

GLOBALIZATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN
AFRICA: THE CASE OF THE CHAD-CAMEROON OIL
PIPELINE.

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Abstract

The process of globalisation is multifaceted. One is smiling and promising, the other looks less attractive, if not threatening. It is the process of growing interdependence of countries worldwide through the increasing volume of cross-border transactions in goods and services and of capital flows, and also through the more rapid and widespread diffusion of technology (The International Monetary Fund, 2001). It is bringing new ways of life and opportunities to the door steps of people in just about all parts of the world. The benefits of the process can be very uneven, with the strong getting stronger and the weak becoming weaker. Marginal groups such as women, the poor and the rural can be particularly affected, with little expectations for social and economic equality. Globalisation, as understood today, feeds on knowledge. Probably the most important source of inequality is the knowledge gap.

This paper is about the Chad-Cameroon Petroleum Development and Pipeline Project. This is a 3.7 billion US dollars, 1070 km pipeline project constructed to transport crude oil from fields in southwestern Chad to Kribi on the Atlantic coast of Cameroon. The project is owned by a consortium of trans-national oil companies: Exxon-Mobil, Petronas of Malaysia, and Chevron of the United States. This is the largest foreign direct investment in Sub-Sahara Africa so far.

The main message of the paper is that because of the knowledge gap, the rural communities and the poor tend to be excluded from globalisation. This was confirmed in the Chad-Cameroon pipeline project. The rural communities did not benefit either from employment or from compensations for their crops and property destroyed. This was because they did not have enough knowledge and skills to get more. Thus, the project confirmed what literature on globalisation says: the rich get richer and the poor, poorer.

The project has come and gone, leaving behind mostly bitter feelings on the part of the rural communities affected. There has been very little, if any improvement in the lives of the people. They feel mostly violated and abused, especially as there were surges in alcoholism, prostitution, and some drug use, whenever the construction activities were within any village. Globalization can be brutal, especially if the receiving community is not fully prepared to accommodate changes. This was the case of the rural communities where the pipeline passed. They knew it was coming, but they were not ready for it. The outcome has not had the anticipated developmental effect.

Key Words: Globalisation, oil, compensation, knowledge asymmetry. empowerment.

Abbreviations used in the Text:

CED	Centre for Environmental Development
COTCO	Cameroon Oil Transport Company
FEDEC	Foundation for Development and Environment in Cameroon
FOEI	Friends of the Earth
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
TOTCO	Tchad Oil Transport Company
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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1.0 Introduction and Background

The Chad-Cameroon Petroleum Development and Pipeline Project is a project that has to do with drilling for oil in Southern Chad and transporting the oil through a 1070 kilometre pipeline to a floating facility off Kribi on the Atlantic coast of Cameroon. Eight hundred and ninety kilometres of the pipeline are buried in Cameroon. A consortium of three oil companies, ExxonMobil, Petronas of Malaysia, and Chevron of the U.S., own the petroleum.

The export system is operated by two joint-venture pipeline companies: the Cameroon Oil Transport Company (COTCO) for the portion located in Cameroon and the Chad Oil Transport Company (TOTCO) for the portion located in Chad. The oil consortium holds about 80 percent of the shares of the pipeline companies. Chad and Cameroon hold minority interests in both companies. Drilling for the oil and constructing the pipeline cost 3.7 billion US dollars, the largest such investment in this part of Africa

This paper is basically about the pipeline, especially the portion that is buried in Cameroon. The focus of the paper is in determining whether the rural communities where the pipeline is buried have in any way been globalised. The paper is centred round four parts or sub-themes, listed here in the form of questions:

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- a) Is this a globalising project?
- b) How were the affected communities written into the project?
- c) How has the project impacted their lives, that is, to what extent have they become part of the global community as a result of this project?
- d) What lessons and conclusions can be drawn from the experience of this project?

The pipes (76 cm in diameter) are buried about a meter deep through farmlands, forests, and grasslands, and mostly away from human habitation, the idea being to avoid areas of high biodiversity, whenever possible. While the farmlands and the rural communities

belong to a number of Bantu tribes in Cameroon, the Pygmies (Bagyeli and Bakola) occupy parts of the forest.

The data and information used in this paper derive from a study carried out by Endeley and Sikod (2005), on *the impact of the Chad – Cameroon Oil Pipeline Operations on Gender Relations, Land Resources and Community Livelihood.*” This study covered 27 communities, all rural (Table 1). The main economic activities of the concerned rural communities are agriculture, fishing, and trapping. It is obvious therefore, that land, forests, rivers/streams are the main community resources that provide a source of livelihood. Some men farm small plots of cocoa, palms and tomatoes for the market while the women farm for subsistence, and market the surplus whenever there is any. Most of the communities lack most of the very basic social amenities for survival – potable water, health centres, electricity, paved roads and enough schools. Only 15 percent of the communities have small markets. Home-based petty trading with very small quantities of essential daily needs such as sugar, salt, soap, batteries, and kerosene constitute the businesses in all communities. Private and public transportation is scarce with foot, bicycle, and motorcycles as the main forms of transportation. Most of the people have some elementary school education.

Table I: Distribution of Study Sites by Administrative Units (Province, Division and Sub-division), length of Pipeline Laid, Ecological Zones and Ethnic Group

Division	Sub-division	Length of pipeline (km)	Study Sites	Ecological Zones	Ethnic group
Ocean	Kribi	42.9	Bidou	Atlantic, Littoral equatorial evergreen forest	Fang
			Makoure 1		Ngumba
			Bandevouri		Fang
	Bipindi	35.8	Ndtoua		Ngumba
			Bidjouka		Ngumba
	Lolodorf	39.5	Mbikiliki		Fang
			Saballi		Ngumba
	Mvengue	27.6	Bikoe 1		Ewondo
			Akom		Beti

			Akarobéllé		Beti
Nyong and So'o	Ngomezap	16.2	Akongo III	Equatorial evergreen Rain-forest	Ewondo
			Nyengue		Ewondo
Mefou and Akono	Ngoumou	15.5	Nkongbibega		Ewondo
			Ngongmeyos		Ewondo
	Mbankomo	25.2	Mbankomo village		Ewondo
			Zoatoupsi		Ewondo
Lekie	Okala	18.7	Leboudi		Eton
			Ebod		Beti
			Yegue		Eton
Mefou and Afambe	Soa	6.0	Esson Mintsang		Ewondo
	Esse	30.0	Ndzana		Beti
			Mvondoumba		Beti
Upper Sanaga	Mbandjock	23.8	Mbandjock plateau		Mixed settlement
			Ndjore II		Eton
	Nanga Eboko	49.6	Nguinda	Nanga	
			Meyangue	Beti	
			Mbongs'ol	Beti	

Source: Endeley and Sikod, 2005.

The project was completed in July 2003, about a year ahead of schedule. Now completed, the pipeline carries some 250,000 barrels of oil a day to the offshore loading facility off the coast of Kribi. It is estimated that the project will earn over US\$ 9 billion per year for the estimated 25 years life of the project: US\$6.8 billion will go to the consortium (Exxon-Mobil, Petronas, and Chevron), about 1.7 billion to the government of Chad, and 0.5 billion to the government of Cameroon (FOEI/CED, 2002 p. 13). For Chad, revenues are expected to accrue from royalties, taxes, and other sources. Cameroon will earn \$500 million in revenues from transit fees and taxes and also from project-related economic activities.

During construction, the rural populations were supposed to benefit directly through compensations for the crops and other property damaged, and through employment and indirectly through the construction of roads, schools, and health centres.

2.0 Is this a Globalising Project?

To determine whether this is a globalising project or not, we need to understand what globalisation is. Globalisation was conceived in the project as the interrelationship between the local and global along the following characteristics and dimensions:

-A process through which economic, financial, technical and cultural transactions between different countries and communities worldwide is becoming increasingly interconnected; thus developments in one region can rapidly come to have significant consequences for the security and well-being of communities in quite distant regions of the globe” (McGrew, 2000:347). It is organised and reproduced through distinctive mechanisms and infrastructures of control such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Internet, global corporations and non-government organizations.

-It can create new opportunities, possibilities and benefits as well as constraints, risks and new sources of potential friction (Keller-Herzog, 1996 and McGrew, 2000).

-Asymmetrical process- there are few expectations for social and economic equality for marginalised groups such as women and the poor; the rich get richer and the poor get poorer; it divides humanity into a privileged and a marginalised class of people (Rajae, 2000);

-it is associated with profound disempowerment by forces outside the reach of those affected, a process that can unite as well as divide people and communities, highly uneven with losers and winners within and across (McGrew, 2000).

What makes the Chad-Cameroon Pipeline Project a globalising project? From a conceptual view point, the project contains some of the elements and processes of globalisation. For example, there were economic, financial and technical and migration of a global nature between Cameroon and different countries (Chad, United States of America, Colombia, Philippines, France, etc.) to the extent that it brought a wave of foreign experts into the rural locations in Cameroon. Also, the pipeline buried in the backyard of these rural Cameroonians is carrying oil that is fuelling the economies of countries thousands of miles away, showing the interconnectedness of communities that

may be very far apart geographically. The transfer of technology from the project for local consumption was minimal. However, there was some transfer of knowledge since a few Cameroonians had to be trained in the use of sophisticated oil related technologies for the construction of the pipeline. The majority of trained workers were urban and educated persons with basic skills and experiences in welding and other vocational skills.

3.0 How were the affected Communities written into the Project?

This was an unusual project because it required World Bank approval for the construction to be carried out. This approval was necessary because there were many opponents to the project. The opponents drew inspiration from the Ogoniland experience in Nigeria. For many years that Shell BP exploited oil from that region, the local communities did not enjoy any of the benefit of oil exploitation – employment, investments to alleviate poverty, etc. The outcome has been constant sabotage of the pipeline carrying oil by the local population. This experience fuelled criticisms and activism against the Cameroon – Chad project. The Bank wanted to use the project to demonstrate that large-scale crude oil projects could significantly improve prospects for sustainable long-term development, especially when designed to ensure transparency and effective environmental and social mitigation (Friends of the Earth, 2002). Many environmental and human rights international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and activists opposed the project accusing Chad and Cameroon of poor human rights records, poor environmental protection, management and other concerns, and the possible exoneration of the oil consortium from all future liabilities associated to the pipeline's presence. The governments of Chad and Cameroon saw the Bank's intervention as supportive of their efforts to ensure that the project was designed and carried out in a manner that served and protected their national interests. World Bank involvement was also to ensure greater public consultation, local participation and attention to environmental and other socio-economic issues. From the perspective of the investors, World Bank participation was needed to provide the political risk mitigation needed to support the huge investments the private sector was making, and also to attract millions of dollars more in debt financing.

The way the Cameroon government saw the interest of its population being protected was mostly through employment and compensation.

3.1 Employment.

May be the most touted way the local communities were written into the project was through employment. Employment was of particular importance to Cameroon and Chad, as far as the project was concerned, given the poverty and unemployment situation in the two countries. Unemployment in Cameroon is over 30 percent, and rising. The government saw the project as an opportunity to inject resources into the economy by curbing unemployment. During the construction period which lasted for two years, over 13000 local people from Chad and Cameroon were hired and given some basic training about the jobs they were doing. In addition, a few people with already some knowledge were trained as technicians in the local universities.

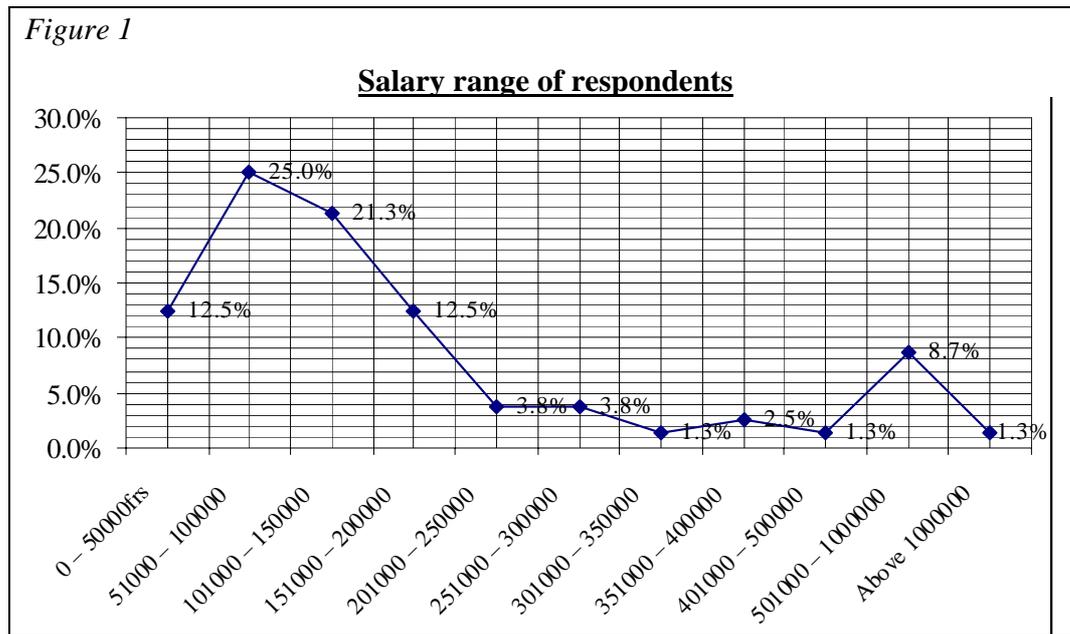
As for the residents of the rural communities where the pipeline was buried, relatively young males aged between 18 and 45 were hired to work in mostly unskilled and semiskilled activities such as temporary and daily paid technicians, cleaners, security guards, bush cutters and manual labourers. The project practised a gender-based division of labour hiring policy, following the normative and cultural definition of gender and work. Young females were employed mostly in the domestic sector, traditionally and culturally associated to women - cleaners, cooks, launderers, housekeepers, etc. Women also ran restaurants and catering services. Although largely prohibited, there were women who worked as sex sales persons. Most of the skilled workers were hardly Cameroonians. They were third country nationals from Colombia and the Philippines.

Community members where the pipeline project passed had been informed that people will be hired to work for the project. They had also been educated on various aspects of the project, including health hazards. Given that these villages supplied unskilled labour, and also given the excess availability of labour in each village, it meant project managers had to devise an equitable way of hiring workers. They hired villagers to work on the portion of the project that was within their village. About two kilometres of pipes were

laid a day, except where there were particular obstacles – cutting through rocky areas, digging under major highways or rivers, etc. This meant that if two kilometres of the project were in a village, then workers from the village would be hired for one day only. The length of the portion of the pipeline through Cameroon is 890 kilometres. Twenty-five kilometres of the pipes were laid in the sub-division of Mbankomo in about thirteen days. The sub-division has two villages, Mbankomo Village and Zoatoupsi. Depending on the size of the area under each village, the laying of the pipeline took just under one week through the area under each village. This means few unskilled persons could be hired in either village for more than one week. The duration of employment offer as indicated by those interviewed was mostly short. Nearly 90 percent of the community members interviewed said employment lasted from one day to 60 days. An average of 28 persons were employed per village. The basic requirement for employment for unskilled labour was a medical test of physical fitness.

There seemed to be no fixed daily wage rate for manual labourers, according to the respondents within the respective communities. By putting together information collected from the respondents, the daily labour wage ranged from 1200 – 7000 francs CFA¹ for labour supply to the project (Figure 1). Over 50 percent of the respondents said they thought the wages were low. As to how they determined it was low, they said they based their appreciation of the wages on the demand and because it was a petroleum project. They also said the impression they had been given before the coming of the project raised their expectations of high wages.

¹ The exchange rate in 2003 was 581 CFA francs to the US dollar



Source: Endeley and Sikod, 2005.

Overall, it can be said that the findings revealed that opportunities for employment and acquisition of new skills were available. However, based on the investments and the scale of the project, one would say that employment opportunities were limited to a few Cameroonians and foreigners, in comparison to the expectations the population had. Even though the project was resident in rural location, the job opportunities that have substantive and durable impact on livelihood and the community economies were limited to mostly Cameroonians with some skills. The rural unskilled people occupied the lower echelons as labourers. Under this circumstance one notices the confirmation in the literature of the disparity of the reward system where the rich get richer and the poor, poorer.

3.2 Compensation

Another way the local communities were written into the project was through compensations. Three types of compensation were paid to the people and the village communities:

- a) Individual compensation. Over 4000 individuals received compensation. This compensation was paid to individuals whose crops or other properties were destroyed by the passage of the pipeline. Compensation was paid for crops, fruit trees such as avocado, mangoes, oranges, etc., pineapples, bananas and plantains, peppers, etc. A 1982 Ministerial order by the Cameroon Ministry of Agriculture, set the compensation rates to be paid by the government of Cameroon for crops and fruit trees destroyed in case land was expropriated for some particular use that had a national interest. COTCO paid the difference between this rate and the current market rates, projected into the expected future life of the crop. Studies of market prices were commissioned by COTCO to determine current market prices to make it possible for appropriate compensation to be made. These prices were used to project into the future life of the crops that were compensated. There were no compensations for annual or seasonal crops like groundnuts and maize. Farmers had been notified ahead of the planting season not to grow these seasonal crops. The cash compensation payment ranged from a minimum of 9,000 CFA francs to a maximum of 12,000,000 CFA francs. While women and men received compensation, food crops were valued lower than traditional cash crops (cocoa, palm, rubber and coffee), even if it was a reflection of the actual market value. This was an unfortunate procedure for especially the women because the food economy has other intrinsic value for rural families and household welfare and survival. It is the source of continuous flow of trickling income and food through different seasons for many families long after the bulk of cash income from traditional cash crops has been exhausted. Was this intrinsic value adjusted in the calculation of compensation to food farmers? No, it was not.
- b) Community compensation. This was payment made to the local communities to compensate for the pipeline passing through community land or other community common property, and causing some environmental damage or inconvenience.
- c) Regional compensation. This was compensation paid to more than one community sharing a common ecosystem affected by the pipeline.

The Pipeline transport company, COTCO, had a range of ideas of what communities could get as compensation. The ideas included:

- i) Education. Construction and equipment of classrooms
- ii) Health. Construction and equipment of health centres, supply of health centres with equipment, medicines, and construction of latrines
- iii) Hydrology. Construction of wells, improvement of water points
- iv) Community infrastructure. Supply of corn-mills, oil presses, soil brick compressors
- v) Supply of building materials to communities for face lifts of old buildings
- vi) Agriculture. Supply of palm and fruit tree seedlings, seeds and light agricultural equipment
- vii) Livestock. Supply of barbwire for enclosures.

These ideas had been catalogued and put into a booklet form that was presented to the communities. A committee made up of community leaders and COTCO officials determined what they thought would be the best project for the community based on how much money COTCO had determined the community inconvenience was worth. The committee also had responsibility to manage the project that they thought would be most beneficial and lasting to their community. The total value of the compensations ranged from a minimum of 100,000 francs to a maximum of 8,000,000 francs. The community compensations actually received in kind include cartons of fungicide, sheets of zinc, classrooms, community halls (jointly constructed with the communities concerned), wells, football field, young palms, classroom benches, grinding machines, spraying machines, wheelbarrows, moulding machines, equipped community hall.

4.0 How has the project impacted the lives of these rural people, that is, to what extent have they become part of the global community as a result of this project?

For the local rural communities, the project was implemented so quickly that there was hardly any impact on community members. Now completed, they are stuck with the pipeline buried in their backyard, carrying crude oil to fuel economies thousands of miles away, but without substantive benefit to show for it. Should we say it is too soon? We

don't think so. The cash payments to individuals were used mainly to buy kitchen utensils, clothes, household furniture, construct houses², and pay for children's education, and family health services. A few bought motorcycles that are being used for transporting people. Very few saved or created businesses.

4.1 Level of satisfaction or disenchantment with compensation.

While more than half of those who received cash payments said they were satisfied, nearly all the communities were dissatisfied with the in-kind compensations they received. Since the in-kind compensations were bounded, recipients could not ask for anything outside of the choices presented to them. Also, they could not participate in the purchase or construction of the compensation. The net effect was they complained of the low quality of what was given to them as compensation.

The expected boom in small and informal household petty trading activities was not realised, perhaps because labourers' meals were confined to job site locations and because consumption of alcohol was prohibited during work hours (from about 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.). The difficult nature and fast pace of the work required serenity and non-indulgence in activities that could lower one's productivity or even lead to losing one's employment.

The Pygmies had some sort of preferential treatment, even if their lot is not much better than before the project came. An NGO, FEDEC, the Foundation for Development and Environment in Cameroon, concentrated its efforts on assisting the Bagyeli and Bakola Pygmies. It identified four priority areas: housing, education, health, and agriculture. A short-term education program was carried out and school fees were paid and clothing provided to the students attending boarding schools and also any adults wanting to undertake secondary education were given assistance. FEDEC also sponsored a program to provide national identity cards to 80% of the Bagyeli and Bakola people who do not have them and are therefore unable to exercise their citizenship rights in the country.

² Non-durable houses constructed with local materials.

4.2 Community Participation in the Project

Oakley (1991:3-10) considers participation which is fruitful for sustainable change as an active process by which beneficiaries or client groups influence the direction and execution of development projects in order to enhance their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance and other cherished values. The immediate question is whether globalising projects can ensure this form of participation needed to secure sustainable livelihood.

An important emphasis by the World Bank and other interested parties in the project was on participation. Participation is a process of empowerment. It allows those involved to internalize the process and feel they are part of the project. A fundamental problem with participation under the current situation was asymmetry in information on potential impacts of the project, and even on power relations. Local community members attended public meetings with project representatives, and over twenty NGOs were active in one way or the other in the pipeline process. These NGOs were under the umbrella of the Group Consultations for Action. They had as objectives to ensure the consortium conformed to regulations and also to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of compensations. The NGOs participated in information sharing with partners, and tried to sensitize the population on compensations and the potential impacts the project could have on them and their environment.

Because of the magnitude of the project, the populations of the areas through which the pipeline had to pass had to be informed of its coming. Communities were educated and sensitised on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and were informed about compensations. Project agents did most of the awareness campaign, with the support of NGOs and local community authorities. Those who were prepared had lectures on the prevention of diseases open to the community during the project; HIV/AIDS/STDs; security; requirements for employment; compensation; environmental protection; road safety etc. Community members were also told people from their village would be hired to work on the project. Those responsible for sensitizing the communities of the coming

of the project and the potential impacts included the project agents (COTCO), NGOs, local authorities, and the media.

Were the communities therefore ready for the project when it arrived? Data collected from the communities showed mixed reactions. That they participated in the discussions, about the project, few said the contrary. What is important is what they came away with from the participation, and how that influenced their lives and reaction to the project. Community members participated in discussions about the project necessarily without understanding the implications. These apparently led to the formation of expectations that were different from those of the project executants. The participation process did not allow the local communities to internalise the objectives of the project to make it possible for them to position themselves to benefit from the project. Those who were employed as temporary labour to work on the project were sometimes more fascinated and overwhelmed by the equipment being used to dig and lay pipes than by what they were to get from working on the project, and how that was going to reshape their lives. This may sound trite, but it indicates the degree of asymmetry between the villagers and the project executants.

The NGOs on their part, did not do any better, partly because the NGOs were not sophisticated enough to grasp the power play, and to position themselves to help the communities prepare themselves to negotiate with this mighty globalising force.

This was definitely not the type of participation Oakley talks about. The rural people participated in discussions about a project that was supposed to impact their lives, but because of information asymmetry, they had neither the power nor the knowledge to influence the decisions that were being taken with them present.

4.3 Project Impact on Livelihood

In terms of the welfare of the affected communities and its members, the responses were mixed:

a) positive changes, even if short lived: these included better water supply through improved water-reservoirs/well structures; better farm tools (hoes, cutlasses, push trucks,

spray pumps and food processing technologies like grinding machines); construction of durable homes such as cement block houses, which also helped in beautifying communities; reduction in quarrels since there was money (relative improvement in the flow of liquidity); more marriages were solemnized or contracted; electrification of few villages; construction of classrooms with either cement and wood or mixture of these materials and mud; improved living standards through investments that are generating cash resources like motor bike taxis, restaurants and off-license bars, etc, improved hygienic latrines ; and increased capacity to pay school fees.

Some Pygmies were given identity cards. This allows them to exercise their civic rights like other Cameroonians.

b) negative changes: complaints of hunger probably due to increases in food prices, especially for the poorer, unemployed or those not able to provide services for the project and therefore unable to share in the short-lived wealth brought about by the project; broken homes – some husbands as well as wives abandoned their families; disintegrated homes- some children took advantage of their old and illiterate parents and stole their compensation through fraudulent means from bank accounts; unwanted pregnancies resulting in ‘pipeline’ children- a situation where parents were forced to shoulder responsibility since the men involved have gone; abortion and rape cases, let alone cases of STD-all of which have financial as well as health implications not just for the individuals but for families. Infertility of land due to the destruction of the top soil or creation of pools of water leading to water-logging.

c) no changes. Some communities reported the passage of the construction activities through their village was so short they did not notice any changes.

On the overall, the impact of the project on the livelihood of the rural communities was minimal and mostly short-lived.

4.4 Project impact on social relations and Behaviour:

A common social phenomenon, rampantly practised was prostitution. Prostitution was propagated more by people coming from outside the communities than those from within the communities. Other social ills included alcohol use, drug use, and as mentioned

above, men running away from their homes to squander their compensations in riotous living in towns.

5.0 Lessons learned and Conclusions from the Project

Globalisation projects tend to be knowledge-based (this project was no exception). There was a huge knowledge gap between the rural communities and the owners of the project. This knowledge gap did not help the rural communities, especially as they were not adequately prepared to take advantage of opportunities of the project long in advance. For communities to be able to benefit from globalising projects, it is necessary to narrow the knowledge gap.

The literature on globalisation indicates that communities tend to accept globalizing projects mostly for economic reasons. This was the case for Cameroon. A counter reaction against the project from the affected communities would have been unusual, considering that they had no knowledge about the potential consequences of the oil-pipeline project. Their knowledge base was not one to allow them to challenge the propositions from the government, especially as the public media carried information that elucidated more of the advantages that the project would bring to the political economy of Cameroon. It was civil society that raised their voices about the potential negative consequences of the project, while the public media carried government's support for the virtues of the project.

The asymmetry and the uneven process of globalisation is confirmed in this study; the clear winners, if we may describe them as such for now seem to be the skilled and semi-skilled migrant men from urban locations in Cameroon and elsewhere. The losers are obviously the rural populace of the affected communities. If the members of the local communities were more knowledgeable, they would have benefited not only in terms of employment and compensations, they would have invested the compensation in more sustainable investments than in mostly consumption goods.

Under this situation of asymmetry, the government of Cameroon had a responsibility toward its citizens. It should have ensured the people benefited more. The government is however, supposed to earn 500 million US dollars a year in transit fees and related taxes over the life of the project. How this money gets used to transform the lives of the affected communities will impact their development and bring them to be either part of the global world, or let them continue to stay excluded.

Another issue of importance from the project is that the outcomes and impact of this interconnectedness on the lives of people, is not all always rosy but sometimes polarised and varied by gender, class and race. The imperialist structure confirmed in this study, is often dominated by western power, culture and lifestyle, thus globalising projects could be real threats to indigenous traditional modes of living, social mores, value of tradition and cultural modes. The findings are also in consonant with Mcgrew (2000) who associates globalization with feelings of powerlessness and insecurity, particularly for losers.

The dimension of the project – 3.7 billion U.S. dollars – and the involvement of the World Bank gave hopes to many Cameroonians that the project was going to contribute to poverty alleviation. There was a lot of hype about compensation, and how that was going to improve on the lives of the rural communities through which the pipeline was going to pass. The rest of the nation expected to benefit through trickle down effects. The project has come and gone – the pipes have been laid and oil has started flowing – and what is left is mostly bitterness, feelings of betrayal, exploitation of people's minds, body, culture and infringements of rights. The chiefs, including the “notables” and some elites feel they have failed their people, just as they believe the government, law enforcement and other technical institutions have failed to protect them from being exploited by the pipeline project. Many communities wished they had not welcomed this project. Unfortunately the people and the communities are so small before a global giant like Exxon-Mobil, which has more powers than even the state of Cameroon.

Many [rural] people who received compensation viewed it mostly as a windfall or some transitory income, which went mostly for consumption than for investments. People abandoned their productive (farm) work to bathe in beer; stay in luxury hotels, married new wives or remarried their wives. Some even increased their consumption of health hazardous substances like drugs, alcohol, etc. On a positive note, a few people have made wise use of their compensations to improve and secure their welfare and those of their families by investing in income generating activities.

Overall, it can be said that the knowledge gap between the rural communities and the globalising agents made it difficult for the rural communities to better position themselves to enjoy the fruits of globalisation. A major deduction from this study is that the communities are still at the periphery of the global world.

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