

Microfinance: a WISE Core group project

Our recent studies have taught us about the Grameen Bank. This institution, dedicated to the eradication of poverty in Bangladesh, provides small loans to people whom ordinary banks consider to be poor risks. By following a strict set of principles and creating an accountability system to ensure its success, the Grameen Bank has helped almost eight million Bangladeshis lift themselves out of poverty.

Like the Grameen Bank, many organizations around the world have created similar 'micro-finance institutions' (MFI's) which have proven successful in helping the poor start their own businesses. There is now great hope for many people in the world to create businesses for themselves rather than working at a low-paying job. Much of this starts at the micro-finance level.

This project asks you to answer, in depth, a simple question for us: what organizations are doing this successfully right now? Working in teams of no more than two (2) people, you will research a micro-finance institution of your choice, find out about it's successes, learn about how it operates, document the sources for your information, and create a Google slideshow to teach us what it is doing. In particular, your group needs to research and report on the following key points:

-INCLUDE SOME HISTORICAL BACKGROUND-

- 1. Where does the group operate—in which countries?**
- 2. Who are the target populations (which people are they trying to help)?**
- 3. What are the group's key principles for successful loans? How does it operate?**
- 4. What is the group's philosophy—besides economic development, what other change is the group trying to bring about?**
- 5. Is the organization a success? How do you measure it's success? What makes it a powerful agent of change?**

Presentations are due on Monday, April 29th. You must have your Google slideshow ready to load on the computer at the start of the block.