



Center for Social Development

GEORGE WARREN BROWN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



Experiment in Ghana off to a Good Start

An impact assessment in Ghana is a key element of the YouthSave learning agenda. The assessment will investigate the impacts of Youth Savings Accounts (YSAs) on developmental outcomes for youth, as well as on their households' finances and well-being. Testing for financial and developmental impacts will provide the strongest evidence for or against the expansion of YSAs and their viability as a development tool.

In the impact assessment, some youth will be randomly assigned to an intervention group and others to a control group. The intervention group will receive active marketing and delivery of the YouthSave saving product and services and the control group will not. Data will be collected at the beginning and end of the assessment (baseline and endpoint) using a survey questionnaire.

The Institute of Statistical, Social, and Economic Research (ISSER), the YouthSave research partner in Ghana, began conducting the baseline survey in Ghana on May 17, 2011, following a full week of training and field simulation. The survey is taking place across eight administrative regions of Ghana where HFC Bank operates. Nine teams of over 40 well-trained and dedicated interviewers are conducting the interviews. Two teams of ISSER researchers are supervising.

In all, 6,000 youth and their parents will be interviewed. The youth participants come from 100 randomly selected Junior High Schools (50 schools comprise the treatment group and 50 the control group). Forty nine of the schools are located in rural areas, and 51 in low-income communities within urban areas. Careful planning has gone into the sampling of interviewees to ensure that YouthSave's interest in low-income youth is sustained without compromising the scientific rigor of the research.

The successful planning and launch of the impact survey in Ghana is a promising beginning to a large and complex research experiment that is expected to yield important data and insights into youth and saving in developing countries. This research success is based on mutual trust and healthy working relationships among CSD, ISSER, and HFC Bank. CSD will continue to work closely with its partners in Ghana as the experiment continues. We look forward to sharing updates on this work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is a product of the YouthSave Project. Supported by The MasterCard Foundation, YouthSave investigates the potential of savings accounts as a tool for youth development and financial inclusion in developing countries, by co-creating tailored, sustainable savings products with local financial institutions and assessing their performance and development outcomes with local researchers. The project is an initiative of the YouthSave Consortium, coordinated by Save the Children in partnership with the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis, the New America Foundation, and the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP).



CSD researcher David Ansong (center) with interviewers following a training session



Field supervisor Sharleeu Nettey collecting school administrative records



CSD and ISSER research teams