GIFTED is a leadership and professional development program for women that aims to build capacity in emerging leaders in education. The GIFTED program is a partnership between New York University (NYU), University of Minnesota (UMN), University of Education, Winneba (UEW), Mujeres por Africa, sponsored by Banco Santander.

GIFTED Fast Facts June ’13- July ’17

| Location: Winneba & Kasoa, Ghana |
| Number of GIFTED Fellows: 36 |
| Number of Schools with GIFTED Fellows: 21 |
| Number of Government Offices with GIFTED Fellows: 2 |

GIFTED Fellows Come to New York
May 29th - June 6th 2017

The Third Cohort of GIFTED Fellows traveled to New York City for a week-long Summer Leadership Institute at NYU. They participated in leadership training, data analysis workshops, received instruction in an evidence-based literacy program, visited a NYC public school, and heard from various women in leadership positions within the field of education. The week culminated with the 2017 GIFTED Educational Symposium where Fellows presented results from their year-long leadership action projects.
Highlights from Third Cohort’s Leadership Action Projects

Slimba, Head Teacher
Slimba has been working on increasing Muslim girls’ enrollment in her school. By the end of Term 2, she has already increased enrollment by 52%, and all of the new girls are attending school regularly! Additionally, 100% of these new students are attending school, with an 89% average attendance. Slimba will continue to hold monthly meetings with a Muslim girls club and visit mosques to help students maintain their high attendance.

Mercy, Education Officer
Mercy implemented hand-washing facilities in two schools and educated pupils on proper hand-washing techniques. She found that pupils regularly used the facilities at both sites, and increased their understanding of the need to wash before eating, after cleaning the school compound and after using the washroom. Mercy plans to implement similar facilities in 10 more schools next year.

Angelina, Head Teacher
Working in a school not yet commissioned, Angelina leveraged her leadership skills to build relationships with community leaders, teachers, and the PTA. Through her leadership, she ran an enrollment drive where she enrolled 110 pupils on the first day of school and 265 by the end of Term 1. She has acquired TLMs for her teachers, school supplies for pupils, and furniture for four of the six classrooms. She arranged for teachers to be trained on Gloria’s literacy program. Angelina is currently working with parents and the community to promote food security and sanitary food preparation.

Pamela, Primary School Teacher
Pamela worked with 5 vendors to improve vendor hygiene, sanitation and increase sales of nutritional foods. The vendors’ now use hygienic items such as hairnets, aprons, and bins 94% of the time. Additionally, the amount of fruit sold increased by 48% over just 12 weeks, indicating that the children are choosing healthier foods, which are now available to them. Overall, students are taking ownership of their school environment and are working with an environment club that has altered the cleanliness of the school grounds.

Ivy, Primary School Teacher
Ivy wanted to enhance punctuality in chronically late pupils. She visited parents and pupils in their homes, assigned leadership roles to pupils, and engaged them in a drama performance. Ivy held one-on-one counseling sessions with those who did not benefit from other strategies. Since beginning her project, punctuality rose from 67.5% at the start of the school year to 97.5% by the end of Term 2. Punctuality for the students receiving one-on-one counseling rose from 37.5% to 92.1%!

Faustina, Primary School Teacher
Faustina set out to increase attendance on market days, when students are frequently absent. She set up a radio broadcast and organized performances on the effects of absenteeism. Through her efforts, student attendance on market days has increased from 60% to almost 100% since the start of her project. Moving forward, Faustina plans to meet with a member of Parliament to gain support for long-term solutions and work with community leaders to continue to improve market day attendance for all of the grades in her school.

Patience, Primary School Teacher
Patience has been engaging students who were frequently truant in grades 4, 5, and 6, especially on market days. She identified these students and then worked with them to perform dance and drama and encourage them to attend on market days. She successfully organized a performance at the market for parents and vendors with her students, stressing the importance of attendance. Average attendance for pupils who were frequently truant in grades 4, 5 and 6 improved from 79% in Term 1 to 90% at the end of Term 2.

Sylvia, Education Officer
Sylvia has been working to enhance the teaching practices of 50% of the kindergarten (KG) teachers in her district. Through her leadership, KG teachers have developed teaching and learning materials (TLMs) and are now regularly engaging their pupils in literacy and numeracy activities that were not previously possible! The KG teachers report feeling more confident in their ability to teach, and pupils are using the TLMs even during breaks. Based on teacher demand, Sylvia will expand her workshops to include KG through primary 3 teachers.

Gloria, Junior High School Teacher
Gloria developed a literacy program for teachers in her school to use during a mandatory district-wide reading initiative. Gloria’s program was used in 19% of 204 extra reading classes! Gloria observed that teachers delivered the lessons adequately, that pupils engaged with the materials, and most importantly, that struggling readers actively participated in each lesson. Gloria’s leadership has attracted attention in neighboring schools and she plans to expand her program to four new schools.

Amma, Primary School Teacher
Amma set out to improve hygiene and fitness practices with her students by creating hand washing stands and organizing physical education classes (PE). By the end of Term 2, hand washing without prompting increased from 77% to 87%. Now, 69% of teachers are joining Amma and bringing their classes out to participate in PE activities weekly. Additionally, other schools have seen Amma’s work and are interested in engaging their students in PE classes and creating hand-washing facilities.

Felicia, Primary School Teacher
To increase attendance in pupils with high rates of truancy, Felicia visited pupils’ homes, regularly phoned families, rewarded pupils for regular attendance, organized a drama performance, and she held an awareness campaign to let the community know she wanted all children to attend school regularly. Attendance in truant pupils increased from 50.7% at the beginning of the year to 95.7% at the end of Term 2!

Serwaa, Primary School Teacher
Serwaa has a passion for women’s empowerment for single mothers of the students in her school. She has held workshops on empowerment, self-confidence, female role models, as well as on vocational skills trainings for the single mothers of students with low attendance. She also engaged these students in drama to increase their school interest and attendance. By the end of Term 2, these pupils’ attendance, which is often the lowest in the school, increased from 33% to 65%.

For more information about the GIFTED Program, please contact the PIs of the project, Kristie Patten Koenig at kristie.koenig@nyu.edu or Rose Vukovic at rvukovic@umn.edu.