

# Main Network

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# MAIN NETWORK News

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## HOW ENERGY CAN LEAD TO MICROFINANCE

To cook and bring light in the house, the women of Togo use equipment such as kerosene lamps or means generating a more or less important smoke that may affect health. But how can the microfinance sector contribute to solving this problem?

This lighting system is certainly one of the cheapest, but it has drawbacks. The Entrepreneurs du Monde organisation, launched MIVO Energy, a project enabling the women from Lomé and around to access new technologies to light their home.

The project, of which some components are the result of Entrepreneurs du Monde and the Air Liquide Foundation collaboration, favours the local market through its local manufacturers of technologies to give the chance to households to spend less money and to include women in the project. They are given the role of resellers of the manufactured equipment.

In 2016, the project figures are: 40 resellers among which a large majority of women, almost 1,000 products sold for 12,000 beneficiaries. But it is also a way for women and other stakeholders involved in this sales network project to benefit from financial services for which no guarantee is required:

*« Professional empowerment of these reseller women is favoured by financial support which aims to provide them with payment facilities and microcredit schemes in partnership with specialised institutions. These financial solutions are also offered to buyers of products distributed by Mivo Energy. » Air Liquide Foundation / Entrepreneurs of the World.*

Mivo Energy puts forward different themes. Professional autonomy of women, the need to educate the Togolese population to energy problems and the indispensable involvement of local market actors in the development of the local economy!

<http://www.newsletter.fondationairliquide.com/au-togo-la-microfinance-pour-diffuser-une-energie-propre/>

<http://www.entrepreneursdumonde.org/espace-media/edm-dans-les-medias/au-togo-la-microfinance-pour-diffuser-une-energie-propre/>

## INTERNET IMPROVES ACCESS TO SMALL LOANS

Refugees have to overcome many challenges among which finding a new income-generating activity in their host country to meet their basic needs as they have been compelled to abandon a job while fleeing their home place.



Over the last years, microfinance has become the most suitable solution to help refugees find economic opportunities due to their increasing number.

It is often a daunting see impossible for refugees to be granted loans from the financial institutions of their host country for legal reasons mainly as stressed by the authors.

The Internet has become today the main communication means worldwide and a platform for the development of a wide range of economic and non-economic activities. Kiva, an American non-profit has created an online platform for lenders and borrowers. The lenders (individuals, social enterprises, schools, NGO's) from all over the world choose a borrower after reading potential borrowers' biography on the organisation's website and also base their decision on the kind of project they want to support (house construction, education or business). This online loan platform can be a major opportunity for refugees to borrow money and offers some hope for a better future.

The project may be virtual. Still, it is very well thought and adapted as Kiva has 300 field partners to assist borrowers and manage the loans. This system allows persons living in remote areas with no access to financial institutions to take out a loan. Kiva's loan system removes many barriers to loan access for many as it would for refugee populations.

The authors also shed the light on initiatives either from international organisations or the refugees themselves that have proven some success. For instance, in Uganda, refugees have created their own solution through micro-savings and lending groups. Many persons from Africa could benefit from these two innovative approaches as well as many Togolese living far from microfinance agencies which network is starting to be very important.

Kiva and MAIN both work in Mali, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Rwanda and DRC just to mention a few.



**R é f :** <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/micro-finance-in-refugee-contexts-current-scholarship-and-research-gapsch-gaps>



## TESTIMONIES

How do MAIN training sessions contribute to the development of microfinance professionals?

Testimonies of two beneficiaries of 2016 UCAC session :

**Moussa Kamissoko II,**  
Operation Director – Crédit Rural de Guinée (CRG)

**Hamado Ouedrago,**  
CEO of URC-Nazinon,  
Union Régionale des Coopératives d'Epargnes et de Crédit du Nazinon, Burkina Faso

« When coming for this master training in Microfinance at the Catholic University of Central Africa, I had a few expectations and concerns.

The day after I arrived, I wanted to meet the final year students to understand the training session programme and its content. Answers provided at the meeting really met my expectations.

From the very first day of training I realised how relevant the subjects proposed were, as well as their content, the quality of trainers and the methodology used, the practical value of the received training in the performance of my duties.

During this training, we have been dealing with senior trainers with many years of experience in microfinance, perfectly mastering their subject and providing courses with methodology and dexterity.

I already feel my skills strengthened and feel better equipped. I learned things that will bring significant improvements to my every day work and to meet the goals of my organisation.

The different meetings and exchanges of practices with the various Microfinance Institutions from a wide-range of countries have enriched me beyond my expectations, addressed my major concerns and the core challenges of the profession. This training has also enabled me to build a network of friends, microfinance practitioners from diverse countries and microfinance institutions. This network will definitely be a great contribution to my career in the sector.

*I give my heartfelt thanks to the MAIN and UCAC for this initiative which undoubtedly contributes to the enhancement of human resources of the continent and the trainers.*

I hope such trainings to be maintained, encouraged and supported to the benefit of MFI industry. I recommend to this effect to all Microfinance Institution leaders of the continent and all technical and financial partners of the sector in Africa, to support MAIN, a valuable institution for the development and viability of the sector in Africa. »



Moussa Kamissoko II,  
Operation Director –  
Crédit Rural de  
Guinée (CRG)



Hamado Ouedrago, CEO of URC-Nazinon, Union Régionale des Coopératives d'Epargnes et de Crédit du Nazinon, Burkina Faso.

« "As a microfinance practitioner for over a decade, I have developed professional expertise through many experiences and modular trainings.

The evolution of microfinance and my position as CEO within my institution have always convinced me of the need to seek to achieve excellence. And this necessarily requires innovative trainings.

The Master in Management of Microfinance Institutions organised and coordinated by the MAIN and the Catholic University of Central Africa is undoubtedly a programme that meets my expectations and certainly any MFI's senior expert. I say this for several reasons:

- Personally, this training allowed me to gain new knowledge and experience. Indeed, through well-designed and tailored programme and methodology, learning is optimal. I worked with great people with whom I have created a network of exchange of good practices.
- For my institution, the application of what I learnt and coaching my team probably will accelerate the achievement of our goals.

I take this opportunity to warmly thank the UCAC and its faculty for their availability, my co-participants (from several African countries) for sharing their experience. My thanks also go to the MAIN which favoured my participation in this programme of extraordinary quality. »



## PEACE MFI, WINNER OF VIRTUAL DIALOGUE OF THE SECOND COHORT BY ACCION INTERNATIONAL, CENTRE FOR FINANCIAL INCLUSIONS

Mr. Tezera Kebede Bekele CEO of PEACE MFI won the virtual dialogue of the second cohort and received the winning CUP in Cape Town, South Africa on May 18, 2016. The African Board Fellowship Second cohort was held from November 18, 2015 to May 18, 2016.

Poverty Eradication and Community Empowerment (PEACE) is a micro financing Share Company licensed by the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) in November 1999 to provide micro-finance services. PEACE MFI is a member of MAIN since 2000 and has benefited from the numerous capacity building programmes MAIN offers. Currently PEACE MFI offers group loans through a network of 22 branches located in three regions of Ethiopia.

The Africa Board Fellows (ABF) program focuses on strengthening governance, improving risk management practices, and building strategic leadership skills among leading board members and CEOs of microfinance institutions in sub Saharan Africa. It connects board members and CEOs through peer learning and exchange to strengthen the governance of financial institutions serving low-income clients in the region. Seminar activities, structure, and content have been carefully designed to create an open atmosphere that allows for frank discussion among peers.

Fellows identify their objectives for the program and then work with a program advisor towards achieving those goals. Fellows will have an opportunity to share knowledge and experience around governance challenges in all of these areas in order to build capacity and enable application of best practices within the framework of their institutions' activities.

Additionally, fellows will have access throughout the program to a participant-led virtual community with tools, resources, content, and access to subject-matter experts. In the end of the program, fellows stay connected as alumni, creating a network of leaders confronting similar challenges.



Tezera the winner (in the middle) with his advisor and his coordinator MM John et Ezra

For more information: <http://www.centerforfinancialinclusion.org/>



# CREDIT TO AGRICULTURE, A KEY TOOL FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The development of countries from the South, to be socially balanced and sustainable, must rely on a strong agricultural sector. Nonetheless, farming is a capital-intensive industry, which growth requires an adequate credit supply. An efficient loan system to agriculture is an essential ingredient for a complete support to the sector.

It is a centerpiece of an "ecosystem" of agricultural development, covering all its dimensions: technical, commercial and financial. If financial institutions face multiple difficulties in financing agriculture, there still are innovative solutions to overcome them through procedures, tools or appropriate partnerships.

Ensuring farmers against damage related to climate conditions is promising but presupposes that insurance products available are effective and affordable.

The state plays a crucial role in risk management, including in defining a favorable regulatory environment and providing the necessary incentives to address market failures and encourage the production of public goods. The major challenge is to promote access to credit for the most vulnerable small farms who are not able to invest to meet their needs.

Source : <http://www.fondation-farm.org>

## MICROFINANCE AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (UGANDA MARTYRS' UNIVERSITY)

The 15th residential program on microfinance and community development was organized at Uganda Martyrs' University from July 24 to August 7, 2016. It was attended by more than 100 participants coming from different parts of Africa. From the total participants, MAIN sponsored 26 participants coming from 15 microfinance institutions of Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda.

MAIN in collaboration with Uganda Martyrs' University in Uganda trains its members on Diploma programme of Microfinance and Community Economic Development programme every year at the end July to beginning of August. This programme is a 3 years distance learning education which requires 3 weeks residential sessions every year combined with field visits to MFIs for sharing live experience and complementing what has been learnt during the sessions. In addition, MAIN is pleased to inform its readers that the Masters program on Microfinance will be launched at the university in 2017 and students can be enrolled for the program as of next year.

## UPCOMING EVENTS :

- 1 - Program design implementation, Lomé-Togo du sept. 05-09 Sept, 2016
- 2 - Management of Information System, Lomé-Togo du sept. 12-16, 2016
- 3 - Annual SEEP network Conference, sept. 19-21, 2016, Arlington, VA, USA
- 4 - Annual Symposium of ADA, « Financial inclusion at the era of digital », Oct. 19, 2016, Luxembourg

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