



The Involvement of Professionals Working in Training as a Vector of Professionalization: The Case of Agro-pastoral Training Institutions in the West and North-West Regions of Cameroon

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration with all authors. Author FFGH was the lead researcher. He designed the study in collaboration with authors TMB and KZ. Author FFGH conceived the methodology. Author TMB did the data collection under author FFGH supervision. Author FFGH organized the written exercise of the article and shared it with authors TMB and KZ. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Aims: This article is an analysis of the contribution of socio-professional actors in agricultural training in Cameroon.

Methodology: Two categories of professionals are distinguished: the family of the learners on the one hand and on the other, active actors of the agricultural sector referred to as "referents" here. The study relies on a questionnaire survey of 50 young learners, 51 heads of households and 30 referents. On the other hand, research interviews were conducted with 10 pedagogic managers in five training centers in West and North-West regions of Cameroon.

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Results: It is observed that referents make technical, material and financial contributions to the training of learners. The family heads provide technical and sometimes financial contributions. The lack of financial resources for the referents and the absence of family land for the future installation of learners are the main difficulties encountered in this new strategy of training professionalization. Financial and technical assistance to referents would significantly improve their contribution to the training process.

Conclusion: So for an efficient training, there must be an solid interaction between the different trainers.

Keywords: Vocational training; alternation; working place; referent; family; agricultural sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

After independence, training schemes were set up by sub-Saharan African countries like Cameroon. In the 1970s and 1980s, Cameroon was one of the few African countries to have an ambitious agricultural vocational training policy [1]. However, the training mechanisms in place initially had as missions the training of state agents, supervising producers and ensuring economic growth. The training of producers was then of a purely technical nature and was designed to ensure the transmission of modern production techniques [2]. The economic crisis and consequent Structural Adjustment measures have had a significant impact on these schemes: lower demand for agricultural training, a mass exodus of trainers and a deterioration in training or institutions [3]. The liberalization of the economy also led to a halt of recruitments into the civil service and the emergence of new actors in agricultural training: non-governmental organizations, producer organizations, development projects and programs, etc. [4]. However, even with these new actors, the framework for the operation of the training system has not changed, be it at the level of the status of institutions and trainers, training programs and content, diplomas or pedagogic methods [4,5] thus attributes the poor performance of Cameroon's rural sector to the dislocation between agricultural training programs and the socio-economic environment. This observation is similar to that of [6] in Bangladesh. For [7], in Cameroon, the content of courses given in agricultural training centers are essentially theoretical, focused on scientific knowledge and takes place within a framework that does not allow the assimilation of the know-how necessary to get into a career. Thus, the need to review these training systems which, as in most African countries, are unsuited to the realities and needs of the socio-economic environment [8]. [9] notes that one of the challenges of agricultural training is to ensure

that agricultural reality is well represented in agricultural training programs. Conscious of the inadequacy of its training system, the State of Cameroon has put in place a strategy to re-orient the agricultural and rural training systems. One of the priorities of the new strategy was the qualification of 13,000 active producers coupled with the training and installation of 15,000 young people per year [4]. This reform of the scheme started in 2008 as part of the program to support the renovation and development of vocational training in the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sectors thanks to the French bilateral debt through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative. The intervention of this program was organized around four pillars: reform of the regulatory framework, the reinforcement of staff capacities, renovation of infrastructures and equipment of training structures, and the renovation of training contents. The latter axis includes a new pedagogic method and a new training approach. The main innovation is the involvement of socio-professional actors in training. The socio-professional environment refers here to an agricultural holding, that of a referent producer (where the learner temporarily resides to acquire know-how) or that of the learner's family. This approach is different from the one previously promoted and involves new interactions between the actors of the new agricultural and rural training system. In this research we analyzed how the new approach is implemented by focusing on the role of referents and the learner's family, and the difficulties encountered in this new approach.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Vocational Training Schemes

Débouvry and Maragnani [10] define a training system as a structured and coherent set of practices, methods, institutions, means, regulations, aimed at achieving a given objective,

for a given audience according to a given situation and in a given environment. The institutions of a training system that may include training centers or schools is defined by [11] as educational places, organized around the teaching and learning of the pupil, reception, follow-up of it, and whose time rhythms to what is supposedly required to carry out the apprenticeship. The purpose of these centers is to train professionals in various fields. A professional for [10] is everyone with the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out an activity while remaining open to the possibilities of evolution of its activity and willing to evolve it.

This study focuses on centers offering vocational agricultural training. Learners are expected to acquire the necessary knowledge for diagnosing, resolving complex situations and making decisions [12] and especially increase their productivity [13]. These trainings thus complement family education which transmits the sum of knowledge accumulated in the past (general knowledge, social rules, attitudes, etc.) and more specifically knowledge on agricultural production and livestock farming: knowledge of the environment and its constraints, production techniques, etc. [12]. According to [11], the professional environment, namely farms and workshops, is the normal framework for vocational training.

Two types of vocational training can be distinguished: continuous vocational training for workers and initial vocational training offered to young people before entering the labor market [14]. The latter may be alternating or not. Alternative training is the combination of both general theoretical lessons and professional experience in a training organization or company [10,15]. In the approach promoted by the support program for the renovation and development of vocational training in the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sectors, initial vocational training is used in post primary situation youth centers and is done by alternation, combining three training pillars namely the referent, the training center, and the family.

2.2 Social Learning Theory

Learning is a stable and lasting modification of an individual's knowledge and know-how. This modification is due to the experience, training and exercises practiced by this individual [12]. On the other hand, social learning consists in being able to reproduce a behavior that has been

observed, error and trial to be completed by observation [16]. The latter is a complementary, rapid and effective means to acquire new know-how, and to use them in the face of new situations. This learning can even make it possible to construct representations, which will allow a better elaborate conduct than those preliminarily observed. [16] points out that there are two fundamental processes of social learning: observational learning and vicarious learning or modeling (demonstration).

2.2.1 Observational learning

Observational learning is a change in behavior following observation of the behavior of another. The fact of being able to learn by observation makes individuals capable of acquiring behaviors or know-how without having to develop them gradually through a process of trial and error [17].

2.2.2 Vicarious learning or modeling (demonstration)

There is modeling when, after observing an individual behavior, under similar conditions, an individual modifies his behavior as if he had performed the behavior of the model and had experienced the consequences. Vicarious learning could correspond, in the school context and for simplicity, to what the child can learn on the margin of the teacher's discourse proper by watching and listening to those who know how to do or by extension analyzing the production of those who know how to do [18,17]. [16] notes that enjoying the experience of others is an extremely common way of learning. Thus, for [18,17], the basic process of acquiring information by learning can only be accomplished by performing an action and experiencing its consequences. [16] also observes that this vision does not cover the whole reality of learning. For him, these learnings by direct experience actually occur most often on a vicarious basis, that is to say by observing the behavior of others and the consequences that result for them.

2.2.3 Traditional learning in Africa

Walther [19] distinguishes two types in West Africa: Traditional Sahelian learning and traditional coastal learning. The Sahelian-type learning is distinguished by the fact that it relies on a substitute for family relations between bosses and children. Indeed, the latter are

brought into the workshop by the parents who delegate to the master craftsman a part of the parental authority. The latter is responsible for transmitting to the young person his know-how, but also to teach him the social values related to the profession he is going to exercise and to the socio-cultural milieu in which he is going to exercise it. Coastal-type learning differs from the former in that it pays off and is based on a commercial relationship between the boss, the apprentice and his family. Four major phases structure the pace of knowledge acquisition as part of traditional learning by apprentices [19]. They are:

- 1- An introductory phase: Which essentially consists of looking at the gestures and attitudes of the teacher and integrating them into his own behavior;
- 2- A phase of initiation into the names of the instruments and the learning of the uses of each, with the possibility of carrying out simple and repetitive technical tasks;
- 3- A phase of participation in the execution of more complex tasks, including the realization of finished objects;
- 4- An end-of-learning or liberation phase reflected in the recognition by the master craftsman of the apprentice's ability to practice the trade for which he was trained.

Given these characteristics of learning, we can say that they are more or less just models of social learning adapted in an African context according to the cultural norms and values of the environment. The new training approach promoted by the support program for the renovation and development of vocational training in the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sectors provides for the stay of learners in reference farms and within their families. The latter are considered as co-trainers in the current system. The hypothesis of our research are: 1)

these visits make it possible to facilitate and accelerate the acquisition of knowledge and know-how by the learners and 2) the contribution of the referents and the heads of households are not solely limited to the transmission of knowledge and know-how.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Subject

Our research is based on surveys of pedagogical managers (monitors and directors), learners and their parents (heads of households) and referents involved in the agricultural training system. The referents at the center of this study are professional farmers with proven experience in crop and livestock production and a production unit in which they receive learners every two weeks for the exchange of experiences.

We have chosen to work with 5 of the 10 training centers supported by the Support Program for the Renovation and Development of Vocational Training in the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sectors in the Western and North-western Regions of Cameroon (Table 1). Their choice took into account the elements of diversity that made the training systems as envisaged vary from one center to another, namely: The type of promoter institution (public, private secular or denominational) and the geographical area with its socio-economic and cultural contexts.

In each center, the director and the monitors were all surveyed. In the centers, 30% of the referents were chosen randomly and then surveyed. At the learner level, 30% of learners from each center were randomly selected and then surveyed. At the family level, the head of the family for each of the initially selected learners were investigated. (Table 2) shows the number of persons surveyed by actor category.

Table 1. Distribution of the different centers

Regions	Centers				Total
	Public centers		Private centers		
	Ministry of agriculture and rural development	Ministry of livestock, fisheries and animal husbandry	Confessionnal	Lay centres	
West	CFR de Bafoussam		CEFAN de Fouban	CEFORCOBA de Bafou	3
North-West		Centre de pêche de Ku-Bomé	PRTC de Fonta		2
Total	1	1	2	1	5

Key: CFR: Centre de Formation Rural, CEFORCOBA: Centre de Formation Rural et Communautaire de Bafou, CEFAN: Centre de Formation des Agriculteurs du Noun et PRTC: Presbyterian Training Center

Table 2. Distribution of persons surveyed by category of actors

Centres	Youths			Families			Referents			Head of pedagogy
	n	p	r	n	p	r	n	p	r	
Centre de formation rural de Bafoussam	34	10	9	34	10	10	23	7	5	2
Centre de pêche de Ku-Bome	33	10	10	33	10	9	23	7	6	2
Centre de formation des agriculteurs du Noun de Foumban	33	10	10	33	10	10	20	6	6	2
Presbyterian training center de Fonta	35	11	11	35	11	10	25	8	7	2
Centre de formation rural et communautaire de Bafou	35	11	11	35	11	11	23	7	6	2
Total	170	52	51	170	52	50	114	35	30	10

Key: n: Total; p: Predicted. (p = 30 % n) r: Encountered

3.2 Instrumentation

Informations on the level of education, field of activity, age, gender and civil status of the respondents were collected.

An interview guide has been developed for the directors and instructors of the training centers. It focused on the criteria of choice of referents, heads of households and learners, the role of each in the training and the level of mastery of this role by each actor, the relationship between monitors, families and referents, the difficulties encountered and the improvements that could be made to the system.

Separate questionnaires were prepared for referents, heads of households and learners. The main information sought were: the expected role of the different actors, their contributions and motivations, the synergies between the actors involved, the strategies and methods of transmission of knowledge and the difficulties encountered by the actors.

Once the collection tools had been designed, they were then pre-tested to ensure their validity and quality.

3.3 Procedure

First of all, appointments on separate dates were taken with the managers of the training centers. After explaining the objectives of our research to the latter, they agreed to the interviews and provided us with a list of referents and learners among whom 30% were randomly selected and invited to answer the questionnaires. From these, 96.15% of the learners and 85.71% of the selected referents agreed to answer the questionnaire. Similarly, among the parents of

the selected learners, 98.07% responded to our invitation.

3.4 Methods of Data Analysis

A descriptive analysis of data from the questionnaire surveys was carried out using Excel spreadsheets and SPSS 20.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) from International Business Machines Corporation (IBM). It consisted to acquisition of descriptive statistics, namely sums, means and frequencies. Data from survey interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis. This made it possible to collect the points of view of the respondents and to regroup them on a thematic basis in order to produce information concerning the various roles and the contribution of the referents and their families in the training system.

3.5 Ethnic Considerations

The persons contacted were free to answer or not answer our questionnaires. In addition, all precautions were taken to ensure their anonymity. The results from our research were given to the organization that funded the study and the various participants, such that the general public can access them.

4. RESULTS

4.1 A Training Approach that Develops Skills for Employment through Alternation

Thanks to the renovation of the training facilities, the training contents have changed including new modalities such as alternate training promoted in training centers. In addition, new

approaches and methodological tools are now being implemented. Since August 2012, the program has embarked on a second phase of implementation called a step towards support for the professional integration of young people trained [20]. This phase focuses on: intensifying the network of training structures and taking greater account of the professional integration of trained learners. Thus, in order to guarantee the easy integration of young learners, the training is now alternating with stays in training centers, referent farmers and families. In addition, the program provides alternating tools linking the center with the referent and the family, including a strategic training plan, a liaison booklet, a monitoring form, a questionnaire, and so on.

Whether it is continuous training or initial training, the learners are chosen on the basis of different criteria. The recruitment of active producers is made on demand according to the number of places available and that of the young people in initial formation according to the following criteria: the justification of a sponsorship by presentation of the authenticated letter of sponsorship; a study of the admission application file and an interview before a jury to evaluate the personality of the candidate and his/her motivations. The training then begins with a stay with the referent in which the young person learns by practicing and ends in the center where he is led to understand the practices learned or observed while with the referent. In addition, the training reference in training centers includes 11 mandatory training modules, 10 of which require the referent.

4.2 Profile of Actors Involved in Work-linked Training

4.2.1 Profile of young people in training

According to Table 3, 66% were men and 34% women. 86% were between the ages of 20 and 35 years. 50% have farmers as parents, 22% were retired parents, 18% were public servants and 10% were parents of other activities of the informal sector. 62% have been to secondary school, while 22% have been to the university, and 16% have only been to primary school. Although a majority of the learners have been to secondary school, they mainly have the first school leaving certificate (CEPE) (34%) and the GCE "O" Level (BEPC) (38%) as highest diplomas. Only 20% GCE have an "A" Level and only 4% with a university degree. For the most part, they are able to understand and develop a professional project. 56% of the learners

surveyed have professional projects associating animal and plant production, while 30% and 14% have projects for animal and plant production respectively. Projects in animal production mainly involved the breeding of poultry and pigs; Projects in crop production are the associated crop of maize and bean, the cultivation of oil palm and banana plantations. Plants and livestock projects mainly concerned the cultivation of maize associated with livestock, either poultry or pigs. In addition, these learners are also required to write off-farm projects at the end of their training.

Table 3. Learners profile

Sex	Male		Female	
	66%		34%	
Education	Primary level	16%	Secondary level	62%
	University level	22%	University level	22%
Learners parent	Retired	44%	Public servants	36%
			Informal sector	20%

4.2.2 Profile of monitors and directors

According to profile, 60% of the instructors were men and 40% women while, all managers were men. All instructors were between 35 and 45 years old, while 80% of managers were between the ages of 45 and 55, and 20% between 55 and 65 years. 60% of the instructors have at least a GCE "O" Level or its equivalent as the highest diploma and 40% the GCE "A" Level. For directors, 20% have at least a degree equivalent to a Bachelor's degree and 80% a diploma equivalent to a Master's degree. They have all received vocational training. Training instructors were veterinary nurses from the National Zootechnical and Veterinary Centers of Jakiri and Fouban (60%), or Agricultural Technicians from Regional agricultural colleges (20%) and technical schools of agriculture (20%). Directors who were trained by agricultural engineers constituted (80%) and agricultural engineers (20%). They therefore have an intellectual background sufficiently capable to transmit at least theoretical knowledge to the learners.

4.2.3 Profile of referents

The referents are farmers whose main activity is livestock farming (33%), crop production (30%) or a combination of both (37%). In addition, 90% have non-agricultural activities, mainly trade (43%). 77% are men and 23% are women. 20% are between the ages of 30 and 39 years,

Table 4. Profile of instructors and directors

Sex	Instructors		Directors	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	60%	40%	100%	0%
Age	35 to 45 years		45 to 55 years	55 to 65 years
	100%		80%	20%
Highest diploma	GCE O level	GCE A level	Bachelor degree	Master degree
	60%	40%	20%	80%

57% are between 40 and 59, and 23% are older than 60 years. 60% are married, 20% single, 10% widowed and 10% divorced. 27% never attended school, 30% attended only primary school, 33% attended secondary school, and 10% attended a university. 27% have no diploma, 37% have FSLC for highest diploma, 27% the GCE "O" Level and 10% the GCE "A" Level. 70% have annual farm receipts of between 500 000 and 1 500 000 XAF and 30% have revenues between 2 000 000 and 3 500 000 XAF. In addition, 67% of the referents have extra-agricultural revenues between 400 000 and 1 000 000 XAF (57%) and between 1000 000 and 3 000 000 XAF (10%). The capacity of referents per training session varies between 2 to 7 learners (73%) to more than 8 learners (27%).

4.2.4 Heads of household's profile

Since the study area is essentially patriarchal, 67% of the heads of households surveyed are men. Women as heads of household are either widowed or divorced. 78% are between the ages of 50 and 70, and 22% are between 40 and 50 years of age. 41% have primary education, 39% secondary and 16% higher. 22% have no diploma, 39% have the FSLC for highest diploma, 20% GCE "O" Level and 16% the GCE "A" Level. 55% have agriculture as their main occupation, 14% are retired farmers, 12% are civil servants, 10% are traders and 10% engage in other activities in the informal sector. 69% have more than 10 dependents of whom only 30% of the young people are enrolled, 60% are out of school and unemployed and 10% have jobs; The training centers constitute for certain parents a solution for the education of their children, the training being free.

4.3 Modalities of Choice and Involvement of Co-trainers

4.3.1 Criteria for the selection of referents and their initial motivations

The referents are chosen by the heads of centers on the basis of criteria previously established by the support program for the renovation and

development of vocational training in the sectors of agriculture, livestock and fishing, namely: To carry out an agricultural activity; Be close to the center; Have the will and willingness to share their know-how and experience; Have accommodation; Have a large farm holding in good quality; Depend on his exploitation for survival and be of good morality. However, in addition to these criteria, private centers (training center for farmers in the Noun in Fouban and Presbyterian training center in Fonta) only accept former learners from their centers as referents. 60% of respondents said they had accepted this status because they were told the Program to Improve the Competitiveness of Agro-pastoral Family farms (ACEFA) could on this basis provide them with financial or material support. This program is also implemented with the support of the French Development Agency and finances agricultural projects to the sum of 10 million XAF (2000 \$). However, 29% said they had done so out of love for the trade and in a concern to participate in the training of young people, and 11% said because they were former learners, they felt accountable to their trainers.

4.3.2 Criteria to access the status of family trainer

Simply having a child in one of the training centers makes the parent a co-trainer. However, the two reasons given by the heads of families to explain the presence of their children in these centers are: the fact that the child is recalcitrant and not performing at school and free training. A mother reports on this subject "*I learned that the government helped young people to become farmers for free. That is why my son is there. I did not have the means to send him to the university after the death of his father*".

4.4 Roles and Contributions of Co-trainers in the Training Process

4.4.1 Roles and contributions of training referents

Within the set-up of the programs, referents have multiple roles to play for young people: welcome

the young people; Ensure their accommodation and provide them with equipment and materials necessary for training, answer their questions and involve them in all activities related to their training, participate in their evaluation, accompany them in their socio-cultural integration and ensure their transportation.

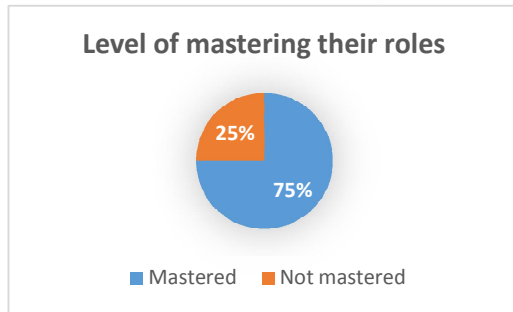


Fig. 1. Level of mastery the roles by trainers

However, only 75% of the referents master their roles in the training process, while 25% do not master them because they do not participate in meetings organized by the centers for them and because the monitoring of activities by the learners to remain with them as planned by the program does not always happen.

The referents make financial, technical and material contributions to the training. Indeed, they cover the housing and nutrition costs of learners during their stay with them. Since the learners are received every two weeks, the minimum expenses incurred are on average 44 800 XAF per month, or 537 600 XAF per year. As material contribution, they provide work tools, phyto-sanitray products, fertilizers, animal feed, etc. used by the young people during their stay. They contribute on a technical level by sharing knowledge and know-how with the learners on the management of farms, the conduct of the technical itineraries and helping them to prepare their professional projects through practical advice.

4.4.2 Roles and contributions of family heads

The different roles to be played by the heads of families in the system are: The transmission of socio-cultural knowledge, the granting of land to learners at the end of their training and the provision of financial, moral and material support when they are at the center or at the referents place. However, 80% of heads of household do not master their roles, very few take part in the

training and awareness sessions organized for them. Moreover, the management of the learner when he is at the referent is almost non-existent. Therefore, the main contribution of the heads of households remains the provision of the learner with land for installation at the end of the training. Moreover, very few strive to share knowledge with the young people. Because they are enrolled in a training center, they are considered by their families to be those with the knowledge and know-how.

4.5 Methods of Transmitting Knowledge and Know-how

4.5.1 Methods used by the referents

The support program for the renovation and development of vocational training in the areas of agriculture, livestock and fisheries recommends a specific method to referents for the transmission of knowledge and know-how. This method obliges them: 1) to explain to the learners the activity to be done; 2) make a demonstration by explaining the different steps, 3) let the learners do everything on their own by giving him help if necessary, and 5) at the end of the day, let the learner do the job again without help this time. This makes it possible to check the level of mastery of what is to be done by the learner. 75% of referents say they use the recommended methods. 25% say they do not use it because they do not benefit from it and consider it too long. Therefore, they just explain what is to be done once and let them do it.

On the other hand, only 47.30% of learners consider that the referents respect the prescribed method. For 20% of learners, most of the time, they are considered employees rather than students. In this sense, a learner asserts: *these referents when we arrive in the morning, they give us a piece to clear, and throughout the day they are not there. They only come in the evening when we have finished the work.* In addition, 33.70% of the learners say they are entrusted by the referents to their employees because they are not very often free to work with them. This observation differs with the point of view of the monitors. 80% of them believe that the referents use the prescribed method. Nevertheless, they recognize that some referents consider learners to be laborers. Once this behavior is realized, to a call to order of the referent concerned is issued, and in case of recidivism, he or she is no longer entrusted with learners.

4.5.2 Methods used by heads of households

Unlike for the referents, there is no method prescribed to parents for the transmission of knowledge. Thus, each parent does it his own way. According to the learners and the instructors, the parents proceed by a simple discourse when they have to share knowledge with the learners. Moreover, 90% of parents consider the period of alternation of young people in the family as a leave where learners should help them in domestic and rural work. Sharing of related information to training takes place in the evening after work in the family farm (most often in the absence of parents).

4.6 Difficulties Encountered by Co-trainers

4.6.1 Difficulties encountered by the referents

The difficulties encountered by the referents include: lack of financial resources for the care of the learners because they do not receive any external support, illiteracy of some, deviant behavior of some learners and family conflicts sometimes caused by their presence. The fact that some referents do not know how to read or write does not allow them to give assessment of the work of the learner as requested in the liaison book. Moreover, they accuse the learners of courting their daughters. When it comes to learners, it happens that conflicts with the wives of the referents occur, the wives considering them as rivals wishing to conquer their husband.

To these difficulties can be added loss of animals and the destruction of work material. For breeders, trainees bring diseases such as swine fever. Cases were observed at the rural training center in Bafoussam and in the North-West Region. Inadequate work equipment is also noted as a problem. When learners go to referents, some do not provide work materials. The referents are obliged to borrow from friends or to buy when they have enough resources. The time allowed for the stay of the learners is also considered insufficient for the learning of certain activities. One of the references states by way of illustration that: *“For watermelon cultivation, for example, it requires a series of activities and a learner who comes for a two-week training period will not be able to follow all the activities to be carried out for this culture. The next person who comes will not know how to execute the stages already done”*.

4.6.2 Difficulties faced by families

The difficulties encountered by families are linked to obtaining land. 70% have no land in the area around the training center as required. Moreover, 90% say they do not have money to give the learners when they are at the referents place. The misunderstanding of the liaison book is also noted as a difficulty as well as an assessment of the learners after their stay with a family.

4.7 Collaboration between the Actors Involved in Work-linked Training

4.7.1 A culture of embryonic contract between the actors of the program

In its early stages, the support programs for the renovation and development of vocational training in the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sectors had instituted forms of commitments that had to be signed by each actor before the beginning of the school year. These commitments specified the different roles of each actor for the success of the training. It must be noted that only two training centers out of the five visited respect this principle: the rural training center of Bafoussam and the Rural and Community Training Center of Bafou. For 60% of the managers of these centers, these commitments are not signed because it is impossible to require a referent to sign a letter of commitment while the latter does not receive any compensation for his work. Consequently, they say they rely only on the good morality of the referents. On the other hand, only 26.70% of the referents acknowledge having had to sign a contract with a training center. However, they say that they are under no obligation to respect it, since no financial or material resources are available to them for this purpose.

76.50% of family heads say there is no contract committing them to participate in the training. However, 23.50% affirm that there is a contract that binds them with the center. In this contract they say, the family must give the learner land for his installation and provide him with financial support during his training.

4.7.2 Relationship between co-trainers and instructors

4.7.2.1 Between instructors and referents

The monitors act as an interface between the referents and the training centers. For 75% of the

referents, the relations they maintain with the monitors are good. When the learners are with the referent, the monitors make follow-up visits to train the new referents on the liaison tools, their roles and the methods of transmission of know-how. On the other hand, these visits allow the referents to discuss the behavior of the learners and benefit from sharing experiences with the instructors. On this subject, a referent confided: *When the monitor does a follow-up, I gain a lot because it allows me to understand some practices that I did due to ignorance.* However, 25% of the referents say they do not know the instructors because they have never come to see them in the exercise of their work. The monitors attribute this to the inadequacy of resources available to them for the follow-up of learners during their period of residence with the referents.

4.7.2.2 *Between referents and heads of households*

In 3 of the 5 studied centers (Fonta, Ku-Bomé and Foumban), the referents say they do not know the parents of the learners. However, 70% of the referents would like the parents to visit them from time to time as this would be an additional source of motivation. However, in the two other centers, solidarity exists between the two groups. For example, at the rural training center in Bafoussam, family and referent meetings are held on a trimestral basis, enabling families to encourage referents and get to know them better. Moreover, in Bafou, when learners go to live with referents, 90% of families get information at the level of management about the referent who will welcome their child.

4.7.2.3 *Between monitors and heads of families*

71% of parents surveyed say they have never met an instructor outside the framework of meetings organized between parents and instructors at the training center. The remaining 29% are parents with special ties to directors and monitors. However, it is foreseen that whenever a young person goes to learn with a family, the monitor conducts a follow-up visit.

Overall, the absence of a formal contract that engages the various actors may explain why some actors do not fulfill the role that is attributed them. This makes it difficult to monitor and evaluate each other's activities and leads to a certain *laissez-faire* within the system.

5. DISCUSSION

Alternation in training, as it is currently organized, is conducive to better acquire the skills necessary for the professional integration of young people. This evolution is in line with the changes noted by [8], which indicated the emergence of new models of agricultural training in developing countries, combining theory and practice in a real context. However, with regards to the range of vocational training opportunities available, one can well question the real motivations of learners in agricultural training (22% with tertiary education). Is it really a conviction for farming as a profession or are they simply hoping for financial aid from the support program for the renovation and development of vocational training in the agricultural, livestock and Fishing sectors to settle thereafter? In the case of Iranian students, [21] noted that their main motivations for vocational training are: the acquisition of information, knowledge, skills and techniques necessary for future professional integration.

Monitors who have received specialized training, mainly have theoretical knowledge and practical skills are sometimes limited. However, this could be improved if Cameroon uses the example of Ethiopia, where, according to [22], having found that agricultural trainers had more theoretical than practical knowledge, the State encouraged them to follow additional practical training by offering them a number of facilities. In addition, planning for the alternation of young people between the different training centers can be put to question. Indeed, if the learners finish their training, with sufficient theoretical background, the fact remains that many shortcomings are observed on the practical level: staying with the referents for two weeks on average does not allow a complete assimilation of all the steps required to conduct a given crop or livestock operation. If one adds the lack of control of their roles by referents and heads of families and the non-respect of prescribed teaching methods, then it becomes difficult for these training schemes to be truly effective. According to [8], agricultural training schemes must be effective and serve as a reference.

Moreover, the method of selecting the referents, who basically do not align themselves, can influence their level of involvement in training as well as the viability and performance of the programs. Since the latter receive no support for their participation and are working in the hope of

future substantial support, it becomes normal to note that only part of their time is ultimately devoted to agricultural activity and follow-up of the learners. If we already consider the limiting factor of time and the relatively low level of education of the referents, we would ask ourselves if they are in a position to organize and to ensure the expected training efficiently, to follow, to guide and to evaluate in an objective way the stay of the learners.

On the other hand, more than 48% of the heads of households who do not have agriculture as main activity, one wonders what practical knowledge related to the farming profession can they transmit to the young learners. Are they really trainers within the system? While their role as a social institution in charge of the education of young people cannot be questioned, it is not the same for their contribution in the provision of new skills, know-how and necessary knowledge for the professional integration of learners. However, in other countries, such as in Australia, every individual who wants to be a trainer in vocational training is required to have a training and evaluation diploma, practical and theoretical knowledge in relation with the domain concerned [23]. Consequently, even if the contribution of referents and heads of households to training cannot be denied, this logic seems slightly exaggerated for the program of support for the renovation and development of vocational training in the sectors of agriculture, livestock and fisheries to consider them as trainers.

According to [13], every vocational training process involves costs for both learners, trainers, training centers in the case of work-linked training and to the society in general. [24] note that in developing countries, the majority of agricultural training schemes are heavily dependent on government. In the cases studied, if the first observation is verified, the second is only partially true. Indeed, the contribution of public services to training remains very low. Thus, the referents must make an additional contribution (financial, technical and material) to the training. Moreover, they strive to receive at least 4 learners each month. Yet it seems that no effort is being made by parents and even learners to encourage them in their momentum. In this regard, a referent says: *learners come here as if they were going to a ball. They do not bring any work tools and it annoys me.* Consequently, it is already feared that they will be demoralized over time, especially if they do not receive support from the program to improve

the competitiveness of agro-pastoral family farms (ACEFA Program) as hoped for at the beginning or if they do not receive substantial support from public authorities and other development partners.

6. CONCLUSION

Our study aimed to analyze the contribution of professionals in agricultural training in Cameroon and was based on two assumptions: learners stay in a socio-professional environment facilitates and accelerates their acquisition of knowledge and know-how; and that the contribution of professionals is not solely limited to the transmission of knowledge and know-how. Surveys through questionnaires (with learners, heads of households and referents) and interviews with the pedagogical managers of five training centers have enabled us to confirm to a large extent our hypotheses. It emerges from our study that the method of knowledge transmission used by referents is based on the theory of social learning and its various components, thus enabling trainees to learn through observation and modeling through practice [16].

Moreover, in the system, the referents have multiple roles ranging from the reception of learners to their follow-up in the preparation of their professional projects. However, 75% of the referents master their roles despite some shortcomings noted in the strategies and methods of transmission of knowledge and the limited time devoted to learners by some referents. On the other hand, although they receive no external support for their participation in the training, the referents contribute to the training in technical, material and financial terms. Moreover, 80% of the heads of households do not master their roles. Nevertheless, they contribute by providing moral and sometimes financial support to learners and promising to make land available for their future insertion. The difficulties encountered by the referents include insufficiency in financial resources, the deviant behavior of certain learners, the loss of animals and equipment, etc. As for the families, the main difficulties relate to the availability of land to be provided to the learner at the end of his training. As for relations between the actors of the system, they are mainly informal and are rarely contracted. The establishment of formal contracts between the actors of the training system and the provision of substantial support to them would probably constitute a means of increasing their motivation and the performance of the training system.

While our study has allowed us to understand the role and contribution of professionals in agricultural training and the difficulties encountered, it remains that their opinions, as well as those of learners on the content of training, are still not known. Further research should therefore be of interest as well as the initial motivations and the effectiveness of the integration of the young people trained.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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