

UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL FOR
SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL
SCIENCES

DOCTORAL RESEARCH UNIT FOR
SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY



UNIVERSITE DE YAOUNDE I

CENTRE DE RECHERCHE ET DE
FORMATION DOCTORALE EN SCIENCES
HUMAINES, SOCIALES ET EDUCATIVES

UNITE DE RECHERCHE ET DE
FORMATION DOCTORALE EN
SCIENCES HUMAINES ET SOCIALES

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**HONORABLE EMILIA MONJOWA LIFAKA AT THE
SERVICE OF THE NATION, 2002-2021: A STUDY IN
FEMALE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN FAKO WEST
CONSTITUENCY**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of a
Master of Arts Degree in History**

Specialization: History of International Relations

By

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September 2025

To

My beloved parents, Jacob ASAAH AZEULESEI and Emilia FIETCHE
TENDONGLEFACK ASAAH, all of blessed memory

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The realization of this work would not have been possible without the contributions of a series of persons. In this light, sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor, Professor Willibroad Dze-Ngwa whose guidance was of utmost importance from inception to completion. He granted me access to his library, African Network against Illiteracy, Conflicts and Human Rights Abuses (ANICHRA) where I harvested much vital information. I also thank him in a special way for his directives and fatherly support. Special thanks go to the entire staff of the History Department of the University of Yaounde I for grooming me intellectually to this level of academic standing.

I equally thank all informants who provided me vital information needed for the work. Paramount of them are, David Mafany Namange and Minerva Akawoh Molinege, for their guidance and provision of adequate material from the Buea Council Archives. I am also heartily indebted to the family of Monjowa Lifaka, especially Cathrine Etonde Lifaka for granting me access to the family archives. In a special way, I thank Minister Marie Therese Abena Ondoa, for permitting me to consult documents in the library of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Family (MINPROFF).

Gratitude also goes to all my course mates of Master I and II for the conducive environment they created for my studies. I also remain indebted to documentation centers that opened their doors for me, especially the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences, the library of the Department of History (all of the University of Yaounde I), the library of the Cameroon Institute of International Relations (IRIC) and the History Research Center (CRH) Yaounde, for permitting me to consult their diverse resources that provided vital information for the study. Many thanks equally go to my family members: Pierre Njonguo Zeshung, Hederita Njonguo Azeulesei, Sandra-Kelly Njonguo Landoh, Lewis-Junior Njonguo Tendonglefack, Nadine Azeulesei Asaah and the entire Mefordong foundation for their warmth, moral, spiritual and financial support for the realization of this work.

ABSTRACT

This study examines Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's life *vis-à-vis* her services to the Nation. The work establishes that her leadership style and capabilities of navigating through multiple challenges and representing the women folk did not only bring a meaningful development to the Fako West Constituency or encourage a steady rise of female personalities in politics in Cameroon, but significantly made Cameroon to be recognized at the international level as a powerful diplomatic nation. It outlines the determinants of Hon Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's infiltration into politics, her socio-economic and political activities in the Fako West Constituency. The study relied on data from primary and secondary sources including interviews. Concerning primary data, we drew evidences after critically treating archival materials and oral information. With regards to secondary sources, we made extensive use of literature that offered some general and specific information concerning our topic of investigation. To ensure a logical presentation of the data, chronological-cum thematic approaches were used in analyzing information gathered by the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Results of our investigations revealed five main issues: Firstly, that the Fako West Constituency's progress was slow hitherto the emergence of Emilia as a parliamentarian; secondly, that she triggered the rapid development of the area; thirdly, that her rise to power encouraged other females to embrace politics; fourthly, that her parliamentary position added impetus to Cameroon's diplomacy; and fifthly, that female leaders in Cameroon confronted a good number of challenges, which limited their degree of participation in decision making. The work ends with recommendations to stakeholders for an appropriate development and pacific cohabitation between female and male political leaders. If Cameroon acknowledges the complex challenges, addressing their root causes, and seizing the available opportunities, it can move towards a more powerful and inclusive future, where every citizen feels a sense of belonging, representation and participation. This journey will require hard work, dedication, dialogue, and a shared vision for a brighter tomorrow.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude examine la vie de l'honorable Emilia Monjowa Lifaka au regard des services qu'elle a rendus à la nation. Le travail établit que son style de leadership et ses capacités à naviguer à travers de multiples défis et à représenter les femmes n'ont pas seulement apporté un développement significatif à la circonscription de Fako Ouest ou encouragé une augmentation constante des personnalités féminines en politique au Cameroun, mais ont significativement permis au Cameroun d'être reconnue au niveau international comme une nation diplomatique puissante. L'étude décrit les déterminants de l'infiltration d'Hon Emilia Monjowa Lifaka dans la politique, ses activités socio-économiques et politiques dans la circonscription de Fako Ouest. L'étude s'appuie sur des données provenant de sources primaires et secondaires, y compris des entretiens. En ce qui concerne les données primaires, nous avons tiré des preuves après avoir traité de manière critique les documents d'archives et les informations orales. En ce qui concerne les sources secondaires, nous avons fait un usage intensif de la littérature qui offrait des informations générales et spécifiques sur notre sujet d'enquête. Pour assurer une présentation logique des données, des approches chronologiques et thématiques ont été utilisées pour analyser les informations recueillies par l'utilisation d'approches qualitatives et quantitatives. Les résultats de nos investigations ont révélé cinq questions principales : Premièrement, les progrès de la circonscription de Fako West étaient lents jusqu'à l'émergence d'Emilia en tant que parlementaire; deuxièmement, elle a déclenché le développement rapide de la région ; troisièmement, son accession au pouvoir a encouragé d'autres femmes à se lancer dans la politique ; quatrièmement, sa position parlementaire a donné un élan à la diplomatie camerounaise ; et cinquièmement, les femmes dirigeantes au Cameroun ont été confrontées à un bon nombre de défis, qui ont limité leur degré de participation à la prise de décision. L'ouvrage se termine par des recommandations aux parties prenantes pour un développement approprié et une cohabitation pacifique entre les femmes et les hommes leaders politiques, Si le Cameroun reconnaît la complexité des défis, s'attaque à leurs causes profondes et saisit les opportunités qui s'offrent à lui, il pourra progresser vers un avenir plus fort et inclusif, où chaque citoyen aura un sentiment d'appartenance, de représentation et de participation. Ce cheminement exigera du travail acharné, du dévouement, du dialogue et une vision commune pour un avenir meilleur.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALCAM	<i>Assemblée Legislative Camerounaise</i>
ANICHRA	African Network against Illiteracy, Conflicts and Human Rights Abuses
ARCAM	<i>Assemblée Représentative Camerounaise</i>
ASGP	<i>Association des Secrétaires Généraux des Parlements</i>
CBA	Competency Based Approach
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women
CFEFSEA	<i>Cercle Féminin d'Etudes Sociales et Economiques d'Afrique</i>
CHRDA	Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CPDM	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
FENASCO	<i>Fédération Nationale des sport Scolaire du Cameroun</i>
GBV	Gender Base Violence
HIV	Human Immuno Deficiency Virus
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRAD	Institute of Agronomic Research
IRIC	International Relations Institute of Cameroun
MINPROFF	Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family
MLF	Monjowa Lifaka Foundation
MP	Member of Parliament
MTE	Medium Term Expenditure
NGP	National Gender Program
NOSO	North West/South West
PAP	Pan-African Parliament
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programs
SDF	Social Democratic Front

UC	<i>Union Camerounaise</i>
UFC	<i>Union des Femmes Camerounaises</i>
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNO	United Nations Organization
USA	United States of America
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

From time immemorial, humans, have contributed in shaping societies. As early as 4000BC, there were women who studied, taught and practiced medicine¹. The entire world is what it is today thanks to the role played by some influential women. They have left lasting legacies in their respective regions that continue to inspire future generations. In Europe, there was Queen Boadicea of the Iceni tribe (30-61AD)², a celtic queen who led a rebellion against the Roman Empire, Queen Olga of Kiev (890-969) a regent of Kievan Rus who implemented various reforms and established trade relations with other nations for the benefit of Kiev³. In America, we had Malintzin (Malinche) of the Aztec Empire (1496-1529AD)⁴, a skilled translator and advisor who played a crucial role in the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire, Lozen of the Apache Nation (1840-1889AD)⁵ who fought alongside other Apache leaders against the Mexican and American forces. She is remembered today for bravery.

In Asia, we acknowledge the role of Empress Wu Zetian of China (624-705AD) the only woman to ever rule China⁶. She implemented great reforms that revolutionized China during this period. Equally we had Queen Suriyothai of the Ayutthaya Kingdom (16th Century)⁷, a legendary Queen of Thailand who is remembered for her loyalty to her husband and kingdom. Still in Asia, there was Razia Sultana of the Delhi sultanate (1205-1240AD) the first and only female ruler of the Delhi sultanate who greatly promoted education and trade in her area of jurisdiction⁸. Streaming down to Africa, we had Queen Hatshepsut (1479-1458BC) the 5th pharaoh of the 18th dynasty of Egypt, known for her impressive achievements including,

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com>, consulted on 4th December, 2024 at 1:04 PM.

² A. L. Tennyson, *Boadicea*, Edward Moxon, London, 1864, p.1

³ N. W. Ingham, "The Cult of St Olga in Medieval Rus", *the Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.58, 2007, pp.222-225.

⁴ J. Boardman et al, *The Assyrian Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 23.

⁵ N.C. Heffernan, *Lozen: Apache Warrior Woman*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, USA, 2012. p. 63.

⁶ J. Clements, *Wu Zetian: China's only Woman Emperor*, Sutton Publishing, Stroud, UK, 2007. p. 27.

⁷ W.A. Wood, *The Kingdom of Siam*, T. Fisher Unwin, London, UK, 1924. p.24.

⁸ H.M Elliot, *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians*, Trubner and co, London, UK, 1867, p. 20.

successful trade missions, architectural innovations and military campaigns⁹. She was one of the few female pharaohs and her success story paved the way for future female leaders¹⁰. Her reign equally marked the beginning of the golden age in ancient Egypt, characterized by peace, prosperity and cultural achievements¹¹.

In addition, we had Queen Njinga of Ndongo and Matamba (1583-1663)¹², a skilled and strategist who ruled over her people in present day Angola. Queen Amanirenas of the kingdom of Kush (40BC-20AD)¹³, a fierce warrior and leader who successfully defended her kingdom against the Roman Empire. Queen Ranavalona I of Madagascar (1782-1861) was a powerful and influential queen who equally defended Madagascar from European colonization.¹⁴ Streaming down to Cameroon, women have also played a key role in shaping the course of Cameroon History. Before colonization and introduction of modern state systems in Cameroon, the territory was characterized with well-established pre-colonial political economic and socio-cultural institutions with profound influence over its peoples¹⁵. This form of governance met different systems, organized within constituted structures and leadership patterns with varied functions and administrative setups.¹⁶ These differences classified pre-colonial societies in to centralized and decentralized communities.

Centralized communities were found in the Adamawa area and the grass-fields regions while decentralized societies were found in the coastal and forest regions of the country.¹⁷ Centralized kingdoms had strong organized and powerful stratified societies with well-established economic, social and political setups based on traditional authority. Historical evidence about the pre-colonial period revealed the diverse ways women valued their motherhood and fertility, knowledge of agriculture membership in secret societies, exercising varying levels of power, experiencing a level of spectrum of belonging as political intermediaries¹⁸.

⁹ Metropolitan Museum of Arts, *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, Metropolitan Museum of Arts, New York, USA, 2005. pp. 103-110.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid, p.112.

¹² L. M. Heywood, *Queen Njinga*, Harvard University Press, Harvard, 2017, p. 305.

¹³ L. Torok, *The Kingdom of Kush: Handbook of the Napatan-Meriotic Civilization*, Leiden, Netherlands, 1997. p. 30.

¹⁴ G. Campbell, *A History of Madagascar*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2005. p. 411

¹⁵ V.G. Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary schools and Colleges*, Vol.II, London, Macmillan, 1992. p 15.

¹⁶ P. Ninjoh, *Advance Level Cameroon History since 1800*, Cameroon, Bamenda, Data Lens Production, 2014. p.98.

¹⁷ Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary schools and Colleges*, p. 17.

¹⁸ Ibid.

In such societies, the role of the princess, queen mother and “Mafor” as it is in Mmuock, were politically prominent, while other women played the role of, priestesses, cultivators, oracles, wives, concubines, slaves and mothers. They played multiple curative roles like nurses, pharmacists, midwives, physicians and councilors. Politically, women in pre-colonial Cameroon did not only play the role of “Mafor” or Queen Mother, who wielded enormous powers, representing and controlling the female folk of every society, especially in decentralized states and kingdoms but also acted as front liners in some of these societies. For instance, Princess Ngonnso (19th century) of Bankim dynasty fought over the throne with her brother Nchare Yen. The split between these two led to the foundation of the present day Nso and Bamum Kingdoms of Cameroon respectively¹⁹. Queen Mandara is a legendary figure in Cameroon History, who founded the Mandara kingdom in the 16th century²⁰. She is remembered for her bravery, strategic thinking and military prowess that permitted her to defend her territory from military attacks. She is celebrated as a symbol of female empowerment and a role model for women especially in the Northern part of Cameroon today²¹.

Navigating through the pre-independence/ independence era, great Cameroonian female figures like Dorcas Ewokolo Idowu²² made history in 1955 when she was appointed to the Southern Cameroon House of Assembly, under the political banner of the Kamerun National Congress (KNC)²³. She represented women’s interest, and paved the way for future generations of women in politics. She worked from 1955-1959 and succeeded by Josepha Mua, elected in 1960, a very strong reunificationist architect who remained in parliament from 1960-1965, and advocated for women’s rights, education and healthcare²⁴. Her contributions to Cameroon’s independence movement and advocacy for women’s rights earned her a place in Cameroon’s History. The first directly- elected female Member of Parliament in British Southern Cameroons was Josepha Mua while Julianne Keutcha, who won a seat in the 1960 Cameroonian parliamentary election was the first directly- elected in French Cameroon²⁵. Her stay in parliament was from 1960-1972. These women all began their careers as educators.

¹⁹ P.Ninjo, *Advanced Level Cameroon History since 1800*, Bamenda, Datalens, 2012, p. 96.

²⁰ P. Burnham, *A History of the Mandara Mountains*, UK, Routledge, Abingdon, 1996, p. 5.

²¹ Ibid.

²² The National Assembly, “The Road to Female Leadership in Parliament” Yaounde, March 2021, p. 24.

²³ “Cameroon,s Female MPs: Dorcas Ewokolo” by All Africa, accessed on December 15 2024.

²⁴ “Josepha Mua” by Everypolitician, Harvard University Dataverse, accessed on December 15, 2024.

²⁵ “Julianne Keutcha” by Everypolitician, Harvard University Dataverse, accessed on December 15, 2024.

Fako West Constituency, precisely, Bojongo court which is our zone of study, constituted part of the political landscape of Southern Cameroons under British Trusteeship. In 1961, through a British-organized plebiscite, the Southern Cameroons including Fako, voted to join the Republic of Cameroon. This led to the creation of the Federal Republic of Cameroon in 1961²⁶. Early politicians from Fako include Dr. E.M.L Endeley, founder of the KNC and later a member of the Kamerun National Democratic party (KNDP) and P.M Kalle, member of the KNDP. It was this preoccupation that motivated a write –up in this area.

Research Motivation

Scientifically, we were urged to research on this topic in order to add to the historiography of political leadership and female political leadership in particular so, the history of Cameroon and Humanities in general can be enriched. The leadership style of Hon. Emilia was a great motivator to the younger generation aspiring to become great leaders in future. Academically, we were motivated by the fact that, a scientific study like this one, is a pre-requisite condition to backing home a Maser Degree in History. Personally, the leadership style and capabilities of Emilia in navigating through the multiple challenges to climb the political ladder, motivate us enormously. Also, the slow but steady rise of female personalities in Cameroon and Fako West Constituency is partly motivated by her actions within the constituency and the National Assembly.

The researcher therefore, seeks to find out about Monjowa's early childhood and impact in her life, through this study. She handled a good percentage of the economic, political and social duties in the grassroots. Despite this, women are under represented on the decision-making table but the survival of female authority over time has captivated the interest of the researcher who is out to investigate the strength and potentials of female authority in Cameroon and Fako West Constituency through Monjowa's actions. Emphasis is also laid on her legacy as well as the problems she faced in meeting up with these commitments. This cannot be possible without a clear understanding of the concepts involved.

Conceptual Framework

For a better understanding of our study, it would be necessary we define some key terms, giving them contextual meaning. To that effect, we shall define; female leadership, political leadership and service to the Nation. Etymologically, the concept of female political leadership is defined as the participation of women in positions of political power and decision-making in

²⁶ V.J Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, Limbe, Press book, 1996.p 232.

companies, organizations, communities and other areas. It's a significant aspect of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).²⁷ For the UNDP, female leadership, is the ability to advance gender equality, contribute to decision-making in public, private and multilateral institutions, design and implement programs, drive change towards the UN sustainable development and Africa's agenda 2063²⁸. It permits and explains how women can be instrumental in closing gender gaps, making decisions, designing and carrying out programs that advance sustainable development in every society. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)²⁹ defines female political leadership as a participatory, democratic and encouraging concept that emphasizes on female representation, empowerment and decision-making ensuring their voices and perspectives are heard.

In the context of this study, Female Political Leadership can be defined as a concept that promotes female representation and participation in all aspects of political life. A political life that encourages female empowerment and inclusivity in decision-making, facilitating open communication among team members. It is a shared vision in developing a common understanding of goals and objectives, and working together to achieve them. It equally lays emphasis on providing resources to enable individuals and teams to take ownership of tasks and projects. It is also accountability, the establishment of clear expectations and consequences, while promoting transparency and feedback. Female political Leadership has as a leader, a female whose ideology and vision radiates equity, inclusion, love and growth in decision-making that changes dreams to realities as visions are attained through missions.

“Leadership” for Uma and Wood³⁰, applies to both female and male leadership. It was originally used in the 1800 when writing about the political influence and control of the British parliament during the first half of the 19th century³¹. During this period, leadership was based on inheritance usurpation or appointment and was considered to occur most frequently in Anglo-Saxon countries. For James Macgregor Burns the concept of leadership is broad enough to include everything from great leaders to mothers, teachers, and peers and work supervisors³². In Burns view, the key to leadership in each case is the discovery of shared purpose and the

²⁷ <http://oxford-review.com>, assessed on 17 December 17, 2024, 3.55pm.

²⁸ United Nations Development Program, <https://www.undp.org>, 1995, retrieved on the 17th December 2024, 4.11pm.

²⁹ UNESCO, “International Bureau of Education, The Concept of Female Leadership”, www.ibe.unesco.org, 1995, retrieved on the 17th December 2024, 4.30pm.

³⁰ J.D Uma and G.J Wood “The Role of Leadership Theory in Raising the Profile of Women in Management in *Equal Opportunities International*, vol.25 no 4, Bingley, England, 2006. Pp.250-255.

³¹ Ibid.

³² J.M.Burns, *leadership*, New York, Happer and Row, 1978, p.10.

interplay between motives and values. Leadership to him is, therefore, making conscious what lies unconscious among followers³³

Bih,³⁴ on her part, defines leadership as the ability to inspire and motivate others, dream more, learn more and become more than what they ever thought themselves capable of. She further holds that Leadership that is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent³⁵. Here, she lays emphasis on the need for team spirit. The ability to work together and realize shared dreams. She concludes that, motivation is accompanied by concrete actions while opportunities for growth are granted to subordinates through the organization or sponsorship of refresher courses³⁶.

G.Yuki sees leadership in terms of power. To him, it is ordering the agenda such that new priorities can get attention. It is visible when things are going wrong and invisible when things are going well, it is building a loyal team at the top that speaks more or less with the same voice.³⁷ It is listening most of the time, frequently speaking with encouragement and reinforcing words with believable action, it is being tough when necessary and the occasional use of power when need arises. In general terms, leadership styles vary from one individual to another, from tyrannical Adolf Hitler of Germany to autocratic Mussolini of Italy, to authoritarian and progressive Amadou Ahidjo of Cameroon. From dictatorial Mobutu Sessekeso of Zaire, to peaceful Mahatma Gandhi of India and to a polarizing Donald Trump of the USA³⁸.

From smart Hilary Clinton of USA, to resilient Helen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia to pragmatic Angela Merkel of Germany, from hardworking. Elad Agne to pioneering Francoise Foning and to trailblazing Emilia Lifaka Monjowa of Cameroon, Leadership styles vary considerably from one leader to another. Hon. Emilia Lifaka happened to be a female personality that rose to higher positions of leadership, beginning from Fako West Constituency as a simple militant of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement Party (CPDM), to the Parliamentarian of Fako West Constituency, through the deputy speaker in the National

³³ J.M.Burns, *leadership*, New York, Happer and Row, 1978, p.10

³⁴ P. Lubiche Nootcha Issoy, "Female Leadership at the service of Education and Sustainable Development: The case of Dr. Elad Teresia Agnes Ngounput, 1939-2016." A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a master's degree in history, University of Yaounde I, 2021, p.3.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.p.5

³⁷ G. Yuki., *Leadership and Power*, *The SAGE Handbook of Leadership*, London, Sage Publications, 2010.p.10.

³⁸ B. Obama, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*, USA, Crown Publishers, 2006.p 281.

Assembly of Cameroon to the trailblazing achievement Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).

Service to the Nation for the UNDP is defined as helping countries to: eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and exclusion, build resilience, develop policies, develop leadership skills, develop partnering abilities, develop institutional capabilities, strengthen the rule of law, ensure efficient and fair justice system, promote and protect human right and mitigate, prevent and prepare for natural disasters³⁹. These are actions, efforts or contributions made by individuals or groups that benefit the country, its citizens and the overall wellbeing of the nation. Such includes, volunteer work, military services, community development, public service and social entrepreneurship⁴⁰.

In the context of this study, service to the nation refers to the selflessness of every citizen in relation to providing services to one's nation. It is the ability to lay down personal priorities in favor of state priorities. It is a civic responsibility, the respect of values such as unity, peace and national integration, that spirit of patriotism, the undiluted love for one's country, manifested through the respect of all symbols of nationhood and the zeal to provide services that in every form, contribute to the political, economic and socio-cultural evolution of the nation and its citizens. Following our context, Monjowa rendered selfless services to Cameroon and Commonwealth nations following her leadership position as CPA chairperson.

Political leadership as a concept, refers to the study and understanding of the relationship between individuals in position of power and the broader political structures they operate within, exploring aspects such as, representation decision making, influence and the impact on social change.⁴¹ Political Leadership is further described as a process of influencing and guiding individuals or groups in achieving specific goals and objectives that benefit the community or the nation. This involves the ability to inspire, to motivate and to empower others to work in diverse missions towards achieving a common goal that permits the realization of a common vision⁴².

According to UNESCO political leadership is a broader concept that includes politicians, heads of state and the ruling class. It is related to governance, which is the manner in which public and private bodies exercise power. UNESCO also recognizes the importance of

³⁹ United Nations Development Program, <https://www.undp.org>, 1995, retrieved on the 17th December 2024.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ N. Smelser et al, International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences, vol. 1-26, Amsterdam, Elsevier, 2001. p.11649-11653.

⁴² Ibid.

leadership in education and the role that political leaders play in improving education systems⁴³. Some responsibilities of public leaders in education include; legislating, shaping public finances, scrutinizing the actions of the government, advocating for causes and representing constituents. UNESCO also states that good governance should be open to new forms of knowledge and that leaders should be able to assert their values and knowledge without fear⁴⁴.

The UNDP sees political leadership as a system of governance which ensures effectiveness, participation, transparency, accountability, equitability and the rule of law in a state⁴⁵. In a country where good governance exist, the state creates a stable political and conducive environment to sustain development while giving the chances to the civil society institutions and organizations to facilitate political and social interaction and mobilizing groups to participate in economic, social and political activities for development. This ensures inclusiveness and coexistence of all governing institutions in the state.

We therefore agree with the UNDP that effective political leadership and good governance can ensure effectiveness, participation, transparency, accountability, equitability and the rule of law in a state. These addresses complex challenges, their root causes, seizing the available opportunities, to move towards a more peaceful and inclusive future, where every citizen feels a sense of belonging and participation. This journey requires dedication, dialogue, and a shared vision for a brighter tomorrow. Our study shall focus on the interaction of Hon. Emilia Lifaka Monjowa and female political leadership in the CPA, Cameroon and Fako West Constituency in particular. To effectively tackle our objectives, we need to flow along with some suitable leadership theories.

Satori describes Multi-Party Politics as a party system consisting of interactions between political parties that results from their mutual competition or cooperation. For party systems to exist, there must therefore be more than one party involved⁴⁶. Beyond the requirement for a plurality of parties, party systems can be said to exist only when these interactions between the parties are patterned, familiar, and reasonably predictable. A plurality of parties is therefore a necessary but not sufficient condition for the existence of a party system. When it comes to the classification of party systems, the most common and traditional approach is based simply on

⁴³ <http://vocabularies.unesco.org/thesaurus/concept1157>, accessed on the 17, December 2024, 5pm.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ United Nations Development Program, 1997, p.74.

⁴⁶ T., Hoyt, Satori and the "Nature of Political Reality", *Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 40, 2015, pp. 257-275.

the number of parties in competition, usually distinguishing between two-party systems, on the one hand, and multiparty systems, on the other. Greater insight is offered by the more elaborate classification developed by Sartori, which takes into account not only the number of parties, but also the ideological distance that separates them.⁴⁷ Next to concepts, we have theories that facilitate a better understanding of this study.

Theoretical Framework

Today, leadership theories have become an interesting ground for research as testified by the works of numerous researchers. Many of these researchers have tried to define what allows authentic and successful leadership to stand apart from the mass. There exists so many theories. From our research, leadership theories are often categorized as The Great Man Theory, Trait Theory, Behavioral Theory, Transformational Theory, and others. In this study, we shall focus on the Behavioral and Transformational Theories that reflect the character of our study.

Watson's Behavioral Theory or the Behavioral Approach, is based upon the belief that leaders are made, not born. It focuses on the actions of leaders not on internal qualities of a person. According to the theory, people can become leaders through learning and observation. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka became a female political icon through learning and observation. The theory holds that leadership is a collection of skills and behaviors that can be acquired and grown. It focuses on observable leadership behaviors and actions rather than on personality traits⁴⁸. This can be acquired through training, experience and practice⁴⁹. The theory has evolved to include the fact that, effective leaders adapt their behavior to different situations and different contexts. This was the case of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka. It lays emphasis on the need to rather observe and analyze a leader's behavior than character.

This reflects the philosophy of Hon. Emilia who observed and learned a lot from her superiors like Simon Ngale Lyonga, who was chief of center of the Institute of Agronomic Research (IRAD) Ekona. She observed and copied much from him. On the other hand, her leadership approach was admired by the younger generation of politicians in her locality who constantly observed and learned from her manner of doing things. Hon. Emilia did not climb the political ladder alone. From her early years of work and politics, she believed in good connections between leaders and followers. These good relations motivated and inspired her as her efforts were valued and compensated by promoting her to the position of chief of service

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ J.B. Watson, *Behaviorism*, Northon and Company, New York, 1925.p. 302.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

in charge of personnel between 1984 -1989. This opened more doors to training, experience and practice that later projected her to higher heights.

Burns in his Transformational Theory also known as the Relationship theory, focuses on the connections formed between leaders and followers. It motivates and inspires people by helping group members see the importance of the task at hand⁵⁰. These leaders focus more on the performance of group members, but also want each person to fulfil his or her task. This theory inspires and empowers leaders to drive positive change. It has evolved over the years to embrace idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation⁵¹. This form of leadership is more visible and applicable in politics, public administration, military and defense, education and business. This reflects Emilia Monjowa, s political leadership. She was a glaring example of a grass root politician whose closeness to her people, provoked their love and admiration.

She became a role model to many in her constituency and Fako in general. The fact that she never stopped to learn, constantly upgrading her skills through education and mentorship till her demise, resonates with the theory of Relationship. An example of an admirer of her behavior and actions in the younger generation of politicians was Akawoh Minerva Molinge who even referred to Emilia as her mother⁵². From Ekona where she made her first steps in to politics, she exhibited a transformational character right up to the level of the National Assembly and within the CPA where she motivated and inspired people by helping group members see the importance of the task at hand. This work is focused on the Behavioral and transformational theories because they best explain the leadership style and context of the emergence of the personality chosen for case study. To realize the project, a review of other works related to the study was made.

Literature Review

To produce this scientific piece of work, we made use of varied sources which either served as primary or secondary sources of information. For the primary sources, we used survey questions, observation tools, interviews, videos and audio recordings. For secondary sources, we used articles, books, and biographies of great figures, dictionaries, theses, magazines, journals and newspapers. Note should be taken that most of what we shall get here, comes from personal findings and discoveries on Monjowa, s life. We made use of other people's works

⁵⁰ J.M Burns, *Leadership*, New York, Harper and Row, 1978.p.3.

⁵¹ *ibid*

⁵² Interview with Akawoh Minerva Molinge, 53, First Deputy Mayor, Buea Council, Buea, December 6, 2024.

and ideas to better explain certain concepts and notions, such as, female leadership among others.

E. Pondi wrote extensively on biographies of many great figures and their impacts on the development of the African continent. Such include Thomas Sankara, Barack Obama, William Eteki Mboma, Nelson Mandela, and Mohammed Ghadafi. To him, ensuring accountability and transparency in governance are of prime importance⁵³. His significant contributions to the fields of leadership and governance as well as politics, have enabled us to examine Hon. Emilia's contributions in the fields of politics, governance and public administration. Like Abwa, his work has permitted us to shape and model the biography of Hon. Emilia. Also, the write ups helped us enormously to shape our methodology, choice of words and language style.

W. Dze-Ngwa pays tributes and profiles the lives of some great academicians like Verkijika Fanzo and Chem-Langhee. He uses V.J Fanzo to highlight the critical role of labor movements and nationalist struggles in Africa's nationalist struggles. He explores the complex relations between trade union politics and the state. Here, he demonstrates how the interactions shape labor movements and nationalist agenda⁵⁴. He argues that, Fanzo's commitment to the rights of workers and also on social justice, serves as a powerful example to present - day leaders in the domain. Through his work, we were able to concretize our methodology in a manner to suit our context. However, many other authors examined, he focused mainly on Cameroonian or African male personalities without paying homage to female leaders as well. We therefore, intend to compliment.

L. Asong and Chi an edited book which dwells on Ndeh Ntumazah and the political impact of his activities in the construction of Cameroon's history. In this book, they provide an insight in to the life and works of the Cameroonian nationalist who alongside many others, fought for the independence of Cameroon⁵⁵. This did not only teach us how to present the biography of Hon. Emilia, but equally permitted us to better relate our work with historical dates in Cameroon, permitting us to come out with some chronological presentation of the figure under study. The authors traced the birth, educational background as well the

⁵³ E. Pondi, *Leadership and Governance in Cameroon*, Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group, Bamenda, Cameroon, 2010.p.28.

⁵⁴ W.D, Ngwa, "The Man: Professor Verkijika G. Fanzo", *Boundaries and History in Africa: Issues in Conventional Boundaries and Ideological Frontiers (Festschrift in honour of Verkijika G. Fanzo)*, 2011, pp. 8-12.

⁵⁵ L.T Asong and S.N Chi, *Ndeh Ntumazah: A Conversational Autobiography*, Cameroon, Langaa RPCIG, 2011.p.17.

professional engagements and realizations of Ndeh Ntumazah. We drew inspiration from here to structure the life of Hon. Emilia.

Ella's⁵⁶ work is a recount of the various historical events that took place in Cameroon, making mention of some pioneer nationalists such as Reuben Um Nyobe and the impact of his activities in shaping the political history of Cameroon. The fact that Ela dwelled on the life of Reuben Um Nyobe, tracing his birth, origin and activities, inspired and guided us in writing on Hon. Emilia. The life of this icon, recounted, brings out the selfless services, the unmeasurable sacrifices, the challenges and obstacles faced by the nationalist and his peers in the course of liberating the nation from the colonial jug.

M.Albright presents her autobiography. This write-up whose original publication appeared in 2003, depicts the life of one of most admired US women, reflecting in her remarkable personal story, talking about her upbringing in war-torn Europe, the balancing of career and family responsibilities⁵⁷. A great inspiration to our study because, Hon. Emilia rose to politics in a context of several challenges, ranging from family background through serious competition with male counterparts to balancing of career and family responsibilities. Her write-up directed us on the way to develop our research questions so as to better bring out the main focus of our work in relation to the managerial skills of our historical figure under study, whose evolution is somehow similar to that of Albright.

D. Aroga on his part, traced the political journey of Charles Rene Okala, presenting him as an actor of the Cameroonian political scene⁵⁸. The author presents the political figure from his year of entry in to the *Jeunesse Camerounaise Camerounaise* (JEUCAFRA)⁵⁹ to his year of death, 1938-1978, bringing to the lamplight his actions on the question of success or failure in the missions conferred upon him by his leaders and by the nation, through the different administrative responsibilities. Charles R. Okala, rendered selfless services to the nation as a great patriot. This is quite similar to Hon. Emilia's services to the nation of Cameroon especially as the chairperson of CPA International. An evaluation of her missions both within and without the Nation is of prime interest. Reasons why this work permitted us to strike a balance between the successes and failures of Hon. Lifaka.

⁵⁶ P. Ela, *Dossiers Noirs sur le Cameroun : Politique, services Secrets et Securite Nationale*, Pyramid Papyrus Press, 2002 later published by Menaibuc Eds, 2008.p.10.

⁵⁷ M. Albright, *Madam Secretary*, harper Collins, 2003.p.206.

⁵⁸ D. Aroga, "Charles Rene Guy Okala" *Memoire de maitrise en Histoire*; Universite de Yaounde I, 1986.p.74.

⁵⁹ Jeunesse Camerounaise Francaise, was a pro-french youth association that aimed at training future political leaders, loyal to the French administration.

F. Kenne in his master's thesis, brings out the biography of Jeremie Ndelene, one of the great activists in Cameroon, who contributed immensely in the fight for self-rule and independence. In line with other authors who wrote on great figures, this work points out the determination and strong will-power demonstrated by Jeremie Ndelen.⁶⁰ The courage exhibited in the course of his activism and fight for self-rule and independence, is very similar to the courage exhibited by Hon. Emilia in the course of rendering her services to the Cameroonian Nation. As these nationalists worked for the independence of the Nation, Hon. Emilia worked for great diplomatic wins for the Nation. His works equally directed us on the methodological approach used in history for the writing of great figures.

Bayek II, presents the upbringing and activities of Pierre Kotouo A Nwatsock from his birth in 1916 to his death in 1993. The author meticulously brings out the manner in which Pierre Kotouo rose after his failure to secure a seat in the *Assemblée Representative Camerounaise* (ARCAM)⁶¹. The manner in which he then strategized to destabilize his political opponents, helped us to better understand the diverse strategies used by Hon. Lifaka to destabilize her opponents within the ranks of the ruling CPDM party in her constituency during her tenure in office. This piece of work, though not directly linked to female political leadership, inspired us in the sense that, politicians do not give up after defeat. The ability to fall back and re-strategize is a good indicator for future successes. Hon. Emilia did not only re-strategize within the ranks of the ruling CPDM party but also at the level of the CPA, given the fact that she contested the post with several other aspirants.

Bagninembom⁶² presents the historical figure Ndounokon Alphonse Richard, from his birth to death in 1973. The man whose humble beginning projects him to the creation of his political party, *Renaissance Camerounaise* in 1949, after integrating the Cameroon Social Union. This political icon came from very humble beginnings and rose to a prominent activist and socialist whose contributions to nation building cannot be underestimated. This work helped us to trace the humble beginnings of Hon. Emilia whose parents could not measure among the rich of the epoch. She then worked hard to achieve a very rich political career that

⁶⁰ F.Kenne; "Jeremie Ndelene" 1920-1960 une figure emblématique de la rébellion camerounaise, Master en Histoire, Université de Yaounde I.p.41.

⁶¹ Assemblée Representative Camerounaise, was one of the first legislative body put in place in French Cameroon in 1946 which later evolved to ATCAM in 1952 and to ARCAM in 1956, granting a special statut to the territory of French Cameroon.

⁶² R.M.Bagninembom "The Mosaic of behavioral Sciences" in Berelson Bernard] editor], *The behaviorist science today*, basics books, Inc. publishers, New – York, London, 1963.p.306.

did not only project her within the Nation but equally throughout the entire world. Though not directly linked to female political leadership, the work was of great importance.

Kumi⁶³ brings out the biography and achievements of a very renowned and charismatic female leader within the CWF Movement ⁶⁴ of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC), Elizabeth Gana 1949-2004, a great woman in the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon whose and selfless services to the church and humanity. She was multi-faceted, a teacher, a coordinator, a counselor and a writer/editor of the CWF/CMF Study Books, a yearly publication of the PCC. She was the pioneer chairperson for Justice and Peace Commission of the Basel Mission for Mission and Evangelism, liaison person and coordinator for World Day of Prayer in the English-speaking part of Cameroon. This piece of work enabled us to better understand the career profile and activities but the diplomatic part of Monjowa, makes the difference.

Tchombe⁶⁵ talks about sustainable education, making mention of the fact that the Government of Cameroon is progressively transforming the teacher's education so that it responds to providing an education that fits within the framework of sustainable development. According to him, transformative teacher education pre-supposes the preparation of teachers who can in their practices ensure transformative learning, where teacher and learner are co-constructors of knowledge. A glaring paradigm shift from the teacher –centered approach to the student-centered approach, The Competency Based Approach (CBA.) He goes further to explain that education during the colonial era had its specific mission and teachers were of course trained to respond to that mission. Though not in line with female political leadership, it permitted us to understand Hon. Emilia's dedication to the promotion of education.

The published document of the World survey 2014⁶⁶, focuses on gender equality and sustainable development of the UN Women. This thoughtfully contributed to our understanding of how gender equality relates to sustainable development. This resource in particular, strengthens the work of policy makers in different part of the world, be it in the private sector, civil society, governments or international agencies.

⁶³ W.Kumi, "Elizabeth Gana 1949-2004 A Great Woman in the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon" BA in History, University of Yaounde I, July 2008.p.19.

⁶⁴ The Christian Women Fellowship is the women's wing of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, created in 1959, first as the Presbyterian girl school of science and technology in Bafut and became CWF in 1961.

⁶⁵ T.M Tchombe, "Growth and Development of Teacher Education in Cameroon", in Ndongko, T.M and Tambo, L. I [Eds] *Educational Development in Cameroon 1961-1999, Issues and perspectives*. Nkernji Global Tech, Platteville, 2000.pp.101-105.

⁶⁶ The Research and Data Session of the United Nations Women.

Chidas⁶⁷ talks about the struggles of Sessime, an economist in Cotonou who despite great attacks on her way to progress, succeeded to occupy a very important and respectable position in her society, as she served for long as the Director of the Congress Hall and the International Conference Hall in Cotonou. The author recounts the different scenes of discrimination that she came across, simply because she was a woman. Her educational and family life, recounted, went a great way to facilitate our understanding of Monjowa's life struggles. From humble beginnings, passing through constituency, to parliament and to the CPA⁶⁸ chairperson, she faced enormous obstacles like Sessime.

D. Odette⁶⁹ talks about Y. Pondja of Benin who served as the president in a network called, Women of Africa. Through this article, we were able to discover this network and the great work done by many women in the domain of health. She carried out a great survey and proceeded to a very impactful sensitization campaign on prostitution and HIV/AIDS. Her dynamism and action as president served as a great inspiration for our write-up. Hon. Emilia, did not only work hard for female emancipation but equally worked tirelessly to promote the girl-child. During her tours, she constantly sensitized both the youths and adults of her constituency on the necessity of prevention against HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases. Her domain of education, makes the difference.

We also consulted magazines like Divas number 67 of March 2006 titled *Le Feminine de Couleur* that speaks of the success story of Chantal Biya, wife of the second head of state of the Republic of Cameroon.⁷⁰ Through this article, we were able to decipher the social works of Chantal Biya and impact of her works on both Cameroonians and the international community. Her diplomatic successes in this dimension, helped to shape our study. The Divas magazine is known for its celebration and upliftment of the female genre. This specific number highlighted the good-will gesture of Cameroon's first lady in the domain of health. The piece enabled us to trace the social activities of Hon. Emilia especially in the domain of health both within her constituency and within the CPA.

From the above literature, we can realize that the study has a good matrix of research works in recent decades. We have equally realized that the works focus on great men and women of substance from different localities with stories about their lives and achievements

⁶⁷ A.Chidas "Le Combat de Martine Sessime Dahoun" in *Amina* number 469,2009, p.24.

⁶⁸The Common Parliamentary Association-CPA, is a body that brings together parliamentarians of Commonwealth countries all round the world to focus on issues of politics and development.

⁶⁹ D. Odette, "President of Women of Africa" in *Amina* number 469, 2009, p.25.

⁷⁰ « *Le Feminine de Couleur* » in *Divas* number 67, March 2006, p. 74.

and to make a difference, we shall concentrate on the unique personality of Monjowa, her birth, her humble beginnings, her entry into politics, braving all odds. Focus will be on her life as parliamentarian and chairperson of the CPA. What central question is going to guide the understanding of this work?

Statement of Problem

Before colonization, female political leadership manifested in a purely traditional set-up with women exercising diverse functions in the political, economic and socio-cultural domains, ranging from slaves, priestesses, cultivators, oracles, wives, concubines and mothers. They played multiple curative roles like nurses, pharmacists, midwives, physicians and councilors while political leadership was reserved for a handful of women like princesses, queen mothers, “Mafor” and sometimes priestesses. The introduction of the modern form of governance by Missionary Societies and later the Germans after signing the Germano-Duala Treaty of July 12 1884, did not witness political leadership in the hands of the women. The handful listed above continued to wield power and influence within the traditional set-up as before. During the trusteeship, one of the terms given to both Britain and France over British Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon respectively, was to prepare the territory towards self-rule and independence⁷¹.

This golden opportunity was quickly grasped by political parties like the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC) and the KNC. It is in this context that Dorcas Ewokolo Idowu made history in 1955 when she was appointed to the Southern Cameroon House of Assembly, under the political banner of the KNC. For the first time in the history of modern governance in Cameroon, a woman could sit on the decision-making table with men. At independence and reunification, women were finally integrated through elections in to the decision-making bodies as Josepha Mua and Julienne Keutcha occupied seats in the Assemblies of West and East Cameroons respectively, under the Federal Republic of Cameroon.⁷² Gradually, Gladys Deffo and Tsanga Delphine joined the parliaments of West and East Cameroon respectively⁷³.

However, the first legislature only came in to existence in 1973, following the change from Federal to a unitary state in 1972 and ended in 1978⁷⁴. This first legislature was composed

⁷¹ V.J Ngoh, *History of Cameroon since 1800*, Limbe, Pressbook, 1996, p.158.

⁷² National Assembly, *The Road to Female Leadership in Parliament*, Yaounde, March 2021, p.6.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Golden Book of National Assembly, Yaounde, p.25.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

of 120 parliamentarians with 7 being women representing a percentage of 5.83 with one of them mounting to the post of bureau secretary by name Ebanda Isabelle Masoma out of the 14⁷⁵. The second legislature began in 1978 and ended in 1983 with the number of women rising to 12, representing a 10 percent rise with Ebanda Isabelle Masoma maintained as member of bureau. Then came the third legislature with number of female MPs rising to 17, representing a 14.16 percent rise and female bureau members rising to 2 out of 14 as Josepha Mua joined Ebanda Isabelle⁷⁶. The fourth legislature saw a rise in the total number of MPs from 120-180 with the female members increasing to 27, representing a 15 percent rise while female bureau members were maintained at 2 out of 14.

The fifth legislature extended from 1992-1997. This particular period witnessed a drop in female representation due to political turbulence following the re-introduction of multiparty politics in Cameroon. 20 women out of 180 MPs, represented 11.11 percent with 2 females out of 14 members of bureau⁷⁷. It is interesting to note that our figure of study, Monjowa, came in during this period of turbulence and met her demise at the 10th legislature, the ongoing that began in 2020 to end in October 2025⁷⁸.

To make the study issue focused, capable of generating interest and debate, it is argued that, although there is very little recognition accorded to female political leadership in Cameroon, there is need, for them to develop resilience in collaborating with their male political counterparts in order to facilitate the administrative machinery of Cameroon and Fako West Constituency in particular. We can only accomplish our study through stated objectives. Her rise and resilience during this period of turbulence motivated us to examine the following research objectives:

Objective

The central question in this study seeks to examine how Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's leadership contributed to women's representation and participation in Cameroon's politics between 2002-2021.

⁷⁵ Golden Book of National Assembly, Yaounde, p.30.

⁷⁶ The National Assembly, *The Road to Female Leadership in Parliament*, Yaounde, March 2021, p.8.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 10.

⁷⁸ Golden Book of National Assembly, Yaounde, p.36.

Specific Objectives

From the main objective, the study constitutes the following follow-up objectives:

1. Trace the circumstances that led to the growth of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka
2. Analyze her socio-economic and political activities in the Fako West Constituency
3. Examine her actions in Parliament and beyond and
4. Establish the difficulties she encountered and propose solutions to them.

Who was therefore Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka as far as service to the Nation is concerned?

This question was guided by the following research interrogations:

Research Questions

1. What geographical and human circumstances surrounded the birth and growth of Emilia Lifaka Monjowa before the period of study?
2. What socio-economic and political activities did she carry out in her area of jurisdiction (Fako West Constituency)?
3. What were her activities in Parliament and at the international scene?
4. What challenges did she encounter?

Significance of Study

Many studies have been done on great figures in Cameroon but this study lays deep emphasis on Emilia Lifaka Monjowa. It is hoped that it would be significant to the Cameroon government, indigenous peoples of Fako Division, to researchers and other stakeholders interested in the history of great figures. Politically, the intellectual class in the society and world leaders today identify three main traits to humanity- Nuclear annihilation, plagues and ecological catastrophes yet, little is thought of leadership which is the most important. Our study brings out the crisis of role models in our society. This work will therefore serve as a source of inspiration, permitting us to examine the mind-sets we take into any leadership positions entrusted to us or that which we are still to occupy as individuals.

To the government of Cameroon, this would help in understanding the problems faced by female leaders. It will also act as a working document for the government to understand how to mediate their actions, differences and responsibilities for the integration of both males and females for the common good of the nation. Economically, the life of this great icon will help people to discover the existing training and employment opportunities she created for

future generations. The knowledge propagated from this work can contribute in bringing more tourists into the country especially those who wish to understand the secret behind the great actions and successes of a black woman with such outstanding leadership qualities.

Socially, this research will help to enrich the literature of social science and humanities.

It will equally add to the documentation and act like an added content of study for historians in Cameroon and abroad, who study great figures as a main university course and whose focus is to celebrate and may be copy from people who sacrificed their lives, energy, time and money to serve their nation both within and without. Religiously, her engagements within her religious denomination for nearly all her life, will serve as a motivation to many, making them to face life with great determination, faith and hope in God as the only creator and perfecter of life. Our wish is for policy-makers and the government of Cameroon to raise this great political icon into the rank of Cameroon's great figures and may her story be taught in our history courses as one of the female leaders who brought an increase into Cameroon's diplomatic records while impacting and changing the lives of many Cameroonians in general and in the Fako West constituency in particular.

The work will also help individuals, especially women and young girls round the world, to grasp all opportunities without fear of prejudice into leadership positions in their societies. In addition, it will motivate Cameroonian youths especially the girl child to study her profile as a role model for self-development. The realization of this work would not have been possible without sources and methodology.

Sources and Methodology of the Study

The realization of this study relied on two main sources of information: primary and secondary. Primary sources constituted interviews and archival materials, while secondary sources were made up of published and unpublished works. For primary sources, interviews were of utmost importance with targeted groups being parliamentarians both male and female, political rivals, people of the Fako West Constituency, mayors of the Buea locality, some Protocol officers at the National Assembly, co-workers, family members, friends and other informants with credible knowledge about the subject. The validity of these sources was based on criticism and evaluation. Our attention was equally focused on archival materials which were gotten from the National Assembly archives and Buea council archives.

These archives provided us with assessment reports focusing on the activities of Emilia Lifaka at the constituency, parliament and at the helm of the CPA. Concerning the secondary

sources, use was made of a wide range of unpublished works: theses and dissertations which handled specific issues directly and indirectly linked to the study. We also made use of related published documents consulted in libraries like those of the University of Yaounde 1, MINPROFF, ANICHRRA, IRIC and the *Centre de Recherche en Histoire* (CRH) Yaounde, Buea Council and family archives.

The methodology used in analyzing data was the qualitative and quantitative techniques, using a question guide. In all, 42 people were interviewed: 22 females and 20 males. In this bulk, we had 16 MPs, 9 community leaders, 4 youth leaders, 3 conventional leaders, 6 traditional leaders and 4 gatekeepers. We proceeded through the collection of data from complementary sources, interpretation, analyses and finally objective synthesis. Emphasis was laid on oral interviews which were either direct or indirect. However, all focused on her upbringing and role played in her constituency and at the National Assembly.

Apart from individual interviews, group discussions were equally exploited since they helped to provide consensus opinions on controversial and conflicting issues. Here, we had 3 focus group discussions, 2 at the National Assembly with 6 and 5 members in each group and 1 in Bojongo village with 5 members. The credibility of information from these oral interviews depended on their relation to that gotten from secondary sources.

The use of a question guide was intended for a better follow up of interviews. The type of questions posed were broad-based without any restrictions. This allowed the informant to express everything he or she knew about the subject matter. All information got was subjected to interpretation, criticism, comparing, and analysis before documentation. The period and area of study permitted a better understanding of the analysis.

Scope and Delimitation

The study is confined within the geographical location of Fako West Constituency in the South West Region and through the National Assembly of Cameroon. This area is also known as Buea Rural, comprised of Bojongo court area, Bojongo Court Area communities of Bojoke, Buana, Sanje, Edenau, Bonarvada communities of Bova, Bokova, Lisoka, Bonakanda, Maumu, as well as the CPA International which are prominent in the area of study.

The study period spans from 2002 to 2021. The starting date 2002, is unique because it is the year that marked the beginning of the Seventh Legislative Period. This period witnessed

an increase in the number of female representations in parliament from 10 to 19 women⁷⁹. It is at this juncture that our subject of study gained access to parliament. In addition, this date is significant in the history of Cameroon particularly in the resolution of a long-standing border dispute with neighboring Nigeria. In October 2002, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled in favor of Cameroon, awarding the country sovereignty over the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula. This decision marked a crucial turning point in the relations between these two countries as it brought an end to years of tensions and conflicts over the disputed territory⁸⁰. It is worth noting here that, this event is crucial in our study because, Fako West constituency is directly linked to Nigeria by the Atlantic Ocean. Relative peace was therefore needed for Hon. Emilia Lifaka to carry out activities in her constituency without fear of constant attacks from pirates.

The year 2021 marks an important date in our study because Emilia Monjowa passed on to glory on April 20, 2021, immediately after her 62nd birthday celebration⁸¹. For the Nation, it marked the beginning of the Tenth Legislative Period, Cameroon equally held its first-ever-regional elections, marking a significant step towards decentralization as the elections aimed to give more autonomy to the country's 10 regions⁸². This happened in the midst of challenges like the escalation of the Anglophone crisis with massive internal displacements and the dye need for significant humanitarian assistance and the intensification of the covid-19 pandemic⁸³. The CPDM party where she militated, came out victorious at the Regional Council elections and the challenges mentioned prompted her to create the Emilia Lifaka Monjowa Foundation with main aim being to provide assistance to the poor and needy. It is important to note that the realization of this work did not go without challenges.

Problems Encountered

It is important we point out some of the challenges we encountered in the course of realizing this work. Despite this, we employed alternative means to foster the research to conclusion. The first problem encountered was to travel to Fako West Constituency. This was due to insecurity caused by the crisis in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. This was curbed by working in close collaboration with the Buea council, who provided us with a

⁷⁹ D, Kagou, *Parliamentary Oversight in Cameroon: The Case of the National Assembly*. African Book Collective, 2017, pp 51-55.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ National Assembly, *Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka*, Yaounde, May 2021, p.32.

⁸² Politics of Cameroon - Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Cameroon, accessed on the 15th of March, 2024, 6pm.

⁸³ Ibid.

guide and in disguise, we penetrated more than half of the villages concerned. Informants like parliamentarians, were suspicious of the researcher. However, after serious identification and determination by the researcher, some were kind enough to provide valuable information.

In addition, the sons of our figure of study began collaborating with us but at one point, they became very skeptical and backed out. To solve this problem, we sort refuge with the only surviving sister, Etonde Lifaka Cathrine, who provided us with very useful information within. With all these, the researcher remained patient, presented her identification documents, research permits thereby convincing other informants to have confidence. This wasted so much time since it took them time to give a listening ear to the researcher. Another problem was to have access to documents in some documentation centers. This case was particular with that of the University of Yaoundé 1 where we were not able to find books because its disorganization. To tackle this problem, the researcher visited other documentation centers like the library of MINPROFF, ANICHRRA, IRIC National Assembly, that the *Centre de Recherche en Histoire (CRH)* Yaounde.

Organization of Work

This work is divided in to 4 chapters. Each chapter starts with a brief introduction and ends with a brief conclusion, giving room for a smooth transition to subsequent chapters. Chapter one examines the geographical setting and the circumstances surrounding the birth and growth of Hon. Emilia before the period of study and chapter 2 analyzes the socio-economic and political activities carried out in Fako West Constituency, otherwise called Buea Rural with emphasis on sustainable development projects initiated and realized. Chapter 3 develops her activities in the National Assembly of Cameroon and within the CPA International while chapter 4, analyzes both challenges and perspectives of Female Political Leadership in Cameroon. The chapter equally brings out some proposals on how female and male political leadership can coexist for the common good. The general conclusion presents a synopsis of the whole work and its findings.

CHAPTER ONE

GEOGRAPHICAL AND HUMAN BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Introduction

This chapter examines the geographical setting and human background of the study. With regards to geographical setting, the study examines the location of Fako West constituency and population composition, climate, vegetation, soils, and drainage pattern which have had natural influences on Hon. Emilia and the urge to serve her constituency and Cameroon in general. This is followed by human activities: origin, migration and settlement and also a brief ethnographical survey of Fako West constituency. It further lays emphasis on the birth and growth of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka. The functions of a parliamentarian are also examined. This provides knowledge about her background and sets grounds for a better understanding of her evolution from constituency to national and international milieus.

I. Geographical Setting

In order to facilitate the understanding of the work, we shall examine the location of Fako West constituency and population composition, climate, vegetation, soils, and drainage pattern which have had natural influences on Monjowa.

A. Location and Population Composition

In order to facilitate the understanding of the work, it is necessary to locate the study area to permit an understanding of the geographical background of Emilia Lifaka Monjowa.

a) Location:

The geographical area today known as Fako West constituency is found in the South West Region of Cameroon about 256km² from Yaounde¹ It is situated between latitudes 4.10N-4.20N and longitude 9.10-9.30E². This defines the boundaries of Fako West constituency within the framework of the South West Region of Cameroon as see in maps 1, 2 and 3³.

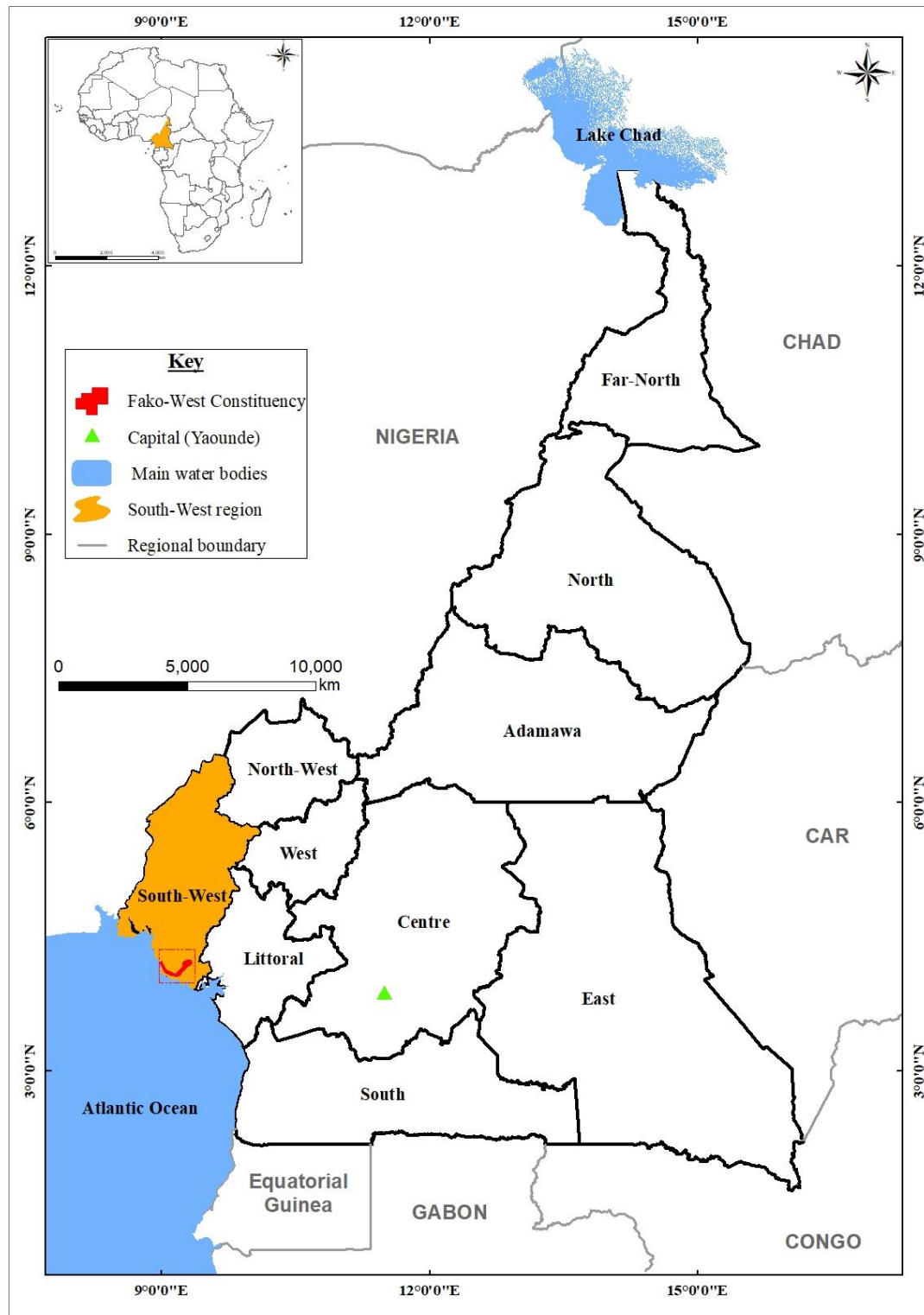
¹ N. I Prudence Lubiche, "Female Leadership at the Service of Education and Sustainable Development: The Case of Dr. Elad Teresia Agnes Ngounput", 1939-2016., University of Yaounde, April, 2024,p.16.

² Ibid.

³ E. Mbah, *Environment and Identity Politics in Colonial Africa: Fulani Migrations and Land Conflicts*, Taylor and Francis, UK, 2016, p.21.

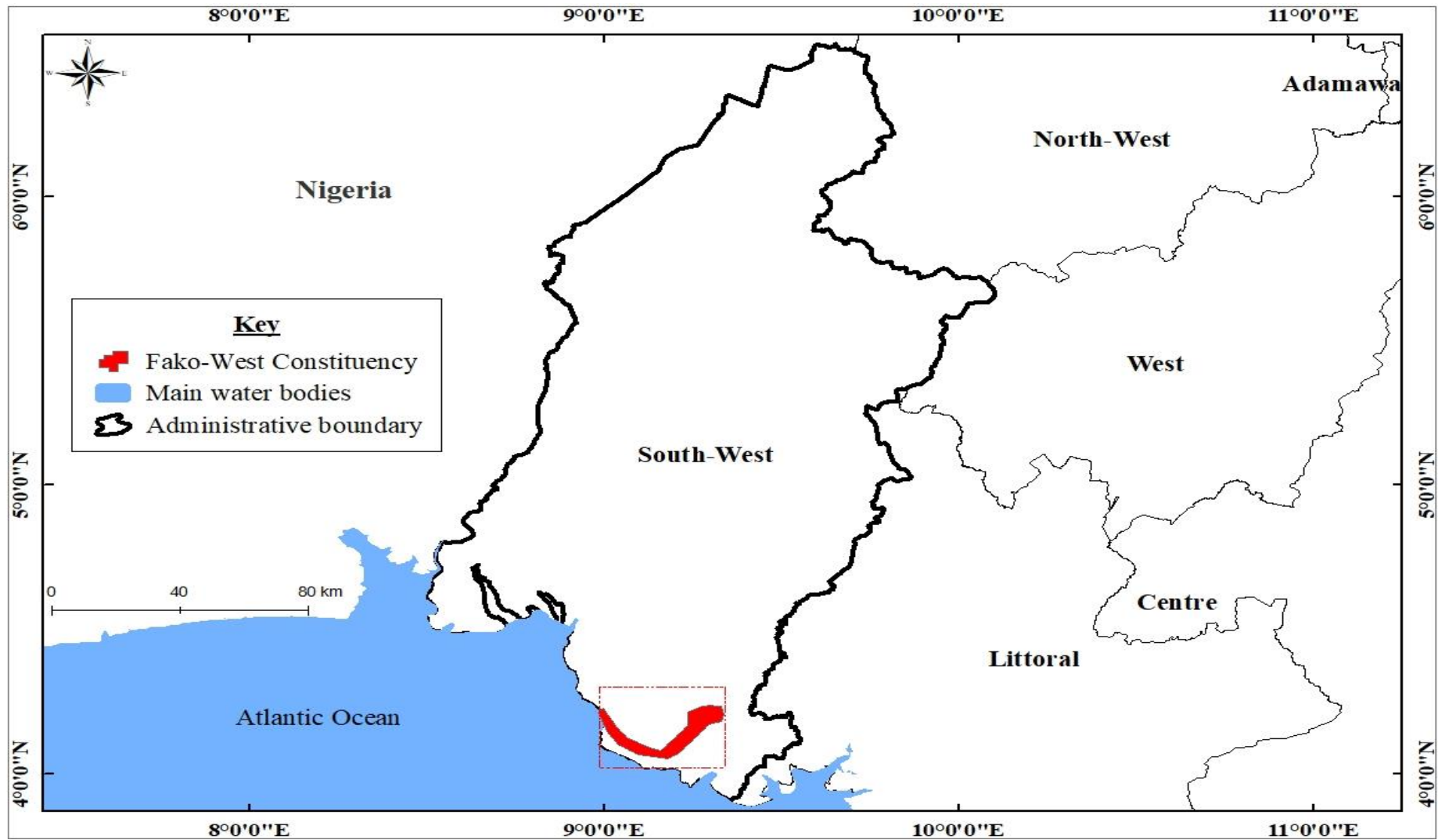
Located at the heart of the Fako Division of the South West Region of the Republic of Cameroon, it is home to 8 villages and communities that make up the backbone of the Division.

Map 1 : The Republic of Cameroon locating the South West Region.



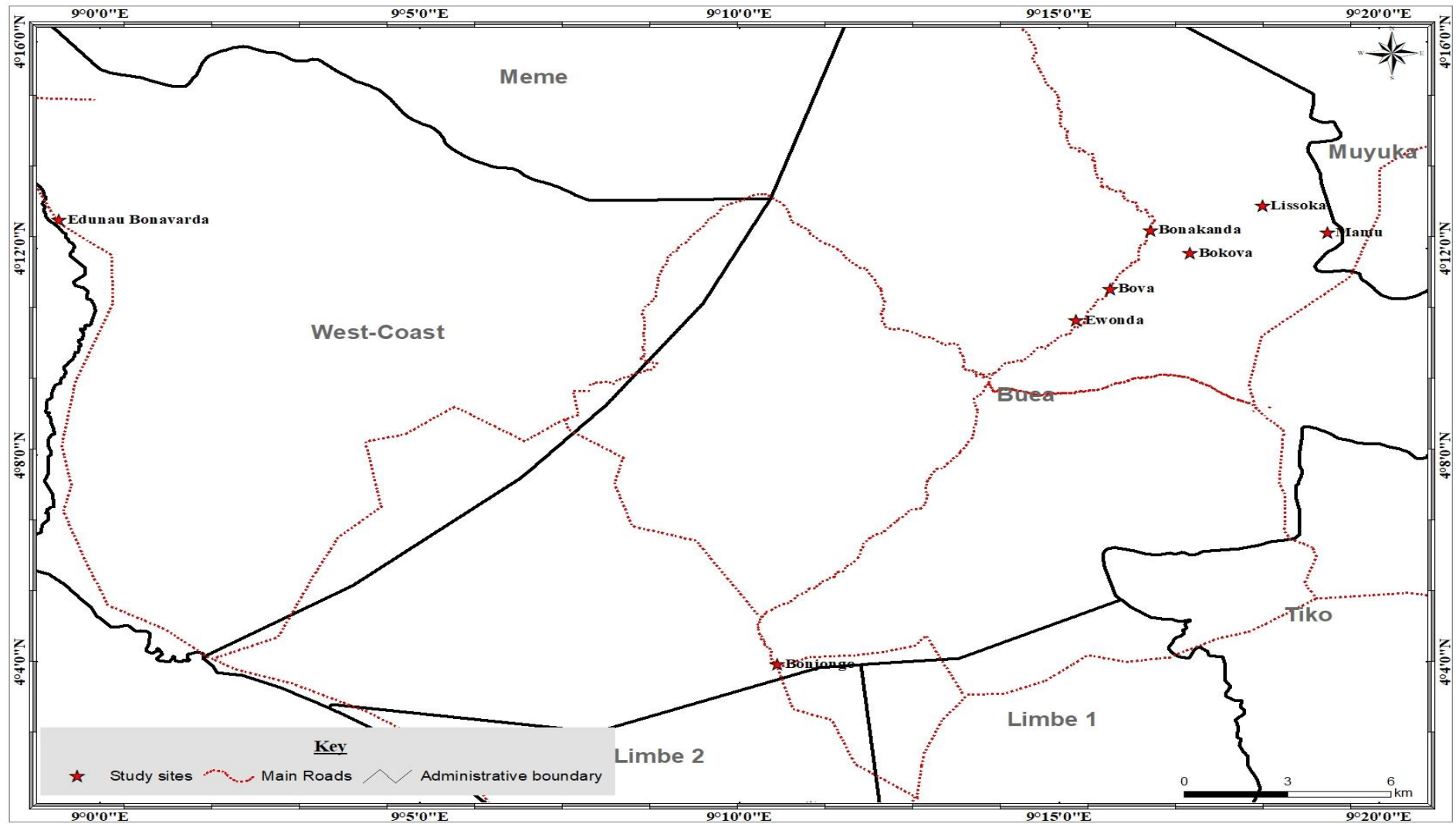
Source: *Limite administrative de l, Institut National de la Cartographie 2018.*

Maps 2 : The South West Region, Locating Fako West Constituency .



Source: *Limite administrative de I*, Institut National de la Cartographie 2018.

Map 3: Fako West Constituency



Source: *Limite administrative de I*, Institut National de la Cartographie 2018.

b) Population Composition

The population of Fako West constituency was estimated to be about 34,462 in 2015, 49.5% male and 50.5% female. This population covers a total surface area of approximately 870 square kilometers with a population density of about 154 inhabitants per square kilometer as seen in the table below:

Table 1: Fako West Constituency: Population Composition

Village	Population as at 2015	Number of households
Bojongo	4,589	841
Edenau Bonavarda	2,191	398
Lysoka	1,812	329
Ewunda	3,219	585
Maumu	2,415	439
Bonakanda	2,817	514
Bova	12,314	2,431
Bokova	5,105	932
Total	34,462	6,469

Source: www.ResearchGate.net

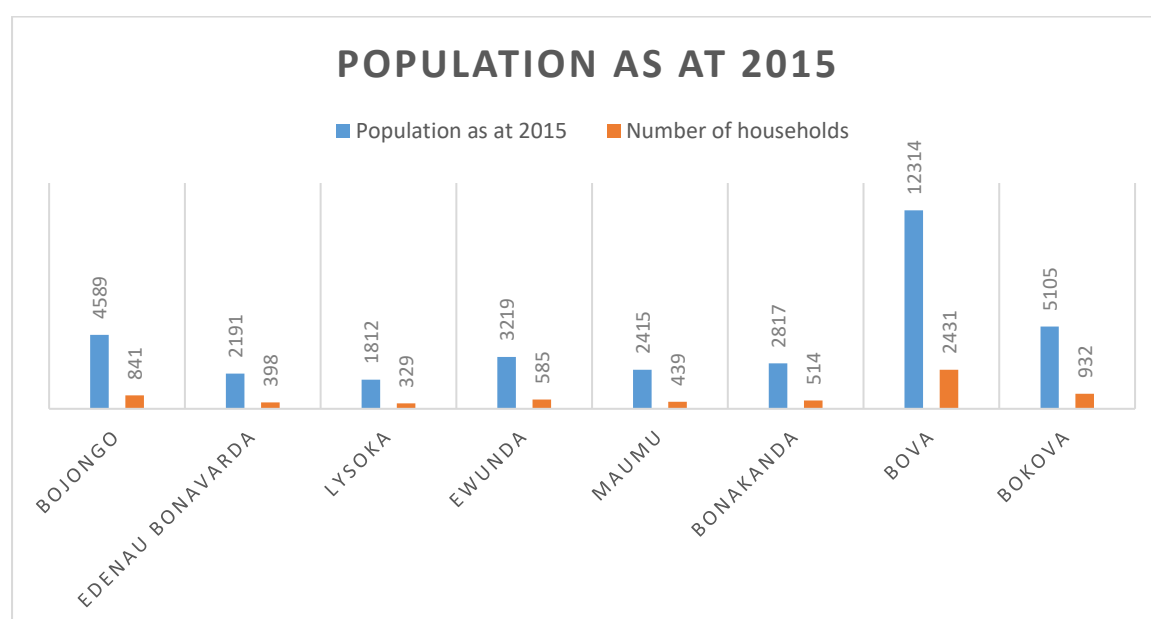


Chart 1: Fako West Constituency: Population Composition

Source: Cameroon National Institute of Statistics (INS), Local Government Report on the 2015 data collection.

Table 1 above illustrates the various communities that make up the Fako West Constituency also known as Buea Rural. This area constituted Hon. Emilia's area of jurisdiction. It is made up of about 8 main villages with a population of 34,462 inhabitants from 6,469 households⁸⁷. From the table above, we can see that Bova, Bokova and Bojongo had the greatest number of inhabitants and households respectively. During the 9th legislature that extended from 2013-2019, these electorates renewed their confidence in Hon. Emilia, by overwhelmingly voting for her⁸⁸. This Legislature was termed, The Great Leap Forward because female representation rose alarmingly from 25 to 56, (Representing 13.88% in the 8th legislature to 31.11% in the 9th legislature)⁸⁹

By 2015, the area was gradually transforming to a cosmopolitan community with people from different ethnic origins of Cameroon and Africa with diverse ambitions, ranging from political, economic and socio-cultural, each trying to create an impact on his or her domain of activity. The domain of agriculture was booming, thanks to the commitment of Emilia Monjowa's support and given the fact that these villages were endowed with the fertile alluvial soils from the foot of the mountain. Food crops like plantains, cassava, cocoyam, maize, tomatoes and leafy vegetables were cultivated both for consumption and for commercial purpose. These crops play a vital role in enhancing food security, income generation and the improvement of livelihood for the local communities. The cultivation of these crops sometimes varies depending on climatic factors.

B. Climate and Vegetation

The long-term average atmospheric conditions of Fako West constituency including temperature and precipitation greatly influenced the trend of events in our study. In the same light, forests, grasslands, savannas and wetlands also influenced the activities of Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka.

a) Climate

Although situated in a zone with equatorial climate, Fako West constituency, has two main types of climate: The mountain and maritime climates. The maritime climate is dominant not only in the coastal area and neighboring villages, but in most of the South West Region as

⁸⁷ Cameroon National Institute of Statistics (INS), Local Government Report on the 2015 data collection.

⁸⁸ National Assembly Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Yaounde, May 2021.p.35

⁸⁹ National Assembly, *The Road to Women,s Leadership in Parliarment*, Yaounde, 2020, pp. 24-30.

well⁹⁰. It is characterized by rainfall throughout the year. Maximum rainfall is recorded between June and October while minimum rainfall is recorded between December and February⁹¹. While mean annual rainfall is between 1500 and 3000mm, there is however an unequal distribution of total rainfall depending on the exposure of slopes to sea influences. These climate types were very influential in the upbringing of Hon. Emilia. She was born in Bojongo village of parents that began life as farmers. The fertility of the soil was influenced by the climate, making it possible for her parents to produce enough for home consumption and sales to sponsor her education. Climate influences the type of vegetation in a given area.

b) Vegetation

The region is dominated by the tropical rain forest, with dense canopies and a wide variety of plant species like obeche, iroko and mahogany. These forests are found in the low-lying areas and along the coastal region while the montane forest found in higher elevations. The Rumpi Hills support montane forests, characterized by tree ferns, mosses and lichens⁹². The mangrove forest is found in areas close to the coast. The lower elevations and coastal plains of the area have savannas, characterized by grasslands with scattered trees. Cultivated land is in abundance as much of the area's land has been cleared for agriculture, with crops like cocoa, coffee, bananas, plantains, cocoyam, maize, cassava and leafy vegetables being widely cultivated⁹³. We also have fresh water swamps found along rivers and streams, supporting a unique array of plant and animal life⁹⁴. The coastal vegetation is found in coastal areas of the region supported by a variety of vegetation types including beach vegetation, dune vegetation and estuarine vegetation.

It is worth noting that, the Fako West constituency is home to many endemic species and its unique vegetation types support a wide range of biodiversity. Young Emilia harvested eru from the forest with her mother and sold to raise money to finance her education⁹⁵. This greatly impacted the life of Emilia since it ensured food security, shelter, settlement and education. It also provided medicinal plants and even the spiritual evolution of her family

⁹⁰ M. Kaniki, M.Tsamenyi, *Fisheries Jurisdiction under the Law of the Sea Convention: Rights and Obligations in Maritime Zones under the Sovereignty of Coastal States*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012.p.10.

⁹¹ N. Sebastien et al, *21st Century Applied Physical Geography and Map Work*, Grassroots Publishers, Yaounde, 2018.p.27.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Interview with, Samuel Ekose, 80, traditional title holder. Bojongo, April 9, 2025.

⁹⁴ M. Kaniki., M.Tsamenyi, *Fisheries Jurisdiction under the Law of the Sea Convention: Rights and Obligations in Maritime Zones under the Sovereignty of Coastal States*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012.

⁹⁵ Eru is a very popular delicacy in Cameroon originating from the South West Region. A traditional dish made from leafy green vegetable plant called eru (*Gnetum africanum*).

because the forests and mountains of Fako area held a significant cultural and spiritual value for the local communities, influencing their traditional beliefs and practices⁹⁶. However, deforestation, habitat fragmentation and climate change are significant threats in the area, one of the reasons she fought tirelessly in parliament to preserve her environment. Climate and vegetation also influenced soil patterns.

C. Soils

Fako West constituency equally had diverse range of soils, influenced by its varied geology, topography and climate. The main soil types found in the area included

Ferrasols (Iron-rich soils)⁹⁷: These soils were common in the region's highlands, particularly on the slopes. They were rich in iron and aluminum, good for cassava production. Nitisols (Nitrogen-rich Soils) was another type⁹⁸: These soils are found in the region's highlands and are rich in nitrogen, making them suitable for agriculture. Andosols are found in areas with volcanic activity, such as mountain slopes. They are rich organic matter and have a high water-holding capacity. Fluvisols are found along the area's rivers and streams, particularly in the coastal areas. They are rich in nutrients and have a high water-holding capacity. Arenosols are found in the coastal areas and are characterized by a high sand content and a low nutrient content⁹⁹. Regosols are found in areas with steep slopes such as the Rumpi Hills¹⁰⁰. This area is endowed with a fast array of timber species. The soils are excellent for the production of cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, bananas and plantains. Lithosols are found in areas with rocky landscape such as the slopes of mountain slopes¹⁰¹.

From the foregoing paragraphs, one can note that the soils in Bakweriland support a wide range of agricultural activities, including the cultivation of cocoa, coffee, bananas, and plantains. However, soil degradation and erosion are significant concerns in the region, particularly in areas with steep slopes and high rainfall¹⁰². These soils play a significant role in the lives of the people by ensuring food security, cash crop production, biodiversity and cultural heritage. This shaped community identity and ensured social cohesion, values that little Emilia

⁹⁶ E.M Lantum, *The Bakweri of Cameroon :A Study of Their Social Organization and Religious Practices*, Oxford University Press, London, UK, 1967, p.71.

⁹⁷ J.R Awasom, "Soil types and their Distribution in the South West Region of Cameroon", *African Soil Science*, vol.15, No.2, 2003, p 23-45.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ A. Kagou, *Meet the Ghost of the Forest: The Rare, Flightless Kagu*, Sydney, Australian Geographic, 2017, p.83.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ E.M. Tabi, "Soil Types and their Characteristics in the Bakweri Region of Cameroon", PhD theses, University of Buea, 2010, pp. 56-95.

¹⁰² Ibid.

grew up with and cherished greatly, hence, her determination to preserve these while at parliament. The Soils have a great influence on drainage pattern as they seem to be inter-woven.

D. Drainage Pattern

The drainage pattern is influenced by Mount Cameroon, an active volcano that dominates the landscape. It is characterized by Radial pattern¹⁰³. This pattern is around Mount Cameroon with streams flowing directly down the mountain slopes. The coastal plain exhibits a dendritic drainage pattern, characterized by a network of streams that flow in to larger streams. The tributary Pattern in the interior exhibits a pattern with smaller streams flowing in to larger rivers¹⁰⁴. Factors influencing this drainage pattern include: Topography, geology and climate with varied hills/plains, volcanic rocks/faults, high rainfall/temperatures respectively¹⁰⁵. The soils with high aluminum and iron tend to have poor drainage, leading to waterlogging and soil erosion. The drainage pattern in Fako West contributed greatly to the MPs plans on water resource management, soil erosion control, agricultural land use planning, flood risk management, infrastructural development like the building of bridges, environmental conservation and climate change adaptation as seen on plate 1.

Plate 1: Flood risk Management Bridge at Bojongo Technical High School.



Source: Author's Personal Collection from field work, Bojongo Village, 9th April 2025.

¹⁰³ E.M Tabi, *The Geology of Bakweriland*, Yaounde, Cameroon, University Press, 201p.19.

¹⁰⁴ A. Kagou, *Meet the Ghost of the Forest: The Rare, Flightless Kagu*, Sydney, Australian Geographic, 2017.p.291.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Above, is a Flood risk Management Bridge at Bojongo Technical High School, the alma matter of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka because she attended her entire secondary education there. Across is the administrative block of the institution and this angle from where the picture was captured, are classrooms. To the left is the school dormitory and further down to the right is the school football field where the MP, often hosted the grand sporting events during holidays to unite the people especially youths of her constituency. Runoffs from the mountainous area over side often flooded the dormitory and classrooms until she provided funds for the construction of the bridge above. This remedied the situation of drainage and flood risk in the environment.

The geographical background of the study was very necessary as it enabled us to understand the part played in the life of Emilia Lifaka Monjowa and the people of Fako West constituency in general, ensuring food security, cash crop production, flood risk management biodiversity and cultural heritage. This shaped community identity and ensured social cohesion in Hon. Emilia's area of jurisdiction. This geographical setting only helped to throw more light on the human background of the study.

II. Human Background

This part examines the origin, migration and settlement of the ethnic group under which Fako West constituency falls. It also dwells on the birth and early life of Hon. Emilia Lifaka Monjowa. It further expounds the socio-economic activities of the area.

A. Origin, Migration and settlement

The people of Bojongo where Emilia Monjowa Lifaka was born, are the Bakweri, also known as the Kwe people¹⁰⁶. They form part of the Bantu-speaking people of Central Africa. Presently, they are based in Fako Division of the South West Region of the Republic of Cameroon. It is the dominant group in this administrative area¹⁰⁷. Other minor tribes include: The Isubu, Bamboko¹⁰⁸, These people are said to have originated from Pitti, upper Congo¹⁰⁹. They were forced to migrate out of Pitti in upper Congo because of succession disputes between the children of Mbedi, their ancestor¹¹⁰. The quarrel made two sons to migrate northwards in to the Wouri estuary, settling there as fishermen and middlemen following the flourishing of the Trans- Atlantic Trade and also because the sea breeze provided a conducive atmosphere for human settlement¹¹¹. One of the sons later left for hunting, further inland around the slopes

¹⁰⁶ V. J. Ngoh, *Southern Cameroons, 1922-1961: A Constitutional History*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2011, p.21.

¹⁰⁷ T, Eyongetah, R, Brian. *A History of the Cameroon*, London, Longman, 1974, p .33.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ C. Mvoko, *Cameroon: A Touristic Guide*, Cameroon Tourism Board, 2010, p. 39.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid. p .20.

of Mount Cameroon. There, he settled and became the ancestor of the Kwe or Bakweri people¹¹².

According to oral tradition, Bojongo village was founded by a group of Bakweri migrants under the leadership of a chief Mukwelle¹¹³. This village was established near the coast where the migrants could easily access the sea for fishing and trade. The origin of this village is deeply rooted in the history and migration of the Kwe people. They are closely related to Cameroon's coastal peoples (SAWA), particularly the Duala and Isubu¹¹⁴. The village has played a significant role in the cultural and economic development of the area, an important cultural and historical site for the Bakweri people.

Concerning settlement, the Bakweri migrated to their present site east of the mountain in the mid-18th century¹¹⁵. From the foothills, they gradually spread to the coast, and up to the Mungo River and the various creeks that emptied into it. In the process, they founded numerous villages like Idenau, usually when individual family groups split off. A rival Bakweri tradition says they descended from Mokuri or Mokule, a brother of the Duala's forbearer Ewale, who migrated to the Mount Cameroon area for hunting¹¹⁶. In addition, a few isolated villages, such as Maumu and Bojongo, claim some alternate descent and may represent earlier groups whom the expanding Bakweri absorbed. Maumu and Bojongo are some of the villages in the Fako West Constituency, the area of jurisdiction of Emilia Monjowa.

B. Political Setup

After migration and settlement, they implanted political structures as follows.

a) The chief

Traditional leadership in the land of Bakweri were entitled to multiple functions derived from traditions and cultures since they were the highest political, administrative and judicial authorities in their societies¹¹⁷. Aside from being the highest political authorities, they were also at the helm of all socio-cultural activities of the society. These positions rendered

¹¹² E.M Lantum, *The Bakweri of Cameroon :A Study of Their Social Organization and Religious Practices*, Oxford University Press, London, UK, 1967, p. 45.

¹¹³ M. Rodriguez, *Excellent Resource for Travelers*, Goodreads, 2020, p. 10.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. p. 10.

¹¹⁶ B.S Takang, *An Illustrated History of Cameroon since 1800*, Datalens, Bamenda, Cameroon, 2019, p 19.

¹¹⁷ Mbonde Nduka Johaness, 82 Years, traditionalist/retired P and T technician, Bonakanda Village, April 8, 2025.

traditional authorities custodians of the diverse responsibilities and functions in their societies. For instance, the distribution of land to various families. The parcel of land accorded to each family ensured its entire livelihood as the parents farmed on it for consumption, thereby, ensuring food security. Excess food produced was sold to cater for family needs like health, education and dressing. Hon. Emilia grew up in this context which was later shaped her life in a very special way.

In pre-colonial Bakweri, traditional authorities had the duty to maintain a peaceful and conducive environment in their areas of jurisdiction. Traditional laws were set-up to tackle all forms of crime or fault which members of the society committed. Court cases under traditional governance in pre-colonial Bakweri were judged hierarchically depending on the magnitude of the case¹¹⁸. Using traditional laws, believe to have designed by the ancestors for the settlement of problems in the societies, chiefs with the help of regulatory societies were able to maintain an atmosphere where political and social justice was a watch word.¹¹⁹ The most difficult cases in the land were transferred to the chief who used his powers as the highest authority of the land to pass verdicts¹²⁰. Using traditional laws in conflict resolution gave a high level of satisfaction since almost everyone mastered the traditional code of law. For instance, the sasswood trial ordeal was well mastered by the population Traditional authorities were in charge of all matters of external relations in their communities¹²¹.

b) Traditional Societies

Secret societies existed in Bakweriland long before the arrival of European colonizers. These societies were often associated with traditional rituals, initiations, and cultural practices. These secret societies include, the Leingu, Maalé (Elephant dance), ¹²²Epasa- Moto and his wife, the goddess of the sea by name Nyango Na Nwana remain cherished deities of the people¹²³. This was because they played and still play a great role in the causation and controlling of natural hazards. Epasa- Moto, the spiritual protector of the people, also known as the mountain god, could and still can be summoned by the traditional authorities over an evil or an unfortunate

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Interview with, Samuel Ekose, 80, traditional title holder. Bojongo, April 9, 2025.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ This was a poisonous concoction made from the bark of the *Erythrophleum suaveolens* Tree, also known as the *Ordeal Tree*. It was used for trial where the victim was considered guilty if he/she failed to vomit after dinking.

¹²² N.N Nkwi, *Secret Societies in Bakweriland: A Historical Perspective*, Cameroon, Langaa Research and Publishing, 2011, p 27.

¹²³ Ibid.

happening in the land¹²⁴. Emilia Monjowa, a fervent and devoted daughter of the land who had her people at heart, was protected by these deities since she was of Kwe origin¹²⁵.

The Ekpe society, also known as the Leopard Society,¹²⁶ was a powerful and influential secret society in Bakweriland. It was known for its complex, rituals, and symbolism. During the colonial era, European colonizers attempted to suppress secret societies in Bakweriland, viewing them as backward practices¹²⁷. Despite colonial suppression, secret societies continued to operate underground, adapting to changing The Post-Colonial era saw the revival of traditional societies. After Cameroon gained independence in 1960, there was a resurgence of interest in traditional cultures and secret societies. Many secret societies in Bakweriland adapted to modern circumstances, incorporating new elements while maintaining traditional practices¹²⁸. Notable Secret Societies included. The Ekpe society, a powerful and influential secret society in Bakweriland. Another significant secret society in the land of Bakweri is the Nganya known for its focus on traditional medicine and healing practices¹²⁹. The Mbwaya, and Nganya, worked in close collaboration with the chief. The Mokpe secret society laid emphasizes on the importance of community service and social welfare¹³⁰.

Secret societies played a crucial role in preserving traditional cultures and practices in Bakweriland. They also promoted social cohesion and community solidarity¹³¹ for economic empowerment, some secret societies were involved in economic empowerment initiatives, such as cooperative farming and microfinance schemes¹³². The secret societies in Bakweriland, however faced challenges related to recognition and legitimacy. The influence of

¹²⁴ Ibid. p 29.

¹²⁵ J.A Mokwe, "A Study of the Nganya Society in Bakweriland: A Study of its History and Significance", *Journal of African Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 11-20, Durban, 1988.

¹²⁶ E.M Lantum, "The Ekpe Society of Bakweriland: A Study of its History and Significance", *Journal of African Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 30-35, Durban, 1988.

¹²⁶ J.A Mokwe, "A Study of the Nganya Society in Bakweriland: A Study of its History and Significance", *Journal of African Studies*, vol. 10, No. 1, 11-20, Durban, 1988.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 41.

¹²⁹ J.A Mokwe, "A Study of the Nganya Society of Bakweriland", PhD. thesis, University of Yaounde I, 1995, pp. 48-50.

¹³⁰ E.N Fonyuy, "The Mokpe Society of Bakweriland: A Historical and Anthropological Study", MA theses, University of Buea, 2008, p. 63.

¹³¹ Gordon, Raymond G., Jr. (ed.) (2005): "Mokpwe". *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 15th ed. Dallas: SIL International. Accessed on 6 June 2006.

¹³² E.M Lantum, "The Ekpe Society of Bakweriland: A Study of its History and Significance", *Journal of African Studies*, vol. 10, No. 1, 1988.

modernization and globalization brought concerns about cultural erosion and the loss of traditional practices¹³³.

Secret societies in Bakweriland were associated with power struggle and conflict, particularly in relation to issues of leadership and authority¹³⁴. This was because of their diverse origins and manner in which kingship was transferred from one generation to another. However, they played an important role in keeping the Bakweri unified, helping them to set goals, and giving them a venue to find solutions to common problems. Secret continues to play a significant role in the cultural and social landscape of Bakweriland. The political setup had a direct relationship with the economic setup of the people.

C. Economic Setup

The Pre-colonial economic setup was characterized by a blend of subsistence and market-oriented activities, with a strong emphasis on community cooperation and self-sufficiency¹³⁵. The Bojongo Court Area during the pre-colonial period was engaged in several economic activities such as land management, agriculture which constituted crop cultivation and animal husbandry¹³⁶. Other activities included hunting, crafts commerce and trade within and between villages¹³⁷. These activities would enable us understand the prevailing economic situation in the area before and after the birth of our subject of study.

Land Management during the colonial period was an indispensable commodity to Fako villages. Land ownership was a key to all economic activities¹³⁸. Land ownership during the pre-colonial era was through first settlement, war and negotiations¹³⁹. Newly acquired lands were seen as public or community lands which were guided and controlled by the chief¹⁴⁰. As custodian of the land, the chief ensured control and rational distribution of the land to his subjects for farming, construction, domestication and tapping of palm wine. The chief in turned enjoyed benefits as tributes in agricultural products, palm produce and hunting expeditions were brought to him¹⁴¹. According to native customs, an apportioned land to a family remained

¹³³ E. Koge, "The Bakweri of Cameroon: A Study of Their Traditional Economy and Social Organization", Ph.D. thesis, University of Yaounde, 2002, pp. 100-125.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 81.

¹³⁶ Interview with, Samuel Ekose, 80, traditional title holder. Bojongo, April 9, 2025

¹³⁷ Ibid

¹³⁸ Gordon, Raymond G., Jr. (ed.) (2005): "Mokpwe". *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 15th ed. Dallas: SIL International. Accessed 6 June 2006.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ E. Koge, "The Bakweri of Cameroon: A Study of Their Traditional Economy and Social Organization", Ph.D. thesis, University of Yaounde, 2002, p 100-125.

¹⁴¹ E.M Tabi, *The Geology of Bakweriland*, University Press, Yaounde, Cameroon, 2010, p. 11.

the family's property over generations and they could cultivate it without restriction. All unoccupied lands were the properties of the community¹⁴².

This greatly facilitated the sustainability of economic projects of our parliamentarian who worked in close collaboration with the chiefs to obtain land for the realization of the micro-projects allocated by the government to her area of jurisdiction. Concerning agriculture and crop cultivation, the economy of Fako West area was highly agricultural though other economic activities such as smelting, crafting, weaving, trading and hunting were equally practiced by the people. Traditional rulers were at the center of all agricultural activities in Fako since they control all the lands in their communities and were in charge of giving out the lands to their subjects for agricultural purposes¹⁴³.

In Fako West, agriculture was subsistent fully or partially practiced by every village. They cultivated food crops such as maize, beans, cassava, Yam, cocoyam, sweet potatoes, Kola nuts and variety of vegetables so as to satisfy the needs within the society. Few exchanges were made with neighboring societies when need arose. The techniques of cultivation were mostly crude and rudimentary since the grass were cleared and the ground hoed by the farmers to soften the soil for planting. Cash crops such as coffee and cocoa were brought to this area during the early years of European exploration of Africa and Cameroon in the late fifteen century¹⁴⁴. However, before Emilia Lifaka Monjowa became parliamentarian, Buea Rural was practicing mostly subsistence agriculture. Her donation of farm inputs including high-yielding seeds, led to massive production in both food and cash crops¹⁴⁵.

Trade was another major activity in the Fako West constituency. During the precolonial era, domestic and distant trade gained its grounds due to excess production of crops, and crafts in the villages. Smaller markets were developed in the various communities for commercial activities. It was based on the barter system that marketing articles were exchanged in smaller quantities within the villages¹⁴⁶. The people traveled long distances to neighboring Nigeria and other regions of Cameroon to exchange their produce (grains and kola nuts respectively) with other produce of the areas¹⁴⁷. The communities of Fako West constituency were uniquely

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ E. Koge, "The Bakweri of Cameroon: A Study of Their Traditional Economy and Social Organization", Ph.D. thesis, University of Yaounde, 2002, pp. 100-125.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 127.

¹⁴⁶ D. Jonathan, "Colonial elitism in Cameroon: the case of the Duala in the 1930s". *Introduction to the History of Cameroon in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Palgrave MacMillan., 1990

¹⁴⁷ J. Ntang, J., M. *The Colonial Legacy in Cameroon: A History of Political and Economic Development*. New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 2007, p. 21.

identified for their massive production of cash crops and fishing for both domestic consumption and exportation to distant markets in Cameroon.

Trade was a source of traditional unity because it provided grounds for social intercourse and development among the people of Fako West constituency. It also provided avenues for the exchange of positive ideas among the communities¹⁴⁸. When the Germans gained control of Fako, a new form of exchange (money) was introduced. The crops produced were no longer just for domestic consumption but were also exported to Europe. New crops such as bananas, coffee and cocoa were introduced in the area, massively for export¹⁴⁹. These crops limited the cultivation of food crops and the subjects. Emilia Lifaka Monjowa worked in close collaboration with the farmers to develop market strategies to market their produce even beyond the nation.

Specialized crafts was another aspect of the Bakweri traditional economy. The Bakweri people developed expertise in blacksmithing, producing tools and implements for farm, kitchen and market use¹⁵⁰. Woodcarving was also practiced as skilled woodcarvers, worked with devotion, creating masks, figurines, and other decorative items. Mama Cecilia Liengu Lifaka was known for her weaving and pottery skills, producing baskets, mats, and ceramics¹⁵¹. These skills were acquired from the catholic reverend sisters¹⁵². These greatly shaped the life of Emilia as the money raised from the sails was used to pay for her training in school.

D. The Birth and Early Life of Emilia Lifaka Monjowa

Hon. Emalia's early life can be examined under the following: The prevailing socio-political situation in Cameroon at the time of her birth, her education, her social life and her economic life before political leadership.

Emilia Monjowa Lifaka saw the light of day into the family of Papa Epkwa Lifaka and Cecilia Liengu Lifaka of very humble backgrounds, on the 11th of April 1959 at Bojongo. Located at the Fako West constituency, South West Region of the Republic of Cameroon. She

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with, David Mafani Namange, 65, Mayor, Buea council, November 15, 2024.

¹⁵⁰ E. Koge, "The Bakweri of Cameroon: A Study of Their Traditional Economy and Social Organization", Ph.D. thesis, University of Yaounde, 2002, pp. 100-110.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.p. 117.

was the third out of 6 children in this family. Today, only two out of the six children are alive as seen in the plate below¹⁵³.

Plate 2: Emilia Monjowa Lifaka and Siblings (plate 2a: 1970 and plate 2b: 1991)



Source: Author's Personal collection, from Lifaka Family Album, Buea, 10th April 2025

¹⁵³ Etonde Lifaka Cathrine Mosaso, 69, retired Liberian at Limbe Botanical Garden, elder sister to late Emilia Lifaka Monjowa, Buea, April 10, 2025.

The two surviving siblings are those in plate 2a above, while Emilia to whom the arrow is pointing and the 2 sisters from the left in plate 2b are of blessed memory. Before this, one other sibling had passed on to glory. May their souls continue to rest in perfect peace. In 1959 when she was born, Cameroon was in a state of turmoil as the independence movement gained momentum. The *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC) political party was leading the charge for independence from French colonial rule.¹⁵⁴ The UPC, piloted by some prominent members like its Secretary General, Rubem Um Nyobe, had been banned by the French colonial authorities after the May 1955 uprisings and many of its militant's arrested, tortured or forced in to hiding¹⁵⁵. Despite this, the movement continued to gain support particularly amongst the Bassa and Bamileke tribes. The French authorities responded to the growing unrest with brutal force, leading to widespread human rights abuses as villages were razed and people forcibly re-located or killed¹⁵⁶. France delayed in granting independence as demanded by *Assemblée Legislative Camerounaise* (ALCAM)¹⁵⁷. It is in this tensed prevailing political atmosphere in the history of Cameroon that Hon. Emilia was born at Bojongo, the land that played host to many people who fled from nearby Bassaland, the fief of UPC.¹⁵⁸

c) Emilia Monjowa Lifaka: Humble family status.

Talking about her family background, Etonde Cathrine personally narrated to us the status of their parents¹⁵⁹. To paraphrase, their parents were neither rich nor poor, yet, of great humility and great commitment to hard work. Originally, their father, Gabriel Epkwa Lifaka was a committed farmer, taking advantage of the rich volcanic soils in Bojongo Court Area to feed and sustain his modest family¹⁶⁰. Meanwhile, the mother, Liengu Lifaka originally was full time housewife, trained by the reverend sisters of St. Philomina Girls School Small Soppo Buea¹⁶¹. With the skills acquired from this center, she stitched uniforms at home and supplied schools around. From here, she grew in business and became a supplier of sand, gravel and other building construction materials like zinc, rods and nails¹⁶². When her father Lifaka later

¹⁵⁴ P. Ninjo, *Advanced Level Cameroon History since 1800*. Data Lens, Bamenda, 2014,p. 73.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ V.T. Le Vine, *Cameroon: From Mandate to Independence*. Routledge, 1996, p. 184.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Eko Tondo, retired technician SONARA, 70years, Bojongo, April 10, 2025, 10am

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Etonde Lifaka Cathrine Mosaso,, 69, retired Liberian at Limbe Botanical Garden, elder sister to late Emilia Lifaka Monjowa, Buea, April 10, 2025.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Etonde Lifaka Cathrine Mosaso, 69,retired Liberian at Limbe Botanical Garden, elder sister to late Emilia Lifaka Monjowa,69 years, Buea, April 10, 2025, 3pm.

secured a job at the West Cameroon Development Agency (WCDA) based at Mutengene, the family relocated from Bojongo village to Great Soppo Buea.

Plate 3: The Researcher and Hon. Emilia's elder sister in front of their Family House at Great Soppo, Buea



Source: Author's Collection from field work, Buea, 10th April, 2025

This family and childhood residence of the MP, is located at Great Soppo Buea, sharing the neighborhood with the Seven Days Adventist Hospital and the OIC market. Today, her only surviving sister lives there with her family, constantly doing renovation works. To the left of this structure, their only surviving brother, based in the US, has put up a storey building. Here, little Emilia enjoyed her childhood with her five other siblings. In order of birth, they were: Cathrine Etonde Lifaka, Jacob Matike Lifaka, the two surviving children out of six, Late Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Joanna Enjema Lifaka, Richard Elive Lifaka and Grace Eposi Lifaka¹⁶³. Cathrine Etonde Lifaka went further to recount how holidays were often animated with the peeling of koki beans and cracking of egussi. The popular law that instilled discipline

¹⁶³ Etonde Lifaka Cathrine Mosaso, 69, retired Liberian at Limbe Botanical Garden, elder sister to late Emilia Lifaka Monjowa, Buea, April 10, 2025.

and hardwork at home was instituted by their mother, Liengu Cecilia which stated: No peeling, no eating of koki¹⁶⁴, No cracking, no eating of Egusi soup or pudding¹⁶⁵. They also made puff during holidays to sell and help their parents raise their school fees. This spirit of hardwork took little Emilia from childhood to maturity. Although not in to any official matrimony, she was a mother to many like the little girl below, and blessed with two biological sons: Adolph Stephen Mbonjo Mbaho Jr. (elder son) and Kenneth Vekima Edube Mbaho¹⁶⁶.

Plate 4: Emilia Monjowa Lifaka and Children, Buea, 2004



Source: Adapted from *National Assembly Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka*.p.8

d) Educational Life

Though she was a little mischievous as every other child at tender age, often abandoning her chores in favour of her favorite childhood game of hand clapping accompanied with jumping and skipping singing: Enter, enter, enter..., she was the most intelligent child in the family.

¹⁶⁴ A popular Cameroonian delicacy made up of peeled grinded special type of beans, mixed with palm oil and other spices and tied in leaves either banana or plantain leaves and cooked. Complimented by banana, plantain, cocoyams or cassava

¹⁶⁵ Another popular Cameroonian nut and delicacy, used in soups to accompany cassava ground products like garri and water fufu. It is also cooked as pudding.

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Kenneth Vekima Edube Mbaho, 33, Finance worker, son of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Yaounde, July 15, 2024.

Her elder sister recounted with emotional tears flowing down her cheeks¹⁶⁷. She did her elementary education at the Cameroon Baptist Convention-CBC, Great Soppo Buea where she obtained her First School Leaving Certificate. She later moved to St Paul's Technical College Bojongo, where she obtained her Advanced Level Certificate. She was also a graduate to Stage 11 intermediary from the College of Commerce in Kumba¹⁶⁸. After her secondary education, she obtained the following higher education qualifications: A Diploma in Secretariat and Business Studies-King's College London, a Diploma in Administrative Management-University of Maryland, an Eastern Shores, United States of America-USA and a Master's Degree in Human Resource Management- University of Anglia Ruskin, United Kingdom. This rich academic background, no doubt, set the pace for her leadership positions in Cameroon and the international scene.¹⁶⁹

e) Her Socio-Economic Life before 2002

With the values inculcated in her from home, she grew up into a very devoted catholic Christian, hardworking, sociable, kind hearted and selfless. Her parents did not spare the rod and spoiled the child. They attended Catholic Church Buea Town as kids. Usually trekking from Great Soppo to Buea town since their parents had no car. Often they will play along the way and get to church very late¹⁷⁰. To curb this, Papa Lifaka and Mama Liengu devised a strategy of always questioning after mass: The first and second readings of the day as well as the central theme of the Priest's preaching. This permitted Emilia to be more focused whenever Sunday service was around the corner. This made her to become very much involved with Catholic Church activities as she grew to adulthood and to a young working-class woman. As a worker at IRAD Ekona, She sponsored sons of Catholic Church Bojongo and Catholic Church Buea town to priesthood¹⁷¹. She was a member of many associations including the Fako Women's Development Association (FAWODA) which influence reduced after her demise¹⁷². This association was aimed at empowering the Fako woman/girl child. Through this, many became self-sufficient with skills obtained from the many capacity –building workshops often organized in their favour. This greatly prepared the grounds for Emilia's entry in to parliament

¹⁶⁷ Etonde Lifaka Cathrine Mosaso, 69, retired Liberian at Limbe Botanical Garden, elder sister to late Emilia Lifaka Monjowa, Buea, April 10, 2025.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ National Assembly, *Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka*, National Assembly, 2021.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Etonde Lifaka Cathrine Mosaso, 69, retired Liberian at Limbe Botanical Garden, elder sister to late Emilia Lifaka Monjowa, Buea, April 10, 2025, 3pm.

¹⁷² Lucy Mbonde, member of FAWODA, 75, Bonakanda Village, April 9, 2025, 11a.m

in year 2002¹⁷³. She had a sense of fairness and justice to mankind, above all, a penchant love for the women and the girl child. She will do everything possible within her reach to see that this group of people are comfortable.¹⁷⁴ Her hard work and devotedness at IRAD Ekona, earned her a scholarship from the institution to study in the United States of America. She joined politics at her return from the USA¹⁷⁵.

At her youthful age, she never manifested the desire to join politics because of her rich religious background and strict family discipline¹⁷⁶. Talking about strict family discipline, she recounted a story of Emilia's return from abroad and how she ordered the family house boy¹⁷⁷ to fry her plantain chips and he gladly did that with palm oil. Furious, she shouted at him and their mother, Cecilia Liengu did not hesitate to remind her of her position in the house. Telling her clearly that she (mama/papa) had the right over the house worker and not her (Emilia). Emilia's best meal was Kwacoco/Mbanga soup¹⁷⁸, taking after her mother, her best drink was coca cola and her best musician was Nguea la Route, popularly known in Cameroon as Mama Nguea, equally of blessed memory¹⁷⁹. The sister testified that whenever she was angry, those who were close to her appeased her with any of mama Nguea's musics and she will lit up instantly¹⁸⁰. All the above shaped her way to the political ladder summit through hard work and discipline.

f) Her political life before 2002

She started her professional career immediately she graduated with the stage II Intermediary Certificate from the College of Commerce in Kumba. She started work in 1980 and for three years, she worked as Personal Assistant to the Chief of Centre of the Institute of Agronomic Research- IRAD Ekona, South West Region, Dr. Simon Ngalle Lyonga.¹⁸¹ From 1984-1989, she served as Chief of Service in charge of personnel in IRAD. In 1997, she moved up to the position of Administrative Assistant in the Roots and Tuber Crops Research Project- ROTREP which received funding from both the Republic of Cameroon and the United States Agency

¹⁷³ Lucy Mbonde, member of FAWODA, 75, Bonakanda Village, April 9, 2025, 11a.m

¹⁷⁴ Lyonga Abel Evanjo, 60, Health Worker, Bokova village, April 8, 2025.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Etonde Lifaka Catharine Mosaso, 69, retired Liberian at Limbe Botanical Garden, elder sister to late Emilia Lifaka Monjowa, Buea, April 10, 2025.

¹⁷⁷ Popular appellation for a boy or man whose services are hired to take care of a home.

¹⁷⁸ A Cameroonian delicacy typical of the Bakweri people, involving grated cocoyam, cooked in leaves and complimented with soup made from the pounding of palm fruits mixed with some spices.

¹⁷⁹ Lucy Mbonde, member of FAWODA, 75, Bonakanda Village, April 8, 2025, 11a.m

¹⁸⁰ Etonde Lifaka Catharine Mosaso, 69, retired Liberian at Limbe Botanical Garden, elder sister to late Emilia Lifaka Monjowa, Buea, April 10, 2025.

¹⁸¹ National Assembly *Tributes to Emilia Nonjowa Lifaka*, Yaounde, May 2021, p. 9.

for International Development¹⁸². After completion of further studies in the USA and the United Kingdom in 2002, she was appointed the Chief of Centre for the Intensive Vocational Training Centre for Office Employees (IVIC) Buea¹⁸³.

Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka was a fervent and dedicated member of the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) who started her political career as a grassroots militant in Ekona Sub Section from 1995-2000. From here, she moved to the Fako III Section in Buea, occupying the post of treasurer that she served from 2000-2002¹⁸⁴. This year marked a turning point in her political career because of her election in to the National Assembly of Cameroon.

Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka was described as a very humble and considerate person who had her Fako West Constituency (Part of Fako III and Edenau also known as Buea Rural) at heart¹⁸⁵. She was much disciplined, outspoken, very intelligent, quite strict but not wicked. She was also described as loving and caring¹⁸⁶. On the other hand, she was described as a one-sided person who only considered those who shared her political ideology¹⁸⁷. Again, she was described as a self-centered politician who only catered for members of her immediate family and failed to represent her electorate appropriately¹⁸⁸.

g) Functions of a Parliamentarian

A Parliamentarian also called Member of Parliament is a typically elected personality whose main function is to represent his/her people in a constituency or region, participating in the legislative process, debates and decision making¹⁸⁹. They play the following functions:

MPs have as principal responsibility, to channel the concerns, interests, and needs of the people they represent¹⁹⁰. It is through the MP that the government reaches down to its grass root population. An MP is also charged with Constituency work where he/she is expected to address local issues like providing support, and resolving problems related to his/her Constituency¹⁹¹. Concerning Legislative functions, MPs are responsible for lawmaking. Here,

¹⁸² National Assembly *Tributes to Emilia Nonjowa Lifaka*, Yaounde, May 2021, p. 9

¹⁸³ Etonde Lifaka Catharine Mosaso, 69, retired Liberian at Limbe Botanical Garden, elder sister to late Emilia Lifaka Monjowa, Buea, April 10, 2025.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Mbonde Nduka Johnaness, 82, retired T and T Technician, Bonakanda village, April 9, 2025.

¹⁸⁶ Lucy Mbonde, member of FAWODA, 75, Bonakanda Village, April 9, 2025.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with, Ekosse Emmanuel, 50 Years, Commissioner of police, Yaounde, November 15, 2024.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Roberts Dictionary, Hachette, Paris, 1998, p.504.

¹⁹⁰ ¹⁹⁰ T. Ndong, *Cameroon's Political Crossroads*, Yaoundé, CLE, 2007, p. 91.

¹⁹¹ K.B. Ayensu and S.N Darkwa, *How Our Parliament Function*, Accra. Ghana, Sub-Saharan publishers, 2001

they are expected to create, debate, and vote laws that are supposed to ensure the wellbeing and livelihood of the local population under their jurisdiction. Secondly, they participate actively in policy development, shaping and influencing public policy to ensure the wellbeing of the local population¹⁹².

Another very important function of an MP is oversight functions. These oversight functions have to do with: Holding government accountable by scrutinizing government actions, policies, and decisions as well as conducting investigations on issues, gathering evidence, and making recommendations for government to finalize¹⁹³. Other functions performed by MPs that cannot be minimized include budget approval through reviewing, debating, and approving government budgets. Thus, if effectively implemented, gives room for checks and balances, ensuring that government resources are properly and equitably used¹⁹⁴.

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the geographical setting and human background of Fako West Constituency. As far as the geographical setting is concerned, much attention was given to the features that have direct influence on the life and activities of Hon. Emilia Lifaka Monjowa. Focusing the human background, the complexity of human coexistence in the area is expounded through the origin, migration and settlement. The pre-colonial political, economic and socio-cultural background of the area, led to the circumstances surrounding the birth and growth of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka. Functions of a parliamentarian have been examined, setting the pace to portray the grandeur, authority and influence she had in the Nation and beyond.

¹⁹² K.B. Ayensu and S.N Darkwa , *How Our Parliament Function*, Accra. Ghana, Sub-Saharan publishers, 2001

¹⁹³ E.N. Ngwa, *Cameroon Legislative System: A Critical Analysis*, Langaa Research and Common Initiative Group, Bamenda, 2013, p. 121.

¹⁹⁴ K.S Chauhan, *Functions, Powers and Privileges, A Comparative Constitutional Perspective*, India, 2005, p. 201.

CHAPTER TWO

EMILIA MONJOWA LIFAKA'S POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN THE FAKO WEST CONSTITUENCY 2002-2021.

Introduction

On the beautiful landscape of Bojongo village, Buea in the then British Southern Cameroons, Emilia Monjowa Lifaka was born to emerge as an unlikely candidate for greatness. Yet, a spark from within would ignite a fire that would propel her to the forefront of political leadership. Against the backdrop of the organization of the 2002 parliamentary election in Cameroon, Lifaka began her effective ascent to political leadership. As the CPDM party underwent significant transformations, she seized the opportunities, navigated the challenges and emerged as a guiding force. This chapter examines her activities at constituency level. However, factors that contributed to her rise to power and motivated her trajectory to political leadership shall be examined first.

Plate 5: Hon. Emilia Monjowa in Parliamentary Attributes Yaoundé, 2019.



Source: Adapted from *National Assembly Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka*.p.1

I. Factors that led to the rise of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka

The political factors that favored Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's rise to politics are closely tied to the changing landscape of Cameroon's governance from time immemorial. How she became a Parliamentarian, shall be examined from the political, economic and socio-cultural perspectives.

A. Political factors

The political context of Cameroon in 2002 was marked by the country's ongoing transition to democracy. Since independence and reunification in 1961, Cameroon had been ruled by a one-party system, with Ahmadou Ahidjo as the country's first president¹. However, in the 1990s, Cameroon began to adopt democratic reforms, including the introduction of multiparty politics and the rise of more women in politics.² The evolution of women's suffrage and the reintroduction of multiparty politics shall constitute this part.

The evolution of Women's Suffrage and Political Rights is an opportunity Emilia did not hesitate to grasp. Post-colonial Cameroon embarked on a complex journey towards expanding women's political rights. Given the significant made, Emilia grabbed the echoes of past restrictions and challenges continued to shape the landscape. The mid-20th century in Cameroon witnessed the dawn of a nascent movement, the fight for women's political empowerment³. In 1955, a glimmer of hope emerged with the introduction of women's suffrage⁴. Yet, like the first rays of a hesitant sunrise, this right arrived draped in limitations, casting a complex shadow on its true meaning and impact. The initial suffrage framework disenfranchised a significant portion of women. Voting rights were often contingent upon specific marital statuses, such as being married to a registered voter, or tied to property ownership, including women in marginalized communities and those lacking wealth. These restrictions reflected the prevailing patriarchal norms and power structures, highlighting the stark contrast between legal pronouncements and lived realities⁵.

However, amidst these limitations, a chorus of resistance and determination began to rise. Women's organizations, such as the *Union des Femmes Camerounaises* (UFC)-1952 and

¹ M. W. Delancey, *Cameroon: Dependence and Independence*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1989, p. 405.

² Assessing the Challenges of the Fight against Corruption in Cameroon. <https://nkafu.org/assessing-the-challenges-of-the-fight-against-corruption-in-cameroon/>, accessed on January 19 2025. 8pm.

³ Ibid.

⁴ A.F Peter, *Democracy and Human Rights in Africa: The Politics of Collective Participation and Governance in Cameroon*, Cameroon, Langaa RPCIG, 2013, p. 260.

⁵ Ibid.

the *Cercle Féminine d'Etudes Sociales et Economiques d'Afrique* (CFEFSEA), emerged as powerful catalysts for change as women began advocating for their rights. Through tireless advocacy, public education campaigns, and strategic lobbying, these organizations challenged the status quo and demanded full and equal suffrage for all women⁶. The fight for suffrage was not merely a legal battle; it was a struggle against deeply entrenched societal norms and prejudices. Women activists faced resistance from traditional authorities, political elites, and even some segments of the female population who adhered to conservative values. The above mentioned women's activities motivated Emilia Monjowa Lifaka to join politics⁷.

While limitations and challenges marked the early days of women's suffrage in Cameroon, it laid the groundwork for future advancements. The unwavering efforts of those who fought for this initial step paved the way for subsequent expansions of suffrage rights and ignited a flame of hope that continued to burn brightly. However, the echoes of those limitations still resonate, reminding us of the ongoing struggle for true gender equality in Cameroon's political landscape. Examining Cameroon's early suffrage movement within a broader global context can offer valuable insights. Exploring the struggles and triumphs of women's suffrage movements in other African countries like Senegal, Tanzania, and Ghana revealed strategies to challenges faced, and lessons learned. This paved the way to Emilia's rise to political leadership.

Comparative analysis illuminates best practices and potential pitfalls, guiding Cameroon's continued journey towards gender equality in political participation⁸. The struggle for women's political participation continued, fueled by a commitment to dismantle barriers. However, the journey was far from smooth. Two formidable obstacles loomed large: limited access to education and economic resources⁹. These challenges disproportionately affected women, hindering their ability to engage fully in the political sphere. In addition, access to education was a critical determinant of women's political agency. Historically, educational opportunities were skewed in favour of men¹⁰. Traditional gender norms like men as breadwinners and women as care-given often relegated women to domestic roles, prioritizing their roles as wives and mothers over formal education. As a result, many women lacked the

⁶ A.M. Bouttiaux, *La condition féminine en Afrique noire*, Paris, Le Harmattan, 1993, p. 263.

⁷ J.F. Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, London, Longman, 1993, pp. 91-99.

⁸ F. L. Schmidt, Well-being in the workplace and its relationship to business outcomes: A review of the Gallup studies, Washington, D.C., American Psychological Association, 2003, p. 74.

⁹ F. Lotsmart, *Issues in Women,s Land Right in Cameroon*, Langaa RPCIG, Cameroon, p. 178.

¹⁰ Ibid.

knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the complexities of political life. Emilia was however blessed with both, paving her way to political leadership.

Despite these challenges, pioneering women emerged as beacons of change. Josepha Mua and Julienne Keutcha emerged as the pioneer female parliamentarians in British Southern and East Cameroon respectively¹¹. Others like Germaine Ahidjo and Alice Nkom defied conventions, advocating for women's rights and political representation¹². Their resilience and determination laid the groundwork for subsequent generations. The legacy of these initial steps echoes in contemporary Cameroon. Women continued to advocate for their rights, demanding equal participation in decision-making processes¹³. However, the path remains uneven. Efforts to dismantle barriers persist. Fueled by the spirit of those who paved the way, Emilia Monjowa Lifaka made her way up the ladder of political leadership.

Cameroon's journey toward gender-inclusive parliamentary representation has been a delicate balancing act like a tightrope walk between legal milestones and the persistent challenges faced by women. Independence in 1960 marked a turning point, but female representation in parliament remained minimal. Julienne Keutcha etched her name in history as the first female parliamentarian in Cameroon¹⁴. Her solitary presence in the National Assembly from 1960 to 1965 marked a significant milestone. It also acted as a great motivator to Emilia's rise to political leadership. The late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed the emergence of multiparty politics¹⁵. The political landscape shifted, and women's organizations seized this opportunity. Their rallying cry echoed through streets, conference halls, and grassroots networks. They demanded more than symbolic representation; they sought active participation. The promise of gender equality beckoned, and women stepped forward¹⁶. In 1996, Cameroon's constitution enshrined gender equality as a fundamental right. Article 6(2) explicitly stated that the State shall ensure the promotion of women.¹⁷ It was a clarion call for equitable governance,

¹¹ F. Lotsmart, *Issues in Women's Land Right in Cameroon*, Langaa RPCIG, Cameroon, p. 178.

¹² J. M. Mbaku, "Matrilineal Empowerment and Patriarchal Constraints: A Comparative Study of Western and Northern Cameroon." In *Journal of African History*, vol. 10, No. 2, Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp.172-190.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ J. Keutcha, *Cameroon's Independence and Political Landscape*, Présence Africaine, 1960, pp.2-5.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Tsanga, D, "Women's Political Participation in Cameroon: Strides and Struggles. Perspectives from Africa: Insights into the challenges faced by women in political participation," In *Gender and Governance*, March 1992, no, 57, pp. 70-89.

¹⁷ E.Y.Vubo, *Gender Relations in Cameroon: Multidisciplinary Perspective*, Bamenda, Cameroon, Langaa Research and Publishing, 2012, pp. 70-75.

a commitment to bridge the gender gap in political representation. Emilia grabbed this golden opportunity and infiltrated into the male milieu.

The good wife narrative clashed with the audacity required for political engagement. Women navigated this tightrope asserting their rights while treading carefully not to upset societal norms. As Cameroon's political music played on, women's voices accentuated. They organized forums, workshops, and awareness campaigns. They ran for offices, defying odds¹⁸. Yet, the orchestra lacked harmony. The seats in the National Assembly remained unevenly distributed. The balancing act continued a delicate equilibrium between aspiration and reality. The introduction of quotas in the early 2000s aimed at bridging the gap between legal pronouncements and live realities regarded female representation in Cameroon's political landscape¹⁹. This landmark policy, mandated by Law No. 2004/018 of 22 April 2004, reserved 30% of seats in the National Assembly and municipal councils for women. A great push to Emilia Monjowa Lifaka and colleagues.

Furthermore, quotas alone could address the underlying socio-economic and cultural barriers that continued to impede women's political participation. Limited access to education and economic resources, coupled with discriminatory practices that favor male candidates, created an uneven playing field²⁰. Addressing these issues required a multi-pronged approach that goes beyond quotas and delves into empowering women through education, skills development, and fostering a culture of gender equality within political parties and society at large. Cameroon's experience with quotas offered valuable lessons for navigating the complex terrain of achieving gender equality in political participation²¹. While quotas offer had undeniably played a role in increasing female representation, their effectiveness was contingent upon addressing broader societal issues and fostering a culture that values and empowers women in leadership roles²². Moving forward, Cameroon must continue to critically evaluate and adapt its quota system, ensuring that it serves not just as a numerical measure but as a catalyst for genuine and meaningful change in the political landscape.

¹⁸Tsanga, D, "Women's Political Participation in Cameroon: Strides and Struggles. Perspectives from Africa: Insights into the challenges faced by women in political participation," In Gender and Governance, March 1992, no, 57, pp. 70-89.

¹⁹ E.Y.Vubo, *Gender Relations in Cameroon: Multidisciplinary Perspective*, Bamenda, Cameroon, Langaa Research and Publishing, 2012, p. 77.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ M. G. Yaa, "Financial Obstacles to the Representation of the Cameroonian Women in Parliament", A Dissertation submitted to the Department of History in partial fulfilment of the Award of a Master's Degree in History, University of Yaounde I, 2008. p.50.

²² Ibid.

The reintroduction of multiparty politics in Cameroon in 1990 was triggered by many factors. Internal pressures played a significant role. This was because the population was increasingly dissatisfied with the single-party system and demanded greater political freedoms²³. The Launch of the Social Democratic Front (SDF), an opposition party, on May 26, 1990, marked a significant turning point²⁴. The SDF's defiance of the single-party system sparked a wave of opposition movements, ultimately leading to the reintroduction of multiparty politics. The constitution of Cameroon permitted a pluralistic political system though the ruling CPDM was the lone existing party by 1990²⁵. It was this provision that barred the government from obstructing the launching of the SDF in May 1990²⁶. This idea of liberty and freedom of speech and press motivated Emilia Monjowa Lifaka.

Corruption and embezzlement, coupled with the centralization of power, were all blamed on the single-party system. The socio-economic malaise that stressed the country also provoked the call for political pluralism. Unemployment, low wages, shortage of basic social amenities. People strongly believed that these ills could be checked with the reintroduction of political pluralism.²⁷ Pressure from Civil Societies, Organizations such as the Cameroon Women's Association, (1985), Confederation of Cameroon Trade Unions (1994), Transparency International Cameroon (1998), the Cameroon Bar Association led by barrister Yondo Black and the Catholic Episcopal Conference which circulated letters blaming the one party system for corruption, poverty and social deprivation promoted the reintroduction of multi-party politics.²⁸ Instead of scaring off Emilia, it rather motivated her in to joining politics under the banner of the CPDM.

The press and television also played a role. They sensitized the population and pressurized the government to decree political pluralism. Newspapers, notably *Le Messager*, exposed the weaknesses of the one party system. "Cameroon Calling", a program on Radio Cameroon, persistently criticized the regime in May 1990, calling on Cameroonians to get up for their rights²⁹. President Biya's Strategic Maneuvering also facilitated the transition. By promulgating the law on multiparty democracy on December 19, 1990, President Biya aimed

²³ P. N. Nkwi, *Anthropology in a Postcolonial Africa: The Survival Debate*, London, Routledge, 2006, p. 102.

²⁴ P. Ninjoh, *Advance Level Cameroon History since 1800*, Bamenda, Cameroon, Data Lens Production, 2014, p.192.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ S.B.Takang, *An Illustrated History of Cameroon since 1800*, Bamenda, Datalens, 2018, p. 283.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid p. 284.

²⁹ V. J Ngoh, *History of Cameroon since 1800*. Limbe, Presbook, 1996, p. 90.

at maintaining control while appearing to accommodate democratic demands³⁰. Moreover, Biya's tactical foreign policy, expressed the need to join the Commonwealth of Nations; this triggered him to promulgate the law on political pluralism³¹. External Influences also contributed to the shift towards multiparty politics. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of socialist regimes worldwide created an environment conducive for democratic reforms. Additionally, international organizations and Western countries mounted pressure on Cameroon to adopt democratic principles which Emilia quickly exploited to her favour. Democratic principles animated her life as MP and CPA chairperson till death³².

Global agitation for Good Governance, restructuring of the state, and improved governance also inspired Cameroon's transition to multiparty politics,³³ but the country's democratic journey remained challenging, with concerns around electoral fairness, representation, and accountability. These factors combined to pave the way for Cameroon's transition to multiparty politics, ending the single-party system that had dominated the country's political landscape since independence. By 2002, Paul Biya's, government faced criticism for its human rights record, corruption and electoral irregularities³⁴.

The country's political landscape was characterized by the strong ruling party, CPDM which dominated the National Assembly³⁵. The opposition parties, including the Social Democratic Front, were weak and fragmented, making it difficult for them to challenge the ruling party's dominance³⁶. Over all, the political context of Cameroon in 2002, was marked by a gradual transition to democracy, but with significant challenges and limitations. It is in this prevailing political context that Emilia Lifaka distinguished herself from the other politicians. Increased participation of women in politics also motivated her to join politics. By 2002, there were 20 women deputies in the National Assembly of Cameroon, marking a slight increase in women's participation in politics, a real positive influence on the rise of Emilia Monjowa³⁷.

Despite this progress, women remained underrepresented in decision-making bodies. To address this issue, Cameroon ratified several international conventions including the

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid. p.91

³² Interview with Osih Joshua, 55, SDF MP for Wourri Centre, Yaounde, 29 July, 2023.

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Cameroon 2002 Human Right's Report, Washington D.C, United States Department of 2002, p. 51.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 52.

³⁷ Interview with Laurentine Nkoa Mfegue, 60, Oldest Female Parliamentarian, Yaounde, February 21, 2023.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights of Women³⁸. The country adopted laws and policies aimed at promoting gender equality such as the Electoral Code which requires political parties to take in to account gender representation in their electoral list. This greatly motivated Emilia Lifaka Monjowa's rise to power³⁹. The importance of Women in political leadership brought about. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's rise to power. This growing emphasis on women's empowerment and gender equality in Cameroon's political landscape also contributed to Lifaka's success. She seized the opportunity offered by the Head of State, Paul Biya, reiterating his total support for more women in politics. This female call to leadership helped promote⁴⁰ women's participation in politics and decision-making processes. Hence, a great motivation for Monjowa Lifaka⁴¹.

B. Economic factors

Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's rise to politics was influenced by many economic factors in Cameroon as seen below.

a) Economic Crisis

During the 1990s, Cameroon faced significant economic challenges, including a severe economic crisis, high level of poverty, and a decline in living standards⁴². The Cameroonian economic crisis was a downturn in the nation's economy from the mid-1980s to the early 2000s⁴³. This is a situation made Cameroon to witness a sudden and significant decline in the country's economy due to several factors including a drop in the prices of cocoa and coffee in the world market⁴⁴. It was characterized by a breakdown in economic and social relations with reflected indicators like inflation employment and growth⁴⁵. The crisis resulted in rising prices in trade deficit and loss of government revenue. The government of Cameroon acknowledged the crisis in 1987⁴⁶.

Outside observers and critics blamed poor government stewardship of the economy. The government instead placed the blame on the fall of the prices of export commodities, particularly a steep drop in the price of petroleum. The sufferings of the people of Fako West

³⁸ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Cameroon: *New Leadership Needed to Bring Justice and Stem the Spread of Corruption*, Geneva, United Nations, 2023, pp.9-15.

³⁹ Cameroon Country Profile, U.N Women, 2021, p. 203.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid. p.259

⁴² V. J Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*. Limbe: Pressbook, 1996.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ G.F Kum, *Navigating Economic Development in Cameroon*, Paris, L, Harmattan, 2024, p. 174.

⁴⁵ J. M. Mbaku, *Women in Cameroon's Development*, Yaounde, edition cle, 2018.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Constituency motivated her in to politics so she could secure their own fair share of the national cake.⁴⁷ Economic disparities further compounded the struggle. Women faced financial constraints that hindered their ability actively engage in political activities. Limited financial independence restricted their mobility, participation in campaigns, and access to networks. Without economic autonomy, women's voices remained stifled, their potential untapped

The 1987–1988 budget reduced government spending by 18%, the first time in the country's history that the budget decreased.⁴⁸ The measures met with international approval, but crime wave rose as a result of a drop in living standards caused by the reduction. Cameroon's plan also failed to eradicate corruption and other ills that accompanied the crisis. By October 1988, the intended effect was less than had been hoped, and Cameroon agreed to an IMF aid package worth \$150 million and accepted a SAP loan from the World Bank⁴⁹. The African Development Bank, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom loaned the government further funds. Cameroon had since focused on paying off its international debt and further restricting public salaries and pay rises to civil servants.⁵⁰ The love she had for her community and the prevailing economic context, served as a great motivator.

However, the consensus among Cameroonians both at home and overseas was that the economic hardship was as a result of the theft public funds by some government officials⁵¹. Members of government constantly stole public funds and built mega structures in other countries such as France without any serious legal action being taken by the administration⁵². An evaluation during this period showed that the country's economy experienced a brutal drop in revenue from the exportation of its primary and petroleum products. This drop was estimated at about 329 billion francs CFA, being 8.2 percent of the GDP⁵³. Economic activities shrank in several sectors particularly construction and public work, cash crops, retail trade and oil. Yet, Emilia Monjowa Lifaka clung to her dream.

The severe economic situation led to a fall in revenue and budgetary balance. Internal borrowing as well as external arrears essentially financed the budget deficit, and the country's

⁴⁷ Mbonde Nduka Johanness, 82, retired P and T technician, Bonakanda village, April 8, 2025.

⁴⁸ DeLancey, M.D et al, *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon* (3rd ed), The Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Maryland, 2002.

⁴⁹ G.F Kum, *Navigating Economic Development in Cameroon*, Paris, L, Harmattan, 2024.p. 175

⁵⁰ "Cameroon Overview of economy, Information about Overview of economy in Cameroon". Retrieved January 29, 2025.

⁵¹ Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2020, Berlin, Transparency International, 2020.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ G.F Kum, *Navigating Economic Development in Cameroon*, Paris, L, Harmattan, 2024.

debt increased sharply⁵⁴ while the government embarked on redressing the situation her own way, though the situation worsen before the highly contested 1992 presidential elections when serious confrontations occurred between the government and the opposition. The result was that the government became financially handicap and unable to honor its financial commitment including its payroll⁵⁵. Thus, despite the high development prospect of the early 1980s, the country remained poor with economic gains incapable of improving the living conditions of a majority of its citizens.⁵⁶ This situation persisted through the 90s to the 3rd millennium and Hon. Emilia Lifaka's message of economic reforms and development especially stemming from the grassroots, resonated with the population as the crisis created an opportunity for new leaders to emerge even within the ranks of the ruling CPDM party.

In this light, Monjowa's political career took off. She was elected to the National Assembly of Cameroon, where she became a vocal advocate for economic development, poverty reduction, and improved living standards⁵⁷. Monjowa's commitment to addressing these issues helped her build a strong support base in her Buea Rural or Fako West Constituency, covering Bojongo Court Area, Edenau pole and Bonavada Communities of Bova, Bokova, Lisoko, Maumu and Ewunda.⁵⁸ Overall, Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's rise to politics was facilitated by a combination of economic factors, including the economic crisis, poverty, inequality, and the need for more women in politics. Some socio-cultural factors equally played a role in her rise to political leadership.

C. Socio-cultural factors

Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's rise to politics was also influenced by socio-cultural factors in Cameroon such as growing discontent, failure of the state to provide quality living standards to the citizens, feeling of marginalization by Anglophones, the rise of civil society organizations to defend the rights of the masses. Beyond structural barriers, deeply ingrained, societal norms perpetuated gender disparities. Stereotypes portrayed women as emotional, unfit for leadership, and confined to domestic roles. These stereotypes discouraged women from pursuing political careers, reinforcing the status quo⁵⁹. The Cult of True Womanhood,

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 181

⁵⁶ L.Ndikumana, J. K. Boyce, *Africa's Odious Debts: How Foreign Loans and Capital Flight Bled a Continent*, London, Zed Books, 2011, pp. 29-31.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Interview with, Minerva Akawoh Molinge, 53, First Deputy Mayor, Buea council, November 2024.

⁵⁹ Mbaku, J. M, "Matrilineal Empowerment and Patriarchal Constraints: A Comparative Study of Western and Northern Cameroon." In *Journal of African History*, vol. 10, No. 2, Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp.172-190.

prevalent during this era, emphasized piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity as the ideal traits for women⁶⁰.

Cameroonians were not happy with the drastic drop in the standards of living as a result of the economic crisis and the clumsy measures used by government to solve it. This included the failed SAP policies⁶¹. This discontent led to the emergence of a vibrant civil society, which played a crucial role in promoting democratic values and holding the government accountable. As a result, the state failed to deliver quality living standards for citizens thereby, motivating those who had empathy for their communities, the case of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka. The majority of the population in Cameroon by 2002 lived in poverty with deplorable medical conditions, poor housing and low salaries as the country continued to struggle with the IMF and World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) policies⁶².

Cameroonians had become cynical and distrustful of politics and the state, creating an environment in which political figures like Lifaka could gain traction. Additionally, the institutionalization of a monolithic political system in 1966 and the abolition of the federal governance system in 1972 had intensified centralization and the co-optation of the English-speaking sector into the French-centralized system⁶³. This created a sense of marginalization among Anglophone Cameroonians, which Emilia Monjowa Lifaka tapped into during her political career though from within the ruling party. Networking and mentorship were other very important strategies quickly exploited by Emilia

Networking and mentorship with top influential personalities and guidance from experienced female political leaders like Ndando Ruth, provided valuable advice and support. This helped in the political take off and evolution of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka. Besides, quality education and training as seen in the educational and career backgrounds of our parliamentarian, promoted her rise to power. Again, team dynamics and organizational culture greatly propelled Hon. Emilia Lifaka as she constantly worked in partnership with a talented and dedicated team that supports and enables the leader's vision. A culture that values

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ These were Structural Adjustment Programs, proposed by the IMF and the World Bank to Cameroon to help curb the economic crisis. These included: The reduction of salaries for civil servants and privatization of many state-owned companies.

⁶² Minerva Akawoh Molinge, 53, First Deputy Mayor, Buea council, November 15, 2024.

⁶³ W.D Ngwa, *The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon: A historical Perspective, 1916-1995*, Memoire de Maitrise en Histoire, Universite de Yaounde I, 1998. p. 54.

innovation, risk-taking, and experimentation adaptability, ability to adapt to changing circumstances and navigate through uncertainties.⁶⁴

Charisma is a natural charm and magnetism that inspires loyalty and devotion. Strategic thinking, the ability to think critically and strategically, making informed decisions and the willingness to take calculated risks to achieve their vision all characterized our subject of study. Accountability, the willingness to take responsibility for her actions and decisions also facilitated her rise to leadership position. Overall, Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's rise to politics was facilitated by a combination of social factors, including the deplorable social conditions, mentorship, networking, team spirit, dynamism and charisma, risk taking and accountability. The political, economic and social factors examined above, raised the politician from grassroots to international scenes.

II. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka,s activities in the Fako West Constituency (Buea Rural)-2002-2021

Emilia Monjowa Lifaka was a grass root politician who carried out a lot of activities that impacted communities in the area within her jurisdiction. What she did in the domain of politics and socio-economic development cannot be under estimated.

A. Economic Activities

Emilia Monjowa Lifaka was a developer and a peace crusader in Cameroon as she strived at all stages and at all levels to carry out actions that defended the interest of peace and sustainable development. These laudable actions are visible in domains like agriculture, transport, trade, education, health sporting activities among others.

a) Agriculture

Agriculture is a vital sector in Bakweriland. The region's fertile soil, favorable climate, and abundant rainfall made it suitable for growing a variety of crops⁶⁵. This fertility of the soil remains the identity of the Kwe people. The Mount Cameroon Project (MCP) in South West Cameroon has as its goal, the maintenance of biodiversity on and around Mount Cameroon. Central to realizing this goal has been the forging of real working partnerships with forest users, the consumers of forest products, governments, and industry⁶⁶. These new styles of action are

⁶⁴ Minerva Akawoh Molinge, 53, First Deputy Mayor, Buea council, November 15, 2024.

⁶⁵ P. E. Will, *Geography of Cameroon: Westview Special Studies on Africa*, Westview press, 1990, p. 93.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

aimed at developing realistic strategies for the sustainable management of natural resources⁶⁷. In the course of identifying sustainable management strategies with resource users, shifting cultivators emerged as major actors within existing resource management systems. Far from being peripheral to forest use, shifting cultivation is well integrated into a multi-faceted forest resource use system.

As such, shifting cultivation remains an important complimentary and robust component of local household livelihood systems⁶⁸. The inherently fertile but often stony volcanic soils encourage mixed farming of cocoyam, plantains, yams, vegetables, bananas, with tree crops such as bush plum (*Dacryodes edulis*), guava (*Psidium guajava*), paw-paw (*Carica papaya*) and breadfruit (*Treculia africana* and *Artocarpus* spp.).⁶⁹ Agricultural practices were a blend of short and long fallow rotations with fallow periods varying from three to eight years depending on the individual or family⁷⁰. Forest use includes non-timber forest product (NTFP) collection (forest vegetables, medicinal plants, and fruits), timber extraction for sale and household use, hunting and trapping, and some product...

The impact of CDC on the West Coast seaward side of the mountain cannot be too greatly stressed; its activities dominated the rhythm and pattern of daily life for local communities before the crisis. These have both indirect and direct impacts on the quality and constitution of the forest⁷¹. The population along this coastal strip is ethnically heterogeneous and growing. Significant numbers of immigrant workers from Nigeria, Benin, and Ghana are contracted to CDC and based in plantation camps.⁷² However, this pattern was destabilized because of the crisis that hit the regions. Some major cash crops cultivated in the area include Cocoa and coffee for both local and international markets⁷³. The Hon. MP has been very instrumental in developing this sector through donations of farm inputs, so her electorate can embrace the ever growing cash crop economy.

Coffee is another important crop, with Arabica and Robusta varieties being grown in the area. Palms are also widely cultivated and processed in to palm oil, with many smallholder and big farmers involved in its production. Food crop production, especially subsistence

⁶⁷ N. Ngwe, "Assessment of Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Cameroon Using Remote Sensing and GIS Techniques", *Journal of Environmental Science and Water Resources*, no 4, 2015, p. 10.

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ P. E. Will, *Geography of Cameroon: Westview Special Studies on Africa*, Westview press, 1990, p. 94.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ M.W Delancey, "Cameroon: Dependence and Independence". *African Studies Series*, Vol.75, Westview Press. 1989, pp. 111-117.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.p.118.

agriculture was common in the area with crops like cassava, plantains, cocoyam and maize primarily for local consumption⁷⁴. It is important to note that most farmers in this area were smallholders, using traditional farming methods and tools like “Ankara”⁷⁵, hoes, cutlasses respectively⁷⁶. Shifting cultivation was also common, where farmers clear and burn forests to create new farmland. Agroforestry practices, which involved integrating trees into farming systems, were also used in this part of Bakweriland including Hon Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, s area of jurisdiction.

It is however important to note that these farming activities brought about soil degradation, reducing fertility and affecting crop yields. Climate change also impacted agricultural productivity in the area, with changing rainfall patterns and increased temperatures⁷⁷. Some farmers faced challenges in accessing markets, leading to low prices and income.⁷⁸ Note should be taken Emilia Monjowa taught by example as she owned a pepper, plantain and yam plantation at upper Bojongo area, going towards Ekanjo village. She employed workers for the project and constantly followed them up personally⁷⁹. These professional skills were derived from the fact that she worked as Personal Assistant to the Chief of Centre of the Institute of Agronomic Research- IRAD Ekona- South West Region, Simon Ngalle Lyonga.

From 1984-1989, she served as Chief of Service in Charge of Personnel in IRAD Ekona. In 1997, she moved up to the position of Administrative Assistant in the Roots and Tuber Crops Research Project (ROTREP) which received funding from both the Republic of Cameroon and the United States Agency for International Development⁸⁰. With much insight on agricultural practices, her community stood to succeed in the domain. Cameroonian forestry law and restrictions on agricultural use of forest land prescribed forest management options with stakeholders. Important actors in this process include shifting cultivators quite visible in Bojongo Court Area.

Under Cameroonian Forestry Law, a forest is understood as any land covered by vegetation with a predominance of trees, shrubs and other species capable of providing

⁷⁴ Njifon Ngwe, Assessment of Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Cameroon Using Remote Sensing and GIS Techniques, in *Journal of Environmental Science and Water Resources*, 2015, no 4.

⁷⁵ This is a traditional farming method widely practiced in most villages in Cameroon. It involves the clearing and burning of the bush

⁷⁶ Greenpeace, *Deforestation and Climate Change*, Amsterdam, Greenpeace, 2016, p. 16.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.p.25

⁷⁹ Vekima Kenneth, 33, Finance worker, Yaounde, November 3, 2024.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

products other than agricultural products (Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Regulations – Law No 94/01 of 20 January 1994)⁸¹. This definition has its roots in a common policy dichotomy, found throughout the world, between agriculture and forestry⁸². The establishment of forest boundaries to describe a community forest was complicated by land use patterns which blur the edges between farm and forest. While this blurring was easily accommodated locally, it remained to be seen whether the law was sufficiently flexible to do the same.⁸³ With Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka at the helm of political leadership, most farmers in her constituency changed from the practice of subsistence agriculture to market economy agriculture. This was because she did not only provide farm inputs to farmers of Bojongo Court Area, Idenau, Maumu, Lysoka and Bonavada areas but also stood at the forefront of innovative projects as far as agricultural land use and management was concerned. These farm inputs that she donated almost on yearly basis to her community included fertilizers, push trucks, seedlings, spraying and watering cans, just to name a few⁸⁴.

⁸¹ E. Tabe, Law No. 94/01 of 20 January 1994: A Critical Analysis, 1996 accessed on December 17 2024. 2 am.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ E. Tchokonte, *Cameroon's Forestry Law: An Analysis of Restrictions on Logging and Timber Exports*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2017, p.123.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Plate 6: Donation of Farm Inputs by Hon. Emilia Monjowa in her Constituency, Buea, 2015. (plate 6a,Donations and plate 6b, speech before donations)



Source: The Lifaka Family Album, Buea, 10th April 2025

This has so far enabled these farmers to send their children to school and live better lives. Before her demise, she kept sensitizing her constituency and had the following opportunities proposed and planned out for her farmers. She stressed on the potential for organic farming in the Fako West Constituency, with growing demand for organic products globally to the detriment of food produced with inorganic matter like fertilizers⁸⁵. She equally encouraged processing and value addition to agricultural products which increased income for farmers and created employment opportunities. For instance, in cassava and palms, irrigation developed, especially in the dry season: Investing in irrigation infrastructure, made available by Emilia Monjowa, improved agricultural productivity and reduced dependency on rainfall.

⁸⁵ Etonde Lifaka Cathrine Mosaso, 69, retired Liberian at Limbe Botanical Garden, elder sister to late Emilia Lifaka Monjowa, Buea, April 10, 2025.

b) Trade

Trade played a significant role in the economy and culture of the people from precolonial times to date. In precolonial times, salt and fish were principal commodities for the coastal kwe people⁸⁶. Salt and smoked fish were traded between coastal people and inland communities in exchange for goods like cassava and plantains⁸⁷. During German colonial rule (1884-1914), Bakweriland became a major producer of cocoa, coffee, and rubber. The Bakweri people traded in agricultural products like cocoa, coffee, and palm oil with neighboring communities in and out of Cameroon⁸⁸

The Bakweri people traded in cash crops with European companies, which exported them to European markets, thereby fueling the inequitable trade between Europe and Africa. However, most of them during this period acted as laborers in German plantations. After independence, the Kwe people continued to trade in agricultural products, including cocoa, coffee, and palm oil, especially with neighboring Nigeria. Timber trade also became a significant contributor to the local economy. Informal cross-border trade was practiced with neighboring countries like Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea. She provided business capital for some beneficiaries in her constituency to start off the trade. This great move benefited both the traders and their families and provoked a rise in living standards⁸⁹.

The West Coast camps had access to good quality market information which was circulated by CDC delivery drivers as they traveled between the main urban centers until the outbreak of the crisis. This transport link provided the chance to respond quickly to changes in demand and prices across the region, which in turn affected household decisions about the crop to plant on a particular parcel of land, the number of shifting plots to maintain, and the harvesting period to capitalize on. There was a marked increase in the fishing population around the camps that coincided with the quieter period of the agricultural and plantation cycle. The area was integrated into international and regional socio-economic systems through well-developed transport links, such as the trading port at Idenau, a busy gateway to Nigeria, and by roads to large urban markets in other parts of Cameroon like Douala and Yaounde.

The Douala Market Cameroon's largest economic city was a major trading hub for Bakweriland's agricultural products. Informal border markets with Nigeria and Equatorial

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Lester, R. Brown, *Building a Sustainable Society*, New York/ London, 1981, p. 77.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ National Assembly Tributes to Emilia Nonjowa Lifaka, Yaounde, May 2021.p.12.

Guinea also facilitate trade in goods like foodstuffs, cacao, coffee and palm kernel.⁹⁰ Infrastructural challenges like poor road network, rendered it difficult to transport goods to markets especially from villages that produce further inland. Conflict and instability: like the Anglophone crisis, which began in 2016, has also affected trade in Bakweri land, with many businesses forced to close down. Both plantation and subsistence agriculture have been affected tremendously⁹¹.

Despite these challenges, there were opportunities for growth in Bakweri land's trade sector, particularly in agriculture, trade and tourism as the MP lobbied with national and international stake holders for the provision of quality infrastructure. She called on her population to be resilient and remain steadfast, forging for more trading opportunities within Cameroon and beyond. This necessitated the zeal for infrastructural development⁹².

c) Transport/Infrastructural Development

Hon. Emilia Lifaka Monjowa's contributions to infrastructural development in Fako West Constituency are reflected in her work as a member of parliament. This was one of the indicators of economic development is measurement in any society. With her Micro Project Fund allocated to MPs, she was able to realize the following projects in her Constituency during her tenure in office.

Concerning Road Infrastructure, Emilia Monjowa advocated for the construction and rehabilitation of roads in the Fako West Constituency, improving connectivity and facilitating trade especially between the villages in her community. Thanks to her initiative, the first tarred road saw the light of day in the Bojongo court area⁹³.

⁹⁰ E.M Mbaku, *Trade and Economic Development in Buea, Cameroon, 1961-1985*, 1987, p. 93.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.p.102

⁹³ National Assembly, *National Assembly Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka*, Yaounde, May 2021. p. 15.

Plate 7: The Tard Road linking Limbe and Bojongo village, sponsored by Hon. Emilia Monjowa



Source: Author's Collection, Bojongo village, 9th April 2025.

The image above, is the tar road that connects all the villages in Bojongo Court Area up to Limbe town. The construction of this road, constitutes one of her most cherished initiatives within her constituency. It facilitated the transportation of good from farms to markets, bridging other political, economic and socio-cultural divides within the area. She supported initiatives to build and maintain waterways, to enhance transportation and drainage from uphill villages like Sanje, from where serious run-offs flow down to villages like Bojongo, Bojoke and Buana during torrential rains⁹⁴. These helped in bridging divides and fostering economic growth, a major tool for peace and social cohesion in an era of socio-political instability.

Emilia Monjowa also worked to improve energy and water Supply. Access to electricity and clean water in Fako West Constituency was of top priority, recognizing their importance for economic development and public health. In this light, a greater part in the electrification of the Sanje Health Centre in the West Coast, Idenau as well as the electrification of Sar-SN Idenau was done by her. Her huge financial donations also went for the electrification of GS Idenau and GS Bakingili. Her financial donations also went for the supply of portable water in Bonakanda.⁹⁵ By investing in infrastructure, Emilia Monjowa contributed to economic growth in Fako West, creating opportunities for businesses, jobs, and income

⁹⁴ Interview with Akawoh Minerva Molinge, 53, First Deputy Mayor, Buea Council, Buea, December 6, 2024.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

generation activities. Her commitment to improving the lives of her constituents and promoting economic development in the area is evident. Other infrastructural activities that brought peace and social cohesion in the area include, the building and equipping of the Buana, Mapanja and Lysoka Community Halls⁹⁶.

B. Social Activities

Education, health, sports and youth empowerment constitute this section of our study. As a member of parliament, she did a lot of lobbying for her community in the domains of education and health.

a) Education.

To be educated is to be sufficiently armed to face the challenges of the present world. It is in this perspective that, Emilia Monjowa, being a grass root politician expressed her humanitarian gesture by coming to the rescue of many underprivileged youths of her constituency at the time they thought all hopes were lost⁹⁷. To this effect, over 200 youths were trained with a cost estimate of over 40 million over a period of 10 years⁹⁸. Such a laudable initiative was greatly applauded by the community. Her objective was self –reliance for the youths of her community and Cameroon in general.

⁹⁶ Mbonde Nduka Johnaness, 82, retired P and T Technician, Bonakanda village, April 9, 2025.

⁹⁷ Idem.

⁹⁸ Idem.

Plate 8: Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Promoting Vocational Training, Buea, 2018



Source: National Assembly Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, p.32

Plate eight demonstrates the hand-over ceremony of the sum of ten million franc by Emilia Monjowa to the Program Director of Opportunity Industrialization Center Buea (OIC). This corresponded to the first phase of her vocational training scholarship scheme for the youths of

her constituency. Further down, is the graduation ceremony of a trained batch of youths, sponsored by this scholarship scheme.

Today, many youths are beneficiaries of this project can boast of either being sole proprietors or working with the Government. She equally paid school fees and provided back-to-school equipment to pupils and students from primary through secondary to tertiary levels of education⁹⁹. When asked when this project will come to an end, she responded that her top priority was the wellbeing of her people and that she will never stop until every child in her community was educated and had a job.¹⁰⁰ She sponsored the construction of two classrooms in Government High School-GBHS Bojongo, her birth place. She independently constructed a modern toilet and donated to Government School-G. S Bonakanda, donated building materials for the construction of G.S Maumu¹⁰¹.

She also lobbied for the creation and construction of GSS Wokeko, sponsored the equipping of GS Bova, donated equipments for CEAC Bokova and negotiated the creation and building of the Community Education and action centre in Boana village¹⁰². It is worth noting that she paid school fees and provided needs to over 500 children across her constituency, ranging from nursery to university levels¹⁰³. In an interview with Azore Opio, under the banner of “The Post Newspaper” in March, 2021, she had this to say about some of her social achievements:

...Still in the West Coast District, I created a community education and empowerment center and bought sewing machines, gas cookers and so on, for the center. I got the Ministry of Agriculture to transfer a facilitator to take care of the center. In Lysoka, I got government to create a nursery school and I rehabilitated the building that houses the school. I provide everything - benches, uniforms, everything that the children need...

She did all she could to provide basic educational amenities for her electorate. This was not only focused on the youths because the adults were implicated as seen in the quotation above. A community education empowerment center was created and equipped at the West Coast District for the adults. Products from this center were tailors, farmers, cooks and hair dressers. Through this initiative, she instilled the spirit of entrepreneurship in her community. In Lysoka,

⁹⁹ Interview with Enanga Lydia, 57, cook to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Bojongo, April 9, 2025.

¹⁰⁰ “CPA Chairperson” Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, April 23, 2021. Retrieved on January 13, 2025, 7.29 pm.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Enanga Lydia, 57, cook to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Bojongo, April 9, 2025.

¹⁰³ Azore Opio, Interview with Emilia Monjowa Lifaka in “The Post Newspaper”, March, 2021.

everything about the Nursery School was provided by Emilia Monjowa, except the creation by government.

Plate 9: Government Nursery and Primary School Bova



Source: Author's collection, Bova village, April 9, 2025

Plate nine projects Government Nursery and Primary School Bova, created under the mandate of Emilia Monjowa. The Nursery and Primary School was created and constructed thanks to her lobby initiatives with the Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB). The equipping of the nursery was done by the Emilia Monjowa, while staffing was done by the government¹⁰⁴.

b) Health

Any community without good health for the inhabitants is a dead community for, “health is wealth” Emilia Monjowa took a visionary step in to the future for the people of the Fako West Constituency and Fako Division in general when she launched the Monjowa Lifaka Foundation (MLF)¹⁰⁵. She took this giant step on September, 16th 2020 in Buea¹⁰⁶. Top administrative officials of Fako Division, a cross section of traditional rulers and a mammoth crowd of jubilant beneficiaries of the foundation's actions, all answered present on this historic day, organized at Survey School Buea¹⁰⁷. Addressing her people, Emilia Monjowa said, her intention was to promote peace, empowerment of youths and women for sustainable development towards nation building. She equally said that MLF aimed at encouraging sustainable development and enhance the quality of health services being provided to her people. During the launching, the charismatic and clairvoyant MP from the Fako West Constituency, distributed gifts which was a pacesetter to what her foundation will be doing for the poor and needy in her community¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Fonge Julius Fongouck, 59, Parliamentarian, Yaounde, December 29, 2023.

¹⁰⁵ Lyonga Abel Evangs, 60, Health worker, Bokova, April 8, 2025.

¹⁰⁶ Idem.

¹⁰⁷ National Assembly Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Yaounde, May 2021.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Asaah Cho Macellus. 45, Health Administrative Assistant, Bonjongo Health Center, April 9, 2025.

The medical items among the several gifts were handed to the Bojongo, Bokova, Ewongo and Bova Integrated Health Centers.

Plate 10 Government Integrated Health Center, Bokova



Source: Author's collection, Bokova village, 9th April 2025

Plate 10b: MLF's Donations to the Bokova Integrated Health Center



Source: Author's collection, Bokova Village, 9th April 2025

Plate ten is a picture of the Bokova integrated Health Centre while plate eleven is samples of health materials (Trash cans for medical waste and refrigerators for the storage of medical samples and equipment). The finger points at the logo of the MLF logo on all items donated. At the end of the ceremony, the district health officer of Buea and the director of the Buea Regional Hospital all heaped praises to the Hon. MP for boasting the health unit under their jurisdiction of competence. The total amount of items distributed was estimated at 10 million

francs CFA¹⁰⁹. Speaking to the press, the MP said “Health is wealth’ so, she promised doing everything within her powers to safeguard the health of her people. Emilia Monjowa is dead but her vision lives through the MLF that continues to donate. She did not relent her efforts in supporting community health workers who were working to promote health awareness and practices in her area of competence. She equally donated material for the construction of the Ewongo Health center¹¹⁰. The above social actions of the Hon. MP, were accompanied by her actions on sporting youth empowerment.

c) Sports and Youth Empowerment

Hon. Emilia Lifaka Monjowa was a peace crusader in Cameroon, she carried out actions that defended the interest of peace and sustainable development. These laudable actions were visible in the domain of sports and youth empowerment. During the time spent in the National Assembly, she took the concept of youth empowerment as one of her cardinal preoccupations. To effectively empower the youths of her constituency and Cameroon, she facilitated the employment of 15 youths at the National Assembly and in the month of February, 2021, she handed the sum of five million francs to the youths of her constituency to enable them register for the Government Common Entrance Examination. .¹¹¹This brought forth many community developers and peace in the community.

To keep the youths active and free from indecent activities during long holidays, she initiated sporting activities. Sports, especially football is a rallying factor not only in Cameroon but in the world at large. She therefore used these sportive activities all through her life as a female MP, to keep her youths active, busy and entertained¹¹². The health benefits of sports to those who practice it regularly cannot be neglected. She therefor promoted sporting activities by organizing the Lifaka’s Unity Cup that took place at Bojongo Court Area from 2008-2015¹¹³. This was a tournament that often brought together about 500 youths and thousands of supporters from all over the national territory, who took the competitions as a great opportunity to meet new friends and relax. Some marriages were often contracted during this period. This enhanced social peace and cohesion within the Cameroonian society.

Apart from the Bojongo community, the Maumu community was also a steady beneficiary of the sporting benevolence of the female MP during her tenure in office. Both football and

¹⁰⁹ Kenneth Vekima Edube Mbaho, 33, Finance Worker, Yaounde, December 15, 2024.

¹¹⁰ Idem.

¹¹¹ “CPA Chairperson” Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, April 23, 2021. Retrieved on 13 January 2025.

¹¹² National Assembly Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Yaounde, May 2021, p.32.

¹¹³ Ibid.

handball tournaments were organized to keep the youths away from negative activities. These competitions usually brought together about 800 youths and countless number of supporters and lovers of the games¹¹⁴. These indicators prove that Emilia Monjowa was able to keep her youths busy, entertained and most especially, responsible for her entire time spent in Parliament. In addition to all efforts furnished, she had a penchant for the girl- child.

d) Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka and the Girl Child

Hon. Emilia Lifaka Monjowa was a tireless advocate for women's empowerment and the rights of the girl child. Her work had a profound impact on the lives of women and the girl child in Fako West Constituency and beyond. Emilia Monjowa championed girl child- education, recognizing its transformative power in breaking cycles of poverty and inequality as their impact in community building cannot be underestimated¹¹⁵. She encouraged women's participation in politics, leadership, and economic activities, fostering confidence, self-esteem, and skills development. She sponsored over 200 young girls to train at the women's empowerment center in Buea especially in the Intensive Vocational Training Center (IVTC) Buea, where she was once a director, with many of them now employed in government offices nationwide¹¹⁶.

Hon. Lifaka advocated for improved healthcare services for women and girls, especially in reproductive health education and access to sanitation facilities. Protection from violence: The female MP worked to protect women and girls from violence, including child marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), and other forms of abuse¹¹⁷. She emphasized on the need to address the scourge of violence against women. Equally, the need to pass laws that protect women from abuse, exploitation, and violence. We must provide support services for survivors, and we must hold perpetrators accountable¹¹⁸. She also supported initiatives promoting women's economic empowerment, such as microfinance programs, vocational training, and entrepreneurship development with valuable assistance from the IVTC center.¹¹⁹

Emilia Monjowa's dedication to women's empowerment and the rights of the girl child left a lasting impact. Her legacy continues to inspire efforts to promote gender equality,

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p. 31.

¹¹⁵ Asaah Cho Macellus. 45, Health Administrative Assistant, Bonjongo Health Center, April 9, 2025.

¹¹⁶ N. E Ngwa, *Women in Leadership: A Study of Female Directors in Cameroon,s Public Institutions*, 2017, p. 27.

¹¹⁷ B.V Ondoua, *Femmes de L'Emmergence du Cameroon, Faits Troublants*. Yaoundé, Les Presses Universitaires. 2022. p. 9.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 11.

education, and economic empowerment for women and girls in Cameroon and beyond. How she managed to carry out the above lies in the fact that, she was a member of the House Committee on Finance and Projects. Her membership in this committee enabled her to influence budget allocations and project approvals, prioritizing infrastructural development in the Fako West Constituency. Equally, she used her platform to advocate and lobby for increased investment in infrastructure, engaging with government officials, international partners, and local stakeholders to build her community, gradually transforming Buea Rural in to a community of mini cities.

e) Emilia Monjowa Lifaka and community Development

Her contributions to the building and equipping of classrooms, school toilets and community halls in her area of jurisdiction, have gone a long way to empower these communities by ensuring a hitch-free teaching learning exercise in the schools.

Plate 11: Hon. Monjowa's Donations of Toilets to GHS Bojongo



Source: Author's collection from field work, Bajoke village, 9th April 2025.

The toilets above were donated by the Hon. MP to GHS Bojongo, situated at Bajoke area, a kilometer away from the Bojongo residence of Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka¹²⁰. For the community halls constructed in some villages of the community. These halls have so far helped to foster the sense community and belonging among residents, helping to build relationships and connections among community members. Secondly, the halls help in hosting workshops and seminars on various topics like health/wellness as well as skill development. They also help in the celebration of cultural activities through events, festivals and performances to

¹²⁰ Interview with Embele Grace, 57, principal, GHS Bojongo, Bajoke, April 9, 2025.

preserve cultural heritage and traditions. Economically, these halls can generate revenue for the community through rental fees and events, support entrepreneurs and local businesses.

Plate 12: Buana Community Hall Donated by Emilia Monjowa Lifaka in Partnership with the Buea Council, 2016



Source: Author's collection from field work, Buana village, 9th April 2025.

The community hall was jointly constructed by donations from the Hon MP and the Buea Council. It is situated at Maumu, one of the communities of the Bojongo Court Area. Halls solely constructed by the MP, include the Sanje Hall, serving the hilly communities of the area.

C. Political Activities

Her political debut was in the Ekona sub-section where she worked. She began like an ordinary member of the CPDM party, a grass root militant from 1995-2000. She later moved to the Fako 3 section in Buea and finally to the position of parliamentarian.

Plate 13: Emilia Monjowa Lifaka in one of her Political Outings, Buea, 2011



Source: National Assembly Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, p. 8

Alongside other factors, Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's rise to political leadership was largely influenced by her mentor, Ndando Ruth, fervent militant of CPDM party during the reorganization of the women's wing of the party, the (WCPDM)¹²¹. More younger and vibrant faces were needed in this process, so distractors contacted young councilor Emilia Lifaka Monjowa to compete with Mrs Ndando Ruth, her mentor. She did not hesitate to reveal the plot to Ndando with whom they devised a strategy to overcome the challenge. They both agreed that she should pretend to compete with her to please the distractors and back down when the moment comes. The plot was very successful as she eventually backed down and handed all her support to Ndando, who won the elections. She then blessed her with the following words:

¹²¹ National Assembly, *National Assembly Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka*, Yaounde, May, 2021, p. 8

“You will go far in politics”¹²². She continued to work in Ndando’s team within the scope of the WCPDM in Fako. During the preliminaries in 2002, Ndando Ruth then proposed her for Parliament, the list was validated and the electorate overwhelmingly voted for her to represent Fako West Constituency¹²³. The moral here, is, loyalty and respect of hierarchy in all we do. This virtue projected our personality to much greater spheres in politics. Finally, 2002 marked a turning point in her political career because of her election in to the National Assembly of Cameroon.¹²⁴ It is in this context that she made her debut as an ordinary member and representative of the Fako West Constituency after an overwhelming victory in the Parliamentary elections organized in 2002. Her political activities in her constituency can never be underestimated

From 2002-2007, the CPDM, maintained a powerful stronghold in Fako West despite the presence of opposition parties like the SDF. Between 2007 and 2011, she was the president of the CPDM campaign team for the presidential elections in Fako Division, giving her party the best results in the entire South West Region of Cameroon in the 2011 presidential elections¹²⁵. The CPDM continued to dominate the political landscape in Fako West and Fako division in general. From 2011-2021, a lot was done in her constituency and in Fako as a whole¹²⁶. In 2014, she mobilized the whole Fako Division and the entire South West Region in general, to receive the Head of state, President Paul Biya accompanied by his wife, Chantal Biya. See plate 14.¹²⁷

¹²² Vekima Kenneth, 33, Yaounde, Finance Worker, November 3, 2024.

¹²³ Idem.

¹²⁴ Interview with Fonge Julius Fongouck, 59, Parliamentarian, Yaounde, December 29, 2023.

¹²⁵ Interview with Tsingong Flobert, 55, Parliamentarian, Yaounde, July 29, 2023.

¹²⁶ Idem.

¹²⁷ Idem.

Plate 14: Community Reception of the Presidential Couple, Tiko Airport, for the 50years of Reunification 2014



Source: www.prc.cm. President Paul Biya in Buea. PRC.CM

This was in the occasion of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Reunification of Cameroon on Thursday, February, 20 2014¹²⁸. Both the head of state and the first lady, received a magnificent welcome as the population of the region covered the entire itinerary from the Tiko airport, through Likomba to Mutengene to Buea. Mobilization for this massive turnout was done by Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, permanent coordinator of CPDM activities in Fako Division¹²⁹.

She was equally the president of the reorganizing mission of the CPDM basic organs in 2015 to Kupe-Muanengumba, a task she effectively carried out by excellently reorganizing the basic organs to the satisfaction of her hierarchy¹³⁰. Then came the Anglophone crisis in 2016 with significant consequences on Fako West Constituency. The area experienced widespread insecurity due to demands for greater autonomy for the English-Speaking Regions. This degenerated to a humanitarian crisis with many displaced persons and human rights abuses report¹³¹.

¹²⁸ www.prc.cm. President Paul Biya in Buea. PRC.CM, retrieved in January, 15, 2025

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ National Assembly Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Yaounde, May, 2021, p. 9

¹³¹ Ibid.

A case in hand was articulated during one of her several interventions as permanent coordinator of CPDM activities in Fako. She condemned in strong terms the gruesome killing of defenseless citizens in Muyuka. She expressed shock and consternation on behalf of the militants of her area¹³². A shocking video that circulated on social media where a harmless woman was being tortured, molested and finally slaughtered on her neck using a machete. She added that such horrific, dehumanizing and barbaric act did not reflect the outstanding moral upright and peace loving nature known of Fako West Constituency¹³³.

Plate 15: Emilia Monjowa Lifaka during the Reorganization of CPDM Organs in Kupe Muanengumba, 2015



Source: National Assembly Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Yaounde, May 2021, p. 27

¹³² Ibid. p. 27.

¹³³ Interview with Cecilia, Dione Njumbe, 51, Parliamentarian, Kupe Muanengumba, June 1, 2022.

In a very saddened tone, she outlined the stand of the Fako people on this matter, calling on the government to bring to book the perpetrators and calling on bilateral partners to assist in sanctioning those misleading these young men from the comfort of their respective countries of host.¹³⁴

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has strived to deliver a well-rounded understanding of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka,s activities in the Fako West Constituency. It has highlighted the socio-economic and political activities carried out in the area during her tenure in office. Ranging from various donations to schools and hospitals, passing through youth empowerment and recreational activities to the promotion of women and the girl child. Her economic activities in Fako West Constituency during her tenure in office can never be underestimated. This understanding is important for the appreciation of the constituency today and for informing future reforms and advancements.

¹³⁴ National Assembly Tributes, Yaounde, May 2021.p.27.

CHAPTER III

EMILIA MONJOWA LIFAKA'S ACTIVITIES AT THE LEVEL OF THE PARLIAMENT. 2002-2021.

Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine the activities of Emilia Lifaka Monjowa **at** the level of the parliament and beyond. Here, we shall examine her actions that benefited the nation at various levels. Every vibrant Member of Parliament operates at various levels with his/her constituency at heart. This was the case of Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka who operated both within and out of Cameroon, rising to the prestigious position of chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) international, serving the Nation at all levels and stages.

I. At the level of the National Assembly

Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka was in the National Assembly for the following legislative periods; 7th Legislative Period (2002-2007), 8th Legislative Period (2007-2013), 9th Legislative Period (2013-2020) and 10th Legislative Period (2020-2021). The 10th was to end in 2025 but death took her away. She was Vice President or Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly from 2009-2021¹. As one of the Bureau members, her functions as Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon included the following:

¹Interview with Forju Bernard, 75 years, Parliamentarian, March 10, 2023.

Plate 16: Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka and Bureau Members of the National Assembly (2009-2019)



Source: National Assembly Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Yaounde, May, 2021, p. 10

A. Assisting the President

She supported the President of the National Assembly in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. By implication, every duty assigned to the speaker of the National Assembly was also the duty of the Deputy Speaker. She often presided over sessions, chaired plenary sessions in the absence of the President, ensuring the smooth functioning of parliamentary business². A case in hand happened in March 2021 when she represented the speaker of the National Assembly (Cavaye Yegue Gibril) in presiding over the opening and closing ceremonies on the occasion of the Picture Exhibition Ceremony of Female Leadership at the National Assembly. The photos below capture the scene.

² O.M, Amadou, *The National Assembly of Cameroon: A Critical Analysis*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017, p. 41.

Plate 17: The Opening Ceremony of the Picture Exhibition of Female Leadership at the National Assembly, 2020



Source: National Assembly Tributes to Emilia Nonjowa Lifaka, Yaounde, May 2021.p. 26

From the pictures above, the honourable MP, third from left with members of her delegation at the opening ceremony of the Picture Exhibition of Female Leadership at the National Assembly, this was after cutting the ribbon. Directly to her left is the President of Female Parliamentarians, Hon. Laurentine Nkoa Mfegue. The second photo on plate seventeen, constitutes members of her delegation as she represented the Speaker of the National Assembly. The most important thing on the second image, is the information at the background, portraying the ladder-growth of female leadership at the National Assembly, from 7 at 1st Legislature to 61 at the 10th Legislator. Her zeal to promote female representation and participation in parliament was clearly exhibited as she called on all female parliamentarians to take the bull by the horn and make sure gender parity is achieved.

B. Legislative Oversight

Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka played a significant role in the initiation of legislation and lawmaking in Cameroon. She introduced several private member's bills, including those related to women's rights, education, and healthcare. She presented motions and resolutions on various issues, such as human rights, democracy, and good governance³. Lawmaking Process.

³ Ibid.

Committee Work: Hon. Lifaka actively participated in committee work, scrutinizing bills, and providing input to ensure that legislation aligned with the needs of her constituents in particular and Cameroon in particular⁴. She engaged in debates and discussions on the floor of the National Assembly, advocating for her constituents' interests and promoting democratic principles⁵.

Emilia Monjowa Lifaka worked closely with stakeholders, including civil society organizations, community groups, and government agencies, to ensure that legislation was informed by diverse perspectives⁶. She also contributed to the development of the Cameroon National Code which promotes gender equality. She took part and advocated for the passage of this law on the protection of women's rights which provided greater protection for women and addressed issues such as domestic violence and discrimination.⁷

As concerns education, Emilia Monjowa improved access to quality education, particularly for disadvantaged groups, through her contributions to the Education Act. Her contributions influenced the decisions of the committee in favour of these groups. Apart from education, she also played a great role in the initiation and voting of the Common Law. It is part of a wider British Academy funded project entitled "(Re) Constructing Judicial Institutions for Conflict Transformation: The Common Law Division of Cameroon in Perspective" This project investigates the role of the newly established Common Law Division (CLD) in the nation's supreme court in engineering positive social change. The CLD was created in response to a socio-political conflict that break out in 2016 and subsequently degenerated into an armed conflict in the South West and North West Regions of the Republic of Cameroon.

Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka was part of the team that worked on the CLD and came out with the following recommendations: Amendment of law No. 2006/016 to take in to consideration particularities of the common law practice and procedure. Constitutional amendments to raise CLD in to a bench. Amendment of more common law trained judges to the CLD. Training of lawyers on the technicalities of appealing to the Supreme Court. Awareness campaign to showcase the activities of the CLD, raising the CLD to a special Division as is the case with the special Division on misappropriation of public funds. Inclusive

⁴ Ibid.p. 65.

⁵ J.M Njinju, *Law and Development in Cameroon*, Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group, Bamenda, 2019, p. 25.

⁶ P.N. Nkwi, "The History of Parliamentarism in Cameroon: From Colonialism to Bi-Communalism.in the Birth of an African Parliament: Making Democracy Work in Cameroon" in *African Books Collective*, 2006, pp. 1-20.

⁷ Ibid.

approaches to the development of policy initiatives.⁸Lifaka's contributions to the initiation of legislation and lawmaking in Cameroon have had a lasting impact on the country's democratic development and the promotion of human rights.

She was part of several committees at the National Assembly: Committee on Constitutional Law, Committee on Finance and Budget, Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms, Committee on Economic Affairs, Planning and Regional Development, Committee on Education/Youth /Vocational Training, Committee on Cultural, Social and Family Affaires as well as the Committee on Good Governance.

C. Budgeting and Committee Work

Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka was a member of the Committee on Finance and Budget in the National Assembly of Cameroon. This Committee was responsible for reviewing and approving the country's budget as well as overseeing financial matters. As far as Committee Work was concerned, one cannot deny the fact that her contributions were very instrumental in shaping the country's laws and policies. For instance, the Committee on Finance and the Budget which reviewed and approved the country's budget and oversees financial matters. Committee on Education and Socials where she also served and laid emphasis on education, healthcare, and social welfare policies. She was also a member of the Committee on Constitutional Law, which reviewed and amended the country's constitution and laws⁹.Her otherb Contributions in committee work include, Budget Analysis where she played a crucial role in analyzing the national budget, ensuring that it aligned with the country's development goals and priorities. She also contributed to the drafting of legislation on many topics, including education, healthcare, and women's rights. Again, Emilia Monjow's committee work helped promoted transparency and accountability in government, ensuring that public funds were used efficiently and effectively¹⁰.

Emilia Monjowa's committee work reinforced the importance of democratic institutions and the rule of law in Cameroon. She played a significant role in holding the government of Cameroon accountable during her tenure as a Member of Parliament and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly. As a member of the Committee on Finance and the Budget, she scrutinized the national budget, ensuring that it aligned with the country's development goals

⁸ E. King et al, "Fastrack Institution Building in Conflict Affected Countries? Insights from Recent Field Experiences." 64 World Development, 2014, pp. 740-741.

⁹ Interview with Ashu Eware, 50, State Prosecutor of the High Court of Manyu Division and the court of First Instance Mamfe, Examining Magistrate and Judge, Yaounde, November 3, 2024.

¹⁰ Idem.

and priorities¹¹. She worked to ensure that government ministries and agencies were accountable for their actions and that they implemented policies effectively¹². This was effectuated through the question/answer session carried out during Parliamentary sessions. Emilia Monjowa was also a strong advocate for human rights, democracy, and good governance.

D. Promotion of Female Representation in Parliament.

She was a fervent promoter of female representation in Parliament as she advocated for more women in the National Assembly. In her speech on the occasion of the General Assembly Meeting of Female Parliamentarians of Cameroon held in Yaounde in 2020, she revealed to the 61 female MPs and all stakeholders present that female representation in the National Assembly has increased from 11.8% in 1998 to 17.8% in 2008 and to 23.5% in 2018¹³. The table illustrates this progress.

Table 2: The Evolution of Female Representation in the National Assembly from 7th-10th Legislatures

Year /legislature	No. of MPs	No. of female MPs	No. of increase for female MPs	No. of decrease	Percentage	Increase of female MPs in bureau.
7 th 2002-2007	180	19	09	-	10.55	05/23
8 th 2007-2013	180	25	06	-	13.88	07/23
9 th 2013-2019	180	56	31	-	31.11	07/23
10 th 2020-2025	180	61	05	-	33.88	08/23

¹¹ Interview with Tchende Malgung, 57, Parliamentarian, Mayo Tsanaga, Yaounde, December, 12, 2023

¹² Idem.

¹³ National Assembly, *The Road to Women's Leadership in Parliament*, Yaounde 2021, p 24

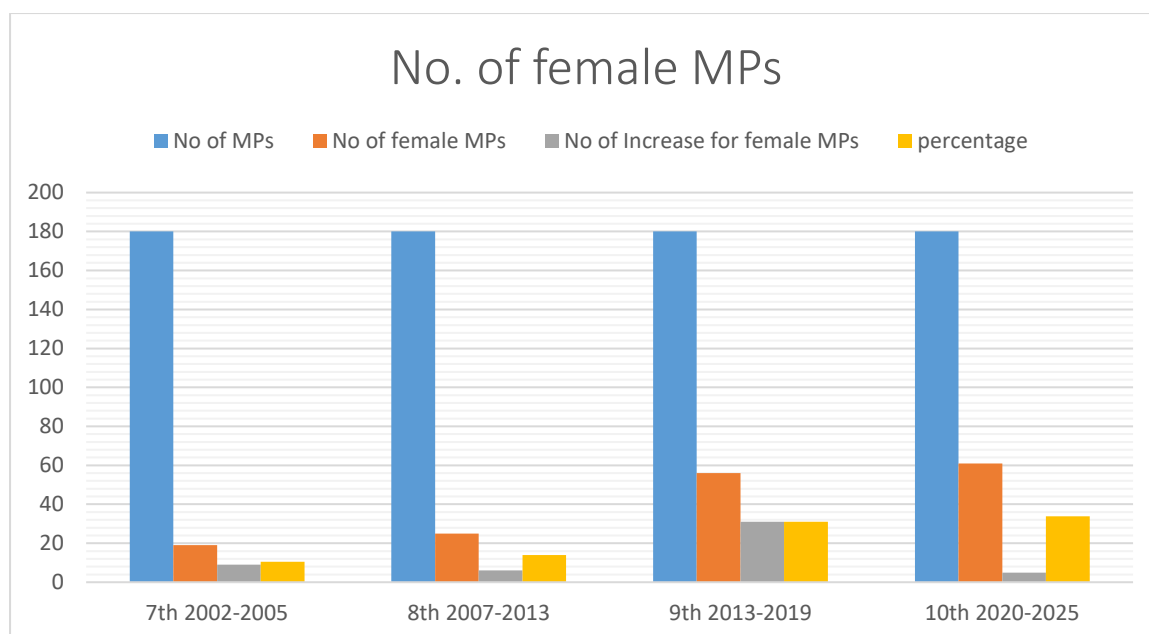


Chart 2: The Evolution of Female Representation in the National Assembly from 7th-10th Legislatures

Source: Conceived by the Author.

From the above table, the 7th legislature-2002-2007 recorded an increase of 09 female MPs, raising the number to 19 and percentage to 10.55 while female bureau members rose from 03-05/23 in representation¹⁴. The 1996 political amendments also affected the legislature considerably. Uncomfortable with the declining CPDM majority in parliament, another house, the Senate was created and to ensure relative control over the senate, 30 of the 100 members were appointed by the president of the Republic¹⁵. The president of the Senate, henceforth became the transitional president of the Republic. Regions were also created to give room to some measure of decentralization.¹⁶

The 8th legislature – 2007-2013 was termed ‘Moving Forward’ because the number of female MPs rose from 20-25, witnessing an increase of 06 female MPs, a percentage rise of 13.55 and 02 more bureau members, raising the representation in the bureau from 03-05/23¹⁷. By 2013, the country had started witnessing some degree of political stability, accounting for the rise in female representation.¹⁸The 9th legislature was termed ‘The Great Leap Forward’ because of the remarkable rise of female representation from 25-56 members, witnessing a net

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid.p.34.

¹⁶ National Assembly, *The Road to Women's Leadership in Parliament*, Yaounde, 2021, p 2.

¹⁷ Interview with Ngalle Daniel, 54, Parliamentarian, Yaounde, December 7, 2023.

¹⁸ Idem.

increase of 31 female MPs, a percentage rise of 31.11¹⁹. Following the 30 percent quota system, more women got themselves enrolled in political parties which in turn tried respecting the 30 percent quota system, hence the great rise in female representation during this legislature. The rise from 13.88 to 31.11 is actually a “Great Leap Forward” and can never be underestimated²⁰.

The 10th legislature has been labelled “Beautiful Perspectives” due to another remarkable increase in the number of female MPs from 56-61, witnessing a net increase of 10 members, a percentage of 3.88 and a drop in female representation in the bureau from 07 to 06/23²¹. The drop in bureau representation at the 10th legislature is justified by the death of Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, female MP for Fako West constituency in the South West Region, member of the Constitutional Laws Committee, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – CPA International, on the 20th day of the month of April in the year 2021²². From the remarkable progressive evolution witnessed above in female representation, the female MPs tried at all levels and at all stages to make their impact felt in the domains of peace and sustainable development with Emilia Monjowa and Laurentine Nkoa Mfegue, leading the Network of Female Parliamentarians.

She also appealed to all stakeholders that they should not relent their efforts at this moment because Cameroon is still to attain the target of 50% representation. She also explained that women face a series of challenges that prevent them from rising such as: Limited resources, prejudice, discrimination, harassment and even violence from their male counterparts. She however catalogued some merits of gender equality which she indicated that it is essential to build and sustain a strong and vibrant democracy. She articulated that more women in parliament will increase policies that will emphasize on the quality of life of families in general and women and vulnerable groups in particular. To conclude, she reminded her fellow female MPs that the door has been opened to them but they should not close it to other women or young girls who are coming behind²³.

¹⁹ Interview with Tabot Lawson, 55, Parliamentarian, Yaounde, December 7, 2023.

²⁰ *Idem*.

²¹ National Assembly Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Yaounde, May 2021.p.25

²² *Ibid*.

²³ Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Yaounde, May, 2021.p.15

Plate 18: Emilia with President of The Network of Female Parliamentarians (Hon Laurantine Nkoa Nfegue) and others, 2018



Source: National Assembly Tributes to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Yaounde, May, 2021

The above illustration presents the MP in a keynote address on the occasion of the General Assembly meeting of Female Parliamentarians of Cameroon, Yaounde, 2018. By her right is the oldest female Member of Parliament, Laurentine, Nkoa Mfegue, president of the Network of Female Parliamentarians. To the left, is the assembly of Female Parliamentarians.

II. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka at the International Scene

Out of Cameroon, Monjowa Lifaka equally had a brilliant career, ranging from Coordinator of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, CPA 2009, and Alternate Vice President of the CPA 2012-2013, Regional Representative for Africa 2015-2017, Vice Chairperson of CPA International 2016-2017 and on the 7th of November 2017²⁴. She was overwhelmingly elected as the First African chairperson of the CPA in Dhaka, Bangladesh during the 63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference²⁵. Therefore, her laudable actions were not only visible in Cameroon but also very outstanding in the international scene as can be seen in Africa, Asia, Europe, America, Canada and the Caribbean.

As the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Lifaka emphasized the importance of parliamentarians in holding commonwealth governments

²⁴ H.Genès, *La Para – Diplomatie Parlementaire*. Paris: LGDJ, 2020, retrieved, August, 17, 2024.

²⁵ Ibid.

accountable for human rights violations. She believed that parliamentarians had a unique position as both legislators and representatives of the people, giving them the power to shape policies, pass laws, and hold governments accountable. Lifaka's legacy continued to inspire parliamentarians across the Commonwealth to promote democracy, human rights, and good governance. The CPA's Emilia Monjowa Lifaka Lecture, established in her memory, highlights the critical role of parliamentarians in upholding human rights and promoting democratic governance.

A. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka and Parliamentary Diplomacy.

As chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, she made sure she promoted cooperation and dialogue among parliamentarians from different countries. Her legacy in Africa proves her tireless efforts to promote Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance.

a) In Africa

She was CPA Africa Regional Representative from 2015-2017. As a Cameroonian politician, and also chairperson of the CPA, she played a crucial part in shaping the continent of Africa especially in matters of legislation.

In West Africa for instance, she worked closely with Nigerian parliamentarians to promote democratic governance and human rights²⁶. Emilia Monjowa collaborated with Ghanaian lawmakers to strengthen parliamentary institutions and advance women's empowerment. Sierra Leone²⁷. In 2024, the CPA through Ghana, honored her memory through the “Emilia Monjowa Lifaka Talk” aimed at promoting her legacy in Parliamentary Diplomacy and beyond. She also provided guidance and support to Sierra Leonean parliamentarians during the country's post-conflict reconstruction²⁸.

In East Africa, Monjowa Lifaka engaged with Kenyan lawmakers to promote constitutional reforms and strengthen democratic institutions. She worked with Tanzanian parliamentarians to advance women's rights and promoted good governance. This greatly strengthened ties with the CPA and the Tanzanian Parliament²⁹. Emilia Monjowa collaborated

²⁶ Amnesty International, *The State of the World's Human Rights*, London, Amnesty International, and January 2023.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ K. Bofo, *CPA and the Evolution of Parliamentary Practice in Africa*, Adonis and Abbey Publishers Ltd, London, 2012, p. 23.

²⁹ Ibid.

with Ugandan lawmakers to strengthen parliamentary oversight and promote human rights³⁰. She engaged with South African parliamentarians to promote democratic governance and human rights. Zambia: Monjowa Lifaka worked with Zambian lawmakers to strengthen parliamentary institutions and advance women's empowerment.³¹ She provided guidance and support to Malawian parliamentarians on promoting good governance and human rights.³²

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Emilia Monjowa collaborated with Congolese lawmakers to promote democratic governance and human rights. She worked with Congolese parliamentarians to strengthen parliamentary institutions and advance women's empowerment³³. Monjowa's impact extended beyond these countries, as her work with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and other regional organizations shaped parliamentary practices and promoted democratic governance across Africa as pronounced in one of her speeches put in these words:

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed guests, and fellow Africans Today, we gather to celebrate the progress we've made towards empowering women in Africa. But we also gather to acknowledge the work that still lies ahead. As women, we are the backbone of our communities. We are the caregivers, the entrepreneurs, and the leaders. But for too long, our voices have been silenced, our rights denied, and our potential untapped. But I stand before you today to say that those days are behind us. We are no longer willing to be marginalized, excluded, or oppressed. We demand our rightful place at the table, and we demand it now.³⁴

This message to African Women was a clarion call for the demand of their rights, a place on the table for decision making. To her, when women are empowered, they invest in their families, their communities, and their countries. They drive economic growth, reduce poverty, and promote stability. First, we must ensure that women have access to education and training. She talked about the need to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to compete in the global economy. To her, celebrating the achievements of the African Woman in our communities, our countries, and our continent should be an African issue, calling it a matter of justice, equality, and human rights. She stressed on the need to work together to create a brighter future for African women, and for Africa as a whole. On the other hand, other authors believe that women can still emancipate if their traditional roles of caring and nurturing, are

³⁰ CPA Chairperson, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Achieved from original, on 23rd April 2021, retrieved, 13th January, 2022

³¹ UN WOMEN, International Women's Day 2015 Reports, p. 16.

³² Ibid. 21.

³³ K. Bofo, *CPA and the Evolution of Parliamentary Practice in Africa*, London, Adonis and Abbey Publishers Ltd, 2012.

³⁴ UN Women, International Women's Day 2015 Reports, p. 24.

valued. Emphasizing that, this can be achieved without necessarily measuring up to male standards (equality).³⁵

b) In Asia

In Asia, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's activities were mainly centered on her role as the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). She was elected as the Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee in Dhaka, Bangladesh, at the 63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in 2017. As CPA Chairperson, Lifaka undertook various activities to promote parliamentary development and good governance in Asia. She worked closely with parliamentarians from Asian countries, including Bangladesh, India, and Malaysia, to share best practices and strengthen parliamentary institutions³⁶. She took part in one notable event was the 10th Commonwealth Youth Parliament held in Delhi- India, in 2019, Hon. Lifaka delivered a speech emphasizing the importance of youth engagement in parliamentary processes in order to ensure continuity.³⁷

During the sixth CPA India Regional Conference, Patna Bihar, 16th-19th February 2018, she delivered another powerful speech in the presence of Madam the Right Honorable Sumitra Mahajan, speaker of Lok Sabha and her entourage. In her speech, she appreciated India for the multifaceted support that led to her election to the summit of the CPA. On behalf of the Cameroon Nation, she thanked India and other Regions for bestowing their confidence on Cameroon through her humble self. She expressed her wish for the excellent cooperation ties existing between members of the commonwealth family to be maintained, nurtured and strengthened so as to further enhance the core values and goals of the CPA. The theme of this particular come together was, "Parliament role in the development agenda and Legislature and Judiciary"

To her, the question of development is rhetorical because, it is often spoken about as if it means different things to different people. While this might be true, she believed that development means: Improvement of an existing situation. She reiterated that each of their countries has a development plan which acts as a road map that defines their development trajectories that they aspire to. To her, development to succeed must be people centered and their presence should not only be participatory but also guarantee inclusiveness. She reminded

³⁵ C. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Harvard University Press, USA, 1982, p.79.

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development accessed on January 13, 2025.

all participants that parliamentarians are the mouth piece of their citizens who voted them to power and entrusted them with the responsibility of making their lives better³⁸. Therefore, the need to hold various governments accountable for actions they take and to make laws that facilitate the development of these people that gave them power and mandate to lead.

At the Conference at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2018), she had this to say: "Promoting Democracy and Human Rights in Asia" is our priority. As a parliamentarian, she believed they have a critical role to play in upholding the principles of democracy and human rights. She called on all participants to ensure that their governments were accountable to the people, and that the rights of all citizens were protected³⁹. She described Asia as a vast and diverse continent, with many different cultures, languages, and systems of government. But despite these differences, they remained united in their commitment to democracy and human rights. However, common challenges like corruption, inequality, and human rights abuses were just a few of the issues that have to be addressed. She pondered at what can be done to promote democracy and human rights in Asia, coming out with the following proposals:

First, she suggested that Parliamentary Institutions be strengthened by ensuring their independence, effectiveness and accountability to the people. Secondly, she called for the promotion of transparency and accountability in government. That all participants must ensure that their governments were transparent in decision-making. Thirdly, she suggested that participants must protect the rights of all citizens, especially the rights of women, children, and minority groups. They were also to ensure that these groups have equal access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Finally, she called on all present to work together to promote democracy and human rights across Asia by sharing experiences, knowledge, and best practices⁴⁰. To this effect, the need to support each other in their efforts to promote democracy and human rights was primordial. Therefore, promoting democracy and human rights in Asia became a collective responsibility. She ended by calling on all to work together to ensure that various governments were accountable to the people, and that the rights of all citizens were protected⁴¹.

³⁸ Amnesty International, *The State of the World's Human Rights*, London, Amnesty International, and January, 2023.

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ UN WOMEN, International Women's Day 2015 Reports.

⁴¹ Ibid

c) In Europe

Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's actions in Europe were primarily focused on promoting parliamentary cooperation, human rights, and good governance. As the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), she engaged with European parliamentarians to share best practices and strengthen parliamentary institution Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)⁴². Lifaka participated in IPU conferences and meetings in European cities like Geneva, Switzerland, and Brussels, Belgium⁴³. She advocated for human rights, democracy, and good governance. European Parliament: She addressed the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium, emphasizing the importance of parliamentary cooperation and human rights. Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). She worked closely with CPA Europe Region members, including the UK Parliament, to promote parliamentary development and good governance⁴⁴.

⁴² D. Kagou, *Parliamentary Oversight in Cameroon: The Case of the National Assembly*. African Books Collective, 2017.p. 90.

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid.p.91.

**Plate 19: The New Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Bureau,
Presented to Prince Charles, 2017**



Hon. Emilia MONJOWA LIFAKA being presented to Prince Charles as the CPA Executive Chairperson.



Source: National Assembly Tributes., Yaounde, May 2021.

Plate nineteen demonstrates the legalization of the position of CPA Executive Chairperson as Emilia Monjowa was being presented to the British monarch, Prince Charles, together with the personnel of the new executive committee. While in Europe, she participated in human rights conferences in European cities like London, UK, and Paris, France, advocating for human rights and democracy⁴⁵. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's engagements in Europe helped to: Strengthen Parliamentary Cooperation: Her efforts promoted cooperation between African and European parliamentarians, enhancing mutual understanding and respect. Advance Human Rights: Lifaka's advocacy for human rights helped raise awareness and promote action among European parliamentarians. Inspire Future Leaders: Her legacy continues to inspire young parliamentarians and leaders across the Commonwealth, including Europe. In a speech delivered at the European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium (2019), she came out with the following topic: strengthening parliamentary democracy in Europe and Africa. A topic that she considers close to her heart⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ National Assembly Tributes., Yaounde, May 2021.p.12.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

To her, Europe and Africa were two continents that were deeply interconnected, sharing a common history, a common culture, and a common commitment to democracy and human rights. She never hesitated to point out the many challenges plaguing both continents, ranging from corruption, inequality, and human rights abuses⁴⁷. On how to strengthen parliamentary democracy in Europe and Africa, she had this to propose. First, she called on all to promote transparency and accountability in government by ensuring that governments were transparent in their decision-making, and that they were accountable to the people. Secondly, she urged governments to strengthen parliamentary institutions, calling on all MPs to ensure that parliaments were independent, effective, and accountable to the people.

Thirdly, she called on parliamentarians to promote cooperation and collaboration between European and African parliamentarians saying “We must share our experiences, our knowledge, and our best practices, and we must support each other in our efforts to promote democracy and human rights”. Finally, she urged participants to recognize the importance of women's empowerment in promoting democracy and human rights. The need for women to have equal access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities and representation in government, was a clarion call⁴⁸. In conclusion, strengthening parliamentary democracy in Europe and Africa was a collective responsibility of parliamentarians, working together to ensure that, governments were accountable to the people, and that the rights of all citizens were protected⁴⁹.

d) In America/Canada/The Caribbean.

Hon. Emilia Lifaka's legacy in America was rooted in her contributions to promoting democracy, human rights, and good governance. Although she was a Cameroonian politician, her impact extended to the United States through various initiatives. This include, the International Republican Institute (IRI)⁵⁰. She collaborated with the IRI, a US-based organization promoting democracy worldwide. She participated in IRI-sponsored conferences and workshops, sharing her expertise on parliamentary development and good governance⁵¹. She equally worked with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), another US-based organization promoting democracy, to strengthen parliamentary institutions and promote

⁴⁷ UN Women West and Central Africa 2021 Annual Report, New York, UN Women, 2021, p. 51.

⁴⁸ Interview with, Rose Agbor Abunaw M, 66, former Deputy Speaker at the National Assembly, Yaounde, October 28, 2023.

⁴⁹ Idem.

⁵⁰ Interview with Kumasi, 54, Parliamentarian, Yaounde, October 7, 2023.

⁵¹ D. Kagou, *Parliamentary Oversight in Cameroon: The Case of the National Assembly*, London, African Books Collective, 2017, p. 133.

women's empowerment in Africa.⁵² She participated in US Congressional Meetings and together Congressional members and staff, they discussed issues related to democracy, human rights, and governance in Africa⁵³.

Plate 20: Addressing CPA Parliamentarians in Quebec, 2018



Source: National Assembly Tributes., Yaounde, May 2021.

In plate twenty above, Emilia Monjowa gave a key note address to CPA parliamentarians that converged in Quebec, Canada, to discuss issues concerning Democracy and Governance. There, she suggested the following theme. Parliamentary Development, Human Rights, and Women's Empowerment. Some important aspects of her impact in the Canadian Parliament include the fact that she addressed shared her experiences and insights on parliamentary development, democracy, and human rights⁵⁴. She worked closely with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Canada Region, promoting parliamentary cooperation and development among Commonwealth countries. She equally worked in close collaboration with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), (now part of Global Affairs Canada) on initiatives promoting democracy, human rights, and women's empowerment⁵⁵.

The legacy left behind in Canada includes the fact that it Strengthened Parliamentary ties promoting cooperation between Canadian and African parliamentarians, enhancing mutual

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.p.151

⁵⁴ P.Nkwi, "The History of Parliamentarism in Cameroon: From Colonialism to Bi-Communalism." in *The Birth of an African Parliament: Making Democracy Work in Cameroon*, edited by Maurice Ake and Paul N. Nkwi, 1-20. African Books Collective, 2006.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

understanding and respect that had been existing⁵⁶. In addition, it advanced Human Rights. Monjowa's advocacy for human rights helped raise awareness and promoted actions among Canadian policymakers and civil society⁵⁷. Above all, her commitment to women's empowerment inspired Canadian women leaders and organizations to support similar initiatives⁵⁸ in Africa. In the presence of the Premier of Quebec and his entourage, she made a speech, feeling honored to have been invited at the 44th session of the APF General Assembly in Quebec, in the capacity of the CPA chairperson. Special thanks went to Hon. Jaques Chagnon, president of the APF who extended the invitation to the CPA

Appreciating the wish of the APF to work in collaboration with the other inter-parliamentary bodies to ensure maximum contributions of APF parliaments to the advancement of the world. She was particularly elated to know that the CPA and the APF share similar goals, perceiving both bodies as excellent avenues for experience and information sharing and a platform for the learning of best practices⁵⁹. She reiterated that, the common denominator they had, was the fact that, they were all parliamentarians and by extension, the people's representatives, the hope of the hopeless, the voice of the voiceless, the voice of the strong and of the weak, possessing the sovereign mandate of the people⁶⁰. She ended her speech in Canada by calling on all MPs present to note that their electorates look up to them as bearers of their hopes and aspirations. This, given the fact that, we are in ever evolving world with increased aspirations for a better life and better living conditions⁶¹. These challenges to her appeared clearly in line with their traditional roles of legislating, voting Bills and exercising oversight over their various governments.⁶².

Hon. Emilia Monjowa's legacy in the Caribbean was marked by her contributions to promoting parliamentary development, democracy, and human rights in the region. Her key engagements at the Caribbean included close collaboration with the Caribbean CPA, promoting parliamentary cooperation and development among Commonwealth countries in the region, collaborated with Eastern Caribbean States through the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) to promote democracy, human rights, and women's empowerment in the Eastern Caribbean. Above all, she facilitated the creation of the Caribbean Women's Parliamentary

⁵⁶L. Sindjoun *L'action Internationale de l'Assemblée Nationale du Cameroun, Element d'Analyse Politique*, Québec, Institut québécois des hautes études internationales, 1993, p. 28.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Rose Agbor Abunaw M, 66, former Deputy Speaker at the National Assembly, Yaounde, October 28, 2023.

⁵⁹ Idem.

⁶⁰ BTI 2022 Cameroon Country Report: BTI 2022. <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/CMR>.

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Ibid.p.15

Network aimed at promoting women's participation in politics and decision-making in the Caribbean⁶³. Here's a sample speech by Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka with theme: "Empowering Women, Empowering the Caribbean", delivered at the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Government Meeting, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago (2015).

Honorable Heads of Government, distinguished guests, and fellow Caribbean citizens, I am honored to be speaking with you today about a topic that is close to my heart: empowering women and empowering the Caribbean. As a parliamentarian from Cameroon, I have seen firsthand the impact that women can have on their communities and countries when they are empowered to participate in the economic, social, and political spheres...But I have also seen the challenges that women face in the Caribbean. From limited access to education and economic opportunities to violence and discrimination, women in the Caribbean continue to face significant barriers to their empowerment... We must also work to address the social and cultural norms that perpetuate violence and discrimination against women. We must promote a culture of respect, tolerance, and equality.

This speech as in other regions, gave priority to Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance and Women Empowerment. These were important factors around which all her speeches in different regions were articulated. She called on the prioritization of women's empowerment in all regional development agendas and the need to work and create a Caribbean where women have equal access to education, economic opportunities, and healthcare. She used the example of Cameroon to tell the world that initiatives were being made to promote women's empowerment, including programs to support women's entrepreneurship and leadership development. She hailed the Caribbean government for creating the Commission on the Status of Women (CARICOM), to the implementation of initiatives to support women's economic empowerment. The Caribbean has made significant strides in promoting women's rights. To crown it all, she called on all to work together to empower women and empower the Caribbean, calling on participants to create a region where women could reach their full potential and contribute to the social, economic, and political development⁶⁴.

The impact of her activities in the Caribbean was evident following the fact that, it Strengthened Parliamentary Institutions by promoting cooperation and knowledge-sharing among Caribbean parliamentarians. It also enhanced their capacity to promote democracy and human rights⁶⁵. Secondly, it advanced Women's Empowerment through advocacy for women's rights and empowerment, inspiring Caribbean women leaders and organizations to push for greater representation and participation in politics⁶⁶. Again, her work helped to foster cooperation among Caribbean countries, promoting a shared commitment to democracy,

⁶³ Ibid.p.93

⁶⁴ Interview with Abomo Fama Magueritte Celestine, 70, teacher/Parliamentarian, Yaounde, December 7, 2023.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Reporters without Borders, 2020 World Press Freedom Index, Paris, Reporters without Borders, 2021.

human rights, and regional development. In recognition of her contributions, Caribbean parliamentary organizations and governments paid tributes, acknowledging her tireless efforts to promote democracy, human rights, and women's empowerment in the region⁶⁷.

In addition, she participated in Harvard's Kennedy School programs, engaging with scholars and policymakers on topics related to democracy, governance, and human rights. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's engagements in America helped to promote Democracy and Good Governance⁶⁸. She advocated for women's empowerment, inspired women leaders in America and beyond, fostering international Cooperation⁶⁹. Her meetings with US Congressional members and staff helped foster international cooperation on issues related to democracy, human rights, and governance. Her legacy continued to inspire leaders and policymakers in America and around the world, promoting democracy, human rights, and good governance.

At the National Press Club, Washington D.C., USA (2016), she came out with the following theme: "Empowering Women, Empowering Democracy" In her speech, she acknowledged that as a parliamentarian from Cameroon, she saw firsthand impact that women had on their communities and countries when empowered to participate in the democratic process⁷⁰. As in her previous speeches on other Regions, she highlighted the barriers that women face in exercising their democratic rights. From discriminatory laws and social norms to lack of access to education and economic opportunities, adding that women are often excluded from decision-making positions and marginalized in the democratic process⁷¹. She called on all present to work to create a world where women have equal access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. A world where women are represented in all levels of government and decision-making positions. A world where women's rights are respected and protected.

She reiterated that, it is not just a matter of social justice; it is also a matter of democratic effectiveness. When women are empowered to participate in the democratic process, they bring new perspectives, new ideas, and new energy to the table. They helped to build more inclusive, more accountable, and more responsive democratic institutions. And they helped to promote a more just, more equitable, and more peaceful world. She highlighted the

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.p.21

⁶⁹Ibid.p.23

⁷⁰ O. Biwolé, V. M., (2007), L'impact de la mondialisation sur la progression de la carrière des femmes en Afrique subsaharienne et au Maroc : une appréciation du programme de formation de formatrices de la Didacthèque selon la perception des femmes, Revue Télescope de l'Observatoire de l'Administration Publique, 13(4), pp. 145-158.

⁷¹ Ibid.

need to prioritize women's empowerment and gender equality the efforts to promote democracy and human rights, calling on all to work together to empower women and empower democracy⁷². She called for the creation of a world where all citizens, regardless of their gender, could participate fully and equally in the democratic process. This speech showcased her commitment to promote women's empowerment, democracy, and human rights.⁷³

III. National and International Recognitions for Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka

At the National level, the Hon. MP for Fako West Constituency, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and Chairperson of CPA international, received several decorations. This was due to her hard work and unflinching support and loyalty to her country Cameroon. She served her Nation with pride, diligence and honour in various capacities. The decorations were as follows: Knight of Cameroon Order of Merit, Officer of the National Order of Merit and Knight of Cameroon National Order of Valour. Internationally, she was designated as the Scaling-Up Nutrition Ambassador in Cameroon by the Hellen Keller International Civil Organization in collaboration with the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement in Cameroon⁷⁴. This award ceremony took place on the 12th of August 2020 in Yaounde Cameroon, in the midst of international dignitaries like Boyer Jacques, UNICEF, permanent representative in Cameroon (replaced by Nadine Perrault in 2022), Bureau Members of the National Assembly of Cameroon and a host of MP.

⁷² Ibid.p.147

⁷³ Ibid.p.155

⁷⁴ National Assembly Tributesto Emilia Nonjowa Lifaka, Yaounde, May 2021.p.12

Plate 21: Emilia's Recognition as Scaling up - nutrition ambassador, 2020



Source Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka picture gallery

Above is Emilia Monjowa, carrying the award symbol, accompanied by delegates from the National Assembly, SUN Movement in Cameroon and Helen Keller International Civil Organization. During the ceremony, the Secretary General of the National Assembly, Teta Ismeal, made it known to the general public that, the choice of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka was justified by the tremendous activities she had under her records towards humanity. He revealed that the MP was retained among 7 outstanding Cameroonians from a shortlist of 50 contestants. The mission entrusted to her by this recognition was, the fight against malnutrition at the

National and international levels. A mission she received and accepted with gratitude, promising to work with her colleagues and other stakeholders to kick malnutrition out of Cameroon and beyond.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to find out the activities of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka at the level of the National Assembly and beyond, bringing to the lamp light, her functions as Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, as member of several committees and as chairperson of CPA International. Here, we also discovered that her tours promoted Parliamentary Democracy and other democratic principles in CPA countries. These earned her some recognitions at both national and international scales. The rich legacy left behind by the MP/ challenges and perspectives of Female Political Leadership shall be examined in the subsequent paragraphs.

CHAPTER FOUR

LEGACY, APPRAISAL, CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES OF FEMALE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP.

Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine the aftermaths of the political, economic and socio-cultural activities of Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka in Fako West Constituency, passing through the National Assembly and to the world at large. The chapter goes further to make a general survey of challenges faced by female political leadership and perspectives.

I. Legacy of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka

This iconic personality left behind a legacy that can never fade away so easily because most of her activities left a long lasting impact. These can impact generations upon generations in all the areas she was able to touch.

A. Political Legacy

As a female MP for Fako West Constituency, her political works stood tall within her area of jurisdiction and beyond. As permanent coordinator of CPDM activities in Fako Division and equally the president of the reorganizing mission of the CPDM basic organs in 2015 in Kupe-Muanengumba. She effectively reorganized basic organs to the satisfaction of her hierarchy¹. To her political party, she remains a great icon, added to the fact that the CPDM rose to first position in her constituency from 2002-present all thanks to her charisma². Mary Muyali Boya who succeeded her as Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon, saluted her memory for the great work done, not just for the Republic of Cameroon but for the world at large³.

She made mention of her rich contributions in the initiation of Legislation Private Member's Bills amongst many others. Hon. Lifaka introduced several private member's bills,

¹ Interview with, Mbangnyor Naomi Ngend, 65, Parliamentarian, December, 7, 2023.

² Interview with Mary Muyali Boya, 62, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon, CPDM MP for Mundemba, Yaounde, December 10, 2023.

³ *ibid*

including those related to women's rights, education, and healthcare. She equally presented motions and resolutions on various issues, such as human rights, democracy, and good governance. Lawmaking Process. Committee Work: Hon. Lifaka actively participated in committee work, scrutinizing bills, and providing input to ensure that legislation aligned with the needs of her constituents in particular and Cameroon in general. She engaged in debates and discussions on the floor of the National Assembly, advocating for her constituents' interests and promoting democratic principles⁴. All the above contributed to policy change in favour of women's rights, education, health care and good governance.

At the international scene, Cameroon's image in Parliamentary Diplomacy has stood tall for all these years thanks to the charismatic activities of the Hon. MP⁵. As chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, she made sure she promoted cooperation and dialogue among parliamentarians from different countries round the globe. Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's legacy in Africa shows prove of her tireless efforts to promote Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance. She was CPA Africa Regional Representative from 2015-2017, playing a crucial part in shaping the continent of Africa especially in matters of legislation and Good Governance⁶. As a saying goes in my mother tongue translated, "A single hand cannot tie a bundle" May be Good Governance would have been a reality in Africa today, if we had many of such political icons in the continent.

B. Socio- Economic Legacy

Economically, the inherently fertile but often stony volcanic soils encourage mixed farming of cocoyam, plantains, yams, vegetables, bananas, with tree crops such as bush plum (*Dacryodes edulis*), guava (*Psidium guajava*), paw-paw (*Carica papaya*) and breadfruit (*Treculia africana* and *Artocarpus* spp.). However, the farm inputs donated by the Monjowa Lifaka Foundation to farmers of her constituency permitted farmers to move from one stage of agricultural production to another. Subsistence agriculture was gradually replaced by commercial agriculture where cash crop production was prioritized. This has permitted farmers in her community to train their children in school and improve on their living standards.

She practiced a humanitarian gesture by coming to the rescue of many underprivileged youths of her constituency at the time they thought all hopes were lost. To this effect, the over

⁴ J.M Njinju, *Law and Development in Cameroon*, Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group, Bamenda, 2019.

⁵ Rose Agbor Abunaw, 66, Teacher/Retired Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, CPDM Mamfe Central, Yaounde, December 28, 2023.

⁶ Amnesty International, *The State of the World's Human Rights*, London, Amnesty International, January 2023

200 youths trained with a cost estimate of over 40 million over a period of 10 years are today holding jobs not only in the public service but exerting also as entrepreneurs⁷. This has permitted them to put food on their tables and take care of their various families. Such a laudable initiative is still very much applauded by the community today. Her objective was self-reliance for the youths of her community in particular and Cameroon in general. She clearly stated that, this project will never stop until every youth in her community is trained and finds a job to execute⁸.

Plate 22: Donations to some Needy and IDPs in her Constituency, 2020



Source: The Lifaka's Family Album

Her contributions to the building and equipping of classrooms, school toilets and community halls in her area of jurisdiction, went a long way to empower these communities by ensuring a hitch-free teaching learning exercise in the schools. These halls have so far helped to foster the sense of belonging among residents, helping to build relationships and connections among community members. They also helped in hosting workshops and seminars on various topics like health/wellness as well as skill development⁹. They also help in the celebration of cultural activities through events, festivals and performances to preserve cultural heritage and

⁷ Amnesty International, *The State of the World's Human Rights*, London, Amnesty International, January 2023

⁸ Interview with Lucy Mbonde, 75, member of Fako Women Development Association (FAWODA), Bonakanda village, April 10, 2025.

⁹ Ibid

traditions. Economically, these halls can generate revenue for the community through rental fees and events, support entrepreneurs and local businesses.

Her support to local hospitals cannot be underestimated. The equipping of the Bojongo, Bonarkanda, Bokova health centers have gone a long way to improve health conditions in the area and improve productivity at every level and at every stage. Today, many people in her community, speak of her with great nostalgia while others even go emotional to the extent of shading tears¹⁰. They believe, their situation would have been far more different if the Hon. MP was still alive. Some health workers who worked and are still working in her constituency also expressed great contentment during her period of leadership following the numerous equipment she donated to facilitate their work in these health facilities. On the other hand, some respondents did not hesitate to tag her as a discriminatory leader who only extended her largess towards people of Nkwe origin¹¹.

II. Appraisal of Emilia Monjowa's Leadership

Emilia's activities were viewed by many from both positive and negative perspectives as can be seen below.

A. Strength

a) A God fearing Woman

Marked by the events that surrounded her upbringing, her growth into an engaged woman owes great thanks to her spiritual and religious background. From the reports gotten from the field, especially from the many people we were opportune to interview, most in their responses as to what lessons they take home concerning this figure, spoke about her Christian life and faith in God. During challenging moments, her first action was to pray to God for divine guidance, protection and direction. Many believed, her successes came from her faith and believe in God concerning everything she aspires to do. She contributed greatly to the growth of the Roman Catholic Church in Buea area and beyond¹².

¹⁰ Enanga Lydia, 57, first cousin and cook to Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Bojongo, April 9, 2025.

¹¹ Anonymous respondent.

¹² Lucy Mbonde, 75, member of Fako Women Development Association (FAWODA), Bonakanda village, April 10, 2025.

b) A Hard Working Woman

Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, was marked and inspired by her mother from a very tender age. Her mother, was an epitome of hard work and dedication. Values she inculcated into her children, especially little Emilia. From her academic performance to professional and political realizations, we can realize that she, at every moment of her life, worked extremely hard to end everything she deserved. While working in government she often served in two different post. In many occasions she spent sleepless nights to work on different state reports and projects. She undertook risky journeys so as to achieve the different legacies left for her constituency, Cameroon and the world. This hard work has end her top-ranking international recognitions and excellent awards both national and beyond.

c) A political leader with focus and determination

Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, believed in taking one step at a time. She stayed focus on the vision she wanted to achieve in her private, professional and political life. She , at no moment saturated her time table of the day because every night she did serious planning concerning everything she was supposed to do the next day , noting it down on her agenda. This work discipline enabled her to manage every little task she was assigned to manage daily. Staying focused on her vision, permitted her to develop reasonable goals that she followed strictly, rising from a professional IRAD worker at Ekona, to one of the most outstanding worlds political leaders. Projecting Cameroon to a dynamic world of successful diplomatic encounters

d) An inspiration to diverse generations

It is often said that real leadership, is leadership that inspires, motivates and transforms. In her different works of life, she acted as a visionary and a transformational leader. She, as per testimonies did not sit as a boss and ordered people around her to do this or do that as often the case with people of position of responsibility. In everything she did, she made sure she took the first step to teach the others how to do and what to do whenever she requested a service. There by teaching her colleagues and people around her by example. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's natural wittiness, charisma, intelligence and boldness, enabled her to address any crowd without panic, reasons why she succeeded in most of her national and international conferences, rising to the top position of chairperson of CPA international. This caused both the young and the old too often come to her for mentorship and professional advice¹³.

¹³ Rose Agbor Abunaw, 66, Teacher/Retired Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, CPDM Mamfe Central, Yaounde, December 28, 2023.

B. Weaknesses

a) A Frank-Talk woman

Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, was a very outspoken woman, who believed on the saying that goes thus “The truth is bitter but must be spoken.” From findings, she was very outspoken, truthful and open. She never waited till others are gone before she could reproach a colleague, a collaborator or any other person around her who went wrong. She, in any case of misbehavior stood so bold and publicly condemned the concerned. This frank-talk attitude of hers kept many of her colleagues, collaborators and other persons around her who did not want to adjust from specific practices, in anger, bitterness and resentment. However, she always ensured that everything ended in an understanding manner. Others even tagged her as a tribalistic leader¹⁴.

b) A Perfectionist and Trust Easily

Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, growing up, developed the value and passion for things done right. This caused many of her colleagues and collaborators to often stand against her strict and perfectionist attitude. To them, what was easy and direct to do, she often insisted for more efforts to be dedicated until a satisfactory response is obtained. One of her actions considered as a weakness by many was to trust easily and give her confidence and trust to everyone that came her way. Though a politician, she often forgot the saying that goes thus” Love All But Trust None.” This openness and believe in many people often landed her in several problems, leaving her with feelings of regret. However, she took the lessons as a way of empowerment and more vigilance in what so ever she did.¹⁵

III. Challenges and Perspectives of Female Political Leadership.

The concept of Female Political Leadership is viewed through diverse lenses in various societies. Generally, the challenges and opportunities for women in politics are often brought to the lamplight. The perspectives embody mostly potential benefits of having women in politics, under and the need to address barriers hindering its growth and expansion.

A. Challenges

The challenges faced by female political leadership are many and varied.

¹⁴ Etonde Lifaka Catharine Mosaso, 69, retired Liberian at Limbe Botanical Garden, elder sister to late Emilia Lifaka Monjowa, Buea, April 10, 2025.

¹⁵ Idem

a) Under Representation

Female Representation goes in line with Gender Promotion as one of the UN sustainable development goals, defined as the growing need for equity to be established in the treatment of both males and female genre in political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of life¹⁶. There by, promoting the need for more female representation in Parliament and effective participation in decisions that affect Cameroon. But generally, women are underrepresented in elected offices and leadership roles in both government and other private institutions. In Cameroon for instance, the number of women elected in office, is not as expected by the national, regional and international bodies¹⁷. Following the 2019 Municipal and Legislative Elections, Cameroon has 26 female senators out of 100 and 61 women in parliament out of 180.¹⁸ Globally, only 25 percent of parliamentarians are women and only 22 countries worldwide have women in highest positions in the society¹⁹.

Politically, women occupy few of political and administrative posts in Cameroon; Ministers (11) Governors (0), Senior Divisional Officers (01 Antoinette ZOGO Mefou and Akono)²⁰. Economically, the woman's role is still to be recognized progressively as the backbone of the management of the economy in every home just as the man continues to assume his functions as family head. Socio-culturally, gender roles are defined in every society according to the customs and traditions of the people involved. In the African continent for instance, we have some countries where the number of female Parliamentarians is high. Taking the case of Rwanda with 49 out of 80 members of parliament being females according to January 2022 records²¹. Cameroon is still very far but striving for a 50/50 parity in gender representation.

b) Discriminatory Social Norms against Women

Discriminatory laws, attitudes and practices in Cameroon in particular and other societies at large have served as barriers to the evolution of female political leadership²². In this study, we witnessed a second generation gender bias, a perspective that took a critical stance to focus on hidden cultural and structural barriers to females as leaders. Moving beyond the explanation

¹⁶ Interview with, Rolande Ngo Issi Epse Mbock, 42, Parliamentarian Yaounde, December,7, 2023

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ J. Momsen. *Gender and Development*, London: Routledge; 2004, *talks of Gender and Development*, London: Routledge, 2004, pp 50-55.

¹⁹ Georgetown Institute for Women Peace and Security-GIWPS, accessed on May 15, 2025.

²⁰ K.B. Nsodzefe, Cameroon-info. Net, Yaounde, 21/10/2019. Consulted on 20/10/2023.

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid.p.2

that the inequality is as a result of intentional actions, this perspective focused on a second generation form of gender bias, the powerful yet often invisible barriers to women's advancement in society that arise from cultural beliefs about gender, as well as workplace structures and patterns of interactions that most often favor men. Different cultures reserve different treatments for men and women and unequal social consideration.

Generally, different national ethnic groups base their family relations on the fundamental difference between men and women. These norms are reflected in their most visible form in the patriarchal customs and traditions where gender stereotypes and the traditional division of labour within the household, assign subordinate roles and responsibilities to women while decision-making roles are assigned to men.²³ We therefore realised that, power relations and authority within families are based on these statuses attributed to women and men, differences that are inculcated in children, girls and boys in the process of socialisation, thereby, determining the social values and norms to be acquired by each through rites, ceremonies, customs and behaviour²⁴. Due to this subordination of the woman and the supremacy of the men in the Cameroonian traditional society, the man embodies authority in the household, sets the pace, fixes rules, manages and controls the family assets, takes major decisions and provides for the livelihood of household members.

Furthermore, motherhood was the core of community life. Fertility was valued by society where a woman was supposed to bear children, preferably boys without which she could face social stigma²⁵. In some regions, tradition has remained rooted in the people's behaviours. A woman had value only if she was married, fertile, humble and docile, dignified and a good housewife. Moreover, some religious and traditional beliefs confined women to their homes did not tolerate their appearing in public places. How could such ever get in to politics, talk less of ascending to the position of a female MP? Bernard Forju, called for a change of mentality amongst the female folk, a dream that could only come true if some of these societal norms were rectified.²⁶

c) Wide Gap between Laws and Application

Cameroon is a party to most International and regional conventions and treaties that ensure the protection and promotion of women's rights. At the domestic level, efforts were made to take

²³ National Gender Policy Document 2011-2020 .Pg xvii.

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ J.N, Mforneh, "Christian Missions in Feminine Education in the North West Region, 1903-2010," Ph.D. thesis in History. University of Yaounde I, 2019.

²⁶ Interview with Bernard Forju, 75, Parliamentarian Yaounde, March 22, 2023.

gender into account in the electoral code or to align certain provisions of the Penal Code with the CEDAW and to condemn certain attacks on the physical or moral integrity of women²⁷. With regards to this normative framework, the Civil Code in force dates from 1804 (Napoleonic Code)²⁸ somehow also served as a blockage to the mechanisms put in place. The country's legal arsenal that is favourable to the women still lacks certain discriminatory provisions, including legal loopholes that encourage the expansion of certain practices that are harmful to the women/girls like female genital mutilation. Therefore, the wide gap between laws and their application is induced in particular by the co-existence of positive law with customary law that contain provisions that keep women in a subordinate position. Given the country's position on gender issues, the main challenge now lies at the level of popularization and effective application of these legal instruments for the promotion and protection of women's rights.

d) The Persistence of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

The UN defines violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life²⁹ GBV is present in every society around the world and equally takes many forms. Over one-third of women and girls globally experience violence in their lifetime. However, this rate is higher in emerging nations and those with conflicts and crisis, where vulnerability and risk are increased and most often family, community and legal protections have broken down like the case of Cameroon where between 2023-2025, more than 1000 cases of femicide (Husbands killing their wives) have been recorded.³⁰, however, victims of assault are advised to dial 116 for rescue.

Though both men and women are exposed to GBV, women and girls are disproportionately impacted by all forms of gender-based violence often manifested in different ways: Physical violence that includes assault or slavery, emotional or psychological violence that includes verbal abuse, confinement, sexual abuse like rape, harmful practices like child marriage and female genital mutilation, socio- economic violence which includes denial of resources, sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. Although the Penal Code adopted in 2016

²⁷ Interview with Bernard Forju, 75, Parliamentarian Yaounde, March 22, 2023.

²⁸ This code made the authority of men over their families stronger, deprived women of any individual rights and reduced the rights of illegitimate children. All male citizens were also granted equal rights under the law and the right to religious dissent. This law was spread to the regions under French control.

²⁹ National Gender Policy Document 2011-2020 .p.5.

³⁰ CRTV News, Thursday, May 22, 2025, 3pm.

has strengthened national legislation through certain provisions that specifically address the issue of gender-based and sexual violence, this phenomenon remains a reality in Cameroon.³¹ The determinants of gender-based violence are linked to ignorance due to insufficient literacy amongst women particularly in rural areas to the depravity of morals, to poverty that affects many families, to the economic dependence of women and to customs.

A breakdown of services, conflict and war, displaced women and refugees constitute added reasons for GBV. In Cameroon like in most countries around the World, violence against women and girls is the disturbing truth and a serious contributing factor to poor representation of women in the National Assembly of Cameroon³². On similar note, Hon. Emilia Lifaka Monjowa, on a keynote address on the occasion of the General Assembly Meeting of Female Parliamentarians of Cameroon, attended by all 61 female parliamentarians in Yaounde, 2018³³, thanked the state for opening more doors to female representation while highlighting the fact that women face some challenges in Cameroon ranging from limited access to resources, prejudice, discrimination, harassment and even violence from their male counterparts³⁴

e) Prevalence of Early Marriage and Pregnancy

In the developing world, teenage pregnancy and early marriage continue to derail girl's health and socio-economic development prospects. The consequences of these phenomena on the health of mothers and children have been of primordial interest round the globe. Teenage mothers are at higher risk of obstetric, fistulae, eclampsia, post-partum haemorrhage and sepsis, making pregnancy and child birth complications the leading cause of death amongst girls aged 15-19 years globally. Further, babies born to mothers under 20 years of age face higher risk of low weight, preterm delivery and severe neonatal conditions. There is also compelling evidence that teenage marriage and motherhood significantly contribute to high school dropout and lower educational attainment.

Despite rising age at first marriage, teenage fertility remains high in Sub-Saharan Africa.³⁵ It has been noticed in Cameroon that discriminatory social norms, the wide gap between laws and their application, relative representation of women in decision-making spheres and the persistence of GBV geared towards women and the girl child, have perpetuated gender disparities and have compromised the life track, status and schooling of a large

³¹ Vivian Kendemeh J, 55, sub director for Gender issues MINPROFF, Yaounde, March 15 2023.

³² Idem.

³³ National Assembly Tributes, Yaounde, 2021 p.15.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ UNFPA. *Adolescent pregnancy: a review of the Evidence*, New York, UNFPA, 2013a, (google scholar).

proportion of girls. The snowball effect of these have been the prevalence of early marriages and pregnancy on the girl- child.

f) High Prevalence of Maternal Mortality/ HIV and AIDS

High maternal mortality rate in Cameroon remains a problem despite government efforts recorded against it so far. The rate in Cameroon remains quite high (467 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2018)³⁶, even though it is close to the 2020 forecasts. Also, the prevalence of HIV remains high. Although the epidemiological situation of HIV has improved in recent years compared to 2011, women and girls are still exposed to the pandemic. (2 women are infected compared to 1 man and 3 girls are infected compared to 1 boy). Given the situation, women and girls are more likely to lose their lives if proper medical care is not applied on the infected persons. Note should equally be taken of the fact that child-bearing is the responsibility of women, therefore, any high rate of maternal mortality, directly or indirectly affects the woman. These two factors put together, have constituted a hindrance to the setbacks recorded as far as female participation in politics in general and as representation in Parliament in particular is concerned.

g) Insufficient Consideration of Gender in Policies, Programs and Budget at National, Local and Sectorial Levels

Cameroon has always taken part in major international gatherings on development issues, most of which have addressed gender concerns. Such include: The Mexico Conference of 1975 which helped in changing the way society perceives women, with particular emphasis on their³⁷empowerment, Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), Rio (1992), Vienna (1993), Beijing (1995) and many others, all aimed at improving the situation of the woman and the girl child. The unfortunate thing here is that, Cameroon fails to fully apply the resolutions of such good-intentioned conferences. Thus, MINPROFF should better position itself as a partner in supporting the Ministries concerned in taking gender in to account in their policies, programs and projects.

This will be the case of Gender Responsive Budgeting which is not yet well adapted in the Medium Term Expenditure (MTEFs) despite the various circulars issued by the President of the Republic of Cameroon on the consideration of gender in the preparation of budgets. It is worth noting that this shortcoming is due less to a lack of will on the part of the sectorial actors,

³⁶ UNFPA. *Adolescent pregnancy: a review of the Evidence*, New York, UNFPA, 2013a, (google scholar).

³⁷ Cameroon Country Gender Profile, UN Women, 2021.p.10.

but more to the need for the development of appropriate tools and capacity building of the sectorial actors. In addition to this, there is the insufficient appropriation of the content of the National Gender Policy by sectorial actors and regional and local authorities and the absence of an effective and functional mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the reference document.

h) Discrimination between Girls and Boys, Women and Men

Discrimination between girls/boys, women/men remain a major obstacle to human development in Cameroon. The Gender Inequality index is 0.566 and the country ranked 150th out of 189 countries according to their level of gender inequality (UNDP, Gender inequality index, 2017)³⁸. The inequality index reveals significant disparities in the three key dimensions of human development: Reproductive health, education and access to employment. Access to antenatal and maternal health care and contraceptive methods also remains a major public challenge in Cameroon. Education and access to employment is still farfetched for the female folk compared to the male folk, despite government efforts. These factors have contributed immensely to poor representation of women in the Cameroonian Parliament.

i) Lack of Interest from the Girls/ Women

This constitutes another disturbing fact that has so far contributed to the poor representation of women in parliament. It has been observed that women and girls lack interest as far as political life in general is concerned. For instance, Hon. Bernard Forju of the CPDM party³⁹ who decries the lack of interest by women and girls in Cameroon as far as political issues are concerned. He further adds that women fall prey to negative socialisation, believing that their place is in the kitchen or better still, a weaker sex. To him, this has contributed immensely to lack of ambition from the female folk. He also claims that politics is not a dirty game as many believe, rather, he encourages the women and girls to go out there and attempt, just as their counterparts in the western world who never want to obtain anything free of charge. He calls for a change of mentality for the benefit of the fact that women have to work in every domain of life just as the men. He equally encourages parents to develop more liberal mind-sets that will permit the girl child to reason from a more liberal perspective.

³⁸ UNDP, Gender inequality index, 2017.

³⁹ Bernard Forju, 75, Parliamentarian, Yaounde, March 10, 2023.

On the other hand, Ndi Nkemasaah Jacob, a traditional title holder and a retired councillor of the CPDM Party⁴⁰ believes that politics remains a dirty game no matter the circumstances. To him, such commitments are risky for the female folk whom he considers a weaker sex and so, must be protected and catered for according to the customs and traditions of Cameroon in particular Africa in general. He reiterated that, African values are not to be forgotten because of western education, calling on all to educate the girl child without necessarily destroying the African values that generally reserve some specific roles for each of the sexes. It is true and very important that African values must prevail but it has been proven beyond reasonable doubt that if equal opportunities are given to both sexes in every domain, the society will certainly have more assets to emancipate politically, economically and socio-culturally⁴¹.

j) The Role of Civil Society

Cameroon has a vibrant civil society with many actors in the field. However, their actions are scattered and poorly coordinated. They are not very coherent and sometimes opposed to government orientations⁴². It becomes therefore imperative to establish a frame work of consultation between civil society actors working in the field and to guide actions towards the implementation of the National Gender Program (NGP), which constitutes the reference framework for interventions in this field of study. In addition, Cameroon lacks a forum where actors working in this field meet, hence the need to institutionalize an annual national forum on women as a prelude to international meetings.

B. Perspectives

The following opportunities like Policy Prioritization could go a long way to promote Female Political Leadership at home and beyond. National, Regional and International policies today, give priority to female leadership as can be seen below. In descending order, we have international, regional and national mechanisms that promote gender equality in Cameroon. International Mechanisms like the United Nations Legislations, through its networks and branches, gave some legal backings to countries willing to promote gender mainstreaming. Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is the unfinished business of our time and the greatest human rights challenge in the world.⁴³

⁴⁰ Interview with Jacob Nkemasaah, 81, retired councillor, Bafoussam, April 4, 2023.

⁴¹ UNDP, Gender inequality index, 2017

⁴² David Mafani Namange, 65, Mayor, Buea council, November 15, 2024.

⁴³ Anatonio Gutierrez, UN current secretary General. <http://www.un.org>, consulted on November 20 2022 at 21:38.

a) International Instruments

UN support for the rights of women began with the organization's founding charter. "To achieve international cooperation...in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion"⁴⁴ Within the first years of UN existence, the Economic and Social Council, established its Commission on the status of Women. Further, Gender Equality was made part of international human rights law by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on the 10th of December 1948⁴⁵. This milestone document in the history of human rights recognized the fact that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour sex, language, religion birth or other status. Values widely promoted by Hon. Monjowa Lifaka.

As the international feminist movement began to gain momentum during the 1970s, the General Assembly declared 1975 as the international Women's Year and recognised the first World Women's Conference, held in Mexico City which gave rise to the declaration of the years between 1976 and 1985 as the UN decade for Women and established a voluntary fund for the decade⁴⁶. Five years after the Mexico City Conference, a second world conference on women was held in Copenhagen in 1980 which culminated in a great call at national levels to ensure women's ownership and control of property as well as improvements in women's rights with respect to inheritance, child custody and loss of nationality. This was thus the 1960 plan of action.

In 1985, another conference held in Nairobi to appreciate the decade's achievements, convened at a time when gender equality had finally gained global recognition and 15000 representatives of NGOs participating in a parallel NGO forum. This forum was described by many as the "birth of global feminism." Then came the famous Beijing summit which was the fourth World Conference on Women held in 1995 which asserted women's rights and committed to specific actions to ensure the respect of those rights⁴⁷. This was the Beijing Declaration and Plan of Action. From Beijing to date, the promotion of gender equality has

⁴⁴ Article 1 of the UN Charter.

⁴⁵ Molyneux M. *Mobilization without Emancipation? Women's Interest, the State and Revolution in Nicaragua*. *Feminist Studies*, 1985, pp 227- 254.

⁴⁶ Multisector Plan for the Implementation of the National Gender Policy of Cameroon, Yaounde, 2016-2020. pp.70-80

⁴⁷ *ibid*

been of great importance in the UN and all regional and sub-regional organisations including the African Union (AU)⁴⁸.

b) Regional Instruments

This is the Gender Policy of the African Union. The vision of the African Union Gender Policy is to achieve an African society founded on Democracy, gender equality and human rights and dignity and recognizes the equal status of women and men, girls and boys with both sexes thriving together harmoniously in a peaceful and secure environment, characterized by equal opportunities⁴⁹. In this light, we can conveniently quote the Maputo Protocol adopted on July 11 2003 by the second ordinary session of the conference of heads of states and governments of the AU on the Rights of Women in Africa⁵⁰. These rights can be studied through three complimentary directions. Prohibition, Incitation and Emancipation.⁵¹ Unfortunately, only 37 African states out of 54 have ratified this protocol.

Furthermore, Article 2 of the African Charter provides that: Every person, regardless of sex (amongst other things) has rights and is entitled to enjoy them. The African Charter goes further in Article 18(3) to urge states to eliminate discrimination against women and ensure the protection of their rights. The Maputo Protocol therefore takes in to consideration the realities on the fact that African values are not all positive and that these values contribute a lot to the abuse of women's rights in the continent. Note should also be taken of the fact that this instrument also protects civil and political rights alongside economic and socio-cultural rights.

Still at the regional level, we have the African Charter on Human Rights, also under the auspices of the African Union – AU, have all given some holistic impetus to the rights of African women. Other regional initiatives here include- The New Partnership for Africa's Development-2001 (NEPAD), the Declaration of Southern African Development Community on Gender Equality in 1997, the Declaration of African Heads of States on Gender Equality 2004, also enhanced regional perspectives on women's rights. Women's marginalization is deeply rooted in the historical, political and socio-cultural context of Africa's development. While some improvements and successes are evident, the substance and pace of change have

⁴⁸ J. N. Atemengue , « La charte Africain des droits de l'homme et ses enrichissement ulterieur, in Olinga Alain Didier(dir), La Protection Internationale des Droits de l'Homme en Afrique Yaounde, Edition Clé , 2012 , p. 49.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ The protocol to the African Charter of Human and People's Rights, on the Rights of Women in Africa as a reinforcement to Article 2 of the African Charter and Article 18(3) to urge states to eliminate discrimination .against women.

⁵¹ J. N. Atemengue , « La charte Africain des droits de l'homme et ses enrichissement ulterieur, in Olinga Alain Didier(dir), La Protection Internationale des Droits de l'Homme en Afrique Yaounde, Edition Clé , 2012 , p. 49.

not been executed with the momentum and rapidity required to catapult Africa's present stage of development to the level of results awaited. We therefore recommend an acceleration of the process to all African countries who are signatories to the above protocols and declarations, calling on the AU to devise strict follow-up strategies to ensure their full implementations in the countries concerned.

c) National Instruments

Cameroon's laws remain deeply discriminatory towards women and, in conformity with observations and recommendations made by the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee to the Cameroon government in 2000 and 2009, the head of state Paul Biya is leaving no stone unturned to ensure the promotion of the rights of women especially in the National Assembly of Cameroon seen in his speech below during the presidential elections of 1997⁵² making equality between human rights and women's rights a reality, in particular by enacting laws to punish all violence against women Together, let's give value to the role and place of women in society, for their full development Women of Cameroon, ...I will make sure that your work is recognized and valued everywhere, I will make sure that you are well represented in all the governing bodies of the country."⁵³ She pledged her commitment in accelerating the process of institutionalizing gender parity and in improving the level of participation of women and youths in political, economic and cultural life.

These efforts of the head of state were crowned with the creation of the Ministry of Promotion of the Woman and Family. At the head of this ministry is Marie Thérèse Abena Ondo who also had this to say in March 2021 on the occasion of the 36th edition of the International Women's Day dedicated to Women's Leadership. Promoting female leadership in all areas of life is a guarantee of sustainable development. The concept of Democracy will only take on a real and dynamic meaning when political guidelines and national legislations are defined in conjunction by men and women, taking in to account the specific interests and talents of the two sides of the population in an equitable manner. In the future, there will be no female leaders, there will just be leaders.⁵⁴

⁵² National Assembly, *The Road to Female Political Leadership in Parliament*, Yaounde, 2021.

⁵³ La Route du Leadership Féminin au Parlement : De la 1^{ère} à la 10^{ème} Législature (1973- 2020), Yaounde, 2021.

⁵⁴ Ibid

In the speech above, we find an embodiment of the need for greater presence of Women in leadership roles, directly linked to a focus on social policies. These policies include education, health care and parental leave which all benefit an economic growth. Apart from the above mentioned speeches, Cameroon has equally ratified various conventions aimed at the promotion of gender equality. The minister in her speech calls for gender parity that will eventually lead to gender equity where there will neither be male or female leadership but leaders simply. From the above analysis, it is clear that the Republic of Cameroon has been very instrumental in the ratification of the UN sustainable goal as seen in the speeches made by the Head of State, the Minister of Women Empowerment and the Family as well as the Speaker of the National Assembly.

d) Other Mechanisms

These include civil societies and Non-Governmental Organisations like The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)⁵⁵ which is the body of independent experts that monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. This body went operational on the 3rd of September 1981, earlier signed on the 18th of December 1979, located at New York. Ratification is good enough but the million dollar question now lies at the level of the implementation of these policies.

e) The Importance of Cross-Party Collaboration

A glaring example of cross-party collaboration is seen with the activities of Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka at the helm of the CPA. She was very good at Parliamentary Diplomacy. During each of her visits to Parliaments of Commonwealth nations, she encouraged policy makers to increase female representation and participation in all domains of life. She equally called on women to increasingly work across party lines to advance shared agendas particularly on gender issues and social justice. This continuous clarion call is visible in her speeches in Africa, Asia, Europe and America as earlier observed in chapter 3. This has so far enabled the countries concerned, to rethink and begin incorporating females in decision making at different levels and stages in order to build more inclusive societies.

⁵⁵ CEDAW defines discrimination as any exclusion, distinction or restriction made on the basis of sex, having the effect of impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms to women. CEDAW, s main objective is to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls in all areas.

f) Social Policies and Economic Growth

Social policies are most often pushed forth by women in politics⁵⁶. This includes health care, paid parental leave, education, child care support...These social aspects boost labour force participation and becomes quite beneficial for economic growth. Furthermore, studies have shown that a 10 percent increase in women parliamentary representation is closely associated to a 0.7 percent increase in the GDP growth of a nation⁵⁷. Glaring examples of such nations include: Rwanda, Iceland and Norway. Though no super powers commanding the world, these countries have seen positive effects from gender quotas with women in high positions of decision making, driving policy changes. This can only be possible in Cameroon through the implementation of strategies that can help promote female leadership in general and political leadership in particular⁵⁸.

The respect of gender quotas is a key strategy to promote female representation in all aspects of political, economic and socio-cultural life of every society. This can accelerate policy change in a nation and benefit the economy, if quotas are respected⁵⁹. In Cameroon for instance, the quota is still very low. It stands at 30 percent in every domain of the economy. Structural barriers can also be removed to pave a smooth way to promoting a work-life balance, addressing bias and providing funds for campaigns after political candidacy. Empowering the girl child/ women by investing in their upbringing, can increase their participation in politics and leadership positions⁶⁰.

As a way forward to the question relating to female political leadership at the service of the Nation, we, like other authors and researchers, make suggestions of the following strategies to improve the current state of female political leadership in Cameroon and beyond. To the international community, The 2006 Commission on the status of women underscored the importance of incorporating women's leadership in a wide range of decision-making positions. The commissions agreed Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, and 4-15 September 1995. the UN publication, sales No.E96.IV.13⁶¹, chapter 1, resolution 1-see annex paragraph 181 conclusions on equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels and at all stages, expressed concern about the lack of

⁵⁶ Fonge Julius, 59, Parliamentarian, Yaounde, July 29, 2023.

⁵⁷ Idem.

⁵⁸ Interview with Tsingong Flobert, 55, Parliamentarian, Yaounde, July 29, 2023.

⁵⁹ Osih Joshua, 55, Parliamentarian, Yaounde, July 29, 2023.

⁶⁰ Idem.

⁶¹ UN publication, sales No.E96.IV.134-15 September 1995.

sufficient information and data disaggregated by sex on the participation of women and men in decision-making processes in all areas, including the economy, the public and private sectors, the judiciary, international affairs, academia, trade unions, the media, NGOs and others, and called on all relevant entities of the UN system, other international and regional organizations, to take a series of actions to improve the participation of women in decision-making at all stages and at all levels. We hereby urge each stakeholder to yield to this international cry.

To the National Assembly which is the Legislative body of the Nation, Peace-development - oriented reforms or bills that promote gender parity and social inclusion be enacted, followed by a strict follow-up by the judiciary body that stands as the referee between the executive and the legislative. A perfect harmony between these three bodies will make Cameroon a better place to live in. To all Cameroonian parents, we recommend a fair treatment on both the male and female children in the family. The family remains the smallest unit of every society and deserves a perfect leadership in terms of justice and equity because a successful family is a good foundation to a good nation while a failed family setting will certainly lead to societal decay.

To the Cameroonian girl child/ woman, we urge them to stand up and seize all available opportunities offered. Hon. Forju Bernard of the Lebialem constituency, urges them to take the bull by the horn by believing in themselves, forging ahead with her education and embracing every opportunity without fear or favour⁶². According to him, most Cameroonian girl children lack interest and ambition in many aspects of life and most often fall prey to negative socialization. Comparing them to young girls overseas who to him are more ambitious and not ready to embrace an easy life style. He therefore calls on an urgent change of mentality and be motivated to act with the mentality that women have to work to earn a living. He backs his arguments with the fact that it is the desire of the Head of State to see more women in all sectors of the state, supported by the Act of Parliament that prescribes at least 30 percent of women in every sector for gender sociological balance.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to find out the activities or legacy left behind by Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka in her Fako West Constituency and at the international scene as well as some challenges

⁶² Forju Bernard, 75, Parliamentarian, Yaounde, March 10, 2022.

and perspectives of Female Political Leadership. We realized that Hon. Emilia Monjowa left a very rich legacy, not just in her area of jurisdiction within the nation, but throughout Africa and the world at large. Challenges realized so far, can pave the way to broader perspectives. If these perspectives are well exploited, then we can hope for a more powerful and Female Political Leadership in the years to come.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Honorable. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka at the Service of the Nation. (2002-2021): A Study of Female Political Leadership in Fako West Constituency, focused on the biography of a woman, a single woman whose life is almost unknown in the history of Cameroon's emblematic figures, yet in her domain, she contributed immensely in molding and shaping the development and destiny of the Nation and beyond just like many recognized individuals did during their own time and space.

Through this research, we aimed at revisiting the socio-economic and political development women such as Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka were able to create both within Cameroon (At constituency Level) and out of Cameroon. We also aimed at bringing to the lamplight, her outstanding activities at the level of the National Assembly and within the CPA (out of Cameroon) when female representation and participation in parliament was relatively low. To conduct this research successfully, we took in to account some selected theories related to female leadership which guided us throughout the study. In this study, we focused on the Behavioral and Transformational Theories that reflected the character and activities of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka.

Watson's Behavioral Theory or the Behavioral Approach is based on the belief that leaders are made, not born. It focuses on the actions of leaders not on internal qualities of a person. According to the theory, people can learn to become leaders through learning and observation. The theory believes that leadership is a collection of skills and behaviors that can be acquired and grown. It focuses on observable leadership behaviors and actions rather than on personality traits. This can be acquired through training, experience and practice. The theory has evolved to include the fact that, effective leaders adapt their behavior to different situations and different contexts. This was the case of Emilia, whose developed skills, triggered rapid

socio-economic development in Fako West Constituency and encouraged other females to embrace politics.

Hon. Emilia in her early years of work had good connections with her superior Dr. Simon Ngale Lyonga, who was chief of center of the Institute of Agronomic Research (IRAD) Ekona. She observed and copied much from him. On the other hand, her leadership approach was admired by the younger generation of politicians in her locality who constantly observed and learned from her manner of doing things. Hon. Emilia did not climb the political ladder alone. From her early years of work and politics, she believed in good connections between leaders and followers. These good relations motivated and inspired her as her efforts were valued and compensated by promoting her to the position of chief of service in charge of personnel between 1984 -1989. This opened more doors to training, experience and practice that later projected her to higher heights.

Burns in his Transformational Theory also known as the Relationship theory, focuses on the connections formed between leaders and followers. It motivates and inspires people by helping group members see the importance of the task at hand. These leaders focus more on the performance of group members, but also want each person to fulfil his or her potential. Leaders with this style often have high ethical and moral standards. It inspires and empowers leaders to drive positive change. It has evolved over the years to embrace idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation. This form of leadership is more visible and applicable in politics, public administration, military and defense, education and business. Her parliamentary position added impetus to Cameroon's diplomacy.

Hon Emilia Monjowa Lifaka was very close to her electorate. She was a glaring example of a grass root politician whose closeness to her people, provoked their love and admiration. She became a role model to many in her constituency in particular and Fako in general. The fact that she never stopped to learn, constantly upgrading her skills through education and mentorship till her demise, made her to become the undisputable leader she eventually became. An example of an admirer of her behavior and actions in the younger generation of politicians is: Akawoh Minerva Molinge, First Deputy Mayor to the Buea Urban Council, who even refers to Hon. Emilia as "her mother". From Ekona where she made her first steps in to politics, she has always exhibited a transformational character right up to the level of the National Assembly and within the CPA where she motivated and inspired people by helping group members see the importance of the task at hand. This helped us to come out with the following results:

The work began by highlighting the geographical setting and human background of Fako West Constituency. As far as the geographical setting is concerned, much attention was given to the features that have direct influence on the political activities of Hon. Emilia Lifaka Monjowa. Focusing the human background, the complexity of human coexistence in the area is expound through the origin, migration and settlement. The pre-colonial political, economic and socio-cultural background of the area, led to the circumstances surrounding the birth and growth of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka. Functions of a parliamentarian have been examined, setting the pace to portray the grandeur, authority and influence she had in the Nation and beyond.

Next, was a delivery a well-rounded understanding of Emilia Monjowa Lifaka,'s activities in the Fako West Constituency. It has highlighted the socio-economic and political activities carried out in the area during her tenure in office. Ranging from various donations to schools and hospitals, passing through youth empowerment and recreational activities to the promotion of women and the girl child. Her economic activities in Fako West Constituency during her tenure in office can never be underestimated. This understanding is important for the appreciation of the constituency today and for informing future reforms and advancements.

We went further to find out the activities or legacy left behind by Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka in her Fako West Constituency and at the international scene. We realized that Hon. Emilia Monjowa left a very rich legacy, not just in her area of jurisdiction within the nation, but throughout Africa and the world at large. She received numerous recognitions from organizations and countries for her outstanding contributions to Democracy, Good Governance Human Rights and Women's Empowerment. Her immense efforts have been crowned both nationally and internationally by the following: Knight of the Cameroon National Order of Merit, Officer of the Cameroon National Order of Merit, Knight of the National Order of Valor. International Recognitions include: The (CPA) established the Emilia Monjowa Lifaka Lecture series in her honor, recognizing her commitment to promoting education, democracy, and human rights. These recognitions demonstrate the significant impact of Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka's work and legacy, which continues to inspire and empower individuals and organizations around the world today.

Again, we examined the aftermaths of the political, economic and socio-cultural activities of Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka in Fako West Constituency in particular, passing through the National Assembly and to the world at large. The chapter went further to make a general survey of challenges faced by female political leadership; opportunities offered and proposed strategies to improve on female representation.

In all these, challenges of female political leadership in Cameroon and beyond like limited representation, socio-cultural barriers, lack of resources, gender stereotypes, work-life balance, lack of mentorship and support... can still be tackled at all stages and all levels depending on will power. Fako West Constituency came out winning big because of the immense socio-economic and political activities carried out there during Emilia Monjowa Lifaka,s tenure in office as MP for the constituency. This study permitted us to come out with a survey of the circumstances surrounding the birth and growth of Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, her socio-economic activities within her area of jurisdiction, her activities in Parliament and within the helm of the CPA...It has also permitted us to realize that- Over the past 30 years, the international community has made numerous commitments to promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination against women through mechanisms like The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women.

The world summit of 2005, saw member states reaffirming the platform for action and the outcome of the 23rd special Session of the General Assembly as an essential contribution to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. The Beijing Platform for Action, considered the inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision making at all levels as one of the critical areas of concern for the empowerment of women. It stated thus:

Women's equal participation in decision- making, is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interest to be taken in to account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved. Strategies to achieve this include: Implementing quotas, promoting mentorship programs, advocacy and policy change as well as community development.

Due to these commitments, governments were expected to implement policies and programs that would advance Gender Equality, including in leadership positions, giving women full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision making. The commitments and goals pertaining to gender equality in decision making at the political and other levels have not yet been achieved by Cameroon whose process remains relatively slow. In both the developed and developing countries, women continue to be under represented in decision making and leadership in several areas. The result of this gender gap is that- Women do not participate fully in decisions that shape their lives; and communities and countries are not capitalizing on the full potential of one half of their societies.

The 2006 Commission on the Status of Women underscored the importance of incorporating women's leadership in a wide range of decision making positions. The commissions agreed report of the 4th World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995. To successfully conduct this research, based on selected theories related to women leadership, we took in to account, two research theories and for those related to peace, we equally took two research theories and perspectives that have guided our analysis all along. These were the Behavioral and Transformational or Relationship theories which guided our analysis all along. In the course of the study, we realized that a leader's identity is tied in his /her sense of purpose and that leaders are most effective when they pursue purposes that are aligned with their personal values and oriented towards advancing the collective good.

We equally observed a second generation gender bias, a perspective that adopts a critical stance to focus on hidden cultural and structural barriers to females as leaders. Moving beyond the explanation that the inequality is as a result of intentional actions, this perspective focused on a second generation form of gender bias, the powerful yet often invisible barriers to women's advancement in society that arise from cultural beliefs about gender, as well as workplace structures and patterns of interactions that most often favor men. In order to rise above the social labels, most female MPs gave themselves the challenge to make their academic performance outstanding by holding firm on values such as humility, honesty and hard work. These values permitted them to rise to the level of representing their people in parliament.

According to field work, statistics show that female leadership role in nation building from time immemorial has been a great debate topic among political, religious and economic leaders. The education in the family was for long taken care of by women, their effective actions most of the time was judged by the success of her children if they were good it became the father's pride and the contrary was the fault of the woman. Even at this, the men in this study recognized the importance of the woman. In light with this recognition, current statistics on women's unpaid labor is estimated to contribute up to 50 percent of GDP in some countries. As indicated by both theory and evidence, the lack of progress on gender equality may be at the heart of failure to advance on sustainable development. If women were in more productive and decision making platforms, we could be moving faster and more assuredly towards sustainable peace and development in the political.

Concerning economic, social and environmental aspects, female political leadership remains a political concept based on good policies and leadership, which however remains hard to achieve until we get closer to gender parity both in the National Assembly and other

structures that accommodate all stakeholders. The results obtained after the study clearly portrayed that at Constituency level, in Parliament and beyond, the male genre stood for more women in decision-making and active participation in the life of the nation, though the contrary is been witnessed at the level of application. Regional and international cooperation can provide much-needed support and resources to bolster these efforts to bring women to real effectiveness. Moreover, the growing female youth population presents a potential force for positive change if empowered and engaged in shaping their future.

Eventually, achieving sustainable gender parity and social cohesion in Cameroon requires sustained commitment from all stakeholders, females, males, government, civil society, communities, and individuals alike and not just female MPs. If Cameroon acknowledges the complex challenges, addressing their root causes, and seizing the available opportunities, it can move towards a more peaceful and inclusive future, where every citizen feels a sense of belonging and participation. This journey will require dedication, dialogue, justice and a shared vision for a brighter tomorrow.

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NAME	AGE	PROFESSION/ STATUS	PLACE	DATE	SEX
Abomo Fama Magueritte Celestine	70	Parliamentarian, CPDM/Upper Sanaga division	Yaounde	07/12/2025	F
Akawoh Minerva Moling	53	First Deputy Mayor, Buea Council,	Buea	06/9/2024	F
Anonymous	58	Parliamentarian/ UNDP/Mayo Loti division	Yaounde	08/4/2025	F
Anonymous	59	Trader	Bonakanda	08/4/2025	F
Asaah Cho Macellus	45	Health Administrative Assistant/ Bojongo Health Center	Bojongo	09/4/2025	M
Ashu Eware	52	State Prosecutor , Mamfe	Yaounde	03/11/2024	M
Azah Joan	52	Library Attendant NA	Yaounde	22/2/2022	F
Azemenkie Asaah	30	Researcher	Buea	10/7/2023	M
Cecilia Monjowa Eko	52	Trader	Bojongo	09/4/2025	F
Constance Kimbong Kanga	46	CEO 300 Women Voices For Africa.	Yaounde	9/12/2023	F
David Mafany Namange	58	Mayor	Buea	06/9/2024	M
Dione Cecilia Njumbe	51	Parliamentarian / CPDM Kupe Muanengumba	Yaounde	01/6/2022	F
Enanga Lydia,	57	Cook to Hon.Emilia	Bojongo	09/4/2025	F

Etonde Lifaka Cathrine	69	Retired Public Administrator	Buea	09/4/2025	F
Fonge Julius Fongouck	59	Parliamentarian/CPDM Kupe Muanengumba-Special	Yaounde	29/12/2023	M
Fontem Patricia	59	Teacher	Mmuock Fosimondi	20/12/2024	F
Forju Bernard	75	Parliamentarian/ CPDM Lebialem Division	Yaounde	10/3/2023	M
Forzeshung Pierre II	55	Notable	Mmuock Fosimondi	20/12/2024	M
Fossoh Tanjock Beatrice Forcha	57	Teacher	Bojongo	09/4/2025	F
Kaptche Deffo	48	Trade Unionist	Yaounde	30/1/2023.	
Kendeme Mary	55	Director /Department of Women/Social Empowerment. MINPROF	Yaounde	11/11/2023	F
Kenneth Vekima Edube Mbaho	33	Civil Administrator	Yaounde	15/12/2024	M
Konyuy Augustine	49	Teacher	Bojongo	09/4/2025	M
Kumasi	57	Parliamentarian/CPDM Santa Special	Yaounde	29/1/2023	M
Lucy Mbonde	75	Member,s Fako Womenn,s Association	Bonakanda	08/4/2025	F
Lyonga Abel Evangs	60	Health Personnel	Bokuva	08/4/2025	M
Mary Muyali Boya	62	Deputy Speaker N.A	Yaounde	10/12/2023	F
Mbangnyor Naomi Ngend	65	Parliamentarian/CPDM Ndonga –Mantung division	Yaounde	7/12/2023	F
Mbonde Nduka Johaness,	82	Retired Post and Telecommunication Technician	Bonakanda	09/4/2025	M
Mofow Maurine	29	CEO, Leteh Empowerment Daughters.	Yaounde	25/12/2023	F
Ngalle Daniel	54	Parliamentarian/CPDM Ndian division.	Yaounde	7/12/2023	M
Njonguo Julius Tiaglefack	45	UN Diplomat	Buea	04/1/2025	M
Nkemasaaah Jacob Asaah	81	Notable	Bafoussam	04/4/2023	M
Nkoa Mfegue Laurentine	60	Parliamentarian, Mfoundi I division	Yaounde	21/2/2023	F

Osih Jos Hua Namb Nangi.	55	Parliamentarian/CPDM Wouri East	Yaounde	29/1/2023	M.
Rolande Ngo Issi Epse Mbock	42	Parliamentarian/ PCRN Nyong-Ekelle division	Yaounde	7/12/2023	F
Rose Agbor Abunaw M.	66	Former Deputy Speaker/ Manyu division	Buea	28/10/2023	F
Tabot Lawson	55	Parliamentarian/ CPDM	Yaounde	07/12/2023	M
Tchende Malgung	57	Parliamentarian/ CPDM Mayo-Tsanaga division	Yaounde	07/12/2023.	M
Tsinga Flobert	55	Parliamentarian/ CPDM Mifi division	Bafoussam	4/4/2022	M

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Research Attestation

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN PAIX-TRAVAIL-PATRIE ***** UNIVERSITÉ DE YAOUNDE I ***** FACULTE DES ARTS, LETTRES ET SCIENCES HUMAINES ***** DEPARTEMENT D'HISTOIRE *****		REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON PEACE-WORK-FATHERLAND ***** THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I ***** FACULTY OF ARTS, LETTERS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES ***** DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY *****
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RESEARCH ATTESTATION

I, undersigned, **Professor BOKAGNE BETOBO Edouard** head of the History Department of the Faculty of Art, Letters and Human Sciences of the University of Yaoundé I, certify that the student **TENDONGMO MARILYNE ASAAH** Matricule **21N253** has been enrolled in the Master's degree since **October 2022** at the History Department, option History of International Relations. She is currently conducting her research under the supervision of **Prof. WILLIBROAD DZE-NGWA**, on the topic: « *Women in the National Assembly: Pushing the Frontiers of Female Participation in the Building of Sustainable Peace in Cameroon 1990 - 2020* ».

We recommend her to heads of administrations, documentation centers, archives and any other national or international institution, in order to facilitate her research.

The present authorization is issued to her to serve and assert what is right.

Appendix 2: Research Interview Protocol

Yaoundé,

 The Head of department

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COLLEAGUES, RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

To the Respondent

This questionnaire is designed to help the researcher to conduct an effective research for her Master's dissertation on the topic Hon. Emilia Lifaka Monjowa at the service of the nation (2002-2020): A study of female political leadership. Your assistance is kindly being sought to participate in this exercise by completing this questionnaire as frankly as possible. Please be assured that information provided in this questionnaire is purely for academic purpose and therefore will be treated with utmost **CONFIDENTIALITY**.

Thank you

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF THE FORM

Please read each question and tick the statement or choose the number that clearly reflects your view, you can also express your view where necessary.

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS

1. Sex/ Gender M ☐ F ☐

2. Marital status: Married ☐ Single ☐ Divorced ☐

3. Age: 18-30 years ☐ 31-41years ☐ 41-50years ☐ 51-60years ☐

4. Educational Background: Master's Degree ☐ Bachelor Degree ☐

Professional Certificate (HND/Diploma) ☐ Doctorate Degree ☐ Advance Level ☐

Ordinary Level ☐ Elementary (FSLC) ☐

Other Tertiary (please specify).....

5. Department.....

6. Category/Level.....

7. What position do you occupy in your Department: Director ☐

Sub-director? ☐ Senior Staff (Cadre) ☐ junior staff (Agent de maîtres) ☐

Hon ☐ Others

SECTION B : QUESTIONS

8. Whats your connection with Emilia Monjowa Lifaka?

.....

9. How long have you known her and what can you say about her upbringing?.....

10. In three words, How can you describe her ?.....
- 11 What do you think is the leadership secret that attracted people towards her?.....
- 12 What is the best memory you keep of her at the level of Fako West Constituency and the National Assembly?.....
13. What is the worst memory you have about her at both constituency and National levels?
14. Name some instruments that promote the evolution of female political leadership.....
- 15 How did her educational background shape her political career?
16. According to you, what projected her from a national to an international politician?.....
17. What are some of her national and international achievements ?.....
18. What can you consider as her main weakness at all levels of her leadership?.....
19. What are some of the challenges faced by female political leaders today?.....
20. What recommendations can be given for an effective cohabitation of both gender in leadership?.....
21. Can you consider her as a historic female leader?, if yes, what can be done to honour her memory?, if no, why?.....

Hon/Dr/Sir/Madame, thank you very much for your time and your frank responses

Signed

Tendongmo Marilyne Asaah

Appendix 3: A Letter of Demand for Autorisation

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix-Travail-Patrie

MINISTERE DE LA PROMOTION
DE LA FEMME ET DE LA FAMILLE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

DIRECTION DES AFFAIRES GENERALES

SOUS-DIRECTION DU PERSONNEL,
DE LA SOLDE ET DES PENSIONS

SERVICE DE LA FORMATION, DES STAGES
ET DE LA GESTION PREVISIONNELLE DES EFFECTIFS

BUREAU DE LA FORMATION ET DES STAGES

No.22/_____/L/MINPROFF/SG/DAG/SDPSP/SFSGPE/BFS

00001066

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace-Work-Fatherland

MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT
AND FAMILY

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL AFFAIRS

SUB-DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL,
SALARIES AND PENSIONS

SERVICE FOR TRAINING, INTERSHIPS AND FORWARD
MANAGEMENT OF PERSONNEL

OFFICE OF TRAINING AND INTERSHIP

Yaounde, the

12 0 JUN 2022

THE MINISTER
LE MINISTRE

A/To

Mrs. TENDONGMO Marilyne ASAAH
épse NJONGUO

Tel : 653 29 95 41 / 677 20 80 28

-YAOUNDE-

Subject : a demande for autorisation to
consult documents of your Ministry

Ref : Y /L of 8 June 2022

Madam,

While acknowledging receipt of your letter with the above-mentioned subject and reference,

I would like to inform you that I have approved your request to carry out research at the Department of Women's Social Empowerment and the Documentation and Archives Service of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family.

I hereby call on you to contact the officials in charge of the above-mentioned work units, for practical modalities related to your demand.

Yours sincerely.

Copy :

- DPSF ;
- SDA.



Appendix 4: Research Attestation from the Lord Mayor of Buea Council

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
PAIX-TRAVAIL-PATRIE

UNIVERSITÉ DE YAOUNDÉ I

FACULTE DES ARTS, LETTRES ET
SCIENCES HUMAINES

DEPARTEMENT D'HISTOIRE



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
PEACE-WORK-FATHERLAND

THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

FACULTY OF ARTS, LETTERS AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

THE LORD MAYOR
BUEA COUNCIL

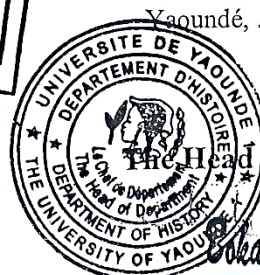
RESEARCH ATTESTATION

I, undersigned, **Professor BOKAGNE BETOBO Edouard** head of the History Department of the Faculty of Art, Letters and Human Sciences of the University of Yaoundé I, certify that the student **TENDONGMO MARILYNE ASAAH** Matricule **21N253** has been enrolled in the Master's degree since October 2022 at the History Department, option History of International Relations. She is currently conducting her research under the supervision of **Prof. WILLIBROAD DZE-NGWA**, on the topic: « *Women in the National Assembly: Pushing the Frontiers of Female Participation in the Building of Sustainable Peace in Cameroon 1990 - 2020* ».

We recommend her to heads of administrations, documentation centers, archives and any other national or international institution, in order to facilitate her research.

The present authorization is issued to her to serve and assert what is right.

Mohabe Elvis Ndembé
Senior Malls Officer
Buea Council
BSc. in Education /Biology

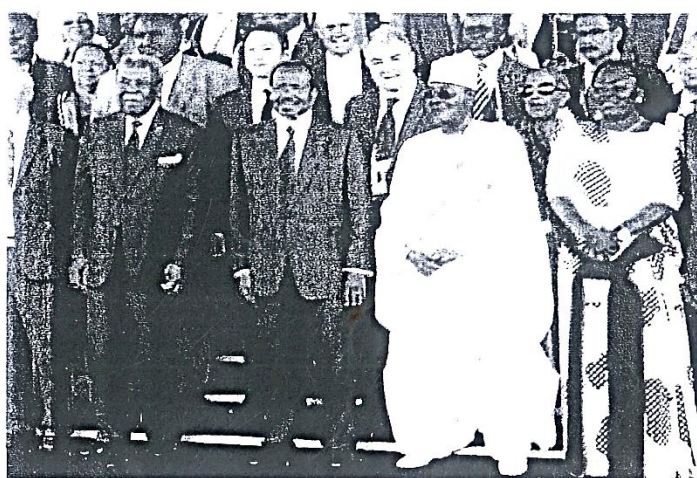


Yaoundé,

The Head of department

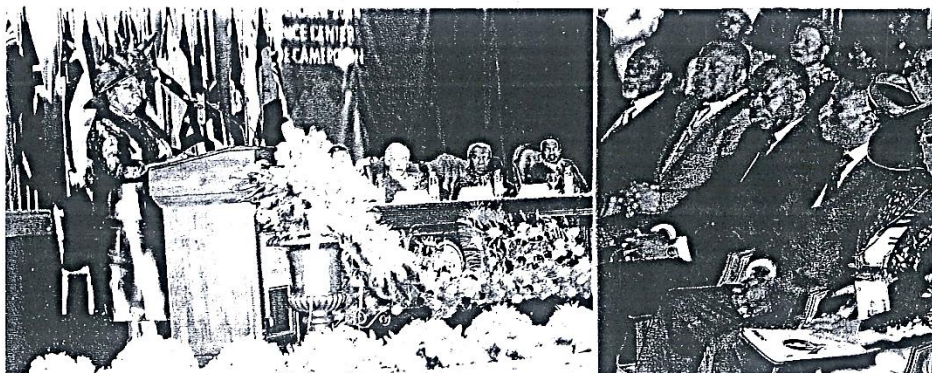
Bokagne Betobo Edouard
Maître de Conférences

THE 60TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE



The 60th
Parliamentary Conference
Yaounde - Cameroon
10th October 2011
time that a CPA
magnitude was held
over one week,
epic centre of Cameroonian
the calibre of delegates
present and the
characterized the
The CPC from ever
forum where
representatives of
Parliaments and
brainstorm and
promote Parliamentary

Hon. Lifaka used her experience about CPA matters to give directives. It was staff and participants that she did not sleep within the period the conference was held in Cameroon. She contributed enormously in mobilizing the entire Country to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Cameroon a resounding success. The Ministries were on hand to receive CPA participants who went on site seeing the country. To crown it all, the perfect organization of the event captured the attention of the H. E. President Paul BIYA, who took off time his busy schedule, to personally open the Conference.

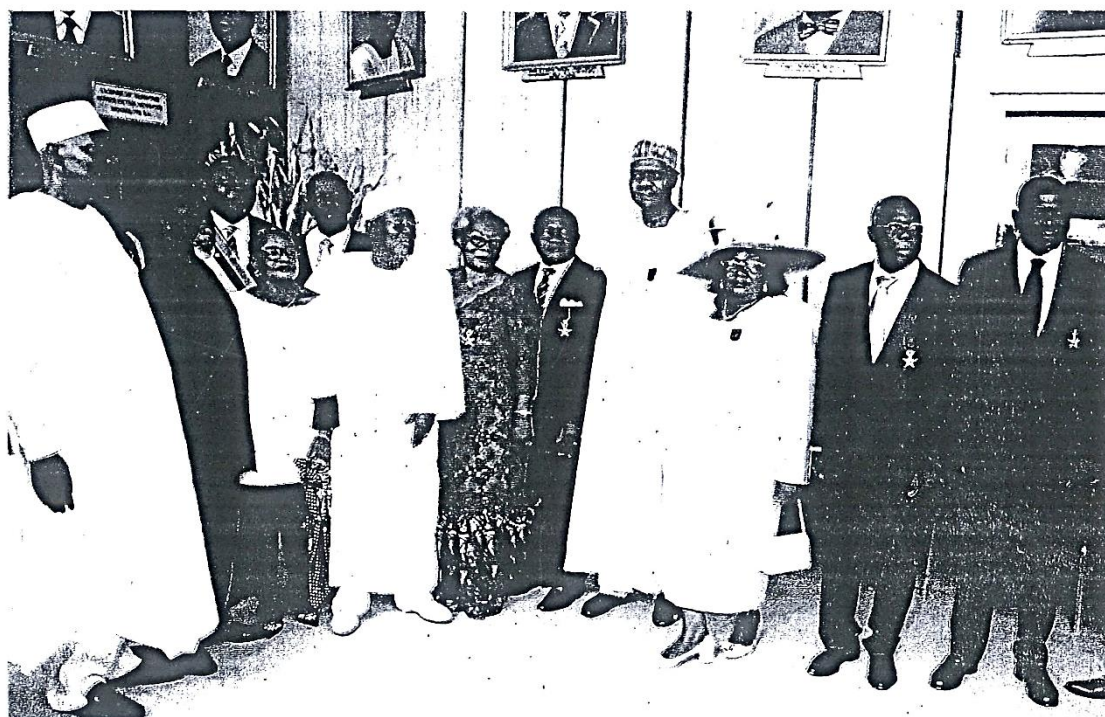


Appendix 6: National Recognitions for Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka

NATIONAL RECOGNITIONS FOR HON. EMILIA MONJOWA LIFAKA



The fallen MP of the Fako West Constituency, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and Chairperson of CPA International received Medals from the State of Cameroon. There is no doubt that she was decorated because of her hardwork and her unflinching loyalty to her Country Cameroon, which she served with pride, diligence and honour in various capacities. The Medals she received are as follows; Knight of the Cameroon National Order of Merit, Officer of the Cameroon National Order of Merit and Knight of the Cameroon National Order of Valour.



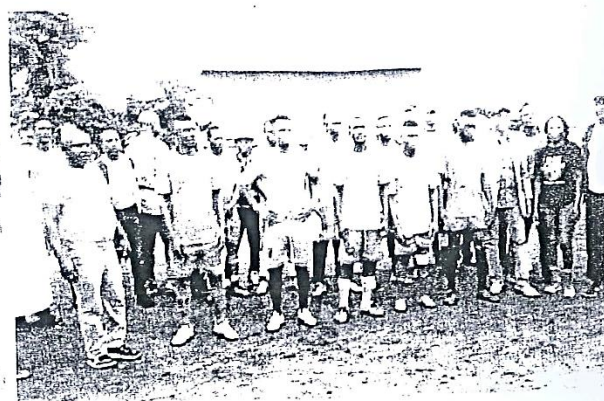
Appendix 7: Sporting Activities

5. SPORTING ACTIVITIES

It is an established fact that sports is not only a rallying factor but a health benefit for those who practice it regularly. This is the reason why Hon. Lifaka sponsored sporting activities for her people during long holidays. She also used sports all through her life as a Member of Parliament to keep her youths busy and entertained. Some of the sporting activities she masterminded include; the Hon. Lifaka's Unity Cup that took place in Bonjongo Court Area from 2008 - 2015. This tournament usually brought together about 500 youths and thousand of supporters who took the competition as a perfect opportunity to relax.

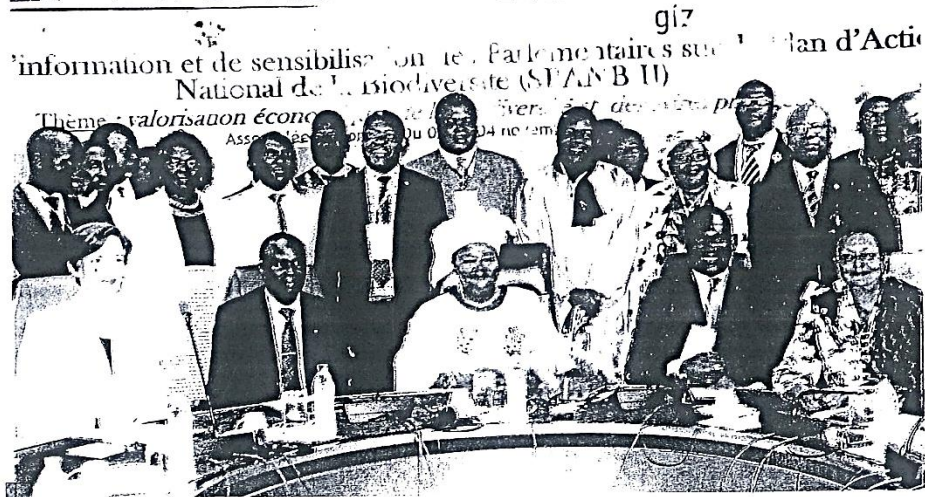


In the same perspective, the Maumu Community was also a steady beneficiary of Hon. Lifaka's sporting activities. On their part, a football and handball competition has always been organized to keep youths away from negative activities. This tournament usually brought together over 800 youths and countless viewers and supporters. It therefore goes without doubt that Hon. Lifaka succeeded to keep her youths busy, entertained and most importantly responsible for her entire time in Parliament.



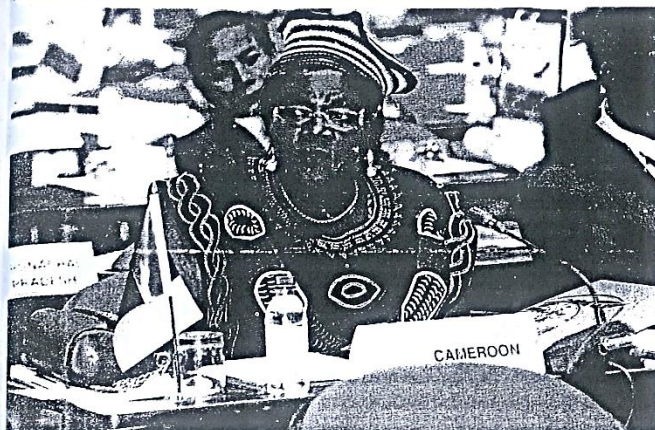
Appendix 8: Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka Chairing Some Parliamentary Network Seminars

HON. EMILIA MONJOWA LIFAKA CHAIRING SOME PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK SEMINARS



**Appendix 9: Hon. Lifaka's Speech during the 6th CPA India Regional Conference,
Patna Bihar, 16th to 19th February 2018**

**HON. LIFAKA'S SPEECH DURING THE 6TH CPA INDIA REGIONAL
CONFERENCE, PATNA BIHAR. 16TH TO 19TH FEBRUARY 2018.**



"Madam the Right Honourable Sumitra Mahajan, Speaker of Lok Sabha, Your Excellency the Hon. Chief Minister, Bihar, The Hon. Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, The Hon. Head of opposition, Bihar Legislative Assembly, The Hon. Speaker, Bihar Legislative Assembly, Distinguish Ministers and Member of Parliament here present, The Secretary General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Distinguish Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with great joy and humility that I stand before you today in Patna Bihar as a humble servant duly elected to serve the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to which India is a very strong force to reckon with. I said this reflecting on my own words during my champagne while running for the position of Chairperson of CPA International. I said then, mine was about being of service to you as members of our association. May I therefore use this opportunity to sincerely thank you again for your multifaceted support that led to my election as Chairperson of this distinguished Association.

My country and especially my Head of State are grateful for the confidence which the India and the other Regions of the CPA have bestowed on Cameroon through my humble self. Madam the Rt. Hon. Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, I wish to express our profound gratitude to the people of Patna in particular and India in general for the warm welcome and the generous hospitality accorded to us right from the Airport. This warm reception is a testimony of the excellent cooperation ties existing between members of the Commonwealth family and the Legendary hospitality of the Indian people.

It is our wish that this relationship is maintained, nurtured and strengthen so as to further enhance the core values and goals of the CPA. Mr. Chief Minister of Bihar your state is beautiful; your people are welcoming and gracious. Mr. Speaker of the Legislative Assembly you and your entire team are wonderful. Through your action we have come to the conclusion that India is the place to be. Dear colleagues, you have chosen two very important topics for discussion 'Parliament role in the development agenda and legislature and Judiciary'.



The question of development is rhetorical because it is often spoken about and at times it is as if it means different things to different people. While this may be true, it is my view that development means improvement of an existing situation. Each of our countries has a developmental plan which acts as a road map that defines the kind of development trajectory that they aspire to. Development to succeed must be people centred. The people must be part of developing their own developmental team agenda. This is not only participatory; it is also a guarantee of inclusiveness.

As public Representative, we are the mouth piece of our citizen who voted us into power and entrusted us with the responsibility of making their lives better. We represent their aspiration and concerns. They have given us power and the mandate to lead. They have entrusted us with the responsibilities of overseeing that, what the government plans to do really happens. Secondly it is to hold government accountable for the action they take and lastly to make laws that will facilitate their development..."

For the full speech, visit www.cpahq.org