

## **Emigration from Cameroon to Europe, 2000-2005**

### **A Introduction**

Voluntary emigration from Cameroon to the More Developed Countries has been going for a long time but after the economic crisis that started in the mid 1980s, it became more visible. Since the onset of this crisis, emigration from Cameroon that formerly limited to a few individuals with specialized skills or people seeking specialized education and training became more generalized. Thousands of people have been leaving since then for various reasons and under varied conditions. Some use clandestine means while other use official means some go for education, some for work, and others for marriage, etc. Despite the positive consequences of emigration expressed by the remittance of both cash and non-cash items, the negative consequences such as brain drain and clandestine emigration sometimes involving death or deportation has raised a lot of concern resulting to the inclusion for the first time in a general population and housing census in Cameroon of questions on emigration. The traditional destination countries for Cameroon's emigrants are the countries of Western Europe especially France, Germany, Italy and the U.K and the countries of North America

### **B Prevailing Economic Situation in Cameroon and Emigration**

After many years of economic prosperity, 1960\*-1986, Cameroon and many countries of Africa south of the Saharan witnessed a period of deep economic recession starting from the mid 80s. In Cameroon, this economic crisis lasted ten (10) years (1986-1996). The apex of this economic crisis was reached during the 1993-94 financial year with the devaluation of the national currency, the franc CFA.

After the period of economic crisis, Cameroon began to witness some economic growth thanks to a series of stringent measures that were carried out by government with the support of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The devaluation of national currency helped Cameroon to register a Gross Domestic Product growth rate of 4.8%. The incidence rate of poverty reduced by 13 points-from 53.3% in 1996 to 40.1% in 2001. Inflation was contained at a moderate rate moving from a very high level of 32.5% at the time of devaluation in 1994 to 1.2% in 2000(Third Cameroon Household Survey, ECAM III, 2004).

Despite the some improvements in the socio-economic situation of Cameroon as result of the implementation of a series of measures and the attainment of the completion point for debt reduction, Cameroon's economy is still fragile. Current living conditions are still below the pre-crisis level. The economy is unable to generate sufficient and decent employment. The unemployment level is still very high and the rate of job creation is far below demand. New jobs are created mostly in sectors with low productivity and low revenues. According to the 2001 Survey on the Informal Sector Employment of 2009, the urban informal sector and agriculture furnished 25.0% and 59.0% of jobs respectively.

In summary, since the end of the economic crisis, Cameroon's economic has been characterized by a very slow growth rate, inability to create sufficient jobs in sectors of high productivity and increasing rate of inflation especially the prices of basic necessities.

These increasing difficult living conditions and mounting desire of the population of Cameroon to improve upon their living conditions led them to adopt many coping measures such as the postponement of marriage, reduction of family sizes, outmigration and emigration. Despite the limitation to emigration many Cameroonians have taken it as way of escaping from poverty and the U.S.A and Canada and some European countries are key destinations for these "escapees".

#### Source of Data and Methodology

##### Source of Data

Data for this analysis come from the Third General Population and Housing Census of Cameroon that was carried out in November 2005. It was the first time that questions on emigration from Cameroon were introduced in a general population and housing census in this country. This was motivated by the fact that many Cameroonians were leaving the country to take up permanent residence in other countries especially in the developed countries of Europe and North America. The increasing emigration from Cameroon involves both those with skilled and unskilled labour qualities. Both employed and even employed persons who were escaping from low wages and deteriorating work conditions. During the 2005 Population Census every household head, his or her representative was asked if any of its member(s) of the household had emigrated from Cameroon within the last five years (2000-2005). If the answer was yes, questions were asked on the sex of those who emigrated, their ages in completed years, the year of departure, the main reason for departure and the country of destination.

##### Method of Analysis

This analysis is essentially descriptive. It involves the use of simple frequency tables and cross tabulations. Absolute values are presented together with proportions, averages, percentages and ratios. As much as possible, information from the Demographic and Health Survey, Informal Sector Employment Survey and the Cameroon Household Survey will be used to complement census information.

##### Advantages of the Study

The main advantage of this study lies in the fact that it is nationwide. In theory, every household was investigated in order to know if anybody emigrated, where he or she went to, why he, she or they emigrated as well as their destinations. The various forms of limitations of surveys are significantly eliminated in this study that uses data that covers the whole population of Cameroon.

##### Some Limitations of the Study

Like many other studies, this study has its own limits. Some of these limits include:

-The fact that many questions which could lead to a more detailed understanding of the emigration process from Cameroon and its implications for socio-economic development are lacking. These include questions on brain drain and the remittance of cash and non-cash items;

-The fact that there could be some degree of under estimation of the number of emigrants from Cameroon due to the absence of information on whole households that emigrate. In such households, there is nobody left behind to report on their departure;

-The fact that information on the emigrant is not reported by the emigrant himself but by a member of the sending household who could be the household head or his or her representative. This increases the possibility of misreporting of the exact ages of emigrants, their reasons for departure as well as their countries of destination. This claim is justified by the presence of information such “main reason for migration unknown” or” destination of emigrant unknown” within the data set.

Despite these and other limitations, this study is still important as it provides the basic information for the study of migration in a context where information on international migration is generally lacking.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The overall objective of this study is to study the characteristics of emigrants from Cameroon to the Europe for the period 2000-2005. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- bring out the total number of emigrants who moved from Cameroon to Europe;
- bring out the proportions of emigrants who migrate from Cameroon to the Europe within the study period;
- bring out the distribution of emigrants from Cameroon to Europe by main reason for departure;
- establish the trend of emigration from Cameroon to Europe between 2000-2005;
- bring out the age and sex differences and/or similarities in main reasons for movement to the Cameroon;
- bring out the main countries in Europe that receive emigrants from Europe;
- come out with some policy recommendations based the results of the study.

### **Indicators to be Produced**

-total number of emigrants from Cameroon to Europe; proportion of emigrants from Cameroon who moved to Europe;-mean and median ages of emigrants from Cameroon to Europe at the time of emigration; distribution of emigrants from Cameroon to Europe by major reason for migration , numbers and proportions of emigrants who moved from Cameroon to Europe by year of departure.

### **Theoretical Considerations**

Emigration from Cameroon to Europe can be viewed under the human capital approach. It is the transfer of labour from where it less investment is less profitable to where it is more rewarding. Viewed in this way, the prominent motive for emigration from Cameroon to these two countries is

economic. Borrowing from Todaro, the key element in this emigration process is the relatively higher wages paid in Europe compared to Cameroon.

#### **Brief Outline of the Study**

- A) Number of Emigrants from Cameroon to Europe and the Rest of the World**
- B) Emigrants from Cameroon to Europe and main Reasons for Departure**
- C) Distribution of Emigrants from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada by Age**
- D) Ages of Emigrants and Main Reasons for Emigration**
- E) Sex of Emigrants and Main Reasons for Emigration**
- F) Emigrants and Year of Departure to Europe**
- G) Year of Departure of Emigrants and Main Reasons for Departure**
- H) Sex of Emigrants and Year of Departure**
- I) Ages of Emigrants and Year of Departure**

#### **Tentative Conclusion and Recommendations**

##### **Tentative Conclusion**

The massive wave of departures from Cameroon to the More Developed Countries especially to Europe and North America has been on for some time and is likely to remain so at least the short run. Despite limitations placed on emigration by receiving countries, many Cameroonians are still struggling to move to these countries. The dream of many Cameroonians youths is to go to a developed country especially to Europe. Despite the varied reasons, the key reason for wanting to leave Cameroon is economic.

##### **Recommendations**

-The government of Cameroon needs to intensify measures of implementing good governance and promoting sustained high economic growth that will improve upon the job openings for her rapidly growing and youthful population;

-There is need to re-orientate education and training programs to better prepare young people for more gainful employment both at home and abroad.

#### **Emigration from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada, 2000-2005**

##### **A Introduction**

Voluntary emigration from Cameroon to the More Developed Countries has been going for a long time but after the economic crisis that started in the mid 1980s, it became more visible. Since the onset of this crisis, emigration from Cameroon that formerly limited to few individuals with specialized skills or people seeking specialized education and training became more generalized. Thousands of people have been leaving since then for various reasons and under varied conditions. Some used clandestine means while others use official means, some go for education, some for work, others for marriage, etc. Despite the positive consequences of emigration expressed by the remittance of both cash and non-cash items, the negative

consequences such as brain drain and clandestine emigration sometimes involving death or deportation has raised a lot of concern resulting to the inclusion for the first time in a general population and housing census in Cameroon of questions on emigration. As the motives for emigration and number of emigrants increase, the main countries of destination of Cameroonian emigrants also increased with the U.S.A and Canada competing favorably with the traditional destination countries (France, Germany, Italy and the U.K) for emigrants from Cameroon.

## **B Prevailing Economic Situation in Cameroon and Emigration**

After many years of economic prosperity, 1960\*-1986, Cameroon and many countries of Africa south of the Saharan witnessed a period of deep economic recession starting from the mid 80s. In Cameroon, this economic crisis lasted ten (10) years (1986-1996). The apex of this economic crisis was reached during the 1993-94 financial year with the devaluation of the national currency, the franc CFA.

After the period of economic crisis, Cameroon began to witness some economic growth thanks to a series of stringent measures that were carried out by government with the support of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The devaluation of national currency helped Cameroon to register a Gross Domestic Product growth rate of 4.8%. The incidence rate of poverty reduced by 13 points-from 53.3% in 1996 to 40.1% in 2001. Inflation was contained at a moderate rate moving from a very high level of 32.5% at the time of devaluation in 1994 to 1.2% in 2000(Third Cameroon Household Survey, ECAM III, 2004).

Despite the some improvements in the socio-economic situation of Cameroon as result of the implementation of a series of measures and the attainment of the completion point for debt reduction, Cameroon's economy is still fragile. Current living conditions are still below the pre-crisis level. The economy is unable to generate sufficient and decent employment. The unemployment level is still very high and the rate of job creation is far below demand. New jobs are created mostly in sectors with low productivity and low revenues. According to the 2001 Survey on the Informal Sector Employment of 2009, the urban informal sector and agriculture furnished 25.0% and 59.0% of jobs respectively.

In summary, since the end of the economic crisis, Cameroon's economic has been characterized by a very slow growth rate, inability to create sufficient jobs in sectors of high productivity and increasing rate of inflation especially the prices of basic necessities.

These increasing difficult living conditions and mounting desire of the population of Cameroon to improve upon their living conditions led them to adopt many coping measures such as the postponement of marriage, reduction of family sizes, outmigration and emigration. Despite the limitation to emigration many Cameroonians have taken it as way of escaping from poverty and the U.S.A and Canada and some European countries are key destinations for these "escapees".

**Source of Data and Methodology**

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Data for this analysis come from the Third General Population and Housing Census of Cameroon that was carried out in November 2005. It was the first time that questions on emigration from Cameroon were introduced in a general population and housing census in this country. This was motivated by the fact that many Cameroonians were leaving the country to take up permanent residence in other countries especially in the developed countries of Europe and North America. The increasing emigration from Cameroon involves both those with skilled and unskilled labour qualities. Both employed and even unemployed persons who were escaping from low wages and deteriorating work conditions. During the 2005 Population Census every household head, his or her representative was asked if any of its member(s) of the household had emigrated from Cameroon within the last five years (2000-2005). If the answer was yes, questions were asked on the sex of those who emigrated, their ages in completed years, the year of departure, the main reason for departure and the country of destination.

### Method of Analysis

This analysis is essentially descriptive. It involves the use of simple frequency tables and cross tabulations. Absolute values are presented together with proportions, averages, percentages and ratios. As much as possible, information from the Demographic and Health Survey, Informal Sector Employment Survey and the Cameroon Household Survey will be used to complement census information.

### Advantages of the Study

The main advantage of this study lies in the fact that it is nationwide. In theory, every household was investigated in order to know if anybody emigrated, where he or she went to, why he, she or they emigrated as well as their destinations. The various forms of limitations of surveys are significantly eliminated in this study that uses data that covers the whole population of Cameroon.

### Some Limitations of the Study

Like many other studies, this study has its own limits. Some of these limits include:

- The fact that many questions which could lead to a more detailed understanding of the emigration process from Cameroon and its implications for socio-economic development are lacking. These include questions on brain drain and the remittance of cash and non-cash items;
- The fact that there could be some degree of under estimation of the number of emigrants from Cameroon due to the absence of information on whole households that emigrate. In such households, there is nobody left behind to report on their departure;
- The fact that information on the emigrant is not reported by the emigrant himself but by a member of the sending household who could be the household head or his or her representative. This increases the possibility of misreporting of the exact ages of emigrants, their reasons for departure as well as their countries of destination. This claim is justified by the presence of information such "main reason for migration unknown" or "destination of emigrant unknown" within the data set.

Despite these and other limitations, this study is still important as it provides the basic information for the study of migration in a context where information on international migration is generally lacking.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

The overall objective of this study is to study the characteristics of emigrants from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada for the period 2000-2005. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- bring out the total number of emigrants who moved from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada;
- bring out the proportions of emigrants who migrate from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada within the study period;
- bring out the distribution of emigrants from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada by main reason for departure;
- establish the trend of emigration from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada between 2000-2005;
- bring out the age and sex differences and/or similarities in main reasons for movement to the U.S.A and Canada;
- come out with some policy recommendations based the results of the study.

#### **Indicators to be Produced**

-total number of emigrants from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada; proportion of emigrants from Cameroon who moved to Canada and the U.S.A;-mean and median ages of emigrants from Cameroon to the U.S. A and Canada; of emigrants from Cameroon to the U.S.A by major reason for migrationNumbers and proportions of emigrants who moved from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada by year of departure.

#### **Theoretical Considerations**

Emigration from Cameroon and Canada can be viewed under the human capital approach. It is the transfer of labour from where it less investment is less profitable to where it is more rewarding. Viewed in this way, the prominent motive for emigration from Cameroon to these two countries is economic. Borrowing from Todaro, the key element in this emigration process is the relatively higher wages paid in these two countries compared to Cameroon.

#### **Brief Outline of the Study**

- A) Number of Emigrants from Cameroon to Canada, U.S.A and the Rest of the World
- B) Emigrants from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada and main Reasons for Departure
- C) Distribution of Emigrants from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada by Age
- D) Ages of Emigrants and Main Reasons for Emigration
- E) Sex of Emigrants and Main Reasons for Emigration
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## **I) Ages of Emigrants and Year of Departure**

### **Tentative Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **Tentative Conclusion**

The massive wave of departures from Cameroon to the More Developed Countries especially to Canada and the U.S.A has being on for some time and is likely to remain so at least the short run. Despite limitations placed on emigration by receiving countries, many Cameroonians are still struggling to move to these countries. The dream of many Cameroonians youths is to go to a developed country especially to the U.S.A and more recently to Canada. Despite the varied reasons, the key reason for wanting to leave Cameroon is economic.

#### **Recommendations**

-The government of Cameroon needs to intensify measures of implementing good governance and promoting sustained high economic growth that will improve upon the job openings for her rapidly growing and youthful population;

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#### **Advantages of the Study**

The main advantage of this study lies in the fact that it is nationwide. In theory, every household was investigated in order to know if anybody emigrated, where he or she went to, why he, she or they emigrated as well as their destinations. The various forms of limitations of surveys are significantly eliminated in this study that uses data that covers the whole population of Cameroon.

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#### **Objectives of the Study**

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- bring out the total number of emigrants who moved from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada;
- bring out the proportions of emigrants who migrate from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada within the study period;
- bring out the distribution of emigrants from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada by main reason for departure;
- establish the trend of emigration from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada between 2000-2005;

-bring out the age and sex differences and/or similarities in main reasons for movement to the U.S.A and Canada;

-come out with some policy recommendations based the results of the study.

#### **Indicators to be Produced**

-total number of emigrants from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada; proportion of emigrants from Cameroon who moved to Canada and the U.S.A;-mean and median ages of emigrants from Cameroon to the U.S. A and Canada; of emigrants from Cameroon to the U.S.A by major reason for migrationNumbers and proportions of emigrants who moved from Cameroon to the U.S.A and Canada by year of departure.

#### **Theoretical Considerations**

Emigration from Cameroon and Canada can be viewed under the human capital approach. It is the transfer of labour from where it less investment is less profitable to where it is more rewarding. Viewed in this way, the prominent motive for emigration from Cameroon to these two countries is economic. Borrowing from Todaro, the key element in this emigration process is the relatively higher wages paid in these two countries compared to Cameroon.

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- E) Sex of Emigrants and Main Reasons for Emigration
- F) Emigrants and Year of Departure to the U.S.A and Canada
- G) Year of Departure of Emigrants and Main Reasons for Departure
- H) Sex of Emigrants and Year of Departure
- I) Ages of Emigrants and Year of Departure

#### **Tentative Conclusion and Recommendations**

##### **Tentative Conclusion**

The massive wave of departures from Cameroon to the More Developed Countries especially to Canada and the U.S.A has being on for some time and is likely to remain so at least the short run. Despite limitations placed on emigration by receiving countries, many Cameroonians are still struggling to move to these countries. The dream of many Cameroonians youths is to go to a developed country especially to the U.S.A and more recently to Canada. Despite the varied reasons, the key reason for wanting to leave Cameroon is economic.

##### **Recommendations**

-The government of Cameroon needs to intensify measures of implementing good governance and promoting sustained high economic growth that will improve upon the job openings for her rapidly growing and youthful population;

**-There is need to re-orientate education and training programs to better prepare young people for more gainful employment both at home and abroad.**