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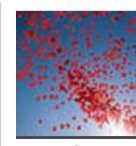
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Kiva's Microloans Underwriting Cockfighting in Peru

By **Lauren Smiley** Wednesday, Feb 27 2008

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At Kiva's Web site (www.kiva.org), you can plunk down a loan of \$25 to spot a farmer for pineapple seeds in **Nicaragua**, or help a fish seller buy cooking oil in **Kenya**. Started by a Bay Area couple inspired by **Muhammad Yunus**, the **Nobel Peace Prize**-winning pioneer of microcredit loans, the San Francisco-based site even has **Bill Clinton** touting it as a way to lift entrepreneurs in developing countries out of poverty for a minimal amount of money.

But one entrepreneur who hit the Kiva block on Feb. 15 has gotten some people squawking: **Sara Alva Vasquez Rodriguez** was asking for a \$700 loan to buy a freezer for her cockfighting ring in the Peruvian jungle. The posting features a smiling woman (whom we presume to be Rodriguez herself) cradling a doomed rooster in the coliseum she and her husband built behind their home. In three days, she had her loan. Complaining e-mails plunked into Kiva's customer service inbox, and an anonymous posting on www.indybay.org denounced the nonprofit's lack of an animal rights policy.

Kiva says Rodriguez' submission was red-flagged by one of the volunteers who look over the postings, but they let it go through after its Peruvian lending partner assured them it was kosher there. Animal-rights lawyers say that while "aiding and abetting" cockfighting is a misdemeanor in California punishable by up to a year in prison and a \$5,000 fine, and federal law prohibits shipping animals across state or country borders for fighting, it's



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