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Stakeholders' Contributions to Rural Development in Mezam Division, Cameroon

ABSTRACT

Rural development is a continuous process facilitated by stakeholders who play complementary roles. 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, interviews and the administration of 260 questionnaires constituted the main primary data sources while a review of institutional, library and internet sources served as secondary source materials of data gathering for this research. The collected data was analysed using descriptive techniques. The results categorized the rural development stakeholders in Mezam Division into four; state institutions (16%), Community Based Organisations (CBOs) (49%), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (27%) and Cooperative Development Agencies (CDAs) (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 include water supply schemes (39%), school construction (20%), agriculture (17%), road maintenance (8%), health (7%), erection of community halls and palaces (5%) and electricity supply schemes (4%). The paper concludes that the rural populations should be fully empowered and their local institutions like the rural councils be made totally autonomous. 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.

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

1. INTRODUCTION

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There is no universally acceptable definition of Rural Development (RD) as the term has different meaning to different people in dissimilar parts of the world. According to [1], RD is a "strategy aiming at the improvement of economic and social living conditions, focusing on a specific group of poor people in a rural area. It assists the poorest group among the people living in rural areas to benefit from development".

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According to [2], it is a subset of the broader term 'development' and connotes the overall development of rural areas with a view to improve the quality of life of rural people. In this sense, it is a comprehensive and multidimensional concept, and encompasses the development of agriculture and allied activities; village and cottage industries; crafts, socio-economic infrastructure, community services and facilities and, above all, the human resources in rural areas. The author further conceptualised RD as a process, a

26 phenomenon, a strategy and a discipline. As a process, RD implies the engagement of
27 individuals, communities and nations in pursuit of their cherished goals over time. As a
28 phenomenon, it is the end result of interactions between various physical, technological,
29 economic, socio-cultural and institutional factors. As a strategy, it is designed to improve the
30 economic and social well-being of a specific group of people, that is, the rural poor. As a
31 discipline, it is multidisciplinary in nature, representing an intersection of agricultural, social,
32 behavioural, engineering and management sciences.

33
34 Theoretically, [3] highlighted that RD seeks to alleviate poverty, mass utilization of
35 resources, commercialization of agriculture, food security, creating opportunities,
36 infrastructural development of rural community and modernization of overall society. Again,
37 [4] further understood rural development in the context of the transformation of rural areas
38 and the wider economy-rural transformation and structural transformation. Through this way,
39 developments in urban and rural areas can be viewed together and be seen to be
40 interconnected. According to the report, it is the process of improving the opportunities and
41 well-being of rural people. It is also a process of change in the characteristics of rural
42 societies. In addition to agricultural development, it involves human development and social
43 and environment objectives, as opposed to just economic ones. Therefore, RD
44 encompasses health, education and other social services. It also uses a multisector
45 approach for promoting agriculture, extracting minerals, tourism, recreation and niche
46 manufacturing.

47
48 The term relates not only to a sustained increase in the level of production and productivity
49 of all rural dwellers, including farmers, and a sustained improvement in their well-being,
50 manifested by increasing per capita income and standard of living, but also leads to a
51 sustained physical, social, and economic improvement of rural communities [5]. Despite the
52 myriad of meanings above, this study considers RD in line with [2] as 'a process leading to
53 sustainable improvement in the quality of life of rural people, especially the poor' in studied
54 communities.

55
56 In the 1990s, the RD agenda was characterised by two main themes; a strong emphasis on
57 the environment and the protection of natural resources and a continued focus on macro
58 policy, liberalisation, the role of government in relation to the private sector and the
59 importance of effective public management (a particular concern of advocates of agriculture
60 sector programmes). Thereafter, new ideas concerning RD began emerging due to limited
61 success in eliminating rural poverty [6].

62
63 Chambers (1983) cited in [2] remarked that "RD is a strategy to enable a specific group of
64 people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what
65 they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in
66 the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of RD. The group includes small
67 scale farmers, tenants and the landless".

68
69 The three basic elements of RD include basic necessities of life (people's needs), self-
70 respect (dignity or honour) and freedom (political or ideological freedom, economic freedom
71 and freedom from social servitude) [2]. Governments looking to advance the goal of
72 sustainable rural development must also take an in-depth look at the existing land and
73 energy price and subsidy policies that so directly impact the overall footprint of agriculture
74 and other non-farm activities. This includes reviewing why so many well-meaning economic
75 initiatives often fail to reach the poor and how they can be better designed to ensure that the
76 benefits accrue to local communities and those most in need [7].

77

78 In view of the above, world leaders while agreeing on the ambitious development agenda
79 that seek to end poverty and hunger by 2030, recognised the central role that RD plays [4].
80 As such, sustainable RD is vital to the economic, social and environmental viability of
81 nations. It is essential for poverty eradication since global poverty is overwhelmingly rural.
82 The manifestation of poverty goes beyond the urban-rural divide. It also has sub-regional
83 and regional contexts. It is therefore critical, and there is great value to be gained, by
84 coordinating rural development initiatives that contribute to sustainable livelihoods through
85 efforts at the global, regional, national and local levels, as appropriate. Strategies to deal
86 with rural development should take into consideration the remoteness and potentials in rural
87 areas and provide targeted differentiated approaches [8]. Therefore, RD is fundamental to
88 achieving the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as some 67% of the
89 populations of low-income countries and 60% of lower-middle-income countries are rural.
90 Rural areas contain most of the planet's natural capital, which is currently being depleted
91 and degraded. Furthermore, about 80% of those below the poverty line live in rural areas,
92 and about one-fifth of rural people live in extreme poverty-a rate that is four times higher
93 than for the urban population. Nowadays, RD should be recognized and its attention urgently
94 pushed to the centre stage of global sustainable development efforts as a result of the deep
95 challenges of poverty and inequality existing in rural area, the current strategies of rural
96 development are proving inadequate for protecting the health of the planet, the advent and
97 spread of digital and other frontier technologies are changing the fundamentals of the
98 present rural-urban divide and finally steady decline of the share of agriculture in the context
99 of globalization RD should be considered central to a sustainable development process,
100 instead of as an appendage of urban industrial development [7].

101
102 The progress of RD needs to be monitored systematically. The systematic monitoring of the
103 progress of broad-based RD requires a core set of indicators to measure the multiple
104 aspects of rural development. It also requires a composite indicator that policymakers and
105 development practitioners can use to assess the performance of a country against its own
106 goals or in relation to other countries within the same region or income group. Some of these
107 measures include income poverty reduction (reduce incidence of rural poverty),
108 Infrastructural provision such as roads, markets and communication services, human assets
109 such as primary school enrollment and reduction in child mortality (below 5 years),
110 empowerment and gender equity, and food security [9]. This monitoring is important
111 because there were some 1.4 billion people in the world living in extreme poverty and 70%
112 of these (about one billion people) live in the rural areas [10].

113
114 The global economy has experienced major structural shifts, with the emergence of stronger
115 markets in middle-income economies, rising urbanization and demand for food, and several
116 low-income developing countries registering the world's fastest growth rates. At the same
117 time, climate change, erratic energy prices and complex and protracted conflicts have
118 delivered a variety of shocks. Several regions have seen large-scale population
119 displacements within and across national borders, and the social and political upheavals
120 linked to unemployment are deepening. Despite impressive reductions in poverty and
121 undernourishment globally, that progress has been uneven, and economic inequality across
122 the developed and developing world alike is increasing [4]. Between 1950 to 2005 for
123 instance, the rural population of less developed countries increased from 1.4 billion to 3
124 billion [11]. This is also the case in the developing world where about 80% of the extreme
125 poor and 76% of the moderate poor live in rural areas make their living from agriculture, as
126 compared to only 44% of the non-poor [12]. Three billion people live in rural areas in
127 developing countries who suffer from extreme poverty, child mortality and inadequate access
128 to electricity and sanitation [13].

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130 The people living in rural settings in Latin America, Asia and Africa do so with diverse forms
131 of deprivation, which has far-reaching implications for initiatives aimed at reducing poverty,
132 improving production and distribution of food and agricultural products, and achieving a
133 better quality of life for all human beings [11]. While population change in the developing
134 world is most evident in the growth of cities and towns, demographic changes are just as
135 marked in rural areas. For decades, those interested in agricultural and rural development
136 have taken as given that rural populations are growing, often rapidly; implying that
137 agricultural output will have to grow even more rapidly, while pressure on natural resources
138 mounts from an ever larger rural population. That pressure may be relieved by migration
139 from country to town, but this is commonly thought to lead to overly-rapid urbanisation
140 marked by the profusion of slums [14]. India for example, is a predominantly rural country
141 with two third population and 70% workforce residing in rural areas. The rural economy of
142 India constitutes 46% of national income. Agriculture (mainly in rural areas) is an important
143 sector of the Indian economy as it contributes about 17% to the total GDP of India and
144 provides employment to over 60% of the population. Some 60.41% of total work force in
145 rural areas in India draw their livelihood from agriculture and allied sectors and poverty
146 mostly persists here (27.1 % in 1999-2000) [15]. Here, one of the strategies used to reduce
147 rural poverty is integrated rural development program and targeted employment generation
148 schemes. The most important of these are the National Rural Employment Development
149 Program, the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Program, the Food-for-Work Program
150 and the Drought-Prone Area Program (Okidegbe, 2001-9). In Cambodia also, some of the
151 key Government policies to promote rural development and rural employment are the
152 Agriculture Development Plan; irrigation system development and management; the Rice
153 Policy; and economic land concessions [16]. In Nepal, rural development is a complex
154 phenomenon involving an interaction of economic, social, political and cultural factors linked
155 to infrastructural development, commercialization of agriculture, proper utilization and
156 mobilization of resources, food security, creating opportunities, inclusive social development
157 in the rural community and modernization of overall society [3].

158
159 While it is imperative for nations to achieve RD, the process is often confronted with
160 challenges. For instance, [3] found that achievements of RD efforts in Nepal are not
161 satisfactory because of imposed development, unstable political situation, absence of
162 people's participation, lack of research and political commitment. In Cambodia, [16] found
163 that the opening of borders for international migration constrained agricultural and rural
164 development. The increasing number of Cambodians migrating abroad, including working on
165 farms in Thailand, intensified the labour shortage and push up agricultural wages at home.
166 Higher wages in agriculture also exerted pressure on wages in non-agricultural sectors that
167 halted the industrialization process of Cambodia prematurely.

168
169 Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in particular faces many rural development challenges. Its
170 demographic transition has come late and the sub-continent has the highest fertility rate in
171 the world. The process of structural transformation (including rural development) in SSA is
172 also still in the early stages with agriculture being the predominant livelihood activity [13]. In
173 2020, some 600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) had no access to energy
174 services, most of them living in rural areas [17]. This is the case of Cameroon where the
175 above issues constitute challenges in the process of achieving RD by the relevant
176 stakeholders.

177
178 The government of Cameroon is conscious of the important socio-economic role of the rural
179 areas and the need to improve on the conditions of the rural dwellers. Since independence,
180 it has pursued a rural development policy through heavily subsidized agricultural projects in
181 production and marketing, supporting and advising other agricultural institutions and farmers
182 in their areas of operation [18]. As such, the government has created development

183 institutions of regional interest such as the Ombessa Development Authority, the Wum Area
184 Development Authority, the North West Development Authority, the South West
185 Development Authority and the Mount Mandara Integrated Development Authority through
186 which rural development challenges can be resolved and their needs provided in a bottom
187 up approach with the contributions of private, public and international organisation. Also of
188 national interest are the Community Development Support Project and the National
189 Community Driven Program. Significant changes for development in rural areas have been
190 initiated by the efforts of these development institutions in Cameroon. They have multi-
191 sectorial goals and have been a common feature of Cameroon's rural development
192 endeavours. They operate in areas with development potentials, but which are inhibited by
193 problems such as none, few or dilapidated socio-economic infrastructure, low technical
194 endowment and support, remoteness and rural exodus. They also operate at the national,
195 regional and divisional scales and in specific geographical settings [19].
196

197 In Mezam Division, several rural development stakeholders are present. However, these
198 stakeholders face problems of uncoordinated activities, insufficient funding, poor
199 infrastructures such as bad roads and state dominance in decision making in the rural
200 development process. The respective areas of intervention of the various stakeholders in
201 rural development are not well carved out leading to conflicts at times between stakeholders.
202 The local population has not also been highly empowered to assist in the rural development
203 process. Until today, the local population still lack the knowledge required to make correct
204 decisions concerning the rural development of their area such as on which basic needs
205 projects to execute, materials to use, where the project should be sited amongst others.
206 From all the above, it is clear that rural development projects and actions in rural Mezam
207 Division are currently unsustainable. This paper examines stakeholders' contributions to
208 rural development in Mezam Division. Specifically, it categorises the rural development
209 stakeholders, determine their spatial distribution within the various sub-divisions and
210 investigate their specific domains of intervention in rural Mezam Division.
211

212 **2. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

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214 **2.1 Study Area**

215 Mezam Division is one of the seven Divisions in the North West Region of Cameroon. It is
216 located between Latitudes 5°40'N and 7°50'N of the equator and Longitudes 09°8'E and
217 11°51'E of Greenwich Meridians [20]. It covers a surface area of some 1,841.45km². Mezam
218 Division is boarded to the North by Boyo Division, to the South by the West Region, to the
219 East by Ngoketunjia Division and to the West by Momo Division. Mezam Division is made up
220 of both urban and rural territories. Rural Mezam occupies the North and the Southern parts
221 of the Division and constitutes four sub-divisions, namely, Bafut, Bali, Santa and Tubah sub-
222 divisions (Fig. 1).

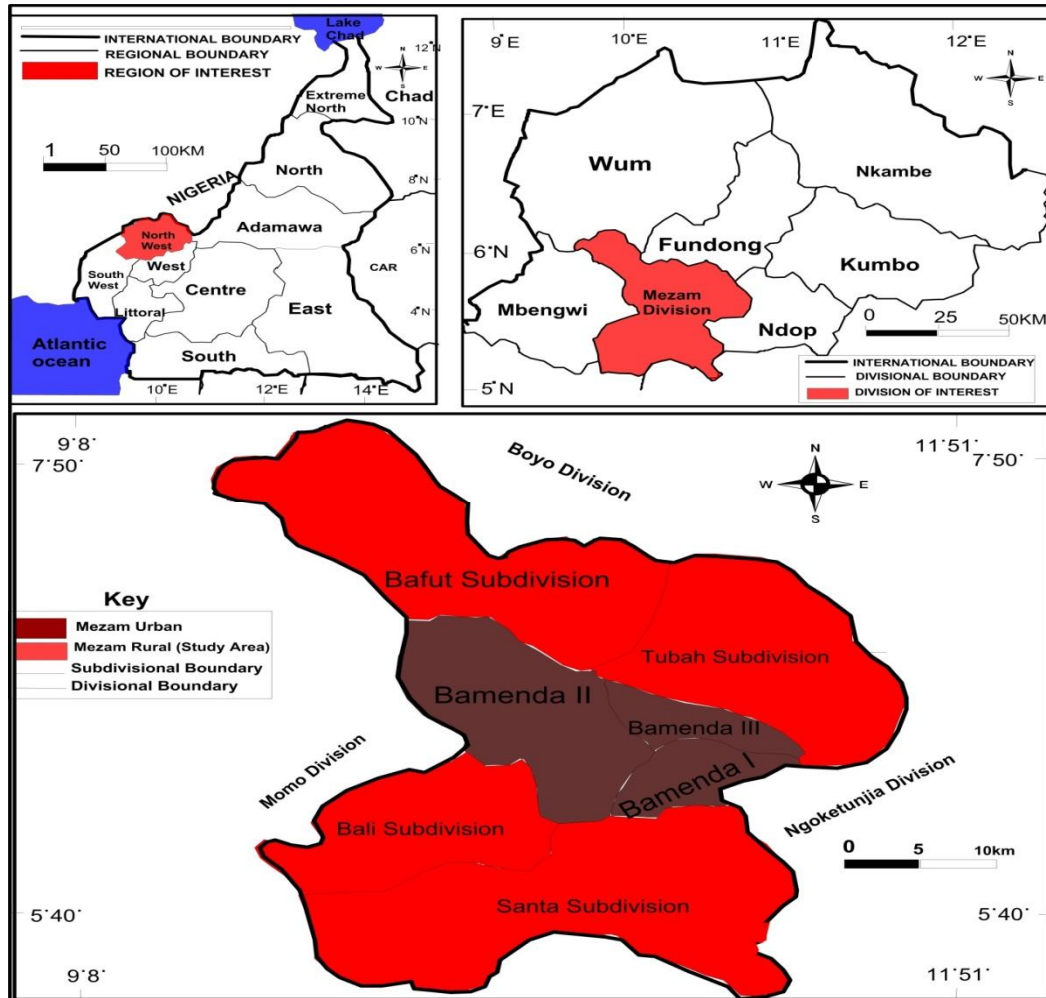


Fig.1: Location of the study area

Sources: Adapted and modified from Ndenecho and AKum (2009) [20]

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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 [21-24]. 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, 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

243 respectively domains of intervention in rural Mezam. This was done between the months of
244 February 2018 and December 2019.

245 During the period of field observation, questionnaires were equally administered to the rural
246 population in varying numbers based on population size within the four rural sub-divisions of
247 Santa, Bafut, Bali and Tubah. The purposive sampling technique was adopted in
248 administering the questionnaires. This sampling technique involved the deliberate selection
249 of the rural population involved in the process of RD in Mezam. Following this technique, a
250 total of two hundred and sixty questionnaires (260) were successfully administered and
251 retrieved within the four sub-divisions that constitute the study area (Tables 1 and 2). The
252 criterion that informed the number of questionnaires administered in the different sub-
253 divisions was their respective population sizes.

254 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

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256 From Table 1, we realise that Santa which is the most populous sub-division in rural Mezam
257 received the largest proportion of questionnaires (38.46%) while Tubah which is the least
258 populated received the least proportion (15.39%). Table 2 further shows the gender disparity
259 in the administration of the 260 questionnaires to the rural masses in the four sub-divisions
260 combined.

261 Table 2: Gender disparity in questionnaires administration to the rural population of Mezam

Actors	Men	Percentage
Male	171	65,8
Female	89	34.2
Total	260	100

262 From Table 2, the gender criterion that was used to classify the surveyed actors according to
263 male and female showed that more males (65.8%) were interrogated than females (34.2%).
264 These involved the youths, adults and aged within the population, educationist, health
265 workers, counselors, teachers and political leaders. The 260 questionnaires targeted the
266 rural populations because firstly they are the beneficiary groups and secondly they constitute
267 the main stakeholders who have a pivotal role to play in their rural development process.

268 To complement questionnaire administration, personal interviews also targeted 50 rural
269 development institutional stakeholders from schools, hospitals, churches, sub-divisional
270 delegations of government ministries in Mezam, municipal council authorities, Village
271 Development Associations (VDAs), Common Initiative Groups (CIGs) and Non-
272 Governmental Organisations (NGOs), all involved in the rural development in one or more
273 sub-divisions (Table 3). Of the targeted 50 personal interviews, 31 were successfully
274 conducted while 19 failed as the interviewees did not respect the programmed schedule with
275 the interviewers because they were absent at the time of the interview. The aim of the
276 personal interview was to determine the specific contribution of the respective stakeholders
277 to RD and also their development sectors of intervention.

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Table: 3: Personal interview with institutional actors in rural Mezam

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

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281 These categories of actors in Table 3 were targeted for personal interview because they are
 282 institutions involved with rural development activities in their various sectors (schools, health
 283 centres, churches, road maintenance and electricity and pipe borne water supply). To
 284 complement the personal interviews, three focused group discussions were held constituting
 285 8 members in each group with livestock breeders association in Bafut, food crop producers
 286 association in Santa and one female 'njanji' group in Tubah. The essence was to obtain
 287 information on the rural development projects that they have participated in and/or are
 288 ongoing as Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in their area.

289 Secondary sources of information were obtained from libraries, institutional and internet
 290 sources. These included published and unpublished works. The libraries of the Universities
 291 of Buea and Bamenda were consulted from where text books and journals were read. The
 292 ideas obtained or gotten were presented in the introduction. Also, archive of institutions such
 293 as Bafut, Santa, Tubah and Bali Rural Councils, NGOs, CBOs and CDAs were accessed
 294 from where end of year and other reports were reviewed. From these sources, plates were
 295 obtained showing community labour initiatives, road development initiatives and donations of
 296 classroom by some of these institutions to the local population. Research papers or
 297 publications from institutions like the World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural
 298 Development (IFAD), North West Development authority (MIDENO) and the Strategic
 299 Humanitarian Services (SHUMAS) were also used in the study.

300 **2.3 Data analysis and presentation**

301 Data gathered from both primary and secondary sources were analysed using qualitative
 302 techniques and presented by help of tables, percentages, charts, histograms and plates for
 303 easy appraisal of the results.

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305 **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

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

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309 **3.1 Stakeholders of rural development in Mezam Division**

310 In Mezam Division, partnership in rural development is a widely used development approach
 311 facilitated by a multitude of stakeholders involved in the rural development process. These
 312 stakeholders have been categorised into four groups for simplicity and easy understanding.
 313 These categorised include CBOs, NGOs, state institutions and Development Cooperation
 314 Agencies (DCAs) like the United Nations Organisation (UNO), European Union (EU) and the
 315 African Union (AU). The CBOs include Village Development Associations (VDA),
 316 cooperatives, CIGs and PTAs. NGOs on the other hand constitute civil society organisations
 317 and non-governmental organisations both national and international. The state institutions
 318 include rural councils and the sub-divisional delegations of government ministries in rural
 319 Mezam while the development cooperation agencies include international organisations (Fig.
 320 2).

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

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

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

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

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

381 Source: Field Work (2019)

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

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

395

396 Fig. 5: Domain of intervention by stakeholders in RD in Mezam Division
397 Source: Field Work (2019)

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

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

415 **3.2 Stakeholders contributions to rural development in Mezam Division**

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

418 **3.2.1 Contributions of CBOs to rural development in Mezam**

420 The populations of the different villages have organised themselves into CBOs to facilitate
421 the collections of fund and rallying their rural populations to be actively involved in their rural
422 development processes. The CBOs constitute major stakeholders in the development of
423 their villages. The CBOs initiate development projects in the different villages. In rural

424 Mezam, CBOs (traditional councils, VDAs, PTAs, CIG, 'njangi' groups and co-operative
425 societies) contribute to rural development by providing free labour, building materials,
426 financial contributions, entertainment and attending training seminars to acquire more
427 knowledge on how to rally more people as well as manage rural development projects (Fig.
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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

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

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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. Plate 1 shows a CBO leading in provision of labour in the laying of water pipeline in Manka'a village, Bafut sub-division.

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Plate 1: CBO led community labour in the laying of water pipeline in Manka'a, Bafut municipality in 2012

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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

495 indigenous efforts have improved water supply in villages in rural Mezam. In the educational
496 sector, the churches and PTAs provide the highest number of classrooms and other didactic
497 materials. In the health sector, the churches dominate in the construction of health centres
498 and hospitals. The PTAs dominate other CBOs in the execution of water and energy supply
499 projects while the cooperatives dominate in the provision of farm tools and other inputs to
500 boost agricultural development.

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502 **3.2.2 Contribution of state institutions in the rural development process in Mezam**
503 **Division**

504 The government of Cameroon has pursued rural development by creating development
505 institutions at regional and sub-regional level such as MEDINO and rural councils. The state
506 institutions have been set up to also coordinate the expertise knowledge and the activities of
507 multi-disciplinary teams of technicians, engineers, agronomists, economists, rural
508 sociologists, geographers, soil scientists and doctors to boost regional and rural
509 development. Results show that the contribution by state institutions to RD in Mezam
510 Division is not the same as some are more active than others in the process (Fig. 7).

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526 Fig. 7: Extend of contribution of state institutions in RD in Mezam Division
527 Source: Field Work (2019)

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529 From Figure 7, we observe that the rural councils in Mezam are the most active government
530 institutions in the rural development process in rural Mezam. However, their activities limited
531 solely to their various municipalities as one council cannot encroach into another council
532 area. MEDINO which is a regional development institution as well as sub-divisional
533 delegations of ministries such as Agriculture and Rural Development also carry out
534 development activities in the whole of rural Mezam. Again, state institutions equally
535 contribute to the different development sectors (Table 5 and Plate 2).

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542 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

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544 Source: Compiled from various regional sub-delegations of ministries and council reports
545 (2019)

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565 Plate 2: Stretch of road graded by MEDINO in Pinyin, Santa municipality

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Source: Field Work (2019)

567 From Plate 2, we realise that rural Mezam benefits from RD projects coming from state
 568 institutions. Besides roads, the area benefits from other rural development projects such as
 569 creation of permanent and temporary jobs, increased the empowerment of farmers and
 570 development of human resources of beneficiaries, promotion of small operators like day
 571 workers, artisans, farm workers, support to micro-enterprises and technical support to
 572 farmers by state institutions. The beneficiaries benefit from state assistance through the
 573 participation of associations and individuals in the implementation of community
 574 development.

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 576 **3.3.3 NGO's contributions to rural development in Mezam Division**

577 Some of the NGOs operating in Rural Mezam Division include Society for Initiatives in Rural
 578 Development and Environmental Protection (SIRDEP), Community Initiative for Sustainable
 579 Development (COMINSUD), Grounded and Holistic Approach for People's Empowerment
 580 (GHAPE), North West Craft Association (NOWECA), SNV, SAILD, Inades Formation, Plan
 581 International, Heifer International and SHUMAS. These NGOs provide funding to CBOs and
 582 empower rural people as well as execute projects in the rural communities in Mezam with
 583 the participation of the populations. The NGOs involved in RD in Mezam Division and their
 584 domains of contribution is presented in Table 6 and Plate 3.

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

NGOs	Contributions to RD in Mezam Division					
	Agricultural development	Transport	Seminars organisation	Classroom construction	Health centres erection	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

586 Source: Compiled from NGOs' annual reports (2019)

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Plate 3: Classrooms donated by SHUMAS to SAPACCO college, Babanki Tugoh, Tubah municipality in 2012

Source: SHUMAS Annual Report (2019) [25]

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Table 6 and Plate 3 show 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 on-going 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.

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3.3.4 Contributions of DCAs to rural development in Mezam Division

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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 the African Development Foundation (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.

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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	-	-	-

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

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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.

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4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

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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

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655 should also be empowered by the state and NGOs through their CBOs. This can be done
656 through education, training and massive sensitisation to be able to improve on their lives and
657 their communities as they get more actively involve their community development. These will
658 enhance good governance, gender equality, lobbying and advocacy for policy change. This
659 should be backed by an independent legal system which can freely handle corrupt cases
660 and regulate the contributions of stakeholder without state influence.

661 **Consent**

663 As per international standard or university standard, Participants' written consent has been
664 collected and preserved by the author(s).

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674 **COMPETING INTERESTS**

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676 The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

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678 **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

679

680 This paper was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Authors FGN and CMW
681 designed the study, performed the statistical analysis and wrote the manuscript. Author FGN
682 collected relevant field data. Both authors read the draft and approved the final manuscript.

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704 [billion/#:~:text=There%20are%20currently%201.4%20billion,for%20Agricultural%20Dev](https://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2011/03/rural-poverty-the-bottom-one-billion/#:~:text=There%20are%20currently%201.4%20billion,for%20Agricultural%20Development%20(IFAD))
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748 **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

749 CBO: Community Based Organisations
750 NGO: Non-Governmental Organisations
751 CDA: Co-operative Development Associations
752 EU: European Union
753 MEDINO: North West Development authority

754 VDA: Village Development Association
755 CIG: Common Initiative Group
756 UNO: United Nations Organisation
757 AU: African Union
758 ILO: International Labour Organisation
759 PTA: Parents Teachers Association
760 ADB: African Development Bank
761 UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
762 WHO: World Health Organisation
763 BEAC: Bank of Central African States
764 USA: United States of America
765 SHUMAS: Strategic Humanitarian Services
766 HPI: Heipher Project International
767 NAF: Neba Albert Foundation
768 SDC: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
769 BHLP: Bamenda Highland Project
770 SAILD: Support Service to Grassroots Initiatives of Development
771 AWICO: Association of Women International Information and Coordination Office
772 SIRDEP: Rural Development and Environmental Protection
773 IDF: Integrated Development Fund
774 ACDEP: Association of Church-based Development
775 HURCLED: Human Rights Counseling and Education Centre
776 ADF: African Development Foundation
777 NOWECA: North West Craft Association
778 GHAPE: Grounded and Holistic Approach for People's Empowerment
779 COMINSUD: Community Initiative for Sustainable Development
780 RD: Rural Development
781 SNV: Netherlands Development Organisation
782 AL: Arab League
783 ENEO: Energy of Cameroon
784 IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development
785 SSA: Sub-Saharan Africa