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Poverty Reduction: Developing an effective implementation strategy for Amansie West District of Ghana

Amansie West District is one of the rural districts in Ghana, noted for its rich natural resources. The district is, however, threatened by a stagnant micro economy. The local economy is not able to optimize the benefits of the available natural resources. There is limited investment and high levels of poverty coupled with poor levels of social and economic infrastructure.

The objective of this study is, therefore, to propose a set of implementation strategies aimed at ensuring that development objectives implemented in the area are effective. To achieve this, a case study approach and participatory research techniques have been used .

Three international development strategies, the Regional Rural Development Concept (GTZ), Sustainable Livelihood Concept (DFID) and the World Bank Reaching the Rural Poor Concept were reviewed to get a broad framework for the analysis of the Ghanaian rural development policy instituted by the country during the period 1980 to the present. The impact of these policy initiatives (the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), PAMSCAD, the Ghana Vision 2020 document and the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy) was analyzed in the following areas: agriculture, environment, health, infrastructure and education.

A number of factors were identified as contributing to the general low impact: there was no effective involvement of the local people; coordination of the implementation of projects was inadequate; human and technical capacity was inadequate; and there was some level of politicization of development. Opportunities such as the strong traditional setup, the abundant natural resources and the initiative of some local mining companies were also identified. In order to improve the situation, a set of implementation strategies (based on the peculiarities in the study area) have been proposed which rely on the principles of the international rural development strategies. The measures outlined include an effective integrated monitoring and

evaluation system of projects, improvement of institutional structures including their coordination and capacity-building.

Key Words: poverty reduction, sustainability, rural development, development policies, Ghana