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**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT CENTRES AND LOCAL
DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF THE SAWA WOMEN OF THE
LITTORAL REGION CAMEROON. A CONTRIBUTION TO
ANTHROPOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT**

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To

my parents Eyong Dickson Achouo and Eyong Susan Ebangha

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ABSTRACT

This research work women's empowerment centres and local development the case of the Sawa women of the Littoral Region Cameroon: A contribution to Anthropology of Development focuses on the contribution of women empowerment centres to local development among the SAWA of the Littoral Region. In Cameroon everything seems to show that women empowerment has raised a lot of controversies which has caused some women to abuse power and increased women struggle for decision making. But empowerment to the sawa women is to gain economic power to help their husbands run the family. Therefore, the question that arose was: what are the contributions of women empowerment centres to local development among the SAWA of the Littoral region? In order to give a tentative answer to this question, the following hypothesis was developed: women empowerment centres contribute to local development among the SAWA of the Littoral region. With the main objective to demonstrate how women empowerment centres in Douala contribute to local development among the sawa. In order to attain our objective we used the qualitative method of research with data collection techniques such as in-depth interview, focus group discussion, direct observation and content based analysis to press on the collected data. To interpret the data collected from the field, the theory of functionalism and the WID approach was used. Findings revealed that, women empowerment centres in Douala contribute to the local development of the SAWA people in different dimensions such as socio-cultural, economic, political and environment. We also found out that the SAWA women carry out different activities at the women empowerment centres which includes cultural activities such as training in traditional dishes, fabrics and dances, with workshops such as sewing, customization, hairdressing and hotel cattery. Also, we discovered that people perceive the women's empowerment centres as place of distress, a place that promotes liberalism, a place of building skills, and a place that breathes indiscipline and in submissive women and women's home. Finally, we discovered that the empowerment centres contribute to the living condition of the people by creating employment, preserving the environment, free checkups and provision of basic medications for the people while relying on the values and beliefs of the people.

Key words: Women, Empowerment, women empowerment, empowerment centres
Development local development.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce travail de recherche intitulé: **women's empowerment centres and local development the case of the sawa women of the Littoral Region: a contribution to Anthropology of development** porte sur la contribution des Centres d'autonomisation des femmes au développement local chez les SAWA du Littoral. Au Cameroun, tout semble montrer que l'autonomisation des femmes a soulevé de nombreuses controverses, ce qui a poussé certaines femmes à abuser du pouvoir et accru la lutte des femmes pour la prise de décision. Mais l'autonomisation des femmes Sawa consiste à acquérir un pouvoir économique pour aider leurs maris à gérer la famille. Dès lors, la question qui s'est posée était : quelles sont les contributions des centres d'autonomisation des femmes au développement local chez les Sawa de la région du Littoral ? Afin d'apporter une réponse provisoire à cette question, l'hypothèse centrale suivante a été développée : les centres d'autonomisation des femmes contribuent au développement local chez les Sawa de la région du Littoral. Avec pour objectif principal de démontrer comment les centres d'autonomisation des femmes de Douala contribuent au développement local chez les Sawa. Afin d'atteindre notre objectif, nous avons utilisé la méthode de recherche qualitative avec des techniques de collecte de données telles que l'entretien approfondi, la discussion de groupe, l'observation directe et l'analyse basée sur le contenu pour appuyer sur les données collectées. Pour interpréter les données recueillies sur le terrain, la théorie du fonctionnalisme et l'approche WID ont été utilisées. Les résultats ont révélé que les centres d'autonomisation des femmes à Douala contribuent au développement local du peuple Sawa dans différentes dimensions telles que socioculturelle, économique, politique et environnementale. Nous avons également découvert que les femmes Sawa menaient différentes activités dans les centres d'autonomisation des femmes, notamment des activités culturelles telles que la formation aux plats, aux tissus et aux danses traditionnelles, avec des ateliers tels que le besoin, la personnalisation, la coiffure et la chatterie d'hôtel. Aussi, nous avons découvert que les gens perçoivent les centres d'autonomisation des femmes comme un lieu de détresse, un lieu qui promeut le libéralisme, un lieu de renforcement des compétences et un lieu qui prône l'indiscipline chez les femmes soumises et dans le foyer des femmes. Enfin, nous avons découvert que les centres d'autonomisation contribuent aux conditions de vie des personnes en créant des emplois, en préservant l'environnement, en faisant des bilans de santé gratuits et en fournissant des médicaments de base aux personnes tout en s'appuyant sur les valeurs et les croyances des personnes.

Mots clés : Femmes, Autonomisation, autonomisation des femmes, centres d'autonomisation Développement local

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LIST OF ACCRONYMS AND INITIALS

ACCRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BEAC	Banque D'Etats D'Afrique Centrale
BUCREP	Bureau Centrale des Recensement et des Etudes des Population
CEDAW	Covention for the Elimination of all orms of Discrimination against Women
CEMAC	Communauté Economique et Monaitaire de l'Afrique Centrale
DARPROFF	Délégation D'arrondissement de la Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille
GAD	Gender and Development
ICT	Information Communication Technology
HOD	Head Of Department
MINATD	Ministère de L'Administration Territoriale et de la Décentralisation
MINPROFF	Ministere de la Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille
VAW	Violence Against Women
WAD	Women and Development
WID	Women in Development
WWW	World Wide Web
PRC	President de la République du Cameroun
TAR	Tradional African Religion
CIMENCAM	Ciment du Cameroun
UNICEF	Fond des Nations Unies pour l'enfance

INITIALS

A.U	African Union
C.D.D	Community Driven Development

C.P.F	Centre de Promotion de la Femme
C2D	Contrat Désendettement Development
F.G.Ds	Focus Group Discussions
G.B.V	Gender based violence
G.D.P	Gross Domestic Product
H.D.R	Human Development Report
HIV	Human immune virus S
I.D.F	International Diabetes Federation
ITCZ	Inter –Tropical Convergence Zone
JMP	WHO and UNICEF joint monitoring Programs for Water and Sanitation
M.S	Microsoft
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
PCD	Plan Cumunal de Développement
P.D.U	Plan Directeur D’Urbanisation
P.O.O	Pedagogy of the Opressed
SPSS	Statiscal Pckage For Social Sciences
SDGs	Sustainable development goals
U.N	United Nations
U.N.D.P	United Nations Development Programs
U.S	United States
W.H.O	Wealth Health Organization
W.P.P	Witness Protection Program

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This part of the work presents the context of work, justification (personal and scientific), and research problem, statement of the problem, and research questions (main and specific) tentative responses to the research questions which constitutes the research hypothesis. As the work progressed, research objectives were formulated. And in order to attain them, the work was shaped in a theoretical framework, methodology and a field work study for primary data.

1.Context

Women empowerment and gender equality is at the top of agendas across the world, as gender inequality is widespread across cultures. In developing countries the problem of gender disparity is rampant compared to development. (Ahmed et al 2001). According to the United Nations, 40percent of young women in south Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are married by age 18. Child marriage not only increases the chance of complications of giving birth that often prove fatal, but also contravenes the fundamental human right of choice of partnership. In Pakistan for example women are expected to accept arranged marriages.

More efforts come in with conferences which countries round the world attended and adopted. United Nations (2020), the United Nations has organized four world conferences on women. These took place in Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995. The last was followed by a series of five-year reviews. United Nations (2020), the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing marked a significant turning point for the global agenda for gender equality. The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, adopted unanimously by 189 countries, is an agenda for women's empowerment and considered the key global policy document on gender equality. It sets strategic objectives and actions for the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality in 12 critical areas of concern.

The notion of empowerment could be traced back to different domains such as feminism, Freudian psychology, black power movement and Gandhism (Brock 2005). Thus early theories of empowerment that developed in the United States are anchored in a philosophy that gives priority to the point of view held by the oppressed peoples, enabling them not only to express themselves, but also to gain power and overcome the domination to which they were subject too (Wise 2005). Among the many inspirations for these writings of

empowerment, one of the foremost is *the conscientization approach* developed by the Brazilian theorist Paulo Freire in *his pedagogy of the oppressed* published in 1968. Infact the vast majority of works on empowerment makes some reference to Freire (1974). In every society, a small number of people exert domination over the masses resulting in “dominated consciences” present in Rural Brazil, Freire wants to attain “critical consciousness”. The feminist movement in the Global South can be credited with the formal appearance of the term empowerment in the field of international development. A turning point in the concept’s history came in 1987 with the publication of *development, crisis and alternative visions*. (Sen and Grown 1987). This book is the result of the reflection of feminist researchers, activists and political leaders from the global south, who collectively formed the network known as DAWN (Development Alternatives with women for a new era) founded in Bzngalore in 1984. It introduces broad principles for a new approach to the role of women in development. This approach will soon be labelled the “empowerment approach” (Moser 1989). In Latin America, according to Leon (2003), the four meetings that took place in Mexico in 1987 are the setting for discussions that move beyond the discourse of victimization of women and evoke other power that of domination by men to acknowledge that power can be a productive source of change. As a result, feminist literature focuses on the process of empowerment for women; most of their publications recognize that the issue of empowerment is relevant to women as well men. Several authors then reject reject the Western development model and return to the rhetoric of participation and the bottom-up models of 1970s, where in the engine of development is the empowerment of the poor and the local community rather than the market and the state. John Friedman described poverty in the global south as a historical process of exclusion from economic and social power or “disempowerment” rather than as an absence of material and financial resources. Friedman advocates moving away from the dominant classical economic model in favour of an alternative model focussed on people and the environment rather than production and profit.

A perfect avenue therefore to push for the economic emancipation of Cameroon women is through the promotion of community based projects. Such as; empowerment programs and centres. Women who possess economic and political power contribute to the well-being of their households. Their empowerment is a commitment of the government of Cameroon to catalyse development. Combining the political representation of women with the approach of economic empowerment with micro projects is proving effective, in reaching women in all spectrums of the Cameroon society. The success of micro projects is contributing immensely

to the welfare of poor and widowed families. They are learning to make out their economic feature without relying on their often powerful husbands and/or the state. The notion of gender discrimination and the related impediment to women can best be examined through the feminist approach. Raman Selden (1989) postulates that the central idea of feminism is to challenge male chauvinism and to end women's exploitation by patriarchy at all levels. In the same light, Bill Ascroft (1995) asserts that feminists' theory generally attempts to unmask and reject patriarchal ideology of domination and fight for female equality. Whereas in a sense, feminism as a doctrine advocates for the social, political and other rights of women as equal to those of men. Women and men alike should be entitled to economic empowerment and equal political representation. Thus the aim of empowerment is equal distribution of power between the sexes. Both women and men should be provided with equal economic, social, legal and political opportunities for their development. To get empowerment, women should increase their self-esteem, self-confidence and understanding of their own potential, appreciate themselves and value their knowledge and skills. Women should obtain equal distribution of power and involvement in decision making at home, in the society, economy and politics through women empowerment. Panigraphy R.L and Bhuyan D (2006). Desai M (2010) highlights the issue of empowerment and improvement in education, health, economic and political participation. Women must have power, authority and preference in functional and important decisions. The empowerment centres are equally aimed to meet up the different dimensions of development. But the empowerment centres in Douala for which this research was carried out limits its empowerment of women to economic, political, cultural, social, environmental and health empowerment (MINPROFF).

2. Justification

There are two principle justifications at the foundation of this research work: personal justification and scientific justification.

2.1 Personal justification

As a city dweller of the littoral region and Cameroon, as a whole I have always had the interest on issues or things that leads to the improvement of development, especially in the city of Douala of the littoral region. We discover that we cannot talk of development without women since they are an integral part of the community and outnumber men. The empowerment of women as a means of development remains the primary reason for the

study; women empowerment and local development the case of the Sawa women of the Littoral Region

2.2 Scientific justification

Anthropology being a social science has to do with the study of human behaviours their perceptions and interpretations of social facts. This study therefore contributes to improvement of Anthropology of development in the sub-branch of gender and development (GAD). The Philippine Commission on Women defined GAD as the development perspective and process that is participatory and empowering equitable, sustainable, free from violence, respectful of human rights, supportive of self-determination and actualization of human potentials. In this light, this study will broaden the scope of GAD by giving it a new path to follow by demonstrating that activities of women empowerment centres improve on development at a global level. This study will also contribute to existing literature on empowerment and development among the Sawa women of Douala.

3. Research problem

There have been a lot of efforts made to empower women all round the world. According to British Council (2019), to begin with, there was a conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, about equality and women's right to vote. In Europe, the idea grew and became International Women's Day (IWD) for the first time in 1911 and the United Nations declared 8 March International Women's Day in 1975. More efforts come in with conferences which countries round the world attended and adopted. United Nations (2020), the United Nations has organized four world conferences on women. These took place in Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995. The last was followed by a series of five-year reviews. United Nations (2020), the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing marked a significant turning point for the global agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment. Thus the United Nations principles of women empowerment that was centred around protecting the rights of women and enhancing women's participation in position of leadership was held at.

Cameroon like other member states of the U.N rectified the aforementioned principles and to attain SDG number 5 which states gender equality and women empowerment. Women empowerment projects, programs, centres were established. But amongs the Sawa women of Douala, the coming of women empowerment centres was visualise in another way. The Sawa community practice gender division labour for which it has never been a problem for them

to fight for power and decision making positions. According to the Sawa women the empowerment centres is not a means of promoting their rights as the Western people.

According to the first situation, women empowerment centres are aimed at empowering women to fight for their rights and be at the top of leadership and decision making. In the second situation, women empowerment centres are aimed at empowering women for local development, by the acquisition of different skills. Unlike other communities where women struggle for equal rights, the sawa women resort to economic empowerment to be able to assist their husbands in their homes. Reason why eventhough refered to women empowerment centres men are equally active participants.

4. Statement of the problem

Anthropology of development remains a vast field of research within which we find other sub-branches such as Gender and development. This study therefore situates itself in the sub-branch of Gender and development at aims at solving the problem of cultural foundations of women empowerment centres in Douala. Many researches have been done in this domain in other social disciplines such as Psychology, Gender and Sociology. Within which their researches were aimed at deconstructing male dominance and women's subjection and bringing about women's emancipation.

To begin with Plai et al (2012), their work was centered on the fact that some of the confusions that arose on what is empowerment was as a result of root concept. They held that power itself was disputed, infact that the underlying assumption of many groups of interest and institutions such as the World Bank and U.N unfortunately is that economic empowerment automatically converts to women's empowerment. Their major issue was demonstrating that the concept of empowerment is important to women's development. The approach used therefore was the theory of human needs, self-determination theory and capability approach.

Also, Kabeer (1999), in her works Gender equality and women's empowerment was aimed at responding to the third principle of the Millenium Development Goal. Her work was aimed at closing the gender gap at all levels, increasing women's share of wage employment in the non-agricultural sector and increasing the proportions of seats held by women at the national parliaments. She developed a framework which depicts empowerment as a dynamic process in which women acquire resources that enable them to develop voice (the capacity to articulate preferences) and Agency which is the capacity to make decisions.

In the same light, Smith eventhough she had many writtings, the most known is “*the stand point theory*”. Here she was aimed at resolving the problem of Sociology considered as a masculine Sociology that is by focusing on the world of paid labour, politics and formal organizations spheres of influence from which women have historically been exluded (Seidman 1994). Thus the goal of Smith’s feminist Sociology is to explicitly reformulate sociological theory by fully accounting for the stand point of gender and its effects on our experience of reality.

In addition to that, we haveHeritier who speaks for the first time of “valence differentielle des sexes” in 1981, in a work entitled the exercise of kinship, which deals with systems of family alliance. This famous researcher in her works refuses the historical fatality of the subjection of women, and paints a picture of the conditions of female emancipation.

Finally, this study on women empowerment centres and local development the case of the Sawa womenwill give an additional path way to the sub-branch of Gender and development in Anthropology of development and other disciplines. The problem to be resolved here is cultural foundation of women empowerment centres in Douala. And to do this, we identified the role of women empowerment centres in the local development of the sawa community, illustrate the various activities in these women empowerment centres in Douala, the perception of people about the women empowerment centres and the contributions of women’s empowerment centres in the amelioration of the living condition of the sawa women. In order for this to be realised, we relied on the theory of functionalism and the WID approach.

5. Research Questions

The purpose and objectives of every scientific work are gotten by a problem that is identified .and when this is done; there is a need to pose relevant questions to which the study should answer.

This will include one main question and three specific questions.

5.1.Main Question

0.5.1.1 What are the contributions of women empowerment centres to local development among the SAWA ?

5.2. Specific Questions

- 5.2.1 What are the different activities carried out in the women empowerment centres in Douala?
- 5.2.2 How do the people perceive women empowerment centres?
- 5.2.3 How do the women's activities help in the amelioration of living condition among the sawa people?

6. Research Hypothesis

Research hypothesis has to do with ideas or explanations for something that is based on known facts but has not yet been proven. Or it could be considered as tentative answers to the main and specific questions of the study to be carried which awaits confirmation or refusal. Thus this study has a main hypotheses and specific hypotheses

6.1. Main Hypothesis

6.1.1. women empowerment centres in Douala contributes to local development among the SAWA people in five different dimension that is economic, political, educational, environmental and health wise.

6.2. Specific Hypotheses

6.2.1. There sexist different activities carriedout women empowerment centres such as learning how to read and write, needing, costumisation, tailoring, hotel cattery and other activities like cultural activities, charity events and open door celebrations.

6.2.2. People perceive women empowerment centres as a place of distress, a place of liberaralism, a place that builds social misfits, a place that breathes insubmissive and indisciplined women, a place of conflict and worry.

6.2.3. Activities carried out in the centrescontributesin the amelioration of the living condition of the people by creating employments, provision of free checkups and free medications to the people.

7. Objectives

Our research objectives are in two categories. That is main objective and three specific objectives which are formulated from the research hypothesis.

7.1. Main Objective

- 7.1.1 To demonstrate how women empowerment centres in Douala contribute to local development among the SAWA people.

7.2. Specific Research Objectives

- 7.2.1 To identify the various activities carried out in women's empowerment centres in Douala
- 7.2.2 To describe the perception of people about women empowerment centres
- 7.2.3 To demonstrate how the activities carried out in the women empowerment centres help in the amelioration of the living condition of the sawa women in Douala.

8. Methodology

This section contains a description of the physical steps taken to gather the data. It describes study participants and the procedures such as the administration of the survey. It also describes the instruments used to collect data. It describes variables that are very central to the study. The chapter details sampling designs and sampling methods, collection designs and their techniques, data collection, editing as well as data analysis procedures. Finally the chapter acknowledges some inevitable limitations and shortcomings of the data collection process that had the potential to compromise the validity of data collected.

8.1 Research design

Research design is concerned with the organization of the activities in the research process. The qualitative approach was used in our study to collect, analyse and interpret data. Researchers usually start off with the research questions and see how it is possible to carry out the research from beginning to end (Johannessen et al 2004). In qualitative design the researcher has a wide range of traditions to choose from when conducting the research. Choices regarding how to collect data at an early stage, limit possibilities at later stages.

8.2. Setting

Douala is the economic capital of Cameroon located between the latitudes of 4.061536 and longitudes of 9.786072. The coordinates of Douala being 4°3'41.5296N and 9°47'9.8592E with a surface area of 210km², the population of Douala has always been increasing due to immigrants' population from other parts of the country Cameroon. This is because of the location of the town and because of the booming economy. In 2020 the population was at 3,663,000 which was a 3.59 per cent from 2019.

8.3. Sample and sampling

Sampling has to do with selecting among a population a particular group of persons with whom we are going to carry out our investigation.

8.3.1. Sample

There exist a wide range of research studies samples and this choosing an appropriate study sample is an important step in any research project since it is rarely practical, efficient or ethical to study whole populations (Marshal Martin 1996). Sampling constitutes the selection of a smaller group from a larger one or a study population making such that the group is representative of the larger population. Putting an effective sampling strategy is fundamental in any study in determining the outcome of the findings. An effective sampling strategy is as important for both qualitative and quantitative research. The research objectives, sample technique, sample population, sampling criteria, sampling process, sample size all fit into the design of a qualitative sampling strategy.

8.3.2 Sampling techniques

We employed purposive, snowball and stratified sampling techniques to gather data for this dissertation. Purposive sampling, which involves choosing who can offer closely guarded information, was employed because not everyone was able to give the required information. Most of the persons at the empowerment centres who were not versed with the problem of women specific roles in community development. As a result, we employed girls from 20 and above and elders around the empowerment centres for more insight.

8.3.3. Sample Population

The population of Douala city is too vast for a study or research work to be carried out. The population of Douala in 2019 was at 3536000, Made-up of various divisions' subdivisions and groups of people making a research work to be difficult in carrying out. For instance only among the Sawa of the Littoral region we have the Bassa, Yabassi, Douala. But for an effective research work to be effectively carried and for everyone to be represented, we took out respondents from the various sub divisions so that every subdivision and division should be represented in order to have true data.

8.3.4. Sample criteria

The purpose of this is to document variations and identify important common patterns. As such, women that were enrolled in these women empowerment centres and had

experience or even graduated from these centres were enrolled as representatives of the various divisions.

8.3.5. Sampling Process

The sampling process involved the selection of various individuals to be enrolled in the study making it a non-probabilistic one. We identified the sites and those who fell under our selection criteria were invited to take part. When agreed, they were enrolled. But in the case where they refused we moved to the next until we attained the quota of the neighbourhood and entire subdivision.

The informants were selected on the basis of certain criteria that were cited here, sex (women), ethnic identity, types of activity studied in the centres, age, occupation and the centre they attend just to name a few. Women were spotted out and enrolled, the reason being that the majority of the women empowerment centres are attended by women.

8.3.6. Sample Size

A feature of qualitative sampling is the fact that, the number of cases sampled is often small. This is because, as mentioned above, a phenomenon always appears once to be valuable. The issues to be considered when determining a sample size for qualitative investigation are dependent on the heterogeneous and homogeneous of the sample population (Amanda wilmort 2005).our sample size considered samples to be enrolled both for the qualitative method. In the course of the study a sample size of about 32 persons were used and interviews administered to the chosen representatives of the size.

8.4. Documentary research

Documentary research was done in libraries, websites, books, articles, thesis and dissertations. Most of the documented information was acquired from the university of Yaounde1 library, and the research statistic centre site. These libraries provided a variety of works with grounded information on this research topic. In these libraries we read books, encyclopaedias', journals, articles and dissertations. Some information was gotten from the internet and audio-visual sources. This was mostly achieved by watching television and listening to programs broadcasted on national stations, seminars and conferences were all sources which helped in the collection of secondary data. In order to interpret the secondary data i did a literature review of three months dating from june to august, came out with a thematic reeding sheeting to analyse books read.

8.5. Methods of data collection

In order to carry out this research work and obtain real data, various techniques of data collection were used such as; interviews, focus group discussions and observations.

8.5.1. Interviews

Interview remains the most common data collection technique in qualitative research. It is familiar and flexible ways of asking people about their opinions and experiences. In this study we opted for a semi structured interview technique. This technique was based on a series of openended questions about a series of issues the researcher thought were relevant to the topic. This was used particularly to know the perceptions of people about empowerment centres, how empowerment centres has contributed to the amelioration of women's living condition, women activities in the empowerment centres.

8.5.2. Observation

Observation consists of the fact that the researcher is present at the scene and is able to observe the behaviours and gestures of his or her target population. In what concerns this research work, we got into the various women empowerment centres where they carry out their various activities. The objective was to observe the behaviors of individuals in the production, distribution and consumption of their goods. As utensils, we used notebooks, cameras, pens, pencils.

8.5.3. Focus group discussions

Many groups of discussions were organised in the town of Douala. From an interview guide containing the principal themes of my dissertation such as the perception of people about empowerment centres, activities carried out at the empowerment centres and how the activities help in the amelioration of women living condition. We grouped around us 6 to 12 persons constituting of men and women of the sawa community who attend the empowerment centres, and other inhabitants around the centres. This was done in order to get diverse ideas and opinions the convenience of participants. Each focus group discussion consisted of persons attending the empowerment centres and people living around the centres. The people were grouped around me in a semi-circle form with a maximum of 35minutes per focus group discussion.

8.6. Techniques of data collection

Techniques of data collection have to do with the ways in which the researcher collected the data from the field. In regards to this work, techniques that were used are; in-depth interviews focus group discussions and direct observation.

8.6.1 In-Depth Interview

This is a qualitative technique of data collection which entails an intensive individual face to face interview with small groups of persons to explore their perspectives, personal ideas and opinions concerning a situation. We asked questions and wrote down the answers given to us by the informants, these exercise prompted us to ask other questions that were prompted from the responses of the informants. We had a number of 32 persons interviewed because it was the point of saturation.

8.6.2 Focus group discussion

This technique permitted us to gather information that could not be gotten from the other techniques. This is because people who share the same ideas, opinions, feelings were grouped, and with this they were able to feel free to express themselves. We grouped around us 6 to 12 persons constituting of men and women of the sawa community who attend the empowerment centres, and other inhabitants around the centres. This was done in order to get diverse ideas and opinions the convenience of participants. Each focus group of discussion consisted of persons attending the empowerment centres and people living around the centres. The people were grouped around me in a semi-circle form with a maximum of 35minutes per focus group discussion.

8.6.3 Direct observation

Direct observation consists of the researcher been present at the field, been punctual at the site indoor to observe facts and gestures of the target population. With the case of our work, we went to the various women empowerment centres, their petit business site where they sell their products. This was done with the goal to observe the individuals during the process of production, distribution and consumption of their products. Here we observed the fabrication of liquid of liquid soaps, the beading and needing. It was discovered that during the fabrication of these products by the Sawa women, there was a lot of communication and exciting gestures such as laughing, chatting, and singing.

8.7 Data collection tools

Data collection tools were used to register all the necessary information which was gotten from the field. This was in order to avoid missed out information on the field. Instruments such as interview guide, focus group discussion guide, observation guide, camera, tape recorder, pens and block notes.

8.7.1 Interview guide

In order for an effect interview to be carried out, we made use of an interview guide. This was used to know how people perceive empowerment centres and how the activities of the centres have contributed to the amelioration of the living condition of the women.

8.7.2. Focus group discussion guide

We had a moderator who posed the question, a notetaker who aided to take notes on the behaviours, attitudes and gestures of participants. Then a time keeper to ensure that time was strictly followed, observed the attitudes, gestures and behaviours of informants during discussion. FDG guide is a list of questions relevant to a researcher's topic. This guide was used in this dissertation in focus group discussions. The FGD guide acted as a map to the researcher during the discussions to avoid mix ups. Many FGD were organised in the Douala municipality. Participants of the FGD ranged from 6-12 participants per FGD. It was done in a semi-circle form to permit the researcher have a view of everyone. During the FGD

8.7.3. Observation guide

An observation guide was used to direct and remind the researcher of the key points to be observed while in the field as well as the topic of interest associated with the research topic. At the field, we observed the different activities carried out at the centres, such as needling, tailoring, exposition of work. We also observed the roles of men and women during community development projects and the attitudes and behaviours of participants during activities carried out at the centre.

8.7.4. Camera, tape recorder, pens and bock notes

These digital tools were used during the field work to facilitate the collection of data. The camera was used to take images and photos that was inserted in the work. A tape recorder was used during the FGDs at the convenience of participants to enable us get

accurate fieldnotes important for the study. Pens and note books were used to take down notes, behaviours, attitudes and gestures of participants.

8.8 Content analysis and interpretation

The social sciences proposes a wide range of methods of analysis, anthropology shares in the methods which will be used in this study as a social science discipline. However the choice of a method or the other will depend on the kind or type of data collected. Since cultural analysis starts from a sheer beginning and ends where it manages to get before exhausting its intellectual impulse.” (Geertz 1973).

Meanings reside in social practice, and not just in the heads of individuals. To get the meaning, therefore, finding data becomes necessary. Analysis’ too involves breaking data down into bits, and then ‘beating’ the bits together. The word derives from the prefix ‘ana’ meaning ‘above’, and the Greek root ‘lysis’ meaning ‘to break up or dissolve’ (Bohm 1983:125 and 156).

In most circumstances in a research study, content analysis aims to provide thorough descriptions of the collected data to make them meaningful to readers and practitioners (Dey, 1993). In this study, qualitative analysis was aimed at describing the world as different observers (researchers) perceive it. The analysis is usually concerned with how actors define situations and explain the motives, which govern their actions (emic perspective). It must, therefore, be ensured that this relates to intentions of the actors involved in the final research study report (Dey, 1993; Boaduo, 2006; Stake, 1994; Carspecken, 1996).

Our interviews were transcribed using the content based analysis. And so doing we selected the content to be analysed based on the research questions. After which we determined the coding categories by setting up rules as we came up with themes related to the topic of dissertation then categorized the responses under these big themes. After the setting up of the rules we coded the different categorize then code the content. Also, we checked the validity and reliability of the content by finding correlations and patterns in order to communicate the various concepts. Furthermore, we were able to check the validity and reliability of the data collected by understanding the intentions of the respondents through gestures and comments, behaviour put in place to answer questions. This format of analysing helped us to avoid repetitions as we were able to group their responses under specific broad themes. For instance with the use of synonyms by different respondents, for which had the same sense and meaning was grouped under a particular theme.

8.8.1 Identifying codes and reducing the codes to themes

Codes were derived through transcribing and labelling words or phrases containing meaning. This analysis therefore led us to the use of content analysis. This is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use.

8.8.2. Analysing iconographic data

Iconography refers to the use of images, pictures or photographs and symbols to represent ideas or the particular images and symbols used in this way by a researcher. The analysis of images consists in identifying every item on it as well as the various aspects. Once this is done, every identified item and aspects are later put in its context to have a global constitution reality. Colours are not to be neglected in this exercise. They have a lot of meaning as far as analysis is concerned, we took note of shapes, forms, colours, textures and the images that were observed in the field.

8.8.3. Model of analysis

Descriptive research, life history is among the approaches to qualitative research. And in the case of this study, the history of women empowerment centres, social representations, reasons for women empowerment centres, difficulties they encounter, their contributions to development. The content analysis exercise prompted us to choose the adequate approach. We used content and context analysis. With the content analysis we took what people said and the context was within the culture of the sawa women which is among the approaches to qualitative research. With life history, the narration of history was done by a key respondent called the narrator accompanied by another person. This historic version doesn't exactly carry facts or truth, but it was important in this research work to know about the past events which was helpful for this research work. We also opted for the naturalistic enquiry. This is an inquiry conducted in natural settings (in this case on the streets) using natural methods such as observation, interviewing, thinking, reading and writing in natural ways by a researcher.

8.8.4. Interpretations

Interpretation comes from the Latin word "interpretare" which means: explaining and making sense out of something. Interpretation therefore, the legal act of giving or conferring sense to a theoretical framework as Mbonji E. (2005) defines it as "what a researcher finds in a theory, a specialisation or much more what he or she formulates in his own words and which will serve as a key of understanding the data of the problem. It is also the elaboration

of a researcher from the material gotten in a theoretical field”. In this study, we used the theorie of functionalism, empowerment and the approach of women in development (WID)to give meaning to the data that we collected from the field.

8.9. Ethical considerations

We obtained the consent of the informants before carrying out the research so the informants were the ones who willingly accepted to give us information after all the conditions needed for answers to questions were read to them. We assured our informants that the information they gave us will be used for strictly academic purposes before them taking part in the interview and focus group discussion. Finally, the privacy of our informants was respected, as those who did not want to speak in the presence of others we organized the interview with them different from the others.

9.Problems encountered on the field

Like any other scientific study, many problems were encountered. A good number of problems were encountered in the field in the process of data collection within the months of September, October and November for which we were able to overcome. To begin with the fact that most of our informants were in the middle of their activities at the empowerment centres thus had no time to attend to us. As a result we waited for several hours when they had free periods to carryout the interview. Also the problem of language; we discovered that most of our informants couldnot understand English nor express themselves in English as a result we had to reformulate the interview guide in French before returning to the field.

10. The Delimitation of the study

The scope of the study was reduced to levels manageable to this researcher, yet broad enough to allow for collection of enough data that enables the research to answer the important questions and fulfil its objectives. Discriminating gender roles in development process is a very broad concept for which all of it cannot be study this it was reduced to a specific and smaller group of persons to be studied for accurate and efficiency. Reason why this study was limited to the littoral region of Cameroon the town of Douala with a specific group of women of the Sawa culture in particular time frame of September, October and November.

13. Structure of the work

This work consisted of a general introduction, six chapters and a general conclusion. The first chapter introduced us to the presentation of the study site the natural environment as well as the overall characteristics. The geography, geomorphology, the climate, the presentation of the political organization of each of the subdivisions will also be presented. The demography, the population, history, religion, the economy and the administrative organization will also be presented.

The second chapter consisted of literature review, theoretical and conceptual framework. Diverse contributions were spotted out in bookshops, library as well as the internet. Contributions were made space and production of women who undergo these training from the centres. Culture specialization was explored. Other author's contribution on women empowerment and development was explored. Concerning the theoretical work certain anthropological paradigms were mentioned with feminist explanations. Good descriptions and other valuable information.

Chapter three consisted of findings on the different activities carried out at the women empowerment centres such as tailoring, costumisation, needing, ICT, hotel cattery and restauration, agricultural tools such as fertilizers, insecticides.

Chapter four explored the perceptions of the people about empowerment centres, how it is regarded and looked upon.

Chapter five consisted of explaining how the various activities carried out in these centres contribute to the amelioration of the living condition of the sawa people.

Finally chapter six consisted of anthropological approaches to women empowerment centres, interpretations and analysis.

Conclusion

This part of the work gave us an elaborated introduction. This consisted of a well defined research problem, statement of the problem, main research question which gave birth to three specific questions. From the research questions we were able to formulate a main hypothesis and three specific hypothesis which gave us a main research objective and three specific objectives, justification (personal and scientific), methods, techniques and tools of data collection, ethical considerations and an overview of the chapters outline. The next

chapter of the work will be presenting to us the detailed presentation of the study area and the sawa people of Douala.

CHAPTER ONE

PRESENTATION OF STUDY AREA

Introduction

This part of the work presents to us the setting up of our research. This is done in two phases; the physical and human phase. Douala found in the littoral region of Cameroon. In 1884 to 1902, Douala served as the capital of the German Cameroon. It again served as the capital of Cameroon in 1940 to 1946 with its mixture of traditional, colonial and modern architecture, Douala has grown rapidly since world war two and it's the most populous city in the republic of Cameroon. <https://www.britannica.com> (Encyclopedia). In this chapter, we brought out an overview of the town of Douala like; the ethnographic study of the area, background of the study, geography, climate, demography, population, people, history, origin and foundation etymology, religion and administration.

1.1. Geography

Douala been the chief port of Cameroon, is situated on the Southern shore of the Wouri river estuary, on the Atlantic ocean about 130miles (210km) West of Yaounde. Douala which is situated in the Littoral region of Cameroon has its geographical coordinates as 4 degree 31 north, 9 degree 42 east and its original name Douala.

The Wouri bridge 5900feet (1800meters) long, joins Douala to the port of Bonabéri carries both road and rail traffic to western Cameroon. It has a population of 1861463 inhabitants with a surface area of 20248km² and four divisions, with a density of 91.93 inhabitants/km² with touristic attractions. <https://www.macrotrends.net> (Cameroon Metro Area Population 1950-2022). The Ngondo festival is rooted here, and other seaside pastimes abound as the indigenes of the region celebrate their intimate relation with water. (www.prc.cm)

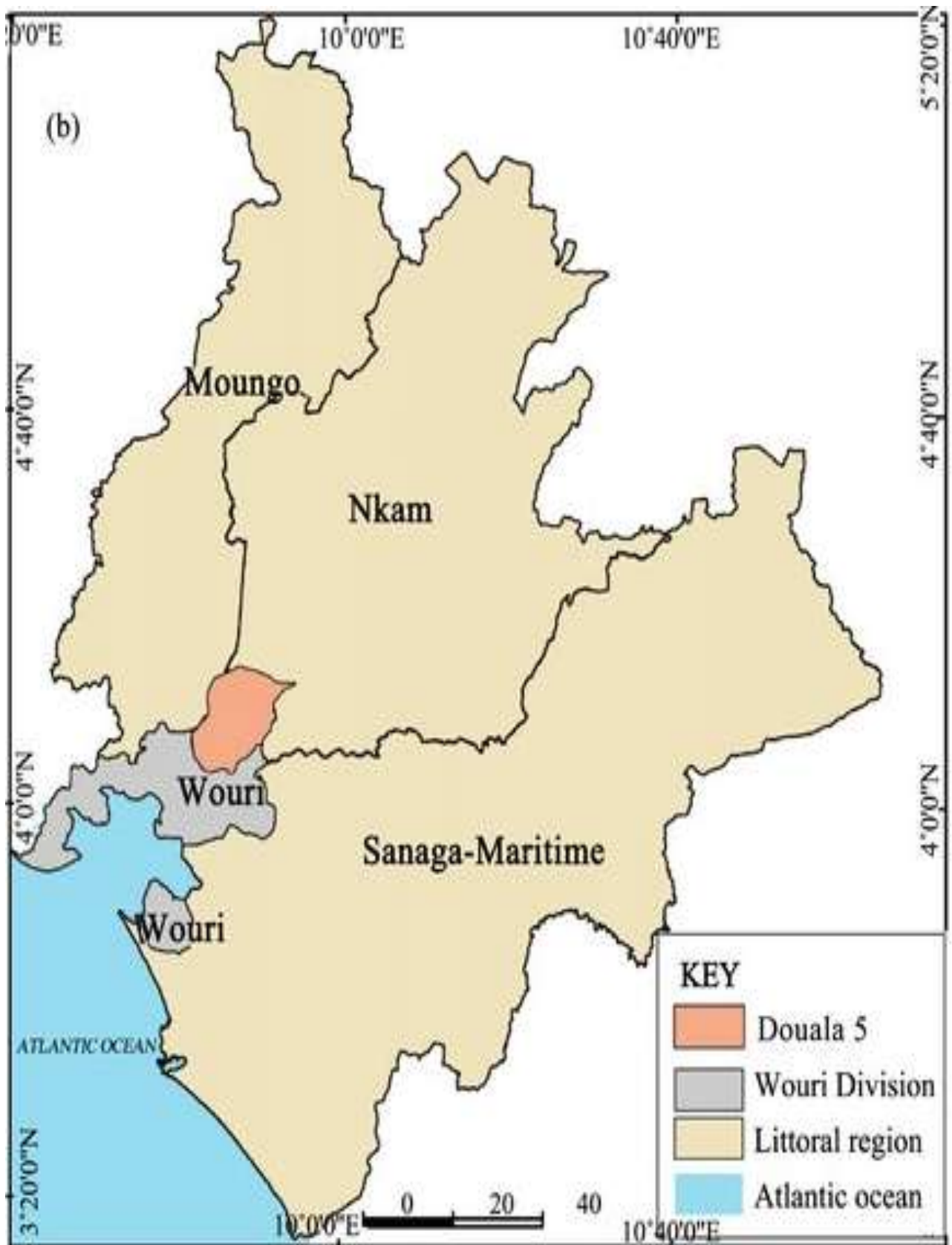
In addition to that, Douala had a population of 3,174,437 and its name was derived from the fact that it being largely littoral and associated with the sea coast. The town of Douala is situated on the mouth of the Wouri River, in the centre of the Cameroon coastline. It is the economic capital of the country and one of the biggest ports on the African continent. Most of the town is built on the left bank of the river. It was the administrative capital of the country when it was German colony until 1901, then took the name of Douala which is the main tribe of the region (the Duala). It has an equatorial climate which is hot and humid. There's a dry season and a rainy season which encourages tourism and favoured the research work we carried out.

Map 1: The location of the Littoral Region in Cameroon



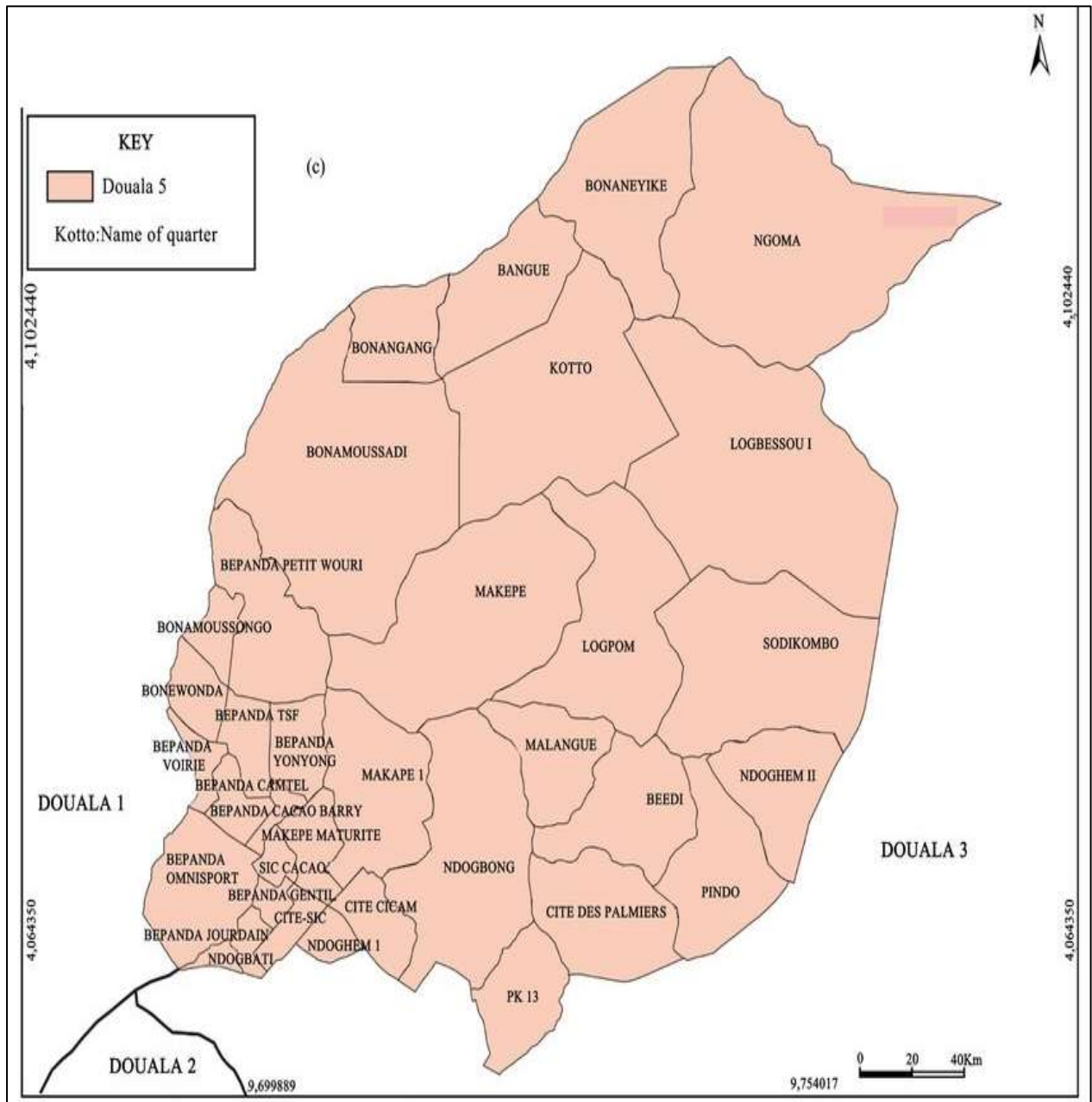
Source: -douala-5 council Consulted on 17 August 2021 at 2 pm.

Map 2: The Littorial Region



Source: -douala-5 council Consulted on 17 August 2021 at 2 pm.

Map 3: Distribution of quarters in Douala 5 council



Source: douala 5 council , Consulted on 17 August 2021 at 2 pm.

1.1.1 Climate and precipitation

Douala features a tropical monsoon climate with relatively consistent temperatures throughout the course of the year, though the city experiences somewhat cooler temperature in July and august. Douala typically features warm and humid conditions with an average and annual temperature of 27.0degrees Celsius (80.6degrees) and are average humidity of 83%. Douala sees plentiful rainfall during the course of the year experiencing on average roughly 3600 millimetres of precipitation falls while its wetttest month is august when on average

nearly 700 millimeters of rain falls. This was very important for us to take note of in order to know how to schedule the fieldwork without been constrained.

Douala is characterized by a subtropical climate of the Guinean forest (the wet equatorial type) with an average rainfall of about 1450mm fairly distributed throughout the year. There are two seasons the dry and rainy seasons. This period of the rainy season is characterized by great rains not by their duration which by the way is very short but by the abundance and intensity of rainfall. From Mid-November to mid-March dry season. This season is characterized by heat waves. However, this climate change is not fixed. Disturbances due to climate change often disrupt this seasonal calendar. Thus, it is frequent that during the dry season, unexpected rains occur to again give way to heat. Despite the various disturbances observed during the seasons, the climate in the municipality of Douala remains the same type.

Also, concerning the temperature of Mbandjock, the Plan Communal De Developpement (2013) indicated that the temperature of this region often can go up to 23.5°C to 26.5°C and so the average temperature stands at 24.7°C. Moreover, for PCD, sunshine on the other hand goes up to about 5:20 AM in the day with evapotranspiration of 3,8mm by day which is relatively low. The average maximum daily temperature of Douala 24.7°C. Temperature varies on a daily and monthly basis. The hottest months are December, January, and February; with a maximum average daily temperature going up to 26°C. The coldest months are; June, July, and August with maximum daily temperatures of between 23°C. This period is also favourable for crops and fruits cultivation.

Concerning wind, Douala like most parts of the country is crossed by two air masses; firstly, the South West Monsoon winds which are humid and dominate the western part of the country. They originate from the St Helena anticyclone but are deviated from their initial track after passing across the equator. They assure the transportation of humidity from the ocean and forest of the South towards the North from March to October. Another important air mass that influences the climate of the area in the southeast Trade Winds originating from the Sahara referred to as the Hamartan Winds. It originates within the Saharan anticyclone and it accounts for the dry nature of this area between December and March, and it is during this period that these conflicts are at their peak. The point where the two air masses meet is referred to as the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ). The alternate displacement of this Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone is what is responsible for the two main seasons (the dry

and rainy season) we have in Cameroon. All these conditions prevail in Douala thus this are an obvious reason for the rich soil content and great involvement in agricultural activities.

1.1.2 Soils

The soils in Douala originated from a thick mantle of granitic intrusion over which lies the bedrock forming a good basement for alluvial deposition. In terms of thickness, these soils vary from a few centimeters (2013), there are four main soil types in the region, which consist of ferralitic soils, swampy soils, loamy - sandy soils, Lateritic soils.

This distribution is however patchy and is not uncommon to find different soil types prevailing within the same area. These soils are derived from the weathering and decomposition of rocks in association with a decomposed organic component. The distribution of soil types therefore closely follows the distribution of the geologic framework. The composition of the parent material plays a decisive role in the properties of young soils and may exert an influence on the oldest soils. The Lateritic soils are formed from the weathering of basalts which after oxidation results in the formation of a brownish coloured soil type rich in composition and favours agricultural activities.

The soils are highly permeable with top soils made up of black silt loam. The abundant vegetation on the marsh has less decomposed organic matter on the organic soil profile. These soils have a high water retention capacity that is greatly reduced only in the dry season. That is why many crops cultivation succeeds in this area. The soils are rich and productive, and this can be seen from their high yields. The soils are usually very hard during the dry season because of exposure to the sun by farming activities. The soils are usually very hard due to the trampling effects of the animals which compact the soils.

This is usually when the floodwaters have retreated, and the seasonal hydromorphic soils are left with green vegetation that serves as fodder for grazing animals. Cattle rearing is the practice here given that the soils here favour the growth of pasture and the presence of watercourses like streams and rivers which attract grazers for cattle rearing. These animals before going allowed cow droppings which enrich the soils and make it favourable for crops production.

1.1.3. Altitude

When it comes to altitude, Douala has a varying gradient with the highest point reading 13 m above sea level and. Generally speaking, this plain is poised by low altitude which is an obvious reason as to why it is called lowland. This low altitude greatly favours the growth of

agricultural products as plantain, cocoyams, cassava, yams, maize, leaching (poultry), crafts (raffia, mat, basket). The lowest points which consist of the marshes are principally occupied by farms and raphia;

1.1.4. Relief

In Douala the relief has valley bottom morphology with a flat topography and a wide variation in the gradient observed. The areas most exposed to flooding are mostly located in lowland areas, close to sea level (mangroves, swamps). This is particularly the case with the humidity, which was the cause of many floods in 2012, 2013 and 2015. Unusual rains caused severe flooding in the city affecting more than 1500 families and killing three people. Emmanuel Tonye (2013).

1.1.5. Vegetation, Flora, and Wildlife

Studies in Douala show that the neighbourhood is a plain surrounded by some swamps. It has the savannah-forest transition, characterized by savannahs shrubs with a few islands of the forest. Savannah is the main constituent of the vegetation cover in the municipality of Douala although it is in sharp decline due to the extension of the city and large plantations. There are also secondary forests, gallery forests and tree forests. The vegetation of this zone is highly influenced by the climatic factors of the region. It also constitutes a mixture of flooded swamp forest and. The natural vegetation cover has witnessed profound changes following anthropogenic factors that have prevailed in the region over the years. The swampy zones of the East and Southeastern region are occupied by large expanses of swamp forest constituted essentially of Hygrophilous vegetation species; dead palms and other trees are dominant in this area. Most upland vegetation is grassland with little signs of primary vegetation. This can be accounted for by bush burning. Still, according to several species are listed here. They include monkeys, antelopes, elephants, porcupines, rats, several species of birds, reptiles, and for aquatic life a variety of fish.

1.1.6. Demography

The population of Douala has witnessed tremendous increase and constant growth since it became the economic capital of Cameroon. In the 1950, the population of Douala was 94,769 inhabitants and has grown by 691166 since 2015 which represents a 4.27% annual change. The current metro area population of Douala in 2020 is 3663000, a 3.59% increase from 2019. The metro area population of Douala in 2019 was 3536000 a 3.63% increase from 2018 which was 3412000 a 4.69% increase from 2017, which was 3,259000 and this

was equally an increase from the metro population area of Douala which was at 3,112,000 in 2016, which equally depicts an increase in the population which was at 2,972,000 in 2015, and a 2,838,000 in 2014, and the growth from 2010 to 2012 was at 2,361,000 and 2,589,000 respectively. And we discover that the growth rate of the city of Douala keeps growing in an alarming way with the percentage of almost an entire country notably. These population estimates and projections come from the latest revision of the UN world urbanization prospects. These estimates represent the urban agglomeration of Douala, which typically includes Douala's population in addition to adjacent suburban areas.

Cameroon has more than 240 tribes which are found in three ethnic groups which are the Bantus, semi Bantus and the Sudanese. The number of national languages spoken in the country is more than 240. The most notable tribes are

- Bantus: Beti, Bassa, Bakundu, Maka, Doaula, Pygmies
- Semi Bantus: Bamileke, Gbaya, Bamoun, Tika
- Sudanese: Fulbe, Mafa, Toupouri, Shao-Arabs, Moundangmassa, Mousgoum

Douala was by the colonial period made up of the dualas themselves. Today it is a cosmopolitan city due to rural-urban migration in the last years. People from diverse ethnic origins now settle in Douala. People from neighbouring countries can also be found living and established in the city of Douala. The population growth has been significant. In 1976, the population was at 464,000 inhabitants. In 1987, 819,000 inhabitants, in 1992 1,031,000 inhabitants and in the year 2000 it was at 1,490,000 inhabitants. The above statistics estimate an annual growth of 4 per cent. These statistics are provided by populationstat.com in collaboration with the ministry of town planning.

Statistics also shows that the youth constitute a majority of the national population. This is because they are victimized by the poor educative system which does not match with demand in the job markets this making many jobless with educational certificates. Added to that the presence of internally displaced persons because of the crisis which is currently on going in the south and North West regions of Cameroon people seek for refuge. We discover therefore that since the government is unable to absorb the population, they are found mostly in the informal sectors of the nation in order to survive. (<https://www.macrotrends.net>).

1.1.7. Transport

The Douala international port is the major civilian hub, while nearby ports are equally used for the transportation and importation of goods like the sea port. Douala by roads is connected to all the major towns of Cameroon. Rail lines running to many directions like Kumba, Nkongsamba, Yaounde and Ngaoundere and the bridge of the Wouri River that joins Douala to the port of Bonaberi and carries both roads and rails traffic to western Cameroon. Many bus companies operate from the city particularly in the Bonaberi districts that transports passengers moving from Douala to the South west region, North west, Baffousam just to name a few. Nevertheless, the exist other bus companies around the Mboppi market through frequent buses run on the national road number3 (Douala -Yaoundé) and Yaoundé Douala. Many buses run through Yaoundé and Douala, and the travel time from Douala to Yaoundé is approximately four hours by public transportation. We discover that the town of Douala and other areas that surrounds it suffers from heavy traffic daily due to the fact that there's high movements of persons either for the purpose of work or schooling for students and others who go in and out of the town. Been the economic capital, the town is known for its busyness both during the day and at night. But the rate of traffic slows down at night in some areas. This also helped us in movement for the field work since we had to visit different empowerment centres. Even though sometimes we were caught up in traffic.(<https://mintransports.net>).

1.1.8. Industrialization

This is an inevitable factor when talking or presenting the town of Douala. The development of the energy, agro industry, digital technology sectors have and the present of industries have been identified as key drivers to the reconstruction of Cameroon's industrialization. The sectors were presented to participants during the first industrialization forum in Cameroon organized on the theme "agro industry a sanctuary of national industrial reconstruction for Cameroon's emergence". We discovered that the rapid growth of the population of Douala and the pollution that exist it's as a result of the presence of these manufacturing industries which serves as employment to many This development. This was a vital part in helping the research work since the study is to improve on the local development decision making system of the nation and particularly the town of Douala.

1.1.9. Empowerment centres

The women of Douala face serious challenges directly related to poverty. The severe lack of access to education especially for the Douala women in the rural areas has kept

poverty rates high. These women are forced to discontinue their education at a young age due to poverty related factors. They are not only subject to a continued life of poverty but also suffer AIDS, prostitution, poor hygiene and early pregnancy which has high risks of maternal mortality. In order to resolve these trending problems in the town of Douala, the government and private individuals came up with empowerment programs and the establishment of women empowerment centres. In this study, we carried out fieldwork in five empowerment centres. The empowerment centres owned by the government which was used in this study was CPF Akwa and CPF Bonamousadi located in Akwa and Bonamousadi respectively, private empowerment centres such as Meridians located in Bonatone Deido, Home ateliers in Bonanjo and Sainte Famille in New Deido. These empowerment centres carry out socio-cultural and economic activities such as workshops, seminars, enculturation and I.C.T.

1.1.10. Main steps and indicators of Douala spatial growth

Cameroon (central Africa) holds together with Nigeria, Ivory Coast, (West Africa), democratic republic of Congo, the richest and densest urban networks of black tropical Africa. After independence in 1960, all Cameroon towns have increased gradually doubling and tripling for some. However Douala and Yaoundé hold the most spectacular increase rate and carry more than 45% of the urban population of Cameroon.

The most urbanized centre in Cameroon, metropolitan Douala has witnessed extensive spatial expansion, which has provoked certain observable environmental problems on the lagoon complex and the wetlands. These are in form of reclamation for expansion of urban sprawls, wetland conversion for industrial infrastructure and development with resultant increased discharge of effluents. In spite of these we discover that the demographic growth keeps increasing and has become a benefit to the inhabitants more. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com>).

1.2. History

Early Duala history may only be conjectured from oral traditions. The Duala proper and most Limba trace their ancestry back to a man named Mbedi. Who lived in an area called “Bakota” in what is today Gabon or the Republic Congo. His sons Ewale and Dibongo migrated north and reached a place called pitti on the Dibambariver. Here the brothers parted ways after a row. Ewale moved to the mouth of the Dibamba river with his followers and then northwest to the east bank of wouri river estuary. Meanwhile Dibongo and his companions migrated southwest to the Sanaga River and then spilt up, some heading

upstream with dibongo and others moving downstream with a man named Elimbe. Ewale's people became the Duala and Dibongo's the Limba. With the arrival of the Portuguese in the 15th century, the area was known as Rio dos cameroes. Before coming under German rule in 1884, the town was also known as Cameroons town; there after it became kamerunstadt (Cameroon city). The capital of German kamerun, it was renamed Douala in 1907 after the name of the natives known as Duaalajaws (njos), and became.

French Cameroon in the 1919: Many of the ijaw (njo) natives the Niger Delta in Nigeria during the Portuguese era. According to the traditions of the Duala proper, the bakaoko and bassa ethnic groups occupied the wouri estuary when the Duala arrived. The Duala then drove them inland, a displacement that likely occurred in the late 17th or early 18th century. The Bakole probably splintered off of the Duala proper at some point and made their way west to their current territory. The Mungo share no singular origin story. Some claim the same history as the Duala proper and Limba, while others trace their ancestry to a man named Lokula who migrated east from near efik territory in modern-day Nigeria. The former tradition seems more likely, however, and the Nigerian story possibly indicates that later settlers entered Limba country from Efik territories at some point and assimilated.

The Bamboko probably moved to Mboko, the area southwest of mount Cameroon in the early 17th century. The predominant Bakweri and isubu traditions claim they originated from this area as well. The Bakweri likely migrated to their present home east of the mountain in the mid 18th century. From the foothills, they gradually spread to the coast, and up to the Mungo River and the various creeks that empty into it. In the process, they founded numerous villages, usually when individual families groups split off. A rival Bakweri tradition says they descend from mokuri or mokule, a brother of the Duala proper's Ewale, who migrated to the mount Cameroon area for hunting. In addition a few isolated villages, such as Mauma and Bojongo, claim some alternate descent and may represent earlier groups whom the expanding Bakweri absorbed. The predominant isubu belief tells of a named isuwunamonanga who led their migration to the west bank of the wouri estuary. When a descendant of isuwu named mbimbi became king, the people began to refer to their territories as Bimbia.

Wovea legend names a man from the island of Bioko as their forebear. His ship washed ashore at mboko, where he married a local woman. They then moved southeast and settled at ambas bay. The wovea likely lived along bay in the 17th or 18th century and they could have

participated in the same migration from mboko that brought the Bakweri and the isubu to their territories. (Encyclopedia Britannica).

1.3. Origin and foundation of the sawa people

The term Sawa includes all the inhabitants of the coastal region of Cameroon. It is a group of peoples with Bantu origins and sharing the same historical heritage radically marked by certain values, in particular the family model and spirit, hospitality, sharing, solidarity, oral and gestural language practices, etc. The Sawa peoples therefore have a common cultural framework where linguistic similarities, rites, codes and similar religious practices are entangled. In terms of spatial occupation, the Sawa are subdivided into two major components. The first group is made up of those who can be considered the first nations of the Cameroonian coastal region. These are particularly the Bakoko, the Bassa of the regions around Douala, Edéa and Yabassi and also other ethnic groups namely the Ndokpenda, Yabassi, Yingui, Mbang, Bandem, Yadimba, Yakalak, Njuki, Yansoki, Bonamateke, Yabea, Ndonga, Adie, Yasuki, Ndokbiakat, among others. The second group is made up of a group of peoples with the same founding ancestor. These are notably the Douala, the Bombedi, the Bokumba, the Bakota and the Bose Minié.

Like all peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, the Sawa peoples have a deep sense of cosmogony. This is found in their spiritual practices which refer to what is usually called Traditional African Religions (RTA), among other subjects of several studies (Mulago, 1980; Magesa, 1997). Mulago (1980) rightly defines African Traditional Religions as a “cultural set of ideas, feelings and rites based on: the belief in two worlds, visible and invisible; the belief in the communal and hierarchical character of these two worlds; the interaction between the two worlds; the transcendence of the invisible world not hindering its immanence; the belief in a Supreme Being, Creator, Father of all that exists”. Among the Sawa, African religiosity is materialized by "Jengu" in its updated form of Ngondo. It is only a set of actions and attitudes, acting on the way of life and thought of the Sawa, allowing them to perpetuate ancestral beliefs and rituals as true cultural expressions and symbols. Being near rivers has led the Sawa peoples to develop religious practices strongly linked to natural aquatic forces. They consider their aquatic heritage a cultural and spiritual asset housing their deity named Jengu. Oral sources, the Jengu, also commonly called "Mami Water" or "spirit of water" by the uninitiated, is the mother of the waters. Recognized in tradition as a hybrid deity, the Jengu is a mystical representation of the omnipotence of the water spirits, an integral part of the life of

the Sawa peoples. It is an aquatic being, deformed compared to humans and inseparable from water. Cultural codes, the way an initiated sawa apprehends the world, starts from an observation of his aquatic environment. The cosmogonic aspects of the Sawa are therefore manifested by Jengu giving rise to particular cultural expressions distinguishing them from other Cameroonian ethnic groups, who also have their traditional spiritual practices.

1.3.1. Different ethnic sawa groups

The Duala (Sawa people) are a Bantu ethnic group of Cameroon. They primarily inhabit the littoral and south west region of Cameroon and form a portion of the Sawa Bantu or “Coastal people” of Cameroon. The Duala are related to several ethnic groups or tribes in the Cameroon coastal areas, with whom they share a common traditional origin, and a similar histories and cultures. These include the Ewodi, the Bodiman, the Pongo, the Bakole, the Bakweri, the Bamboko the Isubu, the Limba the Mungo, the Woeva and the Oroko and are generally known as the Sawa people.

1.3.1.1. People of Douala

The Duala is expert trading, skilful fishery and agriculturalist Bantu-speaking ethno linguistic group of the forest region of southern Cameroon living on the estuary of the Wouri River. They primarily inhabit the littoral region to the coast and form a portion of the larger Sawa (Cameroon coastal) peoples. They have historically played a highly influential role in Cameroon due to their long contact with Europeans, high rate of education, and wealth gained over years as traders and land owners.

1.3.1.2. The Limba (Malimba)

According to oral tradition the madimba people descended from a common ancestor called Mbedi, who came from Congo. The mbedi people gave rise to the Douala, wouri, pongo, batanga, lounge/loungai (who speak Bassa), and dibongo (who speak bakoko).some of the grand parents of the malimba fathers are believed to have migrated from Mouanko to north of edea. There are six malimba villages situated at the sanaga maritime division of the littoral region of Cameroon. The first area is just north of Edea (malimba and malimba farm). The other area is west of Mouanko (maljedu, malmbenge, bongo and mulongo) in Mouanko subdivision. These coastal villages are accessible only by motorized dugout canoe. Malimba farm interviewees hold that they have lost half of their village populace to big cities. Only about 300 are left in the village while about 250 have left for

Douala and other big cities. (A rapid appraisal survey of malimba in Cameroon SIL international 2009.

1.3.1.3. Bodiman

The bodiman are a population of Cameroon living in the littoral region, the department of the Nkam, the district of yabassi. They occupy the upper reaches of the wouri where they have settled in the 18th century. The bodiman are part of the Sawa group. During the census the town had 12,999 inhabitants including 4,288 for yabassiville.

The yabassi, an indigenous ethnic group of the city, live especially in the cartoons of Dibengndokbele, badjobndokpenda, nyatam or nyamtani, yabassi center but also in the canton of wouribwele in particular the peoples of ndokbakeng, tond, diwom just to name a few. There are also the indigenous people of yingui center country, which has been part of yingui town for several years. They are the most numerous of the city in the terms of nationals. Then other ethnic groups such as Bandem, Banen, Doualas, peuls, Bamilekes as well as immigrants from neighboring countries and West Africa.

1.3.1.4. Bakweri

The Bakweri (kwe) are an ethnic group of the republic of Cameroon. They are closely related to Cameroon's coastal peoples (the Sawa) particularly the Duala and isubu. The Bakweri are primarily concentrated in the Cameroon's south west region. They live over 100 villages east and south east of mount Cameroon with Buea their main population center. Bakweri settlements largely lie in the mountain's foothills and continue up its slopes as high as 4000 meters. They have further villages along the Mungo River and the creeks that feed into it. The town of limbe is a mixture of Bakweri, Douala and other ethnic groups. Those who live in the cities such as limbe and buea earn a living at a number of skilled and unskilled professions. The rural Bakweri in contrast, work as farmers, making use of mount Cameroon's fertile volcanic soils to cultivate cocoyam, maize, manioc, palms and plantains.

Traditional Bakweri was divided into three strata. At the top were the native Bakweri, with full rights of land ownership. The next consisted either non-Bakweri or the descendants of slaves. Finally the slaves made up the bottom rung. Chiefs and headmen sat at the pinnacle of this hierarchy in the past, though today such figures have very little power in their own right. Councils of elders and secret societies allow communities to decide important issues. The Bakweri speak mokpwe.

1.3.1.5. Oroko

Another version of oral history which seems more plausible is that the oroko are primarily descended from an earlier Batekka people who later became known as the Batanga. These Batanga were settled close to present day Isangele in the Bakassi peninsular.

Oroko is an ethnic group made up of several clans. Each clan has its own cultural characteristics in terms of traditional dancing, meals and language. Their villages are spread around the south west region specifically in Ndian and Meme division, where they constitute more than 3/4 of the population in each of these divisions. The orokos are located north of mount Cameroon with river Mungo on the right and the Atlantic Ocean on the left. They extend as far north as mamfe, bakassi, and korup national park one part of which bounds with Nigeria and another part with the Manyu division. The main geographical features of the tribe constitute the highlands of BafakaBalue, which extends right up to rumpi hills and itokibakundu area. This forms the back bone and also constitutes the shed from which the five main rivers take their rise that is the Mungo, meme, ndian, moko and the munaya. The great fishing grounds of the west of the Adriatic coast harbour the mangrove forests and the creeks which constitute the richest fishing grounds on the west coast of Africa.

1.3.1.6. Ewodi, Pongo, Bakole, Bamboko, Isubu and Woeva

These other tribes do not have a particular history of their own they hold to the same history of the Duala proper themselves that holds according to oral tradition that they trace their ancestry to a powerful mystical leader Mbedi a Mbongo, the progenitor of all coastal Cameroonian ethnic groups known as the Sawa people. It is recounted in the traditions that Mbedi originally lived in an area called Bakota in what is today Gabon or the republic of the Congo.

1.3.1.7. Bassa

The Bassa who are sometimes known as Bassa-Bakongo area Bantu ethnic group in Cameroon who speaks the Bassa language. They have as traditional dance 'asiko' which is considered a bottle dance. They mostly fall among the sawa and are found in departments of Nyong et Kelle, Sanaga Maritime, Nkam, Wouri. They practice subsistence faming and fishing. Like other sawa people of the Littoral region, the Bassa have as staple food mbongo-tjobi, Mituba and the Ndole.

1.3.1.8. Yabassi

Yabassi is a town and commune in Western Cameroon and capital of the Nkam department. Its population in 2001 was estimated at 1200, and the main dialect spoken is the Bassa Yabassi even though there are other dialects originating in the Nkam which are spoken. They share a common meal with the Douala people, which is that of Mituba and Ndole.

1.4. Religion

The city of Douala is known for various religious movements. Its cosmopolitan nature reflects the religious plurality in the area. Christianity however has more followers than the other religions like the Islamic faith in the area. There exist within Christianity several denominations dominated by the Catholic with Douala having one of the archdioceses of the country. There are equally other dioceses around the city. The Catholic Church outnumbers the other religions with monasteries. Nevertheless, there are other Christian dominations present in the city of Douala. Among which is the evangelical church of Cameroon, the Protestant church, the Presbyterian Church, the Seventh-day Adventist, the Jehovah witnesses, the Baptist not leaving out the Pentecostal movements that have in the last years registered a significant proliferation in the city.

The dominant Pentecostal churches include the full gospel mission and the apostolic church.

1.4.1. Traditional religion and activities of the Sawa people of the Littoral region

The Ngondo is the traditional and ritual feast of the Sawa people, who are a coastal Cameroonian community one of the four cultural areas of Cameroon. The Ngondo was established in 1949 for a commemorative purpose, on the proposal of Stephane Ndoumbe Ekale of the Ngondo committee, and under the supervision of the traditional represented the customary court of the Sawa people, until 1900 when it became an authority for defending its interests, and subsequently an institution that fought for the independence of Cameroon in 1960.

Today, this event is a cosmopolitan festival where all cultures gather in Douala. This includes local ethnic groups but also inhabitants from Benin, Nigeria, Senegal, India and elsewhere. The celebration is centred on values of social inclusion and non-discrimination based on gender, age, origin or social status. Each year, the Ngondo festival is held on the banks of the Wouri River. It takes place throughout the month of November and ends with a

week full of cultural events leading up to the first Sunday of December. The main organising body is the Urban Community of Doula.

1.5. Economic Activities

Douala been the economic capital of Cameroon is a tertiary city. There exist many industries like Brewery industry, CIMENCAM, carpentry workshops which are mostly concentrated in bonaberie. There are many commercial centres in the city of Douala. The main commercial centres are found in the centre of the city just around the coast like Akwa, Bonapriso, Bonanjo .here we can find supermarkets, shops, stores, the headquarters of certain enterprises or their representations as well as hawkers. There are several commercial banks in the city of Douala including the central bank of Cameroon (BEAC). These banks are spread all around Agriculture and forestry although the growth of the petroleum industry since 1980 has resulted in a gradual decline in the importance of agriculture, forestry and fishing to the (GDP), the sector continues to play a notable role in the economy, whereas three decades later the proportion had dropped to morethan half. Primary agricultural and forestry products provide about 1/3 of total exports earnings, with sawn wood, cocoa, cotton and coffee the leading agricultural exports. Small scale farms are also responsible for much of the agricultural exports. The main subsistence crops include; plantains, beans, potatoes, yams, cassava and corn. (Encyclopedia Britannica <https://WWW.britanica.com>). The sawa women take part in agricultural activities mainly food crops production which they use for family consumption and trading and the common production they do are; vegetables (Ndole), Cassava (manioc) and corn.

1.5.1. Arts and craft

In the city of Douala, agenda 21 is a testament to the essential role given to culture for sustainable urban development. As part of it development, public consultation was organised in each neighbourhood to address issues or urban planning, sanitation, environmental conservation and biodiversity. At the end of the process a number of objectives were outlined including embedding culture in everyday life throughout the city. This is evident in several actions such as enhancing Douala's cultural heritage, promoting mobility and exchanges between actors, networking to ensure the integration and promotion of associations and spaces. Based on this vision, a partnership was signed in 2008 by the sawa traditional people's assembly. One of the aims of this partnership was to develop activities for the

preservation and enhancement of arts and local culture, which are symbols of the city's identity. (obs.agenda 21 culture.net).

Among many we have the Doual'art; the centres work is motivated by the belief that artistic and cultural practices has the potential to instigate social change and is an effective weapon in the struggle of poverty and for freedom of expression and social cohesion (www.doual'art.org). Artwork by young girls have been presented to the public. Their works ranged from sculpture through fine arts such as tapestry, basketry and wood engraving. This was possible because of the training they received from three associations: Artisan au feminine, innovtempo and ligne moderne, whose aims are to fight against women dependence and poverty through impartation of artistic skills for income.

1.5.2. Hunting/fishing

The Duala people are very rich in forest resources. Together with their beaches, they constitute the natural resources which Cameroon seeks to conserve. It has a variety of animal species such as; elephants, antelopes, pythons, crocodiles and endemic species such as manatees. The sawa people mostly practice the rearing of domestic animals such as pigs, chicks and ducks. With the presence of water like river wouri and the sanaga maritime, they carry out fishing of various species such as the makerol, crayfish and mouroue which they sell in the nearby markets of Bonasama, Deido and central markets. Their fishing activities are done with the use of canoes since they limit their fishing to the estuaries and creeks.

More to that, hunting is limited to the capture of birds like bats and traps of rat mold and pork epine. This activity is almost not existent among the Duala people due to the disparition of farming and construction of houses, Not excluding the fact that it is the economic capital of Cmeroon, Hence the presence of economic activities such as buying and selling, industrialization which is more present in the area.

1.5.3. Markets

There exist many markets in the town of Douala like the central market, deido market, mboppi market, Ndokoty market and many other markets. Food stuffs and artifacts markets such as the Bonasama, Deido, Petit Marche Makepe and the Central markets register a large number of women who sell their foodstuffs. Some of which are gotten from their farmlands such as; cassava, cocoyams, potatoes, maize and vegetables (Ndole). While others sell their fabriques like the hand made fascinators, clothes, cooked traditional dishes like the plantain and Ndole, mbongo chobbi, roasted fish and bobbolo. These markets are rich in both food

stuffs and artifacts because of the presence of technical shops. In the past years there have been a tremendous increase in the number markets of Douala while others were been dissolved, and others relocated to different areas. While some have been constructed others are been renewed like the deido market. Douala has several markets with the biggest been the mboppi market which supplies the central market and even other markets in the CEMAC zone. Other markets include the rail market. It has many supermarkets with the most popular ones been the Mahima, Caino, super marchekado, Citadelle market which items varies from foodstuffs, clothing, kitchen utensils, electronics just to name a few. There even exists a place known as Carrefour supermarket Douala.

1.5.4. Money and banking

There are numerous banking systems in Douala as well as in the other parts of the country. There are several banks in around the city that offers banking services like savings, loans, exchange of currencies, money transfer etc. some are solely national while others are international and global.

Besides banks, Douala has micro finance institutions. They are preferred by the majority of the population because they are convenient enough to small salary earners, petit business operators. Unlike with banks creating or opening an account at micro finance institutions are relatively cheaper and affordable to the majority of persons and the process is stress free. They provide most of the banking services proposed by banking but go beyond by providing other services like proximity savings. This is an operation where by agents of the micro finance go towards persons especially those involved in small scale businesses with the goal of creating accounts for them and pass daily to collect their savings.

1.5.5. Urbanism

Douala has road infrastructures that are more or less satisfactory both in quality and quantity. However, the maintenance of the principal arteries of the city is acceptable. The renovation work carried out by the Douala councils have for the past years ameliorated the state of roads. Roads have been paved and the sizes of some expanded notably around the Omni sport quarters due to the on-going construction of the stadium.

As far as habitat is concerned in the city of Douala, we can notice the presence of well-planned neighbourhoods as well as very poorly planned ones. If one takes a walk in areas such as Bonanjo, Bonapriso, Akwa, Bonamousadi, we will discover that not only are the houses well- constructed, the road paved facilitating the access, and urban planning can be

well appreciated there. On the hand the contrast is glaring between the less privileged livings in the poorly planned areas. Social stratification can be portrayed here where the ‘haves’ and the ‘have not’ live in separate areas. This is a picture of the realities of the urban milieu. There is almost no physical contact between the two social classes except on public grounds or public milieus. A good example is the Bonanjo neighbourhood where we can find street children, beggars, to beg from cars or occupants who park their vehicles due to traffic or other reasons.

Due to rapid population growth and urbanization, the city of Douala is fast expanding. There are suburban areas developed progressively as rural drainage brings many to the cities. Unoccupied pieces of land in the peripheries are being bought at an alarming rate, construction works are carried out causing the city to go bigger. Despite this situation, the population concentration in the urban centre of the city does not seem to feel the impact. This is due to the large population influx that is registered on daily basis.

Conclusion

The sawa people are geographically located in the Littoral region. They originated from Congo and settled in the present area. They have a total population of 3,174,437, their main means of transportation is by cars, bikes and canoes for those visiting the islands. Their staple food is plantain/bobolo and Ndole, mbongo tjobbi and machoiron fish, Koki and Mituba. And their dressing style is the sanja over a white shirt for men and kabba for women. Their most renowned dance is the asiko with their well known cultural festival known as the Ngondo. Being the economic capital of Cameroon with a high level of industrialization, we noticed that there are settlers from different ethnic groups and countries residing in the Douala municipality. As a result, the economy is booming with large markets, large trades, importation and exportation of goods at national and international levels. The presence of large industries, large roads and construction sides, The development of the energy, agro industry, digital technology, the rapid growth of the population and the pollution that exists as a result of these manufacturing industries is the reason why the hunting activity in this area is almost absent of just limited to traps of rat molds. And the rearing of animals such as pigs, chicks, dogs and pigeons. The next chapter will be giving to us a detailed review of the study, theoretical and conceptual framework.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL
FRAMEWORK

Introduction

In this chapter, we make use of scientific writings which are directly or indirectly related to the research topic. It is divided in three broad parts: a presentation of secondary data. That's ideas of other authors for which its contents are found essentially in different scientific debates on what concerns our topic online and books. A theoretical framework with two theories that explain the field data and lastly conceptual framework which deals with definitions of key words related to the research topic.

2.1 literature review

Reviewing contributions by authors on specific subjects remain an indispensable process in any scientific work. Noting what has been said and their limits which could be in space or time or context enables a situation where there is no repetition. Other areas of the study could be explored and contributions made to enhance the progress of knowledge. It is in this light that scientific works, books, articles and journals will be reviewed in the issue of women empowerment centres and their contribution on local development. This will be done in order to avoid repetition and plagiarism and to add to knowledge first to the discipline of anthropology then to its sister disciplines. The type of literature review employed in this study is the thematic literature review. This implies reviewing or analysing secondary data with the use of themes elaborated in the research work.

2.1.1 Empowerment

The beginning of the concept of empowerment can be traced back to the works of Paulo Freire (1997), a Brazilian scholar, who championed the concept of the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire (1974) argues that every society consists of two forces, the oppressor and the oppressed. According to Freire (1974) the duty of a teacher is to make students aware of the social injustice in society so that they can create the means to liberate themselves. The concept of empowerment takes its root from other sources, such as feminism, Freudian psychology, theology, the Black Power empowerment, and Ganddhisim Simon, (1994); Cornwall and Brock, (2005). According to Whitmore (1998) empowerment is: an interactive process through which people experience personal and social change, enabling them to take action to achieve influence over the organisations and institutions which affect their lives and the communities in which they live.

Empowerment is a process in which people acquire social, economic and political power to liberate themselves from injustices in society Wallerstein (1992), empowerment is a situation in which people, organisations and communities acquire the needed control over the problems that affect them Rappaport (1987); Zimmerman, (1995). The concept of empowerment cannot be understood just as a single definition. The concept of empowerment must be understood in relation to the specific needs of the people who are yearning for empowerment Kabeer, (2005).

CDD has the potential to address the persistent gender gap that limits or even prohibits women's active participation in public decision-making. CDD programs can promote development and enhance women's opportunities by not just allowing them to participate in decision-making, but instead requiring them to be part of the process. Whether or not women are included in or excluded from the political process can depend on several factors. For example, in the case of community forestry projects in India and Nepal, Agarwal (2001) claimed that women were excluded because of their weak bargaining power. Duflo (2012) has argued that the strongest barrier to improving female participation in policymaking is the widespread perception that women are not competent leaders.

Empowerment is a multidimensional concept which has been defined variedly by several scholars; *Kabeer(2001. 2011)*, defines empowerment as "the expansion of women's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them". Empowerment necessarily constitutes 'agency', 'resources needed to exercise life choices' and 'well-being outcomes' *Kabeer (2001); Malhotra et al. (2002)*. A body of quantitative and qualitative research conceptualizes women's empowerment in various ways with autonomy, status and agency used interchangeably *Upadhyay and Karasek, (2010)*.

Empowerment has to do with the ability of enabling everyone feel independent and valuable. Being autonomous increases self-worth and self-esteem among the empowered ones; this empowerment as a whole aims at enabling beneficiaries to give back to their communities what they've benefited. As regards women's empowerment, it refers to the process of increasing women access to the opportunities that allows them fully realize their capacities. Women's empowerment as an economic, political, and socio-cultural process challenges the system of sexual stratification that has resulted in women's subordination and marginalization in order to improve women's quality of life. Most countries through their governments and civil society organizations have been investing in the empowerment of

women because they have been at the disadvantaged position for too long despite the fact that they outnumber men. For instance, following statistics from the Minister of Women's Empowerment and the Family given during the 54th session of the CSW (*Commission on the Status of Women*), women in Cameroon make up 52% of the total population, contribute to 75% of agricultural work and produce 80% of food but sadly they are plagued with varying social problems that hinders them from being fully autonomous. It is in this light that the Cameroonian government invested in the empowerment of women at all levels in a bid to achieve sustainable development by 2030.

2.1.1.1. Economic empowerment

Economic empowerment is the capacity of women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways that recognise the value of their contributions; respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth. Economic empowerment is the ability to make an act on decisions that involve the control over and allocation of financial resources Golla et al (2011). Generally speaking, economic empowerment centres on the promotion of the assets of poor people, transformative forms social protection and skills training. Skills training were the focus of the research study. In order to make economic empowerment tasteful, things such as power to capacity building, supporting individual decision making and leadership. The definition given to us by CARE is that which has used in this study for a better understanding. CARE defines women economic empowerment as the process by which women increase their right to economic resources and power to make decisions that benefit themselves, their families and their communities. CARE (2020).

Women make enormous contributions to economies, whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing unpaid care work at home meanwhile, rural women play a key role in the development of rural and agricultural areas. They account for 43% of the world's agricultural workforce, a percentage that reaches 70% in some countries, T. Raney (2011). Women are responsible for the majority of agricultural work, controlling most of the non-monetary economy (subsistence agriculture, childcare and child education, household responsibilities, water and energy supply). They are major contributors to food and nutritional security, to generating income and to improving the livelihoods and general welfare of households, particularly those with low incomes. Rural women are increasingly leading their own businesses, although their entrepreneurial potential remains largely unknown and

underutilized. Following these findings, there is a growing and increasing need for women to be empowered in all spheres. (UN.org) in *Rural Women and the Millenium Development Goals*

The State of Cameroon is encouraging numerous micro-projects to enhance the economic self-empowerment of women in rural and peri-urban terrains since they are the main procurers and users of energy in Cameroon. Fonjong (2001). They are being encouraged to improve their status in the constricting male dominated Cameroonian society which enables them to gain greater equality with men via economic self-Empowerment. Rural and often illiterate and semi-educated women are involved in various activities designed to improve energy security and generate income. Apraisal report (2009). Women are the main procurers and users of energy in Cameroon. They are being encouraged to improve their status in the constricting male dominated Cameroonian society by becoming dynamic in the production of bio-gas and other cheap renewable for income generation. This is enabling them to gain greater equality with men via economic self-Empowerment Rural and often illiterate and semi-educated women are involved in various activities designed to improve energy security and generate income, they undertake designing of better kitchens and improved cooking stoves, household lighting and productive income generating activities such as modern food and fruit drying installations designing (Fonjong 2001).

The empowerment of the Cameroonian woman is a key to eradicating poverty. Therefore, to lift families out of poverty, especially energy poverty, considerable attention has to be directed towards empowering women, IMF country report (2010).The better welfare of women means the better welfare of entire families, especially because nowadays women head households (Single and widowed) and are active in the informal sector. They are active in food preservation and processing activities, some of which have high energy demand Small-scale industrial activities such as baking, fish and cassava millings are major income generators for disadvantaged rural women and their families. ORCE (2009).

2.1.1.2. Political empowerment

Political empowerment has to do with the equal participation, representation and leadership of women and men within government, institutions, political parties and civically. It also refers to the process of transferring various elements of power such as resources, capabilities and positions to those who do not have it. (United Nations women 2014).

Cameroon being a member state of the AU has adopted and is implementing various AU conventions to improve gender equality; by improving the political representation of the woman the state is taking steps to improve the political representation and participation of women in decision-making. It currently has 180 parliamentarians drawn from various political parties and has increased the number of women in parliament Women constitute 31.11 per cent (56) of elected parliamentarians while men constitute 68.89 per cent. Significant progress is being made to enforce gender parity as stipulated by the AU's gender mainstreaming architecture (*National Assembly of Cameroon: (2014)*).

Measured success has equally been recorded in improving gender parity in the Cameroonian Senate. The Senate saw the light of day in 2013, although it was created by the constitution of 1972, 20 out of the 100. Senate saw the light of day in 2013, although it was created by the constitution of 1972, 20 out of the 100 senators are women. However, significant improvement is required, given that amongst the 70 senators elected on April 14th, 2013 during Cameroon's first-ever senatorial elections, only 17 are women. Among the 30 senators nominated by the head of state just 3 of his nominees are women *Senate of Cameroon: (2014)*. There is a need to further improve the political representation of women. The government of Cameroon has over 30 ministries headed by presidential political appointee Commonwealth: (2014) at any one time there have been a mere 33.3% of female ministers

2.1.1.3. Social empowerment

Social empowerment is understood as the process of developing a sense of autonomy and self-confidence, and acting individually and collectively to change social relationships and the institutions and discourses that exclude poor people and keep them in poverty. C. Lutrell (2009). When we talk of empowering people with resources through education, employment, health services and giving them a sense of identity and community for which they can thrive and grow. Blomkvist (2003).

We discover that social empowerment helps in addressing gender norms and roles which is a prevailing problem faced by women. While social empowerment means all sections of the society having equal control over their lives and the opportunity to take important decisions, the problem still remains on the fact women are not always given these opportunity to make decisions for themselves, their families and the community at large, United Nations (2010). This social empowerment remains indispensable to achieving gender equality of life

for people with disabilities as it is a continuous process. Even though social empowerment can be achieved through other areas of practice such as inclusive education and socio-economic integration, it is also a specific area of practice where tools, methods and approaches exist to facilitate social inclusion. One of which is when a person is accompanied to thrive in his or her personal situation and environment, Gender equality and women empowerment strategy (2016).

2.1.1.4. Educational empowerment

In the past and even now, we discover that girls and women face barriers to education caused by poverty, cultural norms and practices, poor infrastructures and violence. In some parts of developing countries for which Cameroon is part, we discover that girls are discriminated upon in what concerns education. For instance most often the girls are giving into early marriages and as a result give birth and cannot continue with their education. A. Jama (2019). Education as we know is an essential means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to fully participate in the development process. Education is considered as a milestone for women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their lives. Even beyond literacy there is much that education can do for women's rights, dignity and security. For instance when a woman is educated she will know her rights and be able to stand for it without allowing someone to bully her. Women who are educated help their families and communities with basic health services learnt from school, Nelly S (2003).

More to that, education educates individuals within society, to prepare and qualify them for work in economy as well as to integrate people into society and teach them values and morals of society. In order therefore for women to be able to take up decision and policy making positions, they are supposed to be given quality education and trainings. Idriss F (2012).

2.1.2. Women Empowerment

Women empowerment is a situation in which women are given the opportunity to participate fully in social, political and economic spheres of life, Sushama, (1998). Empowering woman entail creating an enabling environment in which women are allowed to implement government programmes and organisational policies that affect their lives Chattopadhyay,(2005); Aspy and Sandhu, (1999); Patricia et al, (2003). Women

empowerment is the situation in which women move from the state of being oppressed to the state in which both the oppressor and the oppressed are equal, socially, politically and economically Chattopadhyay (2005). The concept of empowerment can be understood better when contextualised to social, educational, economic, political and psychological empowerment of women, the social empowerment of women addresses areas of gender inequities that exist between men and women in society Srivstav, (2001); Mira Shiva, (2001).

Women empowerment simply means increasing educational opportunities of women so that they are able to make meaningful decisions about themselves and their families Pathak (2003). The economic empowerment of women refers to the process of according women the power to become “bread winners” to be self-reliant to generate income from projects and fight poverty Elliot (2008). The political empowerment of women is the process of advancing women’s political interests Pam Rajput, (2001); Tiwari, (2001). The psychological empowerment of women refers to the process in which woman increase their motivation, self-interests and morale to become more involved in national programmes, such as education, politics, health matters, agricultural issues and developmental programmes Pam Rajput,(2001); Tiwari,(2001).

Economists increasingly see investing in women as the key to development. For example, Duflo (2012) recently argued, “while development itself will bring about women’s empowerment, empowering women will bring about changes in decision-making, which will have a direct impact on development” (p. 1076). The low level of women’s participation in decision-making activities is seen as one of the greatest barriers to improving gender balance, which consequently hinders economic development. In 1990, the United Nations Economic and Social Council set the target of having 30 percent or more women in national legislative seats in each country worldwide. While 30 per cent stands as the minimum, the parity zone is considered between 40 and 60 per cent. As of January 2014, women held only 20.4 per cent of the legislative seats across the world. 3 In the Solomon Islands, women held none Inter-Parliamentary Union, (2014).

The modern use of women’s empowerment originated in the civil rights movements, which sought political empowerment for its followers. The word was then taken up by women movement in the feminist and development literature related to women and poverty issues this term began to be used in the 1980s. Empowerment for women is a necessity for the very

development of a society, since it enhances both the quality and quantity of human resources available for development. O'neil T (2014). Empowerment is one of the main procedural concerns when addressing human rights and development. This women empowerment is important in fostering decision making and collective actions. Ensuring women's participation in all walks of life, providing information, knowledge, skills for self-employment through which one of the means is the establishment of women's empowerment centres. It should be noted that women are primary caretakers of children and elders in every country of the world. International studies demonstrate that when the economy and political organization of a society changes, women take the lead in helping the family adjust to new realities and challenges. Sohail M. (2014). There exist five types of empowerment; economic, political, cultural, societal and national empowerment.

2.1.3. Gender equality and women empowerment

Gender equality is defined as the process of "levelling the playing field for both men and women so that all sexes" are able to develop their talents in a given geographical environment UNICEF, (2008). Gender equality, as another form of women empowerment, means according women equality of opportunity and removing obstacles that hinder women from participating fully in commerce, education, politics and culture Backhans, (2007). Studies have shown that gender equality is addressed by giving women more access to land, credit market and labour opportunities Morrison, et al, (2007). Several studies have revealed that gender equality correlates highly with economic growth. According to Kishor (1997) there is a positive relationship between gender inequality and low per capita income. It is also argued that there is an inverse relationship between gender inequality and low government expenditure on education Morris et al, (2007). Dollar and Gatti (1999) argue that cases of gender inequality are more numerous in the poorer countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia. According to Rahman (2013) gender inequality is a product of the power relationships that exist between women and men in society. Rowland (1997) argues that every human society has a way of rewarding one sex with more power to the extent that the sex that has no power over the control of resources becomes the oppressed lot. According to Luke (1974) the concept of power in women empowerment helps researchers, academics and policy makers to examine the underlying social and cultural structures that dewomen to acquire psychological empowerment by building self-esteem around them Rowland, (1997); Mayoux, (2003). The concept of "agency" refers to the capacity of women to be self-reliant and to have total control over their fate Rowlands, (1997). The concept of "structure" refers to rules, religion, gender,

ethnicity, customers, and government, which motivate or hinder women from exercising significant roles in society Rowlands, (1997); Mayoux, (2003).

2.1.4. Culture and women empowerment

Culture may be viewed as the total sum of a people's way of life. It includes norms and values of a society: their religion, politics, economics, technology, food habits, medicine, rules of marriage, the performing arts, law and so on. For Geertz (1973) culture is a set of control mechanisms plans, recipes, rules, instruments (what computer engineers call programs) for governing of behaviour. According to him, this view of culture begins with the assumption that human thought is basically both social and public – that its natural habitat is the house yard, the market place, and the town square. Geertz's interpretation of culture has the requisite implications of power and control mechanisms embedded in culture, which allow for the exploration of gender inequality and inequity.

Edward Said (1994) identifies two meanings of culture. First, it refers to the many practices like the arts, communication, and representation which have relative autonomy from the economic, social, and political domains. These human expressions have an aesthetic dimension embedded in art and seek to cause pleasure and entertainment. Second, culture includes a community's reservoir of what defines them as a people which in most cases represents the best that has been known and thought. Through culture we are able to see society in its strengths and weaknesses and to see ourselves. Culture, viewed as such, becomes a space for engagement by various interests and forces. The danger with the uncritical reading of this notion of culture is that it may entail a valorisation of one's culture and an assumption that it is not answerable to views from the rest of the world. The dehumanizing aspects of culture could easily be lost in this blind endorsement of one's culture. Equally, viewed from the outside a people's culture could be rebuked in totality, without due regard to its positive attributes, Williams K. (2001). This it is vital to recognize certain universal values, informed by advances in human thought and knowledge, and to respect the particularities of communities. Culture is an important capability that people bring into development. It influences development through its various forms of expression; attitudes and behaviour related to work, reward and exchange; traditions of public discussion and participation; social support and association cultural sites of heritage and memory; and influences on values and morals. This paper addresses the issue of gender inequalities by

looking at ways in which the cultural repertoire can contribute to women's empowerment. GSIR S. (2015).

Most discussions of African cultures have paid scant attention to their positive and redeemable aspects. In this paper, we sought to show that culture can indeed be an ally to women's empowerment. There are positive attributes to the culture as well as spaces that could be reinhabited in order to deal more deliberately with topical issues – disease, political participation, economic well-being, peace and other emergent issues, Idang G. (2015). These positive aspects of culture in the Great Lakes region, forgotten, suppressed or ignored, require more work and engagement. It is worth reconfiguring the negative aspects of culture, deconstructing and reconstructing them so that they can be more enhancing of humanity. For example, the refusal of women to own land in some cultural backgrounds in Cameroon and the dangerous widow rite practices. Kabeer N. (2011).

In addition, traditional communication channels could be reactivated fruitfully in enhancing self-expression and aural comprehension. Orature is rich in visual imagery, and is the basis on which learning is founded. Oral narratives, proverbs, sayings, riddles have tremendous potential for telling truth about inequality in gender relations and healthy living. Through the use of ancient wisdom, allegory, metaphor and symbolic representation of events, contemporary situations could be questioned and subverted, Panger (2017).

Furthermore, changes to national constitutions, laws and policies to ensure that gender equality is promoted and enforced or enacted and implemented ought to be put in place. Equally, it is necessary to adopt temporary special measures that would accelerate equality between the genders; such as Affirmative Action programs. The modification of social and cultural patterns in order to achieve the elimination of prejudices and practices against women ought to be undertaken, CEDAW (2009). Deliberate efforts should be made to ensure equality in political and public life, education, employment and labour, access to health, finance and social security, as well as legal and civil spheres. The development of rural areas and the broadening of freedom enjoyed by communities is a key to women's empowerment.

2.1.5. Women empowerment models

According to Sohail (2014) women can be empowered by using the following models. Institutions should be developed for providing equal resources to men and women. Media and NGOs should raise awareness about women rights, policy action should be taken to reduce

gender inequality, women should be provided with the education and job opportunities, women should be granted loans at lower interest rates so that they are encouraged and their skills are developed, women should have the right to own their property, women must have simple business registration procedures, male dominancy should be handled in a peaceful manner. Women should have access to economic resources which leads to the economic growth. For the same work equal amount of payment should be given to both men and women and the Amount should be reasonable enough so that they could spend better life. There should be no discrimination in assigning work to people based on gender, both men and women should be given equal opportunities, safe working conditions should be provided to both men and women. Women should be encouraged to join the fields of work which have been considered as fields for men.

2.1.6. Local development

Development can briefly be defined as a situation of growth leaving from a situation a to a situation b. development is a process that creates growth, progress, positive change, or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social and demographic components. Local development is a participative process to address and solve a diversity of socio-economic, cultural and environmental problems with the aim of producing sustainable development and improve the quality of life of the population.

The concept of local development is defined as a particular form of regional development, one in which endogenous factors occupy a central position, and with this, Bandura asserts that most human behaviour are learned through observation, imitation and modelling. Which provides you with a local development environment which allows you to use your own machine to run your website, instead of using one provided by a web hosting company?

CDD has the potential to address the persistent gender gap that limits or even prohibits women's active participation in public decision-making. CDD programs can promote development and enhance women's opportunities by not just allowing them to participate in decision-making, but instead requiring them to be part of the process. Whether or not women are included in or excluded from the political process can depend on several factors. For example, in the case of community forestry projects in India and Nepal, Agarwal (2001) claimed that women were excluded because of their weak bargaining power. Duflo (2012) has

argued that the strongest barrier to improving female participation in policymaking is the widespread perception that women are not competent leaders. For instance, in her work with Beaman, Chattopadhyay, Pande, and Topalova (2009), they used experimental data from West Bengal and revealed that lower levels of satisfaction with women leaders was based on prejudicial views rather than actual performance. The study's reported outcomes on electoral data further showed that voter bias against women leaders decreased with greater (previous) exposure to female leaders.

Even when women have participated by right or as required, the evidence supporting equality, institutional efficiency, and other beneficial outcomes has been mixed. Research by Pande (2003) examined whether mandated political representation impacted policy for marginalized groups. She found an increase in the redistribution of resources in favour of the groups that benefited from political reservation. Similarly, Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004) found that political quotas geared towards women shifted the composition of public spending toward goods they prefer.⁴ In contrast, Casey et al. (2012) found that, four years after the CDD program in Sierra Leone was implemented with measures to enhance participation (i.e., promoting women to hold leadership positions, sign off on projects' finances, and attend meetings), women were no more likely to voice an opinion in community meetings or to play a leading decision-making role than in the past. The authors noted that the outcome might have come as a result of the traditional system in Sierra Leone, which is dominated by male leaders and has continued to the present day to exclude women. Similarly, Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov (2012) examined a CDD program in Afghanistan, where women are faced with stringent household restrictions that could limit the effect of a development intervention. They found that woman's participation and support for decision-making activities increased towards the general role of women in society. Even with the mixed results coming from the mandatory participation of women in development, evidence shows that women should not be excluded from the process. Participation in and of itself is a measure of citizenship rights and not allowing for equal participation tolerates institutional inefficiency

2.1.6.1. Community-Driven Development

CDD is an approach that emphasizes community control over planning decisions and resource investments. The philosophy is that each local community has a right to be involved in their development process in a decision-making capacity. The community's greater involvement often leads to a more effective use of resources and outcomes more in line with

their needs (Wong, 2012). Despite the growing popularity of CDD programs, there is little evidence on their ability to improve local institutions and social capital in a fundamental and sustainable way.

In a critical review by Mansuri and Rao (2003), the authors concluded that evidence of the effectiveness of CDD initiatives lags considerably behind the rate at which such projects are being implemented and scaled-up. They provided examples of projects creating effective community infrastructure, but noted the lack of a causal relationship between any of the outcomes sought and the participatory elements of a given CDD project. More recently, Chase and Labonne (2010) examined the impact of a CDD program in the Philippines, in which communities competed for block grants for infrastructure investment. Their results showed improvements in participation in community assemblies. However, there was a negative impact on collective action and limited evidence supporting that trust increased. 1 In a study in Sierra Leone, Casey, Glennester, and Miguel (2010) found that CDD programs and related donor projects significantly improved links between communities and local government officials and left communities materially better off, yet they also found no impact or effectiveness fundamentally transforming local fundraising capacity, decision making processes, or even social attitudes and norms. In short, previous studies suggest that CDD programs may increase interactions between community members and leaders, but they may not fundamentally improve long-term social capital.

2.1.6.2. Evaluation and limitations of community driven development

The length and timing of a study, as well as the effects of the local culture and social system, can be crucial when implementing and evaluating a CDD program. For example, Beath et al. (2009) argued that their evaluation was done prematurely (two years after the start of the program), which did not allow sufficient time for the deep social change required to recognize an impact. In Beaman et al. (2009), they found time-variant effects in the rating of female leaders, leading to the idea that a few years of exposure to a program is not sufficient.⁵ Also, Mansuri and Roa (2004) advised against taking a wholesale application of “best practices” to CDD evaluation, reasoning that each country is unique and should be evaluated according to its individual context. Wong (2012) also noted that a country's context is very important when initiating and evaluating a CDD because every country will have different complexities. For example, some countries may be suffering from financial crises, while others may be in post-conflict situations--or both. The Solomon Islands, as is discussed further

below, is a country in the process of moving from postconflict reconstruction to long term development.

Measuring women's empowerment has its difficulties as well. For instance, it is challenging to define measures that clearly indicate if a development program has changed the status or perception of women in a community or country at-large and to what extent a possible change will be sustainable. Blattman, Green, Annan, and Jamison (2013) evaluated the impact of giving cash transfers and basic business skills training to the poorest and most marginalized women in a war affected region of northern Uganda. Their results showed that, after 18 months, there was a large increase in income and wealth but no effect on women's empowerment (i.e., household decisionmaking, independence, status in the community, or freedom from domestic violence). Garikipati (2008) has called this the "impact-paradox", where households benefit from economic assistance targeting women, but the women themselves may not be empowered as a result. Garikipati further stated that women may, in fact, be disempowered when family assets are not co-owned.⁶ CDD projects can have the same problem, yet evidence in the field is limited. Nonetheless, efforts are being made to find ways to increase the meaningful engagement of women in community development, while also trying to effectively evaluate how women have participated, to what extent their needs were considered during decision-making, and whether or not they have benefited from such programs.

2.1.7. Empwerment centers

Against this backdrop, with the support of UN women regional officer and IFC Dakar, UN women organized on May 8 2020 a training in antiseptic soap manufacturing via zoom platform from women's organizations in Cameroon. More than 200 women from civil society organizations, as well as social workers from the ministry of women empowerment and the family and the ministry of water and energy were trained throughout the ten regions of the country. UN women Cameroon facilitated the trainings and some of them were hosted by women empowerment centres belonging to the ministry of women empowerment and the family.

In Cameroon women are ostracized and still have a domestic role in the society. Many forced marriages are organized every year and early pregnancies are very frequent, mostly within families living in precarious situations. These situation forces women to drop out of school very early and it's for this reason that lifetime projects choose to create a literacy

education project (women empowerment centres). Lifetime projects works with the Cameroonian association by conducting sessions; training courses and individual follow-up meetings in favour of the personal and professional emancipation of 30 women who benefit from this project. During the mission, volunteers participate in literacy teaching sessions for these women aged 16 to 30 who couldn't go to school or have very little education. These sessions will really help women attaining in the creation of their businesses and the development of their personal and professional independence. Lifetime projects have always made women's rights and empowerment one of its main focus. S. Sosale (2016).

In addition to that we have the IDF (international diabetes federation) that has been carrying out action research in the area of women's empowerment for many years. In 2000 it undertook the profile of 322 sexually active female adolescents between the ages of 13 and 19 in Wum. The study revealed that many of these girls suffered from unwanted pregnancies, an early age of sexual activeness, in some cases encouragement from parents to be promiscuous, and a low level of literacy and employment due to incomplete schooling. In order to help young adolescent mothers gain market and life skills to become contributing members of society and able to become financially self-sustaining. IDF started a vocational training course. Health evidence network (2006).

In addition to the vocational training course in Bamenda, IDF has also carried out trainings of young adolescent mothers in babessi. This training was geared towards educating girls to gain life and market skills. Women living with HIV and AIDS have also been supported through idf's work. Not only do the idf offer health programs such as home-based care program but idf also offers a program in collaboration with the international labour organization to empower women living with HIV AIDS. This program is the sidacoop program which promotes entrepreneurship and mitigates poverty amongst women living with HIV and AIDS in BAMENDA, kumbo, wum and Bali of the North West Region. Intergrated development foundation (IDF 200).

2.1.7.1. Reasons for the creation of women empowerment Centers

The different empowerment centres that exist are owned by government, non-governmental organizations and private individuals; we discovered that there are similarities in the reasons for the creation behind with no self-interest. To begin with the centres were created to meet up the UN goals and sustainable development goals of improving on women's skills by developing empowerment programs to bring them to position of gender equality and

meet up with gender equality. Also, the cost of general education and the fact that it's more theoretical than being practical, So the centres was created to absorb girls and women who could not get empowered through general education because of the cost of schools for young girls and for women who cannot attend general education and follow the discipline alongside taking care of the family so rather than them to be left behind the government and other organizations decided the creation of these empowerment centres to be able to absorb this cases in order to achieve female autonomy and for them to be included in decision making even at local levels.

The empowerment centre was created to meet-up the sustainable development goals of improving on women skills. There are a lot of girls and women who couldn't undergo the general studies because of early child birth and other natural roles. In addition to that, the centre was created to help girls and women to develop their skills to fully participate in development process.

The head of the call centre affirms that the creation of the women empowerment centre was to meet-up sustainable development goals by empowering girls and women to be fully implemented in the development projects of the nation at large and their community in particular. In addition to that, the empowerment centres was created to help women and girls development themselves skills for which they can become active members of development projects and be in decision making positions.

Finally, to be able to absorb the unemployed population through the development of entrepreneurial skills; He said and I quote “ the nation of Cameroon today has taught as that, all of the educated population cannot be absorbed in offices to work and with this many young Cameroonians are unemployed literates and the only way to become financially balanced we help them through the centers to develop entrepreneurial skills through which they can employ themselves and reduce the rate of deviance and vandalism in the economy and to deconstruct the mentality of women being limited to their sex roles activities. MINPROFF DOUALA (2020).

2.1.7.2. Characteristics of women empowerment Centers

Women empowerment centres commonly known as ‘maison des femmes’ is a place which trains women to becoming autonomous. In addition that they are aware of the fact that one cannot talk of gender equality without women's empowerment. These women

empowerment centres are characterized by age; in this light, girls who are of the age of 15 years who understand things are able to be trained in self- realization to the age of women at 65 years. We have gender; in as much as the place is termed women empowerment centre its not biased with gender as boys and men are enrolled if they desire and if they want to be autonomous, economic activity; from the world's measure of poverty we discover that majority of those suffering from poverty are women and the centre enhances diverse economic activities that generates income in order to meet up the sustainable development goal of no poverty. Intrahousehold distribution and health, this includes the implementation of gender division of labour at house hold levels in order not to over burden women which usually cause a high health risk. Other highlighted factors women empowerment centres in the town of Douala takes into consideration; Educational equality between spouses is associated with women empowerment, remoteness is strongly associated with lower levels of women empowerment and gender division of responsibility for economic decision is heterogeneous. MINPROFF DOUALA (2020).

2.2. Theoretical Framework

Authors have being inspired as they explain social phenomena through proposed theories which will be used In the course of this study and of which are related to the research. An appropriate theoretical framework Theories are necessary for the interpretation and understanding of social facts. For any study to be considered objective and credible, theoretical framework and review of literature must be done. Within the scope of Anthropology many enables the researcher to situate and integrate the problem of research Mbonji (2005). This further gives room for clarity and analysis of the data, this led us to the functionalist theory and the WID approach. These theories were chosen because we discover them appropriate for the prediction, explanation, identification and understanding of the issue of women's empowerment centres in Douala.

2.2.1. Theory of functionalism

Functionalism is a theoretical perspective that focuses on the function performed in society by social structures such as institutions, hierarchies, norms. Within this theory, function refers to the extent to which a given activity promotes or interferes with the maintenance of a system. Functionalism emerged in the 20th century and was mainly led by Bronislaw Malinowski and Radcliffe Brown. Both were purely functionalists but their approaches slightly differed as Malinowski is known as Functionalist but Rdcliffe is mainly

known as structural functionalist. Malinowski suggested that individuals have physiological needs (reproduction, food, shelter) and these needs are fulfilled by the social institutions). He talked about instrumental needs (economic, social control, education and political organization) that require institutional devices to get fulfilled. While Radcliffe focused on social structure rather than biological needs. He considered society as a system. He looked at institutions as orderly sets of relationships whose function is to maintain the society as a system.

2.2.1.1 Malinowski's functionalism/ Absolute functionalism

Malinowski was an Anthropologist from Poland and is one of the most famous Anthropologists of the 20th century. He is sometimes known as the father of ethnography due to his extensive field work in the Trobriand Islands. He believed that all customs and institutions in a society are intergrated and interrelated so that if one changed the other would change as well. Each then is a function of the other. The second strand of Malinowski's functionalism known as "needs functionalism" Malinowski (1944), believed that human beings have a set of universal biological needs such as food, shelter. He looked at culture, needs of people and thoughts. That the role of culture is to satisfy the needs of the people, Malinowski was instrumental in transforming social Anthropology from an ethnocentric discipline concerned with historical origins and based on the writings of travellers, missionaries and colonial administrators to one concerned with understanding the interconnections between various institutions, based on fieldwork where the goal was to grasp the native's point of view Malinowski (1984) page 25 cited under fieldwork and Ethnography.

2.2.2. WID approach

By the 1970s it had become very clear that women were being left out of development, they were not benefitting significantly from it and in some instances their status and position in society was actually being made worse by development. The WID approach saw the problem as the exclusion of women from development programs and approaches. As a result, the solution was seen as intergrating women into development programs. WID saw women as a group being treated as lacking opportunity to participate in development. The main objective therefore was to improve women's access to resources and their participation in development. The WID approach originated in the 1970s according to Tinker (1997) two different conglomerations of women gave rise to the impetus for intergrating women in

development programs. The WID approach has helped to promote sustained policy efforts across developing regions to close the gender gap. It has also sparked a growing literature in feminist economics on the effects of economic growth and macroeconomic policy reforms on gender equality and women's well-being.

2.2.3. Operationalisation of theories

Theoretical framework is not about narration of unfounded stories or the accounts of different schools of thought. Research can only make sense when it is framed by theories reason for operationalization of theories. Operationalization of theories will better help in understanding the research problem and the main objective of this study. Absolute functionalism of Malinowski permitted this work to be viewed in the lens of Anthropology, through the functions of women's empowerment centres in the local development of the Sawa community. The women empowerment centres in Douala enable the sawa women to develop skills through the different empowerment activities carried at the women's empowerment centres. These have created employment opportunities for the sawa women and other women in the Douala municipality. The needs functionalism of Mlinowski permitted us to understand how the women empowerment centres contributed to the living conditions of the sawa women. In his principle that institutions are developed to fulfil the needs of people, the empowerment centres has helped in fulfilling the instrumental needs of the sawa people in Douala in the domains of education, social control and political organization. Lastly, the aspect of women's inclusion in development programs in the WID approach permits us to understand why unlike other communities, the Sawa women are a source and active participants of local development in the Douala municipality.

2.2.4. Originality of the study

This abundant literature on women empowerment centres before and during the vitalization of the sector falls within the field of GAD and functionalism. According to Afu, I. (2018) the government of Cameroon embarked on the project to empower women and promote their influence in the community in recognition of the pivotal role they play in improving living standards and alleviating poverty. As a result, the government set up structures such as women empowerment centres coupled with the activities of national and international stakeholders to train and develop skills of the rural women to participate in improving the living standard in the community. The empowerment centres in Douala have being able to meet up with the government objectives and the SDGs. From the empowerment

centres the sawa women developed skills that permitted them to take of their homes, families and communities to improve their standards of living and alleviate poverty.

Development which is the gradual transformation in time and space in a country's socio-political, socio-economic, socio-cultural which in a long run leads to better standards of living, requires the participation of the state, private sector and non-gouvernemental organizations or civil societies. Therefore, the presence of women's empowerment centres in Douala is necessary to provide the labour for nation building and sustainable development. Work therefore within this context requires the readiness of empowerment centres to cooperate with policy makers.

2.3. Conceptual framework

In order to understand this piece of work, some concepts have to be defined, most of which make up the research title. The concepts to be defined here are; empowerment, women empowerment centres, women empowerment, community development, development and gender equality.

2.3.1. Empowerment

Empowerment can be defined as a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives Page and Czuba (1999). This, a part of the cure for poverty was empowerment- training the residents of a poor neighbourhood to organize themselves and learn how to get things from the power structure. More to that, Mirriam Webster defines empowerment as the state of being empowered to do something: the power, right or authority to do something. Empowerment is related to the word power. In English, the concept leans on its original meaning of investment with legal power-permission to act for some specific goal or purpose (Rappaport 1987).

Empowerment has been defined as an intentional on-going process centred in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater to and control over those resources; or a process by which people gain control over their lives, democratic participation in the life of their community, and a critical understanding of their environment.Perkins and Zimmerman (1995).Finally, empowerment is the process by which women gain power and control over their own lives and acquire the ability to make strategic

choices. Women's empowerment has five components: women's sense of self-worth, their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; their ability to influence the direction of social change and economic order, nationally and internationally. UN commission on the status of women (2002).

2.3.2. Women empowerment centers

Vocational training refers to instructional programs or courses that focus on the skills required for a particular job function or trade. In vocational training, education prepares students for specific careers, disregarding traditional unrelated academic subjects. Sometimes called vocational education and training or career and technical education, vocational training provides hand on job-specific instruction, and can lead to certification, a diploma or even an associate's.

Students typically require vocational training to prepare for trades including, but not limited to: automotive repair, plumbing, culinary arts, graphic design, welding.

This refers to women economic empowerment which entails that women have the authority to make their own decisions regarding use of their resources, leads to prosperity for families and communities.

2.3.3. Women empowerment

Based on the assumptions that women differ from men in their social positions and that those differences consist of asymmetric unequal power relations between the two genders, women empowerment refers to the process of increasing women access to the opportunities that allows them fully to realize their capacities. Women empowerment as an economic, political, and sociocultural process challenges the system of sexual stratification that has resulted in women subordination and marginalization in order to improve women quality of life. According to the UN women, women empowerment is achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.

2.3.4. Local development

It is the process of developing a territory, by actors who belong to it or whose activity in it has an impact, which implies the formulation of strategies, decision making, and

implementation of actions that allow civic participation. Secondly, it is the participative process to address and solve a diversity of socio-economic, cultural and environmental power with the aim of producing sustainable development and improve the quality of life of the population. Thirdly, it is a particular form of regional development, in which the resources and endogenous factors of a territory are key to its social and economic development (Encyclopedia of organizational knowledge).

2.3.5. Woman

Woman can be defined in three dimensions that is genetically, physiologically and by social construction. Charles Patrick (2021) explains the constitution of the females as including two x chromosomes (xx) and the physical appearance. The physical appearance includes large breasts, vagina and curves. On the socio-cultural perspective, woman refers to the characteristics of women that are socially constructed which include norms, behaviours and roles. It is in this light that Simone de Beauvoir holds that *on ne nait pas femme: on le deviant*.

Conclusion

In this chapter, literature was reviewed thematically with terms like empowerment, economic, political, social, and educational empowerment, women empowerment models, empowerment centres, gender equality, local development, community driven development and limitations to community driven development. However, with the theoretical framework, we used the theories of functionalism and empowerments with concepts like gender. The chapter ended with the definition of concepts like; empowerment, women empowerment centres, women empowerment, development, local development and gender equality. In the next chapter, we will look at the empowerment activities carried out at the empowerment centres.

**CHAPTER THREE:
ETHNOGRAPHY OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT CENTRES**

Introduction

There exist many empowerment centres in the city of Douala, amongs the empowerment centres we carried out the research in five empowerment centres that is: CPF Akwa, CPF Bonamousadi, Meridians, Sainte Famille and Home ateliers. These centres are managed by both men and women. Thus this chapter will be displaying the general activities that are carried out in the various women empowerment centres where this research was carried out and the particularity of the sawa culture in the cultural activities. Some of these activities will include; training on how to cook the sawa traditional meals, traning on how to make their traditional dresses and other fabriques, how to dance the sawa dance and the solidarity that exist amongs them. Apart from the aforementioned activities, we will be elaborating on other activities that are carried out at the centre. This includes; capacity building which is shaped by business seminars and counseiling sessions, workshops which is characterised by, tailoring, costumisation, needing, hotel cattering, production of chemicals used for washing. Which includes; detergents, soap, bleach and the education of girls and women will be expantiated on for a better view.

3.1. Activities carried out at the empowerment center

Unlike the general education curriculum of studies, the women's empowerment centres have a different and special curriculum of studies and activities. This chapter displays and interprets the various activities carried out at the various empowerment centres and its speciality.

3.1.1. Cultural activities

According to Edward B. Taylor (1871) culture is complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. And it's amazing to know that among the activities carried out in the centre are diverse as it includes cultural practices. These cultural activities are; sports or other activities which enhance the aesthetic, artistic, historical, intellectual or social development or appreciation of members of the general public. Also, the training and refinement of the intellect, interest, tastes and skills of a person, with this, the culture most showcased in the centre is the Sawa culture given its location in the Littoral region; at times, trainees not of the Sawa tribe prefer exhibiting their cultural traits such as dancing, singing, arts and other cultural games.

Like earlier said, culture is a complex whole that englobed beliefs, habits, language, laws, traditions meals, dances, dressing, arts, religion and any other capability or ability that makes man a member of a given society. The women empowerment centres in general and the Sawa women involved in women empowerment in particular have cultural traits and or practices which are taught and transmitted in the center to the sawa women from one generation to another. Some of these cultural practices in the centers which act like a pull factor to these centers include: traditional dishes (meals), dressing, dances, solidarity social schemes just to name a few. These women in the center learn this culture and as well transmit to the girl child and other women. The sawa women have been emancipated because of the presence of these centers as they learn, maeals, dressing habits, language, solidarity among women and the culture of living together.

3.1.1.1. Traditional dish

Traditional dishes are one of the cultural elements that are transmitted in the women empowerment centers to the benefits of Sawa women. Some of the women who have never learnt their cultural ways of cooking their staple food learn this in the empowerment centers, which have gone a long way to empower the Sawa women. Among other meals that women are taught on how to prepare at the empowerment centres, the sawa traditional dish is prioritize. At the centre the women are taught how to prepare Sawa dishes such as mbongo tjobi, ndole, koki and Mituba. Our research noticed that, these women are so eager to learn because they belief that a woman's beauty is in her capacity to make delicious meals for her husband. This is because they believe that, 'the way to a man's heart is through his stomach'. As a result, knowing their traditional dish is priority. This is affirmed to us by one our respondent had this to say:

I am a proud sawa woman. Learning how to prepare my traditional dish for me is a privilege and something very loving. This is because during the learning process other persons from different culture come to see us perform during our occasional days like the open day. When they see it they pose questions about the cooking procedures and feel very interested to learn. It makes me happy to know that our traditional dish is not just limited to our people but it is practiced by others and enjoyed nation and international wide (CPF Akwa Douala: September 2020).

In the same vein, another participant expresses how they view traditional dishes in the empowerment center. They believed that it is a core values of their culture which all Sawa women should know and be empowered with the knowledge and skills.

For me our traditional dish is the best because it is not only consumed by the sawa people but even by foreigners like the Nigerians, Congolese just to name a few. Especially the Ndole and miondo. What makes me happy is that with a knowledge of how to cook the sawa dish, I also teach my children how to cook it, and it is not only used for home consumption but also to generate income through eateries.(CPF Bonamousadi Douala: September 2020).

From the above respondents we discover that, the traditional dish of the sawa people is not just learned and consumed by the sawa people. Apart from the sawa people themselves, other tribes in Cameroon enjoy the dish including foreigners thus solves the problem of ethnocentrism and eases acculturation.

3.1.1.2. Traditional dressing and fabriques

Traditional dressing is another cultural element that demonstrates the Sawa culture. Hence, we cannot discuss culture without making mention of its cultural importance to the Sawa women. This is because through traditional dressing, a person's tribe can be made visible without the person having to mention where he/she is coming from. Like other aspects of culture taught at the empowerment centres, the sawa women are taught how to make their traditional fabrics such as the sanja over a white shirt for the boys and kabba for the women. With the knowledge gotten from the making of these fabrics they are able to transmit the knowledge to their children and other women. This particular activity carried out at the showcasing their attires. When this is done it is easy for them to receive orders from people and when they receive the profits the money is used to take care of their families in respect to what a respondent said;

I used to be a housewife doing nothing and my husband would always refer to me as a liability. But things changed when a friend of mine spoke to me about this empowerment centre. I choose customisation because it permitted me to be African through my dress code something which I have always loved. This has helped me not only to promote my beautiful Sawa culture, but also to make money. You won't imagine my son was sent home for school fees and I was able to pay the money. When my husband got home I just gave him the receipt and he was shocked and said you are now an assert. (Meridians, Deido Douala November 2020).

From the above verbatim, we can explain that, the dress code of the Sawa people is represented during showcases or cultural activities; we have the white shirt worn over the *Sanja* by boys while women wear what is commonly known as the *Kabba*. The originality of the Sawa culture demonstrates that these men who put on the *Sanja* are considered the nobles of the land and it's in this light that one of the activities carried out in the centre is Fashion parade. It should be noted that, today's educational system is not just confined to academics.

But modern day school focuses on imparting skills to students like personal development, confidence, communication, reason why cultural activities come into play in instilling these skills in the students which is equally that which is done at the empowerment centres. Usually, encouraging students to participate in cultural activities is the most effective way to inculcate personality related skills. Those include, activities like dancing, singing, sports, etc. unfortunately, many parents and even adult trainees (mothers and married women) see these activities as a total waste of time and energy because the secrecy of the culture is not demonstrated because it's just an act of pleasure. However, the truth of the issue is entirely different as cultural activities enable women to gain confidence and understand their culture in a better way. Some of the important cultural activities carried out in the centre are:

Picture 1: Traditional regalia and shoe



Source: Eyong Sonita, field work (March 6th2021).

In this image, we can see a sawa woman displaying traditional regalia and shoes which she made with her hands and the use of colours like red and green to paint sawn material as an honour to the country colours of Cameroon.

3.1.1.3. Arts: dancing and music demonstrations

This is done by both women and men of the Sawa culture; they are expected to come out with works of arts. They equally do drawings, and paintings of some ancestral equipment or symbols or even persons (important personalities be they dead or alive). As regards dancing

and music demonstrations, usually this one of the most cherished activities of the Sawa women because they feel delighted when aspects of the culture are being demonstrated by trainees; this shows a lot value and honour to the culture and some of them are active participants of the dance show. This value and honour is attested in the words of Mrs Ebongo:

I feel very excited during cultural activities because apart from the fact it keeps one going and enables you not to forget culture; it's also stress relieving and a means of entertainment because before exhibiting dancing styles often accompanied by singing, a lot of practice is done. There's a lot of bonding, communication, and everyone is able to come out of their shells. During dancing, women do the singing, dancing with other ladies equally playing drums, gong and a few other instruments we are able to gather during that period. (Ariane CPF Bonamousadi NOV 2020).

Therefore, we can affirm from the above assertion that among other activities carried out at the centres, the sawa women enjoy the cultural activities because it helps them to forget culture and also a means of entertainment to relieve them from stress..

3.2. Capacity Building (business seminars and counselling Sessions)

Capacity building is among the means by which women are gradually being empowered. These capacity building takes the forms of business seminars, capacity building workshops and counselling.

3.2.1. Business seminars

Capacity building can be seen as an investment in the effectiveness and future sustainability. There are capacity building projects such as identifying communications strategy improving volunteer recruitment, ensuring thoughtful leadership succession, updating a non-profit technology and improving how it measures its outcomes, all build the capacity of a charitable nonprofit to effectively deliver its mission. When capacity building is successful, it strengthens an ability to fulfil its mission overtime thereby enhancing the ability to have a positive impact on people and communities. UN Women is mobilized and committed to support the government to strengthen women's economic resilience to Covid 19. With the Covid 19 pandemic outbreak and as governments around the world take tough measures in curbing its spread, the social consequences of the new corona virus has hit hard on women.

Most of these women work in the informal economy which means that they benefit from health insurance which is generally inadequate or even non-existent knowing that they are not eligible, they are not helped financially which makes this not only a health issue for

women but the heart of gender equality situation; in Cameroon, UN Women mobilized and committed itself to support the government to strengthen women's economic resilience to Covid19. This includes prioritizing support to women at the frontline of interventions, providing know how for the manufacturing of hygienic products such as masks and antiseptic soap for which their goals are to provide them with higher incomes, better access and control over resources as well as increased security including protection from violence. We discovered that this was possible during the pandemic through webinars according to what we were told by some respondents.

If I can remember well, the outbreak of the Covid19 pandemic was on March 6th 2020 just two days from the International Women's day; as a result it could not be celebrated as usual. So, on March 8, we took part in a zoom training on the manufacturing of antiseptic soap for women's organizations, during this training more than 200 women from CSOs as well as social workers from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family and the Ministry of Water and Energy were trained throughout the 10 regions of the country and this was facilitated by UN Women for which.(Mba CPF Bonamousadisept 2020).

From this, we notice that the training was part of UN women's gendered response plan against Covid19 and a trainer was recruited to enhance the capacity of women in the production of antiseptic soap, revisiting the formulations to focus on the manufacture of antiseptic soaps with products and plans found locally to promote the production of antiseptic soaps at lower cost. There was an adoption of a simplified approach to make it accessible to women with different backgrounds with the use of simplified measurement units and provided clear info at all production steps. A manufacturing guide was distributed to all participants both in French and English as well as a link to the recorded training which was shared with all participants. This is why income generating activities was welcomed by all participants and its profitability made it attractive to several women and girls, we discovered that the participants got maximum satisfaction according to their explanations "we can now make antiseptic soaps by enhancing the value of natural plants that exist in our local environment. Our organization will replicate the training to our supervised groups at our training centres (Mrs Pauline CPF Bonamousadi sept 2020).

Training was organized by MINPROFF in collaboration with UNFPA in commemoration of the International Women's day in 2020 from the 12th -13th March. This training given to women and girls were basic information on how to better manage their reproductive health, importance of family as well as ways to recognize and denounce any form of GBV. To ensure their economic recovery, participants were drilled on how to develop

entrepreneurial skills on budgeting, accounting as well as making savings from their small scale businesses. In the words of the Regional Delegate of MINPROFF, “it’s important for these women and girls to be supported; that is for them to receive instruments, tools and aptitudes to enable them conveniently run their activities in the society. One of the respondents (Patricia) recounted “this training has been very helpful to me because apart from the training certificates we received we were given dignity kits containing basic hygiene items such as sanitary parts, under wears, soap and many other items”. This it can be there’s this collaboration between government institutions and private individuals to support women and girls in their community.

Capacity building carried out in these empowerment centres is not only limited to training aimed at economically empowering women and girls ; social empowerment of trainees is also of utmost importance through Seminars and counselling services in a bid to change mind-sets and ameliorate behaviours for effective change in the society.

During field work, it was noticed that as a means to build up the women and girls of the centres, the coaches or directors invited professionals to come hold seminars and educative talks in the centres. With the business seminars, they are empowered and their capacities built by the business seminars like being taught digital marketing as well as using the social media during the outbreak of the pandemic as a means of training and communication. The aim of these business seminars is to equip the trainees for development at national level and their communities in particular and to equally ensure that they may be economically upright for their communities which will be key to bringing about sustainable development through a realistic approach.

More so, it enables African women in developing businesses because they strongly believe in fostering women’s entrepreneurship as a tool for economic growth. It’s within that framework that the trainers committed to assist in the promotion of gender equality and entrepreneurship through women’s business initiatives as well as through its financial crisis response initiative. These seminars give the opportunity to exchange experiences and promote networking among themselves, they discuss the impacts of financial crisis and its implications to donors, institutions and countries as a whole; this enables women come with concrete recommendations on how to provide more effective and coordinated support as a response to the crisis for women’s entrepreneurship, development and business growth in the nation and their communities in particular. During such seminars, they come up with good and enticing

topics elaborated on flyers as well as PowerPoint presentations to ease understanding. For instance, the impact of the financial crisis, the kind of trade activities to focus on, the types of markets and new trades, they develop new financing strategies to support trade and also discuss on methods to support women on other issues such as discrimination, professional training and networking.

Apart from the seminars that target already flourishing female entrepreneurs and representatives of female business associations, there are other small business seminars that target the employed, students, struggling women and mothers and those of the empowerment centres that are doing training to become autonomous and better entrepreneurs in the future.

The women's empowerment centres aimed at bringing out the talents in some of us that the world and close people had concluded to be nothing and can come out with nothing in life has transformed me and my life through the activities carried out at the centres, one of which is the business seminar. I now have a new business which permits me to take care of myself and can give others work while helping my family at the same time, I am really so glad. (Beatrice CPF Bonamousadi Nov 2020).

From what the respondent says, we understand that the empowerment centres are diverse and dynamic in their functioning. Apart from training the women to be financially independent through the activities carried out at the centre, they also build the women through capacity building with the help of seminars. These seminars in return as said by the respondent, build their mind to be able to come up with creative ideas that generate their income.

More to that, we discovered that during such seminars, they discuss on interesting topics such as how to use social media platforms to engage in communication with the persons involved either in similar businesses with the aim of growing their already existing businesses or how they will be able to grow their business using this medium for those still following a training and are yet to establish a business, how to carry out research on current events and to know what the audience preferences are, how to design and implement social media strategies to align with their business goals. Given that the world is gradually becoming a global village due to the high rate of technical development; it is inevitable to go about your business without the social media if you have the intentions of growing your business. They equally do editing, publishing and sharing of daily contents to keep the public awake and wanting to get more of their vibes through pictures, good videos and reports of events for more information. Also, their thoughts in the seminars on how to do good adverts of their products to attract viewers

about their goods and this equally increases interaction between persons doing the sales and their followers making the grounds for market possible and inevitable. Through their adverts according to experts, it does not only keep lines of communication open with people but also it ensures consistent growth of followers because the more attractive yours products are through good advertisements done, the more people get curious about knowing the product and producer behind the product. They are taught on how to ensure the consistency of their brand, do promotions and get into positive competitions by staying current with technology and how to go about online recruitments.

This picture explains the solidarity that exists among the sawa women in the empowerment centres. The picture was taken after a seminar attended at the cpf Akwa centre on the importance of entrepreneurship. According to them it will help them keep memory of the presence of a researcher who has been encouraged to write about them.

3.3. Workshops

At the centres, several activities are been carried out in order to improve all sectors of the economy and these activities range from tailoring, decoration, production of chemicals used in cleaning such as soap, detergent, bleach, production of hair products such as hair oil, relaxer, catering and a host of others aimed at empowering women and girls to be more independent and contribute to the development of their communities. But in the following paragraphs, these will be developed.

3.3.1. Hotel catering and restauration

This is one of the activities carried out at the empowerment centres and which is really vital. Hotel catering which also has to do with hotel management and restauration carries about 40% of theory and 60% practical hand on job learning. With hotel catering, we discovered that it is a very vital activity at the centre because women and girls see it as an extension of their household activities which has been broadened to become a professional course for which people get trained and use for business purposes. In this light, hotel catering services deals with training the girls and women on how to manage hotels and they are taught attractive cookery methods apart from the usual way they do their cooking; the centre ensures a broader way of doing cookery with use of different methods, designs and western menus are been taught so that their choices of business will not be limited to the country's menu. This is facilitated by professional hotel managers and catering services; it is important to note that

some women take up this activity because they view that they already have an idea in what concerns cookery and the management of their home, so they see it as not been difficult to extend this role to a professional course. Others, as we discovered, carry out the hotel catering activity at the centre because of their passion for cooking and desire to learn other menu and display them during parties. But the majority of these women and girls taking up the hotel catering services are for economic reasons like being able in the nearest future to open up their own hotels, become managers in other hotels and equally play role of “Chefs” in order to get well paid and become financially stable to take care of themselves and families without depending on others financial reasons.

According to one of the respondents' point of view “I chose hotel catering services here because of its benefits I have seen in the society. When I am done I hope to become a hotel manager in any hotel of my choice or open up my own hotel or centre or better still begin as a cook in any prominent hotel in town and get paid so that I can take care of myself and family's financial problems.(Anne CPF Bonamousadi Nov 2020).

According to Kwedi, the reason for her choosing hotel catering is because of the need of the society for which she has observed, that with the influx of hotels in the Douala municipality she can become a hotel manager, or begin as a cook. This explains the fact that some of the people at the centre choose their activities on social constructions of the community.

It was discovered that the trainees trust their trainers so much and the activity they do that they know that they cannot become unemployed after the training and if it even happens that they do not find a job, they will be able to employ themselves by making use of the entrepreneurial skills they have received from the empowerment centres. Apart from learning different preparation designs and management, they are taught how to setup the table and how to manage cutleries which equally benefits them even at their homes since hotel catering has to do with providing food services at a remote or a site such as a hotel, hospital, aircraft, and cruise ship, park, filming sites or studios. Most girls and women see it as an opportunity to get in contact with new persons and professionals in the field that could orientate them in achieving their life goals and sometimes are able to facilitate their acquisition of jobs in the domain but to the others, it remains a passion to carry out such activities.

I am very grateful to this centre for offering training like this one in the name of hotel catering. This is because apart from the little I know about cooking; I have learnt a whole lot that is helping me in my household and the family as a whole because during occasions, parties, events or meetings in the family, I am

also solicited to do the catering. Through the centre, I equally learnt how to set up a table properly and make use of cutleries and be able to cook different varieties and designs for my house which makes my children happy. (Irene CPF Bonamousadi Nov 2020).

According to Pulcherie before coming to the centre she did not know how to set a table properly. But with her coming to the centre and taking up the hotel catery course, while still been trained she already knows how to set up a table properly. Also, she is solicited by relatives during parties, ceremonies and meetings to be the caterer.

Picture 2: Hand made fruit juice



Source: Eyong Sonita, field work (March 6th 2021).

The picture shows a woman displaying natural juice for checking. She used natural fruits prominent in the area to come out with the drinks; such as: djinja, folere, pawpaw and mango. This is done to be sold at cheaper prices and a means to advertise the women empowerment centres.

3.3.2. Fabrication of pesticides and fertilizers

Pesticides are generally known as substances used in killing predators and insects and they include alvicides and lavicides used against insect eggs and larva. Insecticides are used in agriculture, medicine, industries and consumers. Pesticides are a major factor behind the increase in the 20th century productivity, nearly all pesticides have the potential to

significantly alter ecosystems, and many are toxic to human and animals. Insecticides can be classified in to two major groups: systemic insecticides which have a long-term activity meanwhile contact insecticides which have a residual activity. We notice that the model of action of insecticides has to be understood to know whether the insecticide will be toxic to the unrelated species such as birds and mammals.

Social insects such as ants cannot detect non repellents and they crawl through them. As they return to the nest they take insecticide with them and transfer it to their nest mates and in a long term this eliminates all the ants including the queen, this could be seen as having a slow effect than some other methods but usually when this happens, it completely eradicates the ant colony. Insecticides are very useful to farmers because it prevents insects from destroying farm produce this contributing to a boost in productivity. Also, it equally helps in crop preservation from certain diseases and conserves the health of these farm products. Apart from the fact that cultivators come to carry out this activity, some do it to be able to supply farmers with these pesticides in order to make money while holding on the fact they want to return to the basics of our nation which is agriculture. We see that without crop protection, more than half of the crops in the world will be destroyed to insects, diseases and weeds. Farmers who make use of pesticides grow more food on less land but protecting crops from pests and diseases as well as raising productivity per hectare. Women are those who do a lot of from work even amongst the Sawa people, the women are more engaged into farming of food crops for family consumption and for commercial purposes. Most of those who carry out these activities at the centre are farmers because they see the need to be able to fabricate this as it will be helpful for their agricultural work. Even though there are nonfarmers enrolled in this activity, they do not really the need of getting training because according to them it will not yield profit but people who are aware get training and make big farmers their clients in order to supply them with good and affordable insecticides. Pesticides are used to control weeds, insect infections and diseases. Herbicides to inhibit the growth of unwanted plants also known as weeds and to equally control insects.

I have my small farm just around the house and I cultivate crops like vegetables, cassava, maize, cocoyam, sweet potatoes, pepper, ginger for home consumption, but when the harvest I great, I do sell some since most are perishable goods and will rot if stored, so learning how to produce pesticides goes a long way for me because I use it for my personal work for now but hopefully will be a supplier of pesticides to other great farmers in order to make profit. (Simo CPF Akwa October 20th 2020).

From the above we can agree that the fabrication of pesticides helps to protect crops from the dangers of pest in the community. And the most common crop cultivated in the sawa community is food crops. Such as; vegetables, cassava, maize, cocoyam, pepper and djinja.

Nevertheless, pesticides could be dangerous in that, it could cause birth defects, cancer and the possibility to harm the nervous and reproductive systems. We observed during the field work that they carry out testing after production around the centres in the farms that are found around the area with the permission of the farmers which becomes beneficial to the farmers as they are given some free pesticides products, This a benefit to the community. In addition to that, there is the production of fertilizers equally found in this activity since both have similar purposes and are used both for agricultural reasons. In simple terms, it is a chemical / natural substance added to the soil or land in order to increase its fertility. They are also used for the growth of plants; most of these fertilizers commonly used in agriculture contain the basic plant nutrients which are: Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium. Fertilizers can also be considered as food for plants in the same w human beings need an adequate and consistent diet to grow and stay healthy so do plants and crops have to get proper nutrients in order to grow properly and equally stay healthy for human consumption. The reason why women and young girls especially those involved in agriculture get in to this training fields, is because they know the importance if these fertilizers. For instance, fertilizers provide crops with nutrients like potassium phosphorous and nitrogen which allow crops grow bigger, faster and produce more food. Nitrogen in particular is an essential nutrient for the growth of every organism on earth and it makes up about 78% of the air we breathe. The women and girls who produce and use this explain the fact that it boosts both nutrient efficiency and organic matter content in the soil, it nurtures the soil with organic matter that reduces dependency on chemical inputs, it restores and maintains soil fertility to nurture plant growth. They face difficulties in getting the nutrients of plants to come out with a quality production of the fertilizers.

3.3.3. Costomisation

This activity carried out at the centres is done by mostly women. Costomisation is the making of items with the use of materials. This activity is important because it enhances the sawa culture and it easy to transmit from one generation to the other since the designing are done with hands. This is vital because apart from other materials they use to make the items

such as bangles, earrings, chains, hand fans, bags just to name a few. The sanja material of the sawa people is prioritized. During community meetings and occasions they put on these fabrics as a means of showcasing their attires. When this is done it is easy for them to receive orders from people and when they receive the profits the money is used to take care of their families. A respondent has this to say:

I used to be a housewife doing nothing and my husband would always refer to me as a liability. But things changed when a friend of mine spoke to me about this empowerment centre. I choosed costumisation because it permitted me to be African through my dress code something which I have always loved. This has helped me not only to promote my beautiful sawa culture, but also to make money. You will not imagine my son was sent home for school fees and I was able to pay the money. When my husband got home I just gave him the receipt and he was shocked and said you are now an assert. (Nadege Meridians,Nov. 2020).

According to the above taking up costumisation as an activity was a good idea. At first, some of the women were just house wives who couldn't provide for their families. .But as she joining costumisation, makes themable to sell heir fabriques and have money that they are able to pay for the education of their children. The activity thus helps to promote the sawa culture and its diversities, thus empowerment.

Picture 3: Women in Costomisation



Source: Eyong, Sonita, field work.(November 24th2020).

Fromthe picture we can see some women who are specialised in costumisation at the meridian centre. Costomisation been the decoration of things such as bags, bangles with the

use of cotton material. These women thus are designing the bag and bangle with Ankara material to use during their meetings.

3.3.4. Tailoring

This is the sewing of clothing with the use of technology. It starts from making patterns, searching for the latest models to the marketing process. Apart from sewing of clothes, there are other skills the centre offers in this domain. Skills such as studying the parts of a sewing machine and sewing machine maintenance, more to that, they are taught how to market products on various social media; starting from attractive product images, making convincing marketing captions or slogans and how to respond to buyers on social medias. Sorrelle has this to say how to publish our work on social media. For now, I am still undergoing the training but already:

I like the tailoring we do here because it is different from what people do elsewhere. I say this because we are not only taught how to sew dresses, we are taught other interesting things like I am able to sew dresses for myself, parents and siblings. This reduces cost in our family and helps us to save for other family expenses. Though am not done with my tailoring training, I am able to make money to take care of myself and assist my family. Since having a sewing machine is one of the requirements at the centre, people bring their designs for clothes to make and I get paid. (Nelly CPF Bonamousadisept 2020).

The tailoring activity permits them to learn and be able to sew clothes for her family members and this reduces the cost of buying cloths and the money saved for other family expenses and needs. Apart from reducing cost, the tailoring activity helps to generate income for Sorelle since she has a sewing machine at home, people come to sew dresses from her and she gets paid eventhough she's not done yet with the course.

Picture 4: A woman in Tailoring



Source: Eyong Sonita, field work (November 24th 2020).

We can see the image of a sawa woman sewing and designing materials with the use of a sewing machine.

3.3.5. Needing

According to the coach of the Meridians centre, this activity is a part of decoration because it is the use of needle and thread to make designs on already sewn clothes, bags and soles of shoes. He said since the work entails a lot of patience, time and concentration. Most of those who register this activity are women aged 35years and above. I observed that this activity is more like a family. This is because according to the women to make the activity lively, they keep close ties with each other through discussions of their experiences, current events and how to ameliorate on their skills. I also discovered that this activity is different from the others as they have just two days to come to the centre. And they practice extra curricular activities such as having small meetings and sharing a meal. What the sawa women call “le vivre ensemble. Ma mado has this to say:

I use to be totally dependent on my husband to take care of my needs and that of the family. But with the needing I do, I am able to get little money to assist my husband. I say little because people do not purchased items that has been needed so much since it's really expensive. Expensive because we put into account the materials, time spent. But even when it's not bought, we use it at home so it's never a lost. (Prudence Meridians sept 2020).

This explains the fact that at first she couldn't help her family financially since she had no income generating activity. But with the needing activity like the other women she is able

to do some needed works and sell and get money with which she assist her husband and her family.

Picture 5: A woman needing



Source: Eyong, Sonita, field work. (November 25th 2020).

This picture glarely shows a sawa woman needing a shoe which according to her it is for her son to take to school. This activity is common among the sawa women in the empowerment centres. Others need such shoes to be sold and get income to support their families, while others do it for family consumption to reduce cost.

3.4. Literacy program

To begin with, Alphabetization is the process of establishing the alphabetical order of a set of items based on their names or headings. It is equally the arrangement of items by sorting strings of characters according to their position in a given alphabet. It equally helps in pronunciation, reading and writing. The aim of teaching alphabetic order in the centre is to enable those who can't read nor write or even express themselves in their first language to be able to do so; this particular activity in the centre is not done by persons out of choice like the other activities, reason why in this discipline we find both men and women who cannot read nor write but the majority remain women as they are the ones that do not most often have the opportunity school early either because of early marriages and pregnancy, poverty. Therefore, teaching alphabetization brings out the talents of people in all domains of their

lives. Research situations such as finding a particular topic in a book via index or finding the phone number of a business; now, with alphabetization, there is a possibility to integrate all categories of persons. Those women and girls who had no opportunity to get enrolled in the secular education have an opportunity to meet up with expressions, reading and writing. This particular activity aims at empowering women not be limited to doing small business but to empower them also in public work and public speaking which further places them in decision-making positions and with this, they can better relate with business associates/ partners. With alphabetization, they are able to read, write and understand life situations and so far boast of being transformed via this field at the centre. Also, alphabetization helps in developing organizational skills, executive functioning activities and it even improves memory.

My name is ma mado, I have four children and doing my callbox business in front of my house so that I can still be able to take care of my children and husband. At first I did not know how to read and write. So when I am giving any notice or message, I will call my elder son Loic who is in 3eme to read it for me. But when I came to the centre I enrolled to begin with alphabetization and now I am able to read and write alone without the help of my son or anyone else. (Esther CPF Bonamousadi October 2020).

It is therefore evident that the study of alphabetization in the empowerment centres permits the women to be able to read and write and express themselves publicly. With this they don't longer need external help from their children or other persons to read, write and interpret for them messages since they can do it themselves.

In addition, when they complete the course, they are able to apply principles of everyday life and can help them to assess their personal materials quicker and more efficiently; it is equally a skill needed in many employment positions. Alphabetization is fun and memorable and for beginners card games are used to make it exciting and enjoyable in order for it to be understood and easy to function. They equally make use of images and names which keeps them playing and busy. The discipline is important in letter recognition because it enables beginning readers to figure out how printed text is associated with the spoken language, the more reason why alphabetic recognition is one of the very first skills children learn in the secular schools while they are beginning readers this comes before phonetic awareness and decoding. When they learn alphabetization, as people develop alphabet knowledge, they learn to recognize and name upper and lower case letters. They equally discover that, there are sounds associated with each letter; it helps in formulating words appropriately which become visible before reading and understanding.

As you know alphabetization is used to read and write. But apart from that, it is fun and easy to understand since our teachers make use of images with their names inscribed on it like pig, cat, dog and other utensils that we use in the kitchen like knife, pot, and spoon and am happy. (Felicia CPF Akwa September 2020).

This affirms that alphabetization permits them to learn how to read and write. But apart from that, the teaching of this alphabetization is made easy with the use of images done by the coaches of the centre. More to that, the early literacy domain which include emergent literacy skills related to awareness of letter sounds, syllables and rhymes, alphabet knowledge, interest in and knowledge of books, print, pre writing skills, decoding and letter in sound relationship and word recognition. The alphabetic knowledge has its different levels; firstly, its identification and naming of letter, then sounds in spellings, then letter names, letter shapes and letter sounds. They use the five domains of reading skills which is built on separate components: Phonics, phonetic awareness, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. All of these, have contributed a great lot in knowing the people who do this course and to develop self-confidence and fight all forms of inferiority complex and to support this fact, they have groups in their different levels where they are given educative games, sketches and plays in relation to the teachings they receive. By so doing, it builds up the boldness in them, competence and self-worth.

My sister hmm alphabetization has helped me so much infact am happy. At first in our small meetings and cooperations I use to be ashamed to give my own contributions because am afraid to make mistakes. But now, I can speak my mind during meetings without any fear. (Estelle CPF Bonamousadi September 2020).

It is seen from the above that alphabetization permits them to know how to read, write and express themselves publicly that they are even given positions of leadership in their women cooperations. Also, in their different communities, that is the Bassas, Dualas, and Yabassis. They have formed ladies cooperation and in this they have their leaders for campaigns, other activities, and are advocates made up of public speakers consisting of persons who can better express themselves in their first language and other communication languages. Despite the above importance and benefits of alphabetization, the respondents during observations, we discovered that when respondents were asked if they enjoy the activity, they were stretching while others kept sighing and when asked, they say it's really dull and boring and not as interesting as the other activities of the centre.

3.6. Activities during open door day

Women view the empowerment centres just as an extension of women roles as caretakers and care givers but the centres have gone beyond that because apart from the other activities that they do at the centres as seen above. They equally come out of the box to reason why the women empowerment centre at Akwa was first of all known as “la maison des femmes” seeing that it limits women to particular activities that is limited to them even by culture such as cooking, fetching wood, water and other chores that is done at home reason why they decided to break those limits and implement other activities that were considered male oriented like ICT even though they continue to be limited to other NGOs and individuals that have understood that going beyond activities that extend to women’s triple role rather these activities socially and culturally considered as meant for men in a patriarchal society. But since the Sawa people have a culture that doesn’t limit women and that from their households activities, they are free to carry out any other activity of their choice either from home or out of the home reason for the implementation of activities such as automobile mechanic, driving, etc. During fieldwork, we found women engaged in this activity an even making progress since they chose it out of likeness. Even though the presence of women of women is very few in this domain of activities but we could still find other ladies who have taken the bull by the horns to do these activities. One of the respondents said:

Before coming to the centre, when I was at home I used to like doing little technical repairs that is TV repairs, electricity, cables and other things that has to do with technical repairs that I had never done but when I got to the centre and was presented the different activities that was carried out in the centre. Out of curiosity I chose automobile mechanic and when people heard it, even women tried to discourage me saying that the activity is meant for men and that I will develop muscles that will deform me. I gave a deaf ear to them and continued in this field; despite the challenges I am excelling in the domain as I find it exciting (Viviane Meridians Sept. 2020).

From the above it is glaring that the empowerment activities carried out at the centre doesn’t limit the sawa women women to their gender roles. The women are allowed to carry out activities related to their passion and expertist. From the above we discover a woman doing auto-mechanic which is considered as a *man’s role*.

Picture 6: Exposition of hair fascinators



Source: Eyong Sonita March 6th 2021

Picture seven is an exposition of hair fascinators that was made by some women displayed on their open door day ceremony. These hair fascinators are used by women to decorate their hair and match up their dressing attires when going out for meetings. When displayed as such, people interested can either place their orders or purchase the displayed ones and get it at a discount.

Picture 7: Traditional cap on the open door day



Source: Eyong Sonita (March 6th 2021).

The above pictures is a display of what the women did with their hands on open door day at cpf Akwa The traditional cap we see is worn by men as part of their traditional dress code. The sandals are worn by women during outings and particularly when dancing the sawa dance. This is because they say it ensures flexibility during dancing,the sandals is placed on a small hand made shoe shelve,this is done to keep the sawa culture.

Conclusion

To sum up this chapter,it has demonstrated the various activities carried at the centres and the particularity of the sawa culture in the cultural activities. These cultural practices in the centers act like pull factor. Some of activities include training in traditional dishes (meals), dressing, dances, and solidarity social schemes. Women in the center learn this culture and as well transmit to the girl child and other women. Through the centers, most sawa women have been emancipated as they learn, maeals, dressing habits, language, solidarity among women and the culture of living together. The centres also empower women in capacity building that takes the forms of business seminars, capacity building workshopes and counselling. At the centres, women also gain economic empowerment which ranges from tailoring, decoration, production of chemicals used in cleaning such as soap, detergent, bleach, production of hair products such as hair oil, relaxer, catering and a host of others aimed at empowering women and girls to be more independent. The centres equally helps in education of the women in pronunciation, reading and writing as well as in ICT with activities like graphic designing, secretariat activities, excel, social media management just to name a few. The next chapter will explain to us the perceptions of people about empowerment centres.

**CHAPTER FOUR:
PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT CENTRES**

Introduction

This chapter will be elaborating the perception of people about empowerment centres. Perception is the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses. Thus this chapter will be demonstrating the belief or opinion of people about empowerment centres and those who attend these empowerment centres. That is the way they see and hear about the empowerment centres, which is based on what they have observed, witnessed and even discovered by virtue of been close to the empowerment centres or even participants of the empowerment centres in the Douala municipality.

4.1. Perceptions of sawapeople who attend women empowerment centres

The perception people have about the empowerment centres are generally that, at the centre women gain power, self-esteem and communal action knowledge. For people to become empowered, they must have gained power that is to say the *power to* become agents in their own lives, the power from within and the self-esteem to break traditions, norms and structures, and the *power with* other people to take communal action to improve their lives. Central to the concept of empowerment is the ability to make strategic life choices. Changes in the ability to make choices can be found in three inter-related dimensions: resources, agency and achievements. The resources are the conditions under which choices are made, and they can be material, social or human. The agency dimension refers to the ability for people to define their own goals and act upon them. Achievements, on the other hand, are the outcome of the choices defined by the resources and agency. Constraints on the capabilities to make strategic life choices can furthermore be found on different levels; immediate, intermediate and deeper levels.

When this centre was created, some people did not understand the objectives of the centre. Some men look at as a place that has been created to help women challenge them. But I can say with the creation of this centre and for the time I have served as director, this centre has helped women become agents of their lives and families. It has improved on the self-confidence of many and has inspired many to improve on their lives.(Director of CPF September 2020).

According to the above, the sawa men perceived the creation of the empowerment centres as a place that has been set up to challenge the authority of men. But this is not true looking at the above assertion, because the centre has rather helped in giving women control over their lives. This is evident with how the U.N has accelerated and champion the empowerment of these women and girls in the centre. From the United Nations entity

dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, a global champion for women and girls, UN women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN women support UN member states for which Cameroon is part in achieving gender equality and works with government and civil society to design laws, policies programs and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefits women and girls worldwide among which the implementation of women empowerment centres. Which is aim to work globally to make the vision of the sustainable development goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life. During the field work we discover that with the numerous empowerment centres in the town of Douala, many of them are not in line with some of the aim of it creation which becomes a measure challenge. The aim of this chapter is to bring out an overview of the populations perception and their feelings concerning the issue of women empowerment centres in the community.

4.1.1. Perceptions of sawa women who attend the women empowerment centres in Douala

This section of the work gives a vivid analysis and word verbatims of the way sawa women who attend the women empowerment centres of Douala think and perceive about the womwen empowerment centres.

4.1.1.1A place of distress

In as much as the centres are meant and created to improve on the skills of women and girls in order to add them into the society at large and development projects in a particular, like other educational milieus they face a lot of emotional distress as a result of being trainees of the centres. Therefore becomes a problem to those attending the centres, and instil fear in those who wish to attend these centres. This is because while at the centre they are not given preferential treatment and their social status of wives and mothers are not considered, making other women to be afraid of enrolling. Many residents in this city are not happy with the centres and its quality formation. This was seen during our field work as most of the inhabitants of this area expressed their feelings about the situation to us. We discover that due to this the emotions of persons get affected. In addition, we wish to determine if there are emotions that are common to people who attend women empowerment centres. During participants observation, we found that people repeatedly mentioned four emotions related to problems faced in the centres in the littoral region precisely the town of Douala; fear,

worry, anger and bother. An informant explained during our field work, I feel very bad. Very bad because it makes me feel like I made a mistake choosing an empowerment centre in order to gain entrepreneurial skills

what I dislike about the centre is that we are looked down upon and not respected despite our status of wives and motherhood which does not happen in other institutions and we are not even accorded a little consideration of our status when we are being scolded and insulted like infants in the presence of younger children who I can give birth to. (Mama Rose CPFF AKWA Decoration, Sept. 2020).

According to the above, we discover that some of the women suffer from emotional distress at the empowerment centre, since according to them the institution doesn't respect their status of motherhood and wives. The fact that they have been emotionally abused through insults by the coach.

A newly registered trainee explained that:

That faithful day I had a lot of house chores to do and to take care of my home before ever thinking of leaving my house to any place in the name of being trained or receiving a kind of education, that's because my husband is of those who believes in the conception that a woman's place is in the kitchen, and since I was directed to the centre by a friend and didn't want to wreck my marriage I took the resolution to always do with all that's needed at home then wait for my husband to leave the house before I can go to the empowerment centre to receive trainings. I don't know whether to say unfortunately or that fate wasn't just on my side that faithful day because usually my husband leaves early for work on other days but that day he stayed home and left late. So to avoid problems had to keep myself busy at home until he leaves. Finally he left the house and I had to leave for the centre too and got late. At my arrival I was scolded and insulted by one of those who train us as she said 'what kind of example are you showing to the younger ones when you as a mother decide to be in discipline and carefree'. I felt really bad and just said within me that in truth the problems faced by most women are caused by other women themselves. (Mama ANNE CPF AKWA, sept 2020).

The above confirms how the women feel about the way they are being perceived by those who train them in becoming autonomous. We discover that they continue to express their disappointments on the side of women themselves, which means that women are the problems to other women. Reason why they are unable to get the full equality the world is voicing. As a result, other women who are not bold and courageous enough do not want or even desire to find themselves in this kind of milieu whereby they are mistreated by their fellow woman. This is challenging because they are not able to open up to what they are facing in their homes and marriages.

The aforementioned brings the efforts of social workers to a waste of time trying to enlighten the women on how not to be confined by the home and house chores for which the society has limited her to but to get empowered and get involve in decision making positions and equally become active development agents in the society that was denied them of their rights because of their biological and sex roles.

To understand why centre-related emotional distress is inevitable in this way, it is necessary to understand how the language of emotion is used and understood by residents in the city of Douala. Respondents feel fear of being punished for late coming, that they will be unable to acquire the necessary skills in the future, and that their households will suffer the consequences of their half training. The fact that they will not be able to meet up with their family's expectations, or even provide for their basic needs (housing, feeding and clothing). For those whose families depend on them.

4.1.1.2.A place of worry

Some women think that it is a place of worry. This may be explained by the fact that respondent feel worried about the situation they face because they believe that they face worst things than that at home. And if they are able to go through it successfully then is not a training centre that will frustrate their long time efforts. While most respondents experience a quick, intense emotion that they described as fear, fewer reported the experience of constant worry.

4.1.1.3A place of conflict

Anger is levied towards the government of the country as the inhabitant of the city believes it is entirely the responsibility of the government to provide them with well- trained experts in the field of social sciences who can better understand them and feel their pains. According to the responses they gave us during our field work, the inhabitants of Douala believe the government has all that it takes to provide them with all necessities because they believe that if persons who are placed there are those trained in the field they will be able to understand and work with them despite their diverse cultural and social backgrounds.

During our fieldwork in the Akwa centre known as CPFF Clarisse of explained that:

I feel very angry and diminished when I see women like me and sometimes much younger women for which I can be their mother mistreat me or another woman of the same status. This is because my coming to the centre wasn't because I

missed my target in life or because I was just looking for a refuge home or a place where I can belong. Certainly no because I am a holder of the bachelors of science degree in banking and finance and if I found myself in the centre is because of my love for decoration for which general education could not provide me with the necessary skills so I decided to attend the centre because its relatively cheap and affordable and could provide me with the skills I was looking for. Take note the decoration for which I am been trained for is not for me a use to boast my financial status or to get skilled to be involved in development project no I am already occupying decision making positions and also an active agent if development in my community. So I just came to learn decoration to know how to arrange my home because I love the fashion world.' (Pamela, Meridians Sept 2020).

From the above we perceive anger in what concerns the perception of the trainers in the training centre and the society at large. And this as a result of the trainers of the training centre who fail to understand that the centre is not a primary or secondary school milieu made of infants but a place of empowerment and self- discovery of which people of all academic and cultural backgrounds, financial status, age groups and religion come together.

4.1.1.4. A place that promotes liberalism

In as much as the above points stipulates some negative and positive aspects of what they perceive the centres to be nonetheless the cultural background of the Sawa people where the centres are found plays a role in changing the mentalities of some people about her the centres are perceived positively because of its culture. This is because the culture promotes liberalism and freedom unlike other cultures which constrains women on the type of work they should do out of the home or sometimes the fact that women are not allowed to carry out outdoor activities to feign for the families but this is not the case with the Sawa women this is because to an extent they see men and women as being able to carry out their passions so they are allowed to do what they want out of the home if it's their passion or their like. And with the Sawa culture according to what we discovered during the field work that they practice a level of gender equality which is one of the goals of sustainable development whereby same work done by a man and a woman they receive same payment there is no inequality in payment of workloads same work done same payment given and in what concerns work, there's gender division of labour but notwithstanding, those activities in the community which is usually considered as work for men in the community like building of town halls, painting just to name a few some women who have a knowledge of how to do are permitted to do so if only they are willing to while during community work, some men also participate in the cooking activities depending on their comfort ability of work. It is also important to note that liberalism has to do with willingness to respect or accept behaviours or opinions different

from one's that is openness of ideas. This is seen in the case where the women have their own groups where they are able to sit and decide on some things concerning the community which might be different from that of the men and they are permitted by the men of the community to carry out their proposed ideas without restrictions as long as it improves on the community's wellbeing and development.

Also, liberalism has to do with a political and social philosophy that promotes individual rights, civil liberties, democracy, and free enterprise as mentioned above. It also has to do with a political and moral philosophy based on liberty, consent of the governed and the equality before the law. In the age of enlightenment, liberalism became a distinct movement and when it became popular among western philosophers and economists. When we talk of a liberal it is someone who is open-minded and progressive in their views. An example of liberal is someone who likes new ideas that will bring progress even if they are not traditional. Equally we can say that the Sawa people practice cultural liberalism because it has to do with social liberalism whereby the society stresses the freedom of individuals from cultural norms and according to Henry David Thoreau of the united states of America explains this as the right to "march to the beat of a different drummer". Douala being a contemporary society, we discover that the fundamental elements of contemporary societies has liberal roots because liberal sought and established a constitutional order that prized important individual freedoms such as freedom of speech and freedom of association and independent judiciary and public trial by jury and the abolition of the aristocratic privileges.

When I use to work other someone as a private worker in a phone shop, we use to work Monday to Saturday with Sunday being our only day off and sometimes when we have some extra activities especially when new collections come in we were to work up to even Sundays and the working hours increases seeing how apart from the fact the work was tedious I wasn't having time for my family because there was no time. Sorry for taking up your time but I have to explain this to you so that you see where am coming from and to understand that to an extent we are not restrained by culture or by our spouses. So when I stopped the work, I began teaching in a private primary school and was teaching class six it wasn't easy too because apart from the responsibility of taking of the children of the school as a class teacher more was expected of me as I have to come at 6:00am and close at 6:00pm and with all these my husband and I were just managing home responsibilities as he was ok knowing that I was doing what I like doing but being a mother I saw that I wasn't given the necessary attention to my family as was needed that is why I stopped and came to the centre to learn how to make shoes, bags and other things out of pearls so that I can do from the house and only supply when need be. This is to tell you we don't have complications in what concerns women roles and men roles rather we are free to do as we wish without being restrained by culture or men. (Stacy Akwa Oct 2020).

In other words, the centres are not meant to make women challenge their husbands or even flee from their household duties. Rather it gives them the possibility to be dynamic, in the sense that, with the skills gotten, they are able to become bosses of themselves and take care of their families at the same time without been restrained.

Usually during community activities, women voluntary take up activities such as cleaning, washing, sweeping, cooking, serving without been asked to so and without been obliged by any norm or cultural practice, they see it as their feminine role while the men take up activities such as constructions, paintings, lifting of heavy things and all the societal activities considered to be meant for men but as you see me I am always where men are because I don't want to put to waste that which I am been trained in the centre to do which is painting, with this skills, I do mixture of paint and I paint and when I usually go where men are working to join them, they will be gearing at me saying that man in a feminine body and I don't mind because I feel more comfortable doing it. (Nelly Sainte famille Oct 2020).

From the above, we see that community activities are stratified by gender division of labour. Whereby, women take up their gender roles such as cleaning, washing, cooking and serving. While the men do the constructions, paintings and the transportation of heavy material needed at the construction ground.

MyFor me I think the centre is a place of freedom and liberty and I say this because they practice and respect the Sawa culture of doing things. I say this because we are not constrained by any rules and regulation on what a woman or a man should do as activity in the centre what they look at are you capabilities and your passion and they rather encourage you to do what you like and do it better and not feel inferior or bridging any law. For instance when I came to the centre and decided to do caterpillar driving, many women from other tribes were looking at me and saying am it married because according to them a marry woman in fact women are not expected to carry on such activities in the society where we find ourselves even in the people who knew my line of activities were marvelled and termed me a super woman with others commenting that they cannot marry such a woman but it is amazing to know that husband who is a lorry driver rather sees it as a great challenge and always applaud my courage.(Suzanne Meridians Nov 2020).

The above response is glaring on the fact that the centres do not constrained women on particular activities. They have the freedom and liberty to choose and do whatever they are passionate about. Thus the eradication of been gender bias, the case of the woman doing caterpillar driving. Whereas in our contemporary society this is viewed as an activity meant for men.

Women think the centre is a laissez faire place where people are allowed to do anything and anyhow and the way we want to do things. This we are regarded by the society as a freed people having no restrictive measures or laws to keep them going but this is not true because everything its done here in an orderly manner and as every other learning or training milieu the reason why of all the centres I chose the meridians and apart from being orderly, it equally allows people to do what they want without been constrained by any societal norm or cultural practices that's why you can see me doing auto- mechanic as my chosen activity of the centre without been seen or looked upon differently and per what am seeing, presently we are just five women in this activity but with the evolvement of our society today am seeing that in the nearest future this activity will enrol more women because that which was considered male activity have been deconstructed.(Estelle Meridians Nov.2020).

From the above and in the same line to the research and field work carried out on women empowerment centres and local development the case of Sawa women of the littoral region, we see that people of the society and the culture itself perceive the centres as a place of freedom and liberalism and equally a place where peoples talent are discovered. Being a centre aimed at empowering women for a better tomorrow and bringing about a change of conception of who a woman is or how a woman is expected to be according to the society they themselves begin by practicing liberalism and resting upon the Sawa culture where the centres are found, they permit women to do those activities that before now were considered as meant for men at the same time permit men who are willing to take up those activities that were considered before now as a woman's thing to do them and with the aim of establishing gender equality and gender balance so that women will no longer be over burdened with work.

4.1.1.5.A place of focus oriented persons

Youths in Cameroon in general and women in particular face a number of challenges compromising their socio-economic potentials. Some of these challenges include unemployment, poverty, and lack of access to basic social security services. Women empowerment programs can therefore generate better jobs in the informal sector, improving the prospects of women regularly contributing to social security scheme available to the informal sector. With this in mind, the government of Cameroon has focused on developing policies and programs that seek to accelerate the socio-economic empowerment and integration of this vulnerable group of people. As a result over the years the government has been focused on developing and implementing specific programs aimed at providing concrete solutions to the major preoccupations women in Cameroon such as access to both quality education and adequate professional training, access to decent jobs and participating in the

day to day activities of the community as well as decision making. These important programs and projects dedicated to the socio-economic integration of women and young girls are performed with the collaboration of development partners in the areas of education, health and employment which are coordinated by the MINPROFF (ministry of the promotion of the woman and family).

More to that women empowerment has to with a process where women and young girls are encouraged to take charge of their lives. They do this by addressing the situation and then take action in order to improve their access to resources and transform their consciousness through their beliefs, values and attitudes and this aims to improve quality of life, this achieved through participation in women programs and these programs can be through non-profit organizations, government organizations and private organizations where we carried out the research activity. Even though from the above perspectives where the government, non-governmental and private organizations put up these innovative and purpose driven methods in order to empower the women who attend the training centres, some people have a negative perception of what the empowerment centre is and the kind of persons that attend the centres. Nonetheless, there are still some people who see the centres as a place for focus oriented, autonomous and independent people according to what we got from some few respondents:

My friends, with whom I attended the general education studies with them, now see me in a different manner because of the fact that I am now enrolled in a women's empowerment center. Please don't misquote me ooh they rather have a positive conception about me as they always giggle me and tell me that I have chosen a right part which is making me focused oriented as I don't longer have to do everything as we used to do in school as now I do a single thing for which I am good at and they always come around with their clothes for me to sew or patch up their uniforms which interns make me feel comfortable than some of my course mates that are rather surrounded by persons who doesn't encourage them (Stacy CPF Akwa Sept.2020).

From the above we see that they are perceived by people as having a good orientation of professional life. Since they are able to acquire skills and have income generating activities specific to their training. With that, they do not suffer unemployment or having to work for people and get underpaid.

When I just began my training at the women empowerment centres my friends and some neighbours use to mock at me that am just wasting my time that when I was much younger I didn't make any changes is it now that am old and already married that I think I will make a change, but just few months later at the centres I began my little business of fabricating bleach, liquid soaps and sell and also supply to some bakery and shops and with which I am able to pay my bills, school fees of my children and take care of my other needs they began to

marvel and some come to ask me that what's my secret while others see me as a strong and independent woman from which they can get their inspiration from and it really gladdens my heart. (Mama ROSE cpf Newbell sept.2020).

In the same light, before some of the sawa couldnot take care of their financial needs as they were financially dependent. But after been trained to fabricate liquid soaps and bleach, they make them and sell and take care of her family needs and send her children to school. Apart from that they consume the products which reduces cost of living.

with what I have and am still learning at the centre and trying to put into practice, it has helped me to solve the issue of domestic violence in my home and my husband now sees me as an assert than a liability to the extent that when am leaving for the centre in the morning he will be gearing me as strong woman, mama meridian herself and so on and so forth. (Viviane CPF Bonamousadi oct. 2020).

From the above, we can say that some causes of domestic violence is as a result of women financial dependency. When they are empowered to be autonomous, the rate of domestic violence drops because they are now seen as asserts and not liabilities. Meaning they can defend the financial interest of their families and speak for themselves.

4.1.1.6 A place of building skills

These are days set aside in the centre for very special activities. Nevertheless, these days vary from centre to centre as well as their activities. At the sainte famille, their open door day usually takes place in the month of December, and it's open to friends, parents, relatives and neighbouring centres. The sawa women consider these moments as one of the best in the centre. During such days, they organise what is known as Marche de Noel. They bring out their fabriques to the people and sell at cheaper prices. Most at times, the women and girls persuade people to buy and offer it as gifts. This activity is seen as a medium of interaction between the centres and people of the community. Some view it as a medium of solidarity; this is because on such days goods are auction at a cheaper price and donations are made to the less privileged and the widows, according to one of the sawa widows.

My favourite activity at the centre is the open door day. Thisis because on this day not only those who are registered there are allowed to participate, rather they invite those of us living around the community. Last time I went there ibought my kaba for 1000 FRS whereas I use to buy for 2000 FRS at the deido market. At the end of the day, they share to uswidows some of their hand made kitchen iterns such as groundnut oil, vegetable oil, maggi and salt. I think this people were sent by the government to come and help poor widows like us. (Madam Veuve resident at deido Oct 2020).

It is evident from the above that people perceive women empowerment centres as charity homes. These results to the donations and gifts they receive from these centres during activities such as the open door day.

4.1.2. Perceptions of sawa men who attend the women empowerment centres in Douala

This section gives us a detailed interpretation of what sawa men who attend women empowerment centres think and view women empowerment centres. From its name ‘women empowerment centres’, one has the tendency to think it is a place occupied by just women. But this is not the case as men equally get enrolled to develop for themselves skills that will help them in the running of their homes and communities.

4.1.2.1. Women’s home

When the Akwa centre and Bonamousadi centres were created around 1969 it was in the early days known as ‘maison des femmes’. This is because it was a place where mostly women attended in order to develop their skills and become independent and able to stand for their rights in society. Nevertheless today it’s no longer known as maison des femmes’ because it absorbs the society as a whole boy, girl’s women and even men but people continue to hold to the view that empowerment centres are women’s home. The centre consist of both men and women, this is because the centres work to build whole lives in the community by having supportive home programs, support services to help prevent an end to homes in the communities, build communities at large that helps to support and strengthen families as they reclaim their stabilities through a unique model of care and independence by becoming empowered. As the discipline anthropology remains a holistic study, we discover that in order to address women’s issue, each person is addressed holistically that’s why they developed a model of care in the centres to distinguish themselves from circular schools and other foundations created by nongovernmental organizations. And this include addressing six major areas of their lives by ensuring emotional or mental health, financial independency, physical, social, spiritual and vocational trainings. During our field work a man explained his feelings about the empowerment centre this:

I don't know why you border yourselves too much in talking about gender equality or trying to bring women in decision making positions because it's very glaring that women are more taking care off than us the men. For instance see how everything has been put in their disposal to ensure the maintenance of their rights. Sometimes we are told that it is because women are discriminated upon in the society and in order for them to obtain what rightfully belongs to them all

these measures are put in place in order to achieve gender equality. But we see the reverse because since women continue to receive all the attentions men themselves turn out to be forgotten which brings now a level of gender inequality where by the men themselves who are considered those in control are now victims. Look at this centre every day the majority of persons who register here are women and girls with just a few men and boys. That's because women and girls feel more at home in this place while the men feel as not belonging. (yomb, Meridians Centre Douala, Sept 2020).

When we look at the above reaction, we discover that the achievement of gender equality remains a struggle if not a myth because of the patriarchal society where we find ourselves and where men are dominant factors with women being the dominated. Rather they see the empowerment of women as women being favoured over men forgetting to understand that women and girls are mostly the vulnerable in the society not disputing the fact that men are sometimes discriminated but the realities in the field continue to show that more men compared to the fewer men are discriminated upon in our society firstly and even among the Sawa people of the littoral region Cameroon. Let's get the words of a female trainee at the centre who considers and have the feelings that an empowerment centre is a woman's home.

I feel related excited when I come to the centre because I live a family outside my biological home especially when our teachers decide to treat us their children and be build up ourselves across cultural backgrounds we come to the understanding that we are not only given the trainings to build up our lives communities and the society at large or just in order to get into development projects but also we develop ourselves to make the centre a better place for all. (Simo of meridians centre oct. 2020).

From the above we discover that it's inevitable to say empowerment centres is not just a social milieu but a home to the homeless and a place of refuge for many.

4.1.2.2. A place for solution

The fact that empowerment centres focus on equipping women and young girls with skills and knowledge to actively participate in the process of development, they also carry out programs that spur the women and youth girls to realize their full potential for sustainable livelihoods. With this initiative, they inspire communities to believe in the importance of educating girls and with the advantages that come with investing in young women as a result they become self-reliant in attaining their full potentials.

More so, the fact that the economic empowerment is thought to allow poor people to think beyond immediate daily survival and to exercise greater control over both their resources and life choices. The evidence also suggests that economic power is often converted

into increased social status of decision making and as a result, those who attend this centre are regarded by some outsiders as trainees in the solution house because they think that the centre provides the trainees with social problems such as unemployment, poverty, the issue of domestic and gender based violence and the fact that the women come out with skills that gives an opportunity to attain their desirable life goals of occupying decision making positions in some of their sphere of influence where their voice could be heard and their opinions taken into consideration.

Moreover, they hold on to the fact that empowering people helps in eradicating poverty because those who have been empowered will become self-reliance from their skills that they have learn, they can have jobs which they will use to take care of their family, because if there is no one who could take care of the children and other relatives, the poverty will increase so for them they see it as empowering one person is tantamount to empowering a whole family that makes up a society.

Additionally, the fact that the people who attend the centres are made aware of their rights and entitlements through seminars and counselling sessions, equipped with skills to make informed choice and negotiate for their rights and have access to resources for their development. As a result the women themselves and young girls who tend to attend the empowerment centres see it as a solution centre because when they come without any skills they are able to return with skills that help them to develop themselves and be independent. And apart from the economic empowerment they receive they are equally socially empowered by been taught of their rights and how to live with their families and avoid all forms of violence according to what we were told by some respondents during the focus group discussion session.

I am a husband with five kids and a wife. Taking care of them is not easy at all considering that all the five are going to school, three in secondary school and two in primary school, my work alone is not sufficient to satisfy their needs. I use to think the women empowerment centre is just for women until I was told that men to are free to enrol. I enrolled and it has been of great solution to my problems because I don't rely only on my salary since I have another income generating activity. Apart from the skills acquired the counseiling session too is really of great help to me and my family. (Emos Meridians Sept. 2020).

Even though, others have a bad perception of women empowerment centres, some see the importance of empowerment centres in solving women issues in the society. From the above response, we discover that the centre is viewed as a solution house by people.

I see the empowerment centre as a solution centre because it has helped the many women I see around me to the extent that even when some of them leave their homes with a moody behaviour they always come back all satisfied and when asked they will say the activities and people of the centre are so interesting to the point that they are able to forget their many problems. (Brandon Meidians Nov. 2020).

In the same light, people view the empowerment centres as a solution house, in the sense the atmosphere of solidarity and togetherness exercised by these women at the centre gives them joy and inspires them not to give up on their personal and collective goals.

4.2. Perceptions of sawa people who do not attend women empowerment centres in Douala

It is important to note that there are other perceptions of people who do not attend the centre but who are part of the sawa community, and have benefitted from the activities of the women empowerment centres in Douala. These category of persons were those who live around the centres and who equally have a knowledge of how the women empowerment centres functions.

4.2.1. Perceptions of Sawa men who do not attend the women's empowerment centres in Douala

The perceptions of sawa men who do not attend the centres are generally bad. They view the women empowerment centres as a place that breathes social misfits, a place that breathes insubmissive and indiscipline women and a place of persons who cannot pursue general education. These perception of the sawa men who do not attend the women empowerment centres will be analysed in the subsequent paragraphs.

4.2.1.1. A place that builds social misfits

Note should be taken on that healthy and empowered women and girls can foster the changes needed to create empowered communities and consequently a more sustainable and peaceful future for all as envisioned by the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Evidence have shown and continues to show that investing in women and girls creates long term effects that yields multiple benefits which extends to their families, communities and countries. As a result numerous challenges needs to be addressed throughout the life course which can include lack of participation in general education, employment, participation in development projects, gender based inequalities, harmful norms, discriminatory practices

violence and restrictions of insolent behaviours of persons out or within empowerment centres which continues to be prevalent in our society today vis-à-vis empowerment centres.

Also it should be understood that, empowering women is essential to the health and social development of families, communities and countries. When women are living safe, they can reach their full potentials. Contributing to their skills and workforce can rise happier and healthy children for which brings about nation buildings and reduces deviance and vandalism in the society. They are also able to help fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large. But it is astonishing to discover that girls and women who attend the empowerment centres are perceived by the society as being social misfits to the community (persons that have refused to follow the normal or general view of the society. That emphasizes on general education to be empowered not by attending empowerment or training centres). Whereas what they are doing is beneficial not just to them but to the community at large this will be explained In view of a respondent's response to the way she is viewed by her environment and peers.

My dear you see these girls and women that attend this thing they call women empowerment centres, they are lost in this life. They are making noise that they are here to get empowered and become autonomous whereas in reality they are running away from general education because of the discipline that's found in the general education and they come here to practice their lesbianism and prostitution skills (Simo, Sainte Famille Centre, October 2020).

From the above expression, we discovered that people have a misconception about what empowerment centres are all about maybe because they haven't being educated or communicate about it. But this conception is not true because the sainte famille centre intimately understands the importance of empowering women and girls to become strong leaders in the community. Also they are involved with educative talks and orientations of girls into leadership and allow them lead which is done through the program established by Mr. Tagne David of sainte famille on the program 'l'insertion des jeunes filles dans le development'. (The insertion of young girls in development projects or program).

In addition, we discovered that some respondents face similar issues as concerns their attending empowerment centres. And this made some of them to feel bad and even frustrated. As a result affect some of their performances at the centre according to the explanations of a respondent.

You see these women who attend this empowerment centres, they are not good women and are not good examples to our daughters. They claim that they want to get them selves trained to do what I don't even know whereas they just want to be loosed when meeting up with other women. I don't think that opening these centres in this area was ever a good idea if I were the government I would have closed the nonsense ever since because its destroying our women .(Brandon resident at Bonanjo Oct. 2020).

The above expression denotes the fact they are perceived by their communities, peers and sometimes even family relatives as social misfits which turns to make them feel bad, frustrated and almost giving up in their chosen field of studies. And sometimes they turn to blame the creators of the centres that is chief executive officers and even the government that they are not playing their roles in the communities of sensitizing and educating people on what women's empowerment is all about and what empowerment centres are all about too.

Nevertheless it was mind relieving when during the field a respondent made a statement that negates the concepts of people as them being social misfits she said and I quote "there's no development without the involvement of empowered women and girls in the society.

4.2.1.2. A place that breathes insubmisive and indiscipline women

Originally, women's empowerment has become a significant topic in what concerns development and economics. Economic empowerment allows controlling and benefiting from resources, assets and income. It also aids the ability to manage risks and improve women's wellbeing. Furthermore, women's empowerment refers to women's ability to make strategic life choices which had been previously denied to them and nations businesses. Communities and groups benefit from the implementation of programs and policies adopted by women's empowerment centres. As women empowerment centres enhances the quality and quantity of human resources available for development. Empowerment remains the main procedural concern when addressing human rights and development. Yet the fact that the women in the centres get themselves trained in becoming independent and autonomous they are perceived by the society as engaging into such activities as a means to override their husbands, families and people as a whole reason why they are termed as being in submissive and indiscipline women. Holding to the fact that they want to control the society using the pretext of knowing their rights and getting themselves trained in order to become independent and occupy decision making positions. Data collected from some women of the empowerment centres.

I am a proud Douala man and I believe that a woman's place is in the kitchen and that's what I do my wife doesn't work she stays at home to take care of my

kids and i. you see these women who are claiming that they want to be financially autonomous, they are just wanting to get power so that they will dominate over their husbands at home. Most of them have become disrespectful and not submissive to their husbands.(Mba Akwa oct. 2020).

In this light, we see that people perceive the centre as a place that breathes and nurtures in submissive women. According to the respondents, people think of the girls and women who get themselves empowered as wanting to challenge men.

The way men think about us that attend the empowerment centre is that it is a place that breathe women that are not submissive and undisciplined as a result we are all termed that way per what I know especially the women who do those activities that are considered to be men's activities they are seen to be wanting to show off or that they are dominating. Unlike we do they don't see the fact that the women might just be excising their talents and passions or because they want to become the better versions of themselves This they have just the negative orientation about the whole matter but as we were taught at the centre we give a deaf ear and move forward. (Irene CPF Bonamousadi sept. 2020).

Alike to the above assertion, we discover that people think of women and girls who attend the empowerment centres as being dominating and wanting to show off, Especially when the women take up activities that are considered as activities for men, such as; motto mechanic, catapillar driving and construction.

My child any woman who strives to know her rights and wants to become financially independent you should know that that kind of woman doesn't want to submit her husband and wants to challenge men in her socociety(Mama Rose CPF Akwa oct.2020).

We can say from the above that the reason why until now in Cameroon in general and Douala in particular have not been able to attain a level of gender equality which is one of the sustainable development goals is because the stereotyped concepts of people who still see women's empowerment as a means of dominating over men than seeing it as way of acquiring development.

4.2.1.3. A place for those who cannot pursue general education

Before all else, the empowerment centres have as aim to reduce the vulnerable population which is made up of mostly women and young girls and the way they deem it necessary to do so is by creating empowerment centres and training the people to becoming self- reliant through the economic activities that's carried out at the centre. As earlier said the empowerment centres have has ad aim to absorb everyone but that doesn't mean that those who attend the centres are only vulnerable and persons who have been rejected by the society

because amongst the trainees there are persons who are no vulnerable and they decide to join the centre even after their academic portfolio because they want to add to the certificates the received a training that will help boast them financially according to what we were told during the focus group discussions and during the course of our observations.

Men and boys around me as friends or outsiders usually call us the rejected ones. They say all sort of things that we are children who didn't want to go through to school the normal way and since we tried and failed they say that the general education has rejected us that is why we found refuge at the empowerment centres which is very easy going and a laisser faire place where there's no discipline..... I don't really feel or think I am rejected by the society because my decision to attend the centre was solely mind after I graduated with an hnd in accounting I decided to come and do hotel cattery services so that I can have a business of my own while I keep searching for a job.(Clarisse Sainte famille oct. 2020).

From the above, we discover that people perceive the women who attend the centre as persons who have been rejected by general education. This isn't true because those that attend the centres aim at getting themselves practical skills for entrepreneurial reasons. Moreover with activities such as alphabetization, the centre aims at training even the illiterates to becoming litterates.

I am an Afican man and I don't buy the idea. They should alow those things to the white people because in Africa we know women are supposed to be under men. Most of these women who attend these women empowerment centres are not married because they are rejected by the African society. You see me like this, I cannot married that kind of woman because she wont transmit the Afrucan culture to mu children she will rather be training on dictrines I don't even know where she will pick from in the name of women's rights. (Leo, Meridians Nov. 2020).

Looking from the above assertion and their points of view and the perception the society holds about the empowerment centres and those who attend the empowerment centres we see that they are rejected by the society and seen like persons who have been rejected by the general education and for this reason it becomes difficult for them to be integrated into community development and national development and policies in the society. But with very close observations we discovered that the opinion that the people have of the trainees and the empowerment centres is not true. From the analysis we got from our field work data, all the inhabitants of the Douala city around the women's empowerment centres have a negative conception of the place. Negative because apart from the inhabitants we interviewed, we also interviewed the directors of the centres and those who attend the centres. And we discovered from direct observation and response from participants that the centres are attaining their

objectives of empowering women in different dimensions with the activities they carry out at the centres. In the next chapter, we will illustrate how women empowerment centres contribute to the amelioration of the living condition of the sawa women in Douala.

4.2.2. Perceptions of Sawa women who do not attend the women's empowerment centres in Douala

The women empowerment centres are not attended by all ssawa women. In as much as they do not attend the centre, they have their views to share about what they think about the women empowerment centres in Douala. These views they have about the empowerment centres will be expantiated upon in the paragraphs that follows.

4.2.2.1. A place of excellence

It is important to note that, even though the world keeps constraining people with its norms, beliefs and values, there exist a special breed of persevering people who rise above that to redefine themselves and those around them. These are the change makers who are not willing to let others define them, their roles in society and what they can or cannot do. And this spirit is best defined in the work of strong women who despite several obstacles, have redefined and transformed their lives and that of several individuals in the society at large and their communities in particular. We understand that women and young people in developing countries are undervalued and underrepresented and few initiatives have helped bridged the gap like the presence of women empowerment centres. The goal of gender equality has always been at the centre of the economic and political agenda during the two decades since the adoption of the 1995 Beijing declaration and platform for action. In September 2015, world leaders adopted the 17 new global sustainable development goals and 169 targets with goal number 5 specifically on gender equality and the empowerment of women for which one cannot do without the other. It is therefore encouraging and mind blowing to know that empowerments are perceived by those who attend the centres and outsiders as a place of manifestation of brilliancy as per the testimonials gotten from local women around the community and women who attend the centre. When we carried out field work at the local communities of the Sawa women of the littoral region, we were recounted this by a 'local woman' who doesn't attend any of the empowerment centre in the local community Deido. She explained as this:

when I sit by my house which is beside the meridians centre which is just by my house and see the women and young girls who could be my children carrying out their training sessions and how they concentrate and put in efforts to come out with what they have being taught and tend to envy to the extent that I wished I was given another possibility to choose this milieu in order to get myself empowered not just for myself but for the community at large as these women and girls do. (Mama Rose, Deido community Oct. 2020).

From the above assertion we can then come out with analysis on the fact the implementation or implanting of women empowerment centres by the government, non-governmental organizations and private individuals has been a spring board to development at large. This is because from the above response we discover that the issue of empowering women is not limited to a four wall of women attending the centres to get empowered through theoretical and practical knowledge but also raises an awareness to the entire public of what empowerment is all about and it could go a long way in implementing development projects. We continue to get the feelings of these trainees of the women empowerment centres. When we carrying out the field work we got another testimonial given to us by a trainee in one of the empowerment centres about how she's now regarded by the society at large and family.

Every time I see my neighbour going to the women empowerment centres I feel happy for them because this my neighbour makes bag with the use of materials and its so beautiful that her husband calls her mama meridiands to show how proud he is of his wife (Mama BEATRICE, Bonantone Nov. 2020).

From the above comment, we understood that the women expressed the feelings of been accomplished and that they are on track with what they are doing, and this further gives them a boast to keep up the good work. We also discovered the brilliancy of another trainee of tone of the women empowerment centres as she explained.

My friends who use to mock at me that I have decided to do 'la serie C' now run up to me with their torn dresses and other related problems for me to help them out with added to the fact that I still help them with their assignments of the general education because before coming to the centre I did the general studies and learnt the Spanish language as a compliment (Carine trainee in the sainte famille center Douala Deido Oct. 2020).

We see that from the above, one can understands that some of the women at the centres continue to leave their impacts in their local communiies and the national level at lare due to the fact that the creation and formation of women empowerment centres was not a mere formality as their impacts remained felt in their communities in particular and the society as a whole.

4.2.2.2 A Social center place

Generally social centres are community spaces. They are buildings used for a range of disparate activities. This can be linked by virtue of being not for profit. They might also be organizing centres for local activities or they might provide support networks for minority groups such as prisoners and refugees. Often they provide a base for initiatives such as cafes, free shops, public computer labs legal collectives and free housing for travellers. The services are determined by both the needs of the community in which the social centre is based and the skills which the participants have to offer. Also social centres tend to be in large buildings and this can host activist meetings, concerts, bookshops, dance performance and art exhibitions.

Besides, social centres provide a space to socialize in a bar, café or music venue. They also provide access to alternative, hard to access information through projects such as libraries, info shops, film nights and talks. Other activities organized might include events, meetings, exhibitions, classes and workshops on a range of topics.

The above activities are run on an entirely voluntary basis by the people involved, who are neither charity workers nor social workers. The activities are run in a spirit of cooperation, solidarity and mutual aid. While every individual case is different, most centres are run on the basis of non-hierarchical consensus decisions making. Politically most often lean to the left, being anarchist, autonomist or communist in view point. They tend to adopt an ethical vegan philosophy while accepting that individuals involved may have differing personal lifestyles.

More to those social centres are abandoned buildings, warehouses, factories, and military forts, schools that have been occupied by individuals and transformed into cultural and political wheel explicitly free from both the market and from state control though it might be hard to tell at first the social centres aren't ghettos. They are windows not only into another way to live.

From the above assertion on what social centres are, we noticed that the people perceive the empowerment centres as social centres according to what we realized at the field that unlike being a training centre that trains and empower women to becoming self-reliant and autonomous they rather see it as a space built and controlled by the government to help vulnerable persons especially women and young girls by integrating disparate activities that could help keep the people of the centre busy with the activities that carried out at the centre as means of helping the individuals who carry out the activities because after their workshop

activities most often they are given some of their fabrications to take home as testing and benefits of training at the centres and people see it as that the centre is rather there to help and feed minority groups such as widows, single mothers, refugees and other minority groups according to what we were told by the respondents.

I think this place they call women empowerment centres is rather a social centre where the government and private individuals have decided to help a group of persons that they have decided to help under the canopy of training them to become autonomous(Anni Akwaoct.2020).

From the above, it is glaring that people perceive women empowerment centres as charity organizations. That is a place that has been put in place to help the needy and the poor. But this is not true when we see the words of other respondents that the empowerment centres are present to give women control over their lives and achieve gender equality for durable development.

4.2.2.3.A home for the needy

Initially, the empowerment centres offer professional one on one counselling at an almost free public service to enable the people to address their financial challenges and needs and plans for their futures. This is because of the fact that they work with vulnerable young girls, single mothers and women that consistently need sustainable projects to empower vulnerable people to be able to raise money to pay for children's fees and even their personal fees, and take care of their basic needs and that of their families. The fact that that they also support women to set up little businesses through loans like what is done in the government centres in the name of rotative funds and agricultural activities such as plantains, vegetables, poultry, fish ponds just to name a few which are possible around the homes. And prior to this we discovered while at the field that during the field work, all the centres that we carried out our research, the registration varies from 17,000frs to 50,000frs which is considered in the general school as school fees. And relative to general education we noticed that these centres are affordable. This is so in order to absorb the general public even though it is perceived badly by some other people to the extent of ridiculing some of the trainees of the centres according to what we were told during the focus group discussions sessions.

I cannot send my daughter to these women empowerment centres. For me the place is meant for people who are vulnerable and in need. I prefer to send my children to the general education sector which is more open and out of box, which gives the possibility of many openings. (Damaris CPF Bonamousadi Oct., 2020).

Apart from being cheap the empowerment centres unlike the general or circular education are known to be very accommodating and it is more like a family than a place meant strictly for work and business. The staff at the centre is amazing, reports from some of the trainees holds that the staff is extremely accommodating, friendly and organized. The centres care about each and every trainee and see to it that their individual needs are met if possible and necessary. Love, harmony and oneness is the watch word of the trainees and their staffs all together.

Unlike the general education and schools where the discipline masters and mistresses punish for the wrongs of the students without explaining to them where they went wrong and what is not to be done. But those of the empowerment centres are considered as children and friends by their coach. I see how they treat them as family by instilling in them moral values and counselling session through the doctrinal classes they attend at the catholic parish. (Elsa New deido oct. 2020).

From the above we notice that unlike the general education, women empowerment centres treat their trainees as family members. As a result, it becomes easy for them to transmit moral and cultural values to the trainees who intend transmits it to the other generation.

Conclusion

This chapter describes the perception of people about the women empowerment centres. The perception people have about the empowerment centres are generally that, at the centre women gain power, self-esteem and communal action knowledge. That, women empowerment centres commonly known as ‘maison des femmes’ is a place which trains women to becoming autonomous. People perceived that, the centres were created to meet up the UN goals and sustainable development goals of improving on women’s skills by developing empowerment become independent and able to stand for their rights in society. The centres are perceived as investing in women and girls which creates long term effects that yields multiple benefits which extends to their families, communities and countries. The centres play a role in changing the mentalities of women positively because of its culture. The centres provide support networks for minority groups such as prisoners and refugees. Women empowerment programs can therefore generate better jobs in the informal sector, improving the prospects of women regularly contributing to social security scheme available to the informal sector. Empowerment centres focus on equipping women and young girls with skills and knowledge to actively participate in the process of development; they also carry out programs that spur the women and youth girls to realize their full potential for sustainable

livelihoods. The empowerment centres offer professional one on one counselling at an almost free public service to enable the people to address their financial challenges and needs and plans for their futures. Finally, people perceived the empowerment centres as a place to train people to becoming self- reliant through the economic activities that are carried out at the centre. The chapter that follows will give to us the contributions of women empowerment centres to the living condition of the sawa women of Douala.

CHAPTER FIVE

**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT CENTRES AND THE
AMELIORATION OF LIVING CONDITION AMONG THE
SAWA PEOPLE**

Introduction

This this chapter will be demonstrating and analysing how the various empowerment activities carried out at the women empowerment centres contributes to the living condition of the sawa women in Douala and to local development in the Douala municipality. This will be done with the use of verbal expressions gotten from the respondents for emphases. We will discover how the various activities has helped to ameliorate the lives of this women, their families and communities economically, politically, socially, environmentally, health and culturally how the cultural activities has helped in making the sawa culture popular and well known in the Douala municipality.

5.1. Domains of Contributions of the empowerment centres to the living condition of the sawa women in Douala

This part of the work will elaborate on the domains where the empowerment centres contribute to the living condition of the sawa women. This is to say; economic, political, social, environmental and health domains.

5.1.1 Economic development

Economic development is the creation of wealth from which community benefits are realized. It is more than a jobs program. It is an investing in growing the economy and enhancing the prosperity and quality of life for all residents. It is usually measured by an increase in the gross domestic product (GDP) or aggregate income. An example of economic development is when a country or community begins to produce more products and increase its overall wealth. It was discovered that worldwide experiences shows that supporting a stronger role for women contributes to economic development, it improves child survival and overall family health and it reduces fertility This helping to slow the population growth rates. In short investing in women is a sustainable development role and should be regarded with high esteem. The medium used by the government and other private individuals to invest in women is through the women's empowerment centres and the activities carried out at the centres. This this portion will be demonstrating how empowerment centres train women to effect economic development in the Douala community.

5.1.1.1. Entrepreneurship

As businesses and workers become more efficient, costs fall, profits and income rise, demand expands, and economic growth and job accelerate. We notice in our society that entrepreneurs boost economic growth by introducing innovative technologies, products and services. Increased competition from entrepreneurs challenges existing firms to become more competitive. Entrepreneurs provide new short opportunities in the short and long term. This is true in what we discovered in the field that, contributing to community development through participation in corporate social responsibility, entrepreneurs contribute to and support the development of infrastructure for education, health care, business training and mentorship and other social needs. Women entrepreneurs account for improved economic growth and stability within the country. They inspire women to start businesses. This leads to more job creation for women which reduces the gender gap in the work force. Women entrepreneurs have potentials to create employment opportunities. Create wealth state and generally grow the economy. They constitute half of the population. Therefore if the economic status state woman is improved through entrepreneurial development, the socio-economic well-being will be attained. This is evident according to the respondent's words as will be stated and analysed below. The sawa women are therefore trained on entrepreneurship, and the knowledge they get helps them to create wealth. For instance, some of the activities for which they were trained for has not only helped them make wealth but also to create employment for other unemployed women and girls.

I am able to create wealth and even provide employment to others because of the skills acquired at the centre here. In the centre we are trained to be self-dependent and self-reliance and not to be dependent on others for the acquisition of wealth if not you will never get to that desired level. Looking at the society today I don't know if you have noticed it but I have, the population of job seekers out-weighs the number of jobs available and apart from that salaried jobs impoverish rather than enrich reason why I decided to attend the centre and learn some skills in order to create wealth and employment for others. In as much as I don't have a very big business but I have being able to create employment and believe moving forward. This is because I was taught through business seminars on how to come out with a business develop it and manage the presence of competitors. What I was trained to do is the fabrication of liquid soaps for cleaning and glass wash for offices and with that I have a cleaning agency where we dispatch persons to clients who need our services to clean up things especially with the raging pandemic(Violette Meridians Nov. 2020).

From the above we notice that, the empowerment centres inute women and girls of the sawa community with skills. These skills return helps them to create businesses from

themselves and even employment to other people. It is important to note that most people suffers unemployment, other women end up being dependent on their families. But with the skills gotten from the empowerment centres, they donot only get themselves income generating activities, but they are able to employ other people thus reducing unemployment in the community.

for me I can say the activities carried out in the centre generally helps us to come out with entrepreneurial skills because from the various activities learned at the centre, you will discover that there isn't any that is given us to end up working under people but rather it makes us become bosses of our self. Not to be proud, but generally am someone who doesn't like the idea of working some other person because I don't like to be constrained or being bossed around. Cookery and hotel catering and with that even though I am still in the learning process because I am not done with my program officially yet, but I do manage a little restaurant with two workers who serve as hostesses and equally help me in cooking and this really helps me a big lot to foster my training expenses and be able to pay the two girls. (Carine Meridians sept. 2020).

From the above, we discover that the activities carried out at the centre helps or trains the women and girls in becoming entrepreneurs by setting up a business or businesses and taking up financial risks for future profit making. We discovered that they are able to think of a business enterprise, initiate it, organize and combine factors of production, operate the enterprise and undertake risks and handle economic uncertainty involved in running it. And this brings about development in general and community development in particular. Unlike before when the biological role of the woman limited her to the role of just a dependent housewife, we discover that the Sawa women of the littoral region who attend the centre are making a very big difference among other women with the skills they have developed in entrepreneurship they assist financially in the constructions and infrastructures in the development of their respective communities. This intend contributes to local development in that women with their abilities of collaboration, relationship oriented, emotional intelligence which is a competitive advantage, parenting experience and their ability to create a women-friendly corporate culture they are able to collaborate with other companies, mentor persons which is important in business, balance work life with parenting and excel as excellent leaders.

5.1.1.2. Employment

Unemployment generally occurs when workers who want to work are unable to find jobs which lowers economiUnemployment is a term referring to individuals who are

employable and actively seeking for jobs but are unable to find a job. Usually measured by dividing the number of unemployed people by those in the output. However, high rate of unemployment are a signal to economic distress. Sometimes unemployment is caused by slow economic growth due to increase in population, small industries, slow rate of industrialization and the fact of depending on agriculture for survival which is a seasonal occupation the case of developing countries like Cameroon. There exist different types of unemployment voluntary and involuntary unemployment, cyclical unemployment, frictional unemployment and structural unemployment. And this unemployment has a lot of negative effects on the people like poverty, financial hardships, homelessness, deviance, crimes, shame, stigma, violence just to name a few. Development cannot be spoken of in a nation or community where such situations are glaring. We cannot dispute the fact that Cameroon being a third world country suffers these plagues in their diverse communities.

Now looking at the activities carried out in the empowerment centres it was discovered that it employs not only individuals who attend the centres but equally employs other individuals in the community as it will be analysed in the paragraphs that follows with the expressions of individuals.

For me I can say without trembling that the activities that we do at the empowerment centres contribute in developing our community a great lot especially in what concerns employment. I can say this because I am privileged to be one of those who have received a capital from the government to start up a business. To be explicit at our centre which is a government empowerment centre, I don't know about the other centres we have what we call the rotative fund which is usually given to the trainee with the best business plan or project. This amount is not fixed as it depends on the business project and the capital needed to carry out the business. When you are awarded this you are expected to refund the capital with a little interest so that someone else could be helped in one year. Apart from that you are given a supervisor to follow up the project and help you succeed in the business while employing others. For me, the activity I did was hairdressing and with the capital was able to open a lucrative saloon and employ girls with hairdressing skills to be able to run the business and be paid. (Pamela CPF Akwa Sept. 2020).

From the above explanation, we discover that the activities in the centre contributes in the amelioration of the living condition of the sawa women. With the help of the rotative fund given to those with good business plans, those who benefit from it create themselves income generating activities and become self-employed. Another informant had this to say:

"My dear for me I am doing esthetic at the centre as an activity. This has to do with taking care of the body through body massaging, body oil mixtures in fact everything that has to do with taking care of the skin. And this has helped me a

lot in becoming employed since at first what I had no work to do and had drop out from general education because of lack of finances. But now I can take care of my financial needs due to the little income I receive from given body treatments". (Nadege CPF Bonamousadi, Sept. 2020).

In the same vein, the activities of the empowerment centres have helped in ameliorating her living condition by enabling her to have for herself and income generating activity that permits her to take care of her feminine basic needs without having to be a burden to anyone. In the same manner, Ariane revealed that:

"Here at the Sainte famille centre whatever activity we take, we have three years of intensive trainings and during the third like where I am presently the centre provides us with internship sites, so we are sent to companies and other enterprises for internship and professionalization. When this is done and you put up a good character coupled with hard work you can get hired by the company and even for those who don't get hired unfortunately like I wasn't you can go start up something for yourself with the knowledge and skills gotten from the centre and internship site. Like me I do my tailoring at home since I don't yet have a workshop and I get paid as I am known in the quarter as a good tailor". (Ariane CPF Bonamousadi Nov. 2020).

From the above affirmation, we discover that the activities carried out in the empowerment centres contribute to local development as it is able to employ persons who have good results by given them a capital to set up their businesses and intend employ other people. Also from the activities carried out within these empowerment centres we discovered that it helps them in opening businesses and other income generating activities after their training and with this they are able to participate in community development through manual and financial participation This development.

I use to be a housewife that doesn't work to earn any money was just depending on my husband for every expenses of the family and the upbringing of the children so things were really so difficult for my husband a lone to the extent that when we have a little problem he will call me a liability and tell me that I don't offer anything to his life rather I make him spend more. When I related this situation to a friend, she spoke to me about the meridian centre that I could register and get a training which could help me have an income generating activity to avoid the insults from my husband all the time since the registration is just 24000 FRS. I did as advice and registered to do 'costomization' this the making of stuffs with the use of material such as bags, shoes, earrings and other things and with that I have being able to do some and sell and the last time my children were sent away for fees I was able to pay their fees to the last time with the money gotten from the items I sold and when my husband came back and was told he was really happy and for the first time called me an asset not a liability. (Kelly Meridians, Sept.2020).

From the above, we see that the empowerment centres has helped to take the women from a state of financial dependency to a state of financial independency. It is glaring from the

above that women who were not able to take care of their family's financial needs are now able to do so because of their income generating activity learned from the empowerment centres. Others who had difficulties sending their children to school because of lack of money, are now able to send their children to school and improve on their family's living condition.

I am a student at the University of Douala currently doing masters. There are various activities at the centre which people are trained for and when I registered I chose the fabrication of liquid soap. A little of my story is that I am not from a rich family we are poor and it has not been easy with my parents feigning for us in what concerns school and evening the provision of some basic needs of the home. When I had my BAC, my parents were not able to send me to school until when I attended a seminar one time I was told about the empowerment centres which I decided to attend the meridians centre since it's cheaper as compared to the others. Then I took the fabrication of liquid after a year was able to start up a business in selling liquid soaps that's how I saw myself through the university. Until the outbreak of the corona virus when I got large orders this large delivery and more income and now I don't only sponsor myself in school but I help my family needs. (Clarisse, CPF Akwa, Sept. 2020).

This means that, the empowerment centres has not only learnt to ameliorate the lives of sawa women in Douala but also ameliorate the lives of youths in the community. With the skills gotten from the centre, the women are able to open up petit businesses for themselves which they use in seeing themselves through school and other trainings they are passionate about, at the same take care of their family's need.

I am a single mother and a trainee at the meridians empowerment centre. Considering my status as a single mother saw that general education will be too expensive for me to further my studies at the same time take care of my child so decided to hold on with school and get myself trained so that I can better take care of myself and my child. My own field of training at the centre is needing, fabrication of bleach and the soya beans oil. The good thing about the centre is that you can decide to do more than one field then while attending the centre you are able to be gaining income through the little fabrications you do under the strict supervision of the trainees. With this we are able to use some for house consumption and sales. (Pamela CPF Akwa oct. 2020).

From the above, it is glaring that the activities carried out at the women empowerment centres contribute to community development of the Sawa community in particular as the women of the Sawa community were the target population of this study and the centres which this field work was carried out are located in the towns of the Sawa people of the littoral region. The activities at the centre help in poverty reduction as the women are able to have income generating activity from what they studied in the centre and with this they are able not only to take of themselves, but equally take care of their families who make up the society.

5.1.1.4. Increase in country's gross domestic product (G.D.P).

The GDP of a country is the total of all value added created in an economy. The value added means the value of goods and services that have been produced minus the value of the goods and services needed to produce them which is called the intermediate consumption. For which an increase is a sign of economic growth. It is also the monetary value of all finished goods and services made within a country during a specific period. Money is an essential element in the household livelihoods and those who control it have considerable power. However development projects seeking to alleviate poverty house-hold poverty and promote economic growth often speak of the empowerment of women in relation to promoting women's access to credit or income generation. This is evident with the Sawa women who are able to develop petit businesses through the activities they carry out at the women's empowerment centres. And with this they are able to pay what is called auto-defence and other little development projects in their community as will be seen below.

With what i was taught in the centre and what I continue to receive as teaching because in as much as I am able to manage my little business on my own I still attend the centre for more lessons. What I do is that I fabricate coconut oil, soya beans oil, detergents and some other things then I buy some other things from other people them sell just in front of the house and with the money gotten apart from taking care of my family, I also pay boys in the quarter who always take up time to clean the environments, create little routes and open up passages for water to pass through so that we can all live in a comfortable environment. (Prudence, CPF Akwa, Oct.2020).

The above assertion affirms that the activities of the centres contributes to the amelioration of their living condition of the sawa women by providing them with self-employed skills to raise income and even provide jobs for other people in the community.

5.1.2.Socialisation

Research has demonstrated that strong relationships between schools, families and community members can positively affect student achievement and outcomes. In addition to that, when families know about and encourage students to take rigorous classes, students are more likely to enrol and score higher on tests. Also it should be noted that early childhood development impacts children's social and emotional health. Early childhood educators have the important responsibility of helping children learn key social and emotional coping skills. Parents equally have the full responsibility to give the children home basic education at home especially women and girls because it is noticed that women spend more time with children and at a particular age the children feel more comfortable discussing pertinent issues with

their mothers than their fathers who are sometimes considered to be the strictest of the parents. Also, they can help young minds develop a sense of curiosity as they grow in their families love. Apart from that the family has the responsibility of instilling values of citizenship and belonging in the society. During the field work, the activities on capacity building help the women in the socialization of children at home in particular and community at large.

Due to some seminars we attend at the centre as part of our training sessions I attended one on positive parenting where we were taught on how to live at home with children and especially following the pandemic how to follow up children closely. Apart from that we had another seminar on discovering when a child begins to put up deviant attitude like being involve in drugging, pornography videos and even when they are part of a cult or bad gang. (Carine Sainte famille Oct.2020).

From the above, we understand that the activities contribute to the amelioration of the sawa women living condition by teaching them socialisation of children. With this socialisation, children are taught the norms and values of the sawa culture to avoid deviance attitudes in the community

For me what I can say about the centre is that it's a place to be because apart from the training that we receive which places us at a financial independence, it also helps us with tips on how to watch over the children and the level of vigilance to put up with children at home, apart from that I attended the seminar organized by the centre on discovering deviant attitudes in children and it has helped me a lot in grooming my children. For instance how to always check carefully the bed and matrass of the children because that's where some children hide drugs, to be suspicious and follow up the children's behaviour at home in what concerns smoking because some of them who are into smoking we discover that they always love perfuming their room or sucking sweet, also how to put up parent guide on the phone of children that restricts them from bad sites like pornography sides and online prostitution in fact they are too many to name but I appreciate the work they do so far (Nelly Meridians sept.2020).

We see that children's socialization is very important to every community as it ensures the younger people have equal opportunities to develop themselves. It equally ensures that they stay away from school vices that are as a result of ignorance. Girls and women who receive training from the centers play an important role in community development as educators which cannot be doubted. They give the members of the communities the much needed basic education starting at home when they teach young children and to even the education in schools where some of them are teachers of junior classes of young children like

the nursery, class one to about class three per what we got as responses from some the respondents as men refuse to take such classes in school.

In addition to that, they are role models and caretakers. This is evident and cannot be doubted as one of the biological role of women is caregiving and possibly role models to younger children especially. And they often take the lead of helping the family to adapt to different circumstances like the outrageous pandemic of the corona virus. Because of the fact that they are tasked with both taking care of the younger children and the elderly, they play a big role in serving as role models of these children. Every single thing they do is seen by the little ones of the community.

They equally have the teenagers and younger ladies looking up to them and watching their behavior. It is for this reason that they often do their best to set a good example for the children, younger women and sometimes even young men in the community. When the younger people have people they can look up too, the community will always remain hopeful for a better future.

Finally, in what concerns socialization, we discovered that due to the sensitive nature of women and girls to the problems of others and their ability to empathize than just sympathizing, the Sawa women who attend the women's empowerment centres contribute to community development by serving as volunteers. They often set aside some of their time to give helping hand to the less privilege in different ways for instance they go to schools, orphanages, farms among other places which leads to community development to give either moral help, financial and sometimes material helps which they get from the fabrications they do at the centre. This has ameliorated their relationship with their husbands as their husbands see them as asserts and aids rather than rivals with whom they have to compete for power.

5.1.2.1. Education of children

From the field work carried, it was discovered that most of the women of the empowerment centres and the Sawa women in particular, attend the empowerment centres to be able to get financial independence so that they can meet up the needs of their children in what concerns schooling and other basic necessities of the family since some of them are either single mothers, head of households where they are responsible for their families up keep. From the focus group discussions held, it was discovered that they give priority to the younger generation schooling than to older people because according to them in as much as

being financially independent is good, they prefer sending the younger ones to school because of their growing community in order for them to have educated persons that even though the education doesn't give a job as they hold, but it opens doors for opportunities and fast or quick promotions. It was also discovered that too often women are trapped in dangerous situations because they have no financial means to escape. Without finances women faces domestic violence at home or exploitation and abusive relationships where some times the men tend to equally maltreat the children by not sending them to school. This they are forced to stay in situations that put their lives at risk just have shelter and a little money with which they can sponsor their children to their desired academic levels. So when they are able to carry out the activities learned at the centres and become financially independent, they have the power to remove themselves from situations that put their lives at risk at the same time able to take up their responsibility over their children by sending them to school. A case gotten during when the field work was carried out. *I felt so miserable and lonely, but I couldn't leave my husband because I had nowhere to go to with my three kids*” (Mbango 2020).

Things started to change for Mbango when after she was told by a friend about the women empowerment centre that trains vulnerable women and girls on what they will like to do at a relative cheaper price than the general education. With the help of the friend she was able to enrol and take part in the activities of the centre. “Mbango added every time I go to the centre for the usual training and sometimes for the seminars, issues of gender based violence were addressed and how to get help in case you find yourself in an abusive relationship or marriage. Apart from that the centre provides with vocational trainings which enables us to earn a living and since I loved fashion I decided to take up tailoring at the centre whereas while married I had no idea what I would do with the rest of my life little did I know I would find light at the end of the tunnel. I then began my little sewing and was ending money for which I finally left my abusive relationship and above all able to take care of my children's education. Seems like a dream come true for me. (Mba cpf Akwa Oct 2020).

From the above we discover that women who are financially independent cannot only contribute to the everyday expenses of the household but also help to meet their family goals and take care of the education of their children. It is extremely important that every woman becomes financially independent so that they never feel helpless in life. Apart from that it is a fundamental human right and sustainable development goal that children should be able receive quality education and be able to have career dreams and goals.

The fight to end extreme poverty will always remain a dream without the education of children for the next generation. When children in particular and people in general have access to a quality education, they are more likely to live poverty free-lives.in fact a quality

education would be the most effective tool against poverty and instability in a community. Children who are denied quality education do not have a fair chance of escaping poverty in the future. These realities continue to affect some children and girls in particular. Denying children quality education due to poverty harms the next generation making it harder for communities to come out of poverty. Lucky enough that activist and women's empowerment centres have put up strategies to fight the current happenings in the community of Douala by fighting against the denial of children's education and the economic empowerment of women.

In addition to that we also discovered during the field work that the activities carried out in the empowerment centres contribute a lot to their community development. This is seen in the light of women being able to give quality education to their children because of the money they earn from their little activities. Let's take note that we cannot talk of development in general and local development in particular without talking of children's education and every development first of all begins with the family even though the family is the smallest unit of the society, it remains the most essential part of the society because the society is made up of families. Consequently a developed family in order words breathe development in to the society. Will take another comment or words verbatim of a respondent.

The activities we carry out at the centre that is the fabrication of some things, seminars and other activities helps me and my family a great lot in that there are so many things I don't buy in the market again I prefer to get the necessary materials and fabricate them at home which turns out to be cheaper than buying. And the money we were to use to get those things like bleach, soya beans oil, coconut oil, liquid soap and hand sanitizer, we prefer to save the money and use for other pressing needs. (Stacy Meridians Nov. 2020).

From the above, we can see that the empowerment centres do not only train the women with skills of production for distribution only. They are equally trained with skills that they can produce basic needs for family consumption. In this light, the women are able to produce household food items such as vegetable oil, soap for washing. With this it limits cost and expenses and permits them to save more for other expenses.

I am grateful to persons who came up with this idea of having empowerment centres to empower especially women who thought they had missed it in life and there's no remedy this called upon to endure and regret their situation for the rest of their life but that is not case for it's never too late to amends. When I came to the centre, the first activity I took was the customization which is the fabrication of things with the used of materials what is commonly called Ankara designs. After about three months was able to put up my designs in the market for sale. Then I decided to do needling which is making shoes and other things

with the use of bids. With this am able pay my children's fees to the school of their choice and take care of bills at home. (Violette CPF Akwa, Oct. 2020).

In the same light, we can attest to the fact that the skills gotten by the sawa women from the empowerment centres, primarily helps them take care of their family needs. Nevertheless, it also permits them to consume what they produce. For instance with the women involved in customisation and needing who comes up with new designs, they wear it on themselves and their children as means of advertisement to get customers for their goods.

5.1.3. Environmental development

We cannot talk of community development without talking of the environment and its contribution to the development of the Douala community. As the other contributions of activities the empowerment centres that contribute to local development, environmental protection is another aspect of sustainable development. This point will be analysed in relation to how this contributes to development in the community of Douala. It should be noted that environment is the source of a country's development. The sustainable development of Africa in general and Cameroon in particular is mainly dependent on goods and services obtained from its environment and natural resources base. This therefore calls for proper management of natural capital such as land, water, forest, biodiversity, marine ecosystems and mineral resources as they are primary sources of the country's socio-economic development. And without properly conserving them and the environment as a whole the entire effort to achieve sustainable development will not meet its goal. This it implies that the environment is the source of life, economic activities and social development. Implying that the remaining pillars of sustainable development are dependent on the environment. Hence environment deserves equal if not greater attention in what concerns the other dimensions of sustainable development. Given their degree of dependence on it and conserving the environment then becomes a necessity and not just a desired want. The sawa women in order to protect the environment engage in cleaning campaigns where they clean up the roads, gutters, clear grasses in the compound. Sometimes they go to the extent of placing notice boards notifying persons that if dirt is dumped in the area, or persons are caught passing out urine or faeces they will be fined and even given an imprisonment penalty. With this people are forced to keep their environment clean.

It was discovered that women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Therefore their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable

development and without the active participation of women, sustainable development and efforts for environmental protections cannot succeed. This is because it has been discovered that women have invaluable source of knowledge and expertise on environmental protection issues and are more concerned than men with the problem of environment and climate change due to the nature of their household tasks, such as fetching water, collecting wood, cooking, washing just to name a few.

In addition to that, it is noticed that women understand the art of sustainable consumption patterns than men, in the sense that they are more likely to purchase environmental-friendly products. They are better than men in purchasing organic food and eco-labelled products. Which shows that empowering women with greater household decision making powers and active part in environmental protection programs is indispensable? Having discovered this, the women's empowerment centres carry out various activities that educate the women and girls on how to protect their environments in their communities as their contribution to local development as will be analysed in the paragraphs that follows.

The environment is an integral part of our development model. And preserving it is very important to us because it preservations lead to the successes of our businesses and a source of competitiveness. For this reason we work to instil a culture in our trainees in general and girls and women in particular for the utmost diligence and professionalism to achieve the highest possible environmental standards. To do so we continuously improve the environmental performance of our installations and programs.(Counseilor at CPFakwa Oct. 2020).

From this, we denote that, apart from the general cultural norms of the sawa people generally known, the empowerment centres instills other cultural values in the people which they transmit from one generation to another, which is the protection of environment.

5.1.3.1. Water preservation

Water preservation is the practice of using water efficiently to reduce unnecessary water usage. According to fresh water watch, water preservation is important because fresh water is a limited resource as well as a costly one. In other words, water preservation refers to the preservation, control and development of water resources both surface and ground water and the prevention of pollution. Glossary of environments statistics (1997). In the same vein, for people to preserve water they avoid dumpingdirts in water to avoid water pollution.

Water is a vital resource of life and in fact water is life as commonly said. As a result, during our operations and fabrications of things that entail the use of

water in a very great quantity like the fabrication of bleach, liquid soap, paints, tiles and glasses wash, disinfectants we try to reduce the consumption of water and also preserve the quality of water by not dumping the waste during fabrications in the water. (Director of CPF Akwa sept. 2020).

In as much as water is greatly used in the activities carried out at the centre, the director holds to the fact that in order to protect their working environment, and also ameliorate the living condition of the women of the sawa community, they avoid dumping dirt in water. This as a result prevents them from having water related diseases such as typhoid. Thus keep their health in check.

5.1.3.2 Preservation of air

The preservation of air is the protection and cleaning of the earth's air supply. Air pollution can be caused by a number of sources, including transportation, power plants and factories. This pollution can cause a number of health problems. So it is important to practice air conservation when possible. This can be achieved by avoiding atmospheric pollution in areas inhabited by humans.

The preservation of air quality is a priority everywhere even with big industries. We equally operate in making the preservation of air our top priority by meeting the challenge of preserving residents' health by reducing atmospheric pollutions in our operation facilities that's the center and the fabrication of our products. (Director of CPF akwa Sept. 2020).

In the same light, we discover that the empowerment centres ensures the amelioration of the living conditions of women of the sawa community at all levels. From the preservation of air, we discover that the sawa women are spared from air borne diseases such as cold, cough. And it is important to note that when the women are in good health, they can better take care of their families and also inculcate in them health tips.

5.1.3.3 Waste disposal

Waste disposal means removing, discarding, recycling or destroying unwanted materials called waste that is produced from agriculture, domestic usage or industrial products. (<https://www.vedantu.com>).

We try as much as possible to reduce the amount of our waste products by making use of it for other productions. This helps to minimize our environmental footprints and also save resources for future generations. (Director of meridians Nov 2020).

We notice that empowerment centres inculcate values in the women on how to keep their environment clean and safe for a healthy living by avoiding disposal of waste any how.

5.1.3.4 Clean up campaigns

Maintaining a clean environment reduces pollution, preserves our biosphere, protects endangered species, and also helps preserve the earth's natural resources. In order to protect our environment we have days that we take up clean up campaigns when we join other people in the community to clean the roads, drainages, create water passages where it has been blocked, disinfect the surroundings. With the coming of the covid-19 pandemic we took out time to fabricate face masks, hand sanitizers, disinfectants, insecticides which is distributed in the community to enhance environmental protection.

Looking at our above commitments, you see that we put in our best to protect the environment and keep it healthy because it supplies are life necessities such as water, food and air also provides for economic growth and the means to fight natural hazards. And the natural environment influences children well-being by playing significant roles in food and nutrition, water and sanitation, disease and immunity, physical and mental development, hope and security which entails the fact that a healthy natural environment is the foundation of a successful long-term development and better still a contribution to our local development. (Director of CPF Akwa, 2020).

We see that a clean environment is a springboard to a healthy and developed community. And clean up campaigns will ensure that basic necessities such as water and food when kept in good hygiene, it will be able to combat prevalent diseases. While the cleaning of the environment will prevent natural hazards thus ensure the well-being of children and a long term development.

5.1.4. Political development

Political development or good governance is an essential instrument for sustainable development and there's a strong saying that "a balanced achievement of all the pillars of sustainable development depends on the deliberate strategies and operational intervention of the government. Good governance undoubtedly corroborates the achievement of economic and social development and environmental protection (Marita and Zaeke n.d.). As a result, there's a need for a well-established, quality political or governance systems for which women active involvement in decision making positions will help foster the overall quality of governance in terms of boosting accountability and transparency, reducing corruption and protecting the interest of marginalized sections of society. Without women achieving

sustainable development is impossible. Moreover it makes more sense or worth nothing that the economic strength of women is instrumental in achieving other pillars of sustainable development. And the economic empowerment of women is crucial for them to become active participants in the politics of the country at large and equally at the local levels. This is because those who are economically poor will not have time and attention to devote to politics. It is when women are economically powerful that they can better influence politics. Hence, the economic empowerment of women has several non-economic advantages as well. It is important to note that women's equal participation and leadership in political and public life are essential to achieving the sustainable development goals by 2030 because it has been discovered that women are underrepresented at all levels of decision making worldwide and achieving gender parity in political life is far off.

We have our meeting made up of just sawa women. The executive mebers; the president, secretary general and treasurer are women. The aim of the gathering is to ensure peace and serenity in our community. We are able to take up decisions against women who go against our norms. Such as publicly fighting and undress themselves. In some cases they can be fined 2 grates of beer each depending on the crime committed (Mandengue resident at Bonamousadi October 2020).

In this light, we attest to the fact that, the sawa bliefs hold on to the fact that before women can be fully development participants and take part in decision and policy making, they must first of all be economically empowered. The reason why the empowerment centres do more of economic empowerment in their choice of activities in the centre. In addition to that, women's participation in politics helps advance gender equality and affects both the range of policy issues that get considered and the types of solutions that are proposed. Studies shows that higher number of women in parliament generally contribute to stronger attention to women's issues. Women's political participation is a fundamental prerequisite for gender equality and genuine democracy. It facilitates women direct engagement in public decision making and is a means of ensuring better accountability to women. Political accountability to women begins with increasing the number of women in decision making positions, but it cannot stop here. What is required are gender-sensitive governance reforms that will make all elected officials more effective at promoting gender equality in public policy and ensuring their implementation.

One of the pillars of the United Nations women's work is advancing women political participation and good governance to ensure that decision making processes are participatory,

responsive, equitable and inclusive. Efforts are focused through strategic entry points that can advance the status of women by capitalizing wide-ranging impacts. It has been long assumed that women's feminine values will contribute positively in the masculine hierarchical world of politics. This is because women are more likely to bring values of fairness, inclusion, flexibility, collaboration, persuasiveness and empathy in a patriarchal political world. While the masculine positive values such as focus, competition and assertiveness often devolve into corruption, domination and greed. Men are certainly aware of the potential negative consequences of their decisions but they are more likely to be conditioned to ignore moral issues in pursuit of a predetermined goal because they focus solely on the results. This the elaboration of masculine values over feminine values has caused an imbalance in almost every aspect of human life. Now that women have successfully proven their abilities, it is time for them to acknowledge, respect and honour their feminine attributes, ideals and values and to bring them into the world with wisdom and passion. There must be an equilibrium and balance which is interdependent and complementary, not one value system elevated over another.

We have our meeting made up of just sawa women. The executive members; the president, secretary general and treasurer are women. The aim of the gathering is to ensure peace and serenity in our community. We are able to take up decisions against women who go against our norms. Such as publicly fighting and undress themselves. In some cases they can be fined 2 grates of beer each depending on the crime committed (Stacy resident at new deido October 2020).

From the above, we can analyse that women are relegated powers of decision making only in cases involving women and not the general community. Women are as responsible as men for the injustice and inequities in the world today. With the liberal system practiced by the Sawa people women are able to make decisions and occupy positions which they are capable and competent to handle. Notwithstanding some women have their political groups where they handle their affairs and there equally exist other political gatherings in the area where the women exercise their competence and democratic governance. Which benefits from increased involvement and influence of women but it is not just the ratio of women in government that is important. A greater emphasis on peaceful solution care for the environment and humanitarian issues will benefit the nation as a whole. In as much as the empowerment centres are still lagging behind a great deal they have not stopped in putting all efforts that will make women's involvement in politics through boosting them with seminars whereby they are groomed to be autonomous, become leaders through the leadership skills

and able to occupy decision making positions in their meetings, groups and small parties through which their voices can be heard in the community.

We have our small group as Douala women on entrepreneurship. Here we bring out ideas on how to better manage our enterprises for those who have. While women with small businesses are trained on how to grow the business and ensure its durability, in this group we the women take all the decisions and make our policies. For instance when a woman wants to open a business, we go there and verify it, and if the capital she has isn't enough, she's given a loan to start up and when the business is doing well she pays with a little interest and this goes for all members of the group. Our aim is to build leaders and female entrepreneurs. (Ma Beatrice 6th resident at Akwa, December 2020).

5.1.5. Ameliorating decision making in homes

At the centre are done by both men and women and the same is done for the trainees and as a result, a lot of improvements are discovered at the level of their home through gender division of labour as was said by some of the respondents.

because of the training we receive and the fact that we are able to be financially independent speaking for myself now my husband ask my opinions on things or issues about our family because I can now bring something to the table. (Carine Bonamousadi, Sept. 2020).

The above comment still attests to the fact that women are some times given opportunities of making important decisions about their lives when they are economically empowered and financially independent. Without which, they do not have a voice.

5.1.6. Culture

According to Edward B Taylor's (1871) definition of culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, and any other compatibilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society. It is therefore inevitable to say that culture and its related activities have many links with local development. Cultural activities helps to give meaning to a place and a community, mobilize resources and create social dynamics these cultural activities have a significant economic weight. Culture is an integral part of local development just like at the national level, culture is linked to job creation, exports and revenues at the local level. Weather in cities, metropolitan areas or regions, culture has been an essential component in the quality of life, a source of touristic revenue and a "creativity lever" for new goods and services and this is true about the city of Douala which is the capital city of the littoral region. It is therefore not surprising then that encouraging cultural tourism; cultural distinct and cultural neighbourhoods are high on the agendas of local government. For

instance during the field work we discovered that the Sawa people practice what they call the ‘savoir faire’ which they explain that it is practice to make everyone around them feel better and comfortable all the time even if you are not of cultural ties.

And they do this when they want to organized some kind of gatherings then they will have a time of eating and drinking and relaxation to lighten up the moods before the said meeting or sometimes it is done at the end of the event.

With the presence of the empowerment centres in our community, they have being able to promote our culture and given it priority because it is on our soil. During some occasional days at the centre, they display the Asiko dance of the sawa people, dressing code (which is the sanja with white shirt for the boys and kabba for the women. This really makes me happy. (Brigitte sainte famille 2020).

Culture reflects the moral and ethical beliefs and standards that speak on how people should behave and interact with others. They acts as prescriptions for corrections and moral behaviour, land meaning and coherence to life and provide a means to achieving a sense of integrity and safety and belonging. In this light we discovered that moral and ethical values breathe by culture helps the family and children to keep moral values even outside the home that is in the society. This reduces deviance and vandalism among adolescents and deviant attitudes as a result of trying to keep their moral and ethical beliefs and values this development. This is because culture with a higher concentration of values is identified achievement, orientation, relative to a concentration of values supported with a limited good belief, experience more rapid economic growth. In communities where independence is emphasized on children’s upbringing, the economy will grow faster and that’s the case with the Sawa culture as it breathes in children which we discovered that an average of them due to their cultural background tend to be more conscious of their behaviours and attitudes vis-à-vis elderly people and the society as a whole. And with the reduction of deviance and vandalism among children will help the communities focus on other things which will intend improve on the economy and cause it to grow faster. An example is the respect of elders even when you think you are right, a sense of family where they prefer to be together in one house to keep family bond than been separated everywhere. “Le vivre ensemble.

The presence of the empowerment centres and the display of the sawa culture has really been of great help to us. Forinstance our children are able to learn our language since they are taught the basics at the centre, they taught how to prepare our dish (bobolo and ndole). Some artistic statutes are done to which

permits other generations to come and learn from it. (Prudence Meeridians, October 2020).

Also, some economists have linked some cultural beliefs to higher levels of economic development. Many studies have associated increased social trust with higher rates of trades, innovation and development in a community's financial sector. And this is evident among the Sawa people of the littoral region in that even though no one does business to lost, they still hold up to transparency and integrity as their cultural values and with this people more into businesses with them know that they are trustworthy and it brings about an economic boom in the community.

In addition to that culture influences people's way of behaving in diverse ways; this is because culture is a people's identity. Culture includes the social ethics principles and morals seen in the society. This is a method of living that encompasses people's beliefs, values, customs, language and tradition is what we know to be culture and we noticed that people of different communities because of their longevity in the area, they tend to practice the lifestyle of the people with whom they have being with for long This imitate their culture as a lifestyle and this reduces ethnocentrism. And we know that in a place where people are groomed not to believe that only their culture is best and that other cultures have something to offer equally it reduces conflicts and other cultural struggles and puts in place a calm atmosphere which enhances development.

More to that, the acquisition of culture; culture contributes to local development through the fact that culture is acquired through a learning process of enculturation and socialization which is shown by the diversity of cultures across societies. With this we see that cultural values can influence communication orientation or the degree of interaction between family members as well as conformity orientation, or the degree of conformity within a family. Knowing that the family is the smallest entity of the society nonetheless the one with the greatest influence of the society because as we know the society is made up of families and if a family is well groomed and developed meaning that society or community where that family is found will equally experience growth too. Family culture influences the way each family member thinks, feels and acts on daily basis. It also influences things like moral compass, beliefs, values and traditions that is from big life choices and actions to small details. Family culture is important as it plays a big role in making the individual. This dynamics of culture causes economic growth as it is learned, shared and based on symbols and other arts.

5.1.7. Alphabetization

Alphabetization is the process of establishing the alphabetical order of a set of items based on their names or headings. It is equally the arrangement of items by sorting strings of characters according to their position in a given alphabet. Teaching alphabetical order gives persons practical skills that apply in many areas of life. Understanding alphabetical order simplifies many research situations such as finding the particular topic in a book through the index, or finding the phone number of business. Now the reason why the centres have a field of alphabetization, it is because they want to absorb all categories of persons without leaving out any. This department enrolls so many women and young girls who didn't have the opportunity to attend the circular education and others who got forced into early marriages and only saw the importance of being empowered when it was related to them by a friend or any relative who didn't appreciate their life condition. The aim of these basics according to the empowerment centres is to teach women and young girls how to read and write and be able to express themselves properly in their first language before they are deemed fit to take up an activity that permits them to become autonomous. It is very important before anything to have the basics of education and general knowledge before being able to take up any income generating activity because it will help you run your business efficiently without being manipulated by people or even get cheated. This basics given them at the empowerment centres have helped so many women today to have basics in general knowledge and some were able to further their studies seeing the importance and are well to do now whereas they were considered before now had people who had no future in the past. With this they taught how to read, write, spell and being able to understand and relate some situations of life. With this we discovered that women who were before just house wives that were being tossed around by their husbands have become autonomous and financially independent to the extent of sharing this knowledge to other women.

Before I could not read and write. And this was very difficult for me to communicate, talk among people freely because of fear of making errors. Whenever a notice was given me I will get a child to read it and explain it to me. But with the help of a friend, I got enrolled into the cpf empowerment centre and started learning from alphabetization. This has helped me a great lot because now I can read and write, I don't longer need the help of any one to read things for me and explain since I can do it myself (Mme Doumbe cpf Akwa September 2020).

From the above, alphabetization don't only help in teaching trainees who can't read, write or express themselves well, it also help the women to be able to teach their children at

home since they spend basically more time at home with the children. These children benefit from it too. Women and girls who graduate from this field of study at the centre and are able to express themselves fluently and eloquently feel free and bold to talk and participate in decision makings in their groups or meeting without being afraid that they will be mocked at. “Knowledge is power.” In a nutshell the alphabetization activity carried out at the empowerment centres around the community contributes in the community’s development among the Sawa women of the littoral women in that it gives them also a sense of direction in life and transmission of values which they intend indoctrinate their children and their families at large. And a well-trained up family will equally make the community a better place to live and this will ease development.

5.2. Information communication technology (I.C.T)

Information and communication technology has accelerated the growth of the global economy and improve the quality of life of the world’s inhabitants. Ict has brought new ways of creating livelihood for people. The diffusion of ict has also increased year by year and made it possible to reduce poverty. This is because ict plays an important role notably by contributing to rapid technological progress and productivity growth. New technologies and their implementation in productive activities are changing the economic structure and contributing to productivity increases in economies for example, the ability to read screens software that enables partially sighted or blind people to work, reduced personal interaction like what happened during the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic whereby people were having more of webinars to avoid physical contacts with other people. Being able to work from home is profitable for women as it permits them to carry out their role without necessarily going outside of the hose to work.

Knowledge of ICT increases employment, facilitates learning, promotes culture, develops and improves enterprises, reduces social exclusion and support employers’ health care. This assertion is glaring among the Sawa of the littoral region on that the knowledge of ICT they receive permits them to creates for them jobs as secretaries open documentation and this makes the financially independent and gives them time to also take care of their homes

In addition to that, the development of ict in communities helps in reducing transaction cost, increase efficiency of workers, promoting innovations and improving education. More to that those who do the graphic designs come out with their logos and packaging without paying

for external costs which minimizes costs and increase profits. Knowledge of ICT helps them to do their businesses on online platforms, create websites to showcase their businesses to the world and get commissions.

At first, I didn't know anything in computer. But with the knowledge gotten from the centre on ict, I have being able use it to increase my business. For instance now I don't stress much in doing my buying and selling of female clothes, shoes and other accessories. I just post it online and get buyers then go do the delivery. This has helped me a lot of time to take care of my home as a mother and a wife at the same time make money. (Anni Meridians, Nov. 2020).

The above explains and affirms that the activities of the centre contributes to the amelioration of the sawa women living condition not only in giving them skills to be self-employed but also how to modify their businesses using online methods. Another respondent added this:

I use to have my little restaurant with few customers. But when a logo was made by a woman at the empowerment centre who did graphic designing, my restaurant took another shape as it has attracted many customers I now earn more profits. (Clarrisse meridians, Nov. 2020).

In the above order, we see that a knowledge of computer sciences and graphic designs as one of the activities that women are trained in at the centre, helps the women to improve on their businesses by been able to come out with creative ideas that attracts them customers and clients thus improving their sales.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates how the empowerment activities carried out at the centre illustrates their contributions to local development. The general contribution of these activities is the fact that it has helped the sawa women to leave from a financial dependent state to a state of financial independence. This was possible because the empowerment activities inputted in the women skills with which they used in creating businesses for themselves and create employment for other people in the Douala municipality. Through socialisation, they were able to better their lives and that of their family members by teaching them the norms and values of the community which brought about the reduction of juvenile delinquency. Others were able to open for themselves small businesses that they used to generate income and pay for their children's education. With free check-ups, there was a reduction in the risk of people getting sick. While with the help of alphabetisation, the women learnt how to read, write, pronounce and express themselves fluently in public.

CHAPTER SIX

**ANTROPOLOGICAL APPROACH TO WOMEN
EMPOWERMENT CENTRES IN DOUALA**

Academic research follows a series of procedures such as data collection, data analysis and interpretations before it could be realized. Every part of a research has its particularities, and of what concerns an academic research data interpretation is prior. The interpretation is done by theorizing the data that has been collected and analyzed. Thus this chapter will be detailing to us the Anthropological approach of women empowerment centers in Douala in three dimensions; the WID approach, functions of women empowerment centers in the local development of the Douala municipality and the reasons why women empowerment centers in Douala are drilled towards local development. This will therefore permit us to answer our main research question on what are the cultural foundations of women empowerment centers thus attaining our main objective of demonstrating the cultural foundations of women empowerment centers in Douala.

6.1. Functions of women empowerment centers in Douala

This part will entail making sense out on the roles of women empowerment centers in Douala. The functions women empowerment centers in Douala play in the amelioration of the living conditions of the sawa women and their contributions to local development in the Douala municipality. These functions are in five domains that is economic, political, environmental, educational and health domains.

6.1.1. Economic functions

This part entails giving meaning to the roles of women empowerment centers in the local development of the Douala municipality and the amelioration of the people's living condition. This will entail the economic functions of women's empowerment centers in three dimensions; employment, entrepreneurship and increase in country's gross production.

6.1.1.1. Employment

Unemployment is a term referring to individuals who are employable and actively seeking for a job but is unable to find a job (coperatefinanceinstitute.com). This explains the reason why some communities experience backwardness and lack of development. But this is not the case of the sawa people of the Littoral Region, because the presence of the women empowerment centers provides them with jobs such as coaches, counselors, cleaners and cooks. We discovered that the employments are done without any discrimination of age, sex and status bringing us to the non-discriminatory system of the sawa culture where everyone has an active role to play in the community for the advancement of the community. This

explains the sawa slogan of “le savior vivre”. This slogan according to the sawa people means knowing how to live with people by not just fishing for them but rather teaching them how to fish. Bringing us to the functionalist perspective, that focuses on the functions performed in society by social structures like the women empowerment centers, institutions, hierarchies and norms.

6.1.1.2. Entrepreneurship

We noticed among the sawa women of the Littoral Region that entrepreneurs boost economic growth by introducing innovative technologies, products and services. Increased competition from entrepreneurs challenges existing firms to become more competitive. Entrepreneurs provide new short opportunities in the short and long term. Since the women empowerment centers are not limited to the employment of individuals, through its activities the sawa women develop skills for which they employ themselves thus local development. Sawa Women entrepreneurs account for improved economic growth and stability within the Douala municipality and become a source of other women becoming entrepreneurs. We observed that the sawa people practice liberalization like stated by Elison (2006) in cultural Anthropology that liberalization is that everyone can do what he wants. This concept is true with the sawa people where by everyone is permitted to do what he or she wants supposedly that’s the passion of the person without any stereotypes or complex, the reason why some sawa women in the women empowerment centers took up activities such as auto-mechanic and caterpillar driving.

6.1.1.3. Increase in country’s gross domestic production

The GDP (gross domestic product) a country is the total of all value added created in an economy. The value added means the value of goods and services that have been produced minus the value of the goods and services needed to produce them which is called the intermediate consumption. For which an increase is a sign of economic growth. It is also the monetary value of all finished goods and services made within a country during a specific period Fernando (2022). Money is an essential element in the household livelihoods and those who control it have considerable power. However development projects seeking to alleviate house-hold poverty and promote economic growth often speak of the empowerment of women in relation to promoting women’s access to credit or income generation; This is evident with the Sawa women who are able to develop petit businesses through the activities

they carry out at the women's empowerment centers. And with this they are able to pay what is called auto-defense and other little development projects in their community.

Information, communication and technology (I.C.T)

Information technology and technology refers to all technologies including the internet, wireless networks, cell phones, computer software, middleware, video conferencing, social networking and other media apps and services. In the educational milieu, ICT is the mode of education that uses information and communication technology to support, enhance and optimize the delivery of information worldwide. Research has shown that ICT can lead to an improved student learning and better teaching methods but ICT done in the empowerment centres is not limited to only enhancing and supporting the delivery of the information. They go beyond just the theoretical knowledge and carry on practical sessions for which a certificate is given and they can work in ICT companies. For instance, they do graphic designing, secretariat activities, excel, social media management just to name a few. In our society, we discover that ICT has accelerated and grown to the extent of making the world a global village by creating livelihoods for people and reducing poverty; according to world's statistics are considered to be the poorest of the poor, so the centres deemed it necessary that no entrepreneurial skills would be hundred per cent functional without the use of ICT knowledge, reason why ICT courses were implemented in order to create a connection between women and the world at large.

We discovered that this activity registers more people. Both women and men, boys and girls, most of whom have completed at least their secondary school education, and even HND, BSC, MSC and seeing the importance of ICT people had to enrol and study a particular field under ICT or get the basic knowledge of ICT so as to widen opportunities to job creation and employment. We even discovered that some women took up the ICT course after having sort for jobs and could not find because of lack of basic knowledge of Microsoft word. But since the centres are relatively cheap, some women enrolled and took up the ICT course to have a good knowledge of ICT and widen their scope in the job market. This created job opportunities among the sawa women because those who did graphics designs created little enterprises and employed those they know in the same field to have adequate and effective labour.

Therefore, we understand that the world is now controlled by technology and without knowledge of it, even with the highest educational certificates incurred, one remains limited and access to the job market also becomes a problem. In addition to that, ICT knowledge and resources hold potentials for women's empowerment and in the Sawa culture like any other African culture, women's access to internet and computers is usually minimized while it's very easy for men to access internet and computer services which makes them open to the world and new realities and in turn gives them an open mind for which they are able to get to any position of their choice especially decision making positions while women will lagging behind due to their limited knowledge. As a result, the women empowerment centres similarly saw that there cannot be a complete women's empowerment process without exposing them to the knowledge of ICT without exposing them to the knowledge of ICT if they will want to see women occupy decision making and other prominent positions in the society someday and be able to successfully lead a group or team for a positive change.

In addition to that, the fact that networking, online business, websites and blogs have become the order of the day and for which it has become easy for people to work from home without being constrained since what they need might just be their phones connected to the internet and computers in order to work and earn a business. According to observations, they keep empowering women in this domain more and more because they see that if women can get themselves generating activities, through online and the use of ICT, they will be able to have more time to take care of their gender roles at home with ease and without being overburdened. This will reduce the level of violence on them by their spouses at home or bosses at the job site. They encounter difficulties such as lack of equipment/ computers to ease the work and this activity is closed for everyone and is open only for persons who can at least read, write and understand.

6.1.2. Political functions

Among the sawa, we discovered that men and women have their specific roles. Both work hand in gloves to achieve local development. The men are considered the breadwinners of the family and those to stand at the forefront during public occasions. While women are those who give counsels at the background at the level of the household, family and community, with this background, the women empowerment centers are drilled towards training women in being technical advisers for the smooth running of their community. It is from this cultural perspective that the empowerment centers draw their inspirations on how to

function in accordance with the culture of the people, to train the women to be technical advisers and counselors to their husbands who appear in the public as the spokesperson but not the sole person behind the decision since it's a joint effort of the woman and the man.

6.1.3. Environmental functions

It is practically impossible to talk of local development without talking of the environment. Apart from the other functions and roles of the women empowerment centers perform in the Douala municipality where they are present, they equally put up some principles to safe guard the environment. They protect the environment through clean up campaigns organized by the women empowerment centers, waste disposal and preservation of water. This could be situated in Malinowski's absolute functionalism, He believed that all customs and institutions in a society are integrated and interrelated so that if one changed the other would change as well. Each then is a function of the other. In this light, changes in the customs, values or norms of the Douala municipality will eventually mean a change in the women empowerment centers. The functions of the women empowerment centers in what concerns the environment will be seen in three domains that is through clean up campaigns, waste disposals and preservation of water.

6.1.3.1. Waste disposal

The women empowerment centers in Douala ensures waste disposals around the Douala municipality such as removing, discarding, recycling or destroying unwanted materials called waste. This waste is usually produced from agriculture, domestic usage from homes and the women empowerment centers product. This function is vital in ensuring environmental development in the Douala municipality, with the aforementioned; we discovered that the places where this research was carried out were clean and are the seats of touristic sites such as Bonanjo, Akwa, Bonamousadi and Deido.

6.1.3.2. Preservation of water

The elements of nature are perceived as a divine gift in order to serve as a point of contact between the creator and humans for they are sacred elements that ensure communication between the invisible world and visible world, Esoh Elame (2006). Apart from the fact that water is considered as life as it serves for so many purposes such as washing, cleaning, drinking, bathing and for other working reasons like in industries. Beyond this water is symbolic to the Sawa people because it is something sacred. The jengu which is a

water deity commonly known as mami water is the greatest means through which the sawa people communicate with the invisible to get directives on how the year will look like. It is from these cultural foundations that the women empowerment centers draws its inspiration of water preservation (efficient use of water and reduction of unnecessary usage of water).

6.1.3.3. Clean up campaigns

By the Sawa people with the invisible world says Elame (2006). In order to protect the environment of Douala, the women empowerment centers have days that they take up clean up campaigns with Having a clean environment reduces pollution, preserves our biosphere, protects endangered species, and also helps preserve the earth's natural resources which is a means of communication which they join other inhabitants of the community to clean the roads, drainages, create water passages where it has been blocked disinfect the surroundings. With the coming of the covid-19 pandemic the women empowerment centers took out time to fabricate face masks, hand sanitizers, disinfectants, insecticides which were distributed in the community to enhance environmental protection. We should note the saying that cleanliness is next to godliness.

6.1.4. Health functions

Health is the most vital sector of a community as it is commonly said "health is wealth". Therefore means in contrast sickness is poverty which makes up the fact that a healthy society or community will intend make wealth and improve on the local development. The positive impact that health has on growth and poverty reduction occurs through a number of mechanisms such as a reduction of production losses due to fewer worker illnesses, increased in productivity of adults as a result of better nutrition, lower absenteeism rates, and improved learning among school. It should be noted that, communities that are attentive to public health can even reduce inequalities among their residents. Community health also helps to reduce health gaps caused by differences in race and ethnicity, location, social status, income and other factors that can affect health reports

It is important to know that women than men need more health care and access to the health care system than men. While part of this is due to their reproductive and sexual health needs, they also have more chronic non-reproductive health issues as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, mental illnesses, diabetes and obstetric infections that affect their urinary tracks as a result of poor medical attention during childbirth. We discovered that with the current

situation, women who attend the empowerment centers are opportune to have seminars they attend for which they are educated on how to live a healthy lifestyle in order not to fall prey to the above mentioned diseases. Many studies have proven without reasonable doubt that education of girls and women will reduce child and maternal deaths or infant and maternal mortality will equally improve child health and reduce fertility. In this light, the Sawa women of the littoral region receive free education on how to take care of their sexual reproductive health and that of their children. This implies the fact that a healthy woman will bring forth healthy children and this a healthy family. When these women receive lessons about their health and other pertinent things, they are better placed to relate it to their children and family as a whole because women as we were earlier told spend more time with the family than the way men will do this as a result, a healthy woman means a healthy family. The women empowerment centers rely on the cultural foundations of the sawa people who belief in healers, seers and tradi-practitioners in case of ill health. In order for the women empowerment centers to play the role of healers they employ free check-ups and provision of basic medications in the Douala municipality to ensure the health of women first because of their reproductive role then men and children.

6.1.4.1. Free checkups

At first, people use to see their doctor only when they were sick or dying, but today, preventive health care is becoming common place as people become more educated and empowered about their own health. People are anxiously seeking medical advice on how to live a healthy lifestyle. They are looking to lower their risks of various conditions or diseases by maintaining a healthy diet, weight and level of physical activity. In as much as people are becoming more conscious these days, doctors are requesting that patients get regular check-ups to stay on top of their health. They are highlighting the importance of prevention as a means to reduce the number of patients requiring medical treatment or surgery. And this regular check-ups help to discover potential health issues before they become a problem. When you see your doctor regularly, they are able to detect health conditions or diseases early. Early detection gives you the best chance for getting the right treatment quickly, avoiding any complications. By getting the correct health services, screenings and treatment, you are taking important steps towards living a longer healthier life. But it is amazing to know that in this case the empowerment centers dispatch doctors and specialist to meet up the health needs There exist within Christianity several denominations dominated by the catholic with Douala having one of the archdiocese of the country.

6.1.4.2. Provision of basic medications

Essential medications are those that satisfy the priority health care needs of the people, with these the centers through their doctors provide the community with basic first aid treatments to the diseases that's rampant in the area. For instance malaria which is caused by dirty environments because of dumping of garbage anyhow which becomes a breeding place for mosquitoes which causes malaria around the municipality. Provisions of free lenses with people suffering from eyes problem especially the old with reading lenses, basic hygiene prescriptions for women especially for pregnant women and for other ravaging diseases that they are unable to provide them with the necessary medications they give prescriptions on the kind of lifestyle to be lived by the patients and how to avoid further complications and when necessary they are referred to other specialists to ensure their health stability. During the covid-19 pandemic, we discovered that following the barrier measures stipulated by the government, went out on a health campaign after the confinement in the various communities to make available the provision of facemasks fabricated by the trainees of the centers, hand sanitizers, liquid soaps, bleach, buckets and other things that ensured the sanitation of the community to fight against the pandemic.

6.1.5. Social functions

The process of enculturation entails the gradual process by which people learn the culture of their own group by living in it, observing it and being taught things by members of the group. The Sawa cultural association known as mulatako mua sawa holds that a "people without a culture are like people without a soul". This statement denotes the importance of culture to the sawa people, it is from here that the women empowerment centers in Douala make it a priority to teach the women and men the sawa culture, such as the preparations of their traditional dishes (Ndole, mbongo tchobbi, Koki), the sawa traditional dance asiko. With the knowledge the sawa women get from these women empowerment centers, they teach it to their children to ensure continuity from one generation to another. The women empowerment centers in Douala train the women and girls of the empowerment centers the sawa rules, values, norms and customs through their activities. At the level of cultural activities they are taught how to prepare the sawa traditional dishes (Ndole, Mbongo tjobbi, Mituba and koki). They are also trained on the making of the sawa regalia (sanja and Kabba ngondo), the traditional dance (asiko). Cultural values which state the roles of sawa men and women, while the men are considered as the breadwinners of the family, the women are considered the

counselors and care givers of the family. This process of enculturation permits the women to transmit the knowledge and skills to their children and the other generation which in turns ensures continuity.

6.1.5.1. Charity events

Charity events are important vehicles for charitable organizations as these events are not only an opportunity to promote active and healthy lifestyles, but also a mechanism for charities to raise funds and promote their brand King (2004). Trainees of these centres get into the community and share some of their fabricated items to the less privileged, for instance; Following findings, it was noticed that agricultural items were shared to the farmers of some of the communities in the Littoral Region like hoes, wheel barrows, insecticides, fertilizers and other stuff like liquid soap, hand sanitizers, facemasks, buckets, soaps, bleach, just to name a few. Cultural parades with the aim of showcasing the dress code and some cultural practices of the Sawa culture of the Littoral region for instance; boys put on Sanja and ladies, Kabba. Some of the ladies hold brooms, while others hoes, cutlasses and other farming equipments and after questioning we were told that ladies parading with brooms portrays the biological and cultural roles of a woman as being care givers and their household duties as wives, mothers, girls and woman as a whole while some of the guys who paraded with the Sanja and held on to a staff reported to be a “staff of authority” which symbolizes the role of men as the head of the family. The reason for the parade and showcase of the dresses is to display their products for fund raising and advertise the centres. Another respondent had this to say:

The empowerment centres through it functions on charity events has helped the women in their development. Forinstance we discovered that sawa women living around the neighbourhoods where the centres are located were invited for a program. On getting there, they were distributed facemasks, hand sanitizers and liquid soap to every one present. But to the female farmers like me, we were given cutlasses, hoes, wheelbarrows, fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides to use for farming. It brings to our understanding that the presence of the women empowerment centres, is not only to train and empower womrn economically but also fuctions in the domain of helping thecommunity with basic needs for a healthy living. Notwithstanding, it should be noted that these various roles among the Sawa people is not as a means to subordinate because during the analysis of perception of individuals about empowerment centres, I was told that the Sawa people have a liberal system where women

like men work out of the private sphere if they have the competence and sometimes it varies from family to family depending on their mentalities. But their culture doesn't restrict women to the household in anyway.

6.1.5.2. Visitation of historique sites

Due to the fact that some of the women do not really have such opportunities to visit different historic sites, the empowerment centres in Douala makes it possible as a part of their activities and with this they make the trainees visit historic and touristic sites of the communities e.g. they go to the Wouri river and sometimes get into the boat to sail and have a feeling of it. We discovered that some of the sawa women who have lived in the town of Douala use to be sceptical using boats as means of transportation. But with the visitation of natural sites by the centres, others have been able to kill their fears because such visits are done in groups. In other words the centres through the visitation of some places like the Wouri River, the women have become courageous to sail in boats and canoes to the other sides of the river.

6.1.5.3. Counselling sessions

Apart from the economic activities carried out at the empowerment centres in order to bring about financial autonomy and independence of women and girls; the empowerment centres carry out counselling sessions in order to work on the mind-sets of the women to be positive thinkers to attain development and in this light they first carry out counselling on the field of activity the trainees decide on in order to advise the person on the pros/cons of her chosen activity at times after some counselling sessions with someone who wants to enrol at the empowerment centre, they are able to determine the person's passion and that which will suit the person to meet up with their passion in this light a favourable activity is chosen for you based on the capacities on you.

We discovered that the empowerment centres deal with all kinds of persons including children. When children come to get trained they don't refuse, rather they ask them to have some moments of counselling sessions with the children with the aim of discovering that which the child likes doing best and that which the child is more comfortable with before advising the child on the activity to take up. This is because they believe in everyone's capacities and also on the fact that people do what they love with joy and this brings about efficiency unlike when they just forced into a particular domain. It is worth noting from the

above that, the empowerment centres do not just register people into disciplines any how. Before admitting the women and girls, they take time to educate the women on the various activities and taste their ability before enrolment.

Also, counselling in empowerment is viewed as a way in which to concentrate on issues of lack of power which is also referred to as powerlessness and to mediate the role that lack of power plays in the formation and maintenance of social problems. In addition to orientation on activities which can best suits individuals who come for enrolment at the centre, other form of counselling on issues such as GBV, deviance, as well cohabitation has become a doorway for all forms of violence and possible solutions to their problems which makes some these women feel at home.

We discovered the women feel at home when they come to the centre because the empowerment centres is more to them a family than a learning milieu. This is because they receive counselling from those who train them and from other experienced women on the issues they face in their daily lives as wives. In the case of domestic violence, the empowerment centres employ amicable ways of resolving the problem so that the couple doesn't resort to divorce or separation but to live in peace. From observation we notice that the empowerment centres carry out counselling sessions are helpful to the women as it solves their marital problems such as domestic violence or gender based violence. Also, we discover that there is cultural dynamism and solidarity among the sawa women as the women explained the fact of feeling at home while at the centre.

In addition to that, we found out that the women feel excited at the women empowerment centres because their coaches take them as sisters, friends and children for the young ones, to the extend that they are given moral education on social life and how to behave as decent sawa women and girls. It should be noted that the counselling sessions equally reminds the women of their cultural values for which is not paid for. The aim of these empowerment centres is encourage living together and keeping a calm environment suitable for development. It is glaring from the above that, apart from the numerous activities implemented by the government, they equally help in the legalization of marriages that had no marriage certificate in order to protect women's property rights. This is done when men and women agree and affirm that the reason why they had not legalised the marriage was due to income. This is voluntary participation of the couples to partake without been forced.

6.2. Place of sawa women in the local development of Douala

Generally talking of women in development is based on recognition of the importance of the roles and status of women in development process. It is meant to give special attention to the women's role, while extending development assistance. Thus this part of the work will be illustrating to us the roles sawa women of the Littoral region play in the local development of the Douala municipality with her inspirations gotten from the women's empowerment centers. For this to explicit for understanding will use the Agency approach.

6.2.1. Agency approach

Agency is the capacity for purposive action, the ability to pursue goals, express voice and influence and make decisions free from violence and retribution. It is at the heart of empowerment. The model highlights three specific expressions of agency: decision-making, leadership and collective action. This approach explains the reason why the women empowerment centers in Douala have as foundation to build up the sawa women in public speaking, counseling through the Alphabetization activity carried out at the women empowerment centers, an approach that calls for greater attention to women in development policy and practice, and emphasizes the need to integrate them into the development. We discovered through the agency approach that the sawa women have three major roles, which is that of decision making, collective action and leadership, at the family, market and community levels.

6.2.1.1. Decision making

Decision-making epitomizes women and girls expression of agency and embodies the act of assuming control over one's life and future. Moreover, it features across the work of the foundation. In Agriculture, this concerns decisions on what crops are grown, what land is used for food or cash crops, how money from sales is used or who can access which agricultural inputs. We discovered among the sawa women that they are allowed to own land and decide on what agricultural products they will farm. Nevertheless they decide to farm more of food crops such as maize, bitter leaf, cassava for family consumption. The financial services for the poor looks at women's decision-making on the use of financial resources, and is interested in how this benefits them fairly. The sawa culture adheres to the practice of gender division of labor whereby the women take care of their homes, children and ensure the smooth functioning of the family. It is on this perspective that the women empowerment centers train

the women on being active participants of decision making through being active counselors. Both the sawa men and women participate in decision making of the centers, families and communities which in turn improves the centers, families and communities.

Child Health is concerned with decisions on women and girls bodies and reproductive health and this is also prominent in the cross-cutting work on the health and development of the Sawa women. These include decisions on use of contraceptives, desired number of children and pregnancies, birth spacing and delaying of pregnancies, timing and frequency of sex and when and how to feed one's children. Among the Sawa women we discovered that women with the consent of their husbands make decisions on the use of contraceptives, number of children to have, birth spacing, timing and frequency of sex. For younger women and girls, personal decisions on what to wear or eat and whether to go out with a friend, go to school or participate in a sport or youth association, this is true out the sawa women who have as practice liberalization which permits and affirms the choice of people without discrimination on gender, sex and age. Major decisions for younger women and girls entail whether and whom to marry, when and with whom to have sex and how to protect oneself from unwanted pregnancies or sexually transmitted diseases. All these types of decisions are strongly affected by gender and age, often in intersections with other social markers such as socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race or caste.

Empowered decision-making can be approached from two angles: exercising autonomy over different parts of one's life (UNFPA, 2007) and negotiating, influencing and bargaining in decision-making processes. Unlike other cultural foundations whereby decision making is affected by gender and age, the cultural foundations of women empowerment centers in Douala are not affected by these myths because their culture is void of such discrimination since the women like men have their roles to play in the development process.

6.2.1.2. Leadership

Women and girls leadership concerns their ability to lead and inspire social change and to effectively participate in governance. Leadership is closely related to collective organizing and mobilizing, but is also distinct from it. Formal leadership is concerned with formal authority, such as women's political participation or representation in leadership and management positions in private companies. Women and girls can also exercise informal leadership that is, the ability to inspire and guide others in order to bring about change or to

address a complex problem, according to Debebe, (2007, p. 2), Leadership as an expression of agency can manifest itself in individual and collective leadership. These can be related, such as in the case of collective action with individual women leading women's organizations. Women and girls leadership strengthens their voice through speaking up and being heard, and expands their choice through having interests acted on for the benefit of other women and girls as well as themselves. Understanding leadership as women's voice and choice positions women as change agents and actors, rather than focusing on disadvantages and inequalities, leadership encompasses power over, and also facilitates power-within and power-to. In the case of the women empowerment centers in Douala, their cultural foundations train them to actors and voices in leadership not to fight inequalities but to aid the men to acquire local development. For instance among the sawa women we discovered women associations that were created to help dependent women to becoming independent while keeping the beliefs and norms of the sawa people.

6.2.1.3. Collective action

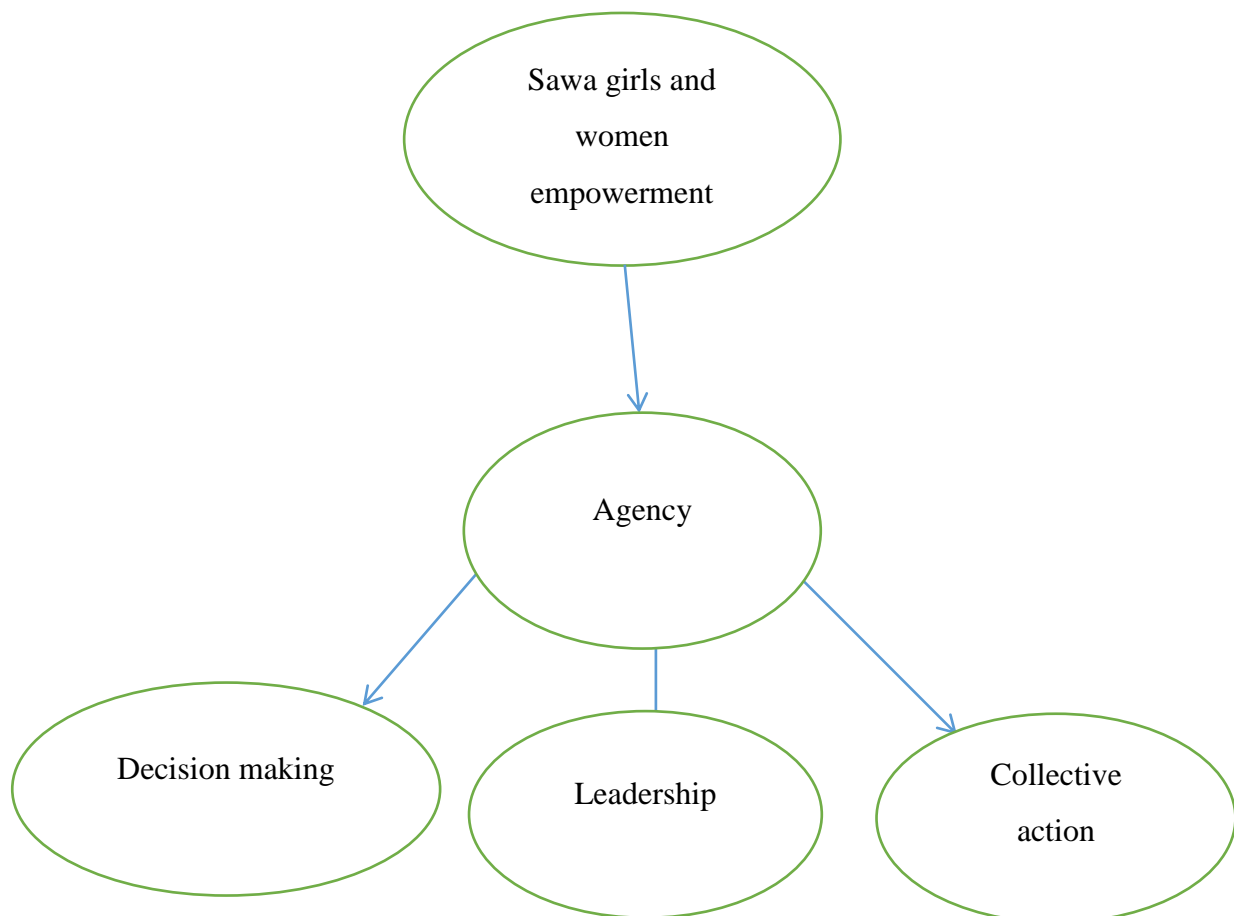
Collective Action concerns women and girls gaining solidarity and taking action collectively on their interests, to enhance their position and expand the realm of what is possible. It mobilizes and strengthens women and girls collective power. Coming together around common goals and interests can enable women and girls to have more influence than when they act individually and in isolation. It manifests itself in women's organizations, cooperatives or SHGs; around themes such as agriculture or marketing or water management; when mobilizing against GBV or in favor of women's rights to land and inheritance or when demanding legal change Alkire et al (2013), Gammage et al (2016). In the same vein, sawa women practice collective actions through social associations, njangi groups and meetings.

In what concerns social association, we discovered that the women empowerment centers in Douala have an association of female entrepreneurs. The objective of this association is to help young female entrepreneurs to be able to put up a business to take care of their household, families and communities at large. As practice, they provide capital for women with a precise business plan and buy shares through investments. In the same light the government through the rotative funds provides capital for women who attend the women empowerment centers. This capital is given to women with a good and precise business plan to be able to execute. Accompanied with the rotative funds they are given a coach to ensure that business succeeds, this money is refunded 1 year later with little or no interest.

Also we discovered another association of widows; this association was made up of only widows. The aim of the association is to collectively take care of needy widows. This group operates in double capacity that is as njangi group and an association for widows. They contribute money and at the end of the month the money is giving to one of the widows to take care of her needs. Sometimes food items are shared among them such as rice, salt, groundnut oil and Maggi. This is to demonstrate their cultural ties through solidarity, peace and living together.

Finally, the women empowerment centers have what they call a “call center”, this is used in case of gender based violence, women’s rights and legal change. This call center at the women empowerment centers in Douala draws it inspiration from the sawa culture on gender division of labor. The call center doesn’t propagate divorce, separation, power struggle for equality, the call center act as a medium of amicable resolution of matrimonial conflicts and equity (fairness of judgment).

Diagram 1: Cultural foundation and empowerment of the Sawa women



Source: Eyong Sonita, June 2022.

From the diagram above the cultural foundations and the empowerment of the ssawa women denotes its particularity from other women's empowerment centres. Unlike other women empowerment centres, the place of the sawa women is visible in the local development process. The sawa women in local development work in a well orientated manner with their specificities. The sawa women through the women empowerment centres strategises on her place in the local development process. Thus the sawa women empowerment is embodied in the agency approach from the above. In the agency approach, we discover the place of the sawa woman in the domains of decision making, leadership and collective action.

To begin with decision making; the sawa woman has as role to take decisions about the family to ensure local development. We discovered that in the sawa community the place of the woman in the local development is respected. This is because the deity that from which the sawa people rely on to get directives on how the year will look like is symbolised as a woman (*jengu*). The sawa woman ensures the running of the family by taking decisions that will benefit the family, like the schooling of the children, their care giving roles like cooking, washing and cleaning. But this decision making is not limited to the family, at the level of the community; the counsels of the women are sort for before implementations.

Also, according to the diagram the sawa women's empowerment on leadership gives them a place at the local development levels. We discovered that sawa women have associations that ensure the development of the community. The women in their associations and groups become the voice and choice of other women and girls. The women leaders bring up the problems women faced and how it could be solved, their counsels are taking into consideration by local development and policy agents because they deem that women are better place to know and understand the problems of other women.

Finally, the place of the sawa women is seen in local development at the level of collective; we discovered that the sawa women have their *njangi* groups which enables them to come together and strengthen their collective power. The fact that they come together having the same goals and interests enables them to have greater influence than when they work individually and in isolation. We discovered that in the *nangi* groups the women development projects to be solved at their individuals and community levels.

6.3. Sources of women empowerment centers of Douala orientating towards local development

6.3.1 Cultural beliefs

Like all peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, the Sawa peoples have a deep sense of cosmogony. This is found in their spiritual practices which refer to what is usually called African Traditional Religions, among other subjects of several studies Mulago, (1980) Magesa, (1997). Mulago (1980) rightly defines African Traditional Religions as a “cultural set of ideas, feelings and rites based on: the belief in two worlds, visible and invisible, the belief in the communal and hierarchical character of these two worlds; the interaction between the two worlds, the transcendence of the invisible world not hindering its immanence, the belief in a Supreme Being, Creator, Father of all that exists”. Among the Sawa, African religiosity is materialized by Jengu in its updated form of Ngondo. It is only a set of actions and attitudes, acting on the way of life and thought of the Sawa, allowing them to perpetuate ancestral beliefs and rituals as true cultural expressions and symbols.

Being near rivers has led the Sawa peoples to develop religious practices strongly linked to natural aquatic forces. They consider their aquatic heritage a cultural and spiritual asset housing their deity named Jengu. Oral sources hold that the Jengu, also commonly called Mami Water or "spirit of water" by the uninitiated, is the mother of the waters. Recognized in tradition as a hybrid deity, the Jengu is a mystical representation of the omnipotence of the water spirits, an integral part of the life of the Sawa peoples. It is an aquatic being, deformed compared to humans and inseparable from water. Cultural codes, the way an initiated sawa apprehends the world, starts from an observation of his aquatic environment. The cosmogonic aspects of the Sawa are therefore manifested by Jengu giving rise to particular cultural expressions distinguishing them from other Cameroonian ethnic groups, who also have their traditional spiritual practices. Apart from its traditional religion, we discovered that the city of Douala inhabits other religious movements. Its cosmopolitan nature reflects the religious plurality in the area. Christianity however has more followers than the other religions like the Islamic faith in the area.

6.3.2. Cultural symbols

Symbols represent signs symbol is an object, word or action that stands for something else with no naturally relationship that is culturally defined. Art remain an important symbol

to the sawa people, this is because they consider art as a means of sustainable development through its cultural heritage that promotes mobility and exchanges between actors to ensure the integration and promotion of associations. It is in the same vein that the women empowerment centers give value to all forms of art as a means to promote the sawa culture. We discovered that the women at the empowerment centers in Douala were expected to produce work of arts through painting and drawing of ancestral equipment. Which are used to signify objects which are real or imaginary.

Among many we have the Dual'art; the centers work is motivated by the belief that artistic and cultural practices has the potential to instigate social change and is an cohesion (www.doual'art.org). Art work by young girls has been presented to the with monasteries. Nevertheless, there are other Christian dominations present in the city of Douala. Among which is the evangelical church of Cameroon, the protestant church, the Presbyterian Church, the Seventh - day Adventist, the Jehovah witnesses, the Baptist not leaving out the Pentecostal movements that have in the last years registered a significant proliferation in the city. The dominant Pentecostal churches include the full gospel mission and the apostolic church.

The religion pluralism practiced at the women empowerment centers in Douala can be traced back to the cultural beliefs of the sawa people. The women empowerment centers in their cultural activities are active participants in the Ngondo festival through traditional dances (asiko) and the visitation of little Islands with the use of boats. While other women empowerment centers in Douala throws its practices from other religions like the Catholic Church the case of the Sainte famille. The women in attending these centers conform to the beliefs, norms and values of the Catholic Church. The traditional religion of the sawa people therefore permits the women empowerment centers in the enhancement of local development. They do through their activities on the preservation of arts and the local culture which are symbols of the city's identity. This is true as the community's development policy promotes cultural diversity, inclusion and social peace by highlighting the local culture public. Their works ranged from sculpture through fine arts such as tapestry, basketry and wood engraving. This was possible because of the training they received from three associations: Artisan au feminine, innovtempo and ligne moderne, whose aims are to fight against women dependence and poverty through impartation of artistic skills for income.

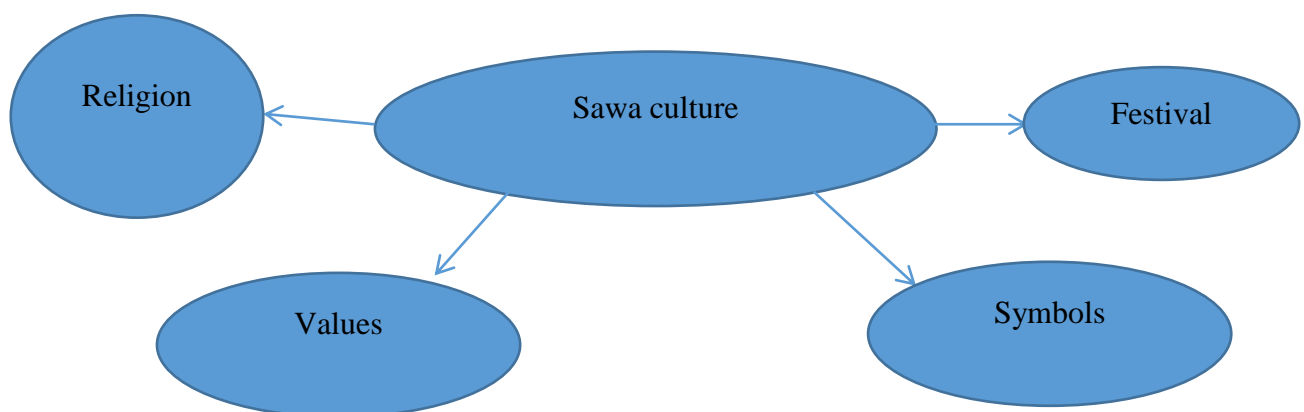
6.3.3 Values of the sawa

We discovered that the cultural values of the sawa women are not limited to be housewives and caregivers of the family. Sawa women are considered to be active participants of local development and are expected to be financially autonomous. Unlike other cultural groups, the sawa women are not discriminated upon in terms of position, schooling and work outside home. This is because they believe that the women have a lot to offer but can only be possible through economic empowerment. Thus the women empowerment centers orientations towards local development. The women empowerment centers in Douala believe that the only way to improve on local development is through enculturation at the centers.

6.3.4. The Ngondo cultural festival of the sawa

During the ngondo we discovered that a number of cultural promotion activities are organized. Activities such as visits to the six main townships of wouri, the reception of Cameroon's other ethnic groups as well as foreigners and dance competitions. These activities are aimed at co-existence, peace and urban identity. It is in this light that the women empowerment centers equally carryout activities that lead to the local development of the city. Activities such as open door day which deals with the display of their products, charity events where they distribute basic items to the less privilege around the community where they are stationed to ensure peace and serenity. We should note it is almost impossible if not impossible to achieve local development in a locality or community where there's no peace and co-existence is absent.

Diagram 2: Women empowerment centre in Douala



Source: Eyong Sonita, June 2022.

From the above diagram, we see that the women empowerment centres in Douala are oriented towards local development unlike other women's empowerment centres is because the sawa culture is the source of its implementation. Among the different aspects of the sawa culture, we see from the diagram that the women empowerment in Douala relies on four aspects of the sawa culture which are religion, values, symbols and festivals.

This chapter demonstrates the cultural foundations of women empowerment centers in Douala. Through its functions (economic, social, political, environmental and health) functions, the description of the place of the sawa women in local development through her active roles of leadership, decision making and collective actions at family and community levels. The sources of the women empowerment centers orientating towards local development relying on the sawa culture (festivals, values, religion and symbols).

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This dissertation entitled “Women’s empowerment centres and local development: case of the Sawa women of the Littoral Region: a contribution to Anthropology of development” demonstrates the cultural foundations of women empowerment centres in Douala.

The problem of this research demonstrates that, the creation of women empowerment centres which spread around the world which was meant to empower women for self control later became a controversy whereby women took it as a way of abusing power, interpersonal relations, high cost of training and arrogance which negatively influenced communities and families. In order for Cameroon to meet up SDG number 5 and obtain development by 2030, women programs and women empowerment centres were established to help women gain control over their lives. Unlike other communities when it penetrated the sawa community which is a place that holds on gender division of labour, the centres were meant to build the women to participate in development through their economic power. The sawa women now took this as an opportunity to build their gender roles and accompany their husbands for the smooth running of their families, the reason why even the activities carried out at the empowerment centres is a continuation of women gender roles and not a struggle for power.

From the research problem, we formulated research questions which are in two categories that is; a main research question and three specific questions, with the main research question been: what are the contributions of women empowerment centres in Douala to local development among the SAWA ? The specific questions were as follows: What are the different activities of the women empowerment centres carried out in Douala? How do people perceive women empowerment centres? How do women activities help in the amelioration of living condition among the sawa people.

In the same vien, from the research questions, tentative answers were given in the same order known as hypothesis. The hypothesis was also in two categories that’s a main hypothesis and specific hypothesis; the main hypothesis was; women empowerment centres in Douala contributes to local development of the SAWA people. The three specific hypotheses were as follows: There exist different activities in the women empowerment centres in Douala which includes; cultural activities, workshops, capacity building, alphabetization and I.C.T, The perception of people have about empowerment centres is that women empowerment centres is a place that breathes indiscipline women, a place of distress and a place of building skills. Activities carried out at the centres help in the amelioration of living condition among

the Sawa women: from the activities, women are able to create for themselves businesses which ameliorates their living condition and that of their families.

The research hypothesis, the research objective were formulated. We have the main objective and three secondary objectives. The main objective is to examine the role of women empowerment centres in the empowerment of women for community development. The three specific objectives goes as follows: to demonstrate the various empowerment activities carried out in women empowerment centres, to examine the perceptions of people about empowerment centres, and to show how women empowerment centres help in the amelioration of the living condition of the sawa women in Douala.

For us to answer our research questions, verify our hypothesis and finally achieve the objectives that we fixed, a methodology of work was inevitable. Mindful of the fact that our work needed to a greater extent exploration, we went mostly for qualitative research designs. These methods then led us to some data collection techniques. For qualitative method, we collected primary and secondary data. For secondary data, we did documentary review and for primary data we collected in the field, we used the following techniques; interviews, Focus Group Discussion, photographic and the observation. As tools, we used, interview guide, FGD guide, observation guide, note books, pens and pencils, the tape recorder to record information that we could not take and later transcribe. A camera was also used to take snap shots.

After collecting the data and analysing them, the documentary research that we have done on this topic guided us to some anthropological theories. Our theoretical frame work helped us to give meaning, to understand women empowerment centres and local development the case of the sawa women of the Littoral Region. The theories that we used as our theoretical framework were; the theory of functionalism of Bronislaw Malinowski, the women in development approach and the different concepts that we employed in the course of this study.

Firstly, the theory of Functionalism fits squarely in the role that the sawa culture plays in the maintenance of the Douala structure. With the notion of objectification, in the sawa, each cultural element has its function. In order to verify the validity of our hypotheses, we mobilised techniques of data collections and qualitative data analysis. There was a need of collecting secondary data in order to meet up the literature review and collection of primary data. Collection of secondary data ran through the periods of September 2020 to September

2021. Diverse documents were consulted such as; books, articles, dissertations, theses, journals and report of studies. The exploitation of these documents gave birth to the elaboration of a reading sheet. For which the contents were used from the beginning to the end of the dissertation. Some libraries were visited in the course of the study: the school library of FALSH and the collections of work of some academic seniors and friends. These documentary data were used to reformulate the research problem, literature review and to bring out the originality of the work.

The field work was realised in Douala faced with a population that constituted of men and women. The individuals that were contacted for the study were gotten thanks to the snowball sampling technique. From the contacts in the field, we were able to construct a beam of individuals relating to them through the use of intermediaries. The field work took place from September to November 2020. Direct observation was used, in-depth interview, focus group discussions, as a means of extracting data. To get accurate data we employed data collection tools such as; interview guide, observation guide, camera, tape recorder, pens and block notes.

The data collected was in the form of word verbatim and images. Content based analysis was employed and iconographic analysis in order to extract “Substantial marrow.” The text and images were cut into significant units. To give sense to the fieldwork, some elements were evoked: theories were used to construct the theoretical framework: the theory of functionalism, the WID approach. The field work, analysis and interpretation of data produced the following results:

This research work demonstrated the various activities carried at the centres and the particularity of the sawa culture in the cultural activities. These cultural practices in the centers act like pull factor. Some of activities include training in traditional dishes (meals), dressing, dances, and solidarity social schemes. Women in the center learn this culture and as well transmit to the girl child and other women. Through the centers, most sawa women have been emancipated as they learn, meals, dressing habits, language, solidarity among women and the culture of living together. The centres also empower women in capacity building that takes the forms of business seminars, capacity building workshopes and counselling. At the centres, women also gain economic empowerment which ranges from tailoring, decoration, production of chemicals used in cleaning such as soap, detergent, bleach, production of hair products such as hair oil, relaxer, catering and a host of others aimed at empowering women

and girls to be more independent. The centres equally helps in education of the women in pronunciation, reading and writing as well as in ICT with activities like graphic designing, secretariat activities, excel, social media management just to name a few. The next chapter will explaining to us the perceptions of people about empowerment centres.

Also, we found out that there are different perceptions of people about empowerment centres among the sawa people. The perception people have about the empowerment centres are generally that, at the centre women gain power, self-esteem and communal action knowledge. That, women empowerment centres commonly known as ‘maison des femmes’ is a place which trains women to becoming autonomous. People perceived that, the centres were created to meet up the UN goals and sustainable development goals of improving on women’s skills by developing empowerment become independent and able to stand for their rights in society. The centres are perceived as investing in women and girls which creates long term effects that yields multiple benefits which extends to their families, communities and countries. The centres play a role in changing the mentalities of women positively because of its culture. The centres provide support networks for minority groups such as prisoners and refugees. Women empowerment programs can therefore generate better jobs in the informal sector, improving the prospects of women regularly contributing to social security scheme available to the informal sector. Empowerment centres focus on equipping women and young girls with skills and knowledge to actively participate in the process of development; they also carry out programs that spur the women and youth girls to realize their full potential for sustainable livelihoods. The empowerment centres offer professional one on one counselling at an almost free public service to enable the people to address their financial challenges and needs and plans for their futures. Finally, people perceived the empowerment centres as a place to train people to becoming self-reliant through the economic activities that are carried out at the centre.

Findings revealed that, activities carried out at the centres contributes to the local development of the Douala municipality. The general contribution of these activities is the fact that it has helped the sawa women to leave from a financial dependent state to a state of financial independence. This was possible because the empowerment activities inducted in the women skills with which they used in creating businesses for themselves and create employment for other people in the Douala municipality. Through socialisation, they were able to better their lives and that of their family members by teaching them the norms and

values of the community which brought about the reduction of juvenile delinquency. Others were able to open for themselves small businesses that they used to generate income and pay for their children's education. With free check-ups, there was a reduction in the risk of people getting sick. While with the help of alphabetisation, the women learnt how to read, write, pronounce and express themselves fluently in public.

More to that, we found out that the cultural foundations of women empowerment centres relied on three dimensions that is; the functions of the women empowerment. Findings revealed that, the women empowerment centres carries out functions in the economic, political, social, and environmental and health functions in the Douala municipality. The sawa women in their empowerment have their roles to play in the local development process such as decision making, leadership and collective actions. Thus the springboard to the sources of women's empowerment centres been oriented towards local development is the sawa culture, in the domain of religion, values, symbols the Ngondo cultural festival.

Generally speaking, we can say that the objectives and hypothesis were attained seeing that the present results corresponds directly or in directly to the tentative answers formulated at the beginning of the study. This work was limited to the sawa women in Douala where this research study was carried out. It was conducted using the qualitative method of research in Anthropology. It can also be extended to other socio-cultural contexts of Cameroon and to other social disciplines.

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II. ORAL SOURCES

List of informants

N°	NAME	AGE	SEX	MARITAL STATUS	DAY AND PLACE OF INTERVIEW	RELIGION	ACTIVITY
1	Ariane	45	female	Married	September, 2020 Meridians	Presbyterian	Hairdressing
2	Anne	35	female	Married	September 2020, meridians	presbyterian	Auto-mechanic
3	Anni	65	female	Married	November 2020 CPF Akwa	Muslim	Hotel management
4	Brandon	40	Male	Single	November 2020 CPF Bonamousadi	Catholic	Hotel management
5	Beatrice	50	female	Married	November 2020 CPF Akwa	Catholic	costomisation
6	Clarisse	50	female	Married	September,2020. CPF Akwa	presbyterian	I.C.T
7	Carine	45	female	Married	September, 2020 CPF Akwa	presbyterian	Beading
8	David	50	Male	Married	November, 2020 Sainte Famille	Catholic	I.C.T
9	Dorette	35	female	Married	September, 2020 CPF Akwa	Catholic	Hotel management
10	Damaris	40	female	Separated	October, 2020 Sainte Famille	Catholic	Tailoring
11	Eboubou	45	Male	Married	September, 2020 meridians	Muslim	Catapillar driving
12	Estelle	40	female	Separated	October, 2020 Sainte Famille	Catholic	Tailoring
13	Esther	50	female	Widow	November, 2020 Sainte Famille	Presbyterian	Costomisation
14	Felicia	60	female	Widow	Nov,2020 CPF Bonamousadi	Protestant	Decoration
15	Irene	42	female	Divorce	October, 2020 CPF Akwa	Catholic	Decoration
16	Jean	40	Male	Widower	September, 2020 meridians	Catholic	Catapillar driving
17	Kelly	35	female	Single	October, 2020 CPF Akwa	Protestant	Hotel management
18	Mandengue	50	Male	Married	November, 2020 CPF Bonamousadi	Protestant	Alphabetisation
19	Mba	70	female	Married	October, 2020 meridians	Protestant	Beading
20	Nadege	50	female	Married	October, 2020	Protestant	Restaurant

					CPF Bonamousadi		
21	Nelly	35	female	Widow	November, CPF Akwa	Presbyterian	Costomisation
22	Pamela	60	female	Separated	September, 2020 CPF Bonamousadi	Catholic	Painting
23	Prudence	50	female	Married	November, 2020 meridians	Protestant	Driving
24	Rose	65	female	Married	October, 2020 meridians	Catholic	Driving
25	Stacy	35	female	Separated	September, 2020 Sainte Famille	Catholic	Hairdressing
26	Simo	60	Male	Married	September, 2020 Meridians	Protestant	Driving
27	Simo	50	Male	Divorce	September, 2020 Meridians	Protestant	Auto-mechanic
28	Suzanne	60	female	Widow	October, 2020 CPF Akwa	Catholic	Decoration
29	Violette	30	female	Married	October, 2020 Meridians	Catholic	Restaurant
30	Viviane	45	female	Married	October, 2020 Meridians	Catholic	Fabrication of liquid soap
31	Yomb	35	Male	Single	November, 2020 CPF Bonamousadi	Catholic	I.C.T

APPENDIX

- **RESEARCH AUTHORIZATIONS**
- **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**
- **INTERVIEW GUIDE**
- **OBSERVATION GUIDE**

1. RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

UNIVERSITÉ DE YAOUNDÉ I
THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

FACULTE DES ARTS, LETTRES ET
SCIENCES HUMAINES



FACULTY OF ARTS, LETTERS
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTEMENT D'ANTHROPOLOGIE

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

12 AOUT 2020

Yaoundé, le

AUTORISATION DE RECHERCHE

Je soussigné, Professeur **Paschal KUM AWAH**, Chef du Département d'Anthropologie de la Faculté des Arts, Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Yaoundé I, atteste que l'étudiante **EYONG Sonita AGBOR**, Matricule 18Z850 est inscrite en Master dans ledit département. Elle mène ses travaux universitaires sur le thème : «*Women Empowerment Centers and Local Development : the case of SAWA Women of the Littoral Region of Cameroun*» sous la direction du **Dr. Afu Isaiah Kunock**.

A cet effet, je vous saurais gré des efforts que vous voudriez bien faire afin de fournir à l'intéressée toute information en mesure de l'aider.

En foi de quoi la présente autorisation de recherche lui est délivrée pour servir et valoir ce que de droit.

Le Chef de Département


Dr. Paschal Kum Awah



CENTRE DE FORMATION PROFESSIONNELLE SAINTE FAMILLE

A

Mrs EYONG SONITA AGBOR
Etudiante à l'Université de Yaoundé1
675 590 851/691 764 011

Objet : Réponse à votre demande de recherche académique dans notre Centre

Madame,

Nous venons par la présente note répondre à votre demande de stage académique dans notre Centre. Nous y sommes favorables.

En effet, le thème de vos travaux universitaires « Women Empowerment Centers and Local Development : the case of SAWA Women of the Littoral Region of Cameroun » vient à point nommé car depuis deux ans l'insertion des filles formées est devenue notre cheval de bataille. Nul doute que les résultats de vos travaux vont nous donner des pistes à explorer pour améliorer notre démarche.

Vous êtes donc invitée à rencontrer Le Chargé Pédagogique, M. TAGNE pour le suivi de votre activité pendant la durée de vos travaux.

Veuillez recevoir Madame, nos souhaits de véritable collaboration et salutations cordiales.

La Directrice



2. INFORM CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF STUDY:

**“WOMEN EMPOWERMENT CENTERS AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT - THE
CASE OF THE SAWA WOMEN OF THE LITTORAL REGION”**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

NAME: EYONG SONITA AGBOR

DEPARTMENT: ANTHROPOLOGY

ADDRESS: DOUALA

PHONE NUMBER: 675590851

EMAIL: eyongsonita83@gmail.com

You are invited to take part in a study entitled “women empowerment centers and local development - the case of the Sawa women of the littoral region: a contribution to anthropology of development”, and you are selected to take part in the study. This is because you are directly involved as an elite and a member of this community. Men, women, young girls are the target population.

INTRODUCTION

I am EYONG SONITA AGBOR a student in anthropology of development in the University of Yaoundé 1. I am carrying out a study on “women empowerment centers and local development - the case of the Sawa women of the littoral region: a contribution to anthropology of development” in the city of Douala while my sample population are the departments of Douala 1 and 5. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. Your participation is voluntary. Please take as much time as possible to read the information sheet. You may also decide to discuss it with your family or friends. You will be given a copy of this form **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH/**

We are asking you to take part in this research study because we are researching on how women and girls who attend the empowerment centers can become active participants of development projects in the community. And why their participation should not be limited only on their gender roles.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

We are inviting everyone above 15 years especially elders and custodians of culture in this community whom we aim to know more about the cultural practices of the community to participate in the study.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice to participate or not. Whether you participate or not, your status in this community will remain the same. If you choose to participate in this study, you will still maintain your social status. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

PROCEDURE

We will collect information from you with the use of a notebook, recorder and camera if possible. This information will be collected for a period of about one month. We may come back to you for more precisions and explanations or verification of information collected from you. At the end of the exercise, this information known as data will be analysed and interpreted to serve the purpose of our study.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS

During this research, we will keep an appointment on when and where to meet to you. At our meeting point, you will be asked questions about the topic above from our interview guide.

We may keep another appointment if we do not exhaust our interview guide.

DURATION

This research is an academic exercise and I have been authorized to spend at most one month on the field. So I will like our appointment to be kept in the earliest time possible.

RISKS

There are no anticipated risks to your participation. When you feel some discomfort at responding some questions, please feel free to ask to skip the question.

BENEFITS

You will not directly benefit from your participation in this research study. Those research will not provide a benefit to you. The overall goal is to improve on women's

participation in the development process in the Littoral region which will come through knowing the activities carried out by women in the empowerment centers.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will only be disclosed by your permission or required by the law. The information collected about you will be coded using a fake name (pseudonym) or initials and numbers for example ABC, 123. The information which has your identifiable information will be kept separately from the rest of your data. The data will be stored in the investigator's office in a locked file or password protected computer. The data will be stored for about seven years after the study has been completed and been destroyed. Your consent will be asked for audio recording and taping. The principal investigator will transcribe the tapes and may provide you with a copy of the transcription upon request. You have the right to review and edit the tape. Sentences that you ask the investigator to leave out will not be used and they will be erased from all irrelevant documents. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that will reveal your identity. If photographs, video or audio tapes recordings of you will be used for educational purposes, your identity will be protected or disguised.

SHARING OF RESULT

The knowledge that we get from this research will be shared with you through academic meetings before it is widely available to the public. Confidential information will not be shared.

We may publish the results in order that other interested people may learn from our research.

RIGHT TO REFUSE OR WITHDRAW

You can choose whether to be part of this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer to any question and still remain in the study. The investigator may also withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrants doing so.

ALTERNATIVE TO PARTICIPATE

Your alternative to participate in this study is not to participate.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue without any penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this study. If you have any questions about your rights as a study subject or you will like to speak with someone independent of the research theme to obtain answers to questions about the research or in the event, contact the University of Yaounde 1 office.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have questions or consent about the research, please feel free to contact the main investigator, Master's degree student of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences from the University of Yaounde 1, department of Anthropology, EYONG SONITA AGBOR.

CONSENT

I have read and understand the provided information and have had the possibility to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at anytime without giving a reason and without course. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature _____

Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ *Date* _____

3. INTERVIEW GUIDE

I am EYONG SONITA AGBOR master 2 student of Anthropology of Development in the University of Yaoundé 1, carrying out a study on Women Empowerment Centers and Local Development.

And for me to get the appropriate information to make this study a success, I rely greatly on your response since you are directly or indirectly concerned with the study since its target population are men, women, young girls and chief executive officers of non-governmental organizations.

You are free to decide to work with me or not.

Thanks for your cooperation.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF INFORMANTS.

Name of informant-----

Age----- Sex-----

--- Marital status ----- Religion-----

Village of origin----- Level of education-----

TO CO-ORDINATOR/CEO OF CENTER

ROLE OF EMPOWERMENT CENTERS

- When did you start teaching on the fabrication of these liquid soap?
- What motivated you?
- What are the criteria for enrollment?
- How many persons are enrolled?
- Are they giving materials for the training?
- After the training are they given materials or finances to start up their own businesses?
- What is the performance?
- How has it contributed to local development?
- Economically

- Politically
- Socially
- Psychologically

PERCEPTION OF EMPOWERMENT

- What do you think people think about the activity?
- How are those who attend this training regarded by the society?
- Do you think the training has been beneficial to the community? If yes how and if no why?
- Do you intend establishing more of such training groups or organization? Give reasons for your answer?

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT AT THE CENTER

- What are the various activities carried out during the training?
- What are the difficulties encountered in the implementation of these activities
- Apart from the fabrication of liquid soaps are there other activities carried out? If yes name them
- Which activities are carried out by men, women and young girls?

CONTRIBUTIONS OF CENTER TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

- Is community development present in your area?
- What role is played by women during local development?
- How do the activities contribute to local development in your area?
- Effects of the activity on community development.

INTERVIEW WITH WOMEN WHO ATTEND THE CENTER

- What do you understand by community development?
- What do you understand by empowerment?
- What is the empowerment center all about according to you?
- Which activity do you belong to at the center and why?
- How has the empowerment centers been beneficial to your family and community at large?

- What are your roles during community development and why?
- How has the training empowered you for community development in your area?
- What are the difficulties you encounter at the center?

INTERVIEW WITH GIRLS THAT ATTEND THE CENTERS

- How did you discover about the training where you informed by a friend family or.....? How long have you been undergoing the training?
- Why did you choose to undertake this training?
- The various types of activities done?
- How has the training helped you?
- Do you have any idea about community development?
- What is this community development all about according to you?
- Have you ever participated in community development?
- Which role did you play and why?
- How has the center empowered you for community development?
- What are the challenges you faced during training sessions?

LOCAL WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE CENTER

- What do you think about women's empowerment training centers? Is it a good idea according to you give reason for your answer?
- How has it been beneficial to your community?
- What are the challenges faced because of its presence in your community?

MEN'S PERCEPTION ABOUT THE CENTER

- What do you think about women's empowerment centers?
- Do you think it's a good idea?
- Do you know or have anyone who attends the center?
- How has the center been of help to you?
- Are the roles played by those who attend the center if yes what roles?
- Do you think these centers are important for community development? Why
- Should more of such centers be created in your area?
- What role do you play during community development and why?

4. OBSERVATION GUIDE

- Observing the different activities carried out at the empowerment centres
- Observing persons attending the centres
- Observing the different roles of men and women during community development projects
- Observing the practical sessions of the activities carried out at the centres such as the fabrication of soaps.

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