



2022 National Sales Champions with their bank executives. From left to right: Mrs. Maame Frimpomaa Nartey (Head, Business Development, BestPoint Savings and Loans); Ms. Agnes Dadzie (HR and Administrative Officer, Sefwiman Rural Bank PLC); Mr. Benjamin Afful-Eshun (CEO, Ahantaman Rural Bank PLC); Mr. Ernest Gyau (National Champion - 2nd Place); Mr. Obed Asiamah (National Champion - 1st Place); and Mr. Emmanuel A. Kissi Yeboah (National Champion - 3rd Place).

CapitalPlus Exchange Announces 2022 Sales Champion Challenge Winners

Changing Attitudes and Practices Increases Lending to Small Businesses

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE UNTIL 8AM on February 27, 2023 – Accra, Ghana. In recognition of their exceptional demonstration of new mindsets and practices to increase lending to small businesses, CapitalPlus Exchange (CapPlus) announced the winners of the 2022 Sales Champion Challenge, a competition among banks participating in the Financial Institution Resilience and STrengthening (FIRST+) program.

The FIRST+ program is an industry-wide collaboration with the Mastercard Foundation, Bank of Ghana, and the Ghana Microfinance Institution Network (GHAMFIN). The program aims to strengthen financial institutions to enable them to increase lending to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and create work opportunities for 60,000 Ghanaians, predominantly young women and men.

The Sales Champion Challenge is a key component of FIRST+'s intensive sales and marketing change initiative designed to increase financial institution lending to MSMEs, empowering businesses to grow and create meaningful jobs especially for youth and women. The Challenge is just one of many interventions to catalyze systemic changes that generate jobs by accelerating small business growth. The Sales Champion Challenge took place over the past three months, culminating in the National Sales Champion award ceremony this month.

CapPlus announced the following individuals as National Champions: First place - Mr. Obed Asiamah of Ahantaman, Rural Bank PLC; Second place - Mr. Ernest Gyau of Sefwiman Rural Bank PLC; and third place - Mr. Emmanuel A. Kissi Yeboah of Best Point Savings and Loans.

Also awarded were Mr. Joseph Kwasi Nyamekye of Akuapem Rural Bank PLC; Mr. Thomas Kwame Piedu of Fiaseman Rural Bank PLC; and Mr. Samuel Nyarko of Mumuadu Rural Bank PLC, who were named Sales Champions at their respective banks.

“CapPlus and GHAMFIN have delivered training and webinars on a variety of topics to over 600 financial institutions and 1,400 people through the FIRST+ program to enable them to help small businesses in their communities grow and thrive,” said Binyam Tadesse, CapPlus Program Lead for the FIRST+ program. “The enthusiasm of the bank trainees and their commitment to learning has been impressive. Seeing them translate learned skills into actual plans to expand lending, assures us that FIRST+ will have long-term impact through the adoption of new systems and mindset changes in support of MSME finance.”

FIRST+ catalyzes the systemic change needed to accelerate job creation by empowering small businesses and improving their ability to access credit. Through FIRST+, CapPlus addresses the underlying challenges that inhibit financial institutions from lending to MSMEs by partnering with them to change mindsets, implement proven methodologies and practices, and tailor services for women and other underserved segments.

GHAMFIN is a vital knowledge exchange center that delivers expertise through FIRST+ to its member financial institutions on how to scale finance to underserved MSMEs, women, and youth.

The Bank of Ghana provides leadership and strategic guidance to FIRST+ on governance issues and program implementation and serves as a member of the program’s steering committee. Mrs. Elsie Addo Awadzi, Second Deputy Governor of the Bank of Ghana, encouraged participating FIRST+ financial institutions to take appropriate steps to increase access to financial services and products for MSMEs, particularly those owned by women, to support economic growth and job security for Ghanaians.

“MSMEs make up 92 percent of Ghana’s businesses and account for 80 percent of all jobs and the Mastercard Foundation is fully committed to job creation for young people, especially women. When financial institutions extend finance to small businesses, those businesses create new jobs that youth and women can fill, they benefit existing employees, and strengthen local communities and the country as a whole by generating dignified work with reliable incomes,” stated Rosy Fynn, Country Director, at the Mastercard Foundation, Ghana.

The Sales Champion Challenge winners shared inspiring impact stories during their award ceremonies:

Mr. Obed Asiamah, First Place Champion, Ahantaman Rural Bank PLC, shares that “The FIRST+ training has helped to systematize our operations. We have become more deliberate with customer service and, more than ever, our focus is on how to make our customers feel cared for, as we serve them. This has impacted our loan volume, which has increased by 60 percent with 80 percent of the new loans made to women-led MSMEs.”

Mr. Ernest Gyau, Second Place Champion, Sefwiman Rural Bank PLC, observes that, “As a result of the FIRST+ sales and marketing training, our bank’s total credit portfolio grew by 6 percent between October

and December 2022. After the training, the bank moved all mobile bankers to the marketing unit to reorient them as marketing officers to reach more customers and improve sales. These are lasting changes in the bank's operations, expected to improve lending performance."

Mr. Emmanuel A. Kissi Yeboah, Third Place Champion, Best Point Savings and Loans, shares how "In two months, our loan volume has increased by 16 percent, after we implemented the strategies and plans we learned from the FIRST+ training. Between November and December, deposits increased by 8 percent, with about 80 percent of our SME loans with women."

Mr. Joseph Kwasi Nyamekye, Bank Champion, Akuapem Rural Bank PLC, recognizes how, "The FIRST+ training has changed the business environment for MSME owners through the 'Credit With Education' module that has been introduced at my bank. The training has also led to a mindset shift. We used to concentrate only on micro and salary loans, but now we can confidently boast of closing commercial loans and overdrafts for individuals and companies. Our loan portfolio has grown 20 percent over three months as a result of the training."



Mr. Joseph Kwasi Nyamekye holds his award plaque with fellow bank staff, Mr. Kingsley Kyere, CEO of Akuapem Rural Bank PLC (immediate left), and CapPlus representative Mr. Eric Quao (immediate right).

Mr. Thomas Kwame Piedu, Bank Champion, Fiaseman Rural Bank PLC, remembers that: "Right after the training I started intensifying selling to both new and existing customers using the referrals and cross-selling sales and marketing techniques that we learned during the training. As a branch we have attached urgency to the sales of the bank's products, and this has increased customers' confidence and trust in the bank. In just two months, I have ten new customers as a result of the training, eight of whom are women-led MSMEs. I will credit this success to my improved sales and marketing skills."



Mr. Samuel Asare (left), Head of Operations at Fiaseman Rural Bank PLC, congratulates Bank Champion Mr. Thomas Kwame Piedu.

Mr. Samuel Nyarko, Bank Champion, Mumuadu Rural Bank PLC, recounts how, “The selling skills and sales techniques I learned from the FIRST+ training in November 2022 have improved my sales. As a result of the training, we have set up a sales and marketing department which will ensure a sustained application of the new practices we have learned.”

Access all high-resolution photos [HERE](#).

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Mr. Samuel Nyarko (center) accepts his award plaque from CapPlus representative Mr. Eric Quao, with Mr. Francis Kotoko, CEO of Mumuadu Rural Bank PLC (far left) and fellow bank staff.

About CapPlus

[CapitalPlus Exchange](#) (CapPlus) delivers sustainable solutions for economic opportunity, job creation, asset building for social enterprises and women-owned businesses, and poverty alleviation. CapPlus equips financial institutions in emerging economies to deliver finance profitably for social impact. Established in 2004 in tandem with the ShoreCap equity fund, CapPlus also partners with impact investment funds to provide technical assistance alongside their capital investments in financial institutions. CapPlus clients have provided over \$13.2 billion in 13.4 million loans to MSMEs.

About GHAMFIN

[Ghana Microfinance Institutions Network \(GHAMFIN\)](#) is a network of non-bank financial institution associations, microfinance associations, and member financial institutions engaged in the provision of financial and non-financial services. Members include: the Association of Rural Banks (ARB) / ARB Apex Bank; Ghana Association of Savings and Loans Companies (GHASALC); Ghana Association of Microfinance Companies (GAMC); Ghana Cooperative Credit Union Association (CUA); Micro Credit Association, Ghana (MCAG); Ghana Association of Financial NGOs (GHASSFIN); and Ghana Cooperative Susu Collectors Association (GCSCA).

About The Mastercard Foundation

The Mastercard Foundation works with visionary organizations to enable young people in Africa and in Indigenous communities in Canada to access dignified and fulfilling work. It is one of the largest private foundations in the world with a mission to advance learning and promote financial inclusion to create an inclusive and equitable world. It was established in 2006 through the generosity of Mastercard when it became a public company. The Foundation is an independent organization and its policies, operations, and program decisions are determined by its own Board of Directors and senior leadership team. It is a registered Canadian charity with offices in Toronto, Kigali, Accra and Nairobi, Kampala, Lagos, Dakar, and Addis Ababa.

About Young Africa Works

Young Africa Works is the Mastercard Foundation’s strategy to enable 30 million young Africans, 70 percent of whom will be young women, to access dignified and fulfilling work. Africa will be home to the world’s largest workforce, with 375 million young people entering the job market by 2030. With the right skills, these young people will contribute to Africa’s global competitiveness and improve their lives and those of their communities. The Mastercard Foundation will implement Young Africa Works in 10 African countries in collaboration with governments, private sector, entrepreneurs, educators, and young people. The first phase of countries identified by the Mastercard Foundation are Rwanda, Kenya, Ghana, Senegal,

Ethiopia, Uganda, and Nigeria.

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