Research Article

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES IN BUEA, SOUTH WEST REGION, CAMEROON

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Abstract

All over the world, there have been a talk on civil society organizations (CSOs); with the hope and aspirations that CSOs will be active in ensuring sustainable development. The activities of some CSOs around Buea reveals that these CSOs are out to provide help to the helpless, gives voice to the voiceless, raising awareness on some social and sensitive issues, advocating for change by empowering communities to develop programs aimed at meeting their needs. This study was centered on the role of CSOs and sustainable development in Buea. It involved a total of 15 organizations and Questionnaires were used for data collection. The study found out that CSOs provides capacity building to those around Buea.It was also realized that CSOs are faced with challenges of getting funds for their own projects which makes them dependent on the resources from the donors or government. Studies have also indicated that the problem of lack of resources has greatly contributed to some negative impact on their relationship with their beneficiary. The study also reveals that in most of the projects executed by CSOs the concerned communities in most cases are not empowered enough to sustain their level of economic and political development; the beneficiaries (communities) do not also account for the resources that are made available to them by donors. They cannot demand accountability from their civil leaders. It is recommended that CSOs at National level should strengthen ties with those at international level and government institutions to curb issues of funding as well as other issues that might arise. Also, community members who are at the forefront of development should be involved in all the stages especially at planning stages.

Keywords: Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Developmental activities, Buea.
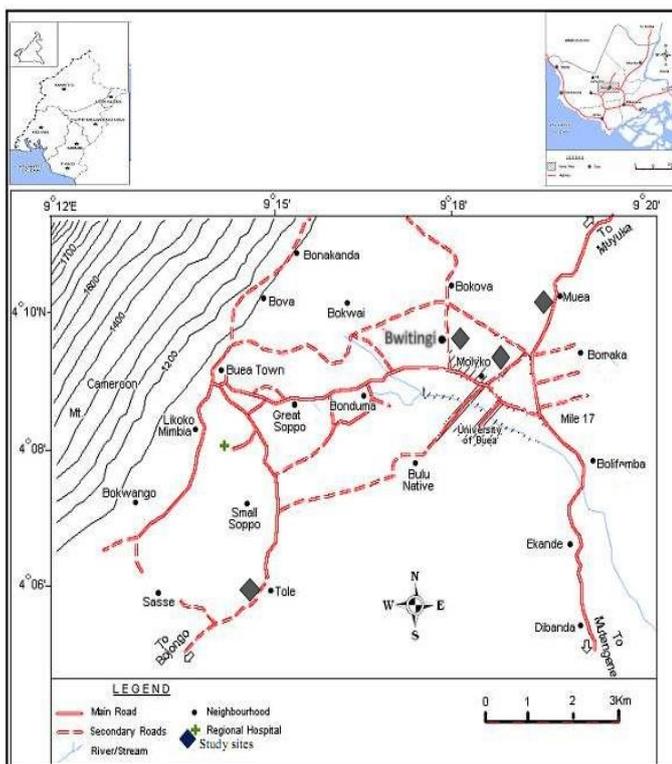
INTRODUCTION

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have been active in regional development activities and have targeted under-served rural communities with the objective of raising the living standards of target populations. However, in the absence of an overall government policy for balanced regional development and a clear rural development focus, and given the ill capacity of local administrations, these initiatives have remained as objectives, often unable to make pieces of a vision puzzle (Clark, 1998 and Wright, 2015). Several African countries have a century-old history of volunteerism and civic institutions, which have contributed to the formation and functioning of traditional civil society organizations. These traditional institutions have continued to provide services to their respective communities despite experiencing protracted famine, war, ethnic conflict, colonialism and political instability (Waisbord, 2020). They have thus remained active despite the difficult experiences that have affected their dynamics and functionality. CSOs still play an important role in communal life and the grassroots collective activities. They are also known for promoting a culture of self-help and social solidarity during emergencies, food crises, conflict and political instability, most notably, in and around the peripheral areas and the marginalized rural and urban communities (European Commission (EC), 2012). In Cameroon, CSOs emerged in the form of pressure groups and associations to create awareness and consciousness among the people on issues concerning their rights within the state and economic interest.

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Traditional associations, normally built around ethnic affiliations are extremely strong in Cameroon and provide the both economic and social functions to their members. Some of them can be considered as Mutual Aid Social Societies that provide social solidarity and economic assistance in good and bad times (March and Taggu, 1986). The main ideology behind the spread of associations is to fill the gap created by the state. Some pressure groups gathered momentum towards the end of British Imperialism as agitation for self-rule championed by an educated minority (such as teachers and clerks) emerged, one of such association is Kom Improvement Association (KIA) which was formed in the early 1960s.Its main objective was to bring educated people together and to articulate their demands for full participation in the political process and local development activities. The formation of the association in the early 1980s was inspired by 1975 law governing cultural development, which permitted ethnically based groups to exist as long as they did not hamper nation-building efforts. The main ideology behind the spread of associations as Nkwi (1997) puts it, was basically to fill the gap created by the state during this era, in some places un-confidential methods was adopted for particular resistance to the prevailing thinking and actions of the ruling elite. The advent of democratic pluralism saw a turning point in the life of civil society operations, which culminated into social, economic and political groupings for effective participation in the democratization process. CSOs in Cameroon have a short history, if one were to consider them strictly from the non-governmental perspective. In this way, its emergence can be traced to about (33)years ago with the promulgation of the Freedom of Association Law,No90/53 of December 19,1990 which liberalized formation and operation of association within the country (Cameron,2001&Cox, 1999).This period

also marked the beginning of Democracy in Cameroon. However, association life has always characterized most chiefdoms and kingdoms of the Northwest and Southwest regions. Some of these associations purportedly represent the people. But the recurrent aspects of cultural and development association in Cameroon is protecting their identity. At times these associations, supported by elites in cities raise funds for projects at home (Nkwi, 1997 & Yenshu, 1997). The role of cultural and development associations witnessed challenges as development agents when multi-partism emerged in the 1990s as most of them were being used by elite to canvas votes during elections. Common areas of interest for these associations were community development (water supply, farm-to-market roads, provision of improved planting materials….).Some of these associations include South West Elite Association (SWELA), Bamileke cultural Association (Laakam) (Yenshu, 1997 & Hearn, 2001). CSOs working in rural peripheral areas in Buea have become partners of many government institutions in delivering a wide range of basic and specialized services. They play a pioneering role in identifying priorities, planning and implementing projects, and accessing donor funds with increased credibility and support. The role of inter-governmental organizations such as the Commonwealth Secretariat, United Nations Organization, the World Bank and donors in creating an enabling environment for the growth and operations of CSOs in the country cannot be over emphasized (Livermore, 2011& Mendes, 2008). Consequently, this study is therefore concerned with the role of CSOs in ensuring sustainable development, investigating the activities they carry out and the challenges they face in their actions to facilitate sustainable Development while focusing on the case of Buea. The researcher tried assessing why Buea as a town that has hosted a large number of "modern" CSOs that have collectively spent billions of dollars on humanitarian and development projects have not been able to attain the required level of sustainable social change it needs. For better understanding of the geographical location of Buea, see figure one below.

Source: Authors Field Work, 2020

Problem statement

Hundreds of international CSOs have invested significant external financial flows in countries in the form of humanitarian, development and advocacy focused projects. However, many of the international NGOs are criticized for becoming involved in fragmentary project interventions with a limited timetable, budget and target groups instead of facilitating broader social action that brokered societal transformation at various levels. The fact that many modern NGOs, unlike the "traditional" CSOs, relyon international donor assistance and external resources, have led many persons to believe that they undermine the power of "traditional" CSOs. For these reasons, local communities in Buea perceive these "modern" CSOs as being an extension of western-based donors and promoters of their interests. Their partnerships have often been defined by short-lived projects focusing mainly on saving lives and reducing human suffering and not on brokering social transformation at the community level. Instead, they tend to produce "specialized" cadres of aid workers and intermediary organizations that are loosely connected to the home and citizen-owned CSOs. The marginalization of traditional CSOs from the mainstream nation-building process therefore, has its own implication for the empowerment of ordinary citizens and the facilitation of collective social action that can result in societal transformation. Such civil society discourses have become more controversial in explaining the roles of "traditional" CSOs in the nation-building process and facilitating societal transformation. To this end, the following research objectives were derived in order to address the research problem.

General research objective

The general research objective of this study was to critically examine the role of Civil Society Organization (CSO) in sustainable development in Buea.

Specific research objectives

The specific research objectives of this study were:

1. To identify and describe development oriented CSOs in Buea.
2. To evaluate the activities of these CSOs.
3. To identify the challenges faced by these CSOs in the sustainable development in Buea and proposed solutions.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The research made use of three theories [Community Development Theory by Tan (2009), Participatory Theoryby Hazard & Audouin (2016) and Grassroots Theory by Stachowiak (2013)}. These theories were based on the views of the recent thoughts and they tried to understand the development role on civil society.

Community Development Theory

According to Tan (2009), community development is a process where community members are supported by agencies to identify and take collective actions on issues which are important to them. It is a comprehensive strategy based on the ideas of empowerment, human rights inclusiveness, social justice, self-determination and collective action. Community

development (CD) was actively promoted throughout the developing world during the first development decade of the 1950s and 1960s as part of the state building process and as a means of raising living standards by government and the United Nations (UN) through its affiliated institutions as part of African independence and decolonization movements (Briggs & Mueller, 1997). Bonye *et al.* (2013) assert that the pursuit of community participation whether as a demand of citizenship or a strategy of government or organization has a particular intrinsic value that community members are to own and sustain development. Community development empowers community members and creates a stronger and more connected communities. It emphasizes the importance of oppressed individuals in overcoming eventually imposed societal problems and it places an explicit emphasis on power distribution in order to address the root cause of inequality and disadvantage (Tan, 2009 & Odoom *et al.,* 2018). In summary a community development paradigm implies that the profession would become more sensitive to a role of social work that is more concern with organizing self-help rather than delivering direct treatment. The job of the social worker is not discarded, but rather reshaped, as a result of the empowerment, education and training of indigenous leaders. A bold and contemporary Community Development social worker must be willing to take that risk (Tan, 2009).

Participatory Theory

A participatory approach is one in which everyone with an interest in the intervention has a voice, either directly or through representation. Everyone's participation should be encouraged and appreciated, and the process should not be controlled by one person or a group. A truly participative approach takes into account everyone's point of view. It does however imply that everyone's opinions are valued and it is not believed that experts or the well-educated inherently knows what is best. The choice of a participatory method is supported both pragmatically and by pursuit of a democratic idea. The pragmatic goal is to increase the players' experience, intellect and inventiveness in the face of irreducible ambiguity (Garrison, 2000 & Weerawardena *et al.,* 2010).The phrase participatory approach has become a frequently promoted methodological concept for intervention practice in discuses about sustainable development and a variety of participatory methodologies, procedures and strategies have been developed to operationalize it. Despite significant variations, the various methods have one thing in common, they all see the process in which players are involved as one of planning, decision making and or social learning (Cees, 2000). Community members' participation is increasingly regarded as critical to achieving long term development. Involving and educating users assists in ensuring that the identified problems and solutions really reflect the requirements and preferences of the community. This improves the likelihood that solutions implemented will be adopted (Adu-Baffox & Bonney, 2021). At all stages of planning, participatory techniques can be used. However, the amount and character of engagement by various players (beneficiaries, citizens, elected public officials, professionals and civil servants, and other stakeholders) may differ. It should be noted here that public participation in societal governance is the topic of history and is critical to every democratic society. However, the term participatory may be interpreted in a variety of ways and the amount or intensity of involvement by diverse groups of actors can likewise vary considerably (Edwards, 2005).

Grassroots Theory

The grassroots theory uses power as changeable and dynamic and unable to be held exclusively by elites. Thus, people can create power by taking mutual action to achieve social change (Stachowiak, 2013).The underlying assumption of grassroots theory is that the sustenance of power depends on the cooperation of the people and power can shift through actions and events. The theory concludes that efforts should be targeted at institutions and policies, not changing individuals. The theory especially posits that advocacy organizations (like NGOs) can facilitate the efforts of a collective to achieve social change. The strategies for social change according to grassroots theory includes; training, capacity building, community mobility, media advocacy, social protest, action, research, whistle blowing and policy analyses

METHODOLOGY

Facts concerning the role of CSOs in Rural Development in Buea were obtained from two sources such as primary (survey questionnaire, interview and observations) and secondary sources (consultation of archives, official documents, letters and project reports, Maps, published and unpublished dissertations, theses and internet. Secondary data was from most recent editions. Because of the difficulties encountered in studying all the CSOs found in the South West Region, the researcher was limited only to CSOs found in Buea and exploratory research design was deployed.

Convenient and purposive sampling techniques were used respectively as it targets the key informant (CSOs staff and users of the services of CSOs) thereby achieving objectivity and subjectivity and the population was divided into age, sex, occupation, level of education, ethnic group of origin and income level. With the use of questionnaire, open and close ended questions were administered to 100 persons by the researcher. For the sake of confidentiality and ethical considerations, the interviewees' names were not taken and what they said was not recorded but codes were assigned to the different categories of respondents. A signed copy of the authorization from the institution was showed to them in other to win their trust. All above involved lot of ethical issues, organizing the field and embarking first on recognition trip to create preliminary rapport. Lastly, participant observation was also done side by side field work period. This gives a detail outlook on what is on the ground and reduces the chances of favouritism.

A descriptive analysis technique was employed such that the data was described in a constructive way and patterns emerged that fulfilled every condition of the data. It involved reading the data, demarcating the data, eliminating irrelevancies, grouping and naming data into constituents, and arranging the data into themes that accurately and fully describe the participants' lived experiences. More so, the data was analyzed narratively, involving capturing and reviewing respondents' information to get more insight into their lived experiences. With the use of excel 2013 for windows 2013, figures and tables were gotten. This was geared towards arriving at results that were to be forced to experience the inference of general laws from particular instances to general and qualitative concerns, judgment and conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Development Oriented Civil Society Organizations in Buea

Findings corresponding to research objective one indicated that some of the development oriented civil society organizations are: Big Step Out Reach, Bright Future Foundation, Reach Out, Plan International Cameroon, Denish Refugee Council and they have workers from 3 to about 200. Furthermore, their main source of revenue is from local, international donors and some from membership contributions. In addition, finding also indicated that the respondent in the organization held the position of mobilisers, project managers, public relations, accountants and secretaries respectively These persons are in charge of the day-to-day running of the organization such as sensitizing the community, creating a link between the organization and the local man. These findings are in line with the ideas of Fowler (1991) & Fisher (1998) who identifies the role of civil society in a "democratic" political culture as vital. He states that the political element of many voluntary organizations facilitates better awareness and a more informed citizenry by enabling them to make informed choices about political agendas and holding their governments more accountable. He attempts to illustrate this by maintaining that the statutes of these civil society organizations serve as micro-constitutions to inform their constituencies and prepare them for the process of democratic decision-making. The research showed that NGOs have been in the municipality in the past decade and to bridge the poverty gap, these NGOs have decided to contribute their bits to improve upon the standard of living of the people and also to add on to what the government does for people in these communities. They however have not been able to cover all the required or needed interventions that the people need.

Activities of these civil society organizations

Findings corresponding to research objective two (table 3 above) indicates that CSOs in the Buea municipality have carried out activities such as: capacity building, sustainable agriculture, promotion of small businesses and trainings/workshops/seminars (community development), scholarships and sponsorship advocacy (education) health talks, free screening, sensitization and free counseling (health/hygiene/sanitation), food distribution, talks on diet (nutrition),guidance and counseling workshops/seminars/trainings, rehabilitation (psychosocial support), community outreach sensitization advocacy).

The activities they carried out is mainly in the side of development and small scale economic endeavors. These sorts of limit civil society outside the field of economic development. This is consistent with the third sector perspective of the civil society which points out both beside free state and the economy (heavy industry base has formation). These findings are in line with the view of Development Kooperation Agency (DKA),(2010)who refers to CSOs as institutions that commonly include a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms and that vary in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. He portrays civil societies as organizational spaces populated by various forms such as developmental NGOs, registered charities, faith-based organizations, community groups, social movements business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups, business circles, standing for non-profit that unite individual citizens outside their families for common civic causes. Also, findings indicate that CSOs give free monthly blood pressure and diabetic check and free medical consultation to the elderly. Also, CSOs relate with the community through: community mobilization, sensitization, education, information, workshops, seminars, trainings, follow-up campaigns, supporting start-ups businesses provision of agricultural inputs, provision of information about the outside world and innovative ideas, capacity building. As per the impact of such project**,** (table 3 above) a few were identified which included; local development, Improved health care, community empowerment, poverty alleviation, better agricultural output, better sanitary and hygienic conditions, reduced unemployment, improved psychosocial development, better education, reduced gender-based violence, human right protection and strengthening of social ties between the communities and the CSOs while building mutual trust. These are further corroborated in the following spheres.

Empowering of communities: Civil society organizations give a voice to the disorganized, voiceless segments of society. They raise awareness of social issues and advocate for change, empowering local communities to develop new programs to meet their own needs.

Ensuring good governance: Civil Society works together with the government, striving to develop policy and implement new strategies. Beyond that, civil society builds so-called social capital by providing a way for participants to build relationships and make connections based on their values, behaviors, and beliefs.

Table 1. Profile of Organization's in the Study Area

S/N	Organization	Year of creation	Number of employees	Sources of funding
1	Big – Steps Outreach	2012	3	International donors
2	Bright Future Foundation	2012	10	International and local donors
3	Cameroon Young Dynamic Youth (CYDY)	2015	10	International donors, local organizations and individuals
4	CARITAS	2014	22	International donors
5	Center for Human Right and Democracy in Africa	2005	30	International and local donors
6	Community Synergy for Sustainable Development	2015	27	International donors
7	Danish Refuge Council	1970	37	International donors, foreign government
8	Good Hope Charity Organization	2017	10	International and local donors
9	Health Hive Humanitarian Action (HHHA)	2015	7	Grants and membership contributions
10	Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Foundation	Not provided	Not provided	International donors, individuals, foreign government and local organisation
11	Nkong Hill Top Association for Development	1996	10	International and local donors
12	Plan International Cameroon	1937	200+	International donors and foreign governments
13	Reach Out NGO	1996	78	International and local donors
14	Springboard Foundation	2016	10	Local donors and membership contributions
15	Young Professionals Foundation	2018	4	Individuals

Source: Field survey, August 2020

Table 2. Areas of Concern, Activities, and Key Actors

Themes (Areas of concern)	Activities	Key Actors
Community Development	✓ Capacity building ✓ Sustainable agriculture ✓ Promotion of small businesses ✓ Trainings/workshops/seminars	✓ Big – Steps Outreach ✓ Community Synergy for Sustainable Development ✓ Young Professionals Foundation ✓ Cameroon Young Dynamic Youth (CYDY) ✓ Nkong Hill Top Association for Development
Education	✓ Scholarships ✓ Sponsorship ✓ Advocacy	✓ Bright Future Foundation ✓ CARITAS ✓ Young Professionals Foundation ✓ Reach Out NGO ✓ Good Hope Charity Organisation ✓ Plan International Cameroon ✓ Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Foundation
Health/Hygiene/Sanitation	✓ Health talks ✓ Free screening ✓ Sensitization ✓ Free counselling	✓ Springboard Foundation ✓ Health Hive Humanitarian Action (HHHA) ✓ CARITAS ✓ Reach Out NGO ✓ Good Hope Charity Organization ✓ Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Foundation ✓ Danish Refuge Council
Nutrition	✓ Food distribution ✓ Talks on diet	✓ Bright Future Foundation ✓ CARITAS ✓ Reach Out NGO ✓ Good Hope Charity Organization ✓ Plan International Cameroon ✓ Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Foundation ✓ Danish Refuge Council
Psychosocial Support	✓ Guidance and counselling ✓ Workshops/seminars/trainings ✓ Rehabilitation	✓ Health Hive Humanitarian Action (HHHA) ✓ CARITAS ✓ Reach Out NGO ✓ Good Hope Charity Organization ✓ Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Foundation ✓ Danish Refuge Council
Career Development	✓ Counselling ✓ Workshops/seminars/trainings ✓ Capacity building	✓ Big – Steps Outreach ✓ Community Synergy for Sustainable Development ✓ Young Professionals Foundation ✓ Cameroon Young Dynamic Youth (CYDY) ✓ Nkong Hill Top Association for Development
Human Right	✓ Community outreach ✓ Sensitization ✓ Advocacy ✓ Capacity building	✓ Center for Human Right and Democracy in Africa ✓ Danish Refuge Council

Source: Field survey, August 2020

Table 3. Activities and the impact of these CSOs in Buea

Area of activity	Activity	Community Action	Impact
Community mobilization and outreach	▪ Sensitization ▪ Education ▪ Information ▪ Workshops ▪ Seminars ▪ Trainings ▪ Follow up ▪ Campaigns	▪ Community collaboration ▪ Acceptance of traditional authorities ▪ Participation in Workshops, Seminars and Trainings ▪ Follow up ▪ Information ▪ Need assessment	▪ Community development ▪ Improved health care ▪ Community empowerment ▪ Poverty alleviation ▪ Better agricultural output ▪ Better sanitary and hygienic conditions ▪ Reduced unemployment ▪ Capacity building
Financing	▪ Supporting startups ▪ Agricultural mechanization	▪ Local resources ▪ Logistics	▪ Improved Psychosocial development ▪ Better education
Communication	▪ Provision of information about the outside world and innovative ideas	▪ Provision of filed information and security situations ▪ Relay of information to the local population	▪ Reduced gender-based violence ▪ Human right protection ▪ Stronger social ties between the community and the organization

Source: Field survey August 2020

Social accountability: As CSOs collaborate with communities through different institutions and organizations, they promote social accountability by holding corporations, faith-based organization and other social institutions accountable for their actions (or inactions). This is common with organizations involved in human right advocacy as well as socio-economic wellbeing. Social accountability prizes transparency and honesty and makes sure everyone; from government officials to local school children, follow the same rules.

Findings also indicated that CSOs in the Buea municipality have some ongoing projects such as: Sensitization, sponsorship, education, agriculture, human right advocacy, and health and Career development. Findings indicate that 7 of the CSOs relate with local people through: groups, individual contacts, Community representative, educational sensitization and employment. Workers of the CSOs visit quarter heads and community leaders for information.

Table 4. Challenges faced by CSOs

Challenges	Frequency	Improvement measures	Responsibility
Inaccessibility of communities	1	Reduction of violence, improvement of transport facilities and less government restriction	Both the state and separatist fighters
		Community involvement	Community
Insufficient funding	4	Increased funding	Funders and people in peaceful regions
Inadequate Communication and Insufficient information and statistics	1	Better network services	Service providers
		Community involvement providing Adequate data collection, methods	Community humanitarian actors
Insecurity	5	Recognition of humanitarian actors	Both the state and separatist fighters
		Community involvement	Community
Government restrictions	1	Relaxation of restrictions	Government
Underachievement of goals	1	Better monitoring and evaluation	Humanitarian actors
Insufficient volunteers	1	Campaigns on volunteering	Humanitarian actors
Conservatism	1	Sensitization	Humanitarian actors
Total	15		

Source: Field survey, August 2020

Challenges faced by civil society organizations in sustainable development in buea and proposed solutions

In line with challenges faced in our third objective, it was found that CSOs are faced with; inaccessibility of communities, insufficient funding, communication problems, insecurity, insufficient information and statistics, government restrictions, underachievement of goals, insufficient volunteers and conservatism, in their attempt to bring social change to communities. These issues have been discussed in three major spheres of donor dependency, political and legal climate and poor mobilization.

Donor Dependency: The civil society organizations in Buea is struggling with a dependency on donor funding which hinders sustainability and encourages a short-term strategy of chasing funds. As organizations face a global decline in donor funding, the issues of dependency and sustainability only grow in importance. In an era of shrinking donor budgets, how do we ensure civil society becomes more independent and self-sustaining and safeguard CSOs to guarantee their existence once donors draw back or leave? New models of blended finance can help ensure institutional independence such as dues, fee-for-service activities, donor and private sector grants, endowments, and cost-risk-sharing partnerships. Natalie Ross suggested moving away from a model of organizations being sustained by grant money for grant-specific activities and instead shifting to a model of investing to create local trust funds that will sustain organizations. Donor dependency not only hampers the financial sustainability of organizations but also diverts resources to fulfilling donor requirements. We need a cadre of civil society leaders – not people who can manage grants. There is a need to build the assets and capacity of CSOs. "Sustainability isn't just funding. We also need to build institutional capacity.

Hostile Legal Environment: The second major challenge civil society in the developing world faces is a growing backlash of draconian laws against civil society organizations, as host governments increasingly view CSOs as foreign-funded agents of opposition and seek to thwart their influence. CSOs are seen by governments as opponents instead of partners. CSOs need to shift from confrontation to collaboration. They need not go to the government with problems and complaints, but rather they should come with solutions. Civil Society Organizations need to have systematic relationships with the government to have success when working with the government on laws. There's a relationship between civil society, the public sector, and the private sector as they all play a role in society.

Each sector has its own function but is working on the same problems. As the political and economic landscapes continue to shift, donors and civil society will need to actively work towards creative solutions to guarantee that this third leg of the stool remains firmly in place. There is need to ensure that local organizations remain strong, operating under financially and institutionally sustainable models and within legal environments that enable them to flourish.

Moreover, findings point to solutions such as:

- Reduction of violence;
- Improvement of transport facilities and less government restriction;
- Greater community involvement,
- Increased funding,
- Better network services,
- Community involvement providing Adequate data collection methods,
- Relaxation of restrictions,
- Better monitoring and evaluation,
- Campaigns on volunteering and Sensitization.

This is in line with the spirit that Fowler (1991) identifies the role of civil society in a "democratic" political culture as vital. He states that the political element of many voluntary organizations facilitates better awareness and a more informed citizenry by enabling them to make informed choices about political agendas and holding their governments more accountable. He attempts to illustrate this by maintaining that the statutes of these civil organizations serve as micro-constitutions to inform their constituencies and prepare them for the process of democratic decision-making. Critics, notably from the development approach, hold that such a perspective on advocacy and the political role of civil society actors can cause tension between politicians and government entities, and challenge their "legitimacy", as Western-supported local NGOs are often self-appointing groups with little constituencies in the south, notably in Africa Along with the postmodernism approach to civil society, the "third-sector" approach became highly popular during the 1990s. Fowler (1997) identifies third-sector organizations as ones that are formally structured, independent, voluntary, self-organized, and non-profit NGOs.

Conclusion

Findings revealed that the organizations function in or relate with communities through groups, individuals, local

organization, local governments (councils) traditional authorities and churches. Local mobilization is due to the fact that most organizations choose not to work with individuals and most groups in the communities have a mastery of the sociology and geography of the community. Even though some organizations indicated that they worked with individuals, this is found in very rare cases. Also, in most communities, traditional authorities are most respected by the local population and therefore partnering with them is a fruitful venture for most organizations. Through these authorities, the communities welcome the initiative introduced and can also trust the fact that the project does not intend harm. On another note, churches emerged to one of the key local partners of most CSOs. For organizations that are Christian based, the church is consider the main means to mobilize the community, couple with the fact that organizations consider that churches and their leaders can be trusted in most of not all aspects of projects, ranging from need assessment to follow-up. In collaborating with the local population through local, authorities, organizations and institutions, information is shared and even consultancy services are offered to the CSOs on how to better operate in the community as well as the consolidation of community trust. As per the impact of such project, a few were identified which included; local development, Improved health care, Community empowerment, Poverty alleviation, Better agricultural output, Better sanitary and hygienic conditions, Reduced unemployment, Capacity building, Improved Psychosocial development, Better education, Reduced gender based violence, Human right protection and strengthening of social ties between the communities and the CSOs while building mutual trust.

Recommendations

To ensure that civil society becomes more independent and self-sustaining and safeguard CSOs to guarantee their existence once donors leave? New models of blended finance can help ensure institutional independence such as dues, fee-for-service activities, donor and private sector grants, endowments, and cost-risk-sharing partnerships. The community should participate at all the phases of the project because the population is the final beneficiary of these projects. This is in line with the Yaoundé declaration on 2005 which asserted that solutions to African problems must lie firmly in the hands of Africans themselves. Democracy is not simply about a few people elected every few years making decisions for the rest of the communities. It is about a living participation where local communities, groups and organizations can think about their own needs, develop their own programs for change and influence the policy process to respond to these needs. The government and organizations should make use of anthropologies. Community development is slow because there is no one consulting with the local people to help plan, implement and monitor the project. Experts such as anthropologies who are familiar with the people's customs can better evaluate prospects of projects than those who are not. The national government should enhance community development and capacity building to ensure that sufficient resources are made through local government to support CSOs at local level. Development is more meaningful to the local population if it is initiated and controlled by them. Even the efforts of the largest civil society organizations are a drop in the ocean, so unless we take our role more seriously, we are never going to achieve change on the scale that's needed to end extreme poverty, protect the planet and realize

fundamental rights. This requires us to be much more deliberate in how we leverage governments and the private sector. Several participants, especially those from organizations which receive donor funding via international CSOs, raised the importance of us being more honest about the power that comes with money and the balance between accountability to funders, and to partners and communities with whom we work. A speaker from Greenpeace encouraged the conference to spend less time talking to people who fervently agree with our take on the world, and spend more time engaging non-believers and agnostics. This is the only way we can grow our work, increase impact and lock-in change. It's also a useful discipline, in that it forces us to stress-test whether what we say is correct, and what we do is effective. When administration is brought close to the grassroots, they feel that they have a greater say in the process. They become responsive, and this reduces the challenges the CSOs face in rural development.

NGOs in the municipality should always involve community members right from the project planning stage, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in the communities, because community members complain about their involvement, this will make the projects sustainable because beneficiaries will feel that the project is for them, thus their responsibility to protect and maintain the project, community members should also be involved in project identification in the aspect of monitoring.It involves the community in decision-making processes that directly influence their lives. It also reassured citizens about the community and overall growth. As a result, it is critical to the development of an empowered and accountable community (Columbia University, 2015). Secondly, community engagement in the planning process fosters a sense of ownership. It gives them a sense of ownership since they believe it is their own progress. This sense of ownership does not emerge from a top-down approach. Also, community engagement ensures the continuation of the development process and therefore ensures long term growth. People are active in community work from the planning to the implementation stages. It fosters reciprocal cooperation between the government, donors and communities resulting in appropriate development (Sjögren, 2001). NGOs in the municipality should also strengthen their ties with international partners so as to get more funds, invest into building their capacities and also collaborating with other developmental partners to make accessing grants a bit easy for them. There should be strengthened collaboration between partners as this will help to prevent duplication of projects in some communities while other communities will be lacking some of this project to ensure sustainability.

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