

Asian, African government officials learn micro-finance skills at EDI

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TWENTY-TWO representatives, mostly government officials from 14 Asian and African countries concluded a six-week training program in various micro-finance and micro-enterprises at the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, Gandhinagar, on Thursday.

During their stay, the foreigners visited a number of Self-help groups and micro-finance organisations to see how these organisations worked. Besides, the visitors were also given material and taught how to source information concerning such initiatives.

Manoj Mishra, Associate

Senior Faculty at EDI said: "The countries they represent either do not have such systems in place or are at the beginning of implementing them. Although these are mainly government officials, it would help them."

Mishra said the participants were exposed to a number of models, such as the self-help group model, the Grameen Bank model of Bangladesh, micro-finance and micro-enterprises.

Mohammad Sala Udin, a representative of Dhaka said: "We are mainly from the developing and underdeveloped countries where people are struggling from poverty. We are here to learn how Indians are using micro-finance to help

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people deal with the poverty here. We have learned a lot about self-help groups which we had never heard of before."

Maximia, a Nigerian and one of the two NGO representatives, said: "We learned about development and coordination of finances with ethics; how to link micro-finance by linking them with major financial institutions."

Asked if the traditional structures of major banks would not choke micro-credit ventures, he replied, "When they see we are a reliable body, they will want to work with us."

Paulina, from Tanzania said the materials she received here will help her back home."

At a small valedictory function, EDI Director Dinesh Awasthi said: "The greatest achievement of people like Professor Yunus is that he proved the poor have a propensity to save and that they are credit-worthy. Our banking sector has yet to learn this."

A handwritten signature, possibly 'Dee', is written above a large, sweeping diagonal line that extends across the page. Below the line, there are some additional scribbles and a small mark resembling a checkmark or the number '15'.