

**Perspectives on the Role of Community Foundations in Community Development:  
A Step to Introducing the Concept in West and Central Africa - Case of Cameroon**  
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**Abstract**

Following a decline in funding to local NGOs, that is attributable in part to the economic recession in the 90s and shifting priorities of international donors, communities are challenged to look for alternative sources of funding for their own development. In this situation, Ndzinwa Julius Bantar uses the civil society landscape of Cameroon as an example to demonstrate the public perception of NGOs as corrupt, and how this view is affecting the public's ability to mobilize local resources to continue working on uncompleted projects and meet the needs of their communities. The author examines the role of community foundations (CFs) as an alternative philanthropy model in a society where NGOs are suspect and described by many as "public stand taps with outlets in individual dwellings, solely controlled with selfish motives". Ndzinwa Julius Bantar forms the initial hypothesis that community foundations are suitable models and effective vehicles for local philanthropy and development which can conveniently address the shortcomings of NGOs and, build trust in the community.

Looking at cases from the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, South Africa and Kenya, among others, the author examines this development role of community foundations vis-a-vis their key functions of grantmaking, donor services, community leadership, and promotion of youth philanthropy. As a stride to introducing community foundations in Cameroon and other parts of West and Central Africa where the CF movement is unfamiliar, the author looks at the comparative advantage of CFs over other nonprofits and provides steps for their creation. The paper concludes with key recommendations for emerging as well as fully established CFs, and a challenge to initiators of CFs to study and adapt them to their local environment rather than to simply copy and paste models from the US where they originated.

For the full version of the paper, please click [here](#).

