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Microfinance and Poverty Alleviation: What Have We Learned?

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Abstract

Microfinance is viewed as an important tool for poverty alleviation. Performance should be judged in terms of access, sustainability, and impact. Asia leads the world in the number of persons reached by microfinance, but sustainability is problematic for many programs. Impact is difficult to measure and subject to much disagreement. The frontier lies in institutional and policy changes that will help assure that all three goals are met.

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