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Start Date

November 20, 2014

End Date

November 21, 2014

Achieving Better Banking in Malawi

Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) in Malawi and the Yale Savings and Payments Research Fund, under the Financial Inclusion Program at IPA, partnered with the Bankers Association of Malawi (BAM) to host a policy conference on Achieving Better Banking in Malawi on November 20 - 21, 2014, in Lilongwe, Malawi.

The conference brought together practitioners, policymakers, and researchers to discuss the current landscape of empirical evidence on financial inclusion in Africa and its implications for policy in Malawi. Speakers and panel discussants explored how innovations in the design and delivery of financial products can be used to positively impact the welfare of poor households and enterprises in Malawi.

The conference showcased results from randomized evaluations in Africa on suitable financial products for smallholder farmers, financial incentives and subsidies for low-income clients, smart technologies for better banking, behavioral nudges to save, and the role of social dynamics in financial decision-making. Each session focused on a set of individual studies and how their findings can contribute to effective programs that can be taken to scale.

FULL CONFERENCE AGENDA ([download](#))

OPENING KEYNOTE



Ronald Mangani, Secretary to the Treasury, Ministry of Finance

SESSION I:

FINANCIAL TOOLS FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

Facilitating Savings for Agriculture: Field Experimental Evidence from Malawi – Malawi
Jessica Goldberg, University of Maryland-College Park
[presentation](#) - [project summary](#) - [academic paper](#)

Agricultural Decisions after Relaxing Credit and Risk Constraints – Ghana
Jessica Kiessel, Chief Programs Officer, Innovations for Poverty Action
[presentation](#) - [project summary](#) - [academic paper](#)

Moderator: *Kingsley Makiyoni, Business Development Manager, National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM)*



Discussants:

Cornelius Mwalwanda, Former Deputy Minister Of Finance

Professor Ephraim Chirwa, Chancellor College, University of Malawi

SESSION II:

PRICE DISTORTIONS AND THEIR IMPACT

Savings Constraints and Microenterprise Development: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Kenya - Kenya

Aaron Dibner-Dunlap, Program Manager, Innovations for Poverty Action

[presentation](#) - [project summary](#) - [academic paper](#)

The Persistent Power of Behavioral Change: Long-Run Impacts of Temporary Savings Subsidies for the Poor - Kenya

Aishwarya Lakshmi Ratan, Program Director, Innovations for Poverty Action

[presentation](#) - [project summary](#) - [academic paper](#)

Moderator: Professor Ephraim Chirwa, Chancellor College, University of Malawi

Discussants:



Fletcher Chilumpha, Program Manager, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Stanley Mkwamba, Head of Retail and SME Banking, Nedbank

SESSION III:

REGULATIONS GOVERNING FINANCIAL SERVICES

Risk-Taking in the Banking Sector

Ben Kaluwa, Chancellor College, University of Malawi

presentation - academic paper

Moderator: Thomas Munthali, Country Director, Innovations for Poverty Action-Malawi

Discussants:

Stanley Mkwamba, Head of Retail and SME Banking, Nedbank

Yananga Phiri, Principal Examiner-Policy & Regulation, Reserve Bank of Malawi (RBM)



**SESSION IV:
FROM EVALUATION TO SCALE**

Evaluating and Scaling Smart Technologies for Better Banking – Malawi

Jessica Goldberg, University of Maryland-College Park
[presentation](#) - [project summary](#) - [academic paper](#)

The Obstacles to Scaling Promising Solutions
Emily Cupito, Policy Manager, J-PAL
[presentation](#) - [project summary](#)

Moderator: *Duncan Phulusa, Executive Director, Malawi Microfinance Network (MAMN)*



Discussants:

Wilson Moleni, Chief Operating Officer, Opportunity Bank

Phindu Lipenga, Principal Examiner, Information, Communication, & Technology, Reserve Bank of Malawi (RBM)

SESSION V:

BEHAVIORAL NUDGES TO SAVE

Effect of Income Timing and Structure on Consumption and Savings Behavior - Malawi

Lasse Brune, Yale University

[presentation](#) - [project summary](#) - [academic paper](#)

Getting to the Top of Mind: How Reminders Increase Saving and Improving Loan Repayment through Positive Incentives - Uganda, Philippines, Bolivia, and Peru

Aaron Dibner-Dunlap, IProgram Manager, Innovations for Poverty Action



[presentation](#) - [project summary](#) - [academic paper 1](#) - [academic paper 2](#)

Moderator: *Ian Bonongwe, CEO, Malawi Savings Bank (MSB)*

Discussants:

Felizarda Mbewe, Alternate Channels Manager, Malawi Savings Bank

Howard Bowa, Head of Retail Banking, Inde Bank

Chikavu Nyirenda, Senior Lecturer, Catholic University of Malawi (CUMIMA)

SESSION VI:

MARKET-BASED SOLUTIONS TO SERVE THE POOR

Commercial Banks: Challenges and Successes in Reaching the Poor

Andrew Mashanda, CEO, Standard Bank
presentation

Moderator: *Lyness Nkungula, Executive Director, Bankers Association of Malawi (BAM)*

Discussants:



Dalitso Kubalasa, Executive Director, Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)

Tyler Tappendorf, Research Associate, The Centre for Financial Regulation & Inclusion

SESSION VII:

SOCIAL DYNAMICS AND FINANCIAL DECISION MAKING

The Cost of Convenience? Transaction Costs, Bargaining Power, and Savings Account Use - Kenya

Aishwarya Lakshmi Ratan, Program Director, Innovations for Poverty Action
presentation - project summary - academic paper

Evaluating Village Savings and Loan Associations - Malawi, Uganda, and Ghana
Emily Cupito, Policy Manager, The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)

presentation - project summary - academic paper

Moderator: *Edward Chilima, Chief Business Development Officer, CDH Investment Bank*

Discussants:

Chikavu Nyirenda, Senior Lecturer, Catholic University of Malawi (CUMIMA)



Fumbani Nyangulu, Chief of Operations, Malawi Union of Savings and Credit Cooperatives (MUSCCO)

CLOSING REMARKS:

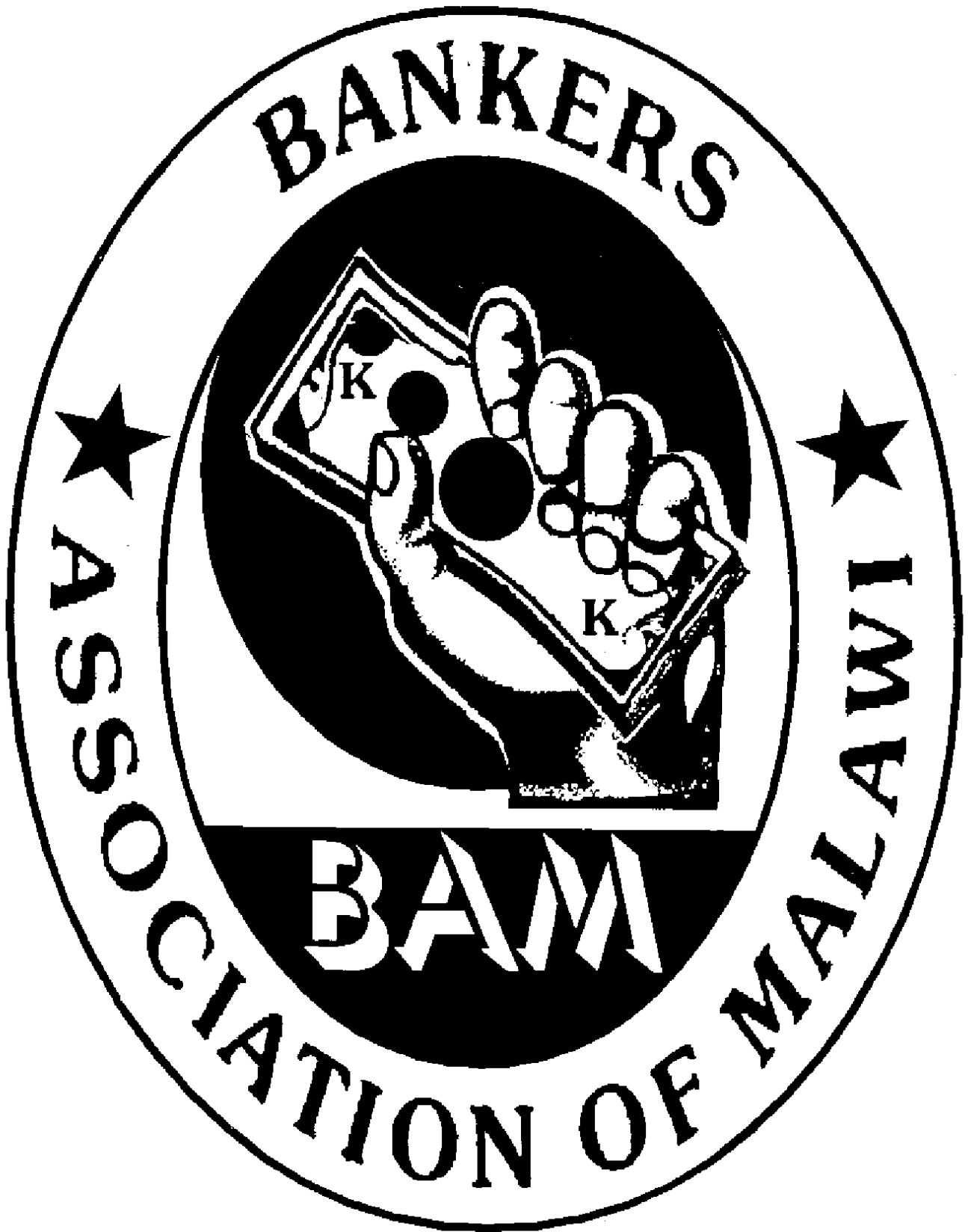
IMPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL INCLUSION POLICY IN MALAWI

Thomas Munthali, Country Director, Innovations for Poverty Action-Malawi

Lyness Nkungula, Executive Director, Bankers Association of Malawi

Ralph Tseka, Director of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development

This conference was organized in collaboration with the Bankers Association of Malawi:



The Yale Savings and Payments Research Fund at Innovations for Poverty Action, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and managed by IPA in collaboration with Yale University, supports rigorous research on innovations that enable the poor to increase their savings and make better use of enhanced payment channels. With a focus on engaging new technologies and digital delivery channels, such as mobile and agent banking, projects supported by the fund study which innovations work best in helping the poor better utilize financial products and new payment channels.

City

Lilongwe

Country

Malawi