

## Microfinance Roundtable – Bullet Point Summary

### Women

- Third world countries are far behind in female education, equality and access to capital
- Women can succeed doing simple things well (pottery, sewing, gardening, embroidery)
- Women are very motivated and can achieve anything once they are empowered and self-sufficient
- The status of women correlates with the development of nations

### Education

- Women's education is very important and has a bigger impact since women are the core of the family
- People can't go too far without education
- Education must be improved
- Teachers have little drive and passion in the inner city
- Children in poor and developing countries are very eager to learn
- Leadership training and role models are needed
- Children have leadership skills, but they are used in the wrong way, such as gangs
- Many children are forced to drop out of school in order to work to feed their family
- Education can break the trend of children entering crime and give them self-esteem
- Mentorship programs are powerful
- Primary education is considered important, but beyond that is often considered irrelevant
- Providing for your family is more important than education

### Family and Society

- People will do anything to feed their family, even crime
- It is tough to go to school and take care of the family
- Money helps people eat but it doesn't improve the family
- The impact of just a small loan can change lives
- People need love
- Society often dictates children's futures
- It is tough to integrate people back into society after long wars
- Different cultures view business differently
- Corruption impedes microfinance and other programs
- Families lose husbands to violence

### Opportunity

- People shouldn't have to move to the U.S. just to get ahead
- People may not leave their home countries if there were enough opportunities
- Even those in horrible situations can make it if they have opportunities
- People don't know what opportunities exist until they are given a chance to save or invest or run a business

### Community

- Policymakers and financiers should collaborate with the locals for the best solutions
- Companies need to study the impact on local communities of their entrance into the market
- Locals sometimes see the cost of living rise when U.S. workers retire to their country
- Globalization is leaving some people behind
- It is important to give back to the community

## Solutions

- Charity doesn't help in the long term, it only gets people out of their current situation
- Money goes through a lot of hands before reaching those who need it, leaving little at the end
- Even a lot of money can do little to put a dent in the massive problem of poverty
- Working with governments is a tremendous challenge
- Subsidization can have adverse effects
- People need to learn the value of money – what it takes to make it
- People need to know how to live rather than just survive

## Microfinance

- Lack of pride destroys a human being
- Microfinance gives people opportunities and a sense of pride and self-esteem
- People are capable of achieving great things, but have no means to achieve them
- Microfinance helps farmers to buy land, cattle and equipment
- Many people have little or no access to banking, no ID and no birth certificate
- It is important to recognize the talent and potential earning power of borrowers before lending
- Borrowers have to want success too
- The concept of lending is different in some places; some people think it's no big deal to not pay back a loan
- Savings is just as important, if not more important, than access to loans
- Savings may not be worth much in a year in some third world countries due to high inflation

## Poverty

- Poor is poor, regardless of color, race or country
- People ask, "How will I eat?" rather than "How will I save?"
- Just to be able to eat and have clothes is a great feeling for the poor
- Just having someone listen can help
- Awareness of poverty is key
- People often have no choice but to take advances on pay at very high interest rates
- Many people deal with lack of education, lack of insurance and lots of crime
- Inner city versus Africa (similarities): can't feed family, violence, little guidance, attitude matters, no reason you can't succeed if given opportunity, broken homes, welfare only pacifies and is self-perpetuating, girls' education is important, kids need role models
- Inner city versus Africa (differences): more resources in the U.S.
- Seeing poverty can change a kid's life

## Causes of Poverty

- There needs to be equitable treatment in the financial system
- Distribution of resources is uneven, and the income gap is growing
- Opportunities are growing scarcer without education in an increasingly globalized world
- You can't think about education if you don't have food
- There is a conscious effort to keep the poor poor
- Corporate leadership needs to change attitude and get away from the focus on profit
- Kids need to be able to dream
- There will never be no absolute poverty