
Chinese E-Commerce Empowers Cameroonian Woman to Rebuild Life



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YAOUNDE, Oct. 12 -After years of displacement caused by conflict, a young Cameroonian woman has rebuilt her life through Chinese online shopping and livestreaming platforms, turning hardship into entrepreneurship.

Each morning, 24-year-old Elove Marie-Cleophas Messanga stands before her ring light and phone camera, promoting products and engaging with customers on TikTok. She now runs a small but thriving business selling clothing she purchases from Chinese e-commerce sites.

Forced to flee her home in Cameroon's restive Northwest Region in 2017, Messanga settled in Buea, where she initially worked as a hairdresser. The work was exhausting and low-paying, prompting her to explore new opportunities. A friend introduced her to China's vast e-commerce market — a move that changed her life.

“Chinese online platforms are convenient and affordable. You can start a business with even 50,000 XAF,” Messanga said, adding that Chinese products are diverse, good quality, and in demand among young shoppers.

Her growing business now supports her displaced siblings and provides her with financial independence.

Economist Victor Arrey noted that online shopping has become an empowering force among Cameroon's youth, particularly women. "It allows them to earn a living with dignity and flexibility," he said.

Messanga hopes one day to visit China to meet suppliers and expand her business network. "China has opened doors for us. I want to become a distributor in multiple cities across Cameroon," she said with pride.

Her story mirrors a broader trend across Africa, where Chinese digital platforms are helping young entrepreneurs rebuild lives, create jobs, and foster cross-border connections that drive inclusive growth.