

**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN THE
NORTH WEST AND EAST REGIONS OF CAMEROON**

BY

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DECLARATION STATEMENT

I, Edwin Sakah Nsah, hereby declare that this research “NGOs and poverty reduction in the North West and East Regions of Cameroon” is fully a product of my study and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any institution of higher education. Facts or data derived from unpublished or published works of others have been acknowledged in the text and a list of references are provided

ABSTRACT

Literature on NGOs and poverty reduction shows inconsistencies in NGOs adding value to poverty reduction. E.g. some researchers have criticized developmental NGOs for not supporting the needy. Contrarily, some have argued that NGOs provide for the underprivileged. NGOs in Cameroon do not pose issues different from the above. What worries Cameroonians most is the fact that a high number of developmental NGOs are created in the same areas. On the other hand, poverty is getting widespread in the same areas serviced by these NGOs. This study analyses why NGOs participate in poverty reduction programmes given that these programmes do not reduce poverty. To achieve the aim of the study, six objectives were established: (1) Establishing the reasons for continued increase in poverty in the selected regions. (2) Exploring how NGO staffs and their beneficiaries perceive poverty. (3) Understanding the nature of participation (4) Understanding reasons donors give funding to NGOs. (5) Investigating the challenges NGOs encounter. (6) Finally formulating suggestions that may lead to better integration of programmes designed.

The study was conducted in Cameroon and a qualitative research design was used. Access into the field was established through informal telephone calls, emails, and covering letters to General Managers seeking their consent to use their organisations for this research. Purposive and Snowball sampling was used to select the study participants based on their links with the study NGOs. The study adopted the triangulation approach.

The study found that selected NGOs programmes continue to fail because there were extraneous variables which account for ineffectiveness in NGOs poverty reduction programmes. For example, poverty reduction in any nation is the duty of every government and its citizens to fight against poverty and NGOs only assist as support mechanisms towards the realization of government obligations to its citizens, here the government and its citizen were not doing enough to fight poverty. Attributing poverty reduction only to NGOs is demanding too much from them.

In conclusion, NGOs are purporting to have made real achievements in poverty alleviation but in reality their programmes are benefitting only a few from the grave effects of poverty because they are more involved with charity work. The study suggests that, dialogue with all NGOs stakeholders will reduce possible contradiction and will improve coordination and collaboration between the actors.

ACRONYMS

ADBP	African Development Bank Group
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CPDM	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HI	Heifer International
HIV	Human Immune-deficiency Virus
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MINEPIA	Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries
NCV	Non-governmental Organisations Community Volunteers
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPA	National Park Authorities
NWR	North West Region
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PI	Plan International
PIC	Plan International Cameroon
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PTA	Parent Teacher Association

RCT	Rural Centre Training
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SLA	Sustainable Livelihood Approaches
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America
VGSW	Vicony's Global Success World
WEF	World Economic Forum
WB	World Bank

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND, CONTEXTUALISATION AND FOCUS OF THE STUDY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Researchers like Choudry & Kapoor (2013), Brass (2010), Abia et al. (2016) and Namara, (2009) criticize NGOs for getting closer to their funders and not supporting the community or beneficiaries, thereby defeating the main reason for their creation. This chapter discusses the background, the issues under investigation and the general overview of the key concepts in the thesis. The perception of NGOs and poverty reduction have been taken up in this section to introduce how they are interconnected to the framework of the study even though these perceptions are elaborated on in chapter two. The researcher gained valuable experience with NGOs and poverty reduction while growing up in a small rural community. This hiked his interest in this area of investigation. For that reason, the researcher has provided clarification of what encouraged him to pursue this area of study.

Growing up in a small poor countryside region where coffee farming was the main occupation and it was common knowledge in this area that the majority of students that completed universities were unemployed and many thought the best way to create jobs was by starting an NGO. The silent statement in the story is that the NGO arena was fertile grounds for those who were created them. What fraction of the targeted beneficiaries actually benefited from the services of these NGOs? Yet the spread of development-related NGOs in Cameroon since the late 1980s has been outstanding and has produced an equally remarkable expansion.

Developmental international NGOs in the area that wanted to have a positive impact were assisting coffee farmers with free fertilizer with the intention to improve yields. There was a steady increase in NGO activities without corresponding improvement in coffee production. Some of the coffee agriculturalists applied fertilizer for many years but there were no improvements in yields; they decided to sell the fertilizers to maize producers at a very low price since fertilizer was not useful in coffee production (Charlier & N'Cho-Oguie, 2009). After many years of operation, the founders of these NGOs did not even care to find out why there was no increase in coffee production or why some of their beneficiaries were selling the fertilizers. Instead, they handed these projects/programmes to the community members who knew little or nothing about these NGO projects and some of the projects were destined to collapse. Meanwhile those that continued were not yielding any satisfaction because there was

lack of proper implementation. This position attracted increasing attention amongst the villagers in this region, as many were wondering why developmental NGOs were existing in this area.

The researcher growing up in this small poor countryside and hearing NGOs' stories about development, sustainability and especially the way developmental NGOs fabricated stories about the poor, wondered whether these developmental NGOs were really for the poor or if what they were doing was a good enough job of explaining the difficulties of development and poverty reduction. The researcher believes the developmental NGOs' role is to reduce poverty in their project communities by giving people an opportunity to develop themselves and work with NGOs in a way that is compatible with their current livelihood strategies. The researcher equally acknowledges the difficulties his father went through as a beneficiary of these developmental NGOs and the sad stories he heard from his community members on what it is like to be the poorest of the poor and no longer have vision but to take things as it is with no way to change the situation. The researcher wished some of these developmental NGOs could have also listened to some of these sad stories to assess why they continue to participate in poverty reduction programmes given the knowledge that their programmes do not reduce poverty. On the other hand, the donors, funders or those that could help change the situation do not like to read stories without happy conclusions. The fear is if NGOs have bad stories, their stories will not be read. This is clearly a great concern because if they have bad stories then the public or those who can assist will not like to read such stories. The researcher accepts that people do not want to read puzzling stories every day. Nevertheless, that does not mean that true stories about the poor should not be written by NGOs and made available for those who want to learn more about poverty. In fact, the researcher feels that NGOs can do much better when they publish stories that portray the poor in a holistic way. It is difficult to understand people you have never come across and are living lives in a different way. It is disappointing when you realize that what NGOs are saying is not true as some researchers such Mawdsley, Townsend, Porter, & Oakley (2002), Choudry & Kapoor (2013) and Roy (2014) revealed that NGOs are trusted to speak on behalf of the poor by the poor but many developmental NGOs do not have time to assess the need of their beneficiaries as they are too busy writing proposals, filling in forms, chasing money and tracking rather than achieving change. This experience may make one conjecture that NGOs' sole purpose is to receive dollars to reduce their employees' poverty. As a result, poverty reduction continues to be hampered by lack of inclusive policies to address poverty.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Cameroon is situated in Central Africa and wedged in the Gulf of Guinea. Cameroon shares boundaries to the northwest with Nigeria, to the south with Gabon, Republic of Congo, and Equatorial Guinea, to the east with Central African Republic, and to the north with Chad (Mah, 2016) (figure 1 below). Its regional port of Douala serves as an entry point to two strategic roads to Bangui in Central African Republic and Ndjamená in Chad (Fambon, McKay, Timnou, Kouakep, Dzossa & Ngohon, 2016). Cameroon has a land area of about 475,000 square kilometres with a population of approximately 24 million people (2017). The most inhabited ethnic groups in Cameroon are the Cameroon highlanders with approximately 31%, of the population, the Equatorial Bantu 19 %, Kirdi 11 %, Fulani 10 % and North-western Bantu 9 % of the population (Mah, 2016). Linguistically, Cameroon is one of the most culturally diverse states in Africa with more than 200 indigenous languages but English and French are the official languages in Cameroon (Fonjong, 2007). Between 1961 and 1972, the former southern Cameroons was known as the state of west Cameroon. This was the period of Federation, with the establishment of a unitary government in 1972; West Cameroon was broken up to North West and South west provinces (Neba, 1999). This lasted till the adoption of the 1996 constitution in which provinces becomes regions. Cameroon now has 10 administrative units known as regions, of which two are dominated by English speaking (South West and North West regions) the remaining being French-speaking (Mah, 2016). There is a deep influence of Christianity in the south and west regions, in the north, people are either Muslim or animist and have largely retained their traditional modes of life. One major disparity in the social geography of Cameroon is the effects of British and French regulation that remain noticeable in many features of life in Cameroon (Barbelet, 2017).

Economically, Cameroon has abundant arable land, water, and energy, oil and mineral resources. This means that Cameroon has a rich and diversified economy (Abia, Nchanji, Markjovert, Eucharia & Abia, 2016). According to these researchers agriculture was the sole pillar of growth and foreign-exchange earning until the late 1970s when oil became the primary source of income (Abia et al., 2016). Food and export crops, livestock, fishing and forestry are the backbone of Cameroon economy, employs about 70 per cent of the labour force. Cameroon is the most important market in the Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale (CEMAC). Most farming production comes from smallholders, apart from rubber and oil palm, which are run under a plantation system. Plantain, yam, Millet, cassava and rice are cultivated for both local consumption and for exports to countries within the central African

region. The main cash crops are cocoa, coffee and cotton. Cameroon forestry sector is second largest export earner after oil, generating around 20 % of export revenues, On the other hand, there is still a great unexploited potential in this sector. Cameroon may possibly be one of the chief exporters of planks and other timber products if this sector is well developed but the sector is inhibited by the absence of elementary transport infrastructure, particularly in the east region of Cameroon (Barbelet, 2017).

Topographically, Cameroon is a hilly and a good representative of natural diversity; for example, in the two regions under study, (the North West and the East regions). These regions have a diverse relief ranging from valleys, plains, forest, and grassland. Land property is not evenly distributed in Cameroon. Cameroon still enforces the postcolonial land regulation that was established in 1974 reform. The reform states that “The State shall be the keeper of all the lands. In that capacity, it can intervene in order to ensure a rational use or in order to take into account the imperatives defence of economic options of the nation” (Degrande , Schreckenber , Mbosso & Mfoumou, 2007:8). The land title is the official testimony of land property. It can be obtained either by purchase or by mutual agreement or donation (Bigombe and Bikie 1998). Access to land and transfer of property rights are determined by the type of descent groups. In most regions property rights are passed from father to son. If a man has more than one wife, each wife with sons may be allotted an equal share of the father’s land to be distributed among the sons, although the wife may continue to work on the lands she worked while her husband lived. If a man dies without male heirs, his eldest brother will usually get control over the land. It is critical to realise that women are rarely allocators of land rights. Their right to use land generally comes through men, either from a husband as part of his holdings or from other male family members. The majority of farming lands remain under customary occupation (Degrande et al, 2007).

1.1.1 POVERTY IN CAMEROON

Cameroon is still a developing nation that is yet to establish adequate infrastructures such as road and rail networks connecting the country. In recent years the country has received thousands of immigrants escaping violence in the Central African Republic (CAR) and most of them have settled outside camps with majority living in the countryside and peri-urban areas of one of the regions under study (east region) creating an increasing gap between funding and needs in Cameroon. There is also a growing crisis with Nigerian refugees in northern Cameroon. Supporting these refugees has become more urgent than ever (Barbelet, 2017). This growing crisis is pushing Cameroon into chronic poverty. In 2015 Cameroon was positioned 153 out of 188 on the 2015 Humanitarian Development Index (UNDP, 2015). There is lack of basic services like education, shelter, water and health facilities preventing Cameroonians from getting out of poverty (Fambon et al., 2016). The crisis in Cameroon today is not new, between 1960 and 1977 there was unfavourable terms of trade in Cameroon that kept import prices high and export prices low. Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during this period was growing at an average rate of 3.1 per cent with population growth averaging at about 2.4 per cent (Fambon et al., 2016). However, between 1978 and 1986 there was an economic boom because of an increase in oil prices. In addition, there was determination by the government of Cameroon to develop the social and economic sectors notably in road and rail networks, education, housing and health services. An increased GDP as a result of an increase in oil production fuelled the investment rate and reduced the level of the country's indebtedness. An increase in oil revenue also boosted economic activities in Cameroon because there was high production using domestic resources with very little foreign borrowing (World Bank, 1989). Notwithstanding the economic boom with an average of 7% per year between 1965 and 1985 there was still a marked inequality in the distribution of incomes and significant regional disparities in poverty levels in Cameroon. For example, there was high level of poverty in rural communities in Cameroon during this period (World Bank 1995, 1999).

The situation in Cameroon became worse after 1986 when the prices of home-produced commodities began to fall (Vyas, 2012). The drop in export earnings forced the government of Cameroon to stop subsidizing agricultural inputs and to cut the prices of coffee and cocoa offered to farmers. In the early 1990s there was a serious cut in public-sector employment and wages. This forced farmers to adopt a survival strategy by not purchasing inputs, and some farmers even withdrew from cultivating cash crops. Small businesses, which theoretically could be more efficient, also faced a lot of challenges and many were closed down. This created

a very difficult environment for economic activities (Kobou, Njinkeu & Powo, 2008). Three main reasons explained why there was a persistent fall in GDP after 1987 (i) there was low demand for export products such as oil, cocoa, coffee, and cotton which resulted in a fall in the prices of export products: (ii) fall in the value of the Cameroonian currency against the US\$; and (iii) the decline in oil output (Doe, 1995).

In 1992 the situation became worsened after the highly contested presidential elections when President Paul Biya was re-elected into power. Biya's re-election into power brought much confrontation between the government and the opposition (The World Bank, 2019). This was further intensified when opposition leaders encouraged their supporters and the population at large to stop paying taxes. This weakened the power of the government which was unable to fulfil its financial commitments. This was destructive to Cameroon's economic development (Fambon et al., 2016). Consequently, civil servants' salaries were cut by half and thousands were made jobless. Life in urban areas became very difficult and many people in urban areas returned to farming in rural areas as the only means to survive. The total number of rural households below the poverty line rose from 49% to over 70% from 1986 to 1994. The situation further became worse in 1994 when the national currency was devalued.

In a stated aim to fight poverty, the government of Cameroon embarked upon measures it said will improve the state of the country to strengthen and improve the business environment and accountability in Cameroon (IMF, 2014). Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was part of the actions undertaken by government in 1989 to fight poverty. The main objective of the programme was to refurbish internal and external macroeconomic balances with the vision to achieve viable and reasonable growth to reverse the downward trend of the economy. SAP emerged on the back of the (African) Debt Crisis of the 1970s onwards. In other words, SAP was meant to get the country to return to surplus in order to resume servicing debts. Privatization of state owned enterprises took place and user fees were introduced for social services and amenities from education to healthcare in order to restore aggregate macroeconomic balance as well as a sustainable and equitable growth and, on the other hand to reduce poverty (IMF, 2010). During this period, stabilization and structural reform programmes, enforced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), that was said to control price increases and stimulate development, based on the vision that raw material from the rural sectors could provide satisfactory budget surpluses to enhance public savings to finance high-priority public and social spending, were adopted by the government. Another programme that followed was Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) in

1999. Significant progress was realised in the export and public finance sectors (African Development Bank Group (ADBP), 2002).

The introduction of structural adjustment programmes and the modifications of economic reforms meant that the government of Cameroon was not able to undertake its duty of providing public services to its citizens. Some researchers such as Fonchingong & Tanga (2009) and Yenshu (1998) pointed out that the state failure to improve the welfare of its citizens led to the expansion of NGOs in Cameroon and particularly in the regions under study (North-west and East regions) to deal with poverty. There were some modifications in the dynamics of interaction between NGOs and the Cameroonian government with the declaration of the 1999 law to control NGOs. With the authorisation on freedom of association, there was a mechanism put in place to control the activities of the growing NGO sector in Cameroon. The increase in the number of NGOs raised the hopes and aspirations of many in Cameroon as the country was going through the devastating effects of the economic crisis. However, the mechanism of coordination and the responsibility of the state in strengthening these development actors were not clearly stated. For example, there was no assurance to the financing of NGOs by the state which made some local NGOs to suffer from funding problems in Cameroon; other weaknesses of the decree include the over-centralisation of mechanisms by the Ministry of Territorial Administration which led to excessive bureaucracy and interruptions. This has continued to discourage the fight against poverty in Cameroon (Fonchingong & Tanga, 2009)

According to Heifer International (2014), poverty in Cameroon is normally a rural occurrence; 55 % of the poor in Cameroon live in rural areas. Approximately 50 percent of the population living in poor households are females and teenagers under the age of 15. There is a continuous lack of savings that can be transformed into investment in Cameroon. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2014) there is inadequate infrastructure, tax regulations, and inefficient government bureaucracy. All these constraints are because of feeble governance that delays development and ability to attract investment (Chatham House, 2017). The major political party in Cameroon; the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) formed in 1985 has remained in power since its creation and has long conquered the country's political setting, occupying more than three-quarters of seats in the National Assembly and in the Senate. The dominant party in power have neglected some regions in Cameroon making it difficult for some areas to fight poverty. For example, the east region which is one of the areas under study for this research has received slight governmental impact from the central administration in Cameroon and has benefited very little from the government of Cameroon

(Barbelet, 2017:04). The infrastructure in this region is under-developed, with a lack of motorways, hospitals and schools (bid). Governance and corruption are also major concerns in Cameroon. . In 2014 Cameroon was ranked 145th out of 175th on Transparency International's corruption index¹.

Religious differences between Christianity, Islam, and traditional beliefs are challenges to poverty reduction in Cameroon as these differences have led to some of the worst decisions taken in Cameroon. For example, governmental nominations and employment in the civil service in Cameroon are seen as a means of sharing power and wealth among different interest groups. The civil service payroll has been used as a means of creating employment for these interests groups and it has failed to ensure effective service delivery, and ever since 1987 the country's per capita GDP has been considerably low. As of the year 2011, Cameroon was graded 150th on the 2011 Human Development Index (HDI) out of 189 countries and territories and in 2016 Cameroon was ranked 153rd globally, with an HDI of 0.556 and it is estimated that more than half of the people live below the poverty line (UNDP. 2019)

Cameroon has experienced disruption especially in the northern and eastern regions. Boko Haram activities along Cameroon's borders have given rise to high levels of uncertainty and clashes, including 2,276 deaths in 2014-2015 alone, as well as damage to cattle, which has in turn caused movement or migration and severe social and economic interruption (World Bank Group, 2017:1). This has continued to worsen the poverty situation in the north and eastern regions of Cameroon as these regions are protecting individuals who have escaped violence in their regions. Political instability in Cameroon has continued to discourage investment. As of August 2016, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs assessed that Cameroon was hosting thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries, while the one of the regions under study (North West region) falls under part of the country in which there has been a war of secession since early 2017(The World Bank 2019).

Notwithstanding the difficulties in fighting political instability in many regions in Cameroon, the country has copious natural resources and land potential, the agricultural sector's contribution to development is very high though there is poor mechanization and lack of irrigation. The industrial sector is weak because there is lack of technical know-how and resources. The industrial sector's contribution to GDP development is also weak and relies mostly on extractives and light manufacturing. The tertiary sector performance, however, has

¹ <https://www.transparency.org/country/#CMR>

been driven in part by high public investment levels, and by relatively unsophisticated retail trade as already indicated above (The World Bank Group, 2017:1).

There is a greater inequality in the urban areas than in the rural areas. Hence, poverty in Cameroon is caused partly by lack of employment opportunities because of low physical and human capital, which forces people into low productive activities, particularly in the urban areas (Mah 2016). There is non-transformation of crops in rural communities because farmers in these areas lack sufficient knowledge on processing. Furthermore, the non-availability of electricity in most rural council areas of the region makes it difficult for processing to be carried out on a large scale. These factors constitute a major problem. The above problems are not new in Cameroon and the need for solutions to these problems have long been recognised by the government but very little or nothing has been done to solve these problems.

Developing rural areas seem to be the most sustainable solution that will promote growth in rural communities and urban areas. Creating job openings, developing rural infrastructure and financial institutions are important strategies to boost economic development both in rural areas and in cities in Cameroon. If immediate actions are not put in place by the government, the extent of inequality will potentially increase the vicious cycle of poverty in Cameroon. The main concern here is to address what seems to be a long-lasting problem of ineffective public services.

1.1.2 STUDY REGIONS

1.1.2.1 EAST REGION OF CAMEROON

The East Region of Cameroon is one of the area where majority of the people speak their own distinctive language and the educated people know French and a bit of English. French is very much spoken than English language. The Eastern part of the East Region is surrounded by the Central African Republic, the Southern part by Congo, the Northern part by the Adamawa region, and the Western part by the Centre and the South regions. The region covers 109,002 km² of the national territory with a population density of less than five persons/km² (Pyhala, 2012). The Southern part of the East Region is made of the Bantu known as the 'Beti-Pahuin'. They speak Beti. The Sudanese occupy the Northern portion. The rest of the region is dense forest and there are no roads. The soil is rich with iron and red in colour. 75% of this region consists of metamorphic rock such as mica, gneiss and schist. There is high temperatures (24° C on average), long dry period from December to May and a heavy wet period from October

to November. The region has abundant species of different animals; however, many of these animals are now under threat of elimination due to hunting and deforestation. The Baka and Babinga inhabit this area. The Baka are one of numerous diverse groups of hunters and local farmers generally referred to as native 'pygmies'. It should be noted that the focus of this study in the East Region is 'Baka community' because selected NGOs in the North West region for this study have projects in this community.

There is not enough recent information on the socio-economic state of affairs of the Baka people. The information that is available is based on estimates (Pyhala, 2012). However, it is easy to identify that the situation of the Baka in Cameroon is a matter for serious concern. This explains one of the reasons there are so many NGOs in the Baka community. The Baka are seen as the most vulnerable group in the Cameroonian society. Baka people are referred to as "less developed, backward, and primitive". These negative labels and discriminatory descriptions are additional to the dispossession of their ancestral land (ibid). In 2011 the Baka population was estimated to be about 40,000 of the total estimated of about 300000 African pygmies in Central Africa and it most have massively increased lately (Ngambouk, 2019). The Baka are not benefiting fully from social services like other Cameroonians. They live in the forest. There are some beliefs that they are not Cameroonian because most of the Baka do not have birth certificates, not to talk of national identity cards. The Baka culture and way of life is different from the main Cameroonian not only in terms of dialect, civilisation, beliefs and backgrounds, but also in that their lives and personality depend entirely on their rights and access to their traditional lands and the natural resources that they have harvested and sustainably managed over time (International Labour Organization (ILO) & African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), 2009). Baka lack sufficient modern agricultural knowledge. Their harvests are only just enough to guarantee self-sufficiency as the selling of forest products, particularly those from hunting, is illegal. Furthermore, there is non-transformation of crops in this community because there are no factories. Some Baka also work in the agricultural estates of their fellow Bantu and their earnings are always not enough in relation to their needs. The normal earnings of the Bantus are more than two-thirds of the income of the Baka who live in the same region (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2005).

Of late, there have been trade dealings between the Bantu and their neighbour, Baka. The Baka sell wild game to the Bantu and buy crops or metal tools from them. These dealings are not always fair as the Bantu from time to time take advantage of the Baka, manipulating them and

selling to them at higher prices, at times exchanging their crops for labour (ILO, 2005). Poverty is also seen in this community through the lack of access to basic social services. For instance, lack of land due to land conflicts, lack of agricultural tools, food insufficiency, and lack of financial means and income to acquire the basic need. It is important to note that in Cameroon, the problem of access to education arises in terms of availability of educational infrastructure but in Baka community, the problem arises in terms of adaptation of the education system to the lifestyles of the Baka (Hattori, 2014). On the subject of social life, the Baka face many challenges, for example, many Baka still lack birth certificates. The official non-recognition of the Baka has a series of political, economic and social implications. Administratively, they are not represented by themselves but by the Bantu to which they are subordinated. Their representation in regional and national institutions is insignificant (Pyhala, 2012).

The Baka throughout their lives have lived in forests where they carry out hunting activities. Currently, government efforts to expand and increase growth in the country has created more problems in this area as people are forced to move out of the forest, which used to be their home and source of income. Some of them now spend part of their lives in urban areas but they continue to go for short-term hunting and gathering expeditions deep into the forest in the rainy season when forest fruits become available from September to November. In the dry season yams are available. They operate in a communal organisation (ILO, 2005). However, due to the dreadful conditions in the forests and enforced restrictions by National Park Authorities (NPA), some of the Baka groups have begun to abandon the practice of hunting and harvesting. This is a key challenge as Bakas are now shifting from their way of life to a sedentary life of agrarians and becoming integrated more with the outside world since they have been refused access to the forest and their identity and wellbeing as well as their future are in danger. The question remains, what will become of the Bakas and of their beliefs, knowledge and dignity in the future with current and predictable shifts in their entire mode of living? They are now becoming forest people without a ‘Forest’ (Ngambouk, 2019). The Baka usually lived in semi-circular houses with thatched roofs. At several residence sites, they constructed houses with mud walls, which are characteristic of houses in farming communities in Cameroon. There are few health posts in this community (Hattori, 2014). Most people in Baka rely on traditional modes of treatment which is done almost free of charge. The leading reason for relying heavily on traditional healers is the voluntary nature of service delivery and its easy accessibility in this community. People in this community usually make the first attempt with these healers for treatment and if it does not work then the patients try biomedical treatment (Pyhala, 2012)

Figure 2: Map showing Baka community in the East region, Cameroon



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pygmy_languages_\(Bahuchet\).png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pygmy_languages_(Bahuchet).png)

1.1.2.2: NORTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

The North West Region (NWR) of Cameroon is one of the two areas where English language is vastly spoken. The Region is divided into seven divisions: Mezam, Bui, Donga-mantung, Menchum, Boyo, Momo and Ngoketunjia divisions. These divisions are further sub-divided into sub divisions. Bui division is divided into six sub-divisions: Kumbo, Jakiri, Mbvem, Oku, Nkum and Noni. Boyo division is divided into four sub divisions: Njinikom, Belo, Fundoung and Bum. Donga-mantung has five sub divisions: Nkambe, Ndu, Misaje, Ako and Nwa. Menchum has four sub divisions: Wun, Fura-awa, Menchum Valley and Fungom. Mezam division is divided into seven sub divisions: Bamenda 1st, Bamenda 2nd, Bamenda 3rd, Bali, Tubah, Bafut and Santa. Momo division have five districts: Batibo, Mbengwi, Njikwa, Ngie and Widikum-menka and Ngoketunjia is divided in to three sub divisions: Ndop, Babessi and Balikumbat. In sum, the North West Region has 34 subdivisions and 35 councils and they remain the main foundation unit for growth with the local government (Ngoe, Ghislaine, Bissaya, & Reine, 2015).

The people of this region originated from Tikar, Ngemba, Chamba Fulani and Moghamo with a range of traditional groups but their cultures are interrelated and they communicate in numerous dialects as their mother tongue, but pidgin English is the bridge language here as elsewhere in Cameroon. The region lies between latitudes 5°43" and 7°9" north and longitudes 9°13" and 11°13" east of Greenwich meridian and covers about 17,400 square kilometres (Alasah, 2008). The region has a population of about two million and 80% predominantly live in rural areas (Balgah, Vobo, Mbue & Kimengsi, 2015). The Northern and Western part of the region is bordered by the Republic of Nigeria, the Southern part by West and South West regions of Cameroon and the Eastern part is bordered by the Adamawa regions (Abia et al., 2016). Yearly precipitation fluctuates from 1300mm in the Ndop plain to over 3000mm in Mount Oku. The region has numerous soil types in which a variety of crops are cultivated. The natural ecosystem is covered by wooded savanna hence the name: The Grasslands of Cameroon (Balgah et al., 2015). Erosion and human activities are gradually transforming the soil, for example, husbandry, building and burning. Over all, farming in the NWR is extensive and dominated by four main agricultural fields: crops, cattle, aquaculture and activities like bee farming. The region is typically mountainous and it is a challenge for farming. The terraced fields can accommodate only one crop per year (March to October). During November to February, it is tremendously demanding to nurture any crop. There is often a scarcity of water for the uphill terraced fields in the dry season. Some of the additional problems concern land degradation including soil erosion, bush fires and excessive grazing as cattle herds increase while available rangeland decreases (Abia et al., 2016). Fish farming with the supply of family labour has developed over the year. Only households with a permanent water supply are able to farm fish. A land based production system with earth ponds is the rule. Fish mostly depend on natural food with the chief external feed source being kitchen left overs (Balgah et al., 2015).

Health care infrastructures are a problem in this region, especially in Ngoketunjia division. A smaller amount of the working class has access to medical services (Abia et al., 2016). This is partly because most families resort to traditional dealing because of the high cost of medication both in public and private hospitals in the region. Long distances to medical facilities in rural council areas are also a problem. School infrastructure in rural council areas is in a deplorable condition as the classrooms are made of sundry bricks without windows and doors and with un-cemented floors (IMF, 2014). Almost 100 percent of the schools in the rural areas in this region suffer from a shortage of teaching staff at all levels, nursery, primary, secondary and higher institutions. Another problem in this region is that the marketing of crops is not well-

planned (Abia et al., 2016). Production in these rural areas is the extraction of raw materials because of limited processing facilities and inadequate knowledge on handling. High post-harvest losses are registered due to poor harvesting and storage techniques. There is also malnutrition in some rural areas in the region, which has resulted to high death rates. Malnutrition is as a result of pests and rampant farmer/grazier conflicts and crop damages. Another factor that causes poverty in this region is the absence of livestock facilities such as a knacker's yard (Ngoe et al., 2015). Information especially in farming, employment and educational sectors, are hardly conveyed from the urban to the rural council areas on time as coverage in the region places a serious barrier on communication (Alasah, 2008).

Almost 100 percent of the existing community water supply systems in this region do not have trained technicians to cater for the tanks and standpipes. Furthermore, there is lack of maintenance tools for the technicians. As a result, damaged stand taps or leaking tanks and pipes are usually out of control (IMF, 2014). There is inadequate funding to extend current schemes and, as such, there is a scarcity of water during the dry season. The creation of NGOs gave the people hope, as NGOs are channels through which financial resources get to the grassroots to address rural poverty. However, the jubilation with which NGOs raised the hopes and aspirations of many in the region died out as most developing countries (including Cameroon) were not experiencing the positive fruits of the NGO projects (Abia et al., 2016).

1.1.3 NAMES OF NGOS FOR THE STUDY

1.1.3.1: VICONY'S GLOBAL SUCCESS WORLD (VGSW)

Vicony's Global Success World is a women and youth centred NGO with headquarters in Bamenda in the NWR of Cameroon. VGSW believes in fair hiring and promotion practices, which contribute to a healthy diversity. The organisation aimed at the empowerment of all employees and a rewarding quality of life in the workplace (VGSW, 2018). The organisation was formed in 2008. It gained authorisation from Cameroon government in February 2009. VGSW has a special review status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. VGSW stems from the vision of the founder and executive director and has been shaped over time with precious insights and efforts from conservationists, agronomists, jurists, educationists, environmentalists and experts in many other fields from all over the world (VGSW, 2018). VGSW works in Momo division with different communities, Mbengwi central, Bome, Bonn, Chigwiri, Ngyen-mbo, Wumtawand and Bessi Formukongn. VGSW provides support in community development such as health and sanitation, gender empowerment, human rights and sustainable development, working specifically with minority groups within the Momo division. Such underprivileged groups include Mbororo ethnic groups, widows, orphans and vulnerable children, prisoners, destitute women and teenage mothers.

The VGSW management team is made-up of four top-level officials, three permanent community volunteers and many temporary volunteers. Community volunteers are the intermediary between the VGSW and the communities in Momo division (VGSW, 2018).

1.1.3.2 SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS (SIL)

The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) is a faith-based organisation devoted to building capacity for workable language development. SIL was formed in 1934. The organisation has developed from a two student's summer linguistics-training programme to a workforce of over 4,800 from 84 countries. According to SIL's annual report (2017:4), "SIL makes its services accessible to all, without regard to gender, race, religious belief and political ideology, or ethno linguistic background. This organisation works alongside ethno linguistic communities to deal with language development challenges in daily social, cultural, political, economic and spiritual lives" (SIL Annual Report, 2017:4).

SIL Cameroon is a subsidiary of SIL International. This organisation has been serving in Cameroon since 1969 for the development of the Cameroonian languages. The mother organisation is based in Yaoundé and has projects in other regions in Cameroon. Its areas of interest include linguistic research, literacy, training, translation, scripture engagement, and the promotion and expansion of multilingual education. The aim of this organisation in Cameroon is to help make communication easier and reduce poverty, health problems and the neglected state of communities. According to the SIL annual report (2017:4), “SIL’s work is people-centred, community based and is concerned with all aspects of human life” (SIL Annual Report, 2017:4). This organisation uses mother tongue to teach lesson content that enable children to immediately master curriculum content and it affirms the value of the children’s cultural and language heritage.

SIL cooperates closely with government ministries, churches in Cameroon and civil society organisations sharing similar objectives, such as Plan International Cameroon. The administrative team of SIL Cameroon consists of six directors working to develop and promote the mother tongue, facilitating access and the use of scripture and other related documents, building the capacity of language communities to successfully lead their language development and enjoy the benefits (SIL Annual Report, 2015).

1.1.3.3 PLAN INTERNATIONAL CAMEROON (PIC)

Plan International (PI) is a British based organisation working in 51 emerging countries across Africa, Asia and America to support child rights and lift children out of poverty. PI was established as ‘Foster Parents Plan for Children in Spain’ in 1937. According to PI Annual Report Fiscal Year (1999:1), “PI works as an intercontinental charitable child focused development organisation without religious, political or governmental affiliation” (PI Annual Report Fiscal Year, 1999:1). Child sponsorship is the foundation of the organisation. PI plays a facilitating role between a child in need and the foster parents who would help that child. In other words, PI tries to address the difficulties and opportunities of the children in need and finds generous persons to address this need (ibid).

PI has been working in the North West Region of Cameroon since 1996 and in the Baka community in the East Region of Cameroon. PI works with eight councils in the region (Boyo, Mezam, Momo and Ngoketunja divisions). PI Bamenda management team is made up of five top-level managers, six first-line managers and 192 community volunteers. According to the

PI Report (2015:5) PI system of support permits supporters and communities in less developed nations to give-and-take letters and build a bond of understanding between them. Benefactors also get regular progress reports from PI (PI Report, 2015:5). Sponsorship contributions are used for community programmes and projects, which enhanced the quality of lives of children. Over the last decade, grants have grown to be an important source of funding for PI (grants from governments, trusts and companies). PI Bamenda is supporting more than 6250 foster children and their families (PI families) in the NWR and Baka community in the East Region (PI Report, 2015). Major activities carried out by PI in these regions include health, learning, habitation, livelihood, and building relations (ibid). The country office comprises both expatriates and local employees.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

NGOs have come to occupy a very significant role in the fight against poverty. However, literature on NGOs and poverty reduction shows inconsistencies in NGOs adding value to poverty reduction. For example, Roy (2014), Choudry and Kapoor (2013) and Bebbington et al. (2007) criticize NGOs for getting closer to their funders and not supporting the community or beneficiaries, which are the main reason for their creation. Choudry & Kapoor (2013:2) make it known that some NGOs are engaged in charitable and humanitarian works that have little or nothing to do with poverty reduction, and others have self-appointed and corporate leadership not answerable to any group of people other than their funders or donors. On the other hand (Bebbington et al., 2007). Brass (2010); Namara (2009); Abia et al. (2016) and Mutati, (2002) show that NGOs' participation in poverty reduction has a positive impact on the poor as they provide for the needy and also fill the gaps left by the governments. NGOs in Cameroon do not handle issues different from the above, given the increased involvement of NGOs in the development process. Literature reveals that, amidst high increases in the number of NGOs in Cameroon, the greatest worries among the underprivileged in Cameroon is their inability to have access to health facilities, food, education, water and to be able to live in a proper sanitary environment (Wujung & Mbella, 2014). What worries Cameroonians most is the fact that a high number of developmental NGOs with the slogan 'We want to reduce poverty, we want to eradicate poverty' are created in the same areas. On the other hand, poverty is getting unfathomable and wider in the same areas serviced by these developmental NGOs and some of these developmental NGOs have been in these communities for years without any veritable change (Abia et al., 2016; Belgah et al., 2015). The inability of most NGOs' to reduce

poverty raise questions to why their strategies or policies are not decreasing the undesirable level of deficiency in the lives of the underprivileged in a more sustained and permanent way.

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

Against an examination of the role of NGOs in poverty reduction programmes, the main aim of this study was to analyse why NGOs in the selected regions of Cameroon participate in poverty reduction programmes given the knowledge that these programmes do not reduce poverty. To achieve the study aim, the following objectives were established:

1. Establishing the reasons for continued increase in poverty in the selected regions.
2. Exploring how NGO staffs and their beneficiaries perceive poverty as well as the level of their success in poverty reduction.
3. Understanding the nature of participation by which the poor are involved in poverty reduction programmes.
4. Understanding reasons donors give funding to NGOs as assistance.
5. Investigating the challenges NGOs encounter and how the lessons learned in the past have influenced their present and future development in the fight against poverty.
6. Finally, formulating suggestions that may be shared with NGOs, academics and research institutes on methods and practices that may lead to better integration of programmes design and execution of projects that may reduce/alleviate poverty

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Poverty is a great enemy to human joy; it certainly undermines liberty and makes some virtues useless and others extremely difficult (Onyango, 2011; Graaff, 2003 and Barrientos & Armando, 2010). Apart from providing a general overview of NGOs and poverty reduction in Cameroon, this study will add more insight into the ways in which NGOs frame their poverty reduction strategies or policies since poverty reduction remains a top concern in present-day development. To succeed with decreasing the undesirable level of deficiency in the lives of the underprivileged at all levels requires full understanding of the critical elements that weaken the fight against poverty and how these elements present themselves in particular locations. Despite the fact that much has been written on NGOs and poverty reduction (Nyamnjoh, 1999; Abia et al., 2016; Hickey & Bracking, 2005; Njong, 2011 and Alasah, 2008), a literature review in French, English and other languages suggests there are no studies in the North West Region

and Baka community in the East Regions of Cameroon to assess why NGOs in these regions participate in poverty reduction programmes, given the knowledge that these programmes do not reduce poverty. I hope this study will inform NGOs and state governments pursuing poverty reduction goals, particularly in planning anti-poverty programmes targeting rural locations in both developed and developing nations.

1.5 KEY POVERTY CONCEPTS

In order to comprehend the meaning of poverty reduction, it is crucial to understand some key words as they are used and operationalized in this study;

Poverty relief, according to Bird (2011), refers to short-term support to the underprivileged especially during external shocks that push underprivileged into a more severe state of dependence than previously. The aim of these strategies is to help address direct needs and not for developmental purposes (Bird, 2011).

Poverty alleviation, according to Barrientos & Armando (2010), refers to decreasing the undesirable level of deficiency in the lives of the underprivileged, but in a more sustained and permanent way than short-term support to the underprivileged. It includes the state's social grant programmes, which improve the impact of poverty for many people (Barrientos & Armando, 2010).

Poverty reduction, according to Brandt (2012), is policies and programmes that decrease the number or percentage of people living in poverty (Brandt, 2012).

Poverty eradication, according to Brandt (2012), implies putting a stop to poverty (ibid).

1.6 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis is in six main chapters. The first chapter introduces the study to the readers. It provides the general background about Cameroon, social and historical facts about poverty in Cameroon, an overview of the North West and East Regions with emphasis on the Baka community in the East region because selected NGOs for the study have projects in Baka community. The chapter also discusses an overview of studied NGOs, statement of the problem, specific objectives of the study and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 presents a literature review that is useful in the study of NGOs and poverty reduction. Concepts that have been widely used by scholars to analyse the existence and the roles of NGOs in poverty reduction as a better option in the development dialogue of livelihood management. The first section of the chapter explains how the role of NGOs has been researched. It also presents relevant literature on civil society. The second section of the chapter focuses on poverty with more emphasis on the causes of poverty. Followed by sustainable livelihood approach as a method that try to measure the many problems that disturb how the underprivileged put their living together and sustain their families beyond what is regularly thought of as economic earnings or social earnings to solve livelihood security measures.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methods used to find answers to the research problem and research objectives outlined in chapter 1. It adopts an interpretivist approach to scan the roles of NGOs in poverty reduction in the regions under study. This chapter further presents the approach, scope and tools used for data collection and the process examines the methodological issues associated with this study, research ethics and the constraints in the methods used.

Chapter 4 present the findings of the study. The chapter describes the causes of poverty in the study regions and NGOs programmes to reduce poverty. The chapter further discusses the nature of participation and challenges faced by NGOs in the regions under study.

Chapter 5 critically analyses the reasons NGOs continue to embark on poverty reduction programmes given the knowledge that their strategies or programmes are not reducing poverty in their project communities.

The final chapter presents a summary of the findings, gives recommendations, conclusion and follow up research.

1.6 CONCLUSION

The overall argument developed in this chapter is that developmental NGOs are created in the same areas where other NGOs have been operating for many years but poverty continues to get deeper and wider in the same areas serviced by these NGOs. To succeed in poverty reduction struggles at all levels requires a full knowledge of the critical elements that either raise or weaken the battle against poverty and how these dynamics present themselves in particular locations. The chapter has also highlighted the researcher's personal motivations and connections with the topic of the study. This chapter has also suggested that this thesis might add to the pool of information about NGOs and poverty reduction.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This second chapter is divided into two sections, ‘A and B’. Section ‘A’ discusses the literature with more focus on the origin of NGOs, the reasons for creating NGOs, activities of NGOs, reasons for rapid growth of NGOs in the Northwest and East Regions of Cameroon, and the relationship between NGOs and their funders. The section has also discusses NGOs as substitutes of the government, complementary actors to the government, as representatives of donors and of their own interests. The second part ‘B’ discusses the causes of poverty, the concept and meaning of livelihood by looking at sustainable livelihood approach (SLA) through a diagrammatical representation of the framework. A discussion of why SLA was selected as theoretical framework for this study is also highlighted. The section ends with the limitations of the approach in this study.

Section A: LITERATURE REVIE

2.1 UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF NGOS

It is difficult to describe NGOs because of the level of range and heterogeneity in terms of size, visions and purposes within the sector. Furthermore, no clear unique characteristics distinguish NGOs from other organisations. The absence of consensus on how to describe and categorise NGOs has subdued advancement on both the theoretical and empirical fronts in the effort to better understand and expedite the functioning of the NGO sector (Vakil, 1997). For example, different nations use diverse terms to refer to the NGO sector. In United Kingdom (UK), the terms that are mostly used are voluntary, charitable or third sector (Lewis, 2007). Still, the involvement of professional or qualified experts in the sector creates worry about the relevance of the term. In the United States of America (USA), expressions such as non-profit or not-for-profit sectors are used (Awuah-werekoh, 2014). Again, the use of such expressions in the United States of America, like the United Kingdom, has again been condemned on the basis that they focus on only one characteristic of non-profit or not-for-profit distribution to members (Awuah-werekoh, 2014).

It should be recalled that the main aim of this thesis was to examine why NGOs in the selected regions of Cameroon take part in poverty reduction programmes given the knowledge that these programmes do not reduce poverty. To that effect, it is essential to examine the role of NGOs from a specific perspective rather than from a widespread point of view. Researchers like Fowler (2013), Simms (2000), Awuah-werekoh (2014) and Pollard & Court (2007) identify NGOs as charitable and self-governing registered organisations that connect the supporters (donors or funders) and the receivers (beneficiaries) for community growth. NGOs have a tendency to reduce the growing gap that occurs between the well-to-do and the poor. Developmental NGOs try to reduce poverty for the advantage of global stability. Yazij and Doh (2009:5) supported the above researchers by defining NGOs as “organizations that (1) provide useful goods or services, thereby serving a specified public purpose; (2) are not permitted to distribute profits to persons in their individual capacities; (3) are voluntary in the sense that they are created, maintained, and terminated based on voluntary decisions and initiatives by members or a board and (4) exhibit value rationality, often based on strong ideological components” (Yazij & Doh, 2009:5). The use of the word ‘non-governmental’ has been condemned on the dregs that almost all NGOs accept assistance and aid from governments, embark on projects on behalf of governments and work together with governments on a number of problems (Choudry & Kapoor, 2013; Ebrahim, 2003; Johnson, 2001). In most circumstances, these organisations are seen to supplement governments, addressing developmental problems of communities; e.g., relief activities, educational programmes, shelters, healthcare donation, and so on (Lewis, 2007; Werker & Ahmed, 2008).

From the above views, there is no disagreement on the actual classification of the different types of NGOs, although scholars use different words to suit their research needs or depending on the context in which they operate. Even though scholars have different definitions for NGOs, there are certain characteristics and features that remain consistent through all the definitions. These include the provision of goods and services, not acceptable to hand out profits to personnel in their individual capacities, they are charitable in the common sense that they are formed, sustained, and terminated based on charitable decisions and the initiatives by members or a board and, finally, they exhibit wisdom, regularly based on resilient ethical components. The United Nations (UN) description of NGOs is the working definition of NGOs for this study. In that respect, NGOs are organisations that carry out activities to reduce misery, promote the welfare of the underprivileged, defend the environment, provide elementary social services and also promote community growth (Malena, 1995). However, the claim that

developmental NGOs are close to their beneficiaries and can improve their living conditions is insufficient as the analyses of the investments of these organisations reveal that these organisations are more expressively allied to donors' agendas than their beneficiaries (Brass, 2010, Choudry & Kapoor, 2014 and Awuah-werekoh, 2014). By allowing donors to have excessive power, NGOs lose autonomy and credibility and, in some circumstances, their fundamental mission and values (Mitchell, 2012).

2.2: THE ORIGIN AND THE REASONS FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (NGO) CREATION

The term/category 'non-governmental organisation' according to Fonjong (2007:06) 'first came into public usage in 1945 because of the necessity for the United Nations (UN) to distinguish in its charter between the right and participation of international specialized agencies and those of international private organization' (Fonjong, 2007:06). This was through the UN Charter, Article 71 which stated thus: "The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence". This was for universal national organisations that were independent of the United Nations member governments, and whose purpose was to observe and participate in United Nations affairs concerned with development, human rights, the environment and peace (Bebbington et al., 2007). The United Nations' intention was to make a distinction in its agreement between the right and participation of intercontinental specialized agencies and those of intercontinental private organisations. The phenomenon has since then developed further than a simple term used to differentiate between intercontinental and international non-governmental organisations into a significant partner in world-wide development. The early 1980s saw the rise of NGOs in the world as an essential mechanism closer to the people to solve the development needs of individual communities (Fonjong, 2007).

It is puzzling to try to give precise dates for the formation of NGOs before the 1991 law on the freedom of association in Cameroon. In other words, this means that there were NGOs existing in Cameroon before the 1991 law in various forms without clear regulation or official status (Abia et al., 2016). In general, NGOs in Cameroon grew from family groups or individual activities to important actors of development, which they are today (Fonjong, 2007). Fonjong (2007) discusses that NGOs existed in Cameroon as mutual assistance groups before colonial interference. In the regions under study, especially the North West Region of Cameroon, these

groups took the form of family meetings, hunting groups and farm groups. These groups carried out activities such as small savings, handicraft production and trade, micro saving and rotating farming. A good example of such a group is the Rural Centre Training (RCT) Mfontah in the North West region where it acted as the centre for training women and youths in better methods of agriculture, livestock management and commercialization of produce. Tamanji (2011) states that most of these common initiative groups role was taken over by missionaries during European colonization in most nations in Africa including Cameroon. Today in Cameroon the success of these common initiative groups at local levels has attracted elite attention or foreign assistance in the form of human and material assistance, which help these groups to expand the opportunities and performances of their activities into NGOs in the regions. Examples of common initiative groups in the North West region include the Woin Tohdong Development Group in Fundong created in 1989. Their main activity is infrastructural development. Kai Women Farming Group in Mbengwi was created in 1982, whose main activity is agricultural development, and the Igunikob Farming Group in Abebung was created in 1986, with its main activity being vegetable and food production (Stella, 2006; Fonjong, 2007). There were no common initiative groups found in the literature in the early 1980s targeting human rights or democratic relief as all the common initiative groups were mostly involved in addressing the basic needs of the people. However, recently almost all the NGOs in the regions now are involved in promoting the welfare of the underprivileged, defend the environment, provide elementary social services and also promote community growth (Abia et al., 2016). This explains why there are many developmental NGOs in the NWR because the majority of the NGOs developed from common initiative groups.

Abia et al. (2016) argue that the history of international NGOs in the south is different to what is observed with their local counterparts. Most of these NGOs have a political preference and they came mostly from countries having good relation and interest with Cameroon. A good number of international NGOs in the study site are from former colonial masters of Cameroon like Britain, France and Germany. Waites (1998:201) remarks, "It is the weakness of the state, its failure to provide services or to engage in local development process that stimulated a thriving voluntary sector in many regions in developing nations. Generally, international NGOs operate on a national scale in Cameroon, with branches in other different parts of the country, partly because they have the necessary financial and human resources. Plan International spread out to the East, North West and Central regions. In each of these regions, local branches

have been established which carry out projects and encourage local initiatives in solidarity with the rural people (PI Annual Report, 2015).

2.3: ACTIVITIES OF NGOS

The activities of NGOs all over the world are influenced by their internal environment. According to Fonjong (2007:8), NGOs are described as people-oriented; this means that their activities are dictated by the needs of the beneficiaries. The practical conclusion is that one will discover relief NGOs where there are disasters, human rights NGOs where there are political supremacies and where discrimination exists, and development NGOs where there is poverty (Brass, 2010). However, the impression that developmental NGO activities are dictated by the need of beneficiaries is not very true because developmental NGOs give the wrong impression that they are there to serve the beneficiaries; meanwhile, they have their own interests and some are accountable only to their donors and not to the communities in which they were called to work. Fonjong (2007:8) added that, “a state where governance is people-oriented, pro-livelihood, pro-nature, non-discriminatory and pro-gender equity in an effort to improve the welfare of its inhabitants will observe the rise of NGOs with similar mandates or mission. The reverse is true when the governance is without vision and some time without the democratic institution”. The activities of NGOs are also controlled by the presence of secular and non-secular institutions. Non-secular states adhere to a particular religion. It will obviously discourage the emergence and growth of NGOs with activities contrary to their beliefs. Catholic states will not support, for example, NGOs advocating the use of contraceptives as a mechanism for HIV/AIDSs prevention or for population control (Namara, 2009).

In the North-West and East Regions of Cameroon, both international and local NGOs are involved in human rights, political and development activities even though each NGO has different objectives (SIL Annual Report, 2017). International NGOs have the means to carry out different activities on a wide scale and in most parts of the regions. This is not the case with local NGOs whose activities are limited in scale and scope. International NGOs are those NGOs operating in several countries with headquarters in another country. Some of these international NGOs may have sufficient funding and means, have narrow country grassroots information, but work at the grassroots through locals who are closer to the communities (Vakil, 1997). With local NGOs the case is different; they depend mostly on other international NGOs for survival and international NGOs have additional advantages that they have been

operating in Cameroon for a long time and have enough time to get themselves rooted and seen as trustworthy all over the regions under study (Fonjong, 2007).

Given that most NGOs have as their major objective the alleviation of the well-being of the poor, they have a keen interest on an unindustrialized sector, which is the top sector in Cameroon that provides employment (Abia et al., 2016). Fonjong (2007) reveals that in areas of relief provision, the political and natural stability experience in the NWR and the East Region in particular and the country at large makes it unnecessary for NGOs with relief missions to take up and cover many grounds in this part of the country. Namara (2009) stated that, though NGOs are doing their best to help the communities in Africa, there are some fake or 'suitcase' NGOs found in countries in Africa. He suggested that these fake NGOs should be put under control as they risk losing the confidence of many communities. Furthermore, the existence of such NGOs place a threat to the survival of genuine NGOs of development in the region and the world at large (Namara, 2009).

2.4 THE RAPID GROWTH OF NGOS IN THE STUDY REGIONS

According to Fonjong (2007:14), NGOs cannot really be grown from outside. Rather they develop from the inside in reaction to particular historical and sociocultural contexts (ibid). One of the main reasons for the speedy development of NGOs in the NWR was the traditional set up of the people in this region. As seen in section 1.1.2.2 above, there are five main ethnic groups; the Tikar, Ngemba, Chamba Fulani and Moghamo which are structured from the lowest unit which is the family to the chiefdom which is the highest in the North West Region of Cameroon. Every village in the region is headed either by a second or third class chief and a group of these villages is controlled by a first class chief who wields greater power than the former though the third and second class chiefs are not directly answerable to the first class chiefs in the region (Fonjong, 2007:14). The chiefs' act as auxiliaries of the national governmental administration as is the case in most parts of Cameroon. These chiefs also wield economic and socio-political power over their subjects. This authority can be used to rally the people and to carry out a wide array of activities. The centralized authority of these chiefs with their clearly defined hierarchies allows for rapid mobilization of members of the tribal groups, which provide a strong impetus for common initiatives and ventures. The ability of chiefs and populations of the NWR of Cameroon to rally together at short notice and to work together encourages foreign NGOs to work in the region and national NGOs to diagnose development

issues with the people and bring necessary assistance with maximum community participation. Furthermore, this facilitates the trickle down of innovations from points of first appearance down to the masses (Fonjong, 2007). There is little literature about the growth of NGOs in Baka community.

Additionally, the liberalization and existence of many political and pressure groups during the British administration of the Southern Cameroons explains the existence of many such groups after independence and this is reflected in the existence of many NGOs in the NWR today. The common initiative groups and the existence of a communal spirit were promoted by the traditional set up of the dynamic people of the North West Region. All these factors created a more favourable environment for the operation and success of NGOs in the North West region of Cameroon (Fonjong, 2007)

Another feature that funded rapid development of NGOs in the regions under study was the existence of a culture of self-reliance. Fonjong (2007:18) argues that the growth of people organisations in Africa reflects the desire of the population to take the destiny of their communities into their own hands by being part of the solution to their local problems. There are many self-reliant organisations in the regions under study but it is not clear as to the precise number of these mutual support groups. The high number of self-help groups in the regions was as a direct consequence of the colonial policy of indirect rule and the powerlessness of the government to assist the people with elementary needs, especially roads, as seen above in Baka community in the East region. The general shortage of structure in the region instigated a spirit of healthy competition among the various village communities to improve their access to services and structure. Such healthy competition from hard working communities who are confronted with a harsh physical environment acts as a gravitational pull on NGOs into the North West region and East region (Barbelet, 2017; Abia et al., 2016; Fonchingong & Tanga, 2009 and Fonjong, 2007). The most important fact about self-help groups in the regions under study is that these groups were operating without due registration until 1991 when the parliament of Cameroon passed the law on freedom of associations. It is found that those that are registered today only did so after operating for some years, which enabled them to gain international assistance and recognition. The existence of these self-help groups commonly known as development groups in the North West region has encouraged the growth of NGOs by providing them with an enabling environment, most especially foreign organisations. Fonjong (2007:18) summarises that “the coming of the Netherlands Development Agency (SNV) and its activities in Ngie sub division was through the initiative of the Teze

Development association that applied for the community oil mill from the mother organization". Increasingly most of these NGOs tend to work in partnership with local development associations by providing them with material, technical and financial assistance for local projects/programmes in the region. However, most of the NGOs preferred working with village associations so that the majority of the projects will benefit the rest of the community, rather than working with common initiative groups, the majority of those projects tend to benefit their immediate members (ibid).

Another vital element that contributes to the fast growth of NGOs in the regions under study is the role of the harsh natural and human environment. As seen in section 1.1.2.1 above, the Baka community in the East Region of Cameroon to an extent can be regarded as a problem community in Cameroon as compared to other communities in the country. Baka throughout their lives have lived in the forest where they carry out hunting activities. There are few health posts in this community (Hattori, 2014). The hostile physical milieu consisting of hills, mountains, valleys, lakes, and waterfalls among others in the one of the regions under study pose a hazard to economic advancement and thus need an intensive effort for any significant change to take place. According to Fonjong, Sama-lang & Fon (2010), the reckless handling of the environment, especially through unsustainable agricultural practices, high rate of unemployment, out migration and high constant inter-tribal conflicts also increase the bad situation in the regions under study, which emphasises the need for a comprehensive strategy for development in the region. Furthermore, Fonjong (2007) argues that the 1986 Lake Nyos gas disaster that claimed over 1700 lives from four different villages and over 3000 cattle drew the concern for much needed international and NGO relief in the region. All these call for a lot of civil education, environmental advocacy and human rights protection centres in order to contain these potential threats to peace, stability and development, particularly in the study regions and Cameroon at large (Fonjong, 2007; Abia et al., 2016).

2.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS, FUNDERS AND NGOS

The relationships between governments and NGOs differ significantly from nation to nation and province to province. There are numerous NGOs in Cameroon but very few are succeeding due to lack of strong organisational structures and weak social mobilization (Abia et al., 2016). Before the late 1980s, local NGOs in Cameroon were very insignificant because they played little or no role in national development. NGOs did not play any part in national development

because of the long history of government centralisation and leaving little room for NGO initiative in Cameroon. The government of Cameroon placed hard restriction on associations including NGOs and these restrictions discourages the development of civil society (Fonchingong & Tanga, 2009). The government of Cameroon's aim here was to limit the powers of the NGOs with the purpose of protecting the government from perceived challenges to its authority. As a result, political considerations in Cameroon dominated the relationship between the government and NGOs during most of the period since independence. This situation began to change as a result of the economic crises that settled upon Cameroon in the mid late 1980s which forced the government to accept the need for reforms in its economic policy that gave NGOs a chance to operate freely (Fonchingong & Tanga, 2009). This inclination was strengthened by global political occurrence of 1989-91 including the fall of dictatorial rules in Eastern Europe, the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and the pro-democracy movement in china. These changes were closely followed in many countries in Africa like Mali, Togo and Zambia but Cameroon was struggling to adapt to change and responded with a series of concessions to calls for democratic leadership and greater freedom within the society (Swartzendruber & NJovens, 1993). Notwithstanding the authorisation of NGOs and the growth of local NGOs in Cameroon since the late 1980s, the government continues to harbour the indecisive attitudes. Some administrators gave the impression that the growing importance of NGOs is accompanied by a decline in the role of government. Even though a new policy of openness has been declared, Cameroon NGOs still await the introduction of tangible measures to permanently improve the working environment for NGOs. However administrators continue to exercise discretionary power in arbitrary ways in Cameroon. E.g. according Swartzendruber & NJovens (1993: 7) Senior Divisional Officers have been known to block the application for registration of new NGOs by means of a semantic loophole in the law of association whose text refers to "associations" but make no provision for NGOs (ibid) The above incidents put forward that in Cameroon, the burden of proof rests upon the private sector and civil society to justify the need for new organisations and to secure government approval for them rather than the government having to justify its restrictions. Abia et al. (2016) argues that since the government of Cameroon and private sector were weak to provide the basic services to Cameroonian, the only hope was NGO sector which was self-confident to take over a much larger share of the responsibility for national development.

The government of Cameroon was suspicious that NGOs may continue to pose problems. This was partly because NGOs were new phenomenon in Cameroon and there was little or no

experience in managing the relationship between the NGOs and the Government. In the meantime the government was trying to look for ways to implement a more tolerant approach toward NGOs while at the same time assuring that their activities were compatible with official policies and priorities. On the other hand, government officials saw NGOs as a competitor for donor funds, NGOs will have control over the development process and they thought NGOs were less tangible to be working on behalf of the people of Cameroon given that resources were becoming steadily limited. The government of Cameroon was facing challenges in terms of defending its political legitimacy. In this context, the rise of a dynamic NGO community working effectively at both the grassroots and the national level could be seen to have political implications, particularly as the country's constitutional crises went on without resolution. Since many NGOs activities were financed from abroad, civil servants sometimes viewed NGOs as potential agents of foreign influence, more plausible; they complained that NGOs were diverting resources that would otherwise have been available to the public sector. One important aspect of the government NGOs relationship concerns the flow of resources to the NGO community from external sources with the government hoping to coordinate or control these, while NGOs seek to maintain their freedom of access to funding (Fonchingong & Tanga, 2009)

This marked the beginning of Cameroon's transition, however, tentative toward a multi-part political system along with a free press and expanded rights of association. Law No. 90/053 of the December 1990 (the law of associations) eased somewhat the control of the ministry of Territorial administration over the creation of association and community organisation in Cameroon. Since 1990 there has been a rapid increase in the number of NGOs. In some nations, for example in Chad, the government has formed a special structure to manage the programmes of NGOs whose rules are exercised by an executive body called "the Permanent Secretariat of NGOs". In Equatorial Guinea, local NGOs are required by government to work with partners from outside. As such, all overseas NGOs that want to operate in Equatorial Guinea search for Equatorial Guinea people who are willing to work with them. Each year important programmes are given to NGOs by the Equatorial Guinea government so that they select the ones they think they can work together with the government in Equatorial Guinea (Larru, 2010). In Latin America, NGOs generally functioned in conflict with the government, playing an important role in supporting civil society (Drabek, 1987). As a result, these NGO sectors emerge from a resilient and more radicalized body of civil society organisations in resistance to the authoritarian regimes across the region (Miraftab, 1997). In Uganda, the NGO sector is seen as

having diverse sensitivities, including the widespread feeling that the public good is not the primary stimulus fuelling NGOs (Leopold, 2001). The subsection below discusses the donors /NGOs' funding negotiations.

2.5.1:FUNDERS/NGOS FUNDING CONTRACTS

Funding contracts ensure that NGOs make the best use of donors' funds, even if they are not entitled to a particular programme (Ebrahim, 2005). In so doing, the NGO has the flexibility and authority to be the same with the donor in their debates, making it the preferred contractual model. This is important because it inspires communication between the funders and the NGOs (Obaydullah, 2007). On the other hand, funding contracts limit the role of developmental NGOs in poverty reduction since they will want to keep to the terms of the contract. When NGOs are independent, their chances of success are high, as dependence on donors is associated with control over project management. From the above views, this is to say that dependence is at times a bad thing (Hulme & Edwards, 1996). Despite the fact that the NGO's co-ordination differs slightly from that of donors, some researchers such as Edwards & Sen (2000) and Unerman & O'Dwyer (2010) continue to argue that providers of NGO funds should have the ability to control, access, regulate, and monitor NGOs during their operation processes. Donors should not only collaborate with NGOs they can handle or control as this may affect the powers of the NGOs in decision-making. This situation tends to place donors in a superior position and hence puts high stress on NGO responsibility rather than on the effectiveness of NGO interferences (Brass, 2012; Choudry, and Kapoor, 2013; Ebrahim, 2005; O'Dwyer and Unerman, 2010).

O'Dwyer & Unerman (2010), Obaydullah (2007) and Choudry & Shragge (2012) argue that it is very difficult for donors to predict the behaviours of NGOs after their contracts have been drawn up. In order for donors to escape funny behaviours from NGOs they have created a stricter rule whereby they tend to select only a few NGOs which they trust because they have their origins in the donor countries. Some donors will consider the size and scale of NGO operations that might mean donors will choose NGOs with projects that are easy for them to monitor. However, NGOs with very high ability to draw up a good proposal, conduct fund raising activities and have better negotiation power due to their experience at international level compared to small-scale national NGOs are able to receive funding. Big NGOs have higher influence at national level compared to the small NGOs. To that effect, these big NGOs get

most of their funds from donors and subcontract the smaller NGOs at national and grass root levels and can influence any donor interest at local level because they are in close contact with these small NGOs (O'Dwyer & Unerman, 2010).

NGOs can take positive measures to ensure less vulnerability in their business relationships with funders. This can be in the form of having a different funding base (Mitchell, 2012). With unrestricted funding NGOs have the prospect to concentrate on what they believe would be the best platforms and measures that would have the most constructive influence on a community. On the other hand, free funding takes away the stress and influence that most funders and donors have over the organisation itself. NGOs are able to maintain both upward accountabilities to the funders and downward accountabilities to the beneficiaries, working under the notion that the organisation itself does not misuse the resources and finds the most marginal utility in each dollar (Namara, 2009)

Researchers such as Mitchell (2012) and Choudry & Kapoor (2013) argue that, since donors are trying to make sure that all the assistance they provide is put to better use, NGOs try to create excessive minor positions in the organisation so as to account for the use of funds. Some NGO directors use their company facilities for personal gains. Some of the directors create numerous pleasurable meetings and useless trips; unnecessary investments in equipment that is afterwards under-utilized; numerous staff feasts and many other avoidable costs. Not all this spending adds value to the success of the organisation simply because these directors know that these cases are difficult and costly to prove by the donors. As such, the NGOs take advantage of this situation and avoid their duties. The result is that they are not being close to the grassroots and poverty-focused because they dodge giving proper accountability to their donors (ibid). Unless NGOs have a bigger standing and minimal market competition in the sector, funders or donors will often have the greater influence at the dialogue table (ibid). When funders or donors have superior authority than the NGOs, the NGOs often end up in deadly deals as a result of their vulnerabilities (Bebbington, 2007).

For this to be effective Obaydullah (2007) argues that donors and funders are reasonably powerful to safeguard the judicious spending of their funds. They want all NGOs either big or small to start reporting procedures in return for their support. The undesirable effect of high monitoring of NGOs' projects/programmes is that the organisations take away time and energy from their programmes in order to protect their supports.

Ebrahim (2003:96) further argues that some of the contracts forwarded to donors by NGOs do not necessarily apply to the projects on the ground and “may not have a direct bearing on NGOs’ primary activities or decisions”. In other words, NGOs become comfortable with their organisational structure and give the impression that they wisely monitor the efficiency of their project/programme/s. At this point NGOs exploit and manipulate donors in order to influence funds and diminish interfering. These strategies involve a number of decision-making and organisational alterations, including changes in funding approaches, and determinations to fight donor control bringing out prevailing pressures in the donor-NGO relationship by embracing and reinforcing the assets for information exchange mechanisms (Ebrahim, 2003).

Mitchell (2012) argues that donors’ contracts straightforwardly push programmes that would be contrary to strict government control and since the NGOs are seriously dependent on their resources, NGOs would bring together programmes that include activities such as the advancement of human and democratic rights, religion and the promotion of conflict resolution or reconciliation. Vernon (2009) and Brechenmache (2017) describe why some states such as Russia and Egypt would ban foreign donors. This is important particularly when it comes to how necessary a contract is, because, should a funder decide to alter his/her responsibilities, it is stress-free to melt sponsorship contracts with NGOs than with the home governments where donors have complex and binding bilateral contracts (Vernon, 2009 and Brechenmache, 2017). The groundwork for this bond is easily broken as the agreements are easier to scatter, and for that reason this interrupts the struggle and the feedbacks of the NGOs, as they know that their programmes and organisation funding are vulnerable to funder or donor satisfaction or desires. For that reason, it is not surprising that in some contracting situations NGOs align their missions with funder choice, contend with for-profit contractors, and ultimately disband their tasks in pursuit of monetary security (Mitchell, 2012).

It is vital to know that both funders and NGOs face related pressures, particularly concerning funding, and can yield the same coping mechanisms of co-optation in response. Funders and donors also have upward accountabilities to other organisations that support their organisations with funds. It should also be vital to know that not all NGOs are equally vulnerable to being compliant to the funder’s will, but it does not suggest that they will be entirely protected either (Obaydullah, 2007).

From the above views, it can be concluded that the contract NGOs sign with their funders give them the opportunity and power to question their actions if the donor does not follow the terms and conditions in the contract. Then again, these funding contracts limit the role of NGOs in

poverty reduction since they will want to keep to the terms of the contract. Most funder/NGO relationships are defined by funding that is directed at a specific goal or programme that will favour only the interest of the donor. When NGOs are independent, their chances of success are high, as dependence on donors is associated with control over project management.

2.5.2 TARGETED FINANCES

Financial instability is one of the main weaknesses for NGOs in the world (Pollard & Court 2007). Namara's (2009) study shows that outside nations that are meddlesome with state affairs create limitations and further complications for NGOs in relation to overwhelmed funding. To overcome such a state of affairs, home governments declare their control over NGOs by pushing them to be fiscally dependent on their home governments by limiting foreign donors or funders. This is the practice in some countries such as Egypt and Pakistan, which all have decrees that hamper international funding. In such states, their governments require NGOs to obtain approval before accepting foreign support (Brechenmache, 2017). Some nations have affirmed that public institutes could not acquire foreign support, and if they do so and continue to partake in political undertakings, they have to be registered as foreign agents (Vernon, 2009). When NGOs are independent of funding, they do not become vulnerable by being too closely tied to funders to totally safeguard their financial resources (ibid).

From the above views, one can conclude that donors prefer weaker NGOs for funding opportunities; on the other hand, these donors ignore stronger ones because of the fear that they could not control them. In conclusion, donors or funders generally do not have any benchmarks to judge NGOs apart from control. One will again conclude that restrictions set on funding by the donors or funders nonetheless affect the natural surroundings of the NGOs and the activities they engage in.

2.5.3 Market competition

Resource competition has a massive impact over NGOs as it presents one of their significant susceptibilities. High resource rivalry between NGOs entail that there are numerous NGOs in the same region fighting for the same resources, and often deliver related social services. Low or no competition among donors or funders allows the funders or donors to have bigger control of the constricting position. This increases rivalry between NGOs when they contest for a select group of donor funds. The struggle between NGOs and the low market competition between

fundings work in contrast to most NGOs as they are left with little or no choice but to enter into poisonous agreements (Mitchell, 2012). In order to overcome this obstacle, NGOs should try to keep up their independence by working with countries' governments as a guarantee in terms of funding for projects that help their beneficiaries extensively (Fowler, 2013).

However, Bebbington et al. (2007), Edwards (2007) and Abia et al. (2016) argue that resource competition enhances effectiveness and better programme delivery by NGOs and governments as they compete for high quality service delivery in order to win donors' support for their projects/programmes. However, this can only be possible if the donors can strictly monitor the NGO's performance, which has proven to be costly in the long term as indicated above. Choudry & Kapoor (2013) and Roy (2014) added that this would work only in theory as NGOs can establish achievements without having to disclose information of the procedures through which those achievements were accomplished (ibid).

Mitchel (2012) argues that competition has so many negative effects on NGO beneficiaries as these NGOs take away valuable time and energy from their main services and programmes in order to make sure their funding is safe. One of the reasons NGOs are more accountable to their funders than beneficiaries is because of the market pressures which limit supply of supporter funding availabilities. Another factor is the great number of NGOs present within the same region and providing the same services (Mitchel, 2014). This is clearly a great concern because if NGOs cannot please their funders or donors, their donors or funders will not like to assist NGOs with their funds.

From the above views, it can be concluded that increased competition would actually benefit the NGO sector's answerability and enactment; nevertheless, this would work only in theory. In reality, most NGOs today struggle to understand the complexities of handling well-organised activities, incorporated operations in large parts in order to satisfy their donors or funders and in doing so they completely abandon their beneficiaries. According to Mitchel (2014), market competition would bring more efficiency and more changes that would encourage productivity in the NGO sector. It can be suggested that monitoring will be the best way to insure that activities are in line with the NGO's objectives. However, as seen above, the questions here are, who monitors and evaluates the activities of NGOs and how long would it take to realize project success? If NGOs and donors cannot answer these questions, it will be difficult to predict changes that funding has on the economic environment.

2.6 NGO ROLES AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Several scholars from different disciplines have consistently argued that NGOs operate in numerous backgrounds and roles that it is hard to make a sweeping statement about them. Some are developed and remain answerable to wider social struggles and others have self-appointments and corporate leadership not answerable to any group of people other than public belief and their funders (Choudry & Kapoor, 2013; Brass, 2010 and Namara, 2009). Runguma (2014:14) added that political commitment by government, donors, and the role of local leaders in policy implementation programmes, transparency, accountability and participation of the local communities in policy making influence the success in the fight against poverty because these factors either facilitate or constrain this process. Investigating the role of NGOs in poverty reduction programmes will be in three phases: substitute of the government, complementary actors to the government and, finally, NGOs as agents of donors and their own plan, especially from within the NGOs.

2.6.1 NGOS AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE GOVERNMENT

Hearn (2007) noted that the role of NGOs from a historical perspective was to serve the happiness of their colonial masters. The colonial masters prepared their colonies for proper administration and utilized international NGOs to provide assistance to their colonies. These international NGOs established two-way ties with local NGOs thereby making them intermediary agents (Bebbington, 2007). Since the early 1980s, Choudry & Kapoor (2013:102) demonstrate that NGOs have been shifting their role from coordinating agents to substitute of the government, taking over many government roles, manipulating government, restraining government authority and holding government responsible (Namara, 2009). This is because governments in most countries were increasingly becoming bureaucratic and inefficient (Brass, 2010).

In NGOs' speech and even in the public's awareness, NGOs are close to the poor. Terms such as 'empowerment' and 'growth from the bottom-up' have been employed increasingly from the 1980s by a range of actors. In this context, the number of NGOs continue to grow as most state governments are becoming weaker. The development has made NGOs to be enemies of the state government as they often fill the gap in the delivery of services and public goods which the public sector used to deliver or was never able to provide (Choudry and Kapoor, 2013). Brass (2010:72) claims that the majority of the services provided by most governments

are associated with the basics of life or death and nothing more. In this background, NGOs see their starring role as an alternative where this service delivery lets off, filling the gaps left by the governments (Brass, 2010). In so many countries, NGOs offer services to civil servants, as public sectors are rationalised under structural adjustment or other free market reform programmes imposed by donors (Choudry & Kapoor, 2014). Molua (2007:37) added that the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV Highland) in Cameroon agitates for government's decentralization projects to be put into practice, which is a key element to democracy in Cameroon. In addition, Plan International's role here also has been instrumental. Baka community children in Cameroon do not have the opportunity to go to school and the government does not recognize them officially in the database. Because of cultural reasons in general, and illiteracy in particular, most children are born without any legal registration of their birth. Plan International assisted them to issue birth certificates to children of the Baka people in Eastern Cameroon in order to have them on the national development database (Molua, 2007). In this setting, many see NGOs as a substitute of the government, assuming to take over many of the government roles.

On the other hand, Choudry & Kapoor (2013:104) indicated that NGOs' role in this era is shifting from popular struggle to policy making. Choudry & Kapoor (2013:104) show a situation in South Africa where NGO staff distanced themselves from social movements and engaging with the state against marching on the street. This implies that NGOs are working hand in hand to complement each other as the governments usually create a potential situation where NGOs are compatible with the government. Namara (2009) added that international NGOs are agents controlling local organisations. This is because most NGOs in Africa for example became a foundation and passage of overseas assistance. The government could market the misery of the population to make sure that NGOs get funding (Namara, 2009). However, not all the NGO activities are as a result of government failure to provide basic necessities. Bebbington et al. (2007) are of the view that there are some international NGOs doing valuable work; however, most of these international developmental NGOs have limitations to drive good governance as they continue to duplicate services rather than providing the poor with the necessary requirements and most often they face accusation of causing more indigenous NGOs' efforts to disappear.

Choudry & Kapoor (2013) added that state governments fund some NGOs and when state governments fund NGOs there is high restriction on how the funds should be used. The deliverable becomes the goal of the state. These institutes set themselves up under the law of

the state. They attract individuals to their boards who do not represent local people but rather sit in their capacity as individuals. This damages the voice of the local people as these types of NGOs do not conduct grassroots mobilization; instead, they try to impress funders and find more funds to stay buoyant. In this context, it is easy to compromise the rights of local people. Brass (2010) strongly disagrees with those who believe that the role of NGOs in poverty reduction is not making a difference. For instance, information from the Government of Kenya NGOs Management Board argues that NGOs provide important services that are difficult to measure using guileless development indicators. For example, NGOs' education programmes have a propensity to do things like HIV/AIDS awareness programmes at schools; construction of a library or construction of a computer lab, providing clean drinking water or fighting a specific illness.

Brass (2010) added that most programmes focusing on peace building, civil education and governance make it difficult to see the direct benefit of NGOs. This is because the benefits are not translated immediately into improving the living conditions of the poor in the short run. For example, in Kenya districts a number of NGOs were acting as a supervisory body over government use of resources (monitoring government spending), providing information to/from government and holding government accountable. They also inspire inhabitants to become engaged in this process as well (Government of Kenya, 2008). This means NGOs have been at the forefront of the democratization process by emphasising human rights and civic education. It can be concluded that for poverty to be reduced, poverty fighters must focus on their core competencies. For this to be achieved the interest of the vulnerable group should be placed at the centre of their activities without which poverty reduction programmes will continue to be a failure.

2.6.2 NGOS AS COMPLEMENTARY ACTORS TO THE GOVERNMENT

NGOs as complementary actors to the government have turned out to be the leading service providers in states where the government is not capable to accomplish its obligation. This is because NGOs are highly philanthropic; they struggle for liberation, care for the uncared for and improve the livelihoods of the poor (Namara, 2009). The good role of NGOs is seen in Oxfam international's mission "to overcome poverty, injustice and suffering in the world" (Oxfam International, 2004).

On the other hand, this role sometimes creates conflicting relations with governments. For example, the NGO role might be seen as a form of rivalry, replacing the government instead

of promoting growth in their project communities. In this context, they are condemned for taking a slice of a procedure that aggressively deteriorates the power of the government to become an accountable and trustworthy provider of services. It might be too harsh to suggest, though, that the main outcome of the NGO presence in services provision has been to weaken the abilities of government (Namara, 2009:35). Numerous intercontinental NGOs have funds that exceed that of some poor countries' governments, which have allowed them to advance parallel and institutionalized structures of service provision. In this way, the NGOs' role will be conflicting with capacity development, as it will not lead to sustainable development because of the direct result of the lack of negotiation (Bray, 2009). Researchers explained that this role arose because of the structural adjustment programmes that were made known in the 1980s and 1990s. They claim that they lead to the "disengagement of most African governments from their role as social services provider such as education and health and as a result some NGOs roles are now conflicting with that of the state" (UNDP, 2007:5).

However, the role of NGOs as complementary actors to the government is still very important. For example, disentanglement is still a case when it comes to rural areas and marginal children in many countries. In Uganda educational establishment or programmes are above all the task of the Ministry of Education. Yet, Uganda's lack of ability and the weak natural surroundings of the state in general have opened up opportunities for NGOs to take control over education in Uganda. NGOs deliver a large part of educational services such as construction of schools, maintainer, assist teachers and provide the needy with basic school provisions and also help reinforce government efforts in accomplishing universal primary education objectives (Ibembe, 2007:13).

Some researchers such as Wood (2007:2) and Amandla Development (2010:9) argue that direct funds to NGOs will improve the standard of living in most countries. NGOs have a more localized perspective of the needs of the community and a greater appreciative of the issues that are relevant to the community. The fact that NGOs tend to have a greater weight regarding the community needs positions them in a more reliable relationship with the community and communities are more willing to co-operate with NGOs than with government. Furthermore, NGOs enjoy the freedom to operate in politically volatile areas and thus reach the poorest which the state sometimes does not (Amandla Development, 2010). As a result, it is stress-free for NGOs to encourage a need-based approach rather than just a donor-focussed one. For instance, in countries like Malawi NGOs use a need-based approach rather than just a donor

driven one as an entry point into the community. In this context NGOs search for the underprivileged and extend welfare and empowerment services to the poor (Namara, 2009).

Many studies reveal that NGOs do not consider compromise, authentication of actors' compliance with rights, improvement and capacity building as important factors in their role (Brass, 2010). Nonetheless, in terms of strategies, NGO activities as complementary ones should be associated with participatory approaches. Edward & Sen (2000:607) argue, "That the use of good governance as a platform to attain poverty reduction is slightly determinations, but that poverty reduction should be transforming power relation into a new social order". On the other hand, not all NGOs have to fit into the above mentioned categories as some try to be neutral.

2.6.3 NGOS AS AGENTS OF DONORS AND OF THEIR OWN SURVIVAL

Researchers like Brass (2010), Namara (2009), Amandla Development (2010) and Molua (2007) argue that NGOs create the impression that they are filling the vacuum created by a declining state. Meanwhile, their own interests and the interest of their donors come first and they do not care much about the poor and community development which is the main objective of their existence. As agents of their donors, NGOs do not use a needs-based approach; rather they go for a donor driven agenda and their own interests. However, this role has a greater influence in contradiction of the risk of over generalization, especially given that NGOs have different reasons for existing. Choudry & Kapoor (2013) added that NGOs both in the north and in the south place themselves as the caretakers between social movements and other associations to act as intermediaries and yet their role and interest in acting in this way are frequently untouchable. Intermediary NGOs or funders can write good funding proposals and are in the information circle, often creating a sense of ineffectiveness for those on the outside. Northern NGOs are often unaware of or seemingly unconcerned about whether southern organisations and their representatives have a genuine grassroot base or rather whether they represent a professional class of NGOs representative with access to intercontinental networks. Roy (2014) suggests that large subsidized NGOs are sponsored and supported by development agencies, which are in turn subsidised by western governments and some multi-national corporations. They may not be the same agencies, however, but they are certainly part of the political formation that runs their projects and tend to demand their share in government spending. In this context, one of the reasons for donors to fund NGOs is to create the impression that they are helping NGOs to fill the gap created by a retreating state but instead they are

trying to serve their own interests. Furthermore, NGO support continuously comes bundled with specific rules and ideas regarding how they must be governed (Namara, 2009). Besides bundled funds, some international donors do not seem concerned with targeting the poor. This can be explained by the fact that some international donors are concerned with charities that may not have poverty reduction as their prime goal. For example, missionaries' programmes in some countries in Africa do not necessarily aim to reduce poverty but rather increase the number of people belonging to their church (Bebbington et al., 2007). Namara (2009) maintains that NGOs are representatives of donors and local administrators of overseas aid money, not administrators of local development processes. From the above views, one can conclude that the state governments are expected to define the interests of their underprivileged citizens and increase pro-poor effectiveness and hold other organisations within the state accountable to their population by holding them to their promises (Namara, 2009:41).

Accountability between NGOs and inhabitants indicate that NGOs have crossed the path of their early objectives and in doing so, "run the risk of becoming yet another system of aid managers and disbursers rather than development agents in their own right" (Pollard & Court, 2007:142). For example, in most organisations the community within which they work hardly gets any information about the budget or a briefing of how the whole project is expected to run so that they could also follow up and call to order the organisation when it is drifting. This implies that there is lack of good governance concerning decision-making. This is common as some of the sponsored projects are developed in NGO offices rather than in the communities through participation in identifying and developing strategies which can bring about long lasting changes as a result of which they hardly have sustainable components (Brass, 2010). Fowler (2005) acknowledged that NGOs are given privileges to access decision-making processes but in reality they do not follow a needs-based approach in their decision-making processes; instead their decision-making processes are donor driven. From his view we can conclude that there are inconsistencies between what NGOs set out to do and what they actually do as the above author further states that NGO roles are slowly changing with the changing face of development in most communities.

However, one cannot deny the fact that NGOs have to be redeemer to many people in the world. For example, Plan International Cameroon provides employment to its employees in Cameroon (PI Annual Report, 2015). Similarly, the NGO sector in Kenya serves as a source of employment for over 250,000 people (Government of Kenya, 2008). Opposing the above view

of extremely professional organisations with educated staff, NGOs have also been criticized, especially by researchers, for being institutionally weak.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The argument on the role of NGOs in poverty reduction shows that funders have authority over NGOs. Even though NGOs have prospects to participate in the democratic developments of some countries, it does not automatically follow that there is a strong NGO sector because NGOs are agents of donors and their own interests. As agents of funders and their own institutional survival, their interest dictates what they do. Although the above factors provide facts to show the role of NGOs in poverty reduction programmes, the literature has not adequately explained the specific interest of NGOs and the dynamics of participation in poverty reduction programmes.

SECTION B: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This second section engages with development of theories relating to poverty. However, sustainable livelihood approach have been operationalized to provide an understanding of best practices in addressing rural and urban shanty towns poverty, though the aim of this study is not to discuss poverty concepts per se but to examine why selected NGOs continue to embark on programmes that are not reducing poverty in NWR and East Regions. In this circumstance, addressing the definition of poverty and how it can be best used to develop a better livelihood is the concern here. The chapter discusses the causes of poverty, and the concept and meaning of livelihood by looking at sustainable livelihood approach through a diagrammatic representation of the framework. A discussion on why SLA was selected as theoretical framework for this study is also highlighted in this section with the limitations of the SLA in this study

2.1 Understanding poverty

Poverty is the ancient and the most strong ailment that brings about an overwhelming disease in the world that affects development and political stability, disrupts nations, regions and individuals and remain a noticeable problem in unindustrialized countries (Runguma, 2014).

Poverty has numerous features, varying from place to place and crosswise. In the early days, countries used Gross National Product (GNP) to measure poverty. With this approach, poverty was measured based on the amount of income necessary to keep somebody alive (Graaff, 2003). According to this approach, the poverty dimension was based on the income level required to purchase the essential volume of lowest nutritional intake for sustaining life and calorie counts. It was believed that nations with high GNP rates would have a lesser volume of poverty but this was demonstrated wrong as nations started to experience growths in GNP with rises in poverty at the same time. The fact is that increases in GNP were not evenly distributed among the citizens and those who receive little or nothing from the country's wealth continue to be poor (Graaff, 2003). Poverty is defined based on the poorest of the poor's powerlessness to maintain their consumption, meaning absolute poverty is lack of appropriate income in cash or exchange items for gathering the most elementary requirements such as food, shelter and clothing (World Bank, 2000; Atkinson, 1991).

The World Bank poverty line is 1.9 dollars per day. This means that if one is living on less than 1.9 dollars per day, one is underprivileged and will fall under the category of absolute poverty (Pettinger, 2017; Thomas, 2015). From the above views, such measurement does not consider the differences in regions, class and beliefs of communities in which people live (Graaf, 2003). For example, one can obtain an income that is enough to satisfy elementary needs, but one may possibly still feel underprivileged in comparison to one's region. It turns out to be clear that poverty was much about class of life and access to wealth as it was about income. As a result, measures of relative and absolute poverty turn out to be the ways in which poverty can be defined (Graaff, 2003:7).

According to Nsah (2013:10) relative poverty refers to 'poverty of a specific group or area in relation to the economic status of other members of the society'. Within this view, people are considered as poor if they fall below prevailing standards of living in a given societal context (Nsah, 2013:10). Here the requirements of life are generally determined. What is essential for an individual in one culture or in a nation could be luxury or inadequate for another citizen in other backgrounds because the beliefs, customs, styles of living, and habits of a certain social condition could be the determining factor. So, one may 'feel' deprived of something compared to another society or even in the same society (Thomas, 2015). The underprivileged have their specific way of looking at poverty. For example, according to the World Bank (1998:11) 'Poverty is pain; it feels like a disease. It attacks a person not only materially but also morally.

It eats away one's dignity and drives one into total despair'' (A poor woman from Moldova quoted by the World Bank, 1998:11).

The above views provide compassionate understanding that being underprivileged can mean a lot more than merely not possessing some income. On a wider view, it can mean being subjected to manipulation by the dominant and the affluent (Graaff, 2003:8). Recently, the Human Development Index (HDI) has been used to measure population, life prospects at birth, anticipated years of schooling, Gini coefficient, and rate of poverty and unemployment rates. The meaning of poverty in Cameroon is also diversified as stated above. The causes of poverty in Cameroon can be grouped under physical capital (buildings, roads), economic or financial capital base (cash, credit/debt, and savings), human capital (skills, knowledge. E.g. lack sufficient modern agricultural knowledge), natural capital and social capital (networks, social claims, social relations, affiliations, associations). The causes of poverty mentioned above are uniformly spread in the country. People in different areas face different causes of poverty. Among the causes mentioned, some of them require direct government interference like political instability and environmental problems while others require NGO intervention. An example is relief programmes, although there are contradictions in the literature saying NGOs are created to secure funds for their internal survival (Roy, 2014 and Choudry & Kapoor, 2014). Runguma (2014:28) suggested that in order to address a poverty situation scholars and practitioners have to deal with the situation in a specific way. The first phase involves the definition. The second phase is to measure the extent of the issue, which consist of the creation of techniques to measure it. Once the issue has been recognised, the next phase is to determine its source. Responses have to be found to the questions: what is poverty? What is the degree of poverty? What are the explanations of poverty? Only then can one cross-examine what the cures to poverty are (Runguma, 2014). Onyango (2011:6) on the other hand suggests that poverty definitions may possibly give wrong messages on how to tackle poverty. For him, a more relevant approach on how to study poverty is well-defined primarily by the underprivileged who know their situation very well (Onyango, 2011). Onyango's (2011) suggestion is embraced in this thesis as will be seen in chapter four below.

From the above definitions, one can conclude that poverty is not only about money or possessions but also about healthiness, life expectancy, security, diet, education, and other living values. It is a cruel cycle that touches every part of an individual, economically, psychologically, socially, politically, culturally and environmentally. The next section discusses the causes of poverty.

2.1.1 CAUSES OF POVERTY

2.1.1.1 INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCES

Individual influences that promote poverty include individual approaches, social capital, and welfare contribution (Sameti, Esfahani & Haghghi, 2012). The belief in individual potential places much importance on people's hard work and responsibility to acquire elementary needs, including education, water, health facilities, food and shelter (Ekane, 2010). The concept is put forward that people should take charge of their life situations because they are in charge of their own lives. Sameti et al. (2012:45) stress that talent, assets and hard work can lead to success. Individuals at times are poverty stricken because they do not want to get involved in activities that will better their life situation. Here social problems such as unemployment can be a burden on the shoulders of individuals (ibid). From the above views one can say that the theory focuses on the explanation that individuals are responsible for their poverty situation. This means that those in poverty should be blamed for creating their own problems. The theory further explains that harder work and better choices will get the poor out of poverty. However, Schwartz (2000) found little evidence to support this claim. This author believes that welfare programmes cause dependency on state administration. Some researchers like Tamanji (2010) and Forgha (2006) argue that this concept gives a false impression that poverty is caused by individual influence. For example, as seen in chapter one above, one of the causes of poverty among the Bakas in the East Region in Cameroon is government's effort to expand and increase growth in the East Region which has forced the Baka to move out of the forest, which used to be their home, source of income and food. Causes of poverty here can be attributed to government role and not to Baka. There are also natural occurrences that cause poverty. For example, the Lake Nyos disasters in the NWR and the mountainous nature of the NWR. Other natural disasters that causes poverty include; floods, fires, earthquakes, tsunamis and cyclones (Mah, 2016)

From the above views, it is certain that one can be poor because of natural occurrences even when one is willing and able to work. There are other causes of poverty such as joblessness, geographical locations, old age, and physical and mental disabilities that can caused poverty (Forgha, 2006). Neo-classical economists pointed out that the core of the conditions leading to individualistic poverty is that individuals seek to maximize their own wellbeing by making choices and investments, assuming that they have perfect knowledge. People choose short term

and low payoffs returns, and forego training that will lead to better paying jobs in the future (Nsah, 2013).

Even though it is challenging to disagree with the point that individual influence cannot limit one's position in society, it is true that one's position in most societies function within boundaries defined by forces outside individual's control (Forgha, 2006). Such forces in Cameroon consist of exploitation, political links, market limitations, tribalism, poor government policies, ethnic encounters and natural disasters (Abia et al., 2016). In the NWR of Cameroon, for example, an individual who is self-motivated, full of strength, and willing to work might remain poor due to the above-mentioned forces (Abia et al., 2016t). This theory, then, puts forward that for poverty to be reduced, the government and NGOs should increase economic development and provide short-term employment to individuals (Semati et al., 2012). The key plan today should be to push the poor into work as a primary goal, this move can be accompany by emphasising on "self-help" strategies for the poor to pull themselves from poverty, and this strategy can be encouraged by elimination of other forms of assistance, e.g. Payments to families as assistance should be reduced

2.1.1.2 STRUCTURAL INFLUENCES

Structural influences emphasise that free enterprise generates conditions that encourage deficiency (Semati et al., 2012). This goes contrary to concepts and policy assumptions that dwell on the lack of "will and skill" obsessed by the poor themselves as being the major cause of their poverty. According to Semati et al. (2012), there are certain places and jobs in the society that require exceptional expertise for efficient and effective management, hence transformation of one's talent into these areas of expertise call for a training period during which an individual is jobless. In this context, individuals should be encouraged with better wages and privileges to endure this sacrifice, if not the world will suffer (ibid). However, Alkire (2007) points out that schooling and training programmes usually fail to decrease discrimination and poverty. This is because education and training involve cost and income is not coming in during the training period because there is usually no labour during the training period. Further education and training do not guarantee employment; hence there is no guarantee on poverty reduction. Another important concern is the influence of femininity and competition on labour price. Alkire (2007) noted that transformations in human capital account partly for the earning gap. According to Semati et al. (2012:8) in the domain of wage

employment, individuals come to be underprivileged when they become jobless, and this practice of economic discrimination is the direct sign of deficiency. For example, joblessness takes place when an individual is discriminated against by the labour market. When someone loses a job, immediately he or she is deprived of access to regular income and their economic status is weakened towards poverty. Similarly, when an individual is denied equal access to material goods or class status, his economic status is also weakened towards poverty. A person's joblessness status can also lead to damage to one's social class (Graaff, 2003).

2.1.1.3 CULTURAL INFLUENCE

The concepts of culture of poverty relates to the power of people's residential surroundings that tends to shape insufficiency (Semati et al., 2012). According to the concept of cultural influence, people do not have controllable emotions of marginality and vulnerability. They act like strangers in their own communities, convinced that the existing establishments do not assist their interests and needs. A good example is the shantytown residents of East Harlem, who do not establish a diverse ethnic or cultural group and do not suffer from cultural discrimination. They are negligible people who recognise only their own predicaments. Generally, they do not have the information, the dream, or the beliefs to see the similarities concerning their difficulties and those of others like themselves in other places. They are not class conscious (Bourgois, 1997). The concept of culture of poverty is erected on the hypothesis that independently the underprivileged and the affluent have diverse patterns of beliefs and behavioural norms. It is believed that the underprivileged come to be poor as they acquire strong emotional behaviours associated with poverty. For example, the underprivileged learn not to work harder, not to plan for the future and not to spend income wisely from the underprivileged they associate with. This situation is magnified when deficiency is passed on from generation to generation as they are socialized with values and goals associated with deficiency (Bourgois, 1997).

However, this concept emphasises that the underprivileged can battle and become free from poverty (McIntyre, 2002). Semati et al.'s (2012) study on the role of culture and social isolation led to the concept of 'ghetto-specific culture'. The ghetto specific culture describes the consequence of social segregation and the attentiveness of irregular behaviours between the underclass in inner cities. As stated by Wilson, the inner cities are socially segregated from mainstream behaviours, and the lack of financial opportunities tend to increase harmful

behaviours such as births out of wedlock, prostitution, crime, and welfare dependence. These irregular behaviours create a cycle of poverty because deviant behaviours make it hard for the inner city underclass to get out of poverty. The opportunity theory discusses that the underprivileged are poor because they have inadequate human capital or lack technical expertise, as well as have poor access to prospects compared to the affluent (ibid). From his views, the underprivileged will continue to be poor because they do not have means to fight their poverty; for example, education and training are the keys to fight poverty but the underprivileged do not have resources to acquire the necessary skills in schools to enable them gain employment and reduce poverty. Mandell & Schram (2003) condemned the culture of poverty for holding the underprivileged accountable for their lot rather than social forces linked with poverty. As said by Rank (2004), blaming the victim belief used by politicians often focuses on character weaknesses of the underprivileged instead of the principal causes of poverty. Societies use negative and behavioural labels to substantiate their accusation of the underprivileged. Rank (2004) indicates that human capital greatly disturbs individual's earnings, and therefore absence of human capital can place an individual at risk of deficiency. In line with Rank (2004), people with high human capital are more likely to be competitive in the labour market than those who have low or lack human capital. From the above views, one can conclude that education and training are key to poverty reduction because people with high education face fewer problems being employed than those with less education. Moreover, they are less likely to be without a job, and the duration of their joblessness is usually shorter when compared to the situation of less educated individuals.

2.2 CONCEPTS AND MEANING OF LIVELIHOOD

This section of the study focuses on poverty and livelihoods with more emphasis on Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) as the best strategy for poverty reduction.

2.2.1 SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS APPROACH (SLA)

Sustainable Livelihood Approaches mean different things at different levels to different people (Krantz, 2001). For example, for programme developers, it means pinpointing what combination of policies are more likely to have a greater supportive influence on economic growth, such as building good transportation networks and developing micro-credit facilities. Chambers and Conway (1992:4) perceive sustainable livelihoods as the connecting of three

concepts; (1) increasing social sustainability, that is, vulnerability of the underprivileged ought to be minimized by decreasing external pressure and providing safety nets such as public allowances; (2) enhancing capability, that is, in facing irregularity, people are flexible, speedy to adapt and able to exploit diverse opportunities and (3) improving equity, the main concern ought to be given to the assets, capabilities and access of the poorest of the poor, including minorities and women.

Applying the SLA to poverty reduction will share the concern that the economic well-being of the poorest of the poor ought to be understood from the perspective of the underprivileged themselves. From this insight, poverty has numerous measurements and the circumstances of well-being for most household's changes over time. Helmore & Singh (2001) assert that poverty entails a holistic and participatory assessment of the range of livelihood activities that people draw upon, and of the strategies they employ. The resources accessible to the underprivileged in fulfilling their livelihood plans and overpowering their weakness to circumstances outside their control are very significant and, as such, poverty is not the focus, but rather building on their prosperity. Ashley & Carney (1999) argue that sustainable livelihood approaches are based on the theory that the underprivileged make premeditated choices according to their privileges and access to assets. For the purpose of this study, Krantz, (2001) definition of SLA is used. According to Krantz a livelihood consists of the capabilities, assets and activities necessary to make a living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can handle and pull through from pressures and shocks and maintain or boost its abilities and resources both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base. These explanations emphasise that sustainable livelihoods should provide significant work that fulfil the social, economic, cultural and spiritual needs of all members of a society, present and future, and protect cultural and biological diversity. This revealed that a decent description of sustainable livelihoods ought to go further than the basic requirements for living (food, shelter and clothing) and include achieving a quality of life that is rooted within the rich local cultures of societies (Department for International Development (DFID), 1999).

The sustainable livelihood approach is used in this study to illustrate how individuals can prepare for and respond to changes in their environment. Furthermore, the approach is an important analytical tool that illustrates how external factors comprising of macro-economic factors, history and politics generally influence the poor in the society. Nyathi (2012:45) indicates that numerous approaches have been unsuccessful to reduce poverty and stresses that NGOs can apply the SLA as it centres on existing resources to improve livelihoods outcomes.

Cárdenas Oleas (2015) argues that although NGOs may not officially use the SLA for poverty reduction plans, it can be a valuable instrument for understanding their work and how it contributes to peoples' means of support. The approach stresses the involvement of poor individuals in the identification and implementation of activities. Roodt (2001:470) indicates that some of the reasons it is difficult to reduce poverty is that most developers' activities are based on top-down project plans instead of bottom-up approaches to deliver change to the community. The top-down approaches most often do not really think through feasibility and thus after much has been spent in terms of resources and time, there is little or nothing to show for it. SLA encourages NGOs to collaborate with citizens to offer leadership development to their beneficiaries. Household means of support are often affected by the capability to diversify livelihood sources and every single household has a variety of capabilities and assets (ibid). The insertion of such dynamic forces from the beginning as a part of the analytical framework offers SLA with a vibrant advantage; even though in reality the piecing together of historical background may not be stress-free (Morse, McNamara & Acholo, 2009). However, effective poverty reduction approaches have to address a variety of problems over time (DFID, 1999). The advantage of this method is that it positions the underprivileged and their conditions firmly at the centre of the investigation and equally offers a general view of the lives of the poor that fits well with multi-level conceptualization of poverty.

The approach has core principles to help interpret and identify information related to the well-being of communities: The core principles underpinning SLA are (Krantz, 2001);

People centred: Krantz (2001) explains that sustainable poverty reduction will be accomplished only if outside assistance centres on what matters to individuals, recognises the changes between groups of individuals, and works with them in a way that is well-suited to their existing livelihood approaches, social setting, and capability to adjust. This means that for NGOs to have a positive impact in their project communities, they should work hand in hand with the poor who know their poverty situation more than the NGOs do. However, the role of the state is still important to meet the needs and aspirations of the people, but change in the conception of people-centred development is the best approach. Roodt (2001) argues that growth does not start with material belongings; it begins with individuals and their training, good system of government, and discipline. From this view unless life expectancy of the people is appropriately considered and managed accordingly, the developmental process will be a useless effort because economic growth alone cannot represent real development (Carney, 2002:13). Krantz (2001) in line with Carney (2002), he advises that “development processes

should carry the aspirations and define the needs of the people for allocating, mobilizing, and managing resources which can strengthen the communities”. According to this author, growth is not like a stuff which can be rented from the outside. To him, genuine growth cannot be attained with foreign aid or assistance alone. People must be involved in carrying out developmental activities that require authentic participation if they want to take benefit from the developmental process.

Being responsive and participatory: Every individual has strengths. As a result, poverty-focused development should recognize and build on people’s strengths (Roodt 2001). This means that a municipality will only take possession of a municipal project if it is consulted regularly and is able to participate in decision-making; the same with NGO activities in their project communities. Decisions should not be provided by one person alone but by a group of people. The goals of participation are achieved through a process of empowerment in which the community actively participates starting from situation assessment, planning, implementation monitoring and evaluation. It is not a once-off project but a learning practice for the municipality that helps them to develop a deeper understanding of their world and the world around them. The empowerment process does not mean that it is only through participation that communities can achieve power. Empowerment here implies people gaining an understanding of and control over social, economic and/or political forces in order to improve their standing in the society. The effectiveness of change and community development depends on the participation of the community in their own development process and how they use their newly learned skills, knowledge and values. The advantages of community participation will be that communities take ownership of their own development and self-reliance, and utilise their power to improve their living conditions (Scoones, 1998). Nevertheless, critical participation may cause the delivery process to take longer than where the beneficiaries are only consulted (Ashley & Carney, 1999).

Working with partners: The method emphasizes the significance of forming partnerships. Partnerships can be developed with underprivileged individuals and their organisations, e.g. partnerships can be formed with NGOs and their beneficiaries. Partnerships should be transparent arrangements, built upon shared goals (Roodt, 2001).

Being dynamic; Means of support and the elements influencing them are continuously changing. The method should try to support constructive ways of change and create longer-term assurances.

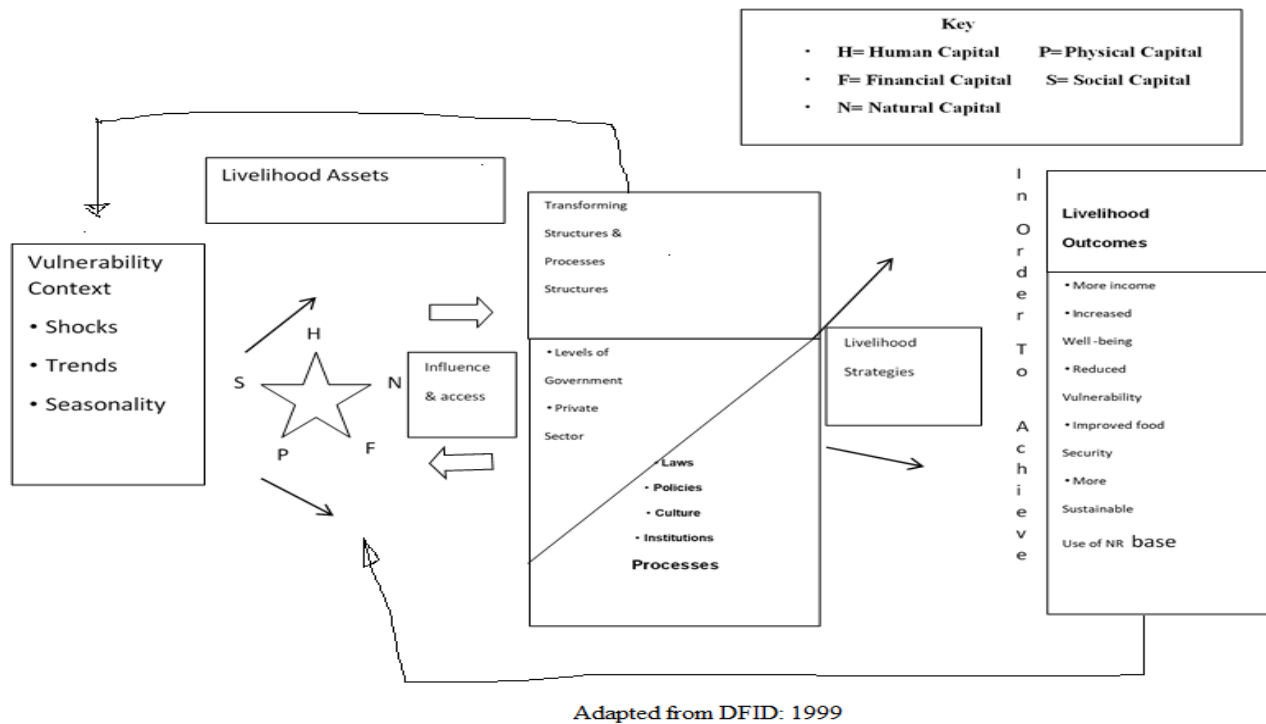
Disaggregate: It is dynamic to apprehend how resources, voices and livelihood approaches vary among affluent groups and underprivileged groups as well as between males and females in these groups.

Applying this approach makes it possible to evaluate the different impacts of the NGO projects on different livelihood strategies of individuals and households in the North West and East Regions of Cameroon. The impact of NGOs on poverty reduction on livelihoods comprises providing work or job opportunity, income and food security, improvement in living standards, training and skills development, healthcare, wellness and safety and empowerment. With this approach, the poor themselves should be the key actors in detecting and addressing livelihood main concerns as the approach necessitates an understanding of what people need and want best (Krantz, 2001).

2.2.2 SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS FRAMEWORK

The sustainable livelihoods framework (Figure: 4 DFID 1999) is a schematic demonstration that assists in studying the means of support of the underprivileged. This schematic representation view the underprivileged as functioning in an environment of vulnerability, however, there are some basic resources around them that they can use to reduce their poverty. The environment also impacts the means of support schemes that are open to underprivileged in search of valuable livelihood outcomes that meet their own means of support objectives. The aim of this framework is to assist poor to detect the issues that shake their means of support, comparative status and the manner in which they interrelate. It is adopted from the sustainable livelihood framework used by DFID in the late 1999's

Figure 4: Sustainable livelihoods framework.



The above conceptual framework of the sustainable livelihoods emphasizes a people centred approach. The framework help in understanding how underprivileged pull on capabilities and possessions to improve livings plans made up of a series of undertakings. The framework outlines diverse types of possessions and entitlements which the underprivileged have access to, examines the diverse features in small and broader setting that influence individual livelihood security and studies the relationship between the micro situation and actors, organizations and processes in the wider world. The framework is built around five important groups of means of support system, namely, livelihood strategies, livelihood assets, vulnerability context, transforming and processes structure, and livelihood outcome.

According to Krantz (2001) sustainable livelihood framework emerged as an alternative way of conceptualising poverty alleviation, including its context, objectives and priorities. The approach focuses on the necessary aspects of life i.e. the ability of underprivileged to support themselves and their families, for now and in the future. The sustainable livelihood structures are explained below as follows:

Vulnerability Context, DFID (1999) people's livelihoods are fundamentally affected by critical trends (population, resource, economic, and governance,) as well as shocks that distress individuals' means of support. Shock here consists of clashes, health complications, and natural disasters, such as epidemic, animal diseases, floods, and earthquakes. Seasonality consist of

prices and employment opportunities over which they have limited or no control. To deal with vulnerability context entails identifying trends, shocks and aspects of seasonality that are of particular importance to means of support. This is very importance for the underprivileged since a common reaction to an adverse seasonality and shocks is to dispose of possessions. Nevertheless the underprivileged often do not have viable possessions.

Livelihood Assets. Individuals need different means of support to attain optimistic livelihood outcomes. Therefore, absence or lack of resources in terms of income, opportunities, consumption and capability building of individuals is a cause of poverty .According to Krantz (2001), Livelihood Assets comprises of natural capital. These are natural resources that can be used by underprivileged to achieve their living objectives, for example, land, water, forest products, wildlife, biodiversity and environmental services. Physical capital refers to basic infrastructure including transport, housing, the means and equipment of production. Financial capital comprises of financial possessions such as credit, cash, bank deposits, liquid assets, pension and regular remittances that can be accessed by underprivileged to pursue a better living. Human capital comprises of skills, health, knowledge, information and ability of labour that make it easy for the underprivileged to practise different living strategies and accomplish livelihood objectives. Social capital comprises of social networks, group membership, relationship of trust, mutual support, access to wider institutions and leadership from which people get support to contribute to their livelihood (Krantz, 2001).

Transforming Structures and Processes: This refers to the institutions and policies that influence the underprivileged lives. Transforming Structures consist of hardware that involves public and private sectors at all levels. While Process is made of policy, law, culture, institutions and power relations. All these elements are more like software, they can change both the vulnerability context and assets to which underprivileged have access (DFID, 1999)

Livelihood Strategies: These are those activities that the underprivileged undertake to achieve their living goals. In other words, these are activities which are employed to generate the means of family survival (Krantz, 2001). Carney (1998) classifies these activities as natural resource based (farm income from crops and livestock), non-natural resource based (non-rural wage, rural trade, rural service, house rents, retirement pensions, urban and international remittances) (Shen, 2009).

Livelihood Outcome: in Sustainable Livelihood framework DFID (1999) refers to what people may obtain tomorrow through livelihood activities. Shen (2009) recognizes two classes of outcomes. The first class is concerned with an individual's working hours, improvement of well-being and capabilities. The second class is based on sustainability, the enhancement of adaptability and resilience to sustainability, and sustainable use of natural resources (Shen, 2009). In Krantz (2001) livelihood outcomes focus more on income, reduced vulnerability, improved food security, and more sustainable use of the natural resource base. For NGOs to achieve their objectives, they need to economically offer local underprivileged a long-term reliable income source, socio-culturally maintain a stable local society and integral culture, environmentally protect local natural resources and institutionally maximise opportunities for local participation and involvement (Shen, 2009).

2.2.1 STRENGTHS OF THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD APPROACH

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach is used in this study because the method encourages a bottom-top approach. The approach stresses that the poor should be at the core when developing poverty reduction strategies. The approach recognises that the poor also have strengths including physical and natural resources (Roodt, 2001). This is in line with results from contemporary participatory poverty assessments, which demonstrate that poverty is a much more problematic phenomenon than just low income or inadequate assets. Poverty reduction entails improvement in health, diet, security, life expectancy, education, access to vital resources and other living principles (Nsah, 2013).

Furthermore, the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach has assisted in the understanding of the principal reasons for the continued increase in poverty level by concentrating on the diversity of issues at different levels that directly or indirectly influence or constrain underprivileged people's access to resources/assets of different kinds, and thus their livelihoods (Tao & Wall, 2008). In addition, the method creates a possibility to see how the poorest of the underprivileged are energetic decision-makers, not inactive victims in influencing their own livings. This is essential for planning support activities that build on the strengths of the underprivileged. In addition, it permits a more vibrant perspective on livelihoods, since individual powers may change over time as their approaches change in reaction to either personal or external set of circumstances (Krantz, 2001). The approach is used in this study because if it is applied effectively, it can contribute to veritable poverty reduction.

2.2.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS APPROACH

Despite all the great benefits that the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach provides for this study, the approach has received some criticism. Helmore & Singh (2001) established the following weaknesses in the application of the approach.

The first criticism is that the approach does not deal with the problem of how to recognise those who are really in need of assistance. From the above views, being underprivileged can mean a lot more than simply not having any income or that poverty is well-defined as absence of enough income in cash or exchange items for obtaining the most elementary needs such as education, drinking water, food, shelter, health facilities and clothing. There is more to poverty than just lack of basic necessities. From the above views, the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach does not offer a clear scheme for dealing with essential elements of policy making, such as people's individual positioning and collective worldviews or their knowledge and emotional affections and, similarly, the way assets and other living prospects are spread locally and are time and again determined by natural structures of social authority and power within the people themselves.

Gender is one of the characteristics of social relationships and to the extent that relationships between males and females are characterized by marked discrimination and social supremacy, they clearly create part of the problem. Furthermore, the approach does not boost a full understanding of the multiplicity of livelihood from an actor's perspective. The best way is to make sure that previously identified/decided advantages fit with individuals' livelihood approaches and make them better at reacting to the limitations and prospects upsetting them.

Finally, the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach cannot be applied consistently, because if the approach is used constantly it might be beyond the real realities of numerous local development managers, with the danger that this method remains as a good deed to funders and their consultants. One approach to neutralise this would be to make sure that stakeholders are included from the start when deliberating how and if such an approach should be implemented, and to train them to use the method, and/or begin with a basic form of the method (Eddins, 2013). Despite these criticisms, the approach offers a more appropriate technique to evaluate why NGO programmes are not reducing poverty and provides a framework through which poverty can be reduced in NGO projects.

2.3 SUSTAINABLE POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY (SPRS)

Poverty reduction strategies highlight a nation's macroeconomic physical and social policies and programs to stimulate growth and reduce poverty, as well as associated external financial needs (IMF, 2005). Hugé & Hens (2007:248) define sustainable development as improvement that fulfils the wishes of the contemporary without compromising the aptitude of forthcoming generations to fulfil their own wishes. According to the World Bank (2000:6), the approach to reduce poverty has evolved in response to the deepening knowledge of the complication of development and the need to improve the lives of those in the suffering group. Based on the understandings from earlier ineffective approaches of decreasing poverty and in the light of a new wide-range of thinking, the World Bank in its 2000 Report suggested three techniques of dealing with poverty in a sustainable manner, i.e. promoting opportunities, facilitating empowerment, and enhancing security (World Bank, 2000). Alternatively, Hugué & Hens (2007) clearly illustrates that sustainable development is not only about the right policies but it is about clear guarantees to its achievement and a pointer to implementation strategy.

2.3.1: PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES

Degrande et al (2007) express concerns about the low priority given to environmental conservation. In the regions under study as seen in chapter one above, the underprivileged depends much on natural resources but there has been a growing population pressure and environmental degradation pointing to the need to address environmental sustainability issues which the government of Cameroon wants to use to consolidate its economic strength. Material opportunities are at the centre of their initiatives to reduce their poverty levels. Barbelet (2017) points out that in areas such as the East region of Cameroon where there is high inequality, greater equity is important for speedy social and economic progress in reducing poverty. This requires focused and continuous state interventions to support the building of human resources and infrastructure assets. State interventions include giving access to cultivate successfully quality arable land that poor people can take ownership of or to which they have access, promoting opportunities through assets and giving market access to increase the independence of poor people and thereby strengthening their bargaining position relative to the state and society. This entails access to employment, credit, roads, electricity and markets for their produce, as well as access to schools, water, sanitation, and health services are all prerequisites

for sustained and viable economic growth that is crucial for generating economic opportunities and ultimate livelihood security (World Bank, 2000)

World Bank (2000) and Sachs (2005) are of the view that human capital development consists of direct provision of basic social services needed by the poor such as primary healthcare, family planning, nutrition and primary education. These authors further declare that improvement in the healthcare of a particular country can be achieved if there is consistent emphasis on preventive and basic curative measures, provision of safe drinking water, improved sewage disposal and other sanitation measures such as campaigns against parasitic diseases.

Additionally, investment in education is another social pillar that can radically reduce poverty. For example investment in education would entail constructing affordable school especially public schools that are built, and financed by the government of Cameroon in Cameroon This will in turn result to enhanced net enrolment rates, and hence high literacy levels leading to job creation and subsequent poverty reduction. Sachs (2005) continues to argue that scientific and technological know-how raise productivity in business output and promote both physical and natural capital which can contribute to the reduction of poverty. Technological advancement in all areas of human life such as agriculture, industrial development, and communication and information technology can stimulate economic activities leading to development and poverty reduction. The ripple-down effect of economic growth would channel down to the poor in the form of employment and the provision of basic services, hence reducing the poverty levels (ibid).

2.3.2 FACILITATING EMPOWERMENT

The term empowerment has different meanings and uses. Empowerment can be viewed as a process in which a person or community gives or gets power from another. In this process there are always individuals or communities that can become empowered. Nevertheless, the key is for individuals to recognise and act upon the power or potential power that they already have (Nsah, 2013). Empowerment can also be termed as gaining of strength, confidence and vision to work for positive changes. Empowerment includes the involvement of individuals, organisational development and community change. Individual involvement refers to participation of a person in decision-making. Whereas, community organisational development refers to the structures which mediate between the individual and community, this situation facilitates collective action, which lies at the heart of community change. The basic concepts

of empowerment at its best include all three levels: individual involvement, organisational development and community change (Nsah, 2013). According to the World Bank (2000:7) the choice and repercussion of public action that are open to the needs of the underprivileged people depend on “interaction of political, social, and other institutional processes”. Entrances to public sector services are often strongly influenced by the state and social institutions, which must be receptive and accountable to underprivileged people. Achieving access, responsibility, and accountability are intrinsically political actions that require “active collaboration among the underprivileged people, the middle class, and other people in the society” (ibid, 2000:7-8).

Vigorous collaboration can be facilitated by “changes in government that make public administration, legal institutions, and public service delivery more efficient and accountable to all citizens by supporting the participation of the poor in political processes and local decision making” (World Bank 2000:7). Empowerment here entails laying the political and legal basis for inclusive development, creating public administrations that promote growth and equity, tackling social barriers and supporting underprivileged peoples’ capital. These components can be greatly influenced by the state and social institutions (World Bank, 2000: 8–9).

In light of this, Sachs (2005) argues that for poverty to be sustainably reduced, the poor should have access to arable land, healthy soils, and available credit/loan for the purchase of farm input, biodiversity and well-functioning ecosystems. These are prerequisites for a healthy, wholesome and viable human society in general. Sachs (2005) further posits that if the underprivileged have access to arable land it will boost agricultural production and hence food security and disposable incomes. Food security and available incomes can improve the quality of life of the poor and increase their living standards and reduce their vulnerability.

2.3.3 ENHANCING SECURITY

One of the theories of poverty is the vulnerability context. Reducing vulnerability to economic shocks, natural disaster, ill health, disability, and personal violence is an intrinsic part of enhancing well-being and encouraging investment in human capital. Achieving greater security in a broad-based context requires formulating an approach to helping underprivileged people manage hazard. This requires developing national programmes to prevent, prepare for, and respond to macro shocks (World Bank, 2000: 11). In effect national action is required to manage the risk of the economy and having an effective mechanism to reduce the risk, including health and weather-related risks faced by underprivileged people (ibid, 2000).

Improving the underprivileged security also involves addressing issues of good governance such as improved public expenditure, reduction in corruption through the establishment of procurement authority and the reinforcement of anti-corruption agencies including independent and solid judicial systems (Nsah, 2013). Building the strength of the underprivileged people is also another way of improving security. Such as providing a range of insurance mechanisms to cope with diverse shocks and may include programmes like public work programmes, stay-in-school and health insurance. These may lead to proper responsibility on the side of the government and to the eventual provision of basic services needed by the underprivileged. Effective and efficient services delivery might add to poverty reduction amidst the poorest of the poor (Nsah, 2013).

2.4 CONCLUSION

Understanding the real roots of poverty is important because poverty reduction is one of the objectives of current development and is concerned with searching for solutions to the poverty problem. Obviously, any dialogue of poverty must start with an understanding of the fundamental causes of poverty. This study grouped causes of poverty under three major sub headings; individual influences, cultural and structural factors. The straightforward assertion is that if the poor are to be placed at the centre of development, a better understanding of the situation in which they lead their lives and make decisions will have a greater positive impact in their lives. From the above views, one will suggest that for NGOs to have a positive impact in their project communities, they should work hand in hand with the poor who know their poverty situation more than the NGOs and the state should play its role by providing all the basics for its citizens. Unless life expectancy of the people is appropriately considered and managed accordingly, the developmental process will be a useless effort because economic growth alone cannot represent real development.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0: INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the way in which the literature and the theoretical groundwork in chapter two are drawn upon in the method used in the study. The chapter is structured into subsection headings: The first subsection gives an overview of why the qualitative approach was chosen for this thesis, followed by the rationale for a case study research design. The third subsection discusses the qualitative sampling techniques that were used to select participants for the study. The fourth subsection describes the instruments that were used for data collection and analyses. The chapter ends by discussing some of the ethical concerns which the researcher knew before starting the process and those that emerged from the data collection process and how the researcher addressed them. Limitations or challenges that hampered this study during data collection in the field are also discussed at the end of this chapter.

3.1 QUALITATIVE APPROACH

The qualitative approach was adopted because it is easy to handle pre-defined conditions and follow-up probing to develop rich and comprehensive understanding of the participants. There was flexibility in the usage of tools, the procedures of information gathering and analysis. For example, since the topic of the research results from literature from the backgrounds of NGOs in Cameroon and other countries, it was predicted that there would be some indigenous or cultural issues involved. These indigenous or cultural issues would be hard to apprehend by quantitative approaches. Because of the tractability, it was conceivable to frequently alternate between the researcher's own observations and meanings of the phenomenon and those of the participants. On the other hand, the use of qualitative approaches by the researcher did not diminish the researcher's understanding of the weaknesses of qualitative approaches. They are weak in structure and lack the degree of accurateness and meanings of the quantitative method (Silverman, 2013). Nevertheless, it is contended that quantitative research is not flexible for the reason that the same interviews must be done in the same set-up and method if it is to help create any fundamental relationships. The inflexible setting of quantitative research suggests that it is not capable of handling changes that may take place in the course of the research process, specifically in the course of data gathering as qualitative research does (Maxwell,

2012). The qualitative approach was also good for this study because there was the necessity for further probing through follow up interviews where perceptions were not clear enough (Bryman, 2003). Moreover, the quantitative approach was not appropriate for this thesis, as it might not have rendered the researcher the chance to achieve some of the complex and rich material necessary for this thesis because quantitative investigation essentially stresses the procedural issues to the abandonment of comprehensive societal interpretations (Awuah-werekoh, 2014).

A case study was used for this investigation. The use of the case study is a suggestion of the researcher's logical groundwork that authenticity exists in the minds of social actors and must be unravelled in a flexible and thorough case study (Creswell, 2012). Moreover, a qualitative design guarantees the setting up of efficient and effective understandings resulting solely from social actors. Furthermore, the use of qualitative research gave the researcher a chance to better comprehend and explain the reason/s NGO programmes in the selected regions are not reducing poverty. In addition, the flexible setting of the qualitative method gave the researcher the opportunity to change the research procedure every time necessary, to handle any new valuable developments that arise. For example, Heifer International (HI) was the researcher's second NGO in mind but was substituted with VGSW in the field because Heifer International was not operating at the last minute when the researcher went to the field for data collection as will be seen below under the subsection "Gaining access into the field". Furthermore, data from PI and VGSW was not enough to answer all the research questions and the researcher had to include the third NGO, SIL, in order to have enough data to answer all the research questions. The implementation of qualitative research for this study allowed the researcher to observe, describe and clarify the nature of activities in the NGO sector.

However, Pettigrew et al. (2011) and Bryman & Bell (2011) criticized this approach for its dependence on the personal understanding of the researcher, which may be characterised by bias, especially from apprentice researchers. The researcher was aware of this issue and he adopted the triangulation approach to overcome the above concern. That is, to deal with the issue of personal understanding, the researcher dug deeper into the literature to find out what other researchers were saying about NGOs and poverty reduction. It is further argued that the merit and trustworthiness of the proof collected and the researcher's understanding in a qualitative research may be problematic to evaluate posing generalization challenges (Silverman, 2011). A qualitative research approach can be very costly in relation to information gathering and analysis and it is also time consuming (Yin, 2011). Although qualitative research

has so many weaknesses, more attention was focused on guiding the discussion toward the issues that were related to the research objectives. An interpretative qualitative method was used to strengthen the conduct of this research. The approach enabled the understanding of all transcribed discussions, notes of opinion or observation in the field and literature and linking each one to the whole in order to accomplish a full picture of why NGOs participate in poverty reduction programmes given the knowledge that these programmes do not reduce the percentage of people living in poverty. Furthermore, the researcher was focused on the importance of shaping the outcome.

3.1.1 REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE CASE STUDY SITE

The cases studied in this research were selected NGOs in the North-West and East Regions in Cameroon. The first reason for choosing Cameroon in general was that Cameroon is the researcher's home country. Furthermore, as indicated in chapter one above literature review in French, English and other languages suggests there are no studies in Cameroon to assess why NGOs participate in poverty reduction programmes, given the knowledge that these programmes do not reduce poverty. The researcher's choice of the North-West Region was influenced by his own connections and knowledge of the region, which simplified his access into data sources. The researcher has lived in the NWR for years. He has also worked with some NGOs in the region and knows much about the NWR and the activities of the NGOs. Furthermore, he is familiar with cultural practices, values, norms and languages. It should be noted that the initial site for this study was NWR. However, after the first data analysis it was discovered that the information gathered during the first phase of data collection was not sufficient to answer all the study's research questions and the researcher had no other option than to include PI and SIL projects that were in Baka community in the East Region. It should be further noted that the concern of this study in the East region is only the Baka community. As already indicated above, selected NGOs in the NWR had other projects in Baka community that would generate additional data. The researcher acknowledged that Cameroon is an incredibly mixed society with French and English influence, though the French influence dominates in most of the regions. The choice of Baka community in the East Region was an opportunity for this study as information was gathered from both the French and English language dominating regions in Cameroon.

3.1.2 SELECTION OF THE STUDY CASES

NGO stakeholders in this study are the following subgroups; NGO officials, NGO beneficiaries, NGO community volunteers and NGO funders. These subgroups directly or indirectly influence the activities of the selected NGOs. It is debated that the choice of suitable case(s) is a necessary element to a successful case study research (Silverman, 2013). Principally Plan International (PI) and Heifer International (HI) were chosen based on “concept sensitive” criteria set by the researcher. The decision was made conceivable through a primary assessment of the documents and preliminary discussion that suggested that these organisations were practising the concepts. The selection was guided by the following principle; the selected NGO must be involved with poverty reduction schemes to determine whether beneficiaries were benefiting from the services of these NGOs. That is, the NGO programme should have a propensity to directly decrease the negative impact of poverty on the lives of the beneficiaries or the severity of the effect of poverty on the lives of the beneficiaries in a more sustained and everlasting way. PI was involved with the following poverty reduction schemes; educational programmes, housing project, water project, toilet project, goat rearing programmes and HIV/AIDS programmes. Furthermore, PI was selected for this study because of its ability to involve the above stakeholders in their poverty reduction programmes. Another criterion was that the NGO had to have a wide environmental coverage. PI operates in eight councils in the region of North West and also in the Baka community in the East Region. Heifer International (HI) was operating in all the divisions in the NWR.

During the first phase of data collection, Heifer International was substituted with VGSW in the field. Heifer International was not operating at the last minute when the researcher went to the field for data collection. The reason for choosing VGSW for this study was determined through preliminary discussions with PI officials and through a preliminary literature review, which revealed that VGSW was practicing the concepts which were in line with the study criteria for selecting the cases. The same criteria used to select the PI poverty a programme was used to select VGSW poverty reduction programmes. VGSW poverty reduction programmes selected for this study were the HIV/AIDS programme, Mosquito Bed-net and goat rearing programmes.

SIL was chosen for this study after data collected from the two NGOs, PI and VGSW, was not sufficient to answer the entire research questions. One of the reasons SIL was chosen is that, after a preliminary literature review and discussion with the SIL language director and financial

director, it was discovered that, although SIL is a faith-based organisation committed to building capacity for sustainable language development, this organisation was also using language as a developmental projects aimed at poverty reduction. SIL poverty reduction programmes were chosen for this study through the use of the same criteria in selecting the PI and VGSW poverty reduction programmes above. SIL programmes for poverty reduction for this study include; educational programme (language programme) and HIV/AIDS programme.

3.1.3 SAMPLING STRATEGIES

Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont (2014) clarify that, in choosing a sample, the aim is to get a sample that is as illustrative as possible of the target population. Strydom (2007:194) defines a population as the “totality of persons, events or organisation units, case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned”. The target group in this thesis therefore comprised of PI, SIL and VGSW officials, their beneficiaries, community volunteers and their funders. The aim of the research was to provide an in-depth understanding rather than generalisation about NGOs and poverty reduction in selected regions. Criteria-based sampling techniques were used to target specific groups, namely, purposive and snowball sampling. According to Strydom (2007:202), purposive sampling is grounded on the judgement of the investigator because it encompasses individuals who possess the most characteristics that are typical features of the population. Using this strategy, as seen in chapter one under “ Names of NGOs for the study” PI Bamenda management team was made up of five top-level managers, six first-line managers, SIL was made up six top-level managers and VGSW with four top-level managers. Three top-level officials were chosen from PI, four from SIL and three from VGSW to participate in this study. All these top-level managers were selected because they make premeditated or strategic decisions in these organisations. Furthermore, top-level managers are conversant with the issues of the NGOs policies, which were the main issues under the study investigation. Additionally, in order to avoid selecting a number that could be difficult to manage in terms of interviewing and follow-up interviews, the researcher chose top NGO representatives who have been employed in their organisations for many years. Two first-line managers were also chosen from PI because they have been employed in PI for so many years and have great knowledge on PI programmes and poverty reduction.

The next group of study participants were NGO beneficiaries. As seen above, the researcher has lived in the NWR and worked with some of the NGOs and he knew some PI and SIL

beneficiaries plus their community volunteers. Purposive sampling was used to choose PI beneficiaries and community volunteers whom he knew had been benefiting from the services of PI and SIL for many years. For example, the second interview which was an introductory interview was scheduled with one of the PI community volunteer for Bamunka. He was selected based on his position at PI. He was one of the first PI community volunteers in Bamunka and he has been working with PI for more than 17 years and had great knowledge of PI activities in the division. This interview was vital in getting an overview of PI activities in as well as getting information about some PI beneficiaries. Some PI and VGSW funders were identified through internet searches and those who were willing to take part in the research were contacted for interviews and follow-up discussion. For SIL some of the personnel were funders. However, some researchers like Creswell (2012) and Silverman (2011) argue that purposive sampling is not the best sampling strategy because it is difficult to convince the person reading the research that using purposive sampling achieved theoretical/analytic/logical generalisation.

To overcome some of the limitations of purposive sampling, the snowball-sampling strategy was used. Maree & Pieterse (2007:177-178) argue that snowball sampling is appropriate when the population is problematic to find or where the community is interconnected. As seen above, NGO stakeholders are made up of sub-groups that are interconnected. In the regions under study, it was impossible to track down some NGO stakeholders like beneficiaries, funders and community volunteers who were still new in NGO projects that make up these networks without recommendations from the community volunteers who have been working in NGOs projects in communities for so many years. As seen above, there was a meeting with VGSW community volunteers and through these community volunteers, VGSW beneficiaries who have been benefitting from VGSW services were identified. Community volunteers also referred the researcher to those they thought might have important information since they were always in contact with these beneficiaries than NGOs field coordinators. Referrals were contacted by phone and emails to schedule appointments. The researcher with the help of NGO community volunteers then had to meet with the NGO beneficiaries and community volunteers since the community volunteers knew where beneficiaries were living. The meetings were either at their homes or at the NGOs' offices in communities or public spaces either at schools or in churches in these communities. SIL officials identified some of their funders and some of their workers were funders. Some of the funders were identified through internet searches.

In summary, purposive sampling was used in selecting key NGOs officials while snowball sampling was necessary for identifying NGO beneficiaries and community volunteers involved in NGOs poverty reduction programmes. The next section discusses how access into the field was gained.

3.2 GAINING ACCESS INTO THE FIELD

According to Yin (2011) and Awuah-Werekoh (2014) gaining clear entrance to case locations is one of the fundamental requirements of a positive implementation of case studies as a method. The use of social contacts to gain access into the field was established. There was consideration to treat participants with respect. Access into PI was established through telephone calls, emails to the PI administrative director and field coordinators of PI. The same process was used for Heifer International. With VGSW the researcher (with a supplementary supportive letter from the thesis supervisor) wrote an introductory letter and sent it to the manager of VGSW to ask for their consent to use their organisations for the research. The researcher made personal/informal visits to VGSW offices and capitalized on personal contacts.

Access to SIL was formally established through informal telephone calls, email, and a covering letter to the director of development and cooperation, director of administration and finance and director of language services in SIL. This was followed up with telephone calls and emails to ensure that access was approved for the research. As soon as access was established, the directors of the NGOs were the core of contact for the researcher. Precaution was taken to discuss and organize schedules with case employees (research participants) to minimize interruptions (Yin, 2011). See appendix for copies of initial formal written request letters and the supporting letter from the thesis supervisor.

After identifying NGOs personnel who have been working with their NGOs for many years, the researcher then worked in partnership with the directors and community volunteers to organise interviews in order to reduce all meeting period conflicts. This approach was utilised with the intention of interviewing staffs who had good knowledge of their organisations. This also helped to identify and contact persons within the NGOs who could then be referred back to in order to obtain any further information about the organisation. However, not all the targeted participants were available to inform the research. Meeting periods were kept in a diary.

As seen above, the researcher has worked with some NGOs in Cameroon and knew some PI and SIL beneficiaries. He also knew some of the community volunteers working for these two NGOs. Access into PI and SIL beneficiaries was established through telephone calls to beneficiaries and community volunteers that he knew. The researcher made private/informal visits to the homes of these beneficiaries with a supportive letter from the thesis supervisor to seek their permission to participate in this study. The same procedure was used again to access into SIL and PI community volunteers. With VGSW beneficiaries and community volunteers, the researcher collaborated with the VGSW administrative director to organise meetings with VGSW community volunteers. A message was sent through VGSW community volunteers to VGSW beneficiaries seeking their permission to participate in the study. Before the interviews began, there was a preliminary visit to the VGSW office and to the homes of VGSW beneficiaries and community volunteers depending on which location they found most comfortable. The aim was to confirm their readiness to take part in the research and to arrange appropriate times for the interviews. For the funders, access was established through emails and telephone calls. The next sub-section describes in detail the instruments that were used for data collection. This comprised of interviews, documentary evidence, and observation.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The plan of this research proposed that a single technique was inadequate because of the inevitability to get the maximum data about the carefully chosen NGOs and poverty reduction. In effect, the research adopted the data triangulation method to gather facts, gain comprehensive explanations and to validate information (Yin, 2011).

3.3.1 DOCUMENTARY REVIEW

Literature reviews constituted secondary sources of data that were important in understanding the NGOs and poverty reduction. These included published books and journal articles. In addition, different categories of information from government, funders and communities that are engaged in poverty reduction programmes were reviewed. This review helped the researcher to understand the history and settings of a phenomenon as well as relevant background information on empirical research that has been conducted on NGOs and poverty reduction at the national and worldwide level. Certain documents were used as primary sources of data and that is what is referred to here as documentary evidence. These comprised of documents pertaining to information about studies of NGO structures which were obtained

from the studied cases' head offices, for example, minutes of meetings and annual reports of selected NGOs. Relevant documents from the studied NGOs were flyers, brochures and posters.

The documentary review process for this study took quite a lot of stages and involved an iterative methodology of visiting and re-examining the sources of the information to make sure that the understanding was actually coming from the setting and background of the research. The first segment of the review was when the researcher was inspired to carry out the research about NGOs and poverty reduction in Cameroon as it was essential to access some basic official papers or documents to build the research proposal. These official papers or documents provided information to prove to both the researcher and the evaluators of the proposal that the subject matter and phenomenon were actually researchable. It helped the researcher to understand the history and equally provided relevant background information on empirical research that has been conducted on NGOs and poverty reduction as seen above. In addition, it was useful in tracing the poverty level as well as understanding the role played by NGOs, the poor and other organisations in fighting poverty in the region and other parts of the world. -

The second stage was called for by the research question and the necessity for the context of the research to be replicated in the interview questions. This review helped in answering some of the questions asked by the studied NGO beneficiaries during the interviews. For example, why are NGOs providing only relief services? Moreover, are NGOs for the poorest of the poor?

The third stage of the literature review came straight from the field during the interviews when some NGO employees unexpectedly mentioned related books, which might not have been recognised to the researcher. In such circumstances, they were given as written evidence to justify the claim by the interviewee. The last element of the literature review was produced from the data analysis, whereby there was a necessity to examine and explain some of the analysis with documents. For example, there was a need to review the VGSW annual progress report and search the internet to identify their donors for further discussion.

During the fieldwork, the researcher was able to use the libraries and resource centres of all the selected NGOs to access documents, which had information related to the study. The documents were analysed along with field notes from observation and transcripts from interviews as primary sources of data. This approach is in line with Doh (2012:79) views, he stated that "documents are rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in a setting and can be very useful in developing an understanding of the setting or group being studied".

However, Creswell (2012) pointed out that one of the drawbacks of literature view is that without harmonising clarification that may perhaps come in through other approaches like observation, note taking in the field and interviews, interpretations and sense-making may partially remain those of the researcher and thus subject to personal conclusions. On the other hand, this declaration does not disqualify the point that literature also contains useful evidences. It must be specified that the assessment of the literature was engaged through content examination. One of the strong points of content examination is that it is natural and it can be carried out without upsetting the background of the research. In addition, it creates opportunity for the researcher to determine where the emphasis lies and information can be checked at any time (Yin, 2014). Literature analysis in this sense served as a secondary source of information. This was done in this study as part of the data triangulation procedure and to improve and validate the facts collected (Yin, 2014).

3.3.2 INTERVIEWS

This study used semi-structured interviews. The interviews took the form of discussions directed by standardized open-ended and unstructured questions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 56 participants. The interview guide was important in engaging the participants, while maintaining the narrative on the topic of interest. However, these questions served only as a guide as each participant influenced the direction that each of the interviews took, based on their unique experiences and perceptions of NGOs and poverty reduction in project communities. The researcher regarded the NGO officials, their beneficiaries, funders and community volunteers as specialists as most of them have been involved in NGO poverty reduction programmes for many years. The researcher allowed maximum opportunity for participants to tell their story without interruption. All questions were open-ended, participants did most of the talking, and the researcher enabled this by asking open-ended questions and probing where relevant. This enabled the researcher to discover significant themes in more detail and generate unanticipated findings.

Furthermore, since there were different participants in the study, there was the need to use the interview questions guide to the purpose of the interview. This adaptation produced four kinds of the interview guide (see Appendices below). For example, if the participant was an NGO staff member, the questions were developed in such a manner that he/she was to chat more about the NGO and development policy in relation to poverty reduction. NGO beneficiaries

spoke more about the impact of NGOs in their lives, community volunteers talked either about the link between the NGOs and the communities while the funders' views were on why they continue to fund NGO programmes when these programmes are not reducing poverty. On the other hand, there was not much different in the interview questions and thus the responses. In each of the interviews, it was perceived that the participant referred to the general system policies. The interview guides were organised in three dimensions. First, for all the research participants, there was a section for information about the participants' background. Secondly, there was a common theme in relation to the NGO and poverty reduction, the knowledge-based economy and the perceptions of the role of NGOs in poverty reduction. This was intended to produce the study participants' general views on the research topic and those relating to their specific roles. Thirdly, the common issue was followed by questions related to sub-topics and themes drawn from the theoretical and logical framework. This involved conversation about their detailed roles and duty, policy in relation to poverty reduction, and barriers in relation to their fight against poverty. The sub-questions termed "follow-up" questions were vital in providing supplementary in-depth answers to the common questions and it was at the level of these follow-up questions that the different levels of the participants were reflected in the interview guide.

There were circumstances where issues arose in the answers in relation to the theoretical framework which became follow-up interrogations. In such circumstances, the participant continued without following the orders of the questions. There were also circumstances where the interviewee mentioned a generally well-known practice, which was in the theoretical framework and required approval from the interviewer. Additionally, there were circumstances where the participants probed to understand the practices in other contexts. For example, "this is how we do it here in PI". Such practices led the researcher to add ideas to the interview to allow the interviewee to continue into his/her conceptualization. To this end, the researcher on some instances had to change add/or remove questions from the guide to direct and focus the research in the right direction. The interview began with a presentation of the generalized understandings and global constructs on information and economic growth and by implication NGOs and poverty reduction. These generalized opinions were presented to encourage the discussions in an open and generalized manner.

Initial interviews were conducted between September 2016 and February 2017 and follow-up interviews between August 2017 and October 2018. Follow-up interviews were relevant to pursue issues emerging in order to reduce flaws and identify cohesions, contradictions,

ambivalences and disruption in the emerging issues on NGOs and poverty reduction in the regions under study (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:289). As indicated above, interviews were conducted either in the studied NGOs' offices or at the homes of NGO beneficiaries and community volunteers, depending on which location they found most comfortable. Interviews with PI funders were done through phone calls. Face-to-face interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. Participants who had been involved in NGO programmes for many years had much more to say and needed much probing from the researcher because they were good sources to provide information on why the studied NGOs continued to embark on programmes that were not reducing poverty in the regions under study. All interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participants. However, face-to-face interviews for data collection were costly and time consuming as the researcher had to travel long distances to conduct the interviews and, in some cases, the time set for the interviews was not convenient for the participants. In such situations he rescheduled another interview as will be seen below under subheading: Field research challenges. The advantage of field notes is that they kept the researcher more focused and fully engaged in the discussion, particularly in circumstances where certain interviewees were very elegant (Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2014).

Audio recordings helped to ensure verisimilitude as in the subsequent analysis the researcher could always return to the data (Doh, 2012).

3.3.2.1 AUDIO FOOTAGE

Interviews in this research were recorded and field notes were taken (hand written notes) to make sure that no facts provided by interviewee was omitted. Notes were taken as a backup and to safeguard against any footage apparatus disappointments. A digital voice recorder that could assemble voices into folders was used to capture the vocal sound while notepads were used to take down non-verbal signs. These assisted a lot in the investigation. In addition, the method assisted the researcher to ask pertinent questions and also to observe any non-verbal signals worth noticing from interviewees. The footages were done with authorisation from informants before the commencement of the discussions. Some scholars explained that tape recorders as an instrument for information collection allowed researchers to concentrate on asking questions and capturing responses accurately that served as evidence (Rubin and Rubin, 2011). In order to minimize the effect of noise and other intercessions, the researcher made sure that meeting periods were set at the participant's convenience and at periods when they

were less expected to be interrupted. The researcher also made sure that the tape recorder used to record the discussions had external noise reduction and pause facilities to control any unanticipated noise and other interactions. By so doing, the discussion processes went efficiently. However, its flaw is that, once recorded, the data remains what it is in its unique form and cannot be changed (Doh, 2012). To overcome this weakness, another interview can be conducted.

3.3.3 OBSERVATIONS

In order to understand the dynamics of NGOs and poverty reduction at the grassroots, the researcher visited the studied NGO project communities two and sometimes more times each week. The researcher at the beginning of the research spent six months with the beneficiaries and spending time with them enabled him to know more about their daily life experiences and their feelings on issues of social and economic development. However, after data analysis it was discovered that six months with the beneficiaries was not enough to gather sufficient data for the study. The researcher had no choice other than going back to the field to gather more data to fill the gaps that could not be filled during the first phase of data collection. At the end, the researcher was with the study participants from September 2016 to July 2018, which was enough time for him to observe and discuss important issues concerning the role of NGOs in poverty reduction in the study region. The researcher spent the entire day either at the office with NGO officials or within the community with NGO beneficiaries observing and/or participating in different studied NGO activities. These included accompanying studied NGO beneficiaries into their food gardens to observe how crops were doing and how they were implementing the agricultural skills gained from their NGOs. The researcher also accompanied studied official NGO teams into the field, visiting clinics where they had HIV/AIDs programmes, visiting schools, and attending workshops and events on specific themes organised around the issue of poverty reduction. The researcher also participated in projects maintenance during observations. The aim here was to observe how maintenance was done, who was participating and why they were participating. Additionally, the researcher attended support group meetings, which enabled him to witness at first-hand how respondents participate, rather than trusting entirely on what they say about their participation. Observation in general meetings focussed on a number of issues; the nature of participation taking place in real life, and how NGOs employees and other organisations interacted with citizens on development policy issues in the regions under study. The researcher generally witnessed the

collaboration and deliberations between the two main parties and only asked a few questions for clarity of issues. The use of the observation method confirmed some of the questions previously discussed with NGO field officers as will be seen in chapter four below. The researcher's presence at some selected and approved meetings mostly within the premises of studied NGOs gave him an opening to responsively observed beneficiaries' roles in decision-making practices (Yin, 2011). The following is a piece from the researcher's field notes:

All the selected NGOs have a district office in their project district. These offices are led by field coordinator. District offices are used in planning and coordinating the activities of the NGOs. NGOs district offices were used for interview venue. NGOs personnel were very professional but they spoke to the researcher in a casual manner. They put the researcher at ease by making lot of jokes. They treated the researcher like they were equals and this served to make the researcher more like them. They gave lot of technical data throughout the data collection that had to do with their work and what their NGO does. An example is information about the organisation of the personnel within the NGO.

Some NGO beneficiaries were happy with the topic of the research. This shows their concern for the study and makes the researcher more at ease with probing. They answered and asked questions throughout the research. Community volunteers in all the study communities gave the researcher information about interaction of NGOs and their beneficiaries. PI community volunteers made jokes about their NGOs, the weather and how they wanted the government to create (a) seaport where there is no sea (Field notes, June 2018).

This observation gave the researcher the patterns of behaviour to understand values and beliefs of participants and sense of social dynamics.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis was adopted for this research. At the commencement of this research, the plan was to analyse the data in two stages: 1) after the first phase of information collection and 2) after the accomplishment of the fieldwork. However, the procedure of data analysis turned out to be a continuous process interweaving into data collection and writing up (Creswell, 2012). Alasah (2008) has specified that the phase of actual information analysis

comprises three undertakings (1) information reduction, (2) presentation and (3) drawing conclusions. The researcher went through these stages.

3.4.1 PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

At the primary stage, the researcher used the basic qualitative analysis steps suggested by Silverman (2013): (1) data management when themes and concepts are created from raw data; (2) making descriptive accounts after the themes and concepts are assigned to data and more abstract concepts are developed and filtered; and (3) making explanatory accounts when data is disseminated to develop abstract concepts. This researcher also emphasised that themes and concepts can be used either in a cross-sectional “code and retrieve” or in non-cross-sectional methods (ibid). The transcripts were word for word but did not include breaks in proceedings, varieties, and other elements of discourse since the researcher’s focus was on the fundamental meaning of the explanations rather than their structure. The huge amount of data collected from the field interviews and observations required the implementation of an information reduction strategy by the researcher to facilitate data analysis (Creswell, 2012). With the above notion in mind, the researcher then developed central themes and concepts, that is to say, a list of codes based on interview guides. Some recurring ideas from the data were turned into codes or sub codes (Maree & Pietersen, 2007). Information from the interviews and note writing were pre-coded and later coded before an audit trail was conducted to safeguard comprehensiveness (Bryman, 2012; Silverman, 2013).

3.4.2 PRE-CODING

A pre-coding procedure was first introduced. Maree and Pietersen (2007) claimed that data at the pre-coding stage is usually raw, unprocessed and highly descriptive in nature, hence the need to organise such information into an appropriate form for analysis. Information composed during discussions and observations (both recorded and handwritten notes) were revised on a daily basis. Composed information (together with those spoken in the vernacular and local languages) were interpreted and transcribed verbatim into written manuscript during this stage of the study in readiness for the identification and underlining the most important themes. This was in line with the aims of the research. Transcription was within 24 hours of each interview to make sure that the questions discussed and the answers were still fresh in the mind of the researcher. It is important to note that transcription of the interviews with new NGO

stakeholders was easier because they did not have much to say in the interviews about NGOs and poverty reduction as compared with those who had been working with NGOs for many years. In line with Silverman (2013) the entire documentary proof was collected into a document summary form to determine its complementarities or otherwise.

3.4.3 CODING

Real data assessment begins after an effective pre-coding. This is the reason that the pre-coding stage merely supports the researcher to perceive emerging themes from the raw information for further examination. The transcribed field notes and other proofs were coded. Symbols or codes, generally captured from the research questions, the main ideas and themes, were developed for each similar piece: paragraphs, sentences and phrases, among others, of the transcribed information. The similar measures were gathered into groups. These codes assisted as an information establishment tool because they allowed the student to rapidly categorise similar codes for possible clustering in line with the identified research questions, concepts and themes. Decisively, pattern coding was embraced in this research in order to understand the designs, the repetitions and the 'whys' that described the phenomena and events. The transcribed information were all conveyed together and numbered chronologically. Fixed numbers were given to the significant sections of the information to provide a link/trial between the information and respondents.

The recorded information was read repeatedly such that any significant sections or responses that touched on any of the research objectives were coloured for that reason. All related coloured sections were conveyed together and stored/saved differently. The highlighted information was conveyed into folders in line with themes developed throughout the coding process and evidence under similar themes was stored in well-defined folders. The collective information in each folder representing the numerous themes were examined in accordance with the level of quality and ability to contribute to the achievement of the research objectives. Summary expressions were read respectively to disclose repeated words/terms that best defined each of the research objectives. The researcher kept a record of the most outstanding and striking findings, thoughts and ideas straight after the interviews. The researcher was able to go back to them later on for further follow-up and reflection. The researcher can affirm that he would have not reached his current ideas expressed in the thesis if he had not had his field-notes.

3.4.4 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

To ensure credibility, a case study procedure was established prior to data collection and multiple sources of data including interviews and observations were continually equated throughout the process of data collection and interpretation. According to researchers like Vos et al. (2014), Silverman (2011) and Nieuwenhuis (2007), trustworthiness in qualitative research is accomplished when designs that develop from various instruments and techniques of analysis crystallise to form an emergent reality. Nieuwenhuis (2007) added that preserved reality is credible if those reading the evidence will be able to see the same emerging patterns, and this adds to the trustworthiness of the research. Field notes collected through observations were essentially useful in recording similarities and differences between participants' descriptions of their experiences. In addition, the researcher has lived in the NWR and knows Pidgin English which is the most common language spoken in this region; however, community volunteers in Baka community with experience of conducting interviews in mother tongue were involved to assist the researcher with data collection.

While some qualitative researchers attempt to distance themselves from the research process in pursuit of objectivity, the researcher does not pretend to have been completely objective in making decisions concerning the selection, preparation and representation of data and how these have influenced the findings presented in chapters four below. Instead, from the onset, the researcher was conscious of the challenges and opportunities that he might face. Although the most widely spoken language in Cameroon is Pidgin English, he was aware that there are communities where the community members can only speak mother tongue and this would then be challenging as he attempted to collect empirical data in Boyo, Momo and Ngoketunjia division in the NWR and the Baka community in the East Region. Strydom (2007) points out that it is of utmost importance for social researchers to take account of their connections to research participants and settings, and how these influence the outcome of the research process. It is precisely this process that will be made explicit in the following section.

3.5 RESEARCH ETHICS

Any research that involves human beings has to be conducted with ethical consideration about the fair mindedness of the research process and its results (Vos et al., 2014). Before going into the field for data collection, the researcher knew that in fact he was entering the secretive spaces

of his participants. Measures were taken to prevent the violation of the rights of the participants. Before going to the field, ethical clearance for the study was granted after a research proposal with details of the ethics protocol was submitted to the thesis supervisor and there was a serious discussion about research ethics. The ethics were maintained throughout the research procedure. Before the beginning of the interviews, the researcher explained to all participants, NGO officials, NGO beneficiaries, funders and NGO community volunteers that participation was completely voluntary and they were free to refuse to answer any question or choose to stop participating at any time. Furthermore, it was explained that no compensation was going to be paid for participating in the study. Additionally, it was made clear that any requested privacy of participants was to be documented through the signing of written consent forms. Permission to record interviews, the aim of the research and the anticipated roles of the interviewees were clarified and documented prior to each interview.

However, some of the ethical dilemmas that were encountered in the field could not have been anticipated prior to fieldwork. Consequently, the researcher had to address these issues as they arose. Most of these issues arose because the initial plan was changed when the researcher got into the field. As already indicated above, after the first phase of data collection, it was discovered that the available data was not sufficient to answer all the research questions and it was necessary to expand the study site. The Baka community as seen in the introductory chapter was not part of the initial planned site for this study. These issues cannot be separated from the researcher's identity, which unexpectedly provided opportunities and challenges in the data collection process. There was a challenge and the same time an opportunity because Baka could understand mostly mother tongue and because community volunteers who had good knowledge in conducting qualitative research were willing to assist the researcher with interviews. At the end, data were collected from both French and English speaking dominating regions of Cameroon.

Respecting participants throughout the research process was of paramount importance to the researcher. As seen in the above paragraph, it was vital for the researcher, as an 'outsider', to be conscious of the cultural sensitivities of participants. To overcome this challenge the researcher was assisted by a SIL community volunteer who had qualitative research skills in the Baka community. Being an insider and aware of social, cultural, and political differences, the researcher understood that he needed to overstress the confidentiality of the recordings. Because the study adopted a qualitative design, total unrecognizability was not possible since this study was dealing with a few NGOs.

Because of political instability in the region at that time, some VGSW managers were nervous about their confidentiality but the researcher further explained to them the aim of the study and also gave them a copy of the supporting letter from his thesis supervisor before he accepted to participate fully in this study. Learning from the above-discussed issues, the researcher later in most cases talked more about confidentiality and the voice recording. This gave interviewees room to talk more without obstruction. Throughout the study, the researcher explained to all the participants that the aim of the interview was to assist him with data for his PhD thesis and he gave them the supporting letter from his thesis supervisor. However, names of the organisation staff have not been used in this research but the words ‘field coordinator’ and ‘director’ or ‘manager’ have been used. With regard to names of NGOs, the researcher could not hide them because presentation of the research findings would not make sense without proper referencing to an organisation.

Another aspect of ethical issue is harm and risk. The researcher assured that no interviewees were placed in a situation where they might be maltreated because of their involvement, physical or psychological, as stated by Crewel (2012).

Notwithstanding all the above-stated safety measures, it was made clear to the interviewees that the investigation was only for educational purposes and their involvement in it was voluntary as indicated above. No one was forced to take part. In summary, proper steps were taken to adhere to strict ethical procedures.

The literature review suggests that researchers should inquire if their research participants would be interested in getting a report on the research findings (Vos et al., 2014; Bryman, 2003). The researcher did not ask the NGO beneficiaries if they wanted anything from the research findings because he was aware of practical complications that he would have in order to do this. Most of NGO beneficiaries did not have email or other well-established means of communication, such as post, through which the researcher could communicate with them, especially those who were in rural areas. Nonetheless, the researcher did agree to send the findings to those interviewees who asked the researcher to do so. As a result, the researcher is going to send field reports to the NGOs that were used for the case study for this research.

3.6 REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH

The design and generalisations from a case study may be tarnished by lack of rigour and strength of the scientific conclusions, for being short of efficient and effective procedures and containing biased views that may impact the direction and conclusions of the study (Yin, 2011). It would have been conceivable to do a collective case study (Silverman, 2013) for all the NGOs in the two regions to provide more data to improve the quality of the data and provide a comprehensive image of the phenomenon. On the other hand, the political situation in the NWR during the data collection period, the physical and human energy and the material resources of the researcher were inadequate for such a broad research. This would call for a huge sum of money and perhaps be designed as a longer-term project, most suitably as a group research project. One of the concerns is that the unavoidable implementation of a single case study strategy leaves out the internal logic and comparative aspects of the ground practices that may be reflective of the national contexts in the whole region. There may have been other (smooth qualitative approaches) which might be desirable to the interviews and documents in reducing some of the flaws in the study. However, there was observation in the form of participatory approaches, which were more significant, particularly for studying the nature of participation by which the poorest of the poor are involved in poverty reduction programmes and their daily activities with regard to poverty reduction, which is a principal mission in this study. Furthermore, participatory approaches required the researcher becoming part of the NGO and beneficiary teams in the region to be able to follow the developments and participate as an observer in the various decision-making in meetings. There were also a limited number of participants, which might affect the study. Data collection was a problem during the time of secessionist war in North-west and South-west regions. The North-West and South-West Regions were striking so there was a ghost town on Monday and Tuesday every week of the month. This limited the number of the targeted respondents given their very busy schedules because of the 'ghost town' situation.

Earlier on in planning the data collection method, there was a thought of using focus group discussions as a tactical means of producing greater and more engaged information on the topic. This would have necessitated bringing participants together but would not have benefitted the study since the aim of the study was to gain the personal perceptions of individuals. Furthermore, because of the research objective, it was considered that focus group discussions might turn to be problematic in that they bring together many participants, perhaps causing

saturation with control problems on the part of researcher and therefore ridiculously producing less data. Lastly, it was perceived that focus group discussions might decrease the honesty and serious opinions in the face of a diverse public, in that way causing the researcher to miss vital outstanding information; individual discussions in privacy were believed to provide more outstanding and objective information. The same reasons, which relate to the restrictions of individual research projects of this sort, accounted for the decision to concentrate solely on NGO staff, funders, volunteers and the beneficiaries of the NGOs. This choice was guided further by the logic of concentrating on the actor from whose perspective the transformation process was taking place; this is because NGOs, volunteers and NGO beneficiary participants know their situation better than any outsider does. This makes it more suitable for the researcher to concentrate on these four levels of participants.

However, the perceptions of other actors like the government might have been beneficial and provided more data that could have enriched the research and improved the whole picture of the research as a countrywide case study. However, as already indicated above, such a research would call for large sum of resources and perhaps be designed as a longer-term project, most suitably as a group research project. All secondary materials in this research and their sources have been provided and quotes from individual respondents.

3.7 FIELD RESEARCH CHALLENGES

Although the field research was generally successful in that it accomplished most of what was planned, there were challenges. The first challenge was gaining access to VGSW and SIL for data collection. As seen above, before going to the field, the researcher had already established connection with Heifer International (HI) as the researcher's second NGO for data collection as indicated under the sub-heading "Gaining access into the field". When in the field it was discovered that Heifer International was not operating at the last minute when the researcher went for data collection. This brought in a challenge, as the researcher had no comprehensive list of all NGOs operating in the North West region. First, the researcher had to search for this information from various sources in order to ensure that the NGO chosen was aiming at poverty reduction and had the different levels of participants as seen under the sub-heading "Selection of the case study". Related to this challenge was that some of the NGOs were newly created NGOs and some that had been existing for a long time (e.g. some religious NGOs) had nothing to do with poverty reduction programmes? Finally, some of the NGOs that aimed at poverty

reduction were no longer functioning. This meant that the researcher had to do another sampling to meet the required NGO for the planned interviews. It negatively affected the data collection process as everything was now less planned and more condensed.

Furthermore, after the first phase of data collection, it was discovered that the data collected during the first phase was not sufficient to answer all the research questions and there was a need to increase the number of NGOs projects. As seen in the above paragraph, most NGOs aimed at poverty reduction were newly created NGOs, those that had been functioning for many years were not operational, and some had nothing to do with poverty reduction. The researcher ended up choosing an NGO that was very much concerned with bible translation although they were using language a tool to fight poverty in their project communities. Conducting a research in these two regions was a challenge because they were far away from each other. Travelling from NWR to the East Region was costly in terms of finances and time lost during travelling.

Another encounter faced by the researcher during the course of the study was the actual conducting of the fieldwork itself. Once access was gained, the researcher agreed interview schedules with the identified interviewees. This notwithstanding, some participants had to rearrange their interviews at the last minute or could not spend the agreed time with the student. The main reason they had to reschedule their interviews was work commitments. Some identified interviewees were either not in good health or had not yet returned from their daily activities at the time of the exercise. Interviews began in September, which was raining season in Cameroon. It was difficult for study NGO beneficiaries to travel in rain to where the appointment for the interview was rescheduled. In addition to the rain that was disturbing movement in the NWR, another challenge was the 'ghost town' in the NWR. There were some weeks when everyone in the region was forced to stay indoors because of political crises that were going on in the North-west and South-west regions of Cameroon. This political crisis made everyone nervous and people did not want to express their views and, as a result, the researcher ensured that the outstanding questions were discussed first. The researcher was able to by-pass these encounter such that it had no influence on the findings of the study. The researcher was persistent and flexible enough to rearrange his time to by-pass the challenges posed by respondents to achieve his objectives. To make sure that the quality of the interview discussions was not compromised, other data gathering sources, including literature reviews, observation and field notes, were used to add to the data.

Furthermore, at the preliminary phase both NGO officials and beneficiaries did not understand the focus of the study. Some of them got the wrong idea about the purpose of the study. For example, one of the VGSW manager felt that it was intended to discourage donors from supporting NGOs since the topic of discussion was to analyse why NGOs continue to embark on poverty reduction programmes that are not reducing poverty. Furthermore, during the preliminary phase in the Baka community, a few individuals contacted were suspicious and unreceptive to unfamiliar visitors partly due to their culture and in the NWR due to the political situation in the region at that time. The services of community volunteers were lobbied to facilitate primary data collection in all the study communities. The main reason the researcher preferred community volunteers was that community volunteers in all the studied communities were well versed with the languages spoken there. They knew their cultural values and additionally they were intermediaries between the studied NGOs and their beneficiaries. Community volunteers served as confidence-builders in all the study regions. The measures adopted after the preliminary phases and the collaboration of key individuals including community volunteers contacted mitigated the difficulties encountered during the major fieldwork.

The third challenge was the unwillingness of beneficiaries to participate in the interviews; they all seemed too busy for this type of interview. For example, PI beneficiaries in Boyo division complained they did not want to get involved in the interviews because PI staff always come and interview them and nothing is being done to improve their living conditions. As a result, they did not want to hear anything about NGOs and poverty reduction. The researcher kept explaining to them that the aim of the interviews was for him to collect enough data, which is a requirement for a PhD degree in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town, and finally he was able interview enough beneficiaries. With regard to the 'ghost town', at one time, the ghost town was for the whole week, and there was no movement of people. All the offices including shops were closed. This caused a serious challenge due to unavailability of NGO staffs for interviews. Most of them were busy with work as they could only work three days a week instead of the five working days. It posed a problem as they were trying to catch-up with their planned programmes and could not easily make time for the interviews. In other cases, some of the sampled NGO staffs were unreachable by phone because of the bad network and some of them were out of the network. Furthermore, during follow-up interviews, internet access was cut off because of political instability in the NWR. This was a big challenge because the researcher was unable to send emails for follow-

up investigation in situations where the crises were so intense that nothing was functioning in the study region. The only means of communication was through phone calls, which was not only very expensive but there was also a bad network, especially calling from South Africa to Cameroon. Political crises in the NWR made it unfavourable for the researcher to be at the study site. His constant moving out of regions under study because of political crises further reduced his limited resources and further delayed data collection.

Furthermore, as already indicated above, there was no telephone network in certain locations. The researcher therefore had to ask community volunteers about the physical locations of the NGO beneficiaries and then look for their houses in order to contact them to fix appointments. This was the major challenge that affected the number of interviews that could have been done within the limited amount of time as the researcher spent a lot of time trying to search for their houses. This meant that the time that could have been used for interviewing NGO beneficiaries was simply wasted on moving around searching for the NGO beneficiaries.

Furthermore, the 'ghost town' situation also affected transportation in the region. There was no movement of cars on ghost town days. The researcher had to walk long distances. In situations where cars were available, the transport cost was high. The high transportation cost was due to high demand of people travelling since there was no movement on 'ghost town' days. Sometimes the researcher could be queuing at a roadside with a driver. Since the drivers wanted more passengers in order to make more money, they would stop at any point without minding that the time was being consumed on the way. By the time the researcher got to the participants of the study, he was already late for the interview and the researcher had to plead and arrange for another interview; however, most of the interviewees knew the difficulties in transportation during the period of the field study. Then again, face-to-face interviews in the data collection process were costly and time consuming as the researcher had to travel long distances from NWR to conduct interviews in Yaoundé and Baka communities since SIL staff were based in Yaoundé, and beneficiaries were in Baka community.

Furthermore, political crises in the NWR also made follow-up discussion to be very costly, as the researcher had to travel from South Africa to Cameroon only when he knew there was calm in the study region. Travelling several times to Cameroon was costly. In addition, spending more time in Cameroon than anticipated also involved additional cost and further affected the researcher's planned submission date as data collection that was planned for a year ended up taking two years and some months. This really affected the study, as the researcher at some

point had to abandon the study in search for money to cover the costs incurred during data collection and tuition for additional years before submission.

Participatory observation in this study required more time than anticipated to gain the trust of the participants. As seen above, there was political instability and respondents were sceptical to share their views because of the crisis that was ongoing in the region. In order to do this the researcher had to spend a lot of time just listening to their problems and sympathising, especially with those beneficiaries who had never received or benefited anything from the NGOs and laughing with them when sharing their happiness. It should be noted that the Baka community in the East region is one of the regions most neglected by the government of Cameroon as seen in chapter one above and NGO beneficiaries were highly affected when they were answering questions about their poverty situation and government's role in poverty reduction.

Another constraint was the issue of gaining access to NGO funders to arrange interviews. The nature of the study participants selected required that the researcher interview some of the NGO funders. Gaining access to some of these funders was a serious challenge, as some of the NGO officials did not like the researcher to have discussions with their funders. Furthermore, it was not easy to search for NGO funders over the internet because there was internet disconnection in the NWR during data collection. However, with determination, the researcher had no other option than to travel to other regions where there was internet service to search for necessary information and thus was able to access the funders. In addition, the sensitive nature of the study made VGSW top officials feel uncomfortable about revealing their funders because of the fear that the topic of the research may affect their relationship with them. However, the researcher had to reassure the respondents that the research was only for academic purposes and not to influence the decisions of sponsors. Despite all these challenges, it was still possible to collect a reasonable amount of data to work with which is able to provide an understanding about NGOs and poverty reduction in the NWR and East Regions of Cameroon.

Finally, dealing with only three NGOs is seen as a limitation. An interpretive case study with only three NGOs may impose some restrictions on the results of the research since case studies in general do not support the generalisation of research findings to the general population. For more details why only three NGOs were chosen for this study, see section on "reflection on the research" above. Although the research on the role of NGOs in poverty reduction offers in-depth understandings, its outcomes cannot simply be replicated in other organisational backgrounds. Since the researcher used the qualitative design for this investigation, it assumes

that generalising the outcomes to other NGOs may not be applicable. On the other hand, the use of PI, SIL and VGSW is sufficient to represent the other NGOs operating in the North West region and Baka community in the East Region of Cameroon and Cameroon at large and to help affirm systematic generalisation (Yin, 2009) as opposed to statistical generalisation.

For the acknowledged limitations to be overcome, supplementary investigation might be vital to address them as discussed further below in chapter six.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has elaborated in detail on the study plan and methodological approach that was used in this research. At the level of NGOs as indicated above, only the top and middle level officials were interviewed. In communities, NGO project beneficiaries and NGO community volunteers who were the intermediaries between the NGOs and the beneficiaries of NGO programmes were interviewed. There was observation to add to what the interviewees were saying. The important part of the observation is an attempt by the researcher to make sense of his participation in the process of information gathering in the NWR and East Region of Cameroon. Therefore, a qualitative design provided the appropriate methodological framework and relevant instruments that guided the researcher in collecting rich and authentic empirical data on NGOs and poverty reduction in the two regions of Cameroon. The chapter also described how ethical issues were handled, reflected upon some specific aspects in the research and the chapter ended with data collection challenges.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0: INTRODUCTION

The three previous chapters have laid a foundation for the study by plotting the holes that this study sought to fill. The previous chapters provide an analytical and theoretical framework within which the findings of this study were interpreted and provide a detailed description of how empirical evidence was collected, processed and analysed. This chapter deals with the presentation of the findings. The findings are presented according to the study sub-objectives.

4.1: OBJECTIVE ONE: ESTABLISHING THE REASONS FOR CONTINUED INCREASE IN POVERTY IN THE NWR AND EAST REGIONS OF CAMEROON.

This section presents the first objective which focuses on understanding the reasons for continued increase in poverty in the NWR and East regions of Cameroon. NGOs and their stakeholders were asked to describe their perception of poverty and also how they were affected by poverty. NGO beneficiaries described poverty as inability to have money to buy or rent fertile land for crop production in the region:

“I think poverty means lack of fertile land for crop production. We do not have enough crops to eat; normally the corn we produce is enough for few months only. We thus have to buy food for the rest of the months and we do not even have the money to buy more food” (PI beneficiary, 17/11/2016).

A VGSW beneficiary said, “People who do not have enough crops to eat throughout the year are called poor” (VGSW beneficiary, 21/11/2016). Their observation of poverty is closely linked to the amount of corn, beans and groundnut they produce per year. When they do not have enough food to eat throughout the year they consider themselves poor. Some of the NGO beneficiaries said poverty is difficult to describe because some people have almost everything and they still complain that they are poor: “it is difficult to describe poverty because you see people and you begin to think they are rich because they have almost everything, they can afford all their needs but some of them are complaining of poverty” (SIL beneficiary, 7/7/2018). From the views of this SIL beneficiary, poverty is not only about income because those who can afford to pay for their needs are still complaining of being poor. Another SIL

beneficiary stated, “If you have money and you cannot buy what you need it is poverty. There are no shops to buy our needs” (SIL beneficiary, 7/7/2018). According to him, poverty is not lack of money but lack of what money can buy because one can have money and still live in poverty because there are no markets where one can buy the things one needs. Another beneficiary also stated, “My family has enough corn to eat but we are still poor because we do not have money to buy meat and oil all the time” (SIL beneficiary in Baka, 20/7/2018). For another respondent, “Poverty is identified by lack of farming land area, the number of people in a family and total income” (PI beneficiary, 13/10/2016). The researcher observed that the core explanations attributed to their deficiency situation were related to their dependence on subsistence agriculture. Another PI beneficiary added that poverty is when someone has very little or nothing to eat to his satisfaction and does not live in a comfortable house (PI beneficiary Baka 20/7/2018). A SIL beneficiary in Baka community said, “Those who do not have a wife or husband and are poorly dressed are poor” (SIL beneficiary Baka community 19/7/ 2018). A similar statement was made by PI beneficiary in Ibal as demonstrated in her comment, “When you are not married, you cannot talk when men are talking because people believed that you are useless and unmarried people do not deserve to be among important people in society” (PI beneficiary, 14/12/2017). These NGOs beneficiaries use the expression to describe their state of poverty. Through observation in many communities in the regions under study, there were no shops; people walked long distances to buy the basics. From participants views, poverty is not only about income because one can obtain an income that is enough to satisfy elementary needs, but one may possibly still feel underprivileged, this shows that poverty is much about class of life and access to wealth.

4.2: OBJECTIVE TWO: EXPLORING HOW NGO STAFFS AND THEIR BENEFICIARIES PERCEIVE POVERTY AS WELL AS THE LEVEL OF THEIR SUCCESS IN POVERTY REDUCTION.

This Objective is divided into two parts (part one and part two). Part one of the objective focuses on how NGO staffs and their stakeholders experience of poverty and part two focuses on the study NGOs projects and their level of success in poverty reduction.

OBJECTIVE TWO PART ONE: UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCE OF POVERTY IN THE STUDY REGIONS

4.2.1: CULTURAL PRACTICES

In a bid to understand the experience of poverty in the regions under study, participants were asked to describe the causes of poverty in the study areas. Many NGO beneficiaries explained that one of the causes of poverty is cultural practices in their community as demonstrated in one of the VGSW beneficiary's comments, "After the passing away of my spouse, there was a family meeting that made me lose everything that we had acquired together. My in-law seized everything including the house and the farms and despised me and my children" (VGSW beneficiary, 5/12/2016). Further probing found that such practices were very common in the NWR. This was explained as one of the causes of poverty in the NWR. A common cultural practice that was observed in the regions under study was that women lacked control and ownership of land as will be seen below. One of the reasons some women failed to benefit from the PI goat rearing programme in Momo division was because culturally women do not have the right to own land. The researcher in some NGO meetings observed gender inequality between men and women where women were not allowed to participate when men were talking about serious issues. This means women cannot contribute ideas on how poverty can be reduced or on how to improve their living condition. Participation will be further examined under the study objective five below. Study participants also said that there are days in rural areas that people are not allowed to work on their farms as demonstrated in PI beneficiary's comment in Ibal;

"We have eight days in a week, among these eight days one can only work for six days and if you are a Christian that observes Sundays, you will only have five days to work on the farm instead of eight a week as it's in urban areas. We have to stay at home doing nothing because there is a general believe that if one goes to the farm on a native Sundays, you will be bewitched and something terrible will happen to you" (PI beneficiary 16/12/2016).

This was confirmed in Ibal, Fundong and Banmuka as beneficiary interviews were scheduled on native Sundays. The researcher observed that the interviews that were on native Sundays were all honoured because beneficiaries were at home doing nothing. These factors were seen to have contributed to increasing poverty in the study areas as people have very few days to work on their farms since they are farmers.

4.2.2 LACK OF LAND

Almost all the NGOs beneficiaries identified lack of quantity and quality of land as a factor contributing to their experiences of poverty in the research regions. PI beneficiaries in Baka community mentioned that they have been forcefully removed from their land in the forest because government said they want to expand and increase growth in Cameroon. From their views government effort to expand growth in this region has created more starvation than reducing poverty. According to these participants, removing them out of the forest which used to be their only source of food and income has pushed them into chronic poverty. PI beneficiaries in Bafut consistently mentioned that Bafut is an area of extreme land poverty with community land holdings in Bafut being small and some areas in the community are very rocky in nature. The same PI beneficiaries in Bafut added that the land is too small for agricultural activities and it is infertile too (PI beneficiary, 7/12/ 2016). This issue of soil fertility emerged as a common theme in each of the case study areas. Many respondents stated that poor soil quality provides insignificant crop yields, further driving local incidences of poverty given that all local food consumption comes from local farms. In both study regions, all the participants linked the problem of poor soil fertility with the earlier agricultural practice of continuous cultivation of the same piece of land over a sustained period. One of the VGSW beneficiaries in Momo division mentioned high levels of soil erosion because of the nature of the topography of the region (VGSW beneficiary, 21/11/ 2016). It was observed that most of the farms are located on mountain slopes and when it rains, the soil is carried away by erosion. PI beneficiaries in Momo mentioned that fertile lands are located far from their communities and they are not capable of engaging in any meaningful farming on these lands due to the long distances they have to commute daily by walking (PI beneficiary, 17/12/ 2016).

One way of addressing the problem of lost soil fertility or infertile soil is through the use of fertilizers but discussion with beneficiaries of NGO programmes found that they don't have resources to acquire fertilizers: "Without fertilizers, good crop yields are unattainable even when the weather is considered favourable. We do not have capital to acquire necessary input for our farms" (PI beneficiary 16/12/ 2016). In search for an explanation of why NGOs could not assist their beneficiaries with fertilizer which can improve soil fertility, the PI field coordinator for Boyo and Ngoketunjia division mentioned that lack of funds was an obstacle to distribute fertilizers to their beneficiaries but they are organising workshops to teach beneficiaries how to make their own manure instead of buying fertilizers. However, it was found that agricultural skills were not helping the rural communities because they were not

able to implement these skills since some of these skills required resources that some of the beneficiaries were too poor to acquire. Making manure requires time as demonstrated in VGSW beneficiary's comment:

“We have been taught on how to improve our yield and also how to market our crops but we need capital to acquire quality seeds and manure. Making our own manure requires time and energy and the benefit from this manure are less than the time and energy we put into making these manure” (VGSW beneficiary, 24/11/ 2016).

According to participants, another key issue that was linked to land problem was lack of transportation means to transport goods from the farm to the market. This was confirmed when the researcher observed beneficiaries carrying crops on their heads from the farms to the market in all the study regions. In probing further, it was found that lack of transportation has continued to force community members in the study regions to stick to subsistence agriculture instead of commercial farming where they can produce in larger quantities for consumption and commercial purposes. According to participants, although the majority of beneficiaries do not have land, those who owned land were not able to effectively cultivate them because of the above-mentioned challenges. Another key issue that was linked to land identified by participants causing poverty in the study regions was urban migration. According to them the active population that could have been engaged in agricultural activities have migrated to urban areas and those left in rural areas were either too old or too young to continue with agricultural activities. As illustrated: “My children are big and they are all in urban areas. I have difficulties to cultivate given my age and the fact that I always fall sick. I cannot work as I used to when I was young and this makes my family very poor and always desperate for a single meal a day” (PI beneficiary, 23/11/2016). Another VGSW beneficiary explained that she lost her husband in 2012 and she is now living with her grandchildren and things are not easy. She has to fight with her children because they have abandoned the land they were cultivating and supporting her with food, and moved to city (VGSW beneficiary, 24/11/2016). In a follow up probing, it was found that many young people in the study areas do not have an interest in agriculture as explained by one of the SIL beneficiaries: “Being a farmer in the community, you will remain poor for the rest of your life, it is better to search office jobs in urban areas” (SIL beneficiary, 7/7/2018).

4.2.3 LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES

According to NGO beneficiaries, infertile land was not the only cause of poverty in their communities but also the lack of infrastructural facilities was described as a serious problem in the study areas as some of the beneficiaries explained:

“The biggest problem here is lack of infrastructure which limits transportation. There are some villages with fertile soil but they are located far from our communities. We are not able to engage in any meaningful farming on these lands because there are no good roads to these farms, meaning we have to walk to the farm and by the time we get to the farm we are already tired, meaning that the day has been wasted for nothing” (SIL beneficiary, 27/06/ 2018).

A PI beneficiary shaking her head in frustration said, “I can only produce enough crops for consumption unlike before when we used to produce for commercial purposes” (PI beneficiary 26/11/1016). She said, it now takes about three to five days for crops to get to the city market in urban areas and this is too costly. According to her, their misery in the rural area is because the government of Cameroon has neglected road and farming infrastructure.

One of their fears is that if the government continues to fail to invest in farm to market roads and other infrastructure to support rural communities, this will lead to a cycle of poverty where future generations will be laboring every day and yet remain in poverty. This was confirmed when the researcher was travelling to and from Bamenda to Yaoundé during the time of data collection from September 2016 to July 2018. The researcher had to disembark from the bus and walk. In worse situations, he had to assist in pulling the bus out of deep potholes. Some of his interview trips were cancelled simply because of bad roads linking communities in the regions under study. In addition to lack of good roads and other infrastructure in the study areas, participants also explained that harsh weather is making matters worse as another PI beneficiary stated, “The worsening state of our farm-to-market roads due to bad weather has made it difficult for us to transport our foodstuffs to the city market where we can sell at a higher prices” (PI beneficiary 26/11/2016). According to him, harsh weather has turned what used to be their source of income into a nightmare. He further said, “I can no longer afford to buy books for my children in school or provide medication when they are sick for want of enough income” (PI beneficiary, 26/11/2016).

Figure 5: Dilapidated Bamenda-Babadjou road: an endless nightmare for travellers



Source: Mimi Mefo Takambou

Figure 6: Bamenda-Babadjou road



Source: Journal du Cameroun 2018.

In addition to bad roads, another key issue raised by participants that was linked to bad roads was lack of storage facilities. Beneficiaries explained that they cannot store their perishable goods until they get to the market: “It is not easy to keep some perishable goods to sell on our

village market day because they will get bad before the market day” (SIL beneficiary, 24/6/2018). Another beneficiary said, “We harvest perishable goods only on market days because there are no buyers within the week and we cannot store them because there are storage facilities” (PI beneficiary, 23/8/2017).

From their views, there is lack of storage facilities and insufficient knowledge on how to process perishable goods and as a result perishable crops get spoiled in farms because they cannot sell them within the week or store them to sell on market days. In a further discussion, it was established that access routes to link the communities and urban areas was a possible solution to reduce poverty. This will ease means of transportation of crops from farms to urban areas. It will also be easier for farmers to get to their farms early in the morning with the strength to carry out cultivation.

Another issue that was raised in most discussions linking bad roads was destruction of physical infrastructure because of the crises going on in North-west and South-west regions of Cameroon. They said community councils have abandoned basic maintenance and there is high destruction and vandalism in all the subdivisions in North-west and South-west regions in Cameroon. From their views, this situation might go beyond salvaging as necessities such as pipe-borne water and health facilities were being damaged. It was observed that beneficiaries in Bafut have to walk long distances to fetch water because pipe-borne water close to their homes have been vandalised. In a further discussion, another respondent said hospitals have been burnt down and they are unable to go to hospitals for treatment (VGSW beneficiary 19/6/2018).

4.2.4 LACK OF INTERNET ACCESS

Another key problem observed causing poverty in the NWR was lack of internet access. During the data collection period there was internet disconnection in the NWR. NGO officials explained that many companies were leaving the region because of internet disconnection. The one of the PI manager said that the disconnection of internet in the region was causing delays in most of their programmes because their activities require the internet as demonstrated in one of his comment: “We cannot send our progress report to our partners on time because there is no internet and post office is not more function as before. We have to travel to other regions only because we want to have access to internet” (PI manager Bamenda 28/6/2017). A SIL beneficiary explained that the disconnection of internet in the region has made life more

difficult for them ‘‘the cutting off of internet in our area is making life very difficult for us. Before it was easy to communicate through WhatsApp to know what was going on in the market in Douala but now we need airtime instead of data to communicate and some of us do not have money to buy airtime because airtime is very expensive than data’’ (SIL beneficiary, 20/7/2018). From his views, disconnection of internet is pushing them into poverty because the money that can be use in buying bread is now used in buying airtime. The disadvantage is that they are not able to communicate with the transporters of the goods or to communicate with the people in Douala to know when there is high demand for crops in the market so as to send their crops to the market. This was confirmed by the researcher as he was unable to search for information on the internet in NWR.

4.2.5 LACK OF ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

In addition to the above-mentioned perception of poverty in the study region, participants said that there was lack of electricity supply. They said lack of electricity was affecting them negatively because they cannot store their perishable goods to sell on village market day because they will get bad before the market day. According to one respondent, lack of electricity was affecting mostly women in rural areas as evidenced in PI beneficiary’s statement, ‘‘We need to leave our farms early because we need to fetch wood as we do not have electricity in our community like other communities. We spent hours collecting wood for cooking and heating’’ (PI beneficiary, 4/7/ 2018). From her views, the time that could have been spent cultivating crops in the farm is wasted in fetching firewood because they do not use electricity to light their rooms and cook like in other communities. A SIL beneficiary said life is very difficult without electricity ‘‘we cannot charge our cell phone here, we need to go to people who have generator and at time their generators are off, meaning we cannot communicate through the phone’’ (SIL beneficiary 13/11/2016). From his views, lack of electricity is making life more difficult for them because they need to travel long distances to charge their phone and also to buy goods and services that need electricity. From observation, lack of electricity was seen as one of the causes of poverty in the study because those who were in retail business were not able to stock goods that need electricity such as perishable goods. Furthermore they cannot charge their cell phones and cell phones are necessary tool for communication. Factories cannot be constructed in these areas because there is no electricity supply.

4.2.6 LACK OF TRAINING CENTRES

The PI administrative director said that there are no training institutions where children can acquire the skills needed in the job market. A PI beneficiary explained that children have to walk long distances to get to school and by the time they get there they are already very tired as demonstrated in one of her comments:

“The closest primary school here is catholic primary school and we cannot afford the fees, my children are studying in government primary school. They have to cover a very long distance on foot to school and from school. By the time they arrived home, they are already very tired and cannot do their home effectively because they need to sleep earlier in order to wake up earlier not to be late in school” (PI beneficiary/23/11/2016).

This SIL beneficiary further explained that, although children walk long distances to schools, children are congested in classes. In addition, parent teacher associations control some primary schools and they do not have enough funds to pay qualified teachers:

“Our government primary schools are managed by Parent Teacher Association (PTA), we do not have enough funds to manage this primary schools, the little funds we generate are from school fees and parents find it very difficult to raise these fees. Communities are not able to hire qualified teachers to teach in these schools and government is doing nothing to assist with construction and teachers” (SIL beneficiary, 12/07/2018).

4.2.7 POOR BANKING SYSTEM

In a follow up probe, another key problem that was identified by respondents was the poor banking system. They said that the banking system in the regions under study was poor and, more to that, there were no other institutions to boost small and medium-size enterprises in the region. Beneficiaries said they cannot risk losing their money because those who were able to save the little that was left after consumption almost lost everything they saved in post offices as evidenced in VGSW beneficiary's comment: “We don't have any saving scheme. I don't want any saving scheme. I used to save with the post office and since I lost my saving in the post office when post offices had financial crises, I have lost faith in all the saving schemes in

this country” (VGSW beneficiary, 10/12/2016). The researcher who was not able to withdraw his savings from Bamenda Post Office simply because the post office had financial crises confirmed this. Everyone who was saving with the Post Office has lost faith because they could not get the money they saved. The banking system is too poor and those who could save preferred to keep their money in their houses than in banks. This means starting a business is not possible because there are no banks to give loans to those who are willing to start businesses.

Through discussions, it was also established that there are no secondary industries in the region to boost production and provide jobs for those who have skills to work in these industries. According to respondents, because of lack of secondary and service industries in the rural areas the active population were migrating to urban areas in search of jobs. The unavoidable consequence has been a reduction in farm labour as those who are left behind are the elderly and children who are dependents. One of the reasons given by the PI field coordinator for Boyo is that young people are not interested in agriculture because communities are still practicing subsistence farming, which means that they cannot produce enough for consumption (PI field coordinator, 26/12/ 2016).

5.2.7 FLUCTUATION IN CLIMATE

In addition to lack of infrastructural facilities in the study areas, the climate problem was observed to be widespread in both study regions. In the research sites, precipitation was consistently mentioned to be unpredictable and changeable as demonstrated in VGSW’s remark, “We don’t really know when the rainy season will start and when it will end. At times, it will start very late. In addition to irregular rainfall, rainstorms usually contribute to agricultural losses” (VGSW beneficiary, 23/11/ 2016). Another beneficiary explained that crops are not doing well because there is lack of rainfall and, when it rains, the intensity and duration is so high and long that it results in flooding. At times, the intensity is so high that in some cases the farms are washed away. He cites an example of how high intensity rainfall washed away farms in Fundong subdivision in August 2017 (PI beneficiary, 20/6/2018). PI field coordinator stated that the NWR has currently been having sighs of sorrow in the face of degrading roads that worsen in the rainy season. He further said that all roads have been suffering from wear, tear and have deteriorated into bumps and mud that makes movements difficult (PI field coordinator, 24/07/2018). From his views, tarred roads in NWR are

comparable to earth roads in rural areas because the presence of potholes and mud makes it hard for agriculturalists to convey their goods to the marketplace.

Figure 7: Bamenda -Nkambe Road



Source: Journal du Cameroun 2018.

In addition to damages caused by high intensive rain on farms, VGSW beneficiaries also explained that pipe-borne water is running out in dry seasons because of low volumes of water in the dam. As a result, during dry seasons community members are unemployed from the month of December to April because it is extremely difficult to grow any crops because there is often a lack of water for the uphill terraced fields in the dry season: “We grow onions, garlic, and cabbages in the dry season. Because of low rain fall, our dams are dry and we need water for our cultivation” (VGSW, beneficiary, 24/11/2016).

5.2.8 POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN CAMEROON

According to participants, another significant perception of poverty in the study regions and other parts of Cameroon was the increasing occurrence of Boko Haram killings in the country. The study participants in Baka community in the east region said there has been influx of Central African Republic refugees in the region making the region one the highest crime area. The study participants in the NWR mentioned the war of secession that has been going on in

the North-west and south-west regions of Cameroon since the early 2017 as one of the main roots of poverty;

“We have been indoors now for almost two weeks and some of our neighbours are living in bushes because of the killing going on here. Some are now refugees in Nigeria and other countries. We are still here because we do not know where to go. All the food we had is finished. I do not know what my children will be eating because there are indications that this crisis will not end now” (SIL beneficiary, 04/07/2018).

A PI beneficiary also stated that, because of the war of secession in the region, thousands of residents in the North-west regions have crossed over to the French-speaking parts of the country while others have gone out of the country. He further said that secessionists have damaged bridges linking different localities and blocked major roads in the region. He further said that there are some weeks when everyone in the region is forced to remain indoors (PI beneficiary 20/07/2018).

Figure 8: Ghost town' day in the North-west region, Cameroon.



Source: Amindeh Blaise Atabong 2018

A PI beneficiary in Boyo division explained that since the crises began they have not been able to harvest the crops they cultivated. They are dependent on remittances received from family members who are living in other countries for their livelihoods. However, financial institutions in the NWR are most of the times not operating because of the crises in the region and people have to travel to the Western region to collect these remittances (PI beneficiary June 2018).

From his views, the remittances are not enough. Additionally, they have to travel to other regions which involve cost and time in order to collect the remittances.

In addition to political instability, some participants said the country is poor and will continue to be poor because of bad government and embezzlement as shown in one of the VGSW beneficiary comments;

“Our head of state has been in power now for more than thirty years simply because they have been manipulating the country’s constitutions. Cameroon money have been placed in foreign banks in countries such as, Switzerland, Germany, France, and were starving here” (VGSW beneficiary, 14/12/2016).

Another participant added that if you are not well connected with the people who have power in the government, you would never gain employment in the public sector in Cameroon;

“I have first degree in economics. I have been writing entrance exams into public service and I always past the written part and fail the interview simply because I do not have enough money to bribe or connected to high rank people in the government. That is why you find so many graduate working as volunteers for NGOs in Cameroon” (VGSW community volunteer, 17/12/ 2016).

From their views, poverty in Cameroon is caused by a bad system of government and lack of transparency and accountability because there is lack of democracy in Cameroon. According to them this factor has continued to prevent those who are willing and able to work to get out of poverty.

Another perception of poverty in the study regions according to the participants is early marriages, especially in Mbororo communities. A PI field coordinator commented, “One of the causes of poverty in this region is early marriages. Children who are supposed to be in school and learn a skill are in marriages and they are busy making children” (PI field coordinator, 27/11/2016). He added that in Baka community, children are busy working in Bantu plantations because they want immediate income instead of studying in schools. One SIL beneficiary explained that the Bantu children in schools are discriminating against the few Baka children who attend schools and this factor has discouraged many Baka children from going to schools. The above factors were found to be problems preventing the population from getting out of poverty.

The above subsection discusses objective two part one of the study which focusses on NGOs staffs and their beneficiaries experience of poverty. The next subsection below will discuss

objective two part two of the study which focuses on the study NGOs projects and their level of success in poverty reduction.

4.3 OBJECTIVE TWO PART TWO: UNDERSTANDING THE LEVEL OF NGOS SUCCESS IN POVERTY REDUCTION IN THE STUDY REGIONS.

4.3.1 EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

In an attempt to identify how the NGOs have been assisting beneficiaries to overcome their poverty in the study areas, the question “what campaigns and programmes in this NGO are you involved with and in your opinion, what has been the social and economic impact of these projects in your life since they were established or when you became a beneficiary was asked. It was found that NGOs have educational programmes for their beneficiaries. One of such programme was educating farmers on how to farm hilly areas as supported in one of the PI beneficiary statements;

“PI have been preaching to us about afforestation, they have given us plants seed and taught us how to plant trees in other to prevent soil erosion. They also educate us on the construction of steps along the hilly areas by cutting the rock layers to reduce the flow of rivers and plugging of gullies to prevent gully erosion. However, these measures are not effective because we continue to face serious damages whenever there is high intensive of rain in our farms” (PI beneficiary 27/6/ 2018).

From his perspective, they continue to be poor because the measures they are implementing are not helping to improve crop production.

When the same question above was asked to PI administrative director, he said PI is using mother tongue as a strategy to fight poverty in school in Baka community. He said, “Children were not interested in education and PI have come up with a new strategy called ‘inter-cultural multilingual education’. This system is linked to community culture and their way of life where Baka teenagers learn to love their own dialect, and culture from an early age. However, this was a failure as many children are out of school” (PL administrative manager, 18/7/ 2018). The same PI manager also said that they have brought in a nutritional programme to help provide food in schools but the attendance is still discouraging.

Further probing found that one of the reasons children were not interested in school is because Baka children were being discriminated against in school by Bantu children and this

discouraged so many children from attending school in the Baka community. PI field coordinator further explained that the government of Cameroon effort in fighting discrimination in schools in this community is not enough (PI field coordinator, 29/06/2018). Talking about developmental programmes and poverty reduction with one of the SIL top-level manager and he stated language programme is one of their tool used in fighting poverty in the regions under study. He further said that SIL has introduced a new strategy where children are taught in primary school in their mother tongue and this concept has been tested in Fundong subdivision and the results proved that those who are taught in their mother tongue tend to perform better academically in comparison with those taught in foreign languages. He stated, “Our language concept has been introduced in primary schools in our project communities and the results are positive. Children who were taught in their mother tongue turn to do well in school than those taught in foreign language” (SIL manager, 29/6/ 2018).

In an attempt to identify how mother tongue is a tool to fight poverty, SIL national language director said:

“Our language programme is important. It is a fact that Mother tongue is the most genuine tool for national development. For any development to have a positive effect in rural areas, community members must be involved in the project. For them to be involved, they need to understand what is going on in the project. This is possible when mother tongue is use in the discussion. It also help children to understand their lessons straightforwardly than foreign languages” (SIL manager, 18/7/2018).

SIL field coordinator for Ngoketunjia had the same views. He said;

“Mother tongue helps to reduce poverty by increasing the worth and proficiency of the labour offered by the poor and by mitigating the population, health and nutritional consequences of poverty. It has been proven that any meaningful and significant development can only be achieved in rural areas when the community members are aware of what is going on. This can only be possible when discussion between the stakeholders is in languages that are understood by all the stakeholders in rural communities” (SIL field coordinator, 24/06/2018).

In their views, mother tongue in any educational programme is the key to poverty reduction in rural areas where the majority of people understand only mother tongue. According to them any meaningful and significant development in a rural community can be achieved only when the community members are aware of what is going on and more especially when discussions

between the stakeholders are in languages that are understood by all the stakeholders in rural communities. This was confirmed in NGO general meetings when the researcher observed that most general meeting discussions were dominated by NGO officials and these discussions were either in French or English and beneficiaries were using mother tongue. The fact that beneficiaries could not understand any of the languages used by NGO officials prevented active participation. According to SIL officials, the reason they continued with the mother tongue programme is that they believed it will have a positive impact in the future.

From their views, language programme opened children's minds to understand the basic formulas, which are very important in the development of scientific subjects. The SIL national language director explained, "It is necessary to teach pupils in the language they comprehend best and most of the time the language that pupils appreciate best is their mother tongue" (SIL national language director, 10/07/2018). Another SIL staff member in the language department further explains that to learn and understand mathematics it is imperative for pupils to be literate in the language of mathematics: "To gain knowledge in mathematics, primary pupils have to master the language in which it is taught. Students who are not taught in mother tongue have to master foreign language in order to master mathematics". (SIL regional director Bamenda, 24/6/ 2018). From the views of SIL officials, this programme is beneficial because students do not have a dual challenge of mastering both mathematics and a foreign language because learners' support materials are written in the learners' mother tongue. Hence, the translation of mathematical texts makes it easier for learners to access the context and understand the mathematics.

In further probing to understand why the language programme was not helping to reduce poverty, one of the reasons as explained by SIL field coordinator for Ngoketunjia division is that those who knew how to read and write in some communities were not interested in the programme. As a result, there were no volunteers to assist in teaching mother tongue in some rural communities. Furthermore, those who were willing to attend workshops organised by SIL to teach mother tongue were coming with the hope that SIL will assist them with food and transport money as proven in one of his comments;

"Our language programme continues to fail because those who can assist as volunteers in communities are not willing to assist. As a result, when workshops are organised, our mother organisation will come with expert to teach and coordinate these workshops. When the team from mother organization is coming, the hall is always full because

people believed food and transport money would be given to them. As such, they come not because they are interested in the programme but because they want to receive gifts” (SIL field coordinator, 27/6/2018).

His views were confirmed when the researcher observed that most general meetings organised by the SIL mother organisation in Ngoketunjia division were always having higher attendance than those organised by the SIL regional organisation. Further probing to find out why there was a high level of attendance in SIL mother organisation meetings, a SIL community volunteer confirmed that the SIL mother organisation usually shares food and transport money with those who attend these meeting. In his opinion, this was a setback because those who are not direct beneficiaries of this organisation are making most decisions that do not favour the direct beneficiaries.

In probing for clarification as to why the beneficiaries were interested only in food and transport money, the SIL community volunteer explained that the food money they received is usually more than they usually earned from working on their farms, meaning these workshops were like a source of income for community members. After further probing to identify why beneficiaries were not willing to attend these workshops, it was found that workshops were being organised on days that people were very busy doing farm work as demonstrated in one of the beneficiary’s comments: “Most general meetings are organized on day that people are busy on their farm. No one will leave his farm work to attend NGOs meetings knowing that the family need food” (SIL beneficiary, 08/07/ 2018). From his experience, meetings are supposed to be organised on days that people are not busy with farm work so that they can have time to attend the meetings.

According to one respondent, another reason the SIL language project continues to be a failure after the implementation of what SIL thought was the best strategy, is that communities like Bamessing, Babanlang and Bagolang are Muslim communities. These communities felt that the SIL language programme in their communities was a way of forcing Christianity on them as supported in one of the comments made by the SIL language field coordinator for Ngoketunjia;

“Our programme is failing in Muslim communities especially in Bamessing, Babanlang and Bagolang because these are Muslim communities and they believed our aim is to introduce Christianity into their communities rather than teaching them on how to read and write in their mother tongue” (SIL field coordinator,27/6/2018).

He further explained that since parents were against this programme, they were making it harder for it to succeed even in primary schools. However, SIL is doing much to encourage Muslim communities to learn from their neighbouring Christian communities. Adults who have never been to school are able to read and write in their mother tongue. He explained;

“We are trying to teach adults and also encouraging them to copy from neighbouring communities where adults who have never been to school before are able to read and write in mother tongue simply because they are willing to be part of our project” (SIL field coordinator, 27/6 2018).

The SIL language director said they have learned from their past mistakes and they are now dealing with subjects that have nothing to do with the Bible in these communities. They believe that through this process the project will have a positive impact in the future as they continue to deal with the obstacles preventing them from achieving their main goal (SIL manager Cameroon, 18/07/ 2018).

Moreover, as seen above in Ngoketunjia division, those who knew how to read and write were not willing to be part of the organisation as further explained by one of the SIL community volunteer who was also a beneficiary in Babungo;

“Very few people here knew how to read and write but they were not willing to be part of SIL and those who were willing to be volunteer can only assist in other services and not teaching. Furthermore, SIL do not have enough resources to employ people from all the community to teach mother tongue in all the villages in” (SIL community volunteer 28/06/ 2018).

This was a problem because the organisation was forced to employ more people and pay higher wages in order to encourage those who knew how to read and write to be part of the organisation: “Surprisingly you will be asked to teach using mother tongue. What mother tongue? I told them I do not really know mother tongue very well” (SIL beneficiary in Babungo 8/07/2018). From his expression, it is very evident that this volunteer was not prepared because he had not undergone any training regarding mother tongue.

Another reason given by the SIL field coordinator for why their mother tongue project continues to be a failure is limited resources as shown in one of his remarks;

“Our organisation depend much on volunteers because we do not have enough resources to employ highly qualify staffs and necessary equipment for the smooth

running of our programmes but the organisation is dealing with this issue as we continue to encourage volunteers to give a helping hand” (SIL Manager 24/06/ 2018).

Furthermore, SIL community volunteers explained that communities have a diverse population making it very difficult for this language programme to run smoothly in school as stated;

“We are finding it very difficult to teach in a mother tongue because in most classes you will discover that children are coming from very different background(s) with different languages and teaching in mother tongue will not be effective because more than half of the class will not understand this language” (SIL community volunteer, 08/07/2018).

Another community volunteer added that there was lack of monitoring and evaluation to correct what was going wrong as demonstrated in his comment;

“The challenges we faced in this community is that when SIL assigned a task, they don’t follow-up to see if things are going on well. At times, we have to stop what we are doing because we do not know if what we are doing is the right thing. We need constant supervision” (SIL community volunteer Bamunka, 29/06/2018).

According to SIL officials in Baka community, the most important reason the SIL language programme continues to fail is not lack of monitoring and evaluation but the government of Cameroon is not doing enough to promote education in this community. Children are not studying in a conducive environment. Available facilities in this area are provided by NGOs as demonstrated in SIL language national director’s statement;

“In most primary schools in this area, there are more than 70 pupils crowded in a very small classroom and most of these classes are constructed by NGOs. It is difficult for us to provide school with everything without enough assistant from the government” (SIL manager, June 2018).

The above views were confirmed by SIL beneficiaries and community volunteers when the question was asked: how do you benefit from NGOs’ educational programme in your community? A SIL beneficiary explained that she is not benefiting from NGO activities because there is no need for her to send her children to school with no teachers and classrooms are too crowded. She commented;

“Children who are supposed to be in different levels are crowded in the same classroom without textbooks and most of the time the teachers are often absent. The aim of

education is to equip children with the skills that they need to realize their potential. Why should I sent my child to school when I know he is not going to learn anything? It is better I should have sent them to urban area with good schools” (SIL beneficiary, 15/07/2018).

From their views, education programmes especially in Baka community continue to be a disaster because it is difficult for students to study effectively when they lack almost all basic study materials.

Studied NGOS stakeholders consistently mentioned that most government schools in rural areas are managed by Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) and most of these teachers lack basic skills. They added that the vast majority of children entering schools come from homes where parents have no knowledge of formal education. There is lack of reading skills that can provide a platform for learning in most communities. Children struggle to make the transition from one level to another and their parents struggle to provide necessary support with homework as evidenced in one of the SIL national language director’s comments;

“Majority of children enrolling in schools come from uneducated home where there is lack of introduction to early reading, and subjects in schools are in languages that do not provide a good platform for learning. This is discouraging children from learning and most of them struggle to get promotion to the next class, as their parents cannot provide the necessary support with homework. Families are not willing to go through this humiliation because even if children are in school, Children do not go hungry for want of textbooks” (SIL manager, 17/07/2018).

The other point that came up consistently regarding education in Baka community was that families in Baka community have been urged by NGOs and other organisations trying to reduce poverty to send children to schools without thoroughly thinking about the implications of sending children to school with an empty stomach. It was found that families preferred to send their children to work in the Bantu plantations to earn some money for their family and some wanted their children to assist them on farms. As one SIL community volunteer commented; “the issue of urging Baka children to go to school is a very big problem in this community. Education is good but children cannot go to school with an empty stomach” (SIL community volunteer 24/06/2018).

He felt that instructing families to send all their children to school was a second step before the first step. He further explained that Baka were still living almost in a communal society where

they rely only on agriculture and families are providing all their basic needs by themselves and there is a belief that children can be taught only how to farm. He further explained that this affected educational programmes because instead of studying in schools children are helping parents on farms or working in the Bantu plantations for income.

Discussions with another SIL community volunteer revealed that there is no way this education can be effective in Baka community because there is an extreme level of deficiency as demonstrated in one of his comments;

“Because of poverty many Baka families preferred to send their children to work in farms. They want immediate income and children are regarded as source of income in this community. They preferred children to work in Bantus plantation to assist them with income. Furthermore, there were no serious educational programme in community for the elderly such as adult literacy programme, which could benefit the old and open their mind about the importance of education in this community. Many people believed farming is the only possible solution that could get them out of poverty” (SIL community volunteer in Baka 10/07// 2018).

From their views, they know education is a solution to poverty. However, education cannot be effective unless the issue of chronic poverty in this community is first solved.

In an attempt to understand if there were scholarships programmes to assist children in schools, it was found that there were scholarships for children. What was needed in Baka community was to assist them to improve their agricultural sector as evidenced in the SIL community volunteer’s comment;

“The issue of children helping families in the forest should be dealt with first before children can concentrate on their studies in this community, because scholarships are not enough to cover family basic needs” (SIL community volunteer for Baka, July, 2018).

He further commented that “children are dropping out of schools because parents do not care about education and children go to school with an empty stomach and sometimes they would have no dinner” (SIL field coordinator 27/06/2018).

In the same discussion with SIL and PI beneficiaries in Baka community in order to identify why Baka were not interested in education, the beneficiaries explained that the level of unemployment in Cameroon is too high and they believed that education is not the key to poverty reduction. As a result, Baka people have preferred to send their children to work in

Bantu plantations rather than going to school. According to them sending children to school without thorough examination of the obstacles is one of the reasons educational programmes are not effective in Baka community as evidenced in one of the SIL beneficiary comments:

“I have observed my neighbour child reach close to malnourishment point innocently because the child’s parents have been made to believe that education was the only right way to get out of poverty and families sent their children to school with no food” (PI beneficiary in Baka community 13/07/2018).

A PI community volunteer who is also a beneficiary commented on the negative effect of urging Baka to send children to school;

“I left school because most of time I went with an empty stomach in the morning. After years of being hungry, I decided to go to Bantu plantation to search for what to eat, and some days I get some few francs which is enough to buy a small thing or a bite to ease the pain of hunger in my family” (SIL beneficiary 24/06/2018).

PI and SIL beneficiaries consistently said they preferred their children to help in the forest because the scholarships were not enough to assist children with all their basic needs. The other points that came up regarding education in Baka community was the issue of discrimination in schools. According to respondents perspicacity or discrimination in schools did not only affect the livelihood opportunities for those who were willing to study but it also encouraged many parents to send their children to work in Bantu plantations because working in Bantu plantations was a source of income for many Baka (PI beneficiary, 08/07/2018).

In further discussion with the PI administrative director to identify what PI was doing to encourage fathers to send their kids to study in schools, the same PI director said that PI was not only helping the Baka children with scholarships, but was also building classrooms and teachers’ houses. He further said that PI brought in nutritional programmes to teach Baka how to prepare nutritional food and they also provide food to school children just to encourage them to take education seriously but the education system in this community has never improved to the level which PI was expecting;

“We give scholarships to children with the aim that this will discourage parents from sending their children to work in Bantus plantation for income and will encourage children to go to school, at the end they refuse to go to school because they believed going to school is waste of resources. We brought in nutritional programmes to teach

them how to prepare nutritional food and also provide food to school children, yet they are not interested in education” (PI administrative director, 02/07/2018).

In further probing to understand why nutritional programmes were not effective, the same PI official explained that it is difficult for Baka to embark on these nutritional programmes because the Baka do not have resources to afford the necessary ingredients to prepare nutritional food. He also added that they find it difficult to measure the right quantity of the ingredients needed for the nutritional food (PI manager, 24/06/2018).

Another PI field coordinator said they know education is an important key to poverty reduction and PI was trying to change the school calendar year to encourage children to go back to school;

“We want a school holidays that is different from Cameroon school calendar, when the rest of Cameroon are in school, Baka schools should be on holidays, so that children can leave school when it is reaping season to help their parents in farms” (PI field coordinator, 20/06/ 2018).

From his views, if the school calendar year is changed, parents will allow their children to attend classes because the harvesting period is when children are supposed to be in schools. However, he further said that this strategy has not been implemented because only the Cameroon government can change the school calendar year: “We have been struggling with this plan but our organisation do not have power to influence any change in school curriculum in Cameroon, only the government have such power” (PI field coordinator 05/07/2018). The same discussion with SIL national language director revealed that the government is not willing to assist because they wanted Baka to integrate fully into Cameroon society (SIL director, 17/07. 2018).

The issue of discrimination was also found in the NWR. One of the setbacks in the PI educational programme in the NWR was discrimination in Mbororo communities. According to the PI field coordinator for Momo, discrimination is creating gender gaps in Mbororo communities where only boys are allowed to attend school as demonstrated in one of his comments;

“Girls in Mbororo communities who are in classrooms are the lucky ones. Over 75% of girls’ children are out of school and just a handful of the female children in these communities make it through to secondary education because they believed school is only for boys and girls for marriage” (PI field coordinator, 09/12/ 2017).

In a follow up probing to identify what is happening as workshops are being organised to sensitize Mbororo communities about the importance of education yet there is discrimination between boys and girls in families. It was found that when workshops are organised Mbororo households do not come to general meetings organised by NGOs. Furthermore, the PI administrative director also said that to fully build the capacity of teachers so that they can handle educational issues demands full training and it is very costly to sponsor as demonstrated in one of his comments;

“We do not have enough resources to sponsor teachers through teacher training colleges but what is discouraging is the fact that, the few we sent to these training colleges are not willing to teach in rural areas, they preferred urban areas” (PI director, 10/07/2018).

From participants' views, it can be summarised that educational programmes continue to fail in the studied regions because there is lack of planning and implementation, which discourages beneficiaries from being part of the solution to their problems. Educational programmes were failing in Baka community because there was chronic poverty in this community. Education is a solution to poverty but education cannot be effective unless chronic poverty is solved. Most communities are Muslim communities and they believe the SIL intention was to bring Christianity into their communities and, as a result, they were not interested in SIL educational programmes. Furthermore, the population in Ngoketunjia division is diverse making it very difficult to teach mother tongue in schools and SIL did not have enough resources to employ diverse teachers to handle this programme in schools.

4.3.2 PI HOUSING PROJECT IN BAKA COMMUNITY

One of the programmes in the study areas to fight poverty is the PI housing project in Baka community. According to the PI administrative director, PI was using a needs based approach to assess community priorities. Through this approach, PI found that the best way to deal with the poverty situation in Baka community was the construction of modern houses for the Baka who were living in shacks. In searching for explanations for why the PI housing project was not achieving its objective when shelters are a necessity to overcome poverty, it was found that there was lack of commitment on the part of PI officials and their funders which requires them to assess the needs and capabilities of their beneficiaries before engaging in a housing project. This was explained by one of the PI manager who was a coordinator when the housing project was launched in Baka;

“The first issue is that we were using needs based approach and never involved community members in the building plan to know what they really wanted, they were contacted when these houses have already been completed and we wanted to give the houses to them” (PI field coordinator 12/07/2018).

The same PI official explained that PI and their funders believe that housing is a basic necessity and Baka were going to be very happy to receive houses as gifts;

“The Baka were delivering children in bushes, additionally, they were living in horrible environment, in rainy season their shacks are leaking water, making life more difficult for them and we thought the best way to overcome this social problem was to give them modern houses free of charge” (PI director, Bamenda June 2018).

Talking to the beneficiaries of these houses, one beneficiary said that he was not feeling comfortable in his new PI house: “I don’t like these houses built for us, they are not warm and comfortable, my shack is very comfortable and very warm in raining season” (PI house beneficiary, 29/06/2018). They moved into these new houses because they were gifts, while some of the beneficiaries maintained their old shacks and some built new shacks close to these new houses. A PI community volunteer who was also a beneficiary said that the cost of maintaining their traditional shacks is low as compared to modern houses. Furthermore, they like to warm their shacks by making a fire and they were not comfortable making fires in modern houses as opposed to their traditional houses. He said, “We like to keep our shacks warm throughout with fire but this new houses are very cold and we cannot make fire inside” (PI community volunteer, 10/07/2018). From the views of these participants, housing project was not the best solution to deal with their poverty because living in these houses reduces their communication with their ancestors. They believed that communicating with their ancestor will make thing easy for them to overcome their life challenges as PI community volunteer supported the PI beneficiary’s views and said that Baka preferred to live in the forest because they believed it easier for them to communicate with their ancestors when they are in their shacks in the forest than when they are living in modern houses. He stated, “Most people in this community believed that communication with ancestors when you are in a shacks is easier than when they are living in modern houses” (PI community volunteer Baka, 10/07/2018).

Another PI community volunteer who was a beneficiary said, “It is needless to have a beautiful house when you cannot communicate with your ancestors successfully. Communication is easy when we are in our shacks” (PI community volunteer, 29/06/2018). Another volunteer stated

that the Bakas are nomadic and never had a fixed place to call home, so giving them houses was not necessary (PI community volunteer, June 2018). The reason he gave was that Baka were moving from one area to another in the forest especially when they lost a relative. According to them, there is a belief that their ancestors are not pleased with some area especially those areas where they lost a relative (PI community volunteer, 29/06/2018). This was confirmed when the researcher observed that the few Baka who finally moved to PI constructed houses built smaller shacks close to the PI modern houses in the community.

One beneficiary perceived that living in large modern houses given to them will have some consequences, including a loss of cultural practices. Another beneficiary said he is not happy this gift because he saw the gift as a way of removing them from the forest: “These houses given to us is another way of removing us from the forest, what is wrong with our shacks?” (PI house beneficiary, July 2018). From his views, negotiating with government to allow them continue to live in the forest was more important to them than building new houses which they perceived as another way of forcing them to leave the forest.

In probing for clarification why the NGO officials were not implementing the suggestions that were made by their beneficiaries, the PI administrative director explained that there are some suggestions that cannot be implemented immediately as they have to discuss these suggestions with their funders first, especially suggestions that have to do with spending of funds. He said:

“We do not have available funds that can be spend at any time. In most cases, we need to discuss financial issues with our funders before any action can be taken. What delayed implementation of recommendations at time is the time duration we have to meet our funders” (PI director, July 2018).

A PI field coordinator also said the money they get from their funders is not always enough to run the affairs of the projects. Sometimes PI has to do fundraising activities and that take a lot of time because they cannot focus on one thing only and this process ends up delaying the implementation of the suggestion made by their beneficiaries (PI field coordinator, 26/06 2018).

Another reason given by the PI field coordinator why some suggestions are not implemented is that some people are poor in such a way that they can only offer unskilled labour as their contribution and NGOs at times need financial resources.

From his perspective, since the beneficiaries cannot assist financially, it is very difficult to raise the needed funds immediately, and before these funds are raised there are already other

imperative issues that need immediate solutions. According to him, the above-mentioned factors are preventing them from implementing strategies that will reduce poverty in their project communities.

Another issue that came up repeatedly was that NGOs were using French and English language in their general meetings and most of the beneficiaries can only understand their mother tongue. An attempt was made to identify why the PI did not try to use people who can articulate in both languages so that beneficiaries can understand what they were discussing and also take part in decision making knowing that the core to the answer of beneficiaries' poverty is beneficiaries themselves getting involved in decisions that influence their own survival. The PI administrative director explained that good translators are too expensive to hire and the organisation did not have enough funds to hire these translators. He further explained that in the past, they did try to use people from Bantu community to do the translation but the context was not well translated and it resulted in more frustration and since then they have stopped using local translators (PI director, 05/07/2018). The same discussion with another PI director revealed almost the same information as he explained;

“It is not always possible to put a conversation on hold while the interpreter does lengthy research, or edit what has already been said. Additionally, it is difficult to find a good translator because only very few Baka have gone to schools and the few who can translate thoroughly are working with other organisations that pays higher salaries” (PI field coordinator, 24/062018).

From their views, discussion between people is more than just getting an idea across. According to them, there are vagueness and sensitivities in every dialect, and misinterpretations occur when sensitivities are left out of the communication. However, beneficiaries who understood either English or French explained that they were not making suggestions because their suggestions were never taken into consideration by NGO officials;

“When we make decisions or suggestions, these suggestions are not implemented. Most of the time NGOs officials will tell us they are going to discussed what we suggested with their funders and some time they do not come back with respond and when they do come back with the respond, it is usually negative” (PI housing beneficiary, 28/06/2018).

In searching for detailed explanations from beneficiaries why they continued to be present at NGO meetings when their voices were not taken into consideration, they mentioned that the

reason they continue to attend NGO meetings is not that they were interested in the meeting's agenda but that the PI meeting site provides an opportunity for socializing;

“We have been encouraging to attend NGOs meeting by NGOs officials but they do not want to consider our suggestion. What is the need to attend the meetings when our voices are not heard? We come to their meetings because these enable us to meet our other community members” (PI housing project beneficiary, 29/062018).

According to their views, their coming to PI general meetings was purposely to meet other community members to share their views about other issues and not to get involved in PI activities. This means that, although they are attending general meetings, they did not have a peculiar role in the housing development and were likely not to be worried with the outcome because their intention in the meeting was not to contribute their views on how to improve the activities of the project.

From the outlooks of the participants, it is clear that the PI housing projects in Baka community are failing to reduce poverty because the design and implementation were based on assumptions and not on what was the top priority of the Baka to deal with poverty. PI believed living in decent houses was one of the best ways to overcome poverty. For Baka negotiating with the government so that the government can leave them in forest was their best solution to overcome deficiency since their main occupation was hunting and farming. However, according to PI the main reason they continue to embark on this programme even when Baka preferred their shacks is that Bakas were living in a horrible environment and in the rainy season their shacks were leaking water. PI believed that Baka will know the benefits of this project in the future.

4.3.3: PI TOILET CONSTRUCTION

Toilet construction is one of the PI projects in Momo division aimed at improving healthcare in the division and hence decreasing poverty. The PI administrative director explained that there was lack of cleanliness and children were dying from diseases linked to hygiene. Many of these deaths would have been prevented with clean toilets: “We believe access to health facilities is a basic human right. Sanitary toilets can free people from a life of humiliation, disease and females who risk shame, harassment by going to the toilet can be overcome” (PI director, 09/12/2016).

He said that the aim of toilet construction was to reduce the spread of diseases and reduce the shame of going to the toilet in the bushes. However, discussion with beneficiaries of this project found that they were not enjoying these services because the construction of toilets was not their priority as will be described by beneficiaries below. A further search was done for explanations as to why PI continues to embark on the construction of toilets instead of providing safe drinking water, which is a basic human right. People simply cannot live without water yet they have been struggling with this issue for a long time. The same PI administrative director of Bamenda and the PI field coordinator for Momo division explained that it was difficult to embark on a water project though it is a good project to reduce poverty. The reason they gave for constructing toilets is that, through a situation assessment, they discovered that people were still going to toilets in bushes and it was humiliating. Additionally, good toilets will reduce diseases linked to hygiene. He added that PI did not have enough resources to embark on a water project in the Mono division. Furthermore, PI does not want to have many projects in one community when other communities do not have a single project. According to him and what was observed, there are public taps in Momo division. The PI administrative director stated;

“Before we embark on any programme or project in the community, we always do situation assessment in order to know what is necessary in the community. We could not embark on water project in Momo division because there were public taps in this division though; children walk over long distances to fetch water. Toilet construction was necessary here than water because there were already public taps” (PI director, 13/12/2017).

The PI field coordinator for Momo division added that their programmes are mostly children centred programmes and they have instructions to follow. As such their organisation carries out projects based on children situation assessments and will not go beyond what their strategy objective states (PI field coordinator for Momo. 23/11/ 2016). According to him, the construction of toilets was initiated based on their situation assessment; however, the project is failing because the situation assessment was done without the involvement of project beneficiaries. On the other hand, the involvement of beneficiaries in a situation assessment was not necessary because PI made it clear that the organisation did not have enough funds to embark on two projects in one community when other communities did not have a project.

In an attempt to understand why the toilets were being used and the beneficiaries were not satisfied with the services, it was found that the beneficiaries had immediate needs which

according to them was one of the causes of poverty in Momo division as demonstrated in one beneficiary comment;

“Organisations have been coming and drawing plans on how they are going to help us with road maintainer, pipe borne water and schools programmes, they have never done anything and PI came construct toilets for us. PI did not considered what was necessary for us” (PI toilet beneficiaries, 14/12/ 2016).

Some of the beneficiaries explained that the construction of toilets for them was a waste of resources as they believed that modern toilets are only meant for wealthy people. Beneficiaries explained that they preferred corrugated roofed houses rather than good toilets as demonstrated in one beneficiary statement;

“My house is a thatched roof which is leaking water during the raining season, this NGO supported us with toilet construction but I needed corrugated sheets to roof my house. You can see my toilet is beautiful. Looked at where I am living. I wish I could stay in that toilet when it is raining” (PI beneficiary in Momo division, July 2016).

From his views, it is senseless to live in a thatched roof which is leaking when it rains and using a luxurious toilet. Through observation and further discussion, it was found that the choice of costly materials such as cement to plaster walls and corrugated sheets gave a message that the PI did not have the interests of the community members in their agenda as many beneficiaries were observed living in thatched roofed houses. As stated, when it rains their roofs are leaking and yet they are using fancy toilets. The higher cost in toilet construction discourages many beneficiaries from using these toilets. In their understanding, the cost of maintaining their modern toilets is higher than the cost of maintaining their houses.

Toilet construction continued even when the beneficiaries preferred the construction of pipe-borne water in the community and some preferred receiving corrugated sheets because they were living in thatched roof houses that were leaking when it rains. The PI field coordinator for Momo consistently pointed out, however, that the immediate, tangible lifesaving intervention in the division was the construction of clean toilets. According to him, clean toilets will decrease diseases linked to hygiene. When people are healthy, it is easy for them to carry out effective production, which reduces poverty.

From the viewpoint of one PI official, the main reason PI continues to embark on the toilet project even when this project is not reducing poverty is that access to health services is a basic

human right. Additionally, PI preferred quality to quantity as demonstrated in one of the comments the field coordinator made;

“We do not want to abandoned project half way because resources were not enough to complete the project. Additionally we preferred quality to quantity. Our resources determined the project we should embark on. Building houses in communities could have been the best solution to reduce deficiency but we do not have enough resources to embark on housing project” (PI field coordinator, 10/12/2016).

PI is aware that the housing project or water project in Momo division is more important to the people than toilet construction but PI cannot embark on this project because PI does not have enough resources for housing and the water project. They continue with toilet construction because they are sure to provide high quality toilets. Additionally, PI is sure to complete the project because the available resources can be used only to construct toilets in this community.

4.3.4 MOSQUITO BED NETS PROJECT IN MOMO DIVISION

One of the NGO programmes in the study areas to reduce poverty is the VGSW insecticide-treated bed nets for pregnant women and children for the prevention of malaria. In a search for explanations of how the project was helping to reduce poverty in the region, it was found that the project was a failure as explained by the VGSW field coordinator for the Momo division. He explained that the project was a failure because the recipients of free nets were not the direct beneficiaries of these nets. Those that received the nets had no knowledge of how to use insecticide-treated bed nets: “We were not using the nets because they will suffocate our children and they will not be able to breed well” (VGSW beneficiary. November 2016). In an effort to understand why the beneficiaries of the bed nets were not taught before the bed nets were given to them, the VGSW general manager explained that they coordinated the project but they did not have the upper hand in the project as evidenced in one of his comments;

“The main target of the project were pregnant women and children, instead the councillors who were in charge of distributing these bed-nets gave them to family members and some were sold. Our role in this project was to coordinate the programme and teach community member on how to use these net. We realised in most clinics that women who were supposed to receive these nets were not getting them. They were taught on how to use the net but some of them did get the net” (VGSW director, 23/11/2016).

From his description, there was a mismatch between who got the education and who got nets. Workshops to teach beneficiaries how to use the bed nets were not effective because the targeted group was discouraged because the nets were sold instead of them getting them for free.

An attempt was made to further understand why this project was a failure when the VGSW role in the project was to monitor and give direction to achieve its main objective. The same director explained that, even though the project was coordinated by VGSW, the government of Cameroon had the upper hand on how the activities of this project were handled (VGSW general, 05/12/2016). In probing for an explanation of why they did not implement what they later knew was the right strategy for the project to succeed, he explained that government officials who had the main say in the project wanted to satisfy their personal needs and not those of the community the project was intended to assist. This was demonstrated in one of his comments;

“Recommendations made by both project beneficiaries and us were not implemented. These recommendations were supposed to be implemented by the same government officials who had their own personal interest and did not want to block their chances of personal gain by implementing correct plan. As a result, the project was not effective” (VGSW director, November 2016).

From the NGO official’s viewpoint, this does not seem to be a goal that would be achieved soon in the government/NGO agenda. Issues such as, project providers determining who should and who should not be party to a community project weakens the powers of the NGOs. According to the VGSW director, VGSW had no power in this project though they were coordinators of the project but their input continued to be insignificant because resources for the project were coming from the government.

4.3.5 PI WATER PROJECT

Another PI programme in the study areas to fight poverty is the construction of pipe borne water in the Boyo division. In an effort to understand the extent to which this project was benefiting the community, it was found that it was insignificant. According to PI beneficiaries, the water project in their community was not necessary because they already had community

pipe-borne water and streams in the area. According to them, the available water was good drinking water as demonstrated in one of the beneficiary's comments: "We have good supply of water in our communities, we have pipe-borne water that was constructed by our council and our streams are very clean and good for drinking" (PI water beneficiary, 27/11/2016). The same beneficiary further explained that the construction of pipe-borne water was a waste of resources because they have important priorities like the construction of classrooms that they have been struggling to achieve for many years (PI water beneficiary, 27/11/ 2016). He said that this project was duplication of services because they had good sources of drinking water. Explanations were sought for why PI continues with the water project instead of undertaking an educational programme that was the highest priority in the Fundong subdivision. PI field coordinator for Boyo and PI administrative manager Bamenda repeatedly clarified that they were aware of council pipe-borne water in these communities. The issue with the available taps is that they were far away from homes and community members have to struggle in order to fetch water and the stream water was not good for drinking as demonstrated in PI administrative director's statement:

"There was a problem of typhoid which was affecting children to fall behind at school and some dropping out from school. They were drinking dirty water from the streams because when they come back from farms they are tired to walk long distances to fetch clean drinking water from taps. Our organisation decided to aid the community with pipe borne water in other to shorten long walk to fetch water and also reduce the spread of typhoid in these areas" (PI director, 21/10/2016).

PI field coordinator said;

"We were aware that there is council pipe borne water in these communities but children still have to walk over long distances to fetch water and the streams in these communities are not good for drinking. Children were most often in hospital because of dirty water" (PI field coordinator, 05/12/2016).

In their view, typhoid fever was a very serious health problem that was draining community resources in treating this disease in hospitals and they thought this project in the community was a top priority. However, from the beneficiaries' perspective there was lack of flexibility or resilience in this project because the PI never explained the importance of drinking clean water to the community at the beginning of the project. According to PI, the beneficiaries wanted the construction of classrooms, which PI considered a quick fix. The PI field coordinator explained

that if classrooms were constructed but the social problem of waterborne diseases that was keeping children out of school was not resolved, the quality of education would remain low. Children who were supposed to be in school learning would be in the hospitals for treatment and the few resources they had would be used for buying medicines (PI field coordinator, 05/12/ 2016).

In further determination to identify why PI did not explain the cause of waterborne diseases before the construction of pipe borne water, it was found that it was difficult to bring the beneficiaries together. As they explained, “When PI decided that they will carry out water projects in our communities instead of constructing classrooms, I decided that I will not be attending their meetings” (PI water beneficiary, 28/11/ 2016). Another beneficiary said, “Why should I go to general meetings? All they discussed is water project and how we can support the project” (PI water beneficiary, 23/11/2016). According to them it was needless to continue attending PI meetings to discuss the water project that they felt was a waste of resources. As a result, decisions made regarding the continuation of the programme did not involve all the beneficiaries. According to the PI field coordinator, they thought water was more important than building classrooms as evidenced in one of his statements: “Construction and renovation of schools in these communities was very important to us but we can only assist the community with what we have” (PI field coordinator, 12/11/2016). PI had limited resources for educational programmes as the same field coordinator added, “When we asked the community members to meet us halfway financially, they are usually not willing” (PI field coordinator 12/11/2016).

From the views of PI officials and their beneficiaries, the water project in Fundong subdivision was uncoordinated. Furthermore, there was lack of resources, which forced PI to implement a project that was not an immediate priority.

4.3.6 HEALTH (HIV/AIDS) PROGRAMME

HIV/AIDS is one of the programmes that was carried out by all study cases in the studied regions to reduce poverty. The main aim of the programme was to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and other transmitted diseases in the regions under study in order to fight poverty as evidenced in VGSW director’s comment: “This organisation is still a baby organisation and

as of now we focus on the health aspect and sustainable development to improve the standard of living of our people” (VGSW director, 25/11/2016).

PI field coordinator for Boyo division and PI administrative director Bamenda said that they focus on building strong HIV/AIDs content in communities, families, and individuals. The SIL national language director said that people in rural communities are vulnerable to malaria and other diseases due to lack of essential information in the mother tongue, especially diseases such as HIV/AIDS, which it is forbidden to talk about in some communities. He added that reading materials in mother tongue that discuss issues relating to hygiene, nutrition, prevention and treatment of diseases is one of the effective ways they are using to encourage communities to improve their general health and life expectancy (SIL Director, 29/06/ 2018).

In an attempt to understand how these projects are assisting to reduce deficiency in the study areas, it was found that some of these health programmes were not yielding satisfaction because of cultural beliefs. According to the SIL national language director, this was a setback as he explained;

“This programme is not achieving its objective because many people lack reading skills and in our project communities parents do not discuss issues pertaining to sexual maturity, condom use, sexual transmitted infections and contraceptives because they believed it is forbidden to talk about such issues with children” (SIL director 08/07/2018).

In further probing, beneficiaries confirmed that you cannot discuss anything about sex with children: “It is an embarrassment to discuss sex with children and I feared being misinterpreted by children that I want to engage in sexual activity with them” (SIL beneficiary 29/06/2018). Another beneficiary said, “How can a male parent talk to their girl child about sex? The child might think the father has an intention of sleeping with her” (SIL beneficiary, 30/06/2018). A third SIL beneficiary stated, “It is very difficult as a woman to discuss anything that concerns sex with your son, we feel embarrassed” (SIL beneficiary, 29/06/ 2018).

VGSW beneficiaries shared the same perception as they also said that children are inquisitive; talking about the sexual role in their heads will just lead them to try it out: “We can't talk with our children about sex because this will be like we are directing them to engage in sexual activities” (VGSW beneficiary, 10/12/2016). Discussion with young people also found that they are not comfortable to freely discuss with their families about sex because their dads are strict and they will be uncomfortable and might take it wrong way. One beneficiary

commented, “We feel ashamed to talk to our mothers about sexual health issues. We think our mothers will always give us that eye of condemnation thinking that we have started sleeping around with boys” (VGSW beneficiary 10/12/2016). They consider that there is no way this programme can reduce poverty in their communities because issues to do with sexual role are by tradition forbidden in their culture and they are considered as a reserved subject not for open dialogue.

In an effort to understand how the NGOs have been trying to overcome these barriers, it was further found that religious beliefs are also preventing the success of this programme. “We have made attempts to talk about this social issues in churches since most community members do not like to talk about these issues at homes but churches are not comfortable with the idea” (SIL language director, 18/06/2018). Beneficiaries of this programme confirmed that they cannot discuss about sexual activities until the children are married. This was found to be a barrier to the NGO HIV/AIDs programme because it discourages parents from talking with their children about sexual role issues as evidenced in one beneficiary’s comment;

“Our religion prohibits condom use, so we cannot tell our children to use condoms in other to prevent diseases. It is not the will of God. Our religion even prohibits us from talk with our children of any gender about sexual and reproductive health issues. This is the responsibility of seniors who are not the parents of the child” (VGSW beneficiary, 24/11/ 2016).

According to respondents, health (HIV/AIDS) programmes were not effective in reducing poverty because sexually transmitted diseases are for adults and they don’t understand why such issues can be discussed with children because they will know about all of these things when they become adults. In their view, it is very clear that for NGOs to succeed with HIV/AIDs programmes to reduce poverty there is a need for them to find an intermediate ground between parents and children, taking into consideration the roles and duties of parents and their children while supporting cultural integration.

4.3.7 PI GOAT REARING PROGRAMME IN MOMO DIVISION

The PI goat rearing programme is another project aimed at reducing poverty in the NWR of Cameroon. According to the PI field coordinator for Momo division, the components of the goat rearing programme is to extract milk from the goats and feed the children, and to empower women on how to generate income. In an attempt to understand how this project has been helping to reduce poverty in Momo division, PI goat rearing beneficiaries were happy to say

that the programme has helped boost their income; “I was very happy last year when I sold one of my goat. I bought school uniform for my child who was taking care of these goats” (PI goat beneficiary, 19/11/2016). Another PI goat beneficiary explained that she has been taught how to reduce her poverty through the extraction of goats’ milk. However, she has not been able to use this skill as evidenced in one of her comment; “We have been taught on how to extract milk but I do not like fresh milk” (PI goat beneficiary, 19/11/ 2016). Through observation, the quantity of milk they were extracting from goats was not enough for the whole family but was beneficial because they were not buying as much milk as before.

Goats’ beneficiaries reported income from the sale of their goats as the most important reason for rearing goats. Further probing found that income from goats is of great importance to sustain human nutrition and education as many beneficiaries were reported to have sold many of the goats to send their children to school. Some of the beneficiaries revealed that they have not yet benefited from goat rearing because they were in the early stages of rearing exotic goats and therefore had little to offer to the market. This implies that, although some PI goat beneficiaries have not yet sold goats, there is hope that they will play a significant role in the market. Therefore, more devotion should be paid to goat rearing as this will increase the supply of goats to the market, and thereby contribute to food safety and economic development. However, it should be noted that the programme was not 100% successful simply because land belongs to the men and women need to negotiate for a piece of land with their husbands in order for them to rear goats. The beneficiaries confirmed that the challenge they faced was lack of land.

4.3.8 VGSW GOAT REARING PROGRAMME

In searching for descriptions of what the studied NGOs were doing in communities to reduce poverty, the VGSW director explained that goat rearing was also one of their programmes to reduce poverty as demonstrated in one of his comments;

“One of our main activities is goat rearing programme. Our goat programme has been successful because we have come to realize that most women make a lot of money from goat rearing and most of them have sustained a living from it” (VGSW staff, 19/10/ 2016).

He further added that widows are able to have many goats within a year and they are selling them; “We received testimonies how these women have been selling their goats and taking care

of their children’’ (VGSW staff, 19/10/2016). He said that the goat-rearing programme was a good programme to reduce poverty since there were testimonies that women are selling these goats and using the money to meet their basic needs. However, with further probing to understand how this project was reducing poverty, a VGSW community volunteer mentioned that PI and Heifer International were organisations with goat rearing programmes in this community. Heifer International is no longer functioning; so only PI has a goat rearing programme in Momo division (VGSW community volunteer, 27/10/2016). It was shocking because this community volunteer who is an intermediary between the NGO and the beneficiaries knew nothing about such a project. In an attempt to understand from the widows how this programme was helping them to reduce poverty, the question “How do you benefit from the services of NGOs?” was asked. Beneficiaries said their children have been benefiting from the hand washbasin project constructed in their primary schools by VGSW and from health facilities like hospital maintenance, pipe-borne water, and vocational training programmes. In a follow up discussion with regard to goat rearing, one of the women said, “I have not been benefitting from the goat rearing project; my children are benefitting from the hand washbasin constructed by VGSW” (VGSW hand washbasin beneficiary, 27/10/ 2016). According to her expression, it was her first time to hear about the goat rearing programme but she mentioned that PI has a goat-rearing programme. Another woman also explained that she was benefiting from Heifer International’s goat-rearing project and the project has been closed; “I was Heifer International beneficiary, they used to train us on goat-rearing skills and give us goats. The NGO is not more functioning”. (VGSW hand wash basin beneficiary, 27/10/2016). It seems that there is no way to judge whether such a programme can reduce poverty in a community because those who were supposed to be the beneficiaries of this project heard about the existence of this project for the first time.

Discussions on objective two focused on how NGO employees and their stakeholders perceive poverty and the level of NGOs success in poverty reduction in the regions under study. The discussion focused more on the relationship between the NGO programmes and beneficiaries’ views on how these programmes help to reduce their poverty. NGO beneficiaries defined poverty as those who do not have enough land and crops to consume during the course of the year. According to them poverty is caused by lack of land, lack of infrastructural facilities, fluctuation in climate and political instability in Cameroon. They also argued that poverty is not lack of money but lack of what money can buy because one can have money and still live in poverty because there are no markets where one can buy the things one needs.

To overcome poverty in the regions under study PI, VGSW and SIL have different programmes in the regions to fight poverty. Among these programmes are educational programmes, healthcare programmes, housing projects, goat rearing, toilet construction, mosquito bed net programme and water project to fight poverty in the regions under study. Among these programmes, goat rearing in Momo division and the language programme in Boyo division were revealed as the most effective programmes in the regions under study to reduce poverty.

From the participant's views and observation in the field, it is very visible that the incessant occurrence of poverty in the regions under study is a factor of NGOs poor prioritization of their programmes. Furthermore, there are extraneous variables which account for the ineffectiveness of NGO work. Attributing poverty reduction to NGO activities is something which the NGOs themselves are conscious they can't fully achieve. It is demanding too much from NGOs. Development and poverty reduction are the duties of every government and NGOs only assist as support mechanisms towards the realization of government obligations to its citizens. Beside, poverty is a relative term and needs to be understood as a phenomenon which would hardly be eradicated. The next subsection discusses objective three "the nature of beneficiaries participation in NGOs programmes"

4.4: OBJECTIVE THREE: UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION BY WHICH THE POOR ARE INVOLVED IN POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAMMES

This section describes the nature of participation by which NGO beneficiaries are included in poverty reduction programmes. Participation here entails active involvement, all the stakeholder in decision making about what, why, where and how to run the activities of an organisation. As described above under objective two part two, NGOs programmes in the regions under study continue to fail to reduce poverty because the views of the beneficiaries that knew their poverty condition were not always taken into consideration by NGOs and their funders before embarking on some of the projects. In an attempt to understand why beneficiaries that knew more about their poverty situation and how they can reduce their poverty were not part of the decision making, it was found that there were many challenges affecting participation in the study areas. One of the challenges mentioned by the study participant was that the government of Cameroon was not doing enough to fight poverty in the

regions under study as evidenced in one of the comments made by one the PI manager in Bamenda:

“Government is not doing enough in proving the basic amenities such as drinking water, building rural infrastructures and create economic activities. In most communities, people walk for long distances to fetch water or attend school. This is a setback because it reduces the time they could have been in their farms. Attending NGO general meetings means they will end up not going to their farms and they are not willing to forgo their farm because of NGOs meetings” (PI manager Bamenda, December 2106).

This was confirmed when the researcher observed that the pipe-borne water were far away from homes in Ibal. Walking long distances to fetch water reduces their available time and, as such, those who were not benefiting from NGO activities were not willing to forgo their farming because of NGO meetings. In further probing, beneficiaries said that if there is a good transport network, they can attend the meetings knowing that they are not going to struggle to return to their farms. From their views, lack of basic services in their communities discourages people from participating in NGO poverty reduction programmes.

According to the SIL national language director, “It is impracticable to expect large structural changes to be delivered by NGOs when government is not doing enough to tackle issues which discourage people from participating in decision-making” (SIL director, 08/07/2018). He further explained that for NGOs to encourage participation in rural areas field coordinators need to integrate fully with their project beneficiaries. They should live with the project beneficiaries in project communities, which is a good strategy. He said the obstacle here is that there are no basic facilities in rural communities where they have these projects. The few social facilities in some of these communities are provided by NGOs. Additionally, children need to be in schools and there are no schools or good roads in rural communities. Cars go to most of these communities only on village market days, but in rainy season some of these roads are inaccessible, meaning that even on market days there is no guarantee that there might be a car on a village market day. He further explained that NGOs do not have enough resources to provide all the staff with service cars so that they can live in urban areas and visit project communities every day. Even in situations where there are cars to use, there are no roads making it difficult for NGO staffs to integrate with their beneficiaries to encourage participation. This was evidenced in one comment;

“Lack of government role in rural areas is a big setback for us because children need to be in schools and government seem to lack concerned about these issues. This is a

setback because some community member turns to view projects as foreign projects because people who are involved in these projects are all living in towns or have nothing common with the community except these projects” (SIL Director, 27/06/2018).

When field coordinators live in project communities they build the confidence of their project beneficiaries. NGO officials living in project communities will empower beneficiaries and make them feel they are equal and, when it comes to participating in NGO activities, they are comfortable in participating. He said that beneficiaries are not participating because it is difficult for field coordinators to live where there are no schools for their children. Another factor a participant mentioned is poor leadership, which is hampering participation as demonstrated in one of his comments;

“Instead of organising community to supply labour, local organisations working with international NGOs in our project community prefer to hire people from other communities to come do the jobs that we can do it ourselves for free. When general meetings are organised to discuss the activities of the project, community members are not willing to attend because they have this feeling they will be asked to contribute funds to pay people from other community that did the job which community members were willing to do for free. Some leaders are using this projects for their political ambitious” (PI field coordinator, December 2016).

SIL community volunteer said when NGO meetings are organised and community leaders are aware that transport money will be shared with all the participants in the meeting, community leaders will prefer only close friends and family members who are not direct beneficiaries of the project to attend. Direct beneficiaries of the project are only informed to attend meetings when they know transport and food money will not be shared. Beneficiaries confirmed this claim as they mentioned that they do not have time for NGO meetings. One of the beneficiaries said, “Why should I continue to attend NGO meetings when NGO officials and community leaders know those who can receive transport and food money. They only informed some of us to attend their meetings when they know transport money will not be shared” (PI beneficiary, 26/06/2018).

Further investigation found that in some instances it was difficult to involve the beneficiaries in decision making as NGOs could not authoritatively choose what to implement without a word from their funders as evidenced in the VGSW director’s comment;

“There are some programmes that do not allow room to include beneficiaries in writing proposal but there are always possibilities to include them on how to implement the project because some funding proposal that we write at times are responses to calls for proposals for prearranged activities. In such cases, beneficiaries’ priorities are not taken into consideration. Furthermore, it is not possible to accommodate all the community needs and desires in a single project proposal” (VGSW director, 13/12/ 2016).

In a further search for clarification on how the beneficiaries are involved in such projects designed by NGOs and their funders, the same VGSW director explained that with regard to such projects they encourage participation at implementation levels, because at this level they are sure of the project. They then invite community members and seek from them how the project can be implemented (VGSW director, 13/12 2016). In his experience, funders do not only provide funds but they also make decisions on major project guidelines such as project location and project activities, and they select projects they want. The PI administrative director stated, “Some of our projects are designed by our sponsors and there is instruction on how this project should be carried out, for example our child sponsorship programme” (PI director, 05/12/ 2016).

According to the VGSW director, there are some programmes that are designed by funders and in such situations it is difficult to involve the beneficiaries to know what they need because the project has been designed and their contribution will not have contributed anything into the project. He added that at times they received information that there is a call for a funding proposal when it is almost the closing date to submit the proposal and in such cases there is no time to organise community meetings to discuss what is needed before those proposals are drawn up and submitted;

“You hear that there is a call for proposal for organisations to do this or that and submission date is already at hand, we put in applications for whoever is calling for the proposal. In such situations, there is no time to discuss with community members what they think would benefit them before writing the proposal” (VGSW director, 13/12/ 2016).

From his explanation, such projects are accepted and implemented because there is an available fund from funders to create projects and in some cases these projects are not the desired projects in communities. Such projects in this study include the water project, toilet construction and

housing project in the Baka community. As seen under objective two part two above, these projects were not beneficiaries' priorities.

The same discussion with the PI field coordinator for Fundong revealed that there are some situations in the organisation that they cannot change as demonstrated in his comment;

“Since some children were enrolled in our organisation, they have never received anything from their foster parents. Most families that their children have not benefited anything directly from the organisation don't like to participate in any of our programmes and we cannot force foster parents to take care of their foster children as to encourage participation” (PI field coordinator, 05/12/. 2016).

Another issue hampering participation in the Baka community is rural-urban migration because of lack of infrastructural facilities in rural areas. The PI administrative director specified that one of the strategies used in the Baka community was to employ the Baka so as to inspire them to fully engage in education activities but this recommendation is not helping because the Baka, after gaining employment, start behaving like foreigners in their community. Some migrate to live in urban areas and visit the project site occasionally and some of their staffs from the Baka community are not committed to the project. He explained that when they have these behaviours it affects the progress of the project negatively as it gives the impression that the project is not theirs (PI director, 27/06/2018).

As already described above, some recommendations are ineffective because community members are not sharing their views. Beneficiaries complained saying they are tired of NGOs' empty promises as evidenced in a VGSW beneficiary's comment;

“We are tired of NGOs meetings. They always come to us saying they want to seek our consent before engaging on programmes so that our needs can be prioritized and after situation assessment and planning, they disappeared. There has never been any implementation. We have important thing to do and we cannot be wasting our time going to meetings when the projects or our plans are not going to be implemented” (VGSW beneficiary, November 2016).

Furthermore, as seen above, language use in the meeting was either English or French while beneficiaries could easily communicate only in their mother tongue.

In searching for explanations on why the studied NGOs were not using the language that can be understood by their beneficiaries, it was found that it is difficult to have a good translator or interpreter because only very few people have translation and interpretation skills in the study

areas, especially in the Baka community. The PI administrative director explained that one of the recommendations to deal with language barriers was to hire those who can translate from English or French to mother tongue. PI tried this strategy and the strategy failed because the translators they hired could not interpret the context of the subject well and, as a result, wrong messages were sent to community members. In an attempt to identify why they were not hiring competent translators, the same PI official explained that qualified translators are very expensive to hire. He also said it is easy to find someone who can translate a foreign language to Beti. Beti is one of the languages spoken in the East Region. It is very difficult, however, to find someone who will translate a foreign language to Baka language. In his experience, the few who are available are very expensive to hire and their organisations do not always have enough resources to pay for this service.

According to beneficiaries, another setback hampering participation was the issue of power relations preventing the youth and women from participation in decision-making. In a general meeting organised by PI in Ibal, November 2016, it was noted that women and the youth present were silent throughout the meeting.

After the meeting, in an attempt to identify why they were silent throughout the meeting, it was explained that youths who are still living with their parents are not allowed to participate in discussions. According to participants, when men are discussing important issues women and youths are supposed to be silent as evidenced in one beneficiary comment; “In our culture, women cannot talk when men are discussing especially when your in-laws are in the meeting. We are petrified that what we say can bring shame to the family”. (PI beneficiary, December 2016). Another beneficiary added, “If you are young and do not have a place of your own, nobody will listen to you in the meeting, you are being considered as a woman” (PI beneficiary, December 2016).

From their views if you are a man without a house or wife you are not allowed to say anything in the meetings because they believe meetings are for men and not for those who are not responsible. This was found to be a setback because this group of beneficiaries had their own views but their views were not expressed.

The researcher probed for clarification as to what the organisation was doing to ensure that both the youth and women, who are the backbone in any poverty reduction programme in the community, are included in decision-making so that projects can have a positive impact in communities. The PI field coordinator explained that the issue of power relations is not new

and to succeed with the programme in a rural community they need to accept cultural practices in these areas. He further explained that the more they tried to change how things are done in the rural communities the more they create problems that discourage beneficiaries from participating and this might, in turn, affect their programme negatively (PI field coordinator, 25/06 2018).

From the views of the participants, there are superfluous factors that affect the participation. For example, state is not playing its role by providing the basic in rural community to fight against poverty and the beneficiaries who are the key to their poverty reduction are not taking active roles in the fight against poverty and as such NGOs cannot fully take the blame for not encouraging participation in their poverty reduction programmes. The next subheading discusses the reasons donors give funding to NGOs as assistance.

4.5: OBJECT FOUR: UNDERSTANDING REASONS DONORS GIVE FUNDING TO NGOS AS ASSISTANCE.

In searching for clarification on why funders continue to fund projects even when these projects are not yielding fruits rather than projects that are top priority in communities, the explanation given by a PI funder is that they cannot stop to fund a project simply because the project is not achieving its objective. He further explained that they believed in good planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In determination to further understand why the toilet project was not achieving its aim when they believed in good planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, the same PI funder explained that it is necessary to correct the reason the project is not succeeding rather than stopping the programme that has been running for some time as shown in one of his remarks;

“When the project is not achieving its objective, we try to find out what is happening, at time we will discovered that the problem is lack of infrastructure to support projects, or inexperienced project personnel. These are common problems. They are easy problem to be fixed. We cannot stop funding because of such issues that can be fixed” (PI funder, 15/05/2017).

There was a very strong indication that, before proposals are accepted, the NGOs should clearly indicate that the beneficiaries of the projects have participated in the situation assessment or the proposal must come from the beneficiaries themselves. Another PI funder said, “Before we accept a proposal, there are terms and conditions. We also do situation assessment and give

advice for every project” (PI funder, 21/04/ 2017). In his view there are indications that there is monitoring and evaluation to ensure that everything is in order. If all these things are happening, why do their programmes continue to fail to reduce poverty?

In a further examination of what was happening when both PI and their funders claimed there was good planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to correct the mistakes in the project, both PI and their funders explained that there are good strategies that could have positive result, but good planning and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation do not guarantee 100% success in NGO projects in communities because there are some unforeseen circumstances. As one PI funder commented;

“Having good planning in project do not guarantee success because there are unforeseen circumstances that might be discovered at the last minute of implementation. For example, natural disaster or that the government has abandoned the provision of basic services, even if planning was good and the project has experienced project personnel, such a project will still be a failure. NGOs are coming in to assist the government and if the government is not fulfilling its responsibilities, it becomes very difficult for NGOs to achieve its objectives in their project communities” (PI funder, 18/06/2017).

This PI funder claimed that PI is doing its best to satisfy their beneficiaries. The reason PI is failing to achieve its objective in their project communities is that the government is not providing the basic services necessary in these communities to overcome poverty

In a further search to understand why funders continue to give funds to NGOs it was found that funders are also assisting the NGOs in terms of training NGOs on how to manage available resources and also how to raise their funds. One of the SIL directors explained that SIL funders were trying to encourage the organisation to set up some programmes that can generate funds. He also said that funders are encouraging their NGOs to come up with questions and suggestions. One of the suggestions is more regular regional meetings to get NGOs together and discuss their problems, perspectives and what they would like donors or funders to do for them (SIL director 10/07/2018).

From his views NGOs and funders are setting up meetings to discuss funding proposals, planning, implementation strategies and challenges to ensure the best solutions for NGO services, yet their programmes continue to be a failure. If all this is happening, why do problems persist? A SIL funder who was also a staff member in SIL explained that there are

many reasons NGOs programmes are not yielding benefits. Among the reasons he gave were that community members are not willing to be part of the solution to their problems, lack of commitment to participate in general meetings because they are too busy, some community members are unwilling to give priority to NGOs meetings or activities, and instability in project communities as described in one of his comments:

“Working in the field with community members, I come to learned a lot from community members, before becoming a missionary I use to think NGOs were not doing enough to include their beneficiaries in their development programme, I was wrong. Working with forest dwellers in Baka community, I realized that they could only participate in NGO programmes if the intervention provides for the fulfilment of their direct basic needs of food, fuel wood, and fodder immediately. However, there are some issue created by NGOs in these communities. For example, Some NGOs give promises that they are not able to fulfil. NGOs are not fulfilling their promises; most community members are beginning to think all NGOs are the same” (SIL donor official, July 2018).

Another SIL funder explained that the SIL is an NGO and people of good will provide their services. Their services are rendered free so it is difficult to find volunteers who are willing to take up the leadership roles and spend their time, money and energy in performing their roles as they have their own things to do to earn their living. He further added that from his experience those who are usually willing to offer to play the leadership role are normally those who have other motives (SIL donor official, July 2018). He stated that people of good will provide most of their services and the organisation cannot force these volunteers to go against their wishes because they are not being paid for their services and, further, these volunteers are also busy with their daily activities and they can only be engaged in SIL activities when they have free time. Knowing the causes that hinder NGO programmes from producing the best results will help in finding and suggesting answers that could help deal with the situation. The next subheading discusses the challenges NGOs encounter and how the lessons learned in the past have influenced their present and future development in the fight against poverty.

4.6 OBJECTIVE FIVE: INVESTIGATING THE CHALLENGES NGOS ENCOUNTER AND HOW THE LESSONS LEARNED IN THE PAST HAVE INFLUENCED THEIR PRESENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY.

The aim of this objective is to show the challenges NGOs encounter and how the lessons learned in the past have influenced their present and future development in the fight against poverty. The objective is divided into parts, part one of the objective deals with the challenges hampering NGO programmes in the study areas and part two of the objective deals with the lessons NGOs learned from the past.

4.6.1: OBJECTIVE FIVE PART ONE: CHALLENGES HAMPERING NGO PROGRAMMES IN THE STUDY AREAS

4.6.1.1 LACK OF SUFFICIENT RESOURCES

Without enough resources it is difficult to carry out any project successfully. All the studied NGO staff complained that their programmes face difficulties because of insufficient funds/resources as evidenced in one of the comments made by the PI director;

“The biggest shortcoming we have is funding. Child sponsorship is the foundation of the organisation and sponsorship donations are not always enough to cover all our programmes/projects cost. There are some children in the community that have never received a gift or even a letter from their foster parents, and at times there are delays in these donations” (PI director, December 2016).

The SIL director also said that their greatest setback is finance as evidenced in one of his comments;

“I think finance is one of the main problems that we faced. Our activities are always more than our resources although some of our staffs are missionaries, meaning they are not receiving full salaries, part of their salaries is being used to fund the activities of the organisation yet, we are still not able to have required funds to run the activities of the organisation smoothly” (SIL director, July 2018).

The VGSW director also complained that lack of funds is hampering their service delivery in their project communities;

“The support we received from our funders is not enough to run the organisation. In most cases, we have to do fundraising yet the funds are not enough and that take a lot of our time because we cannot focus on one thing only” (VGSW director, November 2016).

4.6.1.2: INCREASES IN DEMAND FOR SKILLED LABOUR

When there is a high demand for any goods and services the possibility is that prices for such goods and services will increase. All the three studied NGOs consistently mentioned that their staff were leaving their NGOs for better pay in other sectors as reflected in one of the SIL director's comment;

“We are failing to succeed in our projects because there is lack of resilience; our staffs are leaving our organisation because of low salaries and moving to newly created NGOs with higher salaries. We have limited funds to keep these employees in our organisation” (SIL director, June 2018).

Through observation, it was found that the crises in the North-west and South-west regions in Cameroon have resulted in high humanitarian activities in these regions creating room for international NGOs;

“Poverty situation in Baka community and what is happening now in NWR is pushing international organisation to have projects in this community and most of these international NGOs want to employ only those with working experience” (SIL director, June, 2018).

From their views, high demand for labour is pushing labour prices higher in the regions under study. The high demand for labour is affecting the effectiveness of NGOs as NGOs with limited resources continue to lose employees because they lack funds to pay higher wages to keep these skilled workers. PI administrative stated;

“Our highly qualified staffs are leaving our organisation and we are forced to employ new staffs and train them. This is hampering our long-term strategy because we continue to employ new staffs. Furthermore, in order to work effective and efficient in community, both community members and employees need to be familiar with each other. This is a challenge to us because new staffs are not familiar to our beneficiaries and they cannot collaborate effectively” (PI field coordinator, 05/12/ 2016).

Another PI staff member added that when old staffs that are used to project beneficiaries leave the projects, it creates a problem of sustainability because new staffs need time to become familiar with the beneficiaries (PI field coordinator, 28/11/ 2016). For a field coordinator and beneficiaries to work together, they need to create a good relationship, which usually takes time;

“Our organisation is now acting like a training centre where people can gain skills and search for better opportunities. This is a big problem because our long-term projects are ineffective because new staffs are coming without the any knowledge on how to run the activities of NGO and when the knowledge is gain, they search for better wages in other organisation” (PI field coordinator, 28/11/ 2016).

They are spending time on induction rather than focusing on the project and the little funds are used in training new staff.

4.6.1.3: LAWS THAT GOVERN EMPLOYEES IN CAMEROON

One of the SIL director explained that there are some laws which are hampering their organisation from achieving their objectives as evidenced in one of his comment: “There are some behaviours which our organisation do not tolerate and since there are laws that favour such behaviours, we cannot dismiss people because they have such behaviours; for example, “fornication”. (SIL director, June 2018). According to him, employees are the ambassadors of the organisation in communities as evidenced in another comment he made;

“When employees have bad behaviours, they damage the picture of our organisation since they are our ambassadors in communities and are supposed to act as good role models. People in communities are beginning to have doubt in our programme because we cannot dismiss badly behave personnel” (SIL director, 27/06/ 2018).

In an attempt to understand what the NGOs were doing to overcome the above obstacles, it was found that both the NGOs and funders were trying their best to include project beneficiaries in their plans and implementation;

“We have tried to initiate a protracted struggle to increase the inclusion of the marginalized in policy formation and implementation as one of the recommendation with regard to participation. For example, our organisation is trying to educate the elders in rural communities that women can be very good rulers if they are allowed to express their thoughts” (PI director, December 2016).

The SIL language coordinator for example explained that they are trying to use women in top positions to act as role models in the rural communities so that other women in rural areas can learn how women can be good leaders;

“Another challenge which is also strength in our language programme is the fact that our director is a lady and most people in our programme communities do not value the input of a lady. They believed that women should be kept at the background and men should lead. This challenge is also strength for women because when they see a woman in a top position, it acts like a break through for us, for example, many women are now becoming pastors but this is still a challenge in Baptist and full gospel where they do not allow women to become pastors. Seeing a woman in these leadership positions is a motivation to change the way women think” (SIL field coordinator, November 2016).

The same field coordinator added that they are trying to employ workers who are willing to live in rural communities and are willing to initiate the process of change and manage change in rural areas. They want change through collaboration with the people with whom the workers are working, rather than individually acting alone (SIL field coordinator, 27/11/ 2016).

4.6.2 OBJECTIVE FIVE PART TWO: LESSONS NGOS LEARNED FROM THE PAST AND THE NEW STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME THEIR CHALLENGES

In an attempt to investigate how the lessons learned in the past have influenced NGOs present and future development in the fight against poverty, it was found that NGOs have come up with a new strategy which is division of labour where tasks are being divided and each part is handled by a specialist who has a skill: “One of the biggest lesson we have learned is to divide the task. We sub-contract our activities to other NGOs based on what their organisations can do best” (PI field coordinator, June 2018). He further explained that the new strategy is succeeding because they have seen great progress since they sub-contract with the North-west department of agriculture and the Inner-del Foundation. The North-west department of agriculture has taken care of the component of agriculture because one of the elements is to gather the manure (goat dung) and then use it to nourish farms. The Inner-del Foundation is a local NGO dealing with goat rearing in the region and most of their employees are veterinarians and they are the ones following up the health of animals and PI field staff are just there to coordinate and give a report about the progress in the project (PI field coordinator, 13/12 2016). These claims were confirmed by PI goat rearing beneficiaries. For more details see objective two part two above under sub-objective “PI goat rearing”

One of the SIL director explained that SIL is encouraging the grassroots beneficiaries to become part of the organisation through fund raising as evidenced in one of his statements;

“We have developed a new scheme where grassroots have to contribute materially, for example when we want to carry out project, the community will provide some of the building material such as sundry bricks and our organisation will pay for other activities. Most of the time it depends on what the beneficiaries are capable and willing to do. In most cases we encourage them to provide food during some training sessions, this strategy is helping us to overcome funding issues and it also bring our beneficiaries closer to the project as they will like their contrition to yield fruits” (SIL director, 27/06/2018).

He stated that community members who were coming to the meetings because they wanted food were discouraged from coming since they were the ones to provide food. In probing for clarification of what has been done to keep employees from hunting for new jobs, one of the PI directors explained that they are motivating their workers: “We motivate our workers by increasing their wages. We also give other benefits to the staffs to motivate them like housing allowances and signing long term contracts with them” (PI director, 11/12/2016). This new strategy has also created another problem as demonstrated in one of his comments;

“We used to motivate our beneficiaries to attend our special general meetings by providing them accommodation and transport for those coming from long distance area but now we are unable to motivate them like before because more resources have been shifted to paying higher wages to keep our skilled employees” (PI director Bamenda, 23/06/ 2018).

Talking to other PI personnel, they said their wages have not been increased but the organisation has provided transport for all the permanent workers.

The same PI director explained that, because of lack of resources to employ more staff, communities have been merged because PI was no longer able to maintain so many field coordinators. Merging communities have also created another problem. He explained that the aim of merging communities was to make it easier for one PI coordinator to deal with one community rather than two communities. The problem with merging communities is that different communities have different needs making it more difficult to choose which project to implement. As a result the organisation is not able to give full attention to these projects (PI director Bamenda, 23/06/2018). From his explanation, the reason some projects continue is that communities have different needs and merging these communities makes it difficult to come up with a project that will benefit both communities. PI is forced to continue with

different projects in different communities knowing that they do not have enough resources to run the projects to full capacity. This is one of the reasons projects are not effective in project communities.

It was also found that studied NGOs and their funders are ensuring that NGO projects are monitored as seen in the PI field coordinator's comment:

“Our funders are more and more performance-driven with respect to their funds. It is good that they want to see that every assistance they provide goes to the project and as such, they give us guidance and monitor the activities of the project. The aim is to make sure that the project is completed in time. However, there are some customs in our project communities that we cannot try to interfere with such customs, for example women are not allow to talk when men are talking, our funders insist we should make sure women are part of decision making” (PI field coordinator, 05/12/ 2016).

From his explanation, PI have been educating their funders about the cultural practices, languages, values and norms of the communities where these projects are functioning but their funders continue to send the same recommendations all the times. According to him, these recommendations cannot be implemented because such recommendations will go against custom and tradition in the project communities. Further discussion with the same PI official revealed that PI has been trying to empower women through adult literacy classes and helping them to gain sewing skills so that they can be independent, but these strategies continue to fail because men in rural communities feel the organisation is influencing the women in communities negatively with regard to their cultural beliefs and, as such, some men in rural areas do not want women to be part of the organisation. It is a setback because their programmes are aimed at empowering women. This explains why some good projects are not helping to reduce poverty in rural areas.

4.7 CONCLUSION

Discussions in this chapter focused on how NGO staff and their stakeholders perceive poverty, factors causing poverty, programmes to reduce poverty, challenges hampering NGOs programmes, the nature of participation in which NGOs beneficiaries are involve in NGOs programmes. The study participants defined poverty as lack of land to cultivate crops to consume during the course of the year, lack of income, though, some participants also argued that poverty is not lack of money but lack of what money can buy because one can have money

and still live in poverty because there are no markets where one can buy the things one needs. From their views, poverty is not only about income and consumption because one can obtain an income that is enough to satisfy elementary needs, but one may possibly still feel underprivileged, this shows that poverty is much about class of life and access to wealth. They attribute causes of poverty to lack of land, lack of infrastructural facilities, fluctuation in climate and political instability in Cameroon. To overcome poverty in the regions under study, PI, VGSW and SIL have different programmes in the regions to fight poverty. Among these programmes are educational programmes, healthcare programmes, housing projects, goat rearing, toilet construction, mosquito bed net programme and water projects. From the participant's views, these programmes were not effective in reducing poverty and the main reason why these programmes were failing to reduce poverty was the way NGOs prioritised their programmes. Furthermore, NGOs beneficiaries and the government of Cameroon were not efficiently playing their roles to fight poverty. Attributing poverty reduction to NGO activities is something which the NGOs themselves are conscious they can't fully achieve. It is demanding too much from NGOs. To overcome these serious challenges NGOs stakeholders need to come together and work hand in hand. Beside, poverty is a relative term and needs to be understood as a phenomenon which would hardly be eradicated

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.0: INTRODUCTION

The objective of this chapter is to discuss the data presented in the previous chapters on NGOs programmes and poverty reduction. The discussion here has been articulated around the fundamental elements regarding why NGOs continue to embark on programmes that are not reducing poverty in the NWR and the Baka community in the East Region of Cameroon. The factors to be discussed cut across socio cultural, economic, technical, and environmental issues that drive NGOs to continue with their programmes in the study areas even when these programmes are not reducing poverty. The extent of the discussion centres on the researcher's perceived understanding of how participants presented the data to him during fieldwork and the data collected from the literature.

As indicated in chapter one above, the study was guided by six specific objectives. The first two objectives were as follows; (1) establishing the reason/s for continued increase in poverty levels in the study region, and (2) exploring how NGO staffs and their beneficiaries perceive poverty. These two objectives are merged into one objective. The aim here is to give a better understanding of poverty and its causes in the study areas. The next four objectives were; (3) understanding the nature of participation by which the poor are included in poverty reduction programmes, (4) understanding the reasons funders give assistance to NGOs when NGOs programmes are not yielding satisfaction, and (5) examining the challenges NGOs encounter and how the lessons learned in the past have influenced their present and future development in the fight against poverty. The sixth objective will be discussed in chapter 6 below. Successful programmes in this study are defined largely as (1) programmes that have the possibility to become self-sustaining, and (2) programmes that can permanently improve the standard of living of the people they are designated to target.

5.1 OBJECTIVE ONE AND TWO: DEFINITION AND CAUSES OF POVERTY IN THE STUDY REGION

One of the objective of this thesis as seen above was to understand the perceptions of poverty. According to the World Bank (2000:15), poverty is to be starving, to lack a roof over one's

head, lack of clothing, to be sick and not cared for, and to be ignorant and not schooled, lack of clean water and lack of food. For Onyango a more significant strategy on how to study poverty is defined in the first place by those who are living in poverty and know their situation very well because poverty definitions may possibly give wrong messages on how to tackle poverty (Onyango, 2011:6). The fact that poverty is a mixed concept makes it difficult to define because of its complexity. Many researchers such as Chowdhury (2001) and Sen (1990) believe it is better stating its causes rather than analysing what it is. Feagin (1975) is among the first scholars to study thoroughly the perceptions and causes of poverty in different households. He found three classifications attributed to poverty. The first classification attributed to poverty is individual specific lifestyle or individual influences. The belief in individual potential places much importance on people's hard work and responsibility to acquire basic needs, including education, water, health facilities, food and shelter. Meaning households with better capabilities are talented at being productive in order to survive while the weak will be pushed into absolute poverty. The second classification attributed poverty to exterior causes such as uneven distribution of wealth, manipulation of the poor, uneven opportunities or discrimination (the influence of femininity and competition on labour price), and geographical location. The last category attributed poverty to bad luck such as natural causes, for example, floods, bush fires, drought and volcanic eruptions. All these categories were found to have dominated the social, political, and economic landscape of the regions under study. This assertion was confirmed in this study through frequent descriptions of poverty as people living without food and income. Unable to sufficiently feed families because of infertile soil, floods, lack of income to rent or buy land, lack of income to buy fertilizer, lack of income to afford transport to travel to fertile land areas, flood and long dry seasons were seen as poverty in the study areas. It was also found that poverty is not only lack of money but at times lack of what money can buy because one can have money and still live in poverty because there are no markets where one can buy the things one needs.

Their understanding of poverty is in line with Runguma's (2014) description of poverty. Runguma explained that poverty is not only about income and assets but also about good living, life expectancy, access to vibrant resources and other living values. Their definition of poverty does not focus only on absolute individual income poverty measurements. Social exclusion was seen as another way of conceptualising poverty rather than the traditional view of poverty that focuses on absolute individual income poverty measurements. Namara (2009:160) explained that social exclusion focuses on multidimensional deprivation and emphasises the

relational processes through which certain groups in society find themselves locked out or left behind. Heinonen (2009) agreed that these types of features are largely interconnected to the livelihood opportunities of the dwellers and thus have an influence on their ability to rise or to fall into the poverty trap. Any vital social need that is not sufficiently fulfilled reveals a human poverty situation (World Bank, 2000). This study has maintained a variety of opinions or beliefs about poverty, which are mentioned by the above researchers.

5.2: BUILDING UP OF POVERTY IN NWR AND THE EAST REGION (BAKA COMMUNITY)

As seen in chapter four above, poverty in the NWR and the Baka community in the East Region can be understood through the following factors as explained below.

5, 2.1: WEATHER PATTERNS

As described in chapter four above, unstable weather conditions because of climate change have resulted to unprecedented increases in high temperatures and a drop in rainfall, particularly in the NWR of Cameroon. This has reduced the quantity of water available not only for the agricultural production but has also made safe drinking water scarce. Schwartz (2018) added that weather change has affected farmers through limited water and increased competition for resources. This analysis shows that there is a necessity for farmers to develop new forms of cultivation if they really want to fight poverty. This literature was confirmed in this study as beneficiaries said that low rainfall in most parts of Cameroon is posing a problem, particularly for water-dependent schemes such as irrigation and pipe-borne supply. The irony is that excessive precipitation also results to poverty in farmers. When the intensity is too high, in some cases the farms are washed away as was the case in Fundong as described in chapter four. A World Food Programme (2018) study shows that climate change has generated inflation in food prices throughout the world, especially in developing nations, leaving many people in need of urgent assistance. This has revealed that if those who are trying to fight hunger want to reduce poverty, they should encourage rural communities not to depend only on farming. They need to introduce manufacturing and service industries in rural areas. There is a need also to educate farmers on how to prevent soil erosion that may eventually lead to farms being abandoned. According to other studies, the consequences of climate change have

made everybody in the world vulnerable particularly those who are living in the world's poorest nations, for example, those in countries such as Haiti and Timor (Schwartz, 2018).

5.2.2 QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF LAND

In many areas where the majority of the rural households live, vacant land seems to be unavailable particularly in areas close to urban areas. As seen in the chapter above, the researcher argues that rapid expansion of cities on most fertile soils will generate an additional danger to farming yields in future. PI beneficiaries mentioned that there is life-threatening land deficiency in Bafut as farming land in this area has been used for construction which shows that the NWR is densely clustered in certain areas. At the same time, there are areas of unsettled land in the remote parts of the country like Baka in the East Region and some communities in Boyo division. The economic value of this land is too low for the reason that there is a poor transportation network linking these rural fertile land and market areas in urban towns as described in chapter four. From the above analyses there are villages with fertile soil but they are located far from communities and people are not capable of engaging in any meaningful farming on these lands.

This study confirmed Gomiero's (2016) views as his study illustrates that urbanisation is now forcing agriculturalists to relocate to new areas where there is fertile soil. Relocating to new areas where the land is fertile is the best way to overcome pressure on urban land. On the other hand, as seen above, a poor transportation network has continued to pose a barrier as fertile soil is found in rural area where there are no transportation means to transfer crops from farms to market. This study shows that poverty in the NWR and Baka community is not only caused by lack of quantity and quality of land. Poverty in the regions under study is also caused by lack of infrastructural networks because farmers who are in rural areas where there is fertile land cannot effectively produce and transport their goods to urban areas to sell because there is lack of a transportation network. Citizens who are in urban areas cannot also embark on agribusiness because marginal land is not good for farming. The above analysis also illustrates that poverty in the study region is not only caused by lack of a transportation network but there are other causes like lack of capital and technical know-how as Gomiero's (2016) study illustrates that investing in marginal land can improve soil quality but to improve marginal land requires high capital and rural communities do not have enough resources to embark on such projects. According to Fonjong et al.'s (2010) study, marginal land is not the only cause of

poverty in the regions under study. According to his analysis poverty in Africa is caused by lack of knowledge on how to manage food production because farmers are not able to manage soil fertility depletion, which emerged as a common theme in this study.

The above analysis confirmed Duflo, Esther, Kremer and Robinson's (2008) views. Their study shows that in Nairobi, Kenya, agriculturalists have continued with the old agricultural practices where they do not rotate crops but instead put on organic manure and it boosted their yields. In modern farm practices, as revealed by Mah (2016), the use of fertilizers is one of the best solutions to the problem of soil fertility but NGO beneficiaries were complaining that they do not have resources to acquire fertilizers. This means that in order to overcome the problem of sterile soil, organic fertilizers can be used. However, NGO efforts to improve crop production in the regions under study using organic fertilizers have been a failure as beneficiaries complained that the return from organic fertilizers is lower than their input and, as such, there is no need to continue with organic fertilizers. This analysis illustrates that the NGO strategy to overcome poverty reduction through the use of organic fertilizers is not an efficient strategy because the cost of producing organic fertilizers is more than their harvest.

A report from Duflo et al. (2008) blames farmers in Africa for not doing much to improve their harvest. Their report explained that in other continents, farmers are able to produce tons of maize per hectare but farmers in Africa are able to produce just a ton per hectare. The above analysis confirmed Fonjong et al.'s (2010) views that poverty is caused by lack of knowledge to manage the available land in rural areas. This is partially because property owners do not have enough knowledge on how to invest in this property, or because they do not care and are caught up in their primary ways of living as all the beneficiaries were practising subsistence agriculture. With subsistence farming, there are no leftovers to be taken to the market for sale, which can help in saving for future investment in rural areas. The main reason for the low harvests in the study regions as seen in chapter four is that farmers are still practicing the old system of farming, together with other events such as construction and burning of the soil.

For NGOs to succeed with their poverty reduction programmes in rural areas they need to insist that their beneficiaries should abandon the old system of farming and they should be willing to assist them with subsidises such as manure. This inevitably means that if new strategies are not introduced, agricultural returns will continue to be low if the communities continue to be reliant on farming.

Land distribution within families is also a call for concern in the NWR in Cameroon. For example, land is given only to male children and women who are the backbone in agriculture activities have to negotiate with men before the land is given to them to use for a particular period, meaning that female children will never enjoy the opportunity of being property owners. Land is wealth and the most powerful asset in the region to reduce poverty but female children do not have the opportunity to secure land and reduce their poverty. The above analysis shows that there is high discrimination when it comes to land ownership in the NWR. Namara (2009:125) explained that power is an individual possession of specific resources. Women in the NWR do not have power as seen in chapter four above. Berenskoetter (2007:10) maintains that power works not only where there is conflict over resources and differing interests/preferences but also where there is a consensus. In addition to land distribution, another aspect of discrimination that is causing poverty in the study area is discrimination in Mbororo communities as illustrated in chapter four above. More on discrimination will be analysed under subsection 5.2.6 below.

5.2.3 HUMAN CAPITAL

According to Awan et al. (2011) human capital is knowledge, social attributes, power, including vision, the capability to work, information and ability of labour that make it easy for the poor to practise different living strategies and accomplish livelihood objectives (Awan et al., 2011). Individuals need different Means of support to attain optimistic livelihood outcomes. Therefore, absence or lack of resources in terms of income, opportunities, consumption and capability building of individuals is a cause of poverty (Krantz 2001). Helmore & Singh (2001) explained that skills development is an essential element in improving the labour productivity of the poor and may be an important tool for poverty reduction. In NWR households are losing interest in farming practices and are more interested in odd jobs in urban areas, arguably because the sector is increasingly becoming challenging. As seen in chapter four above, there is lack of technical education in Cameroon simply because parents are not able to afford quality education which can enhance children's skills to seek wage employment as seen in chapter four above. The unavoidable outcome has been a decrease in farm labour as modern farming requires technical know-how. The consequences of lack of technical skills in agriculture are forcing rural communities to migrate to urban areas and the population that is left behind consists of the elderly and children who are dependent on active youths. This analysis shows that unless technical know-how is improved in Cameroon, rural-urban

migration will continue to be an issue and available land will never be productive. Rank (2004) indicates that human capital greatly disturbs individual's earnings, and therefore absence of human capital can place an individual at risk of deficiency. In line with Rank (2004), people with high human capital are more likely to be competitive in the labour market than those who have low or lack human capital.

Awan et al. (2011) explained that developed nations like Japan and Switzerland are among the wealthiest in the world, even though they have insignificant levels of natural resources but countries in Africa with vast natural resources continue to live in poverty because they lack technical know-how on how to manage these resources (Awan et al., 2011). From their perspective and in line with the views of interviewees in this study, absence or low level of technical knowledge is causing poverty in Cameroon. When there is lack of technical knowledge or human capital in any economy as illustrated in chapter 2 above, it means that plans toward learning, health, and other investments are going to be affected negatively (Awan et al., 2011). This means that there is going to be poor economic growth, and high-income inequality (Tao & Wall, 2008). In the regions under study, enough is not done on education, and what is spent to improve educational programmes is often disorganised.

Furthermore, private schools that offer technical education are very expensive and the majority of families in rural areas are underprivileged as already indicated above, meaning the cost of education is too high for them. As a result, children from poor families can attend only public schools, which are poorly organised. If NGOs want to reduce poverty in rural communities, they need to encourage investment in education, improve health and, lastly, come up with policies that will deal with discrimination in schools. They also need to encourage female children to take training programmes on skills development. Educating a girl child is a necessary step to get the poor out of poverty and, if not, poverty will transfer from generation to generation, as Mbah (2016) noted that good education will improve the chances of employment. The study suggests that NGOs should work with the government to ensure that they provide where the government is not capable to deliver.

5.2.4 INCORRECT APPROACH TO DEAL WITH POVERTY

One of the issues that emerge from the findings is that NGOs in the Baka community have pressed families to take their kids to school, which was observed as a fundamental problem. Looking at it from a sustainable livelihood approach, it is a good strategy to reduce poverty but

in reality in Baka community, it is not a good plan for Baka given the fact Baka are still in the primary phase of farming and each family does not have a constant supply of food. Investment in children's education in Baka community is seen as time wasted and energy lost from gathering foodstuff with regard to poverty reduction. This finding revealed that NGO education weakens the anticipated progressive role of education with Baka determining to transfer limited funds to other segments rather than waste them on children's education.

In line with the above opinions, education is a key to fight poverty but NGOs in the Baka community did not consider the implications of poverty on education. For example, as indicated above, schools might be free of charge, but there are additional costs, for example, buying of uniforms, books, food and transportation. These expenses are too much for a poor family to pay. Furthermore, as seen in chapter four above, unemployment in Cameroon is too high. The high unemployment rate discourages the Bakas from sending their children to school, as education to them does not guarantee employment. From this analysis, for NGOs to successfully reduce poverty in areas like Baka through educational programmes, they need to collaborate with parents to know their needs and deal with their top priorities before the introduction of what they assume is best for the community. On the other hand, one cannot deny the views of a researcher like Gomiero (2016) who noted that lack of education is one of the key factors keeping people in poverty; hence, improvement in human capital will form a key component in a poverty reduction plan.

5.2.5 LIMITED ACCESS TO FINANCES

A World Bank Group (2017) study reveals that lack of enough finances is a constraint to economic growth in the world. This view was confirmed by the PI administrative director and VGSW general director acknowledging inefficiency on the part of the government to encourage savings in the regions under study. This means that the level of poverty will continue to increase because the banking system in the region is disorganised. In addition, there are no other institutions to boost economic activities. The above views further confirmed The World Bank Group (2017:16) study, as their study revealed that Cameroon governance is an obstacle to Cameroon's growth as citizens in Cameroon lack access to finance. This means that community members have lost faith in the banking system in this region and they cannot save for future investments. The World Bank (2000) demonstrated that when micro finance services are well organised, there is a high possibility that economic activities in the region will flourish

because there are possibilities that those who are willing to set up or expand businesses will not struggle in getting a loan. In line with respondents' views, it is not easy to have access to finances in Cameroon because the government effort to embark upon major reforms to improve good governance continues to fail because of high dishonesty and the absence of democracy in Cameroon. NGOs cannot fight poverty alone without support from community members and the government. In addition, when there is inefficiency in the banking system, it discourages investors from investing in such a region (Bank Group, 2017).

5.2.6 DISCRIMINATION

In addition to the above analyses on discrimination on land ownership in the NWR, Helmore & Singh (2001) explained that general exclusion of the people from social life can cause poverty. When people are excluded in any form, it reflects discrimination. One can say then that there is no way NGOs can succeed with their poverty reduction programmes in communities like Baka without first dealing with the issue of criminalization in schools. Discrimination in school discourages children from going to school, and education as indicated above is the key to poverty reduction. This means that children in the Baka community will never gain skills which are needed in the job market because they are out of school. According to Helmore & Singh (2001), discrimination is tied to destruction of the social links and assimilation that usually accompany work. Furthermore, exclusion of women from decision-making is also seen as another form of discrimination. In the NWR women are not allowed to participate in decision-making when men are discussing. Exclusion of women from decision-making means there is lack of building their inner personal power and giving them the confidence and experience to expand their horizons. Meaning there is lack of women empowerment in the NWR. According Namara (2009: 128) empowerment is a process of shifting power relations to help the powerless to exercise control over and influence decision-making. This is the development of one's agency to shape or shape one's life, support one to act freely and subsequently source structural changes. Wils (2001:7) added that participation offers a podium to understand the power dynamics and decision-making, where and when power be applied, including the power to influence behaviour and choices of third parties. Therefore, without participation in decision making empowerment remain dead rather than an active administrative struggle for change. Semati et al. (2012) explained that when an individual is denied equal access to class status, his economic status is also weakened towards poverty. According to Krantz (2001) every individual has strengths. Women in rural areas are

the strength of any developmental project, meaning that sustainable poverty reduction cannot be achieved in rural communities when they are excluded from decision-making.

5.2.7 INSTABILITY (BOKO HARAM KILLING AND WAR OF SECESSION IN THE STUDY REGION)

One of the greatest causes of poverty in Cameroon is the increasing occurrence of Boko Haram killing in the country, thus draining the available resources towards the war. Mercier et al. (2016) explained that when there is war, social welfare is shattered as country resources are focused towards the war. Furthermore, during war, a country's infrastructure is destroyed. From the above views, one can conclude that it is difficult for NGOs to contribute toward economic growth in Cameroon during the time of war because during a war period people do not feel safe in their environment. This means that there is limitation on production as the majority of the population stay out of production including NGO officials. This confirms Mercier et al.'s (2016) study which illustrated that war increases the level of poverty because, when there is war, labour and human capital are directed towards war. Furthermore, during war there is loss of social wealth and cooperation upon which strong political and economic systems depend (Mercier et al., 2016). Hegre et al. (2011) cited Burundi as an example of a war affected country. According to them during war in Burundi properties were damaged, people were killed and those who were left behind were mostly children, women and the elderly. From the above literature, one can argue that there is no way people can get out of poverty when the population in the region is only made up of children and the elderly. This group of people are dependent; they cannot carry out production. Furthermore, there are no infrastructural facilities and human capital as a result of vandalism. This analysis shows that war does not only reduce productivity but wars damage available infrastructural facilities and push people into absolute poverty.

Additionally, as seen in chapter two and four above, the East region was receiving so many refugees from neighbouring countries and the North-west receiving people from other regions of Cameroon. This therefore implies that the level of poverty will continue to increase as an increase in population also increases the level of unemployment. Increase in population as a result of migration has the following consequences as explained by Sen (2000): increase in the price of goods and services leads to inflation as there is a high increase in the demand for goods and services, and there is an increase in crime (Sen, 2000). These factors increase the level of poverty.

In line with the study participants' views expressed in chapter four, the fact that the governing party in Cameroon, Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), has stayed in control since it was formed in 1985 and has conquered the political setting in Cameroon, shows that there is lack of transparency and accountability. Furthermore, Cameroon's president Paul Biya has remained in power until this year 2019 since his election in 1982 (IMF, 2014). Edoun (2016) explained that African heads of state continue to stay in power because there is no transparency and accountability in most countries in Africa. According to this author, lack of transparency and accountability are some of the main causes of poverty and civil wars on the African continent. Edoun further explained that the main reason African heads of states stay longer in governments is that these heads of states continue to manipulate the countries' constitutions, which are supposed to be the legal and binding documents ratified by national parliaments. According to him, these heads of states are convinced that they are above the law (Edoun & Mbohwa, 2016). This explanation clearly indicates that there is lack of participation in decision making in Cameroon. For example, the crisis in the North-west and South-west regions as explained by the study participant in chapter four above was caused by lack of democratic rule in Cameroon. The above illustration confirms Mayaka's (2009) perspective. Mayaka states that tribal violence at times is sparked by the failure of the government to recognize linguistic diversity, which has been found to contribute to political instability in some nations in the world.

The consequences of lack of transparency and accountability have resulted in an increase in poverty and have pushed people to migrate to safer areas all over the world. The study suggests that without transparency and accountability in Cameroon, the rich will grow richer while the poor will be pushed to absolute poverty. The study further suggests that for NGOs to successfully reduce poverty in the regions under study, they need to collaborate with other global associations like the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations Organisation (UNO) to ensure that peace reigns in Cameroon and for peace to reign in Cameroon, transparency and accountability are required.

With regard to the role of international organisation as peacemakers, Edoun (2016) argue that intercontinental groups that are supposed to provide solutions to African problems are the same organisations that are encouraging African leaders to remain in power. He further explained that organisations like International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank are giving loans to developing countries. These loans in most cases expose the country to higher interest rates because they default payments. The direct consequence of dealing with this international

organisation is that today's debt burden is passed onto the future generation that continue to experience poverty. The effect of these loans is that they deepen poverty, and inequality is widening as the country's resources are directed toward debts.

Therefore, poverty can be caused by a variety of factors that ultimately result in individuals not being able to meet certain needs due to their historical context or current depletion of natural resources that result to lower income. From the above views, it can be suggested that for poverty to be reduced NGOs and those trying to fight against poverty need to provide safety measures. For example, NGOs can collaborate with communities' leadership to seek measure to address developmental issues in their communities. Through participation, NGO beneficiaries will be able discuss their issues. They will also be able to analyse and reflect on their situation. By so doing they will be able to develop the best strategy or solution that can reduce their poverty and at the end they will be able to make informed decisions and develop self-confidence (Krantz, 2001).

The next section deals with NGO programmes to reduce poverty.

5.3 NGOS PROGRAMMES TO DEAL WITH POVERTY

It should be noted that the aim of this study was not to examine NGOs' successful programmes in the study regions per se but to analyse why NGOs continue to embark on programmes even when these programmes are not reducing poverty. The aim of considering successful programmes in this section is to show that not all studied NGOs programmes were a failure in the regions under study.

5.3.1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

Abia et al. (2016) explained that for growth to materialise it is essential for all the people to contribute towards developmental problems. The best strategy is introducing institutional changes that develop the status of local dialects and increase their importance in communities. In the North West region of Cameroon both international and local NGOs are involved in human rights, political and development activities even though each NGO has different objectives. Increase in participation with mother tongue was found to have dominated the social, political, and economic landscape in the Boyo division. According to Bennett (2009), language is very important because educational knowledge and skills are transmitted through

language. According to this author, discussion on poverty reduction programmes should be in languages that are understood by all the stakeholders. In line with respondents' views, those who were participating in adult literacy language classes gain skills in language translation and some were able to gain employment as described in chapter four. Furthermore, from the SIL annual report (2017:3) it is noted that when the language of teaching is understood by learners, it is more likely that the learner will engage meaningfully with content, question what they do not understand and even enjoy the challenge of new things. This implies that when mother tongue is used in teaching, children understand what is taught more than when foreign languages are used. Borrowing from Igboanusi's (2015) views, the study can suggest that if schools really want their students to have a positive life the language of instruction in schools should be the dialect that students understand best. From the above views, poverty can be promoted when there is lack of information on the best ways of doing things. Bennett (2009) states that people are not likely to do the right thing when information is not provided in the language that they understand. Wilkinson & Pickett (2009:103) confirmed that the language of the dominant group in education greatly disadvantages minorities and marginalized communities, denying them the right to participate effectively in any decision-making that affects their lives. This finding confirmed World Bank (2000) recommendation that an increase in skill development is vital as it will enable the households to overcome their own poverty as individuals would gain employment and poverty would be reduced (World Bank, 2000).

The importance of language is also seen in the PI housing project in the Baka community. As explained in chapter four above, part of the reason PI beneficiaries did not understand what was going on in the housing project is partly because they could only understand mother tongue. This means that if PI was using Baka language, their beneficiaries could have understood what was going on in the project. This analysis shows that, in order to prevent potential disasters, crucial information to communities should be in languages they understand. This strategy is seen to be helpful in dealing with extreme poverty. For example, those who could read fluently in Kom language in Boyo division were given special favours in cultural development organisations because they could read and write in both languages. The programme also helped the elderly who have not been to school to read and write. Another important point according to Simpson (2009) is that in regions where there is high inequality an increase in literacy level will reduce inequality. SIL used these mentioned poverty reduction strategies in their educational programme in Fundong subdivision. This finding supports data

from Igboanusi's (2015) study, explaining that the use of dialect in South African teaching accounts for higher literacy rates in South Africa where the literacy level is low.

The above discussion is contrary to previous studies like those of Choudry & Kapoor (2014) and Roy (2014) and Bebbington et al. (2007). These authors claimed NGOs are created to help reduce their employees' poverty and not to deal with community poverty as some NGOs are accountable to their donors and not to the communities in which they were called to work. With regard to the SIL language programme in Fundong subdivision, the SIL language programme has empowered many elders who have never been to school before as already explained above. Furthermore, full engagement in mother tongue makes it easier for straightforward implementation and action in poverty alleviation programmes in Boyo as community members were able to participate in discussions simply because they were in the language they understood. However, the design of SIL language programmes had many unrealistic requirements in other communities. Even where the programmes were simple, there were still some factors hampering their success as further detailed below.

5.3.1.1 REASONS SIL LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES ARE SUCCEEDING IN BOYO DIVISION AND FAILING IN NGOKETUNJIA DIVISION AND THE BAKA COMMUNITY

Krantz (2001) clarifies that there is no way sustainable poverty reduction can be accomplished when external support does not focus on what matters to the underprivileged. Understand the differences between the affluent and the poor and work with these groups in a way that is compatible with their current living approach. As described in chapter four above, study NGOs continue to fail in reducing poverty because most of their programmes are not community priorities. The SIL language programme was efficient and effective in Boyo because almost all the natives in the Boyo division understood Kom language, hence making it easier for instructors to concentrate on one language. Furthermore, in the Boyo division, community members were motivated and tended to be very active in their meeting discussions when their mother tongue was used for discussion. The reason they were active as discussed in chapter four is that, at the beginning of the project, some community members in this division knew how to read and write in Kom language and they were willing to join the organisation as volunteers.

Additionally, SIL lessons learned from Ngoketunjia and other areas help them understand that the success of any programme in a community begins by involving all the beneficiaries in the project. Moreover, the beneficiaries were willing to be part of the project as described in chapter four above. In Ngoketunjia division those who could read in their mother tongue were not interested in joining the organisation and those who were willing did not have teaching skills. It was difficult for SIL to establish strategies that inspire teachers to teach in home language because SIL did not have enough funds to pay higher wages to those who were willing to teach. The failure of the SIL language plan in Ngoketunjia confirmed Benson's (2004:117) views. Benson explained that in a situation where teachers are not well trained, or where teachers are not native speakers of the child's language, pupils in class are merely required to repeat content after the teacher and given little room for asking questions or expressing hesitations they may have (Benson, 2004:117). This view concurred with Thomas (2009) who talked about the criteria for effective usage of local languages for instruction. He explained that one of the criteria is that there must be enough teachers to teach in native languages. In Boyo division school children understood Kom and furthermore it was easy to find teachers who can teach in Kom language in schools than in Ngoketunjiia where teachers have to master different languages in order to teach in schools with diverse languages (Thomas, 2009).

In line with interviewees, SIL was using a top-down approach in Ngoketunjia division instead of a bottom-up approach. According to Krantz (2001), the top-down approach does not really think through feasibility and thus after much has been spent in terms of resources and time, there is little or nothing to show for it. It has been more than 25 years since this programme was introduced and beneficiaries have not taken full ownership. Another reason why the SIL educational programme was not reducing poverty in Ngoketunjia is that the cost of supporting technical education was too high. Teachers wanted motivation in terms of higher wages as compared to Boyo where teachers were receiving the basic wages and SIL has tight budgets, which make it difficult for them to afford to support effective learning in schools in the Ngoketunjia division. A little education is better than nothing so they continue to support general education, which has limited job opportunities in the job market. Abia et al. (2016) emphasise that NGOs responsible for providing community welfare services are poorly subsidized by their funders and as such NGOs continue to run programmes that are not yielding satisfaction because it is difficult to implement efficient and effective projects with limited funds. Based on other studies, NGOs cannot be blamed for poor service delivery because they

do not have enough resources to efficiently and effectively implement the right poverty reduction programmes in rural communities.

5.3.2 PI TOILET CONSTRUCTION

As seen in chapter four, PI did not lay out a well-defined implementation strategy and as a result, this project continues without achieving its main objective, which is to improve sanitation. The PI implementation strategy did not involve what was deemed the most important priority in the community. One of the setbacks in this project was lack of natives' involvement by PI staffs in situation assessment. According to Krantz (2001), in any programme aimed at poverty reduction, the target group must be part of decision making in the project, starting from situation assessment to the celebration of the achievement. As stated by Helmore & Singh (2001), everyone has a strong idea though strengths might differ from one person to another; as a result, developers should recognise and build on people's strengths. Decisions should be shared through members and not provided by one person alone. The advantage of community participation is that communities take ownership of their own development, are self-reliant, and utilise their power to improve their living conditions (Helmore & Singh, 2001). From Krantz's (2001) point of view, the PI toilet beneficiaries' perspective of poverty was not understood in order to be included in the planning process. Although there was an attempt to involve all the stakeholders, the issue as seen in chapter four was the language barrier, which prevented beneficiaries from fully participating in decision-making. Furthermore, PI attempted to include beneficiaries in decision-making failed because the NGO predecessors in the NWR and Baka communities gave community members the impression that all NGOs were the same. This discouraged many communities from participating in planning and implementation of toilet construction in Momo division. From the above one can conclude that the PI toilet construction was planned by PI with beneficiaries excluded and implemented by PI field coordinators. The idea of not involving the poor in the project explained why the project failed to reduce poverty which was the PI goal.

Applying the sustainable livelihood approach to this study shows that construction of toilets was a waste of resources, not because toilets were not useful, but because people were not taught about the importance of waste disposal as described in chapter four. If community members understood the importance of waste disposal systems, they could have happily built their toilets by using the local material as per their own interests.

Furthermore, the expensive material for toilet construction such as cements and corrugated iron sheets which are imported could give a message that they are making fancy local toilets which would be costly for repairs and maintenance, which discourages making toilets because of the cost of production. From the above analysis it is clear that for NGO programmes to have a positive impact on communities; community priorities should be address first since poverty entails a holistic and participatory assessment of the range of livelihood activities that people draw upon. Based on this finding, non-participation is seen as a hampering factor, as it is critical for the functioning and service delivery of the NGOs. When the beneficiaries are involved, there is a possibility that their views will be taken into consideration before programme implementation.

5.3.3 PI HOUSING PROJECT IN BAKA COMMUNITY

As seen in chapter four, the PI housing project as a way for poverty reduction was conceived and implemented by the people who were intermediaries between the NGO beneficiaries and NGO funders. As a result, they did not involve the people suffering from poverty in the process of designing; hence, maintaining poverty and repeated failure to address it. As seen in chapter four, some Bakas are still living in their shacks instead of living in PI modern houses. According to PI, it was difficult to act like good change agents who are developers who do not support the top-down approach; instead, they are for the bottom-up approach. This means that the interest of the poor is always in their minds (Burkey, 1993). Burkey (1993:76-77) further explained that a real change agent would make sure that the priorities of communities are achieved before they leave the community (Burkey, 1993).

As seen in chapter three above, genuine poverty reduction depends on people's ability and interest to use the local resources efficiently. That is, the poorest of the poor themselves must be key actors in identifying and addressing livelihood priorities (DFID, 1999). In this case, PI poverty reduction did not carry the aspirations and defined needs of the people for allocating, mobilizing, and managing resources, which could strengthen their capability. One of the reasons the PI housing programme continues to be a failure is that PI top officials who have greater knowledge on which projects could successfully reduce poverty in Baka community had no option to choose between programmes because their projects are funded and each project has a guideline to follow. Obaydullah (2007) explained that funding contracts limit the role of NGOs in poverty reduction since they will want to keep to the terms of the contract. When NGOs are independent, their chances of success are high, as dependence on funders is

associated with control over project management. In addition to the funder's role, PI was using a needs based approach to assess community priorities. As seen above, the approach PI used excluded the beneficiaries from situation assessment, as a result of which it was very difficult to know the needs of the Baka. Borrowing from Simpson's (2009) views, when designing a project, NGOs need to start by informing the community about the project. After the community has been informed, the next step will be environmental scanning including all the stakeholders. The third step will be planning and implementation and the last step will be monitoring and evaluation followed by celebration. Unless these steps are followed, NGO programmes will continue to be a failure in their project communities.

5.3.4 MOSQUITO BED-NET PROGRAMME

As explained in chapter four, there was lack of concern by the government officials to see that the project was beneficial and, as such, recommendations made by both project beneficiaries and NGO officials were not taken into consideration by government officials. According to the interviewees, the reason the recommendations were not taken into consideration is that there was lack of mutual benefit. Government officials who were working with the NGOs saw the implementation of recommendations as a setback in their political careers. From the respondents' perspective, one would say that there was no healthy relationship between the NGOs and government. It is evident that government officials had their own personal interests and did not want to block their chances of personal gain by implementing a correct strategy to improve quality services for their beneficiaries. The literature review shows that this finding is not new. According to Fowler (2013), NGO programmes continue to fail because the relationship between NGOs and government is usually uneven. The unevenness is as a result of jealousy. For example, government officials will fear that NGOs will erode their political power because most of the times government officials are corrupt (Fowler, 2013). From the above views, one can say that low levels of accountability and collaboration between project stakeholders, loss of trust and respect for project stakeholders, unfair benefit sharing and inadequate coordination forces NGO to continue with a project that was not beneficial. From the above analysis it can be concluded that there was lack of resilience in this project.

5.3.5 IMAGINARY PROGRAMMES

It might surprise anyone that this issue has come out as a finding in this study. The issue of imaginary programmes is on the rise in many developing nations as seen in chapter two. The issue of imaginary programmes was also found in this study. One of the studied NGOs claimed that one of their main projects was the rearing of goats but this project was operational only on paper and not in practice. However, there is no way to judge whether such a programme is beneficial to the target group because the project was only in theory. The important point in this finding is that some NGOs are dishonest and create the impression that there are projects in communities to reduce poverty when such projects are only in theory. Namara (2009:41) explained that NGOs give the impression that they are helping the poor; meanwhile they have their own interests. In this regard, their funding agenda and their own interests have a much greater influence than their role of reducing poverty in their project communities. This study has the role to draw the public attention to understand how some NGOs are functioning or not functioning in their programmes to reduce poverty. This finding might put such NGOs in the spotlight and also encourage further research on this subject. The next section of this chapter discusses the gaps between NGO policies and their implementation in the studied areas.

5.4 GAPS BETWEEN NGOS POLICES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION IN THE STUDIED AREAS

This section of the study analyses the key findings of this research to bring out clearly the implications for the NGOs beneficiaries in the NWR communities and Baka community in the East Region in Cameroon. In the prevailing poverty reduction framework, the role of NGOs as seen in chapter two above shows that they are required to lead to broad-based ownership, pro-poor effectiveness and accountability, which will ultimately reduce poverty. As seen in previous chapters, NGOs in Cameroon have a long history of partaking in poverty reduction programmes as service providers. However, they are not succeeding in poverty reduction because of the challenges hindering their movement.

5.4.1 RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION

As described in chapter four above, there is lack of engagement in decision making during planning, implantation, monitoring and evolution. Active community members in rural areas who can make significant suggestions on which projects can be implemented have migrated to urban areas. This is a setback because the people left behind in rural areas are those who cannot carry out effective monitoring of the project in order to correct what was wrong. In addition, migration is also seen in this study as a setback because NGO agricultural programmes to improve yields were not efficient in rural areas because those who could efficiently and effectively implement the skills learned from NGOs in rural areas are the ones moving to urban areas in search of office jobs. NGO nutritional programmes on healthy living were not well followed in rural areas because of the above-mentioned reason and those who are behind felt that the process was too complicated to follow simply because they found it difficult to calculate the quantity of what was needed in households.

5.4.2 INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES

The problem of insufficient resources is a growing crisis in many developing countries. As seen in chapter four, there is a continuous increase in the number of international NGOs in the study areas which have resulted in a high demand for skilled workers, hence pushing wages in the NGOs to increase in the study regions. All the three studied NGOs consistently mentioned that their staffs were leaving their NGOs for better wages in international NGOs and other sectors that pay higher wages. Limited funds directly affect the way services are being delivered to their beneficiaries. For example, because of limited resources, the PI water project in Fundong subdivision was delayed and the delay further discouraged the beneficiaries from continued participation in water project activities because they had already lost faith in the project and refused to offer labour because the project took longer than anticipated.

One of the setbacks with lack of funds is that long term plans will continue to fail as old staff will be leaving the organisation and new staff will be coming without any knowledge of how to run the activities of the NGO. Additionally, much time will be wasted on induction rather than focusing on the project. As seen in chapter four, the little funds the NGOs have were used in training staff in order to improve the quality of their services and by so doing they lacked enough funds to keep these trained staff because they were not able to pay higher wages which in turn discouraged their staff to continue working for them. The question is, should NGOs

prefer to hire highly qualified staff and pay higher wages or should they continue to employ unskilled workers at a cheaper rate knowing that immediately they gain skills they will search for better pay in other sectors? The study further argues that training of staff without any increase in their salaries or any motivation to keep the staff in their organisation is a waste of resources, as these skilled workers are needed in other organisations. This revealed that insufficient funds limit the role of NGOs in poverty reduction.

Another setback because of limited funds is seen when the studied NGOs fail to hire highly qualified translators to break the language barriers that were blocking the beneficiaries from fully participating in NGOs' planning, implementation and monitoring of the programme. As seen in chapter four, most Bakas can only understand their mother tongue, meaning for them to have effective and efficient communication they need an intermediary to break the language barrier. Due to lack of funds, the NGOs could only afford to hire unskilled translators who make the situation worse. Furthermore, there was lack of continuous monitoring and evaluations simply because the officials did not have enough funds to travel to the field to monitor the activities of the projects so that corrections could be made. This factor affected the smooth functioning of the projects in rural communities, and hence the benefits from these projects.

5.4. 4 BENEFICIARIES' ABSENCE IN MAJOR DECISION MAKING

Cornwall & Gaventa (2000) explained that participation is a practice meant to decrease exclusion of the poor by enabling them to be makers and shapers rather than mere users and choosers of programmes designed by others; meaning that participation involves taking active control and determining priorities of developmental programmes. The absence of beneficiaries in major decision making in most NGO projects in the NWR and the Baka community was found to be a key component in their powerlessness to gain from NGO programmes. Ebrahim (2005) argues that when community members are not included in decision making the chances that the project will fail are very high. When you involve people right from the beginning, they own the project and when it comes to rolling it out, the community knows everything, including where they can source funds. The interviewees claimed that the reasons for beneficiaries not partaking in decision making is because NGOs use either English or French in their general meetings and they do not understand either of these languages. In addition to the language barrier, there was the issue of gender and power relations where young men and women are

not allowed to participate in discussions when men are discussing important issues. This is seen as a challenge to deal with poverty because poverty has so many dimensions. NGOs did not seek to engage in development programmes as a core process of social change rather than a form of detached technical intervention.

Onyango (2011:6) explained that a more applicable strategy on how to address poverty is well-defined in the first place by the underprivileged who know their situation very well but in this study, projects were implemented based on assumptions and not based on beneficiaries' or underprivileged priorities. Boyte (2008:119) explained that development cannot be achieved unless the people become the agents of their own development. Participation is linked closely to decision making where people can plan and decide for themselves about what action to take to change their own situation.

However, there were claims that NGOs were encouraging participation in community development projects because studied NGOs were working for the poor in their project communities. On the other hand, they can be criticised for entertaining different interests and not being able to establish better linkages with the poor. For example, NGO beneficiaries were tired of active participation in NGO activities because their views were never considered by NGOs. As described in chapter four above, most suggestions or recommendations made by NGO beneficiaries were never implemented simply because NGOs relied on their funders for project funds. From the NGOs' perspective, it was very clear that one cannot bite the hand that feeds one but it does not make sense for NGOs to encourage active participation when they know the contribution from beneficiaries is valueless in their project implementation. This type of influence was found to make the case for NGOs not achieving their main objectives. The study NGOs were not able to develop strategies that would build the capacity of the poor to become agents of their own poverty reduction process. Their strategies discouraged beneficiaries from making further suggestions in their community projects. Tao & Wall (2008) suggest that NGOs should consider underprivileged participation in developmental projects and women should be the driving force behind these developmental programmes. The study considered the absence of beneficiaries in top decision making as a form of social exclusion. Nevertheless, as seen in chapter two and five above, NGO participation alone may not address poverty issues, but, NGOs should contribute by bringing out the poverty issues and the concerns of poor people.

5.4.5 THE SOCIO-CULTURAL AND LEGAL ASPECT OF THE STUDY REGIONS

As seen in background information in chapter one, the socio-cultural and legal aspect has been found to be a hindrance to studied NGOs programmes in the study regions. The coexistence of customary laws is high in the East and North West regions of Cameroon whereby customary laws tend to overtake national legislature, which is a great hindrance to the studied NGOs in the regions to yield satisfaction. As seen in chapter four, traditional norms have continued to exclude females from developmental programmes such as the right to basic education and sometimes they favour early marriages as seen in Mbororo communities. However, this finding is not new in other communities in Africa as Alasah's (2008) study shows that in Mbororo communities in Ghana and Nigeria families are reluctant to sponsor a girl child in school because of the belief that they will bear the cost of the girl child in school and benefits of education will be enjoyed by the girl's husband. It can thus be concluded that girls are denied education partly because it is perceived that families bear the cost of their education and the benefits are enjoyed by the husband families (Alasah, 2008). It is believed in Mbororo communities in Cameroon that girl children will challenge their husbands if they are allowed to go to school. Furthermore, traditional rules in Cameroon prevent women from active participation in decision making that affects their lives. The laws also exclude women from land ownership, which was seen as one of the setbacks in the PI goat rearing programme in Momo division. The PI goat rearing programme in the region was not a 100% success simply because land belonged to men and women needed to negotiate for a piece of land with their husbands in order for them to rear goats. This fundamentally gives the man more power to choose what the wife can do in the project, decide when the goats can be sold, and what the money can be used for simply because women do not have control over land and because of the cultural norms. Men control everything which limits women's rights over these goats. Namara (2009) encourages participation as it would physically include women in policy dialogues and enable them to frame poverty reduction policies and practices because people react in a different way to specific factors of their poverty.

Mah (2016:219-20) recognises the effect of the socio-cultural aspect on the success of NGOs' rural projects in Cameroon. According to this author, and some others, including Njoh (2011), the long-term successful implementation of any community project depends on whether the beneficiaries perceive the project as truly theirs. Unfortunately, the grassroots traditional authorities and their cultural practices have undermined the long-term effective running of community projects in the developing world, notably NWR Cameroon (Fonchingong, 2009).

This analysis shows that power-relations constitute a barrier to developmental programmes. We can see how the gender role continues to exclude women from taking opportunities that can have an optimistic influence on socio-political and economic life in the region. Socio-cultural influences have made women in the region not to take advantage of any project NGOs intended for them.

Additionally, the HIV/Aids NGO programmes in the study areas have not been a success. The reason is that sex is between a married couple and it is not discussed casually as seen in chapter four above. These factors were perceived as an obstacle to NGO HIV/AIDs programmes in the study regions because these factors destabilize effective and efficient communication with parents who are a key source of information to their children.

A research carried out in Tanzania by some researchers, Wamoyi, Fenwick, Urassa, Zaba & Stones (2010) illustrated that children regard their close relatives as being unfriendly and they did not want to be misinterpreted as well as being interrogated on private matters, such as sexual roles. Such factors were seen as barriers to effective communication between close adult relatives and their young relatives affecting the success of NGO projects in the regions under study. Other studies added that media such as television and the internet are the best media through which NGO programmes regarding HIV/AIDs can be shared as Motsomi, Makanjee, Basera, & Nyasulu (2016) illustrated that parents prefer their children to get information about sexual and reproductive health from social media, which therefore diminishes the parents' role as the primary source of information. This literature was not found to be true in this study as NGO programmes regarding HIV/AIDs were not yielding satisfaction because parents do not allow their children to watch TV programmes that talk about sexual activities.

Based on this study's particular finding, the study suggests that for NGOs to have a positive impact in the lives of their beneficiaries, the issues of gender role in particular and cultural norms in general need to be resolved. These issues are hindrances to NGO programmes in the regions under study. With regard to health programmes, especially HIV/AIDs and sexually transmitted diseases, the study suggests that it is necessary for parents to find ways to open efficient discussion with children about sexual roles rather than leaving them to get the information from social media. Social media do not choose the information they share with children. Children might end up getting the wrong information from the media. Furthermore, programmes like HIV/AIDs should be introduced in schools.

5.4.6 POOR PLANNING AND UNSATISFACTORY GOVERNMENT ROLE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE STUDY REGIONS

Development and poverty reduction are the duties of every government and without government involvement in rural development; NGO projects will continue to fail to reduce poverty. For example, the government of Cameroon has failed to provide Baka with basic infrastructure such as pipe-borne water, good roads, and easy access to medical facilities. The Baka with basic training who are supposed to live in their community are migrating to areas where there are basic facilities such as good water, transport system, hospitals, etc. This is a setback in NGO programmes because the Baka who were employed to work with NGOs with the aim that they would act as role models were migrating to other areas, hence making it difficult for NGOs to realize their objectives. This factor influences the way NGO activities are carried out in the Baka community as NGOs struggle to empower them and the skills gained by a few Bakas are not effectively used either because there are no job opportunities or because the Baka lack capital to start their own initiatives. This is also a setback because there are no positive impacts in communities initiated by NGOs that can act as pull factors in NGO projects.

5.4.7 FUNDERS' INFLUENCE IN NGO PROGRAMMES

One of the setbacks in NGO programmes in this study is the presence of funders in major decision making in most projects. Programmes/projects implemented by NGOs are more consistent with the funders' policy objectives and most of such programmes do not respond to community development plans to reduce unemployment and hence poverty. Brass (2010) acknowledges that when donors influence the activities of NGOs, NGOs introduce their own programmes in communities rather than working with the communities to identify communities' priorities before embarking on their programmes. Some researchers such Banks & Hulme (2012), Mitchel (2014) and Ebrahim (2005) continue to argue that donors have the right and the capability to control NGOs during their operation process. They further explained that donors should not only work in partnership with NGOs they can manoeuvre and control because to operate like this may affect the powers of the NGOs in decision-making. The setback in the donor role is that there is no effective and efficient monitoring and evaluating so that their funds can yield satisfaction.

In this study, some funders' monitoring and evaluation were based on the progress reports from their NGOs. Ebrahim (2003: 96) indicates that in such situations, it is easier for NGOs to

manipulate their funder or donors since funders monitoring and evaluation depend only on what the NGOs report. As stated by Ebrahim, the reports, which are sent to funders or donors, might not necessarily be what is happening to the programmes on the ground or the report may not have a direct bearing on NGOs' primary activities. In other words, Ebrahim (2005) explained that NGOs become comfortable with their organisational structure to give the impression that they wisely monitor the efficiency of their projects/programmes. In this setting, NGOs exploit and manipulate donor dependence on information in order to influence funds and diminish interfering. However, as seen in this study, PI and VGSW were sending quarterly reports to their funders about the progress, challenges and successes of their projects; however, some SIL staff members were SIL funders. SIL officials who are funders do sometimes monitor and evaluate their programmes.

An important point in this finding is that it is easy for NGOs to continue to embark on projects that are not reducing poverty because it is easy for them to manipulate the information they release to their funders since monitoring and evaluation are done by NGOs and accountability is done through reporting. Namara (2009:41) concurred that this situation tends to place funders in a superior position and hence there is high stress on NGO responsibility to satisfy their beneficiaries, which in the end will result in upward accountability to funders and not downward accountability to beneficiaries.

This was found to be a setback in this study because when funders continue to force NGOs to change certain activities in the projects, they end up forcing NGOs to ultimately abandon the good job they were doing to concentrate on funders' changes as described in chapter four. Roy's (2014) argues that NGO funding continuously comes bundled with specific rules and ideas regarding how they must be governed and contribute to governing others just as development had done in the past. For example, in this study it was found that one of the PI funder recommendations was to include the underprivileged - particularly women - in decision-making but women are not allowed by custom to talk when men are talking in some communities in the study regions. This finding further shows that, although funders have the greatest influence in NGO programmes, they are less aware of local conditions though they claim to be experts in NGO projects. Based on this finding, they know nothing about the environment, local people, cultural practices, languages, values and norms of the communities where these projects are functioning. Abia et al. (2016) admit that when funders or donors want to do an evaluation, they may send an examiner to evaluate the progress or completion of the project and this often lasts for a few days. Given the limited time for evaluation, much of the

loopholes of the project are easily hidden or camouflaged by these NGOs and the examiner may end up being short-sighted, that is seeing only what went right and to their satisfaction and the underlying realities are hidden. Brass (2010) explained that this is a shortcoming because, in the end, no lessons are learned and with other projects the same mistakes are being made repeatedly.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the data presented in the previous. The discussion was on why NGOs continue to embark on programmes that are not reducing poverty in the NWR and the Baka community in the East Region in Cameroon. Based on the findings of this research, the chapter concludes that there are so many factors which account for the ineffectiveness of NGO work. Attributing poverty reduction to NGO activities is something which the NGOs themselves are conscious they can't fully achieve. It is demanding too much from NGOs. Poverty reduction in any community is the responsibility of the underprivileged and also the duties of every government and NGOs only assist as support mechanisms towards the realization of this goal.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATION, CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

6.0: INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of this study, six specific objectives were set in an effort to adequately analyse why NGOs in the selected regions of Cameroon participate in poverty reduction programmes given the knowledge that these programmes do not reduce poverty. The thesis is divided into six main chapters. The first chapter introduces the study to the readers. It provides the general background about Cameroon including social and historical facts about poverty in Cameroon, an overview of the study regions. The chapter also discusses statement of the problem, specific objectives of the study and the significance of the study. Chapter two is divided into two sections; the first section discusses literature review that is useful in the study of NGOs and poverty reduction. The second section of the chapter focuses on poverty with more emphasis on the causes of poverty. Followed by sustainable livelihood approach as a method that try to measure the many problems that disturb how the underprivileged put their living together and sustain their families beyond what is regularly thought of as economic earnings or social earnings to solve livelihood security measures. Chapter three discusses the research methods used to find answers to the research problem and research objectives outlined in chapter one. Chapter four describes the causes of poverty in the regions under study and NGOs programmes to reduce poverty. Chapter five analyses the reasons NGOs continue to embark on poverty reduction programmes given the knowledge that their strategies or programmes are not reducing poverty in their project communities. The final chapter which is this chapter presents a summary of the findings, gives recommendations, conclusion and follow up research.

6.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Poverty was perceived in the regions under study by NGOs and their stakeholders as not only lack of income but at times lack of what cash can purchase because one can have money and still live in poverty because there are no shops where one can purchase the things one needs. Meaning poverty is not only about income because those who can afford to pay for their needs can still be poor. It was identified that poverty in the regions under study was built through the following factors:

Weather patterns: Unstable weather conditions was identified as one of the causes of poverty in the regions under study. This has reduced the quantity of water available not only for agricultural production but has also made safe drinking water scarce. The irony is that too much rain also resulted in community poverty. When the rain intensity is too high in some cases fertile farms are washed away while the majority of the population in the study areas rely mostly on farms to sustain their life.

Quantity and quality of land: It was identified that there was lack of farming land, especially in urban areas. In rural areas where there was abundance of land, this land was not fertile for agricultural production. Furthermore, where there was fertile land, there were no transportation means to access these fertile lands as they were far from communities. It was also found that gender roles affect the way in which land is shared within the household in the NWR. Women are not allowed to own land in some rural communities in the region. Effective farming was mostly done by women who do not have ownership of land in the NWR.

Human capital: It was found that there is lack of knowledge, personal and social attributes, including creativity and ability to carry out work and produce economic value. There are no technical education institutions in rural areas in the study regions that can enhance their skills to seek for wage employment. Lack of access to technical know-how was perceived as the most important factor causing poverty in Cameroon other than lack of access to land. With human capital they can access unfertile land.

Incorrect approach to deal with poverty in the study regions: NGOs in Baka community have pressed families to send their children to school without looking at the negative effects this will cause in the Baka community. The consequences this approach had in the Baka community included paying for school needs and parents wanting their children to assist them in farm work or work in Bantu plantations to earn some income. The Baka wanted immediate income to overcome their poverty and not an educational programme because education was not a guarantee that they will gain employment.

Limited access to finances: The banking system in the regions under study is poor and there are no other institutions to boost economic activities in the region. Lack of these microfinance

activities prove that poor households cannot save or borrow. It is not possible to successfully mobilize funds from poor households and the government efforts to embark upon major reforms to improve the banking system continues to fail because of high corruption and lack of transparency in Cameroon.

Discrimination: Discrimination was perceived to be one of the factors causing poverty in the study areas. Baka children were discriminated against in schools by the Bantu children. This discouraged children from going to school whereas education is perceived as the most important tool to fight poverty. There is discrimination also in the North West region in Mbororo communities where male children are allowed to go to school and female children are married at an early age without formal education. Furthermore, in some communities in the North West region women are not allowed to participate in decision making when men are discussing serious issues. This was seen in this study as one of the causes of poverty.

Instability (Boko Haram killings) in Cameroon: One of the greatest causes of poverty in Cameroon was the increasing occurrence of Boko Haram killings in the country, draining the available resources towards the war. Resources are being directed to this crisis leaving households with nothing to eat and lives are lost too. In addition to Boko Haram killings, the Anglophone crisis in the NWR and South West Region (SWR) has resulted in tens of thousands of working population migrating to other areas all over the world.

The second objective of the study was to discuss selected NGO programmes in the study region to deal with poverty reduction.

6.2 SUMMARY OF PROGRAMMES IN THE STUDY REGIONS TO DEAL WITH POVERTY

Educational programmes: SIL and PI were using language (mother tongue) in their educational programme as a medium through which the communities can fight their poverty. Those that were participating in language classes gain skills in language translation and some were able to gain employment. In addition to mother tongue programmes, all the studies' NGOs were assisting some schools in the study regions with scholarships, building of classrooms, organising workshops where teachers were trained and vocational training where community members gain skills to fight poverty.

Toilet construction: Toilet construction was one of the projects in the study region aimed at improving healthcare in the division and hence poverty. The aim of toilet construction was to reduce the spread of diseases and reduce the shame of going to the toilet in the bushes. On the other hand, this strategy was not successful in poverty reduction as community members were not using these toilets. The cost of maintaining these toilets was too high for community members as most of them were living in thatched roof houses which were leaking water during the rainy season. Some beneficiaries preferred corrugated iron sheets to roof their houses rather than having beautiful toilets.

Housing project in Baka community: One of the programmes in the study areas to fight poverty was the PI housing project in Baka community. PI found that the best way to deal with the poverty situation in the Baka community was the construction of modern houses for the Baka who were delivering children in bushes. In addition, they were living in a horrible environment. In the rainy season, their shacks were leaking water, making life more difficult for them and PI thought the best way to overcome this social problem was to give them modern houses free of charge. However, this strategy did not help to reduce poverty as the Baka top priority was for NGOs to negotiate with the government so that they can continue to live in the forest and use their hunting and farming skills. Furthermore, the cost of maintaining their traditional shacks was low as compared to modern houses. Bakas were not comfortable in making fires in modern houses as opposed to their traditional houses.

Mosquito bed nets project: One of the NGO programmes in the study areas to reduce poverty is VGSW insecticide-treated bed nets for pregnant women and children for the prevention of malaria. Nevertheless, this project was a failure because the recipients of free nets were not the targeted group. The few that got the nets had no knowledge on how to use insecticide-treated bed nets. There was a mismatch about who got the nets and who got education on how to use the nets. The reason for the mismatch was that the nets were being distributed by councillors and education was done by NGOs officials. They both have different motives. As a result, the project did not help in the prevention of malaria.

PI water project: This was another project in the study area to fight poverty. The aim of the project was to help create pipe-borne water and ease the long distance walk to fetch water in the Fundong subdivision. However, this project did not achieve its main objective. The

construction of the water project in this subdivision was not necessary because they already had community pipe-borne water and streams in the area. The construction of pipe-borne water was perceived as duplication of services and a waste of resources because community members have important priorities like the construction of classrooms that they have been struggling to achieve for many years.

Health (HIV/AIDS) programme: The main aim of this programme was to reduce the spread of HIV/Aids and other transmitted diseases in the study regions in order to fight poverty. However, it was found that some of these health programmes were not yielding satisfaction because of cultural beliefs. For example, matters to do with sex are traditionally a taboo in the study regions. Such issues are considered as private subjects and not for public discourse. This was perceived to be a barrier in NGO programmes because it discourages parents from talking with their children about issues of sexual characteristics and family planning.

PI goat-rearing programme. The PI goat-rearing programme was another project aimed at reducing poverty in the NWR of Cameroon. The aim of this project was to extract milk from the goats and feed the children, and to empower women on how to generate income. This was a successful programme because beneficiaries were able to sell some of the goats and use the income to take care of their families. Some families were able to extract milk, which helped to reduce the income they spent in buying milk. However, the programme was not 100% successful because some did not have land to rear these goats.

6.3 SUMMARY OF FACTORS INFLUENCING THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY REGION

Chapter four accesses some of the participation obstacles which have continued to hamper NGOs' efforts to achieve their goals in the study regions. Evidence gathered further reveals that there is low downward accountability to beneficiaries as the beneficiaries do not enjoy the same level of attention within the NGO sectors, although both NGOs and funders revealed that they sought the consent of the beneficiaries before engaging in programmes so that beneficiaries' needs can be prioritised. One of the main reasons for low level of accountability to the beneficiaries is the funding contracts that affect both the funder's power and that of the NGOs. For example, funding contracts ensure that NGOs use the funds they get from donors or funders effectively and efficiently even when these funds are not designated towards a specific programme. This is significant because it encourages communication between the

donor and the NGOs. On the other hand, NGOs do not have contracts with their beneficiaries that guide them on how to run programmes in communities.

Other barriers which limit NGO beneficiaries from fully engaging in decision making is that NGOs' interest is only in communal labour. As described in chapter four meetings are only planned when the NGOs want to deliver messages or want communal labour. This means that apart from labour there is no input from NGO beneficiaries with regard to beneficiaries' contribution. The studied NGOs ignored the fact that when NGO beneficiaries participate in decision making, they take ownership of their own development and self-reliance, utilising their power to improve their living conditions.

Another setback was that NGOs were using either English or French in general meetings, while most beneficiaries do not understand either of these languages. The reason given by NGOs was that they have limited resources to hire qualified translators. Additionally, NGO predecessors gave community members the impression that NGOs are useless, as previous NGOs never implement any useful programme in most communities.

There were claims from NGOs that there is a direct bond between them and the beneficiaries when it comes to project implementation. These claims were doubtful, as most NGO programmes in the regions were not beneficiaries' top priorities. For example, NGO officials did not take recommendations made by beneficiaries into consideration and the only input as seen in chapter four is when the NGOs want communal labour for an intervention.

However, there are indications where SIL and their funders tried to involve the beneficiaries on all levels but the beneficiaries were unwilling to contribute their ideas and, as a result, some NGOs programmes were implemented based on assumptions. The study concludes that, unless the basic questions such as who controls and makes decisions in NGO projects/programmes are addressed, NGO beneficiaries will continue to be relegated to the lowest levels when it comes to NGO programmes in communities. In the study, NGOs are beginning to organise fund raising events; however, the funds they have raised are still not enough to efficiently and effectively drive their projects to succeed in rural areas.

6.4 SUMMARY OF NGOS' CHALLENGES

Knowing the factors that hamper NGO programmes from producing the best results will aid in finding and suggesting solutions that could help deal with the situation. As seen in chapter four, insufficient resources, differences in social status between the NGO officials and their

beneficiaries, lack of government support to provide basic services in rural communities, language barrier, and strict rules from funders, poor coordination, and lack of facilitation skills were some of challenges hampering NGOs from producing the best result in the NWR and Baka community in Cameroon.

Insufficient resources: The studied NGOs are practically not able to meet the needs of their beneficiaries with the little funds they receive from their funders. They are not willing to use the small available resources they have to maintain old staff. They prefer unskilled employees who are cheaper than highly qualified staff who know what is required from them to satisfy the communities. They kept on wasting the little resources on induction, which has become an everyday issue in the region. However, they are trying not to depend wholly on funders by trying to raise their own funds now.

Differences in social status between the NGO officials and their beneficiaries: It was seen that in all the communities that NGO field coordinators who were supposed to live in communities and monitor the activities of the project were living in urban areas and visit the projects occasionally. This was viewed as one of the obstacles that made participation very difficult as some NGO beneficiaries believed NGO officials' aim in their communities was to exploit them as most of them viewed NGO officials as superior (high class) living in towns. This belief made NGOs in the region to have limited abilities to mobilise and organise their beneficiaries. NGOs' limited abilities in most communities were because of their consultation, which was quick fix mobilisation. Participatory practice was based on what NGO officials assumed would be effective for the beneficiaries and not what the beneficiaries believed would work for them.

Lack of enough government support to provide basic services to rural communities: For NGOs to succeed with their poverty reduction programmes in rural communities, government also needs to play its role by providing the basic needs in communities. Lack of transportation network, educational facilities, health facilities and good drinking water continue to discourage NGOs field coordinators from living in their project communities as well. This was clearly observed as rural areas in the study regions lack basic necessities.

Language barrier: One of the reasons some decisions were implemented with little or totally no input from the beneficiaries is that beneficiaries could not understand what was going on in the project. Beneficiaries could only understand mother tongue but the activities of the projects were being discussed in foreign languages.

Strict rules from funders. NGOs work with strict budgets; for example, PI could not construct the much-needed classrooms in Boyo division because their funds were for water construction and consequently the project was viewed as a failure because the NGOs want to follow the guidelines in the contract.

Poor coordination and lack of facilitation skills: There were no monitoring and evaluation systems for some of the projects and, as a result, corrections were not done or done in time. Furthermore, there were unhealthy relationships among the management especially between the NGOs and community volunteers. NGO volunteers complained bitterly that both the communities and the NGOs they are working for do not appreciate their input and, because their efforts are not appreciated, they are not fully engaged with the activities of the projects. Thus, they help in the projects only when they are not busy. The study suggests that such unresolved tensions might lead to further conflict and will continue to negatively affect the functioning of the projects in communities since NGO community volunteers are the intermediaries between the NGOs and their beneficiaries. Without community volunteers NGOs will not have a say in any community in the regions under study.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The sixth objective of this study is formulating suggestions that may be shared with NGOs, academics and research institutes on methods and practices that may lead to better integration of programmes design and execution of projects that may reduce/alleviate poverty. The following are some of the key recommendations based on the findings of this study. However, some of these recommendations are not new. The study suggests that for developmental NGOs to have a positive impact in their project communities they need to seriously consider the existing recommendations at various levels of policymaking.

The main reason some developmental NGOs are created is to reduce poverty. For poverty to be reduced, such developmental NGOs or those aim at fighting poverty in rural and urban communities in Cameroon need to focus more on developing farming skills since the majority of households in rural areas in Africa are farmers. As seen in chapter four under sub-objective one, without fertilizers, good crop yields are unattainable even when the weather is considered favourable. Most farmers are poor and do not have capital to acquire necessary input for farms. Those who want to fight poverty should come up with new methods on how to improve infertile land and also how to market crops. One of such method should be teaching the community

members the cheapest way of making their own manure. For example, study participants explained that making manure is more costly than the return from the manure. This entails that it is better for farmers to cultivate without manure since the cost of manure is higher than the return from the manure. In order to encourage farming in the study regions, the government should develop rural infrastructure especially roads connecting urban and rural areas as this will ease transportation of goods from farms to the market.

Furthermore, as discussed in chapter four under sub-objective three, one of the reasons NGOs continue to embark on projects that are not yielding benefits is that all the NGOs staff including field coordinators are living in urban areas and visit project communities mostly when there are general meetings. The point was strongly emphasised by many NGOs beneficiaries as they expressed their concern as to how NGOs and their staff working in their communities were actually unfamiliar and insensitive about their culture and way of doing things. When project coordinators visit their projects occasionally it weakens empowerment and ownership because living in the project community is the starting point of any support to the community, whereas living in urban areas prevents the staff from having the knowledge about the communities where their projects are functioning. When project coordinators live in project communities, it will be easier for them to embrace the culture and identity of the beneficiaries. It will also be easy for all the members to pool resources on an equal footing, rather than in unsatisfactory power structures. Seen in chapter two above community members need to feel inspired by projects directed at or including them, not feel that they are being forced on them. Projects will only be efficient and effective if the concerns of the community members are taken into deliberation, rather than assuming that they have the same beliefs and motives as project partners. From observations in the field, beliefs differ between individuals and communities, and they are expected to change over period. For the Baka to be truly powerful and enthusiastic about projects aimed at assisting their livings, these developments need to be based on their beliefs.

Furthermore, as seen in chapter two under "SLA" participation does not only strengthen community commitment and interest but develops legislative and decision-making ability because individuals feel empowered, and they also feel that they are in control of their own material or information. The study strongly suggests that NGO staff - especially the field coordinators - should live in their project communities, as this will reduce the barrier of looking at NGO staff as superior and NGO beneficiaries as inferior. This will enable constructive discussion between different actors in general meetings especially when the outsider expert

chairs meetings. Additionally, participant seminars should concurrently work as awareness-raising and sensitization events in order to support all participants in the community gain a knowledge and understanding of each other's interests and roles.

As discussed in chapter four under sub-objective two part two, the issue of duplication of services in project communities was high. The study suggests that duplication issue can be resolved through an increase in partnerships and dialogue with all stakeholders, including the government and those who want to fight poverty in these communities. NGOs are encouraged to sustain and develop solid working relationships that they have with other organisations. It will be necessary to meet regularly in order to stay better informed and interchange work strategies, progress reports, ideas, news and results with each other. This would significantly assist decrease duplication as seen in the water project in Boyo division where communities were comfortable with the council pipe-borne water but PI came with the same project. Dialogue with all stakeholders will reduce possible contradictions and will improve coordination and collaboration between NGOs. It is also recommended that NGOs should establish a folder of all NGOs operating within the community with full data on who is responsible for what and where. This would help each organisation in selecting proper partners, or building relations with other NGOs and other developments. One of the reasons the PI goat-rearing programme is succeeding is that PI partner with other organisations to implement this programme in communities in Momo division.

In addition, as seen above in chapter four under sub-objective two part two, and objective five part one, one of the reasons NGOs programmes continue to exist without yielding fruit is because of traditional beliefs. For example, one of the reasons PI could not implement some of the recommendations was because of traditional beliefs. PI funders continue to insist that women should be at the forefront of projects in communities but women are not allowed to talk when men are discussing important issues in rural communities. The study suggests that there should be collaboration. Both NGOs and their funders need to familiarize themselves with their project community's culture, traditions, customs and rights before assuming that they can work with the community successfully. This calls for a greater involvement in situation assessment.

Furthermore, limited funds was found to be one of the reasons NGO programmes continue to be a failure. The study suggests that instead of having so many programmes that are not yielding satisfaction because of limited funds, NGOs should close those programmes that are not top priority in communities. Use the limited resources to concentrate on a few that will have a positive impact. For example, one of the reasons beneficiaries are not fully engaged in

decision-making is because they do not understand the foreign languages used by NGOs. It is advisable that NGOs should deal with a few communities. It will be easy for them to handle the language barrier, as they will be able to hire a few qualified translators. Furthermore, with a few communities they can employ a few highly qualified employees rather than having many unskilled employees who cannot deliver positive change because of limited resources. Additionally, with a few communities it would be easy for field coordinators to monitor the activities of the organisation daily or weekly. As seen in four under sub-objective two part two, one of the reasons projects continue to fail is that the activities of the organisation are not monitored. It is recommended that NGO officials should make sure that there is an in-depth follow-up in terms of assembling feedback, monitoring, progress reports, gaining different skills, enhancing results and discerning project results.

As described in chapter four under objective two part two, one of the reasons NGO programmes continue to function even when they are not yielding satisfaction is that NGO staffs do not care to follow up the task they have assigned to their community volunteers. It is important for NGO officials to always monitor their projects in communities in order to be able to quickly adjust any activities that are failing and deal with them at their basis, not wait until the level of warning sign. Such circumstances are significant reminders that the whole thing is connected. Projects or programmes cannot be handled in isolation or the current problem will just be shifted. Although there are some indications in the study that NGOs cannot change the original plan of their funders as seen under objective two part two in chapter four, there are some activities that do not need the concern of funders before correction; for example, children not attending school or community volunteers not performing their duties simply because they don't know whether what they are doing is the right thing or not. These are quick fix issues. If they do not address them much earlier, they can lead to serious damage to the project.

In conclusion, the main findings of the research presented and analysed in chapters four and five revealed that the major constraints faced by the studied NGOs in translating their programmes into solid achievement at grassroots level are focussed on resource limitation. Some of the studied NGOs' limitations are not new. They are aware of them and they are making efforts to ensure that their projects yield satisfaction. As seen in chapters two and four, for donors to overcome the misused of resources by NGOs, they need radical change in their monitoring and evaluation programme.

However, as has been shown, this does not seem to be a goal that would be achieved soon in donors/NGOs' agenda, i.e. for funders to make a positive impact in communities, they should

not only give guidance on how NGO activities should be run but they should also create their own means of monitoring and evaluation. Evidence from this study revealed funders' monitoring and evaluation are done through writing of reports and NGO officials write these reports. This study suggests that funders should not only depend on reports from NGOs. Through monitoring and evaluation funders will come up with good strategies that can improve NGOs' service delivery in communities as it was revealed that funders continue to give recommendations based on what they assumed can be the best solution, but through monitoring they will deal with reality in the field. Trusting documentation more than visits to the field to learn or see what is really going wrong or right will reward good documentation rather than good work.

Furthermore, if funders want their support to be useful, they should encourage NGOs to show much more commitment towards downward accountability to their project beneficiaries. They should actively involve beneficiaries in the process of meaningful gains rather than their upward accountability that weakens their success in their development programmes. Though there were indications that both NGOs and funders seek the consent of the beneficiaries before engaging in programmes, the study revealed that their engagement was not enough to bring beneficiaries closer to their programmes/projects.

As seen in chapter four under objective two part two. One of the reasons the PI housing project in Baka community continues to be a failure is that some Bakas have the feeling that living in modern houses will affect their culture. That is, if they continue to live in modern houses their cultural practices will be lost and, as such, some of them continue to live in their shacks. The study encourages NGOs to support the Baka in documenting and appreciating their beliefs and traditions, principally those features that have been or are on the edge of being vanished. Despite the fact that they may not have direct use for the documented material, future generation may request to use them to refresh certain traditional customs.

6.5 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research, the study concludes that selected NGOs programmes continue to fail because of poor prioritization of programmes by NGOs. Furthermore, there are extraneous variables which account for the ineffectiveness in NGOs determination to fight against poverty. Among these factors is lack of beneficiaries' voices in NGO programmes during planning, implementation, monitoring and evolution. The reasons for lack of

beneficiaries' voices in NGO programmes were found to include language barriers and beneficiaries were tired of making suggestions that were never implemented by NGOs. Furthermore, the selected NGOs' beneficiaries in rural communities who can make significant suggestions on which projects can be implemented, how and where the projects can be implemented so that communities needs can be prioritized have migrated to urban areas. In addition, gender role and power relation issues in these regions prevent NGOs beneficiaries from active participation in decision making. On the other hand, attributing poverty reduction to NGO activities is something which the NGOs themselves are conscious they can't fully achieve. It is demanding too much from NGOs. Development and poverty reduction are the duties of every government and NGOs only assist as support mechanisms towards the realization of government obligations to its citizens. Beside, poverty is a relative term and needs to be understood as a phenomenon which would hardly be eradicated. Nonetheless, NGOs should simplify their project activities so that it will be easy for the beneficiaries to understand what is happening, where the project is leading them to, how to manage the project and allow for straightforward implementation and action if they want to yield satisfaction in project communities as it was found that some NGOs are claiming real achievements in poverty alleviation but in reality their programmes are benefitting a few from the worse effects of poverty because they are more involved with charity work. For the acknowledged limitations of the study to be overcome, supplementary investigation might be vital to address them as discussed further below.

6.6 FOLLOW UP RESEARCH

The most obvious finding to emerge from this study is the issue of imaginary programmes. The important point in this finding is that some NGOs are creating the impression that their aim in some communities is to fight poverty when there are no projects or programmes to help reduce the level of poverty. The purpose of this finding is to put such NGOs in the spotlight and to encourage further research on this subject.

Research on the role of NGOs in poverty reduction programmes require different behaviours, assertiveness and institutional arrangements on the part of NGOs to respond speedily to the issues developing from the participatory developments. This is because existing social, economic and political systems have a mechanism of safeguarding and speedily stabilising them; for that reason, an investigation that connect internal organisations and individual networks would add to understanding NGOs' work in organising social life.

The final area worth investigation is why funders or donors and other groups of participants are unwilling to fully support NGOs' accountability relations, notwithstanding claims that the implementation of them could advance NGOs' role in poverty reduction and other deliveries for the underprivileged and marginalised individuals in society, mostly in Africa and other less-developed nations.

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APPENDICES**SUPPORTING LETTER FROM SUPERVISOR**

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Department of Sociology

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm the EDWIN SAKAH NSAH is registered as a student in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town. He is researching towards the completion of a PhD degree. The topic of his research is “Non-Governmental Organisations and Poverty Reduction in North West Region, Cameroon.”

If the student has approached you for assistance with his research, I would be grateful if you could offer such assistance in any way, which is acceptable to you.

It is a condition of his research that he complies consistently and fully with strict ethical conditions. He will be required to obtain your written informed consent for any interview and the use of material from such interview. He is also willing to prepare an additional written memorandum stipulating any ethical conditions, which you may require.

You are welcome to contact me if you need any further information.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Dr Jonathan Grossman Senior Lecturer

27 September 2016

Self-introduction

My name is Edwin Sakah Nsah. I come from the Bui division in the North West Province. I am a PhD research student from the University of Cape Town, South Africa. My research is about NGOs and poverty reduction in Cameroon. I shall be focusing on why NGOs in the selected regions of Cameroon participate in poverty reduction programmes given the knowledge that these programmes do not reduce poverty. The aim is to establish reason/s for continued increase in poverty levels, investigate the range of other programmes in the local level to reduce poverty, explore how NGO staff perceive poverty and also the level of their success on poverty reduction, examine how NGO beneficiaries perceive poverty and their role in tackling the problem, understand the nature of participation by which the poor are included in poverty reduction programmes, examine the challenges NGOs encountered and how the lessons learned in the past have influenced their present and future development in the fight against poverty. Furthermore, I aim to assess why recommendations which exist are not followed or are not successful and what is the problem that stops their implementation over the years. Finally, I wish to formulate and share suggestions with NGOs, academics and research institutes on methods and practices that may lead to better integration of programme design and execution of projects.

I have come to ask you if you would be willing to be interviewed as part of my data collection process because of your relation with the NGO. I hope you will be willing to assist.

Participation Information Sheet

RESEARCH TITLE: Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Poverty Reduction in Cameroon.

Dear Participant

You are invited to take part in a research study carried out by EDWIN SAKAH NSAH (NSHEDW002). It is in partial accomplishment of the student's thesis towards a PhD Degree at the Department of Sociology, at the University of Cape Town.

Before you decide to take part, it is essential for you to know the aim of the study and what it would require. Please take your time and go through the following information carefully and deliberate it with others if you desire. If have doubt about whatsoever, I would be glad to response to any queries you may have.

Purpose of the Study

The main aim of this study is to analyse why NGOs in the selected regions of Cameroon participate in poverty reduction programmes given the knowledge that these programmes do not reduce poverty.

Description of Study and Your Involvement

This study seeks to document reasons for continued increase in poverty in the selected regions, and the range of programmes at the local level to reduce poverty; to understand the nature of participation by which the poor are included in poverty reduction programmes, and the challenges NGOs encounter and how the lessons learned in the past have influenced their present and future development in the fight against poverty.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

Your contribution in this study is charitable, which entails that you are free to refuse to participate. It is your choice whether or not to be part of the study. If you agree to be in this research, you may pull out at any time without penalties of any kind. If you decide to partake in the study, you are allowed to pull out at any time and without giving a reason. You may also decide not to response certain interrogations that are asked in the investigation. If there is anything that you would choose not to talk over, please feel free to say so.

Payment for Contribution or participation

There are no expenditures to the participant for contributing in the investigation study.

Informed Consent

Your sign up agreement to take part in this investigation study is necessary before I carry on interviewing you. I have attached the consent form with this information page so that you will be able to read the consent form and then choose whether you would like to take part in this investigation study or not.

Researcher Contact Details

Should you have further questions or wish to know more, I can be contact as follows:

Student Name : EDWIN SAKAH NSAH

Student Number : NSHEDW002

Mobile Number Cameroon: +23777622606

Mobile number South Africa: +27671464699

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I am accountable to my supervisor:

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Consent Form

RESEARCH TITLE: Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Poverty Reduction in, Cameroon.

I hereby confirm that I have been informed and also read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by EDWIN SAKAH NSAH towards the Doctoral Programme at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town.

This research has been explained to me in a way that I know and I generously and voluntary decide to take part. My queries about the research have been answered. I know that I can pull

out at any time by instructing the researcher. With full information of all above, I decide to take part in this research.

Participant Name : _____

Participant Signature : _____

Date : _____

Place : _____

Student Researcher : EDWIN SAKAH NSAH

Student Researcher Signature: _____

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QUESTION GUIDE

Edwin Sakah Nsah

University of Cape Town

Faculty of Humanity

Department of sociology

These questions guide are directed to different NGOs subgroups and the purpose is to generate rich qualitative data for textual analysis

- Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself?
- What is poverty?
- What causes poverty?
- How did you become a member of this NGO?
- What campaigns and programmes in this NGO are you involved with and what role do you play as a member in this programme?
- What are the current goals and objectives of this organisation?
- What is the support base of this organisation?
- In your opinion, what has been the social and economic impact of these projects since they were established?
- How do the beneficiaries participate in the activities of this NGO?
- How do grassroots people embrace and support these institutions?
- What opportunities are created through or in these institutions for ordinary citizens to express their desires, fears and frustration with regard to participation and poverty reduction efforts?
- How do donors participate in the activities of the NGO?

- What are some of the challenges your organization encountered in the past and how did the impacts influence their present and future development in the fight against poverty?
- In your opinion what would you think can be done to increase the success of activities in your organisation?
- What lessons can be learned from this organisation by other organisations?
- How is your interaction with the government, if any?
- How does government support you people?
- Is there anything more that you would like to add to this conversation on NGOs and poverty reduction?

Thanks a lot