



# A Reference to Rural Livelihood in Cameroon: A Case Study from South West Cameroon



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## 1. Introduction

Macroeconomics performance in Cameroon over the past years has not been accompanied by a comparable improvement in living conditions especially in the rural areas. This is as a result of the severe deterioration of social conditions during the period of economic crisis.

## 2. Results

Generally, there has been a 13% drop in poverty according to the two household surveys conducted in 1996 and 2001 as seen in table 1.

Table 1: Poverty Rate Trend (%)

	1996	2001	% Change
<b>Incidence (P0)</b>			
<b>Rural</b>	59.6	49.9	-9.7
<b>Urban</b>	41.4	22.1	-19.3
<b>Total</b>	53.3	40.2	-13.1

Source: Adapted from DSCN, ECAM I and II Reports 2003

An analysis by sex of the household head yields encouraging information about the gender gap. The incidence of poverty in households headed by women is slightly lower than that of households headed by men (38.7 percent versus 40.6 percent).

Table 2: Poverty Incidence by sex and age of Household Head (%)

	1996			2001		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	42.4	60.0	54.2	22.5	49.7	40.6
Female	36.4	55.8	45.8	20.7	50.6	38.7
Total	41.4	59.6	53.3	22.1	49.9	40.2
<b>Age (Years)</b>						
<30	32.9	39.6	36.6	15.4	39.9	31.1
30-39	35.6	48.2	42.3	17.2	45.6	34.4
40-49	35.6	56.0	45.7	21.3	48.1	37.7
50>	46.9	65.6	60.1	26.1	53.7	44.7
Total	41.4	59.6	53.3	22.1	49.9	40.2

Source: Adapted from MINEPAT/DSCN: ECAM I and II Reports

In the South West Province diversification in rural households is a means of survival which can be seen in other parts of the country. According to my survey there are varied activities for survival and income generation as seen in table 3.

Table 3: Sources of Rural Income

Activity	Male	Famale
<b>Carpentry</b>	6	0
<b>Farming</b>	45	9
<b>Fishing</b>	3	2
<b>Trading</b>	9	0
<b>Others</b>	5	1
<b>Total</b>	68	12

Source: Field Survey, 2006

## What are the challenges facing rural households in South West Cameroon?

- Infrastructures (Roads, Markets and so on)
- Diseases
- Cultural Barriers
- Institutions and Policy
- Gender and Decision-Making

## 3. Conclusion

In the SW Agricultural research and development combined with off-farm activities will contribute to the development of rural households' livelihood, fight poverty and promote economic growth. It is also important for women to be involved at the community decision-making process and have access to land and other opportunities.