

THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE 1

FACULTY OF ARTS, LETTERS AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

POST GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR
HUMAN, SOCIAL AND
EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

DOCTORAL RESEARCH UNIT FOR
HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY



UNIVERSITÉ DE YAOUNDE I

FACULTE DES ARTS, LETTRES ET
SCIENCES HUMAINES

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

DÉPARTEMENT D'HISTOIRE

**THE UNITED STATES PEACE CORPS AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN
CAMEROON: CASE OF MEZAM DIVISION OF THE
NORTH WEST REGION, 1962-2017.**

*Doctorate Thesis /Ph.D in History, Specialty: History of International Relations
Submitted and Defended on December 05, 2025*

By

Aloysius SHU CHENWI

Jury

Role	Name	University
President	WANYAKA BONGUEN Virginie, Pr	University of Yaounde 1
Supervisor	Willibroad DZE-NGWA, Pr	University of Yaounde 1
Examiners	KOUFAN MENKENE Jean, Pr	University of Yaounde 1
	NGAM CHIA Confidence, Pr	University of Bamenda
	KUM Georges FUH, MC	University of Yaounde 1



December 2025

To my mother, Bridget Bih, for her moral, material and financial support

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Willibroad Dze-Ngwa, who despite his busy schedule, read and corrected the manuscripts. His criticisms, corrections and motivations, greatly enhanced the quality of this work.

My sincere gratitude goes to Professors Phillippe Blaise Essomba, Albert Pascal Temgoua (of blessed memory), Jean Koufan Menkene, Victor Julius Ngoh, Gabriel-Maxime Dong Mougol, Virginie Wanyaka Bonguen, Christian C. Tsala Tsala, Andre Tassou, Faustin Kenne; Associate Professors Edouard Bokagne, Cyrille Bekono, George Fuh Kum, David Nchindah Keming and Moussa II, for the training that has permitted me to face the challenges of research.

I am equally grateful to the authorities of libraries and archives that provided data for this work especially the staff of the archives of the Ministry of External Relations; the National Archives, Buea; Regional Archives, Bamenda; the librarians and staff of the main and faculty libraries of the University of Yaoundé I, the International Relations Institute of Cameroon and the Africa Network Against Illiteracy, Conflicts and Human Rights Abuse (ANICHRA) library.

Many thanks go to all my informants especially Joram Shu of the Agro-Industrial Complex Mambu Bafut, Stanley Tombir of the North West Association of Development Organisations (NWADO), Solomon Saah of the Bamenda Handicraft Cooperative Society (BHCS), Joseph Tiemuncho and Godfred T. Weriwoh who despite their busy schedules, spared time to furnish me with the information that formed an integral part of the work. They granted me access to the archives and information centres needed for this study.

Finally, I am thankful to my father Eric Chenwi and the entire Maurice Shu family for the financial support, which helped in the realisation of this study. I owe more than I can ever repay to my uncle Pascal Ngwabumba and his family for the unfailing love, support and confidence. Their example is one I can only strive to emulate.

My sincere thanks also go to my dear wife, Onorine Lum Shu and my kids Dilland Neba and Zoe-Netanya Bih, for their moral and emotional support. I also wish to thank my friends and classmates: Nelson Amabo, Julie Essombe for their moral and friendly support.

These words of appreciation notwithstanding, the lapses and credit in this work are my sole responsibility.

OBLIGATORY OATH OF INTELLECTUAL PROBITY

I, the undersigned **ALOYSIUS SHU CHENWI**, acknowledge by this oath of probity and intellectual property that this doctorate/ PhD. thesis in History of International Relations is entirely the work of my mind, as well as the product of my own intellectual investigations. It is therefore not, in any way, subject to plagiarism or counterfeiting. All borrowings have been explicitly reported and quoted in accordance with conventions in science in general and in my discipline in particular. I, therefore, admit that any convincing falsification of this assertion should lead to its nullity.

ABSTRACT

This study entitled: “Fifty-Five Years of the United States Peace Corps and Community Development Initiatives: Case of Mezam Division of the North West Region of Cameroon, 1962-2017” seeks to investigate and give a critical appraisal of Cameroon-United States cooperation with regards to community development in Mezam Division. The study unveils the role played by the United States Peace Corps in the socio-economic advancement of Mezam Division. This aim is met within the framework of a number of objectives: it traces the origin and evolution of the United States Peace Corps as well as presents the local development initiatives in Mezam Division before, during and after the arrival of the Peace Corps volunteers since the political and social realities in Mezam ultimately shaped the activities of the volunteers upon their arrival in the study area. The study also presents the activities of the agency in Mezam in the social and economic domain especially in agriculture, health and education and finally explores the impact of these activities as well as evaluates the extent of humanitarianism in the activities. The above objectives constitute the major themes discussed in the study. The central question in the work is what was the basis, evolution and impact of the U.S. Peace Corps in Cameroon? Primary, secondary and tertiary sources were the main sources of information implored in the realisation of this work. Our study adopted the qualitative and quantitative research methods. Our findings revealed two basic issues that were humanitarian activities on the one hand and a hidden agenda on the other hand. In the former, the agency carried out projects like the Mambu-Bawum Water Scheme which was identified as one of the success stories of the United States Peace Corps in Mezam Division because of its substantial influence to community development. Other projects like agriculture, education and health were equally given a considerable insight. In the latter, the agency was out to contain communism, position the volunteers well for professional opportunities and better employment after service, open new economic avenues, markets and make new friends for the United States as well as tilted its agenda to meet the demands of the Department of State in particular and the White House in general. The study argues that community support, safety and security as well as availability of resources made Mezam Division a favourable destination for the United States Peace Corps. This led to the conclusion that the socio-economic development of Mezam was greatly influenced by the United States Peace Corps. This notwithstanding the benefits that could have accrued from these projects were greatly hampered by the problem of language, suspicion and the socio-political crisis. In this regard, the partnership is in need of future closer ties and the return of peace so as to boost the agency’s activities in the study area.

RESUME

L'étude intitulée: "Fifty- Five Years of the United States Peace Corps and Community Development Initiatives: Case of Mezam Division of the North West Region of Cameroon, 1962-2017" cherche à enquêter et à donner une évaluation critique de la coopération Cameroun – Etat Unis en matière de développement communautaire. L'étude dévoile le rôle joué par le Corps de la Paix des Etats-Unis dans la promotion socio-économique de la zone d'étude. Cet objectif est atteint dans le cadre d'un certain nombre d'objectifs. Il retrace l'origine et l'évolution du Corps de la paix des Etats-Unis et présente les initiatives de développement local dans le département de Mezam avant, pendant et après l'arrivée des volontaires du Corps de la Paix puisque les réalités politiques et sociales de la Mezam ont façonné les activités des volontaires du Corps de la Paix à leur arrivée dans la zone d'étude. L'étude présente également les activités de l'agence dans la Mezam sur le plan social et économique en particulier dans les domaines de l'agriculture, de la santé et de l'éducation et explore enfin l'impact de ces activités ainsi que l'étendue de l'humanitaire dans ces activités. Les objectifs ci-dessus constituent les principaux thèmes abordés dans l'étude. La question centrale de ce travail est de savoir quels ont été la base, l'évolution et l'impact du Corps de la Paix des Etats-Unis au Cameroun. Les sources primaires, secondaires et tertiaires ont été les principales sources d'informations consultées dans la réalisation de ce travail. Notre étude a adopté les méthodes de recherche qualitative et quantitative. Nos résultats ont révélé deux problèmes fondamentaux qui étaient les activités humanitaires d'une part et un programme caché d'autre part. Dans le premier cas, l'agence a mis en œuvre les projets tels que le système d'approvisionnement en eau de Mambu-Bawum, qui a été identifié comme l'une des réussites du Corps de la Paix dans la Mezam en raison de son influence substantielle sur le développement communautaire. D'autres projets tels que l'agriculture, l'éducation et la santé ont également reçu un aperçu considérable. Dans ce dernier cas, l'agence devait contenir le communisme, de bien positionner les volontaires pour les opportunités professionnelles et un meilleur emploi après le service, d'ouvrir de nouvelles voies économiques, de nouveaux marchés et se faire de nouveaux amis pour les Etats-Unis et faire pencher son agenda pour répondre aux demandes du Département d'Etat en particulier et de la Maison Blanche en général. L'étude soutient que la sûreté et la sécurité, le soutien communautaire ainsi que la disponibilité des ressources ont fait de la Mezam une destination favorable pour le Corps de la Paix des Etats-Unis. Ceci conduit à la conclusion que le développement socio-économique de la Mezam a été fortement influencé par le Corps de la Paix des Etats-Unis. Les avantages qui auraient pu résulter de ces projets ont été fortement entravés par le problème de la langue, de la suspicion et de la crise socio-politique. A cet égard, le partenariat a besoin de futurs liens plus étroits et du retour de la paix afin de dynamiser les activités de l'agence dans la zone d'étude.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
OBLIGATORY OATH OF INTELLECTUAL PROBITY	iv
ABSTRACT	v
RESUME	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	xiii
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: ORIGIN, EVOLUTION AND IMPLANTATION OF THE	39
PEACE CORPS IN CAMEROON.....	39
1.1. Introduction.....	39
1.2. Geographical Setting.....	39
1.3 Historical Setting	40
1.3. Origin of the Peace Corps	44
1.4. Objectives of the Peace Corps	56
1.5. Evolution of the Peace Corps.....	58
1.6. Reason and Procedure for the Extension of the Peace Corps to Cameroon.....	68
1.7. The Implantation of the Peace Corps in Cameroon	68
1.8. Justification for the Extension of the Peace Corps to Mezam.....	78
1.9. Motivations of Volunteers	81
1.10. Application and Selection of Volunteers	82
1.11. Training of Volunteers.....	84
1.12. Staff and Organisation	92
1.13. Funding.....	94
1.14. Conclusion.....	97
CHAPTER TWO: SELF-RELIANT DEVELOPMENT: A PANACEA FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN MEZAM DIVISION	98
2.1. Introduction.....	98
2.2. The Concept of Self-Reliance	98
2.3. Local Institutions and Self-Reliance Development in Mezam Division.....	102
2.4. Brief History of VDAs in Mezam Division	102
2.5. The Place of Community Participation in Local Development in Mezam Division.....	104
2.6. Challenges of some Village Development Associations in Mezam Division.....	130

2.7. Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs) or <i>Njangis</i> : A Support.....	131
System to VDAs in Mezam	131
2.8. Types and Nature of <i>Njangi</i> in Mezam.....	136
2.8.1. Financial or Cash <i>Njangi</i>	137
2.8.1.1.Reasons for the Growth of Cash or Financial <i>Njangi</i>	145
2.9. <i>Njangi</i> , an Engine of Development: Case Study of the <i>Butah</i> Unity <i>Njangi</i> Group in Bafut.....	150
2.10. Farmer Groups (Service or Farming <i>Njangi</i>) as a Catalyst of Development in Mezam.....	152
2.10.1. Reasons for the Growth of Farming <i>Njangi</i> Groups	154
2.11. Some <i>Njangi</i> Groups as a Drawback to Development in Mezam	155
2.12. Conclusion	157
CHAPTER THREE: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE U.S. PEACE CORPS IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF MEZAM DIVISION.....	159
3.1. Introduction.....	159
3.2. Integrated Agriculture.....	160
3.3. Community Economic Development/Small Enterprise Development.....	179
3.3.2.1.1.The Peace Corps and the North West Cooperative Association (NWCA)	197
3.3.2.1.2.The Peace Corps and the Bamenda Handicraft Cooperative Society (BHCS)	206
3.3.2.2.Anglophone Women's Cooperatives	210
3.3.2.2.1.Mezam Women's Cooperative.....	213
3.4. Transport, Rural and Town (Urban) Planning	216
3.5. Conclusion	219
CHAPTER FOUR: U.S. PEACE CORPS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN.....	220
MEZAM DIVISION	220
4.1. Introduction.....	220
4.2. Community Health.....	220
4.2.2. Fight against Malnutrition	232
4.2.3. Mitigation and Prevention of HIV AIDS.....	235
4.2.4. Mitigation and Prevention of Malaria.....	245
4.2.5. Herbal Medicines, Clinics and Rural Pharmacies	247
4.3. Education	250
4.3.1. Maths /Science Project	254
4.3.2. Curriculum Development	278
4.3.3. Volunteers and Teacher Training Colleges	280
4.3.4. Library Development and Provision of Books	283
4.3.5. University Education	284
4.4. Conclusion	287

CHAPTER FIVE: ASSESSING THE U.S. PEACE CORPS ACTIVITIES IN MEZAM	
DIVISION.....	288
5.1. Introduction.....	288
5.2. Consequences of Peace Corps Activities in Mezam.....	288
5.2.1. Cross-Cultural Exchange.....	289
5.2.2. Grassroot Development.....	295
5.2.3.Collaboration with other Development Agencies.....	300
5.2.4. Capacity building and Self-Reliant Development.....	304
5.3. Assessing the Objectives of the Peace Corps.....	308
5.4. Challenges of the Peace Corps in Mezam.....	329
5.4.1. Suspicion of Volunteer Activities.....	329
5.4.2. Socio-Political Crisis in the North-West Region.....	331
5.4.3. Language Difficulties.....	332
5.4.4. Adaptability and Integration to Cross-Culture.....	333
5.4.5. Housing Problem.....	335
5.4.6. Safety and Security.....	336
5.5. An Overview of the Relations (Hidden Motives).....	337
5.6. Peace Corps- Mezam Relations: Mutuality or Dependence?.....	346
5.7. Recommendations.....	349
5.8. Conclusion.....	350
GENERAL CONCLUSION.....	352
APPENDICES.....	361
SOURCES CONSULTED.....	402
INDEXES.....	420

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A. Maps

1: Map showing the location of the North-West Region in Cameroon	41
2: Map Showing the location of Mezam Division in the North-West Region of Cameroon...	42
3: Map Showing Sub Divisions and Villages with visible Peace Corps Activities in.....	43

B. Tables

1: Distribution of Peace Corps Volunteers in the world in 2017	60
2: Percentage of Volunteer and Trainee skill, 1962-1977	64
3: Peace Corps Year of Entry/Exit in some African countries from 1961 to present.....	66
4: Evolution of Peace Corps Volunteer/Year in Cameroon from 1962-1984.....	76
5: Volunteer Distribution in the North-West Region in 2012.....	80
6: Number of Peace Corps Applicants between 1961-1980	83
7: Peace Corps Cameroon Volunteer Training Programme	89
8: Peace Corps Budget from Fiscal year 2011-Fiscal Year 2017	95
9: Programmatic Distribution of Peace Corps funding by U.S. Government agencies and the private sector in 2013.....	97
10: Some Village Development Associations in Mezam	103
11: Regional Branches of NJIBCUDA and BACUDA	112
12: Special Levies for the Realisation of the Njibujang Water Project in 2012	113
13: Some annual VDA levy for men and women resident in the village	119
14: Other income sources for the Realisation of the Njibujang Water Project between 2016 and 2017.....	119
15: Levies for the Construction of a Multipurpose Hall in Njibujang.....	119
16: Self-Reliant Projects Realised by some VDAs in Mezam.....	123
17: Branch Contributions towards the Realisation of the Njibujang Water Project from	128
18: Cost of the Njibujang Water Project after completion in 2017	129
19: Some volunteers that have served in the Agriculture Programme in Mezam	163
20: Distribution of Small Enterprise Development Volunteers in Mezam.....	182
21: Credit Union Growth 1969-1975.....	188
22: Credit Seminar Courses organised and taught by Volunteers	193
23: Expansion of Credit Unions in Mezam between 1979 to 1984	193
24: Staff Reduction at Union Levels under PRAMS I 1 st November 1991 to 31 st March 1993	206
25: The Mezam Women's Cooperative Society in 1979	215
26: Some Town Planning Volunteers that served in Mezam.....	218
27: Some health facilities in which Volunteers have worked with in Mezam.....	222
28: Some health volunteers that have served in Mezam.....	224
29: Health Districts and number of health areas in Mezam division.....	226
30: Yearly Distribution of Maternal Mortality in Health Districts in Mezam Division.....	227
31: Access to Health facilities in Bafut Sub Division.....	231

32: Some secondary and teacher training institutions in Mezam in the 1960s.....	258
33: Requested Volunteers for Mezam in 1964	263
34: Distribution of Education Volunteers in Mezam Division from 1962 -2016.....	264
35: U.S. Exports to Cameroon in the 1970s.....	345

C. Plates

1: First Group of Peace Corps Volunteers in Cameroon	74
2 : Volunteer and Counterpart in a Demonstration Farm in Mambu	165
3 : Home Gardening Nutrition	165
4 : Mushroom Training Workshop in Bamenda	166
5 : The North West Farmers' Organisation.....	166
6: New Varieties of Potatoes in Bafut.....	167
7: Some of the Moringa seeds in AIC.....	167
8 : Crossbred Gudhai and Holstein Cow in PRTC	169
9: Farmers Planting Guatemala and Acacia Fodder	169
10: Agroforestry Volunteer in Bambui Fish Station.....	172
11 : The Agro-Industrial Complex in Mambu	173
12: Agroforestry Volunteers and Farmers in the Centre.....	174
13 : Volunteer and Students Setting a Nursery and Flower Beds.....	178
14 : Community Nursery in Bawum	178
15 : Best Nursery Award in the N.W and West Regions	179
16: Bronze winner award in the National Nursery Competition	179
17: Training with Participants in Bamenda on Enterprise Development	182
18: The Cameroon Cooperative Credit Union League	190
19: North West Cooperative Association	202
20 : Bamenda Handicraft Cooperative Society.....	208
21: Bamenda Handicraft Cooperative Workshop	208
22 : Reconstructed Bamenda Handicraft Cooperative Shop.....	209
23: Bamenda Handicraft Forest	209
24 : Saint Theresa Catholic Medical Centre Mambu.....	230
25 : Saint Joseph's Children and Adult's Home Mambu	230
26: Demonstrations on the use of Condoms in Mambu.....	231
27 : Training with peer educators in Bawum.....	235
28: Nutrition training on Moringa in Nforya	235
29 : HIV training with G.S.S Mundum students.....	239
30 : Youth Education through Soccer in Bamenda.....	239
31 : HIV Training with students in Bamenda	239
32 : HIV Testing for Persons with Disabilities in Bambili.....	240
33 :A Volunteer Counterpart Conducting HIV Testing in Bambili.....	240
34 : Training Persons with Disabilities to be HIV Prevention Educators in Tubah	241
35 : Training the Deaf on HIV Prevention in Bamenda	241
36 : Training with Youth Group in Bamenda	244

37 :World AIDS Day in Bamenda	244
38 : World AIDS Day in Mundum	245
39 : HIV wall of frame in Bafut.....	245
40 : Demonstration on Mosquitoe Net use and maintenance in Bafut	246
41: Malaria training with G.S. Mundum pupils.....	246
42 : Trained in participant in herbal Medicine.....	249
43: Herbal garden in Mambu	249
44 : Pioneer Students of CCAST Bambili	270
45: First Principal of CCAST Bambili.....	270
46 : Sacred Heart College Mankon.....	272
47: Volunteers teaching English in	272
48 : Volunteer during Training with Teachers in Bamenda	274
49: Volunteers with Students during Training in Bamenda.....	274
50 : Training on Mushroom cultivation G.S.S Mundum.....	277
51: Training on Aloe Vera Soap in fabrication in Mundum.....	277
52: Volunteer during ICT training in Bamenda.....	279
53: The Prebyterian Women Teacher Training Centre in 1961.....	282
54: OLLC Mankon.....	284
55 : Volunteer with friends in Bamenda	293
56: Volunteer during a cultural Festival	293
57: Storage Tank in Mambu	299
58 : Stand Tap in Mambu.....	300
59: Stand Tap in Bawum.....	300
60 : Memorandum of Understanding with PLAN Cameroon.....	302
61: Memorandum of Understanding with Heifer Project International.....	302
62: Volunteers in a Weekend Party in Bamenda	324

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFV	Agro-Forestry Volunteer
AGYW	Adolescent Girls and Young Women
AIC	Agro-Industrial Complex
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APCD	Associate Peace Corps Director
ASS. PROF	Associate Professor
BASCUDA	Bawum Social, Cultural and Development Association
BUST	Bamenda University of Science and Technology
CamCCUL	Cameroon Cooperative Credit Union League
CYC	Cameroon Youth Corps
CCAST	Cameroon College of Arts, Science and Technology
C.D	Country Director
COS	Close of Service
CPC	Cameroon Protestant College
CUAPWD	Coordinating Unit of Association of Persons with Disabilities
DMO	Director of Management and Operations
DPT	Director of Programming and Training
EMTCTHIV	Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV
G S S	Government Secondary School
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HTTC	Higher Teacher Training College
IRAD	<i>Institut de Recherche Agricole pour le Développement</i>
IST	In-Service Training
LCC	Longla Comprehensive College
MASCUDA	Mambu Social, Cultural and Development Association
MDG	Millenium Development Goals
MINREX	<i>Ministère des Relations Extérieure</i>

MST	Mid Service Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOWEFOR	North West Farmers Organisation
NW	North West
NWADO	North West Association of Development Organisations
NWCA	North West Cooperative Association
NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
OLLC	Our Lady of Lourdes College
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PC	Peace Corps
PCMO	Peace Corps Medical Officer
PCPP	Peace Corps Partnership Programme
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief
PLWHIV	People Living with HIV
PMTCTHIV	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV
PST	Pre-Service Training
PROF	Professor
PRTC	Presbyterian Rural Training Centre
ROSCA	Rotating Savings and Credit Association
SAJOCAH	Saint Joseph's Children and Adult Home
SAHECO	Sacred Heart College
SNEC	<i>Société Nationale des Eaux du Cameroun</i>
SPA	Small Project Assistance
STCMC	Saint Theresa Catholic Medical Centre
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAST	Volunteer Activities and Support Training
VDA	Village Development Association
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WAFSP	West Africa Food Security Programme

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The birth of the Peace Corps could be traced way back to 1960 at President J.F. Kennedy's inaugural event during which he challenged Americans to volunteer to serve their country. In an *impromptu* speech, J.F. Kennedy conferred a notion to a sea of restless students for an organisation that could bring together American youths to serve. Even though the speech did not last long (over three minutes), his seed of an idea transformed dramatically in to Kennedy's most lasting legacy-the Peace Corps.¹ Many African leaders who led their countries to independence and their successors recalled fondly their relationship with the young and dynamic American leader, who reached out to involve and assist them. Kennedy's special relationship with the countries of Africa was unpremeditated, but actually a fulfilled campaign promise.² But it was an afterthought that excited the imagination of thousands of college students. The enthusiasm swelled with the admonition of President Kennedy's inaugural address.³ His famous words "And so my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country" were part of one of the famous presidential speeches in American history.⁴ For the first time in an American presidential election, Africa became a conspicuous issue. During the political showdown, J.F. Kennedy rebuked his Conservative challenger for disregarding the value of the budding continent and pledged, in the event of victory, to connect Africa and its people. Before the campaign was over, he made 479 references to Africa.⁵ The effusion of letters from students was very much that Kennedy was afraid he would not establish the organisation in time to take in the first flood of graduates. When Kennedy became president in 1961, he reinforced relations with the African states and also employed very effective personal diplomacy with these states.

By the end of that year, he opened embassies in most of the newly independent African states, while a steady stream of African Heads of States were also welcomed in Washington D.C as follows; 11 in 1961, 10 in 1962 and 7 in 1963.⁶ In each case, Kennedy made it clear that he was committed to African nationalism and independence. He repeatedly

¹ Stanley Meisler, *When the World Calls, The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and its First Fifty Years*, Boston Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 2011, p.5.

² J.A. Amin, "Making Sense of Fifty Years of Peace Corps in Cameroon", University of Dayton, *International African Journal of Historical Studies*, Vol.47, No.2, 2014, p.319.

³ Meisler, *When the World*, p.1.

⁴ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2013, p.3.

⁵ Amin, "Making Sense of," p.319.

⁶ K.F. Njuafac, "The United States and the Democratisation Process in Central Africa, 1990-2001: The Case of Cameroon and Chad", PhD. Thesis in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2012, p.3.

amazed many of his visitors from Africa by stating that he recognised their declared demand to remain neutral in the Cold War. Also, he expressed the wish that America would in due course win them over through actions and outcomes more than just words.⁷ From the point of view of the non-aligned new independent states, his inaugural address stated that: “to those new states whom we welcome to the rank of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial rule shall not have passed away to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny.”⁸ In fact, Kennedy’s ambitions were targeted towards the effective implementation of the principle of self-determination, which the former colonial territories and peoples clamoured for. To bridge the gap of American ambassadors, Kennedy urgently asked the youths, to serve the interest of America in the Third World. He suggested that:

I therefore propose that our inadequate efforts in this area be supplemented by a Peace Corps of talented young men and women willing and able to serve their country in this fashion for 3 years as an alternative or as a supplement to peace time selective service..., well qualified through rigorous standards, well trained in the languages, skills and customs they will need to know. These workers would be directed and paid by the U.S. foreign aid agencies.⁹

From his offhand campaign remark, shaped speedily by his brother-in-law, Sargent Shriver in 1961, Kennedy established the Peace Corps on March 1st 1961, less than two months in to his presidency and the first volunteers headed out in August to Ghana. The organisation since then ascended with remarkable excitement and publicity, attracting the attention of thousands of hopeful young Americans. His idea was to create a Peace Corps-a calling for Americans who were willing to volunteer to live alongside people of developing nations.¹⁰ Youths in America reacted positively to the suggestion of President Kennedy. In November 1960, a set of students met in a congress in Princeton University and gave full support to the idea of the U.S. Peace Corps. The conference participants concurred that the Peace Corps would fight Communism and also rekindle idealism.¹¹

Kennedy regarded the Peace Corps as a Cold War weapon to strengthen the influence, reputation and image of the United States overseas and contain the spread of Communism abroad, but many of his legislators were doubtful of what was jibingly called the “Kiddie Corps”. Despite the positive response to Kennedy’s suggestion, President Eisenhower made mockery of the Peace Corps and ironically styled it a juvenile experiment

⁷ <https://www.jfklibrary.org> consulted on 15/May/2021 at 7: 00 a.m.

⁸ Njuafac, “The United States,” p.3.

⁹ J.A. Amin, *The Peace Corps in Cameroon*, Washington, Kent University Press, 1992, p.4., Meisler, *When the World*, p.9.

¹⁰ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, p.3.

¹¹ Amin, *The Peace Corps*, p.6.

and suggested that its members should be sent to the moon.¹² Nixon and his colleagues also wasted no time in attacking the idea. Richard Nixon deferred a similar idea after it was proposed to him by an African Affairs Bureau official, jeered and branded the programme by stating that: “the Peace Corps was a haven for draft dodgers. Mr. Kennedy would develop a cult of escapism. He argued that it catered to young men looking to skip out on the military draft.”¹³ Also an editorial in the Harvard Crimson reported that: “the Peace Corps is arrogant and colonialist in the same way as the government of which it is part.”¹⁴ Others ridiculed it and dubbed the Peace Corps as Kennedy’s Kiddle Corps and the Children’s Crusade.¹⁵ Irrespective of the chastisement, the Peace Corps persisted in popularity especially among young people and college students during its initial years. By 1966, the organisation celebrated its fifth anniversary and boasted of over 15,000 volunteers in 46 countries serving two-year term of service. Kennedy wanted the new organisation to be a semi-autonomous entity with its own public face and should be synonymous with success. In defining the purpose of the Peace Corps, in a report that Kennedy signed in February 1961 that preceded the birth of the organisation, it stipulated that: “the Peace Corps ... can contribute to the development of critical countries and regions. It can promote international cooperation and good will towards this country. It can also contribute to the education of America and to more intelligent participation in the world.”¹⁶

There has been growing needs and rising expectations on voluntary organisations to provide community development and assistance to the areas in which they operate and serve. In other words, realising locally identified social and economic targets. This was because improvement projects and other social progress programmes and infrastructure were inadequate in some African countries and most of the time, these advancement projects were not furnished by the government.¹⁷ The fact that most of these developing nations had inadequate basic community needs or services explains why immediately after independence, most Third World countries in general and Africa in particular saw the need to achieve development. Julius Nyerere, the President of Tanzania chose to address the problem of underdevelopment by persuading his people to depend on their own resources, forces and

¹² E. Andrew, *8 Little-Known Facts About the Peace Corps*, consulted on 15/May/2021 at 6:30 a.m.

¹³ J.A. Amin, “The Peace Corps: Origins and Performance in Cameroon”, PhD Thesis in History, University of Texas, 1988, p.36.

¹⁴ www.moneycrashers.com consulted on 20/May/2018 at 6:30 p.m.

¹⁵ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.37.

¹⁶ Amin, *The Peace Corps*, p.10.

¹⁷ K.A. Ollong, “The Role of Multinational Corporations in Community Development Initiatives in Cameroon, 1998-2010”, Bamenda, *Pan-Tikar Journal of History*, Vol. 1., No.1, March, 2013, p.50.

initiatives. This manner of escaping poverty was spelt in the Arusha declaration adopted by the Tanzanian National Union (TANU) on the 5th of February 1967.¹⁸ This declaration was a vital document describing the country's dedication to collectivism (Socialism) and self-reliance. It insisted on the principles of equality, community engagement, economic independence, enhancing the use of local resources, and reducing dependence on foreign aid. The Tanzanians called it *Ujamaa* (development through one's efforts). Zambians termed it Humanism (emphasising the human factor of development).¹⁹

The Peace Corps since creation had as prime motive to improve the living conditions of the people of Third World countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Without regard to ideology and propaganda, it had to bring badly needed skills in health care, education and agriculture.²⁰ To attain this important objective, it recruited, trained and sent American graduates (volunteers) to help most Third World countries attain their social and economic developmental goals through capacity building, cultural exchange and promotion of self-reliant development. Most of these concepts like self-reliant development and capacity building were not new in history neither were they practices of contemporary origin. But what was new was the quest to make the concepts occupy their rightful places along with other concepts like sustainable development and outside assistance to promote community development. The importance of its comeback was to make it a long-lasting way of life.²¹ Since 1961, more than 150,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served in 134 countries.

The influence of the United States (U.S.) in Cameroon was initially relatively insignificant especially in the early 1960s. United States influence in Cameroon could not be compared to that of France. The United States was not totally committed in Cameroon probably because Cameroon was never of special interest to it and there were no indications that Cameroon would not go Communist coupled with the fact that France was one of the former colonial masters of Cameroon and thus had more influence. In 1973, the U.S. closed down its Agency for International Development (AID) office in Buea and imported only 4,615 million CFA francs worth of goods from Cameroon compared to 31,002 million CFA francs by France in 1974. In the same year, it exported goods worth 6,528 million CFA francs to Cameroon compared to France's 49,344 million francs. In addition to its limited economic

¹⁸ E.U. Ikoku, *Self-Reliance: Africa's Survival*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980, pp.35-37.

¹⁹ G. Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origin to Global Faith*, London: 2ndedi. Books, 1999, pp. 123-124.

²⁰ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, p.3.

²¹ Rist, *History of Development*, p.123.

interest in Cameroon, the U.S. never considered Cameroon as important. Anglophones felt bad about it when the U.S. closed down its Cultural Centre in Buea and relocated to Douala.²²

Though the U.S. was lukewarm towards Cameroon, it still maintained great relations with it.²³ When Kennedy took over power in 1961, relations between Cameroon and the U.S. became more concretised especially with the diplomacy of aid for development. The relations were also based on a diplomacy in favour of democracy and the fight against terrorism. For democracy, it was popularised especially after the collapse of Communism which permitted the U.S. to be the master of the world thus the move from bipolarity to unipolarity. The end of the Cold War in 1990 was followed by the democratisation revolution in many parts of the world. This became a political network linking both developed and developing countries in a global democratic system. This network resulted in new forms of control, which represented functional equivalence of other systems with efforts to achieve global democratic capitalist integration as colonialism was replaced by neo-colonial institutions.

The end of the East-West confrontation in 1990 simply gave the opportunity to review the various political regimes in Africa to meet up with the prescriptions of Western donor countries. The developed countries particularly the U.S. in their policies towards Africa accelerated the process of capitalist consolidation. This resulted in a strong harmony between liberal democracy and capitalism. The U.S. therefore started acting in concert with other capitalist democracies on African development issues. Infact their common interests in the African continent prevented them from resorting again to military force as a means to solve conflicts among themselves.²⁴ American representatives could openly talk about democracy and freedom in Cameroon.

So because of the increase demand for community programmes and assistance in most developing nations in general and Cameroon in particular, the Peace Corps was requested by the government of Cameroon in 1961.²⁵ Since this period, it helped boost the social and economic developmental needs of the local communities of Mezam. During the past 55 years, Peace Corps volunteers were busily weaving threads of peace, caring and friendship in the villages of nearly 7 sub divisions of Mezam. These threads now encircle the whole division. Volunteers have worked and continue to work on the frontiers of poverty, ignorance and

²² V.J. Ngoh, *History of Cameroon since 1800*, Limbe, Pressbook, 1996, p.274.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Njuafor, "The United States," p.4.

²⁵ J.A. Amin, "Serving in Africa: U.S. Peace Corps in Cameroon", Washington, *Africa Spectrum*, Vol.48, No.1, 2013, p.72.

underdevelopment.²⁶ They are assigned to specific projects on the basis of their skills, education and experience. Once abroad, the volunteer is expected to function in a neighbourly way for two years in the receiving country, speak the same language, and live a comparable life to that of the volunteer's partners. The activities of the Peace Corps were visible in areas like Mankon, Bafut, Nkwen, Bamendakwe, Santa, Bali, Bambui and Bambili.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

In the early days of independence, a lot of countries in Africa counted on technical, financial, material and institutional support from Western nations to define their growth path. Cameroon like other newly independent African nations faced a lot of developmental challenges, which on its own could not be effectively addressed. The tendency was for these newly independent African countries, to start searching for a medium with which they could develop their economies. This state of affairs provoked them to turn to the West to negotiate in almost every respect to revive their socio-economic well-being. The increasing interest to aid the process of community growth in most developing countries resulted to the flooding in of international development agencies and non-governmental organisations. This shift witnessed a rapid upturn in the 1960s, as diverse international donors supported and backed the local progress undertakings within the African continent. Despite the different visions and statement of purpose, the benefactors most often settled on the necessity to fight against poverty, especially for the groups at risk (vulnerable, poor and rural masses).

International funding agencies directed resources in most cases through local non-governmental organisations but, in some cases they passed through specialised government agencies and other local institutions and associations by way of programmes and projects. Sponsored funding was therefore seen as an effective channel for rural development.²⁷ In an effort to achieve this, Cameroon began nursing bilateral and multilateral relations with economically advanced countries and organisations. In 1960, Cameroon opened bilateral relations with the U.S. and then proceeded with the signing of an agreement with the latter in 1961, which made it possible for the Peace Corps to intervene in Cameroon since 1962.²⁸ The first 21 volunteers were posted to the then West Cameroon (N.W. and S.W.) with the study area inclusive who were among other things to teach Maths/ Science and intervene in other

²⁶ G.T. Rice, *Twenty Years of Peace Corps*, Washington D.C, Peace Corps, 1981, p.5.

²⁷ G.N. Mulu et al, "Challenges and Prospects of Sustaining Donor-Funded Projects in Rural Cameroon", *Sustainability*, Vol.11, Issue 24, 2019, p.2.

²⁸ M. Jing, "The Activities of the U.S. Agency for International Development in Cameroon, 1961-1982", *Doctorat de Troisieme Cycle*, IRIC Yaoundé, 1983, p.17.

sectors since Mezam hosts so many local communities with poor backgrounds and serious aspects of social and economic underdevelopment. This state of affairs instigated us to pose the following question: What was the basis, evolution and impact of the U.S. Peace Corps in Cameroon?

1.2. Objectives of the Study

1.2.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study is to investigate the United States Peace Corps activities in Mezam Division. The above has been narrowed down to the following specific objectives.

1.2.2. Specific objectives

- To trace the origin, evolution and implantation of the U.S. Peace Corps in Cameroon
- Assess the local community development initiatives in Mezam Division.
- Examine the role of the U.S. Peace Corps in the economic development of Mezam Division.
- Analyse the contributions of the U.S. Peace Corps in the social development of Mezam.
- Evaluate the activities of this agency in the study area.

1.3. Research Questions

1.3.1. Main Research Question

- What was the motivation behind the extension of the U.S. Peace Corps to Cameroon ?

1.3.2. Specific Research Questions

- What accounted for the implantation of the U.S. Peace Corps in Cameroon and how has it evolved?
- What were the local development initiatives in Mezam ?
- How did the Peace Corps contribute to the economic development of Mezam?
- What were the contributions of the agency in the social development of the study area?
- How humanitarian were the Peace Corps activities in Mezam?

1.4. Literature Review

In a global study, many scholars have been interested in the study of the U.S. Peace Corps and its activities in the world and Cameroon in particular. This section brings out key themes and concepts raised by some scholars, which are related to this study. The different themes have been grouped into the following headings; the notion of U.S. Peace Corps, the concept of development, view of self-reliance and perception of bilateral cooperation.

1.4.1. Notion of Peace Corps

This is the main concept that draws together other themes in this work. The focus of this section is on the whole idea behind the Peace Corps and how academics perceive the organisation. It also focuses on the motivation, selection of volunteers and the criteria for Peace Corps to qualify a project for assistance. Amin in his study assesses the motives behind the establishment of the Peace Corps in the United States. He looks at the United States before the creation of the Peace Corps by Kennedy. To him though created by Kennedy, he did not conceive the idea as the main precursors of the idea were Henry Reuss and Richard L. Neuberger. His work also looks at the role of volunteers in the development of Cameroon especially in the domain of education and community development.²⁹ Similarly, in another study, Amin traces the origin of the Peace Corps and examines the role of volunteers in the development of Agroforestry with emphases on agriculture, nursery development, fish production and small enterprise development, especially the development of cooperatives in Cameroon. His work also assesses how volunteers acted as bridges to facilitate cultural exchanges between the United States and Cameroon.³⁰

In another study, Amin gives a brief survey of the U.S. foreign policy towards Sub Saharan Africa in general and Cameroon in particular. The work also examines the origin of the U.S. Peace Corps and emphasises on the role of volunteers in the development of education especially in the former West Cameroon. He also looks at their role in community development, which involved road construction and the organisation of cooperatives. To him, the services of volunteers had an enduring impact in Cameroon especially in elevating the educational standards and facilitated cross cultural exchange between the two countries.³¹

²⁹ Amin, *The Peace Corps*, p.17.

³⁰ Amin, "Serving in Africa," pp.74-80.

³¹ Amin, "Cameroon Foreign Policy Towards the United States", *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer*, Vol.86., No.322-323, 1999, pp. 230-233.

Landrum studies the contributions of the Peace Corps in the domain of education in Third World countries. He examines the role played by volunteer teachers in Asia and Latin America. Summarily, he looks at the extent to which Peace Corps volunteers succeeded in improving the educational situation of developing countries through their classroom teaching in different countries in Africa and Latin America.³² Mengot compares the standards of education in West Cameroon before and after the arrival of the Peace Corps volunteers. To him volunteers through teaching and library development contributed immensely in elevating the falling standards of education in West Cameroon in the 1960s especially after the departure of the British expatriates.³³

Rice examines Peace Corps activities in the world and Third World countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia. He assesses how far the agency attained its objectives after twenty years of existence in developing countries. He mentions Peace Corps activities especially in the domain of education, health and agriculture in Ghana and Ethiopia.³⁴ To Annet Mbeng, she writes on the origin, creation, evolution, activities of the Peace Corps especially in the domain of education, health and agriculture. She evaluates the role of the agency in the socio-economic development of the South West Province of Cameroon and the challenges volunteers faced.³⁵ Ruppe looks at the origin, evolution, goals and activities of the Peace Corps. The work also looks at the legislatively established status of the Peace Corps volunteers and staff, foreign policy-relationship with the State Department and the Agency for International Development and ends with the funding of the agency. She argues that the Peace Corps has played an important role during the transition between the colonial and the independent present.³⁶

Mark Delancey and Windmiller also wrote a lot on the Peace Corps. Mark focuses his work on the birth and evolution of cooperative societies in Cameroon in general and the North-West in particular, the activities of cooperatives and also examines the role of the Peace Corps volunteers in the development of cooperatives and credit unions in the North-

³² R.L. Landrum, *The Role of the Peace Corps in the Education of Developing Countries: A Sector Study*, Washington D.C, U.S. Peace Corps, Office of Planning and Evaluation, 1981, p.31.

³³ D.A. Mengot, "Are West Cameroonians Educational Standards Falling?", Buea, *West Cameroon Teachers' Journal*, Vol.2, December 1964, p.14.

³⁴ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, pp.12-64.

³⁵ A.M. Agbor, "The Role of the U.S. Peace Corps in the Socio-Economic Development of the South-West Province of Cameroon, 1962-1982", *Maitrise Dissertation in History*, University of Yaoundé 1, 1999, pp.22-30.

³⁶ L.M. Ruppe, "Peace Corps' Enduring Charter", *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law* Vol.16, 1986, pp.687-706.

West.³⁷ Marshall looks at the origin and evolution of the Peace Corps, the motivation and application process and the various ways through which volunteers were selected by the Peace Corps with the aim of imposing peace in the world on American terms. He exposes the various vistas through which the United States employs the Peace Corps with the view of imposing a *Pax Americana* (peace on American terms) in the world.³⁸

Azoh Mbi's work is also very relevant to the study. He looks at the motivation, application and selection of Peace Corps volunteers, the criteria for Peace Corps to qualify a project for assistance in developing countries. The work also looks at the contributions of Peace Corps volunteers towards self-reliant development in Cameroon in the domain of inland fish culture and women cooperatives with emphases in the North-West Region as well as community development with special emphases in the Centre Region of Cameroon.³⁹

Also Meisler's work greatly contributed to shape this present study. The author's fascinating account brings out Washington's discord, conflict and infighting, presidential authority and dominance and the volunteer's distinctive struggle overseas. The author unveils, the complex history with keen and incisive analysis and unforgettable stories, about the voyages of volunteers especially the first historic wave who headed for Ghana on 30th August 1961. He argues that the Peace Corps has served as an American emblem for world peace and friendship, yet few people realise that it has from time to time twisted its agenda to suit the whims of the White House. Uncovering its genesis from the past nine presidential administrators, he reveals how the administrators biased the Peace Corps agenda for example how Lyndon Johnson became angry when volunteers resisted his invasion of the Dominican Republic, how Richard Nixon tried to damage the image of the organisation and how Ronald Reagan endeavoured to make it a foreign policy weapon in Central America.⁴⁰

In the same light, Purcell Fernando's work looks at the origin and evolution of the Peace Corps with special emphasis on volunteer training in the U.S. before they were sent to their service post. The work also argues that countries in Latin America like Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Ecuador had their own initiatives to fight poverty. To him, local efforts decisively shaped what the volunteers ultimately achieved. The study further argues that immediately the volunteers entered South America, they noticed they were not the only ones with something to contribute as their views sometimes contrasted with the visions of the local

³⁷ M.W. Delancey, "The U.S. Peace Corps Program for Credit Union and Cooperative Development in Cameroon, 1969-1976", *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Vol.17, 1982, p.28.

³⁸ M. Windmiller, *The Peace Corps and Pax Americana*, Washington D.C, Public Affairs Press, 1970, p.50.

³⁹ S.A. Azohmbi, "The Contribution of the U.S. Peace Corps towards Self-Reliance Development in Cameroon", IRIC Dissertation, Yaoundé, 1982, pp.10-42.

⁴⁰ Meisler, *When the World*, pp.15-20.

people and institutions many of which worked on community growth initiatives before the Peace Corps was created in 1961.⁴¹

Tyler traces the origin and evolution of the Peace Corps and argues that over the years, the Peace Corps priorities and programmes emphasis were regulated in line with the necessities and circumstances of the Third World and what remained persistent was the dedication in fostering self-help and not dependency. The study further argues that volunteers helped to bring a better understanding between Americans and other peoples and greatly reduced misunderstandings of culture and ends by explaining his service period as a volunteer in Sierra Leone.⁴² Diana in her study evaluates the role of the U.S. Peace Corps in water/sanitation. She looks at the background of the U.S. Peace Corps and water sanitation sector, some common problems of water projects, the role of women in managing water projects and ends by looking at the role of volunteers in the development of water/sanitation in Thailand, Yemen, Paraguay, Sierra Leone and Togo.⁴³

In the context of this study, the Peace Corps is a transnational support network made up of recipient government and staff, volunteers and inhabitants of the community dedicated to the organisation's goal of international cooperation and solidarity. The volunteers and community partners work together on projects that are a top priority for local communities in the domains of health, agriculture and education as well as cultivate talents and strengthen capabilities that improve their career outlook.

The above works greatly contributed in the realisation of this study especially by providing a lot of historical data and showing how Kennedy's initiative captivated historians who emphasised the fascinating experiences of volunteers in their host societies, their motivations and a wide range of details related to how the organisation functioned institutionally. Nonetheless our work is different from the above works in that it has not only examined the evolution and activities of the Peace Corps in Mezam but has also paid sufficient attention to Peace Corps connections to the notions and local growth initiatives in the recipient communities a significant lapse given that an overwhelming proportion of the younger generation who went to Mezam partnered with community organisations, which were already established or functional well ahead of Peace Corps involvement. The study

⁴¹P. Fernando, "Connecting Realities: Peace Corps Volunteers in South America and the Global War on Poverty during the 1960s", *Historia Critica*, Bogota, Vol. 53, No.53, 2014, pp. 7-9.

⁴²N. Tyler, *The Peace Corps, Sierra Leone and Me: Fifty Years Later*, Washington D.C, Norman Tyler, 2010, pp. 6-10.

⁴³D. E. Talbert, *Peace Corps Water/Sanitation: Case Studies and Analyses*, Washington D.C, Peace Corps, 1984, pp.11-19.

also brought out the hidden agenda of the Peace Corps and some recommendations to better the partnership between Mezam and the Peace Corps.

1.4.2. The concept of development

This section presents facts about the concept of development. This concept is in line with our study in that it was for the purpose of development that the Peace Corps was invited to Cameroon. Development is the ability to fully utilise natural resources for common goals while underdevelopment hinders the logical change of the social structure in the Third World countries. Rational here meant that the interest and needs of the majority were increasingly dormant. To some writers, the term development implied growth accompanied by change which is social, economic and even political. Furthermore, development to some economists meant industrialisation and dependence often mentioned by leaders of developing countries or developed countries whose economies are heavily reliant on external investments.⁴⁴

One method through which development was evaluated was in relation to change in comparative gross national product, per capita income and gross national product between countries.⁴⁵ Growth and development were sometimes used confusingly in economic works. Growth refers to a quantitative increase over time of the production of goods and services within a given economic system while development refers to both the increase in goods as well as changes in techniques, socio-political and industrial arrangements by which it was produced and distributed. This concept is as variously and widely defined as the people that use it. Early definitions were mostly by economists who linked it to economic growth. This explains why they believed that the surest means to achieve development was by increasing investment in industrial activities.⁴⁶ Petch reiterates that development is achieved when the degree of satisfaction experienced by members of an economy increase.⁴⁷ Clarence views development as the economic and social structure of a region or country. On his part, Aaron Neba feels that a complete definition of development should include the physical, cultural and personal characteristics of the community and also argues that growth has to do with the

⁴⁴ J.H. Mittelman, *Out From Development: Prospects for the Third World*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1988, p.22.

⁴⁵ M. Griffiths *et al*, *International Relations, The Key Concepts*, New York, Routledge, 2008, p.75.

⁴⁶ A.V. Wirnkar, "Cameroon-Canada Cooperation and Community Development in Kumbo Central Sub Division; A Historical Analysis, 1970-2011", M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé 1, 2016, p.6.

⁴⁷ G.A. Petch, *Economic Development and Modern West Africa*, London, London University Press, 1961, p.12.

persistent advancement of a whole community as well as its societal structures aiming for an improved and fair society.⁴⁸

In a similar perspective, development is viewed as the procedures and strategies that different actors use to improve the standards of living in their different societies that were not their own. This whole concept implies change which can either be good or bad. International development means positive change or improvement especially through the activities and strategies of actors such as international organisations, governments, non-governmental organisations, voluntary agencies to accomplish these goals⁴⁹ Another work that assesses local development in Mezam is that of Akei. He views development as the procedures or ways different institutions and/or local people rally themselves in a particular area in order to create, strengthen and sustain activities to the best of one's ability by using the resources of the area. The study differentiates between state local development institutions and non-state local development institutions operating in Mezam and their activities. He argues that state and non-state institutions in Mezam both work for local development and the study ends by analysing the contribution and participation of the local people to development in Mezam.⁵⁰

The United Nations defines development as the process of inter-related economic, social and political changes with ultimate aim of improving the well-being of the entire population. This implied full participation in the development and fair distribution of its benefits.⁵¹ For Clower, development implied advancement alongside change, due to there being important qualitative characteristics in the development course which were missing in the quantitative improvement of an economy. Some of these qualitative features were improved and efficient factors of production, the development of institutions and a change in the society's attitudes and values. According to the World Bank's Development Report:

Development is conceived as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions as well as the eradication of poverty. The 1991 report, took a broader perspective of the concept of development as it asserted that the challenges of development (...) is to improve the quality of life which calls for better education, higher standards of health and nutrition, less poverty, more quality of opportunity especially in the world's poor countries.⁵²

⁴⁸ A. Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, 3rd edition, Bamenda, Neba Publishers, 1999, p.25.

⁴⁹ Thomas Diez *et al*, *Key Concepts in International Relations*, New York, SAGE Publication Ltd, 2011, p.102.

⁵⁰ L.M. Akei, "Institutions and Local Development: Experiences in Mezam Division, North West Region, Cameroon", *African Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol.1, No.6, 2020, pp.29-42.

⁵¹ United Nations, *Population Resources, Environment and Development: Highlights of the Issues in the Context of the World Population Plan of Action*, New York, United Nations Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, 1984, p.3.

⁵² World Bank, *Development Report on Development Possibilities in Sub Saharan Africa*, Washington, The World Bank, 1991, p.11.

Thus development represented a complete system of change through which an entire social system turns to diverse basic needs of individuals and social groups within a system moving widely satisfactory towards a situation of life seen as materially better. Development can be defined as an increase capacity to regulate internal and external relationships.⁵³

In the context of this study, development can be seen as any process that promotes the dignity of a people and their capacity to improve their own lives. It improves the well-being of a society in terms of material wealth and quality of life. The main characteristics or indicators of development include: improved health care, providing better food, access to education, increase in employment opportunities, improved housing, improvement in water supply and sanitation, long life expectancy, decreased death rate especially infant mortality and infrastructural development. All these are the targets of the Peace Corps in Mezam.

Their elaborate analyses widened our scope and understanding of the concept of development especially on the role played by local, national and international development agencies. Our investigation goes beyond their focus as it dwells on the Peace Corps activities and its role in promoting not only sustainable but also self-reliant development in Mezam.

1.4.3. View of self-reliance

Self-reliance is the ability to do things and make decisions by self, without depending on others to help you.⁵⁴The concept ties with our study as self-reliance was a major approach adopted by the people to achieve development in Mezam though the spirit of self-reliance was rekindled by the Peace Corps upon arrival in the study area. This explains why the Peace Corps strived for at least 25% of community contribution so that volunteer partner activities were built on resources available to community members. This part of the work deals with the various approaches taken by international and local development agencies in Cameroon and Mezam in particular to accomplish projects without depending on others.

To Anjoh, self-reliance is the capacity of an individual to set his/her objectives and realise them to the maximum extent through one's own efforts, initiatives and resources. The resurgence of self-reliance called for self-confidence and be able to produce basic needs while avoiding autarky. Her work also examines how the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) used Peace Corps volunteers to help the coffee farmers of the North-West Cooperative Association (NWCA) to be self-reliant through capacity

⁵³W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Washington D.C, Havard University Press, 1982, p.10.

⁵⁴<https://www.collinsdictionary.com>, consulted on 20/May/2018 at 11:00 a.m.

building.⁵⁵ Self-reliant development was development of the people for the people and by the people. It depended principally on community initiatives and labour. A balanced view of self-reliance should comprise the following; a production plan more responsive to local need, a greater marshalling of financial strategy towards internal funds and self-funding; and a sustained policy of employment. All these were channeled through self-sustenance and increased output of food and cash crop production, accompanied with a persistent increase in the prices of these commodities.⁵⁶

The concept of self-reliance was that people come together and work jointly to improve their lot. It was a basic approach both in theory and in practice as far as community development was concerned. It was also a process which assumed that people rally themselves to assess their condition, outline policies to cope with different sectors of their environment and execute strategies for development. It implied showing confidence in an individual's powers, the self-confidence a community had on the capacities of its inhabitants and its environment. This principle equally meant development that originated from indigenous initiatives without reliance or dependence from the central government.⁵⁷

Umah writing on self-reliance efforts among the Ngie shows how after independence, the people of Ngie realised they could develop their area through self-reliant efforts. He shows the various projects introduced by the Ngie people in their area with emphases on the development of agriculture, health, education and infrastructure. He also treats the difficulties the people encountered in the course of introducing changes in their society.⁵⁸ Rist argued that at each level of self-reliance, collectivity was supposed to realise what it needed in a mutual supporting way and if need be, it could resort to the level above it to acquire what it cannot produce. The lower level should possess as much power as possible to ensure that it was not subjected to domination.⁵⁹

Self-reliance is a system whereby human beings depended greatly on their mental and material resources as the main source of energy to achieve their objectives and they obtained satisfaction in doing so because they used their own efforts. This does not mean that external resources and initiatives cannot be used but even if used must be marginal because their use

⁵⁵ R.F.M. Anjoh, "USAID Cameroon and Contributions to Self-Reliance Development: A Case Study of the North-West Cooperative Association, 1990-1998", M.A. Dissertation, University of Yaoundé 1, 1999, pp.16-47.

⁵⁶ M.D. Delancey *et al*, *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon*, fourth edition, Lanham, Maryland, The Scarecrow Press INC, 2010, p.339.

⁵⁷ H. Fonge, *Africa Yesterday and Today: An Analytical Review of the Historical Development in Africa from 1800 to Present Day*, Dhaka; University Press Ltd, 1996, p.121.

⁵⁸ S.N. Umah, "Self-Reliant Development in Ngie; A Historical Survey, 1961-1992", *Maitrise* Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé, 1992, pp.20-30.

⁵⁹ Rist, *The History Of*, p.27.

does not bring any satisfaction. Rahman viewed self-reliance development as the collective mobilisation of a community at all levels. This must be internally motivated and the members must participate fully in the decision making of their collectivity.⁶⁰

Mangula also worked on self-reliance development and his work focused on the Focolure Movement and its role in the development of Fontem. The study argues that the people of Fontem through self-reliant efforts developed the area especially in the domains of education, health and infrastructure.⁶¹ Ikoku perceived self-reliance as purely an internal affair of a collective association. To him, self-reliance was a spirited change from the periphery at all stages, individuals, local and regional and should not be realised for the outskirts as some industrialised countries claimed to help build self-reliance but something that was done basically by the edge. Self-reliance therefore meant the capacity for autonomous decision making, the character content and pace of which had to be defined and executed with reference to local needs and aspirations. It was concerned with the process of structural change. It presupposed that the objective of the poor societies was to overcome poverty but this was possible through a radical and thorough social transformation which only new institutions could ensure.⁶²

In this context, self-reliance is a process by which people collectively identify their problems and hope to achieve them. This is done with the active participation of the local population with their initiatives, use of local resources and forces though may be locally motivated and stimulated as well as from outside. In the latter, for self-reliance to be successfully stimulated from outside, the recipient must establish mechanisms to ensure authentic self-reliance, otherwise the actual contribution of outside assistance remains doubtful. The recipient must be psychologically prepared to resist any form of domination by the donor.

The above works were useful in the realisation of the study because the literature developed helped to situate the context of our study, but a detailed analysis of the contributions of the Peace Corps in the development of Mezam is what this work is addressing.

⁶⁰ M.D. Ansuir Rahman, *People's Self Development: Perspectives on Participatory Action Research, A Journey through Experience*, Dhaka, University Press Ltd, pp.134-136.

⁶¹ L. Mangula, "The Focolure Movement and its Role in the Rural Evolution of Fontem, 1966-1976", *Maitrise Dissertation in History*, University of Yaoundé, 1992, pp.15-25.

⁶² Ikoku, *Self-Reliance; Africa's*, p.28.

1.4.4. Perception of bilateral cooperation

Bilateralism refers to negotiations or discussions on diplomatic affairs often between two states. Though often considered mostly as interactions between two states, it may involve a country and an international organisation. When states recognised one another as sovereign states and agreed to diplomatic relations, they created a bilateral relationship.⁶³ The concept fits within our study in that it is thanks to the 1962 economic, cultural and technical agreement signed to concretise bilateral cooperation between the U.S. and Cameroon that the Peace Corps operated in Cameroon. Robert Asher assesses U.S. financial and technical assistance to low income countries in a broad framework that includes trade and private investment policy. The author believes that U.S. aid policy since world war two is insufficiently responsive to the needs of the developing countries and does not often serve the United States interest.⁶⁴ This is true as the United States aid has not sufficiently responded to the needs of developing countries like Cameroon and has served the hidden interest of the United States as oppose to the view of the author.

Grace on her part differentiates between development aid and bilateral aid. To her, development aid is a particular form of external help, distinct from emergency or relief efforts with objective to increase the living standards of citizens while bilateral aid is aid from a benefactor country's government to a receiving country's government, which could be in diverse forms for example, loans, grants, in-kind contribution and technical assistance.⁶⁵ Similarly, Njuafac in his study distinguishes between technical cooperation and technical assistance. He argues that technical assistance is the provision of personnel by a donor country to a recipient. As per his study, the U.S. was the donor country and Cameroon the recipient country. On the other hand, technical cooperation though similar refers to different growth activities including information sharing and exchanges, training and the provision of supplies and resources.⁶⁶

The works of Votinyuy and Ngam look at bilateral cooperation between Cameroon and other countries for the purpose of development. Valery looks at the origin and evolution of the Cameroon-German (GTZ) partnership, the structure of GTZ in Cameroon, socio-economic activities of GTZ in Cameroon which included agriculture, health and education

⁶³ Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, *ABC of Diplomacy*, Bern, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, 2008, p.6.

⁶⁴ R.E. Asher, *Development Assistance in the Seventies*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1983, p.23.

⁶⁵ G. Perkins, "East Versus West: Chinese and American Development Efforts and Perceptions in Cameroon", SIT Cameroon, The College of William and Mary, 2012, pp.4-29.

⁶⁶ Njuafac, "The United States," p.5.

and a critical evaluation of the Cameroon-GTZ Partnership.⁶⁷ Alfred examines the origins and evolution of Aid, Canadian assistance and socio-economic development especially in the domain of agriculture, education and health in Kumbo. The work also presents a critical appraisal of this assistance in Kumbo.⁶⁸ The author argues that the development of Kumbo today was thanks to Canadian agencies especially the Charlice Foundation.

Another study that was of great value to this work was that of Thomas Scanlon. The work assesses how United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Peace Corps cooperated to achieve their objectives around the world. This was through different mechanisms such as exchange of personnel, realisation of diverse projects through the Small Project Assistance. The work goes further to look at some technical programmes in which the two agencies realised and succeeded a lot in child survival, nutrition, education, combating childhood diseases and micro enterprise development in Africa, Asia and Latin America.⁶⁹

Other works of immense interest include the works of Jing Maxwell, Forba and Zang which all focus on bilateral cooperation and assistance in helping the government of Cameroon meet up with its objectives of development. Maxwell examines the activities of USAID and its role in the development of agriculture, health and education in Cameroon.⁷⁰ Forba on his part examines USAID and its activities especially in the domain of technical aid and cooperation.⁷¹ Zang on the other hand examines the role of external aid in the development of Cameroon.⁷²

In the context of this study, bilateralism means relations between two countries that is the U.S. and Cameroon which led to mutual benefits between the two countries. The above works added a lot not only to the historical literature of bilateralism between Cameroon and other countries but also showed how bilateral assistance particularly financial and technical assistance helped the government of Cameroon to meet up with its objectives of development. Though much is said about the development process, the influence of the Peace Corps is not handled probably because it might not have been their focus. Therefore, our research will be limited to the role played by the Peace Corps in promoting community

⁶⁷ V.N. Nyala Etanefila, "Cameroon-German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) Partnership, 1980-2011", M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé 1, 2014, p.60.

⁶⁸ Wirnkar, "Cameroon-Canada Cooperation," p.50.

⁶⁹ T.J. Scanlon, *Cooperation between the Peace Corps and the Agency for International Development, A Second Report to Congress*, Washington D.C, Benchmarks INC, 1989, pp. 1-57.

⁷⁰ Jing, "The Activities of," pp.12-14.

⁷¹ M.R. Forba, "USAID in Cameroon, 1961-1980: Case Studies in Technical Aid and Cooperation", M.A. Dissertation, University of Yaoundé, 1981, pp.15-26.

⁷² L. Zang, « Aide Extérieure et Développement, le Cas du Cameroun, 1960-1976 », *Maitrise Dissertation*, IRIC, 1978, p.11.

development in Mezam as well as assess the relations between Mezam Division and the Peace Corps. Judging from the aforementioned literature review, it is clear that researchers in this domain had their specific objectives and foci which though different did not only provoke this work but shaped and guided it. This is because the different works provided information relating to the history and activities of the Peace Corps. It is clear that the Peace Corps and community growth in Mezam was not the direct subject matter of the scholars.

1.5. Conceptual Framework

It will be imperative that the meanings of the key concepts of this study be brought out to shape a trait of our research and to place them in a manner that will suit the context of the study. The concept of community development is used loosely with different meanings. To facilitate the ambiguity of the concept, it will be necessary to define the following concepts; community, community development and sustainable development before merging them in order to situate these concepts within the context of this study.

1.5.1. Community

This idea occupies a central place in this work as the different communities of Mezam were the target of the Peace Corps. The notion of community has been given various connotations in contemporal scholarship. In this light, Teneng thinks that human interaction contributes to the idea of a community as an ever-widening concept.⁷³ Amangwa A.A thinks that a community is made up of people who are interacting among themselves. He defined a community to mean a group of people within a well-defined geographical area bounded by relations and psychological ties with one another where they lived in. He insisted that they shared common interests and were bound to interact with each other and not to retard each other's efforts to improve the socio-economic situation of the community.⁷⁴ Commenting on this with respect to Mezam, it can be seen that the people of the study area had the community spirit of working together for the betterment of their lives. Hess B.B. on the other hand defines a community as "free spaces" in which people develop a sense of strength and collective identity, learn cooperation and generate change from bottom-up.⁷⁵

Ngwa N.E. thinks that village communities were groups of villages with common ecological and human characteristics whose population accepts to live together for the

⁷³ S.T. Teneng, "Pinyin Development Organisation: An Agent of Community Development in the Pinyin Clan, 1978-2011", M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé 1, 2014, p.3.

⁷⁴ A.A. Amangwa, "Critical Analysis of Community Development: Approach to the Economic Development of the Centre and South Provinces", M.A. Dissertation in Geography, University of Yaoundé 1, 2011, p.74.

⁷⁵ B.B. Hess *et al*, *Sociology*, 3rdedi. New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988, p.345.

constant uplift of their welfare.⁷⁶ This was the vision of President Julius Nyerere in 1967 when he presented what he meant by the *Ujamaa* village communities. He said it would consist of a group of families living together in a village and working on a common farm for their common interest. They constructed their houses with resources from their farms jointly owned and the produce was their joint property. All these activities will be determined by the village members themselves.⁷⁷ In Mezam, the people had a common interest, jointly worked, owned farms and the produce from the farms jointly sold and used to develop their society.

In 1988, the World Health Organisation considered a community as a specific group of people living in a social system thanks to the interactions they had developed over a period of time. The people in the society identify themselves through connections like sharing common beliefs, values and norms thanks to their past interactions which may eventually be adjusted with time. They exhibited consciousness of their uniqueness as a group and shared basic necessities and the dedication of accomplishing them.⁷⁸ This definition ties with the study as communities in Mezam shared common beliefs and values.

Mah viewed a community as a group of individuals living within a given space and were bound by common values and objectives with a basic harmony of interests, aspirations and problems, where-in there was the aspect of social stratification due to the fact that there can be no homogenous community without social stratification such as wealth, power and interest differentials.⁷⁹ Commenting on this in relation to Mezam, there are several of such groups with social stratification like wealth, power and interest differentials. Ikechukwu writing on traditional communalism asserted that:

a community is a comprehensive group with two chief characteristics. Within it the individual can have most of the experiences and conduct most of the activities that are important to him. It is bound together by a shared sense of belonging and by the feeling that the group defines for them their distinctive identity...the member of the community lives his whole life within it, he feels a sense of kingship with others who belong to it and he accepts his own name and family membership.⁸⁰

Kottak defined a community in terms of community spirit. He related community spirit to people experiencing a feeling of great social solidarity, equality and togetherness;

⁷⁶ N.E. Ngwa, "Innovation Agencies and Smaller Holder Agriculture in the Noun Basin and its Environs: A River Basin Approach", M.A. Dissertation in Geography, University of Yaoundé, 1985, p.57.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ WHO, *Health Promotion Glossary*, New York, WHO, 1988, p.40.

⁷⁹ U.A. Mah, "The Mbororo as an Agent of Community Development in Fundong Sub Division", M.A. Dissertation in Geography, University of Yaoundé 1, 2010, p.16.

⁸⁰ B.A. Ikechukwu, "Traditional Communalism among the Mbaise of Igboland", Bachelor's Dissertation in Philosophy, STAMS Bambui, 1991, p.2.

people experiencing these characteristics form a community of equals.⁸¹ A community is a group of persons inhabiting a specific geographical structure and area and the people are viewed as a bond because of their interest, background or nationality.⁸² This definition enables us to show how there is a great feeling of solidarity, equality and togetherness in Mezam as the people identified their problems and hoped to overcome them together.

In this study, a community is a group of people living in a given area most commonly the village with common needs, beliefs, history, tradition and interest irrespective of geographical limitation who work together to improve their lives. This concept ties with our work in that the Peace Corps partnered with different communities in Mezam to join in the improvement of their living standards.

1.5.2. Community Development

Community development is an ingredient in rural development. Communities build relationships, developed people's abilities to work together and mobilised resources to improve upon their conditions. It serve as ways through which people took part in projects for community development. For the United States it is an external, political instrument destined to give a democratic response of the resistance towards agrarian revolutionary movement that could convey the Third World countries in to Communism and Totalitarianism.⁸³

Community development is defined as a process by which the efforts of the people are united to enhance the cultural, social and economic realities of the area; to blend these communities with the life of nations and give them that push to fully participate in national development. This complicated process comprises of two important components: active engagement by the people in a bid to enhance their living standards and depending on their own efforts, as well as the furnishing of external help should be secondary in ways that promote local efforts, mutual help and make solidarity more useful and efficient. It can also be seen as efforts to improve the well-being of a particular community and its people.⁸⁴ This definition ties with our study in that the Peace Corps joined the people of Mezam in carrying out projects that involved the active participation of the local communities and provided the technical knowledge that promoted self-help which favoured development.

⁸¹ C.P. Kottak, *Anthropology: The Exploration of Human Diversity*, 5thedi. New York, Mcgraw-Hill, INC, 1999, p.337.

⁸² *Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.243.

⁸³ Teneng, "Pinyin Development Organisation," p.3.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.4.

Community development was often thought of as any project intended to provide living conditions for the poorest of the society. Craig's view of community development is linked to the concept of enhancing community engagement as a way of sustaining growth efforts. He cited the Brudtland Commission which enlisted efficient citizen engagement as one of the pre-conditions to persistent growth. The Human Development Report reiterates effective people engagement and participation in their growth, insisting that people's involvement and engagement will greatly tackle the challenges of development.⁸⁵ Community development is a strategy that seeks to create favourable conditions for the social and economic improvement of the entire community with its full involvement, engagement and dependence upon the people's initiatives, resources and strenghts.⁸⁶ This is true in Peace Corps-Mezam relations as the Peace Corps adopted the bottom-top approach of development which targeted the poorest and the underprivileged people of Mezam. This can be proven by the fact that the agency adopted strength-based mechanisms which promoted awareness of certain risk, disadvantaged and other marginalised groups so that they should not be considered as challenges but as assets and essential advocates of positive change.

In the context of this study, community development is a process by which people bring together their efforts and initiatives so as to improve their well-being in collaboration with international agencies for a given time. Voluntary agencies are increasingly important actors in economic development. They are among the major contributors of social development. Research has shown how voluntary agencies improved conditions in their host countries. Peace Corps was able to promote not only social and economic development but also sustainable development in the host countries. This concept is in line with our study in that it has helped us explain how the people of Mezam brought together their resources in collaboration with voluntary organisations to enhance development. One of the major ways through which the Peace Corps joined in the process of development in Mezam was through the promotion of sustainable development. Sustainable development has become a fact of life in the host countries of the Peace Corps.

1.5.3. Sustainable Development

The fact that this concept has become common currency, it is confused and there is no agreement as to how it should work in practice. Some authors argue that poverty and

⁸⁵ A.S. Chenwi, "United States Peace Corps and Community Development Initiatives in Bafut Sub-Division, 1962-2017, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2020, p.15.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.16

dependence could be sustainable development.⁸⁷ According to other advocates of sustainable development, three priorities should be incorporated in all development programmes that is maintenance of ecological processes, sustainable use of resources and maintenance of biodiversity.⁸⁸ This definition ties with our study in that, the Peace Corps had as priority in Mezam to promote the sustainable use of resources and maintenance of biodiversity.

Sustainable development was one that stemmed from the hearts and minds of those who were affected by the problem with a minimum of help from outside. Sustainability added a human dimension to development and productivity. Increased yields, wealth, and Gross National Product were no longer considered the ultimate measures of sustainable development. The primary goal of development was not development of things but rather development of people. True sustainable development was measured by the quality of life that individuals and communities possessed at the time and what their children will inherit in future.⁸⁹ This is in line with the study as the Peace Corps distinguished itself among other development organisations by concentrating on funding people and not infrastructure.

Sustainable development involved the effective participation of community members in the process of change. This can only be effective when people were informed about the problems and importance of a project that can bring change. To sustain a thing is to support it from collapsing. Sustenance is that which supports life. It is believed that addressing these problems required that the level of economic activities be increased worldwide. It was generally accepted that increased levels of economic activities would potentially damage the natural environment and impair its ability to sustain humanity, although some believed that current levels of economic activities are already very unsustainable. Here, the sustainability problem is taken to be how to address problems of inequality and poverty in ways that do not affect the environment to improve humanity's future prospects.⁹⁰ Contextually, this definition is related to our study in that the Peace Corps joined the people of Mezam through their trainings to adopt new income generating activities that can help them alleviate poverty.

This concept of sustainable development became very popular in 1987 when the Brundtland Report or "Our Common Future" was published. According to this report, sustainable development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without

⁸⁷ Dze-Ngwa Willibroad, 54 years, Model School Principal, Yaoundé, 23/ December/2023.

⁸⁸ Griffiths, *International Relations the*, p.307.

⁸⁹ Agbor, "International Volunteer Organisations," p.2.

⁹⁰ M. Common, *Sustainability and Policy, Limits to Economics*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p.3.

compromising the ability to meet those of the future.⁹¹ This report was produced by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) set up by resolution 38/161 “Process of the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond” of the United Nations General Assembly in 1983. It derived its popular title from the name of the chairman of the commission, Gro Harlem Brundtland.⁹² The commission emphasised that the integration of economic systems was crucial if sustainable development was to be achieved. Although, this definition is fairly concise, it is nonetheless open to varying interpretations. What exactly is a need and how can it be defined, something that is considered a need by one person or cultural group may not necessarily be thought of as such by another person or cultural group. Needs may also vary through time as thus the ability to meet their needs.⁹³ This concept enables us to show how the sustainable management of resources in Mezam was rekindled by the Peace Corps. This can be seen as resources in Mezam today are managed in a way that will meet the needs of the present and the future generations.

Sustainable development holds that for developing countries to successfully fight against poverty and underdevelopment, there must be a new era of growth in which these countries play a large role and enjoy large benefits.⁹⁴ This concept was developed because it was noticed that, the rate of resource exploitation and consumption is increasing and if it continues, the future generations will not meet most of the resources. Sustainable development protects natural resources for future generations and also increases standards of living without destroying the environment. This explains why the Peace Corps joined in the development of Cameroon for the past 55 years to meet up with its developmental goals.

With respect to this study, sustainable development will mean, the careful management of environmental resources to meet the needs and aspirations of the present generation while taking in to account the future generation. In this work, it is seen that the Peace Corps joined the people of Mezam to adopt new ideas and ways of living which had a long-lasting impact in their lives.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

In any scientific work, theoretical framework constitutes a useful and indispensable tool for data collection, analysis and interpretation. Kenneth Bailly holds that explanations

⁹¹*Ibid.*, p.32.

⁹²Brundtland was a former Minister of Environment and Prime Minister of Norway.

⁹³ Griffiths, *International Relations the*, p.307.

⁹⁴ Common, *Sustainability and policy*, p.4.

and predictions are provided by theories. It is also an attempt to answer the why and how of questions.⁹⁵ This study will make use of the liberal, social capital and dependency theories.

Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, Norman Angell, Richard Cobden, Woodrow Wilson, Joseph Schumpeter and John Maynard Keynes are some of the proponents of the Liberal theory.⁹⁶ The central insight shared by all liberals is that states are embedded in domestic and international civil society which decisively constrain their actions.⁹⁷ The activities of international organisations improve economic, political and even cultural links. This situation is mutually beneficial as a high level of interaction between states decreases conflict and makes war less likely since war would cancel the benefits. By this calculation, war is not profitable, but detrimental to the state. Liberalism can be thought to revolve around three interrelated principles which are; rejection of power politics, accentuates mutual benefits and accord a lot of importance to non-state actors like non-governmental organisations (NGO), humanitarian organisations and multinational firms. Liberals believe that international institutions play a key role in cooperation and interdependence and of course absolute gains are made which can promote peace and reduce conflict. International trade and cooperation promotes peace and security because when countries are interconnected through trade, they are less likely to go to war with each other. Interdependence has three main components as states interact in various ways through economic, financial and cultural means since security and the use of military forces tends not to be the primary goal of state to state interactions.⁹⁸

Liberalism holds that state preferences rather than state capabilities are the primary determinant of state behaviour and with proper institutions, states work together to maximise prosperity. It also allows for plurality of state actions. This theory also holds that interaction between states is not limited to political or security high politics but also economic, financial and cultural low politics whether through commercial firms, organisations or individuals thus there are broader notions of power such as cultural capital for instance the influence of films leading to the popularity of the country's culture and creating a market for its exports worldwide.⁹⁹ This theory is related to our study in that the Peace Corps greatly improved the cultural, economic, and financial exchanges between Cameroon and the United States. With their constant interactions, peace is promoted through cooperation and interdependence.

⁹⁵ Wirnkar, "Cameroon-Canada Cooperation," p.20.

⁹⁶ A. Moravcsik, "Liberalism and International Relations Theory", *Center for European studies*, Massachusetts, Havard University, Paper No. 92-6, 1992, p.10.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.2.

⁹⁸ <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/international-relations-theory> consulted on 20/May/2018 at 10:00 a.m.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

The social capital theory is a complex concept thus very difficult to come out with a single definition. It is defined differently by different authors reflecting their interests. Mohan Mohan reacts to this by stating that: “given these significant conceptual problems, one wonders why social capital has become so popular over the past decade...Scholars are interested in it because it apparently offers the power to explain residual variance in models of several kinds of activity.”¹⁰⁰ The central idea in most of the definitions of social capital is that it reiterates on interactions among groups of the society that generate positive benefits.

The theory of social capital is centred on the concepts of trusts, norms, reciprocity, cooperation, interaction and this social interactions, relations and networks are useful resources that influence development and growth among members of groups and associations. The intellectual history of the concept of social capital can be traced way back to Karl Max, Emile Durkheim, John Dewey who all emphasised the role of culture in economic development.¹⁰¹ The theory became popular in the early 20th century and attracted the attention of many social science researchers as from the last quarter of the 20th century.¹⁰² The term was first used by Lyda Judson Hanifan.¹⁰³ His focus was on rural school community centres and he defined social capital as those tangible substances that count for most in the daily lives of the people.¹⁰⁴ With time social science researchers especially economic sociologist and development economist elaborated definitions of social capital.

Bourdieu is remembered thanks to his early works on social capital and he laid emphasis on class dimensions and its contextual content. To him each application of social capital is context specific.¹⁰⁵ He argued that social capital is just one of the capital (with cultural, symbolic or economic capital). Bourdieu defines social capital as: “ the sum of the actual or potential resources that are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relations of mutual acquaintance and recognition in other words membership in a group.”¹⁰⁶ This definition stresses the need and importance of interactions between members of a society as belonging to these groups open and give a lot of benefits and advantages to its members. The author focuses on instrumental value of social capital to

¹⁰⁰H. Bhandari *et al*, “What is Social Capital? A Comprehensive Review of the Concept”, *Asian Journal of Social Science* Vol. 37, No.3, 2009, p.5.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.* p.2.

¹⁰² M.M. Besin-Mengla, “Njangi: A Pillar of Development in the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon”, *Journal of Humanities and Social Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 5, 2020, p.3.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴B. Fine, *Theories of Social Capital, Researchers Behaving Badly*, New York, Pluto Press, 2010, p.49.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.* p.39.

¹⁰⁶ Bourdieu as cited by Bhandari, “What is social,” p.7.

derive social and economic benefits from group membership and considers social capital as collectively-owned asset endowing members from group memberships¹⁰⁷

To Coleman, social capital explain relative performance in educational achievement according to family and neighbourhood characteristics.¹⁰⁸ He defines social capital as: “it is not a single entity, but a combination of different entities having two characteristics in common: it is an aspect of a social and it facilitates certain actions of individuals who are within that structure. The entities include obligations, expectations, trust and information flows.”¹⁰⁹

It is a productive resource that facilitates production and makes it possible to achieve certain ends that would be impossible in its absence. Coleman identifies three forms of social capital that is reciprocity (including trust), information channel and flow of information, and norms enforced by sanctions. Robert Putman is universally acknowledged as the leading figure reputed in the 1990s to be the single most cited author across social sciences. Putman defines social capital as: “features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of the society by facilitating coordinated actions.”¹¹⁰ Social capital is closely related to civic engagement, participation in voluntary organisations and social connections which foster reciprocity and trust. Social capital contends that social relationships are resources that can lead to the development and accumulation of human capital.¹¹¹ Francis Fukuyama defines social capital as: “...the ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups and organisations.”¹¹²

Social capital is the existence of a certain set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permit cooperation among them. He argues that interpersonal trust is fundamental for social relationships to emerge, mutual trust improves the cooperation between individuals, reduces transaction costs and increases business transactions.¹¹³ Ben Fine views social capital as:

Non-individualistic forms of interaction or collectively as embodied in institutions and culture, widely conceived and ranging equally extensively from the family or household though to all other levels below the international with the exception again

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸Fine, *Theories of Social*, p.40.

¹⁰⁹Coleman as cited by Bhandari, “What is Social,” p.8.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.* p.9.

¹¹¹R. Machalek and M.W. Martin, “Sociobiology and Sociology: A New Synthesis”, *The International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*, (second edition), 2015, p.1.

¹¹²Fukuyama, as cited by Bhandari “What is Social,” p.9.

¹¹³*Ibid.* p.10

of the state, as before and with the curious absence of the global as a sphere application of social capital.¹¹⁴

Social capital is regarded as a collective asset in the form of social relations, shared norms and trust that facilitate cooperation and collective action for mutual benefits.¹¹⁵ It enables people to attach greater value to their family and associates that facilitate collective action. The established social networks help in creating mutual insurance mechanisms. The communities that are endowed with a stock of social networks are in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability as opposed to those without such networks.¹¹⁶

Contextually this theory shows that in Mezam, people cultivated indigenous forms of self-reliance and social networking. The theory enables us to show how Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs) known in Mezam as *Njangi* helped improve the lives of most people in the study area as local communities tap the resources entrenched in ROSCA groups to benefit themselves. This institution and practice usually a form of solidarity or social network promotes interactions between its members which is meant to facilitate survival and success for groups and individuals with an intimate knowledge and trust in one another, expressed through reciprocity founded on interdependency. This social networking and interactions facilitate the pooling together of financial and other resources by individuals and collectives determined to fulfill their dreams in both normal and difficult times.

The Dependency theory developed in the late 1950s was in response to the modernisation theory.¹¹⁷ The theory was popularised under the auspices of the Director of United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, Raul Prebisch. Indeed their studies suggested that economic activities in the richer countries often led to serious economic problems in the poorer countries.¹¹⁸ This implied that the growth and advancement experienced by the developed countries did not necessarily lead to growth in the developing countries as it rather coincided with dependent development. The theory holds that developing countries could achieve development through external links with the developed parts of the world. This type of development was termed dependent development (endogenic resources are neglected for external ones) that is, it does not have internal dynamism in the

¹¹⁴Fine, *Theories of Social*, p.2.

¹¹⁵H. Bhandari *et al*, "What is Social," p.6.

¹¹⁶ O.A. Abimbola *et al*, "Rotating and Savings Credit Association: A Veritable Tool for Enhancing the Performance of Micro and Small Enterprises in Nigeria" *Asian Economic and Financial Review*, Vol.10, No.20, 2020, p.191.

¹¹⁷J. Matuhu, "A Critique of Modernisation and Dependency Theories in Africa; Critical Assessment", *African Journal of History and Culture*, Vol. 3, No.5, 2011, p.68.

¹¹⁸V. Ferraro, *Dependency Theory: An Introduction, in the Development Economics Reader*, edi Giorgio Secondi, London, Routledge, 2008, p.58.

developing country and thus remains highly vulnerable to the economic vagaries of the world market. This theory states that resources flow from the periphery of poor and underdeveloped states to the core of wealthy countries. This leads to the accumulation of wealth in the rich states at the expense of the poor states. Thus poor nations provide natural resources and cheap labour for developed nations without which the developed nations could not have the standard of living which they enjoy.¹¹⁹In fact dependency argues that the dependent nature of most developing countries is as a result of continuous interactions between the developed and developing countries and inequality among nations is an intrinsic part of these interactions.

The theory further argues that developing countries export primary products to these advanced nations who then transform these primary products and sell them back to the developing nations at even higher and better prices far more than the prices the products were bought. Dependency refers to exogenously imposed conditions whereby there is the exposure of Third World states to foreign direct investment, unequal trade agreements, interest payments on debts and the exchange of raw materials for high-priced manufactured goods creates structurally unequal relations between the core and the periphery.¹²⁰Theotonio dos Santos Junior, a Brazilian economist and one of the formulators of the theory views it as:

... an historical condition which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favours some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economies...a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which their own is subjected.¹²¹

In the same light dependency can be defined as: “an explanation of the economic development of a state in terms of the external influence that is political, economic and cultural on national development policies.”¹²² There are three core features that most dependency theorist share. Firstly, that dependency characterises the international system as comprised of two sets of states, variously described as dominant/dependent, centre/periphery, core/periphery or metropolitan/satellite. The dominant/centre/core or metropolitan were the developed countries while the dependent/periphery/satellite were the developing states of Latin America, Africa, Asia which had low per capita income and which relied heavily on the export of a single commodity for foreign exchange earnings. Secondly, it was assumed that external forces were of singular importance to the economic activities within the dependent

¹¹⁹<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/international-relations-theory> consulted on 20/May/2018 at 10:00 a.m.

¹²⁰ Griffiths, *International Relations the*, p.71.

¹²¹T. dos Santos, *The Structure of Dependence, Readings in U.S. Imperialism*, Boston: Porter Sargent, 1971, p.226.

¹²²O. Sunkel, “National Development Policy and External Dependence in Latin America”, *The Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 6, 1969, p.23.

states. These external forces included multinational corporations, international commodity markets, foreign assistance, voluntary/humanitarian organisations, communication and any other means by which developed nations can represent their economic interest abroad. Thirdly, dependency indicated that the relations between dominant and dependent states were dynamic because the interactions between the two sets of states tend not to only reinforce but also intensify the unequal patterns. Moreover, dependency is a very deep seated historical process, rooted in the internationalisation of capitalism and it is an ongoing process.

Dependency was always a negative situation which offered no or a very little opportunity for sustained and autonomous economic activity in the dependent state. It expressed subordination, the idea that the development of a country was directly connected to the development of their countries. Susanne Bodenheimer linked this view to Latin America as she blamed the present dependent and under developed nature of most Latin American countries on the developed nations (dominant). She reiterated that: “Latin America is today and has been since the sixteenth century, part of an international system dominated by the now developed nations...Latin American underdevelopment and dependency is the outcome of a particular series of relationships to the international systems.”¹²³

These theorists argue that underdeveloped countries remain economically vulnerable unless they reduced their connections to the developed countries. Dependent states as a solution should attempt to pursue policies of self-reliance. Often this policy perspective is not viewed as endorsement of a policy of autarky. Rather a policy of self-reliance should be interpreted as endorsing a policy of controlled interactions with the world economy as developing countries should only endorse interactions on terms that promise to improve the social and economic welfare of the people. The theory has an overlap with the world systems theory, which was also reflected in the work of Immanuel Wallerstein, a famous dependency theorist. Wallerstein rejects the notion of a Third World claiming that there is only one world which is connected by economic relations (world systems theory).¹²⁴

This theory with respect to this study will help explain how developed nations through their firms, organisations, institutions helped in the development of some developing countries. This is true of the Peace Corps in Cameroon in general and Mezam in particular even though these developing countries depend on the West for financial, technical and economic assistance. The above theory also best suit the context of the current study.

¹²³Susanne as cited by V. Ferraro, *Dependency Theory: An*, p. 62.

¹²⁴<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/peace-corps>, consulted on 20/January/2018 at 11.00 a.m.

1.7. Motivation of the Study

Our pursuit for higher learning in the Higher Teacher Training College (HTTC) Bambili brought us in contact with volunteers who taught us methodology. This contact gave us the urge to find out who the volunteers were, where they came from and why they came. These unanswered questions motivated us to deepen our knowledge and anxiety about them. The researcher developed the zeal to investigate whether it was only for humanitarian reasons that the Peace Corps carried out these incessant humanitarian activities and thus the study.

Moreover, most research works on the history and humanitarian action of the Peace Corps focused on parts of Africa in general and Cameroon in particular while others centred on specific case studies and in given Regions. Thus, the need for a specific scientific research on this study area that benefitted in terms of number and time from the Peace Corps through its volunteers and activities. We also chose the topic because of the researcher's desire to work with an international humanitarian body.

We were further spurred by our field of specialty to delve in to the study. As budding researchers in the History of International Relations and aspirants in humanitarian studies, we were fascinated to demonstrate the techniques accumulated in historiography. The question of humanitarianism and humanitarian action is of international concern mostly as it pulls diplomats to dialogue. This implies fitting square pegs in square holes as the research theme falls within our area of specialty. The above explanations are the main pillars that instigated us to indulge in this exploration.

1.8. Significance of the Study

Though a lot has been written on humanitarian action and community development in Cameroon especially in the field of Cameroon–United States partnership, emphases are on Cameroon as a whole or were limited to the different Regions. The focus of this work is on the activities of the U.S. Peace Corps and community development in Mezam. The study is important in that it carries with it a specificity that was not the concern of previous scholars and researchers especially as the history of Peace Corps-Mezam partnership is concerned. It is hoped that the study will be relevant to the Cameroon government, the people in the study area, humanitarian agencies, researchers, stakeholders as well as American donors especially those on foreign assistance and development-oriented issues.

This research will serve as a piece of information to many who are interested in humanitarian action and enrich the growing historiography of humanitarianism in Cameroon in general and particularly in Mezam. The study will provoke the interest of researchers in

humanitarian action to branch out from the mainstream and venture into relevant but yet to be exploited fields related to humanitarianism and community development.

It is hoped that the study will help the Government of Cameroon to assess the contributions of voluntary agencies in general and the Peace Corps in particular to the development of its country. This will help the government derive new policies to provide an enabling environment that will attract humanitarian agents to Cameroon. This will act as a springboard for future cooperation and improve development. The study will elaborate in a wider scope the activities and impact of the Peace Corps in Mezam. This will serve as a data base that will act as a testimony to the success story of this agency as an agent of development in Mezam. It will also act as a push and boost to stakeholders interested in sponsoring humanitarian activities.

1.9. Scope of the Study

The study covers a period of 55 years that is from 1962 to 2017. The commencement date 1962 is significant because this year marked the arrival of the first Peace Corps volunteers to Cameroon that were sent to the North and South West Regions. The year 2017, is chosen because of the fact that the socio-political crisis in Cameroon aggravated in 2017 and as a result, the Peace Corps activities were suspended in the study area. The volunteers who were in the study area were withdrawn for security reasons and this was in line with the Peace Corps policy of "interrupted service."¹²⁵ Some of the volunteers who were in the field resigned while others opted to be transferred to other regions.¹²⁶ Fifty-five years is a considerable period enough to study Peace Corps activities in Mezam and a possible duration within which there could be reliable information on the subject. The study is limited to Mezam to avoid generalisation and because of our mastery of the terrain and available sources of information and informants. The activities of the Peace Corps are scattered all over the study area in Mankon, Bafut, Nkwen, Pinyin, Bali, Bambui, Bambili, Kedjom Keku, Kedjom Ketinguh and Bamendakwe.

1.10. Sources and Methodology

For this piece of work to be accomplished, information was collected from diverse sources which included; primary, secondary and tertiary. As concerns primary sources, data

¹²⁵ Interrupted Service, addresses those situations where termination is appropriate for reasons beyond a trainee's or volunteer's control. This can be due to circumstances under which it can be reasonably concluded that the trainee's or volunteer's safety is or maybe endangered. It can also be due to lack of a viable assignment for which the trainee or volunteer is qualified.

¹²⁶ Anonymous

was collected from annual reports, archives, manuscript material, tape recordings, articles, official letters, iconography, journals, speeches as well as interviews from field work and informal discussions. Collective interviews or focus groups were also used to authenticate our findings from previous interviews. Focus group discussions were held especially in homes and other areas where the groups felt more at ease and talked freely. The location for interview varied depending on the preferences of each participant and collective groups. This was essential for the participants to be comfortable and secured during interview. Here, opposing arguments and differences of opinion between minority and majority voices within the groups were noticed and avoided and this provided a valuable source of qualitative data. Oral interviews were given a great preference especially in areas we discovered that historical facts gotten were polemic in nature. In this light, we interviewed competent authorities of the area of study who included Peace Corps volunteers and staff, community members and partners, workers of the Ministry of External Relations and the Cameroonian public at large.

The interviews were usually through a question and answer approach and discussions performed. In this process the researcher allowed the informants to be teachers and concentrated on data collection. The challenge was to maintain a friendly conversation while keeping track of the information required. The first step in the oral interview was to establish a domain for conversation. Further afield, we borrowed the services of interpreters who were also informants because some elderly informants could neither speak Pidgin nor English like in Mundum in Bafut. The mode of communication was by face to face. Group discussions were held with Peace Corps volunteers and local community members within the study area. This was chosen for its flexibility and convenience to discuss relevant research issues with informants. The tools used for oral interview included interview guides, pencils, pens, camera, telephone, knapsack. Discussions were recorded on jotters, tapes and later restructured to suit the purpose and context of the study.

Another method used in collecting data was through field observations. The main objective of this technique was to cross-check the weaknesses of oral interviews especially as respondents at some point in time seemed hesitant to answering too many questions and also to gather data on the visible activities of informants. In the same light, there was a reservoir of archival material that enabled us to gather data on the history and contributions of the Peace Corps to community development in Mezam. Some valuable information on the Peace Corps was gathered from the National Archives Yaoundé, the National Archives Buea, Regional Archives Bamenda, United States Embassy Archives, Peace Corps Archives, Ministry of External Relations Archives and some development associations and private

Archives. The documents most of which were assessment reports contained valuable information linked to the study area.

Apart from oral sources, important information was collected from diverse secondary sources ranging from published works (scholarly books, articles and magazines) and unpublished works (theses and dissertations) which were related to the topic. Most of the sources which dealt with the history and humanitarian action of the Peace Corps centred on specific case studies and in given Regions. Others touched parts of Africa in general and Cameroon in particular. The secondary sources were gotten from the libraries of the International Relations Institute of Cameroon, the main and faculty libraries of the University of Yaoundé I, the Africa Network Against Illiteracy, Conflicts and Human Rights Abuse (ANICHRA) library, Divisional, Sub-Divisional as well as urban and local council libraries. The data gathered from these depots helped us to construct the historicity of the Peace Corps in Cameroon. Besides, tertiary sources were also consulted and were very vital to this study. This included almanacs, field guides, internet, indexes, dictionaries and bibliographies.

With respect to the study, the methodology we adopted was both quantitative and qualitative. The reason for the application of these two methods of data collection and analyses was because our work dealt with delicate issues that needed a critical examination. In this case, we chose the qualitative (non-numerical data) approach which favours difficult and comparative analyses and quantitative method which addressed numerical data.

Qualitative collected data through observations, interviews and summarised the findings primarily through narrative and verbal means. This method was used to trace the history and activities of the Peace Corps in the study area. It equally traces year after the other and explores into the intervention of the Peace Corps and partners in local communities in the Division. The qualitative style helped us handle events and intricacies grouped from varying sources. Qualitative data was analysed and presented using descriptive and interpretative research techniques. Textual data was examined and grouped into relevant themes in the research thereby making the data ready for thematic analyses. It was during this process that their interconnectedness was interpreted to answer the concerns of this research.

The quantitative approach on the other hand handled numerical data analysis and summarised results numerically. This was essentially statistical data analyses, tabulations and presentation methods. Data was analysed and presented using descriptive statistics grouped in two main categories which included summary statistics which calculated percentages and statistics and description of data using tables. The study used the Chicago style as a citation guide to document the sources and footnotes.

1.11. Problems Encountered

A piece of research work of this nature cannot be realised without challenges. The first difficulty was getting access to the earmarked documentation centres and acquiring the desired documents. This is the example of the central library of the University of Yaoundé I where some documents were found in the index cards but could not be found in the bookshelves. This delayed the time for data collection and analyses. It was thus necessary for us to make use of other documentation centres to complement our study. Also getting access into the Archives of the Ministry of External Relations was not easy as it required some bureaucratic procedures which involved applications addressed to the hierarchy. This implied that access to the Ministry's Archives was conditioned to an authorisation issued only by the minister. Most at times, these applications were not given attention or treated on time. This delayed the progress of the work. To address this, the researcher exercised a lot of patience while following up and explaining to the authorities the importance of granting our request. We also persuaded our informants that the exercise was purely for academic purposes.

Another drawback that seriously affected the progress of the work was the refusal to grant access to the researcher to conduct research at the Peace Corps headquarters in Yaoundé. The Country Director rejected as she insisted that the Peace Corps has a legislatively established mandate that does not include assisting with private research efforts and that the agency is typically not in a position to make internal Peace Corps information or staff time available for such undertakings of this nature that were not for the purposes or direct benefit of the agency. This did not only affect the progress of the work but access to direct sources from the head office would have improved the quality of the work. It was thus necessary for us to make use of other documentation centres to complement our study. We also persuaded our informants that the exercise was purely academic.

Another handicap in the realisation of this project was at the level of fieldwork. Some informants who participated in community development projects initiated by the Peace Corps in Mezam were very reluctant in giving out information. Others gave tentative *rendezvous* which they never respected. Some volunteers deliberately refused to answer questions related to the topic on the grounds that they were not allowed to do so. Others responded to the questions satisfactorily but refused to disclose their names and ages. This delayed the progress of the work and to solve the problems we explained to the informants that the work was purely for academic purposes and that their identities will not be disclosed.

In addition, informants were scattered all over the study area and even beyond as a result of the crisis and getting to them was very difficult. Some of the informants who lived out of the selected communities were difficult to meet. At times we had to travel across regions, divisions, sub divisions and villages to meet them for interviews. Also, information collected from oral sources was beset by the problem of chronology, credibility and authenticity. The problem of interpretation was serious when we met very old people who did not understand nor speak English or Pidgin but had a mastery of the subject matter. Also, we equally suffered from poor knowledge of the geography of the study area. In spite of these problems coupled with our constant movement to the area, we employed a lot of tact, patience and lobbying to get required information needed for this work.

The feasible activities of the Peace Corps were mostly carried out in the suburbs of certain areas in Mezam suffering from the socio/political crisis thus constant attacks from separatist fighters. The activities of these secessionist fighters made field work difficult. Similarly, because of insecurity as a result of the crisis, the activities of the Peace Corps were suspended in Mezam and volunteers were no longer sent there. Thus, meeting volunteers and getting access to information was a problem since the Peace Corps office in Bamenda was closed. The crisis further complicated this research work with Ghost Towns and Curfews. Ghost Towns hindered the researcher's movement in and around Mezam. This problem was so complicated in Bafut which is one of the heartbeat of the crisis coupled with the fact that the safety of the researcher was also at stake in this crisis period. This therefore delayed data collection and analyses as we took more time than the initial time estimated for fieldwork.

Most volunteer posts like schools, agricultural posts and even some hospitals were closed. This was visible in Bafut where none of the schools in which volunteers served in is still functional. The researcher therefore carried out research on non-Ghost Town days. Also, we used the Research Attestation given by the University of Yaoundé I that convinced some informants to open up and also hired some youths to take us around most of these villages. Irrespective of all these difficulties mentioned, the skills acquired all through our training and the determination to complete this academic piece of work, acted as a driving force against all odds. However, the data collected permitted this work to be divided in to five chapters.

1.12. Organisation of the Study

The work is divided in to five chapters beginning with a general introduction and ending with a general conclusion. Each chapter also begins with an introduction highlighting the objectives, problems discussed and ends with a conclusion which recaptures the major

themes handled and results found. This gives room for a smooth transitioning to subsequent chapters.

Chapter one focuses on the origin, evolution and implantation of the Peace Corps in Cameroon. Here, we presented the geographical and historical background of the study area. This is important because physical and human factors have always influenced development and acted as an enabling factor for humanitarian action. The chapter equally traces the origin, objectives and evolution of the Peace Corps and also examines why and how the activities of the organisation were extended to Cameroon and Mezam in particular. The chapter also looks at the motivation, the process of volunteer application, selection and training as well as the structure/organisation and funding of the Peace Corps in Cameroon.

Chapter two examines the local development initiatives in Mezam and seeks to understand how community development was given credence in Mezam before, during and after the arrival of the Peace Corps volunteers. It also explores the various ways community development inter-twined with the activities of the Peace Corps and how it has changed today. The chapter argues that in Mezam where the state was very distant, people cultivated indigenous forms of self-reliance and social networking to promote development. This was usually through Village Development Associations (VDAs) and Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs) commonly known in Mezam as *Njangis*.

Chapter three assesses the projects initiated and carried out by the agency in the economic domain in the field of agriculture in Mezam. Emphases here were on projects which influenced community development in crop cultivation, inland fishery, animal husbandry and environmental protection as through trainings which built the capacity of farmers the quantity and quality of their yields greatly increased. The chapter also focuses on the role of volunteers in the development of cooperatives and road construction as well as land and survey in Mezam.

Chapter four analyses the role of the Peace Corps in the social development of Mezam. Here emphases were on the strategies implored by the Peace Corps volunteers in a bit to improve on the rate of literacy, living standards and health situation of the people of the study area. Projects in this domain included the promotion of maternal and child care, fight against malnutrition, mitigation of HIV/AIDS and malaria as well as the promotion of herbal pharmacies and local medicine. Other projects implemented by the volunteers in the domain of education included; Maths/Science project, formulation and development of curriculum, library development, teaching in teacher training colleges and universities in Mezam.

Chapter five focuses on the consequences of these activities on the people of Mezam, successes and failures of the Peace Corps in the area of study, the challenges encountered by this agency and its volunteers in the course of carrying out its activities in the study area. It also examines the hidden agenda of the Peace Corps in Cameroon in general and Mezam Division in particular, the extent of mutuality in the relations between the Peace Corps and Mezam. Some measures on how this humanitarian cooperation can better be managed to ensure its effectiveness in accomplishing its task were also presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER ONE: ORIGIN, EVOLUTION AND IMPLANTATION OF THE PEACE CORPS IN CAMEROON

1.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the geographical and historical setting of Mezam Division of the North-West Region of Cameroon. It explains the human and economic geography of the land as an enabling factor for Peace Corps in the study area. The history of the people is uncovered in a bid to rekindle their resourcefulness as a pull factor to community development. The objective here is to evaluate the link between the natural and human environment so as to understand the background that attracted other voluntary organisations in general and the Peace Corps in particular to join in the process of development. The chapter equally traces the origin, objectives and evolution of the Peace Corps, analyses the reason, procedure and implantation of the Peace Corps in Cameroon in general and Mezam in particular as well as examines the motivation, application, selection and training of Peace Corps volunteers, the structure and funding of Peace Corps Cameroon. This said, to have a better understanding of the location of the study area, the knowledge of geography is needed. This will be seen in the subsequent paragraphs.

1.2. Geographical Setting

Mezam Division lies between latitudes 5° 20" and 6° 15" N and Longitudes 9° 7" and 10° 21"E and covers a surface area of 1.841 square kilometres. It shares boundary with Menchum, Boyo and Momo Divisions to the North and East, and bounded to the West and South by the West Region as shown on the maps on pages 40, 41 and 42. It has an estimated 700.000 inhabitants. Administratively, it is divided in to seven sub divisions namely Bamenda 1,2,3 (Bamendakwe, Mankon and Nkwen respectively), Bafut, Bali, Santa and Tubah.¹ The study area is characterised by a cool temperate-like climate with an average annual rainfall of about 2288mm and an average temperature of 23°C varying between 15°C-32°C. There are two principal seasons: wet season that begins in March and ends in October, and dry season from November to February characterised by the Harmattan with dry air.² The natural vegetation of Mezam Division is made up of the grassland savannah, characterised by grasses mixed with shrubs and trees, while the valleys are highly dominated by raffia bushes and palm trees. This natural vegetation over time has been strongly modified by human

¹Akei, "Institutions and Local," p.28.

² A.M. Olayiwola *et al*, "Land Use Change in Mezam Division of the North-West Province, Cameroon, From Landsat Imageries (1998 and 2001)", *Ethiopian Journal of Environmental Studies and Management*, Vol.4, No.2, 2011, p.50.

activities mainly farming and demographic pressure imposed by a rapidly increasing population.³ Some of the indigenous trees have been reduced to near extinction due to exploitation for timber and fuel wood use. On a hydrographic point of view, Mezam Division is drained by the River Mezam and its tributaries. There are other rivers with the Mughep River taking its source in the North East of the area making a water fall at the Station hill. This river combines with other small rivers to form the River Mezam which empties itself in to the Menchum falls.⁴ Geologically, the study area is located along the Cameroon line and it is made up of three principal types of rocks which include; geological rocks, metamorphic rocks and alluvial deposits. The metamorphic rocks outcrop mainly on slopes of high plateaus. The volcanic rocks, mostly basalts outcrop in the North and East especially around Southern Bafut and the alluvial soils dominate the Mezam River valley. Topography and climate highly determine the stratification and spread of soils in Mezam. Thus, ferrallitic soils crop up in the high plateau, the hill slopes are covered by brunified soils and alluvial soils dominate the Mezam River valley. Hydromorphic soils appear in the swampy areas.⁵

Located in the Bamenda highlands and montane region, the relief varies from 1000 to 2500 metres above sea level with escarpments, plateaus and steep hills. Within the Division, the villages are ruled by sub chiefs with traditional councils under the surveillance of the paramount *Fon*. In its structural character and geographic location, Mezam Division has more than synthesised the varied characteristics of the North-West Region.⁶ The geographical location of Mezam was an enabling factor for Peace Corps as its strategic location explains the concentration of activities in the study area. An understanding of the history of the people who make up the area is also very important.

1.3 Historical Setting

The study area is found in the Cameroon Grassfields, a name associated to the savannah vegetation that dominates the western highlands of Cameroon. In pre-colonial times, it was occupied by a variety of centralised societies and political units. These state-like or cephalous societies generally had a well organised and centralised system of administration comprising powerful kings, who wielded a lot of powers, nobles and commoners although the degree of complexity varied considerably depending on the size of the groups.⁷

³ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.31.

⁴ Olayiwola *et al*, "Land Use Change," p.51.

⁵ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.31.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.32.

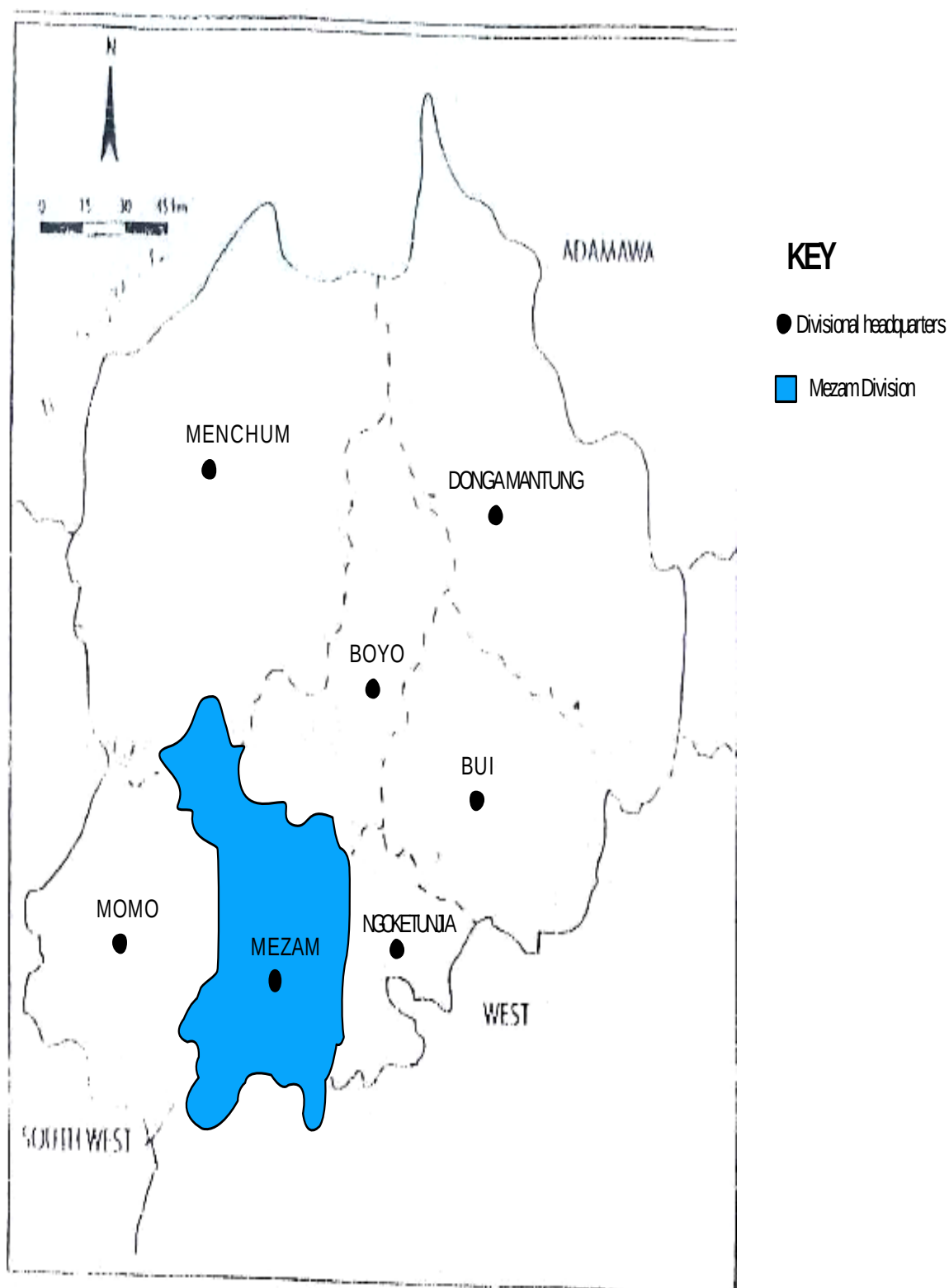
⁷ E.Y. Vubo and G.A. Ngwa, "Changing Intercommunity Relations and the Politics of Identity in the Northern Mezam Area, Cameroon", *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines*, 161, XLI-L, 2001, p.166.

Map 1: Map showing the location of the North-West Region in Cameroon



Source: P.N. Chia *et al*, “Prevalence of *Cryptosporidium Parvum* in Dung Collected from Cattle in Bamenda, North West Region of Cameroon”, *Indian Journal of Medical Research and Pharmaceutical Sciences*, Vol.2, No. 9, September 2015, p.13.

Map 2: Map Showing the location of Mezam Division in the North-West Region of Cameroon



Source: Adapted by author from Vubo and Ngwa, “Changing Intercommunity Relations,” p.162

It is renowned for its chieftaincy, traditional and local authority-styled structures of governance-a vestige of British colonialism.⁸The area was inhabited in the majority by peoples speaking a group of inter-tillable languages classified as *Ngemba*⁹sub-group of Mbam-Nkam sub division of the Grassfield Bantu language family.¹⁰ The *Ngemba* speaking peoples who form the bulk of the substrata of the area are said to have moved westwards from the Bamboutous-Menoua area or the area south of the Bamenda plateau several centuries ago, inhabiting the latter area and areas extending to the southern part of Kom in the 18th and 19th centuries.¹¹ The historical, language and cultural similarities as well as the resourcefulness and community spirit made Mezam a centre of attraction to the Peace Corps.

1.3. Origin of the Peace Corps

The agency traces its roots back to 1960, when J. F. Kennedy who is considered the father of the Peace Corps in a speech challenged some 10.000 students in the early hours of the morning on 14th October 1960 at the Michigan University towards the end of his presidential campaign. From his third presidential campaign debate, the candidate had planned on heading straight to bed in a room at the Michigan Union building before boarding a train for the day long whistle-stop tour through out the state. But when he noticed that these students had braved the cold night air waiting for a chance to glimpse the handsome and dynamic candidate just 49 years of age by then, he mounted the steps of the student union with the students chanting his name. Moved by this reception, Kennedy stepped behind a microphone and gave an unscripted speech.¹²He encouraged them to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries.¹³ He challenged the students by asking that:

How many of you who are going to be doctors are willing to spend your days in Ghana?, how many of you are willing to spend ten years in Africa, Latin America or Asia for the U.S. and working for freedom, technicians or engineers, how many of you are willing to work in the foreign service and spend your lives travelling around the world?¹⁴

⁸ Geshiere as cited by C.C. Fonchingong and M. Mbah, “Social Solidarity Economy and Village-Centric Development in North-West Cameroon”, *International Journal of Community and Social Development*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, 2021, p.10.

⁹ *Ngemba* is a term coined in the colonial period from the local expression for “that is to say” which is common to these groups.

¹⁰ Abumbi II, *The Customs and Traditions of Bafut*, Limbe, Presbook, 2016, p.10.

¹¹ Vubo and Ngwa, “Changing Intercommunity Relations,” p.166.

¹² Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.2.

¹³ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2010, p.4.

¹⁴ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.2., Meisler, *When the world Calls*, p.5., Azoh-Mbi, “The Contribution of,” p.36.

To each question Kennedy received an enthusiastic response and added that:

on your willingness to do that not merely to serve one year or two years in the service but on willingness to contribute part of your life to this country”, he said: “I think will depend on the answer whether we as a free society can compete.”¹⁵ He continued by stating that: “I think Americans are willing to contribute, but the effort must be far greater than we have made in the past.”¹⁶ We come to the University of Michigan-surrounded here by a new generation to rededicate ourselves to meeting that challenge, for the challenge to each person to help and to work with their fellow man is as old as the world, and yet confronts each one of us in turn.¹⁷

His young audience responded to this speech with a petition signed by 1.000 students who were desperate and ready to serve their country. Kennedy’s words provoked the interest of the students who were ready to serve their country by living and working in foreign countries sowed the seeds of the Peace Corps.¹⁸ Kennedy would not officially call for a Peace Corps of talented young men and women but his late night challenge is now cited as the programme’s founding moment. He planted its seeds in that brief encounter at the University of Michigan. There is a plaque in the campus of the Michigan university to symbolise the venue where the first seeds of the Peace Corps were planted.¹⁹ The plaque now proclaims that: “here at 2:00a.m on 14th October 1960, J.F. Kennedy first defined the Peace Corps.”²⁰ The definition was however vague and tentative as Kennedy’s words, had no national impact. Kennedy made a speech in San Francisco in November 1960 and proposed an organisation of trained men and women who would work in Third World countries to help them weave the threads of peace and friendship as well as transcend the frontiers of poverty and underdevelopment. To transform his campaign dream to a reality, Kennedy would start work immediately to create the Peace Corps coupled with the fact that some 25.000 letters had been sent out in response to his call.²¹

Founded in 1961, although its historical background dates back to the end of the second world war when the U.S. began using political, economic and military means to contain Communism. Some of the strategies adopted by the U.S. in pursuit of this objective were very subtle in deed. For example, as far back as 1945, Senator J. Williams Fulbright introduced a bill calling for the establishment of a cultural exchange programme based on the feeling and argument that the security of the U.S. cannot and should not rest solely on armies

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Azoh-Mbi, “The Contribution of,” p.36.

¹⁷ Ruppe, “Peace Corps’ Enduring,” p.687.

¹⁸ <https://www.jfklibrary.org> consulted on 15/May/2021 at 7: 00 a.m.

¹⁹ E. Andrew, *8 Little –Known Facts About the Peace Corps*, consulted on 15/May/2021 at 6:30 a.m.

²⁰ Meisler, *When the World*, p.5.

²¹ <https://www.jfklibrary.org> consulted on 15/May/2021 at 7: 00 a.m.

or on atomic bombs, no matter how powerful or destructive. The passing of the Fulbright bill led to the institution of the Fulbright Programme by which the development or the study of American subjects especially History and English were encouraged in foreign universities.²²

The Fulbright programme though basically cultural had a strong alumni influence. The agency gained from the Fulbright Programme by combining to the cultural dimension, an economic aspect. Other strategies to restrain the spread of Communism were the Truman's Doctrine²³ and the Marshall Plan. The former as per the U.S. perspective brought a new period in understanding and addressing global issues especially with respect to Third World countries. American assistance and funding in sectors such as agriculture, industry, education, health and technology were important features of U.S. foreign policy.

Truman in his inaugural address proposed a new programme for the Third World by calling on the U.S. to: "embark on a bold new programme for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas."²⁴ He requested the U.S. to: "... help the free peoples of the world, through their own efforts, to produce more food, more clothing, more materials for housing as per Point Four because it was the Fourth point of the four important plan of actions proposed in his foreign policy address. Point Four was very special because it addressed the issue of U.S. support to Third World countries during the Cold War, and the next presidents continued to encourage it though with different intentions, visions and methods but the goal remained unchanged.

On June 5th 1947, American Secretary of State George Marshall produced his European Recovery Programme (ERP) which was an economic continuation and expansion of the Truman's Doctrine. The Marshall Aid programme sought to extend a helping hand by offering economic and financial help wherever it was needed. It provided billions of dollars for the economic recovery of war-torn Europe. Marshall declared that: "our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos."²⁵ The Russians immediately noticed that there was a hidden agenda to the Marshall Aid than mere generosity. Despite the fact that in theory aid was really ready especially for Eastern Europe, Molotov, the Russian Foreign Minister rejected the Marshall Aid and referred to it as

²² Azoh-Mbi, "The Contribution of," p.35

²³ Truman's Doctrine was a speech made by Harry Truman in March 1947, who was the U.S. president from 1945-53 stating that the U.S. would support free peoples who are resisting subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

²⁴ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.13.

²⁵ N. Lowe, *Mastering Modern World History*, Third Edition, Basingstoke, Hampshire, PALGRAVE Houndmills, 1997, p.128.

dollar imperialism. He viewed it as an American weapon to win over Western Europe and extend to the East which Russia considered as her orbit. Russia denounced the whole idea, even among her dependent states especially Czechoslovakia that wanted to seize the opportunity was not allowed to do so.²⁶ It is in this background that the origins of the Peace Corps were to be found.

The immediate precursors of the Peace Corps were Richard L. Neuberger of Oregon and Representative Henry Reuss of Wisconsin in the late 1950s. Reuss expressed the idea in 1957 while he belonged to the Joint Committee on the Economic Report.²⁷ He journeyed to South East Asia and unexpectedly stumbled upon a group of educators, serving in the rural community. On 5th June 1958, Neuberger in a discussion to revise the Mutual Defense Assistance Act,²⁸ invited Americans to educate the people of the Third World. Congressman Reuss, a Democrat from Wisconsin joined the chorus when in July, he proposed the establishment of a Point Four Youth Corps. The Reuss' suggestion resurrected Truman's Point Four Programme. Early in 1960, Senator Neuberger and member of Congress Reuss both introduced bills to assess the probability of creating the Youth Corps. With these bills, the government carried out a study on the availability and practicability of the idea of Point Four Youth Corps. The government disbursed \$10,000 for the initial research to be done at Colorado State University.²⁹

Senator Kennedy became aware of the Reuss' concept during the 1960 electoral contest, and noticing the growing momentum for the notion, welcomed the idea and immediately included it in to his political platform.³⁰ In June 1960, Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey coined and used the term "Peace Corps" for the first time when he initiated Senate Bill 3675 campaigning for a programme to send youths to help Third World countries to fight against ignorance, destitution, starvation and diseases. The bill stated that: "the Peace Corps be established to develop a genuine people to people program[me] in which talented and dedicated young American men will teach agricultural and industrial techniques, English language, sanitation and health procedures in Asia, Africa and Latin America."³¹ Humphrey belonged to the prominent Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ This group or task force was formed by the 1946 Employment Act. At creation, it was known as the Joint Committee on the Economic Report before 1956 that it was rechristened Joint Economic Committee.

²⁸ The Mutual Defense Assistance Act was enacted by President Harry Truman in 1951 and was intended to prevent the spread of Communism. The primary goal remained unchanged over time .

²⁹ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.30.

³⁰ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Staff Handbook*, p.21.

³¹ Amin, *The Peace Corps*, p.18.

None of the initial suggestions gained enthusiasm but influenced Kennedy and his collaborators to start reflecting on the issue during the 1960 electoral showdown. Though Humphrey's bill did not receive any much support from the senate because most diplomats quaked at the thought of thousands of Americans scattered across the world and most people in America also wondered how these coddled youths used to air-conditioned houses, fast food and big cars will have the stamina simply to survive overseas let alone do a needed job, it was very significant in that it gave congressional members the opportunity to review the programme prior to the following session and was the first bill with the name "Peace Corps" to describe the programme. Also, it drew public attention and interest for the programme. As the discourse on the Peace Corps was still going on in the Capitol Hill, Senator Kennedy exploited the situation and transformed the idea in to one of his most important electoral concerns. He chastised Eisenhower's government for ignoring the Third World and that for the past eight years, the country had grown conservative, fat and lazy. He said: "we are going to do better". Repeatedly he told his audience that: "the theme of this campaign is going to be action...action abroad to meet the challenge of our adversaries. I believe the American people elected a president to act."³²

Harris Wofford, the Senator from Pennsylvania who worked on the campaign tried later to analyse why Kennedy raised the issue during his speech at the University of Michigan. Wofford wrote that: "the best guess anyone of the staff could give was that Kennedy was still angered by Nixon's insinuation during the debate that Democrats were a war party so Kennedy wanted to counter this with a democratic peace proposal."³³ It should be noted that during the third presidential campaign debate, Richard Nixon remarked that the Democrats were a war party or war mongers and their candidates dragged the U.S. in to the wars America fought. He noted that Woodrow Wilson dragged the U.S. in to the first World war while F.D. Roosevelt and H.S. Truman dragged the U.S. in to the second world war and Korean war respectively.

In october 1960, Kennedy invited the young democrats to form a "Youth Peace Corps" and publicly made a speech about it in the Michigan University. Faced with thousands of enthusiastic youths, he decided to test an idea. Although it attracted no notice beyond the university campus, many students eagerly accepted the test and its challenge. Kennedy proposed a programme in which university graduates will put in two years of service to assist Third World countries and insisted that:

³² *Ibid.*, p.32.

³³ Meisler, *When the World*, p.6.

Life in the Peace Corps will not be easy. There will be no salary and allowances will be at a level sufficient only to maintain health and meet basic needs. Men and women will be expected to work and live alongside the nationals of the country in which they are stationed, doing the same work, eating the same food, talking the same language. But if the life will not be easy, it will be rich and satisfying. For every young American who participates in the Peace Corps and who works in a foreign land will know that he or she is sharing in the great common task of bringing to man that decent way of life which is the foundation of freedom and a condition of peace.³⁴

As time went on, Kennedy won immediate cheers of approval. A set of students met in a congress in the Princeton University and gave full support to the idea of the U.S. Peace Corps in November 1960. The response from the youths was very favourable. The full support and acceptance from the students led to the incessant telephone exchanges from prospective volunteers and inquiries. The thumbprints of the Princeton University Congress acted as a springboard for other groups that abided with the idea. Associations like Americans Committed to World Responsibility sprouted up and boosted the confidence of the Peace Corps idea through conferences.³⁵

With this staggering support, Kennedy appointed his brother-in-law, Sargent Shriver to manage an elite team that will establish the new organisation. Shriver, a smart, gregarious, thoughtful, full of curiosity and a dynamic force was known for his ability to identify and motivate creative, visionary leaders, led the group to quickly shape as well as designed the institution in a month and sent out the first volunteers within ten months of the Executive Order. He had excellent credentials and proved to be the essential link between idealism inspired by the president and its practical application through the Peace Corps. For over a month of serious exchange and argument among the Task Force members, Sargent Shriver brought out seven stages of establishing the Peace Corps in a report presented to J.F.Kennedy in February 1961. He wrote that: "President Kennedy picked me to organise the Peace Corps, I was told, because no one thought the Peace Corps could succeed. The president and aids were sure his campaign was too fanciful to get off the ground. It would be easier to fire a relative than a political friend."³⁶

A graduate of the Yale Law School and World War II veteran, he was in every way a new frontiersman, young just 44 years by then, tough, vigorous, idealistic, determined and always ready to face new challenges. The Task Force was to report how the Peace Corps could be organised and organise it. Together with Harris Wofford, a 34-year-old

³⁴ Amin, *The Peace Corps*, p.4.

³⁵ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.58

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Meisler, *When the World*, p.18.

distinguished law professor from the University of Notre Dame, they relentlessly worked hard to realise the dream.³⁷ The two had formed a close bond within the campaign period and held their first Task Force meeting on 6th February 1961 soon after inauguration at Mayflower Hotel in Washington.³⁸ Wofford served as Kennedy's civil rights advisor. As soon as Kennedy was elected, he entrusted Shriver with the job of chief talent scout, and a reluctant Shriver accepted the president's request to officially lead the organisation. Together with Wofford, they oversaw the hiring efforts for the incoming administration. The president elect wanted his brother-in-law to create a Task Force that would find the most dedicated, bright, tough minded, experienced guys in the country. Atleast 25.000 letters had been posted to Kennedy asking for a chance to serve in the Peace Corps. Shriver and his talent scouts had also been bombarded with inquiries about it.³⁹

At first, the task force was only made up of Shriver and Wofford. They spent a lot of time reaching out to friends and colleagues they believed could assist them. Shriver recruited and energised a brain trust of academics and a talented staff to implement the Task Force's recommendations and issued a report on the programme in a few weeks. The pioneers and early hires included George Carter, a prominent civil rights activist and previously affiliated with the American Society for African Culture, Adam Yarmolinsky, a Foundation Executive Director, Father Theodore Hesburg, Chancellor of the Notre Dame University, Gordon Boyce, Chairperson of Experiment in International Living, Albert Sims of the Institute of International Education, Franklin Williams, a student in African issues and campaign coordinator for black voter registration and Louis Martin, a newspaper editor.⁴⁰ Shriver as per Kennedy was to establish the Peace Corps based on a pattern well detailed in a document written by Professor Max Millikan. He suggested a programme with over a hundred volunteers to be referred to as International Youth Service. The volunteers were to serve under the directives of the United States Agency for International Development. His approach was experimental and Kennedy agreed to it.⁴¹

Added to this was Samuel Hayes, a Professor of Economics, who had written a paper on a possible Youth Corps and a preliminary report of Henry Reuss proposal from Colorado State University. Kennedy joined the Guskins in forming a committee to drum support for the Peace Corps. These reports created the base for Shriver's Task Force. Added to the above

³⁷ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.44.

³⁸ Meisler, *When the World*, p.18.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.47.

⁴¹ Meisler, *When the World*, p.18.

reports, Shriver and Wofford also received another suggestive paper “The Towering Task” prepared by Warren Wiggins, the thirty-four-year old deputy director of the Far East Operations and William Josephson, a twenty-six-year old lawyer both of the Far Eastern Bureau of International Cooperation Administration (ICA).⁴² They took the title of the paper from a line in Kennedy’s first state of the union address. Talking about the need to expand the economy of the entire non-communist world, Kennedy said that: “the problems in achieving this goal are towering and unprecedented-the response must be towering and unprecedented as well.”⁴³ The two were fit, well grounded with knowledge and had the required qualifications. Wiggins was the assistant director of the Far Eastern Operations in ICA, though was still in his 30s had for over the years been engaged in the management of the Marshall Aid in Western Europe. He was deeply unhappy with the way American programmes abroad were being managed. Josephson, just 26, worked with the administration of ICA in the Far Eastern Regional Council as a lawyer. The two programmes were very similar because they both involved former U.S. aid plans in the Third World and soon became the locomotive of the Peace Corps.⁴⁴

On 20th January 1961, in his inaugural speech, Kennedy promised aid to poor countries of the world and by this period Kennedy’s Peace Corps was one of the most talked-about aspects of his platform. After stating that the greatest obstacles to newly developing countries was the lack of trained man power, Kennedy pointed out that:

The new organisation would differ from existing assistance program[me]s in that its members will supplement technical advisers by offering the specific skills needed by developing nations if they are to put technical advice to work, and would help to provide the skilled man power necessary to carry out the development projects planned by the host governments acting at a working level.⁴⁵

On Wednesday 1st March 1961, President Kennedy issued an Executive Order 10924, establishing a temporal Peace Corps as a new agency within the Department of State and Congress later made it official by authorising the organisation's budget.⁴⁶ Although Congress did not pass a legislation authorising a permanent Peace Corps until more than six months later, the date of the Executive Order Wednesday 1st March 1961 is considered as the official birthday of the Peace Corps. Announcing the formation of the Peace Corps in a news conference, President Kennedy outlined the nature of the Corps by remarking that:

⁴² International Cooperation Administration (ICA) will soon be renamed the Agency for International Development (AID)

⁴³ Meisler, *When the World*, p.20.

⁴⁴ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.47.

⁴⁵ Azoh-Mbi, “The Contribution of,” p.39.

⁴⁶ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2010, p.4.

This Corps will be a pool of trained men and women sent overseas by the U.S. government, or through private institutions or organisations to help foreign countries meet their urgent needs of skilled man power. It is our hope to have 500 to 1000 people in the field by the end of this year. We will send those abroad who are committed to the concept which motivates the Peace Corps...None of the men and women will be paid a salary. They will live at the same level as the citizens of the country which they were sent to, doing the same work, eating the same food, and speaking the same language. We are going to put particular emphasis on those men and women who have skills in teaching, agriculture and health.⁴⁷

On the 22nd of September 1961, Kennedy signed a congressional legislation creating a permanent Peace Corps.⁴⁸ This was after the Peace Corps Act backed and advocated for by Senators Humphrey and J.W. Fulbright in the Senate and Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Thomas Morgan and his close collaborators, was passed by acclamation in the Upper House and by a 288 to 97 vote by the committee on foreign relations.⁴⁹ It is important to note that, although Kennedy signed an Executive Order creating the Peace Corps, he had not yet accepted it as an independent agency. Some of Kennedy's close collaborators like Sorensen and Ralph Dungan who was presidential assistant claimed the White House wanted the Peace Corps to serve as a component of the new Agency for International Development (AID), the volunteers would work as junior staff in overseas projects run by AID senior officers. The details suggested that Kennedy envisioned a junior U.S. government corps of foreign aid workers, smarter and better trained than their senior but still taking orders from them. If the Peace Corps had started that way, it probably would have not endured. Influential advisors like the economist John Kenneth Galbraith joined the chorus and agreed with AID director Henry Labousse that it made most sense to put all U.S. foreign assistance programmes under a single umbrella and a single chief. It was difficult to argue with the logic of such a neat organisational chart.⁵⁰ Faced with pressure from his vice and brother-in-law, the president overruled Dungan and the Peace Corps would be an independent agency of the federal government.

The Wiggins and Josephson paper gave Shriver the intellectual rationale for starting boldly and Shriver named Wiggins director of programme and operations and later deputy director of Peace Corps. During the first five years, Wiggins was surely the most influential figure in the Peace Corps aside Shriver. What attracted Shriver most in the Towering Task was Wiggins and Josephsons' persistence that the Peace Corps must be significant enough in

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Speech by Robert Sargent Shriver, Director of Peace Corps, *New York Times Herald Tribune Forum*, March 24, 1961, p.2.

⁴⁹ Ruppe, "Peace Corps' Enduring," p.688.

⁵⁰ Meisler, *When the World*, p.23.

the Third World to meet the expectations of the volunteers and to boost the public image and pride of the U.S. The Task Force completed its report and forwarded it to the president in a little more than two weeks. Several members of the team contributed to the writing with Wofford handling the final draft while Shriver posed over every line and the report laid down their vision. The Peace Corps must not be tentative and insignificant and it must be independent, not appendage of the ICA. This new wine should not be poured in to the old ICA bottle. Kennedy was to make sure that the Peace Corps was not a Cold War tool or weapon but a vector of world development.

The president stated that the programme would be administered by a youth Corps Agency in Washington D.C., but would work through or with colleges, universities and private voluntary agencies. The creation of the Peace Corps was greeted with great excitement in the U.S. Numerous applicants inquired about the Peace Corps from all segments of the society. A college student from California declared that: “i will go wherever i can help, i will do whatever i can.”⁵¹ Another student in Philadelphia established that: “i do not care about a salary. This is something i want to do for my country, tell me what to do.”⁵² In the South West of the country, a farmer indicated that: “if you can use my plough, it is ready, if you can use me, i am ready too.”⁵³ Mitzi Mallina, one of the earliest Peace Corps employees recalled the excitement at the time as she indicated that: “people called and offered their help to the Peace Corps. Some offered free desks, type writers and so on.”⁵⁴

The Peace Corps was regarded as the largest non-military overseas operation in American history. Equally appealing was the cost of the programme since the Peace Corps was extremely affordable and economical than a rocket. The proposed \$40 million budget of the Peace Corps was insufficient to purchase spare parts of a rocket. American troops were scattered all over the world in places such as Vietnam and South Korea to prove to weak nations that the U.S. was ready to contain Communism. The Peace Corps could conveniently play a similar role in developing countries. A majority saw the Peace Corps as something to show the Third World what a free society can do for itself.⁵⁵ Since its creation in the midst of the Cold War, the Peace Corps was the best-known volunteer-abroad programme available to U.S. citizens. Richard F. Celeste, former Peace Corps director reacted to this by stating that: “Peace Corps volunteers are the new diplomats. They live and work in the towns of the

⁵¹ Speech by Robert, p.2., Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.75.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p. 76.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.62.

developing world, helping the world's poorest people become self sufficient for their basic human needs. Peace Corps is one of the few ways today in which an individual can make a real difference."⁵⁶

Volunteers were not to be exempted from military service, were to receive training varying from six weeks to six months and were to serve two to three-year terms overseas. The Peace Corps was to be opened to all Americans who are qualified and was not to be limited to young people although undoubtedly the Corps will be made up primarily of young people. Stressing the Spartan nature of the programme, the President said that:

Peace Corps members will often serve under conditions of physical hardship, living under primitive conditions among people of developing nations...It is essential that Peace Corps men or women live simply and unostentatiously among the people they have come to assist. We will only send abroad, Americans who have a real job to do, and who are qualified to do that job, and who are wanted by the host country. Life in the Peace Corps will be at a level only to maintain health and meet basic needs.⁵⁷

However, when American Columnist, George Sokolsky, in approving the idea of sending young Americans abroad as Peace Corps volunteers suggested that: "they must first of all learn how to present an ideal that will enrich life and make it possible for a person to look towards Washington D.C as a Moslem does towards Mecca."⁵⁸ Peace Corps officials were quick to brush this aside with the contention that the mission of the volunteers is not to convert but to communicate. The denegation of Peace Corps role in the East-West conflict runs through the entire history of the agency. Right from its establishment in 1961, President Kennedy contested that the Peace Corps is not a foreign policy instrument by stating that: "our Peace Corps is not designed as an instrument of diplomacy, propaganda, or ideological conflict. It is designed to permit our people to exercise more fully their responsibilities in the common cause of world development."⁵⁹ The emphasis on countering Communism would negate that spirit and undermine the volunteers' claim to be working for peace.

Considering the popularity and the important role the Peace Corps played in U.S. foreign policy, the desire to promote the activities of the agency occupied a central place in the programmes of the different presidents after Kennedy's death in 1963.⁶⁰ For many years even after his assassination, the Peace Corps volunteers were known in some Latin American countries as "*los hijos de Kennedy*" meaning the children of Kennedy.⁶¹ Limited government

⁵⁶ United States Action, *Annual Report*, Washington D.C, United States Action, 1979, p.28.

⁵⁷ Azoh-Mbi, "The Contribution of," p.40.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.37.

⁵⁹ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.38.

⁶⁰ Kennedy was assassinated on 22nd November 1963.

⁶¹ Meisler, *When the World*, p.11.

initiatives enjoyed the fame of the Peace Corps especially in the early years, an unpremeditated dream that evolved dramatically in to Kennedy's most lasting legacy. Subsequent leaders had strained relations with the U.S. Peace Corps. Lyndon B. Johnson was furious with the volunteers when they rallied and opposed his plans to invade the Dominican Republic. When President Richard Nixon came to power, he placed the Peace Corps within a larger federal department. On his part President Ronald Reagan tried to use the programme to advance his agenda in Central America.

The Peace Corps operated autonomously for ten years before being integrated within a larger organisation ACTION agency in 1971 but in 1981, President Jimmy Carter made the Peace Corps a fully independent and autonomous organisation.⁶² In 1981, at the Peace Corps Twentieth Anniversary celebration, Sargent Shriver, director of Peace Corps from 1961-1966, expressed his view of Peace Corps role in the world by stating that:

I am less confused and more knowledgeable and realistic about peace in the 1960s; some thought it will be easy. We thought Congress would always increase our size and budget, if we produced results. We thought we could defeat poverty, enlighten the ignorant, eradicate diseases, win over our enemies, given enough time, and volunteers. I know the United States and the world need Peace Corps, but now i think we can achieve peace without eradicating poverty, ignorance or disease. The power of peace does not lie in the vain hope that we can change the human condition everywhere and for everyone. Our American faith in a technological "fix" for every problem is naïve and irrelevant...but, thank God, we still have the corps of peace-that body of human beings who know, and have known, that America's destiny is not to be policeman of the world, monarch of the world but servants of people, servant of peace and saviours of humanity.⁶³

Since 2002, the agency has received letters of request and inquiry from 27 countries where there was no current programme and within the U.S., the agency retains a strong reputation, considerable bipartisan popularity and the vocal appreciation of generations of returned volunteers.⁶⁴ The Peace Corps now celebrating more than 55 years of success is surely Kennedy's most enduring legacy. It promotes world peace and friendship by providing American citizens to join other countries in their development.⁶⁵ Volunteers worked and continue to work on the frontiers of poverty, ignorance, underdevelopment and are busily weaving threads of peace, caring and friendship in more than 134 Third World countries. This experience has changed their lives and left an indelible and positive impression on

⁶²Ruppe, "Peace Corps' Enduring," p.688.

⁶³ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Volunteer Handbook*, Yaoundé, Peace Corps Cameroon, November 2013, p.2

⁶⁴ C. Kenny, "The Peace Corps in Smaller World: A New Model for the Next 50 Years", *Center for Global Development*, March 2011, p.2.

⁶⁵E. Andrew, *8 Little –Known Facts About the Peace Corps*, consulted on 15/May/2021 at 6:30 a.m.

millions more overseas. The current head of the Peace Corps is Carol Spahn, who was named Director on 21st December 2022.⁶⁶ When the Peace Corps was created it had particular things that it aimed to achieve. These objectives will be examined in the paragraphs below.

1.4. Objectives of the Peace Corps

The Peace Corps is very dynamic, thus has always adjusted to the ever evolving time and circumstances but has often remained true to its three goals. It is not solely a development agency nor an organisation devoted to promoting international friendship and understanding but it is both. As cited by Rice, a volunteer in Sierra Leone described this blending of objectives as: “the Peace Corps special way of extending the hand and the heart.”⁶⁷ Over the years, Peace Corps continued promoting peace and friendship by remaining true to its three goals established in 1961 in the Declaration of Purpose of the Peace Corps Act which are;

Help people of interested countries meet their need for trained men and women. From the beginning, the Peace Corps had a great deal of attention to its first goal. Providing technical assistance and thus has constantly refined its training and programming. Peace Corps volunteers joined the host country, individuals, groups and communities to advance societal changes. They engaged in projects aimed at training the local counterparts in areas such as education, health, agriculture and community development. This emphasis on education and skills development was to ensure continuity after their service was completed.

Also, the agency was out to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the people served.⁶⁸ Volunteers promoted an improved comprehension of Americans by the people through the every day connections and encounters with their host peers, partners, relatives and others within the two years of service. During the two years service period, volunteers served as U.S. ambassadors across the globe debunking myths about Americans and developing deep relations with local people. The Peace Corps volunteers were America’s most prominent advocates of goodwill and change in most of the communities where other growth and multicultural organisations are hardly available.⁶⁹ Thanks to the day-to-day relations with volunteers, local community members gain a more enhanced grasp of the U.S. and become more interested to collaborate with the volunteers. Peace Corps volunteers have shown the outside world a different kind of America from the one normally on view.

⁶⁶ Congressional Research Service, *The Peace Corps: Overview and Issues*, Washington D.C., Congressional Research Service, 2021, p.2.

⁶⁷ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.53.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.14.

For many Third World countries, the stereotype of the rich tourist on vacation was broken. Volunteers are so different from other Europeans/Americans as they gave up their good life back home and come to live and work in schools. The ability to speak local languages and dialects has become one of the most distinctive features of Peace Corps service. Volunteers have learnt more than 200 languages and dialects.⁷⁰ Through this way, volunteers acquired a greater awareness of the capabilities and difficulties of the local areas as well as built trust with local counterparts thereby fortifying their activities.⁷¹

Finally, the Peace Corps had as objective to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.⁷² In the course of their two-year term of service abroad, volunteers learnt the cultural heritage of their host communities. Upon their return back home, they share their adventure and experiences with relatives, peers and the American population during and after their service. They facilitated direct interactions of Americans with local individuals both independently and through Peace Corps-supported programmes. Persistent relations between Americans and other people promoted an enhanced grasp, mutual understanding and trust between people back home and abroad. Similarly, during service, volunteers acquired skills in working together, linguistic, multicultural, professional, commercial and leadership that prepared them for the present-day job market.⁷³

They share these skills after service while in America, during work both in state and non-public sectors as well as share their adventures and perspectives with relatives, peers, and colleagues. This helped to better prepare a dynamic U.S. human resource. By 1960, most Americans had a primitive view of the Third World. In the early 1960s, the underdeveloped countries remained shrouded in mystery. Their populations were regarded as hostile. The Peace Corps experience and especially returning volunteers were to help break down these attitudes.⁷⁴ Therefore, they deepened and enriched American insight of other countries customs and cultures. Even after their service periods abroad, volunteers continued their work by encouraging an improved comprehension of other cultures, encouraged and supported humanitarianism and engaged in community service. To achieve the above objectives, the agency extended its activities to different countries in Africa, Asia and South America.

⁷⁰ <https://www.jfklibrary.org> consulted on 15/May/2021 at 7: 00 a.m.

⁷¹ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.15.

⁷² Peace Corps Cameroon, *Staff Handbook*, p.2.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.3.

⁷⁴ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.15.

1.5. Evolution of the Peace Corps

Sargent Shriver now led the newest organisation in the United States but it was a name, a concept and little more. He had no request from any country, and of course no single Peace Corps volunteer. The trip to solicit invitations for volunteers from the Third World leaders soon started. The travelling team comprised Sargent Shriver, Wofford, Franklin Williams and Ed Bayley. The pace at which they worked was a clear prove of their determination as in three weeks, they rushed to nine countries among which were, Ghana, Nigeria, Turkey, Pakistan, Burma, Malaysia, Thailand, Phillipines and Singapore. Among the countries, the most important were Ghana and India. India was a hard nut to crack for Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was regarded as the leader of the non-aligned nations, the countries that refused to ally themselves with the U.S. or Russia in the Cold War.

Kenneth Galbraith, warned Shriver and his team that it would be difficult to persuade Nehru to accept the Peace Corps but rather Nehru after listening to Shriver reacted by stating that: "I am sure young Americans would learn a good deal in this country and it could be an important experience for them. The government of Punjab and the Minister of Community Development apparently want some of your volunteers and we will be happy to have them."⁷⁵ Ghana was an even bigger prize as it gained independence in 1957, the first black African colony to do so and its leader Kwame Nkrumah regarded himself as a prophet of Pan Africanism and a natural leader of emerging Africa. The Ghanaian Times, a very influential newspaper had denounced the Peace Corps by stating that: "it was an agency of neo-colonialism and an instrument for subversion. We reject all twaddle about its humanitarianism."⁷⁶ But Nkrumah agreed to receive Shriver and aids but noted that:

Power radiation is going out from America to all the world, much of it harmful, some of it innocuous, some beneficial. Africans have to be careful and make the right distinctions, so as to refuse the bad rays and welcome the right. The CIA is a dangerous beam that should be desisted. From what you said, Mr. Shriver, the Peace Corps sounds good. We are ready to try it and will invite a small number of teachers. We could use some plumbers and electricians too. Can you get them here by August?⁷⁷

Citing the disastrous recent attempt by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to overthrow Cuban leader Fidel Castro with an invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, Nkrumah reiterated that the CIA was a canker worm. Nkrumah elaborated that: "he wanted volunteers who would teach but not propagandise or spy or try to subvert the Ghanaian system. For that

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.26.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.69.

reason, he suspected teachers of social science and didnot want any of them. But teachers of Mathematics, Science and English were welcomed.”⁷⁸Shriver agreed to all the conditions knowing that this blessing by Nkrumah would encourage invitations from the rest of Africa. In a speech on 24th March 1961, Kennedy emphasised on the Peace Corps by stating that:

The Peace Corps is a Georgian lawyer who left his practice to come to Washington at his own expense to serve as our counsel to work on a case that will be heard before the bar of the world. But the Peace Corps is more...The Peace Corps is part of our effort to help make that leap forward a success. It is our effort to help in the world-wide assault against poverty, hunger, ignorance and disease-a grassroots, volunteer effort of free men.⁷⁹He added that the Peace Corps is a lonely native in Africa, squinting in the sun at the pages of a book he cannot read.⁸⁰

President Kennedy welcomed the inaugural group of volunteers at the White House on August 28th 1961, to give them a personal farewell before their departure to Africa.⁸¹The agency headed by Kennedy’s brother-in-law Sargent Shriver chose over 763 volunteers to serve in 13 nations in 1961, with the historic first contingent of 51 volunteers “Columbia 1” who landed in Accra, Ghana on 30th August 1961 and served for two years.⁸²The 51volunteers sung the Ghanaian national anthem in the Twi language.⁸³ In September 1961, Tom Livingston from Woodale, Illinois became the first Peace Corps volunteer when he took up his post at a secondary school in Dodowa-Ghana.⁸⁴

Indeed, the Peace Corps activities in Ghana acted as a springboard for the extension to Nigeria, Tanzania. In 1962, Wofford informed Kennedy about the importance of the Peace Corps in Africa. Referring to this, he noted that: “...this is a continent to win...for freedom...What we do now while Africa is in flux will count more than what we do two, four, or ten years from now. Now we can play a central part in helping these new nations succeed. If we wait until they falter, it may be too late to prevent chaos or Communism.”⁸⁵

The growth and expansion of the Peace Corps was both dramatic and fascinating for any bilateral institution. From a bare 763 volunteers scattered over 13 countries at the end of 1961, the Peace Corps grew in number as some 7.000 volunteers from all walks of life by 1963 were in the field, serving in 44 Third World countries. In 1966, the number increased

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.26.

⁷⁹ Amin, *The Peace Corps*, p.33.

⁸⁰ Speech by Robert, p.2.

⁸¹ <https://www.jfklibrary.org> consulted on 15/May/2021 at 7: 00 a.m.

⁸² Meisler, *When the World*, p.35.

⁸³ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/peace-corps-established>, consulted on 15/November/ 2018 at 6:00p.m.

⁸⁴ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.9.

⁸⁵ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.74.

with more than 15.000 volunteers in 52 countries and by 1980, there were some 80.000 volunteers that had served in Africa, Latin America and Asia. As of 1985, about 6.264 volunteers were in the field but as a result of the 1989 reduction in budget, the volunteer numbers cut down to 5.100, eventhough eventual budget additions led to rekindled progress in to the 21st century; and by 2011 there were over 8.500 volunteers serving in 77 countries but today more than 165.000 volunteers have served in different sectors in more than 134 countries around the world as shown below.⁸⁶

Table 1: Distribution of Peace Corps Volunteers in the world in 2017

Geographical distribution	%	Sector	%
Africa	45	Education	42
Central and South America	19	Health	20
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	13	Youth in Development	12
Asia	12	Agriculture	9
Caribbean	5	Community Economic Development	8
Pacific Island	4	Environment	7
North Africa and Middle East	2	Peace Corps response	2

Source: www. Pathway to peacecorps. com, consulted on 16/May/2021 at 11:00 a.m

The table above shows the distribution of volunteers around the world. From the table, it can be seen that the education sector reigned supreme representing 42% of the volunteer community. The agency concerntrated more on this sector probably because it was through this sector that it could get in to the world easily and also educate people of the world about America. The health sector closely followed with 20% and the other sectors rotated around 10%. Sub Saharan Africa is the heartbeat of service posts for volunteers with Latin America, Eastern Europe and Central Asia closely following behind.

In the early 1960s, though the Peace Corps was very popular with college graduates, its programmes suffered a setback as mostly college graduates without any particular skills were recruited and sent overseas. Emphases were on the cross cultural goals of the Peace Corps and the conspicuous ineptitude of the Generalist volunteers in carrying out development programmes requiring specific skills only led to widespread disenchantment with the Peace Corps. Many Third World countries saw the Peace Corps volunteers as just another pair of untrained hands incapable of effecting any change and therefore irrelevant. Because of this, some countries simply decided not to request additional volunteers. The main focus of the Peace Corps in the immediate post independent years was a face-to-face method, one that was not anywhere close to the Ugly Americans image that was widespread in most areas of the world during this period. According to the book published in July 1958,

⁸⁶Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.38.

American ambassadors were incompetent and ineffective meaning that increased dependence on them would lead to decrease U.S. interest. This implied posting to receiving countries bright and energetic Americans who were dedicated to coping in difficult conditions and overcoming the difficulties of communication in local languages.⁸⁷ The Peace Corps had rooted itself as a reputable organisation in America coupled with the fact that volunteers were helping to transcend challenges abroad and was also deeply admired by Third World people and Americans. One of the distinguishing features was the renewed emphasis on making the Peace Corps a genuine partnership with host nations. In a dramatic move away from the donor-receiver partnership of traditional foreign aid programmes, the Peace Corps made binationalism a priority.

By sharing responsibility with host governments for the planning, training, selection and supervision of volunteers, Peace Corps programmes became part of the host communities. One immediate result of this greater host country participation was higher quality programming which helped meet local development needs. The agency evolved from the direct services need theory to capacity building which stressed the creation and maintenance of institutions and programmes that provided continuing self-help. Through this, the Peace Corps fielded smaller, more specialised groups in precisely defined positions where their skills could be passed on and thus have a long term “multiplier effect”. More than ever before, the focus was on helping people help themselves.⁸⁸

As the 1960s withered out, the demand for specialist volunteers increased from 40% of the total Peace Corps requests in 1969, to 59% in 1970, and then to 69.3% in 1971. The Peace Corps could hardly meet up with these requests. Also, between 1967 and 1970, there was an increasingly turbulent international climate and as such the Peace Corps continued to adapt its policies and programmes to changing global conditions as during this period, there was the growth and development of national consciousness. In Libya and Somalia where military coups took place forced the Peace Corps to leave nine different countries.⁸⁹ The Vietnam and the Watergate experiences only served to further compound the situation by eroding many Americans’ confidence in their administration. Enthusiasm in the Peace Corps began decreasing which led to budgetary cuts. Not only did the U.S. Congress and American public opinion become increasingly skeptical of foreign aid and all involvement overseas, but

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.28.

⁸⁸ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.39.

⁸⁹ Azoh-Mbi, “The Contributions of,” p.41.

Third World countries also began to question the wisdom of involvement with the U.S.⁹⁰ It shifted to a greater development assistance approach, consistent with the perception of changing needs of the Third World. This meant that many developing countries preferred self-reliant programmes to western humanitarian aid. For example, the need for Peace Corps teachers diminished as developing countries began grooming and training their own young teachers. Such changes opened the way for new initiatives in Peace Corps programming in other areas of human needs.

From this period, the organisation revived its programmes with priority being to meet the basic human needs⁹¹ that is food, water, shelter of most communities of developing countries. As cited by Rice, Prime Minister Deja of India stated that: “in the present state of awakening in our country and the zeal for service which has been generated all around, we would like to do the work ourselves rather than secure man power assistance from outside.”⁹² Towards the end of the 1970s, the development strategies of Third World countries evolved from a concentration on capital investment and infrastructure initiatives to a comprehension of the role of health care, energy and food production as important pillars of development.⁹³ Interpreting development in these terms pushed host countries to request Peace Corps volunteers who were skilled and could impact the society. The demands became part of the plans that reached out to a greater number of people who rarely benefitted from such growth policies. In 1978, the statement of purpose in the Peace Corps Act was amended adding the requirement that volunteers help meet the basic needs of the poorest individuals in recipient countries.⁹⁴

Basic needs was basically concerned with removing mass deprivation. However as understood within the Peace Corps, the Basic Human Needs(BHNs) operational definition is those needs which meet the minimum requirements for physical survival of people.⁹⁵ This means the physical well-being associated with freedom from disease, the availability of adequate nutritious food, portable water, adequate protection from these elements and in general, a natural physical environment that contributes to personal health. In impact terms, Peace Corps programme policy guidance for fiscal year 1978/1979 noted that: “Basic Human

⁹⁰ <https://www.jfklibrary.org> consulted on 15/May/2021 at 7: 00 a.m

⁹¹ Basic Human Needs mandate are usually divided into seven categories; food and water, health and nutrition, knowledge and skills, economic development and income, housing, energy and conservation and community services.

⁹² Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.40.

⁹³ United States Action, *Annual Report*, p.28.

⁹⁴ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.42.

⁹⁵ Azoh-Mbi, “The Contribution of,” p.44.

Needs meant decreases in infant mortality rates, increases in life expectancy and the concomitant potential for expanded productivity in all aspects of one's life."⁹⁶

The end of the 1970s was also characterised by an era of chaos in Third World countries similar to what was experienced in the early years of independence.⁹⁷ Programming for basic needs pose a number of problems for the Peace Corps that is how to train volunteers for this tough and complicated type of work, how to support them in communities which often lacked any stable socio-economic infrastructure and how best to define programmes which directly attacked poverty for instance there was intense disagreement as to whether English-teaching, in which most volunteers were involved over the years satisfied the basic human needs mandate. Higher priority was given to implementing new projects in the fields of health, nutrition, food and water.⁹⁸

The Peace Corps had to do something to safeguard its image abroad, and re-establish its relevance to Third World development. Peace Corps then director, Joseph Blatchford quickly announced the Peace Corps new Directions Mandate, with chief features being:

To shift more volunteer assignments to the high priority needs of developing countries, recruit volunteers with the skills which met these higher priority requests, work and cooperate more closely with host country development agencies, international and multinational voluntary organisations and utilise more fully in the U.S., the skills and experience of returned volunteers.⁹⁹

Thus the main thrust of the New Directions Mandate was the recruitment of better qualified and technically skilled volunteers to revamp the Peace Corps developmental role which hitherto was somewhat lazy under the Generalist. The New Directions however, did not last long as Lowther and Lucas pointed out: "Although Blatchford succeeded in attracting marginally more technically trained people, they were never enough to greatly alter the Peace Corps' profile or to fulfill the expectations that New Directions amused abroad."¹⁰⁰ The explanation for this failure was that most of the specialists desired by the Peace Corps were often married persons with limited mobility as a result of their family charges. Other hitches in the supply of skilled personnel for international service included career disruption, insecurity and loss of income thus it was difficult for the Peace Corps to break with its tradition of recruiting generalist volunteers, but nevertheless the percentage of Generalist volunteers steadily declined as shown below.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.43.

⁹⁷ United States Action, *Annual Report*, p.29.

⁹⁸ Meisler, *When the World*, p.40.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.41.

¹⁰⁰ K. Lowther and P. Lucas, *Keeping Kennedy's Promise-The Peace Corps: Unmet Hope of the New Frontier*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1978, p.15.

Table 2: Percentage of Volunteer and Trainee skill, 1962-1977

No	Year	Agriculture	Skills trained	Professional skills	Education	Generalist
1	1962	11	4	14	14	57
2	1963	6	3	15	17	59
3	1964	4	2	15	18	61
4	1965	4	3	20	33	40
5	1966	3	2	15	24	56
6	1967	2	1	12	26	59
7	1968	5	1	14	30	50
8	1969	6	1	14	32	47
9	1970	9	3	19	30	39
10	1971	11	5	18	30	36
11	1972	11	5	21	29	34
12	1973	12	6	20	28	34
13	1974	12	4	22	31	31
14	1975	15	6	20	29	30
15	1976	15	4	23	35	23
16	1977	16	4	25	33	22

Source: Rice as cited by AzohMbi, “The Contribution of ,” p.43.

The table above shows the evolution of volunteer and trainee skill from 1962-1977. From the table, it can be seen that as time went on, the Peace Corps improved on its philosophy of recruiting Generalist volunteers as the agency tried to meet the demands of different countries by recruiting mostly volunteers with specific skills. This was because most countries preferred local expertise during this period after noticing that most of the volunteers sent to these countries were just another pair of untrained hands incapable of affecting any change.

In adopting a global basic needs oriented policy, Peace Corps officials nevertheless cautioned against meeting BHNs in a welfare context. Peace Corps authorities believed that meeting BHNs must be undertaken in the context of enabling people to define their own priority needs to participate actively and equitably in fostering conditions in which they can meet these needs on their own over a long term. This implies the need for empowering people, which is increasing or reinforcing their capacity to meet these needs through self-reliance. Consequently, for a project to qualify for Peace Corps acceptance, it must contain a BHNs component and the implementation of such a project of necessity should be within the context of fostering the conditions in which the host country nationals can actively meet such needs on their own ultimately. Emphases were on projects that facilitated the transfer of knowledge and techniques.¹⁰¹ Of course the Peace Corps admitted that, it cannot ignore the

¹⁰¹ Azoh-Mbi, “The Contribution of,” p.44.

presence of other needs, nor more importantly the desire of hosts governments that the Peace Corps address such as the expansion of employment opportunities, education and man power development, institutional development and highly specialised technical assistance. It simply implies that projects which address BHNs will carry a higher institutional priority and command an increasing portion of Peace Corps resources. Thus there is room for flexibility in programming based on host country demands and peculiarities.¹⁰²

President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s tried expanding the Peace Corps concentration on education and agriculture to involve small enterprise development and computer literacy. This increased both the Peace Corps contingent abroad and funding especially after the opening of Eastern Europe in 1990.¹⁰³ By 2000, the agency leaders were moving towards a broader and flexible definition of basic human needs englobing English teaching to well and latrine digging, depending on the relevance of each programme to a particular host country. Although the Peace Corps did not radically alter the roster of countries it served, by this period overseas projects were redirected towards the following basic human needs areas; Education (40%), Health/Nutrition/Provision of water (25%), Agriculture (18%), Community Economic Development/Income generating Activities (7%), Community Services/Housing (6%), Energy/Conservation (4%).¹⁰⁴

To a greater extent, Peace Corps programmes were about joining to meet these human needs of poor peoples. In conjunction with basic human needs, Peace Corps programmers began to pay special attention to projects capable of producing alternative energy supplies and essential sources of protein. The important role of women in the Third World was also emphasised as well as the knowledge/skills sector which included traditional classroom-based education programmes and also stressed on non-formal education programmes such as vocational education, adult literacy, numeracy and technical instruction.¹⁰⁵

In terms of sex distribution, the scale of volunteers in most countries was in favour of male volunteers. From 1973 however, the trend began changing but never quite led to a balance between male and female volunteers. In 1961, Kennedy stated that the Peace Corps will not be limited only to young college graduates but all Americans who were qualified were welcomed to join the effort. The organisation has no rule preventing the middle-age or the elderly from serving. The rich diversity of volunteers over the past 55 years has proven this assertion. Although, the young have played a vital role, there is a gradual shift towards

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.45.

¹⁰³ <https://www.jfklibrary.org> consulted on 15/May/2021 at 7: 00 a.m.

¹⁰⁴ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.30.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.32.

old volunteers. Volunteers between the ages of 31-50 made up 13.2% in 1985 as opposed to 7.8% in 1962. Those above 50 years old comprised 8% of the total number in 1985 as compared to 2.9% in 1962. About 53% of the volunteers were under the age of 26 in 1985, as opposed to 71% who were below 26 years in 1962. The standard age of volunteers in 1962 was 25 years and in 1985, it was 29 years.¹⁰⁶ By 2015, the average age of most volunteers was 28 with 25 as medium.¹⁰⁷ The mother of President Jimmy Carter, Lilian prominently signed up for Peace Corps service at the age of 68 and about 7 % of all on-duty volunteers are above 50 years. By 2016, Alice Carter, a Boston grandmother of 87 years was the oldest engaged Peace Corps volunteer serving in the Kingdom of Morocco.¹⁰⁸ In 2017, 99% of volunteers claimed to be single while 85% started service after college graduation.¹⁰⁹

In terms of the number of countries reached, the Peace Corps moved dramatically from 13 countries at the end of 1961 to 42 countries in 1962 and 44 in 1963. By 1966, the volunteers were very active in 52 countries and the number kept increasing as by 1980, the Peace Corps had operations in almost 60 countries and today, it is active in over 134 countries. In many of these countries, the Peace Corps left precociously for diverse reasons ranging from political instability in host countries, suspicion of the Peace Corps of espionage to connection with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Nevertheless, the Peace Corps returned to many of these countries when tempers cooled down. With respect to Africa, the table that follows portrays the relative stability and instability of the U.S. Peace Corps.

Table 3: Peace Corps Year of Entry/Exit in some African countries from 1961-2017

No	Country	Year entered	Year Departed	Year Re-entered	Year Departed	Year Re-entered	Year Departed
1	Benin	1968	present	—	—	—	—
2	Botswana	1966	1997	2003	present	—	—
3	Burkina Faso	1966	1987	1995	present	—	—
4	Burundi	1983	1993	—	—	—	—
5	Cameroon	1962	present	—	—	—	—
6	Cape Verde	1988	present	—	—	—	—
7	Central African Republic	1972	1996	—	—	—	—
8	Chad	1966	1979	1987	1998	2003	2006
9	Comoros	1988	1995	—	—	—	—
10	Democratic Republic of Congo	1970	1991	—	—	—	—

¹⁰⁶ Ruppe, "Peace Corps'Enduring," p.690.

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous

¹⁰⁸ Andrews, *8 Little-Known Facts About the Peace Corps*, consulted on 15/May/2021 at 6 :30 a.m.

¹⁰⁹ Congressional Research Service, *The Peace Corps*, p.6.

11	Equatorial Guinea	1988	1993	–	–	–	–
12	Eritrea	1995	1998	–	–	–	–
13	Ethiopia	1962	1977	1995	1999	2007	present
14	Gabon	1963	1967	1973	2005	–	–
15	Gambia	1967	–	–	–	–	–
16	Ghana	1961	present	–	–	–	–
17	Guinea	1962	1966	1969	1971	1985	present
18	Guinea Bissau	1988	1989	–	–	–	–
19	Ivory Coast	1962	1981	1990	2003	–	–
20	Kenya	1965	present	–	–	–	–
21	Lesotho	1967	present	–	–	–	–
22	Liberia	1962	1990	2008	present	–	–
23	Madagascar	1993	present	–	–	–	–
24	Malawi	1963	1969	1973	1976	1978	present
25	Mali	1971	present	–	–	–	–
26	Mauritania	1967	1968	1971	present	–	–
27	Mauritius	1971	present	–	–	–	–
28	Morocco	1963	present	–	–	–	–
29	Mozambique	1998	present	–	–	–	–
30	Namibia	1990	present	–	–	–	–
31	Niger	1962	present	–	–	–	–
32	Nigeria	1961	1971	1992	1995	–	–
33	Republic of Congo	1991	1993	1993	1997	–	–
34	Rwanda	1975	1993	2008	present	–	–
35	Sao Tome and Principe	1990	1996	–	–	–	–
36	Senegal	1963	present	–	–	–	–
37	Seychelles	1974	1995	–	–	–	–
38	Sierra Leone	1962	1994	2010	present	–	–
39	Somalia	1962	1970	–	–	–	–
40	South Africa	1997	present	–	–	–	–
41	Sudan	1984	1986	–	–	–	–
42	Swaziland	1968	1996	2003	present	–	–
43	Tanzania	1962	1969	1979	present	–	–
44	Togo	1962	present	–	–	–	–
45	Uganda	1964	1973	1991	1999	2000	present
46	Zambia	1993	present	–	–	–	–
47	Zimbabwe	1991	2002	–	–	–	–

Source: Peace Corps, *The Peace Corps in Africa, Promoting World Peace and Friendship*, Washington D.C, Peace Corps, 2017, p.2.

From the table above, it can be seen that in Africa, Cameroon is one of the countries where the Peace Corps was stable with an unbroken history of over 55 years. This contrasts with the history of instability the Peace Corps has recorded in the countries of North Africa. Convinced of the need to ameliorate poverty, in the 1950s and 1960s, Cameroon aimed to

achieve growth by establishing some offices and ministries that had as role to encourage social and economic progress that enhanced earlier offices tasked with encouraging industrialisation immediately after independence. It was in this light that just a year after the creation of the Peace Corps, the Cameroon government invited the Peace Corps to Cameroon.

1.6. Reason and Procedure for the Extension of the Peace Corps to Cameroon

At the creation of the Peace Corps, its principles stated that the agency served only in countries where it was invited, and only in programmes the host country had described, so volunteers should feel welcomed upon arrival in the host country.¹¹⁰ The invitations were to come from top-ranking government officials of the host countries which were sent to the Peace Corps headquarters in Washington D.C.¹¹¹ Once the conditions were fulfilled, the Peace Corps started working with the government of the requesting country. Countries that requested Peace Corps assistance suggested sectors and areas that could benefit from volunteer's knowledge. The Peace Corps then conducted an assessment of the social, political and security conditions to determine the feasibility of establishing a Peace Corps programme (New Country or Country Re-entry Assessment). Once the decision was made to enter the country, the office of the General Counsel negotiated and concluded an agreement with the country usually with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These agreements usually did not have a termination date but could be ended with a 90-day notice by either party. The Peace Corps then matched assignments within foreign nations to applicants with the appropriate skills. The Country Director and Director of Programming and Training will proceed in identifying potential project areas and project frameworks and plans were finalised.¹¹² The existence of national development initiatives explains the warm welcome the Peace Corps received upon arrival in Cameroon in 1962 where the Peace Corps found fertile ground.

1.7. The Implantation of the Peace Corps in Cameroon

Relations between Cameroon and the U.S. date way back to May 1957 when Robert C. Foulon was designated Foreign Service Officer (Consular Officer) to Cameroon and a U.S. Consulate or Consular Office opened on 5th July 1957. On 10th April 1959, this Consulate became the General Consulate with Bolard More as interim Ambassador's Deputy and on 1st January 1960, the U.S. General Consulate was elevated to an embassy upon the formal attainment of independence by the former United Nations Trust Territory under French

¹¹⁰ Tyler, *The Peace Corps*, p.7.

¹¹¹ Peace Corps, *Programming, Training and*, p.7.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

administration.¹¹³This process opened the way for a close, mutually beneficial and positive working relationship based on the close links that America and Cameroon enjoyed over the years since the first group of American missionaries arrived Cameroon in the late 1880s. After Cameroon's attainment of independence, the U.S. was one of the first states to recognise the sovereignty of the young independent state and established diplomatic relations. His Excellency Leland Barrows was named Ambassador on 20th April 1960 and he presented his letters of credence to President Ahmadou Ahidjo on 9th June 1960. This was going to act as a leeway to the uninterrupted diplomatic links between Cameroon and the U.S. ¹¹⁴

From May 1957 to May 2007, there have been fifteen U.S. ambassadors to Cameroon and seven Cameroonian ambassadors and two *charge d'Affaires* to Washington. The first Cameroonian Ambassador to the U.S. was Aime Raymond Nithepe.¹¹⁵The establishment of diplomatic relations afforded the opportunity for visits to be exchanged by senior officials of the two countries. Charles Okala, Cameroon's pioneer Minister of External Relations was welcomed in audience by President Dwight D. Eisenhower at the White House on 14th October 1960. President Ahmadou Ahidjo visited the U.S. in 1962, 1967, 1969, 1971 and 1982 while President Paul Biya went to Washington on 27th February 1986 for a working visit.¹¹⁶ To dramatise the new partnership, Memem Williams, Kennedy's Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs paid a visit to Cameroon in 1963. Williams emphasised the wish of the U.S. to contribute to the development of Cameroon.¹¹⁷Though by 1962, Cameroon had close ties with France, Cameroonian leaders realised in 1961 that in order for the nation to develop, it had to look beyond France and establish stronger ties with other countries including the U.S., Britain and Canada. Realising the importance of the U.S. to his overall objectives in foreign and domestic policies, Ahidjo moved quickly to call for the establishment of better and more substantial relations between the two countries. On 19th January 1961, Ahidjo sent a letter of congratulations to Kennedy, on his inauguration as president of the U.S. Ahidjo wrote that:

Au moment où Vous prenez Vos hautes fonctions à la tête du vaillant peuple des Etats Unis d'Amérique, j'ai l'honneur de souhaiter à votre Gouvernement la réalisation complète du programme qu'il s'est tracé convaincu qu'il entretiendra avec le

¹¹³ U.S. Department of State, *United States and Cameroon, Fifty Year Commemorative Edition*, Washington D.C. Manila GPS, 2012, p.9.

¹¹⁴ A.P. Nguerouet Modio, « L'Axe Diplomatique Washington-Yaoundé (1960-1990): Fondements, Enjeux et Perspectives Historiques », M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2013, p.70.

¹¹⁵ C.T.O. Belinga, « Les Chefs de Mission Diplomatique des Etats Unis D'Amerique au Cameroun de 1960 à 2007 », M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé 1, 2011, p.4.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Amin, *The Peace Corps*, p.80.

Gouvernement de la République du Cameroun les meilleurs relations qui ont toujours caractérisé les rapports Américano-Camerounaise (see translation on footnote).¹¹⁸

A pragmatist, Ahidjo reacted quickly for several reasons. First, Cameroon needed urgent economic assistance from the U.S. Second, as a super power, Ahidjo hoped that the U.S.' intervention in Cameroon would neutralise France's great influence in his country. This was particularly important considering the entangling agreements that Cameroon signed with France at independence. He subsequently signaled to France that he would seek close ties with both Anglophone and Francophone countries. In doing so, Ahidjo hoped to minimise French influence in Cameroon and effectively avoid a confrontation with one of the country's former colonisers. Third, Ahidjo hoped to use Cameroon's bilingualism to his nation's advantage which gave it prestige. As far as culture was concerned, Ahidjo pointed out that: "we must... refrain from any blind and narrow nationalism and avoid any complex when absorbing the learning of other cultures. When we consider the English language and culture and the French language and culture, we must regard them... as an acquirement of the universal civilisation to which we belong."¹¹⁹

On 28th of March 1962, Ahidjo concretised his intentions with a five-day visit to the U.S. which shaped the evolution of relations between the two countries.¹²⁰ Even though he was in this country before, this was his first visit after his country became independent. While there, a series of issues were raised in the meeting with Kennedy. First, he requested the U.S. not to give up its opposition to colonialism, reminding Kennedy that a large part of Africa was still colonised. Secondly, Ahidjo discussed what he referred to as Cameroon's struggle against violence, a reference to the continued bloody confrontation between the young nation's armed forces and guerillas representing the outlawed opposition party, the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* emphasising the destructions those wars caused in Cameroon.

The rebels Ahidjo stated were pro-Communists. The presence of the *marquisards*¹²¹ reinforced the need for economic assistance. The Kennedy's administration that was ready to contain Communism anywhere and anytime ensured American aid to Cameroon through the then U.S. Ambassador Leland Barrows coupled with the fact that it was alleged that the *marquisards* were receiving aid from Russia. Whether the terrorists were Communist or not,

¹¹⁸ Amin, "Cameroon's Foreign Policy," p.222.(Translation: At this time, when you assume the highest office over the people of the United States, I wish you success in accomplishing your goals, and hope the relations between Cameroon and America will be strengthened.)

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Nguerouet Modio, « L'Axe Diplomatique Washington », p.73.

¹²¹ This term was used to describe insurgency fighting by underground *Union des Populations du Cameroun* elements against government forces. The *marquis* was a constant fear in Cameroon politics between 1956 and 1971.

it was practical politics and a pretext for Ahidjo to use and secure aid from America.¹²² Thirdly, Ahidjo raised the critical issue of Cameroon's twenty-year development plan (broken down into five-year plans) and requested U.S. aid which was necessary in order to fulfill the long-range goals of the plan. Fourthly, Ahidjo condemned France's continuous attempt to divide Africa into spheres of influence and called for active U.S. involvement in his country hoping to neutralise the excessive French influence in his country. Ahidjo's attempt to break the umbilical cord tying Cameroon to France was destined to be one of his most important foreign policy challenges.¹²³ Kennedy honoured Ahidjo's request and later that year Congress passed the Peace Corps Act, the Peace Corps came to Cameroon at the invitation of the Government of Cameroon.¹²⁴ This was in line with the Peace Corps Act which stated that: "the Peace Corps will go however only where they were asked to or requested, we shall not impose the Peace Corps on anyone or any country."¹²⁵

The work of the U.S. Peace Corps in Cameroon started in 1962 after the Government of Cameroon and that of the U.S. signed an agreement of cooperation and exchanged diplomatic notes. This agreement signed on 26th May 1961 was on economic, technical and related assistance as shown on Appendix 2. On the part of Cameroon, the agreement was signed by Charles Okala, the then Minister of External Relations while on the part of the U.S., it was signed by the U.S. Ambassador, Leland Barrows. Although this agreement was only reconfirmed by Presidential Decree N° 62/DF/111 of 3rd March 1961, it actually went in to force on 26th May 1961. In the note of the U.S. Ambassador, he outlined the understandings which if accepted by the Cameroon Government would provide the conditions under which his country would be furnishing foreign aid to Cameroon. It stipulated the conditions and procedures under which U.S. aid was supposed to be channeled to Cameroon. It also provided that assistance shall be furnished in accordance with arrangements agreed upon between the U.S. and Cameroon representatives and subject to applicable U.S. laws and regulations.¹²⁶

On the part of the U.S., it will furnish economic, technical and related assistance as may be requested by the Republic of Cameroon. Such assistance shall be furnished in accordance with arrangements agreed upon between the mentioned representatives. Cameroon on its part was to contribute its man power, resources and facilities and take

¹²² Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.76.

¹²³ Amin, "Cameroon's Foreign Policy," p.223.

¹²⁴ MINREX archives, "Relations entre le Cameroun et les USA 1962-1965", File No. 3838, box, 629, Ref. No. V/L No A 286/CAB/PR. 1962, pp. 1-2.

¹²⁵ Speech by Robert, p.1.

¹²⁶ Jing, "The Activities of," p.53.

appropriate steps to assure the effective use of such assistance. Cameroon was also to evaluate the effectiveness of the assistance furnished and also bear a fair share of the costs.¹²⁷

In his reply, the Cameroonian Minister concluded as follows:

In the name of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, I have the honour to signify my agreement to the provisions contained in the above note. That note and my reply constitute an agreement in good and due form between our two Governments, its being understood that the English text is authentic so far as the Government of the United States of America is concerned, and the French text authentic so far as the Government of the Republic of Cameroon is concerned.¹²⁸

The Bilateral agreement of 26th May 1961 for economic, technical and related assistance further enabled the U.S. to sign other agreements which strengthened her rights over the internal affairs of Cameroon irrespective of the country's sovereignty to choose the type of economic and political directions to follow. Examples of such programmes were the Peace Corps programme of 10th September 1962, Investment Guaranties Agreement of 7th March 1967, Livestock and Agriculture Development of May 1978, International Military Education and Training of 19th June 1980, Investment Treaty of 2nd June 1986 and Scientific and Technical Cooperation, Earth Sciences on 9th November 1988.¹²⁹

The Peace Corps was operating in Cameroon also under another bilateral agreement of 23rd July and 10th September, 1962 as shown on appendix 3 which allowed the Peace Corps to enter the country.¹³⁰ The U.S. Ambassador Charles K. Moffly signed for the U.S. while Jean Faustin Betayene and Nzo Ekhah Ngaky, Cameroon's Minister of Foreign Affairs and deputy respectively signed for Cameroon.¹³¹ In his reply, the Cameroonian Minister concluded that:

In the name of the Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, I have the honour to give my consent to the provisions contained in the note above. Together with my reply, it constitutes an agreement in due form between our two Governments, its being understood that the English text is the authentic text for the Government of the United States of America and the French text is the authentic text for the Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon.¹³²

Surprisingly, nowhere in the agreement, are the specific objectives of the parties concerned. The agreement stipulated that the U.S. was to furnish Peace Corps volunteers as demanded by the Cameroon government and approved by the former to carry out mutually

¹²⁷ Economic, Technical and Related Assistance Agreement between the United States of America and Cameroon, p.1.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* p.12.

¹²⁹ Kennedy, "The United States," p.117.

¹³⁰ Azoh Mbi, "The Contribution of," p.25.

¹³¹ Peace Corps Program Agreement between the United States of America and Cameroon, pp.1-3.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p.6.

accepted functions in Cameroon. The tasks were not specified, nor was the range and domain of such tasks indicated. No reasons were given either for undertaking these tasks, reasons which as expected were to do with assisting Cameroon in meeting her man power needs. Nonetheless, the agreement stated that Peace Corps volunteers were to work under the immediate supervision of governmental or private organisations in Cameroon designated by the two governments. Apparently this provision sought a collaborative relationship between a donor (Peace Corps) who was subservient to the recipient (Cameroon). The agreement made no mention of volunteer numbers, their place and type of work, though provision was made for suitably appointed administrators of the two countries to occasionally negotiate in line with Peace Corps programmes and volunteers.¹³³

The government of Cameroon undertook to accord equitable treatment to the volunteers and their property, afford them full aid and protection including treatment equal to that accorded generally to nationals of the U.S. residing in Cameroon. The government of the U.S. on its part was to provide the volunteers with such limited amounts of equipment and supplies needed to enable the volunteers to perform their tasks effectively. With respect to duration of volunteer's stay in Cameroon, the agreement only stated that they were to serve for periods of time though within the Peace Corps, volunteers were expected to serve a term of two years.¹³⁴

To enable the government of the U.S. discharge its responsibilities under the agreement, a representative of the Peace Corps was to be sent to Cameroon. The representative and staff were responsible to the U.S. Ambassador, though according to an interior policy directive issued by Peace Corps director S. Shriver to all U.S. missions abroad, Peace Corps should not be located at the Embassy and its members should not be used for propaganda purposes. This reflected the long-standing struggle to separate the Peace Corps and politics. Finally, the agreement did not indicate how long the Peace Corps was to operate in Cameroon but it specified that, the agreement remained valid until 90 days before any of the two parties through official notification could express the desire to end it. Well, none of the parties has done this yet, and since 1962, a lot of water flowed under the bridge.¹³⁵

The former accord on the education plan negotiated by the then Secretary General of Education, Paul Biya was recognised on 10th September 1962. The year 1962 especially the summer period was a very tight one for Peace Corps administrators in the U.S. and

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p.7

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.8.

¹³⁵ Azoh-Mbi, "The Contribution of," p.77.

Cameroon. Negotiations were done for official document signing following the request for Peace Corps volunteers by Cameroon. In May 1962, Peace Corps Washington notified the Cameroon government of the disbursement of \$50,000 for the construction of simple houses for the pioneer wave of volunteers. Half of this amount \$25,000 was initially sent to Cameroon for the beginning of the job. The agency confirmed and pledge to send the rest of the money when proves were shown on the transparent management and proper use of the money for the envisaged purpose.¹³⁶

It was on the basis of these agreements signed about 55 years ago that the first group of 21 Peace Corps volunteers called “Cameroon 1” shown below touched ground at the Douala International Airport on 13th September 1962.¹³⁷ These volunteers were education volunteers who were among other things to teach Maths/Science and general studies in secondary schools and teacher training colleges. Requested by the government of the Federal Republic, these volunteers were to serve under the Department of Education of West Cameroon.¹³⁸ From this education programmes in the North-West and South-West, their activities expanded to include other projects such as Community Development in 1963, Cooperative Societies in 1964, Aquaculture in 1969, Health in 1988, Agroforestry in 1991 and Small Size Enterprise Development in 2000.¹³⁹

Plate 1: First Group of Peace Corps Volunteers in Cameroon



Source : <https://www.peace-corps.gov> consulted on 16/May/2021 at 11:00 a.m

The above shows the first group of Peace Corps volunteers dressed in white and officials to arrive Cameroon in 1962. Most if not all Peace Corps projects and volunteers were concentrated in West Cameroon between 1962-1971. Even Peace Corps Cameroon office was located in Buea. To Azoh Mbi, a Peace Corps Country Management Plan for 1975 explained this configuration with the following factors. Before independence, West Cameroon had initiated a development plan that was in effect from 1955-1960. West

¹³⁶ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.108.

¹³⁷ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Staff Handbook*, p.22.

¹³⁸ Nguerouet Modio, « L’Axe Diplomatique Washington », p.130.

¹³⁹ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Volunteer Handbook*, p.21.

Cameroon was in a position to easily identify its areas of need for foreign assistance. It was only at the time of independence in 1960 that East Cameroon began formally organising precise economic development planning on medium and long term basis. Secondly, West Cameroon led in regional investments in the sector of agriculture and education from 1966-1971, these being two priority areas in which volunteers could be recruited and trained. Finally, with English as the official language, a lower cost of living and favourable climatic conditions also contributed to the Peace Corps significantly higher presence in West Cameroon. As a response to Cameroon's key objective of maintaining national unity, Peace Corps Cameroon office was quickly moved from Buea to Yaoundé in 1972. In 1973, the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language programme was launched in East Cameroon. It signified something more than the simple expansion of Peace Corps programmes and indeed it was a reflection of the Peace Corps' reponse and adaptation to its environment.¹⁴⁰

In most cases before USAID withdrew from Cameroon in 1994, it provided the largest financial support for these projects.¹⁴¹ Thus, the Peace Corps volunteers performed the functions of executing USAID projects on the field. This was after it was mentioned in section V. Article 1 of the Memorandum of Understanding that was reached between USAID and Peace Corps Cameroon in order to execute USAID's activities in the North-West Cooperative Association (NWCA).¹⁴² The activities of the Peace Corps cemented the ties that existed between Cameroon and the U.S. In fact, as early as 1964, the U.S. Congress stated that: "Cameroon was one of the most stable of the new African countries. Its economic recovery [was] outstanding and has become a staunch supporter of continental cooperation."¹⁴³ Again in 2009, the U.S. embassy defined relations with Cameroon by stating that: "U.S-Cameroon relations are close, although from time to time, they were affected by concerns over human rights abuses and the pace of economic and political liberalisation."¹⁴⁴

During the 1960s, an average of 40 volunteers came to Cameroon annually for service. The numbers peaked in 1967 with 75 volunteers in the country. In the 1970s, the number of volunteers for Cameroon increased because Cameroonians requested more volunteers and also because Peace Corps services were increased in French speaking

¹⁴⁰ Azoh-Mbi, "The Contribution of," p.78.

¹⁴¹ MINREX archives, "USAID to Close 21 Missions Around the World", Afrique/Etats-Unis, File No.14/93 of December 1993, p.89.

¹⁴² Louise Cooke and Curtis Jolly, *Mid Term Evaluation for the Program of Reform in the Agricultural Marketing Sector, PRAMS I*, Yaoundé, The Agency for International Development Mission to Cameroon, July 1993, p.28.

¹⁴³ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Volunteer Handbook*, p.23.

¹⁴⁴ Delancey *et al*, *Historical Dictionary of*, p.386.

Cameroon. In 1978, there were 145 volunteers in the country and that number remained stable at about 110 annually in the early 1980s when it began to decline. The reason for the decline was because Cameroon had requested fewer volunteers and also because the nation was in need of people with more specialised skills. Previously, Peace Corps recruited largely B.A.¹⁴⁵ generalists but that trend changed from the 1970s as the receiving nations became more interested in people with specific skills to assist the nation's development. Since 1962 over 4.000 volunteers served in Cameroon and it is among the first Peace Corps posts in Africa.¹⁴⁶

Table 4: Evolution of Peace Corps Volunteer/Year in Cameroon from 1962-1984

No	Year	Peace Corps volunteer No
1	1962	21
2	1963	52
3	1964	155
4	1965	150
5	1966	133
6	1967	120
7	1968	61
8	1969	50
9	1970	63
10	1971	70
11	1972	77
12	1973	77
13	1974	63
14	1975	77
15	1976	77
16	1977	113
17	1978	145
18	1979	147
19	1980	135
20	1981	130
21	1982	125
22	1983	115
23	1984	117

Source: Azoh-Mbi, "The Contributions of," p.80.

The table above shows the evolution of Peace Corps volunteers in Cameroon from 1962 to 1984. From the table, it can be seen that the number of volunteers increased especially from the 1970s as the Cameroon government requested more volunteers because of

¹⁴⁵A substantial portion of the volunteers held degrees in the humanities or their field of study did not equip or impart technical expertise to graduates. They were designated as B.A. generalists.

¹⁴⁶Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, p.2.

their impact and as a result of the fact that the activities of volunteers were extended to French speaking Cameroon.

Between 1977 and 1979, Cameroon occupied 40th¹⁴⁷ place but today Cameroon is the 6th largest Peace Corps mission in Africa and in the top 10 in the world. Cameroon is also one of the only 3 nations in Africa (with Togo and Niger) in which volunteers have served uninterruptedly since 1962.¹⁴⁸ Through these volunteers, Peace Corps Cameroon sought to fulfill its mission. About one quarter of the population of the world live in abject poverty, are victims of diseases and suffer from malnutrition and as a result they cannot realise their full human potentials. It is for such vulnerable people that the Peace Corps has concentrated its projects since there can be no real peace and development if the basic human needs and rights of such people are not realised. For the past 55 years that Peace Corps volunteers have worked in developing countries, their priorities and programme emphases were adapted in line with the demands and circumstances of the Third World people. What remained dynamic is the dedication to build self-sufficiency and not reliance.¹⁴⁹

Peace Corps volunteers in Cameroon worked in the areas of Agronomy, Animal Husbandry, Business Administration, Community Development, Education, Fish Culture, Forestry, Health Education, Nutrition, Public Health and Sanitation to mention but these. Most of them who served in Cameroon were college graduates with Bachelor degrees in the sciences and liberal arts. Those with degrees in mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology generally worked as teachers. Volunteers in agriculture often had degrees in biology, economics, agriculture, rural geography together with some practical experience and training, while volunteers with degrees in accounting, business administration, and sociology served the cooperative and community development sectors. Therefore, the overriding objective of the Peace Corps was to join Cameroonians in general and the people of Mezam in particular to ameliorate the quality of their lives. The U.S. government spent about four million dollars a year on Peace Corps Cameroon, yet value could be placed on the benefits and rewards reaped by both the volunteers who served and the people they served. Peace Corps over fifty-five years joined the government and people of Cameroon especially those in the rural communities where most volunteers lived and worked in Mezam Division. At this juncture, we will focus on the reasons why Mezam was a centre of attraction to the Peace Corps.

¹⁴⁷ Nguerouet Modio, « L'Axe Diplomatie Washington », p.130.

¹⁴⁸ Deputy Chief of Mission swearing in of U.S. Volunteers on August 5, 2015.

¹⁴⁹ United Nations Action, *Annual Report*, p.27.

1.8. Justification for the Extension of the Peace Corps to Mezam

Generally, for the Peace Corps to extend its activities to a particular community, it had to apply. The process started with the community filling and sending an application form to the Peace Corps headquarters in Yaoundé as shown on Appendix 4. The request could be done by the head of an institution, Chief, Mayor, Divisional Officer, Chief of agric post or a medical director of a hospital. The application form had three signatures on it usually that of the person requesting, the head of the institution and that of any other authority in the community for example, the Chief, Mayor or Divisional Officer. Each application was for one volunteer so if the community needed three volunteers that is an education, health and agriculture volunteer, they sent three applications.¹⁵⁰ Irrespective of the individual or institution that requested the volunteer, he/she was for the whole community.

The agency hardly gave more than one volunteer per community except where there was really need for two volunteers in the area or it was a big village. Usually, most Peace Corps volunteer sites were clusters comprised of volunteers of various sectors who were close enough geographically to engage in shared work and learning as desired, as well as to help provide more support for each other. This means that volunteers were placed in strategic areas in close villages so that they could assist each other.¹⁵¹ When the application was sent, the organisation took about 6 to 12 months to assess it. After that, it went to the community to assess and it took in to account the fact that the said community was safe and secured, had enough work for the volunteer, no health danger, availability of housing and above all the needed community spirit which implied that the community must be ready and available to work with the volunteer.¹⁵² All these were present in Mezam and thus attracted the organisation to extend its tentacles to the study area.

The people of Mezam have a community spirit of working together and the necessary community support and reception needed by the Peace Corps volunteers so as to enhance their development. This was not a new phenomenon in Mezam as it was consecrated in the culture and heritage of the inhabitants of the communities. On the eve of European colonisation, veritable community engagement could be seen in the construction of markets, village to farm roads, palaces, shrines and inter village roads. This continued during the British era as the British through the policy of Indirect Rule strengthened the position of

¹⁵⁰ Anonymous

¹⁵¹ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Volunteer Handbook*, Yaoundé, Peace Corps, 2013, p.13.

¹⁵² Anonymous

traditional rulers who rallied the inhabitants for local development.¹⁵³ This idea of community support was the most important factor considered by the Peace Corps before joining a community in its developmental agenda. It assessed if the community was ready to provide the necessary support needed by the volunteers. This implied that the community was to identify three persons who were counterparts always willing, ready and available to work.

These three people were the volunteer counterpart who worked with the volunteer on daily basis and participated in a mutual transfer of skills and knowledge, the supervisor who evaluated and guided the activities of the volunteer. Infact he was responsible for assisting the volunteer with work orientation, cultural immersion, technical and on-going support. In case of inadequate staff in the community, the counterpart and supervisor could be the same person. Finally, there was the community host who was somebody living and well known in the community. He was responsible for assisting the volunteer to integrate in to the community and meet relevant community leaders. Apart from these three persons, there was also the need for the general community to be ready to cooperate and this was present in Mezam.¹⁵⁴ In Mezam, government initiatives focused on community development and the existence of community development initiatives explains the warm welcome the Peace Corps received upon arrival in Mezam. This easily attracted the Peace Corps to the study area.

Another important aspect which pulled the Peace Corps to Mezam was the fact that there was a pool of resources needed by the Peace Corps organisation. The agency assessed if there was enough work for the volunteers in the community. A busy volunteer will face less security and safety challenges. Mezam Division had enough schools like the Cameroon Protestant College (C.P.C) in Bali, Cameroon College of Arts, Science and Technology (CCAST) Bambili, Sacred Heart College (SAHECO) Mankon and teacher training centres like the Women Teacher Training College in Mankon as well as hospitals and health centres like Baptist Hospital in Nkwen, Tubah Health Centre, the Saint Theresa Catholic Medical Centre in Bafut that were ready and able to host education and health volunteers. In the same light, the fertility of its soils and the availability of community groups and associations were able to keep agroforestry volunteers busy and with time, Mezam became the heart of the Peace Corps agricultural programme. Housing which was also a serious issue that was taken into consideration was not a problem in most communities of

¹⁵³ C.C. Fonchingong and L.N. Fonjong, "The Concept of Self-Reliance in Community Development Initiatives in the Cameroon Grassfields", in *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 12, No.2, 2003, p.197.

¹⁵⁴ Anonymous

Mezam like Bafut, Santa and Tubah. The volunteers had community houses provided by the community members.¹⁵⁵

In the same light, the cost of carrying out their activities in Mezam was relatively cheaper than other areas in the North-West Region in particular and Cameroon in general. Santa, Akum and Bamendakwe were very accessible for volunteers since the areas were at the gateway into the North-West Region. Also, the medical concerns of the volunteers were not a problem since there were good hospitals like the Saint Theresa Catholic Medical Centre Mambu, the Bamenda Regional Hospital and the Presbyterian Health Centre in Nsem. These hospitals were at the disposal of the volunteers and there was no particular disease in the area which had a negative impact on the volunteers and scared them away.¹⁵⁶ Mezam was regarded as an island of peace except for the present socio-political crisis which has hit hard on the Division. The peaceful nature of Mezam since 1962 favoured the mass influx of volunteers into the area. This was because the Peace Corps was sure of the safety and security of its volunteers since there was close collaboration with the forces of law and order.¹⁵⁷ With the above advantages, Mezam became a centre of attraction to the Peace Corps. The table below shows the number of volunteers sent to the North-West Region in 2012.

Table 5: Volunteer Distribution in the North-West Region in 2012

No	Division	Number of Volunteers
1	Boyo	8
2	Bui	6
3	Mezam	14
4	Momo	4

Source: Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2012, p.9.

From the table above, it can be seen that Mezam Division received the highest number of volunteers when compared to the other divisions in 2012. The study area received 14 volunteers and this was probably because the agency noticed that its activities could be conveniently carried out in Mezam when compared to the other divisions of the North-West Region. Considering the popularity of the Peace Corps in the U.S., many people were motivated to join and serve as volunteers. The reasons why youths especially after university studies were thirsty of the Peace Corps service is the focus of the next section of the work.

¹⁵⁵ *Idem*.

¹⁵⁶ Chenwi, "United States Peace Corps," p.46.

¹⁵⁷ Abumbi II, *The Customs and Traditions of Bafut*, Limbe, Presbook, 2016, pp.50-51.

1.9. Motivations of Volunteers

Peace Corps volunteers join the organisation with a wide range of knowledge, encounters and opinions. They came from diverse backgrounds including rural, urban areas and sometimes from foreign countries. But even more diverse were the considerations that pushed young Americans to abandon their everyday lives in exchange for the opportunity to serve as a volunteer in a foreign country.

Peace Corps volunteers were motivated by altruism or the desire to assist others.¹⁵⁸ Over the years, the agency trained and transferred skills needed to promote development. These trainings were through the organisation of workshops complemented with practical demonstrations. Engaged in helping to meet the Third World development needs, volunteers were trained in a skill so that they could make a real contribution to development. Tangible results abound miles of road laid, depths of latrines dug and numbers of students taught. This essence was apparent in programmes as diverse as nature conservation, training for the handicapped, improving fishing techniques, developing disease-resistant varieties of vegetables and starting buffalo banks. Innumerable examples could be cited to show how Peace Corps volunteers applied their situations to solve development problems of water supply, organic gardening, medicine centre, tree planting and reforestation.

Similarly, the mission of the Peace Corps was dedicated to fostering global unity and understanding. The Peace Corps advances its mission through the work of volunteers during and after their service.¹⁵⁹ J. F. Kennedy had a vision to change the world, promote peace by bringing people of different countries into contact with each other, to work side by side, thereby building bridges of friendship. After their service, many go on to careers promoting positive change in the world, even back in the United States. There are now lifelong connections between Cameroonians and Americans. By so doing, they succeeded in meeting the challenge of the President. In the course of performing their functions, volunteers also served as civil society diplomats and acted as bridges of international cooperation. For those who had a strong desire to travel and explore, the Peace Corps experience offered a golden opportunity during service.¹⁶⁰ Volunteers continue to bring back the deep understanding that comes from living with foreign peoples, not as expatriates, but as friends, who shared their food, obeyed their laws, spoke their languages and worked with them. In this way, volunteers

¹⁵⁸ Caithlin Barker, 29, Former Peace Corps Volunteer, Yaoundé, 5/May/2022.

¹⁵⁹ Peace Corps, *Fiscal Year 2018-2022 Strategic Plan and Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Annual Performance Plan*, Washington, Peace Corps, 2019, p.2.

¹⁶⁰ Caithlin Barker, 29, Former Peace Corps Volunteer, Yaoundé, 5/May/2022.

enriched their communities, just as they enriched their host countries overseas. The world needs those threads of peace and friendship which volunteers weave.

Peace Corps is a life-defining leadership opportunity and a great way to launch a career. Volunteers return to the U.S. as global citizens with leadership, language, cross-cultural understanding, and technical skills that position them well for professional opportunities. The skills volunteers gain during their time of service are very useful for both personal and career development. It opens doors to other cultures that will be difficult to experience otherwise. This is a great way to build a career as most employers value cultural awareness and the ability to adapt to difficult situations. Volunteers teamwork and leadership skills are invaluable in every professional setting. Russell E. Morgan remarked that: “my experience as a Peace Corps volunteer was the most important transformational movement in my life, particularly because it provided me with a foundation for my career. Peace Corps service transforms both the volunteer and the community members they serve.”¹⁶¹

The least known side of Peace Corps service is that, for many it never ends. The advantages of Peace Corps service continue even after the 27 months abroad. That is why the volunteers like to call themselves returned volunteers and not ex-volunteers or former volunteers. Returning volunteers connect to a network of close to 250,000 people who have completed their service. These different groups or associations link them up, help them to meet other volunteers and to reintegrate in to the society since many returned more activist inclined and more intellectual, having discovered interest and capacities they did not know they possessed. Returned volunteers who are looking for a job will find the network helpful.¹⁶² Considering the popularity of the Peace Corps in the U.S., many people applied to join and serve as volunteers because it gave them an opportunity to discover the world. Though many people applied, not all of them were selected. Despite all these paper work, the most important task that the Peace Corps faced was the recruitment, selection and training of the volunteers, the so-called ambassadors of democracy. It had to recruit, select and train many young people to go to strange lands and perform services which Americans had never attempted before. This is the focus of the next section of the work.

1.10. Application and Selection of Volunteers

Regardless of the individual attributes requested by the Peace Corps, selecting and engaging skilled volunteers able to thrive in challenging physical and psychological situations and sometimes environments is important to the overall goal of the Peace Corps.

¹⁶¹ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.7.

¹⁶² Chenwi, “United States Peace,” p.48.

Shortly after the 10924 Executive Order issued by Kennedy, university students circulated petitions and pledges to serve, and more than 25,000 came from interested applicants. The Peace Corps on its part dispatched 400,000 request forms to various colleges and universities.¹⁶³ For the Peace Corps' first twenty years, over 530,851 young Americans applied to be volunteers out of which only some 100,585 were selected for pre-service training as shown below.¹⁶⁴ In 1985, there were 13,975 applicants, but just about 3,452 were placed.¹⁶⁵ A sharp increase in prospective volunteers after the 11th September 2001 bombings facilitated the task of the Peace Corps process of recruitment, though doubts keep surfacing concerning the length and lack of openness with respect to the recruitment process.¹⁶⁶ Each year, about 15,000 to 18,000 U.S. citizens apply to serve but the number drastically increased in 2017 amounting to 20,935.¹⁶⁷ This was because of a static Peace Corps budget. The Peace Corps' qualification and selection process was demanding as about one in three applicants became a trainee.¹⁶⁸

Table 6: Number of Peace Corps Applicants between 1961-1980

Number	Year	Applications	Trainees Placed
1	1961	12.644	545
2	1962	20.048	3.699
3	1963	33.762	4.969
4	1964	45.653	7.720
5	1965	42.125	7.876
6	1966	42.246	9.216
7	1967	35.229	7.565
8	1968	30.450	7.391
9	1969	24.220	6.2343
10	1970	19.022	4.6322
11	1971	26.483	4.686
12	1972	23.849	3.997
13	1973	33.637	4.821
14	1974	30.158	4.886
15	1975	28.761	3.296
16	1976	18.189	3.291
17	1977	13.908	418
18	1978	13.661	3.715
19	1979	18.159	3.327
20	1980	16.195	3.108

Source: Rice, Quoted in Azoh-Mbi, "The Contribution of," p.45.

¹⁶³ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.57.

¹⁶⁴ Azoh-Mbi, "The Contribution of," p.45.

¹⁶⁵ Ruppe, "Peace Corps Enduring," p.704.

¹⁶⁶ Congressional Research Service, *The Peace Corps*, p.9.

¹⁶⁷ www.moneycrashers.com, consulted on 20/May/2018 at 6:30 p.m.

¹⁶⁸ Anonymous

The table above reflects the enthusiasm of young Americans to serve in the Peace Corps. From the table, it can be seen that 1966 was the year with the highest number of applicants and trainees placed. The table shows the rigorous selection process that applicants went through as most often the number of trainees selected were not even up to half the applicants.

The process of application to approval could take a year or more to complete.¹⁶⁹ Though there were basic requirements needed to apply: you must be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years and must have some familiarity with at least one language more than English and at least a High School Diploma. The rigorous selection process was based on different criteria that included the fact that volunteers were qualified technically. By accepting an invitation to serve as a volunteer, the individual committed 27 months in his host country. Peace Corps on its part was committed to select individuals with the capacity and motivation to serve, trained them effectively, placed them where their knowledge and skills could be used and supported them all through their services. Peace Corps Cameroon had no role to play in the selection of volunteers since it was done in the U.S. but the only thing it did was to specify the number of volunteers it needed for the different sectors.

Service in the Peace Corps was voluntary but once the commitment to serve is made, certain things were expected from the trainee. The trainee completed an extensive online application, a complete medical history, choosing a potential volunteer site and sector of service and then completing a second online questionnaire about current workstyle and environment and sent it 12 months before. If approved, the trainee was invited for an interview with a Peace Corps officer to discuss his/her skills and interests. Together with a medical screening, there was also the security clearance which was a background check of the trainee to see if he/she was a thief, involved in terrorist activities or intelligence. Those approved received an invitation within six months after the interview and the organisation looked at the volunteer's qualifications to match with the assignment at the time. Selection for training was never a guarantee that the volunteers would go overseas. Shriver informed the volunteers that: "do not sell your home, furniture or car, or cut your ties when you accept an invitation for training."¹⁷⁰ After selecting the volunteers, they were trained for service in host countries. The process of volunteer training consists the next part of the work.

1.11. Training of Volunteers

The training of Peace Corps volunteers was equally very challenging and demanding since they were expected to be "doers and operators" by the time the training was over. On

¹⁶⁹ www.moneycrashers.com, consulted on 20/May/2018 at 6:30 p.m.

¹⁷⁰ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.57.

the average, 9 out of 10 trainees successfully completed their training and were sworn in as volunteers.¹⁷¹ During the 1960s, volunteers were trained in the U.S. Such intensive and rigorous process of selection was not restricted only to prospective Peace Corps aspirants but also to the colleges that aspired to train the volunteers. Institutional premises that had plans of conducting volunteer trainings were to meet certain conditions. To protect the agency's image, racially segregated universities were discouraged from applying for contracts.¹⁷² Priority was given to campuses with experience in international development. American universities and college campuses were utilised as training grounds. Experts from different universities especially Ohio which trained a greater number of the volunteers who were posted to West Cameroon at the dawn of independence, provided a suitable and appropriate environment for the training sessions.

The absence of metropolitan features made the town attractive for studies coupled with the fact that the university maintained high standards of no discrimination in race, colour, religion, sex and age. More so, the university as early as 1958, had sponsored teacher training programmes in Nigeria. The job well done in Nigeria acquainted Ohio university professors with the challenges West Africa faced in the domain of education. The University of Ohio ran a bureau of global affairs with an agenda comparable to that of the Peace Corps.¹⁷³ Therefore, the choosing of its campus from the reservoir of aspirants was not a coincidence. It was time for the university to use its experience in international development. On 5th July 1962, the first group of volunteers arrived Ohio university to be trained for service in West Cameroon.¹⁷⁴ This tied with the demands of the project which stated that:

To provide critically-needed teachers for government and mission-run secondary, teacher training and vocational schools. To assist the Cameroon Government in its efforts to re-orient its educational system to make it more responsive to the practical needs of the society. To demonstrate U.S. interest in the development of West Cameroon as an integral part of the Federation.¹⁷⁵

The contract to train the volunteers was signed in April 1962 in Washington by Vernon Alden who was the chancellor of the institution.¹⁷⁶ The first training started from 5th July to 31st August 1962 with an amount of \$323,851.22 disbursed to cover the cost of training. The first group of trainees was made up of 50 students that is 29 female and 21 male hailing from diverse backgrounds of suburbs and cities of about 20 U.S. states. Most of

¹⁷¹ Anonymous

¹⁷² Anonymous

¹⁷³ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.112.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.109.

¹⁷⁵ Amin, *The Peace Corps*, p.109.

¹⁷⁶ Windmiller, *The Peace Corps*, p.25.

them were between 19 to 29 years old and hovering an average age of 22. They were youthful, dedicated, aspiring, enterprising and above all optimistic.¹⁷⁷ From the onset, 56 trainees were to partake in the different sessions of training but by the 5th of July 1962, 6 had abandoned because of the rigorous selection process and the 50 left had pull through the tight enlistment and hiring process. The head of the project was Professor Roy P. Fairfield.¹⁷⁸

With excellent credentials and a political scientist, he selected some of the best and brightest professors to work with. Included in this group were Professors Russell Milliken, William Cooper, John Donovan, William Elsbree and others. Professor Paul Gebauer, was recruited to join the team and share his pragmatic exploits and knowledge on real life situations and cultures since he had served in Cameroon as a Baptist clergy for over 30 years. Again, Daniel Mua, Flavius Martin as well as Johnson Gabuin, all students from Cameroon studying in the U.S. were recruited and involved in the trainings as experts because of their mastery of the culture and perhaps the area.¹⁷⁹ Their job description included to interact, blend and help the prospective volunteers or trainees dispel myths and understand the Cameroonian realities. After the six-page Peace Corps questionnaire, each volunteer wrote a six-hour exam as well as routine checks of each volunteer by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The rigorous screening was to make sure that those selected for training were talented, fit and devoted American men and women.

In later years, the training sessions were transferred from Ohio university to the Columbia and Boston universities in 1965 and 1966. Despite the transfer, however, the main guidelines for the training were those formulated at the Ohio university and Ohio did not forgive the agency for giving the contracts of 1965 and 1966 to other universities. After 1966 Peace Corps Washington decided against establishing a permanent Peace Corps home in Ohio university for volunteers going to Cameroon. Other considerations that influenced the change of opinion include the fact that the university of Ohio did not have an appropriate and conducive setting for the hands-on training which was to complement the theoretical part. As part of their training, these young people had gone in to the poor communities where many Africans lived for weeks and their experience working directly in these communities was intense. The volunteers that were trained in Columbia, spent part of their time in Dartmouth-Quebec a small backward village at the time.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ R. Textor, *Cultural Frontiers of the Peace Corps*, Massachusetts, M.I.T Press, 1966, p.28.

¹⁷⁸ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.113.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.114.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.146.

In several projects, most agencies with which volunteers worked made available a record of households with which the trainees were to interact and stay with. Every week, they came together for close to a two and a half hours' chat concerning their work. The prospective volunteers recorded their exploits and were assessed by each agency.¹⁸¹ The objective was for the trainees to stay with their African host in order to familiarise themselves with the Africans and face the difficulties comparable to what they will face in Africa.¹⁸² The Peace Corps participated in concerns about domestic poverty through the training programmes for its volunteers. Whether in Ohio, Columbia or Boston, the Peace Corps tried to unveil to its trainees the encounter of poverty. It supported this by establishing challenging conditions in university premises where trainees carried out essential features of their training. An important Peace Corps doctrine concerning community involvement and engagement was that the trainees needed to adapt to situations and environments comparable to those they will encounter in their host countries.

Like students with note books in hand, whether in Ohio, Boston, or Columbia, volunteers were expected to examine, observe and take down with care whatever they saw, before beginning anything. The architects of this community engagement principle thought that trained participants understood more on tight hands-on grounds than other systems of training could provide. Far away from being an option, the integrated perspective was a modified interpretation of local ways that concentrated on the creation of interest groups for mutual help initiatives. They were trained in various subjects but it was policy to emphasise the study of American principles of government, democratic life and also tactics of communist agitators. Also, the training sessions were aimed to empower volunteers to handle the psychological and physical hurdles while performing their tasks.¹⁸³

Information-gathering and investigation was an important pillar of training that needed efficient intellectual study. Academic institutions were requested to propose academic programmes in line with their academic specialisation and the aspects indicated by the Peace Corps, that seriously assessed the training programmes. This did not mean uniformity since each institution had its own expertise and concentrated on its own unique strong point, confidential Peace Corps files acknowledge the variety of strategies of indigenous growth. For example, Ohio university which trained and graduated most of the volunteers heading for Cameroon, insisted on a comprehensive approach to indigenous growth. This pushed

¹⁸¹ Fernando, "Connecting Realities: Peace," p.137.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p.134.

¹⁸³ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.49.

volunteers to see the connections within the sectors of a community thereby pushing before the concept of growth on diverse perspectives as possible, merging any growth initiative with what is already existing in the field and what is still in the pipeline.¹⁸⁴

To ensure the practicability of the training, artificial Cameroonian scenes were established. Scenes of Cameroonian markets were created. These areas of exchanges could be compared to the real life markets in Cameroon. Volunteers were expected to mingle, bargain, buy and sell in Pidgin English. Cameroonian food stuff such as garri, yams, cassava and many other commodities were exchanged. Furthermore, the volunteers were mentored on how to cook different Cameroonian dishes and consume them the Cameroonian way. While some cooked using stoves, others made ready the food over burning wood which was similar to African external kitchens and used their hands to eat when need be. In fact, the setting, functioning and ambiance of the training site was a disguised Cameroon. Also John Ngu Foncha was convinced to visit Ohio university during his official visit to the U.S. in 1964. Foncha's visit added flavour, spiced and fanned the flames of the training. In the same light, A.D. Mengot, the Director of Education in West Cameroon was another Cameroonian official who also visited and lectured in the training. Former Peace Corps volunteers who had served in Cameroon like Douglass Lapp, David Dwyer, William Kane and Mr. and Mrs. Terence Sidney were invited as resource persons who shared their immediate experience of their service in Cameroon.¹⁸⁵

The training of volunteers in the U.S. posed a serious challenge to the volunteers owing to the fact that most of them were not able to adapt to the physical and cultural conditions in the field. Squaring up to these difficulties, the Peace Corps strove to improve and streamline its policies. It was decided that, it was probably not the best preparation to train volunteers solely on American campuses when they were soon to be living and working in the towns and villages of developing countries. Deborah Jones stated in a Peace Corps report that: "volunteers needed to learn about and adjust to a new way of life, and becoming aware of the role of an alien in a new way of life."¹⁸⁶ This meant that volunteers were to be trained in the host societies though this was only introduced towards the end of the 1960s.

In the U.S., volunteers after selection were given resources to help them learn, they uploaded online courses which also helped them to learn and finally they were encouraged to start learning about Cameroon. Added to that was the staging event done 2 days before

¹⁸⁴ Fernando, "Connecting Realities: Peace," p.138.

¹⁸⁵ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.142.

¹⁸⁶ Fernando "Connecting Realities: Peace," p.135.

departure for Cameroon with objective to orientate and remind volunteers of what it took to be a volunteer.¹⁸⁷ From 1966, the Peace Corps training programme was shifted to the host country and volunteers that served in Cameroon from this period onwards were trained in different areas in Cameroon. Most of those who served in Mezam were trained in Bamenda, Santa, Mbengwi of the North-West Region and Kombou, Babadjou and Foumbot in the West Region, Mengong and Ebolowa in the South Region and Mbalmayo in the Centre Region.

Peace Corps Cameroon prepared and supported its volunteers through a sequence of distinctive and exhaustive trainings that accompanied the volunteers all through their 27 months of service¹⁸⁸ beginning with a tight and rigorous 11 week Pre-Service Training(PST), closely followed by an In-Service Training and rounding up with a Close of Service which orientated the volunteers about their trip back home and how they were to reintegrate and face life after Peace Corps as shown below. These diverse training opportunities helped volunteers to address the knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA) needed to effectively serve in Cameroon. KSAs equipped volunteers with the necessary tools to successfully integrate and collaborate with partners to achieve project objectives.

Table 7: Peace Corps Cameroon Volunteer Training Programme

No	Activity	Period
1	PST(Pre-Service Training)	11 weeks, community-base and comprehensive (language, technical, cross-culture, personal health and safety
2	IST(In-Service Training)	6 days, sector specific
3	MST(Mid-Service Training)	2 days, sector specific
4	COS(Close of Service)	5 days

Source: Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé , Groupe Inter Press, 2011, p.5.

The table above shows the different volunteer training activities, components and duration of each activity. From the table, it can be seen that PST was the longest and most important followed by IST, COS and MST. Training enabled volunteers to meet project goals and objectives throughout the twenty-seven months of service. Peace Corps volunteer training in Cameroon consisted of standard training events which will be developed subsequently.

Pre-service training (PST) was the first in-country training within the twenty-seven months competence-based training programme.¹⁸⁹ It equipped volunteers with the knowledge and skills and facilitated their successful integration into their service posts and begin their assigned jobs. The duration of the training was not really fixed but often lasted for ten

¹⁸⁷ Anonymous

¹⁸⁸ Twenty-four months is the standard service period in the field, with an additional three months training.

¹⁸⁹ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2010, p.6.

weeks.¹⁹⁰ Over the course of PST, Peace Corps trainees lived with their Cameroonian home stay families and surrounding communities to reinforce technical, intercultural, health, safety and security as well as linguistic proficiency for each project. All these were evaluated and the volunteer had a minimum mark of at least 80% to score before being sworn in as a volunteer.¹⁹¹ This language issue was very clear in the Peace Corps Act as it stated that: “no person shall be assigned to duty as a volunteer under this Act in any foreign country or area unless at the time of such assignment he or she possesses such reasonable proficiency as his or her assignment requires speaking the language of the country or area to which he or she is assigned.”¹⁹² With the technical competence and intercultural awareness, the ability to communicate in the Cameroonian languages was critical to being an effective Peace Corps volunteer. Training followed a community-based model that includes four main components:

1.11.1. Language

Each trainee received 120 hours of language training during PST. The principal purpose was on acquiring skills in French language with an in-depth study, practical exercises in the classroom and with host families and community members. When the targeted French level was attained, the prospective volunteer was now required to learn local languages (Fulfulde and Cameroon Pidgin English).¹⁹³

1.11.2. Technical

Trainees received an average of 75 hours of technical training in their respective programme done through a blend of theoretical and hands-on experiences to adapt trainees for community entry, integration and successful work in their assigned posts. The hands-on learning experiences were attained through a six-week model school for education during which they bring together Cameroonian students like holiday classes in which volunteers are briefed and trained on preparing lesson notes, Cameroonian educational system. Infact it was some sort of the Higher Teacher Training College since volunteers are trained to teach for the first time. There was also an eight-week training in financial institutions for small enterprise development, the setting up of a tree nursery at home and experimental or field trials plots for agro-forestry and six weeks of pragmatic activities with local associations or groups for community health.¹⁹⁴ Training sessions were also accompanied by community host seminars

¹⁹⁰ Anonymous

¹⁹¹ *Idem.*

¹⁹² Anonymous

¹⁹³ Anonymous

¹⁹⁴ Dze-Ngwa Willibroad, 54 years, Model School Principal, Yaoundé, 23/ December/2023.

which lasted for two days to prepare successful volunteer-community engagement and a week site visit by partners and trainees to the trainees future post.¹⁹⁵

1.11.3. Cross-culture

Cross-culture training focused on the history of Cameroon, cultures, cultural adaptation, adjustment, integration and diversity, community engagement skills, autonomy, myth, and self-exploration.

1.11.4. Personal Health and Safety

To strengthen volunteer adaptability and autonomy, trainees received an average of 25 hours of health living education by the Peace Corps Medical Officers (PMOs) on important themes related to personal hygiene and sanitation. The Safety and Security Coordinator reinforces trainees knowledge and skills and integrate safety and security during PST trainings. Apart from pre-service training, the other training programmes were spread throughout the 27 months. When volunteers went to their post of service, they came back to Yaoundé after 3 months, 6 months and after their service for a more in-depth training based on their complexity and when they needed the knowledge to function.¹⁹⁶

Besides the above, another type of training was ongoing learning. Throughout the service of the volunteer, he/she was expected to improve his/her skills and knowledge in areas of technical, language, cross-culture, safety and security. Their learning continued through on-the-job training experiences, technical, intercultural and language seminars, and close of service to assess their period of service and orientate and prepare them for their departure back home. Volunteers addressed identified needs through self-study. In addition to formal organised workshops, volunteers learnt in non-formal settings through conversations, interactions with colleagues, community members and fellow volunteers.¹⁹⁷

Reconnect in service training was held after volunteers served at their sites for 3-6 months. Volunteers discussed the result of their sector assessment, reinforced language learning and focused on skills applicable to their work assignments thus it was sector specific.¹⁹⁸ Also the mid service training conference was an opportunity for the volunteers to evaluate their previous or first year of service and prepare for the second year. It was an occasion for volunteers to get an update and enlightenment from fellow volunteers and

¹⁹⁵ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2010, p.6.

¹⁹⁶ Anonymous

¹⁹⁷ *Idem*

¹⁹⁸ Anonymous

personnel and acknowledge their accomplishments.¹⁹⁹ Close of service was an event that prepared volunteers for their return back home and evaluate how the volunteers have attained the agency's third goal of helping to promote an improved comprehension of other peoples on the part of Americans. It was held 27 months after arrival and for 5 days. It also helped to prepare the volunteer for life after Peace Corps.²⁰⁰ The structure of the Peace Corps in Cameroon is what the study is examining next.

1.12. Staff and Organisation

To optimise its operations, the Peace Corps created a decentralised corporate structure. Each country of service had a Head of Country Operations or Country Director and a qualified administrative, programme support, training and health staff. Their responsibilities were to provide assisted volunteering and execute the Peace Corps policies. Peace Corps Cameroon has 54 staff made up mostly of Cameroonians, Americans (3) as well as citizens of other countries (3).²⁰¹

In Cameroon, the Peace Corps is headed by the Country Director (CD) who was the Peace Corps most senior official in Cameroon. The C.D. is an American who has full authority and responsibility for the management and direction of all aspects of the Peace Corps programme. As a representative of the U.S. team in Cameroon, he collaborated with the U.S. Ambassador, who controlled U.S. employees and governance in Cameroon. The C.D. set policies, administered and established projects, maintained contacts with Cameroon's officials, managed safety and security within the country, and was in constant touch with the volunteers during service. He also managed the Peace Corps budget and personnel in Cameroon.²⁰²

Each post is staffed with a director of management and operations (DMO) who was an American. He/she managed budget and administrative functions. DMOs allocated cost-of-allowance and repayment, operated and maintained general and administrative function staff. They were also in charge of managing Peace Corps property, personnel and contracts.²⁰³ Most posts were staffed with a director of programming and training (DPT) who provided help and assistance to volunteers, managed programming staff, and controlled the planning and training sessions. This implied that before launching a vacancy for the above mentioned posts, it was precised that you must be a U.S. citizen before you could apply. Associate Peace

¹⁹⁹ *Idem.*

²⁰⁰ Anonymous

²⁰¹ Anonymous

²⁰² *Idem.*

²⁰³ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Staff Handbook*, p.17.

Corps directors (APCDs) sometimes called programme or region managers, were experts in diverse domains of development such as small enterprise development, education, health and agriculture. APCDs were in charge of organising training and assisted volunteers for service. This implied making sure that volunteers had enough work and modest living conditions. They also worked with other organisations concerned with the volunteer's job assignments.²⁰⁴

The training manager provided volunteers with the knowledge and skills to meet ongoing learning objectives. He ensured that trainees and volunteers achieved important basic and category experiences including language skills. The training manager prepared trainees and equipped volunteers personally and professionally to serve abroad for twenty-seven months. He collaborated with multiple stakeholders to assess learning needs and provided meaningful ongoing learning experience for volunteers during training.²⁰⁵

Also there was the Peace Corps Medical Officer (PCMO) who was a physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, or a nurse who managed a health programme for Peace Corps Cameroon volunteers.²⁰⁶ This programme included treatment of illness and immunisations, continued health education, prevention of endemic diseases, periodic physical examinations and screening for early detection of diseases. The PCMO worked and collaborated with the health staff and services in Washington D.C. to make sure that volunteers enjoyed quality health care services. Volunteers who had health issues which could not be attended to locally were evacuated to areas where better medical facilities and treatment was available. The safety and security coordinator worked with other staff to closely evaluate the security situation, reacted to security situations involving volunteers and put in place measures to reduce risks and address threats.

Lastly, there was the support staff made up of resident personal service contractors (PSCs) and non-host country resident PSCs comprised a large part of the Peace Corps. They served in many capacities including cashiers, drivers, trainers, mechanics and guards. They were very vital to the proper functioning of a Peace Corps post and worked closely with volunteers throughout their service.²⁰⁷ The service of these volunteers in Cameroon in general and Mezam in particular for two years entailed a lot of financial endeavours. One might be tempted to ask the question how the agency raised funds to cater for its volunteers during their stay in Cameroon. This question will be answered in the paragraphs below.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.18.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Volunteer Handbook*, p.13.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.18.

1.13. Funding

The Peace Corps is an independent U.S. government agency that operates within the executive branch and so Congress voted its budget. During its first 25 years, the Peace Corps received funding largely through congressional appropriations approved by the president. The Peace Corps also benefitted from investments from the private sector and administrative offices. In the early years of the Peace Corps that is around 1962, federal funding, stood at \$30 million but eventually increased to \$128.6 million in 1985. For more than 25 years, Congress allocated \$2.2 billion to support over 100.000 volunteers serving around the world.²⁰⁸ For the fiscal year 2010, the total Peace Corps budget was \$400million.²⁰⁹

Perhaps the most pointedly paradoxical perception was that Congress establish the desire in 1985 to achieve a volunteer corps of at least 10.000 volunteers. This objective was never realised with the nearest being 9095 in 2011.²¹⁰ The justification for this goal not being attained was not because of inadequate volunteers but funds. There are plenty of potential volunteers aspiring to work. This statement is confirmed by the fact that during a two week period in 1985, 7.000 applicants reacted positively to a national plea for volunteers to work in Africa. Limited funds hold down on the amount of volunteers, the agency can recruit and send out for service. In 1985, about 13.975 individuals applied to serve but only 3.452 were selected and sent out for service. If the budget is increased and made accessible, the competence and the practice session ability of the organisation can produce volunteers that will productively work during service.²¹¹

Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama each recommitted to reaching that goal and submitted budget request to achieve it but until now volunteer numbers still rotate around 7.000. The National Peace Corps Association proposed that in order to attain the 10.000 volunteer target by 2022, an allocation of about \$600million would be needed. This will imply a substantial rise as compared the past years. The Peace Corps budget has been static at 410million since 2016.²¹² The table below shows the Peace Corps budget from 2011-2017.

²⁰⁸ Ruppe, "Peace Corp's Enduring," p.703.

²⁰⁹ Kenny, "The Peace Corps," p.1.

²¹⁰ Pathway to peacecorps.com, consulted on 16/May/2021 at 11:00 a.m.

²¹¹ Ruppe, "Peace Corp's Enduring," p.704.

²¹² Pathway to peacecorps.com, consulted on 16/May/2021 at 11:00 a.m.

Table 8: Peace Corps Budget from Fiscal year 2011-Fiscal Year 2017

Fiscal Year	Request(current \$million)	Appropriation(current \$million)*	Total volunteers²¹³
2011	446.2	374.3	9.095
2012	439.6	375.0	8.073
2013	374.5	356.0	7.209
2014	378.8	379.0	6.818
2015	380.0	379.0	6.919
2016	410.0	410.0	7.213
2017	410.0	410.0	7.376

Source: Congressional Research Service, *The Peace Corps: Overview and Issues*, Congressional Research Service, 2021, p.6.

The above table shows the funding of the Peace Corps from 2011-2017. From 2011, it can be seen that the budget increased while the number of volunteers around the world decreased but for 2011 with the highest number of volunteers which was probably because of a budget increase in 2010. From this year onwards, there was a stable decrease in the number of volunteers which could be justified by budget cuts. From 2016, the budget is static up till date and each year the Peace Corps justifies its budget to Congress showing breakdown of regional costs and strategic visions.

Peace Corps Cameroon is fueled with huge sums of money by the U.S. government which spent about four million U.S. dollars annually.²¹⁴ The budget varied with the projects and different policies in place. The Peace Corps does not rely solely on its own appropriated funds but on other agencies as well as cash and in-kind contributions. Apart from the U.S. government, the activities of the Peace Corps were also financed by other U.S. government agencies like the Peace Corps Partnership Programme (PCPP). Begun in 1964, this small but highly successful programme encourages people in host countries to plan and complete their own self-help projects with the support of funds contributed by good will people primarily in the U.S. The programme provides U.S. citizens with a chance to engage community service initiatives. Facilitated by the volunteer who lives and works in the host communities abroad, cooperation interactions can involve cross-cultural letters, music, photos, local artifacts, and other cultural expressions.²¹⁵ Besides facilitating direct sponsor to sponsor funding, the PCPP

²¹³*Figures reflect across-the-board rescissions and supplemental appropriations; they do not count transfers. Total volunteers are number at the end of the Fiscal Year. Volunteers number include those funded by both Peace Corps as well as transfers from other agencies such as the State Department, President's Emergency Programme for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)

²¹⁴ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Volunteer Handbook*, p.20.

²¹⁵ Ruppe, "Peace Corp's Enduring," p.705.

helped fulfill the Peace Corps' third goal by enabling people in the U.S. and those in host countries to better understand each other.²¹⁶

The PCPP channeled private sector contributions to support the Peace Corps. In 2011, \$47.985 was granted by PCPP for 22 projects in six regions of Cameroon. These projects included four sectors (agriculture, food security, health education, and income generating activities) reaching about 159,455 beneficiaries.²¹⁷ Also, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) also provided funds for the activities of the Peace Corps through VAST (Volunteer Activities, Support and Training). PEPFAR, a government initiative to address the global HIV/AIDS epidemic funded Peace Corps' activities especially in the 4 PEPFAR zones of the North-West, South-West, Centre and Littoral. This celebrated dedication insists on increasing health results, improving programme resilience and engagement, enhancing health systems and practices to promote HIV care, prevention and treatment services.

Finally, USAID was also a funding partner of the Peace Corps. Through its Small Project Assistance (SPA), USAID raised funds to support small grants proposed by volunteers. The SPA programme represented one of the most productive and inventive cooperation programme initiated by the Peace Corps and USAID. It was a distinct collaboration that complemented USAID financing and technical support to the Peace Corps personnel to stimulate community development. Introduced in January 1983, the SPA programme provided a quick funding mechanism to the Peace Corps for accelerating and upholding localised initiatives determined by Peace Corps volunteers and local community organisations. Funds were given by USAID to volunteers to support small projects in health.²¹⁸ USAID provides up to about \$40.000 annually for each country for Peace Corps local development initiatives addressing issues related to agriculture, income generating and small business development. Today many important bottom-up initiatives were financed and confirmed very productive.²¹⁹ The appropriation amounts may be considered not enough to encourage self-sufficiency of the village but have been quite significant.

Also, a second SPA programme funded technical and programme assistance to generate small project activity. Since its inception, communities in Cameroon contributed in the form of cash, labour, materials and land.²²⁰ An ongoing concern of both agencies about

²¹⁶ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.84.

²¹⁷ Peace Corps Cameroon *Annual Report*, p.14.

²¹⁸ Scanlon, *Cooperation between the*, p.13.

²¹⁹ Ruppe, "Peace Corp's Enduring," p.702.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

the SPA programme is the question of whether Peace Corps volunteers should be a source of money for the communities where they work. Whatever the case, the SPA programme grants if well managed could provide an essential tool for community development and contribute greatly to the volunteer's work satisfaction and effectiveness. In 2011, with the assistance of USAID funding of about \$23.000, Peace Corps Cameroon supported 13 water and sanitation projects in seven regions of the country providing communities with portable water, sanitation facilities and improved hygiene practices as seen below.²²¹

Table 9: Programmatic Distribution of Peace Corps funding by U.S. Government agencies and the private sector in 2013

No	Small Grant	Number of projects	Total	Beneficiaries	%
1	SPA	20	55.083.39	30.529	41
2	VAST	29	50.088.84	77.741	37
3	PCPP	10	29.565.61	26.137	22
TOTAL		50	134.737.84	134.407	100

Source: Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2013, p.14.

The table shows how volunteers and community host partners worked to implement projects using funding opportunities offered by the Peace Corps partnership with other U.S. government agencies and the private sector. From the table, it can be seen that in 2013 the highest funding partner was SPA sponsored by USAID closely followed by VAST and PCPP. All projects were community driven and focused on skills transfer and sustainability.

1.14. Conclusion

The chapter presented the geographical and historical background of Mezam which played a great role in promoting joint development. It also examines the origin, objectives and evolution of the Peace Corps, reason, procedure and implantation of the organisation in Cameroon in general and Mezam in particular. The chapter also evaluates the process of volunteer application, selection and training as well as the structure and funding of the agency. The chapter argued that the growth and expansion of the Peace Corps was both dramatic and fascinating for any bilateral institution. From a bare 763 volunteers scattered over 13 countries in 1961 to over 7,000 in 44 countries in 1963 and today more than 165.000 volunteers are serving in more than 134 countries around the world. Prior to the arrival of the volunteers in Mezam in 1962, the local people already had their own initiatives to fight against poverty and enhance the growth of their different communities. These development efforts will be the point of focus in the next chapter.

²²¹ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, p.12.

CHAPTER TWO: SELF-RELIANT DEVELOPMENT: A PANACEA FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN MEZAM DIVISION

2.1. Introduction

The chapter examines the local development initiatives in Mezam and seeks to understand how community development was given credence in the study area before, during and after the arrival of the volunteers. Most of the young volunteers who arrived Mezam partnered with indigenous and independent organisations, a majority of which were active and functioning in the area well before the arrival of the Peace Corps. These institutions had their own ways of perceiving community engagement which necessarily did not match or blend with that of the Peace Corps. Most communities in Mezam had their own growth initiatives for poverty alleviation at the grassroots. When they embraced the Peace Corps, it was not only to grasp something from the ideas brought by the volunteers, but because of the desire to sustain their own local organisations and schemes which most of the times were linked to the necessities and efforts tied to social structure. This implies that the local efforts and realities decisively shaped what volunteers ultimately accomplished. The chapter explores the ways in which community development initiatives in Mezam inter-twined with the activities of the Peace Corps and how it changed over time. It is in this light that the chapter argues that, in Mezam where the state was very distant, the people cultivated indigenous forms of self-reliance and social networking to promote development. This was usually through Village Development Associations (VDAs) and Rotating Savings and Credit Association (ROSCAs) commonly known as *Njangis* in Mezam.

2.2. The Concept of Self-Reliance

Africa and its development problems have received significant challenges in recent years and Africans are now passively accepting their inability of attaining the vibrant forms of coping and survival activities which need to be more fully understood and interpreted. Local development strategies were continuously fine-tuned by the multiple actors involved in the development process. Self-reliance has become a fact of life and it is connected to concepts like self-help, mutual help, indigenous participation and local development.¹ It advocated the need for people to rely on internal resources as opposed to development that relied on external resources. When local communities relied too heavily on outside help, they

¹ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.111.

relinquished control of their resources and more importantly their future.² They allowed other people or institutions to make decisions that were not in the best interest of these communities. It implied involving sets of individuals in strategic undertakings that helped them acquire expertise which equipped them with skills to effectively manage the challenges of their daily activities. As defined in 1975, self-reliant development was development of the people for the people and by the people. This was a financial guideline geared towards engaging progress or advancement within a nation through the firm management of the major production inputs by the state and its population. It subjected Cameroon's foreign affairs to the aims of home development, predominantly relying on indigenous initiatives and domestic endeavours. A policy of independence was anchored on the following alternatives; a production strategy more responsive to internal needs, a considerable marshalling of fiscal and budgetary plans geared towards internal savings; and an improved personnel plan. This was geared towards enhanced effectiveness and autonomy in the agricultural sector, accompanied with steady rise in the prices of these crops. By fostering community-supported agriculture programmes, and urban farming initiatives as well as youth engagement, the self-sufficiency approach intended to make Cameroon an agricultural giant and food purveyor in Central Africa.³

A remarkable characteristic of the crisis sweeping across Cameroon was its devastating effect on the rural community, subordinating it to a severe disruption in both the economy and the society. Many remote areas are finding it difficult to cope with the decline. The condition was aggravated by the escalating incapacity of the government to properly and efficiently tackle the crisis. The aggravating challenge of resource depletion in Sub Saharan Africa has forced most governments to realise that they can no longer depend on the standard measures to triumphantly tackle the most pressing demands of the people. Community engagement was rekindled, enhanced and actually attempted, as a measure that can likely be workable in accompanying initiatives to address the demands. The downturn and full-scale poverty gave birth to diverse means and efforts at the local level to address the crash. Goomerante and Mbilinyi as cited by Fonchingong and Fonjong argued that faced with the increasing grip of worsening misery and economic recession in the 1980s and 1990s, self-reliance was reignited, enhanced and seen as an alternative option to subordinate or reliant development and benefactor dominated structural adjustment programmes in Third World

² *Ibid.*

³ Delancey *et al*, *Historical Dictionary of*, p.339.

countries. Self-reliance is an indispensable fact and a matter of survival.⁴ Indigenous development initiatives have observed an upsurge in Mezam.

Today, the concept of self-reliance has become a fact of life in most rural communities. It is a unifying slogan for many community development groups and village-level initiatives. This is appropriate to the concept of community development, which stressed the importance of people becoming more accountable and considered as complementary assistance that is aid was ancillary rather than superseding local capabilities. The focus was about establishing democracy on trust that will help push the communities and their people forward. The concept of self-reliance integrated in to the collective action and social development process the means of giving grassroot people a chance to take part in important decision making about their conditions of living. Grassroot development was a springboard for the stimulation and harnessing of local resources and comprised one of the main productive means of enhancing community engagement in making their own choices with respect to development.⁵

Self-reliance in the context of this study is a process by which people identify their problems and hope to achieve them. This is usually done with the active participation of the local population with their initiatives and use of local resources though may be locally motivated and stimulated as well as from outside. It is very vital for most local communities as it encourages them to successfully govern their own lives and economies. It is pertinent to note that self-reliant development is not autarky. It should welcome external support but should be reliant on one's own means or efforts. Thus, one common goal realised in resource allocation plans of transcontinental, domestic, local government and voluntary organisations is to promote self-reliant development. Thus local communities in as much as they strive to ensure autonomy and pursue policies of self-reliance, they should also give room for robust outside backing. In most instances, outside resources have no bearing and undermine the autonomy of the local community. Thus, self-support, should be considered a limited spectrum characterise by parasitism or dependence on the left hand and autarky on the right hand. This implies that if the economic unit weighs more to the right side then the more self-reliant it is and if it weighs more to the left hand side, the more dependent.

In real terms, there is nothing like do-it-yourself because some sort of outside assistance is always needed for a person to improve on him/herself and change his/her way of life. It is for this reason that self-reliance is increasingly regarded today as "helping poor or disadvantaged people to help themselves" in other words "it is assisted self-help or autonomy respecting help." It has been realised that vulnerable people face the challenge of enhancing

⁴ Fonchingong and Fonjong, "The Concept of," p.197.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.200.

their conditions of life without external assistance. Most often they become self-satisfied and contented with misery. In such a situation, external help can provide the push for action against poverty or to improve the living condition and even sustain improvement actions. Infact self-reliance is regarded as a help-doer relationship where the principles of self-help are adhered to.⁶

Mezam division is a fertile ground for self-help efforts as villagers were tied together in webs of community spirit, kingship, tribal obligations which contributed greatly to basic survival, self-maintenance and development. In the 1930s the Bamenda Improvement Union had already established a firm foundation for self-reliant development in Mezam. Converging in order to seek concerted efforts and devise solutions to recurrent difficulties fashioned the lives of the people of Mezam. It is a complex notion often used to refer to actions of community leaders, crusaders, stakeholders and experts to enhance different facets of communities with target to strengthen and ensure adaptable local communities.⁷ The period of decentralisation in 1996 was a failed devolution and of course did not contribute in the advancement of local communities and their people due to its flawed understanding and inaccurate comprehension. The community well-being spree showcased its radiance, in the cultural, socio-economic and environmental spectrum. The scope of this intercourse is evaluated from minor internal efforts of small to large groups which emphasises the interconnectedness of humanitarian action, development efforts and peacebuilding in addressing the needs of the populations affected by crises. Local development was a guiding light and stronghold of community involvement with a comprehensive strategy aimed at addressing social progress through a nexus of connections in Mezam through common initiative groups, enhanced by agricultural and livestock farming, socio-economic and cultural development.⁸

The people of Mezam had vast amounts of resources available to them, but lacked the expertise and awareness to harness and effectively utilise these resources for the growth of their communities. Alternatively, organisations and individuals, who had a mastery of how to exploit and sell these resources, in most cases took the natural resources and left the population with very little benefits. Those that benefitted from these resources often excluded the people that needed help most that is the community members who lived in poverty. When contributors and experts arrived and accomplished initiatives to boost communities in Mezam, they soon left to go home. Most often, advancements on the projects came to an end

⁶ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.113.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.78.

⁸ K.M. Kingsley, "Community Development in the North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon: A Socio-Analytical Insight of Self-Reliant Development at the Dawn of Decentralisation", *Archives of Business Research, Services for Science and Education*, United Kingdom, Vol. 8, Issue 11, November 2020, pp.194-95.

after the volunteers departed because a challenge may erupt and the reliant population were not able to address it on their own. Goldchen reacted to this by stating that: “i was interested in developing an attitude of progress that would endure more than a physical symbol of monetary response that would wither away. We would never institute self-help programmes among the people we could not teach them to tap their own resources before seeking help.”⁹

In Mezam, development rested on voluntary efforts. Self-reliance was regarded as a point of take-off for a better livelihood. It implied involving sets of individuals in strategic undertakings that helped them acquire expertise which equipped them with skills to effectively manage the challenges of their daily activities. To adapt to the problem of poverty, numerous strategies and measures were initiated at the base to help cope with the decline. The existence of a culture of self-reliance played a great role in community development.¹⁰

2.3. Local Institutions and Self-Reliance Development in Mezam Division

The established and lawful plans for local initiatives in Mezam was brimming with community organisations that transformed the available tangible assets and personnel to enhance the community's economy. These local institutions made important contributions to the development process. They provided a basis for collective actions, building consensus, undertaking management activities, collecting, analysing and evaluating information. Local development carried out by local institutions was expected to contribute towards a better understanding of communities and be more responsive to the most felt basic needs of the people. Some of these local institutions that highly influenced development in Mezam Division were; VDAs, *Njangis* and Farmer groups.

2.4. Brief History of VDAs in Mezam Division

Most VDAs in Mezam originated in the coastal areas of Cameroon, particularly in the South West Regions as far back as the 1940s and the 1950s. In Mutengene, Tiko and Kumba, they started as social groups which later became village cultural and development associations. The creation of VDAs in Cameroon was promoted by the state.¹¹ The legal frameworks for VDAs began with Decree No. 77/79 of 24th March 1977 in the National Plan for Community Development and was again mentioned in the National Village Community Programme drawn up on 12th August 1981, the state recognised the fact that the grassroots population could contribute to the development process, build attractive village communities conducive to live in and become masters of their own destinies through an effective organisation of people in to development associations, unions and groups.

⁹ Goldschen as cited by Fernando, “Connecting Realities: Peace,” p.145.

¹⁰ Chenwi, “United States Peace,” p.115.

¹¹ Akei, “Institutions and Local,” p.35.

With the promulgation of Law No. 90/053 of 19th December 1990 on the Liberty of Associations, there was growth not only in the number of VDAs but also an intensification and diversification of their activities. They continuously improved their strategies and today serve as a lobbying tool for state creation and construction of social amenities like schools and health centres. They are direct providers of technical and social infrastructure.¹²The desire to pool resources together for local development was easily realised in the study area since the people were very dynamic and hardworking. In fact, there was at least one development association in each village all over Mezam as shown on the table below.

Table 10: Some Village Development Associations in Mezam

Sub Division	Village Development Associations	Prime role in local development
BAFUT	Njibujang Cultural and Development Association(NJIBCUDA)	-serve as main grassroots partner and donor institutions
	Mankwi Cultural and Development Association(MACUDA)	-fight underdevelopment and agents of underdevelopment
	Bawum Cultural and Development Association (BACUDA)	
	Njinteh Development and Cultural Association (NDECA)	
BALI	Bawock Village Development and Cultural Association (BAVIDECO)	-serve as main grassroots partner and donor institutions
	Bali Nyongha Development and Cultural Association	-fight underdevelopment and agents of underdevelopment
BAMENDA I	Bamendakwe Development and Cultural Association(BAMEDCA)	
BAMENDA II	Mankon Cultural and Development Association(MACUDA)	-identify and prioritise needs and projects
	Mbatu Cultural and Development Association (MBACUDA)	-bring development to the village and reduce the rate of rural exodus
	Nsongwa Development and Cultural Association(NDECA)	
	Chomba Development and Cultural Association(CHODECA)	
BAMENDA III	Nkwen Cultural and Development Association(NCDA)	
SANTA	Ndong Awing Cultural and Development Association(NACDA)	-mobilises the population and raise funds
	Mbu Cultural and Development Association(MBUDCA)	-fight crime wave
	Pinyin Development Organisation(PDO)	
	Njong Development Association (NDA)	
TUBAH	Bambui Cultural and Development Association(BACUDA)	-sustain the tradition and culture
	Mbeli Cultural and Development Association (MBECUDA)	-Guarantee unity among members of the village in other towns
	Kejom-Keku Development Association(KEKUDA)	
	Kejom- Ketinguh Cultural and Development Association (KEKULDA)	

Source: Modified by Author from Akei, “Institutions and Local,” pp. 33-34.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.36.

The table above shows some VDAs found in Mezam that played a great role in the development of their communities by solely implementing or partnered with other development agencies to realise development projects that improved the lives of the people.

2.5. The Place of Community Participation in Local Development in Mezam Division

Despite the business climate and financial landscape in many African countries, both forced communities to search for solutions to the conditions in which they find themselves. The systemic breakdown or government dysfunction, basic facilities and social welfare coupled with excessive inflation, immense indebtedness, and the devastating outcomes of trade liberalisation and economic reforms weakened any critical development initiative on the part of national governments in many parts of Africa.¹³ Thus, reduced developmental initiatives most often are those of aid agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or in some instances communities turned to their own strengths and resources in order to shape their future and that of their children.¹⁴

The rallying together in an effort to work jointly to address challenges fashioned the lives of the local people in Mezam. Community participation is not a new concept in Mezam as it was embedded in the cultural heritage of the people of the area. On the eve of European colonisation, authentic involvement was seen in the upkeep and preservation of royal residences, construction and maintenance of farm to market roads, shrines and inter village roads.¹⁵ The cooperative spirit was a major force that promoted the economic well-being of the family, society and cooperative societies found in Mezam played a major role in the economic development of the area. Some of the first mechanisms that enhanced cooperation was the *Nsegeh*. This activity brought together people of diverse families, sex and aged groups for common purposes. With *Nsegeh*, the building of houses was carried out by families or village labour assisted by friends of whoever was in need of a house.¹⁶ This collaboration continued until the house was equipped and fit for the family to get in. During British rule, the concept occupied a central place in community development as it was given greater credence. The British imperial administration introduced the colonial system of “Indirect Rule”, which was intended to be a spectrum of the former social structure. With this policy, the seat of the traditional authority was reinforced in the area. The British ruling the

¹³ E. Nel and T. Binns, “Rural Self-Reliance Strategies in South Africa: Community Initiatives and External Support in the Former Black Homelands”, *Journal of Rural Studies*, Vol.16, Issue 3, July 2000, p.367.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Fonchingong and Fonjong, “The Concept of,” p.10.

¹⁶ Asombang Raymond Neba’ane, 65 years, Professor of Archaeology, Yaoundé, 5/July/2021.

people through this traditional authority had the capacity to rally the inhabitants for local development especially as traditional rulers organised and coordinated community works.¹⁷ Britain's restricted commitment transformed the already well established traditional statusquo of societies which implied that colonial policies were fashioned to make sure that local demands did not burden the royal treasury. Thanks to this, community members financed growth initiatives through taxes and other income generating activities.¹⁸

During the 1940s, a characteristic of rural development was brought up in the form of general rallying of self-reliant activities. This was made public by the passing of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act in 1939 in Britain. This gave a positive economic and social content by affirming the need for minimum standards of nutrition, health and education. Around 1950, the British authorities began implementing a "new welfare oriented development policy." Community development through self-help initiatives was the modus operandi of this policy. The Eastern Nigerian Secretary for Community Development, E.R. Chadwick explained the important part that the state's previewed self-reliant efforts were to play to support their initiatives. He argued that: "it is doubtful whether any greater service can be rendered today to the people of Nigeria than that of community development."¹⁹

The initiative was initially focused on mainstream education and adult learning but eventually progressed to involve initiatives in the domain of agriculture, health care, basic services and road-building. Local growth in this context was an exchange mechanism whereby community members supplied resources and manpower while colonial officials supplied these people with financial and technical assistance. To these colonial officials, local development through self-sufficiency was to inspire in the community members the need to advance and the drive to accomplish it by their own initiatives and by nurturing a responsibility which along the line maintained a long-standing African tradition of working together. This idea was inherited after independence especially in West Cameroon when government funding for community development favoured areas ready to undertake self-help. This growth alternative was eventually transformed to the establishment of the Community Development Department. It became a vital branch of the government, mandated to guide and assemble the initiatives of the people geared towards enhancing social progress and economic growth. The Development and Welfare Funds, allocated for the colonies by the

¹⁷ Fonchingong and Fonjong, "The Concept of," p.200.

¹⁸ W. Numvigwaibi, "Decentralisation and Community Participation: Local Development and Municipal Politics in Cameroon", PhD. Thesis in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of Pretoria, 2015, p.85.

¹⁹Kingsley, "Community Development in," p.201.

government of Britain was able to spread down to the community level by way of local authority or administration.²⁰

The department of community development was recognised in Decree No 76/256 of 1st July 1976, which was to implement the strategy by creating and maintaining a spirit of self-help within the domain of self-reliant development of rural communities. This department was to expand these services to every village within the country and in order to do this, the government of Cameroon decided to set in motion a process of national planning for community development. Following this, the department found out that, the facilities that stood out clearly as basic needs of rural communities were health facilities, water supplies, schools and roads. Furthermore, it was realised that development in a village could only be achieved if the roles of the influential people and institutions were considered. These included; the village chief, village development associations, cooperatives, the elites and the villagers that have skills, wealth and resources along with their village community. Following this, the department of community development started work but due to its many problems, it only played an active part in the development of Mankon.²¹

Communities were increasingly taking on the negative impacts of the economic depression and the diminishing capacity of the government to allocate social progress and economic growth by instituting, rallying and implementing their abilities and resources to improve their living conditions. The reliance on indigenous technologies, skills and local human resources led to overwhelming popular participation in community driven development. The concept of self-reliance is an important pillar of effective community development in Mezam. It is the focus of community discussions and it is closely linked to terminologies such as self- help, mutual help, indigenous engagement. It encourages the need for people to improve their lives and conditions of living by using local initiatives and resources available at their disposal. The fact that the concept was widely accepted in the development planning of Mezam has the tendency to give greater stimulus and cohesiveness to the community and the concept is increasingly occupying an important place in community development.²²

Community participation was the secret of success of self-help projects in Mezam. Most volunteers who served in Mezam acknowledged the idea that self-help and community participation was already an integral part of most communities in Mezam as a collective work

²⁰ Kingsley, "Community Development in," p.201.

²¹ Teneng, "Pinyin Development Organisation," p.45.

²² Fonchingong and Fonjong, "The Concept of," p.202.

party sometimes representing the entire community that works on projects of common benefit. The main thought was that individuals and associations should start their own initiatives especially about the most pressing issues, instead of allowing community leaders, government officials and development planners become subjects who deliberated, decided and acted in the world rather than being a by-product of conditions, victim or puppet.²³

Participation according to Bazlul was the engagement by a group of individuals who were participating in an effort to improve their well-being or accomplish other ambitions or objectives.²⁴ Active participation by beneficiaries can be achieved by the people mobilising themselves. This type of participation was as a result of the most felt needs of the people and it attracted the people to participate and take care of their prioritised needs. From among the different approaches of growth, Bazlul cited community engagement and involvement at the local level as a bridge to alleviate poverty and promote equality. As a matter of fact, he considered people's participation to be critical in achieving the objectives of development.²⁵

To Marshall, participation is the coordinated efforts to strengthen resource management and governing structures in a known social condition, in the context of the groups and movements that were previously excluded from such controls.²⁶ Denis Gouet on his part argued that participation by intended beneficiaries or non-elite was an essential characteristic of development plans. Furthermore, the degree of people's engagement by paying attention to the rural poor needed to be conscious of the socio-economic circumstances around especially events that kept them in poverty and the likelihood of spearheading change of their situations independently.²⁷ This required a course of action that leads to maturation and growth. In this sense, engagement was a fundamental natural need. This was demonstrated through voluntary contributions and support (in kind or cash) from community members.²⁸ The Human Development Report reiterates the importance of people's involvement and engagement in their progress, emphasising that community engagement is emerging as the primary concern amidst developmental difficulties.²⁹

²³ D.A. Crocker, "Gouet on Development Ethics and Non-Elite Participation", University of Maryland, *HDCA Conference*, 2007, p.10.

²⁴ M. Bazlul, *Participation, Development and Social Structure: An Empirical Study in a Developing Country*, New York, University Press of America, 1994, p.27.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.28.

²⁶ M. Wolfe, "Participation: The View from Above", Geneva: *UNRISD*, 1983, p.2.

²⁷ D. Gouet, "Participation in Development: New Avenues", *World Development Journal*, Vol.17, No.2, 1989, pp.67-69.

²⁸ Teneng, "Pinyin Development Organisation," p.47.

²⁹ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.15.

The Food and Agricultural Organisation reiterated that, engagement of the people in the structures and frameworks which governed them was a fundamental inalienable or natural right and a critical reformation of political power in favour of vulnerable groups and for social progress and economic growth. Due to frustration of growth schemes, community engagement became vital for the growth of most ethnic groups through widespread approval and neighbourly initiatives. This dissatisfaction explained why the World Bank held that community involvement could be a way of making sure that progress or growth initiatives in Third World countries were reached in the most economical and productive approach. Engagement or participation required even the poorest to contribute in the allocation and apportionment of local developmental cost. Community participation and development were highlighted as fundamental principles in growth with emphasis on direct citizen engagement. Community involvement was the bedrock of local development as argued by Crocker. He believes that: “without participation, development strategies will be both undemocratic and ineffectual. Without development participation of non-elite, even political democracy is a sham.”³⁰ According to Friere:

The touchstone of development is whether people previously treated as mere objects, known and acted upon, can now actively know and act upon, thereby become subjects of their own social destiny. People who are oppressed or reduced to the culture of silence do not participate in their own humanisation. Conversely, when they participate, thereby becoming active subjects of knowledge and action, they begin to construct their properly human history and to engage in processes of authentic development.³¹

Community participation in this context is a process by which people voluntarily contribute either in cash or in kind to the development of their communities. In this sense, communities look inwards, sacrifice efforts and search for solutions to urgent development problems through the mobilisation of local resources and initiatives with little incentives from the government or development organisations accompanied with the active participation of all community members. Participation in community development was the cornerstone of the development process. In this view, participation in decision making led to creativity and mind searching of the people who belonged to the collectivity. This made them to depend on their own to determine their self-development rather than waiting for external resources.

This was so because in most cases where outside help was used to initiate or stimulate self-reliance projects in Asia, it ended up in a failure after the aid was withdrawn. He underscored the need for the recipient to keep watchful eyes over any attempts made by the

³⁰ Crocker, “Gouet on Development,” p.14.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.16.

donor to dominate the situation. For real development to be achieved in Africa it had to originate from within and even if it was to come from outside, it must be adapted to local realities. This was the fundamental principle of self-reliance.³² There was eagerness from the people to involve themselves in projects since the selection of projects was through an agreement and these projects fulfilled the dreams of the people at all levels of the society. The goal of these VDAs was to bring development to their respective areas through self-reliance, fortify love, fraternity, cooperation and develop a sense of oneness and mutual assistance to all members in and out of the village and as well as preserve the cultural values and identity of the people.³³

Membership to these associations was to all sons and daughters of these communities by virtue of birth, to assimilated persons by marriage or adoption and to all Cameroonians who shared these characteristics and objectives as well as to anyone who paid a non-refundable registration fee.³⁴ Honorary membership is also conferred by two thirds of the Ndong-Awing Cultural and Development Association on any person who has distinguished his/herself by some concrete act towards the development of the village.³⁵ VDAs worked to satisfy the aspirations and needs of the local people. The amount of financial support depended on where the person lived and the social and economic background. An organising committee determines the amount to be contributed which took in to account the social, economic and political status of the people. This advocacy ensured that group interest was represented before the issue was presented to the general assembly for vote. In order to realise the project, a fundraising committee was set up which proposed the levy for each person. Concerns for reduction of inequalities and the alleviation of poverty drew attention to rural areas where most of the people lived.

VDA's community members were progressively bearing the harmful effects of the economic slow down and the diminishing capacity of the government to allocate social progress and economic growth by instituting, rallying and spurring their own initiatives to strive for a better life. The dependence on local technology and indigenous human efforts led to an immense popular engagement in community-led development. Many local communities faced challenges in adapting to the recession and the condition was deteriorated by the growing incapacity of the government to conveniently address the rural slump. The aggravating problem of resource shortage in Sub Saharan Africa dictated that governments

³² Rahman, *People's Self Development*, pp.134-136.

³³ NgwaBumba Pascal, 44years, National President of NJIBCUDA, Yaoundé, 1/July/2021.

³⁴ *Idem*.

³⁵ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.112.

could not depend on conventional means to successfully address the basic needs of their populations. This implied that government structures were not able to stretch a helping hand to most communities.³⁶

State downsizing and the changing political terrain significantly altered and restructured the society in Mezam with VDAs in the forefront of the fight against worsening poverty. As state downsized, VDAs in general were soon regarded as the vehicle of choice—the magic for fostering these fashionable development strategies.³⁷ In other words, the downsizing of the state coincided with the growth and proliferation of VDAs. Community participation was encouraged and attempted as a means that could be feasible or promising in supporting efforts to fulfill demands. The downturn and extreme poverty resulted to different approaches and initiatives at the local level to help address the economic stagnation.

The 1990s saw an incomparable rush for self-reliant projects as VDAs rekindled excited and dedicated grassroot action in Mezam. This landmark in growth and trust of VDAs from the 1980s was a partial recovery to the economic depression that affected the country and the tight and severe adjustments that were initially executed by the government in 1990 complying with the directions of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Despite the economic crisis, reduced government exchange reserves declined thus its failure to build critical infrastructure in the country, contractionary measures triggered a wave of budget reductions on important projects like education, agriculture, health and other social amenities that required immediate care. The condition was complex as the local population was in dire need of such resources but the local governments could no longer afford to provide them. In a context of declining state involvement in infrastructural development, VDAs in Mezam were heralded as linch pin for local development. These organisations were an avenue to inspire and motivate community members action, rallying a collection of cultural and relational resources within the society. In the perspective of local government, these solidarity groups provide organisations competence, support and partnership.³⁸

Positioned as key players in grassroot development, VDAs were flag bearers in reclaiming development as most communities understood that development flows from concerted inward efforts rather than reliance on lethargic state intervention as it was noticed that greater mutual engagement downplayed profit and free markets-offshoots of

³⁶ P.T. Tanga, and C.C. Fonchingong, “NGO-State Interaction and the Politics of Development in Cameroon in the Context of Liberalisation”, *International NGO Journal*, Vol. 4, No.4, 2009, p.84.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.85.

³⁸ C.C., Fonchingong, “Re-inventing Community Development: Utilising Relationship Networking and Cultural Assets for Infrastructure Provision”, *Societies, MDPI*, Vol. 8, Issue 3, 2018, p.12.

capitalism.³⁹ It was about people mobilising from the bottom, to provide core social benefits that improved their welfare for all village organisations remained a unifying force in mobilising joint efforts for the general welfare of community members. One of the goals of these VDAs was to bring development to their respective areas through self-reliance by embarking on resolute efforts to satisfy the pressing needs of their communities. Using the environment wisely and ensuring resources were not quickly depleted was a means to solve the complicated equation. VDAs ensured indigenous knowledge-based resource management were harmless to the environment. They promoted environmental sensitivity and conservation education on agricultural practices such as slash and burn which were harmful to the environment and deplete nutrients from the soil. Traditional leadership also struggled with conflicts between farmer and graziers as a result of overgrazing by cattle rearers caused by the search for green pasture.⁴⁰

VDAs were considered as a source of assistance and on the other hand worked with partners like the local councils, NGOs, government, embassies and diplomatic missions to realise projects. At the grassroots, VDAs generally worked with councils as they were mostly considered an overseer of the council areas. Financing of development that came in through VDAs was supposed to make the council to be aware of it in order to avoid duplication of project in case the same project to realise was earmarked by the local council for sponsor. They worked together as most villages in Mezam had their water supply started by the VDAs before calling on the councils to assist them with technicians and materials like cement while the communities brought in sand and stones. Villages that passed through VDAs to realise certain development projects found it easier when they came to the councils for assistance.⁴¹

VDAs were well structured along cultural and village lines and they linked urban migrants with their home villages and organised urban ethnic festivals. They reflected the increasing importance of ethnicity in national and local politics.⁴² VDAs executed development projects like the construction of bridges, water schemes, health posts and halls. Provision of welfare services to rural tax payers was not only the main objective of local councils but rather an obligation. Although the rural people paid inadequate taxes because of their financial weaknesses, the hidden idle man power could produce a heavy investment

³⁹ C.C. Fonchingong, "Citizen Strategising Amid a Solidarity Economy in Cameroon: Are Village Development Associations (VDAs) Resilient?" *Draft Paper for the UNRISD Conference, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development*, Geneva, 2013, p.2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.3

⁴¹ Kanno, "Financing Development in," p.248.

⁴² E.Y. Sobseh, *Rethinking Citizenship, Politics and Governance in Cameroon*, Bamenda, Global Press, 2012, p.84.

towards the realisation of their welfare needs. Tax collection in certain areas was strenuous because of apathy and hostility displayed by the people. The community development approach to problems conquered apathy and hostility shown by the isolated rural people.⁴³

The surfacing, revival and testimonies of community development in promoting economic empowerment, social development and infrastructure improvements was noticeable especially when considering the fact that it was part of the study area. Experiencing financial hardship, decreased engagement aggravated by the decrease in donations (cash and kind), VDAs were striving to create a social enterprise model that can yield tangible rewards for community members. The self-help associations had elected representatives that managed their activities out of the respected council of elders, traditional rulers and villagers who acted as advisers. The principle of division of powers was to guarantee effectiveness in contacts, fundraising and management of projects in a rapidly changing world.⁴⁴ Many VDAs in Mezam had branches all over the national territory where members of their communities were found as shown below.

Table 11: Regional Branches of NJIBCUDA and BACUDA

No	NJIBCUDA	BACUDA
1	Yaoundé	Yaoundé
2	Douala	Douala
3	Bamenda	Bamenda
4	Alou	Bafoussam
5	Limbe	Limbe
6	Buea	Buea
7	Ndop	Mutengene
8	Agyati	Kumbo

Source: Author's conception from fieldwork, 30/June/ 2021.

The above table shows the regional branches of two VDAs in Njibujang in Bafut Sub Division and Bambui in Tubah Sub Division. These different regional branches worked with the home branch to initiate, supervise and realise projects in their respective communities.

Nationwide regional branches were functional external organs vital in mobilising resources for VDA projects. In the larger ones, sub units had smaller associations. There were also youth associations which were quite instrumental in their different corners. For example the 2015 membership records of the Ndong-Awing Cultural and Development Association (NACDA) indicated 63 branches, 9 quarter development unions, a women's committee of 25 branches and a youth committee of 15 branches.⁴⁵ These branches had executives who

⁴³Kanno, "Financing Development in," p.249.

⁴⁴ Fonchingong and Fonjong, "The Concept of," p.210.

⁴⁵ Fonchingong and Mbah, "Social Solidarity Economy," p.131.

collected dues and contributions from members. They acted as delegates in national executive planning committees, thereby facilitating the task of bringing resources and ideas together.⁴⁶ With the Njibujang Cultural and Development Association (NJIBCUDA), the amount of money was levied per branch with the Home, Yaoundé, Douala and Bamenda branches levied highest in descending order as shown below. The amount levied was to be paid in installments within a specified timescale usually one or two years.⁴⁷

Table 12: Special Levies for the Realisation of the Njibujang Water Project in 2012

No.	Branch	Levy(FCFA)
1	Home	5.000.000
2	Yaoundé	3.000.000
3	Douala	3.000.000
4	Bamenda	3.000.000
5	Ndop	500.000
6	Buea	200.000
7	Limbe	100.000
8	Kumba	100.000
9	Nkambe	100.000
10	Agyati	50.000
11	Exco	1.000.000
TOTAL		16,050.000

Source: NgwaBumba Pascal's archives, "Resolutions of NJIBCUDA Annual General Meeting of Saturday 11th August 2012", Yaoundé, 30/June/2021.

The table above shows the balance of the cost of the Njibujang water project that was shared to the different branches as agreed at the Annual General Meeting held at the Presbyterian Church Njibujang Sunday School Hall on Saturday 11th August 2012. The different branches were given two years to completely pay their levies for the realisation of the water project.

Internally, village quarter heads played a central role in easing collection of funds by working closely with the national executive.⁴⁸ The profit motive was the driving force of private entrepreneurs as they seldom operated in areas where losses were anticipated talkless of areas they could not recover manufacturing or production cost. Most villages in Mezam were underpopulated as their populations hovered around 3.000 people except areas that served as administrative units and headquarters. The residents were most often dominated by subsistence farmers who created a weak or declining market for business owners. Public health infrastructure were very expensive especially the high cost of personnel, equipment and maintenance. As a result, most of these local communities could not afford.

⁴⁶ Fonchingong and Fonjong, "The Concept of," p.210.

⁴⁷ NgwaBumba Pascal, 44years, National President of NJIBCUDA, Yaoundé, 1/July/2021.

⁴⁸ *Idem*

Entrepreneurs because of this, restricted their investments and expenditure in most rural communities in favour of urban areas that provided ready and available markets.⁴⁹

Exhibiting resilience in the face of systemic neglect from both private and public parties, the privileged (elites) pushed forward and ensured their people had essential facilities. Most VDAs relied on their elites for essential links and financial support. The support from the elites was very important in soliciting, attracting and mobilising resources.⁵⁰ Other VDAs relied for much needed capital in implementing identified projects. It is on this grounds that not all villagers were levied the same. From a register drawn up under the guidance of the VDA president and in most situations worked in collaboration with the *Fon*, the top tier designated were approached and charged or taxed based on their earning potentials within the public and private sectors. This was owing to their high self-regard and clear objectives they wanted to accomplish for their people since there was always competition among the villages.⁵¹

The chosen few considered their contributions as a source of accomplishment to their people on the one hand and to plan for their retirement on the other hand.⁵² The elites considered their contributions to community development as a way of sharing their wealth more equitably to those in need as they saw this as a path to higher social standing and fame and as a result, contributed generously.⁵³ All contributions were recorded down so that history could tell those who participated in the development of the village or town and consequently the population could draw up a list of patriots and heroes. These persons were eventually honoured by the community during a ceremony organised for this purpose.⁵⁴

As stated earlier the elites constituted a strong force in community development endeavours in Mezam as elsewhere in the North-West Region in particular and the entire country in general. Given the dominance of lobbying in shaping political decisions of a region, elites actively sought out resources from the national government. They used their village associations and organisations as a foundation and support for their efforts. The contributions geared towards supporting local development initiatives rested on the preparedness of the local population to pay back when these distinguished sons and daughters needed back scratching or partisan support during elections. For example, in the Bafut municipality, Honourable Fusi Nnamukong provided assistance in the rehabilitation of most roads in Bafut

⁴⁹ Fonchingong and Fonjong, "The Concept of," p.210.

⁵⁰ Fonchingong, "Citizen Strategising Amid," p.13.

⁵¹ NgwaBumba Pascal, 44 years, Nurse/ NJIBCUDA National President, Yaoundé, 1/July/2021.

⁵² Kanno, "Financing Development in," p.250.

⁵³ NgwaBumba Pascal, 44 years, Nurse/ NJIBCUDA National President, Yaoundé, 1/July/2021.

⁵⁴ Kanno, "Financing Development in," p.253.

especially around Mbebeli, Mbebali as well as Mankwi and this partly explained why because of his ceaseless and incessant role in the development of Bafut, the people gave him their whole hearted support as over the years they constantly voted him in to the National Assembly as a parliamentarian for the Bafut-Tubah constituency.

Elites were also very instrumental in community mobilisation through educational, awareness campaigns and schemes. Elites were able to knock doors in Yaoundé and solicited help, came out with the feasibility studies and timescales to explain to organisations in which help was solicited so as to convince them to fully or partly fund local projects in their communities.⁵⁵ Others were able to lobby for funds from government offices, grants from diplomatic missions and embassies and aid from development organisations. Thanks to their competence, elites carried out educational talks on community involvement, active citizenship, home-school cooperation for children, public health campaigns, promoting scholarships and talks on hygiene and sanitation.⁵⁶ Some from time to time appeared on state and private media to lobby for support especially concerning fundraisings and to remind the people in the entire nation and abroad on upcoming general assembly meetings. The Bafut Elite Association (BELA) was very instrumental in developmental projects in Bafut. The association partnered with the council and different VDAs indirectly by giving scholarships to students in Bafut who excelled in public examinations like the General Certificate Examinations. Best performant students of final year or public exams were selected and provided scholarships amounting from 50.000 to 100.000 francs. This scholarship scheme was one of the projects that were of an annual nature, which BELA took up.⁵⁷

Most of the VDAs had foreign branches that functioned as independent units, though rooted in a strong sense of traditions. Migrant communities also made important efforts to realise particular growth initiatives in collaboration with development executives and project committees back home.⁵⁸ Over the years, the diaspora of most communities in Mezam maintained a strong sense of attachment to the homeland with annual flows of remittances evidently shaping the socio-economic landscape. The extent to which most Mezam people in the diaspora reconnect with their home communities in terms of visible and viable socio-

⁵⁵ NgwaBumba Pascal, 44 years, Nurse/ NJIBCUDA National President, Yaoundé, 1/July/2021.

⁵⁶ Fonchingong, "Citizen Strategising Amid," p.14

⁵⁷ Kanno, "Financing Development in," p. 257, Interview with Asombang Raymond Neba'ane, 65 years, Professor of Archaeology, Yaoundé, 5/July/2021.

⁵⁸ NgwaBumba Pascal, 44years Nurse/NJIBCUDA National President, Yaoundé, 1/July/2021.

economic contributions cannot be underestimated.⁵⁹ Although these people are geographically separated from home, they are equally passionate about development back home just like the home based inhabitants. The migrant workers are deeply involve in homeland development not only because of the feeling that it is either theirs or their ancestors original homeland but also because they see it as a place where they or their children will eventually return one day when things get better. They felt an obligation to push forward the development of their communities back home either independently or as a group.⁶⁰

Remittances constitute a huge proportion of diaspora contribution to the growth of developing countries especially in the last decades when these economies were trapped in a prolonged recession. With unemployment ratios on steady increase over this period of time, the dependency ratios grew simultaneously. With few sources of sustainable income at their disposal, remittances became a means of survival to most people. Worker's or migrant remittances are transfers of goods or funds back to their country of origin by migrant workers, diaspora members, or citizens with familial ties abroad, sent home for household consumption and to help their families and communities realise community development initiatives. They donot only play a significant role in the economies of many labour sending countries but have been increasing at a rapid pace to now become a significant source of income for many Third World countries. The real size of remittances is difficult to quantify because of the informal methods used and unreported transfers. The exact figure is hard to pinpoint.⁶¹ Globally documented migrant worker transfers were estimated to hover around \$596 billion in 2017, with \$450 billion entering Third World countries. They are reflected in the balance of trade. Unreported flows through informal networks are estimated to be atleast 50% more than formal flows. Remittances are not only crucial in size but are also distributed more equitably among Third World countries than international investments. Transfers are vital for Third World countries as they make up about 4% of their Gross Domestic Product as opposed to about 1.5% of Gross Domestic Product for middle-countries.⁶²

In Cameroon about 200.000 Cameroonians live and work abroad. Money sent home is a vital way of diaspora development efforts which at times may include transfers of knowledge, skills and cultural experiences as it is through these financial transfers that most

⁵⁹ W.N. Wankah, *et al*, "Implication of the Mankon Diaspora in the Social Transformation of Bamenda, Cameroon, 1961-2021", *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Studies*, Vol. 8, Issue 3, March 2023, p.3.

⁶⁰ K.A. Ollong, "The Cameroonian Diaspora; An Assesssment of its Role in Local Development", *Journal of Globalisation Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, November 2013, p. 87.

⁶¹ Ratha as cited by Wankah, *et al*, "Implication of the," p.1.

⁶² *Ibid*.

of their development initiatives are made possible. In many families and localities in Cameroon, these remittances constitute the principal source of revenue. Thanks to global economic integration and interconnectedness, transfers around the world are no longer an issue as a result of electronic funds transfers. Among them are cash wiring through Western Union, Money Gram, Ria, bank transfers and also through other illicit or unlawful methods. Aside from transferring funds back home, most of these migrant workers have also established businesses back home. The business landscape spans from micro businesses to extensive undertakings or initiatives, voluntary donations, building of houses, paying taxes at home, education and training, sharing technology, skills and knowledge, support during fund raisings. They were involve in significant projects such as construction of schools and community halls.⁶³

In Mezam as far as the Mezam diaspora is concern, most of them use the means of ethnic associations to serve homeland development. Via these organisations, the migrant workers raised money for diverse development initiatives back home such as the construction of schools, hospitals, sponsoring agricultural and cultural projects and provision of portable water. While the nature of these remittances may differ from one area to another, the impacts are usually astounding especially on the receivers. For example the Bali Cultural and Development Association (BACDA) USA branch sustains the traditional Bali Nyongha palace by providing accessories for the *Fon* and his traditional council. The sons and daughters in the diaspora also contributed a lot in the building of the mortuary, construction of water catchment, disbursing salaries to part-time teachers in primary and secondary schools in the area and constructing a community library to increase literacy in the community as well as sponsored the *Lela* festival.⁶⁴ In Mankon, the Mankon diaspora in France contributed the sum of 3.309.000FCFA for the realisation of the Mankon museum while the Mankon diaspora in the U.S. donated \$1000 in 2002 and later 9.778.000 FCFA in 2004 for the construction of the Mankon palace museum project.⁶⁵

Notwithstanding the fact that these factors accounted for the creation of VDAs, local circumstances or conditions imposed the urgency of projects that were realised by VDAs. As a result of the scarce resources of the VDAs, projects were given precedence and as such just one project was targeted for realisation at a time. To improve on the condition of the people by providing their felt needs, the villagers guided by their associations executives identified

⁶³ Ollong, "The Cameroonian Diaspora," p.90.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.92.

⁶⁵ Wankah, *et al*, "Implication of the," p.2.

these projects and presented to the general assembly during annual meetings for the most important to be agreed upon.⁶⁶ These projects were identified and organised in to coherent documents called Village Development Plan. This is an indepth, and encompassing document that illustrates projects designed by a village community through a consultative approach to tackle pressing issues affecting the village over a given period of time.⁶⁷ When projects were shortlisted, the executive communicated to the members through the various branches who did the feasibility study and cost in various sub committees with most associations always having a project committee which took charge of such projects.⁶⁸ These regional development schemes adopted by village associations remained strong forces of rural development. They inspired grassroots initiatives and were evident in rural water supply, farm to market roads and agriculture.

After the priority projects were identified, feasibility studies were carried out to assess the cost of the projects. Some of these projects were either solely funded by the VDAs or they lobbied for support from other agencies.⁶⁹ Most councillors from the different quarters and villages worked with VDA presidents to identify the priority projects in need of support and forwarded them to the different local councils especially during council sessions.⁷⁰ Many elite associations were formed at village and national levels with the main objective of supporting local development initiatives in their various areas of origin. Municipal councils made an inventory of elite associations that belonged to its council area and applied for co-financing development projects within the council area.⁷¹

At the local level, to realise these projects, there was need for local contributions or a levy was charged to finance water, school and electrification. Other financial support were substantial funds which came via remittances from citizens working abroad. They raised funds through meetings and the population of the village paid annual contributions. Contributions as stated above depended on the cost of the projects. The financial contributions (dues) and active participation (members) were essential components for successfully carrying out major projects. VDAs had a fixed annual contribution for men and women as shown below.

⁶⁶ Shu Derick Neba, 35 years, Teacher/NJIBCUDA Youth President, Yaoundé, 10/June/ 2021.

⁶⁷ L.M. Akei, "Regional Institutions in Rural Council Area Development in the North-West Region, Cameroon", *Journal of Sustainable Development*, Vol.8, No. 1, 2015, p.101.

⁶⁸ NgwaBumba Pascal, 44years, NJIBCUDA National President, Yaoundé, 1/July/2021.

⁶⁹ *Idem*.

⁷⁰ Shu Derick Neba, 35 years, Teacher/NJIBCUDA Youth President, Yaoundé, 10/June /2021.

⁷¹ Kanno, "Financing Development in," p.256.

Table 13: Some annual VDA levy for men and women resident in the village

No	Village	Men	Women
1	Babanki Tungoh	5000	3000
2	Bafut	1000	500
3	Mankon	2000	1000
4	Mbatu	2000	1000
5	Ndong Awing	2000	1000

Source: Modified by Author from Fonchingong, “Citizen Strategising Amid,” p.12.

The above table shows the annual levies and financial inputs of members that go in to implementations. Apart from mandatory development dues, other sources of funding included free will donations by members, proceeds from traditional fundraising and gala events, special grants disbursed by diplomatic missions and embassies, funds solicited from international development agencies, direct assistance in cash or expertise from local government services, pin ups, American sales, traditional dances during general assemblies of the association, loans, royalties and legacies, sales of Almanacs, membership cards, diaries, posters and other gadgets like T-shirts and any other source approved by the general assembly were additional venues to raise funds as shown below.⁷²

Table 14: Other income sources for the Realisation of the Njibujang Water Project between 2016 and 2017

No	Income Source	2016 (FCFA)	2017 (FCFA)
1	NJIBCUDA NO	345.000	90.000
2	Cake Cutting and Gate Fee of AGM Gala Night	90.100	69.500
3	American Sales	-----	28.000
4	Traditional Dances	18.000	17.000
5	Pin Ups	-----	7.000
TOTAL		453.100	211.500

Source: NgwaBumba Pascal archives, “NJIBCUDA 2016 and 2017, Financial Report”, Yaoundé, 5/July/2021.

The table above shows other sources through which money was raised to supplement the annual levy contributions for the realisation of the Njibujang Water Project. It can be seen that these additional sources were important as huge amounts of money were raised which facilitated the realisation of the project. While gender was a key consideration to determine levies, earning potential and area of residence were other determinants as shown below.

Table 15: Levies for the Construction of a Multipurpose Hall in Njibujang

No	Gender/Residence/Income	Levy(FCFA)	Duration to pay Levy
1	Men based out of the village and those at home with a regular employment	50.000	2 years
2	Women based out of the village and those at home with a regular employment	35.000	2 years

⁷² NgwaBumba Pascal, 44years, NJIBCUDA National President, Yaoundé, 1/July/2021.

3	Home based men without a standard employment and who regularly do community work	20.000	2 years
4	Home-based women without a standard employment and who regularly do community work	15.000	2years
5	Youths	10.000	2 years

Source: NgwaBumba Pascal's archives, "Resolutions of the National Delegates Meeting Held in the Bafut Manjong Hall in Bamenda on August 11th, 2017", Yaoundé, 6/July/2021.

The table above shows the different categories of levies for the realisation of the hall project in Njibujang. It can be seen that gender, the area of residence and earning potential was taken in to account before determining the levies. It should be noted that those out of home always paid more than those at home with respect to development levies because those who lived at home did community work which also helped to develop the village.⁷³ Mobilising capital for projects was the hallmark of citizen participation in communitarian ventures, echoing notions of mutual engagement. Integrating gender roles and inclusive development, was a means VDAs used to source the needed funds for projects and enhance the feeling of group identity and participation among members. Through payments in to development levy accounts, members gained solidarity spaces and to build up social, cultural, traditional and economic assess drivers of collective action. VDAs had stipulated payments and calendars of payment usually twice a year. This enabled a list to be drawn up and monitored for chasing up those who were falling behind in terms of payments.

Funds collected were then transmitted to the general treasurer on the day of the general assembly back home if the association had a fixed central house where general assemblies were held. The levies could also be deposited in the associations account before the day of the general assembly and receipts brought to the meeting by individuals or branch executives to justify such payments.⁷⁴ It is important to note that development dues were given a room for modifications and could either be increased or decreased if need be by members during general assemblies of associations depending on the projects at stake.⁷⁵ Community participation was also seen through community works back home. Those resident at home dug trenches, pipelines and transported equipment to project sites and this was done on particular days fixed by the community for such endeavours known as community work days. On such days, they turned out to work on an identified or fixed

⁷³ Shu Derick Neba, 35years, Teacher/ NJIBCUDA Youth President, Yaoundé, 10/June/2021.

⁷⁴ *Idem.*

⁷⁵ *Idem.*

project. In Bafut for instance, community works were done on *Mitaniba'a*⁷⁶ especially those that had to do with road rehabilitation and water projects.⁷⁷

Contributions were obligatory and defaulters were heavily sanctioned. In Njibujang, residents at home, outside or in the diaspora were expected to pay these levies through their various branches for accountability. This implied that even if a resident was living in an area without a branch, the member was encouraged to contribute his or her development levy individually, join the closest branch or could exceptionally pay through the home branch.⁷⁸ Defaulters were punished as most of them had injunctions placed on their plots of land initially but now the injunction was considered as “NJIBCUDA NO” implying the concerned was not contributing to the development of the community neither in kind especially through community works in the village nor in cash through development levy contributions. This “NJIBCUDA NO” was usually put during the burial of a member or a close relative of his/hers, baptism, marriage and any other celebration.⁷⁹ Youths who failed to contribute in kind or cash as mentioned above also received the same punishment and they were not allowed to participate even in sport competitions during the summer holidays.

With instances like this, the national executive worked with the quarter heads if the person was living at home and with the branch president if the concerned was out of the village. Also, these VDAs had updated electronic lists of participating members whether at home or outside. In such a situation, a committee calculated the number of years that the concerned did not pay the levy and a penalty was added.⁸⁰ The sanctions were not only in cash as during such burial occasions, the youths also levied their sanctions claiming that digging of graves which was a communal activity was neglected by the concerned and so what they initially ate was doubled before the grave was dug and the concerned buried. All these sanctions were clear proofs of the fact that the people noticed that it was only through tied efforts that most of these communities could grow. It was also because of the fear of these sanctions, embarrassment and disgrace that most villagers strictly participated in the development of their communities. VDAs acted as locomotives by pulling their communities with or without the participation of the government and other development agencies. The

⁷⁶ This is the second local holiday in Bafut kept aside for families, lineages and quarters to honour their own ancestors. No hoeing of the earth but selective and limited farming works are permitted for instance, planting of seed material using small-size hoe, harvesting, farm clearing, farm weeding and roofing of houses. On this day most communities in Bafut kept the day aside for community works. (Source: Abumbi II, *The Customs and Traditions of Bafut*, Limbe, Presbook, 2016, p.16.)

⁷⁷ NgwaBumba Pascal, 44years Nurse/NJIBCUDA National President, Yaoundé, 1/July/2021.

⁷⁸ NJIBCUDA 2012, Annual General Assembly Resolutions, p.3.

⁷⁹ NgwaBumba Pascal, 44years Nurse/NJIBCUDA National President, Yaoundé, 1/July/2021.

⁸⁰ *Idem*

willingness and success of the local communities in Mezam could be justified by the fact that they were defined by key connections and the confidence that teamwork is more effective than solitary work. This created a conducive environment for VDAs to galvanise the resources of local interest groups. The VDAs that were active in Mezam, mobilised and engaged men, women and youths in local growth initiatives.

Despite the fact that many communities formed these associations, they did not have a mastery of the term. In Mezam the notion of self-help was already deep rooted in the area and many of such organisations grew up. This triggered some readjustment in the dynamics of interaction between the Cameroon state and VDAs. Bereft of critical infrastructure, rekindled community cohesion and heightened cultural identity were deployed by the VDAs to fill the gaps. Ethnicity bound communities against credence that development flows from concerted efforts, rather than resilience on lethargic state intervention. In a context of deepening poverty, declining state involvement in infrastructural development, community based organisations in Mezam were heralded as linchpin for development.⁸¹ Local communities wrestled with the problem of resource scarcity to fill the void left by the reduction in state services. VDAs became the prevalent vehicles for the galvanisation of indigenous resources and building of social and human capital for project execution.⁸²

Located in a region heralded for its self-reliance and mutual development initiatives, VDAs occupied a prime position in championing infrastructural provisioning through social relations.⁸³ These organisations worked together with the people to develop and satisfy their aspirations and needs. Even though urgent or crucial projects varied from one area to another, depending on the physical circumstances or environment and the already available social and economic infrastructure in the area and its surroundings, self-reliance was enormously successful in Mezam in no sector was this more than water supply. The building of bridges enticed a lot of attention within the area because of the physical terrain which is mountainous and the presence of many streams that carved out valleys. The terrain was a major obstacle to rural transportation especially in linking up village markets, and making shared resources available like schools and hospitals which were lacking in some communities.

The absence of water schemes, school buildings and roads in most communities in Mezam forced the population to organise themselves to provide their community with these amenities. Most areas suffered from lack of basic services before the birth of their VDAs. In

⁸¹ C.C. Fonchingong, "Citizen Strategising Amid," p.1.

⁸² C.C. Fonchingong and C.A. Ngwa, "Grassroots Participation for Infrastructural Provisioning in North-West Cameroon: Are Village Development Associations the Panacea", *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, Vol.26, Issue 3, 2011, p.1.

⁸³ Fonchingong, "Citizen Strategising Amid," p.7.

areas where government provision was substandard, the people relied on self-reliant growth initiatives as shown below.⁸⁴ The success of the VDAs revealed the communal role and participation of the people in financing and managing self-reliant projects. This communal spirit was a central pillar of development. It is against this backdrop that some VDAs because of available sources of information and informants will be assessed for their impact on meeting essential human needs of the local residents and local resilience was not exaggerated.

Table 16: Self-Reliant Projects Realised by some VDAs in Mezam

Project Area	PDO	BACUDA	NJIBCUDA
Water	-Lower Pinyin Pipe borne Water	-Construction of the main water project, Ntah Mbang and Atunibah water projects	-Support for the construction of the Njibujang-Njinteh-Niko water project -Extension of the Njibujang Water Scheme
Health	-Health Centres completed in 1978	Construction of modern toilets in the Fon's palace	-Support to Njibujang Health Committee -Support to Njinteh Integrated Health Centre
Education	-Support for the construction of G.T.C. Pinyin -Support for the construction and furnishing of G.H.S. Kwang Pinyin Computer Laboratory -Scholarships awarded to pupils and students	-Construction of Classrooms in G.S.S., G.T.C. and G.S. Jumbu	-Support to G.S. Njibujang -Scholarship awarded to young Njibujang children -Support for the construction of G.T.H.S. Bafut
Electricity	-Partnered with the Pinyin Patriotic Elite for Development(PPE)to supply electricity to all five villages in Pinyin		-Electrification of the Upper Nta'afuluh quarter
Roads/Bridges	-Construction of road linking Menka and Ngong -Several road maintenance executed	-Construction of some bridges and culverts to facilitate movement in the village -Several road maintenance executed	-Construction of the Muluh Road -Construction of the Nkiebo'o bridge Construction of the Nkiebo'o-G.T.H.S. Bafut Road -Several road maintenance executed
Hall	-Pinyin Community Hall		-Project currently going on.
Environmental Protection		-Planting of Ornamental trees from Tubah to C.H.S.	-Planting of trees at the Nta'afuluth catchment area

⁸⁴ Fonchingong and Fonjong, "The Concept of," p.210.

		junction -Planting of trees at the Upland water catchment area	

Source: Author's conception, 4/July/2021.

The table above shows some of the projects that were realised by VDAs in Mezam. It can be seen that all the VDAs no matter where and when they were formed were involved in common projects aimed at providing basic amenities lacking in their communities.

Generally most VDAs in rural areas are more generic and pertain to village development projects like the provision of water, roads, bridges, schools, electricity, health infrastructures, construction of halls and environmental protection thereby reinforcing social cohesion and development. Also, in enhancing local infrastructure, village development associations are apparent collaborators. Members monitor sustenance through farmer groups and cooperatives. In the metropolitan areas, initiatives focused on constructing public assembly areas (community halls), projects implemented are designed to address the problems that businesses in urban areas face when trying to secure funding for their ventures, women's resource or empowerment centres, youth career development groups, city-based collectives for trade and bargaining.⁸⁵

As mentioned above, it can be seen that, in Mezam in no sector was self-reliant development successful than the provision of water supply. This was because of the shortage of portable drinking water in the area. This shortage stemmed from the inability of *SNEC* to supply constant water which could meet the demands of private homes. As a result, men, women and children fetched water down steep and dangerous hills which were very unsafe in the rainy season when paths became very slippery. As a result of this, there was need for most communities through their VDAs to provide portable water by initiating new projects or by rehabilitating and extending the existing ones to meet the needs of the community. The spirit of self-reliant and community development was not limited to the VDAs listed above.

The people of Bali realised important projects that developed their community. Different from most areas in Cameroon, Bali possesses a portable water infrastructure that was realised by the people in 1957. The water system experienced a series of evolutions over time. On the eve of reunification, it was managed as a charitable project by the community under the auspices of the Public Works Department.⁸⁶ Another successful development project was the mortuary constructed in the Bali District Hospital by the Bali Nyongha

⁸⁵ Fonchingong and Mbah, "Social Solidarity Economy," p.138.

⁸⁶ Numvigwaibi, "Decentralisation and Community," p.76.

Development and Cultural Association with a total cost of about 19.492.491francs raised from members' donations. Prior to this mortuary construction, corpses were transported to the Bamenda Regional Hospital located about some 20 kilometres from Bali.⁸⁷

In Santa Sub Division, the Ndong Awing Development and Cultural Association was created on December 23rd 1962 in Buea by the descendants of Awing with the objective of coming together to build a more sustainable future Awing *Fondom*. It was also out to create an atmosphere of peace, promoting diverse cultural and social acumens and projecting a good image of the *Fondom*, worked with state institutions to execute projects worth hundreds of millions in the construction of water supply and classrooms. The Awing area enjoyed running water before the people of Santa town. Most of the people of Awing have access to water without having to trek over long distances and the people's health was significantly enhanced by the availability of clean and reliable water. Its most cherished successes are also in the fields of roads, bridges and electricity.⁸⁸ Also, the Pinyin Development Organisation (PDO) founded in 1974 in Pinyin, Santa Sub Division was very influential in providing portable water to the people of Pinyin⁸⁹. The initial Pinyin Water Project which emanated from the defunct SCAN WATER failed after reception due to technical reasons. This international tender was a corporation from Denmark sponsored with foreign aids demanded by a member of the elite. Taking advantage of the defunct water project, the PDO applied to the British High Commission (BHC) for the funding of their water project and the request was granted. After feasibility studies, a total cost of the project was estimated at fifteen million francs (15.000.000). The BHC partly funded the project with twelve million francs (12.000.000) and the PDO completed the remaining three million (3.000.000) francs plus labour. The construction work was done under the supervision of the BHC.⁹⁰

In the same light, the Mbu village community shop project in Santa Sub Division was conceived as a solution to the acute need for sustainable income generating activity for the community. The total cost of the project was 9.067.000 francs and was jointly realised with contributions from the British High Commission, Cameroon worth 4.950.000francs, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), the Community Partnership Against AIDS Programme contributed 2.838.000francs while the Mbu Cultural and Development Association

⁸⁷ Akei, "Institutions and Local," p.35.

⁸⁸ Nekumboh Paul, 33 years, Teacher, Yaoundé, 1/July/2021.

⁸⁹ The Pinyin Clan is one of the most populated *fondoms* of Santa Sub Division which is found in the Mezam Division of the North-West Region of Cameroon. It is divided in to five villages and covers a surface area of 750 square kilometres. The villages that make up Pinyin clan include; Bauchi, Menka, Meshih, Mesoh and Mentine:(**Source**, Teneng, "Pinyin Development Organisation," p. 21.)

⁹⁰Teneng, "Pinyin Development Organisation," pp.76-77.

contributed 1.279.300francs. They also provided the land for the building of the shop. The community shop has a mill for grains to improve the nutritional and living standard of this community. The project started in January 2007 and the shop opened its doors for business by April 2007. This project was a clear prove that if communities were organised and empowered, they will manage projects and contribute enormously to local development.⁹¹

In Tubah, the Bambui Cultural and Development Association (BACUDA) created in 1978 was also an important vector of community development in the study area.⁹² BACUDA's main focus since creation was on the main water project and later the Ntahmbang and Atunibah water projects which provided portable water to about 20.000 inhabitants in and around Bambui especially with the opening of the University of Bamenda. Since the inception of the project in 1976 and the practical implementation in 1984, so much was achieved and it is worth mentioning that the rate of portable water supply in the entire village is 95%. BACUDA has successfully realised the construction of the following structures: 1 stream catchment, 9 spring catchment, 9 storage and distribution tanks with a total storage capacity of 500 cubic litres, 3 filtration systems, 4 collection chambers, 7 wash basins, 10 inter-ruption chambers, 28 valve chambers, a dense network of pipelines and several stand taps dotted over the village. The association as of the 31st of December 2012, had invested above 300.000.000frs without including village-kind contributions.⁹³

In the Bamenda I Sub Division, the Bamendakwe Development and Cultural Association (BAMEDCA) initiated the Bamendakwe Health Centre Project before the council came in to support. In the Bamenda II Sub Division, the Mankon Cultural and Development Association (MACUDA) also partnered with the council to construct the Mankon Museum.⁹⁴ MACUDA formed in 1990 to initiate and promote cultural and development projects was instrumental in the modernisation and construction of the Mankon Museum at the Mankon palace. The project with a cost estimate of 125.000.000 FCFA started with the demolition of the old and dilapidated structure to give it a modern structure which was completed in June 2008. The museum today has not only attracted tourists in and out of Cameroon who come and spend money to enjoy the artifacts in the museum but has also

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Bambui is the headquarter of Tubah Sub Division and comprises four chiefdoms. It covers a surface area of some 20 square kilometres and shares boundaries with the villages of Kedjom Ketinguh to the East, Bambili and Nkwen to the South, Bafut to the West and kedjom Keku and Kom to the North (**Source**, Speech made by Fon Angafor Mombo-oh III on the Occasion of the Maiden Contact Visit to Bambui by the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam, *Bambui Forum for Development Partnership for Change Speeches*, Saturday 19th January 2013, Jonmaz Complex-Bambui, p.21.)

⁹³ K.V. Angafor, Valuing People, Resources and Sustainability, *Bambui Forum for Development, Partnership for Change Speeches*, Saturday 19 January 2013, Jonmaz Complex, Bambui.

⁹⁴ Kanno, "Financing Development in," p.252.

given a face-lift to the layout of the Mankon palace.⁹⁵ Similarly, in the same sub division, Chomba is a typical example where a water project was started entirely by the village after discovering they had no water at all. They were drinking from running streams but when they discovered a catchment in the hills, they began to harness it themselves before calling on the council, Grassfield Participatory and Decentralised Rural Development Project (GP-DERUDEP) and the British Embassy for financial assistance. This enabled the village to have good drinking water. The water project was championed by the Chomba Development and Cultural Association (CHODECA).⁹⁶

In the Bamenda III Sub Division, the Nkwen Cultural and Development Association (NCDA) and Ndzah Development and Cultural Association (NDCA) started the construction of their various projects with their own resources and the council only came in to supplement. NDCA realised the Ndzah Water Project while in Nkwen the development committee put in place a water supply project called Nkwen Water Project with an annual individual contribution to ensure autonomy in the production and distribution of good drinking water.⁹⁷

Bafut is cherished for communing together to produce a single voice in the execution of their community projects. The Manji population through their development association constructed the Bafut Mortuary. It was the same in Nsem which had its development association that executed its water project which the whole community benefitted from. Similarly, in Njibujang, its VDA worked tirelessly to resolve the issues of water shortages in the area. This was the case with the Njibujang⁹⁸ community in Bafut which had a joint water project with two other communities Njinteh and Niko (Njibujang-Njinteh-Niko Water Project) that was realised thanks to joint efforts from these communities and co-funded by the European Union, through the Village Community Project (VCP).⁹⁹ The VCP was funded exclusively by the European Development Fund. However, the indigenes of Bafut contributed 25% either in cash or kind to the cost of each project. The government also contributed in terms of its technical personnel who were attached to the project.¹⁰⁰

With the growing population in the three communities and the impact on the landscape, there was shortage of water in these communities especially in Njibujang which

⁹⁵ Wankah, *et al*, "Implication of the," p.3.

⁹⁶ Kanno, "Financing Development in," p.252.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.253.

⁹⁸ Njibujang is one of the villages in Bafut Sub Division located about 25 kilometres from Bamenda and it is made up of four communities that is Ajunkia, Muffi, Nkiebo'o and Nta'afuluh with an estimated population of over 2,800 inhabitants. The estimated surface area of the village is 3,442 square kilometres. (Source: Ngwabumba Pascal, 44years, Nurse/National President of NJBCUDA, Yaoundé, 1/July/2021.)

⁹⁹ NgwaBumba Pascal, 44 years, Nurse/NJBCUDA National President, Yaoundé, 1/July/2021.

¹⁰⁰ D. S. Suh, "The Role of Bafut Traditional Institutions in Contemporary Cameroon Politics, 1960-2004", M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2013, p.49.

was furthest among the three communities. This shortage implied that people were to get up early to fetch water and trek to Njinteh and Manji to get access to portable water especially during the dry season. The numerous natural water sources for the people were scattered within various areas and a few rivers. The water sources are prone to variability and are inconsistent in availability leading to water shortages in some places. The situation was more complicated with the upper part of Njibujang which because of the hilly terrain found it difficult for the insufficient quantity of water to get there and as such they depended on water sources which were far from clean and safe. The lone small spring in the area that was at the mercy of the people though very good and clean was exposed coupled with the fact that its volume drastically reduced during the dry season. As such, the Njibujang Cultural and Development Association decided to carry out a water project that was to supply Nta'afuluh and supplement the existing water project to be able to supply the whole quarter to the Nkiebo'o neighbourhood. The project was estimated at 13.8 million francs expected to be raised through fundraisings, annual levies as shown on the table below.¹⁰¹

Table 17: Branch Contributions towards the Realisation of the Njibujang Water Project from 2013-2017.

No	Branch	Levy	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total	Balance
1	Home	5.000.000	348.800	455.500	926.000	188.000	242.000	2.160.300	2.839.700
2	Yaoundé	3.000.000	1000.000	500.000	250.000	200.000	267.000	2.217.000	783.000
3	Douala	3.000.000	558.000	410.000	45.000	225.000	-----	1.238.000	1762.000
4	Bamenda	3.000.000	75.000	160.000	100.000	100.000	130.000	565.000	2.435.000
5	Ndop	500.000	45.000	80.000	-----	-----	-----	125.000	375.000
6	Buea	200.000	-----	-----	60.000	100.000	-----	160.000	40.000
7	Limbe	100.000	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	100.000
8	Kumba	100.000	-----	-----	-----	60.000	-----	60.000	40.000
9	Nkambe	100.000	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	100.000
10	Agyati	50.000	25.000	25.000	-----	-----	25.000	75.000	+25.000
11	Exco	1.000.000	540.000	230.000	105.000	-----	-----	875.000	125.000
12	Wum	-----	23.000	25.000	20.000	-----	-----	68.000	-----
13	Alou	-----	25.00	2500	7.500	-----	45.000	57.500	-----
14	Youth Wing						82.000	82.000	-----
	TOTAL	16.050.000	2.611.300	1.888.000	1693500	873.000	617.000	7.625.800	8.599.700

Source: NgwaBumba Pascal's archives, "NJIBCUDA 2017 Financial Account", Yaoundé, 5/July/2021.

The above shows the contributions of the Njibujang people at home and outside towards the realisation of the water project. From the table it can be seen that within the two years that was given for all levies to be paid, it was only Agyati branch that realised its target. Yaoundé branch which is regarded as the heartbeat of the association was able within this

¹⁰¹ NgwaBumba Pascal, 44years Nurse/NJIBCUDA National President, Yaoundé, 1/July/2021.

timeframe to realise the highest in terms of contributions. Children, men and women dug the pipelines, transported construction materials throughout the period of work and the community's daily participation was a demonstration of community spirit. The work was on every *mitaniba'a* (the second local holiday in Bafut and the day after the *country Sunday*).

Table 18: Cost of the Njibujang Water Project after completion in 2017

A. Completion of Catchment and First Tank	
- Compensation for the destruction of crops	25.000frs
- Material.....	666.980frs
- Labour.....	510.000frs
TOTAL	1.201.980frs
B. Construction of Second Tank	
- Site Preparation.....	37.000frs
- Purchase of Materials.....	617.800frs
- Stones.....	340.000frs
- Sand.....	125.000frs
- Wood.....	55.500frs
- Iron Brush.....	4.500frs
- Sieve.....	5.000frs
- Renting of Drum.....	2.000frs
- Completion for Tank Plot.....	75.000frs
- Labour.....	850.000frs
TOTAL	2.111.800frs
C. Locking Devices for Chambers.....	
20.000frs	
TOTAL.....	20.000frs
D. Pump and Solar Panels	
- First Installment	1.500.000frs
- Second Installment.....	1.245.000frs
- Installation of the Panels.....	19.000frs
TOTAL.....	2.764.000frs
E. Pipeline from Catchment to Second Tank	
- Pipe 40: (40×3.000).....	1.20.000frs
- Pipe 53: (53×3.300).....	174.000frs
- GI Pipe 40: (2×12.000).....	24.000frs
- Transportation of Materials.....	11.000frs
- Site Expenditure.....	11.100frs
- Accessories.....	48.200frs
- Labour.....	75.000frs
TOTAL	464.200frs
F. Supply Pipes and Building of Stand Taps	
i Building of Stand Taps	
- Materials and Transportation.....	147.300frs
- Labour	61.000frs
TOTAL	208.300frs
ii Supply Pipes	
- Pipe 32 (83×2.000).....	166.000frs
- Accessories.....	58.800frs
- Gum and Pipe.....	8.200frs
- Transport.....	5.000frs

- Labour.....	60.000frs
TOTAL	296.000frs
G. Transportation, Communication and Supervision for Projects and Delegates.	107.800frs
GRAND TOTAL.....	7.687.830frs

Source: NgwaBumba Pascal's archives, "NJIBCUDA 2017 Financial Report", Yaoundé, 5/July/2021.

The above table shows the total cost of the Njibujang water project that was realised with the total commitment and contributions of the community members in cash and in kind with the provision of labour especially through the supply of material, digging of trenches and pipelines as well as transporting the material to the project site.

2.6. Challenges of some Village Development Associations in Mezam Division

The attempts by VDAs to conquer the development space in various areas in Mezam were hampered by a lot of difficulties. The transition from a one party system to a multi-party system had deep concerns in the push of VDAs in local enhancement initiatives. This is solely disrupting the proper operation of VDAs as some influential elites resort to partisan politics much more than community development.¹⁰² Elites incapacitated or subdued associations especially if they did not share a similar political ideology. The disunity and reciprocity or back scratching anticipated by elites generated needless pressure that led to the collapse of VDAs. As funds and resources dwindled, revolutionary ideas infiltrated and limited budget pushed VDAs to cut down on earmarked initiatives. This also had diminished results on the enthusiasm and dedication of community members.¹⁰³

Poverty, soaring unemployment and inadequate access to essential services jeopardise and compromise efforts at community building. As a result of the above, members are unable to meet up with their yearly dues coupled with the inconveniences of the socio-political crisis in the study area. In Njibujang, Bambui, Pinyin and many other areas, most projects lasted longer than expected before completion because of the fact that members were not able to meet up with their contributions. Since the creation of NJIBCUDA in 2001, its major priority was to provide water to the entire community but 16 years after, the whole village cannot boast of a steady water supply system because over these years members have not completed their dues to facilitate the full and complete realisation of the project.

Mismanagement of funds was another problem plaguing VDAs and hindering them from realising local development initiatives. Contributions made by community members were embezzled especially by branch executives. This was the case of the NJIBCUDA Douala branch which after contributing their development levies for 2 years (2016 and 2017),

¹⁰² Fonchingong and Fonjong, "The Concept of," p.215.

¹⁰³ Kanno, "Financing Development in," p.257.

some members of the executive swindled the money and right up till date, the money has not been paid in to the national account. Away from the VDAs, Rotating Savings and Credit Associations were also an important ingredient of self-reliant development in Mezam.

2.7. Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs) or *Njangis*: A Support System to VDAs in Mezam

Njangis were enshrined as part of cash flow, an essential backbone and methods of direct immediate help to VDA growth efforts. In most VDAs branches at home and abroad, *njangis* were the foundation for raising and redistributing shared funds from members' contributions. *Njangis* are a major characteristic of community cohesion. This networks of connections provide access to start-up funds for separate and joint projects in diverse areas. Money raised from contributions is reinvested in to personal and shared projects that enhance sustainability, prosperity, welfare and quality of life which tackle both individual and shared demands. Such relational networks are vital solidarity platforms with direct and indirect benefits for members. Members used *Njangi* as a mechanism or system for accumulation of funds to cover future obligations and generate seed funding for micro businesses. This was done by members forming either meetings exclusively for men, women or youths and generally each beneficiary of *njangi*, development levy was deducted before handing over the rest of the money to the person.¹⁰⁴ Most members who are civil servants, traders, labourers argued that this made them pay their dues easily thereby contributing their own quota to the development of their communities without which it would have been very difficult for them to remove either 15 or 20.000 francs to pay at once because of other commitments.¹⁰⁵ A diaspora *njangi* member stated that:

Njangis are an umbrella for us to gather, pool together resources and enable members to carryout individual projects. We equally raise funds and support development projects back home. Equally we hold diaspora assemblages annually and through the funds raised, we decide on how the money raised is spent liasing with the VDA president back home¹⁰⁶

It is averred that operating within localised circuits of production, exchange and consumption *njangis* can be beneficial not only to basic needs provisioning but also local economic development. Most *njangis* have as objective to include the socio-economic development of its members, making room for genuine, industrious and venture minded entrepreneurs, supported by social services and fostering a culture of collective innovation for

¹⁰⁴ Ndownwi David, 48 years, Builder/NJIBCUDA Yaoundé branch President, Yaoundé, 20/June/2021.

¹⁰⁵ Shu Derick Neba, 35 years, Teacher, Yaoundé, 16/June/2021.

¹⁰⁶ Fonchingong and Mbah, "Social Solidarity Economy," p.136.

social progress and economic growth. Another participant stated that: “we have helped members solve big problems such as housing funding and scholarships for higher education, immigration, refugee and asylum claims, child care costs and assistance with child care.”¹⁰⁷ *Njangis* also incorporated a social solidarity agenda as members put aside some funds generally called sinking or trouble funds for events like deaths, births and other emergencies.

ROSCAs were one of the most common informal financial institutions found in the developing world and provided benefits that were missing or under provided. It is an old business practice where members of a community contribute money to assist one another turn by turn.¹⁰⁸ Money raised to contribute to a *njangi* comes from hustling in the informal economy and they provide an alternative through which people raise funds to support their business operations. Almost all entrepreneurs depend on personal funds, family resources, moneylenders and *njangi* as sources of initial and additional capital.¹⁰⁹ Cameroon has a tradition of community-based savings and lending among small groups founded on cultural heritage, occupation, residence or affinity come together to save periodically either weekly or monthly. These groups are constituted of ambitious and industrious young entrepreneurs working towards starting strong businesses or building a bonded family. The group membership primarily consisted of individuals connected to the founding members.¹¹⁰

It is common in most ethnic communities and used mostly by people who speak the same language and who generally originate from the same area to assemble in clubs and societies for their shared interests.¹¹¹ In some cases, members are scattered across the country and even abroad and because of that they may not be able to all gather or meet physically on *njangi* day. Similarly, some members are unavailable for the meeting due to work obligations.¹¹² They assist members in getting jobs, and adapt to the new conditions of living and also give support during difficult times. The gatherings are mostly social events but they also play vital economic roles. Infact, when they promote financial inclusivity by offering savings options and lending services, they imitate the work of the financial institutions and as a result made known to many Cameroonians about both the concept and the practice of the new movement.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ C. Nukunah, “From Feasting to Fasting: An Autoethnography of *Njangis*, *African Journal of Business Studies*, Vol.17, No.1, September 2023, p.45.

¹⁰⁹ Abimbola *et al*, “Rotating and Savings,” p.190.

¹¹⁰ Nukunah, “From Feasting to,” p.49.

¹¹¹ M.W. Delancey, “Credit for the Common Man in Cameroon”, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol.15, No. 2, 1977, p.319.

¹¹² Nukunah, “From Feasting to,” p.49.

¹¹³ Delancey, “Credit for the,” p.319.

To most people in the study area, *njangis* are a way of continuing with internalised habits. This system is not different from the start of modern banking. The *njangi* system is a growing saving system situated outside conventional banks. People realised that cooperation was the only way to overcome the problems they were facing in life.¹¹⁴ The protecting savings or *njangis* provide a means for saving and financial projects in order to cover the gap left by banks.¹¹⁵ As an economic institution, ROSCAs provided savings, credit and insurance opportunities while as a social institution, they served as a hub for social interactions, support and a way of accumulating savings during periods of economic hardship. As a cultural association, cultural equity affected the optimal organisational structure of a ROSCA. Mutualism and dedication to the group were important for the ROSCA to be maintainable and was primarily accomplished through positive social feedback.¹¹⁶

This institution is one of the community aid programmes designed to support vulnerable families address difficult situations across various formal and informal connections. ROSCAs brought relief to people because it is very convenient and also easy to access funds and reduced poverty in local communities.¹¹⁷ In Mezam where the state was distant, indifferent or available primarily in its ripping ability, people adopted indigenous initiatives of autonomy and social interactions. All over the division, the people have a wealth of experience in capital connections, cohesion and paths of growth that avoid the state's difficulties and sometimes they skillfully reap the fruits of their labour from the same state despite the constraints. Such social connections promote the merging of resources that is both financial and other resources by individuals and collectives ready to make their dreams come true through thick and thin.¹¹⁸

ROSCAs were a variety of mutual aid groups of people who rally themselves for a shared goal, for a length of time in order to accumulate and procure. They bridge the gap in some advanced and Third World countries where structured savings or line of credit were unavailable. These institutions provided a solid foundation to ease the hardship of being excluded from the formal financial system by supporting customers who do not have access to

¹¹⁴ C.L. Forje, "Domestic Saving Mobilisation and Small Business Creation: The Case Of Cameroon", *SAJEMS* NS 9, No.1, 2006, p.43.

¹¹⁵ B.D.S. Wenda *et al*, "Assessing the Contribution of Micro Credit Financing to Maize Production in Mezam Division, North-West Region of Cameroon", *International Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 5, No.1, 2020, p.10.

¹¹⁶ A. M. Jorde Sandsor, "The Rotating Savings and Credit Association-An Economic, Social and Cultural Institution", M.A. Dissertation in Economics, University of Oslo, May 2010, p.1.

¹¹⁷ Abimbola *et al* "Rotating and Savings," p.191.

¹¹⁸ F.B. Nyamnjoh and D. Fuh, *Njangi Sociality: Mobility, ICT and Mobile Money Usages and Practices Amongst Poor Rural Farmers in the Cameroon Grassfields (Overview Report)*, Bamenda, Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group, 2014, p.13.

traditional banking services to accumulate and borrow money. Engagement is beneficial because it functions as a means for accumulating, providing loans without interest, highly accessible, reinforce connections and provide gathering places for people to meet. This proved especially powerful for people with very low incomes who lack access to formal banking system.¹¹⁹In essence, these associations were a means for individuals to accumulate capital for large expenditures.

Many people in Mezam argued that *njangi* was the most effective economic tool used by individuals to develop economically as people carried out projects they would not have dared without participating in *njangi*. Almost all participants used the money they received for the purchase of a piece of land, payment of school fees and investment in their businesses. This institution and practice which was a form of social networking and solidarity, was meant to ease help and achievement for associations and individuals with a deep insight of assurance in one another, articulated through connections of mutualism based on mutual dependence. Members assisted one another in the construction of houses, farming and other activities and made it possible to pool resources for the common good of members.

In its simplest form, a *njangi* might be made up of 5 to 20 or more participants and the group met periodically on or after pay-day or harvest and every member contributed a fixed sum of money and the entire sum was assigned to one member.¹²⁰ Through this means, accumulated capital can be used to acquire goods, settle debts or perhaps fund a business. This fundamental arrangement differs and it is proportional to membership, the amount paid by each member extends from a small amount of 500CFA to as much as 1 million CFA and the means of selecting who will take the pot, may even require contracts.¹²¹ Similarly, Mengla believes that a *njangi* was a local institution made up of members who decided to contribute their resources together for equal benefit of members¹²² while Ardener and Burma argue that *njangi* in most areas in Africa and Asia served individuals of the community, often as their main and sometimes their sole accumulation associations. *Njangis* were mutual-assistance and pool of funds associations with trusted members who agreed to contribute periodically to a shared pool which was entirely or partially given to each beneficiary in turns. Many *njangis* had detailed schemes to deal with the effects of rising prices (inflation), failure and allocation

¹¹⁹ Abimbola *et al* "Rotating and Savings," p.190.

¹²⁰ Delancey, *Historical Dictionary of*, p.366.

¹²¹ Delancey, "Credit for the," p.316.

¹²² Besin-Mengla, "Njangi: Pillar of," p.33.

of profits. In providing essential social support, they strengthen social bonds.¹²³To Nzemen, *njangis* are: “informal associations founded on the respect for the word given and homogenous criteria, the aim of which is to promote any action of solidarity or to periodically constitute a financial and firm market allowing its members to invest their savings for some and access credit for others.”¹²⁴

The World Bank as cited by Abimbola defines a *njangi* as a group in which members play a set sum that is often allocated to every member in a rotation (maybe through random selection, asking or any other means).¹²⁵It is a rotating credit scheme for pooling money whereby a specific number of people form a group and contribute a specified amount of money weekly, bi-weekly or monthly.¹²⁶Anywhere there were people from Mezam, *njangi* was always found there. Involvement in these *njangis* is a civic engagement through which people develop and build a name for wise judgment and trustworthiness that makes the incapability of connecting to one of the ROSCAs to be seen as a near social exclusion. Members of these institution demonstrate a sense of belonging.¹²⁷The regularity of contributions for example whether weekly, bi weekly or monthly was agreed upon from the onset. People always started with small amounts to build trust and make sure that everybody trusted each other before the amount was increased.

Akume traces the background of micro finance to centuries ago in the way, it has often been prominently referred to as *njangi*. To him, a *njangi* is a standard type of non-formalised agreement known in microfinance literature as a ROSCA. It consist of an association of community members who gather periodically and accumulate their money (savings). The savings are given to one member of the group who pays it back and the pattern goes on.¹²⁸Today *njangi* is present in many meeting houses, cultural groups, workplaces and is so well developed that it is almost a banking operation. Trust and reciprocity are central to this exchange game. Reciprocity implies actions that were contingent on rewarding reactions from others and that cease when these expected reactions were not forthcoming. *Njangi* was

¹²³ S. Ardener and S. Burman, *Money-Go-Rounds: The Importance of Rotating Savings and Credit Associations for Women*, Washington D.C, Berg Publishers, 1995, p.5.

¹²⁴ M. Nzemen, *Le role des tontines dans la financement du developpement*, Yaoundé, edi. Presse Universitaires du Cameroun, 1993, p.15.

¹²⁵ Abimbola *et al*, “Rotating and Savings,” p.191.

¹²⁶ I. Habiba, “Structured Savings and Asset Ownership: The Role of Rotating Savings and Credit Associations among African Immigrants in the United States”, *The Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, Vol. 47, Issue 2, 2020, p.32.

¹²⁷ N. Ojong and F. Obeng-Odoom, “Resilience and Dynamism of Embedded Financial Transactions in Cameroon”, *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. LI, No.1, March 2017, p.189.

¹²⁸ A.D. Akume *et al*, “The Performance of Microfinance Institutions in Cameroon: Does Financial Regulation Really Matter?”, *Research Journal of Finance and Accounting*, Vol.8, No.2, 2017, p.29.

accessible to people who agreed to rally themselves with the objective of accumulating some resource which can either be money or other resources periodically. *Njangi* thus transcended financial injections by participants, to creating opportunities for other transactions such as benefits, consolations, electioneering and illustrations of mutualism across all other aspects of daily routines.

Members stand together by being present and provide financial and in-kind support during social gatherings (deaths, births, marriages) of members. In Mezam, there is a majority opinion that life itself especially when enshrined in social interactions, is a form of *njangi*. Most people believed that life is *njangi* which simply entails that life is all about reciprocity. So when someone gave something or provided a service to another person, there was an expectation that the same favour should be reciprocated on a later date as a sign of acknowledgement of the service or favour he or she received. This social cohesion is founded on shared respect and confidence for one another, and also mutual responsibilities restricted within an exclusive circle. This reciprocity was extended to other aspects of daily life to involve important social gatherings like politics, deaths, births and marriage which demanded the exchange of goods, services and other facilities. The most evident of this social event was death celebration and political involvement with all seen as *die* and *politics na njangi*.¹²⁹

With respect to death, consoling a member with monetary and in-kind support was seen as *njangi* since the donor expected a very similar mutual help when he/she was bereaved. Therefore, during death celebrations those who participated were simply doing so hoping same would be done to them when they were in a similar situation. Each person carefully kept a record of the things he/she received. So the things received were in effect debts to be paid back. If the person brought money or drinks, he hopes to get back the same amount of money or drinks when he too is bereaved.¹³⁰ The services extended to farming, cash or whatever the individuals concerned agreed upon. Thus the general types of *njangis* in Mezam included; the financial or cash *njangi* and service or farming *njangi*

2.8. Types and Nature of *Njangi* in Mezam

In Mezam, *njangi* was a rite of passage to personhood especially between the ages of 20-60 whether among men or women and joining a *njangi* is the norm and not being a member is seen as unusual. Social cohesion, unity and identity was evaluated with respect to the number of *njangi* groups people were part of and the extent to which they can be dependable and trustworthy at all times. It is not solely because of membership that one

¹²⁹ Nyamnjoh and Fuh, *Njangi Sociality: Mobility*, p.18.

¹³⁰ Abumbi II, *The Customs and*, p.140.

enjoyed praises from colleagues but the sum of money contributed is also very vital. The members who contributed huge funds was a justification that they are self-controlled, industrious and economical. This strong sense of rivalry is embedded (especially those in the unofficial economy) with each aspiring to be at the level of people who contributed the highest amount. The amounts contributed demonstrates how they are prudent or thrifty with their income and provides a path of establishing their trustworthiness and reliability on the group.¹³¹ The pooling of limited resources into a pot which was given to each member in turn was essentially what a ROSCA did.

Despite the presence of numerous modern financial institutions in the rural and urban areas of Mezam, it was noticed that as a result of the communal life and trust, most people rather preferred to be members of financial *njangi* groups. Even among the few who had accounts in modern financial institutions, they hardly saved money in the accounts or better still did not save money as often as they did with financial *njangi* groups. Financial *njangi* groups were responsible for holding about 70% of money in Cameroon.¹³² This shows the kind of financial transactions that took place within most *njangi* groups and such groups sound very much like another form of microcredit. In most rural areas, modern financial institutions were absent and even in areas where banks were found, getting access to these institutions was a problem because of the poor nature of the roads coupled with the fact that it was time consuming to get there. Farmers in Mezam argued that *njangi* was the dominant agent that provided financial services to them by serving as the main source of credits. This is driven by the availability of credit, lack of regulations, lower interest rates and most of the time the absence of tangible collateral applied in these outlets.¹³³ This made *ngangi* groups to be considered as key players centrally positioned in grassroots development. The next section of the work has as motive to show financial *njangi* and why income earners in Mezam relied on *njangi* groups for their socio-economic development.

2.8.1. Financial or Cash Njangi

Financial *njangi* was the most popular saving institution in Mezam in rural areas and even in urban areas with many modern financial institutions, few people saved money in them as majority preferred to save in financial *njangi*. The financial *njangi* are known to have existed so many years ago, but the first person to have documented it was Emmi Meyer

¹³¹ H.M. Nyamnjoh, *Bridging Mobilities: ICTs Appropriation by Cameroonians in South Africa and the Netherlands*, Leiden University Repository, 2013, p.187.

¹³² Besing-Mengla, "Njangi: Pillar of," p.31.

¹³³ Wenda *et al*, "Assessing the Contribution," p.14.

around the 1930s in the North-West Region. There was visible evidence of its presence in the plantations in 1937 and in 1969 the Delancey's discovered that 64 % of the labourers were participants of a *njangi*.¹³⁴ It is believed by some other people that the cash *njangi* came in to prominence during the days of the *marquis* in the Bamileke land. People participating in the fight for independence from the colonial masters were pursued by government forces. These individuals could not appear in the banks to put in their money, or make withdrawals and so they chose one of the innocent citizens to be their banker. They made their contributions to him and when all had contributed, he in turn handed over the money to the beneficiary. This was done in private and it worked well. Their true wealth was unknown to the authorities and they were able to carry out projects directly or through members of their families.¹³⁵

Njangi was mostly defined as a group built around a nucleus of members who agreed to pay periodic contributions to a fund which was partly or entirely given to each member in a turn.¹³⁶ This implied that a *njangi* was a local association where members periodically contributed money which was given to one member and this process rotated until all members of the group benefitted. Examples of some of these *njangi* groups included; the *Mbufede* and *Bekwi* Family Union in Bambili, the *Achamboh* and *Akongne* in Mankon, the Project and Ambitious Friends in Nkwen, Mustard Seed and 25th Day in Bamendakwe, the *Butah*, *Bumah* and *Acheuh* in Bafut, *Abongjam* and 15th Day in Bali and Santa respectively.

Assuming there were 10 members, they came together and planned by establishing the amount and date for each to contribute and if they were to meet weekly, after a fortnight, monthly or quarterly. The last part of the puzzle was to determine the order of who benefits at what time implying that the numbers 1-10 were written on a paper, folded and put in a basket and people picked their numbers randomly and the numbers they picked were the order of beneficiary. In most cases, they all owned stocks (shares) and a share had a flat sum of money to be contributed in each round or session though in other groups the fixed share was only in relation to the minimum amount contributed and a member contributed as much as he or she could afford.¹³⁷

In some groups, a member had two or more shares and contributed twice the fixed amount per session and also benefitted twice within a *njangi* cycle. Involved members referred to their periodic financial contributions as their *njangi* and the action of contributing

¹³⁴ Delancey, "Credit for the," p.316.

¹³⁵ Musada.wordpress.com consulted on the 30/May/2021 at 10:00 p.m.

¹³⁶ Ardener and Burman, *Money-Go-Rounds*, p.5.

¹³⁷ Besing-Mengla, "Njangi: Pillar of," p.34.

as playing *njangi*.¹³⁸ The associated meetings were usually rotating in nature, as the group met in the house of another member each meeting day, but for the particular ones which had a main gathering house. The funds accumulated or whatever money raised in the meeting was given to a member usually the gathering host for the day in line with an already determined lot agreed upon from the beginning of the group or session based on casting of lots or order of desperation. Examples of such *njangi* groups in Mezam included the *Mbufede Njangi* Group in Bambili,¹³⁹ *Akongne Njangi* Group in Mankon,¹⁴⁰ *Bumah Njangi* in Bafut,¹⁴¹ *Ambitious Friends* in Nkwen¹⁴² and *Mustard Seed Njangi* in Bamendakwe.¹⁴³ This ties with Nici Nelson's view, who observed a ROSCA in Nairobi known as the Kiambu Group. She describes the ROSCA as follows:

When i began to attend their meetings in 1971, there were twenty members, all women from Kiambu who brewed buzaa beer and owned housing units in Mathare Valley... At this time, the group met once a week. The woman who would be receiving the fund that particular week would host the meeting and provide tea for the group. The contribution each week was Ksh¹⁴⁴12/plus a little extra to pay for the tea. That meant that each week someone in the group received at least Ksh 240. This was more than the then minimum wage in Kenya (150), and was the amount a hardworking beer brewer could earn in a month. The cycle of contributions took five months to complete.¹⁴⁵

Another format for benefitting was that in every meeting a beneficiary was chosen by lot like in the *Achamboh Njangi* Group in Mankon¹⁴⁶ 15th Day *Njangi* in Santa¹⁴⁷ and the 25th *Njangi* in Bamendakwe.¹⁴⁸ Other groups employed a competitive tendering process (bidding) to select the recipient. Here, the contributed amount was auctioned and the highest bidder benefitted who was among the members that had not benefitted like the case of the *Bekwi Family Njangi* in Bambili,¹⁴⁹ *Project Njangi* in Nkwen,¹⁵⁰ *Abongjam Njangi* in Bali.¹⁵¹ In such situations, when the accumulated amount has been contributed at the end of the meeting, the said amount is open for members to buy. The money will be handed to the highest bidder

¹³⁸ Nyamnjoh and Fuh, *Njangi Sociality: Mobility*, p.13.

¹³⁹ Ndong Sidonnie, 32 years, Farmer, Bambili, 22/July/2022.

¹⁴⁰ Awah Lum Yvette, 35years, Teacher, Mankon, 17/December/2022.

¹⁴¹ Ngumna Mathilda, 41 years, Business Woman, Yaoundé, 16/June/2021.

¹⁴² Fru Peter, 50years, Farmer, Nkwen, 30/December/2021.

¹⁴³ Munjong John, 60years, Farmer, Ajaman, Bamendakwe, 30/December/2021.

¹⁴⁴ Ksh refers to the Kenyan Shilling which is the official currency used in Kenya. Ksh 12, Ksh 240 and Ksh 150 were equivalent to 1.68USD, 33.6USD and 21USD respectively in 1997.

¹⁴⁵ Sandsor, "The Rotating Savings," p.4.

¹⁴⁶ Fuh Roland, 45years, Accountant, Mankon, 17/December/2022.

¹⁴⁷ Mankaa Pamela, 55 years, Farmer, Njong, Santa, 17/June/2021.

¹⁴⁸ Tah David, 45years, Builder, Njoh, Bamendakwe, 30/December/2021.

¹⁴⁹ Akongniwoh Elvis, 36years, Teacher, Bambili, 22/July/2022.

¹⁵⁰ Ayafor Beltha, 55years, Farmer, Nkwen, 22/December/2021.

¹⁵¹ Nyongka Grace, 61 years, Farmer, Bali, 15/August/2022.

after the money he bought the accumulated sum has been deducted. Here the expression of need is taken in to account. In most cases, it is believed that the highest bidder, is obviously the one with the highest challenge and therefore needed the money at all cost . If there is a clash of interest, that is more than one member is in need of the money, the accumulated sum can be shared to the two people.¹⁵² In a similar note, the criteria to benefit might just be to ask by giving the house a crate of beer before you were given the chance to benefit like in the *Acheuh Njangi* Group in Bafut¹⁵³. This ties with *njangi* groups where members regarded such gatherings as forums for relaxation and socialisation.

The organisational pattern is informal with few executives responsible for record-keeping. In most *njangis*, the executive or committee in charge of handling and choosing beneficiaries appointed any member to hand the recipient's money accompanied by a word of advice. Firstly, that whatever the recipient intended to do with the money, may it be fruitful with words of blessings like small droplets of water form an ocean and that whatever he/she did with the money, may it be successful. Secondly, he/she was also reminded that just as the others struggled to contribute their resources for him/her to receive and solve a problem, may he/she not forget to do same when it was the turn of another beneficiary.

Whatever the criteria to benefit, before handing the money to the beneficiary, the group checked to see if he/she was owing any money and if that was the case the amount owed was deducted and the rest given to him/her. But if that was not the case, the money was immediately given. In most of these groups, members also accumulate funds to be kept as savings by the association until the end of the *njangi* session or year depending on the group and the treasurer keeps this money in a bank and/or lend the money out as loans to members and rarely to non-members who returned or paid back the money with interest.¹⁵⁴ The sum that remains in the treasury accumulates and it is put at the disposal of members to borrow based on their challenges and needs. The funds are obtained based on the agreed interest rate which range from 1-5% and exceptionally 10% of the amount borrowed to be returned back after 1 or 2 months though in some groups, the sum is expected to be paid back before the end of the *njangi* session or year. This process of borrowing is not very different from short term loans or overdrafts in modern financial institutions. This is very interesting because most members are usually young business people who are in need of disposable cash flow.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Nukunah, "From Feasting to," p.49.

¹⁵³ Ambe Joseph, 65years, Farmer, Bafut, 20/July/2022.

¹⁵⁴ Delancey, "Credit for the," p. 319.

¹⁵⁵ Nukunah, "From Feasting to," p.49.

As mentioned above, the deducted sum was put at the disposal of members who needed money and interests were allocated on the sum borrowed. At the end of the *njangi* session, the reduced sums plus interest borne was made accessible to members who wanted to borrow money from the group. Savings and accumulated interest are shared back to members in December which allows members to cope with their heavy Christmas festivity expenses. In other groups, the savings and interest are shared in August to enable members meet up with their children's back to school requirements. Most members after receiving their savings and share of the interest borne, immediately save a large percentage of the accumulated funds to the savings scheme in preparation for the following year which usually starts on the same meeting day.¹⁵⁶ A set of books is kept to record savings, loans repayment and interest charges. The criteria for loan approval are to be a member and to pay your contributions regularly and on time. A person requesting a loan, presents his needs and requirements, most often filled on a paper, though it can also be verbally in case of urgency to the president who assesses the issue with the executive and/or any advisory committee. Sometimes, the request is open to all the members of the group. The final conclusion on whether to grant the loan or not will be based on the applicant's need and responsibility that is if it is felt that he is really in need and responsible enough, the loan will be granted and vice versa.¹⁵⁷

Once a request for a loan was granted, a loan contract is signed most of the times with the use of a loan form by the president and the concerned applicant indicating the loan amount, interest rate, schedule and length of loan repayment. The tentative loan schedule repayment indicates whether the applicant will pay the loan directly or indirectly through means like deducting from savings or *njangi*. Most of the loans are paid by the October, November and December meeting and hardly transcended Christmas period when the money is refunded to the members.¹⁵⁸ If a member fulfills all these, a requested loan is immediately disbursed but if the member is not up to date in terms of contributions, he or she is expected to provide a trustworthy guarantor or better still be covered by his/her savings and/or *njangi* if the member has not yet benefitted.¹⁵⁹ During the year as many as 30-60% of the members may take such loans which will hardly go above what the borrowers have kept. The sum may be increased to a level where members are obliged to surety their accumulated savings as a

¹⁵⁶ Shu Derick Neba, 35 years, Teacher, Yaoundé, 16/June/2021.

¹⁵⁷ Delancey, "Credit for the," p. 319.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Shu Derick Neba, 35 years, Teacher and Ngumna, Matilda, 41 years, Business Woman, Yaoundé, 16/June/2021

back up for loan refund. In situations of failure, the sureties are deprived of their savings, a practice also very common in modern financial institutions.¹⁶⁰

All the same, the contrast between *njangis* and modern financial institutions is that the accrued interest is distributed to all members at the end of the session including the people who borrowed and were paying interest. This is because both the saver and borrower are very important since there must be savings before borrowing can take place and savings without borrowing, will obviously yield little or no interest.¹⁶¹ Loans are used to buy plots, cars, pay school fees, build houses and some are injected in to micro and large scale business ventures. Other events could also include marriage and death fees, the purchase of high cost consumer items as well as the normal expenses of food and clothing.

The beneficiary of the *njangi* fund was said to “*chop njangi*” which actually denotes eat *njangi*. Though the beneficiary had the latitude to decide what to do with his money, the member was encouraged to use the money judiciously rather than eating since eating the money meant waste. The person who received the lot was to prudently manage his money and play the *njangi* when needed so that other people will also benefit.¹⁶² This meant that beneficiaries were to eat with consciousness of the necessity and right of other members to enjoy their own fair share. Most recipients paid their children’s school fees with the money, built houses, bought plots of land or engaged in trade and businesses while others sent their children abroad.¹⁶³ During the following gathering, a similar process transpired, with another beneficiary receiving the accrued amount. This process continued till when every member has received the lot and cooperation among members can improve one’s situation in the absence of formal financial alternatives. There were numerous variations in terms of membership as members could be numerous, colossal amounts of money may be concerned, diverse means to identify which member will benefit the lot and law enforcing mechanisms used by different groups.

Njangis were a system of reciprocity association which implied that every member in the group depended on the others to operate. It was necessary that each beneficiary of the pot continued to contribute until all other members received the pot as well because if a member benefitted from the pot and decided not to play again, then the person has enjoyed a favour and was not returning it back thus breaching the contract of mutuality. At the end of the

¹⁶⁰ Delancey, “Credit for the,” p. 320.

¹⁶¹ Nukunah, “From Feasting to,” p.49.

¹⁶² Nyamnjoh and Fuh, *Njangi Sociality: Mobility*, p.14.

¹⁶³ Shu Derick Neba, 35 years, Teacher and Ngumna Matilda, 41 years, Business Woman, Yaoundé, 16/June/2021

rotation, when all the members had received, the group decided whether to start a new rotation or not.¹⁶⁴For the ROSCA to work well, it is important for participants to be dedicated to the association. This might either be based on strong intuition of groupthink or by means of enforcement methods so that social and/or economic sanction of non-involvement was enough to motivate engagement.

Eventhough ROSCAs were structured unconventionally and most often may have poor cash flow management that is accumulated and paid out, they operate under a solid framework of regulations concerning reciprocity. Most of these *njangi* were governed by strict rules which participants were expected to play by. *Njangis* used these established rules to improve their procedures against defaults until new members are known and integrated in to the group.¹⁶⁵The operation of the scheme relied on acquiescence to social norms. The anxiety about social rejection holds greater significance for members rather than being incarcerated. Infact, participants encountered emotional and tangible inducements. The first was the principle of non-failure. This was reiterated by slogans such as *njangi* does not know death or sickness which meant that no one fails to contribute when it was the turn as there was no excuse. Their arguments were that you did not know what it took the other member to contribute so you must contribute so that the beneficiary can solve his/her own problems.

The second was the principle of no lateness in payment as most of these groups had specific time in which the money was contributed. *Njangi* was also a game of mutual support, unity, particularly for but not limited to relatives and peers. Deep community bonds were essential as it was the adoption of values that emphasised integrity, sociability and connections. It was imperative to be faithful in honouring the contributions. Loss of work or a decline in business can lead to members defaulting on contributions. In this case the member is solicited to come to terms while attempting to achieve financial security. This commitment is founded on sincerity and transparency for the association to be long-lasting. There is no credit history where a participant can be excluded but upholding a positive image in the community is very important.¹⁶⁶

Infact, the common practice of community surveillance occurs, as participants who are non-cooperative with a *njangi* to help meet their responsibilities are shun by the society. The members hardly turned to intervention from compulsory external forces of law enforcement to promote acceptable conduct. Rather they were anticipated to exemplify and

¹⁶⁴ Akongniwoh Elvis, 36 years, Teacher, Bambili, 22/Julyk2022.

¹⁶⁵ Habiba, "Structured Savings and," p.34.

¹⁶⁶ Nukunah, "From Feasting to," p.50.

propagate *njangi* ethics-the expectation of a return and extensive experience was awaited to facilitate this simple and spontaneous act. The desire to maintain a good reputation in the community is something most people strive to sustain. Most members contributed to the *njangi* not because they feared intimidations and punishment but instead because they did not want to be viewed as outsiders in the community and highly disgraced and humiliated.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, members had a particular obligation to the person who introduced them because this person stands surety for them.¹⁶⁸ New members are brought in to the group by regular or based member who pledges in the gathering to serve as a back up or guarantor in case of failure.¹⁶⁹ While this might sound exclusive, this is to ensure that all maintain the commitment to the *njangi*. The act of mutual referencing and inter-relating helped to encourage and sometimes forced members to keep to a promise.¹⁷⁰

The participants of cash *njangi* associations most often had interpersonal affiliations. Most of them were fellow workers in the same organisation and trade, others made up of family members while some were made up of people who lived in the same neighbourhood. This is because working with counterparts, co-workers, people of the same ethnic background and nearby people strenghtens affinity, enhances positive self image, fortifies faith and guarantees regular input.¹⁷¹ Summarily, participants of cash *njangi* associations were people who collaborated, recognised each other before the establishment of the *njangi*. These interactions promoted mutual trust which was a driving force in most ROSCAs. In forming such a group, identity as self-efficacy is considered an important factor in constructing boundaryless careers.

Njangi associations were similar to, rivaled with and supplemented modern financial institutions. Just like conventional financial institutions, they save and lend money to members, frequently offering lower borrowing costs than banks. *Njangis* allowed members to borrow, save and insure themselves against unexpected expenditures such as emergencies. Alternatively, they had a function beyond banking thanks to the fact that they were connectors of social networks.¹⁷² Since it rallied members who were already familiar under varied situations like work place, trade, school and church implied that *njangi* associations were tasked with creating, generating and guaranteeing persistence of social interactions that tie participants in other areas of life. In instances of social gatherings like marriages, births deaths, baptism and promotion at work, members were to show concern and togetherness

¹⁶⁷ Besing-Mengla, "Njangi: Pillar of," p.34.

¹⁶⁸ Nukunah, "From Feasting to," p.50.

¹⁶⁹ Habiba, "Structured Savings and," p.34.

¹⁷⁰ Nukunah, "From Feasting to," p.50.

¹⁷¹ Forje, "Domestic Saving Mobilisation," p.43.

¹⁷² Nyamnjoh and Fuh, *Njangi Sociality: Mobility*, p.15.

through cash and material contributions as well as personal presence and involvement in commemorating members' accomplishment or success and consoling them when they are faced with an unfortunate situation. *Njangi* was thus a web of connections and interactions based on a network of interconnected responsibilities that often bind two or more members together. Based on this study, we utilise *njangi* as an analytical model to grasp the interconnected dynamics which shaped the activities of the Peace Corps in Mezam.

2.8.1.1. Reasons for the Growth of Cash or Financial *Njangi*

The common adage that “a bundle is difficult to break”, “one hand cannot tie a bundle”, “you need a hand to wash another” were clear proofs of the communal life that existed among the people of Mezam. Many *njangi* groups in the study area had slogans such as; one another's keeper, unity is progress, unity is strength and together we grow as brother's keeper. From these mottos, it was clear that the people of these area understood that it was better to merge their meagre incomes and resources together to help one another which in turn promoted their socio-economic development. Nonetheless, being involved in ROSCA activities carries a price, for example the value of time lost due to meeting attendance, and the credit risk endured by participants can result in the collapse of the organisation. Apart from this, loans offered by ROSCAs are often of minimal sums and are mostly on short-term basis.¹⁷³ Regardless of these challenges, ROSCAs still gain favour and high-level support because of the following reasons;

ROSCAs contributed to members' reputation beyond the economic help they provided. Many ROSCAs have a strong social purpose with a large gathering connected with each period's contribution. The commitment on participants of ROSCAs to assemble and accumulate funds could offer a reason, framework and self-control to their social gathering. Most members joined such associations because they considered it as a forum of relaxation and socialisation such as the case of the *Acheuh*¹⁷⁴ and *Bumah*¹⁷⁵ *Njangi* Groups in Bafut, Ambitious Friends *Njangi* in Nkwen.¹⁷⁶ The members argued that the rotating nature of the *njangi* helped them to socialise as they moved from one member's house to another implying that they knew the houses of all the members and their way of life which they might not have known if they were saving their money in banks. These gatherings were ample avenues for members to discuss their issues and from other members, they got valuable information and advice on many topics. This ties with the view of a ROSCA member in Bafut who said that:

After contributing *njangi*, collecting savings and feasting, members now relaxed and discussed varied issues which included sharing personal challenges, plan to go to the

¹⁷³ Abimbola *et al* “Rotating and Savings,” p.190.

¹⁷⁴ Ambe Joseph, 65 years, Farmer, Bafut, 20/July/2022.

¹⁷⁵ Ngumna Mathilda, 41 years, Business Woman, Yaoundé, 16/June/2021.

¹⁷⁶ Fru Peter, 50 years, Farmer, Nkwen 30/December/2021.

farm or any other relaxation activity. It was also common for members to share family challenges like sick relations, trouble making husbands or wives. Others used such gatherings to sell clothes, shoes, jewelries and other things.¹⁷⁷

Others began meetings with prayers and biblical exhortations. If a member presented a problem that required prayer, we prayed about it together. In the spirit of one another's keeper, members were encouraged to settle any differences without involving a third party. As a further proof of the bond among members, savings and thrift colleagues often shared news of happenings in their families implying the strength of their unity and growth.¹⁷⁸

The second reason people joined ROSCAs was the trustworthiness of members. Some members argued that they were sure to recover the money saved and so preferred *njangis* to banks as testified by a member of the Ambitious Friends *Njangi* Group in Nkwen¹⁷⁹ and *Bekwi* Family *Njangi* in Bambili.¹⁸⁰ Even if a group is to lend money to non-group members, they require a trustworthy guarantor. It should be noted that no one goes in to a *njangi* with just any person as most members had interacted among themselves and this sociality and interaction promote mutual trust. This is why most *njangis* were either formed on tribal lines, colleagues in school or at work. Informal financial saving groups did not have collaterals but they functioned on mutual trust among members. The confidence that people placed on group members was a motivation why this informal mode of savings continued to flourish.

Also, most people in Mezam preferred ROSCAs because their transactions were easy and without charges as could be seen in the *Bekwi* Family *Njangi* in Bambili,¹⁸¹ *Acheuh* and *Butah* in Bafut.¹⁸² People who were not educated as well as those who had no knowledge of the modern financial institutions had no problem operating in financial *njangi* groups. In most cases the administrative bottlenecks, internal regulations, procedures and paper work that accompanied transactions were not needed. Inflexible and awkward customer due diligence or know your client, necessities such as excessive paperwork, security or guarantees and/or conditions, adversely affected individual creditworthiness from conventional financial institutions.¹⁸³ Similarly, because of the intrinsic trust networks that go with belonging, *njangis* offered a shelter where members can access credit without any complications and excessive bureaucracy or paperwork as mandated by modern financial institutions.

¹⁷⁷ Ngumna Matilda, 41 years, Business Woman, Yaoundé, 16/June/2021.

¹⁷⁸ A.J. Martin, "Female *Njangis* where Members Are at Home with Themselves", *Cameroon Tribune*, 02/October/ 2016, p.3.

¹⁷⁹ Fru Peter, 50 years, Farmer, Nkwen 30/December/2021.

¹⁸⁰ Akongniwoh Elvis, 36 years, Teacher, Bambili, 22/July/2022.

¹⁸¹ *Idem*.

¹⁸² Ambe Joseph, 65 years, Farmer, Bafut, 20/July/2022.

¹⁸³ Abimbola *et al* "Rotating and Savings," p.196.

Most members argued that with financial institutions they applied and informed the bank before collecting their money and at times the long awaited money was not even available. With *njangi*, a member simply contributed and waited his/her turn to receive the lot and the beneficiary's money was handed. Again, most members of *njangis* claimed that they saved their money and received what they saved without any interest cut from the money unlike banks where they saved money and at the end interest was deducted and they were not able to get the amount they saved. While it is true that loans can be gotten from the banks, the speed with which *njangis* can raise a loan and at minimal interest rate cannot match that of banks. *Njangis* are fast becoming authentic financial houses for the people of Mezam. The interest rates on loans are far cheaper than those from the banks.¹⁸⁴

Similarly, most people in Mezam preferred *njangis* to banks because these gatherings obliged members to be investors. Most argued that they were forced to think of development projects to undertake after the *njangi* lots were drawn so as not to misuse the money. Also in the bidding ROSCAs, beneficiaries were chosen based on how convincing the projects they wanted to accomplish were meaning that members came up with interesting projects to convince the committee in charge of choosing the beneficiary since the criteria to benefit depended on the need and the project you wanted to accomplish. This was the case of the Project *Njangi* Group in Nkwen.¹⁸⁵ Members restrict their lending to other members, but rather motivate members to establish small ventures by taxing the interest earned on savings by participants who are not debtors. The standard procedure of limiting to participants and fining them for not obtaining loans show a discrepancy between demand and supply in the *njangi*. Most of these projects have now grown in to mighty projects from which the owners reap the fruits of their labour. Besides, on the day of benefitting the *njangi*, the *njangi* chose a member who blessed and handed the money to the beneficiary with words such as little drops of water form an ocean and that whatever endeavour the beneficiary used the money for may it multiply and grow.¹⁸⁶

ROSCAs provide social aid to its members and such gatherings were used to offer help to a person in need when his closest people were not able to raise the funds themselves. This could be seen in the *Mbufede Njangi* Group in Bambili¹⁸⁷ and the *Akongne Njangi* Group in Mankon.¹⁸⁸ This was a pure act of charity towards a person in a less

¹⁸⁴ Shu Derick Neba, 35 years, Teacher, Ngumna Matilda, 41 years, Business Woman, Yaoundé, 16/June/2021.

¹⁸⁵ Ayafor Beltha, 55 years, Farmer, Nkwen, 23/December/2021.

¹⁸⁶ Fuh Roland, 45 years, Accountant, Mankon, 17/December/2022.

¹⁸⁷ Ndofung Sidonnie, 32 years, Farmer, Bambili, 22/July/2022.

¹⁸⁸ Awah Lum Yvette, 35 years, Teacher, Mankon, 17/December/2022.

fortunate situation. Most *njangis* have a constitution that is shared to all its members and most of these groups have as objective to include the socio-economic development of its members during happy and unhappy events. As members, they are obliged to contribute in cash if there is a loss (death) in the *njangi*, involving a member or their parent, partner or child.¹⁸⁹ Each member pays a flat rate or the amount is directly deducted from the sinking or trouble fund which members are later on expected to top up. This amount is stated in the constitution, to assist the bereaved family. Members are also obligated to be present in the funeral. Again, an instance of offering social help was the flexibility in adjusting the format of benefitting in order to enable a member with a challenge benefit the funds before the established date of receiving.

Any member who modifies his/her order to meet the need for change provided some level of social help to the beneficiary of the delayed funds. If members are anticipated to do same had the situation been different then there was a mutual network between members who needed social help. Again, a number of ROSCAs accumulate funds more than that of the pot in every gathering which was put in a sinking or trouble fund. This fund is given to a member in difficulty disregarding the ROSCA *njangi* funds. For example during challenging financial situations, members can agree to decrease contribution sums or postpone their *njangi* and distribute their money, to resume when the condition changes positively. This aspect of flexibility is very interesting as it indicates determination. The benefit of ethnic-based can be attributed to the flexible human relations in which this trust is embedded.¹⁹⁰ When ROSCAs had such sinking funds, there was mutual awareness in the association that participants offered one another social help in a situation of urgency. If the expected risk was uniform than a crisis will happen while money contributed was even then members with secured standings were providing help to vulnerable members in anticipated terms.

Most members who joined ROSCAs claimed that it helped them to save. They argue that saving money at home made them extravagant and can also be a challenge to the society and the economy at large. Ardener as cited by Habiba describes a *njangi* by stating that:

The most obvious function of these associations is that they assist small-scale capital formation or more simply, they create savings. Members could save their contributions themselves at home and accumulate their own funds but this would withdraw money from circulation: in a rotating savings and credit association, capital need never be idle.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Nukunah, "From Feasting to," p.50.

¹⁹⁰ Forje, "Domestic Saving Mobilisation," p.44.

¹⁹¹ Ardener as cited by Nukunah, "From Feasting to," p.34.

Being a member pushes you to work harder and compels a member to save and avoid any form of lavish lifestyle or conspicuous consumption which will be frowned upon as testified by members of the *Akongne*¹⁹² and *Achamboh*,¹⁹³ *Bekwi*¹⁹⁴ and *Mbufede*¹⁹⁵ *Njangi* groups. Savings demand restraint and ROSCAs offered a shared apparatus for individual self-discipline, when individuals show shifting desires and because of no other technological choices. In this regard, the gain of the *njangi* is viewed in the sacrifice and self-denial of the good things of life, so as to accumulate funds in the *njangi* and be part of other associations.

Njangis thus established ethical guidelines on expenditures as members abide to a shared spirit of savings and investing the rest in their business.¹⁹⁶ Also, people get the strength to save when sitting with others and more to that some *njangi* members claimed that *njangis* were part of development associations as well as cultural groups and belonging to any of these, you became a member of the *njangi* and you were obliged to save. Since these *njangi* associations were driven by a strict adherence to efficiency and reliability, immediately a person joined the group he/she was forced to save. This objective could not be realised with banks as savings was hardly compulsory. Besides, being an independent worker in the non-formal sector where it is characterised by a high level of uncertainty, many people have intentionally decided to be part of one or more *njangi* organisations as a means of broadening their income streams and spreading their investments.¹⁹⁷

Again, most farmers in rural areas joined ROSCAs because of accessibility to these institutions as claimed by members of the *Acheuh Njangi* in Bafut.¹⁹⁸ *Njangis* were already in existence for a period of time for people who had limited access to financial services to rally on weekly market days, *country* sundays (a day to rest and dedicated to appease the gods in communities of the study area) and monthly. *Njangis* are most often enshrined in pre-existing connections, social circles and form key entities for resource accumulation in remote areas characterised by informal financial systems. These groups permit members to save, accumulate and raise huge sums of capital for heavy purchases and business investments. Creating and coordinating the activities of these institutions was very easy coupled with the fact that most rural areas did not have modern financial institutions. The few that existed were located far-off in the semi urban areas and getting to some of these areas was not easy

¹⁹² Awah Lum Yvette, 35 years, Teacher, Mankon, 17/December/2022.

¹⁹³ Fuh Roland, 45 years, Accountant, Mankon, 17/December/2022.

¹⁹⁴ Akongniwoh Elvis, 36 years, Teacher, Bambili, 22/July/2022.

¹⁹⁵ Ndongfung Sidonnie, 32 years, Farmer, Bambili, 22/July/2022.

¹⁹⁶ Nyamjoh, *Bridging Mobilities: ICTs*, p.187.

¹⁹⁷ Ndongfung Sidonnie, 32 years, Farmer, Bambili, 22/July/2022.

¹⁹⁸ Ambe Joseph, 65 years, Farmer, Bafut, 20/July/2022.

with the poor nature of the roads coupled with the fact that it was time consuming. As a result of this, most members had to do with the available since *njangis* were found almost everywhere in these rural areas. This ties with the saying that when the desired is not available, the available becomes the desired.¹⁹⁹ They use them as a way of saving money towards projects and social gatherings.

Financial *njangi* groups are part of the cultural life of the people and promoted the spirit of cooperation in Mezam. Most people preferred *njangi* to banks because it provided sociality and community interest whereas the banks were profit oriented. Such groups were created to socially bond its members as most members were people who share a common identity, language, culture as was the case of the *Mbufude*,²⁰⁰ *Akongne*²⁰¹ and *Butah Njangis*.²⁰² On this premise, a member projects a sense of social belonging, network and relationship. It provides opportunities for participants to socialise, discuss, support each other in economic endeavours and congratulate each other in attaining a financial goal.²⁰³ During the regular meetings, issues that affect the daily lives of the people are discussed. They support information sharing as in the Mustard Seed *Njangi* in Bamendakwe²⁰⁴ and the Project *Njangi* in Nkwen.²⁰⁵ In this way ROSCAs offer most of the services those financial advisors in banking institutions provide. The social benefit side of *njangis* explain why even employees of formal institutions are members.²⁰⁶ Most of these associations started as sport clubs, development groups and later evolved in to financial *njangis* to remind its members of always being together, thereby promoting the spirit of cooperation and solidarity.

2.9. *Njangi*, an Engine of Development: Case Study of the Butah Unity Njangi Group in Bafut

Njangi evokes a notion of reciprocity and interdependency that relates to mutual assistance and reliance. One of the essential ingredients of *njangi* is shared help and support for each other often channeled through cash contributions to one or more members in this system of mutuality. As part of its efforts, members contribute cash in to a social pot often considered as emergency or trouble fund that is a security measure or coverage targeted at helping members in times of trouble especially in times of death or illness. The speed with

¹⁹⁹ Shu Derick Neba, 35 years, Teacher, Yaoundé, 16/June/2021.

²⁰⁰ Ndofung Sidonnie, 32 years, Farmer, Bambili, 22/July/2022.

²⁰¹ Awah Lum Yvette, 35 years, Teacher, Mankon, 17/December/2022.

²⁰² Ambe Joseph, 65 years, Farmer, Bafut, 20/July/2022.

²⁰³ Abimbola *et al* "Rotating and Savings," p.196.

²⁰⁴ Munjong John, 60 years, Farmer, Ajaman, Bamendakwe, 30/December/2021

²⁰⁵ Ayafor Beltha, 55 years, Farmer, Nkwen, 22/December/2021.

²⁰⁶ Ojong and Obeng-Odoom, "Resilience and Dynamism," p.190.

which ROSCAs react to their members' needs can rarely be matched by distance and banking systems. If an incident happened with a member having an unforeseen income reduction and needed the funds but where the next established beneficiary also needed the funds, there was a conflict of interest.²⁰⁷

The person with the unforeseen income reduction depended on the power of social interactions, relations and collaboration within the group to be able to persuade the other member(s) to adjust the format of turns. This expanded the scope of the notion of mutuality, as being ready to alter the format of beneficiaries in a ROSCA was anticipated to be returned in a future turn if their circumstances were switched. The rotatory nature of the *njangi* was seen amongst members as an opportunity for members within the collective to, at various times, address their social and economic concerns. This was because the people in Mezam noticed that it was through joint efforts and merging their meagre incomes that they could better succeed. This was the case with the *Butah Njangi* Group in Bafut formed in 2005 as an exclusive social group for male participants with a membership of 12 and Nforbugwe Pius, Agwene Frederick and Ngwabumba Pascal as president, vice and secretary.²⁰⁸

The birth of this social group was motivated by the desire to encourage members to venture in to diverse developmental activities and in that process collectively contribute money and hand it to each beneficiary in a rotating manner until all the members had their own share of the lot. The group also promoted social solidarity through conviviality and reciprocity and it also served as a forum of socialisation. Members met on monthly basis in a rotating manner usually in the house of the beneficiary where money was contributed and passed on to the member to pay fees for their children, buy plots, build houses, provide capital for business and take care of family needs.²⁰⁹ Unlike most other *njangi* groups in Mezam which had a specific schedule of beneficiaries that is the order of benefitting was determined from the first day through ballot, the *Butah njangi* was different. A prospective beneficiary needed just to request the *njangi* and it was given to him but if there is a clash of interest meaning that two members requested it, the beneficiary was chosen based on the emergency and need of the money. Also, if there was no member wishing to benefit, it was simply handed to any executive member usually in descending order and any new member was automatically pushed to benefit in the last position.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Ndonwi David, 49 years, Builder, Bafut, 10/June/2022.

²⁰⁸ Nforbugwe Pius, 50 years, Driver/President of the Group, Bafut, 25/June/2022.

²⁰⁹ *Idem*

²¹⁰ NgwaBumba Pascal, 44 years, Nurse/Secretary of the Group, Bafut, 5/June/2022.

On every *njangi* meeting day, members were expected to appear in the meeting wearing traditional caps and do their normal contributions. It should be noted that after the normal contributions were done, each member had to contribute an additional 10.000frs in to the project fund while 120.000 frs was deducted from the beneficiary.²¹¹ This project money was saved and interest shared to members at the end of the year and when the money reached a particular amount, the members decided to use it and opened a school in the village which is not only benefitting them but the entire community. After contributions they ate usually achu, drank and shared fowls and if there was any news making event, the house was informed about it for debates.²¹² Members contract their membership to unfailingly honour varying monthly contributions. Most members testified how this social gathering helped them realise projects without which they would not have. The members argued that they were obliged to contribute since in case of failure, fines were levied on defaulters who could generally be associated with untrustworthiness.

These transactions are made possible as a result of the existence of interpersonal ties and as a result of the fact that these interactions are unofficial, as the transactions are not legally secured or protected by law between the parties involved. Autonomy, independence and freedom facilitate the exchange of funds among members within the group. The diverse parties to the transactions respect the undocumented obligations since the effects of failure or breakdown are not only social but also economic. Trust was thus the foundation on which participants congregated and socialised, justifying why members were punished when they breached the contract of cash commitment whether physically or electronically especially through mobile money seen as an agent of confidence and trustworthiness. It is important to mention that since most people in Mezam were farmers, their interactions transcended the financial worth of *njangi* as such associations were also perceived as a form of labour.

2.10. Farmer Groups (Service or Farming *Njangi*) as a Catalyst of Development in Mezam

Farming *njangi* group was an association of cultivators who rally themselves and provide labour to the farmlands of members in turns. Members assist each other during the sowing and reaping seasons that is they take turns in tilling and arranging the farms and also rotate to collect or harvest crops when they are ready. Delancey defines such groups by arguing that the association is a profit-based common practice of coordinating joint efforts or services, what could be considered collective land clearing group. Different members decide

²¹¹ *Idem.*

²¹² Ndonwi David, 49 years, Builder, Bafut, 10/June/2022.

to provide labour as an association, beginning on the land of a member, and successively on the land of other members in the association until the process was completed. Indeed a greater share of the money saved by members of such groups was used to hire labour to clear their farmland.²¹³ These farming institutions were very common in Mezam especially in the rural areas where agriculture is the main stay of the economy. Examples of some of these farming *njangi* groups included; the *Mboonse*, *Nsegeh* and *Abongjam Njangi* Groups in Bafut, Mankon and Bali respectively. Farming *njangis* offer huge networks of support for production and exchange of goods and services with direct impact on livelihoods.²¹⁴

Members gather on the farm of the beneficiary to plough and sow crops. The number of members usually range from 5-20 within the age range of 20-50 years as above that age, productivity diminishes as the farmer becomes slow and weak. Generally, the number of members in the farming *njangi* group was directly proportional to the farm sizes implying that in areas with large farm sizes, the number of members increased and vice versa.²¹⁵ The beneficiary provided food and drinks to the members even though in some cases, they all brought food of different types.²¹⁶ Each member brought whatever quantity of food she could afford. These women worked and ate in harmony.

The participants of service *njangi* group kept aside some days in the week as *njangi* days for members to provide their services in the field. The length of work each day was fixed which was averagely 8 hours. The members had a format they followed which was in respect of an existing timetable or calendar drawn up from the beginning. They followed this format from one field to the other until all member's benefitted. At the end of the farming rotation, the members could begin another round and the calendar was sometimes reversed. Most service *njangi* drew this schedule and left out one week in a month. During this time (1 week), the association permitted members and non-members who demanded their services to hire them. The payment made by a member was cheaper than that of non-members justifying the benefits of social and economic belonging. The funds members received from their hiring to work in the fields of members and non-members was saved. This money could be loan out to members who paid interest to the group. At the end of the farming season, part of the money saved by the farming *njangi* group was used to purchase basic farming tools to

²¹³ Delancey, "Credit for the," p.319.

²¹⁴ Fonchingong and Mbah, "Social Solidarity Economy," p.135.

²¹⁵ Besing-Mengla, "Njangi: Pillar of," p.36.

²¹⁶ Nyamnjoh and Fuh, *Njangi Sociality: Mobility*, p.15.

distribute to members. By the end of the year, most often in December the rest was used to buy food items and drinks to celebrate the end of year festivities.²¹⁷

2.10.1. Reasons for the Growth of Farming *Njangi* Groups

In most rural areas of Mezam division, many farmers preferred farming *njangi* because of the efficiency of labour. Most farmers argued that work was done faster and relatively easier with farming *njangi* groups than when the farmer relied only on individual or family labour. This was testified by members of the *Abongjam Njangi* Group in Bali,²¹⁸ *Mboonse Njangi* in Bafut.²¹⁹ As experts in the field, members of *njangi* groups within few hours did enough work that might have taken weeks or months if the farmer relied on alternative sources of labour. The quantity and quality of work done by these members was superb as in the course of discussing and working, work went faster. Most of these groups had committees and a work supervisor who inspected and made sure that members worked qualitatively and quantitatively. Members who failed to maintain quantity and quality were heavily sanctioned.

Also, members claimed they joined such gatherings because they wanted to avoid or reduce crop destruction since they could not supply the required labour needed to keep their farms in order as was the case with *Nsegeh Njangi* in Mankon,²²⁰ *Abongjam Njangi* in Bali.²²¹ Farmers declared that working alone in large farms made them demotivated and at times work was abandoned on such farms and this led to crop failure. Members argued that this situation of crop failure and destruction was a regular situation especially with farmers who had large farms and those who had so many farms especially in far areas. For this problem to be solved, farmers who had large and many farms joined such gatherings to easily do the work and on time. Farmers noticed that such groups helped them plough their farms, weed and harvest their crops on time because of the high supply of labour.²²²

Again, most farmers belonged to service *njangi* groups because of the benefits of social relations, interactions, team spirit and collaboration that was built among members as was the case in the *Mboonse Njangi* in Bafut,²²³ *Abongjam Njangi* in Bali.²²⁴ In Mezam, farmers spent most of their days in farms as they stayed in farm houses especially in far-off

²¹⁷ Besing-Mengla, "Njangi: Pillar of," p.36.

²¹⁸ Saburm Regina, 52 years, Farmer, Bali, 20/August/2022.

²¹⁹ Bih Bridget, 51 years, Business Woman, Bafut, 20/July/2022

²²⁰ Nji Cecilia, 50 years, Farmer, Mankon, 22/July/2022.

²²¹ Dinbongha Martha, 54 years, Farmer, Bali, 25/August/2022.

²²² Lum Monica, 70 years, Farmer, Bafut, 10/July/2022.

²²³ Bih Bridget, 51 years, Business Woman, Bafut, 20/July/2022

²²⁴ Lehdogha Comfort, 59 years, Farmer, Bali, 20/August/2022.

farms which enabled them to do a lot of work within this period. When they went back home, they were already exhausted as a result of the farm work and did not have enough time to see friends. This decreased the social interactions among peers who were rarely around but however farmers who were members of farming *njangi* groups continued enjoying social connections, spirit of togetherness and cooperation among themselves. They encountered each other on numerous occasions within the week and had a lot of time in the farms to relate and connect. In the course of working in the farms, it served as a training ground for participants as they shared pleasantries, experiences and helped new and young members as working together motivated them to copy and apply the success stories in farming and other development issues learnt from members of the group.²²⁵

Whether the benefits were in cash or in kind, no one entered in to a *njangi* with an unknown or better still just anyone, as it entailed a financial commitment of one's own capital or any other service that one will not tolerate a loss. Confidentiality either in the form of existing links or in the form of togetherness through belonging and abiding to a sense of shared values, norms and a fashioned kinship is therefore a vital prerequisite. Closeness and understanding may not be an insurance against disloyalty and self-seeking or exploitation but they provide greater security than simply taking a leap faith with careless or advancing with dislike or contempt for humanity.

2.11. Some Njangi Groups as a Drawback to Development in Mezam

Irrespective of the fact that *njangis* were regarded as a locomotive of development in Mezam, such groups presented some weaknesses which retarded the process of development in the study area. The major weaknesses identified by the people of the area included; failures or delays to meet up with *njangi* contributions, promotion of robbery, mismanagement of finances, jealousy among members as well as irregular attendance of meeting by members.

Some of the slogans of *njangi* groups were “*njangi* does not know death, it does not know sickness.” This indicated that failure to meet up with *njangi* contribution was not tolerated as every beneficiary contributed no matter the condition. With cash *njangi*, members failed to make their contributions and this posed a serious problem as it made the beneficiary to be unable to receive the expected amount which bred frustration and loss of trust among members. This could be seen in the *Achamboh*, *Bumah*, Project, *Mbufude* and many other *njangis* in Mezam. These caused a lot of problems as most members who had planned projects were unable to realise these projects and this retarded development. As a

²²⁵Besing-Mengla, “Njangi; Pillar of,” p.37.

solution to the challenge, it could be seen that *njangi* groups most often did not include members with doubtful character during balloting.

The general practice was that such members together with the new ones who just joined were automatically assigned the last positions to receive the pot. Others, created and sent committees to go and talk with such members and the beneficiary's money recovered. Generally, most *njangi* had outline penalties for those who did not contribute their money on time or those that did not even contribute at all. Sanctions were very hard on those that benefitted than those who failed without benefitting. In extreme cases, legal measures were taken against defaulters. Having problems with irregular payment of due contribution, is a major problem as ROSCAs were not sustainable if payments were not made. At the end of every *njangi* session, such members who either delayed with their contributions or failed to contribute, were usually expelled and not allowed to continue in the next round.²²⁶

Another major weakness of ROSCAs was the issue of irregular attendance as some members were there to save their money and never bothered to attend meetings. These posed a serious problem especially with *njangis* born out of cultural development associations. This was the case of the NJIBCUDA Bamenda branch meeting. Meeting attendance by members served as indication of commitment to the group. Encouraging group solidarity, was a possible way to improve the sustainability of ROSCAs.

Mismanagement and embezzlement of money were drawbacks of some *njangis* in Mezam. Firstly, some *njangi* groups kept a certain percentage of the money contributed by members during each session of the meeting. These funds were disbursed as loans and interest earned on this loans. Other associations employed a competitive tendering process to select the recipients. The sum received from the competitive tendering process (bidding) was made accessible for borrowing and interest generated. With service *njangi*, the associations accumulated funds when the groups services were hired by members and non-members. Some members argued that the money was usually mismanaged or embezzled especially in the rural areas of Mezam where most of its members were not very educated. They claimed that, the amount given at the end of every *njangi* session was small thereby raising concerns of embezzlement among those who oversaw the finances. Some members looted funds causing the group to experience economic hardship. Members sometimes were afraid of the fact that those who kept their money could abscond with the funds, thereby inflicting financial damage on the group especially during this socio-political crisis as most financial

²²⁶ Shu Derick Neba, 35 years, Teacher, Yaoundé, 16/June/2021

secretaries and treasurers used the security situation as a pretext to disappear with members' money till date. This was the case with the Project, *Acheuh* and *Butah Njangi* Groups.²²⁷

The possibility of robbing people who benefitted from financial *njangi* was a major weakness of this financial institution. This was very visible in the Mustard Seed, Project and the 25th *Njangi* Groups. Participants in a session of the *njangi* usually had clear expectations of who would benefit. The members convened in a shared space and contributions were made at the end and the funds were allocated to the recipient. In some instances, members made contributions hiddenly and the recipient was secretly handed the funds while others played their *njangis* directly in to the beneficiary's private account in modern financial institutions and just the receipts were brought to the meeting to justify contributions. All of this was in a bid to reduce the risk of arm robbery and cover the beneficiary. Irrespective of this, some participants argued that even when the recipient received the funds quietly or hiddenly, some beneficiaries still experienced home invasion or burglary robbery especially at night in which the robbers asked the recipients to give the full sum they received from the *njangi*. Others were assaulted as they headed home after benefitting the *njangi*. Most of the *njangi* members claimed that some of the thieves had a spy or canary among the members. Most people argued that they preferred banks because with *njangi*, beneficiaries could be robbed.²²⁸

2.12. Conclusion

The chapter established the place of self-reliance in community development by analysing the evolution and activities of some communities in local development within Mezam. The chapter argued that diminished state intervention rejuvenated the spirit of self-help, as communities tended to build their capabilities. As a result, most communities initiated, supervised and implemented projects in Mezam especially in the domains of water schemes, education, health, maintenance of roads and bridges which greatly improved the livelihood of the people in the area. Based on these results, the chapter concluded that the active involvement and engagement of community members in efforts to improve their quality of life with much dependence on their own resources was crucial in encouraging initiatives, self-help and mutual-help. The fundamental principle is for communities to focus on their own resources and needs and addressing pressing issues by building on local strengths. If these organisations were enhanced or reinforced, they can play a greater role in planning for local and regional development. Irrespective of this, most of these institutions were plagued by the problem of finance and this pushed most Village Development

²²⁷ Bih Bridget, 51 years, Business Woman, Bafut, 20/July/2022

²²⁸ *Idem*.

Associations to seek support from international voluntary agencies. Besides, the receptive nature of the people and their sustainable self-reliant development efforts were important factors in attracting voluntary agencies to Mezam. There is no question about the need for volunteer skills to the Cameroonian situation, especially if we look at the broad areas in which volunteers operate. Most Peace Corps volunteers have worked and continue to work in agriculture, health and education. However, it is difficult to evaluate the extent of their skills from their qualifications only. Hence the need for practical fieldwork. The next chapter of the work seeks to show the contributions of the Peace Corps to the development of Mezam Division.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE U.S. PEACE CORPS IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF MEZAM DIVISION

3.1. Introduction

The chapter has as aim to discuss the projects that were initiated, supervised and implemented by the Peace Corps in the domain of agriculture and transport as well as rural and urban development in Mezam. Peace Corps volunteers brought ideas that were shared with local developers both on the ground and through training programmes and these programmes linked them with local farmer organisations. In this light, the Peace Corps participated in the extensive network of connecting varied locations and actions that launched a global campaign to combat poverty. Volunteers helped local associations adopt new agricultural techniques that were not known in Mezam as well as helped them improve on their income generating activities. Other volunteers achieved a lot in diverse domains such as animal husbandry, fish production and environmental protection. In the same light, the story of the birth, growth and proliferation of cooperative societies in Mezam will be incomplete if allusion is not made to Peace Corps volunteers. They also helped increase farmers' income by improving on the existing transport systems so that farmers can get access to markets and easily sell their local products.

The Peace Corps is a volunteer-based development agency which differed from other development organisations because rather than funding infrastructure as most agencies did, the organisation built the capacity of people so that they managed their own development.¹ Capacity building refers to development projects of different types mainly aimed at alleviating poverty and ameliorating the livelihoods of local people. This term transcends learning activities or practices to include not only man power management but also change management and institutional strengthening. It is clear that empowering people and agribusiness is of great significance in most improvement initiatives all over the globe. It permits farmers in remote areas especially those carrying out inter-cropping to refine their abilities and understanding of advanced farming techniques. It also illustrates how crucial it is to refine products to improve their quality, ways of creating new products, build market connections, strengthen farmer organisation and ability.²

¹ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Volunteer Handbook*, p.3.

² D. Prianda, *et al*, "Farmers Empowerment: Drivers and Challenges among Smallholder Farmers in Mezam Division, Cameroon", *International Journal of Business Economics*, Vol.3., Issue 2, March 2022, p.133.

3.2. Integrated Agriculture

Strengthening peasant farmers hardly stresses on farming but on what can be done to enable farmers to become independent and self-reliant. It makes farmers feel integrated in to the community and their engagement in to the association, boosts self-worth and promotes self-appreciation thus enhancing the living standards of the farmers. Capacity building is required to strengthen farmers to promote meritocracy and transparency that is a shared hurdle for all government-supported initiatives. It has made great progress to shape farm output. Whenever farmers concerntrate on specific crops, it strengthens them to be market-oriented. For effective farm output to be attained, there is the need for farmers to be strengthened. This capacity building should be an apparatus by which farmers quality of life are enhanced.³

To achieve this, volunteers worked with their local partners to organise workshops and seminars and the knowledge learnt was complemented with practical demonstrations. Capacity building helped the people to formulate new policies that helped in the development of their communities and sustained development for a long time. It depended on the different Peace Corps projects and the areas which had greatest opportunity where volunteers worked. A Peace Corps project was a series of volunteer initiatives in a country of service committed to fulfill established aims and objectives, in partnership with the recipient state to enhance the country's growth channeled towards attaining established profits.⁴ Peace Corps projects in Cameroon and Mezam in particular were grouped in to three main sectors which were agriculture, health and education. The above projects were designed in a way that volunteers focused on activities in which they were trained and expected to impact the society. The Peace Corps ensured that all projects increased local capacity and addressed priorities of those who had limited access to resources. The efforts of the Peace Corps in the development of agriculture in Mezam constitute the next part of the study.

As is typical in many Sub-Saharan African countries and Cameroon, agriculture is the vital engine of the economy engaging about 70% of the inhabitants. On account of its size, the robust agricultural sector is vital for progress atleast in the long-run. Nevertheless, agricultural production is growing at a slower pace than population growth. Agricultural development requires the embracement of farmer organisations to facilitate improved access

³ *Ibid.*

⁴Peace Corps, *Programming, Training and*, p.27.

to productive resources, capacity building, marketing and access to production credit.⁵ This implies that enhancing output and resilience of subsistence farmers require greater asset availability (insecticides, fertiliser, land and man power) and financial resources. Moreso, the environmental footprint of agriculture can be reduced by effectively utilising resources.⁶

The negative impacts of the financial crisis in the 1980s and reduced government involvement in the implementation of essential social and economic services in rural areas of Sub-Saharan Africa had a substantial impact on their socio-economic improvement. In the phase of the persistent socio-economic infrastructural deprivation, most rural communities in Mezam witnessed a dwindling socio-economic improvement. The economic downturn spurred the state to withdraw from the socio-economic sector without proactive strategies to improve the availability of essential social and economic services in the rural areas. The economic malaise and state disconnection had a strong negative impact on the agricultural sector. Inadequate access to basic infrastructure amongst the rural communities in Mezam had an adverse effect on the population whose main economic activity is agriculture.⁷

Agriculture remains the breadbasket of the Cameroonian economy. It generates the highest number of employment both qualified and unqualified, guarantees food safety, substantially impacts Cameroon's GDP and export proceeds and most especially supplies basic materials to the manufacturing sector though still in the budding stages of development. Low access to agriculture continued to limit the ability of rural communities to improve on their socio-economic well-being since the agricultural industry still suffers from deteriorated farm to market roads, deficient marketing framework, limited credit availability, exploration and invention, raising awareness among farmers and development programmes.⁸ The incidence of poverty in Cameroon is about 22.1% and 49.9% in urban and rural areas respectively.⁹ Writing in 1969, R.H. Green, observed that:

The Cameroon economy is marked by low levels of output by the vast majority of its participants and as a corollary by low levels of consumption and of human investment. This in turn hamper efforts to raise productivity. Standards of nutrition,

⁵ K.F. Mbangari *et al*, "Role of Farmers' Organisations to Agricultural Development in Mezam Division, Cameroon", *Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development*, Vol.11, No.8, August 2019, p.140.

⁶ L. Atamja, and S. Yoo, "Analysis of the Technical Efficiency of Potato Farmers in Mezam Division of the North-West Region of Cameroon", *Journal of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences*, Vol. 34, No.2, 2022, p.119.

⁷ A.A. Neba, "Development Actors and Socio-Economic Development: The Case of Basic Infrastructural Provision in Rural Agricultural Uplift in Communities of Mezam Division", *Global Scientific Journal*, Vol.10, Issue 1, 2022, p.1928.

⁸ *Ibid*.

⁹ G.H.F. Fouepe and K.F. Mbangari., "Contributions of Farmers Organisations to Rural Development: Case of the North-West Farmers Organisation in Mezam Division, Cameroon, *Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development*, Vol. 9, No.7, 2017, p.130.

health and education are clearly dependent on output per head but present deficiencies limit the physical, mental and technical capacity of most Cameroonians to achieve higher levels of output.¹⁰

After examining the constraints to the development of the agricultural sector in Cameroon, most voluntary organisations saw a dire need to intervene in this sector in order to avert a food crisis that brought other African countries to their knees. This was why the Peace Corps had to identify problems and come out with projects that sought to boost agriculture at the basic levels. In Cameroon, the Peace Corps intervened in the promotion of agricultural groups, NGOs as well as rural populations as agriculture volunteers were assigned to rural farmer organisations in villages and small towns. In partnership with seasoned counterparts, volunteers collaborated with farmer organisations, cooperatives and farmer owned associations to provide them with knowledge and skills in sustainable agriculture involving integrated agriculture. They also worked in neighbouring schools to enhance and support school gardening activities. This support to self-help capacities of the rural population concerned technical, sectorial priorities, activities and the provision of advice to organisations and institutions. The goals of this intervention in the agricultural domain in Cameroon were to set up organisational and managerial capacities, mobilise human and natural resources in view of self-help promotion. It also ensured that informal and organised farmers' groups used their human, financial, natural and material resources efficiently, provide accompanying measures for the organisations and initiate an efficient cooperation network between farmers' organisation and private as well public service providers.¹¹

Agriculture is the dominant economic activity of the people of Mezam though forestry and livestock provided vital props.¹² The fact that agriculture occupied a crucial slot in Mezam's development plans showed the importance the area attached to it. The agricultural population was estimated at 258,467 inhabitants in 2015 representing 43.07 percent of farm families in Cameroon.¹³ These sectors of the economy employed a significant proportion of the population on part time and full time bases. Irrespective of the fact that agriculture occupied a commanding position in the economy of Mezam, the development of this sector still remains traditional as the lack of technology and knowledge of farming techniques to deal with challenges such as crop diversity, market access, soil and livestock management threatened the livelihood of many in the study area and the income poverty rate situation was

¹⁰ Azoh-Mbi, "The Contribution of," p.82.

¹¹ Etanefila, "Cameroon-German Technical," p.63.

¹² RAB, File No.NW/Sa/d/1979/5, "Bamenda Today, Ministry of Information and Culture 1979" p.20.

¹³ Mbangari *et al*, "Role of Farmers," p.140, Fouepe and Mbangari "Contributions of Farmers," p.131.

estimated at 39.9% in 2007.¹⁴ Farmlands in the study area suffered from serious soil erosion and impoverishment. This was because of the hilly nature of the terrain, the relatively high seasonal rainfall, often torrential and friable nature of soils.¹⁵ The traditional bush fallow system was also a serious threat as most of the permanent vegetation was removed and burnt, sometimes inside the ridges in a system known as *Ankara* (a ridge made of burnt vegetation) which made the farmland to deteriorate.

Also, the reduction in the proportion of domestically produced food and industrial requirement is an important issue in Mezam. The situation of food availability and poverty is deteriorating because of rising food prices affecting low-income individuals and the disproportionate distribution of wealth among the rich, privileged regions and social groups owning land and earning income within and out of the agricultural domain. Most of the arable land is used for the cultivation of crops destined for external markets or exports with little of the produce consumed in the local market. Most countries in Africa are subjected to specialised production of raw materials and are conventionally reliant on the foreign sale of a single product. Agricultural enhancement for the vulnerable people is a pillar to poverty alleviation but the government is steadily withdrawing from actively involving.¹⁶ The goals of the Peace Corps agriculture projects in Mezam were two folds; increase agricultural income generating activities and strengthen farmer's business capacities as seen below based on available data.

Table 19: Some volunteers that have served in the Agriculture Programme in Mezam

No	Volunteer	Service Post	Service role	Year of service
1	Leslie Torrans	Bambui	Fish culture Trainer	1971-1973
2	Richard McEachern	Bamenda	Fish Culture Trainer	1979-1984
3	Randy Lefevere	Bamenda	Fish Culture Trainer/Pond Construction	1980-1984
4	Valerie Aas	Bali-Bawock	Agroforestry Extension Agent	1993-1995
5	Chicky Engstrom	Awing	Agroforestry Extension Agent	1996-2000
6	Megan Bartey	Bamenda	Agroforestry Extension Agent	2005-2007
7	Brian Bragg	Bambui	Agroforestry Extension Agent	2008-2010
8	Stephen Cormier	Pinyin	Agroforestry Extension Agent	2010-2012
9	Jon Ray	Gungong-Bali	Agroforestry Extension Agent	2010-2012

Source: Author's Conception, 10/October/2021.

The above shows volunteers and projects they joined in the initiation, supervision and implementation in the agricultural domain. Volunteers were involved in organic farming,

¹⁴ Fouepe and Mbangari, "Contributions of Farmers," p.130.

¹⁵ RAB, File No. NW/Qh/e./1987/1, "Kilum Mountain Forest Project, 1987," p.25.

¹⁶ M.Y. Bobbo and T. E. Angwafo, "The Influence of Farmer-Grazier Conflicts on Food Security in the North-West Region of Cameroon: The Case of Mezam Division", *International Journal of Horticulture, Agriculture and Food Science*, Vol.4, Issue 6, 2020, p. 207.

mushroom cultivation, catchment protection, poultry farming and pasture improvement. Volunteers spent a substantial amount of time in the field with their counterparts to strengthen and advance sustainable practices and abilities. It is a practical exercise by which volunteers and their partners engage with local farming communities to help them build and expand their agricultural output, implementing advanced animal management techniques, enhancing their intake of diverse, healthy foods and diets. Agriculture volunteers also join forces with health and education volunteers to establish school gardens as well as malaria and HIV mitigation and prevention initiatives respectively.

Crop Cultivation

One of the ways in which volunteers strengthened the capacity of the people of Mezam in the agricultural sector was by partnering with local counterparts to organise trainings with farmers on soil fertility management, home gardening nutrition and new farming techniques.¹⁷In Bali in 2010, volunteer Jon after meeting with the *Abongjam* Women's Group of 25 women decided to offer free workshops on home gardening nutrition which had as objective to increase their knowledge on home gardening nutrition so as to reduce malnutrition. Three sessions were facilitated for the women's group leaders. The first focused on fundamental food intake,¹⁸ the second on organic gardening¹⁹ and in the third training, competences like tofu²⁰ and composting were implemented as shown below. In the workshops, the participants were taught on how they could use small plots of land to cultivate abundant food crops rich in proteins with the use of natural compost produced by the farmers.

They were also educated on income generating activities that could help them raise money for their daily needs. For example, participants were taught on how to use soya beans to make tofu. The workshops were completed in a demonstration farm to exemplify the possibility of using small spaces to grow abundant food.²¹In the end, 21 women and 2 men were trained on basic nutrition, intensive vegetable gardening and compost making. Out of the participants, two new gardens were created and three improved upon from information taught at the workshops.²²Moore in 2014 organised a six weeks course in Bawum on how to use gardening skills build a small-scale business. Working with local partners, the team

¹⁷ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer/Owner of the Agro-industrial Complex, Mambu, 20/August /2019.

¹⁸ Saburm Regina, 52 years, Farmer/Participant, Gungong, Bali, 25/August /2022.

¹⁹ Dinbogha Martha, 54 years, Farmer/ Participant, Gungong, Bali, 25/ August /2022.

²⁰ It is an excellent source of iron, calcium and protein. It is also known as bean curd which is food prepared by curdling or hardening soymilk, squeezing and solidifying the curds into white blocks with a range of softness. It is a staple in East and Southeast Asian cuisines.

²¹Nyongka Grace, 61 years, Farmer/Participant, Gungong, Bali, 25/August /2022.

²² Lehdogha Comfort, 59 years, Farmer/Participant and President of the Group, Gungong, Bali, 25/ August /2022.

offered technical training to 45 farmers, completing fieldwork on intensive gardening, strategies for natural soil improvement, food security and marketing. As a result of the training, 22 trainees built on what they learnt to form a profitable gardening cooperative.²³

Plate 2 : Volunteer and Counterpart in a Demonstration Farm in Mambu



Source:Downloaded from www.flickr.com. Com consulted on 27/August/2019 at 10:00 a.m
The above shows a Peace Corps volunteer and counterpart standing close to a marcotted plum tree, fruiting after three years of transplanting

Plate 3 : Home Gardening Nutrition Training in Gungong Bali



Source: Abongjam Women's group archives, Bali, 20/August/2022
The above shows a women's group in Bali after a workshop on home gardening nutrition

Also, volunteer Reinsma during training educated the people of Mezam on how to recycle waste. The participants were trained on producing organic pest repellents from inexpensive local ingredients as opposed to expensive chemical products. To Achu Peter, a volunteer counterpart, he remarked that: “i am impressed with the physical involvement of Peace Corps volunteers in field activities at the grassroot level. They have been very influential in the lives of the people of Mezam especially in the agro-forestry domain.”²⁴

In the same light, volunteers organised workshops in Mezam in partnership with training centres like the *IRAD* sub station and the Agro-Industrial Complex in Bafut, the Mushroom Production and Training Centre and the North West Farmers' Organisation. During such workshops, on-the-spot and on-the-job trainings were carried out on different methods of crop protection, seed multiplication and mushroom production as shown below. The aim was to help farmers understand new methods which were not very common to most farmers in Mezam. The programme in each zone corresponded to the existing situation in the

²³ LumAgnes, 52 years, Farmer/Participant, Mambu, 20/August /2019.

²⁴ Achu Peter, 65 years, Retired Palm Oil Plantation Manager/Volunteer Counterpart, Nforya, 15/August/2018.

field. Farmers were trained and they tried it on their farms through the application of the improved methods of agricultural production learnt at the various centres.²⁵

Plate 4 : Mushroom Training Workshop in Bamenda



Source: MUPTAREC archives, Bamenda, 23/December/2021
The above shows volunteers and participants after a Mushroom Training Workshop in Bamenda

Plate 5 :: The North West Farmers' Organisation



Source: Author's collection, Bamenda, 30/December/2021
The above shows the North West Farmer's Organisation, a partner and service post of Peace Corps volunteers

Similarly, to promote agriculture in some areas, agricultural inputs were distributed by volunteers to farmers freely like improved crop variety seeds. In Bafut, volunteer Reinsma gave Shu Joram a farmer and owner of the Agro-Industrial Complex one kilogram of moringa oleifeera seeds to plant.²⁶ In Nforya in 2017, farmers were given 30 moringa seeds to go and plant for the benefit of their own families.²⁷ In Mundum volunteers shared a seedling and three seeds each to the 14 attendees who showed up for training and each received a short manual on moringa cultivation.²⁸ There was also the introduction of new crop varieties like the experimentation of the orange-fresh potatoes which was unknown to most farmers and contained more vitamin A than the local varieties as shown below.

²⁵ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer/ Owner of Agro-Industrial complex, Mambu, 20/August /2019.

²⁶ *Idem*.

²⁷ Achu Peter, 65 years, Retired Palm Oil Plantation Manager/Volunteer Counterpart, Nforya, 15/August/2018.

²⁸ Neba Maurice, 62 years, Farmer/ Participant, Mundum, 25/August/2019.

Plate 6: New Varieties of Potatoes in Bafut

Source: Neba Maurice's archives, Mundum, 25/August/2019
The above depicts improved varieties of potatoes harvested from the AIC with more vitamin A

Plate 7: Some of the Moringa seeds in AIC

Source: Author's collection, Mambu, 20/August/2019.
The plate above presents some of the surviving Moringa plants in the Complex.

Despite all these efforts put in by the volunteers, they noticed that it was necessary to link crop cultivation with animal rearing. This will help diversify the activities of farmers and also help farmers reap the fruits of integrated farming.

3.2.1. Integrated Animal Husbandry

Cattle rearing generates about \$96.1 million for the entire North-West Region and serves as a source of livelihood for about 5041 families.²⁹ Mezam is one of the potential areas as far as livestock production is concerned. Cattle grazing in the area is an invaluable economic activity as it is a source of revenue, livelihood, organic manure and employment of many people. The domestic animal population of Mezam is overstated at 1.318 cattle flocks, above 22.378 drove of sheep, 46.024 herds of goat, 469 horse groups, over 23.702 pig groups and 538.369 poultry farms.³⁰ Although the cattle herding enterprise in Mezam is very important, the future of its continuity is uncertain because of a series of economic, social and

²⁹ G. Tamufor *et al*, "Sustainability Assessment of Cattle Herding in the North-West Region of Cameroon, Central Africa", *Journal of Development and Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 9, Issue 10, October 2017, p.290.

³⁰ A. Mamoudou *et al*, "Preliminary Assessment of Bovine Trypanosomiasis and its Vectors in Santa, Bali and Bafut Sub Divisions of the North-West Region of Cameroon", *International Journal of Biological and Chemical Sciences*, Vol.10, Issue 1, 2016, p.2.

environmental challenges. Inadequate road accessibility for the marketing of livestock and related products, low yield of cattle and its associated products because of faded pastures and reduced grazing land, inability of cattle rearers to plan and implement advanced production processes are some of the main hinderances to the economic resilience of livestock rearing in Mezam.³¹ Similarly, its topography, temperature, rainfall, climate, height differences may provide a conducive environment for the prevalence of tse-tse and other biting flies.³²

The Peace Corps' aim of assisting in livestock was to help arrest and reverse the progressive deterioration of land and vegetation due to overgrazing and help diversify the activities of crop farmers. The Peace Corps organised on-the-spot and on-the-job training on livestock development in Nfonta. Farmers were also encouraged to diversify their activities by raising pigs, and other livestock side by side with fish so that they could provide feed for the fish and save the farmer from the risk of monoculture. With the partnership of the Bambui Experimental Station, volunteers and their Mezam partners crossbred local breeds with United States stocks and improved breeds were distributed to farmers as shown below. The breeding took place at the Presbyterian Rural Training Centre (PRTC) in Nfonta created in 1968.³³ The purpose of the centre was to provide practical training in agriculture to farmers who were capable of combining farming and stock breeding.³⁴

Again, inputs were shared to farmers which included, fencing material, fertilisers and veterinary resources. There was also the construction of water points in places like Mundum. Trials were carried out to determine the feasibility of rearing goats and sheep in more controlled conditions. The main constraint was the high cost of fencing materials. Several species of trees were introduced as hedging plants. Some Guatemala grass and *Brachuaria* was distributed to livestock farmers for propagation as dry season fodder as shown below.³⁵ This type of pasturage was beneficial to cattle rearing. It was also realised that with the advent of these foreign pasture, cattle rearing most often took the rotational grazing (paddock) system in many livestock rearing areas in Mezam. This has led to the decline of the common practice of herders and cattle moving up the highlands during the rainy season and down the valleys during the dry season (transhumance) among rearers and the risks and conflicts that accompany it.

³¹ Tamufor *et al* "Sustainability Assessment of," p.290.

³² Mamoudou *et al* "Preliminary Assessment of," p.2.

³³ Anonymous, 56 years, Former Peace Corps Bamenda Worker, Bamenda, 23/August/2018.

³⁴ N.L. Ambe *et al*, "Agricultural Training Institutions in the North West Region of Cameroon, 1968-2016: Impediments", *International Journal of History and Culture Studies*, Vol.10, Issue 2, 2024, p. 38.

³⁵ Neba Maurice, 62 years, Farmer, Mundum, 25/August/2019.

Plate 8 : Crossbred Gudhai and Holstein Cow in PRTC



Source: PRTC Nfonta archives, 29/August/2019

The above shows a young cow, product of a local and an improved foreign breed in Nfonta

Plate 9: Farmers Planting Guatemala and Acacia Fodder



Source: Shu Joram's archives, Mambu, 20/August/2019.

The above shows women planting fodder which will serve cattle especially in the dry season in Mundum

As earlier mentioned, helping farmers to avoid the risk of monoculture was a priority of the volunteers in Mezam. This was also done by training them on how to produce fish for sale.

3.2.2. Inland Fish Culture

It is the production of fish in fresh water ponds controlled by man. Pisciculture or the culture of fresh water fish was introduced by the French in 1948. By 1952, the French had constructed 22 aquaculture demonstration stations to strengthen the sector.³⁶ In 1960, the number of private fish ponds exceeded 10.000 constructed together with sixteen fisheries stations especially for fingerlings³⁷ production and distribution to farmers.³⁸ After independence, French technicians and advisers withdrew and most ponds abandoned due to lack of fry and management as the French did not train Cameroonians in fingerlings production. The government initiated fish culture programmes in 1961 under the Department of Forestry, aimed at increasing private sector production. West Cameroon government because of limited resources and trained personnel, requested the assistance of the Peace

³⁶ V. Pouomogne and D.E. Pems, *Recommendation Domains for Pond Aquaculture, Country Case Study: Development and Status of Freshwater Aquaculture in Cameroon, World Fish Center Studies and Reviews*, No.1871, Penang-Malaysia, World Fish Center, 2008, p.19.

³⁷ Small fish that can be conveniently stocked in a production pond; age of stocking depends on species and management.

³⁸ Forba, "USAID in Cameroon," p.100.

Corps volunteers trained in intensive fish culture techniques. Following this demand, the first group of 8 fisheries volunteers were assigned to the North-West zone and they began working in 1969 and the Ku Bome Station was constructed to help expand government extension services.³⁹

During the 1970s a regional project supported by the United Nations Development Programme(UNDP) together with the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) increased the number of public aquaculture stations to 32.⁴⁰ With the assistance of the U.S. Ambassador's Self Help Fund, the programme was restricted to former West Cameroon until 1974 when 12 Peace Corps volunteers were assigned to Francophone Cameroon because of the success of the programme in the then North-West Province. But because of the fact that most of the fish could not adapt to the Cameroonian climate coupled with the fact that most of the fish ponds lacked qualified technocrats well trained on the basics of pond management, most of the fish ponds were closed and abandoned. This led to a fall in the production of fish in Cameroon.⁴¹ In the 1980s, the administrative responsibility for aquaculture was transferred from the Forestry to the Department of Fishery and later to the newly created Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries. As a result there was the revival in donor support for aquaculture.⁴²

In August 1980, a tripartite agreement was signed between the U.S. Peace Corps, USAID and the government to undertake Small Farmer Fish Production Project, with the goal being: "to assist the government of Cameroon in its efforts to increase income, improve diet and diversify farm production of the rural populations by improving and expanding the existing inland fisheries programme."⁴³ The project consisted of two parts which were the operation of fish stations capable of supplying fingerlings to farmers and the provision of extension services which instructed farmers on proper methods of fish culture. The focus of this project was on the Western Highlands and the completion date was scheduled for 1984. As of 1985, there were 15 Peace Corps volunteers in Cameroon inland fish culture programme with 8 more scheduled to begin pre-service training on 1st April 1985.⁴⁴

Despite its introduction in 1948, fish farming remains marginal, operating at a relatively very low gear with production far below the national demand. This low production is attributed to a lack of investment and data on fish stocks, failure to rehabilitate the facilities, an influx of industrial fishers from other countries, subsidy-driven fishing, illegal,

³⁹ Azoh-Mbi, "The Contribution of," p.96.

⁴⁰ Pouomogne and Pems, *Recommendation Domains for*, p.19.

⁴¹ Azoh-Mbi, "The Contribution of," p.96.

⁴² Pouomogne and Pems, *Recommendation Domains for*, p.19.

⁴³ Azoh-Mbi, "The Contribution of," p.96.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.97.

unreported and unregulated fishing. Also the development of the Cameroonian aquaculture sector since independence has been driven by international donors. Because of the stop-start, top-down nature of this sector, the evolution of the sector was erratic and discontinuous.

The aim of the Peace Corps in this domain was to introduce new species of fish which could adapt to the climate of Mezam, increase fish production as more fish ponds were abandoned. The estimated production was at 1.500 fish ponds in Mezam.⁴⁵ Volunteers worked on fishery farms and they were charged with the responsibility of assisting local fish farmers gain self-sufficiency. The programme sought to encourage and help the rural populations to set up inexpensive local sources of protein through the construction of farm ponds and the production of fish for consumption. Also, the programme sought to help farmers supplement their incomes, through fish culture, by using better pond management techniques, increased fish production and introducing new and more marketable species of fish.⁴⁶ As cited by Azoh-Mbi, David Wiland observed that: “experts ...agree that the role of fish farming in overall rural development can be very significant through the improvements in diet, the creation of jobs and the production of a marketable product.”⁴⁷

Volunteers taught the farmers how to construct simple ponds by diverting water from streams to fill and maintain the water level in fish ponds. Farmers depending on ecological conditions, were taught how to construct and manage source ponds in the water table. Volunteers also demonstrated harvesting and draining of ponds, fertilisation of ponds and methods of feeding fish. Peace Corps volunteers also assisted in in-service training programmes designed to upgrade the skills of government fisheries monitors.⁴⁸ The Peace Corps partnered with USAID to train abroad some 8 government personnel in warm water fish culture at Auburn university. Graduates were to serve at fish stations like the Bambui fish station and associated services. It had as objective to accentuate the capacity building aspect of the Peace Corps-assisted inland fisheries programme in general. Infact the project grant agreement noted that: “training will be one of the most important elements of the project. The educational activities will include training programmes for farmers, extension agents and fisheries administrative personnel.”⁴⁹

The Bambui fish station is an important legacy left behind by Peace Corps volunteers in Mezam. The station founded in 1959 is the oldest of all stations in the North-West Region. It is a government fish farming and research station in Bambui-Nkwen Cameroon which is

⁴⁵ Mamoudou *et al*, “Preliminary Assessment of,” p.2.

⁴⁶ Chenwi, “United States Peace,” p.59.

⁴⁷ Azoh-Mbi, “The Contribution of,” p.99.

⁴⁸ Chenwi, “United States Peace,” p.59.

⁴⁹ Azoh-Mbi, “The Contribution of,” p. 106.

part of a national network of stations. It features 22 ponds across 1.7 hectares and plays a leading role in fresh water fish seed resources and aquaculture in the country. The centre is the only functioning station in Bamenda presently as others like Bamessing and Komomi have been shut down because of the socio-political crisis in the study area. At the inception of the Peace Corps programme in the early 1970s, this station immediately attracted Peace Corps attention, and volunteer Leslie Torrans was sent to work here as shown below.⁵⁰ Prior to his arrival, the station faced a lot of difficulties. The most important was that of draining and renovating the station's 24 ponds in which three species of fish were grown that is Israeli Carp, Clarias (Mud fish) all of which were exotic, and Tilapia (local specie). The ponds were for the most part small and poorly constructed. Most of the ponds seeped and did not only make it difficult to maintain the water level, but also accentuated the problem of inadequate water supply faced by the station especially during the dry season.

Plate 10: Agroforestry Volunteer in Bambui Fish Station



Source: U.S. Department of State, *Focus on Diplomacy, United States and Cameroon Fifty Years Commemorative Edition, 1960-2007*, Manila, GPS, 2007, p.13.

The above plate shows an agroforestry volunteer in the Bambui fish station during a practical demonstration on techniques to raise fish and pond construction in 1973.

The station also faced the problem of inadequate trained man power. With a staff of 11 with its director Lambi George, the only technician and not directly specialised in fish culture. The task of general management and technical tasks such as feeding and spawning of the fish, controlling the water quality and quantity was the place of the station manager. As a result of this cumbersome task, he was unable to keep the records of the station's activities, notably statistics of fish and fingerlings production. Another problem was that of obtaining fertilisers for the ponds and irregular supply for fish. The principal feed for fish was rice bran

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.107.

which was obtained from the rice factory at Upper Noun Valley Development Authority in Ndop. Besides, rice bran is not as rich as cotton seed cake which was difficult to obtain from *Société de Développement du Coton du Cameroun (SODECOTON)* in Northern Cameroon.

The station also suffered from the lack of transportation to bring in feed and for fingerlings distribution. The above factors together with the activities of the King Fisher, that ate up fish fry and fingerlings made the production and distribution of fingerlings to farmers difficult.⁵¹ But with the intervention of Leslie Torrans, some of the difficulties were addressed. His activities included general management of the station, production of fingerlings and fisheries extension work.⁵² Within the framework of the 1980 Peace Corps Small Farmers Fish Production Partnership Project thanks to the efforts of volunteers, the Bambui station was granted equipment such as hatch kit, nets, scales and motorcycles. These equipment helped the station improve upon its production and distribution of fingerlings to fish farmers.⁵³ Volunteers improved spawning techniques and did the survey and management of new ponds. Through volunteer education, the station integrated fish culture with horticulture. By growing rice inside the ponds, mosquitoes were attracted to breed in the water below and the mosquitoes were exposed to the danger of being eaten up by the fish.

The Agro-Industrial Complex is another thumbprint of the Peace Corps activities in Mezam especially in fish production. The centre as seen below is owned by Shu Joram and it was created to propagate fingerlings for sale to farmers and served as a venue for farmers skill development and for the study of aquaculture, livestock rearing and methods of cultivation and land management. The station located in Bafut plays host to students all over the country who studied integrated fish farming and livestock practices. The station is one of the largest in Bafut and home to more than four large fish ponds with a capacity to breed thousands of fish for several markets. The centre has 500 Mudfish fingerlings, 1,000 Tilapia and 250 Carp fish.⁵⁴ Since 2005, volunteers modernised the station and converted some of the land in to model integrated farm and rehabilitated some of the fish ponds.

Fish farmers were taught at the station by volunteers and Shu Joram how to raise fish, pond construction and feed composition for fish. Trainings emphasised on using all of these separate agricultural elements together to create a sustainable and efficient system. Shu Joram indicated that: “we were very grateful for the volunteers and the numerous achievements they recorded in the areas we worked with them, specifically in the areas of integrated farming and

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.9.

⁵² Chenwi, “United States Peace,” p.60.

⁵³ Azoh-Mbi, “The Contribution of,” p.110.

⁵⁴ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer/Owner of Agro-Industrial Complex, Mambu, 20/August /2019.

income generating activities.”⁵⁵Innovations brought by volunteers were the integration of fish culture with small livestock husbandry. Poultry and pigs were kept in a pen usually between two ponds and the drainage from the concrete pen flowed directly in to either ponds.⁵⁶ Besides the generation of income through the sale of eggs, chicks and piglets to farmers interested in raising them, this avoided pollution as it promoted the proper disposal of pig waste and helped to fertilise the ponds. When used in a fish pond, such animal waste help to generate algae which in turn propagates the production and growth of fish food. Volunteers illustrated rehabilitation of the ponds by sloping the walls to prevent erosion.

Plate 11 : The Agro-industrial Complex in Mambu



Source: Author's collection, 20/August/2019

The above depiction presents the Agro-Industrial Complex (AIC) with its owner Shu Joram.

Plate 12: Agroforestry Volunteers and Farmers in the Centre



Source: Shu Joram's archives, Mambu, 20/August/2019.

The above shows AFVs and farmers discussing the integration of fish farming and animal husbandry in AIC. Infront of them is a fish pond with an improved variety of plankton with sticks pinned round it and a pig pen behind them.

3.2.3. Forestry and Environmental Protection

Mezam is endowed with forest which contains tremendous biodiversity of plants with a good example being the Bafut-Ngemba forest.⁵⁷ The richer the forest, the greater the opportunity for medical discoveries, economic development and adaptive responses to new challenges such as climate change in the community.⁵⁸ The forest in Mezam is a significant natural source of income and employment. The exploitation of forest products in Mezam is

⁵⁵ *Idem.*

⁵⁶ Ambe Pascal, 43 years, Carpenter/Participant, Mambu, 21/August/2019.

⁵⁷ E.A. Ndosiri, "Forest Contribution to the Development of Bamendakwe from 1904 to 2004: A Historical Analysis", M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2010, pp.18-19.

⁵⁸ M.M. Ekane, *et al.*, "The Unsustainable Exploitation of Wildlife-Habitat Resources in Tubah Sub-Division, North West Region, Cameroon", *International Journal of Current Research in BioSciences and Plant Biology*, Vol. 3, No. 8, August 2016, p.5.

associated with a lot of problems which include the over exploitation of valuable forestry products. Socio-economically, despite this rich forest, most forest communities in Mezam are inaccessible and poor. The benefits of these rich forests and forestry are not enjoyed by the local people. As from the 1970s, multiple regulations were established with the aim of safeguarding the forest and managing forest resources. The latest of these was Law No 94-01 of 20th January 1994, which stated that 70% of the forest harvesting needs to be for community-based or local processing. Yet, the law is not effectively instituted and because of that forest exports experienced a surge.⁵⁹

The forestry project started in 1991 with three Agro-forestry volunteers who were transferred from West Africa to Cameroon after Cameroon formalised an agreement with the Peace Corps on the 28th of November 1990. In the agreement, volunteers were to provide qualified man power to contribute in building the capacities of local communities in natural resource management.⁶⁰ Mezam's forest has valuable species of trees especially Eucalyptus, Mahogany, Bobinga, Sapelle, Symphonia, Podocarpus.⁶¹ Irrespective of the role that the forest played, very little of the Mezam forest is left because it has been cleared for farming and grazing. The loss of the forest was a call for concern not merely because of the danger of disappearing but also because of its influence on the community members. The forest is a very important source of livelihood to more than 500.000 people per day in Mezam. It is a source of water, firewood, timber, medicinal plants and food for the population. It is also important in the tradition and culture of the people.⁶² The Peace Corps was very influential in the study area through three major programmes in this domain which were Protected Areas Management, Environmental Education and Nursery development.

3.2.3.1. Protected Areas Management

The protection of the environment and conservation of natural resources were top priorities for development set by the Peace Corps. The conservation of nature had as prime motive the protection of biodiversity and ecology. Conservation was regarded as a very important bridge to development and as such conservation areas should not be regarded as "islands of non-development".⁶³ The aim of conservation was to preserve endangered ecosystems and species while taking in to account local people affected by the conservation measures. This was to promote sustainable development that secured conservation of

⁵⁹ Delancey, *Historical Dictionary of*, p.175.

⁶⁰ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Volunteer Handbook*, p.22.

⁶¹ Ambe Pascal, 43 years, Carpenter, Mambu, 21/August/2019.

⁶² Olayiwola *et al*, "Land Use Change," p.55.

⁶³ Etanefila, "Cameroon-German Technical," p.84.

endangered ecosystems and species while also improving the living standards of the people in the protected area.

To achieve this, Peace Corps volunteers organised participatory community-based conservation programmes to ensure sustainable use of forests in Bafut and Bambui. These programmes had as aim to promote the active participation of local community members to rehabilitate and safeguard degraded forest areas in addition to safeguarding the long-term management of forests. This was to guarantee that forests advantages persisted endlessly and replaced unsustainable traditional forests practices. This was because the local people living within or around the protected areas were not very much involved in the decision-making process leading to the creation of the protected area. Also, their traditional land rights were not considered and this usually led to conflicts. This was because the local people were not ready to adapt to new regulations and restrictions on the exploitation of natural resources for the sake of preserving it.⁶⁴

These programmes involved forest user groups and forest management committees striving to ensure an effective forest management system was in place according to the 1994 community forest law.⁶⁵ This was the case of the upland watershed at Alegefor in Bambui. This area was governed by the Bambui Protected Forest Order of 1969 constituted by the S.C.I.N. No. 35 of 1961 of the Forestry Ordinance.⁶⁶ Though a protected area, the watershed was gradually destroyed through the cutting down of indigenous trees for timber and through slash and burn agricultural practices and as a result there was water scarcity. Water friendly trees were felled for wood, indiscriminate farming around catchments became the order of the day. Looking at the university population with the increasing need for water and pressure for living space, the Bambui people needed to be conscious in the way they manage their natural resources. Also, the Association of *Fons* for the Fight against Climate Change was launched in 2008 in the Bambui palace, an indication that Bambui people should champion climate change by contributing their quota for the collective mission in the fight against climate change.⁶⁷

It is as a result of this that the Bambui people requested a Peace Corps volunteer to help educate them on the conservation of the local environment. Brian Bragg served in Bambui from 2008-2010. He partnered with the palace, youth groups, Bambui Water

⁶⁴ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer/Owner of Agro-Industrial Complex, Mambu, 20/August /2019.

⁶⁵ Etanefila "Cameroon-German Technical", p.85.

⁶⁶ Speech Made by Fon Angafor Mombo-oh III on the Occasion of the Maiden Contact Visit to Bambui by the Senior Divisional Office for Mezam, *Bambui Forum for Development Partnership for Change Speeches*, Saturday 19th January, Jonmaz Complex-Bambui, p.25.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Authority and the Tubah Council to monitor the watershed. He organised trainings to educate the people of Bambui on the importance of protecting the water shed and in other domains like organic farming, beekeeping, mushroom cultivation, catchment protection, poultry faming and pasture improvement.⁶⁸ In a similar situation volunteer Stephen Cormwier through his Menka Protected Spring Project educated and sensitised the people of Menka in Pinyin on the essentials of water catchment and protected area management.⁶⁹

Volunteers marked boundaries in most conservation areas in Bafut with paint splashes and sign boards. Their programmes assisted the communities to protect the natural forest and strengthen the capacity of forest management committees to ensure the continuation of project activities.⁷⁰ As the population increased, water issues were a constraint and led to health problems that could be controlled through environmental conservation.

3.2.3.2. Environmental Education

Volunteers taught environmental education in secondary schools. School programmes included school visits, creation of environmental clubs, demonstration of soil conservation.⁷¹ Schools set up tree nurseries, flower beds and gardens. Soil conservation trials were carried out in school farms and these helped paint pictures depicting forest resources and wildlife. In Mundum in 2008 volunteers helped the students of Government Secondary School Mundum to set up flower beds as shown below.⁷² Meetings were organised with communities and traditional rulers to educate them on the dangers of excessive forest exploitation. In Bawum in 2007, Reinsma partnered with Trees for the Future to organised a meeting with over 60 people.⁷³ Community members were encouraged to sustainably exploit the forest and open local tree nurseries as seen below. Most of the trainings were done in the presence of the sub chiefs. This was because the forest owed its existence to the protection of traditional authorities since it played a very important role in the cultural life of the people.

⁶⁸ Akongniwoh Peter, 55 years, Farmer, Bambui, 21/June/2022.

⁶⁹ Penn John, 60 years, Farmer , Pinyin, 25/June/2022.

⁷⁰ Titi John, 64 years, Teacher, Mundum, 25/August/2019.

⁷¹ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2012, p.9.

⁷² Achu John, 60 years, Former Principal of G.S.S Mundum, Bamenda, 30/August/2019.

⁷³ Fuh Edwin, 46 years, Teacher/Participant, Bawum, 22/August/2019.

Plate 13 : Volunteer and Students Setting a Nursery and Flower Beds



Source: G.S.S. Mundum archives, Mundum, 25/August/2019.

The plate above illustrates a volunteer setting up a flower bed in a school in Mundum. Some of the students are working while others are watching keenly with their hoes and others playing

Plate 14 : Community Nursery in Bawum



Source: BASCUDA, *Annual Report*, 2008, p.75.

The above shows Agro-Forestry Volunteers in a Community Nursery in Bawum

3.2.3.3. Nursery Development

Peace Corps volunteers encouraged the establishment of tree nurseries. Nurseries supplied planting materials for soil conservation, demarcation of the forest boundary and enrichment planting in degraded forest areas. Volunteers partnered with local farmers and individuals to set up tree nurseries for instance volunteer Brian Bragg during his service in Bambui between 2008-2010 worked with the Mendel Foundation, a tree nursery with over 1.000 tree species to offer trees that were planted from the Bambui junction to the Comprehensive High School junction in order to revive nature.⁷⁴ In Bafut, volunteer Reinsma worked with Shu Joram and experimental nurseries were created in partnership with the Agro-Industrial Complex in Mambu. The nursery had a production capacity of about 2.000 seedlings per year. This nursery was what it was thanks to the Peace Corps. The nursery won regional and national awards as shown below. Volunteers in partnership with Trees for the Future (TFTF) provided the Agro-Industrial Complex nursery with about 500 tree seeds.⁷⁵ They included species used for timber, medicine and agro-forestry.

⁷⁴ Tabifor Valentine, 58 years, Owner of Mendel Foundation/Volunteer Counterpart, Bambui, 15/August/2022.

⁷⁵ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer/Owner of Agro-Industrial Complex, Mambu, 20/August /2019.

Plate 15 : Plate 14: Best Nursery Award in the N.W and West Regions



Source: Author's collection, Mambu, 20/August/2019.

The plate above shows the winner of the Best Nursery Competition for the West and North-West Regions organised by the World Agro-Forestry Centre in 2012.

Plate 16: Bronze winner award in the National Nursery Competition



Source: Author's collection, Mambu, 20/August/2019.

The plate above shows a bronze award won by the centre in the Best Nursery Competition for the West and North-West organised by the World Agro-Forestry Centre in 2010.

3.3. Community Economic Development/Small Enterprise Development

Another significant step taken in Mezam by volunteers was to help improve the quality of life of community members by fostering a conducive business climate. This was through the Small Enterprise Development (SED) programme that started in 1999 in Cameroon and joined forces with organisations dedicated to community economic growth like local banks and financial cooperatives.⁷⁶ Peace Corps Cameroon received its first group of 14 SED trainees in 2000. The project developed the institutional capacity of small business development organisations such as credit unions and other financial institutions and provided technical assistance to staff of these institutions as well as to entrepreneurial population from the small business sector. In 2011, the project name was changed from SED to Community Economic Development (CED) to better reflect its objectives globally.⁷⁷

Prior to their arrival in Mezam, most micro finance institutions (MFIs) faced problems which included ineffectiveness in banking procedures, such as loan management,

⁷⁶ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Staff Handbook*, Yaoundé, Peace Corps, June 2014, p.23.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

book keeping and computer knowledge among workers.⁷⁸ The Peace Corps Plan 1983-1985 described the agency's initiative for guiding Peace Corps efforts in SED. According to the plan, the goal was to: "emphasise volunteer assignments which promote local economic development and self-sustaining productive capacity (especially in areas of food and energy), develop income-generating market mechanisms and build local institutions and initiative."⁷⁹ The intention was to establish incentives for agricultural producers and develop skills among cooperative members. Volunteers were to assist with activities to meet these goals during a transition period in which host partners could be trained and the cooperatives made self-reliant and profitable. The focus was on production and marketing of agricultural products, although other types of agribusiness and related rural development activities such as handicrafts production were occasionally undertaken by individual cooperatives.⁸⁰

Fostering small and medium sized enterprises is a government approach geared towards improving economic conditions by reducing poverty, job creation and revenue-generating activities. In Cameroon, small sized enterprises involve over 90% of the country's economic sector while contributing an estimated 36% of the national GDP. Despite being a major driver in economic growth, infrastructure development and source of employment, small sized enterprises survival and growth in Cameroon are heavily challenged.⁸¹ The first responsibilities of SED volunteers in Mezam were at small-scale financial institutions, where they were tasked with enhancing the operational effectiveness of financial establishments through learning and support in administration and transfer of employability skills.

SED volunteers posted were to provide credit unions and small businesses with technical support and training in management, marketing and entrepreneurial skills. They also provided technical support and training in computer, financial projections, income statement, book keeping, budgeting cash flow/handling, feasibility studies, loan management and project design.⁸² In Bamenda, volunteer Chang educated the people on the importance of saving money in banks. She organised summer camps where residents learnt how to undertake their daily business activities. Cynthia Boyton taught a variety of topics which included developing an effective banking system and conducting feasibility studies. She worked to reverse the distrust people had for banks while Shauna Blanchard taught business

⁷⁸ Amin, "Serving in Africa," p.77.

⁷⁹ C. Humphrey and C. Meyer, *Peace Corps Programming in Small Enterprise Development, Three Case Studies and Analysis*, Washington D.C, Peace Corps Information, Collection and Exchange, 1985, p.13.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.14.

⁸¹ N. Mukete *et al*, "Determinants of Small and Medium Size Enterprises Access to Credit Schemes in the Mezam Division of Cameroon", *Open Access Library Journal*, Vol.8, No.2, February 2021, p.5.

⁸² Humphrey and Meyer, *Peace Corps Programming*, p.78.

classes in Bamenda. She also audited micro finance institutions, helped determine appropriate collateral for loans, taught filing, excel including marketing feasibility and project plans.⁸³

In addition, SED volunteers worked with business groups in communities to strengthen their skills and business practices, cooperatives and credit unions.⁸⁴ The volunteers strengthened community management and business skills through training and consulting. They also shared common knowledge concerning business conduct to ensure information is available to the community important for initiating and running of businesses. Jon helped the *Abongjam* Women's Group to improve its record keeping procedures while Moore helped the Bawum women form a profitable gardening cooperative in 2014. As in other Peace Corps programmes, volunteers had as motto; adjustment, improvising, ingenuity, creativity and to look for and do work in the communities which could benefit the people. Chang taught tools such as participatory analysis and implemented a global financial and social curriculum in schools and youth centres. She organised and taught savings and loan cooperatives, better accounting practices to recover loans, provided computer training to educate employees on excel and word. Volunteers like Cynthia Boyton conducted trainings with partners and participants in Bamenda to create a positive financial outcome by serving as highly qualified small business experts in order to provide support and assist businessmen in nurturing and developing a business. They also conducted workshops and offered guidance sessions to facilitate entrepreneurial competencies and leadership skills. Workers through trainings gained skills in business planning, accounting and record-keeping as shown below.⁸⁵

The major Peace Corps projects which emerged from this effort were Credit Union Cooperatives, Anglophone Marketing Cooperatives and Women Cooperatives. The role and responsibilities of a cooperative volunteer depended greatly upon where that volunteer was placed. Peace Corps volunteers were placed at the divisional levels to develop cooperative training and educational materials while others were assigned to regional cooperatives to be management advisors or member education advisors as shown on the table below.

⁸³ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

⁸⁴ *Idem*.

⁸⁵ Ngwa Lawrence, 50 years, Accountant, Mambu, 20/August/2019.

Plate 17: Training with Participants in Bamenda on Enterprise Development

Source: Ngwa Lawrence archives, Bamenda, 21/August/2019.

The above is a volunteer with participants in a six week training in Bamenda on initiation to commerce

One result of this diversity of roles was volunteer satisfaction, host country perception of volunteer's effectiveness and other criteria for measuring success varied at each level, making programme evaluation difficult. These projects continue today with some modifications of objectives, geographical distribution and volunteer roles.⁸⁶

Table 20: Distribution of Small Enterprise Development Volunteers in Mezam

No	Volunteer	Type of service post	Service post	Activity/Service role	Year of service
1	Douglas Kelley	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Organised the Bamenda Handicraft Cooperative Society (BHCS)	1964-1966
2	Cynthia Kelley	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Organised the BHCS	1964-1966
3	Chef Aeschliman	Credit Union	Bamenda	Credit Union Field Worker	1968-1970
4	Dave Castelan	Credit Union/Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Cooperative and Credit Union propaganda expert	1969-1974
5	Margie Gates	Women's Cooperative	Bamenda	Cooperative Advisor	1971-1973
6	Henry Gretchem	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	BHCS Advisor	1972-1974
7	Homeger	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	BHCS Advisor	1972-1974
8	Craig Kinzelman	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	BHCS Technical Advisor	1972-1974
9	Merry Kinzelman	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	BHCS Technical Advisor	1972-1974
10	Lissa Matt	Women's Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1974-1976
11	Pauline Maclean	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1980-1982

⁸⁶ *Idem.*

	Waggoner				
12	Bill Strasberger	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Cooperative Education and Training Advisor	1982-1986
13	Schaffer Marilyn	Women's Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1982-1984
14	Fitzgerald Mary	Women's Cooperative	Bali	Technical Advisor	1982-1984
15	Joyce Chris	Women's Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1982-1984
16	Parks Charles	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1982-1984
17	Searle Karen	Women's Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1984-1986
18	Christiane Ann Djonglo	Cooperatives/Credit Unions	Bamenda area	Credit Union Field Inspector/ Credit Union Technical Trainer	1984-1989
19	Roland Thurlow	Credit Union	Bamenda	CamCCUL Trainer	1988-1990
20	Shauna Blanchard	Credit Union	Santa	Field Inspector/Credit Union Technical Adviser	1991-1993
21	Ted Johnson	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1991-1993
22	Ellen Weireb	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1991-1993
23	Chris York	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1991-1993
24	Andrew Clapham	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1991-1993
25	Mike Carney	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1991-1993
26	David Sablatura	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1991-1993
27	Keith Sandbloom	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1991-1993
28	Robin Tousley	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1991-1993
29	Greg Russell	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1991-1993
30	Marissa Parente	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	1991-1993
31	Michael Breiner	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Technical Advisor	2003-2005
32	Susanne Kambore	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Cooperative Advisor	2003-2005
33	Ted Lacey	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Cooperative Advisor	2003-2005
34	Jeannah Lacey	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Cooperative Advisor	2003-2005
35	Franck Lacey	Agricultural Cooperative	Bamenda	Cooperative Advisor	2003-2005
36	Carmen Chang	NGO developer	Bamenda	Organised the Bamenda NGO Fair	2010-2012
37	Cynthia Boyton	Micro Finance Institutions	Bamenda	Organised business classes	2011-2013

Source: Author's Conception, 10/October/ 2021

The table above shows volunteers who served in cooperatives and credit unions in Mezam. From the table, it can be seen that the activities of volunteers helped to open a new page for cooperatives and credit unions. While some served as field inspectors and technical advisors in cooperative societies, others helped to revive the credit union sector in the study area.

3.3.1. Credit Union Cooperatives

At the dawn of independence in 1961, Cameroon like other countries was plagued with difficult situations. Most Cameroonians suffered from poverty and its concomitant of poor education and health. There was the need to manage the small sums of money obtained through the sale of agricultural produce to provide for the rainy days and the money lenders were already exploiting the above situation as they charged very high interest rates on money they gave as credit.⁸⁷ The government set up programmes which recognised the value and necessity of stimulating economic development by urging Cameroonians to contribute individually through the mobilisation of local savings which were to be deposited in commercial banks to finance investment in various projects for improved health and education. Surprisingly, these savings were not kept in banks as expected but in the ground, food containers or under mattresses. As a result, currency notes decayed, were eaten by termites, destroyed by fire, lost or stolen.⁸⁸

Credit unions which rely on the investment of individual savings of members for a capital base are a means of increasing access to credit within cash poor communities. The loans which credit unions make available can provide a source of necessary start-up capital for some businesses of many kinds. Though a traditional form of the credit union, the savings society had long existed in Cameroon, the benefits of a formal organisation were not widely recognised in many rural areas. The grassroots credit and savings networks formed by farmers, peasants and professionals such as teachers, police were established to build financial assets. At first, credit unions prospered by building upon the established network of traditional savings institutions referred to as *Njangis*. The accumulated funds enabled subsistence farmers to source vital materials and to advance and nurture social services and initiatives involving education. Local *Njangis* and credit unions success boosted the cooperative movement and rural prosperity.⁸⁹

The earliest credit unions in Cameroon were founded in the Bamenda area of the North-West Region of Cameroon in 1963 by two qualified roman catholic clergy members who had professional experience in such activities in Canada and the U.S. After four years, there were over 13 registered credit unions and over 20 discussion groups primarily in Nso and Njinikom and later on in 1967, two employees of the Department of Co-operatives were

⁸⁷ Anjoh, "United States Agency," p.470.

⁸⁸ J. Che, "History of Credit Unions, 1849-2007, The Case of Cameroon", *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Vol. 25, No.1, 2023, p.69.

⁸⁹ Delancey, *Historical Dictionary of*, p.121.

designated to help supervise activities.⁹⁰The idea of the credit union was introduced in Cameroon by Rev. Father Anthony Jansen, a Dutch roman catholic priest of the Mill Hill Mission in Njinikom. This Father underwent intensive training in credit union operations in Antigonish, Canada urged by Bishop Peters as a way of enhancing the quality of life of the local population in Cameroon.⁹¹

In 1963, he rallied some residents of Njinikom with the intention of establishing the Saint Anthony Discussion Group after noticing that the Njinikom people had some thrift and loan societies which charged very high interest rates. He also found difficulties in the collection of fees of pupils as well as people went to him for money for hospital bills. The pioneers of the discussion group were Alaba Chiandang, Martina Nayoh, Martha Fultang, Juliana Ekwi, Futola Ngwe, Boniface Sogmba, Patricio Futtang and Joseph Fombuh. Prior to November 13th 1963, membership had grown from eight to thirteen.⁹² The group was registered in May 1964 as the Njinikom Credit Union Limited with certificate number WC304 and their first savings on 16th February 1964 amounted to 2.100 CFA Francs from sixteen members.⁹³The first loans were made in June 1964 and the first annual general meeting was held in February 1965.⁹⁴On his part, Akume Daniel thinks that the introduction of the modern microfinance in Cameroon started in 1963 by a catholic priest Father Jansen in Njinikom.⁹⁵Also, Njuafac thinks that the first credit union was formed in 1963, by Tony Barnicle in the village of Kikaikilaiki in Kumbo central. In 1966, Father Barnicle obtained aid from the U.S. Ambassador in Cameroon, Robert L. Playton and on 14th January 1967, formed a league and it was affiliated to the Cameroon Cooperative Credit Union League under Michael Banseka in 1968.⁹⁶

Subsequently, the credit union model was adopted in different areas. While the idea rapidly diffused to other areas including Bamenda, serving as the capital of the Bamenda Province, the genesis of the movement occurred in Njinikom. The earliest credit union to be established in Bamenda was the Azire Cooperative Credit Union. Similar to the Njinikom example, it also began as a discussion group in February 1967 made up of some thirteen Meta people who were living in Bamenda. The group was known as the Meta Welfare Union and

⁹⁰ Delancey, "Credit for the," p.316.

⁹¹ N.K. Takor and D.M. Tifor, "The Paradigmatic Shift of Credit Union Mission in Bamenda, Cameroon, 1968-2013", *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies*, Vol. 6, Issue 8, 2018, p.97.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Anjoh, "United States Agency,"p.474.

⁹⁴ Che, "History of Credit," p.70.

⁹⁵ Akume, "The Performance of," p.29.

⁹⁶ Njuafac, "The United States," p.123.

members congregated after every two weeks and accumulated money which was made accessible to members to help them tackle the challenges of the survival economy especially the costs of schooling. Each member contributed 50FCFA as membership fee and raised a monthly contribution of 500FCFA. In the course of their gatherings, members were educated on the credit union movement and its benefits. The concept of the credit union was incorporated in to the group resulting to the establishment of the Azire Cooperative Credit Union Limited in 1967 and eventually registered in 1968 with an identity or registration number WC365.⁹⁷

In 1968, some 34 primary societies/ unions became the heartbeat of the league that was formed and an-all credit union assembly was convened in Kumbo to explore the possibility of establishing a co-ordinating committee, inspired the development of the West Cameroon Credit Union League(WCCUL).⁹⁸The WCCUL was made a member of the African Co-operative Savings and Credit Association.⁹⁹With the government's recognition of the association, it started requesting funding for its functioning. Specific assistance, mainly from the Catholic Relief Services, was accepted in the past years, but a wider number of donors was needed to provide additional funding. Financial, material and technical resources were offered by a broad range of institutions including the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Oxfam, the Murray MacDonald Foundation, the Canadian and American aid programmes. Also, volunteers from Holland, and later from the U.S Peace Corps arrived as field workers.¹⁰⁰ In August 1968, the draft league and credit union by-laws were approved.

Inspired by these efforts, other credit unions came in to existence such as the Bamenda Police credit union, 1969, Ntarinkon and Tadkon credit unions formed in 1972, Bayelle credit union created in 1987 and Mitanyen credit union established in 2000.¹⁰¹The inaugural meeting of the WCCUL took place in February 1969 and it was stipulated that all credit unions were to make a deposit of 25% of their share capital with the league as savings.¹⁰² By 1969, the league had sufficient resources and experience to expand outside Bamenda and a period of rapid growth began. Peace Corps volunteers played a significant role in credit union growth and development. In 1970, an official in the Department of

⁹⁷ Takor and Tifor, "The Paradigmatic Shift," p.97.

⁹⁸ Che, "History of Credit," p.70, Delancey, "Credit for the," p.318, Anjoh, "United States Agency," p.485.

⁹⁹ Delancey, "Credit for the," p.318.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ C.A. Ngwa *et al*, "Credit Unions as Source of Economic Empowerment in Bamenda, 1990-2016", *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education*, Vol.12, Issue 2, February 2025, p. 77, Takor and Tifor, "The Paradigmatic Shift," p.97.

¹⁰² Che, "History of Credit," p.70.

Cooperative and Mutuality within the Ministry of Agriculture for West Cameroon initiated the first formal request for programming in this area for Credit Union (CU) support. These requests started discussions that led to the establishments of programmes to assist cooperatives.¹⁰³ The league received three Peace Corps volunteers Susan Gurdner who was sent as a field worker for the South-West Region, Chef Aeschliman worked as a field worker in Bamenda central and Robert Wormstedt was sent in the same capacity to Ndop.¹⁰⁴

There are several reasons for the successful development of the credit union movement. Among this was the competent Cameroon governance, the seed money from external sources and the application of other associations like well grounded businesses, as the nucleus for the advancement of fundamental societies. Despite this, the crucial element was the existence of rotating savings and credit associations commonly known as *njangis* that were enshrined within the local traditions and which reinforced the pervasive current strong aspiration for financial security along with deep knowledge and understanding of the inner workings of the credit union.¹⁰⁵ The leaders and organisers of the new movement exploited the prevalence of unconventional but generally used savings and loan associations. In the early part of the 1950s, W.A. Warmington conducted research on the assets and liabilities among hired labourers in the plantations of the South-West Cameroon and stated that about 60% were somehow thrifty. The study was supported by Mark and Virginia Delancey who carried out research around the same plantations during between 1967-1976 and discovered that 90% of labourers stated that they were thrifty by accumulating funds either in credit unions, banks, family gatherings or *njangis* and in some cases in cans.¹⁰⁶ The credit union movement only spread to french speaking Cameroon in 1973. Shey as cited by Che argued that: “the reason for the late appearance of the credit union movement in the French speaking part of Cameroon was due to language barrier and the limited number of staff.”¹⁰⁷

By 1979, three credit unions had been founded in the Francophone section of Cameroon. As a result of the expansion of credit unions to the Francophone section of Cameroon coupled with the political changes that took place in May 1972, the appellation WCCUL was changed to Cameroon Cooperative Credit Union League Limited (CamCCUL)¹⁰⁸. The change in name was also accompanied by a change in membership,

¹⁰³ Azoh-Mbi, “The Contribution of,” p.14.

¹⁰⁴ Anjoh, “United States Agency,” p.485.

¹⁰⁵ Delancey, “Credit for the,” p.318.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Shey as cited by Che, “History of Credit,” p.70.

¹⁰⁸ The mission of CamCCUL is to initiate, set up and establish an inclusive and effective collaboration platform by consistently delivering high-quality goods and services to associates, promoting inclusive, neutral and active

savings and loans. In 1968, the membership of WCCUL was 4.000 with 34 CUs and a total savings of 16.000.000 FCFA and the total loans given out were 10.000.000 FCFA.¹⁰⁹ With the change to CamCCUL, membership continued increasing as shown below thanks to the efforts of the volunteers. CamCCUL is therefore the umbrella organisation of cooperative credit unions and the largest micro finance institution in Cameroon.¹¹⁰

Table 21: Credit Union Growth 1969-1975

No	Year	Membership	Million CFA share saving	Credit Union and Discussion Group
1	1969	4.000	16.0	65
2	1970	6.000	25.1	98
3	1971	11.600	54.4	149
4	1972	14.100	103.0	177
5	1973	20.100	162.0	190
6	1974	24.300	251.0	182
7	1975	26.900	399.5	181

Source: Delancey “Credit for the,” p.318.

The above table shows the growth and expansion of the credit union movement. The growth could be explained by the intervention of the Peace Corps volunteers coupled with the fact that by 1972, the credit union movement was expanded in to French speaking Cameroon.

However, the growth of the credit union movement was further hampered by several reasons. Following this growth, certain problems were identified that needed assistance. First, moneylenders and other unconventional credit sources hindered the competitiveness of the financial sector. Secondly, company-sponsored credit unions perceived little justification to boost the movement. Lastly, there was widespread confusion on the distinction between credit unions and other types of financial intermediaries in French speaking Cameroon.¹¹¹ Briefly, there was the problem to train league staff in critical credit union operational areas, education of the population on credit union ideas and adequate transport facilities. The training needs identified included book keeping, credit delivery, savings, membership promotion, budgeting, office layout and planning. This was because the league lacked a sound planning based on ongoing analysis of CU needs consistent with projected resources. There was also the need to develop alternative approaches to manage smaller CUs

engagement from its various parties involved, fostering social conscience, strengthening staff capabilities and association dedication through training and nurturing bonded connection in collaboration with similar organisations and governing entities. (**Source:** CamCCUL, *CamCCUL National Statistics*, Bamenda, CamCCUL, 2006, p.1.)

¹⁰⁹ Shu Nelson Atoh, Former Worker at Bayelle Cooperative Union, Bamenda, 25/August/2021

¹¹⁰ Akume, “The Performance of,” p. 30.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

that could not afford their own full-time staff. Again, there was the need to improve standard operating policies and procedures and design policies essential to strengthen the central liquidity facility.¹¹²

It is thanks to these difficulties that Peace Corps volunteers were sent on the extension of credit unions to all villages and sub divisions in Mezam and the formation of many chapters. Volunteers achieved this through the improvement of the educational level of the staff by giving them proper-on-the job training and working conditions. Thus volunteers inculcated in the workers the concept of development, interdependence, trustworthiness and autonomy. The reason for this was because the thrift and loans societies existing at the time had instilled negative ideas in peoples minds about cooperatives. The volunteers therefore had to fight hard to convince the people about the differences between other cooperatives and the C.Us.¹¹³ It was against this backdrop that USAID and CamCCUL initiated the Small Farmer Production Credit Program from 1975-1979. Arrangements for the Small Farmer Production Program[me] were initially started in 1974 upon conclusion of a feasibility study, financed by USAID, which specified a roadmap for the execution of the initiative.¹¹⁴

A further no cost extension was made for Risk Management and Asset Management up to 30th September 1993. Peace Corps volunteers through the Small Project Assistance were brought by USAID to work on the technical implementation of the project. Volunteer Rowland Thurlow arrived at CamCCUL on 17th August 1988 and departed in September 1992. Chef Aeschliman took over as head of the project until it ended in 1993 replaced him.¹¹⁵ A Peace Corps project was designed to help promote this relatively new concept and provide assistance to Cameroon's fledgling credit unions first placed volunteers with CamCCUL shown below in 1970. Approximately 45 volunteers worked on this project since 1970. The object of which is to assist the credit unions in becoming self-sufficient, economically independent, improve the management and operations of the credit unions at their daily working level.¹¹⁶

In the early years of the project, volunteers focused on educating credit union members, assisting local board directors in processing loan applications and approvals as well as improving the management aspects of the credit union organisation and daily operations. Overall direction and advice was provided by CamCCUL, while government authorities

¹¹² Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.110.

¹¹³ Anjoh, "The United States," p.486.

¹¹⁴ W.P. Litwiller, *A Case Study of the Cameroon Cooperative Credit Union League (CAMCCUL) Participation in a Small Farmer Production Credit Program*, W.P. Litwiller, p.2.

¹¹⁵ Anjoh, "The United States," p.488.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.489.

helped handle fraud cases and delinquent loan collection. As the project evolved, volunteers were assigned the more formalised role of bookkeeper and travelling auditor and were required to work more narrowly within government authorised CamCCUL guidelines. Characteristically volunteers were assigned to credit unions which they visited monthly, submitting quarterly reports to CamCCUL.¹¹⁷

Plate 18: The Cameroon Cooperative Credit Union League



Source: Author's collection, Bamenda, 30/12/2021

The above plate shows the CamCCUL head office in the Azire neighbourhood in Bamenda which has served as a service post for Peace Corps volunteers

The volunteers worked with each other's society book keeper to determine the quality of work and to define on-the-job-training. By 1984, the number of credit unions in the division since Peace Corps initial involvement in the project increased. Many credit union members received substantial dividends on their investments. Loans evolved from consumer related to the capital start up types indicating an increase of enterprise development and use of credit. Loan delinquencies reduced and volunteers efforts helped establish credit unions as institutions which positively affected individuals at many levels of society including the poorest by fostering new businesses and better farms.¹¹⁸ Volunteers were field workers who carried out on-the-job-training of new Cameroonian field workers who would take over from them after their departure. The main objective of the pilot project was to determine the best way in which CamCCUL could re-orient its member C.Uns to adopt more production-oriented

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹¹⁸Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.55.

lending in agriculture. The intention was to enable CamCCUL to assist the C.Uns in improving the economic well-being of their farmers.¹¹⁹

Training sessions were directed towards farmers and secretaries who were involved in the scheme. The sessions were both formal and informal. The formal trainings were for short periods of one to three weeks. More intensive formal training courses were from five to six weeks. This formal trainings centred on improving the skills of the CUs secretaries who were managers of these unions. The lectures delivered during such trainings were on CU management, book keeping, loan evaluation/delinquency. Other lectures were on delinquency control, improved agricultural techniques, installment borrowing, line of credit lending and farm financial planning. Most of these formal courses were carried out at the Rural Training Centre(RTC) Nfonta Bafut. Trainings were also done at the National Cooperative College (NCC) Bamenda. Some farmers and board members also received formal trainings.¹²⁰

It was very difficult to assess the real impact of formal trainings on the project's performance. However, it was observed that from results of several end-of-course evaluations conducted by the training centres, from interviews with league staff and from field visits that useful skills were indeed imparted. For instance, although CamCCUL had financial insufficiency, it had become technically feasible. In the same light, CamCCUL's capacity to supply assets through credit to associated credit unions had also grown.¹²¹ Secretaries became familiar with elements of different programmes and their own duties as they demonstrated considerable skills in lending procedures, loan evaluation, supervision and improved agricultural techniques. In addition to the formal trainings, there were periodic informal trainings on improved coffee pruning techniques, crop technologies, loan evaluations, loan supervision at the level of the CUs.¹²²

Another aspect in which volunteers worked with CamCCUL was the expansion and strengthening of the institutional capabilities of CamCCUL. The project had as objective to make available savings and cooperative services to an increasing number of Cameroonian families. This project built on the ability of CamCCUL to generate sufficient earned income to cover administrative expenses, provide training and technical assistance to its affiliated CUs and their members. The projects focused on the development of a strong cooperative saving and credit movement in Cameroon. Note that CUs were non-profit democratically run cooperatives organised to serve the financial needs of their members. They had proven

¹¹⁹ Anjoh, "United States Agency," p.493.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.494.

¹²¹ Litwiller, *A Case Study*, p.2.

¹²² Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.112.

themselves as effective vehicles for development by serving two basic needs that is savings and credit. In Mezam, CUs provided a safe place for people to keep their savings facilities which were typically absent in villages and towns. Without CUs much of these savings would have remained uninstitutionalised that is to say, such savings would have been buried in the ground or hidden in houses and were of little use to Cameroon's development. In addition CUs were organised among groups who were denied access to credit through traditional financial institutions such as banks because they possessed insufficient collateral. The idea later spread to all income groups although the focus was on lower income groups.¹²³

To support and assist the credit union movement in Cameroon, Phase I and Phase II projects executed from 1980-1993 called for continued development of existing structures of CamCCUL. The aim was to enhance both financial and self-sufficiency, provide improved services to affiliated CUs and their members and an expansion of the movement in to unaffected areas. The primary goal of this project was to increase the income of an expanding number of Cameroonian CU memberships. It was also to increase the savings and loan volumes within the rural and urban sectors. The total cost of the Phase I project was \$4.908.500. Of this amount, the vague out of its own earned revenues and reserves financed 2.224.690 or 46%, the KAF of West Germany funded \$256.665 or 5% of the total cost. The U.S. Peace Corps and the Netherlands Volunteer Organisation contributed volunteer services worth \$807.186 or 16% of the total cost. The balance of \$1.600.000 representing the cost of the technical assistance was provided or 33% of the total cost was provided by USAID.¹²⁴

Volunteers like Dave Castelan developed and distributed promotional material and outreach activities of CamCCUL in Bamenda and neighbouring areas. These included Posters, Calendars, Brochures, Manuals, Radio Programmes and News Letters. By 1992, there were 21.445 CU members from the North-West with more than half about 11.029 in Mezam closely followed by Mentchum, Nkambe and Nso.¹²⁵ Volunteers organised productive credit seminars of six weeks long which started in 1988 as stated in the project agreement. The table below gives a picture of the subjects taught.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p.113.

¹²⁴ Anjoh, "United States Agency," p.509.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

Table 22: Credit Seminar Courses organised and taught by Volunteers

Course No	Subjects	1988	1989	1990
1	Introduction to Productive Credit	✓	✓	✓
2	Loan policy	✓	✓	✓
3	Loan Granting Procedure	✓	✓	✓
4	Loan evaluation	✓	✓	✓
5	Central Finance	✓		
6	INADES formation	✓		
7	Financial Management	✓		✓
8	Loan Delinquency Control	✓	✓	✓
9	Goal Setting	✓	✓	
10	Co-maker Register		✓	
11	Promotion of S and ME		✓	✓
12	Bookeeping for S and ME		✓	✓
13	Collateral lending*			✓

Source: R.F.M.Anjoh, “The United States Agency,” p.553.

The table above shows some courses taught by volunteers during credit seminars held between 1988 to 1990 as stated in the project agreement to improve the skills of credit union secretaries who were managers of these credit unions. The seminars centred on credit union management, bookkeeping, loan evaluation and delinquency. The impact of their activities was not only felt with the increased trust and number of customers affiliated to CamCULL but was also seen in the increase in the number of credit unions in Mezam as shown below.

Table 23: Expansion of Credit Unions in Mezam between 1979 to 1984

No	Year	Number of Credit Unions
1	1979	49
2	1980	46
3	1981	46
4	1982	50
5	1983	52
6	1984	52

Source: Modified by Author from Anjoh, “The United States,” p.516.

The above table shows the expansion of C.Uns in Mezam between 1979 and 1984. From the table, it can be seen that the number of C.Uns reduced between 1980 and 1981 because of poor management practices. But as from 1982 with the involvement of the Peace Corps volunteers through Phase II of the projects executed with the partnership of Peace Corps and CamCCUL, the number of credit unions increased because most of the credit unions were now very competitive and implementing better management policies thanks to the knowledge acquired from the trainings they received from Peace Corps volunteers.

3.3.2. The Peace Corps and the Development of Cooperative Societies

Cameroon invited the Peace Corps to assist in the development of education and agriculture in 1962 shortly after its independence. In 1969, an official in the Department of Cooperative and Mutuality within the Ministry of Agriculture for West Cameroon initiated the first formal request for programming in this area. These requests started discussions that led to the establishment of programmes to assist cooperatives. The programme was formally launched in 1970 when the first group of 16 volunteers completed training and were assigned to local cooperatives. In 1974, the programme was expanded on a limited scale in to the francophone area.¹²⁶ The purpose of the programme was to improve the quality of agricultural produce for export, expand the services the department of cooperatives did to farmers, increase the amount of capital available to villagers for raising their standard of living and help establish market and storage facilities for local surplus production.

Cooperative societies were vital organisations for agricultural advancement, but recently the cooperative movement has faced difficulties that diminished its capacity and it is less significant now than previously. At the dawn of independence in Cameroon, cooperatives were existing as forums for political struggle against imperialism. But the cooperatives initiated by volunteers were structured to empower community members manage their markets and engage them in the progress of Cameroon in general.¹²⁷ It is assumed that the cooperatives would significantly raise the living standards of the people. This was because farmers in Mezam hardly saved anything of their own as most of what was gotten out of the sales of farm produce and cattle rearing was used for pleasure rather than preserving it for unforeseen circumstances. Some people at times practiced holden. This was a practice where people in the study area dug a place and buried money which could not yield any interest and at times, the bank notes, got bad in the ground. Also, there were times that farmers lend out money to business men on the pretext that, it was the best way of preserving this money but unfortunately for them, these business men took the money away and never returned.¹²⁸ If properly managed and organised, a cooperative can become an unparalleled force for socio-economic and even political development:

It all begins when individuals are able to pool both human and material resources together. This makes possible the provision of services acting individually, the members cannot enjoy. It could also result in an increase in their bargaining power in the market of not only outputs but of inputs as well. Also, government or any other donor will subvent a cooperative effort for more easily than it would assist members

¹²⁶ Azoh-Mbi, "The Contribution of," p.14.

¹²⁷ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.190.

¹²⁸ Teneng, "Pinyin Development Organisation," p.100.

at their individual level. Furthermore, cooperatives can serve to strengthen the spirit of unity and solidarity in the community as people work together, and it could also stimulate a spirit of competition towards progress among peoples and communities as the quantity and quality of produce is compared. The development of a cooperative will usually generate linkages with other development efforts such as the construction of produce evacuation roads, cooperative halls may serve as venues for marriages and other social activities, and quite often, for political discussions as well. Infact a cooperative brings increased wealth and power to farmers-they can build good houses, eat well, buy medicines and become healthier and stronger for more work and progress.¹²⁹

In Mezam, cooperatives were very important for different reasons like the already existing societies did not have the required skills for effective gathering, refining, warehousing and selling of cocoa and coffee. Local craftspeople in most of these communities experienced frequent sales difficulties of their craftsmanship at profitable prices because of the lack of organised foreign and domestic markets for their products and the fact that most of the population living in the rural areas were excluded from mainstream financial services or unbanked. Many cooperatives were plagued by inherent flaws, deficient financial practices, leadership feuds, lack of organisational experience such as marketing strategies and outreach tactics and many of the members fought against evolutions.¹³⁰ Besides, inadequate management and price swings of farm output brought about changes, however, these remained unchangeable elements. Government liberalisation in the 1990s was the major force behind the downturn in the sustainability of support and the increasing power of private buyers of agricultural produce.¹³¹ Cooperatives are spread throughout the country as mom-and-pops and large organisations of farmers, planters and farm intermediaries, structured to enhance durability and unity as regards the citizens. The main cooperatives in Cameroon focused on cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, oil palm and banannas. Cameroon counts on the cooperative movement for the full realisation of its agricultural potential and policy.

3.3.2.1. North-West Marketing Cooperative Societies

These societies are formed by small producers and manufacturers who find it difficult to sell their products individually. They offer huge networks of support for production and exchange of goods and services with direct impact on livelihoods. The society collects the products from the individual members and takes the responsibility of selling those products in the market. Cooperatives help to pull produce together, arrange, transport produce to local and urban markets and sales from these produce help farmers to participate in other activities.

¹²⁹ Azoh-Mbi, "The Contribution of," p.140.

¹³⁰ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.190.

¹³¹ Delancey, *Historical Dictionary of*, p.115.

The North-West Cooperative Association, the Bamenda Handicraft Cooperative Society, Bamenda Dairy Farmers Cooperative and Bamenda Vegetable Cooperative Societies are examples of marketing cooperatives. The goals of this project were to provide immediate technical assistance, input and help to facilitate cooperative workers and administrators to run a financially rewarding business, upholding impartiality and ensuring equity and profitable work for the peasant producers. Since its initiation in 1970, the project concentrated on groups marketing coffee and cocoa for export although volunteers also provided assistance to cooperatives for other crops such as palm oil and rice. Volunteers were assigned to specific cooperatives whereby they served as assistant managers and problem solvers.¹³²

As concerns the N.W. Marketing Cooperatives in 1979, there were 144,460 beneficiaries of their services, of which 35,960 were members. The marketing union with the most members was the Nso Area Cooperative Union which had 8,708 registered. The cooperatives employed 398 total full-time employees, of which 144 were defined as being trained. The majority of these trained employees that is 60 or 41.7% were working for the North-West Cooperative Association. Part-time employees totalled 4,407 about 91.7% of all staff with 829 and 808 from the Nso and Kom Unions respectively. There was a civil servant posted only to Ndop and 8 persons who were neither from the cooperatives or the government attached to these cooperatives. As mentioned above, the greatest amount of produce sold for farmers by these societies was arabica coffee. The average tonnage sold per union was approximately 572 tons. Of the total, three unions (Kom, Nso and Santa) sold 3,340 tons.¹³³

The relatively open job description allowed volunteers to take in a wide variety of other activities in addition to their assigned task. In addition to auditing books and training bookkeepers, for example, they also started coffee and cocoa nurseries, operated cooperative stores to provide tools, fertilisers and other products, conducted efficiency and cost benefit studies, merged cooperatives and created newer education programmes. As cited by Clare and Chris, Mark Delancey stated in his report to the Peace Corps that: “volunteers assigned to these two projects were more successful than those assigned to the credit unions because they were frequently able to play the role of free-lance innovator and trouble shooter.”¹³⁴

Volunteers and staff felt that their role and responsibilities were not outlined clearly enough. The project would have been more successful if their job descriptions delineated

¹³² Clare and Meyer, *Peace Corps Programming*, p.19.

¹³³ D. Mahon, *Cameroon-USAID Study and Design Project of the Cooperative Sector ; Cooperatives and their Activities in the United Republic of Cameroon : A Statistical Analysis*, Yaoundé, USAID, 1980, p.13.

¹³⁴ Clare and Meyer, *Peace Corps Programming*, p.20

more specific tasks and line responsibilities. Volunteer problems were in dealing with instances of graft, nepotism and political influence within the organisations as they were expected to assist. Their role as troubleshooters brought some volunteers face-to-face with evidence of such practices, yet allowed them few options for dealing sensitively with the situation. Volunteers tried to overcome these problems with efficient financial controls and discussions with management. Yet in many cases, the volunteers were not able to correct the situation and thus were never completely comfortable with the ethics of the organisation¹³⁵

3.3.2.1.1. The Peace Corps and the North-West Cooperative Association (NWCA)

A Cooperative society is a common-interest association of individuals sharing needs, jointly working for the attainment of shared economic interest (prosperity). Its purpose is to benefit, the underprivileged of the community by virtue of self-reliance and reciprocal help. The main goal is to offer assistance to participants.¹³⁶ No one becomes a member of a cooperative for profit motive. A group is gathered, members combine their personal capital, harness its full potentials and draw the greatest shared interest from it. Atleast 10 persons with a minimum age of 18, having the legal competence to contract with shared economic goals like weaving, farming, consuming can form a cooperative society.

Nemon defines a cooperative as an attempt by local people to control the socio-economic destiny of a community¹³⁷ while Brown thinks that a cooperative is a means through which community members pursue priorities of independently set goals commonly founded on shared geographical characteristics, shared experiences and values.¹³⁸ However, although perspectives differ, there appears to be a general agreement that community development should actively involve community members and meet their needs. A cooperative movement could be perceived as an act through which people with a shared interest rally themselves and establish a business, where there is an equal balance of power between the management and the workforce and income shared among them in proportion to their activities.¹³⁹ Also, a cooperative is a business whereby a group of people with shared interest, rally or assemble their initiatives, experiences and funds in order to enhance the

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Ngwagan Mathew, 65 years, Worker at NWCA, Nkwen, 17/December/2021.

¹³⁷ Nemon as cited by Wilson in "Cooperatives and Community Development: A Perspective on the Use of Cooperatives in Development", *Journal of community Practice*, Vol. 19, Issue 11, 2011, p.1.

¹³⁸ Brown as cited in *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Gentil as cited by Jiotsa *et al* in "Cooperative Movements in the Western Highlands of Cameroon", *Journal of Alpine Research*, Vol.103, No. 1, 2015, p.1.

progress of all. This means that in all cooperatives, self-reliance, community growth and social progress overcome individuality and other self-centred inclinations.¹⁴⁰

The history of the cooperative movement in Mezam is linked to the production of Arabica coffee. The area provides a veritable climate for its production since it does well in mountainous areas with hot and humid climate.¹⁴¹ Albert thinks that the first cooperative in Mezam saw the light of the day in 1920 known as the Bamenda Farmers Cooperative Union. He argues that the support the cooperative received through the Nigerian Marketing Board, triggered the birth of other cooperative associations in areas like Santa, Nkwen and Bafut.¹⁴² In the same light, Jiotsa argues that the birth of the cooperative movement in Mezam dates back to 1943, when some farmers in Santa brought their coffee together and sent it to Dschang, later to Bamenda for sale. This was because farmers in the Bamenda area did not receive favourable attention from the John Holt Ltd and Cadbury and Fry firms that were operating in Southern Cameroons. These companies bought mostly palm kernels and cocoa in Southern Cameroons. Consequently the coffee growers in Bamenda quickly organised themselves in to cooperative societies to market their produce collectively.¹⁴³

Similarly, Anjoh thinks that the first cooperative was founded in 1947 at Bafreng at a location called Ghana Street in Bamenda. The group of farmers who founded this cooperative were J.N. Foncha, A.A. Geh, J. Ako and G.S. Anthony all of blessed memory. Not long after, other cooperative societies were formed essentially around Bamenda. On 2nd August 1953, five of these cooperative societies formed the first cooperative union, the Bamenda Provincial Union. It was later changed to the Bamenda Cooperative Marketing Association (BCMA) on 16th October 1953. After the BCMA, came the Arabica Coffee Cooperative Organisation formed in July 1968. In June 1970, it was replaced by the Bamenda Cooperative Association (BCA). However, since the Southern Cameroons Marketing Board (SCMB) took over the right to market coffee from the North-West in 1954, the BCA only retained the function of coordinator of the activities of cooperatives of the region.¹⁴⁴

The name North-West Cooperative Association came in to existence in 1978, when the government of Cameroon, decided to carry out broad base rural development programme for the benefit of the farmers in the North-West. It was hoped that this will be carried out by the BCA. But since the BCA could not better represent the whole region, the BCA in an

¹⁴⁰ INRUDS as cited in *Ibid*.

¹⁴¹ Jiotsa *et al*, "Cooperative Movements in," p.3.

¹⁴² *Ibid*.

¹⁴³ Anjoh, "United States Agency," p.394.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

extraordinary meeting on 29th March 1978, resolved and transformed itself into the NWCA. Incidentally that same year, the government created the National Produce Marketing Board (NPMB). It took over the marketing functions of the SCMB and subsequently those of the West Cameroon Marketing Board(WCMB).¹⁴⁵

In the 1985/86 season, the arabica coffee marketing system in the North-West began unravelling due to the deepening economic crisis in Cameroon. This crisis had devastating impacts on the NWCA coffee marketing arrangements. Financing became increasingly difficult to secure from the NPMB. Payment to NWCA became more irregular and uncertain despite the fact that there should have been substantial reserves in NPMB arabica coffee stabilisation fund. Between 1978/79 and 1988/89, according to local estimates, NPMB made profits of approximately 14 billion FCFA on sales of arabica coffee from the North-West Province. This did not include reserves that the NPMB accumulated from marketing robusta coffee and cocoa. Thus NPMB should have been able to weather the storm of declining commodity prices. Instead no reserves were found at NPMB. In 1989, it was estimated that NPMB owed NWCA 3.9 billion FCFA in arrears including approximately 2.3 billion FCFA owed to North-West farmers.¹⁴⁶

As a result of these difficulties, arabica coffee production in the North-West Province steadily declined from a five-year average of 8.296 tons between 1974/75 and 1978/79 to a five-year average of 5712 tons between 1984/85 and 1988/89. Farmers in the North-West put less care in to maintaining their trees, not regenerating their coffee trees, moving out of coffee production in to food crops and even uprooting their trees.¹⁴⁷ As a result of the poor management practices in the NWCA, it elaborated a restructuring programme for itself and looked for a sponsor. It won the sympathy of USAID. The NWCA educated farmers on the importance of the cooperative society urging them to be members.¹⁴⁸

USAID took the NWCA proposals, studied them and examined the situation of the NWCA after the closure of the NPMB. It equally examined the monopolistic situation operated under strong state control. Several meetings were held between USAID and the NWCA representatives during which the problems of the NWCA were presented and discussed. Both parties did a careful evaluation and conditions were laid down for eventual take-off of the project. In August 1990, a NWCA Board meeting attended by USAID took

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p.16.

¹⁴⁶ P.D. Wessen, *Program of Reform in the Agricultural Marketing Sector Phase I (PRAMS I)*, Yaoundé, USAID, 1994, p.6.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.7.

¹⁴⁸ Jiotso *et al*, "Cooperative Movements in," p.3.

place to sign several project documents including the Memorandum of Understanding between NWCA Ltd, affiliated cooperative unions and USAID. With USAID acceptance to assist NWCA, a “Programme Grant Agreement” and “Project Grant Agreement” were signed on 30th August 1990, between the Republic of Cameroon and the U.S. acting through USAID. Those who signed these documents were Elizabeth Tankeu of the Ministry of Planning and Regional Development as representative of the Cameroon Government, American Ambassador, Francis D. Cook and the AID mission director Jay. P. Johnson as representatives of the U.S. Government.¹⁴⁹ The agreement authorised the obligations of NWCA in implementing PRAMS I cooperative restructuring reforms and USAID in supporting the restructuring effort, plus the Programme Implementation Agreement for year one outlining the specific actions required of USAID and NWCA in implementing the reforms.

USAID assistance to the NWCA was given through a programme called “The Programme for the Reform of the Agricultural Marketing Sector I Phase I (PRAMS I). PRAMS I that lasted from August 30th 1990 to June 30th 1994 was a process intended to reform, restructure and strengthen the cooperative structure with the following objectives: (1) to reform the governance arrangements of the NWCA so that the association can be restructured from the bottom up than the top down (2) to develop new internal marketing arrangements within the association and improve processing technology that will enable farmers and their cooperative organisations to improve the quality of coffee they market and operate with greater efficiency (3) to reduce the per unit operating costs of all cooperative organisations within the associations-CPMSs, cooperative unions and the apex organisation so that farmers can realise a greater income from the sale of coffee (4) to create a marketing capability within the apex organisation of NWCA so that N.W. coffee was well represented on the world market.¹⁵⁰

The PRAMS cooperative restructuring component was designed to assist North-West farmers in adapting to a liberalised Arabica coffee market, while minimising the social costs of adjustments. The assistance focused on strengthening and restructuring the NWCA then the sole Arabica coffee marketing structure in the North-West Province. The restructuring project introduced new internal marketing arrangements with the cooperative structure to complement USAID’s policy reform efforts to liberalise and privatise the Arabica coffee

¹⁴⁹ Anjoh, “United States Agency,” p.396.

¹⁵⁰ R.J. Oakerson, *Program of Reform in the Agricultural Marketing Sector, Phase I, First Intra-Annual Assessment during Year 4 (1993-1994) Final Report*, Yaoundé, Decentralisation: Finance and Management Project Associates in Rural Development INC, March 1994, p.10.

sector in Cameroon. NWCA was a federation of 11 area cooperative unions. Each union was formed by a number of marketing societies, 40 in all when the programme began. An estimated 35,000 farmers produced coffee then in the N.W. all smallholders. The 11 unions operated a total of 12 coffee mills, where Arabica coffee is hulled and graded. The apex organisation of NWCA supplied expert marketing and engineering services to area unions¹⁵¹ USAID provided financial and human resources to support the reform development in the NWCA. Financially the cost of the programme was estimated at \$22,000,000 to be disbursed in 4 installments. The NWCA with USAID's approval requested assistance from Peace Corps Cameroon for volunteers to help do these assignments. However, for Peace Corps Cameroon to provide volunteers for this project, a Memorandum of Understanding had to be signed.¹⁵² The Peace Corps was first mentioned in Section V, Article 1 of the Memorandum of Understanding between NWCA and USAID as a viable resource to participate in PRAMS I.¹⁵³ A few months later, the Peace Corps signed a formal Memorandum of Cooperation on the 16th of December 1991 in Yaoundé with USAID, NWCA, Ministry of Agriculture and the Arabica Policy Coordinating Committee (APCC).¹⁵⁴

As a matter of procedure, letter No.NWCA/19/354 of 2nd November 1990 was addressed through the Minister of Agriculture to the Minister of Planning and Regional Development and Peace Corps Cameroon requesting volunteers. In this letter, the job description of volunteers suggested that they should have language competence, cross cultural skills, expertise in cooperative development and management, and skills in small enterprise development.¹⁵⁵ The role of volunteers was to assist NWCA shown below to change existing poor management practices and redirect the accountability of each tier. Its focus was on the management issues of the Cooperative Produce Marketing Society (CPMS). A secondary role was to work on the implementation and research aspects of PRAMS I. The agreement called for 15 volunteers, but only five were initially provided. This number later grew to eleven, one for each of the eleven unions. Peace Corps volunteers were supervised by the NWCA and submitted quarterly reports to the NWCA. The responsibility to ensure Peace Corps effective participation in the project was shared between the parties to the above

¹⁵¹ Wessen, *Program of Reform*, p.1.

¹⁵² Oakerson, *Program of Reform*, p.400.

¹⁵³ Cooke and Jolly, *Mid Term Evaluation*, p.28.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Anjoh, "United States Agency," p.401.

mentioned Memorandum that is NWCA was to provide technical guidance in collaboration with USAID.¹⁵⁶

Plate 19: North West Cooperative Association



Source: Author's collection, Bamenda, 30/December/2021.

The above shows the NWCA in Nkwen Bamenda in which volunteers have served there over the years especially in the 1980s and 1990s.

Training was provided to the initial five Peace Corps volunteers so as to provide an understanding to the logic of the institution designed for the cooperative structure. They were provided with the fundamentals to educate and inform the societies about the new institutional design and its implications. They were also trained to compile and record research data based on their field observations and experience. Peace Corps volunteers, by their nature were anxious to move forward with their new mission. When NWCA failed to provide guidance, the volunteers took their decisions from the International Science and Technology Institute (ISTI). As words got back to NWCA about Peace Corps volunteers' field activities, NWCA accused ISTI of usurping them. This was the beginning of a major setback for the initial group of Peace Corps volunteers coupled with their youthful and lack of relevant experience in their working fields. These things made it relatively easy for NWCA to discredit their noble but futile effort.¹⁵⁷

The second group of eleven were more mature and had better knowledge transfer skills. They worked on the implementation and research aspects of PRAMS I. They delivered technical assistance to the Cooperative Produce Marketing Society (CPMS) level, built common knowledge of new institutional arrangements among cooperative members, monitoring and recognising the decisional and behavioural responses of CPMS employees

¹⁵⁶ Cooke and Jolly, *Mid Term Evaluation*, p.28.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*

and members to their new situation and watching for difficulties and problems that may necessitate revisions in technical assistance, institutional arrangements and research design. While they were accomplishing these aspects with some degree of success, the first and the second were still diminished by earlier problems.¹⁵⁸ Peace Corps volunteers despite the conflict they were caught in, were doing a good job. USAID took the lead in getting all of the team players on the same side. The loss of the valuable human resources due to lingering animosities was an unanticipated social cost. After all the required resources were in place, the effective implementation of the PRAMS I project in the NWCA began.¹⁵⁹

Volunteers educated the farmers on the importance of growing good quality coffee at the level of the farm. Production of high quality arabica coffee is a complicated and time dependent process. During production, pruning, weeding, fertilising and spraying are important activities contributing to coffee yields and quality. The critical stage in determining coffee quality is primary processing at the farm level. Improper processing affects the taste (not always the appearance) of roasted beans. The educators laid emphasis on the required method and type of coffee bean to be picked. Farmers were reminded by volunteers that if these were properly done at the level of the farm, the parchment obtained would be of good quality and earn higher incomes. Good quality Arabica depends upon initiating processing within 24 hours of harvest and controlling the timing and duration of fermentation to preserve flavour. Farm level washing involves several stages (pulping, fermentation, washing and drying.) Thus incentives to produce good quality coffee, in the context of smallholder production must be directed to the farm level. The basic problem is that the quality of Arabica is difficult to discern at the point of purchase from farmers prior to roasting.¹⁶⁰

The quality of Arabica coffee also depended on efficient hulling and grading coffee. This is done in union mills with machinery that exhibit economies of scale thus large numbers of dispersed smallholder Arabica producers produce a perishable coffee parchment that is further processed at a concentrated number of mills-often only one in a specific production area. There is potential in this situation for a mill to exert considerable market influence over relatively powerless farmers. In addition, it is important to control the moisture level of both coffee parchment prior to hulling and or coffee beans prior to export. Thus maintaining the quality of Arabica coffee during processing and shipment requires close coordination of processing stages and marketing function; implying the need for a vertically

¹⁵⁸ Saah Solomon, 60 years, Manager of BHCS/Volunteer Counterpart, Nkwena, 30/December/ 2021.

¹⁵⁹ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.15.

¹⁶⁰ Wessen, *Program of Reform*, p.13.

integrated market structure linking producers to the world market.¹⁶¹ They also educated the coffee farmers on the handling of the coffee harvested from the farm. After the farmers picked the ripe coffee, they were to pulp it within 8 hours to take off the cherry. When the cherry was taken off, the farmers were to ferment the coffee for 24 hours depending on how hot the environment was. After fermentation, the coffee was washed properly in clean water and dried on a raised surface.¹⁶²

During such programmes, volunteers discovered that farmers' problems concerning the handling of coffee emanated not only from inadequate education but also from lack of equipment. This problem was witnessed by volunteers like Christopher York in Nkambe area, Robin L. Rowsley in Ndop area and Ellen Weinred in the Oku/Noni area, though it was a general problem all over the N.W. Volunteers reported that most of the farmers had no pulpers and the drying slaps were outdated. There was the difficulty of access to clean water. Since only very few farmers possessed pulpers that were not even in good conditions, the others waited until the pulpers were free before they could pulp their coffee. The consequences were that the coffee stayed too long before being pulped, coupled with poor washing and drying conditions explains why NWCA coffee had poor quality and bad taste.¹⁶³

Volunteers transmitted these problems to USAID which provided 20,000 modern coffee pulpers and 8,000 tarpaulins for the NWCA farmers. This cost USAID 395,000,000 FCA. The educational campaigns mounted in some unions like Bali, Santa helped to improve on the coffee parchment as supported by Ronald J. Oakerson a short term coffee processing specialist, Karl Reler an ISTI coffee specialist reported in January and February 1992 that generally, parchment quality was up sharply over the previous years. It was also due to the efforts of volunteers directed at farmers and delegates. Volunteers were equally included at the level of the unions to educate the store keepers who received coffee. In addition, workshops were organised by Philip Pesta, volunteers and NWCA engineer Elias Fufang Sikod to demonstrate practically what was expected of the store keepers. Because of these recommendations made by the Peace Corps volunteers there was an increase in the quality and quantity of coffee production in most unions, the Santa union for example, doubled its capacity and produced an average of 140 bags per 8 hours.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.15.

¹⁶³ Saah Solomon, 60 years, Manager of BHCS/Volunteer Counterpart, Nkwen, 30/December/ 2021.

¹⁶⁴ Anjoh, "United States Agency," p.405.

4.3.2.1.1.1. Improvement of financial, Accounting and Marketing Conditions

Volunteers developed and followed up a different accounting system that was introduced in the societies. This was known as the Simple Cash Base Accounting System (SCBAS). The aim was to enable the societies understand easily how to post their accounts. The volunteers made several presentations on this system, which improved the accounts of the societies. It also led to a reduction in workload because in the past, societies employed a manager and store keeper to take care of accounts. It also greatly improved upon the old system of traditional bookkeeping used at the society level. Volunteers went on to reconcile the transaction of societies with those of their unions. With NPMB no longer in existence, the NWCA became aware that its survival depended greatly on how best it sold the produce of its members, particularly with the approach of a liberalised coffee market and eminent competition. It was also important to keep the farmers loyal to the cooperative organisation. Due to this, USAID demanded the volunteers to improve on the marketing management of the NWCA. A marketing unit was established at the level of NWCA by volunteers to coordinate the sales of coffee produced by the farmers. It was created in August 1992.¹⁶⁵

4.3.2.1.1.2. Reorganisation of the Institutional Management

This attributed the many difficulties besetting actors within the Arabica coffee sector to institutional arrangements poorly adapted to the specific requirements of Arabica coffee production, processing and marketing. Thus volunteers concluded that coffee production and marketing could be improved by transforming the institutional arrangements and policy environment constraining the production and marketing of Arabica coffee. Concerning rearrangement, redeployment and repositioning of staff, Peace Corps volunteers concentrated on the organisation of staff at the apex of unions and societies. The idea was to make the structure function like a business unit on purely profit basis. It was also to enable the NWCA provide the best services and income to its farmers. Volunteers carried out studies and showed that unions were over-staffed. A reduction of the staff level was imperative to reduce per unit cost and improve efficiency as shown on the table below. With the help of volunteers, union and societies calculated the severance benefits and forwarded the results to the NWCA for approval and payments.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Saah Solomon, 60 years, Manager of BHCS/Volunteer Counterpart, Nkwen, 30/December/ 2021.

¹⁶⁶ Anjoh, "United States Agency", p.406.

Table 24: Staff Reduction at Union Levels under PRAMS I 1st November 1991 to 31st March 1993

No	Unions	Permanent staff	No laid off	No retained
1	Santa	18	7	11
2	Pinyin	9	3	6
3	Bali	8	5	3
4	Bamenda Central	13	5	8
Total		48	20	28

Source: Anjoh, “The United States Agency,” p.448.

The above shows the number of staff at the union level in Mezam that were either laid off or retained. This was to make sure that the NWCA provided effective services. Unions with highest production were also over staffed that is why some unions had the number they had before PRAMS I.

After the review of the 1973 cooperatives law, Peace Corps volunteers carried out numerous seminars at all levels of the NWCA structure. These seminars were designed to educate farmers and staff of NWCA on the new law and what was expected of them. During such educational exercises, they assisted the NWCA, unions and societies to draw up their specific by-laws. Such seminars equally focused on the procedures to be followed by the cooperative units to register under the new law. This exercise was very relevant because the new law, gave cooperative units a time limit, from August 1992 to March 1994 to register. Since the new law also specified that cooperatives could freely merge or split, the Peace Corps volunteers helped to split up some of the societies that demanded separation. It should be remembered that the law of 1973 amalgamated cooperative societies without their consent. Thus, with the 1992 law, cooperatives which were not happy with their state had to split.¹⁶⁷

3.3.2.1.2. The Peace Corps and the Bamenda Handicraft Cooperative Society (BHCS)

Another important Anglophone marketing cooperative society in which volunteers left a good reputation was in the Bamenda Handicraft Cooperative Society (BHCS Ltd). BHCS Ltd is a very old cooperative of craftsmen who thought it wise to come together to see how they could produce and market their crafts. The cooperative was formed in 1964 with the support of some Peace Corps volunteers Douglas and Cynthia Kelley who were interested in promoting and supporting the craft industry in the North-West. It was responsible for selling the handicraft and other goods produced by the people in the Bamenda region. The organisation was registered as a cooperative on the 14th of May 1964.¹⁶⁸ Thanks to the activities of the volunteers, instant improvement was recognised after its creation. By

¹⁶⁷ Saah Solomon, 60 years, Manager of BHCS/Volunteer Counterpart, Nkwen, 30/December/ 2021.

¹⁶⁸ *Idem*.

November 1964, its membership rose to 425 and the institution saved or accumulated 650.000 Francs CFA from sale of products. By 1966, the group already had about 1.200 members and a visible characteristic of the association was that it transcended tribal boundaries. This was a significant triumph because the members of the diverse tribes in Cameroon had a long-standing tradition of suspicion for one another. Thanks to the initiatives of the volunteers, they had the potential to join the cooperative to accomplish shared goals. This was the dawn of a new day in the lives of Cameroonians and they celebrated the trans tribal collaboration the cooperative brought but however, the absence of government assistance hindered the progress of the cooperative. Other similar cooperatives established in the country by volunteers faced the same challenges.¹⁶⁹

In August 1966, a wooden royal piece known as *Afo-A-Kom* was stolen from the Kom palace and seen on exhibition at the Dartmouth College Hood Museum.¹⁷⁰ The man who deserved substantial credit for the return of the sacred *Afo-Akom* was Craig Kinzelman, a Peace Corps volunteer working then in the Cameroon grasslands but the role of Kinzelman was hardly mentioned nor acknowledged.¹⁷¹ For over 3 years, Kinzelman 30 years old and his wife Merry 27 years wrote letters, made phone calls, visited government officials and pleaded with art experts all over the world in an effort to recover a work that was the symbol of the spiritual and political heritage of the Koms. The kinzelman's interest in the mysterious disappearance of the Kom figure began in 1970 when they were asked to become technical advisers to the then Bamenda museum. The museum was established about 6 years earlier to preserve and catalogue the artistic heritage of the Cameroons.¹⁷² The museum collection was started by two British but it was not until the Kinzelman's stepped in at the invitation of the Cameroon government that serious work began on indexing and displaying the collections.

As the cooperative grew, the most challenging problem faced was how to get a big market. Through the government, the information got to the Peace Corps and in 1972, two Peace Corps volunteers Henry Gretchen and Homeger were assigned specifically to the BHCS Ltd. They worked hard on the managerial ability, improved on the marketing skills, production ability and connected the cooperative to the international market. After Gretchen

¹⁶⁹ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.190.

¹⁷⁰ V.B. Ngitir, "Bamenda Grassfields Royal Collection and Museums from Ancient Times to the Beginning of the 21st Century", PhD. Thesis, Department of History, University of Yaoundé, 1, 2011, p.308., E. Njinuwo, "Community Museums and Meaning Making: A Survey of Community Museums in the Grassland Regions of Anglophone Cameroon", *African Journal of Social Sciences*, Sachu and Diamond England, United Kingdom, 2015, p.1.

¹⁷¹ Ngitir, "Bamenda Grassfields Royal," p. 309.

¹⁷² S. Blakeslee, "Kom's Statue's Homecoming Will End 3-Year Search by Peace Corps Volunteer", *New York Times*, 5th November 1973, p.42.

and Homeger, was the turn of Merry Tumi Kinzelman to play her own part in the development of the cooperative. Most of her assistance was to link the centre to the international market. She also lobbied for funds and grants from America through the Peace Corps Partnership Project and constructed some structures at the cooperative centre.¹⁷³ With these funds, she supervised the construction of the cooperative shop and the stone building shown below. Merry's intention was to make the stone building a workshop but with time the management of the cooperative decided to construct a new workshop because of the fact that if continuously left as a workshop, craftsmen were going to destroy the building with their very hard handworks. The stone building today is not very functional as a result of the crisis and the management thought it wise not to allow the rooms empty as some of the rooms today are rented out for example two of the rooms are rented out to the Njinikom Council.¹⁷⁴

Plate 20 : Bamenda Handicraft Cooperative Society



Source: Author's collection, 30/Decemeber/2021
The above shows the Bamenda Handicraft Cooperative Society

Plate 21: Bamenda Handicraft Cooperative Workshop



Source: Author's collection, 30/December/2021
The above shows the Cooperative Workshop constructed by Peace Corps Volunteers

Unfortunately, upon the completion of the shop, it got burnt and the volunteers again through the Peace Corps Partnership Project, the Cameroon government and a Dutch organisation called Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries(HIVOS) assisted the Bamenda handicraft cooperative society with funds to reconstruct the burnt structures. Other volunteers like Michael Breiner, Susanne Lajor Kambore, Ted, Frank and Jeannah Lacey came in October 2003 to revitalise the business. All through their service periods, the handicraft centre was able to exploit American markets thanks to their efforts. In 2005, the Dutch Embassy in Cameroon partnered with the Peace Corps and helped the BHCS with funds for the planting of 8 hectares of different kinds of trees as shown below. This was

¹⁷³ Saah Solomon, 60 years, Manager of BHCS/Volunteer Counterpart, Nkwen, 30/December/ 2021.

¹⁷⁴Idem.

aimed at preserving the handicraft industry that is experiencing a scarcity of raw materials. The stock system at the centre was introduced by volunteers and it is still used till date. The centre today also owns tables, chairs and other equipment used all thanks to the efforts of volunteers.¹⁷⁵ In the Bamenda Dairy Farmer's Cooperative, James and Vivian George of Walnut Creek, California and two volunteers provided assistance to this cooperative by helping it to improve its marketing strategies and plan a processing plant in 1987.¹⁷⁶

Plate 22 : Reconstructed Bamenda Handicraft Cooperative Shop



Source: Author's collection, Bamenda, 30/December/2021

The above shows the burnt Bamenda Cooperative Shop after reconstruction by some Peace Corps Volunteers

Plate 23: Bamenda Handicraft Forest



Source: Author's collection, Bamenda, 30/December/2021

The above shows a forest of assorted trees planted to sustain the craft industry at the Bamenda Handicraft Centre with project sponsored by the Peace Corps in partnership with the Dutch Embassy

Numerous peasant farmers in Mezam are at the brink of starvation and it attains its apex during the change from the dry to the rainy season as food supplies were exhausted and another reaping (harvest) still pending or better still, not yet ripe. The apiculture yields are a gradual release of energy especially for children and sick people is underutilised as honey harvesting in the area has always been done by beehive raiding and hunting bees in the bush. Understanding that empowering local farmers with sustainable beekeeping practices would enhance the accessibility of foodstuff during the transition period (hunger period) and serve

¹⁷⁵ *Idem.*

¹⁷⁶ Scanlon, *Cooperation between the*, p.9.

as a measure to alleviate poverty, the Peace Corps partnered with and supported the West Africa Food Security Partnership which facilitated beekeeping practical learning sessions.¹⁷⁷

Farmers were empowered during training sessions on sustainable beekeeping techniques including Kenyan Top Bar Hive construction, swarm trapping, apiary choosing and control, harvesting, high-quality processing and record-keeping. Upon completion of the training sessions, farmers placed Kenyan Top Bar Hives in most apiaries around communities. The new colonies provided the community with honey for increased availability of calories and incomes. Also, in the Bamenda Bee Cooperative, volunteers taught farmers on how to improve bee hive management practices. Volunteers opened a myriad of new opportunities to school children, students and community members learnt the craft of beekeeping, business and accounting. The funds they raised were used for other school projects, some of which led to additional revenue for school use. They also conducted training for agricultural extension agents. The volunteers efforts increased ten folds the effectiveness of volunteers working in beekeeping.¹⁷⁸

The project produced some notable offshoots including one small cooperative which produced and marketed honey and wood carving. The volunteer conceived the idea and wrote the marketing plan, then worked with one staff and the member board to develop the project. The goal was to expand potential income by selling processed honey rather than the raw product. The venture achieved a sales volume of \$10,000 annually with 25-30 members selling to consumer market of well-to-do Cameroonians. The cooperative paid off an initial \$500 loan in the first four months, covered other expenses, and made an annual dividend payment to all members of approximately \$200. Despite the low monthly rate, this represented new income of the participants and provided a successful pattern for succeeding projects. Although the cooperative later ran it to transportation problems, when it tried to expand in to more distant markets, the volunteer who initiated it identified this activity as the most successful of several projects with which he worked.¹⁷⁹

3.3.2.2. Anglophone Women's Cooperatives

Women cooperatives dealt largely with the marketing of foodstuffs produced by members with customer items such as palm oil and other household necessities. These cooperatives were for the most part either producer or consumer cooperatives. Few expanded in to producer-consumer cooperatives. The desire on the part of the government both to

¹⁷⁷ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.75.

¹⁷⁸ Scanlon, *Cooperation between the*, p.15.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.21.

expand the participation of women in national development and to provide a marketing structure for locally grown foods gave rise in the 1970s to a project to establish women's food marketing cooperatives. The basic assumption behind the project was that, women, as the primary producers of foodstuffs, stood to gain from the improved marketing mechanism of cooperatives as men had with cash crops. Initial project efforts attempted to stabilise the price and supply of palm oil, a major cooking product. Cooperatives for corn, beans and others soon followed and provided major marketing channels for those foods.¹⁸⁰

Also, the corn mill societies that existed before the arrival of the volunteers were transformed by these volunteers to corn cooperatives. These were associations that were founded to permit local women grind corn, an activity they carried out after they returned from the fields for the evening meal and in so doing associated with other women. These groups were aimed at reducing the burden of women from the tedious method of grinding corn on stones. By this, the women were encouraged to socialise among themselves during their free moments. It was hoped that the mills were going to enable women have time for themselves. To facilitate this task, Elizabeth O' Kelly who was transferred to the Bamenda division as the woman education officer in the British colonial services, created a programme where hand-grinding machines were provided for groups of women such that by 1960, there were about 200 of such societies comprising thousands of women. The first corn mill was established in July 1954 and by 1960, there were about 200 of such societies with about 70 women per group. Each group established rules on how the mill will be used, how the loan for the mill will be refunded and members' responsibilities. When revenue was collected from the grinding of corn, the society refunded the money that was used in buying the mill after which the society owned the mill. The refunded loan was used to purchase other machines.¹⁸¹

Membership to these associations was opened to all women regardless of religion or tribe and they were non-political organisations. The mills were only provided when the Woman Education Officer was convinced of the participation of any woman of the area. Because of the non-tribal and non-denominational nature of these societies, they were the only groups in the country which boasted of membership from every section of the community and from every tribe and religious denomination. Contrary to earlier organisations that were created on ethnic leanings, these corn mill societies served as forums where women could gather and bring out their opinions on matters concerning them.¹⁸²The

¹⁸⁰ Humphrey and Meyer, *Peace Corps Programming*, p.20.

¹⁸¹ J. Kuendun, "Women and the Independence Struggle in the British Southern Cameroons, 1945-1961: A Historical Survey", M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2014, p.61.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

volunteers worked to gather these women and transformed most of these corn mill societies in to cooperatives.

As far as the women's cooperatives were concerned, it could be said that the basic objective was to bring about a rational cooperative marketing structure for locally grown foodstuffs. The volunteer had to strengthen general business conditions, supervise and coordinate daily activities, personnel control and education of members. The volunteers were assigned to each women's cooperative and dubbed with the equivocal job title Technical Advisor. The volunteer on working alongside local cooperative officials helped improve upon the latter's performance as cooperative managers and agents capable of standing on their feet when Peace Corps assistance was withdrawn. The Cameroon government was responsible for volunteer's lodging, running costs of vehicles, seminar and official travel. The U.S. Peace Corps in turn made the volunteers and their motorcycles available.¹⁸³

The technical Advisors attached to the women's cooperatives first of all were to organise seminars for a continuous in-service training of collaborators on their job both in office and in fieldwork. Volunteers also tried to collaborate with officials and services of the more mature men's export marketing cooperative in an effort to induce a trickle down of financial and managerial assistance to the young and often fragile women's cooperatives.¹⁸⁴ Volunteers were requested to assist in identifying and establishing markets, organising or revitalising food stuffs production cooperatives and advising these cooperatives on single storage techniques. Volunteers in Mezam worked since 1971 in a variety of roles from manager of the cooperatives to trainers in bookkeeping and officer responsibilities to initiating and catering new cooperatives. Most have worked in Mezam under job titles of Cooperatives Foodstuffs Marketing Advisors and Women's Cooperative Advisors. Because the project originated more with the national government than with the communities or the women themselves even to the choice of palm oil as the primary product to be marketed, progress in establishing the cooperatives was slow at first. The lack of local involvement in project planning complicated the volunteer's tasks of convincing women to contribute the share capital and dues necessary to operate the cooperatives.¹⁸⁵

Most of the women's participants were illiterates, cooperatives were often required to hire a bookkeeper, raising operation cost. Lack of management skills and experience in business made the women hesitant to participate in the operation of their cooperatives. The women's cooperatives did not have access to resources readily available to the men and were forced to depend on the men's organisations for assistance. For example, many women's

¹⁸³ Azohmbi, "The Contribution of," p.143.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Humphrey and Meyer, *Peace Corps Programming*, p.22.

groups lacked the transportation which was provided to the men's cooperatives or they had to share transportation on a schedule established by the men's cooperatives. This limited the women's capacity to extend their markets to a wider circle of villages and drastically limited their ability to deliver products on a reliable schedule. These problems and the fact that commercial buyers often cut prices to meet the new competition of the women's cooperatives caused many short-term frustrations and a fair number of outright failures. Nonetheless, the women were able in most cases to keep their prices competitive and the competition had a positive effect on market forces. The cooperatives reliability as suppliers increased as time went by in most places, as the women improved their business practices. Participating volunteers reported long-term satisfaction despite the short-term frustrations.¹⁸⁶

3.3.2.2.1. Mezam Women's Cooperative

Located in Bamenda, the Mezam women's cooperative was essentially a consumer cooperative dealing exclusively with the marketing of palm oil. Palm oil was bought from palm factories in Lobe, South West Region and distributed to members for sale since very little was produced in the region of North-West where demand was high. This cooperative was in existence since 1970. It is important to note that the idea of setting up a women's cooperative in Mezam was first introduced by a political group, the womens' wing of the now defunct Cameroon National Union party(CNU) presently called the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement. Unfortunately, this organisation provided inadequate and at times misleading information and education concerning the collection of dividends.¹⁸⁷ These political leaders often had little or no knowledge at all concerning economic matters and in particular, about the cooperative movement. The problem of initiatives coming from cooperative novices was further compounded by the fact that unlike some of its peers, the Mezam women's cooperative was an independent cooperative with no affiliation to an established cooperative union which could give the women general cooperative guidance.

By 1974, when the first Peace Corps volunteer was posted to the cooperative, Lisa Matt noted that 1.024.000 FCFA in shares had been collected and deposited in a bank account but this resulted in no action. The cooperative had never risen to a full-fledged cooperative. It had no office, not even a store of its own. It was parasitically attached to other organisations. It was housed by the Bamenda Vegetable Cooperative Society and apart from a full time secretary on secondment from the NWCA, the cooperative had only an unpaid staff

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.23.

¹⁸⁷ Azohmbi, "The Contribution of ," p.144.

for full time Peace Corps Technical Advisors to work with. Most of the volunteers who worked within this structure claimed that the role of a Technical Advisor was:

To the best of our knowledge there never have been any written set of guidelines as to what the volunteers should or should not be doing in the women's programme. It would be difficult to arrive at detailed guidelines since all the women's cooperatives vary in management structure, affiliations with unions but a general list of guidelines pertaining to all women's cooperatives would be beneficial.¹⁸⁸

This was frustrating since a list of tasks had been established as far back as 1976 giving the specific objectives of the women's cooperative programme. Volunteers were either ignorant of their job description or ignored it. An ill-defined, ill headed technical advisor role means volunteers were abandoned to dictate or define their own duties. The first volunteer attached to the Mezam women's cooperative from 1974-1976 was reported to have occupied herself supervising oil purchases and distribution to the different sections. Other activities included education and training of members, and setting up of an appropriate accounting system. A second volunteer from 1976-1978 performed similar task-advising the board members, educating and gathering statistics as well as searching for markets in order to expand oil sales. As Delancey observed that she (the volunteer) was an organiser, supervisor, planner, manager and motivator. Irrespective of her efforts, this volunteer's efforts did not meet with success because of the lack of leadership and difficulty in finding skilled persons to maintain books and records, or to manage the business, the bookkeeping system was too complex for the level of skills available, the organisational structure was too complex, lack of sufficient capital to maintain regular supply of oil and transportation problems as well as branches competed against each other and refused to cooperate.¹⁸⁹

Nonetheless, the activities of the cooperative were able to extend through out all of Mezam division claiming a total membership of 1374 women as shown below. The cooperative was divided in to five sections that is Bafut, Mankon, Bali, Santa and Ndop.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.146.

¹⁸⁹ Humphrey and Meyer, *Peace Corps Programming*, p.25.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.145.

Table 25: The Mezam Women's Cooperative Society in 1979

1	No. of members	1,374
2.	No. of Non-Member Beneficiaries	100
3	No. of Trained Full-Time Employees	0
4	No. of untrained Full-Time Employees	01
5	No. Part-Time Employees	0
6	No. of Civil Servants	0
7	No. of External Personnel	01
8	1978 Tonnages Sold Palm Oil	12
9	1978 Supply Service Surplus	-
10	1978 Profit Distribution	0
11	Paid-up share Capital	2,548,000
12	Total Amount of Reserves at Cooperatives Disposal	232,725
13	Value of Fixed Assets	3,641,361
14	1978 Year End Surplus	623,700

Source: Mahon, *Cameroon-USAID Study*, p.25.

The above shows the Mezam Women's cooperative society in 1979, with the largest recorded membership of 1,374 with 2 staff of which none was trained. The only product sold by this society was palm oil, which members bought for retailing operations in the local market. The total estimated tonnages of palm oil sold was 12.

Despite the little achievement, a third volunteer (1978-1980) was placed at the cooperative. After noticing the difficulties of her former colleagues, the volunteer expressed the need for a re-organisation while at the same time also recommended that Peace Corps support be withdrawn on the grounds that after several years of Peace Corps assistance nothing was achieved. When the fifth Peace Corps volunteer 1982-1984 came to the cooperative, it was essentially moribund for the last date of activity was 1981. She requested an audit of the cooperative by the provincial audit team with a view to making a fresh start. This audit was duly completed in December 1983 and in a separate report the auditor established the causes that led to the collapse of the cooperative as follows: lack of cooperative and business education from the inception of the scheme, general mismanagement of the oil scheme both in the society and sections leading to losses in oil and cash, many losses in some sections such as Santa prompted many women to believe that their capital in shares was lost and lack of continuity in the running of the oil scheme.¹⁹¹

Peace Corps volunteers ran cooperatives as if they were employees of the society. Activities stopped at the end of each Peace Corps tour in Cameroon and were restarted only when another Peace Corps volunteer arrived there. This state of affairs resulted in losses for which responsibility could not be pin-pointed. Finally, the Mezam oil scheme was initiated

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.26.

by the women's wing of the CNU and as a result, sub section presidents upon their election seized the oil scheme in their area and mismanaged it. This scared members (this was the case of the late sub section president of Santa women's wing of the CNU who seized the oil scheme and operated it as a private enterprise). Some members argued that: "she took it without anybody handing it over to her and she died without handing it over to anybody"¹⁹² the report noted. All these reports boiled down to one thing that is the original objective of the programme which was aimed at bringing about a rational and more viable cooperative marketing structure was not attained.

The last aspect of the Kwende Report supported by the Delancey Report expressed and translated a failure of the initial strategy of having volunteers work alongside Cameroonians in advisory positions, guiding the nationals and increasing their capacity in managing viable cooperatives when the volunteers withdrew. Some of the volunteers replaced the nationals at the job. For as full time advisors to local cooperative officials, it could not be any different for a volunteer wanting to be occupied. Marilyn Schaffer, Peace Corps volunteer between 1982-1984 admitted that though she was primarily concerned with the cooperative, circumstances reoriented her efforts towards other areas, notably, handicraft cooperatives, the cattlemen cooperative and Bamenda vegetable cooperative society. This same volunteer even secured a \$10,000 grant from the Small Project Assistance fund for a cold store facility for the Bamenda vegetable cooperative society. All she did for the cooperative was to ask for an audit with a view to making a new start on a changed strategy by re-organising the cooperative not from the apex but from the grassroots level in the villages. When she left, her successor, Karen Searle (1984-1986) continued. But as there was still no full time staff at the cooperative, there was doubt that new volunteers can perform any better under the prevailing circumstances. This strategy to an extent failed because there were no Cameroonians available to work with the volunteers on a full time basis.¹⁹³

3.4. Transport, Rural and Town (Urban) Planning

Because of the importance of community development, volunteers were tasked with enhancing improvement of rural areas in Cameroon. Rural development is considered as enhancing the quality of life of the poor living in the remote areas and fostering growth and self-reliance.¹⁹⁴ In effect, volunteers provided technical assistance and training to community development field workers and helped to organise and plan activities of the then Ministry of

¹⁹² Azohmbi, "The Contribution of," p.149.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.150.

¹⁹⁴ Amin, *The Peace Corps*, p.125.

Community Development. Organisation and planning are probably the activities in which the volunteers can be of greatest assistance both now and in the long-run.¹⁹⁵ An effective rural development officer had to mobilise resources, design and implement projects beneficial to the community and have the capability to encourage community residents to participate in the implementation of the projects. The officer could acquire skills either through formal education or during a long-standing experience which leads to practical training.¹⁹⁶

In the early years of independence, Cameroon was ideally suited for rural progress as many people lacked access to services, facilities and resources that improved their living standards and increased their incomes. Volunteers made a considerable impression in the country in building roads, bridges, water points, clinics and helping to organise literacy classes, youth groups, cooperatives, agricultural development and digging of latrines. The volunteers were to be agents of modernisation and full dedication was needed if they were to realise the obligations requested of them. The Peace Corps trainers and facilitators motivated the volunteers to engage in local community growth initiatives even when they were assigned a teaching job. There were some volunteers particularly posted to Cameroon for community development. By 1966, there were about 16 Peace Corps volunteers doing community development work.¹⁹⁷

Volunteers helped farmers in Mezam with the construction of market access roads for the rural population. Rural transport is dual functional, first as a conveyor string that has one terminal connected to the market and the other terminal to the farm implying that it links the farm to the market. Peace Corps volunteers are committed in the improvement of tracks and roads linking the farms and market or vice versa. Addressing the need for better rural infrastructure is not a recent phenomenon in community growth, but it is a primary focus of development efforts, backed by the common understanding that rural road areas have a lower status in connection to economic development, social progress, well-being and prosperity and could be tackled with the construction of roads.

Roads are considered as the drive of economic growth and are vital for the improvement of remote communities. Transport poverty in rural areas in Mezam severely impaired farming productivity as it restricted the quantity of farm inputs and outputs. Funding from AID was used for construction costs.¹⁹⁸ Volunteers worked closely and fruitfully with USAID personnel attached to the Ministry of Community Development. USAID provided

¹⁹⁵ Peace Corps, *Peace Corps Volunteer*, Washington D.C, April 1964, Vol.2, No.6, 20525, p.14.

¹⁹⁶ Amin, *The Peace Corps*, p.125.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Neba, "Development Actors and," p.1933.

\$285,000 worth of road building equipment and materials to the ministry to create basic farm-to-market roads.¹⁹⁹

To improve the infrastructure of farm to market roads, the Peace Corps implemented measures to enhance movement between the farms and the markets. In construction, more than 20 miles of roads were done and mapping more than 70 miles of preliminary road traces. Volunteers worked on studies of a number of communities and inspired scores of other growing villages and towns to request their services.²⁰⁰ Volunteer John Kane during his service in Bambili from 1962-1964 traced different farm to market roads which helped most community members in this area to easily export their local produce to the neighbouring villages and even right to Bamenda.

Also, Alan Demb between 1963-1965 transformed the city as he was very much involved in urban and regional planning in Bamenda. John Morris between 1964 and 1966 also did a lot of road maintenance in the Bamenda area which went a long way to improve farmers' incomes through increased sales.²⁰¹ Volunteer Herold was in charge of the mechanical workshop in the Bamenda depot of the farm to market road service. Other volunteers drew up plans for different towns including improvements to what exist and proposals for future development. While volunteer Malesky worked in Bali as town planner, Allyn Powell, a graduate of Middlesex Country vocational and technical high school, New Jersey worked in Bamenda with the Mankon Planning Authority. He prepared a development plan for Mankon town and Bamenda station. On his part, Alva Whipple, a welder, supervisor and an expert in heavy equipment operation and maintenance, conducted on-the-job training during his period of service.²⁰² He served as an Advisor of planning problems, development layouts and plans in Bamenda as seen below.

Table 26: Some Town Planning Volunteers that served in Mezam

No	Name of volunteer	Service	Year of service	Place of service
1	John Kane	Tracing of farm to market roads	1962-1964	Bambili
2	Alan Demb	Urban and Regional planning	1963-1965	Bamenda
3	John Morris	Road Maintenance	1964-1966	Bamenda
4	Jim Kellenberger	Road Mapping/Maintenance	1964-1966	Bamenda
5	Mr. Malesky	Town Planning	1964-1966	Bali
6	Alva Whipple	Town Planning	1965-1967	Bamenda
7	Allyn Powell	Town Planning	1966-1968	Mankon
8	Mr. Herold	Town Planning	1967-1969	Bamenda

Source: Author's conception, 25/August/2022.

¹⁹⁹ Peace Corps, *Peace Corps Volunteer*, p.14.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.145.

²⁰² NAB, File No. Ta/a/1964/1, "Application for Peace Corps Volunteers, West Cameroon", Buea, 1964, p.42.

The above table shows some Peace Corps volunteers that served in Mezam in the field of transport, rural and urban (town) planning.

3.5. Conclusion

The chapter had as major objective to show the efforts of the Peace Corps volunteers in the development of agriculture and transport which are the backbone of the local economy in Mezam. The Peace Corps' action in this domain was dense and far reaching. Extending from crop production to animal husbandry, fishery, environmental protection, the period under study witnessed important investments emanating from the Peace Corps activities. Within this context, the Peace Corps deployed resources and expertise to help rural household improve on the quality and quantity of their outputs which became a priority in the economic development of the study area. Their action of partnership also extended in to the development of transport facilities, credit unions and cooperative societies. In this domain, the Peace Corps saw the implementation of projects which helped to provide the needed market for most local farmers' products. The birth, growth and proliferation of cooperatives in Mezam today is thanks to the groundwork and foundation laid by Peace Corps volunteers. This volley of economic action of the agency ranks among the most significant part of its work whose results to a larger extent were successful. This pushes us to conclude that the partnership between the agency and Mezam was tailored towards solving local agricultural problems and in the process making sure that the grassroot population were a part of the solution. Despite the help in the agricultural domain, Peace Corps found out that to increase yields and ensure a regular supply of food, the health of the inhabitants had to be cared for because the persons who were engaged in agriculture had little access to health facilities.

CHAPTER FOUR: U.S. PEACE CORPS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN MEZAM DIVISION

4.1. Introduction

The main thrust of this chapter is to examine the projects which were carried out in the health and education sectors. In this respect, we particularly focused on the role or the plethora of ways in which the U.S. Peace Corps and its Cameroonian partners enhanced community development in the study area. In Mezam volunteers worked with their local counterparts and health facilities to improve the health conditions of the people. They accomplished this primarily through education and outreach activities. Apart from serving as health personnels in different hospitals in Bafut, Tubah and Bamenda, they also carried out sensitisation campaigns to help fight against malaria, maternal and child death and respond to the challenges of HIV/AIDS with a high prevalence rate in the study area. Volunteers educated peer educators who in turn trained the local population on the basics of hygiene, sanitation and healthy living and joined to create herbal clinics and pharmacies which were all efforts to deal with the unavailability of conventional medicines and the high cost of the few available medicines which often led to death. In the same light, while most volunteers served as classroom teachers through the Maths/Science project in different secondary schools in Bambili, Mankon, and Bali, others provided in-service workshops and demonstration projects for primary school teachers in Teacher Training Colleges. Volunteers were also involved in curriculum development, often as an adjunct to their classroom teaching assignment as well as improved the literacy levels of the population of Mezam outside school systems with forms of education adapted to their practical needs. It is in this light that the chapter critically looks at the health and education activities of the Peace Corps in the study area.

4.2. Community Health

The health of a nation plays a major role in its development since it will be very difficult to attain development objectives if the people who are engineers and support this development are not in good health.¹ After independence in Cameroon and Africa, authorities went ahead with the health systems introduced and left behind by the colonial masters. Access to this type of health care was limited in towns while the villages were neglected. Most African governments adopted this system though, due to poverty, there was less

¹ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.66.

investment in infrastructure and medication and the society became medically plural.² By trying to imitate the European system, poverty played a role in influencing the creation of a real replica of the system. This is demonstrated by the fact that till date, infrastructure, equipment, medication and the training of medical personnel is still limited due to lack of funds. In many African countries, there is disequilibrium in infrastructure between towns and villages. The hospitals are concentrated in towns while the villages are left with almost nothing. Traditional medicine triumphs at this level.³

Given the discouraging social and economic performance at the time in West Cameroon especially in 1961, there was need for external assistance to provide the minimum acceptable standards of living for the population. Although the statistics could possibly be misleading due to the fact that they were provided by Nigerian sources, the data however was similar. In the health sector, there were only 12 doctors (1 doctor for 73,000 people). A hospital bed in West Cameroon was meant for 708 people.⁴ There was therefore the need to improve on the social and economic situation of West Cameroon. Improving the living conditions of the people of Cameroon was a priority of the Peace Corps since 1962. This was very effective especially with the introduction of the health programme in 1988. The health programme was later consolidated in 1996 with community development which began in 1962 to create the community health project.⁵ It was very necessary for the Peace Corps to improve on the health situation of the population. This is due to the fact that, a healthy population will provide the agency with its needs for development in other sectors of life.

The aim of the health programme was the improvement of the general health conditions in the country. Lack of clean water and inadequate medical facilities are contributing factors to the poor health of the people. Volunteers were involved in health projects which they worked with their Cameroonian counterparts as they were assigned as health educators to train host country teams who, in turn, train villagers on the importance of standard hygiene practices especially in areas with limited access to health services as seen below.⁶

² D. Nebane, "Traditional Medicine in the Advent of Conventional Medicine: The Case of Bafut in the North-West Region of Cameroon", PhD. Thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Yaoundé I, 2014, p.177.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Jing, "The Activities of," p.64.

⁵ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Volunteer Handbook*, p.21.

⁶ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.66.

Table 27: Some health facilities in which Volunteers have worked with in Mezam

No	Health facility	location
1	Saint Theresa Catholic Medical Centre	Mambu, Bafut
2	Tubah Health Centre	Bambili
3	Bafut District Hospital	Manji, Bafut
4	Bamenda Regional Hospital	Bamenda
5	Nkwen Baptist Health Centre	Nkwen Bamenda
6	Mezam Polyclinic	Bamenda
7	Foundation Clinic	Bamenda

Source: Author's conception, 21/August/2022

The table above shows some of the hospitals and health centres in different communities of Mezam in which volunteers served to improve the health situation of the people.

Prior to the arrival of the Peace Corps in Mezam, there were a few hospitals operating within the division. These included the Provincial Hospital opened in 1956, the Military hospital and the Baptist hospitals.⁷ These hospitals were very few and had to cope with a high population coupled with the fact that most of these hospitals were in the urban centres like Bamenda at the detriment of the rural areas. As a result of this, patients trekked from different rural areas to Bamenda for medical treatment. Some of the patients who could not trek were carried on stretchers to the hospitals while others were carried to healers. This sometimes resulted to infant mortality, high death rate and complete lack of ante-natal and post natal care with fatal results among women. There was later the emergence of other cottage hospitals and health centres and this greatly affected the number of births, deaths and ante-natal consultations. These health centres included the Ntarinkon Health Centre, P.M.I (Parent Child Clinic) Nkwen in 1979 reduced the overcrowded Provincial Hospital as cases of births and ante-natal consultations were transferred to these cottage hospitals. Besides these hospitals were a number of pharmacies and medicine stores amongst which featured City Chemist Pharmacy opened in 1962, Black Star Pharmacy opened in 1978, Amen Pharmacy opened in 1979. These pharmacies attended to some minor cases.⁸ It should also be noted that there existed several medicine stores in the central market but were closed by the government since most of these medicine stores were managed by unqualified individuals.

After the creation of these hospitals, it took much time for other hospitals to be opened. Moreover, many types of equipment especially of modern standards were lacking. Government charges were also very high as compared to income levels and the poverty stricken nature of the local people. Affordability of drugs and local charges for common and

⁷ RAB, File No. NW/Sa/d/193/1, "The Bamenda Urban Space-Evolution and Organisation, 1983", p.40.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.41.

familiar diseases became almost impossible. Most people preferred to remain in their homes to depend on traditional herbs even after diagnosing the illness. In addition, curative care was prioritised over cost-effective prevention and a limited engagement of the people and disregard for herbal medicine by state entities. Thousands of people lacked access to adequate basic services including clean water, sanitation, food security and health care.⁹

The provision of water continued to be a priority, to most international organisations in Mezam. Many areas of the division suffered from scarcity of good drinking water. Most of the people especially those in the rural areas relied on their streams situated some kilometres away from their homes. The people therefore experienced the problem of long distances to get water for drinking and washing while others faced the problem of contaminated water. This resulted to diseases such as typhoid, cholera which were renowned in most rural and urban areas of Mezam. Also, inadequate mental health services reduced individual well-being and social exclusion. By the end of the 1980s, the situation was aggravated with the economic crisis. Drugs and medical equipment could not be replenished, financing the training of health personnel was a problem and so remote areas were abandoned.¹⁰

Similarly, in Mezam, community health centres faced major problems of understaffing, which caused many patients to turn to self-medication. This could lead to more infections and could be fatal in most cases. The lack of basic health equipment, like the use of one pair of forceps on several patients without sterilisation, contributed to high rates of contamination in the community. Community health centres operated in rented premises, people's homes and in community multipurpose halls. The few health centres with trained personnel faced the problem of overcrowding with doctors working at a ratio of about 1 doctor to 400 patients. These doctors found it difficult to perform their duties effectively and efficiently. Added to this was the elevated level of poverty and unemployment in rural communities which made the population unable to seek for health attention thus resulting to high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other associated diseases.¹¹ In an attempt to curb the above problems and improve on the health situation of the rural communities, Peace Corps developed a health programme with the objective to reduce maternal and infant mortality.

For these problems to be resolved, volunteers worked with their partners in Mezam to improve the quality and availability of health services as shown below based on available

⁹ Agbor, "International Volunteer Organisations," p.76.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.41.

¹¹ O.A. Chenwi, "Human Rights and Non-Governmental Organisations(NGOs) in the North-West Region of Cameroon: Case Studies of Plan Cameroon, Human Rights Defence Group and Strategic Humanitarian Services 1990-2008", M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2013, pp.88-89.

data. They worked with the government and local organisations as they supported initiatives with the aim of enhancing traditional expertise on a range of medical conditions and developing their abilities to foster impactful actions. Volunteer efforts included; community engagement and guidance on necessary maternal health support and infant care, prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV, forming and maintaining support or care groups, sensitisation on the spread and mitigation of malaria, training and mentoring on infant and young child feeding. Peace Corps' assistance was directed to areas with difficulties in getting access to good drinking water and medical services in Mezam because they discovered that most of the health problems in Mezam stem from insufficient and contaminated water supplies and poor hygienic conditions. In an attempt to provide uncontaminated water and improve personal hygiene, volunteers paid attention to health education so that people can be able to make better use of their health facilities such as drinking water supply and medical services put at their disposal as well as assisted with training and supervising personnel.¹²

Table 28: Some health volunteers that have served in Mezam

No	Volunteer	Service post	Year of service
1	Dennis King	Bambili	1971-1974
2	Kwa Anna E.	Bamenda	1998-2000
3	John Smith	Tubah	2000-2002
4	Katherine Wright	Bafut	2003-2005
5	Kathrine Reinsma	Bafut	2005-2007
6	Peter Njodzeka	Bamenda	2005-2007
7	Benjamin Ace	Bamenda	2010-2012
8	Mark Ryan	Bamenda	2015-2017
9	Rachel Chaikof	Bafut, Bamenda, Tubah	2015-2017
10	Timi Leslie	Bamenda	2015-2017
11	Chelsea Grant	Bamenda	2015-2017

Source: Author's conception, 9/October/2021.

The table above shows some Peace Corps volunteers that served in different health centres/hospitals in Mezam with the aim of improving the health conditions of the people in the area.

The concerns of the volunteers were to understand how the people of Mezam especially those in the rural areas could adopt and live a healthy life. Their goal was to improve the capacity and skills of local health personnels to increase knowledge on diseases like malaria, cholera, diarrhea and reduce community exposure to such diseases and above all increase support, care and resources for people living with these diseases in the communities. They also had as objective to arrest health complications such as malnutrition very visible

¹² Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.68.

especially with rural children. As cited by Wirnkar, Mike Li, a 2007 German volunteer reacted to the health complications in the study area by stating that:

I have had personal first hand experience in seeing the children and the state their lives are in. The orphans I have visited are suffering immensely. Because the local society does not have a consciousness of birth control, one family always have 5-8 children which is actually out of their academic ability. We have even witnessed 10 children in one house under the charge of a single mother. High rate of qualification and sanitation condition is the main cause of short life expectancy. Male family members died earlier leaving the mothers struggling hard to raise the children. Another cause of the orphan family comes from the culture of the society...As the volunteer from the outside world, I feel heart struck by the scenes I see during the investigation. Hunger, disease and social family stress are three main problems in their lives. Most of them have one small meal a day at the most if lucky, boiled potatoes and black beans being the most common food. Hypo-alimentation and malnutrition are commonly seen among these children. The children (mostly female) suffer a lot to no cloths, just bits of cloths wrapped around them.¹³

Volunteers had as objective to resolve the problem of malnutrition by helping the rural people understand the types and classes of food. The priority of the volunteers was to build the capacity of community members and enable them take pro-active role in developing their own communities. Volunteers participated in data gathering and record-keeping as well as training of village health workers and traditional birth attendants. They also instituted local campaigns to reduce infant mortality due to diarrhea, malaria and communicable diseases.¹⁴ Some of the health projects supported by the Peace Corps in Mezam were mother and child care, fight against malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, Malaria and promotion of Herbal Medicine.

4.2.1. Mother and Child Care

In all human communities, societal continuity depended on the quality and availability of infant and maternity welfare services. Conscious of the outcomes of infancy care on the productive efficiency of individuals at adulthood, the reproductive life of women and child welfare became an area of interest to the U.S. Peace Corps.¹⁵ On average, the rate of maternal mortality globally is estimated at 358.000 due to issues or complications connected to pregnancy. Close to 99% of the loss is in Third World countries with Sub-Saharan Africa having about 43% since 2008. This is due to many factors including malnutrition, unsanitary living conditions, births spaced too closely, and low levels of education among mothers. The death of these children yearly presents a unique challenge to governments and international

¹³ Etanfila, "Cameroon-German Technical," p.54.

¹⁴ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.65.

¹⁵ L. Nina-Prazil Lienjeh *et al*, "Transmutation of the Reproductive Life of Women in Southern/West Cameroon(s), 1922-1972: A Colonial Manipulation", *Social Science and Humanities Journal*, Vol.8, Issue 7, 2024, p. 4225.

development institutions-a challenge as hopeful as it is sad because it is a fact that, through oral rehydration therapy and massive inoculation programmes, atleast half of these deaths could be prevented.¹⁶ In Cameroon, the speed has witnessed a rise from 669 pregnancy-related deaths/100.000 live births to 1000/100.000 live births in 2010.¹⁷ Economic, cultural, social and obstretic motives account for this jump. Peace Corps volunteers tended to have a particular interest in women's health issues, especially maternal and child care, an area neglected under colonial government. Hundreds of mothers and children died yearly in Mezam from preventable diseases like malaria and malnutrition. Newborns and children under the age of five were particularly vulnerable to malnutrition and diarrhea which led to early deaths. The recurring incidents of diarrhea worsen starvation, cripple the cognitive and physical growth of the children who suffered from this phenomenon, impose a heavier responsibility on the family (parents and siblings) who looked after them and the rising medical expenses. This high death rate is caused by dehydration as a result of diarrhea.

In 2011, the government's expenditure on child health below the age of five was estimated at 114.3 billion or 24.3 percent of the health budget. It entailed an average expenditure of about 34.000 FCFA per child below five years.¹⁸ On the other hand, the government's expenditure on reproductive health was estimated at 28.44 billion FCFA or 6.04 percent of the 2011 health budget.¹⁹ Mezam division has five health districts comprising 58 health areas with people of diverse cultural, religious backgrounds, educational levels and social status as shown below.²⁰

Table 29: Health Districts and number of health areas in Mezam division

No	District Area	Population	No of health areas
1	Bafut	66.039	14
2	Bali	34.629	07
3	Bamenda	345.869	17
4	Santa	73.418	09
5	Tubah	55.358	11
Total		575.312	58

Source: Egbe *et al*, "Determinants of Maternal," p.3.

The table above shows the health districts, the population and health areas in Mezam. From the table, it can be seen that there are 58 health areas in over five districts with the

¹⁶ Scanlon, *Cooperation between the*, p.27.

¹⁷ T.O. Egbe *et al*, "Determinants of Maternal Mortality in Mezam Division in the North-West Region of Cameroon: A Community-Based Case Control Study", *International Journal of Tropical Disease and Health*, Vol. 15, No.2, 2016, p.1.

¹⁸ Ministry of Public Health, *Comptes Nationaux de la Sante*, Yaoundé, Ministry of Public Health, 2011, p.11.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.10.

²⁰ Egbe *et al*, "Determinants of Maternal," p.3.

Bamenda district having the highest number of health areas closely followed by Bafut, Tubah, Santa and Bali.

Table 30: Yearly Distribution of Maternal Mortality in Health Districts in Mezam Division

No	District Area	Population size	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total	No controls
1	Bafut	66.039	04	03	05	02	14	28
2	Bali	34.629	02	02	0	03	07	14
3	Bamenda	345. 869	15	08	10	13	46	92
4	Santa	73.418	02	03	03	04	12	24
5	Tubah	55.357	02	02	04	02	10	20
Total		575.312	25	18	22	24	89	178

Source: Egbe *et al*, “Determinants of Maternal,” p.6.

The above table shows the yearly distribution of maternal mortality in health districts in Mezam division from 2011 to 2014. From the table, it can be seen that Bamenda health district had the highest number of yearly maternal mortality and the total number of mortality over the four-year period as well as the highest number of controlled maternal cases. It was closely followed by Bafut, Santa, Tubah and Bali.

The majority of maternal deaths in the study area were from direct causes, mainly post-partum haemorrhage, unsafe abortions, and hypertensive disorders in pregnancy. The main indirect causes were severe malaria and HIV/AIDS while anaemia, lung disease also contributed. Inadequate ante-natal care, place of delivery, health care provider training and accessibility of health facility were other contributing factors. This implied that those who delivered out of the hospital setting were more likely to die from pregnancy related complications than those who delivered in the hospital. Some of these deaths occurred at home without the attention of the health facility of the area. The utilisation of existing facilities for delivery were low which was inadequate to reduce maternal deaths. In Mezam, some areas are enclaved and faced transportation barriers to provide access to skilled birth attendance coupled with the fact that, most women in these communities delayed seeking medical attention until labour is well underway justified why some women either experienced home births or delivered in transit.²¹ Inadequate use of ante-natal care and previous pregnancy problems contributed to the high rate of maternal and child mortality in Mezam. The lack of anti-hypertensive medications in some rural areas worsened the bad situation.

To address these problems, the Peace Corps launched programmes aimed at reducing the levels of infant mortality in Mezam. The goal of the programmes was to strengthen

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.7.

community members in local child survival projects. Through the use of highly skilled health professionals, Peace Corps programming and training in the health sectors was strengthened. Increased numbers of community members, both health specialists and generalists were trained to become successful contributors to child survival projects in their post of service. The programmes had as objective to assist host communities to integrate a health education component mostly at the community level. The programme also builds on existing primary health care systems to reduce deaths and illness in children from 0-5 years of age and pregnant women. It is directed towards reducing high infant mortality rates found within this high-risk population. It focused on three areas that is vaccine preventable diseases, dehydration secondary to diarrhea diseases and child and maternal illness due to malaria.²²

Volunteers gathered women and children and taught them health and child care lessons. High infant mortality rate was one of the aspects of health which volunteers never minimised in Mezam. It was sorrowful when volunteers discovered that many kids died because of their mothers' fault. Therefore, every volunteer upon arrival in Mezam was briefed on this aspect or noticed it. Volunteers helped expand immunisation coverage by developing educational materials and flyers for health units, clinics and hospitals.²³ Volunteers during their mother and child care lessons insisted on the proper feeding of children and were made to understand that the remedy of this situation was in their hands. Mothers were advised to leave their children in the house than carry them in the cold to farms, markets and traditional celebrations. The children needed to get much sleep and should not be carried around by their mothers or small girls. Breastfeeding was also controlled by the volunteers who told the women to give in more time for this.²⁴

Similarly, volunteers advised the women that the high death rate among children could be prevented by the use of oral rehydration therapy(ORT), a relative inexpensive solution that can be given at home. Volunteers organised ORT trainings in Bamenda whereby skills and knowledge were transferred to rural health workers and mothers in the rural communities. ORT programme development by volunteers eased local initiatives to promote rehydration by incorporating ORT in to basic medical care offered by rural health facilities and personnel. In addition, an ORT manual was developed to update the knowledge and skills of community members in Bamenda.²⁵

²² Scanlon, *Cooperation between the*, p.29.

²³ L.A. Lawyer, "Female Missionary Activities and Change in the Bamenda Grassfields, 1904-2006: A Historical Survey", PhD. Thesis, Department of History, University of Yaoundé I, 2012, p.133.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

²⁵ Scanlon, *Cooperation between the*, p.26.

In Mezam, most women in the rural areas were not often aware of signs and consequences of pregnancy related complications and sexually transmissible diseases. In this regard, they did not take adequate measures to prevent illnesses and some failed to seek treatment when complications developed. They also lacked adequate knowledge about contraception which brought about unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions. In order to avoid these health problems and save the lives of these rural women, the volunteers began dealing with the enormous public health challenges by improving on health and family planning services for women with their families. By enhancing education and awareness about reproductive health and availability of facilities, emergency obstetrics and new born care, tools and resources, medical staff, a large number of deaths could be averted. Better maternal well-being played a major role in enhancing dietary intake, preventive care and support of all family relatives.²⁶ The Peace Corps intervened in this domain by emphasising on the prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV, improving community health, promoting healthy living and combatting food security and malnutrition. Volunteers partnered with their health centres and personnels to improve on the health of local women. It should be noted that volunteers were not in any way replacing health personnels but worked in partnership with them since the health volunteers were not health practitioners. This entailed that volunteers did not administer drugs or injections in clinics or hospitals.

In order to avoid these health problems, volunteers dealt with the enormous public health challenges of women by using techniques such as information campaigns to attain their goals.²⁷ Through campaigns organised in Bafut, Bamenda and Tubah, women were educated on reproductive health in pregnant women. The campaigns had a clear set of objectives which included raising awareness about key maternal issues, changing practices and beliefs of the people in the community. It equally had a well-defined target group of people with multiple sexual partners, traditional birth attendants and pregnant women.²⁸ Rachel Chaikof, a Peace Corps volunteer organised a training in Mambu in 2015 in partnership with the SCTMC and SAJOCAH²⁹ centres shown below.

²⁶ Agbor, "International Volunteers Organisations," p.68.

²⁷ M. Stein, *Volunteers for Peace: The First Group of Peace Corps Volunteers in a Rural Community Development Program in Columbia, South America*, New York, John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1966, p.114.

²⁸ Agbor, "International Volunteer Organisations," p.69.

²⁹ It is a rehabilitation centre in Mambu that serve people primarily children with disabilities.

Plate 24 : Saint Theresa Catholic Medical Centre Mambu



Source: Author's collection
20/August/2022.

The above shows STCMC that received health volunteers in Bafut

Plate 25 : Saint Joseph's Children and Adult's Home Mambu



Source: Author's collection
20/August/2022.

The above is the SAJOCAH Centre in Mambu, Bafut

In the training, 11 persons with disabilities were educated on sexual reproductive health. The goal of the training was to teach the participants sexual reproductive health, sexual consent, unwanted pregnancies and family planning.³⁰ In another training in Bawum in 2015 with 20 people, participants were taught on different contraception options like condoms and birth control pills.³¹ Demonstrations were done with wooden male reproductive organ models or bananas and participants practiced putting condoms on them. Rachel used bread and demonstrated the importance of family planning. She divided the bread with respect to the number of children found in each home. The exercise instilled in the participants a sense of awareness on the economic and wellness effects of family planning on children as shown below.³² The Care Group Approach was also successfully piloted to scale up demand and use of ante-natal care services in health centres like in Tubah and Bafut. Through this approach, most health centres recorded an increase in the number of ante-natal care attendance and deliveries. The community-based members of the care group were selected from each quarter of the village with responsibility to train and sensitise about 10 other members of their communities.³³ In 2006 in Bafut, Katherine Wright formed the Compassion Campaign group of 10 members with Ngwa Samuel as leader. The group reached about 100 community members.³⁴

³⁰ Bih Caroline, 56 years, Nurse/Participant, Bawum, 20/August/2019.

³¹ Lum Joan, 58 years, Farmer /Participant, Mambu, 21/August/2019.

³² Bih Caroline, 56 years, Nurse/Participant, Bawum, 20/August/2019.

³³ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter press, 2015, p.9.

³⁴ Ngwa Samuel, 64 years, Teacher/Participant and President of the Group, Mambu, 21/August/2019.

Plate 26: Demonstrations on the use of Condoms in Mambu

Source: Bih Caroline's archives, Mambu, 21/August/2022

The above plate shows participants with a wooden male reproductive organ and bananas demonstrating how to put a condom on an erected male reproductive organ. The women also have some loaves of bread by them which were used to educate them on family planning.

Volunteers also created mobile clinics in Bafut to help educate women who faced the challenge of bad roads.³⁵It should be noted that in areas like Mundum and the Muslim communities of Ntaaya who lived up the mountains, most of the women trekked long distances of about 35 kilometres before reaching nearby health centres. The story was not very different from other areas in Bafut as shown below.

Table 31: Access to Health facilities in Bafut Sub Division

No	Health Area	Distance to District Hospital
1	Akofunguba	30km
2	Akossia	25km
3	Buwe-Bukari	15km
4	Mambu	10km
5	Manji	3km
6	Mankaanikong	15km
7	Mankwi	20km
8	Mbakong	35km
9	Njinteh	5km
10	Nforya	20km
11	Mundum	35km
12	Nsem	6km
13	Nsoh	10km
14	Tingoh	25km

Source: Author's conception, 25/July /2022

The table above shows the distance covered by some community members in the Bafut health district to get access to medical facilities. From the table, it can be seen that people in Mundum and Mbakong suffered most as they covered about 35 km before getting

³⁵ Anonymous

to the district hospital meaning that such communities were in dire need of volunteers' assistance especially in the health domain.

As a result of this distance, preventive care and treatment was rare for most of the vibrant villages.³⁶ Through these mobile clinics and care groups, trainings were organised in Nforya and Mbakong to sensitise pregnant women on the importance of ante-natal and neo-natal care. They also organised local vaccinations which coincided with the local monthly vaccinations that the health centres did throughout the health districts.³⁷ Reinsma organised vaccination sessions in Mambu on the 9th of May 2006 which reached about 40 women³⁸ and another was organised in Nforya with about 20 female participants.³⁹

4.2.2. Fight against Malnutrition

Severe famine and food deprivation triumph throughout the Third World countries. Upgrading the diet and medical management plays a vital role in reducing the morbidity and mortality among vulnerable populations such as reproductive-age women and infants. It also improves the output of community workers. This population represent the human resource base upon which the future development of Third World countries depends. Medical personnel argue that poor nutrition could be a cause of some illnesses. An illness like Kwashiorkor that affects especially children is the consequence of poor feeding. In Mezam, diverse factors contribute to poor nutrition for many people.⁴⁰

Nutrition in the study area is a serious threat to human existence. This is because most children hardly took the required balanced diet and the sufficient quantity of nutrients needed by the body. As a result, a lot of children in the study area were afflicted with malnutrition problems such as protein and vitamin A deficiencies. Poverty is one of the main cause of poor nutrition in Mezam. Diseases like diabetes, gastritis and worms were attributed to poor feeding habits. People experienced widespread hunger and face a crisis of food scarcity as a result of employee disengagement, depletion of resources and food stores in addition to impoverishment. These factors limited food security which had an impact on good nutrition. Amarta Sen as cited by Rachell, explains the fundamental causes of hunger:

What is crucial in analysing hunger is the substantive freedom in the individual and the family to establish ownership over an adequate amount of food, which can be

³⁶ Aishatou Jamelatu, 55 years, Trader, Mundum, 30/August/2019.

³⁷ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, p.11.

³⁸ Mankaa Josephine, 50 years, Farmer/Participant, Mambu, 21/August/2019.

³⁹ Akwanwi Rebecca, 52 years, Farmer/Participant, Nforya, 15/August /2018.

⁴⁰ Rachel Massell, "Positive Living: Nutritional Realities and Interventions to People Living with HIV/AIDS in North-West Province", Diploma for Cameroon: Culture and Development SIT Study Abroad, Duke University, 2006, p.6.

done either by growing the food by oneself, or buying it in the market. A person may be forced in to starvation even when there is plenty of food around if he losses his ability to buy food in the market, through a loss of income...For those who do not themselves produce the food, or donot own the food in the market, the ability to acquire food in the market depends on their earnings, the prevailing food prices and their non food necessary expenditure.⁴¹

This captures perfectly the economic underpinnings of the dire situation that many face when their ability to generate either income or food diminished especially due to disease. Cooperation in nutrition is especially important at a time when food availability in Mezam is decreasing and nutritional needs are increasing in the study area. The Peace Corps programme to fight against malnutrition is very important so as to focus nutrition programme development and training on activities which promote community self-reliance and build local capabilities.⁴²Volunteers recommend a balanced diet, that delivers a comprehensive micronutrient profile which is very significant to the well-being of the population and can help fortify the body's defenses, increase vitality and keep weight in check.

In Mezam division, the staple food is full of carbohydrates. The signature dishes are achu made from pounded cocoyams which occupies an important place in the diet of the people of Bafut, Mankon, Bamendakwe, Nkwen, Pinyin, Akum, Mbatu, Nsongwa and Awing as well as corn fufu and vegetables.⁴³ Fruits, vegetables are plentiful and cheap relative to other regions. In town, food is cheap as there are different varieties but the problem is how most people acquire their sustenance (food) and cook it. Inspite of the fertile land, abundant yields and sustainable farming practices, fruits and vegetables are rarely a staple in most meals as they are no longer recognisable after being altered during consumption and look deceptively healthy. Again, the growers in this area are known for their excessive use of fertilisers which leads to nutrient deficiency, and therefore people need to consume a greater quantity of food to ensure adequate vitamin. The people are also somehow ignorant about over cooking food, washing out vitamins and the universal over use of palm oil thinking that what they are eating is nourishing when it is not.⁴⁴

To address this problem of malnutrition, conferences were organised by Reinsma in Bafut in 2007 which regrouped 50 participants among which were health centre representatives, members of the community and Peace Corps volunteers.⁴⁵Working with

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁴² Scanlon, *Cooperation between the*, p.26.

⁴³ R.N. Asombang *et al*, *Festival of Cameroon and the World Flavours, 2023; Bafut Kingdom and the Story of Achu*, Yaoundé, November 2023, p.3.

⁴⁴ Massell, "Positive Living: Nutritional," p.7.

⁴⁵ Bih Caroline, 56 years, Nurse/Participant, Bawum, 20/August/2019.

volunteers was transformative. Bih Caroline learnt a lot as she maintained that: “I learnt many things which helped me, my family, friends and the community of Mambu. The ideas improved the ways of living and also those of nearby communities due to Reinsma’s trainings since she came to Mambu.”⁴⁶The conferences had as objective to improve the knowledge of participants in food security, the cultivation of soya beans and moringa with the rich nutritional benefits could serve as a remedy to malnutrition. Reinsma organised a nutrition training in STCMC Mambu with 15 women who attended ante-natal clinic on the 17th of February 2007.⁴⁷

Some of the participants believed that the trainings were pivotal in their lives. Ngum Doris a participant established that: “after giving birth, I was afraid of been isolated. I was wondering how I would be able to make friends. The training was the first time I could talk among other girls.”⁴⁸On her part Lum Ruth, indicated that: “I lived with my elder sister. At home I could not talk as much as I did during the training. I was very happy to have met other youths like me to share our experiences. It helped me grow.”⁴⁹She also trained 10 peer educators mostly members of the local communities in Bawum and Mambu to educate the people on the benefits of good nutrition.⁵⁰Local farmers were encouraged to cultivate nutritious food like beans and moringa. During the Bafut District Health and Nutrition Week celebrated from the 25th-29th of June 2007, Reinsma and nurses from the Saint Theresa Catholic Medical Centre visited the three health zones and checked vaccination cards, heights and weights of some children under the age of five. Through this approach about 434 mothers were educated on family nutrition and 300 children received deworming medicine, Vitamin A supplements and anthropometric measurements assessed.⁵¹ A nutrition presentation was designed to educate women on preparing nutritious meals for their families as shown below.

In Nforya, a small village in Bafut, the moringa oleifere tree and its amazing nutritional benefits were presented by volunteers during a cooperative meeting.⁵² Volunteers worked with Achu Peter, a retired palm oil plantation manager and financial secretary of a local farmer's cooperative. Through this programme, Achu and volunteers began work on a piece of land measuring 1400 square metres on which they planted 500 direct seeds of the

⁴⁶*Idem.*

⁴⁷ K.R.Reinsma, “Chop Fayne: Nutritional Realities in Cameroon and Interventions in the North-West Province”, Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, Colorado State University, 2008, p.38.

⁴⁸Ngum Doris, 29 years, Farmer, Nsoh, 26/August/2019.

⁴⁹ Lum Ruth, 31 years, Farmer, Nsoh, 26/August/2019.

⁵⁰ Ngwen Constance, 57 years, Farmer/Participant, Mambu, 21/August/2019.

⁵¹ Reinsma, “Chop Fayne: Nutritional,” p.40.

⁵² Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2017, p.15.

moringa tree.⁵³The volunteer designed all working days as a practical exercise on diverse elements of moringa growing so that participants learnt by doing. The group gathered their first harvest in April of 13.5kg of fresh moringa. The initiative concluded with a "Moringa Field Day" on 21st of May 2017, when the skills of 45 participants from within and around Nforya were strengthened on moringa production that is from planting through cultivation to harvesting and transforming moringa and the health advantages and importance of moringa. Each participant at the end of the exercise went home with 30 moringa seeds to plant for the welfare of their families as seen below.⁵⁴

Plate 27 : Training with peer educators in Bawum



Source : Peace Corps Cameroon, *Health Training Manual*, 2005, p.40. The above is a volunteer and counterpart during a training with women. The women were taught on the three food groups (energy, body-building and protective foods)

Plate 28: Nutrition training on Moringa in Nforya



Source: Peace Corps, *Annual Report*, 2017, p.19. The plate above shows a volunteer explaining the essential aspects of Moringa cultivation and its benefits to farmers. Some of the farmers sat down with their hoes and others standing and taking notes

4.2.3. Mitigation and Prevention of HIV AIDS

The HIV/AIDS epidemic threatens to be the world's hardest-hit disease in human history and an astounding two-thirds, or 24.7 million of the 39.5 million people living with HIV/AIDS are found in Sub-Saharan Africa. Cameroon is no exception to the rule as the country is among the most severely affected and suffers from the highest prevalence rate in Central Africa. In 2011, about 3.64% of the expenditure on health was directed towards HIV/AIDS or an amount of about 17.14 billions FCFA.⁵⁵ Within Cameroon, the critical HIV/AIDS situation is found in the North-West Region with the study area inclusive with a

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Achu Peter, 65 years, Retired Palm Oil Plantation Manager/Volunteer Counterpart, Nforya, 15/August/2018.

⁵⁵ Ministry of Public Health, *Compte Nationaux de*, p.11.

prevalence rate of about 4.0 percent.⁵⁶ There are 88,373 People Living with HIV/AIDS in the region out of the 505,000 nationwide. The HIV is a substantial problem because of the low quality of medical care and inadequate health records. Figures are higher in rural areas of Mezam because there is a minimal effort to perform a post-mortem examination and many issues go along with the AIDS epidemic as numerous children are parentless as they die of AIDS. There is also a funding shortage for the treatment of people living with HIV coupled with abject humiliation for them and patients are usually stunned by loved ones as well as it was a challenging task persuading the population that the AIDS pandemic is a reality.⁵⁷

Another significant step taken by the Peace Corps in Mezam was its incessant fight against HIV/AIDS. The mitigation and prevention of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Mezam was a top priority of the Peace Corps. The N.W. is one of the regions topping the charts in Cameroon with a prevalence rate of 4.0 percent closely followed by the Centre with 3.5. The South, East and Adamawa top the charts with a prevalence rate of 5.8, 5.6 and 4.1 respectively. These regions were defined in the 2018-2022 National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmissible Infections as priority areas of intervention and were to be targeted more in the fight against HIV infection in Cameroon.⁵⁸ As cited by Sandie, Mezam Division was identified as a persistent division with HIV infection hotspots.⁵⁹ Specifically, polygamy and domestic violence can be held for the faster spread of the virus among women in the study area. As cited by Rachel Massell, Nancy Bolima stated that:

The high level of psycho-social care that is available in this division convinces many people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) originally from other regions to move here for treatment and so the rate has become artificially inflated, she added that many home care givers may not be educated enough on prevention and so many care givers become infected through their care of PLWHA.⁶⁰

Another theory is that traditional cultural practices also play a role in the spread of HIV/AIDS infection especially in areas of polygamous populations and traditional leadership structures, like the North-West *fons* and *fondoms* in general and Mezam in particular. This incident is evidently influenced by the saying that the power, authority and influence of a kingdom is shaped by the number of people the king governs. Regrettably, this practice has resulted in the spread of HIV/AIDS. In the study area, it is common to find traditional rulers

⁵⁶ A.B. Sandie *et al*, "Hot-Spots of HIV Infection in Cameroon: A Spatial Analysis Based on Demographic and Health Surveys Data", *BMC Infectious Diseases*, 2022, p.2.

⁵⁷ Delancey, *Historical Dictionary of*, p.201.

⁵⁸ Sandie *et al*, "Hot-Spots of," p.2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.4.

⁶⁰ Massell, "Positive Living: Nutritional," p.20.

who pride themselves with wives totalling a hundred or so.⁶¹ This explains why during the launch of the World AIDS week in Bamenda in late November 2006, Cameroon's Ministers of Health, Social Affairs and Women's Empowerment were signatories to an understanding of commitment with the over 300 plus *fons* and traditional rulers.⁶²

Several factors blend to justify the widespread rates of HIV in royal residences as compared to the main population. This is simply because a *fon* could have 20 to 30 or more wives, most who are 25, 30 and at times 40 years younger than their husbands. Newlyweds may find their sexual needs unmet and *fons* might be engaging in sexual relationships with multiple women outside the acceptable sphere. In the study area, *fons* inherit their predecessors' wives and are ipso facto expected to make children with them. It is therefore very possible that they could be infected with the disease if their predecessors died of HIV/AIDS. Conversely, if the newly crowned *fon* is HIV positive, he can equally spread the disease to several wives.⁶³

Traditional dances and ceremonies are also a contributing factor to promiscuity as there is a high tendency to become very drunk and engage in unprotected sex. Researchers have concluded that various traditional rituals are creating pathways for spread distinctive to Africa-dangers that are up till now considered as hidden threats. Also scarifications are conducted with instruments of questionable cleanliness and sterility, and numerous folk medicine remedies involve incising and phlebotomy (blood letting). Clearly the North-West Region is not the sole environment where precarious customs, rituals and ways of life exist in Cameroon. Most likely, it is a unique synergy between all of these factors coupled with the denial, low condom use, and early marriages that can be found through out the study area, that sinisterly works to achieve the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Mezam and the NW Region in general.⁶⁴

It should be noted that the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) activities were just in four of the 10 regions of Cameroon that is the North-West, South-West, Littoral and Centre.⁶⁵ The Peace Corps therefore leverages PEPFAR's resources to support HIV interventions in Mezam. For sensitisation to be very effective, Peace Corps volunteers had as motto: "we all are concerned with HIV/AIDS. Yesterday we were infected through ignorance but today, we are infected through negligence."⁶⁶ Volunteers like Wright, Reinsma, and Chaikof, in 2005, 2007 and 2015 through trainings in Bafut and Tubah sensitised the local communities on the importance of HIV prevention. Through an application process,

⁶¹ Suh, "The Role of," p. 124.

⁶² Massell, "Positive Living: Nutritional," p. 20.

⁶³ Suh, "The Role of," p.124.

⁶⁴ Massell, "Positive Living: Nutritional," p. 21.

⁶⁵ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, p.4.

⁶⁶ Stein, *Volunteers for Peace*, p.30.

local community members from all the quarters applied and groups of youths were formed made up of males and females with an average age of 23. In Bafut in 2005, Wright formed two of such groups and a Frisbee⁶⁷ sport group with 10 members in each group while Reinsma in 2007 formed a compassion campaign group to train and empower six local religious leaders to care and support people with HIV/AIDS. These groups educated about 100 community members. Trainings were organised by Wright to strengthen peer educator skills so that the groups carried out a full package of HIV prevention.⁶⁸ Volunteers used school clubs and youth camps to train students on HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention. They integrated school-based HIV curricula in schools as seen below.⁶⁹

In the same light, in August 2007, volunteer Reinsma formed a committee to counsel and help people living with HIV/AIDS as well as organised a seminar for 21 lay religious leaders which lasted for two days and focused on guidance, care and support for HIV patients in Bafut. She also partnered with Plan International to coordinate the International Candlelight Memorial Service for 300 people to remember those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and also provided free HIV testing for 275 people in Bafut between July 2006-July 2007.⁷⁰ Similarly, volunteers like Carmen Chang and Jon also carried out different activities to educate the youths on HIV/AIDS. Jon for example used the Grassroot Soccer Curriculum as a base to organise a community wide soccer tournament in his village. Without such programmes, youths in that community would have missed the chance to learn this crucial information about the concerns of HIV, gender equality and unwanted early pregnancy as shown below.⁷¹ Chang also used different school activities like dancing to get youths involved so as to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS especially to refute the myth that it does not exist, the transmission means and how it can be prevented as shown below.

⁶⁷ Also called a floating disc, flying disc or simply a disc, it is a hang glider or sports equipment that is commonly malleable with a width of about 8-10 inches and a prominent lip. It is generally used for recreation and competitions through flinging (throwing) and grabbing (catching).

⁶⁸ Ndownwi Princewill, 48 years, Teacher/Participant, Mambu, 20/August/2019.

⁶⁹ Achu John, 60 years, Former Principal of G.S.S. Mundum, Bamenda, 30/August/2019.

⁷⁰ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

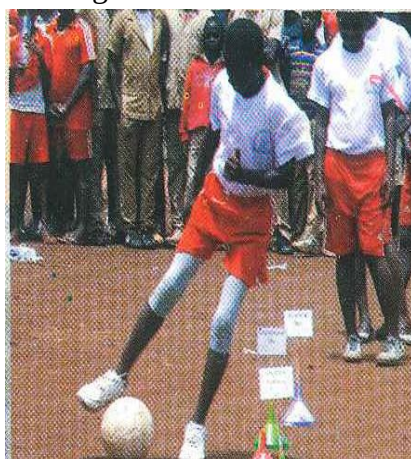
⁷¹ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2016, p.13.

Plate 29 : HIV training with G.S.S Mundum students



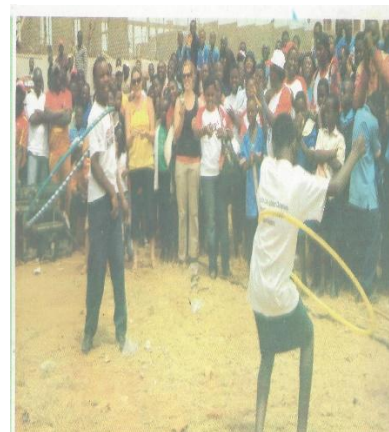
Source: G.S.S. Mundum Archives, Mundum, 25/August/2019. The above shows students during training with diverse HIV related terms like HIV, Immune System, Anti-Retroviral Drugs scorchched on their uniforms to educate their mates

Plate 30 : Youth Education through Soccer in Bamenda



Source: Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, 2016, p.13. The above shows students during a soccer tournament aimed at raising awareness on HIV, gender equaity and unwanted pregnancy.

Plate 31 : HIV Training with students in Bamenda



Source: Tombir Gilbert archives, Bamenda, 30/December/2021. The above shows a volunteer in Bamenda getting youths involved during an HIV Awareness campaign and training

A startling reality for People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Mezam division is the level of stigma that many confront within their communities and their own families. Local actors, health care providers, volunteers noted this as one of the major challenges in delivering treatment, care and support activities. The effects of stigma are crippling and can negatively influence PLWHA nutrition or access to food as well as early death. It is as a result of the devastating effects of stigma on PLWHA that the U.S. Peace Corps volunteers in partnership with some humanitarian agencies in Bamenda on 16th June 2011 organised a practical training exercise to drill peer educators on the effects of social shame in Bamenda.

The team of the training was “we teach, stand together, teach together” was organised at the Nkwen Baptist Health Centre. The training camp in collaboration with the International Rotary Club saw the participation of 19 students from Bamenda. The camp was organised by volunteer Benjamin Ace and the youths who participated in the training aged between 14 and 19 years were selected based on merit of school performance, maturity and attitude. The camp focused on youths of this age group because they were the most affected in the area where the incidence rate of HIV was very high. The peer assisted educators were tasked with educating other youths in their various communities on HIV mitigation and prevention and reduce the negative impact of societal biases against people living with HIV.⁷²

⁷² Cameroon postline.com consulted on 21/May/2022 at 1:00p.m.

In the same light, another Peace Corps volunteer Rachel Chaikof in collaboration with the Coordinating Unit of Association for Persons with Disabilities in 2016, conducted a training of trainers workshop for 17 persons with disabilities from four villages in Tubah (Bambui, Bambili, Kedjom-Keku and Kedjom-Ketinguh) to train them on how to educate other persons with disabilities in their communities about HIV prevention as seen below. They were all provided with a manual to assist them in sharing information.⁷³ Similarly, after conducting HIV Campaign on International Day of Persons with Disabilities in 2015 in Bamenda, Rachel Chaikof and her partners decided to reach out to persons with disabilities beyond Bamenda from rural communities. On 28th June 2016, in collaboration with the Coordinating Unit of Association for Persons with Disabilities, Bamenda Regional hospital and the Tubah Health Centre, an HIV Testing Campaign was organised in Bambili. The HIV Testing Campaign was funded by PEPFAR. It did not only fund the testing but also the transportation to assist persons with disabilities in commuting from their homes to the HIV testing campaign site. Community support and contributions were also received and about 120 persons with disabilities were tested free of charge as seen below. About 60 participants were tested for the first time while 10 of them were HIV positive.⁷⁴

Plate 29 : HIV Testing for Persons with Disabilities in Bambili



Source: Downloaded from blog.rachelchaikof.com, 17/May/2022

The above presents Persons with Disabilities who are waiting to be counselled and screened against HIV/AIDS. Some are holding crutches while others are on wheel chairs

Plate 30 : A Volunteer Counterpart Conducting HIV Testing in Bambili



Source: Downloaded from blog.rachelchaikof.com, 17/May/2022

The above shows a volunteer partner taking blood sample from a person with disability for HIV Testing

Also, she organised another training in Bamenda on HIV prevention for the Deaf on 20th July 2016. Rachel partnered with Regina Awafe, a deaf communication facilitator, who owns an organisation called Agnes Association for the Empowerment of the Deaf and

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Blog.rachelchaikof.com, consulted on 17/May/2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Vulnerable Persons, rallied 31 hearing impaired (deaf) adults together at a church to participate in an HIV mitigation and prevention seminar as shown below. The workshop was the most comprehensive HIV prevention event Rachel ever held or organised. Regina interpreted the presentation and it was an interactive workshop.⁷⁵

Rachel also organised another training in Bamenda for Health Workers on HIV and Disability on 5th May 2016. As she worked with persons with disabilities in Bamenda, she noticed that many of them were left out of HIV education and services. After her community needs assessment during her service in the study area, she learnt that many persons with disabilities lacked HIV knowledge, and a majority of them understood that anti-retroviral therapy was used to treat HIV and how to avert the disease. As she was drafting her community health assessment report, she explored particular accounts on how people with impairments encountered challenges to access HIV services and knowledge across the African continent. The greatest impediments were bias, disgrace and unawareness. There were health workers who were mistaken in believing that people with special needs were celibates and thus were not at risk of HIV/AIDS whereas they were in a greater risk of acquiring it.⁷⁶

Plate 31 : Training Persons with Disabilities to be HIV Prevention Educators in Tubah



Source: Downloaded from blog.rachelchaikof.com,17/May/2022
The above shows a volunteer and counterpart training Persons with Disabilities to be HIV Prevention Educators

Plate 32 : Training the Deaf on HIV Prevention in Bamenda



Source: Downloaded from blog.rachelchaikof.com,17/May/2022
The above depicts three people with a counsellor waiting to be counselled and screened against HIV/AIDS. An interpreter interpretes in sign language

After a presentation to a group of persons with disabilities in Ban and other sub divisions of the study area, Rachel noticed that most health care workers and mobilisers thought that differently abled people were celibates and thus were safe from HIV/AIDS. So

⁷⁵ Cameroon postline.com consulted on 21/May/2022 at 1:00p.m.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

predicated on her discussions with people with vulnerabilities, analysing case studies and going through some tests results, she noticed that there was need to provide sensitisation and also empower health care workers on how to accomodate people with impairments about HIV knowledge and resources. In April, Rachel organised three trainings for health professionals on how to care for people with special needs when it concerned HIV knowledge and resources. Each practical exercise was offered to three health centres, Mezam Polyclinic, Bamenda Regional Hospital HIV treatment Centre, the largest HIV treatment centre in Bamenda and Foundation Clinic.⁷⁷

During the trainings, Rachel explained the meaning of disability and furnished them with a record of the kinds of disabilities such as people with reduced mobility, hearing impairment(deafness) visually impaired (blindness) and its origins such as mishaps (accidents) and congenital or inheritance. All through the training exercise, three practical demonstrations were done by subjecting them to a comparable experience where they felt impaired. In the first exercise, the participants were given a paper to write their names with the hand they normally donot write with and they found it difficult to write.⁷⁸ She continued by still asking them to place a piece of paper on their head and write anything with the normal hand they used to write. They chuckled and showed exasperation by saying it was challenging and she used these examples to explain to the participants the challenges of the life of a person with moderate to severe disability. In the second demonstation, she asked the participants to touch their fingertips or clasp hands except of the fore fingers which she asked to interlace. They were demanded to raise their pinky fingers which they all did with ease but when they were asked to lift the ring fingers, they were unable to. Using the frustration she noticed on the faces of the participants, she explained to them that those were the challenges disabled people go through everyday.⁷⁹

For the last demonstration, everyone was given two cotton balls to put in their ears and a work partner read a text to them. After reading the text, they were asked to take the cotton balls out of their ears and were asked how well they heard and the obvious chorus was they all said they could not hear well. Participants reacted that they now understood what disabled people went through and how to be treated. Rachel also shared statistics to help them better understand the situation of persons with disabilities in Cameroon for example 95% of people with special needs are the poorest. Women with impairments experience difficulties of HIV prevention and mitigation as a result of the fact that they have a greater likelihood of experiencing domestic violence and are not accessible to family planning, reproductive health

⁷⁷ Blog.rachelchaikof.com, consulted on 17/May/2022 at 6:00 p.m.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

and maternal and child health facilities. Just 5% of women with vulnerabilities are married while 50% of their male counterparts are married in Cameroon.⁸⁰

Those who participated demonstrated disbelief and skepticism with respect to the numbers especially the number of people with special needs who had access to education, the degree of their destitution or poverty and the number of people with impairments found across the world. She explained to the participants how persons with disabilities are left out of HIV services, learning facilities which involves seminars and schools, are unavailable to persons with vulnerabilities as there are just a few or no deaf communication facilitators to the hearing impaired and no braille for the visually impaired. Again, most institutions, factories and schools require steps to access with no slopes or inclines for people with mobility impairments who need crutches and wheelchairs. They were also sensitised on how differently abled people were not able to access health facilities for the same purpose as educational services were unavailable as well as not informed about HIV testing campaigns.⁸¹

Concerning the sensitisation of the unique needs, the participants were told that so few go to school thus it was the place of health care providers to ensure access to education on HIV mitigation and prevention. Even when they are invited to participate in trainings and educational events, it is essential to guarantee that resources and means are provided such as a sign language interpreter, braille and transcript and also ensure such activities should be hosted in a building that can easily be accessed by people with mobility impairments. This implies that people with special needs were previously facing stigmas thus if they are infected again with HIV, they now face dual stigmas and increased bias. Again, they could experience a further decline in abilities because of HIV infection since HIV can impact the mobility and vision of the body. In spite of the challenges that health care workers raised, they expressed gratitude for the training because they knew who to get to anytime when they were in need of help in offering resources and accommodations for persons with vulnerabilities and that was the Coordinating Unit of Association for Persons with Disabilities.⁸²

In another training in Bamenda in 2017, dubbed “HIV Training as a means to prevent risky behaviours among youths”, volunteer Ryan played a great role in elevating the health situation in his service post. As a result of the socio-political crisis, most schools were closed in the area and because of the fact that students were not going to school, the community health facility realised a rise in teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. To solve this problem, Ryan and his partners of the local hospital decided to begin an HIV and sexual reproductive health programme for the community. They began with a peer educator

⁸⁰ Cameroon postline.com consulted on 21/May/2022 at 1:00p.m.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Blog.rachelchaikof.com, consulted on 17/May/2022 at 6:00 p.m.

training as shown below. Through an application process opened to all eight quarters, a group of 17 youths made up of seven males and 10 females with an average age of 23 was formed.⁸³ They organised a full day training to enhance peer educators abilities to enable the group execute a complete set of HIV prevention initiatives involving HIV sensitisation, condom application and usage training, sexual reproductive health and rights, social norms related to gender and involving communities in risk management for Adolescents Girls and Young Women (AGYW). The peer educators facilitated risk management exercises with girls in and around the area every month. They also eased the know your status campaign. With their rallying initiatives, they successfully connected AGYW to HIV/AIDS Testing and Counselling (HTC) services.⁸⁴

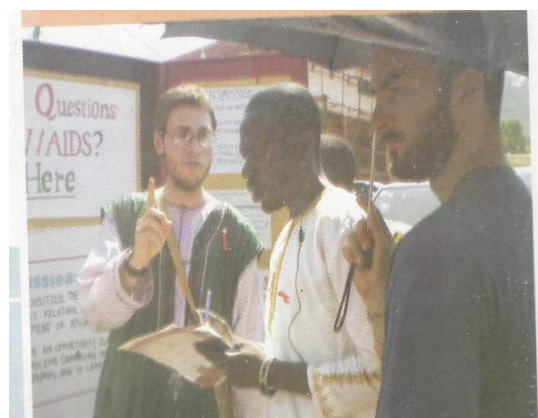
Plate 33 : Training with Youth Group in Bamenda



Source: Lum Loveline's archives, Bamenda, 21/August/2022

The above shows a youth group listening to a peer educator during a training on HIV prevention with files to take notes.

Plate 34 : World AIDS Day in Bamenda



Source: Peace Corps Cameroon, Annual Report, 2011, p.6.

The above shows volunteers educating the Bamenda people about HIV/AIDS during the World AIDS day in 2011.

In other communities like Akofunguba, orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) as well as youths were targeted by volunteers through mass media and annual charity events like the Bafut *Fons* Annual Dance where volunteers and local collaborators conducted HIV/AIDS test. They organised health walks and race for the youths. Volunteers through the Akofunguba fun run which was a 10 kilometre race against HIV organised in Bafut on the 1st of December 2016 reached and sensitised about 100 youths. These activities were done in conjunction with celebrations like World AIDS Day. On such days, there was free HIV

⁸³ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2017, p.15.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

campaign, counseling and testing.⁸⁵In the same light, volunteers designed a wall of frame in 2017 in Bafut which educated the community members as shown below.⁸⁶

Plate 35 : World AIDS Day in Mundum



Source: Mundum community archives, Mundum, 25/August/2019.

The above shows youths, volunteers and counterparts partaking in a race with banners celebrating 2016 World AIDS Day

Plate 36 : HIV wall of frame in Bafut.



Source: Peace Corps Cameroon, Annual, Report, 2017, P.6.

The above is a wall of frame with paintings showing how an HIV person should take his/her drugs. On it, is also written that HIV is not a death sentence. All these to mark World AIDS Day

4.2.4. Mitigation and Prevention of Malaria

Another very important endeavour of the Peace Corps in Mezam was its role in the mitigation and prevention of malaria which was a major health problem and leading cause of deaths. The programme of malaria control in Mezam faced an uphill task due to the high prevalence of multi drug-resistant malaria vectors. Above all, continued human migration from rural to urban areas, accelerated biodiversity loss, unhygienic conditions and poor drainage infrastructure spurred the recent surge in malaria cases incidence along with arthropod-borne diseases. The Bafut health district is one of the most affected areas in Mezam.

In Mbakong, a small village which falls within the Bafut health district, a total of 4230 patients sought treatment at the Mbakong integrated health centre and were clinically diagnosed to be suffering from malaria between 2006 to 2012.⁸⁷ This situation was not very different in other parts of Bafut. Volunteers performed laboratory analyses of mosquito populations and promoted malaria control training for primary health workers and local communities. They also conducted community assessments in their areas of service in Bafut, Tubah, Bamenda, Santa and Bali. The assessment was through malaria tests and household visits. In 2005, Wright carried out malaria test and visits in over 100 homes and about 200 people were reached within 3 months in Mambu. Malaria sensitisation campaigns were also

⁸⁵ Che Godlove, 49 years, Teacher/ Volunteer Partner, Mundum, 30/August /2019.

⁸⁶ Lum Loveline, 48 years, Nurse/Participant, Bamenda, 22/August/2019.

⁸⁷ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>, consulted on 10/December/2018 at 2:00 p.m.

organised in these communities.⁸⁸In Mundum, Gwendolyn Lee and Kelsey Cornelius in 2008 organised such campaigns⁸⁹ while Wright and Reinsma did same in Mambu and Bawum in 2005 and 2007. Over 100 people were reached through this approach.⁹⁰

Community-led bed net campaigns were organised with the health centres. The local populations during these campaigns received lectures on the causes of malaria and transmission. In Bawum and Mambu, mosquito nets were provided and demonstrations carried out on their maintenance and use by Wright and Reinsma as seen below.⁹¹Health volunteers intervened in schools by creating health clubs which organised activities to sensitise students on malaria prevention. In Mambu, Wright created two health clubs in 2005 and a Frisbee group with her health centre and workers. Grassroots soccer games were organised in and around Mambu where she reached about 72 children in a nearby primary school as well as the translation of malaria prevention resources in to the Bafut language as shown below. During such activities, community members received lectures on malaria.⁹²

Plate 37 : Demonstration on Mosquito Net use and maintenance in Bafut



Source:STCMC archives, Mambu, 21/August/2019

The plate above shows volunteers with community members during a mosquito bed maintenance and use demonstration session. Some children are watching while others are spreading the nets to understand how to hang them

Plate 38: Malaria training with G.S. Mundum pupils



Source: Che Godlove's archives, Mundum, 30/August/2022

The above shows some primary school kids during training on malaria. The kids are in a circular form and those in the middle have a mosquito net tied on their waist throwing balls to the different pupils

⁸⁸ Neba David, 55 years, Nurse/Participant, Mambu, 20/August/2019.

⁸⁹ Che Godlove, 49 years, Teacher/ Volunteer Partner, Mundum, 30/August /2019.

⁹⁰ Bih Caroline, 56 years, Nurse/Participant, Bawum, 20/August/2019.

⁹¹ *Idem.*

⁹² Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.77.

4.2.5. Herbal Medicines, Clinics and Rural Pharmacies

Another important aspect through which volunteers impacted the lives of the people of Mezam was through the promotion of herbal medicine, clinics and rural pharmacies. Before and even after the arrival of the volunteers, herbalists were the most commonly consulted and most accessible primary health care providers in most communities in Mezam. The indigenous people relied heavily on traditional healers for the treatment of patients suffering from certain diseases and disorders in people's systems. Herbalist are spread all over mezam with notable areas with many of these healers being Bambui, Bafut, Nkwen. These herbalist use roots, tree barks and leaves in preparing medicines for the healing of both physical and spiritual illnesses like leprosy, sterility in women, madness and impotence.⁹³

It is as a result of the reliability, accessibility, affordability and availability of herbal medicine that, upon arrival in Mezam, most health volunteers decided to complement modern medicine with herbal medicine especially in the treatment of some particular diseases. The volunteers through different trainings sensitised the people on the use of cost effective herbal medicine. Volunteers in 2002 during training successfully encouraged traditional doctors and farmers in Bafut to use medicinal plants to treat common illnesses such as malaria.⁹⁴ Rachel Chaikof also educated the Bafut community in 2015 on herbal medicine. She organised workshops and educated 20 people from Mambu based on their previous involvement with medicinal plants or their need to learn for medicinal reasons. Half of the group was made up of traditional doctors and the rest, people from different walks of life. In the workshops she educated participants on the importance of changing their methods of treatment. She helped herbalists understand how HIV/AIDS was spread through unhygienic methods especially through cutting patients with razor blades during treatment.⁹⁵ Volunteers tried to promote safe and effective means of treating people with herbs like the use of teas, tinctures⁹⁶ and rubs.

The most important aspect in this domain was the creation of the Mambu Herbal Group. It was a herbal support group to the Saint Theresa Catholic Medical Centre in Mambu. The group was formed in 2007 in the Roman Catholic Mission Bafut by volunteer Reinsma who served in Mambu from 2005-2007 and Doctor Okwen Patrick Mbah, the medical doctor in Saint Theresa Catholic Medical Centre.⁹⁷ The intention was to create a

⁹³ Nebane, "Traditional Medicine in," p.66.

⁹⁴ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer, Mambu, 22/August / 2019.

⁹⁵ *Idem*.

⁹⁶ A medicine made by dissolving a drug in alcohol.

⁹⁷ Bih Caroline, 56 years, Nurse/Participant, Bawum, 20/August/2019.

herbal pharmacy in the hospital similar to that in the Shishong hospital.⁹⁸ The project was an effort to deal with the unavailability of medicines and the high cost of the few available medicines which resulted to treatment being postponed until medical conditions became too severe and they even reached emergency proportions. The group was registered as a Common Initiative Group with the name the Mambu Herbal Group. It was made up of about 10 herbal practitioners and two gardeners. The project did not only contribute to improve health care for participating members, but also served as an educational and income generating project. Over 20 people received training as bookkeepers, pharmacy aids, gardeners and managers of the pharmacies. Three training workshops were organised by Peace Corps volunteers in the Roman Catholic Mission in Mambu to educate the participants on the importance and use of herbal medicine. In the second training which took place from the 5th-8th of June 2007, the Peace Corps brought in Mbah Nyambi Opacko who was a specialist in herbal medicine to educate the participants on the importance of herbal medicine.⁹⁹

Reinsma during the third training held from the 23rd-24th August 2007 taught Anatomy and Physiology and provided the participants with books that could help them diagnose a patient, know the scientific names of herbs, doses and contra indications. The group wrote projects and worked with the Regional Delegation of Scientific Research. It also marketed the herbal products of the group to other communities in and around Mezam. The participants were also given end of course participation certificates and most of these practitioners since then set up herbal gardens as shown below. Members donated the land for the gardens and all the labour while the Saint Theresa Catholic Medical Centre provided locked facilities for the pharmacy. The herbal gardens were used to treat diseases like pile, malaria and typhoid. This treatment helped them meet up with their daily needs. Some of the herbal practitioners visited different hospitals in Bafut to treat diseases like ulcers and cancer which were beyond the control of conventional medicine. Shu Joram who was one of the participants confirmed that:

Due to the knowledge I acquired from the trainings, I was able to treat five people from Mambu suffering from incurable ulcers. He added that I have been using herbs from my herbal garden to treat Mankaa Judith who has cancer and she has been surviving up till date thanks to the herbs in my garden. This was after the woman had undergone about 13 chemotherapy treatments.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Okwen Patrick, 72 years, Former Medical Doctor STCMC/Volunteer Supervisor, Bamenda, 30/July/2019.

⁹⁹ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer /Participant, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

¹⁰⁰ *Idem*.

Plate 39 : Trained in participant in herbal Medicine



Source: Author's collection, Mambu, 20/August/ 2019.
The above is a participant of the training with his end of course participation certificate

Plate 40: Herbal garden in Mambu



Source: Author's collection, Mambu, 20/August/ 2019.
The above shows a herbal garden in AIC. Some of the herbs are used to treat pile, ulcers, typhoid

Other participants like Ayamah and Worebanu were known for their ability to cure cases of insanity caused by witchcraft due to the knowledge obtained from the trainings.¹⁰¹ Similarly, Ngwa Lucas, another participant claimed that:

The end of course certificate given to us at the end of the training was my first certificate I had ever received. I did not graduate from secondary school and when I graduated from primary school, I was not given a certificate. The day of graduation from the herbal training course was the greatest day of my life. I framed my certificate and hung it up for my children to see.¹⁰²

The project did not last very long because the initiators for different reasons left Bafut. Reinsma after her service travelled to the U.S. and Patrick Okwen picked up a job with the government and left Saint Theresa Catholic Medical Centre. Also, as the project continued, herbalists were invited to join and internal squabbles developed among them as to who was to head the group.¹⁰³ The squabbles made the group very unsafe and it collapsed. Irrespective of the contributions in the health domain, volunteers found out that the best way to help the people of Mezam improve their health situation and maintain a healthy living was through education. This was because, without skilled people, community members were not able to maintain expensive health projects or use financial aid to encourage further growth.

¹⁰¹ Shu Paul, 50 years, Teacher, Nsoh, 24/August/2019.

¹⁰² Ngwa Lucas, 68 years, Herbalist/Participant, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

¹⁰³ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer /Participant, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

4.3. Education

The dawn of independence in Cameroon just like other African countries represented a milestone in the evolution of education. Africans experienced a new sensation that they could decide on the educational path that best fit their needs. Colonialism brought direct European political, economic, cultural and educational control and earlier attempts were restrained by the imperialists. The liberation movement in Africa was characterised by relentless attacks on the flaws and disconnection of the imperial administration for the development of Africa. Shortly after independence, the direction of control changed from direct to indirect as African studies intellectuals attributed the post-colonial problems to colonial legacies and developed nations. Christian missions and colonial administration were criticised for developing an educational system that was ineffective in social integration and economic development. This tied with Nkrumah's view as in the course of trying to transform education in Ghana, criticised the British imperial education for being a futile means of integration and principally for being counter productive regarding economic growth.¹⁰⁴

Critics saw colonial education as the underpinning factor in the slow rate of African development for instance, when Julius Nyerere sought to revolutionise education in Tanzania, he viewed colonial education as an effort by the colonisers to reject Africans progressive education. The systems of colonial education were criticised for being intentionally designed to serve the economic interests of the colonising power rather than the well-being of the colonised people. It also took advantage of and subdued the underdeveloped world and their peoples while missionaries were blamed for being puppets of imperialists. Walter Rodney and Franz Fanon largely blamed the former colonial powers for the post-colonial education problems in Africa. They viewed the systems of education, plans and initiatives as well as the academic life of sovereign African nations as elements of neo-colonialism.¹⁰⁵

Educational neo-colonialism is considered as an incompletely planned initiative of developed nations to preserve their dominance in developing countries. Altbach proposed a plan for evaluating the colonial legacies in education and argued that educational systems remained deep-seated in the governance system of the former colonial masters. He asserted that advanced countries might not be the primary factor contributing to the current state of affairs even though the school's layout and design that imitated an imported model consistently influenced the educational system. He suggested a curriculum analysis throughout all the educational system and proposed that where textbooks brought in from the

¹⁰⁴ M.B. Gwanfogbe, "Changing Regimes and the Development of Education in Cameroon 1886-1966, (with special reference to the Basel Mission)", PhD. Thesis, Department of History, Humanities and Philosophy/Department of International and Comparative Education, University of London, Institute of Education, August 1995, p.142.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

advanced countries together with foreign teachers and school administrators are accessible, the books and foreign teachers perpetrate the implantation of foreign principles or ideas and therefore hinder efforts to revamp the educational system to suit national objectives. Lastly, he stated that the practice of decolonisation can also be seen where the languages of the former colonial masters remain the means of the teaching-learning process since they are the ways in which values are consistently held dear.¹⁰⁶

These attacks supported the anti-colonial charges made by emerging or post-colonial leaders. These leaders believed that imperial education had segregated the recipients from their community via Christian indoctrination. They argued that, where colonial and mission education equipped individuals for their roles in life, it was counter cultural of the African community, life as a colonial official or public servant, firm or mission. The 1961 conference hosted in Addis Ababa challenged the legacy of colonial education for the growth of Africa. It was recommended that African education should have as aim to develop fully capable men and women who were enthusiastic in technological revolution. This scrutiny resulted in changes called decolonising or Africanisation of education. Educational systems underwent a transformation in several countries. In Cameroon, the public alarm was prevalent and there was anxiety, hope and expectations that a unique Cameroon education system would be established from a Cameroonian perspective after the country was a product of 3 changing regimes from the Germans to the French and British.¹⁰⁷

Developing countries spent about \$80 billion annually on education yet the benefits of this sizeable investment were not fully realised. Despite the large advances in education that were made throughout the Third World, there are massive numbers of children without access to primary education in many countries. This is largely due to out spacing population growth. Financial limitations and the problems of inefficient organisational systems further constrain the ability of developing countries educational systems. Consequently, more than 600 million adults today cannot read or perform simple mathematical calculations.¹⁰⁸ Cameroon like many other African countries understood that education was the gateway to freedom. Cameroonian policymakers recognised the crucial role education played in driving economic growth. They outshone many African countries and understood what Thomas Jefferson meant about education when he said that: “no nation can be both ignorant and free... education can illuminate the darkness and make them free. He added that any society or state that ignores its humblest citizens (education) is failing in its sacred obligations.”¹⁰⁹ A country may have all the available resources for development but might still be lacking in development due to

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.145.

¹⁰⁸ Scanlon, *Cooperation between the*, p.32

¹⁰⁹ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” pp. 254-255.

inadequacy of educated elites to harness the available resources into meaningful development for the community.

Despite other problems, West Cameroon realised that the problems which needed urgent solutions were road improvement and education thus after independence, West Cameroon made education a key priority in its development plan as in the initial five-year development plan (1961-1966) of the country, education was considered the second most important element after road infrastructure. Nothing was undertaken with enough conviction and if any, to change the content of education and the orientation of pupils, considering the principal options of the plan. The West Cameroon government expected that the situation in Nigeria where regional governments reformed their educational systems could be practised in Cameroon. The government embarked on a more comprehensive reform and educational planning that embraced elementary, secondary and university education was promoted. The sense of independence over plans was illustrated in the statement that: "Government (West Cameroon) believes that education is an investment, human and material which can reap rich dividends. No policy for education can be relevant unless it takes in to account all the economic, social, political and spiritual factors of our time and circumstances."¹¹⁰

Education was a worthwhile investment and an essential pillar of development since it played a key role in poverty reduction and social development. This was reflected in bilateral policies as seen in a number of international documents such as the Millenium Development Goals and the United Nations Initiative of Education For All that became important reference documents for international development cooperation.¹¹¹ To Spicer, education for sustainable development involved changing people's attitudes and customs. He argued that:

Changing people's customs is an even more delicate responsibility than surgery. When a surgeon takes up his instruments, he assumes the responsibility for a human life ...The Administrator of a program[me] of technological change carries a heavier responsibility. Whenever he seeks to alter a people's way of life, he is dealing not with one individual but the well-being and happiness of generations of men and women. If his skill is poor and his judgement bad, he can destroy cooperative human relations and create hatred that will affect uncountable number of people. If on the other hand, his skill is equal to the task, the possibility is open for creating cooperation where it did not exist and for bettering the lives of generations.¹¹²

Sustainability added a human dimension to development and productivity as increased yields, wealth and gross national product were no longer considered the ultimate measures of sustainable development. The primary goal of sustainable development was not the

¹¹⁰ Gwanfogne, "Changing Regimes and," p.152.

¹¹¹ Etanefila, "Cameroon-German Technical," p.108.

¹¹² E.H. Spicer, *Human Problems in Technological Change*, New York, Russell Sage publication, 1952, p.62.

development of things but people. True sustainable development was measured by the quality of life that individuals and communities possessed and what their children will inherit in time to come because without skilled labour, the projects and the financial aid will not be properly managed. In the 1970s, development experts recognised that massive transfers of capital to the governments of Third World countries failed to ameliorate the condition of people at the lowest socio-economic level. A grassroot approach aimed at directly meeting the basic human needs of the poor was proposed as an alternative. The Peace Corps was a forerunner of this approach. For a people to develop, they must acquire sufficient and proper education. A publication in 2002 highlighted the importance of education by stating that: “education is not just a human right. It is also vital for reducing poverty, promoting health, improving governance and empowering people to make choices about their destinies. People are at the centre of development, and education is crucial for enhancing their capabilities, furthering equity and promoting social progress.”¹¹³

Ameliorating the living standards of Cameroonians was one of the main objectives of the Peace Corps. In order to achieve this, the volunteers were expected to help Cameroonians improve the quality of their lives. They were to educate the masses and join them meet up with development projects like providing qualified teachers and the maintenance of libraries. Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that: “everyone has a right to education” and that “education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality.”¹¹⁴ Education satisfied a basic human need for their social and economic status. Understanding and believing that education provided their children with the opportunities they never had, many parents in Mezam made enormous efforts in order for their children to attend school. The government on the other hand equally made a lot of efforts and committed scarce resources to make universal primary education a reality.¹¹⁵ Mass education was a basic necessity for development in Cameroon. This tied with Margaret Read’s view in 1950 as Head of the Colonial Department of the University of London Institute of Education cited the examples of China and Russia by stating that:

...Mass education is one of the secrets of the great strength, achievements and endurance of our two great allies, it has helped to make them a great force in the modern world.¹¹⁶ She argued that: education had to be something in which Africans were keen and not something put over them from on top. Literacy first, then

¹¹³ H.S. Mesumbe, “Local Development Decentralisation in Cameroon: The Case of the Tombel Rural Council, 2004-2013”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2014, p.81.

¹¹⁴ Agbor, “International Volunteer Organisations,” p.32.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.33.

¹¹⁶ Gwanfogbe, “Changing Regimes and,” p.30.

agriculture, health and local development, for mass education is about the whole life.¹¹⁷

Her view was in line with that of Jacob Viner when he stated that: “in many countries, if the masses of the population were literate, healthy and sufficiently fed...all else necessary for rapid economic development would come easily and of itself.”¹¹⁸ The Peace Corps believed that the people of Mezam needed to be educated for the area to develop and that the literate workers who constituted a catalyst in the changing nature of the area were a by-product of schools. Thus the Peace Corps embarked on the fight against illiteracy in various ways. In the process of accomplishing the mission of the Peace Corps, the goal of the education programme was to offer personal, professional and academic opportunities to students and teachers in Mezam. The volunteers had 3 main objectives which were; to help teachers improve the student-centred instructional techniques, help students improve English language and Science proficiency and to enhance community members' participation in their schools as well as library development.

4.3.1. Maths /Science Project

The lion's share of education volunteers, by roughly seven times is in programmes aimed at assisting secondary education. About 81% of education volunteers were in this domain in Africa.¹¹⁹ The Maths/Science teaching was the largest single programming in the education sector. It accounted for over 30% of all education volunteers and 12 % of all Peace Corps volunteers.¹²⁰ The scope of this area of expertise revealed a serious deficiency in experienced and skilled Maths and Science teachers in most countries of Africa, poor performance of students in these subjects in Third World countries, particularly in Africa, and the recognised value of knowledge in the natural sciences and Mathematics to the process of modernisation and development. At the March 1961 press conference announcing the Executive Order establishing the Peace Corps, Kennedy said that: “particular emphasis would be placed on volunteers with skills in teaching, agriculture and health.”¹²¹ When the initial contingent of 763 volunteers were expatriated abroad in 1961 and 1962, Kennedy identified as their goal in Africa and Latin America to address the critical shortage of skilled workers

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.31.

¹¹⁸ Jacob Viner, Quoted by Jing, “The Activities of,” p.1.

¹¹⁹ Landrum, *The Role of*, p.27.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.28.

¹²¹ Chenwi, “United States Peace,” p.37.

abroad. Within the initial 763 volunteers, 258 or 34 % went in to programmes of education, establishing a focus within the education field of the organisation.¹²²

The Maths/Science programme sought to build skills of students, teacher trainees and teachers and covered the following subjects, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Computer Science and Mathematics. The programme began in 1962 with 21 volunteers posted in the North-West and South-West Regions.¹²³ Though identified as one of the top priorities of Mezam's development plan, education was not without difficulties prior to the arrival of the volunteers especially in the early 1960s in Mezam. The first difficulty was the inadequate number of schools since most of the educational endeavours were in the hands of missionary bodies. Before then, Cameroonian parents sent their children to secondary schools in Nigeria. In 1935, there were seven students from Cameroon studying in the training College at Umuahia, two Cameroonian students at the Ayaba High College, one undergoing studies in the Queens College in Lagos and 40 other students from Cameroon studying in the Nigerian teacher training colleges particularly, the Uyo, Ogoja and Saint Charles college Onitsha.¹²⁴ Even after the opening of the Cameroon Protestant College in Bali in 1949, many children continued to go to Nigeria for enrolment in the secondary schools. They would go there to write the entrance examination, before going back to enrol if they were selected.

By 1962, six secondary schools had been created in the territory (four by missionary bodies and two by the government) that is; Saint Joseph's College, Sasse Buea in 1939, Basel Mission College-Bali in 1949, Government Technical High School Ombe in Tiko created in 1952, Queen of Rosary College Okoyong in Mamfe established in 1956, Sacred Heart College-Mankon set up in 1961 and Cameroon College of Arts, Science and Technology in 1962 offering general and technical secondary education though only three of these establishments could be called grammar schools preparing for the London General Certificate of Education (LGCE). These secondary schools that aimed at providing: "...an education which, while complete in itself will fit students to become responsible citizens and provide the groundwork for further training."¹²⁵ Even though they were just three but they represented the brightest jewels of Anglophone education after the abortive attempt to transform the Cameroon College of Arts, Science and Technology (CCAST) to prepare

¹²² Landrum, *The Role of*, p.6.

¹²³ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Volunteer Handbook*, p.20.

¹²⁴ J.N. Lon and C. Musah, "The British Southern Cameroons HMs: Prestigious and Dignifying Professionals at the Service of the Nation", *International Journal of Education and Social Service*, Vol.6, No.7, September 2019, p.42.

¹²⁵ Asenju, "Three Instances of," p.194.

students for further studies and act as a pre-university college with multiple faculties.¹²⁶ The founding fathers of CCAST had purposed the school to grow to a university like its Nigerian counterpart the Nigerian College of Arts Science and Technology (NCST) Enugu, Ibadan, Zaria which progressed to be the Universities of Nsukka, Ife and Ahmadou Bello. Unfortunately, CCAST graduated the technology with the schools of Agriculture and Education. Though there was a cordial relationship between the government and mission, the establishment of educational facilities was for the most part carried out by the christian missions under government guidelines.

In West Cameroon in general and Mezam in particular, mission education was held in high esteem. By 1962, denominational schools had an enrolment of about 50.000 students, 4.000 students in educational institutions that were privately owned and 1.000 students in government schools.¹²⁷ This may be explained by the fact that most members of government were educated by missions and more importantly because of the inherited tradition from the British. Hence the policy strongly supported a continuation of the type of collaboration that existed between the missions and the colonial government. The policy stated that: “government appreciates the fundamental influencing of sound religious training in the formation of character and it is our intention to see that religious instruction takes its rightful place in the curriculum of schools.”¹²⁸ As for the missionaries who were dispensing education to more than three quarters of the pupils, education constituted a spearhead for religious conquest in the country and in those days, temple and school were in the same building.¹²⁹ According to Gwanfogbe:

Missionaries believed that schools were the best way of influencing the population and winning converts to Christianity. They sought to carry out evangelisation and conversion in schools, hence targeting the heathen parents of pupils at home. Equally they wanted to produce educated African assistants of Christian leaders and state servants.¹³⁰

The above view was supported by Che Mfombong who argued that :

The first step in missionary activities in Cameroon was the conversion of the indigenous population to Christianity, which was closely followed by the establishment of schools with two fold aims: to train native teachers and catechists

¹²⁶ Christian Courade and George Courade, *Education in Anglophone Cameroon (1915-1975)*, Yaoundé, National Geographic Centre, 1977, p.25.

¹²⁷ J.A. Amin, *Sixty Years in Africa: The U.S. Peace Corps in Cameroon*, London, Routledge, 2023, p.100.

¹²⁸ Gwanfogbe, “Changing Regimes and,” p.155.

¹²⁹ Christian and George, *Education in Anglophone*, p.3.

¹³⁰ G.B.Titalanga, *et al*, “The Symbiosis of Bali Nyonga-Basel Mission Relationship: Understanding the Influence of Bali Nyonga through the Prism of the Basel Mission Vernacularisation in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon, 1902-1963”, *International Journal of Integrated Education*, Vol.4, Issue 2, 2021, p.354.

who will serve as proselytising agents and to provide the colonial administration with a semi-literate class to serve as interpreters, clerks, messengers, dressers among others.¹³¹

Education was one of the main visions of their founder as stipulated by Sr. Muala Lahert, principal of Our Lady of Lourdes College between 1985-1992 when she wrote that:

Our vision of education is deeply rooted in the vision of our founder Bishop Joseph Shanahan. For him, the objective of school was to honour and glorify God. The seed of faith was sown in school. Through the school, children came to see God as the centre of their lives and thus grow to respect and appreciate their dignity as persons. He hoped that the pupils would acquire what would enable them to become the co-founders of christian families and future influential leaders, who would transform their families and society. He saw the school as a place where young people would be encouraged to develop all their God-given gifts needed to be effective citizens. We continue to keep this vision alike by providing an all-found Christian education based on gospel values. The core of our vision is the education of the whole person, we strive to educate our students to be people of faith who respect and appreciate the dignity of each person. We encourage them to develop a sense of self-worth by helping them to develop their gifts and talents. Our aim is to provide a high standard of education which will lead to the formation of mature and responsible adults, who are well-informed and will transform societies as wives, mothers and christian leaders in the Cameroon of the future.¹³²

About 85 % of the primary, secondary and teacher training colleges were owned by the Basel, Roman Catholic and Baptist missions as shown below.¹³³ It is important to note that since these schools were few compared to the vastness of the study area, student enrolments were low and there was the shortage of qualified teachers. By 1961, the four mission secondary schools in the territory put together had a total enrolment of only 882 students. This enrolment represented a dismal 0.75% of all primary schools in the territory which was estimated at 116.859 pupils.¹³⁴ At independence in West Cameroon, there were 3.157 teachers. Of this number there were 1058 certified teachers (923 male and 135 female) and 973 uncertified teachers (877 male and 96 female) and finally 1126 Probationary teachers (1025 male and 201 female).¹³⁵

But for the Cameroon College of Arts, Science and Technology, all other schools were created and operated by missionary bodies. This posed a serious problem as most parents in Mezam with their meagre incomes could not afford the tuition charged in these

¹³¹ W.C. Mfombong, "Bamenda Division under the British Administration 1916-1961: From Native Administration to Local Government", M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé, 1980, p.125.

¹³² Lawyer, "Female Missionary Activities," p.251.

¹³³ RAB, File no. NW/Sa/d/1983/1, "The Bamenda Urban Space-Evolution and Organisation, 1983", p.46.

¹³⁴ R.N. Ndille, "Black men, English Suits and a Corner Service: Education and the Making of a West-Cameroon Civil Service, 1954-1972", *Social and Education History*, Vol.8, No.2, 2019, p.7.

¹³⁵ Lon and Musah, "The British Southern," p.43.

mission schools. The consequence was that a majority of elementary school leavers did not advance to secondary education due to inadequate finances. The importance of the private sector was not left out. Apart from the low output in the few mission secondary schools, the unwillingness of the colonial government to set up government secondary schools in the territory as they had done in Nigeria further complicated human resource development. By 1954, the Eastern Region of Nigeria to which the Southern Cameroons was attached had about 82 secondary schools. Of this number, 23 were government owned but none was in the Southern Cameroons.¹³⁶

Also, most of the existing institutions were located in urban areas like Bamenda, Bambui and Bali and a large population of the study area who lived in rural areas characterised by poor educational conditions were neglected. All these setbacks had a great influence on the number of students' enrolment in to secondary schools. This can be illustrated by the fact that of the 30% of pupils who attended primary schools, less than 1% of the group eventually graduated and enrolled in to secondary school.¹³⁷ Irrespective of this, the West Cameroon government after independence implemented a lot of reforms which had a great impact on educational expansion. At independence there were 491 primary schools in West Cameroon.¹³⁸ The expansion in primary school enrolment from 86,200 in 1961 to about 152,300 in 1966 had a direct effect in the secondary and vocational education within this time. From three all-boys secondary schools and one girls' school in 1961, the number rose to 16 in 1966 and enrolment grew from 780 students in 1961 to 3,388 by the 1966/67 academic year. The number of vocational and trade institutions also grew from only one in 1961 to 16 by 1972 and the enrolment rose from 1,401 in 1962 to 3,400 by the 1966/67 academic year.¹³⁹

Table 32: Some secondary and teacher training institutions in Mezam in the 1960s

No	Agency	Institution	Type	Location
1	Basel Mission	Cameroon Protestant College	Secondary School	Bali
2	Basel Mission	Marriage Training Centre	Vocational School	Bafut
3	Roman Catholic Mission	Sacred Heart College	Secondary School	Mankon
4	Roman Catholic Mission	Our Lady of Lourdes	Secondary School	Mankon
5	Government	Cameroon College of Arts Science and Technology	Secondary School	Bambili
6	Government	Institute of Agriculture	Vocational School	Bamenda and later

¹³⁶ Ndille, "Black men, English," p.8

¹³⁷ Agbor, "International Volunteer Organisations," p.37.

¹³⁸ Amin, *The Peace Corps*, p.113.

¹³⁹ Gwanfongbe, "Changing Regimes in," p.156.

				transferred to Bambili
7	Baptist Mission	Baptist College	Secondary School	Mankon
8	Roman Catholic	Teacher Training Centre	Vocational School	Bambui
9	Basel Mission	Teacher Training Centre	Vocational School	Mankon
10	Basel	Teacher Training Centre	Vocational School	Bali

Source: Author's conception during fieldwork, 20/August/2021.

The table above shows some of the secondary and teacher training institutions in Mezam in the 1960s. From the table, it can be seen that a majority of the educational endeavours were in the hands of the missionary bodies as most of these schools were owned by them except for Cameroon College of Arts Science and Technology which was the lone government secondary institution existing in the study area by then.

In the same light, West Cameroon was modelled after the British system which comprised of the primary (junior and senior primary), teacher training college, secondary school, technical college and the College of Arts, Science and Technology. It required a lot of effort to advance from one level to another. Thus after standard VI, pupils enrolled and took the five-year secondary course which ended with the obtention of the West African School Certificate. Under the British administration, the idea of a university was unthinkable.¹⁴⁰ The effect of the poor tertiary education policy for the Cameroons was that in 1959, only 116 Southern Cameroonians had been registered in higher education institutions in Nigeria and abroad since 1954.¹⁴¹ This was even more pressing because by 1961, the number of university graduates was severely deficient to tackle the staff demands of the young state. There were a little over 20 university graduates in West Cameroon by 1962 and most of the public service jobs as a result of this shortage were dominated by expatriates from Nigeria and Britain.

By 1962, there were only about 21 West Cameroonians holding top executive posts and the number of students pursuing higher education outside the territory was 65 compared to 6800 Nigerians, 280 Gambians, 3793 Ghanaians and 833 Sierra Leoneans. There were 65 Southern Cameroonians in British universities in 1961 with only ten taking degree courses. There were 17 others in Nigeria pursuing various degree and professional courses.¹⁴² These facts indicated that there will be a huge man power deficiency at top levels of administration which was bound to negatively affect the rate of the Cameroonisation of the public service after independence. Another significant challenge faced by political leaders after reunification was the need to overhaul the existing educational goals to attain national

¹⁴⁰ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.96.

¹⁴¹ Ndille, "Black men, English," p.9.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

aspirations. More so, mission schools emphasised the scriptures. Also, education was passed on to the national government after independence. The government devised a curriculum that was to serve national interests and not solely missionary bodies. In general, secondary schools grappled with urgent challenges. The absence of a higher institution (national university) by 1961 justifies the lack of skilled teachers in these institutions.

As a result of this, the government sent a request to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation regarding a training programme for educators of younger secondary students insisting that university graduates were the only suitable teachers for the upper classes. However, the programme predicted an expansion of the curriculum of the Cameroon College of Arts and Science (CCAS) similar to the approach in Nigeria to educate teachers for junior secondary schools. The policy suggested the broadening of CCAS to include technology. It was hoped that it could become a decentralised college of the federal university offering intermediate courses.¹⁴³ Following reference letter No FSG 102/147 of 17th August 1965, the Minister of National Education wanted the school to remain a GCE Advance level Arts and Science institution like the old NCAST having departments like Agriculture, Education for training secondary school teachers, Business Administration, Cooperative Assistants and Survey Technicians. On its part, the West Cameroon authorities wanted these departments to be at the middle grade level and courses concurrently with the pre-university courses in Arts and Science.¹⁴⁴ This conflict of opinion between the authorities left the school at the point of dilemma retarding the growth of the school.

Similarly, many of the school libraries and the few bookstores in Mezam contained limited volumes of books and depended upon books donated by charitable organisations coupled with the fact that the few existing books were irrelevant to the subjects taught in schools. Besides, the curriculum for secondary schools was shaped by the British Overseas School Certificate Boards (External Examination Boards of the Universities of Cambridge and London). The subjects taught included Mathematics, Physical Sciences (Physics Chemistry and Biology), English Language and Literature, Farming, West African Languages (Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo with none of the languages from Cameroon), Classical languages (Latin and at times Greek) and modern foreign languages (French, German, Spanish), History (British, European, British Empire and the Commonwealth), Geography, Handicrafts, Mechanical Drawing, Religious Knowledge, Physical Training and organised

¹⁴³ Gwanfoghbe, "Changing Regimes and," p.156.

¹⁴⁴ N.A. Tamukong, "The Evolution of Education in Bambili, 1952-1992: A Historical Perspective", M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2005, p.56.

Games, Arts, Music and Domestic Science. From the curricula, except for a limited range of subjects and local languages where they were present, African history was learnt through reading books written based on Euro-centric views. The remaining curricula was foreign to Cameroon students. According to Fonlon: “the principal preoccupation in the primary school was language and that of the secondary school, culture, that of the sixth form, introduction to specialisation and the university, specialisation.”¹⁴⁵ Thus the study area’s educational system was tethering on the brink of collapse.

The plan for secondary education was designed to facilitate accessibility for elementary school pupils who demonstrated their ability to profit for continued studies. This required more support to the missions to open the schools and obviously these missionaries through the government had to request for help from the Peace Corps. Volunteers had an especially powerful impact on the educational system of Cameroon. Emerging from its dark night of colonial domination, Cameroon turned to the Peace Corps for help in pursuit of the ideal of mass education. The demand for man power to replace the departing colonialists was the motivating force behind most educational reforms and the need for volunteers. It should be noted that during the colonial era, the objective of education was to train temporary civil servants for colonial exploitation and clerks who could work in the administration, business and industrial plantations. In 1944, of the 163 public service staff in the Southern Cameroons, 130 were Nigerians and only 33 were Southern Cameroonians. In 1946, all the four head teachers of the government primary schools in Southern Cameroons were Nigerians.¹⁴⁶

By 1950, 64% of junior grade employees in the government were Cameroonians and 36% Nigerians. For higher positions, one Cameroonian was employed against six Nigerians.¹⁴⁷ By 1959, there were 1471 posts in the Southern Cameroons public service with 121 in the senior administrative category and 63 in the executive category all of which required a post-primary certificate as entry requirement. Of this number only 36 Southern Cameroonians were in the two categories put together. 52 posts were vacant and 70 were occupied by Europeans and Nigerians.¹⁴⁸ Besides, the Sydney Phillipson’s report of 1959, stated that only 50 % of the colonial workers were from Cameroon. These figures showed the critical need for indigenous public service personnel educated beyond the primary school. The exit of the foreigners or expatriates in 1961 left over 410 openings in the administration and technical domain. The implication of the dearth of qualified staff had immediate

¹⁴⁵ Fonlon, as cited by Christian and George in *Education in Anglophone*, p.17.

¹⁴⁶ Ndille, “Black men, English,” p.10.

¹⁴⁷ Fonlon, as cited by Christian and George in *Education in Anglophone*, p.2.

¹⁴⁸ Ndille, “Black men, English,” p.10.

consequences on education. Due to the superior training and expertise of educators at the time, the inclination was for the government to withdraw a large number of experienced teachers from the classroom to take up vacant positions in the administration.¹⁴⁹

Primary education was free in Mezam but the burden of providing adequate learning infrastructure and teachers remained at times in the hands of the parents or host communities. It was for these reasons that in rural areas, schools operated in begged or rented buildings, which were often uncompleted or not well structured. The few permanent structures were characterised by tiny classrooms, leaking roofs during the rainy season and earth floors which gave children a lot of diseases. Some schools had polluted water and as a consequence pupils and students were at risk of having typhoid and cholera. Logs of wood, pinned bamboos were used for benches and children used their laps as tables. In addition, there were cracked and collapsing walls and the absence of blackboards, offices, toilets, teachers' tables and chairs and inadequate supply of teachers presenting a ratio of 1:3 classes.¹⁵⁰ With such challenges, poor performance was inevitable. It was due to this unfriendly learning environment that the Peace Corps intervened to promote education in Mezam.

Faced with all these setbacks, the assistance of volunteers in the improvement of the educational standard of West Cameroon in general and Mezam in particular was inevitable. On the 19th of August 1961, A.N. Jua, West Cameroon Minister of Social Affairs gave a memo to the U.S. Ambassador in which the West Cameroon state government solicited the helping hand of Peace Corps volunteers to engage and enhance the training of teachers, technical and secondary education starting from January 1962. J.N. Foncha and A.N. Jua on the 25th August in the U.S. Embassy validated the request.¹⁵¹ In December, A.D. Mengot, the Director of Education in West Cameroon, emphasised the necessity of Peace Corps volunteers during a conversation with the U.S. Peace Corps Representative in Cameroon.

Subsequent to the initial meeting, the government filed a formal request to the Peace Corps headquarters in Washington. The Peace Corps Representative notified the government of Cameroon in 1962 of their willingness to dispatch 54 volunteers in accordance with the request.¹⁵² President Ahidjo, while on a state visit to Washington in March, emphasised to President J.F. Kennedy the necessity of the Peace Corps to help in the growth and progress of Cameroon. Volunteers filled a critical vacuum in Mezam's educational system. This acted as a pacesetter for the 21 volunteers of the first group who arrived in September 1962 to teach

¹⁴⁹ Gwanfongbe, "Changing Regimes in," p.161.

¹⁵⁰ Chenwi, "Human Rights and," pp.83-84.

¹⁵¹ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.107.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

in secondary and teacher training colleges in West Cameroon. Then in September 1963, an additional group of 52 volunteers arrived among them 27 teachers to help open new schools and expand the capacity of existing secondary and teacher-training institutions.¹⁵³

Most education volunteers in Mezam were requested by heads of institutions because of the shortage of teachers. Even though, solicited as an education volunteer, most got involved in other cross sectoral activities like agriculture, health and community development especially upon the request of the community. Each community applied for one volunteer in each sector. The information filled on the application form that was sent to the Peace Corps head office in Yaoundé included generally; the agency, type of institution, school for volunteer to teach, subject to be taught, number of hours to be taught a week, class to be taught and number of students. Religion though not very important could be added when it had to do with mission schools. The choice of sex was at times added too by single sex schools. This was considered by the organisation in the early years but later on worked at the detriment of communities that applied with a precision of sex since the agency considered such communities as gender biased and may not send volunteers to the community. The Peace Corps believed that a volunteer was a volunteer whether male or female. Requested volunteers were to have at least a Bachelor of Arts or Science and a teaching experience especially in the subject to be taught.¹⁵⁴ The table below shows some volunteers requested in Mezam with the number of volunteers required, institutions, sex and the subjects to be taught.

Table 33: Requested Volunteers for Mezam in 1964

No	Agency	Type of Institution	Number Required	Sex	Religion	Subject	Remarks
1	Roman Catholic Mission	Secondary School Mankon	2	Female	Roman Catholic	Maths and Science	Non
2	Cameroon Baptist Mission	Secondary School Mankon	3	Female	Protestant	French	M.A with teaching experience, extra-activity sports, Games, Music and Drama Club
3	Basel Mission	Cameroon Protestant College Bali	1	Male		French	M.A., teaching experience to replace the two leaving
4	Roman	Teacher	1	Male		French	Professional

¹⁵³ Peace Corps, *The Peace Corps Volunteer*, Washington D.C., April 1964, Vol. 2, No.6, p.14.

¹⁵⁴ Anonymous

	Catholic Mission	Training Centre, Bambui					Teachers Qualification
5	Roman Catholic Mission	Girls Secondary School, Mankon	2	Female	Roman Catholic	Maths and Science	
6	Government	Secondary School	1			Physical Education	Graduate

Source: Modified by Author from Agbor, “International Volunteer Organisations,” pp.39-40

From the table above, it can be seen that these volunteers were requested to teach in government and mission schools because of the problem of acute shortage of teachers in mission schools. From the 12 volunteers that were requested in Mezam, only one was to teach in a government school.

In Mezam, the volunteers taught different subjects in secondary schools like Cameroon Protestant College Bali, Sacred Heart College (SAHECO) Mankon, Cameroon College of Arts, Science and Technology Bambili, and vocational training centres like Teacher Training Centre in Bambui and the Presbyterian Women Teacher Training College Mankon. The volunteers taught subjects like Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science and Mathematics in schools where the respective teachers were lacking. The volunteers had as objective to help the government in improving its educational standards and to solve the problem of inadequate teachers in most schools in Mezam. This was as a result of the disproportionately high youth population and the lack of teacher training colleges.¹⁵⁵ The table below shows the posting of volunteers in some schools in Mezam.

Table 34: Distribution of Education Volunteers in Mezam Division from 1962 -2016

No	Name of Volunteer	Institution	Subject (s) taught	Years of service
1	William John Kane	CCAST Bambili	Economics	1962-1964
2	J. Kellmberge	CCAST Bambili	Maths/Physics	1962-1964
3	A. Bridge	CCAST Bambili	Maths/Biology	1962-1964
4	Miss Brickman	CCAST Bambili	Maths/Chemistry	1962-1964
5	Miss Laws	CCAST Bambili	Maths/Chemistry/Biology	1962-1964
6	Miss Cavas	CCAST Bambili	Maths/Physics/Chemistry	1962-1964
7	Bill Murphy	Sacred Heart College Mankon	Maths/Physics	1962-1964
8	Bob Guthrie	Sacred Heart College Mankon	French/ Maths/Physics	1962-1964
9	Stuart Lee Kinney	Sacred Heart College Mankon	Physics/Biology/Maths	1963-1965
10	Brian Shelley	Sacred Heart College Mankon	Physics/Biology/Maths	
11	Richard P. Sugg	St. Peters Teacher Training	English	1963-1965

¹⁵⁵ Chenwi, “United States Peace,” p.88.

		College Bambui	Language/Literature/French	
12	Bob Utz	St. Peters Teacher Training College Bambui	English Language/Literature/French	1963-1965
13	Hanks Levitt	CCAST Bambili	Maths/Physics/Chemistry	1963-1965
14	Ariane Laidlaw	Bamenda	English	1963-1965
15	Jim Herring	Sacred Heart College Mankon	Physics/Biology/Maths	1963-1965
16	Miss Delie	Sacred Heart College Mankon	Physics/Biology/Maths	1963-1965
17	Barbara D'Estrade	Sacred Heart College Mankon	Physics/Biology/Maths	1963-1965
18	Ray Hubeger	Sacred Heart College Mankon	Physics/Biology/Maths	1963-1965
19	Mr. Malesky	Cameroon Protestant College Bali	Physics	1964-1966
20	Mary Prosser Bunton	Presbyterian Women Teacher Training Centre, Mankon	Arithmetic/English/Principles and Methods of Learning	1965-1967
21	Miss Mauricelle	Sacred Heart College Mankon	French	1965-1967
22	Tharwtzman	Sacred Heart College Mankon	Mathematics	1967-1969
23	Mr. Rupert	Sacred Heart College Mankon	Maths/Physics	1970-1972
24	Mary Jane Linker	Bamenda	<i>IPAR*</i>	1980-1982
25	Mary Fitzgerald Bodkin	Cameroon Protestant College Bali	Maths/Physics	1984-1986
26	Mary Malmquist	Bamenda	Arithmetic, Rural Science, English, Principles and methods of teaching	1984-1989
27	Jean Smith	Bamenda	Arithmetic/English/Principles and Methods of Learning	1984-1989
28	Mark Anthony White	Bamenda	Maths, Physics, Biology	1986-1989
29	Beth Essess	Presbyterian Women Teacher Training Centre, Mankon	Arithmetic, Rural Science, English, Principles and methods of teaching	1989-1991
30	Kathleen Ryan Jingwi	Sacred Heart College Mankon	Mathematics	1990-1993
31	Paul Mickelson	Bamenda	Computer	1992-1994
32	Paul Startz Thams	Presbyterian Secondary School Bafut	Mathematics/Physics	1993-1995
33	Angela Fryer	Government High Kwang Pinyin	Mathematics/Physics	1997-2000
34	Jonathan Levene	Bamenda	Mathematics/Physics	1998-2000
35	Kwa Anna E. Van Deusen	Teacher Resource Centre Bamenda	Resource Person/taught Biology in different schools	1998-2000
36	Mike Jaeger	Longla Comprehensive College	Maths, Physics, Biology	1998-2000
37	Cheryl Onega	Regional Institute of Agriculture	Farming Systems/Business Classes	2000-2002
38	Albert Onega	Regional Institute of Agriculture	Farming systems /Business Classes	2000-2002
39	Katherine Wright	Saint Joseph's Children and Adult's Home	Arts classes	2003-2005
40	Adam Green	Longla Comprehensive	Biology	2004-2006

		College and Teacher Resource Centre		
41	Gwendolyn Lee	Government Secondary School Mundum	Mathematics/ Chemistry and Computer Science	2008-2010
42	Kelsey Cornelius	Government Secondary School Mundum	Physics, Biology and Computer Science	2008-2010
43	Gabriel Albin	Teachers Resource Center	ICT/Computer Science	2009-2011
44	Peter Tarkowsky	Bamenda University of Science and Technology	Computer Networking (TCP/IP) and CISCO Equipment	2010-2012
45	Ruth Kelly	Regional Delegation of Secondary Education	ICT	2010-2012
46	Rose Barah	Regional Delegation of Secondary Education	ICT	2010-2012
47	Jacqueline Erner	Higher Teacher Training College, University of Bamenda	Chemistry/ Teaching Methods	2011-2013
48	Eric Adlam	Regional Delegation of Secondary Education and some schools in Bamenda	Computer Science	2011-2013
49	Ashley Elizabeth	Our Lady of Lourdes College, Mankon	Librarian	2015-2016

Source : Author's conception, 21/August/2021

The above table shows some institutions in which volunteers were posted to teach in Mezam to improve the knowledge of the students. From the table, it can be seen that the institutions varied from secondary, teacher training colleges as well as higher institutions of learning.

After postings to the schools, the volunteers worked with their partners to improve learning conditions in the classrooms. At a time when illiteracy was high in the study area, the volunteers stepped in and contributed a lot to educating the people of Mezam. They provided quality instructions aimed at enabling the schools gain competencies in sciences in order to enhance the development of their communities.¹⁵⁶ Volunteers struggled to wipe out the teacher-centred and introduce the student-centred teaching techniques. This improved student's proficiency in science and literacy since learning was in the hands of the students. The volunteers came to Mezam during a critical moment of the division's history. At a time when the study area was experiencing bilingualism, they ensured they kept English up to the required standard. When the British expatriates left the area, English was on the brink of being removed in the area, however, the prompt arrival of the volunteers saved the day . Eventhough the volunteers faced a difficult decision of Cameroon's attempt to minimise the importance of English, they swiftly assimilated and comprehended the yearning of the people

¹⁵⁶ Anonymous

of Mezam to uphold English-speaking community. Though the spirit of bilingualism was more said than done as it was much more visible in speeches than practice, the Peace Corps volunteers assisted the bilingual objective of the country.¹⁵⁷

The shortage of teachers pushed volunteers to teach subjects they never studied in college thereby exposing themselves to criticism. They accepted the challenges of teaching several subjects. They set up class schedules, established numerous public reading rooms, student organisations, extra curricular activities in most institutions, promoted a range of athletic activities and established the groundwork for creating a syllabus more sensitive to the needs of Mezam students. Their presence created the urgency of opening new schools, their aspiration, bravery and affability were significant characteristics emulated by Mezam students. They gave the students of Mezam an entirely new framework for educational practices by illustrating that it did not only imply detachment from the ordinary person as suggested by the Europeans who conceived an elitist and privileged lifestyle. Their effort to dissemble racist practices in denominational institutions motivated their partners in Mezam to adopt similar methods and manage their organisations in the years that followed.¹⁵⁸

The volunteers waged a war against rote learning after noticing that most students in Mezam could not analyse problems because they had been motivated to memorise and recall facts during evaluations. The archaic thinking that the teacher was always correct was the norm and teachers ability and competence was not questioned. This traditional school system hindered the students from unveiling their core competencies, draw conclusions and adopt a general solution to specific cases. Most students in Mezam had memorised facts on Napoleonic France, Victorian England but could neither analyse nor discuss the significance of the information. The system also devoted no time to either Cameroon or African studies. These fields were relegated to the background by the British GCE Examination system.¹⁵⁹

To contest the system in place, the volunteers designed a syllabus and specially crafted textbooks responsive to the demands and necessities of students in Cameroon. They also paved the way for the foundation of the London GCE to replace the West African School Certificate Examination Board with effect from June 1964.¹⁶⁰ The volunteers argued that the required subjects of the examination board was the main focus of the syllabus and crushed the dream of indigenisation or Africanisation and thus standardised the British system of education. Similarly, in the later years, the volunteers worked so hard to facilitate the process

¹⁵⁷ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.90.

¹⁵⁸ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.161.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Gwanfogbe, "Changing Regimes of," p.154.

of establishing a Cameroonian Examination Board to substitute the LGCE. Eventhough these early adopters or new comers departed Cameroon too briefly to witness their initiatives manifest, they initiated the process. Cameroon separated from the LGCE system and set up its own examination board in 1977. Regrettably, Cameroon historical records disregarded the contributions of the initial Peace Corps volunteers in the operation.¹⁶¹

Of interest regarding the teachers in West Cameroon was their numerical importance in the secondary and the teacher training schools of the country. When independence came, many of the expatriate teachers left the country. A number of institutions were so deranged by the departure of these teachers that they were forced to curtail their enrolment or in a few cases to close their doors. By this period, the volunteer teachers in West Cameroon, represented more than 34% of the teaching staff in all secondary and teacher training colleges. Largely due to the presence of these colleges, the enrolment in these institutions increased from 1807 in September 1961 to 2767 in January 1964.¹⁶²

In the Cameroon College of Arts, Science and Technology (CCAST), volunteers played a great role in the growth of the school. Opened in 1962, the school was initially on a temporal ground at the Government Teacher Training College Kumba before it was transferred to Bambui and finally to Bambili. The West Cameroon Government through its Education policy paper of July 1963 anticipated that CCAST was to be a future college of the Federal University of Cameroon created in 1962. It was believed that the school was to be similar in status like an American junior college or English Polytechnic. A preliminary entrance examination preceded an intake of 51 Arts students and the pioneers underwent a two-year pre-university programme. Its first principal was Hugh Vernon Jackson shown below. Jackson headed eight teachers among whom were six Peace Corps volunteers including J. Kellmberge, William Kane, A. Bridge, Miss Brickham, Miss Laws and Miss Cavas. There were two Cameroonians in the staff who were Sylvester N. Dioh and William Mutchia. These six Peace Corps volunteers partnered with their counterparts and the effects of their activities were far reaching during and even after their service periods.¹⁶³

In December 1963, CCAST was transferred to its present site in Bambili and Sylvester Dioh was appointed as principal. This dream was somehow constrained by the problem of infrastructure and man power. To achieve this, the government appealed to the U.S. government for the provision of volunteers for assistance towards this goal, considered crucial in the development of the required man power. USAID and some volunteers came in

¹⁶¹ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.162.

¹⁶² Peace Corps, *The Peace Corps*, p.14.

¹⁶³ Tamukong, "The Evolution of," pp.50-52.

to lend support to firmly establish the institution in the science department. This took place under the auspices of Dr. David Laird, USAID Adviser on Education, Dr. William Stanley, Adviser on Science and Education, Mr. H.O.H Vernon Jackson from the U.S. who became the pioneer principal. USAID's groundbreaking mission was very brief but the Peace Corps volunteers continued with the good foundation laid by USAID. Mr. Sylvester Dioh stands out as one of the key Cameroonian figures in the early development of CCAST Bambili.

The arrival of the volunteers was very timely as the educational endeavours in CCAST especially in the early years were tethering on the brink of collapse. It should be noted that when the college was transferred to Bambili, a science department was introduced and in the 1964-65 session, the first set of science students enrolled. But unfortunately, the newly introduced science programme was handicapped by the lack of qualified teachers. The Cultural Delegate indicated that Dr. Aaron Bokossah who at the time was studying in Britain was to teach Physics, Miss Dorothy Efrange in the U.S. to teach Biology and Dr. Gregory Tanyi in Canada was to teach Chemistry. Things did not work out as planned as Dr. Bokossah's courses were extended, Miss Efrange had not yet graduated and Dr. Tanyi was doing research for the U.S. Government.¹⁶⁴ Hence they could not teach in the Cameroon College of Arts, Science and Technology at the time they were dearly needed. This created a vacuum in the newly born science department and hampered its progress. However, Peace Corps volunteers like Brickham, A. Bridge intervened and rescued the situation by aiding the department for some time to teach these courses.

William John Kane who also served there between 1962-1964 also left behind a very important legacy. Posted among the first volunteers in the study area and also the youngest of the six Peace Corps volunteers, Kane taught Economics and the skills with which he taught the subject transformed the school and gave it the popularity it had during and after his period of service. He also sponsored and coordinated the school history club. The effects of the volunteer's activities were not only felt in terms of results in the GCE but were also felt in the increase in student enrolment.¹⁶⁵ By 1963, the number of students in the Cameroon College of Arts, Science and Technology (CCAST) increased from 52 in 1962 to 110 students in 1963 and between 1964 and 1966, the student enrolment increased again to 390 students and by the 1980s when CCAST Bambili became a full secondary and post secondary school, there were over 1439 students for both levels.¹⁶⁶

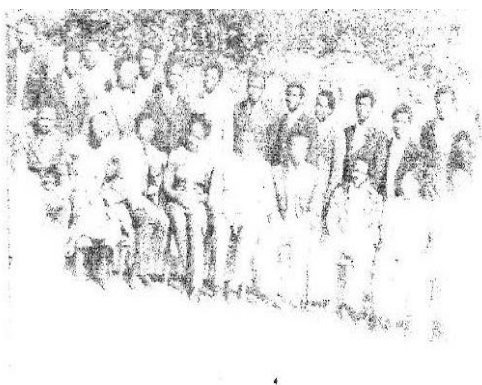
¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.58.

¹⁶⁵ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.60.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.91.

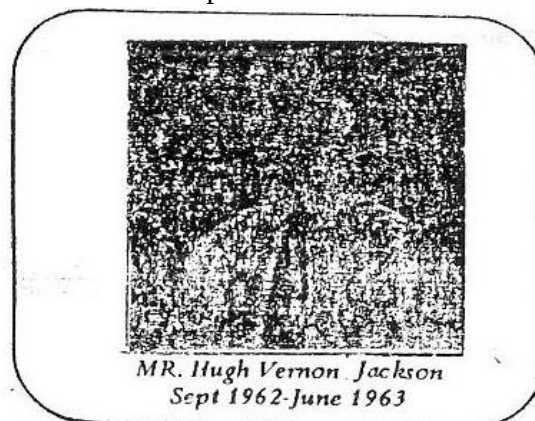
The role of the volunteers in the creation and subsequent consolidation of CCAST was a landmark in the growth of education in the area. It was the first Anglophone post secondary institution in Cameroon and it prepared many students for the University of Yaoundé. In essence, CCAST represented the pillar of secondary and higher institutions in Bambili. The School of Agriculture and Education to prepare secondary school teachers were first created as branches of CCAST in 1964 and 1966. These schools became autonomous and served not only Bambili but Cameroon in its entirety. Perhaps the words of the Minister of Education in 1982, Rene Ze Nguele sums it all when he intimated during the 20th anniversary of CCAST that: “the creation of the college should serve as a point of departure, a new determination for greater success. Its past success should remain eloquent testimonies that will encourage development not only in CCAST but the whole of Bambili.”¹⁶⁷ The popularity the school enjoyed was thanks to the good foundation the volunteers laid.

Plate 41 : Pioneer Students of CCAST Bambili



Source: Tamukong, “The Evolution of,” p.51. The above shows the first batch of students of CCAST taught by volunteers

Plate 42: First Principal of CCAST Bambili



Source: Tamukong, “The Evolution of,” p.53. The above shows Vernon Jackson the first principal of CCAST who headed the first group posted to teach in the school

Another school in which volunteers played a great role in its growth and development was Sacred Heart College Mankon shown below. Bishop Rogan, the Catholic Bishop of the Southern Cameroons and the seasoned priest of the Roman Catholic Mission Mankon, Father Mathew Nabben, were the brains behind the establishment of the new institution that was to be an offspring of the Saint Joseph’s College Sasse. The admission test in to Sacred Heart College Mankon was conducted in October 1960 and a list of 30 candidates was published in Decemeber 1960.¹⁶⁸ It became the second grammar school in the area after the Cameroon

¹⁶⁷ Tamukong, “The Evolution of,” p.53.

¹⁶⁸ G.Y. Numen, *Sacred Heart College Mankon and the Marist Brothers of the Schools, 50 Years of the Presence of the Marist Brothers in Cameroon 1965-2015*, Bamenda, Marist Brothers, 2015, p.3.

Protestant College in Bali created in 1949. The school began as an all-boys institution on 21st January 1961 at 6 p.m. with Fr. Thomas Mulligan as the pioneer principal. Alphonse Ndenge, Rev. Father Thomas Mulligan, John Nzeribe, who was a Nigerian established the foundation of knowledge for the first cohort of students in the school.¹⁶⁹

When the second batch of 60 students were admitted, there was a serious need of more teachers coupled with the fact that one of the pioneer teachers John Nzeribe who was a Nigerian decided to go back home. Most of the initial teachers were not graduates as it was not easy to find graduates willing to teach in catholic secondary schools for various reasons. The need for teachers pushed the school to shop far and wide for qualified teachers. This search extended to Nigeria, Britain and the U.S.¹⁷⁰ Among some of the early recruits of the school were two Peace Corps volunteers Bob Gurthrie and Bill Murphy posted in 1962 just after the creation of the school. Guthrie and Murphy imparted knowledge to the students in Mathematics, French and History as well as supported the development of a sports programme, the building of a school depository or savings account, enhancing hygiene and bettering sanitation practices in the residence halls (dormitories). Upon inquiry about the need for more volunteers in his school, Father Mulligan stated that: “send us more but make sure they are like Murphy and Guthrie.”¹⁷¹ That spoke volumes of the Peace Corps’ reputation and the thumbprints left by volunteers in the school. Over the years, “Peace Corps teacher or white man teacher” became a familiar term in the classrooms of many schools in Mezam. In 1963 and 1964, a good number of Peace Corps volunteers were posted to Sacred Heart College. They were Jim Herring, Stuart Kenny, Miss Delie, Barbara D’Estrade and Ray Hubeger. These five volunteers together with the initial two were graduates from American universities thus providing Sacred Heart College with a pool of graduate teachers. The volunteers were to teach Maths, Physics and other science subjects. The students regretted their departure as the volunteers succeeded in demystifying the Maths and Science myth.

In September 1965, the pioneer batch graduated with the best results tallying higher than 60% and was the first-ranked college of all the schools in West Cameroon that wrote the London G.C.E. Ordinary level examinations. This was thanks to the efforts and the good foundation laid by the volunteers in the early and budding years of the school. None of the institutions with an established legacy reached or exceeded a 40% pass and being successful in English was a measuring stick. The outstanding success by the first batch instilled in the

¹⁶⁹ Tubuo Ernest Timchia, 53 years, Principal SAHECO, Mankon, 17/December/2022

¹⁷⁰ Numen, *Sacred Heart College*, p.4.

¹⁷¹ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.158.

future generations the *ethos*, spirit and an excellence mindset.¹⁷² The seed of love and hard work that the volunteers sowed is consistently sprouting. Today, Mathematics is the most prized, loved, and most excellent subject, for over 90% of students of Sacred Heart College.¹⁷³ Volunteer Rupert was also posted in the school to teach Maths, Physics and Chemistry from 1970-1972. He continued with the good work started by his predecessors and greatly influenced the growth of the school.¹⁷⁴

Plate 43 : Sacred Heart College Mankon



Source: Author's collection, Mankon, 17/December/2021
The above shows Sacred Heart College Mankon Bamenda

Plate 44: Volunteers teaching English in Bamenda



Source: U.S. Department of State, *Focus on Diplomacy: United States and Cameroon Fifty Years Commemorative Edition, 1960-2007*, Manila GPS, 2007, p.19.
The above shows Peace Corps volunteers teaching English language in Bamenda in October 1982

The Basel mission opened a secondary grammar school in Bali in 1949. In 1958, the Cameroon Baptist mission joined the Basel mission to run the school as a secondary school for boys, renaming it the Cameroon Protestant College. By 1962, the introduction of double shift classes helped in the expansion of the college and with this increase, there was the need for teachers. It is in this light that volunteers were requested to teach in the school. Volunteer Malesky was posted to teach Physics from 1964-1966.¹⁷⁵ Other volunteers like Adam Green, was posted to teach Computer Science in Longla Comprehensive College (L.C.C) Mankon and was also involved in extracurricular activities. Though initially posted in Tatum, he was later transferred by the Ministry of National Education in August 2004 to the double

¹⁷² Numen, *Sacred Heart College*, p.5.

¹⁷³ Tubuo Ernest Timchia, 53 years, Principal SAHECO, Mankon, 17/December/2022

¹⁷⁴ Numen, *Sacred Heart College*, p.4.

¹⁷⁵ NAB, File No. Ta/a/1964/1, "Application for Peace Corps Volunteers, West Cameroon," Buea, 1964, p.43

functions at the North-West Teacher's Resource Centre (NTRC) and Longla Comprehensive College in Bamenda.

During service in the NTRC, he was engaged and conducted training exercises for computer science teachers and developed a self-contained application to introduce the fundamentals of specific software applications. This programme was later circulated all over Cameroon through other Teacher's Resource Centres and Peace Corps volunteers. In L.C.C., the volunteer delivered organised lessons to his computer science colleagues. Green, also helped in establishing a new computer science laboratory comprising of more than 149 interconnected devices. While in Bamenda, Green acted as the link for institutions engaging in Environmental Globe Cameroon Data Exchange Project in Mezam. He also created and delivered presentations on Global Positioning System technology to students and teachers.¹⁷⁶

Volunteer Peter Tarkowsky during service in Mezam organised a three weeks training course for computer science teachers and inspectors. While in the classroom, he covered computer hardware and software maintenance as well as computer networking as shown below.¹⁷⁷ Mike Jaeger also served as a volunteer in Bamenda from 1998-2000 as a Maths/Science teacher. While in service, he faced a lot of challenges especially concerning the teaching of computer science because of the inadequate number of computers. It is as a result of this that in 2006, through his Computers for Cameroon Programme, he provided and installed dozens of computers in L.C.C. Mankon and in a nearby school in Bafut. He also trained staff and taught courses on computer-aided design programmes, word processing, data entries and the internet.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶[www.polyploidevolution](http://www.polyploidevolution.com) .com, consulted on the 19/July/2021 at 7 :35 p.m

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ <https://www.flickr.com> , consulted on 19/July/2021 at 8:00 p.m.

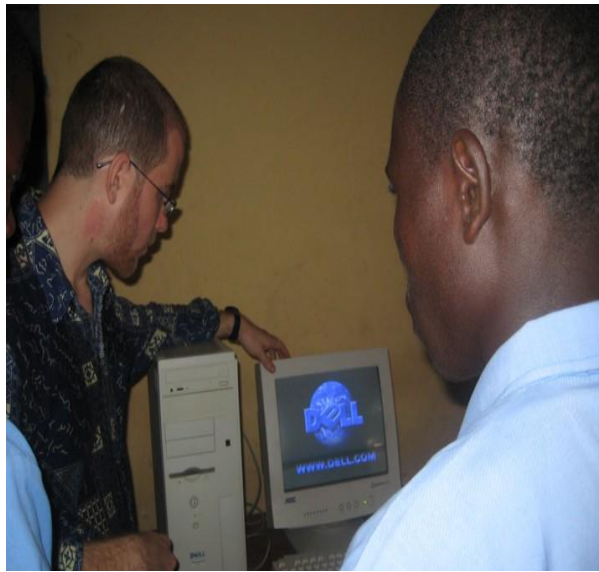
Plate 45 : Volunteer during Training with Teachers in Bamenda



Source: NWTRC archives, Bamenda, 18/June/2022

The above shows a volunteer during training with teachers on computer maintenance and repair in Bamenda

Plate 46: Volunteers with Students during Training in Bamenda



Source: NWTRC archives, Bamenda, 18/June/2022

The above is a volunteer with students during a class on computer hardware, software and computer networking essentials in Bamenda

Volunteers started projects such as music groups, philosophy clubs and physical education programmes. Some introduced baseball and softball in their schools while others engaged in lengthy discussions with their students and co-workers about life in the U.S. The volunteers were fulfilling the task assigned to them in the Peace Corps Act. According to some former students and counterparts of volunteers, most of the volunteers were devoted and determined teachers who greatly enhanced the educational standards of Cameroon. One of the former students testified that: “The Peace Corps programme is a wonderful initiative. Volunteers impacted knowledge and were the best among the best teachers we had.”¹⁷⁹ Also volunteers used alternative (positive) discipline methods as a means of curbing gender-based violence and corporal punishment, thus creating safer schools for students.

Many countries nowadays, are struggling to take education as one of their top priorities but ironically, the government of Cameroon has embarked on the creation of public schools without necessarily furnishing the institutions with the required infrastructure and equipment to operate. A key complaint in Cameroon secondary schools is the inability to do science practicals because of inadequate laboratory equipment. Since schools were not

¹⁷⁹ Weriwoh T. Godfred, 70 years, Retired Colonel/Former Volunteer Student, Yaoundé, 11/May/2022.

supplied with vast amounts of money or resources, volunteers had to be creative and improvise. They used local resources to achieve their work goals. They adapted techniques to local realities for instance, with the absence of calculators, the trainees were taught how to use sticks and stones to teach simple multiplication, subtraction, division and addition. They were taught to be innovative in creating teaching tools like their own play equipment, using pictures, charts and maps instead of more refined audiovisual materials. As teachers in Mezam, Fairfield informed volunteers to have as motto: “adjustment, improvising, ingenuity and creativity.”¹⁸⁰

Volunteers like Gwendolyn Lee and Kelsey Cornelius shared their knowledge on the use of local teaching aids and resources to replace a laboratory or present lessons where there is no laboratory in Mundum. Local teaching aids and resources were used to teach students and this motivated some students to study sciences and made them to understand that science was everywhere and brought the lesson closer to the students. Kelsey and Lee were some of the education volunteers who arrived Cameroon and served in Mundum between 2004-2008. They had Bachelors of Science (B.S) and taught Mathematics, Chemistry and Computer Science while collaborating with the science club in Government Secondary School (G.S.S) Mundum and another nearby secondary school. They left a great impact in the lives of the students, teachers and the entire community of G.S.S. Mundum. The school lacked a laboratory for students to carry out their practicals. Irrespective of this, Lee used other local alternatives at her disposal like the dissection of the eyes of a cow in the slaughter house in Mundum market which increased the anxiety and enthusiasm of the students since they had an opportunity to touch the lens, retina, and watery fluid.¹⁸¹

Accompanied by her colleagues and students, Lee organised frequent visits to the local training and water treatment centres. Kelsey taught computer science even though there was no computer laboratory. She taught typing in an interpretative dance form. Another instance in which the students, teachers and community benefitted from volunteers knowledge was on mushroom cultivation in G.S.S. Mundum. The school accepted to do a trial run with Form 3 at the advent of their unit on fungi and viruses in January 2008. In addition to the 53 students in class, members of the community and school offered support to the project; from sterilising the sawdust substrate in a neighbour’s outdoor kitchen, to storing the fungi for the course of one month in the laboratory newly refurbished by the Parents Teachers Association. She used plastic bags to put the spore and substrate mixture with the

¹⁸⁰ Agbor, “International Volunteer Organisations,” p.34.

¹⁸¹ Che Godlove, 49 years, Teacher/ Volunteer Partner, Mundum, 30/August /2019.

aid of students. One month after, students examined the plastic bags containing spore and substrate mixture and were happy to discover that mushrooms sprouted in the plastics. At the end of the sequence, an average improvement in students' performance was noted for the material covered by the practical.¹⁸² Shu Jonathan, Senior Discipline Master explained that:

Both teachers and students were impressed when they saw the mushroom grow; it gave the students a different touch to how they learn biology in class as they could link it with real life. Infact it transformed the teaching of Che Godlove, the biology teacher with whom we piloted the project as he started relating his lessons to real life phenomena and utility, and he greatly increased his use of real life materials in class. Che Godlove expressed interest at the conclusion of the project in doing the experiment outside of school.¹⁸³

These reactions were same among many other teachers as it also transformed their teaching especially those that participated in the project. Other demonstrations were carried out on home-made Aloe Vera soap fabrication with community members as shown below. All these activities motivated young students and made them understood that they could ameliorate their well-being thanks to science while still sitting on the benches. They taught students how their everyday environment was filled with science.¹⁸⁴ Achu John reacted that:

A volunteer drew my attention to the fact that there were very few girls doing sciences, something I had not notice. I summoned the parents of the few girls doing sciences in a bid to make them serve as ambassadors in the community and persuade their peers to send their own girls to study sciences. The volunteer continued to work with the girls of the school, helping them to understand the importance of education and science education for women.¹⁸⁵

Volunteers used bottle caps as teaching aids to help students practice spellings and literacy. The bottle cap scrabble put literacy physically in the hands of the students and relieved the pressure of pen and paper. With the bottle caps, it did not matter if you had a bad hand writing. Through the bottle cap scrabble, students were able to improve on their spelling abilities. This success was because of the enjoyment the students got out of the bottle cap. Students were encouraged to be creative and analytical so as to eliminate rote learning.¹⁸⁶ The Chess¹⁸⁷ game was also used to teach children critical thinking skills.¹⁸⁸ Wright organised arts classes in Saint Joseph's Children and Adult's Home (SAJOCAH) in 2005.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸² *Idem*.

¹⁸³ Shu Jonathan, 55 years, Teacher/Volunteer Counterpart, Mundum, 30/August/2019.

¹⁸⁴ Achu John, 60 years, Former Principal G.S.S. Mundum, Bamenda, 30/July/2019.

¹⁸⁵ *Idem*.

¹⁸⁶ Rote learning was a system of education where students were not trained in analytical thinking.

¹⁸⁷ It is a tabletop game for two players on the game board, a checkerboard, with the 64 squares place in a standard 8×8 configuration

¹⁸⁸ Shu Jonathan, 55 years, Teacher/Volunteer Counterpart, Mundum, 30/August/2019.

¹⁸⁹ Emmanuela Vernyuy, 58 years, Reverend Sister, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

Plate 47 : Training on Mushroom cultivation G.S.S Mundum



Source: Titi John's archives, Mundum, 15/August/2019.

The above shows a volunteer with community members, teachers and students during training on mushroom cultivation. The participants are busy mixing spore and substrate and putting it in plastic bags from which mushrooms will sprout.

Plate 48: Training on Aloe Vera Soap in fabrication in Mundum



Source: Titi John's archives, Mundum, 15/August/2019.

The above shows a demonstration on the manufacture of aloe vera soap and lotion. Participants are seen mixing the various elements and the other showing aloe vera leaves in a bottle

Moreover, some volunteers encouraged the education of the less privileged by providing scholarships and accommodation to the serious and intelligent students in their various establishments. An example of this was the case of Mauricelle and Tharwtzman who were posted to teach in Sacred Heart College Mankon between 1965-1969. Mauricelle and Tharwtzman did not only provide knowledge of French and Mathematics to these students in class, but went as far as making provision for some students to continue their studies. They provided accommodation to some students and went as far as buying the students textbooks and paying their school fees. One of the beneficiaries of this gesture was retired colonel Weriwoh T. Godfred who testified that:

I am a product of the Peace Corps. Without the Peace Corps I would not have been what I am today and a million of other people that I have impacted their lives. My educational pursuit would have ended in Form Three in Sacred Heart College Mankon, Bamenda, if the Peace Corps volunteers were not there. Two of them paid my school fees.¹⁹⁰

In the same light, Tombir Stanley, the coordinator of the North-West Association of Development Organisations testified that it was thanks to Peace Corps volunteers that he sailed through his academic career as volunteer Spavla Zakova paid his school fees from

¹⁹⁰ Weriwoh T. Godfred, 70 years, Retired Colonel/Former Volunteer Student and Beneficiary, Yaoundé, 11/May/2022.

secondary school to university level.¹⁹¹ Similarly, Volunteer Reinsma in 2006, partnered with Care International to pay the school fees of 90 orphans and vulnerable children in Bafut.¹⁹² Volunteers also donated text books to intelligent and serious students. These books which were mostly science textbooks enabled the beneficiaries who could not afford them, understand their lessons. Peace Corps volunteers noticed that the educational system neglected the study of Cameroon history as very limited time was issued to teach the students issues concerning their own country. Students learnt about Napoleon Bonaparte and France, the Kings of England and the Commonwealth but were taught little on Africa's contribution to world civilisation and its independence talk less of the history of Cameroon. This system of education retarded the national consciousness of the Cameroon youths.¹⁹³ Hence there was need for it to be eliminated. For this system to be challenged, the volunteers formulated a curriculum and designed text books more attuned to the needs of Cameroonian students.

4.3.2. Curriculum Development

Most volunteers were involved in curriculum development, often as an adjunct to their classroom teaching assignments. Volunteers helped to re-write national textbooks and also organised conferences for teachers at the regional, divisional and sub divisional levels. Understanding the differences between the American and Cameroonian educational systems, most volunteers obtained from Cameroon copies of syllabi of the grade III and II teacher training college, the regulations and syllabi of the GCE, the London City and Guilds syllabi and textbooks generally used in Cameroon to teach the various disciplines. In the course of teaching, volunteers emphasised on the importance of syllabus to the Cameroonian students and the methods of learning which involved, assign-study-react-examine and closely tied to the textbook method. The important role of the teachers was equally emphasised.¹⁹⁴

After five decades of rapid expansion in enrolments, many schools in Mezam made strives to upgrade the educational standards. Placement for Peace Corps volunteers in curriculum revision was constrained by market dynamics similar to the domain of teacher instruction, this was a field whereby a small number of volunteers showcased outcomes that resonated with numerous educators and learners. Enhanced curricula was a major area of Peace Corps contribution to education in Mezam. Volunteers advised the government on a three-year junior secondary programme to be followed by a two-year career and technical

¹⁹¹ Tombir Stanley, 45 years, Coordinator of NWADO/ Former Volunteer Student and Beneficiary, Nkwen, 30/December/2021.

¹⁹² Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

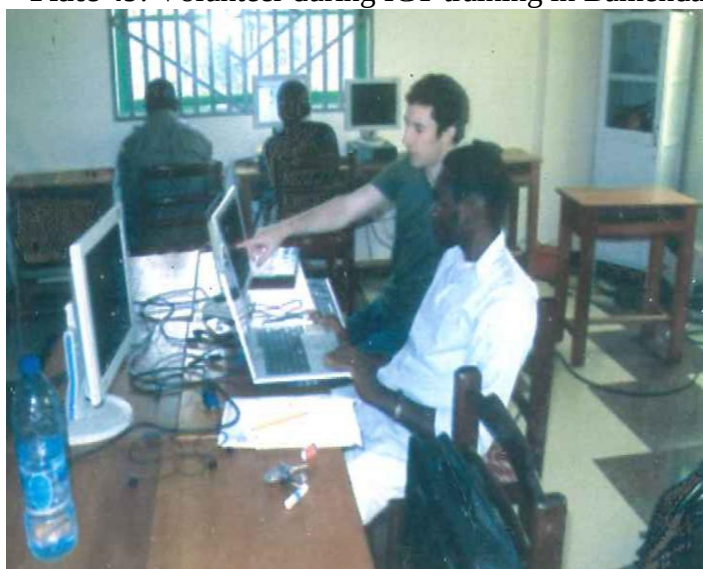
¹⁹³ Gwanfogbe, "Changing Regimes of," p.160.

¹⁹⁴ Agbor, "International Volunteer Organisations," p.34.

education geared towards farming and vocational education. The purpose was to provide opportunities to primary school leavers who were intelligent and talented to progress to secondary schools while those gifted or skilled in agriculture and handicrafts were sent to agricultural schools, career and vocational institutes. Apart from the students, volunteers also helped teachers to enhance their expertise and procedures within the school framework and district-level continuing education seminars, discussions during departmental meetings held every week and peer observation evaluation of one another.¹⁹⁵

Volunteer Gabriel Albin organised in-service training workshops and seminars for teachers. He worked very closely with the regional delegate and inspectors on the direction of the Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) programme and the design of trainings and workshops in the Bamenda area for ICT teachers as shown below.¹⁹⁶ Other Volunteers like Rose Barah and Ruth Kelly organised in-service training workshops and seminars for the training of teachers in Bamenda. They also developed a Teacher's Handbook on ICT and trained teachers in nursery education and teacher training colleges as well as developed ICT training material for the regional and divisional delegation staff.¹⁹⁷

Plate 49: Volunteer during ICT training in Bamenda



Source: Regional Delegation for Secondary Education archives, Bamenda,
30/December/2021

The above picture shows a Peace Corps Volunteer Eric Adlam teaching advanced web development and programming in Bamenda

¹⁹⁵ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2010, p.10.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.11.

¹⁹⁷ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2011, p.11.

4.3.3. Volunteers and Teacher Training Colleges

Prior to the arrival of the volunteers to Mezam in 1962, most of the teacher training colleges continued to face a severe lack of qualified educators. There was excess demand to the extent that authorities were driven to extreme measures of hiring people who had the First School Leaving Certificate Probationary Teachers. The shortage of qualified teachers in most primary schools in Mezam, pushed the missionary bodies to open teacher training colleges which could train and provide the needed teachers for their primary schools.¹⁹⁸ Besides, the opening of these teacher training colleges required an increase in the number of teachers since the available staff was not enough to meet demand. As a result of this, most denominational schools requested the services of Peace Corps volunteers to improve the staffing situation in its schools. This could be explained by the fact that there was an increase in enrolment in teacher training colleges.

The increase in enrolment was as a result of the rise in the number of teachers. The teaching staff in the teacher training colleges in 1962 climbed from 60 to 90 in 1964. Among this number, 23 were Peace Corps volunteers all university graduates. Thus, the volunteers made up the highest number of degree holders among the teachers. Summarily, the volunteers constituted about 85% of the staff who were degree holders.¹⁹⁹ The impact of their activities was tremendous as the number of training institutions increased from 7 in 1961 to 12 in 1964 and eventually to 14 in 1966. The amount of trainee teachers registered in these schools also jumped from 396 by 1961 to 1,379 by 1966.²⁰⁰ These teacher training institutes were significant in the development of the Cameroon educational system. In these schools, the students were not only free from the chains of the LGCE, but the school graduates were also assigned the duty of teaching in primary schools. Both the boys' and girls' Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) offered the same subjects but for Domestic Science that replaced History and Geography offered in boys' school. Thus after standard VI pupils could decide to enrol in the TTC to become teachers after a two-three years course.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Teacher trainees were recruited among First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) holders, after two years of fieldwork practice, they were put in the category of uncertified teachers. The best uncertified teachers were subsequently selected to pursue one year studies in the Elementary Training Centre where they could obtain the Teachers' Elementary Certificate. After one more year of practice, holders of this first certificate could be reselected to pursue a two years course in Teachers Elementary Higher School where they could obtain the Teachers' Higher Elementary Certificate. Following a teaching term of one or two years, the cream of the crop, of the Grade III were chosen for a two-year Higher Elementary Course or Programme with the qualified proficient graduates capable of teaching through various levels up to standards five and six.

¹⁹⁹ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.163.

²⁰⁰ Gwanfogbe, "Changing Regimes in," p.156.

²⁰¹ Kuendun, "Women and the," p.41.

In Mezam, a large number of volunteers provided in-service workshops and demonstration projects for primary school teachers in Mathematics, Agriculture, General Science, Arts and Craft. The syllabus of the teacher training institutions mirrored elementary school subject matter in conjunction with some subjects instructed in secondary schools. During their training, the trainee teachers assessments were administered by an external body in Arithmetic, Principles and Methods of Education and English language coordinated from the regional capital. Experiential learning or hands-on teaching was evaluated by a group from the headquarters and English was assessed as a measuring stick. Applied and foundational agricultural science, sports and development of instructional materials alongside in-person instruction were evaluated. The internal assessments consisted of Geography, English Literature, Religious Knowledge, History, further work in Mathematics, Rural Science and Handwork.²⁰²

In most of the teacher training colleges, trainees were encouraged to implement critical thinking and creativity in their lessons. Others developed new level curriculum in agriculture and health and introduced this to teachers through demonstration lessons and community projects.²⁰³ Some of the teacher training colleges in which volunteers served in and contributed in their growth and development was the St. Peter's Teacher Training College Bambui opened in 1947 in which volunteer Richard P. Sugg served from 1963-1965. He taught English Language and Literature. He also coached basketball.

Other volunteers like Mary Prosser Bunton and Beth Essess served in the Presbyterian Women Teacher Training College shown below from 1965-1967 and 1989-1991 respectively. The school was created in 1960 by the Basel Mission thanks to a grant from the government for the opening of an Elementary Teachers Training Centre for girls in Mankon. It was also in view for the growing pressure for women's participation in social works, that this institution was created in 1960. The first course began in a temporary building in Bafut in 1961 before it was transferred to a permanent site at Mankon in 1962. It offered a three year course for girls in view of the Teachers Grade III Certificate. The school trained female teachers from 1961 to teach in primary schools.²⁰⁴

These volunteers during their service periods taught the students different professions from various domains such as Cookery, Midwifery, Craftwork, Knitting, Marking, Sewing, Hairdressing and Typewriting. Thanks to the hard work of the volunteers, most of these

²⁰² Gwanfogne, "Changing Regimes in," p.135.

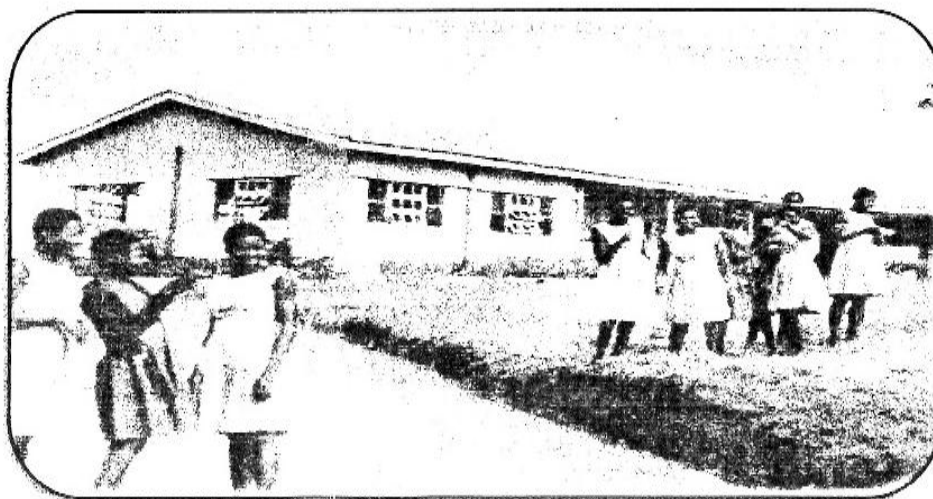
²⁰³ Landrum, *The Role of*, p.31.

²⁰⁴ E.F. Mankong, "The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon: A Partner in the Development Process of Mezam Division 1957-2002", M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2006, p. 28.

students and the college graduated many women as teachers who were in turn employed by the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC). Driven by the immense efforts of the volunteers, there was a noticeable shift in educational media. Learning progressively changed from oral retelling of stories, riddles, proverbs and spoken poetry to a more streamlined and thorough approach of education delivered in classrooms. The activities of these volunteers in this school greatly increased the empowerment of women in the church and the society at large. In 1966, the PCC took over the management and control of the college and by 1967, the PCC began the construction of two classrooms to add to the existing structures. Though the college was closed in 1976, to give rise to Presbyterian Secondary School Nkwen, it contributed much to train women teachers to help solve the problem in schools.²⁰⁵

The opening of new teacher training colleges in Mezam was made possible by the volunteers as through their activities like teaching, more and more teacher training institutes were opened. The effect was that the number of primary schools increased and their enrolment jumped from 86.200 in 1961 to 95.200 in 1962, 106.100 in 1963 and finally to about 152.300 in 1966.²⁰⁶ This could be explained by the fact that there was an increase in the teaching staff. The volunteers considered the teacher training colleges as a hub for fostering meaningful learning. The graduates of these schools, were posted to elementary schools to teach. The volunteers argued that, immediately their students abstained from memorisation, they would discourage it among the primary school pupils assigned to them after graduation.

Plate 50: The Prebyterian Women Teacher Training Centre in 1961



Source: Lawyer, “Female Missionary Activities,” p.132.

The above plate shows the Presbyterian Women Teacher Training Centre in Mankon in 1961. From the above plate, some girls could be seen standing in front of the main building with library, staff room and chapel

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.29

²⁰⁶ Gwanfogbe, “Changing Regimes and,” p.157.

To fulfill this objective, the volunteers ceased giving abundant notes to their students and inspired them to think critically, explore ideas as to gather information before making a judgment. Furthermore, they fostered critical thinking about printed material and their credibility as well as validity and to go for a number of or varied sources before concluding. These techniques of learning were very new to the typical Cameroonian student.

4.3.4. Library Development and Provision of Books

Another key role played by volunteers in the education domain in the study area was the provision of books and maintenance of libraries. These libraries were to improve the learning conditions of students. With the coordinating initiatives of the volunteers, school books and other supplies were offered by some agencies in America to different secondary institutions of learning in Mezam. The school books were very vital in furnishing a significant number of the school libraries that had very limited resources for diverse subjects. Many volunteers organised libraries and equipped them with books donated by American agencies, family members and friends back home. They donated athletic equipment and advanced sporting materials in the schools, while much of the sporting equipment has disappeared, the Peace Corps has maintained its commitment to offer books whenever and wherever possible. Books labelled “donated by Peace Corps” can still be found and accessible in many of these school libraries. To the students in Cameroon, the volunteers’ coming to Cameroon was a literacy boom. In Mambu, volunteer Wright provided about 50 books to the Saint Joseph Children and Adult’s Home Centre.²⁰⁷

In the same light, Ashley Elizabeth served at Our Lady of Lourdes College Mankon in the 2015/2016 academic year. The school shown below is a secondary grammar school for girls opened in 1963. After her posting to the school, she was to teach English but when the school noticed that there were enough English teachers, she was asked to work in the library which she willingly accepted. She worked as a librarian and among some of the things she did was the registering of books, signing of books out to students, labelling of shelves. She also worked with the Arts club and taught christmas paintings and how to write songs on cardboards. Being a very friendly person, her desire was to stay much longer but she served just for one year because of the socio-political crisis.²⁰⁸ In different communities in Mezam, volunteers organised literacy workshops for children and evening literacy classes for adults. Volunteer Nerly collected books from friends and family and added to her collection of books primarily for children and initiated the idea of a mobile library. The younger kids practiced

²⁰⁷ Emmanuela Vernyuy, 58 years, Reverend Sister, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

²⁰⁸ Sister Kemjei Mary, 52 years, Principal of OLLC/Volunteer Supervisor, Mankon, 17/December/2021.

the alphabet while older ones learnt interesting stories. She shared her knowledge and over 50 children attended her classes. She travelled to many villages in Mezam educating children.²⁰⁹

Plate 51: OLLC Mankon



Source: Author's collection, Mankon, 17/December/2021

The above shows the Our Lady of Lourdes College in Mankon Bamenda

4.3.5. University Education

The efforts of volunteers in improving the educational standards of Cameroon in general and Mezam in particular were not only limited to the secondary and teacher training sectors, but also extended to the higher or university levels. Eligible volunteers for university posting were scarce among applicants however, there remained a persistent discriminating need for Peace Corps university teachers in Cameroon in general and Mezam in particular and a small supply of talented volunteers who strongly preferred these assignments.²¹⁰ Application of basic human needs to the education sector deter university placement for volunteers through focusing on deploying volunteers to rural communities, assisting disadvantaged communities and teaching extra curricular activities. Besides, recruiting qualified volunteers and the adequate supply of qualified nationals were the most serious problems in this domain. Peace Corps programmes in university education were declining though there was a strong tradition of programme and placement in university education. This was because over the years most universities in the division increased their capacity to staff faculties with either nationals or qualified Africans from other countries. However, most young and developing universities in the study area still requested volunteers.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.89.

²¹⁰ Landrum, *The Role of*, p.30

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

Cheryl and Albert Onega were some of the volunteers who created a positive impact in the development of education in Mezam with the thumbprints they left in the Regional College of Agriculture in Bambili. The school initially known as the Government Rural Education Centre was opened in 1953 in Bamenda before it was later transferred to Bambili with a nine months programme for certified teachers from all voluntary agencies in Cameroon. The programme covered how to manage school farm records and accounts with some advantage knowledge in teaching rural science. The programme was restructured in 1956, and the centre was transformed in 1957 to the Institute of Agriculture to provide agricultural science programmes for certified teachers. The Bambili Agricultural Institute was established as part of the vocational education programme.²¹² Cheryl and Albert during their service period taught business systems and farming practices.

Other universities quickly followed on the heels of the Regional College of Agriculture to request for volunteers. This was the case of the Bamenda University of Science and Technology (BUST) which because of the shortage of qualified teachers requested the services of volunteers to give a helping hand to the school. As a result of this request, the Peace Corps reacted positively by posting Peter Tarkowsky. Being a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical and Electronics Engineering, he served in BUST from June 2010-August 2012. During his service period, he lectured a course on Computer Networking with a focus on Company Information System Company (CISCO) equipment. He stressed on practical skills and the students were expected to apply theory learnt to practical exercises.²¹³

Aside lecturing, he advised the school on the design of a new computer laboratory for technical students through making professional recommendations for the type and number of computers, networking equipment required, and calculating the electrical requirements for the new laboratory. The administration was very receptive and moved quickly to purchase the necessary equipment. With the aid of the students, Peter installed the 140 network computers of the laboratory and functional computer network throughout the school. He also worked with a few cybers in the neighbourhood to train the owners on the basics of software and hardware maintenance. In the University of Bamenda, Peter did consulting for network design as well as teaching computer skills to lecturers.²¹⁴

²¹² Asenju, "Three Instances of," p.191.

²¹³ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.91.

²¹⁴ Ndownwi Peter, 55 years, Teacher/Volunteer Counterpart, Nkwen, 31/December/2022.

His method of teaching and the success that accompanied it soon spread like wild fire in and around Bambili and encouraged other schools to request for volunteers. This was the case of the Department of Chemistry of the Higher Teacher Training College (H.T.T.C), Bambili of the University of Bamenda that requested volunteers to teach methodology in the department. Most of the volunteers with excellent credentials, graduate degree, teaching experience taught in this department for instance Ehrner Jacqueline, an education volunteer taught micro-teaching and methodology in the Department of Chemistry of H.T.T.C Bambili between 2011-2013. She helped the students understand that teaching involves creativity and the impact you create either to the students or the society. She demonstrated to the chemistry student teachers how to present lessons in the “where there is no chemistry laboratory publication.” Ehrner Jacqueline stated that: “my goal was to have future chemistry teachers learn and practice how to teach science in a resource-scarce environment. They gained first-hand experience and confidence that they are able to make their students visualise certain Chemistry concepts and they can show them how their everyday environment is filled with Chemistry.”²¹⁵ The fruits of her labour were very visible as different student teachers who were taught by Jacqueline over the years gave positive feedback of her work and the reputation she left in the school. Berinyuy Ransom, one of Jacqueline’s student and a graduate of the 2012 batch of the Department of Chemistry of the H.T.T.C testified that:

When I began studying at [H.T.T.C.], I had it in mind that I was in a “mistaken field”. In the second year, when Erhner Jacqueline taught me Teaching Methodology and Micro Teaching, her teaching changed my mind set. I learnt that one can learn to love a profession as well as the situation in which we find ourselves. I learnt from her that teaching involves creativity and the impact you create either to the students or the society. I presented the lesson on the electro-chemical cells (lemon battery) which is in the Where There is no Chemistry Laboratory Publication. Now I love teaching and my students are very creative.²¹⁶

The activities of the volunteers also influenced the number of students studying abroad as Cameroonian students had another option for further studies which was the U.S. Prior to the arrival of the volunteers, Britain, France and Germany because of colonial links were the most, if not the only three destinations for Cameroonian students pursuing further learning. Realising from the volunteers the role of experiential education, youthful Cameroonian scholars included the U.S. to their list of preferred countries for advanced studies.

²¹⁵ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2011, p.11.

²¹⁶ Berinyuy Ransom, 35 years, Teacher, Bamenda, 20/August 2019.

4.4. Conclusion

The chapter had as objective to show the different projects that the Peace Corps joined in the initiation, supervision and implementation in the domain of health and education in Mezam. The results proved that beneficiaries especially orphans and vulnerable children(OVC) and people who had very limited access to health facilities were educated and those tested HIV/AIDS, malaria and malnutrition positive were registered and treatment commenced immediately. There was follow up as they were on subsidised health programmes. Volunteers touched local lives and made them better by making available drugs and other health equipment. In the same light, the arrival of the volunteers in Cameroon in 1962 marked a turning point in the history of the country's educational development and opened a new chapter as the revival of schools and the replacement of British expatriates were new assets. Most of the volunteer teachers were competent. They consistently worked their shift on time and were sober, knowledgeable and sincere which significantly surpasses many of their local co-workers. The volunteers initiated a national bibliography list and commenced the process of drafting textbooks that were more sensitive and responsive to the demands of Cameroonian students and schools. A defining quality of these neophyte teachers was that all of them were graduates and had atleast a first degree or its equivalent. It was once common for British high school drop outs to hold positions of importance, but upon the arrival of the volunteers, that was no longer the case. Volunteers operated as connectors of diverse forums where the problems of community development were discussed. Based on the results, we argue that the organisation successfully implemented its health and educational agenda in Mezam. Irrespective of this, not everything about volunteer service was exciting in Mezam. This will be the bone of contention of the next chapter as it seeks to assess if the volunteers were able to attain the objectives stated in the Peace Corps Act.

CHAPTER FIVE: ASSESSING THE U.S. PEACE CORPS ACTIVITIES IN MEZAM DIVISION

5.1. Introduction

The chapter aims to evaluate the Peace Corps activities in Mezam Division. The arguments sustained in this chapter aim at showing how the various projects carried out by the Peace Corps in Mezam positively impacted the lives of the people as the projects fostered and enhanced the sustainable development of the area. Apart from cross-cultural exchange which involved sharing the diversity of the U.S. with the host nationals, and also learning from host country diversity, the agency transferred skills and built the capacity needed to push communities to succeed. The chapter also seeks to determine how far the Peace Corps' *raison d'être* in Mezam Division was realised. Volunteers have battled and overcome ignorance, starvation, destitution and diseases in Mezam and their initiatives aimed at promoting global harmony and cooperation via mutual understanding, have worked to foster trust and confidence with friendly relations. Yet, even in the midst of the renewed optimism surrounding its 55th anniversary, the Peace Corps took time out to be reflective and prospective. In some small village, J.F. Kennedy once said, volunteers will lay a seed which will bring a rich harvest for us all in later days. On the Peace Corps 55th anniversary in Cameroon, it seemed just timely to ask just how those seeds were laid and what harvest they have in fact produced. The chapter sustains that volunteers were unprepared, inexperienced and lacking necessary resources for services in Mezam and consequently failed to accomplish Goal 1 of the Peace Corps Act that urges the organisation to support the economic and social progress of Third World countries by building a qualified workforce. This problem will be scrupulously developed in the succeeding sub topics: consequences of Peace Corps activities, assessing the objectives of the Peace Corps, challenges of the Peace Corps, general overview of the Peace Corps, Peace Corps-Mezam relations and recommendations.

5.2. Consequences of Peace Corps Activities in Mezam

The consequences of the Peace Corps activities on the people of Mezam can be very difficult to quantify since the agency concentrates more on the funding of people through capacity building and transfer of skills than funding things (infrastructure). However, the activities of this agency to a greater extent have positively impacted the lives of the people.

5.2.1. Cross-Cultural Exchange

A prerequisite for success was an understanding of culture. Peace Corps places a high value regarding fostering dialogue and intercultural understanding between America and Cameroon. When volunteers uphold and get involve in the 2nd and 3rd goal activities of the Peace Corps, they build a strong foundation of harmony and friendship between the two countries. Since the birth of the Peace Corps in 1961, bridging the cultural divide, was deemed an essential necessity. By then the world was gripped by fear due to the Cold War and tethered between two doctrines. Sharing the American culture and bringing new understanding of other people home continued today to capture the American spirit of idealism and proved to be effective people-to-people diplomacy. Senator Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts reacted to this by stating that:

My experience in Ethiopia surpassed any formal study before or after it. There I lived and learnt with students whose lives were vastly different from my own. I was a Peace Corps teacher, but I hope my Ethiopian friends know how much they taught me. We had a very personal sense of depending on each other, so it was natural for us to know that nations must also depend on each other. Nothing before or after that time has shaped my view of the world so deeply.¹

Since its creation in 1961, the Peace Corps was guided by a mission of world peace and friendship. The organisation is a true reflection of the American spirit by enabling Americans foster global cooperation and intercultural engagement. Through this evolutionary path, Peace Corps is fostering meaningful bonds between the United States and the citizens of its partner states while promoting positive change abroad especially to the inhabitants of the communities it supports, the personal lives of volunteers and back in their home country. The Peace Corps advances its mission through the work of volunteers during and after their service.² J. F. Kennedy had a vision to change the world, promote peace by bringing people of different countries into contact with each other, to work side by side, thereby building bridges of friendship. After their service, many go on to careers promoting positive change in the world, even back in the United States. There are now lifelong connections between Cameroonians and Americans. By so doing, they succeeded in meeting the challenge of the President.

¹ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.3.

²Peace Corps, *Fiscal Year 2018-2022 Strategic Plan and Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Annual Performance Plan*, Washington, Peace Corps, 2019, p.2.

Volunteers continue to bring back the deep understanding that comes from living with foreign peoples, not as expatriates, but as friends, who shared their food, obeyed their laws, spoke their languages and worked with them. In this way, volunteers enriched their communities, just as they enriched their host countries overseas. The world needs those threads of peace and friendship which volunteers weave. Volunteers are willing to go and mix with very ordinary, simple people, teach them very simple techniques and live with them. The ability to speak local languages and dialects became one of the most distinctive features of Peace Corps service.³

All volunteers experience culture shock. This often entails giving up amenities like indoor toilets, familiar food, drink, recreational facilities and readily accessible transportation. They also have to contend with sometimes intransigent bureaucracies and hosts who may appear to lack interest in their projects. The vast majority of volunteers proved resilient enough to survive their two years abroad. In the process, they reaped the full benefits of the Peace Corps experience that is learning to speak another language, becoming intimately aware of another culture, establishing friendships with people with life experiences and diverse expectations plus the satisfaction of playing a role in the development of another country. Ultimately, most volunteers expressed a shared feeling of remorse. They thought they benefitted a lot from a situation where they gave little. Few have broken through the cultural barrier but most have at least made a beginning. Individual examples abound of volunteers sensitively adapting to their host cultural life and at the same time promoting an understanding of Americans.⁴

Instead of offering financial support to countries, the Peace Corps deploys volunteers to disseminate their expertise and knowledge while coexisting and cooperating with rural communities. This daily exchange provides volunteers with an uncommon understanding and the potential to engage with community groups to support their growth and foster a deeper relationship. Volunteers are the ambassadors of the U.S. in different local areas across the globe, cultivating a positive image or reputation of the U.S. and upholding American ideals with their communities. Having completed their service, the volunteers returned home with enhanced capabilities, cross-cultural understanding and long-lasting connections. Returned volunteers expand their service through cultural sensitivity and worldwide concerns with friends, relatives,

³Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.66.

and the U.S. population, cultivating connections with partners in local communities where they were posted, enhancing dedication to humanitarianism and community engagement.⁵

Except for missionaries, Peace Corps volunteers penetrated further in to Third World societies than most previous Americans. Nevertheless, by treating local people according to their own needs and customs without undue reference to their political philosophies, volunteers indicated to sometimes skeptical Third World nations that America is capable of idealism. The majority of volunteers worked attentively, lived modestly and made friends whenever and wherever they could. For the most part, their efforts to cross the great cultural divide have gone unrecorded. Often the most fulfilling relationships were established during summer vacations when volunteers travelled up country and immersed themselves in local communities. Probably their strongest impressions were made on the minds of children teaching, laughing with them, showing them that not all Americans were imperialists. These subtle forms of impact can never be adequately measured or better still quantified.⁶

Volunteers played an important role and helped increase awareness and strengthen bonds between Cameroonian and American cultures. Before volunteers arrived Mezam, most of the people in this area were just plain shy of the *Whiteman* while others suspected and regarded whites as spies. Similarly, there was this habit of living together in Mezam and obviously any other person was seen as an outsider coupled with the fact that the people of Mezam were not ready to learn and adapt to new cultures. For volunteers to effectively meet the needs of the people of Mezam, they were to understand the host culture and share their own culture with the people in the study area. As cited by Rice in 1971, India's prime minister Mahamat Ghandhi predicted that: "Peace Corps volunteers create understanding-that is in short supply in the world. If we can understand one another and see problems from the point of view of local people, then it is much easier to realise fully the difficulties."⁷ Even in the remotest villages, Peace Corps volunteers have shared very closely in the lives of the people of Mezam, worked side by side with them, spoken their language, adopted their customs and in sum, have done their best to become one of them. Volunteers have touched many lives and made them better.

Volunteers represent America's best efforts to promote positive public image in rural areas and different communities across the globe where other growth or intercultural dialogue

⁵ Peace Corps, *Fiscal Year 2018*, p.4.

⁶ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.73.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.2.

organisations are hardly ever available. Due to the connections with volunteers, individuals and communities enhance their comprehension of the U.S. and become more open to participate with Americans. Persistent connections between U.S. citizens and other people necessitates a common comprehension and confidence, promoting equality and inclusion in global politics back home and abroad. In addition from their travel abroad, volunteers develop language, cross-cultural, technical and entrepreneurial competencies that build their present-day job capabilities. Volunteers possess and utilise these competencies in their work across the economic spectrum (both private and public sectors), disseminating their international insights and perspectives with their co-workers, kith and kins. This helps in enhancing U.S. workforce competitiveness. Some volunteers like Wright and Reinsma adjusted to incountry realities. They ate the food, danced local music and became soccer fanatics. They participated in traditional meeting groups and *njangis*.⁸Lindsay Miesko summed up that:

Life in Cameroon is not one big thing, it's a lot of little things, a lot of small habits that you have to make and break [...].How to get kids to stop calling you *whiteman*[...].How to go[...] in a pit latrine[...].How to ride on a motorcycle with three other people[...].How to eat *fufu* [...].How to get out of an eight hour church service[...].How to take a hot bath[...].How to handle everything[...].How to be happy.⁹

The first aspect through which volunteers learnt about the cultural diversities of Cameroon was during pre-service training. During the training, focus was on issues like Cameroon history, cultural adaptation, customs and traditions.¹⁰ This was important because it helped volunteers have a basic idea of their local receiving communities before the start of their service. The many other creative ways that they did was through sharing of favourite recreational activities and games, conducting summer American camps for youths or cooking their favourite food like taco¹¹on American holidays as shown below. They also engaged friends in discussions on a variety of topics ranging from popular culture to the latest music video and *Zumba* steps.¹²

⁸ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer /Participant, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

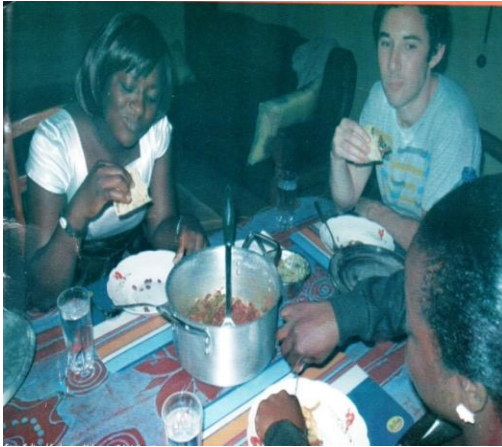
⁹ Amin, *Serving in Africa*, p.81.

¹⁰ Anonymous

¹¹ Taco is a popular Mexican menu comprising of pocket-sized corn or wheat tortilla filled to the brim.

¹² Anonymous

Plate 52 : Volunteer with friends in Bamenda



Source: Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, p.5.

The above shows a volunteer introducing Cameroonian friends to American Tacos in Bamenda, North West Region.

Plate 53: Volunteer during a cultural Festival



Source: Ade John archives, Mankon, 30/August/2022

The above shows a volunteer during a cultural festival in Mankon dancing the traditional *Mbaghalum* dance

Volunteers, through their first hand experiences, learnt local languages, participated in local practices and worked alongside community members to actively contribute to issues related to the community. They shared these experiences with their friends and family members back home who knew about Cameroon from websites, photos, facebook and other social media. Some family members visited volunteers and returned home with a better appreciation of the day to day activities in the country.¹³ This was true with Reinsma whose parents visited Bafut twice between 2005 and 2007. They in turn shared their experiences with even more Americans who were able to know Cameroon through these opportunities. All these activities allowed people from both sides to develop attitudes and relationships grounded in first hand experiences.

Another way volunteers built connections and engaged in meaningful activities was through the Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools (CWS) correspondence match programme. While volunteers worked in Mezam, many exchanged emails, letters, videos, photographs and telephone calls with classrooms back home. The programme linked volunteers with teachers and their classrooms, as well as with students in the U.S. through the exchange of letters and photographs. U.S. students learnt about other cultures, and the lives of volunteers. As part of the

¹³ Anonymous

Coverdell programme, 40% of volunteers regularly shared ideas, stories, pictures and artifacts that assisted U.S. students' classroom learning and understanding of the population, landscape and the customs and traditions of Cameroon.¹⁴ When they went back to their country, they kept the flame burning by imparting knowledge to Americans and engaging in educational outreach activities. These activities enabled interactions between the two countries, which nurtured perspectives and connections rooted on direct observation. The volunteers lived with members of the community, and learn to value the every day circumstances of their service posts.

Volunteers who formerly served in Cameroon highlighted their help to Cameroon through involvement in events and displays throughout America. A substantial contingent of volunteers registered with the federal registry or national record to share their stories and reaffirm their dedication to global harmony and to assist Cameroon accomplish its developmental goals. Upon their return to the U.S., they contributed to the level of awareness about Cameroon through their websites, newsletters and presentations for continued support for Peace Corps. Other major activities through which volunteers shared the culture of the U.S. with their local counterparts included: networking between American and Cameroonian small businesses, organising American and Cameroonian sports, films and music competitions.¹⁵

All in all, volunteers and their services had an enduring impact in Mezam as well as on the volunteers. They were young, non-elitist, respected the people and established long-lasting friendships between the people of Mezam and Americans. Most people in Mezam through the volunteers learnt about the U.S. As cited by Rice, President Ronald Reagan in 1981 said that:

American men and women have left their families, their jobs and the security and familiarity of their homes to help the people of other lands. In the process these volunteers have offered the world a very personal view of Americans putting their ideals and commitments on the line. However, it is important to recognise that this has not been just a one-way street. The Peace Corps has given Americans a path back to themselves as well as to other peoples.¹⁶

One of the primary benefits of the volunteers sharing their experiences was to take some of the fear and mystery out of the American view of Third World. Fifty-five years ago, many Americans considered it a dangerous prospect to send young people in to what was still referred to as the Darkest Africa. The psychological impact and educational value of innumerable stories

¹⁴Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, p.12.

¹⁵ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2011, p.12.

¹⁶ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.2.

and photographs of volunteers teaching African, Asian and Latin American children should not be underestimated. On returning home, volunteers often tried to reinforce this awareness through private conversations, public discussions and actions. Between 1962-2017, numerous cultural exchanges took place between the U.S. and Cameroon. In Mezam in particular, U.S. culture including dressing habits became so widely accepted to the point that if the current pace continues, its popularity will soon surpass the acceptable British culture in the area. Today in the major urban, semi urban and even the rural areas of Mezam, blue jeans is the popular dressing code. *Rap* music is alive and from music stores to night clubs and even in individual homes, young people in Mezam danced and listened to *Rap* rhythm and blues. *Hip Hop* culture is on the rise in Mezam.¹⁷

Irrespective of the fact that volunteers played an important role and helped increase awareness and strengthen bonds between Cameroonian and American cultures, it should also be noted that their efforts had a hidden objective. A by-product of their achievements would be the abdication of Communism by these countries during the era of the Cold War. The Peace Corps was to function as a vehicle for development assistance so as to align these young countries to western ideologies and prevent them from entering the orbit of Communism. Also, this cultural awareness and the ability to adapt to difficult situations were invaluable in almost every professional setting. This awareness helped them to gain better employment after service. Unlike other development agencies, the U.S. Peace Corps development approach in Mezam was the bottom-top whereby the masses and the less privileged felt the impact of the activities first. All these were based on the premise that development starts at the grassroots, one of the Peace Corps guiding principle since its creation in 1961.

5.2.2. Grassroot Development

Every year, U.S. Peace Corps volunteers joined the people to implement projects to alleviate poverty and strengthen skills using funding opportunities channeled through the agency. The *raison d'etre* of the funding remained the capacity building of the community and individuals. All volunteers were engaged in some form of community service that is in addition to their primary activities. This support and social welfare services promoted their community inclusion, their modelling of humanitarianism and their drive to feel successful although their assigned tasks was an irritant. Nonetheless, in most cases, community services were structured to

¹⁷ Amin, "Serving in Africa," p.30.

occupy less than 20% of the volunteer's time on annual basis to avoid over commitment and neglecting their work assignment.¹⁸

The Peace Corps Partnership Project (PCPP) channeled private contributions to support Peace Corps efforts in promoting peace and friendship around the world. The project was structured to support volunteers in soliciting funding or contributions for sanctioned community initiatives. The PCPP does not provide direct financial support for projects though served as a bridge to associations, groups and individuals interested to extend a helping hand to the significant activities volunteers were carrying out in their service posts. Volunteers also played a significant contribution to project funding through sharing contact details of relatives, peers and associations interested in the project they were coordinating.¹⁹

The secondary projects were developed by volunteers because of the need in their community of service. For example, the provision of portable drinking water to the Mambu/Bawum communities by Reinsma was because the two communities lacked safe and clean water. Also, school-based volunteers involved themselves in secondary projects when schools closed or were on break.²⁰ For example, in 2016 with the challenges posed by the socio-political crisis many of the education volunteers who were posted in the area of study were affected since most of the schools were closed and they could not teach. Although the Maths and Science teachers were not able to teach from mid-November onwards, most of them utilised their time very constructively and supported their communities by carrying out secondary projects.²¹

To improve the water supply and sanitation of the people, volunteers carried out projects in most rural communities of Mezam based on the renewal and provision of water lines and pipe borne water. They also improved water sanitation skills of local technicians or caretakers. The volunteers were to construct or rehabilitate rural water sources in Mezam so that the local inhabitants had access to portable water. The Mambu/Bawum Water Scheme was one of the prominent water projects executed by the volunteers in the 2000s in Bafut.

5.2.2.1.Mambu/Bawum Water Project

Mambu and Bawum are two communities located in Bafut and the development of the water project which was to serve the two communities was thanks to the efforts of Kathryn R.

¹⁸ Anonymous

¹⁹ *Idem.*

²⁰ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, p.4.

²¹ Anonymous

Reinsma who served as a community health volunteer in Mambu, Bafut from October 2005-November 2007. Bafut is blessed with watersheds but lacking basic technology and knowledge to treat and preserve them for consumption. The project was brought about as a result of the fact that there was shortage of portable drinking water in Mambu and Bawum. The shortage of water stemmed from the inability of *SNEC* to supply constant water which could meet the demands of private homes. Prior to this project, women, men and children fetched water down a steep and dangerous hill which was very unsafe in the rainy season especially when paths became slippery and above all, these available water points were not safe for drinking because the water points were shared with animals. This resulted in high mortality especially among children.²²

Upon first arriving in Mambu Bafut, Reinsma met with women's and men's groups to determine the needs of the community. Every group invariably said that the lack of water was the biggest development problem in the community. The solution was that a new water management committee (WMC) be created with women and young men who were dynamic and the fact that the old had mismanaged the project initially. The volunteer to successfully execute the project, worked in partnership with the local development associations of Mambu called Mambu Social, Cultural and Development Association (MASCUDA) and that of Bawum called Bawum Social, Cultural and Development Association (BASCUDA).²³ She met with the chief of Mambu and asked the two development associations to form a committee to work with for the next two years.

The committee that was headed by Shu Joram comprised of five members that is two women and three men.²⁴ As earlier mentioned, with the small grants projects of the PCPP each project was to be community backed with a demonstrated tangible commitment of at least 25% contribution. The local communities through MASCUDA and BASCUDA were expected to raise at least 25% of the total amount estimated for the project. The two communities provided more than 30% of the amount which amounted to about 1.000.000FCFA of the total cost and also supported the project in kind by providing the needed labour.²⁵

During these meetings, she learnt that the Mambu water system was first conceived in 1980 and implemented in two phases. The first phase was initiated by the late Reverend Father Kolkman from 1983-1985 in which water from two catchments flowed by gravity to a pump and

²² Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.104.

²³ Reinsma, "Chop Fayne: Nutritional," p.60.

²⁴ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer /Participant, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

²⁵ Che Moses, 65 years, Farmer, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

was pumped by three rams to twin storage tanks and distributed to the population by gravity. Niba Gregory initiated the second phase from 1999-2000 through Reverend Father Peter Nabel with a financial assistance of Thirty million FCFA from a donor in Holland. Because of the inability of the three rams to pump sufficient water to the twin storage tanks, the three rams were replaced with three electrical pumps and water was pumped from a steel storage tank to the twin storage tanks.²⁶ During the second phase, the system functioned only for six months and ran into the following difficulties. There was confusion among the villagers about the parties responsible for the payment of maintenance and usage of water after the Dutch benefactors vacated. It should also be noted that, at this point the community was working without the support of the mission since it had installed a small pump which provided water to the Mambu mission.²⁷

The community thought they were to use the water for free as was promised by the Reverend Fathers. As a result of this, when the WMC began asking people to pay for the water, the inhabitants accused the WMC of stealing money. This caused the villagers to lose confidence in those appointed to manage the system in particular and the entire scheme and hence the dilapidated state of structures. Most of the pipes were destroyed by farmers as well as during road construction. The inability of the population to pay their maintenance and electricity bills to the WMC resulted in an outstanding electricity bill of 462.854FCFA and an eventual removal of the community metre. While meeting with the WMC and learning this past history, Reinsma was actively looking for water engineers and international donors that would be able to assist the community in rehabilitating and extending the water system. Through the PCPP, Reinsma wrote the project and sensitised it online to attract donors. The project received support from her parents, friends, good will people and institutions back in the U.S.²⁸

In November 2006, she met Peter Van Leedam who was a board member of Holland Helps World Wide and had been coming to Mambu for many years to offer assistance to the Saint Joseph Children and Adult's Home (SAJOCAH). He was aware of how the water problems in Mambu affected SAJOCAH which was a centre for disabled people but did not know exactly how it affected the whole community. The Reverend Sister in charge of SAJOCAH introduced Van Leedam to the WMC and in January 2007, he gave 3.500.000 FCFA. Reinsma and Peter brought in an experienced water engineer from Njinikom to help realise the project. The money

²⁶ Reinsma, "Chop Fayne: Nutritional," p.61.

²⁷ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer /Participant, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

²⁸ Reinsma, "Chop Fayne: Nutritional," p.62.

was used to clean and repair the water catchment, install a pipeline leading to the twin storage tanks, buy two new electric pumps, build a small storage tank at the catchment area shown below, buy and install a new electricity metre to reinstate electricity which was cut off for over seven years and finally install two new stand taps shown below. In March 2007, the WMC was restructured and Mambu and Bawum became more actively involved.²⁹ Together with Reinsma, they requested donations from Bawum and Mambu people who lived abroad. In total these people contributed over One (1) million FCFA and the money was used to clean and patch the twin storage tanks. It was also used to cover the transport and communication costs of the WMC.

Though Reinsma was not able to finish the rehabilitation project during her two years of service, a firm foundation was laid for future volunteers to work with the WMC and oversee the project so that it continued moving forward.³⁰ In 2008, the first phase of the project was completed and water pumped down to the market square in Mambu and Bawum.

Plate 54: Storage Tank in Mambu



Source: Author's collection, Mambu, 20/august/2019.

The above presents the Mambu/Bawum water storage tank rehabilitated by a volunteer . The tank with a red door is always locked for the safety of the children and the water

Since the project required monthly electricity bills, she rallied the villagers to pay the bills and this was done through words of the mouth, talks with the chiefs, announcements in churches like the Catholic Mission and the Presbyterian Church Mambu where Reinsma was a dedicated member of the Christian Women Fellowship. Reinsma also printed T-Shirts for the water committee with writings on it such as “Water is life”. Throughout the two years, increasing the management capacity of the committee members was a priority because non transparent

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰Che Moses, 65 years, Farmer, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

money collection caused the project to fail initially. Reinsma did this by organising a management seminar, encouraging receipt usage, and giving regular lessons on water systems.³¹

Plate 55 : Stand Tap in Mambu



Source: Author's collection, Mambu, 20/August/2019

The above shows the standing tap built by a volunteer in Mambu market square

Plate 56: Stand Tap in Bawum



Source: Author's collection, Mambu, 20/August/2019

The above shows the other standing tap in the Bawum market square.

Although building materials and technical assistance for the project were provided with the support of the PCPP, the community members offered generous resource donations or material aid through the furnishing of labour and indigenous sourced resources like sand and stones. Construction of the water project heavily relied upon porters who carried the construction materials on their heads. Some initial minor problems arose like the high pressure emanating from the tank caused some of the pipe joints to come apart but this problem was resolved by the community-based caretakers, who were trained as part of the project. The conception, development and eventual success of the Mambu/Bawum water project helped reduce the water problems in these areas. The success of the Peace Corps in Mezam was thanks to the fact that the organisation partnered and collaborated with other development agencies in the area.

5.2.3.Collaboration with other Development Agencies

As international development organisations frequently seek ways to carry out their missions effectively and efficiently, establishing partnerships and collaboration with one another improved their work. Mezam is a vibrant division with many non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations and associations dedicated to improving the lives of the people. Development agencies in Mezam realised different projects as they channeled resources in some cases directly through local NGOs, farmers' groups and village development associations however, for the most part, by way of regulation entities through initiatives and efforts.

³¹ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

Funding from benefactors was crucial in this regard, as it was seen as an efficient channel for growth but the drawback was that, these agencies concentrated on funding infrastructure than people. This posed a serious problem especially when the volunteers of these agencies left as most of the projects ended because a problem could arise and the dependent individuals were not able to solve it on their own since the people lacked the necessary technology to manage the projects. Upon the arrival of Peace Corps volunteers in Mezam, their major priority was to fund people and help the people enhance their own development by participating and getting involved in projects carried out. To effectively achieve this, the Peace Corps did not only train community members but also trained and collaborated with other development agencies that were active in promoting development in Mezam.

The Peace Corps often partnered with development organisations, to complement their advantages and capabilities. This sometimes involved providing expert support and engaging in practical exercise with their partners/counterparts. For instance, NGOs may offer complementary books or practical exercises (training) on specific issues to volunteer. They may also provide guidance in site identification for volunteer task. Volunteers also supported and complemented NGO initiatives by strengthening capabilities and the long-term impact of projects at the grassroots level. The Peace Corps partnership with international as well as local agencies like the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), Holland Helps World Wide, Trees for the Future (TFTF), Japanese International Cooperation Agency, Plan Cameroon and at the local level, like the Cameroon Baptist Convention, NOWEFOR, CamCCUL, impacted the lives of the people of Mezam. Each Peace Corps project operated under an agreement that was signed and these understandings guaranteed that the Peace Corps remained involved with the partner and strengthened the trustworthiness of the Peace Corps' service in Mezam. Most often, these agreements were Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs) with a pertinent collaborating partner as shown below. An elite in Bafut testified that:

I wish to thank you sincerely for the smooth collaboration we have shared with American Peace Corps since 2005. We are very grateful for the volunteers and the numerous achievements they have recorded in the zones we have worked with them, specifically on the areas of cane rat rearing and income generating opportunities. We plead that the number of Peace Corps volunteers increases.³²

Through the PCPP, the Peace Corps and these development agencies organised seminars and workshops to build the capacity of the people of Mezam. In 2007 in Bafut, Reinsma in partnership with TFTF organised a training to educate the Bafut community on the dangers of

³² Ngwakongoh Lawrence, 47 years, Mayor, Bafut Council/ Volunteer Supervisor, Bamenda, 25/August/2022.

excessive forest exploitation. Similarly, the NGO through its partnership with the Peace Corps helped develop the Agro-Industrial Complex Nursery. This close relationship between the Peace Corps and these NGOs facilitated the realisation of different projects in Mezam. The success of the first phase of the Mambu/Bawum water project was thanks to the collaboration and support from Holland Helps World Wide and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO). Also, VSO took part in training and donated some of the books that were distributed to participants during the training on herbal medicine in Mambu from the 23rd-24th of August 2007.³³

Plate 57 : Memorandum of Understanding with PLAN Cameroon



Source: PLAN Cameroon archives, Yaoundé, 28/July/2022

The above shows the signing of a Memorandum Of Understanding between Peace Corps Cameroon and PLAN Cameroon

Plate 58: Memorandum of Understanding with Heifer Project International



Source: Heifer Project International archives, Yaoundé, 28/July/2022

The above shows the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Peace Corps Cameroon and Heifer Project International

Another important thumbprint left by the Peace Corps in Mezam was the organisation of the Bamenda NGO Fair, a two-day event held at the Bamenda Congress Hall from 23rd-24th February 2012. The two-day public/private sector partnership was an initiative of a Peace Corps volunteer Carmen Chang, who served as an NGO developer with the small enterprise

³³ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer, Mambu, 22/August/2019.

development programme where she taught organisational development and business classes to local entrepreneurs and non-governmental organisations. She engaged in cross-cultural exchange and successfully executed a two-day networking fair, after many months of fundraising and planning. The project idea was conceived in November 2010 with support from the North-West Association of Development Organisations (NWADO), VSO, Heifer International Cameroon and Plan Cameroon. The event was out to help organisations show case their know how, activities and projects in different thematic areas including agriculture, health and education.³⁴

The charity fair with motto “connecting for progress” had about 500-1000 participants and the organisers massively attended including 76 NGO and donor stands.³⁵ Also, on the invitation list were authorities and dignitaries like the representative of the Governor of the North-West Region, the Country Directors of the VSO and the Peace Corps, the Mayor of the Bamenda II council. Others included NGOs from other regions, corporate sponsors and media outlets. The main objectives of this fair included: expanding connections and mutual support between NGOs, promoting the culture of humanitarianism among young people and the community, encouraging social impact initiatives or corporate social responsibility (CRS)³⁶ among businesses, councils, and service organisations through philanthropy and creating an NGO directory for NGOs and local councils.

The common themes that run through all PCPP are impact, focus on counterpart involvement, volunteers’ competence and organisational professionalism. The NGO or charity fair was successfully carried out with a financial backing of \$3.841(1.778.500CFA) from Chang’s relatives and peers resident in the U.S. which amounted to about 54% of the total budget. About \$3.336 (1.545.000CFA) was from community contributions which was about 46% of the total budget. These contributions were from organisations like Imagine Bakery, Essoka Security which provided funds and security guards while the Bamenda City Council helped by permitting the bill boards of the event to be pasted around town for free. It was believed that this directory will provide the opportunity for NGOs to further networking and partnership opportunities between the NGO, business and government sectors within Cameroon.³⁷

³⁴Tombir Stanley, 45 years, Coordinator of NWADO/Volunteer Counterpart, Nkwen, 30/December/2021.

³⁵ *Idem*.

³⁶ Corporate Social Responsibility is defined as business and society interactions where the business is said to deliver services, offer support and provide assistance or extend beyond basic product provision to the society. (Source: Ollong, “The Role of,” p.51.)

³⁷Tombir Stanley, 45 years, Coordinator of NWADO/Volunteer Counterpart, Nkwen, 30/December/2021.

The fair left a lasting mark in the lives of the participants. During the fair, two full day sessions were hosted, including the opening ceremony, introduction of NGOs and networking hour, roundtable discussions, dance performances, food and the closing ceremony. There were group panel discussions on the opportunities, challenges and possible solutions of NGO sectors. Health wise, the Nkwen Baptist Health Centre used the event to do HIV screening and testing. A post-event strategy meeting initiated engagement and interactions through future sessions to champion the NGO in its entirety. Restitutions and resolutions were made at the end of the fair to give a positive way forward for NGO fair in Cameroon and how NGO's can better function. The fair had a long-term and direct impact on the Bamenda community. NGOs had the opportunity to collaborate with organisations from other sectors, the youths gained more work experience through volunteerism with NGOs, business exuded, more interest in the public sector and the non-profit sector remained connected through the NGO directory. Executing a successful NGO fair encouraged businesses to practice corporate social responsibility and philanthropic efforts should Mezam community members organise NGO fairs in future. Chang also facilitated 15 organisational development and business courses and 5 strategic plan workshops for local NGOs and businesses.³⁸

NGO participants felt the impact of the event through new introductions and potential partnerships for the future. NGOs in the North-West Region and Mezam continued networking and assessing opportunities to organise subsequent NGO fairs. The next year, another NGO fair was organised with funding from the European Union thanks to the ground work laid by Carmen Chang. The focus of volunteers was to help develop the capacity of people and not things. Capacity building is what the next section of this work will be addressing.

5.2.4. Capacity building and Self-Reliant Development

Development can be defined as a process that enhances respect and self-worth of a people and their ability to advance their own standards of living. In this light, development implies the improvement of the capacity of the people.³⁹ The agency's approach to development can be linked to the Chinese proverb which states that: "if you are planning for a year, sow rice, if you are planning for a decade, plant trees, if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people."⁴⁰The

³⁸ *Idem.*

³⁹ Peace Corps, *Programming, Training and*, p.3.

⁴⁰Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, p. 6.

Peace Corps supported work in Mezam with an emphasis on building capacity rather than financial support. Its focus was on the development of the capacity of people and not things. It would be difficult to argue that the Peace Corps has made deep and immediate inroads in to Third World poverty at the national level or was directly responsible for dramatic rises in host countries GNP. Unlike larger organisations like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, USAID, the Peace Corps does not engage in large-scale financial transfers. Instead, it is focused on improving output and enhancing self-help in the communities and towns mostly neglected by the more well endowed development assistance agencies through capacity building.

The Peace Corps strategy to growth is the community-driven and people centred. Peace Corps volunteers boost capacity of host communities to improve local progress results. Through this, the Peace Corps fielded, smaller, more specialised groups in precisely defined positions where their skills could be passed on and thus have a long-term multiplier effect. More than ever before, the focus was on helping people help themselves. This emphasis on building capabilities helped to make sure that the Peace Corps volunteers initiatives lasts for a long time even after their service is completed. Via volunteers skill development, most communities and their people are empowered and they use such competencies to tackle their particular problems.⁴¹

Volunteers facilitated identification and helped the people prioritise whatever they wanted to change, to harness their capabilities and capitalise on their skills and resources to bring about that transformation. The Peace Corps believed that when development stemmed from within, it was sustainable. Volunteers engaged with community members in a participatory manner to relate to their issues and needs directly and experience their concerns first hand. They also partnered with other people like counterparts, organisations and local communities generally to support community-wide and tailored efforts. This was done because other people could have increased accessibility for specific community groups and targeted members. Also, with widespread information sharing to community members, the more they tended to embrace those messages. Finally, by including others, initiatives were more likely to persist even after volunteers have departed for their country.⁴² For example, volunteer Jon helped the *Abongjam* women's group refine its record-keeping and management systems.

⁴¹Peace Corps, *Programming and Training Booklet 1*, Washington DC, Centre for Field Assistance and Applied Research, Information Collection and Exchange, 2015, p.6.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.7.

Such organisational shifts did not only enhance durability, but they also increased service quality and quantity offered in addition to trading activity or turnover.⁴³ Sirri Comfort attested that: “the best way to transform a community was by living together and interacting as one homogenous group. Peace Corps was the greatest reformer of our society because volunteers lived within the system and gradually changed it through their activities which had a long-lasting impact on the whole society.”⁴⁴ Peter Achu, another volunteer counterpart in Bafut testified that: “the Peace Corps remained the best organisation working to improve the lives of the people of Mezam at the community level. The most important lesson learnt is that, Peace Corps may not come with a bag of money to distribute but rather a multitude of ideas to share, when they resonate they can change lives.”⁴⁵

The transfer of skills and knowledge will not be complete if the targeted local community members' behaviour had not changed. Infact, behaviour change was the end product of the knowledge and skill transfer chain and underlies the purpose for which transfer of skills and knowledge was intended. Peace Corps volunteers understood that the effectiveness of their contributions depended on the application of the newly acquired knowledge by individuals-a process which often demanded behaviour change. The local community members were expected to improve their conditions through skills and knowledge acquired and learnt. For instance, after the trainings organised by Jon with the *Abongjam* women's group in Bali in 2010, three new gardens were created and four gardens improved. Also, six women disclosed their utilisation of the newly acquired understanding concerning nourishment to enhance their families nourishment and food preparation and processing. Four women also announced transmitting the knowledge from the three hands-on seminars in their other individual associations in Bali.⁴⁶ Also, because of the training, participants were able to maintain and harvest a 100% chemical-free local garden for home consumption and local sale.⁴⁷

In the same light, the Peace Corps facilitated the development of self-sufficiency among individuals so that they progressed and ultimately maintained a self-sustaining system for themselves and followed a self-directed plan. It sought to engage local populations in development projects in Mezam. Participatory development was an essential element of the

⁴³Lehdogha Comfort, 59 years, Farmer/Participant and President of the Group, Gungong, Bali, 20/August /2019.

⁴⁴*Idem.*

⁴⁵ Achu Peter, 65 years, Retired Palm Oil Plantation Manager/Volunteer Counterpart, Nforya, 15/August/2018.

⁴⁶Lehdogha Comfort, 59 years, Farmer/Participant and President of the Group, Gungong, Bali, 20/ August /2019.

⁴⁷Saburm Regina, 52 years, Farmer/Participant, Gungong, Bali, 20/August /2019.

human development approach. Various forms of citizen engagement in growth aimed to ensure participatory development for their benefit with the hope that progress initiatives had greater long-term viability and positive impacts when local communities were involved.⁴⁸ The Peace Corps stressed an inclusive approach to project formulation and modification since collective decision-making was the core of the Peace Corps developmental theory.

The agency developed projects that helped communities in Bafut, Tubah, Mankon to address problems like HIV/AIDS and malnutrition. At the community level, volunteers used appreciative inquiry and asset-based approaches to achieve locally led and sustainable solutions. Appreciative behaviour models inspired and motivated people to participate and support. Strength-based thinking promoted respect for certain groups such as people with vulnerabilities and other marginalised groups so that they were not seen as obstacles but as valuable assets and facilitators of improvement. Advantaged-based thinking often used by volunteers looked for possibilities and strengths rather than problems and deficits. Each day, the Peace Corps worked to break the cycle of poverty in Mezam by encouraging the people to create and manage their own sustainable economies, provide the people of Mezam with more opportunities and options to improve their living standards and to foster self-sufficiency. This was done by ensuring a solid groundwork of essential competencies that supported self-help such as strategic thinking and analysis to help them build their technical skills.⁴⁹

The agency sought local-level funding first as every small grant project was backed with at least 25% community contribution were to leverage existing community assets for volunteer partnerships with community inhabitants. Minimising dependence on external funding and maximising the viability of volunteer initiatives, the agency engaged host partners through in-kind support whenever possible. This was when the local community could not provide the needed 25% community support in cash. Their in-kind support or services were then evaluated in financial terms. It drew upon non-appreciative funds only when necessary and in a way that was consistent with the Peace Corps approach to development. Local resources, initiatives and skills turned to be very sustainable and thus promoted development far more than outside resources.⁵⁰

The agency also tried to remove many of the obstacles the people of Mezam faced by giving them access and build social and financial capital, infrastructure and markets. Along the

⁴⁸ Anonymous

⁴⁹ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2010, p.5.

⁵⁰ Anonymous

way, the agency mentored and there was follow up as they built sustainable livelihoods for themselves, and their communities so as to avoid dependency. It institutionalised these developments so that when their volunteers and partners disengaged after twenty-seven months of service from these communities, they could stand on their own and develop as well as implement strategies and innovations that could help them to be self-reliant and be able to create income generating activities that could improve on their livelihoods.⁵¹

The Peace Corps believed that giving charity was just another way of saying that i donot believe you can do it either, that was why it funded persons and not things. The aim of the Peace Corps was not to fund infrastructure or give financial assistance but to build on the capacity of the community members. Their actions were not driven by a desire for recognition through charity but a guiding vision of a world where persons everywhere were strengthened to accomplish their objectives. To transform this myth in to a reality in Mezam, it strived everyday to help rural communities in the study area and their people, rekindle the spirit of self-reliance. This was in line with the February 1961 report that preceded the birth of the Peace Corps which stated that: “the agency will help in the creation of stable and self-reliant ...communities capable of withstanding the stress of modern life.”⁵²

5.3. Assessing the Objectives of the Peace Corps

One of the objectives of the Peace Corps was to help people of interested countries meet their needs for trained men and women. Similar to America’s early settlers who transformed the frontier by expanding their territory westward, the foundation of the Peace Corps’ vision was that American volunteers would be globally disseminated and aid Third Word countries. A Peace Corps hiring flyer or pamphlet emphasised that: “the volunteer must be prepared to live a pioneer life.”⁵³ Over the years the agency trained and transferred skills needed to promote development in Mezam. These trainings were through the organisation of workshops complemented with practical demonstrations. From the beginning, the Peace Corps had a great deal of attention to its first goal-providing technical assistance and refined its training and programming procedures. Engaged in supporting the Third World growth demands, volunteers were conscious of their weaknesses. Despite their shared experience, they were deeply resentful of the way they were

⁵¹ Peace Corps, *Programming, Training and*, p.3.

⁵² Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.49.

⁵³ Tyler, *The Peace Corps*, p.3.

treated as right minded, but trivial well-wishers or paltry benefactors. Volunteers were trained in a skill so that they could make a real contribution to development. They go overseas to work and since the value of the Peace Corps contribution varied according to the country, project and individual volunteers, the programme's overall impact is difficult to quantify.⁵⁴

Through out its 55 year history in Mezam, the Peace Corps paused at intervals to take stock of what it has accomplished. Tangible results abound miles of road laid, depths of latrines dug and numbers of student taught. This essence was apparent in programmes as diverse as nature conservation, training for the handicapped, improving fishing techniques, developing disease-resistant varieties of vegetables and starting buffalo banks. Innumerable examples could be cited to show how Peace Corps volunteers applied their situations to solve development problems of water supply, organic gardening, medicine centre, tree planting and reforestation.⁵⁵

At the top of this are education programmes. In many ways, the Peace Corps most valuable contribution was to give hundreds of children in Mezam the chance to go to school. Volunteers have not only provided knowledge of maths, science and other subjects, but also helped break down their student's traditional fear of attempting anything beyond a textbook's rigid instruction methods, sport clubs and numerous extracurricular activities associated with the modern school. There are quite literally hundreds of stories of Peace Corps volunteers making a difference to individual lives in local towns and villages of Mezam. William Kane in the Cameroon College of Arts Science and Technology Bambili transformed the school and gave it the popularity it ultimately enjoyed. Similarly, Bob Guthrie and Bill Murphy taught Mathematics in Sacred Heart College and contributed to the development of a sports programme, the establishment of a school treasury or a school fund, enhanced hygiene and upgraded sanitation facilities in the boarding house or dormitories. Mauricelle and Tharwtzman did not only teach Mathematics in Sacred Heart College but went as far as providing accomodation, buying students textbooks as well as paying students school fees. Ashley Elizabeth on her part donated books and managed the Our Lady of Lourdes library. Rose Barah and Ruth Kelly organised in-service training workshops and seminars for teachers in the Bamenda area and also developed a teacher's handbook and training material for teachers.⁵⁶

Agroforestry volunteers also achieved a lot in this domain. In Bali, volunteer Jon in three different workshops with women in 2010 on basic nutrition, natural approaches to intensive

⁵⁴ Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.117.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.118.

⁵⁶ *Refer to details discussed in chapter 4 above*

vegetable gardening at home and compost making joined in making the women learn new agricultural techniques. Also, he organised another training on how to recycle waste and produce organic pest repellents from inexpensive local ingredients as opposed to expensive chemical products. In Bafut, Moore offered technical training to farmers on gardening, strategies for natural soil improvement, food security and marketing. Volunteers also worked on fisheries and poultry farms and were charged with the responsibility of assisting local fish farmers gain self-sufficiency. Reinsma worked with Shu Joram, the owner of the Agro-Industrial Complex to make this complex a money-making venture. The duo used the centre as a training environment for local farmers to learn about fish farming, animal husbandry and farming techniques. In Bambui, Leslie Torrans trained fish farmers on general management of ponds, production of fingerlings and fisheries extension work while Brian Bragg partnered with the Bambui Water Authority and the Tubah Council to help educate the people of Bambui on the importance of protecting the Alegefor watershed and also worked in other domains like organic farming, beekeeping, mushroom cultivation, catchment protection and poultry farming. Also, Reinsma with Shu Joram set up a nursery in Bafut with a production capacity of about 2.000 seedlings.⁵⁷

In the health domain, Rachel Chaikof organised a training in Bafut with eleven disables on sexual reproductive health. In Bawum, 20 participants were taught on different contraception methods. During the Bafut District Health and Nutrition week, Reinsma in partnership with nurses from Saint Theresa Catholic Medical Centre were able to reach 300 children who received deworming medicine and 434 mothers educated on family nutrition. She also organised a nutrition training with 15 women who attended ante-natal clinic on 17th February 2007. In Nforya, volunteers through trainings illustrated to 45 participants how the moringa oleifeera tree with its amazing nutritional benefits could reduce malnutrition. Wright formed two youth groups and a Frisbee group in Mambu that educated 200 community members on HIV prevention. In other areas, volunteers used health walks and race like the Akofunguba fun run to sensitise 100 youths in Bafut on HIV transmission and prevention strategies. Rachel Chaikof trained participants in Bafut and Tubah especially native doctors on the importance of changing their methods of treatment that is using razor blades to cut patients. Participants were also encouraged to use safe and effective means like the use of teas and rubs. Reinsma also formed the Mambu Herbal Group which was a support group to the Saint Theresa Catholic Medical Centre. Chaikof in Tubah organised trainings with persons with disabilities on HIV prevention.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Refer to details in chapter 3 above

⁵⁸ Refer to details in chapter 4 above

Despite the above successes, volunteers were ill trained, ill prepared and ill equipped for services in Mezam. Once in Mezam, volunteers experienced the hardship of destitution in remote and urban communities. Irrespective of their connections to a U.S. state organisation that necessitated a framework of regular performance reviews and appraisals, they were free to make some decisions on their own in their everyday lives. To Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, she stated that: “ many were motivated to enlist in the Peace Corps by a spirit of adventure that complemented their individual goals and objectives. In this sense, their personal motivations and life projects combined with the mission of the Peace Corps despite intentions in Washington to reduce them.”⁵⁹ Indeed, young people were keen to leave behind a physical inheritance in the areas where they served. When their viewpoints conflicted with the complicated circumstances they faced, this lack of patience resulted in a great deal of annoyance.⁶⁰

Training and selection methods suffered from many shortcomings. Over the years, substantial numbers of volunteers failed to complete their two years of service. Many went back home for medical or emotional reasons, but others went overseas neither as well motivated nor as well prepared as they might have been. As concerns those who started their service or work in 2013, 27% were discharged before they completed one year of their contract’s full term(2 years). Among those that were discharged, 63% chose to quit or leave their job. These figures reveal that a group of volunteers are ill-prepared, ill-equipped and ill-trained for the situations or circumstances that training was intended to equip them with. The blame lies on the Peace Corps itself for failing to create a training programme that properly prepares its volunteers.⁶¹ Volunteer Kelli Donley stated that:

As a 20-year journalism graduate, I had grown nary a house plant before trying to teach to farmers how to improve their crops. The audacity of my arrogance in assuming that this time abroad would do Cameroon any good was apparent on Day 1. I lasted just 5 months before returning home frustrated, confused and annoyed that I had put so much thought in to a system that failed both the host country and the volunteer with the best of intentions. The Peace Corps is a great program[me] in true need of reorganisation.⁶²

Programming, planning and organising volunteer assignments and projects in Cameroon in general and Mezam in particular had some drawbacks especially in the days when large

⁵⁹ Fernando, “Connecting Realities: Peace,” p.135.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ S. Dobson, *Tulane Students Must be Critical of No.1 Peace Corps Volunteer Ranking*, New Orleans, Tulane Hullabaloo, September 27, 2018, p.25.

⁶² D. Tande, *Peace Corps Volunteers: Too many Innocents Abroad, Scribbles from the Den*, January 10, 2008, p.20.

numbers of unskilled college graduates were sent to Cameroon. John Summer of the Overseas Development Council told Congress in 1977 that: “robo sure, there have been many failures, many disillusioned and ineffective volunteers, and a number of strained relations brought about in specific instances.”⁶³ The Peace Corps was criticised in the past for providing inadequate programming and support. Many volunteers became frustrated because they were sent to areas where there was no job for them. Records or accounts documented in the past detailed that some volunteers were idle or underutilised characterising and blaming the organisation for poor planning, negligence, carelessness and lack of accountability. While volunteer feedback consistently demonstrates strong overall satisfaction, about 20% of volunteers in 2017, claimed that they were underutilised or were idle at their job location, and 23 % experienced discontent with the support provided by Peace Corps staff in site scouting and readiness. Enduring weaknesses included unsuccessful volunteer orientation and preparation, ineffective site preparation and readiness, inadequate safety measures, restricted collaboration with host government departments and project collaborators.⁶⁴

The Peace Corps, while experienced and capable of hiring or selecting generalists and equipping or preparing them adequately to complete beneficial tasks, has over the years failed to cultivate a talent-driven culture or specialised expertise. This approach was a long-standing point of contention. In the 1960s, Peace Corps programmes suffered a major setback as mostly college graduates without any particular skills were recruited and sent overseas. Emphases were on the cross cultural goals of the Peace Corps and the conspicuous ineptitude of the generalist volunteers in carrying out development programmes requiring specific skills only led to widespread disenchantment with the U.S. Peace Corps. Many Third World countries saw the Peace Corps volunteers as just another pair of untrained hands incapable of affecting any change and therefore irrelevant. Some contended that the organisation should hire or acquire more expert professionals to cater for the expanding needs of an intricate world for skilled personnel such as engineers, doctors and agronomists.⁶⁵

⁶³ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.12.

⁶⁴ Congressional Research Service, *The Peace Corps*, p.10.

⁶⁵ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.13.

Many host nationals were disappointed when they discovered that the skilled Peace Corps workers they had been promised were inexperienced B.A. generalists.⁶⁶ More than 80 % of the volunteers especially in the early years of the Peace Corps existence were B.A. generalists and were incompetent or lacked the necessary skills to fulfill their duties or complete the tasks entrusted to them. As a result of the fact that the new agency's strategies were armophous, an exemplary volunteer was seen as a fresh graduate with a B.A. generalist degree, very flexible and resilient to virtually every situation or circumstance given that no one had a clear understanding of what they were preparing or equipping the volunteers for.⁶⁷ This Peace Corps idea rapidly became popular, especially with the younger generation of Americans. Sargent Shriver and his collaborators envisioned that: "... a cadre of new pioneers would help cure a malaise among the American youths of the 1960s."⁶⁸ Everyone connected with the Peace Corps knew that the image of the super volunteer so often depicted in American magazines was a false one.

In the early 1960s the influence of Burdick and Lederer's *Ugly American* was pervasive. The book published in July 1958, emphasised that American diplomats were, by and large, neither competent nor effective and the implication was that the more the United States depended on them, the more its influence would wane. Basically, the book argued that Americans were not liked overseas and the image of young Americans, dressed in T-shirts, Levi jeans and tennis sneakers living in hovels and feeding starving children was a perfect antidote. This pushed many volunteers in to the field too quickly.⁶⁹ Compounding this problem was the weak training programme Peace Corps Washington created for volunteers. Not enough attention was paid to training volunteers to do specific jobs, that too many volunteers were sent abroad without a specific task to do and that sending too many volunteers overseas too quickly ran the risk of sacrificing Peace Corps' quality to quantity. Community development programmes were criticised. Volunteers were sometimes sent out on their own into a local society with the vague invocation to participate. Most volunteers were engaged in this extremely difficult kind of work and many ended up feeling frustrated, disillusioned and generally ineffective.

Critics dismiss the accomplishments of the Peace Corps volunteers. They recognise that volunteers frequently forge lasting connections abroad while asserting that they contribute very

⁶⁶ A substantial portion of the volunteers held degrees in the humanities or their field of study did not equip or impart technical expertise to graduates. They were designated as B.A. generalists.

⁶⁷ Tyler, *The Peace Corps*, p.8.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.50.

little or nothing to the political advancement, social progress and economic growth. The idea of serving others in developing countries is restricted to the people or those countries, excluding volunteers. Volunteers often seek to make a difference through volunteer work but they often overlook the consequences for their host country. This has been termed “voluntourism” and many voluntourists have little to no experience with work in their own country before they go abroad.⁷⁰ Volunteers generate goodwill for the U.S. but they do little or nothing to aid development in poor countries. In his article in the New York Times, Robert L. Strauss, the former Peace Corps Cameroon Country Director, wrote that: “the overwhelming majority of volunteers lack the maturity and professional experience to be effective development workers in the 21st century.”⁷¹ A cynical professor once proposed that the Peace Corps reimburse a Latin American country for the harm wreaked on its economy by the volunteers.⁷²

Again, most of these volunteers were generally young in their early-to-mid 20s with 23 years averagely and 85 % were college graduates with little or no professional experience.⁷³ Most of these volunteers had no experience at the time of their posting but for the Peace Corps training and were under minimal supervision. The circumstances are not a breeding ground for positive impact. Biased against this opinion is the conviction that the Peace Corps is as much an organisation of soft power or citizen diplomacy as a development agency. Proponents of this view claim that building relationships through personal connections is just as vital as technical support and fresh college graduates may be less costly to hire and supervise. The problem of young age coupled with the fact that they just graduated from the university was a serious issue since most of the volunteers could not handle difficult problems that required experience. According to Fritz Fischer: “Peace Corps officials did not know what they were training the volunteers for.” He added that: “many volunteers saw little sense in the Peace Corps training programme and training was inadequate in the areas of culture, languages and technical skills.”⁷⁴

The overall agency evaluation team of 2010 identified that individual, familial and professional commitments or responsibilities diminished the number of older specialists enthusiastic about Peace Corps service. The team proposed that the Peace Corps should strengthen the capabilities of volunteers through better training and more focused

⁷⁰ Dobson, *Tulane Students Must*, p.25.

⁷¹ Meisler, *When the world*, p.42.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Anonymous

⁷⁴ Amin, “Serving in Africa,” p.74.

programmes.⁷⁵ In the same light, volunteers were also frustrated to discover that behind most community projects, laid a clearly political background. Indeed, this discomfited some volunteers who rather naively believed they were part of a non political campaign. Their community empowerment initiatives in the U.S. had emphasised the widespread transmission or propagation of a belief system, but they were astonished to discover that most community development initiatives served political goals or gains.

In the agricultural domain, volunteers could not accomplish much because they lacked language and technical skills to function in agroforestry. They lacked the skills to navigate the social and economic landscape in Mezam because their training sessions or exercises did not equip them to relate and connect with the local residents of the communities. They failed to impart marketable abilities to peasant farmers for example volunteer Kelli Donley was a graduate in journalism but worked as an agriculture volunteer. Robert Strauss agreed that agroforestry volunteers were too often ill-equipped, ill-trained and ill-prepared for work in Cameroon. He concluded that: “the Peace Corps has long shipped out well-meaning young people possessing little more than good intentions and a college diploma... in Cameroon, we had many volunteers sent to serve in the agriculture programme whose only experience was puttering around in their mom and dad’s backyard during their high school.”⁷⁶

Most Peace Corps volunteers were not very apt and effective in handling the job entrusted to them. This is because they belonged to several walks of life and diverse educational backgrounds. Volunteers competence in cooperative work was found doubtful with most of them being fresh graduates with degrees in Account, Economics and Business Administration. They therefore could not be good technocrats in the field since they lacked effective knowledge. This was complicated by the wrong execution of instructions by poorly qualified personnel in field demonstrations. For example, a volunteer who served in the Mezam women’s cooperative between 1978-1980 recommended that Peace Corps support be withdrawn on the grounds that after several years of assistance, nothing was achieved.⁷⁷ Similarly, Shauna Blanchard, one of the volunteers who worked at the NWCA recommended that future volunteers be trained on elementary education in agronomy and coffee farming techniques. She pointed out and insisted

⁷⁵ Congressional Research Service, *The Peace Corps*, p.8.

⁷⁶R.L. Strauss, Too Many Innocents Abroad, *The new York Times*, January 9, 2008, p.2.

⁷⁷ Azoh-Mbi, “The Contribution of,” p.110.

that most of them had never heard of a cooperative before and saw it for the first time.⁷⁸ Also at the conclusion of the Phase 1 portion of the Small Farmer Production Credit Programme with CamCCUL, the results were mixed. Although participating credit unions had achieved the ability to deliver agricultural credit, neither CamCCUL nor individual credit unions had developed the expertise or resources to become directly involved in the marketing or efficiently supplying services. The Ministry of Agriculture appeared to suffer from a lack of adequately trained personnel and thus provided little if any extension support to programme participants.⁷⁹

In the inland fish culture domain, the weaknesses of the volunteers were also very visible. In 1974, Nguetcheng Samuel attested that: “he did not find Peace Corps services very useful.”⁸⁰ Trained in fisheries both at Mbalmayo and Bangui and stationed in Bamessing, he also worked with the Bambui fish station. Samuel Nguetcheng on so many occasions disagreed with volunteers. In 1974, he strongly disagreed with the site of the fish station on the grounds that it was too flat to allow a free flow of water in to the ponds. This Peace Corps selected site is basically responsible for today’s water supply problem in the station. This disagreement between the director of the fish station and the Peace Corps volunteer, ended Peace Corps involvement with the station. Consequently, Nguetcheng not only demanded the ouster of the Peace Corps volunteer who had been serving at the station, but also declined to ask or accept any more Peace Corps volunteer at the station. As cited by Azoh-Mbi, a fishery technician and accountant of one of the fish stations in Mezam argued that: “the Peace Corps is doing nothing as far as fisheries in Cameroon is concerned. He said that Cameroonians are more pragmatic while Peace Corps volunteers tend to be too theoretical.”⁸¹ The latter reacted in a similar direction by stating that: “the best thing is for the government to train Cameroonians to do this work. Some inland fish culture Peace Corps volunteers were not able to distinguish a male carp from a female.”⁸²

Other frustrations sprang from difficulty of adapting paradigms learnt in American universities to local realities on the ground. Volunteers discovered that much of the training at the centre was irrelevant. They complained that the technical training was too abstract and not always appropriate to conditions in the field. The technical competencies volunteers achieved in

⁷⁸ S. Blanchard, “Quarterly Report of Peace Corps Cooperative Technical Assistance (PCCTA) for Santa Union, November 1992-February 1993, NWCA Archives Bamenda.

⁷⁹ Litwiller, *A Case Study*, p.2.

⁸⁰ Azoh-Mbi, “The Contribution of,” p.111.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

pre-service training were insufficient. Cultural training was weak and trainees spent too much time at the centre as opposed to visiting villages on a regular basis. Gerald Bauman, director of Peace Corps Bolivia, celebrated a new curriculum at Utah State University that aimed to provide the technical skills that he required of volunteers. He stated that:

This is a refreshing experience compared with the non-existing relationships that at times existed between field and training site. But the problem was technical training. Volunteers often complained about how little they knew about local organisations and political as well as cultural practices that directly impacted their work site since most ended up working with the government run community development programmes.⁸³

As with other programmes, lack of motivation was an issue with the agroforestry project. Farmers were neither motivated nor interested in demonstrations made by volunteers because of inadequate cultural training. Volunteers lacked the ability to either change the mindset of the local Mezam people or convince them that those ideas would lead to more productivity. In the same light, volunteers were impatient with the slow pace of change in agriculture as they felt frustrated by the absence of immediate results. As a result, many turned their attention to secondary projects such as HIV prevention, youth and women projects.

In the domain of education, not enough attention was paid to technical instruction, there was too much emphasis on academic subjects and an inordinate amount of time was spent on physical exercise and psychological tests. Also, some volunteers were not very successful in their academic life. Daniel Seck, the secretary general of the Cameroon's Ambassador to the U.S. reacted to this in 1966 when he confirmed that:

Their level of knowledge is very difficult to determine since the recruitment is among 1st to 3rd year students of the Bachelor of Arts. One thing that is certain about them is that we rarely find students who successfully completed their studies. On the contrary, most of them were those that repeated courses and were late in the progress of their studies.⁸⁴

Again, despite the high demand for maths/science volunteers, their number sharply reduced. This resulted from several factors with the major factor being the shortage of qualified volunteers. The agency continues sending unqualified volunteers to teach English when nearly every developing country could easily find high calibre English teachers among its own population. Even after Cameroonian teachers and education officials ranked English instruction

⁸³ Fernando, "Connecting Realities: Peace," p.136.

⁸⁴ MINREX archives, "Cameroun-USA, 1962-1965", File No. 3942, box 653, Ref. No. 63/s/CF/CAB/DPI/1B, p.2.

as their lowest priority after Computer literacy, Maths and Science, the agency continued to send trainees with little or no classroom experience to teach English in Cameroonian schools.⁸⁵

The total number of maths/science majors among American college graduates declined making recruiting Peace Corps teachers more difficult. At the same time, competition for volunteers qualified to teach these subjects is high. Because of budget limitations, Peace Corps must cut back volunteers in some areas to supply other areas. Some volunteers because of the shortage of teachers agreed to teach subjects or disciplines which they were not trained or had never taken in college thereby exposing themselves to criticism. Seck added that: “they lacked professional training. In the domain of education, these youths are less trained than our instructors with BE or D.M.E.G. Considering them in Cameroon as technical assistance therefore seems absolutely ironic to me, especially since most who come to Cameroon are obliged to return to school.”⁸⁶ Volunteers who heard of Cameroon only during training were teaching Cameroon history. These problems were complicated by the absence of textbooks and other teaching aids. For example, volunteer Douglas Dorr was assigned to teach a course which he flunked in college. Also volunteer Bill Kane taught economics, a subject he never studied in college.⁸⁷ Similarly, the education volunteer Peter Ryder had a Bachelors of Arts in History but taught Biology and Chemistry.⁸⁸ Strauss stated that: “one volunteer told me that the only possible reason he could think of having been selected to teach English was that he was a native English speaker.”⁸⁹ Local college officials defended these assignments by stating that they were never informed until very late whom they were to get either in terms of subject matter or sex of Peace Corps volunteers. The volunteers were paying the price for administrative floundering.

In the same light, volunteers were determined to eradicate rote learning in Mezam yet they failed to understand the origins and reasons for rote learning. Also, they were unsure with what to replace it. Some of the volunteers mistakenly blamed rote learning on the British system of education. The volunteers sought to change this system without providing the students with an equally important substitute.⁹⁰ In the classrooms, volunteers were found wanting especially with respect to their teaching methods. This can be justified by the letter sent to the U.S. Ambassador

⁸⁵ Strauss, *Too Many Innocents*, p.3.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.151.

⁸⁸ Tiemuncho Joseph, 45 years, CRTV Journalist, Yaoundé, 20/June/2018.

⁸⁹ Strauss, *Too Many Innocents*, p.3.

⁹⁰ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.151.

in 1965 by the Minister of External Relations. In the letter, the minister declared that: “the way in which this teaching is dispensed shows a total absence of any valid pedagogical method. The results from this lacuna is a great inefficiency generating discouragement on the parts of students.”⁹¹In the same light, the flaws of the volunteers did not go unnoticed by Bernard Fonlon, the then deputy minister of foreign affairs who remarked that: “the level of education provided by American volunteers in different secondary schools of our country feels at an insufficient qualification for the most part.”⁹²As a result of the pitfalls of the volunteers, the government advised that: “its desire is to see in future that, the work of volunteers be oriented towards sports and physical education activities where it will be much more effective.”⁹³

The teaching method used by the volunteers also posed serious problems. Lacking experience with the Cameroonian educational system, certain errors continuously surfaced in the services of the volunteers between 1962-1966. Many volunteers lacked the commitment to their jobs. The Peace Corps attracted the volunteers for many reasons and many were not interested in teaching after they arrived Cameroon. It was common for volunteers to inform their students and co-workers that: “I am teaching for this tour only. I am not a teacher. I never intend to teach again.”⁹⁴ Such remarks adversely affected their performance and discouraged the Cameroonian students who viewed educational achievement as the only road to paradise.

The failure to commit themselves in their teaching gave rise to other problems. The most frequent criticisms school principals made against the volunteers was that of inadequate class preparation. Volunteers often went to class without knowing the subject to teach for the day. For this reason, their lectures often lacked coordination, organisation and a sense of direction. Some found themselves in the uncomfortable position of being unable to answer simple questions students asked in class. Though the Peace Corps representatives spoke to the volunteers in conferences and individually about this, the problem persisted. Also, school administrators were disappointed with the poor discipline in the classes taught by volunteers. In their efforts to establish cordial relations with the Cameroonian secondary school students, the volunteers failed to realise that these students, as typical teenagers, given the opportunity could become very

⁹¹ MINREX archives, “Cameroun-USA 1962-1965”, File No.3838, box 629, Ref. No. 2253/CAB/DIPL/IB, p.1.

⁹² MINREX archives, “Relations entre le Cameroun et USA 1962-1965”, File No. 3317, box, 567, Ref No. H/L No 59/S/of/1 CAB/DIPL/IB du 20/9/1966, p.1.

⁹³ MINREX archives, “Cameroun-USA 1962-1965”, File No.3838, box 629, Ref. No. 2253/CAB/DIPL/IB, p.2.

⁹⁴ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.175.

indisciplined. Their classes were generally too lax. To compensate for this lack of discipline, the volunteers often passed too many students in examinations. This did not silence their critics.⁹⁵

Although most students enjoyed the company and classes of the volunteers, they did not hesitate to criticise the volunteers for failing to understand the format of the G.C.E. examinations. Volunteers did not understand that the goal of secondary school students was to pass the G.C.E examinations. As a result, students taught by the volunteers often performed poorly in their final years in the G.C.E examinations. By 1965, students in their final year in college preferred to be taught by British teachers who understood the British G.C.E. system. This problem was brought officially to the West Cameroon Prime Minister in 1966, when the students of Cameroon Protestant College Bali told him that they wanted British teachers for English. On the G.C.E exam of the previous year only 7 of the 35 students passed English in the ordinary level exams. Not surprisingly, the students blamed their failures on their Peace Corps teacher. They denounced the teaching performance of the volunteers. Their most pronounced grievance was that: “we follow the American system... We do not want it.”⁹⁶

With degrees in business and economics from American Universities, many SED volunteers had little or no experience in business practices and faced many challenges. The three months training was insufficient to educate them on business culture and values in Mezam. One of the workers of a credit union in Mezam questioned the relevance and knowledge of volunteers assigned to the company by stating that: “They were not competent.”⁹⁷ Often, volunteers became frustrated with their inability to bring rapid change. Unable to influence change in a micro finance in Mezam, a volunteer hastily blamed the people contrasting that: “Mezam people donot want development [...] They want charity [...]. They want free labour [...]. They want the appearance of development. We donot have a decent development committee in the community.”⁹⁸ Those types of reactions were numerous and revealed a subtle arrogance embedded in volunteers’ attitudes. Adding to this, was the poor infrastructure since most SED volunteers were based in the semi urban areas, their jobs required them to travel to rural areas to organise and teach business skills to residents there. Work in the villages required knowledge of local languages which many SED volunteers did not have. Although the volunteers were indeed

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.177.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Nji Rene, 50 years, Accountant, Bamenda, 25/August/2019.

⁹⁸ Amin, “Serving in Africa,” p.80.

working in community development, they were not usually doing the type of development work performed by volunteers in Latin America. Here their role was not so much to assist villagers in defining their problems and agreeing on a solution to be communally implemented rather their role was to assist the ministry in responding to the ever increasing pleas of the villagers for technical assistance to tackle projects deemed necessary for their progress.

In the health domain, volunteers lacked knowledge of Cameroonian culture, attitudes and this often led to feelings of desperation. Another problem was that volunteers were not well trained to impact the Mezam society. As a result, they were not able to train the people on the effectiveness and ability to cure spiritual diseases that could not be cured in the Western health units.⁹⁹ Some diseases especially epilepsy though are naturally caused, can also be a function of metaphysical forces like gods, ancestors, witchcraft and deities. Such diseases at times are inflicted on people by the gods as punishment or by other people because of jealousy.¹⁰⁰ These diseases can only be cured by traditional healers through incantation and invocation of spirits. Their trainings do not involve such people and as such, volunteers can not impact such disorders which are common in Mezam. For over the years, health volunteers cannot point to any hospital that was created or has remained in service as a result of the work of volunteers. Perhaps the bit that can be said about the programme is the coming of volunteers and their friendship with Mezam people. This said, it can be concluded that volunteers did not achieve Goal 1 of the Peace Corps Act because they were ill-trained ill-equipped and ill-prepared for services in Mezam.

Another Peace Corps objective was to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the people served. For volunteers to meet the needs of the people of Mezam, they were to understand the host culture and share their own culture with the people of the study area. Volunteers played an important role and helped increase awareness and understanding of the American culture on the part of the people of Mezam. Volunteers worked with their local counterparts and helped to bring a better cultural understanding, something which is very vital in helping to bridge communication gaps between different cultures. In the 1960s, most people in Mezam had seen very few Americans who were not missionaries, businessmen or affluent tourists. Peace Corps volunteers showed the world a different kind of America. They came to live with the local people not in hotels, not in sumptuous houses, but in farms, huts, sharing their

⁹⁹ G.W. Mbingek, *et al*, "The Resilience and Survival of Traditional Medicine in the Oku Fandom of Cameroon", *Research and Scientific Innovation Society*, Vol. VII, Issue VIII, August 2023, p.1469.

¹⁰⁰ Keming David, 42 years, Associate Professor of History, Yaoundé, 22/December/2023.

food and roof. This was perhaps the Peace Corps most enduring contribution. It should be noted that volunteers stood for and not a selfish society but a society that is interested in other people. This new breed of Americans who spoke the local language, lived under local conditions and were not afraid to get their hands soiled had a tremendous impact on Cameroonians.¹⁰¹

Peace Corps volunteers have shown Cameroon and Mezam in particular a different kind of America from the one normally on view. For many Cameroonians, the stereotype of the rich tourist on vacation has been broken. Peace Corps volunteers are so different from other Europeans/Americans as they gave up their good life back home and came to live and teach in the different schools in the study area. Mezam women appreciated the works of volunteers to help break down gender barriers. Evidence of an integrated Peace Corps convinced many Cameroonians that Kennedy declared war against *Apartheid* in Cameroon. To Cameroonians, the volunteers represented the good intentions of Kennedy. The people of Mezam showed their appreciation by naming their children after Kennedy. Many hung in their living rooms the picture of Kennedy and some of the influential volunteers besides those of important family members. Through the volunteers, Cameroonians learnt about American democracy and many continued to call for the establishment of the American brand of democracy in their country.¹⁰²

The major ways through which volunteers acted as bridges to help the people of Mezam understand American culture was by sharing favourite recreational games and activities. In Mezam, Katherine Wright formed a Frisbee club in Bafut which helped the youths of the area to understand the Frisbee sport. They also conducted summer American camps through which different aspects of American cultures were learnt. Volunteers engaged friends in discussions on a variety of topics ranging from popular culture to the latest music video and *zumba*¹⁰³ steps. American cultures including dressing habits became so widely accepted in Mezam thanks to volunteers. Today the blue jeans is an important dressing code in Mezam. Similarly, American music was also implanted in Mezam as most music stores and night clubs played *Rap* music. Young people in Mezam listened and danced *Rap* and other American genres of music like *blues* and *Hip Hop* culture is on the rise in Mezam. Volunteers like Reinsma taught the people of Mezam how to cook their favourite food. This was usually on public holiday celebrations like Thanksgiving Day, Columbus' Day and 4th July. On such days, the dinner traditionally consisted

¹⁰¹ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.45.

¹⁰² Amin, "Serving in Africa," p.73.

¹⁰³ *Zumba* is a fitness programme that involves cardio and Latin-inspired dance.

of food and dishes indigenous to the Americas like tacos and cranberries. The people assumed that by dining with the volunteers, they had the opportunity to learn about American ways.¹⁰⁴

Despite this, there were disturbing aspects of their lifestyles. Volunteers came to live among local people but they occupied large luxurious buildings in the different communities in Mezam. They spent their money lavishly on expensive goods and vacations because they neither paid for housing nor other facilities. The volunteers failed to destroy the image traditionally associated to expatriates. This idea calls for wider and critical examination of what the Peace Corps meant by the volunteers lived a simple life. Volunteers were also involved in a variety of questionable activities. Given that adventure and travel were among the reasons given by volunteers who signed up to serve, some overdid it. Some volunteers drank excessive alcohol, substance abuse and visible irresponsible sexual activities which reinforced the perception that Americans were reckless and easy. Others displayed a dismissive condescending and rude attitude towards the people of Mezam. Infact they acted in ways they would not dare at home. Volunteers could not wait for weekend when they get together and party as shown below. Strauss reacted to this indiscipline and feeling of entitlement by certain volunteers calling on others not to give up on their colleagues. He warned that: “it is not only around sexual relations that some volunteers make unhealthy decisions. He added that drugs and excessive alcohol consumption are significant problems in our communities and we are responsible to one another to make sure that a problem does not evolve into a tragic and an avoidable event.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴Amin, “Serving in Africa,” p.74.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, p.83.

Plate 59: Volunteers in a Weekend Party in Bamenda



Source: Downloaded from kelseycornelius.blogspot.com on 15/August/2019 at 6:00 p.m.

The above shows volunteers enjoying themselves through an arm wrestling competition. In front of them were different bottles of beers and wine.

Finally, volunteers as per the last objective of the Peace Corps Act were to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. Volunteers contributed greatly to make new American friends within the host country. On a broader level, they learnt about themselves and other people and returned to the U.S. determined to re-educate Americans about Africa. Hundreds of volunteers who served in Cameroon and returned to the U.S., actively contributed to the level of awareness about Cameroon through presentations and continued support for Peace Corps. All these activities allowed people from both sides to develop attitudes and relationships grounded in first hand experiences. This experience destroyed the myth that existed about Africa which the volunteers were fed with during training and by some of their college professors. In the 1960s and after, most Americans had a primitive view of the Third World in general and Cameroon in particular. It was a strange view most Americans had of the dark continent at that time. It was seen as an almost mythical place and these underdeveloped countries remained shrouded in mystery. Their populations were regarded as hostile, barbaric and backward. Thus the challenge of the Peace Corps was to bring a better understanding between Americans and other peoples and reduce misunderstandings of other cultures.

The Peace Corps experience and returning volunteers helped break down these attitudes. Volunteers easily adjusted to incountry realities. They ate food, danced music and joined traditional meeting groups, participated in *njangis*, established love connections, marriages and took on projects in the community after their service ended. Former volunteers helped educate

Americans about the developing world. On such occasions, returned volunteers joined together in the U.S. to give assistance to communities where they work. Indeed, one of the Peace Corps priorities of the 21st century was to use more effectively the knowledge, skills and experience of former volunteers. Shriver liked to remind Peace Corps volunteers that: “they would fulfill their responsibility only after they brought their experiences back to the myriad of communities of America which can only benefit from your return to them.”¹⁰⁶ In 1978 for the first time, a National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers was organised. This was a membership organisation representing individuals and organisations of returned volunteers. Its purpose was to establish a network of local returned volunteer groups all across the country and encourage returned volunteers share their experience and perceptions with their fellow Americans.¹⁰⁷

The council educated a wide range of American audiences about the people, lives, cultures and development problems in the countries where U.S. Peace Corps volunteers served. The programme strengthened capability of the council to foster and improve the activities of all returned Peace Corps volunteers in development education. The AID and Peace Corps grants enabled the council to create a permanent resource centre for development education at the council, to hold annual workshops and to assist returned volunteers through out the country to forge links among themselves and with other individuals and institutions committed to educating the American people about the developing world. Returned volunteers helped the American people and the development education community to translate abstract themes and cold numbers in to the realities of the personal lives of the people with whom they lived.¹⁰⁸

The Aspen Institute of Humanistic Studies reckoned in 1977 that in virtually every American community, some one has had a Peace Corps experience. Thus in an important step towards the fulfillment of the third goal, returned volunteers helped give Americans a more compassionate and sophisticated awareness of life in the developing countries. This was in line with Kennedy’s objective as he sent the first volunteers overseas under the invocation to come back and educate us. Volunteers carried their experience and knowledge in to their future lives and careers to their own and country’s benefit. The society requires great citizens and the Peace Corps is a world wide training school for great citizens. So many volunteers returned home to work in education, human resource and other humanitarian development programmes through

¹⁰⁶ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.83.

¹⁰⁷ Scanlon, *Cooperation between the*, p.34.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

out the U.S. said former AID Administrator Doug Bennet in 1980, he said that: “imagine what the U.S. would be like today if we did not have that infusion of former volunteers in to the American public, my god, it would be like the 1940s and 1950s.”¹⁰⁹ This showed the role of the volunteers in the evolution of America especially in cross cultural exchange. In helping and learning about other people, Americans helped and learnt about themselves.

As Peace Corps volunteers adjusted to this lifestyle, so did the Cameroonians who quickly accepted them. The first aspect through which volunteers learnt about the cultural diversities of Cameroon was during pre-service training. During the training, focus was on issues like Cameroon history, customs and traditions. Another approach was through the Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools Correspondence Match Programmes. Through this, volunteers exchanged letters, photographs videos with classrooms back home. As part of this programme, volunteers shared stories and pictures that helped U.S. students to appreciate the history, people, geography and cultures of Cameroon.¹¹⁰ In America, their homes were decorated with African arts and many continued to organise different forms of *njangis* like the one established by Bill Strassberger and his colleagues who served in Cameroon. They established the Friends of Cameroon, an organisation that educated Americans about Cameroon, promoted relations between America and Cameroonians and provided assistance for development projects there.

During their service in Mezam, both the poor and the rich invited volunteers for dinner. Which ever house they visited, there was an abundance of food to eat. Most volunteers in Mezam echoed the familiar theme of food. They could not disguise their appreciation of the Cameroonians. Never had they seen give so much to people they knew so little about. By sharing dinner with the people, the volunteers did not only learn but it was also a sign of goodluck and friendship. As the volunteers came around, so did the good news spread around and this led to more invitations from the people of Mezam.¹¹¹ Volunteers also visited or became regulars in local markets. Reinsma and Wright with their host families visited the Bafut and Bawum markets on weekly basis to buy local foodstuffs. These markets acted as cultural exchange points as the interactions between volunteers and the people opened their minds on the local languages, dressing, food habits not only of the Bafut people but also people from other villages of Mezam.

¹⁰⁹ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.10.

¹¹⁰ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2010, p.12.

¹¹¹ Amin, “Serving in Africa,” p.73.

Volunteers whole-heartedly participated in traditional festivals in Mezam like the Mankon, Nkwen, Bali and Bafut *Fon*'s Annual Dances every December. During such occasions, volunteers learnt a lot as the people of Mezam explained the historical significance of such days, local food, dance steps and the meals prepared for the day were mostly local meals like Achu. Such occasions became unofficial cultural exchange programmes. Describing her experience during the 2005 Bafut *Fons* Annual Dance, Kelsey Cornelius affirmed that:

In December 2005, the *Fon* of Bafut arguably one of the biggest kings in the country had his Annual *Abine* festival and gave me an invitation when I went to visit the *Fon* during my site visit. I arrived late at the occasion only to find a sole chair left for me at the right side of the *Fon*. The youngest queen showed me to my special seat and brought me an Amstel and a wine glass. The *Fon* sat and rubbed a ground red stone over the naked shoulder of 50 people or so, calling out their names. Then, he poured palm wine from a gourd in to his hands and they drank. Afterwards, they were allowed to address the *Fon* in the traditional way by clapping and bowing. I had the best seat and I think it was a real honour. I could not help but laugh as I sat there, feeling like a royal, sipping an Amstel with the *Fon*.¹¹²

These types of reactions and opportunities were numerous as volunteers learnt from the rich cultural display in Mezam. On such and many other occasions, volunteers drank local produce like palm wine which was very cheap and that was part of living in Mezam. Kelsey reacted to this by writing that: "I learnt so much as I sat at times at a local store, attempting to turn down litre after litre of palm wine sometimes mixed with Orange, Fanta or Guinness."¹¹³ Through all these first hand experiences, volunteers learnt local languages, participated in local practices and worked alongside community members to actively contribute to issues related to the community. They shared these experiences with their friends and family members back home who knew about Cameroon from photos, videos and other social media. Some family members visited Cameroon and returned home with a better appreciation of the day-to-day activities in the country. In 1979, it was estimated that some 66 % of all returned volunteers maintained direct contacts with their host communities either by writing letters, going back to visit them or having them come over to the U.S.¹¹⁴ Many other volunteers who went back to their host country noticed that the love was still there. This was true with Reinsma whose parents visited Mambu, Bafut twice between 2005 and 2007. They in turn shared their experience with even more Americans who were able to know about Cameroon through these opportunities.

¹¹² Kelsey Cornelius.blogspot.com consulted on 15/August/2019 at 6:00 p.m.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.85.

Despite all these, the third goal of the Peace Corps for the past 55 years was partially fulfilled. Former Peace Corps Director Richard Celeste in 1981 reacted that: “most of you are familiar with two goals of the Peace Corps but there is a third goal, he said and in many ways it may be the most important...It’s a sad fact that, despite modern technology, the U.S. remains culturally isolated from the rest of the world. In this sense we ourselves are citizens of an underdeveloped nation.”¹¹⁵ He urged a consistent effort to achieve the third goal. But only the activities of former volunteers in the 21st century will decide whether the third goal will be fully attained. Although volunteers left a mark on the American society, they are yet to maximise their potential and fully implement the Peace Corps’ third goal in an organised manner. The Peace Corps impact on the domestic scene was never quite spectacular. One major problem is that volunteers tend to be highly individualistic with interest so diverse that it was difficult to organise a project capable of attracting any large number of them. In the early 1960s, volunteers made plain their opposition to any type of Peace Corps Veterans Club or Peace Corps Alumni Association. Besides, studies have shown that most returned volunteers resume lives that, in many ways resemble the majority of other Americans. They return to school, begin careers, marry and start families. Coming home, volunteers faced the painful process of readjusting to aspects of their society that previously went unquestioned and accepted as American. Some felt different from others of their age and background after having the Peace Corps experience.¹¹⁶

Most volunteers discovered that they had their own cultural frontiers to conquer even though some volunteers could not adapt to the cultures in Mezam. This was as a result of the fact that, training was inadequate in the areas of culture, history and language. Because of their ignorance of African cultures in general, volunteers sometimes referred to Africans as: “lazy, seemingly useless people and categorised them as dependent, different and undeveloped.”¹¹⁷ Robert Coughlan described Africa when writing for *Life* magazine in 1959 as: “it is the black Africa of apes and ivory, of Stanley and Livingstone, Crocodile and Lion, and of 125 million people still living in or at the edge of savagery.” He wrote that: “almost all Africans were quite primitive, suffering from the inertia of cons of ignorance.”¹¹⁸ For Coughlan, Americans had a role to help Africans explode out of the stone age into the modern world. Larry J. Brown, former

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.86.

¹¹⁷ Amin, “Serving in Africa,” p.74.

¹¹⁸ Tyler, *The Peace Corps*, p.5.

Peace Corps Country Director in Uganda referred to the people by stating that: “they had small houses and primitive mud huts, naked little bodies, darting around with women cooking over outdoor fires. Men were trimming branches of trees with much used machetes and children at play amidst the dense greenery and flowering bushes.”¹¹⁹ Similarly, as cited by Rice, a post card written by volunteer Margery Michelmores in Nigeria fell in the hands of Nigerian students. The card, describing the squalor and absolutely primitive living conditions in Ibadan.¹²⁰ Irrespective of this, volunteers experienced personal growth, acquired good skills and confidence during and after service. Volunteers became leading advocates for racial justice. For many, Peace Corps service turned out to be a rite of passage to a fruitful and enriching life. They understood that other people were committed to their cultures as Americans were to theirs. In trying to accomplish its agenda in Mezam, the organisation faced some difficulties as will be seen below.

5.4. Challenges of the Peace Corps in Mezam

Individuals like organisations be they national or international do not operate without challenges. What makes the Peace Corps so difficult that it is touted as “the toughest job you will ever like” is because there can be millions of potential challenging scenarios. In this context, the Peace Corps faced a number of challenges in all facets of life which will be developed below. In the face of these problems, most volunteers maintained their equilibrium and sense of humour. Their patience served them well, allowing them to adapt to unforeseen obstacles and delays, to find solutions to achieve their ends, or simply to await calmly succeeding developments.

5.4.1. Suspicion of Volunteer Activities

The major challenge faced by the Peace Corps volunteers rotated around the issue of suspicion that they were doing not just what they were portrayed to be doing. The Peace Corps was established as a volunteer agency different from AID or any other previous U.S. effort in the developing world. Over the years, it has guarded that apartness jealously. Specifically, the Peace Corps remains apolitical to avoid suspicion and continue to operate within countries that need volunteers. This suspicion does not come from its connection to the Embassy but probably because Americans are often viewed as sowing seeds of change and revolution. Over the past decades, other countries were concerned about America’s military and economic dominance,

¹¹⁹Amin, “Serving in Africa,” p.74.

¹²⁰ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.69.

hegemony and anti-American sentiments often caused international friction.¹²¹ However, over the years, the Peace Corps has steered clear of major political and diplomatic conflicts. It is a testament to the underlying volunteer service.

Since it was founded during the height of the Cold War, the Peace Corps was often subjected to speculation that it was a frontline organisation for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The Kennedy's administration ordered the CIA not to meddle in the Peace Corps' affairs, but many host countries still believed rumours and Soviet propaganda that the volunteers were under cover spies. In the interest of avoiding any connection to the espionage community, the Peace Corps maintained a blanket ban on former CIA employees becoming volunteers. Former members of other intelligence outfits are allowed to serve in some cases, but only after a 10 year waiting period.¹²² Political tension provided the Peace Corps with some of its most testing challenges in regard to its several goals. Paradoxically, although the Peace Corps always strove to be strictly non-apolitical, it was sometimes treated as a political football. In most countries that the Peace Corps left, the primary cause was diplomatic tension with the U.S. or a change in the domestic political environment of the host nation. The Peace Corps was never asked to leave because of operational failure or general impropriety. Soviet propaganda has perennially attacked volunteers as agents of imperialism. In 1961, Secretary of state Dean Rusk stated that: "any foreign policy benefits of the Peace Corps activities for instance, a build up of political goodwill for the United States would simply be a by-product to be cherished but not an aim to be deliberately sought. The Peace Corps is not an instrument of foreign policy because to make it so would rob it of its contribution to foreign policy."¹²³

Fonlon reacted to the fishy activities of volunteers when he wrote to the U.S. Ambassador attesting that: "American volunteers engage in various indefinite activities in various regions of our country especially in West Cameroon, some exempt of this purpose for transceiver stations whose power exceeds that of national broadcasting."¹²⁴ They were therefore doing things that were not defined. Also, Daniel Seck quickly noticed the leery work of volunteers and asserted that: "regarding their extra-professional activities, there is a rumour among the embassies here and in certain African countries (Egypt, Ghana and Morocco), that the CIA has a certain control

¹²¹ Perkins, "East Versus West," p.15.

¹²² E. Andrew, *8 Little –Known Facts About the Peace Corps*, consulted on 15/May/2021 at 6:30 a.m.

¹²³ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.70

¹²⁴ MINREX archives, "Relations entre le Cameroun et USA 1962-1965", File No. 3317, box, 567, Ref No. H/L No 59/S/of/1 CAB/DIPL/IB du 20/9/1966, p.1.

over the organisation.”¹²⁵Mezam people some times viewed the Peace Corps with suspicion especially when the agency first introduced a new programme in the area. There were fears that the volunteers were CIA spies or were plotting to undermine their economy or government for the benefit of the U.S.¹²⁶ This was the case with the Peace Corps volunteers in Mezam as some community members suspected them of being spies and of course rejected the change brought by the volunteers. In other communities like Mundum, there was the lack of local interest and involvement because the community members thought that volunteers were out to gather information for the benefit of the U.S. Volunteers found out that, the more contact they had with community members, the more quickly such suspicion dissipated.

5.4.2. Socio-Political Crisis in the North-West Region

In some cases, the activities of the Peace Corps and their volunteers were halted or grounded by the problems of the local communities in which they operated.¹²⁷ The activities of the Peace Corps in Mezam were greatly hampered by the socio-political crisis in Cameroon. The year 2017 was a very difficult year as the activities of the Peace Corps in Mezam were curtailed due to security concerns. Volunteers were withdrawn from their posts of service in Mezam back to Yaoundé. This was in line with the Peace Corps policy of "Interrupted Service or Non-Disciplinary Discontinuance of Service."¹²⁸ Some of the volunteers in Mezam opted to be transferred to other regions of Cameroon while others decided to travel back to the U.S. The closing of the Peace Corps Bamenda office and its activities worsened an already bad situation. The Peace Corps in 2017 had 108 volunteers serving in only 6 regions of Cameroon.¹²⁹It should be noted that volunteers were also withdrawn from the South-West Region for the same purpose and because of the Boko Haram insurgency, volunteers had been withdrawn in the Extreme North and Northern Regions for security reasons. As of the year 2017, the Peace Corps volunteers were active in the local and urban communities of the West, South, Littoral, Centre, Adamawa and East.¹³⁰ The socio-political crisis was a serious challenge to the Peace Corps since its activities were halted in Mezam.

¹²⁵ MINREX archives, “Cameroun -USA, 1962-1965”, File No. 3942, box 653, Ref No. 83/8/e1/3/1B, p.3.

¹²⁶ Anonymous

¹²⁷ Tiemuncho Joseph, 45 years, CRTV Journalist, Yaoundé, 20/June/2018/.

¹²⁸ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Volunteer Handbook*, p.81.

¹²⁹ Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, p.4.

¹³⁰ Anonymous

The study area had a long history with Peace Corps dating back to the very beginning in 1962 and Mezam was very crucial to all three of the Peace Corps' programmes. The area with its rich soils and industrious farmers was the heart of the agriculture programme. The North-West Region with Mezam inclusive also represented one of the four regions (the Centre, Littoral and South-West) that benefitted from the President's Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS prevention programme. Finally, the maths and science education programme was almost entirely located in the study area.¹³¹Volunteers and their staff hope to return and continue working with the people of Mezam who had the community spirit, support and reception needed by the volunteers.

5.4.3. Language Difficulties

The problem of language was another very serious challenge faced by Peace Corps volunteers in Mezam especially at the beginning of their service since most of the volunteers quickly learnt and mastered the language of the receiving communities in the course of their two years of service.¹³²This issue of language was so important that Congress stated that: "no person shall be assigned to duty as a volunteer in a foreign country or area unless at the time of such assignment, he/she possesses such reasonable proficiency as his assignment requires speaking the language of the country or area to which he/she is assigned."¹³³

Language was pertinent because without the mastery of the language spoken in the communities, the activities of the Peace Corps volunteers could not be felt since it will be very difficult to communicate with the population and build their capacity. The trainee was given the opportunity to study local languages that could also facilitate their service. In Mezam, the language used was mainly Cameroon Pidgin English. Reinsma, Lee and Kelsey gradually integrated themselves with the communities of Bafut and were able to use the Bafut language in some particular cases so as to facilitate their activities. Even with this, some volunteers as well as some people in the local communities could not speak and understand Pidgin. About 70% of volunteers who worked in Mezam foresaw their main challenge to be the problem of language.¹³⁴

This was especially with the extension programme volunteers (agriculture and health volunteers) like Reinsma, Rachel and Wright since they needed to master a certain degree of Pidgin English before commencing service. On the other hand, education volunteers like Kelsey

¹³¹Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, p.4.

¹³²Tiemuncho Joseph, 45 years, CRTV Journalist, Yaoundé , 20/June/2018.

¹³³ Peace Corps, *Programming, Training and*, p.89.

¹³⁴ Anonymous

and Lee faced a lesser challenge since they needed to teach in English which they mastered well though they faced challenges when they got involved in other secondary activities. Over the years, the Peace Corps began to rectify one of its major weaknesses that is language instruction by devoting more training time to it than any other subject.

5.4.4. Adaptability and Integration to Cross-Culture

The most successful volunteers were those who successfully integrated in to their communities and genuinely became part of the lives of the people they served. The best impact volunteers could make was to bring the American cultural traits, optimism and a can-do-attitude to the people they served, engaging them in solutions and building their capacity for problem solving. Peace Corps volunteers needed to be creative in addressing the needs of the communities. Most Peace Corps volunteers who served in Mezam just graduated from the university with its communal and often bonding experiences. To be suddenly thrust in to a particular foreign culture, barely speaking the language, among people who might be suspicious of your motives or just plain shy around foreigners can be very lonely and isolating. Volunteers were to integrate in to the communities, by speaking the same language, eating the same food, working together and adapting to the local culture. It was difficult as 20 % of volunteers who served in Mezam admitted that they foresaw their main challenge during their period of service to be cultural adaptability and integration.¹³⁵ However, once volunteers arrived their sites, diversity and inclusion remained the same but took on different shapes in which local communities may share a common culture and the volunteer is the outsider. The volunteer may be in the minority if not the sole American in the site. Volunteers might begin to notice diversity in perspectives, ethnicity and degree of support received and may need to make adjustments.

The lack of diversity among volunteers who in recent years have been overwhelmingly white, female, young and well educated poses a big problem. As a result of limited exposure, some Mezam people expected all U.S. citizens to be white and were unaware of the diversity in the U.S. The U.S. ranks third after China and India in racial diversity. The population is dominated by the white race numbering some 210.000.000 and a black race numbering over 30.000.000 inhabitants.¹³⁶ For volunteers, the range of responses to their skin colour varied greatly from being mistaken for a host country national, to being questioned about their U.S.

¹³⁵*Idem.*

¹³⁶ Njuafac, "The United States," p.17.

citizenship and ridiculed, to not being able to get better prices for goods. This pushed them to reject the volunteer. Volunteers needed to be sensitive to the habits, tastes and taboos of hosts. The degree to which volunteers could ultimately adapt impacted their ability to serve. When volunteers were unable to resolve the challenges of adaptation and finding meaningful work, they felt miserable and bored and chose to end their service.

In some schools, the relationship between the volunteers and their missionary administrators was not the best. As per the Peace Corps regulations, volunteers were not to abide by any religious rules. Yet in Mezam, some principals required the volunteers to either teach religion or join the students in daily prayers, something the volunteers bluntly rejected. This problem which was never completely resolved had a negative impact on the performance of the volunteers.¹³⁷ In a similar vein, the missionaries denounced all night drinking parties among the volunteers. Certain volunteers occasionally drank excess alcohol but this did not affect their job performance. The missionaries believed that the volunteers had to adhere to prohibition. They also criticised the volunteers for staying out late. In one case, the principal of a Baptist Teacher Training College closed the gate to volunteers who stayed out late at night. Peace never existed between the volunteers and the missionary administrators in mission schools.¹³⁸

Other Cameroonians lamented about the shabby dressing habits of volunteers which was regarded in some cultures in Mezam as a taboo. The dressing habits of volunteers painted a bad image about them and obviously pushed the local inhabitants to reject the volunteers and their activities. One Peace Corps worker lamented that: “on a visit to a volunteer’s house, she was almost naked and when she opened the door, I asked her to go and dress properly. She entered her house just to add another small dress on her body which still left much to be desired as most of her body was still exposed.”¹³⁹ Such habits were noticed by the people of Mezam and had a negative impact on the performance of the volunteers. In other aspects, the missionaries maintained constant watch over the volunteers. The missionaries rejected the idea of girls visiting the volunteers. In one instance, the principal of a Baptist School told Stanley Meisler, the Peace Corps evaluator that: “I do think the Peace Corps should have a policy prohibiting male

¹³⁷ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.180.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.181.

¹³⁹ Anonymous

volunteers from shacking up with the female volunteers.”¹⁴⁰ The volunteers refused to adhere to such doctrinal rules as putting their social life on hold was not a Peace Corps requirement.

5.4.5. Housing Problem

According to the 1961 cooperation agreement, volunteer housing was to be provided by the government with a monthly amount of 25,000 FCFA per house. This was done through reimbursemernt meaning that the Peace Corps paid and then the money was reimbursed by the government. Housing for Peace Corps was provided mostly by the Cameroon government and to a lesser extent the local community.¹⁴¹The role of the local community was to help identify the houses and the Peace Corps made the choice. The Peace Corps strived for the volunteer to live as to the local norms of the population as possible while having necessary security measures in place. The Peace Corps believed that development and mutual learning were effectively achieved when people lived and worked together, it was important that volunteers lived modestly by the standards of the people they served. Volunteers were likely to be accepted in the community when their housing was of modest nature. Community-donated housing was preferable to government provided housing as it demonstrated that the community saw the value of the Peace Corps volunteer and was willing to sacrifice to ensure Peace Corps presence in their community. It was an indication of community reception.¹⁴²When communities were unable to lodge volunteers, but demonstrated a real interest in hosting a volunteer, the Peace Corps paid rents with money provided by the government. Community housing was provided by a variety of sources (community development organisation, an individual or traditional council).

The problem of housing especially in the early weeks of service was very disheartening. Most mission schools constructed houses for one sex. Yet both sexes were sent to many of these schools. The problem was most evident in Cameroon Protestant College Bali. The school had accommodation for either males or females and not for both. The principal was surprised when two men and two women were sent to the school.¹⁴³Adding to the headaches was the acute shortage of household equipment. When volunteers arrived, there was almost nothing in the new houses. Beds, mattresses, dishes, stoves and other household equipment were unavailable. Washington failed in its responsibility to furnish the houses as promised. The volunteers found

¹⁴⁰ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.180.

¹⁴¹Peace Corps Cameroon, *Volunteer Handbook*, p.74.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p.75.

¹⁴³ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.151.

themselves in the embarrassing situation of borrowing dishes, stoves and other household necessities simply to stay afloat each day. The volunteers resented this situation.¹⁴⁴ The problem of housing persisted even though the Peace Corps has struggled over the years to address it.

The Peace Corps tried to identify volunteer housing that was safe, secured and needed no improvement but the major difficulty was that there were usually very few ready to rent houses in some remote communities like Adiemukong and in other communities like Mundum, the houses were not up to standards to meet the modest demands of the volunteers.¹⁴⁵ In such cases, most volunteers lived in the nearest area where better housing could be provided. This hindered the volunteer's services and activities as they travelled over long distances before reaching the communities of service. In some cases, improvement was needed to make the house secured and comfortable. This problem of improvement posed a serious problem between the Peace Corps and the landlord but it was the volunteer that bore the consequences. The Peace Corps believed that the landlord should pay for improvements (locks, metal doors) because these were permanent improvements to their property and they should pay for these investments.¹⁴⁶

The landlords on their part thought that, improving the conditions of the houses protected and enhanced the safety of their volunteers. Furthermore, landlords thought that should they provide the volunteer with a home almost free, the Peace Corps should on its part try to improve the conditions of the houses. So, this disagreement between the agency and landlord was a serious threat to most volunteers. Volunteer's rents were at times not paid on time especially with houses to be paid by the government. This misunderstanding between the two parties and efforts in resolving issues regarding rents and improvements with the landlords always ended in a crisis since most landlords thought that all Americans were "wealthy people."¹⁴⁷

5.4.6. Safety and Security

Another challenge of the Peace Corps was vulnerability of volunteers to crime. Serving in isolated areas, in cultures with different values and attitudes, combined with extreme poverty in some cases, led to many cases of robbery and assaults. The safety and security of Peace Corps volunteers was a prime concern for Congress, and attention has grown in recent years. Since its creation about 301 volunteers have died in service, though accidents have declined since the

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.153.

¹⁴⁵ Peace Corps Cameeroon, *Volunteer Handbook*, p.75.

¹⁴⁶ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer/Owner of Agro-Industrial Complex, Mambu, 20/August /2019.

¹⁴⁷ *Idem.*

1970s. The top cause of volunteer death has long been motor vehicle accident with disease and drowning also major causes.¹⁴⁸ The 2002 report by the General Accounting Office found out that the rate of crimes against volunteers was steadily increasing and that the problem could be worse due to underreporting. The report blamed poor reporting practices and a high turnover rate in Peace Corps administration and training for a lack of preparedness for host country crime.¹⁴⁹ Serving as a volunteer overseas entailed certain safety and security risks. Living and travelling in an unfamiliar environment, limited understanding of the local culture, language and the perception of being a wealthy American can put a volunteer at risk. Property theft, burglaries and incidents of physical and sexual assaults were common especially when volunteers were away from their sites, in over crowded locations such as markets or in public transportation.¹⁵⁰ The Peace Corps worked in partnership with the local security officers around the volunteer's site in the study area.

In Mezam, tourist attractions in some urban and semi urban areas were favourite work sites for pick pockets. Volunteers who served in towns and bigger villages faced this problem especially Reinsma and Rachel. They experienced varying degrees of unwanted attention and harassment, petty thefts and burglaries where volunteer homes were forcefully broken in to and their items stolen especially when they were not around. Others were attacked in taxis or on their way from work and their items like mobile phones seized. Volunteers who were sexually assaulted while in their sites complained that the Peace Corps ignored or downplayed the allegations. In 2013, Peace Corps volunteers were sexually harassed at Nsani a business junction in Bafut. The volunteers were raped when they went out to relax and take a drink.¹⁵¹ At this juncture, the next section of the work will focus on the untold story/agenda of the Peace Corps.

5.5. An Overview of the Relations (Hidden Motives)

Despite the difficulties encountered, the unanswered question is to know why the Peace Corps and the U.S. government continued to send volunteers to Cameroon. The paragraphs below focus on the hidden agenda of the Peace Corps. It should be noted that Cameroon is one of the three countries in Africa (Togo and Niger) that the Peace Corps served in uninterruptedly since 1962.

¹⁴⁸ Congressinal Research Service, *The Peace Corps*, p.10.

¹⁴⁹ <https://money.howstuffworks.com> consulted on 20/December/2018 at 1:30p.m.

¹⁵⁰ Anonymous

¹⁵¹ Anonymous

The origin, history and the context of Peace Corps creation was a clear proof that it was created to combat the spread of Communism in Third World countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Its emphasis on peace was earnest but the backdrop for the new agency was the Cold War. The creation of the Peace Corps acted as a strong weapon to contain the spread of Communism and capitalist democratic ideologies in the American context.¹⁵² On 22nd September 1961, President Kennedy signed the Peace Corps Act as public law No.87-293. The Act placed the agency under the direction of the Secretary of State. More significant was section 4(c) of the Act which required the Secretary of State to ensure that: "Peace Corps activities were effectively integrated at home and abroad."¹⁵³ Also, the Act stated that the president shall make provisions for such training as he deems appropriate for each applicant for enrolment. The trainees were required to understand the philosophy, strategy, tactics and menace of Communism. This portion of the Peace Corps Act, and particularly the focus on Communist tactics in volunteer training, revealed the pragmatic considerations at work at the time the Peace Corps was created. The agency whatever its idealism was also intended to serve the American policy of containment. No wonder the agency's target for volunteers was the so-called strategic countries.¹⁵⁴ Their presence in these areas was part of what Alan McPherson described as:

A process of increasing North-South intimacies which grew in size during the Cold War, a conflict in which not just violence, but the logic of modernisation through social and economic development was also crucial. Indeed, the challenge of development provided a key battlefield in which the U.S. and the Soviet Union both strove to impose their respective visions of how to modernise the world. Demonstrating the efficacy of their contending ideologies became a matter of crucial importance.¹⁵⁵

There can be no denying therefore that the Peace Corps was created to circumvent communist influences in the world-the volunteers were to work for the U.S. and for freedom and were to play an important role in the unfolding post-war imperial competition between the U.S. and Russia. Kennedy encouraged young Americans to take the initiative in the Cold War and to do this, the U.S. needed a pragmatic third world policy. Kennedy as far back as 1957 had mocked at what he perceived as: "a gradual drop of American prestige in Africa and the growing Soviet influence." He concluded that: "we must embark on a bold and imaginative programme

¹⁵² Chenwi, "United States Peace," p.136.

¹⁵³ Amin, "The Peace Corps," p.64

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.65.

¹⁵⁵ Fernando, "Connecting Realities: Peace," p.131.

for the development of Africa.”¹⁵⁶ This was because the Third World became the new battle ground for the ideological struggle. This can be seen when he characterised the southern part of the globe (Africa, Asia, Middle East and Latin America) as: “the great battle ground for the defense and expansion of freedom today and a condition of peace.”¹⁵⁷ He added that: “we live at a very critical moment in history. The whole southern half of the world-Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East are caught up in the adventures of asserting their independence and modernising their old ways of life...Without exception they are under communist pressure. In many cases that pressure is direct and military.”¹⁵⁸ These statements by Kennedy were further explained by Theodore Sorensen supporting that:

He regarded a revitalised program[me] of economic and development aid as a principal instrument with which we could help them begin. It was not only a matter of idealism and generosity or better still volunteerism. These vast under-developed countries were in the absence of a major war, the crucial point of conflict between the East and West, the modernisation and maturity of their societies would strengthen their own security.¹⁵⁹

While the Peace Corps mission was to promote world peace and friendship, the competition between super powers was a major factor in its creation. The Peace Corps was an outgrowth of the Cold War. Kennedy warned that:

The communists were doing a far better job of training their young people to work for Communism outside their own countries. For the fact of the matter is that out of Moscow, Peiping, Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany are hundreds of men and women, scientists, physicists, teachers, doctors, engineers and nurses, studying in those institutes prepared to spend their lives abroad at the service of world Communism.¹⁶⁰

The United States had no such programme, and Kennedy wanted to involve Americans more actively in the cause of global democracy, peace, development and freedom. Against this impressive communist commitment according to Kennedy, the U.S. could muster only an inept foreign service with lackluster overseas missions. The U.S. had chosen too many ambassadors who were ill-equipped and ill-briefed and whose campaign contributions were regarded as a substitute for experience. He insisted that men who lacked compassion for the needy here in the U.S. were sent abroad to represent us in countries which were marked by diseases, poverty,

¹⁵⁶ Njuafor, “The United States,” p.2.

¹⁵⁷ T.C. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, New York, Harper and Row, 1965, p.529.

¹⁵⁸ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.49.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ www.moneycrashers.com, consulted on 20/May/2018 at 6:30 p.m, Meisler, *When the World*, p.9.

illiteracy and ignorance. He reiterated on the lack of fluency of the foreign services especially in foreign languages. He said that:

Seventy percent of the new foreign service officers could not speak any language besides English. In Athens, he said, only six of the seventy-nine Americans in the Embassy studied Greek. In Belgrade, only three out of the forty-four Americans spoke Serb-Croatian. And no one in the New Delhi Embassy could speak Hindi or any other Indian Language.¹⁶¹

Kennedy wanted a counter programme that involved Americans more actively in the cause of global democracy, peace, development and freedom. The Peace Corps was one of the tools the U.S. drew on to achieve its modernising objective and in Cameroon, it was conceived as a local complement of the structural changes since Peace Corps actions had a direct impact on small communities, the study programmes offered a window through which to examine local manifestations of the Cold War. As good ambassadors of democracy, the volunteers were assigned the task of developing the economies of host countries. Summing up the proposal, Kennedy said that: “we cannot discontinue training as soldiers of war, but we also want them to be ambassadors of peace.”¹⁶² Addressing Peace Corps volunteers while signing the Peace Corps Act in 1965, President Johnson attested to the Peace Corps’ role in influencing world order when he said: “I wish there were as many of you as there are soldiers, sailors and marines. The more we have of you, the less we need them.”¹⁶³

A by-product of their achievements was the abdication of Communism by these countries. The Peace Corps was to function as a vehicle for development assistance so as to align these young developing countries to western ideologies and prevent them from entering the orbit of Communism. By establishing the Peace Corps, Kennedy hoped to show developing nations that the U.S. cared for them thereby preventing them from falling in to Communism during the Cold War. Cameroon did not consider Communism as an option and therefore remained a non-aligned nation all through the Cold War. The volunteers were in part agents of propaganda engaged in a form of people-to-people diplomacy. Kennedy denounced Eisenhower for lacking a well coordinated policy for African countries. He criticised and remarked that: “under Eisenhower, American foreign policy was starved on a diet of negatives.”¹⁶⁴ Kennedy believed that Eisenhower’s policy of reacting to Soviet initiatives through “military pacts and alliances”

¹⁶¹ Meisler, *When the World*, p.9.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ Azoh-Mbi, “The Contribution of,” p.37.

¹⁶⁴ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.27.

crippled American foreign policy. In Pennsylvania and Kentucky, he exhorted that: “across the face of the globe, freedom and Communism are locked in a deadly embrace.”¹⁶⁵ He insisted that: “at this moment and during the past months and years, the communist expansion was on the move. We see it beginning to move.”¹⁶⁶ As a solution to this he proposed that: “Americans must move forward to meet Communism rather than waiting for it to come to us and then reacting to it.”¹⁶⁷ An early draft of 1961, on the Peace Corps pointed out that: “the Peace Corps would check the influence and appeal of Castroism in Latin America.”¹⁶⁸

Like in Cuba, Kennedy had plans of using the Peace Corps to check the spread of Communism in Cameroon. So just a year after its creation, volunteers were sent to Cameroon to fulfill the task of checking Communism while spreading Capitalism. In defense of the programme before the U.S. Congress, he evaluated that:

It is hard for any nation to focus on any external or subversive threat ...when its energies are drained in daily combat with the forces of poverty and despair. It makes little sense for us to assail the horrors of Communism, to spend \$50 billion a year to prevent its military advancement and then to be grudge spending...less than one tenth of that amount to help other nations...cure the social chaos in which Communism has always thrived.¹⁶⁹

It is clear that American interest was prime in the politics of development aid. Since the Cold War, American aid and voluntary services to foreign countries was a means to fight Communism, an instrument to re-enforce democratic systems of government and a true panacea for agriculturalists and American industrialists.¹⁷⁰ Also, most countries had to fulfill conditions and guarantee American interests before obtaining aid and volunteers. Certain actors had already underlined the absence of philanthropy in the U.S. aid and voluntary services to the black continent in general and Cameroon in particular like Seymour Whitaker who asserted that:

The effective allocation of bilateral aid and volunteers necessitates at once, a definition of American priority orders and the capacity to respond to African needs; the two things are always closely linked or related. Among the strategic divergences proposed to choose or exclude by beneficiaries of aid, some insist on political, economic and social criteria. The support of American strategic interest, the concentration of aid on important countries; the satisfaction of African elites, aid to regimes that are progressing, concentration accorded with respect to progress in the domain of human rights, aid to the very poor, aid limited to those who make a better use of it, or the concentration of efforts in domains in which the United States succeeds most (otherwise put agricultural development). Added

¹⁶⁵ Amin, “Making Sense of,” p.10.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁶⁷ Amin, *The Peace Corps*, p.33.

¹⁶⁸ Amin, “The Peace Corps,” p.49.

¹⁶⁹ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 531.

¹⁷⁰ Belinga, « Les Chefs de, » p.11.

to these criteria, each state is called upon to apply at a moment in time in function of the evolution of events in Africa and our interests in the world.¹⁷¹

In the same light, the Peace Corps served as an American emblem for world peace and friendship, yet few realise that it had sometimes tilted its agenda to meet the demands of the White House. The ups and downs in Washington were also too numerous to understand easily. Tracing its history over the past 55 years with 11 presidential administrators and 19 Peace Corps directors, the Peace Corps sometimes bent its programmes to suit the whims of the White House. Since its inception in 1961, the Peace Corps had to manage its mission to advance peace and provide development assistance, from teaching to building wells, against political onslaughts within the U.S. and host nations even as it managed its image as a symbol of American idealism rather than a tool of the CIA. Succeeding administrations had testy relations with the Peace Corps. Meisler offers information on the informed perspective from the turbulent years of the Vietnam war, when many volunteers were conflicted about their governments to the future direction of the Peace Corps.¹⁷²

Meisler discloses how Lyndon Johnson became furious when volunteers opposed his invasion of the Dominican Republic and how Richard Nixon literally tried to destroy the Peace Corps. Ronald Reagan endeavoured to make it an instrument of foreign policy in Central America. In 1980, Honduras received the largest Peace Corps programme in the world as a reward for letting the U.S. use the country as a base for the CONTRAS attacking the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. The U.S. intervened in Central America sending financial and military aid to rebels in Nicaragua against the left wing Sandinista government. When the Cold War ended, the Peace Corps foolishly rushed volunteers to Eastern Europe as agents of capitalism. During both the Vietnam and Iraq wars, many volunteers wondered if they were serving overseas as the smile on the face of the imperial tiger. The study explores the tension between the independence of the Peace Corps and the demands of U.S. foreign policy. This tension reflects a great danger for the Peace Corps would lose its credibility and acceptance if it lost its independence. Thus it is very important for the Peace Corps to maintain an independent non political stance in order to avoid jeopardising its worldwide acceptance.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*

¹⁷² Meisler, *When the World*, p.3.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

The least known side of Peace Corps service is that for many, it never ends. That is why the volunteers like to call themselves returned volunteers, not ex-volunteers or former volunteers, when they come home after their tours of overseas duty. Their links with the Peace Corps and returned volunteers, and their service to their countries and friends abroad, go on. Peace Corps is a life-defining leadership opportunity and a great way to launch a career. Volunteers return to the U.S. as global citizens with leadership, language, cross-cultural understanding, and technical skills that position them well for professional opportunities. The skills volunteers gain during their time of service are very useful for both personal and career development. It opens doors to other cultures that will be difficult to experience otherwise. This is a great way to build a career as most employers value cultural awareness and the ability to adapt to difficult situations. Volunteers teamwork and leadership skills are invaluable in almost every professional setting. The Peace Corps does not end after two years; it lasts a lifetime. Many returned more activist inclined and more intellectual, having discovered interests and capacities they did not know they possessed. Every volunteer experiences a private awakening. Most of these volunteers had an unprecedented impact on their personal and sometimes their professional development.

These different skills, aptitudes and experiences acquired during service prepared them for better employment. Most volunteers travel overseas not solely because of the need to help others but also to gain better employment after service. Meisler reacted to this by noting how surprised he was when he studied three Peace Corps alumni roster to discover the impressive array of talents among returned volunteers. He noted that:

There were two U.S. Senators, nine members of the House of Representatives, two Governors, three Mayors, twenty Ambassadors, a host of University Presidents, the board chairs of Levi Strauss and the Chicago Bears and the founders of the Nature Company Netflix, Novelist Paul Theroux, television news anchor Chris Matthews and New York writer George Packer were also [returned] volunteers.¹⁷⁴

As Kennedy wished, many volunteers returned home and later joined the U.S. State Department, with some advancing to the top. In compensation for the services of Christopher R. Hill, a Peace Corps volunteer who served in Cameroon from 1974-1976, he was nominated by President Jimmy Carter in to the State Department in 1977, and later served as Assistant American Secretary of State of the South East and Pacific Asia at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, South Korea from 1983-1985.¹⁷⁵ About one third of ACTIONS staff were returned volunteers,

¹⁷⁴ Meisler, *When the World*, p.3.

¹⁷⁵ Nguerouet Madio, « L'Axe Diplomatique Washington, » p.130.

many working to improve the understanding conditions and needs in Third World. In this way, returned volunteers working in overseas government organisations might ultimately be of more value to developing countries than they were during their actual service. Returned volunteers also made a significant mark on one of the highest institutions of American government-the Congress. In 1980, roughly 150 returned volunteers worked as congressional staff assistants. Representatives James Courter, Thomas Petri and Tony Hall served as Peace Corps volunteers in Venezuela, Somalia and Thailand respectively. In the Senate, Paul Tsongas was in Ethiopia between 1962-1964 and Christopher Dodd saw service in the Dominican Republic between 1966-1968¹⁷⁶

Returned volunteers also made their presence felt in various private organisations. In 1970, 20% of all International Voluntary Services personnel previously served with the Peace Corps. In 1980, the Cooperative for American Relief Elsewhere valued international experience and took it as a key priority and criteria for recruitment. The organisation reckoned that nearly 40% of their employees were returned volunteers. Volunteers in technical assistance put the figure at 30%. The Experiment in International Living estimated that atleast half its staff was comprised of returned volunteers. The private business sector was also a beneficiary of the skills and experience of returned Peace Corps volunteers. Several multinational companies made a point of hiring returned volunteers.¹⁷⁷

The economic aspect was also a very important reason for the continuous sending of volunteers to Cameroon. At no time in the history of the U.S. has economics played a more important role in foreign policy than it does today. This increasingly interdependent relationship is because of the fact that U.S. participation in the world economy is more vital to domestic prosperity than it was since the early 19th century. During the Cold War, when containment of Soviet Union was a cardinal objective, security alliances were preeminent policy tools. In the post Cold War world, economic relationships have assumed atleast equal significance.¹⁷⁸ Volunteers opened new markets for America and American goods so that the U.S. can withstand and maintain its economic dominance all over the world. Luchaire Francois believed that for President Johnson to convince the U.S. Congress in 1967 to accept the

¹⁷⁶ Rice, *Twenty Years of*, p.82.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ MINREX archives, "U.S. Commercial Diplomacy: The Challenge of the 21st Century", Afrique/Etats Unis, File, No. 02/97, June 1997, p.109.

programme for foreign aid and volunteerism, he remarked that: “an increase of 1 % of GNP in the under-developed countries, U.S. exports increase by 1.4 and Formosa after receiving U.S. aid and volunteers, its foreign trade with the country developed while that with Israel tripled.”¹⁷⁹ Aid and volunteers were given and sent to boost U.S. exports and foreign trade. Furthermore, Harrop William, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the U.S. recommended that:

In spite of the current economic conditions in the West, it is our own long term interest to increase bilateral and multilateral assistance to Africa.¹⁸⁰ He recommended that Aid alone will not suffice to turn around a situation in Africa...we should continue to increase our aid and volunteers...as the U.S. has been doing. But we must work closely with our commercial sectors to help them increase their businesses with Africa in ways that are consistent with Africa's development needs.¹⁸¹

With the case of Cameroon, volunteers over the years improved economic and commercial relations between Cameroon and the U.S. In 1970, there was an increase in the number of volunteers in Cameroon and this increase was also accompanied by an increase in commercial exchange between the U.S. and Cameroon as shown below

Table 35: U.S. Exports to Cameroon in the 1970s

No	Year	Amount in million dollars
1	1969	12.375
2	1970	20.194
3	1971	15.178

Source: MINREX archives “Etats des Relations Entre le Cameroun et Les Etats-Unis D’Amerique”, p.1.

The above table shows the evolution of U.S. exports to Cameroon for three years. From the table, it can be seen that exports increased dramatically in 1969 and a contributing factor to this was the increase number of volunteers requested by Cameroon and the fact that Peace Corps activities were extended to French speaking Cameroon. The volunteers during their service opened more markets for American goods. Moreover, over 90% of the financial aid was used to purchase goods back from the U.S. and this was always stated in the project agreement. This was a visible characteristic of dependent development. In 2011, Cameroon was U.S. 107th largest

¹⁷⁹ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p.90.

¹⁸⁰ W. Jacobsen, “Africa in the 1980s”, Remarks by Deputy Assistant Secretary, Harrop before the Danish Foreign Policy, Copenhagen on 8 March, 1980, p.8.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.10.

imports suppliers and the U.S. 128th largest export market. In that same 2011, the U.S. was Cameroon's sixth largest imports partner.¹⁸²

Again, during their two years of service, volunteers were opened to different activities that helped them learn. Volunteers worked and lived alongside the nationals of the country in which they were stationed doing the same work, eating the same food and speaking the same language. In the course of their living and working together with community members, they had access to particular information or knowledge which helped them during and after their service. The volunteers played some sort of double standard role as they served the interest of their receiving communities and that of their home government. Infact, volunteers often played the role of transceivers. The volunteers were obliged to prepare and write end of service reports on their activities and experiences which through information sharing, they leaked out information about the receiving communities. The information provided by the volunteers enabled the U.S. Department of State to take certain decisions for her own interest (foreign policy) based on the reports of service.¹⁸³ The exposure was a kind of training since it offered volunteers opportunities after university studies. The training helped them in any thing they may want to do when they were back in the U.S. or any other country they may find themselves in. This said, an appraisal of the relations between Mezam and the Peace Corps consist the next part of the study.

5.6. Peace Corps- Mezam Relations: Mutuality or Dependence?

The relationship between the Peace Corps and Mezam was marked by aspects of mutuality and dependence. The first aspect of mutuality among the two parties was that both actively took part in the implementation of the projects. The volunteers worked with their partners. This aspect of mutuality in the implementation of projects is further buttressed by the fact that volunteers and some community host worked hard to implement projects using funding opportunities offered by the PCPP with other U.S. agencies and the private sector.¹⁸⁴

Another aspect of mutuality was the fact that both parties endeavoured in mutual agreements to an extent before projects were carried out.¹⁸⁵ The Peace Corps staff was sent to the community to assess if there was the needed community support and reception. This enabled the two parties to take into account mutually agreed necessities and possibilities. Eventhough, all

¹⁸²Njuafac, "The United States," p. 250.

¹⁸³ Tiemuncho Joseph, "International Volunteerism, the Case of the Peace Corps", Beyond the Frontiers, rebroadcast on CRTV Afternoon edition, Yaoundé, CRTV, 21 /November 2018.

¹⁸⁴ Votinyuy, "Cameroon-Canada Cooperation," p.125.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.126.

projects were highly influenced and financed by the Peace Corps, the final decision to earmark, continue or terminate was the responsibility of the executing agents of both parties in Mezam.

Contrary to the neo-colonialist North-South relations marked by the absence of mutual decision making, the taking of decisions in the framework of the Peace Corps-Mezam relations was subject to mutual understanding. This explains why Cameroon often elaborated priority lists of project proposals from which the Peace Corps selected the projects to finance in Mezam. This was mostly the outcome of a face-to-face encounter. In most cases, the volunteers came to the field of implementation to verify the proper execution and follow up of the projects earmarked. They usually made evaluations and drew up a map for those that were still in the pipeline.¹⁸⁶

Another aspect of mutuality was seen through the benefits obtained by both parties. The "benefits reaped by the volunteers during their stay in Mezam were expressed through the communal life they learnt and adopted."¹⁸⁷ They ate, lived and worked with community members and because of this, they had access to information. This explains why for more than 55 years, the Peace Corps continuously sent young American graduates to Cameroon. It was also affirmed that the Peace Corps assistance was very successful thanks to the solidarity and community spirit of the people as far as community development is concerned. One of the most important things to note here is that the people of Mezam through their *Fons* always appreciated the works of volunteers either by gifts or in kind. For example, Reinsma was recognised and dressed in traditional regalia by the Bafut people. Another volunteer John Granville was so successful and loved by his community that he was given an honorary title by the chief of the village. The volunteers testified that they were always appreciated and how their lives and their communities have advanced thanks to the Peace Corps.¹⁸⁸

Generally, relations between the two were widely perceived to be donor-driven that is its management was more in the hands of donors than of recipient government. Its donor-driven nature was manifested in several ways. The Peace Corps-Mezam relations depended on American donors. All the projects carried out and the training given to the staff was realised thanks to aid. The projects carried out in Mezam were financed by American donors. The profound socio-economic disparities between the two partners played a lot in their relations. Most development projects were financed from outside. Most of the financial as well as material assistance was given by the American government, USAID through small grant assistance,

¹⁸⁶ Etanefila, "Cameroon-German Technical," p. 120.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

¹⁸⁸ Shu Joram, 60 years, Farmer, Mambu, 20/August /2019.

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief through volunteers support activities and training and the Peace Corps Partnership Project contributed by good will people in the U.S. Cameroon was entirely free to take its decisions and develop its ideas but financially, she was heavily dependent on the Peace Corps. Whatever the case, this financial and material dependence on outside donors was certainly a common feature of North-South relations. However, it was hoped that the projects funded by the Peace Corps were to enable Cameroonians improve their living standards and financial sufficiency. The financial dependence of Cameroon on the Peace Corps certainly affected the mentality of Cameroonians who perceived volunteerism as a free gift.¹⁸⁹

Ideas for technical cooperation originated from donors. In most cases ideas were hatched in resident missions and then grown and sold to recipient governments. The latter was not always convinced but they were presented and perceived as conditions for obtaining assistance. They believed that resources of cooperation may be useful in ways different from those perceived by donors. Also, most projects were prepared or designed largely by staff or consultants of Peace Corps rather than by recipient government. Peace Corps preferred to use their staff or consultants for project design because of known entity; they were familiar with the formal and informal requirements and procedures of project design. It was easier culturally and linguistically, to work with people from one's organisation or country and the design will be delivered in a formal and on a schedule acceptable to them. The Cameroon government accepted this because they lacked the staff or resources to design the projects on their own or simply because the design of projects by Peace Corps was the practice for a very long time that it had become accepted as normal.¹⁹⁰

The Peace Corps dominated the implementation of projects. It had legal documents defining its responsibilities and the recipients concerning the control of project resources. Even the mid projects or post evaluations of projects were often carried out by the agency's staff and consultants. The terms of reference for evaluations were always prepared by the Peace Corps to comply with the regulations and interest of their governing bodies than meet the decision making needs of the government and local community.¹⁹¹Based on the above results, the arguments sustained in this section of the work prove that dependence outweighed mutuality in their relations. The objectives of the Peace Corps in Mezam were not completely achieved because of some drawbacks. It is as a result of this that we made proposals if implemented by both parties, will not only enhance and foster closer ties but also boost relations between the two parties.

¹⁸⁹ *Idem.*

¹⁹⁰ Anonymous

¹⁹¹ Votinyuy, "Cameroon-Canada Cooperation," p.125.

5.7. Recommendations

The Peace Corps-Mezam relations were affected by a series of problems. The failure of the partnership to achieve its goals were attributed to the problems. We are suggesting that on the part of the Peace Corps, it should pay more attention to cultural sensitivity in the recruitment process that is locals of the project village should be recruited, work harder to ensure presence of counterparts and improve supervision and quality control. There should be participation of beneficiaries in the identification, planning, implementation and evaluation of development projects and technical control as well as equal relationship between volunteers and their host communities like giving communities a greater say in the work volunteers perform, or sending community members to the U.S. for education and training that is host communities must drive the work volunteers do. This is to ensure that they take on the full control and responsibility of activities and pursue them after the Peace Corps departure, a key aspect of sustainability.

Also, the two-year contract signed by each volunteer was short and thereby led to occasional discontinuity in projects which lasted longer than their period of stay in Cameroon. No wonder the people of Mezam lamented each time a group of volunteers returned to the U.S. after serving for two years. They regretted the departure of their friends. If the contract years could be increased to 3 to 5 years, it will give volunteers the opportunity to initiate, supervise and implement projects with a longer life span and that will impact their posts of service. Again, a more inclusive volunteer corps with more volunteers from working class backgrounds and more colour would benefit host communities who will gain access to a greater variety of knowledge and skills. It might also improve America's reputation overseas as more people in other nations would encounter the diversity that is such a source of U.S. strength. The Peace Corps recently began a laudable initiative to increase the number of volunteers who are 50 years and above. These older volunteers brought something to their service that most young volunteers could not: extensive professional and life experience and the ability to mentor younger ones. What the agency should begin doing is recruiting the best of recent graduates and those older people whose skills and personal characteristics are a solid fit to the needs of the host country.

On the other hand, the Government of Cameroon should be able to define its priority areas in which it need volunteers to intervene. Volunteer skills should be channeled to the right sector if not they will be of no use and will not be of help to Cameroonians. The volunteers should intervene more with issues that have to do with technology and to that extent, it will be

expected that volunteers should not come to Cameroon to do things that their local counterparts can best do. The way forward is that the government should define its priority areas and the area of technology would be one of those that will be very important and could be of interest because technologically, the volunteers are more advanced. Also, there should be some sort of a reform system or exchange programmes between the U.S government and that of Cameroon. If the Peace Corps sends some volunteers to Cameroon, Cameroon should also send its education experts to train Americans. Of course there is no country with a monopoly of knowledge.¹⁹²

The government can start up a scheme similar to the Peace Corps which engages Cameroonian youths to venture in to the world and volunteer so as to gain the international experience that goes with it. Cameroon could send its volunteers to serve in different countries for one or two years but if this is not possible because of lack of resources and finance, there is a similar initiative in Nigeria called the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) which was set up on 22nd May 1973.¹⁹³ This scheme implied that after university studies, graduates must put in a year of service to the state. During this period, they are barely given a token that allowed them to survive but the most important thing is the exposure and experience they were opened to.

The government can create the Cameroon Youth Corps (CYC) which will involve Cameroonian graduates in nation building and development of the country. They can put in a year since the government might not be able to take charge if the service period is more than one year. This will imply that young graduates will be posted to regions other than their regions of origin where they will be expected to mix with people from different ethnic groups, social and family backgrounds and learn the culture of the indigenes in the locations they were posted to. This action might bring about unity and help the youths appreciate other ethnic groups. This exposure to different cultures opens them to a lot of things that they will learn and this is going to prepare them for better employment or any other thing they will choose to do in life.

5.8. Conclusion

The chapter focused on appreciating the U.S. Peace Corps activities in Mezam. To attain the objective of the chapter, we assessed the consequences of these activities in diverse domains including agriculture, health and education. After the assessment, the results proved that most projects carried out by the U.S. Peace Corps in Mezam were a success. This could be explained

¹⁹² Dze-Ngwa Willibroad, 54 years, Model School Principal, Yaoundé, 23/ December/2023.

¹⁹³ <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/National-Youth-Service-Corps>, consulted on the 30/12/2018 at 1 :35 p.m.

by the fact that donors were present at the execution phase of projects and involved the people which promoted self-reliant development. The chapter also argues that volunteers were ill-trained, ill-equipped and ill-prepared for services in Mezam and as a result failed to achieve Goal 1 of the Peace Corps which calls on the agency to provide developing nations with trained men. On the other hand, the agency greatly succeeded to achieve Goal 2 and 3 which required them to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the people served and to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. A general review of the work will constitute the next part of the study.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

During the past fifty-five years, Peace Corps volunteers served in Cameroon uninterruptedly. In 1960, Cameroon commenced diplomatic relations with the U.S. and there was exchange of Ambassadors and diplomatic notes between the two countries. The U.S. was represented in Yaoundé while Cameroon was represented in Washington. These relations evolved with time and the signing of the cooperation agreement on 26th May 1961 and the Peace Corps Programme Agreement on 23rd July and 10th September, 1962 between the U.S. and Cameroon acted as a take-off point in the relations between the two countries. When the Peace Corps came to Cameroon, its activities were extended to the North-West Region and particularly to Mezam Division where the U.S. was very influential. As part of the project to restore historical sites, the Embassy sponsored the publication of a book titled “*The Customs and Traditions of Bafut*” and also rehabilitated the *Achum*.¹⁹⁴ This proved that diplomacy can also go beyond the circles of consular services and state-to-state high level politicking to involve peoples of the grassroots level. This was an exemplary proof of cultural diplomacy.

This said, the main goal all through was to unveil and investigate the contributions of the Peace Corps to the people of Mezam. The central problem in the study seeks to assess the extent to which the United States Peace Corps contributed in the development of Mezam Division. This problem is streamlined into the following: what was the reason for the extension of the Peace Corps to Cameroon and Mezam in particular? what were some of the local development initiatives in Mezam? what were some of the activities initiated, supervised and implemented in Mezam by the Peace Corps? what were the consequences of these activities on the people and how far did the Peace Corps keep to its set objectives in the area? After the organisation closed its office in the study area in 2017, we investigated to know whether the initial objectives expressed in the 1962 cooperation agreements were attained. We tried to evaluate and draw conclusions on the partnership which ran for over five decades. In the course of doing this, we structured our work in to 5 chapters.

The first chapter of the work presents the geographical and historical setting of Mezam which played a great role in promoting joint development. This is because physical and human

¹⁹⁴The *Achum* is an architectural master piece and the traditional residence of the *Fons* of Bafut and their spirits dwell in it. It is one of the oldest traditional architectural designs in the region. The architecture and style of the *Achum* is reminiscent of ancient Tikar architecture. It is built entirely of local materials that is bamboo walls and a thatched conical roof supported by carved wooden beams. The structure was built between 1907-1910 to replace the original structure that was burnt by the Germans during the Bafut vs German war (1901-1907); as such it is today the oldest structure of traditional origin in all of Cameroon.

factors have always influenced development and acted as an enabling factor for humanitarian action. It also examines the origin, objectives and evolution of the Peace Corps, reason, procedure and implantation of the organisation in Cameroon and Mezam in particular, the application, selection and training of volunteers as well as the structure and funding of the agency. The chapter argued that the growth and expansion of the Peace Corps was both dramatic and fascinating for the past 55 years from a bare 763 volunteers scattered over 13 countries in 1961 to more than 165.000 volunteers today serving in 145 countries around the world.

Chapter 2 examines the local development initiatives in Mezam Division and seeks to understand how community development was given credence in the study area before, during and after the arrival of the Peace Corps volunteers. The chapter argued that the presence of volunteers gave rise to a dialogue between existing paradigms and connected varied community development efforts both private and public in Mezam. They brought ideas that were shared with local developers both on the ground and through training programmes. These training programmes both formal and informal linked them with private institutions and efforts including farmer groups, *njangis* and Village Development Associations. In this sense, the Peace Corps collaborated in the broad process of connecting diverse spaces and efforts that constituted a global fight against poverty to the degree that its volunteers operated as connectors of diverse forums where the problems of community development were discussed. Hopkins argues that:

Globalisation was a multicentred phenomenon and that even today, it can be understood fully only by recognising that it is not simply the result of a dominant centre activating lesser peripheries, but is jointly produced by all parties to the process. This did not occur uniformly, ultimately every global phenomenon has different rhythms and densities. What ultimately becomes global originates in the local.¹⁹⁵

Along these lines, it could be argued that unlike the argument found in many narratives about the Peace Corps, the political, economic and social realities that the volunteers encountered in Mezam decisively shaped not just the realms and environment, where they worked but the way they did community development too. The foundational principles of community growth such as solidarity, community engagement and democracy were already enshrined in the customs and traditions of the people. The spirit of working together to achieve mutual growth was never uncommon. Due to the lack of modern financial institutions during the pre-colonial period and in some areas in the colonial and post-colonial periods coupled with the

¹⁹⁵ Fernando, "Connecting Realities: Peace," p.145.

accessibility, availability, reliability and the confidence indigenous people had in *Njangis*, such associations served as a forum where people rallied themselves and mobilised initiatives geared towards growth through collective financial pooling. These associations were grounded on mutual trust, cemented by a common bond of ethnicity, culture, friendship, neighbourliness and expanded to include religious and occupational affiliations, shared experiences, village and regional origins and provided the framework for the construction of new modes of cooperation among the people of Mezam.¹⁹⁶ These groups eventually served as traditional sources of credit to finance community development and laid the foundation for the establishment of credit unions and cooperatives in the later years. The ease of the establishment and eventual growth and proliferation of credit unions and cooperatives in the 1960s by Peace Corps volunteers in Mezam was as a result of these indigenous modes of cooperation which already existed in the area. The conflicts that emerged on how to approach community development show that the Peace Corps was not an isolated organisation. On the contrary, only the broad context of a truly global war on poverty in which multiple institutions and individuals interacted, joined efforts, clashed and conflicted can prove the actions of volunteers in Mezam.

Chapter 3 dives in to the projects which had as priority the development of the study area. Here, the work researches in to the actual manifestation of the Peace Corps agenda in the field of development. In the economic sector, poverty alleviation was the prime motive of the Peace Corps. Through diverse projects among which included improving agriculture by opening new markets for farmers and creating income generating activities in the local communities, their living standards were improved. Agricultural markets played a key role in the lives of poor people in the developing countries since more than half of the population in these regions and more than three quarters of the poor were defined as those living on less than \$ U.S.1 per day. Most of these people lived in the rural areas where agriculture typically constituted 50-90 percent of household income. As a result of this, the development of efficient agricultural markets by the volunteers in Mezam had a large impact on the economic opportunities of rural households.

Within this context, the Peace Corps deployed resources and expertise to help rural household improve on the quality and quantity of their outputs which became a priority in the economic development of the study area. Their action of partnership also extended in to the

¹⁹⁶ D.B. Ngoran, *et al*, "Incidental Benefits of Female Constituted Social Groups in Nso Polity of the Cameroon Grassfields: Colonial and Post-Colonial Appraisal", *International Journal of History and Cultural Studies*, Vol.7, Issue 1, 2021, p.21.

development of transport facilities, credit unions and cooperative societies. In this domain, the Peace Corps saw the implementation of projects which helped to provide the needed market for most local farmers' products. The birth, growth and proliferation of cooperatives in Mezam today is thanks to the groundwork and foundation laid by Peace Corps volunteers. This volley of economic action of the agency ranks among the most significant part of its work whose results to a larger extent were successful

Chapter 4 shows the contributions of the U.S. Peace Corps volunteers in the social domain especially in the health and education sector. Volunteers were involved in health and education activities which they considered to be pillars of local development. It was very necessary for the U.S. Peace Corps to improve on the health situation of the population. This is due to the fact that a healthy population will provide the agency with its needs towards development in other sectors of life. Their impact was felt in local hospitals and the communities at large where they trained staff, local community health personnel as well as donated equipment and drugs to help arrest the health complications of the people in the study area. In the same light, education continues to be very important as far as the development of any community is concerned. A community may have all the available resources for development but might still be lacking in development due to inadequacy of educated elites to harness the available in to meaningful development for the community.

After the British expatriates left the area, English was at the verge of being eliminated coupled with the fact that the educational system in Mezam, just emerging from the dark colonial days tethered on the brink of collapse but the timely arrival of the volunteers rescued the situation. In many ways, the volunteers most valuable contribution was to give hundreds of children in the study area, the chance to go to school. Volunteers have not only provided knowledge of maths/science but also helped break down students' traditional fear of attempting anything beyond a textbook's rigid instruction methods, sports clubs and numerous other extra curricular activities associated with the modern school. The volunteers initiated a national bibliography list and commenced the process of drafting textbooks that were more sensitive and responsive to the demands of Cameroonian students and schools. A defining quality of these neophyte teachers was that all of them were graduates and had atleast a first degree or its equivalent. It was once common for British high school drop outs to hold positions of importance, but upon the arrival of the volunteers, that was no longer the case.

One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programmes by their intentions rather than results. This view was the major preoccupation of chapter 5 where we go beyond the activities of the Peace Corps to evaluate the consequences of these activities in the study area. The programme continues to reflect the evolving priorities of the U.S. government and changes in the population of the United States. Today, on average, volunteers are older than their predecessors and more experienced in specialised fields. By serving, volunteers established long lasting friendships and discovered new career paths. The Peace Corps experience was an awakening and answered Kennedy's inaugural challenge "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." In villages, volunteers were frequently at neighbours homes dining, planning future projects, taking a walk to bars to share drinks, buying local products in market and reflecting on their service. A clearly positive contribution was that by spending their money in Cameroon, the volunteers assisted in the development of the area. Economists will argue that the dollars Peace Corps volunteers spent in Mezam, though few, assisted the economy of the area. The lives of the people were also improved through capacity building and transfer of skills. This promoted sustainability and avoided dependence since the people in the study area are becoming more and more self-reliant. Volunteers work to build trust within their communities and share their skills to solve challenges that face developing communities. Apart from the impact their activities had on the local people, another significant achievement was their ability to make friends for America even in the remote areas of Africa, something that has remained as an important legacy and thumbprint of the Peace Corps. They have learnt more than 200 languages and dialects.

The chapter also argues that though the Peace Corps greatly contributed in the development of Mezam through diverse projects, there were things fundamentally wrong with volunteers' service in Cameroon and Mezam in particular. Many lacked both the skills and experience to reform their jobs which did not go unnoticed by the people of Mezam. Increasingly the latter questioned why their government paid thousands of dollars to bring unqualified Americans to serve when thousands of Cameroon university graduates languished in unemployment. Some people in Mezam thought that: "some volunteers were useless. They left the U.S. to come fill vaccination sheets."¹⁹⁷ Others argued that: "Cameroon does not need the Peace Corps. Why can the Peace Corps not just take a year and bring in experts to train so many

¹⁹⁷ Neba Nelson, 60 years, Teacher, Mambu, 20/August/2019.

Cameroonians in the Higher Teacher Training Colleges who will in turn train other Cameroonians rather than sending young Americans to venture in to the Cameroon society with very little results. There is a lot more than just the humanitarianism they claim thus the issue of the spy system.”¹⁹⁸ He added that considering the cost of maintaining the volunteers in Cameroon, the cost of running the staff, stipends and time the volunteers stay in the country, I will strongly advise the programme be suspended and halted. If the U.S. government genuinely wants to improve the development of Cameroon in the domain of education, health and agriculture, they should transfer just one quarter of the resources to the different ministries.¹⁹⁹ Volunteers’ activities have not undergone significant alterations that consistently endure beyond their term of service (two years). A fishery technician in 1985 argued that: “Peace Corps volunteers come here to learn” while another argued that: “he did not find Peace Corps services useful.”²⁰⁰ Another person reacted that:

Stop sending unqualified, out for adventure young people to Cameroon. There are so many Cameroonians better qualified to do what these youngsters are sent to do. The experience I had with Peace Corps volunteers sent to teach in Cameroon was horrible. I believe this programme is just a way of reducing unemployment among American youths who have lost a sense of purpose at the detriment of fresh graduates from developing countries. This programme has no use anymore.”²⁰¹

Compounding the problem was the ever-present suspicion of the Peace Corps as an arm of the CIA. Life as a Peace Corps volunteer is not easy and volunteers face many challenges, from language barriers to poor living conditions and no salary. Volunteers receive a monthly stipend for room, buy a few essentials enough to be at a level sufficient only to maintain health and basic needs. Men and women are expected to work and live alongside the nationals of the country in which they are stationed doing the same work, eating the same food, speaking the same language. This therefore limited the success of volunteers and as a result fewer Cameroonians were involved in farming and the fishing industry in the study area is almost extinct. Foodstuffs such as rice and fish are imported from China. The February 2008 protests in Cameroon over shortages and the persistent increase in the prices of foodstuffs, basic consumer goods and petroleum pointed not only to failures of government policy but also to the ineffectiveness of development agencies such as the Peace Corps to address the most urgent

¹⁹⁸ Dze-Ngwa Willibroad, 54 years, Model School Principal, Yaoundé, 23/ December/2023.

¹⁹⁹ *Idem*

²⁰⁰ Azoh-Mbi, “The Contribution of,” p.111.

²⁰¹ Tande, *Peace Corps Volunteers*, p.21.

economic and social problems of the day. The needs of the people of Mezam in the 21st century are very different from what they were 55 years ago when the agency was established in 1961. Back then, enthusiastic young Americans offered something that many newly independent countries counted in single and even double digits. But today, those same nations have millions of well educated citizens of their own desperately in need of work. So its much less clear what inexperienced Americans have to offer.

There is a clear-cut difference between good volunteerism and voluntourism and this lies in the impact factor at home or abroad. Volunteers should leave behind a positive impact that goes beyond the warm fuzzies as most African nations today need experienced and skilled people in health, sciences, engineering, technology and water resource management. Given the Peace Corps inability to recruit people with those skills since most volunteers were B.A. generalists, the agency has been increasingly irrelevant especially with respect to Africa's development needs. The question is whether the agency has ever thought how an American would feel if a fresh-out-college Cameroonian from a rural area with a Bachelor of Arts degree who from time to time helped the mother in the farm is sent to consult on animal husbandry, fishing techniques or crop cultivation. Sure Americans will look at the person as a clown and his activities as a bunch of nonsense. Generally, Cameroonians were not allowed to challenge the volunteers and were hardly held accountable if they were wrong. Sometimes, volunteers find it difficult to live in Cameroon and can write and complain about Cameroonians to the Embassy and even back home making it difficult to control them. This also makes them understand that they are coming with knowledge to pass it down to some ignorant people.²⁰²

The study recommends that donors and aid agencies should have as priority the use of national and regional consultants whenever such resources were available. Also, the government should define its priorities in which they want the volunteers to intervene so as to better benefit from their activities. This is especially in domains of technology in which volunteers were more advanced. The Government can create a similar scheme in which Cameroonians can volunteer in order to acquire the rich experience that goes with it. Cameroon should create the Cameroon Youth Corps which will have the Peace Corps as key partner to share its experience for the development of the country now that most countries are showing a growing interest in

²⁰²Dze-Ngwa Willibroad, 54 years, Model School Principal, Yaoundé, 23/ December/2023.

volunteerism because of the benefits accrued to it. Furthermore, Cameroonians and the government should stop regarding aid as a free good since they believe that it has no impact on the state budget as it is funded from outside. The government should be able to say no to assistance and reject it if it is not going to play a primary leading role. This belief of assistance being a free good explains why there is usually inadequate follow up from the government.

The results of the work prove that the humanitarian agenda of the agency was implemented in Mezam. This can be justified with the numerous projects the organisation initiated, supervised and realised in the study area. These projects enhanced the development of the area. This said, we have as lessons from our work that volunteers learnt and understood that perception was different from reality. They were surprised with the positive treatment they received in Mezam as oppose to the negativity they heard about Africa as a whole and Cameroon in particular. The experience helped volunteers to mature, develop and plan their future careers. When they joined the Peace Corps, their knowledge of Africa was very myopic and clouded with myths of hunger, people living on trees, jungle forests, barbarism as taught by some of their university professors while some read in books and watched in films. After service, they discovered that the so-called dark continent was not very different if not better than theirs. While joining the Peace Corps, most volunteers thought they were coming to help the people develop, but at the end they realised that, they learnt more than the people they served. Perhaps their most important lesson learnt was that people all over the world were the same in many ways.

This work just like any other academic endeavour did not address every aspect of the Peace Corps. The first shortcoming of the work is seen in the fact that it did not give a detail analysis of the role of volunteers in the promotion of youth, women and gender empowerment. Also, the limits of the work could be seen in the domain of data collection and analyses as the researcher was not allowed access into the Peace Corps head office in Yaoundé and any other information concerned to the agency. This was on the grounds that the Peace Corps does not help in the realisation of studies that are not of the direct interest of the organisation. This rather acted as a motivating factor to the researcher as we wanted to know why an organisation of this level refused to help in an endeavour which was partly aimed to popularise the agency. Our hope is that, this work will add something new to the interpretations of the Peace Corps, demonstrating the organisation's importance in Mezam. Finally, the researcher wishes to encourage other studies of the Peace Corps in action especially in the missing aspects mentioned above. It is hoped that this study will provoke the interest of researchers in humanitarian action to branch out

from the mainstream and venture in other relevant but yet to be exploited fields related to humanitarianism and the Peace Corps.

In total, we conclude that the activities of the Peace Corps in Mezam from 1962-2017 lived up to expectation. Our assessment of this period pushes us to say that the projects of the Peace Corps in Mezam were very successful as they impacted the lives of most people especially in the remote areas. The Peace Corps was a springboard to local development in Mezam. After more than 55 years of service, the Peace Corps is more vital than ever and still growing. From J.F. Kennedy's inspiration came an agency devoted to world peace and friendship and volunteers continue to help individuals build a better life for themselves, their community and their country. Its approach to development was different since it funded people and not things. This helped to avoid the issue of dependency which was a companion of North-South relations. The U.S. saving grace is the Peace Corps. When one person extends his hand to give a gift, the hand of the person who receives the gift is always below that of the donor.

The U.S. can continue to give to Cameroon, but it cannot be considered a win-win situation if Cameroon never learns how to manufacture its own cars or fix its own roads. The Peace Corps is never going to make Cameroon a rich country. That is not what it is there for. The U.S. did not become an economic powerhouse because it has goods but because it makes goods. In order to develop, Cameroonians indicated the necessity of technology transfers and the young Peace Corps volunteers are expected to play a frontline role since they are more advanced in terms of technology. Our increasingly interconnected world demands global solidarity, not charity to solve global problems that transcend national borders. We drew inspiration from this to make recommendations which will ameliorate the basis for future partnerships. In their improved form, aid might not only be one way but some sort of an avenue of shared experience and mutual development.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE 1

FACULTY OF ARTS, LETTERS
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES.
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

*FACULTE DES ARTS, LETTRES
ET SCIENCES HUMAINES.
DEPARTEMENT D'HISTOIRE*

Guided Questions on the activities of the U.S. Peace Corps in Mezam

Dear informants, the information we intend to get from you will enable us realise a research work. It is purely an academic exercise and we plead that you answer the questions that follow honestly and frankly without fear as your ideas will be analysed just for this purpose.

A. Status of informant

Name..... Age..... Sex.....
Profession..... Village..... Social
status..... Date.....

B. Questions addressed to workers of the U.S. Peace Corps and other development agencies.

- What do you understand by the Peace Corps?
- When and where was it created?
- Who were the founding fathers of the agency?
- What prompted the formation of the agency?
- What were its objectives?
- How does it function?
- What are the criteria for volunteer application and selection?
- How are they trained?
- What does it take for the Peace Corps to be established in a particular country?
- How does this agency raise its revenue?
- What accounted for the coming of this agency to Cameroon?

- How many directors have headed this agency in Cameroon since its creation and who is the present Peace Corps director?
- How has it evolved with time?

C. Questions addressed to community members in Mezam

- What are some of the agriculture projects that have been initiated, supervised and implemented by this agency in Mezam?
- What are some of the health projects that have been initiated, supervised and implemented by this agency in Mezam?
- What are some of the projects in the domain of education that have been initiated, supervised and implemented by this agency in Mezam?
- What were some of the impacts of the projects in Mezam?
- Apart from this agency, which were the other agencies that were supporting this agency in the development of the area?
- What were some of the failures of the agency in Mezam?
- What are some of the problems that have been hindering this agency from accomplishing its objectives?
- If you were asked to propose solutions to the problems that this agency is facing, what would you say?
- What would be your personal opinion, if you were given the opportunity to comment on whether you want this agency to continue or shut down?

D. Questions addressed to community members on self reliant or community development initiatives in Mezam.

- . What do you understand by self-reliant development?
- . What are some of the self-reliant development initiatives or efforts in Mezam?
- . Which are some of the Village Development Associations (VDAs) that have been very influential in the development of your community?
- . How do VDAs function?
- . How have VDAs evolved with time?

- . What are some of the projects that have been initiated, supervised and realised by the VDAs in your community?
- . Apart from VDAs, which other local, national and international development organisations support community development initiatives in your area?
- . What were some of the impacts of these projects on the people of the community?
- . What are some of the problems that have been hindering this VDAs from accomplishing their objectives?
- . What are Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs), or *Njangis*?
- . How do *Njangis* function?
- . How have they evolved with time?
- . What are the different types of *Njangis*?
- . What are the reasons for the growth of *Njangis* in Mezam?
- . What is the impact of *Njangis* on the people of Mezam?
- . What are the contributions of *Njangis* to the development of Mezam division?
- . What are the problems that have been hindering *Njangis* from accomplishing its objectives in Mezam?

Thanks immensely for making my research a success.¹

¹Source : Author

APPENDIX 2

ANNEX 1

A.1

CAMEROON

Economic, Technical and Related Assistance

Agreement effected by exchange of notes
Signed at Yaounde May 26, 1961;
Entered into force May 26, 1961.

The American Ambassador to the Camerounian Minister for
Foreign Affairs

Embassy of the
United States of America
Yaounde, May 26, 1961.

Excellency:

I have the honor to refer to recent conversations between representatives of our two Governments and to advise you that the Government of the United States of America will be prepared to furnish to the Government of the Republic of Cameroon economic, technical and related assistance in accordance with the understandings set forth below:

1. The Government of the United States of America will furnish such economic, technical and related assistance hereunder as may be requested by the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, or by representatives designated by it, and approved by representatives of the agency designated by the Government of the United States of America to administer its responsibilities hereunder. Such assistance shall be furnished in accordance with arrangements agreed upon between the above-mentioned representatives, and subject to applicable United States laws and regulations.
2. The Government of the Republic of Cameroon will contribute its manpower, resources, and facilities in accordance with the general state of its economy and to the extent possible in furtherance of the purposes for which assistance is made available hereunder; will take appropriate steps to assure the effective use of such assistance; will cooperate with the Government of the United States of America to assure

A.2

that procurement will be at reasonable prices and on reasonable terms; will without restriction, permit continuous observation and review by United States representatives of programs and operations hereunder, and records pertaining thereto; will provide the Government of the United States of America with full and complete information concerning such programs and operations and other relevant information which the Government of the United States of America may need to determine the nature and scope of operations and to evaluate the effectiveness of the assistance furnished or contemplated; and will give the people of Cameroon full publicity concerning programs and operations hereunder. With respect to cooperative technical assistance programs hereunder, the Government of the Republic of Cameroon will also bear a fair share of the costs thereof; will, to the maximum extent possible, seek full coordination and integration of technical cooperation programs being carried on in Cameroon; and will cooperate with other nations participating in such programs in the exchange of technical information.

3. In any case where commodities or services are furnished on a grant basis under arrangements which will result in the accrual of proceeds to the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, from the import or sale of such commodities or services, the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, except as may otherwise be mutually agreed upon by the representatives referred to in paragraph 1 hereof, will establish in its own name a Special Account in a banking institution designated by it and approved by the representatives of the Government of the United States of America referred to in paragraph 1 hereof; will deposit promptly in such Special Account the amount of local currency equivalent to such proceeds; and, upon notification from time to time by the Government of the United States of America of its local currency requirements, will make available to the Government of the United States of America, in the manner requested by that Government, out of any balances in the Special Account, such sums as are stated in such notifications to be necessary for such requirements. However, these drawings by the Government of the United States of America will not exceed ten per centum of the sums deposited. The Government of the Republic of Cameroon may

A.3

draw upon any remaining balances in the Special Account for such purposes beneficial to Cameroon as may be agreed upon from time to time by the representatives referred to in paragraph 1 hereof. Any unencumbered balances of funds which remain in the Special Account upon termination of assistance hereunder to the Government of the Republic of Cameroon shall be disposed of for such purposes as may be agreed upon by the representatives referred to in paragraph 1 hereof.

4. The Government of the Republic of Cameroon will receive a special mission, which will discharge the responsibilities of the Government of the United States of America hereunder; upon appropriate notification by the Government of the United States of America will consider the members of this special mission as part of the diplomatic mission of the United States of America in Cameroon for the purpose of enjoying the privileges and immunities accorded to that diplomatic mission and its personnel of comparable rank; and will give full cooperation to the special mission, including the furnishing of facilities necessary for the purpose of carrying out the provisions hereof.

5.(a) Any supplies, materials, equipment or funds introduced into or acquired in Cameroon by the Government of the United States of America, or any contractor financed by that Government, for purposes of any program or project conducted hereunder shall, while such supplies, materials, equipment or funds are used in connection with such a program or project, be exempt from any taxes on ownership or use of property, and any other taxes, investment or deposit requirements in Cameroon, and the import, export, purchase, use or disposition of any such supplies, materials, equipment or funds in connection with such a program or project shall be exempt from any tariffs, customs duties, import and export taxes, taxes on purchase or disposition of property, and any other taxes or similar charges in Cameroon.

(b) All personnel, except citizens and permanent residents of the Republic of Cameroon, whether employees of the Government of the United States of America or its agencies or individuals under contract with, or employees of public or private organizations under contract with the Government of the United States of America or the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, or any agencies of either the Government of the United States

A.4

of America or the Government of the Republic of Cameroon who are present in the Republic of Cameroon to perform work in connection herewith and whose entrance into the country has been authorized by the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, shall be exempt from income taxes and mandatory social security contributions levied under the laws of the Republic of Cameroon with respect to income upon which they are obliged to pay income taxes or make social security contributions to any other Government and from taxes on the purchase, ownership, use or disposition (to other persons enjoying the exemptions mentioned herein) of personal movable property (including automobiles) intended for their own use. The representatives of the Government of the United States referred to in paragraph 1 hereof shall, upon request of representatives of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, furnish such information as they possess with respect to the obligation, if any, to pay income taxes to the Government of the United States of such personnel as (1) are individuals under contract with the Government of the Republic of Cameroon or employees of public or private organizations under contract with the Government of the United States of America or the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, or any agencies of either, and (2) have, during a period of eighteen consecutive months terminating during a period of service hereunder in the Republic of Cameroon, been present in a country outside the United States for a period of 510 days. The disposition of personal movable property by personnel referred to in the first sentence of this subsection to other persons not enjoying the exemptions mentioned herein must be preceded by an authorization from the Government of the Republic of Cameroon and will involve the collection of fees and taxes as prescribed by the laws of the Republic of Cameroon. Such personnel and members of their families shall receive the same treatment with respect to the payment of customs and import and export duties on personal effects, equipment and supplies imported into Cameroon for their own use, and with respect to other duties and fees, as is accorded by the Government of the Republic of Cameroon to diplomatic personnel of the Embassy of the United States of America in Cameroon.

A.5

(c) Funds introduced into Cameroon for purposes of furnishing assistance hereunder shall be convertible into currency of Cameroon at the rate providing the largest number of units of such currency per United States dollar, which, at the time the conversion is made, is not unlawful in Cameroon.

6. The Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Cameroon will establish procedures whereby the Government of the Republic of Cameroon will so deposit, or assure title to all funds allocated to or derived from any program of assistance undertaken hereunder by the Government of the United States of America that such funds shall not be subject to garnishment attachment, seizure or other legal process by any person, firm, agency, corporation, organization or government.

7. All or any part of the program of assistance provided herein may, except as may otherwise be provided in arrangements agreed upon pursuant to paragraph 1 hereof, be terminated by either Government if that Government determines that because of changed conditions the continuation of such assistance is unnecessary or undesirable. The termination of such assistance under this provision may include the termination of deliveries of any commodities hereunder not yet delivered.

I have the honor to propose that, if these understandings are acceptable to the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, the present note and Your Excellency's reply not concurring therein shall constitute an Agreement between our two Governments which shall be deemed to have entered into force on the date of Your Excellency's reply and which shall remain in force until thirty days after the receipt of either Government of written notification of the intention of the other to terminate it, it being understood, however, that in the event of such termination the provisions hereof shall remain in full force and effect with respect to assistance theretofore furnished.

A.6

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my
highest consideration.

LELAND BARROWS

His Excellency
Charles OKALA,
Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Republic of Cameroon,
YAOUNDE.

The Cameroonian Minister for Foreign Affairs to the America
Ambassador

Source : MINREX archives

APPENDIX 3

TREATIES AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ACTS SERIES 517

PEACE CORPS PROGRAM

Agreement Between the
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
and CAMEROON

Effectuated by Exchange of Notes
Signed at Yaoundé July 23 and
September 10, 1962



CAMEROON

Peace Corps Program

*Agreement effected by exchange of notes
Signed at Yaoundé July 23 and September 10, 1962;
Entered into force September 10, 1962.*

*The American Chargé d'Affaires ad interim to the Cameroonian
Minister of Foreign Affairs*

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Yaounde, July 23, 1962

No. 15

EXCELLENCY:

I have the honor to refer to recent conversations between representatives of our two Governments and to propose the following understandings with respect to the men and women of the United States of America who volunteer to serve in the Peace Corps and who, at the request of your Government, would live and work for periods of time in the Federal Republic of Cameroon.

1. The Government of the United States will furnish such Peace Corps Volunteers as may be requested by the Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon and approved by the Government of the United States to perform mutually agreed tasks in the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The Volunteers will work under the immediate supervision of governmental or private organizations in the Federal Republic of Cameroon designated by our two Governments. The Government of the United States will provide training to enable the Volunteers to perform more effectively their agreed tasks.

2. The Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon will accord equitable treatment to the Volunteers and their property; afford them full aid and protection, including treatment no less favorable than that accorded generally to nationals of the United States residing in the Federal Republic of Cameroon; and fully inform, consult and cooperate with representatives of the Government of the United States with respect to all matters concerning them. The Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon will exempt the Volunteers from all taxes on payments which they receive to defray their living costs and on income from sources outside the Federal Republic of Cameroon, from all customs duties or other charges on their personal property

introduced into the Federal Republic of Cameroon for their own use at or about the time of their arrival, and from all other taxes or other charges (including immigration fees) except license fees and taxes or other charges included in the prices of equipment, supplies and services.

3. The Government of the United States will provide the Volunteers with such limited amounts of equipment and supplies as our two Governments may agree are needed to enable the Volunteers to perform their tasks effectively. The Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon will exempt from all taxes, customs duties and other charges, all equipment and supplies introduced into or acquired in the Federal Republic of Cameroon by the Government of the United States, or any contractor financed by it, for use hereunder.

4. To enable the Government of the United States to discharge its responsibilities under this agreement, the Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon will receive a representative of the Peace Corps and such staff of the representative and such personnel of United States private organizations performing functions hereunder under contract with the Government of the United States as are acceptable to the Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon will exempt such persons from all taxes on income derived from their Peace Corps work or sources outside the Federal Republic of Cameroon, and from all other taxes or other charges (including immigration fees) except license fees and taxes or other charges included in the prices of equipment, supplies and services. The Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon will accord the Peace Corps Representative and his staff the same treatment with respect to the payment of customs duties or other charges on personal property introduced into the Federal Republic of Cameroon for their own use as is accorded personnel of comparable rank or grade of the Embassy of the United States. The Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon will accord personnel of United States private organizations under contract with the Government of the United States the same treatment with respect to the payment of customs duties or other charges on personal property introduced into the Federal Republic of Cameroon for their own use as is accorded Volunteers hereunder.

5. The Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon will exempt from investment and deposit requirements and currency controls all funds introduced into the Federal Republic of Cameroon for use hereunder by the Government of the United States or contractors financed by it. Such funds shall be convertible into currency of the Federal Republic of Cameroon at the highest rate which is not unlawful in the Federal Republic of Cameroon.

6. Appropriate representatives of our two Governments may make from time to time such arrangements with respect to Peace Corps Volunteers and Peace Corps programs in the Federal Republic of Cameroon as appear necessary or desirable for the purpose of imple-

menting this agreement. The undertakings of each Government herein are subject to the availability of funds and to the applicable laws of that Government.

I have the further honor to propose that, if these understandings are acceptable to your Government, this note and your Government's reply note concurring therein shall constitute an agreement between our two Governments which shall enter into force on the date of your Government's note and shall remain in force until ninety days after the date of the written notification from either Government to the other of intention to terminate it.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurance of my highest consideration.

CHARLES K. MOFFLY

Charles K. Moffly
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

His Excellency

JEAN-FAUSTIN BETAYENE,
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Yaounde.

*The Cameroonian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs to the American
Ambassador*

APPENDIX 4

Appendix A: Peace Corps Volunteer Request Form

CORPS DE LA PAIX DU CAMEROUN / PEACE CORPS CAMEROON DEMANDE DE VOLONTAIRE / VOLUNTEER APPLICATION/REQUEST

Prière de rendre ce Formulaire rempli au:

Kindly give this form back to:

CORPS DE LA PAIX / PEACE CORPS

B.P. 215, Yaoundé

Tél: 2220-2534 ou 2220-4348

Fax: 2221-5398

(Par Voie Hiérarchique)

The requesting community provides / La communauté faisant la demande fournit:

- *A Community Host who is responsible for assisting the Volunteer to integrate into the community and meet relevant community leaders / Un hôte communautaire chargé d'aider le Volontaire à s'intégrer dans la communauté et à rencontrer les chefs communautaires.*

1. Nom du Demandeur/: _____

Name of the applicant:

2. Service/Organisation _____

Company

3. Adresse: _____

Address

4. Téléphone: _____

Telephone

5. Rempli le: _____ 20 _____

Filled on:

6. Email: _____

7. Secteur du Corps de la Paix impliqué: (cocher un)/ *Please check the project you are interested in :*

Education ☐ Développement des Jeunes/*Youth Development* ☐

Environnement/*Environment* ☐ Développement Economique Communautaire / *Community*

Economic Development ☐ Santé Communautaire/ *Community Health* ☐

8a. Région /*Region*: _____ 8b. Département /*Division*: _____

8c. Arrondissement

de/*Sub-Division*: _____ 8d. Commune /*Council*: _____

8e. Ville/village proposé

/*Proposed town/village*: _____

9a. Nom et titre du superviseur proposé / *Name and title of proposed Supervisor*:

Nom/Name _____ Tél/Tel: _____

E-mail: _____

9b. Nom et profil (titre, expérience professionnelle, etc.) de l'**homologue** désigné:

*Name and profile (title, working experience, etc.) of the assigned **Counterpart***

Nom/Name _____ Tél/Tel: _____

E-mail: _____

Profil/Profile: _____

9c. Site et commune de l'homologue /*Site and Counterpart's town/village* _____

9d. Nom et profil (titre et/ou qualifications) de l'**hôte communautaire** proposé

*Name and profile (title and or qualifications) of the proposed **Community Host***

Nom/Name _____ Tél/Tel: _____

E-mail : _____

Profil/Profile: _____

10a. Projets et/ou activités déjà en cours qui impliquent le secteur demandé:

Projects and/or current activities that involved the sector chosen

10b. Projets et/ou activités prévues qui impliqueront le secteur demandé:

Planned projects and/or activities that will involve the sector chosen

10c. Description de travail du Volontaire: Indiquer les activités que pourra faire le Volontaire:

Job description of the Volunteer: List activities that the Volunteer could carry out

10d. Décrire comment le Volontaire et son Homologue travailleront ensemble:
Describe how the Volunteer and Counterpart will work together.

10e. Zone d'intervention du Volontaire: Indiquer par nom les villages/villes dans lesquels le volontaire va intervenir. Noter aussi les distances entre les villages/villes et le village où sera logé le Volontaire.

Volunteer's area of intervention: give names of villages/town where the Volunteer will work as well as the distances between villages/towns where the Volunteer will be living

11. Quelle langue est couramment parlée au site? *What language is mostly spoken at site?*

- 1^{ère} langue/dialecte parlé/*1st language /dialect spoken:* _____
- 2^{ème} langue/dialecte parlé/*2nd language/dialect spoken:* _____

12. Un/une Volontaire doté(e) d'un vélo pourra-t-il (elle) accomplir ses tâches? / *Could a Volunteer with a bike carry out his tasks?* Oui/yes ☐ non/no ☐

13. La communauté pourra-t-elle fournir ou identifier le logement du futur Volontaire?
Could the community provide or identified a house for the future Volunteer? Oui/yes ☐
 non/no ☐

14. L'homologue serait-il disponible à participer aux stages organisés par le Corps de la Paix?

NOTE: WE WISH TO REMIND YOU THAT PEACE CORPS POLICY SPECIFIES THE FOLLOWING / IL EST IMPORTANT DE SAVOIR QUE LE REGLEMENT DU CORPS DE LA PAIX STIPULE CECI:

1. *That no Volunteer should deprive a Cameroonians of a job. / Aucun Volontaire ne doit priver un Camerounais de travail.*
2. *Volunteer assignment increases local capacity / La tache du Volontaire améliore les capacités locales.*
3. *The job description for the PCV has Cameroonians as work partners associated with all assignments / la description de travail du Volontaire inclue des Camerounais qui servent de partenaires dans toutes les projets..*
4. *Addresses basic needs at the grassroots level / Le Travail du Volontaire répond aux besoins fondamentaux au niveau local.*

Date	Date	date
Signature et Cachet du Demandeur <i>Signature and stamp of the applicant</i>	Signature et Cachet du Responsable du Service/ de l'organisation <i>Signature and stamp of the Head of the organization</i>	Signature et Cachet du Responsable de Commune/Arrondissement ou du Chef du Village concerné <i>Signature and stamp of the Council/Subdivision or the chief of the village</i>

Source : Peace Corps archives

APPENDIX 5

EBM/OAJ 9

N° d'ordre 3842

note 653

8318/emp/

1B-

- 2 10 1966

DIRECTION DES AFFAIRES POLITIQUES

3/DIRECTION EUROPE-AMERIQUE-OCEANIE

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE DE L'EDUCATION DE LA JEUNESSE
ET DE LA CULTURE.

- YA O U N D E -

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire tenir ci-joint à
toutes fins utiles, copie d'une lettre de notre Ambassade
à Washington au sujet de la formation professionnelle
des volontaires du Peace Corps en service en République
Fédérale du Cameroun.:-

F. TCHOUNGUI

P.J. : 1

Après le recrutement, les volontaires subissent une formation rapide de 3 mois à Boston, consistant en particulier à étudier les coutumes parfois les dialectes du pays où ils vont servir.

Ils n'ont pas de formations professionnelles. Dans le cadre de l'éducation par exemple, ces jeunes gens sont moins formés que nos moniteurs titulaires du BE ou même du D.M., E.G. Les considérer au Cameroun comme une assistance technique me semble donc absolument ironique d'autant plus que plusieurs en revenant ici sont obligés de retourner à l'école comme vous le constaterez par la lettre dont copie ci-jointe.

En ce qui concerne leurs activités extra-professionnelles, le bruit court parmi les Ambassades ici et dans certains pays africains (Egypte, Ghana, Maroc), que le CIA a une certaine main-mise dans l'organisation. Mais ceci ne peut être prouvé que si un agent est pris sur le fait. Les Soviétiques ont récemment arrêté un à la frontière Pakistanaise, mais ils ont dû le relâcher, faute de preuves.

En tout état de cause, les autorités nationales me semblent mieux placées que l'Ambassade pour analyser les activités des volontaires en général, et pour décider si oui ou non le Cameroun continuera à importer cette forme d'assistance.

Pour l'Ambassadeur

(é) Daniel SECK
Premier Secrétaire.

.../...

APPENDIX 6

Relations entre le Cameroun et les USA
N° 3317 Borte 567

EM/SAJ

MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES POLITIQUES

REGION EUROPE-AMERIQUE-OCEANIE

MONSIEUR LE PRESIDENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE FEDERALE DU
CAMEROUN.

- YAOUNDE -

REFERENCE : M/L N° 39/S/cf/1 CAB/DIPL/15 du 20/9/1966

SECRET/CONFIDENTIEL

OBJET : Besoins en volontaires américains.

J'ai l'honneur de porter à la connaissance de votre Excellence les enseignements que j'ai tirés au cours de plusieurs séances de travail interministérielles tenues dans mon Département au sujet des volontaires américains du Peace Corps en service dans la République Fédérale du Cameroun.

Les rapports des divers services s'accordent sur deux points :

1°- Le niveau de l'enseignement dispensé par les volontaires américains dans différents établissements scolaires de notre pays se ressent d'une qualification insuffisante pour la plupart.

2°- Les volontaires américains se livrent dans certaines régions de notre pays surtout au Cameroun Occidental à diverses activités indéfinies, certains disposant à cette fin de postes émetteurs-récepteurs dont la puissance dépasse celle de la radiodiffusion nationale.

- 2 -

Compte tenu de ces précédents, il aurait été souhaitable de surseoir au renouvellement des demandes en volontaires du Corps de la Paix ou tout au moins de procéder à une compression sérieuse de leur contingent.

J'estime toutefois qu'une révision brutale sur le sujet avec Washington serait mal interprétée et provoquerait inutilement une réaction assez vive.

Compte tenu de ces considérations, j'ai donc demandé aux services utilisateurs des volontaires de bien vouloir ne présenter pour la période 1967-1968 que des demandes motivées et de préciser les domaines où l'utilisation de ceux-ci s'avère le plus indispensable. A cet effet une commission s'est réunie au Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et a procédé à l'étude des besoins par service, comme l'indique le tableau ci-joint.

Services utilisateurs	Nombre de volontaires existants	Nombre de volontaires demandés	Nombre de volontaires retenus
Education Nationale	---	38	38
Commissariat Général à la Santé Publique et à la Population	---	12	12
Secrétariat d'Etat à l'Agriculture du Cameroun Occidental	---	13	6
Local gouvernement	---	6	6
Secrétariat d'Etat à l'Enseignement du Cameroun Occidental	---	35	35
TOTAL	---	104	97

Comme il apparaît sur ce tableau, les services utilisateurs n'ont pas fait parvenir le nombre de volontaires du Peace Corps actuellement en poste. Il faudrait que mon Département soit en possession du nombre exact d'Américains en

.../...

.../...

- 3 -

service au Cameroun afin de faire le point. Malgré de nombreuses lettres envoyées aux différents utilisateurs des volontaires, le recensement de ces derniers n'a pas encore été effectué. Permettez-moi de suggérer qu'une circulaire préliminaire demande à tous les services de procéder à ce recensement.

Par contre, de source américaine, il y aurait actuellement 82 volontaires en poste dont une fraction en fin de séjour. La fraction de volontaires en fin de séjour n'étant pas évaluée, il est impossible de connaître le nombre total de volontaires que nous aurons au cours de cette année.

Le Ministère de l'Éducation, de la Jeunesse et de la Culture réclame 38 volontaires avec précisions sur les postes disponibles, la qualification et les lieux d'affectation.

Le Commissariat Général à la Santé Publique et à la Population demande 36 volontaires échelonnés en 3 périodes dont 12 pour la période 1967-1968. Les 12 volontaires sollicités par le Commissariat Général à la Santé Publique et à la Population seront affectés dans les Départements du Nyong et Kelle et du Haut Nkam où ils s'occuperont :

- 1) de l'éducation sanitaire et sociale
- 2) de l'assainissement et des travaux d'hygiène
- 3) de l'éducation nutritionnelle des mères
- 4) des œuvres de protection maternelle et infantile dans ces mêmes zones rurales.

Sur le plan de l'Etat fédéré du Cameroun Occidental, le Secrétariat d'Etat à l'Agriculture réclame 13 volontaires dont 7 pour l'animation rurale. Compte tenu des considérations politiques soulignées plus haut, l'envoi massif d'Américains dans un secteur aussi sensible que l'animation rurale a paru assez risqué à la commission ; raison pour laquelle elle n'a retenu que 6 volontaires pour ce service.

Le "local gouvernement" demande 6 volontaires que la commission a retenus. Le Secrétariat d'Etat à l'Enseignement en réclame 35. Ce dernier service ayant joint à l'appui de son

.../...

- 4 -

dossier un tableau détaillé de ses besoins et des postes disponibles, ses propositions nous ont paru bien fondées.

En définitive sur les 104 volontaires sollicités par les services, la commission n'en a retenu que 97.

La commission souhaiterait que ces 97 volontaires ne s'ajoutent pas au contingent en place. Par le phénomène de remplacement, nous voulons approximativement avoir le même nombre de volontaires du Peace Corps que par le passé, sans coupure brutale. Mais il est souhaitable qu'étant donné les critiques sérieuses portées contre ces volontaires, leur nombre d'ici deux ans diminue sensiblement.

Je vous saurais gré des instructions que vous voudrez bien me faire parvenir au sujet de ces nouvelles demandes de recrutement ainsi que du nombre de volontaires américains à retenir pour faire face aux besoins de nos services, mon Département quant à lui mettant des réserves sérieuses sur le nombre élevé des demandes ; ce qui est en contradiction avec les critiques faites par les mêmes services demandeurs des volontaires américains./-

Enl. : 9

Dr Bernard FÖNLON

APPENDIX 7

2 NOV 1965

2053/CAB/DiR/18.

DS/KM

Le Ministère des Affaires Etrangères de la République Fédérale du Cameroun présente ses compliments à l'Ambassade des Etats-Unis d'Amérique à Yaoundé et a l'honneur de lui exposer ce qui suit :

Dans le cadre de l'Assistance Technique du Gouvernement Américain aux Pays en voie de Développement, le Gouvernement Camerounais a bénéficié avec beaucoup de reconnaissance d'un contingent de volontaires du Corps de la Paix destiné à l'enseignement de l'Anglais dans les écoles camerounaises. Or ces jeunes gens pleins de bonne volonté, possèdent malheureusement une connaissance très rudimentaire du français et peuvent de ce fait difficilement communiquer avec leurs élèves. Malgré les nombreuses garanties qui ont été données sur ce point par les autorités américaines, aucune solution efficace n'a encore été apportée à ce problème.

Par ailleurs la façon dont cet enseignement est dispensé montre une totale absence de toute méthode pédagogique valable. Il résulte de ces deux lacunes une grande inefficacité génératrice de découragement de la part des élèves.

Cameroun - USA (1962 - 1965)
N° 3838 - liste 628

- 2 -

Compte tenu des difficultés ci-dessus mentionnées, le Gouvernement de la République Fédérale du Cameroun désirerait qu'à l'avenir le travail des volontaires de la Paix au Cameroun soit plutôt orienté vers les activités d'éducation physique et sportive où il s'avèrera certainement plus efficace.

Le Ministère remercie l'Ambassade pour l'attention avec laquelle cette proposition sera examinée et saisit cette occasion pour lui renouveler l'assurance de sa très haute considération./-

AMBASSADE DES ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE

- YAOUNDE -

APPENDIX 8

DIRECTION DES AFFAIRES POLITIQUES

-i-i-i-i-i-i-i-i-

/DIRECTION EUROPE-AMERIQUE-OCEANIE

-i-i-i-i-i-i-i-i-

1B.-

MONSIEUR LE PRESIDENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE FEDERALE
DU CAMEROUN.-

O B J E T : Assistance Technique Américaine.-

Réf. V/L N° A 286/CAB/PR. du 23 octobre 1962.-

Par votre lettre susvisée, vous avez bien voulu me demander de saisir les autorités américaines en vue de leur faire connaître que le Gouvernement Camerounais désirerait qu'à l'avenir les aides en matières d'Enseignement soient orientées vers les activités d'éducation physique et sportive.

En réponse, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire tenir ci-joint copie de la correspondance par laquelle j'ai saisi l'Ambassade des Etats-Unis et celle de la Note par laquelle celle-ci constate une contradiction entre les termes de ma correspondance et les déclarations des autorités responsables de l'Enseignement au Cameroun.

Elle déclare en outre que les Volontaires du Corps de la Paix ne sauraient, en aucun cas, être affectés comme professeurs d'éducation physique et que si le Gouvernement Camerounais n'a pas besoin de leurs services dans l'Enseignement de l'Anglais, ils seront mutés dans d'autres pays où ils sont mieux appréciés.

.../...

Cameroun - USA (1962 - 1965)

N° 3838 boîte 628

Source : MINREX archives

APPENDIX 9

PROTOCOLE D'ACCORD DE DEVELOPPEMENT

entre

LE GOUVERNEMENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE FEDERALE
DU CAMEROUN

et

LE GOUVERNEMENT DES ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE

En application de l'accord d'assistance dans les domaines économique, technique et autres qui s'y rattachent, du 26 mai 1961, de l'Accord sur les Volontaires du Corps de la Paix du 10 septembre 1962 et de l'Accord général d'aide spéciale au développement du 28 mars 1968, et conformément à la demande du Gouvernement de la République Fédérale du Cameroun, le Gouvernement des Etats-Unis d'Amérique représenté par l'Ambassade des Etats-Unis d'Amérique au Cameroun et le Gouvernement de la République Fédérale du Cameroun conviennent de réaliser un projet de développement de la production animale dans la région du plateau de l'Adamawa. Les caractéristiques du projet sont les suivantes :

DESCRIPTION ET OBJECTIFS

Dans le cadre du programme d'amélioration de la production du cheptel bovin de l'Adamawa, le Gouvernement camerounais a décidé d'entreprendre une enquête dans le but de connaître le potentiel effectif de l'Adamawa tant en ce qui concerne le cheptel que pour ce qui est des pâturages.

L'action d'investigation s'appuiera sur l'action sanitaire habituelle (déparasitage, vaccination, lutte trypanocicide) et les enquêteurs travailleront en étroite liaison avec les équipes de prophylaxie. En outre, une action de vulgarisation pourra accompagner l'action d'investigation où la si-

.../...

- 2 -

tuation s'y prête, comprenant l'organisation de causeries-conférences au niveau des villages, avec éventuellement projection de films éducateurs sur l'élevage etc.

Dans le cadre de cette opération, le Gouvernement Camerounais a estimé que le Gouvernement des Etats-Unis d'Amérique pourrait lui apporter une contribution.

Contribution du Gouvernement des Etats-Unis d'Amérique :

La contribution du Gouvernement des Etats-Unis d'Amérique comporte :

- Une subvention de 25 000 dollars offerte par M. David Newsom, Secrétaire d'Etat Adjoint, à l'occasion du 10ème anniversaire de l'Indépendance du Cameroun en janvier 1970, destinée à l'acquisition du matériel technique : véhicule à vocation audio-visuelle, instruments, matériel et médicaments vétérinaires, matériel et accessoires destinés à la vulgarisation, etc.

- Une assistance technique en personnel volontaires de la Paix dont un Docteur vétérinaire expérimenté.

Ces acquisitions se feront grâce à des ordres d'achat rédigés par l'Ambassade des Etats-Unis pour les articles ayant fait l'objet d'un accord mutuel. Tous ces ordres d'achat devront être faits dans les six mois qui suivront la date d'entrée en vigueur de cet accord.

.../...

- 3 -

Contribution du Gouvernement de la République Fédérale du Cameroun :

Le Gouvernement de la République Fédérale du Cameroun s'engage à fournir la contribution suivante pour l'exécution du projet :

- direction générale et supervision du projet, y compris l'utilisation effective de tous les articles financés grâce à cette subvention ;
- personnel du Secrétariat d'Etat à l'Elevage pour les équipes d'études et les activités qui s'y rattachent dans le cadre du projet ;
- véhicules, matériel opérationnel, médicaments etc... nécessaires à la réalisation du projet et qui ne sont pas couverts par cette subvention ;
- coût opérationnel et d'entretien des véhicules, y compris celui du véhicule à vocation audio-visuelle fourni au titre de cette subvention ;
- frais de transport des articles acquis grâce à cette subvention, du port d'entrée jusqu'au site du projet.

Dispositions générales :

- 1° - Le Gouvernement de la République Fédérale du Cameroun prendra toutes les mesures nécessaires pour faciliter l'entrée en franchise des importations financées grâce à cette subvention.
- 2° - Sauf dispositions contraires consignées par écrit, tous les fonds en dollars fournis au titre de cette subvention devront être utilisés avant le 30 juin 1971.

.../...

- 4 -

3° - Le présent protocole d'Accord est valable pour une durée de deux ans à partir de la date de la mise en place du projet.

POUR LE GOUVERNEMENT DE LA
REPUBLIQUE FEDERALE DU
CAMEROUN

POUR LE GOUVERNEMENT DES
ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE

APPENDIX 10

Accord de...

U N I
XXX

USA/100

IMPORTANT

ON EUROPE-AMERIQUE-OCEANIE

2

I D E - M E M O I R E

A/S

ETAT DES RELATIONS ENTRE LE
CAMEROUN ET LES ETATS-UNIS
D'AMERIQUE

- o - o -

Bien que le courant des échanges commerciaux entre les Etats-Unis et le Cameroun soit réduit, la coopération Américano-camerounaise, dans les domaines politiques, culturels et économiques se développe à un rythme encourageant.

Cette coopération s'est surtout matérialisée ces dernières années entre nos deux pays, par la signature d'un certain nombre d'Accords qui constituent le cadre juridique.

I - ACCORDS ENTRE LES ETATS-UNIS ET LE CAMEROUN:

- Accord d'assistance technique et économique 26 mai 1961
- Accord relatif à l'emploi des Volontaires du Corps de la Paix - 1962
- Accord relatif au Transcamerounais - 27 Août 1962
- 30 juin 1970

.../...

- 3 -

- Economie
- Etudes bancaires et financières
- Télécommunications
- Urbanisme
- Mathématiques et Informatique

Le nombre des étudiants camerounais aux Etats-Unis n'a cessé d'augmenter depuis 1961.

<u>Nombre d'étudiants</u>	<u>Années</u>
14	1961
18	1964
29	1967
40	1969
80	1971

Bien qu'il n'existe aucun accord culturel entre les Etats-Unis et le Cameroun, les Centres Culturels américains installés à Douala et à Yaoundé mettent à la disposition des camerounais une documentation assez fournie livres, journaux, films, disques permettant une meilleure connaissance de la culture américaine.

IV - ETAT DE RELATIONS COMMERCIALES :

- Principales exportations du Cameroun vers les Etats-Unis pour 1970/71 :

Café (arabica et robusta) 4.386 millions de dollars/US

Cacao et produits dérivés : 398.00 dollars/U

- Principales importations pour 1970/71 :

Aéronefs et pièces de rechanges : 1.741 millions de dollars/US, émetteurs télégraphiques : 933.000 dollars/US, matériaux pour le Transcamerounais plus de 4 millions de dollars/US, du Papier Kraft pour 833.000 dollars/US.

.../...

- 4 -

Le montant des échanges entre le Cameroun et les Etats-Unis en millions de dollars/US pendant les trois dernières années est comme suit :

Pour le Cameroun :

<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>
13.605	23.920	17.439

Pour les Etats-Unis

<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>
12.375	20.184	15.178

V - CONTRIBUTION DES ETATS-UNIS AU DEVELOPPEMENT DU CAMEROUN

- Assistance des volontaires du Corps de la Paix
- Education : 25 professeurs d'anglais et 5 de sciences et mathématiques
- Elevage : 6 volontaires
- Développement Urbain : 24 volontaires
- Assistance Economique et Technique : base juridique, accord technique et économique ; 26.5.61. Le montant total de l'aide américaine est de l'ordre de 36 millions de dollars, depuis 1961, notamment dans le domaine des Transports (route Koundou-Mamfé, transcamerounais, aménagement du port de Douala). Au départ les Etats-Unis mettaient l'accent sur l'aide bilatérale, actuellement, l'accent est mis sur l'aide multilatérale.
- Programme efforts personnels : l'aide apportée aux projets concernant le secteur privé. L'aide annuelle de 1964 est d'environ au moins de 50.000 dollars/US.
- Construction de logements pour les professeurs de l'Université de Yaoundé
- Aide au Ministère de la Santé Publique dans la lutte contre les oreillons et la variole (équipement, formation du personnel)

VI - PARTICIPATION DES COMPAGNIES PRIVEES AMERICAINES

a) Dans les banques : (au Cameroun)

- SCB (Morgan Guaranty, Chase Manhattan, First National City Bank, Franco-American Banking Corporation)

.../...

APPENDIX 11

- SGB (Bankers' Trust)
 SBWA (Chase Manhattan)
 BICIC (Bank of America)
 BIAO (First National City Bank)
- b) - Dans les compagnies pétrolières, (au Cameroun)
- Amerda Hess (exploitation)
 Gulf (exploitation)
 ESSC (Marketing = vente)
 Mobil (exploitation)
- c) - Programme "Dole" :
- Usine d'ananas
- d) - Participation de United Fruit Company dans les com-
pagnies de bananes :
- Participation de Kaiser Aluminum dans SEBACA
- e) - Prêts officiels de l'Eximbank :
- Télécommunications
 Camair equipment./-

J. HONGORY

APPENDIX 12

[illegible]

Source : OLLC archives

APPENDIX 13

29th September 1992

The Director,
American Peace Corps,
Yaounde.

Dear Dr. Enyong,

APPLICATION FOR TEACHERS

I wish to request for your generous assistance as regards teachers for our school.

We have had a tough time getting teachers for the sciences especially for Physics and Mathematics. There has been a high mobility in these departments because most of those available are not professional teachers but graduates of different disciplines like engineering. When they get more lucrative jobs the tendency has been to leave the students irrespective of the school time such opportunity offers itself. Hence there is little continuity. This year for instance, I have the three members of these department all new and none a professional teacher.

You can well picture how inadequate and unsatisfactory this state of affairs is.

I understand you have helped some institutions. Please kindly consider my need and come to my rescue.

This is a single sex school (Female). I crave your indulgence in requesting for female teachers whom we can house in the premises. I will be most grateful to get two. But if the female teachers are not available and the male ones are ready to live in a rented house outside the compound, we will be delighted to have them.

Please furnish me with you conditions for deploying staff to school. It might be pertinent to mention that our finances too is very low.

Could it be presumptions to expect any this academic session? I guess I'm already late. I only heard of your priceless assistance just yesterday so I made haste to apply.

If nothing can be done for me this year, please keep me in your records for next year.

While waiting for your favourable reply.

I remain,
Yours faithfully,

Sr. Mercy Ani.
Principal.

APPENDIX 14

OUR LADY OF LOURDES
SECONDARY SCHOOL

P.O. Box 92, Mankon,
North West Province,
Republic of Cameroon,
West Africa.
Phone: 36 11 72

JUNE 1988

CONTRACT BETWEEN THE PRINCIPAL, O.L.L.S.S. MANKON AND THE PEACE CORPS

THE PRINCIPAL, O.L.L.S.S. AGREES :

To rent the school premises to the Peace Corps for their Training Programme from the 16th July - 3rd September 1988.

THE PEACE CORPS AGREE :

1. To pay 200.000 francs rent for the use of the school premises;
to pay for the electricity used and any damages to school property,
which happen during the Training Programme.
2. To leave the hall chairs in the hall at all times.
3. To use the coffee bar (tea and coffee cups are not to be put on
staffroom tables).
4. Not to use too many electric appliances at the same time,
(otherwise the electricity on the mission compound will be affected.)
5. To use the pits for tins; incinerators to be used for burning only.
No fires are to be lit on the compound.
6. That new members will not ride motor bikes near the Cathedral
during Church Services, i.e. 5.30 - 6 p.m. Wed., Fri. & Sun.
4 - 6 p.m. Sat.

Signed: 
Director of Peace Corps Training
Programme.


Sr. Nuala Lahert.
Principal, O.L.L.S.S.

APPENDIX 15

CORPS DE LA PAIX DES ETATS-UNIS
UNITED STATES PEACE CORPSBoite Postale 817 - YAOUNDE, Cameroon
Téléphone : 22.25.34 - 22.43.48Christine Ann Fedorchak
Regional CoordinatorPeace Corps
Northwest Province
Box 4059, StationBamenda, N.W.F.
April 2nd, 1987To The Sisters
OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES ;REQUEST FOR THE USE OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

I, Christine Fedorchak, would like to request on behalf of Peace Corps, the use of OUR LADY OF LOURDES MISSION FACILITIES for the 1987 Peace Corps Training.

The trainees will arrive on Sunday July 26th and depart on Sunday September 6th. There will only be 14 trainees this year as compared to 41 last year. This also means staff will be reduced.

Prior to July 26th, other staff will have to arrive some few days early in order to set up sleeping and kitchen facilities.

I hope these dates are suitable for you.

I will be out of town until April 14th. Upon my arrival I will stop by to discuss this matter further.

Thank-you for your cooperation.

Sincerely Yours,

Christine Ann Fedorchak

Christine Fedorchak

Regional Coordinator

Peace Corps

APPENDIX 16

The Director,
Peace Corps
B.P. 817,
Yaounde.

17th February 1995

Dear Sir,

APPLICATION FOR ACADEMIC PERSONNEL

Permit me Sir, to renew my sincere request for your assistance as regards deploying teachers to our school. I had written on the 29th September 1992 on this issue. I had waited patiently fearing to disturb you with this request too soon afterwards. Now however, I am full of remorse that my "prudent action" may have worked against me as I did not get the teacher nor any reply to my request. Hence, I humbly and persistently request Sir, that our plight attract a favourable response this time around.

Sir, with the precarious financial situation in the country, the absence of regular Government Subventions to Private Colleges, the high cost of living, the growing need for education and the plight of women who are the worst victims in the area of independence, we are finding it very difficult to run the school. The staff are poorly paid if one compares their output with their financial remuneration. For example, since September 1990, a graduate teacher with us goes home with a monthly pay package of 66.666 CFA. You can see that one can hardly pay rentage, electricity and water bills with this, let alone feeding and clothing oneself.

The question of raising the boarding fees from 90.000 CFA - 120.000 CFA is completely ruled out as, it would be tantamount to closing the doors of our institution to girls from average families. These from very poor families may have no other alternative than to be given to early marriages.

We do not mind whatever the specialities of the personnel are as we have need of Science, Arts and Commercial subject teachers.

If we can save some money from salaries, we will be better able to improve both Teachers and students' welfare.

Sir, your office has been closely associated with us from 1981 to 1990 in different ways. You had been conducting holiday classes in our premises and had even deployed some staff to this college in the very early 1980s.

Sir, why have you forgotten us now when our needs are more intense?

Please come to our aid, we are desperate.

While waiting for your kind assistance I wish you God's choicest blessings.

Yours faithfully

APPENDIX 17



Source: OLCC archives

SOURCES CONSULTED

Oral Sources

Name	Age	Profession	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
Achu John	60	Principal/Volunteer partner	Bamenda	30/August/2019
Achu Peter	65	Retired Palm Oil Plantation Manager/Volunteer Counterpart	Bafut	15/August/2018
Aishatou Jamelatu	55	Trader	Mundum	30/August/2019
Akongniwoh Elvis	36	Teacher	Bambili	22/July/2022
Akongniwo Peter	55	Farmer	Bambui	21/June/2022
Akwanwi Rebecca	52	Farmer	Bafut	15/August/2018
Ambe Joseph	65	Farmer	Bafut	20/July/2022
Ambe Pascal	43	Carpenter	Mambu	25/August/2019
Anonymous				
Anonymous				
Anonymous				
Anonymous				
Anonymous				
Anonymous				
Anonymous				
Anonymous				
Anonymous				
Anonymous				
Anonymous				
Asombang Raymond Neba'ane	65	Professor of Archaeology	Yaoundé	5/July/2021
Awah Lum Yvette	35	Teacher	Mankon	17/December/2022
Ayafor Beltha	55	Farmer	Nkwen	22/December/2021
Berinyuy Ransom	36	Teacher	Bamenda	20/August/2018.
Bih Bridget	51	Business Woman	Bafut	20/July/2022
Bih Caroline	56	Nurse	Bamenda	20/August/2019
Caithlin Barker	29	Former Peace Corps Volunteer	Yaoundé	5/May /2022
Che Godlove	49	Teacher/Volunteer Partner	Mundum	30/August/2019
Che Moses	65	Farmer	Mambu	22/August/2019
Dinbogha Martha	54	Farmer	Bali	25/August/2022
Dze-Ngwa Willibroad	54	Model School Principal	Yaoundé	23/December/2023
Ebogo Titus	42	Medical Doctor	Bamenda	1/September/2022

Ngwa				
Fru Peter	50	Farmer	Nkwen	30/December/2021
Fuh Edwin	46	Teacher	Bawum	22/August/2019
Fuh Roland	45	Accountant	Mankon	17/December/2022
Keming David	42	Associate Professor	Yaoundé	22/December/2023
Kemjei Mary	52	Principal /Volunteer Counterpart	Bamenda	17/December/2021
Lehdogha Comfort	59	Farmer	Bali	20/August/2022
Lem Gladys	39	Teacher	Bamenda	16/October 2021
Lum Agnes	52	Farmer	Mambu	20/August/2019
Lum Joan	58	Farmer	Mambu	21/August/2019
Lum Loveline	48	Nurse	Bamenda	21/August/2019
Lum Monica	70	Farmer	Bafut	10/July/2022
Lum Ruth	31	Farmer	Nsoh	25/August/2019
Mankaa Josephine	50	Farmer	Mambu	21/August/2019
Mankaa Pamela	55	Farmer	Santa	17/June/2021
Mbah Okwen Patrick	72	Retired Medical doctor/Volunteer Counterpart	Bamenda	30/July/2019
Munjong John	60	Farmer	Bamendakwe	30/December/2021
Nde Gilbert	40	Coordinator of MUPTAREC/Volunteer Counterpart	Bamenda	20/October 2021
Ndofung Sidonnie	32	Farmer	Bambili	22/July/2022
Ndownwi David	50	Teacher	Yaoundé	15/July/2022
Ndownwi Peter	55	Teacher/Volunteer Counterpart	Nkwen	31/December/2022
Ndownwi Princewill	48	Teacher	Mambu	20/August/2019
Neba David	55	Nurse	Mambu	20/August/2019
Neba Maurice	65	Farmer	Mundum	25/August/2019
Neba Nelson	60	Teacher	Mambu	20/August/2019
Nekumboh Paul	33	Teacher	Yaoundé	1/July/2021
Nforbugwe Pius	52	Driver	Yaoundé	15/July/2022
Ngwakongoh Lawrence	47	Mayor Bafut Council/Volunteer Supervisor	Bamenda	25/August/2022
Ngum Doris	29	Farmer	Nsoh	26/August/2019
Ngumna Matilda	42	Business	Bafut	16/October 2021
Nji Cecilia	50	Farmer	Mankon	22/July/2022
Nji Rene	50	Accountant	Bamenda	25/August/2019
Ngwa Lawrence	50	Accountant	Mambu	20/August/2019

Ngwa Lucas	68	Herbalist	Mambu	21/August/2019
Ngwa Samuel	64	Teacher	Bafut	21/August/2019.
NgwaBumba Pascal	44	Nurse	Yaoundé	1/July/2021
Ngwagan Mathew	60	NWCA Worker	Bamenda	17/December/2021
Ngwen Constance	57	Farmer	Mambu	21/August/2019
Nyongka Grace	61	Farmer	Bali	25/August/2022
Penn John	60	Farmer	Pinyin	25/June/2022
Saah Solomon	60	BHCS Director/Volunteer Counterpart	Bamenda	30/December 2021
Saburm Regina	52	Farmer	Bali	20/August/2022
Shu Derick	35	Teacher	Bafut	16/October 2021
Shu Jonathan	55	Teacher/Volunteer Counterpart	Mundum	30/August/2019
Shu Joram	60	Farmer/volunteer Counterpart	Bafut	20/August/2019
Shu Nelson Atoh	42	Former worker, Bayelle Cooperative Union	Bamenda	25/August/2019
Shu Paul	50	Teacher	Nsoh	24/August/2019
Tabifor Valentine	58	Owner of Mendel Foundation/Volunteer Counterpart	Bambui	15/August/2022
Tah David	45	Builder	Bamendakwe	30/December/2021
Tiemuncho Joseph	55	Journalist	Yaoundé	20/June/2018
Titi John	64	Teacher	Mundum	25/August/2019
Tombir Stanley	45	NWADO Coordinator/Volunteer Counterpart	Bamenda	30/December/2021
Tubuo Ernest Timchia	53	Principal SAHECO	Mankon	17/December/2022
Vernyuy Emmanuela	58	Reverend Sister	Mambu	22/August/2019
Weriwoh T. Godfred	70	Retired Colonel/Beneficiary	Yaoundé	11/May/2022

Books

- Abumbi, II**, *The Customs and Traditions of Bafut*, Limbe, Presbook, 2016.
- Amin, J.A.**, *The Peace Corps in Cameroon*, Washington, Kent State University Press, 1992.
-, *Sixty Years of Service in Africa: The U.S. Peace Corps in Cameroon*, London, Routledge, 2023.
- Anderson, J.**, *Realism and some of its Critics*, Sydney, World Publishing Co., 1962.
- Anonymous**, *Bambui Forum for Development Partnership for Change Speeches*, Saturday 19/January/2013, Jonmaz Complex Bambui.
- Ardener, S.**, and **Burman, S.**, *Money Go-Rounds: The Importance of Savings and Credit Associations for Women*, Washington D.C, Berg Publishers, 1995.
- Asha, B.**, and **Brent, K.**, *A Moment in History, The First Ten Years of the Peace Corps*, New York, Double Day Institute Press, 1971.
- Asher, R.C.**, *Development Assistance in the Seventies*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1983.
- Bansek, M.T.**, *101 Questions and Answers on Credit Unions*, Limbe, Nooremac Press, 1980.
- Barnet, R.**, *Intervention and Revolution, The United States in the Third World*, New York, The World Publishing Company, 1968.
- Bazlul, M.**, *Participation, Development and Social Structure: An Empirical Study in a Developing Country*, New York, University Press of America, 1994.
- Bobyns, H.F.**, and **Doughty, P.L.**, *Peace Corps Program Impact in the Peruvian Andes*, New York, Department of Anthropology, Cornell University, 1964.
- CamCCUL**, *CamCCUL National Statistics*, Bamenda, CamCCUL, 2006.
- Carey, R.**, *The Peace Corps*, New York, Praeger, 1970.
- Cerf, T.H.**, and **Walter, P.**, *Strategy for Peace for the Sixties*, New York, Foreign Policy Clearing House, Praeger, 1960.
- Cleveland, H.**, *The Future of the Peace Corps*, Havard, Aspen Institute, 1971.
- Clower, R.W.**, et al, *Growth without Development: An Economic Survey of Liberia*, Evaston, III; North Western University Press, 1966.
- Common, M.**, *Sustainability and Policy, Limits to Economics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Congressional Research Service**, *The Peace Corps: Overview and Issues*, Washington D.C, Congressional Research Service, 2021.
- Courade, C.**, and **Courade G.**, *Education in Anglophone Cameroon (1915-1975)*, Yaoundé, National Geographic Centre, 1977.
- Cormick, M.C.**, *The Global Environmental Movement, Reclaiming Paradise*, London, Bellhaven Press,

1989.

Delancey, M.D., et al, *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon*, fourth edition, Lanham Maryland, The Scarecrow Press INC, 2010.

Deputy Chief of Mission Swearing in of U.S. Volunteers Speech on 5/August/2015.

Diez, T., et al, *Key Concepts in International Relations*, New York, SAGE Publication Ltd, 2011.

Dos Santos, T., *The Structure of Dependence: Readings in U.S. Imperialism*, Boston: Porter Sargent, 1971.

Ezickson, A.J., *The Peace Corps: A Pictorial History*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1965.

Fanso, V.G., *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges Vol.II. from Prehistoric Times to the 19th Century*, London, Macmillan, 1989.

Ferraro, V., *Dependency Theory: An Introduction in the Development Economics Reader*, edi.Giorgior Secondi, London, Routledge, 2008.

Fine, B., *Theories of Social Capital, Researchers Behaving Badly*, New York, Pluto Press, 2010.

Fitzgerald, M.I., *The Peace Corps Today*, New York, Dodd and Mead, 1986.

Fonge, H., *Africa Yesterday and Today: An Analytical Review of the Historical Development in Africa from 1800- Present Day*, Dhaka University Press,1996.

Griffiths, M., et al, *International Relations, the Key Concepts*, New York, Routledge, 2008.

Hapgood, D., and Meridan, B., *Agents of Change: A Close Look at the Peace Corps*, Boston, Little Brown, 1968.

Haq, U.M., *The Poverty Curtain: Choices for the Third World*, New York, Colombia University Press, 1976.

Hayes, S., *An International Peace Corps, The Promise and the Problem*, Washington D.C, Public Affairs Institute, 1961.

Hess, B.B., et al, *Sociology*, 3rd edition, New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988.

Hoopes, R., *The Complete Peace Corps Guide*, New York, Dial Press, 1961.

....., *The Peace Corps Experience*, New York, Clarkson N. Potter, 1968.

Humphrey, C., and Meyer, C., *Peace Corps Programming in Small Enterprise Development, Three Case Studies and Analysis*, Washington, Peace Corps Information, Collection and Exchange, 1985.

Ikoku, E.U., *Self-Reliance: Africa's Survival*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980.

Jacobsen, W., *Africa in the 1980s, Remarks by Deputy Assistant Secretary, Harrop before the Danish Foreign Council*, Copenhagen, on 8 March 1980.

Kennedy, J.F., *The Strategy of Peace*, New York, Harper and Row, 1960.

Khemando, V.B., *Buddhism and Peace*, Calcutta, Lazo Print, 1995.

- Kinleberger**, C.P., *et al*, *Economic Development*, Tokyo, Mcgraw Hill-Kagakushu Ltd, 1977.
- Kottak**, C.P., *Anthropology: The Exploration of the Human Diversity* 5th edi, New York, MCgraw Hill NC, 1991.
- Landrum**, L.R., *The Role of the Peace Corps in the Education of Developing Countries*, Washington D.C., U.S. Peace Corps, Office of Planning and Evaluation, 1981.
- Lantum**, D.N., *Traditional Medicinemen of Cameroon: The Case of Bui Division*, Yaoundé, SOPECAM, 1986.
- Liston**, R.A., and **Sargent**, S., *A Candid Portrait*, New York, Farrar Straus, 1964.
- Litwiller**, W.P., *A Case Study of the Cameroon Credit Union League (CAMCCUL), Participation in Small Farmer Production Credit Program*, William Litwiller.
- Lowther**, K., and **Lucas**, P., *Keeping Kennedy's Promise-The Peace Corps: Unmet Hope of the New Frontier*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1978.
- Mcguire**, E., *The Peace Corps, Kindlers of the Spark*, New York, Macmillan, 1966.
- McIntosh**, C., *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Meisler**, S., *When the World Calls, The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and its First Fifty Years*, Boston Massachussetts, Beacon Press, 2011.
- Ministry of Public Health**, *Comptes Nationaux de la Sante*, Yaoundé, Ministry of Public Health, 2011.
- Mittelman**, J.H., *Out from Development: Prospects for the Third World*, New York, St. Martins Press, 1988.
- Neba**, A., *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, 3rd edi. Bamenda, Neba Publishers, 1999.
- Ngoh**, V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, Limbe, Presbook, 1996.
- Nsamenang**, A.B., and **Tschombe**, T.S.M., *Handbook of African Educational Theories and Practices*, Bamenda, Human Development Center (HDRC), 2012.
- Nyamnjoh**, H.M., *Bridging Mobilities: ICTs Appropriation by Cameroonians in South Africa and the Netherlands*, Leiden University Repository, 2013.
- Peace Corps**, *Fiscal Year 2018-2022 Strategic Plan and Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Annual Performance Plan*, Washington, Peace Corps, 2019.
- Peace Corps**, *Health Sector: Guidance for Project Development*, Washington DC, Office of Global Health and HIV, 2012.
- Peace Corps**, *Programming and Training Booklet 1*, Washington D.C, Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research, Information Collection and Exchange, 2015, p.6.
- Peace Corps**, *Programming, Training and Evaluation Guidance*, Washington DC, Peace Corps Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support, 2015.
- Peace Corps Cameroon**, *Staff Handbook*, Yaoundé, Peace Corps, 2014.

- Peace Corps**, *The Peace Corps in Africa, Promoting World Peace and Friendship*, Washington D.C, Peace Corps, 2017, p.2.
- Peace Corps Cameroon**, *Volunteer Handbook*, Yaoundé, Peace Corps, 2013.
- Petch**, G.A., *Economic Development and Modern West Africa*, London, London University Press, 1961.
- Pouomogne**, V., and **Pemsi**, D.E., *Recommendation Domains for Pond Aquaculture, Country Case Study: Development and Status of Freshwater Aquaculture in Cameroon*, World Fish Center Studies and Reviews, No.1871, Penang-Malaysia, World Fish Center, 2008.
- Rahman**, M.D., *People's Self Development: Perspectives on Participatory Action Research, A Journey through Experience*, Dhaka, Dhaka University Press Ltd, 1993.
- Reeves**, T.Z., *The Politics of the Peace Corps and VISTA*, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1988.
- Reuther**, V.G., *Goals for the United States Peace Corps*, Washington D.C, United Auto Workers, 1960.
- Rice**, G.T., *The Bold Experiment, JFK'S Peace Corps*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.
-, *Twenty Years of the Peace Corps*, Washington D.C., Peace Corps, 1981.
- Rist**, G., *The History of Development: From Western Origin to Global Faith*, London: 2nd edi.Books, 1997.
- Rodney**, W., *How Europe Under developed Africa*, Washington D.C, Havard University Press, 1982.
- Sandrum**, R.M., *Development Economies: A Framework for Analysis and Policy*, Chickkersterm, John Willy and Sons, 1984.
- Smith**, D., *Altruism, Volunteers and Volunteerism*, New York, John D. Harman edi., 1982.
- Sobseh**, E.Y., *Rethinking Citizenship, Politics and Governance in Cameroon*, Bamenda, Global Press, 2012.
- Sorensen**, T.C., *Kennedy*, New York, Harper and Row, 1965.
- Spicer**, E.H., *Human Problems in Technological Change*, New York, Russell Sage Publications, 1952.
- Stein**, M.T., *Volunteers for Peace, the First Group of Peace Corps Volunteers in a Rural Community Development Program in Colombia, South America*, New York, John Wiley, 1966.
- Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs**, *ABC of Diplomacy*, Bern, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, 2008.
- Tadora**, M.P., *Economics for Developing World: An Introduction to Principles, Problems and Policies for Development* 2nd edi., London, Longman, 1982.
- Talbert**, D.E., *Peace Corps Water/Sanitation: Case Studies and Analyses*, Washington, Peace Corps, 1984.
- Textor**, R.B., *Cultural Frontiers of the Peace Corps*, Massachusetts, M.I.T. Press, 1966.

Thomsen, M., *Living Poor, A Peace Corps Chronicle*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1969.

Tyler, N., *The Peace Corps, Sierra Leone and Me: Fifty Years Later*, Norman Tyler, 2010.

United Nations Development Program, *Etudes Socio-Economiques Regionales au Cameroun*, Tunis: DIRASSET, 2000.

United Nations, *Population Resources, Environment and Development: Highlights of the Issues in the Context of the World Population Plan of Action*, New York, United Nations Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, 1984.

U.S. Department of State, *Focus on Diplomacy, United States and Cameroon, Fifty Year Commemorative edition 1960-2007*, Manila, GPS, 2007.

Velma, A., *Les Volontaires de la Paix*, Paris, Nouveau Horizons, 1965.

Viorst, M., *Making a Difference, the Peace Corps at Twenty-Five*, New York, Weidefield and Nicolson, 1986.

WHO, *Health Promotion Glossary*, New York, WHO, 1988.

Windmiller, M., *The Peace Corps and Pax Americana*, Washington D.C, Public Affairs Press, 1970.

Zuvekas, C., *Economic Development and Modern West Africa*, London, Macmillan Press, 1979.

Articles

Abimbola, O.A., *et al*, “Rotating and Savings Credit Association. A Veritable Tool for Enhancing the Performance of Micro and Small Enterprises in Nigeria” *Asian Economic and Financial Review*, Vol.10, No.20, 2020, p.190.

Adams, R.E., *et al*, “Volunteerism and Wellbeing in the Context of the World Trade Center Terrorist Attacks”, *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health*, Vol.17, No.1, 2015, p.5.

Akei, L.M., “Institutions and Local Development: Experiences in Mezam Division, North West Region, Cameroon”, *African Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol.1, No.6, 2020, pp. 29-42.

..... “Regional Institutions in Rural Council Area Development in the North West Region, Cameroon”, *Journal of Sustainable Development*, Vol.8, No.1, 2015, p.101.

Akume, D.A., *et al*, “The Performance of Microfinance Institutions in Cameroon: Does Financial Regulation Really Matter?”, *Research Journal of Finance and Accounting*, Vol.8, No.2, 2017, p.29.

Ambe, L.N., *et al*, “Agricultural Training Institutions in the North West Region of Cameroon, 1968-2016: Impediments”, *International Journal of History and Culture Studies*, Vol.10, Issue 2, 2024, p. 38.

Amin, J.A., “Cameroon Foreign Policy Towards the United States”, *Revue Française d’Histoire d’Outre-Mer*, Vol.86., No.322-323, 1999, pp. 230-233.

....., “Making Sense of Fifty Years of Peace Corps in Cameroon”, University of Dayton, *International African Journal of Historical Studies*, Vol. 47, No.2, 2014, p.319.

....., “Serving in Africa: U.S. Peace Corps in Cameroon”, Washington, *African Spectrum*, Vol.48, No.1, 2013, p.72.

- Atamja, L., and Yoo, S.,** “Analysis of the Technical Efficiency of Potato Farmers in Mezam Division of the North-West Region of Cameroon”, *Journal of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences*, Vol.34, No.2, 2022, p.119.
- Besing-Mengla, M.M.,** “Njangi: A Pillar of Development in the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon”, *Journal of Humanities and Social Studies*, 2020, Vol.2, No. 5, pp.31-38.
- Bhandari, H., et al,** “What is Social Capital? A Comprehensive Review of the Concept”, *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 37, No.3, 2009, p.49.
- Bobbo, M.Y., and Angwafo, E.T.,** “The Influence of Farmer-Grazier Conflicts on Food Security in the North-West Region of Cameroon: The Case of Mezam Division”, *International Journal of Horticulture, Agriculture and Food Science*, Vol.4, Issue 6, 2020, p. 207.
- Che, J.,** “History of Credit Unions 1849-2007, The Case of Cameroon”, *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Vol. 25, No.1, 2023, pp.69-70.
- Chia, P.N., et al,** “Prevalence of Cryptosporidium Parvum in Dung Collected from Cattle in Bamenda North-West Region of Cameroon”, *Indian Journal of Medical Research and Pharmaceutical Sciences*, Vol.2, No.9, September 2015, p.13.
- Crocker, D.A.,** “ Development Ethics and Non-Elite Participation”, University of Maryland, *HDCA Conference*, 2007, p.10.
- Delancey, M.W.,** “Credit for the Common Man in Cameroon”, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol.15, No.2, 1977, pp.316-320.
-, “The U.S. Peace Corps Program for Credit Union and Cooperative Development in Cameroon, 1969-1976”, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Vol.17, 1982, p.28.
- Egbe, T.O., et al,** “Determinants of Maternal Mortality in Mezam Division of the North-West Region of Cameroon: A Community Based Case Control Study”, *International Journal of Tropical Disease and Health*, 2016, Vol.15, No.2, pp.1-6.
- Ekane, M.M., et al,** “The Unsustainable Exploitation of Wildlife-Habitat Resources in Tubah Sub-Division, North West Region, Cameroon”, *International Journal of Current Research in BioSciences and Plant Biology*, Vol. 3, No. 8, August 2016, p.5.
- Fernando, P.,** “Connecting Realities: Peace Corps Volunteers in South America and the Global War on Poverty during the 1960s”, *Historia Critica*, Bogota, Vol. 53, No.53, 2014, pp.7-9.
- Fonchingong, C.C.,** “Citizen Strategising Amid a Solidarity Economy in Cameroon: Are Village Development Associations(VDAs) Resilient?” *Draft Paper for the UNRISD Conference, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development*, Geneva, 2013, p.2.
- Fonchingong, C.C,** “Re-inventing Community Development: Utilising Relationship Networking and Cultural Assets for Infrastructure Provision”, *Societies*, Vol.8, Issue 3, p.12.
- Fonchingong, C.C., and Fonjong, L.N.,** “The Concept of Self Reliance in Community Development Initiatives in the Cameroon Grassfields”, *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 12, No.2, 2003, p.197.

Fonchingong, C.C., and **Mbah, M.**, “Social Solidarity Economy and Village-Centric Development in North-West Cameroon”, *International Journal of Community and Social Development*, Vol 3, Issue 2, 2021, pp. 131-138.

Fonchingong, C.C., and **Ngwa, C.A.**, “Grassroots Participation for Infrastructural Positioning in North-West Cameroon: Are Village Development Associations the Panacea”, *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, Vol.26, Issue 3, 2011, p.1.

Forje, C.L., “Domestic Saving Mobilisation and Small Business Creation: The Case Of Cameroon”, *SAJEMS NS 9*, No.1, 2006, p.43.

Fouepe, G.H.F., and **Mbangari, K.F.**, “Contributions of Farmers Organisations to Rural Development: Case of North-West Farmers Organisation in Mezam Division, Cameroon, *Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development*, Vol.9, No.7, 2017, pp. 129-142.

Galtung, J., “Violence, Peace and Peace Research”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Central Queensland University Press, Vol. 6, No.3, 1995, p.1.

Gouet, G., “Participation in Development: New Avenues, *World Development Journal*, Vol.17, No.2, 1989, p.67-69.

Habiba, I., “Structured Savings and Asset Ownership: The Role of Rotating Savings and Credit Associations among African Immigrants in the United States”, *The Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, Vol.47, Issue 2, 2020, pp.29-51.

Jiotsa, A., et al, “Cooperative Movements in the Western Highlands of Cameroon, *Journal of Alpine Research*, Vol. 103, No.1, 2015, p.2.

Kenny, C., “The Peace Corps in a Smaller World: A New Model for the Next Fifty Years”, *Center for Global Development*, March 2011, p.2.

Kingsley, K.M., “Community Development in the North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon: A Socio-Analytical Insight of Self Reliant Development at the Dawn of Decentralisation, *Archives of Business Research Services for Science and Education*, United Kingdom, Volume 8, Issue 11, November 2020, p.1.

Machalek, R., and **Martin, M.W.**, “Sociobiology and Sociology: A New Synthesis”, *The International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*, Vol.1, 2015, p.1.

Majee, W., and **Hoyt, A.**, “Cooperatives and Community Development: A Perspective on the Use of Cooperatives in Development”, *Journal of Community Practice*, Vol.19, Issue 1, 2011, p.1.

Mallum, K., “Volunteers/Volunteering”, *The International Encyclopaedia of Organisational Communication*, 2016, p.1.

Mamoudou, A., et al, “Preliminary Assessment of Bovine Trypanosomiasis and its Vectors in Santa, Bali and Bafut Sub Divisions of the North-West Region of Cameroon”, *International Journal of Biological and Chemical Sciences*, Vol.10, Issue 1, 2016, p.2.

Matuhu, J., “A Critique of Modernisation and Dependency Theories in Africa, Critical Assessment”, *African Journal of History and Culture*, Vol.3, No. 5, 2011, p.68.

Mbangari, K.F., et al, “Role of Farmers’ Organisations to Agricultural Development in Mezam Division,

- Cameroon”, *Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development*, Vol.11, No.8, August 2019, p.140.
- Mbingek**, G.W., *et al*, “The Resilience and Survival of Traditional Medicine in the Oku Fandom of Cameroon”, *Research and Scientific Innovation Society*, Vol. VII, Issue VIII, August 2023, p.1469.
- Mengot**, D.A., “Are West Cameroon Educational Standards Falling”, *West Cameroon Teachers Journal*, Vol. 2, 1964, p.14.
- Moravsik**, A., “Liberalism and International Relations Theory”, *Center for European Studies*, Massachusetts, Havard University, Paper No.92-6, 1992, p.10.
- Mukete**, N. *et al*, “Determinants of Small and Medium Size Enterprises Access to Credit Schemes in the Mezam Division of Cameroon”, *Open Access Library Journal*, Vol.8, No.2, February 2021, p.5.
- Muluh**, G.N., *et al*, “Challenges and Prospects of Sustaining Donor-Funded Projects in Rural Cameroon”, *Sustainability*, Vol.11, Issue 24, 2019, p.2.
- Nde**, W.W., *et al*, “Impact of the Mankon Diaspora in the Social Transformation of Bamenda, Cameroon, 1961-2021, *Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Studies*, Vol. 8, Issue 3, March 2023, pp. 1-8.
- Ndille**, R.N., “Black men, English Suits and a Corner Service: Education and the Making of a West-Cameroon Civil Service, 1954-1972”, *Social and Education History*, Vol.8, No.2, 2019, p.7.
- Neba**, A. A., “Development Actors and Socio-Economic Development: The Case of Basic Infrastructural Provision in Rural Agricultural Uplift in Communities of Mezam Division”, *Global Scientific Journal*, Vol.10, Issue 1, 2022, pp. 1927-1960.
- Nel E.**, and **Binns T.**, “Rural Self-Reliance Strategies in South Africa: Community Initiatives and External Support in the Former Black Homelands”, *Journal of Rural Studies*, Vol.16, Issue 3, July 2000, p.367.
- Nfi**, J.L., and **Musah**, C., “The British Southern Cameroons HMs: Prestigious and Dignifying Professionals at the Service of the Nation, *International Journal of Education and Social Service*, Vol.6, No.7, September 2019, p.42.
- Ngwa**, C.A., *et al*, “Credit Unions as Source of Economic Empowerment in Bamenda, 1990-2016”, *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education*, Vol.12, Issue 2, February 2025, p.77.
- Ngoran**, D.B., *et al*, “Incidental Benefits of Female Constituted Social Groups in Nso Polity of the Cameroon Grassfields: Colonial and Post-Colonial Appraisal”, *International Journal of History and Cultural Studies*, Vol.7, Issue 1, 2021, p.21.
- Nina-Prazil**, L. L., *et al*, “Transmutation of the Reproductive Life of Women in Southern/West Cameroon(s), 1922-1972: A Colonial Manipulation”, *Social Science and Humanities Journal*, Vol.8, Issue 7, 2024, p. 4225.
- Njinuwo**, E., “Community Museum and Meaning Making: A Survey of Community Museums in the Grassland Region of Anglophone Cameroon”, *African Journal of Social Sciences*, Sachu and Diamond, England, United Kingdom, 2015, p.1.

Nukunah, C. “From Feasting to Fasting: An Autoethnography of Njangis”, *African Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol.17, No.1, September 2023, pp.45-53.

Ojong, N., and Obeng-Odoom, F., “ Resilience and Dynamism of Embedded Financial Transactions in Cameroon”, *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. LI, No.1, March 2017, p.189.

Olayiwola, A.M., et al, “Land Use Change in the Mezam Division of the North-West Province, From Landsat Imageries (1998 and 2001)”, *Ethiopian Journal of Environmental Studies and Management*, Vol.4, No.2, 2011, p.50.

Ollong, K.A., “The Role of Multinational Corporations in Community Development Initiatives in Cameroon, 1998-2010”, *Pan Tikar Journal*, Vol.1, No.1, 2013, p.50.

....., “The Cameroonian Diaspora: An Assessment of its Role in Local Development”, *Journal of Globalisation Studies*, Vol.4, No.2, November 2013, pp.82-95.

Paine, A.E., et al, “A Rose by Another Name...Revisiting the Question, What Exactly is Volunteering?”, *Working Papers Series*, London Institute for Volunteering Research, 2010, p.8.

Prianda, D., et al, “Farmers Empowerment : Drivers and Challenges among Smallholder Farmers in Mezam Division, Cameroon”, *International Journal of Business Economics*, Vol.3., Issue 2, March 2022, p.133.

Ruppe, L.M., “Peace Corps’ Enduring Charter”, *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law*, Vol.16, 1986, pp.687-706.

Sandie, A.B., et al, “Hot-Spots of HIV Infection in Cameroon: A Spartial Analysis Based on Demographic and Health Surveys Data”, *BMC Infectious Diseases*, 2022, pp. 2-4.

Smith, D., “National Survey of Volunteering”, London, National Center for Volunteering, 1998, p.4.

Sunkel, O., “National Development Policy and External Dependence in Latin America”, *The Journal of Development Studies*, Vol.6, 1969, p.23.

Takor, N. K, and Tifor, D.M., “The Paradigmatic Shift of Credit Union Mission in Bamenda, Cameroon, 1968-2023”, *The International Journal of Humanities and Social Studies*, Vol.6, Issue 8, August 2018, p.97.

Tamufor, G., et al, “Sustainability Assessment of Cattle Herding in the North-West Region of Cameroon, Central Africa”, *Journal of Development and Agricultural Economics*, Vol.9, Issue 10, October 2017, p.290.

Tanga, P.T., and Fonchingong, C.C., “NGO-State Interaction and the Politics of Development in Cameroon in the Context of Liberalisation”, *International NGO Journal*, Vol.4, No.4, 2009, p.84.

Titalanga, G.B., et al, “The Symbiosis of Bali Nyonga-Basel Mission Relationship: Understanding the Influence of Bali Nyonga through the Prism of the Basel Mission Vernacularisation in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon, 1902-1963, *International Journal of Integrated Education*, Vol.4, Issue 2, February 2021, p.354.

Vubo, E.Y., and Ngwa, G.A., “Changing Intercommunity Relations and the Politics of Identity in the Northern Mezam Area, Cameroon, *Cahiers D’etudes africaines*, 161, XLI-L, 2001, p.166.

Wenda, B.D.S, et al, “Assessing the Contribution of Micro Credit Financing to Maize Production in Mezam Division, North-West Region of Cameroon”, *International Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol.5, No.1, 2020, p.10.

Wolfe, M., “Participation: The View from Above”, Geneva, *UNRISD*, 1983, p.2.

Newspaper Articles

Blakeslee, S., “Kom’s Statue’s Home Coming Will End 3-Year Search by Peace Corps Volunteer”, *New York Times*, 5th November 1973, p.41.

Kouega, J.P., “The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon: Focus on Education”, *The Voice* No 053, 18 April 2017, p.6.

Martin, A.J, “Female Njangis Where Members Are at Home with Themselves”, *Cameroon Tribune*, 2 October 2016, p.3.

Shriver, R.S., “Peace Corps Director’s Speech” *New York Herald Tribune Forum*, 24/March/1961, p.25.

Reports

Blanchard, S., “Quarterly Report of Peace Corps Cooperative Technical Assistance (PCCTA) for Santa Union”, Nov 1992-Feb 1993, NWCA Archives Bamenda.

Cnaan, R.A., et al, “Defining Who is a Volunteer: Conceptual and Empirical Consideration”, 25 *NON PROFIT AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR*, Quarterly Report, 1996.

Cooke, L., and Jolly, C., “Mid Term Evaluation of the Program of Reform in the Agricultural Marketing Sector, *PRAMS I*, Yaoundé, The Agency for International Development Mission to Cameroon, July 1993.

Lewis, L., “The Civil Society Sector: A Review of Critical Issues and Research Agenda for Organisational Communication Scholars”, *Management Communication Quarterly Report*, Vol.19, No.2.

Mahon, D., *Cameroon –USAID Study and Design Project of the Cooperative Sector ; Cooperatives and their Activities in the United Republic of Cameroon : A Statistical Analysis*, Yaoundé, USAID, 1980.

Nyamnjoh, F.B., and Fuh, D., *Njangi Sociality: Mobility, ICT and Mobile Money Usages and Practices Among Poor Rural Farmers in the Cameroon Grassfields*, (Overview Report), Langa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group, 2014.

Oakerson, R.J. *Program of Reform in the Agricultural Marketing Sector, Phase I , First Intra-Annual Assessment during Year 4 (1993-1994) Final Report*, Yaoundé, Decentralisation: Finance and Management Project Associates in Rural Development Inc, March 1994.

Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2010.

Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2011.

Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2012.

Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2013.

Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2014.

Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2015.

Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2016.

Peace Corps Cameroon, *Annual Report*, Yaoundé, Groupe Inter Press, 2017.

Russell, J., “*A National Framework for Youth Action and Engagement Report of the Russell Commission*”, London, Russell Commission, 2005.

Scanlon, T.J., *Cooperation between the Peace Corps and the Agency for International Development, A Second Report to Congress*, Washington D.C, Benchmarks INC, 1989, pp. 1-57.

United States Action, *Annual Report*, Washington, United States Action, 1979.

Vander Waarde, J.J., *Helvetas Cameroon Experiences in Catchment Protection Activities Assessment*, Bamenda, Helvetas Cameroon, 2004.

Wessen, P.D., *Program of Reform in the Agricultural Marketing Sector Phase I (PRAMS I)*, Yaoundé, USAID, 1994.

World Bank, *Development Report on Development Possibilities in Sub Saharan Africa*, Washington, The World Bank, 1991.

Theses/Dissertations

Agbor, A.M., “The Role of the U.S. Peace Corps in the Socio-Economic Development of the South-West Province of Cameroon”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 1999.

....., “International Volunteer Organisations in Cameroon: Case Studies of German Volunteer Service and U.S. Peace Corps, 1962-2002”, *DEA Thesis in History*, University of Yaoundé I, 2005.

Amangwa, A.A., “Critical Analysis of Community Development Approach to the Economic Development of the Centre and South Provinces”, M.A. Dissertation in Geography, University of Yaoundé I, 2011.

Amin, J.A., “The Peace Corps: Origins and Performance in Cameroon”, PhD. Thesis in History, University of Texas, 1988.

- Anjoh**, R.F.M., “USAID Cameroon and Contributions to Self- Reliance Development: A Case Study of the North-West Cooperative Association, 1990-99”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 1999.
-, “The United States Agency for International Development and Agriculture in Cameroon, 1962-1994: A Historical Analysis, PhD. Thesis in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2005.
- Asenju**, C.T., “Three Instances of Western Colonial Governments and Christian Missions in Cameroon Education 1884-1961”, PhD. Thesis, Program in Cultural and Educational Policy Studies, Loyola University Chicago, August 2011.
- Azohmbi**, S.A., “The Contribution of the U.S. Peace Corps towards Self-Reliance Development in Cameroon”, IRIC Dissertation, 1982.
- “A Geographical Appraisal of the North-West Development Authority: An Agency of Rural Development”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 1998.
- Belinga**, C.T.O., « Les Chefs de Mission Diplomatique des Etats Unis D’Amerique au Cameroun de 1960 a 2007 » M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2011.
- Chenwi**, A.S., “United States Peace Corps and Community Development Initiatives in Bafut Sub Division 1962-2017”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2020.
- Chenwi**, O.A., “Human Rights and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the North-West Region of Cameroon: Case Studies of Plan Cameroon, Human Rights Defence Group and Strategic Humanitarian Services, 1990-2008”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2013.
- Etanefila**, V.N., “Cameroon–German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), 1980-2011, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2014.
- Fonge**, C.S., “The Development of Cooperative Societies in Southern Cameroons, 1916-1961”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé, 1988.
- Forba**, M.R., “USAID in Cameroon, 1961-1980: Case Studies in Technical Aid and Cooperation”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé, 1981.
- Gwanfogne**, M.B., “Changing Regimes and the Development of Education in Cameroon 1886-1966, (with special reference to the Basel Mission)”, PhD. Thesis, Department of History, Humanities and Philosophy/Department of International and Comparative Education, University of London, Institute of Education, August 1995.
- Ikechukwu**, B.A., “Traditional Communalism among the Mbaise of Igboland”, Bachelors Dissertation in Philosophy, STAMS Bambui, 1991.
- Jing**, M., “The Activities of the U.S. Agency for International Development in Cameroon, 1961-1982”, *Doctorat de Troisieme Cycle* Thesis, IRIC Yaoundé, 1983.
- Jorde Sandsor**, A.M., “The Rotating Savings and Credit Associations: An Economic, Social and Cultural

- Institution” M.A. Dissertation in Economics, University of Oslo, May 2010.
- Kuendun, J.**, “Women and the Independence Struggle in the British Southern Cameroons, 1945-1961: A Historical Survey”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2014.
- Lawyer, L.A.**, “Female Missionary Activities and Change in the Bamenda Grassfields 1904-2006: A Historical Survey”, PhD. Thesis, Department of History, University of Yaoundé I, 2012.
- Mah, U.A.**, “The Mbororo as an Agent of Community Development in Fundong Sub Division”, M.A. Dissertation in Geography, University of Yaoundé I, 2010.
- Mangula, L.**, “The Focolure Movement and its Role in the Rural Evolution of Fontem, 1966-1976”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 1999.
- Massell, R.**, “Positive Living: Nutritional Realities and Interventions for People Living with HIV/AIDS in the North-West Province”, Diploma for Cameroon: Culture and Development SIT Study Abroad, Duke University, 2006.
- Mesumbe, H.S.**, “Local Development Decentralisation in Cameroon: The Case of the Tombel Rural Council, 2004-2013”, M.A Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2014.
- Mfombong, W.C.**, “Bamenda Division under the British Administration, 1916-1961: From Native Administration to Local Government”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé, 1980.
- Monkang, E. F.**, “The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon: A Partner in the Development Process of Mezam Division, 1957-2002”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2006.
- Mokoro, M.N.**, “Women Cooperatives in the North-West Provinces of the Republic of Cameroon”, *These de Troisieme Cycle*, Department of Geography, University of Yaoundé, 1985.
- Ndosiri, E.A.**, “Forest Contribution`to the Development of Bamendakwe from 1904-2004, A Historical Analysis”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2010.
- Nebane, D.**, “Traditional Medicinemen in the Advent of Conventional Medicine: The Case of Bafut in the North-West Region of Cameroon”, PhD Thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Yaoundé I, 2013.
- Ngitir, V.B.**, “Bamenda Grassfields Royal Collection and Museums from Ancient Times to the Beginning of the 21st Century”, PhD. Thesis, Department of History, University of Yaoundé I, 2011.
- Nguerouet Modio, A.P.**, « L’Axe Diplomatique Washington-Yaoundé (1960-1990): Fondements, Enjeux et Perspectives Historiques », M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2013.
- Numvigwaibi, W.**, “Decentralisation and Community Participation: Local Development and Municipal Politics in Cameroon”, PhD. Thesis in Anthropology, University of Pretoria, 2015.
- Perkins, G.**, “East Versus West: Chinese and American Development Efforts and Perceptions in Cameroon”, SIT Cameroon, The College of William and Mary, 2012.

Reinsma, K.R., “Chop Fayne: Nutritional Realities in Cameroon and Interventions in the North-West Province”, M.A. Dissertation, Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, Colorado State University, 2008.

Suh, D.S., “The Role of Bafut Traditional Institutions in Contemporary Cameroon Politics 1960-2004”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2013.

Tamukong, N.A., “The Evolution of Education in Bambili, 1952-1992: A Historical Perspective”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2005.

Teneng, S.T., “Pinyin Development Organisation: An Agent of Development in the Pinyin Clan, 1978-2011”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2014.

Tsongwain, D.V., “Conservation and Development: Agricultural Intensification and the Uptake of Project Initiated Alternative Livelihood Activities around the Kilum-Ijim Forest(Cameroon), M.A. Dissertation, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge, 1990.

Umah, S. N., “Self-Reliance Development in Ngie; A Historical Survey, 1961-1992”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé, 1992.

Wirnkar, A.V., “Cameroon-Canada Cooperation and Community Development in Kumbo Central Sub Division; A Historical Analysis 1970-2011”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2016.

Zang, L., « Aide Exterieur et Developpement, le Cas du Cameroun, 1960-1976 » *Maitrise IRIC*, 1978.

Archival Sources

MINREX archives, File No.3317, box, 567, Ref No. H/L No 39/3/of/1 CAB/DIPL/1B, “Relations entre le Cameroun et les USA”, 1966.

MINREX archives, File No. 3942, box, 653, Ref No.63/S/CF/CAB/DPI/1B, “Relations entre le Cameroun et les USA”, 1966.

MINREX archives, File No. 3838, box 628, Ref No.2253/CAB/DIPL/1B, “Cameroun-USA, 1962-1965”, 1965.

MINREX archives, File No. 3838, box 629, Ref. No. V/L No A 286/CAB/PR, “Cameroun-USA,1962-1965”, 1962.

MINREX archives, File No. 3838, box 629, Ref. No. 2253/CAB/DIPL/1B, “Cameroun-USA, 1962-1965”,1965.

MINREX archives, File No. 14/93” USAID To Close 21 Missions Around the World”, Afrique/Etats Unis, December 1993.

MINREX archives, File No.12/91, “U.S. Commercial Diplomacy: The Challenge of the 21st Century”, Afrique/Etats Unis, June 1997.

NAB, File No. 517, Sb/b/1962/2, “Cameroon College of Arts, Science and Technology”, CCAST Bambui, Bamenda, 1962.

NAB, File No. Sa/e/1971/2 “Women Cooperative Societies”, West Cameroon, 1971.

NAB, File No. Ta/a/1964/1, “Application for Peace Corps Volunteers, West Cameroon”, Buea, 1964

RAB, File No. NW/Sa/d./1979/5, “Bamenda Today, Ministry of Information and Culture, 1979”.

RAB, File No. NW/Qh/e./1987/1, “Kilum Mountain Forest Project, 1987”

RAB, File No. NW/Sa/d./1983/1, “The Bamenda Urban Space- Evolution and Organisation, 1983”.

Radio/Television Programmes

Tiemuncho, J., “International Volunteerism, the Case of the Peace Corps”, Beyond the Frontiers, Rebroadcast on CRTV Afternoon Edition, Yaounde, CRTV, 21 November 2018.

Internet Sources

Blog. Rachelchaikof.com

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/peace-corps>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/National-youth-service-corps>.

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/peace-corps>

[https:// www.amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com>

[https://www.history.com/this-day-in history/peace-corps-established](https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/peace-corps-established)

<https://www.jfklibrary.org>

<https://www.meriam.webster.com/dictionary/corps>

[https://money.howstuff works.com](https://money.howstuffworks.com)

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>,

<https://www.peacecorps.gov/cameroon>

[https: //www.peacecorps.gov/columbia/preparing](https://www.peacecorps.gov/columbia/preparing) to volunteer/living conditions

Kelsey Cornelius.blogspot.com.

musada.wordpress.com

[www.endrural poverty.org/what-we-do/programs/cclear/299-why-is-selfreliance-important for sustainable development](http://www.endruralpoverty.org/what-we-do/programs/cclear/299-why-is-selfreliance-important-for-sustainable-development).

[www.pathway to peace corps.com](http://www.pathwaytopeacecorps.com)

www.polyploidevolution.com

INDEXES OF NAMES AND CONCEPTS

A

Africa, xiv, 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 27,
28, 30, 33, 43, 46, 56, 57, 58, 59, 65, 66, 69,
75, 76, 80, 84, 85, 92, 96, 97, 102, 107, 132,
135, 157, 164, 171, 176, 180, 205, 215, 221,
230, 232, 236, 245, 249, 251, 271, 286, 288,
289, 308, 314, 316, 318, 320, 322, 331, 332,
335, 339, 348, 350, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401,
402, 403, 404, 405, 406

agreement, 6, 16, 22, 67, 70, 71, 72, 141, 167,
168, 171, 188, 192, 195, 196, 295, 328, 339,
345

Agroforestry, 8, 73, 160, 168, 170

Ahidjo, 68, 69, 256

aid, 2, 4, 16, 17, 29, 45, 49, 50, 51, 59, 60, 69,
70, 72, 102, 106, 113, 130, 131, 145, 181,
244, 248, 269, 279, 308, 333, 335, 336, 338,
339, 341, 350, 352

American, 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 16, 29, 30, 45, 46, 47,
49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 60, 67, 69, 83, 84,
85, 86, 90, 117, 181, 195, 204, 265, 272,
276, 283, 284, 285, 286, 288, 289, 295, 302,
307, 308, 310, 311, 313, 314, 315, 316, 318,
319, 321, 323, 324, 326, 331, 332, 334, 335,
336, 337, 338, 339, 341, 349, 350, 409

animal husbandry, 36, 156, 161, 169, 214, 304,
350

Aquaculture, 73

Asia, 4, 8, 17, 28, 43, 46, 56, 58, 59, 106, 132,
161, 331, 333, 337

Awing, 101, 107, 110, 116, 122, 160, 228

B

Bafut, x, 5, 21, 32, 35, 38, 43, 78, 79, 110, 112,
113, 116, 117, 118, 121, 124, 125, 126, 136,
137, 138, 143, 144, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151,
152, 154, 162, 163, 165, 169, 171, 172, 173,
174, 186, 193, 209, 215, 216, 217, 219, 222,
224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 232, 233,
239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 253, 259, 267,
271, 275, 287, 290, 291, 296, 300, 301, 304,
316, 320, 326, 331, 341, 345, 394, 395, 396,
397, 403, 407, 408, 409

Bali, 5, 38, 78, 101, 115, 122, 136, 137, 150,
151, 152, 160, 161, 162, 165, 179, 199, 201,
209, 213, 215, 222, 236, 240, 250, 251, 252,
253, 257, 258, 259, 264, 266, 300, 304, 314,
329, 394, 395, 396, 403, 405

Bambili, 5, 30, 78, 124, 136, 137, 140, 143,
144, 145, 146, 147, 213, 215, 217, 219, 235,
250, 252, 253, 254, 258, 262, 263, 264, 278,
279, 303, 394, 395, 409

Bambui, 5, 20, 101, 110, 124, 128, 160, 165,
168, 169, 172, 173, 174, 235, 242, 252, 253,
257, 258, 262, 275, 304, 310, 394, 396, 397,
408, 410

Bamenda, xiii, 3, 12, 32, 35, 38, 39, 40, 43, 64,
79, 83, 87, 88, 90, 99, 109, 110, 111, 114,
117, 122, 124, 125, 126, 131, 153, 159, 160,
165, 173, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 182, 183,
185, 186, 187, 191, 193, 197, 201, 202, 203,
204, 205, 206, 208, 211, 213, 215, 217, 219,
222, 223, 224, 226, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236,
237, 238, 239, 240, 243, 251, 252, 253, 258,
259, 260, 264, 266, 267, 270, 271, 272, 273,
277, 278, 279, 280, 290, 297, 298, 304, 309,
314, 317, 325, 331, 394, 395, 396, 397, 399,
400, 402, 403, 405, 406, 408, 409, 410

Bamendakwe, 5, 38, 78, 101, 124, 136, 137,
148, 171, 228, 395, 396, 408

Baptist, 78, 84, 217, 234, 252, 253, 257, 266,
295, 298, 328

Basel, 245, 251, 252, 253, 257, 266, 275, 405,
408

bilateral, 6, 7, 16, 17, 18, 58, 71, 95, 247, 335,
339

C

Cameroon, v, vi, x, xi, xiii, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,
11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31,
33, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 46, 50, 54, 55,
65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76,
77, 78, 79, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90,
91, 93, 94, 95, 97, 99, 100, 102, 103, 104,
108, 109, 114, 116, 120, 122, 123, 124, 125,
130, 131, 132, 133, 135, 143, 156, 157, 158,
159, 160, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 171,
172, 173, 175, 176, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184,
185, 187, 189, 190, 191, 193, 194, 195, 196,
202, 203, 207, 208, 210, 211, 212, 213, 215,
216, 218, 220, 221, 225, 227, 228, 229, 230,
231, 232, 233, 234, 236, 237, 238, 239, 245,
246, 247, 248, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255,
256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264,
265, 266, 268, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 277,
278, 279, 280, 282, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290,
295, 297, 298, 299, 301, 303, 305, 306, 308,
309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 318,
319, 320, 321, 324, 325, 326, 328, 329, 331,
334, 335, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343,
344, 345, 348, 349, 350, 351, 353, 354, 397,
398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406,
407, 408, 409, 410

capacity building, 4, 14, 55, 59, 157, 168, 282,
289, 295, 299, 348

Capitalism, 335

Catholic, xiv, 78, 79, 181, 217, 229, 242, 243,
244, 252, 253, 257, 264, 293, 304

CCAST, xiii, 78, 250, 258, 262, 263, 264, 410

Cold War, 2, 5, 45, 46, 51, 52, 56, 283, 289,
323, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 338

Communism, 2, 5, 45, 53, 69, 289, 331, 333,
334, 335

community, v, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15,
18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 38,
43, 51, 55, 59, 60, 76, 77, 78, 80, 85, 86, 87,
88, 89, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 102,
103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 110, 112, 113,
115, 117, 118, 119, 120, 122, 123, 124, 125,
126, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 141, 147,
149, 154, 161, 172, 175, 177, 190, 192, 205,
206, 211, 212, 213, 215, 216, 218, 219, 220,
223, 224, 225, 227, 228, 229, 233, 236, 238,
239, 240, 241, 242, 244, 246, 249, 256, 269,
270, 274, 281, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292,
294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302,
304, 308, 311, 314, 318, 319, 321, 323, 324,
325, 329, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 346, 347,
351, 354, 355

Congress, 17, 50, 53, 60, 70, 74, 92, 93, 297,
306, 326, 330, 335, 337, 338, 406

cooperation, v, 3, 7, 16, 17, 19, 24, 25, 26, 27,
31, 37, 46, 70, 74, 80, 94, 102, 107, 108,
131, 140, 147, 148, 152, 159, 247, 328, 342,
345

Cooperatives, 177, 178, 179, 180, 190, 191,
192, 205, 206, 207, 210, 254, 403, 406, 408

counterpart, 78, 162, 250, 297, 300

Credit Union, x, xiii, 9, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181,
182, 183, 184, 185, 399

culture, 9, 10, 24, 25, 26, 69, 84, 87, 89, 100,
101, 106, 130, 147, 160, 166, 167, 168, 169,

170, 171, 220, 255, 265, 283, 284, 285, 286,
288, 289, 308, 310, 314, 315, 316, 322, 326,
327, 331, 344

D

dependency, 10, 24, 28, 29, 76, 114, 302, 351

development, v, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13,
14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27,
28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 38, 44, 45, 50, 53,
54, 55, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69,
73, 75, 76, 77, 78, 80, 83, 84, 86, 89, 91, 94,
95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104,
105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 112, 113, 114,
115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 122, 123, 124,
125, 128, 129, 135, 139, 142, 144, 145, 147,
148, 152, 153, 154, 156, 157, 159, 160, 165,
167, 171, 175, 176, 180, 182, 184, 185, 187,
189, 190, 192, 194, 196, 203, 206, 211, 212,
213, 214, 215, 216, 221, 224, 227, 228, 245,
246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 254, 256, 260, 263,
264, 272, 273, 274, 275, 278, 280, 282, 283,
284, 285, 289, 290, 291, 294, 295, 296, 297,
298, 299, 301, 302, 303, 306, 307, 308, 309,
311, 314, 318, 319, 320, 329, 332, 333, 334,
335, 336, 337, 339, 341, 343, 344, 345, 346,
347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 353, 354, 355, 411

Diaspora, 113, 114, 115, 403, 404

Division, v, vi, x, xi, 6, 7, 12, 17, 18, 19, 21, 33,
37, 38, 39, 42, 76, 78, 79, 100, 101, 102,
110, 122, 123, 124, 125, 128, 131, 155, 156,
158, 160, 176, 221, 222, 226, 231, 251, 258,
275, 282, 345, 346, 399, 401, 402, 403, 404,
405, 407, 408, 409

E

East, 5, 16, 38, 49, 53, 58, 73, 124, 161, 231,
323, 325, 331, 333, 337, 409

education, v, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 36,
45, 55, 58, 61, 63, 64, 72, 73, 74, 77, 78, 88,
89, 91, 94, 103, 108, 109, 115, 129, 155,

157, 158, 161, 169, 173, 177, 180, 183, 184,
189, 191, 199, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 212,
215, 219, 221, 223, 236, 237, 238, 239, 244,
245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253,
254, 255, 256, 261, 263, 268, 270, 271, 272,
273, 274, 275, 276, 278, 279, 280, 290, 297,
303, 309, 311, 312, 319, 325, 326, 343, 344,
347, 354

elites, 104, 112, 128, 246, 335, 347

English, 32, 35, 45, 46, 57, 61, 63, 69, 70, 74,
82, 86, 88, 249, 254, 258, 259, 260, 265,
266, 274, 275, 277, 311, 312, 314, 326, 334,
347

F

Fon, 39, 112, 115, 121, 124, 172, 320

G

Ghana, 2, 8, 9, 43, 56, 57, 58, 65, 193, 245, 324

H

health, v, x, 4, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 36, 46, 47,
50, 52, 55, 59, 60, 61, 77, 78, 80, 87, 88, 89,
90, 91, 94, 101, 103, 104, 108, 109, 113,
122, 123, 139, 155, 157, 158, 161, 173, 180,
214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222,
223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 234,
236, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 248,
249, 256, 274, 280, 290, 297, 304, 315, 326,
344, 347, 349, 354

host country, 5, 10, 52, 54, 59, 62, 63, 64, 66,
82, 87, 91, 93, 157, 178, 216, 282, 299, 305,
307, 318, 321, 327, 330, 343

humanitarian, v, 6, 7, 24, 29, 30, 31, 33, 36, 37,
60, 234, 319, 345, 350, 351

I

ignorance, 5, 53, 54, 57, 232, 236, 322, 333

inland fish, 9, 167, 310

K

Kennedy, 1, 2, 4, 7, 11, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49,
50, 53, 54, 57, 58, 62, 64, 68, 69, 71, 81,
249, 256, 282, 283, 316, 319, 323, 332, 333,
334, 335, 338, 348, 351, 398, 399, 400

L

language, v, 5, 43, 46, 47, 50, 56, 58, 69, 74, 82,
87, 88, 89, 91, 130, 147, 182, 196, 235, 238,
241, 249, 255, 284, 285, 286, 309, 315, 322,
326, 327, 331, 334, 337, 339, 349

Latin America, 4, 8, 10, 17, 27, 28, 29, 43, 46,
58, 59, 249, 314, 331, 333, 335, 404

Library, 176, 276, 403

M

Malaria, 80, 220, 240, 241

Malnutrition, 227

Mankon, 5, 38, 78, 101, 104, 114, 115, 116,
124, 136, 137, 145, 146, 147, 150, 152, 209,
213, 215, 228, 253, 257, 258, 259, 260, 264,
265, 266, 267, 271, 275, 276, 277, 301, 320,
394, 395, 396, 403

maths, 303, 311, 325, 347

Mezam, v, vi, x, xi, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19,
20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36,
38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 76, 77, 78, 79, 87, 91, 95,
96, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, 104, 108, 109,
110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 119, 120, 121, 122,
123, 124, 128, 129, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135,
137, 142, 144, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152,
153, 154, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162,
164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 171, 172, 175,
176, 178, 179, 184, 187, 188, 189, 190, 193,
201, 204, 207, 208, 209, 210, 212, 213, 214,
215, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224,

227, 228, 231, 232, 234, 237, 240, 242, 243,
244, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255,
256, 257, 258, 260, 261, 265, 267, 268, 272,
273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 280, 282, 285,
287, 288, 289, 290, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298,
299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 305, 306, 307, 309,
310, 311, 312, 314, 315, 316, 317, 320, 321,
322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 331, 340,
341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349,
350, 351, 353, 354, 355, 401, 402, 403, 404,
405, 408

mother and child care, 220, 223

multilateral, 6, 339

Mutuality, 182, 189, 340

N

Nigeria, 27, 56, 58, 66, 83, 103, 247, 250, 254,
264, 322, 344, 401

njangi, 129, 130, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137,
138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146,
147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154

Njibujang, x, 101, 110, 111, 117, 118, 121,
125, 126, 127, 128

Nkwen, 5, 38, 78, 101, 124, 125, 136, 137,
143, 145, 148, 192, 193, 197, 198, 199, 200,
201, 203, 204, 217, 228, 234, 242, 271, 275,
279, 297, 298, 320, 394, 395

Nursery, 171, 174, 175, 296

P

partner, 13, 80, 94, 95, 101, 237, 283, 284, 295,
301, 339, 350, 394

Partnership, xiv, 17, 93, 123, 124, 169, 172,
203, 205, 290, 340, 341, 397

Peace Corps, v, vi, x, xiii, xiv, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,
9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23,

24, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 142, 155, 156, 157, 159, 160, 162, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 239, 240, 243, 246, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 255, 256, 257, 260, 261, 262, 263, 265, 266, 268, 271, 272, 273, 274, 276, 278, 279, 280, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 353, 354, 370, 394, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 410

Pinyin, 18, 20, 101, 104, 105, 121, 123, 128, 160, 173, 189, 201, 228, 259, 396, 409

poverty, 3, 5, 6, 10, 13, 15, 22, 23, 27, 45, 46, 53, 54, 57, 61, 66, 76, 85, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 105, 107, 108, 120, 131, 156, 158, 159, 160, 176, 180, 205, 215, 217, 218, 227, 247, 248, 282, 289, 299, 301, 305, 330, 333, 335, 346, 411

Pre-Service, xiv, 87

R

remittances, 113, 114, 115, 116

S

Sacred Heart, xiv, 78, 253, 258, 259, 264, 265, 271, 303

Sanitation, 10, 76, 400

Santa, 5, 38, 78, 87, 122, 123, 136, 137, 165, 179, 191, 193, 199, 201, 209, 210, 211, 222, 240, 295, 309, 395, 403, 405

science, iv, 25, 57, 260, 262, 265, 266, 268, 269, 270, 271, 274, 278, 279, 303, 311, 325, 347

Secondary School, xiii, 173, 253, 257, 259, 268, 275

self help, 98, 104

self-reliant, 4, 9, 13, 14, 15, 21, 60, 97, 98, 99, 104, 108, 110, 120, 122, 128, 155, 176, 301, 302, 344, 348, 354

Small Enterprise, x, 175, 176, 178, 398

Social Capital, 25, 398, 402

Soviet, 323

suspicion, v, vi, 65, 154, 323, 324, 349

Sustainable, 22, 23, 116, 180, 401, 402

T

Task Force, 48, 49, 51

Teacher Training College, xiii, 30, 78, 258, 260, 262, 275, 279, 328

Third World, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 29, 45, 46, 47, 49, 52, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 64, 76, 227, 246, 248, 285, 288, 299, 302, 306, 318, 331, 337, 397, 398, 399

Tubah, 38, 78, 110, 113, 121, 124, 173, 215, 217, 219, 222, 224, 225, 232, 235, 240, 301, 304

U

U.S, x, xi, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 28, 30,
 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55,
 56, 60, 62, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 74, 76,
 79, 81, 82, 83, 84, 86, 87, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93,
 94, 95, 115, 156, 166, 167, 168, 180, 181,
 187, 195, 207, 211, 215, 234, 244, 251, 254,
 256, 262, 264, 268, 280, 282, 284, 285, 286,
 287, 288, 289, 292, 297, 305, 306, 308, 309,
 311, 312, 318, 319, 321, 323, 324, 325, 327,
 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339,
 340, 341, 343, 344, 345, 347, 348, 351, 353,
 397, 398, 399, 401, 407, 408, 410

underdevelopment, 3, 5, 11, 23, 29, 54, 101

V

VDA, x, xiv, 107, 110, 116, 125, 129

W

West, v, vi, x, xiv, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 29, 31,
 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 52, 53, 73, 74, 78, 79, 84,
 86, 87, 94, 99, 100, 103, 112, 116, 120, 123,
 124, 131, 135, 158, 160, 162, 163, 164, 165,
 166, 168, 171, 180, 181, 182, 187, 189, 190,
 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 197, 201, 205, 208,
 213, 216, 218, 227, 229, 231, 232, 247, 250,
 251, 252, 253, 254, 256, 261, 265, 266, 271,
 297, 298, 314, 323, 324, 325, 333, 339, 345,
 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 407, 408, 409,
 410