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# The Newsletter

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MLF, Malawi

FONDATION

GRAMEEN CRÉDIT AGRICOLE

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## THE FOUNDATION'S KEY FIGURES AS OF NOVEMBER 2019

### ACTIVITY

38

COUNTRIES  
of intervention



92,5M€

OUTSTANDING  
PORTFOLIO



42%

PORTFOLIO  
in fragile countries

87%

Funding in  
LOCAL CURRENCY

### SOCIAL PERFORMANCE

69

MICROFINANCE  
INSTITUTIONS



12

SOCIAL BUSINESS  
ENTERPRISES



4,4M

BENEFICIARIES via  
the supported organisations



74%

microcredit beneficiaries live in  
RURAL AREAS



75%

microcredit beneficiaries are  
WOMEN



# Foreword

Éric Campos  
Managing Director  
Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation

We are pleased to present you the 34<sup>th</sup> issue of the Newsletter. It wraps up a very good year 2019 with an activity that allows us to reach a record 90 million euros outstanding portfolio.

We have signed numerous partnerships with microfinance institutions and invested in new countries such as Sierra Leone or South Africa. We have also set up a very good partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency to help refugees in Uganda to develop income-generating activities.

Finally, our Solidarity bankers programme is continuing its good trajectory. You will discover the testimony of Sarah Belbachir of Crédit Agricole S.A. who conducted an awareness and training mission on compliance rules in Morocco.

Enjoy the read



## News

Sida, UNHCR and the Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation join hands for financial inclusion of refugees in Uganda

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation launched a four-year programme to promote access to financial and non-financial services for refugees and host communities in Uganda.

More information



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Solidarity Cents 2019: CA employees committed to social entrepreneurship

Launched by the Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation, Crédit Agricole SA and CA Centre-Est, Solidarity Cents aims to finance entrepreneurship projects by mobilising Crédit Agricole employees. On November 4, Rania, a Syrian entrepreneur and refugee supported through the 2018 campaign, shared her experience at a launching event in Montrouge.

More information



[Interview] The role of microfinance in the face of climate change

On the occasion of the African Microfinance Week (SAM) in Ouagadougou, the FinDev portal interviewed Eric Campos, Managing Director of the Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation and Head of CSR of Crédit Agricole SA on the challenges of microfinance in the face of climate change.

More information



See all the news



IEWS  
FROM THE  
FIELD

## "Technical assistance helps to sustain our agricultural microcredits"



Discussion with Susan Chibanga, Executive Director of AMZ, microfinance institution in Zambia

This new section is an area dedicated to the partners of the Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation. Supported organisations, founders, technical and financial partners will share their actions, their projects, their work with the Foundation and the impact of their actions in the field. In this edition, you will discover the interview with Susan Chibanga, Executive Director of AMZ Zambia, a microfinance institution supported by the Foundation.

The Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation offers a technical assistance facility to help in the capacity building of institutions funded through various programmes. One of the flagship programmes is the Take-off Facility for agricultural and rural microfinance in Africa, launched in partnership with the French Development Agency (AFD) in 2013.

The Facility is a funding and technical assistance programme aimed at strengthening microfinance institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa. Since the launch of the second phase in 2017, 22 institutions have benefited from technical assistance missions, 91% of which are small institutions (portfolio under 10 million dollars) via 129 missions.

One of the organisations that received support is AMZ Zambia, a microfinance institution that provides microcredit, insurance and money transfer services to over 50,000 clients, mainly women (60%) and in rural areas (80%). Through technical assistance provided within the African Facility scheme, AMZ was able to develop an Agriculture Loan Evaluation System to enhance its credit assessment of its agriculture loans to small holder farmers. This is a new innovation in Zambia and in the region at large.

Spotlight on the programme's impact on AMZ's business performance with an interview with Susan Chibanga, the institution's Executive Director.

### What are AMZ Zambia's objectives and activities?

Susan Chibanga : AMZ Zambia was established by the Agora Group 8 years ago, and ever since we have been engaged in contributing to the economic well-being of the financially excluded and underserved rural populations. We aim to provide appropriate financial services: village group loans, agricultural loans, MSME loans, microinsurance and mobile money services. Agricultural loans and rural financing in general are expensive due to the need for service delivery at the doorstep of the customer. Our partners have contributed through the provision of technical assistance on several

projects including digitalization of our processes and the development of the Agriculture Loan Evaluation System (\*).

### How does technical assistance improve your microcredits?

With this technical assistance, we have created a tool to help us assess creditworthiness of our agriculture product customers: The Agriculture Loan Evaluation System. This is a resource developed with help from the Frankfurt School of Business. The tool makes it possible to determine the tenor and payment frequency of the loan to be granted by simulating the repayment models depending on the type of crop being grown by small and medium-sized farmers. We conducted a pilot project on corn, soybeans, tomatoes, watermelon and peanuts during an agricultural season. We now wish to deploy it more widely.

### With which priorities?

Going forward we plan to extend this product in all branches of our operation and also develop a mobile application for the tool. It will be relevant to combine it with our customers' credit ratings and more secure authentication systems: signature by stylus or even by facial recognition. Experience shows that such tools reduce the risk exposure for both our institution and our beneficiary clients. Technical assistance will help us improve the efficiency of our lending.

### What are AMZ's growth prospects?

We are already established in 6 of the 10 provinces of Zambia and we want to extend our activities to the whole country. We also hope to become a deposit-taking institution medium term, as part of our product diversification and expansion strategy. Our positioning in the territories will remain decisive, with a portfolio of 10 to 15% of the dedicated agriculture loan over the long term. A vast majority of our clients, even those accessing other products, are small farmers.

(\*) In order to develop rural and agricultural financing, AMZ Zambia works with national organizations (FSDZ, RUFEP) and international lenders (Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation, Oikocredit, FMO, Triple Jump, Global Partnership Lendahand), some of which, such as the Foundation, are also coordinators of technical assistance missions from which it benefits.



AMZ, Zambia

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## Solidarity Notebooks: A Solidarity banker in Morocco



Testimony of Sarah Belbachir,  
Solidarity banker,  
Project manager, Crédit Agricole S.A

Launched by the Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation and Crédit Agricole S.A. in June 2018, Solidarity banker is a skills-volunteering programme open to all Crédit Agricole Group employees for microfinance institutions and social businesses supported by the Foundation. Discover the testimony of Sarah Belbachir, Solidarity Banker of Crédit Agricole SA.

### Solidarity Banker... but, why?

The first time I spoke to my acquaintances about the Solidarity bankers programme, I was told «banker and solidarity ... isn't that a bit contradictory?» For many, these two words have a hard time resonating in unison. However, when I discovered Solidarity bankers, I met passionate people, sincere ambitions and concrete actions. Far from being fine words, the programme won me over by the values it inspires and its willingness to work directly on the ground.

So I immediately applied for a mission to strengthen the anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism financing system (AML-ATF) of Al Karama, an institution supported by the Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation and Crédit du Maroc that offers microloans to people excluded from the traditional banking system, in particular women.

Very soon after applying, I had confirmation that my application had been accepted. My mission therefore began in Montrouge, at the premises of the Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation for the preparation phase. With the help of the Foundation's team, we defined the schedule and the objectives. They introduced me to the main concepts of microfinance, and provided me with specific contextual elements on Al Karama, on the Moroccan economy and the microfinance sector in Morocco.

### Take-off to Rabat!

On July 13, I finally flew to Rabat. For ten days, I was going to devote myself to a topic that was part of my area of expertise, but in a different sector, in a different size structure and in a cultural context different from my daily life.

The first two days were devoted to raising awareness among top management on the risks linked to AML-ATF and how to prevent them. An AML-ATF training was



Al Karama, Morocco

organised by Crédit du Maroc teams within the framework of a skill-sharing patronage.

The discussions that followed with Al Karama's team allowed me to familiarise myself with the functioning of the institution, to identify the strengths in terms of AML-ATF and the elements needing strengthening.

The next step was to elaborate a more detailed action plan, so that Al Karama integrates its AML-ATF obligations gradually and according to priorities. In collaboration with Edouard Sers of the Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation, who joined me on this part of the mission, we thus defined precise recommendations, with one manager per action and a three-year implementation schedule. The challenge was to draw up a realistic and achievable action plan for Al Karama, in light of its resources and its workforce.

The action plan was very well received by the Al Karama Executive Committee to which we presented it on the last day of the mission. The next step is now in the hands of Al Karama, who will implement this roadmap.

### Unforgettable meetings

My mission was punctuated by two visits that marked my experience. Al Karama organised visits to agencies, one in urban areas and the other one in rural areas. The first took place in the city of Temara, on the outskirts of Rabat.

After some discussions with the branch manager and loan officers, we visited a client at his store of traditional Moroccan clothing. This first visit allowed me to better understand the functioning of a microcredit agency and to see how the procedures are actually applied in the field.

The second visit took place in Larache, in the north of Morocco. We first visited a rural agency which offers agricultural services to the inhabitants of the region. Then, we went to a watermelon and peanuts field to meet with a farmer who has received a microcredit to develop its activity with a larger field. I was able to confirm the impact of microcredit on the development of small farming and the strengthening of rural economies.

These meetings allowed me to understand microfinance as closely as possible and to see what concrete finance can achieve. But above all, these meetings have been an unforgettable human experience. This was just a taste ... I came back to Paris with the desire to get further involved. 

With my thanks to the Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation for its support throughout the mission, in particular Carolina Herrera, Edouard Sers, Eric Campos and Violette Cubier; to the teams of Al Karama and Crédit du Maroc for the welcome and the richness of our exchanges; to François Baudienville and Marie-Françoise Chabriol of the Compliance Department of Crédit Agricole S.A. for their support; to Lucie Brochard and Yann Dos Anjos of the Human Resources Department for the great video report on the mission; as well as Christelle Alexandre and Aurélie Cacciotti for contractual and logistical aspects.