

Ghana's HIDDEN ENTREPRENEURS

When Dr. Moses Acquah wanders the busy street markets in his native Ghana, he takes in a kaleidoscope of color – vibrant umbrellas shading fruit stands, mountains of brightly patterned fabric, jars of dry goods, and stacks upon stacks of hand-woven baskets for sale.

He also sees something else in all the hustle and bustle: generations of female entrepreneurs who are sustaining businesses – and shaping the nation's developing economy – often without monetary support or traditional financing from banks. "It is a very challenging environment and yet they persist and do so well," says Acquah, Professor and Director of Phd in Business Administration at the Bryan School of Business and Economics.

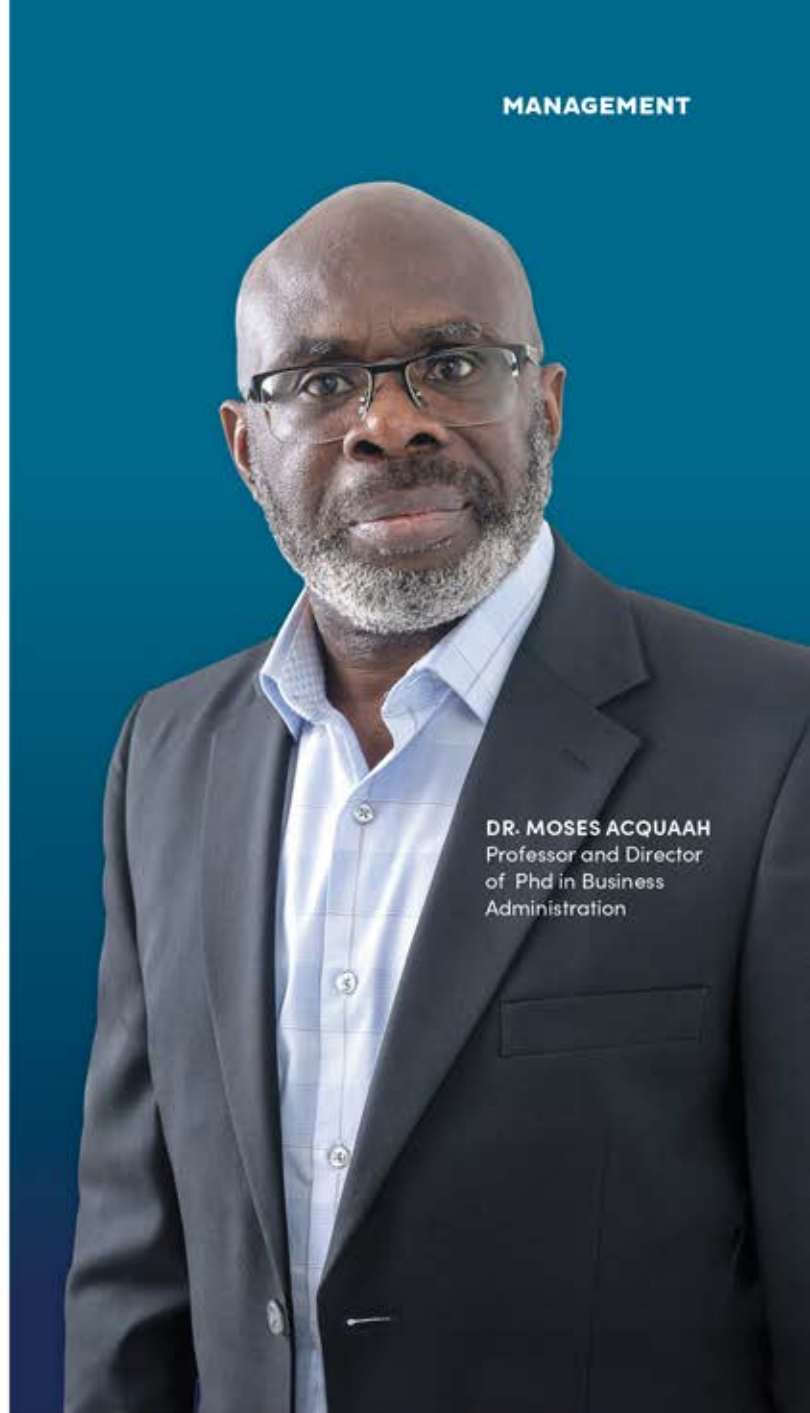
This spring, Acquah will travel to Ghana to further study these informal and "often ignored" businesses, as the recipient of a prestigious Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award for the 2024-2025 academic year. He will collaborate with fellow researchers doing similar studies of female entrepreneurs in Niger, with a goal of broadening and sharing the findings. "We hope to learn more about the innovative strategies these women use to organize, get resources, save money and reinvest in their businesses," Acquah says.

The Fulbright award also brings with it a teaching role, and Acquah plans to lead classes for Phd and master's students as part of his mission to advocate for business education throughout the continent. As president of the Africa Academy of Management and long-time editor-in-chief of the Journal of African Business, Acquah is interested in issues of strategy, sustainability and family business. Already this year, he has helped to develop the research capabilities of junior faculty in South Africa and Kenya. He intends to bring his findings from Ghana home to students at the Bryan School, where he has taught for 24 years.

"It's important for students to know that business strategies that work here may not work in the developing world," he said. "Understanding that businesses are different from place to place truly helps with a global perspective."

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