

BIOGRAPHY

Leyla Karimli, MPhil, Ph.D. candidate
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Leyla Karimli is a PhD candidate at Columbia University School of Social Work. Her specific areas of focus are youth poverty and social experiments on the financial behavior of youth, their asset accumulation, and their social networks and social capital. Her dissertation examines the saving performance of poor children participating in Child Development Accounts in Uganda and the effect of family financial socialization on children's savings performance.

Leyla has more than seven years' of research experience, specializing in policy research and analyses of participatory poverty reduction strategies, savings behavior of youths in poor households, and asset accumulation in Child Development Accounts in Sub-Saharan Africa. She also has more than six years' field experience working on poverty reduction programs with Oxfam Great Britain in Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and Azerbaijan.

Dr. Fred M. Ssewamala, PhD
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Dr. Fred Ssewamala is an Associate Professor of Social Work and International Affairs at the Columbia University School of Social Work. He is also a Global Thought Fellow at Columbia University, a Faculty Associate with Columbia University Population Center, a Visiting Professor at the University of California, San Francisco Center for AIDS Prevention Studies, a Faculty Associate at the Center for Social Development, Washington University, a Senior Faculty Associate at Makerere University's Center for the African Child (AfriChild), a faculty affiliate of the Center on Child Protection at Columbia University, and a former Senior Research Fellow at the New America Foundation's Global Assets Project. Additionally, Dr. Ssewamala is also a member of the Africa Faculty Steering Committee for the Columbia Global Centers.

Dr. Ssewamala's current research in Africa is funded by a consortium of organizations, including the National Institutes of Health, the MasterCard Foundation, and New America Foundation. This research focuses on asset-ownership development, financial management, and creating life options through economic empowerment and innovative financial inclusion models for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in sub-Saharan Africa. In Uganda, using rigorous research methods and randomized control trial study design, Dr. Ssewamala studies financial inclusion and savings performance of orphaned and vulnerable children and their families in Uganda. He also examines the impact of asset accumulation through child savings accounts on psycho-social outcomes of OVC and their caregivers. Dr. Ssewamala has also researched the acceptability and feasibility of economic empowerment interventions in poor African immigrant communities in the urban United States.

