](#), [Microfinance Opportunities](#)). The participants included some valuable resource persons from the [consumer education working group](#) of the Microinsurance Network and [Farm Radio International](#), as well as representatives from insurance supervisory bodies and trade unions in Brazil, Colombia and Kenya.

José Antonio Navarro



It is with great sorrow that we share with you the news of the tragic death of our colleague and friend, José Navarro. He became ill while on mission in Peru, and the illness proved fatal.

José was a wonderful colleague, totally committed to the improvement of microinsurance, and a strong believer that insurance should be an important option to enable the poor to manage risk. We are going to miss his clear thinking and conviction, his technical expertise and his kindness.

Innovation Flash is a quarterly online newsletter launched in 2008 and available at www.ilo.org/microinsurance. For more details, contact us at microinsurancemedi@ilo.org

Who are our new grantees?

	Africa	Latin America and the Caribbean	Asia	Other
Institutional models	Old Mutual (South Africa)	Protecta (Peru)	PGI (Mongolia)	
Health			PWDS (India) SSP (India) Care (India)	Microfund for Women (Jordan)
Agriculture			IFCO-Tokio (India) WRMS (India)	
Life Accident		Seguros Futuro (El Salvador)	RADOL (Bangladesh) Pioneer Life (Philippines)	
Consumer education	Microfinance Opportunities (Kenya)	CNSEG (Brazil) FUNDASEG (Colombia)		Freedom from Hunger (FFH)

Grantee: In Focus - protecting the special needs of women

[MicroFund for Women](#) (MFW) in Jordan and [Women's World Banking](#) are developing 'Caregiver', an affordable health insurance product that should offset some of the critical costs borne by MFW's clients (mostly women entrepreneurs) in accessing public health care. Although every citizen has access to public facilities for primary health care in Jordan, research has revealed dissatisfaction with public health care, citing such problems as overcrowded environments, the absence of important medicines and a lack of professionalism among medical staff. The microinsurance product would provide 'hospital cash' to help offset the cost of accessing private health care facilities for emergencies and more serious illnesses. Because women tend to be the family 'caregivers' and therefore have to take time off work if a child, parent or spouse is ill, the product covers all family members.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA)

First study tour in India

In 2007 Britak, a Kenyan insurance company, in partnership with the Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA), launched a new product that targets farmers. A subsequent review identified several problems, including the need for better sales force management and administrative processes. The Facility supported a study tour for key Britak staff to visit ICICI Prudential, an Indian insurer that has developed a product targeting tea plantation workers. From this experience, Britak is now focusing on recruiting locally-based staff to supervise service quality and is developing a consumer education programme to give front office staff and their customers valuable knowledge about the utility of insurance.



Supporting African co-operatives

To help the co-operative movement improve its members' access to relevant and affordable insurance products, ICMIF, the Facility and the ILO's COOPAfrica jointly organized a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya in July. The aim was to provide selected co-operatives, insurers and other organisations partnering cooperatives with an overview of the sector and examples of products, models and consumer education approaches that have been tested in developing countries. In addition, through a one-on-one clinic, the participants identified their own technical assistance needs and what steps to take to meet these needs.

TA grants on request

A TA grant can be used to fill a gap in a microinsurer's skills or capacity. It helps microinsurers to purchase the expertise that they think they need to launch a project or consolidate an existing scheme. Several insurers and MFI's have already benefited from this type of opportunity. Check the [grantees profiles](#) and contact microinsurancetechnassist@ilo.org for more details.

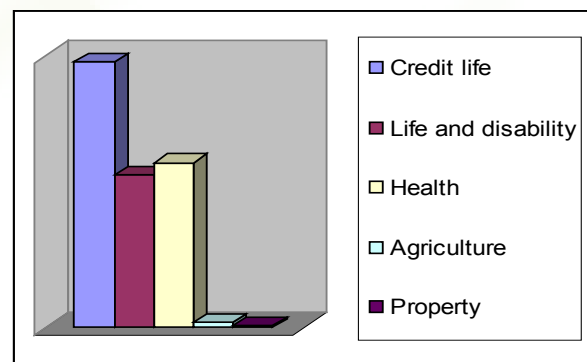
RESEARCH

A business case for microinsurance

Can insurance companies really operate profitably at the bottom of the human pyramid? This is an important question because, in many markets, the mass expansion of insurance for low-income people requires the commitment, technical expertise and capital of the insurance industry. The Facility is conducting a thematic study to analyze the business case for insurance companies providing microinsurance and to gain a better understanding of what products, and in what contexts, insurers can expect to generate profits.

African Landscape study

Preliminary results from this study indicate that more than 10 million low-income people benefit from some insurance in Africa. Life products (often bundled up with credit) account for a significant proportion of this. Health is also significant, but agriculture and property insurance remain marginal. The completed study will be presented at the Annual Microinsurance Conference in Dakar (3-5 November) and will be available in our [Publication section](#).



Apply for research grants

The Facility offers [small research grants](#) on a competitive basis for academics, particularly from developing countries, to analyze a range of microinsurance issues.

Applications for these grants should be sent to microinsurance@fundp.ac.be by **30 October 2009**. For more detail on eligibility, take a look at the [11 projects](#) that were selected in February.

PUBLICATIONS



Protecting the Poor: A Microinsurance Compendium
published by the Munich Re Foundation and the ILO, is now available in French and in Portuguese.
Contact: pubvente@ilo.org



Index insurance and climate risk: Prospects for development and disaster management
This publication from the International Research Institute for Climate and Society aims to bring state-of-the-art knowledge and practice on index insurance to a broader audience. The focus is on the potential of index insurance as a tool for development, climate change adaptation and poverty reduction through improved climate risk management and transfer. To download the issue, check [IRI's website](#).

MICROINSURANCE NEWS

Documenting impact

The Microinsurance Network's Impact Working Group has set up a community of practice (COP) for donors, multilateral agencies, insurance and social protection providers, policy-makers and academics. Theresa Chen, a Delhi-based research fellow supported by the Facility, is leading the project. Her work will include a stocktaking of ongoing impact assessments of microinsurance and the coordination of a publicly accessible, Wiki-based, practical collation of experiences.

Supporting women entrepreneurs

In a [new podcast](#) Mary Ellen Iskenderian, President of [Women's World Banking](#), talks about her collaboration with Zurich Financial Services to develop a health microinsurance programme in Jordan. She discusses the motivation for diversifying into microinsurance and the potential benefits the programme could bring to female entrepreneurs.

New Focus Notes

The Microinsurance Network has published a new version of [Microinsurance in Focus notes](#). These Notes repackage *Protecting the Poor: A Microinsurance Compendium* to extend its access and present concisely more than 40 microinsurance providers' experiences and their good and bad practices. The notes are available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

Investing for financial inclusion

[LeapFrog](#) has announced that it raised US\$44 M through its investment fund. It is the world's first investment fund focusing on microinsurance. The fund aims to invest in businesses that will bring insurance and financial services to 25 million low-income people in Africa and Asia, 15 million of them women and children.

RESOURCES & EVENTS

- [Join the microinsurance group on Linked In](#). The Facility has created a [microinsurance group](#) to exchange information, share news articles, meet practitioners and hear about 'job opps'.
- [2008 MI conference in video](#). We just released [new presentations](#) from the 2008 Annual Microinsurance Conference about index insurance ([ICI Lombard](#)) and consumer education (Microfinance Opportunities, Fasesolda and University of California/Davis).
- [Annual Microinsurance Conference](#). The Munich Re Foundation and the Microinsurance Network are organizing the [5th Annual Conference on Microinsurance](#) from 3 to 5 November 2009, in Dakar, Senegal. This year the event has a special focus on health and on African experiences. [Register](#)
- [Micro Health Insurance practices](#). [Pro MHI Africa](#) will hold an international conference on 'Lessons learnt and lessons to learn in the field of Micro Health Insurance in Africa' on 2 & 3 December 2009 in Lilongwe, Malawi.

THE FACILITY NEWS

New faces

[Pranav Prashad](#) was previously with ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company and implemented large programmes in index-based weather insurance and rural health. He joined the Facility as a Grant Officer in July.

[Miguel Solana](#), an actuary, previously worked for Symbiotics SA in microfinance advisory services. He joined the team as a Technical Officer in August.

[Carys Hughes](#) is doing a communication internship with the Facility. She has enrolled for a Masters in Communication for Development and has worked previously for several MFIs.

Regional strategy

The Facility is reshaping its strategy towards a regional approach in order to respond to the different characteristics of the regions. The team is now divided into five regions: Africa, Indian Sub-continent, Latin America, Middle East and South-East Asia. We have also developed a strategic partnership with the [Centre for Insurance and Risk Management](#) (CIRM) to be our focal point in India, and are looking for partners in other regions to enhance our work at the local level.

Opportunities

Knowledge Officer and intern

The Facility is looking for a [Knowledge Officer](#) to help manage knowledge generated through the Facility activities, including our innovation grants, research and technical assistance projects. The officer will work with the Facility's Research Officer to extract lessons learnt, and with our Communications Officer to effectively disseminate relevant knowledge to target audiences. The Facility is also looking for [an intern](#) to map existing microinsurance literature and technical assistance tools and create a database of sample microinsurance products.

Fellowships in Mongolia, South Africa, Jordan and India

Check our [job opportunities](#) page for more details on these positions and apply very soon!

Private Equity Principal in Sydney

LeapFrog is recruiting a small team to develop and manage microinsurance investments in India, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines and is seeking an experienced partner to work in Sydney. Contact: arielstern@leapfroginvest.com

Innovation Flash is produced by the Microinsurance Innovation Facility, edited by Craig Churchill, translated by Rene Roig and designed by Sarah Bel. For more details, contact us at microinsurancemedia@ilo.org