



**Women Advancing Microfinance  
and  
The Microfinance Club of New York**

**Present**

**Microfinance in Our Midst: A Path to Economic Independence in New York**

You are invited to a panel discussion of the unique types of microfinance services offered in our local market of New York. Our panel brings together representatives of diverse financial institutions, ranging from small business loan funds (SeedCo Financial), community development credit unions (Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union), group lending programs (Grameen America), diversified lending and economic development organizations (the Business Center for New Americans) as well as the Empire State Development Corporation which supports diverse lending and asset building programs across the state. These institutions meet the needs of the economically disadvantaged in our midst, from small business owners who have difficulty obtaining traditional bank loans, to new immigrants to the US who have never been part of a formal financial sector, to residents of economically depressed neighborhoods who struggle to move toward economic stability.

**Date:** Thursday, June 18

**Time:** 6:00 PM – 6:30 PM Registration; 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM Panel Discussion and Q&A

**Location:** Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, 281 Park Avenue South (near East 22nd St.), Conference Room A

**Fee:** MFCNY and WAM members - free; non-members of WAM and MFCNY, \$10.

**Please RSVP: Provide name, company name, membership status, and email to [microfinance\\_event@yahoo.com](mailto:microfinance_event@yahoo.com).**

Through their discussions, the panelists will outline the relative differences between the domestic and international microfinance sector. They will consider questions like:

- What is the profile and needs of the underserved community which they target?
- What services do they provide (both financial and non-financial) and is their impact?
- What are the relative advantages and challenges of their business structure?
- How has the current economic crisis affected their business and their target market?
- Is their business sustainable?
- What innovations are on the horizon? What does the future hold? What support is needed for this sector?

**Moderator:**

**Daniel Delehanty, Vice President-Community Development Banking, Capital One Bank**

**Panelists:**

**Edwin Hong, Senior Vice President, Seedco Financial**

Edwin Hong serves as Senior Vice President at Seedco Financial - a national nonprofit organization that provides affordable financing and comprehensive technical assistance to small businesses and nonprofit

organizations situated in economically-distressed and traditionally underserved communities. Edwin holds an undergraduate degree in Government from Dartmouth College and a Masters in Business Administration from Cornell University's S.C. Johnson Graduate School of Management.

**Leslie Kane, Vice President of Strategy & Finance, Grameen America**

Leslie Kane holds the position of Vice President of Strategy & Finance at Grameen America. Grameen America is a non-profit microfinance organization whose mission is to help entrepreneurial individuals, especially women, build credit and defeat poverty. Grameen America provides loans, savings programs, credit establishment and other financial services to the working poor, especially women, in the United States. Grameen America is built upon the success of the Grameen Bank. Founded by Professor Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh, the Grameen Bank is the most widely recognized microfinance company in the world. Ms. Kane holds a BA in History from Yale University.

**Jeffrey Metzler, Vice President-Economic Empowerment, Empire State Development Corporation**

Jeffrey Metzler serves as Vice President-Economic Empowerment at the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC), the state agency responsible for supporting small business development and retention both in New York City and the entire state of New York. Since the beginning of the economic downturn, ESDC support for small businesses has expanded. Before joining ESDC, Metzler served as an Assistant Attorney General at the Office of the NY Attorney General and as Law Clerk at Hon. Diana Gribbon Motz. He is a graduate of Yale Law School and Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

**Samira Rajan, CEO, Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union**

Samira Rajan is CEO of Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union, a community development credit union serving more than 5,500 individual members of the low-income neighborhoods of Bushwick and Bedford Stuyvesant (Brooklyn) with savings, loan, small business development, foreclosure prevention, home ownership education, free tax preparation and other services. Credit union members are not simply clients, but shareholders with a democratic voice in the financial institution that holds their assets. Samira started her career with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and the Jerome Levy Economics Institute before joining the credit union at its launch and rising through the ranks to become Director of Lending and Chief Operating Officer. Ms. Rajan holds an MPP from the JFK School at Harvard University.

**Yanki Tshering, Executive Director, Business Center for New Americans**

Yanki Tshering has over eleven years of experience in developing and implementing economic development programs in New York City. She is the Executive Director of the Business Center for New Americans, a division of Center for Community Development for New Americans (CCDNA). Ms. Tshering played a key role in starting this center, which has received national recognition for its creative and sensible asset development programs for low to moderate income residents of New York City. The Business Center has made over \$6.4 million in micro-loans; 1004 refugee families and individuals have graduated from the Center's Individual Development Program for Refugees and invested over \$20 million in assets like home-ownership and small business. Eighty five graduates from the First Home Program are home owners who are still in their homes. Over 450 businesses attend workshops and receive technical assistance from the Business Center each year. Ms. Tshering has a Masters in International Affairs from Columbia University. She grew up in a Tibetan refugee community in India.