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Farmer's union and the economic sustainability of cocoa farmers in Cameroon

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Laurea University of Applied Sciences**Abstract**

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This research on the activities and rule of cocoa farmers unions and organizations in Cameroon and the impact on cocoa farming, I will be looking at cocoa farmers unions in Cameroon and what they do to improve on the quality of cocoa farming while looking at how they have helped to make cocoa farming more economically profitable for farmers. The worry is that cocoa farmers in Cameroon take the activity as professional but are not able to produce on a mega scale and therefore cannot or find it very hard to make a living out of the trade (personal opinion confirmed by many farmers). The famers unions and cooperatives are there to assist farmers achieve success and high quality and quantity production. It is important to look at the difficulties that most cocoa farmers unions and organizations have, and the reasons why most of the organizations do not meet the expectations of farmers. This is very vital considering the importance of cocoa farming in Cameroon and the world at large, explaining why we have to avoid losing a vital sector that attracts only the aging population.

To respond to the needs of this thesis, I have made use of books and much online documentation related to interest groups and cooperative, to get a better understanding of the major concepts of farmer's organizations. I did also develop a questionnaire with which I was able to present visible openings where difficulties and differences could be expressed. This processed gave me the possibility to sample over 80 opinions from different parties involved in cocoa farming and its unions. The exercise both from the questionnaire and from many reports and documentation led us to the conclusion that farmers unions are doing a job which on the part of most farmers is falls below the level of their satisfaction. Also based on the fact that it is very visible to see that most cocoa farmers are not economically happy, one can conclude that farmers unions have not been successful in adding value to cocoa production in one way or the other. It was then possible to outline what major problems that the farmers face and those that the farmer's organizations also face.

At the end of the day, looking at the difficulties that are face here, i have been able to improvise some recommendations that can be looked into in order to change the situation. Practical solutions that will start from the state, changing the laws to the farmers themselves, changing their attitudes towards the participation in union activities, will be very important in changing the actual situation for the better in Cameroon cocoa production.

Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulu
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Tiivistelmä

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Maanviljelijöiden liitto ja taloudellisen kestävyuden kaakaon viljelyn Kamerunissa

Vuosi 2012 Sivumäärä 50

Työn aikana toiminnasta ja oikeusvaltion kaakaon maanviljelijöiden ammattiliittojen ja järjestöjen Kamerunissa ja vaikutukset kaakaon viljelyä, aion tarkastella kaakaon viljelijöiden etujärjestöt Kamerunissa ja mitä he tekevät parantaa laatua kaakaon viljelyä, kun tarkastellaan miten ne ovat auttaneet tekemään kaakaon viljelyn taloudellisesti kannattavaa viljelijöille. Huoli on, että kaakaon viljelijät Kamerunissa ottaa toimintaa ammattimaisena, mutta eivät pysty tuottamaan mega mittakaavassa ja siksi ei voi tai on hyvin vaikea saada elantonsa kaupan (henkilökohtainen mielipide vahvistavat monet viljelijät). Famers ammattiliitot ja osuuskunnat ovat siellä auttaa viljelijöitä saavuttamaan menestystä ja korkeaa laatua ja määrää tuotannon. On erittäin tärkeää tarkastella vaikeuksiin, että suurin kaakaon viljelijät ammattiliitot ja järjestöt ovat ja miksi useimmat organisaatiot eivät vastaa odotuksia viljelijöille. Tämä on erittäin tärkeää ottaen merkityksen kaakaon viljelyn Kamerunissa ja maailmalle, miksi meidän täytyy välttää menettämättä tärkeä ala, joka houkuttelee ainoastaan väestön vanhenemiseen. Voit vastata tarpeisiin opinnäytetyön, olen käyttänyt kirjoja ja paljon verkossa koskeviin asiakirjoihin sidosryhmille ja osuuskunta saada parempi käsitys suurten käsitteiden viljelijän kanssa. Olen ollut myös kehittää kyselylomake, jolla saatoin esitellä näkyviä aukkoja, joissa ongelmia ja eroja voidaan ilmaista. Tämä käsitellään antoi minulle mahdollisuuden näytteen yli 80 lausuntoa eri osapuolten kaakaon viljelyä ja sen ammattiliitot. Harjoitus niin kyselyyn sekä useita raportteja ja asiakirjoja johti meidät johtopäätökseen, että viljelijöiden etujärjestöt tekevät työtä, joka on osa useimpien maanviljelijöiden on alittaa tason tyytyväisyytensä. Myös perustuu siihen, että on erittäin näkyvä nähdä, että suurin kaakaon viljelijät eivät ole taloudellisesti tyytyväisiä, voidaan päätellä, että maanviljelijät ammattiliitot eivät ole onnistuneet tuomaan onnea useimmat maanviljelijät tavalla tai toisella. Silloin oli mahdollista kertoa, mitä suuria ongelmia maanviljelijöille kasvot ja ne, jotka viljelijän järjestöt kohtaavat. Lopussa päivän, katsot hankaluuksien vuoksi kasvot täällä, olen voinut improvisoida joitakin suosituksia, joiden avulla selvitetään muuttaakseen tilannetta. Käytännön ratkaisuja alkaa tilasta, muuttaa lakeja viljelijöiden itsensä muuttavat asenteita osallistumaan unionin toimintaan, on erittäin tärkeää muuttaa todellista tilannetta paremmin Kamerun kaakaon tuotannossa.

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1. Introduction

The main objective of this study is to have an insight look into the types of farmers union in Cameroon and to expose some of the practical difficulties faced by the farmers and the farmers unions. In the due course of this thesis I will be looking at what work is done by farmers unions and what limits them as they struggle to better cocoa farming through their different activities. Bettering Cocoa farming means that farmers are assisted to make their job more easy and enjoyable, make the sale of cocoa more profitable and ease the access to fund and farm materials for farmers. As a child who grow up and the agricultural community, I have witnessed the tremendous and huge efforts put forth by farmers to make the best of what they do, but it ends, to benefit just a mechanism, system or political figure who at the tail end do not in any way contribute to add value to the cocoa output.

Despite the fact the numerous farmers union do exist from within different sectors, it still difficult to ascertain that members in such unions have an understanding of the obligation, duties and responsibilities one union and another union, and between unions and some cooperative societies. For the purpose of this study, it will be important to limit the study to cocoa workers farmers union. The idea behind the limitation is to make the research more specific and to be able to trace and manage information from a particular operation with more concentration on the particular player. The idea here is to be able to identify specific trend of problems and make a more valuable contribution to the problem. Contribution generally will include,

- i. How do farmers unions operate
- ii. what challenges are faced by cocoa farmers unions
- iii. How farmers unions secure better services for cocoa farmers in Cameroon.
- iv. Finally recommendation for implementation

These mean that we will be able by the end of the study to understand the mechanism of Workers union in the context of cocoa farmers in Cameroon operates. It will important also to identify the most important unions and be able to sight specific problem that limit economic sustainability in agriculture

2. Background and previous studies on major concepts

2.1 Major concepts

2.1.1 Economic sustainability within the Agricultural sector

sustainability in Agriculture intergrates three main goals, environmental health, economic profitability, and social and economic equity. Despite the different pespectives that have been taken on defining sustainable agriculture, themes like stewardship of human and natural

resource have always figured in common definitions. At certain level of sustainability, we consider a system perspective, where we look at the the ecosystem from individual farms to large communities affected by farming. This approach will also involve interdisciplinary efforts in research and education. it is very strategic to notice that family economy and personal goals of all those involved in the system, do have great influence on the step by step progress into susustainable Agriculture(Sustainable Agriculture research and education program)

Economic sustainability is a term usually used to describe the productivity and maintenance within certain trades or activities. It will be more appropriate to handle the definition by sliding the words apart. The word sustainable is a complex one that translates the management of the environment and economy in a way that will not diminish it value in the future. Usually in the 1980s, the word has always been used to identify situation of environmental sustainability. But today with the numerous impacts of other activities on the environment, the term has also been shifted to diverse fields. The main idea is that an activity can maintain and support future generations(Agricultural sustainability, Vic Barnett, Roger Payne, 1995)

Economic has broad meanings from different standpoints and implications. In the light of this thesis, economic will not be viewed as a mechanism but as a stand for appreciation of living quality. Here we imply that the term quality will mean that an evaluation of the standard of live that a group people live from their activities is worth valuable and there is a guarantee that a better standard is possible in the future.

The main word, Economic sustainability therefore means that an activity can sustain and secure a good standard of live for those practicing it now and in the future. What is important here is that we are able to make a living through this activity and that the future of the trade is guaranteed. **Cameroon Agro sector (proportional segmentation)**

Very strategic figures from the encyclopedia of nations show that until 1978, agriculture has been the highest sector that contributed to the national GDP of Cameroon; there was a shift to oil and gas when extraction started.

(<http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Cameroon-AGRICULTURE.html>).

In this nation of vast agricultural potentials, it is very important to throw a light on the different types of products that are cultivated and also to demonstrate their representation on the nations GDP. Between 1990 and 2001, agriculture in most developing countries has witnessed a decline in their contribution to the nations GDP. The case of china and Congo are instrumental as they witnessed a shift from 27% and 12.3% to 16.3% and 7.2% for China and Congo respectively. The situation in these nations demonstrate a situation where with the influence of industrialization, the impact of other sectors grow stronger and they tend to add more value to the GDP than Agric sector. The figures of Cameroon demonstrate a different scenario where between 1990 and 2001 Agriculture marked a change from 24.2% to 53.5%. These figures show that up till 2001, in most nations, Agriculture has always been the main source of revenue for the state. But from this period, there has been a shift and more people

turn to get involved in other industrial and economic activities. Proportion of the population involved in Agriculture has always been on a decline.

<http://www.ajol.info/index.php/jasr/article/view/2811/11378>

Cameroon is different from this general pattern, Agriculture in Cameroon has been on an increase until 2001, people turn to develop interest and gained trust in the financial reliability of the profession. Farming in Cameroon by the way comprises of several types and for several purposes. 44% of GDP of Cameroon in 2004 was covered by Agricultural production with 56% of the population being actively involved in the process even though only about 15.4% of the land was arable. The most important cash crops are Cocoa, used in the production of cacao drink, candies, chocolates, cocoa oil, and a host of others. Cameroon is amongst the world's largest producers of cacao with over 130.000tons being produced in 2004.

From the international cocoa marketing figure, it is very uncertain to determine profitability since the prices are on a constant variation and fluctuation. A look at the diagram below gives an insight into the international cocoa market prices over a wide period of time.

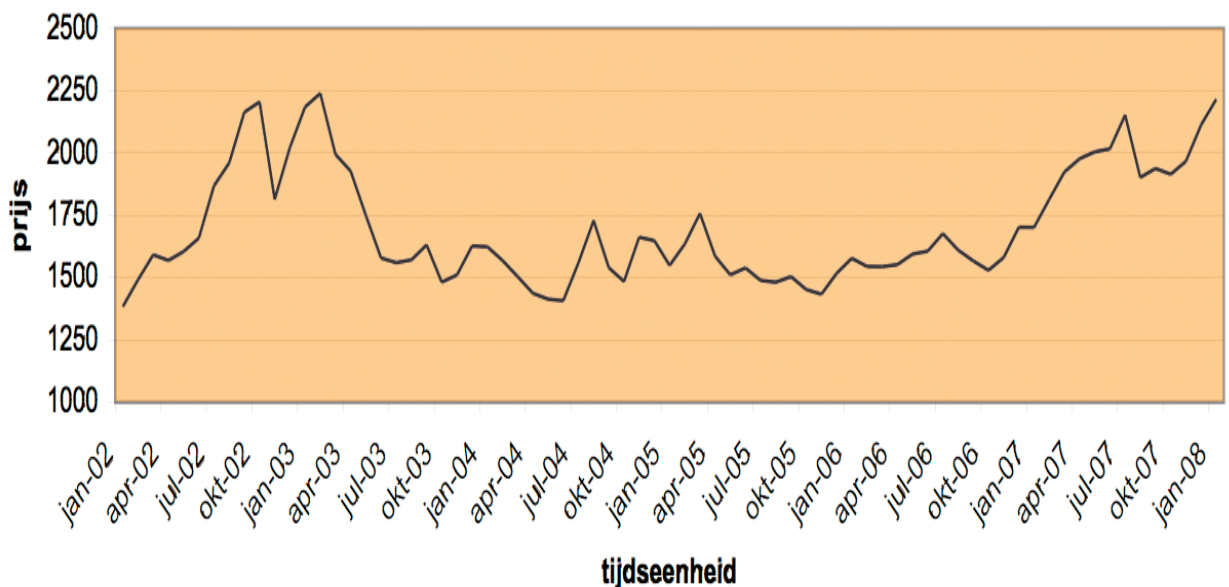


Figure 1: Cocoa price change over time

Cameroon is endowed with rich soils for crop cultivations and the country is commonly referred to as Africa's in miniature. This favourable climate has favored the cultivation of over a thousand species of crops in different parts of Cameroon. Crop types ranging from, Cassava, Nuts, and vegetables of different categories, tubers like yams, palm nuts and many others have attracted consumers from all over central Africa.

2.1.2 Major Agro-sartorial Discrepancies and Reasons for low Growth

How can we explain why despite the fact that Cocoa farming in Cameroon is an old trade, the level of industrialization within the trade is low, the degree of trust and reliance on cocoa is declining, most people are abandoning the trade, and many others little ponders.

It is high time to make an evaluation on the value of workers union in Cameroon. We will be looking at the existence of these unions, their managerial organ grams and representation. It will be vital to take a look also at the representation of the farmers in the Union and how the relationships amongst farmers and the union are managed. The basis of such relationship amongst other things will also be analyzed from the perspective of its economic sustainability. As Mr, Nkele, the chair man of Kumba joint cooperative unions, reports in one seminar, after deliberations, it was clear that,

Agriculture in rural and urban communities today in Cameroon has for a long period witness massive stagnation. At least, there are enormous efforts on the part of farmers to improve the quality of their trade but it has been fruitless for a long period of time.

The core of this dissertation is centered on the difficulties involved in the Agric sector in Cameroon. Agriculture in the history and facts books has always been a stable, consistent and reliable sector from which the state raise a greater portion of the GDP(at least 24% per the 2002 data) and from which almost 63% of house hold depend on for the upkeep of their families. When working as a researcher in the domain of Agriculture in Cameroon, it very uncertain to determine the future since statistics on past Agro evolution has always been too difficult to come by or find. A keynote at the discrepancies in the sector will be addressing some of the difficulties that hinder the growth and progress of the sector.

The Slow technological evolution of the Agricultural sector in Cameroon can be identified as a major reason behind the loop back of the sector. Agriculture in Cameroon and most other African states has always been practiced in the old traditional system and farmers there has always been the use of much man power and human energy than machineries. This makes it more strenuous and time consuming for farmers who put in more energy than the activity can pay for(seminar report by Victor Ngoh)

The lack of appropriate farming knowledge and education that will enhance high productivity can also be a reason for the low output of agriculture in Cameroon. Farming today is profitable only when it is highly industrialized with the use of modern equipment and technology. The situation is different in Cameroon because farmers are mostly uneducated and they turn to use old farming techniques that might be detrimental to facilitate crops growth. Farming education is very expensive and highly restricted to very intelligent students, making it very difficult for farmers to be enrolled for such courses that will help them in their profession.

The availability of several Agro-pastoral training centers and university faculties has always been the main place where professional training can be obtained but with the lack of ade-

quate staffing, high competitive nature of the training entrance and the extremely high cost to get the education has all undermined the value of purpose of the education.

The pricing of farm products at the international market is unfair and greatly disfavors farmers. There is a lot of uncertainty due to the fact that even though Cameroon and most other cocoa producing countries are members to the board, they do not have a bigger say in the pricing mechanism. A simple cost and output analysis approach will be an appropriate standard in the calculation of the profit margins within an operation but the case of Agricultural product is different and this explains why most Agricultural states still have a very low income level. The lack of appropriate infrastructures in the different activities and units that assist in one way or the other in the cultivation, handling, conservation or the transportation of these farm produce has always been a reason for the slow development and low profit margin with farmers in Cameroon and other Agro countries at large. The lack of heavy incubators and the scarcity and high cost of repair and maintenance service in the largest poultry has always been the cause of low productivity and failure to be cost effective.

In the course of this research, I will be looking at farmers unions in Cameroon as a whole, with a view at the role they play in enabling a better agriculture for farmers in the country.

It is very wise to understand that for any Agricultural system to be very productive, reliable and consistent, different factors must put in a giant hand to facilitate the operations. The state or Government instituted mechanisms, Nongovernmental organizations, Educational and training institutions, the international communities and the farmers unions themselves.

It very imperative that we cannot measure the contribution of these different forces or better still we cannot weigh the impact of the different actors in impacting a better farming career for farmers, but for the purpose of this thesis, we will be looking at the rule that the farmers unions play in bringing a considerably financial and structural improvement of the farming situation in Cameroon (Building more effective unions 2nd Edition, Clark, Paul F).

2.2 Background study

The problems and difficulties faced by cocoa farmers in Cameroon is as old as the career and crop itself. There has been tremendous efforts from different actors, basically farmers unions, research institutes, the state, and many others to address these issues. Before these, we will be looking at the work done by other researchers, by farmers unions and other cooperative bodies to better address the need of cocoa farming and to properly situate with practical examples the situation in different regions and at different seasons. The south West cocoa farmers Archives have been very useful in the development of this thesis.

2.2.1 Cocoa Farmers union case study (Ekona cocoa Farmers unions)

The Ekona cocoa farmers union is one of the oldest farmers unions that were created in the early 1980s to help farmers curb immediate difficulties amongst farmers. Ekona is a small rural community located in the south west province of Cameroon. In this region, cocoa is the major Agricultural activity and by consequence the Farmers unions in this region were created based on cocoa solidarity. As we can conclude from the questionnaire, The first Idea in this region came up when farmers in the region decided on forming a framework that they could easily after a tedious day in the farm, meet, relax, drink and drink some beer at the end of the day. The union idea then started developing when the farmers started thing that they could jointly sell their products to major buyers in Douala. Since this union was situated in an interior village with poor roads especially in the raining season, it was very costly and expensive to transport the products to the city. The fact also that farmers lose a lot when they sell their products individually can be seen when products are bought at a cheaper price in smaller quantities. With all the factors, the groups that were created on the bases of relaxation and solidarity, farmers began to discourse other issues related to cocoa sale and production. The creation of the cocoa farmers unions in the 1980s in Cameroon also facilitated the creation of these unions since farmers were made to see the need in putting together their crops and marketing them through the Board. The Ekona farmers Unions started with about 16 members, these sixteen members were all men ranging from 28 years of age to about 69 years of age. This group was originally made up only of men, since it was funny for ladies to be involved in men gatherings. This union in the start only had a chairman, secretary and a treasurer. These three men managed the group until structuring went on as time went by. The union has been very instrumental in the change and transformation to the actual Ekona Farmers that exist now our days in that region (Mr. sona Elias, pioneer member of the Ekona cocoa farmers union)

2.2.2 Farming Economics and the importance of cocoa farming

The value of Agriculture in Africa since from the colonial days cannot be overvalued without an appreciation to the introduction of industrial farming of cash and commercial crops by the colonial masters. In the early days, when cocoa farms were first developed, life styles where transformed and huge migration trends were developed since we could read from history that most people migrated from the interior regions or the hinterlands to work as farmers in the plantations. Although the original trends of colonial cash crops could be found in rubber and palm plantation, cocoa and coffee plantations developed subsequently on the same trends.

Looking at statistics and Agro information from different sources, we will arrive to concrete and interesting results. On the international platform, Africa based on reports from the World Food Organization (WTO) and its numerous programs, is a continent with enormous food

shortage, a place known by the west to be amongst the poorest of all continents and where an average individual lack the possibility to have basic meals in a day. This situation and political ramification has led to the development of several mushroom and unscrupulous institutions with a vague claim to assist farmers and thereby improve on the capacity of food production in the nation.

The growing of cash crops in Cameroon has for history been considered a reliable source of income for both the farmers and also because of these activities quite many business have been developed along the lines of this trade. These operations are very important in the chain of activities because they contribute at the different stages of cocoa production. A skeleton of this will find three different types of occupations after the farmers.

The farm produces buyers which group of lucrative Business class that develops as middle men in the sale, transportation and processing of cocoa beans. They act as the direct link between the farmers and the big buyers who in their turn supply to the international market.

Also we do find, Pesticides and farm material suppliers who are involved in the sale and distribution of farming materials, chemical products needed in the fight against insects and all other forms of pest and pesticides that affect a regular plant growth.

We also have the Big Buyers who are well established and structured firms with capital of over Billions of CFA Frs., located at the economic capital in Doula but will small local offices in some cities. Because of their financial might, they control at a certain level the pricing of cocoa within different periods. Firms like SIC CACAO, CRPE LtD and many others that have direct contact and make supplies directly to foreign buyers through the port of Douala(DRUM commodities, An introduction to the Cameroon cocoa Industry, may 2012)

2.3 Literature review

This work would not have been a success with the use of previous knowledge, text books and many other documentations available on web pages, seminar reports and many others forms to explore and to demonstrate the necessary information needed to better understand key concepts needed for this thesis development.

2.3.1 The notion of Union

Standard definition sees a union as an organization whose membership consist of workers and union leaders, united to protect and promote their common interest. The principal purposes of a labor union are to negotiate wage, working condition terms, regulate relation between workers (its members) and the employer, and take collective actions to enforce the terms of collective bargaining, raise new demands on behalf of its members and help settle their grievances(The ideology of pressure groups by John A Crampton, 1965)

A trade union on the other hand may be a company union that represents interest of only one company and may not have any connection with other unions. Also called a house union, a company union is often a bogus one and generally illegal. On the other hand it can be a general union that represents workers from several companies in the same industry also called an industrial union. A craft union represents skilled workers in a particular field such as carpentry or welding. In the conception of unions, it is very primordial that a conceived model for the union participation must be observed while members are orientated through specific communication strategies. With the union participation model, all the members of the union cannot be grouped under same strength because of the differences on the impact and level of commitment to the union activity and to some extent how much interest is shown or manifested during the unions operation. Since the success of the union depends greatly on the degree of these commitments, it is very imperative that members turn to respond fully to the callings of the unions. Henceforth formal participation in unions operation will not only mean attending to meetings, or voting during elections, but it can occur in a more intermittent or occasional ways (Social partnership at work, Mcshane, fullagar et al , 1995).

It is also very important that the communication procedure within a union is properly construed so that follows general pattern of getting information heard, digested and responded to. It is only by effective communication of relevant information, that unions can affect attitudes and belief. The three steps of Effective communication which include, Attention, comprehension and acceptance must be observed keenly. This therefore implies that the communicator will consider how the source, the message itself, the channel through which it can be communicated. Despite the different kinds of unions that exist based on occupational trends, it is evident that for the purpose of this writing we concentrate on farmers unions. It will not be appropriate to jump directly into farmers unions in Cameroon without taking a walk back the lane of historic union's development and startups. A look at the first conceptions of farmers unions in the United States and also in the United Kingdom will be instrumental here.

2.3.2 Farmers Union

The criterion of farmers unions is a common conviction (even though a high survey of members might reveal striking homogeneity in other respects. The combination of interest and opinion is not unique to farmers union. Initially groups that were merely interest groups have taken on ideological objectives which may be remote from member's economic interest. In the farmers unions, the combination of interest and opinion is very old. The union's liberal, agrarian ideology has been the most important, though not the only factor influencing the organizations programs and structure throughout its history. Diffusing this ideology has been the reasons for the existence of most unions. This study indicates that opinion interest groups by ideological definition posses' particular needs and proceed under special stresses and en-

joy unique advantages as they press their claims upon societies. Ideology of Pressure Groups, John A Crampton) In such organization, Unions are generally organizations of a group of people, practicing a common trade who come together to identify, set rules and regulation and also organize their activities so as to improve the quality and value of their activity. In the case of farmers union, we are looking at Farmers coming together to form an organization independently managed in order to foster development and progress within the profession. The United Kingdom national farmers union defines National Farmers union as a trade union or industrial association for farmers in a particular region. The history of this organization in the UK stems from the desire to improve farmer's political and economic control over their activity. The American context can be traced from farmers alliance way back in between 1877 and 18 and 1892 where grass root farmers alliance were formed in the south and plain states to combat debt, poverty and low crop prices by educating and mobilizing rural men and women, engaging in cooperative economic organization and asserting their powers in electoral politics

(<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3401801476.html>).

The growth and development in the alliance paved the way for a more political and economically strong farmers union today in the United States.

In Cameroon farmers union came up as a result of grouping of farmer coming together on regional and specific bases to demand certain aid from the state. The unions were formed so that they can easily solve common problems, get fund and be represented in decision making process. These among many other reasons explain how the unions were formed in deferent countries but then the specific process of formation can only be analyzed from in insight look into the different types of unions that exist.

2.3.3 Types of farmers Union

The development of farmer's alliance as known by Americans can be explained historically under two great movements that explained their origins. Firstly, there are those alliances that are founded after the Granger movements that helped to unite farmers in a common force that will enable them to jointly in one force fight against their enemies and foster their interest in both the social, Economic and political perspective. This movement gradually led to a group of founders creating and heading movements to this regard.

On the contrary, the second group of unions just sprang from the soil and just grooved instead of being deliberately planed. Historically the development can be traced in the first creation of alliances in 1874 or 1875 in the frontier county of Lampasas, Texas. The aim of the alliance was to fight against Horse theft and land sharks and for the cooperation in the rounding up of strayed stocks and in the purchase of supplies(American farmers and the rise of Agribusiness, William Henry, Kerr, 1975)

Generally a collection of online sources and an insight look in the concept of trade union holds that, Unions can be founded on regional bases or occupational trends it is with certainty that one can mention that farmers union like many other trade and organizational unions can be set on national and or regional bases. They can also be based structurally on the hierarchy pattern of organization starting with the local unions, to state and finally national unions. (http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/producers/cacao/kuapa_kokoo_union.aspx). From the link we can have a look at the farmers union in Ghana and how they are formed on both bases.

We cannot over emphasize the value of trade unions and the impact of their representations. We have to not that different unions are represented in different ways and that the level at which a representation is made depends greatly on the statute of the representative within the unions. we can see how nions train, advice and work with its members. It will generally include (Trade Union representation in the work place)

<p>Collective bargaining involved in the negotiation and arrangement of deals in favor of the unions. Also issues related to membership, union discipline and others are part of the package.</p>	<p>The unions environmental representative will or should always be concerned about the groups green program and that related to climate change</p>
<p>The union learning representative will arrange for education and programs that will upgrade its members competence</p>	<p>The unions equality representative will work on programs that will render equality to all members at all situations</p>
<p>The union health and safety representative will design programs and arrant work safety procedures at work for members.</p>	<p>The disciplinary and complain units of the union will always be there to record complains and make findings to different problems affecting members interest.</p>
<p>There is also the unions agent in charge of publicity and concerned with arrangements with other bodies and negotiations on behalf of the group.</p>	

Other agencies and bodies also represented are those dealing with subject specifics like consultations and negotiation in redundancy and pension. These specialists will need proper and valued education for their job, since it involves the application of defined legislations and others. Consultation bodies are often created to assist these different bodies. With these different agencies under the union to represent different union interests, there is always a pos-

sibility for the European Peas to get more compensation and remuneration for the extra time put in travelling and attending to meetings. there also exist union members with multiple rules or functions who are sometimes hard to come by because of the lack of a course that address the needs. In most cases, a very experienced union official fills the gap because of he is old in the job.

In my opinion, the above findings or extracts from the Acas booklet on trade union representation in work place has been a very important document in the discussions of modern trends in trade unions and their representation of workers within Europe and the world at large. The development of farmers unions in Cameroon literally cannot be discoursed without a completely look on facts recorded and reported by one article by Lotsmart N Fonjong. In this great book titled *The challenges of nongovernmental organizations in Anglophone Cameroon*, we are able to have an inside mastery of the development of farmers unions and other nongovernmental organizations that were develop in that part of the world at that time to respond to specific needs. The term nongovernmental organization came into existence and need in Cameroon and most part of Africa in 1945 when the United Nations needed to differentiate in its charter rights and participation of intergovernmental and specialized agencies and those of international provide organizations. The general call for development in 1980s saw an international call for the creation of these organizations that developed over deferent trends and responded to address different community problems at different grass route levels. Personally, I hold the opinion that, the case of cocoa and coffee farmers unions in Cameroon is quite unique to that of other agricultural African states. When we take a look at unions from a broad perspective, we can identify three main groups, the national unions, the indigenous unions and Solidarity groups. It is possible to make these differences based on the fact that it is very practical to witness differences on the menstioned formats since wide margins do exist on their origins, kind of projects, management and financial capacity and affiliation to the state. As a factor for understanding the huge differences which exist in the different groups of unions, one can make allution to the cultural and ethnic trends in the formation of different group of people who share the same problems in the running and management of their trade.

conclusively from the questionnaire, the national unions and cooperatives are the bourgeoisie and flamboyant agency that hide behind the farmers to misuse public fund. This is usually a highly bureaucratic organ formed by the state with complete control of its finances and administration. The idea here usually is that the organ or union is created by the state so as to help the farmers in difficult technical and financial situations. Also we must remember that membership into such unions by other indigenous unions was based on the payment of certain membership fees. Since this union is connected with the state, they always benefit from easy access to farm specialist, state funds and Management; this explains why they have always been more powerful than others.

The indigenous unions usually are founded on regional bases, not typically on geographical stands but on the idea that people in an area who have a common history and ideology form a kind of group supposed a union that they can jointly sit, dialogue and find solutions to common issues regarding their daily activities. Since these are typically rural areas with agriculture as the major economic activity, there is a strong tendency that small gatherings of farmers are the eventual start point of this kind of unions. Both the Financial and administrative management of this groups depends solely on voluntary commitments from it members.

And finally the solidarity group based farmers unions are very typical and they are founded on typical values of community living. Traditionally they are founded by people who live in the same area and like to live like a group but hold still different interest. The idea here is that two to five people of the same region who practice farming arrange systematically to work on each other's farms on programmed days. They work as a group and protect their interest by every member trying to be the brother's keeper. They have very insignificant or no financial commitment. Trust and commitment are the principles of operation. In this domain unions are founded on regional bases and most parts of the union follow the general out lay of geographical settings. In this perspective they start at local or grass root settings and then they have a regional representation and finally at the national level. Central organs may also exist. Examples of this set ups can be found with unions like The Ekona cocoa farmers union that exist at the sub divisional level in the Ekona region.

At the local level we usually find the roots of such unions and organization. This is the place of origin in terms of the ideology and conception of the union. At the local levels, we usually find the main problems and difficulties for which the union is founded to resolve. People that form the local union are generally all the activist in the area, practicing the same trade and sharing similar crisis at the level of daily operation. The regional level is usually a sub superior level generally comprising of representative from the branches.

2.3.4 Union Management and Organigram

Generally management concepts maintain that management should bear an empirical, behavioral, operational, contingency, mathematical, decision theory, social system, socio technical system, contingency approaches. In these different approaches we can see how the different concepts in managerial application are developed on different dimensions and situations. According to Dr. M. Thenmozhi presentations, the different dimensions upon which those values are developed determine the management patterns.

in consideration of Dr thenmozi approach, I hold the opinion that the case of Cocoa farmers union in Cameroon should not be seen or cannot be attributed with values of a particular management system. This is simply because management on this situation usually stands on ethnic and cultural observations. Of course official managerial structures and departments do

exist with the standard organigram Typical managerial approach of the Ekumbe Famers union has a structural setting. The union has an office in Ekumbe, Meme division in the SW province of Cameroon. The office handles the management of the unions operations and documents the union's activities. At the top of the union, there is a president who is assisted by a vice president. The president leads and heads the union. He is the chief executive officer of the union. He as well represents in the union in events, meetings and other official matters concerning the union. The president in absentia is represented by the vice president. The VP assumes and manages the responsibilities of the president in his absent. He also acts as immediate assistant to the president. Farmers unions do also have secretary who sits also at the office and follows the president in official meetings so as to keep minutes and document the happenings for the organization (Impact of collective marketing by cocoa farmers organizations in Cameroon, Bergaly and Andre, 2011 yaounde) Farmers unions also have financial, technical and agricultural staffs that assist in their different capacities to regulate and document financial and technical operations of the union. Financial staffs takes care of the flow of financial transactions and values, keep record of money spent and money received and most importantly assist in grants application for the unions from the state, NGOs and other organizations. Technical and agric staffs helps in the field of practical agriculture, the study of cocoa plant life cycle, pest and parricides identification, effects and treatments, farmers trainings, workshop organizations and many others. One very important thing that must be understood in the formation and management of farmers union is the diversity of this union in terms of their foundation bases. This is a typical in delimiting the financial and administrative strength of such unions. Let's take a look at the two classes. There are basically unions founded by the state with just farmer's representation and there are also unions founded by farmers themselves. Unions founded on states support are very powerful, instrumental and most popular. The main reason here is that, since they are state formed and funded, they poses huge financial stakes and support. Workers here are state salaried and recruitment is usually state oriented. The standard and level of management here is often high since the workers here owe huge responsibility to the state management in the execution of the function and they are accountable to other superior state organs. Farmers formed farmers unions are typically founded at very local levels and the general concern for their formations are usually that the need for people in the same region and with similar stream of difficulties to constantly meet and communicate to higher authorities, their problems so that jointly a more reliable solution can be made (impact of collective marketing by cocoa farmers organizations in Cameroon, Bergaly and Andre, 2011 yaounde).

2.3.5 Objectives of Farmers Union

Several organization, NGOs and state agencies have different points of view when it comes to appraising the existence of most farmers union. In reality it is very obvious to maintain that farmers unions are farmers groups that seek to protect the farmers interest and assist in making the occupation a more reliable and sustainable one. An insight look at the information from the farmer's voice in Cameroon helps us to understand that such unions are solidarity groups amongst poor farmers (<http://www.thefarmersvoice.org/146.php>). Many other schools of thoughts hold different opinions about farmers groups.

They are groups founded on specific Agricultural trends that help to educate the famers on recent and modern techniques in the practice of their trade. When we take a look at this stand point, we come to understand that these groups try to make it an obligation to improve the quality of production. This base of these unions from a technical point of view is to address recent agricultural problems and to make the production more profitable.

Another factor that has always been a great a reason behind the formation of farmers union is the dilemma in the pricing mechanism. Most Agricultural products sell at a price that do not yield return to farmers. There is often a complicated procedure in price determination and the price of most farm products are often imposed on the farmers by either international institutions, buyers unions, state mechanisms or whatever. The situation has always been that farmers unions do not have a say in the determination of the prices of their product. Now recent development has aroused the attention of farmers and sparked their interest in being a party in the determination of the prices of their products. In the case of cocoa in Cameroon, the Cameroon marketing board was the institution that managed the sales and pricing of the product in the whole country until its collapse during the close of 1980s. Today in Cameroon the price of cocoa beans really vary from one region to another region and from one agent to another. Huge buyers like Talca with head office in Douala and regional offices all over the cocoa production provinces in Cameroon, Njimili and sons and many other buyers form a clique of middle men in the market and sales of cocoa between the farmers and the world market. These middle men, even though influential, do not really have a say in the determination of the prices of these farm products. The international cocoa organization and WTO determine the price of the product in accordance with regulations from other organizations. Detail information about that ICCO can be seen at

<http://www.icco.org/projects/projects1.aspx?id=sov1648>.

This organization has signed series of agreements with cocoa producing countries and many states organizations in order to regulate the marketing of cocoa products. The world cocoa foundation is also another organ that plays a vital rule in the transformation of the cocoa production sector. Details on the web page (<http://www.worldcocoafoundation.org/who-we-are/members.html>) will demonstrate the role of the WCF.

Another objective for the formation of farmers union is to bring farmers under an identifiable umbrella where by all resources destined for them can easily be channeled to them. We come to understand that it is a means of bringing together people who live the same situations in life to be able to develop and work on situations they share common interest on. On this stand point farmers consider the unions to be a kind of solidarity group. The experiences from local farmers groups in Cameroon reveal that they turn to act as others keepers. This is very typical in African farmers groups where insecurity theft and high level of illiteracy exists within farmers groups. Farmers union also acts a forum through which different farmers can meet and share their knowledge and experience. Constant meeting on fixed days are arranged so that as a club vital farming issues can be discoursed. This forum is mostly exploited by the state that has trained Agro engineers. The Agric Engineers offers lessons and do often organize farm visitation trips with local farmers in a bid to introduce new farming techniques and to help combat pests and other parricides that affect general farm productivity. Farmers unions are also formed to protect and maintain the continual existence of a trade or farming type. It is evident that a line of agriculture that is not supported by a strong relation of all those who practice the trade is easily pruned to extinction. When farmers are easily united, they have a single voice in the practice of their activities and it is on this base that we find a stronger and more united value in the trade. Generally there are many more reasons behind the formation of farmers unions in Cameroon and the world over, but recent literatures have demonstrated that great values of economic and social importance can be achieved. It is further evident through this observation that solidarity, unity, education and greater productivity are the output of such unions. Little or no difference do really exist when we look at the way these unions are managed and the way others enterprises are. Better still standard administrative organigram do not differ with those of unions.

Usually since most unions have a national representation, it is evident that there exist administrative hierarchies where by instructions on management, reporting and administration come from higher quarters. The situation of Cameroon does not really differ in terms of how these unions are ruled and managed administratively. We must pay attention to the fact that the roots of a union are very instrumental in determining the managerial setting of such unions. It is the standard in Cameroon for cocoa and other unions to develop on and from different background. Like we have seen in part of this work, we come to acknowledge that it will depend greatly on the geographical, political or economic origins of the union, for a managerial and financial autonomy to be set up. The case of Cameroon depicts different patterns in both set up standards and formality of control of most unions because of the lack of regulated standards to be observed in the creation of these unions. This notwithstanding, even in cases where there exist some laws to this respect, the lack of an efficient system of control by the state on the observations and respects of such standards is a reason for multiplicity in this existence. Even though the below diagram shows the standard platform on how most unions are created, it is a fact to assert with certainty that is organigram demonstrate only about 2%

of the giant Cocoa farmers unions that exist in the country. The reason being that since most farmers live and operate in rural communities that are in most cases not accessible in terms of proper road network, it is possible that the unions created in these zones based on their personal interest do not have ramifications outside these regions. It is useful to understand that there exist over 6400 farmers organization in the whole nation that generally all unions are should be covered under one of the three main state Agro- institutions

Conseil de federation paysannes du Cameroon (CFPC), Confederation national de des organization paysannes du Cameroon (CNOP-Cam), Conseil national des organization paysannes de petit producteur du cameroun (CNOPROCam). These institutions are government bodies for general agricultural operations and therefore within the cocoa production sector we had on the 28th of January 1991 the creation of creation of the office National du Cacao et du Café, a French acronym that depicts the national office for cocoa and coffee. Since we cannot single out a particular mode of origination, for the purpose of this dissertation, it exists in the case of Cameroon as below,

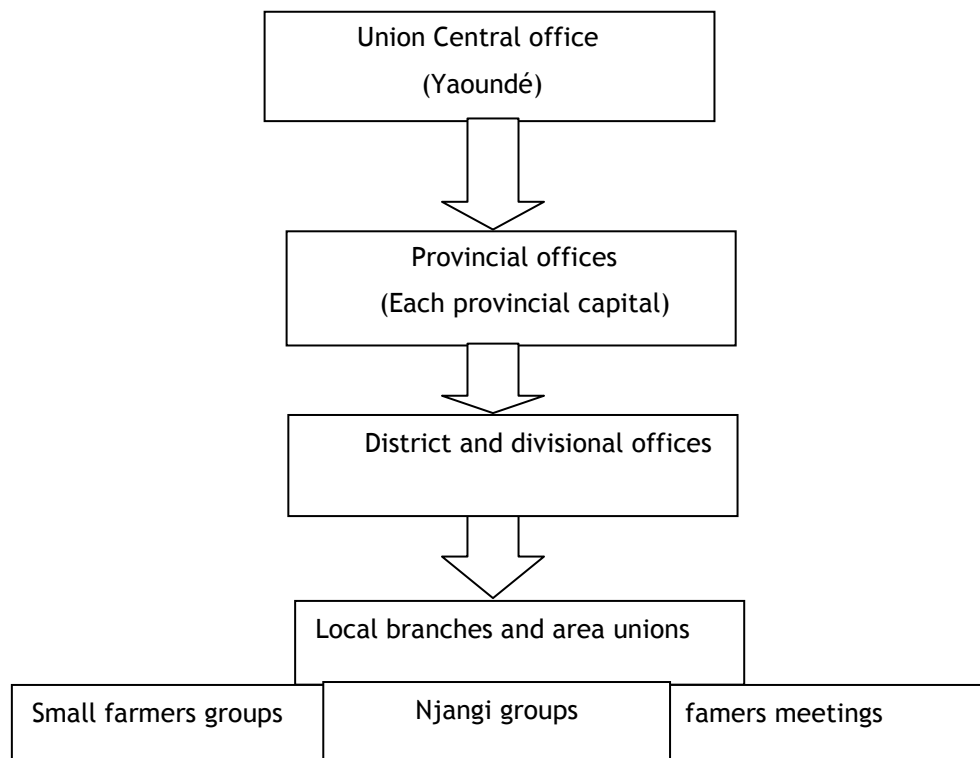


Figure 2: Hierarchical representation of Farmer's Union

General managerial patterns usually present an office with the Chief Executive officer CEO heading and overseeing the general administration and management of the union. This function may be seen at all the level of the trade union setting. Beneath the CEO is the Directors of Administration and the director of finance with the latter overseeing and directing the day in and day out operations of the union. The latter Director of finance works hand in hand with

all other financial personnel in the implementation and discharge of financial duties. Another important position is the Technical and agricultural advice department that works on research to improve productivity. Other positions like secretaries and other non-administrative staffs that assist in the discharge of the union's activities obviously do exist in other centers and units.

From this standpoint, management at all the levels has the same mode of operation and when we look at the representation, we often find that there is National chairman. He officially resides and directs the national office and he is assisted by the vice chairman. At the provincial offices there are also provincial delegations headed by the provincial directors. They are assisted by a vice. They generally manage and supervise general managerial operations. They represent the union and present union demands to the right quarters.

There is usually a financial director or manager at all the level, financial directors always respect their hierarchy and as such always present financial reports to their superiors. The finances of each hierarchical level is managed and communicated to the immediate hierarchy. There also exist at all level technical advisers. They are in most of the cases, trained agricultural engineers who are there to advise the management on key agricultural developments, changes and current trends. All union offices are usually charged with a secretary or two. The secretary is usually there to document office and unions operation on a day today bases. Usually all the office secretary report at their duty sites all working days and hours and also assist to all meeting, the office is called to, so that they keep note and records of all events.

3. Research Methodologies

Objective of the Study

In developing what research methods will be used through this thesis, it is pertinent to take a look again at the objectives of this work, which include, how the farmers unions operate, what problems they do face at different levels of their operations and finally the recommendations that can be made based on the problems revealed and the future perspective

During our study of the cocoa farmers unions and its cooperative activities in Cameroon, we have used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis in finding out very important facts related to the contributions made by cocoa farmers unions to foster growth. At the same time, this thesis addresses the level of failures of the union while addressing what recommendable efforts they make to promote cocoa farming. There was a questionnaire that addressed different questions with the hope of responding to different problematic issues. After gathering valuable course materials on research work from different sources, it was easy to to construct the questionnaire in a manner that addressed the needs of the farmers and the unions.

3.1 Data analysis and its relation to the literature review

Several text books on different issues related to this thesis idea, course material, seminar reports, and other online sources and pages were very vital development and construction off this work.

Books such as Building more Effective unions 2nd Edition by Clark, Paul F (Laurea E library resource), was very vital in collecting qualitative data that contributed in the development of major concept of unions, their activities and participation. Another important book, Building Sustainable societies; A blue print for Post Industrial World(Dennis C. Pirages) is very typical about the definition of sustainable values and standards. It addressed issues ranging from economic to environmental sustainability. Many other resources including, Mark Naison "About Sharecropping - Southern Tenant Farmers Union" that introduce, the creation of the tenants farmers unions in the southern union states of the United States of America after the great depression. The creation of the union at this time in the states was instigated by President Roosevelt Agricultural adjustment Act, aimed at reviving the Agricultural economy. other resources was also used throughout the preparation of the thesis. Other literary sources include, Prosperity without growth; Economics for a Finite Planate (Tim Jackson), The economics of sustainable development by Herman E. Daly, The National Farmers union (Ideology of a pressure Group) By John A. Crampton of the University of Nebraska press, The state and the farmer (1962) by self, peter, H Storing An analysis of the various agricultural interest groups and in particular of the national farmers unions of England and Wales.

With the difficulty in getting first hand literary material on practical situations in Cameroon, I did also made vital use of the information collected from websites that have operations and have their businesses with both cocoa farmers and their unions. Some of the sites included, (<http://www.ajol.info/index.php/jasr/article/view/2811/11378>), Relates to a research on Agriculture and agricultural research, demonstrating the role and contribution of Agriculture to the GPA of China, Burkina Faso and Cameroon (<http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Cameroon.aspx>), related to the general and basic information on Cocoa production and its neighboring trades and occupations. The below sites also shared the same values and stands but with more concentration on cocoa trade specifics (<http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Cameroon-AGRICULTURE.html>).

Information related to the actual and major problems faced by farmers has been presented by the chairman of one prominent cocoa cooperative in Kumba, where in on workshop, he had the opportunity to present the farmers problems. A report was presented and published thereafter.

(<http://www.roundtablecocoa.org/documents/3%20Mr.%20Ngo%20Kelle%20Victor%20%20Cameroon.pdf>). This same document was also vital in expressing the role of the unions in the life of cocoa farming. These other sites were also valuable in giving strategic information concerning the cocoa farming and the unions involved in the whole of Cameroon. (https://editorialexpress.com/cgi-bin/conference/download.cgi?db_name=CSAE2012&paper_i

d=177, www.Cocoafederatio.com, www.Cocoamechants.com, www.eurococoa.com), and many others gave a link on the trade pattern of cocoa and the associations that in return sponsor projects that were aimed at uplifting the standards of cocoa farming.

Legal resources and text in Cameroon have also been used in understanding the state obligation, commitment and legal framework for the creation of cocoa farmers unions and other cooperative unions.

The objective of the survey is to take an insight look at the activities of the cocoa farmers in Cameroon and figure out what relationship do exist between cocoa farmers and the unions, farmers unions and the state, cocoa farmers and the state and the level of interaction that exist between these forces and other organization that operate projects benefiting the farmers. Looking at this we can understand the imperative values in sampling the different opinions of farmers on the one hand and that of the workers in of the unions on the other.

Working on our objectives for the survey, we were bound to ask questions that in the start identify the respondents, either demonstrating their age and sex and their duration in the union at different levels. Here we tried to identify the persons involved. In another sense, the questionnaire identifies if the respondent was a farmer or a union worker.

It went further to address the level of attachment and commitment in the activities organized by the group. it is very obvious to witness that not all members of the union were very committed to the activities or responded to all the calls of the group.

The questionnaire in another part, focused on the kind of services that the unions could offer to the farmers. These ranged from financial to technical and we were able to sample the differences in what the farmers expected and what they got as services from the unions.

The questionnaire also brought out the differences that existed between the different sources from which the unions get their resources. The different partners that assist the unions in their activities either by giving them finance, technical assistances or through research work.

In the final analysis, the questionnaire responded to the issue of recommendations and it was able to identify what people think should be included on the different platforms, in order to make the workers unions activities more helpful to famers.

3.2 Quantitative data Analysis

With the quantitative data analysis, I was able to gather numeric facts about the situation of cocoa farmers unions in Cameroon. In this situation only about two questions in the questionnaire were designed in this manner. Using this approach as a method in getting numeric date was also a part of the research in the light of data interpretation. Cameroon has twelve provinces and amongst the twelve provinces only four of them have cocoa production facilities. The south west province, the center province, the south and littoral with patch production capacities in other provinces of the similarity in the history and the market chain of cocoa and coffee. Statistics from the questionnaire also demonstrated that not all farmers unions

are more males than females had membership in the union. The reason here is that the men are usually the family heads and therefore represented a greater portion of the farmer's representative. Even though farms are family owned, only about 10% of the farmers were female. For reasons of low communication capacity and lack of appropriate information in achieves, I was able to sample only 115 questionnaires, .I targeted farmers mainly in the south west and center province where I have network and some connection. It was possible to get contact with more farmers, than union workers. Some farmers also belonged to union managerial settings as well. We had responses from 93 farmers and 22 from farmer's union workers. Amongst those questioned, we had a categorical classification of responses since, the respond represent different interest. The literacy level of most farmers affected their ability to respond to the questionnaire, but this not withstanding, it was possible to question them orally and fill in their responses.

3.3 The Questionnaire and Qualitative Data analysis

This approach was very instrumental in the development of the whole thesis from its conception to through the questionnaire design and interpretation of data form both farmers and the operators of the unions. In developing the questionnaire, I was able to come out with questions that in one way or the other reflected on what the union is doing, in order to help improve the output of cocoa farming and to finally better the livelihood of farmers, either by improving productivity, product quality and or boosting sales. Most questions requested a respond that will help determine the impact of unions generally on the quality of product, the farming technics, the fight against harmful pests and parricides that affect healthy crop development and how the sale and pricing of cocoa beans affect farmers financially. The objective of the questions as represented in the questionnaire also tries to show through what different activities, the unions assist the farmers. They often range from providing them finance (what are the criteria for these financial assistance and what form do they take?). These Finances may be in the form of loans, grants for development, advance payments for product and many others. The most important issue here is the availability of this service and the strings attached to them. Differences on this stand were raised and developed by different respondents to the questionnaire since workers of the cooperatives had a different view from that of the farmers.

The questionnaire was also designed to respond to issues of the extent of inter relation amongst the different actors. An evaluation of the extent of assistance that the state offers to farmers through their unions and cooperative is also included in the questionnaire ideology. An assessment of the level of content from all the forces to the level of success achieved by their different activities was represented through their responses that only showed a favor of them showing the different kind of activities operated by farmers unions and how the unions interacts with other forces.

Even though the questionnaire could not contain all possible questions, it was developed such that questions could represent different aspects of the global Idea, remembering that the objective is to find out how effective the workers unions have been in contributing to improving the productivity level of cocoa production and thereby enhancing the profitability of cocoa production. Questions are linked to one another and this helped greatly to have a coherent flow of an understanding of the different points that have contributed greatly in deciding on the margin of success that most unions have and can attain. Tactical reasoning has been very instrumental as a basis for the development of the different questioning parameters. While designing the questions, keen consideration was taken on both the farmers and unions positions on the environmental or natural factors. Running through the types of questions presented, we can see an identification that runs through issues from, the age groups, union memberships of the farmers and practical relationships that exist between all the actors. This approach has been incorporated bearing in mind the philosophical conception of an outsider, standing very neutral from the whole setting.

4. How do farmers Unions Operate

Farmers unions in Cameroon like in other countries from their creation throughout their existence have almost similar patterns of operation. Farmers unions in the United States of America usually operate as a lobby group for farmers on one hand and as a platform for the organization of farmers activities. In most cases the unions also acts as the only channel through which cooperative actions can be carried out by farmers. Control from state authorities and the medium for dialogue with external figures can also be carried out through this means. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Farmers_Union_\(United_States\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Farmers_Union_(United_States)))

Farmers unions in the United States have always stand as a strong political force whereby they always they demonstrate their political choices by closely following the different politicians opinions and favor to Bio and agricultural policies. The case of Obama success was because of his favor of the subsidy to promote bio ethanol and wind energy production.

In Cameroon typically, there are provincial levels of management at certain farmer's organization in the farmers sector. SOWEDA is a typical example of an organization that assists cocoa farmers in the south west province of Cameroon. National agencies seldom exist but the state has set up agencies through the ministry of Agriculture to assist farmers' organizations in the realization of their goals. The Ministry of agriculture in Cameroon has a delegate in charge of cocoa and coffee farming. The duty of this department is to is to set training program for farmers, continuous follow up of the education and assisting farmers in getting state finance for their projects.

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4.1 Creation and membership

Laws enabling the creation of farmers unions differ in different countries. In most developed countries like the United States and Great Britain, there are very stiff laws enabling the creation of farmers unions. These laws are intended to establish a level of control and to maintain service quality by the unions. The criterion in these communities always requires a formal application from the members of such unions to the patent and national registry of organization office. After proper control on documents and other important element like the mission statement and foundation bases, the union is approved to go official. The case of Cameroon is the 1996 law on the creation of cocoa and coffee farmers unions and cooperative bodies. This law lays down the basic formalities for such establishment.

There have always been standard problems in the implementation of the law (questionnaire) because of the lack of state control to continuously check the standards and abilities of the unions, if they do comply with the ground laws. A lot of flows do exist in the operation because of low financing and lack of adequate managerial standards (personal impression)

The membership in unions is upon qualification on certain standards and formalities. The most important of the formalities is that the members have to be farmers in the locality where the union operates. Even though only farmers can be members, it is very difficult to limit the membership of non-farmers or those whose activities are closely related to cocoa farming. This includes cocoa produce buyers, farm product marketers, pesticides and other input agents are amongst those whose activities depend greatly on cocoa farming.

Within the farmers unions in Cameroon, three segments of membership do exist, we have the active members who are very committed and have a follow up of the unions activities, the passive members who are registered member but do not bother to follow up the unions operations. In most cases they are just there because they are farmers or other relations but because they benefit less from the unions, they do prefer to spend their time otherwise. The last group of the union members is state representatives or administrators which the state

designates to represent and report the union in external affairs. The existence and influence of this class of member will depend on the strength and financial capacity of the union.

4.2 Management and external relation

Usually, the management of a cocoa farmers union in Cameroon is not defined by any prescribed law or piece of national legislation, but the law enabling the creation of cooperatives laws down certain rules related to the management and representation of cocoa farmers unions. The law makes it legitimate for the unions created at grass root level to be managed by a board of administrators selected by the local members in that community. This local management group will manage the internal affairs of the association, preside over regular meetings, keep report; document and process applications for grants, loans, supports, tenders and to some extent negotiate market for produce on behalf of the members of the union. The Kumba cocoa farmers union is a case study here.

Usually the external relation of the union is managed by both the state and the unions themselves. In most cases where the union is financially viable and has educated elites at it head, they use their initiatives to design programs and create contacts for sponsors and grants application. In cases where they cannot do these, they often turn on to the state designated leader of the union who is usually seated in the regional cooperative body. Members at the regional cooperatives either come from different regional cocoa farmers unions or are state paid staffs to assist in coordinating funds and other resources allocated to the farmers.

4.3 Funding and Resource planing

Farmers unions usually lack the fund needed to execute most of the projects they envisage to better the situation of farmers. In their search for finance, they turn to apply for grants and subventions from international organizations like the State of Cameroon, European Union, the international monetary Fund, The African development Bank and others. These institutions provide substantial support through different agencies who intend present the grants to the farmers unions.

The farmers union always passes through its regional cooperative organization to apply for state grants and others but in very rare cases; they have direct contacts with other international donors groups that make direct donations to the unions. With this system, funding is only granted for approved programs and the state ensures that the projects are properly executed.

It is a rule in project management for reports to be presented at the end of each project to sponsors and donors, farmers unions always develop and maintain a standard reporting format destined to encourage continuous support from donors. Reporting is also regarded as one of the requirement for grants application for state subvention.

Resources therefore in the unions are managed following guidelines for their grants applications. Most unions and their management have to work closely and allocate resources to the particular projects for which they got sponsor for.

4.4 Cocoa Farming in Cameroon

Cocoa Farmers unions in Cameroon are not in any form different from those that are found in other parts of the world. It is a fact that cocoa and coffee unions in Cameroon are often closely linked since they form almost similar class of product with quite many similarities on different viewpoints. With the liberalization process in Cameroon and the passing of the law No 92/006 of August 14, 1992, the government of Cameroon legislated and laid framework for the restructuring of all cooperative bodies and the enabling of the creation of farmers unions on grassroots bases. This same law encouraged the municipal facilitation of the creation on communal bases (GIC). This was in a respond to the complicated and bureaucratic natures of most national cooperative that were no longer viable because of the liberalization scheme.

4.4.1 General perspective

The history of professional unionism in the world was developed first on trade lines. Many trade unions in civilized world today do operate at national levels. The case of Finland is very typical and we can draw a standard example from unions that operate along different professional line. The PAU is a union for post and other logistics workers. This union covers membership from all those recruited in logistics chain and these members pay a fee to belong in the union. But still just like all other Unions in Finland, they do perform the following task: The coordinate, monitor and ensure that the salary paid in those professions fall within standards and that they are connected to labor codes. This means that the union ensures that employees are not cheated by their companies and that they get exactly what salary they deserve regarding the stipulation of the employment codes. The PAU also arranges information workshops and sessions for its members whereby they are informed about their duties, rights and responsibilities Vis avis the companies. They stand on the side of the worker and will always intervene to protect the rights in situations of conflicts with the company. The union also encourages trainings and other forms of practical education that will enhance advancement in the member's capacity and promote opportunities for further education that will at the tail end be beneficial to the individual and the company at large.

In Cameroon farmers unions cannot be identified with a standard pattern of organization. It is very difficult to match the organigram of all the existing unions to one particular format. For this reason based on the differences on the reason of formation, the differences on the modes of operation, most unions do not exist at national level. They turn to exist in small localities

where they respond and answer to the needs of the local people. The South West Farmers' cooperative Union (SWEFCO) is a typical example of one of those unions that exist at the national level. Here farmers are represented fairly at all levels of its activities and management. SWEFCO is a farmers union that operates in the south west region of Cameroon and it has as members farmers from all the localities of this region. When we look at the administrative platform of this organization we turn to realize that it fits into the standard platform of most organization of similar category. The central office is in Yaoundé and they have a regional head quarter in Kumba. Politically the head quarter of south west province is Buea, but the SWEFCO regional head office is situated in Kumba because it is quite close to the most of the cocoa producing farms. This union is also represented in the small villages where cocoa farming is done and all the unions' representatives are answerable to the head office in Kumba. This union played a dual role in that it was a union to other unions and also a union to large scale farmers. Most farmers with very elaborate sizes of farm were registered as members to the unions and some mushroom unions that covered a small group of small farmers also operated as members to the large union SWEFCO.

Despite the fact that most cooperatives or farmers unions are developed on trends linked political origins in Cameroon, it is very important to witness that most of them turn to act as umbrellas for the governments where funds destined for farmers can be siphoned into private coffers. Since most of the administrators in these huge organizations are politically appointed, they rarely are scared of the union's members but they directly act in manners that will give them a proper image in front of the state. Real cocoa farmers unions in Cameroon are those that are set on grass root bases. They have very low operational budget and even the sources of income for them is uncertain. Since they are founded not on political grounds, but on the need for solidarity and common grounds and force to respond to similar treats to their occupation, they truly represent their interest and are genuine in their operations. Inconsistency within unions formed on this basis is a general reason why these unions have turn to be inactive (van der laan 1987).

4.4.2 Other cooperative bodies and their impacts

The fact that many organizations develop around cocoa production does not directly or automatically mean they are all cocoa unions or cooperatives. This distinction has to be made in a search to draw a line between the real unions and other adhoc bodies that may in one way or the other affect the lively hood of cocoa production but which are not identified as unions.

(Farm gate Prices and Market Power in Liberalized West African Cocoa Markets by Michael D. Wilcox (Jr), Purdue University). This same article throws more light on the difficulty created by this legislation. It is important to note that this legislation of 1992 enabled the creation of three forms of groups, the cooperatives that already existed on the one hand, the communal group of common initiative (GIC), and the private licensed buying agents. These groups have

different rule in the livelihood of cocoa farmers even though sometimes, confusion arouse on their different activities since liberalization has steadily weakened the strength of the cooperatives.

Typical examples of such groupings will show that farmers unions were different from the GIC in that while GIC was meant to facilitate the operations of cooperatives, unions by keeping records for cocoa sale, cooperatives were basically involved in the marketing of produces to exporters in Douala. The idea based here is that the different farmers unions in a region founded a cooperative and this cooperative worked with the state in ensuring the pricing stability. The produce marketing board that existed until the liberalization in 1992 was more instrumental than the cooperative because it was more politically and economically connected to the state and it had a set of trained staffs that worked for the proper pricing and exchange of cocoa in the world market. Van der laan. Therefore the 1992 law came with the creation of multiple grass rout groups and unions, but generally transferred the duties of drying marketing Board to cooperatives and the private license owners. Community councils were authorized to issue licenses to individuals who could provide storage facilities, capital and the practical resources to dry and preserve cocoa beans. A new market force was therefore created. Van der laan 1987.

A sketchy illustration of the flow of the cocoa product and the forces that play in the market in Cameroon to the foreign buyers can be seen below. It will also be important at this level to show what parties are involved in the chain from planting to the time that it is sold at the international market and to firms that use it at the tail end.

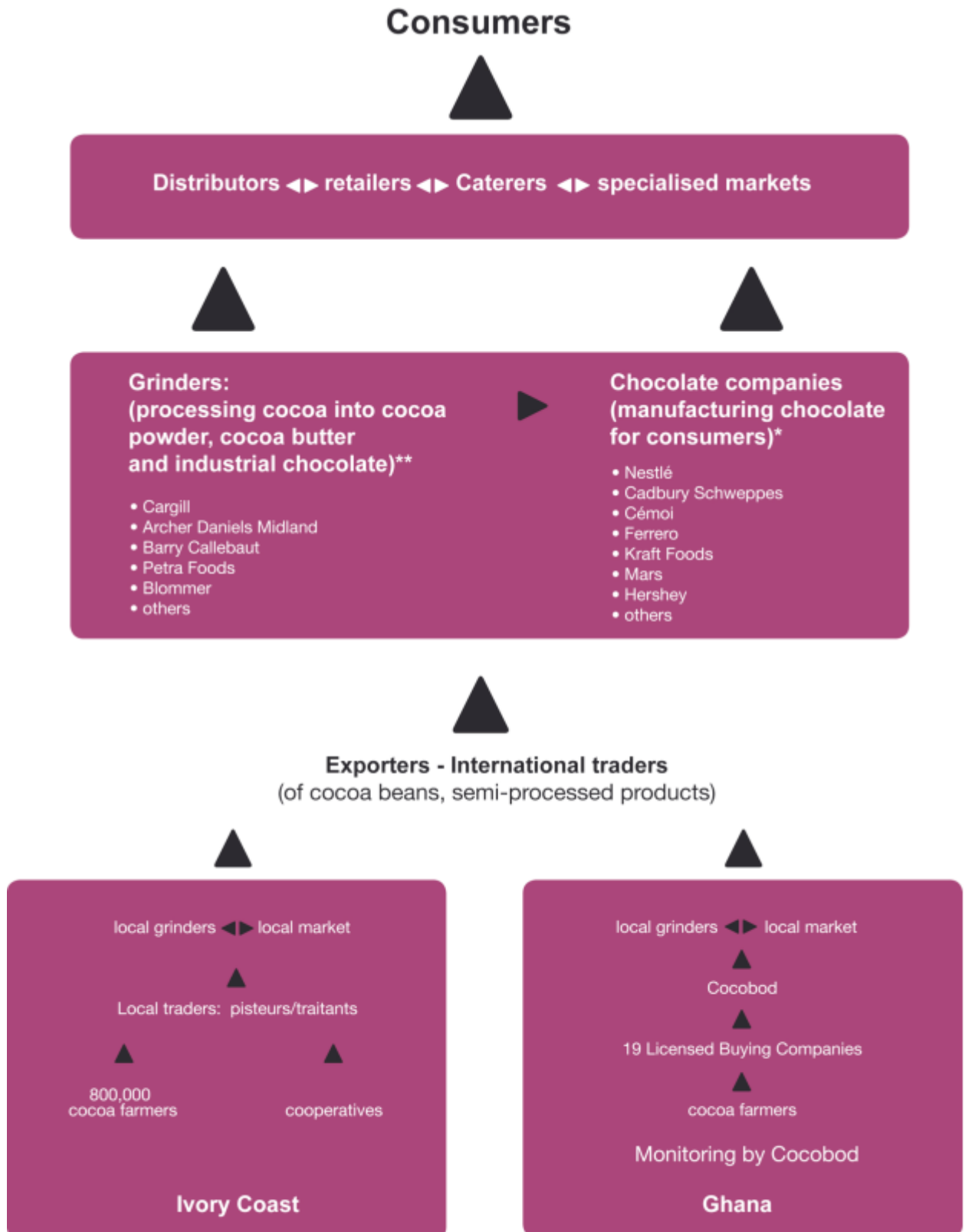


Figure 3: Actors in the cocoa chain

The situation from an international perspective or presentation seems s same with that of the union s within Cameroon like most other African countries including Ghana and Nigeria. A viv- id look at the diagram below may mean something else.

The below diagram is a typical example of the exact situation in the Ghana and Nigeria (<http://www.njas.helsinki.fi/pdf-files/vol13num1/fonjong.pdf>).

In these countries, we see that Farmers unions jointly with many different forces play a very strong role and impact greatly on the forces of demand and supply in these markets. A broad list of all the traders and middle men between the consumers and end users, the grinders and chocolate companies have developed. In very typical situations we have cocoa brokers, re- tailers, distributors, caterers and different special markets. Also a list of grinders and choco- late companies that come to trade by sponsoring farmers and other cocoa related businesses within these countries is also outlined in the diagram. More details can be seen below <http://www.njas.helsinki.fi/pdf-files/vol13num1/fonjong.pdf>



* Some of the chocolate companies also have their own grinding capacity, but this is limited.

** These companies are not just involved in the grinding stage of the supply chain. Barry Callebaut, Cargill and ADM sell small amounts of industrial chocolate. Petra Foods, Blommer and Barry Callebaut manufacture chocolate for consumers.

4.4.3 Global analysis of Agricultural Output from Cameroon

Agriculture is a major constituent of Cameroon's GDP. Statistics from the US Department of states show that in 2009, 19% of the country's GDP came from Agriculture. A very strategic value despite the constant decline of Agricultural output still makes us to believe that a lot of rural communities depend on this trade for their livelihood. This same source shows that The Agricultural sector in Cameroon produces Timber, coffee, tea, banana, cocoa, rubber, palm oil, pineapples, cotton, and many others destined for markets in industrialized countries. For the purpose of this dissertation, I will like to elaborate on cocoa and banana farming in Cameroon. As concerns Banana farming, America and china has been the world's leading producers over the years and Africa has only accounted for between 11 to 13% of the production.

(<http://www.unctad.org/infocomm/anglais/banana/images/prodcontinents.gif>)

The link above will share more light to the content of Banana production in Cameroon and Africa at large. Looking at values from deferent sources it is very pertinent to notice that Banana production in Cameroon is managed by two major companies who own huge acres of land in the south west province of the country. Delmonthe and The Cameroon Development Cooperation (CDC) are the main players in this sector. Banana Plantations in Cameroon have been developed on the rich volcanic areas in Fako Division and its environs, including Littoral Division and part of the Western province. In these areas huge plantations exist in very vast pieces of land and mainly constitute the major economic activity in these regions.

Cocoa remains the main cash crop to more than 75% of the population in Cameroon. Its production is mainly by peasant farmers who, even though they are the main producers of the high demand crop, do not earn sufficient income to meet their needs and maintain a moderate standard of living.

Despite the value that Cocoa production adds to the value of Agricultural output, it is very important to try to understand why there is a slow growth in the sector. It is also valuable to notice that even though cocoa production stands ranks Cameroon as the forth from Africa, the sector still suffers from difficult challenges that relentless efforts from either the farmers, the state, farmers unions and other international organizations have done little to bring forth the needed changes. Some of the listed problems below have been brought to light from the farmers, the farmer's union workers, and some elites in the farming communities through the general questionnaire for this thesis that was presented to them.

Neglect of the sector by the government in terms of funds through the ministry of Agriculture.	Poor knowledge of farming periods, equipment use and proper education in general
The lack of major logistics such as warehouses, good roads and many others to facilities to enable proper channeling of cocoa to the right markets.	Lack of money to purchase farm inputs like fungicide, pesticides and others needed for crop cultivation.
Lack of market knowledge and the functioning of the marketing mechanism. This causes farmers to be dubbed by some buyers.	Poor farm to market roads and cocoa drying facilities.
Most farming communities are generally aged and poor. This affects the motivation to farm and cause the youth to discontinue cultivation.	The government has great influence on farmers through the unions in that they regulate pricing and marking but fail to follow up and control.
Poor knowledge on privatization and how it affects cocoa production and sale.	Poor Knowledge on the part of farmers to engage in other income generating activities
Most farmers lack the knowledge on modern farming since they do not constantly upgrade their knowledge.	Poor knowledge on land and other environmental issues.
Poor understanding of the unions duties and obligations on the part of both the farmers and the union officials	The lack of financial resources on the part of the union because of the lack of financial autonomy to generate funds needed for their projects.
Lack of proper organization and orientation in the management and planning regarding funds destined to farmers.	Improper political influence in the management and operation of the major cooperative bodies.

Table 5 Farmers problems

with the above difficult situation that farmers face, it is imperative for several negative impact to be felt on cocoa farming like the rise in the aging population, the youths who are supposed to take over farming from old, turn to migrate to the cities in search of more or better waged jobs. Kids are left to suffer alone in the villages, while illnesses increase and the vulnerable age groups are left to suffer alone. This issues needs to be addressed because of favourable future that cocoa farming present to the communities involved, in terms of poverty alleviation and employment capacity.

Despite the fact that cocoa remains a major cash crop in Cameroon, with more than 70%of the Agricultural community involved in its production, its production is often done by peasant farmers and they are somehow abandoned by the state. The government adds to this sufferings by collaborating with other stakeholders to in the sector to impose lower prices on the product market. The assistance from the price control unit of the ministry of finance that regularly assisted farmers to curb unscrupulous buyers is now out of order.

With the emerging rural Exodus, the old are often abandoned in the villages and poor hygienic condition because of the lack of the need energy to take care of their health and that of the young; they are often left exposed to health treats from mosquito bites causing malaria and other health issues caused by poor sanitation.

4.4.4 Evaluation of Cocoa production from Cameroon and the International Cocoa economics

When we take a look at the Major Factors affecting the cocoa chain of activities in Cameroon and other cocoa producing countries, we might at a certain point want to compromise the realities in realities in what value this activity have on the global economy. The need of this study cannot be over emphasized since we all cannot undervalue the importance of cocoa beans as both a nutrient and an industrial raw material. I do not want to go back into the figures of the production capacity in Cameroon or of what position this might be in the international market. Almost 70% of the total active farming population in Cameroon is involved in cocoa production. Those involved in other petit trades and activities related to cocoa trade also cannot be underscored. Many companies that employ thousands of Cameroonians have developed from the marketing to processing of cocoa farm produce. This sector has also attracted international firms that have developed and set up branches and departments in Cameroon and abroad and these firms have recruited several Cameroonians in different levels of administration and marketing of the produce.

The farm produce from cocoa cultivation has helped the country to maintain or contributed to add value to the nations GDP. This is a fact since the figures of the country's GDP reads that this activity has been amongst the top three agricultural products contributing to the GDP. It is very important to comment that the fluctuating price of the cocoa beans in Cameroon as figures shows from 450 FRS to 150 FRS in 1997 and from 1200 FRS to 400 FRS in 2004.

This constant decrease especially in periods when farmers have invested quite huge sums of money in the purchase of farm produce is a factor that demonstrate the international pricing mechanism for cocoa does not properly assimilate the farming cost related aspects of the farming to the pricing system. In my opinion more has to be done in stabilizing the international cocoa price in the world market and the state harmonizing the market in Cameroon.

5. Challenges of the cocoa farmers unions in Cameroon

Generally in most societies where workers unions do exist, it is very possible to observe in most of the cases, progressive transformation of a trade under which the union operates. Very few unions exist in Cameroon and most professional groups have not still founded a union that can protect their interests. If we try to synchronise Cameroon and the effects of unions or workers group to positive changes in their different sectors, it is very hard to make a genuine analysis of the whole show because of the influence of the state and lack of administrative and financial autonomy of most and almost all of these institutions. It will be vital to demonstrate the impact of many bodies and factors that exhibit the union representation in Cameroon. It is proper to look at the factor that have closely influence the developments in the cocoa farmers unions in Cameroon.

Cocoa Farmers workers in the Cameroon like those involved in other agricultural activities have greatly and do have the possibilities of enhancing tremendous growth in the sector. When we talk about growth in this very difficult sector, we refer to the possibility for increase productivity, an industrial transformation of the sector bringing forth the use of Machines and other materials, a proper bargain for price and other economic negotiations and many others. The cocoa farmers unions have seen success because of their groupings to form cooperative bodies. In most cases because the unions are generally locally based and lack the strength to act on large scale, they usually become more successful at the level of cooperatives (De latre Gasquet et al 1998)

Through the cooperative bodies, the unions have been able to direct the cries of the farmers to the state, nongovernmental organizations and other organizations that are involved in or interested in the great work done by farmers. Through this channel, there is a liaison between these actors and the farmers. Also farmers unions have certain level helped to maintain or achieve a better price at certain time for the farmers. This was very instrumental and visible when the farmers when the unions operated a buffer stock program initiated by the state owned marketing board. With this program, the state helped to stabilize the prices and ensure that the market cocoa price did not very much fluctuate (van der laan 1985)

The state has been very instrumental in developing networks, training and commissions that assist the famers unions in getting through their day to day activities. The government of

Cameroon has not been different in encouraging programs that will call operations. The government has been involved with other international partners in sponsoring researches to find treatments and cure for most farmers problems. These problems include pest and many other diseases that usually attack crops and which usually farmers and the unions cannot provide treatment on their own. The state sponsors research through the ministry of Agriculture and other nongovernmental research organizations like institute for agronomic Research (IRAD) to many diseases and parasites that attack crops and undermined greatly the value of cocoa production. This story from Reuters can throw more light on the demand made by farmers unions to the Government and there was a respond thereafter (<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE7770E820110808>).

Many schemes by the state have been sponsored through different research units to research on new farming procedures and techniques that will enhance productivity. The government of Cameroon has since the passing of the new cooperative law, in 1992 intend to give the cooperatives and cocoa farmers unions more powers in the marketing of the farm products. Evaluating the level of implementation of this law brings us to understand that the still has lots to do, to give the farmers and their unions the power needed to be involved in the determination of the prices of the produce. The government is also helping the farmers union through series of seminars and workshops organized to train and teach them on modern farming techniques that they can better teach in their respective regions. Graduates from state created Agriculture schools in Ngaoundere and Dschang help to work with the unions and farmers in the training and continuous education on farming techniques. Extensive projects have been carried out by the state to assist in the creation and development of new ovens and communal drying facilities for the fresh cocoa. This has been a major problem because it has not been easy with the traditional drying methods where they have to spend several nights in the oven drying the cocoa beans. The government has responded to several cries from the Unions and farmers themselves in the demand for the construction of farms to market roads, to facilitate the transportation of produce from the farms to the markets. The project in the maintenance of the Kumba-Mato road is an example of such project that has responded to the community and union cry. Even though these roads are seasonal and are often in difficult states during the raining seasons, it has still in many ways facilitated the transportation of the farm products to the markets. The government also in 1992 created a law that outlined the availability of a fund to assist cooperative unions in their duty to assist farmers. Very little has been put in practice since the creation of the law and many other laws and decrees that we believed if in effect will greatly change the lives of many farmers.

Other actions have also come from The American Embassy, the American Agricultural department, the European Union and many other forces have contributed greatly both by supporting the sector with modern drying equipment, but also with the education on child labor. This comes as a result of the note that most farmers are using their under aged children as work-

ers in the farms. Workers shops and seminars have been sponsored by these actors to educate farmers on the criminal nature of child labor and the international fight against that. Many children have been saved somehow through these educations. All these forces combined have always through the unions be very instrumental in the global response to the general cry of the farmers through their different unions.

Regarding the challenges, we look at the areas where the cocoa farmers unions have failed to enhance what they were meant to achieve for farmers in Cameroon. It is obvious that why looking at the challenges, we shall be looking at the reasons or motives for their failures. Farmers have been disappointed within different cocoa unions throughout Cameroon for several reasons owing to the fact that their intention to use their cooperatives to foster growth and transform a change within the cocoa farming and marketing has been slowed or weakened by the government actions and thinking through different legislations. But despite relentless efforts by the unions to uplift the statues of cocoa farmers in Cameroon, there has been low growth for the following reasons.

The issues raised below are simply findings from different sources and documentations on the legal provisions enabling the creation of farmers unions and other farmer's organizations. The history of Agricultural unions in Cameroon and personal critics on these findings, analyzing the reasons the level of effectiveness and how these laws assist farmers to succeed in their cultivation and union missions.

5.1 The politicization of farmers union in Cameroon

In Cameroon, farmers unions were developed in the early 1970s when the cocoa and coffee production started in Cameroon. The idea of the union then was conceived amongst farmers as a solidarity group amongst people in the same profession, living in common vicinity. The future became different when the state introduced the National produce marketing Board, a Cameroon marketing board, (failed organization whose initial goals were to assist farmers in the sale of their product and in the provision of fund or over draft payments for the products) the situation of Cameroon is not different from that of other agricultural African states like Ghana. This Board operated only in the south and northwest provinces of the country because these are the regions involved in cocoa and coffee productions. During the first years of the creation of cooperatives and other regional workers unions in the North West and south west provinces of Cameroon that formed the southern Cameroon, the huge financial, economic and financial autonomy these institutions portrayed true values that really protected farmer's interest. Since the political power of the united republic of Cameroon was in the east and the view that a strong independent agro economy in the west can be a treat to political power caused the national administration to pass certain laws, lay certain rules and finally facilitate the creation of new financial institutions like FUNADE to provide loans to farmers and the national produce marketing board to provide easy and unique marketing of all farm produce. These newly created state institutions were aimed at

- Destabilizing the Agricultural autonomy of the existing regional cooperatives
- Reaffirming the political strength of the central administration by getting control of all the forces of the economy.
- Controlling the Agriculture market

These factors constituted the main grounds upon which most of the La republics created institutions were founded. And with this system, mechanisms were created that gradually created the heavy indebtedness of most of the cooperatives till when they are finally closed.

5.2 Lack of control of the pricing market

The situation of Ghana is very empirical in the late 80s and early 90s when the country was in a deep financial crisis and the country sold the future of the cocoa farmers by taking huge loans from the international monetary fund with high interest rates and letting them to decide the price, interest rate and market value of cocoa from that country. The case of Cameroon now our days is more unscrupulous. I will like to elaborate demonstrate on the Cocoa and coffee marketing board normally termed the national produce marketing board (NPMB) in Cameroon. To my knowledge and understanding of this institution, it is one of the most appreciated and economically viable agro institutions that have existed in Cameroon. The national produce marketing board established in effect coordinated the activities of all the cooperatives in the different regions and assisted them in the management and finding of solutions to cocoa and coffee farmers problems. Actively involved in the buying process was the NPMB, cooperatives and private dealers. An in-depth understanding of the marketing board and its functioning can be seen on the work and study on the marketing of cocoa and coffee products by the African studies research institute at the University of Leiden. The link below (<http://www.ascleiden.nl/GetPage.aspx?url=/publications/publicatie5465>)

Meanwhile this giant institution could not survive the pressure from politics and mismanagement, its collapse in the 1980s transformed the market value of cocoa and coffee and led the farming profession into a night mare.

(http://www.thefrontiertelegraph.com/content/012908/marketing_board.html)

The above link demonstrates physically how East and west Cameroon can be represented agriculturally, with an illustration of the constant manipulation and transformation of the marketing system. As if this is not enough, we can further see how the state through the NPMB sequentially eliminates all other actors in the produce market.

5.3 Inadequate education and training

It is a fact that European and western Agricultural evolutions were marked by the ability of education gained in this domain to be transformed into great changes that can be seen into great Agricultural output, increase productivity, low cost of production and use of less labor force. The case in Africa and Cameroon in particular is that farmers have not been able to technologically transform their economy from its huge reliance of great human labor to the use of machineries in its production. Agriculture schools have been created throughout the country and the ministry of Agriculture and forestry has encouraged the creation of agro pastoral units in most regions of the country but this has not helped the situation any much since most of the graduates from these schools end up in offices only to fill papers and sign documents rather than working in the farms with farmers. Technical schools and universities have also failed in their capacities to produce machineries that could help farmers in their production. An absolute reason for this failure is that most Agricultural machineries cost a lot to produce and as such, most farmers lack the money even to sponsor the production of such machinery. The state in his part has completely neglected the creation of funding to enable the development of science and technology that will facilitate the creation and acquisition of huge farm machineries. These factors have led the farmers to remain the traditional and colonial practices where in Agricultural process are carried on in highly human resource consuming manner, with very little compensation to workers recruited in these sectors.

5.4 Lack of autonomy and decisive powers in the union

Since unions are created nationally with their ramification regionally in small farmers groups, there is often the tendency for these unions to be managed based on principle of hierarchical subordination in the management platforms. Farmers unions in the cocoa and coffee producing regions of Cameroon are not any different owing to the fact that the state has set up a mechanism of control. If we take a typical look at the structure of the meme cocoa farmers union (MECOFA) a very old farmers union that united all the cocoa farmers in meme division. We have to acknowledge the fact that membership here did not only include small grass roots farmers unions but also individual farmers with huge farm and produce sizes. This aspect of multiple membership choice gave the union a stronger grip on all farmers' category and groups in that region. With this high control established, the state easily comes in with first financial influence and then extends by laying down modalities for getting loans and at the end of the day we find all the functioning under severe state control and influence. Farmers unions turn to be more political and therefore respond to political commitment than the basic needs of the union in a bid to keep their positions. It is very hard for unions created by farmers themselves to stand the test of time because they lack the necessary resources to be able to manage their own affairs. They therefore turn to the state from which they autonomously depend on financially and administratively.

5.5 The role of the State

In most developed economies and those with great and recommendable interest for growth, the government has been very instrumental in enhancing real development and growth within any agricultural operation of such magnitude considering the impact it makes on the livelihood of the citizens and the contribution it makes to the nations GDP. In many Agricultural economies like in most history of Agrarian union development, the state has always been an instrumental actor in enabling the growth of the union. Since most farmers unions have always been apolitical organizations or at least developed on these stands, we must confirm with certainty that American and British farmers unions have always turned to be political lobby groups or either strong forces in the great political evolution. The southern tenants Farmers union is an example of a great union developed in the southern United States as a result of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) by President Franklin D. R to help revive the American Agriculture. Looking at what contributions that state of Cameroon has made and is making to assist farmers unions in their struggle to assist farmers in the cocoa sector and on the other part I will try to evaluate based on the questionnaire where the government has come short in assisting the unions. There is a general cry by the unions considering the fact that, the farming population is getting older and most young people are not interested in getting involved in the cocoa production. There is very limited action by the government to encourage the youths to get involved in cocoa farming and there is a fear that with the aging farming force, there is no increase in farming capacity since the old are reluctant to increase farming sizes. Several unions amongst others like the SOWEFCU Kumba recommended that it will a great thing if the state can contribute in getting the youths gain courage to overtake and seriously get involved in Cocoa farming (Victor Nkelle 2009).

In evaluating the short coming of the state's commitment in assisting farmers unions in Cameroon, a look at the level of commitment at the three different stages in the production process will be necessary. We have to know that the state of Cameroon values very much, the contribution made by the farmers unions in the cocoa sector to enhance productivity. Considering that the sector represents the 4th producer of the world standing at about 1800.000toons in 2011 but projected to be double in 2015. The value in terms of the employment and source of revenue to more than 70% and 90% of the rural community respectively are all reasons why the state tries to sponsor research to assist the sector. Despite this concern showed by the states involvement in promoting the sector, it is recommended that the government can help to implement farm extension schemes. This will be done by increasing the farm size and getting more energetic youths involved in Agriculture. Special packages can be developed to make this possible like granting huge subsidies to cover planting costs and free farm tools delivered to youths.

The government has also failed and there is a general cry for the state to properly regulate the market and sale of farm chemicals and pesticides that are of great need by the farmers. There are a lot of unscrupulous businesses that have developed in this domain and there is always the tendency of price hiking during peak cultivation and need periods. This is problematic because the farmers are usually affected by the inconsistency in the prices that affect the profit level of their products. The lack of a government control mechanism that can properly control the prices of such farm medicine is a great problem. Because of the inappropriate control of the market by the state, there happen to be huge quantities of very low quality and fake chemicals in the market and sold to farmers at a very high price that end up not satisfying the needs of the customers. There is still a cry from the farmers through their unions to the Government, for them to set a mechanism for proper state control. Also, there is pricing of cocoa is greatly affected by international and political control leaving the farmers out. It is a cry that prices should be stabilized by the state and that farmers through the unions should be given a hand in the management and administration of the pricing of their product. The greatest problems of the farmers have always been the lack of access to direct fund. Most farmers and their unions have always been working on programs where they can get the state to be enacting laws that will favor and facilitate the Unions and farmers access of funds from financial institutions and banks. The lack of this avenue is a fundamental set back that hinders the entrepreneurial process in this sector.

6. How can Cocoa farmers unions secure better services to farmers in Cameroon?

For farmers to get an improvement in the quality of farming, better prices for their products and easy access to finance during off seasons, both the farmers themselves and the unions have to observe certain formalities, retain a degree of autonomy and meet certain standards that can guarantee internal transformation in the trade. With the complicated and unscrupulousness of many professions and trades that are developed around cocoa farming, the farmers turn to suffer from a lot of difficulties as we have witnessed during this thesis.

Since the strength of union cannot be undervalue because of the success history that farmers and other unions have recorded in many countries, it is imperative to admit that farmers unions in Cameroon can only guarantee a better services for the farmers if they upgrade their representation and positions in the various domains.

Works through different seminars, workshops and other events involving farmers, the state and other actors proved that the situation can be bettered by providing farmers with the needed Education and Training, Gain more lobby force to influence policy makers, Involvement in product marketing and price determination, Financial and administrative autonomy, Easy access to funds. These materials have been collected from a cross section of opinions from the survey.

6.1 Education and training

Education and training in the field of cocoa farming is something that requires constant update, and the learning process should be consistent, so that farms are continuously monitored. Farmers and farmers unions always strive to get the best of crop cultivation and this cannot be achieved without a constant update in the field of scientific and agro research. All farmers unions always encourage through different sponsors, programs that are aimed at providing direct education to the farmers on issues ranging from, soil erosion prevention, planting systems, soil treatment, harvesting techniques, pesticides, pests, fungi's and other bacteria that affect the crops and the general cocoa output. Farmers unions do also organize trade fairs and other agro events where products can be exposed to the public and stand by lessons also organized where by successful farmers teach and explain to the other farmers, their farming techniques.

6.2 Gain more lobby force to influence policy makers

Even though most farmers unions in Cameroon are nonpolitical farmer's solidarity groups, it is evident to notice that, farmers unions are the strongest force through which farmers can use to request for a proper protection from the state. This protection will normally take several forms ranging from the provision of budget, to sponsor farmers program, the subsidization of the farming economy either by reduction in farm input cost or the proper and fair control of the product price.

It has been very difficult in the past for unions to present their interest to the state through political channels. The case of the unions using political channels through lobby groups has been successfully proven in the United States of America and the United Kingdom where farmers Unions have always been the bases from which most political parties were developed. Most parties in the 1960s were developed on the bases of solidarity from farmers groups. This will be a totally new concept in Cameroon since the concept of lobbying is still underdeveloped.

6.3 Involvement in product marketing and price determination

The sale of farm product in Cameroon is not properly regulated and this leaves the room for the improper development of commerce related either to farm product sales like that sells pesticides, spraying equipment, fungicides and other equipment needed in farming and those related to the sale of farm produce, that is cocoa beans to be poorly and unjustly operated. The state has failed to maintain control in the pricing system and this laxity has given different individuals the ability to use factors like seasonal changes, poor road for transportation and others to constantly change prices to their advantage.

The solution here will be that the union in relation with the state can work towards a price harmonization. This harmonization will mean all the parties involved in the trade will con-
certs to the price determination and price change initiations. In this like unfair pricing in
some remote region that helps to steal from farmers will be controlled and prices will be
more stable throughout the country.

6.4 Financial and administrative autonomy

It often certain, for any organization and its operation to be successful, it must retain a high
degree of self-autonomy both financially and administratively and the farmers unions are not
an exception. This is very high to come by since farmers unions in Cameroon exist solely on
subvention from the state and other donors.

Financial and administrative autonomy will mean that the farmers unions are independent
and answerable to no other institution for their finances and other administrative decisions.
For this to be possible there has to be proper control and professional update in the standard
of level of professionalism of the unions. Unions will therefore have the capacity to design,
make decision and have the resources to see productive farming projects for the betterment
of cocoa farming without external control either from the state or some donors.

6.5 Easy access to funds

Farmers face difficulties even at the level of getting loans and other financial credits from
both state banks and other financial institutions, this is the reason why growth and develop-
ment has been very negative. Farmers suffer this difficulty because of the lack of information
about the farmer's financial records and credibility is seriously doubted. Even in very difficult
situations during off seasons, farmers cannot get even a basic loan like during back to school
and when they need medical attention.

The need for a solution to this problem cannot be marginalized, that is why the farmers un-
ions in the different regions have to register farmers to different banks encourage recording
of the financial transactions and boast credibility with most financial institutions. The state
always has a role to play by creating a farmer s scheme through the farmers unions whereby
they can channel whatever financial assistance to farmers.

7. Conclusion

It will be imperative to take a proper look at the questionnaire in proper which is an appendix
to this thesis, before making a proper analysis of the feedback from the sample opinions. see
appendix for questionnaire.

7.1 Questionnaire Analysis

The facts collected from the total of 115 questionnaires from which we were able to get responds to, demonstrated varied and conflicting responses from which we can depict two main impressions. On the one hand there is the picture that the farmers unions have not succeeded in securing a better condition for cocoa farming and for farmers and also that the cocoa farmers unions, have not had enough support from the government. This visible conclusion demonstrates, on one hand, that, even though cooperative and unions are doing a lot to facilitate cocoa farming, cocoa farmer unions have still not done a lot to improve farmer's positions because of the low quality of support and the political orientation of government control on the unions. Statistics from the exercise (survey) can be addressed below.

About 80% of the farmers belong to one or more farmers unions and cooperatives while the statistic generally demonstrate that 18% of farmers do not belong to any union or any farmer's cooperative. Amongst those registered with one or more farmers unions, only about 60% of them (farmers) are seriously committed to the union's activity and perfectly have a follow up of activities organized by the unions. Considering the level of activities that the unions could offer to farmers, they included technical assistance on farming practices, crop treatment and seasonal operation related to the respect of seasons, very limited financial assistance to farmers available in the form of loans at very high interest rates, access to very strictly controlled funds and over payments. Usually most unions offer to pay some money to farmers at their request and get control of their produce during harvesting season. Farmers unions did also demonstrated a weakness in the mitigation of the product price. Evaluating also other comments from the questionnaires, it is also easy to logically conclude that farmers enjoyed the operations of their unions when they are founded on indigenous bases, but at the same time, these bases usually lack the financial and material resources to respond to the problems of farmers. A reason as well while cooperatives were encouraged after the liberalization process. Still under similar stands or popular opinion that the union are managed and represented by mostly state employed staffs, they are compelled to follow strictly politically oriented agenda.

Looking at the actual responses gotten from the respondent, I can quickly draw two conclusions from the exercise. The workers of the unions and other cooperatives have a pro unions respond, meaning that their responses demonstrated that, the farmers unions have and are still doing a great job to better cocoa production. In this light the respondents presented a series activities ranging from cocoa drying technics and facilities, other technical assistance, some financial assistance, crop marketing programs through the cooperative, agro fairs, and many others. The strongest part of the union's commitment is viewed in the different meetings and other events organized, through which they have an opportunity to discourse and dialogue about what problems they have or share in common. These activities are being rendered to most farmers at no profit base and some farmers unions try to evaluate and make a balance between what services they render and what they get sponsors for. The union work-

ers also addressed issues related to the difficulties which they find in getting the state subvention for their projects. The idea is that farmers unions are nonprofit based and they present the problems faced by the farmers to the state and other interested actors, in a bid to seek for solutions in different forms. Getting money and other products from the state and other sponsors have always been a problem that most workers or farmers unions presented.

The funding of most farmers unions like cooperatives in Cameroon is done through project sponsors. They try to write out projects, and solicit for sponsors for either the state or other institutions. The state officially as well recognizes some large unions and cooperative and provide them subvention for keep up and daily functioning of the group.

The farmers on the other hand responded by demonstrating that farmers unions do not or at least support the farmers enough in their daily struggle to battle cocoa production crisis. Farmers presented several complains in the questionnaire expressing the lack of proper training and education, technical farm assistance and the access to micro finance through the farmers unions. Even though most farmers expressed dissatisfaction and would wish that unions do more to support them, they at certain point had certain similarities from the perspective of the responded questionnaire. Many farmers also expressed worries about the lack of influence on the part of the union in fighting against the constant cocoa price fluctuation. Added to the constant price fluctuation (which often leads to the exploitation of the farmers by all the classes of buyers) farmers also complained of the exploitation by the unions that pay lower prices for the products through very expensive sale of pesticides and other farm inputs. This is possible since in most cases farmers lack the money during the cultivation seasons to buy items like pesticides, farmers usually contact their unions and cooperatives who at the end provide them with either these items or the needed money. They will then control the sale of their products so as to get back their money.

A vivid similarity can also be seen on the responses from the questionnaire demonstrating, the constraints and difficulties within the different level of structural, managerial and political platforms of farmers unions. Many farmers unions members like farmers expressed that they had very little or no impact on the union administration and this means that management do not bother much, since they are not answerable to them. The unions usually are compelled to convince the state and cannot press on them in any way since they depend on them for subsistence. Since the government is marked with corruption, the union leaders are also corrupt by hiding behind the state corrupt system.

Another point of interest was the impression given by most respondents that the unions are not strong financially. This is explained by the fact most farmers unions usually envisage programs to assist farmers but do not see them through the execution face because of the lack of financial resources. Explanations from respondents gave me understand that there is been a failure by the state or other donors to provide funds in most cases. Another fact that is raised is the general cry that farmers unions do not fight and affect changes in the prices of the farm products. There is a constant cocoa price fluctuation as has been demonstrated in the

writing and this problem has caused great uncertainty within the mind of farmers who cannot plane their finance beforehand.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

After the findings involved in this thesis, it is obvious to hold the opinion that, farmers unions in Cameroon's cocoa farming needs a complete reformation. The strong reasons are very obvious if we want to create a better impression about the farmers unions and create a better atmosphere for cocoa farmers to be economically sustainable. It is very good to positively think about what solutions will be appropriate to take, what institutions to create that will bring the much needed change, so greatly wanted in the establishment of farmers unions in Cameroon and the world at large. This transformation can only start from the state. There should be a new law in Cameroon that guarantees the creation of farmers unions. This same law has to establish the modalities for the creation of the unions, defines its activities and also its territorial constituencies. I think that by these definitions in the law we will be able to map and locate what regions or territorial localities contain what unions. The law should also state the criteria for membership and establish what duties the members have Vis avis the unions. This will help to ensure the duplicity of membership in unions and help in the identification problem. The problem of what level of commitment and responsibilities to the unions and how the union members can be punished or fined in the case of infringements and defaults on internal rules and regulation. The state also has to ensure in the law on the creation and organizations of cocoa farmers unions, an administratively and economically autonomous entity that can manage its own affairs without political influence. The autonomous Economic package in the law should make it possible for the state to allocate a certain budget for each union for certain purpose that will be determined by the research on the farming during each financial year. This money will obviously cover the cost of running the union and also sponsoring of the major problems or plans within the year. There should also be in this law a mean of control to ensure that the budget is properly spent.

Unions should meet certain standards before they are officially recognized in the state program and before they can get state assistance. They should have programs that can be seen without constrain as favorably contributing to ameliorate cocoa farming in Cameroon. Activities like training on farming techniques, crop treatments and drying technics must be included in their regular problems.

Farmers unions should have the power to work and in hand with state in deciding the farm produce price. This will be a solution to the existing pricing problem since the state will either set a working group that will involve cooperative and union representatives and they will jointly work to protect the cocoa price in the national market while impacting on the international market. The eradication of unscrupulous middlemen and businesses that help to make cocoa farming unviable economically will as well do a great job to help farmers. The farmers should be represented nationally and internationally since the product is destined for the for-

eign market, so that they can better be there in places where decisions are taken about their crop. This means that even at law making institutions within the state, it is imperative to get people who can better protect the farmer's interest. Through this mechanism, they can also be able to mobilize and lobby in different quarters for their interest to be protected. They can also through this be able to mobilize national actions like strikes and other manifestations to press for their demands to be met.

Cocoa Farmers unions in Cameroon could also as a solution to their financial problem, jointly create a financial institution that will be at their disposals in case of financial needs. This will be managed jointly by the state and the union and this will help to cover crisis through different periods and for different reasons.

The state has to work with the unions to create educational institutions and facilitate the access to training for farmers. This will give them first hand training on farming techniques.

These recommendations and many others will go a long way in addressing the different problems that limit the level of contribution that cocoa farmers unions make in Cameroon to help the farmers. I think that it will address problems ranging from, the creation of the unions, the criteria for membership and responsibilities to the level of access to funds which have always been a great problem for the cocoa farmers unions. If the state starts by revising the 1996 law on the creation of cooperatives and cocoa farmers unions, taking into consideration the above discussed issues, then much will be achieved in the domain of productivity, profitability and professionalism in the cocoa farming in Cameroon..

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Thesis Questionnaire

Dear farmers and members of workers unions,

I solicit your response to the below questions concerning your assessment of the cocoa farmers union in your region, to which you are a member or for which you work. These questions are aimed at understanding the margins upon which those unions are founded and to evaluate if they meet or achieve the reasons for which they were founded.

Your respond to the questions below will contribute to a valuable observation and enable possible recommendation for changes within the conception of cocoa farmers unions in Cameroon.

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sex: Male Female Age

Union.....

1. Are you a famer
2. Do you belong to a farmers union
3. Do you assist regularly or attend union meetings
4. Are you active in union activities
5. Do you get any financial support from the union
6. Do you get any form of technical assistance from the union
7. Kindly list some of the activities of the Union

.....

8. How would you grade your local union

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	10	<input type="checkbox"/>								

9. Are you satisfied with the union services or do you think that they can offer more services

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10. How many unions belong to your regional cooperative?

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11. What international partners does your union have?

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12. What programs do you have with the international partners?

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13. Do you get fund or any financial assistance from the unions (what kind and on what grounds)?

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14. Do the union assist in cocoa marketing and sales?

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15. How do unions assist farmers in the access to pesticides and other materials needed for cultivation?

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16. Who appoints the union leader?

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17. Do union officials get salaries?

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18. How often do you meet as a union?

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19. Do you have a hand in managing your local union? What role do you play

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20. What recommendations do you have for the union? What should be changed and what should not?

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