The Cameroonian Diaspora in Germany
Its Contribution to Development in Cameroon
Foreword

In May 2006, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH (German Technical Cooperation) launched the Sector Project Migration and Development on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) at GTZ Head Office in Eschborn. This project aims to devise and disseminate strategies and instruments to help the relevant actors deal with the development potential and minimise the risks posed by migration.

The advisory project acts as an interface between the realms of research, politics and practice. Its core tasks include both providing specialised advisory services to BMZ and mainstreaming the approach within GTZ and other German implementing organisations. An in-depth exchange of experience and cooperation with European partners is also an important part of the intervention.

Cooperation with diaspora communities in Germany, which is an important field of project activities, aims first and foremost to acquire a better understanding of ongoing activities of the various migrant organisations in their countries of origin. To this end, GTZ published a study in 2006 on this subject: “Egyptian, Afghan and Serbian Diaspora Communities in Germany: How Do They Contribute to their Country of Origin?” Three more studies followed in 2007 on the Moroccan, Senegalese and Vietnamese diaspora communities in Germany. All of these publications helped close a gap in social research, since little was known at that time about the activities of migrants in their countries of origin.

The second step was to use these studies to identify cooperative approaches for the formulation and implementation of joint projects in the countries of origin. Within the framework of a GTZ pilot promotion programme on the cofinancing of investments in social infrastructure, which launched in May 2007, a number of diaspora organisation projects are now receiving support in their countries of origin.

The two present studies – on the Cameroonian and the Philippine diaspora communities in Germany – continue to pursue the successful approach of getting acquainted with these communities and then exploring possibilities for cooperation between the diaspora and development cooperation.

Regina Bauerochse Barbosa
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Abbreviations

AGEF Arbeitsgruppe Entwicklung und Fachkräfte im Bereich der Migration und der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit
(Association of Experts in the Field of Migration and Development Cooperation)

BAMF Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
(German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees)

BMZ Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
(German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)

CIM Centrum für Internationale Migration und Entwicklung

DAAD Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
(German Academic Exchange Service)

DC Development cooperation

GTZ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
(German Technical Cooperation)

IOM International Organization for Migration

NEPAD New Partnership for Africa’s Development

NGO Non-governmental organisation

MINREX Ministère des Relations Extérieures
(Cameroonian foreign ministry)

OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PRF Programm Rückkehrende Fachkräfte
(BMZ Returning Experts Programme)

STUBE Studienbegleitprogramm für ausländische Studierende
(German study support programme for foreign students)

WUS World University Service

ZAV Zentralstelle für Arbeitsvermittlung
(Central Placement Office of the Federal Employment Agency)
1. Introduction

The present study examines the structure and potential of the Cameroonian diaspora community in Germany and its activities as they relate to the country of origin. First of all, semi-structured interviews were the basis for the study. These were conducted with representatives of associations and key personalities from the scientific world, the private sector and the healthcare system who came to my attention through my own experience, Internet research, and snowball sampling. The second element was core information and statistics gleaned from surveys and from discussions by development experts with representatives of government authorities and organisations (the German Statistical Office, BAMF, the Cameroonian embassy, DAAD, CIM, STUBE, WUS and the Federal Employment Agency). Third, related research material on the Cameroonian diaspora and on the discussion in academic and scientific circles about migration and development was evaluated. Fourth, selected documents and studies by various international organisations (IOM, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, OECD, the World Bank) were integrated into the analysis as background material, as were websites, annual reports, protocols, and Cameroonian association documents.

Within the scope of the study – which does not claim to be representative – 33 key persons and association representatives of Cameroonian descent were interviewed throughout Germany. It was their willingness to communicate that made the study possible, for which we wish to express our heartfelt thanks. To save time, the interviews, except those in Berlin, were mostly conducted per telephone. The focus for the interviews was the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia, where the Cameroonian population in Germany is concentrated.

The methodology is geared to the guidelines and frames of reference already developed for GTZ studies of other diaspora communities:

– The attitude of the Cameroonian government towards the diaspora
– Reasons for migration (migration process and structure)
– Framework conditions for social integration; the situation in the host country
– Forms of organisation of the diaspora in Germany
– Non-profit activities and remittances

Unlike other studies thus far, students form one particular focus of the Cameroonian study, since they represent a significant proportion of the Cameroonian diaspora in Germany.

The two terms migration and diaspora must first be briefly elucidated because of their central importance to this study. Both in scientific/academic and ordinary language, the use of the term migration in Germany, an immigration country, has a specific meaning. According to a UN definition, “migration” or “migrant” indicates “persons who temporarily or permanently live in a country where they were not born and who have built up certain social ties to that country”. In contrast to common international usage, the terms “immigration” and “immigrant”, derived from the term “migrant”, are rarely used in German migration research (see Sieveking 2008). In contrast, in the overwhelming majority of EU countries and in the classic immigration countries – Canada, USA and Australia – the term “immigrant” is generally used to indicate persons who have become relatively settled in the host country. In German migration research, the term Zuwanderung has been frequently used since the early 1990s,

1 Translator’s note: For the sake of simplicity, the German term “Verein” is translated by the English word “association”. The term “Verein” stems from the German word “vereinen” (unite) and depending on the context, may correspond to the concept of club, association, special interest group, charitable organisation, etc... Nearly 600,000 Vereine were registered in Germany in 2007.

2 Unfortunately, several of the contact persons could not be interviewed. A few Cameroonian association representatives refused to be interviewed, stating that they had no time and/or no interest in the study.

3 The studies may be found at: http://www.gtz.de/migration.

borrowed from demographics. In everyday language the legal term *foreigner* is used to indicate “someone who does not belong”. Because this term was regarded critically by the Cameroonians interviewed, the synonym “migrants of Cameroonian nationality” is used instead of the statistical term “foreign population”.

The Cameroonian organisations themselves frequently use the term *diaspora* to describe themselves. In recent years, this term has gained in significance for purposes of discussion of both identity and development policy. It is also increasingly used by governments, international organisations and development agencies. There is no standard definition of the term “diaspora”. Today we encounter various usages, meanings and typologies of the term that have developed over the course of time (Cohen 1997; Mayer 2005; Sheffer 2003). The point at which the various academic and journalistic meanings intersect may refer to governments (also governments-to-be), nations, peoples, a language, a culture or a region. Inherent in the term is the danger that “diaspora” may suggest cultural homogeneity among the migrants from a particular country, whereas in reality numerous differences – cultural, social, political and economic – are typical of migrants from a single country of origin. The Cameroonian diaspora includes individuals with very different personal histories, expectations, strategies and potential (Ionescu 2006).

Within the context of the development policy initiatives of migrant associations, the concept of *transnational social spaces* is also employed. This term connotes the overall structure of both the context in the country of origin and in the host country, and can thus be used to describe the migrants’ transnational activities more comprehensively (Sieveking 2008).
2. Cameroonians in Germany

2.1 The size and importance of the Cameroonian diaspora community

Difficulties with gathering data have prevented creation of a comprehensive compilation and demographic analysis of Cameroonian migrants. Neither the exact number nor the structure of the community in terms of professions can be reconstructed based on existing statistics.5

Today 14,414 Cameroonians are officially registered in Germany (see Table 1). These numbers constitute a not precisely definable proportion of the total of Cameroonian migrants living in Germany. In any event, the official number of migrants with Cameroonian citizenship who have settled in Germany has seen a six-fold increase over the past 15 years. In 1991, for instance, only 2,452 citizens of this central African country were registered.

Still, the official statistics for Cameroonian migrants did not take into account undocumented migrants who lived and worked in Germany. Other groups not reflected in the statistics are Cameroonians with German citizenship, former Cameroonians with other citizenships and second generation-Cameroonians who have German citizenship.

A further 1,601 persons naturalised as Germans between 1980 and 2005 must be added to the 14,414 officially registered citizens of Cameroon.6 On the basis of the naturalisation figures (in 2005, 354), which are at least reliable, it may be assumed that in the past two years (2006-2007) a minimum of another 700 Cameroonian citizens were naturalised in Germany. It has been estimated that African migrants actually number about 50 percent more than those officially registered (Lentz 2003). On this basis, more than 20,000 migrants of Cameroonian descent would now be living in Germany.

5 See Sieveking 2008 for further information about the problematic data situation in regard to African migrants to Germany.

6 Due to more streamlined regulations for naturalisation, starting in 2000, the number of naturalisations increased from far less than a hundred per year to more than three hundred.
Table 1: Migrants with Cameroonian citizenship and naturalised Cameroonians in Germany, 1980 - 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total number</th>
<th>of which students</th>
<th>of which asylum-seekers</th>
<th>Naturalisations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>8 (1981-84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26 (1985-89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1,553</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>2,452</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>4,128</td>
<td>1,131</td>
<td>1,622</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>4,410</td>
<td>1,364</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>4,243</td>
<td>1,480</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>4,513</td>
<td>1,601</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>5,232</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>6,217</td>
<td>2,291</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>7,269</td>
<td>2,966</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>8,397</td>
<td>3,628</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>9,311</td>
<td>4,141</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>10,560</td>
<td>4,464</td>
<td>983</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>12,242</td>
<td>4,896</td>
<td>1,279</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>13,514</td>
<td>5,332</td>
<td>1,009</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>13,834</td>
<td>5,393</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>14,272</td>
<td>5,521</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>14,414</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of students is based on enrolment in the winter term. The figures up to 1990 refer only to the federal states of former West Germany.

Source: Compilation by the author based on figures from the German Statistical Office and the BAMF, refugee statistics and the central registry of foreigners for the years 1980-2006.

Cameroon’s diversity in terms of ethnic origin, language and religious affiliation is reflected in the backgrounds of Cameroonian migrants in Germany, although regional origin and ethnicity are not proportional to the population within Cameroon itself. Migrants from Western Cameroon and from the two largest cities, Yaoundé and Douala, are over-represented, since it is here that the country’s educational institutions are centred.

Unlike other migrant groups from sub-Saharan Africa, emigration from Cameroon is primarily educational migration. In terms of migration and development policy, the immigration of Cameroonians to Germany is particularly interesting for two reasons: First, there is relatively greater immigration from Cameroon than other sub-Saharan African countries. After Ghanaians and Nigerians, Cameroonians have come to be the third largest migrant group from sub-Saharan Africa. Besides, the number of Cameroonians has continued to rise over the past five years, whereas the number of migrants from other African countries is declining. Second, migrants from Cameroon are mostly young and well educated. Today Cameroonians constitute the largest group of students and graduates from sub-Saharan Africa. There are more than 1,000 new enrolments each year. In view of the demand for trained professionals...
and the aging population in Germany and throughout the EU, the youth and above-average education of Cameroonians make them a group that may be expected to make significant economic contributions to both Cameroonian and German society.

2.2 Motives for and types of migration

The reasons for the growing pressure to emigrate from Cameroon are 1) the socio-economic crisis going back to the beginning of the 1990s combined with currency devaluation and salary reductions and 2) the high percentage of young people in the population and their poor prospects in terms of education and a future profession. Not only Germany but also France, Great Britain, Italy, the USA and Canada are important destination countries for Cameroonian migrants. In the OECD countries in 2005, of a total of 57,600 employed expatriates 42 percent were classified as highly qualified (Dumont/Lemaître 2005). The desire to migrate is strengthened by global information and communication flows.7 Transnational family relationships and friendships play a large role in the migration process between Cameroon and Germany. Networks and contacts as well as the positive example of successful migrants living in Germany are important grounds for the decision to migrate to Germany (Fleischer 2007).8 German economic might, organisational talent and high technical standards are prized in Cameroon, as are German educational opportunities. In contrast to France and England, the colonial past plays less of a role in the selection of Germany as a destination country. Despite language barriers, many Cameroonians come to Germany because a student visa is relatively easy to get and because to date, studies are easier to finance in Germany than in France, Great Britain, the USA or Canada (Sieveking 2008).

Basically at least three different kinds of migration can be distinguished: classic educational migration of students, the family reunification, and refugee or asylum migration. Migration to Germany for purposes of employment is not officially provided for, since a moratorium on recruiting has been in effect since 1973. Motives for migration (Fleischer 2007) are, for one, education and training, mostly for young, unmarried migrants up to 25 years of age. Another is to find a job: this group mainly includes mostly married men aged 30 to 40 with children in Cameroon. A further motive is to reunite the family if older siblings or relations have become established in Germany, or marriage migration to join a partner who is settled in Germany (ibid.).

Security and economic benefit are at the heart of the decision to migrate, which according to the latest research is not primarily taken by an individual but by the extended family. The family decides in favour of persons who have shown themselves to be reliable and purposeful and who have often already completed studies in Cameroon. The family supports the migrant before and shortly after migration. It pays the costs incurred and expects remittances in return (ibid.) as a contribution to the improvement of the socio-economic situation of the family as a whole. The expectations of the family in Cameroon thus place educational migrants under considerable pressure.

7 See World Development Report 2007. A study of the desire of young Cameroonians aged 15 to 35 to migrate has revealed that 83 percent would be prepared to go abroad. Those wishing to migrate are for the most part between 20 and 25 years old and single, with an average of five siblings. Fifty percent of those queried have relatives abroad whose successful migration has been decisive for their own decision to emigrate. Two of ten persons queried have already made one attempt to migrate (ALEC 2007). This study is supported by the World Development Report 2007, which documents the desire to migrate world-wide.

8 The reasons students give for their decision to study in Germany are the poor tertiary education infrastructure in Cameroon and the fact that tuition for studying in Germany is very low compared to France, England or the USA. In addition, possibilities exist in Germany to earn money while studying (Lämmermann 2006). The introduction of tuition fees in Germany constitutes an additional financial burden for Cameroonian students.
2.3 Process of migration: educational migration and asylum seekers

Most Cameroonians come to Germany for the sake of education – at university level or for training of some kind. Educational migration from Cameroon began with a scholarship programme in 1985/86, through which the Cameroonian government was to send 80-100 students majoring in the natural sciences, technical subjects or medicine each year to study in the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany).

In the last decade, the number of Cameroonian students has nearly quadrupled: Today more than 5,521 Cameroonian students are enrolled (latest data from the winter term 2005/2006) in Germany, of whom just under a third are women (1,730 or 31.3 %). In the winter term 1995/1996 the number of Cameroonian students was 1,601, of whom a fifth were women (332 or 20.7 %). That is, the proportion of women students has increased within the past 10 years by more than 10 percent.

Due to the rising number of students enrolled, the number of graduates has doubled within a period of only three years. During the winter term 2002/2003, there were 195 university graduates from Cameroon; by the winter term 2005/2006 the number had increased to 443.

Among the students as among the graduates, the most important major study areas were engineering, with more than two-fifths, and mathematics and the natural sciences, with a quarter each (see Table 2). A larger proportion of students and graduates are also in medicine. Social sciences, law and languages are chosen comparatively seldom. Cameroonians usually choose fields of study that offer a promising professional future and good chances for advancement.

Table 2: Students and graduates of Cameroonian nationality at German universities during the winter term 2005/2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major field of study</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>% of students</th>
<th>No. of graduates</th>
<th>% of graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Languages and culture</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law and social sciences</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics and natural sciences</td>
<td>1,519</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary medicine</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry /Nutritional Sciences</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>2,263</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and culture</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,521</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: German Statistical Office

In view of good networking among Cameroonians, pressure within the country of origin to migrate, and a growing number of successful examples, it is to be expected that in future the numbers of educational migrants from Cameroon will increase even further among persons who are seeking to improve their economic situation and standard of living through temporary international migration and who see good opportunities for themselves in Europe, with its aging population.

The new immigration and citizenship law of 2004 has made it easier for Cameroonians to start a profession and pursue a career in Germany. With the current discussion about the lack of qualified
professionals in Germany, especially in the field of engineering, a further opening of the job market is in the making for graduates of universities from non-EU countries. In November 2007, the “priority check”, which accorded German citizens priority for a given job, was eliminated for applications from university graduates from non-EU countries. Cameroonians are highly sought after as employees by international companies and other institutions in Germany because of their good knowledge of English and French.

Compared with educational migration, asylum migration from Cameroon plays a comparatively small role. Since the early 1990s, the number of asylum-seekers has kept pace with the general trend for asylum-motivated migration (see Table 1). With the increase in political tensions in Cameroon and the asylum crisis in Europe, the number of Cameroonian asylum-seekers in Germany peaked in 1992 with 1,622 asylum-seekers. A new peak in the number of Cameroonian asylum-seekers was reached following elections in Cameroon in 2002 and 2003, with more than a thousand asylum-seekers from the central African country. In the remaining years, the number of asylum-seekers from Cameroon fluctuated by several hundreds. Asylum-seekers from Cameroon are very seldom classified as political refugees: since the year 2000, only two to four persons per year have been recognised.

Today some 904 Cameroonians live in Germany with “tolerated” status; a further 500 Cameroonians in the central foreigners registry have no residence classification (neither “tolerated” nor “permitted”) (as of 31 December 2006).

2.4 Demographic characteristics and duration of residence

The following data do not realistically reflect the actual demographic profile of the Cameroonian diaspora in Germany, since they do not take the growing number of naturalised Cameroonians and their children into account. The following statistical analysis is based solely upon immigrants from this central African country who are still Cameroonians citizens.

At present, 3,996 migrants with Cameroonians citizenship (27.7 %) are employed and paying social security.9 The average age of Cameroonians migrants is 27.8 years.10 Accordingly, nearly three-quarters of all Cameroonians belong to the 20-to-35 age group. The Cameroonian diaspora community is made up almost exclusively of first-generation migrants with pre-school and school-age children. Six percent of Cameroonians were born in Germany; the majority are 15 years old or younger.

Table 3: Number of migrants with Cameroonian citizenship according to age as of 31 December 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>under 15 yrs</th>
<th>15-20 yrs</th>
<th>20-25 yrs</th>
<th>25-30 yrs</th>
<th>35-45 yrs</th>
<th>over 45 yrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14,414</td>
<td>1,267</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>2,602</td>
<td>7,695</td>
<td>1,998</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>8.8 %</td>
<td>3.3 %</td>
<td>18.0 %</td>
<td>53.4 %</td>
<td>13.9 %</td>
<td>2.6 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: German Statistical Office

Today two-fifths of Cameroonians registered in Germany are female. In terms of the proportion of men and women in the Cameroonian community in Germany, there is the same clear trend over the years towards a feminisation of migration that can be observed in migration throughout the world. Since 1999 the proportion of female migrants has risen steadily from 31.0 % to 39.8 % (see Table 4) of the total.

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9 Unfortunately employment statistics by the Federal Employment Agency do not indicate the positions held by employed persons and does not take naturalised persons into account.

10 The average age of all migrants in Germany with African citizenship is 31.
Table 4: Gender distribution among migrants in Germany with Cameroonian citizenship, 1999-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total persons</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>% of women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>8,397</td>
<td>5,790</td>
<td>2,607</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>13,514</td>
<td>8,788</td>
<td>4,726</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>13,834</td>
<td>8,667</td>
<td>5,167</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>14,272</td>
<td>8,777</td>
<td>5,495</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>14,414</td>
<td>8,682</td>
<td>5,732</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: German Statistical Office

The Cameroonian diaspora community is relatively new to Germany in terms of duration of residence. The **average duration of residence** of migrants in Germany with Cameroonian citizenship is 5.5 years.\(^{11}\) More than one-third of non-naturalised Cameroonians in Germany reside there for more than five years, i.e., longer than the average duration of residence. Naturalised Cameroonians usually reside in Germany a far longer time.

One-fifth of migrants with Cameroonian citizenship are married (3,019 or 20.9 %), including a large number of German-Cameroonian married couples (1,517 or 10.4 %).

2.5 Geographic distribution of the Cameroonian diaspora community

The majority of Cameroonians live in the **economically strong and highly populated German states** of North Rhine-Westphalia (27.0 %), Baden-Württemberg (16.8 %) and Hesse (9.4 %). In view of Berlin's diversity of institutions of higher education and cosmopolitan milieu, a disproportionate number of Cameroonians live there (9.8 %). In contrast, Cameroonians are underrepresented in the populous state of Bavaria (6.2 %). Relatively few Cameroonians have settled in the new German states (the former East Germany) (see Table 5).

\(^{11}\) One in four Cameroonians (3,636 or 25.3 %) resides in Germany for 5 to 10 years; one in ten (1,517 or 10.5 %) for more than 10 years.
Table 5: Geographic distribution in Germany of migrants with Cameroonian citizenship as of 31 December 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>No. of Cameroonians</th>
<th>% of Cameroonians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baden-Württemberg</td>
<td>2,432</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bavaria</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>1,414</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandenburg</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bremen</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamburg</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hesse</td>
<td>1,360</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Saxony</td>
<td>1,116</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Rhine-Westphalia</td>
<td>3,893</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhineland-Palatinate</td>
<td>913</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saarland</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxony</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxony-Anhalt</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schleswig-Holstein</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thuringia</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany: total</td>
<td>14,414</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: German Statistical Office
3. Attitudes of the Cameroonian and German governments towards the diaspora

The degree to which the Cameroonian diaspora in Germany succeeds in exerting an influence on the development of their country of origin depends not only on the migrants themselves. Significant factors also include the current political regime in Cameroon, specific policies concerning the diaspora, investment conditions, and problems with corruption and security. The influence of the Cameroonian diaspora is directly dependent on whether or not the government seeks to cooperate with it and how it structures such cooperation. The engagement of the diaspora on behalf of development within Cameroon can also be more successful if the German government promotes circular migration and supports the return of experts and managers to Cameroon. Although an in-depth discussion of the political conditions is beyond the scope of this study, two important factors should be elucidated from the points of view of the Cameroonian and German governments respectively.

3.1 New Cameroonian government approaches to diaspora policy

In light of the international discussion about migration and development, it is clear to the government of Cameroon that other countries have been able to develop with the aid of know-how and money transfers from their diasporas, provided these qualifications and resources are well used. Of late the Cameroonian government, too, has begun to devote more energy to creating political initiatives to exploit the immense potential of highly-qualified persons for the sake of the country’s development. These governmental initiatives target migrants who occupy highly qualified jobs in their host countries and who have financial resources at their disposal.

A conference on the subject of economics and diaspora was to take place in Cameroon in April 2007. Numerous representatives of the diasporas in Germany and other industrialised countries were invited. This business forum was to spur the interest of highly qualified persons in Cameroon’s economic development and to involve these persons in private sector activities. However, the conference was cancelled at short notice due to the approaching elections. In the summer of 2007, an initiative for the modernisation of Cameroonian institutions of higher learning was launched that sought to tap into diaspora expertise. Important elements of this initiative include introduction of new technologies into the tertiary education system, the introduction of innovative teaching methods, promotion of international cooperation among institutions of higher learning and for virtual learning, the creation of 1,000 new tertiary education positions within three years and the announcement of available teaching positions among the diaspora membership. In order to create internationally competitive and practice-oriented education in Cameroon, the expertise of highly qualified Cameroonians abroad is to be tapped. To implement its initiatives, the Cameroonian government is seeking a dialogue with selected representatives of associations and leading members of the scientific, health and engineering communities.

These contacts view these new developments as a positive signal, with the proviso that the government creates dependable framework conditions. Doubts about the real substance of the initiatives arise from negative experience with the Cameroonian government in practice in past decades. In an open letter to political leaders, diaspora representatives list the conditions that must be met for the diaspora to be included effectively in economic development processes. Important points are difficult economic frame conditions such as corruption and clientelism on the part of ethnic groups and parties or bills

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13 See the remarks of the cultural attaché of the Cameroonian embassy, Ms Abassolo, on 8 October 2007 (http://www.challengecamerounais.de/fr/bnnews.php?id=8811&kat=3&vlp=0&site=0).

14 The letter is the result of contributions to a discussion in the Internet forum Discama, which was initiated by five Cameroonians and was addressed to the president, ministers of trade and industry and the ambassador in Germany. The letter presents a summary of more than 100 discussion points raised at the forum.
to clients in Cameroon from contracted parties in the diaspora that remain unpaid for years. Requests made by the diaspora include loans for business start-ups, the possibility of dual citizenship, personal safety and property guarantees, and more teaching of basic economic and business content in schools to create a foundation for the sustainable success of small-scale entrepreneurs. Also called for are permanent, reliable contacts and structures, such as a special department within the Cameroonian foreign ministry (MINREX) that would be concerned with Cameroonian in Germany and a forum for the networking and cooperation of experts in Cameroon and Germany.

Even the latest government initiative for the modernisation of the tertiary education system meets with mixed reactions in the Cameroonian community. Some of the persons interviewed view the government proposal as a major opportunity to contribute to renovation of the outmoded university system. Others, however, are sceptical and question the political will of the government to include the diaspora efficiently in the planned university system modernisation project: they anticipate no substantial measures to emerge from these government activities. At the moment it is too early to estimate the extent of the initiatives that have just been started, since the planning and implementation of measures are still at an early stage. The dialogue between Cameroonian government and diaspora has so far been irregular, focusing on the one hand on highly qualified persons and on the other hand on persons in the diaspora with close connections to the government.

Unlike other African countries such as Egypt, Ghana or Morocco, the institutionalisation of cooperation between the diaspora and the Cameroonian government is still in its infancy. Within the diaspora itself, however, a recognisable effort has been made in recent years to reach out and form connections. As part of Challenge Camerounais, a large-scale, very traditional annual event for Cameroonian living in Germany, a business network for business activities and a Cameroon Diaspora Network for the linking of the associations have formed that aim to combine common interests and enable targeted lobbying (see Section 4). The objective is to lend existing diaspora knowledge networks (Meyer 2007) greater visibility and weight so that their potential and expertise can be used more effectively.

Some individual associations cooperate closely with the Cameroonian government. The Deutsch-Kamerunische Brücke (German-Cameroonian Bridge) works with the Cameroonian embassy in Germany for the improvement of German-Cameroonian business relations. Here the aim is to optimally match up demand and supply of experts through Internet announcements. Job openings in Cameroon are announced, and – with the aid of Cameroonian experts who have been trained in Germany – German investment is to be attracted to Cameroon.

3.2 Circular migration and promotion of return to the country of origin

Within the EU context, greater openness of job markets to third-country nationals from developing countries is a focus of current migration and development policy debate and initiatives. With the recent lifting of the “priority check”, an important barrier to the German job market has been removed for highly qualified third-country nationals and integration of Cameroonian professionals in Germany facilitated.15

The qualification structure of migrants from Cameroon makes clear that the brain drain of experts from this central African country constitutes a major problem. The point of the BMZ Returning Experts Programme is to use the return of Cameroonian experts to Cameroon to foster know-how transfer and thus make a contribution to the country’s sustainable development. Within the scope of the Returning Experts Programme, cooperation between Germany and Cameroon has recently been stepped

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15 Depending on the ministry, migration and development policy discussions concerning African migrants presently take place for the most part piecemeal, and are only occasionally linked to other, parallel discussions of this subject. Cameroon is one example of this. The temporary opening of the job market to (unskilled) workers from African countries, as practiced, for instance, in Spain, does not play a role in German migration policy.
The return to Cameroon is conducted in line with the development policy guidelines of the CIM joint operation, made up of GTZ and the Central Placement Office (ZAV), together with the World University Service (WUS) and the Arbeitsgruppe Entwicklung und Fachkräfte (AGEF, Association of Experts in the Field of Migration and Development Cooperation). As part of the programme, preparatory seminars, an additional allowance for a period of two years, and subsidies for workplace equipment are provided. Business start-ups are not directly promoted; however, persons establishing a livelihood may also apply for a subsidy for workplace equipment. Key sectors for the promotion of return to Cameroon are health, environment, resource protection and decentralisation. These priority areas overlap only partly with the major study areas of Cameroonian students and university graduates, which are primarily in the fields of engineering and natural sciences.

Only a limited number of returnees can be given support, however. Returnees also encounter a number of barriers in Cameroon that complicate their integration into the local job market (BMZ 2006). In order to link up Cameroonians interested in returning to Cameroon and to give them a voice at home, a returnee coordination centre was set up in 2006 at the Goethe-Institut in Yaoundé (see section 3.2). At present a pool of experts is being established in the form of a database of highly qualified Cameroonian experts who have been educated in Germany. The coordination office cooperates for this purpose with Cameroonian professional associations of physicians, engineers and computer scientists.17

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16 The evaluation of the BMZ Returning Experts Programme in Cameroon has led to further development of the programme. See BMZ 2005, Länderstudie Kamerun.

17 http://www.kbk-cameroon.net
4. Forms of social organisation

Social networks based on socialisation in Cameroon – especially ties of family and friendship – play a key role in the life of Cameroonian migrants in Germany. In the following section, factors of particular significance for the formation of associations and social networks are presented. The focus of the study is on associations that were formed or are headed by Cameroonians, but in which German members and persons from other African countries are also actively involved. Further research is required for a more profound understanding of the extent, structure and function of these networks and informal relations.18

4.1 Forms of associations and groups

There is great diversity among the associations formed by the Cameroonian community in Germany. One of the interviewees stressed that in Cameroon itself, too, people liked to form associations and that they dedicate a large part of their free time on Sundays to meetings and association activities. Among the most important are associations of students, professionals, returnees or alumni19, associations based on regional and ethnic background, associations focusing on development and general umbrella associations such as Challenge Camerounais.

Associations of students from Cameroon have now been formed at almost all universities in which Cameroonian students are enrolled in large numbers. Often Cameroonian students join these organisations, most of which are also open to students from other African countries, as a matter of course. The aim of the association is primarily to facilitate the students’ integration into the university and their studies. The students, especially new arrivals, are given assistance with practical matters of everyday university and student life, which is also organised through cultural events, excursions, parties, etc. Also arranged are events in special fields of study, or events that prepare the students for their profession, such as lectures and seminars, computer courses, practice in submitting applications, or tutoring and preparatory courses by Cameroonian graduates and lecturers. As the Cameroonian community has grown, the student associations have in recent years expanded their membership to include Cameroonians already employed in a profession. The main aim of the student associations is to support their members as they move toward successful completion of their studies. Thus development activities in Cameroon are not at the forefront of such associations. Still, within the framework of the student associations a number of initiatives by individuals or informal sub-groups are active in regard to development policy. The Catholic and Protestant student organisations and the General Student Committees (AStA, Allgemeine Studierenden Ausschüsse) support student association engagement for development policy. Often the student associations work in cooperation with the local municipalities in which the universities are located.

There are more than 200 ethnic groups and languages in Cameroon, the Bamiléké from West Province being the largest group. Consequently, associations based on region, city or ethnic group play an important role. Cameroonians from the same locales and regions have closer contact with one another, sometimes to keep up their mother tongue or other cultural traditions. Examples of large regional associations of Cameroonians in Germany are those from the north of the country20 or Northwest Province.21 These associations are organised trans-nationally with chapters in England, France, the USA and Canada as well. Their purpose is to organise persons of particular origin who are dispersed throughout

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18 There is little relevant background literature. See especially Lämmermann 2006; Fleischer 2007; Sieveking 2008. According to Sieveking, a clear categorisation of the organisations as African migrant organisations, solidarity groups or development organisations is hardly possible such divisions tend to be fluid (ibid.).

19 Alumni association members may have attended schools and universities in either Germany or Cameroon or both.

20 Association pour le Développement du Cameroun Septentrional.

21 CANCuda Cameroon Northwest Cultural and Development Association.
the world. In Germany’s larger cities, a number of regionally based associations are represented within umbrella associations of all Cameroonians (e.g., ARCH Hamburg or CC Munich), yet they may be nationally or trans-nationally organised as well.

Highly qualified Cameroonians join together in **professional associations**. The medical association Camfomedics was founded in 1994; the engineers and computer scientists followed with the founding of a professional interest group in 2000. These associations are of particular importance for development policy and private sector cooperation because they concern themselves with knowledge and know-how transfer and support for returnees more systematically than is the case for other types of associations.

A whole range of associations have a primary focus on **development policy**, such as Deutsch-Kamerunische Brücke (German-Cameroonian Bridge in Hesse), Generation Tiers Monde (Baden-Württemberg/Bavaria), Pro New Tech or IdantAfrica (both North Rhine-Westphalia). Aside from these organisations, associations founded by Cameroonians in the field of development policy-related training and education, information and lobbying include AfricaAvenir (Berlin-Douala), African Development Initiative, NEPAD Germany (Hesse) and Africa Positive (North Rhine-Westphalia).

The regional associations, in particular, are united under the English-French **Challenge Camerounais**. “Challenge” started in Bielefeld in 1991 with a football tournament that has been held annually ever since, at a different location each year. These matches are on their way to becoming the major sport and cultural event of the Cameroonian diaspora. The common interest in football plays an important role in integrating Cameroonians within the diaspora community. Some 3,000 Cameroonians attended the last match in Frankfurt in May 2007, and record numbers are expected for the next one, in 2008 in Munich. Also as part of “Challenge” activities, a Cameroon business forum was established in 2005 to foster contacts within the business community, and this has been an integral part of the programme ever since. A further development by the association is the formation of a business network to coordinate business activities and a Cameroonian diaspora network to link Cameroonian associations that are currently in the formation process. The aim of all of these networks is to support and shape development policy and/or private sector cooperation.

Finally, returnee associations in Cameroon itself enjoy considerable status and have since 2006 been linked in a network at the Goethe-Institut in Yaoundé, where their central coordinating office is located.

**4.2 Association capacities and degrees of organisation**

The exact number of Cameroonian associations in Germany is unknown, since not all are registered with the embassy. Various interviewees estimated that there are at least 100 Cameroonian associations. Many of the Cameroonian associations cannot be found in the official associations registry, although they have declared their purposes in statutes. Even when Cameroonians are not formal members of an association, they may often be committed to its purpose and goals, if, for instance, they belong to the professional group, region or city the association represents. The leadership structures in official association organisations are dominated by men. Women play a more important role in the “savings circles” carried over from these societies in Cameroon and in informal solidarity networks.

Only a limited number of associations have a primary focus on **development policy activities** (particularly associations and professional associations that are specifically geared to development policy). In most associations, development policy activities are left to the initiative of individual persons or are only

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22 The alumni associations of major secondary schools in Cameroon are also similarly organised world-wide.

23 In almost every city there are groups of Cameroonians who meet once a week to play football. Fan club of the Cameroonian national team, the Lions, plays a role in Germany, too.

24 [http://www.kbk.cameroon.net](http://www.kbk.cameroon.net)
now being taken into consideration. In contrast, support for returnees, is a major concern of both student and professional associations.

When it comes to hands-on work, a number of Cameroonian associations focus primarily on social integration, solidarity and how to establish a life in Germany. People seek to cultivate cultural traditions through shared festivities and general sociability and to exchange news about social and political issues in Cameroon and Germany. Activities specifically geared to the second generation are now being offered as well, for example, tutoring for school children, or drumming and dance classes for children. Many associations offer advisory services and assistance with official business or support during life crises such as illness, birth and death. Other African countries’ migrant associations also focus primarily on problems with integration and social security in Germany and only secondarily on activities in the country or region of origin (Sieveking 2008).

Cameroonian association activities depend upon volunteer services. Any professionalisation of association activity (e.g., organisational development, project management, public relations work, fundraising, aims, principles and strategic planning) is for the most part still in its beginnings. For many years, the limited length of residence permitted to Cameroonians had an impact on the nature and extent of their involvement in associations and on the continuity and organisational stability of association work. Now, however, highly qualified persons increasingly tend to settle in Germany for family or professional reasons. As a result, the Camfomedics and VKII professional associations, in particular, but also Challenge Camerounais, are attempting to make their work more professional.

As a general rule, this functions only with considerable dedication on the part of private individuals in terms of time and money. Such individuals – often engineers, computer experts and doctors – possess notable social, business and technical skills. The development policy activities of these persons in Cameroon and other parts of Africa would be impossible without considerable initiative and investment of private funds on their part (Sieveking 2008).

For the most part the associations work parallel to one another and cultivate only loose connections among each other within a given city. Yet they do work together (e.g., Challenge Camerounais), exchange information and invite one another to events they sponsor. Cooperation beyond this, such as joint projects, is generally an exception; but events are often planned and held jointly to increase the focus on particular issues and achieve greater impact. Especially associations and student associations that are geared to development policy tend to be organised into regional umbrella associations. This facilitates access to information and resources and, through public relations work, can help give issues a higher profile and increase lobbying leverage. Financing of associations is primarily drawn from membership fees, donations, corporate sponsorship, municipalities, and in individual cases development policy foundations, donors and German state ministries. Many associations have trouble mobilising their members to attend regular meetings and pay their membership fees. The Catholic and Protestant student communities play a significant role in the financial promotion of development policy initiatives.

The dividing lines within the Cameroonian community – aside from socio-political, social or professional orientation – arise primarily from the orientation of associations to a given region, city, ethnic group, or members’ political leanings in Cameroon or closeness to or distance from the Cameroonian government. Borderlines exist between students and non-students, university graduates and persons with no degree (Lämmermann 2006), and between persons with or without guaranteed residence status. Cameroon’s former division into anglophone and francophone regions continues to exert an influence on closeness/distance and prejudice among Cameroonians (Saague 2004).
Ethnicity is a major criterion for mutual exclusion among the members of the Cameroonian diaspora. As the numbers of Cameroonian migrants increase, more and more associations are being founded to cultivate ethnic roots. According to several of the persons interviewed, a greater ethnic fragmentation among the associations is noticeable, which most interviewees attribute to the perceived distance from Cameroon. In municipal associations, professional associations or in Challenge Camerounais, however, common interests and identification with shared national roots as Cameroonians outweigh ethnicity.

Lämmermann’s claim that regional origins play a more important role in Cameroon than they do abroad, where, in contrast, the solidarity among Cameroonians and their common heritage are considered more important (Lämmermann 2006), is not confirmed by the interviews conducted in this study. One interviewee who has lived in Germany for years even went so far as to describe the organisational structure of Cameroonian associations and informal groups as “tribal”. 
5. Contributions of the Cameroonian diaspora community to Cameroon’s development

On the whole, there are close ties between Cameroonians living in Germany and their extended families in the country of origin, and, beyond these, to former schoolmates, fellow students or colleagues in other industrialised countries. Many of the interviewees stressed that it was the duty of each and every Cameroonian living in Germany to “help out at home”. Other interviewees also emphasised that, as they see it, every activity of Cameroonians in Cameroon is relevant to development policy. The rapid spread of information and communication technology makes contact and the maintenance of ties easier, even though annual visits to Cameroon are curtailed due to expense. Ties to the country of origin generate a diversity of transfer activities and personal engagement in the spheres of science, business, culture and education.

A whole range of civil society individuals and organisations contributes to transfer in the form of exchange of ideas and conveying of values and social customs – “social remittances” as it were, which cannot be taken up in the scope of this study. NGOs such as NEPAD Germany, AfricaAvenir and the African Development Initiative support the ongoing discussion about endogenous development approaches and take up the cause of human rights, women’s rights and peace in Cameroon and the African continent as a whole.

5.1 Community benefit activities

5.1.1 Range of non-profit activities

Cameroonian migrants are engaged both collectively and individually in non-profit activities in their country of origin. They contribute to the support of social infrastructure, particularly the raising of children, education, health and science. Engagement in Cameroon takes place not only through associations, but also informally through individual persons or small groups. Often the activities are related to the world of the school or village the individual left behind or to his or her region of origin. Although for the most part these initiatives are only local, the activities as a whole are important catalysts for better education and the empowerment of children and young people, especially in rural areas.

According to those surveyed, most engagement is on behalf of the individual’s own home town or region and takes place sporadically for the most part. The association’s declared purpose for its support assumes help for self-help. A major field for association activities is the delivery of donated goods to Cameroon, such as hospital beds, computers, sewing machines, tools and vehicles. Another central activity area is the payment of stipends or sponsorship of needy schoolchildren so that they can get an education. The success of the measures is monitored during personal visits by the donor or is based on the judgement of trustworthy partners on site – often individuals the donor knows personally. The implementation of more complex projects based on sustainable project management concepts has so far been rather the exception among the associations. In the following, the range of activities is presented based on selected examples from the fields of education, science and health:

Education: A large share of the activities of the Cameroonian diaspora aims to improve the infrastructure of schools by various means. One priority area is building schools and equipping them through renovation and additions to buildings and classrooms or through the construction and modernisation

26 Most of the students and young academics consider their stay in Germany to be temporary. Especially the Cameroonians who are young when they start studying in Germany have close ties to their home country whether they return there immediately upon completion of their studies or would like to stay for a few years in Germany to gain some professional experience. Either way, they are open to intercultural contact and professional opportunity in Germany. When they found a family in Germany or became established in a profession, their prospects for a return to Cameroon are put off indefinitely. This is also confirmed by the study of Cameroonians in Freiburg, according to which very few Cameroonians wish to stay in Germany for a longer period or feel that this would be a realistic possibility (Lämmermann 2006).
of wells, toilets and sanitary facilities. Aside from actual building and infrastructure, everyday activities at schools are supported through the donation of writing materials, schoolbooks and teaching aids for classroom instruction. The organisation of sponsorships and the payment of pupils’ school fees also constitute important forms of assistance by associations and individuals.

Curriculum development and the qualification of teachers for better classroom instruction are less often the focus of engagement. One example is an electronics engineer who undertook to support the founding of school technology clubs with various practical applications. In the field of chemistry, the clubs teach pupils how to make soap; in physics, the pupils build transistor radios. The project’s initiator assumes the cost of the materials and conducts teacher training to create a model for the promotion of practice-orientation and vocational preparation at schools. Aside from this, the engineer developed, in collaboration with the provincial government, a curriculum for computer sciences training in secondary schools with an accompanying textbook. Students and young graduates are also active in transferring knowledge and materials to their old schools during their holidays or while doing their internships. They hold lectures on regional studies as part of geography classes, or they teach political education methods at human rights clubs. The professional associations of engineers and doctors are also active in promoting innovation and improvements in curricula at secondary schools. Within the framework of the Cameroonian Technological Network they provide consulting and concept development to introduce training in computer science at secondary schools, and they conduct public information campaigns about infectious diseases and AIDS prevention.

Due to the extreme lack of practical professional qualification possibilities in Cameroon, one priority area for educational initiatives is practical professional training, for example, the establishment of training centres for electronics technology, construction trades and carpentry geared to poverty-stricken target groups such as orphans or half-orphans. Such projects are already in the planning stage as association initiatives but are often not yet actually up and running, since they involve major financial and organisational challenges.

Tertiary education and sciences: the Cameroon Government’s latest diaspora initiative aims to include Cameroonians living abroad in the modernisation of the tertiary education system, that is, to use the as yet untapped potential of the more than 100 university lecturers, numerous persons with doctorates and other highly qualified persons of Cameroonian descent living in Germany.

Although considerable obstacles to the establishment of formal cooperation on the university level have been reported, the interviews indicate a number of approaches for knowledge and method transfer in tertiary education between Germany and Cameroon that have so far often taken place on an informal basis. University lecturers from Cameroon engage in scientific discussion and activities for German-Cameroonian exchanges for lecturers and students. They offer lectures and seminars in Cameroon at no charge, invite Cameroonian colleagues to conferences and arrange grants for doctoral candidates and post-doctoral scholars from Cameroon. They are also active in organising conferences and summer schools in Cameroon and in disseminating information about international programmes that promote research. The transferring of donated materials such as computers, laboratory equipment and other teaching aids and instruments are also an important field of activity for Cameroonian university lecturers here in Germany.

Individual initiatives are also devoted to the compilation and dissemination of research and studies by African intellectuals, for example, through support for a project to digitalise work already produced or to raise funds for textbooks. The purpose of the German-Cameroonian foundation AfricaAvenir is to establish a library and an independent resource centre in Douala.
Formal cooperation on the university level has proved difficult so far. Cameroonian professors of computer science and chemistry speak of failed efforts for cooperation in state universities because of bureaucratic hurdles in Cameroon and the unwillingness there to make even a minimal contribution towards concrete cooperation. According to the experience reported, agreements are more easily made through church-sponsored and private universities.

Future transfer activities are planned for the purpose of building up training capacities in Cameroon in the field of applied sciences. A Cameroonian full professor of computer science is currently working together with Cameroonian colleagues on a concept for the foundation of a private technical university, the Institute of Technology in Nkongsamba.

Health: Basic health care within the Cameroonian public health system is sub-standard, due to the lack of both medical specialists and equipment – instruments, medicine, health care aids such as beds, wheelchairs, and bandaging material – at medical facilities. Thus the doctors’ association Camfomedics is attempting to improve infrastructure at one clinic by financing nursing staff and the construction of water systems and through donations of examination instruments. Camfomedics is also active in health information campaigns about HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. Interviews indicate that medical students and young doctors do volunteer work in Cameroon during their clinical training or vacation periods, or that they bring donations, such as medicines, along with them to Cameroon. Several associations assume the costs for treatment or operations for needy persons.

The majority of doctors from Cameroon are young specialists, are currently training in their field of specialisation or are still studying. A central concern of Camfomedics is the application of the knowledge gained through the promotion of permanent return of Cameroonians to their country of origin. A number of physicians would like to set up a practice or a clinic or to join existing private health care facilities, which in some cases they would like to help establish by commuting back and forth between Germany and Cameroon.

5.1.2 Obstacles to non-profit activities

The interviewees indicated obstacles to active engagement in Cameroon on various levels. Disillusioning experiences and practical difficulties led several of the interviewees to become active outside of Cameroon in another African country where government offices accorded them more respect and where they experienced more genuine willingness for cooperation. Corruption and a lack of transparency prevented, underlay and cast a pall over the individual initiatives of both benefactors and target groups. For example, donated goods were sometimes sold for a profit, and stipends for pupils were misused and directed to other ends.

Another barrier is constituted by the high customs duties levied by the Cameroonian authorities even on goods donated for humanitarian purposes, such as hospital beds and medical examination instruments. From a financial point of view, donations of goods and equipment no longer make sense when the overall expense is higher than the cost of the goods on site. The interviewees considered another hindrance to more extensive engagement to be the difficulty of motivating administrations and organisations in Cameroon to take more initiative themselves. Aid organisations and individuals are sometimes perceived, they said, as rich foreigners with inexhaustible resources. In the opinion of the interviewees, the formation of reliable partnerships or partner organisations constituted another difficulty. Several of the associations have founded their own partner organisations, which then must often cope with bureaucratic obstacles such as overly complex, non-transparent permit procedures. When the difficulties

27 According to information from the German Rectors’ Conference (HRK) and the head of the DAAD Africa division, there are only five formal arrangements between universities, and these particularly involve languages. Cameroonian scientists working in Germany do not play a particularly important role in this. According to the DAAD division head, academic contact between Cameroon and Germany remains disproportionately low, considering the large number of Cameroonian students in Germany.
described prove too great for effective engagement in Cameroon, motivation for association work in Germany is dampened. Aside from these problems, hurdles to effective engagement must also be overcome in Germany. Generally speaking, the financial and human resources and time of both the associations and individuals are limited. The associations work exclusively on a volunteer basis. They are for the most part poorly organised and function through informal channels. All in all, many associations continue to have trouble carrying out transfers to Cameroon effectively or on a large scale.

Although numerous associations are constantly active and very successful in Cameroon (and Germany), many of them need to improve considerably in regard to their competence in the fields of fundraising, public relations work, and project development and management. Current possibilities for public relations work and fundraising remain untapped, not least because poor access to information and networks does not foster further capacity development. Cooperation with German development policy is extremely limited, and independent lobbying is rare. In addition to this, lack of harmony within the associations themselves obstructs effective engagement to the extent that several of the interviewees have come to prefer to act as individuals and avoid development policy activities within the association context.

One interesting question, worth pursuing in further research, is the extent to which successful integration might be an important factor in determining development policy engagement. It is observable that longer-term engagement for development can be more effective if association members are well integrated and on sound footing both professionally and financially (Baraulina et al. 2006; Sieveking 2008). Most of the members of the young Cameroonian diaspora community are still more or less at the beginning of professions and careers, which means that they are primarily occupied with their own professional planning and advancement.

5.2 Remittances

Nearly all of the persons surveyed send regular remittances back to Cameroon, mostly to family members and very close friends. According to the interviewees, these funds are used primarily for education, such as school fees, university tuition and other training or education expenses for siblings and other family members, to cover the cost of health care, for relief to people in need (e.g., damage to buildings, getting through periods of unemployment or economic crisis, repairs, funerals, etc.) for the purchase of various articles such as mobile phones, televisions, stereos, and finally as gifts, e.g., on the occasion of births, marriages and graduations. Private remittances are also made as regular retirement payments and support to parents and close relatives to help defray everyday living expenses. Finally, such funds are also used for various kinds of investments, such as transport companies, trade and commerce or real estate.

The amount and frequency of the remittances depends on their purpose of the given project and objective. The lack of reliable data makes it impossible to determine the total amount of money transfers by Cameroonian members and very close friends. According to the interviewees, these funds are used primarily for education, such as school fees, university tuition and other training or education expenses for siblings and other family members, to cover the cost of health care, for relief to people in need (e.g., damage to buildings, getting through periods of unemployment or economic crisis, repairs, funerals, etc.) for the purchase of various articles such as mobile phones, televisions, stereos, and finally as gifts, e.g., on the occasion of births, marriages and graduations. Private remittances are also made as regular retirement payments and support to parents and close relatives to help defray everyday living expenses. Finally, such funds are also used for various kinds of investments, such as transport companies, trade and commerce or real estate. The

28 The representative of one association, who has been active in Cameroon for 15 years, pointed out that it has become more difficult of late to motivate people to do volunteer work and that donations by individuals have declined. Generally speaking, he said, volunteer work is not sufficiently highly valued in Germany.
appeared in **Bundesbank** statistics since the beginning of the year 2000, thus represents only a small portion of total remittances from Germany to Cameroon.

According to the statements of interviewees, **average annual remittances** vary depending on income. Cameroonian students send between EUR 500 and EUR 1,000 to Cameroon each year; they often bear great responsibility for the support of their parents and siblings. The introduction of tuition fees along with the uncertainty of employment have reduced the possibility of sending remittances for some of those affected.

Employed persons transfer far greater amounts, described in individual interviews as being between EUR 1,500 and EUR 5,000 per year. Student remittances are generally sent less regularly than money transfers by working people earning a steady monthly income. The financial transfers by students impose a proportionally greater burden on their household budgets than do the transfers by employed persons. Transfers by employed persons not only serve as support for the daily living expenses of close relatives but are more often used for investments of various kinds, such as the purchase of plots of land, construction of a house, setting up a business or engaging in trade. Money transfers also promote **income security** and improvement of the standard of living of family members, although they can also lead them to have greater and greater expectations and to make ever higher demands.

**Methods of remittance transfer, fees:** Because of the expense involved and the limited range of the banking services in Cameroon, remittances mainly take place through international money transfer service companies such as Western Union/Reisebank or Money Gram rather than through banks and the post, which are rarely used. In 2005, an information technology engineer of Cameroonian descent founded the money transfer company Moneyline, which is geared exclusively to Cameroonians and offers them an alternative money transfer service. Moneyline has captured an estimated market share of approx. 10 percent. According to the persons interviewed, prudence has led them to use informal money transfers via middlemen less and less commonly. Larger amounts of money are transferred in person during visits home.

### 5.3 Business activities

In the following, **individual examples of business activities** in the country of origin are presented without any claim that these examples are representative. Since in the case of Cameroonians we are dealing with a young, rapidly growing, highly educated migrant group, it may be assumed that business activities will increase in future both in Cameroon and in Germany. The interviews indicate that many Cameroonians wish to invest in businesses in Cameroon or to serve as local on-site representatives of a German company.

Within Challenge Camerounais, over the past two years the **establishment of a business forum** has been fostered to group current business activities together. This forum is designed as a network for exchange, member activities and lobbying on behalf of Cameroonian business founders in Germany, as well as a contact address for German companies wishing to invest directly in Cameroon. Individual associations such as Deutsch-kamerunische Brücke (German-Cameroonian Bridge) and the association of Cameroonian engineers also cooperate in such efforts.

#### 5.3.1 The range of business activities

Basically two kinds of Cameroonian private sector activity are to be distinguished: the first is **business activity**, which covers the “ethnic micro-economy” and informal trade; the second is the supplying of **more complex services and products** by educational migrants. The entrepreneurial activities

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29 In 2008 further African countries are to be added as well.
of Cameroonians who have already returned to the country of origin will not be explored in this text, though more extensive research on the founding by businesses by returnees could indicate important entry points for private sector investment on the part of the diaspora.

Business owners of Cameroonian origin engage in a wide variety of business activities and are involved to varying degrees in their home country. In Germany, Cameroonians found small-scale businesses of the “ethnic economy” variety, such as Afro shops, Internet cafés, and telephone shops or small cafés and restaurants, which are there to provide services primarily for the Cameroonian community and other Africans. In Cameroon, money and goods supplied by the migrants assist the start-up of small-scale businesses such as taxi companies, transport and logistics services, Internet cafés and laundries. In addition, as is typical of African economies (in the case of Senegalese, see Faye 2007), there is also trade in goods (e.g., appliances, automobiles, IT facilities and equipment) between Germany and Cameroon. These commercial transactions are very useful, since many Cameroonians earn a living through trade.

Examples of services and products of firms founded by educational migrants that are engaged to varying degrees in business in Germany and Cameroon include: construction and property management by an architecture office, a money transfer company with target group-specific financial services, the construction and marketing of photovoltaic plants, a geotechnical engineering and construction office, offices for IT solutions, translation services, human resources and corporate consulting, the production of licence plates and automobile sales.

5.3.2 Obstacles to business activities

As already mentioned regarding community benefit activities, there are some barriers to business activities. It can be difficult to find reliable, trustworthy individuals or business partners on site in Cameroon and to monitor costs and money flows. Cooperation is also complicated by the different business operations culture and business ethics in Cameroon: a lack of professionalism – e.g., in regard to reliability and adherence to agreements and deadlines – and even embezzlement of funds. In the experience of several of those interviewed, Cameroonian economic and market conditions do not encourage business activity. They complained of corruption and a lack of security for their property, high customs fees and taxes, difficulties in dealing with the authorities and a lack of transparency, e.g., non-transparent and long-drawn-out permit and invitation-to-tender procedures. Bills left unpaid by both public and private clients are a major problem, as is the lack of legal recourse for forcing collection of unpaid bills within a reasonable period of time. Individual interview partners also report that despite their being Cameroonians and having a knowledge of business practices in Cameroon, they are at a disadvantage vis-à-vis European businesspersons when it comes to winning contracts.
6. Conclusions

Unlike other migrant groups from sub-Saharan Africa, the Cameroonian diaspora community is primarily composed of educational migrants, who have been coming to Germany since the mid-1980s – albeit in greater numbers over the past ten years. A growing number of the Cameroonian migrants are university graduates – employed professionals who are becoming naturalised in growing numbers and among whom a relatively large proportion are married to Germans. Cameroonians in Germany are very highly organised and are now starting to organise themselves as a diaspora community as a whole into umbrella associations with both civil society and commercial aims and purposes. Women have been underrepresented in the associations organised so far. Their involvement tends to be greater in pan-African organisations and in informal solidarity networks.

Based on the educational profile, age and increasing size of the Cameroonian diaspora community, a growing potential for cooperation with German development cooperation may be assumed.30 Tapping this potential particularly depends on better linking of migration to development policy approaches and measures in Germany. New forms of (temporary) promotion of returnees need to be developed; successful, long-term integration needs to be recognised as a prerequisite and opportunity for effective engagement in development policy by Cameroonian migrants (Sieveking 2008); and a link needs to be formed with persons and associations willing to become involved in governmental development cooperation. There is a fundamental need for further research on an appropriate context for structures and promising conditions for development projects by migrant organisations in both their country of origin and the host country.

The members of the Cameroonian diaspora make contributions to the development of their country throughout the entire range of their transfer activities. There are a number of non-profit and money transfer services on both the collective and individual levels, and these provide important impulses for poverty reduction, greater opportunity and increased empowerment, particularly for the coming generation. The extent of future diaspora activities for development depends largely on political and legislative framework conditions and business and investment conditions in Cameroon. The main factors in these framework conditions were listed in an open letter from diaspora representatives in Germany to the government in March 2007. In addition to this, a plea was made for facilitation of the various forms of transnational activity through easing shuttle migration and permitting dual citizenship.

Non-profit and private sector community activities in Cameroon often involve difficulties and risks that discourage activity by members of the diaspora community in their country of origin: Corruption, lack of transparency, the Cameroonian business culture and business ethics, and high customs fees and taxes are the greatest hurdles to effective engagement. At the same time, there is a lack of human and financial resources in the Cameroonian associations in Germany that obstructs any large-scale transfer activities in the country of origin.

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30 In view of the limited number of associations examined in this study, no conclusive estimate of the potential for cooperation is possible. Further interviews would also be needed for any estimate of the potential for cooperation in the private sector.
7. Recommendations for action

In the following, recommendations for action are provided based on the results of the study on the Cameroonian diaspora community and the particular requests for support mentioned by the interviewees. The aim is to enhance present engagement efforts.

- **Capacity-building** of existing independent organisation structures within the Cameroonian diaspora community: examination should be made of the extent to which the initiatives of the Cameroon Diaspora Network and Cameroon Business Network might be appropriate as coordination and networking addresses for non-profit, civil society and private sector activities. Within the context of the Cameroonian associations, particularly the professional associations, there is a strong desire for professionalisation of organisational and project structures. The potential for fundraising has not yet been exhausted within a number of association projects that are relevant to development. Important intervention points for increasing present resources and improving development-related association projects would be seminars and coaching on fundraising and project financing and also on consulting and support for project development and management. Tapping possibilities for support – as for example offered by the Migration und Entwicklung (Migration and Development) office in North Rhine-Westphalia – can make a contribution to the growth and development of Cameroonian migrant associations.

- **Existing project approaches and ideas** of the diaspora organisations should be further pursued within the scope of GTZ project promotion in the form of advisory services and support. As part of this it would be desirable, for instance, to step up integration of the know-how that is currently available in the diaspora in the fields of natural sciences, technology and medicine. The improvement of infrastructure and access opportunities in the education sector should be examined as should content of curricula and training modules adapted to the target group, particularly in secondary education and in vocational training. Through the initiatives of the diaspora, new possibilities for practice-oriented innovations in secondary education and vocational training can be introduced that would adjust training targets more specifically to market demand on site.

- **Women** are ascribed a key role in development processes, which is why the participation of women and girls from the Cameroonian diaspora should be strengthened as actors and target groups of development policy activities. Gender-specific barriers to training and education, the job market and health should be addressed as part of gender mainstreaming and the promotion of women’s interests, so that the social participation of women and girls and their living conditions are improved. Women are often underrepresented in official associations. Thus the role of informal solidarity networks should be reviewed in development projects and taken into account in project promotion measures.

- In the field of sciences, academia and tertiary education, the growing number of Cameroonian university lecturers and highly qualified experts working in businesses, public institutions and civil society organisations constitutes important potential for cooperation in higher education and knowledge exchange. Together with DAAD and other promotional institutions, existing informal cooperation arrangements between Germany and Cameroon should be expanded in those priority areas that are relevant to development, particularly in the fields of health and environmental protection, in which Cameroonian educational migrants in Germany are strongly represented. The extent to which new projects for institutions of higher learning might be developed within the context of the new diaspora-related university initiative in Cameroon should be examined, for example in the field of virtual learning. An evaluation of best practices models for education (e.g., e-learning training modules in the field of medicine) as they have been tested with the diasporas of other countries might open up new opportunities.
• Among the main focuses for the diaspora initiatives in the Cameroonian community is the promotion of return to Cameroon and the establishment of new livelihoods. For this reason, establishing a new livelihood as a strategy for return should be promoted as part of the Returning Experts Programme. The experience gained by the new returnee coordination office in Cameroon as it relates to the establishment of livelihoods by returnee experts should also be evaluated and used. In particular, new concepts for temporary return should be developed and integrated into the human resources planning of development policy organisations.

• Development cooperation can also support adaptation of governmental and commercial information and consulting services and corporate services to migrant needs, in addition to general improvement of the business and investment climate, particularly regarding legal stability. An effort should be made to foster cooperation between Cameroonian business networks and chambers of commerce and industry in both the host country and the country of origin. Development cooperation can also support the lobbying of Cameroonian migrants for better business conditions in the country of origin, for example, by raising the issue of the prevalence of corruption or overly complex customs regulations. DC is in a good position to promote a dialogue between diaspora companies and government representatives.

• The high level of education of the Cameroonian diaspora in Germany also qualifies it for an important role in economic and technical innovation in Cameroon. An important starting point for promotion would be the establishment of match-making mechanisms between Cameroonian and German companies to enable know-how transfer or the founding of joint ventures. DC can provide support for the establishment of appropriate platforms for this.
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