

Title: The Role of Internal Migrants' Improvement Associations in the Development of their Origin Areas: The Case of Out-Migrants from the North Region to the C.D.C and Pamol Plantations of Cameroon

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Introduction

Individual out-migrants from the North West Region to the Cameroon Development Corporation (C.D.C) and Pamol Plantations often group themselves on the basis of a common ancestral tribe or village origin into associations which are known by various names such as “Improvement Unions”, “ Cultural and Development Unions or Associations”, “ Family Meetings”, Kinsmen’s Associations, “Migrants’ Village or Tribal Associations” and more recently as “Home-Town Associations”(HTAs) in the literature on international migration, especially to describe Mexican migrant organisations in the United States (Lopez, Esula-Rabadan et al ., 2001)

It is in this light that we have many associations of out-migrants from the various tribes of the North West Region in the C.D.C and Pamol Plantation of the South West Region formed based on common tribal or village origins such as the Bafut Manjong Development and Cultural Association, the Bali Nyongha Cultural and Development Association, the Kom Development and Cultural Association, the Nso Development and Cultural Association, Moghamo Cultural and Development Association, the Njinikom Intelligence, etc These migrants group themselves under a migrant elder who has often been known to crystallize sentiment their aspirations and who has a deep attachment to their ancestral home.

The scope of the activities of these migrant unions has progressively widened to include informal insurance, rotating credit, sports and the organization of cultural events. Specifically, unions out-migrants the various localities of the North West Region to the C.D.C and Pamol Plantations provide the following services to their members and home places:-

-forging unity among sons and daughters from the same chiefdom or ancestral home;

- the promotion of savings and investments by its members;
- the promotion of the ancestral customs and traditions of migrants in “foreign” lands;
- The provision of assistance to members in times of joy such as marriage, child delivery and in time of misfortune such as the dead of a parent(s), child, spouse or other family relatives. Funds put together to assist members in times of unfortunate happenings are known here as “Trouble funds” or Social Security Funds.
- The provision of assistances to newly arrived persons from home place, this assistance may include the provision of shelter, food, a job and company until the person is well settled at the new destination;

- the peaceful settlement of disputes between members and between members and non-members;
- The facilitation of the collection of funds to assist in the development of the origin areas such as funds for the building of schools, extension of electricity, the construction of hospitals, the provision of pipe borne water, etc;

The role of these migrants' associations in the development of their origin areas is recognized by many localities and appeals are often made to them to assist in the construction of potable water supply projects, the construction of schools, churches and palaces. These, associations often respond favourably to appeals for assistance from their home places in the realization of public infrastructural and social amenities and their financial contributions to community development projects are often higher than those of non- migrant members who are the main beneficiaries. Unlike financial remittances sent by individual out-migrants that go essentially to assist their immediate or extend families , remittances through improvement unions go into development projects such electricity extension projects and the provision of pipe borne water,etc.

General Information on the North West Region

The North West Region is one of the two English-speaking regions of Cameroon. The main features of this region are its hilly nature with more than three-quarter of the land found on altitude of 900m above sea, a high population density with an overall population density of more than 100 persons per square, a low population growth rate of 2.4% per year compared to an overall population growth rate of 2.7% for Cameroon as a whole due to a high rate of out-migration, etc. It is the region with the lowest annual growth rate in Cameroon. Results of the Third Household Survey of Cameroon indicate that about 50% of the population lives below the national poverty line, making this region the third poorest in Cameroon. The main economic activities of the population are agriculture mostly subsistence which employs more than 65% of the population and extensive animal rearing. Living conditions in this region are so hard that a large majority of the able-bodied population migrate to other zones especially to the coastal capitalistic agro-industrial establishment - Cameroon Development Corporation and Pamol Plantations. Out-migrants from this region to the C.D.C and Pamol Plantations maintain close ties with their home places and contribute individually and through the various kinsmen's associations to develop them.

Some General Information on Associations of North West Region's Out-Migrants in the C.D.C and Pamol Plantations

The information on the improvements unions presented below concern mostly period of their formation and their names.

Table 1 Name and Dates of Formation of Some Improvements of Migrant Workers from North West Region in the C.D.C and Pamol Plantations.

Pamol Plantations

Name of Union	Year of Creation
Moghamo Development Association (MOCUDA)	1970s
Bafut Manjong Meeting	1970s
Ndong-Awing Cultural and Development Association (NACDA)	1980s
Njinikom Intelligence	2006

Wum Family Meeting	1970
Ndop Family Meeting	1979
Oshie Family Meeting	1989
Kom Family Meeting	1985

Cameroon Development Corporation Plantations

Name of Union	Year of Creation
*Weh Development Association	
*Guzang Development Association	1976
Bafut Manjong Group	1970s
Kijem Keku Cultural and Development Association	1980
Metta Development and Cultural Association (MECUDA)	1970s
Ngie Development Association	1970s
*Nseh Development Association	1980s
Njinikom Family Meeting	1980s
Oshie Development and Cultural Association	1980s
Ndop Family Meeting	1980s
Wimum Development and Cultural Association	1980s

* These migrant associations of people from the same villages while others are made up people from the same tribe.

Table 8.1 above indicates that many major tribes and some villages of the North West Region in the C.D.C have migrant associations in the C.D.C and Pamol Plantations. The first of such unions were formed in 1970s and their numbers have increased dramatically since then. The number of registered members range from 20 persons to more than 100. Even though most of these associations are not registered with government, they constitute important instruments for the promotion of unity among people from the same tribe in the Diaspora and for channelling financial assistance from them towards the realisation of development projects in their home place communities. Each tribe may have more than one association in one of these plantations. Some of these unions are sub-groups of bigger associations. For example village migrant associations are sub-groups of their tribal migrants associations.

With is striking is the fact some of these associations or unions consider themselves as “family” unions. This does not mean that they are necessarily members of the same family but they are a “constituted family” of people from different families but from the tribe.

The initial aims of these migrant associations were mainly geared at the facilitation of the integration of migrants from the same origin into their new societies and promoting unity among them but progressively they take care of the needs of their villages or town of origins.

Direct Contributions of these Improvement Unions to the Development of their Home Place Communities.

The direct contributions of migration improvement associations involve their role in the promotion of the construction of public infrastructure, the creation of social projects and participation in productive investments for the benefit of their home place communities. The collective remittance of cash through such unions to their home places contributes to realisation of pipe borne water supply projects, the construction and maintenance of roads, the extension of electricity supply, the construction of schools, etc. By participation financially in the realization of these projects, improvement unions extend the benefits of migration beyond their home place households to their origin households. This is one of the most significant

ways through which both migrant and non-migrant households in the home places of migrant benefit collectively from the out-migration of members of their communities.

Contribution Towards the Realization of Community Development Projects in their Home Places.

In the North West Region of Cameroon characterized by high out-migration and high degree of self-reliant development, the role of the association of migrants from the region is very crucial in the realization of public infrastructure. Since the late 1980s, the role of these associations in the development of the North West Region has become more evident especially with the reduction of the contribution of the state to development as result of the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The implementation of this programme has reinforced the need for alternative actors in the development drive of the region and the various local development associations always appeal for assistance and get favourable replies from their out-migrant associations for the provision of basic facilities.

Table 2 Distribution of Improvement Unions According to the Amounts of money Sent to their Based Communities within the last One Year for Community Development Projects

C.D.C Plantations

Amounts in francs CFA	Frequency	%
50000-100000	3	27.3
100001-150000	5	45.5
150001-200000	2	18.2
200001 and more	1	9.0
Total	11	100.0

Pamol Plantations

Amounts in francs CFA	Frequency	%
50000-100000	2	20.0
100001-150000	4	40.0
150001-200000	3	30.0
200001 and more	1	10.0
Total	10	100.0

Even though it was difficult to get the exact amounts of money each improvement union sent for development purposes in their home place community within the year preceding this survey, the study found that the modal amounts of money each improvement union sent to his home place community lies between 50000 and 100000 francs CFA. This modal sum is the same for both the Cameroon Development Corporation and Pamol Plantations. These amounts may seem small but when it is combined with the contributions that come from other migrant communities, they become significant and crucial for the realisation of any development operation in the home place community, after all, the saying goes that ‘many drops of water make up an ocean’. The per capita contribution of migrants through improvement unions is generally higher than that of non-migrant population that relies essentially on subsistence agriculture. It is for this reason that many communities in the North West Region always appeal to their migrant sons and daughters for assistance in the realization of pipe-borne water projects, the construction of roads, hospital, etc. and they always response favourably.

Development Projects Realised in the Migrants’ Home Places with their Assistance

Migrants' improvement unions provide valuable assistance to realization of many projects in their home places such as the extension of electricity supply, provision of pipe borne water, the construction of schools and the provision of school equipments, the construction of hospitals, etc. These projects are of key importance in improving the welfare of the non-migrant population at the home place. Apart from improving the living conditions of the migrants' home place community, the migrants themselves may eventually benefit from the presence of these facilities when they go for visits or when they eventually return to live permanently there at the end of their migration careers. Table 3 Distribution of Migrants' Improvement Unions in the C.D.C and Pamol Plantations According to the Projects they have participated to Realize in their Home places in the North West Region within the Last Five Years

C.D.C Plantations

Project	Frequency	%
Pipe borne water supply	4	36.4
Extension of electricity	1	18.2
Building of Schools/provision of school equipment	8	72.7
Building of hospitals	3	27.3
Construction of Churches	2	18.2
Construction/maintenance of chiefs' palaces	1	9.1
Construction of Community Halls	1	9.1
Construction/maintenance of roads	1	9.1

Pamol Plantations

Project	Frequency	%
Pipe borne water supply	6	60.0
Extension of electricity	1	10.0
Building of Schools/provision of supply equipment	7	70.0
Building of hospitals	1	10.0
Construction of Churches	1	10.0
Construction/maintenance of chiefs' palaces	1	10.0
Construction of Community Halls	1	10.0
Construction/maintenance of roads	2	20.0

Table 8.3 above shows that these migrants' improvement unions participate in the realization of many important development projects. The projects which most of these unions participation in their realization are the provision of education facilities such school buildings, laboratory equipment, school chairs, computers etc. This is followed by the pipe borne water projects, assistance to the construction of hospitals, churches, etc.

Construction of Schools and the Supply of School Equipments

Among the key projects that migrants' improvement unions contribute towards their realization in their home place communities, projects in the domain of education come first. Over the past five years, 70% of these improvements unions in the Pamol Plantations and 36.4% of those in the C.D.C reported that they have contributed financially towards the improvement of the quality of school infrastructure in their home places. This high rate of participation in the realization of projects in this domain is due to the fact the education of young people has been identified as a key factor in the socio-economic development of any community. With the government and religious bodies becoming increasingly unable to provide the educational needs of the various communities unassisted, the home based population and their migrant communities in the plantations and elsewhere often come together in a self-reliant effort to cover the gap. Reports of emergency assistance from improvement unions to schools whose roofs were blown off by winds are also common. This participation in the realization of education projects is common especially for government schools which are often created without provision for adequate funds to build classrooms or provide facilities such as electricity and water.

Education plays a key role in the socio-economic development of any community. Through education and training, young men and women acquire the necessary skills and talents that improve their production potentials and open up the way for gainful employment. This enables them to contribute more positively to their personal development, that of their

households, their community and the nation. Through education, the elites who usually form the pride of every family, household and community and who play key roles in socio-economic development are trained.

Education is essential for the promotion of positive values in society such as HIV/AIDS awareness, gender equality, the fight against witchcraft, the promotion of reproductive health and family planning, the fight against early marriages and early pregnancies, etc.

Contribution in the Realization of Pipe Borne Water Supply Projects

The supply of good quality water to the population is so important that one of the Millennium Development Goals involves the provision of potable water to an increased number of persons. By participating in the realization of pipe borne water supply projects, these migrant associations are contributing in their own way to the realization of one of the very important Millennium Development Objectives and in bringing life to their home place communities; after all, the saying goes that “water is life”. Specific pipe borne water supply schemes which the various improvement unions surveyed participated in their realization include the Guzang Village Water Project, the Bafut Water Project, Kijem Ketiku Water Project, etc. 60% of improvement unions in the Pamol Plantations and 36.4% of those surveyed in the C.D. C Plantations reported having contributed to the realization or extension of pipe borne water supply in their home places in the North West Region.

The provision of pipe borne water is very important in the North West Region for many reasons. The North West Region is characterised by the existence of two distinct seasons-the dry and the wet seasons. During the dry season, many streams and springs that provide water for household use and drinking dry off and the villagers have to move for long distances to fetch water from the few streams or rivers that do not dry off. In moving far off to the valleys to fetch water, children and women spend a lot of valuable time and energy. Cases of children arriving late and tired to schools and farms because they have spent a lot of time moving far off into the steep valleys to fetch water are common especially in the later part of the dry season that lasts in many localities for about six months of the year (October to March). By providing pipe borne close to the living units such time wastage and energy loss become highly reduced.

Water derived from streams and rivers is often of bad quality. This water may be polluted by animals as the North West Region is an important region for extensive cattle rearing. The water may also carry human and kitchen refuse, dead plants and animals, etc. All these make it unsafe and expose the population to health risks and the possibility contacting water borne diseases such typhoid and cholera. These are disease that are difficult to treat and can be very deadly. The provision of pipe borne water which is usually of better quality significantly reduces the prevalence of these diseases.

When the source of water supply is far, people tend to economize its use and sometime use dirty water to wash household utensils in order to reduce energy and time loss in moving to the streams and springs. By bringing water to the vicinity of the dwelling units, the use of dirty water for washing household utensils and dresses is reduced. This increases the health situation of the population.

Another important advantage of community supplied pipe water is the fact the cost. The water provided by the community is either used free of charge or against the payment of an annual fee which in many communities do not go above 5000francs CFA per household.

This is very important in this region where a large proportion of the population and households live below the poverty line.

This pipe-borne water is which is supplied to the population either free or at lower cost enables the populations to use it for the making sun dry blockings which constitute the principal building material in the region. This water is sometimes used to irrigate vegetables and tomatoes that are usually planted close to the dwelling units. In this way, the villagers are able to have some vegetable all year round that they would otherwise have only during dry periods.

Picture Number 1: Water flowing from a Pipe in Abebung Village in Ngie Subdivision in the North West Region



The above pipe borne water was realized with financial assistance that came from migrant associations of sons and daughters from this village in the C.D.C and Pamol Plantations that amounted to about 2000000 francs CFA. The water is certainly of better quality than that got from the many streams and rivers that formerly used to serve as sources of drinking water.

The Extension of Electricity Supply

Electricity supply is essential for socio-economic development. With the rising prices of kerosene and petrol, the use of hydro-electricity in rural areas has proved to be cheaper. Electricity power can also be used to run machines that are used for welding works that were done mostly in Bamenda (the regional capital of the North West Region). This reduces the some times high cost of going to Bamenda and other towns to benefit from services that need electricity power. Today, due to the availability of electricity, internet, video-clubs and television images are now available in small urban areas and in some villages thanks to the financial contributions of out-migrants from these localities. This has highly improved upon the quality of life in some the rural areas of the North West Region. The advantages of electricity supply are many and this explains why many migrant improvement unions

surveyed in both the Cameroon Development Corporation and Pamol Plantations have contributed financially in the extension of electricity supply to their home place communities. A notable example of an electricity supply project realized in the North West Region with the financial contribution from migrants' improvement unions from these two plantation enterprises is the Ndong-Awing Electricity Supply Project. 10% of these migrants' improvement unions in the Pamol Plantations and 18.2% in the C.D.C plantations reported having contributed financially to the extension of electricity supply to their home place communities in the North West Region.

Assistance in the Construction of Health Infrastructure

Good health alongside education is essential for the advancement of any society. This explains why many of the migrants' improvement unions included in this study reported that they have contributed financially to the realization of health infrastructure in their home place communities in the last five years. Many examples of health infrastructure that have been realized in the various communities in the North West Region with the financial contributions from their migrants improvement unions present in these two plantations include the Batibo Theatre Project, the Bali Community Mortuary Project, the Construction of the Saint John of God Hospital in Batibo, etc. These health projects assist in bringing health services close to the populations and reduce the high cost of moving patients to hospitals in Bamenda or Kumbo for medical care. Examples of patient dieing in the course of the tedious and long journeys to distant hospitals have been reported quite often in this region. 27.3 % vc

Picture Number 2: The Abebung Integrated Health Centre in Ngie Subdivision Construted with Financial Assistance of about 1200000 Francs from their Migrant Communities in the C.D.C and Pamol Plantations



The above health centre provides essential services such as family planning services, vaccination and immunization against some common diseases, pre and post natal health care, sensitization on sexually transmissible diseases, etc.

Construction of Community Halls

Many communities in the North West Region have a community hall. Communities that do not have community halls do everything possible to have one. In order to construct these community halls that form the pride of many communities, the home based populations and their out-migrant associations put their resources together. Examples of community hall projects realised with financial contribution from some of the migrant improvement unions surveyed in these two plantations include the Guzang Community Hall, the Ndong-Awing Community hall, the Ngie Multi-purpose Community Hall with facilities for conferences, library, etc. These community halls are places where some ceremonies, cultural events and meetings take place. Community halls are usually better constructed than most of the other houses in the villages and this helps to improve upon the infrastructural out look of the various communities. 10% and 9.1% of North West Region out-migrant improvement unions in the Pamol and C.D.C Plantations respectively reported that their unions have contributed financially to the construction of home place community halls with the reference period.

Picture Number 3: The Abebung Community Hall in Ngie Subdivsion in The North West Region Realized with Financial Contribution of about 1000000 Francs CFA from Out-migrant Communities in the C.D.C and Pamol Plantations



Even though the above community hall may look quite modest for some a town perspective, it is a real beauty in a village setting such as Abebung can not be overlooked.

Construction and Maintenance of Rural Roads

One of the major problems that the North West Region faces is that of inadequate roads for the transportation of people, goods and services with many areas being either inaccessible or accessible with a lot of difficulties. The government and the local councils alone can not construct all the roads needed in the various communities so many communities work with their out-migrant communities in the plantations and elsewhere to construct roads, build bridges or maintain portions of the roads that may become bad during the wet season. The inadequacy of roads makes it very difficult for food produced in remote areas to reach the markets and the transport cost becomes very high. In order to solve these problems, many communities put their resources together to carry out road projects and appeal for assistance which they readily get from their out-migrant improvement unions. 20% of these improvement unions in the Pamol plantations and 9.1% of those in the C.D.C reported that they had contributed at least once to the construction/maintenance of roads in their home places within the five years preceding this survey..

The Construction and the Maintenance of Chiefs' Palaces

The traditional ruler sometimes known as ' the Fon' or chief is very important in the North West Region and in most of the grasslands of Cameroon in general. He plays an important role in keeping his people together and upholding the traditions and customs of his area, he represents an important link between his people and the gods. He is therefore, a link between local and modern administration. The pride of many communities is to provide a befitting palace for its chief. This explains why many of the palaces of this area represent real architectural attractions that greatly add to the beauty of the communities and are great tourist attractions. Examples of palaces that attract tourists to the region are many and include the Bafut Palace, the Palace of Kom, Nso, Bali, etc. Among the many ways improvement unions show their attachments to the home places is the contribution to the construction or the maintenance of these palaces. 10% of the improvement unions included in this study from the Pamol plantations and 9.1% from the Cameroon Development Corporation plantations reported that they had once contributed to the construction or the maintenance of the Fon's palace in their home places.

Support towards the Construction of Churches and Other Church Related Infrastructure

The church has played and continues to play an important role in the lives of the people of the North West Region. Many of the people owe their education thanks to the church. The church is also active in the provision of essential health care to the population and many of the prominent hospitals and dispensaries such as the Bansa Baptist Hospital, the Bingo Baptist Hospital or the Shishong Catholic Hospital exist thanks to the church. The church also plays a moral role and provides other services to the communities such as taking care of orphans and the disabled.

Due to the important role the church plays in the various communities, appeals for assistance in the construction of a church especially the well established churches such as the Roman Catholic Church or the Presbyterian Church always receives favourable reply from members of the church, the community and even migrant communities. This explains why 10% of the improvements unions included in this study from the Pamol and 9.1% of those from the C.D.C Plantations reported that they had contributed to the construction of a church and other church infrastructure in their home places.

Picture Number 4 : The Njembeng Presbyterian Church Building in Ngie Subdivision in the North West Region Realized with Financial Contribution of about 400000 from Migrant Communities from the this villade in the C.D.C and Pamol Plantations



Indirect Contribution of Migrants’ Improvement Unions in the Development of their Origin Areas.

Apart from contributing directly towards the development of their home places such as contributing financially towards the realization of pipe borne supply water schemes, the extension of electricity supply, the construction of schools and other projects the various migrants’ improvement unions equally contribute indirectly towards the improvement of living conditions in their home places through the ideas they advance during their participation at annual development and cultural meetings at their home place and their support and encouragement to newly arrived members from their home places, etc.

Table 8.4 Distribution of Out-Migrant Improvement Unions According the Type of Indirect Contribution Made Towards the Development of their Home places

Cameroon Development Corporation Plantations

Type of indirect Support	Frequency	Percentage
Participation at Annual Home place Development Meetings	11	100.0
Encouragement and support to new members from the home places	9	81.8
Award of prizes to hardworking students in home place schools	3	27.2
Executive Membership of home	5	45.5

place development meetings		
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Pamol Plantations

Type of Indirect Support	Frequency	%
Participation at annual Home place Development Meetings	8	80.0
Encouragement and support to new members from the home places	7	70.0
Award of Prizes to hard working students in home place schools	3	30.0
Executive Membership of home place development meetings	4	40.0

Participation at Home place Annual Development Meetings

Many communities in the North West Region organize annual developments meetings to discuss how to marshal their resources in order to develop their localities in line with other localities. During these meetings, associations of out-migrants from these communities and non-migrants meet to examine how to develop their areas. During such meetings, participants also discuss the various financial levies that each member of the community or each migrate association has to contribute during the year towards the development of their home place communities. Delegates also go to such meetings with the financial contributions made by their improvement unions towards specific development projects. Many migrant improvements unions always send delegates to their home places to participate in such meetings. All the improvement unions surveyed in the Cameroon Development Corporation Plantations and 80% of those surveyed in the Pamol plantations send delegates to such meetings.

At these meetings, the delegates often advance more innovative ideas towards the development of their home places than their non-migrant counterparts. This is due to their greater exposure to the wider world. These migrants' delegates are more receptive and ready to propagate new ideas in the domain of the fight against HIV/AIDS, the promotion of gender equality, the promotion of family planning and reproductive health, the discouragement of polygamous marriages, etc. The delegates also use such meetings to inform members of their home communities of the existence of employment openings in the plantations where they work and encourage them to come and benefit from such employment openings.

The financial contributions made towards the development of the home place and the spending pattern of migrants' delegates demonstrate their degree of success at their destinations and often act as a motivational force to potential migrants in the home place to migrate in order to also derive the benefits of migrating to these plantations. Such potential migrants are some times ready to accompany their kinsmen to the plantations or other destinations to work and derive the some advantages which would lead to the improvement of their lives, those of members of their households and even their home place communities in general.

The financial Balance Sheet of the Kedjom keku Cultural and Development Association in Tiko (an association made up mostly of migrant workers from Kedjom Keku in the North West Region working in the C.D.C Plantations around Tiko) shows that in 1983 alone delegates from this branch attended the annual home place development meeting with 235450

francs as development levies collected from member for development projects in their home place..

Executive Membership of Home Place Development Associations

Due their exposure and the new organisational skills that they may have acquired at their new destinations, delegates sent by migrants' improvement unions to attend their home place development meetings can be of great use in the running of such unions. This study revealed that 40% of Pamol plantations' improvement unions and 45.5% of those of the Cameroon Development Corporation plantations have delegates who hold executive posts in the home place development associations. The various posts held these delegates in the executive board of their home place development associations range from the post of vice president to that of financial secretary. These delegates act as links between their home place development associations and the improvement unions in the plantations. They collect funds from the members of their improvement unions and take them to their home places during annual home place development meetings. These are funds that are meant for the realization of development projects in the home place.

Other Forms of Indirect Support from North West Region Out-Migrants' Improvement Unions to the Development of the Home Place Communities

Other forms of indirect support or contributions from migrants' improvement unions to the development of their origin areas include the encouragement given to education via the award of prizes to hardworking students in schools in their home places and support to new arrivals from home place communities, etc.

During the end of year graduation and prize award ceremonies in some of the schools in the North West Region, school authorities appeal for prizes from many sources. An important source is the out-migrants' improvement unions. This study revealed that 30% of these improvement unions in the Pamol plantations and 27.2% of those of the Cameroon Development Corporation plantations reported having sent prizes to hard working and deserving students in their home place communities during prize award ceremonies. Even though these prizes may not cost much in financial terms, they have an important motivational effect. These prizes help to encourage the students to work hard and to acquire more skills and knowledge that place them in advantage positions for gainful employment and greater contribution towards their home social and economic advancement, that of their households and their communities.

Another form of indirect support to the home place community from migrants' improvement unions is through the support provided to new arrivals from the home place communities. New arrivals to the C.D.C and Pamol Plantations from the home places of out-migrants from the North west Region; receive assistance from associations as well as individual migrants from their home places in getting employment, land for the cultivation of food crops and to adapt to the new environment. Once the new comer becomes settled he becomes fully integrated into his or home places' migrant community association and begins to contribute with other members towards its development . In this way, the assistance given to the new comer becomes of great use to him, his family at the plantations, at home and to his home place community.

70% of migrants' improvement unions from the North West Region found in the Pamol and 81.8% of Cameroon Development Corporation Plantations reported that they encourage people from their home places to migrate to the plantations and provide them with moral, financial and other forms of support upon arrival.

Recommendations

- migrants' associations should be consulted and given a voice in development planning and projects execution in their home places;
- local governments should seek to promote the engagement of migrant associations (both internal and international) in local development projects in their regions and countries of origin, especially the improvement of infrastructure and collective goods such as education and health;
- initiatives should be taken by local governments and communities to promote the use of ICTs to cultivate contacts with their out-migrant associations in view of reinforcing their engagement with their countries or regions of origin;
- sending communities should make an effort to raise awareness and inform their out-migrant associations about the realities in the communities, ongoing projects and the possibility for their engagement/participation in them.

Conclusion

The role of migrants' improvement associations in the development of their origin areas has received little interest in the literature on the consequences of migration. Associations of out-migrant from the North West Region to the agro-industrial Pamol and C.D.C Plantations of the South West Region of Cameroon play crucial roles in the development of their areas of origin. The role of these associations in the provision of public infrastructure and creation of social projects is important. More and more, they are coming in to fill the gap left by the partial withdrawal of the government as result of the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme. By assisting in the construction of roads and bridges, they improve the local economies by facilitating economic transactions. Financing education and health projects is a way through which these associations participate in investments in human capital formation which contributes to meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

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