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ADOPTION OF CASSAVA TECHNOLOGY
FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Applied Science in Rural
Development at Massey University, New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

The RTIP was part of efforts to improve the livelihood security of resource poor farmers in Ghana. The focus of the programme included the introduction of the new cassava varieties, that have the potential to improve yields and consequently to improve household income levels. However, the low level of sustained adoption of the technology has raised questions relating to the project.

A single case study was used to investigate the factors that influenced farmers’ reasons for adopting and continuing or discontinuing the use of the new cassava varieties. Semi-structured interviews were used in the data collection, which was conducted between May and June 2006. Farmers who had adopted or not adopted the cassava technology and key informants, including opinion leaders and agricultural extension agents, were interviewed. A qualitative data analysis procedure was used in the analysis of the information gathered.

The findings of this study revealed many interrelated factors, which influenced the initial adoption of the cassava technology and the sustained use of the new cassava varieties. The factors, which were identified as influencing the initial adoption decision of farmers, were related to the cassava technology, whilst other external factors relating to the farmers and their circumstances, in addition to situational factors and extension contacts, were found to have influenced the sustained use of the new cassava varieties. The new cassava varieties have a proven potential to improve the livelihood security of the farmers, through income generation, provided they have access to credit, processing and reliable markets. Inadequate institutional support with resources, for extension agents, influenced the effectiveness of service delivery.

The findings suggest that development interventions, intended to improve the living standards of farm households, need to consider the complex nature of the farmers’ circumstances, in their planning and implementation of the projects, if the needs of the target group are to be met.
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ABBREVIATIONS

AgSSIP - Agricultural Sub-Sector Improvement Programme
COCOBOD – Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board
FAO - Food and Agricultural Organisation
FASDEP – Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy
GASTSBY – Rice Project
GNAFF - Ghana National Association of Farmers and Fishermen
GHC – Ghana cedi
GPRS – Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GTZ – German Technical Corporation
HDI – Human Development Index
IFAD - International Fund for Agricultural Development
MOFA - Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MUHEC – Massey University Human Ethics Committee
NAEP - National Agricultural Extension Project
NERICA – New Rice for Africa
NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation
NZD – New Zealand Dollar
PSI – President’s Special Initiatives
RTIP - Root and Tuber Improvement Programme
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
USD – United States of America Dollar

Exchange rate: 1 US Dollar = 9,622.70 Ghanaian Cedi
1 Ghanaian Cedi (GHC) = 0.0001039 US Dollar (USD)
1 New Zealand Dollar = 6,549.88 Ghanaian Cedi
1 Ghanaian Cedi (GHC) = 0.0001527 New Zealand Dollar (NZD) (Ghanaweb.com, 2007a).
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