

Trustees' Annual Report

01 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

Thomas Edwards

22 June 2024

Version History

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1. Administrative Details

Charity Name	Cameroon Catalyst
Registered Charity Number	1155758
Charity Principal Address	Flat 6 Stockwood Court 19 St Winifred's Road Bournemouth BH2 6NY

Trustee Name	Dates Acted
Thomas Edwards	Trustee and Chairperson
Laura McFadzean	Trustee (until 23 March 2023)
Thom Dutton	Trustee
Andy Hopkins	Treasurer
Pat Mballa	Trustee and Co-Founder
Claire Gott	Trustee and Co-Founder
Sebastian Denner	Trustee

2. Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document	Constitution, latest version enacted March 2016
Charity Constitution	Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
Trustee Selection	Elected by charity members at AGM

3. The Report

This Trustees' Annual Report accompanies the accounts submitted by Cameroon Catalyst to the Charity Commission, covering the 12-month accounting period from 01 September 2022 to 31 August 2023. It highlights the objectives of the charity, the activities undertaken and the achievements made in the period reported.

4. Objectives and Activities

4.1. Objectives

The object of Cameroon Catalyst is to empower village communities across east Cameroon, West Africa and improve living conditions and wellbeing, especially through the provision of water, education, health care, affordable housing, renewable energy, and microbusinesses.

Cameroon Catalyst is a student driven international development charity promoting sustainable development in rural Cameroon. We bring together students and specialists to deliver essential infrastructure projects in some of the least developed communities in the country. We were co-founded in 2009 by a team of civil engineering students at the University of Southampton in partnership with a native Cameroonian living in the UK.

Our vision is for rural communities in Cameroon to possess the autonomy and opportunity to achieve their own sustainable development towards a fulfilling, healthy and prosperous future. Our mission is to act as a catalyst for sustainable change in rural Cameroon by delivering needs-assessed infrastructure which remove development barriers and empowers local people to engage with their own sustainable development.

We are driven by teams of dedicated students at the University of Southampton, the University of Birmingham and Imperial College London. Our student volunteers hold a vital role in our work and are responsible for the design and fundraising for our projects. Our student teams combine a diverse range of technical and non-technical degree programmes, drawing from engineering, natural and social sciences and languages.

We are governed by a Board of Trustees who inform the charity's direction and managed day-to-day by a senior committee of industry professionals. We are supported by an advisory board of individuals and organisations who specialise in each of our focus areas and priorities. We are grateful to receive ongoing corporate patronage from engineering professional services firm WSP who contribute to our project funding. We are also proud of our long term technical advisory relationship with humanitarian architectural design charity Article 25 who play a vital role in the delivery of our projects.

Our work is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The goals and their targets help to define our priorities and provide us with the confidence that our solutions act towards the sustainable change we hope to catalyse.

4.2. *Activities*

To ensure we are most effective in achieving our purpose, we conduct our work through four focus areas. Within each focus area we define what we hope to achieve, what we do to achieve this, and the impact we have. Our focus areas were chosen to reflect what is most important to us as a charity and structure our approach irrespective of our current priority.

- **Project Delivery:** We deliver essential needs-assessed infrastructure projects to some of the least developed communities in Eastern Cameroon.
- **Community Engagement:** We involve local communities throughout the project delivery lifecycle to ensure our solutions consider the cultural, religious, economic and political setting.
- **Student Development:** We support our students to become future civil society leaders and sustainability thinkers.
- **Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing:** We aspire to partner and share our best practice and lessons learned with the wider industry.

Our first programme of works between 2009 and 2014 prioritised the village of Bambouti. Over five years we delivered five independent projects addressing five interconnected development needs, including a Medical Centre, Mechanical Workshop, School Classrooms, a Solar Electrification Hub and Improved Housing.

In 2013, following the successful delivery of our programme of works in Bambouti, we conducted a full assessment of the development needs in the wider Eastern Region of Cameroon. Our assessment identified that a lack of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) Infrastructure was the biggest barrier to sustainable development. Since 2014 we have been developing our response to the presented WaSH needs across the Eastern Region. Our WaSH programme combines infrastructure for water provision and sanitation. To date we have delivered seven hand dug water wells, a ventilated improved pit latrine and a rainwater harvesting and storage system.

Rising temperatures and less frequent rainfall in Sub-Saharan Africa are lengthening the dry season exacerbating stress on groundwater levels and consequently shallow aquifers are becoming less reliable as a water source. This is rendering many older shallow, hand-dug wells less effective, especially towards the beginning of the rainy season, when groundwater levels are after a long dry season. This was highlighted by UNICEF in their Climate Change Impacts, Trends and Vulnerabilities of Children in Sub Saharan Africa report in 2020. Consequently we have adapted their response to clean water provision to focus on the delivery of solar pumped borehole wells which tap deeper into the surface aquifer, or even into unconfined aquifers deeper below ground.

5. Achievements and Performance

5.1. Project Delivery

The most tangible impact we have is through the delivery of essential infrastructure projects. Project Delivery encompasses the full project lifecycle, from needs assessment to post-handover monitoring and evaluation. Our student volunteers respond to assessed needs with sustainable design proposals which are checked by our in-house chartered engineers and by external experts. We work closely with our advisors at Article 25 and WSP to ensure our project designs are technically excellent and best meet the needs of the community.

Construction in Cameroon is undertaken by appointed local contractors and completed projects are handed over to selected operational committees within the beneficiary community. The success of each project is not only defined by the handover of the project to the community, but by the continued performance of the facility following completion. We conduct monitoring and evaluation activities on an ongoing basis, ensuring our projects continue to meet target outcomes; this process also provides valuable lessons for future projects.

Challenges and failures of the contractor meant the pilot ventilated pit latrine which was delivered in the spring of 2022 in the village of Petit Bello was inappropriate for use and required repair and reconstruction. In November 2022 the Birmingham Student Chapter delivered the design and specification for these works. The contractor who delivered all seven of the charity's existing hand-dug wells carried out the repair and reconstruction works and the latrine is now operational.



Latrine in Petit Bello

The Southampton Student Chapter designed and oversaw the retrofit of one of the charity's existing hand dug wells in Mbangué with a solar powered pump

system. The project acted as proof of concept in preparation for the delivery of a borehole well in 2023/24 which will rely on a solar powered pump to provide the required.



Solar pump retrofit of Cameroon Catalyst well in Mbangue

The Imperial Student Chapter continued with the development of their scalable rainwater harvesting and storage solutions at household and community level.

5.2. *Community Engagement*

Community engagement encompasses all of the charity's interactions with our beneficiary communities, local governance and representation in Cameroon. We involve these stakeholders throughout the lifecycle of each project; from thorough initial field visit surveys to ongoing monitoring and evaluation post-handover. Consistent and effective communication with the communities ensures that each project responds to the essential needs and aligns with community aspirations. As a result our projects are well received and maintained, and empower local communities to continue to achieve their own development sustainably.

In June 2023 a team of Trustees, Senior Committee Members and Student Volunteers travelled to Cameroon on the annual research trip. The team oversaw the solar pump retrofit of the existing well in Mbangue and observed maintenance work on the rainwater harvesting and storage system in Bambouti built in the spring of 2022.

Alongside the maintenance work the team delivered a workshop to community members in Bambouti to explain the engineering design of the JHC's rainwater harvesting system. The workshop was delivered by Martha Day (Trustee and R&D Manager), Clara Gimeno-Jesus (Head of Community Engagement) and a local contractor who translated into the local language. Workshop delivery was aided by an infographic designed by Amy McLoughlin (Imperial design team lead) which were laminated and passed round the workshop attendees prior to the discussion. The infographic was then explained in detail during the workshop, and the attendees were able to ask any questions. Verbal feedback from the session was very positive, especially towards the use of the infographic. Similar techniques will be used for our community engagement workshops on household rainwater harvesting this summer.



Rainwater harvesting and storage workshop in Bambouti

5.3. Student Development

Student volunteers are the core drivers of our impact, responsible for the design of, and fundraising for, each project. This level of student involvement in an international development charity is unique to Cameroon Catalyst and is important because it provides those at the beginning of their careers with the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and experience across a range of technical and non-technical areas. Our student volunteers develop both passively through their direct experiences with project involvement and charity operations, and actively through opportunities tailored towards improving specific skills or knowledge sets. Cameroon Catalyst alumni represent a cohort of sustainability thinkers and the next generation of civil society leaders.

In March 2023 the charity hosted the Annual Charity Workshop at the University of Southampton. The workshop brings together Trustees, Senior Committee Members and Student Volunteers to share achievements and lessons learnt from the previous year and partake in design and fundraising workshops.



Annual Charity Workshop at the University of Southampton

5.4. Collaboration & Knowledge Sharing

Collaboration & Knowledge Sharing includes all of our interactions with NGOs, companies, institutions and wider industry outside of our beneficiary communities. We aspire to partner with organisations to deliver the most effective projects and share our research findings, best practice and lessons learned. Through this we can significantly increase our influence in the international development sector rather than existing as an isolated entity.

Following the 2023 Summer Trip, Ben Hutton-Penman spent a week shadowing Government ministers in Bertoua. Ben made the below xx about his experience.

"My time in the Cameroon Eastern City of Bertoua was one to remember, which allowed me to experience city life in Cameroon. The week began at the end of the annual Cameroon chapter trip which was a success in itself. The whole team met the Eastern Region Governor and had drinks in his house. Following the introductions the team left and I was shown around. I finally had access to luxuries which I had missed on the trip such as running water and a physical toilet which was a relief. Access to electricity in the city was still limited though as the city battled with frequent power cuts throughout the day and night which led to the fan at the end of my bed flicking on and off constantly.

"The primary aim of the week was to build a relationship with the governor on behalf of Cameroon Catalyst, better understand why the Eastern region is less developed than the other parts of the country and experience the city culture. Throughout the week I also met with other government officials and local business owners and was given tours of construction projects in the local area.

"Overall the week was a great success, I had many meals with the governor and other colleagues building relationships, and eating incredible freshwater fish from a local fish place most days! I learnt more about the country gaining insight into the current Anglophone crisis, China's influence and other economic and political components affecting the development of the eastern region and Cameroon as a whole."





Photographs from Ben's week spent shadowing Government ministers in Bertoua.

6. Financial Review

Reserves Policy

Cameroon Catalyst endeavours to hold reserves to help cover the next year of charitable activity and provide contingency. At the end of the 2022/23 financial year the reserve stood at £23,420 in the Main UK Bank Account.

7. Declarations

Signed on behalf of the Trustees of Cameroon Catalyst.

Name	Thomas Edwards	Position	Chairperson
Date	22/06/2024	Signed	



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Registered Charity Number: 1155758



Receipts and payments accounts

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For the period
from

1/9/2022

To

31/8/2023

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Voluntary - Corporate Sponsorship	7,500	-	-	7,500	7,500
Voluntary - Other Donations	780	-	-	780	1,280
Fundraising Activities	2,360	-	-	2,360	2,627
Grant Income (Main UK)	-	4,000	-	4,000	2,000
Trip Fundraising Activities	-	7,200	-	7,200	-
Grant Income (Southampton)	-	480	-	480	-
Cash Deposit	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	10,640	11,680	-	22,320	13,407
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	10,640	11,680	-	22,320	13,407
A3 Payments					
Charitable Activities (Cameroon): Solar Pump Retrofit	4,176	4,000	-	8,176	6,415
Charitable Activities (Cameroon): Latrine	2,310	-	-	2,310	-
Charitable Activities (Cameroon): Trip Support	2,800	7,330	-	10,130	3,588
Insurance	2,374	-	-	2,374	2,241
Website Hosting Fee	102	-	-	102	-
Cost of Fundraising (Main UK)	216	-	-	216	304
Cost of Fundraising (Southampton)	91	-	-	91	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	12,069	11,330	-	23,399	12,548
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	12,069	11,330	-	23,399	12,548
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 1,428	350	-	- 1,078	859
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	24,578	3,000	-	27,578	-
Cash funds this year end	23,149	3,350	-	26,499	859

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds				
	Current Account: Main UK Account	21,420	2,000	-
	Current Account: Southampton	380	350	-
	Current Account: Birmingham	1,079		
	Current Account: Imperial		1,000	-
	Cash held in hand	270		-
	Total cash funds	23,149	3,350	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £


B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
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	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Thomas Henderson Edwards	22/06/2024