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Cultivating Rice in Import Dependent Cameroon:
A Case Study of the Successes and Challenges Facing Rice Farmers in Santchou, Cameroon

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Abstract

Cameroon is qualified as an import dependent country, meaning it relies on imported food to feed its population. Specifically, Cameroon imports over 80% of its rice consumption, spending 145 billion French CFA on rice imports yearly. But, Cameroon has sufficient untapped arable land and a large enough agriculturally centered population to produce adequate rice quantities to meet demand without relying on imports. This paper examines the challenges facing rice farmers in Cameroon in the context of import dependence and why local farmers cannot currently produce enough rice to meet local demand, focusing on the experience of the rice farming community in Santchou. I found that the main challenges inhibiting sufficient rice production facing rice farmers are: poor infrastructure, rudimentary equipment, birds, and a lack of financing. Furthermore, this paper explores what initiatives are already practiced that support Cameroonian rice production. I explain how UGERILCOPAM, the Santchou rice farmers union, allows for the cultivation and sale of Santchou rice, in addition to discussing its relationship with civil society and government actors. Finally, makes proposals for the future, acknowledging the government must take action both to support local rice production and end corruption, which currently drains financing opportunities.

Résumé

Le Cameroun est considéré comme un pays dépendant des importations, ce qui signifie qu'il importe des aliments pour nourrir sa population. Le Cameroun importe plus de 80% de ses besoins en riz d'une valeur de 145 milliards de FCFA par an, alors que le Cameroun dispose de terres arables inexploitées suffisantes et une assez grande population agricole capable de produire des quantités de riz suffisantes pour répondre à la demande sans compter sur les importations. Ce document examine les défis auxquels sont confrontés les producteurs de riz au Cameroun dans le cadre de la dépendance des importations et pourquoi les agriculteurs locaux ne peuvent pas produire assez de riz actuellement pour répondre à la demande locale, en mettant l'accent sur l'expérience d'une communauté qui cultive le riz à Santchou. J'ai trouvée que les principaux défis inhibant la production de riz en quantité sont: l'insuffisance des infrastructures, des équipements rudimentaires, des oiseaux, et un manque de financement. En outre, cette rédaction explore les initiatives qui sont déjà pratiquées afin de promouvoir la production du riz camerounais. J'explique comment UGERILCOPAM, l'union des riziculteurs de Santchou riziculteurs, travaille pour la culture et la vente de leur riz, mais aussi de sa relation avec la société civile et les acteurs du gouvernement. Enfin, le présent document fait des propositions pour l'avenir, en reconnaissant que le gouvernement doit prendre des mesures à la fois pour soutenir la production locale de riz et mettre fin à la corruption, qui bloque actuellement les possibilités de financement.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Methodology.....	7
Context in Cameroon.....	10
Introduction to Santchou and SODERIM.....	14
Analysis of Research Question One: Challenges Facing Santchou Rice Farmers	15
Analysis of Research Questions Two: Overcoming Challenges.....	22
Suggestions for Supporting Local Rice Production.....	24
Conclusion.....	30
Bibliography.....	33
Appendices.....	35

I. Introduction

I.1 Import Dependence and Rice in Cameroon

Like many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Cameroon—a country in the central west part of the continent—is dependent on food imports to feed its population, despite a huge potential to produce its own food. Cameroon is considered to be import dependent, and is losing its food security and food sovereignty, defined below. The degree of reliance on trade in Cameroon has a multitude of negative consequences. Specifically, these include fostering a dependence on highly volatile and monopolized world markets, an absence of a long-term national food security strategy, and harm to domestic agricultural production. In essence, such significant food imports have impacts on agricultural production and farmers, who cannot compete with highly subsidized or inexpensively produced imported foods.¹ Yet, despite its current reliance on trade, Cameroon has the potential land and labor forces to greatly increase its food production, and ultimately eliminate import dependency altogether. In Cameroon, more than 70% of the population grows crops, either cash crops for sale or staple foods to feed local families. More than 40% of the country's GDP comes from agricultural production, despite the reality that current production represents only a small fraction of what is possible.² The country has over 240,000 hectares of cultivable land, but barely 25,000 hectares are currently exploited for agricultural production.³ All of these facts attest to the potential for agricultural production and development in Cameroon.

This paper will examine Cameroon's import dependency on rice and, specifically, the challenges rice importation creates for Cameroonian rice farmers. While this paper reviews

¹ Uwe Hoering. "FDLC Policy Paper: Alternatives to Food Import Dependency," *Centre for Research and Documentation Chile-Latin America* (May 2013): 5.

² Dorothy Malaa Kenyi (Coordinator for the Rice Project at IRAD) in interview with the author. April 7, 2014.

³ Godwill Nkwain. "Huge Potential Beckons Investors" *Business in Cameroon* 10 (November 2013): 9.

important statistics on rice importation in Cameroon, it focuses on the plight of Cameroonian rice farmers who are trying to produce and be competitive in the current import-saturated rice market. I chose rice as the focus of my study because it is a staple food that qualifies as a strategic good in Cameroon; this means that the import levels are incredibly high, forcing the country to lose huge sums of money due to reliance on foreign rather than domestic rice production.⁴ A study done by ACDIC concluded that 3 out of 4 Cameroonian families eat rice at least 4 times a week, close to 80% of which is imported rice. Cameroon imports approximately 650,000 tons imported into the country each year, while only 135,000 tons of rice is locally produced.⁵ The country already spends approximately 145 billion French CFA importing rice, annually, and domestic demand is continuing to escalate, driving this money spent higher and higher.⁶ This is vitally important because Cameroon is endowed with the potential to entirely meet its rice needs through local production. It has the proper climactic requirements for rice production, huge untapped resources of arable land, and a population capable of significant further agricultural development.⁷ By ramping up local rice production, Cameroon could experience a tremendous impact in the reduction of import dependency and the hemorrhagic money losses intrinsic to it.

I.2 Research Questions and Hypothesis

This research project investigates the struggles that rice farmers face in Cameroon in the context of import dependence. While knowing that Cameroon has the potential land and labor to meet its rice needs, this study addresses the issue of why Cameroonian rice farmers cannot

⁴ Tobie Ondoua Manga (Coordinator of the Project for the Development of Pluvial Rice Agricultural in Biomodal Rainfall Zones, a MINADER project) in interview with the author. April 10, 2014.

⁵ "Food Sovereignty Campaign: Let's Help Them Feed Us" *Citizens Association for the Defense of Collective Interests* (2006): 7.

⁶ Godwill Nkwain. "Rice: Solving Demand/Supply Inequality." *Business in Cameroon* 10 (November 2013): 6.

⁷ Nkwain, "Huge Potential Beckons Investors," 9.

currently meet local demand, and asks what must change in order to support food security. This topic is subdivided into two main research questions that examine the experiences of rice farmers in Santchou, a farming village in the West region of Cameroon, where this study was conducted. The first research question asks what the primary challenges are for rice farmers in Santchou concerning the production of their harvest. I hypothesize that rice farmers struggle to produce rice in large quantities due to lack of access to modern technology, and that they have difficulty selling their rice not only because of a lack of sound infrastructure to transport their goods, but because they have to compete in a market against less expensive, imported rice. The second research question asks how rice farmers in Santchou cope with the struggles in their production. I hypothesize that rice farmers increasingly support each other through the use of community-based unions, although struggles for finance still exist. The paper will conclude by making suggestions for government and civil societies to support rice farmers in Cameroon, based on conversations held with agriculturists in Santchou.

I.3 Definition of Key Terms and Abbreviations

- **SODERIM** (Société de Développement de la Riziculture dans la Plaine des Mbos). The government funded rice research and development facility located in Santchou, operating between 1978 and 1988.
- **UGERILCOPAM** (l'Union des Groupes d'Initiatives Communes d'Exploitants Rizicoles pour la Lutte Contre la Pauvreté en Milieu Rural de la Menoua). The farmers' union in Santchou supporting rice production.
- **MINADER** (Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural). Cameroon's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- **IRAD** (Institut de Recherche Agricole pour le Développement) The Cameroonian research institute for agricultural development.
- **ACDIC** (L'Association Citoyenne de Défense des Intérêts Collectifs). Cameroonian civil society organization that works to support agricultural development among other goals
- **CIG** (Common Initiative Group) A group of at least five people that form a group to support

each others endeavors. In the agricultural context, this often entails sharing purchases, mutual support in the harvesting stages, and combined sales.⁸

- **Import Dependence** The phenomenon when a country is unable to feed its population with domestic production of food and thus relies on imported products.

- **Food Security** The state of having access to sufficient amounts of nutritious and affordable food for a population

- **Food Sovereignty** The state of a population having the ability do decide what they eat

- **Inputs** Item required in the pre-harvest steps of farming, like seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, and water

- **Paddy Rice** Rice when it is still in the husk, before post-harvest transformation to edible form

II. Methodology

II.1 Selection and Research Processes

This paper investigates the above research questions by interviewing rice farmers in Santchou, a village in the west of Cameroon. I chose Santchou as the site for this project for two main reasons. First, Santchou used to be the home of SODERIM, a government-owned rice production factory opened in 1978 and closed in 1988. Thus, many farmers in Santchou have experience both working for a large factory that received large amounts of support from the government, and working independently with much less support. These two varied contexts provide insight into understanding if government initiatives ease challenges in rice-producing communities, as well as giving farmers a context to understand how their current challenges compare to those of the past. The history of SODERIM is discussed at length below. The second reason this project focuses on rice production in Santchou is due to the creation of the Union des Groupes D'Initiative Commune des Exploitants Rizicoles pour la Lutte Contre la Pauvreté en Milieu Rural de la Menoua (UGERILCOPAM), a rice farmer's union, after the closure of

⁸ Edouard Nomboussi (Rice Farmer) in interview with the author. April 21, 2014.

SODERIM. UGERILCOPAM is a cooperative of agriculturists that work together to overcome challenges of rice production in Cameroon, acting specifically to overcome problems facing local communities. Moreover, UGERILCOPAM works with civil society actors in Cameroon, including IRAD, which helps provide quality inputs to the rice farmers of Santchou. This is important to the study because it helps analyze what Cameroonian actors are already doing to support rice production and to alleviate import dependence.

The target population was simply rice farmers in Santchou. The sample selection was ten rice farmers in Santchou. The choice of working with rice farmers is justified by the nature of the research questions, and my accessibility to farmers in Santchou through a rapport with the delegate of UGERILCOPAM. Interviews were largely conducted in homes of farmers in Santchou, in boutiques in the town, or at the office of UGERILCOPAM. In addition, by spending time in an agriculturally focused town, I was able to observe some of the struggles facing farmers there, as well as engage in numerous casual conversations with people in the town in an effort to understand the population. This allowed me to witness, first-hand, some of the challenges facing farmers in Santchou in their daily lives, like the poor quality of roads and the tediousness of hand-held tools for farming. This also included observation of the closed and abandoned SODERIM factory as well as the UGERILCOPAM factory for comparison, discussed below. In Yaoundé, I spoke with representatives of the World Bank, Cameroon's Ministry of Agriculture, IRAD, professors, and leaders of civil society, like ACDIC, that work with domestic agricultural production.

When conducting interviews with the sample population, establishing rapport before the interview commenced was essential so that interviewees felt comfortable talking openly about their experiences. This process was accomplished largely by spending casual time with farmers

in an effort to better understand their lives. Once a sense of mutual trust was fostered, interviews were conducted. As interviews continued, I was able to ask more in-depth questions to gain a greater level of understanding of problems. Additionally, I was in close contact with the delegate of UGERILCOPAM, Mr. Ekanga, who frequently answered questions, clarified topics, and explained the functions of the union.

Following interviews, the data analysis process commenced. This process largely consisted of reviewing interview transcriptions to identify reemerging themes and more clearly understand the challenges and experiences of the sample group. Following, I cross-referenced the interview results with the interviews conducted with related actors in Yaoundé to confirm and further analyze the research results, thereby drawing conclusions from an emerging in-depth understanding of the experiences of Cameroonian rice farmers. I returned to the civil society actors in Yaoundé for follow-up interviews to answer questions if necessary. In addition, I cross-referenced and confirmed my results further through studying secondary sources, scholastic research, and news articles, helping me to ensure reliability. All of these steps, allowed me to comprehend the rice production circumstances.

II.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns for this research project are relatively limited. The largest consideration was related to the sample size, respective privacy and anonymity. All people involved in the interview process understand the purpose of the research. For the purpose of ensuring anonymity, I will only use first names of farmers interviewed. Since the community in Santcou has a relationship with the Cameroonian government, as well as with several civil society organizations, consideration needed to be taken to respect and support those relationships. In addition, Santchou had developed a decade of reliance on major government support from the

SODERIM factory, which was abruptly closed down, as described above. Thus I took care to convey an attitude of genuine support and a purpose of learning, so as to respect the reality of the farmers' previous experiences. It was important that they have no worry that their trust in my good intentions might be betrayed. Sensitivity to this historical context has been an implicit ethical value for me.

II.3 Strengths and Limitations

The strengths and limitations of this study are varied. The primary limitation was the restricted amount of time, which both reduced the opportunity to have a larger sample group, and also the chance to return to respondents for follow-up interviews. The strengths included the study site itself, namely, the historical context of Santchou, where the farmers had experienced the support of SODERIM, its closure, and the subsequent development of a cooperative farmers' union. This infused the farmers' interviews with considerable perspective, thereby mitigating the potential for a myopic view of their situation. This proved a tremendous strength that would have been difficult to find elsewhere.

III. Context in Cameroon

III.1 History of Rice and Food Sovereignty

Cameroon is qualified as an import-dependent country, relying on other nations for food products to provide sustenance. While the importation of food products is not harmful in and of itself, when a country depends on outside forces to provide large quantities of basic foods that are fundamental to the people's diet, a country loses its food security and sovereignty. Thus, it is at the whims and control of other countries and the international market.⁹

Cameroon started to lose its food sovereignty in the 1990s. The devaluation of CFA franc

⁹ Hoering, "FDLC Policy Paper," 4.

in 1994, as well as the adoption of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund’s Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), rendered extensive agricultural support financial difficult, as subsidies were removed and many agricultural development programs—including SODERIM, a large factory in Santchou—collapsed.¹⁰ Rice imports into Cameroon expanded greatly in 2001 after world rice prices sharply decreased and huge improvements in rice production strategies started to flood the international market with surpluses of rice.¹¹ International rice production became less expensive and imports into Cameroon steadily rose. Compared to traditional staple foods, imported rice was significantly less expensive, and eventually eating habits of Cameroonians changed to reflect the prevalence of imported rice, while consumption of traditional foods declined.¹² This also engendered a “neglect of domestic food production” as local farmers struggles to ... “compete with subsidized imports.”¹³ Eventually, the country’s rice imports rose from around 143,000 tons in 2000 to over 507,000 tons in 2011, to nearly 650,000 tons today. The changes in the national rice market encouraged this change, and statistics reflect the transformation. In 1975, Cameroon met almost 80% of its own rice needs. Yet today, Cameroon imports over 80% of its rice needs, and the rate of consumption of rice has been increasing since the 1990s.¹⁴

Additionally, it is important to note that that a large Chinese rice cultivation and production factory, name IKO, signed a 99-year lease in 2006 for 10,000 hectares of land in Cameroon, 2,000 hectares of which is located near Nanga-Eboko for the purpose of rice

¹⁰ Piebiep Goufo. “Rice Production in Cameroon.” *Research Journal of Agriculture and Biological Sciences*, 4.6 (2008): 748.

¹¹ Adam Sneyd. “Cameroon: Let them Eat Local Rice,” *Africa Portal*, 7 March 2012. <<http://www.africaportal.org/articles/2012/08/27/cameroon-let-them-eat-local-rice>> (accessed 29 April 2014).

¹² Lauren Sneyd. “Wild Food, Prices, Diets and Development: Sustainability and Food Security in Urban Cameroon” *Sustainability* (2013): 4789.

¹³ Hoering, “FDLC Policy Paper,” 5.

¹⁴ Godwill Nkwain. “Rice: Solving Demand/Supply Inequality,” 6.

farming.¹⁵ The large company produces rice on Cameroon's land, and ships it back to China, not selling the products to Cameroonians. Thus, this further harms Cameroon's food security, harnessing its own agricultural potential to feed other countries when it already lacks its own security. Furthermore, this use of land takes arable land that could be produced by Cameroonians away from local farmers, thus harming the livelihood of local rice farmers.

III.2 Changing Food Habits and Consequences

The dietary habits of Cameroonians, especially the urban poor whose budget limits their ability to choose what they eat, reflect the changes in the world market. Cameroonians, especially the urban poor, eat imported rice because it is inexpensive and easy to prepare. This situation is a result of food insecurity in Cameroon, as the country must rely on inexpensive imported foods like rice to feed its population. Emmanuel Sene, Senior Rural Development Specialist at the World Bank's Cameroon office, explains that extensive rice consumption, as a result of the loss of food security in Cameroon, results in malnutrition due to its low nutritive qualities of imported foods like rice.¹⁶

Among civil society actors that study rice consumption in Cameroon, there is an understanding that the poorer a family is, the more rice they eat.¹⁷ The financially struggling population is forced to eat large quantities of rice because it is all they can afford; yet imported rice lacks equivalent nutritional values compared with many traditional Cameroonian foods. The frequently consumed rice does little but stave off hunger temporarily while providing little nutritional value. Imported rice lacks the husk and bran, thus it is low in nutritive values like

¹⁵ "Land grabbing and food sovereignty in West and Central Africa," *GRAIN*. (September 2012). <<http://www.grain.org/es/article/entries/4575-land-grabbing-and-food-sovereignty-in-west-and-central-africa>>

¹⁶ Emmanuel Sene (Senior Rural Development Specialist at the World Bank's Cameroon office) in interview with the author. April 8, 2014.

¹⁷ Lauren Sneyd. "Wild Food, Prices, Diets and Development: Sustainability and Food Security in Urban Cameroon" *Sustainability* (2013): 4789.

fiber and vitamins.¹⁸ On the other hand, the rice produced in Cameroon is whole grain rice, which contains the vitamins and fiber that imported rice lacks. This nutritional significance becomes leveraged when rice is a dietary staple rather than a side dish.

By investing in the production of local rice production, Cameroon could work to end import dependence and generate economic growth. This would greatly improve the quality of life for Cameroonian farmers and the urban poor and save the nation billions of dollars. By importing what the country already produces and has the ability to augment, the government is perpetuating the absence of food sovereignty instead of capitalizing on the immense potential already natural to the country.

III.3 Current Government Programs

The Cameroonian government already initiated and oversees several programs to assist in augmenting rice research and production in the country. The two largest government funded projects are the *Société d'Expansion et de Modernisation de la Riziculture de Yagoua* (SEMRY), created in 1954 in the Far-North province, and the *Upper Noun Valley Development Authority* (UNVDA), created in 1974 in the North-West Province.¹⁹ Both operate as rice research and development institutes to support the country's rice production by providing inputs, access to processing machinery, and a market for farmers. While these efforts are important, as SEMRY produced 85% of total rice production in Cameroon, there are widespread complaints that both institutions are not properly organized, and are in great need of technology updates, as they currently use outdated machinery.²⁰ But, according to Emmanuel Sene, the World Bank is currently supporting government efforts to rehabilitate these two institutions in the coming

¹⁸ Lauren Sneyd. "Wild Food, Prices, Diets and Development: Sustainability and Food Security in Urban Cameroon" *Sustainability* (2013): 4789.

¹⁹ Piebipe Goufam. "Evaluating the Constraints and Opportunities for Sustainable Rice Production in Cameroon." *Research Journal of Agriculture and Biological Sciences*, 4.6 (2008): 737.

²⁰ Piebiep Goufo. "Rice Production in Cameroon," 748.

years.²¹

In addition to SEMRY and UNVDA, a third rice agency, SODERIM, was created in 1978, but the project was terminated ten years later. This paper will talk extensively about SODERIM below. In addition to SEMRY and UNVDA, the government runs several other programs to encourage rice production in Cameroon, often in conjunction with civil society organizations like the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IRAD), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the African Development Bank, and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Notably, IRAD conducts research to develop new species of rice that provide high and large quality returns and are more resistant to threats, in addition to working with agricultural communities like Santchou to provide superior varieties of inputs, namely seeds.²²

IV. Introduction to Santchou and SODERIM

Santchou, a town in the west region of Cameroon, has a population of approximately 25,000 people, many of whom are farmers.²³ Santchou, as stated above, used to be the home of government-supported SODERIM. SODERIM, opened in 1978, was a rice research and processes factory that provided valuable inputs to farmers to increase the quality and quantity of their harvest. Additionally, it provided manufacturing machines for farmers. Farmers were able to bring their rice, in paddy form, for processing and sale. This relieved farmers of the responsibility of transformation of rice to the edible form, packaging, transportation to markets,

²¹ Emmanuel Sene (Senior Rural Development Specialist at the World Bank's Cameroon office) in interview with the author. April 8, 2014.

²² Dorothy Malaa Kenyi (Coordinator for the Rice Project at IRAD) in interview with the author. April 7, 2014

²³ "Divisions administratives du Cameroun," *Centre Technique de la Forêt Communale Cameroun.* <<http://www.foretcommunalecameroun.org/divisionAdministrative.asp?p=2&d=3&c=249>> (Accessed 29 April 2014).

and sale. SODERIM had a capital of 1550,000,000 Fcfa and managed 1500 producers, attracting both immigration to Santchou and economic activity for the town.²⁴ Due to insufficient funding SODERIM closed its doors in 1988, leaving the farmers of Santchou without access to inputs for their production, without machinery for the transformation from paddy form, and without the equipment to package and process for sale. According to Mr. Ekanga, the delegate of UGERILCOPAM, without access to the machinery of SODERIM, rice production in Santchou stopped completely, and only recommencing after the creation of the UGERILCOPAM in 2009.²⁵ The Union then registered with the government and received funding to purchase the necessary machinery to process and transform rice for sale.

V. Analysis of Research Question One: Challenges Facing Santchou Rice Farmers

Rice farmers in Cameroon face a multitude of challenges in cultivation, preparation, and sale of their products. For farmers in Santchou, many of these challenges were multiplied after the closure of SODERIM. This section will discuss problems for rice producers in Cameroon in general, and how they specifically apply to the experience of the community in Santchou.

V.1 Inputs, Equipment, and Credit:

The first challenge inhibiting rice production in Cameroon is the lack of access to quality inputs, meaning the tangible products farmers need to produce their goods. This problem specifically applies to independent farmers without access to government programs like SEMRY and UNDVA. Without access to such assistance, they are unable to invest in things like high quality fertilizer and seeds, and are thus forced to rely on the limited and poor quality materials

²⁴ ACDIC. "Food Sovereignty Campaign: Let's Help Them Feed Us," 7.

²⁵ Ekanga. (Rice Farmer and Delegate of UGERILCOPAM) in interview with the author. April 22, 2014.

that do not produce rice at as large of a quantity, or cannot grow rice at all.²⁶ This problem is exacerbated by the lack of access to credit in rural locations, as well as the inability for many farmers to meet interest rates and other collateral requirement for receiving credit.²⁷ This, in the words of Emmanuel Sene, “ it is a very vicious cycle” because farmers do not have money to invest in higher quality inputs and equipment, but cannot create sufficient revenue to access credit without having higher quality inputs to produce in larger quantities.

The problem of limited access extends not just to inputs, but also to the tools used in farming at the harvesting level. Approximately 86% of all agriculturists in Cameroon rely on the use of handheld hoes, axes, machetes, and cutlasses in the field.²⁸ This problem was immediately apparent in Santchou. In the conversations held in Santchou, all interviewees reported that they used rudimentary, hand-operated tools in the field, unless they were using the machines of their farming union, discussed in detail below. Rice farmers of Santchou use hoes, machetes, cutlasses, and other rudimentary materials to work the field. According to Fidele, a rice farmer, all work in the field is done manually; the work is tedious and slow, and the returns are minimum.²⁹ This was also observed in the township of Santchou and along the road to the rice fields, just outside the village center. Nearly every person observed walking to the crop fields in the morning had a hoe slung over their shoulder or a machete in their hand, while pushing a small metal cart used to bring their crops home at the end of the day. When farmers harvest manually it is very wearying, difficult and time consuming. The use of these handheld tools is not only extremely labor-intensive, but does not effectively cultivate products quickly or

²⁶ Emmanuel Sene (Senior Rural Development Specialist at the World Bank’s Cameroon office) in interview with the author. April 8, 2014.

²⁷ ACIDC. “Food Sovereignty Campaign: Let’s Help Them Feed Us,” 10

²⁸ Piebipe Goufam. “Evaluating the Constraints and Opportunities for Sustainable Rice Production in Cameroon,” 738

²⁹ Fidele Assonkooh (Rice Farmer) in interview with the author. April 18, 2014.

efficiently, thereby resulting in a loss of potential production from incredibly fertile land.

A similar problem of lack of access to high quality inputs and harvesting equipment applies to the machinery needed for the post-harvesting stages as well; a lack of access to modern equipment obstructs each step of rice cultivation. The ability to process what little rice is produced into a sellable and packaged form is largely constrained by “inadequate and inappropriate equipment” used in rice transformation.³⁰ This includes both handheld tools, like hoes and machetes, on the field, and in the post-harvesting transformation of rice from the paddy form to being packaged for sale, such as machines for threshing, hulling, parboiling, winnowing, milling, de-stoning, and drying facilities. Without access to such tools, farmers must rely on rudimentary tools, or small equipment owned by farmers’ unions for preparing their rice. Dorothy Malaa of IRAD suggests that without mechanization there is not enough production or the quality of the product is too low, but if these stages are mechanized rice production in Cameroon will increase.³¹ Even those farmers that come together to form CIGs, unions, and cooperatives, that support each other to help finance things like equipment, do not have sufficient funds to support production to its potential.

The experience of individual rice farmers in Santchou confirms that these struggles exist in their context. After SODERIM closed, but prior to the creation of UGERILCOPAM, rice production in Santchou came to a halt because farmers did not have access to the goods or machinery needed to produce rice.³² After the creation of the UGERILCOPAM, rice farmers started to receive support—both machinery and inputs—both from the government through IRAD, as well as from civil society organizations, which is discussed under Research Question

³⁰ Piebipe Goufam. “Evaluating the Constraints and Opportunities for Sustainable Rice Production in Cameroon,” 739

³¹ Dorothy Malaa Kenyi (Coordinator for the Rice Project at IRAD) in interview with the author. April 7, 2014

³² Ekanga. (Rice Farmer and Delegate of UGERILCOPAM) in interview with the author. April 22, 2014.

2. Before these relationships commenced, it was virtually impossible to produce rice in the town, as was experienced between the years of 1988 when SODERIM closed, and 2010, when UGERILCOPAM received funding for the first time.³³

Now, although UGERILCOPAM owns both a tractor and small machinery to transform the rice harvests of its members, the equipment is largely inadequate for producing high quantity or high quality rice.³⁴ The machine used for the transformation of rice from the paddy form to the edible form is small, tucked in a corner in the factory of UGERILCOPAM. It requires at least three people to operate it, and the process is slow and tedious. Moreover, UGERILCOPAM does not have the funds to adequately pay the machinists that operate the equipment. Instead, farmers who are members of the union, work without salary to help support the rice production in Cameroon. When asked why he worked without salary, Fidele a farmer that volunteers for the UGERILCOPAM factory, told me that it is a sacrifice because that union does not have enough money, but he volunteers because he wants to encourage the production of rice in Santchou.³⁵ That being said, this necessary volunteerism adds to the necessary workload of farmers in Santchou in order to get their rice to market.

V.2 Roads and Transportation

For rural farming communities all throughout Cameroon, weak institutional development represents a challenge with consequences that extend beyond poorly developed roads. In smaller towns away from larger urban centers, road networks are quite weak—meaning people have to navigate primarily uneven dirt and mud roads—if roads exist at all, inhibiting the ability of

³³ Ekanga. (Rice Farmer and Delegate of UGERILCOPAM) in interview with the author. April 22, 2014.

³⁴ Ekanga. (Rice Farmer and Delegate of UGERILCOPAM) in interview with the author. April 17, 2014.

³⁵ « C'est une sacrifice parce que il n'y a pas de salaire. L'union n'a pas assez d'argent pour payer les emplois...Je travaille pour l'union parce que je voudrais... encourager le culture du riz. »

farmers to get their goods to market.³⁶

In Santchou particularly, this presents a large problem for the rice farming community. There is one primary, paved road that goes through the center of Santchou, but all roads leading to homes and fields are dirt. Additionally, the road that leads to the small UGERILCOPAM-operated factory for transformation at the post-harvesting stage is difficult to maneuver. Most paths are very uneven with large potholes. When it rains in Santchou, these roads become incredibly difficult to navigate as the mud and large puddles can grow large enough to be impossible to cross by foot, let alone while transporting materials or crops. Thus, when farmers need to carry their harvested goods from their fields to the UGERILCOPAM factory for processing and packaging, or from the UGERILCOPAM factory to the markets in other cities where the rice is sold, they often confront long stretches of road that are insurmountable.

Lack of reliable road networks also results in indirect problems for the development of Santchou as a whole. Poor roads limit the effective market size, and also limit a community's access to health services, education services, and other institutions that could contribute to the growth of Santchou.³⁷ The capacity for transportation is related to the entire development effort and well being of a community in general.³⁸

In addition to weak infrastructural networks, farmers in Santchou would not have the ability to effectively travel the roads, even if they were more reliable, because they lack modern means of transportation. Agnes, a rice farmer in Santchou, explained that agriculturists do not have the access or ability to purchase motorized means for transportation, like motorcycles or

³⁶ Nkwain, "Huge Potential Beckons Investors," 9.

³⁷ Savitri Mohapatra. "Cameroon: Central Africa's Potential Rice Granary." *International Rice Research Institute* (October-December 2013).

<<http://irri.org/rice-today/cameroon-central-africa-s-potential-rice-granary>> (Accessed 29 April 2014).

³⁸ Piebipe Goufam. "Evaluating the Constraints and Opportunities for Sustainable Rice Production in Cameroon," 740

cars. Thus, they rely on small metal carts to transport their harvested goods from the fields to either their homes or to the factory for processing and sale.³⁹ I witnessed this as well when in Santchou. In the early mornings, walking to the field for the day, countless people along the road wheeled out empty metal carts by hand, and at the end of the day pushed them back when they were full of various goods. These carts are small and unstable. They require manual labor to maneuver, and are not well equipped to handle uneven and muddy roads that are all too frequently found in Santchou.

It is not just individual farmers that struggle to transport goods around Santchou and to the market. Despite receiving past funding and establishing rapports with civil society actors in Cameroon, UGERILCOPAM lacks the financial ability to invest in more advanced technology, or other products to help augment their production. This includes a car. Both the delegate of the union and a farmer that volunteers in the post-harvest operations reported that a major challenge for the Union is the absences of a truck to transport the rice to the market for sale in nearby cities and towns. The union currently relies on motorcycles, which allow only small amounts of rice to be transported at a time.⁴⁰ In fact, the delegate told me this was the biggest challenge experienced by the Union in the commercialization process.⁴¹

V.3 Birds

Rice farmers in Santchou are required to arrive in their fields early in the morning not just to have time in the day to complete the tedious, manual labor, but also to chase birds from eating their rice, one of the biggest challenges inhibiting rice production in the town. Every rice farmer in Santchou interviewed discussed the problem of birds eating their rice as one of, if not the largest, threat posed against their production. And for Santchou rice farmers, they must rely on

³⁹ Agnes Nkan (Rice Farmer) in interview with the author. April 18, 2014.

⁴⁰ Fidele Assonkooh (Rice Farmer) in interview with the author. April 18, 2014.

⁴¹ Ekanga. (Rice Farmer and Delegate of UGERILCOPAM) in interview with the author. April 22, 2014.

manual means to guard their rice from birds. For example, Agnes, a rice farmer in Santchou, explained that it was necessary to go to her rice fields as early as five in the morning and stay there until the sun sets to watch for birds and chase them away.⁴² Several other farmers explained how they chase the birds away when they come near the fields, all relying on either their voices to make loud enough noises to scare the birds away, primarily by shouting with their voices.⁴³ Additionally, Jean-Marc, another rice farmer, demonstrated that he put rocks in empty plastic bottles and shook them to make noise to chase the birds.⁴⁴

When asked if other, more effective, methods exist for chasing birds, all but three rice farmers reported that they were unaware of other methods or materials, and believed that the only way to guard birds was manually. Even if other methods did exist, they were unaware of them or unable to locate them. The three who were aware of another method had experience working with SODERIM, who employed the use of a material called Tonfore to stave off birds. Tonfore is a manually operated tool that creates loud noises to scare birds away.⁴⁵ Although this material was used several years ago when SODERIM was active in Santchou, farmers now have no access to it, and are left to chase birds away physically to protect their crops.

V.4 Small Harvest Size

All of these challenges contribute to the principal challenge facing farmers in Santchou: small quantity of harvest. All aforementioned challenges—lack of high quality inputs and equipment, weak infrastructure, and ineffective methods to reduce product loss due to bird—contribute to the inadequate amount of rice harvested and produced in Santchou. The final challenge contributing to the small harvest size is Santchou rice farmers' dependence on rainfall.

⁴² Agnes Nkan (Rice Farmer) in interview with the author. April 18, 2014.

⁴³ Pouline Kenfoux (Rice Farmer) in interview with the author. April 20, 2014.

⁴⁴ Jean-Marc Nkoum (Rice Farmer) in interview with the author. April 21, 2014.

⁴⁵ Ekanga. (Rice Farmer and Delegate of UGERILCOPAM) in interview with the author. April 22, 2014.

In the words of Fidele, *if does not rain, all is lost*. Farmers do not have access to irrigations system or motorized pumps to bring water to their rice fields, so their production is entirely dependent on climate. Without a larger production amount, especially if there is no sufficient rain which dictates their harvest, farmers do not have the available funds to invest in new equipment or technologies to not only support their agricultural production, but also their livelihood.

The hypothesis of this research question postulated that sale in market places would be a challenge for rice farmers in Santchou because they have to compete with the inexpensive prices of imported rice. In reality, UGERILCOPAM sells rice at the same price as imported rice.⁴⁶ Additionally, there are no difficulties in selling Santchou rice. Rather, there is simply not enough rice to sell to create sufficient revenue for farmers.

VI. Analysis of Research Question Two: Overcoming Challenges of Rice Production

VI.1 UGERILCOPAM and CIGs

Despite the myriad challenges facing rice farmers in Santchou, the community came together following the closure of SODERIM to collectively promote and support each other in the production of rice. In 2009, nine CIGs, 138 people total, came together to form a rice farmer's union, or cooperative, in Santchou, UGERILCOPAM.⁴⁷ In 2010, the union registered with the government and submitted an application for government funding through MINADER, subsequently receiving government funding in 2010, 2011, and 2012. Subsidies were not received in 2013, and UGERILCOPAM is still waiting for the current calendar year. The state funding was used for the purchase of the machinery for the processing and packaging of rice, as

⁴⁶ Ekanga. (Rice Farmer and Delegate of UGERILCOPAM) in interview with the author. April 16, 2014.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

well as a tractor shared and used by all members of the union.

UGERILCOPAM is structured rather simply, with CIGs acting as the members of the union. In addition to government funding, which is not guaranteed, members pay a early fee that support operations.⁴⁸ This money contributes to the purchase of materials not provided by civil society and government actors like herbicides, pesticides, transportation feeds, and materials for marketing and sales. The delegate of UGERILCOPAM is responsible for these purchases, organizes the funds received, and distributes the purchased goods to the delegate of each CIG. The delegate of each member CIG receives the inputs and other equipment from UGERILCOPAM through communication with the UGERILCOPAM delegate, and distributes them to their members.⁴⁹ UGERILCOPAM also owns a tractor, purchased with government funding, that is operated by Union members when their fields require it. After harvesting, members of UGERILCOPAM bring their rice, in the paddy form, to the union's factory, where it is transformed into the sellable form using a machine purchased with government funding, packaged, and prepared for sale.⁵⁰ This process is conducted entirely by UGERILCOPAM members on a volunteer basis. Finally, the packaged rice is taken to markets in nearby towns and cities, like Dschang and Melong, for sale. The money garnered from sale is returned back to the members.

UGERILCOPAM is structured in a way that supports the community, and provides access to materials and services that individuals alone do not have. These include government funding and seeds from IRAD. Moreover, UGERILCOPAM allows farmers to bring their rice just after harvest, so they are relieved of the responsibility of transformation, packaging, transportation to market, and sale. This, in and of itself, makes consumption of rice from

⁴⁸ Ekanga. (Rice Farmer and Delegate of UGERILCOPAM) in interview with the author. April 22, 2014.

⁴⁹ Ekanga. (Rice Farmer and Delegate of UGERILCOPAM) in interview with the author. April 17, 2014.

⁵⁰ Edouard Nouboussi (Rice Farmer) in interview with the author. April 21, 2014.

Santchou possible. Without these services, rice farmers would be unable to cultivate rice and sell it individually and rice production would be impossible in Santchou. Through its relationship with the government, although currently inactive, the union has access to items that are necessary for production. Despite the multitude of challenges that continue to face rice farmers in Santchou, UGERILCOPAM is a strong foundation and necessary base that allows individuals to have access to greater tools through a community-based network.

VI.2 Relationship with IRAD

Directly after the creation of UGERILCOPAM, IRAD started giving seeds to the union to support production. The rice project of IRAD primarily conducts research and tests new varieties of rice that render high quality and quantity harvests.⁵¹ With this research, they work with community organization like UGERILCOPAM to provide seeds at no cost to the farmers. IRAD is funded both by the Cameroonian and Japanese governments.⁵² For the farmers in Santchou, the role of IRAD is incredibly important for their success; as their available funds are so limited, IRAD provides high quality seeds for free so cultivation can take place. This relationship is not without its negative consequences, however. Significantly, this relationship creates a dependence on IRAD for the farmers of Santchou, and without it, their cultivation would be much more difficult, if not impossible.

VII. Suggestions for Supporting Local Rice Production

In Cameroon, arable land makes up 13% of the total area of the country, and as of now, 80% of this arable land is not used for agricultural production. Importantly, this land is highly fertile and could be brought into competitive production to bring food security and eventual

⁵¹ Dorothy Malaa Kenyi (Coordinator for the Rice Project at IRAD) in interview with the author. April 28, 2014

⁵² Ibid.

economic growth to the country.⁵³ As proved in Santchou with UGERILCOPAM, communities have the ability to come together and increase rice production with the support of outside actors to provide necessary factors, like high quality inputs. While there are some initiatives already active in Cameroon, such as the research and distribution conducted by IRAD, there is much work to be done to support rice production, and rice farmers, in Cameroon. Largely, many of the problems experienced in Santchou could be addressed with additional financing and government aid to the farmers in Santchou to develop their production because the problems do not relate to the inability to grow rice or a lack of demand for rice in the markets, but rather to the inability to produce rice at sufficient quantities for various reasons detailed above.

VIII.1 Subsidies, Inputs, and Technology

The first action to be pursued in the support of rice production in Cameroon is financial. As evidenced by the case of UGERLICOPAM, financial assistance is necessary to support and jumpstart rice production, and make Cameroonian rice competitive in the markets. This can take several forms, but according to Brendan Schwartz, who has worked in the development space and with rural farmers through Cameroonians non-government organizations, government funding through subsidies is the only plausible mechanism for financing.⁵⁴

There are two classifications of government subsidies, direct and indirect. Indirect subsidies entail subsidizing inputs and production equipment and materials. This system of mechanization helps multiply the amount of production in the country, yet entails the use of an intermediary, which creates the opportunity for embezzlement and inefficiency. Direct subsidies include creating purchase price guarantees to producers, and a premium to production, meaning farmers would receive money at the end of the harvesting season if they produced an agreed

⁵³ Piebipe Goufam. "Evaluating the Constraints and Opportunities for Sustainable Rice Production in Cameroon," 740.

⁵⁴ Brendan Schwartz (Greenpeace employee) in interview with the author. April 26, 2014.

upon amount.⁵⁵ This serves as an incentive for farmers. ACDIC supports direct subsidies for spurring agricultural support and development, as they create a sense of responsibility as well as motivation for farmers to produce effectively. This would entail identifying farmers' organizations and paying them to produce. Additionally, direct subsidies support the development of input supply systems, as to engender growth in more than just the farming sector.⁵⁶ Direct subsidies also eliminate the use of intermediaries, thereby limiting the potential for embezzlement and distortion of funds. However, the Cameroonian government has yet to attempt the implementation of direct subsidies.⁵⁷

For famers in Santchou, every person interviewed stated that government investment and support in the construction of irrigation systems is imperative to enhancing rice production. As stated above, rice farmers in Santchou currently must rely on rainfall to feed their crops. Every member of the sample group agreed with the construction of irrigation systems, their productivity would boost; rice would be a more reliable crop that they could invest more time and money into. As for now, most farmers grow several crops, not just rice, as there are so many challenges facing rice production. With irrigation systems, rice production could be pursued throughout the entire year, not just during the rainy season. Investment in these materials could be incorporated into direct subsidies, yet it would be necessary to incorporate transparent management of these types of subsidies to ensure that the materials arrive at their designated locations, and are being used properly and effectively, thus necessitating the use of training in some situations.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ ACDIC. "Food Sovereignty Campaign: Let's Help Them Feed Us," 7.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Yvonne Takang (ACIDC employee) in conversation with the author. April 28, 2014.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Moreover, as stated above, UGERILCOPAM currently relies on seeds from IRAD for their production. This dependence, while helpful for the moment, cannot continue into the future because if IRAD's ability to provide to Santchou ends, then rice farmers there would be left unable to produce. Thus, measure needs to be taken to invest in establishing complete rice value chains that operate independently.⁵⁹ This includes production of seeds independently.

VIII.2 Training and Capacity programs

In addition to subsidies and investment in modern technology, actors involved in Cameroonian agricultural development recommend localized training and support initiatives to boost capacity and address problems inhibiting production. The government or other non-state initiatives would not create significant development in the agricultural sector if they simply brought in modern technologies without training or proper instruction. This applies not only to equipment, but also to farming in general. A fundamental step to promoting the production of rice in Cameroon is offering technical support to rice farmers to expand their capacity. This support should be structured either as advisory councils or by offering farmers access to agricultural engineers to help learn how to overcome challenges and how to most effectively produce their goods. These services could improve the technical capacity of producers so they are fully informed on the most efficient ways of production, acting as a bridge between farmers and research institutes.⁶⁰

Access to training and information could be structured in several ways. The first option would be to establish the presence of agricultural engineers in farming towns across Cameroon. Although it is complicated to organize and implement such structure, MINADER has a large

⁵⁹ Dorothy Malaa Kenyi (Coordinator for the Rice Project at IRAD) in interview with the author. April 28, 2014

⁶⁰ Emmanuel Sene (Senior Rural Development Specialist at the World Bank's Cameroon office) in interview with the author. April 8, 2014.

reach into agricultural centers already, and the potential of these advisory boards would be indispensable to farming communities attempting to be competitive in the market place.⁶¹

The second option is to establish phone services, so rice farmers can call designated agricultural engineers with their questions and get advice. This option is already practiced by ACDIC, which allows farmers to call the organization to be put in touch with an agricultural engineer for advice and assistance. While this option is simpler, it only caters to the population with access to phone service and to those with knowledge of the service. If the government adopted ACDIC's strong example, farmers could start to increase their productivity from that knowledge. For example, they could work with agricultural engineers, who understand and are actively researching new methods to guard birds from eating rice, with which the farmers of Santchou currently struggle. Instead, agricultural communities are currently left to farm with rudimentary tools, although solutions and modern methods exist that could improve their production. This deficiency can be partly explained by the entrenched corruption in Cameroon, discussed below.

VIII.3 Addressing Political Will and Corruption

Although subsidization and training programs seem like promising solutions for promoting rice production in Cameroon, they are impossible without political will for the cause, and effective action. Government commitment to creating and actively implementing programs and subsidies, as well as political transparency, is vital to promoting development in any sector, including agriculture. Without transparency, effective subsidization or program implementation is impossible.⁶² Sandrine, a representative from RELUFA (Reseau de Lutte Contre la Faim), a Cameroonian NGO that focuses on eliminating hunger, poverty and injustice and frequently

⁶¹ Brendan Schwartz (Greenpeace employee) in interview with the author. April 26, 2014.

⁶² Emmanuel Sene (Senior Rural Development Specialist at the World Bank's Cameroon office) in interview with the author. April 8, 2014.

works with rural farming communities, believes that political will is the fundamental ingredient not only to support production, but also to end import dependency.⁶³ Without such will and real desire to help the agricultural sector, the continuation of import dependence and food insecurity is imminent, because the government is the only force with the ability to assist farmers at the necessary scale. Despite the active work of NGOs like RELUFA and ACDIC, engendering significant agricultural production and addressing the many challenges facing farmers today is a role for the government. NGOs cannot match the financial or technical capacity of the government. Although NGOs and civil society needs to play an important role, the government must take a primary position in supporting farmers and agricultural production in the country.⁶⁴

In Cameroon, there is in extreme dearth of political will that manifests largely because of the presence of corruption within the political bureaucracy of the country. This corruption—a lack of transparency and accountability of civil servants—means that the majority of money designated to help communities like that in Santchou is never realized in their intended location due to the prevalence of embezzlement. This can occur in several different ways, two of the most primary concerning rice production are fraudulent CIG registration and decreased amounts delivered to farmers. The first, CIG registration, entails the phenomenon of civil servants creating fake CIGs to capture state funds intended to help real farmers' associations. According to a study published by ACDIC in 2009, between 60 and 70 percent of CIGs in Cameroon are fake; they are created by civil servants that appropriate the money intended for real CIGs, thus leaving farmers more needy than necessary by a huge percentage.⁶⁵ The second occurs when money is allocated for a farming community, but only a portion of the assigned funds is actually

⁶³ Sandrine Bikele (Employee of RELUFA) in interview with the author. April 9, 2014.

⁶⁴ Brendan Schwartz (Greenpeace employee) in interview with the author. April 26, 2014.

⁶⁵ "The Maize Crisis" *Citizens Association for the Defense of Collective Interests* (2008): Part C.

received by farmers, while government actors embezzle the rest. Farmers are happy to receive any amount of money, even if it just a percentage of what the intended amount was. While the rest of the money is suctioned into the system, farmers are left without sufficient funds to improve their livelihood and their production, as the corruption imbuing the government depletes allocated funding. Thus, there needs to be a significant increase in government effort to end such embezzlement by keeping the entire system transparent and implement accountability programs to ensure farmers see the funds intended for them. Additionally, all government efforts, like subsidization and advisory boards, will be harmed by the presence of corruption, as funds are drained. Therefore, seeking an end to corruption needs to be a priority of the government so all other initiatives function properly.

IX. Conclusion

This research project sought to explore two research questions. While considering the context of import dependence in Cameroon, it sought to understand why Cameroonian rice farmers—specifically those in the town of Santchou—are not currently meeting local demand and also explored what needs to change to increase rice production and start to foster food security related to rice in the country.

IX.1 Analysis of Research Questions and Hypotheses

The first of the two research questions posed asked what the primary challenges are for rice farmers in Santchou concerning the production of their harvest. I hypothesized that rice farmers struggle to produce rice in large quantities due to lack of access to modern technology, and that they have difficulty selling their rice not only because of a lack of sound infrastructure to transport their goods, but because they have to compete in a market against less expensive,

imported rice. The rice farmers in Santchou neither confirmed nor denied this hypothesis completely. Rather, this study did in fact determine that rice production is greatly inhibited by a lack of modern technology, which would increase the efficiency and overall quantity of cultivated rice, while also reducing the amount of tedious manual labor for farmers—including the manual labor needed to chase birds from the field which was the most commonly reported challenge facing rice farmers in Santchou. The root of this lack of technology stems from inadequate financial resources to invest in new materials and equipment. Yet, the second part of the hypothesis was disproved in the case of Santchou rice farmers, who sell their rice through UGERILCOPAM at the same market price as imported rice. Thus, for them, it is not an issue of competing in the market, but rather producing a large enough quantity of rice to have sufficient revenue to significantly expand production to start meeting local demand for rice.

The second research question asked how rice farmers in Santchou cope with the struggles of their production. I hypothesized that rice farmers support each other through the use of community-based unions, although struggles for finance still exist. This hypothesis was confirmed, as the cultivation and sale of rice in Santchou would be virtually impossible without the presence of UGERILCOPAM. The presence of the union also allows for relationships with the government and with other civil society actors like IRAD that provide indispensable goods for rice production. That being said, there are still numerous challenges facing UGERILCOPAM and there are intrinsic problems that inhibit its success. These problems are largely related to the failings of the government, which does not possess the will to aggressively pursue agricultural development as significantly as is needed. Furthermore, government funding intended to help farmers is being depleted by extensive corruption that plagues the state.

IX.2 Looking Ahead and Suggestions for Further Research and Reading

This study, while discussing the challenges facing rice production in Cameroon due to a lack of financing and government support, also found synergistic value in the ability of rice farming communities to work together in mutual support. It targeted rice as a strategic good for production in Cameroon to start encouraging food sovereignty and security, and reducing import dependence. The opportunities for further research into this topic are varied, and could delve into the specifics of each challenge facing rice producers, as well as an in-depth analysis on the government's role in promoting rice production to see what scale of local rice cultivation is plausible and possible in Cameroon.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questions for Representative from the Ministry of Agriculture

1. Quel est le rôle du gouvernement dans le développement des zones rurales ?
2. Quels sont les défis et les réalisations auxquels font face les agriculteurs au Cameroun ?
3. Que fait le gouvernement pour soutenir les agriculteurs? Est-ce qu'il y a des programmes spécifiques ? Est-ce qu'il y a de nouveaux programmes dans le futur ?
4. Quels sont les défis plus important pour les agriculteurs au Cameroun et est-ce qu'il y a quelque chose qui le gouvernement peut faire ?
5. Quels sont les objectifs pour le futur de l'agriculture au Cameroun ?
6. Quelles sont les conséquences positives et négatives de l'importation des aliments ?
7. Que pensez-vous qu'il faut faire pour mettre fin à la dépendance des importations ? Est-ce que vous pensez que la fin de la dépendance des importations est positive, nécessaire, ou possible ?
8. Qu'est-ce que vous pensez qu'on devrait être fait pour promouvoir le développement de la production alimentaire au Cameroun ?
9. Est-ce que le gouvernement donne quelque chose aux agriculteurs, comme des graines ? Pensez-vous que ce qui doit changer? Pourquoi?
10. Qu'est-ce que vous pensez de la subvention des agriculteurs? Pensez-vous que la subvention des agriculteurs est positive pour l'agriculture au Cameroun ?
11. Pourquoi la production locale des aliments est importante pour l'économie de Cameroun ?

Appendix B: Interview questions for IRAD, RELUFA, and other Civil Society Actors

1. Quel est le rôle de votre organisation dans l'agriculture du Cameroun ?
2. Pourquoi est l'agriculture importante pour le développement du Cameroun ?
3. Quels sont les principaux défis agricoles et les réussites agricoles pour le Cameroun ?
4. Quelles sont les plus grandes luttes pour les agriculteurs au Cameroun? La production, le marché, l'infrastructure,
5. Quels sont vos objectifs pour le futur en ce qui concerne l'agriculture Camerounaise ?
6. Est-ce qu'il y a des choses spécifiques qui doivent changer pour les agriculteurs au Cameroun ? Si oui, lesquelles ?
7. Qu'est-ce que vous pensez qu'on devrait être fait pour promouvoir le développement de la production alimentaire au Cameroun ?
8. Qu'est-ce que vous pensez de la subvention des agriculteurs? Pensez-vous que la subvention des agriculteurs est positive pour l'agriculture au Cameroun ?
10. Est-ce que vous pensez qu'il faut modifier les politiques commerciales du Cameroun et ses relations commerciales avec d'autres pays ?
11. Quelles sont les conséquences positives et négatives de l'importation des aliments ?
12. Que pensez-vous qu'il faut faire pour mettre fin à la dépendance des importations ? Est-ce que vous pensez que la fin de la dépendance des importations est positive, nécessaire, ou possible ?
13. Que pensez-vous des politiques sur l'importation du riz au Cameroun ?
14. Quels sont les défis auxquels font face les agriculteurs au Cameroun ?

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Rice Farmers in Santchou

1. Pourquoi est-ce que vous produisez du riz et d'autres légumes?
2. Où trouvez-vous vos semences de riz, des engrais, du travail, et d'autres choses pour la production?
3. Utilisez-vous des outils ou des machines pour votre production?
4. Qui vend votre riz? Qui achète votre riz?
5. Pourquoi pensez-vous que les gens achètent votre riz?
6. Quelles sont les choses spécifiques qui font de vous un succès?
7. Quels sont vos principaux défis et les réussites de votre agriculture en général?
8. Quels sont les défis particuliers dans l'obtention de vos produits sur le marché et leur vente?
9. Quels sont les défis particuliers de l'agriculture et de la production de vos produits?
10. Quels sont vos objectifs pour le futur en ce qui concerne votre agriculture?
11. Est-ce qu'il y a des choses spécifiques qui doivent changer pour que vous réussissiez ? Si oui, lesquelles ?
12. Est-ce que vous avez l'expérience avec Soderim? Quelle était votre expérience et comment cela se compare à l'agriculture indépendante ? Comment est-ce que Soderim vous a aidé
13. Est-ce que vous travaillez avec d'autres agriculteurs à Santchou? Comment travaillez-vous ensemble et comment vous vous soutenez mutuellement ?
14. Qu'est-ce que le gouvernement fait pour vous et d'autres agriculteurs au Cameroun?
15. Qu'est-ce que le gouvernement doit-il faire autrement ? Est-ce qu'il y a des programmes ou des politiques spécifiques qui vous aident ?