

Cameroon (2012 - 13)

Global Research Project: Urbanization and Development: Delving Deeper into the Nexus

Research: Suburbanization and Inequality in Transport Mobility in Yaoundé (Cameroon): Drawing Public Policy for African Cities

Grantees: Valerie Ongolo Zogo and Boniface Ngah Epo

In 2012, two researchers from the University of Yaoundé I-Soa received a grant from GDN, to conduct systematic research on integration of suburban specificities in the decentralization process in Cameroon as part of the Francophone component of GDN's Global Research Project on Urbanization and Development. The funds were complemented by mentorship by subject-matter experts and participation in methodological training workshops.

The team investigated inequalities of urbanization and transport, linking uncontrolled sub-urbanization and issues of inequality in transport mobility in Yaoundé, Cameroon's capital city. The project produced completely new knowledge in the context of Cameroon, providing critical and exemplary insights for addressing the deficit of adequate public policies in francophone Africa.

Valerie Ongolo leveraged the funding and her professional visibility as the Head of the Division of Studies, Planning, Programming and Cooperation at the Ministry of Transport, to organize a national research dissemination workshop attended by academics, the media and policy-makers from the Prime Minister's office, the Ministry of Decentralization, and the Yaoundé Urban Council. Access to world-class mentoring boosted the legitimacy of the research findings and the professional visibility of the team, who succeeded in making an intervention in the debate about the decentralized management of inter-urban road transportation by local communities in urban Cameroon. In her capacity as a close advisor to the Cameroon Minister of Transport, results from the study have been presented to the Ministry of Transport and as a result, there is a consensus to tackle emerging modes of transportation. Ongolo Zogo tells GDN, that the study findings have been used by both the Unit of Planning, Programming and Forecast and the Unit of Studies and Statistics of the Ministry of Transport in the conception and elaboration of a few planning documents for the Ministry of Transport.

Ongolo Zogo acknowledges that the GDN grant not only helped in building research capacity of her team but also provided a much-needed forum of interaction with policy-makers of the region that is essentially missing from most research related activities. Subsequent to the dissemination workshop held after the GDN grant was complete, a working partnership was established with the representative of the decentralization committee and Ongolo Zogo. She has also been invited now to several meetings to help formulate suggestions operationalizing the ensuing recommendation of managing emerging modes of transportations like motorcycles within the current decentralization framework. A working group created by the Yaoundé Urban Council in May 2015 looking at the technical and economic feasibility for the creation of a Mass Transit System in Yaoundé has appointed Ongolo Zogo as an Advisor.

More recently, on the 29th of May 2015, the Yaoundé Urban Council created a working

group in charge of the technical and economic feasibility for the creation of a Mass Transit System in Yaoundé where Professor Ongolo Zogo has been appointed as an Advisor.