

BREAKING NEWS



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YUNUS SIGNED AN AGREEMENT of cooperation and support for entrepreneurs on Sunday

in the Bosnian capital

Sarajevo, along with Bosnia Bank International (BBI) director general Amer Bukvic and Saudi Arabia's Centennial Fund director general Abdul Aziz al-Mutairi.



Centennial Fund is a leading charity organization in Saudi Arabia with a global scale of operations, while Muhammad's Yunus Social Business creates and empowers social businesses to address and solve social problems around the world.

According to the signatories, potential entrepreneurs in Bosnia will have a chance to take education and training through various campaigns and projects in order to start and develop self-sustaining businesses.

As it was highlighted during the signing ceremony, the agreement applies particularly to socially vulnerable categories of the population and young people.

"We only ensure the conditions so that people can work and be creative," said Yunus.



THE ITALIAN BISHOPS CONFERENCE relaunched on Monday its microcredit initiative for families and small businesses, a program first begun in 2009 in response to the global financial crisis.

In the last four years, the "Loan for Hope"

program has distributed more than \$29 million in loans to families and small companies in Italy. It is carried out through the Intesa San Paolo Bank, on behalf of the Italian bishops and Caritas Italy.

"We have provided loans to about 4,500 families, and 15 percent of them were small family companies or cooperative companies who got loans of \$30,000 in order to replace furniture or write off the red of balance sheets which occurred with the economic crisis," Fr. Andrea La Regina of Caritas Italy told CNA Feb. 27.



KAZAKHSTANI BANKS ARE EXPERIENCING tenge shortages because many of their clients have been transferring their tenge deposits into dollars-denominated ones after the February 2014 devaluation of the national currency.

Director of the Association of Microfinance Organizations of Kazakhstan Anatoly Glukhov believes that the present situation - high devaluation expectations - makes Kazakhstanis opt for services of microcredit organizations, Tengrinews reports.

Glukhov pointed out that borrowing from microcredit organisations had markedly increased. The fact that banks have tougher requirements towards borrowers' creditworthiness and collateral than microcredit organizations adds to the existing conditions. No wonder that interest rates in mi-



crocredit organizations are higher than in banks - they start at 15 and reach as high as 45 percent.

Glukhov insisted that the deficit of the tenge was only temporary. "There should be a joint meeting of the government and the National Bank of Kazakhstan, where, I think, the decisions on how to remedy the present situation will be made," Glukhov said about the meeting that took place in mid February. However, no dramatic improvements have taken place since then.

Not everything may be so easy for the microcredit organisations either. Chairman of MCO KazMicroFinance LLC (KMF) Shalkar Zhusupov said that his organization did not expect a large inflow of customers because the problems that had affected the banks would affect microfinance institutions

as well. "It all depends on how the situation will unfold in the next 2 or 3 months," he said.

KMF accounts for 60 percent of all the microcredits issued in Kazakhstan. According to the website of the organization, its 17 years of operation established

KMF as one of the leaders in Central Asian microfinance sector. It is also the largest microfinance organization in Kazakhstan with a loan portfolio of over 27 billion tenge (\$146 million) and over 130,000 active clients.

On January 30 KMF was re-registered from microcredit to microfinance institution (MFI)

and is now subject to the regulation of the National Bank of Kazakhstan. In the long run KMF plans to become a bank.

Until the end of 2015 all the microcredit organisations in Kazakhstan must assume the status of microfinance organization. According to Glukhov, re-registration of other microcredit organizations into MFIs is expected in the second or third quarter of this year.

Reporting by Azhar Ashirova, writing by Dinara Urazova, editing by Tatyana Kuzmina



STERLING BANK INCREASES ONLINE MICRO CREDIT BY OVER 200%

Sterling Bank Plc said it has increased the minimum amount for online "quick cash" via its social lender platform from N3,000 to N10,000 even as it aims to reach 6,000 beneficiaries this year.

The bank, in a statement, said that it had disbursed over N5 million to over 2,000 on-line customers within six months of the introduction of the social lender platform, adding that over 90 per cent of the amount advanced has been paid back by the beneficiaries.

The social lender is a modified peer-to-peer lending solution using the social media platforms through which micro-credit is offered to members of these communities.

The scheme provides a platform for online followers who are customers of Sterling Bank to obtain these monies via social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter. The bank's group head, Strategy and Communications, Mr Shina Atilola, had explained that the scheme was repackaged because of its success story, the quality of feedback from members of the online community and the impressive pay back rate of the beneficiaries.

FRANCE-ANTILLES

www.franceantilles.fr MARTINIQUE

LE MICRO-CRÉDIT: UNE VRAIE PISTE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT

Gerard Grignon, président de la délégation Outre-Mer CESE, et le professeur Eustase Janky.

Le micro-crédit serait une piste pour développer l'insertion sociale dans les outre-mers. Mais pour qu'il soit correctement réalisé, il faudrait qu'il soit accompagné lors de ses phases de montage et de pérennisation du projet.

Le Conseil économique, social et environnemental (CESE) a adopté un avis relatif au micro-crédit dans les outre-mers. C'est Pierrette Crozemarie (du groupe CGT et vice-présidente de la délégation outre-mer du CESE) qui a présenté ce dossier pour la délégation Outre-mer. Les CESE estiment que c'est une piste importante pour développer l'insertion sociale dans les Outre-mers. Pour preuve, Mme Crozemarie cite un chiffre : « 91% des créateurs d'activité sont encore dans l'emploi trois ans après cette création. »

L'Association pour le droit à l'initiative économique (Adie), leader dans la microfinance, a accordé 16 600 micro-crédits en 2014. Sur les 13 400 micro-crédits professionnels, 3 000 ont été octroyés à des personnes en Outre-mer. Et sur les 3 000 micro-crédits personnels, environ 10% ont été accordés en Outre-mer. Selon Mme Crozemarie, le microcrédit est une vraie piste de développement à condition que ce micro-crédit soit accompagné dans sa phase de montage et dans la phase de pérennisation du projet ainsi financé. C'est avec les projets montés par des femmes que les réussites semblent les plus éclatantes.



The Daily Star

INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a national mission of financial inclusion.

Called the Prime Minister's People's Wealth Programme, it envisions bank accounts for all Indians. In its first phase, ending August 14, 2015, the target is 7.5 crore accounts. As Modi said, "There are millions of families who have mobile phones, but no bank accounts. We have to change this. The change will commence from this point. We are now the second biggest mobile banking country in the world after Kenya. We will become number one in a few months," Dr Atiur Rahman, governor of Bangladesh Bank, told The Daily Star.

Rahman is believed to be the champion of the successful campaign for financial inclusion. He has motivated central and commercial bankers to bring the unbanked population into financial services. He made the mobile banking services 'well-regulated', both by the central bank and scheduled banks.

He dreams further towards sustainability. "Financial inclusion will lead us to financial sustainability. We have also launched green banking, keeping in mind the sustainability issue," said the governor.

Financial inclusion and financial literacy have long been the words used by policymakers, bankers and researchers across the globe. There are many opinions about what financial inclusion

means.

The G20 association of major world economic powers added its imprimatur to financial inclusion by recognising it as one of the four pillars in the financial sector reform structure of its Global Development Agenda and given it equal standing along with financial integrity, financial consumer protection, and financial stability.