

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

FOURTH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL MICROFINANCE CONFERENCE

THEME: MICROFINANCE AND FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICA

15TH -16TH JANUARY, 2009

CALL FOR PAPERS

The theme for the January 2009 Microfinance Conference “Microfinance and Food Security in Africa” has been informed by the current global food crisis. Since the beginning of the year food riots have taken place in countries around the world. Microfinance as a development tool for reducing poverty and accelerating economic growth can become an important channel for ensuring food security. Microfinance can be used to increase food security through growth in agriculture output and productivity, reducing post harvest losses, improving storage as well distribution and marketing. The expectation of the Fourth Annual Conference is that policy makers, academics and practitioners will share ideas and strategise to promote self-sufficiency in food production in Africa

Potential presenters should submit an extended abstract of two pages to cover the following areas:

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Results
- Conclusions
- Recommendations

Authors can submit completed papers to the organisers. When making a submission please provide full name(s), affiliation(s), address(es), phone number(s), fax number(s) and email address(es).

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

The objectives of the 2009 Conference are to:

- Provide a platform for practitioners and academics and other stakeholders to share experiences and practical ways of using microfinance as a tool for ensuring food security in Africa
- Assess the role of the microfinance sub-sector in contributing to agricultural production and food security.

- Identify the linkages between microfinance and other sectors of the economy especially agriculture which is the back bone of African countries.
- Identify strategies for using microfinance to promote food security in Africa.

DESCRIPTION OF SUB-THEMES

The following sub-themes have been identified:

- Role of microfinance in agriculture
- Microfinance, food processing, distribution and marketing
- Promoting food sufficiency and security through microfinance
- Microfinance, gender and food security
- Microfinance interventions and household food coping mechanisms

Role of Microfinance in Agriculture

Microfinance has a key role to play in agriculture and its related activities. Among the areas identified are:

- The role of microfinance in promoting agriculture.
- Role of microfinance in reducing post-harvest losses.
- Extension services to agriculture through microfinance.
- Input supply to agriculture through microfinance institutions
- Value chain in agricultural financing.
- Approaches and strategies in wholesaling and retailing of microcredit to farmers.
- Use of microfinance in promoting all year farming including irrigation farming.
- The role of microfinance in land acquisition for farming (fishing, poultry and livestock).

Microfinance, food processing, distribution and marketing

Food processing, distribution and marketing pose serious challenges to African food growers. The issues to consider include:

- Micro leasing and food processing.
- Technical innovation in food processing, preservation and distribution.
- Services that microfinance can provide to local food distributors such as market women
- Providing storage facilities for food growers through microfinance.
- Providing market security for food growers in Africa.

Microfinance, Gender and Food security

In times of food crisis, it is women and children who suffer most. Since microfinance targets mostly women who are involved in food production in Africa, it is necessary to devote attention to these issues:

- Gender dynamics in food production and security.
- Microfinance facilities available to women and men engaged in agriculture
- Empowering women through credit with education.

Household Food Coping Mechanisms

The intention is to identify some of the spill over effects of specific microfinance interventions in food security at the household level such as food consumption strategies, types of food consumed during the year, house keeping arrangements etc.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Participants and organizers should meet the following deadlines:

Submission of Abstracts	30 th September, 2008
Registration Begins	1 st October, 2008
Notification of Acceptance	15 th October, 2008
Registration	15 th November, 2008
Submission of Full papers	30 th November, 2008
Dissemination of Conference Programme	15 th November, 2008
Closing of Registration	15 th November, 2008

REGISTRATION, FEEDING AND ACCOMMODATION

Registration

Registration and Feeding (during the programme only) GHC 200.00

Accommodation (Please find attached the accommodation type and their rates).

Participants are to indicate their preference of accommodation on the accommodation form. Participants who do not pay for accommodation will have to make their own arrangements for accommodation. More information about the 2009 International Conference can be obtained from the address below. All enquiries about the conference should be addressed to:

The Microfinance Conference Secretariat
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 Cape Coast, Ghana.
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