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FINANCIAL EDUCATION FOR THE POOR

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Jennefer Sebstad and Monique Cohen[1]

"[financial education] … can help to inculcate individuals with the financial knowledge necessary to create household budgets, initiate savings plans, and make strategic investment decisions. Such financial planning can help families meet near term obligations and maximize their longer term well being and is especially valuable for populations that have traditionally been underserved by our financial system."

(Alan Greenspan, 2002)

Poor people in developing countries share the same goals as all people -- economic security for themselves, their families, and future generations. The main difference is that they have fewer resources and opportunities. Most live in high-risk and unpredictable environments. And, compared to others, they don't have much money (Rutherford 2000). In this context, managing the little money that they have is vital. Good money management is critical for meeting day-to-day needs, dealing with life cycle events and unexpected emergencies, taking advantage of opportunities when they present themselves, and planning for the future.

Building assets is important for poor people in developing countries because they provide the basis for economic security. Common ways that poor people build assets are through savings, and investments in land, businesses, and housing. They also build assets by investing in children's education, health, and the maintenance of reciprocal social relationships that provide support in times of need. Good money management is critical to the process of accumulating all kinds of assets and preserving them. Access to appropriate financial products and services, along with the financial skills to manage these resources well, are key to the process of asset accumulation.

Improving money management skills has been a focus of microenterprise training programs for many years. A decade ago, training in cash flow management and record keeping was integral to many microenterprise programs involving credit. Since then, with the widespread adoption of minimalist microfinance approaches, many business development services beyond financial services have been dropped. However, as microfinance markets become more competitive and financial portfolios more complex, many clients find themselves juggling an array of financial products that they do not fully understand. They lack skills to cost out individual products, assess their best use, and compare alternatives. In this context, determining appropriate financial strategies to achieve investment and other economic goals becomes little more than guesswork.

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The promotion of financial literacy in developing countries is timely and can be a win-win situation for poor people and financial service providers alike. It can help poor people build assets and create wealth. Financial literacy skills can be applied in managing a wide range of individual, household, business, and community resources. Moreover, once people have acquired financial literacy skills, they cannot be taken away. A one-time course in financial education can have longer-term, even permanent, benefits. This paper attempts to make a case for financial literacy for the poor and proposes an agenda for action.

The Financial Landscape of the Poor

At a basic level, good money management involves keeping a little money aside when it comes in, avoiding unnecessary expenditure, and finding a safe place to store what is left over (Rutherford 2000). In this respect, poor people are like everyone else. But they are at a disadvantage because they lack access to many formal financial institutions such as banks, insurance companies, and government systems of social protection (Rutherford 2000; Lund and Srinivas 2000).

Nevertheless, poor people do not lack access to finance altogether. Diversity and complexity perhaps best describe the financial landscape of poor people. Their financial services, largely invisible to the surveyor of formal financial systems, are provided through family, friends, moneylenders, pawnshops and a wide range of informal systems[2]. A growing number of poor people throughout the world also have access to semi-formal financial services through microfinance institutions (MFIs). Together they make up significant networks of savings, credit and insurance services. These systems typically provide small sums of money, often, as little as a one dollar.

While these informal and semi-formal systems are innovative and in many cases responsive to people's needs, they are far from perfect. Informal systems can be expensive, insecure, and inaccessible to some groups. They can be inefficient and inadequate in providing enough money when it is needed (Morduch 1999). Nevertheless, these informal financial systems play an important role in the financial lives and money management strategies of the poor.

Semi-formal finance provided through microfinance institutions is increasingly part of the financial landscape for many poor people. Microfinance institutions compete with informal systems for clients with different products, terms, and conditions. While they see themselves as a more cost effective choice for the poor, they rarely displace these informal providers. Instead, they continue to be used in combination with informal sources of finance (Box 1). Many consumers perceive the greatest benefit of microfinance to be as an additional source of finance, one that enables them to diversify their options.

One limitation of microfinance is its limited product line. Short term working capital loans predominate. Compulsory savings are widespread and serve as collateral against which clients can borrow, particularly among institutions modeled after the Grameen Bank. Voluntary

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[2] The most common include savings clubs, rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs) and accumulating savings and credit associations (ASCAs)

savings services are off limits for most MFIs due to lack of formal regulatory frameworks. The potential for microinsurance increasingly is recognized, but experience to date is still limited and experimental.

Box 1: Microfinance and the Financial Landscape

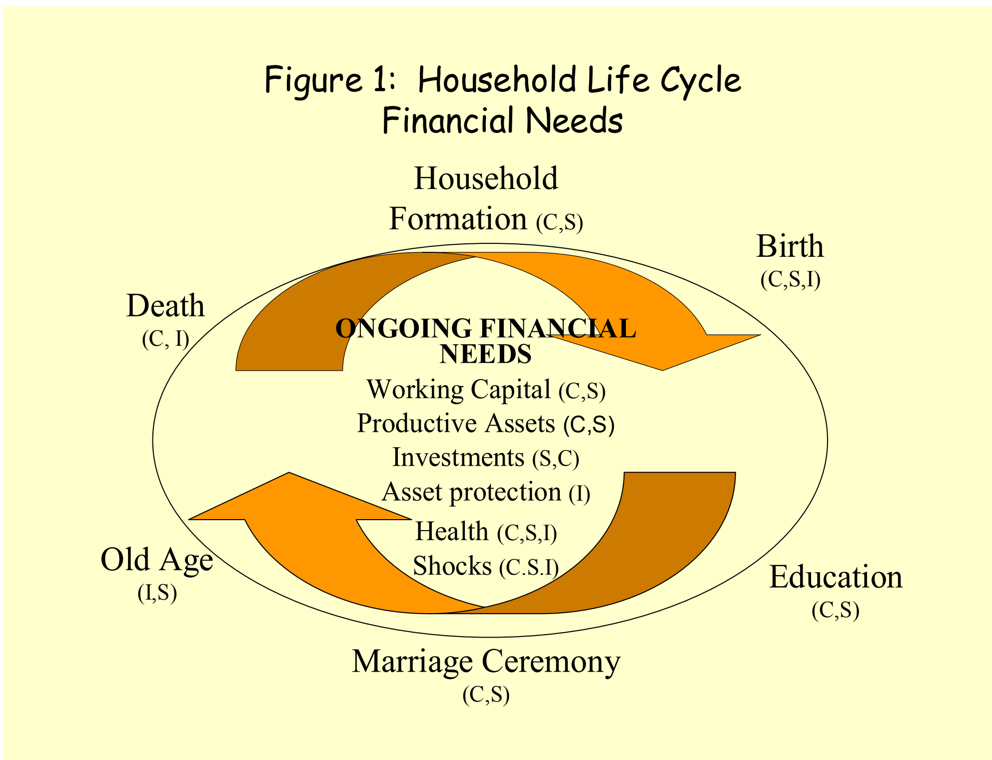
- √ In Bangladesh, a study of 42 poor households found they used in total 33 formal and informal financial instruments. Most households used somewhere between 4 and 16 different instruments. Microfinance, even when readily available, averaged 16 percent of the value of trancactions or 10 percent of the total number of transactions (Rutherford 2002).
- √ In Peru, a study of 305 Mibanco borrowers found that 58 percent also had other debt. Total client debt was divided evenly between formal and informal sources (Dunn and Arbuckle, 2001).
- √ In India, a study of 276 SEWA Bank borrowers found that borrowing from SEWA Bank did not decrease women's debt from other sources, mostly informal. SEWA borrowers had as much non-SEWA debt as other groups. Few used their SEWA loans to pay down other debts (Chen and Snodgrass 2001).

While the financial landscape of the poor is diverse, significant segments of the potential market for microfinance services remain underserved. For example, Figure 1 depicts household financial needs across the life cycle. The limited role of short-term working capital loans in relation to the full range of needs is striking. Many of the life cycle needs for financial services are not addressed.

Another underserved segment of the microfinance market are poorer clients who are left out for various reasons. For vulnerable people operating at the margin, managing loan repayments in the context of ever-present downward economic pressures is a challenge. Loan repayments can have a negative effect on household well being if they divert income from basic consumption or other necessities or deplete assets. This problem may be acute when the design of existing loan products does not meet the financial cycles and needs of poor clients. It may be exacerbated when poorer clients are inexperienced in managing debt or dealing with MFI systems of repayment. Limited knowledge of how to manage larger lump sums of money may also affect their success as MFI borrowers. Products and services that are designed to better meet the needs, preferences, and opportunities of the poor, complemented by financial education to improve their money management skills is a strategy MFIs can use to expand and consolidate their market reach and better serve the poor.

Accessing microfinance services increases choices which plays an important role in empowering the poor, especially women. The world of the poor is often reactive, as they move from crisis to crisis. Access to microfinance allows people to move into a more proactive mode that enables them to protect against risks ahead of time and opens up new opportunities. This economic freedom, which often is taken for granted by those with secure incomes, is a huge gap in the lives of the poor. It includes not only personal growth in self-esteem and self-confidence that results from managing their own money, but also the freedom that comes with having choices.

The complementary relationship between microfinance and financial education is clear. Financial education can play an important role in helping men and women interface effectively with their financial landscapes, choose among the increasingly complex array of financial options, and better manage the financial resources they have.



The Daily Challenge of Good Money Management

For microfinance clients and others, good money management is a daily challenge. Pressures on their cash flow are persistent and often urgent. Future planning becomes difficult when people are struggling to make ends meet on a day-to-day basis. Planning horizons tend to be short and correspond to immediate needs, seasonal expenses, or school fees. Limited attention often is given to planning for frequent illness or other emergencies, unexpected social demands, or future investments.

Nevertheless, in the face of persistent financial stress, poor people use their financial landscape in a wide range of creative and resourceful ways to meet needs, manage risks, and build assets. Saving is at the core. People save "what comes in" through ROSCAs, ASCAs, formal savings accounts, MFIs, or other formal and informal mechanisms. Some people intentionally put money into less liquid savings instruments because they are hard to get at. Many women value compulsory savings required by microfinance institutions for this reason. For anticipated life cycle expenses such as weddings, school fees, or funerals people use a mix of formal and informal financial instruments. For example, parents and other family members in Kerala, India prepare ahead of time for their daughter's dowries by making regular fixed payments into a marriage fund. They not only build up a reserve for the dowry, but they can borrow against the fund when they need a loan (Rutherford 2000). In the Philippines and elsewhere, investment in livestock is common way people save for higher education of children (Chua, et al 1999). Burial societies prepare people for a universally anticipated event and are common across the continents. People contribute small sums to these societies throughout their lives, with the knowledge that their own funeral costs will be covered in due course.

To reduce "what goes out" poor people minimize consumption and expenditure in countless ways. One financial management strategy is to control 'outflows' by earmarking savings accounts for particular purposes (for example, health expenses, dowry, buying land, building rental housing). Another is to designate income sources for particular expenditures (for example, income from the charcoal business to pay for school fees). Others include the purchase of bulk food stocks and raw materials. Keeping written accounts of income and expenses also helps to control what goes out. During times of stress, it is common for poor people to cut back on basic expenditures for food, clothing, education, and health care. They may reduce the number of meals per day or change their diets. If the pressure persists, people may resort to more stressful strategies, such as moving to cheaper accommodation, postponing marriage or reneging on other social obligations. People also may cash in on social capital by seeking assistance in the form of food, childcare, housing, or labor from reciprocal social networks (Rutherford 2000; Sebstad and Cohen 2001).

Box 2: Examples of Financial Options for Poor People

	Formal	Semi formal	Informal
Options for saving	Banks Cooperatives, Credit Unions	MFIs Registered self help groups	Savings clubs ROSCAs ASCAs Investment in liquid assets
Options for borrowing	Banks Credit Unions Suppliers	MFIs Registered self help groups Pawnbrokers	Family and friends Moneylenders
Options for insuring against risks	Funeral insurance Health insurance Life insurance	Welfare societies *Harambees* Burial societies	Reciprocal social networks Community self- help groups Self insurance through investment in 'protective' assets, diversification of income and credit sources, purchase of bulk food

Despite all efforts to save, people sometimes require a lump sum of money that is larger than what they have on hand (Rutherford 2000). Strategies often are based on a mix of informal and semi-formal sources and can become quite inventive. For example, with the unexpected death of a family member, surviving family members face the burden of funeral costs. This often entails a series of lump sum needs following the death. In Nepal, families pay for funerals with money from a range of sources. Twenty five percent comes from in-kind community contributions and the rest from personal savings and borrowing from moneylenders (Centre for Microfinance 2000). In Ethiopia, people receive cash and in-kind support from multiple funeral societies immediately following the death, each one covering a different component of the cost. During the months following the funeral, surviving family members are responsible for covering the cost of obligatory rituals and ceremonies and usually do so through saving, borrowing, and in-kind contributions from family and friends[3]. Putting together these types of financial packages is commonplace. In most cases, it requires not only maintaining good social relations in the community, but also having ready access to one or more sources of credit. This means keeping debt under control and paying off loans in a way that does not limit future access.

The Increasing Role of Microfinance

While informal saving, borrowing, and insurance systems continue to be of primary importance in the money management strategies of the poor, the microfinance industry is playing an increasing role (Barnes 2001; Centre for Microfinance 2000; Chen and Snodgrass 2001; Cohen and Sebstad, Forthcoming; Dunn and Arbuckle 2001; Rutherford 2000). As MFIs seek out new ways to grow and become profitable, they are offering a wider range of products and services to clients. An increasing number of MFIs are supplementing working capital loans and

[3] Personal communication, *Edir* Member, October 11, 2002.

involuntary savings with experimental savings, insurance, and money transfer services. A few are forming new alliances with formal financial institutions to deliver these services. This type of approach reflects a shift away from supply-side, product-led approaches in favor of market-driven products and services that respond to client needs and preferences. This new emphasis is leading to a more business like approach to providing microfinance services.

While the diversification of microfinance products and services is welcome, it has taken place in an environment where MFIs are not well informed about their clients and clients are not well informed about the products and services offered by MFIs. Clients are faced with a growing number of choices that often tend to complicate rather than simplify their lives. Choosing among the growing number of MFI products and services (and informal products and services too) requires a lot of information and the skill to calculate costs, project cash flow needed to make repayments, and weigh alternatives. While microfinance providers face the challenge of managing the additional costs, institutional demands and risks of introducing new and products, clients face the challenge of deciding which of these products, if any, to use. Empowering clients to make informed and strategic choices about the use of financial services will benefit both. To date, tools to empower clients to make these choices do not exist.

A Role for Financial Education

While poor people in developing countries use many creative, sometimes complex strategies to manage their money, these often develop through trial and error rather than by design. They often tend to be more reactive than proactive. Unfortunately, for people operating at the margin, 'reactive' money management strategies can have severe repercussions when they deplete assets and/or place a future claim on income flows.

Box 3: The challenge of calculating interest rates

Equity Building Society (EBS) in Kenya undertook market research for the development of new products in 2001. An important finding was that clients failed to understand the difference between interest rates of 3percent per month and 10 percent for three months. Many thought the latter cost of funds was cheaper.

(Personal Communication with EBS staff, 2002)

In the context of few resources, persistent downward pressures, and complex financial landscapes, financial education can play a critical role in helping people manage and preserve the few resources they have and work toward their economic goals. However, to date, they have had almost no opportunity for financial education.

What are the objectives of financial education?

Broadly speaking, the purpose of financial education is to teach people concepts of money and how to manage it wisely. The aim is to enable people to become more informed financial decision makers, develop awareness of personal financial issues and choices, and learn basic skills related to earning, spending, budgeting, saving, borrowing, and investing money. Financial literacy can help people set financial goals and optimize their financial options.

Financial education can cover a wide range of topics, from managing cash flow, to building assets, to managing risks, to planning ahead for the future. The relevance of topics for any given course will depend on the financial circumstances and needs of individuals or groups involved, their financial landscape, their life cycle stage, and other factors related to the context in which they live and work. Box 4 lists examples of common topics covered in various financial education curricula.

What are the benefits for different groups of people?

In the context of developing countries, financial education is particularly relevant for people who are *resource poor* and who operate at the margin and are vulnerable to persistent downward financial pressures. Women, in particular, often assume responsibility for household cash management under difficult and unstable circumstances and with few resources to fall back on. They often lack the skills or knowledge to make well informed financial decisions. Financial literacy can increase their decision making power and prepare them to cope with the financial demands of daily life. It can help them prepare ahead of time for life cycle needs and deal with unexpected emergencies without assuming unnecessary debt. Financial planning can help people position themselves to take advantage of new opportunities when they present themselves.

For *microfinance clients*, financial education can help them choose wisely among a growing number of financial options and use microfinance services to their best advantage. With better knowledge of the range of financial services available, their costs, and the risks associated with their use, clients can decide which ones best meet their needs. Improved financial management skills and behavior can help reduce the risks of running a business and financing business activities with loans. For *microfinance institutions*, improved ability of clients to manage debt can help keep repayment rates up and delinquency rates down. Involvement of MFIs in assessing financial education needs of clients can help staff understand financial management strategies of the poor, financial service gaps and how microfinance products and services could be improved and expanded. Ultimately, financially savvy clients can reduce portfolio risks, stimulate competition, and contribute to the growth and development of MFIs.

Financial education can play a special role for *young people* in developing countries by helping them prepare for productive and secure futures. Adolescence is a critical time for learning basic skills related to earning, spending, saving, and investing money. However, most adolescents (and adults) learn these skills through trial and error. While money management is an important dimension of day-to-day life for everyone, money management skills can help young people grow more independent, self-confident, and prepared for the future. Knowledge and practice of good money management can reduce the vulnerability of young people to many risks associated with adolescence. Financial knowledge can open up new opportunities to work, to build assets, and to expand horizons. Financial literacy is a particularly important building block for adolescents and young people in developing countries because they often start to work at a young age – out of economic necessity. In poor households, adolescents often take on financial responsibilities at a young age. Moreover, many factors associated with risky sexual

Box 4: Examples of Financial Education Topics	
Basic principles of money management	Assessing your financial situation Setting financial goals Distinguishing between needs and wants Assessing your financial 'personality' or 'style'
Managing cash flow	Making a financial plan Developing a budget Following a budget Spending wisely -- stretching your money
Building assets	Housing, land, property, and other physical assets Investing in a business Protecting assets
Dealing with life cycle events	Marriage Household formation Birth of children Children's education Retirement/old age Death
'Interfacing' with formal and informal financial institutions	Saving - opening a savings account; setting savings goals; participating in ROSCAS Borrowing - when to (and not to) borrow; risks associated with borrowing money; comparing loan terms and conditions; calculating interest; how to manage debt Insurance - understanding what it is and can do
Dealing with special challenges	Illness of family members Death of family members Own illness Extending help to other families Divorce or family breakdown Job loss Natural disasters/calamities
Financial decision making processes	Joint decisions Independent decisions
Planning ahead for the future	Investments Old age/retirement Death
Earning money	Money making ideas Looking for a job (paid employment) Starting and managing your own business Career planning

behavior in adolescents relate to poverty, vulnerability, limited opportunity, and lack of hope for the future. Moreover, by helping to build savings, other assets, and decision-making skills, financial literacy can provide young women an economic safety net that can help them avoid risky sex. By emphasizing practical skills to plan for the future, financial literacy can play an important role in promoting a 'future orientation' (Hallman et al, 2003).

In context of *families and communities affected by HIV/AIDS*, effective budgeting and management of household financial resources is a critical coping strategy (Barnes 2002; Donahue et al, 2001; Parker 2000). Management of financial resources to cope with long-term illness, loss of income, and funeral costs associated with HIV/AIDS directly affects the well being of surviving household members in affected households. In many cases, when parents are sick or have died, younger household members are left with the responsibility for managing households and supporting surviving family members. For these young people, and other surviving family members, skills to manage money and other household resources become critical for the survival and longer-term well being of their families.

Experience to Date with Financial Education for the Poor

Surprisingly, there has been limited attention to financial education in the context of microfinance, sustainable livelihoods, or other poverty reduction programs in developing countries. Despite the critical importance of money management skills and the scope for improving them, there are very few examples of efforts to build financial literacy skills among microfinance clients or other groups of people targeted by these programs.

SEWA Bank's financial counseling service for poor self-employed women in India is one exception. 'Project Tomorrow' was started in 2001 by SEWA Bank in collaboration with Freedom from Hunger. Its purpose is to develop and test a financial counseling curriculum to help participants manage money productively, plan ways to increase assets, address life cycle events, manage risks, and use SEWA Bank products. Through this project, SEWA Bank has set up a training unit and training delivery system and is developing tools and procedures to monitor the counseling work. The project began with market research to assess the needs and demand among SEWA Bank clients for financial education, followed by a training of trainers course. SEWA Bank is now providing financial counseling to its clients through a weekly course. The initial experience suggests that participants grasp the concepts presented and welcome new perspectives stemming from such training. It has generated a demand for individualized financial counseling services.

Another exception is the financial literacy tools developed by World Education and Pact to use as part of literacy training program for rural women in Nepal. With these tools, women learn about financial concepts while they learn to read through the Women's Empowerment Program.

The Food and Agricultural Organization's (FAO's) Food Security and Nutrition Project in Zambia has developed a guide on money management for farmers. It is designed for use by community based field workers and agricultural extension agents to raise issues of money management with families and community groups. While the focus is largely on business planning, record keeping, and managing group enterprise and community projects, it also covers general issues related to cash flow management, tracking income and expenditures, saving, and seasonality (Heney 2000). The next phase of this project will involve the production of a guide that covers a wider range of issues to help people think more clearly about money problems and how to manage them.

There has been some focus on financial education by microfinance institutions in developing countries, but the emphasis has been mostly on business planning and management. These courses usually teach clients how to track business income and expenditures and/or how to manage loan repayments. There has been little or no attention to issues related to managing personal and household finances or making strategic investment or financial decisions. Many clients have benefited by applying some business management principles and skills to household resource management. However, the fungibility of this training is somewhat limited. Moreover, with the rise of minimalist credit, many MFIs have cut back on business training.

In contrast to the limited experience in developing countries, there is extensive experience with financial education for poor people and youth in the United States. One example is a campaign by the Federal Reserve Board at the national and local levels to promote financial literacy for less-well-off households. Other examples include the development of courses and curriculums through programs supported by government agencies, corporate foundations, and private voluntary organizations. They are being implemented through high schools and middle schools, teachers' associations, youth organizations, local banks, community development organizations, and employment promotion programs for the poor. The curricula incorporate excellent adult and youth learning materials that present financial concepts simply. They include easy to use worksheets and interactive exercises that could inform the design of financial education training materials in developing country contexts. While this experience is very valuable, the lessons have not yet crossed over to developing countries.[5]

In the popular literature, massive numbers of financial education books, guides, and materials are written for people in developed economies. While they incorporate many basic principles that could be adapted to financial education in developing economies, they focus largely on managing finances in the context of higher growth economies with more sophisticated and accessible financial institutions and instruments. They cover investing in stocks, bonds, and other formal financial instruments, managing housing mortgages and automobile loans, using credit cards, choosing what kind of insurance to buy, setting up retirement and college funds, devising tax strategies, and writing wills. Few of these books are aimed at the poor, and none at the poor in developing countries.

The considerable experience in developed countries and the potential benefits of extending financial education to poor people in developing countries offers considerable

[5] Greenspan 2002 describes several financial education programs for low income people in the US. In addition, Financial Freedom International, Inc., Operation Hope, Financial Fitness Centers, and Jump$start Coalition are further examples of organizations promoting financial literacy for people from low income households in the US.

opportunity for development organizations, especially microfinance institutions, to do more to see this happen.

The Challenge Ahead

Microfinance clients and other less-well-off people in developing countries have limited opportunity to learn skills related to setting economic goals, making a financial plan, managing cash flow, minimizing debt, and planning for the future. The lack of attention to financial education for the poor in the context of development policies, programs, and projects is a large gap to be filled. The potential benefits are clear, both for different groups among the poor and for the providers of financial services.

Nevertheless, promoting financial education poses many challenges. From a strategic standpoint, the limited experience with financial education in developing countries means there is still a lot to learn in terms of approach. Developing financial education tools for microfinance clients and others requires understanding the current financial options and strategies of poor individuals and households. Understanding client financial behavior is an emerging interest among many MFIs and provides the starting point for identifying ways to improve the money management skills of poor people. It goes beyond simply looking at how they use and repay their loans. It requires an awareness of the economic goals of poor households, how people manage resources and activities in the context of their households, how they build assets, and how they deal with risk in their day-to-day lives. It further requires an understanding the financial landscape in which people operate – and how, why, and when they use various formal, semi formal, and informal sources of finance. These factors all affect people's capacity to assume debt, tolerate risk, and use financial resources effectively. This type of knowledge is important in deciding what approaches to take in promoting financial education.

From a practical standpoint, questions remain about the most appropriate and relevant content for financial education training, counseling, and materials. Obviously, this will vary by group and circumstance and must be adapted accordingly. Offering financial education in a context where many people are illiterate and have limited exposure to any kind of training is one challenge. Dealing with highly sensitive social and personal issues is another. An overriding issue is how to affect a change in mind set in environments where future prospects are often less than bright.

Drawing on the lessons and experiences with financial education in developed countries will be important. But in doing so it will be important to consider carefully which approaches and materials can be appropriately adapted and what new kinds of materials need to be developed.

An Agenda for Action

Financial education can play an important role in contributing to poverty reduction in developing countries by building people's knowledge and skills to optimize the use of resources and take advantage of opportunities. Financial literacy can enhance the ability of people in not so well off households to interface more effectively with the financial system – not only microfinance institutions, but other formal and informal institutions as well. It can help people manage risk in their day-to-day lives and plan for the future. And it can play an important role in promoting savings and household asset accumulation. These are important benefits not only for individuals, but also for wider economies in developing countries.

Undoubtedly, there is a role for promoting financial education in the context of development policies and programs to reduce vulnerability and expand opportunities for the poor. To this end, there is a need to explore the potential for integrating financial literacy into various types of development programs: microfinance, vocational education, skills training, business development, health, nutrition, agriculture, and food security programs, life skills classes, school curriculums, non-formal education, and other non school-based programs for youth.

The fit with microfinance is natural. Financial education can reduce the risk of lending, provide a valued service, and support a client-centered approach. Better informed customers will demand more from financial service providers and put pressure on MFIs to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their operations.

The promotion of financial education for poor people in developing countries calls for work on several fronts:

- research to assess the financial management strategies of different groups of poor, how these can be improved, and the potential role for financial education;

- development of tools and materials for training at two levels. The first level is the development of financial literacy teaching materials and guides to train trainers and financial educators who will deliver financial education. The second level is financial literacy materials and guides for use by trainers to deliver financial education to different groups of people and at both the group and individual levels. These should incorporate adult learning techniques and include training modules and guides for group-based training complemented by workbooks, interactive games, stories, and exercises that focus on building individual financial literacy skills;

- identification of partner organizations to deliver financial education training and counseling. This could include MFIs, banks, cooperatives, credit unions, microenterprise support organizations, government extension programs, youth and other livelihood programs with wide outreach to desired target groups;

- experimental programs that deliver financial education – to test out and refine financial literacy approaches, tools, and materials for less well off people in developing countries; and

- development of indicators to evaluate the outcomes and impacts of financial education in relation to broader development goals.

The resulting financial literacy skills will be an important way for people without much money to take more control of their lives.

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Other Materials Reviewed

Financial Freedom International, Inc. -- training materials
Operation Hope -- website and training materials
Financial Fitness Centers -- training materials
Farm Radio Network -- published radio scripts
Jump$tart – website and training materials
Shri Mahila Sewa Trust – Project Tomorrow training materials and workshop reports

List of Acronyms

ASCAs	Accumulating savings and credit associations
Edir	Informal group-based funeral society in Ethiopia
Harambees	Fund raising events in Kenya often held to support emergency needs
MF	Microfinance
MFI	Microfinance institution
ROSCAs	Rotating savings and credit associations