

THE RURAL BANKER



ISSUE 8
Q4, 2019



KINTAMPO RURAL BANK
CELEBRATES 40 YEARS
IN GRAND STYLE

MEET OUR 5TH BOARD
CHAIR



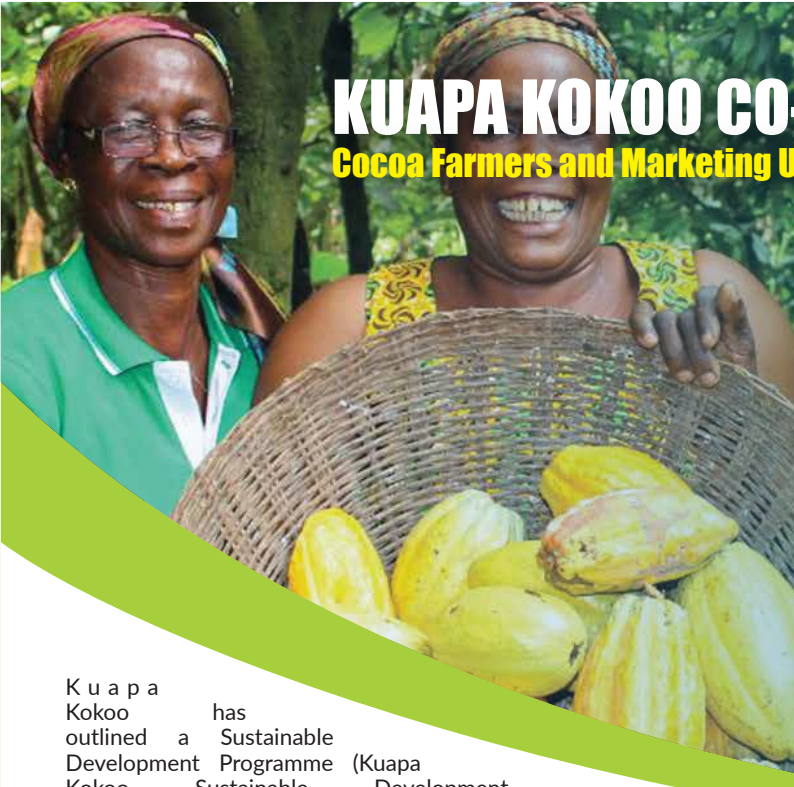
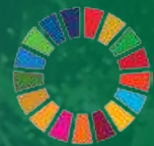
Still Counting

Feature:

REGULATORS TO HELP RETRIEVE LOCKED UP FUNDS OF RCBs

KUAPA KOKOO CO-OPERATIVE

Cocoa Farmers and Marketing Union Limited (KKFU)



Who we are

Kuapa Kokoo Co-operative Cocoa Farmers and Marketing Union Limited (KKFU) currently has committed membership of 100,000 cocoa farmers in six cocoa regions of Ghana who are producing an average of 150,000 metric tonnes of multiple certified cocoa annually. KKFU is under the leadership of Madam Fatima Ali, a 38-year old cocoa farmer as president. Kuapa Kokoo Limited (KKL) is a Licensed Buying Company owned by KKFU that mobilizes member's cocoa for Cocoa Board and the certified global market. Kuapa Kokoo undertakes social and economic interventions through the Kuapa Kokoo Sustainable Development Programme (KKSDP), a collaborative programme between KKFU and Millennium Promise Alliance (MPA) aimed at achieving the SDGs. KKSDP is anchored on the following key components:

Kuapa Kokoo has outlined a Sustainable Development Programme (Kuapa Kokoo Sustainable Development Programme) a collaborative programme between KKFU and Millennium Promise Alliance (MPA) aimed at developing the human capital and the productive capacities of the farmers in the creation of healthy and sustainable communities. KKSDP is anchored on the SDG framework for transforming farmers, farming and farmer communities.

The key components of KKSDP are:

Kuapa Kokoo/MPA TeleAgric

The Kuapa Kokoo/MPA TeleAgric seeks to bridge the communication gap between academia and best farm practices. It also aims at advancing Agricultural extension services in to the hard to reach farmers in Ghana. Leveraging on SDG 9 to support over 100,000 farmers with inputs and best farming practices systems in 6 local languages to aid easy communication with these farmers, Extension Officers and academia have been identified and trained to support these farmers through the TeleAgric Programme. Farmers dial in on their cell phones from their various farm locations to a TeleAgric Centre (call centre) in Kumasi, Ashanti region and speak to experienced Extension Officers and Disease and Pests Specialist about their planting, input application, disease and pests, soil and other growing challenges and receive the needed support in their own local languages. The TeleAgric programme is the first of its kind in Africa to provide real-time information to farmers and increase extension coverage.



Certified Under multiple certification schemes:



Supported by:



Back 2 School Project

The aim of this project is to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs on Nutrition, Education and Child Labour (SDGs 2, 4 & 8) by introducing innovative local interventions to increase access, enrolment, quality and retention of children in schools in 12 cocoa growing districts in Ghana. The project centers around ensuring accessible, affordable, quality education at the basic level; promoting functional literacy and numeracy; fostering community involvement in sustaining educational interventions and; attracting and retaining teachers in rural schools in the project districts. Etc.



Visit by Prince Charles of Wales

In November 2018, the prince of Wales, Prince Charles recognizing the quality of cocoa beans produced by Kuapa Kokoo visited one of the KuapaKokoo farms in Kona, a community in Ashanti Region. This was a great motivation to the members of the farmers union who trooped in solidarity.



Kuapa Kokoo. Papa! Paa!!

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Design & Print
Zebra Prints Limited
(A Loop Consulting Company)
No. 2C Klanaa Ave.
Adenta 0244775753

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EDITORIAL

Maximus Attah



THE RURAL BANKER IS TWO YEARS AND COUNTING...

It all began sometime in the year 2017 as an in-house internal newsletter, meant to serve the exclusive appetites of the employees of ARB Apex Bank. A few months later however, the scope of the newsletter was expanded to cover the peculiar needs of the entire Rural and Community Banks (RCBs) in Ghana.

Given that ARB Apex Bank is the 'mini' central bank and a major business facilitator of the RCBs in the country, we thought that even if we were going to produce a newsletter, it should be a tool that projects the internal affairs and concerns of all the member banks.

A team was quickly formed to review the original intent of the internal newsletter, which was initially called "Apex News." The team discovered that "Apex News" was too narrow in scope and would be perceived as an internal newsletter which would not go beyond the four walls of the ARB Apex Bank.

A new title, "*The Rural Banker*", was therefore proposed with a new project management module formulated to help kick start the innovative idea of starting a news magazine for the RCBs. Pilot interviews returned an overwhelming endorsement of the name because it was truly encompassing.

On April 28, 2018 at the Golden Tulip Hotel in Kumasi, **Issue # 1 of the quarterly magazine**, with an expanded mandate to tell the stories of the RCBs in a positive, compelling manner, was officially launched.

Since outdoor the maiden issue two years ago, "*The Rural Banker*" has consistently produced seven issues with the current **Issue # 8** being the latest.

Today, this quarterly magazine, which is duly registered as a newspaper with the National Media Commission (NMC) has become a veritable medium for selling RCBs' products, projecting the teams that manage our banks as well as educating the public on latest trends in the industry.

As Jeff Bezos, Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Amazon once said, "A brand for a company is like a reputation for a person. You earn reputation by trying to do hard things well."

The journey to this eighth edition has been challenging, particularly because of the wide network of our banks. To be able to reach those branches and write stories can be logistically straining.

We value every piece of information we churn out and therefore in every issue, we strive to make the contents more enchanting while making sure that we enhance the layout.

Minded by the drift in news consumption and the fact that young, educated, upwardly mobile and affluent members of the society these days prefer their news stories on the go, we have created a dedicated website, www.theruralbanker.com and added social media, to ensure that our esteemed readers receive news from the magazine relatively faster and in real time too.

The website is still being improved to enhance readability and user interactivity with our readers. The magazine thanks our esteemed readers and partners, particularly advertisers and all our RCBs for their support in the past two years.

The Editorial Board can indeed say that "*The Rural Banker*" has come to stay and we are still counting. We can count on all our partners for the many more years ahead and we also promise to continue bringing your riveting stories.

FROM THE MD'S DESK

A YEAR OF ACTION AND LEARNING



Kojo Mattah
Managing Director, ARB Apex Bank

On behalf of the Board, Management and Staff of the ARB Apex Bank,

I wish you Happy New Year. Now that we are a few days into the new year, it is good to look ahead and think about what this year may bring us. First, a quick look back at our major highlights.

2019 was quite a year for all of us in the banking industry. We have been through many developments, in

sometimes less than favourable circumstances.

Within the rural banking industry, we have also made some strides, notable amongst these are: Ghana Commodities Exchange (GCX) collaboration, with potential for ARB Apex Bank to provide over GHS50 million to RCBs to support the Warehouse Receipt Financing for farmers; CAGD Loan Product collaboration with WTD Consult; GLICO collaboration for Seed fund management for Licensed Buying Companies (LBCs).

There will be more collaborations on board this year which will inure

to the benefit of the RCBs in the generation of non-funded income, commissions and fees.

We have also outlined a number of activities to improve our systems, customer relations and stakeholder engagements. These would result in the upgrade of our Data Centre Infrastructure as well as core banking software from R14 to R19 and introduction of the much touted agency banking product. With the high rate of technological advancement, we must be running to be at the same place.

Within the Bank we have launched our new strategy to support our RCBs with their financial needs by providing advice when needed and flexibility where possible.

As this year is declared a year of learning, leadership development at all levels of the Bank and RCBs will be our priority. We have structured our 2020 training calendar to adequately support the training needs of our RCBs. However, we will not hesitate to add other developmental programmes to build the capacity of the staff in the rural banking industry.

Everything rises and falls on leadership. It is, therefore, important for us to use our time wisely, take responsibility for our personal development and move forward as decisively and swiftly

▶▶ Pg. 8



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as we can in 2020.

That will only be possible with your continued dedication and support. We need to continue to work together in order to create a successful rural banking industry.

I encourage all of us in our decision making to evaluate not only what is best for our individual banks, but also the potential impact on the rural banking industry as a whole.

The past few years have had a significant impact on all of us, but I would like to thank all stakeholders for your immense support and dedication during these challenging times. We could not have been where we are now without such a tremendous level of endorsement.

The year ahead will bring its own challenges but I am sure by working together, keeping focus on our priorities and putting our

customers first we can realise our ambitions. These will certainly continue to be my priorities and I am convinced I can count on you to do the same.

It is my prayer that 2020 will be the best year yet for us all.

We wish you a healthy and successful 2020. ■

The past few years have had a significant impact on all of us, but I would like to thank all stakeholders for your immense support and dedication during these challenging times.

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KINTAMPO RURAL BANK CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY IN GRAND STYLE

Rural banking was birthed in Ghana over four decades ago. At the time, as it still is in Ghana, almost every developmental intervention programme was piloted or centred in the south of the country. It was believed the economy of southern Ghana was more productive and returned attractive benefits to investors.

That theory might have also informed and supported the introduction of rural banking in the country, leading to the first Rural Bank being established at Agona Nyakrom in the Central Region. As faith may have it, three years later, Kintampo Rural Bank was also born in the Bono East Region (the then Brong Ahafo Region), with excitement.

The story of Kintampo Rural Bank (KRB) was, for many years to come, a mixed bag. It experienced its highs and lows, and in the early 2000s, had to be rescued through an intervention by the Bank of Ghana (BoG).

Kintampo Rural Bank, bounced back from the restructuring and is today, one of the strong Rural and Community Banks (RCBs) in the country.

Strong and efficient at 40

It was therefore heartwarming to witness the pomp and celebration of the 40th anniversary activities of the Bank, which were climaxed at the campus of the College of Nursing and Wellbeing at Kintampo on Saturday, December 14, 2019.

According to the Efficiency Monitoring Unit (EMU) Report of ARB Apex Bank for Q3 2019, Kintampo Rural Bank was among the Top Five Rural Banks in the country.

Mr Kojo Mattah, Managing Director of ARB Apex Bank noted that, “the turnaround story of Kintampo Rural Bank reveals that despite all the challenges faced by rural banks in the country, with the right support and confidence from shareholders and customers, all our banks can become stronger and be able to provide enhanced services to customers and the general public.”

Speaking at the climax of the 40th Anniversary celebrations at Kintampo, Mr Mattah extolled the Bono East Region for hosting the food basket

of the country. He stated that, “The Bono East Region is the food basket of the country and holds vast tracks of arable commercial lands, suitable for the cultivation of maize, vegetables, traditional and non-traditional cash crops, which can help boost the export-led agenda of the Government.”



Kojo Mattah
MD, ARB Apex Bank



Dignitaries helping to cut the anniversary cake

Mr Mattah assured that, “with support from ARB Apex Bank, Kintampo Rural Bank stands ready to support farmers, marketers and all the players in the Agriculture value chain in the Bono East Region.”

He pledged the full support of ARB Apex Bank and the RCBs “for actors in the four (4) landmark Government initiatives, namely; Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ), Planting for Exports and Rural Development (PERD), Rearing for Food and Jobs (RFJ), and One District One Factory (1D1F). ARB Apex Bank, through the RCBs would finance those engaged in these projects with the needed credit lines to enhance good returns for our farmers and rural dwellers in particular.”

Mr Mattah revealed that ARB Apex Bank and RCBs had partnered with the Ghana Commodity Exchange (GCX) to assure and guarantee farmers and others engaged in the Agriculture value chain of ready markets and returns on their investments.

He touted eight banks which were already working with the GCX in the regions, namely: Adansi Rural Bank, Afram Community Bank, Bonzali

Rural Bank, Builsa Community Bank (Bucu-Bank), Nandom Rural Bank, Sekyedumase Rural Bank, Sekyere Rural Bank, and Sonzelle Rural Bank.

He added that, the days when fresh agricultural produce were either left at the farms to rot, or farmers succumbed to traders who bought the farm produce cheaply at the farm gates are over.”

“The Ghanaian farmer can now smile, knowing that there is a good reward for his/her toil,” he stated.

He invited other RCBs to join the GCX, noting that the benefits, to RCBs, farmers, and the economy at large, were enormous.

Mr Emmanuel Asiedu-Mante calls for effective risk management

Touted as a key architect for the positive turnaround story of Kintampo Rural Bank, Mr Emmanuel Asiedu-Mante who was the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank from 2001 to 2006, put together a “Marshall Plan” for the Bank.

He put together a Management Team and provided the needed capital to

revive the ailing Bank at the time. The revival plans yielded positive results and the Bank has since returned to winning ways and ranks amongst the top five in the industry.

Mr Asiedu-Mante who was the guest of honour for the event, noted that banking business in the country had “become very competitive and risky.” As a result, the role of the board of directors had become even more paramount, with some of its core functions being, to monitor and



Emmanuel Asiedu-Mante
Former Deputy Governor, BOG



Hon Yaw Effah-Baafi
Board Chairman, Kintampo Rural Bank

implement systems and activities that enhance corporate performance.

“This means determining the optimal level of risk and speedily addressing challenges that might arise,” Mr Asiedu-Mante stated.

He revealed that because of the innovations accompanying the advancement in information and communication technologies (ICTs), “the bank would no doubt be assuming additional risks and challenges.”

To minimize these risks, he added, “There is the need for effective risk management. I, therefore, advise that the board should institute a risk management policy to identify, assess, monitor and control operational, reputational and credit risks, among others.”

He called on Kintampo Rural Bank to institute a cyber-security policy that would ensure that risks associated with the implementation of ICT products are reduced to the barest minimum, adding that, “cyber-security is not just a matter of neutralizing threats, it is also a matter of data privacy.”

Mr Asiedu-Mante was decorated with an elegant African Kente cloth, a citation, and a memento for his strategic role in helping to turn around the fortunes of the Bank.

Applause to founding fathers

Hon Yaw Effah-Baafi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bank, eulogized the founding fathers of

the Bank for laying the foundations of a successful organization which is providing employment and livelihoods for many households in Kintampo and beyond.

He commended Mr Paul Kwadwo Badu, first Chairman of the Board of Directors, Mr Emmanuel Kwaku Donkor, First Vice-Chairman, and other members such as Messrs Thomas Kofi Manu, Peter Kwabena Nyamekye, James Effah, Yaw Twumasi, Joseph Kwasi Fah, Kwabena Mensah, George Kwaku Adamu, and Alfred A. Adama, “for their hard work and tenacity.”

Hon Effah-Baafi stated that despite “their minimal formal educational backgrounds, the founding fathers saw the vision of establishing a viable Bank for the people of Kintampo.”

He said the theme for the 40th Anniversary celebrations: “**40 Years of Service with Commitment and Integrity,**” was carefully selected to resonate with the brand positioning of the Bank, which is, “**Service to Humanity.**”

Hon Effah-Baafi pledged the commitment of the Board of Directors and Management to maintain the Bank as the pride of the region.

Bono East Regional Minister showers praise

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr Kofi Amoakohene, Bono East Regional Minister, revealed that over the past few years, many banks in the country had failed, adding that “it is a great

honour that Kintampo Rural Bank is celebrating its 40th anniversary.”

Mr Amoakohene said the bank had survived many challenges in the past and that it was therefore worthy to celebrate its 40th year in grand style. He said he was happy that Kintampo Rural bank currently ranked among the best rural banks in the country.

He noted that “the adage; life begins at forty”, was an indication that the bank was about to begin another journey



Kofi Amoakohene
Bono East Regional Minister

of success, and tasked shareholders, customers, directors, management, and staff of the bank to give off their best “to ensure that the bank becomes even more profitable in the future.”

Testimonials from customers

As part of the celebrations, *The Rural Banker* team was there and spoke to some customers of the Bank who also graced the 40th anniversary celebrations. Below are excerpts of the interviews with some excited customers of the Bank.

Tuobodom Senior High Technical School

An excited Mr Charles Agyapong, Headmaster of Tuobodom Senior High School, was the first to speak to *The Rural Banker*.

Tuobodom Senior High Technical School has been a corporate customer of the Bank for more than ten years and Mr Agyapong noted that when he was promoted to Headmaster of the School and they were celebrating their



Charles Agyapong
Headmaster, Tuobodom SHS

20th Anniversary in 2018, “the school appealed to Kintampo Rural Bank and they came to our aid and provided support for us to erect a wall around the School.”

“They gave us 50 bags of cement and that went a long way in helping us to build a wall to ensure security for the students and teachers on the campus of the school,” Mr Agyapong said. He added that, on the personal level, when he was undertaking his Master’s degree studies, “the Bank advanced a loan to me to help complete my programme.”

Mr Agyapong revealed that the Bank was still supporting him in his PhD programme, and commended the Bank for supporting the school and individuals with bespoke products. He said the 40th Anniversary was a great milestone as the Bank had taken the lead in banking activities in the whole area.

He said he is looking forward for more support and collaborations between the Bank and the school.

C-Mandela Ventures

Mr Kofi Kwaw Sarpong, Chief Executive Officer of C-Mandela Ventures Limited, revealed that his company, which is a major distributor of soft drinks and provisions, started operating with the Bank over a year ago.

According to him, C-Mandela Ventures Limited operates with only Kintampo Rural Bank, because of their

commitment to ensuring that the company flourishes.

“We were dealing with other banks before we came to Kintampo Rural



Kofi Kwaw Sarpong
CEO, C-Mandela Ventures Limited

Bank. We however realized that hopping from bank to bank would not help us. [Therefore] at the moment, we bank with only Kintampo Rural Bank, we don’t have any other bankers,” he added.

Nyame Bekyere Tomato Sellers’ Association

Representatives of this progressive group, excited at the success of the Bank, were part of scores of customers who participated in the celebrations. According to Madam Araba Arthur, leader of the group, Nyame Bekyere Tomato Sellers’ Association had been banking with the bank for more than fifteen years.

She said the group’s success is wholly attributable to the help received from the bank over the years. She revealed

that the bank has designed flexible facilities to allow them operate their businesses and derive the needed profits.

Madam Arthur lauded Management of the bank for the excellent customer service and business support provided to the group over the years.

She said the bank was also always ready to restructure facilities for them on occasions when some of them could not repay their loans on schedule.

Nyame Bekyere Tomato Sellers’ Association has a membership of 20 and is based at Kintampo in the Bono East Region.

A member of the group who pleaded anonymity, stated that her two sons, who currently work with the bank, could not have completed their education if Kintampo Rural Bank had not supported her.

She praised the Bank for the numerous corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects in the communities in which they operate.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES OF THE BANK

Overview

The banking industry in Ghana has become highly competitive as a result of the licensing of new banks and other non-bank financial institutions. Customers on the other hand, have now become more enlightened and sophisticated. Financial institutions which want to stay ahead of the competition therefore need to roll out customer centric and competitive products.



Nyame Bekyere Tomato Sellers’ Association



Head Office of Kintampo Rural Bank at Kintampo

Kintampo Rural Bank has been leading the way in designing new products and re-packing existing products to meet the growing needs of its customers. Below are some of their products and their features:

DEPOSIT PRODUCTS

- a) Current Account
- b) Savings account
- c) Susu savings

This is a savings product for busy customers who do not want to visit the banking halls. It gives such customers a flexibility to save through the bank's mobile banking agents who visit the customers to pick up their daily 'susu' savings.

d) Mmofra Mpontuo Account

This account gives low income earning customers or high net worth individuals with excess cash to set aside some savings towards the education of their children. Customers are assured of adequate financial packages for the child in case the parent/guardian dies or becomes permanently disabled.

e) Efie Ne Fie account

Efie ne fie account is a specially designed account, which enables Ghanaians living abroad (especially those living in Libya) or for those living outside their hometowns to control their finances back home. This account must be operated by individuals in their personal capacity.

f) Fixed Deposit Account

FDA is an investment product for the customer with a longer investment time horizon. It is an investment of a fixed amount for a fixed period, for example, 30, 91, 182 or 365 days and at a predetermined fixed interest rate.

g) Me Panin fie so Anidasoo (Retirement Benefit Account)

This is a specially designed product for the informal sector, who constitutes majority of the working populace and are willing to voluntarily contribute periodically towards their old age, which the traditional pension scheme does not cater for.

LOAN PRODUCTS

A) Fellowship Box (Church Development Account)

Church development account is a specially designed account for churches, which provides them with active cash management, cash handling, funds management and personalized financial services and also to assist churches with funds when most needed.

b) Overdraft Facility (Commercial)

This is a short-term facility offered to Sole Proprietors, Partnerships and

Companies to boost working capital.

c) Adaduanan Bosia (Overdraft Facility for Salaried workers)

This is a personal overdraft facility designed for salaried workers whose salaries are paid through their account at KRB.

d) Salary loan

This is a loan offered to salaried employees, mostly government workers, whose mode of salary payment is through monthly remittance of salary to a current account held at Kintampo Rural Bank.

e) 'Susu' loan

It is a microfinance product that seeks to reduce drudgery by ensuring that Mobile Bankers get to the door-steps of 'Susu' contributors to make daily cash collections and deposit them in their individual 'Susu' account at the bank.

This is a product designed to encourage small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) to organise themselves in groups to acquire loans to expand their business as well as encourage them to save.

f) Dwadipa Bosia (Microfinance Loan for Individual)

This is a specially designed product to meet traders who do not need a substantial amount to expand their business, and also to meet their short term financial obligations.

g) Drive Your Own Car Loan

This is a loan product geared towards assisting commercial drivers under a recognised union who do not own vehicles as well as those who would like to increase their fleet of vehicles.

h) Abusuapanin Anidasoo (Funeral Loan)

This product is designed for families who have lost their family member and need financial assistance.



KINTAMPO RURAL BANK LTD.
Service to humanity

i) Agro Loans

This is a loan product specially designed to meet the needs of farmers and others engaged in the agricultural value chain.

MONEY TRANSFER AND REMITTANCES

Western Union Money Transfer

This money transfer service is an international money transfer service, which enables individuals all over the world, send and receive money quickly and conveniently. KRB provides a convenient and reliable way of receiving funds from family, friends and loved ones.

Apexlink Domestic Money Transfer

Apexlink is a domestic funds transfer product, which enables the transfer of funds from one community to another using the network of rural/community banks. This product has proved to be safe, reliable and convenient to traders, businessmen etc.

Walk into any Kintampo Rural Bank Agency and transfer/receive money to/from any village, town or city in Ghana. It would be received within a matter of minutes.

Martin Mensah is the helmsman

Mr Martin Mensah leads the team at Kintampo Rural Bank and has been General Manager since 2012. He has acquitted himself very well and endeared himself to the Shareholders, Board, Management, Staff and Customers of the Bank.

Work experience

Mr Martin Mensah joined Kintampo Rural Bank as a Clerk in 1991. He



Martin Mensah
General Manager, Kintampo Rural Bank

rose through the ranks to become the General Manager of the Bank in January, 2012. He has been in the rural banking industry for twenty-eight (28) years and has undergone several refresher courses geared towards sharpening his managerial and leadership skills. Mr Mensah by his calm, gentle but strict disposition has been able to bring a lot of improvements in the working attitude of both Management and Staff of the bank, which have resulted in the bank's current operational status.

Education

Martin began his Secondary education

at Kintampo Secondary School. He proceeded to Kumasi Polytechnic (now Kumasi Technical University) for a Diploma in Accounting. He obtained a Bachelor of Science (Accounting with Computing) from the Garden City University College, Kumasi, and is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Accounting and Finance at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi.

Family Life

He is married and is blessed with five sons.

Hobbies and Interest

He likes watching games, especially football and wrestling. He also loves listening to Business and Financial news.

Editor's note:

A team from *The Rural Banker* was on the grounds at Kintampo, to observe the grand celebration of the 40th anniversary of the bank. The celebration drew people from all walks of life, who wanted to be part of the important history. ■



Staff of Kintampo Rural Bank

SOME PICTURES FROM THE ANNIVERSARY CEREMONY



MORE PICTURES FROM THE ANNIVERSARY CEREMONY



STARTING THE 2020 FINANCIAL YEAR ON A POSITIVE NOTE

Joseph Akossey

Overview

The 2019 financial year has ended and 2020 financial year has just begun.

The year 2019 was a turbulent one for all players in the rural banking industry because the financial sector reforms which led to the revocation of licenses of some Microfinance Companies, Savings and Loans Companies, Finance Houses as well as Investment Companies took a heavy toll on Rural and Community Banks (RCBs).

It is worth mentioning that in 2019, there were some malicious messages that circulated on social media platforms, purportedly meant to discredit RCBs.

The malicious messages no doubt had adverse effects on the RCBs subsector as some of them experienced heavy panic withdrawals. Despite the initial challenges, the industry was able to weather the storm.

The RCBs have bounced back and are doing extremely well in promoting financial inclusion among the rural poor, vulnerable and marginalized in the economy

of Ghana. According to figures from ARB Apex Bank, the RCBs have over 6.5 million customers which is more than the customers of all the 23 universal banks combined.

As we begin the 2020 financial year, I would like to urge all the 144 RCBs to remain focused and not to allow the challenges they encountered in 2019 to overwhelm or sidetrack them. The banks should open their eyes to the numerous opportunities in their catchment areas and strategize to exploit them. They should not be bogged down by any external threats or inherent industry weaknesses.

To start off year 2020 on a good note, the RCBs should explore the following strategies:

1. Review strategies

Strategies are prone to strategic wear out. There is therefore a need for periodic reviews. Strategic wear out occurs when a strategy is no longer effective in helping organizations such as the RCBs to achieve their objectives and more importantly, improve on their key performance indicators (KPIs). It occurs because of changes in customer needs, competition, changes in technology, and changes in regulation among others. As we begin the year, individual RCBs should engage management staff who are qualified, experienced and talented to help craft winning strategies, to replace ineffective ones so as to impact positively on their KPIs. It should be emphasized that there is no everlasting strategy which can stand the test of time. The



Joseph Akossey
Head, Proven Trusted Solutions

board and management of RCBs should therefore keep their strategies under constant review.

2. Be aggressive

The banking space is evolving at a faster rate due to new developments and trends in both the internal and external environment. 'Passive banking', where banks expect customers to walk into their comfortable banking halls to transact business such as making deposits, open new accounts, apply for credit, etc., are becoming a thing of the past.

Passive banking has shifted to aggressive banking whereby bank employees aggressively chase after the customers.

According to the Global Financial Index Report (2017) published by the World

Bank, access to formal financial services in Ghana grew from 40.5 percent in 2014 to 57.7 percent in 2017. Per this report over 40 percent of Ghanaians lack access to formal financial services. This implies that there is a huge gap in the financial space in Ghana to be filled by the RCBs.

Moreover, the collapse of a large number of Microfinance Companies and some leading Savings and Loans Companies, have increased the unbanked and the under banked segments of the society. RCBs should therefore be more aggressive at winning more customers to help grow their deposits and asset base. I would like to urge management of RCBs to reorient their employees on the current trends in banking, which requires aggressiveness. It is gratifying to acknowledge that some of the banks are doing very well in that regard.

3. Be ambitious

The banks should also be ambitious in growing their KPIs. This means that RCBs should dream big and should not be content with the little gains they have been making. Some RCBs have been in existence for over three decades but have not been able to build a significant asset base. This could partly be attributed to the fact that those banks are not pushing themselves hard enough. They are comfortable with the current situation. Now is the time to wake up the sleeping giants in all our banks.

I would like to urge the top players in the rural banking industry such as Amenfiman, Atwima Kwanwoma, Ahantaman, Fiaseman, Adansi, Manya Krobo, Kintampo, among others not to fall into the complacency trap.

All RCBs should be ambitious and strive to improve on their financial soundness indicators. Top performing RCBs should use the Universal Banks as competitive benchmarks in order to be motivated to work harder and improve on their performance.

Our RCBs must grow bigger and be able to mark landmark acquisitions in the future, as it was in Kenya, where a Credit Union was able to acquire a bank.

We should be looking forward to a time whereby a top performing rural bank will do the same.

4. Give priority to customer satisfaction

RCBs exist purposely to serve customers. Staff of RCBs derive their paycheques from customers. Hence, customer satisfaction should be their prime concern. Peter F. Drucker argued that the purpose of business is to create and retain satisfied customers. RCBs should therefore be customer oriented and desist from short term profit orientation. Customer satisfaction results in numerous benefits, such as positive word of mouth which leads to repeat business, competitive advantage, growth in deposit mobilization, increase in share of wallet among others.

5. Improve asset quality

The key parameter for measuring asset quality of banks is non-performing loans (NPL) ratio. RCBs should work hard to improve on their NPL ratios so as to improve on their profitability.

To improve on asset quality, individual RCBs should strengthen their Credit Risk assessment and also intensify loan recovery efforts. Staff at the Credit Departments should be provided

with enhanced training on Credit Administration to help upgrade their skills and knowledge. Furthermore, RCBs should recalibrate existing lending models to appropriately deal with high levels of NPLs. In view of the challenges facing fund management companies and the reducing yield on Government Treasury Bills, granting of loans has become the most profitable assets. However, that will depend on the quality of the assets created because bad loans can erode profitability.

6. Reduce investment in non-earning assets

Non-earning assets of banks consist of both fixed assets and other assets. Investment in property, plant and equipment are important since some can be converted to liquid assets in challenging times. It is however important that RCBs avoid investing a large chunk of their funds into fixed assets because it has potential adverse effects on liquidity.

It can also have adverse effects on profitability because of the high cost of depreciation and the fact that it reduces the quantum of earning assets, which can in essence affect reserves and for that matter the capital adequacy ratio.





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Some RCBs also tend to invest in huge sums in stationery stock. This deprives them of earning income. RCBs should ensure effective stock management by taking into account appropriate maximum levels of stock to keep and more importantly, their stationery re-order levels. In 2018 financial year, one rural bank had stationery stock balance of GHS575,433 while another had GHS891,704.

There is no doubt that, the figures mentioned above are scary and have the tendency to affect profitability negatively since they will not directly contribute to income.

7. Invest in quality marketing programmes

To improve performance in the year 2020 and beyond, RCBs should invest in quality marketing programmes such as marketing communications in the form of advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations and employee training with a view to influencing customer mindset. This is likely to translate into favourable market performance such as growth in deposits, attraction of new customers, increase in market share and customer share of wallet, thereby impacting on positive shareholder value.

8. Remain well-capitalized

Currently, the minimum paid-up capital of RCBs is GHS1.0 million Ghana Cedis. It is however advisable that RCBs work harder to grow their capital beyond the minimum regulatory requirement. This is because adequate capital can help to absorb shocks, undertake effective financial intermediation, and engender customer and investor confidence. To grow share capital, RCBs should adopt aggressive share mobilization strategies in their respective communities. Some major shareholders are reluctant to encourage new shareholders to purchase

new shares for fear of dilution in their shareholding. Such attitude does not promote resilient and robust rural banking.

Scores of RCBs have the tradition of transferring funds from income surplus to grow their stated capital.

It is recommended that existing shareholders buy more shares, since this brings in fresh and extra capital, thereby increasing shareholders' funds and also improves the capital adequacy ratio.

Transferring funds from the income surplus to stated capital in the form of bonus shares attracts 8 percent tax from the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA).

Related to the need to grow stated capital is that, RCBs should improve on their capital adequacy ratio. To achieve this, management should improve on operational efficiency so as to improve on profitability in order to grow their reserves. The Capital Risk Directive (CRD) of Basel 203 framework introduced in January 2019 required CAR of 13 percent. Hence, RCBs should always aim at improving their CAR beyond the minimum regulatory benchmark of 10 percent.

CONCLUSION

So far the article has discussed extensively several measures that RCBs could put in place to start off the year 2020 on good note. It is the author's fervent desire that management of RCBs will apply some of the points advanced in this piece in order to end the year with improved results ■



To improve performance in the year 2020 and beyond, RCBs should invest in quality marketing programmes such as marketing communications in the form of advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations and employee training with a view to influencing customer mindset.



Author

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ADA RURAL BANK – supporting our untapped salt industry

OVERVIEW

Sodium Chloride with the chemical symbol NaCl, popularly called common salt is a vital economic mineral, which occurs in large reserves and is believed to be deposited in substantial quantities in at least five continents of the world. According to Affam and Asamoah (2011), common salt “is among the five major chemicals, which form the backbone of the chemical industry, including petroleum”.

Ghana is known to have large deposits of this mineral in Dagme East, Dagme West, Weija, Keta, Ketu, Gomoa (Ewutu and Effutu), Mfantseman and Ahanta areas. Experts believe that Ghana has a potential annual salt production capacity of 2.2 million tonnes.

This capacity, if strategically exploited, could represent another potential revenue source from Nigerian buyers who currently import several metric tonnes from Brazil to support the country’s crude oil industry.

Since the discovery of crude oil in Ghana in 2007 and commencement of commercial production in 2010, the country continues to discover substantial

oil reserves. This means, Ghana itself would need this “white gold” in the management of its growing petroleum sector. Ada is located in the Ada East District, a few hours’ drive to the east of the capital Accra, and is very strategic to the salt-mining and hospitality industries in Ghana.

The Bank

Incorporated on November 27, 1981, Ada Rural Bank commenced business on August 13, 1982, with an initial customer account opening by Nene Kabu Abram Akuaku II, Paramount Chief of Ada Traditional Area.

Its main mission is “to facilitate economic development in its catchment areas by inculcating the habit of savings in the inhabitants”, and it has over the years, succeeded in mobilizing savings and providing affordable credit to a broad segment of people in the area.

Ada Rural Bank has aggressively pursued its mandate over the years by “bringing banking solutions to the doorsteps of existing and potential customers and in the process, brought great relief to farmers, fisher folks, salaried workers and persons

engaged in the salt mining business.”

It has maintained its focus through the provision of microfinance, savings, investments, as well as by offering advisory services to individuals, small-and-medium sized enterprises in and around Ada.

Mr Theophilus Ofori McCarthy, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the bank indicated that “the bank also differs from universal banks by targeting the semi-banked and un-banked members of society.”

According to Mr McCarthy, “Ada Rural Bank is unique because it employs more socially responsible strategies in its dealings with customers and the society in general.”

He noted that the bank is respected amongst salaried workers because “it provides them with short and medium term credit at very reasonable terms.”

It also facilitates the payment of school fees and provides other forms of educational support to parents whose wards have

▶▶ Pg. 24



Theophilus McCarthy
Chief Executive Officer of Ada Rural Bank



Theophilus McCarthy, CEO (left) with **David Narh Sabbah**, Board Chairman of Ada Rural Bank

gained admission into second cycle schools in any part of the country.

“Under certain circumstances, the bank provides financial support to its customers towards the payment of hospital bills,” Mr McCarthy added.

He stressed that, “the bank’s impact as a rural financial institution is etched in the catchy slogan, ‘**ohio lo? Emaa**

ma fo!!” which is how the rural folks affectionately refer to the bank. The cliché is loosely translated as ‘**poverty, it shall vanish.**”

According to Mr McCarthy, “Ada Rural Bank does not only delight its customers, but also donates generously towards improving the communities in which we operate. In particular, the bank donates towards the improvement of facilities operated or owned by educational and health institutions within our catchment areas. For instance, it has renovated a number of wards in health facilities over the years and collaborated in sponsoring various quiz competitions in Ada East and Ada West Districts.

Sometimes, we sponsor the orientation of newly-trained teachers posted to the two districts. We also support the West Africa Security Services Association (WASSA) celebrations of the Ghana Police Service.”

Mr Theophilus Ofori McCarthy leads the team

Mr Theophilus Ofori McCarthy became Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the bank in 2012. An Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Administrators and Management Consultants, Ghana (CIAMC), Mr McCarthy also holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Management from the



Jacob Tetteh Numo
Manager - Finance & Administration

“

Ada Rural Bank does not only delight its customers, but also donates generously towards improving the communities in which we operate. In particular, the bank donates towards the improvement of facilities operated or owned by educational and health institutions within our catchment areas.

”



Moses Nartey Gbagidie
Head, Microfinance

International Professional Managers' Association (IPMA) of UK and a Diploma in Statistics from the University of Ghana (Legon).

Prior to joining Ada Rural Bank as an Administrative Officer in 1998, he had a short stint with the defunct Bank for Housing and Construction. He worked

really hard from 1998, occupying many positions until 2012 when he was elevated to the position of CEO.

Innovations and enhanced services

Since assuming the helm, Mr McCarthy has leveraged on the assistance of ARB Apex Bank to ensure the bank became a fully computerized and networked financial institution, interacting seamlessly with all collaborative bodies and partners.

The bank is an active participant in the Apexlink Money Transfer service, Western Union, RIA Money Transfer, Unity Link Transfer, ACH Transfer, Transflow Services, Swift Transfer, NLA platform, E-Zwhich, Momo (Mobile Money) and the Cheque Codeline Clearing (CCC) service.

Ada Rural Bank now operates from very secure, modern and congenial atmosphere for its customers to do business in and recently added state-of-the-art Automated Teller Machine (ATM) services.

Strategic initiatives

Key initiatives introduced since Mr McCarthy became CEO include:

- a) Mobilization of Shareholders,



Emmanuel N. Lawerteh
Manager, Sege Branch

Directors, Management, and Staff to participate in shoring up the number of shares in the bank.

- b) The construction of two magnificent edifices for the Bank at Kasseh-Ada (Head Office) and Sege-Ada.

- c) Acquisition of a bullion van, a



Sege Branch Staff of Ada Rural Bank



Head Office of Ada Rural Bank at Kasseh-Ada

The bank is an active participant in the Apexlink Money Transfer service, Western Union, RIA Money Transfer, Unity Link Transfer, ACH Transfer, Transflow Services, Swift Transfer, NLA platform, E-Zwhich, Momo (Mobile Money) and the Cheque Codeline Clearing (CCC) service.

duty-post vehicle and two other vehicles towards the mobilization of deposits and recovery of loans.

d) Delivery of ATM and U-Connect services by the bank.

e) Constant update or review of the bank's conditions of service to reflect current trends in the industry, to help maintain and attract quality staff.

f) Expansion and introduction of new strategic departments and functional units to help manage the operations of the bank more effectively and efficiently.

g) Continuous training and team building to ensure a harmonious working environment for the employees.

Major improvements

According to Mr McCarthy, the bank has witnessed major improvements in the key performance indicators in the past five years. This positive trajectory has been confirmed by the Efficiency Monitoring Unit (EMU) report of the ARB Apex Bank. Below are some highlights:

- a) Total Assets have grown by 105.71% from GHS10.86 million in 2014 to GHS22.34 million by 2019
- b) Total Deposits also increased by 113.65% from GHS8.59 million in 2014 to GHS18.36 million by 2019.
- c) At the same time, Total Loans and Advances increased by 99.80% from GHS4.98 million to GHS9.96 million by 2019, while Total Investments increased by



A meeting of the Board of Directors of Ada Rural Bank



Ebenezer K. Kpabitey
Senior Manager, Operations

79.21%, from GHS2.97 million in 2014 to GHS5.32 million by 2019

d) Total Net worth has grown by 113.31% from GHS1.034 million in 2014 to GHS2.21 million by 2019

e) The Paid-up Capital grew by 215.75% from GHS335,889 in 2014 to GHS1.06 million by 2019.

He revealed that the above positive indicators have boosted investor confidence in the bank, “the reason why we have been able to meet the new Minimum Capital Requirement of GHS1.0 million,” Mr McCarthy added.

Within the past eight quarters (spanning about 2 years), each EMU Report published by the ARB Apex Bank has seen the bank improve in its ratings among sister Rural and Community Banks (RCBs), “gradually moving from **Marginal** through **Fair** into the **Satisfactory** category”.

Mr McCarthy however stressed that “as far as I am concerned, the bank has spent too much time in the Satisfactory category. My goal, therefore, is to see the bank featuring among banks within the Strong category, with the kind of profits that will translate into better dividends for shareholders, and better conditions of service for staff.”

Mr David Narh Sabbah, the indefatigable Board Chair

Mr David Narh Sabbah became chairman of the Board of Directors after the Board was reconstituted in June 2011.

Education and experience

He is a Chartered Accountant. He also holds a Graduate Diploma in Management and a Higher Diploma in Accounting.

Strategic changes

He is an astute Microfinance expert with over 20 years of experience at the non-governmental organization (NGO), Freedom from Hunger, Ghana.

To the admiration of Shareholders and Directors, Mr Sabbah has helped introduce a range of Microfinance products to the product and service suite of the bank. His interventions were strategic because at the time, Microfinance was relatively unknown on the RCB terrain.

The innovation by Mr Sabbah has brought immeasurable benefits to Ada Rural Bank and currently projects and positions the bank firmly as a key partner in the communities in which it operates.



Matthew Akwetey Opata
Administrative Officer

Other Directors

Other members of the Board include, Mr Bernard Katernor Bosumprah, Mr Adjoteye Lawer Akrofi, Mr Samuel Tetteh Amoah and Mr Theophilus Ofori McCarthy, who is the CEO.

Live wire to businesses in the communities

Ada Rural Bank has become a saviour to key businesses in its catchment area. Below are two major businesses that it has been helping to grow exponentially:



David Narh Sabbah
Board Chairman, Ada Rural Bank



Songor Salt Project



Salt being loaded for delivery

Songor Salt Project – Ghana’s white gold

Songor Salt Project is located in Ada in the Greater Accra Region. The project was started by a Greek private investor in the 1970s. The project was acquired by the Government of Ghana after a few years in the hands of the private operator. It is therefore wholly owned by the Government.



Ezekiel Kpalam
Kasseh Branch Manager

The innovation by Mr Sabbah has brought immeasurable benefits to Ada Rural Bank and currently projects and positions the bank firmly as a key partner in the communities in which it operates. The Bank has become a saviour to key businesses in its catchment area, helping businesses to grow exponentially.

Individuals buy the salt and export them to Togo, Benin, and Burkina Faso. The company does not export directly but sells to the indigenous people. Daily sales proceeds are lodged with Ada Rural Bank.

Songor Salt Project started doing business with Ada Rural Bank since the 1980s. All employees of the company



Vincent Baku
Head of Credit



Musahamat Farms



Carlos Manuel Valverde Diaz
Product & Development Manager

He revealed that “our mining site has a staff capacity of 121 with two (2) management staff, the Head of finance and the Human Resource Manager.” According to him, “the company sells over 200 bags of salt per month.”

Praising the bank for the immense support the company enjoys from it, he said, “The project wouldn’t have survived without the financial help from Ada Rural Bank.”

Musahamat Farms – producing bananas from Ghana to the world

Musahamat Farms Limited was established at Battor in the Volta Region in 2012. It started commercial cultivation of bananas in the year 2014, with an initial farm size of one hectare.

By 2019, the farm had extended production to cover more than 250 hectares. The farm acquired a total cultivable land area of 1,750 hectares and hopes to increase the farm size with improved weather conditions and availability of logistics.

The farm boasts a state-of-the-art packaging plant and a proficient logistics team that produces premium bananas.

Carlos Manuel Valverde Diaz, Production and Development Manager indicated that, “the remaining land of



about 1700 hectares will be put to use this year if the weather is favourable and we have enough labour.”

He revealed that the company has three farm branches with its headquarters located in Kuwait, Middle East. The Ghanaian branch is what is cited at Battor in the Volta Region. The other two farms are located in the Philippines and Equador.

Musahamat Farms has a permanent workforce of 500 workforce, with more than 70 percent operating current and savings accounts with Ada Rural Bank. The farm receives foreign remittances through Ada Rural Bank and pays its staff through the bank, making the relationship between the farm and the bank mutually beneficial. ■

receive their salaries through the bank. Some of the employees enjoy attractive credit facilities from the bank.

Mr Reuben Adjumani, Head of Finance of the company indicated that, “Ada Rural Bank has been the backbone of the project.”

Taking *The Rural Banker* team through some of their processes, Mr Adjumani indicated that “the salt is mined and collected or heaped in mounds at a particular location on site. It is washed with sea water and is allowed to crystalize in the open sun.”



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SOME INTERNAL CONTROL STRATEGIES FOR MINIMISING FRAUD IN RURAL BANKS

Halima Oboshie Torto

Introduction

Fraud can be committed against an individual or a business. In today's global business environment, and with acceptance and profound use of technology,

businesses are exposed to unimaginable risks as there is now a wide range of external groups of people who are connected to and interested in financial information generated by businesses. The rise in financial scandals at the beginning of the 21st Century was associated with increased incidence of fraud. There is, therefore, a need to continually remind ourselves and also create awareness on the existence of fraud and discuss ways of minimising its occurrence.

What is Fraud?

In the broadest sense, fraud is a deception made for personal gain. Fraud is a broad legal term referring to dishonest acts that intentionally use deception to illegally

deprive another person or entity of money, property, or legal rights. Unlike the crime of theft, which involves the taking of something of value through force or stealth, fraud relies on the use of intentional misrepresentation of facts to accomplish the taking.

It refers to the wrongful or criminal deception intended to result in financial or personal gain. Situating the definition within the context of banking, bank fraud is defined as the use of dishonest means to obtain money, assets, or other property owned or held by a financial institution.

The concept was defined by Dr Paul Acquah, a former Governor of the Bank of Ghana (BoG), as:

A criminal offence of knowingly executing, or attempting to execute a scheme or artifice to defraud a financial institution, or to obtain property owned by or under the control of a financial institution by means of false or fraudulent pretences.

Dr Acquah (2006) identified bank fraud to be perpetrated by insiders or outsiders to the bank or a collusion between the two. The act often takes the form of embezzlement, misappropriation of funds, aiding and abetting, making false account entries or statements, false declarations in loan and/or credit applications, money laundering, etc.



Halima Oboshie Torto

Business Dvt. Manager, ARB Apex Bank

While the specific elements of a particular banking fraud law vary between jurisdictions, the term applies generally to actions that employ a scheme or trick, as opposed to bank robbery or theft. Based on this, bank fraud is sometimes considered a white collar crime.

Bank fraudsters have become increasingly skilled and sophisticated, due to advances in technology. The acts of fraud results in substantial losses to banks, which may culminate in their collapse.

Minimising Fraud

The following are some proactive measures to help combat the menace:

- a) Due diligence on prospective staff should be undertaken before they are engaged. Exhaustive background checks should be conducted on prospective employees.
- b) A culture should be created which mitigates the incidence of fraud. This should cut across the entire hierarchy of Rural and Community Banks (RCBs) and ARB Apex Bank.
- c) A policy statement on fraud should be displayed at the banking halls of both RCBs and the ARB Apex Bank, for example, "Fraud will not be tolerated in this bank under any circumstance."
- d) Staff suspected to be involved in fraudulent activities should either be interdicted or requested to proceed on leave pending the outcome of investigations, which should be expeditiously done and remedial action taken.
- e) Warning signals of fraud should be identified and followed up, For example, ostentatious lifestyles, and the opposite of living below one's means in order to cover up any suspicions of fraud, etc.
- f) Management staff should demonstrate an awareness of fraud. They should attend and encourage their staff to attend courses on fraud periodically. Internal Audit and Compliance teams should be established and their capacities to perform duties effectively and efficiently strengthened. The Audit teams must submit their reports to the Board with copies to Management.
- g) Effective internal controls should be enforced and reviewed periodically. Related to this is the frequent inspection/audit of RCBs and ARB Apex Bank.
- h) Staff should be sufficiently motivated, and an atmosphere of job satisfaction created.
- i) Open and frank communication channels should be maintained with staff so that they may feel free to disclose their observations about operations of their banks.

- j) Vulnerable and risky areas of operation should be identified and controls put in place to minimise vulnerabilities.
- k) Staff should be given regular training in areas related to their jobs to keep them abreast with current trends in the sector.
- l) Rotation of staff should be enforced and leave rosters strictly adhered to. This may well be an opportunity to uncover fraudulent activities.

- o) Internal control mechanisms and compliance issues should be enforced. Policies, procedures and systems should be developed, well documented and reviewed periodically.
- p) Competent, honest and reliable staff should be put on sensitive schedules.
- q) Opportunities which facilitate the perpetration of fraudulent activities should be limited, thereby making fraud more difficult to commit.
- r) The Know Your Client (KYC) principles should be fully complied with in account opening formalities and payment procedures.
- s) Staff should not be allowed to open accounts in different names other than their officially known names.
- t) Effective supervision should be exercised over all staff irrespective of the schedules they handle.



In this age of digitalization, banks are being duped of huge sums of monies, thus destabilizing investor confidence.



- m) Shareholders with relevant backgrounds should be elected as directors of RCBs and directors should not interfere with the day-to-day administration of their banks.
- n) Staff of RCBs and ARB Apex Bank should adhere to service conditions and the ethics of banking. Any infractions should be appropriately dealt with.

Conclusion

In this age of digitalization, banks are being duped of huge sums of monies, thus destabilizing investor confidence. Banks deal with public money and hence it is imperative that employees exercise due care and diligence in handling transactions in their banks.

Management of banks must also put in place robust systems to ward off intruders and fraudsters, tighten security mechanisms and ensure strong internal controls.

Fraud results in substantial losses to banks which may culminate in their collapse. A word of caution to the RCBs and ARB Apex Bank is that, empirical evidence has established that no fraud prevention measure is full proof. Under the circumstance, there is the compelling need for RCBs and ARB Apex Bank to increase efforts on security awareness and evolve the necessary strategies to minimize the incidence of fraud in order to ensure sustainability of our banks. ■

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AMANTIN AND KASEI COMMUNITY BANK: SERVING TWO STRATEGIC REGIONS OF GHANA

Despite the presence of more than half a dozen other banks in its catchment area, Amantin and Kasei Community Bank, has over the years carved a niche for itself as a strategic bank, providing bespoke services to communities in and around Amantin, Atebubu and Kasei in the Bono East Region.

The bank specifically operates in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality, Pru District, Sene West and East districts in the Bono East Region, and Ejura-Sekyedumase and Kwabre districts in the Ashanti Region.

It has a total of seven (7) branches spread across Ashanti and Bono-East regions, with its headquarters located at Amantin in the Bono-East Region. The branches are located at Amantin, Kasei, Pru, Sene, Ejura, Sekyedumase and Kwabre.

The name Amantin and Kasei Community Bank

The bank was first registered as the Centre for Wealth

Creation and started operations at Kasei in the Ashanti Region, by the then board chairman. There was one commercial bank at Amantin, which later collapsed. The directors of the then Centre for Wealth Creation decided to relocate the finance house to Amantin and the name was then changed to Amantin and Kasei to serve both communities. Amantin is in the Bono East Region and Kasei in the Ashanti Region. It has since its founding been headquartered at Amantin in the Bono East Region.

There are other Banks within the catchment areas of the bank including; Yabra Rural Bank, Otuasekan Rural Bank, Okomfo Anokye Rural Bank, GCB Bank, and Agricultural Development Bank, amongst others.

Directors

The bank has a seven-member board chaired by Dr John Oduro Boateng with Mr Ernest Kwakye as the Vice-Chair. Other members

of the board include, Mrs Mary B. Ansong, Mr Fatau Awudu, Mr Vincent Amponsah, Mr Anthony Appiah, and Mr Alfred Owusu Acheaw.

Human Resource

The bank has 130 staff and more than half of the staff are females, and is led by Michael Osaе, General Manager. The bank has come up with strategies to encourage its female staff to take up managerial positions.

Product and service offerings

The products and services of the Bank are carefully crafted to suit the varied needs of our customers. Some of our key products include: **'Susu' Scheme** – which involves micro mobilization of deposits from the doorsteps of customers and giving them access to 'Susu' loans based on their deposit contributions. The 'Susu' deposits currently constitute about 20 percent of the bank's deposits and 15 percent of our credit portfolio.



Michael Wilberforce Osae
General Manager, Amantin and Kasei Community Bank



Head Office staff of Amantin and Kasei Community Bank



Japiiong Subinleeb
Head, Risk and Compliance

Loans and Overdrafts – the bank traditionally grants credit to its customers for various purposes, ranging from working capital support to personal budget finance. These products have been diversified into salary loans, business loans, microfinance loans, transport loans, overdrafts, agriculture inventory and ‘Susu’ loans.

The bank supports customers typically engaged in cottage industries, trading, farming and salaried workers.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

The bank believes that it is essential to give back to the communities in which it operates. It has therefore over the years, supported the provision of clean drinking water through the drilling of bore holes in



Michael Debrah Bempong
Manager, Credit

some secondary schools including, Amantin, Atebubu, Ejuraman and Yeji Secondary Schools.

Other CSR activities undertaken by the bank include, donation of a transformer to serve the community, donation of a generator to the St Luke Hospital, located at Amantin, as well as the ongoing

Fixed Deposits – this is also another important product of the bank, where customers are encouraged to place their deposits on hold for an agreed duration for competitive interest rates.

‘Meba Daakye’ and ‘Christmas and Salah’ accounts are two other key fixed deposit products of the bank.



Mark Ernest
Head, IT

construction of an assembly hall for Amantin Senior High School and the construction of a pantry for Amantin Senior High School.

Mr Michael Osae is the General Manager

The face of rural banking has seen a major uplift in recent years. This has attracted many high calibre employees.

The continuous adoption of computerization and modern technology in the operations and product development by the rural banking industry has also made the industry attractive to professionals. Rural and Community Banks (RCBs) can therefore boast of professionals with good academic qualifications who use their expertise to spearhead the strategic and day-to-day operations of their banks.

According to Michael Osae, “the continuous expansion of rural banks’ share of the retail banking market is enough proof that rural banks are effectively and efficiently managed by professionals who are

committed to the development of the banking industry. RCBs are being managed by Chartered Bankers, Chartered Accountants and Master’s Degree holders with many years of experience. Some General Managers are PhD holders.

Being a General Manager has become very competitive. Before anyone becomes a branch manager, that person must have more than seven to ten years’ experience and be knowledgeable in the banking field.”

Michael has been in the rural banking industry for over seventeen (17) years. Prior to his appointment as the General Manager of Amantin and Kasei Community Bank, he was the Deputy General Manager and Head of Credit of the Bank for eight (8) years.

He holds a Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration (CEMBA) from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and a BSc (Agricultural Science) from the University of Ghana.



Eric Najon Janja
Operations Manager



The continuous expansion of rural banks’ share of the retail banking market is enough proof that rural banks are effectively and efficiently managed by professionals who are committed to the development of the banking industry. RCBs are being managed by Chartered Bankers, Chartered Accountants and Master’s Degree holders with many years of experience. Some General Managers are PhD holders



Dr John Oduro-Boateng,
Board Chairman, Amantin and Kasei Community Bank

He is a certified Banker and currently at the final level (level IV) of the Chartered Institute of Bankers (CIB) Ghana Examination. He also holds a professional certificate in Microfinance from the University of Cape Coast. He is a product of Ofori Panin Secondary School (1986 to 1993), where he obtained his Ordinary Level and Advanced Level Certificates.

Mr Osae started his banking career with Amantin and Kasei Rural Bank. He was employed as a credit officer and rose through the ranks to become the General Manager. Michael is an astute Credit and Risk

Management specialist. He has exceptional qualities in Strategic Planning and Implementation and Relationship Management. He has a strong passion for Rural Livelihood Empowerment and Rural Development.

He is married with two children.

Innovations brought to the bank

Mr Osae revealed one of the landmark innovations he brought to Amantin and Kasei Community Bank is a corporate dress code, which is portrayed by staff every Monday.

He also re-engineered the bank's

“Susu” mobilization and a special award to the staff with the most outstanding “Susu” mobilization portfolio. The award which is presented to the winner at the bank’s Annual General Meeting (AGM) is to encourage staff to work hard.

Since its introduction, “the award scheme has helped to increase the bank’s ‘Susu’ collection by more than 50 percent.”

He has also introduced a Risk Management Fund that takes care of bad loans. All loans are insured by the bank against death and permanent disability.



Dr John Oduro-Boateng showing appreciation to Mr Kingsley Opoku Boateng, the first Luke Society employee who cosigned to open the first clearing account of the bank in 1992

Looking forward

Mr Osae stated that, future prospects of the bank look very bright and it is his intention “to help open more branches, becoming the bank of choice in our catchment area as well as ultimately become, the best RCB in the Bono East Region and beyond.”

Birth of a good bank

According to Dr John Oduro-Boateng, the vision and mission

of Amantin and Kasei Community Bank revolve around the key vision of the Kasei Mission Hospital, which is part of the St Luke Mission Hospitals. Kasei Mission Hospital started in 1986 with four main objectives.

The first objective was the provision of community based health services, where they started and reached out to all the communities in and around Kasei. The hospital

was the second to be established after Mampong Hospital. The second objective was evangelism, where the St Luke Missions sought to reach out to the communities with the Christ-centred gospel. The third objective was income generation and economic empowerment of the rural folks and the fourth objective was collaborative linkages, “because it was our belief that government alone cannot lead the holistic development of the rural folks.”

He said Kasei Mission Hospital undertook a survey in 1989, the outcomes of which showed that the rural dwellers around Amantin and Kasei had three peculiar felt needs. These needs according to the research were, how to expand their farms, how to improve their housing needs, and how to improve upon their water and sanitation needs.



Dr John Oduro-Boateng with Rev Ambrose E. Brennan III



Kasei Mission Hospital

The Kasei Mission Hospital discovered however that the most paramount need was how to expand their farms. “We therefore started St Luke Multipurpose Cooperative in 1989 to help them access micro-credit to support their farms. As the cooperative society was expanding, the GCB Bank Branch which was located at Amantin, a few miles from Kasei was closed down. Around the same time, the idea of starting a Rural and Community Bank (RCB) was catching up, because we had done feasibility studies and came up with the name the ‘St Luke Rural Bank.’”

He said, “we approached officials of GCB Bank to explore the possibility of St Luke Multipurpose Cooperative taking over the old premises of their bank. It turned out that the Chief and people of Amantin were the ones who constructed the structure, which GCB Bank refurbished and operated their branch which became defunct from.”

A memorandum of understanding was therefore signed between St Luke Rural Bank and the people of Amantin. “The property was valued and converted to shares for the people of Amantin. Just around the same time, there was a directive by the Bank of Ghana (BoG) on the adoption of the right nomenclature by all rural banks in the country. We therefore took advantage of the BoG directive and changed our name from St Luke Multipurpose Cooperative to Amantin and Kasei Community Bank.”

It is worthy of note that Amantin took precedence in the new name because the people of Amantin wanted their name to be prominent in the new name.

Initial Capitalization

Dr Oduro-Boateng revealed that at the time they were about to establish the bank, he was a member of the Board of Directors of Sinapi Aba Trust and Opportunity International. He therefore approached the management of

the two institutions and sold the idea of owning shares in Amantin and Kasei Community Bank.

He said Rev Dr Kwabena Darko who was the Board Chair of Sinapi Aba Trust and Opportunity International agreed and the two institutions provided some capital, St Luke Mission Hospital provided the matching fund and the value of the building which was to serve as the headquarters of the bank at Amantin was converted into shares for the Chief and people of Amantin.

“The shareholders of Amantin and Kasei Community Bank are Sina Aba Trust and Opportunity International, Luke Mission and the Chief and people of Amantin. The board of directors is made up of representatives of the three groups of shareholders and Dr Oduro-Boateng was made chairman of the board in 1997 and has been the chair since the bank began operations”, he stressed. The board is composed of very experienced professionals with diverse backgrounds who ensure that corporate governance rules are strictly adhered to at the bank.

Joy of the people

The people of Amantin have a huge market, there is a Senior High School, farmers, traders, and the St Luke Mission Hospital is also based there and inhabitants are really excited to have a bank they can always call their own.

The farmers are able to access credit facilities from the bank, all government and quasi-government institutions do business with the

bank. Most of the workers receive their salaries through the bank. Furthermore, our partnership with Sinapi Aba Trust and Opportunity International has also been very beneficial to the communities in and around Amantin.

“But for Amantin and Kasei Community Bank, to be able to access banking services, the people of Amantin would have had to travel for 40 miles to Atebubu or 15 miles to Ejura. All the traders now have agencies of our bank where they are able to deposit their funds. This has provided a huge reprieve for the people,” he added.

Man behind the good work - Holistic, Integrated Development Medical Doctor

Dr Oduro-Boateng who describes himself as a holistic, integrated development Medical Doctor, had his secondary education at Opoku Ware Senior High School where he did his Ordinary and Advanced Levels.

He is a product of the University of Ghana Medical School. He did his Housemanship at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital.

He has worked at the Agogo Mission Hospital, St Dominic Hospital, Akwatia, Battor Catholic Hospital, Nkawkaw Holy Family Hospital, and the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in Kumasi at various times of his career.

He is the Board Chair of the bank and doubles as the Executive Director of the Emmanuel Eye Centre at East Legon in Accra and the St Luke Hospital at Kasei in the Bono East Region.



Dr John Oduro-Boateng,
Board Chairman, Amantin and Kasei Community Bank

Further studies and work abroad

He had further studies in Cadana, Denmark, United Kingdom, and the United States of America and worked in some of those countries at various times. According to him, “it was during some of those medical studies and work sojourns that he developed the passion for and came back with the idea of holistic, integrated development.”

He came back from the US with that mission and with support from his partners, the original Luke Mission of Mississippi, which is the poorest county in the US, “we partnered to form the Luke Missions Ghana.”

“We started at Kasei, did all the surveys, planted churches, trained church leadership, started the community health work from Oku, Sekyedumasi, Drobo, where we established health centres and the big centres such as Kasei and Emmanuel Eye Centre were developed into major Medical centres,” he revealed.

Advise to Bank of Ghana

Dr Oduro-Boateng called on the Bank of Ghana (BoG) to expedite efforts at helping the RCBs to retrieve their locked up funds with the Finance Houses. That he said, “would help improve the liquidity of the RCBs.”

He said the BoG and Government should play their parts to ensure that the industry is friendly to all the banks to enable them operate sustainably.

He stated that the people of Ghana are very hard working, creative and industrious, adding that “all they need is support from the Government through the provision of the enabling business environment and they would flourish.”



Alhaji Kofi Owusu with Michael Osae, GM of Amantin and Kasei Community Bank

ALHAJI DIDI COLD STORE

BIGGEST AND MOST POPULAR COLD STORE IN ATEBUBU

On our visit to Amantin The Rural Banker caught up with Kofi Owusu, a sole proprietor who operates under the name, Alhaji Didi Cold Store and a prime customer of Amantin and Kasei Community Bank. His business is located on the main Atebubu to Amantin trunk road.

The cold store was first registered as “**Freeman Cold Store.**” It is currently operating in the business name of Alhaji Didi cold store. The cold store has been in operation since 1992 and serves communities like Atebubu, Krachie, Kumasi, Mampong, Kejeji, Ejura, Salaga, Zambanga and would soon open a branch at Kintampo.

The Managing Director, Mr Kofi Owusu, also mentioned that he operated a wholesale provision shop. He said his two businesses have trucks which transport goods to the communities he serves.

Alhaji Didi has been operating with Amantin and Kasei Community Bank for over 22 years and keeps both corporate and personal accounts with the bank.

When *The Rural Banker* team visited his cold store, he indicated that Amantin and Kasei Community Bank provides him with banking services such as loan facilities and savings products, which have helped him to grow his small business into a big one.

He also indicated that he started with a small cold store which was initially managed by his wife while he operated a tractor he owned because he is also a driver.

Support from the Bank however helped him to open a bigger cold store and later added two more branches which he manages himself.

Mr Owusu is currently one of the largest loan clients of the bank. He added that the bank sometimes grants him overdraft facilities when he is expecting goods and does not have enough money to clear them from the harbour.

The bank also provides him with business advice which helps him to improve his business, while officers of the bank pay regular visits to his shops to assess the status of the business. He said “Amantin and Kasei Community Bank has made my business what it is today and I would always recommend the bank to other customers.”



Alhaji Kofi Owusu

Francis Enimil Ashun

THE PLACE OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Corporate governance has become an increasingly topical issue in recent years.

It has become even more relevant following the recent collapse of some financial institutions in the country. The boards of the failed banks have been put on the spotlight.

The role of boards of directors have become important in examining the issues that led to the collapse of these banks. It has been established that the lack of good governance or the inability of some of the boards to exercise proper oversight responsibilities contributed in no small measures to the collapse of some of the banks.

The banking crisis and failure of the respective boards to preempt same, has led connoisseurs to ask many questions including: What is good corporate governance? What roles do directors play in corporate

governance? Who are the drivers of corporate governance?

This article attempts to provide some answers to these questions.

Principles of Corporate Governance

Corporate governance is the vehicle through which companies and organizations are directed and controlled. This involves the establishment of structures and processes through which management is made accountable to the directors who are also accountable to shareholders and industry regulators. Corporate governance encompasses how an organization is managed, its corporate structures, its culture, its policies and the manner it deals or interacts with its various stakeholders.

It is concerned with structures and processes for decision-making and with the controls and behaviors that support effective accountability for performance.

It provides the vehicle through which the objectives and policies of the company are set. Good corporate governance enables the board and management to pursue objectives that are in the best interest of the company, shareholders and all other stakeholders, including employees and the community in which it serves.

Corporate governance practices



Francis Enimil Ashun
Manager, Lower Pra Rural Bank

hinge on the following principles: predictability, transparency, accountability and participation. Predictability applies to consistent interpretation and enforcement of rules, procedures and regulations, while transparency refers to the availability and disclosure of information. Transparency in decision making and implementation reduces uncertainty, thereby making it easier for stakeholders to predict the health and direction of the company. The accountability principle requires identifying who is accountable, to whom are they accountable, and for what are they accountable. The last principle, participation, enables stakeholders

including employees to participate in the decision-making processes affecting the direction of the organization. In order for these principles to be effective, their application or practice must be unbiased and impartial.

What are the responsibilities of a Board?

Board of directors of companies are traditionally considered to be responsible for taking strategic decisions and giving directions for executives to enable the organization maximize shareholder wealth. However, directors are now expected to broaden their responsibilities to include other stakeholders and to consider social and environmental issues in making their decisions.

High profile failures in the financial sector in Ghana (UT Bank, GN Bank etc.), have resulted in increasing attention being paid to good corporate governance issues such as the effectiveness of reporting, disclosures, roles of the board, internal control systems, audit committees and independence of directors and auditors. While CEOs and their executive management teams aim at making profit in the shortest possible time and so do whatever is necessary, the board is expected to monitor them and exercise control in order for the executive management not to overstep their boundaries that may result in attracting sanctions from the regulators or legal suits.

Structures and other frameworks must therefore be put in place by the boards to provide guidance for management on policies and other decision making processes. Good corporate governance frameworks involve shareholder rights, disclosures and transparency, executive management and board accountability. The greatest concern is the accountability of the board to all stakeholders who may have competing interests. However, as directors are delegated by shareholders to exercise responsibility of controlling the company in their best interests, they have to ensure shareholder value is increased without falling foul of regulations.



Board of directors of companies are traditionally considered to be responsible for taking strategic decisions and giving directions for executives to enable the organization maximize shareholder wealth. However, directors are now expected to broaden their responsibilities to include other stakeholders and to consider social and environmental issues in making their decisions.

Roles and duties of the board

After the recent bank failure in the country, the spotlight has been focused on the roles and duties of directors of the banks. The roles of the boards depend on the following:

- a) **The board structure:** its members, leadership, and the number of committees it requires to function properly
- b) **The board composition:** the mix of experience, skills, and other attributes required of members
- c) **The board processes:** how it gathers information to make decisions

The traditional view of the board is that they protect shareholders' interests through setting policy direction for the organization and the appointment or removal of the chief executive officer (CEO) and other officers, who are directly appointed by them. However, modern functions of a board have been defined to include setting out the company's purpose, its strategies and plans for achieving that purpose and establishing policies to guide the operations of the organization.

The board monitors and assesses the performance of the executive team.

Directors are no longer expected to view their positions on the board as a mere prestige but must spend time in fulfilling their duties of giving strategic direction to their charges. Potential legal actions arising from disgruntled shareholders, employees and regulators means that internal reforms may be needed as the gap between what directors do and what is expected of them widens

In order to fulfill this strategic role, the board itself needs to have an in-depth understanding of the company's business, its competitors and the industry environment it operates in. Modern governance practices enjoin boards to not only create increased shareholder value, but also to recognize employees as one of the main drivers of value creation for the firm. Employees must be recognized as assets, which are key to the sustenance of the organization.

Directors are no longer expected to view their positions on the board as a mere prestige but must spend time in fulfilling their duties of giving strategic direction to their charges.

Potential legal actions arising from disgruntled shareholders, employees and regulators means that internal reforms may be needed as the gap between what directors do and what is expected of them widens. Directors bear the ultimate responsibility for the health of the organization. It is no longer acceptable for directors to say or claim the executives or management hid vital information from them or failed to ensure full disclosures of the happenings in the business to them. It may be viewed as a negligence of their fiduciary duties or responsibilities entrusted to them by shareholders and other regulatory bodies.

Boards must therefore strengthen their governance frameworks and policies to reassert their roles in the governance of their organizations. Board level sub-committees must be established with clear responsibilities, to reinforce their supervisory roles. Stakeholders now regard boards as accountable for the effective governance of organizations.

This means boards are now expected to get more involved in how the organizations are governed, that is, they are expected to enhance their supervisory oversight of management. Boards must establish charters that clearly designate what they are strictly responsible for and must approve, what management can approve and bring up for board ratification or what they must just be made aware of.

Evaluation of the performance of the Board

As the board of directors evaluate the executive management on their stewardship of the organization, the board must also subject themselves to self-evaluation. The performance of a board directly affects the performance of the organization and therefore it is critical that the board itself is continuously evaluated or appraised. Regular board evaluation can result in improved or enhanced leadership, greater clarity of roles, duties and



responsibilities, improved teamwork, greater accountability, better decision-making processes, improvement in overall organization-wide communication and a more efficient board and management.

Board Evaluation is a measure of the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of board members, especially in relation to the governance of the organization. Board evaluation is crucial for every organization which strives for excellence and high performance. For an effective evaluation, there must be a benchmark for measuring performance. Some of these benchmarks include: clear and precise job descriptions for the board and higher management, availability of corporate strategies, corporate governance structures and policies that align with the vision of the organization. Evaluation is critical to the success of the organization and so must not wait for crises periods or when the company is facing challenges.

A board is evaluated to measure the effectiveness of the corporate management policies they have established, organization's performance or results, the presence of accountable and competent leadership, teamwork, regard for positive work norms and culture, minimized conflicts, positive employee relations and high morale or motivated personnel.

The processes of board evaluation

Board evaluation process involves the assessment of the board in relation to the roles and performance. Areas relating to corporate governance are evaluated by the board, while consultants or members of staff evaluate programmes and services in an organization. The major areas that evaluation process focuses on are: board management, board development, board goals, missions and strategies and senior staff. The evaluation of the board involves an assessment of board meetings, assessment of the various sub-committees, performance of individual directors, the chairpersons' output as well as their collective performance. The process for board

evaluation could include among others: the purpose of the evaluation, model or structure, design, relevant information gathering, analysis of the information gathered, and implementation.

It is always appropriate to use the services of an independent or external consultant to carry out the evaluation processes. However, where the board or management decides to carry out the evaluation themselves, care must be taken to protect people who volunteer information from being victimized.

Conclusion and way forward

Recent happenings in the corporate world and in Ghana's financial sector have heightened the awareness of the role of the board of directors. It has therefore become imperative that more attention is paid to strengthening the boards to provide the leadership that is needed for a resilient organization.

Boards must insist on adopting a good governance framework to strengthen their organizations. Policies and procedures must as a matter of urgency be documented and made available to all so as to become a reference point. This would assist the board and management in steering the organization clear of the dangers that befell financial institutions leading to their eventual collapse.

Author:

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Recent happenings in the corporate world and in Ghana's financial sector have heightened the awareness of the role of the board of directors. It has therefore become imperative that more attention is paid to strengthening the boards to provide the leadership that is needed for a resilient organization.





(L-R) **Comfort Owusu** - Executive Director, Association of Rural Banks; **Hon Kwabena Okyere Darko-Mensah** - Western Regional Minister; **Tetrete Okuamoah Sekyim II** - Paramount Chief of the Wassa Amenfi Traditional Area; **Daniel Ohene Kwaku Owusu** - President, Association of Rural Banks; **Dr Maxwell Opoku Afari** - First Deputy Governor, Bank of Ghana; **Kojo Mattah** - Managing Director, ARB Apex Bank

BANK OF GHANA TO HELP RETRIEVE LOCKED UP FUNDS

The Bank of Ghana (BoG) and the Ministry of Finance are working with the receiver of the liquidated Savings and Loans Companies, Finance, and Microfinance Institutions to release locked up funds of the Rural and Community Banks (RCBs).

Speaking at the recently held seventh Rural Banking Week celebrations at the Takoradi Technical University at Takoradi in the Western Region, Dr Maxwell Opoku Afari, First Deputy Governor of the BoG stated that, “the central bank and the Ministry of Finance have directed the receiver to release locked up funds to the RCBs.”

According to Dr Afari who was the special guest at the event, the BoG was aware of the liquidity squeeze in the rural banking sector because of the challenges posed to them after some Fund Managers and Investment Houses were resolved by Regulators in 2019.

He said the central bank was conscious of the critical role played by the RCBs in the development of the rural areas and has therefore decided to work with the ARB Apex Bank to ensure that the rural banks remain solvent “to continue with their crucial financial intermediation roles in the rural areas.”

“We are working together with the ARB Apex Bank to ensure

that workable strategies are put together for the RCBs. It could be mergers or acquisitions, but all would depend on the specific nuances in the banks concerned,” Dr Afari stressed.

Dr Afari stated that so far over 95 percent of retail depositors in the liquidated financial institutions have received their deposits.

“Retail depositors form majority of the investors and when we work out those who invested GHS1,000 or less, they form up to 95 percent and all these people have so far been paid,” he added.



Dr Maxwell Opoku Afari
First Deputy Governor, Bank of Ghana

Tools for rural development

Chairman for the occasion, Tetrete Okuamoah Sekyim II, Paramount Chief of the Wassa Amenfi Traditional Area pleaded with the Government to channel the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) through the RCBs.

Tetrete stated that the RCBs are the main financial intermediaries in the rural areas, adding that, “in some of our towns and villages, the only financial institutions one can transact business with are the rural banks, we therefore need to do

everything to support them.”

According to him, any Government funds meant for the local areas should be channeled through the rural banks because that is a sure way the banks can also be sustainable.

He said he would continue to be a strong advocate of the RCBs because he is conscious of and witness to the “strategic role most of them have been playing in the rural areas.”

Enhancement in rural financial inclusion

According to Mr Daniel Ohene Kwaku Owusu, President of the National Association of Rural Banks, RCBs have the capacity to bring banking services closer to majority of Ghanaians in view of their wide branch network and are capable of moving people in rural areas from everyday survival to planning for the future.”

He noted that “if Ghana is ever going to achieve a high level of financial inclusion for its citizens and reap the benefits that come

with it, it would have to depend on the RCBs that are the main driving force behind the agenda.”

Mr Owusu stressed that the RCBs provide the avenue for the vulnerable to gain access to loans, save towards the education of their children, plan for retirement and have solid investments to rely on in times of adversity.

He stated that the best approach to increase access to services by the financial sector is to educate the people in financial literacy that was why we settled on the theme, “the Role of Rural and Community Banks in Financial Inclusion.”

He charged the RCBs to leverage on the theme to sensitise the people in their catchment areas on the banking services and options available to them.

RCBs as partners of Government

In his brief remarks, Mr Kojo Mattah, Managing Director of the ARB Apex Bank said he was excited that the Government has introduced a number of flagship developmental programmes, some of which are synergistic with the strategic intent and project financing focus of rural and community banking in the country.



Kojo Mattah
Managing Director, ARB Apex Bank



Tetrete Okuamoah Sekyim II
Paramount Chief of the Wassa Amenfi Traditional Area

First is the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ), and second, the famous, One-District-One-Factory (1D-1F), amongst other laudable initiatives, which are rural community-focused.”

Mr Mattah stated that for decades, “ARB Apex Bank and the Association of Rural Banks and all our member banks continue to deploy vital and lifesaving financial services to the usually forgotten bottom of the society. We have taken banking services to the very ends of the country, where most High Street banks fear to tread.

The RCBs fill the little but crucial

GHS50 to GHS1,000 micro-credit void that cannot be met through the provision of sophisticated documentation, security and collateral requirements of the other banks. The network of rural banks, which together form about five (5) percent of the total assets of the banking industry, have therefore become a vital and unbreakable chord in the country’s financial ecosystem.”

He said the RCBs have come to stay, adding that it is in this light that they see the RCBs and Government as veritable partners in the financial inclusion and economic emancipation of our people.

He stressed that the rural banks have the capacity to process payments to contractors, service providers and other beneficiaries of the DACF.

The seventh Rural Banking Week was on the theme: **“the Role of Rural and Community Banks in Financial Inclusion,”** and brought together directors, managers, staff of the RCBs and the ARB Apex Bank to deliberate on issues affecting the RCB community.

SOME PICTURES FROM THE 7TH RURAL BANKING WEEK







RIB CRACKING HUMOUR

A MUST READ

By Gavivina Tamakloe

In 1999 when I was entering the exams hall to write Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), I had three items on me, a pencil, pen and a razor blade.

It was the first paper and I didn't want anything to go wrong. Pencil for shading. Pen for writing. Razorblade, just in case the tip of my pencil got broken.

The first paper was English and we were supposed to write the Part One, take a break and come and write Part Two. Coming from a school which always used the local language, English was obviously going to be a difficult subject for us.

Immediately I sat in the exams room, I looked at the faces surrounding me, just to be sure I would have

someone to ask when the going gets tough.

My left was a wall so obviously no salvation was going to come from that end. On my right was Seth. A guy who joined our class in Junior High School (JHS 1). He came from a preparatory school and could speak impeccable English but when it came to writing it, there were always problems. I couldn't count on him either.

I looked behind and saw Peter Sagoe. Peter came to school from Akwakrom, a village close to Mankessim. The only English word he'd ever uttered was his name, Peter. Obviously, he counted himself lucky to be seated close to me. I was going to be his source of answers. Even me!

And then in front of me was Magdalene. We all called her "Shinton." She was asked the name given to the flesh of a goat, she didn't know. The teacher wrote it on the board for her to pronounce. She looked on the board and saw "Chevon" but the only word that came out of her mouth was "Shinton." It became her name since that day.



These were the people I was surrounded by. When the shading papers came, the first instruction was; "Write your name in Block Letters." "Block letters? What are block letters?"

For the next five or so minutes, I sat down scanning through my memory trying to figure out when and where "Block Letters" were taught and what the phrase meant. I couldn't remember, so I skipped and started answering the questions.

The first part was on Comprehension, I soldiered through. The second part was on "Words Nearer in Meaning."

I did guesswork. The third part was boldly labeled "CONCORD."

"Concord? Concord in the English language?" I asked myself. That's where I stopped writing the examinations. I hadn't written my name because I didn't know what block letters were. Here I am again battling with another word, CONCORD.

The invigilator got to my table and saw my head lying on my table. She asked, "Have you finished?" "No" I answered. So why are you sleeping? I didn't answer her. I only stared at her face as she was staring at my papers.

"You haven't written your name, why?"

"I'll write it when I'm done."

"What if you forget? Write it and let me see."

I started; E.r.s.k...

The invigilator tapped my shoulder; "hey hey hey, block letters. Can't you read the instruction? It says "Write your name in block letters." I erased what I'd written and said to the woman; "w'ankyir3 hen block letters. Block letters nso yi abaadze?" (What are block letters? We were not taught). "Don't you know capital letters?" She

asked, almost screaming. I said in my head, "Nti capital letters k3k3 na ne dzin kakraka d3m no?" I wrote my name in block letters and shaded it.

She didn't go away. She might have suspected that a boy who didn't know what block letters were might be capable of doing stupid mistakes. She kept scanning through my paper.

"You haven't answered any questions on CONCORD, why?"

"3rrrm, madam....3rrm, you see, I know what concord is but this concord confuses me."

"What Concord do you know and why does this confuse you?"

"I come from Mankessim. The Concord we know is the Concord truck that brings goods to the Mankessim market on every market day."

The invigilator took two steps backward and took a critical look at me. She asked; "What school do you attend?" I answered; "Edumadze District Assembly JHS."

She left me, almost laughing out loud. About five minutes later, she came back with a colleague invigilator. Obviously she had told my legendary

story to the colleague so they both came in with this succinct smile on their faces. The colleague invigilator asked amidst held-back-laughter; "What did you say CONCORD was?"

They were kind to me afterward. They told me what to shade and what to clean. I did.

Immediately they left, I felt a tap on my shoulder from behind. And then a voice followed; "Wosi block letters ye abaadze?" (What did they say 'block letters' were)?"

Sagoe too wanted to know.

Some months ago I met Magdalene. She has two beautiful kids. A girl and a boy. I looked at their pretty faces and asked; "I hope you kids know what the flesh of a goat is called." She slapped my shoulders and screamed aaaaah! We both burst out laughing.

Poor little kids. They didn't get the joke. If only they knew what their mother called goat meat when she was a girl. But I can bet on my last coin that she too tells her kids that she was always first in class when she was a kid ■

Invigilator:

What Concord do you know and why does this confuse you?

Student:

I come from Mankessim. The Concord we know is the Concord truck that brings goods to the Mankessim market on every market day."



Mr Kwabena Okuamoah Agyekum (arrowed) with participants at the training

FIRST EVER TRAINING OF RCBS ON MARKETING STRATEGY

To improve the marketing approach to business of the Rural and Community Banks (RCBs), the largest network of banks in Ghana, the ARB Apex Bank organized a two-day nationwide training tour for some board members and managers of selected RCBs.

The training tour which is the first of its kind attracted Directors, General Managers and Business Development Managers of the RCBs and

the focus was on Marketing Mix and Strategy Development. It was organised in collaboration with the Chartered Institute of Marketing Ghana (CIMG) and was facilitated by Mr Kwabena A. Agyekum (Executive Director, CIMG), Mr Prosper M. Attipoe (Programmes and Learning Officer, CIMG) and Mr Gordon P. D. Dery (Head of Business Devt, Marketing & Reserarch, ARB Apex Bank).

The tour was held in three zones in tandem; Zone A had their session from November 22nd – 23rd 2019 in Kumasi and comprised Ashanti, Western, Central and Western North Regions. Zone B had Eastern, Volta, Greater Accra and Oti Regions,

and took place from November 25th - 26th, 2019 in Koforidua. The last leg of the tour was held from November 28th – 29th, 2019 in Sunyani for Zone C, made up of Bono, Bono East, Ahafo, Northern, Savannah, North-East, Upper East and Upper West regions.

The training was designed as an interactive and practical session with Syndicated Group Work, Case Studies, Activities, Videos and Face-to-Face Presentation as the mode of delivery. The major areas covered were the Value of Marketing, Marketing Information Systems, Marketing Audits, New Product Development Process, Branding, Marketing Planning Process among others.

The participants expressed satisfaction for the training taunting it as very key to their future growth and competitive advantage. With insights into these key topics, the RCBs planned to use some of the ideas to roll out new products in the coming years and make good

investments in the marketing function for improved business.

The programme was highly recommended for a mop up to be done in 2020 for the benefit of other RCBs, sighting the practical activities and presentations they

experienced, which according to them had lasting impressions for their learning outcomes.

THE MARKETING STRATEGY TRAINING IN PICTURES

SESSION 1



SESSION 2



SESSION 3





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World Savings Day

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31

10

2

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1

9

FIRST EVER “WORLD SAVINGS DAY” CELEBRATED IN GHANA

ARB Apex Bank led Rural and Community Banks (RCBs) to celebrate “World Savings Day” for the first time in the history of the financial sector in Ghana and the rural banking sector in particular.

The celebration which was on the theme “Save Right, Create Wealth”, was marked by panel discussions held on strategically selected community radio stations across the country on Thursday, October 31, 2019.

The in-studio discussions were held by panels composed of Directors, General Managers, representatives of ARB Apex Bank and the Association of Rural Banks.

The radio discussions were held in the local dialects of the various communities and focused on savings culture, resilience of RCBs, new developments in the industry, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the issues surrounding the general RCB industry. It was an image-building

and community engagement exercise, which brought the RCBs closer to the communities in which they operate for a better understanding of their operations.

In all, over seventy (70) RCBs participated in the programme with very far reaching results as some RCBs were represented in the studio for the first time to discuss issues of mutual interest and for them, it sent a good signal of the unity and resilience of the RCBs to their customers and the general public.

▶▶ Pg. 59



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The public reaction was that of excitement as some called their banks to congratulate them for what they heard on radio and further indicated that the fear of the collapse of their RCBs was eliminated and their

confidence increased.

This and other initiatives by the Bank will be implemented and upscaled for the benefit of the RCB fraternity as yearly events. We will continue to

provide such opportunities as avenues to “tell our story” and portray a united front to all our teeming customers and the general public as per our tagline: “Together for Progress” ■

STAFF OF RCBs TOOK TO RADIO STATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON WORLD SAVINGS DAY



MIR FRANCIS AKOTO

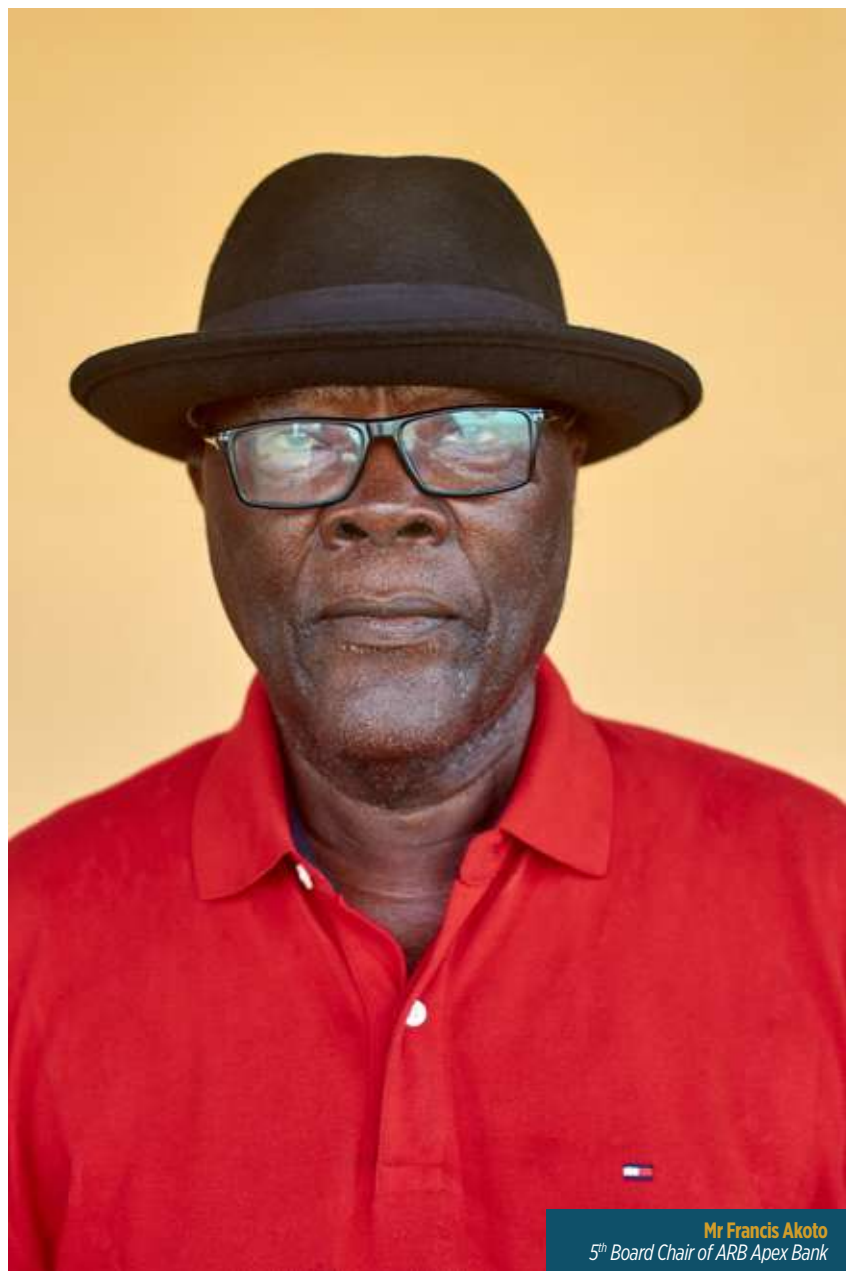
5TH BOARD CHAIR OF ARB APEX BANK

In the first instance, membership of the Board of the ARB Apex Bank is by institutional representation. Until recently, there were ten (10) regions in Ghana. Each region was designated as a chapter. However, the three northern regions i.e., Northern, Upper East and Upper West were given two slots. This made the representation of the regional chapters on the Board to be nine.

In addition to these, were four other institutional representatives, namely, the Association of Rural Banks, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Bank of Ghana and ARB Apex Bank, which is represented by the Managing Director. The Board, therefore, consisted of thirteen (13) institutional representatives.

To become a Chapter representative, one has to become a Director of a Rural/Community Bank (RCB). I joined Agave Rural Bank Limited (AgRB) IN 1997 and became its vice-chairman. Two years later, I was elected its Chairman and therefore an automatic member of the Volta Chapter. Three years later, I was elected as the President of the Chapter. A vacancy came on the National Council of the Association of Rural Banks in 2007. I applied for it and was elected to represent the Chapter on the Council.

The Volta Chapter representative on the Board of the ARB Apex Bank was going to exhaust his maximum two terms of three years each on December 31, 2009. The National Association called for an elected representative. I applied for it and was elected unopposed.



Mr Francis Akoto
5th Board Chair of ARB Apex Bank



Mr Francis Akoto, 5th Board Chair of ARB Apex Bank and wife, Mrs Agnes Akoto

I therefore joined the Board of the ARB Apex Bank Limited on January 1, 2010 and was appointed at its first meeting the Chairman of the Audit and Finance Committee. At the end of my first term of three years in 2012, I was again elected to represent the Chapter for the second and final term.

At the beginning of this term, I was elected (not unopposed) to be its Chairman.

In all, I served the Board of the ARB Apex Bank for the maximum two terms of six years from 2010 to 2015 when I retired.

During this period, I enjoyed the full support and co-operation of all the stakeholders, fellow directors,

management of the Bank led by its Managing Director and the Secretary, other members of staff, especially the Union Executives, Members of the Ladies Club, the National Association of Rural Banks, owners (members) i.e., all Rural and Community Banks.

Consequently, the Bank performed very well, posting profits and at times declaring dividends, advancing and bailing out distressed RCBs.

Despite the above congenial environment in which the Bank was operating, there were a few challenges of staff and management. These I consider to be normal in any business enterprise. Those issues were resolved amicably and the few which escalated to the Board, were also professionally resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

After my tenure as Board Chairman of the ARB Apex Bank, elections to the Chapter Rep on the ARB Apex Bank Board became very competitive. This can largely be attributed to the good works I did as well as the vibrancy I brought to the Chapter activities.

You may ask what is my background. I am a Chartered Accountant but now retired. I was admitted to the full membership of the Institute of Chartered Accountants (Ghana) in 1985 after having passed final professional examination a year earlier.

I worked with Barclays Bank Limited, Agricultural Development Bank Ghana Limited and the Ghana Cocoa Board (Cocobod).

I worked as a Chief Accountant of Produce Inspection Division (now Quality Control Company) of Cocobod. I was transferred to the Head Office in the same capacity. Later I was transferred to the Cocoa Services Division as the Deputy Executive Director and finally to Cocoa Processing Company as Deputy Managing Director where I retired in 2004.

You could notice that whilst working with the organisations named above, I was studying for my professional examinations which I cleared in 1984.

After retirement, I have engaged myself in all types of jobs within my family, town, district, church etc. Currently, I have been engaged on a book of the meanings of Ewe names but mainly Agave names. There is a very rich knowledge to be gained there but left unexplored.

Editor's Note:
This profile of Mr Francis Akoto, 5th Chairman of the Board of Directors of the ARB Apex Bank for The Rural Banker by Mr Akoto himself.



Mr Francis Akoto

MEET OUR RICH CADRE OF GENERAL MANAGERS

Richard Merz

General Manager, Asutifi Rural Bank



Education

Mr Richard Merz holds a Master of

Business Administration (Finance) degree from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi as well as a Bachelor of Science (Agriculture) degree from the same university. He is a product of Opoku Ware School in Kumasi.

Experience

Richard's 11 years' experience spans Finance, Agricultural Economics, Computer and Credit Risk Management. He has performed roles covering Credit Administration, Product Development and Reengineering, Financial Analysis to Systems Administration.

Prior to being appointed General Manager of Asutifi Rural Bank in April 2019, he has also served as Head of Finance and Administration from 2017 to 2019, ICT Manager from 2010 to 2017 and Deputy Credit Manager from 2008 to 2010.

Family Life

Richard is married to Juliet, a Teacher at Acherensua Methodist Basic School and they are blessed with five (5) sons and daughters namely, Jeffrey, Jason, Jeannelle, Jerrald and Jerrold. He loves playing musical instruments and sightseeing.

Benjamin Henry Amosah

General Manager, Agona Rural Bank



Education

Mr Benjamin Henry Amosah is a Chartered Banker (ACIB-Gh) and has over 30 years' experience in the banking industry. He holds a Master of Business

Administration (Finance option). He has undertaken several courses and attended several training programmes including Strategic Business Planning and development, Analysis of Financial Markets, Marketing Management, Credit Administration and Microfinance.

Experience

Mr Benjamin Henry Amosah was employed by the bank in 1985 after his national service. He was the Branch Manager of Kwanyako, Swedru and Duakwa branches from 1989 to 1995. He was appointed the Accountant of the bank in 1996. He was promoted to the grade of Assistant Manager and was appointed the Head of Finance and Operations department when the bank introduced a new management structure in 2001.

By dint of hard work he was promoted to the grade of Chief Manager and acted as the deputy General Manager until his appointment as the General Manager of the Bank on April 1, 2014. He also doubles as Secretary to the Board.

Value Addition

Since his appointment as the General Manager, he has been able to open a new branch at Coaltar, in the Ayensuano District in the Eastern region.

Family and social Life

Benjamin is married and is blessed with four (4) children. He loves listening to Gospel Music. He is also interested in reading and watching football.

Stephen Yaw Adu-Yeboah

General Manager, Capital Rural Bank



Education

Mr Stephen Yaw Adu-Yeboah holds a Bachelor of Science (Agriculture) degree from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) Kumasi in 2005. He is currently pursuing a Master of Science (Economics) degree at the KNUST. He is a product of the St James Seminary and Senior High School at Sunyani, which he completed in 1999.

Experience

He was appointed General Manager of the bank on June 2014. Prior to his appointment, he was the Credit and Marketing Manager at Suhum Rural Bank from April 2014 to May 2014. He also served as the Credit Manager and Publicity Officer at Capital Rural Bank from November 2012 to March 2014. Stephen also served as Branch Supervisor and Publicity Officer at Capital Rural Bank from November 2010 to October 2012. He was also the Credit and Business Development Officer at the Bank from April 2009 to November 2010. Between October 2006 and April 2009, he was the Credit and Publicity Officer.

He had his mandatory National Service at the Animal Production Directorate (Amrahia Dairy Farm), Ministry of Food and Agriculture from August 2005 to September 2006.

Achievements

Some of the major achievements under his tenure include:

- a) Deposits have grown by 40% from GHS10 million in 2014 to GHS14 million by 2019
- b) The bank met the new minimum capital of GHS1.0 million in 2017
- c) The Bank was adjudged 1st Runner Up, Most profitable Rural Bank at the 2017 Rural and Community Banks Excellence Awards
- d) Two mobilization centres have been added to the bank's operations in 2019
- e) The non-performing loans portfolio has dropped from 20 percent to 4.0 percent in four years

Family and Social Life

Stephen is married and is blessed with four lovely sons. He loves reading, watching movies and playing computer games at his leisure times.

Pobi Antwi Donkor

General Manager, Ahafo Community Bank



Education

Mr Pobi Antwi Donkor is a native of Asante Mampong in the Ashanti Region. He started his elementary education at St Anthony's Roman Catholic Primary and Middle School. He attended St Joseph's Seminary Secondary – Mampong Ashanti for his 'O' Level and St Hubert Seminary – Kumasi for his 'A' Level. He obtained a BA (Sociology and Political Science) degree from University of Ghana, Legon. He is a Chartered Banker from Chartered Institute of Bankers – Ghana.

Experience

Mr Donkor joined Ahafo Community Bank as a Credit Manager on January 2, 2006 and rose to become the General Manager of the Bank on July 1, 2016.

Family life

Mr Pobi Antwi Donkor is married to Madam Sabina Pokuaa and God has blessed them with four children: Nyantakyiwaa, Adutwumwaa, Amankwaa and Antwiwaa.

Sylvester Kwaku Torku

General Manager, Avenor Rural Bank



Early life and Education

Mr Sylvester Kwaku Torku had his Secondary School education at Akatsi Secondary Technical School in the Volta Region. He proceeded to the University of Cape Coast where he obtained a Bachelor of Science (Commerce) degree. He is currently a Level II student at the Institute of Chartered Accountants Ghana (ICAG).

Experience

Sylvester began his banking career as a Senior Clerk at Avenor Rural Bank after completing his mandatory National Service at Anlo Afiadenyigba Secondary School in the 2004/2005 academic year. Due to hard work, humility and selfless service rendered at the front desk of the bank, he was transferred to the Dzodze Agency as the Officer-in-charge from 2006 to 2009.

From the Dzodze Agency, he was moved to the Denu Agency as the Officer-in-charge from 2010 to 2013 and later transferred in 2013 to the Head Office as the Operations Manager, a role he held until 2016. He was appointed General Manager the same year when the role became vacant. Sylvester has therefore been the General Manager for Avenor Rural Bank for three years.

Training

The bank has experienced an

impressive growth under Sylvester's tenure. The following positive indices indicate the bank is on a positive trajectory:

- a) It successfully moved from Fair categorization in 2015 to Satisfactory in 2016 and has since maintained this position.
- b) A successful diversification of the bank's investment portfolio, thereby increasing returns by 25 percent from 2017 to 2018
- c) Deposits have improved considerably
- d) Overhead costs have also been substantially reduced

Family life

Sylvester is married to Roseline and they are blessed with two daughters, namely, Mawufeasi and Eyam. He is an Elder of the Church of Pentecost. He loves reading the word of God, preaching, listening to gospel music and is an avid follower of football and boxing.

Francis Agyei Bekoe

General Manager, Bosomtwi Rural Bank



Education

Mr Francis Agyei Bekoe holds a Higher National Diploma (Accounting option), a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree in Finance from the Sunyani Polytechnic (now Sunyani Technical University), University of Cape Coast and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) respectively.

Experience

Francis began his banking career at Nkoranman Rural Bank immediately after completing the HND in 1999. He

has also worked with Adansi Rural Bank. His total Rural and Community Banking (RCB) experience spans 18 years and covers areas such as marketing, loan recovery, deposits mobilization, internal controls management, etc

He has been Chief Executive Officer of Bosomtwe Rural Bank, based in Ashanti since December 2014.

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Joseph Mensah Jr

Chief Executive Officer, Afram Community Bank (ACBank)



Experience

Joseph is a highly seasoned business executive with over 10 years of experience in Financial Services and Consulting. His professional strengths include Strategic Change Management, Credit Risk Management, Financial Reporting Systems, Retail Banking, and Strategy Development.

Prior to being appointed the Chief Executive Officer of Afram Community Bank in August 2014, Joseph worked as the Head of Banking Operations with the bank from January 2013 to August 2014. He also doubles as Secretary to the Board of Directors of the bank. He had earlier served the same Bank for five (5) years as the Head of Credit and Projects. He joined the bank in Bank in 2009.

Achievements

Under Joseph's watch, Afram Community Bank has undergone amazing transformation and rebranding from a small and struggling medium-sized bank to a major, profitable bank.

The stated Capital of the Bank has grown over 300% within a period of five (5) years under his leadership; exceeding the current Bank of Ghana's minimum capital requirement by over 50%.

The total Assets and Deposits of the Bank have both tripled since he was appointed CEO of ACBank thereby improving the ranking status of the Bank by ARB Apex Bank Ltd from Marginal to Satisfactory and constantly being maintained.

Family life

Joseph is married and a proud father of two boys.

Hobbies and Interests

He likes watching games, especially soccer. Joseph loves to read extensively and to play soccer. Joseph is a Christian and a Deacon/Church Secretary of the Victory Assembly, Tease Assemblies of God Church.

Education

Mr Joseph Mensah Jr from a humble family at Goaso in the Ahafo Region holds a Master of Business Administration (Banking and Finance) from the University of Cape Coast (UCC) and a Bachelor of Science (Agriculture) from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). He is a product of Achimota School.

Noble Martin Adjei-Amponsah

General Manager, Suma Rural Bank



University of Science and Technology (KNUST). He is also a product of the University of Cape Coast, and Kumasi Polytechnic (now Kumasi Technical University).

Experience

Martin joined Kaaseman Rural Bank in 2001 first as Branch Manager at Sefwi Osei Kojokrom and later in the same capacity at Debiso. He was appointed General Manager of Suma Rural Bank in July 2008, a position he has held since then. He therefore has over 18 years of experience in the RCB industry.

Achievements

On assumption of office as the General Manager, Noble Adjei-Amponsah facilitated the upgrading of the bank's position from "Fair to Satisfactory" on the ARB Apex Bank's Efficiency and

Monitoring Unit (EMU) rating within a year.

The bank has also placed 65th position on the Ghana Club 100 rankings for three consecutive years.

As a result of his hard work, Martin was selected for the West Africa Nobles Forum Awards held at Akosombo in the Eastern Region in 2014. He was named a 'Noble' for his Honesty, Integrity and Accountability. In 2015, he was named a Fellow of the Civilian Institute of Democratic Administration of Africa (FCIDA) based in Nigeria.

Family Life

He is married and blessed with two (2) children. He loves reading the bible and watching football at his leisure times.

Adormah Mawunyo

General Manager, Jomoro Rural Bank



Education

Mr Adormah Mawunyo had his Secondary School education at the Nkroful Agricultural Secondary School (NASS) in the Western Region and proceeded to the then Takoradi Polytechnic (now Takoradi Technical University), where he pursued a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Marketing.

He also obtained a Bachelor of Science (Marketing) degree from the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) and topped it up with an MBA (Finance) from the University of Cape Coast.

Experience

Mawunyo who describes himself as a consummate Rural Banker, began his career as an Operations Officer at Jomoro Rural Bank in the year 2003.

He excelled and was made Branch Manager and subsequently promoted to Head of Banking Operations. He was again elevated to the position of Deputy General Manager and subsequently appointed General Manager of the Bank in 2014.

Achievements

He mentioned some of his achievements as:

- a) The successful migration of the bank from the manual operation to

a fully computerised and networked bank

b) Rebranding and repositioning of the bank for effective competition in the market place

c) Massive improvements on all the key performance indicators of the bank

Family Life

He is married to Rebecca and they are blessed with two adorable children, namely, Mawunyo and Mawuyram.

Mawunyo is an Elder, Executive Committee Member, and Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Church of Pentecost at the Tikobo Number One District. He is also a member of the Axim Area Finance, Audit and Monitoring Team of the Church of Pentecost.

He enjoys listening to gospel music, reading, and watching movies during his leisure times.

Ali Maamah

General Manager; Nkoranman Rural Bank



Education

Mr Ali Maamah is a product of the University of Cape Coast where he graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) degree. He also has a professional qualification from the Chartered Institute of Bankers, Ghana.

Experience

Maamah started his banking career in 1994 with Suma Rural Bank, where he was the Head of Audit. He later joined Nkoranman Rural Bank as Internal Auditor in March 2011 and rose through the ranks until his appointment as the General Manager in 2014. He has over 25 years of a successful career in Banking, Business Development and Administration.

Achievements

At the time he took over as the General Manager, Nkoranman Rural Bank was facing serious financial challenges but through his ingenuity and foresight, the bank has experienced a positive turn around. Some key achievements include:

- a) Intensive deposit mobilization across all branches
- b) Share mobilization, which led to meeting the bank of Ghana minimum capital requirement of

GHS1,000,000.

c) The bank moved from a loss making position to profit

d) Enhanced the human capacity of staff through training

e) Provided banking advisory services to the bank with the aim of improving operational efficiency and efficient customer service

f) Provided a clear vision and sense of direction to achieve set targets

Family Life and Social Life

Maamah is married and is blessed with nine (9) kids. He loves listening to news, reading and playing football.

Mark Kofi Krah

General Manager, Frerol Community Bank



Education

Mr Mark Kofi Krah holds a Bachelor of Science (Accounting and Finance) in 2014 from the Evangelical Presbyterian University College, which is affiliated to the University of Cape Coast. Mark is currently a final year MBA (Finance) student at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi. He holds a Higher National Diploma (Accounting) in 2002 and is a product of Kadjebi Asato Secondary School, Kadjebi in the newly created Oti Region.

Experience

Mark was appointed General Manager of Frerol Rural Bank on January 1, 2019.

He hopes to bring the many successes he chalked at Asubonteng Rural Bank to the new position at Frerol Rural Bank.

He was employed as a Clerk by Asubonten Rural Bank in November 2002. By dint of hard work, he rose through the ranks to become the General Manager of Asubonteng Rural Bank in October 2012. At the time of his appointment as the General Manager, he was the only officer of the bank who had managed all five (5) branches of the bank namely, Worawora Head Office Branch, Hohoe, Kpando, Dambai, and Chinderi.

Before being appointed as the General Manager, he was also the Operations and Marketing Officer of the bank between February and June 2012 and Accounts, Treasury and Reconciliation Officer from July 2012 to October 2012.

Achievements at Asubonteng Rural Bank

To ensure effective administration and smooth running of the bank, Mark developed a comprehensive organogram with specific job schedules for various positions at the bank. The positions include, ICT, Finance, Credit, Internal Audit, Compliance and the role of Control. Deputy General Manager in-charge of Operations.

The reforms brought a lot of efficiency into the system at the bank and deposits increased from GHS4.1 million as at the end of December 2012 to GHS7.9 million by December 2018. Again, as General Manager of Asubonten Rural Bank, he made sure the bank remained liquid throughout his tenure. For the past 11 months Mark has been working at General Manager of Frerol Rural Bank, he has introduced strategies that have increased seen an improvement of deposits of the bank.

Family life

He likes reading the Holy Bible, listening to Gospel music and reading story books ■

SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN RURAL AND COMMUNITY BANKS (RCBs)

Dr Albaji Yahaya Abdul-Raman

This is the concluding part of the article published in Issue # 7 of The Rural Banker magazine. Part I dwelt on relevant concepts and key pillars of good customer service.

OVERVIEW

In the previous article in the immediate past publication, the focus was on understanding the relevant concepts and key pillars of service quality and customer satisfaction. The article discussed customer service, service quality and customer satisfaction, the captive customer, satisfied and dissatisfied customers, customer service charter (CSC), customer service unit (CSU), internal customers, suppliers and the external customer.

This second part focuses on the determinants of service quality and customer satisfaction. As mentioned in the previous publication, the author tries to avoid the temptation of being overly academic but rather tries to bring out practical perspectives on the subject matter. For the sake of readers who enjoy extensive academic exploration however, there has been synthesis of materials from



Dr Albaji Yahaya Abdul-Rahman
Board Chairman

theoretical and empirical literature sources on the concepts of service quality and customer satisfaction. Several writers and researches who have written on these include Parasuraman et al 1985; Parasuraman et al (1988); Gronroos (1984); Brady and Cronin (2001); Thai et al. (2008); Kolanovic et al. (2011); and many others. Those who have contributed to the literature on service quality in banking include Cowling and Newman (1995); Dawes and Swales (1999); Chaoprasert and Eley (2004); Greenrooms (1990); Zeithaml et al. (1985); Schneider and White (2004); McCleary and Weaver (1982); Zemke and Albrecht (1985); Hollowell, (1996); Reichheld and Sasser, (1990); Newman

and Cowling, (1996); and many others.

Determinants of Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Despite the existence of other approaches in this subject area, the SERVQUAL (service quality) model of Parasuraman et al. (1988) has been a very popular tool in assessing service quality and customer satisfaction in many business sectors across many countries in the world. Under the SERVQUAL model, several Service quality determinants have been categorized under the five broad headings of:

- a) Reliability
- b) Assurance
- c) Tangibles
- d) Empathy
- e) Responsiveness

Service reliability is the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. This dimension of service quality examines the ability of the service provider to perform services right the first time and keep service promises.

Responsiveness is the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. A service provider is responsive if he/she is prompt in service delivery, is willing to help customers and has personnel who respond to customer requests. Assurance refers to the knowledge and courtesy of employees



IoD-GH CORPORATE GOVERNANCE TRAINING

The Institute of Directors-Ghana (IoD-Gh) is a professional institution established in 1999 to promote good corporate governance in Ghana through training, consultancy services, advisory services, research, and advocacy. The Institute organizes a six-week training programme as a route to membership. The objects of the training are to enable Directors to;

1. Add value to corporate activities
2. Improve their skills and competencies
3. Introduce professionalism into their practice

DURATION

The course runs on three streams namely; weekend and weekday (Morning and Evening). The weekend stream is conducted on Saturdays only for now. The duration is six (6) Saturdays and six (6) workdays respectively and is equivalent to thirty-six (36) credit hours.

TARGET GROUP

Board and Council Members, Chief Executives, Senior Managers, Board Secretaries, Partners, Entrepreneurs, Professionals, Academicians, Clergy and Civil Society.

CERTIFICATE

A professional certificate is issued to participants who complete the course. Such participants are admitted into full membership of the Institute of Directors-Ghana. Members are entitled to use the designation MIoD after their names.

COURSE MATERIALS

Each participant receives comprehensive course materials containing lecture notes, articles, case studies and essential documents for use during the training program. This toolkit also serves as a reference manual thereafter.

FACULTY

The IoD-Gh's unique professional training is endowed with a faculty composed of talented and broadly experienced professionals. These professionals include Lawyers, Accountants, Bankers and other industry experts drawn from both the private and public sectors of the economy. They possess excellent skills in teaching and have a deep passion for good corporate governance.

and their ability to convey trust and confidence. The service provider must instill confidence in customers in the process of service delivery. There is empathy when employees are not only easily approachable and accessible to customers but are also willing to listen and attend to the needs of such customers. Tangibility on the other hand is what is physically evident as the “vehicles” for providing the required services. Tangibles include tools and equipment as well as physical space and facilities that are used in service delivery.

Despite the popularity of the SERVQUAL model, many studies have been conducted on the concept. Many variations have been introduced in many studies on service quality. Other writers on service quality have emphasized that the number of quality determinants can be varied to suit the studies being conducted in a particular industry or business sector. The presentation of service quality determinants in this article has been couched based on some views that call for appropriate and suitable variations in the categorization of service quality determinants by some earlier studies in retail banking in some parts of the world.

Service Quality Determinants in Banking

The underlisted service quality determinants in banking are presented to help deepen understanding on the subject matter. It is believed that the understanding of this subject can influence the minds of readers in banking to help modify the underlisted quality determinants to suit the peculiarities of their banks and catchment areas.

Reliability

This refers to the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. The following quality determinants constitute the reliability dimension of service quality.

Customer support – customer support is a key service quality determinant in the banking industry. Customers appreciate support provided by staff in matters such as the filling of deposit forms, filling of withdrawal forms, filling of loan and overdraft application forms, making requests for automated teller machine (ATM) cards, Payment Orders, etc.



Staff courtesy – This refers to good manners and hospitality of employees towards customers.

Staff knowledge – This refers to the relevant knowledge of employees without which quality service cannot be provided.

Staff integrity – In this part of the world, where corruption is rampant integrity of staff can influence the customer's perception of service quality. This refers to being honest and having strong moral principles relating to the job.

Complaint handling – Complaint handling should be focused on the satisfactory resolution of customers' grievances. There should be an effective mechanism to resolve and handle complaints. There should also be a way of assessing complainants' satisfaction with the way their complaints are handled.

Cost of doing business – The cost of doing business is an important service quality determinant. Issues involved include, the level of service charges and the frequency with which upward revisions are made.

Return on customer deposits – Customers appreciate returns on their deposits, no matter how small.

Competence

Organizational competence in this context, refers to the combinational effect of knowledge, skills, experiences and attitudes of all employees, which deliver the expected solutions to customers.

Communication with the customer

– The quality of communication is influenced by factors such as:

- a) The existence of a customer service unit which interacts with and gives basic information on products and services.
- b) The provision of regular information that is relevant to customers.

Complaint handling should be focused on the satisfactory resolution of customers' grievances. There should be an effective mechanism to resolve and handle complaints. There should also be a way of assessing complainants' satisfaction with the way their complaints are handled.

- c) The existence of a mechanism for receiving information from customers.
- d) Conducting regular surveys on customers to gauge their satisfaction levels with the services provided.
- e) Obtaining regular and accurate information on the characteristics of all customers.
- f) Periodically assessing the needs and preferences of customers.

Timeliness in service delivery – With respect to timeliness, there should be:

- a) General promptness in service delivery
- b) Existence of time standards for providing various services
- c) Provision of prompt information during enquiries
- d) Provision of prompt services that are required by customers
- e) Short turn-around times of customers in the banking hall



Working hours must be very convenient for customers. The extension of banks' closing hours from 2.00 pm in the 1980s and 1990s to 5.00 pm and the introduction of Saturday banking in recent times are manifestations of banks' desire to improve service quality in terms of business hours.



Accuracy in transactions – Errors in banking transactions on customers' accounts should be at the barest minimum.

Safety of customers' investments

Customers should perceive their investments (deposits and investments in securities) to be safe at all times.

Keeping confidentiality of accounts and transactions

– Customers must have a firm conviction that information on their accounts and transactions will not be leaked but will be kept confidential at all times.

Various kinds of services offered

– Customers should have access to options, in respect of the various products and services that are provided.

Tangibles

Tangibles refer to the appearance of physical facilities and equipment in service delivery. The following are relevant examples:

- a. Infrastructure facilities such as parking space, ATMs, etc.
- b. Banking network or how well it is functioning
- c. Modern equipment and décor (their beauty and appeal)
- d. Internet banking facility and its functionality
- e. Adequacy of tangibles. Are they adequate? In some banks, chairs for customers are not adequate
- f. Quality of tangibles. Are they of satisfactory or of good quality? The frequent breakdown of operating equipment and facilities depict their poor quality, which can result in customer dissatisfaction

Empathy

Empathy refers to the level of care and individual attention the bank's personnel provide its customers. Some of the elements which constitute empathy are as follows:

Ease of operating bank account – The procedures and steps in the operation of bank accounts must not be complicated, but should be simplified and made easy.

Convenient business hours – Working hours must be very convenient for customers. The extension of banks' closing hours from 2.00 pm in the 1980s and 1990s to 5.00 pm and the introduction of Saturday banking in recent times are manifestations of banks' desire to improve service quality in terms of business hours.

Customer convenience and comfort in doing business – Key elements that generate convenience and comfort in doing business include the following:

- a. Comfort and neatness of waiting room for customers' use
- b. Comfort of the banking hall
- c. Neatness of washrooms for the use of customers
- d. Simplification and non-complication of documentation procedures for accessing facilities and services

Different income-earning options

– banks should provide options to allow customers to earn incomes on their investments. For instance, customers should have the option to choose the application of interest on their investments and deposits on fortnightly, monthly, quarterly, trimesterly, half-yearly, or yearly bases. Banks must develop many options for customers to choose from.

Understanding the customer – Without understanding the customer and his/her characteristics and special needs, a bank will not be able to develop services that meet their needs. Understanding the customer should not be a one-time process. There should be periodic evaluation of customer needs and preferences, otherwise a bank's products and services will be archaic, outmoded and lag behind contemporary customer needs. Physical access to the bank's premises and services by customers with special attention to the physically weak, the aged and physically challenged persons influence customers' level of satisfaction. This is a service quality determinant for many vulnerable members of society.

Language diversity – In a business environment where there are multiple languages, printed materials and oral communications should be provided in applicable languages so as not to disadvantage a section of customers. A typical example is what happens during air travels. The airports, pilots and crews are always sensitive to the language preferences and/or handicap of air travelers and therefore make announcements in different languages.

Security – The issue of security is very key in customer satisfaction. Issues of security include the security of car parks, the security of cars, the personal security of the customer him/herself and the security of customers' accounts, deposits and investments.

Fairness in service delivery is an important source of customer satisfaction –

- This can be based on elements such as:
- Fairness in service charges to customers
 - Fairness in providing prompt services to customers
 - Fairness in the prompt handling of complaints of customers

Flexibility in service delivery

Service providers, including banks must be flexible in their service delivery. A lot of studies on service quality have

included flexibility as an essential element of service quality. Flexibility in service delivery has components such as adaptability and spontaneity.

Service adaptability – This is the ability to handle a special request for a special service (out of the usual services provided).

Service spontaneity – This is the ability to provide an unscheduled request from a customer, outside the usual routine.

Summary and Conclusion

Service quality and customer satisfaction are influenced by service quality determinants. The quality determinants mentioned in this article are not exhaustive. Service quality determinants should be made relevant to an organization's type of business. In the opinion of the author, many of the quality determinants will be relevant for many banks, but each bank must determine the determinants that are relevant to customer satisfaction in its catchment areas. ■

Author:

Dr Alhaji Yahaya Abdul-Rahman is a Practicing Chartered Accountant since 1995 and holds a PGD from Coady Institute, Canada. He holds a BSc Admin (accounting), an M. Phil in Social Work and a PhD in Public Administration from the University of Ghana, Legon, with research experience in service quality and customer satisfaction. Outside rural banking, Dr Yahaya has occupied positions (1995 – 2008) as Chief Auditor, Credit Manager, HR Manager, and Financial Controller at places such as GCB Bank, ELF Oil (now Total) and GIPC. Dr Yahaya has been associated with rural banking since 1984 – 1985, when he was a manager trainee at the Nandom and Naara Rural Banks. Between 1985 and 1990, he managed the Sonzele and Bessfa Rural Banks. Dr Yahaya has over 20 years consulting and lecturing experience with the EU, EC, UNDP, World Bank, VRA, Ghana Govt, National Banking College, UPS, and UDS. He is currently the CEO/Managing Partner of Ruyan Consult, a firm of Chartered Accountants and Management Consultants.



OUR BOARD CHAIRMEN

Hon. Robert Kwasi Amoah

Chairman of the Board of Directors, South Birim Rural Bank



Education and experience

Hon Robert Kwasi Amoah holds a Master of Philosophy (Guidance and Counselling) and has been Chairman of

the Board of Directors of South Birim Rural Bank since June 1993.

He is also the Member of Parliament for the Achiase Constituency in the Eastern Region.

Innovations at the bank

Through his experienced leadership at the boardroom, the following feats have been chalked:

- a) The bank moved from a loss making position to a profit making bank
- b) Construction of the Head Office building, with a 500 seating capacity conference hall at Achiase
- c) Expansion in the branch network from an initial two branches to seven. The new branches added are Akim Oda, Akim Asene,

Asamankese, Akwatia and New Abirem

Hobbies and Personal Interests

Hon Robert Kwasi Amoah loves reading and teaching.

He also has a strong passion for Youth, Agriculture and Rural Development.

Dzoboku Benjamin

Chairman of the Board of Directors, Mepe Rural Bank



Education

Mr Dzoboku Benjamin is a Chartered Accountant (ICA, Ghana), a member of the Chartered Institute of Taxation (CIT, Ghana), a Fellow of the Institute of Financial Accountants (US), and a Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE, USA). He holds an MBA (Financial Management) from Clement University and a Master of Public Administration from the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA).

Experience

He joined the board in 2013.

He has worked as a Senior Auditor with Pannell Kerr Forster (PFK Ghana), an Internal Auditor with SG Bank and also as the Head, Risk Management, Internal Audit, Financial Controller, Group Treasurer, General Manager, Banking Operations all at the then HFC Bank (now Republic Bank, Ghana Limited).

Simon Nerro Kodjo Davor

Chairman of the Board of Directors, Avenor Rural Bank



Education

Mr Simon Nerro Kodjo Davor is a Chartered Accountant by profession and has been a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants Ghana (ICAG) since 1992. He holds a Master of Business Administration degree (MBA) from the University of Ghana, Legon in 1990. He also obtained a Bachelor of Science (Accounting) degree from the University of Ghana in 1987. He is a product of St Paul's Secondary School.

Experience

Industrial Experience

Mr Davor worked with Cooper & Lybrand Accountants (now PwC) as a Trainee from 1991 to 1992. His professional work experience began at Bank of Ghana from 1992 to 1997. He also worked with CAL Merchant Bank Limited in various capacities including Director of Audit and Director of Finance from 1997 to 2004. Mr Davor later joined the Agricultural Development Bank as Chief Internal Auditor from 2004 to 2006 and later

worked in the same bank as the General Manager, Finance from 2006 to 2010. From 2010 to 2013, he served as the Deputy Commissioner to the National Insurance Commission.

Teaching Experience

He was a part time lecturer at the Institute of Professional Studies (IPS) now University of Professional Studies, Accra, from 1992 to 1996 and at the Chartered Institute of Bankers Training School from 1993 to 1999.

Directorship

Mr Davor joined the Board of Avenor Rural Bank on September 16, 2001. At the time of joining the Board, the bank was on the verge of collapse. He had to look for people to buy shares to become Directors of the bank. He was appointed Chairman of the Board of Directors of the bank in August 2010. He is also the Chairman of Multi – System Prestige Company Limited (Shine 96.9 FM based at Avenor). He is a member of the Board of Directors of Vanguard Assurance Company Limited. He is also a Board member of Activity Venture Company Limited.

Achievements

National Assignments-Government of Ghana

- a) He was a member of the National Bonds Market Development Committee.
- b) He was a member of the Technical Committee of the Inter – Governmental Action Group on AML/CFT.

c) He was a member of the National Payments Systems Council.

d) He was the Chairman of National Fire Maintenance Fund.

Avenor Rural Bank

Throughout his tenure as a Director and Chairman, he brought more Shareholders to help shore up shareholding enabling the bank to meet the new minimum capital requirement of GHS1.0 million in 2017. He also championed the computerization of the operations of the bank. During his 18-year tenure, the branch network has grown from three (3) to six (6) by 2019. Investments have also grown from GHS3.98 million in 2015 to GHS7.70 million by 2018, a percentage increase of 93.47%.

Family Life

Mr Davor is married and is blessed with six (6) children.

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Jeffrey Konadu Addo

Chairman of the Board of Directors, Afram Community Bank



Handlesinstituttet, Bergen, Norway.

Experience

Mr Jeffrey Konadu Addo is an astute businessman and an experienced ICT Consultant. He has over twenty (20) years of functional ICT consulting and management experience in the areas of Software Systems Development, ICT Project Management, System Integration, Networking, Data Centre Management, ICT Project Implementations, and General Business Development.

Jeff is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of BEDCO Consulting Limited, a local ICT consulting firm in Ghana that engages in Business Process Outsourcing (B.P.O) in Software Development. He was the Regional Manager for West Africa for Fronter International, a Norwegian ICT in Education Company (now owned by Pearson International).

He is a co-founder and Board Member

of Ghana Oil Drilling Academy, www.godac.net, established together with NORTRAIN AS www.nortrain.no and other investors – GODAC is the first training center for Oil Rig workers in Ghana.

He is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Orcons Systems Limited, a major ICT Company in Ghana, specializing in software development, System Integration, Networking and Data Centre Management. Jeff is also the founder and Board Chairman of Daakye Pension Trust Limited, a licensed Corporate Trustee operating under the new Pensions Act, Act766 (2008).

Shareholding

Mr Jeffrey Konadu Addo is also the major shareholder and the Board Chairman of Afram Community Bank, based in Afram Plains in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

Education

Mr Jeffrey Konadu Addo who is a former Director-General of the National Information Technology Agency, holds a BA in Economics and Political science from the University of Oslo, Norway, Diploma in Export Management from the Institute of Export, London, UK and Diploma in ICT Management from

Kofi Wiredu Sasah

Chairman of the Board of Directors, Suma Rural Bank



positions in the Ghana Education Service, including the position of headmaster of Nafana Presbyterian Senior High School at Sampa in the Bono Region before his retirement from the service.

Directorship

Mr Wiredu has served as a Director of Suma Rural Bank Limited (SRBL) for 27 years. He was among the committee appointed in 1992 by the bank to mobilize shares and at the same time carry out feasibility study at Sampa so that the bank could establish an Agency in the town. As a result of the Chairman's hard work, he was appointed as a Director immediately after that exercise.

Mr. Wiredu as a number cruncher, was

able to learn rural banking operations and interpretation of the Bank of Ghana's prudential returns in a shortest possible time. He became the Vice-Chairman of the Board in 2006 and later became the Chairman of the Finance sub-committee of the Board in addition to his position as Vice-Chair of the Board. He held these two positions until he became the Board chairman in 2018.

SRBL is proud of having Mr Wiredu on its Board and attributes many of the successes to him.

Personal Interests

The Chairman has interest in Community development and church activities.

Education

Mr Kofi Wiredu Sasah holds a Bachelor of Education (Mathematics). As an Educationalist, he held several



Left to Right - Olufemi Muraino, Executive Director, Inlaks_ Shaun Lim, Sales Representative (Africa), Hyosung_ Yacoba Amuah, Head, Sales & Strategy

INLAKS, HYOSUNG INTRODUCE ULTRAMODERN ATMs IN GHANA

At the just ended ATM roadshow held in Accra with the theme “Innovation with the NextGen ATMs”, Inlaks introduced into the Ghanaian financial sector, new ultramodern and high-tech ATMs with enhanced features manufactured by the Korean-based Original Equipment Manufacturer, Hyosung Inc, to give customers and banks seamless experience, improved customer experience and more security as they perform their cash and non-cash transactions on Hyosung ATMs.

The newly introduced ATMs – MoniSafe 500, Monimax 8800, Monimax 5600ST, and Monimax 8600S, all come with new and exciting features in line with the global technology trends. The Monisafe 500, called the teller cash recycler, is made to increase branch efficiency in cash handling process where customers are now empowered with a self-service experience in cash deposit on terminals to eliminate errors on cash counting and counterfeit. The Monimax 8800, the video



The Monimax 5600 ST



The newly introduced ATMs – MoniSafe 500, Monimax 8800, Monimax 5600ST, and Monimax 8600S, all come with new and exciting features in line with the global technology trends.

teller machine, is also situated in the branch and has the function of performing routine self-service transactions to customers for a wide range of transactions and has the chance to interact with customer-service persons at the back office or contact center via a live video.

The latest FinTech enabled cash dispenser ATM, Monimax 5600ST, is designed with a high capacity cash dispenser, faster dispensing technology, robust system design, and configuration against vandalism.

It also has new features as near

field communication (NFC) reader for contactless transaction and finger print reader for biometric transactions on the ATMs. Lastly, the 8600S, a modern cash recycler, is powered by the latest cash recycling technology as well as improved fraud prevention technology.

The transit cassette available in the unit can offload and replenish the machine without exposing cash from the safe that improves efficiency and enhances security.

The Executive Director, IBU Africa Operations Inlaks, Tope Dare, said the ATMs will do more than just

dispense cash in the years ahead.

He said they will deliver all facets of the financial propositions such as service, sales, relationship building, promotional and brand and provide a range of community functionality and needs; for example, ticketing for events, among others.

Also speaking at the launch of the machines in Accra, Country Manager of Inlaks, Olufunmilayo Okubena, said the purpose is to make banking life easy and convenient for customers and banks. "It is all about the customer.

We are looking to offer the next



We are looking to offer the next generation technology to make the customer experience seamless in terms of ease of use and in terms of convenience for the customer where aside of just using your ATM cards, you can also get value added services from the ATM.

generation technology to make the customer experience seamless in terms of ease of use and in terms of convenience for the customer where aside of just using your ATM cards, you can also get value added services from the ATM.

And in terms of what we bring to bear, we are evolving the ATM business whereby from the standard ATMs that just dispense cash, we are offering solutions

which can actually accept cash and cheques and you can even have a direct interaction with the customer service person via video and telephone. It also affords the banks an opportunity to sell their services by this interaction,” he said. ■

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RDF Ghana Organizes Corporate Governance Training for 32 Rural and Community Banks

RDF Ghana, in partnership with the ARB Apex Bank and the International Finance Corporation, has held a day's training for Directors and Managers of 32 Rural and Community Banks. The training brought together 96 Board Members and General Managers of selected Rural and Community Banks. The training was aimed at bringing key Corporate Governance themes like: the Effective Board and the Governance of Risk to the fore. Participants were also introduced to IFC's Corporate Governance self-assessment methodology and guided through the development of action plans to tackle identified loopholes.



Mr. Yaw Oppong, CEO, RDF Ghana, delivering his address at the programme



Mr. Moez Miaoui, IFC, presenting on the Business Case for Good Corporate Governance



Mr. Mohamed Wurie of the IFC making a presentation on the Effective Board



Mr. Alex Kwasi Awuah, Deputy Managing Director at the ARB Apex Bank, stressing a point



About RDF Ghana

The Rural Development Fund (RDF) Ghana, was birthed out of DANIDA's desire to institutionalize a development finance organization that will outlive Denmark's transition from aid to trade in Ghana by 2020. RDF Ghana is mandated to promote credit accessibility to Agriculture /Agribusiness and Renewable Energy sectors by providing lines of credit and credit guarantees primarily through financial institutions. RDF Ghana also provides technical assistance to both beneficiaries and partner financial institutions.

RDF has, since October 2018, disbursed GHS 6.5million to 4 Rural and Community Banks in the Upper East, Western North, Ashanti and Western Regions, through which 289 farmers have received credit facilities.

Read more about the RDF at: www.rdfghana.com



Mrs. Comfort Owusu, Executive Director, National Association of Rural Banks, making a point





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- WAF (WEB APPLICATION FIREWALL)
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