

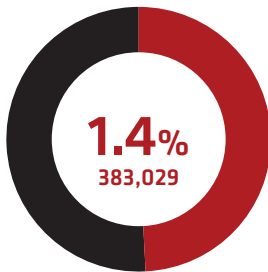


# Diaspora engagement mapping CAMEROON

## Facts & figures

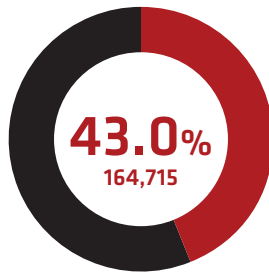
### Emigration

% of emigrants in total population



♂ 49.3%  
♀ 50.7%

% of which in the EU



♂ 44.0%  
♀ 56.0%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **0.8%**  
Remittances inflow (USD million): **329**



### Top countries of destination

France	89,496
United States	53,185
Gabon	50,273
Chad	33,936
Nigeria	28,177



### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>1</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>2</sup>:  
with restrictions



Voting from abroad:

At embassies/consulates



Terminology: Cameroon refers to its diaspora as 'Cameroonians abroad', although the term diaspora is also used in some contexts.

**Cameroon does not have a diaspora engagement policy.**

<sup>1</sup> In Cameroon, the nationality code of June 11, 1968, states that; once a Cameroonian citizen obtains the citizenship of another country, s/ he automatically loses his or her Cameroonian nationality. Full text available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b4db1c.html> . For a discussion of some of the issues relating to dual citizenship in Cameroon, see: <https://www.camerounweb.com/CameroonHomePage/features/Toward-dual-citizenship-in-Cameroon-Win-win-proposals-357007>

<sup>2</sup> Law No. 2011/013 of 13 July 2011 permits voting abroad for Cameroonian nationals that register with Electoral Commission Focal Points in embassies, but excludes Cameroonian diaspora with other nationalities. As many Cameroonian diaspora hold other nationalities this effectively disbars them from participating in Cameroonian electoral processes. In addition, concerns have been raised about diaspora voter registration processes. For more information see <http://www.elecam.cm/?q=en/node/104> ; <https://www.france24.com/fr/20181005-cameroun-presidentielle-reportage-paris-diaspora-biya> ; and <https://cameroonvoice.com/opinion/2018/08/27/election-presidentielle-2018-et-diaspora-camerounaise-leternelle-incomprehension/>

## Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2009** ● **Vision 2035<sup>3</sup>** sets out an action plan that includes mobilising funds and putting the financial system at the service of development. It also includes devising an appropriate strategy to capitalize on the resources of the diaspora. This is the sole reference to diaspora in the strategy.
- 2010** ● **National Growth and Employment Strategy<sup>4</sup>** includes the component 'NDS-4.1.2 Development of scientific and technological collaboration with scientists and engineers in the Diaspora'. There is little available information on this component, but one example of its implementation is the partnership agreement signed between a Cameroonian diaspora organisation in Germany, VKII, and the University of Yaounde I (see Spotlight section).
- 2018** ● **National Development Strategy 2020-2030<sup>5</sup>** aims to build the country's economy through a series of regulatory and other reforms to attract greater investment. It includes the objective '(iii) attract capital-holders (investors and the diaspora) and professionals in the different sectors of the financial ecosystem.' Priority sectors under this strategy include energy, agro-industry, digital, manufacturing, trade, and culture and tourism. In late 2018 the National Development Strategy 2020-2030 was presented to the Cabinet.<sup>6</sup>

### » Trends

Due to economic factors and a lack of employment opportunities, since the 1980s the country's frustrated youth has tended to pin its hopes on emigrating from the 1980s onwards, especially the high skilled. This has led to skills shortages in areas such as education and medicine, and has had a negative impact on the economy. According to a 2018 AU study, the Cameroonian diaspora in Europe are highly qualified.<sup>7</sup>

Cameroonian diaspora organisations, although mostly small, are very active, delivering projects across a range of sectors including health, education, skills and technology transfer, and business and enterprise.<sup>8</sup> See the Spotlight section for examples.

EU states have sought to encourage diaspora contributions to Cameroon. Germany and France have been active in working with diaspora organisations and high-skilled professionals to promote skills and technology transfer, as well as investment.<sup>9</sup>

The current political instability in the country and worsening ethnic tensions, combined with the ongoing insurgency by extremists in the region, have meant that Cameroon's focus has been on national security and securing its borders, rather than on diaspora engagement, with the diaspora sometimes perceived as a threat.<sup>10</sup>

3 Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development (2009), Vision 2035, available at: [http://www.cameroon-embassy.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Cameroon\\_VISION\\_2035\\_English\\_Version.pdf](http://www.cameroon-embassy.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Cameroon_VISION_2035_English_Version.pdf)

4 [https://www.cameroonembassyusa.org/images/documents\\_folder/quick\\_links/Cameroon\\_DSCE\\_English\\_Version\\_Growth\\_and\\_Employment\\_Strategy\\_Paper\\_MONITORING.pdf](https://www.cameroonembassyusa.org/images/documents_folder/quick_links/Cameroon_DSCE_English_Version_Growth_and_Employment_Strategy_Paper_MONITORING.pdf)

5 Available at: [https://www.minepat.gov.cm/index.php?option=com\\_docman&view=download&alias=117-expose-of-minepat-pillars-of-the-2020-2030-nds-and-institutional-mechanism-for-its-implementation-cabinet-meeting-of-28-november-2019&category\\_slug=exposes&Itemid=284&lang=en](https://www.minepat.gov.cm/index.php?option=com_docman&view=download&alias=117-expose-of-minepat-pillars-of-the-2020-2030-nds-and-institutional-mechanism-for-its-implementation-cabinet-meeting-of-28-november-2019&category_slug=exposes&Itemid=284&lang=en)

6 <https://www.cameroon-tribune.cm/article.html/29465/fr.html/nationdevelopment-strategy-document-for-2020-2030-period-presented>

7 AU (2018), Diaspora Mapping and Research Study in Five European Countries. Available at: <https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/2018%20Diaspora%20Mapping%20Study%20Europe%20ENG.pdf>. This is consistent with a 2009 IOM study which found that 42% of the Cameroonian diaspora working in Europe were highly qualified. See: <https://publications.iom.int/books/migration-au-cameroun-profil-national-2009>

8 <https://www.forim.net/sites/default/files/Repertoire%20des%20associations%20camerounaises%20de%20France.pdf>

9 <https://www.cimonline.de/static/media/giz2016-fr-diaspora-kamerun.pdf>; <https://www.afd.fr/fr/carte-des-projets/favoriser-les-investissements-productifs-de-la-diaspora-camerounaise>

10 <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/05/13/camerouns-separatist-movement-is-going-international-ambazonia-military-forces-amf-anglo-phone-crisis/>

Remittances to Cameroon make up less than 1% of GDP, so there currently is little financial incentive for the government to prioritise diaspora engagement. Cameroonian diaspora savings – estimated at around \$700m<sup>11</sup> in 2016 – are significant, but harnessing these for investment will require both confidence-building measures and incentives for diaspora investors.

## Obstacles



- **Lack of trust:** Even before the current period of political instability, there was significant mistrust between the Cameroonian government and its diaspora. The increase in tensions between the Anglophone and Francophone regions of the country and the rise of a secessionist movement have exacerbated this trend greatly in recent years, and lack of trust is thus probably the greatest barrier to improving diaspora engagement.<sup>12</sup>
- **Lack of policy focus:** Historically, national development strategies have not effectively engaged the views and intellectual input of the Cameroonian diaspora, and include few references to the diaspora.<sup>13</sup> The lack of a dedicated diaspora strategy or institutions, as well as a lack of information, hinder more effective diaspora engagement.
- **Diaspora capacity constraints:** Organisations established by the Cameroonian diaspora have suffered from severe capacity constraints, lacking formal social organisation or proper channels to gain access to useful information and networks. Furthermore, Cameroonian associations are typically far more marginally linked with mainstream development agencies compared with other comparable diaspora communities.<sup>14</sup>

## SPOTLIGHT: Effective practices



### FODIAS - Forum for the Diaspora<sup>15</sup>

The Forum for the Diaspora held in Yaounde in 2017 was organised by the government in partnership with the Agence Française de Développement. It aimed to develop an inclusive strategy between the Cameroonian government and members of the Diaspora. The Forum resulted in a range of recommendations including the establishment of a Secretariat of State for the Diaspora, along with the development of a database of diaspora members including their socio-economic profile and professional competencies.

NETWORKING

11 Commonwealth Senior Finance Officials Meeting 2016 Discussion Note: Action to Expand the Economic Impact of Diaspora Finance, available at: [https://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/FMM1603%20-%20SOM\\_Diaspora.pdf](https://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/FMM1603%20-%20SOM_Diaspora.pdf)

12 <https://www.theafricareport.com/22437/camerouns-diaspora-learning-to-live-with-the-enemy-within/>

13 Richard Agbor Ayukndang Enoh (2014) 'Interactions between the government and Diasporas: the West-African case of Cameroon', *Diaspora Studies*, 7:2, 75-87

14 Awango (2013). *The Cameroonian Diaspora: An Assessment of its Role in Local Development*. Available at: <https://www.socionauki.ru/journal/articles/165438/>

15 <https://www.cameroon-tribune.cm/article.html/9804/fr.html/diaspora-forum-camerouns-diaspora-want-secretariat-of-state>



## Diaspora Health Initiatives

### HEALTH + HUMAN CAPITAL

Cameroonian medical, pharmacy and dentistry students in Germany founded the Cameroonian diaspora association Camfomedics. It runs many projects in Cameroon such as PINK. PINK includes a portal for information on internship, clinical traineeship and practical placement opportunities for medical and nursing careers in Cameroon.<sup>16</sup>

The focus of the iMED programme (Improving Medical Education and Health Care Delivery through Diaspora Engagement) is to train Cameroonian doctors in the use of simple, modern, 'minimally invasive' diagnostic and therapeutic instruments. Cameroonian doctors from abroad work or teach within the framework of the programme.<sup>17,18</sup>

## Diaspora Supported Education, Knowledge, Technology and Entrepreneurship in Africa (DISEKTEA) 2.0

### EDUCATION + HUMAN CAPITAL

DISEKTEA 1.0 was a skills and technology transfer initiative set up by the The Association of Cameroonian Engineers and Computer Scientists (VKII) and DÄSAV (the German-Ethiopian students and academics Association) with the support of GIZ.<sup>19</sup>

The programme included practically oriented training for students in actual relevant technological areas, such as Bio Energy and Mobile Apps Programming.<sup>20</sup>

## Dias'Invest 237<sup>21</sup>

### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Dias'Invest 237 scheme is a project of the Ministry of External Relations of Cameroon.

Programme partners in France and in Cameroon select business creation projects most relevant to the Cameroonian context, with priority given to social impact investments led by women entrepreneurs. Dias'Invest 237 partners plan to work with all selected entrepreneurs to develop a 3-phase business analysis and an implementation plan elaborated in collaboration with the entrepreneur. The scheme is only open to Cameroonian diaspora entrepreneurs based in France.<sup>22</sup>

### HUMAN CAPITAL

## Developing a diaspora mobilisation strategy

In 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in partnership with the IOM MIDA programme, was working to develop a diaspora mobilisation strategy specifically focused on the return of qualified nationals. During its pilot phase the project facilitated Cameroonian specialists in the health and education sectors to return to Cameroon and help build up the human capital much needed by the country.<sup>23</sup> Its current status is unclear.

16 <https://www.camfomedics.org/de>

17 <https://www.alumniportal-deutschland.org/en/global-goals/sdg-03-health/diaspora-association-cameroon-camfomedics/>

18 Danielle Minteu Kadje 2020, 'Migration and Development Between Germany and Cameroon', in *Trans* 2020-04-02

19 <https://disektea.net/pilot/>

20 Ibid.

21 <http://dias-invest.cm/>

22 <https://www.afd.fr/fr/actualites/cameroun-lancement-de-lappel-candidatures-diasinvest-237>

23 <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/how-diaspora-contributes-development-cameroon>

## Annex:

# List of Actors

## Diaspora related institutions



- **At regional level**

**African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO) Continental Meetings** <https://au.int/en/cido>

Cameroon is a member of the African Union and nominates a diaspora focal point to represent Cameroon as part of the African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO) Continental Meetings

**Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)** [www.ceeac-eccas.org/index.php/en/](http://www.ceeac-eccas.org/index.php/en/)

- **National institutions**
  - At ministerial level

**Ministry of External Relations (MINREX)** <http://www.diplocam.cm/>

MINREX has the responsibility of promoting and protecting Cameroon's and its citizens' interests abroad. It is the lead ministry for diaspora engagement. Cameroonian embassies and consulates in Europe and North America often include a desk officer in charge of diaspora engagement, but there is little public information about the services provided to the diaspora. There is a section of the MINREX website for 'communities abroad' which is currently under development.<sup>24</sup>

- At sub-ministerial level

**Directorate of Cameroonians Abroad**

<https://diplocam.cm/index.php/fr/le-ministere/les-collaborateurs-du-ministre>

The Directorate of Cameroonians abroad, foreigners in Cameroon, refugees and migration issues (Direction des Camerounais à l'Étranger, des Étrangers au Cameroun, des Réfugiés et des Questions migratoires) is responsible for developing and implementing policies and programmes related to migration.

## Diaspora organisations in Europe



**Association Franco-camerounaise BIAGNE France** <http://www.biagne.org/>

- ☑ **Development activities**

BIAGNE works to improve the quality of primary and specialised care in different structures in place in western Cameroon, it also collects and transports technical equipment and participates in the continuous training of medical and paramedical staff.

<sup>24</sup> <https://diplocam.cm/index.php/en/citizen-services/cameroonians-abroad>

**Cameroon Forum** United Kingdom <https://www.cameroonforum.org/>

 **Development activities**

Cameroon Forum works to help Cameroonians in the diaspora integrate into their host communities, and draw upon their skills and experience for the mutual development of Cameroon and their host communities in the business, social and charity domains. In 2012 it founded the African Diaspora Action Against Malaria (ADAAM) which works with diaspora medical professionals to fight against malaria in Africa through awareness-raising in local communities in Cameroon and policy advocacy in the UK.<sup>25</sup>

**Deutsch-Afrikanische Brücke e.V. (German-African Bridge, DABeV)** Germany 1992  
<https://www.deutsch-afrikanische-bruecke.de/>

 **Development activities**

The organisation works in the field of development cooperation with a special focus on economy, hygiene/health, sports and education.

**Deutsch-Kamerunisches Forum für die Medizinischen und Paramedizinischen Wissenschaften e.V (Camfomedics)** Germany <https://www.camfomedics.org/>

 **Development activities**

Camfomedics is a Cameroonian diaspora organisation set up by diaspora medical professionals based in Germany. It provides medical treatment, equipment transport, and medical training in Cameroon, and promotes the integration and integration of Cameroonian and German medical students.

**Ident.Africa** Germany 2004 <http://www.identafrica.org/?lang=en>

 **Development activities**

ident.africa was founded in order to address the education deficit in Africa. It delivers education, health, and Micro and Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) support projects in Cameroon with local partners.

**Verein Kamerunischer Ingenieure und Informatiker e.V. (VKII)** Germany <https://www.vkii.org/index.php>

 **Development activities**

VKII works to develop technology-based solutions to development policy problems in Cameroon and abroad. In addition to projects in Cameroon, VKII provides a mentoring programme, and organises symposia and seminars in Germany.

<sup>25</sup> Page and Tanyi (2015), *Engaging the African diaspora in the fight against malaria*, available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283101456\\_Engaging\\_the\\_African\\_diaspora\\_in\\_the\\_fight\\_against\\_malaria#fullTextFileContent](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283101456_Engaging_the_African_diaspora_in_the_fight_against_malaria#fullTextFileContent)

Written by: **AFFORD**  
Edited by: **EUDiF**  
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