

The Role of the Cameroon Diaspora in the Socio-Economic Development of Cameroon

Kennedy Fonju NKONGHO
Istanbul Aydin University, PO Box, 3400, Istanbul Turkey

Abstract

This paper is focused on accessing the role of the Diaspora in the socio-economic development of Cameroon. It examines the origins of the Cameroonian diaspora and the causes of the migratory movements and what they have been able to offer in their respective communities in Cameroon. It argues that the Cameroon diaspora is an indispensable tool for homeland development. It discusses some of the main Economic, Political and Social contributions of the Cameroon Diaspora to the homeland. This paper will discuss the Cameroon diaspora as a single entity despite the fact it is distributed in the main developed economies of Europe and America. As such, they unite themselves through ethnic groupings and tribal affiliations. This has however given some difficulties in executing development projects back home because they are not united under a single body. More emphasis is on Remittances as they have been classified as the main tool for homeland development. Most of the Economic developments come in the form of remittances to households in Cameroon. This paper work is divided into two main sections. The first section is the introduction and gives a brief summary of the history of the Cameroon diaspora, the causes of movements and how they are distributed in the main counties in Europe, Asia and the Americas. The second section will deal on the main Economic and Socio-Political contributions of the Cameroon diaspora to the homeland.

Keywords: *Diaspora, Cameroon, Remittances, Homeland Development, Migration, Emigration, Bush Falling.*

DOI: 10.7176/RHSS/9-14-05

Publication date: July 31st 2019

Introduction

The study of the Diaspora and their contributions to the development of homeland has in recent years been a burning topic of discussion for many writers and scholars. According to Mousa (1999), the diaspora has been considered as crucial partners for homeland development. Greater contributions of modern emerging economies come from diaspora remittances. The history of the diaspora can be traced as far back as the days of slavery and slave trade when people were taken from different parts of the world including Asia, Latin America and Africa to the mines, railway construction and factories in central Europe and America (De Hass 2007). This later developed to what has become known as the India Diaspora, the Pilipino Diaspora, and African Diaspora and to the Cameroonian Diaspora.

The focus of this paper is based on the Role of the Cameroon Diaspora in fostering economic and social development in Cameroon. However, Cameroon is a country in West Africa sharing a boarder with Nigeria to the West, Chad to the North, Central African Republic to the East and Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Congo to the South. English and French are the two official languages at equal value as both a heritage of Cameroon's colonial past both as a colony of Great Britain and France. The name of the country is La Republique Du Cameroun in French and The Republic of Cameroon in English. Cameroon is a centralized Unitary State. The current President is Paul Biya who has been in power since November 1986. He is the head of state and Head of the Arm Forces. He has the right to appoint the Prime Minister together with other Ministers. He also has the right to dismiss them at will. He does not need approval from the National Assembly or Senate to Pass Decrees because he rules by Decrees. Cameroon is divided into 10 regions; a governor appointed by the President governs each region. The regions are further divided into Divisions and (Echitci 2014) Sub-Divisions ruled by Divisional and Sub-Divisional Officers respectively both of whom are also appointed by the president.

The general objective of this thesis work is focus on the role of the Diaspora on Economic and Social Development in Cameroon. The political contribution will also be discussed. It is also aim at studying the nature of the Cameroon diaspora and how it is distributed in different parts of the world. The extent to which they have been able to identify themselves as a people and the relationship that exist between them. Diasporas has been considered as great partners of homeland development according to Dembele Moussa. Many economies are highly developed economically, politically and socially largely because of the remittances their Diaspora populations sends back home. The Diaspora seems to be a great key to homeland development especially for developing and emerging economies.

Reasons for Human Capital Flight and Migration

The reasons for migrations are diverse and differ from person-to-person depending on their various conditions and ambitions. Globalization and growth of communication networks and well developed transport networks in

the 20th and 21st centuries have ease communication between immigrants and their families back home and has also ease the migration process (Butler, 2001). This has helped the easy movement of people around the world. Discoveries in communication technologies and highly developed transport facilities have helped transformed the world into a global village. Cross-border migration in Cameroon gained grounds mainly in the 1960s. When Cameroon achieved independence in 1960, the government of Cameroon embarked on development programs that were to help facilitate the movement of Cameroonians to countries with strong economies and high technology like United Kingdom, West Germany, France, United States of America and Canada. The aim of this project was to help Cameroonians developed diverse skills so that they could later come back home and put these acquired skills at the service of the state (Ollong A. Kingsly, 2013).

More so, in the early 1980s many Cameroonians traveled out of the country because they were drastic drops in the prices of agricultural products that were the main source of income for the economy. This was followed by an economic crisis that forced the World Bank and the international monetary fund (IMF) to place Cameroon under Structural Adjustment Programs (Van de Wier 2001, p. 252). All these forced many farmers and businesspersons to abandon their farms and businesses to sought new roads of adventures. Furthermore, they was political instability in the Cameroons in the early 1990s (Konings, 1996) that forced many people to flee the country to seek asylum in Europe because of persecution or arrest. This was followed by the devaluation of the franc CFA that resulted to a 70 percent cut in the salaries of civil servants (Monga, 1995). This pushed many workers that were employed by the government to abandoned their jobs and travel to Europe or America where they could be better paid.

The new generations of Cameroonian Migrants in the 21st are mostly educational migrants. The Cameroon population is made up of mostly youths who are mostly students and with the poor prospects in terms of educational facilities and a future profession (Schmelz Andrea, 2007), many choose to travel to the west after high school or university education to further studies. Some youths are eager to be highly professionalized but their ambitions are hampered by the lack of highly equipped professional schools in some fields of study in the country as a result they are bound to travel. This process is sometimes the easiest means to easily travel out of the country because most of the students travel on scholarships and even the ones that do not have scholarship; it is easier to get a student visa than many other visas.

More Cameroonians travel abroad for family reunion. In this situation, many Cameroonians live home and travels abroad. When he or she becomes financially viable, the other family members move to join. For instance, a man travels and leaves behind his wife and a kid; when he eventually settles abroad, he tries to bring over his family. More to this, the American DV lottery program and the procurement of the American Green Card has given rights to Cameroonians to live and work in the USA (O. Kingsly, 2013) (Alpes M.J, 2011). This method has favored the migration of many Cameroonians on a yearly basis.

Economic crisis and high rates of unemployment have also been a highly contributive factor to migration in Cameroon. The level of unemployment in Cameroon is considerably high amongst educated and uneducated youths. Jobs opportunities have become so scarce that for one to become employed especially in the civil service in crisis-ridden Cameroon (Alpes M.J, 2009), it will depend only if he or she has an influential person who is in a key position already. Many graduates have turn to see travelling as the only easy means to become economically viable.

The Distribution of the Cameroon Diaspora

The Cameroon diaspora is sparsely distributed in different parts of the world. There has been little research carried out on the Cameroon diaspora as such, there is limited literature on how it is perfectly distributed in the major continents and countries of the world. This is because there is no major body or organization that has been branded as the Cameroon diaspora organization. However, many Cameroonians migrated during the late 20th century and the early phase of the 21st century to Europe and America with a considerable small number to Asia and very few to other African countries.

According to Ollong Kingsley, with the statistics from the 2005 populations demographic census that were conducted in Cameroon, it shows that they were 136,909 Cameroonians were legally living abroad. Most of these populations were largely distributed in the main OECD countries with France taking the lion share. In 2005, 57,060 Cameroonians were legally living in Europe, which has been brandished as the most favorable migrant destination for Cameroon migrants. Out of this number, 36,000 were legally living in France, there were 20,000 legally living in the United States, 14,414 in Germany, 3,040 in Belgium, 3,012 in the United Kingdom, 2,070 in Canada, 1,827 in the Netherlands, 1,209 in Italy and 506 in Luxemburg. The distribution of the Cameroon diaspora in 2005 can be better presented on the table 1 below.

Table 1: The distribution of Cameroonians living abroad in 2005.

Destination Country	No of Cameroonian diasporas (in thousands)
France	36.000
United States of America	20.000
Germany	14.414
Belgium	3.040
United Kingdom	3.012
Canada	2.070
Netherlands	1.827
Italy	1.209
Luxembourg	507

Source: United Nations 2005, extracted from Ollong Kinsley, Varieties of globalization

From the table above, France has been the most favorable destination for Cameroonian migrants. This factor owes mostly to the colonial past of Cameroon. In 2005, Europe was serving as a breeding ground for Cameroonian migrants though a good number was also in America and Canada but comparatively small to that of Europe. There were also more or undocumented migrations so these figures cannot be authoritatively agreed to be the fixed numbers of the Cameroon diaspora during this year. Amongst these migrants, they were people from all works of life ranging from engineers to medical doctors.

However, they have been a considerable increase in these figures in 2010. According to the Cameroon government, the demographic population census in 2010 estimated the population of Cameroon at 19,406,100 people, and stated that 2.2 percent of the total population, which was approximated at about 200,000 Cameroonians, were living and working abroad. It is difficult to completely access the Cameroon diaspora based on figures. This is due to lack of a well-organized institution in charge of the diaspora as earlier mentioned in this work. Undocumented migration has posed a very difficult task of recording the number of the Cameroon diaspora in neighboring African countries since as most of the migrations are by sea and land with no official documents or residents permits in these areas. As a result, statistics of Cameroon diaspora is relatively available in mostly OECD countries largely and non-OECD countries in lesser extents.

Table 2: The Redistribution of the Cameroon Diaspora in 2010/2011

Host country	Number of Cameroonian diaspora (in thousands)
France	69.6
United states	31.8
Belgium	11.1
United kingdom	9.5
Canada	7.6
Italy	7.0
Switzerland	7.0
South Africa	4.9
Spain	4.7
Kenya	2.1

Source: OECD 2015, Connecting with emigrants, a global profile of Diaspora

From the table above table, France remains the most favorable destination for Cameroonian migrants with the total number of Cameroonians living in France in 2010 and 2011 doubling the number that was recorded in 2005 within just an interval of five years. This growth in Cameroon diasporas' population in France could also be attributed to high birth rates within the Cameroon diaspora community and the increasing number of Cameroonian students attending higher education and expertise workers migrating too. The united have also witness a significant increase with more eleven thousand Cameroons migrating to the United States within the period of five years. However, this rapid increase is also due to the US diversity lottery that gives Cameroonians the right to live and work in America. Canada, the United Kingdom and other European countries also witness a steading increase respectively with South Africa habituating up to 4700 and Kenya 2100 Cameroonians.

Nature of Occupational Activities.

Cameroon is both a migrant destination especially for people from the neighboring African countries of Chad, Central Africa Republic and Nigeria. Emigration from Cameroon is mostly to America and Europe and primarily to France. The total number of Cameroonians that were recorded to be living out of the country in in 2007 was estimated at a whopping 170,000 with up to 40,000 of them living in France alone (IOM 2009). Most migrants from Cameroon to Europe and America are mostly education migrants who must have completed university education in Cameroon before travelling. Nevertheless, the primary aim of living Cameroon is always to go out there to hustle and improve yourself more economically (Nyamjoh and Page, 2012). In this case, the education

for some people is just to secure a legal status and obtain a residents permit. Everything being equal, most Cameroon students abroad attends higher institutions and most of them attend classes only in the evening while taking part time jobs in the factories or restaurants during the day (interviewee, Cameroonian masters' student in Turkey).

Moreover, upon completion of studies abroad most Cameroonian Diasporas prefer working abroad rather than taking home the expert knowledge. According to Dibussi Tande in his book titled 'Essays on Politics and collective memory in Cameroon', he stated on P38 that about 25% to 30% of professionals trained in Cameroon travels out of the country why a whopping 70% to 80% of professionals trained out of Cameroon never returns to work in Cameroon except on retirement. As such, many of them goes in for employment usually as highly qualified professionals in the areas of information technology, Engineering, Electronics, Educational Professors, Transport, management and Medical doctors, Nurses and pharmacist. A proportionately large number of the Cameroonian Diasporas work as nurses in Europe and America.

The Association of Cameroon Medical Doctors has estimated that more than 4,000 Cameroon Medical Doctors are living and working abroad as compared to a considerably smaller number of 800 medical doctors are into active service in Cameroon which is considerably very low to a population of about 24,000,000 million inhabitants (Winterhagen, 2016). This is also in line with the other highly skilled professionals in other fields especially engineering and management. It is estimated that 40% of the highly qualified work force of Cameroon works abroad. Dr. Jenni Winterhagen has concluded that more Cameroonian expert live and work abroad than the total number that leaves and works in Cameroon. Dr. Lazare Kaptue an associate professor of the Universite' des Montagnes in West Cameroon during an international conference for Excellence in Science and Technology revealed that over 12,000 Cameroonian engineers works for big companies in Germany. Undocumented migration has also plaid a paramount role to pose a difficulty in stating the number of Cameroonians distributed in the different sectors abroad.

Diaspora Contribution through Remittances

Due to high inflation rates and lack of employment facilities in many Sub-Saharan African countries including Cameroon, migration has been on a constant rise to pick up white collar jobs abroad because people desire better living conditions. The people back home intend rely on the family members abroad for remittances to better their living standards back home (Dumont and Lemaitre 2005). Remittances by emigrants from developing countries have been considered as one of the most important source of external financing to the developing countries. Remittances forms the greatest source of foreign financing to sub-Saharan African countries as a whole and Cameroon in particular. In 2010, global migrant remittances from developed countries to developing countries stood at 334 billion dollars (World Bank, 2010). This amount increased drastically in 2016 amounting to about US\$574 billion dollars. Remittances have shifted largely to reducing poverty and promoting human development. Cameroonians living out of Cameroon send money back home to family members and friends on annual basis. Not all of the money sent home are through formal means of exchange or are recorded. Most of it is sent using informal means and some are in the form of material goods. As a result, the actual volume of flows are not known or précised. The World Bank estimated global remittances to developing countries in 2017 tripled the amount of both the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Official Development Assistance (ODA) combined at US\$466 billion dollars (Eamonn and Jennifer, 2018)

Base on the statistical data of the World Bank and OECD, the monetary remittances of Cameroonians living abroad in the year 2000 was estimated at 40.0 million Us dollars that amounted to about (20billion CFA) at the time. The amount increased steadily in the subsequent years and in the year 2004, the amount of remittances sent home was 41 million US dollars making up to about (21billion CFA francs). With time the number of Cameroonian emigrants kept increasing and within the space of two years, the amount of money that was remitted home from abroad in 2006 was estimated at 56 million US dollars summing up to about (28 billion CFA francs). Cameroon being a developing country and not very rich, remittances are very crucial for the growth of its economy (Kingsley O, 2013). The total amount of the remittances that were remitted by the Cameroon diaspora in 2006, contributed to 1.5% of the country's GDP for that year (OECD, 2005). Fig 1 below will demonstrate the actual flow of remittances as a percentage of the GDP(left diagram) between 2000 to 2006 and the sums of money that were received in millions of US dollars(right diagram) between the years 2000 and 2006.

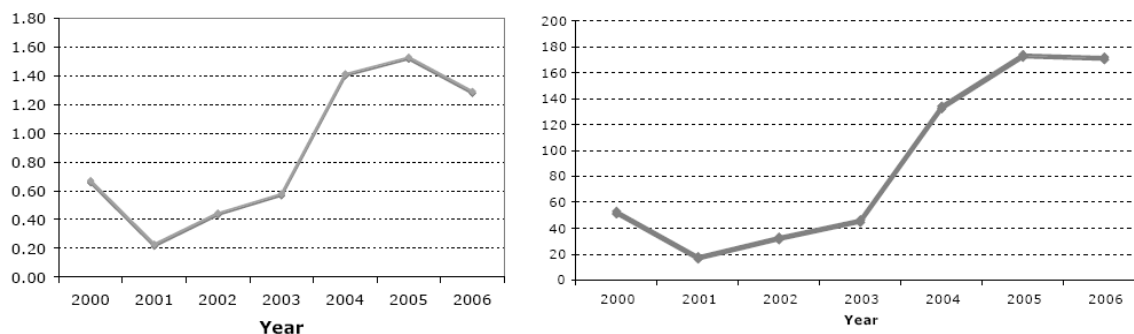


Figure.1: Flow of remittances as a percentage of GDP (left) and Flow of remittances received in millions of USD (right).

Source: OECD 2006, as extracted from (Kingsley O.) Varieties of Globalization.

From the figure above, the steady increase in the number of Cameroon emigrants and the subsequent increase in the amount of money remitted home between the years 2000 and 2006 contributed to a small but significant increase in the GDP of the within these years. The same thing happened to the amount of money that was sent home within the same years as they was a drastic increase from 2000 to 2004 and in 2006 the amount tripled itself or even more.

Flow of Remittances, Foreign Direct Investment and Net Official Development Assistance to Cameroon from 2005 to 2013.

The figure below explains the inflow of remittances, the net official development assistance and the amount of foreign aid to Cameroon between the years 2005 to 2013. It shows that, the inflow of remittances has been consistent although it has been lower in terms of comparison with other external inflows of finance. Between the years 2005 to 2013, remittances witness its lowest inflow and stood at US\$ 26 million in 2005 and it has since then increased drastically to a peak level in 2013 amounting to US\$ 80 million. In the preceding years to the global financial crisis, remittances inflows to Cameroon were not consistent and recorded the following amounts in the number of years US\$ 26, 43, 56 and 54 for the years 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 respectively. In 2009 which was recorded as the global financial crisis, inflows of remittances increased from US\$ 54 million in 2008 to US\$ 61 million. The reason can best be attributed to Altruism that supports more remitting more in times of crisis in the home countries because people's demands are higher during crisis and the only way of financing is relying on remittances. Because of this, Diasporas send more money back home (International Migration Outlook, 2006).

The increase in the inflows of remittances in 2009 is also related to the developmentalist argument that migrant remittances provide more capital that is needed to booster investment in home countries (Coetzee, 2011). In 2010, the year that proceeded the global financial crisis, inflows of remittances witness a drastic decrease from US\$ 61 million in 2009 to US\$ 38 million in 2010 approximately. This drastic in amount of remittance inflow in this particular year can be in line with concept that, many developed countries and some developing countries where migrant emigrate to must have tighten their financial sectors and put aside regulations to restrict the outflow of capital excessively especially after the global financial crisis. Moreover, it could also be because many foreign workers were laid off their duties because of the effects of the crisis and as such must have resulted to a fall in their incomes and consequently to the relative fall in the inflow of remittance in developing countries (Wall, 2009). Since then, after 2010 remittances have tried to be consistent and stable to Cameroon.

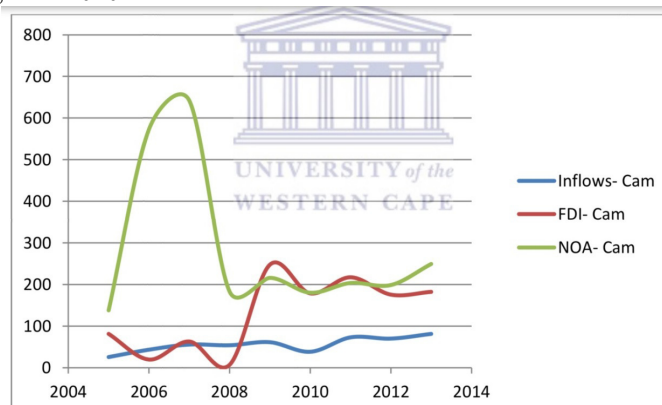


Figure 2: Flow of Remittances, Foreign Direct Investment and Net Official Development Assistance to Cameroon from 2005 to 2013.

Source: Adarkwa M.A, impacts of remittances on economic growth in Cameroon.

Meanwhile foreign direct Investment has been inconsistent for Cameroon throughout the period 2005 to 2013. In 2008, it was at its lowest point and was followed by the global financial crisis in 2009 and approximately US\$ 7 million. Surprising enough, foreign direct investment for Cameroon witness one of its highest figures in 2009 (the year of the financial crisis) and was estimated at about US\$ 247 million. According to scholars such as Verick and Islam (2010), the underpinning reason for this high increase could be because of the fact the crisis greatly affect developed nations and as such many investors felt unsecured and decided to invest their capital more in developing nations which were less affected.

Moreover, it can be deducible from the trend above that, the amount of net official development assistance for Cameroon has been on the rise since 2005 until 2008 when it witness a slide drop to US\$ 183 million when it had one of its highest amounts in 2007 amounting to US\$ 642 million. As a result, the amount of net official development assistance for Cameroon has remained inconsistent and declining since then. However, scholars such as Carson and Clark (2013) have argued that the reason for this constant inconsistency and decrease can be as a result of the Asian crisis that might have prompted development partners to focus more of their attention and resources to helping Asian countries to overcome their crisis. Others hold the argument that many African leaders including Cameroon have been frequently involved in the misappropriation of funds for development by the net official development assistance. Because of this, many development partners have become more reluctant to give more funds.

Social Contributions.

Social remittances are defined as practices, mind-sets, ideas, behaviors and social capital such as experience, knowledge and expertise that the Diasporas transfer from the host countries to the origin countries either knowingly or unknowingly. The Cameroon diaspora acquires social remittances through different ways ranging from education to training in the academic institutions of their host countries. This is because most of them go through former education in their host countries and it helps them to acquire high-level skills and some gain more specialize quality knowledge in particular disciplines. Also, they acquire social remittances through specialized professional expertise in work places that help them to acquire values, norms and work ethics which there help them to deliver their services in a more efficient and constant manner. Again they also gain more social remittances through socialization in their host countries which enable them to archive some certain attitudes and norms which they intend mediate between their host countries and Cameroon and they help to influence or change the social setup in the country.

According to Alpes MJ, (2009), the Cameroon diaspora acquire more social remittances through building up transnational networks that is by crossing countries and continents thereby linking up the globalization process with activities in the origin country Cameroon. Furthermore, he stated that, these transnational networks helps the Cameroon diaspora to build up intersecting social, economic, cultural and political connections that help to link up their destination countries and Cameroon. This has been so possible through the improvements in communication technology that has made Diasporas to stay very connected to their families back home through constant calls and chatting on social media and also inexpensive international calls. Also the advancements in air, water and land transports coupled with the cheap fares enable the Diasporas to make more frequent visits to their homelands as a result, the Cameroon diaspora are gaining more influence in homeland activities as the years goes by.

In more concretize terms, the Cameroonian diaspora are capable of transferring the following social remittances to Cameroon; Valuable democratic attitudes, policy reforms, Innovative ideas, technological skills, good work ethics, Peace-keeping ideas and social and cultural influences. These social remittances are equally as important as the financial remittances thus the Cameroon diaspora possesses a wide range of social remittance. However, more research and policy focus has been on financial remittances making it look more superior to social remittances which have somehow created a social imbalance which shows how the area of social remittances has remained an area of neglect in terms of policy research.

Cameroon has diverse areas where the human and social remittances of the Cameroon diaspora can be harnessed. For example more Cameroonian diasporas are needed to work in administrative setup of Cameroon and many of them are working as professional accountants, administrators, policy makers and educators in local governments and business setups across countries in Europe and other countries abroad. Many Cameroon Diasporas work are experts in policy making and many of them having working as representatives of in their countries. This has proven them qualified to be included in the social setup and policy making process of the host country.

Diaspora contributions through Education

All over the world, Diasporas have been considered as significant contributors to education in their respective countries of origin. Many studies have been conducted by different scholars to bring out the contributions of the Diasporas and their remittances to education and many have proven positively that Diasporas remittances have

been of immense importance to the education sector in remittances receiving economies. Rapport and Docquier, (2005) found out that diaspora remittances have a direct effect on education as it increases the number of children's enrolment into elementary schools and secondary schools and it also helps to reduce child's labor because it provides parents with the necessary funding for their children's education and many children avoid the risk of having to involve themselves into part time jobs to finance their studies. However, Edward and Ureta, (2003) also stipulated that children in households in El Salvador with at least one member living abroad, have high probability and a higher number of children not dropping out of school and going beyond secondary education than children whose households receive no remittances likewise Cameroon.

Furthermore, Salas, (2014) also holds the view that migrant remittances affects education positively because it provides the chances for children in remittance receiving households to acquire quality and higher education as opposed to others that do not. Again, Dorantes et al argues that migrant remittances helps to increase the number and the appearance of children in school because many children will be able to pay fees and to buy the necessary textbooks that will influence the student to be more regular in school and will help to improve students performances.

Talking about the contribution of the Cameroonian diaspora to education in Cameroon, migrants from Cameroon are made up highly educated and skilled professionals from different disciplines. They migrated mostly as educational migrants and skilled laborers. As a result, they know the significance of education to human development and the society. Most Cameroon's migrants are bread winners of their families and they do harbor all the responsibilities of family members especially the school children. The diaspora contributes to education in Cameroon either in groups that are through cultural and tribal affiliations or as individuals taking care of their direct family members. These contributions are in the form of carrying out projects like, providing computers, books, libraries and carrying out renovation work on campuses, providing funds for the construction of new buildings in schools, and funding the supply of pipe borne water in schools. Cameroon diaspora contributions to homeland development are based largely on tribal links and cultural groups. So most of these developmental projects are found in the communities where these cultural group members originate from.

To begin with, in 2002 the Lebialem Leadership Group in the USA (Lebialem is a division in the South West Region of Cameroon) shipped ten computer work stations from America to Cameroon to be distributed in schools in lebialem (Joseph Takougang, 2014). These computers were to be distributed in the major schools in Lebialem to equip the computer laboratories and to help staffs of the department in teaching students. So that students could have more practical lessons to facilitate their understanding and development. Again, in 2003, this same association bought and shipped other educational materials to Cameroon to be distributed in elementary schools in lebialem including fourteen thousand pencils and pens and also bought three thousand exercise books for the same purpose. These items went a long way to support children who did not have all the exercise books and pens thereby encouraging them to go to school regularly and at the same time promoting good results.



Figure 3: Computers donated by Lebialem Leadership Group to schools in Lebialem-Cameroon.

Source; LECUDA-USA Photo Album 2002.

Still on educational contributions, the Ex-students Association of Saker(EX-SSA-USA) Baptist college in

USA that was founded in 2000 made financial contributions that help it to lunch projects in its former college such as improving on the water system in the school campus, renovating the college chapel and donating thousands of books to the school library and medication to the college health center. These donations especially the text books help to provide the library with sufficient and good textbooks that have continuously help to improve the academic performances of students from this college. Consequently it has become one of the top ranking college in Cameroon producing excellent results every with one of every five students making it through university.

Apart from the contributions already mentioned above, other ethnic organizations of Cameroonian decent have also carried out activities similar to the ones mentioned above in their respective communities to support education. Base on individual perspective as has already been mentioned, Cameroonian diaspora or ‘bush fallers’ have been actively supporting education in their communities. Some people do it beyond their households and single handedly or with a friend donates books and other materials to schools in their communities. Meanwhile bush fullers have been largely relied upon in Cameroon especially in the Anglophones towns of Buea, kumba and Limbe as direct sources to provide tuition fees for their relatives, provide allowances and house rent. They also have to provide money for text book and research and field trips fees.

The Lebialem Cultural and Development Association (LECUDA-USA) in USA also contributed money that was used to sponsor a project that donated benches in the classrooms and office chairs in secondary schools across Lebialem Divison in the South west Region of Cameroon. These benches helped to reduce congestion in classrooms and avoided situations where more than three students could be forced to sit on one desk because of the unavailability of benches.

Furthermore, of a cultural association, the Association of the Bahams (Baham is a town in the Western region of Cameroon) in the diaspora through financial contributions, donated the construction of two classrooms in Government High School Baham. These classrooms help to avoid the situation of concentrating so many students in a single classroom which will intend led to distraction amongst the students.

Other members and associations of the Cameroon diaspora also contribute to education in Cameroon through offering of scholarships to intelligent children who do not have the advantages of furthering their education, others renovate toilets system and provide good clean water in schools and the renovation of old classrooms and administrative blocks in campuses. Others who have experience in the education sector help to develop the curriculum when they do visit home while others help to pay the salaries of contract and PTA (Parents Teachers Association) teachers in their respective communities.

Considering tertiary education, Cameroon Diasporas who are university lecturers in their host countries usually engage in scientific discussions and organizes exchange programs for lecturers and students from Cameroon in their host countries. They travel to Cameroon to offer lectures at no charge and sometimes they invite their colleagues tutoring in Cameroon for conferences in their host countries and organize grant for doctorate and post-doctorate scholars from Cameroon .In the domain of technical and scientific education, they have been failed attempts repeatedly to partner state universities with other universities abroad. However, many individuals and Cameroonian diaspora and home based scientific lecturers have been working on efforts to set up a private technical university and the Institute of technology in Nkongsamba in the littoral region of the country (Shmelz, 2011).

Diaspora contribution through Health.

Health is one of the most essential areas where the contributions of the diaspora are most visible. Healthcare in Cameroon is sub-standard due to lack of specialist, equipment, medicine and medical aids such as wheel chairs, beds and bandage materials in health centers and hospitals. There is total lack of personnel and medical facilities especially in the rural villages of the country. As a result of this, there have been high infant mortality rates, constant spread of diseases amongst the rural populace and lack of health education. Based on these grounds, the Cameroon diaspora has on grounds of cultural associations and tribal affiliations coupled with individual donations set up projects that have been improving on the lives of Cameroonians especially the less privileged and the societal misfits.

CAMFOMEDICS which is an association of Cameroonian medical, pharmacy and dentistry students in Germany was founded in 1994 to promote a sustainable health policy which will favor the integration and re-integration of Cameroonian medical students with German medical students. Member of this association are aware of the reality of the health situation back in Cameroon and now that they have medical experience abroad, their objectives are to; carryout medical projects back home in Cameroon, encourage training and further studies in the medical field, promote global partnership and exchanges with different fields of study and to promote the integration of medical experts. One of their projects in Cameroon is PINK (program for internships in Cameroon). Through this program, members of this association both Cameroonians and Germans are encouraged to take up a year of practical medical internship and a clinical traineeship and nursing career internships in Cameroon (Danielle Kadje, 2018). The objectives are to make them help the unstaffed health centers and

medical clinics in Cameroon and also to help them develop their skills and careers perfectly.

The Cameroon diaspora also partnered with the French association called BSF that stands for (Biology Sans Frontieres) with the primary objective of giving development aid to long-term biological research and medical assistance to institutions and persons in need. The association visited Cameroon in 2006 to assess the health conditions in some rural areas. When left Cameroon, and through the members of the Cameroon diaspora they assisted the Mbouo Evangelical Health Centre with medical equipment and medicine (Pelican, 2010). This equipment and medicine help to improve on the lives of the people of this and was a good boost for the country and the diaspora.

Furthermore, the Cameroon diaspora is very concern about the health issues back home and they try always to keep up efforts to assist in this aspect. In this regard, it is worthy of note that in 2007, the association of the Sawa women (Sawa is a tribe in Cameroon found in the littoral region with headquarters in Douala) in the diaspora contributed money that was used in buying medical equipment for the District Hospital in Deido Douala (Ollong Kingsly, 2013). This equipment went a long way even though with insufficient staffs to better the health conditions of patients in the area who lacked such facilities.

The Cameroon diaspora have also through the Cameroon American AIDS Alliance (CAAA) given vital contribution to the people back home. The CAAA is a non-profit organization that was form in America by some Cameroonians with the main objective of fighting against HIV/AIDS in Cameroon. In 2006, the organization in partnership with Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago and Actelion Pharmaceuticals, a company that produces drugs in California contributed funds and started an HIV/AIDS educational and prevention campaign in the Manyemen Health Centre in Kumba South West Region of Cameroon. The hospital since then have grown into a big hospital with over 150 beds for patients and is now called the Presbyterian General Hospital Kumba with more five medical doctors and other specialists (Joseph Takougang, 2014). In addition to this, the hospital organize talks base on HIV/AIDS from time to time that bring together people in the community so that they be educated about this illness.

Another effort at improving the health of people in Cameroon was by the Bali Immigrants Population (Bali is found in the North West region of Cameroon with headquarters in Bamenda) in the United States. In the early 1990s, they aided the district hospital in Bali by shipping tons of medication from the USA, and contributed money which was used to construct a mortuary in the hospital and partially paid expenses for the supply of water in the area (Sikod and Tchouassi, 2006). Other groups such as the Bakossi Cultural and Development Association (BACDA) and La Famille Bamileke (LAFADA) also carried out tremendous contributions in terms of health in their respective communities. Cameroonian immigrants in America of the Omega Gospel Ministries also contributed to health by visiting Cameroon on a spiritual mission. Amongst them were medical experts who gave free medical checkups to patients in the areas they visited and this also offered the North West Regional Hospital a Dialysis machine.

The most appalling issue in the health sector in Cameroon is the lack of specialist and Cameroonian diaspora have tried in a way to combat this problem. They have come up with a program called iMEDprogramme (Improving Medical Education and Health Care Delivery through Diaspora Engagement). The objective of this program is train Cameroonian doctors on how to use modern diagnostic and therapeutic instruments such as sonography, electrocardiography and endoscopy (Danielle Kadje, 2013). Through this program, Cameroonian doctors in the diaspora teach their colleagues in Cameroon through organizing medical workshops in Cameroon and they work within the framework of this program.

Diaspora Contributions in Home Politics.

For many years since the independence of Cameroon, the Cameroon diaspora was mostly made up of educational migrants and they were mostly grouped by social groupings that were more interested in giving support to its members rather than participating in political affairs in Cameroon. The preambles of their associations both cultural and students associations labeled them as non-violent and non-political groups but they were there to represent their members and to serve as liaisons to the respective authorities. The relative economic growth and political stability that Cameroon enjoyed few decades after independence made many diaspora to become less interested and less critical of the regime and status quo in the country at that time. As the economy was booming in the 1980s, the government provided scholarships for Cameroon students to study abroad and also encouraged the ones who had finished their studies to return home with their newly acquired skills and help in building the nation (Takougang J, 2014).

Takougang further stipulated that even though not all the diaspora was in support of the regime in power until the 1980s, very few Diasporas were able to questions the leadership for fear of being imprisoned. One of such cases was that of one the famous Cameroonian writer Mongo Beti who remain in self-exile in France for many centuries because he was a critic of the regime in power. Moreover this reluctance was also because of the fact that many Cameroons living abroad at that time were not naturalized citizens and most of them didn't have legal resident status. All this coupled together they were scared of the risk of deportation and what they could

face back home if they were noted as opposition before being deported. It was only until the late 1980s that Cameroon diaspora started developing interest in politics back due to the political liberalization that cuts across the continent during that time. They team up support the opposite in the following ways;

In respect to supporting the formation of political parties in Cameroon, the Cameroon Diasporas who have gain more political experiences in the host countries can be available to this effect. For example, when the SDF was lunched in Bamenda (an Anglophone city in Cameroon North West region) in September 1990, it gained massive support from the Cameroon diaspora especially those from the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. Shortly after it was created it branches expanded all over America and Europe where Cameroonians were mostly settled (Krieger, 1998). The party representative mobilized the Cameroonian people to raise funds in order to support the party during election campaigns and also sponsor the party in elections registration.

Again in 2011, the Cameroon parliament issued a decree that allowed Cameroonians living outside the country to participate in voting during elections in Cameroon in elections. However, this decree only limited the voting rights to non-naturalized Cameroonians because Cameroon does not grant dual nationality status to its citizens. Because of this, many Cameroonians who are naturalized citizens of other countries are unable to vote during elections. This is because all Cameroonians willing to participate in voting must obtain a consular card from the Cameroon embassy or consulate in their respective countries.

The Cameroon diaspora also contributes politically by organizing match rallies and staging protest in fronts of the various Cameroon embassies in their respective countries against malpractices in Cameroon such as bad reforms, military harassment of civilians, chronic corruption, rampant embezzlement and harsh policies of the government. For example, in 2008 when President Biya wanted to amend the constitution so that it allows him to run for elections in 2011, Cameroonians staged massive protest across Europe and America in Cameroon embassies demanding the president not to temper with the constitution even though their cries fell on death ears. The Cameroon diaspora have also been at the fore front of promoting democracy in Cameroon. They do this by constantly opposing government policies which are of no benefits to the country and try to promote democratic ideas by publishing articles and books that spread democratic ideas in Cameroon websites online such as cam.infonews.org and camer.be. Even though many people in Cameroon read these books they only get the knowledge in it because the ideas are more or less not practical. Although pressure from the diaspora sometimes forces the government to implement reforms that are beneficial to the citizens. The Cameroon diaspora also contributed immensely during the last presidential elections in Cameroon on October 7. They registered to vote massively in their respective countries and they turn out massively on this day to make their choice of leader.



Figure 4: Cameroonians Diasporas registering to vote in Paris.

Source: www.camer.be

The picture above shows a number of Cameroons living in France standing on a queue to register for Presidential elections that were held in Cameroon on the 7th of October 2018 during which president was re-elected into the office. However, the Cameroon do not grant dual nationality to its citizens leaving abroad so a greater number of the Cameroon diaspora do not participate in the actual voting process of elections in Cameroon because they are

not considered as Cameroon nationals since they were born or have lived in another country and do not hold a Cameroonian passport or national identity card. Moreover, it was only until recently that Cameroonians living abroad were granted the right to participate in elections in Cameroon (Takougang J, 2014). But before they take part in this voting process, they must acquire a voter's card from the Cameroon embassy in that country as a result; most people who are not in support of the regime in power are not often opportune to have these cards.



Figure 5: Cameroon Diasporas voting during Presidential Elections.

Source: www.camer.be

CONCLUSION.

This study has been focus on studying the contributions of the Cameroon diaspora to socio-economic development in the homeland. To archive these goals, the researcher employed qualitative methods of research and Semi-structured interviews which enabled him to get a full understanding of the subject matter. According to the research, a good number of Cameroonians lives and work abroad. This group of people constitutes some of Cameroon's finest in terms of education, sports and expertise in the different works of life. These groups of persons can make a significant contribution in homeland development if they can transfer some of these expertise and skills back home. The reasons for outgoing migration have been attributed to Education, the need for better life opportunities and family reunions. The active population is more involved in migration in Cameroon.

On the part of the setup, the Cameroon diaspora is not team up under a single body. It is organized according to tribal affiliations and associations in the major countries in the world. France has the highest number of Cameroonians living in Europe followed by Germany and in America, more Cameroonians lives in the United States due to the American Visa diversity lottery that gave them the green light. Many others also live in Canada. Majority of them are experts in various fields and educationalists.

Based on the contribution to homeland development through remittances, the data collected for this study alongside works of other authors showed that the prime motivations for Cameroonian diaspora remitting money home for development are because of Altruism and Self-interest. However, it is also due to the strong attachment to family and community of the Cameroonian diaspora. Cameroonians living abroad have a good knowledge of the situation of the people in the communities and as a result they send more money to their families and friends and also for community development projects. For self-interest reasons, many Cameroonians living abroad owns businesses in Cameroon and from time to time they send in more money or goods to increase the capital and stock of their business. Others that do not own businesses also remit money because of self-interest to top their Bank accounts so that they can be able to carry out personal projects like buying or constructing a personal home or planning for their retirement when they eventually returns home.

However these remittances helps to promote development especially at the local level because they enable many people to access healthcare, education, food and small businesses to sustain themselves. Many of the interviewees stated that the money they send home goes beyond their family and friends to promote local development in the sense that they also pay for traditional rites in the community, and they contribute more to community development projects like the construction of schools or roads. The remittances also improve micro development through increase family income, good nutrition, maintenance of farm to market roads and increase agricultural productivity.

References

- Alpes M.J. (2009)**, imagining a Future in Bush: Migration Aspirations in times of Crisis in Anglophone Cameroon, Amsterdam, Taylor and Francis Online, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2013.831350>
- Alpes M.J. (2011)**, Bush Falling: How young Cameroonians dare to Migrate, Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam Press.
- De Haas, H. (2007)**, Remittances, Migration and Social Development: A Conceptual Review of the Literature in Programme on Social Policy and Development, Paper no. 34. UNRISD, Geneva.
- Docquier, F., & Rapoport, H. (2005)**, The Economics of Migrant Remittances, Bonn: Germany, Discussion Paper No. 1531.
- Dorantes ,A., et al.(2013)**, The effects of Enterprise systems Implementation on the Firm Information Environment, Contemporary Accounting Research 30(4):1427-1461. Doi: 10.1111/1911-3846.12001.
- Eamonn N and Jennifer L, (2018)**, Remittances: a hidden contribution to development, Global Trendometer.
- Echitchi S. R. G 2014**, The discursive formation of nationalism: a study of the Anglophone secessionist movements in Cameroon, http://eprints.ucm.es/30678/1/Size_Raymond_Gael_Echitchi.pdf
- Francis N.B and Ben P, (2002)**, White man kontri and the Enduring Allure of Modernity amongst Cameroonian Youths, African Affairs 607-634, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/101.405.607>
- Joseph, T. (2014)**, Cameroonian immigrants in the United States: Between the homeland and the Diaspora. Maryland, Lexington Books.
- Kadje, D. (2018)**, Migration and Development between Germany and Cameroon, Yaoundé: University of Yaoundé Two.
- Kingsly A.(2013)**, The Cameroon Diaspora: an Assessment of its Role in Local Development, Journal of Globalization Studies, vol.4. no. 2. 82-95.
- Konings, P. and Nyamnjoh, F. B 2003**, *Negotiating an Anglophone Identity: a Study of the Politics of Recognition and Representation in Cameroon*, Leiden Boston, Brill, Afrika-Studiecentrum Series, Vol. 1, 230 p.
- Michael P. (2013)**, International Migration: Virtue or Vice? Perspectives from Cameroon, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2013.723256>
- Moussa, D. (1999)**. Contribution a' la deconstruction des theories conventionnelles sur le development de l'Afrique, Dakar, Senegal, CODESRIA: Senegal.
- Prabal K. De & Dilip R. (2012)**: Impacts of Remittances on Households income, assets and Capital: Evidence from Sri Lanka, Migration and Development, 1:1, 163-179, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2012.719348>
- Rubenstein, E, (2016)**, Immigration drives U.S Population Growth, <http://www.npg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/2016-Immigration-Drives-Population-Forum-Paper.pdf>> [Accessed 15 September 2016]
- Schmelz, A, (2011)**, The Cameroonian Diaspora in Germany: their role in local Development, Eschborn, Deutsche Gesellschaft Fur
- Tande D, 2007**, President Paul Biya: 25 Years and Counting, Cameroon Politics,<http://www.dibussi.com/2007/11/paul-biya-25-ye.html>
- Tchouassi, G., & Sikod, F. (2010)**, Altruistic Preferences as motivation for Migrants