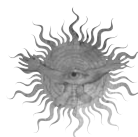


Savings and Development



Special Issue - UMM Master Awards 2015



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UNIVERSITY MEETS MICROFINANCE 2015 MASTER AWARDS

University Meets Microfinance (UMM) presents its 2015 Master Award Winners

In order to foster and promote new research on topics related to financial inclusion and recognize the work of young researchers, UMM rewards and publishes outstanding student research each year. The UMM Selection Committee composed of qualified academics and practitioners working in the financial inclusion domain evaluate the master's theses and select the award winners. The 1st place award winner receives a cash prize of 500 Euros and is invited to present their research during European Microfinance Week in Luxembourg. Following are the 2015 UMM Master Award Winners:

Abdul-Nasiru Iddrisu Alhassan

Abdul-Nasiru Iddrisu Alhassan is a finance and accounting professional who has worked as the Head of Finance and Administration at Grameen Ghana since 2008. He has long standing and proven experience in microfinance, development work and management of non-governmental organizations. Abdul-Nasiru holds a Master of Business Administration degree in Corporate Strategy and Economic Policy of The Maastricht School Of Management, a Bachelor's degree with combined majors in Accounting and Economics and a Higher National Diploma in Accounting. He is currently a final level (Level III) student of the Institute of Chartered Accountants Ghana (ICAG) and a Part II student of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) UK.

Laura De Matteis

Laura De Matteis graduated in International Development Cooperation from the Catholic University of Milan in 2015 and wrote her Master's thesis on migrants' financial inclusion. From 2014 to 2015 she worked as Assistant Project Manager at Fondazione Giordano Dell'Amore, a non-profit founda-

tion based in Milan that provides financial and technical support to microfinance institutions in Italy and abroad. At the Foundation, Laura was in charge of managing two Best Practices Awards bestowed on innovative and replicable initiatives implemented by microfinance institutions in Europe and in developing countries.

Ayako Iba

Ayako Iba is a development consultant with an expertise in microfinance and local economic development, which was developed over seven years of working for international development agencies and other organisations, such as the World Bank and Apros Finanzas, a microfinance institute in Mexico. Due to her ardent belief in the multi-disciplinary approach to development, Ayako pursued a bachelor's degree in Sociology and a master's degree in Local Economic Development, both at the London School of Economics (LSE).

Special thanks to the following Selection Committee members for their valuable time and participation in the 2015 UMM Awards selection process:

Academics: Ahmad Nawaz, Universität Göttingen; Christina Wildenauer; Davide Castellani, Università degli studi di Bergamo; Karla Henning, Freie Universität Berlin; Margherita Mori, Università degli Studi dell'Aquila; Silvia Rico, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid; Thilo Klein, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Practitioners: Bezant Chongo, Positive Planet; Cristian Bevacqua, Microfinanza; Matteo Prizzon, Positive Planet; Sarah Vignoles, Positive Planet; Vanessa Quintero, SOS Enfants Sans Frontieres; Verónica López Sabater, Fundación Afi

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ABOUT UNIVERSITY MEETS MICROFINANCE

The growing interest of students and academics as well as the increasing need for knowledge creation and dissemination in the microfinance sector, led to the launch of University Meets Microfinance (UMM) by Positive Planet – the new name of PlaNet Finance – and Freie Universität Berlin in 2009.

UMM is a European initiative which fosters cooperation between European universities, students and microfinance practitioners to promote microfinance and financial inclusion education and innovation through research. UMM is active in the domains of microfinance education, research, documentation of information, professional exchange & dissemination of information. All UMM activities are carried out under the umbrella of the European Microfinance Platform (e-MFP) in the frame of the e-MFP UMM Action Group.

From 2009 to 2015, more than 5,500 students, academics and practitioners have benefitted from UMM activities.

To access past UMM award publications, please visit the UMM website here: <http://www.universitymeetsmicrofinance.eu/award-winners.html>

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ABOUT POSITIVE PLANET

Positive Planet has set itself a mission to help people across the world to create the conditions for a better world for the next generations and, in particular, for their own descendants. It is in the interest of those living today to help future populations, who in turn will continue the chain. Such is the definition of the positive economy.

To achieve its mission, Positive Planet aims to specifically accompany those persons lacking the means to improve the lives of their own descendants, for them to provide their children with the best environment to grow, learn and achieve their full potential. Drawing on its experience in microfinance and financial inclusion acquired when operating under the name of PlaNet Finance, Positive Planet aims to provide access to a healthy and balanced life for everybody.

Positive Planet mobilizes the support of all its experts for the poor and needy across the world, so that young children and their parents will have access to housing, clean drinking water, education, health, a safe environment, training, and the financing of their projects in order to release their full potential, individually and collectively.

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ABOUT SAVINGS AND DEVELOPMENT

The journal *Savings and Development* with its supplement, the *African Review of Money, Finance, and Banking*, was founded in 1977 by Finafrica Foundation, now Fondazione Giordano Dell'Amore (www.fgda.org), based in Milan. The journal has been voicing researchers from Countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America for many years. In 2007, it was handed over to the Research Center on International Co-operation (Finance and Development Group) of the University of Bergamo.

The University of Bergamo welcomed this opportunity, as the journal is among the oldest in its field and has gained increasing international appreciation over time. In doing so, while trying not to lose continuity with the past, the University declared the intention to widen the range of topics the journal covers, still adhering, however, to the theme of "finance and development". Themes of interest are: the link between finance and development in general, microfinance, informal finance, rural finance, performance, processes and management issues in financial intermediaries and markets in poor countries, monetary policy issues.

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CONTENTS

“THE VALUE OF SKILLS TRAINING IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF MICROFINANCE BENEFICIARIES: A CASE STUDY AT GRAMEEN GHANA” ABDUL-NASIRU IDDRISU ALHASSAN	1
“FINANCIAL INCLUSION, POLICIES AND INSTRUMENTS FOR MIGRANTS IN EUROPE AND ITALY” LAURA DE MATTEIS	39
“MICROCREDIT IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL AND FISCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT” AYAKO IBA	71

