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## **Local Development in Cameroon Under the Constraint of Own Resources: the Case of the Municipalities in the Far North Region**

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**Abstract:** The problem of this paper stresses on the low contribution of self-generated resources of each municipality as a trap for underdevelopment of the local economy in Cameroon. The methodological approach was based on secondarys datasin other to make a flat tri analysis. Like in most rural communal councils in major part of the Far-North Region in general and the Mayo- Kani Division in particular are largely dependent on financed with the FEICOM and governments grants. The results of statistical highlight not only the constrains linked to the lack of own financial resources, but also a low mobilisation of local taxation income and the lack of qualified human resources among the communal personel. This hampers diverse infrastructural development as well as the local development process itself.

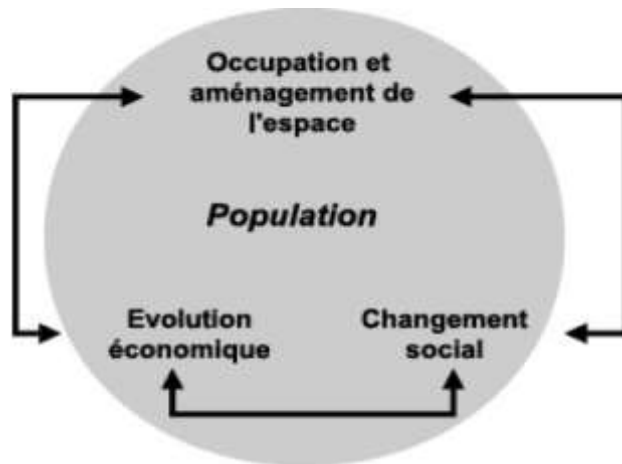
**Keywords:** Local Development; finance; self-generated resources; local taxation; qualified human resources

### **1. General Introduction**

The notion of local development, which appeared in the 1960s, is based on a simple principle: the mobilisation of local potential (natural, social, individual resources, etc.) can guide socio-economic dynamics. The study of local socio-economic development<sup>2</sup> poses a socio- economic diagnosis of the municipality and in this sense raises a problem related to the conditions and possibilities of a development driven at the local level. In the foundations of local development, theorists assume that central governments do not have the capacity to fully appreciate the diversity of local conditions or to assess local needs and capacities. Local governments, on the other hand, have clear comparative advantages in that they are well informed about local needs and priorities, by virtue of their proximity to local users and the pressure they face from their populations for accountability and transparency (Bonfiglioli 2005). Local development is a process through which the community participates in shaping its own environment in order to improve the quality of life of its residents. This requires a harmonious integration of economic, social, cultural, political and environmental components.

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<sup>2</sup> The local refers to a territorial space delimited by the scope of certain processes.



**Figure 1.1. Key variables of the local economy.**

*Source: Bossard (2001).*

The population living in the same territory, here at the centre of the graph, is both an actor and a beneficiary of local development, the main variables of which are: socio-economic transformations, regional planning and a better standard of living or quality of life. Local development policies were thus born out of decentralisation policies<sup>1</sup> and the disengagement of the State. The central idea was to correct, through appropriate governmental interventions, the spatial effects of economic growth which, while encouraging from the point of view of both the national economy and the living conditions of all citizens, was unevenly distributed in the various socio-spatial entities (Jones & Whalley, 1989).

While in the new context of decentralisation the municipalities and other local actors will henceforth be the main project owners for local development, the work of Nshimyumuremyi (2006) already mentioned that, ‘*the information necessary for the identification and evaluation of actions to be undertaken in order to promote good governance and local development is today largely insufficient, if not non-existent*’.

The 2005 UN Millennium Project Report entitled “*Investing in Development*” suggests in this perspective that “*when properly equipped with human capital, infrastructure and the enjoyment of basic rights in a market economy, men and women can, through their own initiative, obtain productive and decent work. When infrastructure, health needs and education are widely available, even poor countries can participate in the global division of labour in a way that promotes economic growth, raises living standards and increases the technological sophistication of the economy*” (UNCDF, 2005). When these conditions are met, local economic actors are able to undertake appropriate initiatives to meet local needs.

One of the things that strikes the observer travelling through Cameroon from North to South and from East to West is that: populations are settled in villages or in towns, depending on socio-economic opportunities, natural resources, favourable climate and relief, etc. The towns develop and attract more rural people around production, transformation or trade activities that exist locally. The towns develop and attract more rural people around the production, transformation or trade activities that exist locally. For example, the town of Nkongsamba, which used to be the third largest town in the country, was built

<sup>1</sup> Decentralisation is based on the assumption that administrative tasks and/or the decentralisation of governance from central government to communities can enhance equity and thus help to achieve the goals of poverty reduction and/or sustainable development (Fergusson 2004).



on coffee production. Once this activity fell, the town was very quickly downgraded. These towns or localities, which have been transformed into municipalities in the decentralisation process, must rely on their resources and develop economic activities to improve the living environment and well-being of the population.

Municipalities with a strong rural connotation in Cameroon also have many weaknesses, especially because of the lack of clarity in the existing regulatory frameworks regarding their precise competences, the scarcity of their financial resources, their relations with the hierarchy (conflicts of competence) and also for the lack of qualified human resources. When a locality has fewer resources of its own, its population is more prone to rural exodus, it is more vulnerable to poverty and such municipalities, whether rural or urban, attract very little investment from other localities.

The availability of own resources has several advantages for the municipality. According to El-Mensi (2018), giving local authorities the possibility of levying taxes or imposing financial charges (fees) in return for the services they provide is justified on several counts: First, allowing these authorities to mobilise their own revenues in a relatively autonomous manner is likely to promote a sense of fiscal responsibility (judicious allocation of resources to expenditures that meet the needs of citizens); Second, own resources serve as a catalyst for efficient local governance and citizen involvement in the management of local affairs; And finally, own resources strengthen local financial autonomy, especially in the case of local authorities with a broad economic base.

In an increasingly globalised economy, whether it is to take advantage of competitive advantages or to avoid the marginalisation of rural areas that often do not attract strategic investment, the primary issue in the development of a community is its control over its own resources, in particular its economic resources. For Trembley et al (2002), these resources are generally associated with the factors of production: material resources (land), human resources (labour) and financial resources (monetary capital). The dynamism of any economy is characterised in particular by the efficiency with which it uses these different resources. Given the context of globalisation of economies, it is no longer possible to talk about local development without taking into account the organisation and requirements of foreign markets. This context of free trade imposes new challenges on rural economies, such as strengthening local competitiveness, facing competition, and at the same time assuming environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability.

If rural areas in poor countries, because they are less attractive, cannot rely much on the extraverted growth of private capital at international and national level for their development, it would be urgent to rethink the development policies and strategies of each rural municipality, and their financing, by relying on both the potentialities and the resources that exist locally (Brun et. al., 2014). For the local authority, the issue of resource mobilisation is of particular interest. Indeed, the financing of the rural economy, which is essentially agricultural in Cameroon, has a double challenge because economic actors must produce more to ensure food self-sufficiency for local populations and generate a surplus for national and international markets. It is under these conditions that the municipality will be able to have the material and financial means to invest in the social sector, to develop the living environment and to improve the living conditions of the local population in a substantial and sustainable way (McNamara, 1973). Local development, because it deals with a relevant and central issue on the knowledge of economic and social dynamics at the local level (Paulais, 2012), gives local actors a better visibility to identify the levers on which they can act.



Thus, according to the GOLD Report (2010), all over the world, local authorities are assuming more and more responsibility for the provision of public services, the implementation of social policies, environmental management and local development. They account for between two thirds and half of public investment in most OECD countries as well as in some emerging countries (China, South Africa, Brazil...).

The dimension of community development is economic, social and political. It aims at the economic and social revitalisation of a territory by intervening in employment, housing, training, health and social services (Sardadvar, 2015). It seeks to promote the reappropriation of its economic and social future by the resident population (Diallo & Aubert 2009). In reality, it is well known that the economic success of a locality is essentially based on criteria such as human dynamism and mainly intangible factors such as initiative, autonomy, entrepreneurship or social solidarity, and then on tangible factors such as the number of projects and jobs. But this dynamic is only possible thanks to the availability of natural resources, financial resources and qualified human resources. The sustainability aspect of local development is also becoming more and more relevant.

Sustainable local development in the sense of public policies defines a process of “diversification and enrichment of economic and social activities in a territory based on the mobilisation and coordination of its resources and energies”, taking into account the environment and future generations. Three multiple functions are attributed to the local level: Firstly, a production function (providing consumers with healthy, quality products, products whose origin and production conditions are known); Secondly, a territorial function (occupying territories, managing space, preserving landscapes and natural resources); and thirdly, a social function (contributing to employment, animating the rural environment, producing collective services).

Local development is also a participatory development. It is part of an economic logic of territorial development and a social logic that must be organised on the basis of a shared role within the communities and negotiation between its members. The populations of Dziguilao, Moulvoudaye and Touloum participate in the management of their municipality by freely voting the members of the municipality’s executive. The mayor and his councillors act throughout their mandate as representatives of the people. Each trade nominates a representative for municipality meetings who often participates in working sessions to take important decisions in the life of the municipality. The delegates of the trades are often contested or even challenged in their own field of activity when the municipal authorities take a decision that is less favourable to them. Local actors do not fail to mobilise in synergy when the construction of a community infrastructure requires local input.

The economic stakes in rural areas in Cameroon are multiple: the rural sector continues to be the primary source of foreign exchange, contributing about 55% of total exports, both in agricultural and forestry products. In addition, the agricultural sector contributes significantly to employment (comprising 60% of the active population) and food security. In addition to plant, animal, fishery and wood products, activities in rural areas also include trade, crafts and mining. Agriculture, livestock, crafts and trade are the main economic activities in the municipalities of Mayo-Kani in general, and Moulvoudaye, Touloum and Dziguilao in particular, which are the subject of this study. Farmers in these three municipalities, whether young or old, are not driven by dreams of farming or entrepreneurship that would lead to the creation of agricultural enterprises. Farming has remained traditional and family-based, with the exception of a few rare cases such as SEMRY and SODECOTON.

However, the lack of mastery of modern techniques by farmers negatively affects their working conditions and the improvement of farm income. On the part of the central government, and in the context of the second generation of agriculture advocated by the government, the measures envisaged aim to provide farmers with, among other things: plant material, subsidies for pesticides and fertilisers of between 20 and 50%, granting credit loans at subsidised rates, creating five pools of agricultural machinery and supporting them to the tune of 15%, and acquiring around a hundred tractors, with a view to increasing processing, storage and packaging capacities (INS, 2011). In reality, however, these measures only target the production of sectors with a high food security rate, of which only rice cultivation is concerned in all these municipalities. Cameroon has been engaged in the process of decentralisation since 1990, which aims to reconvert the political action of the State in the development of each Region by promoting the planning and management of the rural economy at local levels. Through this process of decentralisation, the Cameroonian state seeks to make local authorities capable of planning, managing and monitoring their development. It can be seen that the municipalities do not have the same natural resources. Some municipalities have the forest, large companies, mining resources, the river port, etc. as resources. Some municipalities have resources from the forest, large companies, mining resources, the river port, etc., while other municipalities lack their own resources (public or private) to ensure the socio-economic development of their locality.

The disparities in competitiveness factors partly explain the inequalities between the country's regions or municipalities. Other phenomena such as agglomeration, urbanisation, inequalities in education and inter-regional migration, have contributed to amplifying these imbalances. The Far North Region of Cameroon, where the municipalities that are the subject of our study are located, is one of the poorest in the country according to the reports of the ECAM1, ECAM2 and ECAM3 surveys. The extent of the backwardness of schooling, the isolation, the lack of water and electricity here mean that today, civil servants consider their assignment to this region as a punishment.

Equalisation is a redistribution formula that aims to reduce the differences in wealth, and therefore inequalities, between the various territorial authorities. Two mechanisms generally guide the principle of equalisation: firstly, horizontal equalisation, which is carried out between local authorities and consists of allocating to disadvantaged local authorities a part of the resources of the 'richest' authorities. Then there is vertical equalisation, which is carried out by the State's allocations to local authorities. The aim of a good equalisation system is to bring poor municipalities with no resources up to the same level of development as richer municipalities.

In Cameroon, the 2018 finance law, in its article C 114, provides that urban communities and district communities benefit from the same revenues as municipalities. Article 116 specifies that a share of 20% of the product of the tax revenues of local authorities is levied and allocated to FEICOM or any other body in charge of decentralization and equalisation for the financing of projects of municipalities, urban communities and unions of municipalities. Thus, as specified in Article 117, the equalisation resources are redistributed to municipalities and urban municipalities not on the basis of poverty criteria, but in proportion to population. This is proof that the most populated municipalities, often the richest (urban municipalities), benefit more from the equalisation resources. All other things being equal, this redistribution can only widen the gap between municipalities with their own resources and those without.

The socio-economic development of rural municipalities in Cameroon depends, among other things, on



a number of prerequisites: opening up the production basins; land use planning; development of education, health and leisure infrastructures; etc. When the municipal executive lacks its own resources to carry out its development missions, the municipality is locked into a poverty trap whose sequence is as follows: Low level of economic activity; low level of local public resources; low level of spatial planning; low level of attractiveness of the private sector; and low level of wealth creation.

The lack of financing is underlined by all rural actors as an obstacle to the development of their activities. Microfinance has long been presented as a miracle solution for the poor. In developing countries and low-income economies, microfinance programmes have aimed to provide micro-loans to the poor to enable them to establish an income-generating activity, in order to break the poverty trap (Bateman, 2013; World Bank, 2003). Yet despite the hype surrounding microfinance, more recent research results are mixed (Banerjee et al. 2013). In the municipalities of Mayo-Kani covered by this study, microfinance and banks are absent.

While municipalities in large cities derive a large proportion of their resources from the return on their investments and from levies on various economic activities of more dynamic local actors, poor municipalities on the other hand are largely dependent on additional FEICOM pennies in Cameroon. Hence the following research question:

***How does the lack of own resources affect the local development of the municipalities in Cameroon?***

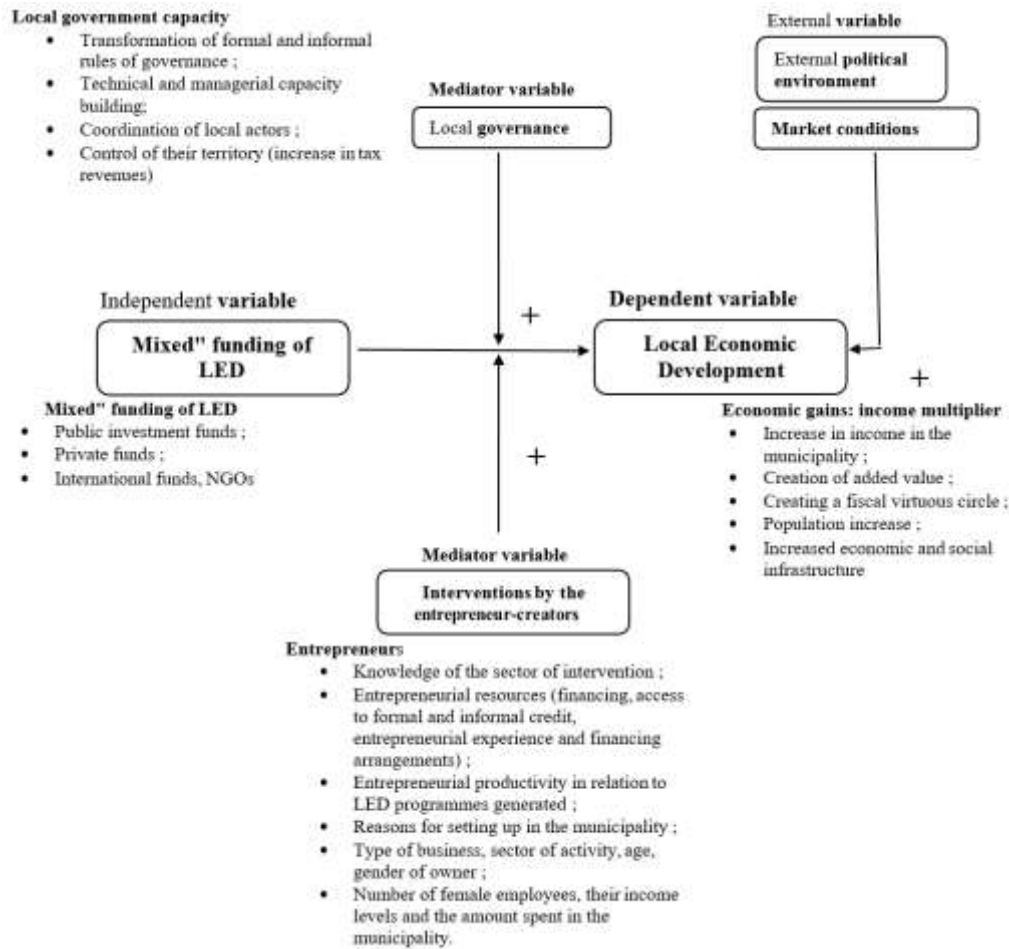
## **2. Theoretical Framework for Financing Local Development.**

The absence of a theoretical construct for investment, financing and local development in the socio-economic contexts of developing countries constitutes a major challenge for better policy formulation and improving the quality of local development interventions.

In the process of local development, public authorities play an essential role through spatial planning, the construction of non-market goods such as roads, schools, hospitals, land use planning, etc. Decentralization confers part of these formerly central state competences to local government. Decentralization confers some of these formerly central state competences to local government. However, the lack of financing opportunities, the lack of adequate development infrastructure, among others, imply unfavorable conditions for the emergence of a dynamic and innovative private sector in Least Developed Countries (Annick, 2018). However, where the market has failed, as in the rural finance sector, only the state can provide some incentives.

Local Economic Development (LED) is one of the solutions to the difficulties identified in LDCs, because it generates endogenous growth based on the production of added value that the private sector and local actors can generate.

The study of the sources of funding for the local economy in the context of decentralisation offers an analytical framework for promoting a territorial development dynamic capable of generating economic initiatives that create jobs and wealth, and relying more on the resources of the municipality (Bœuf, 2009). Decentralisation involves a transfer of powers, resources and responsibilities from central governments to the regions (Dafflon & Madies, 2008; Denieuil, 2005). The municipality's budget is one of the local means at the disposal of the local administrative authority to meet the demands of the population.



**Figure 2.1. Theoretical model of LED funding from Annick (2018).**

In this model, the municipality’s own resources are made up of public or private investment funds available at the local level and the availability of human resources or local skills that are essential to give impetus to socio-economic development in each municipality.

The importance of mastering the potential sources of local government funding is that local governments are well placed to improve the management of public resources to meet citizens’ demands. Most local development problems are related to the weak development of the financing system and lack of capacity, especially in developing countries, or more generally to insufficient resources. Other challenges are external to the financial system, but influence the demands it has to meet and the way it operates.

In Cameroon, while the municipalities of the big cities draw a large proportion of their resources from the return of their own investments and from levies on various economic activities of the more dynamic local actors, the poor municipalities on the other hand are largely dependent on additional centimes from FEICOM, loans and subsidies requested from the State and FEICOM, indirect taxes, taxes in full discharge of their obligations, patents and licences. Other development partners such as the PDR, PNDP, PADDL/GIZ, etc., which provide technical and financial support to these rural municipalities, will soon withdraw. Like most rural municipalities, those of Dziguilao, Moulvoudaye and Touloum suffer from a number of handicaps that crystallize their economic development process, notably isolation, the absence

of electrification in the urban centre and in rural areas, other socio-cultural obstacles and, above all, the lack of funding.

The mobilisation of public resources for the financing of decentralised local governments remains a major challenge in Cameroon, although theoretically the sources of local finance are diversified (Bateman 2013). Local finance initiatives are programmes whose objectives are to unlock domestic financial sectors in low-income countries and finance local economic and social infrastructure projects that are necessary for local economic development.

**Table 2.1. Sources of Finance for the Local Economy.**

Transfers	Taxes	Fees	Grants	Borrowing	Coupons
From the Central State	Land (built and unbuilt land)	Compulsory levies	Donors (NGOs, international organisations, etc.)	Bank	Issues of securities
Conditional transfers	Local taxes	Taxes on public procurement	Donations	Donors	
Unconditional transfers	Business taxes	Contributions	Annuities paid by joint stock companies; consortium of cooperatives (savings and loan; agricultural producers...)	Specialised bodies	
	Business taxes		Repayment of loans or advances	Corporate pensions	
	Tax charges				

Source: Annick 2018.

The sources of funding for localised development policies refer to the resources available to local authorities to meet the supply and demand of public goods and services in the territories. But in Cameroon the law limits the competence of municipalities to mobilise such resources. Thus, most of the time, it is the public authorities that respond to the demand from the inhabitants of rural/urban territories. However, local authorities can also revive a public service and ensure that the service meets the demand raised by the inhabitants (Goga et al. 2006; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2007).

However, more than 80% of local government budgets are composed of transfers from central governments (Annick, 2018). Access to borrowing or the financial market for African local governments is limited<sup>1</sup>. Even where legislation allows it, the situation of local finances and the functioning of the financial system do not facilitate access to the market. There is a tendency at the local government level to expect that resources collected at the central state level are shared among the communities. However, municipalities that emancipate themselves from this dependence on central state resources enjoy greater financial autonomy and can invest more in their local development projects.

The powers and responsibilities of local authorities, especially for service delivery, are based on legislation and the Constitution. In Cameroon, Law No. 2004/017 of 22 July 2004 organising decentralisation stipulates (in Title II, Article 22) that ‘the resources transferred to the exercise of their competence by the decentralised territorial authorities are devolved to them either by tax transfer, or by

<sup>1</sup> In French-speaking Africa, Douala has conducted one of the few experiments with bond issues on the capital market. In 2005, the city raised nearly US\$19 million on the newly established Douala Stock Exchange.



endowment, or by both'. The Cameroonian general tax code includes under the heading of local taxes: the tax in full discharge, patents, taxes on firearms, tax on livestock, CAC/ IRPP, IS, VAT and taxes on games, licences, annual forestry fees, additional tax on land ownership. The above law stipulates that municipalities such as those in our study area are basic decentralised communities whose territorial jurisdiction is that of the arrondissement. They have a general mission of local development and improvement of the environment and living conditions of their inhabitants.

### 3. Methodology and Results

Based on the data collected from three sample municipalities in our study, the assessment of local economic activity is made with a focus on agricultural and pastoral production. The ratio of own resources to the budgets (2013, 2014 and 2015) of these municipalities is used to assess the financial autonomy of the municipalities. Flat-sorting statistical analyses allow comparisons to be made between the active population, local resources and economic activity in each of our three municipalities.

The choice of municipalities in the Department of Mayo-Kani, and in particular those of Dziguilao, Moulvoudaye and Touloum, is due firstly to the availability of data, and secondly to the specificity of their geographical situation in the Sahelian zone of the country: sometimes landlocked (Moulvoudaye and Dziguilao) and sometimes open (Touloum). Beyond the fact that all the tribes of the region are found in these three municipalities, it is respectively livestock and agriculture that make the economic strength of these three municipalities, as of all the other municipalities of the department and even of the Far North Region. Finally, the other particularity of this Region is that it is classified among the poorest Regions of Cameroon.

A socio-economic diagnosis of our study municipalities shows that each municipality develops its economic activities on the basis of its natural endowment of production factors such as arable land, population, etc. It is also a question of identifying who are the actors of local development and what are their resources? The local authority of each municipality relies on its budgetary envelope to finance development projects.

**Table 3.1. Percentage of Moulvoudaye's own Revenue**

<b>Evolution of revenues</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
additional communal centimes	82 248 315	72 595 959	126 495 489
Indirect municipal taxes	14 905 984	13 794 400	16 372 393
Income from the operation of the estate and municipal services	3 164 950	2 520 900	2 378 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>105 409 258</b>	<b>167 244 213</b>	<b>268 742 028</b>
<b>Percentage of the municipality's own revenue</b>	<b>17,14%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>7%</b>

*Sources: Author's calculations based on municipal administrative accounts.*

When reading the Budget of this municipality (with a selected piece in the table above), several findings emerge:

- The largest source of revenue contribution in these three years comes from the additional municipal tax, which remains a resource outside the municipality;
- The second largest source of contribution is the state grant, which is always a resource outside the municipality;

- The low contribution of tax revenues between 20014 and 2015 calls into question the capacity of the municipality to assume its financial autonomy<sup>4</sup>;

While investment expenditure is very often absent from the budget (fiscal year 2013 and 2014), it can be seen that the heading “other expenses and miscellaneous losses” which could have been minimised in favour of productive investments is usually inflated. The sources of financing of the budget of this municipality show that own resources contribute less than 20%, sometimes even less than 10% to the budget of the municipality. The municipality will not even be able to pay the salaries of local administrative staff, let alone finance an investment project for local development if external funding is cut off. One must always wait for the state subsidy or the additional communal centimes from FEICOM so that the local administration of these municipalities can meet its operating costs.

Unfortunately, the municipalities of Dziguilao and Touloum show almost the same statistical trends as Moulvoudaye. Compared to the municipalities of Yaoundé or Douala, which generate significant resources through local taxes on businesses, well-developed markets, etc., the municipalities of Moulvoudaye are not able to generate sufficient resources to meet their needs. The municipalities in our study sample are thus locked in a ‘vicious circle of underdevelopment’ or what can be described in this study as ‘the trap of lack of own resources’ according to the following sequence: low own resources to build markets and invest in land use planning, low attractiveness for investments and other development actors, low level of economic activity and low level of local taxes.

**Table 3.2. Percentage of Touloum’s Own Revenue**

<b>Evolution of revenues</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
additional communal centimes	39 312 197	49 671 090	46 000 000
Indirect municipal taxes	8 103 410	12 330 000	11 866 000
Income from the operation of the estate and municipal Services	ND	2 100 000	1 600 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>54 883 990</b>	<b>80 374 581</b>	<b>199 850 826</b>
<b>Percentage of the municipality’s own revenue</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>7%</b>

*Sources: Author’s calculations based on municipal administrative accounts.*

Fiscal decentralization in Africa is strongly constrained by the macroeconomic and financial context of states. The low level of taxation has a direct impact on the financing of public policies and on fiscal decentralization.

The system of equalization of central state resources allocated to municipalities aims to correct inequalities in local development. However, political lobbying and technocratic elites influence this redistribution system to the extent that poor municipalities do not always receive more resources from the central state than rich ones. The recent example of the government’s allocation to municipalities for the fight against COVID 19 shows, on the contrary, that it is the rich municipalities that received the ‘lion’s share’ in Cameroon in May 2020.

So-called resource equalisation formulas are widely used. Often a simple indicator is used, such as population or target size (Burkina Faso, Malawi and Mozambique), but more complex formulas are also used (South Africa). Conditional grants are paid if the recipient meets a number of criteria (submission of a budget, administrative accounts, etc.), or they must be spent according to certain criteria (minimum percentage in investments, in certain types of investments) or in certain areas, with or without locally financed expenditures. For example, in Kenya, the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) transfers the

full amount of the planned grant if local governments have submitted various documents within a prescribed timeframe: budget, financial statements, revenue improvement plan, accounts receivable and payable, etc. Equalization transfers give local governments more flexibility than the conditional transfer.

Indeed, these imbalances in public allocations to local authorities in several countries show the failure of the equalisation system to correct inequalities. GOLD II (2010) observes at the global level that, while the responsibilities of local authorities are increasing, the sharing of the means to assume these responsibilities is often clearly unsatisfactory, especially in developing countries. This is compounded, in most regions, by the limited autonomy given to local authorities in the management of their resources.

The municipalities in the department of Mayo-Kani do not have the financial autonomy to carry out their development missions. Nor do they capitalise on the collection of revenue from local economic activity, which nevertheless generates significant production in the agro-pastoral domain. Other tax sources are not exploited, such as building permit fees, impound fees and taxes on services provided. In the municipality of Touloum, for example, the mayor is the main authorising officer for all inputs and outputs, and is sometimes assisted by his secretary general or his municipal collector. This poses a real problem of local governance. The municipal collector is in charge of collection and disbursement operations. For reasons of traceability, money orders and revenue orders are drawn up with stubs that are archived at the municipal revenue office of the municipality and the general treasury of the region. Tax censuses to estimate the local tax base are carried out by the decentralised state services<sup>15</sup>. Most of the local tax collectors are not trained, and only a few of the executive staff of these three municipalities have received training at CEFAM in Buea, the only school that trains communal staff in Cameroon.

The population is the first actor of local development, not to say the first factor of production in an essentially agricultural economy.

**Table 3.3. Population of Dziguilao by Age Group**

Gender/age groups	0 - 16 years	16 - 30 years	30 - 55 years	over 55 years	Total
Men	9158	9565	2494	1961	23178
Women	10750	11229	2928	2302	27209
<b>Total</b>	19908	20794	5422	4263	<b>50387</b>
%	39,51%	41,27%	10,76%	8,46%	100%

Source: PNDP (2011).

The population of the municipality of Dziguilao, which is mostly young, represents an asset for its economic development, with an active population of 52%. As for the 0-16 age group, which represents 39.51% of the population, it poses a major challenge in terms of training and supervision by the municipal executive, which unfortunately does not always have a substantial budget for building and equipping educational and social infrastructures. Training also concerns all local development actors.

Training for development means above all helping to create a link between actors, bringing together mayors, MPs, prefects, NGOs and companies, then informing and communicating, raising awareness and involving populations in real time situations. In this sense, training-development and support for initiatives breaks with the traditional approaches to professional training. To meet these challenges, local

<sup>1</sup> In a Francophone context characterised by the unicity of cash, the analysis consists of comparing the share of local revenue managed by municipal revenue boards and that managed by the Treasury. This distinction also covers taxes subject to assessment and whose bases and rates are set by law (revenue managed by the State) and taxes determined by local authorities (communal revenue boards).

authorities need appropriate resources and capacities.

**Table 3.4. Distribution of the Population of Moulvoudaye by Sex and Place of Residence.**

Population of the municipality of Moulvoudaye	Total population	Gender		Sex ratio (%)
		Male	Female	
Urban population	7383	3739	3644	102,61
Rural population	74985	36729	38256	96,01
<b>Total population</b>	<b>82368</b>	<b>40468</b>	<b>41900</b>	<b>96,58</b>

Source: BUCREP (2005).

The particularity of the population of Moulvoudaye is that there are more women than men, and the majority of the population is concentrated in rural areas. The active population of the Far North Region (aged 15 to 59) is 43.8%. On the basis of the regional rate, the active population of Moulvoudaye is therefore estimated at 36077.

The rural exodus drains the municipalities of a potential and especially qualified workforce, as young people after their secondary education go mainly to the country's large cities in search of opportunities that they cannot find locally (qualified job opportunities, opportunities for higher or university studies). The local administration, according to the communal development plan, has not made any plans for managing the growth of the urban population, with social housing projects<sup>1</sup>, land subdivision projects, etc.

In the international context, urban growth, which increases demand for public services, is a global trend that is particularly strong in developing countries (GOLD II 2010). A majority of the world's population already lives in urban areas and this proportion is expected to exceed 60% by 2030. 85% of this urban growth, according to the UN, will be concentrated in Asia, Africa and, to a lesser extent, Latin America.

The main activity is agriculture and livestock farming. The best way for the local administration to support the development of this population would be to open up the agricultural basins. However, the rural tracks are very poorly maintained and are almost impassable in the rainy season. The situation is similar in the municipality of Touloum.

**Table 3.5. Distribution by Gender and Residence of the Population of Touloum**

Distribution of the population of Touloum	Total population	Gender		Sex ratio (%)
		Male	Female	
Urban population	4570	2447	2123	115,26
Rural population	35627	17621	18006	97,86
<b>Total population</b>	<b>40197</b>	<b>20068</b>	<b>20129</b>	<b>99,7</b>

Source: BUCREP (2005)

The low population density in urban areas is explained by the low level of development of infrastructure and urbanization in these different municipalities so that they are attractive to rural populations. A sort of rurality of the urban space can be observed, with a strong practice of agricultural and pastoral activities in the urban centre to the detriment of the secondary and tertiary sectors.

Improving the quality of life of these populations and facilitating access to essential services are essential

<sup>1</sup> In 2007, the United Nations estimated that 72% of the urban population in sub-Saharan Africa lived in poor housing (GOLD II 2010).

to ensure economic development as well as social and political stability in the region. Training is essential to improve the level of the local actor. The many actors involved in local development (elected representatives, managers, companies, employees, association activists, inhabitants) come from different worlds and practice divergent professional cultures. In such a context, a large body of literature is devoted to training as a “link” to strengthen the skills of each actor and encourage interaction. This work considers the territory as a centre for networking actors, in which a collective learning process takes place. Training is therefore involved in the search for qualifications for project leaders whose jobs are constantly changing as a result of the new activities being promoted. Training, in this sense, makes it possible to give the inhabitants and, as far as possible, by encouraging the Region’s universities to articulate their interventions on training, tools so that they become stakeholders in territorial development processes (ILO 2005).

Urbanization is always seen as a factor in increasing demand for agricultural products. However, low investment by central or local government in land-use planning or low dynamics in the construction of socio-economic infrastructure not only delays urban development in particular, but would generally slow down economic activity in the whole municipality. Although abundant agricultural production allows the population to be well fed, healthy and growing, in turn, an abundant and healthy population should allow for equally high production.

**Table 3.6. Agricultural Area (ha), Production (Tonne) and Yield (t/ha) in Moulvoudaye, Touloum and Dziguilao Compared to the total for Mayo-Kani Department in 2016.**

Speculation		Moulvoudaye	Touloum	Dziguilao	Total Mayo-Kani
Sorghum SP	Surface	5 500	1 810	12 300	48 960
	Production	7 812	1 810	19 680	72 602
	Performance	1,4	1	1,6	1,4
Maize	Surface	180	14	1 100	6 930
	Production	288	16,8	2 640	14 484
	Performance	1,6	1,2	2,4	2
Penicillary	Surface	2 720	17	10	3 162
	Production	3 808	13,6	8	4 224
	Performance	1,4	0,8	0,8	1,3
Rainfed rice	Surface	95	280	160	621
	Production	95	840	384	1 482
	Performance	1	3	2,4	2,3
Peanut	Surface	320	50	800	5 210
	Production	192	40	640	4 366
	Performance	0,6	0,8	0,8	0,8
Cowpeas	Surface	6 500	200	3 100	21 160
	Production	6 500	160	3 100	17 307
	Performance	1	0,8	1	0,8
Sesame	Surface	140	17	96	1 072
	Production	84	10,2	768	1 691
	Performance	0,6	0,6	0,8	1,5
Voandzou	Surface	800	12	210	1 471
	Production	560	9,6	210	1 318
	Performance	0,7	0,8	1	0,8
	Surface	3	0	3	107



Soya	Production	2	0	2	120
	Performance	0,8	0	0,8	1
Okra	Surface	30	0	25	365
	Production	120	0	88	1 253
	Performance	4	0	3,5	3,4
Chilli	Surface	0	10	16	34
	Production	0	10	19	37
	Performance	0	1	1,2	1
Cassava	Surface	400	6	5	468
	Production	8 800	95	60	9 636
	Performance	22	16	12	20,5
Potato	Surface	30	0	0	86
	Production	600	0	0	1 776
	Performance	20	0	0	20,5
Guinea sorrel	Surface	20	0	10	382
	Production	28	0	20	244
	Performance	1,4	0	2	0,6

**Source: 2016 Report of the Departmental Delegation of Agriculture of Mayo-Kani.**

For the crops that constitute the agricultural potential of the Far North Region of Cameroon, such as sorghum SP (rainy season) and maize, it can be seen here that only the municipality of Dziguilao performs above the departmental average of 1.6 tonnes/hectare for sorghum SP and 2.4 tonnes/hectare. While the departmental average yields are 1.4 t/ha and 2 t/ha for SP sorghum and maize respectively. For rainfed rice, only the municipality of Touloum exceeds the departmental average with a yield of 3 t/ha compared to 2.3 t/ha for the department.

The main difficulties in the agricultural sector noted for these municipalities are, among others: the isolation of the agricultural basins, the lack of inputs, difficulties in accessing land, the lack of financing, etc. One would expect that the municipality of Moulvoudaye, which has the largest population of our three municipalities, would also have the highest production. But this is not the case, if we look only at the two main products we have just mentioned. The main asset of the Touloum municipality in this sector is its accessibility, as it is crossed by the Kaelé-Yagoua asphalt road for 15 km. The only microfinance structure identified in these three municipalities is in Dziguilao. This explains, among other things, the relatively good performance of its agriculture compared to the other two municipalities.

This unique microfinance is still subject to competition from informal financing structures such as the “Tontines”. The members of the latter prefer to borrow from their mutual funds at a lower or even zero interest rate than to borrow from microfinance structures. One of the solutions in this context for these microfinance institutions is to target the “Tontines” as clients and not as competitors by offering them an account in microfinance to manage their savings.

Particularly in the Sahelian zones, other constraints weigh on the agricultural development of these municipalities, notably the lack of improved seeds; soil impoverishment; climate change; etc. The farming system is dominated by agriculture and livestock. Farming is still mostly traditional with hoe and daba, with an evolution towards mechanisation through the increasing use of animal traction. However, the modernisation of cultivation techniques is also gradually taking place thanks to the support provided to farmers by companies such as SEMRY and SODECOTON. Touloum’s agricultural production is quite diversified and includes millet and sorghum in abundance, cotton, beans / cowpeas,

rice, groundnuts, maize, okra, potatoes, onions / garlic, peppers, cassava, potatoes, etc.

On the part of the central government, and in the context of the second-generation agriculture advocated by the government, the measures envisaged aim to provide farmers with, among other things: plant material, subsidies for pesticides and fertilisers of between 20 and 50%, granting credit loans at subsidised rates, creating five pools of agricultural machinery and supporting them to the tune of 15%, and acquiring around a hundred tractors, with a view to increasing processing, storage and packaging capacities (INS, 2011). In reality, however, these measures only target the production of sectors with a high food security rate, of which only rice cultivation is concerned in all these municipalities. To be truly effective, an economic development strategy must reconcile the individual and collective interests of the majority of economic agents. In view of the relatively low level of schooling and professionalism among farmers, one may wonder about the capacity of rural people to adapt to a changing socio-economic situation at national and international level.

**Table 3.7. Moulvoudaye’s Livestock Situation in 2016 Compared to the Department’s Total**

Category	Moulvoudaye	Dziguilao	Touloum	Total Mayo-Kani Department
TAURILLON	3774	856	743	10218
GENISSE	5574	1539	595	12282
CASTRES	107	85	136	2197
TAUREAUX	4435	428	356	11706
CATS	7734	3936	1101	35153
VEALS	3338	1711	823	11247
<b>Total</b>	<b>24962</b>	<b>8555</b>	<b>3754</b>	<b>82803</b>
Aries	7980	1570	1567	30854
Ewes	8540	9420	2870	42514
Lambs	3423	4710	523	11025
<b>Total</b>	<b>19943</b>	<b>15700</b>	<b>4960</b>	<b>84393</b>
Goats	1200	296	980	5049
Goats	9650	7402	3650	54051
Castrated	7543	2665	1511	30790
Kids	5694	4442	704	21401
<b>Total</b>	<b>24087</b>	<b>14805</b>	<b>6845</b>	<b>111291</b>
Donkeys	799	291	124	6552
Camels	0	0	0	0
Horses	318	201	102	1503
<b>Total</b>	<b>1117</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>8055</b>
Boars	321	84	346	6423
Sows	402	416	564	12483
Castrated	23	98	345	3105
Piglets	199	822	415	2674
<b>Total</b>	<b>945</b>	<b>1420</b>	<b>1670</b>	<b>24685</b>

Source: 2016 Report of the Departmental Delegation of Livestock of Mayo-Kani.

The livestock sector has great potential and is not negatively influenced by the problem of isolation as is the case for agriculture. The problems encountered by livestock breeders in these municipalities include: low rainfall creates a lack of pasture, health problems linked to epizootics due to contact with foreign animals during transits and transhumance, some breeders are less encouraged to vaccinate their



animals due to their ignorance, the lack of training among breeders, and the local pork market is very limited due to certain religious considerations

As for the municipality of Moulvoudaye, with the largest population of the three municipalities, livestock breeding is the most important source of wealth, followed by agriculture and small-scale trade. The presence of quarries (sand, gravel) and tourist sites (shell huts, former slave transit sites) in the municipality can, through their development, revive tourism and thus generate jobs and income. Its wood park is an important element in its revenue, since it supplies 75% of the city of Maroua with firewood. The municipality can promote the diversification of this wealth by exploring other types of possible resources.

Marketing remains a major challenge for producers, as they can only sell their products if there is a market. This locality has enormous potential, particularly in the agro-silvicultural and craft sectors. The Moulvoudaye district has three markets, two of which were built by PREPAFEN and one built by the municipality. The latter cost CFAF 4,000,000 and is located in Moulvoudaye centre. This district also contains two slaughterhouses: one built recently at an average cost of 5,500,000 and managed by the municipality; and another, dating from 1962. In the assets of this municipality, there are 14 shops in the central market, 37 sheds, a building for the town hall services and a livestock park made up of five pens. The municipality has acquired a municipal hostel with 10 rooms and modern toilets, the total cost of which is estimated at 67,000,000 FCFA.

However, in towns under construction, the municipality plays a key role in property development. The development of urban space by creating easements, water and/or electricity supplies increases the value of the housing estates, which the municipality can sell to private individuals with added value. If the municipality optimises the collection of local taxes, it can easily meet these challenges. The Moulvoudaye municipality has natural resources such as sand quarries in DARAM, GADJIA and gravel quarries in Kolara and Kobo. The development of access roads to these quarries would enable the municipality to optimise the revenue it receives from these activities.

**Table 3.8. Integrated strategic plan for modern livestock and agriculture**

<p><b>Production economy</b></p> <p>Supply less than demand. Strategy: produce and control the means of production.</p>	<p><b>Market economy</b></p> <p>Supply exceeds demand. Strategy: segment the market and control the choice and nature of production.</p>	<p><b>Economics of adaptation</b></p> <p>Supply exceeds demand. Omnipresent and multifaceted competition, intrusion of multiple parameters in the strategy</p>
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Source: constructed by the author.

In the first case, it is sufficient to produce in a standardised way. But with a market economy (in the second case), supply being greater than demand, breeders and farmers must absolutely integrate the choice of competitors and consumer expectations into their production decisions (case of national and international consumer preferences for organic products). Entrepreneurial farmers or breeder-entrepreneurs are in the third scenario of the “adaptation economy” and the parameters to be taken into account for production are multiple: technical, regulatory, economic, ecological, technological, political, psychological. This context requires a great sense of anticipation because it is characterised by the



shortening of periods of stability. The farmers of Dziguilao, Moulvoudaye and Touloum need to be trained in this new strategic production and marketing context.

The interview with the mayor of Touloum revealed that *'the Toupouri does not sell his oxen, he keeps them and contemplates them...'*. Yet this wealth is only useful if it allows for better health care, better housing, schooling for children, in short if it allows for an improvement in the living environment and standard of living. Keeping one's livestock beyond a certain size becomes idle wealth, like a refuge value that does not benefit its owner. If the cattle are sold, part of the income can be reinvested in real estate or in diversifying the local economy.

In the absence of industries processing raw materials or agricultural products, handicrafts are the main economic activity of the secondary sector in Moulvoudaye. This sub-sector includes the activity of weavers (who make mats), the pottery activity found in the locality of Horlon. The craft industry also includes the activity of blacksmiths, which is strongly represented in this municipality. The blacksmiths set up in workshops make, among other things, hoes, sickles, machetes, knives, axes, "pousse-pousse" (pushcarts), wheelbarrows, ploughs, etc. There are 35 blacksmiths in the municipality, 25 of whom are in Moulvoudaye centre and 10 in the Goumlaye canton.

The blacksmithing activity is already being modernised with the connection of these localities to the ENEO electricity network<sup>1</sup>. With the help of electricity, blacksmiths can use the welding technique to make ploughs, wheelbarrows and doors. The demand for ploughs and some agricultural tools increases significantly during the ploughing season. The handicraft sub-sector accounts for at least 5% of the working population. Of all the activities identified in this sub-sector, two are mainly important in this locality: blacksmithing and traditional wine making ("bili-bili"). However, it should be noted that this drink can have negative consequences<sup>2</sup> on the health of people who consume it regularly.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The municipalities of the Department of Mayo-Kani in the Far North Region of Cameroon are characterised economically by great potential in the agricultural and livestock sectors. These agricultural production basins are negatively affected by the problem of isolation which, in the context of decentralisation, will henceforth be the driving force behind local administration. The livestock sector, on the other hand, thrives in these municipalities regardless of this isolation. The limited budget of the municipality does not allow the local authority to respond adequately to local development needs in terms of land use planning, maintenance of rural tracks or construction of socio-economic infrastructure. The share of these municipalities' own resources in their budget remains negligible, which justifies the lack of financial autonomy and a great challenge for local budget financing.

The solutions of equalisation of the resources of the central power to reduce the inequalities of the local

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<sup>1</sup> According to the mayor's sources, only one village in the entire municipality of Dziguilao is supplied by the ENEO electricity network. The cost of installing an electricity network to cover this municipality is estimated at 300 million FCFA. However, the installation of electricity is underway, as half of this cost has already been paid by FIECOM. However, while waiting for this lighting project to be implemented, the population of the Dziguilao district is content with paraffin lamps and generators.

<sup>2</sup> The use of millet/sorghum in the brewing of traditional beer has always been a matter of great concern, both to the authorities and to development actors. *"The colonial administration was very early concerned about the harm that millet beer did to the natives, and its judgement of them in terms of [lack of foresight] was based in part on the [waste] of millet for beer brewing that was considered excessive.* (Seignobos and Iyébi-Mandjeck, 2000).



communities do not always work well, because they are drowned out by political lobbying and the influence of a certain technocratic elite of civil servants, which favours each one's locality to the detriment of the municipalities poor in own resources. The law favours the urban communities, which are already more developed, in terms of equalisation resources.

Another solution could be local currency financing fed by resources from the collection of local savings. The collection is done through financial institutions and banks on the one hand, and local capital markets on the other. In developed countries, public-private partnerships are increasingly encouraged for the financing of local development.

To be more productive, the agricultural sector needs to be modernised, notably through the introduction of mechanisation, the use of natural fertilisers and the training of agricultural actors. This sector offers new challenges in terms of the acquisition of agricultural tractors, the costs of which will not be affordable for poor farmers. Another challenge is the manufacture and marketing of natural fertilisers to improve agricultural yields while preserving the environment and to promote organic farming. These areas of investment are characterised by the fact that they are part of the strategic framework of future changes in the country's second generation agricultural sector and of sustainable development, the challenges of which are not yet perceived by the current players at local level. These opportunities for the development of the rural world, which do not yet attract private promoters, must be anticipated by the local authorities with a view to increasing the municipality's local resources. However, this local authority does not have the necessary funding to subsidise these local actors.

The undoubtedly large potential of the local livestock industry is not enough for the development of the municipality. In the absence of banking structures, some farmers keep their wealth or savings in the form of animals, a kind of idle capital, running the risk of cattle theft or other epidemics. This wealth must be channelled into financing development through the promotion of micro-finance structures. The processing of agricultural products has not yet been explored by economic actors. It is a paradox that milk is produced in abundance in the municipality, but yoghurt, which is a product derived from this livestock, is not yet produced locally, even though milk, which is the main raw material for this production, abounds here. The municipal executive does not draw sufficient resources from taxes to invest in local development.

The development of the urban environment in Moulvoudaye further increases the value of real estate investments, especially in the area of modern buildings. The town hall has an important role in the development of the urban space and the enhancement of the housing estates. Because it is very hot in this geographical area, the traditional "sarés" housing methods still have their place in the promotion of the local traditional habitat. However, executives and civil servants working in this district as well as potential investors have an income that allows them to request modern housing at their convenience with water, electricity and modern showers, the supply of which is still very scarce in this city. In addition, in order to attract micro-finance structures to the locality, buildings must be constructed that guarantee both their security and working comfort.

Without being exhaustive<sup>1</sup>, this paper concludes that local development in the municipalities of the Department of Mayo-Kani in particular, and in Cameroon in general, is inhibited by a certain number

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<sup>1</sup> On this last point, the GOLD II report (2010) already stressed that fiscal decentralisation is hampered by a lack of knowledge of the cost of transferred competences. Solving this problem is even more difficult when the sharing of competences is unclear.



of factors such as: the lack of own resources in each municipality, the lack of interest for banks or micro-finance institutions to set up in rural municipalities, the low attractiveness of the territory for investments, local governance, the lack of qualified or ambitious personnel in the local executive to carry out development projects, etc. In the end, this paper presents local authorities' control of their own resources as a prerequisite for the development of their locality.

In terms of economic policy recommendations, a system of equalisation of central government resources based on the criterion of poverty, which could allow a transfer of resources from relatively richer to relatively poorer municipalities, would be beneficial for the development of municipalities that have no resources.

The local executive must have a better visibility of the mapping of all the socio-economic resources (public and private) available in its municipality through a report on the study of the local economy in order to better collect tax revenues on local activity. He or she must target the unexploited or poorly exploited resources and have a plan for regulating this activity in the short and medium term that can boost local development and improve the well-being of the population. For the population, the election of a team to lead each communal executive should be based on its capacity to mobilise resources both internal and external to the municipality to finance local development.

A new local tax code and good training for the local executive and tax collectors will help to better mobilise the municipality's own resources.

In order to open up our municipalities and in view of the limited budget of our municipalities, public-private partnerships must be envisaged for the construction of infrastructures in municipalities where the private sector is fairly well developed.

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