

Original Research Article

Stakeholder Contribution to Rural Development in Mezam Division, Cameroon

ABSTRACT

Rural development is a continuous process facilitated by stakeholders. These stakeholders play complementary roles in the process through rural empowerment, project execution and provision of material needs to the population. In rural Mezam Division notwithstanding, there exists a dearth of information on the stakeholder categories, their spatial distribution and intervention domains in the rural development process. This paper examines the stakeholder categories, their spatial distribution within the various sub-divisions and specific domains of intervention in the rural development process in Mezam Division. Field surveys, focused group discussions, structured interviews with 31 institutional heads and the administration of 260 questionnaires to various actors constituted the main primary data sources while a review of institutional, library and internet sources served as secondary sources materials of data gathering for this research. The collected data was analysed descriptively using tables, percentages, graphs, bar charts and histograms. The results revealed that the stakeholders involved in rural development in Mezam Division are wide-ranging but were categorised into four, namely, state institutions (16%), CBOs (49%), NGOs (27%) and cooperative development agencies (8%). These stakeholders are unevenly concentrated within the four sub-divisions in Mezam Division as follows; Santa (33%), Bafut (28%), Tubah (23%) and Bali (16%). The areas of intervention of the stakeholders in rural development in Mezam Division are water supply schemes (39%), school construction (20%), agricultural development and modernisation (17%), road maintenance (8%), health centres (7%), erection of community halls and palaces (5%) and electricity supply schemes (4%). The paper recommends that the rural populations should be empowered and their local institutions like the rural councils be made totally autonomous. It concludes that in this way, the rural councils could easily rally the rural people, raise funds, execute projects, coordinate the activities of other stakeholders and serve as the custodian of rural development.

Keywords: Stakeholders, contribution, rural development, Mezam Division, Cameroon

1. INTRODUCTION

Over 1 billion people the world over live in poverty and 70% of these live in the rural areas. In the developed world (European Union (EU) for example), rural areas dominate the region making up 91% of the territory in the 27 member states and are homes to 113 million people who are over 56% of the population of EU [1]. In the less developed world, over 76% of the poor people reside in rural areas and make their living from agriculture. In India for example, the national economy is predominantly rural with 72.22% of its impoverished population still living in rural areas while 60.41% of total work force in rural areas draw their livelihood from agriculture and allied sectors. In Africa, the problem of rural underdevelopment is very severe as over 74% of African poor live in rural areas. The situation is however slightly better

in North Africa as not up to half of the rural poor in Africa are found in this region. More than 65% of the rural poor in Africa is found in Sub-Saharan Africa. The economy of Ghana in West Africa for example, just like other Sub-Saharan African countries like Tanzania, Niger, Togo, Chad, Central African Republic and Cameroon all depend heavily on agriculture in terms of employment, food security and income [2]. Here, the problem and extent of rural underdevelopment has been growing and manifest itself in the form of poor infrastructure, lack of access to basic education, lack of drinking water, lack of basic health facilities, hunger and lack of adequate shelter. The core problem of widespread poverty, growing inequality, rapid growth of population, and rising unemployment all find their origins in the stagnation and other retrogression of economic life in rural areas. Rural development is therefore a very important and urgent need for rural areas.

[3] considered rural development in terms of improvement in the economic and social life of the rural poor. Thus, the basic objectives of rural development include organising, developing and utilizing the available natural and human resources to facilitate equitable opportunity to the entire population dependent on them. Beneficiaries contribute to rural development planning and implementation to the extent that their involvement is planned in the development process and facilitated by effective communication and participatory methods. This makes rural development a complex process involving an interaction of economic, social, political and cultural factors. It is a multidisciplinary process of development which seeks transformation of the society from traditional to modern nature. The concept of rural development is a process of development and change to improve rural social life. The goal of rural development cannot be achieved without available infrastructural development, commercialization of agriculture, proper utilization and mobilization of resources and inclusive social development. The term rural development connotes overall development of rural areas with a view to improve the quality of life of rural people.

Against this backdrop, world leaders have agreed on an ambitious development agenda that seek to end poverty and hunger by 2030 while recognising the central role that rural development plays [4]. The solutions to these problems require new forms of governance and partnerships between stakeholders [5]. Recently, partnering in rural development is the most popular concept in this regard. Consensus is its key and the primary factor for promoting such partnership between stakeholders. These stakeholders in rural development include farmers, agriculture and non-agriculture labourers, artisans, traders, money lenders and those engaged in providing such services as transport, communications, processing, banking and education and extension [6].

The government of Cameroon is conscious of the important socio-economic role of the rural areas and the need to improve on the conditions of the rural dwellers. Since independence, it has pursued a rural development policy through heavily subsidized agricultural projects in production and marketing, supporting and advising other agricultural institutions and farmers in their areas of operation [7]. In this light, the government of Cameroon has created institutions like municipal council and North West Development Authority (MEDINO) through which rural development challenges can be resolved and their needs provided in a bottom up approach with the contributions of private, public and international organisations.

In Mezam Division, several rural development stakeholders are present. However, these stakeholders face problems of uncoordinated activities, insufficient funding, poor infrastructures such as bad roads and state dominance in decision making in the rural development process. The respective areas of intervention of the various stakeholders in rural development are not well carved out leading to conflicts at times between stakeholders. The local population has not also been highly empowered to assist in the rural development process. Until today, the local population still lack the knowledge required to make correct decisions concerning the rural development of their area such as on which basic needs projects to execute, materials to use, where the project should be sited amongst others. From all the above, it is clear that rural development projects and actions in rural Mezam Division are currently unsustainable. This paper examines stakeholders contributions to rural

development in Mezam Division. Specifically, it categorises the rural development stakeholders, determine their spatial distribution within the various sub-divisions and investigate their specific domains of intervention in rural Mezam Division.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1 Study Area

Mezam Division is one of the seven Divisions in the North West Region of Cameroon. It is located between Latitudes 5°40'N and 7°50'N of the equator and Longitudes 09°8'E and 11°51'E of Greenwich Meridians [8]. It covers a surface area of some 1,841.45km². Mezam Division is boarded to the North by Boyo Division, to the South by the West Region, to the East by Ngoketunjia Division and to the West by Momo Division. Mezam Division is made up of both urban and rural territories. Rural Mezam occupies the North and the Southern parts of the Division and constitutes four sub-divisions, namely, Bafut, Bali, Santa and Tubah sub-divisions (Fig. 1).

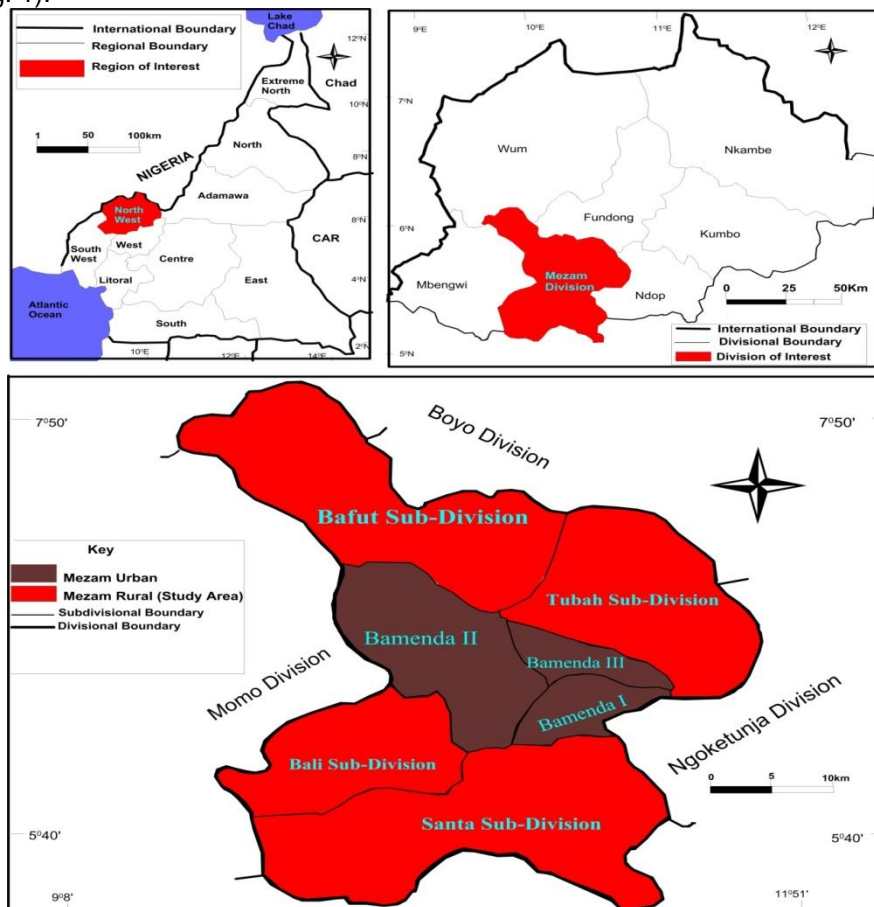


Fig.1: Location of the study area

Sources: Adapted and modified from Ndenecho and AKum (2009) [8]

The region is situated within the highland area of the North West Region of Cameroon. The four sub-divisions which constitute the study area have a combined population of over 498,000 inhabitants. Of this number, Santa sub-division has the largest population which stands at over 223,000 inhabitants, followed by Bafut and Bali sub-divisions with some 129,000 and 89,000 inhabitants respectively while Tubah is the least with some 68,000 inhabitants as of the 2015 projections [9-14]. Rural Mezam has an agrarian economy with

over 80% of the population involved in either the cultivation of crops or the rearing of animals. The population of this area constitutes veritable potentials for rural development.

2.2 Data collection

Pertinent data for this study was gotten from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources of data included field observations, questionnaire administration, structured interviews and focused group discussions. These primary data sources targeted individuals, institutions and groups who are directly involved and contribute to rural development in Mezam Division.

Field observations were ensured on the state of rural development infrastructures present in the sub-divisions. It also helped to identify the rural development stakeholders and their respective domains of intervention in rural Mezam. This was done between the months of February 2018 and December 2019.

During the period of field observation, questionnaires were equally administered to varied rural development actors in varying numbers based on population size within the four rural sub-divisions of Santa, Bafut, Bali and Tubah. A total of two hundred and sixty questionnaires (260) were successfully administered and retrieved within the four sub-divisions that constitute the study area (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: Questionnaire administration within the four sub-divisions

S/N	Sub-divisions	2015 population	No of questionnaire administered	% of total
1	Santa	223,000	100	38.46
2	Bafut	129,000	70	26.92
2	Bali	89,000	50	19.23
4	Tubah	68,000	40	15.39
Total		498,000	260	100

From Table 1, we realise that Santa which is the most populous sub-division in rural Mezam received the largest proportion of questionnaires (38.46%) while Tubah which is the least populated received the least proportion (15.39%). Table 2 further shows the administration of the 260 questionnaires to various actors (the rural population and some rural development sector staff) in the four sub-divisions combined.

Table 2: Questionnaires administration to various actors in rural Mezam

Actors	Men	Women	Youth s	Educationist	Health workers	Counsellors	Administrators	Total
No. administered	74	66	60	20	17	13	10	260
% of total	28.5	25.4	23.1	8	6	5	4	100

These rural populations were targeted because firstly they are the beneficiary groups and secondly constitute the main stakeholders who have a pivotal role to play in their rural development process. To complement questionnaire administration, structured interviews also targeted 50 rural development institutional stakeholders from schools, hospitals, churches, sub-divisional delegations of government ministries in Mezam, municipal council authorities, VDAs, CIGs and NGOs all involved in the rural development of the sub-divisions (Table 3). Of the targeted 50 structural interviews, 31 were successfully conducted while 19 failed as the interviewees did not respect the programmed schedule with the interviewers because they were absent at the time of the interview.

Table: 3: Institutional actors interviewed for the study

Actors	VDAs	NGOs	Administrative authorities	School heads	Health center heads	Church heads	Others	Total
Targeted	11	8	8	7	6	5	5	50
Interviewed	8	5	4	3	4	4	3	31
Absent	3	3	4	4	2	1	2	19

These categories of actors in Table 3 were targeted because they are institutions involved with rural development activities in their various sectors (schools, health centres, churches, road maintenance and electricity and pipe borne water supply). To complement the structured interviews, three focused group discussions were held constituting 8 members in each group with livestock breeders association in Bafut, food crop producers association in Santa and one female 'njanji' group in Tubah. The essence was to obtain information on the rural development projects that they have participated in as CBOs and/or are ongoing in their area.

Secondary data was obtained from published and institutional sources such as libraries of the University of Buea and the Limbe municipal library. These included text books, institutional archives and research papers or publications. Unpublished sources of data were also reviewed in the study including theses, past dissertation, end of year institutional reports and council reports.

2.3 Data analysis and presentation

Data gathered from both primary and secondary sources were analysed using qualitative techniques and presented by help of photos, tables, bar charts and histograms.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings for this paper are presented on stakeholder typology in rural development and the contributions of specific stakeholders in the rural development process in Mezam Division.

3.1 Stakeholders of rural development in Mezam Division

In Mezam Division, partnership in rural development is a widely used development approach facilitated by a multitude of stakeholders involved in the rural development process. These stakeholders have been categorised into four groups for simplicity and easy understanding. These categorised include Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), state institutions and Development Cooperation Agencies (DCAs) like the United Nations Organisation (UNO), European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU). The CBOs include Village Development Associations (VDA), cooperatives, CIGs and PTAs. NGOs on the other hand constitute civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations both national and international. The state institutions include rural councils and the sub-divisional delegations of government ministries in rural Mezam while the development cooperation agencies include international organisations (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2: Stakeholders' categories in rural Mezam
Source: Field Work (2019)

Figure 2 presents the stakeholder categories involved in the rural development process in Mezam Division. Four categories of stakeholders are evident as found in the figure, namely, CBOs, NGOs, state institutions and DCAs.

The spatial distribution of stakeholders in rural Mezam is unequal. Findings revealed that the Santa municipality has the highest number of stakeholders given that the municipality has ten villages with different VDAs, traditional councils, CIGs and PTAs. This is followed by Bafut, Tubah and Bali respectively due to their comparatively small number of villages and small surface area that they occupy (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3: Spatial distribution of rural development stakeholders
in Mezam Division
Source: Field Work (2019)

Results equally show spatial variation in the degree of involvement or contribution by the various stakeholders in the rural development process in Mezam Division (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4: Spatial variation in the degree of contribution by stakeholders in the rural development process in Mezam Division

Source: Field Work (2019)

Figure 4 reveals that the CBOs make the greatest contribution to the rural development process in Mezam of up to 49%. This is closely followed by the NGOs, state institutions and CDAs with 27%, 16% and 8% respectively. Of the 49% of CBOs, Santa and Bafut sub-divisions host the greatest numbers. This follows that they receive more contributions in terms of rural development projects than Bali and Tubah sub-divisions.

Regarding their domains of intervention, the stakeholders intervene in diverse domains in rural areas in Mezam Division where there is little funding available for development. Together, they have been involved in the construction of schools, health facilities, water supply schemes, road maintenance, agricultural development, community halls and palace headed by administrative authorities and development of electricity supply projects (Fig. 5). The rural population on their part has created community based organisations and elects their representatives to channel their development needs and challenges to relevant higher authorities and partners in rural development for solutions to be provided.

Fig. 5: Domain of intervention by stakeholders in RD in Mezam Division

Source: Field Work (2019)

Figure 5 reveals that of the stakeholder domain of interventions sectors, water supply is the priority sector of intervention represented by over 39.1% of all the contributions. This is closely followed by schools construction (19.1%), agricultural development in terms of intensification and modernization (16%) and road maintenance (10%). Potable water is being provided through pipes and boreholes. Small water tanks of between 10-30m³ are constructed to provide water to some rural households by the stakeholders. Most of these water schemes however have suffered from breakdown without repairs. With rapid population growth in the area, more than 40% of the rural masses still lack access to potable water. The least intervention sector by stakeholders is in the domain of electricity supply represented by only 3.8% of the total. This explains why the rural masses still suffer from epileptic nature of electricity supply characterised by frequent power cuts from the energy utilization company Energy of Cameroon (ENEO).

Though the CBOs remain the most active RD stakeholder in rural Mezam, state institutions are the most influential since they have the authority over other stakeholders and determine the nature of rural development to be pursued in Mezam Division. The specific contribution to RD of the different stakeholder categories in Mezam Division is presented in the following section.

3.2 Stakeholders contributions to rural development in Mezam Division

The respective contributions of CBOs, NGOs, state institutions and DCAs to RD in Mezam Division are presented below.

3.2.1 Contributions of CBOs to rural development in Mezam

The populations of the different villages have organised themselves into CBOs to facilitate the collections of fund and rallying their rural populations to be actively involved in their rural

development processes. The CBOs constitute major stakeholders in the development of their villages. The CBOs initiate development projects in the different villages. In rural Mezam, CBOs (traditional councils, VDAs, PTAs, CIG, njangi groups and co-operative societies) contribute to rural development by providing free labour, building materials, financial contributions, entertainment and attending training seminars to acquire more knowledge on how to rally more people as well as manage rural development projects (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6: CBOs contribution to RD in Mezam Division
Source: Field Work (2019)

Figure 6 shows the various areas of CBOs contribute in rural development in Mezam Division. From the figure, CBOs highly contribute in the domain of free labour contribution for development purposes (44%). This is closely followed by financial contribution from youths (1,000-2,000FCFA), men (1,500-5,000FCFA), women (1,000-3,000FCFA) and volunteers (10,000FCFA+) annually (27%).

The traditional councils of villages for example are more involved in rural administration while the churches are involved in the religious, health and educational domains. The PTAs are more involved in the development of the educational, water and energy supply sectors targeting schools in most cases. The cooperatives and CIGs are more involved in agricultural development activities (Table 4).

Table 4: Some CBOs and their contributions to rural development in Mezam Division

CBOs	Municipalities				Projects in rural Mezam				
	Santa	Bafut	Tubah	Bali	Classrooms	Health centres	Water supply	Farm tools	Electricity Supply projects
Traditional councils	10	1	4	2	—	—	—	—	—
Churches (Denomination)	9	8	7	6	272	14	30taps	14	9
PTAs	139	127	52	63	682	--	124taps	—	10
Cooperatives	14	9	5	4	8	--	18taps	269	6
CIGs	25	21	14	15	---	---	---	831	---
VDAs	10	1	4	2	141	18	674taps	456	26

Compiled from PTAs, CIGs, VDAs and other CBO reports (2019)

Table 4 reveals that CBOs have contributed enormously to rural development in the different villages in Mezam Division. This can be seen in the domains of health, education, farm tools provision and water and electricity supply. Figure 7 shows a CBO leading in provision of labour in the laying of water pipeline in Manka'a village, Bafut sub-division.

Fig. 7: Photo showing CBO led community labour in the laying of water pipeline in Manka'a, Bafut municipality in 2012
Source: Bafut VDA report (2019)

Findings further revealed that water supply is purely a community based initiative given the fact that the national water corporation 'CAMWATER' does not serve rural municipalities in Mezam. The VDAs are making efforts to provide potable water to the population but the constructed reservoirs are very small in sizes between 10-30m³ and found only in a few fortunate villages in the municipality. In high altitude areas like Manka'a, streams and springs

have been harnessed to run through pipes without reservoirs or treatment plants. These indigenous efforts have improved water supply in villages in rural Mezam. In the educational sector, the churches and PTAs provide the highest number of classrooms and other didactic materials. In the health sector, the churches dominate in the construction of health centres and hospitals. The PTAs dominate other CBOs in the execution of water and energy supply projects while the cooperatives dominate in the provision of farm tools and other inputs to boost agricultural development.

3.2.2 Contribution of state institutions in the rural development process in Mezam Division

The government of Cameroon has pursued rural development by creating development institutions at regional and sub-regional level such as MEDINO and rural councils. The state institutions have been set up to also coordinate the expertise knowledge and the activities of multi-disciplinary teams of technicians, engineers, agronomists, economists, rural sociologists, geographers, soil scientists and doctors to boost regional and rural development. Results show that the contribution by state institutions to RD in Mezam Division is not the same as some are more active than others in the process (Fig. 8).

Fig. 8: Extend of contribution of state institutions in RD in Mezam Division
Source: Field Work (2019)

From Figure 8, we observe that the rural councils in Mezam are the most active government institutions in the rural development process in rural Mezam. However, their activities limited solely to their various municipalities as one council cannot encroach into another council area. MEDINO which is a regional development institution as well as sub-divisional delegations of ministries such as Agriculture and Rural Development also carry out development activities in the whole of rural Mezam. Again, state institutions equally contribute to the different development sectors (Table 5 and Figure 9).

Table 5: Development sectors of state institutions in rural Mezam Division

State institutions	Contributions to rural development in Mezam Division					
	Agriculture	Transport	Seminar organisation	Classrooms construction	Health centres	Water supply
Municipal councils	356 tools provided	12bridges 26culverts 14km roads	7	18	24beds	267taps
MEDINO	223	14bridges 13culverts 46km roads	9	13	2 centres 12beds	4water scheme
Delegation of health	–	–	10	–	8centres	12taps
Delegation of education	–	–	8	382	–	18taps
Delegation of water and energy	–	–	2	–	–	2 feasibility studies
Delegation of transport	–	–	3	14km road rehabilitated	–	–
Delegation of agriculture	867 tools	9km road	9	–	–	Two water schemes, 14 taps, 3boreholes

Source: Compiled from various regional sub-delegations of ministries and council reports (2019)

Fig. 9: Photo showing a stretch of road graded by MEDINO in Pinyin, Santa municipality.
Source: MEDINO reports (2019)

From Figure 9, we realise that rural Mezam benefits from RD projects coming from state institutions. Besides roads, the area benefits from other rural development projects such as creation of permanent and temporary jobs, increased the empowerment of farmers and development of human resources of beneficiaries, promotion of small operators like day workers, artisans, farm workers, support to micro-enterprises and technical support to farmers by state institutions. The beneficiaries benefit from state assistance through the participation of associations and individuals in the implementation of community development.

3.3.3 NGO's contributions to rural development in Mezam Division

Some of the NGOs operating in Rural Mezam Division include Society for Initiatives in Rural Development and Environmental Protection (SIRDEP), Community Initiative for Sustainable Development (COMINSUD), Grounded and Holistic Approach for People's Empowerment (GHAPE), North West Craft Association (NOWECA), SNV, SAILD, Inades Formation, Plan International, Heifer International and the Strategic Humanitarian Services (SHUMAS). These NGOs provide funding to CBOs and empower rural people as well as execute projects in the rural communities in Mezam with the participation of the populations. The NGOs involved in RD in Mezam Division and their domains of contribution is presented in Table 6 and Figure 10.

Table 6: NGO's contributions to rural development in Mezam Division

NGOs	Contributions to RD in Mezam Division					
	Agricultural development	Transport	Seminar organisation	Classroom construction	Health centre construction	Water supply provision
SHUMAS	476 tools	4bridges 12culverts	6	18	26beds	27taps 5boreholes
SIRDEP	613tools	10culverts	7	5	28drinking g pales	Protected 8water catchments
Plan International	–	–	9	–	2centres	2 water schemes
NAF	–	–	4	8	14beds	3boreholes
SAILD	12processing machines	–	10	–	–	4 feasibility studies
HURCLEP	–	–	8	–	–	–
Heifer project	421piglets	–	7	–	–	3 water schemes 2boreholes

Source: Compiled from NGOs' annual reports (2019)

Fig. 10: Classrooms donated by SHUMAS to SAPACCO college, Babanki Tugoh, Tubah municipality in 2012

Source: SHUMAS Annual Report (2019)

Table 6 and Figure 10 shows that NGOs have been very active in the rural development process in Mezam Division in the domains of education, agricultural development, health care, transportation and water supply projects. However, the 'Anglophone crisis' currently ongoing in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon which turned violent in 2017 has hindered NGO development activities in rural Mezam. This was particularly felt in the domain of rural empowerment through training seminars and other field-based activities as a result of insecurity experienced in the region via frequent gun shots, kidnapping of workers for ransom, ghost towns and lockdowns. This is further worsened by the Covid-19 global pandemic today.

3.3.4 Contributions of DCAs to rural development in Mezam Division

A number of projects have been financed by development cooperation agencies in rural Mezam. Development co-operation agencies active in the decentralisation and rural development domain in Cameroon are the United Nations and its related structures, the World Bank, International Labour Organisation (ILO), EU, Arab League (AL), African Development Bank (ADB), Bank of Central African States (BEAC), as well as friendly countries like Germany, France, Canada and the Dutch and Swiss governments. The Grassfield I and II projects were some of the major projects sponsored by the ADB through ADF implemented by MEDINO and conducted in close collaboration with other on-going projects in rural Mezam Division. The development cooperation agencies sponsor state institutions, NGOs and CBOs involved in the rural development of Mezam. The state institutions, NGOs and CBOs then execute development projects. The contribution of development co-operations to RD in Mezam Division is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Contributions of DCAs to rural development in Mezam Division

DCAs	Contributions to rural development in Mezam Division					
	Agriculture	Transport	Seminar organisation	Classroom construction	Health centres	Water supply
UNESCO	—	—	6	8	—	4boreholes
EU	63tools	15km graded road	2	6	18 tables and chairs	5boreholes
AU	—	—	2	—	—	—
WHO	—	—	6	-	16beds 20drinkin g pales	6 boreholes
World Bank	10processin g machines 546 farming tools	20km graded road	9	14	3centres 8beds, 6thermo meters, 4 weighing scales	3 water schemes 18taps
ADB	592 farming tools	46km graded road	82	11	2centres	4 water schemes 28taps
BEAC	-	-	6	-	-	-

Source: Compiled from state delegations, NGOs and beneficiary groups reports (2019)

Result in Table 7 reveals that CDAs have tremendously contributed to RD in Mezam Division via the provision of farm tools and processing machines, road grading, organisation of seminars, classroom and health centre construction as well as water supply provision to the rural population.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The contributions of four categories of stakeholders to rural development in Mezam Division have been very visible in the various development sectors like agriculture, water and energy, education, health and transport. These stakeholders play complementary roles in rural development in Mezam. The state in an effort to facilitate stakeholder contributions created Santa, Bafut, Bali and Tubah rural councils. However, these councils which are supposed to be at the pivot and serve as custodians of rural development are weakened and reduced to mere project recipients by state administrators. Rural development in Mezam is thus overlapping, uncoordinated and fragmented in a 'top-bottom' rather than 'bottom-top' approach as prescribed by the decentralisation law which permits local participation in their development. The end result has been continues rural underdevelopment in Mezam Division with abandoned projects and regional inequalities observed. The rural populationas such continues to suffer from seasonal roads, insufficient supply of potable water and electricity, insufficient staff and classrooms and poorly staffed and equipped health centres.

The study recommends that besides providing some physical infrastructure to the rural population, they should also be empowered by the state and NGOs through their CBOs. This can be done through education, training and massive sensitisation to be able to improve on their lives and their communities as they get more actively involve their community development. These will enhance good governance, gender equality, lobbying and advocacy

for policy change. This should be backed by an independent legal system which can freely handle corrupt cases and regulate the contributions of stakeholder without state influence.

COMPETING INTERESTS DISCLAIMER:

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist. The products used for this research are commonly and predominantly use products in our area of research and country. There is absolutely no conflict of interest between the authors and producers of the products because we do not intend to use these products as an avenue for any litigation but for the advancement of knowledge. Also, the research was not funded by the producing company rather it was funded by personal efforts of the authors.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CBO: Community Based Organisations
NGO: Non-Governmental Organisations
CDA: Co-operative Development Associations
EU: European Union
MEDINO: North West Development authority
VDA: Village Development Association
CIG: Common Initiative Group
UNO: United Nations Organisation
AU: African Union
ILO: International Labour Organisation
PTA: Parents Teachers Association
ADB: African Development Bank
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO: World Health Organisation
BEAC: Bank of Central African States
USA: United States of America
SHUMAS: Strategic Humanitarian Services
HPI: Heipher Project International
NAF: Neba Albert Foundation
SDC: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
BHLP: Bamenda Highland Project
SAILD: Support Service to Grassroots Initiatives of Development
AWICO: Association of Women International Information and Coordination Office
SIRDEP: Rural Development and Environmental Protection
IDF: Integrated Development Fund
ACDEP: Association of Church-based Development
HURCLED: Hunam Rights Counseling and Education Centre
ADF: African Development Foundation
NOWECA: North West Craft Association
GHAPE: Grounded and Holistic Approach for People's Empowerment
COMINSUD: Community Initiative for Sustainable Development
RD: Rural Development
SNV: Netherlands Development Organisation
AL: Arab League
ENEO: Energy of Cameroon