COMMUNITY AID FOR RURAL DEVELEOPMENT

CARD

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 2008-2009**

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***PRESENTED TO:***

**ALLIANCE FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS (ARHR)**

**Community Aid for Rural Development (CARD)**

P. O. Box 12, Hamile U/W/R

Ghana, West Africa

Telephone/mobile: +233-243-863296

E-mail: cardpot7@yahoo.com /hudiziyat7@yahoo.com

Contact Person: Al-hassan Hudi

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| ***CARD: Working in Partnership to Sustain and Consolidate the Gains of Poverty Reduction*** |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Aid for Rural Development (CARD)was created with the aim of empowering the vulnerable (women, children, youth and persons with disabilities), by fighting the ever-increasing rate of HIV/AIDS, falling standard of education, low awareness on basic human rights and the upsurge of poverty evident within Hamile and its surrounding communities in particular, the Lambussie-Karni District and Upper West Region in general. We do this with a high sense of voluntarism, communality and patriotism. The aid programme has a focused of empowering and making those marginalized especially women, children and persons with disabilities agents of their own development. This we believed will accelerate and ensure speedy and sustainable reduction of acute poverty within the Hamile/Burkina Faso border corridors, the Lambussie-Karni District and Ghana as a whole in attaining the Millennium Development Goals of reducing extreme hunger and malnutrition, access to primary education and health care, gender equity, promotion of democratic rights and eradication of HIV/AIDS, inter alia, by 2015. We have set up several projects aim at contributing efficiently in sustaining the gains of poverty reduction by empowering women, children and persons with disabilities with requisite capacity to live a decent life and enjoy to its fullest their human and democratic rights. The aid programme place s much premium on:

**Primary Health Care and HIV&AIDS**

CARD has facilitated the formation and training of 280 Youth and 165 Community Adults as Peer Educators on HIV&AIDS Prevention in the Lambussie-Karni District of the Upper West Region. Vigorous and intensive capacity building on the technicalities of HIV&AIDS as well as leadership skills and community capacity enhancement was instilled in them to make them functional and responsive to issues of HIV&AIDS in the border communities in particular and the whole district in general. In effect, behavioral change communication approach was adopted and Journey of Hope methodology used to facilitate the understanding of abstinence, faithfulness and condom use. Condon promotion and proper usage was embarked during this period. About 23,000 pieces of both male and female condoms procured, and 15,000 pieces distributed among sexually active and most-at-risk populations within the border communities and the entire district.

Access to quality primary and reproductive health care services and information to young people, women and children was a top most priority of CARD within the year. Through the Action on Grassroots Reproductive Order (AGRO) and the Healthy Mothers for Health Kids Projects, CARD is facilitating the formation and training of Pregnant and Lactating Mothers Clubs as well as Girls Clubs in our catchment communities and all JHS respectively. A periodic interface and or engagement of health professionals and communities as well as the youth to enhance their understanding of reproductive issues including illegal abortions, pre-marital sex, rape, defilement, early marriages and rural urban drift. Enhancing the efficiency of these interventions and sustaining their impacts will be the focus for the subsequent years.

**Research, Policy Advocacy and Engagement for Good Governance and Accountability**

The CARD-SEND Ghana Citizen Monitoring Committee has embarked on several pro-poor policy education, interface and advocacy to enhance their understanding and ensure the effective participation of vulnerable groups and youth in particular. Among such programmes were the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), the Ghana School Feeding Programme and the Capitation Grant Scheme. Citizens understanding and participation in these programmes has been enhanced and many people are now concern and responsive to central government policy interventions. This has promoted greater citizen participation in public policy and good governance.

**Sensitization, Education and Awareness Creation**

Community sensitization, education and awareness creation has taken a centre stage in most of the activities carried out in the year. Community meetings and durbars were organized in 28 communities to sensitize and educate members on issues of reproductive health, education and general welfare including embracing development projects in their communities.

**Youth Cultural Festival and Documentation**

Through our Youth Cultural Festival and Documentation Project, CARD has been able to revive the rich cultural heritage of the chiefs and people of the Lambussie-Karni District. The youth festival was celebrated with the theme; Sustaining Our Rich Cultural Heritage through Festivals: The role of the Youth. About 20 of youth groups participated. The festival wiped up the youth interest in cultural issues as was portrayed in the displays staged during the programme. This enabled CARD to identify some cultural potentials such as the youth ability in learning and exhibiting our culture in its original form, among the participating youth groups which is one of our potential focus areas in the coming year. In effect, through collaborative efforts of the Assembly and chiefs and people of the district, an annual cultural festival was celebrated and institutionalized.

**CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS**

Several challenges and constraints militated against the effective implementation of our programmes and activities within the period under review.

* Logistical challenge/constraints to facilitate timely carrying out of planned activities
* In adequate funds to support effective implementation
* Untimely release of funds for project implementation
* The rainy season also affected the time, duration and number of participants for projects and activities.

**THE WAY FORWARD IN 2010**

CARD is better position to continue with some of the projects and activities carried out in 2009. Our Youth Cultural Festival and Documentation Project will end in February, 2010 after the documentation of the stories, proverbs, drama etc has ended.

The second phase of the HIV/AIDS Prevention Programme will be vigorously pursued this year. Emphasis will be placed on the Voluntary Test and Counseling and efforts made to form associations of Persons Living With HIV/AIDS in the District. We will also endeavor to solicit support to at least procure Anti Retroviral Drugs for infected persons.

Also, we will increase our pace and create a platform of interaction and interface in the Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation of Pro-poor policies and programmes such as the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP), Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP), Capitation Grant Scheme, National Health Insurance Scheme, Free Uniforms and Books Programme, Savanna Accelerated Development Initiative (SADI) among others. We will continue to play a crucial role in monitoring of the implementation of health sector, agriculture, youth centered policies and educational sector policies and programmes to yield maximum output.

**PHILOSOPHY OF COMMITMENT FROM PARTNERS**

A very strong commitment and support from our major partner and stakeholder is needed to help strengthen the organization and better place us to champion the course of vulnerable groups and their families in the Upper West Region. The support of national and international NGOs is highly anticipated as we work to achieve our mission of working in partnership to sustain and consolidate the gains of poverty reduction among the youth, women, children and persons with disabilities in the Lambussie-Karni District in particular and the entire Upper West Region.