

Financial Access at Birth (FAB) recently completed a preliminary needs-assessment and feasibility study for its first pilot and is eager to introduce its findings to potential donors and implementation partners. More on that soon...

In the meantime, it writes to acknowledge the rich learning and exchange of ideas it enjoyed through its participation in the 2011 SEEP Network annual conference.

Day 1: FAB spent Member Day with associates of the [SEEP Savings-Led Financial Services Working Group](#). With a focus on informal savings groups, the Working Group reported on an October 2011 gathering it organized, [Arusha Savings Groups Summit](#), which brought together over 250 savings groups practitioners, representing 46 countries. The format of the conference was participatory and included debates, research presentations, small group discussions, and a [World Café](#) exercise to share ideas on how better to collaborate and achieve impact. In addition to a follow-up conference in September 2012 (sponsored by Oxfam and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), the Summit resulted in the creation of a publication with six chapters on themes of importance to the industry that were discussed at the summit. These themes include the need for savings groups, related delivery channels, linkage of savings groups to formal financial services, savings-led development, development-led savings, and more. Among the contributing authors to this publication will be Jeff Ashe, Markku and Susan Johnson, Joanna Ledgerwood, Paul Rippey, Kim Wilson, and Megan Gash. We can all look forward to the publication in early 2013. In the meantime, enjoy this excellent [website and blog regarding savings groups](#).

Day 2: The highlight of day two for FAB was its participation in a Media Roundtable on “Major Microsavings Initiatives Worldwide” organized by the SEEP Network. A recording of this event is available [here](#). FAB enjoyed enormously the opportunity to join a dialogue with Kate Griffen from the Grameen Foundation, Rashid Bajwa from the Pakistan Microfinance Network, and Nathanael Goldberg from Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA).

FAB is grateful to Voice of America for its print and video coverage of this event. Click to view a [3-minute story on “Money in Motion”](#)

click to read

[VOA's written piece, "Microsavings Could Mean Big Gains for the World's Poor."](#)

FAB also appreciated and sends thanks for the chance to connect with friends of USAID's microlinks via this [short video introduction](#) and with readers of Microfinance Focus in [this write-up](#)

Day 3: Early morning on the third day, FAB was among the first in line to receive, hot off the press, the four learning products about youth finance: [Innovations in Youth Financial Services Practitioner Learning Program \(PLP\)](#)

. They include (i)

[Building Sustainable Business Models for Youth Financial Services](#)

(ii)

[Effective Marketing for Scaling Up Financial Services to Youth](#)

(iii)

[Reaching Scale with Financial Education for Youth](#)

, and (iv)

[Institutionalizing Youth Financial Services to Achieve Scale](#)

. These publications and the program were organized by SEEP and made possible by a grant from the MasterCard Foundation. Finally, FAB was pleased to serve as host to one of four sessions of the "Formal Savings Track" of the conference. For a brief summary of the key takeaways from these thought-provoking sessions click

[here](#)

. They included:

- The Elephant in the Room: Can We Build a Case for Microsavings? with Debbie Dean (Grameen Foundation) and Glenn Westley (Consultant)
- Financial Access at Birth (FAB): Can Financial Citizenship Start at Birth? with Rosita Najmi (Consultant) and Rani Deshpande (Save the Children)
- Formal and Informal Savings for Youth: Contextualizing an Appropriate Response with Jennifer Gurbin Harley (MEDA), Paul Lobo (Plan Canada), Rossana Ramirez (Freedom from Hunger)
- Achieving Microsavings Success through Operational and Organizational Change with Peg Ross (Grameen Foundation), Ruth Jacobs (MEDA), Cathleen Tobin (Women's World Banking)