

Title: To what extent has research been used to inform anti-poverty policy in Ghana

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Abstract:

Social science research pinpoints groups at high risk of poverty and illuminates the impact of persistent poverty. However, a perceived lack of commitment by government and other agencies to research, and, neglect of its findings has confounded many social scientists. This study explores anti-poverty policies in a developing country, asking the question: To what extent is research used to inform anti-poverty policy in Ghana? Three further questions inform the answer:

- Which factors hinder or facilitate the use of poverty research by policy makers?
- How do policy networks facilitate or constrain policy-making?
- To what extent has policy transfer influenced anti-poverty policies?

Answers to these questions explain the dynamics of the interaction between social scientists and policy makers. The methods used include:

- A literature review of the effectiveness or otherwise of evidence-based policymaking, policy-making frameworks and anti-poverty policies in Ghana.
- In-depth interviews of researchers and policy makers.
- Analysis of poverty research in Ghana.

The study settled on Ghana because it focuses on poverty through academic and policy research. Social scientists also know little about how researchers and policy makers work together, the barriers to knowledge exchange or factors that might increase researchers' engagement with policy makers. There was also an opportunity to assess the contribution of researchers to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The study found evidence of the direct use of research to develop policies in the health, agricultural and technological sectors. There was considerable evidence of the conceptual use of research to enlighten policy makers, facilitated by a network of specialists across government and international agencies. Analysis proved that policy networks helped to spread and exchange knowledge and resources, which contributed to the development of anti-poverty policies in Ghana. However, there was some evidence that International Finance and International Development Agencies imposed anti-poverty policies on the government of Ghana.