



REPORT

on a Seminar on Financial Capability and Asset Building Organised for Social Work Practitioners

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About

The University of Ghana Department of Social Work

The Department of Social Work at the University of Ghana is the premier social-work training institution in the republic. The department aims to prepare competent social workers through the provision of high-quality educational experiences at the undergraduate and graduate levels in order to enhance human wellbeing by supporting individuals, families and communities' capacity to address their needs.

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Cover: Participants in the Seminar on Financial Capability and Asset Building, Accra, 14 September 2023.

A Seminar on Financial Capability and Asset Building Organised for Social Work Practitioners

Augustina Naami, Mavis Dako-Gyeke, Abigail Adubea Mills, and Abena Ampomah

The Department of Social Work at the University of Ghana, in collaboration with the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, organised a day seminar on financial capability and asset building (FCAB) for selected social-work practitioners in Accra on the 14th of September 2023. The participants included twenty-five representatives from selected government and non-governmental organisations that supervise the fieldwork of social work students.



Dr. Augustina Naami
Head of Department of Social Work

In her welcome address, Dr. Augustina Naami, Head of the Department of Social Work, said that FCAB generally involves helping people to acquire the knowledge and skills required to make sound financial decisions for themselves and their families. As people who work with vulnerable populations, social work practitioners ought to be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to build the financial capacity of their low-income clients. The goals of the FCAB seminar were to equip practitioners to enable poor and vulnerable clients to understand and navigate the increasingly complex financial environment, minimise the risks they are exposed to, and maximise their opportunities for better living standards. Noting that the seminar on FCAB for social work practitioners was the first of its kind in Ghana, Dr. Naami applauded Professor David Ansong, the brain behind the FCAB Africa initiative, and his team from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, for supporting for the initiative.

Professor Mavis Dako-Gyeke, dean of the School of Social Sciences, established the FCAB initiative at the Department of Social Work during her term as head of department. In remarks to seminar participants, she noted that the FCAB seminar aligns with the mission of the School of Social Sciences and the University of Ghana, as well as with the Sustainable Development Goals and the African 2063 Agenda. She therefore highlighted the need for support for the FCAB initiative in the Department of Social Work.



Dr. David Ansong
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Faculty Director, Center for Social Development

The goal of the FCAB seminar was to equip practitioners to

- ✓ enable poor and vulnerable clients to understand and navigate the increasingly complex financial environment,
- ✓ minimise the risks they are exposed to,
- ✓ and maximise their opportunities for better living standards.

Professor David Ansong, who joined the seminar virtually, stated that the essence of the FCAB Africa initiative is to find ways to improve people’s financial stability and security in order to advance their social and economic well-being in sub-Saharan Africa. The FCAB initiative also seeks to provide practitioners with the competencies to assist their clients in building their financial capability and assets. He mentioned that the FCAB Africa initiative is operational in six African countries and at different stages. He applauded the Department of Social Work at the University of Ghana for moving the FCAB project forward.

Faculty members made three presentations on FCAB from papers they published in a special issue of *Global Social Welfare* (2022). The presentation by Professor Mavis Dako-Gyeke and her co-authors focused on incorporating FCAB within the social work curriculum in order to prepare social work students to address the financial needs of their clients. Professor Dako-Gyeke emphasised the need for training to build faculty capacity in teaching FCAB. She also stressed the need to develop understanding of (a) different ways in which FCAB could be integrated into the social work curriculum, (b) educational opportunities, and (c) curricular resources and ideas for infusing FCAB content into the existing curriculum.

Dr. Augustina Naami and Dr. Abigail Adubea Mills presented on the role of social workers in providing FCAB for vulnerable populations, using persons with disabilities as a case study. They argued that FCAB interventions for persons with disabilities are necessary to break the cycle of poverty among them and to change the narrative that they are the poorest of the poor. They argued that social workers have crucial roles to play in effecting such change.

The final presentation was given by Dr. Kingsley Saa-Touh Mort, currently the fieldwork coordinator in the Department of Social Work. He argued that building the capacity of field-education agencies to design and facilitate effective project-based learning opportunities for practicum students could equip a new cadre of professional social workers with FCAB competencies.

On behalf of the Department, Dr. Abena Ampomah announced that, as part of the FCAB Africa initiative, a baseline survey was being conducted in collaboration with the University of North Carolina School of Social Work. The survey seeks to understand ways to equip current and future social-work professionals with the FCAB competencies and skills necessary to build the financial resilience and capability of economically marginalised clients. The seminar ended with a call from the participants for further engagement with the Department of Social Work on the FCAB initiative. It was agreed that WhatsApp would be a useful platform for sharing information and engaging on FCAB issues, and a WhatsApp presence has since been created. Dr. Akosua Agyemang, in her closing remarks, said that the Department of Social Work at the University of Ghana is committed to promoting the FCAB Africa initiative through a range of activities involving social work faculty, practitioners, and students.



Dr. Abigail Adubea Mills
University of Ghana



Dr. Kingsley Saa-Touh Mort
University of Ghana



Social work practitioners participated in the Seminar on Financial Capability and Asset Building, which was hosted by the Department of Social Work at the University of Ghana in Accra on 14 September 2023.

FCAB Africa

Financial Capability & Asset Building in Africa (FCAB Africa) is a strategic partnership among a diverse set of university researchers, social-work and human-service practitioners, financial-service providers, policymakers, and donors. The initiative aims to increase financial capability and asset holding in order to improve financial stability and security of socially and financially marginalised populations in Africa, thereby strengthening their social and economic well-being.

The initiative will achieve this goal by equipping frontline human-service practitioners with basic financial knowledge and skills for their work with marginalized populations. Social workers, community-development practitioners, health-care providers, teachers, counselors, and other human-service professionals regularly serve such populations, which may benefit from financial guidance and coaching. The initiative will also work with financial-service providers to create a comprehensive financial-development program delivered through existing services, including fintech.

The FCAB Africa initiative is led by Dr. David Ansong, Dr. Moses Okumu, and Dr. Isaac Koomson in partnership with the Center for Social Development in the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis, which has defined this area of work and has elaborated it through extensive research and teaching in the United States and Asia.

Learn more about FCAB Africa at csd.wustl.edu/items/fcab-africa



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