

The Social and Economic Impacts of the Stalled Inland Valley Rice Development Project on Farmers in Ohiamadwen



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List of Abbreviation/Acronyms

AFDB	African Development Bank
BUSAC	Business Sector Advocacy Challenge Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNA	Ghana News Agency
IVRDP	Inland Valleys Rice Development Project
MiDA	Millennium Development Authority
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
NRGP	Northern Rural Growth Project
SDA	Shama District Assembly
ToR	Terms of Reference
UA	Unit of Account (African Development Bank)
WR	Western Region

Executive Summary

Rice is an important crop in the Ghanaian staple diet and its frequent availability for many households in the country is equally of great significance but the plight of many local rice farmers is unacceptable considering their contribution to food security in the country. This is the case of rice farmers in Ohiamadwen, a predominately rice growing community in the Shama District of the Western Region. The farmers are faced with many challenges, including lost business opportunities and associated incomes because Government of Ghana (GoG) through the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) has failed to execute the Inland Valley Rice Development Project (IVRDP) it commissioned there in 2009 for completion within 18 months aimed at improving conditions of the rice farmers. The Government acquired 75 hectares of farmland belonging to over 300 farmers without compensation but in anticipation of making the farmers shareholders and direct beneficiaries of the project. As the project has stalled, the livelihood of the farmers has been under threat; resulting in several negative economic and social impacts on the farmers, their businesses and the nation as a whole.

To contribute towards arresting and reversing this unfortunate situation, the Ohiamadwen Rice Growers Association with financial support from the Business Sector Advocacy Challenge Fund (BUSAC) seeks to advocate through a project titled “Campaign for Farmlands Recovery” for the restoration and recovery of their farmlands acquired for the purpose of IVRDP by the GoG.

A research, forming the basis of the advocacy strategy, was commissioned by the Association to inform its members and other stakeholders on how the lands can be restored and recovered as well as establish the effects of the prevailing condition of the project on the farmers. The 18 day research, carried out from March 11 to March 29, 2013 started with the review of existing data on the subject at stake, visits to the project area and discussions/interviews with key stakeholders affected by the project.

The research revealed that:

- The farmlands were released for the project by the farmers as planned as the farmers expected to enhance their incomes from the project but were not paid compensation. The affected farmers were instead granted loans prior to the commencement of the site development.
- The project stalled because funding from the African Development Bank (AFDB) ceased after the project officially ended in June 2011.
- The stalled project has had negative economic and social implications on the farmers and their businesses as evident in lost and/or reduced income levels and loss of business opportunities emerging from the oil and gas sector in the region.
- The Northern Rural Growth Project (NRGP) being implemented by MOFA is to ensure the full completion of the stalled IVRDP in Ohiamadwen (The Whin Site at Dompim)

Based on the findings, it was recommended that the affected farmers engage in an effective and well facilitated dialogue with the relevant stakeholders and state agencies (Shama District Assembly-SDA, District and Regional MOFA) for the completion of the project or restoration of the farmlands. The researcher strongly recommends the relevant authorities to expedite action on the project completion. This will bring the affected farmers back to their farmlands, restore their lost income and further enhance it whilst increasing local rice production to curb the escalating importation of rice. The dialogue sessions must also be accompanied by effective media campaigns.

Acknowledgments

The researcher deeply appreciates the support, time and inputs by the executives and entire members of Ohiamadwen Rice Growers Association, other affected farmers of the Inland Valley Rice Project in and around Ohiamadwen and all other stakeholders that made the information gathering a success.



Figure 1Rice Processing Structure (Rice Mill) at Ohiamadwen

1.0 Introduction to the study

This research report has been organised into four main sections. The first section entails the introduction, background of the study, problem statement, objective of the research, terms of reference/scope of the study. The second centered on the methodology adopted for the study and limitations. The third section discussed the key findings of the study. The fourth section draws meaningful conclusions and makes recommendations based on the findings.

1.1 Background

As noted by Amoah (2012), human survival is enhanced through the hard work and benevolence of farmers but it appears society cares not about the welfare of the farmer. Small holder farmers in Ghana particularly rice farmers deserve the appreciation of all Ghanaians as they have over the years fed residents even though they are confronted with mishaps in the course of their work. Rice has become an important contributor to Ghana's economy and agriculture, accounting for nearly 15% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with its production area estimated about 45% of the total area planted to cereals (Kranjac-Berisavljevic, 2000). Equally significant is the contribution of the local rice sector towards the provision of rural employment in the country.

The Ohiamadwen Rice Growers are noted for the production of paddy rice and as observed by Asuming-Brempong (1998), Ghana has comparative advantage in the production of paddy rice over the other countries in the sub-region.

1.2 Profile of Ohiamadwen Rice Growers Association

The Ohiamadwen Rice Growers Association was formed to create a platform for members to learn from each other and to enable every member maximize output from their farmlands as well as to have a common bargaining power for their produce. The association has a

membership of 430 farmers and belongs to the Ghana Trade and Livelihood Coalition (GTLC), a nationwide advocacy organization, striving for agriculture and trade justice.

1.3 Problem Statement

The livelihood of rice growers in Ohiamadwen are under threat since 75 hectares of their farmlands acquired by Government in 2009 and prepared for Inland Valley Rice Development Project (IVRDP) has stalled. Over 300 farmers released their lands without receiving any compensation but hoping to participate in the project are now faced with severe hardship and extreme poverty. The farmers are now agitating for the restoration and recovery of their lands.

1.4 Research Objectives and Terms of Reference

The purpose of this research is to inform the Association and other stakeholders on how the lands can be restored and recovered as well as establish the effects of the prevailing condition of the project on the farmers. Specifically, the research was conducted based on the Terms of Reference (ToR) as noted below:

- Understudy the terms on which the farmlands were released for the Inland Valley Rice Project
- Understudy the reason the project stalled
- Understudy the economic and social implications of the stalled project on the farmers and their businesses.
- Recommend strategies to be adopted to restore and recover the lands.

2.0 Methodology

To achieve the research objectives, the following approaches were adapted for the study:

2.1 Site Visit

The researcher undertook site exploration to establish personal familiarity with the site and with the affected farmers before the actual interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FDG) sessions.

2.2 Data collection and Analysis

This study was mainly a qualitative research and therefore relied heavily on qualitative methods of data collection. These included ethnographic interviews such as key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observations at the site. Thus, the methodology was designed to strive for in-depth information about the subject at stake without special regard to the issue of generalization. Primary data was obtained using semi-structured interviews guide and focus discussions guide. The methods employed afforded the researcher opportunities to triangulate information at the local community, district and regional levels. Secondary data were obtained through publications, journals and articles. The data collection process was merged with data analysis and a basic descriptive content analysis was adopted. In doing so, attempts were made to establish commonalities, patterns and themes.

2.3 Sampling techniques

Due to the peculiar nature of the issue, the researcher adopted the purposive sampling method for the study and in some few instances the snowball method was used. The respondents or key informants included the affected farmers of the stalled project, the Shama District Assembly and the district and regional MOFA. At the regional level, interview was held with the officer in-charge of the IVRDP.

2.4 Limitations

The perspective of the Contractor (Macksam Contractors) was not captured during the 18 day study as several attempts to reach him proved futile. Notwithstanding, this research will contribute immensely to the continuing advocacy for the immediate completion of the project or the payment of full compensation to the affected farmers at Ohiamadwen.

2.5 Desk Review

Contribution of Agriculture

Agriculture is the backbone of Ghana's economy as it accounts for approximately 40 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), directly employs approximately 60-70 percent of the labor force, and generates more than 55 percent of foreign exchange earnings(Millennium Development Authority –MiDA: http://mida.gov.gh/site/?page_id=184). Indeed, the role of cereals such as wheat, rice, maize, millet, sorghum among others remains significant to the overall agricultural contribution to the country's GDP. In terms of cereals, maize is said to be Ghana's number one staple crop followed by rice.

Land Issue

Land is crucial as far as agriculture in the country as concern. In the Western Region and the Shama District in particular where the Ohiamadwen community falls, land has turned to be relatively scares due to the rapidly emerging oil and gas industry of the region. As the closet district to the Western Regional capital, the Shama District has within the last four years witnessed competing demands for land by investors and the general public. This makes land for cereal production a critical area to be considered and must be a major concern to stakeholders. As reported by Trading Economics, the land under cereal production (hectares) in Ghana was last reported at 1602102 in 2010, according to a World Bank report published in 2012 (

<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/ghana/land-under-cereal-production-hectares-wb-data.html>).

This is depicted in Figure 2 below.

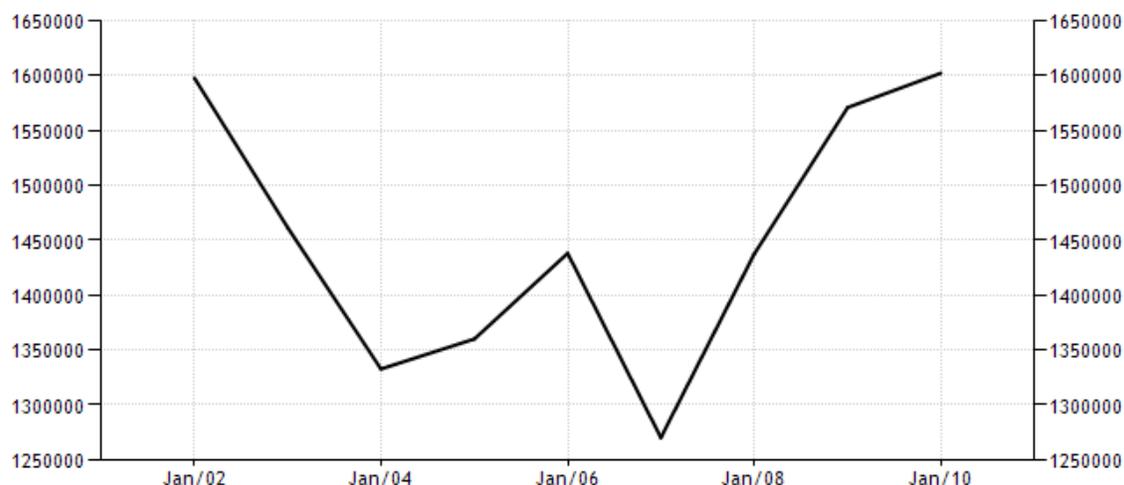


Figure 2 Land under cereal production (hectares) in Ghana

SOURCE: WORLD BANK INDICATORS- Land under cereal production (hectares) in Ghana (<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/ghana/land-under-cereal-production-hectares-wb-data.html>)

Importance of Rice

It is an undeniable fact that rice has become an important component of the diet of many Ghanaians. In the 1920s, most of the rice in Ghana was produced in Volta and Western Regions, by traditional rice farmers (<http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/4130.pdf>). The crop has indeed been in cultivation in Ghana for a very long time. In the 17th and 18th centuries, rice was already one of the major commercial food crops (Mobil J. et al., 1985 in Donya D, 2000). Presently, rice is one of the major cereals in Ghana and most households' especially those in the urban centers regard rice as inevitable within. For most people in the highly urban centers of the country, not a single day passes without eating rice.

Consumption versus Production of Rice

The forces of demand and supply are crucial when analyzing issues about rice. In Ghana, available statistics denotes that domestic production of rice has over the years been consistently less than consumption needs. In fact, total demand for rice has outstripped supply. This can be attributed to several factors including but not limited to improved standard of living among residents, population increase especially in urban areas, ease of rice preparation, the development of trade as a result of economic liberalization and poor production and marketing arrangements on the supply side. According to the Millennium Development Authority (MiDA 2010), between 2010 and 2015, rice demand is expected to grow at a compound annual growth of 11.8 percent. It is also widely acknowledged that in recent times, the Government of Ghana import over 50% of local rice production to cater for the increasing demand levels. Nonetheless, the situation has not been different in the past. As reported by Dogbe (1996 in Kranjac-Berisavljevic, 2000), government imports up to 200% of local rice production to compensate for the short fall in supply with the consequence of draining the country's scarce foreign exchange. Figure 3 shows that projected rice demand as seen by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture would keep increasing.

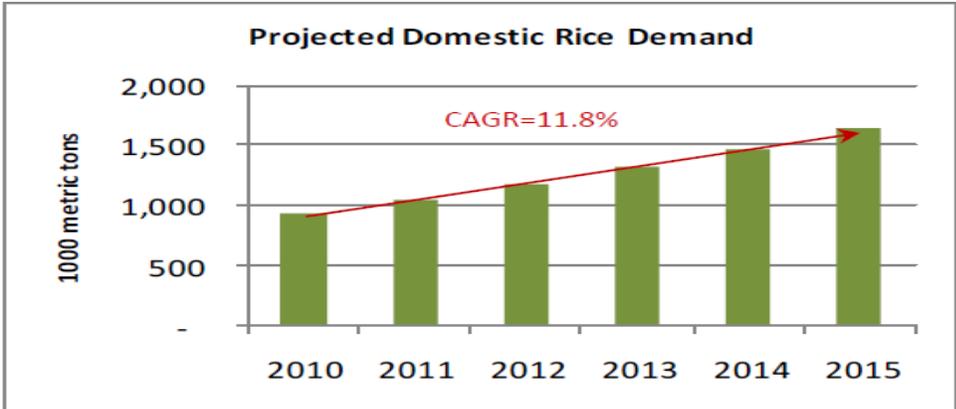


Figure 3 Projected Rice Demand
Source: Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Statistics Research and Information Directorate, "Agriculture Sector Plan: 2009-2015".

As reported by the Ghana News Agency-GNA (October 30, 2012), it is estimated that Ghana spends more than \$450 million annually on rice importation to augment local demand. In 2009 the country spent \$218 million on importing rice, an amount which is higher than that spent in 2008 (\$187 million) and in 2007 (\$157 million).

The Inland Valley Rice Project

The Inland Valleys Rice Development Project (IVRDP) is being implemented by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) at a total cost of UA¹ 17.1 million, comprising a loan of UA 15 million (88%) from the African Development Bank (AFDB) and Government of Ghana contribution of UA 2.1 million (12%). The rationale for the project is that inland valley rice production is more profitable than both conventional irrigation and upland cropping, provided water management is improved and farmers adopt improved rice production practices. The IVRDP is thus providing a basis for sustainable rice development in the inland valleys through provision of simple, low-cost water management structures (weirs, dykes, canals, drains and basins/ plots), use of improved production inputs and post-harvest management practices. The Project seeks to enhance food security, reduce importation of rice and increase incomes of smallholder rice producers, traders and processors through increased production of good quality rice. The IVRDP targeted 38 communities in 21 districts of five (5) regions: Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, Central, Eastern and Western. The districts for the Western Region were: Shama, Mpohor Wassa East, Nzema East, Wassa West, Wassa Amenfi, Aowin- Suaman, Sefwi-Wiawso, Bia, Juabeso.

*Information about the Inland Valley Rice Project: Source- MOFA official website:
http://mofa.gov.gh/site/?page_id=732*

¹ UA is the Unit of Account by the African Development Bank

3.0 Findings and Discussions

There is no doubt that over the years, farmers' concerns have not been sufficiently addressed. They are faced with many challenges which often thwart their production fortunes and by implication, their income fortunes. This section explores the terms/conditions in which the farmlands were released for the Inland Valley Rice Project in Ohiamadwen (the Whin site at Dompim), the reasons the project stalled and further examines the economic and social effects of the stalled Project on the farmers and businesses.

3.1 Ohiamadwen and the Inland Valleys Rice Development Project

Ohiamadwen is a predominantly rice growing community in the Shama District of the Western Region. The rice farmers are noted for producing high grade local rice in the country and over the years, most of the Districts' Best Rice Farmers come from the community.

In May 2009, over 300 farmers in Ohiamadwen had their 75 hectares farmlands (in the Whin river site near Dompim) taken over by the Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) for an Inland Valleys Rice Development Project (IVRDP). The farmers, who initially declined to let go of their lands because they received no compensation, agreed and reversed their decision because of promises by authorities to ensure their active participation in the rice irrigation project. The project according to information at MOFA website sought to enhance food security, reduce importation of rice and increase incomes of smallholder rice producers, traders and processors through increased production of good quality rice (http://mofa.gov.gh/site/?page_id=732). As part of the project, a rice mill has been cited in the community, tested but yet to be commissioned. However, the machinery is without the equally needed '*rice disstoner (machine for removing stones from rice)*' that usually accompanies such milling machine.

According to the farmers, government authorities at the time informed them that the project would enhance their activities and also ensure high production of rice to feed the mill.



Figure 4 The Rice Milling machine at Ohiamadwen

However, though the official website of MOFA asserts that “The IVRDP is being implemented by MOFA at a total cost of UA 17.1 million, comprising a loan of UA 15 million (88%) from the African Development Bank (AFDB) and a Government of Ghana contribution of UA 2.1 million (12%)”, site visits by the researcher proved that there has not been any substantial development on the said piece of land. This means that the over 300 farmers who accepted and released their farmlands for the project have since been affected as the project has stalled coupled with the fact that farmers were not compensated for the destruction of their sugarcane/ farmland. The affected farmers had hoped work on the land would be completed within 18

months as promised to enable them go back into business, but that is yet materialize.



Figure 5 The stalled project site

Indeed, the visit by the Researcher to the site revealed the contractor was yet to finish the weirs (shown in Figure 6) even though some few pipes had been laid and the lands demarcated for the farmers.



Figure 6 The uncompleted weir; The Whin river (inset)

The visit to the site also revealed that the top soil has been removed and heaped close to the Whin River. This means most crops cannot do well in places without the top soil. Mr. Kofi Nti, who owned the largest tract of land and therefore convinced his fellow farmers at the initial stages of the project to let go their sugarcane farms for the project had currently planted maize at some portions of the land belonging to him. However, the portions without top soil are not coping well compared to those with some amount of top soil. Aside, the maize, he has also planted okro.



Figure 7 The removed top soil

The idea according to MOFA Western Regional Coordinator in-charge of the IVRDP was that the area cannot support rice cultivation through the year and therefore planned as a Rice Based Cropping System: a system where rice becomes the major but not the only crop cultivated.



Top left: Maize planted at the site

Top right: Okro planted at the site

Down: Mr. Kofi Nti & his farm manager at their maize site

Figure 8 Current site developments

3.2 Terms for Release of Land

Improved quality of life is admired by society and rice growers in Ohiamadwen are not an exception. As indicated early, the farmers were not given any compensation before or after the release of the land or for the destruction of their sugarcanes. So the critical question is; on what basis did they give out the land? Well, the researcher gathered that both the land owners (*mostly family heads as ownership of lands in the area rest mostly with families*) and farmers (most of them migrants) though did not receive compensations were promised that their livelihoods would be restored and even enhanced by the project as they were to return and work on the respective fields / farms after the site development.

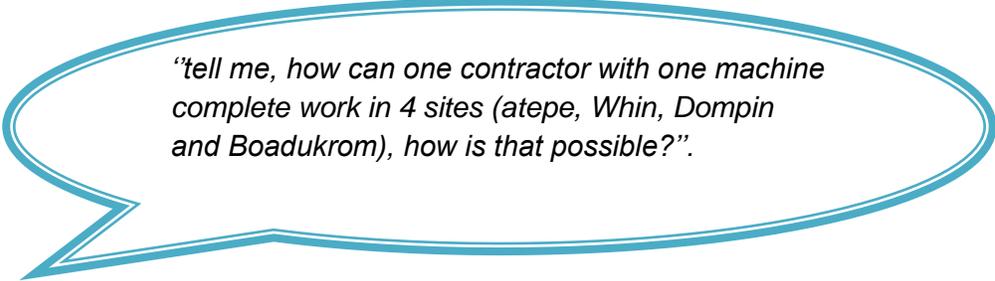
In short, the land was released on condition that it will be used for Rice based cropping system where the farmers will be able to cultivate rice (and get higher yields than normal rice farms) at some periods in the year and also cultivate other crops when rice is not possible.

3.3 Reasons the Project Stalled

Official MOFA sources at the regional level indicated that the project stalled because funding was ceased as per the duration of the project. The project agreement, it was revealed, was signed in 2004 with five year duration and later saw a year extension (*making it 6 years*). As indicated by the Regional Officer of the Inland Valleys Rice Development Project (IVRDP), *"it was a project which means it had a time frame and so that project has ended meaning no sponsorship; therefore it is currently being run by MOFA as a full program and so its on-going"*.

It must be noted that the IVRDP was implemented by MOFA at a total cost of UA 17.1 million, comprising a loan of UA 15 million (88%) from the African Development Bank (AFDB) and a Government of Ghana contribution of UA 2.1 million (12%)-Though the actual project agreement was signed in 2004, the site development commenced in 2009 and the project officially ended in 2011.

On their part, the affected farmers offered varied reasons as to why the project stalled. The main reason was that the Contractor (Macksam Contractors) did not have the requisite machinery to complete the work. As narrated by one affected and aggrieved farmer,



"tell me, how can one contractor with one machine complete work in 4 sites (atepe, Whin, Dompin and Boadukrom), how is that possible?"

The farmers again indicated that the same contractor was awarded the construction of the milling structure and completed that on schedule.

Nevertheless, it was also noted that the completion of the milling structure and the installation of the milling machine (though without the disstoner) marks the completion of the Inland Valley Rice Development Project.



Figure 9 Milled Rice by Ohiamadwen rice growers

3.4 Implications of the Stalled Project on Farmers and Businesses

3.4.1 Economic Implications

The following are some of the key economic implications of the stalled project on farmers, businesses and the community / nation in general.

a. Loss of Income

Almost all affected farmers interviewed indicated that the motive for Rice Cultivation and production is mainly for cash and food security. However, with the stalled project, this intention has been extremely difficult to materialize. It was sad to note that some affected farmers mostly

women who claimed to earned between GH¢ 2, 500 and GH¢ 6, 000 annually from their then sugarcane farms now cannot even boast of GH¢20 a month. What is worse, these women were equally not offered any land compensation. This is really unfortunate as most of such women are the breadwinners of their families and in some instances; are single parents. The story by the men was not different from their women counterpart. As revealed by Mr. Kwame Sam, the stalled project has resulted in increased poverty of affected land owners/farmers due to deprivation of livelihood.

b. Loss of potential businesses opportunities

It is evident from the literature review that in Ghana, rice consumption has witnessed unparalleled increase over the past decade with significant proportion of consumers switching from consumption of other staples to rice. In the Western Region, this trend would in no doubt be escalating with the high influx of people and companies into the region in view of the commercial oil production. This present an emerging bigger market for local rice growers but this business opportunity is not far from been missed as farmers are faced with difficult access to land and in particular the increasing competing land uses in the Shama District. As over 300 farmers hope of participating in the Inland Valley Rice Project has been dashed for the last three years, such business opportunities have been lost to importers of rice in the region.

c. Apathy towards farming & Loss of productive labour

Farming in Ghana has over decades been regarded as the ‘preserve of the rural folks’ with the youth showing no or little interest in farming activities. However, due to the role of agriculture in the economy of Ghana, several initiatives have and are been initiated by various concerned groups and government to make the sector attractive to the youth. Unfortunately, as the concerns of farmers remain unaddressed to a larger extent by authorities, even the older folks in farming are often forced to quit the sector if possible. This is becoming the situation in

Ohiamadwen and communities such as Dompim where the Whin project is situated. Most of the affected farmers have lost interest in farming. Already, the economically active population engaged in agriculture is not encouraging. Indeed, *the economically active population in agriculture (number) in Ghana was reported at 5790000 in 2008, according to the World Bank.* (<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/ghana/economically-active-population-in-agriculture-number-wb-data.html>) and shown in Figure 11 below. Again, some of the older farmers who due to age factor / advancement in age are unable to farm again and have lost complete interest in farming have promised not to let their children consider the farming sector. Indeed, most of such older folks who are much aggrieved are considering taking the matter to the law court to be paid their full compensation. What has delayed or prevented them from pursuing the matter at the law court is as noted by Opanyin Antwi, *” the court will delay the case and even we may end up spending and wasting our little savings on transportation going to the court every week”*.

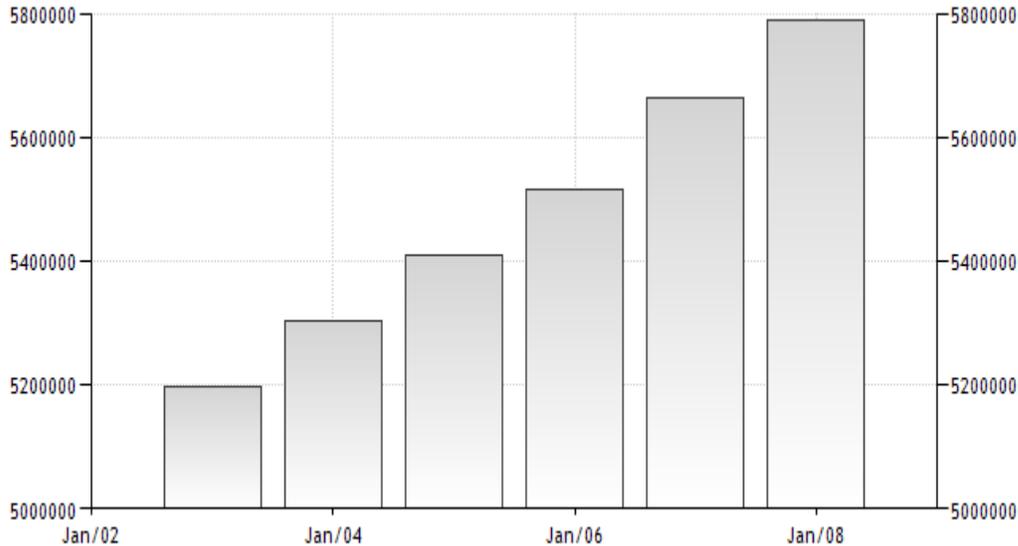


Figure 10 Economically Active Population in Agriculture in Ghana

Source: Word Bank Indicators: Economically active population in agriculture (number) in Ghana, 2008 (<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/ghana/economically-active-population-in-agriculture-number-wb-data.html>)

d. Deepening poor standards of living

The standard of living among most affected farmers has reduced drastically in recent times. It was revealed that most female affected farmers have now become head porters in order to get money to support their children. Most people who lost their sugarcane farms for the project are now engaged in diverse small and less paid businesses at the Beposo market. Sadly, some have turned into head porters, sachet water and tiger-nut sellers. In short, most of them are hackers mainly on market days at Beposo. These people indicated living in extreme poverty as a result of the stalled project. According to Ante Adwoa, an affected farmer, “what I got from my sugarcane farm in the past was very encouraging, about GH¢ 2,200 a month, now I go to Beposo to sell water and I get less than GH ¢ 30 cedis a month”.

e. Decreasing Rice Production

Clearly, if the project had facilitated the much needed increase rice production, it would have contributed in curbing the increasing rice importation which is collapsing the local market. The official MOFA website equally agreed that the inland valley rice production is more profitable than both conventional irrigation and upland cropping.



Figure 11 Paddy Rice by Ohiamadwen Rice Growers

f. Difficulty in payment for Rice Mill

Information gathered revealed that the rice farmers/association in Ohiamadwen are to pay for the cost of the milling machine installed in the community. The inland valley rice project was supposed to feed the mill with more rice to facilitate the payment. However, with the project stalled, the payment even after the commissioning of the milling machine would be extremely difficult. This situation is capable of placing extra financial burden on the farmers and their businesses.

3.4.2 Social Implications

The stalled project has had some social implications on the affected farmers, their families and society at large. The section below highlights the major social impacts of the stalled project.

I. Increasing levels of school drop-outs

As indicated early, most affected farmers especially the women are either single parents or the breadwinners of their families. But with the stalled project coupled with less diversified livelihood options in the community and the Shama District as a whole, their children are faced to drop out of school as they are unable to meet the financial obligations associated with the educational system. In most cases, children who completed Junior High School (JHS) within the last three years in particular could not pursue further education as their parents have been faced out of jobs.



Figure 12 The pre-school at Ohiamadwen

As narrated by an elderly women in Ohiamadwen, *“most children in this community are no more going to school as we the parents have no money for them; we can’t buy their books, school uniform and even pocket money to school on daily basis”*. In a similar report by Citi FM's Lorrancia Adam (July 10, 2012), pupils of the Ohiamadwen D.A Kindergarten, cannot even answer to “What is your name?” (<http://www.citifmonline.com/index.php?id=1.958007>)

II. Disinterest in Decision making

Ghana is seen by most nations as a model for democracy in Africa and has had free and fair general elections since its return to democracy in 1992. This means eligible voters are free to cast their votes during elections in helping to decide ‘community and national level leadership’. However, some months before the 2012 Presidential and Parliamentary elections, some affected farmers of the stalled project in Ohiamadwen threatened not to vote in the elections. This move was reported by the media mostly radio in the region. Most aggrieved farmers were

reported as planning to boycott the election and were equally advising their dependents not to vote since the plight of farmers receives little attention in the country.

III. Food Insecurity

With the current situation where rice consumption in the country far exceeds the local production; a condition fuelling huge imports of rice, the Inland Valley Rice project in Ohiamadwen could have contributed in reducing the consumption-production gap as it had the potential to intensify rice production. Already, the Millennium Development Authority (MiDA 2010) estimates that between 2010 and 2015, rice demand in Ghana would grow at a compound annual growth of 11.8 percent. It is also widely acknowledged that the Government of Ghana import over 50% of local rice production to cater for the increasing demand levels. However, with the project stalled, this gap would be further widened and this would definitely have implication on food security in the communities and the nation.

IV. Competing land uses and associated issues

Competing land use is crucial in the Shama District because it is resulting in increased poverty of affected land owners/farmers due to deprivation of livelihood; increased social vices (armed robbery, prostitution, teenage pregnancy etc) and conflict on land. In fact, the birth of the district in 2008 (*carved out of SAEMA in 2008*) and the discovery of oil in WR is increasing demand on land and has rendered the resource very scares. The scarcity of land in the district is escalating competing land usages and depriving many farmers of traditional livelihoods and generating land conflict in the district. Most investors since the oil discovery and subsequent production have turned attention to the newly created Shama District as it is the closest to the Western regional capital and also due to its 'green' nature. Key informants interviewed noted that people (from outside the district) have rapidly acquired large tracts of lands for settlements and other

unknown developmental projects. Already, commercial sand winning activities are rampant and destroying vast areas of both cash and food crop plantations.

V. Loss of farmlands

Most farmers in Ohiamadwen complain of insufficient farmlands due to the increasing demand for land by various groups of people. Though some affected farmers of the IVRDP have lost interest in farming, the larger portion who still value and cherish farming are forced to acquire lands in neighbouring Mpohor-Wassa East District. Some of these farmers such as Mr. Moses Duanyewotor even won the 2011 Best Rice Farmers in the Mpohor-Wassa East District.

VI. Potential Land based Conflict

Conflicts on who can make use of the land with its attendant riot are raising its ugly heads in some of these communities bordering the stalled project. This can contribute to lawlessness and further result in intense conflict between communities and land potential users.

VII. Emergence of Social Vices

With the increasing rate of youth unemployment in the district, most youth in Ohiamadwen and its environs had high expectations of benefiting from the Inland Valley Rice Development Project through participation in the project. Stakeholders at the community noted that most of such youths whose expectations have been dashed are currently involved in social vices including armed robbery and prostitution. Teenage pregnancy was equally mentioned by local leaders as partly resulting from the stalled project as most affected farmers are deprived of their livelihood and therefore find it difficult to cater for their children. This, they emphasized, have led to loss of respect accorded parents by their children and seen most female teenagers becoming pregnant; as parents have lost control over them.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

It is evident that rice farmers in Ohiamadwen have seen their dreams dashed and also feel that MOFA has greatly disappointed them. Indeed, over 300 rice growers / farmers at Ohiamadwen and its environs are furious at the delays by the Government of Ghana in completing work on a 75 hectares piece of land earmarked for the Inland Valley Rice Development Project. Almost all affected farmers who are highly frustrated have given up hopes of farming on that piece of land and are currently demanding either the payment of full compensation due them or the immediate completion of the project. The farmers have over the period faced many financial challenges, lost business opportunities and income and therefore questioned government's commitment to delivering on the project which was commissioned in 2009 for completion within 18 months.

Nevertheless, three preferred options detailed below, ought to be noted:

- A. **Immediate completion of the project:** This is the preferred option by the affected farmers. Affected farmers want the project restored as they believe it has the potential to enhance their income levels and further improve their business opportunities. This means
 - a. Government through MOFA should call the Contractor (Macksam Contractors) to return to work and complete the project as soon as possible without any further delays or
 - b. Government through MOFA should re-award the contract to a new Contractor and ensure the completion of the project as soon as practicable.

- B. **Payment of full compensation.** The compensation should cover the following

- a. The land acquired
- b. The sugarcane destroyed
- c. The lost income from the due completion date of the project to date.

C. Restoration of the land and payment of full compensation: The acquired land should be restored to its original state (the state of the land before the site development commenced) in addition to compensation stated in B (a, b, c).

Recommendations

As the Inland Valley Rice Development Project ended² by the ceasing of fund from AFDB and the project turned into a program by MOFA, it is imperatively for the affected farmers to engage in an effective and well facilitated dialogue with the relevant stakeholders and state agencies (Shama District Assembly-SDA, District and Regional MOFA) for the completion of the project or restoration of the farmlands.

This research strongly recommends and advocates for the immediate completion of the IVRDP and tasks the affected farmers to urgently dialogue with the appropriate authorities such as SDA, district and regional MOFA to expedite action on the project completion. This will get affected farmers back to their farms, restore their lost income and further enhance it whilst increasing local rice production to curb the escalating importation of rice. Increases in the local rice production would save the country the millions of US Dollars used for rice importation in meeting the demand-supply gap.

² confirmed by MOFA Western regional authorities

<http://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2011/12/03/western-regional-minister-cautions-against-smuggling-of-fuel/>

Additionally, the dialogue sessions between the rice farmers and the district and regional MOFA must target authorities of the new *Northern Rural Growth Project (NRGP)*³. The NRGPA authorities are crucial because information gathered from the Western Regional MOFA indicate the group has been mandated by the Government of Ghana to ensure the full completion of all site developments initiated but uncompleted under the IVRDP.

Nonetheless, in parallel to the dialogue sessions, effective media campaigns geared towards the immediate completion of the project must be initiated by the Ohiamadwen Rice Farmers Association.

³ The overall sector goal of the program is to contribute to an equitable and sustainable poverty Reduction and food security among rural households (http://mofa.gov.gh/site/?page_id=713)

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