



SPOTLIGHT ON ORGANISATIONS: LATIN AMERICAN MICROFINANCE

This document highlights some of the key organisations that focus on microfinance in the Latin American context. Together these organisations cover a wide range of themes, such as institutional innovation, rural microfinance and microfinance technology, and implement a variety of initiatives, from research and funding, to policy advocacy. The organisations include those based in, and focused entirely on Latin America, as well as international organisations that have a significant focus on the region.

► ACCION, Latin America Region

Link: <http://www.accion.org/lac>

Areas of Expertise: Microfinance, access to finance, policy analysis

Key Activities: Funding, training, technical assistance

This international non-profit organisation - working all over the world, including in Latin America - aims to provide MFIs in Latin America and beyond with the necessary tools to enhance their business and thereby increase access to financial services for the rural poor. The microfinance services they offer include management services, investment, innovation and governance support. Their website includes information on their work in the Latin America region, and the [list of their local partners](#) might be particularly useful for readers seeking access to Latin American MFIs.

► Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP)

Link: <http://www.cgap.org/countries/latin-america-and-caribbean>

Areas of Expertise: Microfinance, financial inclusion for the poor

Key Activities: Research, policy analysis, policy advocacy

CGAP is an independent policy and research organisation based at the World Bank. Through research, outreach and advocacy, it aims to support poor people's access to finance. Publications are on diverse topics related to microfinance, aiming to promote standards, innovate and offer advice, and share interesting case studies. Though focused internationally, CGAP has conducted research and carried out other activities focusing on Latin American countries. Their organisational [blog also often focuses on Latin America](#), offering interesting features on regional trends and specific countries. Finally, CGAP runs the [Microfinance Gateway](#), a comprehensive online source of publications, news, training and employment information related to microfinance.



► Entrepreneurial Finance Lab (EFL)

Link: <http://www.eflglobal.com/efl-history>

Areas of Expertise: Methodology for credit scoring models based on psychometrics principles

Key Activities: Training, technical assistance

EFL is an independent, private organisation whose objective is to link financial institutions with high-potential entrepreneurs, mostly from SMEs in developing countries that are not always easy to identify. EFL provides tools, technical assistance and a knowledge centre for capacity building on how to better score credit and avoid risk. Analysed in the [ELLA Microfinance Technology Brief](#), credit scoring methods have proven to be effective and the ones based upon psychometric principles are starting to become commonly used due to their statistically-proven impact on reducing risk. Though working worldwide, EFL has a significant focus in Latin America through its offices in Lima, Peru and Sao Paulo, Brazil.

► Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), Global Financial Inclusion Initiative

Link: <http://www.poverty-action.org/financialinclusion>

Areas of Expertise: Financial access for the poor

Key Activities: Impact evaluations, research, randomised evaluations

Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) is one of the key organisations promoting randomised evaluations in development. IPA's Global Financial Inclusion initiative applies their research methodologies to questions related to how poor people could and do make use of financial services. IPA manages projects in the Latin America region in Bolivia, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Peru. Research findings are available on the [publications](#) page, and they also conduct outreach events to disseminate their work.

► Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Link: <http://www.iadb.org/en/topics/microfinance/microfinance-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean,1655.html>

Areas of Expertise: Rural microfinance, regulation, technologies

Key Activities: Research, training, technical assistance

Over the past twenty years, the IDB has conducted a significant amount of work related to microfinance in Latin America. The IDB provides funding for countries to strengthen microfinance regulations and expand access. They also conduct research about a variety of microfinance topics, and in fact are probably one of the largest sources of publications about microfinance in Latin America. They publish academic publications along with case studies about the microfinance programmes they are funding, like the [Social Entrepreneurship Program](#) mentioned in the [ELLA Guide to Microfinance](#), which supports programmes related to rural finance and access to basic services.



► Microfinance Information Exchange (MIX) Market

Link: <http://www.mixmarket.org/>

Areas of Expertise: Regulated and unregulated microfinance institutions, sector performance

Key Activities: Data, analysis, reports, online platform

This non-profit organisation is a source of up-to-date information about microfinance institutions, funders and other key microfinance actors, as well as indicators on sector performance. MIX aims to be the first source of objective, relevant and quality microfinance performance data and analysis. Not only are publications and regional analysis made continuously, but readers can create their own reports by selecting relevant indicators or focusing on specific countries or regions; they also accumulate and publish a wealth of information about [Latin America](#). Though users need a premium account to access the most in-depth data, many of their larger reports and publications are available to any user.

► Multilateral Investment Fund (*Fondo Multilateral de Inversiones - FOMIN*), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Link: <http://www5.iadb.org/mif/Projects/AccessoFinance/tabid/437/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Areas of Expertise: Access to finance, rural microfinance, regulation, technology

Key Activities: Funding, research

MIF, a member of the [Inter-American Development Bank \(IDB\)](#), focuses on supporting private sector development, and includes a significant amount of work on microfinance and access to finance more generally. They conduct and publish a variety of research, from theoretical documents to empirical evidence and reports on the Latin American microfinance market, and projects related to improving financial inclusion. Their [MicAmericas](#) knowledge platform, published in English and Spanish, houses additional research and publications. Though in Spanish, their [YouTube channel](#) includes videos about microfinance in Latin America.

► Pro Mujer

Link: <http://promujer.org/>

Areas of Expertise: Microfinance plus, gender

Key Activities: Microfinance loans, technical assistance, funding, publications and outreach

Based in New York City, *Pro Mujer* (meaning Pro Woman) is an innovative microfinance organisation dedicated to providing access to finance for women in Latin America, working primarily in Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru. The *Pro Mujer* approach - microfinance plus - combines providing microfinance to poor women with other services such as health services, training and basic financial education. Their products include small, general and seasonal business loans, education and housing loans, savings accounts and life insurance. *Pro Mujer* has a [YouTube channel](#) and many English [publications](#) documenting their approach and experiences.



► [Rural Finance Learning Center \(RFLC\)](#)

Link: <http://www.ruralfinance.org/>

Areas of Expertise: Rural microfinance

Key Activities: Capacity building, training, knowledge dissemination

The RFLC website acts as a database of diverse publications about rural microfinance. These publications are about organisations that offer training, events, and theoretical literature about rural microfinance worldwide including case studies and study guides, as well as multimedia material. The library with theoretical literature has material on client advice, service provision and policymaking. Although RFLC is not focused only on Latin America, nor does it have a specific regional department, it is an extremely useful organisation, as readers can use the website's [advanced search](#) feature to find publications and training materials specific to the Latin America region.

► [Women's World Banking \(WWB\)](#)

Link: <http://www.swwb.org/>

Areas of Expertise: Microfinance products and services for women, microcredit, savings, microinsurance, youth and finance, gender, leadership

Key Activities: Product design, funding, research, technical assistance to strengthen MFIs

Women's World Banking is a microfinance network focused entirely on building women's access to finance and promoting their economic empowerment. It works with MFIs of all around the world, and has a particularly strong presence in Latin America, working with important MFIs in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru. WWB has a strong focus on knowledge sharing, doing research on product and services design and good practice, and engaging in policy advocacy. Their [publications](#) page includes a wealth of information about their work, findings and training materials focused specifically on the Latin America region.

CONTACT [GRADE](#)

To learn more about microfinance in Latin America, contact the author: Miguel Jaramillo, PhD, Principal Researcher, GRADE, at mjaramillo@grade.org.pe.



FIND OUT MORE FROM [ELLA](#)

To learn more about microfinance in Latin America, read the [ELLA Guide](#), which has a full list of knowledge materials available on this topic. To learn more about other development issues, browse other [ELLA Themes](#).

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